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The Stone Monuments and Antiquities of the Jebel Marra Region, Darfur, Sudan
c. 1000 - 1750 AD

by

Andrew James McGregor

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Ph.D.
Graduate department of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
University of Toronto

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Abstract

The Stone Monuments and Antiquities of the Jebel Marra Region, Darfur, Sudan c. 1000 - 1750 AD

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Dissertation for Ph.D. requirements
2000

One of the world's richest collections of untouched archaeological sites is found in the region of Darfur. Prior to its incorporation into the modern state of Sudan in 1916, Darfur was one of the old Sudanic sultanates that stretched in an east-west line across pre-colonial Africa, forming a bridge between Muslim north Africa and the largely animist regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Population movements and cultural influences were absorbed from both north and south, forming a vibrant and constantly evolving civilization.

In the absence of scientific archaeological work, the history of Darfur is presently derived from a mass of often contradictory and frequently fanciful accounts provided by the mediaeval Arab geographers, early travelers, and the officials of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium government of Sudan (1898-1955). Added to this material is a wealth of oral tradition preserved by the many indigenous and more recently arrived cultural groups who call this province home. The value of oral tradition as historical evidence and its usefulness as a tool of archaeology is critically examined and discussed in detail.

A number of groups have succeeded in forming ruling dynasties in Darfur, including the legendary founders of the state, the Tora, and their successors, the Daju (12th cent. - 14th cent. AD), the Tunjur (15th - 16th centuries), and the Kayra Fur (early 17th century - 1916). These dynasties are examined through a combination of linguistic evidence, physical evidence, and a review of the available written accounts and oral traditions. The work also deals with the regional context, and evaluates the evidence cited in support of existing theories suggesting Meroitic and/or Christian Nubian penetration of Darfur.

The parameters of this study are provided by a concentration on the Jebel Marra mountain range as the traditional heartland of the oldest cultures in Darfur, and the site of the most extensive collections of monuments and antiquities. Beginning in the eleventh century AD, a period possibly belonging to the

shadowy Tora, the study covers the period up to the ascension of the Kayra Fur sultan Muhammad Tayrab (c.1750), after which the Fur began to build their monuments almost exclusively in brick and entered into the larger historical record.

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The Nile Basin

Map adapted from H Erlich and I Gershoni (eds): *The Nile: Histories, Cultures, Myths*, London, 2000

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1. Introduction

The old sultanate of Darfur (in the western part of modern Sudan) together with its neighbour and rival, the sultanate of Wadai (modern east Chad) and a handful of petty border sultanates were among the last parts of Africa to fall to the forces of European colonialism, holding out until the early part of the twentieth century. These sultanates were centered around a type of divine kingship, and life within the kingdoms was focused around an elaborate ritual cycle, rich in Islamic tradition and pre-Islamic survivals. The legitimacy of the sultanates was based on their great antiquity, witnessed by a multitude of stone monuments and abandoned cities. The testimony of these ruins was enveloped by local traditions in Darfur which provided an assortment of myth, legend and historical evidence that spoke of a succession of dominant cultures, beginning with the shadowy Tora, typically described as a race of 'white giants' who came from the north. Following this group were the Daju, an important and aggressive group mentioned by Arab geographers of the 12th century AD. By the fifteenth century the Daju had been displaced by the Tunjur, a warrior group of possible Berber/Banu Hilal origins. Power began to shift in the late 16th and early 17th centuries to the indigenous Fur, who established an Islamic state that survived until 1916. It would be false, however, to regard any of these states as homogeneous creations; each of them consisted of a multi-ethnic empire in which intermarriage and conquest drew people from every constituent group into a larger society in which advancement to all levels of administration short of the sultanhip was open to enterprising individuals of most ethnic groups.

The lateness of the conquest offered interested colonial administrators an opportunity to study first-hand a culture that was still rich in its own traditions and rituals, both through physical isolation and a jealously guarded political independence that bordered on xenophobia at times. Such efforts were, however, scattered and unsystematic, due to the absence of any official program to study and record the traditions and ruins of the region. Those engaged in these efforts were rarely trained in anthropology or archaeology, and the literature they produced was quickly filled with a bewildering combination of observation, supposition and personal bias. In this atmosphere certain voices came to be regarded as authoritative by consensus, despite often critical weaknesses in their work.

Proper archaeological work has yet to begin in Darfur and a full study of the known physical evidence with the associated traditions has yet to be completed. The state of the current body of literature, in which hypothesis is frequently presented as fact, is an unsatisfactory base for further studies. The present work has been written in the belief that a study of the physical evidence, linguistic evidence, and oral traditions that takes into consideration the regional context, would be of great value in establishing a

framework for further archaeological investigation. The existing literature will be examined in depth in an effort to separate fiction from fact, and to suggest the most promising avenues for further research.¹

My own research in and about Darfur began with a reading of Slatin Pasha's *Fire and Sword in the Sudan* (1895-6), fortunately in the first edition, which contained a historical summary of Darfur that was excised from later editions. As a student of Nubian archaeology with field experience in the Sudan, I was quickly intrigued by the mysterious dynasties of the old sultanate. As I examined the literature regarding Darfur it became apparent that the meager primary literature had been supplemented by a mass of secondary literature consisting of unrestrained speculation, often of a diffusionist and frequently contradictory nature. There was little in the way of scientific archaeological work done in the region before the 1980's, and the finds were poorly recorded, and the evidence used to support often far-fetched theories. Colonial boundaries had also served in distorting the literature, as there had been little co-operation between French and British archaeologists in the region, working independently of each other on their own sides of the Chad/Sudan border. As in many parts of Africa, the artificial colonial divides had deprived historical investigations of a regional context that reflected historical realities in an often cosmopolitan pre-colonial Africa.

Though it is clear that Darfur badly needs a programme of archaeological surveys and excavations, it seemed obvious to me that it was nearly impossible to move forward without first laying out some sort of reliable groundwork from the mass of conflicting evidence and commentaries. Fieldwork cannot exist in a vacuum, but must eventually be measured against the available historical records and existing oral traditions. There had not, however, been any attempt to examine the traditions, personal accounts and archaeological records in a single work, a necessary first step towards profitable fieldwork. With an unsuitable and outdated base for further studies, it was necessary to go back to the original sources and critically examine the raw evidence without the biases of its later interpreters.

Two major sources were available for this purpose, the underused archival papers of Dr. AJ Arkell (held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London), and the unpublished field-notes of Mr. HG Balfour Paul (retained by him at his home in Devon, England). The Arkell Papers were examined in 1995 and again in 1997, at which time I also visited Mr. Balfour Paul to examine his field-notes. Also of use were the intelligence records of the 1916 Darfur Field Force, held at the Sudan Government Archives, Khartoum (examined in 1991), and the diaries and correspondence of Condominium administrators at the Durham University Sudan Archives (examined in 1993). A research trip to Darfur in 1991, while profitable, was fraught with difficulties familiar to the early visitors to Darfur in terms of getting there, remaining there, and even obtaining permission to leave. Examination of many of the remote archaeological sites was not possible at the time due to an extremely unsettled security situation.

¹ The extensive ritual cycle practiced in the Fur sultanate, as well as many other aspects of the complex social life of the sultanate's inhabitants are treated in detail in O'Fahey's *State and Society in Darfur* (1980), and will not be dealt with at length in the present work, which will instead focus on the material remains in Darfur and their regional context.

2. Geography of Darfur

Forming the western province of the modern Republic of the Sudan, the region of Darfur corresponds roughly to the limits of the old independent Sultanate of Darfur at the time of its incorporation into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan Condominium in 1916. With readjustments to the Darfur/Wadai border by the French and British in the 1920's following their conquest of the small border sultanates during the Great War,¹ and the addition of a large quantity of desert to the north in 1952, the present area of Darfur is approximately 193,000 square miles.² The people of Darfur are greatly varied in origin, speaking at least twelve major languages, with numerous dialects. They fall generally within one of three types; sedentary indigenous groups, nomadic or semi-nomadic non-Arab groups, and the nomadic or semi-nomadic Arab groups, who keep camels in the north and cattle in the south.³

Darfur has historically been regarded as an isolated area due to the vast desert to the north, the dry sandy hills along the Kordofan border to the east, and the tsetse fly ridden marshes to the south. Darfur is most closely connected to the west, though political antagonism with the neighbouring sultanate of Wadai frequently served to limit interaction with this area. The border sultanates of Dar Tama, Dar Qimr, Dar Sila and Dar Masalit have historically resisted rule from either Wadai or Darfur, with varying degrees of success.

Most of Darfur consists of vast plains, undulating in the west, and fairly level in the east, where flat-topped *inselbergs* occasionally rise 100-200m. above the plain. The most prominent feature is the Jebel Marra mountain range, a series of volcanic hills that rise up to 3000m. above the plain. The range is composed mostly of basalt with some amounts of phonolite and trachyte. The range is not vast, measuring only 50 km. east to west and 110 km. north to south, but maintains an immense importance in the region as it dominates the drainage of the area as the dividing point between the Nile and Chad basins and is regarded as the ancestral homeland of the Fur people who succeeded in unifying and ruling the entire Darfur region. The main crater of this volcanic eruption is in the south-west corner of the Jebel Marra range and contains two lakes (which will be discussed in detail below in the section on Daju sites in Darfur). The mountains receive up to 75 cm. of rain each year which is fully adequate to support agriculture in the range. The mountain-sides are extensively terraced to prevent soil erosion and to support irrigation. The large number of unused terraces suggests that Jebel Marra once supported a much larger population than at present.⁴ Low sandstone hills may be found both to the east and west of the Marra range.

Northern Darfur is a relatively dry area, receiving about 25 cm. of rain a year at most. The steppes are broken in places by *wadi*-s with periodic water flows. The area is largely preferred by nomads, especially

¹ See J Tubiana (1981), pp.113-28; and Grossard (1925).

² Sources for the geography of Darfur include Barbour (1954), pp.172-82, Barbour (1961), pp.148-58, Theobald (1965), pp.1-11

³ For the movements of the nomadic groups in Darfur, see fig.58, Barbour (1961).

⁴ Hale (1969)

in the range between 16° to 17°N. This region, known as the *jizzu*, is usually covered with succulent plants from the time of the autumn rains up until January or even February, providing excellent grazing for the nomads' herds. The western and southern areas of Darfur are generally better watered, receiving enough rain to grow crops such as cotton (which in woven form became a major form of currency in the sultanate), tobacco, cucumbers, pumpkins and melons. During the rainy season and shortly afterwards shallow wells dug in the *wadi*-s provide sufficient water for crops and animals. In the southern reaches of Darfur the seasonal *wadi*-s drain into the Shari river in the west and south-west, and into the Bahr al-Arab in the south. The southern part of Darfur consists largely of a clay plain covered with thick bush, and forms the homeland of the nomadic cattle-owning Baqqara Arabs.

To the east of Jebel Marra is the vast *Qoz* region of undulating sand-dunes which stretches across Kordofan to the White Nile. An annual rainfall of approximately 27 cm. annually provides just enough water to support a mostly sedentary agricultural population. Grasses and herbs are usually sufficient to support a number of animals, but with only one significant *wadi* in the area (the Wadi Ku) a certain inventiveness has been necessary to provide enough water for the population. To this end deep wells, cultivation of melons, and the hollowing out of the huge *tebeldi* trees (*Adansonia digitata*) that dot the landscape for water storage are all employed to provide sufficient water year-round.⁵ A certain security was always provided to Darfur by the difficulty of finding enough water to support the movement of large numbers of men and animals westwards from Kordofan to Jebel Marra. The 1916 Anglo-Egyptian expedition of the Western Field Force came very close to disaster before a single shot had been fired when it was discovered that many of the wells could not possibly provide enough water for both men and animals. Food was also in short supply, and to some degree the expedition was saved by the discovery of a field of onions, which led to a three-day onion feast. The greatest fear of the British command staff was that Sultan 'Ali Dinar would destroy the wells and *tebeldi* trees along the eastern approaches. Though this would have effectively eliminated the possibility of moving an army along this route, the maintenance of the wells and *tebeldi* trees was regarded as a sacred responsibility of the Darfur sultan, and even the approach of the Anglo-Egyptian force was not enough for 'Ali Dinar to break this trust. The early use of the direct route from the Nile to Darfur is highly questionable;

From Central Kordofan the direct approach to Central Darfur must have been extremely difficult until the Kunjara Sultans (Fur) in the XVIIIth century opened the line of great rock-hewn wells from El Fasher towards the Kaga hills, because eastern Darfur and western Kordofan were practically waterless. The Hamar did not systematically develop the system of storing water in baobabs until about the end of the same century, and wells were not opened at El Nahud until the

⁵ 'The stem of these is hollow by nature, and the hollow it contains can easily be enlarged into a cavity of considerable capacity. During the rains water is hauled up from a reservoir dug at the base of the tree in which it collects, and poured into the hollow stem through a hole cut near the top of the main bole, and as soon as the tree is filled it is sealed up. When water is required for use it is drawn up out of the hollow stem with a skin bucket. In a sandy region where there are no wells, *Tebeldi* trees are of great value. They grow to a great age, and in some cases have been known to hold as much as 3000 gallons of water' (Sarsfield Hall, 1922, pp.362-3).

Mahdist era. Consequently the ordinary road from El Fasher to El Obeid, instead of running as it does now, used in the XVIIIth century to turn slightly north from Jebel el Hilla and pass through Kernak, Kaga Surrug and Foga to Kaga Soderi and Katul and thence turn south-east through Bara to El Obeid; and it was this line that was invariably followed, in default of any other sufficiently well watered, by the invading forces of Darfur.⁶

The important trade-routes of Darfur connected the sultanate to the north, through the Darb al-Arba'in from the commercial centre of Kobbe to Asyut in Egypt (used primarily in the period of the Fur sultans), and through an even older route that connected Darfur through Kufra to Tripoli. In more ancient times the *Wadi* al-Milk and the *Wadi* Hawar may have provided important links to the Nile valley; extensive cultural remains have been found along the latter route, which stretches over 1000 km from eastern Chad to the Nile near Debba.⁷

O'Fahey describes a division of Darfur into three zones based on rainfall, which in turn correspond to three ways of life: camel nomadism, rainland hoe agriculture, and cattle nomadism. 'Within this approximate framework, ethnic identity and cohesion appear as a complex function of descent, of language in some cases, and of the notion of a common tribal land, reinforced by the experience of external and internal political domination.'⁸ The story of Darfur is the story of the interaction of the many peoples of this province, and their roles in building the larger culture of the sultanate.

Notes:

- 1) Square brackets within quotations indicate an insertion by the author
- 2) The sites examined comprise a selective, rather than comprehensive list

⁶ MacMichael (1918), p.36

⁷ See Keding (1998), pp.2-12; and Mohammed-Ali (1981), pp.176-8

⁸ O'Fahey (1980), p.7

3. Historiography of Darfur

Early sources on Darfur

WG Browne, an Englishman, arrived in Darfur *via* a grueling trek down the *Darb al-Arba'in* ('40 Day's Road') from Asyut in 1793. The Fur, well aware of the threat to their independence from the northern Mamluks and Ottomans, had adopted an almost xenophobic attitude to foreigners who were not known traders. Even the latter were generally confined to the merchant's town of Kobbé at the southern terminus of the *Darb al-Arba'in*. Browne came under immediate suspicion, and quickly found that leaving Darfur was even harder than getting there. Browne was kept confined to Kobbé and the capital al-Fashir, and was unable to make extensive enquiries before being allowed to leave in 1796. His 1799 work, *Travels in Egypt, Syria and Africa*, provides excellent information regarding the then little-known trade route from Egypt to Darfur and the commercial communities of Kobbé and al-Fashir, but the sparse historical information is generally confused and unhelpful, mistaking the Tunjur with the Daju, and describing the Fur sultans as 'Moors' in origin.

Another commercial traveller with far greater access to all parts of Darfur was the Tunisian Muhammad 'Umar al-Tunisi. Al-Tunisi was from a merchant family, and his father and uncle plied the routes between Sinnar, Darfur and Wadai.¹ Arriving in Darfur at the age of 14 in 1803, al-Tunisi spent 8 years there before returning to Tunis through Wadai. Living in Cairo years later, al-Tunisi met a French resident, Dr. Perron, who encouraged al-Tunisi to record his observations in two works, *Voyage au Darfour* (1845) and *Voyage au Ouaday* (1851). The works appeared in both Arabic and French, thanks to translations provided by Dr. Perron. Valuable in many ways, these works do little to enlighten us on historical aspects of Darfur, as al-Tunisi typically took little interest in pre-Islamic history, and was generally uncritical with the historical information he did gather. Al-Tunisi again noted the absence of written historical material in Darfur.

Heinrich Barth explored the region between Mali and Bagirmi between 1849 and 1855, publishing his findings in a three volume work, *Travels and discoveries in north and central Africa* (1857). Barth did not reach Darfur, but made efforts to collect information about its peoples and history. Barth was disappointed by his failure to acquire written documents regarding Darfur, after having had success in finding numerous manuscripts regarding Borno.

Gustav Nachtigal, a former doctor in the Prussian army, spent six months in al-Fashir in 1874 while on his return from an epic six year exploration of the central African interior, during which time he had travelled from Tripoli through Fazzan and Tibesti (where he was nearly sold into slavery) to Lake Chad, and then through Borno, Bagirmi, Wadai and Darfur. Nachtigal's intellect, curiosity and energy resulted in a

¹ Hasan and Ogot describe Muhammad al-Tunisi's father, 'Umar, as one of a number of foreign 'jurists and mystics' encouraged to settle in Darfur by Sultan 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid (1787-1800), (Hasan and Ogot, 1992, p.190).

detailed and generally scientific account of these lands, which he began publishing in 1879 as *Sahara und Sudan: Ergebnisse sechsjährigen Reisen in Afrika* (Berlin). A second volume appeared in 1881, but Nachtigal held off on publishing his notes from Wadai and Darfur in the expectation of making further explorations in these regions. He was instead appointed *Reichskommissar* for the German government in the new colonies of Cameroon and Togoland, where he died in 1885. A third volume of *Sahara und Sudan* was compiled from his notes on Wadai and Darfur in 1889, but these works remained extremely rare for many years until their appearance in a four-volume English translation by Fisher and Fisher in 1971.

Nachtigal differed from his predecessors in making a systematic investigation into the history of Darfur, seeking out both traditions from learned sources and hunting down the often elusive written sources, of which he succeeded in reading several (though they proved largely contradictory). Nachtigal was helped in some degree by establishing friendly relations with Sultan Ibrahim (1873-4), but as the sultanate was in a general state of apprehension regarding a possible Egyptian invasion (which indeed came shortly after Nachtigal's departure), the doctor was prevented from leaving al-Fashir to explore the countryside, and was often regarded with the greatest suspicion and even derision from the populace.

O'Fahey describes the work of MacMichael and Nachtigal as 'open to the criticism of too great a pre-occupation with the Arab/non-Arab divide and with descent generally. Beyond entrapping the reader in the mire of Arab pedigrees, the genealogical approach has small utility...'.² The present work deals with such issues in some depth in the belief that 'the genealogical approach' may yet provide clues as to the origins of certain cultural groups, reveals the processes involved in the collection and transmission of oral tradition (hence providing a critical framework for the examination of these traditions), and, where the genealogies have been obviously revised or falsified, allows us to discover who a certain cultural group believed themselves to be, which is in reality as important as an accurate racial/ethnic identification in reconstructing regional history. (This material is, of course, most useful when examined in conjunction with linguistic evidence, archaeological remains, and the written works of outside sources, such as the Arab geographers.) For this reason the term 'cultural group' commonly appears in this paper where the term 'tribe' may appear in older works; the latter implies a racial or ethnic homogeneity which is not compatible with what is known of the social organization of the peoples of Darfur. Tracing a lineal history of such groups ignores a continual process of assimilation or dispersal of peoples of various linguistic or ethnic identities in the area. Cultural groups in the Saharan/Sudanic regions also rarely display any egalitarian traits, being divided into hereditary castes of servile and superior clans, though individuals and certain cultural groups have demonstrated the existence of a large degree of mobility through these ranks. Nearly every major 'tribe' additionally has divisions within it that are 'foreign' to that group, but which have long been assimilated to the larger group, though traditions may remain of the outside origin of the smaller groups. Particularly after the adoption of Islamic pedigrees (whether Adnanite or Himyarite) many indigenous pagan groups were swallowed namelessly within nominally Islamic pedigrees, often inspiring the generally pointless practice of

² O'Fahey (1980a), p.3

colonial administrators sorting out their charges through determinations of racial purity through the examination of superficial traits such as skin colour, facial features, head-size, etc. Such practices ignore the importance of understanding the interaction between all the inhabitants of Saharan and Sudanic Africa, instead relegating their studies to an evaluation of how 'debased' a certain ethnic group has become through intermarriage with indigenous peoples. That such fusion may produce a new, creative and vital culture is generally not considered; the accomplishments of such groups are attributed to a leavening of lighter-skinned 'Hamitic' blood, while those aspects of a culture found distasteful to the colonial historian were chalked up to the degree of 'native' heritage (or simple 'blackness') found within that culture. The concept is not a new one; it can be traced back into the works of some of the oldest Arab geographers. Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), cites an earlier and now lost work of Wahb b. Munabbih (d. c.730):

Wahb b. Munabbih said that Ham b. Nuh was a white man having a beautiful face and form. But Allah (to Him belongs glory and power) changed his colour and the colour of his descendants because of his father's curse. Ham went off, followed by his children. They settled on the shore of the sea, and Allah increased them. They are the Sudan.³

The Hamite question

The dubious existence of the 'Hamite' race and its supposed role in African history rests uneasily upon the poorly defined concept of just what constitutes inclusion among the Hamites. Identifying characteristics include 'occupational specialisation such as pastoralism, at other times cultural traits such as language and religion (Islam), and still at other times physical characteristics like skin complexion, physical height, skull measurements and texture of hair'.⁴ Such pliable criteria made it possible for proponents of Hamitic penetration and influence in Africa to ascribe almost any cultural development in the Sudanic and Sub-Saharan regions to the presence of 'Hamitic' civilizing traits. The Hamitic theory was clearly stated by one of its greatest proponents, CG Seligman:

Apart from relatively late Semitic influence - whether Phoenician (Carthaginian) and strictly limited, or Arab (Muhammadan) and widely diffused - the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites, its history the record of these peoples and of their interaction with the two other African stocks, the Negro and the Bushman, whether this influence was exerted by highly civilized Egyptians or by such wider pastoralists as are represented at the present day by the Beja and the Somali... The Hamites - who are 'Europeans', i.e. belong to the same great branch of mankind as the whites - are commonly divided into two great branches, Eastern and Northern.⁵

Bender describes the 'Hamitic concept' as;

The racist idea that African peoples who are seen as more 'advanced' in some terms favored by racist theorists are so because of admixture by invading 'Hamites' (descendants of the Biblical

³ Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allah b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari; *Kitab al-ma'arif*, Trans. in Hopkins and Levzion (1981), p.15

⁴ Afigbo (1993), p.43

⁵ Seligman (1966), p.61; See also Seligman (1913), pp.593-705

'Ham'), making them superior to 'Negroes', although, of course still not up to the standard of Caucasians (which includes the theorists, naturally). First of all, the terms 'Hamito-Semitic' or 'Semito-Hamitic' are linguistically wrong because the division of Arasian into bipartite branches Semitic vs. all the rest is not supported by the data... Second, the 'Hamitic' concept is physically unsound: it is a racist thesis which must be rejected as unscientific and pernicious.⁶

The Hamitic theory has also been attacked by Olderogge, who described it as 'one form of expression of a reactionary ideology of racialism, which divides people into 'full-valued' and 'less-valued'.⁷ African groups displaying few traits of the perceived 'Hamitic' influence were often subject to crude generalizations in colonial literature despite their historical roles and achievements in the region. One such group was the Daju, who were described as 'as decadent and debased a people as may be found in Africa'.⁸ Elsewhere the mountain Fur, judged to have the least amount of 'Arab blood' are referred to as the 'still savage Karakirit Fur'.⁹ The colonial literature abounds with such references, of which these are only examples. The Hamite theory has been used in Darfur to explain the emergence of a powerful kingdom among the black Fur of Jebel Marra;

'Fur' apparently (like 'Sudan') means 'blacks', and was the name given by the early light-coloured (?Berber) sultans of Darfur to the original negroid inhabitants of the country (such as the Binga, Banda, etc.), who agreed to become Moslem and submit to the sultan's rule, the alternative being to be attacked and either killed or enslaved... As the historic dynasty became more and more negroid from intermarriage with black wives and concubines, the appearance of the sultans darkened correspondingly and they became known by the appellation of their black subjects, 'Fur'.¹⁰

A major proponent of the Hamite hypothesis was HR Palmer, a British administrator in northern Nigeria (1915-28). Palmer collected manuscripts and commissioned histories from those versed in local history and tradition, publishing these works in translation with extensive commentaries informed by the author's belief in diffusionism and the cultural superiority of the 'lighter-skinned' peoples. Nevertheless these works remain an important repository of the lore and history of Borno, Chad, Kanem, Bagirmi, Darfur and other regions of the central Sudan. While Palmer's translations of manuscript histories are of great value, his commentaries must be approached with the greatest caution; 'Palmer's publications in particular are extremely difficult to use. They are very confused, having no doubt been hastily produced in the spare

⁶ Bender (1997), pp.42-3

⁷ Olderogge (1971-2), p.70

⁸ Henderson (1939), p.56 This appears to be the source for Trimmingham's judgement that the Daju are 'a very decadent debased type' (Trimingham, 1949, p.89). The Daju of Dar Sila appear to have have left a much better impression on the French; Col. Largeau wrote of the Daju in 1912 that 'L'humeur indépendante des Dadjo, la nature montagnaise de leur pays, leur grande aptitude à utiliser les terrains difficiles et les obstacles naturels, développée par le sport national de la chasse et de la recherche du miel, paraissent être les principales raisons qui ont sauvé l'indépendance du Sila. Il ne paraît jamais avoir payé au Darfour et au Ouddaï que des tributs irréguliers et peu importants' (Berre, 1983, pp.122-3).

⁹ Arkell (1920b), p.24

¹⁰ Arkell (1961), p.214 The self-name for the Fur of the northern Kora range of Jebel Marra is *Korakwa* (*Kwa* means 'people'). Arkell attempted to demonstrate that Kora meant "blacks" with the connotation of 'slaves' (Arkell, 1951a, pp.57-8).

time of an exceptionally busy colonial administrator. Even where clear they tend to be misleading because of the author's predilection for basing historiographical interpretation on apparent similarities of vocabulary in the languages of the peoples studied extending even to the acceptance of far-fetched parallels with ancient Egyptian and Greek. But Palmer was not a trained linguist and much of his writing in that field is in fact nonsensical'.¹¹ Bivar and Shinnie remark that 'These curious works contain, if one can sort it out, a mass of information but are uncritical and full of inaccuracies'.¹² Last has also come to the defence of a critical reading of the traditions collected by Palmer, 'I would suggest that much of Palmer's data is merely what he was told by mallams [*mu'allim-s*], and we have to sort out what it was they wanted to convey, from what Palmer made of it; and then we must de-code the mallams' data along with their 'mental frameworks'. Simply to discard the data of Palmer (and others like him) is to discard part of oral history c.1910: in practice, even the strictest historians do not do so, despite the disavowals'.¹³ Musa Muhammad appraised the work of Palmer and other colonial officials as follows:

Like most of the scholars of their generation, they took a diffusionist standpoint. They looked to the archaeological evidence in the area to show human migration and cultural diffusion into Darfur. The Nile Valley and the West Africa savannah which were archaeologically better known were taken as more 'civilized' areas and hence the possible sources for the cultural development in Darfur. That assumption led to confusion... Despite their failings, they made pioneering attempts to record the archaeology of Darfur and reported sites which since their visits have been much destroyed.¹⁴

AJ Arkell

AJ Arkell's prolific output of articles regarding Darfur history and impressive career as a colonial administrator in the Condominium government have made him the most influential writer on matters related to Darfur history and archaeology. Born in 1898, Arkell abandoned his studies at Oxford to join the Royal Flying Corps in 1914, serving as a fighter pilot until 1919. He returned to Oxford after the war but again left his studies to join the Sudan Political Service in 1920. After the usual language training in Khartoum, Arkell served as an administrator in Darfur until 1926, a period which saw Arkell develop a strong interest in the numerous ruins he encountered in the field.

Following his first posting in Darfur, Arkell served in White Nile Province until 1929, during which he was distinguished for his work in eliminating the cross-border traffic in slaves with Ethiopia. After this Arkell was made District Commissioner (DC) in Blue Nile Province until 1932. The first of many publications came with the 1932 volume of *Sudan Notes and Records*. He was promoted to Deputy Governor of Darfur, where he served until 1937, which allowed him to further investigate the antiquities of

¹¹ Abdullahi Smith (1971), p.165, fn.17

¹² Bivar and Shinnie (1962), p. , fn.2

¹³ Last (1985), p.168

¹⁴ Musa Muhammad (1986), pp.6-7

the region. In 1937, Governor-General Angus Gillan decided that anthropological research in the Sudan should be co-ordinated by the Condominium government to ensure its best application to administrative requirements. Knowing of Arkell's historical interests, anthropologist CG Seligman suggested to Arkell that he pursue a year of study at Oxford. Arkell agreed, and obtained a Diploma of Archaeology, studying under EE Evans-Pritchard and AR Radcliffe-Brown. In 1938 Arkell returned to the Sudan and became the first Commissioner for Archaeology and Anthropology in the Sudan.

Though busy with other duties during the war-years, Arkell was, however, able to continue his archaeological pursuits in the Sudan during this period, excavating the prehistoric site on the future grounds of the Khartoum hospital in 1943 and 1944. The following years also saw the groundwork laid for the establishment of the Sudan Antiquities Service and of a national Sudanese museum. Arkell also served as editor of *Sudan Notes and Records* from 1945 to 1948. After excavating Shaheinab in 1949 Arkell left the Sudan, moving to London, where he became a lecturer in Egyptology at University College.

In 1955 Arkell brought out the first edition of his influential *History of the Sudan from the earliest times to 1821* (a revised second edition appeared in 1961). In 1957 Arkell accompanied an expedition travelling by car from the Libyan coast to Ennedi and Tibesti, the archaeological results of which were published as *Wanyanga* in 1964.

Arkell's life made another turn in 1963, when he retired from the University of London to become an Anglican vicar in a country parish. From this point until his death in 1980 Arkell was rarely involved in archaeological matters.

Arkell has been described as having 'congenitally diffusionist views',¹⁵ and accused (with HR Palmer, his mentor in historical style) of practicing 'wild amateur philology',¹⁶ seeking cognates and derivatives through innumerable and unrelated language groups and dialects, even though some languages used in their philological comparisons (Assyrian, Meroitic, Egyptian, etc.) had been dead for hundreds or thousands of years.¹⁷ This tendency, when combined with the availability of thousands of known ethnonyms and countless variants in the Sudanic regions, could lead to some rather startling conclusions, usually without any support from historical, traditional or archaeological sources;

From the reign of Tuthmosis IV (1425-1404 BC) there is a record at Konosso near Philae of one successful expedition perhaps into the eastern desert against some tribe that had raided Wawat (probably the Wadi Halfa district); and on his chariot the royal sphinx treads underfoot three Nubians and six foreigners (some of whom are represented as negroes) with the names Cush, Karei, Medju (Beja), Irm, Gwršš and Trk. The last three names suggest the country west of the Nile now known as Darfur, where a section of the once royal tribe of Mima is still called Armi, another tribe in south-western Darfur is known as Kreish, and the Turuj are the serfs of another royal tribe, the Daju.¹⁸

¹⁵ Kleppe (2000), p242 In this case for suggesting that the stool of the Shilluk was the throne of Osiris.

¹⁶ Holt (1963), p.42

¹⁷ For a more scientific approach to such work, see Ehret (1971), pp.10-25

¹⁸ Arkell (1961), p.90

As Arkell's methodology largely consisted of seeking proofs of his *théorie du jour*, his works must be read closely, separating the interpretation from the hard data of observation, for which we are still reliant upon Arkell in many places in Darfur.¹⁹ His earliest works, in which Arkell was still collecting evidence and drawing interpretations from it, are among his most reliable; unfortunately Arkell often dropped his earlier and sounder observations in later years in favour of wilder diffusionist explanations, supported by often subtly manipulated physical and historical evidence. Arkell became intrigued early by the Hamitic hypothesis, following Palmer in tracing this supposed influence on the Sudanic kingdoms back as far as the earliest Egyptian dynasties. The culmination of this approach was the 1955 work *A History of the Sudan* (revised 1961), in which unfounded speculation is presented as reasoned theory, and an attempt to reconcile various diffusion-based approaches results only in a web of contradictions. This work has been characterized by Trigger as ;

a series of pseudohistorical ornamentations such as the idea that [traits such as iron-working, brick architecture, and divine kingship] were carried westward by the Meroitic royal family fleeing from their Axumite conquerors (an idea not unlike the once fashionable one that the Renaissance in Western Europe could be explained as the result of scholars fleeing the fall of Constantinople). Since that time, Arkell's theories, both with and without such romantic elaborations, have attracted widespread attention and have been repeated, with few if any caveats, in many general studies of African prehistory.²⁰

Arkell's archaeological writings between 1959 and 1963 are largely concerned with proving the existence of a highly dubious Christian kingdom in Darfur and Wadai, perhaps reflecting the religious turn in his state of mind that led to his retirement from archaeology in 1963 to become an Anglican minister. Nevertheless, many of Arkell's least reliable speculations regarding Darfur continue to appear in popular and scholarly literature that deals with the region. Using both his published works and archival notes (held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London), this paper will examine Arkell's influential work in detail.

More recent archaeological work in Darfur

Very little has been achieved in the post-independence period with regards to archaeological exploration in Darfur. The most important contribution has been made by Ibrahim Musa Mohammad, who carried out archaeological surveys and a number of small-scale excavations in al-Fashir, Merbo, Bora Dulu and Kuttum in the period 1978-81, the results of which were published in *The Archaeology of Central*

¹⁹ An important corrective to Arkell's approach is found in the articles of HG Balfour Paul, a British official who carried out extensive exploration of the archaeological sites in Darfur in the early 1950's. Balfour Paul was able to revisit a number of sites previously described only by Arkell, and in many cases made significantly different observations than did Arkell. Balfour Paul's commentaries are more reasoned and based on direct observation than are Arkell's and his draftsmanship allowed Balfour Paul to produce a large number of important plans and drawings; see in particular Balfour Paul's *History and Antiquities of Darfur* (1955), which, though short, is to this day the most reliable work on Darfur antiquities.

²⁰ Trigger (1969), p.25

Darfur in the 1st millennium AD (1986). This work attempted to combine ethnological observation, archaeological work, and the collection of oral traditions in its analysis, which it manages to do with varying degrees of success - the information of the traditions is often given in only the briefest fashion, and the cultural history is largely ignored in the examination of the sites. A number of important C14 dates were, however, obtained through this work. Musa Mohammad's most significant contribution has been in tracing the origin of iron-working in Darfur, a topic that is well covered in his 1986 work, and in a more comparative work published in 1993.²¹

A. Mohammad 'Ali has carried out important work on the prehistoric cultures of the Wadi Hawar region, but this early material (c.3000 - 2000 BC) falls outside the scope of the present work. H. Ziegert of Hamburg undertook a number of surveys and excavations in the Jebel Marra region, but none of this work was ever published (to the present knowledge of the writer), and efforts by Musa Mohammad to examine manuscript reports of this work proved unsuccessful.²²

²¹ Anyone planning to do fieldwork in Darfur would also be well advised to examine Musa Mohammad (1986), section 1.6 'Problems encountered in the 1978-1981 surveys', pp.15-16

²² Musa Mohammad (1986), pp.7-8

4. Oral tradition as a tool in reconstructing Darfur history

It is perhaps misleading and possibly even irrelevant to judge oral traditions in the sense of being 'correct' or 'incorrect', 'accurate' or 'inaccurate'. The oral transmission of culture history is never designed to preserve a record of a group for historical purposes; it is instead a living creation, recalling events that have a functional purpose in the present for a cultural group, particularly in the role of legitimation. The traditions usually serve to explain why present conditions exist; the question of 'how' is important only insofar as it serves to support the answer to 'why' - hence the 'discrepancies' that exist in the early portions of narratives of different traditions that end the same way. In the value system of oral traditions each route to a result is as valid as another; the purpose is served when a set of events determines a desirable conclusion. In this process the mythical event is as legitimate as the historical event, so long as it is integral to the world-view of the giver and the hearer of the tradition. 'Whereas it was once thought one might attain a better understanding of 'what really happened', now it is more clearly realised that we can understand only the various ways in which different peoples and different groups understood their past: in short, that there is for us no History, only histories.'¹

The traditions exist in a constant state of flux, evolving in reaction to the events around them. The dispersal or concentration of populations, the arrival of alien groups, the departure of community members or the introduction of new religious ideas will all either expand or diminish the importance of certain traditions and therefore directly affect the will to remember. 'Since myths and legends are used to support political claims it follows that they are most numerous and complex where the claims are contested or the population mixed'.² Tradition also responds to the needs of the present, enduring modifications or omissions to validate the needs, pretensions or vanity of those who call upon it. Entire lineages can fall at one fell swoop according to the desire for a community to confirm their rights or orthodoxy through the introduction of a new version of their culture history. It is typical, however, for elements of the willfully forgotten past to percolate back into a record so flexible as oral tradition. In the Sudanic states the pagan heroes of a barbaric past may be reduced to an Arabicized name in a lineage list, but something in the memory of an individual refuses to perish. The deeds of the individual may be forgotten, but something in his or her life compels memory, often regardless of its role in validating or reinforcing the world-view of a community. Conversely, a process of lengthening can often be found in genealogies and king-lists, occurring through the addition of tribal or clan chiefs who never ruled, or through the inclusion of multiple monarchs who actually reigned concurrently over different parts of what later or earlier formed a kingdom.³

¹ Last (1985), pp.168-9

² Richards (1960), p.177

³ Many efforts have been made to extract chronological information from king-lists by deriving a mean length of reign and applying it to an entire list in order to estimate the total length of a dynasty's rule. Such attempts will not be made here, as the author is in agreement with Henige that 'This approach has obvious weaknesses. It assumes that the concept of 'average' has real relevance in historical reality. It further

As historical events recede into a foggy past, it will often nevertheless be felt necessary to elaborate upon the deeds of a community progenitor, leading to the development of an eponymous ancestor. Again the tradition satisfies the need to know 'why'; in this case why a cultural group is known by a certain name. The distance between the eponymous ancestor and the present is easily telescoped as the question of time is not only largely irrelevant, but may in fact impede the function of the oral narrative in substantiating claims to land, lineage, or political leadership.⁴ Oral tradition is, moreover, subject to formulaic and mnemonic devices employed by the keepers of community memory. Historical personalities may undergo conflation with other historical characters or even mythic individuals. The cultural evolution of a group may also lead to the assimilation of the memories of an absorbed or displaced community in order to legitimize the claims of the new power (the apparent transference of the Ahmad al-Ma'qur variation of the 'Wise Stranger' myth from the Tunjur to the Kayra Fur comes to mind); as Richards notes, 'Historical events are not unique in our sense of the phrase; they are, on the contrary, as identical as possible'.

Reference to time in the collected accounts is either wholly absent or given in the most general terms in most cases. Fixing chronological points is not a concern in the oral tradition, and for events known from traditions prior to the 17th century in Darfur, it is necessary to look for correspondences from the Arab geographers (whose works are themselves often compendiums of uncritically gathered information). They nevertheless have the benefit of a fixed date for their completion. The reliability of these geographers needs to be examined on an individual basis, as they habitually borrowed and embellished earlier accounts, and often did not hesitate to retail third-hand information to fill in gaps in their works. Other problems are often encountered in their works; 'Some incorporate palpable errors of topographical description and betray a childish predilection for 'tall stories' of monsters and marvels. Finally it is important to realise that these writings show substantial racial prejudice against the Negroes on the part of the authors, prejudice which destroys their value as source material for African history'.⁵ The lengthy and often fanciful glosses appended to various ethnonyms in the works of the Arab geographers may be attributable to what Wansborough described as 'a horror of anonymity', which 'necessitated provision of an etymology or history for every word or notion in the language'.⁶

The problem of 'feedback' in oral traditions is a modern phenomenon associated with the growth of literacy in African societies. After oral traditions were collected and put into print by colonial and post-

assumes that the succession system under study has not undergone changes from its inception. Finally, it presupposes that the kinglist/genealogy itself is accurate' (Henige, 1974, p.4).

⁴ An excellent demonstration of the process of 'telescoping' can be found from Tanzania. An historical chronicle was produced for the Kilwa people of the Tanganyika coast in the early sixteenth century, but appears to have been consulted rarely if ever since then. When Kilwa oral traditions were collected in the twentieth century, it became possible to compare the development of the traditions concerning events earlier than the sixteenth century with a written control. It was found that the oral traditions had closely retained the origin story with the same names and places. After this event, however, seven hundred years of history was telescoped into the reigns of only six rulers (Levtzion, 1972, p.58).

⁵ Smith (1971), p.168, fn.26

⁶ Wansborough (1970), p.91

colonial administrators and anthropologists these accounts tended to contaminate and even replace other versions of oral traditions. A worst-case scenario was encountered by Cohen while doing field-work in Borno; upon making enquiries about local history in the capital Cohen was frequently told the man he wanted to talk to regarding Kanuri traditions was HR Palmer.⁷ The perceived virtues of Palmer's written record had supplanted the value formerly attached to orally transmitted traditions. A similar problem was encountered by Shinnie and Bivar, 'Many traditions now retailed in Kanuri villages were derived from Palmer. This is not to suggest that Palmer deliberately falsified his material but it seems likely that when he had established one version to his satisfaction, he then passed this on to others telling them that this was their history. On more than one occasion, when talking to the Kanuri on historical matters and asking them where their information came from, we have been told 'It is so because Sir Richmond Palmer told us so'.⁸

The presence or absence of visual aids is an important factor in the development of oral traditions. The depiction of historical figures in art serves to ensure their continued presence in traditions. The easy access of the illiterate mass of a literate society such as the Christian Nubians to portraits of kings, princesses, saints and bishops must have fostered the existence of a vast core of oral tradition, no matter how deep its 'inaccuracies'. The folk-tales of ancient Egypt, as related by such unwitting collectors of oral tradition as Herodotus, are a prime example of oral traditions surrounding monuments and images of a largely forgotten past. The introduction of Islam negated the value of preserving such traditions, but they nonetheless make themselves felt through the preservation of pre-Islamic customs and the appropriation of Christian saints (and their burial-sites) to an Islamic tradition. Islamic societies are, however, often image poor, leaving them without an important mnemonic aid. Throughout the entire history of the Darfur sultanate there is not a single representation of a ruler or any other figure of prominence, save for the 'trophy photo' of the just slain Sultan 'Ali Dinar (last of the Kayra Fur line) taken by the British in 1916. In the absence of such representations it becomes clear that institutions such as the reliquary maintained by Kayra sultans at Fashir played important roles in prompting the collective memory through the display of these memory-triggers in public processions at festivals, coronations and other events.⁹ The Fur-speaking court had access to Arab-speaking scribes who could keep court records, copy correspondence and maintain genealogies, but the mass of the non-Arabic speaking Fur population was reliant upon oral tradition for their own historical charters,¹⁰ and may in reality have had little access to what written records there were (Nachtigal's text implies that even the Darfur sultan had not seen all the records of his dynasty). Nieke finds good reason for the denial of access to written documents:

⁷ Cohen (1966), pp.47-8

⁸ Bivar and Shinnie (1962), p.7

⁹ For the importance of material objects as mnemonic devices for oral tradition, see Vansina (1965), pp.36-7

¹⁰ The archives of Sultan 'Ali Dinar were substantial in size when seized by the British in 1916. It is unlikely that the practice of detailed record-keeping was initiated by 'Ali Dinar, and it seems probable that a large and multi-generational collection of records was destroyed or spirited off to Cairo following the conquest of Zubayr Pasha. Nearly all remaining records were destroyed during the Mahdiyya.

The support of claims to authority by the creation of a past suitable to the group's or individual's present aspirations has a lengthy history which transcends the introduction of literacy... Within the traditions of an oral society, though, suitable genealogies could be created with relative ease by deliberate manipulation of the evidence, since there was little or no way of externally validating whatever claims were made. This situation was transformed with the developing use of writing. Once recorded in a documentary form a genealogy could establish certain individuals and families as office-bearers much more firmly than had ever been the case before. The fabrication of claims to challenge the power and position of these individuals would then have necessitated access to those lists which did exist, as well as to the technology whereby alternative versions could be produced.¹¹

The remarks above would appear to support the claims of those who suggest that oral tradition becomes valueless after only one to three generations, that its pliability and functionality preclude its usefulness in reconstructing the past. Oral tradition is, however, not completely without a system of checks and balances. These exist as a result of the use of oral traditions as 'historical charters',¹² a means of legitimizing the claims of a social group:

If historical charters can be altered at will why should pre-literate people bother to remember them with any exactitude? Because a myth which validates a political claim must be preserved in its authentic form if it is to act as a charter; it may in fact have to be preserved in a particular form of words, and some of the myths told are long and elaborate. Again political claims may be based on ideological history but they must seem to the teller and to the hearer to be exact, otherwise they will not serve as charters, while knowledge of the recent past must be very full indeed since it is the events and genealogical connexions of this period which form the subject of the claims.¹³

¹¹ Nieke (1988), p.245 The technology in this case would be knowledge of written Arabic, which was rare outside the merchant, religious and scribal classes in Darfur. Until 1916 even the business of the Kayra court was conducted in Fur, though such records as were felt necessary were committed into Arabic by bilingual scribes. Many researchers in the Sudanic region have mentioned the 'elusiveness' of genealogical works which are often cited but rarely produced. Dakhliya describes a 'systematic dependence on the written word as proof of the [oral] account's veracity':

In order to lend support to one's words, one readily mentions the existence of a family tree (*sajāra*), a chart that is supposed to confirm the antiquity and noble origin of the family. This document is usually, if not always, invisible - 'hidden' or 'disappeared' - as if the mere mention of a written document were sufficient proof. This endless reference to the lost *sajāra* expresses the search for an additional legitimacy which, beyond the memory of the community, would compensate for the denial of recognition by the other groups... In order to better demonstrate the document's existence, references are made to one's feeble genealogical memory: has not the possession of a written document done away with the need for memorization? In fact people are rarely able to name a lineage of ancestors that goes back for more than five or six generations. The written document is to cut short all discussion and to render speech useless. Thus, it is as if one recounted the lineage's history for lack of being able to produce these documents (Dakhliya, 1993, pp.69-71).

¹² The concept was first elucidated in Malinowski (1926)

¹³ Richards (1960), p.178

We need not, however, go so far as Low in arguing that there is little difference in the problems encountered in written documents and oral traditions.¹⁴

In some cases Islamization has resulted in the wholesale discard of older pre-Islamic traditions, which come to be regarded as part of the *jahaliya*, or 'state of ignorance' that existed before the message of Muhammad. This is most notable in the case of religious conversion being accompanied by a change in rulers or the general political structure. More often, however, the new dynasties depend to some degree for their authority (especially among the less-Islamized classes) on the precedent of earlier dynasties in the region in question, to which the new dynasty must be seen as the legitimate successors. In the Sudanic states compromise with displaced élites is also common, and various offices and titles may pass into the administrations of entirely new dynasties; a notable but far from unique example in Darfur is the office of Sultan of the Darfur Daju, which survived the rule of the Tunjurs, the Kayra Fur, the Turco-Egyptians, and finally the Anglo-Egyptian administrators. Groups following such traditional rulers often take a natural interest in their own history, and their traditions may be usefully compared for correspondences with the traditions maintained by breakaway groups of the same lineage, who preferred to migrate (such as the Daju of Dar Sila and the Tunjur of Kanem, etc.) rather than live as subjects under new dynasts.

Genealogical innovation often occurs when new elements (such as Islam or Arab/Berber groups in the case of Darfur) are in the process of being introduced into older indigenous societies. Genealogies of the indigenous groups may be revised or completely overhauled to impress the newer elements (especially a ruling class) with the importance and antiquity of the older ruling groups. As Henige points out,¹⁵ many African lineages were constructed by Africans in the form in which they were transmitted to colonial administrators in an effort to seize the advantages available through a policy of indirect rule. In Darfur, however, indirect rule was only ineffectually and haphazardly applied before being abandoned in the 1930's. The failure of this policy in Darfur was due in large part to the rejection by the British of most members of 'Ali Dinar's extensive family as suitable candidates for administrative posts. One result of this was that there remained little incentive for the Kayra Fur to maintain or embellish their traditions of royal lineage after the Anglo-Egyptian conquest.

The many devices used in formulating oral tradition, such as hyperbole, repetition, and the use of mythical characters or events to symbolize more complex historical episodes should not be regarded only as means by which texts are obscured, but as part of the method of their preservation; 'Indeed, the multiplicity of forms in which oral tradition was transmitted, in fixed and free texts, in poetry and in prose narrative, as music or performance, was a part of its insurance against destruction. Some of these elements made traditions pleasurable, and therefore ensured frequent repetition and transmission over a long span of time'.¹⁶

¹⁴ Low (1972), p.55

¹⁵ Henige (1974), p.7

¹⁶ Alagoa (1993), p.10

In collecting oral traditions it is necessary to distinguish between several types of information; 'There are distinctions to be made between traditions and testimonies, between official and unofficial traditions, and between individual and consensual accounts'.¹⁷ Unfortunately, such distinctions were rarely made by the main collectors of oral traditions relevant to Darfur, HR Palmer, HA MacMichael and AJ Arkell. It is apparent that the upheavals of Darfur society between Zubayr's invasion of 1874 and the Anglo-Egyptian conquest of 1916 caused an enormous disruption in the transmission of oral history. Any oral tradition collected by a colonial administrator must be regarded as possibly suspect, unfortunately, due to the fear of the informants that such information may be used for purposes of taxation or reorganization of traditional lines of authority. Other sources of oral information, such as songs with a historical basis, seem to have disappeared, and were often not judged of sufficient value to collect when they were still current. Nachtigal mentions hearing several such songs in the 1870's from the Fur, but later efforts in the Condominium period to find persons with knowledge of such songs were fruitless.¹⁸ Colonial administrators were all fluent in Arabic and conducted their interviews with elders, *shaykh*-s and *imam*-s in that language; traditional songs, however, were far more likely to have been sung in one of the many local languages, and were thus less likely to draw the attention of colonial officials unfamiliar with the language.

Many scholars with experience in northern Africa have offered an opinion regarding the period of 'usefulness', or 'validity' for oral traditions. Shinnie notes that evidence from many parts of Africa suggests that 'reasonably reliable' oral traditions go back only a few centuries.¹⁹ Murdock regards indigenous oral traditions as 'completely undependable much beyond the personal recollections of living informants', and calls native historical traditions 'the one type of historical information that is virtually valueless'.²⁰ Richards noted that while working in Northern Rhodesia in 1957 'dead chiefs of whom I had had vivid eye-witness' account during my first visit [23 years earlier] had already begun to fade into bare names or points on a genealogical chart'.²¹ This decrease in detail is nonetheless consistent with the purpose such forms of historical recollection serves:

The genealogies that tribesmen know are for the most part those which link together people of the same tribe, and these are known because it is through them that tribesmen express the political relations of their constituent groups. The study of people after people shows that genealogies are altered to make them suitable reflections of group arrangements at any given time. These alterations may take the form of the elision of generations, the merging together of collateral branches, the incorporation of total strangers, and the exclusion of groups who, having moved away, are no longer relevant. Another feature of these genealogies is their tendency to be held at the same generational depth, regardless of the actual number of generations from the alleged founder

¹⁷ Henige (1974), p.2

¹⁸ Two examples of this type of song collected from the Tunjur of Kanem are given in the appendix to the chapter on Tunjur history and sites.

¹⁹ Shinnie (1971b), p.446

²⁰ Murdock (1959), p.43

²¹ Richards (1960), p.177

[telescoping]; and in this way the number of points of segmentation, giving rise to separate lineages, remains constant.²²

An interesting example of the way in which 'extraneous' material is dropped from genealogies is found in the oral records of the Tiv people of Nigeria; 'After the Tiv genealogies were recorded in the early colonial period, the British naturally expected the details to remain constant, with additions as time passed. The Tiv, however, claimed, as time passed, that the earlier genealogies were incorrect; indeed, from their own perspective they were'.²³

Oral tradition as a guide to archaeology

An interesting case of archaeological work inspired by oral traditions can be found in southern Algeria, where the collection of oral traditions of the Tuareg by P re Foucauld and a number of 19th century French travellers led to a search for the tomb of the legendary Queen Tin Hinan, the ancestress of the noble tribes of the Tuareg. According to the traditions, Tin Hinan left from the north for the Hoggar mountains with her loyal servant Takamat and a number of slaves, bringing with them numerous camel-loads of dates and millet from the Berber country.

En route the caravan exhausted their food supplies until Takamat spotted a large field of ant-hills in the distance. Together with the slaves, Takamat gathered all the grain that had been collected by the ants in their mounds, and presented it to her mistress. With these provisions the caravan was able to arrive safely in the Hoggar. Here they encountered the Isabatan, a pagan people living in mountain caves, raising goats and sheep. In this place Tin Hinan founded the noble line of Ihaggaren Tuareg, and was eventually buried in a great fortress.²⁴

This apparent folk-tale proved enormously attractive to the French, and the elements of a white Berber queen and her fantastic desert fortress provided the basis for *L'Atlantide*, a 1919 romance by Pierre Benoit. The novel, made into a 1921 GW Pabst film (shot on location in the Hoggar) gives the story of Antinea, a white queen of lost Atlantis, who lures lovers to her Hoggar mountains stronghold, where she kills them and hides their mummified remains in the mountain recesses.²⁵ Interest in the Tin Hinan tradition (however mutilated it had become in European hands) was thus high when French archaeologist Maurice Reygasse decided to attempt to locate the legendary tomb, based on information he had been provided by Tuareg informants.

²² Cunnison (1971), p.189

²³ Henige (1974), p.27

²⁴ Some versions of the legend call the fortress Tin Hinan's work, though others ascribe it to the Berber giant Jalut. In the latter version the fortress was already old and abandoned when found by Tin Hinan.

²⁵ The Benoit novel and the Tin Hinan tradition came to be almost inextricably intertwined in popular French works on North Africa, in which the historical Tin Hinan was frequently described as the descendant (or daughter) of Antony and Cleopatra, a lineage found only in the novel.

Using this information, the 1923 Reygasse expedition eventually found a large 11-roomed stone structure at Abalessa, measuring 26 x 23 m. Within this monument, later dated by radiocarbon methods to the fourth or fifth centuries AD (when the introduction of the camel was changing the patterns of trans-Saharan trade), were the skeletal remains of a woman wearing silver and gold bracelets and a necklace of silver and stone beads. Evidence for a northern origin for this individual includes two amulet-style beads identical with examples from the sanctuary of Tanit in Carthage, a handful of Roman coins dated to between 313-24 AD, and the bracelets, which appear to have been worked with antimony as an alloy, a substance much used for the purpose in Carthage. Numerous inscriptions in an archaic version of the *Tifinagh* script were found, but could not be deciphered. Surrounding the fortress (or fortified *caravanserai*, as it appears to be) are a number of typical Berber tombs of the *chouchet* type.²⁶ One especially well-built *choucha* tomb was attributed by the Tuareg to Tin Hinan's servant, Takamat, and the addition of an enclosure wall and a monolithic stone in Islamic times were testimony to the popularity of her cult. Excavation of the previously unopened tomb revealed the skeleton of a woman of Berber type.²⁷

The myth of Tin Hinan is vitally important to the entire structure of Tuareg society, and usually occupies a dominant position in the lineages held by the Tuareg, although she is typically referred to as a Muslim princess in order to enhance the Islamic pedigree of the noble clans. The lineages show notable signs of telescoping; Tin Hinan is often described as the mother or grandmother of Kella, an historically known figure from the mid-18th century and an important ancestress of the noble Kel Rela and Taitok clans. Some thirteen centuries appear to have been collapsed into the interval.²⁸ Henige remarks that in such cases;

Telescoping may occur in a tradition for many reasons. In most cases it will occur when the duration of the past loses its relevance for the present. Only those past events which influence the present will be remembered. Generally these relate to the 'migration' to and settlement of the area, which encompassed land rights, and the legitimation of the ruling dynasty or social order. All of these can be, and usually are, remembered in a fashion which is not objectively quantifiable. In telescoping, whole epochs, such as the creation and development of the polity, may be remembered by a single archetypal figure.²⁹

Without an adequate translation of the texts found at the Abalessa site, it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that the fortified *caravanserai* contained the remains of an historical figure named Tin Hinan, but the remarkable concordance of archaeology and oral tradition allows us to say that there is a large degree of probability that this is indeed the case, and that we have here an example of oral tradition preserving important historical details for a period in excess of 1500 years.

²⁶ This type of stone tomb, which will be discussed more fully elsewhere in the text, has a flat-topped cylindrical form, named for its relation to the *chéchia*, a pillbox-style cap worn by the Zouave troops of Algeria.

²⁷ For details of the excavations see Gautier and Reygasse (1934), Gsell (1935) pp.639-40, and De Prorok (1926), pp.329-69

²⁸ See Keenan (1977), pp.18-23

²⁹ Henige (1974), p.5

Vansina cites another instance of an archaeological site apparently having given rise to an oral tradition in Uganda:

A good example of such a chance occurrence - although it is true the chance was foreseen - occurred in Nkole, where the traditions maintained that a certain site, which had clearly been occupied by an earlier people, had served as residence for two different kings at some distance apart in the dynastic genealogy. Excavations showed that, unknown to the inhabitants of the region, a second site lay buried beneath the first one, which was very much smaller than the first. Thus the tradition was correct in maintaining that the place had been twice occupied, and very probably it also gave the correct names to the kings that were said to have lived there.³⁰

Even in cases of remarkable correspondence between oral traditions and archaeological discoveries such as that cited above, Schmidt strongly urges a cautious approach:

The simple conjunction of archaeological evidence with ethnohistoric evidence in specific cases does not *ipso facto* constitute proof of the oral tradition, nor does it mean verification of interpretative ideas that might be held in an oral tradition, such as a discussion about the function of an earthworks or a technological area.³¹

There is, nevertheless, a growing acceptance of the claims of oral evidence in some quarters; a 1998 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada allowed the use of oral history to support claims of the aboriginal Gitksan people to some 22,000 square miles of the British Columbia interior. In accepting uncorroborated oral testimony the court was required to set aside longstanding rules of evidence. The leader of the Gitksan elders defended the validity of their claims; 'What evidence did we have to show them this land was ours? There are the names of the territory, the names of the streams, the names of the mountain peaks. This took thousands and thousands of years. These are our boundaries. You could not fake them.'³²

In the Venda region of northern South Africa are a people known as the Lemba, a black group who practice a variety of Jewish customs and claim through their oral traditions to be descended from a group of Yemenite Jews who migrated south and intermarried with the local people. Genetic testing performed in 1999 revealed that Lemba men carry a DNA sequence distinctive to the *cohanim*, a hereditary class of

³⁰ Vansina (1965), p.175; for the details of this excavation see Posnansky (1959), pp.32-6

³¹ Schmidt (1978), p.5

³² Neil Sterrit Sr., quoted in A. DePalma; 'Canadian Indians celebrate vindication of their history', *New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1998. An excerpt from the Supreme Court decision is given here:

The Aboriginal historical tradition is an oral one, involving legends, stories and accounts handed down through the generations in oral form. It is less focused on establishing objective truth and assumes that the teller of the story is so much a part of the event being described that it would be arrogant to presume to classify or categorize the event exactly or for all time.

In the Aboriginal tradition the purposes of repeating oral accounts from the past is broader than the role of written history in Western societies. It may be to educate the listener, to communicate aspects of culture, to socialize people into a cultural tradition, or to validate the claims of a particular family to authority and prestige...

Jewish priests. Testing showed that the DNA sequence was especially strong in members of the Buba clan, the seniormost of the twelve Lemba sub-groups. The Buba clan is named for the common ancestor of the Lemba traditions, a certain Buba who led his people from a place called Senna (San'a ?) south to their present home.³³ As pliable, self-serving and prone to confusion as many oral traditions are, there is nevertheless strong reason to give critical consideration to what they may offer us in the absence of written records. At the very least they may serve as a useful guide to the archaeologist seeking rewarding sites. If the possibility of genetic mapping ever occurs in the Sudanic region it promises to resolve many of the major questions related to the migration of peoples through the area, but will no doubt raise many new and intriguing possibilities, particularly when the evidence is matched against the oral traditions.

³³ Nicholas Wade; 'DNA backs a tribe's tradition of early descent from the Jews', *New York Times*, May 9, 1999; Associated Press; 'Africans might have Jewish ancestry', May 10, 1999

5. The Tora: Mysterious founders of Darfur civilization

The Tora are the great enigma of Darfur civilization. Megalithic construction, sophisticated stone-work techniques, terrace irrigation and the cultivation of palm-trees are all attributed to these people by the residents of Darfur, yet we know so little of them that we cannot with any certainty even state that they are anything more than a legend. There is, however, archaeological proof of a culture living in the Jebel Marra mountains before the emergence of the Daju as local rulers, but it remains impossible to identify these sites with the mythical Tora. Arkell notes the confusion in many of the traditions circulated in Darfur:

[The Tora] are everywhere looked on as distinct from the Fur, and are said to have been white invaders who built in faced stone masonry. In Turra they told me they were Abu Qonaan; and they thought Show was the last of the Tora - in fact they did not usually speak of the Tungur but of the Tora - while at the southern end of Jebel Marra, where on Jebel Keima are the rough stone remains of a building said to have been the palace of Kusbur, usually known as the first Daju king, the term 'Tora' seemed to include the Daju. Thus to the Fur the Tora are the early white people who taught them how to build houses in stone, and to form terraces and irrigate; and that they are sometimes called Abu Qonaan is a fair indication of the probability that they belonged to a Berber-speaking people. The term seems to include both the Tungur and the Daju, the early rulers of the country, who elsewhere in Darfur are distinguished from one another.¹

Beaton speaks of a tradition current in western Darfur in the 1940's that the Fur poured out of Jebel Si and 'swept the Tora off the mountain in a victorious drive to the south as a preliminary to their period of expansion and conquest to the east'.² Certain sections of the Fur claim to descend from the Tora, such as the Toronga Kúroma.³

The derivation of the name Tora and its relationship to the name of Turra for the traditional heartland of both Tora and Fur are matters of some dispute; of the Tora Arkell remarks:

It is in Turra that they are best remembered, and there seems to be little doubt that Turra was their centre, and that the name Turra does not come, as I have heard it suggested, from the word *tur*, said to mean 'grey soil', but is derived from the Tora. Sir Harold MacMichael, who spells them To Ra, and describes them as the aboriginal population of Turra and Jebel Si, records a Turra derivation of the name from the giant lizard, called 'to' in Fur and 'warana' in Arabic [see MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.93, fn.2], but despite as full an enquiry as possible from the elders of Turra during my short stay, I never heard this derivation suggested, and I have no doubt that it is fantastic, and that Sir Richmond Palmer is right in suggesting that they are the same as the Tura, the common Tibu and Kanuri term which is applied to the white races of the north; whence the common designation of a 'white man' in Hausa: *Ba-Ture* (plural *Turawa*).⁴

¹ Arkell (1951a), p.62

² Beaton (1948), p.3

³ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 13/(Darfur 5)

⁴ Arkell (1937a), pp.91-2 See also Arkell (1952a), p.149, where Arkell reiterates the above points and adds a Borno tradition (without source) that walled towns were introduced to Kanem/Borno by the Tura.

Tura is, however, more than a generic term in Kanem/Borno, where it applies to a specific group, the Tura section of the Teda Tubu.⁵ Nachtigal relates that their original homeland was in Tu (Tibesti), and that they maintained a colony in Kawar. 'The Tura undoubtedly came into the country with the first immigrants in more considerable numbers than did the Kai [a section of the Daza Tubu], and with careful inquiry their fragments are to be found scattered over the Bornu territory to an extent almost as great as are the Magomi, even if in smaller numbers'.⁶ Aminu describes them as 'white merchants', specializing in the importation of horses and the exportation of slaves; 'Apart from the *ulema*' other groups also enjoyed special privileges and exemptions conferred through *mahrms*⁷ by Kanem/Borno rulers; the best example were the Tura... Their home region was Dirku (a Kanuri name for Kawar). In Kanem and Borno their leader bore the title of Dirkuma; which although remembered, is no longer in use today. The two tribes among the Tura that stand out in the *mahrms* were the Beni Mukhtar and the Beni Habibi, both were probably derived from a mixture of Teda and Arab'.⁸ The Tura were regarded as *sharif-s* (descendants of the family of the prophet Muhammad) by the people of Borno but have lately become largely assimilated into the greater Kanuri population.⁹

Newbold went so far as to draw upon the accounts of Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, Agathermerus and Ptolemy for evidence of *Leucaethiopes*, or white Ethiopians. Coupled with the sparse archaeological evidence and the available traditions, Newbold took these accounts as proof that:

By the first century AD, a blond race, who must have been one of the Libyan peoples, the ancestors of the present Berbers, had pushed their way as far South as, say, Northern Kordofan and Northern Darfur, and had either established a 'white' ethnic island in the sea of blacks inhabiting these latitudes, or had inter-married to such an extent as to modify conspicuously the colouring of the negro tribes with whom they mingled. All this, of course, took place at least seven or eight centuries before the arrival of the Arab.¹⁰

Tora architecture is very distinctive and is easily distinguished from more modern Fur stone buildings. The masonry is massive, faced on both sides, and walls are typically filled with rubble. More recent Fur walls are simply made by balancing single rocks atop each other without any attempt at facing. The buildings are always round and may be multi-chambered. Dwellings are usually found within a massive oval or circular compound wall. Large stone plinths are common, as are small casemate cupboards attached to the rooms within a dwelling. Tora terracing is always done with large boulders, while much smaller stones are used in the modern era.

Balfour Paul described the characteristics of the Tora-style 'palaces:

⁵ The Tubu are historically separated into two divisions, the Daza and the Teda, with a reputation for mutual antagonism. Tubu means 'people of Tibesti'.

⁶ Nachtigal III (1971), p.161

⁷ *Mahram-s* are documents issued by the Sayfawa kings of Borno extending hereditary exemptions and privileges to specific individuals or groups as a reward for exemplary service to the kingdom.

⁸ Aminu (1981), pp.34-5

⁹ Aminu (1981), pp.35-6

¹⁰ Newbold (1924c), p.30

A standard type of Tora 'palace' - with, of course, variations in size and layout - occurs throughout [Darfur]. Its basic feature is a cluster or a row of round stone huts with flat roofs surrounded by a ring-wall pierced by two entrances opposite each other. Often the ring-wall is divided or doubled to present two separate compounds, one for the king and the other for his retainers. The palace is generally on a hill-top and when the sides of the hill are steep the building area on top is often levelled off into one or more terraces by continuous revetment. Two other features are stone seats for doorkeepers projecting from the wall outside the entrances, and store cupboards with small openings and shaped like large ovens built into the inside walls of rooms. These 'palaces' vary in size from the extensive enclosures of the Keira kings, often three or four hundred yards in diameter, to the strongholds of local chieftains consisting of three or four rooms in a solid cluster within a thirty-yard ring-wall.¹¹

The construction technique used in building the Tora stone walls is the single most distinctive feature of this style. A description of the building method given by Musa Mohammed demonstrates the reason for the durability of these works:

The courses of the wall were held together in a horizontal row by a bonding technique in which horizontal courses of regular elongated stones were laid with the ends of the upper blocks resting on the middle of the lower ones. The two facing walls were never joined to each other or to the loose rubble filling them. Although most were constructed without underground foundations, the double walling made the base larger and lessened the pressure which might have been exerted by the 1-2 m height of the wall. The rubble filling prevented the two walls from collapsing and made the structure solid and not easy to destroy.¹²

Musa Mohammed concludes that the Tora-derived building techniques of Darfur are an expression of indigenous development in the region and show no obvious affinities to works of the Chad or Nile basins.¹³

Smaller communities of old stone houses are found throughout Jebel Marra and its foothills, all as of yet undated, but apparently consistent in type and plan through several centuries at least;

In plan the villages were mere rabbit-warrens with the houses built close together on high ground suitable for defence. The poorer man would apparently have no more than a single hut, but the better-to-do would have an enclosure containing a number of rooms or else a group of several huts built contiguously to one another. The chief's enclosure - as one assumes it to be - generally occupies a central position on the highest ground and is larger, better built, and more intricate in design.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the presence of a set of traditions, a claim to descent among certain Fur groups, and a related assemblage of architectural works is not enough to verify the historical existence of a people known as the Tora. Traditions of white ancestors (at least in the royal lineages) are common throughout the Sudanic region. This is not to say that such traditions could not arise from an infiltration of Berber groups from the north (for which there is some evidence in certain of the Tora sites), but the claim appears to be held just as strongly by some Sudanic groups for whom such a claim seems unlikely at best. De Medeiros

¹¹ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.21

¹² Musa Mohammed (1986), p.178

¹³ Musa Mohammed (1986), p.238

¹⁴ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), pp.108-9

notes that the earliest Arab geographers made no mention of the supposed 'white' origin of the ruling dynasties of the Sudanic states. Such references begin only with al-Idrisi in the 12th century in a context of growing Islamization in the region.¹⁵ The descent claim of such groups as the Toronga Kúroma is more interesting, as descent from a group well known to be pre-Islamic is not the usual type of genealogic claim found in the region, which is normally concerned with establishing the Arab and Islamic character of a group's predecessors. Even the more familiar Himyarite ancestors claimed by many in the region are frequently 'Islamized' retroactively, so as to protect the integrity of the claims to legitimacy embodied in such descent myths. Given the tendency to invent lineages in the region, it is impossible to accept such claims to Tora paternity outright, but they lead to the interesting possibility that the Tora are none other than the ancient Fur themselves, transformed into an intruding group of foreigners by the post-Islamic Fur, who saw little need to associate themselves with any residents of Jebel Marra prior to the arrival of the retroactively Islamized culture hero Ahmad al-Ma'qur. The lack of affinity shown by Muslims for their pre-Islamic ancestors from 'the time of ignorance' is widely observed in north Africa. A theory of this type would help to account for the pattern of architectural development witnessed in Darfur; after the establishment of a monumental style of stone architecture during a hypothetical Tora period, this style was adopted by the Daju, a conquering group without a building tradition of their own. Works of the indigenous Tora/Fur style created by the Fur subjects of the Tunjur continued to appear alongside architectural innovations (partly associated with the introduction of Islam) under the Tunjur régime, only to appear in a revitalized massive form in the works of the Kayra Fur.

With regards to the architectural remains, a parallel situation from Uganda provides a cautionary note for the acceptance of the 'Tora' remains in Darfur as proof of the existence of the Tora as an independent group:

Throughout the region of the Great Lakes in Central Africa one finds traditions which refer to the 'Bachwezi', who, a long time ago, founded an empire which has since disappeared, while in Uganda there are the remains of large dikes and canals, almost all of them circular in shape, which are popularly believed to have been constructed by the 'Bachwezi'. The remains are on such a scale as to lead to the assumption that they must have been constructed by large numbers of labourers, probably slaves, which presupposes the existence of an organized state. Since the traditions maintain that the Bachwezi founded a state, there is some reason to suppose that they were in fact responsible for these large-scale public works. But there is room for doubt, for people might have arrived at such an assumption from the appearance of the remains, and invented a tradition about a powerful kingdom in order to explain them. It is not probable, but quite possible.¹⁶

¹⁵ De Medeiros (1988), pp.131-2 De Medeiros concludes that 'The states of the Sudan were specific creations of the black peoples. They were in contact with the Berbers of the southern edge of the Sahara, and maintained complex relations with these neighbours of white origin' (p.132).

¹⁶ Vansina (1965), pp.174-5

Tora sites

Map A: Tora and Meidob sites

The 'Tora' sites listed below may be sites attributed to this culture by oral tradition, or may be works without attribution, but which display an adherence to the stone Tora architectural style and seem (solely on surface appearance) to predate the Daju supremacy.

Kebeleh

The stone city of Kebeleh is located near Jebel Au, a volcanic plug along the Turra to Fashir road in the Turra hills. This eighty-five acre site remained undiscovered (save by the Fur) until 1965, when GE Wickens came upon it while working for the United Nations Special Fund Jebel Marra project.¹⁷ Wickens made only a single visit (without his camera), and the site is only known otherwise through aerial photographs and a handful of sherds.

Kebeleh gives the impression of having been built in three stages, each with identifying characteristics. The northern section of the city has tightly packed compounds, displaying all the characteristics of 'classic' Tora architecture; the use of massive stones (some over a metre square), circular compound walls of dry stone with rubble interiors, the use of large stone lintels, circular buildings with several rooms, a single entrance, and the use of small casement cupboards inside the structure. The houses retain stone walls three feet in height, but there is no indication of the type of roof. Some entrances lead only to blank walls, which must have been climbed with some type of ladder.¹⁸

Buildings in the central section incorporate ground contours into the structures so that some buildings may only be entered by means of a low tunnel. The floor level of the rooms is often below ground level. The roofs appear to have been flat, covered with stones and earth or timber and earth. Stone lintels are also in much use in the central area.

Wickens gives little information about the southern section ('time did not permit a careful examination'), which is unfortunate, since the layout of the site suggests that a sequence of architectural types might be established here. A later aerial observation showed that the compounds were well-spaced in this area, unlike the northern section, in which the compounds are separated only by narrow paths of basalt slabs.¹⁹

A description and a pair of drawings were made of the massive dry-stone barrows in the southern part of the city.²⁰ Wickens mentions barrows square, oblong or circular in shape, but the drawings show only a rectangular and circular version. The rectangular box style of barrow has at one end what

¹⁷ Wickens (1970), pp.147-51, see Map II for a map of the Jebel Au/Kebeleh area. Kebeleh is not marked on the Condominium-era charts.

¹⁸ A typical compound plan is given in Fig.1, Wickens (1970).

¹⁹ Aerial photo, pl.1, Wickens (1970).

²⁰ See Wickens (1970), fig.s 2a, 2b. The barrows may also be seen on pl.1, the aerial photo.

appears to be a raised offering chapel or support for a votive figure of some kind (though nothing of this kind is known from Darfur). This type of barrow stands approximately three metres high, and has little resemblance to any other style of barrow known from the region. The circular pillbox-style tomb also stands at least three metres high and is surrounded by a stone ledge or footstep about half a metre high. From the drawing and the aerial photo this appears to be the classical *choucha* type associated with Berber populations (see pl.5 a-c). *Chouchets* with a ledge encircling the structure are known from the Aurès region of northern Algeria, and the *choucha* type is also known in Tibesti on the route from Tunis and the eastern Maghrib to Darfur (see pl.5b).²¹ Another type of Berber tomb is the *bazina à degrés*, which consists of two to three stages of circular stonework, though the proportions of the stages are generally more equal than in the examples described at Kebeleh.²² Pieces of broken pottery were found on the top of the barrows and were probably the remains of offerings left for the deceased. Arkell examined these sherds but was unable to identify them with any other known samples.²³

Ferti

The settlement at Ferti is found on a conical hill on the west side of the Kurma-Kuttum road commanding the pass leading into the Gabri plain. The upper part of the hill is covered in ruins, and is defended by a stone wall about one-third of the way up the hill. The houses are all circular, and appear to have had flat roofs of stone supported by wooden beams. In many cases the houses and compound walls are built right into the hill-side, and in most cases dwellings consist of two to three circular rooms. The dry-stone masonry is all faced and rubble-filled. Small square cupboards are found in the dwelling walls. A number of the houses had semicircular flanking walls to the main door, and a bench was occasionally built in the alcove.

²¹ Radiocarbon dates taken from bones and dried tissue fragments from *chouchets* in Tit (southern Algeria) excavated by Reygasse have provided the following results:

Monument no.4: -650±100 years BP, or 1300 AD

Monument no.68:-680±100 years BP, or 1270 AD

From Silet:

Monument no. 3: 420±100years BP, or 1530 AD

The radiocarbon data suggests that many of the monuments once believed to be solely pre-Islamic may in fact be contemporary with the Islamization process. (Camps, 1994, pp.1937).

²² Camps (1991), pp.1400-07 The *bazina à degrés* is described by Camps as follows:

Les bazinas à degrés ont une forme caractéristique et peuvent atteindre de très grandes dimensions. La base est ceinturée de blocs choisis généralement pour leur forme quadrangulaire obtenue par débitage naturel. Les assises ainsi constituées sont parfaitement régulières; ces bazinas ont deux ou trois degrés, rarement plus, des pierrailles et plaquettes calcaires assurant le comblement entre les assises concentriques. (p.1403).

Tombs of this type are known from the Sahara, south Tunisia, the Hoggar, and the Fezzan.

²³ Wickens (1970), pl.II

At the top of the hill is a levelled compound. Two circular stone huts stand in the north-east part of the compound, and a small storeroom roofed with stone stands in the north-west part. Arkell's impression was that 'this was a considerable settlement, guarding the road; but not a king's town; unless he was of [only] very local significance'.²⁴

Kaura Pass (see pls 2-4)

The Kaura Pass is a strategically important area, controlling the way between the Marra and Si massifs. This large site includes five palaces (four large and one small), some large storehouses, and several groups of small stone *tukl*-s. All walls found on the site are well-faced and rubble-filled. Though this site was visited earlier by Arkell, our most accurate information regarding this site is provided by Balfour Paul, who made plans and drawings in April, 1953.²⁵ The store-houses have casemated cupboards built in tiers, and appear to have been beehive-roofed, like *qubba*-s. Near the centre of the site are a large palace (160 ft. x 105 ft.), accompanied by another of more modest dimensions (50 ft. x 35 ft.). Balfour Paul described the wall of the larger palace as 'the best I've seen', having an average width of 10 feet and a remaining height of 11 feet. The mass of the central structure is penetrated by seventeen rooms, mostly arranged in pairs connected by narrow passageways. A type of alcove is found at the entrance to these paired rooms; Balfour Paul thought it might have been for the use of the palace eunuchs. Several features are characteristic of Tora construction, including the built-in cupboards and the doorkeepers' seats beside the main entrance. The smaller palace has four circular rooms, three of which are connected by narrow passageways.

Another of the large walled palaces at Kaura consists of another central mass containing single rooms with independent entrances, except for one arrangement of three interconnected rooms. Casemate cupboards and stone benches built into the wall are both present. The compound wall forms a rough circle, enclosing a space of approximately 90 feet across. Unlike the palaces already mentioned, there is evidence here of an *örre baya*, or narrow gate. Another of the palaces has a rough oval shape, and contains two large inner courts, each of which is connected to two to three separate rooms. A single entrance to the interior splits just inside the complex, so that the courts and their rooms are kept separate. There is a possible eunuch's room at the entrance of one of the two diverging passageways, indicating that the mens' and womens' quarters were kept separate.

The well built round houses of the hill village have narrow raised entrances about five feet above ground level. These entrances lead into partitioned chambers with raised doors, and must have been entered with the aid of a ladder of some sort.

²⁴Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3) 5-3-1936

²⁵ Balfour Paul, Darfur Field Notes, pp.82-3, and plans following. See also Balfour Paul (1955b), p.21, and fig.s 6, 7a

Jebel Zureiq:

The hill-top complex at Jebel Zureiq (at Abu Suruj, close to the Wadai border) is thickly covered in *kitr* bush, and is extremely difficult to make out. A number of storehouses can be made out, as well as a large walled oval compound, measuring approximately 150 feet x 225 feet. A smaller walled compound containing a single room is found within the larger compound. All the stonework here is of Tora technique, and suggests that the Tora wielded influence some distance from their Marra strongholds,²⁶ as later Fur works in this area come from a period when brick was extensively used and many modifications to the original Tora style had been made.

Jebel Foga:

On the north-west side of Jebel Foga are several graves, consisting of concave masonry-lined pits measuring about 7ft. by 5ft., with a rough north-south axis. The pits were covered by three to four large stone slabs lain east to west, the spaces between the slabs being filled with small stones. All the graves showed signs of having been opened, either by men, animals, or natural subsidence. Arkell referred to the site as 'Tora graves, Berber type'.²⁷

²⁶ Balfour Paul, *Darfur Field Notes*, pp.86-7, and sketch-map.

²⁷ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)

6. The Daju dynasty: origins and historical outline

The Daju are the first of the known dynasties to rule in Darfur. They appear to have assumed power at some time in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, and seem to have followed the Tora close enough to inherit the existing architectural system. They may also have inherited a political system of rule over the indigenous tribes that eventually formed the Fur people, though nothing at all is known of this. Al-Idrisi was the first of the Arab geographers (in his work of 1154 AD, *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq*) to mention a group that could be identified with the Daju, in this case a people he calls the *Tajuwin*:

[Third section of the first clime]: From the town of Manan [in Kanem] to the town of Tajuwa is thirteen stages. This is the capital of the Tajuwa people, who are pagans, and do not believe in anything. Their land adjoins that of the Nuba... [Third section of the second clime]: As to that part of the land of the Tajuwin included in this section, its inhabitants are the Sudan [*ie.* blacks] whom we have mentioned before in the First Clime. We have said that they are pagans, who do not believe in anything. They are a very numerous people, and possess many camels. There are many pasture-lands in their country, and they are nomads, who do not settle in one place. All their neighbours raid them and employ various stratagems in order to capture them. They have only two towns, Tajuwa and Samna...¹

According to the Andalusian geographer, Ibn Sa'id, by c.1269 AD the town of Tajuwa had been incorporated into the Kanem empire and its inhabitants converted to Islam, while the pagan Tajuwin roamed the deserts and mountains. The Tajuwin are for the first time identified with the Zaghawa:

The territory (*majalat*) of the Tajuwiyyin and the Zaghawiyyin extends over the tract lying within the bend of the Nile from south to north. They are of one race but authority and physical and moral excellence is found only among the Tajuwiyyin. They are pagans who are refractory to the sultan of Kanim. They keep to the deserts and mountains of the First and Second Climes. Ibn Fatima relates that the kings of Kanim and Tajuwa fled with their capitals from the Nile only because of the mosquitoes which are abundant near the Nile and are very harmful to man and horses. They have wells (*ahsa*) in the sands and water which overflows from the Nile in periods of flood.²

MacMichael regarded the information of Ibn Sa'id as dubious; 'The grounds for any possible identification of (the Darfur Daju) with the Tagua branch of Zaghawa mentioned by Ibn Sa'id... would be, so far as I am aware, nil, and neither Daju nor Zaghawa lend any support to such theory either by their own traditions or by obvious physical characteristics'.³ While the name *Zaghawa* in modern use refers to a specific group

¹ Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Sharif al-Idrisi, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), pp.114-15, 124; Newbold states that the country of the Tajuwin is 'clearly the Bir Natrun-Nukheila area' (Newbold, 1924b, p.265).

Lange and Barkindo note that al-Idrisi 'had access to a wealth of information, most of it transmitted to him orally but also some derived from written sources. But in fact al-Idrisi muddled all his material together, and also threw in some details that were pure inventions. Hence his description of the *Bilad al-Sudan* must only be used with the greatest caution' (Lange and Barkindo, 1988, p.457).

² 'Ali b. Musa Ibn Sa'id, *Kitab al'Jughrafiya*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.189

³ MacMichael, Vol.1 (1922), p.71

occupying the northern regions of Darfur and Chad (and who typically reject any notion of relationship to the Daju),⁴ it was in the mediaeval period a generic name used by traders to refer to the indigenous population of the eastern Sudan. Traders were, of course, a primary source of information for the Arab geographers. The first recorded mention of the Zaghawa by name comes in the *Kitab al-Buldan* of al-Ya'qubi (889/90), in which al-Ya'qubi provides an apocryphal descent story for the Zaghawa that emphasizes their non-Arab origins:

When the progeny of Nuh dispersed from the country of Babil (Babylon) the descendants of Ham son of Nuh, went to the west, and crossed the Furat (Euphrates) towards the setting sun. After they had crossed the Nile of Egypt the descendants of Kush son of Ham, namely the Habasha and the Sudan, split into two groups. One of these groups proceeded to the south, between the east and the west. These were the Nuba, Buja [Beja], Habasha [blacks] and Zanj. The other group went to the west. These were the Zaghawa, HBSH, Qaqu, Marawiyun, Maranda, Kawkaw and Ghana.⁵

Al-Muhallabi, writing in the tenth century, was emphatic that the Zaghawa were 'many nations',⁶ and appears to have used Zaghawa as a generic name for the whole Teda-Tubu group. Lewicki notes that the Arab geographers used Zaghawa 'to designate virtually all the branches of the Tubu with the exception of the Goran and the nomadic inhabitants of Kawar and the Kufra oasis...'.⁷ According to Last:

The term is still used, in its Kanuri form of Sa'o, in the Tuareg form of Isawaghen, in its early Mandara form of Saguou and a later form, Musgu; it is used too to refer to the pastoralist group, the Beri [the modern Zaghawa], who occupy the Sudan-Chad frontier today. Zaghawa, then, does not refer either to a specific culture or to a specific period, but more generally to the early pre-Islamic, black inhabitants of the region, even in the ninth century: it was used explicitly to refer to more than one distinct kingdom. The origin of the term is uncertain; one contemporary Arabic writer [Ibn al-'Arabi] suggested, with evident prejudice, that it referred to their smell, but there are other more plausible possibilities, most notably that it is a dialectical variant of 'Zanj', the term Arabs used for East African black peoples and occasionally also applied to the Zaghawa.⁸

Hrbek adds that the name once applied to all nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes between the Nile and Lake Chad.⁹

The Ayyubid geographer Abu al-Fida (who wrote his work between 1321-31) quotes Ibn Sa'id's information without providing anything new.¹⁰ Ibn Khaldun (whose works were written and added to between the years 1378-1406) reports that the lands of the 'Zaghay and Tajuwa' are east of Kanem and

⁴ Linguistic evidence supports the Zaghawa viewpoint: Daju is an independent language group of several dialects, while modern Zaghawa is one of three branches (together with Teda and Kanuri) of the separate family of Saharan languages. See Bender (1997), p.23.

⁵ Ahmad b. Abi Ya'qub b. Ja'far b. Wabb b. Wadih, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.21

⁶ Al-Muhallabi's geography, *Kitab al-'Aziz*, is now lost, and is known only through quotations in Yaqut b. 'Abd Allah al-Hamawi (13th century) and Abu al-Fida (14th century). The passage cited above can be found in Yaqut, *Mu'jam al-buldan*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.171.

⁷ Lewicki (1988), p.293; and see Levtzion (1978), p.680

⁸ Last (1985), pp.182-3; For the Zanj/Zaghawa equation, see Lewicki (1974), p.18

⁹ Hrbek (1977), p.79, fn.2

¹⁰ Al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad 'Imad al-Din Abu 'l-Fida' Isma'il b. al-Malik al-Afdal Nur al-Din 'Ali, *Taqwim al-buldan*, see trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.203

adjoin the territories of the Nuba.¹¹ He later repeats Ibn Sa'id with reference to the Tajuwa (text gives *Tajura*) being a branch of the Zaghawa.¹²

Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) mentions the 'Taju', also borrowing in part from Ibn Sa'id, but adds new material describing their work in stone and warlike proclivities:

They [the Habasha] are followed by the nomad ('*uraba*') Nuba who possess the town of Dumqula to the west of the Nile. They are mostly Christians. These are followed by the Zaghawa, who are Muslims. One of their branches is Taju... The Taju are a branch of the Zaghawa who work in stone and make war upon the people of Wathku [?]. Their country lied ten stages to the east of the mountains and the Nile traverses it on its way to Egypt (*sic*).¹³

Linguistic evidence for the Daju

The linguistic evidence for the spread of Daju-speaking peoples is best viewed with the help of Bender's classification system for Nilo-Saharan languages.¹⁴ Bender classes the Daju language group as part of the larger Eastern Sudanic group, and divides the Daju group into six sections (see pl. 6a). In Kordofan we find Shatt (south-western edge of the Nuba mountains) and Liguri (central Nuba mountains on Jebel Liguri and smaller hills north-east of Kadugli). According to Stevenson, the Shatt and Liguri do not call themselves Daju, but acknowledge the connection.¹⁵ Straddling the Kordofan-Darfur border in the Daju hills region is Nyala-Lagowa.¹⁶ The Bayko (Bender gives Be(y)go) of Darfur are a further section, though they deny Daju origin.¹⁷ Mongo-Sila represents what may be two dialects, the first spoken in central Chad, east of Njamena,¹⁸ the other in Dar Sila in eastern Chad. Further south, in Bahr al-Ghazal on the Sopo river, are

¹¹ Abu Zayd 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.320

¹² Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-'ibar wa-diwan al-mubtada' wa-'l-khabar fi ayyam al-'arab wa-'l-'ajam wa-'l-barbar*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.332

¹³ Taqi'l-Din Ahmad al-Maqrizi, *Kitab al-mawa'iz wa-'l-i'tibar bi-dhikr al-khitat wa-'l-athar*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), pp.353-4

¹⁴ Bender (1997)

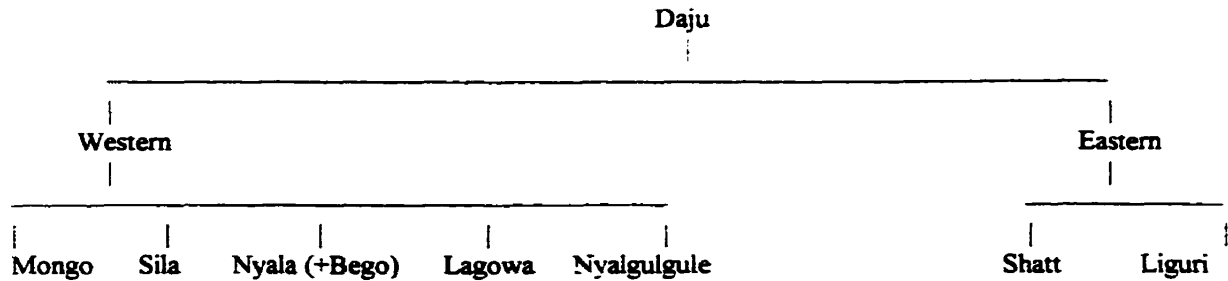
¹⁵ Stevenson (1984), p.13 Potagos, who visited the area in the 1870's, noted a tradition of Darfur origin: 'Les Chats et les Gologoules [Nyagulgules], ainsi que les Féroughès, sont comptés parmi les nations du Four... Les Chats et les Gologoules, qui se regardent comme des tribus soeurs, s'allient par des mariages.' (Potagos, *10 Années de voyages en Afrique Equatoriale*, Paris, 1885, p.166, cited in Santandrea, 1953, p.245). Henderson remarked of the Shatt; 'The Shatt are a mysterious people. On the Kadugli hills they resemble the local Nuba; in Darfur they are hardly distinguishable from Dagu; north of Wau they are connected with the Jur and speak a dialect of Shilluk. The Ngork Dinka met them on the Gnoi and drove them west. The Malwal met them on the Lol and absorbed them (Henderson, 1929, p.55).

¹⁶ Arkell claims that the 'present negroid Daju of Southern Darfur are no doubt the descendants of the negro serf subjects of the original Daju dynasty, who retain the name of their erstwhile masters...' (1952b, p.245), but gives no evidence for reaching this conclusion (which appears largely to have been derived from the darkness of their skins).

¹⁷ The Bayko tongue is virtually extinct today, having been replaced entirely by Arabic. Tucker and Bryan (1966), p.60; Bender (1997), p.199

¹⁸ The 'Daju of the west' claim that the Dar Sila Daju broke from them and went east; the Sila Daju claim that the western Daju broke from them. According to Le Rouvreur, 'La vérité semble être encore ailleurs. Les Dadjo qui furent les premiers maîtres connus du Ouaddaï laissèrent au XV e siècle la place aux conquérants tounjour, et c'est probablement dès cette époque qu'ils se divisèrent en deux moitiés et

the Nyolge (or Nyalgulgule).¹⁹ Stevenson (1956-7, p.112) gives the following subdivisions for the Daju language group.²⁰



The evidence appears to support a general east to west drift of Daju speaking peoples, though the language cannot be traced any further east than Kordofan, making a Fazughli origin for the Daju (as suggested by MacMichael and Palmer) purely speculative.²¹

Origins of the Darfur Daju

The Daju communities of Darfur consist of the following divisions:

In the east:

- a) Tulindjigerké (the royal house, holding the *nahas*)
- b) Chortinengé (closely related to the Tulindjigerké)
- c) Kalwaké
- d) Sumbinangé
- e) Buharké
- f) Dufugé
- g) Dambogé

Nyala district and the area south of it:

- a) Tumbugé
- b) Keiawarké
- c) Adajungé
- d) Tarunungé
- e) Doruningé²²

cherchèrent refuge au voisinage des grands massifs du Dar Sila et de l'Abou Telfane' (Le Rouvreur, 1962, p.124).

¹⁹ The Nyagulgule are known to their neighbours as Bayko. Santandrea goes so far as to call them the southern branch of the Bayko. The group retains a tradition regarding their move south from Darfur and their split from the parent branch of the Daju: 'As for the meaning of (Nyolge), the natives relate it to *nyoole*, which means 'left-hand'; because, they say, in splitting away from the original tribe as they came from the east, this group turned off to the left, thus going south-west, to their present home. This explanation contrasts strangely with that given by a man of the Daju tribe, closely related to the Bego and Ngulgule: in the splitting of the tribe, he said, the latter (known to the Daju as Nyogole) went to the 'right' ('right-hand' is *nyogole* in Daju).' (Santandrea, 1964, pp.147-8, p.171)

²⁰ See also Thelwall's commentary on Stevenson's work (Thelwall, 1981, pp.167-84)

²¹ See MacMichael (1918), p.36 MacMichael suggests that the name by which certain Daju call themselves, Fininga, may be connected to the word Funj.

²² MacMichael Vol.I (1922), p.76

An examination of the historical evidence that has been provided by the modern Daju of Dar Sila reveals one of the paradoxes of historical work in the Sudanic states - written evidence can be less reliable than oral tradition in some cases. Low, speaking in an African context, notes that:

Manuscript and archival material, whether ascribed to a participant, unengaged witness, or nonobserver of the scene recorded, is inferior in several ways to the kind of testimony which living deponents can offer. Written documents inform (as well as misinform) but they do not usually define their terms or supply much background on the author's motivation for writing, his biographical nodes of reference, or his range of access to primary sources; we may even lack assurance that he did in fact provide the text at hand.²³

As is common in Sudan, the Daju of Dar Sila have adopted a royal genealogy (*nisba*) that is highly contrived, placing, as always, the origins of the family amidst the most respected figures of early Islam in the Arabian peninsula. Such claims have obscured the true origins of these groups, in part because of their functional compatibility with African genealogies; in his study of Baqqara pedigrees of southern Darfur and Kordofan, Cunnison observed that 'what distinguishes the Baqqara (and more generally Arab) genealogies from others is the extent of their reckoning backwards in time beyond the name of the tribal ancestor to reach names associated with an ancient cradle-land, in this case Arabia of the time before the Prophet. This may be aligned functionally with the type of genealogy recorded from African peoples in which the ancestor of the group is connected with God or with some miraculous event at the beginning of the world or society'.²⁴ The Daju claim to 'Abbasid origin is a popular one in the area, and it is also claimed by the Kayra Fur. Most of these invented genealogies are the work of *faki*-s of the last two hundred years and often show many similarities²⁵. MacMichael collected many examples which he preserved in volume two of his *History of the Arabs in the Sudan*. Berre mentioned other problems with these written records, using as an example the king-list he was provided with by Sultan Mustafa of Dar Sila:

Celui qui m'a été présenté est une copie, faite par le faki attitré du sultan Moustafa, d'un papier que se transmettent de père en fils les sultans du sila. Dès que ce document se déchiffrait moins aisément ou qu'un sultan nouveau désirait voir figurer son nom à la suite de celui de ses prédécesseurs, une nouvelle feuille était établie et l'ancienne, jugée sans valeur, disparaissait.²⁶

²³ Low (1972), pp.55-6

²⁴ Cunnison (1971), p.190

²⁵ The role of immigrant Arab scholars in providing Arab genealogies for the Sudanese ruling clans is discussed in RS O'Fahey (1973a), p.55. Many of the 16th century *ansab* allegedly written by the legendary Mahmud al-Samarkandi (O'Fahey describes him as 'the ubiquitous and probably fictitious genealogist', O'Fahey, 1980b, p.49) appear to have been commissioned by the Funj in order to persuade the Ottoman sultan of the Arab and Muslim character of these people, hoping thereby to avoid any acquisitive designs of the sultan (Kropacek, 1984, p.411).

Henderson, working with oral traditions of Daju descent in south-western Kordofan, states that 'Daju genealogies vary with every informant' (Henderson, 1939, p.54).

²⁶ Henri Berre (1985), p.6 The king-list (D1) is given in full in the appendix to this chapter.

The Dar Sila record also gives a description of the ever westward wandering of the Daju; the account gives a period of 263 years and 4 months residence in Yemen, 320 years and 3 months in Darfur, 205 years in the Marra mountains, 195 years at Jebel Kadjano, and 244 years in Dar Sila before the arrival of the Europeans (1916).²⁷ Jungraithmayr cites a manuscript from Dar Sila that gives the year 1692 as the date of arrival of the Daju in Dar Sila.²⁸ There is, however, little reason to believe in an 'Abbasid or Yemenite origin for the Daju, who with pedigrees such as this are merely indulging in the regional preoccupation with Islamic respectability. The ruling house of the linguistically related Bayko, the Terkit Hajar section of the Subhanin, claim a Ja'ali Nile valley origin, despite their probable origin in the Bahr al-Ghazal, and a concurrent claim to descent from Ahmad al-Daj.²⁹ Henri Berre, who, as former commandant of Goz Beida in Dar Sila, was exceptionally well-informed on the Daju, presented a more modest version of the entry of the Daju into Darfur:

Il est probable que l'invasion arabe les avait chassés de la vallée du Nil et si les Foriens ne s'opposèrent pas à leur venue, c'est que leur petit nombre et leur pauvreté ne les rendaient pas bien redoutables. Mais les Dadjo, indisciplinés, à qui rien ne faisait peur, bafouaient ouvertement les autorités du pays, pillaient leurs gens, les dépossédaient de leurs troupeaux, leur enlevaient leurs captifs. Ils finissaient toujours par succomber, car leur petite troupe tapageuse ne pouvait avoir raison de tribus importantes. Cette déconvenue explique leurs déplacements successifs vers l'ouest, en direction du Djebel Marra d'abord, puis vers le Hadjer Koudjouna.³⁰

There is even less reason to agree with Arkell's assertion that there are brands used by the Daju 'that still survive in Dar Sila and that can only be explained as having been originally Egyptian hieroglyphs'.³¹ MacMichael had made a study of camel brands in Kordofan (likely in the interests of efficient taxation) but did not rely heavily upon it for his interpretations of history in the western Sudan. Arkell, on the other hand, did not shy from drawing some rather remarkable conclusions from his own studies of camel brands, often ignoring evidence that was well known to him in order to connect disparate cultures through great gulfs of time and space. From the similarity of Sila brands to Egyptian hieroglyphs, Arkell felt justified in concluding that 'It is possible that the legendary Daju sultans of Darfur have their roots in that past when Meroë and perhaps even Egypt held sway on the Nile, and that from Egypt came originally to the Daju, perhaps via Cush, the pattern of the divine king that survived in the Fur sultanate till after the end of the medieval period, indeed down to 1916'.³² Arkell's fourth century AD date for the beginning of Daju rule in Darfur is based on a direct link to the deposed rulers of Meroë. An example of Arkell's method can be found in LG Hill's 1972 study of camel brands; 'On occasion single brands have been dealt with as isolated signs or symbols, ignoring the other dimensions which have been suggested as being significant on the

²⁷ Berre (1985), p.7

²⁸ Jungraithmayr (1978), pp.153-4, fn.11

²⁹ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.80 The Bayko consist of two main groups, the Subhanin (easterners) and Gharbanin (westerners). MacMichael suggests, perhaps correctly, that the Bayko joined the more powerful Daju from the south, borrowing the Daju language but preserving their independence (Vol.1, 1922, p.81).

³⁰ Berre (1982), p.144

³¹ Arkell (1961), pp.107, 176

³² Arkell (1959), p.44

animals themselves. For example, Arkell wrote of the Fung brand *noggara wa asaiya* (drum and stick): 'There would appear, however, to be little doubt that this brand is really in origin the hieroglyphic ankh, the sign of life, which is always depicted in the hands of gods and kings in ancient Egypt...' [Arkell; 'Fung origins', *SNR* 15, 1932, p.235] In its context of data assembled to demonstrate possible Fung connections with Egypt, this may be a valid inference. I personally would prefer to look for my explanation in material closer to hand in time and space, for example in the facts that 'drum and sticks' brands have been widely recorded in the Sudan, especially from Dar Fung to Dar Fur, and that in this zone the drum and the right to beat it symbolize authority. We can be certain that there is in this area a common climate of ritual ideas about authority and its symbols, made manifest by some ruling families in 'drum and sticks' animal brands'.³³ In his 1961 *History of the Sudan* Arkell also notes brands used by the Tunjur, the related Kaitinga and certain Zaghawa 'which bear a remarkable similarity to royal property marks used at Meroë' (p.176), despite having observed ten years earlier that of 150 brands he collected from the non-Arab tribes of Darfur, 140 might be derived from characters in the Berber alphabet.³⁴ The forms used are highly simple, as might be expected, and lend themselves easily to making any number of cross-cultural connections. In this connection it should be noted that one of the commonest brand symbols, the crowsfeet, can be found on pottery from the tombs of the first and second Egyptian dynasties at Abydos (2920-2649 BC).³⁵

Al-Tunisi regarded the Daju not as Arab-related migrants to Wadai, but as one of five aboriginal groups in Wadai (including the Masalit, the Mima, the Kashmara and the Kura'an).³⁶ Arkell attempted to outline a kind of Hamite/Berber/Meroite hybrid as the source of the Daju state:

About 1200 AD the country [of Darfur] was probably divided into the spheres of several chiefs, who were known as the Taju or Daju. These chiefs probably belonged in origin to the Brown race [Hamites], and possibly to an eastern branch of the people known today as Tuareg, although they had no doubt by this time a considerable amount of the blood of their negro subjects in their veins. They spoke, at any rate originally, one of the Berber dialects, and used, or had used, at an earlier date, the Berber script. Their culture and religion seems to have been in the direct tradition of Meroe, and it is probable that most of the chieftainships dated from the days when the kingdoms of Napata and Meroe flourished on the control of the trade routes that brought to Egypt the products of the Sudan. These Taju chieftainships were thus similar in origin to that from which developed the early kingdom of Kanem, and to the kingdom of the Jukun, which soon after the beginning of our period was being established to the south-west of Lake Chad.³⁷

The suggestion that the Daju ever spoke a Berber language or used their script is entirely unproven, and Arkell's conception of the Daju as members of a 'Brown race', absorbing 'the blood of their negro subjects' is an uncalled for allusion to the 'Hamite hypothesis'. Non-Arab Muslims such as the Daju are usually held locally to have descended from south Arabian ancestors, though such claims are for the most part fictional.

³³ Hill (1972), p.4

³⁴ Arkell (1951b), p.219

³⁵ See E. Amélineau, *Les nouvelles fouilles d'Abydos 1895-1896*, Vol.I, Paris, 1899, pl. 38

³⁶ Al-Tunisi (1851), pp. 245, 248. Al-Tunisi added of the Daju that 'leur caractère est encore sauvage'.

³⁷ Arkell (1952b), p.269

With reference to the common claim of Yemenite Himyar³⁸ origins amongst the Berbers and other non-Arab Muslim groups in North Africa (of which more will be said later), Norris remarks:

The Himyarite myth, and it must be conceded to be such, is primarily a scholar's myth. Conceived in the minds of the lettered, it has commonly been accepted by fusion with folk-tales of unlettered clansmen. There has never been a shortage of scholars to expand and embellish these myths, but it is at certain times, more than others, that they have been given a peculiar emphasis or have been elaborately woven and propogated so that there has seemed to be a direct connection between them and some change, whether social, historical, or religious, in society which has demanded or prompted these tales.³⁹

The Legend of Ahmad al-Daj

The only real point of interest in the Dar Sila list is the presence of the name Ahmad al-Daj, which appears to have been a constant in the lists of Daju rulers of Darfur seen by Nachtigal. It is Ahmad al-Daj who is held responsible (according to tradition) for the establishment of the Dar Sila branch of the Daju. Reputedly a proud and overbearing Sultan, Ahmad al-Daj is said to have decided (or been persuaded) that no other mount than a *tiang* (antelope) would be suitable for someone of his immense importance. The

³⁸ While North African traditions are rife with descriptions of pre-Islamic Himyarite incursions as far west as the Maghrib, the history of the Himyarites of Yemen provides little corroboration for such activities. The kingdom of Himyar appears to have been formed from a group living within the old territory of the Saba'. By the first century they were established in Raydan outside Zafar in the southern Yemen. The Himyarite kingdom may have originally been a Parthian client-state; throughout its existence it consistently displayed pro-Persian sentiments, and was actively hostile against the Romans and Abyssinians. By the fourth century the Himyar kings had gained complete dominance over southern Arabia, but remained loyal to the Sassanid state in Persia. Secure and prosperous, the Himyarite state also developed its own brand of monotheism, worshipping the 'Lord of Heaven and Earth', Rahmanan. At some point in the fifth century Judaism began to take root amongst the Himyars (see Lecker, 1995, pp.129-36), and the conversion of the royal line began a period of persecution for the local Christian and Abyssinian communities within the kingdom., leading to the defeat of Yusuf As'ar Yath'ar (Dhu Nuwas) and the occupation of Himyar by the Abyssinians. In 575 a Persian force restored a Himyarite royal, Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, to the throne, but shortly thereafter Chosroe II (or Khosraw, the Kisra of the west African traditions - see the chapter Christianity in Chad?) made Himyar a Persian satrapy, bringing an end to its independence. In the Himyarite legends, the cause of the decline of Himyar was the collapse of a great dam at Ma'rib, leading to the exodus of the Himyarite sovereign at the head of his people.

³⁹ Norris (1972), p.28 Like the Dar Sila Daju, the Nile-dwelling Ja'aliyyin did not let the contradictions inherent in a genealogy combining Abbasid and Himyarite ancestors prevent them from following such a pedigree. See MacMichael, Vol.II,(1922) Tree to illustrate MS. 'BA', 2. Ga'aliin branch (opposite p.61), and the remarks of Yusuf Fadl Hasan (1967), pp.146-50 See also Barkindo (1985), p.227 for the importance of the Himyarite myth in establishing political legitimacy in Kanem and Borno. The mythical, rather than historical, importance of Himyar and the role of this *nisba* in claiming Islamic legitimacy is related in a 16th century manuscript from Borno;

We saw in the book 'Ifrikiya' that Himyar conquered the world, and had a magnificent kingdom. He built between Kufra and Irak one thousand houses of crystal, and placed in every house a bed with eight legs of silver, each leg gilded with gold, and on each bed was a slave of the daughters of the kings. Himyar was the brother of Luwai ibn Ghalib and Luwai was the ancestor of the Kuraish [Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad] (*Imam Ahmed ibn Furtua, 'The Kanem Wars', MS edited and reproduced in Palmer, Vol.I, 1928a, pp.15-76).*

antelope galloped off at full speed towards the west (towards Dar Sila) and the Sultan was never seen again in Darfur.⁴⁰ The incident seems to have inspired a general tribal exodus that is still related in story: 'Led by the sultan's counsellors a large party of tribesmen set off along the tracks taken by the tiang. Wherever a portion of the sultan's clothing or flesh were found adhering to the thorn trees there sections of the party broke away and formed villages. The old men followed the tracks always westward until at Sulltokanyou in French Wadai, they came upon the tiang lying dead beside the sultan's head. There they formed their new headquarters and appointed the first sultan, Angarib'.⁴¹ The story likely commemorates the flight of this Sultan to the west, under pressure from the growing strength of the Tunjur house.⁴² No definite date is set for this event, but Balfour Paul suggests that the Dar Sila genealogy would place Ahmad al-Daj's ride c.1670, which Balfour Paul states is probably 180 years too late.⁴³

The Daju of Dar Sila themselves place the date of their migration in the early 18th century, but according to Kapteijns, 'their oral traditions cannot be verified beyond the reign of Sultan 'Anqarib (ca. 1813-1851) or that of his son Muhammad Bulad (1851-1879)'.⁴⁴ MacMichael reports that the *tiang* story was incorporated into later Fur myth in the Turra region, replacing the figure of Ahmad al-Daj with the unfortunate Fur Sultan 'Umar Lel (Lel=Fur, 'donkey'), who in reality died imprisoned in Wadai in 1753.⁴⁵ Arkell reported another version of the *tiang* story, this time from the Mira section of the Zaghawa of northern Darfur and Wadai. In it the figure of Ahmad al-Daj is replaced by a Sultan Terninga, a descendant of Ahmad al-Kabgawi, the legendary founder of the Zaghawa Kabga.⁴⁶ The Kabga (or Kubga) are a section of the Zaghawa Kobbé. The Bidayat of Ennedi consider the Zaghawa Kobbé to be Daju.⁴⁷

District Commissioner WF Crawford reported in the 1920's that the head of the Tamanig section of the Kordofan Daju had adopted the title of *letege* rather than sultan out of fear that the tiang might reappear and carry him off as well.⁴⁸ At Uri Arkell appears to have heard a tradition that it was the Tunjur ruler Shau Dorsid that disappeared to Dar Sila aboard a *teitl*.⁴⁹ Among the Jukun of Nigeria, a group with many cultural affinities to the eastern Sudanic kingdoms, there exists a tradition that an 18th century king, Agwabi, was of such girth that he could not be carried on a horse, and thus rode a roan antelope. Similar stories are

⁴⁰ Cadalvène et Breuvery (1841), II, pp.198-9; Nachtigal (1971), pp.272-4, MacMichael, Vol.1(1922), p.75

⁴¹ MacIntosh (1931), p.173

⁴² See Slatin (1895), p.41

⁴³ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.9

⁴⁴ Kapteijns (1983), p.449

⁴⁵ MacMichael, Vol.1 (1922), p.75, fn.4 The ruling house of the Bayko of Darfur, a former slave-tribe (perhaps from Bahr al-Ghazal originally), also claim descent from Ahmad al-Daj, but disclaim any relationship to the Daju, despite speaking a form of Daju (See Jungraithmayr, 1978, pp.145-154; MacMichael, Vol.1, 1922, p.81; and the Bayko king-list at the end of this chapter). The rulers of the petty Sultanates of Dar Tâma and Dar Kobbe along the Darfur/Wadai border also claim Daju origins (Le Rouvreur, 1962, p.155).

⁴⁶ Arkell (1951b), p.223

⁴⁷ MacMichael, Vol.1 (1922), p.58; Arkell (1951b), p.211

⁴⁸ Hillelson (1925), p.61

⁴⁹ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10

told of a number of Jukun chiefs.⁵⁰ A tradition from Dar Tama, on the north-west border of Darfur, has Ahmad al-Daj leading the Daju to Dar Sila from the east:

Selon la tradition, trois frères, accompagnés de leur vieux père, arrivèrent un jour dans le pays des Dadjo [Dar Sila]... Ils s'appelaient Abdullay, Diroso et Tamrga. Leur père Ahmat Daïkt ou Ahmed el-Dadj était faki. Il mourut en cours de route. Sa lance aurait été conservée au pays des Dadjo.⁵¹

Adaptations of the story appear widespread throughout the region, and are not necessarily an indication of Daju origin when used by other tribal groups, as Arkell suggests.

The Daju remaining in Darfur live principally east and southeast of the Jebel Marra range, particularly around the Daju hills near the modern town of Nyala.⁵² The large difference in dialects of the Daju language between Sila and those Daju remaining in Darfur would seem to indicate a long period of separation. Under the Fur sultanate and the Condominium government these Daju retained a hereditary sultanhip. The sultan was aided by an elected *sambeï*, a type of head shaykh. The position is common to nearly all the dispersed Daju groups, and seems likely to be a holdover from the original Daju administration. The Darfur Daju maintain a tradition of an eastern origin, usually from the Nile area around Shendi.⁵³ Barth thought that the Daju might have come from the Fazughli mountains south of Sinnar, and mentions that they were known as 'Nas Far'aón' ('the People of Pharaoh').⁵⁴ Tradition relates that they were brought out of Arabia by their king, Kedir. This king brought them to the Nuba hills of south Kordofan, where he is remembered in the name of Jebel Kedir, east of Talodi. From Kordofan the Daju moved further west, forcefully driving out the Furogé, or Fertit⁵⁵ and eventually centering their kingdom round the sultan's new

⁵⁰ Meek (1931), p.50

⁵¹ Tubiana (1964), p.199 Grossard reports another story in which two brothers from the Daju of Dar Sila, Yahia and Helbou, were the common ancestors of the Tama. A variant of the legend gives Yahia and Helbou four other brothers, Bârou, Dogo, Chougou, and Tayrab (Grossard, 1925, p.319).

⁵² Though the name Nyala derives from an old Daju word meaning 'place of chatting', the town is principally a creation of the Anglo-Egyptian government, and thus figures little in the pre-twentieth century history of the region.

⁵³ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.274, 346 The Shendi tradition fits into the usual Sudanic claims of Hijazi origin, which many of the Daju, like so many of their neighbours, have adopted in their desire for Islamic respectability.

⁵⁴ Barth (1857), p.544. MacIntosh saw two tribal *nisba*-s in the 1920's that, while making the usual claims to Hijazi origins, also made reference to *nas faraon* (MacIntosh, 1931, p.171). The term may refer to an ancient riverain origin. According to Nachtigal the term was applied to the Daju in the sense of their being 'evil, violent men' (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.346). This reputation no doubt derives from the pagan nature of their dynasty and the reputed excesses of some of their kings. Carbou mentions a native manuscript from Wadai (the *Tarikh al-Khamis*) which also refers to the Tubu of northern Chad as Nas Fara'ón (Carbou, 1912, vol. I, p.116).

⁵⁵ Fertit is a generic term for the black tribes found in southern Darfur, Bahr al-Ghazal, the northern Congo, and in what is now the Central African Republic. Generally the term refers to non-Muslim peoples who were subject to slave-raiding by the Darfur sultans and the nomadic *baqqara* tribes. MacMichael gives the following: 'I believe that the negroes themselves who compose (the Fertit group) distinguish between a western division, all speaking dialects of the same tongue and consisting of Kâra, Sâra, Gula, Médi, Koio, Vór, Dudu, Binga, Runga and Féri and known in general as 'Yér', and a loose eastern group of 'Fertit' consisting of Digga, Béa, Keraysh, Shayré, Bongo, Belunda, etc. To the Arabs, of course, all alike are

residence at Jebel Kilwa. Certain Darfur Daju maintain that it was Ahmed al-Daj who brought the tribe west from Kordofan. MacIntosh's elderly informants were unsure of the names of the Daju kings, 'but were agreed unanimously that Ahmed Dag was the first sultan and Omar Kissifurogé the last'.⁵⁶ Balfour Paul also collected a similar tradition from the brother of the Sultan of Dar Sila; 'Their ancestor Ahmed el Daj left Mecca and settled in Um Kurdoos in Nyala district (the present home of the Nyala Daju). After many years there they moved to Jebel Marra for 80 years and built palaces there. Then they moved to Kujunung for 80 years. Then they moved under Ahmed el Turkan [?] to Sila where he settled 235 years ago and built the great *qasr* in the hollow of the mountain'.⁵⁷ The confusion seems to have arisen through a local practice of explaining the name of the Daju through reference to an eponymous ancestor, Ahmad al-Daj. A further factor could be the common tradition of Kedir and Ahmad al-Daj as figures who were responsible for westward movements of the Daju.

The Daju of the Abu Zabad district of south-western Kordofan were able to offer little help to colonial administrators in recreating the ancient history of their tribe; the group is not, as might be imagined, a remnant of Kedir's westward march, but are rather present in Kordofan as the result of a split in the Dar Sila group, which led to an eastward migration by part of the tribe. 'They know little about their ancient home (Dar Sila), and even the fact that their ancestors had once borne sway in Darfur is unknown to them. They have forgotten the names of Qedir and his successors, and only the story of Ahmed el Dag and his adventurous ride on a hartebeeste was familiar to them. Their historical memory does not in fact go beyond the date of their migration to their present country. Tradition relates that they left their western home perhaps four generations ago, led by a member of their royal family Kabbashi, whom a quarrel arising out of a disputed succession to the throne had driven from his country'.⁵⁸ Robinson, writing in 1929, was even more dismissive of the value of their traditions; 'The present-day Daju in Kordofan and Dar Fur are mostly

'slaves' who have been raided by themselves from time immemorial, and the name of 'Fertit' in common parlance embraces all or any of them. They appear to belong to the Bantu family.' (MacMichael, Vol. 1, 1922, p.90). Al-Tunisi gave a list of non-Muslim regions that served as sources for slaves; Nuba below Sennar, Turuj below Kordofan, Fertit below Dar Fur, Janakhira below Wadai and Kiridi below Bagirmi and Borno (Al-Tunisi, 1851, pp.273-4).

Arkell cites a Fur folk tradition in which the Fur are descended from a legendary progenitor, Fir, while his brother Firat begat the Fertit (Arkell, 1951a, pp.52-3). 'Again the Fur traditions imply rather than state that at one time most of Jabal Marra and the land south of the mountains reaching as far as the Bahr al-Arab was inhabited by peoples now found living in an arc south of Dar Fur stretching from the Western Bahr al-Ghazal through the northern part of the Central African Empire to Chad. Thus what is today the Fur heartland was historically a moving frontier which saw the progressive displacement or assimilation of such peoples as the Banda, Binga, Feroqe, Shatt, Gula and Kara - peoples now mostly living several hundred miles to the south.' (O'Fahey, 1980a, p.53)

⁵⁶ MacIntosh (1931), p.172

⁵⁷ Balfour Paul, Darfur Field Notes, pp.30-31

⁵⁸ Hillelson (1925), p.60 Henderson later confirmed Hillelson's information on the length of the Daju migration east to Kordofan, noting the tradition that 4-5 successive chiefs of each section died on the way (Henderson, 1939, p.54).

emigrants from Wadai and Borno, from whence they fled during the nineteenth century, and are much too ignorant to afford information as to their ancestors, beyond three generations.' ⁵⁹

Nachtigal records that he was able to see three different documents which listed Daju kings. The first came from the *Basi Tahir*,⁶⁰ who was recommended to Nachtigal as an expert on the history of Darfur. This document gave the names of thirteen Daju kings, as well as later Tunjur and Fur monarchs. A second list, obtained from a Daju prince who had fled to Wadai from Sila gave twenty-one names, the first six of whom were said to have reigned as pagan kings in the Jebel Marra range. A third list, whose source Nachtigal does not mention (but was probably provided by the *Basi Tahir*) gives the name of five Daju kings, and another twenty-five Tunjur and Fur rulers.⁶¹ Unfortunately Nachtigal did not record the lists in his notes, and the sure destruction or loss of the originals of these documents during the *Mahdiyya* has unfortunately meant a permanent loss of this important information.

MacMichael gives a list of six successors to Kedir in Darfur, which may correspond to Nachtigal's list of six pagan kings obtained from the Daju prince.⁶² The names, in order of succession, are Mai, Zalaf, Kamteinyei, 'Umar, 'Abdullahi Bahur, and Ahmad al-Daj. Nachtigal names only two Daju kings, Gitar and Kosber (Kusbur), both of whom he describes as being the first Daju ruler in Jebel Marra.⁶³ Arkell was also given the name Kusbur as one of a group of kings who ruled before the Tunjur king Shau Dorsid.⁶⁴ Oddly, the notes attached to one of the chronologies seen by Nachtigal make Gitar not only a contemporary of the pre-Islamic prophet Salih, but also a neighbour, for it records that Salih lived in Jebel Marra.⁶⁵ While most

⁵⁹ Robinson (Apr. 1929), p.274

⁶⁰ *Basi* was an honorific title given to male relatives of the Fur king.

⁶¹ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.272, 274

⁶² MacMichael Vol.1,(1922), p.75

⁶³ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.274, 276 The confusion likely stems from the fact that Nachtigal saw conflicting king-lists, as Fisher and Fisher observe in the notes to their translation (p.276, fn.1).

⁶⁴ From an informant, Hamid Ahmed, a Tunjur chief at Uri. The other names given were Kuru, Timsah (possibly Tunsam, a Fur chief who may have ruled concurrently with the Tunjur), and the interesting name of Taberber (Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10,p.14).

⁶⁵ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.272. For Salih, see the *Kuran*, VII, 73-9: XI, 61-8; XXVI, 141-59; XXVII, 45-53. Salih was a descendant of Noah, and the period of his life appears to be placed somewhere between Hud and Abraham, according to the sequence of stories in the *Kuran*. Salih appears as a prophet sent to the Thamud, a pre-Islamic Arabian people who are known historically from Assyrian and Greek texts, but who seem to have disappeared before the emergence of the Prophet Muhammad. These sources would indicate that the home of the Thamud was in the region of al-Hidjr in the Hijaz. Notorious idolators, the Thamud rejected the prophet Salih, who was sent to warn them of their ways. In punishment God sent an earthquake that destroyed their homes in the sandstone cliffs of al-Hidjr. The rock-hewn tombs and inscriptions found in the cliffs near al-Hidjr have also become linked in folklore with the Salih story and are known as Mada'in Salih. That the area has maintained an evil reputation is shown by two instances; in 631 the Prophet led his army through al-Hidjr but forbade his men to enter to use the wells. More recently the Wahabbi chief Sa'ud wished to build a town there, but gave up his plans after vehement opposition from the *ulama*.

It seems inexplicable that the Muslims of Jebel Marra would identify their mountain home with the despised home of the prophet Salih, unless it was once believed that Salih sought refuge there after the destruction of the Thamud. There is, however, no evidence that this belief was ever held. A clue to the presence of this name in Jebel Marra folklore might be found in neighbouring Wadai, which was known in the written language as Dar Salih, the kingdom of the descendants of the 'Abbasid, Salih ibn 'Abdallah ibn-'Abbas (Nachtigal IV, 1971, pp.205-6). The overthrow of the pagan Tunjur kingdom of Wadai is credited to

traditions name Ahmad al-Daj as the last Daju king, Slatin names a certain Kor as 'the last of the Tago dynasty', and provides a description of this king that corresponds to the Daju reputation: 'King Kor, like all his predecessors, was a heathen: he had become ruler by violence, was utterly ignorant of the outside world, and did not even know of the existence of any country outside his own immediate dominions: beyond making occasional raids from his mountain strongholds on the dwellers in the plains, he seldom left his hills'.⁶⁶ The name of Bugur, which appears in some oral traditions as the first king of Darfur (see the description of Dar Wona below) may have only been a title for Kusbur,⁶⁷ there are no specific activities associated with this king by tradition.

The pedigree held by the rulers of the Maruwe clan of the Daju-speaking Nyagulgule of Bahr al-Ghazal traces their descent ultimately from a certain Ahmad al-Dia, who ruled before this branch of the Daju

'Abd al-Karim ibn Yame c.1611 AD (MacMichael, Vol. 1, 1922, p.198) after his father, Yame, brought a group of Ja'liya west from Shendi. The Ja'liya, despite being a heterogeneous group of riverain tribes, all lay claim to descent from al-'Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet. According to Nachtigal, 'Before these migrants entered the districts of what later became Wadai, they spent some time in what is now Darfur, first to the east of Kobe, in the mountain district of Woda, and later on the Burgu mountain at Kabkabiya' (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.206). The specific claim of Yame's group to descent from Salih ibn 'Abdallah may be a residual memory of their stay in Darfur.

Al-Tunisi relates a story given to him by an 'aqid (military commander) that a certain devout jurist of 'Abbasid descent, Salih, was persuaded to leave his home in the Hijaz by a group of pilgrims from Sinnar. Appalled by the heathen behaviour he found in Sinnar, Salih went west, passing through Kordofan and Darfur into Wadai, where he converted the population to Islam and was made Sultan (al-Tunisi, 1851, pp.70-5). This appears to be yet another variation on the 'Wise Stranger' folktale that is used so often to explain the conversion of the Sudanic and Chadic kingdoms, but it is impossible to say how widespread this particular variant was. It does however suggest that folk tradition may be preserving the memory of some influential Islamic Hijazi missionary in the area, becoming associated in the Jebel Marra with the Hijazi prophet Salih, who also preached in a mountainous area to idolators. The first of the Islamic missionaries to reach the Nile from the east was a Yemeni, Ghulam Allah ibn 'Ayd, in the second half of the fourteenth century (Hasan, 1967, pp.154-5; Hrbek, 1988, p.84).

The process in which Salih became a part of the mythology of a Sudanic kingdom can also be found in the example of another Kuranic (and Old Testament) figure identified with Borno, Noah. 'The meaning of the name Bornu, which is found for the first time in Ibn Said to describe a part of Kanem, is doubtful, though Kanuri and Arabs of that region agree in deriving it from Barr Noah (that is, Noah's land). It seems in fact that in Fezzan and Tripoli... it was written as two words. Perhaps the marauders coming out from the desert and the steppes called the region lying south of the Komodugu Yoobe 'Noah's land' because it was of a fertility to which they were unaccustomed. This designation then appears to have led the inhabitants later to the fanciful notion that Bornu was actually the landing place of Father Noah, rescued from the Flood; and, with the difficulty of discovering in their perfectly flat country any elevation on which the patriarch's ark could have landed, an insignificant rock on the south shore of the Chad, Hajer Teus [*hajar ta'us*, 'peacock rock'] had, as Denham reports, to serve them for this purpose.' (Nachtigal, Vol.III. 1971, pp.143-4; Denham, Clapperton and Ouedney, Vol.II, 1826, p.59)

⁶⁶ Slatin (1895), p.40 AE Robinson, using the information provided by Slatin, claims that Kor (or Kuro) was a Kayra Fur ruler of Daju origin who conquered the Fur of Jebel Marra. Robinson's study of Darfur king-lists and chronology is reliant on the allegedly corrupted king-lists of Shakyh al-Tayeb and Dr. Koenig, and has therefore been little used by subsequent scholars, though a discerning reader can still gather useful source material from it.

⁶⁷ See Arkell's analysis of the word/name in Arkell (1951a), pp.65-6, and the word-lists gathered by Jungraithmayr, in which *buge* is given as the word for chief/sultan in four dialects of Daju (Jungraithmayr, 1978, p.148).

family moved to Bahr al-Ghazal. This name is almost certainly to be identified with Ahmad al-Daj. Between this king and the migration of the Nyalgulule to the south under Dahia (or his son Andal) were four rulers; by name Nafer, Danat, Muhammad, and Uda.⁶⁸ Henderson described a tradition collected in southern Kordofan in which the Nyalgulule were a rebel group of Daju led south into Dar Fertit by a Bayko ruler of the Shatt in Muglad.⁶⁹

There is very little evidence to indicate that the Daju possessed any skills as administrators or leaders; according to Gros, the Daju 'qui constituèrent une population de nègres païens assez combattifs, assurant leur subsistance par des razzias sur les tribus voisines. Quoique mieux organisés que leurs voisins, on ne peut pas dire cependant qu'ils formaient un état digne de ce nom, et leur domination sur le pays devait s'expliquer par leur supériorité numérique et une combativité plus grande.'⁷⁰

In the folk tradition that Alexander the Great (as Dhu al-Qarnayn) was the earliest ruler of Jebel Marra (see below), it is related that Alexander brought with him an easterner named Khalaf, who was made regent by Alexander when he returned to the east. Arkell suggests an identification between Khalaf and Zalaf, the third Daju sultan.⁷¹ It is possible that this Zalaf, Zalf, or Salf is to be identified in an Islamized form as Salah in a tradition collected by Berre in Sila in which a sultan Salah leads the Daju from Darfur to Dar Sila.⁷² Of 'Umar Kassifurogé ('Eater of the Furogé') much more has been retained in tradition. It was apparently 'Umar who consolidated Daju power in Darfur, driving the Furogé out of the region and back into their original home in Dar Fartit.⁷³ MacIntosh collected a considerable amount of oral tradition regarding this king:

Nicknamed Kissifurogé owing to his having auspiciously commenced his reign by inflicting a crushing defeat on the Furogé or Fertit, he appears to have derived from his victory an intolerance which ultimately led to his downfall. His tyrannies are legend in Darfur to this day. It is related how he levied tribute in grain which on being presented was emptied in the sand for the luckless taxpayers to reassemble. The Dago state that his horse was watered by a human chain from his stable on Gebel Kilwa to the wells a mile away, and it is said that the horse was held by a man day and

⁶⁸ Santandrea (1953), p.244

⁶⁹ Henderson (1939), pp.54-5

⁷⁰ Gros (1971), p.274

⁷¹ This story asserts that Khalaf was a Kaitinga, a group closely related to the Tunjur (MacMichael refers to them as a blend of Tunjur and Zaghawa; 1920b, p.24; They are described elsewhere as a mixture of Fur and Zaghawa - see Tubiana, Tubiana, Quezel, Bourreil, Reyre and Sarre, 1968, p.5). Some reference to the change in power from the Daju to the Tunjur may be indicated in this rather confused tradition. There is also a section of Zaghawa north of Kuttum that calls itself Kaitinga and regards itself as from Tunjur descent on the male side and Zaghawa descent on the female side. According to MacMichael; 'They are inclined to demur to the appellation of Zaghawa, though not flatly disowning it, and to speak of themselves as a separate tribe. They never call themselves Tungur' (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.58).

⁷² Berre (1983), pp.126-7 The tradition also provides a Daju origin for the people who broke from the Daju of Dar Sila to found the sultanate of Dar Tama; they were known as *iatama*, 'the orphans'.

⁷³ The Furogé (or Ferogé) traditions of origin have become corrupted by Arab influence and shed little light on Darfur history. Santandrea collected two accounts; the first claiming Arabian and 'Abbasid origins, the second claiming a Himyarite origin in Yemen. The latter contains another variant of the 'Wise Stranger' tale involving a certain Hamad 'Abbas Himyar. Hamad 'Abbas is often described as a Bornawi (of Yemenite descent) in these traditions (Santandrea, 1953, pp.239-41; 1964, pp.163-4, 168).

night with a second recumbent man acting as a shackle. The act which led to his downfall was the royal order that Gebel Um Kardos was to be moved to adjoin the group of hills surrounding his residence. Gebel Um Kardos is a large hill, containing rock cisterns lying about twenty miles south-east of Nyala and about 25 miles from Gebel Kilwa. The ancestors of the present Dago laboured for a long period on the abortive task of trying to dig up and move some millions of tons of rock. There still exists at the base of Jebel Um Kardos a huge depression that does not appear to be of natural origin and which lends colour to the legend.⁷⁴

After this point, the tradition collected by MacIntosh absorbs the *tiang* story of Ahmad al-Daj, and it becomes 'Umar who is carried off to the west by an antelope. The tradition concerning Jebel Um Kardos is also very similar to one related about the later Tunjur tyrant, Shau al-Dorsid. There may be a conflation of these two kings in the traditions.⁷⁵ MacIntosh also collected a king-list which helps in confirming some of the names we have already seen, but which is almost certainly incorrect in its order of succession; MacIntosh admits his informants' uncertainty on this point.⁷⁶ The names are Salf or Zalf (Zhalaf/Khalaf?), 'Abdullahi Kamteinye,⁷⁷ Husayn Morfaïen, Fileil, and 'Umar Kissifurogé. De Cadalvène and Breuvery state that the last two kings of the Daju were named Tunjur and Kachifor. The former is obviously the result of confusion with the name of the following dynasty, and Kachifor is likely a variation of Kassifurogé. These kings ruled 'about the year 850 *hijri* (1446-7)'.⁷⁸

An interesting letter written by Sultan Muhammad Bakhit of Dar Sila to 'His Grace the Sultan of the French' in 1912 gives a few details of Daju tradition not found elsewhere, including the name of an early king:

Listen, O you French, great and small ! O God, O God, by God and by the truth of our lord, the messenger of God - the blessing and peace of God be upon him - from [the time of] our forefathers down to the present, not one of them has followed the Fur. The name of our [first] forefather who fought with the Fur, and went out from that battle to Kujunung [Hajar Kujunung in Dar Masalit], was Bahr [the 'Abdullahi Bahur of MacMichael's king list?]; he was an enemy of the Fur until he passed away to God Most High. As for the words of the people who say that Sultan Bakhit is 'Ali Dinar's man and a follower of the Fur, these are lies of theirs. O God, by God, those people are telling falsehood which we do not deserve. From the time that we Daju came to the land of Sila about three hundred years ago down to the present there have been battles between our sultans and ancestors and the Fur. Our forefather Sultan Ya'qub Bok Doro moved from Jabal Kajanan to here, that is Sila, and even before that wars between the Daju and the Fur were common.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ MacIntosh (1931), p.172 Similarities will be seen with the tradition regarding the Tunjur sultan Shau Dorsid and the *Mailo Fugo Jurto*, 'the dug-up mountain'.

⁷⁵ Balfour Paul interprets the name of the Daju king as 'Kassifurok' (Balfour Paul, 1955b, p.11).

⁷⁶ MacIntosh (1931), p.172

⁷⁷ *Teinye* means 'cow' in Daju

⁷⁸ Cadalvène and Breuvery, Vol.II (1841), p.197 De Cadalvène and Breuvery's informant was likely Dr. A-M Koenig, a French orientalist in the service of Muhammad 'Ali who travelled through Shendi, Sinnar and Kordofan between 1823-25. Koenig may have derived much of his information from a native chronicle written from a Musaba'awi point of view, now presumably lost. See O'Fahey (1973), pp.32-3; AE Robinson (July 1928), p.357, and a letter from Robinson in *Sudan Notes and Records* 7, 1924, p.198

⁷⁹ Letter dated August 18, 1912, translated in Kapteijns and Spaulding (1988), pp.489-50

Besides the introduction of the name Ya'qub Bok Doro, the letter is also interesting for the political history that is presented here in an important piece of diplomatic correspondence. The tradition of Ahmad al-Daj and the *tiang*, which was current at the time in Dar Sila, is nowhere mentioned, suggesting that the Sultan was well aware of the difference between folktale and real tradition.

7. Daju sites in Darfur

(Map B: Darfur - Daju sites)

The general use of Tora style construction techniques by all three of the great dynasties of Darfur makes the identification of sites by this method alone very difficult. Balfour Paul asserts that 'The material remains of the Daju are as dubious as their rulers'.⁸⁰ Arkell is only slightly more helpful; 'The sites associated by tradition with the Daju are comparatively few in number, and bear out tradition in that they are less elaborate than those associated with the Tungur, and appear probably to be older'.⁸¹ For now, the Daju sites, like so many others in Darfur, are unfortunately reliant on oral tradition for attribution. There appears to be one distinctive feature to these sites; 'Another reason why these sites should be surveyed at the first opportunity is that they are almost the only sites from which I have seen fragments of pottery other than the type which is in general use in Darfur today, and which is at first sight indistinguishable from the rough mar-impressed ware found in the latest graves at Meroe'.⁸² Arkell's 1952 recommendation has yet to be carried out almost 50 years later, but the existence of a distinct form of pottery at Daju sites would be a valuable aide in their identification.

Jebel Doba

According to Nachtigal, the first Daju king of Darfur, King Kusbur, had his residence at **Jebel Doba** (which he calls *Debba*⁸³) and was later buried there. After an extensive search, Arkell found a large barrow matching Nachtigal's description at **Jebel Dobo** (north-east side of the foothills of **Jebel Marra**) in November 1936. The barrow consists of a mound 35 feet in radius and 6 feet high, made from soil mixed with stone. There were some indications of subsequent burials in the mound. 'Shartai Tabun says that he has

⁸⁰ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.9

⁸¹ Arkell (1952b), p.244

⁸² Arkell (1952b), p.244

⁸³ The name is used elsewhere in the Sudan for sites of antiquities; in the south Sudan are many large and apparently ancient mounds measuring from one to five acres in size, and in height from fifteen to forty feet. The mounds are known as *debba-s*, and are said to be occupation sites, usually attributed to a race of giants known as *Barrjo*. The word *debba* appears to mean a low mound in flat country (Crawford, 1951, p.2). These *debba-s* are found along both sides of the White Nile from **Jebelein** to **Malakal**, in the **Sobat** region, and in **Bahr al-Ghazal** (Crawford, 1948, p.9). Surface collections of pottery from the White Nile sites have suggested a link with **Meroë** to some scholars (Shinnie, 1966, p.16; Arkell, 1966, p.452), though more recently it has been suggested that they are **Funj** in origin (Kleppe, 1982, pp.79-70).

heard that he (Kusbur) was buried in a sitting position with all his weapons.⁸⁴ Many other similar barrows were said to be found in the nearby hills.⁸⁵

Dar Wona

A stone palace with Tora-style walls at **Dar Wona**⁸⁶ is associated with both **Bugur** and **Kusbur**. The oval ruin is known locally by the Fur as **Arin Dulo**, 'the Sultan's ruin'. In a very ruinous state today, the total enclosure measures approximately 45 yards by 20 yards. A stone wall six feet thick divides the enclosure into a small eastern part and a larger western part, the latter containing a number of circular stone rooms partly dug out of the hillside. 'The whole ruin gives the impression of considerable age - it is ruinous, and many of the stones that have fallen out of the walls are buried or partly buried in the soil'⁸⁷ Unlike many of the mountain palaces, this structure was associated with kings from two different dynasties, the site also having the reputation of being a residence of **Tunsam**, **Dali**, and **Kurru**, all later Fur kings or princes from the time shortly before the Kayra dynasty was established by Sulayman Solong. A curious oral tradition tied to the site was collected by Arkell: 'None of (the Sultans) died there. They used to vanish. Some said they went east, and then a few days later another Sultan appeared'.⁸⁸

Jebel Kilwa

Jebel Kilwa is reputed to be the original home of the Daju sultans. MacIntosh mentions an elusive cromlech⁸⁹ said to exist near the summit, but despite the local Daju admitting to its existence, MacIntosh's guides could never seem to find it. Since an earlier group of military officers also failed to locate the site, MacIntosh suspected he was being deliberately misled; 'Whether the spot has some significance to this day and is a shrine for votive offerings I do not know, but I came away with the feeling that its whereabouts had

⁸⁴ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3) Burial in a sitting position in a subterranean chamber is known among the Moro of Bahr al-Ghazal (Seligman and Seligman, 1932, p.486) and the ancient Sao of southern Chad (Lebeuf and Detourbet, 1950, pp.91-2; and see pp.32-3 for the possibility that the indigenous black Sao migrated through Darfur on their way to the region south of Lake Chad after the Arab invasion of North Africa). Burials of this type are also found in Tibesti and in the oasis of Taiserbo (part of the Kufra group) (Dalloni, 1935, p.220; Rohfs, 1881, p.269).

⁸⁵ Arkell reported hearing of another tomb of a Daju sultan on a ridge near Barakandi (Murtafal on the map), though from his notes it does not appear that he had the opportunity of seeing this first hand (Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 10/File 48).

⁸⁶ On the saddle of Jebel Keima, about 13 miles NNE of Kalokitting, NE of the village of Madu.

⁸⁷ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 10/File 48

⁸⁸ Informant Khamis Mubaju, 1936. Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 10/File 48 The 'disappearing Sultan' appears to be a constant in many of the Darfur folk traditions.

⁸⁹ Christopher Chippindale describes the confusion that can be encountered when dealing with different terms used to describe megalithic monuments: 'Take 'cromlech', for example, a word which came into the English language from Cornish and perhaps Welsh. In English, a 'cromlech' is a vague word for any megalithic structure whose uprights huddle together to support a roofing-slab or capstone. In French, which got the word from Breton, *un cromlech* is a circle of well-spaced standing stones without a capstone - megalithic and often prehistoric, to be sure, but not at all the same thing as a 'cromlech' (Translator's preface to Joussaume (1985), p.14). We may interpret MacIntosh's reference to a cromlech in the English sense, according to his description.

been wilfully concealed from me for some purpose known to the Dago'.⁹⁰ The cromlech was described as a huge flat rock supported by two other giant slabs.⁹¹ Specific sultans associated with Jebel Kilwa include Koseru (or Kaseru), Kam Teinyei, and 'Umar Kassi Furok'.⁹² The latter king is said to have kept residences at **Jebel Hileila** in the Simiat hills and at **Nari**, in the south-east part of the Jebel Marra range.⁹³ Jebel Heleila, known to its present day Berti inhabitants as Akheir Leina, is south-west of Wadi Kolkol, and north-east of Jebel Sergein. An informant gave the successive occupations as Daju, Turuj, Musaba'at, and Berti.⁹⁴ At Nari (3 miles from Kedingnyir, in the south-east part of the Marra range) are ruins of a town and residence in the Tora style. The local subsection of the Fur, the Miri, are held to be Dagu who eventually coalesced with the Fur.⁹⁵

Dar Simiat

A ruined village in **Dar Simiat** (east of al-Fasher) is a reputed Daju settlement, later occupied by the Berti. Round, single room stone huts are known to the locals as *tirga umm sot*, the Umm Sot being the name for the legendary builders of the site.⁹⁶ The terraces of neighbouring Jebel Silga, with fortifications of stone walls, would seem to indicate a long occupation for the site. Beside ostrich shell beads and a lone cowry, there are signs that iron was once extensively worked here; among the finds were part of a pottery neck for a blacksmith's bellows, six small iron beads, fragments of iron chain, razors, knives and the remains of a 'reckoning counter'.⁹⁷ Some of the mortarless stone walls show considerable skill in producing square faces. Arkell mentions another settlement site in Dar Simiat at Jebel Wara, which means 'residence of the king'.⁹⁸ A passage in al-Idrisi (1154 AD), supported by the evidence of the Christian potsherds allegedly

⁹⁰ MacIntosh (1931), p.175

⁹¹ Megalith style construction continued in the south Sudan into the twentieth century, primarily in Equatoria province. Notable groups practicing this type of construction include the Lango (Lotuko speakers of the Imatong Hills), the Madi (inhabiting both sides of the Nile and extending westwards into the Congo), and the Moro (in south-west Bahr al-Ghazal, speaking a dialect of Madi). The westernmost examples tend to be larger than those found in the east, and serve as grave monuments. In the east they become much smaller (at a foot high in average, they are not megaliths so much as model megaliths) and serve as shrines for the dead, usually built beside the family hut. Their size renders them portable when a village moves. Illustrations can be found in Seligman and Seligman (1932), fig.25, pl.s LI, LII, LV

⁹² Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 5/File 25/(Darfur 17) (Names are provided as given in the source)

⁹³ The local Miri section of the Umunga Fur are regarded as Daju integrated into the Fur. See MacMichael, Vol.1, (1922), p.99

⁹⁴ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

⁹⁵ MacMichael, Vol.1 (1922), p.99

⁹⁶ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

⁹⁷ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

⁹⁸ Arkell (1951a), p.64. Arkell notes that he did not visit this site in person, which is not to be confused with the old Wadai capital of Wara. One informant attributed all the stone walls called *tirga* at Jebel Meidob and in Dar Zaghawa to the Daju, though this seems unreasonable. See- 'Notes on a further conversation with Fiki Ahmed Adam, 18/9/33, Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 12/(Darfur 4). With regards to the word *wara*, Nachtigal reported that it meant 'the place through which it is difficult to pass'. De Neufville and Houghton note that 'In terms of usage it might be quite difficult to distinguish between these definitions' (1965, p.203)

from 'Ayn Farah (see the section on 'Ayn Farah in Tunjur sites in Darfur), was used by Arkell to identify Wara as the town destroyed by the governor of Bilaq⁹⁹:

.Another town in [the country of the Tajuwa people] is Samna, which is a small town. A traveller who had been to the country of Kavar related that the ruler of Bilaq, who is a governor on behalf of the king of the Nuba, turned against Samna, and burned and destroyed it, scattering its inhabitants in all directions. It is now in ruins. Samna is six stages distant from the town of Tajuwa. There are eighteen stages from the town of Tajuwa to that of Nuwabiya [Jebel Haraza, in northern Kordofan], from which the Nuba trace their origin, and derive their name.¹⁰⁰

In the passage quoted above al-Idrisi writes the name of the town as *Samna*, but in a later reference al-Idrisi gives the name as *Samya*. Arkell took the version provided in the second reference, and identifies this name with Jebel Simiat. Arkell must, however, have been familiar with Palmer's commentary on this passage, which, despite its own inaccuracies, was probably correct in placing Samna in the area of Fitri:

Idrisi locates, in the region assigned by Leo to the kingdom of Gaogha, certain tribes called by him Tajuin, whose capital towns were Tajuwa and Samina. The latter at the date he wrote had recently been raided and depopulated by a Berber chief of Kanem who was subject to a 'King of the Nubaba'. It would appear that the present-day terms, Kam Siminayi (a Simin man) and Abu Simin (Simin people), terms still used to describe the population of Fitri, are derived from a town called Simin near Fitri which was destroyed shortly before the time of Idrisi. This town was ruled by the Kuka in the twelfth century, that is to say, at about the period the Dajo tribes ruled Southern Darfur before the coming of the Tunjur to Northern Darfur.¹⁰¹

Palmer's identification of the governor of Bilaq as 'a Berber chief in Kanem' is without foundation; Bilaq almost certainly equals Philae.¹⁰² An identification of Samna with the Fitri district would be in agreement with Idrisi's information that Samna was eighteen stages from Jebel Haraza; Dar Simiat is far too close to Jebel Haraza to fit this location.

⁹⁹ Arkell (1961), p.191; Arkell (1959), pp.46-7

¹⁰⁰ Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Sharif al-Idrisi, *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion, (1981), pp.114-15

¹⁰¹ Palmer (Apr. 1930), p.281

¹⁰² See Vantini (1981), p.140; and Lewicki (1969), p.64 Ibn al-Wardi in 1446 called Bilaq *Wilaq*, describing it as 'A great city, the meeting-place of the merchants of the Nuba and Habasha...The ships of Egypt and Sudan reach this mountain' (see Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, p.391, fn.22).

Daju sites in Wadai and Kordofan

Structures of a less permanent nature, but potentially important for their insight into Daju religious practice, have been described by Nachtigal in Wadai,¹⁰³ and by Hillelson in Kordofan.¹⁰⁴ Both accounts mention the use of huts as shrines, called (in Kordofan at least) *perari*, or *perari kalge*, dedicated to the chief god of the Daju, Kalge (who in recent times is identified with Allah). The shrines take the form of straw huts, only a metre high, with a pointed top adorned by an ostrich egg, and are attended to by a priestly class known as the *togoimye*.¹⁰⁵ Inside the shrines are an earthenware jug to hold water that is poured on the ground during rites, two hollow ostrich eggs, and a miniature stool.¹⁰⁶ The invocation of rain appears to be the chief activity associated with these shrines. In Wadai the Daju had 'a special hut for their god, well equipped with merissa, which is for the benefit of the supervising priests, a sacred tree, on which merissa is

¹⁰³ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.155

¹⁰⁴ Hillelson (1925), p.64

¹⁰⁵ Arkell notes the existence of the Tongongi, or Togoingi section of the Daju of Dar Sila, 'who are in charge of the pagan 'customs' celebrated at the accession of the Sila sultan' (Arkell, 1951a, p.69). *Togoimyi* is an old Daju word that has passed into Fur as a form of address for the locust wizards and others practicing pagan customs. Suggesting that the title *takanawi* (or *tokonyawi*), which denoted the governor of the northern province of the Darfur sultanate, was an arabicization of *togoimye*, Arkell makes a case for the inclusion of northern Darfur in the realm of the Daju kings (*ibid*, p.69). As in so many cases, however, Arkell crawls out on a linguistic limb while dismissing more obvious evidence - the position of *takanawi* was traditionally held by a member of the Fur clan of Konyunga, which claims Tunjur descent. The area ruled by the *takanawi* roughly corresponded to that said to have been ruled by the Tunjur dynasty (the northern quarter of Darfur). O'Fahey is on better ground when he remarks, 'It may not be too fanciful to suggest, especially in the light of the *takanawi*'s claim to Tunjur descent, that the northern governor was originally a Tunjur viceroy ruling on behalf of a newly emergent Keira dynasty. But since the relationship between the Tunjur and Keira dynasties is obscure in the extreme, this must be regarded as speculation' (O'Fahey, 1980a, pp.70-71). If the governor's title is derived from Daju, it most likely passed into use in the Tunjur dynasty before being adopted by the Fur, and need not imply Daju control of the northern area. Balfour Paul comments: 'In Keira times (*takanawi*) was the title of the governor of the northern quadrant of the empire, but he seems to have been a Daju state magician. Many small sultanates, Gimr, Kobbe, Tuar, as well as the Sila Daju, still preserve the appointment locally and his functions are always associated with pre-Islamic rituals' (Balfour Paul, 1955b, p.10). Al-Tunisi mentions 'Dár Tékenyâouy' as a large territory in north-west Darfur encompassing the lands of the Zaghawa and their eastern neighbours, the Berti (al-Tunisi, 1845, pp.132,133,138; see also M-J Tubiana, 1964, p.195 for further on the *togoimyi*). It seems probable that several Daju words and titles passed into use by the Fur (and possibly earlier into the now unknown Tunjur language) as administrative terms. *Sambeï*, a type of elected head shaykh found in Daju communities is also used in one or two administrative districts of the northern province for a type of appointed official who acted as a go-between for the *shartay* and his subordinate, the *dimlij* (see Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.325 for a colourful explanation of the origin of the title of *sambeï*). *Shartai* also appears to have been derived from the Daju word for drum, *chorti*, which is, of course, the symbol for authority in all the Sudanic sultanates (see notes by Fisher and Fisher in Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.415). The title of *shartai* was in use throughout Darfur during the sultanate; the application of Arkell's reasoning in this case would require Daju domination of the four corners of Darfur, an assertion unsupported by physical evidence or tradition.

¹⁰⁶ Hillelson (1925), p.64. Hillelson notes that shrines in the form of miniature huts decorated by ostrich eggs are also found amongst the Shilluk. The ostrich egg as royal/divine symbol is found throughout Sudan; such diverse examples are found as the ostrich eggs found fixed to spikes on the roof of one of 'Ali Dinar's palace buildings at Fashir, and the ostrich egg which surmounted the Nuer 'pyramid' of Deng Kur in the Upper Nile province.

sprinkled, and also a sacred stone'.¹⁰⁷ The Daju were regarded as a pagan tribe in Darfur long after the introduction of Islam. According to Nachtigal they were for this reason compelled to submit part of their tribute to the Fur Sultan in the form of slaves from their own people well into the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁸

The Daju hills in eastern Darfur are a notable site for rock-paintings that beg for a systematic collection. According to Arkell; 'They represent a negro people, armed with spears and shields, who sometimes coloured their hair red and wore red loin cloths. Their earlier pictures are confined to those of wild animals, and later they were much impressed by horsemen armed with swords, with whom in one picture they are represented in combat. It is reasonable to suppose that these horsemen represent their Daju conquerors'.¹⁰⁹

The Dereiba Lakes (see pl.6b)

A possible site for a royal Daju burial ground is found on a shoulder of the peaks of Jebel Marra at the south-west corner of the crater containing the Dereiba lakes.¹¹⁰ The site is itself significant, as the Dereiba lakes are a traditionally sacred place in Darfur. The peak of Jebel Marra itself, after which the massif is named, overlooks the lakes and appears to have been a place closely associated with pre-Islamic customs. In the 1880's Felkin noted that 'The Fors have another very strong belief, which has been unaffected by the Mohammedan religion, that a great spirit liven on the summit of Gebel Marah. They do not worship him, but they believe he has an innumerable army of spirit servants, zittan, who possess extraordinary powers'.¹¹¹ Likely volcanic in origin, the larger of the two is salt-water, while the smaller lake is fresh-water. They are known respectively as the 'female' and the 'male' lakes. In the days of the Sultanate, and for possibly far longer, the lakes were held in awe and fear by the mountain tribes, who never touched their waters. The lakes were instead consulted as a divine oracle; the answers to questions posed to them were interpreted from the various colours their waters turned in early morning or late afternoon, or through the ripples in the water when the wind blew across them.

In a discussion of pagan survivals in Darfur ritual, Nachtigal noted the use of these lakes for making prophecies: 'On New Year's eve the administrator of the Turti region had to sleep by the Deribe lake, where

¹⁰⁷ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.155

¹⁰⁸ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.347

¹⁰⁹ Arkell (1952b), p.245 The problems inherent in dating rock paintings and in tracing the early movements of the Daju makes the identification of these sword-wielding invaders as Daju somewhat less than 'reasonable', but no less appealing. Rock paintings were still produced in the Darfur area in the twentieth century by Tuareg (known as 'Kinin' in Darfur) and by the Teda/Daza (Kura'an). Note: the Tuareg in Darfur are a recent arrival, coming as refugees across Darfur's borders to a cold reception from 'Ali Dinar in the early 20th century. The Tuareg had come east to fight beside the Sanussi forces in their war against the encroaching French, as they did again in 1912 to aid the Sanussi against the Italians in Libya.

¹¹⁰ Arkell describes the way to the tombs: 'The easiest way up to these barrows is by a path which ascends to the rim of the main crater near the south end of the salt or female lake. Thence the path follows the sky-line along the south edge of the crater to the south slope of the peak marked on the 1/250.000 map as 0056, where slightly below the summit are four large barrows.' Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹¹¹ Felkin (1884-5), p.222

a veranda had been set up for this purpose, and his dreams that night were accepted as visions which could be regarded as reliable and indubitable omens for the future of the country.¹¹² The use of the lakes as royal oracles appears to have persisted into the twentieth century, according to a report made by Capt. HFC Hobbs in 1918:

It is said that when Ali Dinar, the late Sultan of Darfur was fleeing in front of the force under Major HJ Huddleston, DSO, in October 1916, he sent two of his followers to this lake to consult the waters with regard to his future movements. The natives say that the 'waters refused' to let the envoys approach, which probably means that the latter became panic stricken and were afraid to go near the lake.¹¹³ Whatever happened did not do Ali Dinar much good as he was killed and the whole of his forces taken prisoner a few weeks later. Mr. Gillan [Asst. Political and Intelligence Officer, Sudan Western Frontier Force] and myself and several of the native soldiers who had accompanied us on this trip bathed in the lake, in view of the Jebel Sheikhs who were much impressed when they saw us all emerge safely from the water, unharmed by the demons of the lake. Nothing could induce any of them to go into the water.¹¹⁴

The use of mountain lakes as oracles does not appear to be unique to the Fur. Another example of such a pagan tradition surviving in a nominally Islamic land is found at Lake Esan in the North Caucasus: '(The) book of wisdom is accessible only to a few. Once every ten years the wise-men of the tribes gather upon the bank of the mountain-lake Esan. By night the book appears to them and itself speaks to the

¹¹² Nachtigal IV (1971), p.368

¹¹³ There is a tradition that if the waters take a dislike to an individual, they will rise and overwhelm him. Lynes, (1921), p.123

¹¹⁴ 'Some notes on Jebel Marra, Darfur - March 1918, by Capt. HFC Hobbs, Egyptian Army; SAD/Official Papers: 448/3/1-5 These notes were published with some revisions as HFC Hobbs: 'Notes on Jebel Marra, Darfur', *The Geographical Journal*, 52(6), 1918, pp.357-63. Due to the geographical and political isolation of the site, Hobbs and Gillan were certainly the first Europeans to see the Dereiba lakes. Nachtigal had been forbidden to travel in the area by the Sultan. The unusual qualities of the area were noted by a visitor in 1920: 'We had ourselves to confess to a somewhat eerie feeling on looking down on the upper lake, even in broad daylight; while the view of the lakes and the whole crater by the light of a fitful moon, obscured by light clouds, was very uncanny. The silence of the place was unbroken, and if one excepted the flocks during the day, and a few hawks, there appeared to be neither bird nor beast there. Certainly these lakes, lying as they do right up a jebel, embody many curious features and their whole situation is such as to inspire awe in the native mind; while the five whites who have as yet visited them, besides ourselves, all noticed the same thing.' (Anon.: *Blackwoods Magazine* 208(1261), 1920, p.678). A hydrographic expedition to the area in 1957 was also impressed by the strange atmosphere around the smaller 'male' lake: 'This lake, deep in a sort of circular cauldron lying in the heart of the main crater, is beautiful and curiously lifeless. At a time of day when the outer lake was alive with wading-birds and ducks, in the inner lake we saw but a single grebe and the silence was disturbed only by the distant barking of a baboon. The inner lake is very deep and steep-sided, and cannot provide the environment most ducks and waders like. The colour of this lake is brilliant and striking, changing between emerald and ultramarine as little gusts of wind move the surface. But for all its beauty it is a somewhat eerie place, and its clear water, reaching down so steeply to depths no one knows, tend, we found, to sap the confidence of would-be swimmers.' VC Robertson: 'Jebel Marra', *The Geographical Journal* 37(12), April 1965, p.922 Scientific descriptions of the crater-lakes can be found in D. Hammerston: 'Recent discoveries in the caldera of Jebel Marra', *Sudan Notes and Records* 49, 1968, pp.136-48, and MAJ Williams, DA Adamson, FM Williams, WH Morton, and DE Perry: 'Jebel Marra volcano: a link between the Nile Valley, the Sahara, and Central Africa, In: MAJ Williams and H. Faure (eds); *The Sahara and the Nile : Quaternary environments and prehistoric occupation in northern Africa*, Rotterdam, 1980

assembled men in all languages. It speaks for half an hour only, but that is sufficient for ten years of silence.¹¹⁵ A more distant example is found at Tibet's Chokhorgyal monastery (founded 1509). 'Nearby there is a lake whose reflections were reputed to prophesy future events. It is said that prophecies leading to the discovery of the 13th and 14th incarnations of the Dalai Lama were seen in the lake's reflections.'¹¹⁶ Closer to Darfur, some of the lakes of the South Sudan are regarded as having important spiritual significance.¹¹⁷

The Dereiba lakes are an appropriate and sacred site for the location of tombs of 'divine kings'. The four barrows are of similar style: a rough stone masonry wall with soil fill, and an outer covering of boulders. Two of the tombs are oval, with an ENE-WSW axis. The two westernmost are roughly circular. Measurements are as follows:

- 1) 15 feet by 9 feet, 4 feet high, oval shape
- 2) 18 feet by 12 feet, 4 feet high, oval shape
- 3) 19½ feet by 18 feet, 4 feet high, roughly circular
- 4) 15 feet in diameter, 2½ feet high

Each of the barrows is marked by the usual depression in the centre indicating internal subsidence. Barrow two is also marked by a pilgrim path that runs over top of the barrow on the east side. Close to barrow four are two normal sized graves, one marked by a rough circle of stone.. This is believed to be a late addition, probably the grave of *faki* Ahmad Arba of Merri (19th cent.?). A fifth barrow, much smaller than the others, appears much earlier than the two small graves, and is marked by a ring of large stones.

Arkell made a provisional identification of these monuments as tombs of Daju divine kings,¹¹⁸ a position supported by Balfour Paul, who notes the existence of clusters of rough stone barrows throughout northern Darfur, either at the foot or at the top of hills. 'The few that have been excavated have produced well preserved skeletons (one or more) but no grave furniture, though those round Jebel Otash are reported by the Beni Hussein to contain bodies helmeted with bowls and adorned with ostrich eggshell necklaces.'¹¹⁹

The identification of the Dereiba lakes barrows is largely based on their resemblance to the barrow at Jebel Doba (described above), and to a tradition of pilgrimage to the site by Fur that continued till recent years. The unusual feature of this site is that pilgrimage is not made to 'Daju tombs', but to what the Fur believe to be the tombs of the sons of the pre-Islamic figure Dhu al-Qarnayn (who is usually identified with

¹¹⁵ Essad-Bey (1931), p.21

¹¹⁶ Shakabpa (1967), pp.91-2

¹¹⁷ Informant: Mr. Peter de Kuch, Khartoum, Feb. 1984

¹¹⁸ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3), Arkell (1951a), p.68

¹¹⁹ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.4 The author, while noting the existence of such barrows from Ennedi in the west to regions east of the Nile, cautions that sham barrows were often built in northern Darfur during the Mahdiyya as grain stores in order to deceive foraging *ansar*. Arkell mentions a circular stone mound, 'possibly a barrow', just to the east of the palace at 'Ain Farah, that was ransacked in search of grain during the famine years of the Mahdiyya (Arkell, 1936, p.303). This mound may have been mistaken for one of these *faux* barrows (its proximity to the works at 'Ain Farah argues for its genuineness), or it may have fallen victim to the desperation of the local people, who were known to search various ruins in search of food in this period.

Alexander the Great). The smallest barrow is believed by the Fur to belong to their dog. The pilgrimage ritual is described by Arkell: 'All four are objects of reverence and pilgrimage to the Fur, and the barrows have been to a certain extent damaged by the pilgrims, who crawl round each in turn on their hands and knees, and extract soil (to mix with water and drink) from small holes like rabbit burrows at the end or side of the barrow. (This was) described by my informant as the soil from the inmates' legs or navel... Offerings are frequently made at these tombs... A policeman who was with me and who had not visited western Darfur his home for over ten years crawled round the tombs in the hope his wife would produce a child.'¹²⁰ The evidence of the site suggests that the pilgrimage is an ancient tradition; the 'crawling tracks' are worn very deep around the barrows, and in one instance they have formed a deep cut into a barrow where the path crosses the tomb rather than goes fully around it.¹²¹

Arkell had the opportunity to interview a learned old man, Ahmad Adam (b.1848?) regarding the traditions surrounding the site.¹²² His informant was a former *kadi* to the *Maqdam* of the North,¹²³ and had

¹²⁰ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹²¹ The attribution of these barrows is unusual, but the form of pilgrimage is not. Balfour Paul noted such a practice at a site between Jebel Marra and Jebel Gidera, two miles south of Kulbu. In this area, at the village of Wastani are a small group known as the Annok, who speak a brand of Tama like that spoken by the Erenga of Dar Masalit (Dar Erenga lies between Dar Masalit proper and the old sultanate of Dar Qimr). The Annok deny being Tama however, and claim descent from Zayd, progenitor of the Awlad Zayd (Zayadiya). Local tradition claims that Zayd came from Tunis, which agrees with a tradition known elsewhere in Darfur that the Zayadiya ancestor was a slave of the first Tunjur immigrants to Darfur (MacMichael 1912b, p.137; Slatin, 1896-7, Ch.II) - see below for traditions of Tunjur origin in Tunis. As recorded by Balfour Paul in 1952, the rites were performed at a site which 'consists of two small stone-ringed platforms halfway up the Jebel, one said to be the grave of the Fiki, the other the grave of the Muhajir. The petitioner slaughters a pigeon or a goat at the gubba (or if very poor puts a bowl of flour and water out) and then crawls around the platform on all fours praying aloud to God for what he wants - especially barren wives. They also take earth from the floor of the 'gubbas' home to mix with their water.' (Balfour Paul, Darfur Field Notes, pp.27-8). Another example of this practice can be found at Tanjikei in Zaghawa country. A stone sanctuary and sacrificial stone were once the site of sacrifices and coronations; 'Today it is still the object of pilgrimage by individuals - generally childless women - who climb the hill, splashing the stones with the mixture as before, crawl around the sanctuary on all fours praying, and return home with a handful of its soil to be mixed with water and drunk by the pilgrim for whom the prayers were offered' (Balfour Paul, 1956a, p.83). Balfour Paul believes this type of ritual was once general in the Darfur area (Personal communication, July 1997).

The Tama connection is certainly interesting here in considering a possible Daju origin for these rites (the Tama live in their own *dar* in the northern region of the Darfur/Wadai borderlands). According to Le Rouvreur, certain traditions known in Wadai trace Tama and Zaghawa origins to two branches of the Daju family that split from the main stock during the period of Daju rule in Darfur (which Le Rouvreur places before the 15th century). Though the languages of the three groups are dissimilar, Le Rouvreur notes a remarkable similarity in certain textile patterns between the Daju of Dar Sila and the Tama, and goes on to suggest that it is probable that the royal families of Tama and Zaghawa were Daju in origin (Le Rouvreur, 1962, p.155). Arkell notes that the royal families of the Daju and Tama are alone in using the sword as a brand (Arkell, 1951b, p.220). Murdock calls the Tama (together with the related Erenga and Sungor) a branch of the Daju who settled Dar Tama, displacing the Qimr (Murdock, 1959, p.135). The Zaghawa reject any notion of relation to the Daju, and belong to a different language group.

¹²² Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 12/(Darfur 4) The interview likely took place in 1933, when the informant would have been approximately 85 years old.

¹²³ The term *maqdam* was introduced in the late 18th century in Darfur, and was used to indicate a vizier or representative of the Sultan, often with supreme authority for the duration of his appointment. The title is possibly a variant of the Arabic *muqaddam* and the post had a tendency to become hereditary.

once possessed many historical manuscripts that were seized and burned by the Mahdists. 'He considers that the first sultan in Darfur was Dhu al Gerneim - 'He of the two Horns', whom he obviously takes to be Alexander the Great... His kingdom was from sunrise to sunset, and impinged on Gog and Magog.¹²⁴ He built his house at Merri in Jebel Marra, and he introduced the date palm.'¹²⁵ Dhu al-Qarnayn is recalled in Darfur as a great prophet and cultural innovator, in the tradition of the legends that grew around his career in Ethiopia, the Middle East, and Central Asia. A reference to the presence of Alexander in the west Sudan is found in a letter (c.1290) from King Ador of al-Abwab (a poorly defined place in Nubia¹²⁶) to the Sultan in Cairo in which he speaks of the success of a military expedition to the west; '(For) the hearts of the natives had been impressed with great fear by the army of our Lord the Sultan, as they had reached further than any other army had reached before, if exception is made of the army of Dhu-l-Qarnayn, and all that had been achieved without any loss in the victorious army, but one man who had been slain for sake of Allah and another who had been drowned.'¹²⁷ The Iranian historian al-Dinawari also describes an expedition to Sudan by Alexander:

[After vanquishing the king of India] Alexander travelled on until he reached the land of the Sudan. There he saw people like crows [ie. black], naked and barefooted, who wandered in the jungles

¹²⁴ Gog and Magog are mentioned in the bible (Ezekiel, 28, 1-3; Revelation, 20, 7-8), as well as in the Koran (xviii, 24), where they serve as the names of the tribes against which Dhu al-Qarnayn builds an immense gate. Due to the presence of these vaguely defined names in Christian, Islamic and Hebrew literature, an astonishing number of theories have been developed as to their true identities; among those suggested have been the Scythians, Goths, Celts, Huns, Alans, Khazars, Arabians, Turks, Magyars, Parthians, Mongols, and the ten tribes of Israel (Anderson, 1932, pp.3-14). The location of Alexander's gate is also a matter of some controversy; most often it is placed at the pass of Dariel in the central Caucasus, though this place, like Darfur, was never visited by Alexander. Gog and Magog were also known in Africa, where the following tradition was preserved by Muhammad Bello (d.1837), king of the Fulani empire west of Borno; 'Those Tuareg were of the remnants of the Berbers who dispersed in the days of the conquest of Ifriqiya. The Berbers are a nation of the offspring of Abraham. It is also said that they are the descendants of Japheth, and from Gog and Magog who were shut up by Dhu'l-Qarnayn. A party of them came forth to wreak havoc and destruction of others. They remained and intermarried with the Turks and the Tatars' (from *Infraq al-Maysur*, cited in Norris, 1982, pp.21-22).

¹²⁵ Merri was the home of the *faki* who is believed to occupy one of the smaller and more recent graves of the tomb cluster. The tradition may have been especially strong at that place, and the holy man may have died while making a final pilgrimage to the burial grounds of Alexander's sons. MacIntosh collected a tradition that the first Daju king made his home at Merri (1931, p.171), which would seem to reinforce the notion that the early Daju rulers have become entwined in the whole Alexander/Dhu al-Qarnayn myth cycle.

¹²⁶ Ibn Selim decribed al-Abwab ('the gates') as the frontier between Mukarra and Alwa (as quoted by Maqrizi, cited in al-Adawi (1954, p.7). Al-Aswani (d..996) visited Alwa, and described al-Abwab as the northern province of Alwa; 'The beginning of the country of Alwa is a number of villages on the east bank of the Nile known as Al-Abwab. This district has a governor named Al-Wahwah appointed by the king of Alwa' (Trans. by Zarroug). Hasan (1967) places al-Abwab at Kabushiya, but Jackson ('A trek in Abu Hamed district', *SNR* 9, 1926, pp.1-36) places it at Abu Hamed, a location with which Zarroug concurs (1991, p.21).

¹²⁷ From Ibn Abd al-Zahir, in; *Oriental sources concerning Nubia collected and translated by Fr. G Vantini*, Heidelberg and Warsaw, 1975, p.429

living on fruit and if they had a year of famine ate one another. Alexander passed through their territory till he came out to the sea and crossed to the Aden coast of the Yemen...¹²⁸

Ibn Sa'id indicated that Alexander went as far west as the Canary Islands:

These islands [al-*Jaza'ir al-Khalidat*, 'the Immortal Isles'] are uninhabited but Alexander Dhu'l Qarnayn reached them and wished to navigate to seaward of them. He was unable because of tempests and thick fog or because he feared to go astray and perish for no good reason. Then he placed a beacon on each island to guide those who go astray and wrote upon each one: 'There is no way beyond me!'¹²⁹

The figure of Dhu al-Qarnayn is described in several stories within the *Kuran* (XVIII, 83-98), where he appears as a great king rather than the usual tyrant or oppressor featured in the Koran. Never explicitly called Alexander in the text, Dhu al-Qarnayn appears to be a conflation of aspects of Moses, the Mesopotamian hero Gilgamesh, and Alexander the Great,¹³⁰ though popular opinion in the Islamic world usually regards him as Iskander. The Alexander identification ultimately rests upon his name, 'the two-horned'. Ibn Kathir provided several authorities for this identification; according to Wahb b. Manabbih the name came about because the sides of Dhu al-Qarnayn's head were made of copper,¹³¹ he was king of both 'Rome and Persia' (the two *qarn*-s), and that there was on his head something resembling two horns (in portraiture Alexander's curly hair is often shown curling around his ears in the fashion of horns). According to another early Kuranic commentator, Sufyan al-Thawri, Dhu al-Qarnayn was a prophet who summoned his people to God, but was rejected when they hit him on his *qarn*. After God restored his life the people killed him by hitting him on his *qarn* a second time, hence Dhu al-Qarnayn.¹³²

¹²⁸ Abu Hanifa Ahmad b. Dawud al-Dinawari, *al-Akhbar al-tiwal*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.23

¹²⁹ Ibn Sa'id, *Kitab Bast al-ard fi'l-tul wa-l-ard*, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.183

¹³⁰ Wheeler (1998), pp.191-215; Anderson suggests that the Alexander of legend experienced an 'early identification with Dionysus and Heracles and with the Babylonian prototype of Heracles, Gilgamesh' (1932, p15).

¹³¹ This may immediately suggest a helmet such as a warrior like Alexander might have worn, but as has been pointed out several times, all available evidence suggests that horned helmets were never worn by Macedonian soldiers before or during the time of Alexander. Seleukos I Nikator, Alexander's successor in the east, did, however, issue a series of coins depicting Alexander wearing a type of horned helmet. See Stewart (1993), fig.s 114, 116. For the possibility of a reference to Moses in this passage see Wheeler (1998), p.212

¹³² For Wahb b. Manabbih and Sufyan al-Thawri, see: Wheeler (1998), pp.210-11. See also Anderson (1927), pp.100-22

Many scholars have pointed to the prophetic passage in the Book of Daniel (8:1-27) which describes 'a ram with two great horns, the one larger than the other'(8:3-4). This may represent the King of Persia (AY Ali (1946), p.761), the horns embodying the combined kingdom of the Medes and Persians. This theory makes Dhu al-Qarnayn a King of Persia, possibly Cyrus the Great. Another interpretation makes the ram Dhu al-Qarnayn/Alexander by virtue of the horns representing the King of Rome and Persia (Wheeler, (1998), p.211). Knight's interpretation of the passage (Knight, 1971, p.446) is probably correct: the ram with two horns represents the empire of the Medes and Persians, but not Alexander, who is represented by the 'he-goat with a prominent horn on its forehead' that overthrows the ram and tramples on it (8:5-7). When the great horn is shattered at the height of its power, 'in its place came up four others, facing the four winds of heaven' (8:8), surely a reference to the division of Alexander's kingdom into four regions by his

The identification of Alexander with Dhu al-Qarnayn is in part due to Alexander's identification with Ammon, the Greek/Libyan form of the ram-horned Egyptian god Amun-Re. This was the resident god of the oasis of Siwa, which Alexander visited in 332 BC, and where he reportedly was announced as the son of Ammon by the oracle. In the Greek Cyrenaican cities the syncretized ram-horned form of Zeus Ammon was found on coinage, and his popularity spread throughout the Greek world.¹³³ The change in Ptolemaic coinage after Alexander's death that saw the wide use of horned portraits of Alexander was entirely in keeping with earlier Egyptian usage, in which representations of deified kings were frequently found to have a ram's horn curved across their cheeks.¹³⁴ According to Stewart;

The practice of combining royal insignia to create a complex symbolic code had been in use in Egypt from time immemorial, and in one of the reliefs of the Shrine of the Bark at Luxor, Alexander himself wears the feathers of Ma'at, the sun disk, the horn of Ammon, and a gold ribbon. Yet though the moneyers were probably imitating this practice, the insignia they chose were wholly Greek. The ram's horn and aegis are clearly symbols of Zeus-Ammon and Zeus, respectively, and the forehead band is surely the *mitra* of Dionysos, not the royal diadem, for diadems are worn above the hairline, *mitrai* below it. The most prominent member of the ensemble, the elephant scalp, is also the most controversial: is it another Dionysiac attribute, or does it stand for India, Africa, or, more generally, for 'power far extended'?¹³⁵

Arnell speculated that there could be other origins for the tradition of Dhu al-Qarnayn in Jebel Marra, and pointed to the horned crowns of the rulers of Nobatia and the horned caps (*tajja umm gerein*) worn by the *Manjiluk* (pl. of *manjil*, a tributary ruler or provincial chief of the Funj kingdom).¹³⁶ The latter is shown in a representation of the Mak Husayn of Fazughli by Cailliaud, drawn in 1822.¹³⁷ The two-horned

generals after his death. If this interpretation is correct, there can be no allusion to Dhu al-Qarnayn in the text; Alexander bears only one horn in this vision.

¹³³ Al-Tunisi remarks 'On ne sait pas précisément pourquoi Alexandre reçut le surnom de 'Zou-l-carnayn' ('à deux cornes'). Les uns prétendent que c'est parce qu'il avait deux éminences sur la tête, d'autres parce qu'il avait deux cornettes à sa couronne, d'autres parce qu'il avait deux longues tresses de cheveux pendantes, d'autres parce qu'il subjuguait l'univers, de l'Orient, réel... La dénomination d'Alexandre aux deux cornes' est analogue de celle de Jupiter Ammon' (al-Tunisi, 1845, pp.456, 458).

¹³⁴ See Bell, 1985, p.269, fn.84 for a lengthy list of examples.

¹³⁵ Stewart, 1993, p.223

¹³⁶ Arnell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 12/(Darfur 4) Arnell was no doubt familiar with MacMichael's earlier suggestion that there was a connection with the 'two horns' worn by the Mek of Bujaras and the two horned *tajja* worn by the Fung (MacMichael, Vol.1, 1922, p.7, fn.7). According to Paul (1954, p.22), 'Apart from the royal officers special titles and distinctions were granted to vassal rulers and notables (of the Funj) in greater or lesser degree. Most coveted was the title of *Manjil*, granted only to the 'Abdullah viceroy, to the Sheikh of Khashm el Bahr, to the King of the Ga'al, the *Diglel* of the Beni 'Amer, and a few others, which entitled them to wear the *Tagia Umm Qurain*, a copy of the two-horned cap worn by the King himself, as an insignia of rank, to have their own war drums, and to wear a gold chain known as *heikali*.'

¹³⁷ The *tajja* (or *tagia*) was made of cotton cloth, with raw cotton stuffed into the ends to form a horn, and its use is described in detail in Robinson (1931). Bruce saw one worn by a *mak* in Sennar, and described it as 'a camlet cap like a head-piece, with two short points that covered his ears' (Bruce, 1805, vol.6, p.353). Although efforts have been made to trace the origin of this type of cap to sources as remarkable as the Palace of Minos in Crete (Corkill, 1945, p.167; and see Crawford's comments in Crawford, 1945, pp.333-34), the horned headress is a traditional form of Nile Valley regalia in various forms since Pharaonic times.

headdress of the Christian kingdoms of Nubia is best known from the Abd al-Gadir portrait of an eparch¹³⁸ of Nubaria, the portrait of an eparch from Kulubnarti, and the portrait of a king in the Rivergate Church at Faras. There is, however, no reason to suggest that the figure of Dhu al-Qarnayn has become confused in tradition with Nubian kings or Funj dignitaries. As a symbol of authority the horned headdress seems to have been little known in Darfur; the pre-Islamic holdover, the *kalamsiya*, a red and gold embroidered hat worn by Kayra royalty, features no horns of any kind.¹³⁹

Another possible solution for the origin of the Dhu al-Qarnayn legend in Jebel Marra might be found in the sagas of pre-Islamic migration from Arabia (from the Yemen in particular) into the Sudan via the Red Sea.¹⁴⁰ A certain king of Yemen named Dhu al-Manar (Abraha b. al-Harith al-Ra'ish, b.134 BC) invaded the Sudan through Abyssinia, sweeping, allegedly, as far west as the Maghrib. An account by Abu Hamid al-Gharnati (1081/1 - 1169/70) combines the adventures of the Tubba kings of Yemen and the romance of Alexander:

Tubba' Dhu'l-Manar arrived in [the Sudan] when he was trying to reach the Darkness (*al-zulumat*), which Dhu'l Qarnayn had entered. God knows best. And (it is also said) that his son, Ifriqisun b. Tubba' Dhu'l Manar was the one who founded the town of Ifriqiya, and called it after himself. And that his father, Tubba', reached Wadi al-Sabt, which is a river in the Maghrib, where sands flow like flood-water, and no living being may enter it without perishing. When he reached there, he hastened back. As for Dhu'l-Qarnayn, on his arrival there he stayed until the day of Saturday, when the flow of the sand stopped, and then he crossed it, and marched until he reached the Darkness. This is what is said, but God knows best.¹⁴¹

The eleventh-century Cordoban, Ibn Hazm, was blunt about the valuelessness of all Himyarite lineages as maintained by the Berbers:

People have said that they [the Berbers] are the remnants of the offspring of Ham ibn Nuh. Groups of them have claimed a Yemenite origin from Himyar, and some of them from Barr ibn Qays 'Aylan. This is false. There is no doubt at all. The genealogists have known of no son called Barr in the lineage of Qays 'Aylan, nor had Himyar any access to the land of the Berbers save in the lies of the Yemenite historians.¹⁴²

Ibn Khaldun, who was less extreme in his treatment of Berber aspirations, nevertheless dismissed the possibility of the Himyarite kings of Yemen ever reaching the Maghrib on their raids;

Al Mas'ûdî also mentioned that one of the Himyar kings after Afrîqis, Dhu'l-Adh'âr, who lived in the time of Solomon, raided the Maghrib and forced it into submission. Something similar is mentioned by al-Mas'ûdî concerning his son and successor, Yâsir. He is said to have reached the

¹³⁸ The *eparch* was a type of civil governor of a province. His authority was 'symbolized by the horned crown which he wore on a helmet decorated with a crescent. He usually wore a full robe held in by a scarf' (Michalowski, 1981, p.335).

¹³⁹ The *kalamsiya* is shown in an illustration in Balfour Paul, 1955(b), p.27

¹⁴⁰ The Himyarite saga is given in *Muluk Himyar wa aqyal al-Yaman*, Cairo, 1378 AH.

¹⁴¹ Abu Hamid al-Gharnati, In; Hopkins and Levzion (1981), p.134

¹⁴² Ibn Hazm, quoted in Norris (1982), pp.39-40

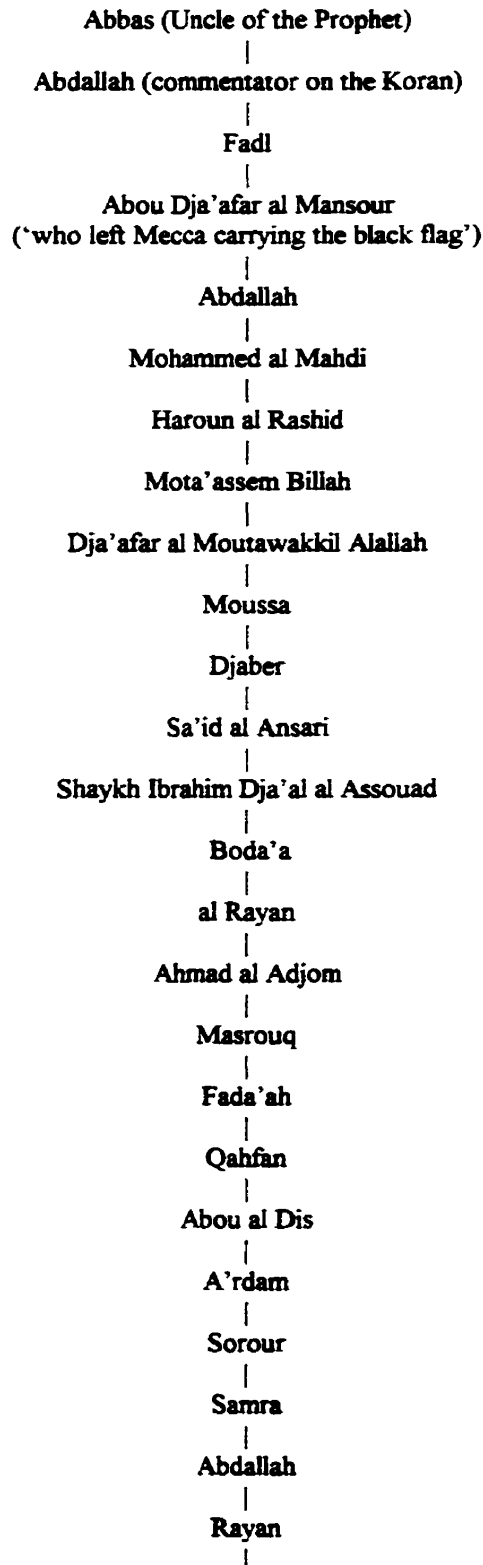
Sand River in the Maghrib and to have been unable to find passage through it because of the great mass of sand. Therefore he returned... all such information is silly or fictitious.¹⁴³

Dhu al-Manar was the son or brother of al-Sa'ab 'Dhu al-Qarnayn'. From various sources this figure was said to be 'two-horned' because he wore two plaits of hair hanging down over his temples, or because he wore a two-horned crown.¹⁴⁴ Because of their common nickname, the legendary figures of Alexander and al-Sa'ab are often confused in folklore. It is interesting that Abu Hamid's account has al-Manar's father (al-Sa'ab 'Dhu al-Qarnayn' ?) attempting to recreate the achievement of Alexander (Dhu al-Qarnayn). The text shows the type of confusion that has come to exist in areas exposed to both the Himyarite and Alexander romances.

¹⁴³ Ibn Khaldun Vol. 1 (1958), pp.21-2

¹⁴⁴ MacMichael, Vol.1 (1922), p.7

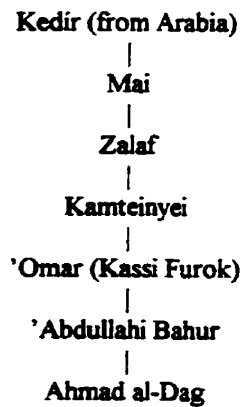
8. Daju King-lists
King-list of Sultan Mustafa, Daju Sultan of Dar Sila, 1922-46 (D1)





From a king-list recorded by Djimi Wad Sayyid, a faki of the court of Sultans Muhammad Bakhit and Mustafa, as given by Henri Berre, *Sultans d'adjo du Sila (Tchad)*, Paris, 1985, pp.6-7; and see Berre (1983), pp.128-29

MacMichael's Daju King List (D2)
 from Darfur sources



MacIntosh's Daju King List (D3)
(from Darfur sources)

Ahmed Dag
|
Salf or Zalf
|
Abdullahi Kamteinyee
|
Husein Morfaïen
|
Fileil
|
Omar Kissifurogé

The Bayko King-list (D4)

Ahmad al-Daj
|
Hajar
|
Nafi
|
Ibba
|
Husayn
|
Omar
|
Abukr Naka
|
Muhammad Kebkebé

(Source - Sultan Muhammad Kebkebé of the Bayko, given in MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.81)

9. Historical outline of the Tunjur Kingdom

The arrival of the still mysterious Tunjur in Darfur, their existence apparently unknown and unrecorded before this event, marked a watershed in the development of the Darfur sultanate. Demonstrating a sophistication unknown to the Daju, whom they so easily displaced, the Tunjur have been called 'the 'founding fathers' of state formation in the Dar Fur and Wadai region'.¹ It is in their reign that we see the massive organization of state labour resources, the introduction of long-range trade, and the first traces of Islamization, at least in the ruling group (though this process was only institutionalized in the later reign of the Kayra Fur dynasty).

The modern Tunjur of Darfur may be found in two concentrations, the first around Kuttum in the north (including the so-called Tunjur-Fur of Dar Furnung), with the second around Jebel Hurayz in the *qoz* country south of al-Fashir. Smaller groups may be found scattered throughout the province.

In Darfur the Tunjur consist of the following subsections:

- a) Kirati (the ruling family at Harayz)
- b) Dowlunga (the ruling family at Kuttum)
- c) Kirwa
- d) Kurukuri
- e) Nīminga
- f) Um Kadarik
- g) Sukuri
- h) Waringa
- I) Ingunga (a Kuttum-based branch of the Kirati)²

As ex-rulers of Darfur, al-Tunisi records the practice of the Tunjur sultan of wearing a black turban as a sign of mourning for their former position.³

Barth gives the following account of the Tunjur (supporting a Nubian origin), and their spread through the regions of Darfur, Wadai and Bagirmi:⁴

The Týnjur, of whose original language I have not been able to collect any specimens, and which seems to be almost extinct, are said to have come from Dóngola, where they had separated from the Batálesa, the well-known Egyptian tribe originally settled in Bénesé.⁵ Advancing from Dóngola,

¹ O'Fahey (1980a), p.4

² MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.71

³ al-Tunisi (1845), p.128 MacMichael notes that the practice did not survive into the 1920's (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.70, fn.6). The Saharan Tuareg nobles wear a black veil while the servile classes wear a white veil (Rodd, 1926, p.139). The custom of Kayra sultans wearing the *litham* was continued down to the reign of 'Ali Dinar (d.1916), and continued amongst the Masalit sultans well into the colonial period.

⁴ Barth, Vol. II (1857), p.547

⁵ There does not seem to be any Egyptian tribe known as Batálesa; MacMichael states that 'Batálesa is simply a regular plural formed from 'Batlus', the Arabic form of Ptolemy (Ptolemaeus), and the legend suggests that the Tungur were an ancient pre-Arab tribe from Nubia' (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.66).

the Tynjur are said to have vanquished first the Dájó, who... were at that period masters of Dár Fúr, and in course of time spread over the whole of Wádáy, and over part of Bagirmi, making Kádama, a place situated about three days' march to the SW of Wára, and half way between Malám and Kashémerém the capital of their extensive empire. They maintained their dominion, as far as regards Wádáy, according to native tradition, ninety-nine lunar years, while the eastern portion of this loosely connected group of different nationalities, which had been conquered at an earlier period, was wrested from their hands much sooner by Kúro [Kurru] vanquishing the Tynjur, and founding the pagan kingdom of Dár Fúr, some time before the general introduction of Islám into these countries. This Kúro himself was the third predecessor of Slimán, the first Moslim prince of Dár Fúr. But as for the centre of the empire of the Tynjur, it was overthrown by the founder of the Mohammedan empire of Wádáy, viz., 'Abd el Kerim, the son of Yáme - according to tradition, in the year 1020 of the Hejra.

The 'Native Chronicle of Wadai' also supports a Nubian and 'Abbasid origin for the Tunjur, though in this case through a rather doubtful eponymous ancestor:

The Tunjur - so it [is] said - were of the Beni 'Abâs. Others say they were followers of the Beni 'Abâs, and that the great ancestor of the Wadaians was named Kheir Ullah and nick-named Tunjur because he was a carpenter (*najjar*), and that he was of non-Arab stock.

When he was at work on his trade, and was asked 'What are you doing', he replied 'I am a 'Tunjur' - so he was given the nickname Tunjur, and the name has stuck to his descendants till now.

He was a good upright man, and the people followed him, and he became king in the island of Senaar.

Their kingdom afterwards extended to Darfur and Wadai.⁶

Tunjur groups are also found in Dar Ziyud (modern Chad, west of Wadai), Kanem (southern region of modern Chad) and in northern Nigeria. In Kanem the Tunjur remained distinct from the local population, though they adopted many Kanembu customs and mixed to some extent with the Bulala population, which they supplanted.⁷ By this time the Tunjur were at least nominally Muslims. Chappelle dates their arrival in

O'Fahey (1980b, p.57, fn.13) offers that Bénése can be identified with the city of Bahnasa in Upper Egypt (classical Oxyrinchus), and that the tradition related by Barth appears to be 'a garbled version of the romance *The Conquest of Bahmasa* (published by E. Galtier, *Foutouh al-Bahmasa*, Mémoires de l'institute français d'archéologie du Caire, 22, 1909). Batlus was the name of the Byzantine governor of Bahnasa at the time it was besieged by Arabs.

⁶ Palmer, Vol.II (1928b), p.25

⁷ Nachtigal estimated the Tunjur population of Kanem at about 5,000 individuals, consisting of nine sections:

- 1) Nas Fugobo (the noblest section, in Mondo)
- 2) Nas Yusef (the most numerous)
- 3) Nas 'Abid
- 4) Nas Maina
- 5) Nas Kagustema
- 6) Nas Aqid
- 7) Nas al-Jallabi
- 8) Nas al-Fokkera
- 9) Nas Bulul

(Nachtigal III, 1971, p.90) Nachtigal and his Kanem Tunjur informants were agreed on the Arab origins of the local Tunjur (Nachtigal, Vol.III, 1971, p.13). Carbou, however, noted a reluctance on the part of the Kanem Tunjur to claim Arab origins; 'Les Toundjour, quoique d'origine arabe, ne disent jamais *ana 'arabi*: je suis Arabe. Ils se considèrent comme formant une population à part - de souche arabe, il est vrai - qui

Kanem to the 17th century.⁸ Zeltner places it more precisely in 1630, and questions whether the Tunjur, having been defeated by the Arab/Maba coalition in Wadai, could have expelled the Bulala by force, as has long been supposed.⁹ The Bulala may in fact have left the area of their own accord due to the start of a beginning of a period of aridity in the region.¹⁰ The Tunjur presence in Kanem did not go unchallenged, however. Subsequent to their arrival a series of wars were fought in the mid-seventeenth century between the Tunjur and the Dalatawa, the latter acting as agents of the Borno *Mai* and possibly under the direction of a Borno *khalifa* (Kanuri *alifa*) centred at Mao. Dalatawa tradition holds that the leader of the Bornawi expeditionary force was a Hausa slave named Dala Afno (or Afuno). Dala Afno serves as an eponymous ancestor for the Dalatawa and was an important figure in Arkell's theory of a period of Bornawi rule in Darfur (discussed below). Many Dalatawa chiefs as well as three Tunjur sultans (Muhammad al-Shayb, Brahim and 'Abd al-Kerim) were killed in a series of battles. The Tunjur later regained control of the region until the arrival of the Arab Awlad Sulayman in the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹ Nachtigal records that the Tunjur were entrusted by the Borno kings with the governorship of Kanem and the provision of security on its eastern frontier, 'but when the Tunjer soon began to adopt a disagreeably independent attitude, the Borno government became suspicious, and confided the post to that Dala, a Hausa slave who had achieved honour and dignity, and who was invested with power sufficient to inspire the Tunjer with respect'.¹²

In Nigeria the Tunjur maintain their tradition of a Tunis origin and consist of two septs, the Tunjur and the Kurata (Kirati). They are locally grouped with the Shuwa Arabs (the Nigerian equivalent of the *baqqara* of southern Kordofan and Darfur), many of whom migrated from Wadai centuries ago. Temple reports that the Nigerian Tunjur 'have at all events received a large admixture of blood from indigenous races and have abandoned many Arab customs, so that they are despised by the other Shuwa, with whom, however, they have been in close touch for many generations and whose language they speak'.¹³ The Gaéda of Ennedi also claim a common origin with the Tunjur, a claim which is acknowledged by the Tunjur of Kanem.¹⁴ This long separated group may represent a faction of Tunjur that split from the main group during a migration south to Darfur and Wadai. Balfour Paul describes slab-lined graves found in north-west Ennedi

n'est nullement apparentée aux tribus choa du pays. Ils disent *ama toundjourai*: je suis Toundjour. Ces indigènes forment à tous les points de vue, une population intermédiaire entre les Arabes et les Kanembou et Toubou.' (Carbou, Vol.I, 1912, p.82)

⁸ Chapelle (1982), p.59

⁹ Zeltner (1980), p.192

¹⁰ MacMichael (1922), p.68

¹¹ Carbou, Vol.I (1912), pp.79-80; Decalo (1987), pp.105-6

¹² Nachtigal III (1971), p.9 Nachtigal added that he could find no trace of a 'Tunjur language' among the Kanem Tunjur, who spoke Arabic exclusively to each other. Many had a knowledge of Kanuri, and to a lesser extent Dazaga, a Tubu dialect (Nachtigal III, 1971, p.13). Arkell (incredibly) describes the Kanem Tunjur as 'descendants of Christian Nubians who once colonized Chad or went to it as missionary monks' (Arkell, 1963, p.315).

¹³ Temple (1965), p.25

¹⁴ Le Rouvreur (1962), p.107 One might also recall at this point the tradition held by some Tunjur of Darfur that Chau Dorsid fled on a white horse to Ennedi (to join Gaéda kinsmen?). Tunjur clans have been documented in the Ennedi hills by Fuchs (1977, pp.33-53).

that are remarkably similar to those found near the Tunjur capital of Uri. Tora style architecture is unknown in Ennedi, and the Ennedi graves are distinct from the barrow-style tombs attributed to the Daju in Darfur. 'This fits in with the belief that the Tunjur came into Darfur from the north-west, bringing their burial customs with them, while Tora building was an art already practised throughout Darfur by the indigenous peoples amongst whom the Tunjur - like the Daju rulers before them - carved their kingdoms.'¹⁵

Gros has collected a set of traditions regarding the early Tunjur from the modern Tunjur of Mao (Kanem), who appear to have retained a more coherent account of their history than any of the other groups of the Tunjur diaspora.¹⁶ These traditions describe the arrival of the Banu Hilal/Tunjur under Sultan 'Abd al-Majid (see Tunjur king-list T3) in the region between Ennedi and the Karkour-Nourène Massif in northern Chad. Here, in the Wadi Umm Shaluba, was built a fortress which remained the Tunjur capital through the reigns of five sultans up to Ahmad al-Maq'ur (see the entry on Umm Shaluba in Tunjur sites in Wadai, below). War with their (presumably) Tubu neighbours in Ennedi (in which the sultans al-Hassar and al-Libei were killed) forced the Tunjur gradually to the south-east into the region of Borku and north-western Darfur. Sultan Sa'ad conquered Dar Qimr and pushed into Darfur as far south as Dar Sinyar. Sa'ad's son was the well-known Ahmad al-Maq'ur, who in turn had two sons, Ahmad Kanjar¹⁷ and Musa Tanjar. From this point the Mao traditions follow the line of Musa Tanjar, who established the Tunjur kingdom in Wadai, while Ahmad Kanjar took control of the Tunjur kingdom in Darfur.¹⁸

Musa crossed Dar Qimr, taking Dar Tama and installing himself at Erré, a hill at the foot of the southern slopes of Nyéri. With the aid of a faction of Mahamid Arabs, Musa continued his conquests into the Biltine region of Chad, driving the Mimi to the north and bringing into submission the Kodoi. Impressed by the resistance offered by the Kodoi, the Tunjur sultan created an alliance through marriage to a Kodoi woman, an event which became a tradition for the later Abéché sultans of Wadai. Musa's son, 'Ali, continued the southern drive of the Tunjur against the strong resistance of the Karanga. 'Umar, 'Ali's successor, defeated the Karanga and built a new capital at Jebel Kadama. The Daju of Dar Sila were brought under his rule, and an expedition was sent to the Abu Telfan massif. 'Umar's son, Daoud al-Mireim, inherited a strong empire stretching from Tama in the north to Sila in the south. *Razzias* were carried out as far south as Fitri and as far west as Kanem, but the long absences of the king and the growing influx of Muslim Ja'aliyyin Arabs aided in the deterioration of Tunjur power, which rested only on the physical domination of the region. The Arab leader, 'Abd al-Karim, made inroads amongst the Arab cohorts of the Tunjur army and even among some Tunjur themselves, converting them to Islam. Eventually Daoud al-

¹⁵ Balfour Paul (1955b), p. 11

¹⁶ Gros (1971), pp.272-6 While Gros' contribution is valuable, it is marred by the author's failure to distinguish between the direct evidence of the oral traditions and his own commentaries.

¹⁷ O'Fahey sees in this name an eponymous ancestor for the Kunjara Fur: 'This version, in effect, neatly disposes of the transition from Tunjur to Fur rule by a linguistic device.' (O'Fahey, 1980b, p.50)

¹⁸ *Tanjar* also appears to be eponymic, but if in fact the Tunjur took their name from an important ruler at some point after finishing their southwards migration, it would explain why the word *Tunjur* is unknown in North African sources.

Mereim was defeated in battle at Wara by the Arabs and their Maba allies (1611 ?¹⁹) and forced to flee. Under the leadership of the defeated sultan's son, Diab, the bulk of the Wadai Tunjur began their migration to Kanem. Dar Tama is said to have remained a principality of the Tunjur for another 22 years, until it was conquered by Changelif, a Daju follower of 'Abd al-Karim and the founder of the ruling Daju family of Dar Tama.²⁰ These traditions no doubt mask any number of social and economic developments, but are nevertheless impressive in their coherence and correspondence with information on the Wadai Tungur gathered elsewhere, though to what degree we owe this coherence to Gros' editorial efforts is uncertain (Gros, 1971).

Some Daju and Tunjur monuments may be contemporary, showing the existence of two separate traditions of monument-construction before the eventual departure of the majority of the Daju from Darfur:

It is true that natives will tell one that first the Dagu ruled, then the Tungur, then the Fur, but what they mean in the case of the first two is that each in turn was the most powerful tribe in the country and not necessarily that one subdued the other or even occupied the same part of Darfur. For instance, the Daju never had any shadow of power or influence in northern Darfur or Gebel Marra, and the Tungur never had any connection with the southernmost districts of Darfur or Gebel Marra. The main spheres of the two people were always distinct, except that they certainly met and overlapped in central-eastern Darfur, that is to say, in the neighbourhood of el-Fasher.²¹

The success of the Tunjur in establishing themselves as rulers in Darfur and Wadai was undoubtedly due to their martial prowess and their skills in constructing fortified defences for their mountain-top settlements. Mounted on armoured horses and equipped with lances, iron-tipped javelins, and distinctive curved sabres (unlike the cruciform swords otherwise found throughout the region), the Tunjur must have made quick work of the relatively unsophisticated tribesmen they found there. The Tunjur warrior himself wore a coat of mail and a conical helmet with a nose-guard, all of which must have been imported.²²

Tumaghera and Tunjur

Arkell traced the origin of the Tunjur to the famous Tumaghera clan of the Tubu, an African people who are principally found in the Tibesti mountains (or *Tu*, as the region is known in the Tubu dialects²³) northwest of Darfur and who display certain cultural affinities with their western neighbours, the Tuareg (most notably in the wearing of the *litham*). The Tubu consist of two main sections, the Teda and the Daza,

¹⁹ The date of 1611 is favoured by Barth and many traditional sources, but O'Fahey is in general agreement with Nachtigal on a date somewhere between 1635 and 1655.

²⁰ Arkell was always fascinated with what he supposed to be the great antiquity of the people of Tama, identifying them with the people of Temeh mentioned in the account of the third expedition of Harkhuf (approx. 2250 BC), and as a branch of the C-Group that moved to north-eastern Wadai (Arkell, 1961, pp.43-4, 49-50).

²¹ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.67

²² Gros (1971), p.275 The coat of mail and conical helmet were still standard issue for the *fursan* (horsemen) of 'Ali Dinar's army at the battle of Beringia in 1916, but proved entirely ineffective against British Maxim guns. Examples may be found in the collection of the 'Ali Dinar palace museum in al-Fashir.

²³ Tibesti is the name by which the Fazzan Arabs know the region.

who speak the Tedagada and Dazagada dialects respectively. Both of these dialects bear a resemblance to Kanuri. The Tumaghera are widely regarded as a family bearing a special royal significance both in Tibesti and in regions south of the mountains, where they have often provided a ruling class. The Tumaghera themselves are found not only in their modern homeland of western Tibesti, but also in Kawar²⁴ (the oasis of Bilma), where they dominate the other Tubu groups.²⁵ They are also found in Kanem and Borno, where they have become largely assimilated with the Kanembu and the Kanuri.²⁶ Traditions collected in Borno indicate that the dynasties of Munio and Mandara originated with the Tumaghera,²⁷ although Barkindo has strongly rejected this relationship in connection with the Mandara:

The Tomegera origin of the Mandara is nothing more than yet another re-working of the Hamitic hypothesis: a view that maintains that the Negro culture was incapable of producing an organized political system without external influence. The Tomegera were not only seen as 'wise strangers', but also as originally non-Negro. This was the only way to explain the presence of a centralized state surrounded by small-scale societies in a remote mountainous country of Africa. While rejecting a Tubu or Tomegera origin, there is no denying the fact that Mandara had relations with the Tubu over a very long period. It is possible to suggest that some Tubu or other 'northern' elements could have been assimilated by Mandara. Even if that may have been the case, it does not follow that it was only when these 'wise strangers' came that centralization started in Mandara.²⁸

Barth believed the Tumaghera to be Berbers, largely based on the paramount role of the queen mother (*ghumsa*), a Berber survival.²⁹ The practice of matrilinear succession has allowed many Sudanic ruling families to claim Tumaghera origins as a source for their legitimacy.

The source of the royal attributes of the Tumaghera remains obscure, but Arkell derived their authority through Meroitic, Berber, Bornawi and/or Nubian Christian origins at various points in his career. Throughout, Arkell maintained his belief in the Tumaghera origin of the Tunjur dynasties of Darfur and Wadai, despite the lack of any traditions among the Tunjur or neighbouring peoples attributing a Tumaghera

²⁴ Al-Idrisi, writing in 1154, mentions the inhabitants of Kawar as *Mulaththamun* Berbers (*litham* wearers, also known in Arabic as *Ahl al-litham*, and in Tuareg Tamachek as *Kel Tagulmust*) who conducted a trade in alum as far east as Egypt. (Trans. of *Nuzhat al-mushuq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq* in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, p.123) The chiefs of Kawar claim authority through descent from two daughters of a Tumaghera sultan, Kélîma and Kéfê (Chapelle, 1982, p.111).

²⁵ In Kawar, leadership alternates between two subclans of the Tumaghera, the Kilimada and the Kifeda. See Nachtigal II (1972), p.76.

²⁶ Barth notes a parallel in the Berber name of the Borno province of Demagherim (Barth, Vol.II, 1857, p.30). Kanem itself appears to be a Tubu word: *anum*, *anom* = south; with the nominalizing prefix *k*, Kanem 'The (land of the) south'.

²⁷ Lange, 1989, p.245; See also Nachtigal III (1972), pp.161-2

²⁸ Barkindo (1989), pp.70-71

²⁹ ABO blood testing has revealed a remarkable resemblance between Berber and Tubu populations, although the Tubu have their own language and are far darker in skin colour than the Berbers (Decalo, 1987, p.314). Barkindo, however, rejects any notion of Berber descent, though he describes the Tubu as 'a black people of diverse origins' (Barkindo, 1989, pp.70-71). Cultural similarities suggest that, if not related by blood, the Tubu have at least assimilated a large number of Berber customs and social practices.

origin to the Tunjur, a claim one might reasonably expect given the royal reputation of the clan.³⁰ Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to examine in some detail the question of this undoubtedly royal clan, and to determine whether the Tunjur dynasty may find its origin with the Tumaghera, or if the Tumaghera played any role in the development of Darfur.

Arkell first advanced his theory in 1936:

The name Tumagira must mean 'of Tibesti the great ones'. *Tu* is the Teda name for Tibesti, and *MGR* (*MGhR*) is a Berber root meaning 'great'.³¹ In Bornu, from the eleventh century, Tumagira women are several times mentioned in the court chronicle as queens whose sons succeeded to the throne. With the matrilinear system of the Berbers it is likely that the son of a Tumagira woman would consider himself to belong to the Tumagira. I conclude for these and other reasons that in Darfur history the Tungur are the local representatives of the Sultan of Bornu, and that Shau [Dorsid] is the sultan of Bornu himself. The name Tumagira, as soon as it had become arabicised into *Tumagirawi*, as was bound to occur as soon as Islam became the state religion of Darfur, would easily be contracted into *Tungurawi*.³²

In his *History of the Sudan*, Arkell identified the Tumaghera as both possibly the 'scions of the Meroitic royal family',³³ and as representatives of the Nubian Christians; 'Indeed the name Tungur and its older form Tumgur... is now seen to derive from Mukarra and its older form *Tmkr*', which occurs in the tribute lists of Tuthmosis III.³⁴ It is probably the same as Tumagera, the royal family of Tibesti, of Kawar, of Munio and Mandara in Bornu.³⁵ Arkell went on to conclude that the Tumaghera rule in Tibesti suggests that Tibesti and Ennedi were within the sphere of influence of Christian Nubia, positing connections through the Selima oasis (which Arkell describes as a Christian ruin³⁶) and Merga, or alternately through the Wadi

³⁰ O'Fahey remarked in 1980 that 'It was the late Dr. Arkell who most thoroughly investigated the Tunjur question. He later discarded his first hypothesis, namely, that 'Ma'qur' was an Arabicization of the root *m.gh.r* as in the name of the Tubu royal clan of Tumaghera, and that the Tunjur were part of a Berber/Tubu southward movement remotely caused by Banu Hillal pressure in the north' (O'Fahey, 1980b, p.54). As we will see, however, Arkell never abandoned his Tunjur/Tumaghera connection, though his final conclusion was that the Tumaghera were agents of the Christian Nubian rulers of Mukarra.

³¹ Though he does not credit it, Arkell's source for this would seem to be Carbou; 'Notons... que le mot toubou *Tomaghera* peut se décomposer de la façon suivante: *Tou-magra*, les maîtres, les seigneurs du Tou' (Carbou Vol.I, 1912, fn.1, pp.13-14) Palmer provides a slightly different derivation for the name, tracing it from *Tu* plus the Tuareg class term *imagaren*, (or *imagheren*) 'nobles' (Palmer, 1936, p.3).

³² Arkell (1936), pp.308-9

³³ Arkell (1961), pp.176-7

³⁴ Here Arkell relies upon Zyhlarz (1958, p.14), who identified the form *Tmkr* in the country list of Thutmosis III with the later Christian territory of Mukarra. See also Zibelius (1972), p.173

³⁵ Arkell (1961), pp.191-2

³⁶ The first European account of Selima Oasis is found in Browne (1799, p.111), who described it as 'a small verdant spot'. Browne recounted a legend no doubt told to him by his Arab companions, which described the 'convent' as a 'coffee-shop' run by a certain princess Selima 'who, like the Amazons, drew the bow and wielded the battle-axe with her own hand... and who spread terror over all Nubia'. James Currie provided a description of the allegedly Christian ruins at Selima; 'A most beautiful place. It would be most difficult to find without a guide, as it is really only a large hole in the desert. The descent to it is very deep indeed. There are three wells, a good many date trees, and good grass. One sees the remains of an old Christian convent, moderately well preserved, but the point of interest attaching to it is that it has apparently been built out of the ruins of something much older, to judge from the inscribed stones one notices. There

Howar or through a route passing through northern Darfur.³⁷ 'Since the Tungur were Christian and probably from the kingdom of Mukurra or Makuria, their name may also be connected with the name of that kingdom, and probably enshrines the title Kur, recently shown to have been the title (in Dongola) of the rulers of Cush, who formed the Twenty-fifth dynasty of Egypt and of whom all but one were buried at *Kurtu*'.³⁸ In 1963 Arkell added that 'The Tungur of Darfur are usually known as Tungur Kirati, and the fact that the Borno history of Imam Ahmed speaks of the Tumagera as 'of the Kira people' makes it probable that 'Tungur' is an arabicized form of Tumagera.'³⁹ In Arkell's version of events, the Tunjur, Tumaghera, Makurrian Nubians and the Twenty-fifth dynasty rulers of Kush all appear to be one and the same people.

Arkell's observations are at odds with what we know of Tumaghera origins from other sources. The Tumagheras' own traditions state that they came from Kanem (northeast of Lake Chad) to Tibesti, where they subjugated the local clans.⁴⁰ Nachtigal believed that they may have been the earliest immigrants to Kanem, or were at least the main component of a larger migrant group (presumably of Berber origin). Barkindo suggests that the Tumaghera may have moved to Kanem around 900-1000 AD 'when there was said to have been a steady north-south movement of the Teda-Daza peoples due to the dessication of the Sahara'.⁴¹ From Kanem they likely moved in part to Borno where, together with the Tura and the Kai, they form a significant component of the Kanuri.⁴²

The Tumaghera of Tibesti consist of four subdivisions:

- 1) The Erdeiduga (Erdindoga or Erdi) of Enneri Zuar
- 2) The Laiduga (Laindoga or Lai) of Enneri Zuar
- 3) The Aramiduga (Arami) of Enneri Yoo and the southern Yoo plain
- 4) The Mohammeduga of the Enneri Marmar

The chieftain of all the Teda, the *dardai*, was not hereditary, but was selected in alternation from the Erdieduga, the Laiduga, and the Arimiduga, with the Laiduga taking two turns for every one of the others; '(The Laiduga's) privileged position was said, however, to have been won by them only as a result of

are abundant salt deposits near, and a huge petrified forest, which extends further than I had time or inclination to go' (In *Gleichen*, Vol.I, 1905, p.203). Caillaud made a special trip to the oasis in 1822 to visit its 'fabulous ruins', but was bitterly disappointed by the 'convent', which actually bears little resemblance to any Christian architecture of the Nile Valley. A plan and photos are given in T. Leach (1926), and a detailed description of the inscriptions (mainly graffiti, camel-brands and Kufic inscriptions) may be found in Newbold and Shaw (1928), p.169. See also Newbold (1924b), pp.282-3.

³⁷ Arkell (1961), p.192

³⁸ Arkell (1959), p.45

³⁹ Arkell (1963), p.315

⁴⁰ Requin (1935), pp.55-9, 259-64

⁴¹ Barkindo (1989), p.72

⁴² Nachtigal III (1971), pp.83, 160 With regards to the royal attributes of the Tumaghera in the region, Nachtigal remarks; 'That such an important role is ascribed to them, and that their communities are found by preference on the periphery of the kingdom [of Borno]... are already facts which support the view that they immigrated early, and formed a significant element of the Kanuri, even though perhaps more impressive through political standing than through numbers.' (Nachtigal III, 1971, p.162)

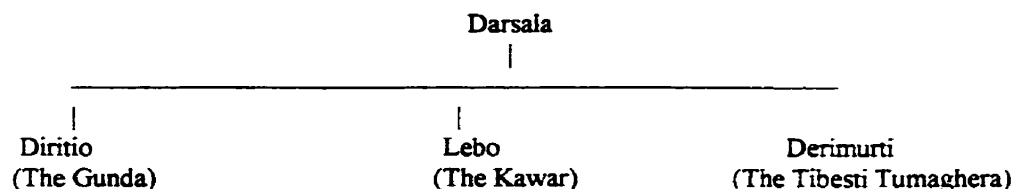
their capacity for intrigue: the correct rule was equality between the three families...⁴³ The *dardai* was expected to provide for himself as the position came with little more than a tent, a carpet, a Tunisian hat, and a turban.⁴⁴ No taxes were offered or collected from the anarchic Teda. Local tradition in Tibesti traces the Tumaghara back to an ancestor from Damergu called Darsala, who settled at Duros in approximately 1550 AD, a tradition which is supported by the presence of Tumaghara communities in Kawar and southwest Tibesti.⁴⁵ It is said that before the arrival of the Tumaghara in Tibesti the chieftainship was held by a member of the Derdekishia clan. The son of Derihurti, the ancestor of the Tumaghara of Tibesti, married a Derdekishia princess, and thus obtained for the Tumaghara the right to the *kadmul*.⁴⁶

⁴³ Fisher and Fisher in *Nachtigal I* (1971), p.398, fn.1

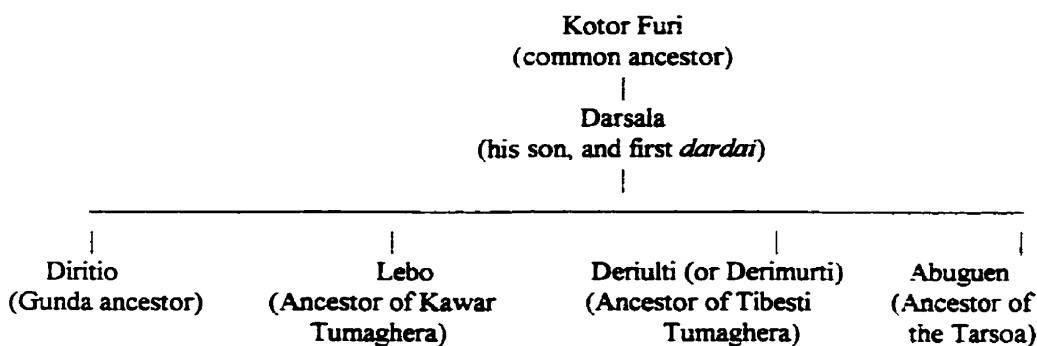
⁴⁴ The *kadmul*, a green turban of pre-Islamic origin, was the supreme symbol of authority amongst the Teda.

⁴⁵ Damergu is located directly south of the Air massif, and north of Zinder.

The following genealogy is offered by the Tubu to explain the descent of noble families in the region from a common ancestor, in this case Darsala, first *Dardai* of the Tubu:



A more elaborate version of this collected by Capt. Schneider during the French occupation provides an even earlier common ancestor:



(Provided in Chapelle, 1982, p.83)

The Gunda are said to be closely related to the Tumaghara, and to have come north to Tibesti from Kanem at the same time. Most of the Gunda left Tibesti for the Fazzan in the 17th century after losing a power struggle with the Tumaghara. Their social and political position is only slightly inferior to the Tumaghara. These genealogies and others collected show a strong current of tradition that, regardless of their accuracy, is entirely independent of associations with the Tunjur or with the Christian kingdom of Mukarra.

⁴⁶ Cline (1950), p.14; Cline issues the following warning regarding Teda traditions; 'Four factors limit their historical utility: they give us no cultural data which can be correlated with archaeology and ethnography;

Other traditions claim that Islam was introduced to Tibesti by a Tumaghera at the end of the 16th century. One legend states that a Tumaghera individual came to Tibesti to sell cow's butter, but was eventually installed as *dardai* with Borno support. Another legend claims that the Tumaghera stranger (a 'Wise Stranger' as found in the traditions of the region) was given the *kadmul* and a wife in return for his services as a teacher of Islam and an arbitrator of disputes. The above traditions may represent the true source of Tumaghera authority, ie: the introduction of Islam and Islamic customs, rather than the introduction of royal traditions from a long vanished Meröe. It appears that the early Tumaghera dynasties were contemporaries, rather than ancestors, of the Tunjur ruling houses of Darfur and Wadai. The Tumaghera may have originated in the Fazzan, and after a sojourn in Kanem and Borno in which they absorbed the Islamic religion, they returned north to Tibesti, where they were able to quickly establish their authority by means of their cultural superiority, a common theme in Sudanic traditions. With regards to their relations with the other clans of Tibesti, Chapelle remarks; 'Ils ont apporté et conservé une réelle distinction de race, un certain sens de la civilisation, et le sentiment de leur supériorité vis-à-vis des clans du massif, sur lesquels ils exercent une suzeraineté nominale'.⁴⁷ Chapelle suggests a Teda migration to Kanem in the 13th century with a return to Tibesti by the Tumaghera clan in the late 15th/ early 16th century, at a time when Islamic Borno was extending its influence. A further movement of elements of the Tibesti Tumaghera occurred in the 17th century.⁴⁸ When the camel riding Tumaghera raiders encountered the sedentary palm-raising clans of Tibesti, a deal was struck in which the indigenous Tubu retained rights to the palm-groves, while camel raising was limited to the Tumaghera.⁴⁹ The Tunjur are everywhere regarded as pagans until recent times, and are never spoken of as propagators of Islam.⁵⁰ Unlike the Tunjur, who claim a Banu Hilal origin, the Teda display no interest in claiming Arab origins.⁵¹ Arkell's linguistically derived Tumaghera origin for the Tunjur must be rejected in the absence of any corroboration from historical or traditional sources, especially as his connections are drawn between distinct languages separated by vast gulfs of time.

they show no time perspective; they have probably been modified or even fabricated to fit folklore patterns or confirm intertribal prejudices; and the Europeans who have recorded them have neglected to give us any documentation by which they may be evaluated.' (Cline, 1950, p.15)

⁴⁷ Chapelle (1982), p.83

⁴⁸ Chapelle (1982), pp.42-5

⁴⁹ Chapelle (1982), p.73

⁵⁰ Citing the unanimity of opinion found in the works of al-Tunisi, Barth, and Nachtigal, Tubiana, Khayar and Deville assert that 'La tradition montrant des Toundjour païens semble donc être solidement établie' (1978, p.9). Unlike nearly all the other ruling groups mentioned in this work, the Tumaghera have managed to maintain their aristocratic status. The last fully independent *Dardai* was Shaffai Bogarmi, who ruled Tibesti from 1894 to 1914, when he was defeated by the French and fled to the Fazzan. After making peace with the French in 1920 he ruled as their nominal subordinate until 1939. Until the removal of French troops from Tibesti in 1965, the French asked little of the Tubu other than to maintain the peace. Shortly after independence the Tumaghera led a general Tubu revolt in 1968 that did not end until the Chadian government made promises of non-interference in 1975.

⁵¹ Cline (1950), p.14

Among the Arabic manuscripts collected by Palmer is one which claims (on an older authority) a Berber origin for the Tunjur, who appear in this source to have been forced from the north under pressure from incoming Arab tribes:

We have found in an old account in a *Tarikh-es-Sudan* the following:

The same tribes which came to middle Afrikia, after the end of the Ummayyad Empire, and the Abbâsîd Empire, and the Alîd dynasties, and the Fatimids in Masr, were those which created the Empire of the Emirs of the Seljuks and the Abidin from the remains of the Ummayyad power - namely the Beni Abbas.

They ruled over the Sanhaja and Andulus, after the time of the old kings of western Ifrikia, and Egypt.

In that epoch, a great number of people came to the Sudan because of the wars occasioned by these changes in North Africa, among them the Zenanata and other Barbaras.

Among these Barbaras, a great number came to Fur. Among them were the Bulala, and Babaliya, and Bideyat, and Tunjur, and Makada, and others.⁵²

According to a tradition collected by Lieut. Barboteu in 1935, the Bilia clan of the Bidayat was founded by a certain Tunjur named Sulayman. Living near Jebel Aress [Jebel Harayz?] under the rule of a Sultan Sao Doli sit [Shau Dorsid?], Sulayman travelled north to the Ennedi region, where his sons established the four sub-clans of the Bilia Bidayat: the Kouliala [KolyaRa], the Ourala [UraRa], the Etinga [Idinga], and the Boronga.⁵³ Arkell cites a corresponding tradition from Jebel Harayz that would seem to corroborate Barboteu's account:

If the Tungur are of Tibu origin, it must have been nearly forgotten eighty years ago, and seems to have been quite forgotten to-day, except that the Tungur of Jebel Hereiz in central Darfur recognize their relationship with the Biriara, the chief section of the Bedayat of Bao, and maintain some degree of social intercourse with them, although their spheres are now separated by more than two hundred miles. The Tungur, presumably in view of their pretensions to Arab ancestry, do not advertise this intercourse, and I discovered it from the Bedayat. They informed me that the Tungur are descended from emigrants from all the four sections, Itinga, Burunga, Kuriara and Urara, into which the royal section, the Biriara, is divided. They say that these emigrants came to Darfur and developed into the Tungur.⁵⁴

⁵² Palmer, Vol.II (1928b), p.54 (Text XIV - Middle Ifrikia). Holt remarks of this text that 'a cursory examination of its contents indicates its unhistorical qualities' (Holt, 1963, p.52). Though the author claims the information comes from an old 'Tarikh es-Sudan', it clearly falls into the realm of oral tradition, with its lack of concern for historical exactness. What proves interesting in such texts are the general themes, such as the Tunjur being grouped among a number of Berber sections, despite their associations with the Banu Hilal. Another translation of this text published by Palmer in 1930 adds that 'From among the Anej and Bideyat came the ancestor of the Tunjur to Wadai, where he established his rule' (Palmer, 1930, p.365).

⁵³ Lieut. Barboteu; 'Les Erdis, aperçu de l'Ennedi', Ms., Archives Fada (Chad), 1935, pp.68-9, cited in Tubiana, 1964, p.154; see also the genealogy in Table IX of Tubiana, 'Les chefs Bideyat Bilia d'après Nosur Abdullay'.

⁵⁴ Arkell (1951b), pp.210-11 In MacMichael's intelligence notes the Bidayat are described as 'an exaggerated form of the Zaghawa. They are darker, wilder, bigger thieves, more independent, more treacherous, and live farther North than the latter' (MacMichael, 1915, SGA Intel. 5/3/38).

The Epic of Abu Zayd and the Legend of the Wise Stranger

In Darfur the Tunjurs commonly claim an origin for their people in the great migration of the Arab Banu Hilal ('The Sons of the Crescent Moon') to North Africa under the legendary leader Abu Zayd. This migration is alleged to have brought the Tunjur south from 'Tunis al-Khadra', which, with its fertility and moderate climate, is regarded as a type of lost paradise of a Tunjur golden age. The strength of this origin tradition is seen in Nachtigal's recollection of the nineteenth century Darfur Tunjur sultan Muhammad al-Hasin, who once asked a visiting *sharif* from al-Qayrawan, the holy city of Tunis, what had become of the descendants of his ancestors there.⁵⁵

The Tunjur tradition of Hilalian origin brings the Tunjur descent myth into the world of the Arabian epic of Abu Zayd and the *taghriba* ('western march') of the Banu Hilal through North Africa into the Maghrib. The best known recension of this story, the *Sira al-Hilaliyya*, exists in two versions, the Syrian and the Hijazi, but it thrives principally through its lively and detailed oral version, filled with great heroes and terrible villains, and long a favourite recitation in the coffee-houses of the Middle East and North Africa.⁵⁶ The tale exists in two parts; the first describes the early years of Abu Zayd and his tribe in Arabia. The second part, known as *al-Durra al-munifa fi harb Diyab wa qatl al-Zanati Khalifa* ('The sublime pearl regarding the war of Diyab and the slaying of the Khalifa al-Zanati') concerns the drought and famine that afflicted the Banu Hilal in Arabia, and the efforts of Abu Zayd and his companions to find new pasturage for the *kabila*. This group arrives at 'Tunis the green' and asks permission of its Berber king, Khalifa al-Zanati, to settle in the surrounding area. After various difficulties with the Berber king, Abu Zayd returns home to lead his tribe into the new lands around Tunis. In most accounts the Banu Hilal and the Zanata Berbers meet in a great battle, in which Khalifa al-Zanati is killed by being pierced through the eye in single combat, usually by Diyab, one of the other heroes of the Banu Hilal. After this the land of Tunis passes into the hands of the Banu Hilal. There are innumerable variations of endless complexity beyond these basic narrative points. Many variations emphasize a Himyarite origin for the Zanata Berbers, thus turning the cycle of stories into part of a never ending struggle between Yemenite and Hijazi Arabs.

MacMichael collected a number of oral traditions in Kordofan concerning Abu Zayd, of which four have interest for us. The first, collected from the Musaba'at sultan in Kordofan, reflects the story held by their Fur rivals, the Kayra, in which Ahmad al-Ma'qur was the founder of the Kayra Fur dynasty (and by implication was the ancestor of Tunsam, the founder of the Musaba'at group in Kordofan);

Abu Zayd of the great Arabian tribe of El Hilala came to Darfur from the East. He had a brother named Ahmad, and the latter tried to seduce Abu Zayd's wife: the infuriated Abu Zayd bade his slaves attack Ahmad, and they did so and wounded him in the leg: hence Ahmad is known as 'El Ma'akur'. Abu Zayd, dissatisfied with Darfur, now marched northwards to Tunis, leaving

⁵⁵ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.347

⁵⁶ Norris (1982), pp.210-26

Ahmad behind. The latter married the daughter of the Tungur Sultan and in time succeeded to the throne of Darfur.⁵⁷

Another story pits Abu Zayd and the Banu Hilal against the Berbers in a battle for Kordofan in the era of the Umayyad *khalif*-s (661-750 AD):

In the days of the Beni Ommayya Abu Zayd lived in North Africa and fought with the Himyaritic Zenata: he subjugated them, but again they revolted under one named Khalifa. Abu Zayd marched against them and drove them southwards before him till he reached El Adayk, about 40 miles north of Bara in Kordofan. It was close to here, at a rock since known as El Zinati, that Abu Zayd finally slew Khalifa and completed the rout of the Zenata.⁵⁸

In a version told by a Baqqara *shaykh* Ahmad al-Ma'qur appears as the son of Abu Zayd who is dropped from the Banu Hilal migration to the west in somewhat unfortunate circumstances. The story begins with Abu Zayd's accidental discovery of Tunis al-Khadra, and his return to his people (either in Arabia or Syria):

Abu Zayd retraced his steps marvelling and told his tribe of the wonderful land he had discovered. They at once determined to migrate there: packed their belongings and so forth. They marched through Kassala, Gedaref, Sherkayla, and El Rahad to El Fasher in Darfur; and it was as they passed through Darfur that Ahmad the grandson [son?] of Abu Zayd seduced his grandmother, the mother of Abu Zayd. To prevent this occurring again, Ahmad's father cut his son's tendon Achilles with a sword and mounted him on a camel for the rest of the journey. One night Ahmad, faint and weary, fell off the camel and lay stunned. When he recovered his wits he crawled for refuge under a bush and was there found by the heathen blacks. He was tended by them and eventually taught them to read the Koran and speak Arabic and converted them to Islam: finally he became king over them and founder of a great dynasty.⁵⁹

In the fourth story of Abu Zayd, Ahmad al-Ma'qur is once again the brother of Abu Zayd, and is left for some untold reason in Dar Humr, (in the borderland between Darfur and Kordofan) when Abu Zayd reverses the migration in order to take another route into Darfur:

Abu Zayd and his host set out for Tunis from the East and passed through Kassala, Sherkayla and El Rahad: when he reached Dar Humr⁶⁰ he was dispirited by the attacks of the tsetse fly upon his camels and the difficulty of making his way with camels over the cotton-soil. He therefore left his brother Hamid (sic) el Ma'akur there, and returning with his people led them to Darfur by the Arbain road that runs from the Nile across the North of Kordofan.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Related by 'El Sultan' Hamid Gabr el Dar, Musaba'awi', at al-Obaid, 1907; In MacMichael (1912b), App.III, p.231 The episode in which an unfaithful wife tries to seduce her brother-in-law and then accuses him before her husband is known in folklore analyses as motif K 2111 (Pontiphar's wife). See Stith Thompson, *Motif index of folk literature*, Vol.4. Bloomington Ind., 1966, p.474, cited in Hurreiz (1986), p.5.

⁵⁸ Related by Misr Muhammad, a Ferahani (Dar Hamid), at Serag, 1908; In MacMichael (1912b), App.III, p.232

⁵⁹ Related by 'Sheikh Ghanowi of the Dar Gawad Hawazma (Bakkara)', at Sungukai, 1908; In MacMichael (1912b), App.III, pp.232-4

⁶⁰ Dar Humr is located in south-west Kordofan and is named for the Humr section of the Messirya Arabs who make this area their home. For the boundaries of Dar Humr, see the map in Cunnison (1954), facing p.51

⁶¹ Related by Mekki Husayb, *shaykh* of Hamr Felaita, 1908; In MacMichael (1912b), App.III, p.234

All these stories reflect the integration of the epic of Abu Zayd and the archetypal 'Wise Stranger', a folkloric element in Sudanic stories that in Darfur goes by the name of Ahmad al-Ma'qur.⁶² O'Fahey and Spaulding describe the 'Wise Stranger' as someone who comes 'to a remote and barbarous land, introduces new customs, often associated with eating, and marries the chief's daughter and their descendants rule but in a different style and under another dynastic name'.⁶³ The earliest known written reference to Ahmad al-Ma'qur occurs in Cadalvène and Breuvery (1841), in which he is described as an 'Abbasid of the Quraysh Arabs who led a number of nomadic tribes into Kordofan and Darfur, where he seized power and established Islam'.⁶⁴

Another Kordofan-based variant on the tale is said to have been written by al-Samarkandi in the 16th century. In this version the 'Abbasids are said to have conquered Nubia after their expulsion from Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258. At some point Abu Zayd and Ahmad al-'Abbasid crossed the White Nile to attack the Nuba of Kordofan. The attack was successful, but Abu Zayd was wounded in the leg and left on the battlefield. He was found by the Nuba and remained to found the Abu'l-Sakaring dynasty of Jebel Taqali before moving on to Darfur, where he married Shau al-Dorsid's daughter and began another dynasty'.⁶⁵ In this variant the 'Abbasid lineage so valued by the Kayra Fur is stressed, and the Daju king is replaced by Shau al-Dorsid, emphasizing the familial link between the late Tunjurs and the early Kayra rulers. The whole reads as an attempt to reconcile the Jebel Taqali and Darfur versions of the 'Wise Stranger' legend in order to fit this tale into a genealogical sequence.

A version of the tale known from Dar Tuar may be important in tracing the origins of the Tunjur (if we regard the tradition as Tunjur in origin, which it appears to be). Dar Tuar is a Zaghawa territory lying directly between Ennedi and the northern hills of Darfur, the traditional centre of the Tunjur kingdom.⁶⁶ A tradition collected by Arkell from the chief of Dar Tuar relates 'that when Ahmad al Ma'gur was left behind wounded by his brother, his sister Al Doma stayed behind with him and eventually became the mother of Tuar, *i.e.*, of all the five sections of Zaghawa who claim Bornu descent, being given in marriage by the sultan to Haj 'Ali of Bornu, a learned man who had been on pilgrimage, and who was put in charge of Dar Zaghawa after the flight of the Mira chief'.⁶⁷ The existence of this story in Dar Tuar (appropriately modified

⁶² East of Jebel Gelli is a circular stone-walled *hosh*, in which are several stone huts that are said to have been the home of Ahmad al-Ma'qur; Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3).

⁶³ O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974), p.114 Further versions of the legend are cited from Bornu, the 'Abdallab Arabs, and Guinea (Old Mali); (Hurreiz, 1986, p.9), and from Jebel Taqali in Kordofan (O'Fahey, 1971, p.90), where the Muslim Wise Stranger who marries into the pagan dynasty is known as Muhammad al-Ja'ali, a Qurayshi Arab of 'Abbasid descent.

⁶⁴ Cadalvène and Breuvery (1973), p.199

⁶⁵ Arkell, SOAS, Box 4/File 16; O'Fahey (1980b), p.49

⁶⁶ See the map of the Zaghawa territories in Tubiana, Tubiana, Quezel, Bourreil, Reyre, and Sarre (1968), *frontispiece*

⁶⁷ Arkell (1951b), p.218

for the present Zaghawa inhabitants) may indicate the passage of the Tunjur through this area on a migration to Darfur from the north.

Variants of the Ahmad al-Ma'qur tradition in which considerable foreshortening was employed in order to emphasize a familial link between the Tunjur and Kayra Fur were noted by Nachtigal:

At the time when Ahmed el-Ma'qur came into the country, he had understood how to establish himself in the favour of the then ruler, whom tradition calls Kuroma, but who is not mentioned in any written list of rulers. Kuroma had married Fora, a daughter of the chief of the Kera, who bore him a son, Shau or Sau. Later he divorced this wife, and when Ahmed el-Ma'qur became his favourite, she had been given to him as his wife; from this marriage Dali was born. Some, however, depart from this tradition so far as to say that it was Rifa'a, the son of Ahmed el-Ma'qur, who married the Kera chief's daughter, and that it was from this marriage that Shau and Dali were born. But the two men cannot have had both parents the same; in all the lists of rulers Shau concludes the Tunjur rulers, and in popular tradition also he is generally known as the last king of the Tunjur, while his half-brother Dali, whose proper name is Delil Bahar, is always recorded as the founder of the Kera dynasty.⁶⁸

Another version of this tale which again emphasizes a familial link between the Tunjur and the Kayra Fur is that collected by Slatin in the 1880's.⁶⁹ About the fourteenth century, the 'Tunjur Arabs' began a southwards migration from Tunis into the lands of Wadai, Borno, and Darfur. Among the first arrivals in the latter place were two brothers, 'Ali and Ahmad, who settled on the western slopes of Jebel Marra. 'Ali, convinced of his wife's infidelity with his brother, severed Ahmad's Achilles tendon with his sword and left him to die in the desert. Remorseful, 'Ali sent two slaves, Zayd and Birked (the eponymous ancestors of the Zayadiya and the Birked⁷⁰ of Darfur) with camels and provisions back to his lame brother, who had nearly expired when found. They took him to the nearest settlement, where Ahmad was well received by the savage king of the Daju, Kor. After marrying Kor's daughter, Ahmad succeeded to the throne, the news of which was heartily greeted by the Tunjurs of Borno and Wadai, who began to pour into Darfur in large enough numbers so as to displace the Daju. Ahmad's great-grandson was 'Sultan' Dali, whose mother belonged to the Kayra Fur. The idea of a relationship between the Tunjur and Fur is reinforced by the claim of the Mayringa section of the Fur to be descendants of the Banu Hilal.⁷¹ In Dar Abo Uma (eastern Jebel Marra)

⁶⁸ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.275; Traditions may often be streamlined and eventually emptied of detail in their upper reaches; 'They may consist, in fact, of a first period which is little more than a series of postulated zero-points for the origin of social groups such as tribes or clans - a geographical area or even a point of a compass; a tale of first occupation of the tribal territory; an eponymous ancestor with no other attribute than that of being first; or perhaps alternatively, an ancestor who has a miraculous origin and is therefore somewhat larger than life and does things which no human being has subsequently been able to do - myths that seem to be common in chiefly society in which rulers do actually claim extraordinary powers' (Richards, 1960, p.178).

⁶⁹ Slatin (1896-7), pp.38-41

⁷⁰ Two sections of the Birked maintain traditions of a Banu Hilal origin, though several possibilities exist to explain this: 'The so-called Hilali sections of Birked may be no more than Tunjur who joined them in Darfur or may represent Beni Hilal elements who joined the Birked in the same way as others joined the Tunjur' (MacMichael, 1918, p.49).

⁷¹ Arkell (1951b), p.235, fn.6

the Mayringa formed the ruling group, supplying the Abo Uma, the governor of the province. The clan, which is found in smaller numbers in Dar Abo Dima (southwest of Jebel Marra), claims descent from an eponymous Hilali ancestor, Mayri, but the name probably comes from *mayri*, a kind of grass.⁷²

An interesting variant of the 'Wise Stranger' legend is found in a recension of the Funj Chronicle:⁷³

It is said that the Funj are Umayyads. When the rule was taken from them, and the 'Abbasids put them to flight, two of their men came to this place, and begat offspring there, and the Funj are their descendants. And it is said that they are Bani Hilal.

And the common story is that their chiefs used to gather at the place of their chief, and they would bring food, and the first to arrive ate the kidney. And they were living at Jayli, until a man arrived from downstream, and settled amongst them, and looked into their affairs. He advised them, and it came to pass that when food came, it was set aside until the company was assembled. Then he would get up, and distribute it among them, and they would eat, and the remainder would be left over. So they said, 'A holy man; he shall not leave us'. So they married him to the daughter of their king, and she bore him a son.⁷⁴

Holt regards the reference to the Banu Hilal as a later interpolation and the improbable association of the Funj with the Umayyads is surprising, but the tale has remarkable similarities to the 'Tunjur' version of the 'Wise Stranger', with an emphasis on the importance of reforming eating customs. In Darfur,

It had been the custom for centuries for any retainer to take his food at the time it pleased him, quite regardless of the wants of others. It therefore frequently happened that, 'first come, first served', nothing remained for the later arrivals, who, in their anger, would fall on their comrades, and as often as not blood would be shed. Ahmed reformed all this by establishing a fixed hour for meals, at which all must be present, with the happy result that peace and tranquility prevailed.⁷⁵

Ahmad al-Ma'qur's innovations in eating were Islamicized in later versions of the tale, in which the innovation consisted of saying the *basmala* blessing before eating.⁷⁶

Sons of the Crescent Moon

The historical Banu Hilal did indeed seize Tunis, but the manner of, and reasons for, their coming to Ifrikiya are poorly understood. Historians have, for the main part, followed the fourteenth century version

⁷² See MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), pp.95-9

⁷³ The recension is known as the 'Vienna manuscript', first obtained by Dr. Ignaz Knoblecher (1819-58). Holt believes it to be a copy of an early version of the original (dated approx. 1823), and provides a translation and transcription of the difficult Arabic in Holt (1961), pp.39-55

⁷⁴ Holt (1961), p.50

⁷⁵ Slatin (1896-7), pp.40-41

⁷⁶ Arkell, SOAS, Box 4/File 13; O'Fahey (1972), pp.70-71, based on an interview with Muhammad Ibrahim, Zalinjay, May 25, 1969.

of Ibn Khaldun (in the *Kitab al-'Ibar*), which describes the coming of the Banu Hilal as akin to 'a spreading of locusts' (*jarad mumtashir*), destroying and devouring everything in their path.⁷⁷

Following the account of Ibn Khaldun (who himself drew upon Ibn Shaddad, al-Nuwayri and Abu al-Fida), the westward migration of the Banu Hilal and the Banu Sulaym appears to have had its genesis in the break-away of the Zirid ruler of Tunis, al-Mu'izz ibn Badis, from his Fatimid master in Cairo (al-Mustansir) in favour of the Sunni Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad. Unable to send an army against al-Mu'izz, the Fatimids hatched a plan to unleash the hordes of unruly Banu Hilal and Banu Sulaym bedouin who had settled in Upper Egypt on the Tunisian kingdom of Ifrikiya.⁷⁸ With a promise of booty and pastures, the Arabs began their march west in 1050-51.⁷⁹ Brett and Fentress suggest that: 'Lacking the call to faith which had set the Berber tribesmen on the road to empire, the motive for their *taghriba*, their drive to the West, was not so much dominion as opportunism'.⁸⁰ The unsuspecting al-Mu'izz at first tried to enlist the nomads into his armed forces, but the relentless looting and destruction of the Arab host in Tunisia led to a series of battles. At the most important of these, the battle of Haydaran (in the spring of 1052) the larger black slave army of al-Mu'izz broke before the Arabs, a result which eventually forced al-Mu'izz to reacknowledge Fatimid suzerainty in 1054-5, and to abandon Kayrawan to the nomads in 1057. The Banu Hilal expanded into the Maghrib, and remained the most important force in the area despite being broken into numerous petty states in a constant and anarchic state of war against each other and the remains of the Berber confederacies of the north. This situation held until the arrival of the Almohads and the return of security and order in the mid-twelfth century.⁸¹ In the 13th and 14th centuries, the Banu Hilal in Tunis were themselves displaced by the Banu Sulaym. The details of this basic account are no longer regarded as entirely accurate by modern scholars who have examined the biases and literary precedents involved in its composition:

In recent years an attempt to revise the hypothesis of the Hilalian catastrophe and some of the related issues has been undertaken. It is now maintained, for example, that the Arab nomads were not so numerous, that their invasion was not so destructive and that already before their arrival there had appeared signs of decline in the economies and societies of North Africa. Moreover, the emigration of the Arabs from Egypt is now considered to have been caused mainly by the economic situation (a catastrophic dearth and hunger under al-Mustansir's reign) and not by political

⁷⁷ 'The famous invasion of North Africa by the bedouin, which Ibn Khaldun compared to a swarm of locusts, was in reality a fiction trading on the legend of the Ma'rib dam to convey the impression of a disastrous flood' (Brett, 1993, p.55).

⁷⁸ The Banu Hilal and the Banu Sulaym had been encouraged to migrate to Egypt by the Fatimid rulers of Cairo. Caliph Al-'Aziz (975-96) resettled many of these bedouin to Upper Egypt and the desert east of the Nile. When migration west began, many of the tribesmen remained behind, where they remained in a constant state of revolt until punitive expeditions were carried out by the Armenian vizier of al-Mustansir, Badr al-Gamali al-Guyushi, in the early years of the 12th century (See Hasan, 1967, pp.94-5).

⁷⁹ There is some evidence to suggest that the Banu Hilal were already present in the oasis of Farafra at the end of the tenth century, and had been migrating steadily into the region to the south of Ifrikiya for fifty years. See Brett (1995), p.258

⁸⁰ Brett and Fentress (1996), p.133

⁸¹ Hrbek (1988), pp.323-4; Knapp (1970), pp.46-7

considerations. The debate has contributed to the clarification of many points and has to some degree rectified the one-sided view of the Hilalians as the chief and sole culprits of the decline.⁸²

Some traditions hold that the legendary Abu Zayd and his Hilalian host crossed the Nile on their way west. Petherick gave the origin of an Abu Zayd related toponym he encountered in 1862: '...came to the ford Mochada [Muhatta] aboo Zaet - so called from it having been crossed by Aboo Zaet, an Arab chief, who with his tribe from Arabia passed over, and formed a settlement to the West'.⁸³ Brun-Rollet was told that after crossing the Muhatta Abu Zayd the Banu Hillal crossed Kordofan, Darfur, and the great desert before arriving in Tunis.⁸⁴ Another tradition holds that Abu Zayd marched from Kassala, crossing the Nile near modern Kosti. Each campsite on the march was known as Muhatta abu Zayd.⁸⁵ These examples may represent the Abu Zayd epic becoming intertwined with a historical movement of a section of Banu Hilal into the western Sudan, following their deployment by Sultan al-Mansur Qala'un of Cairo in an expedition against the Nubian kingdom of Mukarra in 1288.⁸⁶ Carbou collected Tunjur traditions in Kanem that spoke of a stay on the banks of the Nile, which Carbou thought was a vague memory of the time when a segment of the Banu Hillal were resident in Upper Egypt.⁸⁷ The arrival of the Tunjur in Darfur was dated by MacMichael to the 15th or 16th centuries, though he did not favour the theory of a northern origin over an eastern migration.⁸⁸ The traditions of Darfur and Kanem seem to contain elements of both, though the legend of Abu Zayd has penetrated all the variants.⁸⁹

Nachtigal appears to have been the only European to have seen Tunjur king-lists in Darfur.⁹⁰ Unhappily no record of these was found amongst his notes when they were used to posthumously compile the last volume of his journeys. From the publication of his notes we are told only that Ahmad al-Ma'qur

⁸² Hrbek (1988), pp.333-34

⁸³ Petherick, Vol.I (1869), p.91

⁸⁴ Brun-Rollet (1855), p.75

⁸⁵ MacMichael (1912b), p.231. MacMichael notes the existence of the name Tunjur in a rapid 72 miles south of Wadi Halfa. The word *tunjur* means 'a bow for shooting' in Nubian, and was used by MacMichael as evidence for a Nubian origin for the Tunjur: '(Tunjur) traditions connect them with Dongola and the Beni Hilal, they preserve the custom of using the sign of the Cross, their name survives in a rapid on the Nile, and all things considered, one may say that such evidence as there is clearly indicates a Nubian origin for the Tunjur' (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.69).

⁸⁶ Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahim ibn al-Furat; *Ta'rikh Ibn al-Furat* or *Ta'rikh al-duwal wa'l-muluk* VII, cited in Hasan (1967), p.171; see also p.113

⁸⁷ Carbou, Vol.I (1912), pp.74-5, fn.3

⁸⁸ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.66

⁸⁹ Arkell advanced the idea, based on earlier speculation by Palmer, that the Berber Tunjur were in the habit of referring to themselves as *ilala*, the Berber plural term for noble (*ili*). After their conversion to Islam and a new-found need for respectable Arab ancestry, the *ilala* naturally called themselves *Hilali* (Arkell, 1951b, pp.215-222). The suggestion, though neat, is completely unverifiable.

⁹⁰ Nachtigal speaks of the great difficulty he had in getting permission to read such documents, or in finding the persons responsible for their keeping, which is typical of certain African societies in which it is thought unnecessary (or even undesirable) to spread the information contained in 'historical charters' throughout the community. Keepers of genealogies eventually may come to be considered their 'owners' with all the proprietary sense that involves (see Richards, 1960, p.180).

was the first Tunjur ruler in all the lists, and that Shau Dorsid was always the last ruler named.⁹¹ Kropáček remarked of the Tunjur that 'their available genealogies are clearly fictitious within the well-known schemes of Arab noble ancestry'.⁹² The descent line from Abu Zayd to Ahmad al-Ma'qur might reflect a certain Hilalian influence; 'The Banu Hilal were addicted to the genealogical fiction of descent from a common ancestor, under whose umbrella extended families or clans might break up into fractions, or unite to form new tribes'.⁹³ Other lists are known from Kanem, Wadai and Kordofan, but there is little in the way of historical fact or oral tradition to connect with the names provided. It seems quite possible that the Tunjur were in origin a semi-Arabized Berber group from the Tunis region that incorporated Banu Hilal elements (possibly even in a leadership role). This group may have begun a general southward movement in the 14th century or slightly earlier in which Islamic influence declined as the group moved further into the interior. The adoption of a Banu Hilal lineage by these Berbers would not in any way be unusual; 'Going beyond mere imitation, it is possible for those attracted by the prestige of the conquerors to pass into their ranks as the clients of individual leaders or groups, so that they acquire a new lineage and a new identity, and their origin is easily forgotten'.⁹⁴ Banu Hilal tribesmen may have been only an auxiliary to the main Berber force, which in turn adopted what was supposed to be a superior lineage from the Banu Hilal. Coalitions of Berbers and Banu Hilal are known from as early as the 11th century.⁹⁵

Shau Dorsid, 'The Master over us'

In the apparent absence of Tunjur king-lists in twentieth century Darfur, one must look to the remaining monuments in Darfur connected with Tunjur rulers to see what names may have survived through association with the ruins. In almost every case, however, only one name is cited; that of Shau al-Dorsid (or Dorshid). According to MacMichael, 'the name of Sháu Dorshid is familiar in Gebel Sí itself to the present day, but the greatest vagueness prevails as to details and opinion is even divided as to whether he was a Tunguráwi or a Furáwi or one of the Tó Rá, the prehistoric people who, according to tradition, preceded the Fur both in the mountains of Sí and Turra (the northernmost portion of Marra, immediately south of Sí.)'⁹⁶ A king of immense power (according to the traditions), Shau was remembered as a tyrant and a despot, known not for conquest or heroic deeds, but rather for his repressive sorties and endless programme of monumental building works, for which he conscripted vast numbers of his subjects.

Not only did he drive them from one military expedition to another, undertaken in difficult circumstances, but he also compelled them to dig wells in the high rocky regions, and to undertake the arduous and useless task of levelling the Mailo mountain peak, on the summit of which he wanted to establish his residence. This lies in the Ro-Kuri region at the western foot of the Marra

⁹¹ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp. 274, 347

⁹² Kropáček (1984), p.420

⁹³ Brett and Fentress (1996), p.141

⁹⁴ Brett (1995), p.268

⁹⁵ Hrbek (1988), p.333

⁹⁶ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.68

mountain, and is still called today Mailo Fugo Jurto, i.e. 'Mailo, the levelled mountain'. Because of the slow progress that was made the levelling project had ultimately to be abandoned.⁹⁷

The massiveness of the many stone complexes built at the summit of various hills and mountains in the northern Jebel Marra and Jebel Si areas are testaments to the (forced?) industry of the Tunjur sultan's subjects.

Many stories have been collected regarding Shau's activities; Arkell collected one with apocalyptic overtones from a *shartai* at Jebel Si:

Shau Dorshid was the head of a race of white straight-nosed giants, who came from the north and established a kingdom in Darfur 'at the beginning of the world before the Tunjur sultans'. Their capital was at Fara in Dar Furnung, where there are red brick buildings of theirs.⁹⁸

There are stone ruins of theirs at Tow in Jebel Gurgi: and you can see the prints of their boots in the rocks at Abunjedah. They occupied Jebel Marra. Eventually they moved away east. They were not Tunjur, as the Tunjur say. The Tunjur came after them, and made out that they were descended from Shau Dorshid. He (the informant) learnt from a very old Furawi called Fiki Khalil, who died in 1914 (?), that this race were the ancestors of the English. He took the Fiki to Sultan 'Ali Dinar, before whom the Fiki prophesized that as these white giants had come at the beginning of this world, so the English would become lords of Darfur at the end of the world.⁹⁹

Nachtigal has provided the most complete recounting of the end of Shau Dorsid's rule (and the Tunjur supremacy in Darfur);

Shau so far alienated himself from the hearts of everybody that on one occasion, when he was away on an expedition against some rebellious villages on the Si mountain, the great men of the country asked Delil, or Dali, his half-brother, to seize power as quickly as possible with his forces. He camped for the night in Turi, his second residence, which still exists in the Kora mountains, and from there advanced to Si Dallanga, not far from the Nami mountain. Near here, his half-brother Dali defeated him in a night battle at Barra, during which the daring and courageous Shau was deserted by most of his men. He finally fled to Turi, dismissing on the way, with the words 'Go to your new king Dali', the remnant of his faithful followers, and even his wives and children. Dali had him pursued to Turi, but he was no longer to be found there. The popular story says that he had fled on a white horse and apparently disappeared.¹⁰⁰

The origin of the name 'Shau' is of some dispute. Balfour Paul maintains that the word '*Shau*' is the normal Kanuri word for Sultan, and is thus a title of Borno origin.¹⁰¹ If correct, this does not necessarily imply that Shau was of Kanuri origin himself - it was a regional practice for new royal courts to adopt the titulary of older and established kingdoms.¹⁰² Nachtigal notes that the surname "Durshit or Dorsid" means 'the master over us' and indicates the harshness of his government.¹⁰³ Arkell looked much further back; 'The

⁹⁷ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.276 Recall the legend of the Daju tyrant Kassifuroge and Jebel Um Kardos, related above (p.48).

⁹⁸ A reference to 'Ayn Farah, discussed below.

⁹⁹ Arkell, SOAS, Box 5/File 24/(Darfur 16) - Interview with informant *Shartai* Musa um Ruddus of Jebel Si, Kuttum, 22/2/24

¹⁰⁰ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.276

¹⁰¹ Balfour Paul (1954a), p.139

¹⁰² Last (1985), p.187

¹⁰³ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.276

name of the legendary Tungur sultan Show Dorshid also is inexplicable unless it is derived from Shu or Show the sun god of Egypt, who occasionally is given the attribute *neb-er-djer shed* 'lord without limit, deliverer', and with whom the king of Meroë was sometimes equated in complimentary fashion'.¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere Arkell traced the name through a connection with the Tumagara (as discussed above):

The Tumagera must have been at one time looked on as remarkably royal in nature for them to have provided princes for Tibesti, Kawar, Munio, and Mandara, also perhaps Demagherim, if not Darfur and Wadai as well. Such royalty is bequeathed to men only by descent from the ancient gods. Such a theory would explain the origin of the name or title Show for the early ruler of Darfur, for at Meroe the king was identified with Show, who was looked on as a sun god, a later form of Shu, the atmosphere.¹⁰⁵

According to Hurreiz, the name Shau refers to the tyrant's fair skin, Shau being the name of a kind of locust known for its yellowish colour.¹⁰⁶ In some variants of the Ahmad al-Ma'qur legend Shau is even referred to as having Spanish or Italian blood.¹⁰⁷

The Fall of the Tunjur empire

The work of Terrence Walz in investigating Cairo court records of the seventeenth century as part of his research on trade between Egypt and the Sudan yielded an unexpected and welcome result by providing documented dates for the existence of the Tunjur kingdom in Darfur. Black slaves from the African interior are often mentioned in court records of sale and manumission, with their names usually consisting of a personal name tied to a *nisba*, or place of origin. Since the original homeland of the slaves was usually either unrecorded or forgotten, the *nisba* was normally that of the country of export. Thus we find slaves carrying the *nisba* of *al-Tajuwi*, *al-Tunjurawi* and *al-Furi*.¹⁰⁸ The important names found with reference to the Tunjur kingdom are: Sa'd al-Tunjurawi (sold in Cairo 1018/1609), Maryam bt. 'Abd Allah al-suda al-Tunjurawi, 'the Tunjur black' (freed in Cairo 1020/1611-12) and Mubarak b. 'Abd Allah al-suda al-Tunjurawi (freed 1030/1620).¹⁰⁹ These dates would seem to confirm the existence of the Tunjur kingdom in the early seventeenth century (or possibly only as far as the late sixteenth century, as the names might have survived the political existence of the Tunjur kingdom if the slaves in question had been resident in Egypt for some time before they came to the attention of the Cairo courts - as one might expect in cases of manumission), and suggest that the Tunjur state was involved in a trade relationship with Egypt. By the late seventeenth century the name al-Tunjurawi begins to be replaced by al-Furi or al-Furawi.

¹⁰⁴ Arkell (1962), p.176

¹⁰⁵ Arkell (1951b), p.217

¹⁰⁶ Hurreiz (1986), p.4

¹⁰⁷ Musa A. Abd al Jalil and 'Abd Allah A. Khatir, *Al turath al Sha'bi li qabilat al fur*, (Silsilat dirasat fi al turath al Sudani 23), Khartoum, 1977, pp.5-6, cited in Hurreiz (1986), p.11, fn.5

¹⁰⁸ Walz (1978), p.177

¹⁰⁹ From the notes of Dr. Walz, published in O'Fahey (1980b), p.53

While the Darfur traditions regarding the end of Tunjur rule give little more information than that the last Tunjur king was disposed by his half-brother and subsequently fled to Ennedi, by contrast the last days of Tunjur rule in Wadai are well preserved in tradition as part of the story of 'Abd al-Karim.¹¹⁰ A detailed account was collected by Palmer.¹¹¹

The first Arab sultan was 'Abd ul Karim. He seized the power from the ancestors of the Tunjur by guile, and craft, and sorcery. His capital was the land of Madala. The Muhamid Arabs assembled, and swore fealty during his campaigns against the Sau whom he conquered. They assembled about 5,000 camels or more and tied to the tail of each a mat which dragged along the ground.

Thus they marched to the town of the Tunjur Sultan. News was brought to the Tunjur Sultan saying: 'Arise with all speed and might, a large army is marching down on us.' So the drum was beaten and martial music was played, the Tunjur army was assembled, drawn up in battle array, and the Sultan came out to repel the foe.

But when he saw the dust of the enemy's host mounting to the sky like a cloud or mist, he turned to his Wazir and said to him: 'What is this dust of an army which is as numerous as a cloud of locusts?' 'What', said the Sultan, 'are we to do in this pass?' The Wazir said: 'We do not know what tribes compose this army. We can leave our homes and then return and attack them.' The Sultan said: 'Yes'. So they left their homes in flight and came to the land of Masmaj, to the rock of Shimir, and the rock of Bariat, and stayed there.

'Abd ul Karim entered the Tunjur Sultan's house and found it empty except for the Sultan's daughter, who spoke to him as if she were the Sultan, so that they left behind their plunder and all the property there was.

Sultan 'Abd ul Karim then ruled as King. News came to him that the Tunjur were assembled at the rock Bariat and were digging [for water] in the river. So he sent a large army against them to fight. When the Tunjur heard of the coming of that army against them, and saw its approach, they attacked, but they were defeated by reason of the size of 'Abd ul Karim's army.

The Tunjur Sultan fled from the midst of his army and sought the rock Mujuf. His army then fled in all directions. The army of the Sultan then returned - Sultan 'Abd ul Karim ibn Sharif Jami ibn Sharif Jawad ul Ahar ibn Sharif Abbas, the maternal uncle of the Prophet of God...

The importance of the king's daughter in a matrilinear method of succession seems to be acknowledged in this story, in the person of the princess 'who spoke... as if she were Sultan'. We also see the usual claim to 'Abbasid origins in the short genealogy provided for 'Abd al-Karim.

In the version of the story provided in the 'Native Chronicle of Wadai'¹¹², 'Abd al-Karim returns to Wadai from a pilgrimage to Mecca with the intention of introducing Islam to Wadai. In this he is initially aided by the Tunjur king 'Dawurd al Miriri the Modaddan', who had capitals at Wara and Kadam (Kadama). The sultan gives his daughter, Ayesha, in marriage to 'Abd al-Karim, but she steals the king's armour and weapons and presents them to 'Abd al-Karim, who enters into a power struggle with the king:

¹¹⁰ Nachtigal mentions repeated revolts by the Tunjur against Sulayman's rule following the Kayra ascension to power. Even as late as the reign of Muhammad Tayrab (c.1756-87) the Tunjur sultan al-Mur led a major Tunjur revolt against the Kayra (Nachtigal, Vol.IV, 1971, pp.279, 288).

¹¹¹ Palmer (1936), p.215

¹¹² Palmer, Vol II (1928b), pp.26-7

When the Sultan of the Tunjur saw that Abd ul Karim was accepted by the people and that they followed him, he was angry and drove him out of Wâra; but his wife 'Ayesha remained there, aiding his cause.

So the people took sides and learned Sheikhs wrote letters.

The first of the kings of the country to follow Abd ul Karim were the king of N'galaka¹¹³ whose name was Tanjak, and the king of the Mimi, and the Sheikh of the Muhammid Arabs. These chiefs came to Abd ul Karim's assistance against the Tunjur at Wâra.

As a ruse in the fight Abd ul Karim tied branches of trees on the tails of his camels, and drove them forward so as to create a great cloud of dust, and give the impression that he had a large army.

Towards night the battle grew fierce, and 'Ayesha, who was present, said to her father to frighten him: 'O father, save yourself, for here is an army which is too strong for you.'

So he mounted his horse called 'Son of Al-Kamâri', and fled to Kadam, which was one of his districts.

It is said that this horse was white with a red mouth and that his dam Al-Kamâri used to pasture near the tomb of the Saint Abu'l Malik, and that there came to her a stallion whence no one knew and was the sire of her first foal - the Sultan Tunjur's horse.

He was of incredible swiftness and it is said that he set off from Kadam and only stopped at Fitri.¹¹⁴ It is said that the race of Kanem horses called 'Arbad Jud Shallâli' (Roan) are descended from this horse.

Several important points are found in this version; 1) 'Abd al-Karim assumes a character similar to Ahmad al-Ma'qur, introducing Islam to the region and using superior intelligence to take the throne after he has married into the royal family. This 'Wise Stranger' also assumes authority by the usurption of the matrilinear form of succession; 2) The Wadai Tunjur sultan flees to the west on a white horse, just as his counterpart in Darfur, Shau al-Dorsid was said to have done; 3) The sultan's mount is a magical type of beast with incredible speed and endurance, like the *tiangs* known in the Daju tales of sultans' flight. Also common to the Daju tales and the version above is the idea of a sultan going west alone, to be followed by his people at some undefined point (to Sila in the Daju tales, and to Fitri in the Tunjur tale).

Another manuscript intended to illuminate the history of Kanem and the Bulala reinforces the traditions of 'Abbasid descent for the family of 'Abd al-Karim and again describes a process of marrying into the Sultan's family before taking power..¹¹⁵

The people of Wadai are of three kinds:

The first - the people of the 'land of the slaves', the slaves of the Sultan.

The second - the 'Tunjur' whom the slaves of our lord Abbas drove away, and sent to their lord Abbas.

The third - the people of Sherif Abd'ul Karim whose disciple was 'Jarma' ['general'].

Jarma came with his master to Birni N'jimi [Kanem]. The Sultan of the Birni knew of their coming before they arrived. He was told 'that a learned man was coming who would take his kingdom.'

So Jarma's master killed the Sultan, and ran to the Bahr-ul-Jamâl, and sought refuge among the Tubu Gur'aan.

Then the Sultan of the Tunjur gave him his daughter to wed, and said 'pray God for me'.

¹¹³ 'Ayn Galakka

¹¹⁴ Lake Fitri in Kanem

¹¹⁵ Palmer, Vol II (1928b), p.32

But he prayed on his own behalf, and so the Sultan died, but the 'Sherifs' rule Wadai till now - the Abassid Sherifs.

Despite the near certainty (using traditional and historical evidence) that Tunjur rule in Wadai was relatively brief (about a century) and was toppled by an Arab coalition led by 'Abd al-Karim somewhere between 1611 and 1635, Arkell suggested in one of his last works that 'It seems therefore that the alleged Tungur 'kingdom' of Darfur was a province of the Nubian kingdom of Mukurra, with provincial headquarters probably at Uri, a few miles east of Ain Farah. Thus the legendary Tungur 'pagan kingdom' of Wadai with its capital at Wara may have been but another province of Christian Mukurra, both these provinces becoming lost to Nubia in the 13th century with the advance of Moslem Kanem'.¹¹⁶ The 'Native Chronicle of Wadai', however, recalls the Tunjur as pagans at worst, and poor Muslims at best; 'When God was about to take power from them, he gave them opportunities for wrong doing in the land and as regards their religion, for they were not strict in matters of religion, but mixed up with their faith pagan rites...'.¹¹⁷ Arkell's date of the 13th century for the Tunjur kingdoms of Darfur and Wadai also appears impossibly early. The difference in detail between the legends surrounding the Tunjur in Darfur and Wadai has been noted by O'Fahey;

The traditions of the overthrow of the Tunjur in Wada'i contrast with the ambiguity of the Dar Fur traditions, not only in telling a relatively more consistent story, but in being couched in a familiar Sudanic pattern. A Muslim holy man succeeds in attracting the support of the more Muslim, or more discontented, sections of the population against their pagan, or only nominally Muslim, rulers. The revolution carried through, a new and consciously Muslim dynasty consigns its predecessors to oblivion. And in Dar Fur, oblivion seems to have been imposed very effectively indeed.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Arkell (1963), p.315 See also Arkell (1959), p.45

¹¹⁷ Palmer, Vol.II (1928b), p.25

¹¹⁸ O'Fahey (1980b), p.55

10. Tunjur Sites in Darfur

(Map C: Darfur - Tunjur sites)

Dowda (see pl.10)

An impressive number of palaces and town-sites are attributed to the reign of **Shau Dorsid**; at times it seems that such an attribution is made when the real builder has been forgotten. Nevertheless, such traditions point to his reputation as a prodigious builder. Among these works is the stone palace of **Dowda**¹¹⁹ (near Kaira, in the Jebel Si neighbourhood), which is known locally as Dulo Kuri (Fur: 'The Sultan's ruin'). The structure, consisting of two large circular rooms each 15 feet in diameter) on the summit of a hill, surrounded by a wall 25 feet below (except on the east side, where the hill is very steep) is built with well faced stone, filled with rubble in the typical Tora style. The wall measures from four to six feet thick. The buildings appear to have been flat-roofed. There are two smaller circular rooms, one at the north of the structure and one at the south. The entrance on the west side had well built steps, flanked by stone walls at least 10 feet high. The floors of the main house were sunken. There exists a smaller back entrance, probably an early example of the 'women's gate' (Fur: *orre baya*, literally 'the narrow gate'), an architectural feature that persisted in important residences in Darfur until the 1916 conquest¹²⁰. Arkell found only slight traditions surrounding the site; 'Practically nothing is known of the history of this building. There does not seem to have been any big settlement in the vicinity. It is associated by the local Fur with Shau Dorshid. They say it was built in a day for Shau, who was on a journey, because his wife gave birth there.

¹¹⁹ Arkell's directions are as follows: 'Approached by path from Korral well, which leads to Burgu Kerri, first going west to the old site of Bargala village, and then turning south. The house is on a small hill (100 ft. high) on a small plain called Dowda. This small hill lies about one mile west of the northern half of the great hill of Bulgi. Village of Turi is a mile or so west of this hill.' Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹²⁰ The larger 'men's gate' is known in Fur as the *orre de*. The *orre de* led to the public domain of the palace, while the narrow gate led to more intimate quarter, the *harim*, and the residences of concubines and eunuchs. Nachtigal, who had been in the royal palaces of Wadai and Darfur, remarked that 'while in other countries, e.g. Wadai, it is a mark of distinction to be such a trusted visitor of the king as to be able to choose the so-called Women's Road, in Darfur... great importance was attached to access to the king by the *orre de*' (Nachtigal, vol.4, 1971, p.332). The early existence of these separate gates at Dowda and Uri (see below) may give us a clue as to the standing of women in Tunjur society, if a parallel can be drawn with later Fur practice. O'Fahey, in examining al-Tunisi's references to the *orre baya*, remarks 'Al-Tunisi - not unreasonably from his own perspective - equates the female side of the palace with the *harim* of the palaces and houses of the Islamic heartlands. But this misses the significance of the 'narrow gate'; Fur women, whether royal or commoners, had immeasurably greater social freedom than the women of al-Tunisi's homeland' (O'Fahey, 1980a, p.25). Status of this sort would be more in keeping with Berber traditions than Arab customs, and is an important point in considering the origin of the Tunjur (i.e., Berber vs. Banu Hillal). Barth had the opportunity of seeing the *orre baya* in use in Borno, where it was also used; 'In the wall of the court yard (between the two huts used by the women folk of the household) there was a small back door, raised above the ground, and of diminutive size, apparently intended for admitting female visitors, without obliging them to pass through the parlour, and, at the same time showing much confidence in the discretion of the female department' (Barth, Vol. II, 1857, p.439).

The well also was dug: but as soon as the lady was able to resume his journey, they went on. Who Shau was, or of what tribe, where he came from or where he was going they do not know.¹²¹ Arkell speculates that the compound may have been a rest house for the use of the ruler of Uri on the route from Uri to the Kawra Pass and Turra.¹²²

Dawa

Also near Jebel Si¹²³ is the stone-built settlement at **Dawa**, a small hill marked on the map as Sania Kiri. Northwest of the settlement is the village of Sabula. The small village at the top of the hill consists of clusters of two to three huts gathered around what was presumably the king or chief's house, built on the highest two points of the hill. There is some evidence of a road up the east side of the hill, and there are several more stone houses on a northern spur of the hill. Arkell's informants claim that the site was a residence of Shau Dorsid, who they connected with Uri.¹²⁴

Dirma

A more obvious royal residence can be found at **Dirma**¹²⁵, where a small hill is topped by a palace of faced stone masonry surrounded by a double ring of walls. Inside a circular courtyard with three entrances is a semicircular platform with three steps. 'Local tradition states that this was the house of Shau Dorshid whose main home was at Uri: but who was travelling round his dominion when his wife gave birth, so he built this house for her.'¹²⁶ The story is almost identical to that told of Shau at Dowra.

Kusi (see pl.9b)

¹²¹ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹²² Arkell (1952b), p.253

¹²³ MacMichael opposed the view of Nachtigal (gained from his sources) that Jebel Si ever formed part of the Tunjur kingdom: 'Nachtigal speaks of the last Tungur king, Sháu Dorshid, as living in Gebel Si, and it has been inferred that the Tungur (all or part) lived in those mountains and that they had the seat of their rule there. But the term 'Gebel Si' is a very wide one. It does not include only the rocky, almost impassable, range which forms the northern prolongation of Gebel Marra, but all the cultivable sandy country with smaller outcrops of rock which flank the hills for a day's journey or so to east and west. Even in 'Ali Dinar's time and at the present day the head *Shartái* of Si, which is thus a district as well as a range, does not live in the hills but on the fertile tract to the east of it; and there is no local record or tradition that I have been able to trace, even in Si itself, that the Tungur ever occupied the mountains of Si proper or had their headquarters there. Nor is it in the least likely from what we know of their history that they ever bothered - or were able - to overrun these inhospitable crags and settle there' (MacMichael, Vol.1, 1922, p.67). There is no evidence that the Tunjur ever headquartered at Si, with Uri and 'Ain Farah much more likely locales, but there is a probability that the Tunjur did occupy the area of Jebel Si proper. The tradition of Shau Dorsid's last days cited by Nachtigal mentions Shau making an expedition against rebellious villagers on the Si mountain, whom Shau seems to have regarded as his subjects.

¹²⁴ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹²⁵ Marked on the map as Durma; 14° 10' North, 24° 25' East

¹²⁶ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

A larger house is found at **Kusi**, east of Kurra.¹²⁷ This building is at the far end of a small town of round stone houses. A wall is built around the perimeter, except where an extreme slope makes it unnecessary. The outer stone wall of the house is over six feet thick in places but has fallen in many places. The compound shows some interesting innovations in the usually static Tora building style. Use of the local stones, which tend to be smaller and flatter than usual, enabled the builders to adopt a more complicated plan, with smaller rooms. Attempts have been made to build square rooms, but the corners remain slightly rounded. The many remains of pillars suggest that a flat roof was used: in the large circular rooms found outside the north wall a central pillar was employed.

The general layout at Kusi differs in some ways from that of Uri (the 'royal platform' is noticeably absent); if both sites are genuinely Tunjur in origin it is uncertain how much their dissimilarities might be due to the tendency of the local stone to break up into smaller, flatter pieces than usually employed. A smaller house with a complicated plan is found 25 yards north-east of the main compound. Much of the work at Kusi displays the affinity for innovation seen in many of the Tunjur sites; 'there are frequent attempts at straight walls and square corners, though most of the corners are eventually rounded off; the rooms are smaller and more complicated, and pillars and parti-walls (presumably intended to support flat roofs) are more frequent'.¹²⁸ Local tradition says only that the elusive Shau came from northern Darfur, and did not stay at Kusi long.¹²⁹ The site is interesting as it is placed in the Turra heartland of the Kayra Fur, and as such is the only site in the area attributed to Shau.

Ronya

A settlement at **Ronya**¹³⁰ is attributed to Shau Dorsid, but there is no evidence of a palace at the site, which is probably Tunjur in origin. The rocks leading up the hillside appear to be polished by feet, indicating a lengthy period of occupation. The town consists of a number of roughly circular compounds, each containing up to 10-12 windowless rooms. The rooms contain the characteristic 'cupboards', and appear to have had flat roofs. The outer compound walls are in the Tora style, well faced, and up to six feet thick and over ten feet high. The storerooms yielded a number of items.¹³¹ Two thirds of the way down the west side of the hill are a pair of very large flat stone platforms, probably the site of official or ritual

¹²⁷ Arkell describes the site as being a 2 mile ride east of Kurra. 'The track enters a massive faced masonry wall (rubble filled) which cuts off a high part of a narrow ridge running W-E. The wall runs N-S. The track runs along the north side of this height for ½ mile... The track comes to a stone compound, approximately rectangular with rounded corners, covering an area about 25 yards from E-W by 40 yards from N-S.' (Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2); Arkell, 1937a, pp.101-3, pls. XI-XII)

¹²⁸ Arkell (1937a), p.102

¹²⁹ Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)

¹³⁰ Marked Ronya on the map; 14° 3'N, 24° 23'E. The site commands the road from Uri to Jebel Si.

¹³¹ The items found in the storerooms, or 'cupboards', included four iron knife blades, part of a throwing knife, parts of iron and copper bracelets, various broken pots, parts of a very large coarse water jar (*sir*), and part of a large coarse heavy bowl. Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

functions. South of the Ronya site is a small conical hill with several Tora buildings on it; local tradition holds that it is the residence of the witches of Ronya.¹³²

Kuka, Tuna and Filga

The Ronya ruins are the largest in the region of Dar Inga (in the Kutum-Jebel Si district). Other sites in this *dar* include **Kuka, Tuna, and Filga** (west of Tuna). The region is home to a mostly Tunjur population, including one section, the Showunga, who call themselves the people of Shau Dorsid.

Jebel Ferti and Jebel Masa

At **Jebel Ferti**, overlooking the hill route from Kutum to the plains of Fasher, is another hill-top town protected by a wall half-way up the incline. Again, circular huts with flat roofs are encountered, as is a large platform of flat stones. **Jebel Masa**, another hill-top ruin, is located in the hills north-west of al-Fasher. This easily defended town on a conical hill was possibly an earlier capital than Uri. The local inhabitants also claim descent from Shau, who they say went from Jebel Masa to Uri. Calling themselves Tunjur Wara, the people of J. Masa claim to have come with Shau Dorsid from Wara in Wadai. Local tradition says that Shau later moved to Jebel Mutarrak, where he died. Shau's son, 'Ali Korkorat, abandoned the hill and moved to a site somewhere between the *jebel* and the modern village, approximately two kilometres away. 'Ali Korkorat reigned only three or four years before being killed by Sulayman Solong, whereupon the Tunjur scattered.¹³³ Among the finds at Jebel Masa were a distinctive large hoe of the *hauya* type and brass bracelets, both of which resemble artifacts found at Uri. The Jebel Masa site overall gives the impression of having been destroyed at some point, but there is no tradition associated with such an event.

Sirma and Jebel Mutarrak

Near Jebel Masa, at **Sirma**, are graves of the oval masonry-lined type with flat roofing slabs that are found at Uri.¹³⁴ MacMichael reports a 'fort and palace' of Shau at **Jebel Mutarrak** on the edge of the north-eastern Furnung hills (20 miles from 'Ain Farah), but did not visit the site.¹³⁵

Kerker

¹³² Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹³³ Arkell, SOAS, Box 5/File 24/(Darfur 16) If the little known 'Ali Korkorat was indeed the son of Shau Dorsid, he could not have been deposed and killed by Sulayman Solong only a few short years after the flight of Shau Dorsid. There were undoubtedly a number of Kayra rulers between this time and the ascension of Sulayman Solong, but being pagans, they have frequently been omitted from the traditions, thus creating a foreshortening in the oral history in which the Muslim Kayra immediately succeed the pagan Tunjur.

¹³⁴ Arkell (1952b), pp.251-3

¹³⁵ MacMichael,(1920b), p.25, fn.1

Halfway between Meidob and Jebel Teiga, in a now relatively waterless land, are ruins on the north-eastern tip of Kerker, east of Jebel Eisa.¹³⁶ The site is strategically important, as it controls the Darb al-Arba'in trade route from Egypt into northern Darfur, and may have been an important outpost of the Uri-based Tunjur kingdom. The settlement is built on a hill with precipitous sides, except at the extreme north-east tip, where defensive walls were built. Two parallel stone walls contain a rock platform on which the settlement is built. The walls are eight feet thick and four feet high, built in a variant of the usual Tora style, using elongated rocks on the outside with a rubble fill in the middle. The walls are not as well dressed as at Uri, but the rough nature of the local volcanic rock does not lend itself to such fine construction. The chief feature of the town is the circular stone-built 'platform of audience',¹³⁷ which is built in an enclosure of about fifteen yards by thirty yards. Beyond this was an oval courtyard with a maximum diameter of seventy yards. There are many stone *tukls* still traceable at the site, 'but one gets the impression that it was only inhabited by the king and a number of domestic slaves... Probably not occupied for more than a few years as the outer defending wall (was) not completed; and only a fair number of pottery fragments (were found)'.¹³⁸ Among the artifacts found at the site are large *hanya* hoes, fragments of iron (there are traces of slag in the north-east corner of the compound), and ostrich beads, though the site appears to have been carefully combed by local herdsmen for useful materials. Numerous stone remains of villages can be found around the site, and the contours of agricultural plots have been spotted under the sand by aerial reconnaissance.¹³⁹

Jebel Kerbi (see pl.9a)

Atop Jebel Kerbi is yet another house or palace associated with Shau Dorsid. A roughly oval compound (approx. 35m x 55m) contains a semi-circular row of round huts. Continuous revetments level off the hill at its steepest points. The main compound is entered by a single doorway, while two other doorways connect this area to a larger walled compound measuring 50m x 70 m, probably intended for the sultan's retainers.¹⁴⁰

Uri (see pls 7-8)

¹³⁶ 15°27' North, 26°5' East. The site was visited by Arkell in October, 1935 (Arkell, 1952b, p.250; 'Notes on ruins on the north-east tip of Kerker', Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)). An aerial survey was made in 1985 by Dumont and el Moghraby (Dumont and el Moghraby, 1993, pp.385, 391, fig.6). The site is known to the Meidobi as Seringeti.

¹³⁷ In his *History of Darfur* Arkell gives a size for this platform of 5 feet high by six feet in diameter, though his original notes record a size of 4 feet high and 7 feet in diameter (Arkell, 1952b, p.250; Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)).

¹³⁸ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹³⁹ Dumont and el-Moghraby (1993), pp.385,391, fig.6

¹⁴⁰ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.21, fig.6a.

One of the most important Tunjur-associated sites in Darfur is at Uri, a cone-shaped peak next to Jebel Mutarrig, north-west of Kutum.¹⁴¹ It has a highly strategic location, being located at the nexus of important trade-routes to Egypt and Tripoli. A large area of three to five miles in circumference, Uri is a complex site showing evidence of extended occupation and a variety of different building styles and methods, though it is dominated by the usual Tora techniques. The walled site is thickly covered with *kitr* bush, which makes observation of much of the ruins difficult. The city at Uri was discovered by E. Campbell, a Condominium administrator, was visited by Arkell in 1934 and 1935, and was again investigated by Balfour Paul in the 1950's.¹⁴²

The oldest part of the city appears to be the separately walled area on the cliff of the west bank of Wadi Uri. A roughly circular area of approximately 150 yards in diameter is enclosed by a massive wall six to nine feet thick. The buildings within were known to the locals as 'the *kadi*'s house' and 'the mosque'. Arkell refers to the whole as 'the Lower Palace'.¹⁴³ In a smaller courtyard along the east side of the wall is a 'platform of audience', still six feet high and probably once covered by a wood floor. The western approach to the platform is by a stairway flanked by massive stone walls. A smaller stairway on the east side is connected to a private enclosure of at least four huts, and was likely the approach used by the chieftain. This latter compound was flanked by two others with a number of circular stone huts. These may have served as residences or storerooms, though the southern enclosure was thought by Arkell to have possibly been a prison because of its reinforced walls and the presence of two stone pillars inside one of the huts.¹⁴⁴

In the north-east section of the 'Lower Palace' is a large gate, while at the south-eastern part is a smaller entrance. These may be further examples of the *orre de* and the *orre baya*, as found at Dowda. The remainder of the courtyard outside of the smaller enclosures along the east wall is filled with the stone remains of numerous compounds with circular huts within, all very overgrown with *kitr*. The thick brush led to an important misunderstanding of the site, as Arkell missed the actual mosque altogether, declaring that 'There is no trace whatever of a mosque'.¹⁴⁵ Arkell's guides had retained a tradition that the 'Lower Palace' was the site of a mosque, but its true location had been thoroughly concealed in the *kitr* bush (possibly generations before). The guides apparently took the 'platform of audience' as the mosque; Ahmad Hamid, Arkell's informant 'had always been told that the lower building was a mosque: admits it doesn't look much

¹⁴¹ 'The easiest way to get to Uri is to take the Kutum-Dar Zaghawa motor road and, a mile or two before reaching Ain Siro, where the road passes through the Furnung hills, to turn to the right down a track which runs parallel with the south side of the hills, until after some eight miles it turns north and drops down over a ridge of black stone of volcanic origin into Wadi Uri' (Arkell, 1946, pp.185-6).

¹⁴² Arkell's surveys are so far the only ones to have been done at the site, and much of the following description relies on his observations. Balfour Paul, however, who had an opportunity of visiting Uri, cautions that 'Arkell's plans and description are most inadequate', especially in the area of the Uri mosque (Balfour Paul, personal communication, July 1997).

¹⁴³ Arkell (1946), pp.185-202

¹⁴⁴ Arkell (1946), p.187

¹⁴⁵ Arkell (1946), p.186

like it'.¹⁴⁶ The true mosque was not found until the 1950's, when Balfour Paul found it beneath the *kitr* and published a short description together with a plan.¹⁴⁷ The building is a marked departure from the rest of the structures on the site, and from Tunjur-attributed architecture in general. The building is roughly square with a distinctive continuous bonded buttress. The only known parallel in Darfur is found at the other large Tunjur site at 'Ain Farah where the mosque has a similar type of continuous bonded buttress. Entrances are found on the north, east and south sides, and the *mihrab* is located slightly north of the middle of the east wall. Six rows of pillars apparently supported a roof, save in the centre, which seems to have formed an open courtyard. Connected to the exterior of the structure are a number of roughly built stone walls that were probably intended as animal enclosures for visitors.

Moving west through a vast number of stone hut-circles one comes to the 'Upper Palace', situated on the lower eastern slope of the *jebel*. This building has the main attributes of the stone-built royal palace that is found in Darfur, a walled circular enclosure, a platform of audience, and stone benches ranging along the interior of the enclosure walls. At Uri the enclosure walls are fifteen feet high, and the circular platform is approximately nine feet high, the top of which was reached by nine steps. The platform surface was probably of wood, and it has long since disappeared. Five columns and a large rock appear to have supported the floor of the platform. The rock is said to have been the king's throne, but in fact it must have remained concealed when the floor was installed.¹⁴⁸

Just south of this compound is a small building with a complex plan. A walled round courtyard with two entrances surrounds a smaller circular room with a single entrance. A slightly rectangular compound adjoins the building to the east, but there is no apparent access from this area to the round room or its courtyard. The inner room probably had a flat roof (now collapsed), another feature of Tora architecture that differs from the modern practice in Darfur of constructing conical roofs of grass.¹⁴⁹ This building was probably the king's own residence, separated from the platform of audience and its courtyard, where the king's public functions were carried out.

Leading from the 'Upper Palace' to the summit of the hill is a zig-zag road built of enormous blocks of stone. The summit of the hill is enclosed by three rings of stone-wall. Within the innermost

¹⁴⁶ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/p.14

¹⁴⁷ Balfour Paul (1954a), p.140 Balfour Paul suggests that there may be a second mosque on the site, and that a clearance of the *kitr* brush may reveal traces of many other buildings.

¹⁴⁸ Arkell (1946), p.189 It is possible that the rock had some magical or religious significance, as so many stones in Darfur do, but the usual ritual of milk and flour offerings would be made impossible if the Uri stone was concealed within the platform.

¹⁴⁹ 'The Sudan *tukl* (circular hut) has no central pole. The conical top or roof consists of a very light framework of thin branches and it varies in shape from a perfect cone to that of an open umbrella. This framework is made of radial poles fixed into a circumferential base of flexible withies; and it is thatched and complete before it is lifted on to the walls of mud, brick, dry stone (without mortar [as in Darfur]), or straw, to which it is affixed. If the circular walls are of straw it is usual to drive four stout forked poles into the ground so as to take the weight of the roof. In most of these huts the cooking is done over a fire in the centre of the hut and the smoke keeps out mosquitoes, etc.' (Robinson, 1930a, p.230). Newbold suggested a Berber origin for the word *tukl*; Berber prefix T + the root of GL, 'shelter' (Newbold, 1945, p.236).

enclosure there are no traces of building, but there are several boulders, one of which shows a groove where grain was ground. Given the availability of more accessible stones for grain-grinding throughout the Uri site, and the impressive road with which the summit is reached, it seems likely that the summit of the hill was the site of ritual practices, probably involving offerings of grain. Beyond this the summit provides an excellent observation point for watching the approaches to Uri. Arkell's informant, Ahmad Hamid, provided the story that Shau Dorsid lived on the summit of the *jebel* with his horse, while water was provided by a chain of slave-girls passing buckets from the well to the top of the hill. When Shau saw his enemies approach, he was able to despatch his people against them.¹⁵⁰ Elsewhere on the hill are a series of masonry terraces which supported a number of small huts. These structures were probably store-rooms or granaries, as it would be impossible for anyone to live looking down into the king's compound in the 'Upper Palace'. The residences of the leading men and princes of Uri appear to have been south of the 'Upper Palace'; two of the compounds show evidence of having contained smaller versions of the platform of audience.

Further south, just inside the city wall and adjoining a small hill is a large square-cornered building, known as the *bayt al-mayram*, 'the house of the princess' (probably better understood as the house of the Queen-Mother). This unusual building is roughly square in shape, with an attempt at squared off corners with the dry-stone walling. A number of small windowless rooms are connected by low passageways. When Arkell visited in 1934 he was told that the building had remained roofed until recently, and Arkell noted that in the one small passageway where a roof remained, it consisted of long stones laid like rafters.¹⁵¹ It is probably to this building that Arkell would later make reference in attempting to establish a Meroë-Uri connection: 'There is in the royal palace at Uri one building that is constructed of brick-like stone masonry such as that employed in the late royal palace at Meroë uncovered by Garstang's excavations and an imposing platform of audience with an ascent of nine steps which may well be a rough copy of the platform on which the Meroitic king gave audience near his palace'.¹⁵²

The 'Lower Palace' was known as the residence of the *kadi*, and there is a rock-shelf nearby where he is said to have sat and given his verdicts. If we interpret the Lower Palace as an early residence of the king, who later moved his home to the 'Upper Palace', it is conceivable that the Lower Palace was given over to the *kadi*, who would not of course be able to use the royal 'platform of audience'.

The traditions gathered near Uri by Arkell were as follows: Shau Dorsid was a pagan of red colour (usually denoting Arabs or Berbers) who owned chain mail and lots of horses, but no firearms or camels. He ruled over reds and blacks alike. The defences on the hill were built as protection against raiding Magharba,¹⁵³ who bore rifles (some early type of firearm would be indicated here) and rode on camels.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/p.14 The story of the slave-girls is common to many of the Tunjur/Shau Dorsid hill-top ruins.

¹⁵¹ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/p.11; Arkell (1946), pp.190-1

¹⁵² Arkell (1961), p.176

¹⁵³ The term does not necessarily imply individuals from the Maghrab; in the time of the Mamluks and Muhammad 'Ali the term was applied to any tribesmen from west of Egypt (though some may have indeed come from the Maghrab). Many Magharba went to the Sudan as irregular troops in the 1821 Turko-

Balfour Paul's discovery of the mosque raises important questions when one notes that the Tunjur are universally described in Darfur traditions as pagans, and that many elements of the Tunjur diaspora (in Wadai, Kanem and Bagirmi) remained pagans into the nineteenth century. The Uri mosque is a sudden and dramatic deviation from the circular forms found in Tora architecture. The mosque represents, as well, solid evidence of the penetration of outside religious influence into the Darfur hills.

The *imam* of the Nyala mosque provided the information that the *nahas* (drum) of the Fur sultans named *Beida* was found in the ruins of the palace at Uri.¹⁵⁵ There was also said to be an iron post (*rukas*) at Uri to which Shau used to tie his horse, Showai. Despite its value as a metal, the local people were afraid to remove the post 'because of the *shaytans*'.¹⁵⁶

Egyptian conquest, and many more followed as troops or police. There is a group of Magharba in the Blue Nile region whose traditions may be of interest in considering the claim that Shau could have been subject to raids from these westerners; 'The common tradition in the tribe (the Magharba) is that they immigrated from the neighbourhood of Fez 'some hundred years ago', or 'in the days of Soba'. They claim much of the rainland behind the village of Soba to belong to them, and even allowing that it is with an eye to substantiating their claim to cultivation-rights that they desire to imply to a Government official that they are the earliest owners, and have been there since the days of the Christian kingdom of 'Aloa, there is nothing inherently improbable in their claim, and one has at least fairly good evidence, the biography of 'Abdulla Wad Hasoba el Moghrabi, that some of them have lived there since the sixteenth century. The darkness of their complexion proves a long sojourn in the south, and it is even possible that some of their ancestors were once the inhabitants of those hostels which Ibn Selim describes as inhabited by Muhammadans at Soba towards the close of the tenth century AD' (MacMichael, Vol.2, 1922, p.318). If these Magharba had reached the Blue Nile by the sixteenth century it does not seem improbable that they may have been active further west in Darfur a century or less earlier in the days of Tunjur rule.

¹⁵⁴ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/p.14; Arkell (1946), p.200 Arkell's Uri informants consisted of a number of local elders, led by Ahmad Hamid, who described himself as descended by nine generations from Shau Dorsid, whom he described as the first Tunjur ruler of Darfur.

¹⁵⁵ This drum appears to have survived the looting of the holy relics of al-Fashir that followed the defeat of Sultan Ibrahim by the slaver al-Zubayr at Manawashi in 1874 (though it may have been replaced by a new drum given the old designation). It was the second most important of the set of *nahas* maintained by 'Ali Dinar in the palace drum-house. As symbols of royal authority and prestige, the *nahas* were at the centre of many important rituals (Fur: *aadinga*, Ar: '*awa'id*', lit. 'the customs') performed by the *habubat*, old women (either slaves or members of the royal family) who were entrusted with these pre-Islamic practices. Such rituals included the accession ceremonies and the annual *jalud al-nahas*, 'the covering of the drums'. Twice a year the *nahas* were brought out of the drum house to be paraded together with other relics, including the red flag of the *beit al-nahas*, the *selatia* (the 'male spear'), the six 'female' spears, a carpet, a Koran and an umbrella. The most important drum was known as *al-mansura* ('the victorious'), the original of which was captured by al-Zubayr. If the drum was heard beating while locked away in the drum-house, the noise was attributed to *damzog-s*, or genies, and indicated that a war or other great event was imminent (al-Tunisi, 1845, p.153). After passing through the hands of Nur Angara it fell into the possession of the Khalifa at Omdurman. 'Ali Dinar asked for its return from the Anglo-Egyptian government in Khartoum after the conquest, but was told it had been sent to Europe. The government sent two large drums as compensation (these remain on display outside the *beit al-nahas* in al-Fashir). The drum that was designated as *al-mansura* by 'Ali Dinar was taken by MacMichael after the fall of al-Fashir (Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 13/(Darfur 5)). The original *mansura* was only a small drum, which might indicate that it was held in special reverence through its association with some figure or event in the past. In general, all fine drums in Darfur were known as *stambouliat*, which might give an indication of their place of origin.

¹⁵⁶ 'Notes from a conversation with Fiki Mohammad Tahir, Imam of Nyala mosque', 6/11/1936, in Arkell, SOAS, Box 10/File 3

Outside the city wall, but at only a short distance from the 'lower palace' is a round stone house surrounded by two circular stone walls, all considerably ruined. The stonework is smaller and less skilfully rendered than that found in the city proper.¹⁵⁷ Slightly to the east of this ruin, which is known as 'Dali's House' after the great Fur law-giver, are a number of stone mounds which may be tombs.¹⁵⁸ Local tradition holds that Dali was Shau's chief eunuch, and, as a member of the Kunjura branch of the Fur, became involved in a power struggle with the Tunjur ruler.¹⁵⁹ Dali allegedly took over Uri after Shau (in a now familiar story) fled from the city on the back of a *teitl*. Dali was not, however, said to have become a sultan himself, but was nevertheless regarded as the founder of the Kayra dynasty.¹⁶⁰ The name of this figure was later Arabicized into the forms Delil (or Dalil) Bahar and Hajj Brahim Delil in the genealogies of the Fur,¹⁶¹ but there is some evidence that, as with *Shau*, *Dali* may be a title rather than a name:

One of the oldest names (in the eastern Sudan) is seemingly 'Dalla'. It occurs particularly in connection with founders of cities in Baghirmi and the Kotoko area, in Bedde and in Kano; it occurs in the royal title 'Gau Dalla' and in Borno texts as the name or title of kings ('Mai Dalla'; 'Dala' - though in the latter case it may sometimes be a form of an Arabic name). It is both the name of a clan in Kanem and of a group of western Sa'o, and as 'Wa-ndala', the name of the people of Mandara... It is possible, however, that whatever its original meaning (or meanings), 'Dalla' was also used as local title before 'Gau', 'Ku' or 'Ker' came into the vocabulary of the various Zaghawa peoples as a whole to mean 'overlord' or sovereign over a wider political unit. A close study of the way early titles were used suggests, however, that one cannot always infer from a ruler's title what language was spoken by the people subject to that ruler. But it does suggest that there developed a widespread 'court culture', in which aspirants to 'royal' power or status adopted the titles and style of already established, prestigious rulers in the region.¹⁶²

In a graveyard near Uri¹⁶³ Arkell discovered a number of interesting items lying in exposed graves. These included beads of Indian and Venetian manufacture, brass beads, and examples of a double spiral

¹⁵⁷ Arkell (1952b), pp.249-50, Arkell (1946), p.192

¹⁵⁸ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10

¹⁵⁹ Though we know little of the place of eunuchs in the Tunjur court, they were from the first an important part of the administration of the Fur kingdom, acting not only as *harim*-keepers, but also filling important positions in the bureaucracy, including the post of *ab shaykh*, the governor of the eastern province of Darfur called (perhaps significantly in this context) *Dar Daali*. Most of the eunuchs (Fur: *lófenga*) came from the pagan groups living in Dar Runga. Although the mortality rate from their mutilation was high, the survivors could aspire to find service at such high levels as generals or even king-makers in the ever-tricky matter of royal succession. 'Ali Dinar maintained a large corps of eunuchs right up to 1916. Many of these accompanied 'Ali Dinar on his flight through Jebel Marra after the battle of Beringia, but seized some weapons and made a fighting escape from the sultan's camp before seeking the *aman* of the British forces. Lost in a world without a Fur royal court, these men were eventually pensioned off to Mecca by the Condominium government.

¹⁶⁰ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.273

¹⁶¹ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.276, 348

¹⁶² Last (1985), pp.186-7

¹⁶³ 'About half a mile north-east of Uri well, and on the east side of the main wadi, between the wadi and a low hill, is a burial ground, where considerable erosion of the soil caused by water running off the hill has exposed a number of graves.' (Arkell, 1946, p.193)

pendant, made in both brass and iron.¹⁶⁴ In 1934 RG Dingwall accompanied Arkell in the excavation of three of the exposed graves in this cemetery. The graves were lined with masonry, on top of which rested four to seven long flat stones. A small pile of boulders was placed above these flat stones, or a ring of stones was built around the tomb. The bodies were each laid in a fully extended position, lying on a north-south axis, the head in each case resting at the south and facing east.

About two miles from this site is another burial-ground consisting of larger and more elaborate versions of the tombs described above. In many cases the masonry lining is replaced by large stones, and the tombs are topped by larger flat stones. Arkell excavated the grave of a woman, measuring in its interior six feet by four feet.¹⁶⁵ Unlike the earlier graves, this body was found lying on its right side, legs flexed, with the right hand under its head and the left in front of its face. The body bore many ornaments, including a headress of brass discs made in the style of the *khurus* still worn in the Sudan today (although the material is usually gold). Cowries, brass earrings, agate beads (possibly Indian), brass and iron bracelets, strings of ostrich-egg disc beads (around the neck, waist, and ankles), a massive brass anklet, and Venetian glass beads were all used as jewelry in this case.¹⁶⁶ The ornaments provide evidence of external trade, which fits naturally with Uri's dominance of the southern end of important trade-routes to Tunis and Egypt in the north.

A reference in d'Anania's geography of 1582¹⁶⁷ mentions Uri and its trade with the north;

And then comes Uri, a very important city, whose prince calls himself *nina*, that is 'emperor'. The neighbouring kingdoms are subject to him, namely Aule, Zurla... Sagava, Memmi, Musulat, Morga, Saccae and Dagio. This great prince, because he is allied to the Turks, is very powerful. He is supplied with arms by the merchants of Cairo who come there because of the quantity of gold found there. The prince does not wish this gold to be used in his country in order that the people will not, out of avarice, become greedy for the metal, nor that it will be lacking for trade, so that the merchants will no longer come. He therefore wishes that they use barter.¹⁶⁸

Aule and Zurla cannot yet be identified, but the rest of the ethnonyms seem to match known ethnic groups in Darfur. The passage gives some indication as to the strength of the Tunjur kingdom at its height,

¹⁶⁴ This type of ornament is unknown in modern Darfur, but was worn in al-Fasher by women of the Awlad Sulayman, Magharba, and other members of the 'Fezzan' community, all of whom had made their way to Darfur from Tripoli *via* Kanem in the early twentieth century as the result of disruptions caused by advancing Italian and French forces. It is used by them as an amulet, as it is also used in Egypt, where it can be commonly found. See Arkell, (1937e). Hrbek does not regard these finds as indications of substantial trade involving Uri; 'The trade seems to have been rather insignificant. From the Tunjur era only small quantities of Venetian and Indian beads found at Uri are witness to commercial relations with Egypt and the Red Sea ports. The chief cultural changes came with the infiltration of the nomadic Arabs, with their new breeds of cattle and pastoral techniques and, perhaps, with new weapons' (Hrbek, 1977, p.78).

¹⁶⁵ Arkell, (1946), pl.s XIIIc, Xvb,c

¹⁶⁶ Arkell submitted samples of the glass beads to the Consorzio Vendita Conterie at Venice, who were able to confirm 'that the beads are of Venetian manufacture, although it is impossible to date them, since beads have been made there by the same process for centuries'. (Arkell, 1946, p.196)

¹⁶⁷ GL D'Anania: *L'Universale Fabrica del Mondo, Overo Cosmografia*, Venice, 1582

¹⁶⁸ D'Anania, as given in Lange and Berthoud (1972), pp.343-4

but its geographical extent cannot be more than roughly ascertained, due to the continuing movement of peoples in this area. *Sagava* is the Zaghawa, the *Memmi* are the Mima (Mimi in Chad),¹⁶⁹ the *Musalat* are the Masalit of the Chad/Darfur borderlands. *Morga* probably represents the Birked (or Birged),¹⁷⁰ the *Saccae* are probably the Berti, and *Dagio* surely refers to the Daju. The greatest problem with D'Anania's account is that gold is not found in Darfur in any quantity, but the Tunjur princes may have served as a conduit for gold mined further west, where it is found in abundance, or for the alluvial gold found in the south. D'Anania also refers to the presence of 'un Re tributario di quel d'Vri' who was resident at Barca, on the Cyrenaican coast.¹⁷¹ The reference is probably to a commercial agent of the Tunjur king.

¹⁶⁹ The Mima can be found in southern Wadai, in two colonies in Darfur, and in central Kordofan. The Wadai and Darfur branches were mentioned by al-Tunisi, who says that the Darfur branch still maintained a sultan, tributary to the Fur sultan (al-Tunisi, 1851, p.249; 1845, pp.128, 138, 297). Based on Ibn Batuta's description (1356) of the town of Mima (just west of Timbuctoo), MacMichael (Vol.1, 1922, p.82) suggested that the Mima, or a branch of them, had moved eastwards to Wadai and Darfur. Ibn Batuta's description of the people of Mima as *mulaththamun* ('people of the veil', ie: Tuaregs, Tubu, etc.) would seem to make this unlikely, as the Wadai/Darfur Mima seem to share very few cultural characteristics with the wearers of the *litham*, nor are there any traditions of a western origin for the Mima. (Ibn Batuta, *Tuhfat al-nuzzar fi ghara'ib al-amsar wa-'aja'ib al-asfar*, 1356; Trans. in Hopkins and Levzion, 1981, pp.297-99). Arkell collected traditions that placed the Mima in Dar Zaghawa (northern Darfur) before the Zaghawa drove them south into Wadai and Darfur. The organization of some of their sections in Darfur, Nanku (the royal family), Fira (the soldiers or followers of the Sultan) and Armi Kowamin (those who advise the sultans and appoint their successors) points towards a Berber origin for the Mima (Arkell, 1951a, pp.69-70), though their chiefs claim descent from the Banu Ummaya. They appear to have been avid barrow-builders whose works can be found on Jebel Jung at Um Bura and on a ridge at Wadi Jugtera near Irima (where some 300 barrows were counted by Arkell, the largest of which was thirty feet across). The Zaghawa were in the habit of rifling these barrows for iron, often found in the form of long hoes and spearheads. In 1923 Arkell opened three which he thought remained unopened; 'The entrance, through which apparently the corpse had been deposited, was in all three roughly west. The corpse was apparently placed in a crouching position on a floor of flat stones placed on the surface of the jebel. Over this were erected long stones sloping inwards to form a small room inside which the corpse was deposited. Over this was piled a heap of large stones, varying in height from six to twelve feet.' (Arkell, SOAS, Box 5/File 24/(Darfur 16))

¹⁷⁰ Like the Mima, the Birked (who call themselves Murgi) can be found in Wadai, Darfur and Kordofan, though they had no sultan of their own. MacMichael thought that they may have originally come from Nubia after the breakup of the Christian kingdoms (though unlike the Midob, the Birked make no such claims themselves), and traced their arrival in Darfur to a time earlier than that of the Tunjur: 'Since there is no trace of the Tungur having ever spoken any tongue but Arabic, and since the Birked are socially indistinguishable from the Dagu, who preceded the Tungur in Darfur, and since the Birked have forgotten everything about their Nubian connection and are generally regarded as having lived in south-central Darfur from time immemorial, whereas it is common knowledge that the Tungur immigrated and are not indigenous, it appears likely that the Birked reached Darfur before the Tungur immigration (in the fifteenth or sixteenth century)' (MacMichael, Vol.1, 1922, p.79). Al-Tunisi associated the Birked with the Tunjur, but had a low opinion of them, describing the Birked as 'traitorous, thieves and rapacious to excess, without knowledge of God nor of the Prophet' (Al-Tunisi, 1851, pp.133-6). The Birked were reduced to submission by Muhammad Tayrab (1756-87) who cut off the beard of the Birked chief and added it to the trophies of the royal house. In later years a goat-hair brush was fastened to the spears carried in procession before the Fur sultans as a symbol of this triumph (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.288).'

¹⁷¹ Lange and Berthoud (1972), pp.320-23

A further possible reference to Uri occurs in the writings of the Dominican priest Vansleb, who travelled in Egypt in the mid-seventeenth century; ¹⁷²‘To the west of Cairo lies the land of Fur (Fohr), to which caravans repair frequently in order to purchase slaves. Its Sultan resides in Ogra. The present sultan is called Urimellis.¹⁷³ When the *kafila* (caravan) goes there from Cairo, it comes by way of Kab, Dago and Issueine to Fur in one and a half months. From that country it brings as goods, ostrich feathers, tamarind, elephant tusks, pitch-black male and female slaves, and even little children’. This account, though slightly confused, seems to confirm the existence of an important trade route between the Tunjur kingdom (inherited by the Kayra Fur) and the markets of Egypt.¹⁷⁴

Kulu

A site in northern Darfur described by Arkell as ‘roughly contemporary’ with Uri is found atop a small granite hill, ½ mile south of Kulu village, itself south of Gabir. The site appears to be a settlement, consisting of rough houses made of massive stones which also make use of the large natural boulders at the top of the hill. The walls are of the usual faced masonry and rubble-fill. All the buildings are roughly circular, and have doors consisting of a hole underneath long rock lintels. It is unclear whether the roofs were flat or conical. A dozen graves of massive stone are also present at the site, though by 1936 all were exposed through soil erosion. An informant identified the buildings as those of the Tora, whom he described as ‘the people of Shau Dorshid’.¹⁷⁵ It is entirely possible that this site may actually predate the arrival of the Tunjur in Darfur.

‘Ayn Farah (see pls 11-13a)

The most spectacular and certainly the most controversial of the Tunjur-associated sites is that of ‘Ayn Farah, approximately 80 miles north-west of al-Fashir (or 20 miles west-north-west from Kuttum and 20 mile south of Uri) in the hills of Dar Furnung, an area inhabited by a mixture of Fur and Tunjur.¹⁷⁶ The

¹⁷² Johann Michael Wansleb (1794), cited in O’Fahey and Spaulding (1974), p.121

¹⁷³ The sultan’s name appears as ‘Urizmellis’ in the translation given by O’Fahey and Spaulding, but Adelberger later identified the z as a double-hyphen in the original Gothic German text. It has here been omitted (see Adelberger, 1991).

¹⁷⁴ It should be noted that Uri exists as a place name in Tibesti, denoting the Wadi Uri, the most easterly of the valleys in the Tibesti massif. Though there may be some interesting yet unknown connection between the place-names, it seems unlikely that the Tibesti Uri would have been the destination of any trade caravan.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Tora ruins at Kulu, south of Gabir’, 5/3/1936, Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

¹⁷⁶ The people of Dar Furnung consist of three sections; the Fella (Fellanga), the Sambella (Sambellanga, possibly connected with the Sambelange section of the Daju), and the Dumua. MacMichael observed that in Dar Furnung the Tunjur and Fur ‘had intermarried freely and on no particular system for generations. They regarded the Tunjur as being the real owners of the *dar*. Of the criterion whereby they decided whether a child of mixed origin was Tunjur or Fur I could extract no coherent account’ (MacMichael, Vol. I, 1922, p.126: MacMichael’s original account of ‘Ayn Farah was published as ‘The Tunjur-Fur of Dar Furnung’ in *Sudan Notes and Records* 3(1), 1920. The article was republished without revision as Appendix 5 of Part 1, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, Vol I, 1922, pp.122-28. For clarity’s sake all references will be made from the 1922 publication).

site forms a type of citadel some 200 to 300 feet above a deep gorge through which runs a perennial stream of spring water. The site, including the path to the top, is covered in thick *kitr* brush, and was home in the 1920's to baboons and other wildlife. The combination of fresh water and strategic location made it ideal for a fortified settlement. The structures of 'Ayn Farah are built of both brick and stone, and the remains of the kilns used for brick-making may be seen at the base of the hill. The entrance to the valley on the west side of the hill was blocked by a massive stone wall, while other walls on the hillside combined with natural features to strengthen the defences. Above these fortifications is the citadel; 'Standing here one sees towering above one in the distance on all sides rugged inhospitable peaks; far below one to the east winds the narrow stream clothed in evergreen verdure, and to the north and west some fifty feet below is a stony plateau, the site of the ancient settlement'.¹⁷⁷ Terraces to the east provided areas of cultivation for what must have been a substantial population. Facing the west is the main gateway to the fortress, some 10 feet wide and flanked by 12 foot high walls. This gateway can only be reached through a narrow and easily defended defile. All other approaches involve scaling steep ridges, except in the south, where another wall was built.

Arkell describes some of the *tukl*-s on the way up to the citadel as being made in the traditional Tora fashion of faced stone walls on each side, filled with rubble,¹⁷⁸ while de Neufville and Houghton describe the dwellings on the south and south-east ridges as having walls consisting of 'large rocks coursed in an earth matrix', being some 24 to 30 inches thick.¹⁷⁹ The upper part of these structures appear to have been built of grass, as the walls are at most 3 feet high, but are not surrounded by the rubble associated with collapsed courses. Two or three of these circular forms are combined together to form a single (family) dwelling, connected by low interior doorways. As at Uri, these dwellings incorporate 'cupboards', with an opening of about 16 inches leading into a cavity about 2 feet on each side. The true function of these 'cupboards' is uncertain; they may been used as domestic ovens rather than storage spaces, for which the design appears strange to Western sensibilities.

About half-way along the north ridge is a complex that has been given the rather unimaginative name 'the large stone group' (see pl.13a). Somewhere between an oval and a rectangle in shape, this single-entrance complex is surrounded by a low wall 1 to 3 feet high, and measures 70 feet E-W, and 35 to 40 feet N-S. In the south-west corner was a roughly square two-chambered building with walls over six feet in height. Three circular rooms with walls of similar height fill the eastern portion of the compound, while a circular platform has been created in the space in between by constructing a wall 3 feet in height and then filling the interior with earth. Measuring six feet in diameter, this structure is very similar in size to the

¹⁷⁷ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.123 The structural remains in the interior valley west of the citadel may have been animal pens rather than a settlement site, as assumed by MacMichael. They are identified as such by De Neufville and Houghton (1965, p.197).

¹⁷⁸ Arkell (1936), p.302

¹⁷⁹ De Neufville and Houghton (1965), p.197

'platform of audience' found at the Tunjur site of Kerker, and suggests that this complex may have served as a reception area or had some other administrative or public function.¹⁸⁰

The main group of buildings found at the highest point on the ridge is variously styled the royal residence (Arkell), the fort (MacMichael) and the palace or citadel (Balfour Paul). The strong system of defences suggests that the main structure served as a citadel, while the actual residence of the sultan (as identified by MacMichael) might be found in the large two-chambered rectangular building on the left (or northern) side of the great gateway. Arkell suggested that this building served as the sultan's *diwan*, though the 'large stone group' seems a better candidate for this function, particularly as it contains the expected 'platform of audience'.¹⁸¹ Standing some 50 yards north of the citadel, and about 20 feet lower, this red-brick building is notable for the red clay plaster which was hardened by the lighting of large fires inside the structure.

During the visit of Arkell and RG Dingwall in 1934 some of their guides discovered fragments of blue glass of poor manufacture inside this building, some with a distinctive scrolled end. Dingwall submitted these fragments to the Ashmolean museum, where the curators drew his attention to some eighth century examples of glass from Jerash (Palestine) and a comparable modern example from Hebron. 'There is no doubt that they are of the same type of bottle glass window pane, not dissimilar to that used in old cottages in England. The quality of the glass is much poorer than that of the Gerash specimen and there is no suggestion that my fragments actually came from Palestine.'¹⁸² Since Dingwall's comments were made, similar examples of crown window panes have been found at several Nubian sites, including the church at Debeira West (eighth to ninth centuries),¹⁸³ Aidhab (tenth to fourteenth centuries),¹⁸⁴ and Soba (ninth to thirteenth centuries).¹⁸⁵ The discovery of this glass in the so-called *diwan* became as strange as the alleged discovery of Christian sherds in the mosque when Balfour Paul visited the site and found more samples of the same glass with the characteristic scrolled edge in the stone tuki east of the *diwan*; 'Now the odd thing is

¹⁸⁰ See plan in De Neufville and Houghton (1965), fig.2

¹⁸¹ By analogy with Uri, however, it is possible that this site may have belonged to the chief *kadi*, or the Tunjur equivalent.

¹⁸² RG Dingwall in Arkell (1936), p.311 The glass pane is illustrated in pl.13

¹⁸³ 'The crown window-pane was developed in the east in the 4th century and fragments, some with folded, some with rounded rims, are prolific on early church sites, e.g. at Jerash. The type continued to be prevalent in early Islamic times, e.g. at Samarra and Soba. It also spread westward to Italy in early Christian times, to Greece by the 11th century, if not earlier, and, much later, to France and Britain, etc. As we might expect, many of the Debeira fragments come from the church (R-44), but some are from other parts of the site. Dating is difficult. Those from R-44 are probably from the time when it was first in use, i.e., the second half of the seventh century, and the others may be of the same date or later.' (DB Harden, in Shinnie and Shinnie, 1978, pp.88-89). Arkell used the resemblance of the crown window-pane found at 'Ayn Farah with the Jerash examples dated to 700 AD in his attempt to date the works at 'Ayn Farah to between 900 and 1200 AD in order to fit his late theory of 'Ayn Farah being a Christian settlement (Arkell, 1959, p.44). In 1961 Arkell went further, suggesting that the 'Ayn Farah remains probably date to 'between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, and may indeed be earlier, for a glass window pane found there could date c.AD 700' (Arkell, 1961, p.191). Arkell had previously dated 'Ayn Farah to c.1585 AD.

¹⁸⁴ DB Harden; 'The glass found at Soba', In, PL Shinnie (1961), fig.47

¹⁸⁵ Helen Morrison 'Vessels of glass', p.257 and fig.93, In, Welsby and Daniels (1991)

that the *diwan* emphatically had no windows. The wall is complete in many places and never more than one brick or two has fallen. And what could glass panes be doing in a To Ra *tukl*?¹⁸⁶

The broad curve of the south wall of the complex encloses two masonry built terraces on which are built orderly rows of stone *tukl*-s, probably intended for servants, the *harim*, or both. A small gateway to the east serves as a separate entrance serving these dwellings. The brick-built citadel itself stands on a steep bank above these terraces, and is in a considerably ruined state, possibly due to the washing out of the mud mortar which held the red bricks together.¹⁸⁷ MacMichael described the fort as 'like nothing but a rabbit warren: galleries run in and out and chamber leads to chamber in bewildering manner'. The foundations are built of unhewn boulders, with the buildings proper being made of red brick, 'hard as iron, metallic in ring and slightly glazed'.¹⁸⁸ Arkell disagreed with MacMichael's description of the citadel as a 'rabbit warren', he mentions only 'a large house with more than half a dozen rectangular rooms'.¹⁸⁹ It was ultimately left for Balfour Paul to provide a proper plan for the construction of the citadel (see pl. 11b).¹⁹⁰ In the south-west corner of the main building was a spiral staircase leading to a small brick room which MacMichael described as a guardroom; by Arkell's time this part of the structure appears to have already collapsed, leaving exposed the wooden lintels which supported the roof of the staircase. Massive bricks, measuring 22½" x 11¼", are used in the construction of the staircase,¹⁹¹ which leads below ground to a small chamber, described by MacMichael as a dungeon, and by Arkell as a storeroom.

Near the centre of the complex is a large, deep rectangular pit, lined with stone at the bottom and in its lower courses, and with masonry in its upper courses. Native lore calls the pit a prison, but all such pits are described as prisons due to the Kayra propensity for imprisoning political transgressors in deep holes or natural fissures in the Jebel Marra mountains.¹⁹² The pit was more likely a storeroom of some type: Arkell suggests that it might even have been plastered and used as a fresh-water reservoir.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁶ Balfour Paul, *Darfur Field Notes*, p.127

¹⁸⁷ Arkell (1936), p.304

¹⁸⁸ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.124

¹⁸⁹ Arkell (1936), p.304

¹⁹⁰ Balfour Paul (1955b), fig.5 De Neufville and Houghton decline to provide any description of this part of 'Ayn Farah.

¹⁹¹ MacMichael mentions that bricks of this size are found 'here and there' in the ruins of the larger buildings and in the mosque, and notes their similarity to those found at Zankor in Kordofan (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.124, fn.1). Balfour Paul provides a measurement for the largest of the bricks at 'Ayn Farah as 23" x 11" x 5", which 'weighs as much as a sheep' (Balfour Paul, 1955b, p.13; MacMichael's measurements were originally given in spans, which probably accounts for the slight discrepancy). De Neufville and Houghton provide a similar size of 20" x 10" x 4" for the bricks used as paving in the 'Ayn Farah mosque, but say that these bricks weighed no more than seven pounds; 'The reason for their lightness was not apparent as they were in no way hollow and had the same appearance as the other, smaller bricks' (De Neufville and Houghton, 1965, p.200). Large fired bricks of a remarkable lightness are also used in the arches and pavement of the red-brick ruins at 'Ayn Galaka in the Borku region of Chad. These bricks measure approximately 13' x 6.5" x 2.5" (A. Lebeuf, 1962, p.442).

¹⁹² The 'prisons' were usually reserved for political prisoners; common criminals were simply beaten to death when the penalty called for more than the customary payment of *tekaki* or cattle. Many 'prisons' were simply deep crevices in the rock of the mountains, but an example of one specially constructed is found at

Two hundred yards south-west of the citadel lies the mosque, easily the most important building on the 'Ayn Farah site due to the alleged discovery of decorated Christian sherds within its walls (see pl.13b). The sherds were brought to the attention of Arkell in 1958 by Lady Rugman, who stated that she had found the sherds 29 years earlier under some large bricks near the *mihrab*.

There were masses of pottery sherds there, and I picked out those with patterns, as I was interested in textile designing at the time, and thought them original. There were also fragments of red glazed pottery (which I have mislaid) that appeared to be from bowls with flat rims incised with a line. They were smoother on one side than the other, and were of a fine texture, reminiscent of Samian ware... The bricks were easy to lift - they were very large and of a blue tinge, like lustre glaze... Among the bricks was what appeared to be the lid of a tomb, the length of a man, made of one piece of solid brick - red brown in colour - and rough.

The tomb lid is further described as flat underneath and on the ends, with a low ridge along the top.¹⁹⁴ The sherds are undeniably Nubian Christian,¹⁹⁵ but the account of their discovery is questionable on several points. Most obvious is the 'lid of a tomb', which was so apparent to Lady Rugman, but has escaped the attention of all other visitors to the site. The paving bricks with 'a blue tinge, like lustre glaze' have also gone unremarked, as well as the fragments of red glazed pottery (most of the sherds at the site are of a rough red-ware similar to that in use in Darfur today). Most importantly, these two sherds remain the only decorated sherds recovered from anywhere at 'Ayn Farah (save the sherd incised with a Tunjur brand found by MacMichael). This fact remains rather remarkable considering that at least two expeditions have visited 'Ayn Farah since the publication of Arkell's paper and made thorough searches of the mosque for further evidence of Christian relics. Shinnie admits that the sherds are 'without doubt Christian Nubian... What is in doubt is their 'Ayn Farah provenance, which rests on the unsupported testimony of one informant relying on the memory of events many years before'.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Arkell was prepared to abandon his earlier theories on 'Ayn Farah after having viewed the two sherds;

The discovery of these sherds at Ain Farah shows that the building in which they were found was a church and not a mosque, and this explains some of its unusual features... The identification of this building as a church instead of a mosque as has hitherto been thought, makes me think it highly probable that the complex of buildings at the top of the hill is not a fort (MacMichael) or palace (as I described it, *SNR*, 19) but a monastery... It will be seen that within the outer surrounding wall are

Kalokitting. About 20 feet deep, this pit had a diameter about the same as an ordinary *tukl*, and was lined with masonry. A wall was built to a height of about six feet above ground level and covered with beams, save for a small hole through which the prisoner would be lowered by a rope. Food and drink could be lowered by rope through the hole, which was normally covered by a large stone, keeping the prisoner in complete darkness and isolation, often for years at a time, or until the prisoner's death. A permanent guard was installed on the beams covering the pit, which was in turn covered by an ordinary *tukl* roof (Arkell, SOAS, Box 10/File 48)

¹⁹³ Arkell (1936), p.304; Balfour Paul identified the pit as 'almost certainly a grain store. If it had been plastered as a tank, traces would remain. The plaster in the *diwan* is in good condition still' (Balfour Paul, Darfur Field Notes, p.128).

¹⁹⁴ Arkell (1960), p.119

¹⁹⁵ The sherds are illustrated in Arkell (1960), fig.s 1,2, pl.XXXVII, fig.s 3,4

¹⁹⁶ Shinnie (1971), p.49

what were probably cells for 26 or more monks, and within the inner wall buildings that could have been kitchen and refectory, water reservoir (fish pool ?) and perhaps abbot's house and guest-room.¹⁹⁷

The first sherd depicts a fish in profile supporting a cross. The material is hard light pink ware covered with a white slip, and appears to have formed part of a small shallow dish. The piece is typical of ware produced at Faras and Ghazali, and is common from the first to the fourth cataract.¹⁹⁸ The second sherd appears to have come from the shoulder of a vessel of hard red ware, burnished on one side and bearing the fragmentary remains of a stamped impression depicting a bird with raised wings and a cross atop its head. The image was a fairly common one in Christian Nubia.¹⁹⁹ This type of ware is known to have been produced at Debeira East, Serra West and Faras.²⁰⁰

Recognizing that these sherds represent a type of pottery found in use in the 11th century at the latest raises an important question, as most of the evidence from the site suggests a construction date in the 15th or 16th century (even if the mosque were to be identified as a Christian church, it would have to be a type found no earlier than the 15th century). It is also curious that despite close examination, no other pieces from the bodies of the vessels have been found at the mosque, nor have any sherds of this type of pottery been found anywhere else in Darfur, let alone 'Ayn Farah. The sherds are thus inconsistent with the rest of the site, and, considering their dates, are unlikely even to have been stray trade goods, as has been previously suggested. Arkell, after examining the mosque and other areas of 'Ayn Farah remarked that 'potsherds are comparatively few',²⁰¹ there is no mention of the 'masses of pottery sherds' found by Lady Rugman in the mosque, from which one could simply pick out a few interesting decorated pieces. On examining all the evidence it becomes apparent that the claimed provenance of these two sherds represents, if not an intentional hoax, at least a certain confusion on the part of their discoverer between the 'Ayn Farah site and some other Christian ruin she may have visited some 29 years earlier. They do not in any way provide the type of evidence needed to make a radical revision in the dating and cultural attribution of the 'Ayn Farah site.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Arkell (1960), pp.116-17

¹⁹⁸ This type of ware is classified by Adams as Group N.IV, Style N.IVA, Classic Christian Fancy Style. The extreme limits of its use are 800 AD to 1100 AD, with the main dates of manufacture being 850-1000 AD. (Adams, Part 1, 1986, p.246).

¹⁹⁹ See Adams, Part 1 (1986), fig.160, W1; fig.168, HM 31, 11; Vantini (1981), p.211, examples from Faras and Ibrim

²⁰⁰ Classified by Adams as Group N.III, Style N.III, Early Christian Style. The extreme limits of its use are 550 AD to 1050 AD, with the main dates of manufacture being 650-975 AD. (Adams, Part 1, 1986, p.244)

²⁰¹ Arkell (1936), p.306; Arkell (1961), p.251

²⁰² The rejection of the 'Ayn Farah sherds as evidence of Christian Nubian influence in Darfur has important implications for many of the theories that have formed part of the literature for the area since 1960. One example can be found in the speculation surrounding the site of Tié (c.1380-1570 AD) in Kanem (modern Chad). At this place Bivar and Shinnie found a single sherd bearing a cream-coloured slip (similar to a type produced in Dongola) and remarked of the flattish, finger-scored, irregular sized bricks (varying greatly in length and width) that 'this type of brick is also known from the Nile valley in Christian times' (Bivar and Shinnie, 1962, p.9). They go on to speculate that:

The mosque is placed on a stone platform 4½ feet high, and has walls that vary from eight to nine feet in thickness (see pls 12b-c).²⁰³ The inner walls are of brick (2½ feet thick), and are strongly buttressed by outer stone walls of 5½ to 6½ feet in thickness. The structure as a whole is a square measuring 17m x 17m.²⁰⁴ The method of construction used in the walls is very similar to that found in the mosque at Uri (also Tunjur-associated). Both *mihrab* and *minbar* are found in the east wall. MacMichael noted that 'the making of the mihrab had evidently given some trouble, for, though the face of the arch had been negotiated successfully, the concave back had been formed by building up a straight surface of large bricks and then hewing them into concavity as one would hollow out a trough'.²⁰⁵ In light of Arkell's later assertions that the mosque was in fact a Christian church, De Neufville and Houghton made a careful examination of the construction of the *mihrab*; 'the arched brick vault of the *mihrab* penetrates through the brick part of the wall into the stone part, so that it forms an integral part of the structure. It would therefore seem quite unlikely that the *mihrab* was a later addition to the original structure.'²⁰⁶ The method of construction used in the *mihrab* seems to show an unfamiliarity on the part of the builders, but gives no indication of being a late addition, such as is found in the mosque of Wad Saleh at al-Kurru on the Nile, where a church was converted to a mosque through the conversion of the apse into a *mihrab* by the addition of mud walling.²⁰⁷

Having determined that the entire site of 'Ayn Farah was Christian on the evidence of the two sherds, Arkell seized upon the 'L'-shaped pillars of the mosque in identifying this structure as a domed basilica (Somers Clarke Type B).²⁰⁸ In doing so, Arkell ignored the other features of the Somers Clarke type B domed basilica; 'The doors, opening north and south, are in their usual places. The little rooms on either

The appearance of a Dongola ware sherd together with reminiscences of the Nile in the bricks themselves suggests that some influence may have come from East. This view is not so fantastic as it might once have seemed since we now have firmly attested examples of Dongola ware from Ain Fara in Darfur, which is not so far from the region of Mao. Although not suggesting that Tié was an outpost of Dongolese Christianity, the Bulala date allows for some overlap and it may well be that the peoples of the eastern side of Chad were in touch with the Nile valley. Such a suggestion opens up the possibility of the whole inspiration for red brick building having spread into West Africa from the Mediterranean via the Nile valley. (pp.9-10)

Without the 'Ayn Farah sherds we are left with only a single cream-coloured sherd which, if not of local make, could have arrived at Tié by any number of means. The only point of distinctiveness with the irregular-shaped bricks is the pattern formed by scoring the wet clay with fingers, which is a characteristic of many of the brick ruins found along the Chadian Bahr al-Ghazal.

²⁰³ Measurements are provided in De Neufville and Houghton, who were the first to provide accurate measurements and a detailed description of the construction of the mosque (De Neufville and Houghton, 1965, pp197, 200, and fig.3, plan and elevation).

²⁰⁴ The mosque was resurveyed by Kamal Yunis and Ibrahim Musa Mohammed in 1980 (Musa Muhammed, 1986, p.220 and fig.8.3)

²⁰⁵ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.125

²⁰⁶ De Neufville and Houghton (1965), p.200

²⁰⁷ Crawford (1961), pp.33-34

²⁰⁸ Arkell (1969), p.116 Balfour Paul mentions horizontal holes in the 'L'-shaped pillars, whose function he could not determine (Balfour Paul, Field Notes, p.20).

side of the altar are found and the rectangularity of plan and of external appearance of the building is maintained...'²⁰⁹

Since the publication of Arkell's 1960 article a great deal has been learnt of the characteristics and types of Nubian churches through the extensive surveys of Lower Nubia in the 1960's and in the archaeological work undertaken in Upper Nubian sites through to the present. Some of the more relevant characteristics of the Nubian church are as follows; a) the usual plan is a rectangle on an east-west axis, although in the very late Christian period churches were almost square; b) the apse, when present, is encased within a rectangular masonry shell, and never forms part of the wall or extrudes from it; c) from the seventh century onward almost all churches were entered by doors in the north and south walls, slightly west of the centre of the building.

Domed churches using 'L'-shaped pillars were introduced in the Classic Christian period (850-1100AD),²¹⁰ probably resulting from the introduction of Syrian or Palestinian influences. A Late Christian Nubian type (1200-1400AD),²¹¹ roughly equivalent to Somers Clarke type B, is a church with a central cupola mounted on 'L'-shaped pillars. The structure is typically small in size (average size is 10m x 8m), is nearly square in plan, and in all known examples was thoroughly decorated with paintings. The apse often disappears, to be replaced by a plain square sanctuary chamber. The type marks a change in Nubian church plans, for the *bema* (the eastern sanctuary) appears to have entirely usurped the *naos* (congregation area).

The ultimate development of this style is what Adams calls the 'Epitype',²¹² in which the plan is further reduced and simplified to a point where the style begins to resemble the earliest and crudest attempts at church construction in Nubia. Found only at Diffinarti and Abd al-Qadir (see pl.12a), this is the type most similar to the 'Ayn Farah building, but it is uncertain whether Arkell was even aware of its existence in 1960.²¹³ Both known examples may be dated to the 15th century. This type is extremely small; Diffinarti is 6m x 5m, and Abd al-Qadir is 5m x 4m. Apparently highly decorated, these churches feature the sanctuary and sacristies combined in a single transverse chamber entered through a doorway at the east end of the nave (unlike 'Ayn Farah), and lack the western corner rooms. Abd al-Qadir has the usual north and south entrances, but Diffinarti has only a single eastern entrance (similar to the earliest Nubian churches).

It appears that Arkell, in noting the similarity of the 'L'-shaped pillars in the 'Ayn Farah structure and the Nubian 'cupola churches', has ignored numerous and significant differences:

- 1/ No apse, *haykal*, or sanctuary chamber is present at 'Ayn Farah
- 2/ There is an absence of sacristies, so 'intimately connected with the divine services'²¹⁴

²⁰⁹ Somers Clarke, 1912, p.32

²¹⁰ Adams Type 3c - Tamit type; Adams (1965), pp.114-16

²¹¹ Adams Type 4 - Serra type; Adams (1965), pp.116-19

²¹² Adams Type ?5; Adams (1965), pp.119-20 and fig.14 (104 & 86)

²¹³ For similar examples, Arkell cites the domed church near Wadi Halfa (Mileham, 1910, pl.37), the domed church of Adindan (Mileham, 1910, pl.27; Somers Clarke, 1912, pl.17), the central church at Serra East (Somers Clarke, 1912, pl.12, 2a), and the church at Madeyq (Somers Clarke, pl.20, 2).

²¹⁴ Adams (1965), p.63

- 3/ The 'Ayn Farah structure lacks any trace of the frescoes found in the Late Christian churches
- 4/ The customary western corner rooms are absent
- 5/ The 'Ayn Farah structure is at least three times larger than the examples of Adams type 25, which it most resembles. In type 25, the aisles 'are barely wide enough for a man to turn around'²¹⁵
- 6/ Only the most elaborate Nubian churches had stone flagging or brick pavements on the floor; most had only a packed mud floor. A floor of fired red-brick as found at 'Ayn Farah would be highly unusual in a church of such modest dimensions.
- 7/ Church doors were customarily placed in both the north and south walls, slightly to the west of centre. The only exception to this is found in the earliest and latest church plans, in which a single door is found in the western wall. The 'Ayn Farah building fits neither type, having only a single door placed centrally in the north wall.
- 8/ The combination of stone and brick in the construction of the walls is very unusual in Nubia, though not unknown (there are examples at Faras). More importantly, the style of brick and stone buttress work found at 'Ayn Farah is nearly identical to that found in the mosque at Uri, which bears absolutely no resemblance to any known style of church, and is moreover held by tradition to be roughly contemporary with the work at 'Ayn Farah, and to be the work of the same dynasty.

The mosques of Uri and 'Ayn Farah are without precedent in Darfur, and would seem to symbolize the first appearance of Islam in the region. While structurally similar, their plans are highly divergent, and probably mark a period of experimentation in style, or an opening of the sultanate to outside influences. In shape alone these square and rectangular forms are an innovation in an area where the oval and circle had previously reigned supreme in architecture. It is not inconceivable that a Christian refugee (or convert to Islam) from Nubia was employed to design a building whose form was dictated by Islamic requirements, but whose method of construction was unfamiliar to the architects and builders of Darfur at the time. While the dome and use of glass would seem to derive from Christian sources, neither are incompatible with Islam; indeed, the use of both would seem entirely suitable for a royal house of worship and can be found in mosques throughout the Islamic world. The structural incorporation of the *mihrab* is a deciding factor in the identification of the 'Ayn Farah building as a mosque; the awkward method of its construction lends support to the theory that the architect was familiar with Christian design, but was a novice with elements of Islamic design. A *tukl*-style house of unusual size (11 yards diameter) is found close to the mosque and may have served as the residence of the *imam*.

Four to five hundred yards south-east of the main mosque, on the same ridge, are the ruins of another complex of red-brick buildings and stone walls.²¹⁶ The complex is known through local tradition as the '*bayt al-mayram*', another parallel to the Uri site. The first building, apparently a residence, has four rooms and is rectangular in shape, as at Uri. Below this building, at the base of a perpendicular cliff, is a

²¹⁵ Adams (1965), p.119

²¹⁶ This complex is omitted from the plan of 'Ayn Farah published by De Neufville and Houghton.

second red-brick building which is quickly identified as a mosque from the *mihrab* located in the centre of its eastern wall. Measuring 3.7m x 3.3m., this structure has a single western entrance.²¹⁷ The cliff along its northern edge forms its northern extent, and no attempt has been made to join the south wall to the west and east walls. A small window is found four courses above the *mihrab*. The wall incorporating the *mihrab* bulges outward (a characteristic entirely unknown in the construction of apses in Nubian churches). The south wall shows traces of plaster having been hardened by fires lit in the interior of the building, and the whole was probably topped by a flat roof of the usual wooden beams and grass or palm fronds. Beyond the west wall was a carefully laid terrace, possibly for the accommodation of worshippers of insufficient status to be admitted to the mosque itself. That this building is so clearly a mosque reinforces the identification of the other building at 'Ayn Farah as being a mosque also. Arkell, in his newfound enthusiasm for identifying the entire 'Ayn Farah site as a Christian settlement after 1960, never made further mention of the '*bayt al-mayram*' mosque,²¹⁸ and its existence seems to have passed from the awareness of those writers and scholars who followed Arkell's lead in this manner.

A rock terrace leads from the small mosque to a lower level on which stand four circular ruins of red-brick that stand within the stone wall that encases the mosque. Two of these structures give the appearance of having been built in brick courses far higher than is usually encountered in the grass-topped *tukl-s*, and may thus have been beehive-shaped *qubba-s*, intended as tombs for holy men or members of the royal family (the latter being the more usual use for *qubba-s* in Darfur). The two other circular ruins may have served as huts, though one appears to have been an antechamber for one of the *qubba-s*, as entrance to the *qubba* can only be made through the hut.²¹⁹ Balfour Paul identifies these works as *qubba-s*, and describes them as 'unique in Darfur';²²⁰ the only parallels appear to be the *qubba-s* said to have been built as tombs for the Kayra sultans at Turra (demolished by 'Ali Dinar in the early twentieth century), and the *qubba* built to honour 'Ali Dinar's father Zakaria at al-Fashir.

Graves are strangely scarce at 'Ayn Farah, but one was found and excavated by Musa Mohammed. The tomb is described as a pit 70 cm. deep in a cairn with a stone slab superstructure. The burial was accompanied by bone and ostrich shell beads, and a number of iron objects and beads. One iron sample was subjected to radiocarbon dating, which yielded a calibrated date of 260 - 705 AD.²²¹ Certain difficulties were

²¹⁷ This work was only properly surveyed in 1980 by Kamal Yunis and Ibrahim Musa Muhammed; they did not, unfortunately, publish a plan. Previously the only available measurements were those made by Arkell, who paced off the length of the walls. See his rough sketch plan (Arkell, 1936, pl. XII). A private mosque may have been attached to the private residence of the Borno sultan at Gamburu (second half of the 16th century?) according to Denham, Clapperton and Ouedney (Vol. I, 1826).

²¹⁸ In his 1961 edition of *A History of the Sudan*, Arkell makes reference to 'a monastery and two churches [at 'Ayn Farah], the larger of which had a typical Nubian dome' (p. 191). Presumably the church without a dome is the small mosque at the '*bayt al-mayram*', but Arkell gives no reason for turning this most obvious mosque into a Christian church.

²¹⁹ Arkell (1936), pp. 305-6

²²⁰ Balfour Paul (1955b), p. 13

²²¹ Musa Mohammed (1986), p. 254

encountered in obtaining this date, and without corroboration from other samples this date must be regarded as inconclusive, particularly in light of its incompatibility with other evidence gathered from the site.

At the extreme end of the ridge stand a number of huts which were found to contain the only intact pottery recorded at 'Ayn Farah. These pots were described by MacMichael but were not removed and do not appear to have been examined since.²²² They fall into three types:

1/ Common *burma-s* of unusual hardness and thickness. The interior and exterior are brick-red in colour, while the core material is burnt black. With a wide mouth, short neck and round belly, they have the appearance of *burma-s* still in use in Darfur and Kordofan, and were probably made in the same way through kneading on a mat.

2/ Larger vessels for storing liquids, 'of coarser and even harder fibre almost indistinguishable from brick, with quite large pebbles embedded in them, generally an inch or more thick'.

3/ Red glazed vessels of the *dulang* type, with a long neck, slightly bulbous in the middle.

On a fragment from one of these latter types MacMichael noted some incised potter's marks, which strongly resembled the brand used by the Fella (Fellanga) section of the Dar Fumung Tunjur-Fur.²²³ Other intriguing marks were found by Arkell on a number of red-bricks, four from the building identified by Arkell as the *diwan* (these may have formed part of an inscription over the door), and a fifth from the brick-lined pit.²²⁴ Balfour Paul found three inscribed bricks at the site, though one appears identical to one already found by Arkell.²²⁵ The markings bear a resemblance to certain characters in the *Tifinagh* script (or its Libyan predecessor), and are a further suggestion that the builders of 'Ayn Farah had a Berber or North African origin. A Tunjur brand still used in Dar Fumung²²⁶ may be a simplification of the symbol found on the brick from the pit. No doubt many further examples would be uncovered in a systematic examination of the whole site.

Among the other artifacts discovered at 'Ayn Farah is an (unfired?) musket ball of lead which was dated by RL Hobson of the British Museum as not likely to be older than the 16th century.²²⁷ Other finds

²²² MacMichael, Vol. I (1922), p.125

²²³ The fragment and the brand are illustrated in MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.125

²²⁴ The inscriptions are reproduced in Arkell (1936), p.306 The Tifinagh 'ieg' or the Libyan 'eif' character figures prominently in two of the inscriptions. There also appear to be variations of the Tifinagh 'iez' and 'yeb' characters.

²²⁵ The bricks are drawn in Balfour Paul, Darfur Field Notes, p.127

²²⁶ Reproduced in MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.127, fn.2

²²⁷ Arkell (1936), p.306. Could this be a relic of the *magharba* raiders that were said to have plagued Shau Dorsid at Uri? Arkell suggests that the musket ball could be a remnant of Bornawi rule of Darfur during the 16th century rule of Idris Aloma, who obtained firearms from Tripoli (Arkell, 1952b, p.260; Arkell, 1961, p.212). Ibrahim Musa Mohammed states that Arkell dates this musket ball to the 12th century AD, but provides no reference. I cannot find any attempt by Arkell to date this relic so early. Although Idris Aloma appears to have employed a corps of Turkish musket-men, firearms do not seem to have been in use in Darfur during the civil war of the early 17th century that brought Sulayman Solong to the throne (Fisher, 1977, p.303).

include an iron spear,²²⁸ a pair of stirrup irons of a type known in Darfur as *tumus*,²²⁹ and some hexagonal beads of about 0.5 mm diameter.²³⁰

Given the Tunjurs' widespread reputation for paganism, we are then left with the problem of accounting for the mosque at Uri and the two mosques found at 'Ayn Farah. Before his embrace of a Christian origin for the Tunjur and their works at 'Ayn Farah, Arkell posed a scenario in which Darfur was conquered by the Hausa slave Dala Afnu, who served the Bornawi Muslim *Mai* Muhammad Idris b. Katarkamabe (1519-38) as viceroy of the east, a position which was concerned primarily with subduing the Bulala of Kanem. According to Arkell, the Tunjur city of Uri fell to Dala Afnu in 1535. Having constructed a temporary residence at Uri ('Dali's House'), Dala Afnu later moved to Turra where he introduced a system of law and administration based on Bornawi precedents. At some point during the reign of Idris Aloma (1571-1603) 'Ayn Farah was built as a retreat for the *Mai* or his governor.²³¹ The death of Idris Aloma led to the collapse of the Borno kingdom, and a civil war in Darfur followed before the defeat of Tunsam and the victory of the forces of Sulayman Solong. The total absence of any tradition in Darfur or Borno recalling such a momentous conquest and relatively lengthy period of occupation (other than a vague and unsupported Bornawi tradition of their kingdom having once stretched to the Nile) did not deter Arkell, who suggested that the Kayra Fur of the 17th century and later, being ashamed of their pagan ancestors, excised their memory from their traditions.²³² 'In thus shutting out all history before [Sulayman] Solong, they soon presumably forgot the period when they were ruled by Borno, only remembering in a corrupt form the name of their first conqueror who had reorganised the kingdom...'.²³³

The tenuous condition of this reconstruction of Darfur history is perhaps best demonstrated by the ease with which Arkell abandoned it when the alleged Christian sherds from 'Ayn Farah came into his possession. While Arkell was able to draw parallels between a number of customs and phrases common to both Borno and Darfur, his attempt to describe the pre-Islamic law of Darfur, the *Kitab Dali* (or *qamun Dali*), as a Bornawi attempt to reconcile the *Shari'a* with local custom is unconvincing;²³⁴ and the documents he cites in support of this assertion are probably late attempts to cover the *Kitab Dali* with a

²²⁸ Arkell (1936), p.306

²²⁹ Arkell (1936), p.307, and pl.IXb

²³⁰ Ibrahim Musa Mohammed (1986), p.222 (8.6.3)

²³¹ Arkell (1952b), p.267

²³² The absence of a Borno interregnum in the traditions cannot in itself be regarded as sure proof that no such domination existed, for it is consistent with the ellision of usurpers in lineage traditions. Among the categories of usurpers, 'the most important includes those individuals who rule during periods of foreign hegemony. These may either be royals who secure office through the suzerain's favour, or governors from outside the society appointed to rule it. For obvious reasons periods of foreign dominance are prime candidates for the 'amnemonic' process. A polity's self-image usually requires a past free of such embarrassments' (Henige, 1974, p.30).

²³³ Arkell (1952b), p.268

²³⁴ Arkell (1952a), pp.145-6 Arkell describes Dali's law as 'a highly simplified form of the Maliki code, with punishments altered to suit local ideas; e.g., adultery in Darfur has always been very prevalent, and the *sharia* punishment must have been administratively impracticable'.

vener of Islamic respectability.²³⁵ Nachtigal, who is our only eyewitness to this pre-Islamic code in use, was emphatic regarding its dissimilarity to the Shari'a:

The principles which guided [Dali] in establishing these laws were apparently not at all based on Islam, but rather on the effort to assure power and an adequate income for the ruler and his officials, and to bind the two closely together. There is no death penalty, no corporal punishment, no limitation of personal freedom. For the gravest crimes, as for trivial offences, Dali prescribed fines in the shape of payments of cattle or *teqaqi*,²³⁶ varying according to the seriousness of the offence. This legislation is still in force in Darfur. There have been improvements in it, and here and there some deterioration, but Dali's successors have not undertaken any substantial changes.²³⁷

The contrast is again emphasized in Nachtigal's description of the post of *forang aba*:

The sixth in rank among the court officials was the *forang aba*, who, according to ancient custom, had to come from the Fur sections of the Foranga or Baldanga. Expert in ancient law and custom, he was their guardian, and the judge on all disputed matters in this field. For even after Islam had been introduced as the state religion in Darfur, the laws set down in the Book of Dali had not lost their validity, and right up to the most recent times any one could, in relation to specific cases, be judged, according to his wish, either by the religious laws of Islam or by the *siesa*, i.e. the old customs of the country.²³⁸

It would seem, therefore, that there was no comparison between the *Kitab Dali* and the Maliki school of the *Shari'a* practiced in Borno, especially in view of the Fur practice of maintaining the parallel posts of *forang aba* and chief *kadi*.²³⁹ The idea of deliberately altering the *Shari'a* through the inclusion of traditional customs would seem to be inconsistent with the Islamic pretensions of the Saifawa *Mai*-s.

Although the conquest of Darfur by Borno seems unlikely, it is undeniable that 16th century Darfur was a neighbour to a powerful and expansionist Muslim kingdom in Borno. Commercial relations between the two kingdoms would be sufficient to account for the spread of cultural and religious influence from Borno to Darfur.²⁴⁰ During the reign of *Mai* Idris Aloma Borno carried on trade with Egypt and other parts of North Africa. One of the items traded north was gold,²⁴¹ and with Darfur lying astride the trade

²³⁵ These Arabic language manuscripts can be found in the Arkell Papers, SOAS, Box 4/File 17/pp.1-88.

See also Shuqayr, Vol.II (1903), pp.137-9

²³⁶ Arabic *takiya*, pl. *takaki*: strips of cotton cloth, used as currency in the Fur sultanate.

²³⁷ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.277 Nachtigal made extensive efforts to locate a written copy of the *Kitab Dali*, but was unsuccessful.

²³⁸ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.330

²³⁹ A detailed discussion of Fur and Islamic law as practiced in Darfur can be found in O'Fahey (1980a), pp.109-14

²⁴⁰ For the cultural and administrative similarities, see Arkell (1952a), pp.129-53. The close relation between merchant activity, long-distance trade, and the spread of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa is noted by Hrbek; 'Islam as a religion born in the commercial society of Mecca and preached by a Prophet who himself had been for a long time a merchant, provides a set of ethical and practical precepts closely related to business activities. This moral code helped to sanction and control commercial relationships and offered a unifying ideology among the members of different ethnic groups, thus helping to guarantee security and credit, two of the chief requirements of long-distance trade'. (Hrbek, in El Fasi and Hrbek, 1998, p.71).

²⁴¹ Barkindo (1992), p.499

route to the north, it may well have been Borno which was the source of the gold mentioned by D'Anania. It is known that Islam was generally practised only in the Borno court at the time, and the new religion (attractive through its association with powerful neighbours both to the north and west of Darfur) may have been adopted by the Tunjur court at some time in the 16th century, resulting in mosques in their imperial cities but nowhere else.

This pattern of Islam as the official religion with the mass of the populace non-Muslim and with a largely traditional court ceremonial remained a general fashion in many Sudanese states and is an indication of the very delicate balance which always existed between Islam and the indigenous religious structure... This does not mean that the kings were necessarily very devout or deep Muslims. They also had to reckon with the local customs and traditional beliefs of the majority of their non-Muslim subjects who looked upon the rulers as incarnations of or intermediaries of supranatural powers. None of the rulers had the political power to enforce Islam or Islamic law without compromising the loyalty of the non-Muslims.²⁴²

Besides easing relations with their neighbours, the nominal adoption of Islam by the Tunjur rulers would also have had important economic implications as a means of sanctioning the growing slave trade.²⁴³ The practice of Islam was probably very superficial in the Tunjur court, as it was in Wadai, where the Tunjur sultans were still in the grip of their pagan traditions until their overthrow.²⁴⁴ Pre-Islamic rituals involving the usual sacred stones were still widespread in Dar Fumung well into the twentieth century.²⁴⁵ Balfour Paul comments;

²⁴² Hrbek, in El Fasi and Hrbek (1988), pp.73, 76

²⁴³ Arkell (1952b), p.273

²⁴⁴ 'The intellectual superiority of the immigrant Tunjur, and their more refined customs (their hospitality was especially celebrated), wrested power from the Daju without any fighting or violence. But the Tunjur themselves were still Pagans, or not sufficiently Muslim to establish Islam in the country around them, or to avoid falling back themselves at least partly into Paganism in the midst of these Pagan people.' (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.274)

²⁴⁵ Dar Fumung itself takes its name from the holy stone of Fumung, to which the local *shartai* makes sacrifices. At nearby 'Ayn Sirra, only a few miles from 'Ayn Farah, are two other holy stones, known as *hajar al-arus* ('the bride's stone') and *hajar al-ada* ('the custom stone'). These boulders have special significance in rites associated with rain-making, circumcision, marriage, and births (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, pp.122,127-8, see also Sarsfield Hall, 1920c, pp.223-4). MacMichael made some connection between Christianity and the use of a cross sign in certain rites performed at 'Ayn Sirra (a connection cited repeatedly as proof of ancient Christianity in Darfur), but in pre-Islamic ceremonies carried out in Darfur it was customary to use tribal brands as symbols. Arkell was almost certainly correct when he stated; 'The use of the sign of the cross by the Tunjur of Dar Fumung is nothing more than the use of the tribal brand + which is almost certainly in origin the Berber letter T' (Arkell, 1936, p.307). Arkell later added that he was doubtful such ceremonies contained Christian elements; 'Although I was on the look out for years, I found no evidence of this'. Arkell witnessed a Tunjur rain ceremony at Jebel Masa, where he took care to note that the sign used in the ceremony was the Tunjur brand '+', and not the cross (Arkell, 1951b, p.222). Michelmores, drawing on accounts of milk, flour and butter being smeared on certain stones in Abyssinian Christian ceremonies, suggested that the use of butter, flour and milk in Darfur to smear cruciform signs (among other symbols) on holy stones signalled that 'ceremonial offerings of milk and butter on stones or other revered objects may have been widespread amongst the old African Christians and may not have been derived from the pagan aborigines', but acknowledges that 'the cross is such a simple sign to make, that its occurrence alone cannot be taken as evidence of much value' (Michelmores, 1932, pp.272-3).

In my own view actual Bornu hegemony over Darfur at any period is still by no means proved, and I find the greatest difficulty in placing Uri as early as the 13th century [with reference to Arkell]. But some such intimate connection with the strongly Muslim empire of Bornu would at least explain the presence of the mosques in reputedly Tunjur capitals.²⁴⁶

Kropáček states that 'There is clear evidence of similarities among the institutions found in all the emerging Muslim states between the Nile and the savannah of Chad, which may be interpreted in terms of Bornu cultural influence, but not necessarily of political supremacy'.²⁴⁷

The Borno/Kanem region is home to a wide variety of red-brick ruins, many of which probably date to the 16th century. Palmer was the first to make a connection between these works (which he dated from about 1500 AD) and those at 'Ayn Farah; 'The red brick palace of Shau Dorshid naturally brings to mind the red brick buildings of the old Bornu capital N'gazargamu, Gamburu on the Kamadugu, and other places'.²⁴⁸ Arkell (without reference to Palmer) made the same connection to Gamburu and N'Gazargamu in 1952.²⁴⁹ Aside from their common construction in red-brick, it is difficult to see many similarities between these works. Birni N'Gazargamu was probably built by Sultan 'Ali b. Ahmad (also 'Ali Dunama or 'Ali Ghaji Zeinama, c.1465-97) in approximately 1470 AD, and survived until its destruction by the Fulani in 1811/12.²⁵⁰ The city measured two kilometres across, and is surrounded by a seven metre high circular earth rampart.²⁵¹ The palace-wall still measured eighteen feet high when Denham visited it in the 1820's. Tradition holds that the Sao were involved in the construction of the city, and a manuscript records that the Sao Mai Dala Gumami drew a circle with a bow to determine the location of the gates and built the earth ramparts.²⁵² Gamburu is likely a 16th century work, allegedly built by Queen Amsa, the mother of Idris Aloma (1571-1603), and has no apparent surrounding wall. Both cities are badly ruined through deliberate destruction (as at N'Gazargamu) and through years of re-use of the bricks as building materials.²⁵³ Neither site displays any of the Tora style architecture that is found at Uri and 'Ayn Farah, and appear to differ greatly in plan, from what can be recovered from the arrangement of the remains. The houses at N'Gazargamu, Nguru,²⁵⁴ Mashina and Gamburu are almost always rectangular in form and built with thick mud walls and flat roofs.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁶ Balfour Paul (1954a), p.139 See Cohen (1966) for maps showing the extent of Kanem/Borno in 1300, 1450, and 1600. Beyond the Lake Chad region, expansion of the Kanem/Borno kingdom tended to be northwards and westwards, rather than towards the east (pp.71-2, Maps 1-3).

²⁴⁷ Kropáček (1984), p.421

²⁴⁸ Palmer (1926), p.72

²⁴⁹ Arkell (1952b), pp.259-60

²⁵⁰ According to al-Tunisi, 'le terme *birny*, au Bâguirneh et au Barnau, correspond au mot Fâcher pour le Dârfour et le Ouadây. Birny n'est point un nom propre; il se dit de la place qui est devant la demeure du sultan secondaire, un gouverneur de premier ordre' (al-Tunisi, 1851, p.643).

²⁵¹ Denham, Clapperton and Ouedney (1826), p.154; Barth, Vol.II (1857), p.225; Bivar and Shinnie (1962) pp.2-3, fig.1, pls. 1,2. The huge mud-brick walls found at Borno cities are known in Kanuri as *garu*.

²⁵² Palmer, Vol.II (1928b), pp.66-7

²⁵³ Bivar and Shinnie (1962), pp.3-4

²⁵⁴ For Nguru, see Fremantle (1911), p.312

²⁵⁵ Barkindo (1992), p.505

A small building at N'Gazargamu is identified by the locals as a mosque; 'though there is nothing in the layout as it can now be seen to support such a view, they may be right.'²⁵⁶ 109 m west of the palace are the red-brick remains of what Lange identifies as a five-aisle mosque measuring 79 m by 36 m, oriented towards Mecca. There are, in addition, as many as four other possible mosques in the ruins.²⁵⁷ There are no real points of resemblance to the mosques of Uri or 'Ayn Farah.

In the early days of his reign Idris Aloma is remembered for revolutionizing the design and construction of Borno's mosques; 'As an indication of [the Sultan's] excellent qualities, is the innovation he made in building a mosque of clay. Formerly the mosque was of thatch, but he planned and saw that there was a better and more correct form. He destroyed all the old mosques in the Birni, and built new ones of clay, knowing how to hasten in the cause of the Faith, as is laid down in the Kurá'an and Hadiths.'²⁵⁸ The introduction of the red-brick mosque is thus contemporary with the construction of the cities of Uri and 'Ayn Farah, but the use of brick walls with stone buttresses is an entirely local innovation in Darfur, and is perhaps characteristic of a culture shifting to new building materials, but not yet trusting enough of the new material's strength to completely abandon the use of stone.

Birni N'Gazargamu and Gamburu are only two of many red-brick settlements in the eastern Sudanic region. Most are extremely difficult to date with any precision, but probably belong to the 15th and 16th centuries when centralized administration and long-distance trade began to make such developments possible. Among these are N'Guru in Borno, Garoumélé at the north end of Lake Chad (Niger),²⁵⁹ and Tié in southern Chad.²⁶⁰

A most important site is found at 'Ayn Galakka in Borku (central Chad). The site is located at a natural spring of sweet water, and was a natural location for the extensive works located there. Nachtigal was the first outsider to visit and describe the site:

In the immediate neighbourhood of the spring I found the remains of an ancient, solid four-sided building of brick, 235 paces long from southeast to northwest and 160 paces wide, the corners of which had apparently been furnished with towers. The bricks are well shaped and burnt, the mortar of great durability. The whole building indicated a degree of architectural skill such as is now found neither in those districts of the desert which I visited nor in Bornu. Around the ruins of these walls were scattered others, less extensive and less well finished, but I could not determine their layout with any certainty. Many of the natives put the erection of this building, so unusual in the local

²⁵⁶ Bivar and Shinnie (1962), p.3

²⁵⁷ Lange (1987), p.116

²⁵⁸ Ibn Fartua, in HR Palmer (ed), (1926), p.33 Lange suggests that the Kanuri term *tin* ('clay') was used in the text mistakenly for *tub* ('brick') - Lange (1987), p.117

²⁵⁹ Garoumélé probably dates from the early 15th century, and is distinguished by an outer wall of *tubuli* bricks (Hausa for egg-shaped bricks of sun-dried mud). See Binet (1952), pp.1-2; Bivar and Shinnie (1962), pp.4-6, fig.2, pls 5-7; Landeroin: 'Du Tchad au Niger: Notice historique', In, *Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho (1906-1909)*, Vol.II, Paris, 1911, pp.309-52, 354

²⁶⁰ Tié has been largely stripped of its bricks, but the remaining traces reveal a town measuring 243m x 218m. Local opinion dates Tié to the Bulala period (c1380-1600AD). Bivar and Shinnie suggest the town was destroyed c.1570 during the Kanem wars (Bivar and Shinnie, 1962, pp.8-10, and fig.3).

circumstances, in the time of the immigration of the ruling class into Bornu... The ruins, however, are scarcely as old as this. Others indeed ascribe them likewise to the Bornu kings, but of a later time, when these extended their rule to the north and even over Fezzan; they tell how at that time a mosque was joined with the *qasr*, in which a *mu'allim* dwelt as governor (in order no doubt that at the same time Islam might be established in Borku). Finally, still others assert that these buildings are attributable to Egyptian nomads who under Muhammad Ali had to leave their homeland, and for a long time maintained themselves in this strong fortress. To me the second explanation appears the most likely, for there are still, dating from the same period of the highest development of the power of Bornu, some ruins of similar brick buildings in that country itself.²⁶¹

The works were obscured after Nachtigal's visit by the Sanussists, who used the ruins as a foundation for defensive works.²⁶² The foundations of the earlier work were made of cut stone laid in mortar. Mud brick and baked brick were also employed in the works. The bricks are convex (a type unfamiliar to Darfur), and measure 32 x 34 x 16cm., with a centre thickness of 6cm.²⁶³ The bricks are also longitudinally scored with fingers, as is found at many of the sites along the Bahr al-Ghazal to the south.²⁶⁴ The fossil silicate composition of the bricks makes them remarkably light when baked. Tradition holds that the works at 'Ayn Galakka were already in place when the present residents of the area arrived in the seventeenth century, and Lebeuf makes a case for their construction by North African Muslim architects, possibly from the Fazzan or South Tunisia.²⁶⁵ Arkell suggested that 'Ayn Galakka, like 'Ayn Farah (in his view), had been built by Mai Idris and/or his mother.²⁶⁶ Carrique reports the local traditions, which hold that the works were built by the *Nassaras* (ie., Nazarenes, a Chadian term used frequently when ascribing responsibility for pre-Islamic works, or structures already in existence when a new population group took possession of the area. The meaning should be interpreted as 'whites' rather than Christians, as it can easily refer to Muslim North Africans), or by a race of giants, the 'Khouz'.²⁶⁷ Carrique himself presents two hypotheses; the first suggesting a Bulala origin, while the other, which rests on the assumption that advanced architectural techniques can rarely be indigenous developments in an African setting, and which Carrique seems to prefer, suggests a Roman origin for the 'Ayn Galakka works:

Ce qui est certain, c'est l'usage du ciment qui n'a jamais été signalé dans les constructions indigènes anciennes, la perfection de la construction, l'organisation de la défense, probablement l'aménagement des sources, etc. en un mot un ensemble de faits qui indique une main européenne.²⁶⁸

²⁶¹ Nachtigal II (1971), pp.367-8

²⁶² 'Ayn Galakka became the site of two important battles in 1907 and 1916 between the Sanusiyya and the French for dominance in the area. Colonel Largeau and General Bordeaux both destroyed part of the site in order to prevent it being reused as an anti-colonial stronghold. The site and the Sannusi modifications are described in detail in Carrique (1935).

²⁶³ AMD Lebeuf (1962), p.442

²⁶⁴ Huard and Bacquié (1964), pp.16-17 The authors describe a site at Ouogayi, 300 km. WNW of Umm Shaluba with the same brick size and type as at 'Ayn Galakka.

²⁶⁵ AMD Lebeuf (1962), p.442

²⁶⁶ Arkell (1936), p.310, fn.3

²⁶⁷ Carrique (1935), p.91

²⁶⁸ Carrique (1935), pp.91-2

Lebeuf preferred to suggest that 'Ayn Galakka was the work of Muslim architects from North Africa (specifically Fazzan and south Tunisia) who, in turn, inspired the Kanembu.²⁶⁹ Arkell learned from an informant that the Sanussi believed the buildings to have been the work of *Ghazz* (Ghuzz?) from Egypt.²⁷⁰ *Ghuzz* was the name by which Kurds in Egypt were often known, and appears to derive from the Turkish *oghuz*, which was originally applied to Turkic nomads in Central Asia.²⁷¹ In Ottoman period Sudan the term came to be applied to the Nubian garrisons of Bosnian, Hungarian, Albanian, Turkish and Circassian troops.²⁷² *Ghuzz* is certainly the same as Carrique's *Khouz* mentioned above, suggesting that the term had lost its original meaning in Borku, coming to mean something akin to *Abu Qona'an*, i.e., giants.

Stretching north-east from Lake Chad along the Chadian Bahr al-Ghazal are a large number of brick-walled settlements.²⁷³ The bricks are of a convex shape, typically measuring 28-30cm x 14-16cm x 6.8cm, tapering to 4-5cm. at the end. The bricks are scored longitudinally with the brick-makers' fingers while still wet, a technique also observed at Tié by Bivar and Shinnie.²⁷⁴ These works may date as early as the 14th and 15th centuries, and could be the result of techniques learned by the Kanembu during their campaigns in the Fazzan, or are possibly the work of North African architects imported to the region, as in the early 17th century construction of Wara, the Maba capital of Wadai.²⁷⁵ Lebeuf characterizes all the brick ruins of Kanem and the Chadian Bahr al-Ghazal as enclosed sites of fortified camps, dating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries.²⁷⁶ As a whole these works demonstrate that red-brick construction techniques were well known at an early date in the region immediately west of Darfur, and provide a much more likely source for the innovations found in the architecture of Uri and 'Ayn Farah than a wholesale migration of Christians from the Nile Valley.

It is interesting to note that brick was used almost solely for royal architecture in Darfur, rather than passing into use for domestic architecture, in which the common materials remained stone, wood and grass. Oral tradition from Borno suggests that the use of brick may have been a royal prerogative that could be granted to certain vassals. The temporary residence of a *mai* could also be built of brick, and some traditions state that bricks were carried by the followers of the *mai* whenever he left his capital.

If we assume that oral and documentary evidence is correct, then we could conclude that burnt bricks must have had a symbolic value in connection with kingship far transcending the rational use of a building material. Oral tradition collected in Maiduguri insists on punishment in case burnt bricks were used in other than royal residences. It is common belief that fired bricks in Borno are strong and often contain magic substances originating from sacrifice. Bricks at the palace

²⁶⁹ AMD Lebeuf (1962), p.442

²⁷⁰ 'Note of a conversation with Shaykh Abu Sofita', Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 12/(Darfur 4)

²⁷¹ Hasan (1967), p.134

²⁷² Adams (1984), p.611

²⁷³ The most important of these sites are Guesser, Dikilinga, Kogori, Lehan, Anchalay, Naréanga, Héréké, Goronia and Kommaka. See AMB Lebeuf (1962), pp.437-442.

²⁷⁴ Bivar and Shinnie (1962), p.9

²⁷⁵ AMD Lebeuf (1962), p.441

²⁷⁶ Lebeuf (1964), p.77

of Machina are described as 'lung', 'liver', etc. according to their slightly different colours. Various traditions collected in Maiduguri indicate that the preparation of the clay mixture was done where animals were slaughtered and that the blood of the animals was used.²⁷⁷

11. The Tunjur: Evidence from the south?

A recent contribution to the Tunjur problem was made by Dr. Kunijwok Kwawang, a Shilluk scholar.²⁷⁸ Relying on oral traditions provided by three Shilluk elders (including his father and chief Kwanyireth Bol Acien), Kwawang reconstructed a possible involvement in Darfur affairs by Nyikango, the legendary founder of the Shilluk people.²⁷⁹ While living in Bahr al-Ghazal, Nyikango's son Dak returned from a hunting expedition to the north, where he encountered the Lwel, a 'strange-looking red people' who enslaved freemen and stole their cattle. Nyikango had a dream in which he was urged to overthrow an evil foreign race which enslaved free people, and therefore followed Dak back north. At a point south-west of Kadugli in southern Kordofan Nyikango was captured by the Lwel and taken to their capital Paçir (Fashir?).²⁸⁰

While held at Paçir Nyikango persuaded the royal guard, the Patwac, to revolt. Under the leadership of Nyikango and his son Dak the Patwac defeated the Lwel in a battle near Dho Ling (Dilling) in

²⁷⁷ Seidensticker (1981), p.244

²⁷⁸ Kwawang (1982)

²⁷⁹ Cenotaph shrines for Nyikango are found throughout Shilluk country, the most important being at Fenikang and Akurwa. Each shrine consists of at least one or two huts and a small, roughly circular enclosure fenced with millet stalks (the *ludi*). (See Seligman, 1932, pl.s VII, VIII, IX). The immortal spirit of the dead king is believed to possess the *reth* upon his investiture. According to Evans Pritchard;

These shrines are widely distributed throughout the country so that every section of it participates in the cult of Nyikang, who is, it must be borne in mind, not only the semi-divine hero of Shilluk mythology but also the king at every period of their history. Indeed the shrines of Nyikang, what Professor Seligman calls his cenotaphs, are indistinguishable from the tomb-shrines of dead kings and they have the same ceremonial functions in the life of the people: in the rain-making ceremonies, at harvest time, and in times of sickness and pestilence. The religion and cosmogony of the Shilluk are bound up with the political system through the identification of Nyikang with the king. The kingship stands at the centre of Shilluk moral values (Evans-Pritchard, 1948, p.18).

²⁸⁰ Kwawang (1982), pp.6-7, pp.67-9; Udal, (1998), pp.183-93. 'Fashir' should not here be understood as the town of al-Fashir, which was not founded until the reign of Muhammad Tayrab (1756-87), at which point it became the permanent capital of the Kayra sultanate. The term *fashir* is used in Bagirmi, Wadai and Darfur in the sense of the 'seat of the sultan', without being fixed to any specific spot. The large number of what appear to be royal residences of the Daju, Tunjur and early Kayra periods reinforces the notion that the *fashir* was wherever the sultan was holding court at the time (see al-Tunisi, 1845, p.103). The word is first recorded in a late 16th century Borno manuscript regarding the reign of Mai Idris Aloma (Palmer, vol.I, 1928b, p.36). Udal makes a case for identifying the Paçir of the traditions with the Tunjur capital: 'The last of the Tunjur sultans before Dali, Show Dorshid, lived, according to Nachtigal, at Jebel Si, a little to the south of Uri. Kwawang's traditions speaks of the ruler being at 'Fasher, previously Kerri'. Kerri is probably Jebel Si, the habitat of the Kerakirit or Kora Kwa - the Fur people. Thus Nyikango was probably held captive at Jebel Si. However 'Fasher' is convincingly translated by Kwawang's guardians of Shilluk oral tradition as 'Paçir' - place of force' (Udal, 1998, p.587, fn.8). See, however, Udal's map 'Route of Nyikango's journey' (p.187) in which Paçir is shown in the region of al-Fashir rather than Jebel Si.

Kordofan. After being joined by other black peoples, the Koc Col (pr. Chol), the forces of Nyikango and his sons forced the surrender of the Lwel, freeing the lands roughly south of Jebel Si (Si and the more northerly Dar Furnung being the Tunjur heartland) and the area of southern Kordofan from Lwel rule. Lwel resident in those areas were allowed to migrate north.

Nyikango founded a brief-lived kingdom which he divided into four quarters:

- 1/ The north-east, ruled from Obed (al-Obeid?) by Nyikango's half-brother Gillo. Gillo was also the military chief of the entire kingdom.
- 2/ The south, in the area of the Bahr al-Arab, where Adimo was chief. Adimo (or Dimo) was a brother-in-law of Nyikango.
- 3/ The west, where Queen Akec La ruled from the area of Nyala with special responsibility for the Fur, who were highly reluctant to abandon the slave trade.
- 4/ From Kerri another brother-in-law, Thurro, ruled the north-west.²⁸¹

Possibly as a result of tensions between Nyikango and Gillo, the main group of Koc Col followed the Bahr al-Ghazal to the confluence of the Sobat and Nile rivers.²⁸² Here Nyikango was made *reth* of the Shilluk (a combination of the Col and the local inhabitants who accepted Nyikango's rule), an event which Kwawang dates to c.1545. Udal suggests that the overthrow of the Lwel can be dated to c.1525, and the migration down the Bahr al-Ghazal to c.1540. Udal goes on to speculate that the Lwel could be identified with the Tunjur: 'If Kerri and Jebel Si are synonymous, it is conceivable that Nyikango was instrumental in overthrowing Show Dorshid...'.²⁸³ In deriving his dates, Udal works in part from Arkell's theory of a Borno interregnum between Tunjur and Kayra rule after the alleged conquest of Darfur by Dali Afnu in 1530-40. If the fall of the Tunjur in Darfur is placed in the later part of the 16th century, as is more likely, then Udal's dates are too early for an involvement by Nyikango in the overthrow of the Tunjur sultan. The first hard date encountered in the Shilluk traditions is the reign of Nyikango's grandson, *Reth* Nyidoro, in 1605-15. It would seem conceivable, therefore, to posit later dates for Nyikango's activities in the west, while still providing for a period of civil war before the unification of the country under Sulayman Solong c.1640. There are a number of interesting parallels between the Nyikango and Tunjur traditions. The insurrection begun by Nyikango reminds us that Shau Dorsid was driven from his kingdom by his own people; the establishment of a kingdom divided into quarters is like the administrative system devised by Dali,²⁸⁴ who is

²⁸¹ Kwawang (1982), pp.21-4, 71

²⁸² The details of other traditions regarding the migrations of Nyikango and his people can be found in Crazzolara, vol.I (1950), pp.33-49

²⁸³ Udal (1998), pp.189-90.

²⁸⁴ Nachtigal describes the division of Darfur by Dali into five provinces; Dar Dali (east), Dar Uma (south), Dar Dima (southwest), Dar al-Riah or Dar Tokonyawi (north) and Dar al-Gharb (west) (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.277 - the full names of the first three provinces are Dar Abu Shaykh Dali, Dar Aba Uma and Dar Aba Diima). As Arkell points out, however, it is very likely that the original division was into quarters: 'The fact that the fifth province has an Arabic name, and that there is no official with ancient title and prerogatives for this fifth province corresponding to the other four governors or viceroys (The Abo Dali, Abo Uma, Abo

in some cases held responsible for the overthrow of the Tunjur; and Dali himself is described in some traditions as originally a servant of the Tunjur king (chief eunuch). The whole matter is intriguing and worthy of further investigation, as well as reminding us that even at this late date the collection of oral traditions can prove very rewarding.

12. Tunjur Sites in Wadai

Umm Shaluba

The original capital of the Tunjur dynasty in Wadai was a hilltop citadel at Kourdé along the Wadi Umm Shaluba, south-west of the Ennedi massif. Strongly fortified, the site dominates the trade route from the interior of Wadai north to Cyrenaica, and served as a starting point for caravans heading north-west to Tripoli.²⁸⁵ Commandant Tilho, who visited the site just before the Great War, remarked that 'The wells of Oum Chalouba are very important, both because of their position at the extreme southern limit of the Sahara and because they never run dry. Accordingly, the caravans that come and go between Wadai and the Mediterranean by Ounianga [Ennedi] and Koufra all pass through this station...'.²⁸⁶ This well-built fortress lies above a long gentle slope which unites the Iriba plateau and the Bir Bai depression (which opens onto the valley of the Wadi Howa). The work as a whole shows a developed ability in building defensive constructions. Within an oval bank which encircles a dry moat is a second wall which crowns the ridge. In the southern part of the enclosed space are traces of two groups of buildings. In the south-east part of the enclosure are a series of paired cells in stone of small dimensions, each opening toward the south. In the south-west are twelve structures in dry-stone which the locals (who are Zaghawa rather than Tunjur) assert are the tombs of the Tunjur sultans. Each consists of a circular wall 1m 20 in height supporting a vault of flat-stone over a filling of rubble (apparent *chouchet* tombs of the Berber type). The locals prefer not to be found in the vicinity of these tombs after dark. Water was apparently supplied by a cistern cut into a large rock fault. The whole enclosure measures approximately 300m by 150m.²⁸⁷

Dima and Abo Tokonyawi) makes it clear that the original provinces corresponded roughly with the points of the compass, and that the fifth province was created to answer a historical need, when Darfur expanded in a westerly direction at the expense of Wadai (Arkell, 1952a, p.131). In the king-list of Isma'il Ayyub Pasha (Egyptian governor of Darfur, 1873-6) it is Sabun, leader of the Kunjara Fur, who is credited with the division of Darfur into five provinces (see O'Fahey, 1995, p.165 and the Fur king-lists following).

²⁸⁵ See Huard and Bacquié (1964) for detailed descriptions of the trans-Saharan trade routes that linked Kano, Borno, Borku, Wadai and Darfur to the Mediterranean coastal cities of Tripoli, Tunis and Benghazi.

²⁸⁶ Tilho (1920)

²⁸⁷ Gros (1971), p.273

Kadama and Abu Telfan

Another capital, allegedly the work of the third Tunjur sultan of Wadai, 'Umar, is found at the foot of mount Kadama, fifty miles south of Abéché in the Kashemereh region on the edge of the Karanga massif. Barth mentioned the site, which he describes as the former capital of an extensive empire,²⁸⁸ and Nachtigal also mentions it, though it does not seem that he had the opportunity of visiting the site.²⁸⁹ The site apparently remained the capital under 'Umar's successor, Da'ud al-Mirayn.²⁹⁰ Umar is also said to have led an expedition to Abu Telfan, where he established a community of Tunjur that remains to this day.²⁹¹ The 'Native Chronicle of Wadai' states that 'Kadam' was the site of a seven-year siege of the Tunjur by the forces of 'Abd al-Kerim.²⁹²

Wara

Though by some accounts Wara was said to have been uninhabited when 'Abd al-Karim visited the site and made it the capital of his Muslim state, there is abundant evidence that Wara formed a capital of the Tunjur kings, although their residences were typically found on the hill-tops of Ama Sultane and Tréya, above the plain where the Arab capital was later built.²⁹³ On Ama Sultane one finds traces of occupation, including a round building of stone built on a platform, and numerous sherds and fragments of terracotta (some decorated).²⁹⁴ On Jebel Tréya Lebeuf and Kirsch observed the stone ruins of a possible guard-house, four small round structures accompanied by several millstones and a strange 'pyramid' of rough stone boulders. The 'pyramid' is built on a slope, so it varies in height from 5 to 10 metres, and is built in stages of 1 to 2 metres in height from blocks of granite. A ramp lying to the west leads five metres below to a small

²⁸⁸ Barth, Vol 2 (1857), p.547

²⁸⁹ Nachtigal, Vol 4 (1971), pp.163, 207 See also Carbou, Vol. 1, 1912, pp.78-9

²⁹⁰ Kadama and Wara may have served as the southern and northern capitals (respectively) of the Tunjur kingdom of Wadai (Tubiana, Khayar and Deville, 1978, p.14).

²⁹¹ Gros (1971), pp.274-5

²⁹² Palmer, Vol.II (1967), p.27

²⁹³ These sites were described by the Tunisian traveller Zayn al-'Abidin, who visited the area in the 1820's (Chaykh Muhammad, fils d''Ali, fils de Zayn al-'Abidin de Tunis, *Le livre du Soudan* traduit du turc ottoman par Marcel Grisard et Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, 1 - Laboratoire d'ethnologie et d'archéologie tchadiennes et camerounaises, CNRS, Ivry-sur-Seine, 1973; 2 - Société d'ethnographie, Paris, 1981). Zayn mentions ruins, stone sarcophagi (probably those of the later Maba Arab rulers north-west of the city), and traces of a sun-worship cult. The Arabic original of Zayn's manuscript was lost, and it is known only through a Turkish translation. Despite having been drawn to the attention of scholars by Georg Rosen in 1847, it remained virtually unknown until 1972 (with the exception of a mention by Dr. Helmolt in his world history of 1903; see Helmolt, 1903, p.540). Zayn's narrative was regarded as reliable in the brief time it has been known to scholars, but questions about its veracity were raised by Joseph M Cuoq in 1988 (*Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 31(262-3), p.86). See also the 'Note liminaire' in Lebeuf and Kirsch (1989), pp.14-15 and the review by JE Lavers of Lebeuf and Kirsch (1989) in *Sudanic Africa* 2, 1991 where the similarities of Zayn's works to the works of al-Tunisi are noted. A brief history and summary of this unusual document is given in Th. Monod and J-L Bacqué-Grammont; 'Le Récit de voyage de Zayn el 'Abidin au Soudan et au Tchad', In: *Études Nubiennes*, Paris, 1977, pp.205-7.

²⁹⁴ Lebeuf and Kirsch (1989), p.23

esplanade, called 'the terrace of the serpent'. A platform allows the observation of the sun on the horizon between two volcanic cones on the first day of the dry season and on the first day of winter.²⁹⁵ The whole installation is vividly described in 'A Native chronicle of Wadai' translated by Palmer:²⁹⁶

Among the hills in the neighbourhood of Wâra was a height called Jebel Thurayya (Pleiades) on the summit of which was a threshing floor. Near this was a rock where the heathen kings of the Tunjur of old used to build a grass house, and made for it seven 'Stations', as for instance the station of Thurayya (Pleiades).²⁹⁷

When they made a Sultan their chiefs took him up the hill to this place and made him stay in the 'Seven stations', and his followers encamped round him on the hill. Then they seized the people of the villages at its foot, boys and girls, and sacrificed as many as they thought fit - one each day. They also sacrificed a dark coloured ox, and from the flesh of the ox and that of the children made a pâté from which the Sultan-elect ate, what he left being thrown on the rock.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.67, pl.XVI, fig.30

²⁹⁶ Palmer, Vol.II (1967), p.27

²⁹⁷ For various forms of worship involving the Pleiades, see Puhvel (1991), pp.1243-7

²⁹⁸ There is evidence that cannibalism was practiced in ritual form in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic cultures of the area. The fierce Masalit warriors of Dar Masalit (lying on the Darfur/Wadai border) were rumoured to make meals of their enemies as late as the end of the nineteenth century; 'I had the good fortune to meet a man who was obviously very well informed about his fatherland (Dar Masalit). We talked about the Massalit in the west of the country, the predatory character of the et-Tirje Massalit and the cannibalism of the Ambus Massalit, who, despite their professed adherence to Islam, were said not to have broken off this shocking custom. He also told me that even now small water-bags made of human skin were sometimes brought into Darfur' (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.267). Certain Masalit of the Um Bus section admitted to MacMichael that they would eat the raw entrails of their enemies, thereby gaining courage and eliminating softheartedness (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.87), while Slatin also reported that the skins of their fallen foes were used by the Masalit as waterbags. Nachtigal describes a ceremony with cannibalistic origins performed at the annual drum festival in Darfur during the reign of the Fur princes, in which the putrefied entrails of a castrated ram (kidneys, liver, spleen, etc.) were chopped up and mixed with year old rancid butter and a strong dose of hot pepper.

The leader of the princes then devoured one of the wether's eyes, while he gave the other to the *iyā basi* [a Fur title for the king's sister], who dared not hesitate to do the same. The princes and princesses sat down in a circle around the *konda* dish, and armed slaves stood behind them so that no one could withdraw from the duty of eating it. Woe to him who, overcome by nausea, or irritated by the pepper, made any movement that suggested vomiting, or gave way to a fit of coughing; the slaves who were on guard had the duty of killing him, since his behaviour was considered a sign that he did not wish well to the king and his government. Instead of the wether, there had been slaughtered in Pagan times, and right up to the reign of King Suleman Solon, a virgin who had scarcely reached puberty, whose entrails were consumed in the manner I have described. This custom was said indeed to have been maintained until the beginning of (the 19th) century. (Nachtigal, IV, 1971, pp.340-1)

MacMichael suggested that the pagan tradition survived into the late 19th century:

Those of the late Sultan's family who were not chosen [as the new Sultan] were liable to be put to death as soon as the new Sultan succeeded. The manner of this was as follows: a boy, the only son of his father and mother, was put to death and his liver cut out. An *akhdar* sheep and an *akhdar* bull were also killed and their livers cut out. The livers of all three were then chopped up small and heavily sprinkled with red pepper. The mixture was then left to stand for three days. All the *Awlad el Salatin* were then made to eat a portion of the mess (called *Kundanga*). If anyone of them

Then a huge snake came out.

Thus they made food for the Sultan for seven days and they said that any Sultan who did not go through this ceremony would have no real power.

When Abd ul Karim saw this house, he cleared it up and made a town....

When Abd ul Karim (may God have mercy upon him) died, there was a dispute about the succession, and his friend Kalak Tanjak and his followers called the son who had come with him from Hijaz because he was the elder and put him in the king's palace.

But the people of Wadai made Harut king, because he was their brother, and took him up the rock to the place of pagan worship.

But Kalak Tanjak returned with his people, and turned Harut out of the house and drove him away, and the Wadaians will have nothing to do with his people even now.

But as regards the ancestral custom of making kings on the rock, they have never broken with it altogether, for when Harut's affair was over, Satan suggested to his brother that if he fulfilled the old rites of the rock as practised by the ancient kings, his kingdom would endure.

Mount Treya (Thurayya) was a sacred hill with an important role in fertility and accession rites, and apparently remained so well into the 19th century. It was for climbing Jebel Treya that the German traveller Dr. Edward Vogel was killed by the Wadai sultan c.1856.²⁹⁹

A very similar story was told by the Fur *shartai* of Kerne in 1936 regarding a type of rite that may have once been common throughout the Darfur/Wadai region:

The ceremony is performed at Gili on a small ridge on which are the remains of a stone building surrounding a rock. A black bull followed by the *shartai* with his people and horses, is led to a large *gemmeiza* tree, under which a shot is fired. The bull is then slaughtered between two other trees, and the *shartai*, his people and horses jump over the carcass. They then approach the 'place of customs' from the east, and go round the north side, and enter from the west. There they enter, and the hereditary officiant places water, flour and a little of the meat, and sprinkles water on the ruins, the people and the animals of the *shartai*. Next day the offerings will have vanished, and it is believed that they are taken by short white snakes with human eyes.³⁰⁰

MacMichael refers to a boulder at Sergitti (little different from those around it, as is often the case) under which lived the local *jinn* or *shaytan*, which took the form of a short, fat, white snake with a large black woolly head and enormous eyes. As usual, an old woman acted as the hereditary familiar to this spirit. The

coughed in the process he was at once put to death. This horrible custom was last put into practice by Hussein Abu Koda who called himself Sultan for eight months at Fasher in 1898 and was ejected by Ali Dinar on his arrival previous to the defeat of Ibrahim, the other pretender. (MacMichael, SGA Intel. 5/3/38 - Notes on the Tribes of Darfur, Oct-Dec 1915 Typescript ; See also al-Tunisi, 1845, p.165)

While engaged in administrative duties in south-eastern Jebel Marra in the 1930's, Arkell discovered that the sacrifice of a boy and girl of the Daranga section of the Fur was traditionally required in the accession rites of the *Umangawi* (the viceroy of the south). The ceremony had been modified under Condominium rule; 'in 1936 the new Umangawi performed these rites, blood being taken from the arm of a boy and a girl from this section and mingled with the blood of a slaughtered sheep, and smeared on his face (Arkell, 1951b, p.235).

²⁹⁹ According to the account of his death provided by Muhammad al-Shinqiti, the Dar Fur ambassador to Cairo: see *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* II, 1858, p.79. For Nachtigal's efforts to raise the matter with the reluctant Sultan of Wadai, see Nachtigal IV (1971), pp. 131-2

³⁰⁰ Arkell (1951b), p.230

district chief (*Niamaton*) was required to make a sacrifice whenever he passed this place, or suffer fatal consequences:

The *Niamaton* on reaching the stone would slaughter a sheep in such a way that its blood would gush over the stone and would drag the carcass across the path which he was to take. The old woman would remain behind after he had passed to make up cakes of blood and flour and cut the meat into strips and arrange these morsels on or by the stone for the snake. She would at the same time hold converse with the snake and intercede with it for the *Niamaton*'s immunity from all harm, and the snake would appear to her and talk to her and grant her request. She would address it as 'ya waladi' ('my child') and pet it and place it in the shade.³⁰¹

A snake 'of a reddish-brown colour, about four feet long, and thick as a man's arm' is used for omens by the *Erenga* at *Jebel Mun* (on the Chad-Sudan border neighbouring *Dar Tama*).³⁰² The letters and field-notes of Condominium officials in Darfur are full of similar accounts. The sites of such stones are nearly always associated with taboos against various court officials and dignitaries (though usually only one in each case), who must propitiate the spirit with a sacrifice before passing. That these taboos take no heed of the importance of the individual (applying even to the 'Muslim' *Fur* sultan) argues for the ancientness of these practices.

³⁰¹ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), pp.100-1

³⁰² Davies (1922), pp.167-8

Appendix OneTunjur songs from Kanem'Tunis the Green'³⁰³

Lead us to the country of Tunis the green
 If we need millet, the water of Tunis will be enough to keep us alive
 Lead us to the country which does not have horseflies
 Tunis the green is a paradise beyond this country
 The dates made famous the land of Mao
 The *savonniers*³⁰⁴ made famous the land of Qudjer
 The knights and the sons of the Sultan made the reputation of Tunis
 Their clothes were of silk
 Their saddles smelt of *teb*
 The mouth of Djeber is blue as the *fusus*
 Yes, by god, his teeth are as white as the *mersus*
 Kumboyé, come see
 the morning star
 which moves in the sky
 al Aris goes in the night distributing cakes
 Haggar, son of Kanguédi
 fills well his saddle of *gafal*-wood
 when the cattle are stolen and their cries beckon

³⁰³ Nachtigal mentioned a village named Tunis in Kanem named 'in memory of the last home of the [Tunjur] tribe before they migrated into the Negro countries' (see Nachtigal III, 1971; IV, p.347, where Nachtigal places this village in the region of Mondo, in the south-eastern portion of Kanem). Carbou, however, was never able to locate it, despite many enquiries (Carbou, Vol.I, 1912, p.74). Palmer mentions that similar songs of 'Tunis the Green' were known among the Tunjur of Borno (Palmer, July 1930, p.369).

³⁰⁴ The *savonnier* is a type of tree. An illustration of this plant can found in Chapelle's memoirs of service in Chad - see Chapelle (1987), pl.8.

Son of the prize-bull
 Son of those whom the whole world fears
 Golden Kouria
 Son of the most esteemed men
 He mounts his mare
 He goes in the cold night
 The *fugbu*³⁰⁵ Dares, son of Djeber

'Warriors'

The place of assembly is full of shining lances	(Refrain) Warriors !
Fares, son of Djeber	Warriors !
is a valiant warrior, who puts the horsemen to flight	Warriors !
He pursues them as a bird of prey	Warriors !
He kills the fat men to leave them for the vultures	Warriors !
Here are our <i>savonniers</i>	Warriors !
Here are our milk-cows	Warriors !
Here are the ranges of our herds	Warriors !
Here are our young women so prized	Warriors !
Here are the mothers of our young women	Warriors !
Brave men, gather	Warriors !
that we may throw ourselves into the thick of the fight	Warriors !
Let my blood run	Warriors !
The enemy are as the testicles of the elephant	Warriors !
I call to you a longtime;	Warriors !
Why, slave, do you not come?	Warriors !

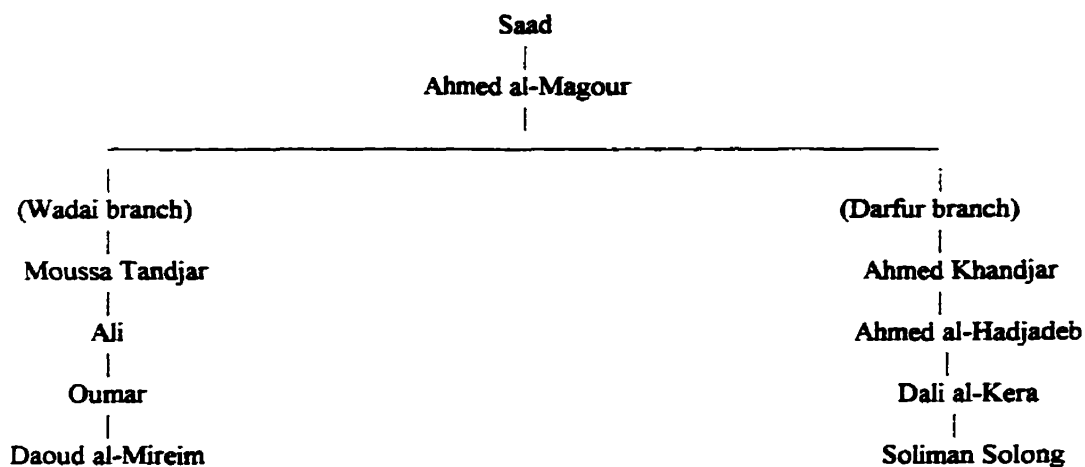
³⁰⁵ *Fugbu* (or *fugobo*) is a Kanembu title meaning chief. See Carbou, Vol II (1912), p.1

The Tunjur, sons of their father (<i>ie</i> : of noble origin)	Warriors !
have left aside the quarrels of the past	Warriors !
They no longer butcher men	Warriors !
Here are the knights of Tunis	Warriors !

(Songs collected and rendered in Arabic with a French translation by Henri Carbou; *Méthode pratique pour l'étude de l'Arabe parlé au Ouaday et à l'est du Tchad*, Paris, 1913)

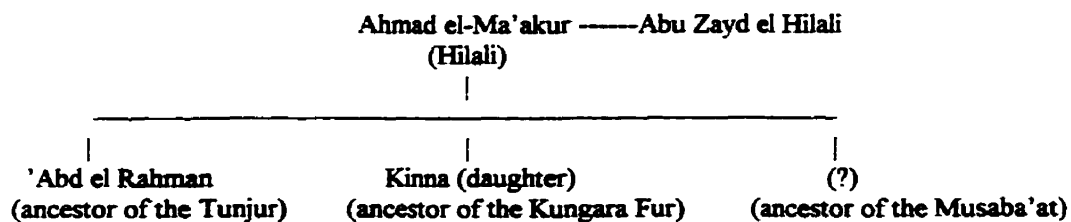
13. Tuniur King-list from Mondo (Kanem) (T1)

Ali al-Karrar
 |
 Hassa el Sobti
 |
 Mahamat
 |
 Hassan Massana
 |
 Abdoulaye el Mahdi
 |
 Moussa Djaimi
 |
 Daoud
 |
 Abdoulaye
 |
 Mahamat
 |
 Mahamat
 |
 Yahia Zaed
 |
 Abdoulaye
 |
 Mahamat
 |
 Hassan Sghir al-Gharbi
 |
 Khouès
 |
 Khanem
 |
 Djelil al-Hilali
 |
 Salem
 |
 Rézik
 |
 Abou Zayd al-Hilali
 |
 Adoum
 |
 Mahamat
 |
 Abd al-Médjid
 |
 Abd al-Kérim
 |
 al-Hassar
 |
 al-Libéi
 |



(As given in R. Gros: 'Histoire des Toundjour de Mondo (Kanem)', In *Quelques populations de la Republique du Tchad*, Paris, 1971)

A Tungur Genealogy from Kordofan (T2)



(From various Tungur sources in Kordofan, collected by HA MacMichael, published in MacMichael (1912), p.54)

Tuniur King-list from Kordofan (T3)

Ghalib
 |
 Luai
 |
 Ka'ab
 |
 Hashim
 |
 'Abd al-Muttalib
 |
 'Abbas
 |
 'Abdulla
 |
?
 |
 Sa'ad
 |
 al-Gerah
 |
 'Amir
 |
 Ishak
 |
 Mamun
 |
 'Agab
 |
 Batnan
 |
 Kusayr
 |
 Germun
 |
 Serhan
 |
 Sufian al-Ma'akur
 |
 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hilali
 |
 Ishak
 |
 Nul
 |
 'Awamil
 |
 Serih
 |
 Kun
 |

Batt
 |
 Rufa'a
 |
 Shau (al-Dorsid)
 |
 'Amr
 |
 Isma'il
 |
 Bukr
 |
 Nur
 |
 'Othman
 |
 Nair
 |
 Yusef
 (present generation in 1912)

(Collected and published by HA MacMichael, 1912, pp.55-6)

Tunjur King-list from Wadai (T4)

(Tunjur kings)
 Al-Malik Karāma
 |
 Jemal ub Dīn
 |
 Durdur
 |
 Al-Kāmin
 |
 (Tunjur sultans of Wadai)
 Muhammad Tunjur
 |
 Yakub al-Mu'akir
 |
 Hamid Abu Wuiba
 |
 Dawurd al-Mirīn

(From 'A Passage from a native chronicle of Wadai', in Palmer , Vol.II, 1928b, p.25)

A Musaba'at source for the lost names of the Tunjur kings ?

The Musaba'at king-list from Kordofan (F4)¹ begins with sixteen unfamiliar names before the appearance of the name Ahmad al-Maq'ur and the 'proto-Kayra' (Dali, Kurru, Tumsan, etc.) who follow him in most lists. It has generally been assumed that these names represent the early Musaba'at chiefs, but a comparison with Tunjur king-lists from Mondo (Kanem) (T1) and Kordofan (T3) reveals a number of interesting concordances that suggest that at least some of the names in the Musaba'at list are those of the early Tunjur rulers missing from nearly all the traditions, which habitually use the name Shau al-Dorsid or some variant in referring to any Tunjur ruler. List F4 appears to be an example of what Henige terms 'genealogical parasitism', in which 'the beginnings of dynasties are often antedated by attaching them to other dynasties of alleged or demonstrably earlier dating'.² List T1 is separated by three centuries from F4, but interestingly there are no correspondences between the two Tunjur lists, which are separated by a like physical distance and passage of time.

Correspondences between King-lists F4, T1, and T3

<u>F4 - Musaba'at, Kordofan</u>	<u>T1 - Tunjur of Mondo (Kanem)</u>	<u>T3 - Kordofan Tunjur</u>
Khuzaym	Khouès	
Kenan	 Khanem	
Nudr		
'Abd al-Salam al-Asmar		
Hilal	Djelil al-Hilali (?) ³	
Idris		
Mamun		
'Isa		
Nagil		

¹ See the section on Fur King-lists from Darfur and Kordofan

² Henige (1974), p.51

³ The *Hilal* of F4 is a generic name probably applicable to any Tunjur ruler and served as the clue that these names may represent Tunjur rather than Musaba'at chiefs. The correspondence with Djelil al-Hilali is thus given, but remains questionable.

'Agab		'Agab
Batnan		 Batnan
Rufa'a		
Kas		Kusayr
Ga'afir Gurmun		 Germun
Sufian		 Sufian al-Ma'akur
Rizik	Rézik	

The three and possibly four names common to lists F4 and T1 are most likely those of Tunjur rulers of Darfur, as there would appear to be little reason for the Mondo Tunjur to incorporate names from a Musaba'at lineage that was of no importance when the Tunjur began their migration to Kanem. The Musaba'at list, however, emphasizes the clan's claims to legitimacy through incorporating a long string of pre-Kayra rulers. The five matches from the Kordofan Tunjur list may also represent former Tunjur rulers, although it is still possible that the matching names from F4 may actually be Musaba'at chiefs, and the pedigree of the Kordofan Tunjur has been contaminated through contact with their Musaba'at neighbours (the reverse could just as easily be the case). The matching order of succession in several of the name combinations from T1 and T3 is a small argument in favour of the historical existence of these individuals, rather than their simply serving as useful but meaningless extensions to the lineage. The Rizik/Rézik of lists F4 and T1 is in both cases the last king to reign before the arrival of either Abu Zayd (T1) or Ahmad al-Maq'ur (F4). The inclusion of Tunjur names in a Musaba'at Fur pedigree again suggests that the Fur and Tunjur peoples became largely mixed through inter-marriage, most prominently in the Kunjara and Musaba'at sections of the Fur. MacMichael in fact notes that the Dongola *nisba* adds that the Musaba'at are descended from the Hilala,⁴ which in the Darfur context are to be identified with the Tunjur. We may thus tentatively add the names Khuzaym/Khoués, Kenan/Khanem, Djelil al-Hilali (?), 'Agab, Batnan, Kas/Kusayr, Ga'afir Gurmun/Germun, Sufian (al-Ma'akur), and Rizik/Rézik to our list of known Tunjur rulers for whom the name *Shau al-Dorsid* may have been a title.

⁴ MacMichael (1912), p.56

14. Historical outline of the Kavra Fur Kingdom

The Fur people are best viewed as a linguistic group rather than an ethnic or racial type, as they seem to have been formed through the assimilation of a number of tribes by a core group of Fur speakers from the Jebel Marra heartland. As such they have always formed the largest non-Arab group in Darfur, numbering perhaps 450-500,000 people today. The last three centuries have witnessed a gradual movement of the Fur from the Jebel Marra range into the foothills and plains west and southwest of Jebel Marra.

As a result of this migration (and no doubt in part as a consequence of the influence of assimilated peoples) the Fur language (*bèle fòòr*) can now be divided into six dialects, with all types having a high to reasonable degree of mutual intelligibility:

- 1/ Jebel Marra (central Fur area)
- 2/ Zalingei (western Fur area)
- 3/ Northern (Jebel Si, Dar Furnung)
- 4/ Geneina (Dar Masalit, a non-Fur area)
- 5/ Kulli (southwestern Fur area)
- 6/ Nyala (southeastern Fur area)¹

The Fur language has very complex forms of grammar and syntax, and is very rich in vocabulary and expressive phrases. The language has long been regarded as an isolated member of the Nilo-Saharan language phylum, but in recent years Amdang, a language found in enclaves in Wadai and pockets of western Darfur, has been recognized as a variant of Fur.² Fur is traditionally an unwritten language, but Felkin mentions medical texts in Fur using Arabic characters (though he says he did not see them himself), and Jernudd has noted a practice among certain Fur of rendering Fur phonetically through the Arabic script when it is desired to keep communications secret from Arabic speakers.³

The Fur describe themselves as all belonging to one of three great divisions, The Tamurkwa (west of Jebel Marra) and the Kunjara and Karakirit (both on the eastern side of the mountains).⁴ The Tamurkwa were the 'mountain Fur', and were generally regarded by the other sections of the Fur as being less sophisticated. A report produced by MacMichael in 1915 demonstrates the hold that shaman-type figures still held in a very lightly Islamicized culture:

These Temourka and the Jebela (or Jebelowis) of Jebel Marra are the most savage and uncivilized folk in Darfur. They are despised by the rest of the population as such and also feared

¹ Jernudd (1968), p.168, and see Jakobi's revised map of dialect distribution in Jakobi (1990), p.4

² Greenberg (1972), pp.45-9, Bender (1997), p.24 For a summary of the research done in the Fur language since Sir Henry Salt compiled the first word-list in 1814, see Jakobi (1990), pp.1-15.

³ Felkin (1884-5), p.243; Jernudd (1968), p.180

⁴ *Karakirit* may be an Arabic corruption for *Korakwa*, just as the more familiar Arabic *Tamurka* appears for the Fur *Tamurkwa* (or *Tamurakwa*).

on account of their supposed powers to transmogrify themselves into animals, and also come to life again after death. These beliefs are very ancient and though the Sultan disapproves of them still hold good. In fact the magicians form a sort of guild with recognised high-priests, and exact dues from the villages, threatening in case of default to turn into lions and ravage their herds. These experts are known as 'ahl el awaid'. Two years ago their exactions became so gross that the villagers complained to the Sultan. The latter summoned the head magicians and ordered them to turn into lions before him: as they 'refused' he put one to death and consigned the other two to prison.⁵

The Kayra were a royal section of the noble Kunjara section. Membership in the Kayra clan was somewhat mobile rather than hereditary, due to the immense progenies of the Fur sultans whose innumerable descendants could not all be accommodated as members of the royal family; 'Membership was practically effective for only about two generations; third generation Keira, male and female, tended to disappear into the masses, a distinction expressed in those called *baasingal*'royals' and *tellanga*'distant', between those who had access to 'sovereignty'/*mamlaka* and those who did not'.⁶

The Fur kingdom, though nominally Islamic,⁷ remained to its end strongly rooted in time-honoured practices and traditions that expressed themselves through a highly complex ritual cycle:

In form the ritual cycle was essentially the magnification by the state of local ritual life: the accession ceremonies paralleled those of the provincial and local chiefs, drums were everywhere the symbol of political unity and authority, old women were ritual guardians and seers at local shrines devoted mainly to snake cults throughout the Fur lands, and the pervasive influences of religious norms and sanctions far older than Islam informed all aspects of the popular and political culture.⁸

Beyond the usual folk-religion involving holy stones and serpents, the Fur also appear to have developed a more sophisticated type of religious belief before the arrival of Islam, involving the worship of Molu, who lives in the sky. The righteous dead went to join Molu, while the wicked were condemned to Uddu, the place of punishment, where they would eventually be consumed by fire. According to Felkin, who recorded these beliefs in the 1880's, Islam was still poorly understood at the time:

The name of Allah is used now by many of the people for God, but they have a very confused idea as to the difference between God (Allah) and the Shereef at Mecca. Some few of them go on pilgrimages to Mecca, and they say that this Allah is a very fat man, who lies on a white mat and never does anything, but receives those who come to him, and lets them kiss his hand.⁹

Despite the success of the Fur in maintaining an independent kingdom for nearly three centuries, and their success in reviving the sultanate after the depredations of Zubayr's conquest and the ravages of the

⁵ MacMichael (1915), p.71

⁶ O'Fahey (1980a), p.33 (using information from the papers of PJ Sandison, Durham Sudan Archives).

⁷ For the process of Islamization amongst the Fur, see Osman (1986), pp.351-2, and O'Fahey (1971); and (1973a).

⁸ O'Fahey (1980a), p.23

⁹ Felkin (1884-5), pp.218-19 Felkin also reported the existence of stone huts dedicated to the worship of Molu, which were still held in reverence by the Fur (*Ibid*, p.222). Beaton reported that most of these beliefs had ceased to be current in Darfur by the 1940's (Beaton, 1948, p.38).

Mahdiyya, many officials of the condominium régime described the Fur in only the most negative terms. Typical of this is the description provided by Sarsfield-Hall, who served as a political officer in Darfur before serving as governor of Kordofan and Khartoum provinces.

The Tamurka and Jebala [the so-called 'Mountain Fur'] sections, who inhabit the Jebel Marra group, are probably the most savage and uncivilized people in Darfur, and regarded by their own Kungara brethren as slaves. Generally speaking the Fur proper, though good cultivators, are an indolent drunken folk, who have a greater reputation for treachery than for courage.¹⁰

Among the few colonial administrators to have a good impression of the Fur was AC Beaton, who characterized them as having a closely knit social organization, and as being physically strong and hardworking, and 'at least the intellectual equal of some of their non-Arab neighbours... As a race they are brave, respectful, on the whole honest, and extremely industrious'.¹¹

The power shift: Tunjur to Fur

The many versions of the Ahmad al-Ma'qur legend in which Ahmad appears as the mediator in the transition from Tunjur to Kayra rule are most likely the result of intermarriage between the Tunjur and elements of the Kunjara Fur and the subsequent absorption of Tunjur pedigrees into the Kunjara/Kayra lineage. As with many traditions, only the figures important in a transfer of power are remembered, while intervening rulers disappear from the record, so that Ahmad al-Ma'qur through Shau al-Dorsid and Dali to Sulayman Solong may only be remembered as a matter of four or five generations.

Dali is recorded in one source (in the Arabized form Ibrahim al-Dalil) as invading Kordofan in the early 16th century at the head of his supporters and two tribes of Arabs, the Ghudiyat and the Tumam. Dali quickly took the Kordofan capital, al-'Ubayyid, but a dispute between Dali's Arab allies led to the Ghudiyat helping the Funj sultan of Sinnar, Badi, to take Kordofan from the Fur in 1559.¹²

The processes involved in the transition of power from the Tunjur to the Kunjara are poorly understood and have to a large extent become mythologized in the traditions, but as Tunjur authority declined it appears that two clans of the Kunjara Fur engaged in a long struggle to fill the growing void. The losing group came to be known as the Musaba'at because of their migration east to Kordofan following their final defeat (*Musaba'at* = 'people of the east', from *sabah*, 'morning', 'east'). A Musaba'at tradition records Idris Ja'l as scoring the decisive victory over the Musaba'at faction in 1578, following a bloody twenty-year conflict.¹³ In Darfur, however, the conflict is summarily remembered as a quarrel between two chiefs, Kuru and Tunsam (Arabicized to Tumsah, 'crocodile'), over a property in Dar Fia. Kuru was for long worsted in the struggle, and the conflict would not be concluded before his son Sulayman took charge on the battlefield.

¹⁰ Sarsfield-Hall (1922), p.364

¹¹ Beaton (1948), pp.3-4

¹² Cadalvène and Breuvery, Vol.II (1841), pp.200-201.

¹³ Cadalvène and Breuvery, Vol.II (1841), pp.201-2

The war between the Kuru and Tunsam factions of the Kunjara may represent a final struggle between the forces of Islam and traditional custom for supremacy in Darfur.

The official establishment of an Islamic state in Darfur is everywhere attributed to Sulayman Solong (or *Solongdungo*, Fur: 'the red-skinned', i.e., 'Arab') who for this reason is also credited as the first sultan of the Kayra dynasty. De Lauture recorded a tradition describing Sulayman's efforts to spread Islam; 'He preached Islam in Jebel Marra and after several conversions, also converted *malik* Dukkume, chief of the Tomourki [Tamurkwa], whom he circumcised with a razor that he had brought from Cairo and which had to do for several thousand people.'¹⁴

During the war between his father Kuru and Tunsam, the young Sulayman was spirited off to his mother's people, the Serbung section of the Masalit, who were customarily attributed an Arab origin (hence the surname). As a young man Sulayman returned to Darfur to complete the expulsion of Tunsam's faction. Following this success Sulayman embarked on no less than thirty-three military expeditions, leading his victorious troops with his talismanic drum (the *ginsi*) and round metal shield (*shirim*). The latter was adorned with little bells which rang as Sulayman shook it in battle, and the shield eventually found its way into the Kayra reliquary at Fashir, where it remained still in Nachtigal's time. Many tribes, including the Birked, the Bayko, the Zaghawa, and the still rebellious Tunjur were all brought under his domain, though the tradition of Sulayman extending the borders of his kingdom as far as the Atbara in the east is almost certainly hyperbole.¹⁵ Nachtigal records that Sulayman reigned from 1596 to 1637.¹⁶

Sulayman Solong was followed to the throne by his son Musa, for whom Nachtigal ascribes a long reign of 45 years. Musa was unsuccessful in his attempts to subjugate the Qimr, and was occupied through much of his reign with struggles against the Musaba'at of Kordofan. According to Nachtigal the Musaba'at under Sultan Janqal (or Jongol, the Muhammad Gunkul of the Musaba'at king-list F4) succeeded in bringing the war to Jebel Marra, engaging in battles at Tine and Kolge, both residences of Musa at the foot of the Jebel Marra range.¹⁷ Another tradition, possibly taken from a manuscript-history of Kordofan, asserts that Musa was deposed by his brother, Muhammad Bulat, and took refuge in Kordofan. With the aid of several tribes that followed him, Musa was able to conquer Kordofan within a matter of days, and remained there for five years, until his supporters in Darfur called him back. Muhammad Bulat was killed, and Musa regained the throne.¹⁸ Barth cites a tradition from Wadai that Sultan Yaqub 'Arus (third successor of 'Abd

¹⁴ De Lauture (1855-6), p.79

¹⁵ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.278-9; O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974), pp.120-1

¹⁶ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.279

¹⁷ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.280

¹⁸ De Cadalvène and Breuvery, Vol.II (1841), pp.202-3 Based on the information of Dr. Koenig, this source places these events in the years 1700-1705, which may be several decades too late. The same source also mentions 'Janqal' (Jongol, Gunkul), a sultan of the Musabba'at, who had many supporters among the Bidayriya Arabs of Jebel Suruj. Janqal marched against the Funj at al-Ubbayid, but was defeated by the Funj general, Dakin al-Funjawi, who killed Janqal with his own hands and sent his head on to Sinnar (Cadalvène and Breuvery, Vol.II, 1841, p.202; this event is dated at 1603, which is far too early - see O'Fahey and Spaulding, 1972, p.321).

al-Karim, reigning 1681-1707 according to Nachtigal¹⁹) attacked Darfur in Musa's later years hoping for an easy victory, but was handily defeated and forced back to Wadai.²⁰

Musa was succeeded by his eldest son, Giggeri, an epileptic who had the misfortune of suffering a seizure on his coronation day, and was immediately replaced with the youngest of Musa's eight sons, Ahmad Bakr. During his forty year reign Ahmad focussed on spreading Islam and the orthodox form of its customs throughout his kingdom. Immigration from more advanced regions such as Borno, Bagirmi and even the Nile valley was encouraged. Militarily Ahmad succeeded in consolidating his rule along the Wadai border and defeated the Qimr in the north in a war said to have lasted seven years, seven months, and seven days. Inevitably another dispute arose with Wadai, this time over the annual tribute of one girl of the royal blood sent from Wadai to the sultan of Darfur, a legacy of the junior and senior Tunjur régimes in Wadai and Darfur.²¹ Sultan Yaq'ub Arus refused to pay the tribute, and invaded western Darfur as far as Kabkabiya. Ahmad declined to give battle right away, and spent two years procuring fire-arms from Egypt and troops from Bagirmi before decisively defeating the Wadai sultan in a battle at Kabkabiya (Fur: 'They threw their shields away'). The defeat of the Qimr opened up the northern plains of the Zaghawa to Kayra influence. Ahmad appears to have brought these lands (vitaly important to the control of the northern trade routes) into his sphere of influence through intermarriage and the exchange of gifts. Zaghawa resistance was violently repressed, driving some of the Zaghawa into northern Kordofan,²² but the Darfur sultan also sought to expand his influence through peaceful means, marrying into the ruling clan of the Kobbé Zaghawa. Ahmad's son, Muhammad Dawra,²³ was instrumental in the campaigns against the Qimr and the Zaghawa.

Nachtigal records that in Ahmad Bakr's later years the sultan was infirm and hard of hearing, and that a rising discontent with his rule allowed Giggeri to seize the throne. Ahmad succeeded in withdrawing to Kuli in the south-west. Here the old sultan prepared his slaves for war, and struck in the fall cultivation season, when Giggeri's levies were scattered in the fields. Ahmad took the residence at Abu Asal and killed Giggeri. The sultan now determined to strike at his troublesome cousins in Kordofan, the Musaba'at, but died *en route*; according to one source his death occurred shortly after receiving a vision of the *faki* Khujali b. 'Abd al-Rahman.²⁴

Ahmad Bakr was succeeded by his son Muhammad Dawra c.1730, the first Kayra prince to have been made *khalifa* and successor, a major change in the usual consensus method of choosing a new sultan within the royal family only after the sultan's death. Described by Nachtigal as 'a brave warrior but also a barbarous and cruel man', Muhammad Dawra's reign was fit for portrayal in a Shakespearean tragedy. Ahmad Bakr on his death-bed had made his sons swear to rule in turn, beginning with the eldest,

¹⁹ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.208

²⁰ Barth (1857), p.644

²¹ This tribute seems to reinforce the suggestion that the Kayra Fur derived at least part of their legitimacy as sultans through a familial relationship with the imperial Tunjurs.

²² Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.208-10; 280-82; O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974), pp.126-8

²³ Dawra is a Fur nickname meaning 'iron'.

²⁴ Dayfallah (1971), p.200; Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.281-2

Muhammad Dawra. The latter, in full knowledge of his unpopularity and the uncertainty of this new type of succession, set out to eliminate all other contenders to the throne, executing over seventy of his brothers at once, while a few others escaped by dressing as women. Muhammad's eldest son Musa 'Anqarib was in turn promoted *khalifa*, but Muhammad's mind was poisoned against his son by the mother of his second son, 'Umar. With his father incited by belief in Musa's treachery, Musa was forced to take the field against the sultan. Musa was triumphant in a battle at Ghabashat and Muhammad changed tack, sending a number of religious dignitaries to his son with the message that all was forgiven, and asking for his return. The dignitaries were suspicious of the sultan's motives, however, and asked the sultan to swear an oath on the *Koran* that he would not harm Musa, which the sultan willingly did. Musa was received warmly by his father, and presented with a robe of honour, but when his son began to pull the garment over his head, the sultan caved in Musa's head with the butt end of a musket.

Ahmad Bakr, fearing his son's temper, had prophesized Muhammad's destruction if he harmed Ahmad's favourite son, Yusuf. Yusuf had escaped the massacres that followed Muhammad's enthronement only by being imprisoned in a deep hole in the rocks of the Jebel Marra. Perhaps emboldened by the murder of his own son, the sultan now had Yusuf killed. Muhammad was shortly thereafter stricken with leprosy, and suffered greatly, with even his tongue having to be cut out, before dying in 1743.²⁵

'Umar Lel, Muhammad's second son, now came to the throne. In some accounts of 'Umar's rule he is said to have been greatly devoted to Islam, and according to Shuqayr, this devotion may have caused problems at the time of his succession:

'Umar was a just and pious man, who after three days as sultan told his council that he wished to abdicate in favour of one of his uncles, since the burden of the sultanate was greater than he could bear. He was prevailed upon to stay on the throne and executed a few corrupt officials at the gates of his *fashir* as a warning to the rest. Apart from the hostility of his uncles, 'Umar as a devout Muslim may have had scruples about ruling what was still a largely pagan state.²⁶

The enmity between 'Umar and his uncles (the *awlad* Bakr) would eventually turn to open fighting, and 'Umar kept the most popular of his uncles, Abu'l-Qasim, imprisoned in a *crevasse* of Jebel Marra. Two of 'Umar's uncles, Pelpelle and Sulayman al-Abyad, joined forces with the Musaba'at sultan, 'Isawi b. Janqal, and the frontier between Darfur and Kordofan became highly unsettled. After Sulayman aided 'Isawi in defeating the Funj at Qihayf, the Musaba'at sultan deliberately provoked an invasion of Kordofan by 'Umar Lel, who was known to have the temper of his father. 'Isawi fell back until the Kayra sultan was deep into Kordofan, allowing Sulayman to drive into a lightly defended Darfur from the south-east with the aid of the Rizayqat Arabs. 'Umar Lel returned to Darfur by means of forced marches, overtaking and killing Sulayman in Dar Birked.

'Umar followed Sulayman Solong's pattern of undertaking annual military expeditions, which had the effect of exhausting the sultanate's resources and manpower. Around the year 1752 the war with Wadai

²⁵ Al-Tunisi (1845), p.55; Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.282-3

²⁶ Shuqayr, Vol.II (1903), pp.115-6, as cited in O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974), p.130

resumed, possibly as a result of 'Umar demanding the ancient tribute of a maiden from the Wadai royal family. This may have been only a deliberate provocation, for the unpopular and unhappy 'Umar seems to have sought a warrior's death on the battlefield rather than wait to be murdered. Even in this 'Umar was to be disappointed, as his army deserted him at the height of the battle, leaving the sultan alone on the battlefield with his slaves and family members. All were massacred save 'Umar, who was taken in chains to Abu Kundi, where he spent several more years as a prisoner, reading the *Koran* and waiting for death.²⁷

One of 'Umar's last acts had been to free his uncle and rival Abu'l-Qasim from his mountain prison. Abu'l-Qasim quickly came to power, repelling yet another attempt by the Musaba'at to retake the land they had regarded as theirs since the days of Tunsam. Gradually the sultan distanced himself from the *awlad* Bakr, entrusting his rule to a Zaghawa *wazir* and a number of slave officials (a tendency which became more pronounced in the future as the sultans became more isolated from the other Kunjara nobles). The sultan devoted himself to preparations for war against Wadai, exacting a heavy new tax of one cow per household in order to field an army of 12,000 mounted men in armour besides the usual levies of *jebelawi* Fur. When the sultan assembled his men on the battlefield in Wadai he placed his guard of slaves and the Zaghawa *wazir* in the front ranks, grievously injuring the pride of the Kunjara nobles. When the slave troops wavered in battle the remainder of the sultan's army deserted him, crying out 'Children of Fur, take to flight, for only flight can save us. Desert Abu'l-Qasim, let the cows he has taken from us and the Zaghawi, Bahr, fight for him'. Wounded, the sultan was left for dead on the battlefield, and the nobles and dignitaries nominated Abu'l-Qasim's brother Muhammad Tayrab for the throne in the old fashion, reserving their revenge on Wadai for another day. The old sultan had, however, been discovered in dire condition by a nomad member of the Mahamid tribe, who, not recognizing the king, took him home and nursed him back to health. To the horror of the nobles Abu'l-Qasim thus reappeared in Fashir one day, and Tayrab immediately offered to step aside to allow him to resume his title as sultan. The nobles convinced Tayrab that none of their lives would be worth anything if this occurred, and Tayrab gave the command for Abu'l-Qasim and his sister, the *iya basi* Sendi Suttera to be quietly executed.²⁸ Tayrab came to a settlement with Wadai, allowing him to turn his attentions east towards Kordofan and the Nile valley. Born of a Zaghawa mother, Tayrab incorporated leading Zaghawa into the inner court at the expense of the Kunjara nobles. Tayrab built a remarkable red-brick palace and mosque at Shoba,²⁹ near Kabkabiya, but about 1770 he moved from the Jebel Marra region to the plains south-east of the mountains. From here Tayrab conquered Kordofan, and the Kayra dynasty became closely involved with the cultures and events of the Nile valley. The architectural works of Tayrab's reign mark a final divide between the old traditions of stone-work inherited from the aboriginal Tora, and the

²⁷ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.210, 283-5; Cadalvène and Breuvery, Vol.II, 1841, pp.203-7

²⁸ Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.285-7; O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974), pp.133-4. News of the murder of Abu'l-Qasim apparently reached the explorer James Bruce at Simnar, who referred to it in his diary (see Murray, 1808, p.425).

²⁹ See Balfour Paul (1954b), pp.5-11

development of new, externally influenced methods of Islamic architecture using red-brick and other materials.

15. Kayra Fur Sites in Darfur

(Map D: Darfur - Kayra Fur sites)

The Turra Hills region in the central part of the Jebel Marra mountain range is regarded by most Fur as being their ancestral homeland, and is home to a number of sites of historical and religious importance. There are indications that the now sparsely populated area was once home to a considerable population;

The Turra Hills are formed from the deeply dissected lava-flow tableland on the northern slopes of the Jebel Marra massif. There is fairly easy access along the now disused road from El Fasher to Turra and Guldo. Travelling along this road from the east one cannot but help be impressed by the wealth of archaeological sites and the apparent aridity of the area. Yet the indications are that mighty streams must have flowed through the wide, boulder-strewn river beds while the vast areas of terraced slopes now covered by dense kitr (*Acacia mellifera*) must have carried a heavy population in the past. The present rainfall (400-600mm.) indicates that the present xerophytic vegetation must be due to soil poverty through erosion rather than climatic changes.³⁰

Jebel Foga

At a site at **Jebel Foga** in the Turra region³¹ are the remains of a large, roughly circular compound built of faced masonry, which tradition describes as the 'House of Dali'. Built on the saddle of a spur near the top of Jebel Foga, the main compound (approximately 100 yards in diameter) is surrounded by a wall about three feet thick, now mostly fallen into rubble. Three long blocks of ten, five and four circular rooms run parallel with the outer wall on the eastern and southern sides. A semi-circular string of six rooms is found towards the centre of the compound; slightly north-east of these is another semi-circle of five unconnected huts.³² Various other individual huts are scattered about the compound. A second connected compound is formed by two walls that run out to a rocky ridge. Only a single hut is found within this area.

³⁰ Wickens (1970), pp.147, 149

³¹ 13°10'N, 24°25'E. The descriptions of the earliest Kayra remains in the Turra region rely upon the observations of Arkell, who remains one of the only outsiders to visit the sites and attempt to record them.

³² For some reason Arkell misrepresents the layout of the plan in his 1952 'History of Darfur, Part IV'; '[The building at Jebel Foga] contains a feature never apparently attempted again, that of rows of single circular rooms in more or less straight blocks; there are four such blocks containing twenty-five rooms in all' (Arkell, 1952b, p.254). A quick look at the aerial photo of the site (Arkell, 1937a, pl.I) will show that the circular rooms are arranged in semi-circles, and are in fact not out of character with similar rows of rooms in Turra and even at 'Ayn Farah.

Smaller walled compounds with circular connected rooms and individual huts can be found 250 yards south-east and 100 yards north-east of the main compound.

It appears that the most easterly of the three may have been the residence of Dali and his women, that the largest compound was the centre of his administration and contained storerooms and offices, the individual huts may have been those of important retainers, and the small ruined compound on the north-east that is full of rooms may have been another store, possibly an earlier one which had to be discarded because too small.³³

Most of the dwellings in the area were probably circular grass huts of the type still found in Darfur.

The attribution of this site to Dali rests only on local tradition of course, but if the attribution is correct it shows a return by the early Kayra to the traditional forms of Tora architecture and design familiar to us from most Daju works and some of the Tunjur sites.³⁴ The site is not especially well built, which no doubt reflects Dali's status as a local chief, a Fur kinglet, or even a rebellious eunuch or official of the Tunjur régime. There is nothing here to suggest a Borno origin, nor is there even anything resembling a mosque, such as is typically found attached to the residence of Bornawi royals. If this is indeed the residence of the legendary Dali, an identification of Dali with Dala Afnu would seem highly improbable.

On the northern slope of Jebel Foga just below the crest is an oval compound built of well-faced masonry. Within walls six feet thick are a number of circular rooms, and a well built circular hut is found just below the compound.³⁵ Whether this work should be connected with the alleged Dali complex is uncertain; on the grounds of construction technique it is better made and probably belongs to a slightly later period.

Nachtigal informs us that the burial place of (the non-eunuch?) Dali and his sons (Sabun, Sikar and Bahar) is in the Turra district a half-day's journey from the burial grounds of the later Fur sultans.³⁶

Dulo Kuri

Tradition in Turra attributes an unusual structure at **Dulo Kuri** (about six miles east of the village of Kurra) to '*Ari Tunsam*' (*Ari* = archaic Fur for Sultan). The ruin is situated on the north side of a gorge through which the *Wadi* Tunsam runs. A massive stone wall forms a roughly square plan, measuring about sixty yards square, with doors on the north and south side. The wall is built of faced masonry, is rubble-filled, and varies from six to twelve feet in thickness. The corners are well rounded, and the structure as a whole rests on the top of a ridge levelled to form a platform. The plan of the wall suggests a mosque rather than a traditional stone palace, but several features of the interior suggest otherwise. There are traces of

³³ Arkell (1937a), pp.92-3, pls. I,II; and sketch plan key to pl.I (aerial photo), found in Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2) See also Arkell (1952b), p.254

³⁴ Informants of Musa Mohammed emphasized that the builders of the works at Turra were Fur and not Tora (Musa Mohammed, 1986, p.210).

³⁵ Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)

³⁶ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.280 Arkell suspected that the burial site had become confused with the residence.

stone huts inside, although they have been almost completely destroyed. There is also a row of three masonry lined pits, of which two have been largely filled with cattle dung by the modern Fur, who use the ruin as a cattle enclosure. The third has been completely filled, and one of several modern *tuki*-s at the site has been built above it by the cattle-herders.³⁷ The poor condition of this site suggests deliberate destruction, perhaps as a result of the civil war between Tunsam and the family of Sulayman Solong, in which Tunsam was defeated and driven from the Jebel Marra.³⁸ Tunsam was also linked by one of Arkell's informants to Dar Wona (described above in Daju sites in Darfur).³⁹ A stone enclosure on the west side of the east peak of Jebel Keima was said to be the house of Tunsam's sister.⁴⁰

Immediately south of this structure is another levelled ridge, on which stands a roughly circular wall, 2½ feet in thickness. Within the wall are the remains of four stone huts, built of faced stone masonry in the usual Tora fashion. There is a single entrance on the north-west side.⁴¹ About ¾ of a mile south-south-west of Dulo Kuri is a perennial pool of fresh-water underneath a rock ledge. This pool, named Tunsam, was the probable source of water for Dulo Kuri. The works on the southern ridge were probably the residence of Tunsam and his family, while the larger enclosure was likely intended for stores, court functions, and a gathering point for his retainers. Arkell was presented with several iron objects by the local inhabitants, including a pair of heavy iron stirrups, a spur, a buckle, and a spearhead over 11 inches long with an engraved pattern. All were said to have been collected in the close vicinity of Dulo Kuri, and appear to have been North African in origin.⁴²

Tong Kuri

The large plateau of Jebel Forei⁴³ is closely associated with Kuru, the traditional founder of the Kayra Fur dynasty. The steep sides of this plateau, measuring two miles east to west and two-thirds of a mile from north to south, make the entire area easily defensible from attack. A massive stone wall blocked the approach from the east, and the site remains difficult to access. At the north-west end of the plateau is the building known in Fur as **Tong Kuri** ('the house of the sultan'). Stone walls enclose a roughly circular

³⁷ Arkell had some interesting speculations regarding the occupation of Tunsam's residence; 'This site alone of the royal sites [of Turra] is occupied today, being inhabited by one of the wives of the *Shartai* of Turra. This fact is probably significant. The houses of the early rulers who were respected by later generations were left to their memories or ghosts, but the palace of Tunsam, who was driven out of the country with ignominy, was probably handed by his successful rival to the local chief of Turra, and he has retained it in use to the present day, although he does not normally live there himself' (Arkell, 1952b, p.255).

³⁸ Plan in Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2); Arkell (1937a), pp.99-100, pl.X(c)

³⁹ Informant Khamis Idris (Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)). The informant claimed that the works at Dar Wona were built by Tunsam, and were later occupied by Kuru, Dali, Sulayman Solong, and Ahmad Bakr. This account would seem to have little to recommend it.

⁴⁰ Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

⁴¹ Arkell (1937a), p.100; Plan in Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)

⁴² Arkell (1937a), pp.100-101, pl. X(a & b)

⁴³ (13°13'N., 24°28'E.)

compound of more than 100 yards in diameter. The walls form a type of rounded corner in the south-west, and the sole entrance is found in the east wall. This entrance is flanked by additional stone walls, and is accompanied by a stone hut, or guardhouse. The compound walls are never less than four feet in thickness, and are made in the usual way with dry stone and rubble. The circular rooms within the compound are of two types; the first stand at ground level and have well-made window openings; the others are built below ground level to a depth of 15 feet, and probably served as grain-stores. Local tradition recalls that all the rooms had flat roofs of stone resting on wooden rafters.⁴⁴ 'The quality of the masonry is more like that in the single compound below the House of Dali on J. Foga and the best at Uri itself.'⁴⁵ The plateau gives every impression of having supported a considerable town, of which most of the dwellings may have been made of grass.

The plateau is dotted with the ruins of residences and other works; among the most interesting of these is the structure known locally as 'the sultan's prison' (see pl.15). The work is very well built, and has a circular wall six feet high and six feet thick, made in the Tora style. A single doorway in the east leads to the interior, which is dominated by two massive pits, masonry lined and each twenty feet deep. A staircase in the south-west corner of the western pit leads to the bottom, while access to the eastern pit can only be gained by a doorway at the top of the common wall between the two pits. This doorway is key to understanding the true nature of these pits as grain-stores rather than dungeons, for the eastern pit can only be gained through the doorway if the western pit is already full of some product on which a man may stand. Circular rooms have been built adjoining the outer walls, three on the north side and four on the south side. Small recesses found inside these rooms suggest that they served as living quarters, perhaps for the grainkeepers.⁴⁶ Arkell perpetuates the myth of the 'prison' in the 1961 edition of *A History of the Sudan*; 'The pits such as those near the palace of Sultan Kuru on Jebel Forei are those in which the captives [i.e., those who had refused to become Muslim and submit to Fur rule] were kept before being traded to North Africa'.⁴⁷

Tong Kilo (see pl. 16)

Sulayman Solong, as well as being recalled for his military campaigns and the establishment of an Islamic state in Darfur, is also remembered as a prodigious builder. As his kingdom grew in size, Sulayman created new residences in the newly submitted territories. Nachtigal was told that Sulayman lived successively at Kobe, Salua, Umm Harraz and Majala (or Noyo), all on the slopes of the Jebel Marra.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Arkell (1937a), pp.94-5; pl.s III, IV(a & b)

⁴⁵ Arkell (1952b), p.255

⁴⁶ Arkell (1937a), pp.95-6, pl.s IV(c) and V

⁴⁷ Arkell (1961), p.214

⁴⁸ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.279

One of the most impressive of Sulayman's works is the palace at Jebel Nami,⁴⁹ at the very centre of the Kayra Fur heartland. Jebel Nami, at 2,159m. high, is one of the most prominent peaks of the Jebel Marra. Both Sulayman and his son and successor Musa⁵⁰ were said to have dwelt at this site, which is known as **Tong Kilo**.⁵¹ Roughly circular in shape, the site consists of an outer enclosure and a smaller inner enclosure, the whole surrounded by a massive wall of Tora construction, standing in most places at least ten feet high, and varying in width from six to twelve feet. Doorways to the outer compound exist on the northern and north-western sides, and were originally topped by enormous stone lintels, which have since been toppled. Arkell remarked that the massive masonry at Nami bears signs of having been demolished and rebuilt, but did not elaborate.⁵² The outer enclosure has the remains of at least sixteen stone huts, as well as two other structures, a pair of pits connected to a small *tukl*, and a building known as 'the treasury'. This latter structure has an enormous circular stone wall, twelve feet high and six to eight feet thick, which surrounds a partly underground storeroom. Originally this work had doors in the west and east, but at some point the east door was blocked up and a semicircular wall was built around the west entrance. 'Inside the Treasury, about three feet or so below present ground level, is a ledge from which project 10 to 12 large stones, tilted slightly upwards and about six feet from each other, which must have once supported a wooden floor over a smaller pit in the centre of the Treasury.'⁵³

The pair of pits, which are, as usual, called prisons by the local people, are accessed by a stairway which leads out of the small *tukl*. The pits are from 15 to 20 feet deep, and also appear to be grain-stores. The separate situation of the 'Treasury' and its unusual design suggest its purpose was not the storage of grain, but had some specific function. It may have been a treasury as Arkell suggests, or even a prison, but the latter is unlikely, as the Fur sultans (unlike their counterparts in Europe) seem to have displayed no interest in having their prisoners and enemies held captive within their residences.

The inner enclosure holds two large huts and two to three smaller ones. Access is gained only through a single doorway that enters from the interior of the outer enclosure. Within this enclosure at two different points are flat stones built into the walls about four feet from the ground. 'They are too high to sit on, unless a raised earth floor has been washed away. They have the appearance of a fire-step, but as they give on to the outer court only, it is possible that their purpose was to enable the sultan or the women of the inner court to see what was going on in the outer court without being seen themselves.'⁵⁴ 'From the air it appears that the whole plateau north of Jebel Nami on which Tong Kilo stands had once been covered with

⁴⁹ (13°15'N.,24°24'E)

⁵⁰ Musa was also said to have had residences at Tine and Kolge, both at the foot of the Jebel Marra range (Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.280). Arkell's notes record red-brick ruins at Korkurma (or Korgorma) on the Wadi Barei that are said to be the mosque and palace of Sultan Musa (Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)).

⁵¹ Arkell gives a curious meaning for this name; 'In the Fur language *tong* = house, and *kilo* = intercourse between young men and girls' (Arkell, 1937a, p.96, fn.1- for plans and photos of the site see pl.s VI-VIII, IXa).

⁵² Arkell (1952b), p.256

⁵³ Arkell (1937a), p.98, pl.IX(a)

⁵⁴ Arkell (1937a), p.98

large regularly spaced round stone huts, defended by two concentric walls - but these had been all demolished to make the present building with its massive stone walls'.⁵⁵

Filga

Outside of Turra proper is the palace of Sulayman Solong at **Filga**, commanding the entrance to the fertile Suni valley. The attribution of this site to Sulayman is supported by the general resemblance of this work to that of Jebel Nami. The circular wall is of faced dry-stone masonry with rubble-fill, twelve feet wide and encloses an area of about 50 yards diameter. The compound, like that of Nami, contains both an inner and outer enclosure. The 8-foot wide main entrance on the north side is flanked by stone seats mounted on the wall; a smaller entrance (the *örre baya* ?) of 4½ feet in width is found in the south-east part of the compound.⁵⁶ The inner enclosure of 25 yards diameter is formed by a semi-circular wall with a single doorway, again flanked by stone seats. Twelve flat-roofed circular rooms, all in contact with each other, are found in the inner enclosure. The largest of the rooms is about 20 feet in diameter, and several of them appear to have gone beneath ground level. The outer enclosure consists almost entirely of open space, the exception being a set of four small huts found just inside the main gate.

Just north of the palace are three further circular compounds connected by a massive stone wall, thus forming a semi-circle. These compounds are slightly smaller than that of the palace, but are built in the same type of masonry as the larger compound. The north and south compounds are of the same size, while the middle one is slightly smaller. In the southernmost compound one of the rooms has a storeroom covered by four large stone slabs. Five other circular rooms are found in the compound, the largest being nearly 20 feet in diameter. West of the north compound are the traces of many stone huts and a number of stone mounds which Arkell suggested might have been barrows.⁵⁷

Abu Asal

On the track which winds around the north-west side of Jebel Foga on the way from Daia to Forei village is a small hill named **Abu Asal**, which local tradition holds to be the palace of **Ahmad Bakr** and the site of the battle in which Ahmad Bakr defeated and killed his brother Giggeri. The compound is about 100 yards square, and is formed by a rough stone wall which combines with the north side of Abu Asal (forming the south side of the enclosure). Inside the boulders of the hill is a cave where the sultan is said to have spent the heat of the day.⁵⁸ The site has been greatly damaged by cultivators working the site, and most of the

⁵⁵ Arkell; 'Tong Kilo, 14/1/36', SOAS Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)

⁵⁶ For the compass directions I have followed the directions indicated in Arkell's sketch-plan, which differ at times from the directions given in his notes ('The palace of Suliman Solong at Filga; March 1936', Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)).

⁵⁷ Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

⁵⁸ Arkell, 'Sultan Ahmed Bukr's Palace', SOAS Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)

stone buildings have been dismantled for use in the building of terraces. The most interesting feature is the foundation for a small rectangular building of red-brick, which marks the reintroduction of fired-brick construction to Darfur after a period of about 100 years. Balfour Paul has speculated that the reappearance of this material may have been due to the importation by Ahmad Bakr of Bagirmi craftsmen who were renowned in the region for their skills.⁵⁹ Slightly to the west of this site are the remains of a large stone building in the Tora style.⁶⁰ Ahmad Bakr appears to have been the last of the Kayra to build his palace in the Turra region; as the kingdom began to expand westwards towards Wadai new royal residences were also built further west (the Wadi Barei being a favorite location). Bakr himself is said to have established royal camps (*fashir-s*) at Gurri (Gurli?) in Dar Kerne (west of Jebel Marra), and further north at Murra in Dar Fia.⁶¹ Nachtigal notes that a cannon which was imported by the sultan for use in the war against Dar Qimr was still in place at Murra shortly before his visit in 1874.⁶² Ahmad Bakr was unsuccessful in mounting a campaign against the Funj along the Nile, dying along the way at **Jebel Tika**, where a *qubba* called al-Mandar was erected for the preparation of his body before being sent to the burial grounds at Turra.

Jebel Adadi

At **Jebel Adadi** along the Wadi Barei is a stone palace that does not have any recorded attribution from oral tradition, but which must be placed to a period very close to that of Ahmad Bakr both on the basis of style and location. The site seems to be one of the last of those built entirely of stone in the Tora style. The circular, well-faced, rubble-filled walls range in width from 1m. to 1.75m., and are deliberately widened at the main gate in the south. Stone gatekeeper's seats are fixed to the walls at both the southern main gate and at the narrow *orre baya* in the north wall. Built right on top of the *jebel*, the approach to the main gate is made by a stepped entrance and a stone-marked pathway. The interior of the compound consists of an outer and inner enclosure, just as found in the palaces of Sulayman Solong at Filga and Jebel Nami. The outer enclosure holds the remains of ten stone huts of varying sizes, while the inner enclosure contains a round raised platform (as known from the Tunjur sites) on which is placed a stone *qibla*. There is evidence of iron-making, yet the site as a whole gives the impression of having been unfinished, and displays no signs of occupation. The mixture of Tunjur, early Kayra and Islamic features in an area not generally home to royal residences until after the reign of Ahmad Bakr makes **Jebel Adadi** a most intriguing site.⁶³

Jebel Mojalla and Gozorma (see pl.14b)

⁵⁹ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.24

⁶⁰ Arkell (1937a), pp.103-4 This building is in fact attributed by local tradition to the Tora (Arkell, SOAS Box 3/File 10/(Darfur 2)).

⁶¹ O'Fahey and Spaulding (1974), p.126; Nachtigal IV (1971), p.280

⁶² Nachtigal IV (1971), p.281

⁶³ A plan of **Jebel Adadi** is found in Balfour Paul, Field Notes, p.16

Little is yet known of the residence of Ahmad Bakr's cruel successor, **Muhammad Dawra**. His ten year reign was apparently spent at **Jebel Mojalla** in the Ro-Kuri district on the western slope of the Jebel Marra range.

Muhammad Dawra's son, **'Umar Lel**, lived at first at Jebel Mojalla, but later established his own residence at **Gogorma** near the Wadi Jeldama in the western province of Darfur. The use of a massive dry-stone revetment to level the hill recalls earlier Tunjur practice, and the use of red-brick in the construction of the palace itself continues a practice which was reintroduced to Darfur during the reign of Ahmad Bakr. The revetment supporting the compound at Gogorma is fifteen feet high, and a smaller revetment is used to level the actual palace building. The palace measures approximately 14m x 32m, and is perfectly rectangular in shape with rectangular rooms. Architectural design appears to be finally taking advantage of the ease of making perfect corners with regular sized bricks (which are normally 12½" x 5½" x 3"). Windows are made in a triangular shape, but it is primarily in the use of bricks shaped like truncated wedges to build circular pillars that the Fur (Bagirmi?) builders display their confidence in this resurrected medium.⁶⁴

Gurli

Abu 'I-Qasim spent his reign at **Gurli** (or Gerli) on the side of the Wadi Barei, the place in which his successor **Muhammad Tayrab** built a magnificent brick palace.

The Kayra Burial Grounds at Turra:

At **Turra**, in the heart of the Jebel Marra homeland, is the traditional burial-ground for the Kayra sultans. All the Darfur sultans from Sulayman to Muhammad Husayn are buried there, with the exception of 'Umar ibn Muhammad Dawra, who died in captivity in Wadai. Muhammad Husayn's successor, Ibrahim, died fighting the invasion of Zubayr Pasha, and was buried near the mosque at Manawashi. On the ridges near the Turra burial grounds are stone traces of what may be even earlier tombs predating the Kayra dynasty.⁶⁵

The original buildings of stone and mud had been replaced by new works of red brick by 'Ali Dinar in 1910. The new buildings are roughly rectangular with rounded corners, low arched doors on the north side, and several small windows at the ends. The walls are reinforced by pairs of brick buttresses, while the roofs consisted of grass thatch. The tombs exist in two groups; that of Sulayman and Musa are paired together in a single building, while the rest stand a little way east and slightly higher on a ridge within a stone-walled compound. Within a single building are the tombs of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid, Muhammad Fadl, and Muhammad Husayn. The remaining tombs, those of Ahmad Bakr, Muhammad Dawra, Abu'l-Qasim and Muhammad Tayrab all stand side by side and have separate structures. The actual tombs are long

⁶⁴ Balfour Paul (1955b), pp.21,24, fig.8

⁶⁵ Balfour Paul (1955b), p.6

and low, unadorned, and stand only about a foot high. Between the two groups of sultans' tombs is a stone wall round a tomb said to belong to a son of Muhammad Dawra. According to Nachtigal over 100 slaves lived at the site to guard and maintain the tombs.⁶⁶

The site was so completely rebuilt by 'Ali Dinar that it is difficult to reconstruct its original appearance. It is said, however, that Muhammad Dawra had two large brick *qubba*-s built, one for himself, and one over the tomb of his father Ahmad Bakr. The builder was then executed. These *qubba*-s were in a ruinous state when 'Ali Dinar had them demolished and used the bricks in constructing his new buttressed buildings. Though holding the site in great reverence, 'Ali Dinar himself never visited the site, as it was considered bad luck for a Sultan to visit the tombs of his ancestors.⁶⁷

Slightly north of the tombs is a rectangular stone mosque with nine stone pillars built by Ahmad Bakr.⁶⁸ According to tradition the foundations for this mosque were built by Musa, with the rough work low along the north wall being pointed out as evidence. The mosque was still in good repair in the 1920's, save for the thatch roof, which had been destroyed by a grass fire during the Mahdiyya. 'Ali Dinar sent a force of troops to rebuild the roof, but after the timber was cut they were called away, and the project was never resumed.⁶⁹ The mosque was attended by seven generations of Jawami'a *faki*-s brought from Kordofan by Ahmad Bakr for that purpose.⁷⁰ Appointed hereditary *imam*-s of the mosque, the Jawami'a also acted as

⁶⁶ Nachtigal, IV (1971), p.338

⁶⁷ Various sites and roads were considered taboo for individuals of different ranks, and often necessitated lengthy detours in order not to offend certain spirits and demons who resided there (see discussion in Tunjur sites in Wadai). These pre-Islamic customs were usually strictly adhered to in the pre-Conquest sultanate. A story is told of 'Ali Dinar, however, that he once decided to pass through Jebel Afara on his way to his birthplace at Showaia, where he would occasionally holiday. He was met at the pass by a deputation of elders who warned him of the *shaytan* that resided there, and reminded him that no Sultan had ever passed that way. To their astonishment 'Ali Dinar rode through, laughing and firing his repeating rifle all the way. (Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 13/(Darfur 5) - Interview with Kadi Idris). At times when his rule was threatened, however, 'Ali Dinar did not fail to take refuge in all manner of magic and superstition, both Islamic and pre-Islamic in origin.

⁶⁸ Arkell's notes attribute this work to 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid, but in this he must be mistaken, given the Musa tradition and the need for a permanent mosque at the site from a time close to its establishment as a royal burial ground. (Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3))

⁶⁹ Mohammed provides an entirely different description of the later history of the mosque; 'It was rebuilt by Ali Dinnar in 1910. The rebuilt mosque was constructed in mud brick with four square columns cemented with mud and the whole structure was buttressed with stone' (Mohammed, 1986, p.218). This description conflicts with the information collected by MacMichael in 1916 just after the fall of the Fur sultanate and the death of 'Ali Dinar, as well as the plan made in the 1930's by Arkell (SOAS Box3/File 11/(Darfur 3)), and the photographs taken by Bimbashi LD Gordon-Alexander (published in MacMichael, 1926), all of which clearly show nine pillars.

⁷⁰ The genealogy of the Jawami'a Imams of Turra:

Idris
|
Da'ud
|
Haj Salih
|

keepers of the royal archives and as chaplains to the Sultan.⁷¹ West of the mosque are the ruins of two other stone mosques.⁷²

The proper burial of the Kayra sultans in their traditional grounds at Turra was regarded as being of the greatest importance, not only for the sultan, but for the kingdom itself. The transportation of the corpse was part of an elaborate ritual, with various rites carried out at stages in the procession. The true significance of many of the ritual sites was lost even to the Fur themselves, but no doubt had origins long predating the Kayra kingdom.⁷³

The funerary cortege was preceded by a white flag, and stopped at the border of the Turra region at Murtal where the corpse was washed at the site of a large *haraz* tree. The corpse was again washed at the site of the 'silver' *nabaq* tree,⁷⁴ which was also marked by a large cairn, said to mark the place where a silver ring fell from the hand of a dead Sultan (perhaps Muhammad Tayrab; Arkell thought the cairn might have actually been an ancient barrow⁷⁵). The Jawama Imam, accompanied by a number of *fuqara* watched for the appearance of the white flag at Hajang Keingwo ('the pilgrims have returned'), and upon spotting it,



(Arkell, SOAS, Box 10/File 48)

Arkell elsewhere questions the Kordofani origin of the Jawami'a *imam*-s, suggesting that their name simply derives from the Arabic word for mosque, *jami* (Arkell, 1951a, p.53, fn.2).

Other Jawami'a families who came to Darfur as *fuqara* include that of Hamid b. 'Abdallah, who is said to have come at the invitation of Sulayman, and settled at Azagarfa. Another family of Jawami'a *fuqara* is said to have been given tracts of land by Shau Dorsid at Arari, a grant that was later confirmed by Sulayman Solong (O'Fahey and Spaulding, 1974, p.124).

⁷¹ O'Fahey (1971), p.91 See Vansina (1965), p.39 for the importance of guardians of royal tombs in Africa as custodians of royal history.

⁷² The Turra site is described in MacMichael (1926), pp.75-77; MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.93, fn.1, and Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3)

⁷³ Up until the time of Ahmad Bakr (d.1722) an important first step in the death ritual was the execution of the *kamni*, a type of ritual 'double' for the Sultan (often described as a 'shadow sultan'). While alive the *kamni* was treated with all the respect given to the sultan, wore the turban and the *litham* of the king, and was officially third in importance in the kingdom, after only the *aba kuri* (the sultan), and the *abo* (the sultan's mother). The *kamni* was provided with the land and resources to provide for himself, but had few if any real functions to perform. On the death of the sultan, however, the *kamni* was expected to present himself for execution in the same manner in which the real king died (See Nachtigal IV, 1971, pp.326-8; al-Tunisi, 1845, p.172).

⁷⁴ (*zisyphus spina christi*) This tree, three hours to the east of Turra, was known as *Numan Fedda*, and was also the point from which Dali was said to have divided the Kayra kingdom into five sectors (Nachtigal, IV, 1971, p.277).

⁷⁵ Arkell's suggestion is based on a similarity to two circular barrows he saw about two miles north of Tong Kilo, at a point very close to the old road to the Turra burial-grounds (Arkell, 1937a, p.99).

went forth to meet the cortege at Kamala Keira ('the camels can go no further'). From this point the cortege was accompanied by the Imam direct to the burial grounds.⁷⁶

The tombs at Turra were also the site of the prelude to an important annual festival, the *konda* (kidney) feast, which celebrated all the dead kings of the sultanate. Prior to the feast, cattle were collected from all parts of the kingdom to be used as *sadaqah* (memorial sacrifices). These cattle were taken in procession to Turra, where the main rites were performed:

Before the cattle appointed for the *sadaqah* were slaughtered, the so-called *melik ed-dubban*, i.e. the king of the flies, proceeded to the Nami mountain, killed a sheep there and ate a little of its flesh, leaving the rest to the flies, who thus should not be troublesome when the cattle were slaughtered. The slaves of the dead kings had to slaughter an appointed number of cattle for each of them, to eat as much as possible of the flesh in honour of and as a memorial to their masters, and to distribute the rest among those who lived around, while the Quran was read several times by *faqih*s so that the dead might rest in peace. When this had been done, the *hababa* took out of the earth a large water jug, *danuana*, which had been buried there full of merissa at the time of the festival of the preceding year. It is said that the beer begins to ferment again only at the moment when the *hababa* appear again for this festival in the following year. The contents of the pitcher are filtered by them, and even drunk.⁷⁷

When the rites at Turra were finished, the *malik kissinga dora*, dressed in a turban and black *litham*, took the remaining cattle to Jebel Kora on the northern spur of the Marra range, where they were sacrificed in memory of the pagan kings of Darfur who were buried in that region. This ceremony omitted the reading of the *Kuran*. The graves here are described as circular forms with cairns.⁷⁸

The Fur King-lists

In examining king-lists there are several points to keep in mind:

1/ A lack of pattern may be an indication of reliability; king-lists tend to become systematized in their pattern of succession in the interests of oral recitation, simplifying the real order of succession,⁷⁹ or obscuring the fact that individuals or dynasties may have been contemporaries ruling different areas (as in the Libyan and Nubian dynasties of the Egyptian Late Period).

2/ Arabic names are rarely an accurate indication of Arabization or Islamization. More often they reflect the desire of now-Muslim populations to lay claim to respectable Islamic pedigrees. Such names may be late additions to the genealogy, or may be Arabized versions of pre-Islamic names.

⁷⁶ Arkell, SOAS, Box 10/File 48 - Interview with Abdel Mula Dukhan, 11/11/1935; Box 10/File 48 - information from informants Fiki Abdellatif, Imam of Turra, and his cousin, Medani Wad Haj Hamza at Daia, 12/11/1935. O'Fahey states that the cortege was met by the Turra *Imam* at a later stage called Haja Keingwo, 'the pilgrims have returned' (O'Fahey, 1980a, p.23).

⁷⁷ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.338

⁷⁸ Mohammed (1986), p.218

⁷⁹ Urvoy (1941), p.25

3/ A common tendency in king-lists is to order reigning full or half-brothers in succession as a lineal group, regardless of the actual sequence. This tendency may be misleading, suggesting a rule of brother-to-brother succession where none existed: 'In general, then, the more this type of succession appears to be the case in a royal genealogy where there is no such rule, the less trustworthy is the historical validity of the information'.⁸⁰

4/ Despite their generally confused state, the synchronicities between the king-lists of the Tunjur remnant groups, the Musaba'at, and the Kunjara/Kayra Fur all seem to point towards the inter-relatedness of these dynasties.

⁸⁰ Cohen (1966), p.77

16. Fur King-lists from Darfur and Kordofan

PM Holt's Kavra Fur King-list (F1)
(with dates of accession)

Sulayman Solong, 1640

—
Musa b. Sulayman

—
Ahmad Bakr b. Musa

—
Muhammad Dawra b. Ahmad Bakr

—
'Umar b. Muhammad Dawra, 1743-4

—
Abu 'l-Kasim b. Ahmad Bakr, 1749-50

—
Muhammad Tayrab b. Ahmad Bakr, 1756-7

—
'Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid b. Ahmad Bakr, 1787

—
Muhammad Fadl b. 'Abd al-Rahman, 1800-1

—
Muhammad Husayn b. Muhammad Fadl, 1838-9

—
Ibrahim b. Muhammad Husayn, 1873

Shadow sultans of the Khedival and Mahdist periods (1874-1898):

Hasab Allah b. Muhammad Fadl

—
Bush b. Muhammad Fadl

—
Harun b. Sayf al-Din b. Muhammad Fadl

—
'Abd Allah Dud Bandja b. Bakr b. Muhammad Fadl

—
Yusuf b. Ibrahim

—
Abu 'l-Khayrat b. Ibrahim

The revived sultanate:

'Ali Dinar b. Zakariyya b. Muhammad Fadl (1898-1916)

Fur King-list of Shaykh al-Taveb of Turra (F2)

(with date of accession and Budge's adjusted dates of reign)

Suliman I (1444)	(1445-76)
Omar ibn Suliman (1475)	(1476-92)
Abd er-Rahman (1491)	(1492-1511)
Makmud (1510)	(1511-26)
Muhammad Sul (1525)	(1526-51)
Dalil (1550)	(1551-61)
Sharaf (?Es Sarraf) (1561)	(1561-84)
Ahmed (1583)	(1584-93)
Idris (1592)	(1593-1615)
Saleh (1604)	(1615-22)
Mansur (1625)	(1622-39)
Shush (1639)	(1639-58)
Nasr (1658)	(1658-70)
Tom or Toum (1670)	(1670-83)
Kur (1683)	(1683-95)
Suliman II (1695)	(1695-1715)
Musa (1714)	(1715-26)
Ahmad Bakr (1726)	(1726-1746)
Muhammad Dowra ibn Ahmed Bekr (1744)	(1746-57)
Omar II 'Es Sarraf' ibn Muhammad Dowra (1757)	(1757-64)
Abu'l Qassim (1764)	(1764-68)
Tirab (1768)	(1768-87)
Abd er Rahman II (1787)	(1787-1801)
Muhammad Fadl (1800)	(1801-39)

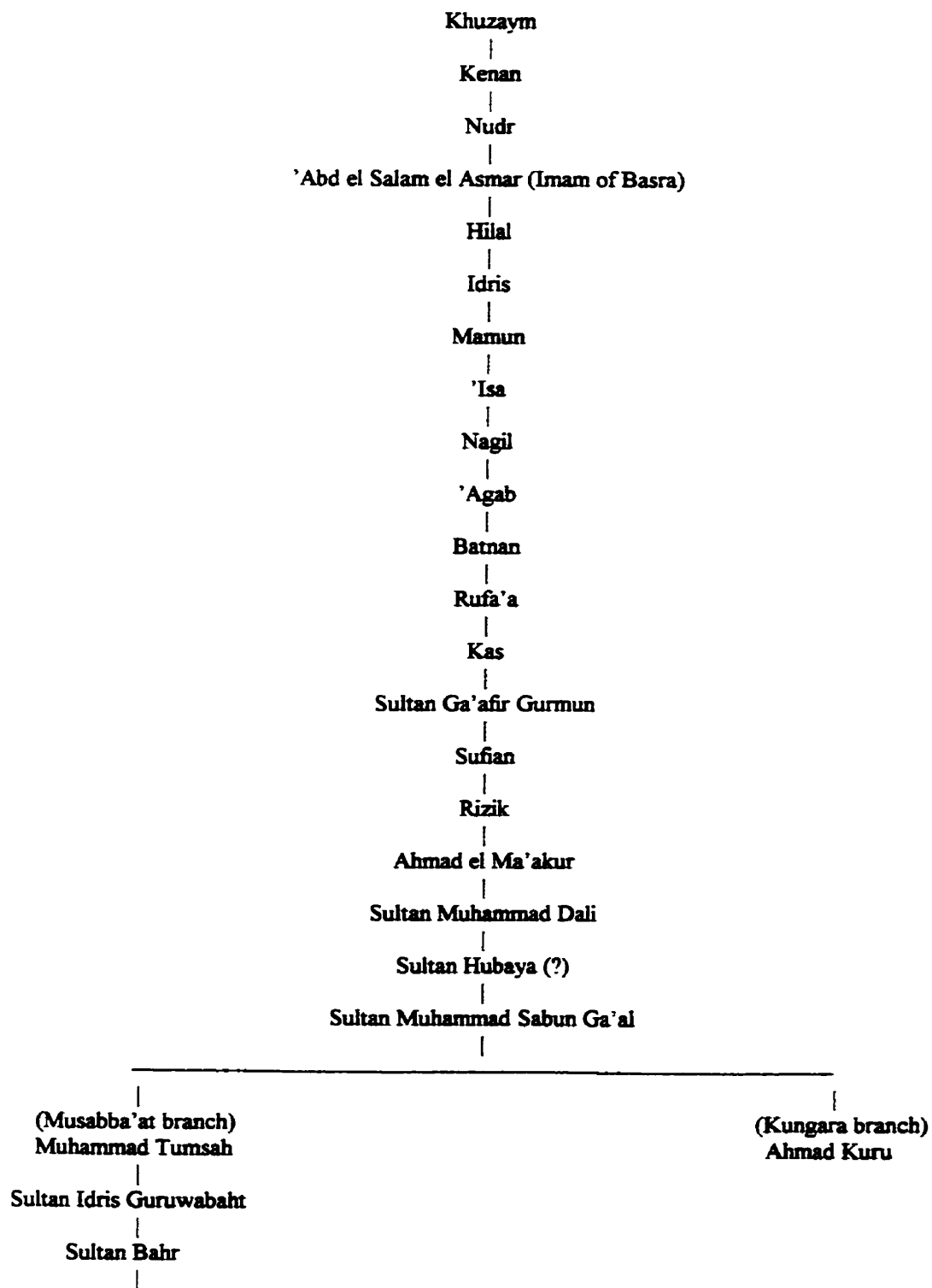
Sources: Robinson (July 1928), p.362; Budge (1907), vol.2, pp.206-7, HHS Morant, SAD (1902), 731/6/64

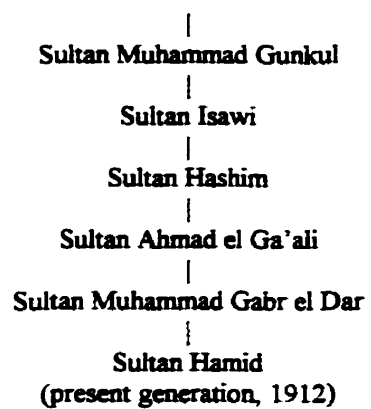
Fur King-list of Dr. Koenig (F3)
 (with dates of accession)

Ahmed el Maaqur el Qoraishi (1448)
 |
 Rifaa ibn Ahmed (1472)
 |
 Chau Donqid (?ibn Rifaa) (1498)
 |
 Ibrim 'El Delil' ibn Rifaa (1507)
 |
 Sabun ibn Ibrim (1559)
 |
 Idris 'El Gorial' (El Gaal) ibn Sabun (1579)
 |
 Kuro ibn Idris (1591)
 |
 Terrindem (1602)
 |
 Salbuti (?Saleh) ibn Idris (1611)
 |
 Abd er Rahman 'Es Sarraf' (ibn Idris) (1622)
 |
 Roumsam ibn Idris (a grandson ?) (1654)
 |
 Diatomé ibn Roumsam (1685)
 |
 Suliman (nephew of Diatomé) (1688)
 |
 Musa ibn Suliman (1701)
 |
 Muhammad Bulat (1704)
 |
 Musa ibn Suliman (again) (1706)
 |
 Ahmed Bekr (1716)
 |
 Ismail 'Abu Harama' ibn Musa (1728)
 |
 Muhammad Harama (nephew of Ismail) (1740)
 |
 Omar Leilu (1746)
 |
 Abu'l Qassim (uncle of Omar) (1753)
 |
 Tirab 'Abd es Shems' (1762)
 |
 Haji Ishak ibn Tirab (1786)
 |
 Abd er Rahman (uncle) (1789)
 |
 Muhammad Fadl (son) (1799)

(published in Cadalvène and Breuvery, vol.II, 1841, pp.197-215)

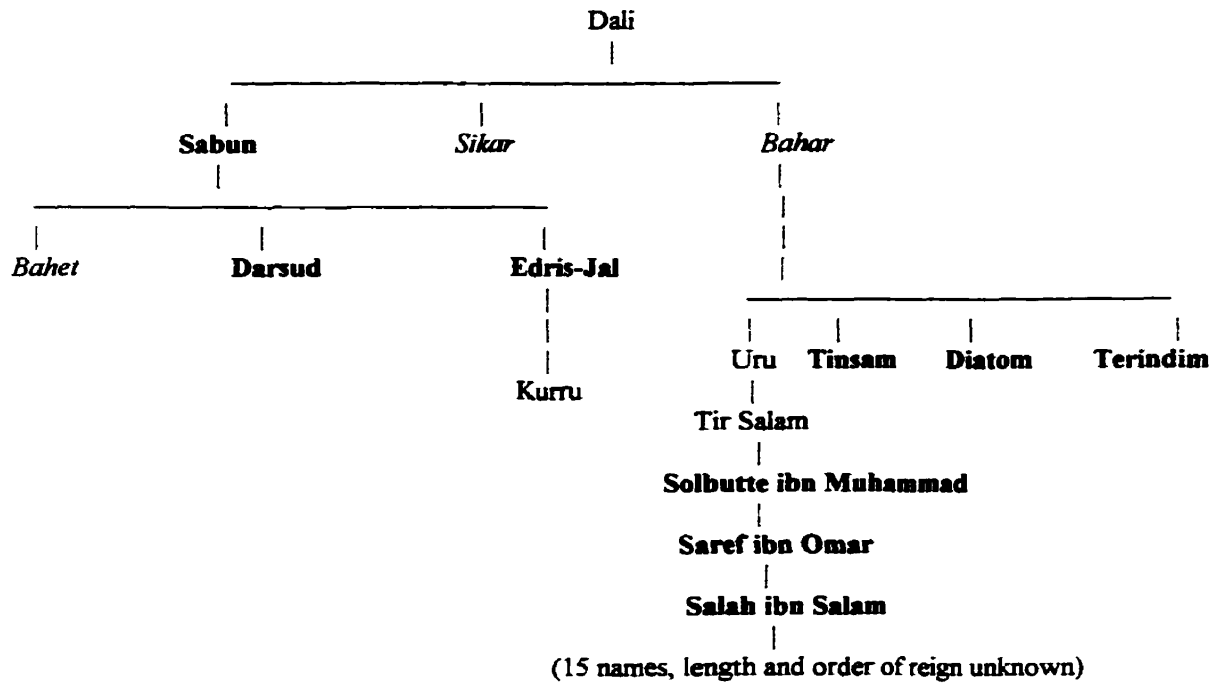
Fur King-list of the Musabba'at (Kordofan) (F4)



Musabba'at branch (cont.)

(King-list provided by Hamid Gabr el Dar; collected and reproduced by HA MacMichael, 1912b, pp.55-6)

Kavra Fur kings before Sulayman Solong (F5)
 (from information provided by Nachtigal)



Names from other lists: Rum-Sham, Nasr, Sem-terim, Sakersim

Names in bold-face are those believed by Nachtigal to have actually reigned

Names in italics are those believed by Nachtigal to have been doubtful; the remainder (in plain type) are improbable

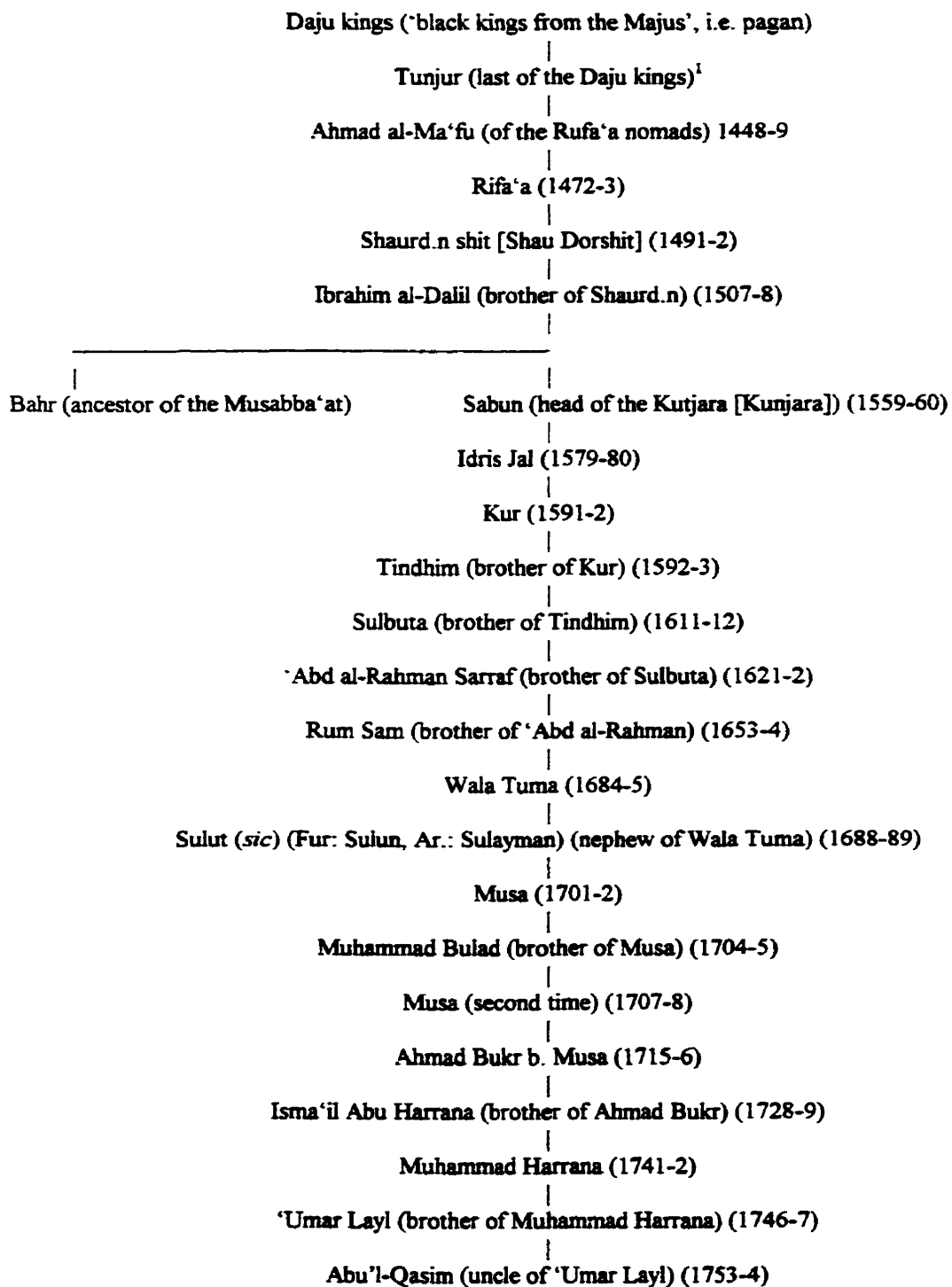
Source: Nachtigal IV (1971), pp.277-78

According to Nachtigal, some of the names in plain type (including the four names from other lists) may have belonged to the same person; others may belong to chiefs of the Musaba'at.

Fur King-list of Sultan Muhammad al-Fadl (F6)
(as provided by Nachtigal)

Ahmad al-Maqr (Quraysh)
|
Rifa'a (Tunjur)
|
Haji Brahim Delil
|
Jal Idris
|
Kuru
|
Sulayman Solon
|
Musa
|
Bokkor
|
Abd ar-Rahman
|
Muhammad al-Fadl

Musabba'at/Fur King-list of Hikimdar Isma'il Ayyub Pasha (F7)
(with dates of accession)



¹ The citing of a king 'Tunjur' (as the last of the Daju dynasty in this case) is an example of an archetypal figure being used in a lineage in order to personify an entire period whose duration is uncertain.

Musabba'at/Fur King-list (cont.)

↓
 Tayrab (brother of Abu'l-Qasim) (1762-3)
 ↓
 'Abd al-Rahman (1789-90)
 ↓
 Muhammad al-Fadl (1799-1800)
 ↓
 Muhammad al-Husayn (1838)
 ↓
 Ibrahim (1873)

The King-list was provided in a report from Isma'il Ayyub Pasha (governor of Darfur) to the court in Cairo, Dec. 17, 1874. This *nisba* was said to have been the result of enquiries among 'those who were knowledgeable among the people and *faqih*s of Darfur', but O'Fahey believes it may only be a garbled version of the *nisba* given in Cadalvène and Breuvery (Vol. II, 1841, pp.197-215). Richard Hill reports that Isma'il was educated in Marseilles and was fluent in French (Hill, 1967, pp.183-4, 402). O'Fahey also notes a change in style in this *nisba*; 'The report has been sanitized for Egyptian consumption, as is clear from the use of *amir*, *hakim* and the like; nowhere are the Darfur rulers called 'sultan', their own designation in Arabic. Implicit in the account is a denial of the legitimacy of Keira rule' (O'Fahey, 1995, p.159; Text in Arabic and English translation, pp.160-69). The original text is found in 'Abd al-'Aziz Amin 'Abd al-Majid, *al-Tarbiya fi'l-Sudan*, 3 vol.s, Cairo, 1949; Vol.III, pp.191-2.

17. Correspondences in the Fur King-lists prior to the reign of Sulayman Solong

- ~ Uncertain correspondences are marked with a question mark
- ~ Relationships are given only where they are indicated in the lists themselves
- ~ Lists F3 and F7 appear to be taken from the same information. Since they present small variations in the names and dates, both will be given, however, in cases where the only correspondence is between lists F3 and F7 it will not be presented below.
- ~Names are cited as they appear in the source text

King-list no.

- F3 **Ahmed al-Maaqur el-Qoraishi (1448-72)**
 Predecessor: none
 Successor: Riffaa ibn Ahmed (son)
- F4 **Ahmad el-Ma'akur**
 Predecessor: Rizik
 Successor: Muhammad Dali
- F6 **Ahmad al-Maqur (Quraysh)**
 Predecessor: None
 Successor: Rifa'a (Tunjur)
- F7 **Ahmad al-Ma'fu (Rufa'a) (1448/9 - 1472/3)**
 Predecessor: 'Tunjur', last of the Daju kings (*sic*)
 Successor: Rifa'a

-
- F3 **Riffaa ibn Ahmed (1472-98)¹**
 Predecessor: Ahmed el Maaqur el Qoraishi (father)
 Successor: Chau Donqid (son ?)
- F4 **Rufa'a (?)**

¹ Nothing is known of this king (if, indeed, he ever existed), but his name and place in F3/F7, and F6 as the successor (and likely son) of Ahmad al-Maq'ur appears to be a recognition of other variants of the Ahmad al-Maq'ur legend in which Ahmad is a member of the Rufa'a Arab group. The Rufa'a of the Sudan, if not a part of the larger Juhayna confederacy, are at least closely related to it, though they reserve a claim to be *Ashraf* in origin. MacMichael noted the connection of the Rufa'a with the Banu Hilal; 'Makrizi calls the Rufa'a branch of the Beni Hilal, and it will be noticed that one section of them in the Sudan is called the Hilalia. It is possible therefore that the legend of Abu Zayd el Hilali crossing the Blue Nile near the site of the village of Rufa'a is connected with the southern movement of the Rufa'a from the the Eastern Desert to the Blue Nile' (MacMichael, Vol. 1, 1922, pp.239-40, and A 2, XXXV; A 11, LVIII; D 6, XXXV)

- Predecessor: Batnan
Successor: Kas
- F6 **Rifa'a (Tunjur)**
Predecessor: Ahmad al-Ma'qur (Quraysh)
Successor: Hajj Brahim Dali
- F7 **Rifa'a (1472/3 - 1491/2)**
Predecessor: Ahmad al-Ma'fu (Rufa'a)
Successor: Shaurd n.shit [Shau Dorsid]
-
- F3 **Chau Donqid (ibn Rifaa ?) (1507-59)**
Predecessor: Rifaa ibn Ahmed (father ?)
Successor: Ibrim 'el-Delil' ibn Rifaa (brother)
- F5 **Darsud**
Predecessor: unknown; father was Sabun
Successor: unknown
- F7 **Shaurd.n shit (1491/2 - 1507/8)**
Predecessor: Rifa'a
Successor: Ibrahim al-Dalil (brother)
-
- F2 **Muhammad Sul (1525-50)**
Predecessor: Makmud
Successor: Dalil
- F3 **Salbut (Saleh ?) ibn Idris (1611-22)**
Predecessor: Terrindem
Successor: Abd er Rahman 'es Sarraf' (ibn Idris) (brother)
- F5 **Solbutte ibn Muhammad**
Predecessor: Tir Salam
Successor: Saref ibn Omar
- F7: **Sulbuta (1611/2 - 1621/2)**
Predecessor: Tindhim (brother)
Successor: 'Abd al-Rahman Sarraf (brother)
-
- F2 **Dalil (1550-61)**
Predecessor: Muhammad Sul
Successor: Sharaf (es Sarraf ?)
- F3 **Ibrim 'al-Delil' ibn Rifaa (1507-59)**
Predecessor: Chau Donquid (ibn Rifaa ?) (brother ?)
Successor: Sabun ibn Ibrim (son)
- F4 **Muhammad Dali**

- Predecessor: Ahmad el Ma'akur
Successor: Hubaya (?)
- F5 **Dali**
Predecessor: (none)
Successor: Sabun (?)
- F6 **Hajj Brahim Dali**
Predecessor: Rifa'a (Tunjur)
Successor: Jal Idris
- F7 **Ibrahim al-Dalil (1507/8 - 1559/60)**
Predecessor: Shaurd.n shit
Successor: Sabun
-
- F3 **Sabun ibn Ibrim (1559-79)**
Predecessor: Ibrim 'el Delil' ibn Rifaa (father)
Successor: Idris 'el Gorial' (el Gaal) ibn Sabun (son)
- F4 **Muhammad Sabun Ga'al (father of the Musaba'at and the Kunjara)**
Predecessor: Hubaya (?)
Successors: Muhammad Tumsah (son, first of the Musaba'at); Ahmad Kuru (son, first of the Kunjara)
- F5 **Sabun**
Predecessor: Dali (?) (father)
Successor: unknown
- F7 **Sabun (first of the Kunjara) (1559/60 - 1579/80)**
Predecessor: Ibrahim al-Dalil
Successor: Idris Jal
-
- F2 **Sharaf (es-Sarraf ?) (1561-84)**
Predecessor: Dalil
Successor: Ahmed
- F3 **Abd ar-Rahman 'es-Sarraf' (ibn Idris) (1622-54)**
Predecessor: Salbuti (Saleh ?) ibn Idris (brother)
Successor: Roumsam ibn Idris (nephew ?)
- F5 **Saref ibn Omar**
Predecessor: Solbutte ibn Muhammad
Successor: Salah ibn Salam
- F7 **'Abd ar-Rahman Sarraf (1621/2 - 1653/4)**
Predecessor: Sulbuta (brother)
Successor: Rum Sam (brother)

-
- F2 **Idris (1592-1604)**
Predecessor: Ahmed
Successor: Saleh
- F3 **Idris 'el-Gorial' (El Gaal) ibn Sabun (1579-91)**
Predecessor: Sabun ibn Ibrim
Successor: Kuro ibn Idris (son)
- F4 **Idris (?)**
Predecessor: Hilal
Successor: Mamun
- F5 **Edris-Jal**
Predecessor: Sabun (?) (father)
Successor: unknown (Kurru ?)
- F6 **Jal Idris**
Predecessor: Hajj Brahim Delil
Successor: Kuru
- F7 **Idris Jal (1579/80 - 1591/2)**
Predecessor: Sabun
Successor: Kur
-

- F2 **Saleh (1604-25)**
Predecessor: Idris
Successor: Mansur
- F5 **Salah ibn Salam (?)**
Predecessor: Saref ibn Omar
Successor: unknown
-

- F3 **Roumsam ibn Idris (1654-85)**
Predecessor: Abd er Rahman 'es Sarraf' (ibn Idris) (uncle ?)
Successor: Diatomé ibn Roumsam
- F5 **Rum Sham**
Predecessor: unknown
Successor: unknown
- F7 **Rum Sam (1653/4 - 1684/5)**
Predecessor: 'Abd ar-Rahman Sarraf
Successor: Wala Tuma
-

- F2 **Nasr (1658-70)**

Predecessor: Shush
 Successor: Tom or Toum

F5 **Nasr**
 Predecessor: unknown
 Successor: unknown

F2 **Tom or Toum (1670-83)²**
 Predecessor: Nasr
 Successor: Kur

F4 **Muhammad Tumsah** (first of the Musaba'at)
 Predecessor: Muhammad Sabun Ga'al (father)
 Successor: Idris Guruwabaht (second of the Musaba'at)

F5 **Tinsam** (??) (brother of Diatom according to the king-list, though these figures may well be the same person - see below)
 Predecessor: unknown
 Successor: unknown

F2 **Kur (1683-95)**
 Predecessor: Tom or Toum
 Successor: Suliman II (*sic*) [Sulayman Solong]

F3 **Kuro ibn Idris (1591-1602)**
 Predecessor: Idris 'el Gorail' (el Gaal) ibn Sabun (father)
 Successor: Terrindem

F4 **Ahmad Kuru** (first of the Kunjara)
 Predecessor: Muhammad Sabun Ga'al
 Successor: unknown

F5 **Kurru**
 Predecessor: unknown (Edris-Jal ?)
 Successor: unknown

F6 **Kuru**
 Predecessor: Jal Idris
 Successor: Sulayman Solon

F7 **Kur (1591/2 - 1592/3)**
 Predecessor: Idris Jal
 Successor: Tindhim (brother)

F3 **Diatomé ibn Roumsam (1685-88)** (possibly the same as Tunsam)
 Predecessor: Roumsam ibn Idris (father)

² Widely known as 'Tunsam'.

Successor: Suliman (nephew of Diatomé)

- F5 **Diatom**
 Predecessor: unknown
 Successor: unknown
- F7 **Wala Tuma** (1684/5 - 1688/9)
 Predecessor: Rum Sam
 Successor: Sulut (*sic*) [Sulayman Solong], (nephew)

- F4 **Bahr** (third of the Musaba'at)
 Predecessor: Idris Guruwabaht
 Successor: Muhammad Gunkul
- F5 **Bahar**
 Predecessor: unknown
 Successor: unknown
- F7 **Bahr** (first of the Musaba'at)
 Predecessor: Ibrahim al-Dalil (father)
 Successor: unknown

The above correspondences do not, of course, validate the historical existence of any of these individuals, but they may be seen as indications that these individuals may have existed, possibly even as contemporaries in some cases, during a period of inter-tribal rivalry and civil war among the Fur, a process which may have involved the Tunjur rulers (Shau al-Dorsid is present in at least two of the variants as a Kunjara ancestor - see F5 and F3/F7).

Names without correspondences, most likely spurious:

- F2: Suliman I, Omar ibn Suliman, Abd er-Rahman, Makmud, Ahmed, Mansur, Shush (The F2 list shows the greatest signs of lengthening. The name Suliman I is elsewhere unknown, and its appearance in this list creates an entire cycle of rulers before the appearance of Sulayman Solong, who appears in this text as Suliman II. Names of various pre-Islamic Fur chiefs seem to have been mixed with several names of pure invention in order to create an extended and retroactively Islamic pedigree)
- F4: Nudr, 'Abd al-Salam al-Asmar (Imam of Basra !), Mamun, 'Isa, Nagil (some of these names may represent Tunjur rulers)
- F5: Sikar, Bahet, Uru, Tir Salam, Sem-terim, Sakersim

The process of Islamizing or Arabizing pre-Islamic or indigenous names can be easily seen in many of the above concordances.

18. The 'Gaoga' Controversy

A geography written by the Spanish Moor, Leo Africanus, in the early sixteenth century provides a description of a powerful Sudanic kingdom called Gaoga. Supposedly stretching from Borno to Nubia, and more vaguely from 'a certain desert' in the south to the Egyptian frontier in the north, Leo's Gaoga was allegedly an Islamic kingdom with a significant Christian population enjoying good relations with the Islamic rulers of Egypt. Despite questions over whether Leo ever even visited the area in question, his account of Gaoga has inspired a lengthy debate over the existence and location of this kingdom. The theories presented on these questions vary widely; among them are the suggestions that Gaoga was a Bulala dynasty centred on Lake Fitri, that Gaoga represented a collection of Daju or Nubian refugee groups, that Gaoga was a great state centred on Darfur and including Wadai, or that Leo's account is simply unreliable and misunderstood hearsay repeated as fact in Leo's *History and Description of Africa*.¹ Though Leo undoubtedly travelled in parts of west and central Africa, his description of Nubia seems suspiciously reliant on second-hand accounts, and his chapter on Egypt begins without any mention of an overland passage from 'Nubia' (which in Leo's mind apparently included Kordofan and possibly Darfur) to Egypt along the *Darb al-Arba'in*, which in Leo's time would have been the only way possible to reach the Egyptian frontier from the south because of the dangers inherent in the river route down the Nile to Aswan. Lange questions Leo's presence in the area at all;

The numerous errors contained in his 'description' of the kingdoms of central Sudan rule out any possibility of Leo Africanus having himself visited the region. He calls the king of Bornu 'Habraam' (Ibrahim) and mentions two kings of the 'Gaoga', Mose (Musa) and Homara ('Umar). The only sovereign by the name of Ibrahim to have reigned in Bornu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was Ibrahim b. 'Uthman (c.1431-9). Neither name - Musa or 'Umar - is confirmed for any Bulala kings of the period.²

Before examining the details of the controversies surrounding Leo's description of 'the kingdome of Gaoga', it is worthwhile to give here his text in its entirety as it regards Gaoga:

Gaoga bordering westward vpon the kingdome of Borno, and extending eastward to the confines of Nubia, adioineth southward vnto a certaine desert situate vpon a crooked and winding

¹ For a long time after the initial publication of Leo's account it was assumed the author, when speaking of Gaoga, was referring to the city of Gao (Gao-gao, or Kawkaw) built by the Almoravid movement on the east bank of the Niger in the 1100's. Difficulties in recognizing place-names abound in Leo's work, due in large part to the initial publication of the work in Italian; according to the editor of his English translation, '...when translating his Arabic manuscript into Italian, (Leo) adopted a puzzling form of transliteration, which may account for the peculiar shape some of the names have taken, or for others the identity of which is less easy to settle' (Robert Brown, in Leo Africanus, Vol.I, 1896, p.xcii). See also Hartmann (1912), pp.176-83.

² Lange (1989), p.260, fn.82

part of Nilus,³ and is enclosed northward with the frontiers of Egypt. It stretcheth from east to west in length five hundred miles, and as much in bredth. They haue neither humanitie nor learning among them, but are most rusticall and sauage people, and especially those that inhabite the mountaines, who go all naked saue their priuities: their houses are made of boughes and rafts, and are much subject to burning, and they haue great abundance of cattel, whereunto they giue diligent attendance. For many yeers they remained in libertie, of which libertie they were deprived by a certaine Negro slaue of the same region. This slaue lying vpon a certaine night with his master that was a wealthie merchant, and considering that he was not far from his natiue countrey, slue his saide master, possessed his goods, and returned home: where hauing bought a certaine number of horses, he began to inuade the people next adioning, and obtained for the most part the victorie: for he conducted a troupe of most valiant and warlike horsmen against his enimies that were but slenderly appointed. And by this means he tooke great numbers of captiues, whom he exchanged for horses that were brought out of Egypt: insomuch that at length (the number of his souldiers increasing) he was accounted of by all men as soueraigne K. of Gaoga. After him succeeded his son, being no whit inferiour in valour and high courage vnto his father, who reigned for the space of fortie yeeres. Next him succeeded his brother *Moses*, and after *Moses* his nephew *Homara*, who beareth rule at this present. This *Homara* hath greatly enlarged his dominions, and hath entred league with the Soldan of Cairo, by whom he is often presented with magnificent gifts, which he most bountifully requiteth: also diuers merchants of Egypt, and diuers inhabitants of Cairo present most pretious and rare things vnto him, and highly commend his surpassing liberalitie. This prince greatly honoureth all learned men, and especially such as are of the linage of Mahumet. I my selfe being in his court, a certaine noble man of Damiata brought him very rich and roiall gifts, as namely, a gallant horse, a Turkish sworde, and a kingly robe, with certaine other particulars that cost about an hundred and fiftie ducates at Cairo: in recompence whereof the king gaue him five slaues, fine camels, five hundred ducates of that region, and an hundred elephants teeth of woonderfull bignes.⁴

Elsewhere in his work Leo provides us with the information that the language of Borno is similar to that of Gaoga,⁵ that the fifteen kingdoms of the Negroes⁶ fall under the actual rule of the three strongest kings in the area; 'to the king of Tombuto who is Lord of the greatest part; to the king of Borno, who gouerneth the least part; and the residue is in subiection vnto the king of Gaoga',⁷ and that in matters of religion, the inhabitants of Gaoga 'approch (after the Egyptian manner) neerervnto the Christian faith'.⁸ In the latter remark Leo seems to be making a reference to the Egyptian form of Coptic Christianity.

³ Leo's 'Nilus' could refer to the Niger, the Ubangi, or any other number of west and central African rivers, as it was still a common belief in Leo's day (as was asserted in the earlier Arab geographers) that the Nile had its roots in the great rivers of western Africa. This confusion originated in the early works of Juba and Pliny, and persisted in both Arab and European geographies until the explorations of Denham and Clapperton in the 1820's. The development of thinking regarding the course of the Nile is well traced in Langlands (1962), pp.1-21.

⁴ Leo Africanus, Vol.III, (1896), pp.834-5

⁵ Leo Africanus, Vol.I, (1896), p.134

⁶ Gualata, Ghinea, Melli, Tombuto, Gago, Guber, Agadez, Cano, Cafena, Zegzeg, Zanfara, Guangara, Borno, Gaogo and Nube

⁷ Leo Africanus, Vol.I (1896), p.128

⁸ Leo Africanus, Vol.III (1896), p.820

Barth was emphatic in his belief that Leo's Gaoga was the same as the Bulala empire, which he centred on Lake Fitri,⁹ as the Bulala headquarters was found there in Barth's time.¹⁰ The Muslim Bulala were a princely family of Kanem who marched southwards under the leadership of Jil Shikomeni to establish a kingdom in the territory of a non-Muslim ethnic group known as the Kuka.¹¹ Though the Bulala of Barth's day did not speak a language similar to the Kanuri spoken in Borno, Barth recalled that before the forced exodus of the Sayfawa Magumi¹² in 1380 from Kanem to Borno, it is likely that both Bulala and Magumi spoke a form of Kanembu;

When Leo says that the language of Gaoga was identical with idiom of Bórnu, he evidently only speaks of the language then used by the dynasty and the ruling tribe of the country, with whom, on his visit to that kingdom, he came into contact, and who were of the same origin as the Bórnu people, while at present, having intermingled and intermarried with the indigenous population, the Bulála, who are still the ruling family in Fitri, appear to have forgotten their own language, and have adopted that of the Kúka.

⁹ Fitri is a small closed lake in southern Chad with a depth of only five to six feet, lying almost directly east of Lake Chad. With Lake Chad, it is a remnant of the great inland sea that once existed here, but in recent years (like Lake Chad) it has diminished greatly in size.

¹⁰ Barth, Vol.II (1857), p.545

¹¹ The Bulala are an ethnic group of Arab (and possibly Berber) ancestry, deriving their name from Balal, a legendary leader of a segment of the Kanembu who opposed the Sayfawa Magumi dynasty in Kanem. Fisher calls the Bulala a cadet branch of the Sayfawa line, 'descended from a Saifawa mother and thus excluded from the normal succession' (Fisher, 1977, p.291). The Sayfawa Magumi were toppled by the Bulala in 1356 and driven into Borno in 1380. After moving to Borno the Sayfawa Magumi intermarried with the Sao and Kotoko peoples, forming a people known as the Kanuri and establishing a powerful empire that would survive into the late nineteenth century. Bulala rule in Kanem continued for 120 years. After the reconquest of Kanem by the *Mai*-s of Borno in the early sixteenth century the Bulala eventually came under pressure from the Tunjur of Wadai and from sources in Bagirmi in the early seventeenth century, leading to a migration and resettlement in the area around Yao near Lake Fitri, where the Bulala established a more modest sultanate. The Bulala apparently adopted the Kuka dialect, though Arabic was widely spoken even in the nineteenth century.

¹² The Sayfawa are the royal house of the Magumi clan of the Kanembu. Ruling in Kanem and/or Borno from the eleventh century AD to 1846, the clan takes its name from a probably mythical king, Sayf b. Dhi Yazan, from whom the clan claims descent. The Sayfawa letter to Sultan Barquq in Cairo dating from 1391-2 claimed that Sayf was a Qurayshite, a pedigree that al-Qalqashandi took issue with, describing the claim as 'an error on their part, for Sayf b. Dhi Yazan descended from the *tubba*'s of the Yemen, who were Himyarites' (al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-a'sha*, trans. by Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, pp.344-5, 347). Sayf became a hero of a cycle of folk-tales in Egypt revolving around the theme of the struggles of the Muslim Arab Sayf against the pagan blacks (see Paret, 1924, and Lange, 1977, pp.101-2), and is elsewhere credited with the expulsion of the Abyssinians from Yemen (Lange and Barkindo, 1988, p.458). The true founder of the dynasty was likely a certain Hummay (c.1075-86), a Muslim Berber (Hummay is a variation of Muhammad; see Lange, 1977, p.98). Kanuri traditions hold that Hummay was the twelfth *mai* of Kanem, but the first Muslim (Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, fn.23, p.401). At some point in the thirteenth century Hummay's genealogy was emptied of Berber content and references to Himyarite and Yemenite ancestors in favour of a descent from Quraysh, the eponymous ancestor of the tribe of the prophet Muhammad (Lange, 1989, p.239; See also Lange, 1977, pp.93-4, 353-4). Barkindo notes that 'by the late fifteenth century - probably some three centuries after the legend had been advanced - scholars still could not find solid proof to document clearly the Saifawa legend. But by then it was already becoming politically dangerous to question the origin myth since the legitimacy of the Saifawa *Mais* was strongly tied to the historical authenticity of the legend' (Barkindo, 1985, p.227). See also A. Smith (1983), pp.16-56.

Robert Brown, who annotated the Haklyut edition of Leo's geography, agreed with Barth's comments, and added that the name of Gaoga (or Kaoka) was derived from the Kuka tribe in whose territory Jil Shikomeni had founded his kingdom. Brown even identifies Jil Shikomeni as the 'certaine Negro slaue' mentioned in Leo's account, and suggests that Gaoga stretched from eastern Bagirmi to the interior of Darfur.¹³ Carbou, however, opposed the idea that Gaoga could be a kingdom centred on Lake Fitri; if the Bulala conquered the Fitri region as a result of being driven out of southern Kanem by the Tunjur, who were themselves being driven from Wadai as a result of the success of the Arab coalition that took power in 1611 (according to Barth; Nachtigal provides 1635), then it cannot possibly be the Fitri region which is described as Gaoga by Leo, who wrote his geography in 1517. Following information provided by al-Idrisi,¹⁴ linguistic analysis, and the information found in Leo, Carbou firmly placed the Gaoga kingdom in Kanem.¹⁵ With Carbou's interpretation Barth's explanation of the language problem becomes unnecessary; as Carbou points out, the language of the Kuka, Tar Lis (or Tarlis), is different from that of Borno, while the language of Kanem, Kanembu, is almost identical to the Kanuri spoken in Borno.¹⁶

At roughly the same time Carbou was writing, another French military administrator, Capt. Modat, was the first to advance the theory of a Darfur-centred Gaoga, which he believed incorporated Dar Zaghawa. Modat interpreted Leo's reference to mountain-dwellers amongst the peoples of Gaoga as an indication that the kingdom included the Jebel Marra massif.¹⁷ Carbou's response was that Darfur could not be the centre of Gaoga, as no Islamic kingdom existed there in the 15th and early 16th centuries.¹⁸ Palmer later advanced the even more fanciful theory that Leo's Gaoga was a Daju kingdom in the Fitri region, under Bulala dominance at the time Leo wrote.¹⁹ Arkell entered the debate with the suggestion that Uri may have been a capital of the Bulala 'who dominated Kanem between 1386 and 1472, were finally defeated by Idris Katargarmabe [Katarkanabi] of Borno (1504-1526) and appear to be the same as the kingdom of Gaoga which was described by Leo Africanus...'.²⁰ Fisher advanced the idea in 1977 that Gaoga could be identified with Kaiga in Borno, but the evidence for this supposition seems slight, and Fisher does not back it

¹³ Leo Africanus, Vol.III (1896), p.852, fn.27

¹⁴ El Idrisi, *Description de l-Afrique et de l'Espagne*, (Ed. by Dozy and Goeje), Leiden, 1866, p.10 of the text, pp.11-2 of the translation

¹⁵ Carbou, Vol.I (1912), pp.292-99

¹⁶ Carbou, Vol.I (1912), p.297

¹⁷ Modat (1912), pp.79-80

¹⁸ Carbou, Vol.I (1912), p.297, fn.1

¹⁹ Palmer, Pt.1 (Apr. 1930), p.280 Palmer's theory bears greater reliance on Idrisi's description of a 'Tajuwin'/Zaghawa kingdom in the twelfth century than on Leo's account.

²⁰ Arkell (1946), p.202 Arkell admits in a footnote that he could 'find no trace in Darfur of a tradition that (Uri) was ever subject to the Bulala, and it seems that Leo must have been mistaken in thinking that Gaoga and Nubia were contiguous'. Uncontent to be cautious, however, Arkell goes on to suggest that 'another possible solution is that the kingdom of Uri is not unconnected with the kingdom of Meroe, which came to an end in the fourth century of the Christian era. Further study may show that some of the features of Uri can best be explained as being derived indirectly, if not directly, from Meroe'(Arkell, 1946, p.202, fn.18).

forcefully.²¹ In the same year Hrbek rejected the idea of a Bulala/Kanembu dominance of Darfur; 'Arkell's theory about the strong political and cultural influence of Kanem exercised during the Daju period and later is not substantiated by any trustworthy evidence'.²²

Working from a somewhat literal reading of Leo Africanus, Pierre Kalck published a detailed argument in 1972 for the location of Gaoga in the Chad/Darfur region (see pl.1a).²³ Kalck's theory is based on his reconstruction of a kingdom established by Christian refugees from Nubia and/or Coptic merchants from Egypt and which was in existence at the time in which Leo allegedly passed through it on his way to Egypt via the *Darb al-Arba'in*.²⁴ Abandoning the Darfur tradition of a Daju/Tunjur/Kayra Fur order of succession, Kalck relies heavily upon Arkell's identification of Darfur as a Christian realm, based on the two decorated sherds said to have been found at 'Ayn Farah, and the supposed existence of a church and monastery at the same site.²⁵ Kalck refers to Modat's work, pointing out that Leo's reference to mountains within Gaoga cannot apply to the plains of Kanem, much less to the area of Fitri, which, being a depression, is quite the opposite to a mountainous region.²⁶

In a commentary that appeared a year after Kalck's article, O'Fahey and Spaulding make a case for identifying Leo's Gaoga with the early Funj kingdom, before proceeding to list a number of significant objections to such an identification, proving, perhaps more than anything else, the malleability of Leo's vague and confusing description.²⁷ In his reply to O'Fahey and Spaulding's comments on his 1972 article, Kalck backed off somewhat from his suggestion that Gaoga was a Christian kingdom, emphasizing instead the possibility of influential Coptic merchants being present there.²⁸

Any attempt to read Leo Africanus' account of Gaoga literally is slated for failure, due to Leo's credibility problem, the unreliable system of transliteration, and the apparent use of garbled or second-hand information in Leo's description. While Kanem seems to best fit the facts as given by Leo, it becomes obvious that with enough ingenuity Leo's account can be made to fit any number of locations. The mere mention of mountains in the description does not seem a compelling enough reason to locate Gaoga in

²¹ Fisher (1977), pp.291-2, pp.304-5

²² Hrbek (1977), p.79

²³ Kalck (1972), pp.529-48 See especially the map giving the extent of Gaoga on p.532, which includes Darfur, Dar Zaghawa, Wadai and Dar Fertit.

²⁴ As O'Fahey and Spaulding point out, however, it seems very unlikely that Leo actually traveled this route in 1514. The first certain reference to the Forty Days Road appears in the account by JM Vansleb in the description of his 1663 visit to Egypt (O'Fahey and Spaulding, 1973, pp.505-6, and fn.7). Vansleb's account appeared in HEG Paulus (ed): *Sammlung der Merkwürdigsten Reisen in den Orient*, 4 Vol.s, Jena, 1792-98 (Vol.III, pp.45-6).

²⁵ Kalck also appears to have been influenced by Mauny's commentary in the Epaulard 1956-7 French edition of the Leo Africanus text. Fisher suggests that in the Darfur = Gaoga equation the rebellious slave of Leo's account could be Dali, or even Ahmad al-Ma'qur, though Fisher warns of the 'many difficulties remaining in the evidence', and the 'grave objections' that have been raised to the equation.

²⁶ Kalck (1972), p.537

²⁷ O'Fahey and Spaulding (1973), pp.505-8

²⁸ Kalck's reply is given in O'Fahey and Spaulding (1973), pp.507-8

Darfur, and to ignore a set of traditions that (at least in its Daju /Tunjur/Kayra order of succession) has almost universal acceptance in Darfur.

18. The Meroitic Hypothesis and the African Iron Age

One of the questions that arise constantly regarding the history of Darfur and the surrounding regions concerns the possibility of Meroitic penetration of these areas, possibly as the bringers of iron-making technology. The evidence of the numerous but usually vague stories of eastern origins for the peoples of the central and western Sudan is rejected by Shinnie in cases where it has been attempted to use these stories as proof of Meroitic contacts with the western regions:

Some historians have suggested that these legends go back to Meroitic times and use them as evidence for what seems to me a largely mythical Meroitic spread to the West. Oral tradition in Africa as far as it is known rarely goes back more than four to five hundred years and the fall of Meroe is over fifteen hundred years away. It would be historically much easier to explain these stories as being a memory of influences coming from the Nile in medieval times, and what little archaeology has to add supports this view, whereas no Meroitic objects have been found west of the Nile.¹

In addition to the traditions, the use of iron has often been cited as proof of Meroitic contact with Central Africa. Arkell was critical of Shinnie's 'excessive caution' in failing to fully agree with Arkell's belief that Meroe was a centre for diffusing iron technology throughout the African interior.² Arkell's position, which involved a migration of people and political systems as well as cultural or technological diffusion, was stated in 1951 as part of Arkell's attempt to reconstruct a Meroitic-Tumaghara-Tunjur connection:

It is not improbable that when Meroe, about the fourth century, was sacked by Axum, the fringes of the country between Meroe and Tibesti were more inhabited than they are today. We have seen that this desert may have been still drying up and expelling its population in the time of Leo Africanus. If this were the case, is it so very impossible that the royal family of Cush, or some branch of it, after ruling for a period of over a thousand years on the Nile, first at Napata and then at Meroe, may have taken refuge in Tibesti? Even under present day conditions, it would not be impossible.³

Elsewhere Arkell suggested that the royal family of Meroe had taken refuge in Darfur where they founded a kingdom.⁴ Huard, working along similar lines in Chad, determined that iron-working technology arrived in Chad from Meroe in the early centuries AD.⁵ Shinnie noted the lack of archaeological evidence for any Meroitic presence west of the Nile and responded by asserting that 'arguments based on assumption and rather sketchy etymological evidence (and we do not know what the language of Meroe was) [are] not ones that should be accepted by the archaeologist, nor indeed on the ordinary principles of scholarly evidence should they be accepted by anyone except as intriguing and interesting hypotheses'.⁶

Haycock also took issue with Arkell's presentation of his Meroitic/African hypothesis:

¹ Shinnie (1971a), p.48 Shinnie excludes from his comment the Meroitic-style thumb-ring found atop Jebel Omori in the Daju hills north-east of Nyala (see Arkell, 1968, p.160).

² Arkell (1968), p.159

³ Arkell (1951d), p.

⁴ Arkell (1961), pp.174, 176-7

⁵ See Huard (1960), (1964), and (1966).

⁶ Shinnie (1966), p.14

Another of Arkell's key ideas, widely welcomed at the time, but since treated with increasing caution, was that Meroe formed a cultural bridge between Pharaonic Egypt and inner Africa [in *A History of the Sudan*, 1961] over which an attenuated and backward form of civilization was transferred to Africa, including the spread of what may be loosely termed 'divine kingship' as far as Nigeria, along with the knowledge of iron-working. Of course Arkell is entitled to put this hypothesis forward if he wishes as speculation, but in my view... he can be legitimately criticised for not making it clear, in a book designed for non-specialists, that evidence in support of his viewpoint is at present almost totally lacking, and many other scholars reject his ideas. Some more recent popular writers have been misled into regarding his theory almost as fact.⁷

Iron technology most likely arrived in Darfur from the west rather than the east. There is evidence that iron was being worked in the region of Termit (between Air and Lake Chad) as early as the seventh century BC,⁸ and in the Koro Toro region of Chad (see the chapter 21 Christianity in Chad ?) an iron-working community known to archaeologists as the *Haddad* (Ar: 'blacksmith') flourished between the fourth and eighth centuries AD.⁹ Musa Mohammed, who has studied the evidence for iron-working in Darfur, concludes that 'the excavated iron objects (hoes, reaping knives), as well as the furnace types, all indicate that Central Darfur had more technological affinities with the areas further west and north-west than with the Nile Valley'.¹⁰

Though the evidence of heaps of iron slag at Meroe was long cited as proof of iron-working at the site, the first certain smelting furnaces were found in 1969-70 in a building dating from the first few centuries AD. This proved to be the first of a number of fired-brick furnaces within buildings of similar construction. *Tuyère* fragments were found, as was evidence of the use of pot bellows;

[The furnaces] are all domed, forced draught, slag tapping furnaces about 1 m in height enclosed in a building and apparently built and used in pairs facing each other within the building. An unusual feature is that there is a bricklined channel with what Tylecote describes as a 'bosh' in the middle of the enclosed area... Tylecote has suggested that the bosh and the channels leading to it may have been used for draining off water to cool the tools used in the slag tapping and the handling of the bloom. The presence of steps leading down to floor level suggests that the furnaces were built below ground level and that one of the purposes of the walled structure was to protect them from the intrusion of sand.¹¹

The furnace type traditionally used in Darfur is of a different type altogether from the Meroe examples. A shaft furnace is used in which slag is not tapped, but falls to the bottom of a pit instead. The iron and slag must be separated after the smelting, and the furnace is then broken down and never used again. The furnaces are typically built over a depression 50 cm wide and 60 cm deep. Two types of furnace are used, a small and a large kind. In the small type the shaft is less than 1 m high, and there are seven holes for *tuyères*, which are used two to a hole. The large furnaces measure 120 cm high and have ten holes for

⁷ Haycock (1971), p.27 Similar points of view are expressed in Oliver and Fagan (1975), pp.41-2, and Shinnie (1971a), p.49.

⁸ Quéchon and Roset (1974), p.97

⁹ Treinen-Claustre (1978b); Treinen-Claustre (1982)

¹⁰ Musa Mohammed, (1986)

¹¹ Shinnie (1985), p.32

tuyères, requiring ten men to pump the sheep or goat-skin bellows (not pot-bellows, as at Meroe).¹² The *tuyères* are of heavy red clay and measure 30 cm in length. The walls of both small and large furnaces are 4-5 cm thick, and are tied round with plant fibres on the exterior to keep the walls from cracking.¹³ A single smelt in a small furnace uses some 200 lb.s of crushed ferricretic sandstone in a sixteen hour process that leaves the slag and a spongy material known as the 'bloom', a combination of iron, charcoal, and some slag. The bloom is broken up by reheating in a smithing hearth, at which point the iron is finally obtained.

Nearly identical descriptions of smelting furnaces in Darfur are given by Browne (18th century), and by an informant from Mao in 1980.¹⁴ Felkin describes a type of six-foot high conical furnace in use by the Fur in the 1880's that used pot bellows covered with skins, but did not have any means of tapping the slag.¹⁵ A high cylindrical furnace with a bag bellows was in use in northern Chad until the beginning of the 20th century that was very similar to that described by Haaland.¹⁶

Outside the walled settlement at Mao are some twenty smelting furnaces dated by charcoal samples to the first millennium AD. The furnaces have a circular superstructure of 50-80 cm in diameter with clay walls 5-7 cm thick. Excavation revealed circular pits below the furnaces of 80 cm in diameter and 50-60 cm deep. Fragments of *tuyères* encrusted with slag were found nearby, but there was no evidence of pot bellows. Overall the remains 'suggest a similar superstructure to that described by Haaland'.¹⁷

The physical evidence of furnace-types from west Africa and the evidence of dating from archaeological sites in the region both fail to support the thesis of a Meroitic exportation of iron technology to the west. An example may be found at Daima, a site on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad. Iron objects here dated to levels from the first, sixth and eleventh centuries AD.¹⁸

If, indeed, iron-working techniques reached West Africa from Meroe, it must have gone through Daima. If this was so one would expect to find evidence for the use of iron at Daima at a much earlier date than in the Nok Culture site of Taruga which is situated almost 1,000 kilometres to the south-west. Present evidence does not indicate this. In fact, available evidence suggests that iron was being smelted at Taruga some six to eight hundred years before it got to Daima. This and the fact that the iron industry at Meroe employed Roman-type slag-tapping furnaces, whereas the Taruga furnaces are non-slag tapping would indicate that neither iron objects nor iron technology diffused from Meroe to the Nok areas as has often been proposed.¹⁹

¹² Pot bellows of the Meroë type were in use in 19th century Kordofan, though there is no evidence that this technology was obtained as early as the Meroitic period (see Wilson and Felkin, Vol.II, 1882, p.302). Kordofan received a steady stream of migrants from the Nile valley beginning in the seventeenth century.

¹³ Haaland (1985), pp.51-6

¹⁴ Browne (1799), p.267; Musa Muhammad (1993), pp.461-2 (for the informant from Mao).

¹⁵ Felkin (1884-5), p. 261

¹⁶ Musa Muhammad (1993), p.462 It is becoming more difficult to carry out ethno-archaeological investigations into areas such as iron technology, as the use of iron-smelting techniques is once again becoming a lost art in the region, due to the availability of scrap metal. Enquiries even among the relatively isolated Zaghawa of northern Darfur found no-one who could remember smelting operations since 1950. The iron now being obtained from auto parts (Tobert, 1988, p.92).

¹⁷ Musa Muhammad (1993), p.462

¹⁸ Connah (1981), p.156

¹⁹ Jemkur (1992), p.62

Of the sites examined in this region, many appear to have gone directly from a stone-using to an iron-using economy without passing through copper or bronze-using phases. While examination of a number of West African sites (especially in Niger) shows evidence of copper-working before iron-working began, excavations have consistently found iron objects in levels directly above stone-using levels at other sites.²⁰ It is possible that iron-smelting furnaces in the region were a direct adaptation of pottery-firing furnaces, a type of technology already familiar to these cultures. As C14 dates began to come in from iron-making sites in West Africa, Trigger warned (in 1969), that 'the early dates for iron age sites in West Africa and in southern Africa should serve to remind us that the possibility should be kept open that iron-working may have developed independently at one or more points south of the Sahara'.²¹ Saharan and sub-Saharan iron-working sites have now been dated from before the fifth century BC in Niger, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.²²

Carthage has also been suggested as the source of the iron technology found in the Sudanic and Chadid regions. Mauny in particular has advocated a Carthaginian origin for this technology, which was carried into the Sudanic regions *via* Garamantian trade routes across the Sahara, or was even brought by itinerant Jewish blacksmiths to the south.²³ First millennium BC dates for iron-working sites in Niger²⁴ are, however, too early for technological transmission from either Carthage or Meroë. Other grounds for opposition to the Carthaginian theory have been outlined by Kense:

This unquestioning reverence for Carthaginian influence, however, is based almost entirely on intuition. There is no published data on Phoenician/Carthaginian metallurgical practices, in terms of furnace types, smelting technique, bellow types or bloom quality. Since the relationship of Carthage with its hinterland is poorly understood, the nature of the postulated transmissions of iron working expertise remains unknown. And finally, since little of the socio-economic structure of the recipient societies is known, the impact of this new technology cannot be assessed nor the basis for its adoption determined with any confidence.²⁵

Attempts to link the spread of technology to political events (such as the fall of Meroë) are typical of a style of historical analysis current in the first half of the twentieth century when Arkell and others were developing the Meroë/Darfur hypothesis:

Today such history has been supplemented, or largely replaced, in Europe by new approaches that seek to understand changes in a broader institutional setting. Unfortunately, when the old historiography is applied to cultures for which inadequate documentary evidence is available, the result is often not history at all but a perverse kind of pseudohistory in which cultural processes are

²⁰ Musa Muhammad (1993), p.463

²¹ Trigger (1969), p.50 For views supporting the possibility of indigenous development of iron technology, see Andah (1979), Lhote (1952) and Jemkur (1992), pp.64-5

²² De Medeiros (1988), p.139 The Rwandan dates show iron-making activity was especially strong in the 3rd century AD, making it contemporary with Meroë, but using a different type of furnace - see Van Grunderbeek and Doutrelepon (1982), pp.5-58

²³ Mauny, 1978, pp.333-4

²⁴ Posnansky and McIntosh (1976)

²⁵ Kense (1985), p.24

'explained' in terms of made-to-order political events. The attempts to interpret the development and spread of metallurgy in the Sudan provide some notable examples of this kind of pseudohistory.²⁶

²⁶ Trigger (1969), p.24

20. The Meidob Hills:
The History and archaeology of an isolated culture

(Map A: Tora and Meidob sites)

The Meidob hills (often referred to simply as Jebel Meidob, or Midob) are found in the remote north-eastern corner of Darfur province. Measuring 27 miles E-W and 37 miles N-S, the Meidob hills are a concentration of volcanic hills and deep *wadi*-s. The depression on the west side of the hills is known as al-Malha (or the Malha crater), and contains valuable deposits of *natrun* (rock salt) and *gerdiga* (muddy salt), as well as having a number of fresh-water springs and a small, shallow lake.¹ Bagnold describes the salt industry at Malha: 'The lake contains an oozy black liquid saturated with salts. The people wade into it up to their necks and scoop up from the bottom with their feet the black crystalline sludge which they dry and sell under the name 'gundonga' to the neighbouring Berti people and to the Arab nomads. It is regarded as a cure for all cattle diseases'.² A wide range of archaeological sites, including rock-paintings, stone barrows, and even cities are found at Jebel Meidob and in the neighbouring Tagabo hills to the southwest (see pl.14a). The hills are populated by a semi-nomadic people who speak a Nubian-related language. The region's ruins, the language, a tradition of matrilinear succession and a claim by the Meidobis to be Mahas Nubians in origin are all usually offered up as proof of the penetration of Darfur by Christian Nubians. The Meidobis know their homeland as *Tiddi ór*, and a Meidobi is called a *Tiddi*. Their language is called *tidin-dal* by the Meidob. The people of the hills are divided into the following sections:

¹ The crater measures nine hundred yards in diameter and is at least two hundred feet deep, while the lip stands only a few feet above the surrounding plain. The crater appears to have been formed by one or two violent explosions of short duration, for the surrounding area shows only a small amount of ejected material (i.e. rocks, lava flow). The crater is a source of information for the climatic history of the area:

At the foot of the cliffs, large white blocks of mineralized vegetation were found, and Mr. WN Edwards, of the British Museum, has identified these as Papyrus Cyperus, a modern form of papyrus, suggesting that in geologically recent times the climate was humid and tropical, and the crater was filled with fresh water, surrounded by papyrus growth which eventually became mineralized as the lake became more salty owing to evaporation. With the advance of a desert climate, the lake contracted and became saltier. According to native reports, the level of the lake has on occasions rapidly altered, and this has been accompanied with gurgling sounds. (Colchester, 1927, pp.233-4).

The volatility of the crater is also related in a Meidobi story from the time of 'Ali Dinar, related by Lampen (1928, p.57):

As the Meidob were watering round the pool, which in those days extended up to the ring of trees below the side walls, the water with loud gurgles disappeared, all save a tiny puddle of mud in the centre. When the frightened herdsmen came next day, the water was slowly coming back. The same thing had happened in the previous generation. Melik Gami Kheir told me that he had heard as a young man that many generations ago fire had come out of the crater and destroyed many persons and cattle. Also that once a red bull came out of the lake and drank down all the water.

² Bagnold (1933), p.116

- 1/ Urti (northern hills, maintain own *malik*)
- 2/ Torti (west, maintain own *malik*)
- 3/ Shelkota (southern hills, maintain own *malik*)
- 4/ Wirdato (northern slope of the Tagabo hills, allied to the Shelkota)

Subdivisions:	Ordarti	Claim to be Mahas Nubians
	Turkeddi	Claim to be Mahas Nubians
	Usutti	Claim to be Mahas Nubians
	Kagiddi	Claim to be Mahas Nubians
	Genana	An absorbed Arab group(?)

The Shelkota line of kings has gone through three dynasties. The first consisted of 19 kings before a *wakil* of the last king of this line received the throne through bribes to the Fur sultan. The second Tesetti dynasty (which, like its predecessor, followed a strict line of matrilinear succession) came to an end when a Tesetti *malik* disinherited his sister's son over his disobedience and made his own son the heir. The new Aurungide dynasty nevertheless recognized the importance of their form of succession by granting the Tesetti royal family perpetual overlordship of their own section of the tribe. The throne passed peacefully through several generations until the late nineteenth century, when an usurper named Ainyumba Daifani seized the throne briefly during the reign of Bagari, a contemporary of Muhammad Husayn and Ibrahim of Darfur. The period of the Mahdiyya had a devastating effect on the people of Meidob through punitive raids, forced conscription, and losses on the battlefield, including the Urti *malik*, who fell at Atbara. Like 'Ali Dinar and his companions, the Meidob mostly fled to their homeland on the day of the battle of Omdurman³

The origin of the Meidob people has been subject to much speculation; the earliest origin suggested belongs to Arkell, who cited the county of Irṭt, which is known from the autobiographical inscription of the sixth dynasty Egyptian caravan-leader Harkhuf at Aswan. The small Lower Nubian chiefdom of Irṭt was most likely found in the region between Tumas and Dakka. Arkell speculates that 'the name may just possibly still survive in that of the Urti, who now live in the north of Jebel Meidob, and who speak a Nubian dialect; but it is not at present suggested that the Irṭt were living in sixth dynasty times as far west as Jebel Meidob'.⁴ MacMichael was probably the first to record the Meidob tradition of a Nubian origin; 'They speak of themselves as an ancient colony of Mahas and Danagla from the Nile, but have no idea at what date their migration westwards occurred... It is quite possible that they are in some way connected with the mysterious

³ Lampen (1928), pp.57-8

⁴ Arkell (1961), p.161 With reference to the Shelkota section of the Meibob, who call themselves Kagiddi, Arkell remarks that the name Meidob 'is derived from *peida* which means 'slaves' in the Nubian language of these people, and Kagiddi in the same language means 'the people of Kag'. This name is presumably connected with that of the Kaja, the people of the hills of western Kordofan, with whom the Kagiddi still acknowledge a relationship, and who live south-east of Jebel Meidob and south-west of the Abu Negila hills. It does not seem too fanciful to see in Cush the common basis of all these names' (Arkell, 1951c, p.354).

Anag who are fabled to have inherited Northern Kordofan'.⁵ Lampen noted that 'They undoubtedly believe they came from Dongola, their speech contains words which policemen from Dongola with me have recognised, and I believe I am correct in saying that matrilinear succession was in force in Christian Dongola before the arrival of the Mohammedans... I can find no evidence of their ever having been Christians'.⁶ The Meidob claim that their ancestors also occupied the Tagabo hills and the Teiga plateau, and claim an affinity with a section of the Bideyat through the further migration of part of the Teiga section to Bideyat county.⁷

Newbold, who visited the area in 1922, thought it 'probable that they are of Tibbu origin and were driven south from southern and eastern Cyrenaica by the surge of the early Arab invasions across the northern fringe of the Libyan desert and Tripoli'.⁸ Thelwall has noted the tendency for many Meidobis to hold equally to traditions that give descent from the Nile Nubians as well as from the Bani Hillal, a trait which Thelwall attributes to 'the historical importance of the Nubian kingdoms and the desire to manufacture a respectable Islamic and Arabian pedigree'.⁹

Round or elliptical stone barrows abound in the Meidob hills; they are usually found on the slopes or at the base of the hills. They are almost universally rejected by the Meidobi as being their work, save for one large mound near Jebel Kabojja at the south-east corner of the Meidob region. This grave figures in one Meidobi tradition as the burial place of the great queen who led their people there from the east.¹⁰ The pre-Islamic origin of these tombs is reflected by the Meidobi's attribution of them to the 'Anaj' or the 'Abu Qona'an'. The barrows average three feet in height and five to six yards in diameter and consist of nothing more than simple heaps of stones over a mostly unprotected body. Newbold and Arkell excavated a typical example of these barrows in 1922. Two skeletons were found above ground (both crushed) and two more were found in the soil level. There were traces of bark that suggested the bodies had been covered with a loose layer of sticks. The more intact of the two bodies in the soil level was noted as lying on its right side due east to west, legs bent, facing north, and the head to the east.¹¹ MacMichael noted that 'exactly similar cairns occur between Midob and the Wadi el Melik, on the Wadi el-Melik, at Kaga and Kutul, on the Wadi el Mukaddam, in the hills immediately west of Omdurman and in the hills between the Blue Nile and Abu Delayk'.¹² It should be noted, however, that graves of such simple construction have a high probability of resemblance to any other poorly built burial mound. A large number of much simpler tombs were found by Major Maydon along the Wadi Magrur, just north of the Meidob hills:

⁵ MacMichael (1912b), p.103

⁶ Lampen (1928), p.60

⁷ Lampen (1928), p.57

⁸ Newbold (1945), p.230

⁹ Thelwall (1982a), p.50

¹⁰ Arkell (1961), p.174 'East' does not necessarily imply the Nile valley here, but may only mean a point in northern Kordofan.

¹¹ Newbold (1945), pp.229-30 The Meidobis lay the body out in extended position, lying on the right side, facing east, head to the south, feet to the north.

¹² MacMichael Vol.I (1922), p.64

Near by the water-holes, but far up the bank of the valley, I found several very ancient burial-grounds, where several hundred persons must have been buried. They were marked by small piles of stones, and in some cases the oblong shape of the grave was marked by selected bits of white stone stuck upright, and once or twice by a huge rough sort of headstone. There was no trace left of any buildings. A few queer stone beads were found. As the Nubas always stick to their hills, and the few Arabs hereabouts were all nomadic, it is hard to account for so large a graveyard. The present water supply would not sustain a large village permanently.¹³

Meidob religion, aside from a nominal allegiance to Islam,¹⁴ consisted into the 1900's of worship at holy stones. Most notable of these is an unshaped block of granite 2½ feet high at Jebel Udru (Arabic: Jebel Mogran).¹⁵ The stone is called Telli (northern dialect) or Delli (southern dialect), these being also the words for 'god' in the Meidobi language. The ceremonies are principally concerned with rainmaking, and are customarily carried out by old women, as throughout Darfur. An important difference with the other forms of stone worship in Darfur is that the Meidobi rocks are not associated with serpents or *jinn*-s living beneath them. The stone at Jebel Udru is accompanied by a smaller rock which was 'referred to as the son or younger brother of the larger one, and the reason of its having also been honoured was said to be that the hut built over the big boulder had so consistently fallen to pieces that the people thought the rock was perhaps annoyed at the neglect shown to the smaller boulder, so of late years they had taken to making offerings to both'.¹⁶ Other holy stones are known from the Malhas crater and the Wadi Golonut, as well as a holy cave where barren women make offerings of flour. This cave once held the *nahas* of the Turrti dynasty; the *nahas* was said to have arrived at the hill on the back of a wandering camel.¹⁷

The matrilinear succession practiced in Jebel Meidob takes the form of inheritance or succession passing to the sister's son. In more recent years Islamic practice is followed while honouring the pre-Islamic custom by having the father grant all his possessions to his sons before death, so that the nephew is left with an empty inheritance that meets the word, if not the spirit, of the custom. In matters of succession to the throne the matrilinear line prevailed into the late 1920's, and it was noted that the *Malik* Gami Khair was 'not anxious for his own son Mohamed Sayah, the Government's nominee, to succeed him, as to him there is something unlawful in such an idea'.¹⁸ This deeply ingrained tradition of matrilinear succession is not, however, attributed to the Meidobi's alleged Nubian origins, but has instead become surrounded with traditions giving the practice a local origin. 'The story of the origin of the custom is that an early king was saved in battle by his nephew when deserted by his sons and so left the kingdom to the former. When I have put the matter to them, Meidobis have always agreed that the real reason is that under the loose moral code

¹³ Maydon (1923), p.37

¹⁴ In 1922 Sarsfield Hall described the religious state of the Meidobis; 'though they profess Mohammedanism they still perform certain pagan rites, and many of them are surprisingly ignorant of the tenets of Islam' (Sarsfield Hall, 1922, p.364).

¹⁵ All place names in Meidob have Meidobi names and Arabic equivalents.

¹⁶ MacMichael Vol.I (1922), p.63

¹⁷ Lampen (1928), p.61 Sacred caves are also known to the Zaghawa.

¹⁸ Lampen (1928), p.61

which prevails in the Jebel, the daughter's son will have more chance of being a true scion of his line than will the king's son who may be a bastard, without his father being aware of it'.¹⁹

Within the lava field of the Malha crater is a large unwallled settlement known as 'Malha City' (see pl.17a). The stone remains consist of fortifications on the perimeter, a concentrated core of stone-ringed huts, and a scattering of individual huts beyond the apparent limits of the town. Tumuli graves are also found around the outskirts of the settlement.²⁰ A survey by Dumont and el-Moghraby in 1985 recovered pot sherds, oxidized fragments of a metal (bronze?) bracelet, cowries, ostrich shell beads, stone axes, mortars, arrowheads, fragments of obsidian, and a metal axe from a partly destroyed grave.²¹ The surrounding area is today bleak and relatively bare of vegetation, seemingly unlikely to support a population of any size, which suggests either that the climate of the area was once substantially better, or that the population was able to survive on the proceeds of the salt trade from the Malha crater (salt being a valuable commodity in the Saharan and Sudanic regions). Arkell suggested that the city of Malha was connected with the control of the salt trade by either Kanem or Borno.²²

East of Jebel Eisa, on the north-west edge of the Meidob hills is another city known as Kerker (Meidob: Seringeti). This small fortified stone settlement is discussed in detail above (Tunjur sites in Darfur) because of its attribution in tradition to the Tunjur; the people of Meidob disclaim responsibility for these works - 'These ruins are said by Meidob tradition to have been the residence of the sultan of the people who ruled Jebel Meidob before the Furs [Tunjur?], and who built the large stone town at Malha...'.²³

In the Tagabo hills to the southwest, which are populated today by the Berti and a colony of Wirdato Meidobis who live on the northern slopes, there are found two further stone cities, Mao²⁴, and Abu Garan. The walled city of Mao (see pl.17b) appears to have been built on a flattened hilltop (artificially created in the Daju/Tunjur style?).²⁵ Hundreds of stone houses of circular or oval form occupy the site. Many consist of two or three room compounds within a single-doored enclosure wall.²⁶ Photos reveal well-built circular stone graves of the pillbox-shaped *choucha* style.²⁷ The Berti remember Mao as the site of the palace

¹⁹ Lampen (1928), p.62 Yuzbashi Negib Eff. Yunis noted that Daju sultans in Kordofan were succeeded by their sister's son, but Yunis may have confused the Daju with the Nuba (Yunis, 1922, p.106)

²⁰ An aerial photo showing extensive ruins at the Malha crater can be found in Arkell, SOAS, Box 3/File 11/(Darfur 3), p.100

²¹ Dumont and el Moghraby (1993), p.385

²² Arkell (1952a), p.148

²³ Arkell (1937d), p.146 Stone construction is unknown to the Meidob, who build only impermanent houses made of long boughs, sticks, grass and cornstalks in a flat-topped beehive shape; see the description and plan in MacMichael (1918), pp.41-3.

²⁴ Not to be confused with the Tunjur centre of Mao in Kanem.

²⁵ Dumont and el Moghraby (1993), pp.391-2, fig.s 7,8

²⁶ See the plans in Musa Mohammed (1986), pp.41-2, fig.s 3.3, 3.4, 3.5; a five-room house is shown on p.47, fig. 3.11

²⁷ *Choucha* tombs are among the six types of pre-Islamic North African tombs:

- 1/ Stone Tumuli, often of stone and soil (Ar.: *Kerkur*, or *Redjem*)
- 2/ *Bazina*-s (Berber) - a cylindrical stone tomb with revetments or stages, as distinguished from the

of a legendary king, Na-madu (Berti: 'the red king'), probably to be located on an isolated hill near the southern ridge of Jebel Siab, 3.5 km west of Mao (see pl.19a). This site consists of one, two, three, four, and five-room compound houses gathered within a strong enclosure wall having an irregular oval shape (see pl.18a-d). In the centre of the enclosure is a two-room house atop a graded platform of four stages, the lowest being made of heavy stone slabs to serve as the foundation (see pl.19c).²⁸ To Arkell the name Na-madu suggested the king of Kanem or a local representative, which he believed was confirmed by the use of the name Mao, the capital of Kanem.²⁹ Nachtigal, however, refers to Na-madu as the king of the Berti who was defeated by Sulayman Solong in the early 17th century.³⁰

In the north part of the Tagabo hills is an unwallled stone city, Abu Garan, which remained unrecorded until its discovery in 1985 by Dumont and el Moghraby. Individual stone huts are carved from the rock slope of a mountain to a height of 100 metres. Pottery fragments and stone tools were recovered from the site. Rock paintings in a nearby shelter depicting humans and camels may or may not be connected to the site.³¹

The Berti who inhabit the Tagabo hills are believed to have established a line of kings in the area by the 17th century.³² This group, who call themselves Sigato, offer vague claims of descent from the Ja'alyin of the Nile valley and the Howara, and of relationship through intermarriage with the Dar Hamid Arabs of Kordofan.³³ The Berti language is most closely related to Zaghawa, forming with it one of three branches (including Kanuri-Kanembu and Teda) of the Saharan language group.³⁴ By the late eighteenth century some Berti groups had moved to the Darfur/Kordofan borderlands in the Umm Kiddada/al-Tuwaysha region. In the Tagabo hills pagan rituals involving holy stones and trees with attendant old women in charge of their practice were still carried out into the 1920's.³⁵

Yet another variant of the 'Wise Stranger' is found among the Berti. In this version the court of King Na-madu is visited by a Fulani Muslim *faki*, who teaches the people Islamic eating customs and inheritance rules. The king married the *faki* to his daughter, who later gave birth to a son, Muhammad

simple heaps of stones that form the tumuli (with which Reygasse formerly grouped the *bazina-s*)

- 3/ *Chouchets* - cylindrical stone forms
- 4/ Stone circles
- 5/ Dolmens
- 6/ Funerary chambers carved out of the rock

²⁸ Musa Mohammed (1986), pp.55-8, fig.s 3.20, 3.21 In nearby Mabo is a single-stage platform within an enclosure wall with a single entrance - see pl.19b.

²⁹ Arkell (1952a), pp.137-9

³⁰ Nachtigal IV (1971), p.279

³¹ Dumont and el-Moghraby (1993), p.392, fig.s 9-11

³² O'Fahey (1980a), pp.6-7

³³ MacMichael Vol.I (1922), p.64

³⁴ Bender (1997), p.23 Bender adds that 'The lack of data on Berti is the main problem in Saharan classification work; the untimely death of Karel Petracek in 1987 removed our only source of recent work on the nearly extinct Berti' (p.60). See the bibliography for works on the Berti language by Petracek.

³⁵ MacMichael Vol.I (1922), p.65

Yambar, who was raised as a Muslim. When the Berti tribe rebelled against Na-Madu, the sultan fled and Muhammad Yambar was raised to the kingship.³⁶ The Berti, however, also maintain an entirely different origin tradition, mentioning two Muslims from Bagirmi (Muhammad and Hammad, sons of Tamr) as the ancestors of three of the chief families of the Berti.³⁷

Dumont and el-Moghraby have suggested that the cities of Malha, Abu Garan and Kerker/Seringeti could only have supported their populations (estimated at roughly 6,000 each) in a time of significantly higher rainfall.³⁸ Through the extraction of sediment cores from Malha crater and an examination of trends in the Holocene palaeoclimate of northern Darfur Dumont and el Moghraby have determined that this period could be no later than the beginning of the first millennium BC, placing the construction of these cities even earlier than the emergence of the Kushite civilization on the Nile. Using this early date the authors postulate the existence of a common origin for the later Meroitic culture of the Nile valley, and the Tora culture of Darfur. As part of their case, Dumont and el Moghraby note a simplicity in the city plans suggesting a culture with an as yet undeveloped social structure;

While the structure of Mao, with paved streets, hewn blocks of sandstone, circular graves with a flat top, and an upper level separated from the lower levels by a wall indicates a peculiar form of social stratification, hence, perhaps a 'recent' origin, such is not the case for the three northern cities [Malha, Abu Garan, Kerker/Seringeti]. These, among other things, share a uniform, undiversified building style, and tumulus graves.³⁹

Recognizing the existence of such a culture would mark a radical change in our understanding of the early history of Darfur and the Nile valley, but there are reasons to hold off on the assignment of dates for these works in the second millennium BC. The study of Dumont and el Moghraby unfortunately concentrates on climatic factors to the neglect of the material remains of the cities, which are given only a cursory mention. The Kerker site has already yielded iron objects, including the *hanya* type of hoe known from Uri. The 'platform of audience' at Kerker is also common to Tunjur sites placed in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries AD. The 'circular graves with a flat top' found at Mao are (from their photos) almost certainly *choucha* type tombs, which, along with the less distinctive tumulus type, are usually connected to a Berber presence.⁴⁰

³⁶ Musa Mohammed (1986), p.216 - Informants Botolo Muhammad, Mao, Oct. 1979, and 'Ali Ahmad, Tagabo, 1982 (the latter is a member of the Berti royal family and claims to be a 20th generation descendant of Muhammad Yambar).

³⁷ Musa Mohammad (1986), p.216 The families are the Wamato, Kamdirto and Basigna, the last of which is the most recent ruling clan.

³⁸ 'For cities of this size to evolve, rainfed agriculture with a low probability of crop failure would be necessary, and this requires an annual precipitation of minimum 300, and preferably 500-600mm. Such conditions are found in Jebel Marra and its northern foothills, the Furung Hills. The 300mm isohyet curves north around the Furung Hills in Kutum area, and includes the site of Uri, but runs distinctly south of the Tagabo and Meidob Hills' (Dumont and el Moghraby, 1993, pp.394-5; See also Ibrahim, 1984).

³⁹ Dumont and el-Moghraby (1993), p.394

⁴⁰ Reygasse (1950), p.6 'Au sujet de la répartition des tumulus et des chouchets dans le Sud, une observation générale s'impose: lorsque ces monuments furent élevés, les conditions désertiques existaient

Tombs of this type are also known from the Fezzan,⁴¹ Tibesti⁴² and Borno. A significant Berber presence in the area of northern Darfur is unlikely before the population movements from the north in the first centuries of the second millennium AD. A single radiocarbon date obtained from an iron-working site at Mao yielded a calibrated date of 980-1020 AD.⁴³ Neither the radiocarbon date nor the evidence of iron-working agree with the extremely early dates proposed by Dumont and el Moghraby.

The environmental evidence for the early dating of Dumont and el Moghraby must also be regarded as inconclusive; Kerker appears to have had only a brief occupation, and was perhaps abandoned due to lack of water. Mao may have had an independent water supply or have mastered the use of *hafir*-s or other such methods of collecting water (for which there is evidence at the site).⁴⁴ Malha city may have survived through its success in exploiting the much sought after salt reserves of the crater. If reserves of grain were brought in by caravan the community could survive handily on the numerous fresh-water springs of the crater. Such an operation would require the assistance of an organized state, and Malha city might well represent a fortified outpost that was part of Kanem's attempt to control the salt trade in the area.⁴⁵ The distance from Kanem is not problematic as similar operations were carried out by the Kanembu as far north as the Kavar oasis.

The linguistic evidence is most interesting, given the Meidob tradition of an eastern origin. The Meidob dialect is part of the Nubian language group, which consists of the following sections:

- 1/ Nobiin (Fadijja-Mahas) Nile north and south of Lake Nasser
- 2/ Midob (Meidob) Meidob hills of north-eastern Darfur
- 3/ Birged (Birked) Central Darfur⁴⁶

déjà dans le Sahara; aussi rencontrons-nous généralement ces divers monuments isolés, dispersés sur de vastes surfaces ce qui dit clairement la vie des grands nomades'.

⁴¹ Two tombs of this type in the Fezzan have received radiocarbon dating: Tedjeri, 840 ± 120 AD; Tin Alkoum (al-Barkat), 660 ± 120 AD. See Bellain and Pauphilet 'L'âge des tombes préhistoriques de Tejerhi, Fezzan', *Trav. de l'Institut Recherches Sahariennes* 18, 1959, cited in Huard (1967-68), p.120, fn.160

⁴² Those of Tibesti are strikingly similar to the tombs at Mao. Dalloni excavated three examples in Tibesti, which stood 5-6m high and had a diameter of up to 10m. There is some evidence that the dead were placed in a seated, or squatting, position in these single-chambered tombs: 'En raison des dimensions réduites du caveau, il n'a pu être inhumé que dans la position accroupie: dans nos fouilles, bien que les connexions des diverses parties du squelette aient pu être dérangées par l'affaissement de l'assise supérieure, on pouvait nettement constater qu'il était replié sur lui-même; dans deux cas, il semblait en position verticale; dans l'autre, couché sur le côté'. See Dalloni (1935), pp.216-23

⁴³ Musa Mohammed (1986), p.253. The sample comes from a layer of charcoal beneath a layer of iron slag and was without any evident source of contamination.

⁴⁴ Dumont and el-Moghraby (1993), p.392. Musa Mohammed notes that fourteen ancient wells were discovered by the local Berti in the mid-1970's and reopened (Musa Mohammed, 1986, p.44).

⁴⁵ Arkell (1952a), pp.147-8

⁴⁶ The Birged are found in the south-east of Darfur, in a colony north-east of al-Fashir (Turza), in parts of Wadai (where they formed one of the slave-tribes of the Sultan), and in Kordofan south of al-Obeid. The Birged of Turza claim their closest relations to be the people of Jebel Meidob. Other sections of the Birged claim origins in the Bani Hilal, a connection that may have originated through close contact with the Tunjur. Like the northern Meidob, the Birged also give every indication of having lived in south-central Darfur 'from time immemorial' (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, pp.77-80). The Birged were initially conquered by Sulayman

- 4/ Kenzi-Dongola On the Nile, south of the Nobiin group
 5/ Hill Nubian (Kaduru, Debri, and six other dialects) Northern and northwestern Nuba mountains, Kordofan.⁴⁷

A careful analysis of the relationships between these languages was undertaken in the late 1970's by Robin Thelwall. Cognate counts of 100 item vocabulary lists were submitted to cluster analysis and arranged into tree diagrams of five different types. One of only three points that each resulting tree diagram agreed upon was that Meidob was the most distant member of the group. The linguistic evidence suggests that the people of Jebel Meidob were never present in the Nile valley:

In the last millennium BC Nubian communities, presumably pastoralists in subsistence, spread out widely across the steppes between northern Darfur and the Nile. The possible position of Meidob in its own group coordinate with the group made up of the other four Nubian languages suggests that the movement was principally from Darfur eastward.⁴⁸

In short the analysis showed that Nubian-speaking people had originated in the South Kordofan/Darfur region, and were located there approximately 2,500 years ago. The results were thought to confirm Zyhlarz' 1928 hypothesis regarding population movements both to the east and to Jebel Meidob.⁴⁹ As Trigger states; 'The major differences that separate these four groups [Nile Nubian, Kordofanian, Jebel Meidob and Birged] refute totally the possibility that the Nubians living in Kordofan and Darfur arrived there as refugees from the Nile Valley during the Christian era'.⁵⁰

Solong, and were completely absorbed into the Kayra sultanate during the reign of Muhammad Tayrab (1756/7-1787). MacMichael, relying on al-Tunisi, states that the Birged were without their own sultan, but Nachtigal lists them as being one of several groups to maintain a sultan under the authority of the local *shartai* (MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.78, al-Tunisi, 1845, p.137, Nachtigal IV, 1971, p.325) The main divisions of the Birged in Darfur are as follows:

Madargarké (ruling house)	Turingé
Tuddugé (Bamu Hilal)	Fileiké
Sirindiké	Eraykat (assimilated Arab group)
Togongé (Bamu Hilal)	Tongolké
Kamunga	Kagurtigé
Mirowgé	Morolké
Kulduké	Sasulké
Izmandiké	

⁴⁷ Bender (1997), p.26, Bechaus-Gerst (1989), pp.86-96; For Meidob see Werner (1993)

⁴⁸ Thelwall (1981), pp.48-9, see especially fig.1 - Schematic representation of Nubian geographical positioning and glotto-chronological distance (in years BP). Zyhlarz developed a theory in 1928 suggesting that the Nubian homeland was found in Kordofan, and that a series of migrations brought certain elements to the Nile valley, while another group moved westward early to Jebel Meidob and remained there. Later attempts by the Nubian kingdoms of the Nile to control western trade routes based on Jebel Meidob brought Nubian cultural influence, and with it, a new tradition of Meidobi origin in the great Christian kingdoms in the east (Zyhlarz, 1928).

⁴⁹ Thelwall (1982b), p.121

⁵⁰ Trigger (1977), p.319

King-lists of the three Meidob dynasties**Shelkota kings: Aurungide line**

Toké
↓
Buéri
↓
Abiad
↓
Idris
↓
Belugo
↓
Byeri
↓
Bagari
↓
Ahmed Aingeru
↓
Gami Khair

Turri kings

Timlig
↓
Koiniono
↓
Urro
↓
Said
↓
Adam Said Kosango (reigned 98 years)
↓
Abdullahi Hassan

Urtti kings

Uchuringe
 |
 Shatti
 |
 Abukr
 |
 Hassan
 |
 Tille
 |
 Tawdirri
 |
 Ougir
 |
 Kolginde
 |
 Adila Wad Tawdirri
 |
 Hashim Sarraf
 |
 Ezeirik Eisa
 |
 Fertisha Eisa
 |
 Ali Eisa
 |
 Mansur Suliman
 |
 Hamid Suliman
 |
 Mansur Suliman (twice deposed)

(King-lists collected and published by Lampen, 1928, p.65)

21. Zankor, Abu Sufyan and the Legend of the 'Anaj'

One theory that is often encountered in whole or in part in the literature on Darfur is the suggestion that Darfur was connected culturally or politically with the Christian cultures of the Nubian Nile. The poorly understood ruins of Zankor and Abu Sufyan in northern Kordofan often figure in these speculations as links in a route that connected the allegedly Christian citadel at 'Ayn Farah in Darfur with the 'Christian' fortress of Qarri on the Nile north of Soba. Northern Kordofan does not appear, however, to have been uninhabited in the mediaeval period. Evidence for a long-vanished group known as the '*Anaj*' consists of a couple of historical notices, a collection of often vague traditions and the physical remains of a culture with strongly developed techniques of water conservation. The archaeological remains, according to Newbold, 'consist of rock-pictures, innumerable stone burial-cairns, some burnt-brick remains, ancient walled enclosures, relics of iron-smelting (much of this, however, is recent), and stone implements and stone rings. To these must be added a number of Berber place-names'.¹ 'Ayn Farah is discussed in detail in the section on Tunjur sites in Darfur; the other sites are as follows:

Zankor:

An intriguing site is found at the foot of Jebel Zankor in the Kaja Serug hills of western Kordofan, close to the border with Darfur. Only 1.4 ha in size, the site consists of a number of mounds covered with stone building slabs, stone pillars, and bricks of three types; burnt red-brick, mud-brick and cut stone. The site has received only one significant investigation, that of AED Penn in 1928 and 1929.²

An area called the 'Pillars site' contained twelve stone pillars arranged in a circle of eleven pillars with a single pillar standing in the centre. The pillars have an average measurement of 1 metre 10 cm.s in height, 55 cm.s in diameter, and a circumference of 2 metres. The circle of pillars is approximately 4 m in diameter. The material appeared to be sandstone, which none of the Sudanese in Penn's party could ever recall seeing in the Kaja Serug hills.³ A complex of this type is to date otherwise unknown in the Darfur/Kordofan area. Penn mentions ruins of other groups of pillars arranged around the site, and excavated the site of one group, without finding any clues as to their purpose. Without any apparent function, a religious purpose for these arrangements is suggested, possibly of Berber origin.

The central and largest mound was excavated by Penn. A multi-roomed building was found, made of both dried mud-bricks and fired red-brick. The east room yielded a large cache of *zir*-s with simple patterns on the neck,⁴ a quantity of ostrich egg-shell beads, two skulls and the burnt bones of a man

¹ Newbold (1924b), p.284

² Penn (1931), pp.179-84; A summary of the site is given in Zarroug, (1991), pp.69-70. Zankor was also visited in the early 1920's by Newbold, who provided a cursory description; see Newbold (1945), pp.231-2.

³ Penn (1931), p.181

⁴ Penn (1931), pl.VIII

mounted on a clay charger. One of the man's fingers still bore two brass rings. Two large querns were also found, both of them being given to the villagers for use after they had been measured.⁵ Excavation of the central room of this structure was quickly abandoned as the mud-brick and clay used in its construction was exceedingly hard, but the structure appeared to Penn to be of more than one storey. An iron hoe of a type different from those used in the area today was recovered from the central room.⁶

Another part of the site, which Penn termed 'the acropolis', held a vast cache of burnt clay pots in a large layer of ash. About 10% were found to be unbroken, and contained the bones of sheep, goats, or cows.⁷ The pottery consisted of hand-made thick ware, nearly all covered or partly covered by a thick red slip. In section the ware was black with a red edging on either side. The pottery was examined by F. Addison:

These pots as a group are not of the usual Meroitic type, though they have Meroitic affinities and are superior in fabric and workmanship to the later Aloa wares. They do not, on the other hand, bear any marked resemblance to the modern Nuba types, and I do not know how they compare with the pottery from the region to the west. The dating of this pottery is largely a matter of conjecture. On the scanty available evidence I am inclined to attribute it to about the 7th century AD, and I think it more likely that the people who made it reached Zankor from the river to the east rather than that they came up the Wadi el Malik from Dongola.⁸

Kropacek sees a similarity between the Zankor pottery and that of Soba,⁹ while Arkell thought it similar to modern Shilluk pottery.¹⁰

Among the unusual artifacts found at the site was a large sandstone jar set in the earth, apparently for storing oil or grain. This roughly round jar measured 3½ feet high and 2 feet in diameter. Eventually this

⁵ The querns measured 70 x 54 x 20 cm.s, and 60 x 45 x 17 cm.s.

⁶ The hoe closely resembles Arkell's type B6, based on a hoe recovered from Kerker (halfway between Jebel Meidob and Jebel Teiga), a site attributed by Meidob tradition to the predecessors of the Fur. Arkell suggests this type has a Kanem origin, and was introduced into Darfur around the thirteenth century:

If this surmise is correct, its occurrence at Zankor may be of importance, as indicating the possibility that that site was not as has hitherto been thought an outpost of the Kingdom of Nubia, or a Meroitic outpost from Dongola, but rather a post of the empire of Kanem, sited so as to control the trade route with Egypt via the Wadi Melik and Dongola, as Uri in Northern Darfur must have controlled the trade route to Egypt via the Derib al Arba'in. It is also I think significant that Zankor is said locally to have been built by the Anag or Abu Um Goraan, for I suspect that the land of the Anag is the Berber name for the eastern part of the empire of Kanem (Arkell, 1937d, pp.146, 149-50, pl.XX; for the Zankor hoe see Penn, 1931, pl.VIII, fig.14f)

⁷ The pots recovered were of many types, most of which corresponded to types in use in the western Sudan today. These types included the *zir*, *burma*, *kalul*, *doreia*, *kantoush*, *dahalob*, *tarib*, and *sakhkhana*. The quantity was so great that Penn records his workers exclaiming 'Wallahi ! Their wealth consisted only of burnt mud !' (Penn, 1931, p.183, pl.VI, fig.16; pl.VII).

⁸ F Addison; 'Notes on the pottery of Zankor', In Penn (1931), pp.183-4

⁹ Kropacek (1984), p.419

¹⁰ Arkell (1946b), p.91

jar found its way to Khartoum.¹¹ Water for the site was evidently provided by a funnel-shaped *sania* (well) that is similar to one attributed to the 'Anaj at Khor Gadein in Jebel Haraza.¹²

The unusual evidence collected from Zankor makes it very difficult to attribute an origin for the residents of this site. Penn suggested a 'Coptic outpost', but leaves it unclear whether he meant a trading post for Coptic Egyptian traders or an outpost of the Nubian Christians.¹³ The iron artifacts found in the mounds give us a date no earlier than the Meroitic culture, and the small size of the site suggests a small permanent population, though an extensive midden of 30 yards by 50 yards and approximately 20 feet high suggests a long period of occupation. The midden is covered with bones, sherds and fragments of iron ore. Edmonds, who visited the site in 1937, thought that the midden marked the position of an iron-working site.¹⁴ Edmonds' wife found a small tanged stone arrowhead within the single walled enclosure at the site; Edmonds compared the relic to a similar arrowhead recovered from tumulus 6 at al-Kurru by Reisner.¹⁵ The dating of al-Kurru to the eighth century AD is, however, entirely inconsistent with the evidence of iron-working at Zankor.¹⁶ Arkell at one point suggested that Zankor was the work of Mai Idris of Borno and his mother,¹⁷ a suggestion that is unlikely on numerous grounds.

Local traditions surrounding the site are scant and generally uninformative; the local Kajawi ascribe the works to the 'Anaj or the Abu Qona'an (giants), while nomads suggest the site may have belonged to the Musaba'at.¹⁸ There are few known examples of Musaba'at architecture with which to compare the site, but one would expect certain Fur characteristics; circular buildings, walled compounds, Tora construction techniques, and the placing of the site atop one of the hills rather than at their base. There are no traces of identifiable Islamic or Christian remains; to the contrary, Zankor appears (from the scant evidence) to be a pre-Islamic site practicing a pagan religion.

There is, however, the evidence of the Arab geographer al-Dimashqi (1256-1327). Al-Dimashqi relates that the King of Alwa lived at a place called Kushah, Kus, or Kush al-Wagilah. Water is described as being obtained from wells. This place was six days from the city of Nuwabiya (Jebel Haraza) in northern Kordofan, and was under the rule of the Nubian king of Dongola.¹⁹ Using al-Dimashqi's description,

¹¹ Penn (1931), pp.181-2, pl.III, fig.s 4-5

¹² Newbold (1945), p.231 Jebel Haraza appears to be at the centre of 'Anaj activities in northern Kordofan.

¹³ Arkell notes that both Newbold and Crawford thought that Zankor was a Christian site (Arkell, 1960, p.119).

¹⁴ Edmonds (1940a), p.193

¹⁵ Edmonds (1940a), p.193, and pl.1. The arrowhead measures 40mm. in length and 14mm. in width. The arrowhead from al-Kurru is no.1578 in the Antiquities service collection.

¹⁶ A small number of iron objects have been found in the tombs of the 25th dynasty at al-Kurru, Nuri, Sanam and elsewhere, but represent a heterogenous collection of tools and ornaments that were probably imported from Egypt during the Nubian occupation. Iron objects disappear from the archaeological record for a while after the Kushite withdrawal from Egypt, reinforcing the theory that all such objects were imported during the 25th dynasty. There is also no evidence of ironworking (furnaces, slag heaps, etc.) in the area for such an early date. See Trigger (1969), pp.36-43

¹⁷ Arkell (1936), p.310, fn.3

¹⁸ Penn (1931), p.6

¹⁹ Dimashqi's account is given in Monneret de Villard (1938), pp.154-5, 220

Crawford was able to calculate that Kushah was 180 miles from Nuwabiya. The distance brings one almost exactly to the Kaja Serug hills, although Crawford appears to have been unaware of the Zankor site when he made his calculations.²⁰ Adams, however, cautions that al-Dimashqi's account is 'not based on first-hand information and is of dubious value'.²¹

Nevertheless, al-Dimashqi's account provides us at least with a date when the existence of a city in the Kaja Serug hills was known to outsiders (late 13th to early 14th centuries, or just before the fall of the Christian kingdom of Makuria in 1323). If Zankor was under the rule of the king of Dongola, as al-Dimashqi states, there is as of yet no evidence of Christian remains at the site. Possibly Zankor, with its strange pillar-circles, was a centre of pre-Islamic Berber activity in North Kordofan (the mysterious 'Anaj').

Abu Sufyan:

Roughly north of Zankor is another accumulation of ruins in the Wadi al-Milk area. This site lies in a grassy plain approximately 8 miles NNE of Idd Abu Sufyan (15° 37' N, 27° 53' E). The site is very remote and can only be reached by crossing extremely rough country. Because of this our information about Abu Sufyan is largely reliant upon the visits of Newbold in 1923²² and WBK Shaw in 1935.²³

Five groups of ruins have been identified. These consist of:

- 1/ A discontinuous stone circle, 1-2 feet high and 30 yards in diameter
- 2/ A small circle of stones set on their edge, 2 feet across and less than one foot high. There is an opening in the north-east part of the circle.
- 3/ A circle of red bricks, 2-3 feet high and 23 yards in diameter
- 4/ The remains of a circular structure of red-brick, 1-2 feet high and 40 feet in diameter
- 5/ A roughly circular, flat-topped mound, 15-20 feet high. The base of the mound measures 150 feet N-S by 130 feet E-W, and the top measures 70 feet N-S by 55 feet E-W.

This last structure was called a 'pyramid' by Newbold (a name which it has retained), but in shape it is actually more of a tapered cone rising to a flat top. Built of baked red-brick, this structure has been described by Shaw as follows:

Ascending from the plain level for the first two-thirds of the slope is a mass of brick debris, amongst which it is impossible to distinguish the courses. Above this to the summit 18 courses of red brick could be counted, the upper ones overlapping the lower by varying lengths. In two of these the bricks, seen from above, were laid as 'stretchers' and in the others as 'headers'. The red bricks are set in mud mortar. From the top of the highest course inwards towards the centre was a width of about 7½ feet of mud bricks laid flat and pointing radially outwards, forming a sort of flat parapet to the mound. The centre of the mound is nearly flat and free from fallen

²⁰ Crawford (1951), p.27 and fn.29

²¹ Adams (1984), pp.537-8

²² Newbold (1924a), pp.77-8

²³ Shaw (1936a), pp.324-6 A summary of the evidence is given in Zarroug (1991), p.69

bricks or any sign of building. We dug here to a depth of 3 feet or so and found nothing but yellow drift sand with which the whole centre of the building seems to be filled. I do not think the mound can have been much higher than it is today, and certainly there is not enough fallen rubble on the sides to account for it having been carried up to a high central point.²⁴

The bricks are poorly made and insufficiently baked; they break easily and contain sand and uncharred straw. The bricks are not uniform in size, but average 30 x 17 x 8 cm.s (Newbold gives 12-14' x 5' x 3½'). A number of small graves are found nearby, and the large mound may represent the tomb of some important individual, but the style of this work gives little clue as to its origin.²⁵ Eight miles south-east of the main site is a stone-walled enclosure about 200 yards square and no more than three feet high in its present ruined condition. Inside the enclosure were scattered sherds and bones, while beyond the walls were middens and traces of habitation.²⁶

Newbold examined a number of rock drawings at two small ridges near the site, consisting of both animal and human figures. Horses, giraffes, antelope and camels are depicted, the latter being the most numerous; 'Pregnant she-camels, suckling foals, bodies of camelry with spears and hoisted banners (?), camels carrying two and even three men, camels with waterskins (?) dangling beneath their flanks, are portrayed over and over again'.²⁷ The human figures commonly have tails and horned or double-plumed headdresses and are often depicted carrying shields.²⁸

Little pottery was recovered from the Abu Sufyan site; it included a number of pilgrim bottles similar to types found at Soba,²⁹ as well as sherds of 'good workmanship with impressed designs'.³⁰ Newbold suggested a dating of Abu Sufyan to the middle or late Meroitic periods (100 BC -300 AD).³¹

Sites identified as 'Anaj' in Kordofan

HC Jackson examined a large number of sites in north-east Kordofan during his survey of the Abu Hamed district. According to Jackson; 'They consist for the most part of graves, stone villages and indistinct traces of paths and walls. The graves are all some six feet in length and two to two-and-a-half feet in height;

²⁴ Shaw (1936a), p.325

²⁵ Shaw draws a parallel with certain tombs from the 3rd century AD cemetery at Karanog on the Nile, though these consist of rectangular brick-walled enclosures filled with sand and rubble (Shaw, 1936a, p.326).

²⁶ Newbold (1924b), pp.271-2

²⁷ Newbold (1924b), p.267, fig.s 2,3

²⁸ Newbold (1924a), p.77

²⁹ Zarroug (1991), p.69 Pilgrim bottles are an excellent diagnostic device for dating sites through the analysis of variations in their handles, necks and decoration. Unfortunately, Newbold, the discoverer of the pilgrim bottles at Abu Sufyan, did not provide a detailed description or drawings of these objects. Newbold appears to have been familiar with the pilgrim bottles from Soba, but may not have been aware that pottery of this type becomes common in the Nile Valley after the Egyptian 18th dynasty, and was produced locally in Nubia through the X-Group, Meroitic and Christian periods (see Adams, Vol.I, 1986, pp.103, 145).

³⁰ Newbold (1924b), pp.272-3

³¹ Newbold (1924b), p.273

they appear to be duly orientated and are composed of heaps of stones that may once have been carefully laid one upon the other'.³² Many other sites are unidentified as to type, being known mainly from their identification as 'Anag ruins' on the 1:250,000 charts of the Sudan produced by the Condominium government.

Wadi Abu Sibaa (18°, 30' N; 32°, 35'E)- graves

Baiyuda Wells (17°, 33' N; 32°, 8' E)

Bargat Umm Balhat (16°, 17' N; 31° 50')

Jura (18°, 39' N; 33°, 8' E) - graves

Abu Saival (17°, 17'N; 31°, 12'E)

Muwalih (18°, 15' N; 32°, 47'E) - graves

Muweileh (18°, 24'; 32°, 30'E) - graves

al-Mallagi (18°, 46'N; 32°, 53'E) - graves

Khor al-Sidr

This site is mentioned in Chittick (1955, p.91) as being marked on sheet 45 J of the Sudan 1:250,000 series as a site of '80 Anag graves'. The site is located in the area of the Gilif hills in the Bayuda desert, but was not visited by Chittick in his explorations of the region. The graves are more likely to be Meroitic or Christian, as are most of the antiquities in this area.

Umm Harot (16°, 20'N; 31°, 49'E)

Jebel Umm Oubu (16°, 23'N; 31°, 49')

Dar Hawawir

In the area in North Kordofan located between the Wadi al-Milk and the Wadi Muqaddam are a large number of enclosures with massive dry-stone walls and walled stone *hafir*-s of a distinctive type. This region is now the home of the nomadic Hawawir, descendants of the powerful Hawara Berbers who had effective rule of Upper Egypt south of Asyut until the early 19th century.³³ These Hawawir do not use

³² Jackson (1926), pp.24-5 Jackson's description of the ceramics around the many grave-sites is not very helpful; Pottery from the neighbourhood of these graves appears to be of similar kind to that found by Bimbashi Ryan who, in 1906, opened an 'Anag' grave at Abu Haraz opposite to Berber (*ibid*, p.25)

³³ The Hawawir maintained a tradition into the 20th century that they were originally not Arabs, but Berbers descended from Ham (MacMichael, 1912b, p.219; see pp. 214-21 for the Hawara, the Hawawir, and the Jallaba Hawara of Kordofan). Ibn Abi Zar of Fez (d. 1315) relates an eponymic origin story that gives the Hawara a Himyarite ancestry:

hafir-s or build structures of stone, and disclaimed any knowledge of the use and sometimes the existence of the enclosures and *hafir*-s when they were investigated by JM Edmonds in the 1930's.³⁴ The sites are as follows:

- 1/ Wadi Abu Hashim (Kernak wells): A circular enclosure 260 yards in diameter, 5 feet thick and 6 feet high (possibly twice as high originally) and five smaller enclosures. 'The wall is built of flat slabs of sandstone and mudstone without mortar and has an interior filling of small rubble, the whole being of skilled construction.'³⁵
- 2/ Mitnet al-Jawwala: A walled *hafir* and three enclosures of similar technique, one small and two large.
- 3/ Eilai: A walled enclosure 82 feet in diameter, at least six feet high nine feet thick. Eighteen circular grave mounds are present, along with several fragments of 'pilgrim bottles' of indeterminate date.
- 4/ Wadi Milk: A possible grave-mound and a number of *hafir*-s are found here, the largest of which is 250 yards across. The wall is faced with slabs of sandstone with an interior filling of stone rubble. The ruins of an enclosure 100 yards in diameter were found nearby.³⁶
- 5/ Jebel al-Raqta: A walled *hafir* of poorer construction than those of the Wadi Milk and a number of rectangular graves.
- 6/ Abu Urug area: Six miles east of the Abu Urug wells are two walled *hafir*-s.
- 7/ Jebel al-Hosh, in the Wadi Muqaddam: This site may not be contemporary with those mentioned above as the enclosure is of a unique shape and differs in construction, using straight-edged slabs in a vertical pattern, except bordering the entrance, where the slabs are piled in the usual horizontal fashion.

The Dar Hawawir sites are the work of a culture practicing a more intensive form of water conservation than the present inhabitants of the area, which recalls the many traditions that hold the Anaj were the ultimate victims of drought in their homeland.³⁷ Edmonds suggested that 'The scattered distribution shows that they were the work of an indigenous population and not built by any invader, and

It is also said that Sanhaja is a branch of Hawwara, and Hawwara is a branch of Himyar, Yemenites of the posterity of Sawwar b. Wa'il b. Himyar. They were called Hawwara because when their renowned ancestor, wandering through the lands, happened to arrive in the Maghrib to the south of Qayrawan in the land of Ifriqiya, he said: 'I've been rash (*tahawwart*) in wandering over the lands!'. And so they were called Hawwara. And God knows best. (Trans. in Hopkins and Levzion, 1981, p.236)

³⁴ Edmonds (1940b), p.295, 302

³⁵ Edmonds (1940b), pp.296-7, see also RE Colston: 'Itinerary from Debba to El Obeid', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 20, 1875-6, p.357.

³⁶ Edmonds (1940b), pp.299-301, pl.3

³⁷ Jackson notes that the Arabs he interviewed all ascribed the well-built stone-lined wells and *hafir*-s of Shendi and Abu Deleig districts to the 'Anags' (Jackson, 1926, p.25).

their careful construction, the great labour involved and the making of hafir banks also point to the same conclusion'.³⁸

Sites identified as 'Anaj in Northern Darfur

Baheir Tageru (16° 46' N; 26° 54'E)

Near the western foot of Jebel Tageru are two stone cairn graves 'said to be of 'Anag origin' encountered by Newbold in 1923.³⁹

Wadi Howar (17° 26' N; 26° 52'E)

Two sites were found on the north side of the *wadi* containing scattered heaps of pottery, bone, stone querns, pestles, animal teeth, and stone axes, including one of the *hache à gorge* type. The sites are marked 'Anag on the Khartoum Survey Office *Survey map NE-35-J*, but are probably those of the neolithic culture whose remains are found in the Wadi Howar.⁴⁰

Qarri: Nubian terminus of an E-W route to Darfur ?

Present day Qarri is a small village on the east side of the Nile, about 40 miles north of Khartoum and just south of the sixth cataract. Qarri was, however, once a town of some importance, as it was the capital of the 'Abdullah *shaykh*-s who ruled the area under the suzerainty of the Funj kings. Nearby, in the hills of the Sabaloka gorge is a 12 ha. fortified site on Jebel Irau. Where the steep slopes of the jebel were judged insufficient for the defence of the site massive stone walls were built, measuring in their present ruinous state about 2m in height and 2m in width. The wall is of dry stone construction, using large slabs of rock in rough courses with a filling of stone rubble. The style is very similar to the Tora method, except in those areas where the stone slabs are arranged in a herring-bone pattern.⁴¹ Close to the river on the western side of the site are the remains of massive stone walls that served to block the *wadi* approaches to the *jebel*. Smaller defensive walls are found on the uneven ground between the *wadi* defences and the main fortifications.

The buildings scattered across the site are typically simple rectangular works of roughly-coursed rubble, usually sited on the high ground. The rooms are sometimes arranged in small complexes, or are found within walled enclosures. Some minor oval or circular structures are found, which probably served as animal pens, while oval or circular rooms are at times incorporated into circular or semi-circular complexes.

³⁸ Edmonds (1940b), p.302; see Edwards (1989), pp.114-15 for the identification of these works with the 'Anaj remains marked on the Sudan survey maps.

³⁹ Newbold (1924a), p.56; Hinkel (1979), p.148, NE-35-N/18(1)

⁴⁰ Hinkel (1979), p.132, NE-35-J/18-H-2; NE-35-J/18-H-3

⁴¹ A detailed description of the site is found in Chittick (1963), pp.264-72. A summary is given in Zarroug (1991), pp.61-2.

At the high point of the jebel stands a large roughly square enclosure containing several rooms in its south-western and north-eastern corners. The enclosure is adjoined by a row of small square buildings which form a semi-circular enclosure, probably a courtyard for a ruler who lived in the large square enclosure. A possible cistern was found, but it appears that most water was brought from the river below.

A number of rock engravings, either pecked by stone or incised with metal, are found on a smooth slab of stone on the eastern side of the settlement. Chittick remarks that these engravings, which depict sandals, a boat, various domestic animals, and camels with riders are very close in style to engravings of known Islamic date in southern Egypt.⁴² Nothing in the way of Christian symbols or inscriptions was found. Surface finds were scarce, but among them were part of a burnt brick and a sherd of Islamic monochrome glazed ware common in the second half of the 15th century and in the 16th century.⁴³

Several likely references to the site at Jebel Irau (commonly known as Qarri after the nearby village) have been preserved. The Funj Chronicle, a late 19th century compendium of written sources and oral traditions, tells us that 'Amara Dunqas, the founder of the Funj kingdom of Sinnar in 1504-5, had decided together with his allies to 'make war upon the Anag, the kings of Soba and el Kerri. So Amara and 'Abdulla Gema'a with their men went and made war on the Kings of Soba and el Kerri and defeated them and slew them.'⁴⁴

⁴² Chittick (1963), p.268, fig.s 3-8, pl.LXX

⁴³ Chittick (1963), p.271

⁴⁴Translations in Vantini (1975), pp.786-7; MacMichael, Vol.II (1922), pp.358-9 The passage preceding this in which Soba is described as a Christian kingdom appears to be a recension of the earlier description by Ibn Selim al-Aswani, as preserved by al-Makrizi (1365-1441):

(Soba's) site was on the east of the Nile, near to the confluence of that river with the White Nile; and the chief food of its inhabitants was the white *durra* known as *el kassabi*. Their religion was Christianity, and they had a bishop appointed by the prelate of Alexandria, as had the Nuba before them. Their books were in Greek (Rumia) but they used to commentate upon them in their own language. (MacMichael, Vol.II, 1922, p.358)

The early date of this description is indicated in the reference to a bishop appointed by the prelate of Alexandria, a practice that ended in 1235 AD according to a history of the Coptic patriarchs (Adams 1984, p.541; Budge, Vol.II, 1907, p.306; Hasan, 1967, p.126). The Funj Chronicle, which describes events c.1500 AD in the early passages which concern us, does not otherwise refer to the rulers or people of Soba and Qarri as Christians. The entire question of Funj involvement in the fall of Alwa is open to question; the early passages of the Funj Chronicle may be merely an attempt to elevate the manner in which the Funj kingdom was created:

The black Sultans [of Funj] obviously sought to legitimize their rule by identifying their kingdom of Sennar as a successor state (by right of conquest) to Alwa. Since the Funj themselves never ruled at Soba, the extended description of the city's power and wealth in Christian times, with which the chronicle opens, can only be understood as an attempt to reflect some of its glory upon its conquerors. It seems, then, that the name and reputation of Alwa - whatever the actual date of its fall - could still command respect and authority in the sixteenth century, and for that matter even in the nineteenth (Adams, 1984, p.539; see also Holt, 1963, pp.39-55, and Hasan, 1967, p.132).

Penn collected a number of 'Abdullah traditions in the 1930's; among them is an account of the legendary Arab unifier of the northern Sudan, 'Abdallah Jamma and his struggle against the 'Anaj':

The Arabs swore fealty to him after he had reduced their clans, one by one, but he considered it expedient to make a treaty of alliance with Amara Dunkas, king of the Fung country, who lived in the mountains towards Walool. They agreed together that the Fung king should supply provisions and fighting men from Negroland and, together with these and his Arab allies, Sheikh 'Abdullah Gamma' advanced towards the Anag king. He overcame him in many battles which it would be tedious to describe and penetrated northwards into the Anag country as far as its capital Soba. This city he reduced, and slew the Anag king, but Hassaballah, their general, succeeded in escaping to Gerri [Qarri] with a remnant of his forces. Now Gerri was encircled by a great wall and on this wall he built strong towers of defence, of which the traces can be seen at this day, but 'Abdullah Gamma' pursued him and besieged the town so closely that he was compelled to surrender'.⁴⁵

Based on these traditions, Chittick described Qarri as the site 'at which the Christians made their last stand on the Nile'.⁴⁶ By the time of 'Abdullah, however, Christianity could only have existed in a nominal form at best, due to the isolation of the Christian community beginning in the 14th century and the process of Islamization that was already well under way in the region at this time.⁴⁷ Aside from the description of Soba lifted from al-Aswani, neither the Funj Chronicle nor the traditions refer to the occupiers of Soba and Qarri as Christians. There are no indications of Christianity at Qarri, and the 'Christian' general of the tradition bears a Muslim name. Adams suggests that it is 'quite possible that Alwa might have passed under Moslem rule, unbeknown to the outside world, long before its final downfall'.⁴⁸

Chittick pointed to several similarities between the Qarri site and the hilltop 'palaces' of Darfur, including the use of natural features in the fortifications, the Tora style dry stone masonry, a central complex, and the occasional circular hut.⁴⁹ The huts at Qarri, even where round (and most are not), do not compare in technique to those of Darfur, and the herring-bone pattern used in the construction of the main walls of Qarri is unknown in Tora construction methods. The deep grain pits found in Darfur royal compounds are also missing from the Qarri site. The speculations of Chittick and Zarroug regarding a connection between Qarri, Zankor, Abu Sofyan, and 'Ayn Farah are, in part, based upon the alleged Christian identification of the latter three sites. The evidence for such an identification is, however, extremely slight and sometimes highly questionable.

Summary:

The sites of Zankor, Abu Sufyan and Qarri have, in the absence of any conclusive evidence, lent themselves to much speculation as to their date and origin. Arkell, in particular, seems to have been of

⁴⁵ Penn (1934), pp.59-83

⁴⁶ Chittick (1963), p.272 There are no indications of the 'towers' mentioned in the tradition at Qarri.

⁴⁷ See Holt (1969), where Holt suggests that the fall of Soba can be placed in the thirteenth century.

⁴⁸ Adams (1984), p.539

⁴⁹ Chittick (1963), p.271

several minds regarding the antiquity of Zankor and Abu Sofyan; in his 1961 edition of *A History of the Sudan*, Arkell notes that 'the excavation of sites at Zankor and Abu Sofyan in Kordofan may one day show that [the Napatan kingdom of Kush, approx. 750-650 BC] extended three hundred miles or so west of the Nile. From the former comes an arrow-head of similar type to those found at Kurru. There is, however, no archaeological evidence that Darfur was included in the kingdom of Cush'.⁵⁰ A little later Arkell remarks that 'The Ptolemaic 'pilgrim bottles'... found at Abu Sofyan near a possible red-brick pyramid reminiscent of the last pyramids of Meroë,⁵¹ and the red-brick ruins still further up the Wadi el Milk at Zankor, not yet scientifically excavated, both indicate that north-western Kordofan was probably part of the kingdom of Cush in Meroitic times. There is, however, no archaeological evidence that Darfur was part of the kingdom of Meroë...'.⁵² Finally, Arkell states that 'The Wadi el Milk is the natural route by which the influence of Mukurra extended into Darfur... Abu Sofyan probably, and Zankor certainly with its typical Christian large red bricks, was a Christian centre on that route'.⁵³

Attempts have been made to connect the sites of Abu Sofyan, Zankor and even 'Ayn Farah through their use of large bricks,⁵⁴ but unfortunately the measurements for the bricks of Zankor are not mentioned by Penn. The large bricks used at 'Ayn Farah are twice as long as those at Abu Sofyan. Grabham (cited by Penn⁵⁵) has suggested that 'Zankor was a Meroitic outpost from Dongola, planted by people who had found their way down the Wadi el Melik to Kaja Serug'. Shinnie, however, recognizing that the evidence as it stands remains insufficient, remarks of the ruins that 'They may be Meroitic, but we know far too little of them to base any rational argument on their presence, and it is just as likely that they are of medieval date, as are those of their nearer neighbours in Bornu'.⁵⁶

The role of a now extinct people known as the 'Anaj (Anag, Anak) in the pre-Islamic settlement of northern Kordofan is uncertain; even the name 'Anaj is full of ambiguities as it was once in popular use among the natives of parts of the Sudan as an attribution for any work of pre-Islamic origin.⁵⁷ In the areas of the Nile and the region east of it the name may be applied to works of Egyptian, Meroitic or Christian

⁵⁰ Arkell (1961), p.137

⁵¹ The rounded flat-topped mound at Abu Sofyan in fact bears little resemblance to the Meroitic pyramids, despite the name given it by the earliest British visitors to the site.

⁵² Arkell (1961), pp.174-5

⁵³ Arkell (1961), p.192; Arkell elsewhere referred to the ruins at Zankor as 'a monastery' (Arkell, 1959, p.47)

⁵⁴ Newbold (1924a), p.79; Shaw (1936a), pp.325-6

⁵⁵ Penn (1931), p.180

⁵⁶ Shinnie (1971b), p.447; Shinnie elsewhere notes that 'Zankor produced large bricks unlike the normal Meroitic ones, and the pottery, though of a style of its own is more like that of Soba than of anywhere else' (Shinnie, 1971a, p.48).

⁵⁷ There is also a site known as Wadi al-'Anaj 20 miles north-east of Nukheila (at 19°, 50'N, 26°, 50'E) which does not have, as one might imagine, an historic connection with the 'Anaj, as it only received its name from Newbold and Shaw in 1927 (Newbold and Shaw, 1928, p.120). A prehistoric site was found in this area, and Newbold and Shaw rendered Wadi al-'Anaj as 'Valley of the Prehistoric Men'. It was again visited by de Almásy in 1935. See Hinkel (1979), p.109, NE-35-B/17-U-1.

origin.⁵⁸ In particular it has been used to describe the inhabitants of Soba⁵⁹ and their alleged descendants, the Hamaj of Fazughli.⁶⁰ More specifically, the name has been used in north Kordofan to describe the 'Berber aboriginals' whom native tradition held to be a 'white race'.⁶¹ Palmer sought a Berber related origin for the word 'Anaj': 'The word Anaj is merely the Kanuri-Teda word 'An' with the Tuwareg termination *ek* or *ag*, i.e., the *An-ag* would naturally live in *An-di* (Ennedi) and be called by the Kanuri of Kanem and Wadai *Kan-di-in* = Kindin' [the Kanembu word for Tuareg, known in Darfur as Kinin].⁶² Elsewhere Palmer suggests a period of Berber or Sanhaj ('Anaj) domination of northern Darfur and Wadai.⁶³ In a Sudanese manuscript *nisba* originating in the 15th century, 'Anaj is used variously in reference to the Dinka, the Nuba, the Daju, and the people of Borku (Wadai).⁶⁴ The Bedariya of Kordofan and Darfur are also described as a combination of 'Abbasid and 'Anaj descent'.⁶⁵

The 'Anaj/'Anak name may have a scriptural source, derived from the 'Anakim, a giant people of southern Israel (Hebron especially) mentioned in several places in the Old Testament.⁶⁶ Traditions from Israel, Ammon and Moab all referred to the 'Anak as an ancient race of giants who struck fear into the hearts of the Hebrews because of their size. According to Joshua (11:21-22) the 'Anak once occupied a greater area, but were reduced by Joshua to small remnant groups in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. These legendary 'Anak may be connected to the *Y'nk* mentioned in the Egyptian Middle Kingdom execration texts.⁶⁷ There can be no physical connection between the 'Anak of Palestine and those of Sudan, but the word, as a generic term for 'giants', may have passed into use in the Sudan and Darfur as one of several names used to refer to an aboriginal race of 'giants'.

A term that is often used synonymously for 'Anaj is 'Abu Qona'an (or Umm Qona'an), also a seemingly all-purpose term for pre-Islamic populations in the Sudan. The name is a corruption of *Qana'an*, and refers to the alleged Canaanite descent of the Berbers.⁶⁸ Arkell notes that Tora ruins in Jebel Marra are

⁵⁸ Budge even attempted to make a connection between the 'Anaks' and the ancient Blemmyes, and reproduces two photos of stone dwellings at Jebel Maman (between Kassala and Suakin) that he identifies as 'Anak' (Budge, Vol.II, p.175, pls facing p.176 & 178).

⁵⁹ MacMichael (1912b), pp.5, 87; Arkell (1961), p.198, fn.2; MacMichael Vol.I (1922), pp.50-51; Stanton (1911), p.277

⁶⁰ Chataway (1930); Spaulding (1974); Zarroug (1991), p.99. Many of these people speak Gule, a branch of the Koman language group. Of these, Bender remarks; 'Like many 'remnant' peoples of middle-eastern Sudan, the people refer to themselves as 'Anej' or 'Hamej', supposedly dating back to the Funj state in the area from about 1500 to about 1820' (Bender, 1997, p.24).

⁶¹ Newbold (1924c), p.34

⁶² Palmer (1926), pp.71-2

⁶³ Palmer (Apr. 1930), p.357

⁶⁴ MacMichael Vol.II (1922), ms.D1, Sections CXXIX (Dinka), CXLIX, CLV, CLXIX (Nuba), CLXII (Daju), CLI (Borku)

⁶⁵ MacMichael Vol.II (1922), ms.D1, Section CXXXIX

⁶⁶ Num. 13:22-8; 13:33; Deut. 1:28; 2:21; 9:2; Joshua 11:21-2

⁶⁷ Albright (1928), pp.237-8; the original Egyptian text may be found in Sethe (1926), name F-4.

⁶⁸ The Abu Qona'an also bear the reputation of being giants, and in this generic sense the name cannot always be regarded as being synonymous with 'Anaj. Regional examples of massive stone-work or large constructions of the dim past being attributed to giants can be found in the Bahr al-Ghazal, where sherds-

sometimes called the works of the 'Abu Qona'an', and MacMichael also encountered the name in use in the same region:

The burial places of the old inhabitants are frequently met with. They are oval constructions of random stone slabs stuck up on end and, in Dar Abo Dima, were spoken of as the work of 'Abu Um Gonan', a term which must be the same as the 'Abu Gonaan' (or Kona'an) who are fabled to have once lived in the northern 'Nuba' hills of Kordofan, and whose name again may be connected with Kana'an, *i.e.* Canaan, son of Ham, the traditional progenitor of pagan tribes.⁶⁹

The attribution of Canaanite descent by the Arabs was not necessarily complimentary; according to al-Ya'qubi; 'Kana'an was the first of the sons of Nuh [Noah] to revert to the ways of the sons of Qabil (Cain) and indulged in distractions and singing and made flutes and drums and guitars and cymbals and obeyed Satan in vain amusements'.⁷⁰

The Tageru hills, north-east of Jebel Meidob, were called 'the headquarters of the white giant race of 'Anag' or 'Abu Konaan', two names given by the Arabs to the pre-Semitic and pagan aborigines of the northern Sudan'.⁷¹ Consisting mainly of a broken plateau 700-800m. high, Jebel Tageru is now waterless and largely uninhabitable, save for the four rock wells on the western side of the *jebel*. 'Apart from the 4 rock wells, 'Anag graves and rock pictures have been recorded from the west side of Jebel Tageru... The obvious concentration of archaeological remains at the west side of Jebel Tageru would have been favoured by the existence of the rock wells on this side of the *jebel*. But even on top of the Tageru Plateau sites were

covered mounds of one to five acres are ascribed to the *Barrjo*, who were 'tall men' (Crawford, 1948, p.10). in Ethiopia, where the stone fortresses of the Tchertcher mountains are attributed to the *Arlas*, a race of giants, in Ennedi, where the Bidayat were said to have displaced a race of 'Majians' forty-six cubits high who created great caves in the rocks (Palmer, Vol.II, 1928b, p.55), and in Tibesti, where circles of boulders are called the work of giants (Thesiger, 1939, p.438). Carrique cites the attribution of the works at 'Ayn Galakka to giants; 'Une autre tradition recueillie par les Senoussistes et qui m'a été rapportée, les attribue aux «Khouz». La traduction de ce mot est: «Ogre, Géant»... les auteurs anciens et les traditions indigènes citent une race de géants qui aurait occupé le pays' (Carrique, 1935, p.91). The Tora of Darfur are likewise often referred to as giants.

The development of a Canaanite ancestry for the Berbers is traced by Brett and Fentress:

The idea that the Berbers originated in Palestine among the sons of Canaan gave genealogical precision to the perception of the Arab conquerors that the Berbers were not only a nation, but were divided into two distinct groups, the Butr and the Baranis. The original meaning of these terms is obscure: one suggestion is that the Baranis (sing. *Burnus*) wore the burnous, a long garment, while the Butr wore a brief tunic, *abtar*, 'cut short'... By the tenth or eleventh century they had been converted into the descendants of eponymous ancestors, Abtar and Burnus, the sons of Barr, the grandson of Canaan and father of the race (Brett and Fentress, 1996, p.131).

The forms *Butr* and *Baranis* were both gradually replaced by those of the major sections of each people, the Zanata and Sanhaja, respectively. *Butr* and *Baranis* are not encountered as names in accounts previous to the Arab conquest, but may have reflected some social division among the Berbers; 'It would seem that Berber and Arab genealogists constructed this division *a posteriori*, but in so doing took into account the facts of historical experience' (Monès, 1988, p.227).

⁶⁹ MacMichael, Vol.I (1922), p.112

⁷⁰ al-Ya'qubi, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.21

⁷¹ Newbold (1924b), p.274

noted with 'old pottery'.⁷² The rock pictures are mostly incised rather than painted, and display cattle, giraffes, elephants, and bowmen, but not camels, and probably predate any 'Anaj occupation.⁷³ A number of so-called 'Anaj graves are found at Qelti al-Adusa, but no proper description of these tombs has been made.⁷⁴ Just north of Jebel Tageru a pilgrim bottle of red ware was discovered at Jebel Bayt al-Nahas.⁷⁵

The first historical mention of the 'Anaj is in 1269 AD, in a passage from Ibn Abd al-Zahr⁷⁶ wherein Ador, King of al-Abwab writes to an emir of the Mamluk sultan that he has been on an expedition against a certain King Ani, who has fled to the land of the 'Anaj. Ador adds that the country of the 'Anaj had been conquered by an unnamed king (perhaps Ani) and that he (Ador) and his Muslim forces were engaged in deposing the king, in which case it was expected that all the *bilad al-sudan* would come under the rule of the sultan.⁷⁷ The next historical mention comes in 1286 AD in the record of a complaint brought to Sultan Qalaun by an ambassador of Ador. The letter, which is a complaint against the king of Dongola, is signed by Ador, 'king of the gates' as well as by the princes of Barah (Bazah), al-Taka, Kedrou, Ary, Befal, Anedj and Kersah.⁷⁸

Jebel al-Haraza is associated with certain traditions that ascribe the site great antiquity; one such is found in a manuscript authored by Daud Kubara ibn Sulayman in 1911. This work is a collection of history and oral tradition, and describes the kingdom of the Nuba in the opening chapter:

Its capital was Gebel 'Abd el Hadi [an alternate name for al-Haraza], which lies between Dongola and Kordofan, and various other hills. Now the cities and hills of the Nubians were dense with troops and horsemen, and when their power had become firmly established in the Sudan a great army was assembled, under the leadership of King Tahrak and of Sebakh the King of Abyssinia, to make war on the kingdom of Egypt; and after much fighting and great slaughter Egypt was conquered...⁷⁹

Oral tradition concerning the 'Anaj deals mostly with the manner of their disappearance. At al-Haraza, where 'Anaj memories are strongest, it is said that 'the Abu Qona'an lived in the 'days of the prophets', i.e. before Islam, and were a rich and very godless folk who amassed wealth galore, but a great

⁷² Hinkel (1979), pp.150-53

⁷³ The rock pictures from Qelti Umm Tasawir are reproduced in Hinkel (1979), figs. 124-27

⁷⁴ The site is mentioned in Monneret de Villard, Vol.I (1935), p.279. Newbold passed through the site in 1923, and is probably the source for the identification of this site on the Sudan Survey maps.

⁷⁵ The bottle is identified as Christian in the Sudan National Museum catalogue (SNM object catalogue no. 2620). It was discovered by Shaykh Muhammad Wad Tom, and turned over in 1928.

⁷⁶ Vantini (1975), p.429

⁷⁷ MacMichael suggests that Ani fled to Jebel al-Haraza in northern Kordofan (MacMichael, Vol I, 1922, p.185, fn.3)

⁷⁸ 'The Gates' = al-Abwab, Basa remains the name for a district east of Kabushiya, Taka is the older name for Kassala, Kedrou = Kaderu, eleven miles north of Khartoum, Kersah may be identified with the tribe of the same name mentioned by Ibn Selim as living in the Gezira (MacMichael, 1912b, p.87, fn.2; MacMichael, Vol.I, 1922, p.183, fn.6; JW Crowfoot: 'Some lacunae in the anthropology of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', *Report of the British Association*, Aug. 1907).

⁷⁹ Ms. text given in MacMichael, Vol.II (1922), pp.324-5 'Tarakh and Sebakh' equal the 25th dynasty kings Taharqa and Shabaka, though curiously Shabaka is referred to as a king of the Abyssinians.

famine came upon them, and the price of corn was its weight in gold; finally they perished of hunger and became extinct.⁸⁰ Another tradition collected at Jebel Katul, 100 miles south-west of Jebel al-Haraza, also refers to a famine⁸¹:

When the first Nuba came from the Nile in their westward migration, they found on top of Jebel Katul three large, venerable, white-skinned, and bearded old ladies who were in the last stages of collapse and were just able to indicate to the thirsty newcomers where the waterholes in the rocks were before they died. It is believed that they were the last survivors of the Anag inhabitants of Katul, the remainder having died of famine or migrated.

According to Newbold, their ruined houses were still pointed out in the old stone village lying under Jebel al-Azib, a spur of Jebel Haraza.⁸²

Another tradition of the Jawami'a Arabs of Faragab states that the first Arabs to cross Kordofan were the Banu Hilal. These Arabs eliminated the aboriginal 'Anaj and were in turn forced westwards by the Funj of Sinnar.⁸³ Palmer suggested that the Berbers of north Kordofan were attacked in 1290-93 by either the Juhayna or the Banu Hilal.⁸⁴ The 'Anaj are also commonly said to have come from the north and to have been fair-haired, possibly a reference to a Berber-type people.⁸⁵

The most important areas for the examination of 'Anaj activity are Jebel al-Haraza, Abu Hadid, and Um Durrug. Traditions of the 'Anaj as the original inhabitants of Jebel al-Haraza are especially strong, and cases of albinism are said to be throwbacks to the aboriginal white 'Anaj.⁸⁶ Doughnut-shaped stone rings and hollowed conical stones of granite and sandstone are common at al-Haraza, Abu Hadid and Um Durrug, where they are found on the sites of old settlements. They are referred to as both *hajar Abu Qona'an* and *hajar al-'Anaj*.⁸⁷ With an internal diameter of 2cm. or less, these rings correspond closely to 'Group 3' of the sandstone rings recovered from Jebel Moya.⁸⁸ Crowfoot found many examples at scattered sites in the Butana, and suggested that the rings served as base rings or stands for round-bottomed pots.⁸⁹ Similar sandstone rings, too small to be armlets (as worn by the present-day Tuareg) were found in Tibesti by

⁸⁰ MacMichael (1912b), pp.88-9

⁸¹ The tradition was provided by Shaykh Tamaragha Doka, a 100 year old genealogist and repository of tribal lore (Newbold, 1924c, p.36).

⁸² Newbold (1924c), p.37

⁸³ MacMichael (1912b), p.59

⁸⁴ Palmer (Apr. 1930), p.357

⁸⁵ MacMichael (1912b), p.90

⁸⁶ Newbold, in a dubious bit of genetic science, attempts to connect cases of albinism in parts of Kordofan to an aboriginal white race, a folly which seems to have been encouraged by remarks made by MacMichael in 1912 (Newbold, 1924c, p.36; MacMichael, 1912b, p.90).

⁸⁷ A native of al-Haraza informed MacMichael that the hollowed conical stones were used by the indigenous inhabitants of Jebel al-Haraza to avert lightning. Seligmann suggested that they were ceremonial mace-heads (MacMichael, 1912b, p.88, fn.2, pl.2).

⁸⁸ Addison, Vol.I, 1949, p.164

⁸⁹ Crowfoot (1920), p.91

Dalloni.⁹⁰ MacMichael excavated one of a number of 'conical circular tumuli of stones', but found nothing under the tumulus to a depth of seven or eight feet.⁹¹

In the *nisba* mentioned above is a passage that describes the Nuba of al-Haraza, Abu Hadid and Um Durrug as 'Anaj, save for the Awwlad Mahmud of al-Haraza who are Rikabiya Ashraf.⁹² The modern Rikabiya in Haraza are descendants of a group of Rikabiya from Mundara near the Blue Nile who migrated to al-Haraza in the early 1700's, expelling most of the residents and intermarrying with those who remained. Browne (1799) mentions quite clearly that the people of al-Haraza in his time were non-Arab idolators. Traces of matrilinear descent, a pre-Islamic Berber characteristic, are found at al-Haraza, Abu Hadid and Um Durrug.⁹³

Painted and engraved rock pictures are found at al-Haraza (Jebel Shalashi) and two other sites only a mile or two away, Jebel Karshul and Jebel Kurkeila (all are in the Jebel al-Haraza range). Those of Jebel Shalasi depict men on horseback, giraffes and hyenas; those at Jebel Karshul depict mounted men and camels; and the Jebel Kurkeila pictures are of animals only, with camels predominating. MacMichael, who published these works,⁹⁴ initially declined to attribute them, but later suggested that they were the work of 'roaming tribes probably connected on the one hand with the ancient Garamantes and on the other with the Tibbu and Eastern Tuwarek, - part descendants of the old nomad Berbers'.⁹⁵ Arkell also sought a Tuareg connection, suggesting that the term 'Anaj derived from the Tamachek expression *Kel Anag (Kel Imnek)* 'the people of the east', and that 'it was used first in Kordofan by Tuareg introduced in the time of the kingdom of Meroë to look after the new transport animal, the camel, for which the steppes of Kordofan provide such suitable grazing. *Kel anag* to such Tuareg camel-owners would have meant the Meroitic inhabitants of the Nile valley.'⁹⁶ Rodd, however, was clear in giving a different meaning to the phrase:

The Agades Chronicle, on the authority of the learned Ibn Assafarani, says that the first Tuareg who came to Air were the Kel Innek, under a ruler called Agumbulum; and that other Tuareg followed them. Now, Kel Innek means literally 'The People of the East'; it is primarily a generic or

⁹⁰ Dalloni (1935), pp.195-7

⁹¹ MacMichael (1909), p.567

⁹² MacMichael, Vol.II (1922), Section CLXVII Bell attempted to establish the existence of an extinct branch of the Nubian language centred on Jebel Haraza (Bell, 1973, pp.73-80), drawing mainly on a word-list collected by Newbold (Newbold, 1924d, pp.126-31). Newbold's elderly informant claimed that the vocabulary was that of the original 'Anaj people of the area, which seems highly unlikely.

⁹³ MacMichael (1912b), p.91 For matrilinear succession among the Berbers (some of whom were already Muslims), see Ibn Sa'id (c.1269; trans. by Hopkins and Levtzion; 1981, p.193), Ibn Battuta (1356; Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, p.285), and Ibn Khaldun (1374-8; Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981, pp.333-4). Matrilinear succession was the norm among the Guanche, a Berber people of the Canary Islands who were never exposed to Arab influence (Murdock, 1959, p.115). A number of Berber genealogies preserve elements of matrilinear succession, and those of the Tuareg are often entirely so designed (see Norris, 1982, pp.40-43).

⁹⁴ MacMichael (1909), pp.562-8 Newbold states that in 1922 he found a further group of rock paintings in the Haraza area. The paintings were discovered on an undercut boulder at Gelti al-Naga, south-east of Jebel Belbeldi, and consist of sixteen figures of men and camels in red pigment (Newbold, 1924b, p.285).

⁹⁵ MacMichael (1912b), p.89

⁹⁶ Arkell (1961), pp.198-99, fn.2 See also Arkell (1951c), pp.37-8. Arkell also suggested that the Tuareg remnants in Kordofan were absorbed by the Arab Kababish (1951b, p.310).

descriptive term, and not a tribal proper name. Ibn Assafarani wrote from Asben, where the eastern country always and necessarily means the area around Lake Chad.⁹⁷

The 'Anaj traditions are often vague and are unfortunately the memories of those peoples who moved into the 'Anaj lands rather than memories of the 'Anaj themselves, whose survivors were dispersed and assimilated into other groups. Two common themes run through these traditions; an agreement that the 'Anaj perished through a combination of aridity and famine, and their origin as a 'white' i.e. Berber or possibly Arab population. The well-built stone *hafir*-s that pre-date the modern nomad inhabitants of northern Kordofan might indicate an organized response to decreasing rainfall in the area by an earlier population. Does the *safia* at Zankor and its resemblance to a reputed 'Anaj *safia* at Khor Gadein represent an 'Anaj presence at Zankor? Without further evidence it would be premature to assign Zankor and Abu Sufyan to any particular culture, but it should also be noted that there is insufficient evidence to make any firm links with Meroitic or Christian civilization on the Nile, or to posit an arrangement of outposts leading from the Nile into the interior of Darfur. It is tentatively suggested that 'Anaj represents a pre-Islamic Berber culture driven south into northern Kordofan in the early part of the 2nd millennium AD, and who disappeared as a group due to a severe increase in aridity in the region centred around Jebel Haraza and pressure applied by advancing nomadic Arab populations who were more capable of adapting themselves to the new environmental conditions. The 'Anaj in the area of Jebel Haraza may have interacted in some way with a resident Nubian-speaking population (there are traces of such a group in tradition and language), but the exact nature of their relations is uncertain. It appears that the Nubian-speakers of Haraza may have inherited certain cultural traditions from the 'Anaj, as they continued to be identified in later Arab *nisba*-s and by various informants as 'Anaj. The 'Anaj as a group probably did not survive long after the dawn of the 14th century.

The fortress of Qarri is dealt with in this section because of the speculation over a possible connection between this site and Darfur. The similarities in style between this work and the Tora-style works of Jebel Marra are not strong enough to suggest an intrusion as far as the Nile by a Darfur group at such an early date (late 15th/early 16th centuries). A Daju or Tunjur empire of such size seems to be out of the question, while the earliest suggestion of Kayra expansion so far east comes with Nachtigal's notice of a tradition that Sulayman Solong (early 17th century), the first Muslim Kayra sultan, ruled a kingdom that extended east to the Atbara river, east of the Nile.⁹⁸ There is no reason, however, to lend credence to this tradition; like the Borno tradition of a kingdom reaching east to the Nile, the Nile valley is simply used here as a terminus point for the creation of a mythic realm that justifies any subsequent claims to the lands to the east (a useful invention no doubt inspired by the later Fur sultans' battles against the Musaba'at, Funj and Egyptians for control of Kordofan). Nor is there any reason to include Qarri as part of a network of sites that would include Zankor, Abu Sufyan and 'Ayn Farah. Qarri was probably a fortress of the Soba kings, but

⁹⁷ Rodd (1926), p.369

⁹⁸ Nachtigal, Vol.IV (1971), p.279

its role as the last stronghold of 'Christian' Alwa seems due to a mistaken inference based on the borrowings made by the Funj Chronicle.

22. Christianity in Chad ?

(Map E: Chad)

A large *wadi* known as the Bahr al-Ghazal¹ runs 600 km. north-east from Lake Chad into the Djourab depression (see pl.1b). Points along the valley range from 1500 to 1600 km. from the Nile. Red-brick ruins, evidence of iron-working and numerous types of pottery are all found along its banks with a special concentration around the point where the *wadi* meets the depression at Koro Toro, all suggesting a lengthy period of occupation in this now extremely arid region. Mollusk shells and fish skeletons (often of substantial size) litter the area, and rock-drawings portray numerous species, including horses, camels, hippopotami, dogs and ostriches. Tilho cites local traditions that until the beginning of the nineteenth century native navigators were able to travel in boats from Lake Chad along the Bahr al-Ghazal to the lowlands further north, leading him to conclude that 'until the early centuries of the Christian era this low-lying and now completely waterless region of the lowlands of the Chad may have been a great zone of lakes and marshes dotted with sandy or rocky archipelagoes.'² The remains of older forms of pottery in the outlying regions suggest a process of dessication that prompted settlement along the more reliable water source of the Bahr al-Ghazal. Though many types of ceramics may be found in the valley proper, a type of painted pottery bears a distinct resemblance to styles found in Meroitic and Christian Nubia.

Capt. Seliquer was one of the first to explore this area and drew attention to the numerous forms of pottery and many settlements around the depression at the end of the Bahr al-Ghazal.³ Seliquer described the dry lake-bed at the end of the *wadi* as 'the lake of the Tounjour', though he may have only borrowed this name from the Tounjour wells, 32km. northwest of Koro Toro, where he claimed to have found fragments of fine sandstone engraved with what appeared to be Greek letters. Seliquer was informed by Kura'an tribesmen that the settlements were those of black Christians, and that furthermore the Tunjur were Christians, though there seems to have been some confusion on this point.⁴ There is in Chad, however, a tradition of referring to all pre-Islamic works as being those of the '*Nassara*', or Christians, just as pre-Islamic works in Kordofan are called the work of the *Abu Qona'an*, or Canaanites. Arkell identified a sherd from Koro Toro⁵ and a goblet from Bochianga as Nubian Christian, and seized upon the *Tounjour* place

¹ In this chapter all references to the Bahr al-Ghazal refer to the wadi of that name in Chad. Elsewhere in the text this feature is referred to as the 'Chadian Bahr al-Ghazal' to distinguish it from the Bahr al-Ghazal region of the southern Sudan.

² Tilho (1920), p.258

³ Seliquer (1945), pp. 197-209

⁴ Tilho was also told that great cemeteries found on the platform of certain rocks in Borku belonged to 'a completely vanished race of 'black Christians', though Tilho was never able to find any trace of Christian occupation (Tilho, 1920, p.258).

⁵ The sherd is of red burnished ware with a black line decoration using both fish-scale and herring-bone patterns. It was found at Koro Toro by MR Capot-Rey of the Institut de Recherches Sahariennes, Algiers.

names as proof of his theory of a Christian Tunjur occupation of Darfur and Wadai.⁶ The resemblance of the Koro Toro style pottery to ceramics of Christian manufacture is highly misleading; Shinnie once described it as 'the first certain evidence for Christian Nubia material in the West'.⁷

In supporting his theory of a Nubian Christian occupation of regions as far west of the Nile as Chad, Arkell cited a passage in an anonymous Persian geography (dated c.983), the *Hudud al-'Alam*, 'The Regions of the World'.⁸ The passage follows short references about Nubia and the Beja country and describes a Christian settlement somewhere west of the Nile:

Tari (?) is a small district in the desert between the Nuba and the Sudan. There are two remote monasteries belonging to the Christians of the district. It is reported that they contain 12,000 monks, and when one of them disappears from the Nuba, one of the Christians of Upper Egypt comes to replace him.⁹

Arkell suggested that because the following paragraph of the text deals with towns of the 'Sudan' located in modern Nigeria, Tari should thus be located significantly west of the Nile. The passage is, however, clearly connected to the preceding remarks in the text regarding Nubia. Arkell nevertheless equated 'Tari' with a Christian Tunjur realm:

For a site that will suit the *Hudud al-'Alam*'s Tari we must look to the west of the Nile, and it does seem that it is possible that 'the small province lying in the desert between the territory of Nubia and the Sudan' (Nigeria) in which lay two remote Christian monasteries may have included northern Darfur, where one Christian monastery has recently been identified at Ain Farah, and where the name of the people connected with it, the Tungur, is now seen to be derived from *Tmkr*, the original of the Nubian kingdom of Dongola's name Mukurra, and known from the tribute lists of Tuthmosis III, c.1450 BC... Presumably Ain Farah, the intervening Christian sites of Zankor and Abu Sofyan, and other settlements in Wadai and Chad, may well have been administered at one time from Ghazali [the monastery on the Wadi Abu Dom, running south-west from modern Merowe], and if Ghazali's old name was Tari, the whole may have been known as the province (diocese ?) of Tari.¹⁰

There is no reason to suggest a location for Tari at any great distance from the Nile, other than to support the theory that Ain Farah was the site of a Christian monastery (see the section on Ain Farah in [Tunjur sites](#))

⁶ Arkell (1963b), pp.317, 319, fig.s 1-2; Mauny (1963), pp.40-44, fig.s 3,4. Adams identified the goblet as Late Christian type N. VI (1200-1400 AD) (Adams, vol.I, 1986, p.99; for the sherd see p.202). For the Tounjour site, see Huard, Bacquié and Scheibling (1963), pp.435-42. If there is indeed any connection between this site and the Tunjur, it is more likely to have been the result of groups of Tunjur passing through this area on their south-eastern migration into Darfur than to be the result of a Nubian Christian migration from the Nile Valley.

⁷ Shinnie (1971a), p.49. Huard noted the similarity of some types of the Koro Toro style with Nubian C-Group pottery (approx. 2200-1550 BC), and cited some of the examples of painted pottery from Bochianga and Koro Toro in a paper suggesting that the C-Group was part of a much larger common culture stretching westwards into Chad (Huard, 1967-68).

⁸ Arkell (1963a), pp.320-21

⁹ Translated in Vantini *OS* (1975), p.174

¹⁰ Arkell (1963a), p.321

in Darfur), nor is there any reason to suppose that the monastery at Ghazali was named Tari. Other details of the Persian geographer's account are suspect; the figure of 12,000 monks seems impossibly high, even if it applied to all Nubia, and the information provided about this site is clearly second-hand at best. The location of this desert monastery remains uncertain; Vantini suggests that the text may be a reference to Selima,¹¹ which may well be a Christian ruin, but which follows no known plan for Nubian Christian monasteries, and was only capable of sheltering several dozen individuals at best.

A clear refutation of a Nubian Christian origin for the pottery of Koro Toro was obtained through the radio-carbon dating carried out by Treinen-Claustre in the Bahr al-Ghazal region in the late 1970's¹² (see Appendix One, end of this chapter). The dates obtained for sites bearing painted ceramics range from the 1st to the 13th centuries AD,¹³ with a grouping within a 500 year period (1670-1170 BP) and a concentration around 1500 BP. Treinen-Claustre suggests that the main development of Koro Toro painted pottery occurred between the end of the 3rd century AD and the end of the 8th century AD with a culminating point in the 5th and 6th centuries. No dates were obtained from the 9th and 10th centuries, but the type seems to recur in the 11th and 13th centuries.

These painted works appear without local precedent in a concentrated area. Similar painted ceramics are unknown in every direction save east, where the Nile Valley civilizations produced high quality painted ceramics at various times in their history. The Koro Toro pottery shares many of the geometric patterns and devices used in the pottery of the Christian kingdoms of Nubia. Religious motifs, however, are absent, but the lotus motif common to Meroitic pottery is frequently found. Many of the ornamental patterns found in the Koro Toro works are Meroitic designs that found their way into Christian pottery. The Koro Toro pots are not clearly Meroitic however; after advancing a Nilotic origin for the Koro Toro style, Treinen-Claustre notes some puzzling differences:

Sous peine d'être jugées trop hâtives et superficielles, nos affirmations doivent faire l'objet de quelques restrictions: divergences quant aux formes et à l'ornementation. En Nubie, on rencontre des formes spécifiques absentes de Koro-Toro: vases subcylindriques avec ou sans pied, bouteilles, jarres (*bowls, cups, bottles, jars...* Selon la terminologie d'Adams), une polychromie plus riche, des motifs figuratifs floraux, zoomorphes, voire anthropomorphes, beaucoup plus nombreux, des ornements inexistant au Tchad comme les méandres, les entrelacs, les croissants. Et d'une façon générale le décor est plus complexe (motifs de base toujours agrémentés de détails annexes), plus élaboré, moins géométrique, moins «classique» en quelque sorte, au Soudan.¹⁴

¹¹ Vantini (1981), p.54

¹² Treinen-Claustre (1978), pp.103-9; (1982), pp.98-100

¹³ The early date of 410 BC came from a site bearing painted ceramics, but which also appeared to have been occupied at a much earlier date, as seen by the proliferation of grooved pottery characteristic of the Old Iron Age in the area (Treinen-Claustre, 1982, p.98).

¹⁴ Treinen-Claustre (1982), p.100 and the numerous plates giving details of the Koro Toro designs.

Arkell's initial instinct in noting the resemblance of the fish-scale pattern on the sherd from Koro Toro with first and second century AD examples of the painted ware of Meröe appears to have been correct (so far as style is concerned),¹⁵ but by 1963 Arkell was busily accumulating evidence for his hypothesis of a Christian Tunjur/Nubian rule of Darfur and Wadai and therefore gave the piece an 8th to 12th century AD date. Mauny, who was in touch with Arkell regarding the painted ceramic-work from the Bahr al-Ghazal also noted the similarity to Meroitic and Christian forms.¹⁶ The strange similarities between the *wadi* pottery and works found on the Nile is also seen in the forms of braziers found at Maledinga (north of Koro Toro),¹⁷ which strongly resemble ancient braziers of the Nile valley. Huard and Bacquié, with the assistance of Leclant, noted the similarities of these types to works of the Nubian C-Group found at Toschka, about 250 km. south of Aswan. Arkell remarked on the similarity of one of the braziers to a type known from the Egyptian first dynasty.¹⁸ As with the pottery, the similarities are apparent, but the explanation is elusive. Fortunately, the radiocarbon dates rule out a Christian origin for the Bahr al-Ghazal painted ceramics, but the question of their relationship to the Meroitic works they so strongly resemble remains open. The development of these works appears to postdate the existence of the Meroitic kingdom, and the radiocarbon dates suggest that this ceramic tradition survived into the 13th century with a minimum of modification. As Ogot reminds us, pottery styles may be transmitted and practiced independently of their source without any corresponding population movement.¹⁹ The Koro Toro style is an adaptation of Meroitic pottery with enough similarities to confirm some contact between the two cultures, but the immense distance from the Nile to the Bahr al-Ghazal and the absence of any Meroitic remains from excavated contexts in the intervening regions argue against such contact.

A set of traditions suggesting that a Sassanian Persian leader led a movement of Christian people and soldiers into the western and central Sudan in the seventh century AD were collected by HR Palmer and, most notably, by Leo Frobenius.²⁰ This leader, known as Kisra, fled to Nubia after a defeat by the Romans in Egypt, and then turned west, spreading Christian influences along the way.²¹ Papadopoulos suggests that this movement was accompanied by a movement of Himyaritic Christians driven out of Arabia to Nubia, and a third movement of Christian Nubians.²² These movements allegedly influenced the development of Darfur, Wadai, Baghirmi, Kanem, Nupe, Gobir, Songhay, Mandara, Jukun and Busa, and were possibly felt as far as Ghana and Mali. The kings of Borgu even maintained a tradition of descent from Kisra.²³ The tradition

¹⁵ Arkell (1963b), p.316

¹⁶ Mauny (1963), p.43

¹⁷ Huard and Bacquié (1963), pp.446-8, fig.2

¹⁸ Personal communication from Arkell to Mauny (30-3-1962), cited in Mauny (1963), p.44

¹⁹ Ogot (1983), p.26

²⁰ Frobenius, Vol.II (1913), Chapter 29

²¹ For the Byzantine-Persian war of 602 - 626/7 see Stratos, vol.I (1968), pp.58-68

²² Papadopoulos (1966); see also the important review article by Daniel F McCall (1968).

²³ Hermon-Hodge (1929), pp.115-17

provided by Palmer refers specifically to Darfur, and is allegedly taken from a book read by the informant some forty years previously:

It is said that the tribe of Kisara appeared in the Sudan when it fled from Egypt after it had fought the Byzantines (Rum)... The King of Rum was named Harkilla and these Kisara when defeated spread abroad in Egypt, and went east and west. Of those who came west, the leader was Tatars. This man arose in the sixth year of the Hijra of the Prophet (i.e. 627 AD), since by reason of the descent of the Sura ALM the Byzantines (of Egypt) defeated the Persians in Egypt in that year. The Persians and their army fled to the land of Fur, now called Darfur. So said the book, and that they remained a long time in Fur and that the path of their migrations thence was well known. I however do not know the names of their towns in Fur but they reached Jebel Kwon [actually in Kordofan, near al-Obeid] and Fasher, and settled in Wadai, towards the south of Wadai, and remained there for many years.²⁴

Frobenius attempts to connect Kisra with the Persian king Chosroes II (d. 628 AD), who does not, however, appear to have ever visited Egypt. Frobenius maintains that Kisra might only be a generalized term meaning 'Lord of the Persians', and could thus have been applied to the leader of the Persians in Egypt.²⁵ Shinnie notes that 'None of these traditions have been collected and examined with the ruthless critical standards that are necessary in the intellectual jungle of oral tradition, and it is plainly obvious, from linguistic evidence, and also, I suggest, from common sense, that none of these peoples as such came from the East'.²⁶ The origin of these traditions is very curious, but there is nothing in the way of physical or written evidence (as might be expected in the correspondence or records of the Coptic and Nubian Christians) for the establishment of a string of Christian states across the Central and Western Sudan as the traditions hold. McCall has evaluated the slight evidence for placing the origin of this tradition to a seventh century event:

The most important evidence in favor of the Kisra=Chosroes hypothesis is the reference to the Persians conquering Egypt and then being driven out by the Romans, which, if correctly reported by Frobenius, must be a reference to the seventh-century Perso-Roman war. Even if correctly reported, however, allowance must be made for the possibility of an interpolation, perhaps from an Islamic source, and such a corruption would make the tradition seem older than it actually is. Therefore, we eagerly look for some other item which would corroborate the seventh-century date, as most of the other information, while congruent with such a date, appears equally congruent with later dates. In the end, it seems to me, the only other item which must be seventh-century - if the interpretation is correct - is the name of the King of Rum, Harkilla which, if he really is Heraclius, and if the source is really independent, would be strong support. Unfortunately, both the Kisra=Chosroes and the Harkilla=Heraclius hypotheses are of a class - names derived from uncertain historical and linguistic circumstances - which is of such a low order of reliability that, ordinarily, we would want evidence from some other form of data; in this case, however, with so

²⁴ 'The Kisara migration' [Translation of a note written by Mallam Sherif of Argunga, 10th April, 1922], Palmer, Vol.II (1928b), p.61

²⁵ Frobenius, Vol.II (1913), p.625 McCall notes that 'Phonetically, Kisra is closer to the Persian than the form we have taken from the Greeks (Chosroes). Khosrau, Khusra, Khosrav, and such variants are used by scholars who attempt to transliterate the Pahlavi' (McCall, 1968, p.258).

²⁶ Shinnie (1971b), pp.47-8

little hard evidence available, we are thankful for two mutually supporting examples of weak evidence.²⁷

The rulers of the Borgu state on the west bank of the Niger claim descent from Kisra, though the legend here seems to act as an explanation of the Borgu dynasty's traditional resistance to Islam:

A brief synopsis of the legend is that Kisra lived at Badar, near to Mecca, in the time of the Prophet Mohammed. Mohammed repeatedly sought to convert Kisra to the Muslim faith, but he refused. Eventually Mohammed launched a war against Kisra and his people in which they were badly beaten, causing them to flee from Arabia. After travelling through many lands, and staying for different lengths of time at various places, Kisra and his people finally reached the River Niger. After crossing the river, Kisra settled on the west bank, where his descendents established themselves as rulers at Bussa, Nikki, and Illo.²⁸

This tradition is noticeably devoid of Christian or Persian content, aspects of the Kisra legend that have probably garnered disproportionate attention from Western scholars (and suffered some distortion in the process, whether intentional or otherwise). There are no doubt a wide number of variants of the legend in which the Kisra character is used in a variety of aetiological roles. Constance Larymore noted the eagerness with which the Christian Kisra figure was seized by the colonial administrators, regardless of the evidence:

Another theory about the Borgu, which, to the best of my belief, is entirely erroneous, is their supposed connection with early Christianity. Major Mockler-Ferryman remarks that 'they (the Borgus) themselves assert that their belief is in one Kisra, a Jew, who gave his life for the sins of mankind'. I was much astonished to find that this idea is utterly falacious, and is not even known to the people. In the first place, Kisra, or rather Kishra, is buried close to Bussa, and his tomb can be seen by any one, which immediately disposes of the possibility that the Borgus, in honouring him, refer in any way to Jesus Christ. Kisra was a Mohammedan pure and simple; he lived - so the tradition runs - in Mecca, during the life-time of Mohamed, and beginning to prove himself positively a rival to the Prophet, was driven forth, with his large following, and apparently drifted down to Borgu. His memory is deeply honored and revered, but entirely as a warrior king, and in no sense as a pioneer of any special religion. Certain rites and ceremonies of the most frankly Pagan description are still performed at his burying place, the site of which is well-defined and visible to all.²⁹

In this light the Kisra legend appears more closely related to the usual descent stories involving Hijazi or Yemenite ancestors sweeping into the African interior and establishing various royal families, states and dynasties.

A tradition collected by Palmer (*Kirgam-a-Wandala*, 'The Mandara Chronicle') regarding the origin of the Mandara royal line combines elements of Christian and Himyarite ancestry. The tradition relates the cause of their ancestors' emigration from Yemen under the leadership of a man named Gaya:

²⁷ McCall (1968), p.260

²⁸ Stewart (1993), pp.129-30

²⁹ Constance Larymore, *A Resident's wife in Nigeria*, London, 1911, p.162, cited in Stewart (1993), p.131

There were three or some say four men, or five of the companions of Himyar who fled from the hatred of the Jews, in fear that they would be persecuted because of their religion. They were followers of Isa. upon whom be peace, and under the dispensation of the Gospel. They were among the most noble of the Himyarite youths. Dthu Nowas [Yusuf As'ar Yath'ar] called on them to embrace Judaism, since the Himyarites at that time followed him. They refused and preferred death or slavery... This was the reason of their leaving Yaman. and the country called Nejran.³⁰

Palmer also states that the tradition relating to the early Mandara rulers combines a Tuareg connection of some sort, a Kanuri genesis, and a tradition of having been Christian at some time.³¹ Barkindo has more recently examined a number of other versions of this text and found that only Palmer's version includes a reference to Christianity³²; 'The Christian idea seems to come from Palmer himself, and is based on the fictitious claim that there were Christians among the pagan Mandara'.³³ Some versions of the tradition do not even make a reference to eastern origin.

Ibn Sa'id makes a reference to Christians in the Tibesti region in his geography of the late 13th century:

To the north of this range, which stretches from west to east, is the country of Barkami who are prosperous Sudanese possessing valleys between the hills with palm trees, water, and verdure. Those of them who are adjacent to the country of the Kanim are Muslims, those who are adjacent to the country of the Nuba are Christians, and those who are adjacent to the country of the Zaghawa are idolators. The Luniya mountains overlook them and stretch into Kawar.³⁴

The interpretation of this passage rests on the identification of the Luniya mountains with Tibesti; Cuoq holds that Ibn Sa'id's remarks only make sense if the Luniya mountains are the Air range further west.³⁵ There are references in the Chronicle of John, Abbot of the Monastery of Biclaram in Spain, to the conversion of the Kura'an (the Daza Tubu of Borku and Ennedi) north-west of Darfur in the sixth century,³⁶ but by the time these people were mentioned by Leo Africanus there was no further reference to Christianity among these people.³⁷ Palmer cites traditions in the *nisba*-s of the Bulala and the Bilia Bidayat of Christian ancestors, offering support in the form of a passage in al-Idrisi;

³⁰ 'Mandara Chronicle', Palmer, Vol.II (1928b), p.96

³¹ Palmer (1926), p. 71

³² Barkindo cites the versions given in Lebeuf and Rodinson (1956), pp.227-55; Abbo and Mohammadou (1971), and several examples discovered by Barkindo while doing fieldwork in Mandara (the mountain area of the mountains of north-west Cameroun, and part of Nigeria). Barkindo argues for a late date for the origin of this legend; 'For the Gaya legend, we propose that it was worked out in the 18th or early 19th century and that it was most probably by the pen of one of the immigrant Malumba [Wandala for *mu'allim* - scholar], using some folk-tales of Wandala. It was likely that this was done in order to justify the sultanhip of Bukar Aji (whose link to the old ruling dynasty, even if accepted, is still not clear) both to the foreign Muslim rulers and to the Wandala people themselves' (Barkindo, 1989, p.85).

³³ Barkindo (1989), pp.76-7

³⁴ Ibn Sa'id, trans. in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.193

³⁵ Cuoq (1975), cited in Hopkins and Levtzion (1981), p.451

³⁶ Kirwan (1934), pp.201-3 For the Kura'an see Bouilliez (1913), pp.399-418, and Appendix IV ('Kura'an and Garamantes') in MacMichael, 1912, pp.235-41

³⁷ 'The King of Nubia maintaineth continual warre, partly against the people of Goran (who being descended of the people called Zingani, inhabit the deserts, and speak a kind of language that no other nation

The neighbourhood of this place (Aswan) is sometimes invaded by black cavaliers called Beliin, and it is claimed that they are Greeks and have been Christians since the days of the Egyptians, before Islam. They are heretic Christians - Jacobites. They wander in the desert between Beja and Habash and come as far as Nubia. They are nomads, and do not live in one place - just as do the Lamtuna of the extreme west.³⁸

Further north, the Berbers of the North African coastal areas proved susceptible to a degree to Christian and even Jewish influences before the arrival of Islam, but a certain contrariness in religious matters left the Berbers open to unorthodox variations in Christian and later Islamic practice (as seen in the Berber devotion to the Ibadite and Kharadjite heresies):

Virtually all the Berbers followed their ancient cults of worshipping the forces of nature. The Arabs called them *madjus*, i.e. 'fire-worshippers', but in the context of the early history of Islam this term usually means simply 'pagans'. Christianity had not become widely spread among the Berbers: only the inhabitants of the coastal belt, the people called *al-Afarika* by the Arabs, were Christian. The Afarika were a marginal people, a mixture of Berbers and Romanized Carthaginians, Romans, and Greeks. In comparison with the powerful Berber groups further inland they constituted only a small minority. Among the Berbers properly so called, the spread of Christianity was slight: only in Zeuguetania and Byzacena had it become established in the interior. Moreover, the Christians of Byzantine Africa were divided by schisms; for these Berbers, Christianity had long been a source of unity against Roman domination, and they had ardently embraced such heresies as Arianism and Donatism which stood in opposition to the doctrine of the Church of Rome. A similar situation developed later in opposition to Byzantine religious policies.³⁹

This tendency amongst the Berbers made them poor proselytizers for the new religions, and one would expect to find that Berber allegiance to these faiths would diminish rather than persist as they moved south into the African interior. Elements of pagan ritual survived the introduction of Christianity and Islam in many Berber communities.⁴⁰

Barkindo states that the widespread belief in North Africa that Christians were present in central Africa was 'often based on reports of traders who took any sign of religion more complex than simple animism to be Christianity'.⁴¹ The retailing of these reports had tragic consequences for a pair of Franciscan priests sent south in 1710 from Tripoli by the Vatican in search of a community in Borno 'where there are many Christians, little or uninstructed in the Faith, with virtually only the name of Christians'.⁴² The unfortunate priests succeeded in passing through Agadez to Katsina, where they died in August 1711 without having found any Christians, in name or otherwise.

understandeth) and partly against certain other people also dwelling upon the desert which lieth eastward of Nilu... called Bugiha' (Leo Africanus, Vol.II, 1896, p.836).

³⁸ Al-Idrisi (Trans. Dozy), (1866), p.21

³⁹ Monès (1988), p.229; see also Savage (1997), pp.89-111

⁴⁰ Lewicki (1966)

⁴¹ Barkindo (1989), p.77 Barkindo also remarks upon the willingness of certain European scholars to distort textual evidence in order to support the hypothesis of a Christian presence in central Sudan (p.78).

⁴² Fr. Maurizio da Lucca, 1710, cited in Gray (1967), p.383

In all, the evidence for a Christian presence in Darfur and areas west prior to the colonial period is unpersuasive. Western scholars are frequently guilty of seizing upon dubious or unexamined physical evidence and misinterpretation of texts or ritual activities in order to pursue a romantic and Haggardesque search for a lost kingdom of Christians. The most frequently cited proofs in works by scholars favouring the Christian hypothesis are the Christian sherds allegedly from Ayn Farah and Palmer's translation of the Mandara Chronicle - though both sources show little credibility under critical examination. Though hard evidence of a Christian community in Darfur or other points west may one day be found, in the mean time the fate of the Franciscan missionaries should stand as a warning to scholars in search of lost Christians.

Appendix One: Radiocarbon dates from sites bearing painted ceramics in the Koro Toro region, Chad

2360 ± 100 BP, or 410 BC, Site no.34
 1960 ± 60 BP, or 10 BC, Area of Tunjur (Tounjour)
 1670 ± 80 BP, or 280 AD, Site no.4
 1655 ± 55 BP, or 295 AD, Area of Tunjur
 1580 ± 100 BP, or 370 AD, Site no.4
 1570 ± 50 BP, or 380 AD, north-east Djourab
 1540 ± 90 BP, or 410 AD, Site no.110
 1510 ± 75 BP, or 440 AD, Area of Koro-Toro
 1500 ± 100 BP, or 450 AD, Site no.5
 1500 ± 100 BP, or 450 AD, Site no.5
 1480 ± 100 BP, or 470 AD, Site no.34
 1410 ± 100 BP, or 540 AD, Site no.3
 1400 ± 100 BP, or 550 AD, Site no.4
 1340 ± 100 BP, or 610 AD, Site no.28
 1250 ± 100 BP, or 700 AD, Site no.97
 1230 ± 100 BP, or 720 AD, Site no.4
 1170 ± 90 BP, or 780 AD, Site no.4
 935 ± 80 BP, or 1015 AD, Site no.5
 730 ± 90 BP, or 1220 AD, Site no.26
 670 ± 100 BP, or 1280 AD, Site no.3

Dates provided in Treinen-Claustre (1982), p.97

23. Conclusion

The achievements of Darfur civilization were not the work of a single group, nor even of a succession of groups. Most of the major population groups in Darfur have been dealt with independently in this paper at times, mainly as a means of organizing the information, but probably at the risk of obscuring the multi-ethnic nature of life in Darfur under the rule of various régimes. Numerous groups, indigenous and otherwise, were at all times active in the intellectual, ritual and physical development of the kingdom. Certain waves of immigration, such as those which brought the Daju and the Tunjur, had strong effects on the development of the kingdom, but intermarriage and participation in a common culture native to the region would eventually diminish the impact made by these groups. Most interestingly it is in Darfur that an indigenous African group is responsible for raising Islam to the state religion, rather than an intrusive Muslim group. This was certainly of immense assistance to the Kayra Fur in establishing their legitimacy as rulers in the greatest days of the sultanate, and was moreover consistent with the expanding slave trade carried out by the Fur and their Muslim neighbours. It was at this time that many culture heroes, such as Dali and Ahmad al-Ma'qur, were Islamicized in memory, thus lending their antiquity to the Islamic credentials of the ruling Kayra.

Though the traditions depict régimes such as the Daju and the Tunjur having a certain hostility towards their subjects, ruling through a primitive system of *razzias* and extortion, the monuments speak of a much more complex state of affairs. The once foreign ruling groups appear to have themselves been absorbed into an indigenous cultural system exemplified by a divine kingship, an elaborate ritual cycle, a tradition of stone architecture, and a common belief in holy stones and their attendant *jinn*-s, usually taking the form of a serpent. These were the cultural constants that made Darfur a kingdom rather than a group of feudal states with generally mono-ethnic population bases, such as arose with the group of petty border sultanates lying between Darfur and Wadai. The vagueness of the traditions surrounding the transfer of power from the Tunjur to the Kayra Fur is a better representation of the complex social mechanisms at work in Darfur than is the linear representation of kings and dynasties provided by the king-lists.

It remains virtually impossible to provide precise dating for most of the important events and developments of Darfur history before the seventeenth century. These events are generally only available to us through traditional sources, and cannot be verified against outside sources for dating. The evidence of the Arab geographers tells us that the Daju were present in the region in the twelfth century, but is not clear as to whether they ruled in Darfur at this early date. In time the Daju took control of the southern Jebel Marra massif and the region lying east and south-east of it, before being displaced by the Tunjur. The latter group, likely an Arab/Berber hybrid, reached Darfur from the north by the fifteenth century, probably ruling in the northern part of Jebel Marra and Dar Furning simultaneously with the Daju régime in the south before

driving the Daju from power completely. Whether this process was violent or not is still uncertain, though certain traditions state that the Tunjur succeeded through their cultural superiority to the Daju.

The Tunjur period does seem to represent a time of intense development in the sultanate, opening the kingdom up to the changes brought by long-distance trade which made cities such as Uri and 'Ayn Farah possible. Islam also appears to have been introduced at this time through commercial contacts, but does not seem to have taken firm hold among either the Tunjur or their animist subjects. Through some poorly defined sequence of events apparently involving intermarriage between the ruling Tunjur and members of the powerful Kunjara clan of the local Fur, power began to pass from the Tunjur into the hands of the Fur, particularly those belonging to what eventually came to be called the Kayra branch of the Kunjara. As the Tunjur régime collapsed a power struggle seems to have developed between two major factions of the Kunjara, a sequence of events that the traditions embody in the stories surrounding the civil war between the followers of Kuru and Tunsam. The Kayra faction represented by Kuru may have become early adherents to Islam, which would account for the swift establishment of Islam as the state religion when Sulayman Solong became the first true Kayra sultan of Darfur in the early seventeenth century. Each case of a transfer of power appears to be accompanied by an outward migration of members of the old ruling group, though residual groups remained as often-privileged members of the multi-ethnic society of the Darfur sultanate.

There is, at present, no reason to suppose that Islamic Borno or Christian Nubia ever intervened politically in Darfur, though there is considerable evidence for the influence of Kanem/Borno in areas of custom, administration, and even religion, as is to be expected from a regional power already centuries old by the time of the arrival of the Tunjur in Darfur. Christian influence, whether from Nubia or North Africa (and despite its prominence in much of the literature), is in fact negligible from all available evidence. By contrast, influence from Tubu, Berber and later Arab sources is strongly evident in Darfur.

The veracity of oral tradition in Darfur (which is of interest to the archaeologist but not necessarily a function of oral tradition) will one day be tested through scientific excavation, but the richness of these sources is a promise of the rewards that will accompany such work. The construct of inter-cultural relationships in the old sultanate was, of course, always based on both who a people believed themselves to be, as well as the extent to which such claims were recognized by surrounding groups; in this case we are witness to a type of parallel history that exists through mutual agreement rather than through the validation of certain historical 'facts'.

Traditions of an early Christian presence in the central and western Sudan appear to have been given undue prominence by Western scholars, who in some cases have not proven averse to manipulating the available evidence to support such theories. It is clear that in many parts of the Sudanic regions the terms 'Christian' or 'Nazarene' are simply synonyms for 'pagan', and are little more useful for tracing cultural history than are other generic terms for autochthonous pre-Islamic peoples, such as *Abu Qona'an*, or *'Anaj*. The total absence of any record or tradition from the Christians of Nubia regarding any form of religious or commercial contact with the west (much less a political domination of the region) means that

suggestions of such contact can only be made with the highest degree of caution. Before the opening of a route to the Nile by the Kayra sultans of the seventeenth century it appears that the cultural and commercial relations of Darfur were primarily with the west, and, to a lesser degree, with the north. The south remained a hinterland of commodities such as slaves and ivory, but even those brought to Darfur as slaves made cultural and even political contributions to the development of the sultanate, often serving at the highest levels of the administration.

The advent of C14 dating and a close examination of the type of iron-working technology used in the central Sudan shows the cultural interaction of early Darfur with regions west of it, while at the same time lessening the possibility of the long-supposed Meroitic influence on the region of Darfur and Wadai, for which there is no significant physical evidence. The development of a type of pottery in the Koro Toro region of Chad having a Meroitic style, but none of the usual Meroitic motifs, must for the moment remain a mystery.

The analysis of the available evidence in this work is not intended to resolve all the many problems of historical studies in Darfur, but is designed to provide a critical evaluation of certain types of evidence, and a reasoned consideration of what these materials can tell us without using this evidence to promote certain theories or enthusiasms. It has been my hope that in bringing together the various available sources it will have been possible to separate the raw evidence from its later embellishments and to compare the sources against each other. In this way, it has been possible to dispense with a number of popular theories regarding Darfur history, such as the role of Meroites, Tumaghera Tubu and Makurrian Christians in developing the region's culture.

Examination of the oral traditions informs us of the vast number of 'parallel histories' existing in even as remote a region as Darfur. For an historian seeking an 'objective' interpretation of history, it is a sobering thought. Interpreting the oral traditions is still a risky business as we continue to struggle to find ways and means of evaluating their historical value. Oral tradition represents a type of knowledge transmission that has been largely repressed in Western societies, existing today only in a type of 'common knowledge', representing a set of popularly held beliefs about past events that is frequently at odds with documentation. In societies where oral tradition serves as a form of 'historical charter', validating land ownership and societal privileges, one would expect a constant pressure for revision for political purposes or personal gain, much like the Soviet Union's 'textbook purges'. So far, the effect of this tendency to distortion remains immeasurable. Concordance between versions from different sources is usually viewed as a valuable tool for evaluating historical accuracy in a tradition, but concordance may merely be a synonym for 'popularity', with the number of concordances telling us instead about the social influence of a ruling group or even the presence of a culturally influential set of neighbours. When agreement is found between the traditions of two disparate and apparently unrelated groups, is this proof of the tradition, or proof of the remote and common origin of the groups in question? We can also only guess to what degree oral traditions have suffered in their adherence to an original version through translation from a native language (such as

Daju) into a *lingua franca* (Arabic) before being committed to paper in a European language. In evaluating oral traditions the method of collection can be as important as the method of transmission.

Tradition may improve with age in a narrative sense, but is certain to decrease in accuracy. What is puzzling is that degradation of collective memories does not seem to happen at a constant rate. Many societies have also developed means of coping with memory degradation through telescoping, always keeping the total number of recalled generations to a manageable number. In this way the origins of the group and their earliest claims to land and privilege remain accessible to judges and policy-makers. It is an important point that is often forgotten by those who pronounce oral traditions as valid for only *x*-number of generations. The study of oral tradition is a reminder to us all how much history serves the present rather than the past.

It is my hope that this work has exposed the true role of indigenous groups (as well as more familiar outside cultures) in developing Darfur's common culture, and that it may serve as a foundation for eventual and much needed scientific excavation. As further research and excavation progresses Darfur will take its place as the centre of an important Sudanic and African culture, rather than continuing its present role as a historical note on the periphery of Nile Valley civilization.

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Archival Sources

Annotation used in footnotes appears in square brackets

Durham Sudan Archives (University of Durham, England): [SADU]

Morant, HHS: 'Resume of the history of Darfur' - Extract from Military Intelligence Summary, 1902. DSA 731/6/64
Papers of PJ Sandison

Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) [SOAS]

Arkell Papers

The Arkell Papers consist of two batches of papers concerning the Sudan, donated to SOAS in 1967 and 1972. The papers are accompanied by a finding aid created by Prof. PM Holt. Of the 76 total files, 21 concern Darfur. Numerous photographs taken in the field accompany the notes.

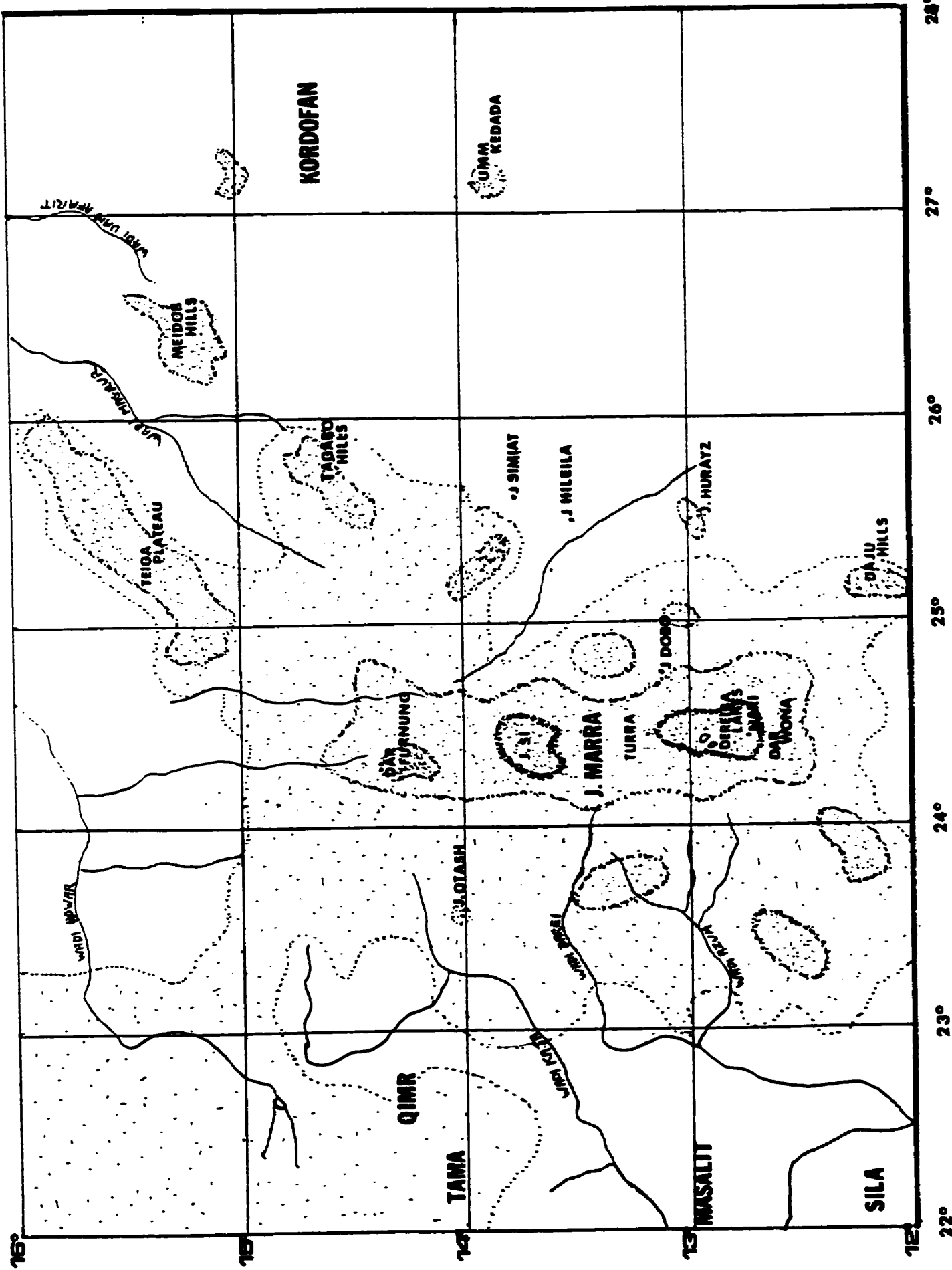
Sudan National Archives (Khartoum) [SGA Intel]

Darfur Intelligence Notes: Records of Sudan government intelligence efforts regarding Darfur 1898-1916 (with many reports provided by HA MacMichael); Correspondence between Sultan 'Ali Dinar and the government; Daily records of events during the Government campaign of 1916

HG Balfour Paul - Darfur Field Notes [Balfour Paul, Darfur Field Notes]

Two volumes of notes made by Mr. Balfour Paul while on trek in Darfur in the early 1950's as an official of the condominium government. The notes remain in the possession of Mr. Balfour Paul, who kindly granted the author use of them for this study.

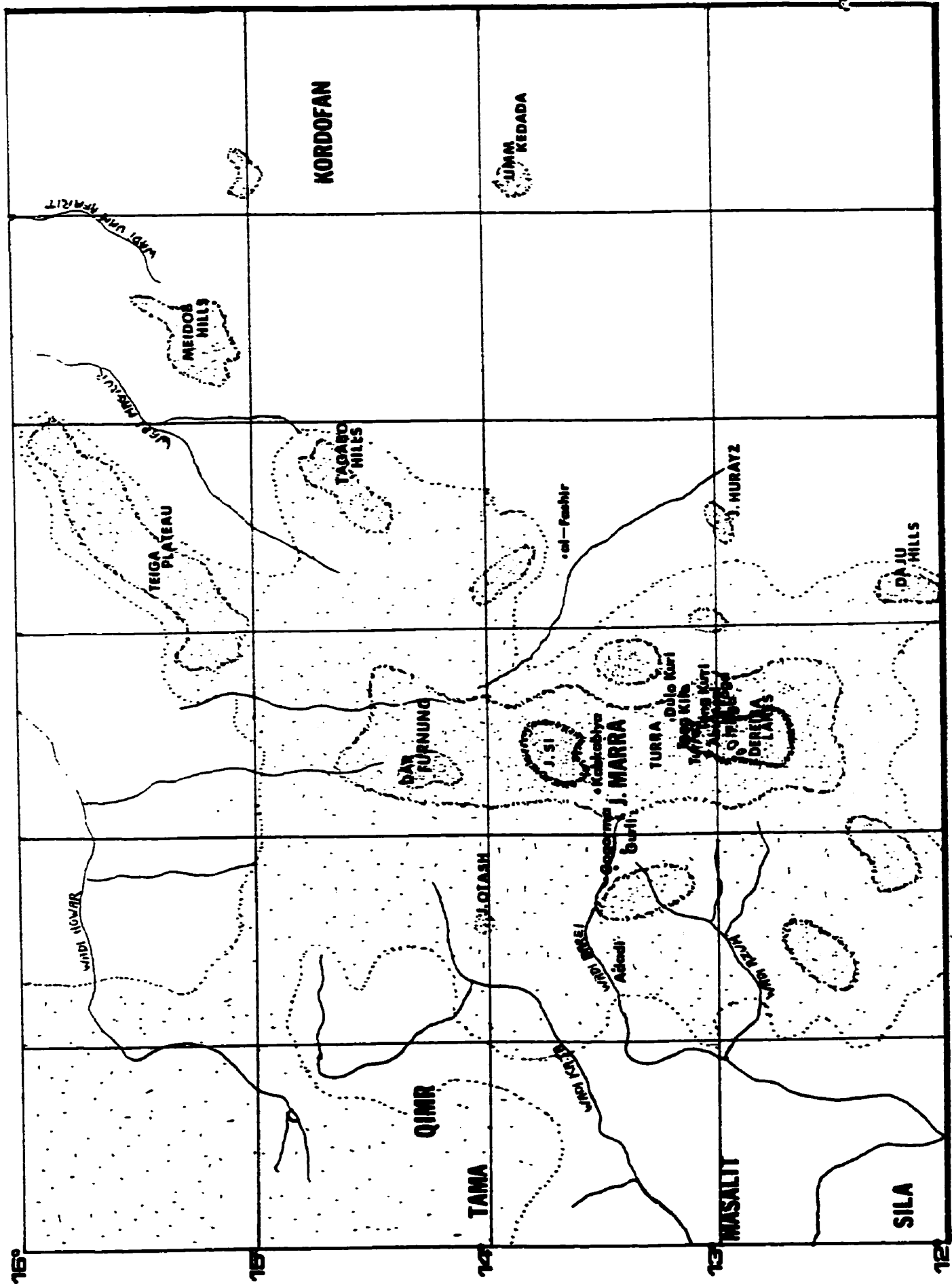
Darfur DAJU SITES



scale 1:2 000 000

Darfur

KAYRA FUR SITES



22°

23°

24°

25°

26°

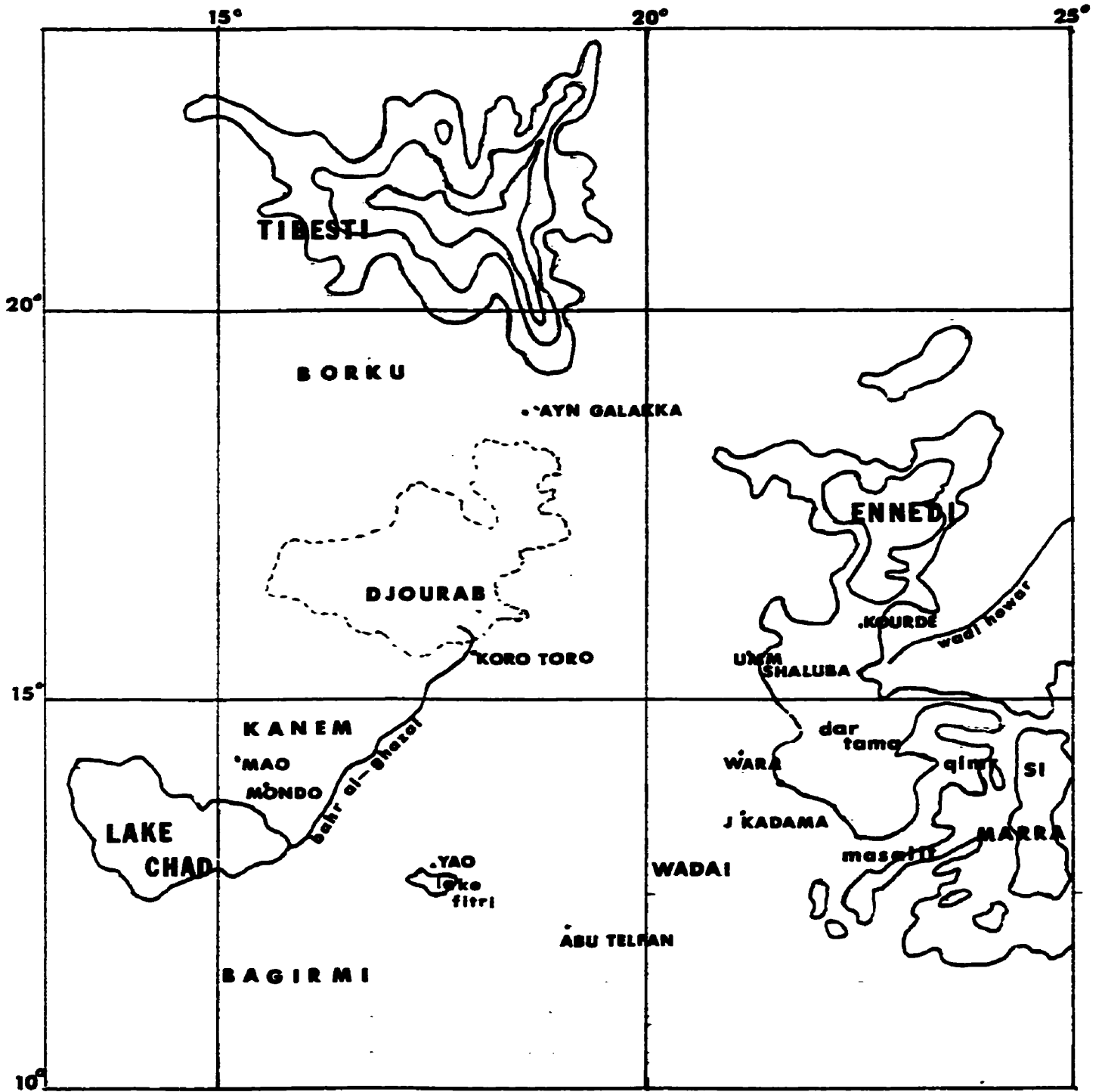
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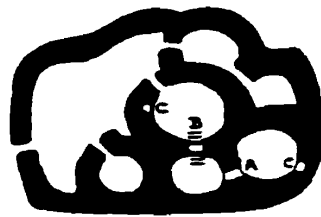
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CHAD

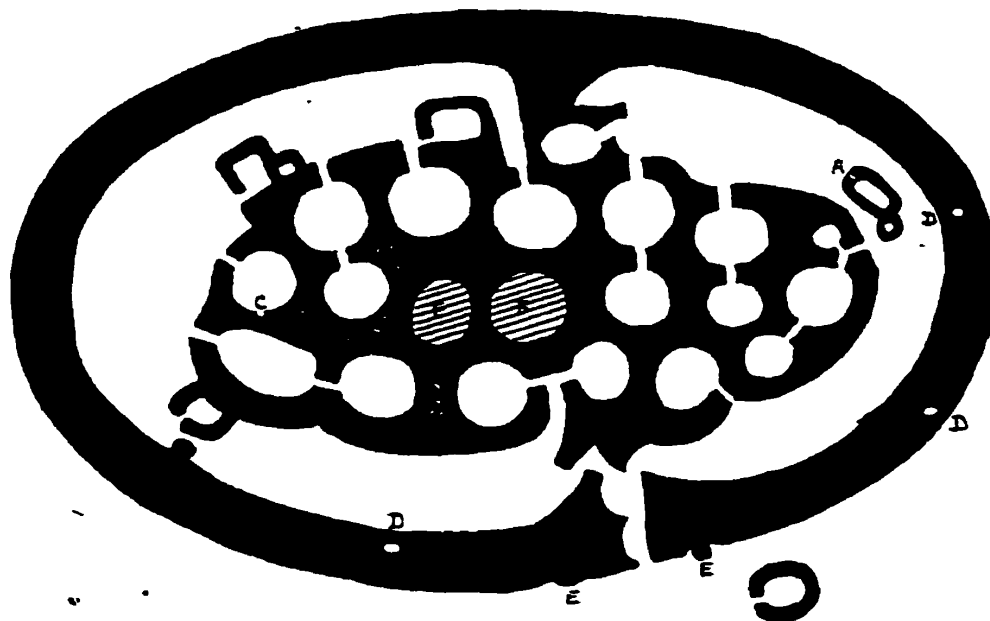
E





LEGEND

- A Small covered passage way.
- B Stepped sill (conjectural).
- C Built-in cupboards.
- D 5-ft deep holes in flat top of wall.
- E Doorkeepers' seats.
- F Uncertain - no doors traceable.

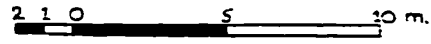
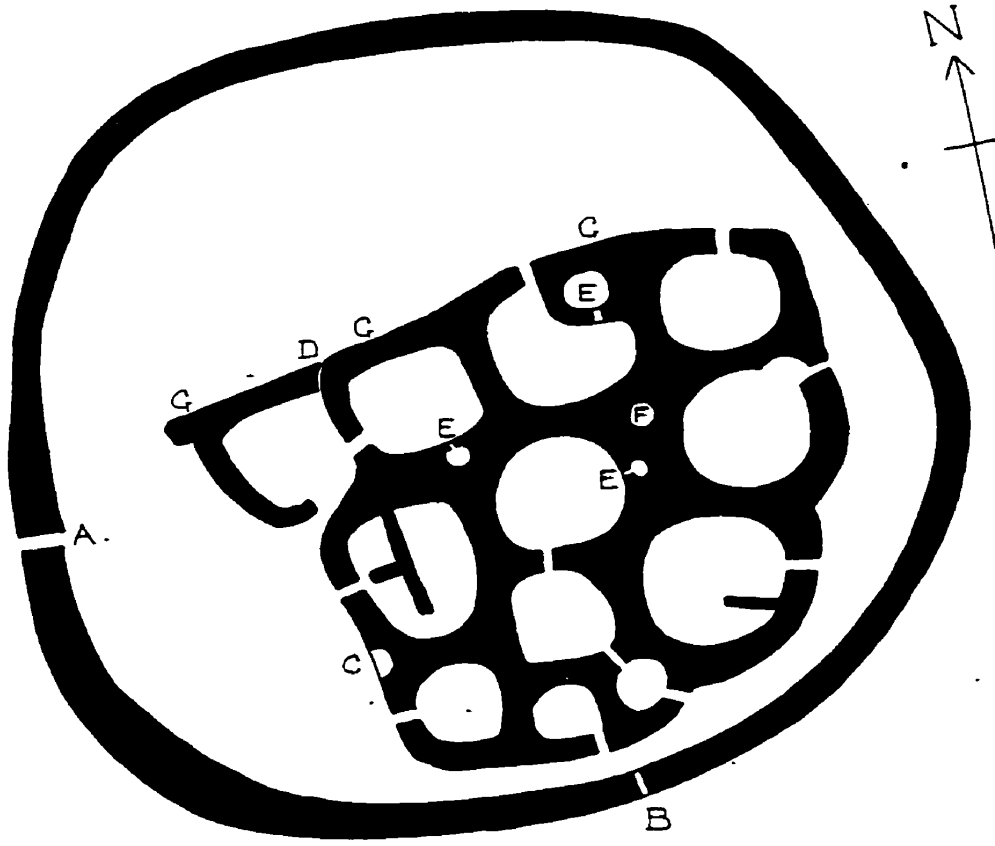


SCALE



LARGE & SMALL WALLED PALACES KAURA PASS

Balfour Paul -Darfur
Field Notes



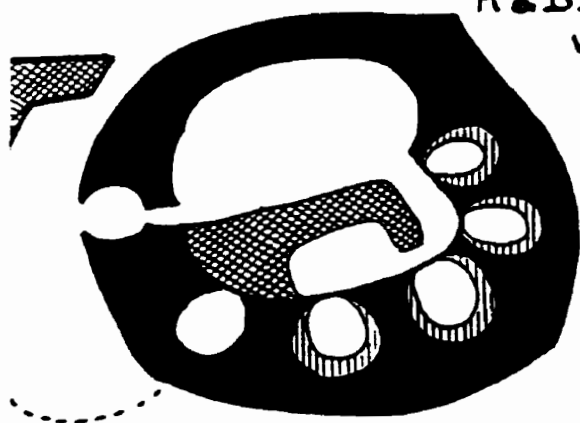
A	MAIN ENTRANCE
B	RAISED (?WOMEN'S) DOOR (2'3" X 1'6")
C	BENCH BUILT INTO WALL
D	BREAK IN ORIGINAL WALL PLAN
E	CASEMATE CUPBOARDS
F	INDEPENDENT STORE SHAFT
G	WALLS 9' HIGH (elsewhere between 4' and 6')

WALLED PALACE - KAURA PASS
 DRY-STONE

Balfour Paul - Darfur
 Field Notes

KAURA PASS

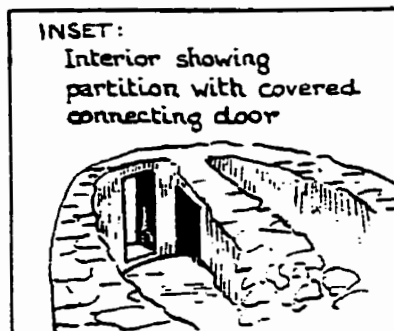
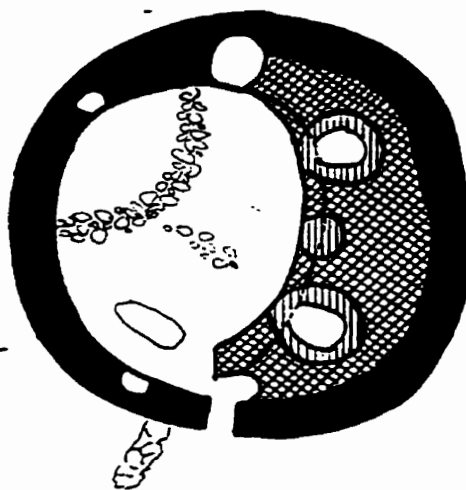
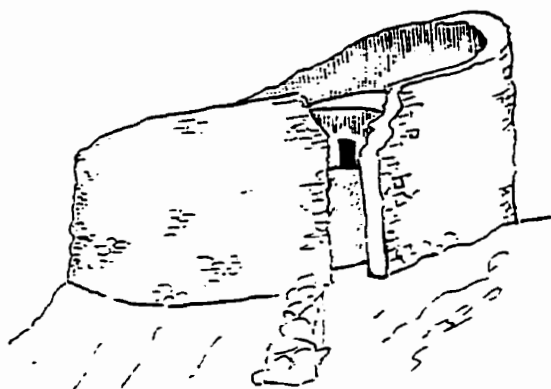
A & B. EXAMPLES OF STORE-HOUSES WITH CASEMATED CUPBOARDS TIERED & BEEHIVE-ROOFED



Principal walling.

Walling of lower height.

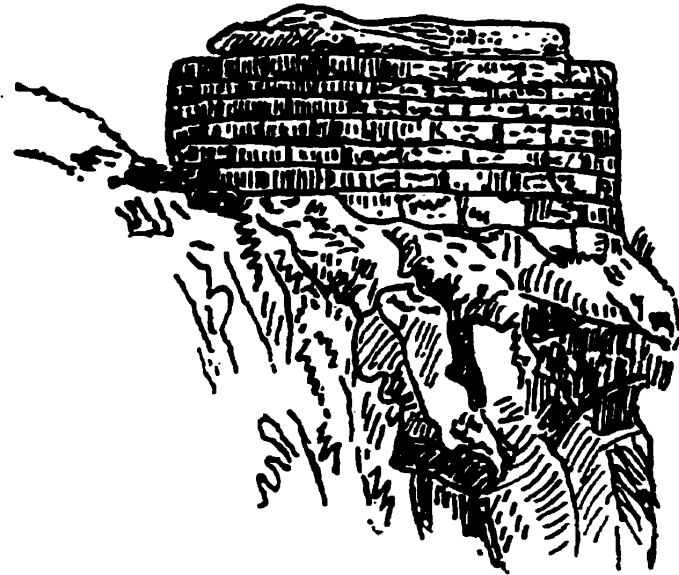
Smaller casemate above larger one.



C. EXAMPLE OF HOUSES IN HILL VILLAGE

WITH NARROW RAISED ENTRANCES & RAISED FLOORS.

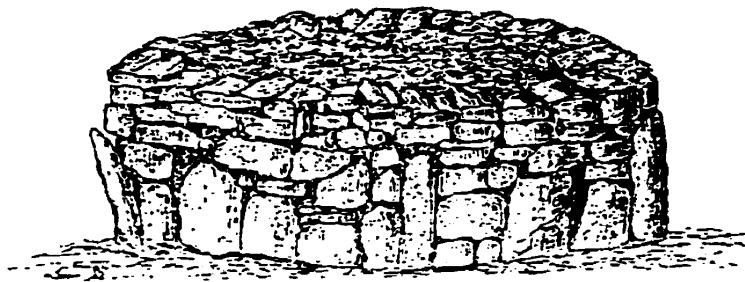




Type de chouchet de l'Afrique du Nord.

a

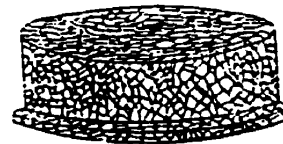
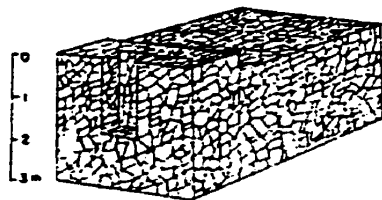
Reygasse (1950)



— Un des vieux tombeaux d'Aozou.

b

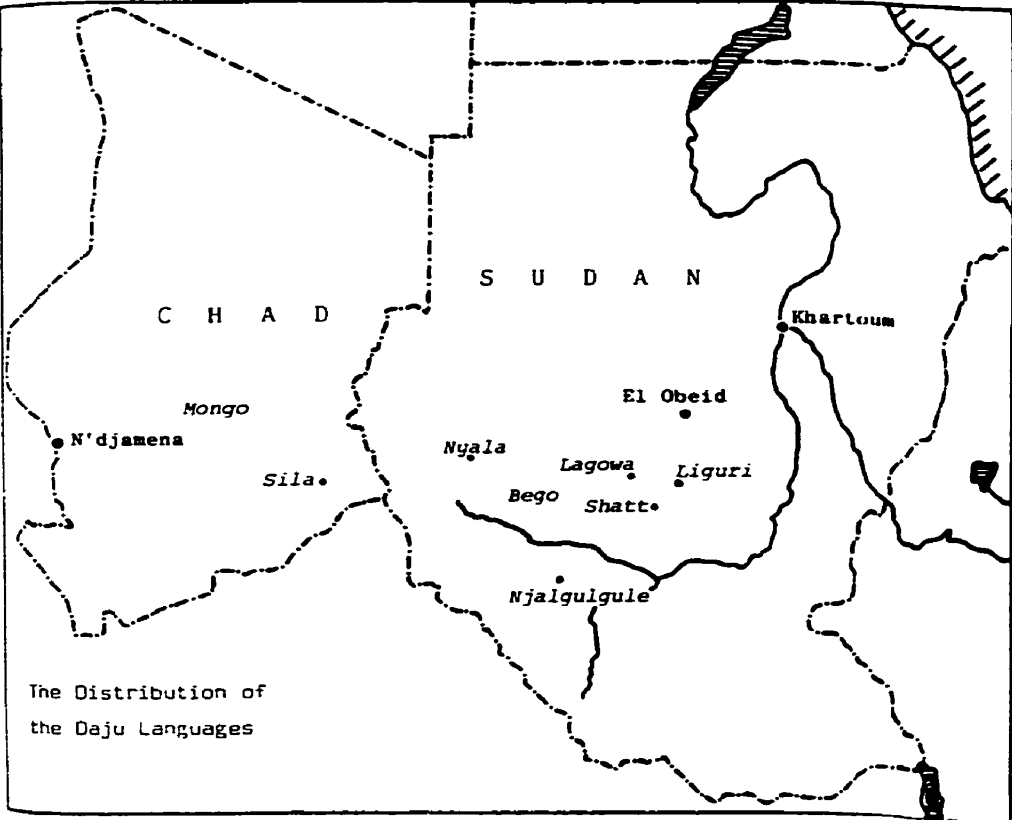
Dalloni (1935)



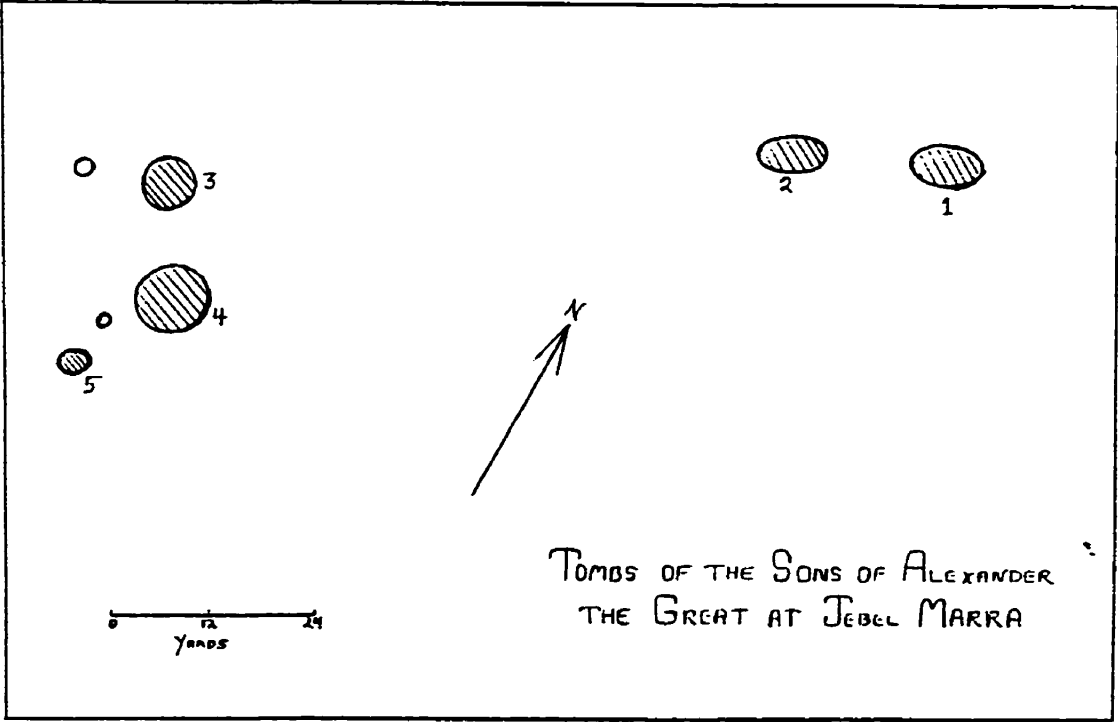
GRAVES OR AUDIENCE PLATFORMS.

c

Wickens (1967-8)



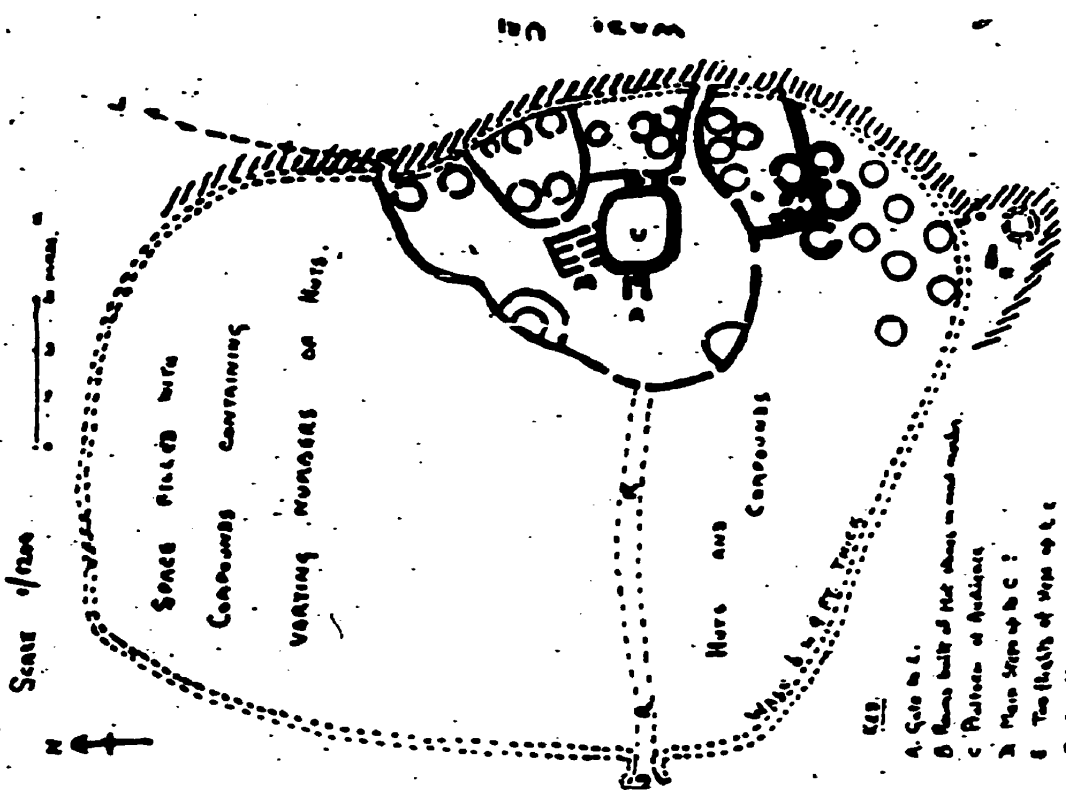
Thelwall (1981)



b

Handwritten mark resembling the number 11.

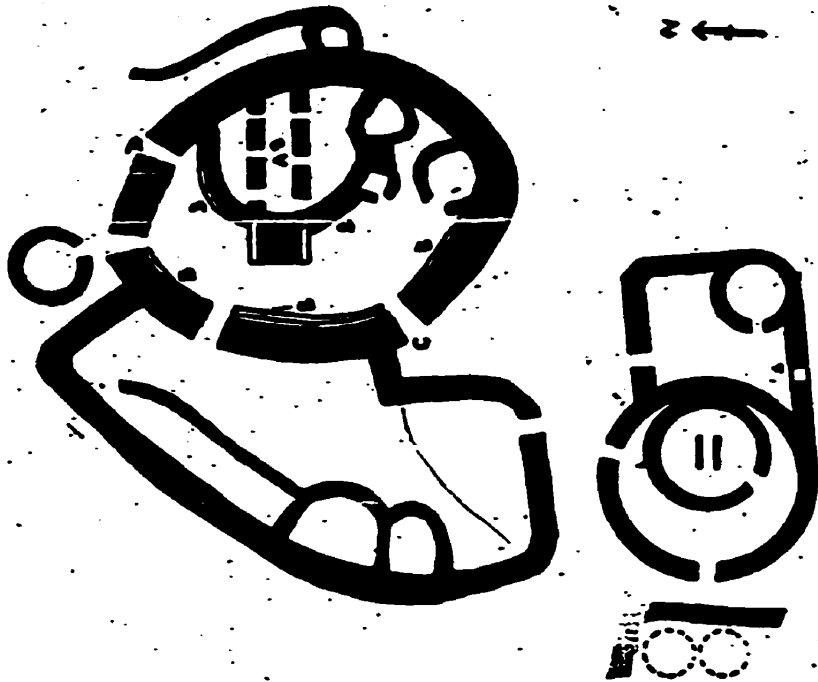
THE LOWER PALACE AT URI - LOWLY KNOWN AS THE PISTON



- KEY
- A. Gate to L.
 - B. Room built of flat stones in east wall.
 - C. Platform of Audience
 - D. Main Stair up to C.
 - E. The Bath of Wap up to C.
 - F. The 'Piston' compound
 - G. Hut containing a medical ware pot.
 - H. The King's judgment seat
 - I. The Plain Gate
 - K. Shallow well and 2 roughly paved
 - L. Path down, slip to well

Key

- A. Long wall in center of Platform of Audience.
- B. Benches
- C. ? Main entrance to Court of Audience
- D. ? Private entrance from Pavilion to Court of Audience
- E. Rough stone wall separating Pavilion from rest of town.



THE UPPER PALACE URI

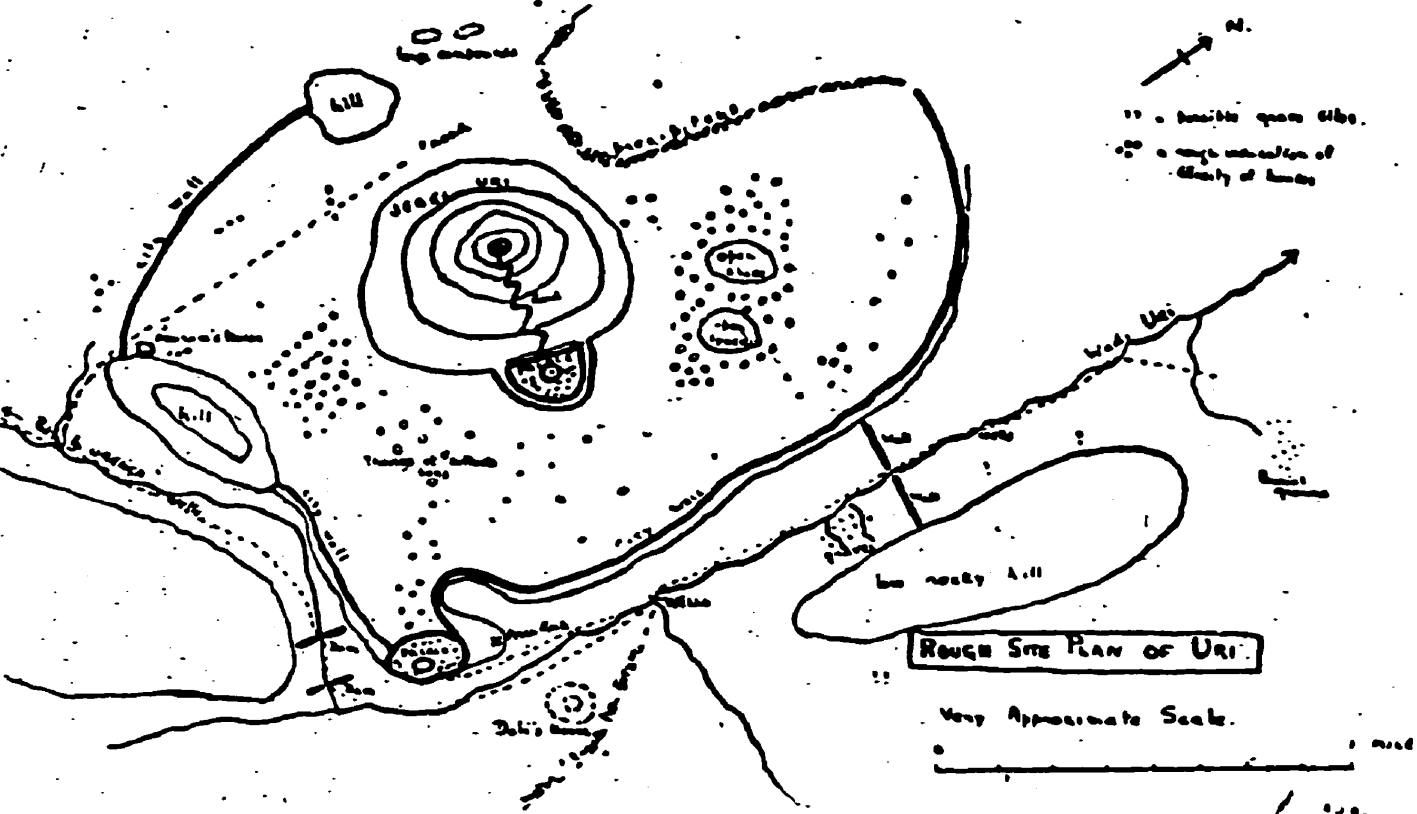
TERACES AT FOOT OF J. URI ON WHICH ARE SEVERAL STONE HUTS.

unemployed

N.

•• = possible square sites.

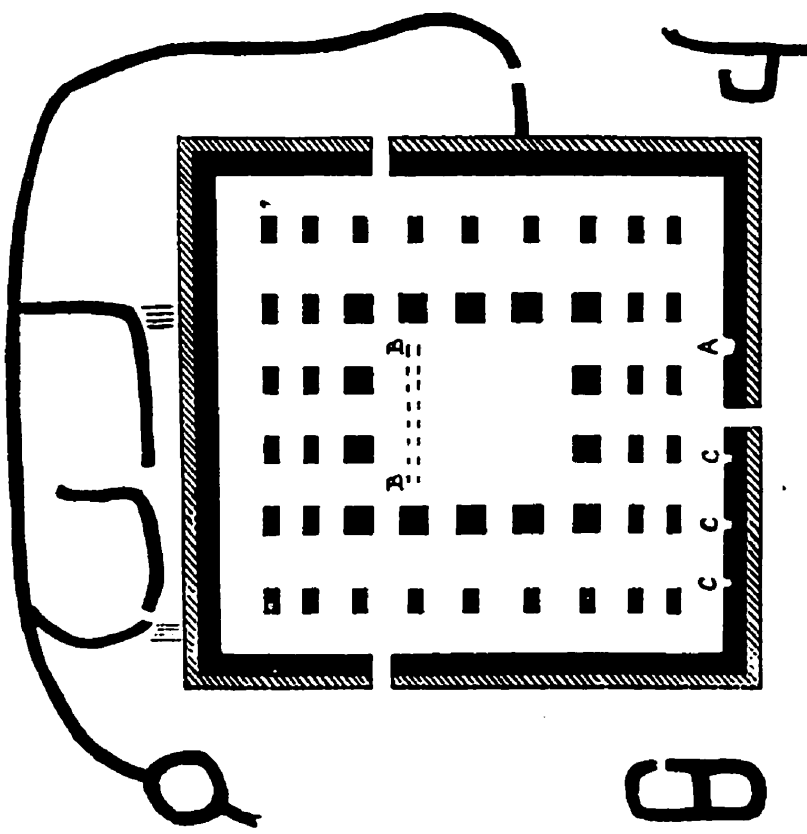
••• = rough indication of clarity of border.



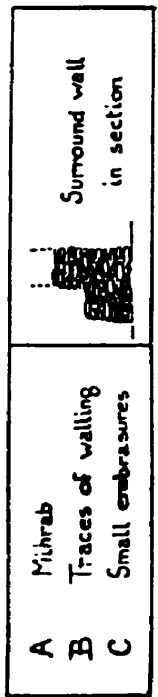
Rough Site Plan of URI

Very Approximate Scale.

Arkell (1946a)



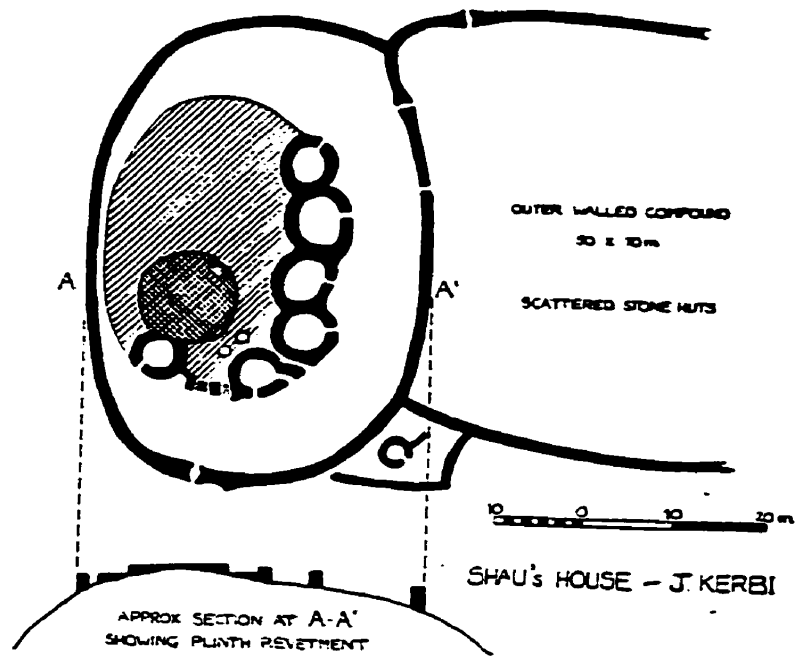
SCALE



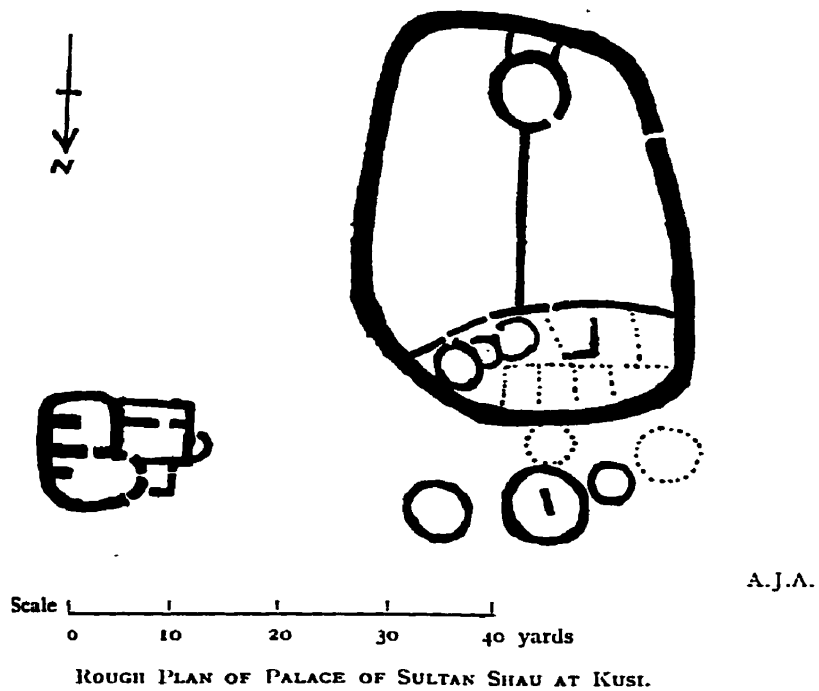
URI

GROUND PLAN OF MOSQUE

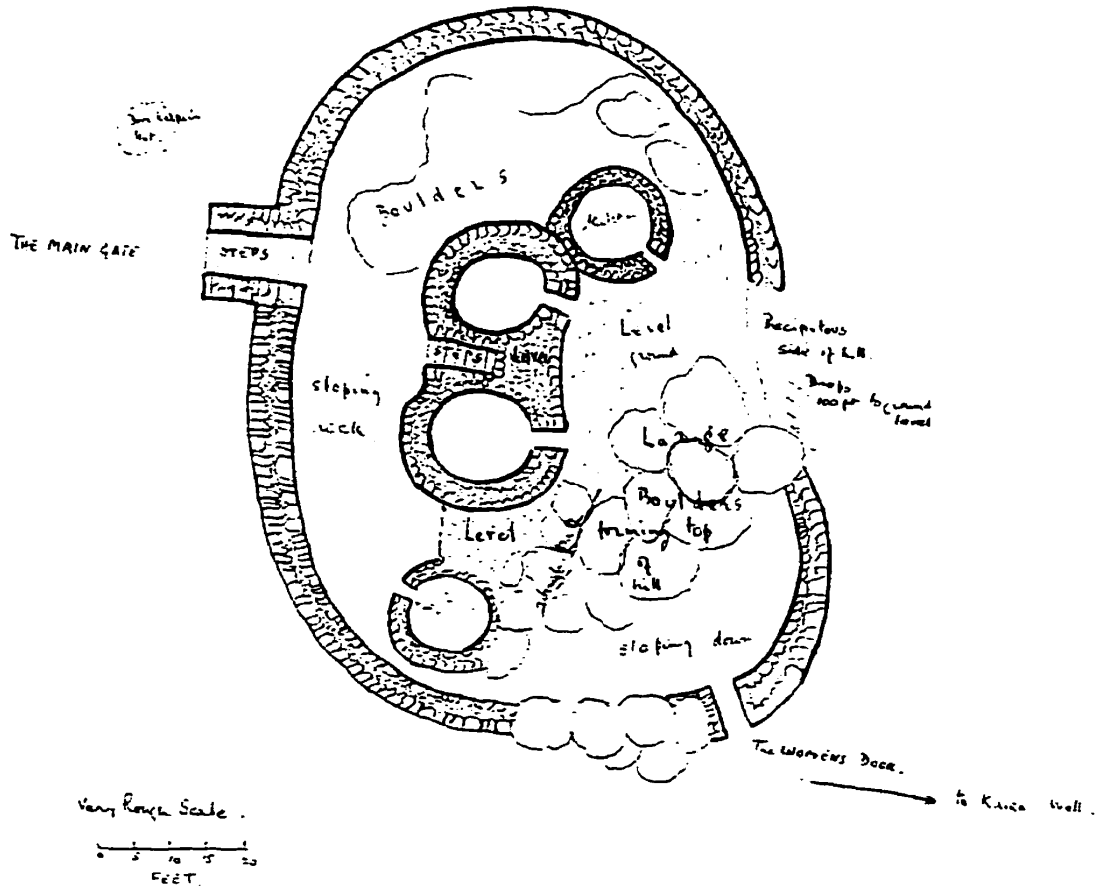
Balfour Paul (1954a)



Balfour Paul (1955b)



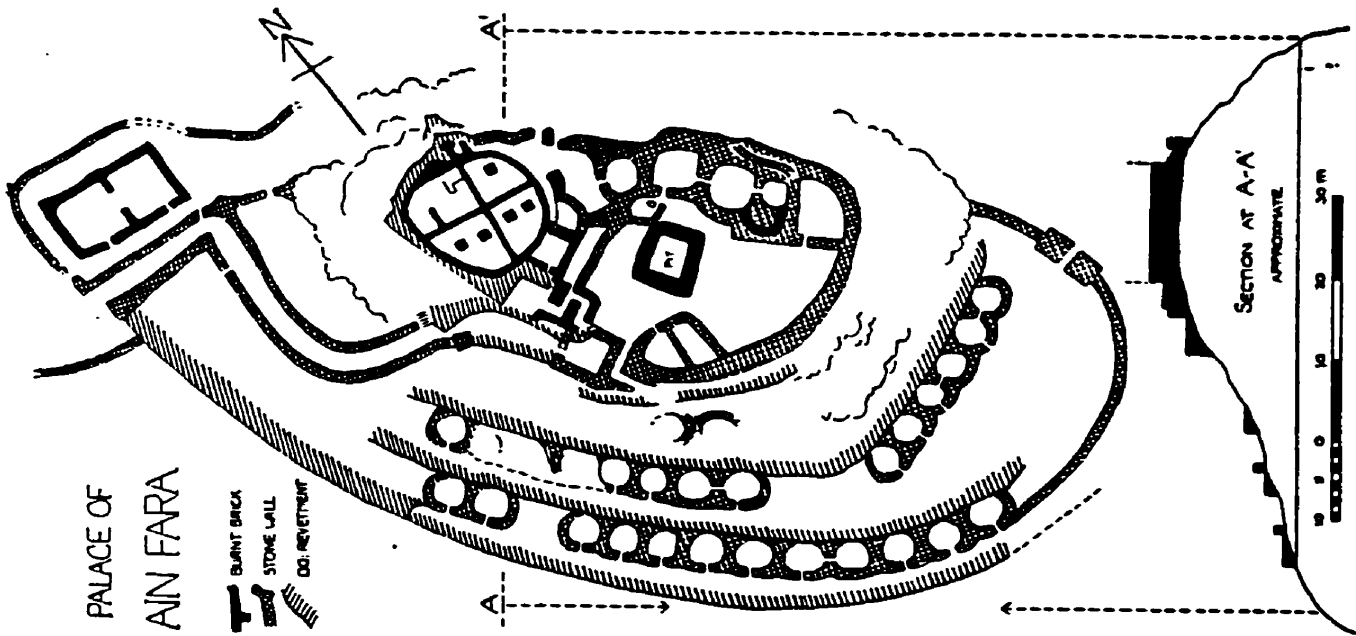
Arke11 (1937a)



Sketch of SHAH DORSHID'S HOUSE AT KAIRA CE TERI
IN JEBEL SI.

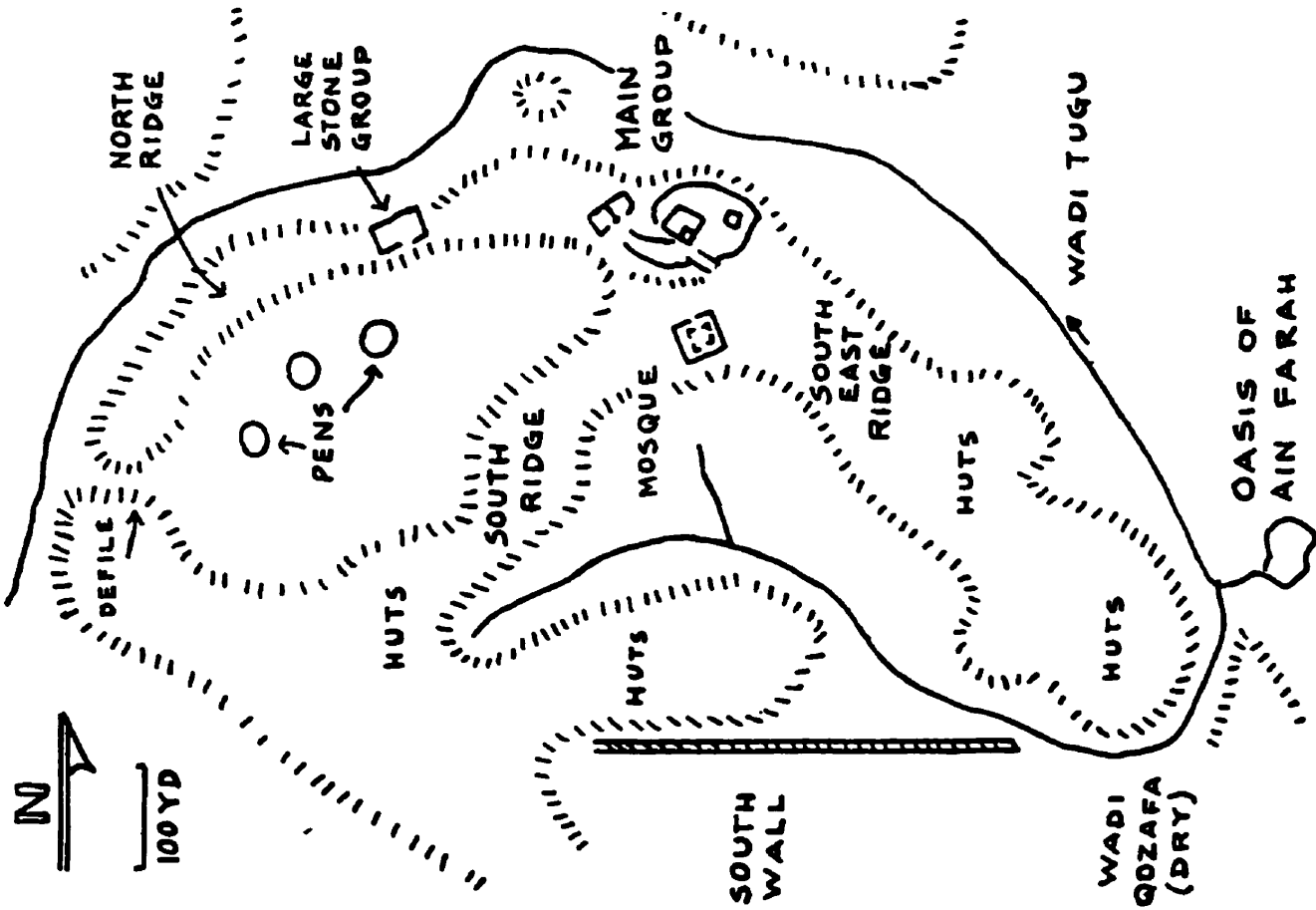
(By eye only.)

AJA
4.3.36.



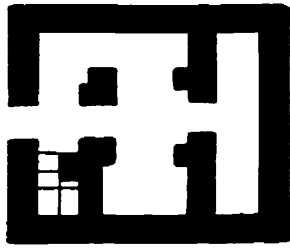
PALACE OF AIN FARA

Balfour Paul (1955b)



PLAN OF AIN FARAH

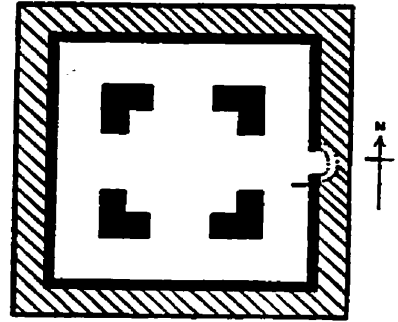
De Neufville and Houghton (1965)



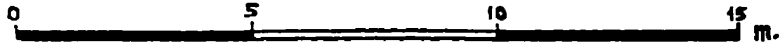
104. Diffinarti



86. Abd el Qadir

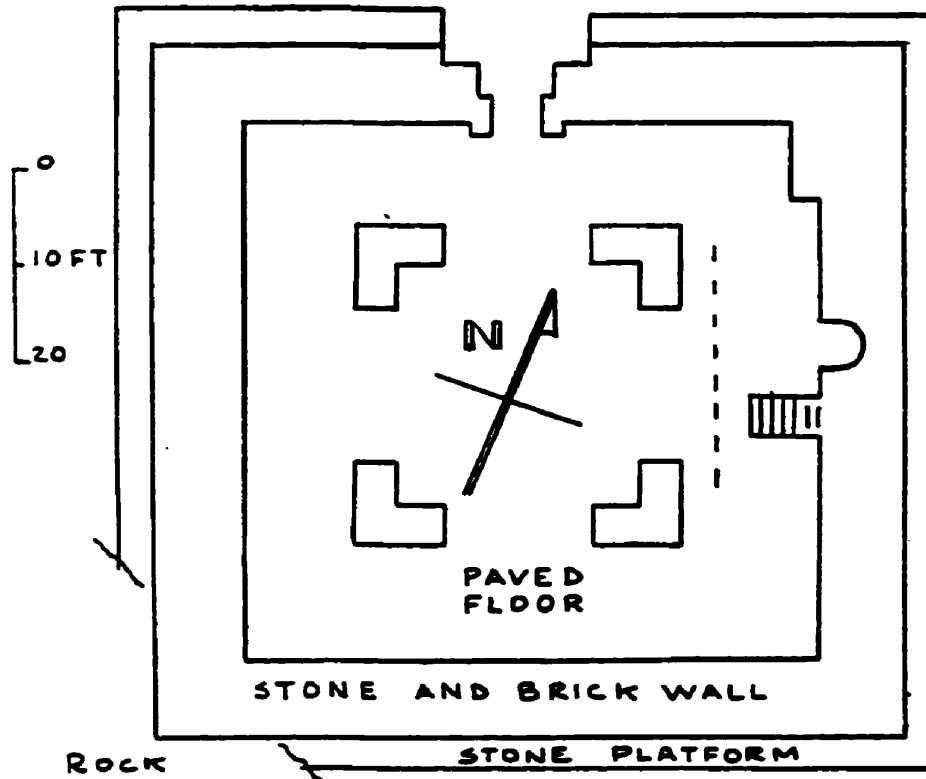


b



Adams (1965)

Arkell (1960)



PLAN



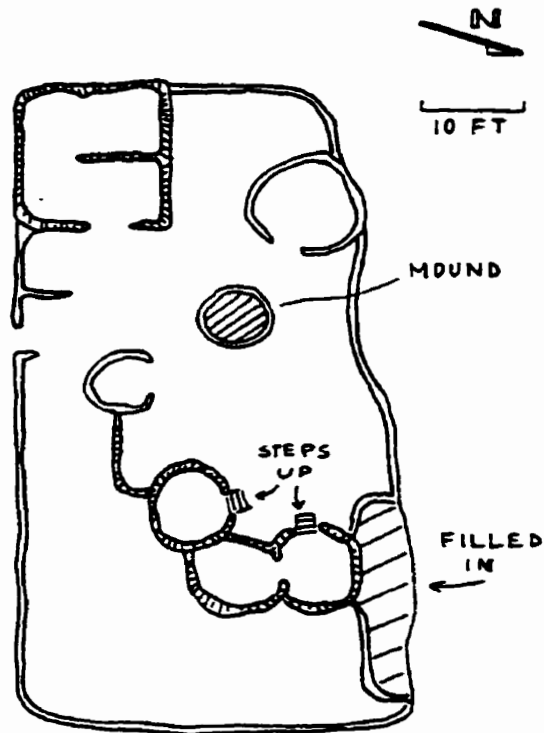
ELEVATION

MOSQUE

PLAN AND ELEVATION OF MOSQUE AT AIN FARAH

De Neufville and Houghton (1965)

c



== LOW WALLS 1 TO 3 FT.
--- HIGH WALLS OVER 6 FT.

LARGE STONE GROUP

a

De Neufville and Houghton (1965)

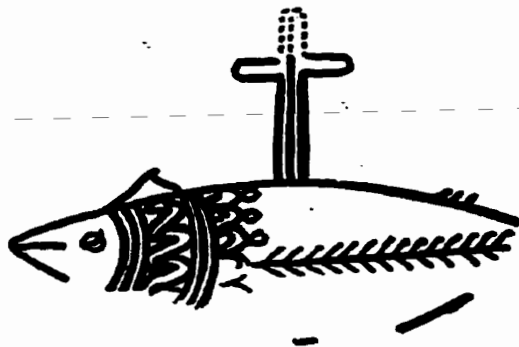


FIG. 1

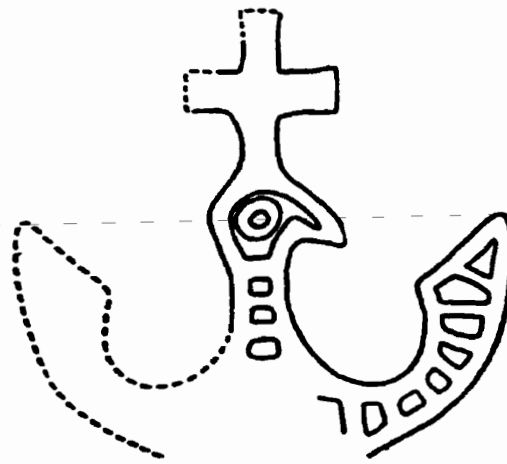


FIG. 2

b

Arkell (1960)

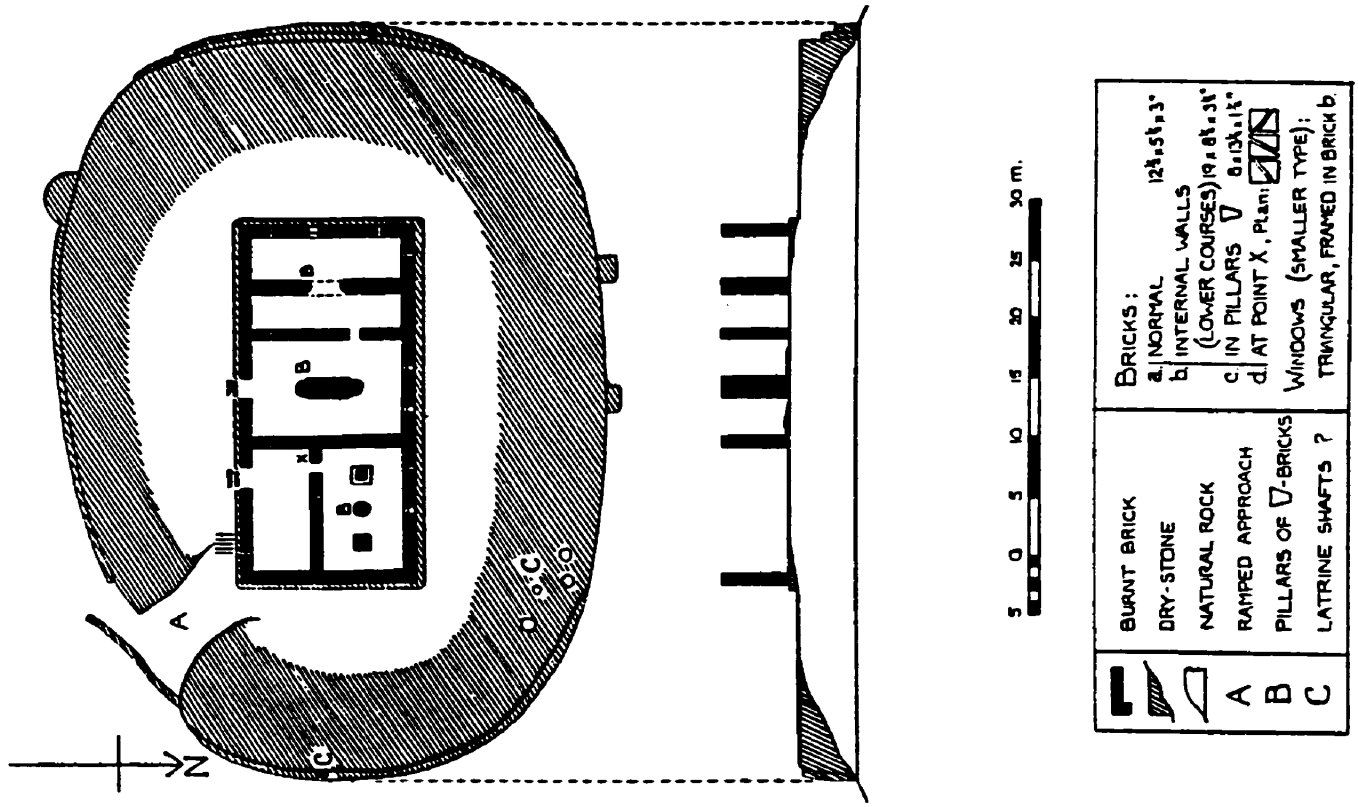


Fig. 8. 18th CENTURY FUR PALACE AT KOGORMA

b

Balfour Paul (1955b)

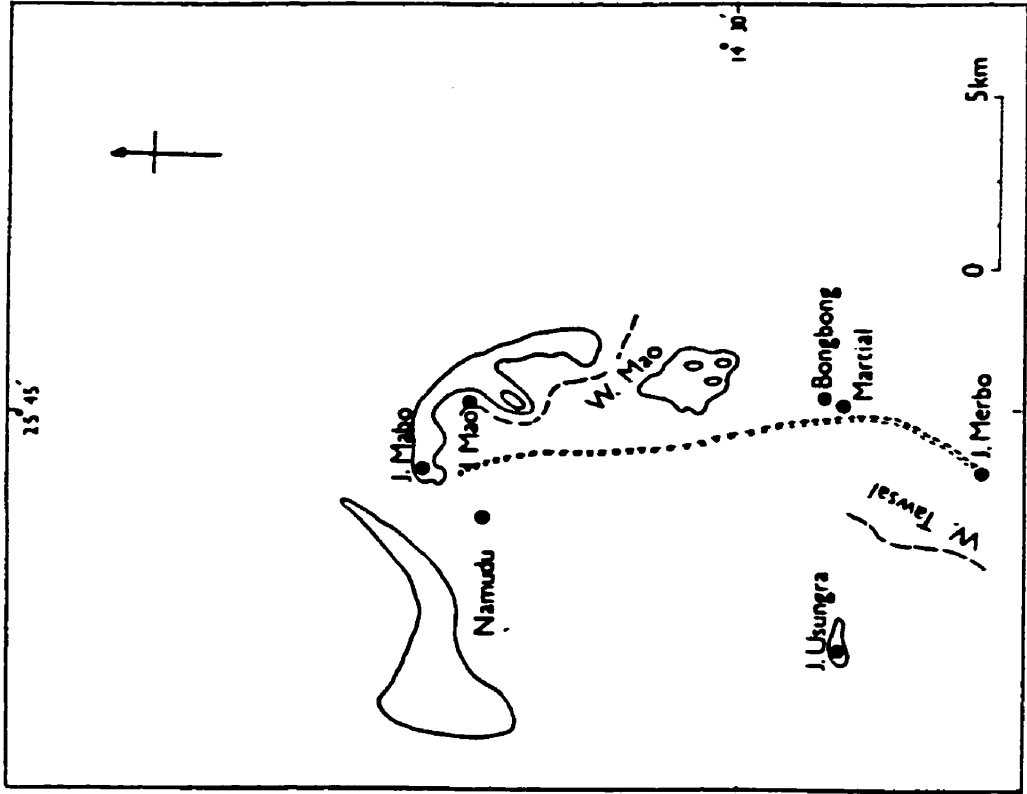
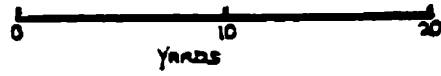
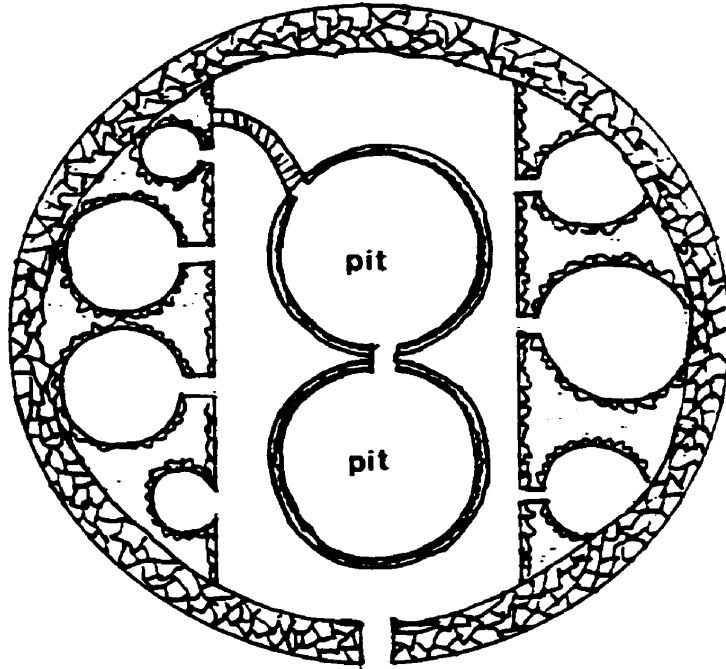
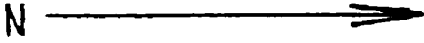


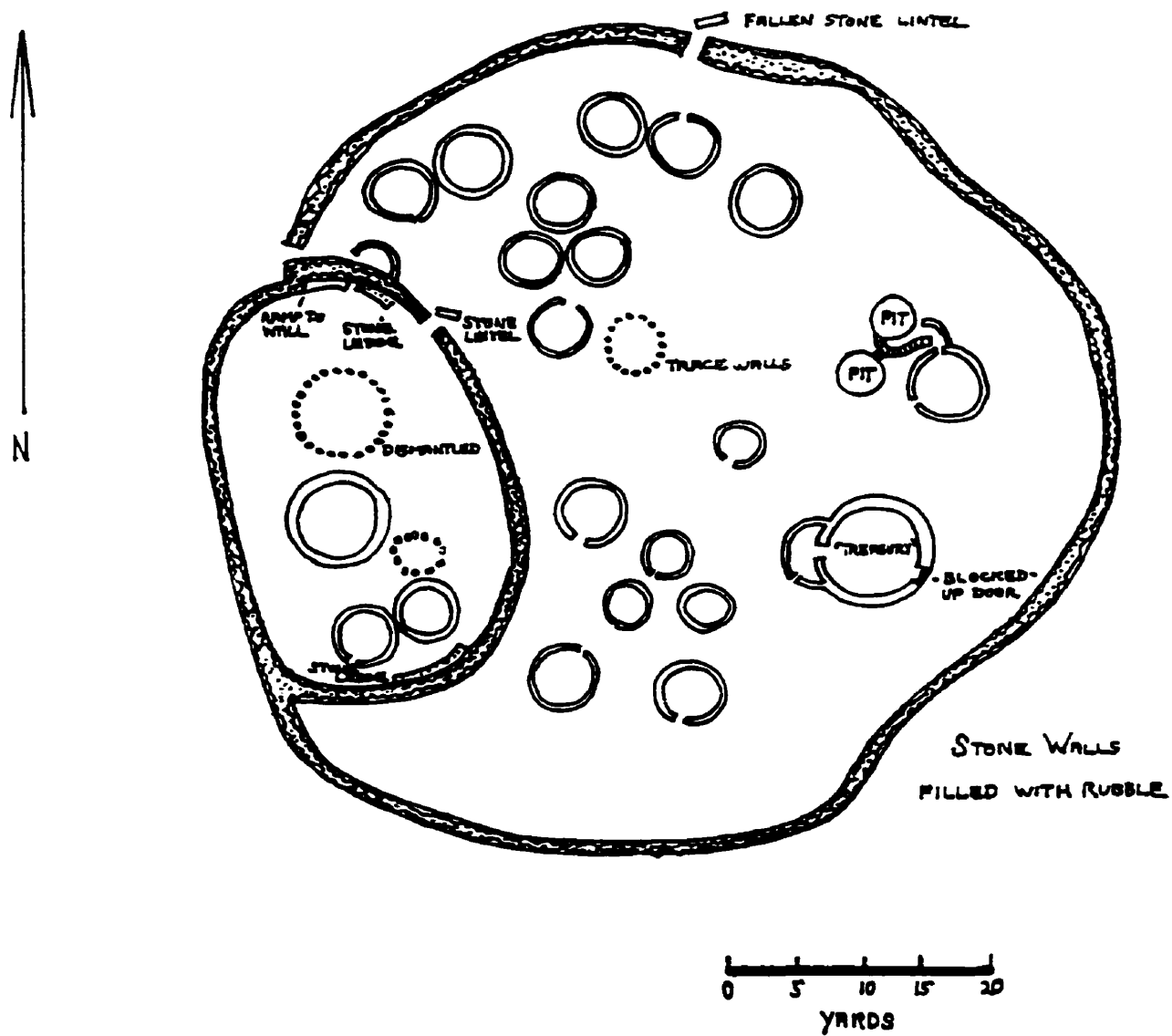
Figure 3.1
Tagabo Region: Areas of detailed survey

a

Mohammad (1981)



"PRISON" OF SULTAN KŪRU - J. FOREI



PALACE OF SULTAN SULAYMĀN SOLONG — J. NĀMI

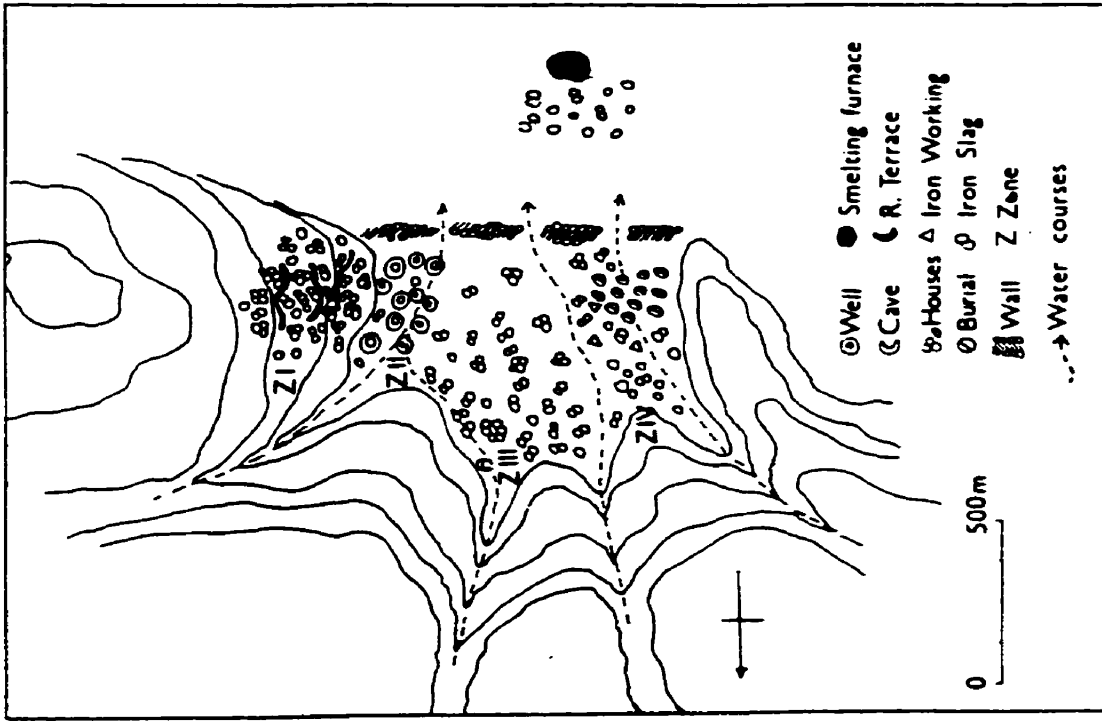
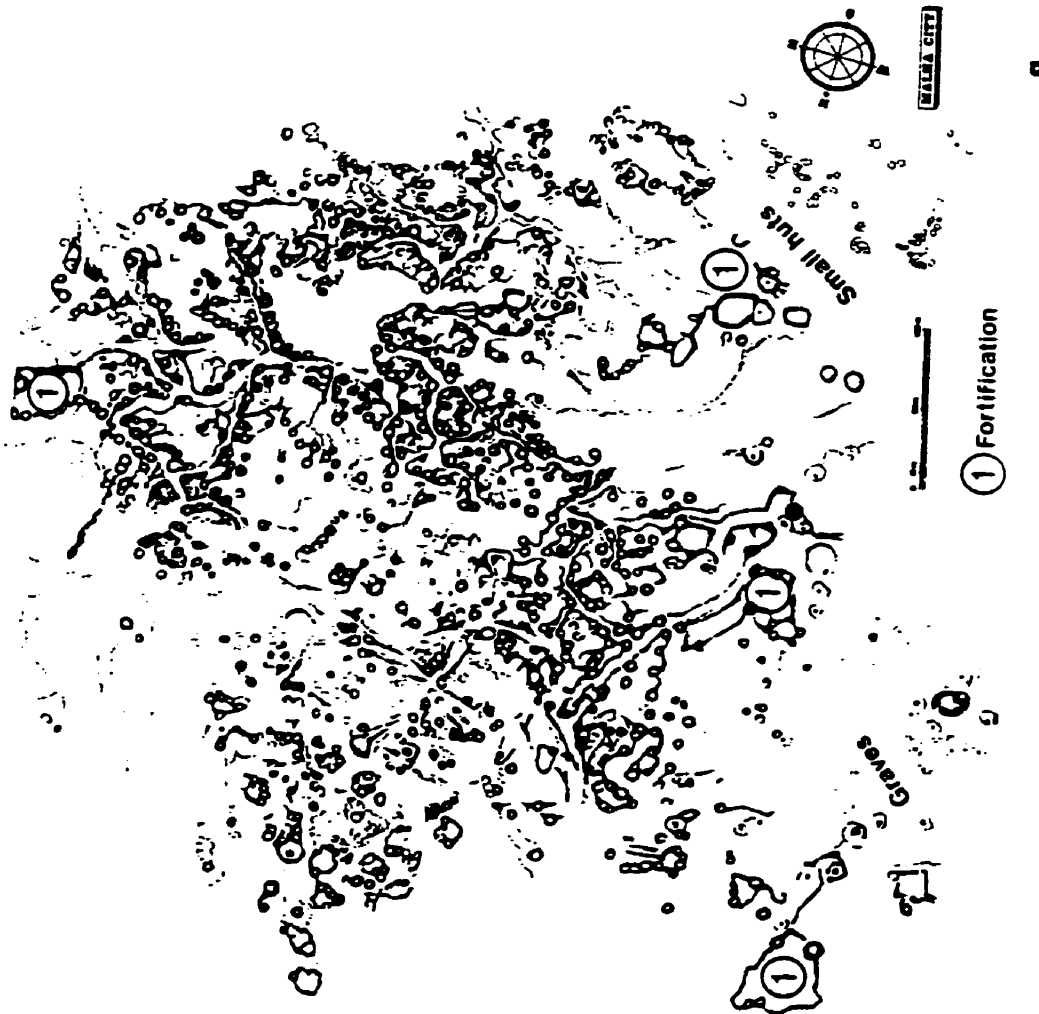


Figure 3.2
Mao: Survey area

Mao
Mohammad (1981)



Malha
Dumont and el Moghraby (1993)

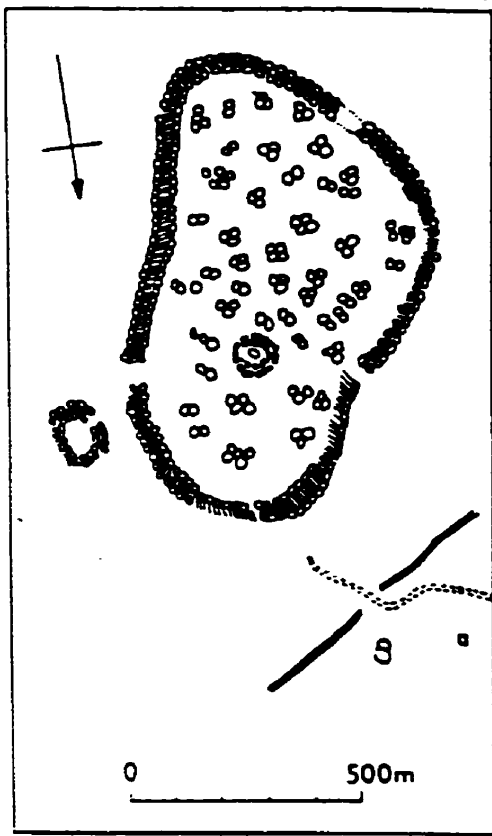
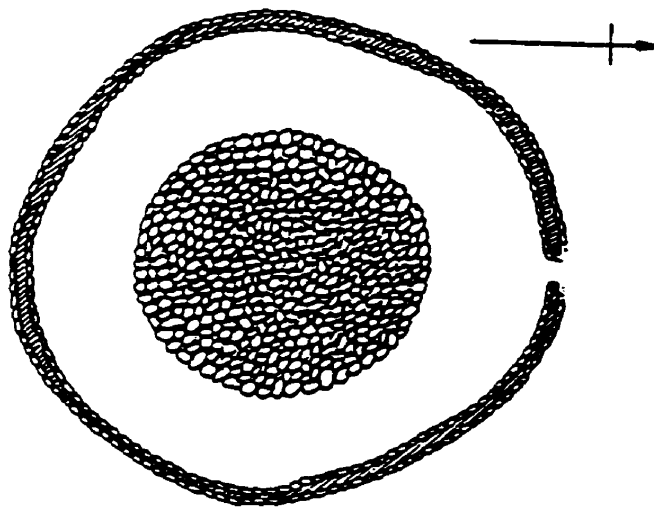


Figure 3.20
Namudu site

a



Section



Figure 3.19
Single platform (Mabo)

b

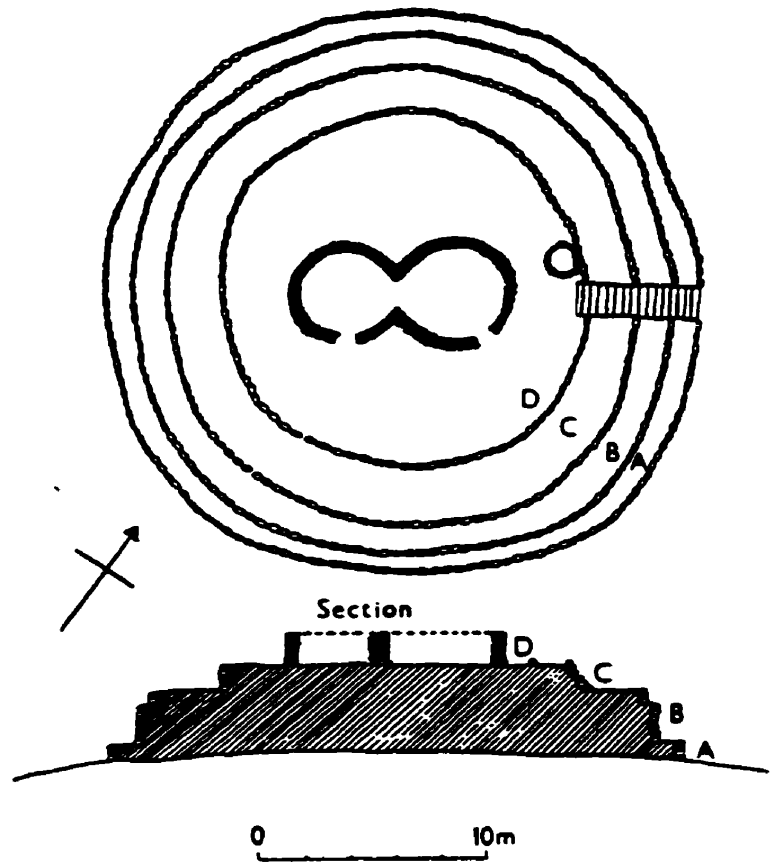


Figure 3.21
Raised (graded) Platform (Numudu)

c

Mohammad (1981)