SUDAN STUDIES

Number 34 July 2006

ISSN - [0952-049x]

CONTENTS

Registered charity No. 328272

SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY - UK

The Sudan Studies Society - UK was founded in 1987 to encourage and promote Sudanese studies in the United Kingdom and abroad, at all levels and in all disciplines. SSSUK is a registered charity (no. 328272).

General enquiries about Society matters and membership should be addressed to:

Hon. Secretary, SSSUK
Flat 2/2
56 Ashley St
Glasgow G3 6HW
Email: Sudanssuk@aol.com

Membership

Anyone with an interest in the Sudan, general or specialized, is welcome to join the SSSUK. Membership is by annual subscription payable in January each year. Current subscription rates are:

Individuals:	Institutions:
* in UK £10 (US$24)	* in UK £18 (US$36)
* elsewhere in Europe Euros20 (US$28)	* elsewhere in Europe Euros32 (US$43)
* elsewhere £15 (US$32)	* elsewhere £25 (US$48)

NB: dollar subscription rates take into account the bank charges incurred in converting to sterling.

Members receive two issues each year of *Sudan Studies*; the right to a reduced rate on copies of the Society's occasional papers; and the right to attend the joint Annual General Meeting and Symposium and other occasional meetings organized by the Society.

Editorial

This is the last number of *Sudan Studies* which I shall edit; I am moving to East Africa for the next three years, and have decided that I should stand down, as I can no longer give the time to this bulletin which it needs. I should like to thank all readers and contributors for their continued tolerance of delays in production of *Sudan Studies* – you have all been very patient!

This number contains a range of material, including some thoughts on two accounts of Sudan originally published many years ago and a very personal view of the comparisons between the political cultures of Sudan and Indonesia. Douglas Johnson offers a characteristically provocative discussion of film depictions of Sudan, and John Udal an equally characteristically detailed retrieval of the biography of a nineteenth-century Sudanese officer. John Udal's paper was presented at the recent Bergen conference, a very successful gathering which was enjoyed by all who attended; I hope that future issues will carry more of the papers from this event.

I hope you will enjoy this, and I wish all readers – and the new Editor – all the best for the future.

Justin Willis
Durham, July 2006

W G Browne's Visit to Darfur, 1793-96

By H R Jack Davies

William George Browne was born on Great Tower Hill in London on 25 July 1768, the son of a wine merchant, George Browne, who came from a well-established Cumbrian family. He appears to have been educated privately before proceeding to Oriel College, Oxford. There he studied Law graduating in 1789, but did not think much of the education there. On his father's death he decided that he wanted to be an explorer. He was, therefore, one of the many relatively well-off people who were enthused by the exploits of such great pioneers as James Bruce and Captain Cook. The African Association was founded in 1788 with the object of furthering the exploration of a continent about which little was known apart from the coasts, and although Browne does not appear to have ever joined it, he certainly thought highly of Banks, who was the association's first Treasurer. Browne is reported to have tried to meet Banks and Beaufoy, the first Secretary of the African Association, immediately before he set off for Africa in 1791. Certainly, it is clear that Banks and Browne later engaged in fruitful letter contact. It is also possible that Browne's departure for Africa in 1791 was occasioned by political developments, for he was a freethinker, an ardent Republican and a supporter of the French Revolution.

Browne arrived in Alexandria on 10 January 1792. His first journey in Egypt was to Siwa Oasis of which he gives an interesting account, despite his being viewed with suspicion, and the fact that he could not see all that he had hoped to. Later that same year, he began what he had intended to be his

journey to Ethiopia via Sennar. Information and experience of others had already persuaded him that an attempt to reach there through Massawa or some other Red Sea port was impossible. In this too his plans were thwarted by the unsettled state along the Nile to the south of Aswan. He found out that the Sennar Caravan had been stopped for some time and that there was no immediate prospect for its resumption. Accordingly, it was back to Cairo after a diversion to the Red Sea for a rethink. It is at this point that Darfur comes into the frame.

Brown obtained information that a Darfur Caravan would soon be leaving Egypt travelling by the *Darb el Arbein* (or Forty Day Road). He was also told that there would be no difficulty in going on from there eastwards to Sennar through Kordofan, passing the White Nile on the way. He could therefore explore this river which he, unlike Bruce, had come to believe came from the true source of the Nile. From Sennar he would travel eastwards to Ethiopia. He convinced himself that, though this was a considerable diversion from the direct road to Ethiopia, it contained many possible advantages for the explorer. He also had in mind the possibility that, if he could not travel eastwards from Darfur, it might be possible to travel west through Wadai towards the Niger and return across the Sahara to North Africa. Accordingly, he made preparations for the journey.

He was told that the Darfur Caravan, which had arrived in Cairo in the summer of 1792, would be returning in two months as the number of slaves and the quantity of merchandise brought was not large. In fact, it did not leave Cairo for the return journey until March 1793. To fill in the time while he waited for the Darfur Caravan to organise itself, Browne set off

eastwards from Cairo to visit Suez, where he commented upon the oil seepages. In March he visited St Catherine's Monastery in Sinai.

Eventually, Browne left Cairo on 4 April 1793 and after 8 days caught up with the Darfur Caravan at Asyut. It was after a further 50 days, on 25 May 1793, that the Caravan finally left to begin its journey along the *Darb el Arbein* during what was by now the hottest time of the year. Unsurprisingly, he found the heat almost intolerable, unlike his companions who seemed inured to the conditions. It is plain that the other merchants in the party were unable to understand why Browne should want to cross the Sahara to Darfur if he had no goods to sell. He passed himself off as an emissary to the Sultan, describing himself as *Daif-es-Sultan*, (the Sultan's Stranger). The Caravan appears to have followed the standard route via Sheb, Selima, Bir-el-Malha and entered the Fur lands at Wadi Masruk. That the journey was not without its problems can adduced from the three occasions when they had to stop as the leaders had lost the road. Selima he describes as a `small verdant spot' with `the best water of any place on the route'. Here he recorded, on 23 June 1793, a temperature in his tent of 116°F (48°C). At Suweini all visitors, whether merchants or not, had to await the Sultan's permission to proceed. It was here that foreign merchants had their goods examined and import duties imposed on behalf of the Sultan, who had a virtual monopoly of the trans-Saharan trade with Darfur. Once this process had been completed they were allowed to proceed to Cobbe, where most foreign merchants resided whilst in Darfur. Browne finally reached Cobbe on 7 August 1793. So far the journey had taken some 74 days. Besides the heat and the dangers of losing the track, he also refers to sandstorms, lack of water and with it the necessity of forced marches, and the danger of attack

unless the necessary dues were paid to the Ababda, Kababish and Zaghawa who controlled the water points on the way. Cobbe, he tells us, was a narrow settlement stretching for 2 miles along the road. It was blessed with many trees and had a flourishing market twice a week. Today, the site is deserted.

So far as is known Browne was the first European to visit Darfur and produce an account of his experiences and this is where the significance of his written account lies. *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria, 1792-1798* appeared in 1799. A second enlarged edition (some 100 pages longer) appeared in 1806 and in it there is a great deal more information about his journey. The Caravan was composed of 10-12 units, some of which were Egyptian, some Furian and with a smattering of merchants from other parts of the Middle East and the Maghreb. He also found out later that there were often a few Coptic Christians among the Egyptian traders but that the Sultan of Darfur had now forbidden their presence. A large proportion of the nearly 500 camels they had started with died on the way, and some of the merchants had to bury some of their goods to be collected by them on a future occasion. He tells us that the nearer they got to Darfur the more cheerful the Fur merchants became and the more glum the Egyptian! This was apparently a rather larger than average caravan; Browne believing that 200, rather than 500, camels was a more common figure.

Browne tried to estimate the population of the Sultanate by using calculations based on the size of the Sultan's army and the rate of losses from it. His conclusion was that the population might number about 200,000. He identified five main distinct groups within the population. The

Fur were the rulers and the dominant class. The second group were the `Arabs' who were divided into traders and religious teachers on the one hand who mainly came from the Nile communities of northern Sudan, and nomads on the other, in particular the cattle owning Baggara and, in the northern part of the Sultanate, the camel owning Kababish. Thirdly, there were people who had come from Wadai and the west including traders, but that their numbers were constrained by the disturbed conditions in Kordofan which militated against travel eastwards for trade or pilgrimage to Mecca. It would appear that only the beggar with a bowl would have had any chance of completing the pilgrimage by the direct easterly route from El Fasher. The final, and a major group, were the black slaves from Dar Fertit and other areas to the south of Darfur. In today's terms this would seem to include the Dinka, Zande and some of the small tribal groups within the modern Bahr El Ghazal and Western Equatoria. In some of the larger settlements Browne estimated that these people made up half of the population. He tells us that the population was particularly mixed in El Fasher, the capital, and in Cobbe, the main trading centre. In the latter he referred to traders from Dongola, Mahas, Tripoli, Tunis, Sennar and Kordofan. He also referred to various Saharan peoples as living mainly in northern Darfur such as Zaghawa, Berti and Bideyat.

The first Sudan census carried out in 1955-56 is the only one that asked questions about ethnicity and all the groups mentioned by Browne are represented. The population of the Province was recorded as a little over 1.3 million. About a quarter of these were `Arab' (75% of whom were Baggara). The main non-Arab group, comprising two©thirds of the Province's population, were recorded as `Westerners'. If those recorded as

belonging to tribes of West African origin are excluded, it appears that the traditional non-Arab tribes of Darfur numbered three quarters of a million (or just over 60% of the Province's population). The Fur, numbering 300,000, were recorded as residing particularly in Jebel Marra and areas to its west and southwest. 20% of the population was described as nomadic but this is known to be a considerable underestimate due to the criteria used in its definition.

Browne arrived in Darfur at a significant time in the Sultanate. Until a short time before his arrival there had been disputes about the succession, but by 1793 Abdel Rahman el Rashid (Sultan from 1787 to 1803) had asserted his authority. According to Browne, the capital, El Fasher (the courtyard in front of the Royal Palace) had been peripatetic as the ruler moved around to keep his eye on his underlings and their activities. By Browne's time El Fasher had just about been finally stabilised in one place (where El Fasher is today). However, on his maps Browne did not mark El Fasher and his route southwards from Cobbe is marked without a name at the end. He gave some good descriptions of El Fasher and the activities of the court and his book includes a plan of the Sultan's oval shaped residence which he computes at 1300 feet (430 metres) from north to south by 1000 feet (330 metres) from east to west. Nearly 40% of the area within the enclosure was given up to the women's quarters. The enclosure was surrounded by a thorn hedge 10 feet (3.3 metres) thick and 10 feet (3.3 metres) high. It had two gates one was the main entrance and the other faced the market place. Browne suggested that the core of the Darfur State stretched for some 300 miles (480 km) from north to south and 200 miles (320 km) from east to west. Outside this area the Sultan had endless trouble; force of arms was needed to assert

his authority. There were particular difficulties over Kordofan, a part of the country that for generations both the Kingdom of Sennar and the Sultanate of Darfur had struggled to control. Browne records that the Sultan of Darfur had had considerable success in subduing at least western Kordofan in 1794 and 1795.

Browne had endless difficulty in obtaining an audience with the Sultan. This is perhaps not surprising as we must ask ourselves what the Sultan could have made of this man who had arrived without merchandise, describing himself as the King's Stranger. This fact alone would mean that the Sultan did not get the accepted tax (perhaps 10% of the value of the goods), though of course there were other ways of 'taxing' Browne. The ideas of exploration, travelling for its own sake to see new places, to fulfil curiosity could not be comprehended. As he was not a merchant or a holy teacher, then he must be a spy, perhaps in the pay of the rulers of Egypt. As the Sultan could not make him out, Browne spent most of his time under house arrest. Unsurprisingly, he was struck down by illness on several occasions, by dysentery and various fevers. In Cairo Browne had recruited a servant, Ali Hamad, who had been highly recommended as travel companion. However, they seem to have fallen out soon after the departure of the Caravan from Asyut, and after an altercation on one occasion Browne drew a gun on him. From that moment things rapidly went downhill. It appears certain that his servant sought revenge and set about sabotaging Browne's visit to Darfur by suggesting to the Darfur authorities that Browne was up to no good. Ali appears to have been the instigator of an attempt to poison him and of a spear thrown at him grazing his arm.

Browne wanted to accompany one of the slave raids southwards but was refused permission, no doubt in part because the Darfur authorities did not want him to find out the source of this lucrative trade. His requests to travel eastwards were similarly rejected. Again, the Sultan feared that he might escape and pass on useful information to the government in Sennar. He was eventually given permission to accompany an army into Kordofan, but fortunately for Browne he was warned that this was a ploy to have him killed thereby removing a troublesome person. There is little doubt that Ali Hamad was a part of this conspiracy. Browne had also mooted the possibility of travelling westwards but was informed that relations between Darfur and Borgu were very bad and that there was an implacable hatred of Christians there and that he would definitely be killed by them.

The circumstances of Browne's release are a mystery. Certainly, he had several times requested his release, but these requests had been ignored. During the time he was held in Darfur two caravans had left for Egypt. It has been suggested that his eventual release came about as a result of threats of dire consequences to the next caravan to arrive in Egypt from Darfur if he was not a part of it. Certainly, Browne had put out a rumour to this effect and claimed to have sent letters to Egypt without the Darfur authorities knowing about them. Browne himself professed to have no idea as to why he was released. It could simply have been that the Sultan had grown tired of his irritating presence. Whatever the reason, he eventually left Cobbe in March 1796 arriving finally in Asyut nearly four months later, worn out, ill and suffering badly from heat exhaustion, having travelled the *Darb El Arbein* for the second time during summer.

He gives details of the Cairo bound caravans telling us that a large one would be composed of 2000 camels and 1000 slaves. Camels that died, or otherwise became incapacitated on the journey, would be eaten and an ill slave would be left by the roadside. However, it was to traders' advantage to ensure that as many camels and slaves reached Egypt as possible as slaves and camels were the most important items of commerce from Darfur sold in Egypt. The great advantage of both was that they walked themselves to market. Other significant trade items from Darfur included ivory, rhinoceros horn, teeth and whips from its hide as well as ostrich feathers, gum, pimento and small quantities of copper from Hofrat en Nahas which he says is 23 days travel southwards from Cobbe. Items imported from Egypt included amber, glass beads, a very wide range of textiles including carpets, muslims, cottons and silks, leather shoes particularly red, writing paper, coffee, copper utensils, looking glasses, cosmetics, pepper, soap and various weapons including swords, firearms and defensive armour for horses. The Sultan was also trying to obtain from Egypt artillery to use against the Sennar army.

Besides giving the first European eye witness account of aspects of life in Darfur, Browne gave quite a lot of detail about plants, animals, diseases and various local customs. For part of his time in Darfur he kept two pet lions. He also reported about a smallpox epidemic that may have destroyed up to half of the Darfur army in Kordofan in 1795. He also gleaned a considerable amount of information about the Nile and trade routes in spite of the very restricted movements allowed to him. He heard about rivers and marshes to the south of Darfur and he speculated that this was the source of the White Nile, the true Nile. On his map he labelled the mountains on the south side as *Jebel el Kumr* (Mountains of the Moon). Within Darfur itself he places

various mountains including Jebel Marra which he describes as lofty and `said to be sulphurous' (a reference to its volcanic origin). He reported the effects of altitude on climate noting that, because if its height, the inhabitants grew wheat on Jebel Marra. The main trade route eastwards from El Fasher to the White Nile and Sennar passes through Ibeit (El Obeid) and he referred to the deep sands that had to be crossed to reach Ibeit. He gave the main crossing point of the White Nile as Hillet Alleis, where the Shilluk controlled the crossing, facts confirmed later by Linant De Bellefonds and others in the 1820s. He also marked another route from Ibeit to the confluence of the two Niles at Emdurman (Omdurman). In Appendix II he gave much information about routes, a large part of which was quite accurate with regard to the names of places passed through. However, his attempts to give the distance between places by reference to the number of days of travel were less successful. Nevertheless, considering the fact that he was not allowed to travel far from Cobbe and El Fasher he gathered a most surprising amount of information. Certainly he does not give as detailed a picture as Al-Tunisi in the mid-19th century, but then their positions were very different.

It might be expected that after such a difficult three years Browne would opt for a period of relaxation. In fact, less than six months after his return from Darfur he set off on a tour of the Middle East including Jerusalem, other parts of Palestine, the modern Lebanon, Syria and Turkey to Constantinople (Istanbul). This first series of travels were over when he reached London on 16 September 1798. The First Edition of his *Travels* contained twenty-nine chapters, of which only between six and seven are devoted to Darfur. The work concluded with six appendices, of which three relate to Darfur. One

dealt with routes in the Sudan of today and Ethiopia, and another contained climatic observations made during his stay in Darfur. His book was not well received, partly because of his style of writing and partly because the work, (the first edition in particular), lacked interesting human detail. In this he was not helped by the disappearance of much of his luggage after he had left it at Alexandria for dispatch to Britain before he set off for Palestine. Certainly, it is not particularly easy to find your way around the text in spite of the apparently logical layout. For example, bits of information about the caravan that he went with to Darfur are scattered around in several different places and much of interest has to be dug out of the appendices. Nevertheless, it was translated into at least French and German. The conclusion contained in Gleichen's account of the Sudan published by HMSO in 1905 that Browne's account is `of no great value' is less than fair. Furthermore, to conclude that Darfur has changed little since the 18th century is a claim too far, but many of the basic characteristics remain.

Browne returned to the Middle East and was in Turkey from 1800 to 1802. Thereafter, he disappeared from the scene until 1812. In that year he set out to visit Tartary via Persia. He seems to have been murdered in the late summer of 1813 between Tabriz and Teheran. His bones are believed to have been taken to Tabriz and interred in a cemetery there.

Bibliography:

BROWNE, W G (1799), *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria from the year 1792 to 1798*, 1st Edn., Longman, London; 2nd enlarged Edn. (1806).

GLEICHEN, Count (1905), *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, 2 Vols, HMSO, London.

HALLETT, R (Ed) (1964), *Records of the African Association, 1788-1831*, Nelson, Edinburgh.

MATTHEW, H C G & HARRISON, B (Eds) (2004), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – Brown-Burstow, Vol 8, Oxford, OUP.

SLATIN, R C (1897), *Fire and Sword in the Sudan..... 1879-95*, (translated by F R Wingate), Arnold, London.

SUDAN DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS (1962), *First Population Census of Sudan, 1955/56: Final Report*, Vol 3, Khartoum, Council of Ministers.

Why *The Four Feathers*?
(why not seven?)

By Douglas H. Johnson

The Sudan has not often been the subject of big screen cinema. The Charlton Heston/Lawrence Olivier epic *Khartoum* (1966) – recently re-broadcast on British TV – is one of the better known. The Battle of Omdurman is an episode in *Young Winston* (1972), and the fighting around Suakin in the 1880s bookend the cinematic version of Kipling's *The Light that Failed* (1939). But these were all preceded, and then succeeded, by *The Four Feathers*, which continues to cast a long shadow. There have been seven film versions of A.W. Mason's novel made since 1915, five of which have been major productions, making it the most filmed Sudan story ever. The question is, why?

The novel was first published in 1902: after the Re-conquest had wiped out the 'stain' of Gordon's abandonment, restored Britain's military honour, and reconfirmed Britain's confidence in its fighting men and their leaders, but also after the Boer War had shaken that same confidence. It is the story of upper class heroism and doubt. Its characters have frightfully pukka names like Faversham, Willoughby and Eustace (even an Ethne Eustace). Its main character, Harry Faversham, lives in the shadow of his retired general father. Fearing that he cannot live up to his father's standards of duty and courage, he resigns his commission on the eve of his regiment shipping out to the Sudan as part of the Gordon Relief Expedition. He is then branded a coward by three

of his brother officers and his fiancée, who each give him white feathers as a token of his cowardice. He redeems himself by going out to the Sudan privately and, over a period of years, in different disguises (including that of a Greek peddler, assisted by a schoolboy knowledge of classical Greek), performs acts of courage and heroism that make each one of his accusers take back their white feathers, until Harry's honour is fully restored and he regains his place in society.

As such it is not a story about the Sudan, but about the British. In some ways it is an allegory of Britain's involvement in the Sudan, of dishonour redeemed. The Sudan is the backdrop against which Britain, represented by its officer class, works through its doubts about its own ability and worth, and comes out reaffirmed. Perhaps such reaffirmation was necessary in 1902, to remind a Britain shaken by the disasters in South Africa that it really was up to the mission of Empire.

White feathers came back in fashion in 1914 when young women gave them to young men who were tardy in enlisting (an act many of those young women probably regretted by 1918). The first film of *The Four Feathers* was produced in the US in 1915, followed by a British production in 1921, the year before the novel's first reprint. The first major screen version came out in 1929, starring Richard Arlen (a former Royal Canadian Air Force pilot who featured in Howard Hughes' *Wings*), William Powell (of 'Thin Man' fame), Noah Beery (a Western heavy), and Fay Wray. It was described in *Variety* as having scenes of hippos sliding down the steep bank of 'a jungle watering place', baboons hopping 'from limb to limb to escape a forest fire', and 'a huge army of

black savages dashing to battle on white camels'. So not much of the Sudan then (except, perhaps, the camels). This film was apparently the last big silent feature made after the talkies came in. It also launched Fay Wray's career: it was on the strength of her silent performance in *The Four Feathers* that she landed a more vocal role in *King Kong*.

Mason's novel was reprinted again in 1936, and was soon given the treatment by the staunchly anglophile Korda brothers. Here the story was transferred from the 1880s Gordon Relief Column to 1890s Re-conquest. This is perhaps the most satisfying version for Sudanists as it was filmed in the Sudan, with Sudanese extras giving it a feel of authenticity. We see one of Kitchener's gunboats being winched through the Shabaluka rapids, real Beja breaking a British square, real Sudanese dressed in jibbas, real British and Sudanese soldiers dressed in period uniforms showing that they knew how to use the weapons in their hands, and a recreation of the Battle of Omdurman – an unambiguous victory – on the Kerreri plains. Ralph Richardson (who later played Gladstone in *Khartoum*) appears in one of the leading roles. For all of these reasons the Korda *Four Feathers* remains the definitive version. Its timing may have been coincidental, but its release in 1939 could have only helped remind British audiences of past triumphs in the face of then-present threats and uncertainties.

Post-war and post-empire versions of *The Four Feathers* have been less certain in their message. A 1955 remake (or rip-off, depending on your point of view) was released under the title *Storm Over the Nile*, just before Sudanese independence. It recycled the Korda Sudan battle scenes

and told essentially the same story as the 1939 version. A television remake was released in 1977, with the American hunk Beau Bridges in the starring role. Filmed in Spain, with the Sudanese represented by all-purpose Bedouins dressed in flowing robes and burnouses (scarcely a jibba in sight), and with Bridges' accent slipping alarmingly, it gave a modern spin to the 'generation gap' between Harry and his father, the denouement being that not only could Harry at last face down his father, but that he could look the portraits of his ancestors in the eye as well.

This brings us to the most recent version, directed by Pakistani filmmaker, Shekhar Kapur, and released in 2002. Kapur places the story back in the 1880s, but his vision is both post-colonial and post-9/11. In an interview on the DVD release of the film he remarks that the breaking of the British square at Abu Klea in 1885 marked 'the beginning of the end' of empire – a startling claim considering the empire's rapid expansion soon after. But in going back in time Kapur transposes the events of the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. His Mahdists are true jihadis, the British are bogged down in a contested occupation.

The resonance with the present 'war on terrorism' is underscored by a readjustment of the military contest. The British forces ride into the Sudan dressed in red coats (they actually wore khaki and grey), to be sniped at by jihadis wearing Afghan-style dark turbans during street fighting inside a Sudanese town. Abu Klea is transformed from a desert well to a Beau Geste-style British fort that the Mahdists capture, and then don British uniforms to lure the relief column into a trap. The Mahdist gaoler, Idris es-Saier, is, strangely, the only historical figure introduced

into the film. The motive for his cruelty towards British captives is given as revenge for the death of his family by British forces.

The problem is: the history is wrong, the politics are wrong, the battles are wrong, the uniforms are wrong. The British are made to look more archaic then they were – because everyone expects a 'thin red line' of empire. Mahdist costume, which was specific to time and place, is changed – because everyone knows that jihadis fight with their faces muffled in massive turbans. The 1880s battles the British fought were in the desert, rather than towns, with very few non-combatant casualties – but everyone knows that in modern wars the 'collateral damage' suffered by civilians exceeds battlefield casualties. In 1885 Britain was fighting a war of withdrawal from the Sudan, not of occupation. The Sudanese were struggling to free themselves from the Egyptian, not the British, empire. To present the Mahdiyya as motivated by religious zeal and hatred aimed primarily at a Christian imperialist occupier is a massive revision of history.

But these historical anachronisms apart, Kapur does something the other films do not: he inserts the Sudanese into the story. The role of Idris es-Saier is, of course, distorted, but at least he has a speaking part. A character named Abou Fatma who appears in the minor role of a guide in earlier films (sometimes as a Jaali) is given a much larger role here. While his background is never identified, Djimon Hounsou (of *Gladiator* fame) plays him very much as an ash-covered Nuba wrestler. And Kapur also acknowledges slavery, introducing Alek Wek, with bumps pasted onto her forehead, as an enslaved Shilluk princess, who gets her own

back against her enslaver and escapes to freedom. So something of the Sudan's own internal complexity is represented: it's not all Arabs in flowing robes dashing about on camels.

The Four Feathers has undergone a complete transformation from the reaffirmation of British imperialism to the defeat of Western imperialism. This does not fully explain why the story has been filmed so much. The reason, I think, is that the story is a moral tale, and like so many moral tales it can be adjusted to illustrate different morals.

For most Western filmmakers, Africa is still a stage for savagery and barbarism. But not all of Africa is the same. When filmmakers want to do savagery, they go to the Congo. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has been filmed – either as itself, or as *Apocalypse Now* – to explore the dark heart of Euro-Americans, not just Africans. But the Sudan was the site of an heroic struggle, and that struggle is still seen as one of high moral purpose (the final line of *Khartoum* declares, for instance, that 'Without the Gordons of this world civilisation would return to the sands from which it came'). Films that use the Sudan still consciously respond to this. Thus John le Carré's *The Constant Gardener*, while set in Kenya, has a scene of moral redemption set in the relief effort in the Sudan. And, I would suggest, the forthcoming film version of Deborah Scroggins' *Emma's War* is part of this same tradition of using the Sudan to portray an essentially European moral struggle, beset by doubt, but redeemed by sacrifice.

It is time that the Sudan came up with a new story line.

A Note on David Ha-Reuveni's Visit to the Funj Sultan in 1523*

By Gabriel R. Warburg

David Reubeni (hereafter Reuveni) was, according to S. Hillelson,[1] a Jewish adventurer who travelled to Sennar and met King 'Amara [Dunqas?], ruler of the Funj Sultanate, in 1523. His visit to the Funj sultanate was in itself remarkable since this remote and rather unruly African kingdom was not in the limelight of European or other travelers. Moreover, Reuveni arrived in Sennar from Mecca, a highly rare visit for a non-Muslim. Fortunately, Reuveni kept a diary, written in Hebrew, the original manuscript of which was kept at the Bodlean in Oxford from where it presumably disappeared after 1867. However, an edited transcript of the original manuscript was published by Neubauer in Oxford in 1887. Whether Reuveni was a German Jew, as claimed by Neubauer, or the manuscript was a transcript of an oral presentation in another language, taken down by a German Jew, as claimed by others, was immaterial for Hillelson at the time. Neither did it matter whether he was an adventurer and an impostor, or whether he took part in Shlomo Molcho's Jewish messianic movement, as stated by Graetz, a

* Revised version of a paper presented to the Annual meeting of the Sudan Studies Association, Georgetown University, July-August 2003

[1] S. Hillelson, "David Reubeni, An Early Visitor to Sennar", *Sudan Notes & Records*, XVI(1933), pp.55-66; in Hebrew manuscripts and books he is referred to as David Ha-Reuveni.; see also Fr. Giovanni Vantini FSCJ, *Oriental Notes Concerning Nubia: David Reubeni*, (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, and Heidelberg: Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), I am grateful to Dr. Jacke Phillips for sending me these notes. However, these notes are just an additional corroboration of Hillelson's paper.

prominent Jewish historian. Instead, what interested Hillelson was whether Reuveni's description of Sinnar and the Funj Kingdom were relevant and whether it added to our accumulated knowledge at the time.

To understand Reuveni's diary we have to put it in its historical context. It is important to note that, following the Spanish inquisition and the Jewish exile from the realm of Ferdinand and Isabella, messianic movements mushroomed in several regions of the Jewish diaspora, especially among exiles from Spain and Portugal and among the Jewish converts to Christianity, known as Marranos (*Anusim*). Ha-Reuveni, although he never seemed to have claimed the title of *Messiah* explicitly, was associated with this messianic trend and, in particular, with Shlomo Molcho. It was also a time of conflict in Europe, which assumed religious and cultural dimensions with the expulsion of Muslim rule from Granada in Spain in 1492. Therefore, Jewish messianic dreams at the time were associated with European (mainly Iberian) plans to expand eastwards so as to oust Islam from other regions, and to seek Spanish or Portuguese support for a Jewish revival in their historic homeland.[2]

In his paper, Hillelson avoids the broader political and messianic controversies and concentrates upon the Sudanese aspects of Reuveni's travel to Sinnar. He states that Reuveni's information on Sinnar in 1523 seems accurate and that he could not have obtained it without personally travelling to that region. Reuveni travelled disguised as a Meccan *sharif*

[2] Spain was at the time in much of turmoil since the crowning of King Charles I in 1516 was rather unpopular and the uprising of the Spanish Comuneros followed in 1520-21. In

(descendant of the Prophet Muhammad) which explains the honour granted to him in the newly Islamized Funj Kingdom, whose king treated him as if he were a saint.

Extracts From The Manuscript:[3]

The following extracts are quoted from Hillelson's article and are compared with Neubauer's *Collection of Jewish Chronicles*, published in Oxford in 1887. In it, David ha-Reuveni claimed to be the son of King Solomon and the brother of King Joseph 'who rules his kingdom in the desert of Khabor [Arabia?], where he is king over 300,000 people of three of the "Ten Lost Tribes": Gad, Reuven and the half-tribe of Menashe.'[4] Reuveni was instructed by his brother King Joseph to meet the Pope in Rome. 'So I left them and journeyed from the desert of Khabor by way of Harrah, a distance of ten days until I reached Jedda.' From there Reuveni took a boat to cross the Red Sea and arrived in 'Suakin in the land of Kush' where he rented a house for himself and his old servant in which they stayed for two months.[5] From Sawakin [Suakin] ha-Reuveni joined a merchants' camel caravan, consisting of some 3,000 camels, with which he travelled for two months until he arrived in Sheba. There he met King 'Amara [Dunqas, 1504-33] 'who dwells on the Nile and his Kingdom is Sheba the capital of which is called Lam'ul. And he is a black king who rules both over blacks and

---

1535 Charles undertook an expedition to Tunis against the Turks, which may have tied in with ha-Reuveni's grand design.

[3] A. Neubauer (ed.), *Medieval Jewish Chronicles etc.* (Oxford 1887); Eduard Biberfeld, *Der Reisebericht des David Reubeni*, (Berlin 1892) [incomplete]; Hillelson, p.55 fn.1-2

[4] Quoted as 'Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh' in Hillelson, *Reubeni*, p.56

[5] Hillelson, 56; in the original version his slave is described as "old, deaf, and dumb." See Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles* Vol. II, p.131

whites.'[6] Reuveni introduced himself to the King as a *sharif* from Mecca and was given many presents, including slaves. However, he declined these, insisting that he came to the Kingdom only to see its splendour.

After ten months with King 'Amarah, Reuveni left Lam'ul with his old servant en-route to Sinnar, which they reached after eight days.[7] There he met Obadia (Sic.), the king's agent, who provided him with another slave, as well as three camels to accompany him to al-Sharif Abu Kamil, who resided in a town called Soba. Soba was the capital of Alwa, the previous Christian kingdom, which had existed in that region prior to the Funj Sultanate.[8] When Reuveni arrived there it was in total ruins and his encounter with Abu Kamil is related as follows: 'Abu Kamil met me and said: "How is it that you came away from the king without a present of slaves? ... Therefore, you shall remain in my house while I go up to the king and ask for a gift on your behalf." To this I agreed.'[9] However, in his dream that night, David ha-Reuveni relates that he was warned by his deceased father to leave Abu Kamil immediately, otherwise he would perish; accordingly, he left the following morning without awaiting his host's return.

From Soba, which according to Hillelson was about 165 miles north of Sinnar, Reuveni travelled north through the 'kingdom of Al Ga'l'

---

[6] Hillelson, p.57; 'Amarah Dunqas was King of the Funj from 1504-1533; Reuveni visited the Kingdom in 1523; according to Reuveni Lam'ul was on the Blue Nile, eight days journey south of Sinnar; see also Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles* Vol. II, p.131

[7] Hillelson, p.59; Reuveni's departure was hastened by the arrival of a third Meccan *sharif* who stated to king 'Amara that ha-Reuveni was a Jew and an impostor. See Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles* Vol. II, p.136

[8] A.J. Arkell, *A History of the Sudan to 1821*, (University of London Press, 1955), p.156

[9] Hillelson, p.61

(Ja'aliyyin),[10] and arrived at the mountain of Ataqqi [?], whose ruler was 'Abd al-Wahhab.[11] For the journey to Dongola and onwards Reuveni purchased another slave to serve him and 'Abd al-Wahhab accompanied him along the edge of the desert until they arrived at the Nile where the enemies of King 'Amara lived and he was welcomed by them. 'Abd al-Wahhab now returned to his own country and Reuveni's new host, 'an Ishmaelite elder', promised to convey him safely to Egypt.

Two matters of significance were mentioned by Reuveni concerning his stay with his new [Egyptian?] host. First, he relates that a delegation from "the tribes of Reuven and Gad", two of the ten lost tribes of Israel, came to visit him and brought him two lion cubs as a present.[12] Secondly, Reuveni was informed that he had to travel with a caravan since it was dangerous to carry on accompanied by only two slaves. However his newly-acquired slave soon escaped and Reuveni declined to travel on without him, even with a caravan. He asked King Muhammad [of the Nubian kinglet of Batn al-Hajar?] to find his runaway slave. When the king brought him the fugitive he said: '"Because of my love for you do not beat the slave this time." After the king had gone I put irons on the man's neck and feet.'[13]

On the 14th of Kislev [October 1523?] Reuveni and his party finally left and went through the desert, heading north, and after 45 days they arrived at the

[10] Al-Ja'aliyyin are a riverain tribe residing in what is now the northern Sudan.
[11] Hillelson, pp.61-2; this is the earliest reference to the Ja'aliyyin tribe; Jabal Ataqqi cannot be identified.
[12] Hillelson, p.63; see also fn.1 in which Hillelson writes: "David's fantastic story about the lost tribes is based on legends current at the time."
[13] Hillelson, p.64

Rif, in Girgeh, guided by a man called Shalom, in whose house Reuveni later resided, and who also arranged for his trip by boat on the Nile, to Cairo.

Commentary

Apart from his stay with King 'Amarah Dunqas of the Funj and Reuveni's later meeting with the Pope, both of which seem to have been narrated accurately, the rest of his manuscript contains little of interest. Indeed, Hillelson quotes a paper written by A.Z. Eshkoli, a scholar in Jerusalem, who claimed that the bulk of Reuveni's manuscript was purely imaginary and was derived from literary sources. Furthermore, he states that the manuscript was fabricated for political reasons.[14] Aharon Eshkoli later went to Paris, London and to the Vatican in Rome in order to study relevant documents about David ha-Reuveni and to translate his manuscript which was then at the Bodlean Library in Oxford. Eshkoli summarized his views on Reuveni in two books written in Hebrew: *Messianic Movements in Israel* and *The Story of David ha-Reuveni Copied from the Oxford Manuscript*. He claimed that, to begin with, ha-Reuveni's aims were political and military and that his claims to messianism came only after his long sojourn in Portugal.[15] In a detailed introduction to the second edition of Eshkoli's book on Reuveni, Prof. Moshe Idel from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem enables the readers to further comprehend the differing views about this Jewish adventurer.[16] Several scholars supported Eshkoli's view that Reuveni, as well as Shlomo Molcho, first envisaged a political-military

[14] A.Z. Eshkoli, "David Reubeni in the light of History", *Zion*, Vol V, (1938); see also A.Z. Eshkoli (ed.), *The Story of David ha-Reuveni Copied from the Oxford Manuscript*, second edition (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1993), [in Hebrew]

[15] Ibid. XX, quoting Eshkoli's book *Hatnu'ot Hameshihiyot be-Yisrael*, (second printing, Jerusalem 1948), p.273

mission which aimed to purchase weapons and to mobilize and train Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal and to 'repatriate' them eastwards, via the Horn of Africa in order to fight against the Turks. Other scholars viewed Reuveni's so-called political-military phase as a figment of his imagination, which fits into his messianic pretensions. Reuveni's messianic claims started during his visits to Jerusalem and Safad, where such claims prevailed following the Spanish inquisition, and the belief was that *Reuven*, namely Reuveni's presumed tribe, would be the pioneer of this messianic awakening.[17] While Idel admits that ha-Reuveni's messianic mission was secondary to his political-military ambitions, he concludes that the two were simultaneous. When Reuveni asked King Johannes III of Abyssinia to mobilize Ethiopian Jews and arm them with Portuguese weapons in order to fight for the liberation of their historic homeland, military-politics intertwined with messianic dreams. However, even then Reuveni did not assume the title of a *messiah*, claimed at the time (1535) by Shlomo Molcho; Idel thus concludes that there never was a messianic movement, claiming ha-Reuveni as the *Messiah* and that those who believed in his mission were mostly the Marranos living in Spain and Portugal rather than the Jews in other parts of the Jewish diaspora.[18]

Who Was David ha-Reuveni?

---

[16] Eshkoli *Reubeni*, XIX-XLIII

[17] In *Wege Nach Zion: Reiseberichte und Briefe aus Eretz Jisrael in drei Jahrhunderten*, von Kurt Wilhelm, (Berlin: Schocken Verlag,1935); the author quotes a correspondence between two Italian brothers fro the Tarbut family, regarding Reuveni's visit in Palastine in Purim [March-April] 1523; pp.9-13. The Italian Jewish scholar Casuto claimed that Reuveni was an Ethiopian Jew (Falasha), a claim rejected by most of the scholars; Eshkoli, *Reubeni*, XXIII, according to Idel, this view is supported by Hillelson.

[18] Eshkoli *Reubeni*, XLII-XLIII

We now arrive at the debate around this 'fantastic story'; where some deem it to be purely imaginary, others have tended to believe in significant portions of the manuscript. A.S. Yehuda came to the following conclusions: first, he believed Reuveni was a Spanish Jew whose command of that language was perfect, including its syntax and the composition of its sentences. Yehuda therefore rejected the assumptions made by other scholars, that Reuveni was an Ashkenazi Jew, probably of German ancestry. Secondly, that the story about the ten lost tribes and his assumed origin as a Jew from Haybar [Khabor?], were figments of ha-Reuveni's fertile imagination, nourished by stories prevailing at the time especially among the Marranos in Portugal and Spain. Thirdly, hearing these stories during his long sojourn in Portugal, ha-Reuveni undertook his journey in order to convince his Portuguese patrons, as well as the Pope, with whom he spent some time on his way back from Arabia via Kush to Portugal, that by supporting him they could realize their Imperial designs on Johanes's Kingdom of Abyssinia.[19]

Yehuda pays special attention to ha-Reuveni's Arabic and claims that its origins are from the Marghib (i.e. a Moroccan and/or Spanish dialect) rather than the Mashriq and this, in his view, explains the fact that the Arabian origin, which he claimed whilst among the Funj, was suspect since his Arabic was unlike that spoken in Arabia or in the Nile Valley. In fact, ha-Reuveni, according to Yehuda, knew only colloquial Arabic as spoken in Morocco or in Spain, but whilst in Arabia he picked up the local accent and

[19] A.S. Yehuda, 'David ha-Reuveni-moza'o, leshono, u-te'udato', *Hatqufa*, Vol. 34/35, (New Haven, 1949); quoting from A.D. Neubauer, (ed.), *Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes*, (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1887), in Hebrew.

hence spoke a mixture of the two. The same applies to his Hebrew which was a hotchpotch of several accents and Yehuda therefore concluded that ha-Reuveni was an exile from Spain, living somewhere on the North-African coast, who remembered his childhood Arabic and Hebrew but spoke mainly Spanish whilst his literary expression was in rather poor Hebrew.[20]

What of Reuveni's trip to Rome and Portugal? In both he received support and money from local rich Jews. He mentions Rabbi Daniel of Peisa[?] whom he described as a 'rich, honorable, and clever' man who paved his way to his meetings with the Pope and with several archbishops in Rome. Both he and Signora Abarbanel apparently provided him with sufficient funds to carry on with his mission to Portugal. However, by then Reuveni was accused of attempting to restore the Spanish and Portuguese Marranos to their previous Jewish creed, and consequently of betraying Christianity and his Spanish-Portuguese hosts. The person who first made these accusations was Don Miguel de-Silva, the Portuguese delegate in Rome. It is he who, after many years of pursuing Reuveni, finally succeeded in convincing his king not to support Reuveni; thus Reuveni's plans to liberate the holy land with Jewish volunteers, fighting the Turks with Portuguese weapons, finally evaporated. According to Yehuda, ha-Reuveni's early plans were realistic and he had the right connections to pursue the weapons he sought. He was neither a *messiah* nor a learned Jewish rabbi, but a pure,

[20] Yehuda, 'David ha-Reuveni-moza'o, leshono, u-te'udato', *ibid.*

trained fighter, who sought to exploit his know-how for the good of his people, as he saw fit.[21]

Eliyahu Lipiner also added his comments to this discussion. In his introduction to Eshkoli's book on ha-Reuveni, mentioned above, he generally agreed with the author's conclusions and concentrated on Reuveni's visit in Portugal and his subsequent death, the sources of which were not consulted by Eshkoli at the time he first published his book.[22] In his manuscript Reuveni mentions that upon his arrival in Tavira, Portugal, on 24 October 1525, he submitted to the local judge a letter from the Pope, as well as a letter from Don Juan [John] III, King of Portugal inviting him to visit his country. However, by the time of his arrival the King was already suspicious with regard to his intentions. He therefore told Reuveni that he would not honour his previous commitment to supply him with ships and arms in order to fulfil his mission. Instead he ordered him to leave Portugal immediately, but agreed with Reuveni's request to undertake another visit to the Pope in Rome. He gave him two letters: the first to his brother King Joseph of Khabor,[23] the second a letter affording safe passage to ha-Reuveni and his "six Jewish" companions wherever they went. These letters were given to Reuveni in the town Santerin on 21 June 1526. Lipiner, who was the first to research and publish these letters, noted that in a post script to the second letter it was stated explicitly that "David the Jew" was in fact

---

[21] According to Yehuda, "David ha-Reuveni-moza'o, leshono, u-te'udato", *ibid.*; ha-Reuveni was finally arrested by the Spanish King, who put him in chains and he died a prisoner in 1535 [?]

[22] In Eshkoli *Reubeni*, XLV-LVII

[23] In Eshkoli *Reubeni*, LI, Lipiner observes that instead of "Deserto de Habor", as the kingdom was named in the letter to King Don Juan III, his response was addressed to King Joseph of "Deserto de Monte Tabor."

expelled from Portugal.[24] Miriam Eliav-Feldon, in her article on 'Invented Identities'[25], retells Reuveni's story, as part of the 'Invented Identities'; however, she does not add to our knowledge about his visit to the Funj Sultan, which is my reason for delving into this episode once again, concentrating instead upon his meetings with the Pope and other rulers in Europe. Indeed she states that 'there is no documentary corroboration for his travels prior to his arrival in Europe' which, in her view, is 'suspiciously similar to the information supplied by earlier works.'[26]

Finally, we arrive at the question as to where and when ha-Reuveni died. The debate as to whether David Reuveni was burnt to death by the Portuguese or the Spanish inquisitions has been going on for many years and was finally solved by Elias Lipiner. In a document sent by the Portuguese inquisition in 1552 to their Spanish counterparts in Lierna Spain, they accused a tailor named Afonso (sic.) Fernandes de Medellin, who had escaped from Spain to Portugal, of being a keen supporter of David ha-Reuveni. In the details pertaining to his case it became clear that Reuveni was in fact burnt to death by the Spanish inquisition in Lierna Spain, on 8 September 1538.[27]

---

[24] In Eshkoli *Reubeni*, LI; Lipiner states that he left in fact in 1526 following the King's final decision not to help him and following Reuveni's refusal to a proposal to embrace Christianity.

[25] Miriam Eliav-Fenton, 'Invented Identities: Credulity in the Age of Prophecy and Exploration', *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol.3 No.3 (Leiden, 1999), pp.203-32

[26] *Ibid.*, p.212, her assumption does not seem right in the case of his visit to Sinnar.

[27] Eshkoli *Reubeni*, LVI-LVII; the evidence is first quoted by Lipiner from "Prosecution file 5998, of the Inquisition of Evora, 1552" and related to the evidence given by Afonso Fernandes de-Medellin to the inquisition court in that city.

To conclude, David ha-Reuveni has to be viewed as a product of his generation. As such he fitted into a pattern of Jewish hope pertaining at that time, regarding the coming of the Messiah who would lead the Jews back to their historic homeland and bring about their salvation. The belief in messianic movements prevailed in particular after the Spanish inquisition and was propagated by the Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal. Ha-Reuveni, with his colorful background and his assumed ties with the king of Portugal and the Pope, seemed to fit into this pattern perfectly. And it is therefore understandable that Jews and Marranos in the Iberian Peninsula would fall for his story without hesitation. The fabricated story about the ten lost tribes, Reuveni's brother, King Joseph of Khabor and other episodic details should be viewed as incidental ploys added on by Reuveni as an aid to realize this holy mission. The 'tribes' he used for his purpose were the Jews of Ethiopia, whose ancestry was a mystery and could thus be made to fit into the Jewish dream of the ten lost tribes. Entire sections of Reuveni's manuscript were derived verbatim from literary sources, primarily those of Eldad ha-Dani[28] and Benjamin Metudella, both of whom were popular authors at this time.

[28] Eldad HaDani was a somewhat mysterious Jewish traveler who wrote his assumed experiences during the ninth century. He claimed that the tribe of Dan, one of the ten lost tribes, emigrated to Ethiopia prior to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire and the Jewish exile which followed. Consequently he stated that the Ethiopian Jews (the Fallashas), were in fact the offspring of Dan; see Haggai Erlich (ed.), *Ethiopia Christianity, Islam, Judaism*, [Hebrew](Tel Aviv, The Open University, 2003), p.275

Unity in Diversity:
the experience of Indonesia and Sudan

By Pieter Tesch

The problems of finding a new inclusive post-colonial national identity for nation states emerging from colonial territories in Africa and Asia are well illustrated by Indonesia and Sudan, which have respectively celebrated their sixtieth and fiftieth anniversaries of independence. Their experiences illustrate the ironies and contradictions of establishing such new national identities out of a European colonialism that had brought together, often under force of arms, diverse peoples of different pre-colonial cultures and often conflicting colonial experiences in the form of unitary states.

In her award winning documentary film, shown at the SSSUK symposium last September, *All About Darfur* Taghreed Elsandhouri asked the question why the official ideology of Sudan laid such a heavy emphasis on unity, even though that unity was borne out of very violent colonial conquest. Well before his current incarnation as the UN's special envoy in Sudan Jan Pronk - then minister for development in the then Dutch centre left coalition government - had a bruising encounter in the 1970s with the then president of Indonesia, General Suharto. Suharto had come to power following the military repression of an abortive Communist coup in 1965, and was a hate figure for people like Pronk, who was the Clare Short of his time in the Dutch Labour Party, while Suharto had a deep distrust for Dutch lefties trying to interfere in the former Dutch colony. According to 'reliable sources', Pronk tried to break the ice by saying that he was happy to have helped to remove from The Hague the statue of General van Heutz, the 'butcher of Aceh' in

northern Sumatra, a symbol of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. President Suharto, who started his military career as a NCO in one of the native units of the KNIL, the Royal Dutch Indies Army, before becoming one of its successful commanders in Indonesia's national army against the Dutch between 1945-49, is alleged to have replied: "But Mr Pronk you obviously don't know much about Indonesian history; without General van Heutz there would be no modern Indonesian state."

But while the concept of unity of the independent state is as axiomatic for the Indonesian as for the northern Sudanese ruling political and military elites, the former have also emphasised the concept of 'diversity' to reflect the new nation's diverse cultures and traditions. The ethos of the *Republik Indonesia* is symbolised in the legend in Sanskrit on the national coat of armour of Indonesia *Bhinneka Tungal Ika*, 'Unity in Diversity', held by the Garuda, the mythical Javanese hawk-eagle emblazoned with the symbols of the *Pancasila* or five principles formulated by the first president, Sukarno, in 1945. These principles are: belief in One Supreme God, but guaranteed equality between Islam, the majority religion, and Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, and even the so-called traditional beliefs, of the minorities; Just and Civilised Humanity; Unity of Indonesia; Democracy guided by Unanimity, and Social Justice for all the people of Indonesia.

The formulation of the *Pancasila* indicated a wish to recognise the diversity of the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago by taking into account their different histories, cultures, religions and aspirations. And while it has not stopped civil and communal strife post-independence and while its democratic principles have not always been honoured in the letter or spirit, the *Pancasila* has survived the sometimes difficult times

under the 'guided democracy' and 'Old Order' during the later 1950s and early 1960s of Sukarno and the subsequent 'New Order' under Suharto, and has guided the country to a new phase of democracy and peace settlements with East Timor and in Aceh after the fall of Suharto in 1998.

The *Bhinneka Tungal Ika* motto is derived from the Java based Hindu Buddhist Majapahit empire between the end of the 13th and early 16th century and complements the red and white flag of Indonesia, representing the Majapahit colours of courage and purity. The mainstream Indonesian nationalists sought to link their new secular republic with Indonesia's own largest historical pre-colonial, but also-pre-Islamic empire, to offer a new national identity that would embrace all Indonesians despite their different religious, ethnic and geographic backgrounds. Indonesia may be the world's largest Muslim country, but it is not an Islamic, let alone Islamist, state, despite a strong politic Islamic movement. In a Sudanese context, the comparison would have been for al-Azhari, al-Mahdi and al-Mirghani to drawn their inspiration for the symbols of the new independent state from the Kushite kingdoms, to give an identity that would appeal to non-Muslims and non-Arabic speakers as well rather than the varied forms of Arabism and political Islam of the majority. But instead it was the late John Garang who pushed the 'unity in diversity' concept as an idea to reform but retain the unity of the country into a 'new Sudan'.

One may argue that because of the obvious differences in geography and history Indonesia is potentially even more divided than Sudan; while Indonesia may appear to have a more united ecology, the so-called Wallace Line running between the islands of Kalimatan and Sulawesi in the north and Bali and Lombok in the south, divides western or Asian

Indonesia from eastern or Pacific Indonesia. It is more than a boundary marking different flora and fauna between western and eastern Indonesia, but also is a kind of invisible cultural and ethnic boundary between the 'Asian' and 'Pacific/Oceanic' cultures. In Sudan, by contrast, modern historians and archaeologists have pointed to the continuing strong African elements in the Middle Nile cultures from before the Kerma period (2500-1500 BCE) to the Funj Sultanate of the early modern period which link them to the Sudanic cultures of the Sahel from west to east.

Both Indonesia and the Sudan were, prior to the establishment of Islam, the home of ancient civilisations in their own right. These were no pale and primitive imitations of even more ancient civilisations. While Hinduism and Buddhism arrived in Indonesia from the Indian sub-continent, probably brought by Indonesian seafarers, the subsequent cultures and civilisations of for instance Sirivajaya of Sumatra and Majapahit of Java were entirely Indonesian in their character and expression – showing not imitation but adaptation and transformation. Islam in Indonesia only established itself relatively late as a religious, cultural and political power. When Marco Polo sailed past Sumatra at the end of the thirteenth century he noted small Muslim states in the north of the island, now known as Aceh, as the old maritime empire of the Buddhist Sirivajaya of Sumatra was crumbling. But the ascendancy of Hindu Majapahit empire of Java was still to come, and only splintered in the early 16th century, under pressure from newly established Muslim states on the coast of northern Java.

The result was that Islam in both Indonesia and the Sudan has developed in parallel and apparent contradictory forms, with a popular form based around saints and mystics incorporating much of pre-Islamic lore and folk

culture, alongside a minority formal, 'pure' form, on occasion militant and hostile, defensive because of its relative recent position as the dominant force in the country that has not been able to replace older and still lingering non-Muslim cultures.

In Indonesia, even though Islam did not arrive by Arab conquest it did not stop later Muslim states when established from waging *Jihad* on their non-Muslim neighbours for conquest and slaving, particularly on Sumatra and Java, but also on Kalimatan and Sulewesi. As Muslim mercantile communities established themselves, 'court conversion' by scholars and learned scribes of the host states became common, giving the monarchs access to the wider international community of the *Umma* and new legitimacy as Muslim monarchs. And these learned men became at a popular level the saints and venerated mystics. In Sudan, Islam became established outside the courts of the sultanates of the Funj and Dar Fur at popular level through learned men and mystics.

In Indonesia, by the time that Islam had become the dominant political and cultural force for the Indonesians, they had lost their economic and political independence to the Dutch. From establishing a trade monopoly in spices the latter had carved out a territorial empire in South East Asia through increasing political of the Indonesian states and imposing the cultivation of tropical cash crops. In northern Sudan, Islam had spread well beyond the courts before the invasion of Mohammad Ali, the new model Ottoman viceroy, in 1820. The Turco-Egyptian conquest was later completed with Dar Fur as well as Fashoda, Bahr al Ghazal and Equatoria, which were to become later southern Sudan. The defeat in 1898 of the Mahdist state in northern and central Sudan which had overthrown Turco-Egyptian rule and its European backers, turned what

became the modern country of Sudan in a virtual British colony until 1956. The Mahdist movement of the 19th century may be regarded as a kind of transition between traditional politics and ideologies and modern movements for independence. In Indonesia the movement of Prince Diponegoro of Yogjakarta that led to the Java War of 1825-1830 played a similar role, but his movement represents a typical Indonesian syncretism seeking its inspiration as much in Islam as in the older Hindu-Buddhist traditions. He became an inspiration for the modern Indonesian independence movements that sought as much their inspiration in Islam and the ancient cultures of Indonesia as well as the modern political -isms of liberalism, nationalism, socialism and communism.

Governed by the 'indirect rule' principle the development of Sudan was uneven, consolidating economic power in the Nile valley, and frustrating political development with its emphasis on traditional rulers adding to the strife from the peripheries against the centre in Sudan post independence. While a minority in Indonesia sought an answer in the Wahhabist type of reformed Islam, rejecting both the west as well Indonesian traditions, other blamed 'backward Islam' for the demise of the independent states of Indonesia by the Dutch. The Dutch also applied the principles of indirect rule through the traditional rulers. However, the Indonesian writer Mochtar Lubis has challenged the Dutch traditional view of 350 years of colonial rule by pointing out that such parts like Aceh, southern Bali, the interiors of Kalimatan and Irian were only brought under effective Dutch control in the last 50 years of colonial rule. By the time the Dutch colonial government was defeated by the Japanese in 1942, it had managed to alienate not only the Islamists or Communists, but also mainstream nationalists as well.

The nationalists seized the moment of Japan's capitulation on 15 August 1945 to try to prevent a return of Dutch colonial rule, by declaring the county an independent republic on 17 August. There followed what was to become a typically bloody Southeast Asian war of national liberation, as the Dutch tried to hang on in vain to their colony by military repression and politics of divide and rule, especially in eastern Indonesia. Dutch military intelligence and special forces played a role in arming the Islamist movement of Darul Islam (DI) in West Java against the mainstream secular nationalist movement. The budding Indonesian national army as the armed wing of the mainstream secular nationalists earned its spurs and respect among the majority of Indonesians in defeating regionalism, Islamism and Communism after the Communists attempted a coup in East Java in 1948 while the war of independence against the Dutch still raged. The latter finally acknowledged Indonesia's independence in 1949.

As in Sudan the first attempt at parliamentary democracy in Indonesia ended in chaos in the 1950s, while the Indonesian armed forces dealt with the lingering DI insurrection on West Java and rebellions elsewhere, which had brought together as unlikely bedfellows disaffected Christian army officers and DI militants from both islands, protesting against the dominance of Java. Finally with the support of the army and the communists, President Sukarno became a virtual dictator as the economy spiralled downwards, initiating 'guided democracy' or 'Old Order' period, but when Sukarno began to rely more and more on the Communists the army baulked. When the former suppressed a Communist coup, there followed one of the darkest and bloodiest periods of modern Indonesia in 1965/66. Under Suharto's *New Order* the Indonesian left was severely repressed, but while the regime certainly

played on occasion the religious, Islamic card, the army with its relatively large number of Christian officers never allowed radical Islamism to become a mainstream political force. It did, however, after Suharto was forced to resign in the face of a popular protest movement following the economic collapse of 1998, allow Indonesia to return to parliamentary democracy and the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, which Indonesia annexed in 1976, to secede and reaching a settlement with the Islamist separatists of Aceh.

Islamism tried to fill the gap left by Communism by exploiting social, economic and political grievances. An extreme element reconstructed DI as the Al Qaeda affiliate Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which had its hand in the bomb attacks on tourist targets on the Hindu island of Bali as well as in jihadist movements on Sulawesi and the Moluccans fighting local Christians. JI's 'mentor', Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, however - who shares more than a passing resemblance with Dr Hasan al-Turabi - never made it into the government.

Ultimately, in Sudan, the ruling political and military elite realised that the country's problems could not be solved by repression. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9 January 2005 ended the civil war in the south and should allow for a political settlement of economic and cultural differences. Standing on the threshold of a new beginning despite the continuing civil war in Darfur and eastern Sudan, Sudanese mainstream politicians of different background may want to study the Indonesian experience. While the Indonesian political and military elites are not beyond criticism, with their history of repression and corruption, the free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections in 2004 that finalised the transfer to democracy as well as the settlements with East Timor and in Aceh has never been given full recognition by the

usual western critics of Indonesia on the left and the right. The Indonesian government is engaged in devolving power to the regions. A review of the constitution and the *Pancasila* is on its way, but retaining its core value of 'Unity in Diversity' and equal rights for the majority Muslim and minority traditions. It will undoubtedly not be without pain and there may be setbacks, but the country is now closer to the original democratic vision of Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir, of combining modern secularism and all the traditions of pre-colonial Indonesia.

Bibliography

Adams, W.Y., 1977. *Nubia, Corridor to Africa.* London

Brown, C., 2003. *A Short History of Indonesia. The Unlikely Nation?* Crows Nest

Conboy, K., 2003. *Kopassus Inside Indonesia's Special Forces.* Jakarta

Conboy, K., 2006. *The Second Front, Inside Asia's Most Dangerous Terrorist Network.* Jakarta

Gelman Taylor, J., 2003. *Indonesia, Peoples and Histories.* New Haven and London

Hall, D.G.E., 1994. *A History of South East Asia.* London

Holt, P.M., and Daly, M.W., 2000. *A History of the Sudan from the Coming of Islam to the Present Day.* Harlow

Lubis, M., 1990. *Indonesia, Land under the Rainbow.* Oxford

Welsby, D.A., 1996. *The Kingdom of Kush, the Napatan and Meroitic Empires.* London

Welsby, D.A., 2002. *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia. Pagans, Christians and Muslims along the Middle Nile.* London

Welsby, D.A., and Anderson, J.R., (eds,) 2004. *Sudan: Ancient Treasures,* The British Museum Press, London

The Sudanese Seraskir: Adham Pasha El'Arifi

By John Udal

From the time of the establishment of the Fung Kingdom of Sennar in 1504 until the Turkish-Egyptian conquest of the northern Sudan in 1820 by Mohammed Ali Pasha, the political leaders were preponderantly Arab in respect of the dependent principality of the Abdullab, and its provinces of Kordofan, White Nile (El Ais), Blue Nile (Khashm el Bahr/Singa), Rahad (Beyla), Fazughli, and Taka (the Beja). If the most notable leaders were the Fung kings and their Abdullab viceroys, the greatest names were those of the first Fung king, Amara Dunkas, 1504-34; the Abdullab viceroy, Sheikh Agib el Mangilak, 1570-1611; and Mohammed Abu el Keylik, c.1755-74, Fung general, conqueror of Kordofan, then regent of the Kingdom.

They were ancestors of the people of today's independent Sudan. In 1820-21 however the conquest of Sennar in the name of the Ottoman Sultan extinguished home rule for the Sudanese until the coming of Muhammad Ahmed el Mahdi in 1882. The Arab sheikhdoms were subordinated to an administrative structure of governorates subdivided into *kashifliks*, all headed by Turks of the Ottoman empire, especially Circassians, Kurds and Albanians, the local tribal sheikhs being made responsible to them for order and tribute. Only exceptional sheikhs like Abdel Qadir el Zein, Ahmad Bey Awad el Karim Abu Sin and his son Awad el Karim Pasha Ahmad were trusted as subordinate administrators of large regions, in Abdel Qadir's case of the Blue and White Niles for some 30 years.

Turkish officers likewise monopolised all but the lowest officer ranks. Ferdinand Werne, German engineer under Ahmed Pasha Abu Widan, commented in 1840

> The higher officers and even the captains (yuzbashis) and first lieutenants (mulazimin el awal) are all Turks, and it is difficult for any Arab to reach the first lieutenancy.

Turks regarded the Arab officers as inferiors, speaking another language and treated by senior officers as domestics, fit to serve them with the coffee and fill their pipes.

However when Werne was recording this observation, Turkish dominant influence on the Viceregal government in Cairo was already on the decline, following the Russian occupation of Circassia and Georgia. Sir John Bowring, sent by Lord Palmerston to report on the state of Egypt, had concluded that by 1839 the Turkish race was

> . . . rapidly passing away . . . The whole character of the population is undergoing a silent but obvious change. The Egyptian element is gradually replacing the Turkish. The Arabic language is becoming more extensively used for official purposes. The public accounts are kept in Arabic.

It took substantially longer for Turkish predominance in the Sudan to wane. Following the death of Ahmed Widan in 1843 the Sudan was briefly divided into provinces ruled directly from Cairo. Nevertheless, Turkish military

governors remained in control, and the *hakimdaria* was restored in 1844. John Petherick, later British consul in Khartoum, estimated the armed forces to total in 1847 some 16,000 men, including three infantry regiments. Following the decision of Viceroy Mohammed Sa'id ten years later to revert to a Sudan (this time) of four separate provinces reporting directly to Cairo, only the armed forces remained unified under a Circassian *seraskir* Osman Pasha Jarkas, the total numbers much diminished. On his death in 1860 the residual battalions were again divided between the provinces.

This much weakened government of the Sudan, ruled by an irresolute Viceroy in Cairo whetted the expansionist dreams of the Abyssinian Emperor Theodore II, whose ambition was strengthened to reoccupy the lands conquered by the former Axumite dynasty in the 4th century AD. Frustrated at the eleventh hour by the firm reaction of the future Viceroy, Ismail Pasha Ibrahim, and by the latter's appointment in May 1862 of the experienced Circassian Musa Pasha Hamdi as *Hakimdar* of the Sudan, Theodore desisted for the while. Following the sudden death of Musa Hamdi in 1865, Theodore would then proceed to provoke the British Magdala expedition of 1868 by the arrest and imprisonment of the British Consul and of other Europeans in revenge for refusal to support his territorial ambitions.

1863 seemingly marks the first entry of Adham Bey el'Arifi ('Irayfi) into the history of the Sudan. According to Richard Hill he would then have been approaching fifty years of age, born of the 'Arifia branch of the central Kordofan Dar Hamid Baqqara, originating from Darfur, who pasture among the Nuba Mountains. Adham Bey was personally known as 'el Tegalawi'. Serving in the 9th Regiment of the Egyptian Army he had taken part ten

years earlier as its second in command and *qa'immaqam* in the Turkish forces fighting in the Crimean war, having previously fought under Ibrahim Pasha, el Wali, in the Syrian campaign of 1839. Now in May 1863 as a *miralai*, Adham was appointed by the new Viceroy Ismail Pasha Ibrahim, in response to Musa Hamdi's request for reinforcements as commander of a new regiment to be raised in the Sudan. By the end of that year he was escorting Sheikh Ahmed Bey Abu Sin on an expedition to the Fazughli area ostensibly to collect taxes – in the event, army recruits in lieu of taxes.

Adham Bey's first important active service in the Sudan relates to the Kassala revolt of July 1865, following on a mutiny the previous October of Dinka Moselm troops of the 4th Regiment over arrears of pay and shortage of grain. Despite the commendable truce efforts of the Khatmia religious leader Sayyid el Hassan el Mirghani, the insurrection in Kassala had not been put down. Government reinforcements were urgently sought from Khartoum. One of two relief columns to Kassala would be led by Adham Bey, the first to reach Kassala on 30 August eight weeks after the revolt and, due to the trust reposed in him by the mutineers, able to negotiate a surrender. But to no avail. The arrival of Albanian irregular troops a week later and the order of the garrison commander to imprison the mutineers led to a massacre of more than half the mutinous 4th Regiment, and the arrest of the remaining 759, of whom 240 were shot. Adham Bey protested in vain at the governor's failure to respect the terms of the surrender he had negotiated with the mutineers. He was nevertheless personally commended by the Viceroy for his resolute action. He was promoted to *lewa*, then pasha when in 1867 Ismail Pasha appointed him to command the black 1st and 2nd regiments, which were disbanded, reconstituted and dispatched back to the

Sudan. The Sudan army was now limited to some 7,000 men. Two years later the new *Hakimdar*, Ja'afar Pasha Mazhar noticed that Adham, unlike Europeans and senior Turkish commanders, remained undecorated. He recommended him for the prestigious Order of Medjidieh, Third Class.

Adham Pasha's promotion to the highest military rank of *seraskir*, commander-in-chief of the Sudan army, followed the angry resignation of the *Hakimdar*, Ja'afar Pasha Mazhar in July 1871 and the fragmentation of Sudan government into general-governorates. Once again as in 1857, security demanded a continued unified command of the armed forces and unsurprisingly, and doubtless on Ja'afar Mazhar's advice, Adham Pasha el'Arifi became *seraskir* of the Sudan.

Already Ismail Pasha had embarked upon his expansionist policy of African aggrandisement for which the Sudan, at the cost of its own neglect, would provide the springboard. The gathering financial crisis in Egypt itself being ignored, by 1869 claim had been laid to the southern littoral of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. With the appointment of Werner Munzinger, the former British and French consular agent, first as *muhafiz* of Massawa then general-governor of the Eastern Sudan, Bogos had been annexed from Abyssinia in April 1872. Sir Samuel Baker in 1870 had meanwhile embarked for the Sudan as leader of the Equatoria expedition to occupy the lacustrine kingdoms of what is now Uganda, while a further expedition under Sheikh Mohammed el Hilali was simultaneously attempting the annexation of Dar Fertit and northern Bahr el Ghazal as an approach route to Darfur.

All this military activity argued a strong central control of the Sudan, yet it was at this moment that its government was weakened by the gratuitously provoked resignation of Ja'afar Pasha Mazhar, and the reversion to fragmented rule. Worse, the Khedivial favourite transferred to Khartoum in November 1871, Ahmed Mumtaz Pasha, hitherto general-governor of the Red Sea littoral and now styled 'of South Sudan', was in July 1872 arrested, seemingly for gross financial irregularities in the levy of taxation and the escalating debt. Adham Pasha the *seraskir* was ordered to arrest him and act as general-governor in his place.

Here at last was the opportunity to appoint an experienced Sudanese, if not yet as *Hakimdar* of the Sudan, at least as general-governor of the south at Khartoum. Now aged in the mid-50s, with a proven record of senior military leadership and with extensive battle experience in Turkish-Egyptian service; trusted by his Sudanese troops for courage and justice, and uncorrupt, he would have made an ideal appointment as ruler of the Sudan as he would demonstrate during the next two months. But he was not Turkish nor personally possessed of a following in ruling circles in Cairo. The appointment as general-governor went instead to Ismail Pasha Ayub, a Circassian with many years military service in the Sudan, formerly president of the Khartoum Council under Ja'afar Mazhar, but passed over earlier that year for appointment to command the 1st Regiment in Khartoum and repatriated to Cairo.

Both Adham el'Arifi and Ismail Ayub would become involved in the serious reverse suffered by the expedition of Mohammed el Hilali, the Khedive's *nazir* of Dar Fertit. In May 1872, having been incompletely reinforced by

Ja'afar Mazhar, Hilali had embarked upon the suppression of the slave *zaribas* of Sheikh Zubeir Rahma Mansour, of Bahr el Ghazal, to be then pursued and killed by Zubeir's principal lieutenant Rabih Fadlallah. The news reached Adham Pasha, acting general-governor and seraskir in August, who reported to Cairo at once. In his judgement Hilali's death and the failure of an expedition in the name of the Khedive stemmed from the treachery of Zubeir's *zariba* owners. Accordingly a relief expedition should be dispatched from Kordofan and Zubeir be arrested and brought to Khartoum for a public enquiry, and Adham Pasha advised Cairo accordingly. The Khedive on the contrary blamed Sheikh Hilali for attacking the *zaribas* and, if an investigator were indeed to be sent to Deym Zubeir and confirmed this, the *zariba* owners were to be compensated. Ismail Ayub, who now arrived in Khartoum to succeed Ahmed Mumtaz, took the same stance and blamed Ja'afar Mazhar for Hilali's appointment. Zubeir, the arch slave-trader, would go on to conquer Darfur in the name of the Khedive, Ismail Ayub to become *Hakimdar*. Adham Pasha would revert to *seraskir* on 21 October 1872.

Seraskir again, Adham Pasha loyally served his new general-governor but there is little information regarding the specific duties in which he became involved in the remainder of his service. On the morrow of this installation as general-governor in Khartoum in October 1872, Ismail Ayub ordered the occupation and fortification of the important market border post of Gallabat on the Abyssinian frontier, an exercise undertaken personally by Adham Pasha having regard to the threat from the predatory rivals to succeed Emperor Theodore II – John of Tigré and Woronya of Amhara. The occupation was successfully consolidated in May 1873. For the while Ismail Ayub, to be advanced to *Hakimdar* in December 1873, looked to Adham

Pasha to deputise for himself in his absences from his capital. When however in June 1874 Ayub was at last authorised by Cairo to join, with his regular troops, the already successful pre-emptive invasion of Darfur by Zubeir's private militia, it was Mohammed Bey Hasan, president of the court of appeal, whom Ayub selected as vice-governor-general, to be superseded in his turn in February 1875 by Khalid Bey Nadim.

Had Adham Pasha already retired as *seraskir*? While a commander-in-chief had been necessary when the Sudan was fragmented in its rule, nevertheless it was possible for a centralized *hakimdaria* to have a *seraskir* as in the case of Gordon Pasha and Osman Pasha Rifki in 1877. In 1874, during the vice-*hakimdaria* of Mohammed Bey Hasan, who had no military rank, a *seraskir* would have been essential in the absence of the *Hakimdar*, and Adham Pasha may be presumed then to have still been in post. But in February 1875 Khalid Nadim had attained the rank of *qa'immaqam* and, by May 1877 under Gordon, *miralai* rank when he was vice-governor-general. Accordingly it may be that Adham Pasha, by then perhaps aged 60, had retired. We do know that when in October 1879 the search was on for a successor as *Hakimdar* to Gordon Pasha, Adham el'Arifi's name was not canvassed.

The first Sudanese national to reach the rank of *lewa* (brigadier) and to be *seraskir* of the army under Turkish-Egyptian rule of the Sudan, Adham Pasha has left a most distinguished and honoured name behind him.

Bibliography

Arkell, A.J. *The History of the Sudan from the Earliest Times to 1821* (London, 1855)

Crawford, O.G.S. *The Fung Kingdom of Sennar* (Gloucester, 1951)

Douin, Georges, *Historie du Règne du Khédive Ismail*, vol. iii, *L'empire Africain: partie 1 1863-69* (Cairo, 1936); *partie 2, 1869-73* (Cairo, 1938)

Hill, Richard and Peter Hogg, *A Black Corps d'Élite* (Michigan, 1995)

Spaulding, J. *The Heroic Age in Sennar* (Michigan, 1985)

Udal, John O. *The Nile in Darkness: i. Conquest and Exploration, 1504-1862* (Norwich, 1998); *ii. A Flawed Unity, 1863-69* (Norwich, 2005)

A Note on Locust Hunting

By Arthur Staniforth

Just sixty years ago I was summoned to Wad Medani where Maxwell Darling, the Sudan Government Entomologist, had a wall map showing where locust swarms had been reported in the Northern Province. He explained the situation and briefed me on the job to be done.

The locusts had flown in to lay their eggs, in pods of about 200, in land which would shortly turn green with vegetation as the seasonal rains fell. The moisture would also cause the millions of eggs to hatch into tiny hoppers which advanced in hordes, consumed the greenery and, as they grew in size, shed their skins several times until, full sized, they sprouted wings and flew on to commit their depredations.

Flying locusts are hard to kill but the hoppers are vulnerable and my job was to supervise gangs which spread a poison bait of Paris Green and bran in front of the advancing hopper armies.

I arrived at Shendi on September the 14th, picked up my tent, water supply and provisions and, with my cook, driver, and truck, made for a place called Bir al Nagaa. There I found two privates from the Royal Corps of Signals, loaned from the army for the campaign, already installed, with the wireless which kept us in touch with Shendi and the central store of bait, oil, petrol and money. The two soldiers had happily discarded their uniforms and were enjoying themselves in Arab *jellabiyya* and *imam* and, in their spare time, looking after a young, orphaned gazelle.

I worked on the right bank of the Nile and Robin Hodgkin, from the Education Department, looked after the campaign on the left bank. You can find some account of his experiences in *Exploring: Robin Hodgkin's Letters from the Sudan*, which was reviewed in *Sudan Studies* number 33.

The work was interesting, in a part of the Sudan where there were many ruins from earlier civilizations. For details and illustrations readers may consult my book, *Imperial Echoes*, obtainable from the Ituri press, 4 Chestnut Close, Woodford Halse, Northants, NN11 3 NB.

When the scouts could find mo more hoppers, we paid off the gangs and returned unused bait to the Shendi store. The campaign had killed many millions of locusts and so saved large areas of crops. We bought a lamb from a local nomad and the two signalers, their interpreter and guide and my cook and driver and I had an end-of-term feast. The signallers I knew only as Geoff and Dutch and they came from the Midlands. It must have been a quite idyllic interlude for them and I wonder what they went back to in 'civvy street', and what tales they may have told their grandchildren of the time they went locust hunting in the Sudan.

Designation status for the Sudan Archive, Durham University Library

In 2005 the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) extended its Designation Scheme, formerly available only to museums, to libraries and archives, and institutions in England were invited to apply for designation status. On 28 October 2005 the MLA announced a list of 38 collections in libraries and archives across England that had been recognised as having outstanding national and international importance under the Designation Scheme.

Durham University Library successfully applied for designation status for two of its outstanding collections, Bishop Cosin's Library and the Sudan Archive.

The Sudan Archive was founded in 1957, the year after Sudanese independence, to collect and preserve the private papers of British officials who had served or lived in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium period (1899-1955). Now the major archive on the Sudan outside Khartoum, it comprises approximately 800 boxes of official, semi-official and personal papers from over 320 individuals, 50,000 photographs, 1,000 maps, 130 cinefilms, museum objects and sound recordings.

All levels of colonial society are represented, from Governor-General and senior officers of government, to Assistant District Commissioner, as well as from the technical and medical services, the army and the church. Major individual collections include the papers of General Sir Reginald Wingate (1861-1953), the second Governor-General, and the Sudan papers of Sir

James Robertson (1899-1983), former Civil Secretary. The scope of the Archive now extends to the Mahdiyyah (1885-1898), with over 300 Mahdist documents in Arabic and material on British involvement in the Nile campaigns of the 1880s and 1890s, and to the period after independence. Moreover, as officials were frequently seconded or posted to neighbouring countries, or simply passed through them on leave, the Archive also holds substantial numbers of papers relating to Egypt, the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine, Transjordan, and African states bordering on the Sudan.

It is hoped that this new status, recognising the international significance of the Sudan Archive, will help to raise its profile and to attract more visitors.

For further information see the website for Archives and Special Collections at http://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/ or contact Jane Hogan at pg.library@durham.ac.uk (tel: 0191 3342932).

M. W. Daly and Jane R. Hogan, ***Images of Empire: Photographic sources for the British in the Sudan***, Brill NV, Leiden, 2005. 391 pp. ISBN 90 04 14627 X

This volume, comprising over 300 annotated photographs of the Sudan during the Condominium years, helpfully arranged into topics such as 'Leisure', 'Transport', and 'British women in the Sudan', offers an way into the collection of more than 48,000 images currently housed in the Sudan Archive in Durham. The general reader is provided for admirably, lowered gently into the academic blast furnace without being put off by all of the hot air this contraption lets of from time to time. The modestly described 'General Introduction' is no Wikipedia article, packing a surprising degree of detail into its seventy-odd easily-readable pages, and is further supplemented by comprehensive footnotes that serve primarily as signposts elsewhere. But the book is evidently as much a work to illustrate what can be found in the archives in Durham on further investigation, a means to an end and an end in itself. And if it steels the nerve of, and spurs into action, anyone contemplating undertaking an arduous and comprehensive review of this most underused of sources, it will have served a great deal of good. It should do.

What these photographs help to do perhaps most of all, and certainly most obviously of all, is to give the modern viewer a sense of the passing of time. An image of the shining tomb of the Mahdi, restored by Sayyid Abd al-Rahman in the late 1940s, is juxtaposed neatly and starkly with one of the original, taken in 1898 shortly before it was blown up, reminding the viewer in a simple and effective manner of the difference that alterations in the relationship between colonizer and colonized define

the extent to which certain things can and cannot, (or will and will not, depending on your perspective) be allowed.

Perhaps it was simply a matter of space, but it would seem more could have been done to draw inferences from the photographs. For example, were the numerous images taken of new buildings Khartoum and elsewhere an affirmation by the British that they felt at ease with what they had created, that they were convinced they could reconcile a British 'modernity' to an 'ancient' Africa? Or were they merely snaps to show parents eager for information where they lived, worked and socialised? Or both? And, as Peter Galassi has shown with respect to the photography of Cartier-Bresson, did the rationale behind colonial photography shift from a desire to take a photo like a 'scalpel that cuts the fragment of perception from its context, displacing it into the realm of imagination' to, in the post World War Two years, photography where the click of the shutter 'gathers "the significance of an event" into the still frame, suggesting the absent context'? But this is a small quibble. This is a long overdue collection sensitively collected and edited by two that rank among the pre-eminent in their respective fields. Every picture might not tell a thousand words, but this collection demonstrates that many of them contain important words still yet to be written.

Christopher Prior
University of Durham

John Udal, ***The Nile in Darkness. A Flawed Unity, 1863-1899***, Michael Russell, Norwich, 2005, xiv, 685. ISBN 0 85955 2918. £55.

The second volume of John Udal's ambitious history of the Nile takes the story up to the creation of the Condominium – the 'flawed unity' of the title - and is as detailed and carefully written as the first. The focus is

really on Sudan, with the other countries of the region playing a supporting role; and the depth of Udal's knowledge of detail is remarkable. This is, it should be said, a particular kind of history book. Those looking for explicit analysis will not find it here, for this is very much a work of narrative, in which the larger questions of 'why' are rarely addressed directly. But for those who wish a closely detailed retelling of the story of the Turkiyya, the Mahdist revolt, the Khalifa's state and the 'reconquest', this will be a welcome book; clearly written and with a very impressive grasp of a wide body of sources.

This style brings its problems, of course. Alongside the absence of explicit narrative, there is here an easy acceptance of the assumptions of a rather dated literature, and academic historians may find some of these assumptions a little jarring. British policy in Egypt is discussed very briefly indeed, and the assumption here is that it was the desire to suppress disorder and prevent the massacre of Europeans which led to the Occupation. There is, surprisingly, no real discussion of the motives for reconquest, or the political complications which this curious Anglo-Egyptian operation were to raise. Nor is there any attempt to acknowledge the debate which has risen in reassessment the role of some figures who loom large in this narrative: for Udal, Samuel Baker is still the heroic explorer and administrator; Gordon the noble hero, badly treated by Gladstone's government. This may, overall, seem a slightly dated book; but it is undoubtedly also a considerable scholarly achievement.

Justin Willis
University of Durham

Sudan Studies* is published twice yearly by the Sudan Studies Society - UK (SSSUK).

All correspondence, articles and features relating to ***Sudan Studies***, and books for review, should be addressed to

Hon. Editor
Sudan Studies
c/o Flat 2/2
56 Ashley St
Glasgow G3 6HW

Email: Sudanssuk@aol.com

Notes for contributors

SSSUK welcomes notes and articles intended for publication, which will be assessed by the Editorial Board. The normal maximum length of an article is 5,000 words including footnotes; longer articles may be accepted for publication in two or more parts. Notes and articles should be typed and double-spaced and wherever possible submitted as paper copy and as word-processed files (in PC format) on diskette or as email attachments. SSSUK retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space and consistency of style and spelling. ***Sudan Studies*** aims to follow the editorial style of ***African Affairs***, the Journal of the Royal African Society.

Manuscripts are not normally returned to authors, but original material such as photographs will be returned.

It is helpful to have, very briefly (2-3 lines) any relevant details about the author - any post held, or time recently spent in the Sudan.

* Single issues and back numbers may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary at a cost of £8 per copy.