SOME RECENT SUDANESE BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS, AND HISTORIES (INCLUDING MUSIC) 
A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE¹ 

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The present note presents partial information on a number of recent publications on the Sudan from both within and without the Sudan. The criterion for inclusion has been that the works noticed are primarily of an historical or biographical character. Writings that are overtly political have not been included.

Introduction: The past and the further past

The distance from the independence of the Sudan in 1956 is beginning to impose a change of perspective on the colonial period and how it is perceived. Most of the ‘classic’ studies of Condominium Sudan (1898–1956), ṢAbd al-Ṯālim, Daly, Warburg, Woodward and so on,² were largely written out of

¹ The books described here were bought on visits to Khartoum and Cairo in 1993, 94 and 95. These visits were financed by the co-operation programme between the Universities of Bergen and Khartoum and the National Records Office (NRO). As always I am grateful to the programme’s co-ordinator, my colleague Anders Bjørkelo, for his support. I should like also to thank Dr. Muḥammad Ibrāhim Abū Ṣalıım, former Secretary-general, and Dr. ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ ʿAbū Ṣarār, present Secretary-general, of the NRO for their practical help in getting the books to Bergen. Needless to say, these same books are available to bone fide scholars in Bergen.

² Mudathir Ṣabāḥ al-Raḥim, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan, Oxford 1969; M.W. Daly, Empire on the Nile and Imperial Sudan, Cambridge 1986 & 1991; Gabriel Warburg, Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society: the case of the Sudan, London 1978, and Peter Woodward, The Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism, London 1979. This by no means exhausts the list of such works. It is perhaps the very richness and articulateness of the British records (as well as the liberal access policy of the National Records Office in Khartoum and the Sudan
British sources, where the actions of Sudanese political figures are largely described and analysed through British eyes. Perhaps not yet, but surely in a decade or so, this new perspective, buttressed by the type of literature discussed here from the last years of colonial rule and the first of independence, will entail a new interpretation of the whole colonial era and its aftermath.

In a similar way, the ‘standard’ writings on the pre-colonial northern Sudan by Crawford, Hill, Holt, Spaulding, the present writer and many others, will hopefully be modified and deepened by a combination of ethnographic, historical and anthropological studies by Sudanese scholars and others, eventually to lead to a new synthesis of our understanding of the Sudan’s complexity. The complexification of pre-colonial Sudanese historiography is in fact well underway.3

In the first category, over the last twenty years or so a number of memoirs and biographies have been published that provide new fodder for the historian of the modern Sudan. Likewise both in the Sudan and in the new Sudanese diaspora, new works of history are being published. These latter fall into two broad categories; ‘traditional’ tribal genealogically-based works of a type pioneered by the Sudanese historian-cum-chronicler, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (see elsewhere in this issue the article by Ibrāhīm, Karrār and O’Fahey). These works usually contain ethnographic and historical data of the greatest value, even if it has to be very carefully evaluated. The second category of historical writings are broadly ‘revisionist’ and are often produced by Sudanese scholars living outside the country. Often they conceal a political agenda that is not always immediately apparent.

In the case of the memoirs and modern biographies, since I

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3 See the discussions in Neil McHugh, Holymen of the Blue Nile. The making of an Arab-Islamic community in the nilotic Sudan, 1500-1850, Evanston 1994, 1-32, and Albrecht Hofheinz, Internalizing Islam. Shaykh Muhammad Majdhūb, scriptural Islam and local context in early nineteenth-century Sudan, Chapter two (Dr.philos. thesis, University of Bergen; forthcoming)
am no specialist on the recent history of the Sudan, my purpose here is not so much to pass judgement on the quality of the works noticed here, but simply to record that they exist and give some indication of their contents.

**Political biography**

For the nineteenth century, we have a very useful recent publication, namely Khalīfa ʿAbbas al-ʿUbayd, *al-Zubayr Basha* (Cairo: Markaz al-dirāsāt al-Sūdāniyya 1995, 120 pp.). This is in fact more a compilation than a monograph. The core of the work is a translation of Flora Shaw’s interviews with al-Zubayr Pasha in Gibraltar published originally in *The Contemporary Review* (1887, 333-49, 564-85 and 658-83), plus other original sources, including al-Zubayr’s *al-Ajwiba al-sadīda*, reproduced from the only known extant lithograph in the Egyptian national archives.⁵ *Al-Ajwiba* presents a series of letters from al-Zubayr to the sultan of Darfur, Ibrāhīm Qarad (reigned 1873-74) and to various Darfur ʿulamā’ justifying his invasion of the sultanate; the arguments combine assertions of the sole legitimacy of the Ottoman Sultan/Caliph with insinuations about the soundness of Islam in Darfur.⁶ For its reproduction of *al-Ajwiba al-sadīda* alone, al-ʿUbayd’s work would be valuable, but the value of his work is enhanced by copious quotations from the verse in praise of al-Zubayr by the poetess, Umm Misaymis, and some striking photographs of al-Zubayr striding his fields at Jaylı in old age.⁷

Few formal biographies of major political figures of the twentieth century have as yet been published. We still lack full-length published biographies of such figures as the two ‘Sayyids’, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and ʿAlī al-Mīrghanī. One major biography is by the veteran Sudanese journalist, Bashīr Muḥammad Saʿīd of Ismāʿīl al-Azharī (1900–69), the first prime

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⁴ All the works referred to here are listed again in the bibliography at end.
⁵ For full details, see *ALA*, i, 71.
⁶ For a more detailed analysis, see my ‘Al-Zubayr and the Conquest of Darfur in 1874’, *Sudan Notes and Records* (forthcoming).
⁷ See further, *ALA*, i, 87.
minister of the independent Sudan, *al-Za'îm al-Azharî wa-\c{a}sruhu* (Cairo: al-Qâhira al-hadîth li'l-\c{t}ibâ'îa, Ahmad Bahî 'l-Dîn al-Kharbûṭî 1990, 511 pp.). \Sâ'id, the founder of al-Ayyâm Press and newspaper; past President of the Sudan Press Association (1957–58); member of the Sudan’s National Constitution Commission (1958), and delegate to the UN, effectively retired from public life under the Numayrî regime (1969–85). In compensation, he has written a number of books, including a somewhat apologetic work in English on the ‘Southern question’: *The Sudan. Crossroads of Africa* (London: The Bodley Head 1965, 238 pp.) and a biography of the nationalist lawyer, Ahmad Khayr (see bibliography below).8

Although \Sâ'id’s biography of al-Azharî is a conventional one, it is informed by a deep intimacy between author and subject; the former first met the latter in 1936.

Although its subject never became prime minister, \c{U}thmân Mu\c{h}ammad al-\c{H}asan’s edited collection of the letters and other writings of the late Jamîl Muhammad Ahmad throws much light on Sudanese politics in the immediate independence years, and particularly on the Sudan’s attempts to find a place for itself in the Afro-Arab World. *Jamîl Muhammad Ahmad: rasâ’il wa-\c{a}wrâq khâṣṣa* (Beirut: Dâr al-Jîl 1992, 215 pp.). Jamîl Mu\c{h}ammad Ahmad (1915–85) was a Nubian born at Wadi Halfa, who after a distinguished academic career at Khartoum and Oxford, spent the rest of his life moving between the national university and the Foreign Ministry. A prolific writer, in English \c{A}hmâd’s best known work is probably his Oxford B.Litt. thesis, *The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press 1960, xi, 135 pp.). His Nubian background comes to expression in a volume of short stories, *Stories of Serra East* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1985, 89 pp.).9

\c{A}l-\c{H}asan’s volume, after a brief introduction, comprises

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8 His other works are listed in the bibliography; I am unable to give full bibliographical references.

9 Again I have listed Jamîl Muhammad Ahmad’s writings on the basis of al-\c{H}asan (p. 27), even when I have no publication details. Dr. \c{A}rif Jamîl tells me that he has numerous letters of his father that he hopes to publish (personal communication).
selections of Ahmad’s letters to his family (pp. 31–74), to his friends (75–100); letters and other documents from his period as ambassador and, finally articles and lectures from his academic years. The volume is elegantly and movingly introduced by the Sudanese novelist, al-Tayyib Sāliḥ (pp. 5–17).

Service memoirs – military and civilian

On an altogether more rollicking note are the memoirs of General (‘amīd) al-Ṭāhir Muḥyī ’l-Dīn al-Najīb, Ālam al-ḍubbāt bayn al-inqilābāt wa’l-ḥarb wa’l-salām, wa’l-thalāṭa ‘W’ wa’l-thalāṭa ‘S’ (Omdurman: al-Maṭba’a al-‘askariyya al-Šūdāniyya 1990, 216 pp.). The tone is set when the author explains that the three ‘W’s stand for ‘War, wine and women’, while the three ‘S’s stand for ‘Security, stability and sacrifice’. Al-Najīb started his military career in a Sudanese artillery battery stationed at Tripoli in North Africa in the Second World War. His book is a mixture of memoirs and general reflections, including a chapter on all the military coups between 1958 and 1985. A final chapter discusses ‘the world of the officers’, ālam al-ḍubbāt, with such subheadings ālam al-ḍubbāt wa’l-khamr, ālam al-ḍubbāt wa’l-nisā’ and so on.

A more serious work, also published by the Military Press in Omdurman, is Māmūd ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Fakī, al-Quwwāt al-musallaha fī taʾrīkh al-Šūdān al-hadīth 1935–1975 (Omdurman: al-Maṭba’a al-‘askariyya al-Šūdāniyya n.d., c. 190 pp.). This is part history, part memoir by the former deputy Chief of Staff (nāʿib raʾīs hayʾat al-arkān) between 1974 and 77. Although no date of publication is given, it must be after 1989 since the book is graced by a preface by ʿUmar al-Bashīr. General al-Fakī’s book is a relatively detailed history whose value is enhanced by the numerous documents and lists of officers, with details of their careers, which are included.

A third, relatively brief, military memoir is that of Muḥyī ’l-Dīn Aḥmād ʿAbd Allāh, Liʾl-taʾrīkh wa-min ajl al-taʾrīkh (Omdurman: al-Maṭba’a al-‘askariyya n.d., 94 pp.). The author, born at al-Nuhūd in Kordofan in 1923 into a military family,
gives a very lively account of his career in the Second World War and after.

A fourth military work is by airforce colonel (‘aqīd ṭayyār) Muḥammad ʿUthmān Ahmad, Ḍuwwat dīfāʾ al-Sūdān, dawrūhā wa-ʿāthār isḥtirākīhā fī ‘l-ḥarb al-ʿālamīyya al-thāniyya (Omdurman: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿaskariyya 1990, 214 pp.). This a scholarly well-documented history, with a detailed bibliography, of the Sudan Defence Force’s campaigns in the Second World War. The author notes that he intends to publish a further work, Dalīl al-bāḥith al-ʿaskarī.

A work that is halfway between military and civilian memoirs is Ḥasan Ṣāliḥ Bayyūmī, Jihāz amn al-dawla: amāma maḥkamat al-taʾrîkh: tajribat al-Sūdān fī ‘l-amn (n.p. [Khartoum] 1993, 2nd pr., 207 pp.). The author was head of the Sudan intelligence and counter-espionage services for most of the Numayrī years and the principal architect of the 1978 ‘Qānūn jihāz amn al-dawla’, which he gives in full as an appendix (pp. 197-202). Jihāz amn al-dawla is not so much a memoir, but rather an essay on the Sudan’s security and intelligence needs and experiences in which the author explains such terms as ‘cover operation’ and ‘dead letter boxes’. But throughout the book there are titbits that will undoubtedly be of interest to the historian of the contemporary Sudan; for example, he discusses briefly the Sudan government’s involvement in the airlift of the Falasha from Ethiopia to Israel via the Sudan in 1980 (pp. 188-9).

A work reminiscent in tone of the best British Sudan Political Service memoirs is Ḥusayn Muḥammad Ahmad Sharfī, al-Adārī fī ‘l-Sūdān (1942-1973) (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1992, 333 pp.). The author, born and educated in Omdurman, entered the civil service as a nāʾib maʾmūr in northern Kordofan in 1945, rose through the service to become governor of the Ḍaḥr al-Ghazāl in 1964 and, later, governor of

10 Which works continue to be published, witness Donald Hawley, Sandtracks in the Sudan, Wilby (Norfolk): Michael Russell 1995, 160 pp. Sir Donald Hawley served for the last part of his Sudan years in the Legal Department in Khartoum and has much to say of great interest on legal and judicial matters.
Northern Province. The memoirs, evidently based on diaries and contemporary documents kept by the author and written in strict chronological sequence, offer a wealth of detail, blending, as in the best SPS memoirs, informal storytelling with serious discussion of administrative issues. The author notes also that he has also written a book, in English, on the Southern question, which if it has been published is unknown to me, and a guide to the Northern Province, *al-Murshid li’l-mudīriyya al-Shamāliyya*. It seems that the latter is unpublished; judging by the quality of the information and reflections in *al-Adā’ al-idārī*, it ought to be published.

A more purely political memoir is that of the prominent Democratic Unionist Party politician, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Khalīfa, *Min Turāthinā al-siyāsī bayn al-Khartūm wa’l-Qāhira, 1949-1969* (Khartoum 1992, 247 pp.). The main focus of the memoirs is the Southern issue as seen through the eyes of the DUP; given the longstanding ties between the DUP and Egypt, al-Khalīfa has much to say on Egyptian involvement in the Southern Sudan issue.


*Al-Ustād Maḥmūd Muḥammad Tāhā. Rā’id al-tajdid al-dīnī fī ’l-Sūdān* (Cairo: Markaz al-dirāsāt al-Sūdāniyya 1992, 141 pp.). This is a volume of essays, written essentially by admirers of the late Maḥmūd Muḥammad Tāhā, by Ḥaydar Ibrāhīm ʿAlī, ʿAbdullāhī al-Naʿīm, ʿAlam al-Dīn ʿUmar, Muḥammad Aḥmad Maḥmūd, Tāhā Ibrāhīm and Jörgen Rogalski.

To conclude this section, I shall mention two works by the veteran journalist, Ahmad Muḥammad Shāmūq; the first is an older work, *Dīsimbir 1955* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-ʿāśima bi’l-Qāhira

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11 The book is described as vol. 2 of the author’s memoirs.
12 In the case of the last named it is a question of an Arabic précis of Rogalski’s German MA dissertation.
1981, 122 pp.), which offers a detailed account, with a heavy emphasis on the Egyptian connexion, of the final days of the Sudan’s transition to independence. The second work by Shāmūq is a sociologist’s delight, *al-Shakhṣiyāt al-Sūdāniyya al-muʿāṣira* (Khartoum: Bayt al-thaqāfa 1988, 482 pp.). This is a, mainly northern Sudanese, ‘Who’s Who’, providing professional and personal information (family details, addresses, hobbies, and similar) for a goodly proportion of the northern Sudanese elite. For anyone interested in the contemporary Sudan, it is perhaps one of the most informative books published in recent years.13

Books on music and of music

A number of books on or of music—a great Sudanese passion—have been published in recent years; here I only notice those that I have in my possession. Two are older studies by the folklorist and musicologist, ʿAlī al-Dawʾ. The first is an illustrated inventory in Arabic and English of Sudanese musical instruments: ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad and ʿAlī al-Dawʾ, *al-Ṭl al-mūṣiqīyya al-taqlīdiyya fī ʿl-Sūdān / Traditional Musical Instruments in Sudan* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1985, 83 pp.). The second is ʿAlī al-Ḍawʾ, *al-Mūṣiqā al-taqlīdiyya fī muṭtamaʿ ʿal-Bīrtā* (Khartoum: Khartoum University 1988, 158 pp.), a detailed study of Berta music and its role in Berta society.

Two other works, although they have much to say about Sudanese music in general, are centred on institutions, in particular the famous Institute of Music, Drama and Folklore, the brain-child of Dr. ʿAbd al-Majīd Abū Ḥasabū, which was established in 1969.14 The first is by the well-known singer and writer Dr. al-

13 See further Heather Sharkey’s article in this issue of *SAJHS*.
Fātih al-Ṭāhir, Ānā’ Umm Durmān. Ta’rīkh al-mūsīqā fī ’l-Sūdān (Khartoum: Maktabat al-Sūdān 1993, 128 pp.). This is an attempt to write a history of Sudanese music in this century, centred on biographies of the principal singers; its value to musicologists is enhanced by its listing (pp. 125-6) of the main protagonists with their dates of death.¹⁵ The second work is a beautifully-produced monograph, with many musical quotations and photographs of such figures as the poet ʿUmar al-Banāṭ, son of the great poet of the Mahdiyya, Muḥammad ʿUmar al-Banāṭ (d. 1919; see ALA, I, 339) and singer Khalīl Faraḥ, by Jumā’ā Jābir, al-Mūsīqā al-Sūdānīyya. Ta’rīkh, turāth, huwiyya, naqd (Khartoum: Sharikat al-Farābī n.d., 397 pp.). Both al-Ṭāhir and Jābir’s books are fundamental sources for any serious academic study of Sudanese music.

Finally, Dr. al-Fātih al-Ṭāhir has produced 30 Sudanese Songs Born to Live: arranged for piano and vocal (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1992, 79 pp.). As its title says, this work presents as sheet music thirty well known Sudanese songs; one problem is that it does not give the lyrics.

Histories – traditional and otherwise

ʿAbd al-Qādir Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Dawra, Ta’rīkh mamlakat Taqālī al-islāmiyya (Khartoum: Maṭba’at al-Markaz al-islāmī al-Ifrīqī 1994, 190 pp.) is a splendid example of the Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm tradition of writing, a detailed compilation of oral traditions, genealogies, king-lists and the like. The author, born in al-ʿAbbāsiyya in 1934, is a member of the dynastic clan of Jabal Taqālī, his fifth ancestor (jadduḥu al-khāmis) being makk Muḥammad b. al-makk Jaylī Ābū Qurūn. The compilation was begun in the 1960s and the present book is based on a manuscript preserved in the National Records Office on the theme of ethnicity in Sudanese history and politics presented at a conference in Cairo in April 1995 organised by the Centre of Sudanese Studies there.

¹⁵ A point not to be undervalued, since it is often extraordinarily difficult to find the death-date of contemporary or near-contemporary personalities.
in Khartoum. Indeed, the book has a foreword by Dr. Muhammad Ibrahîm Abû Salîm, the former director of the NRO, who gives, among other reasons, the explanation that the book was published because Dr. Janet Ewald’s book on Taqalî was in English and was ‘very expensive’.

The book raises the interesting question of the interaction between ‘Western’ and indigenous scholarship. In his introduction, ʻAbd al-Qâdir makes clear his familiarity with the article by the British colonial official, R.J. Elles (‘The kingdom of Tegali’, *Sudan Notes and Records*, xviii, 1935, 1-36) and with the researches of Dr. Janet Ewald, 16 ‘who stayed with us for three years (wa-makathat ma‘anâthalâthasana‘awât)’. One wonders if the fact of Dr. Ewald’s research was the spur to Sayyid Dawra’s writing.

A second compilation of tribal traditions seems possibly also to have been a response to Western, in this case colonial, scholarship, namely Şiddîq Muhammad Ahmâd al-Bâdî, *al-Qabâ’il al-Sûdanîyya wa’l-tamâzuj al-qawmî*, I, (Omdurman: Maţba˚at Umm Durmân 1995, 163 pp.). This is presented as being the first of four volumes on the tribes of the Sudan, tracing where appropriate their ancestry back to Arabia, and Professor ʻAwn al-Sharîf Qâsim in his foreword deliberately draws a parallel between al-Bâdî’s book and Sir Harold MacMichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan* (2 vols., Cambridge 1922; repr., London 1967). *Al-Qabâ’il al-Sûdanîyya* consists of a series of discrete notices of various ethnic groups or regions; the first volume is weighted towards Kordofan and contains notices (averaging about 10 pages in length) of the following groups: Ngok Dinka; Rizayqât; Bidayriyya in Kordofan; Jawâmi‘a; Kabâbîsh; Shanâbla; Misîriyya; Batâhîn; Hawâzma; Jammû‘iya; Ḥasaniyya; Majânîn; Zaghâwa; Nuba; Daju; Kawâhla and Humr.

Other works by al-Bâdî are listed in the bibliography at the end of *al-Qabâ’il al-Sûdanîyya*; three that are accessible in Bergen are *Al-Shaykh al-Ṭayyib w. al-Sâ‘îh* (n.p., n.d. [1992], 40 pp.), the hagiography of a noted shaykh (d. 1971) from near al-
Kamlın who studied at the Badrāb centre at Umm Dubbān. The second is a study of the Mahdist amīr and poet, ʿAbd al-Qādir w. Habbōba, who became involved in 1908 in a fracas with the British (rather than an organised revolt, it would seem) that led to the death of a British official and Wad Ḥabbōba’s execution, *Lamahāt min ḥayāt wa-thawra wa-madāʾiḥ ʿAbd al-Qādir w. Habbōba* (n.p. [Khartoum] 1993, 110 pp.). The third is entitled *Maʿālim wa-ʾālām* (n.p., n.d., 176 pp.) and is a fascinating potpourri of anecdotes, biographies, family histories and short histories of towns—p. 76 gives a brief biography, with a pedigree back to Ḥamad al-Nahlān ‘Wad al-Turābī’ (d. 1116/1704-5) of qādī ʿAbd Allāh Dafī Allāh al-Turābī, the father of Dr. Ḥasan al-Turābī.

Another work, centred on Kordofan and Darfur, appeared earlier than most of those noticed here, but I mention it here both because of its interest and ‘scarcity value’, ʿĀhmäd ʿAbdullāhī Ādām, *Uṣūl al-Baqqāra waʾl-Dīnka wa-qadiyyat Abyai* (Khartoum 1984, 236 p.). This is a mixture of oral traditions about the coming of the Baqqāra to the Abyei region, their relations with the Dinka, with an extensive historical description of the political relationship between the two groups. It thus invites comparison with some of the writings of Francis Deng, for example his *Africans of Two Worlds. The Dinka in Afro-Arab Sudan* (New Haven 1978).

Three urban studies have been published in recent years. The first is a detailed history of Ḥalfāyat al-Mulūk, his home town just north of Khartoum, by Professor ʿAwn al-Šarif Qāsim: *Ḥalfāyat al-Mulūk: al-tāʾrikh waʾl-bashar* (Omdurman: Omdurman University Press 1988, 314 pp.). Superficially, the book looks like a ‘genealogical history’ (at the end, the book has a wonder-
fully intricate series of genealogies that invite deconstruction), but in fact it is much more, being a kind of *évenementiel* micro-history of how Ḥalfāyat al-Mulūk functioned as a community and illustrating with a wealth of detail how dynamic in terms of movement in and out its population was and is.\(^{20}\) Ḥalfāyat al-Mulūk is a much more subtle production than it seems. The second urban history is an affectionate and detailed history of Kosti by a journalist and *walad al-madīna*, Naṣr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Shalaqāmī, *Kōstī: al-qīṣṣa wa’l-taʿrīkh* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1991, 241 pp.). Despite a somewhat half-hearted attempt to give Kosti a longer historical pedigree (that is, back to the Romans), the author honestly gives credit to the town’s true founder, the Greek trader Kosti (or Kostas), of whom there is an inimitable portrait, a kind of *ṣūra rūḥiyya*, on p. 31.

The third urban history comes from the south, namely Stefano Santandrea, *A Popular History of Wau from its foundation to about 1940* (Khartoum: Encounter 1989, Church Memoirs, 1, 200 pp.). This is a meticulous history, the work of a Catholic missionary who has over the years made an extraordinary contribution to the ethnography of the Bahr al-Ghazāl; like Shalaqāmī’s book on Kosti, it is enriched with many fascinating photographs. In fact, the title is misleading in that the book is in effect two works; pp. 1-114 constitute a ‘popular’ history of Wau—Fr. Santandrea calls it thus because, ‘First, it is concerned almost exclusively with people. Secondly, it lacks, on the whole, the backing of official statistics and documentation’. Among the many gems in this section is Santandrea’s account of Bishop Stoppani and Fr. Giorgetti’s musical experiments in combining already in 1913 Zande and Western music in ‘The Brass Band of the Catholic Mission’—an early precursor of the ‘World Music’ scene. The second part of the book tells the story of the various Catholic mission schools in and around Wau.

Moving from Wau to the eastern Sudan, two books by the late Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ .Dirār (1892-1972) of Sawākin and some-

\(^{20}\) Professor ‘Awn al-Sharīf Qāsim is presently working on a multi-volume encyclopedia of ethnic groups and place-names of the northern Sudan (personal communication).
time ‘umda of the ‘Ajilāb (a section of the Milhitkināb) and employee of the Eastern Telegraph Company, make a major contribution to our knowledge of the eastern Sudan. Both have been published a cura the author’s son, Dirār Ṣāliḥ Dirār.21 The first is Ta’rīkh Sawākin wa’l-Baḥr al-Aḥmar (Khartoum: Dār al-Sūdānīyya li’l-kutub 1991, 277 pp.), based on the travel literature, archival sources, local documents and oral tradition. It concludes by quoting some verses on his journey from Berber to Sawākin written by an interesting figure of the nineteenth century, the poet Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Farrāsh (d. c. 1883)—his diwān of essentially secular poetry, Dīwān al-Farrāsh, shā‘ir Barbar, has recently been published (Khartoum: al-Dār al-Sūdānīyya li’l-kutub n.d., 103 pp.).22 The second book is Ta’rīkh qabīl al-Ḥabāb wa’l-ʿamīṣīn bi’l-Sūdān wa-Irītrīyā (Khartoum: Dār al-Sūdānīyya li’l-kutub 1991, 208 pp.). Like its companion volume on Sawākin, it is very strong on local sources. For other works by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Dirār, see the bibliography at end. Sayyid Dirār seems to have written works on virtually all the Beja groups, but seemingly they remain unpublished. An older book, published while the author was still alive, is his Amīr al-sharq: ‘Uthmān Diqna (Khartoum: al-Dār al-Sūdānīyya li’l-kutub n.d. [c. 1970], 170 pp.).

With regard to the nineteenth century especially, it may be useful to draw attention to a reprint series from Egypt, Ṣafahāt min ta’rīkh Miṣr, published by Maktabat Madbūlī (6 Tālā‘at Ḥarb Square, Cairo); the series comprises reprints of works in Arabic commissioned by King Fuḍayl in the 1930s. Two are particularly relevant to the Sudan; the first is al-Riḥla al-ʿulā li’l-baḥth ‘ān yanābī‘ al-baḥr al-abyaḍ (Cairo: Mk. Madbūlī 1993, Ṣafahāt min ta’rīkh Miṣr, no. 21, 93 pp.), being an Arabic translation from the Turkish by Muḥammad Mas‘ūd of the diary or logbook of Salīm Qabūdān’s first journey up the White Nile in 1839-40. The second reprint is the fundamental work of Prince ʿUmar

22 See further ALA, 1, 88.
Arabic
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Al-Jaysh al-Misrī gives much detail on the Egyptian army in the Sudan, including the exact location and size of its garrisons there. Hopefully, Prince Tusün’s other works on Egyptian military history will also be reprinted.


A final Egyptian publication that contains much on the Sudan are the memoirs of ʿAbbās Hilmi (1874-1944), otherwise the Khedive ʿAbbās Hilmi II (Khedive 1892-1914), ʿAhdī. Mudhak-kirāt ʿAbbās Hilmi al-thānī, khidīw Miṣr al-akhīr (translated from the original Turkish by Jalāl Yahyā, Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq 1993, 312 pp.). ʿAbbās Hilmi came into open conflict with the British over the Sudan on several occasions; his memoirs not only describe these episodes from his perspective, but also reproduce documents, both in Arabic and French as well as photographs of the greatest interest.


Two veteran Sudanese scholars have recently produced major studies. I shall not discuss here Dr. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Abū Salīm’s recent additions to his Mahdist corpus, but Abū Salīm has just published vol. 1 of an edition of Qādī ʿAbd Allāh ʿĀḥmad Yūsuf, al-Nakhīl (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1995, 349 pp.). Qādī ʿAbd Allāh (b. c. 1889; d. 1960s), a Rubʿātābī from Mūqrāṭ Island and a Tijānī, served as a judge in various parts of the Sudan during the Condominium. Dr. Abū Salīm provides an interesting reconstruction of the Qādī’s life and his family connections which link up with the Sufi tradition of Ahmad b. Idrīs (d. 1837) through the latter’s Sudanese student, Ibrāhīm al-Rashīd (d. 1874). Al-Nakhīl itself, edited by Abū Salīm from what is obviously an enormous majmūʿa of material now preserved at the National Records Office in Khartoum (more volumes are, hopefully, to follow) defies classification, being a miscellany of facts, stories, poems, etymologies, ḥadīths, and similar items about the date palm and its fruit. The compilation ranges from Andalusia to the Tubu of northern Chad and is a fascinating work to dip into.

Al-Ṭayyib Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib, the folklorist, has produced a major study of the khalwa or Qurʾān school in northern Sudanese society, al-Masīd (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1991, 375 pp.). Al-Ṭayyib has produced an immense source-book, organised regionally, on the masīd or khalwa, reproducing documents that he has found in the course of his researches. One chapter (pp. 248-56) presents brief biographies of women teachers. At the end, he ventures to make some comparisons between the khalwa tradition in the Sudan with other Arab countries, especially the Yemen.

Finally, an outstanding example of northern Sudanese revisionist historiography is Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Nuqud, ʿAlāqāt al-ṣūl fī ʿl-mujtamaʿ al-Sūdānī (Cairo: Dār al-thaqāfa al-jadīda; distributed by the Markaz al-dirāsāt al-Sūdāniyya 1995, 444 pp.). This is a study by the secretary-general of the Sudanese Commu-

26 Sayyid Nuqud has recently published a companion volume, ʿAlāqāt al-ṣūl fī ʿl-Sūdān, Cairo 1995—this I have not yet seen.
nisti Party of slavery, in a kind of mentalité style, within northern Sudanese society. This is an original and important study enriched by numerous facsimiles of documents concerning slavery, especially from the Mahdist period. There must be few documents in the National Records Office from the Mahdist and Condominium periods concerning slavery that Sayyid Nuqud has not reproduced. The book has its own message, namely that northern Sudanese need to understand the suffering they have inflicted on their fellow Sudanese as part of any future reconciliation.

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