BINAGI, LLOYD ARPHAXAD

THE GENESIS OF THE MODERN SUDAN: AN INTERPRETATIVE STUDY
OF THE RISE OF AFRO-ARAB DOMINION IN THE NILE VALLEY, A.D.
1500-1526

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THE GROWTH OF THE KIKUYU TRIBAL: AN INQUIRING STUDY OF THE
EVOLUTION OF THE APRIL-APRIL RITUAL IN THE KILE VALLEY, 1880-1886

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Submitted to the Temple University Graduate Board
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Right Reverend Onesime Thomas Binaafi and my mother, Sabina Esteve Nyagahombo Miringa.
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This study is a broadened survey, critical analysis and reinterpretation of the historical and political writings on the Sudan. The urge to approach this body of writings as a topic of a dissertation arose because I consider what has been written not sufficiently objective as far as the role and position of Black africans in the evolution of the modern Sudan is concerned.

Admittedly, there is no doubt that this is a woman problem that extends over the literature of all colonial Africa. The difference here, however, is that, in the case of the Sudan, the bias is against the Blacks who, incidentally, constitute the majority of that country’s population. Thus, even though the 1956 and 1972 official censuses confirm that the majority of the population is Black rather than Arab, the Sudan is nevertheless often projected as an Arab country. This projection is derived from the social, economic, and political hegemonic position that the Arabs and the Arabised minority was compelled into after the Sudan’s conquest by Ahmad Ali in 1822. Since then, the Sudan has been considered an Arab state, partly because of the privileged position that the Arabs and the Arabised Africans occupy and partly because of Islam.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to treat Africans and Idris as one and the same thing, despite the obvious fact that Idris is a racial creed, whereas Islam is a universal religion that is open to men and women of all colors and tribes. Yet, in order to maintain the supremacy of the Arab culture and identity, the Arab minority in the Sudan
continue to treat Arabs and Jalis as if the two were synonymous phe-
nomena, thus obliterating the preponderance of the African elements in the
Sudan's bi-racial complexity.

Moreover, this faulty construction of Jalis and Arabs has also won
the minds of the non-African observers of the Sudan's historical scene
as well. This misrepresentation was, of course, made all the easier be-
cause of the dominance of Jalis and the Arabic language in the better
educated and more influential northern provinces of the Sudan.

It is to be emphasised, however, that the principal concern of this
study is not to question the right of the Arabs or their allies, the Arab-
ised Africans, to be Sudanese, or even the right to enjoy a democratically
achieved leadership position. Rather, the principal concern of this in-
quiry is to demonstrate that this august social, economic, and political
position was facilitated by the active intervention of external forces.
These external forces were the Hausalites and later the Turco-Egyptians
who, incidentally, were responsible for the destruction of Jalis and the
Fanj Confederacy respectively.

Methodologically, this study involved the analysis and reinterpret-
ation of Sudan's historical and political writings from what is considered
to be an African viewpoint. By African, here, I mean Black or Negroid,
as defined by the Sudan's census of 1956. Likewise, the definition of an
Arab Sudanese is grounded on or derived from the same qualification. But
it is also recognised that the Sudan's definition of an Arab is based on
language, culture and religion rather than physical anthropological fac-
 tors. Nevertheless, this is the functional definition of an Arab in the
Sudan, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to question it, since this is
the way the Arab Sudanese perceive themselves. Concomitantly, even though it is fully recognized that Islam and the Arabic language have been very strong tools in legitimizing the Afro-Arab hegemony, the legitimacy of these two tools is not questioned. This is because it is quite possible and legitimate to be a Muslim and speak Arabic while retaining an African or Black identity. This is clearly evidenced by the positions or situations of descendants of Black Americans who are English-speaking and yet Black in terms of racial identity. Under the circumstances, the failure of the observers of the Sudan's scene to recognize this fact as well as the decisive role of the external factors in the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony constitutes the justification for this study.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding however it is hereby emphasized that this study is primarily concerned with the ways and manner which the Afro-Arabs were propelled into their present social, economic, and political hegemonic position and not about Islam, whose universalism as a religion is not in question. It should also be made clear that, as I have said, the definition of an Arab here is the same as that perceived by the Afro-Arabs of the Sudan themselves. The frequent mention of Islam is purely coincidental and collateral to the era into which that religion has been vulgarized in the course of legitimizing Afro-Arab hegemony.

Like all of the African frontier states in the Sudanese belt, the modern Republic of the Sudan was profoundly affected by many external factors. Among these factors were economic (trade), religious, technological, and foreign military interventions. But the impact of these forces varied according to the locality and the processes through which these forces were introduced. In the case of the Sudan, the arrival of
these forces was aided by its geographical proximity to Egypt and the greater number of Arab refugees, immigrants, and a chain of Arab-Colonial alliance interventions that poured into the country through and with Egypt's help. Here one has in mind the Nawabiyya and the Ottoman Turks, who propelled the Arab invasion until its saturation in 1835 when Mohammed Ali installed himself as the sultan of Egypt and the Sudan.

Henceforth, Arab supremacy in the country was indirectly secured.

Additionally, these forces, whether externally engineered or locally produced, were subject to considerable change, changes that often overlapped. Consequently, even though this study concentrates on the ultimate predominant thrust of the alien forces in the re-structuring of the modern Sudan and the subsequent rise of an Afro-Arab hegemony, this is not to suggest that the alien-propelled alien was not supported by a locally recruited group that vicariously identified itself with the alien conquering group. Here, I am referring to the rise of the hybrid Afro-Arab forces who constitute an important aspect of the modern Sudan. Therefore, the question of whether this hybrid group represented the birth of a fifth column that opted to identify with the alien conquering forces as represented by the Arabized Egyptians, the Arab from inside, or their Ottoman propellers cannot be viewed as being subversive to objective historical analysis and interpretation.

Suffice it to say this in precisely the essence of this study: a critical analysis and interpretation of the existing literature on the Sudan which has tended to accept the thesis that the Arabs conquered the Sudan despite the obvious fact that the Arabs and their locally coopted associates were propelled into political hegemony by a chain of external
factors. Chief amongst these extant factors were, of course, the Ottoman Turks.

This, of course, is not to suggest that the Arab refugees and immigrants who came into the Sudan were uninterested or immobilized in the unfolding political struggle for power and control in their newly adopted country. On the contrary, as the history of Kharif, Livre, and the latter-day Fomb Empire's history shows, the Arabs were extremely versatile and active in using trade, religion, interpersonal meeting, as well as the rising urban societies and the Arabic language in creating new political bases for themselves. In particular, the Islamisation of the native Sudanese, the use of the Arabic language as a lingua franca, and the rise of the new economic order that was based on trade and urban settlements, contributed in no small measure to the polarisation of Sudan's tribal-based societies and thus in rendering them vulnerable to the new conquering forces. Thus, it was these new trading settlements accompanied by the presence of Arab and Arabised daily seen that served as the nuclei of a new Afro-Arab civilization, a civilization that received encouragement and support from the Ottoman Turks in Egypt, the old Arab-Islamic world in the Near East, and the Mamluks. Therefore, in order to protect Islam, economic interests, and political influences, the Muslims, whether Arabs, hybrid-Arabs or African converts to Islam, coalesced their interests into a new and all-embracing ideology of Afro-Arab unity.

However, despite this unity, the Arabs and the Muslims alone might not have been able to impose their will and hegemony but for the intervention of the Turco-Egyptians that took place in 1822, thus destroying the very fabric of the Fomb Empire which, though Islamic in religion, was
essentially African in origin and composition. Again, it is for these reasons that this study has maintained that the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nilo Valley was largely a consequence of external factors.

In conclusion, it may be observed that by attributing the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony to external factors I am not advocating the over-blown or removal of the African-Arab from their present dominant position. Rather, what the analysis and interpretation projects is that there is a need to define the presence of the African-Arabic in the Sudan so that the vantage of social, economic, and political power in that country may reflect the Arab-African macroeconomic nature of the entire Sudan's population. For only such a bold move can preserve the unity of the modern Sudan and prevent racial polarization, thus bringing a truly happy marriage between Afro-Arabic and Africanism. Viewed from this perspective, this analysis and interpretation should be received as a positive re-study, reinterpretation of the evolution of the modern Sudan, and, above all, a reconstruction of Sudan's history in the light of contemporary Africa's awareness and legitimate claim for the redefinition of colonial African history. Surely, such a reconstruction and reinterpretation of African history cannot be limited to the availability and use of primary materials while leaving the existing literature undisturbed.

This study would not have been possibly without the caring and critical help of Dr. Andrew Bass and later Dr. Geneva Greaves. The latter joined my doctoral committee as a consultant when the former (Dr. Bass) left the History Department. Together with other members of my dissertation committee, namely Dr. Donald L. Whetten (my advisor and chairman of the
committees), Dr. Francel Weber, and Dr. Marilyn Gilfeather, Dr. Rosen proved extremely useful in drawing my attention to many subtle points that required clarification and supportive evidence. For all these, I am most thankful.

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I deem it to be proper and a matter for the record to mention that the pursuit of my doctoral studies has been long and extremely hazardous, involving an arbitrary arrest and detention without trial in my own country for sixteen months. Upon my release my return to Temple University to resume my studies was made possible by the most welcome help of my advisors, Dr. Vadenas, and Dr. Herbert Bass, Chairman of the History Department, who recommended me for a Teaching Assistantship. This assistance enabled me to return to Temple and resume my studies. For this, I express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to both Drs. Vadenas and Bass.

Last, but in no way least in importance, I thank my beloved wife, Dorothea, and son, Zeb, who fully shared with me the arduous process of
working, conducting research, and writing. It is with profound pleasure that I admit that without the support, encouragement and love of Dorothee, the accomplishment of this dissertation would have remained an unfulfilled dream. The other persons who contributed to this accomplishment and thus deserve a mention are Miss Doris Winkler who typed the entire dissertation, and Mr. and Mrs. William Maddox, family friends who provided us with a secure and comfortable apartment.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

A. PREVIEWING THE SUDAN AND THE NILE VALLEY

The Arabic expression "Nil el-Suudan," which literally means "land of the Nile," is a vague term that was used by medieval Arab geographers and traders to describe all the African lands that were inhabited by black peoples south of the Sahara Desert. Briefly, the Sudanese territorial zone extended from the Senegal-Gambia River on the Atlantic Coast, to the Red Sea Coast on the northeast of what then was known as Abyssinia. Although it is now widely accepted that the term reflected the limited Arabic view and knowledge about Africa, and later Arab-Islamic influence, the term has, nevertheless, continued to be applied in the description of this vast area whose most distinguishing cultural hallmark is the religion of Islam. Indeed, it may be argued that the most common elements of the Sudanese belt or zone are: religion (Islam), culture (Afro-Islamic), geography (greenland watered by an expanding Sahara desert), and the presence of Afro-Asiatic languages. Thus while it is true that the dominant population of the Sudanese belt is black, color is no longer the basis for this name. In

3. Trangramp, p. 2.
fact, some writers have ventured to suggest that this zone is not the true home of the so-called Negro,⁴ and have thus assigned it to the so-called Hamitic group.⁵

On the other hand, modern Africanists have continued to use the term "Sudan" as a geo-cultural description. Thus, according to this usage, the Sudanic belt is divided into three regions: Western, Central, and Eastern. The Western region covers today’s republic of the Camarín, the so-called Mali and Upper Volta. The Central Sudanic belt covers the republics of Niger and Chad, and Eastern Sudanic Belt broadly falls within the present-day borders of western, central, and eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan. This is also the area through which the mighty Nile River traverses from the south to the north as it proceeds to empty itself into the Mediterranean Sea. But even though the term the "Nile Valley" connotes the territories through which the Nile River flows, the term has acquired a cultural description rather than a geographical one which would have included the entire of the Sudan, Uganda in the south, and Egypt in the north. However, in its cultural context the term is used to describe the riverine parts of the modern northern Sudan and Egypt south of the Nile Delta. The nature of this cultural description that adorns the Nile Valley are the Nubians and the Egyptians. Equally pertinent in the cultural context of the term, the Nile Valley is the wide spread presence of Pharaonic culture, earlier Christianity and their successor Arab-Islamic culture. Thus,

⁴Ibid., p. 1.
in today's parlance, the term the Nile Valley means those sierian
areas of the modern Sudan that are primarily Islamic and Arabic in
culture, language and religion.

Sietarian northern Sudan is the ancestral home of the Nubian peo-
ple who, also, occupy the southern parts of Egypt. But the northern
Sudan is also the habitation of the Nuba (the suspected kith and kin
of the Rubaish), the Nuba and the Nuba. However, it is most proba-
ble that the first black peoples that the Arab encuentado were Nubians
and the Nuba, since the Rubaish were known to the Arabs as Rubaish
(Abyssinians). On the other hand, it is probably correct to argue
that the Arabs used the term "Rubaish al-Sudan" to describe all the lands
south of the Sahara which, though unknown to them, were nevertheless,
occupied by black peoples. This may be deduced from the fact that the
Arabs referred to Rubaish as a kingdom, whereas individual Rubaish serv-
ing in Islamic armies were of ten referred to as Sudanese. 6

The northern Sudan has a long and rich civilization that pre-dates
Pharaonic Egypt and the rise of Islam. This is particularly true of
Rubaish which is the nucleus of the modern Sudan, especially the northern
region. Rubaish was the motherland of Jisraki, the Conqueror of Egypt
and Founder of the Ziphi Dynasty. 7 Rubaish was also the expanded home of

6. J. Acwell, A History of the Sudan (London: University of Lon-
don Press, 1951), p. 112. See an interesting study of the Rubaish in E-
gypt, see Robert A. Perros, Rubaish in Egypt (Aswan: University of
Aswan Press, 1973). And see a comprehensive study of the Rubaish people
as a whole, see William T. Adams, Rubaish: A Concise History of Arica

 Sons, 1912), pp. 537-561.
Himyar Empire, a civilization that is renowned for its contribution in the production of iron ore. Nobis, a.s., Ethiopia, and Acre were also the only known African Christian kingdoms south of the Sahara. Accordingly, it may be argued that Nobis, and therefore the northern Sudan, was in contact with every civilization that has appeared in Egypt and Ethiopia. However, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, and British. Naturally, each of these colonizers has left its own imprint on the northern Sudan. But as a whole, it is Arabic and Islamic that have been indelibly imprinted on Nobis and the whole of the expanded modern Sudan. Indeed, what distinguishes the eastern Sudan from the rest of the modern Sudan is the country's total immersion into Arabic and the Arab world at large.

3. THE LAND AND ITS PHYSICAL FEATURES

While the Bahnas and their age-old contacts with the Pharaonic cultures, Nubia, and later the Fara, Punt, and the Arab people continue to be the most important people in the evolution of the modern Sudan, the country's dominant physical features are the Sahara desert and the Nile River. The modern Sudan is a large territory of about six million square miles. Thus, geographically, the Sudan is the largest African state. 10

10. The Sudan is a member of the Arab League and its national language is Arabic. (Kenneth, P. O., and T. E. I. 91.)

What is true of its territorial grandeur, however, is not complimented by population density, probably because of centuries of Arab slave raids that rendered the interior peoples into a much sought after human game.13

Geographically, the modern Democratic Republic of the Sudan is bounded in the north by Erythraea and Libya; in the east by the Red Sea and Ethiopia; in the south by Kenya, Uganda, and Zaire; and in the west by the Central African Republic and Chad. But like many other modern African states, Sudan's boundaries hardly reflect any natural physical features or ethnic distribution. Thus, the northern and western provinces, popularly called the north, have all fallen under strong Arabic-Islamic influences and are therefore referred to as the Arab north, while the three southern provinces are extemely described as Black and therefore African in culture and racial identification. Such a designation, however, is both faulty and unrealistic. The Nuba of Kordofan, the Puri of Darfur, some Beihans in Kordofan and the Beja in the Red Sea hills are Arabic only in a religious, linguistic and cultural sense, yet racially, the majority of the peoples in the so-called Arab north, are a medley of Afro-Arab admixture with a predominantly African outlook. There are also strong survivals of the African languages still in usage despite the predominance of Arabic as the language of the Qur'an, medium of instruction in schools, administration and day to day communication between the various

ethnic groups who inhabit one massive territory. We shall come to this point when we discuss the peoples of the Sudan.

Like its northern neighbor, Egypt, the Sudan depends on the Nile and its tributaries for its agriculture, especially the cash crop agriculture which is largely centered on cotton in the Gezira agricultural scheme. The main Nile, commonly called the White Nile, flows from Uganda and traverses the country northwardly into Egypt. Although the Nile is unmarked by mighty tributaries, they are all restricted to the south and central-northeast, where the Atbara and the Blue Nile enrich its waters with the torrential rains of the Ethiopian highlands. It is to the flood and the mod vicissitudes brought by these tributaries and the highly developed canal system that Sudan's renowned cotton schemes in the Gezira region owe their existence.

Yet while the Nile River is central to the Sudan's agriculture and hence its general development, the river has always been a poor means of communication. This is true not just southwardly, but also northwardly, where the rocky chains of canyons and the zigzag bends of the river make the hazardous desert routes preferable. Southwardly navigation is often obstructed by the huge water plants known as "elephant's tail," while those "elephants" were effective obstacles to Arab expansion into the southern provinces, northwardly the rocky chain of canyons were a good measure.

13 Lee and Broads, ibid.
of physical defense against Egyptian and Arab advances into Nubia, albeit unsuccessful.

As in the case of its population, the climate of the Sudan is remarkably diversified. Indeed, as Joseph E. Tringham has observed: "The diversity of the Sudan finds expression in the lack of uniformity in its climate which ranges from extreme aridity of the northern continuation of the Sahara desert to the long rainy seasons of the equatorial forest in the south." Suffice it to say that no one who has traveled through the Sudan can fail to notice the degree to which climate has influenced the people. Thus, the Arab immigrants who were desert nomads have remained in the eastern and northern provinces where they still engage in cattle rearing and some shifting agriculture. Most of them seem to have avoided the heavy rain forests partly because these areas were unsuitable to nomadic life and partly because they were inaccessible. On the other hand, the Nubians who have always been sedentary and traders, have tended to restrict their extensive southward migration to intensive agriculture and urban trading areas where they have continued to excel in clericalism, trade and administration. These latter occupations, are perhaps, indicative of the pre-Islamic days Nubian literary traditions and religious contacts with Egypt.

The Central Sudan which is the concern of this study has three basic seasons. First, there is the summer—known as "raif." This is a hot and dry period. "Raif" starts roughly in March and ends in June or July. Second, there is the rainy season—known as "sharaf." This

[1b] Tringham, p. 3.
season is, naturally, the one for sowing. "Shari" begins in July or August and ends in early October. Third, there is the dry winter—known as " adipiscing," which normally lasts until March or early April.

Since the Sudan is not an industrialized country, the majority of its people are peasant farmers, cattle herders, or both. There is also a sizable number of Arab nomads who still wander in the desert today just as much as their ancestors did in pre-Islamic days in the Arabian sub-Continental. There are the Araba who have not been tampered by the Sudanese, pure of Arab blood. But the most vocal group in the country's political and commercial life is the Jallaba—the Arabized Sudanese and the Britons. The former control the riverine agriculture, irrigation, and commerce while the latter are most dominant in the country's armed forces, since the days of Turco-Egyptian conquest in 1822, when they were recruited as irregular soldiers.

C. THE PEOPLE OF THE SUDAN

The question whether the northern Sudan has, as a whole, always been a sparsely populated country is one that continues to intrigue demographers. And while there is no doubt that the desert and the Stephanie are not given to a very dense population, the same cannot be said about the fertile riverine and southern districts. Moreover, there is also some reason to suggest that Sudan's population must have been, at least in pre-Islamic days, as dense as that of Egypt. Otherwise, it is hard to imagine how a small and sparsely populated Egypt with no superior weapons could have conquered Egypt in 150 B.C., occupy the whole country, and still have a surplus of troops for campaigns.
in Palestine. The same thing is true during the earlier centuries of Arab conquest of Egypt and the rise of the Mameluke rule in 1259. For almost seven hundred years, and despite wars and slave raids, the pharaohs put up a gallant resistance against a combined Moslem-Arab onslaught. Thus, it is most unlikely that a poorly or sparsely populated and small country like Nubia could have posed the kind of challenge and resistance that the Moslem and the Arabs.

Two possible explanations underlie the above interpretation and analysis of Sudan’s early population. The first hinges on the domination of the northern Sudan’s population through many years of attacks and slave raids, beginning with the coming of Islam and the Arab settlers in A.D. 650 to 1250, when Nubia was subdued by the Muslim empire to sign an anti-slave trading treaty. Until then, there is ample reason to suspect that the constant wars with the Nubians from 1275 to 1450 A.D., and later against the Turks, must have had a devastating impact on the country’s population. The second possible explanation hinges on the Mamluk rule. According to the unreliable estimates of Sir Ronald Dance, the Sudan had a population of about 5,500,000 people on the eve of Mamluk rule. But by 1405, owing to the massacres, deportations, and famines that greeted the Mamluk’s rule, the population had fallen to a mere 1,550,000. Dance’s guess, however, is highly suspect and is therefore viewed as another example of Britain's

15Ecclesiastical History, p. 49.
16Travels in Egypt, p. 40.
On the other hand, it must be observed that the population estimates of the post-Turko-Egyptian conquest (that is after 1822) are not of much help to this study since the time span of our inquiry is up to 1819, the year that Muhammad Ali died. Accordingly, our description of the Nubian population is safely restricted to the period preceding the Turko-Egyptian conquest. Here all available records indicate that prior to the coming of Islam and the Arabs (that is until the A.D. 650), the population of the north consisted of the Nubians and the Beja. The former were sedentary and the occupants of the Nile Valley, and the latter were semi-nomadic and dwelled in the Beja hills and desert. Racially too, the two peoples were slightly different. The Nubians are much darker in their complexion; whereas the Beja are slightly lighter in their complexion and manifest a strong Afro-Asiatic admixture. In terms of history and institutions too, it is the Nubians rather than the Beja who have been the hub of the Nile Valley civilization whether one is concerned with the Pharaonic, Christian or Islamic periods. Accordingly, it is the Nubians who are central to this study.

Following the rise of Islam, the conversion of the Nubians and the influx of the Arabs into Nubia, the Nubian population underwent a revolutionary change that resulted in two Nubian groups. These were the Arabized Nubians who came to be known as Sama I-Lamis and the non-Arabized Nubians. However, there was also a sizable number of Arab tribes who

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retained their Arab tribal system and racial identity with a certain degree of success as Arab immigrants continued to pour in from the Hijaz, Egypt and Maghrib through Libya. But despite these differences, as Islamisation and Arabisation intensified, the majority of the Nubians were submerged in Arab culture and language thus producing the Muslim and Arabic-speaking population of the northern Sudan. Thus, even though not all the people of the northern Sudan are Arabs or even Arabic-speaking, most of them are Muslims and accept Arabism as the ultimate culture. Therefore, as Tringham has observed, “in the north there has been some admixture of Arab blood with that of the original population, and the adoption of Islam has fused the peoples so that they are now culturally homogeneous.”

Perhaps it should be emphasised that this fusion of culture and admixture of race is noticeable in the north, the west, and in the east from the Blue Nile to the Red Sea. Consequently, in the so-called Arab north, the only people who have retained their pre-Islamic culture are the Nubians of Kordofan. This, of course, is not to suggest that all the Nubians and the Saba have totally abandoned their pre-Islamic African culture and languages. Rather, what is stipulated here is that these groups have accepted Islam and Arabism at the ultimate culture, perhaps because of religious, social and political prestige.

Consequently, the only noticeable non-Muslim and African stock population is to be found in the three provinces of the southern region, which is the homeland of the undiluted Nilotic culture with its proud
devotion to traditionalism." The distinguishing mark of the southerners is that they have retained their African languages, and religious beliefs in the form of African polytheism. Here, even the minority who have opted for organised religion tend to favor Christianity rather than Islam. De-Islamised and un-ivelled, the southern Sudanese are the Sudan's strongest bulwark against Arab social and cultural imperialism. However, it is important to emphasise that the undisturbed cultural tranquility that the southerners still enjoy is largely due to the distance from Egypt coupled with inaccessibility and British intervention towards the end of the nineteenth century which contained Arab expansion under the tutelage of Turko-Egyptian rule.

But despite the effective Islamisation and Arabisation of the north, it is important to caution the reader that it is rare to find anything approaching a pure racial type among any people of the northern Sudan. This is because the Sudan has experienced many injections of racial dispersions. Thus, its population ranges from the almost pure Caucasian to the pure Negroid type in Shilluk or Shima lands in the south. Therefore, the term "Arab" is significant only when viewed in terms of language and culture rather than race and, in reality, the term "Arab" is used in describing people who range from the Sudanese Jallaba to the


It should also be mentioned that the racial admixture in the northeastern Sudan has been going on for many years, and it is the contention of this writer that the origin of the so-called Hamitic group can be understood better if viewed and studied as a product of Afro-Asian admixture. This point has been underscored by Joseph Greenberg who rightly rejects the idea of a Hamitic race and designates it as a linguistic group.  

From a morphological point of view, there is no doubt that the Hamitic-speaking groups like the Beja, Khatiopes and Somali are products of some ancient Afro-Asian admixture. This is confirmed by their physical outlooks which correspond or resemble the Africans of mixed blood that one encounters in Nubia, Sudan and Eastern Carli. In this context the only reason why the Afro-Arab Sudanese are distinguished from the Beja, the Amharic and Oromo or Gorm in Ethiopia is because the Arab-African admixture is recent and the resultant type took to Islam, Arabic language and culture.

The above brief analysis is amply confirmed by Tringham, who in his study of Beja in the Sudan, has observed:

'Since the Arab conquest there has been a gradual absorption of the Arab by the Sudan in the north and by the black in Central Sudan, the resultant type now call themselves 'Arab,' but their claim to the title varies very considerably.'

Tringham's observation is strongly supported by a more illuminating

22Tringham, p. 6.
statement by a native Sudanese who writes:

The original aboriginal peoples of the Sudan were the Nuba, Ethipians and other Blacks. Every tribe that is derived from the Nuba belongs to the Black group, and every tribe that is derived from the Fulani belongs to the Nuba group. The so-called Arab tribes who are in the Sudan, other than those (i.e., the Nuba, the Ethipians, and the other Blacks), are foreigners, and have but weakly mixed with the tribes mentioned above and multiplied with them. None of them have retained the characteristics of the Arab, and the element of Nuba and other Blacks that is intermixed among them has adopted Arab characteristics; on the other hand, there have been some Arabs who have mixed with the Nuba and other Blacks and adopted their characteristics; but in each case they know their origin. [1]

From the above questions, one thing emerges most vividly: the Arab, coming from a civilization that was enjoying imperial power and religious prestige, imposed their language and religious culture on the aboriginal peoples so much so that they became the central focus of unity in the highly destabilized Sudan. The result is that there has emerged a political and religious-cultural group that bears a distinctly Arab stamp. In other words, the conquered and uprooted Africans of different ethnic groups, including the slaves, were molded into the imperial religion, culture, and language. Here it is important to remember that even though the actual conquest of Nuba was affected by the Kωωιάενικες and later by the Fυρκο-Επιγυνικά, the religious, culture, and language that both regimes expressed in the Sudan were Arabic in content and practice. And it was through the political

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and military actions of these external groups that the otherwise desperate Arab immigrants and refugees obtained social, economic and political ascendancy in the Nile Valley. However, it is possible to assert that the earlier Sudanese identification with Khartoum was nothing but a survival tactic by an overcrowded people. And the Sudanese vicarious identification was welcomed by the Arabic who, as Sir Arthur Keith has observed, "have an evolutionary relationship to all surrounding peoples."

While this writer agrees with Keith's statement that the Arabic have an evolutionary relationship to all surrounding peoples and this is amply evidenced by the Arabic's geographical misappropriation and cultural assimilation. It is, nevertheless, the contention of this writer that the political ascendancy of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley (Sudan) was primarily fostered by external factors and not the Arabs alone. The Arabs were mere middlemen who seized the opportunities created by these superior external factors to assert their presence and subsequent political ascendancy as the vanguarded natives veered for vicarious identification with a victorious imperial culture which consisted of Islam and the Arabic language. Thus, in order to understand the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley one must examine and analyze the role of the external factors that propelled the Arab influx into the Nile Valley beginning from 1860 to 1920 A.D. This then brings us to the theme of this study, namely: The Genesis of the Sudan State: an Interpretative Study of the External Factors that Contributed to

the Rise of Afro-Arab Hegemony in the Nile Valley, A.D. 1500-1577. By
the Afro-Arab her it means: (a) the Arab settlers who had immigrated
into the Nile Valley through Egypt and the Arab refugees who accompanied
the Mamluk Army of invasion and then were left in the country, (b) the
Islamized and Arabized Hausa-Lionel Bulens who had adopted the Arab
tribal system, and the Arab Halfeaters who were products of intermarial
matings between black women and the Arab males. Suffice it to say the
term "Afro-Arab" is most appropriately derived from the latter group.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

This study is concerned with the role of the external factors in
the rise of Islam and the dual process of Arabization and Arabiza-
tion, as in the Nile Valley, especially in its eastern sector which served as the
beacon of Arabization and Arabization in the larger Nile Valley. The
study focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the roles played by
the external factors in the consolidation of Islam, Arab influx, set-
tlement and the rise of the Afro-Arab "half-natives" as the most dominant
political group in the country.

By external factors here is meant the forces that originated out-
side Nubia, Beja and Nuba, the three early elements of northern Sudan.
Accordingly, a number of external factors that fostered Islam, Arab
influx and settlements in Nubia have been selected for re-analysis and

The term Arabization refers to the adoption of Arabic language
whereas Arabization refers to the adoption of Arab culture and racial
identification. See David McCallum, "Ethnic and Cultural Identificani
in the Sudan," in E. H. Barnes-Princeton, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from
26 re-interpretation with an African perspective. These external factors were: Egypt in its Ilvamic and post-Islamic periods; the rise of the Nubian dynasty in Egypt, 1260-1516; the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, 1517; the rise of European imperialism and Napoleon's conquest of Egypt, 1798; the rule of Muhammad Ali in Egypt, 1805; and Muhammad Ali's conquest of the Sudan in 1822. However, since it is widely acknowledged that the diffusion of Islam in the Nile Valley was, largely, the work of the Sudanese clerics or Sufis, popularly known as the Fali, during the Fatimid period (969-1171), the Fali are often considered as a special autochthonous factor that also contributed to the process of Arabization and Islamization of the Nile Valley.

Due to its geographical proximity with Egypt, and many years of intensive political, economic and cultural contacts, the Sudan has always been treated as a footnote to Egypt, not only by the Egyptians, but also by those who occupied Egypt and settled there permanently. Such was definitely the case with the Arabs, the Hemurites and, the Turks who typified themselves in the dynasty of Muhammad Ali. But historically, the Sudanese were primarily an African people and not racially Black or Negroid. This is unlike the Egyptians who have had close association with the Mediterranean peoples. This racial difference between the Egyptians and Sudanese was easily recognized by the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans and later the Arabs who, described the Sudanese as "Ethiopians" and "Nubians" respectively; terms that significantly

26 By an African perspective here is meant the African feelings and opinions toward the Arabs.
and acknowledged the distinct racial outlooks of the Sudanese people. True, even though Islam and the Arab have been quick to claim freedom from racial prejudice, there is strong evidence to suggest that the Arabs were far from being racially unbiased. Consequently, it would be a gross simplification to restrict the biased interpretation of the history of the Sudan to European colonialism and imperialism while accepting the Egyptians and the Arabs as "natural" brothers of the Negroid Sudanese. Historically, the Egyptians, whether native captives or Arabs, have always viewed themselves as members of a civilizing imperial culture in the Nile Valley. Concurrently, they perceived the Nile Valley as a reservoir of slaves and other economic resources. Because of these reasons it is unlikely that the Egyptians, whether Coptics or Arab Muslims, could have treated the Sudanese, their culture, civilization and political aspirations with respect and neutrality in their recording, analysis and interpretation of Sudan's history. And yet, it is Egypt, the Arab, the Swahilis and later the Turks who have served as the primary sources of Sudan's history. Thus, it is unreasonable to accept the remarks of Arab writers like Ibn Khaldun regarding the ways and manners in which the Arab settlers took over the Christian kingdom of Nuba as historical truths despite their obvious impracticality and illogicality. Perhaps nothing typifies Ibn Khaldun's illogical assumptions like his statement on how the Arabs took over the kingdom of Nuba. He wrote:

And with the conversion of the Nuubiya the payment of tribute ceased. Then the tribes of the Gebayy Arab spread over their country and settled in it and filled it with rapine and disorders. At first, the kings of the Nuba attempted
to rule it, but they failed, when they went too far, by giving them their daughters in marriage. Thus
was their kingdom disintegrated, and it passed to cern
ship of the sons of Dakhsh, on account of their proximity (having Mo before the royal blood), according to the con-
tent of the wills as to the succession of the sister’s son. So their kingdom fell to pieces and the jum-
rah (mixed Arabs) of Dakhsh took possession of it. 27

The historical truth is that at the time of the Khazars, which was
during the first half of the fourteenth century, Dakhsh was still a
kingdom, but on the verge of collapse because of repeated Khazar aggres-
sion. Furthermore, the Khazars of that time were the survivors
of the period of the eleventh century, and the Khazar
who were nomads. And whereas it is true that the Khazars were
marginal in terms of ethnicity, there is no evidence to suggest
that the system extended to royal succession since all the available
records show a wider succession ranging from sons and brothers to
cousins and nephews. Nor is it logical to suggest that the
Khazar Arabs were won over through marriages to the Khazar princesses.
The truth is that the Khazar kingdom was destroyed by the Khazars in
Egypt who used Dakhsh as a dumping ground for Arab political malcontents
from Egypt.

Nevertheless, the etrics manufactured by the Khazars and other Arab
apologists have continued to influence the writing and interpretation
of Dakhsh’s history. Thus, J. A. Archibald, Sir Harold I. McMichael, O.
G. B. Crawford, Joseph S. Tristram, J. H. North, and A. H. Judge,

27Tristram, p. 71.
As a general rule, Islam has tended to look upon Africans as an inseparable ingrafted element of African identity. But Africans as a racial group have always possessed a sense of their own identity that was not diminished by contact with other races. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the British, French, and other European colonial powers, who governed vast territories of Africa for many years, never succeeded in eradicating the racial identity of the Africans. The African people have always been able to preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage, even in the face of intense missionary and educational efforts to assimilate them into the dominant European culture. This has been achieved through a combination of cultural resilience and a strong sense of national identity and pride.

It is important to recognize that the history of Africa is characterized by a rich and diverse cultural heritage that has been shaped by the interaction of many different peoples and cultures. This diversity is a fundamental aspect of the African identity and should be respected and preserved.

However, it is also true that the African continent has been subject to a long history of colonialism and imperialism, which has had a profound impact on the development of African societies. This has led to a number of challenges and problems, including political instability, economic underdevelopment, and social inequality. It is therefore essential that we work towards finding solutions to these problems, in order to create a more just and equitable society for all Africans.

In conclusion, the history of Africa is a complex and multifaceted subject, which requires a careful and nuanced approach. It is essential that we recognize the contributions of all African peoples to the development of their continent, and that we work towards creating a more just and equitable society for all.

References:

The consequences of this a priori and biased approach in the interpretation of African history is that it makes the Africans a doubly subjected peoples. First, the approach perceives the Africans as an innately inferior and inaccurate race. Second, the Africans are perceived as a mass of dormant natives who simply engage in reproduction and survival, waiting to be improved or bettered by Caucasian entrepreneurs. As evidence of the latter point one need only look at the laissez-faire theory of the "wise stranger" (who is invariably Arab) who often arrived from North Africa or the Middle East, and married the daughter of the chief and founded a kingdom.

There are, of course, many historians who would argue that these a priori and biased assumptions belong to the past and need not prejudice correct African historiography. The danger with this kind of attitude is that it denies the African historian the opportunity to correct the false interpretation of African history and thus providing the modern non-African reader with an interpretation that at least, reflects the African sensitivity and culture as perceived by the African peoples albeit in a posthumous endeavor. Unfortunately, the African historian's endeavor towards this goal is often hindered by the new established methodology of history which leans heavily on the so-called primary


sources. However, primary sources, in the case of history, are invariably written reports, which in the case of Africa, which was largely non-literate, are often unavailable, or if available, they are no more than impressionistic observations recorded by members of the alien conquering teams. Archaeology which is another source remains to be conducted and too costly for the individual African scholar. The last source, namely oral, is terribly problematic in the case of ancient history and in countries where the population has undergone intensive acculturation culminating in the adoption of a new identity and a rejection of the old identity.\footnote{Jan Vanite, "The Use of Oral Tradition in African Cultural History," in Gabel and Bennett, 1970.}

This latter point is most relevant in the case of the Nile Valley where, because of Islamisation, Arabisation and Arabization, the majority of the people have been assimilated to Arab culture.\footnote{Bard, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Sudan," in Journal of Modern African Studies, 3, 2 (1970), pp. 235-246.}

It may be argued that by adhering to traditional methodologies, the existing works or studies in the Sudan are implicitly protected, subject to the availability of primary materials, and interpretation. But primary materials are often beyond the access of many African students because of the time and money required in the undertaking of field researches and archaeological works. Yet, in the case of the Sudan, there is an enormous amount of historical work that demands a new analysis and interpretation in light of contemporary African political and cultural awareness. This is precisely the premise upon which this study...
is based. It is based on the existing known works on Egypt and the
Sudan and makes no claim to new primary sources. The study bases its
justification on two grounds: First, the study confines itself to
the impact and role of the external factors in the rise of Afro-Arab
hegemony in the Nile Valley. It treats the Arab immigrants as mere
middlemen who benefitted from the obvious impacts of these external
factors. Second, the study brings into focus a non-Arab and non-Mus-
lim African interpretation of the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the
Sudan. Moreover, the Sudan is still a country that is caught in cul-
tural and political conflicts between the Arabized and Muslim north,
and the Africans in the south, whether Muslims or Christians. Viewed
from these two points, there is no doubt that this study will make some
contribution to the understanding of the modern Sudan, which widely
accepted may prove to be the testing ground for Afro-Arab claims to
racial harmony and political solidarity in Africa.

It is primarily because of the above problems that this study was
undertaken in its present form. It is an exercise in "competitive" his-
tory which entails an attempt to utilize analysis and reinterpretation
of the existence secondary sources as a means of understanding the dual
process of Arabization and Arabization in the Sudan in the light and
context of the external factors that fostered the rise of Afro-Arab
hegemony.33

The emphasis on external factors is not, of course, a denial of

33This approach is not a revision or a historically geographical study, hence,
it is a critical analysis and re-interpretation of the impact of the ex-
ternal factors on the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony.
the potential spiritual appeal of Islam to the African peoples in the Nile Valley, or indeed the vigour and tenacity of the Arabs. Rather, what is being contested in this analysis and re-interpretation is that by 1250 A.D., the period when Arab influx into Nubia began, the Arabs were politically and militarily a spent force and subject to the political manipulation of their former white slave soldiers, the Filastin who seized power in Egypt in 1250 A.D. As, as Hassan has shown in his study of The Arabs and the Egyptians, it was this alley of white slave soldiers who destroyed the kingdom of Nubia and opened its gates to the Arabs from Egypt, the Subay and the Nubars. On the other hand, the valiant resistance presented by the poorly armed Egyptian bowmen, and the later rise of the Fatimid Conqueductors whose rulers came to embrace Islam, are living proofs that the Africans in the Nile Valley were no mere observers of history waiting for the Ismael "wise" and strangers and refugees to become their insilial Adam and Eve. On the contrary, a careful survey of the existing literature shows that the Africans were creative and adoptive to the ideologies that were influencing the world.

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34 On the other hand, it is important to point out that the defeated Arab influx into Nubia and the vest of the conquering Nubians did not stop the traditional Negro migrations from the south into that region. See Wadi Hasha Aafa, "The History of Negro Migrations in the Northern Sudan," in Southeastern Journal of Anthropology.

35 It is in the contention of the present writer that it is possible to see the African acceptance of Islam and adoption of Arabic language as proof of the inferiority of the African societies while hailing the British colonies' acceptance of Christianity which was also a similar savagery. Thus a distinction must be made between these African societies that accepted Islam and Arabic language and adopted them for the betterment of their societies, as was the case with Wall, Songhay, Fulani, Benin and Zanzu Pen.
And, one may hazard to argue that if left to itself and spared the scourge of Semitic aggression and the Turks who complemented and fostered Arab influx, the identity and history of the modern Sudan would have remained African, albeit Islamic and even Arabic-speaking. But the prospect for this African development was obstructed by Semitic aggression which turned Nubia into a frontier lebensraum for the Arabs. The Fursj Confederacy which was also a brilliant example of the Nile Valley African creativity and adaptability was obstructed and blackmailed by the Ottomans who controlled all the vital trade routes to the north and curried Arab elements who now controlled it. But even then, it is not the Arab power that destroyed the Fursj Confederacy. Once again it was another external force, namely Mohamed Ali who forcefully conquered it and pronounced the legitimacy of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley. Henceforth, the Sudan became a medley of Africa and the Arab world.
CHAPTER II
THE CHRISTIAN INHERITAGE IN NORTH, NEEL, AND THE "KING OF ISLAMIC NORTHERN".

A. CHRISTIAN AND DODECANESE EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

Apart from archaeological findings, and until the scripts of Mecca are fully deciphered, the early history of the Sudan has to be carefully delineated from the contacts with external nations, especially Egypt, Byzantium, and the Arabs who kept inscriptions and even written records. Unfortunately, studying the history of a country through the casual observations and records of aliens is problematical because the inquiring historian risks the danger of becoming the victim of alien impressions and interpretations of the subject of the country and people being studied. Yet, and despite this problem of studying unmediated societies of which earlier Sudan was partly a part, the Sudan is blessed with immense archaeological findings that can be utilized to supplement external observations and records. 1

While the use of oral traditions is now widely accepted in the study of nonliterate societies, the viability of this approach is seriously

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questioned in the case of societies where local traditions, languages and tribal political systems have been totally replaced by an immigrant tradition, language, religion and culture thus culminating in the adoption of a new cultural identity. This, of course, is not an attack on a rejection of oral traditions as a potential alternative source to written records and archaeology. Rather, what is being suggested here is that in the case of the Sudan, the disruption caused by the Maarijum, the Arabs, the Turks and the imposition of Islam, reduced the indigenous peoples not just into Muslims, but also into Arabized Arab tribal clients who, because of religious prestige, abandoned their aboriginal African heritage. This contention is evidenced by the fraudulent popularization of some Arab dialects, even among the Nubians and the Beja where aboriginal languages are still alive.\(^2\)

Thus writing on the impact of alien pressure on the earlier Sudanese societies, Trubingham observed:

> picturesque A vast country of pagans, broken up into innumerable tribes speaking different languages, of forced migrations, wars, and raids for cattle, women, and slaves, with their attendant evils of the devastation of crops, the burning of huts, the displacement of tribes, and the terror of pestilence and famine.\(^3\)

While Trubingham’s observation is greatly impaired by an ill-choice

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of words and his subjective view of African societies as "pagan" and consisting of tribes, should be rejected, there is no doubt that destruction and enslavement is what characterized early Arab-African encounters. On the other hand, it is paternalism gone too far to project the Sudanese, Beja, and Shilluk as a bunch of damned tribesmen. Surely this is not the ancient Egyptians', Byzantines' or even earlier Arabs' image and view of the主体 or the Nile and Beja, who have been at the center of the Sudan's evolution and repeated encounters with alien invaders from the Mediterranean and the Near East. Moreover, on the question of Christianity, it is perhaps interesting to mention that Sudanese contact with that faith dated Britain and other so-called civilized nations of Europe.

However, before a clear picture of the history of the Christian influence in Sudan is gained, a brief survey here is necessary. These are: a synopsis of Sudan's pre-Christian history and relationship with Egypt, and the rise of Christianity in Egypt at Alexandria. By examining Sudan's pre-Christian history, the reader will be given an objective picture of ancient Sudan as a land inhabited by black people who shared an undefined common border with Egypt, which sometimes colonized them and imposed its culture on them, but yet, never succeeded totally in altering the dominant racial trait of the Sudan people. This approach is considered necessary because, as William I. Adams has cogently argued, too much ethnology has been grafted into Sudan history. He writes:

Students of Sudan history from Lodge and Belcher to Heyer have been mostly appallingly vague: involvement in Sudan has been more or less a by-product of their primary commitment to Egypt and its civilization.
It is almost inevitable that they should view Nubian history chiefly as a reflection (perhaps a pole reflection) of events and conditions in the Nubian-Nubian country, and should dwell upon the similarities rather than the differences between Nubia and Egypt. Their attitudes may perhaps be partly compared to the typical Nigerian view of the Irish.

Perhaps it should be noted here that Adams is seeking a view that is often raised by modern Africanists who feel that the history of any African society is often written as if it were a review of the diary of outside actors while the indigenous Africans are reduced into mere observed objects whose history begins with the arrival of the outsider. Unfortunately, Adams' welcome objection to the treatment of Nubians as shadowed shades of Egyptian history is marred by his own strange reluctance to affirm the Nubians' African identity and obvious Nubian connections.

The earliest history of Nubia is essentially the history of Black peoples in Egypt, because Upper Egypt too is, and always has been, Nubian territory stretching from the first cataract at Aswan. Moreover, there is also a reason to suspect that in the days of the Old and Middle Kingdoms in Egypt there was no properly fixed border between the two peoples. This is because under the Old Kingdom, the Egyptian Pharaohs were most concerned with the perfection and consolidation of state power. And, it was not until during the Middle Kingdom that the Pharaohs embarked on an armed trade monopoly to meet the needs of their rising material culture that Egypt turned against its southern neighbor for...
acquisitive gains. This, naturally, is what provoked conflict between the two sister countries.

According to Adams, the earliest commodities that Egypt sought from Nubia were valued products such as ivory and hides and other typically tropical products like aloes wood, incense, and aromatic oils. But there was also occasional mention of captives being sold as slaves during the first dynasty. Inscriptions of Amenemhat I reveal a practice that Adams indicates is mentioned in all subsequent Egyptian military texts dealing with Nubia down to the time of the New Kingdom. Indeed, there is ample evidence to show that the relations between Egypt and Nubia were characterized by military raids by both countries with Egypt assuming the role of a superior imperial power. But there is also reason to suspect that Egyptian raids were motivated by her growing need for minerals, especially gold. This is confirmed by Adams, who writes:

The later Egyptian Pharaohs developed an insatiable appetite for gold, and it became the most important and most coveted of all products from the southern lands. The "Gold of Nubia" (probably Lower Nubia) and "Gold of Kush" (Upper Nubia) figure repeatedly in the annals of the New Kingdom.

As a whole, then, Egyptian-Nubian relations were centered on and governed by three things. The first was economic—that is, trade in animal products and later Egyptian control and exploitation of Nubian...
mining. The second was Egypt's need for Nubian labor in the form of
mine workers, slaves and soldiers. The third was Egypt's policy of control-
ing Nubia politically in order to guarantee its commercial monopoly in
Nubia and to secure the southern flank. But there is no evidence of
massive Egyptian settlement in Nubia to the extent that the racial as-
pect or language of Nubia were supplanted. The few Egyptian settle-
ments that were established in Nubia, such as Kurna and Pahan near
the second cataract, never integrated with the Nubian population. Per-
haps those settlements were mainly made up of Egyptian occupying forces
and other state functionaries.

But despite the successful occupation, the Pharaohs never took the
Nubian for granted. This is clearly revealed on the boundary stele
which was erected at Semna in the name of Semnu II, who repelled
the Nubian attack in 1573 B.C. According to Adam, the translation of
that stele reads:

'Southern boundary, made in the year 6, under
the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khnumes
Semnu II, who is given life forever and ever, in order
to prevent that any Negro should cross it, by water or
land, with a ship, or any beast of the Negroes; except a
Negro who shall come to do trading in Dido (Ningiruyu), or
with a commission. Every good thing shall be done with
them, but without allowing a ship of the Negroes to pass
by bare doing something, for ever.'

9Bruce G. Trigger, History and Settlement in Lower Nubia (New
Haven: Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 58 [1956]) and
S. C. Kaye, 'Medieval Nubia in the Perspective of Sudanese History,'

Kaye, 'The Place of Napatan-Nubiotic Culture in The History of
the Sudan and Africa,' in Beyond, The Sudan in Africa (Khartoum: Sudan;
ture of Medieval Nubia and Its Impact on Africa,' in Beyond, Thr, pp. 42-50.
This stalemate indicated clearly that the Nubians (and there is no
doubt that they are the ones who are referred to as Regoues), were not
merely vanquished enemies or helpless and uncivilized natives waiting
for Egyptian enlightenment nor enslavement. Indeed, as William trans-
lated it, the Nubians (Regoues) were an occupied citizenry that
nevertheless, owned ships and waited patiently for opportunity to rid
itself of Egyptian occupation. This opportunity arose in 1750 B.C.
when the Asiatic Hyksos invaded Egypt and replaced the Pharaohs of the
IV and VI Dynasties. During the Hyksos rulers Nubia (Kush) seized the
occasion to assert its independence. This was made possible by the
fact that the Hyksos concentrated their conquering efforts in the Delta,
leaving Kush to the Nubians and Middle Egypt to the Egyptians so long as
each paid its tribute.

However, detection of Egyptian presence, Cush struck a note of si-
lent alliance with the Hyksos. And, it was this tragic occupation and
disintegration of Egyptian power that prompted the Egyptian Pharaoh at
Thebes to lament: "A Chassnai is in Avaris [Beqba] another in Kush
(Kush). I am united with an Asiatic and a Nubian, each man in posses-
sion of his slice of this Egypt." The Theban ruler's lamentation was
a visionary prediction of the worst that was yet to come. A time was
ever to come when Nubia would pay Egypt in its own coin of conquest.

11Pitts and Twelke Hotze, Civilization of the Sudan-Tanganyika, Zanzibar,
and Christian Nubia (Tanzania, German Democratic Republic: Leipzig Press,
1969), pp. 11-12; John Van Seters, The Hyksos (New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1980).
12Ibid, p. 206, and James B. Breasted, A History of Egypt (New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912, pp. 176-180 and pp. 531-556.)
Ironically, the revival of Rhum's resurgence came not from Lower Ru-
bia, which was closer to Egypt and therefore likely to be more Egyptian-
ized, but from Upper Rubia which harbored most of Rhum's resources and
military spirit. The prime center of this Rhum resurgence was a
place called Eema. Thus anthropologists and archaeologists have dubbed
the Upper Rhumans, the Eema people and their culture, the Eema culture,
even though there is no evidence to suggest that the Eema Rhumans were
different from their northern brethren. Nevertheless, because the Eema
culture is regarded as the origin of the Eema Dynasty, its origin has be-
come a subject of disagreement among archaeologists. For example, George
A. Relman, who led the Boston-Harvard excavations of 1913 and 1916, con-
tended that Eema was "a colony of Rhumans in Egypt of the Middle
Kingdom and the seat of the earliest Egyptian viceroy of Eema." Other
archaeologists, however, notably, Herman Lykes, Eugene Lee-Hever-Herzog,
and William I. Adams, have cogently argued that the findings at Eema
could not possibly be those of the Egyptians.11

Perhaps it should be stressed here, that the assertion that the
Eema culture was primarily indigenous, ought not to be taken as a denial
of Egyptian presence and influence in Rhum. Rather, what is being pos-
tulated here is that Eema's cultural ascendancy was due to the area's
natural wealth and access to the unexplored resources of the so-called

barbarism south rather than mere Egyptian presence and influence. Nobody was more aware of this fact than the Pharaohs of Egypt. This is why the expulsion of the Hyksos was followed immediately by the reconquest of Nubia. This was accomplished by the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom who, it is widely reckoned, were imperialists par excellence. During the New Kingdom, Egypt pursued expansionist policy on both Africa and Asia. Within Africa the Egyptian hegemony was extended as far as the fifth cataract. The temples of Sema and Esna, now reconstructed in Luxor, are a living echo to this expansionist policy. It was, indeed, during the New Kingdom that the entire Nubia and its southern peripheries were dotted with Egyptian temples. However, whether these temples were the works of Egyptianized Nubian religious or Egyptian settlers, it is hard to conjecture.\textsuperscript{15} Yet noting the presence of so many Egyptian temples that characterized the New Kingdom’s hegemony in Nubia, some archaeologists and historians have stipulated that the Egyptian objectives were not centered on military power per se, but on the effective propagation of the Cult of Amun. If the propagation of the Cult of Amun, a state religion, was indeed the ideology through which an over-extended Egypt hoped to control Nubia and its southern peripheries, it soon boomeranged on Egypt. This happened towards the end of the XVIII Dynasty, when Egypt’s imperial Golden Age began to crumble, thus signaling the rise of Kush as a successor to its oppressor.

In an excellent summary of Egypt’s Pharaohs during the XVIII Dynasty, Adam has observed:

\textsuperscript{15}\textsuperscript{15}REUTER, p. 26.
Within a matter of fifty years the whole region of Nubia was overrun. The native dynasty at Kerma disappeared without a trace, and Egypt was master of the Nile as far upstream as the fourth cataract. A viceroy was appointed for the newly recovered territories, and he and his successors governed Nubia as an Egyptian province for the next 500 years. At first, the new administration followed the lead of the previous Egyptian occupation of Nubia. The initial act of the conquering Pharaoh was to restore and enlarge the great fortresses which had symbolized Egyptian rule in the Middle Kingdom. In this case, however, supervisors and administrators accompanied the garrisons, and a genuine colonial enterprise was begun. New fortified towns were established in the Abûsimal Beach and the Dongola Beach, far beyond the previous limits of Egyptian sovereignty. But at the same time, the Egyptian rule in Nubia grew more secure, the military grip was gradually relaxed. Towns were allowed to grow up outside the fortress walls, and some of the latest settlements in Upper Nubia may have been established. At the same time, a dramatic change took place in Egyptian policy towards the conquered region and its people. The Pharaoh turned from a fortress-building to temple-building, seeking to legitimize their rule not by military intimidation but by propagation of the state ideology. The effort met with considerable success, hastening the Egyptianization of the native population.16

It is possible that the policy of Egyptianization was attained among the Nubian elites since the children of this class were trained in Egypt. But the contention that all Nubians were Egyptianized must be treated with utmost caution since the Nubians did not lose their racial identity and language. In the circumstances, it seems logical to argue that the process of Egyptianization was perhaps restricted to the Nubian adoption of the Cult of Amun and technology. This would definitely explain the rise of Napata with its proto-African dynastic civilization in

It was indicated, through the adopted priesthood of Amon and abundant resources that the Khosian vicerey in Egypt acquired prominence in the politics of that country. And here, no words can serve us better in describing the meteoric rise of Nubia over Egypt than those of the British historian, Arnold Toynbee when he observed:

When a growing civilisation breaks down through the deterioration of an entirely creative into an unhealthy dominant minority, one of the effects of this sinister change in the human form society's leadership is the entanglement of its former protectors in the semi-primitive socialism round about, which the civilisation in its growth stage was influencing in diverse degrees by the effects of the cultural radiation. The protectors' attitude changes from an ascension expressing itself in (cultural stagnation) to a hostility breaking out into xenophbic hostility of distant external potentialities.

Few historians would quibble with Toynbee's judgment so long as its application is not restricted to eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century victims of European conquests in Africa, Asia and the Americas. But what is relevant and important regarding this subject is that, through the adoption of the Pharaonic technology and the all-powerful Amon cult, supplemented by the Nubia's resources, Nubia turned the tables against Egypt and colonised it, also, utilizing the glimmering Pharaonic traditions. This classic example of cultural and technological proliferation is a theme that deserves its own lengthy treatment. But here it is enough to

17 Elton, p. 19.
mention that the first Nubian ruler to claim the full title of Pharaoh was Kashta, who ruled from 668-651 B.C. Kashta was succeeded by his son, Piaskhi the Great, in 650 B.C. It was Piaskhi who perfected Nubian rule over Egypt by eliminating the pretentious dynasties in the Delta. He even personally led Nubian troops into Egypt, capturing the Middle Egyptian city of Hermopolis. Adams has enriched our historical perception of this towering Nubian ruler with the following description:

Piaskhi, the king, finding that gifts, even when his own royal crown was bestowed upon them, availed nothing with Piaskhi, went out his queen to walk with the women of the Nubian that they might intercede with him on Piaskhi's behalf. This device was successful, and secured, at last of his life, Piaskhi surrendered and turned over the city and all his wealth to Piaskhi, who immediately took possession of the palace. After an inspection of Piaskhi's palace and treasury, Piaskhi entered the stables.

"His majesty proceeded to the stables of his horse**, so say his words**, and the quarters of the stalls. When he saw that they had suffered injuries, he said: 'I swear as he loves me—it is more grievous to my heart that my horses have suffered injuries than any evil deed that thou hast done in the presence of thy master.'

Concerning the conquest of the rest of the Delta, the text reads:

Piaskhi moved against the Delta, taking Memphis by assault, in which he made use of his fleet as well as his army. In this war of the princes of the Delta submitted, and he then went to Tanis and received the surrender of Tanis, specifically the last Pharaoh of the XXIII Dynasty, as well as Tefnakht then took refuge in an accessible island in one of the eastern mouths of the Nile and persuaded Piaskhi to accept his surrender. Regarding the
conquest of Egypt, as we complete, Piankhi returned home to Napata (Bubastis), erected the Thebes, and reconstructed the great temple of Amun there.\textsuperscript{21}

Piankhi’s conquest and occupation of Egypt and his coronation as the undisputed Pharaoh of Egypt were unparalleled in history. Only Charlemagne’s coronation, 500 years later, as the Emperor of the Second Roman Empire could be equalled to it. Yet ironically, while Piankhi’s redemption of Egypt from its internal decay and the scourges of Asiatic attacks, his name does not enjoy any legendary myth among the Arab Egyptians of today who constantly recite the heroic deeds of a Kurdish warrior, Salih al-Din, who raised power in Egypt almost 2,000 years later.\textsuperscript{22} Piankhi’s achievement and Nubian rule over Egypt were continued by other Nubian rulers, notably, Shabaka, Shimataja and Taharqa until Nubian rule in Egypt met its end in the hands of the Assyrians, whose successors over the Nubians were recorded in the annals of Assurbanipal, vis:

On my second campaign, I directed my way to Egypt and Nubia. Traditions heard of my campaign and that I tried the soil of Egypt. He abandoned Nubia and fled to Thebes to save his live. The kings, priests, and beggars whom I had set in Napata came to me and kissed my feet. After Tantamani, I pursued my way and came to Thebes, his place of his strength. In hot toidelity, Thebes in its entirety I composed with the help of Amun and Kapitere. Silver, gold, precious stones, all the possessions of his palace, many-colored clothing, wines, great horses, men and women

\textsuperscript{21}Akhmim, p. 120.

attendants, two high chalices of shining orichalum, 2,100 talents in weight, the provisions of the temple doors I took from their bases and removed to Asyut. Heavy booty, beyond counting, I took away from Thebes. Against Egypt and Nubia I set my weapons range and showed my might.23

The terror and desolation that besett Nubian rule in Egypt did not cease unrecorded by the conscious and literate world of the ancient Hebrans. Thus fifty years later the Biblical prophet Nahum, still terrified by Assyrian power, was to foretell the destruction that would befall Assyria in turn. Be wary:

Art thou better than Pulpura Pharaoh that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round it, whose rampart was the sea and her wall was from the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite—yet see she carried away...into captivity her young children were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets, and they cast lots for her honorably men, and all her great men were bound in chains.24

Commenting on the achievements of the Nubian Pharaohs in Egypt, Adams has also observed:

The achievements of the Ethiopian Pharaohs Egypt were not insconceivable. They restored the northern country to unity, however temporarily, for the first time in more than three hundred years. Their building activities in and around Thebes, though modest by the New Kingdom standards, were nevertheless more extensive than those of any ruler since Ramses II. Although they were the offerings of once despised barbarians, their aim was nothing less than the restoration of Egyptian culture and religion to their original

poorly, and in this way they were not wholly unimportant.
The anarchical tendencies which are first apparent in
the monuments and literature of the XXV dynasty were
to parallel through succeeding centuries until the fi-
nal downfall of the Pharaonic state. [25]

With the collapse of Nebet's power in Egypt and the fall of that
country into a succession of non-African rulers, beginning with the As-
syrians, Persians, Greeks, and then the Romans, the center of power in
Egypt shifted to the Delta. Meanwhile, in Nubia the power and influ-
ence extended to their native source in the south. In the words of
Adame, "The Dactars of power in Egypt were now entirely in the north;
those in Nubia were in the south; a broad no-man's-land yawned between
the two, and after the destruction of Thoth they had few interests in
common. They were now second-rate powers preoccupied with local af-
fairs." [26] But unlike Egypt, whose territory was defined by unalter-
able physical circumstances, Nubia's southward flank was an open fron-
tier for further imperial expansion and the building of new empires.
This is positively what happened to the Nubian empire builders. Nubians
turned to the southern steppe lands, where they vowed the seeds for the
development of another remarkable empire known as Meroe. [26] Yet it is
interesting to note that the Egyptian rulers did not cease styling them-
seleves as the Pharaohs of Egypt even after that country had long fallen
into what turned out to be a chain of successive alien conquests. [28]

25 Ibid., p. 268.
26 Ibid.
27 Ghirshman, A Civilization of the Sudan (New York: Preager Publisher,
1967); and "Two Lights On Medieval Nubia" in Journal of African History,
6 (1975), pp. 263-327.
Just as it had been through the Amun cult at Thebes that the Nubians had gained the Pharaonic throne, they also became the last bearers of the Amarna theology. Thus, while the Nubian retreated into the desert sophisticated dams in the Nile valley, Egypt was also being forcefully drafted into the Indo-European world of the Greeks, and Romans. It was, perhaps, the tragic beginning of Egypt's racial ease and the inevitable negation of its ancient African roots.

Neroe, which became the hub of another Nubian empire was located south of the sixth cataract between the Aswan and the Blue Nile on the east of the White Nile. This area is also known as the Nubian Steppe.

The locale of Neroe was reported by the Greeks to be an island, and the name ‘Island of Neroe’ has survived to modern times. As a settlement, Neroe is probably as old as Napata. But while Napata owed its development to the control of trade with Egypt, the route to the Red Sea coast, and gold, Neroe owed its rise and prosperity to its terrain and the discovery of iron. Further environmental advantages of Neroe have been given by Aure Reades who wrote:

Neroe lay further south, within the area of annual summer rain. While being advantageously placed than Napata for control of trade with Egypt, it was more favorable for cattle raising and was closer to the source of wealth from the central and southern Sudan. Not more important than these factors was the extensive iron-smelting industry, of which the great site known in the immediate vicinity of Neroe still gave evidence.59

Some other scholars have attributed the development of Neroe to

59Jalasu, pp. 302-303.
the agricultural wealth of the region. Others have contended that the place of Herod reflected the site of the ancient route as an alternative to the eastern-inverted and signifying Nile River. As evidence, these authors quoted the development of the Hypothesis which connected Nepata with the city of Herod. 34

The Herodian Empire lasted for almost a thousand years. It started about 66 B.C. and ended about A.D. 750, when the Arsacids (Parthians) conquered the country. 35

King Josephus described it. Josephus has provided us with the translation of one of Assur's scrolls. It reads:

By the might of the Lord of all, I made war upon Lake [tablet], for the peoples had rebelled and had made a boast of it. And they were in the habit of attacking the peoples of Mezeronte, and Besan, and Semyr, and the Elans, and of making war upon the red peoples. And so I went war upon them, and they would not listen to me, and they refused to cease from their evil deeds, and then before themselves to flight, I made war upon them. And I went in the might of the Lord of the lands, and I fought with them on the Arbore, at the ford of the Elans. There upon they took flight, and would not make a stand. And I followed after the fugitives and twenty and three days, killing some and making prisoners others, and capturing spoil wherever I tarried. Prisoners and spoil by people who had entered into the country brought back to me. Meanwhile I burnt their towns, both those built of bricks and those built of reeds, and my soldiers carried off its food, and its copper, and its iron, and its brass, and they destroyed the statues of their temples, and the treasures of food, and the cotton trees, and set them into the River Nile, and I came to last and I fought a battle and made prisoners of the people at the junction of the river Nile and Atbara. The masses of the titles of bricks were given up back. The town built of bricks which the lake [tablet] held therein were Tahira and Parfait, and I planted a fruitful in that country at the place where the River Nile. 36

This attack marked the end of the erstwhile dynastic dynasty and civilization of Kush which had lasted for more than one thousand years. Although we have few records of Meroe, two things stand as evidence of its greatness and prosperity as a civilization. These are its own scripts which have not yet been deciphered and the massive inscriptions which prompted the philologist A. H. Sayce to describe Meroe as "the Birmingham of ancient Africa." The second is the kingdom of Alwa which continued to remain a center of Nubian civilization and was a convert to Christianity in later centuries. What remains unexplained is what happened to the Nubian dynasty. Yes, it is not a viable argument to accept Atta's theory that his attack was the sole cause of Meroe's eclipse. Could it be that many years of alien occupation of Egypt and the rise of Aram were the primary causes of Meroe's undoing? Or was it pressure and infiltration by the weaker but less sophisticated tribes from the south? Unfortunately, we do not see much help from Egypt in the misfortune of Meroe's mystery. But as it has been said elsewhere in this chapter, after the withdrawal of the Nubians from Egypt, that country itself became the prey of one foreign conqueror after another. As the Assyrians and Persians vied for control, political and economic chaos reigned until 332 B.C., when Alexander the Great finally imposed a degree of stability. However,

31 A. H. Sayce, University of Liverpool Journal of Archaeology and Antiquity, 4 (1917).
32 Ibid., p. 35.
true peace did not come to Egypt until the Macedonian General Ptolemy repulsed his Greek allegiance and set up an independent dynasty at Alexandria. Henceforth the Ptolemies presided over the decayed remnants of Egyptian civilization. The Ptolemies' pharaohs died with Cleopatra's suicide in 30 B.C. But Cleopatra's suicide was also the opening page of six hundred years of Roman rule. Thus, although Rome was never conquered by either the Greek/Ptolemaic dynasty in Alexandria 332-30 B.C. or the Romans from 28 B.C. to A.D. 525, elements of Hellenistic and Roman influences filtered into Nubian culture. But as an alien grip tightened on Egypt and its Nubian allies were replaced by the alien provincials, so did the economic and cultural grip on Nubia decline. Nevertheless, Nubia was not totally unknown to the Greeks. Indeed, according to Tringham, who quotes Strabo, the Nubians were mentioned by the Greeks as early as 276 B.C.

On the left of River Nile beside Tushratta / Nubia / dwell in Libya, a great people, beginning at Nono and reaching the banks of the river. They are not subject to the Egyptians but independent, being divided into several kingdoms.

Strabo also mentions that during the first century B.C. the Roman historians wrote about the Queen of Sheba called "Queen," a generic term which Professor P. L. Griffith has indicated was used to denote any Queen Mother. It is also mentioned that when the Roman

54 Tringham, p. 12.
55 Ibid., p. 9.
pursued attacked Syria (antones), in 23 B.C., the Nabataean counterattack was directed by a queen who was acting as the regent. The Roman attack was led by Antipater, who later marched into Arabia and attacked and sacked Athapla. Other Roman assaults on Arabia were also contemplated by the Roman Emperor Nero in A.D. 65, but were never implemented because northern Arabia or Naba was found to be too poor and unworthy of a planned military adventure.

To recapitulate, this lengthy exposure into Nabataean-Egyptian relations has shown crucial and important social, economic, and political phenomena that characterized the relationship between the peoples for a period of over three thousand years. The recorded encounters started during the Old Kingdom. While Egypt enjoyed superiority in terms of material culture, political institutions, and centralized religion, Nabataeans provided the essential minerals, animal products, and manpower. Equally important is the fact that Nabataeans were not mere observers in the evolution of that great civilization. Contrary to the popular myth of the civilized north descending on the barbaric south, Nabataeans were constantly moving into the north and defending Egypt against the Asiatic invaders. If, indeed, the Nabataeans were Egyptianized through their acceptance of the native bureaucracy, they did so as Nabataeans, continuing their time-honored practices of ruling with the help of their queen mothers. Thus even when the Ptolemaic dynasty of Shabata, Ptolemy, and Dauphina assumed the Ptolemaic throne, they still acted as Nabataeans who felt duty-bound to protect the state religion and its priests at Thebes. And when each

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76 Judge, pp. 257-258.
one of them died, he was buried in Babia—clearly indicating the Babians' attachment to their Motherland.

The erstwhile Pharaonic dynasty and Babian Empire ended during the fourth century A.D., because Egypt lagged into perennial economic anemia due to its occupation and plunder by the Romans. The Babian Empire thus disintegrated into periodic petty chieftainships. Hence in the south fell into the hands of the Babia, a people who were not fully initiated into the practices and habits of the Amalite theocracy. Under these uninitiated tribesmen the state lacked its complex, unifying ideology and the differentiated power structure of Thebra, Napata, and Merotic times. In short, an ideological and power structure vacuum arose. Babia returned to a state of absolute petty chieftains typical of the early Dynasty age. Yet Babia had long passed a tribal age. Its people and institutions could only operate within a centralized and functionalized state revolving around trade and a common religion. Thus, though vanquished, and probably overwhelmed by the new emirates from the south, central, and east, the Babian age was far from being deemed tribesmen unready for any new changes, especially Christianity, that was replacing the worship of Amun and Isis, the formerly popular gods of the Pharaonic dynasty and the Hamite civilization.

3. THE CHRISTIAN IMPERIUM IN EGYPT AND SYRIA

For almost three thousand years dynasty had followed dynasty in

37 ibidem, pp. 1-3.
Egypt. Invading aliens had been repulsed or perhaps contained and Egyptianized at least in culture, as in the case of the Hittites. Even the sacred Egyptians failed to uproot Egypt from its manifestly anachronistic framework of pharaonic culture based on the worship of Anubis and Isis. Yet as the ancient civilization rose to its end, Egypt, like other cradles of ancient civilizations in the Near East, began to feel uneasy, threatened by the looming changes. Thus its spiritual leaders, long grooved and humiliated by alien invaders, began to see the old, artistic styles of the Old Kingdom. Thus the coming feeling of helplessness with the pharaoh's replacement was widespread in all centers of old civilizations from Egypt to Mesopotamia. To paraphrase Azair, the last Chaldean emperor in Mesopotamia ordered the excavation of a long-forgotten temple of his predecessor, hoping to recover some knowledge of their ways. In the ancient Biblical land of Palestine, a succession of prophets from Isaiah to Joel preached a return to the stern, simple ways of long-ago pastoral times. These exhilarating movements were all, in one way or another, attempts to revitalize a fading religion. But in the end, they too enforced the inevitable fate of satiatic survivals. The symbols of the past, even when they could be recovered, had lost their original vigor and meaning amid the complexities of the unfolding age.

In Egypt, the collapse and decay of the ancient ideologies had left a symbolic and spiritual vacuum which even a refined Hellenistic apologists could not fill. The result was that under Ptolemy a flowering of oriental salvationist cults developed as substitutes. But in the end...
the Roman cults returned to the worship of the ancient and familiar deities of Isis or Mithra or one of the Olympian pantheons. This crisis of a spiritual vacuum was compounded by the diminishing returns of an over-extended empire that was now on the verge of being challenged by its own political prescience.39

It was in these challenging circumstances that Christianity, a simple, universal, and radical doctrine, arose. In the words of Adams, it alone among the cult religions of antiquity offered a complete break with the past. A new God, previously unknown except to the Jews, untouched by the corruption and decadence of the Olympians, had spoken.40 The message of its proponent, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph and Mary, was addressed primarily to the dispossessed. Moreover Jesus' message was delivered not through the ritualistic priestly establishment of the Roman prefects, but through himself as a representative of the powerless majority, the masses. Jesus promised salvation through a simple and personal testament symbolized by baptism, which washed away all the accumulated past traditions. If nothing else, the new doctrine freed the powerless and ordinary people from a past that they neither knew, understood, nor controlled. By dissociating himself from the dead hand of the past and the then-current Roman bureaucracy, and the elitist priestly class, Jesus tapped the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat. The peasants, however, isolated and always indifferent to higher ideological

39Adams, p. lii.
currents, continued to draw satisfaction from polytheistic folk rituals. On the other hand, the privileged and priestly classes were understandably hostile. Both classes viewed the new doctrine as a subversion to the government and established traditions. But before long these classes ceased the attraction and liberating possibilities of the new doctrine. The reasons and logic underlying the change in these classes were simple and straightforward: if Christianity offered the poor a chance to escape from the inequities of the past, it could also offer the rich and powerful a chance to mobilize the proletariat and consolidate their power and position on a new and revitalized universal basis. \[1\]

Thus within three centuries of its founding Christianity was accepted and tolerated throughout the Roman Empire. And within four centuries it was proclaimed the state doctrine of the Empire. But while the doctrine acceptance and adoption by the state might have tended to rob the creed of its revolutionary flavor, its sphere of operation and strength were multiplied by the backing it received from the state. Instead, it was the Roman state that carried out the destruction of venerated religious monuments and creeds as a matter of state policy, thereby distinguishing Christianity from the purveyors of intra-creed violence. \[2\] Although the destruction of old and time-honored religious monuments must have made the Christian proposition of breaking with the past easier.

But while the adoption of Christianity as an official creed of both

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1 Chid., P. 324, and Adams, p. 415.
Rome and Byzantium must have rendered the spread of the doctrine easy. It was also pregnant with inevitable interpretative disidents. To be sure, the doctrine moved quickly both within and beyond the frontiers of the Empire. The Egyptians, who for more than one thousand years had experienced the burden of alien rule ranging from the Hyksos in 1750 B.C. to the then Byzantines, were among the alienated proletariat of the Empire who must have found the new universalistic doctrine most appealing. To them the idea of breaking with the past must have implied breaking with alien rule as well. This is one possible explanation for the nationalistic overtones that characterized the development of the Egyptian Church.4

Three crucial and important phenomena lay at the center of the introduction and development of Christianity in Egypt. First was the nature and character of Egypt as a country which for centuries had served as a meeting point of the Mediterranean, the Near Eastern, and the African cultures, thus creating a geo-cultural situation that one writer has described as "a palimpsest in which the Bible is written over Herodotus and the Koran over that."5 The second was the cultural nature of the native Egyptians: a highly mixed people, alienated by centuries of foreign rule, yet assimilated to the Greek-Roman culture which had proven a poor or unwanted substitute for the old Pharaonic culture. The result is that the Egyptians had become a mass of spiritually denuded and

4. For a brief but an excellent description of Coptic Egypt, see "Coptic Egypt," a booklet compiled by the Brooklyn Museum (New York, 1931).
The third was the colonial nature of Ptolemaic rule and occupation of Egypt. Although the Ptolemaic dynasty used and adopted Pharaonic titles, its center was at Alexandria, a city that was situated in Egypt but not a part of the Egyptian people. Yet, it was at Alexandria that the seeds of early Christianity were effectively sown.

Although at the beginning of the Christian era Alexandria (founded some six centuries earlier), was wrongly engaging the last remnants of the graces that it had retained as the capital of the Ptolemaic empire, but it was still the intellectual center of the Near East. Even under Roman rule, the city remained being what Strabo described as the greatest "center" of the inhabited world. In fact, under Roman rule the city and its excellent harbor were still commercially important. As John B. Harris has observed, through it the plentiful harvests of the fertile land of Egypt was exported to Rome; through it the luxury goods of the Eastern World which reached Egypt on the newly discovered trade routes were channeled into the Mediterranean world of southern Europe.

But what was true of Alexandria economically, politically, and intellectually did not apply to its detailed relationship with the Egyptian people as, indeed with the strong, well-populated and intellectually alert Jewish community. The Jews and the Egyptians—both extremely cosmopolitan—had their political privileges curtailed, which inevitably led to resentment. The Roman response was simply manifested in its person.

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"Acts of the Alexandrines," which were decreed during the second and third centuries. Naturally, the Alexandrine Jews saw the Roman as tyrants. On the other hand, successive Roman Emperors were haunted by the memory of the threat to the security of the empire created by the ambitions of individuals like Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Added to this was the constant concern of the Roman authority for Alexandria as a natural base from which usurpers could launch their claim to what Harris has termed the "imperial purple." Thus Rome could neither abandon Alexandria nor destroy it, as Titus had done to Jerusalem: the city was too crucial to the imperial economy. The result was that Alexandria continued both to enjoy commercial prosperity and to foster intellectual discords. Because of its wealth, the Hellenized Jewish community, and political strategy, Alexandria maintained academic institutions which made it the empire's habitat of curiosity, research, and learning in the ancient world. And this was how Alexandria became the nucleus of earlier Christianity.  

The credit for the conversion of native Egyptians is generally given to the Patriarch Dionysius (A.D. 216-267), the first patriarch who advocated the conversion of native Egyptians. But once Christianity was introduced among the Egyptians, they immediately clothed it with their own unique and native ideas of mysticism. As a movement, mysticism

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17 Ibid., p. 391.
had its origin in the ancient Egyptian practice of withdrawing one’s labor as a protest against objectionable working conditions. Hence, it is possible that the early Egyptian Christians adopted or rescued this practice of withdrawal and denial as a response to alienation perception. But whether monasticism was a pre-Christian Egyptian practice or not is irrelevant. What is important and relevant here is that the movement definitively originated in Egypt and represents Egypt’s greatest contribution to Christianity.

Perhaps an illustration can explain the impact and significance of monasticism than this lengthy quotation taken from the Apocalypse of St. John the Elder on ‘Daytime of the Fathers,’ when one of the Egyptian monks at a consecration meal in honor of the Archpriest, explains himself:

I remain (says Harvaus) fasting my thought for five years, saying (I thought it came from the desert): But as the thought remained, I set out into the desert. I found there a lake of water with an island in its middle. The beasts of the desert came drinking from it. I saw in the middle of them two naked men. My body froze through fear, for I thought that they were spirits. But when they saw that I was afraid they said to me, ‘Fear not, for we also are men.’ And I said to them, where are you from and how came you into this desert? They said to me, We are from the monasteries and have made an agreement to come to this desert fifty years ago. One of us is Egyptian, the other a Libyan. And they asked me, ‘How is it in the world? Does the foundation still exist at its right season? Does the world have abundance as of old?’ I said to them, ‘Yes.’ And I asked them, ‘How shall I be able to become a monk?’ And they said to me, ‘Thrice a man receives all the things of the world, he cannot become a monk.’ Then I said, ‘I am weak and have not your strength.’ They said to me, ‘If you have not strength we have, then go, sit in your cell and weep for four years.’ I asked them, ‘When it is summer are not your bodies warmed? What if it is winter are you not cold?’

They answered, "God has so ordained it for us that in summer the heat does us no hurt and in winter we feel no cold!" (Iespa, Catalgata, III:17). (p. 103)50

Whatever may have been the reality or truth of this bizarre voca-
tion, there is no doubt that the Egyptian monks saw themselves as an-
cestors of God who sought the devil and engaged him in battle away from
the human comfort of domestic life. It is also worth noting that the
tradition of the naked monks was later passed into medieval Western
hermitage. The best known was the Naked Monk, Onuphrius, whose feast
is celebrated in the West on June 12th. A church in Rome is dedicated
in his honor, and his naked figure is not unknown in Western Christian
art.51

The founder of Egyptian monasticism was Antony, who was a close
associate of the Patriarch Athanasius. Antony was born about A.D. 251
in Middle Egypt in the village of Bana, near Memphis. He was a native
Egyptian, spoke no Greek, and had very little formal education. Accord-
ing to tradition, Antony was attracted to Christianity and conversion
by reading Matthew 18:27: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou
hast, and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and
come and follow me." Interestingly, it was these very words that Origen
had interpreted literally and had himself converted. Antony—who was
made a saint of the Coptic Church—is also best remembered for the es-
tablissement of Deir Mar Eliseos Monastery.52

50Ibid., pp. 102-103.
51Ibid.
52Ibid., p. 104.
Another equally famous Egyptian monk was Pachomius, who was responsible for the spread of monasticism in Upper Egypt. Like Anthony, Pachomius is considered one of the pillars of the Eastern church. A native Egyptian who learned Greek later in life, Pachomius was responsible for the development of a more regulated monastic life. His writing in Coptic script, \textsuperscript{53} as Barrett has observed:

The Coptic movement was truly Egyptian, with its relationship to its culture. There was a common appearance of business and legal documents and of private letters, in Coptic and Syriac, in the Coptic language, reflecting the social and economic life of the communities and their relations with the secular world. Their own property they owned and manufactured; they sold and traded. Their prosperity was not maintained until after the Muslim invasion and conquest of Egypt in A.D. \textsuperscript{641}.\textsuperscript{54}

Thus it was through the efforts of the native monks that Egypt was Christianized; to use today's language, it was conversion through a "grass roots" movement. However, monasticism, the Coptic legacy to the Christian world lay in the solid support which it gave to the protagonists of orthodoxy, Atanasius at Alexandria and Cyril at Ephesus. And its dominant characteristic was its loyalty to the Coptic patriarch. This is why, in the prolonged and bitter struggles which divided the Christian world and provoked imperial interference, the Coptic reaction reflected its nationalistic feelings.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Gold, pp. 407-409.
\textsuperscript{55} Westerman, pp. 9-12.
At the center of this conflict was the definition of the nature of Christ. The Coptic Church believed that Jesus Christ had but one nature. The adherents of this school were known as monophysites or Jacobites, whereas the supporters of the idea of "three-natures" in one, which was the official position adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451, were dubbed "Nestorians" or "Monophysists." The result was that by A.D. 530, the monophysite church was securely established as the national Church of Egypt. Once the Egyptian Church was established, also, differences between its official patriarch at Alexandria and Constantinople, it was most natural, therefore, for it to attempt to extend its brand of Christianity to its southern frontier. Therefore Christianity was introduced to Nubia by the competing doctrinal influences of Coptic Egypt and the Greek Orthodox Church in Constantinople. But before we turn to the question of the diffusion of Christianity to Nubia, it is imperative to state the underlying political and social differences between Egypt and Nubia, because these differences were bound to determine and influence the spread of Christianity to Nubia.

As Lady Duff Gordon has aptly observed, "Egypt is a palimpsest, in which the Bible is written over Herodotus, and the Koran over that."57 This is true. But one may also emphasize that nothing that has appeared on the Egyptian scene has succeeded its celebrated Pharaonic culture and the Nile heritage. And the latter reflects not just the flow of the water to the north, but also the movement of the people. But in political terms,

56arris, pp. 475-10.
57Watters, p. 7.
attempts to keep Egypt alive probably ended with the fall of the XXV Dynasty. Thereafter Egypt was conquered, occupied, and subjugated into the Hellenistic culture, or shall we say, the classic Hellenistic culture of Ptolemy and Rome. Thus, for almost a thousand years, beginning with the withdrawal of Kush, Egypt entered into a period of unbridled hybridization. The Greco-Egyptian culture was deliberately interwoven with the Pharaonic culture. The result is that Egypt's racial and cultural differences with her erstwhile southern neighbor, Kush or Nubia, were assuaged. The spiritual homeland of Egyptian gods-especially Amon—was shifted from Thebes in Upper Egypt to Alexandria, and its priests, once the power base of the Pharaonic dynasty, were replaced by Greek ecclesiastics and商業. Alexandria thus became the second power base of Lemko-Nubian imposition.

Meanwhile in the south, Nubia and its successor Meroe retreated into the hitherto unexploited terrains of the Nile Valley with no access to the lucrative markets of Egypt and the Red Sea coast. The result is that the Kushe Empire declined and retreated into disunited tribal kingdoms. Also, Meroe's urbanization was limited and probably curtailed by these rigid tribal cultures. And even though Meroe rose into an important empire for more than a thousand years, it was an anathema to Ptolemy or its successor the Roman rule in Egypt.

Christianity, as we have already observed, was a radical doctrine that appealed most to the urban proletariat and later to the ruling classes who thought they could use it to strengthen their own political power. In Nubia, there is no evidence that there was a distinct proletariat waiting for redemption. The citrinya in the disunited kingdoms of
Habir, Amu, and Alu were perhaps tribal peasants, a people noted for their conservatism. Political and priestly power was concentrated in the hands of the deposed kings. Moreover, decline in trade must have meant an equal decline in the development of a middle class, the only class that could claim any sharing of power. Under these circumstances, any introduction of a radical doctrine like Christianity had to start with the kings. Thus, it was indeed, like introducing Marxism to a plural-authoritarian society. Mabia had not benefited from Hellenistic secularism and Roman militarism—the two combinations that prepared the road elsewhere for the development of Christianity.

C. THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF MABIA

While Mabia had participated and benefited from the Hellenistic culture, especially during the New Kingdom, the attempt to integrate the two Nile Valley Kingdoms failed with the collapse of the XIX Dynasty. Thereafter Egypt passed into Hellenistic influence while Mabia retreated into the typical terrain of the Nile Valley. Throughout the Greco-Roman rule in Egypt, Mabia became a runged kingdom outside the Greco-Roman civilization. And while the Pharaoh-priestly aristocracy of Egypt was undergoing radical cultural changes, the Mabian-Habirion culture was being submerged with tribal reinforcement from the south.

Although Christianity in Egypt was in Alexandria, and that city was isolated from the rest of the country, Christianity was soon able to find adherents among Egyptians throughout the country. "Egypt," wrote William W. Adam, "was in fact one of the few Roman provinces in which the new faith took root among peasants almost as soon as it did among
city-dwellers. Unfortunately, however, and perhaps because of the
Îles occupation and oppression, the Egyptian Church from the beginning
was troubled by heretical and schismatic movements. Additionally, most of
these movements developed normally over obscure theological questions,
but at bottom they often reflected the anti-Jewish feelings that were
shared by most native Egyptians. This problem was exacerbated after
Christianity was adopted as a Roman state cult. Ecumenists H. I. Bell
has summed up the nature of the Egyptian schismatic movement; "It was
natural that when Constantine was temporal as under the Roman Em-
peror Constantine, Egypt should be Catholic; when Constantine was
Catholic, Egypt should be heretical." The hide-and-seek differences
between the young church in Egypt and the mother church in Constantinople
was given a de jure difference in A.D. 431 at the Council of Chalcedon,
which ruled that Christ is consubstantial with his Father as regards to
his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as regards to his manhood. He
was made known to us in two natures. Henceforth, the Christian Church
was split between Monophysite and Monophysite doctrines. The Monophysite
followers were known as the 'Monkites, or the "Emperor's Men," while the
Monophysite followers were known as Jacobites. The Egyptians were, of
course, Jacobites.

Since Egypt shared deep historical connections and a common border
with Syria, it was inevitable that any attempt to spread Christianity

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59 Adone, p. 139.
59 Fuller, p. 301.
among the citizens and Muslims, would reflect the overriding religious differences with Byzantium, more so in Mecca because the latter was not a province of Byzantium. But Egypt’s capacity to spread Christianity into Mecca and elsewhere in the south has been implicitly questioned and answered in a rather harsh statement by Bell:

The Catholic or Malabar party, depending upon the support of the imperial government and therefore shrewd to the majority of the people, enjoyed little prestige and commanded a nearly following. The Monophysite or Jacobites, supported by the ignorant monks who were hostile to Greek culture in all Egypt, were quite incapable of making any important contribution to the thought of the age. Thus Egypt, whose capital, Alexandria, had been in the second and third centuries the seat of the famous Catechetical School and even in the fourth had produced in Athanasius a major figure of ecclesiastical history, became a provincial backwater.6

Bell’s statement provides us with a vivid picture of a religious form by factional strife and under whose fatal shadow the evangelization of Mecca was undertaken during the sixth century. According to tradition, the effort to convert Mecca was inaugurated by the great Byzantine Emperor Justinian in an uncoordinated policy of spreading the gospel beyond the imperial frontiers. It was uncoordinated because Byzantium had no political control over Mecca. Under these circumstances, one cannot but suppose that the Emperor’s efforts to convert Egypt’s southern neighbor was merely an imperial policy to contain the Monophysite rebellions in Egypt. This suspicion is supported by Justinian’s move within Egypt to close the Temple of Isis at Philae and to remove its pagan statues to

6 Bell, p. 116.
Constantinople. 62 Thereafter Byzantine's activities on the southern frontiers were intensified.

However, opinions differ as to who started the evangelization in Nubia. According to Bishop John of Sopens, whose detailed report on early missionary activity carries great reliability, the incentive to evangelize the Nubians was not initiated by Justinian but by his flamboyant and influential wife Theodora. 63 Bishop John, who was born in Mecapstad in A.D. 516, served for thirty years as an official at the Byzantine Court, and in his capacity, he was entrusted by Emperor Justinian with important religious affairs. Because of his zeal in the conversion of the "pagans" in Asia Minor, he was later appointed Bishop of Sopens. He was, to be sure, an adherent of the Monophysite doctrine, a fact that is evidenced in his interest in the development of Christianity in Egypt and Nubia.

According to Bishop John, there were three kingdoms in Nubia: Boscara, Makur, and Elue. He also mentions the Blampees, or the Beja. In his Ecclesiastical History, he wrote on the efforts to evangelize Nubia started by the Byzantine Court. 1900's accounts have been paraphrased by Fawzi Sedatis whose lengthy observation is reproduced here wholly because of its insightfulness and relevance:

62 See L. P. KIrwan, The Oxford University Expeditions at Phila (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939); also in the journal of E.

63 See Rev. Dr. John Pantini, The Expansion of Paezids: A Contribution to the History of Christian Nubia (Copenhagen, 1942; suppl. 1946), and Mace, pp. 635-636.
Julian, an able priest who had been a companion of Theodotus, the Captive Patriarch of Alexandria, while in exile in Constantinople, was full of an intense desire to convert the Sobodan, inhabitants of Sobatha. He transmitted his desire to the Emperor Constantine, the greatest champion of the Monophysite sect in the realm of Justinian. Theodore received the proposal with ardent soul and asked Julian to send him as a missionary to Sobatha; but the Emperor, who maintained the doctrine of Chalcedon, would not communicate a Monophysite as the agent of conversion; and so a rival Melkit mission was sent off in Justinian's name. Nevertheless, Theodore illustrated this mission's work by sending with Bereta that the Syriac governor of Trachis (Upper Egypt) would detain the Melkite mission until Julian had reached his destination. Julian arrived in Nubia in A.D. 563, and was enthusiastically welcomed by the Sobodans, who referred the God of the Chaldeans, saying, "that he is the one true God and there is no other besides Him." The statement shows that there was no ready response, and its wording may well reflect the gulf between the Monophysite and the Chaldean doctrine concerning the nature of Christ. Julian taught them Christianity and warned them against the Chaldean doctrine as that when the imperial counter-mission arrived in Sobatha it did not achieve any success.

Julian returned to Constantinople after two years of earnest work and was succeeded by Theodore, Bishop of Bulla, who maintained and consolidated Julian's work. Theodore returned to Nubia in A.D. 571 and the work was carried on by Lubanur, another able man who was Bishop of Bulla.

Due to the opposition of Melkites Longines had considerable difficulties in getting away from Constantinople and it was only by dissimulating himself that he was able to slip out and reach his field of 569. Longines had two missionary work in Sobatha; the captivated Sobodans received in the cold kindness of the Chaldean Church and built their church, and in their deep distress and tribulation, Longines left for Egypt to secure in the election of the Nubian Melkite Patriarch.

But Longines returned to Sobatha in A.D. 576 at the request of the King of Axum, who desired to have his country re-evangelized as had been Sobatha with which Axum was in friendly relations. But when the Melkite Patriarch heard that Longines was about to preach Monophysite in this new scene he showed him and sent two Melkite Bishops to the King of Axum to inform him about Longines' deposition and to warn the King that unlike the Melkite Bishop, Longines was unable to baptize or ordain. But as before in Sobatha, the Melkites were frustrated in their
attempt through the persistence of the king that Longinus only, who had baptized the Robatae, should baptize the people of Alba. In A.D. 550 Longinus set out for Alba and because Makura was unfriendly he had to take a roundabout route through the land of the Ramaeas in which he suffered many hardships. In an interesting letter from the king of Ramaeas to the king of Alba he said: "But because of the wise devices of him who dwells between us (i.e., the king of the intervening land of Zephyris), I sent my faithful father to the king of the Ramaeas, that he might conduct him thither by routes further inland; but the Makurese heard also of this, and sent people on the lookout in all the parishes of his kingdom, both in the mountains and in the plains.

Longinus was accorded a great welcome in Alba and after a few days' instruction both the king himself was baptized and all his nobles, and subsequently in process of time, his people too. There he also met certain Christians following the example of Malamhearus who claims that Christ's body was incorruptible and converted their belief.

Gedallah's lengthy paraphrase of Bishop John's account contains many geographical and historically known facts that lend it a respectable authenticity. It confirms, for example, reliable political information about Alba after the collapse of BDSM and Marcus implicus. Three disputed kingdoms, namely: Robata, Makura, and Alba came into existence; and while Robata and Alba were converted to the Monophysite sect through the efforts of Julian, Theodore, and Longinus, Makura was converted to the Nestorian sect. But above all, it shows that there was a significant outburst of missionary activity in Alba in the middle of the sixth century in which both Monophysites and Nestorians were active. It can also be discerned from the Bishop's account that the motives which prompted this

wave of evangelical effort was as much political as they were religious. Thus, as it has always been the case in Egyptian history, rival factions sought to strengthen their positions against each other by exploiting the support of the rulers. The end result was, of course, an almost universally hectic competition to bring the Christian message to the Pharaohs.

It is also safe to assume that the motives of the Pharaoh kings in accepting the Christian faith were perhaps political. This is evidenced by the fact that rival, and apparently hostile, Pharaoh kings opted for rival sectarian affiliations. Therefore when the King of Awa learned that the people of Awa were Amonites, he opted for Amonite religion, which was also the faith of the Pharaoh. To paraphrase Adams, the Pharaoh rulers must have seen an opportunity to strengthen themselves against their neighbors by entering into alliance on the one hand with the dominant hierarchy of Egypt, and on the other with the Byzantine Empire. Yet, and despite their sectarian preferences, there is no doubt that the Pharaoh rulers of the post-Nectanebo era must have felt the need for a new, unifying and prestigious ideology. And Christianity was obviously such an ideology; it was new and inclusive; it promised redemption to all people; and it was prestigious because it was the religion of neighboring Egypt and imperial Byzantium. In short, conversion to Christianity might have been calculated to give the Pharaoh rulers international legitimacy.

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65 Adams, p. 46.  
66 Ibid.  
67 Kiwan, pp. 82-83.
and respectability at home and abroad. International legitimacy, respectability, political solidarity, social prestige, and economic gains have always been among the motives for modern conversion among rulers. In fact, in the case of Muslim conversions, some writers have argued, it was inevitable from the moment when Christianity became the state religion of Egypt. After all, for many centuries the northern country had always been the standard and style of civilization for Muslims; no ideology which has ever developed there, from the cult of the Pharaoh to the cult of Sweer, has failed in the end to prevail in Muslim as well.

On the other hand, it is appropriate to wonder whether qualitative and durable conversion of the kind that took place in Arabia ever went deep enough to guarantee continuity and self-sustaining growth without external prodding. Thus, according to Josh of Shobak and Ibn of Balkhi, most of the early missionaries to Arabia were as much ambassadors as evangelists who started their proselytization at the top, with the kings and then the nobles. There is no mention of any other missionaries except those ambassadors and missionaries. Under these circumstances one is forced to speculate that the conversion of the lower orders, who naturally constituted the majority of the population, was either delayed by the king and his court subordinates, or done without sufficient religious instructions. Suffice it to say, the alleged successful conversion of

68 Adam, p. 144.

the whole country within a half century is a possible evidence of a
declining conversion or conversion without regard to a proper under-
standing of the doctrine. Moreover, the evidence used to show that
by the second half of the sixteenth century India was Christian is proble-
natic to say the least. As an example, one may refer to the changes
in the burial custom. Without questioning the authenticity of these
accused graves, one might rightly ask whether they were for all ordi-
nary people or the rich who could afford the costly embalming.\[70\]

Therefore, it is the opinion of this writer that the few thousands of
grievs that have been accused do not tell us enough about the degree
to which Christianity had penetrated to a largely rural, illiterate,
and semi-tribal society, being instructed in a language it neither spoke
nor understood. Neither does the number of the squabbles built under
the auspices of kings who were bent on enhancing their international
prestige and legitimacy at home tell us much about the degree to which
Christianity had successfully replaced local traditions and custom.
Indeed, if latter-day Christian conversion elsewhere in Africa, is any-
thing to go by, tribal traditions and customs in largely rural and ill-
iterate societies die hard.\[71\]

Regarding the religious heterodoxy that resulted from the conver-
sion of Rohitha and Mahaveera to rival Christian doctrines, there is

\[70\] Kantinkle, p. 275.

\[71\] For an insightful account of the African reactions and attitudes
in the Sudan, see Francis Mading Daud, The Africans of Two Societies: The
For a general view on religion and the African societies, see Monica
Williams, Religion and the Transformation of Society (London: Cambridge
evidence to suggest that the difference did not persist long, since debate was apparently unnecessary and appealing to Muslims by the beginning of the seventh century. This then brings us to the question of why Christianity wrenched away in Mecca after almost a hundred years of official backing and unimpeded conversion. The catastrophic effect of the Arab conquest in A.D. 632 and Islamic hostility is well known and will be dealt with later. What is relevant here is whether the consecration of the Rubenites had gone deep enough to evolve sufficient native agency capable of self-preservation and growth without external support. Consequently, this raises the question of the impact of Christianity, a foreign religion with state support, on the social, economic, and political structure of the Rubenian society as a whole.

The available evidence shows that in two or three decades Christianity had skewed up the Nile Valley from Aswan to Asyut. If this assessment is accepted, we must agree with Father Yaultini that the traumatic change must have caused a large part of the population to look at Christianity as a foreign religion (with Greek priests, Greek language, and Byzantine symbols), or else the “religion of the king,” obligatory for people who were his servants and for whom the king was everything. This is evidenced by the fact that the king was directly responsible for the erection of the churches. He was also the priest and military

72There is a disagreement among scholars as to whether the Rubenites were Judaizers or Nestorians at the beginning of Christianity in Mecca. See Yaultini, op. cit. pp. 173-174, and W. F. Demblis, “The Egyptian Contribution to Ruben Christianity,” in Ruben Studies, vol. 12 (1950-51), pp. 21-23.
73Yaultini, pp. 275-276.
leader. The result was that the church flourished when the prestige and military power of Rome was rising and declined whenever the temporal power of the king was in trouble or decline. This is the very opposite of the Christian church in Egypt where the church had become the embodiment of native resistance to alien domination.

In Egypt, the native Christians evolved and grew under official opposition, persecution, and political pressure by the Roman pagan emperors, then by the Byzantine emperors, and lastly by the Arab caliphs and sultans. Under these various forms of opposition the Egyptian church developed a native Christian ethos of resistance which accounted for its survival.\textsuperscript{16}

In Babia, it was the opposite. The church was an externally imposed ally of the throne. In short, the Christian church was an instrument of the king and not an embodiment of local beliefs, customs, and traditions; it lacked the flavor of a traditional ethos or nationalism.

There is also the question of the degree of the impression that the Christian religion made on Babia. Granted, the whole kingdom was converted. However, it must be noted that Babia was surrounded by polytheistic populations in the west and east which were constantly flowing in and out, with their polytheistic influences. This was the opposite of Egypt, whose population was highly concentrated, free from migration influences now, and had a settled peasantry protected by geography. In such different circumstances, the conversion of the
rural masses in Nubia must have remained shaky and superficial. Only
the traditional elite, the friends of the king, the court, and those
who wanted to belong to the new, extended cultural world took it seri-
ously.

Lastly, one must turn to the question of education and literacy
as the most effective means of enabling the Nubians to understand the
Gospel in Greek and to develop its own literary traditions. There is
no evidence that the Nubian princes or the Greek missionaries opened lo-
cal schools or sent Nubian students to Alexandria or Constantinople to
study or seriously attempt to Nubianize the clergy. Thus it was not
until in the ninth century that the nubian language began to be used in
churches and in some religious texts. This failure to develop a na-
tive clerical elite outside the royal family must have rendered the
church weak, especially in the face of Nestorian and Islamic onslaughts
against the royal family. The problem of the lack of a native clergy
was also compounded by the isolation of the Nubian church created by
the conquest and occupation of Egypt by the Islamic armies. This occu-
pation not only cut off the spiritual umbilical cord of Nubia from the
mother churches of Alexandria and Jerusalem, but also destroyed Nubia's
links with the Mediterranean world and Arabia. And while there was men-
tion of occasional Nubian pilgrims and travellers to Jerusalem and Egypt
until the end of the fifteenth century, they were insufficient to pre-
serve or sustain the growth of the Christian church. Only the presence

\[3\] See Hughes, *The Ethiopian Church* (London, 1907), pp. 228-231, Adams,
pp. 437-439.
of a trained native clergy and theological schools could have nurtured Christianity inophilia. But this never happened. Consequently, the Nabataean church was left to starve, with Islam, perhaps, picking up the tenuous offerings.

But since most of Philia's problems were caused by the Arab conquest of Egypt in A.D. 641 and the attack of Philia in A.D. 652, we must now turn to the role of the Arabs and Islam in the destabilization of Philia and the decay of the Christian church.

The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in A.D. 641 was by far the most traumatic conquest that country had ever experienced. The Egyptians, the Nabataeans, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans had each conquered and occupied that country, but none of these had the objectives or intentions that the Arabs had. Unlike all other past conquerors, the Arabs came not just as rulers, but also as settlers, assimilators, and forceful proconsuls. Not even the Greeks, whose general, Ptolemy, created a dynasty and adopted Pharaonic gods, changed the Egyptian society in the manner that the Arabs and Islam did. This is not meant to be a denial of Greek settlement in Egypt, especially in Alexandria, a city that was founded, built, and settled by Greeks and excluded Egyptians. Rather, what is being suggested here is that the Greek policy in Egypt was essentially political and economic. Islamization was an intellectual process, a process that only involved the Egyptian elite. The Greeks had no national religion that they sought

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76 Egypt was conquered and annexed by the Arabs who immediately flooded it with their own people. Soon, most of these settlers regarded the country as theirs by reason of conquest.
to impact on the Egyptian masses who, after all, they despised and segregated. In fact, if the Greeks entertained any religion at all, it was one lip service to Hellenistic gods.

The Arabs were very different to the Greeks. Their chief driving motive was religion—Islam. Thus conquest, assertion, Islamisation, assimilation, fiscal pressure, and socio-political disintegration were all conquest methods of attaining conversion and exploitation. In modern conquests only the Spanish conquest of Latin America can probably be compared to the Arab conquest and expansion.

The Arab conquest of Egypt is inextricably linked with the rise of Islam. Unlike Christianity, whose origin is traced to a man who discovered politics and temporal power, the rise of Islam was also the rise of Arab political power. Though is known about Abdullah Muhammad, the founder and prophet of Islam. He was born in Arabia in A.D. 570 of a simple and humble background. But when he died at Mecca in A.D. 632, his death was followed by one of the greatest wars of conquest and migrations in history. As Lorton Waterfield has observed, "The Arab burst out of the Arabian Peninsula inspired and disciplined by the Muslim [Islam] faith, defeating the experienced soldiers of the Greek and Persian Empires."77

Like the Arabs and Islam, the Spanish settlers made the spread of Catholicism and the Spanish language a matter of state policy. Spanish "salting" or "spermacete" with native women eliminated in the rise of a new Spanish-speaking class called the Mixtecs who were Spanish in culture, language and religion. See Robert James Sherer, The Reality of Latin American (Washington, D.C.: East and Co., 1979).

Waterfield, pp. 39-56.
Among the Arab generals who made these sudden and puzzling victories possible was Hur Tham al-A‘a‘, a trader, who was familiar with Egypt and its rich Greek city of Alexandria. According to accepted tradition, General Amr, after helping to capture Syria, obtained the reluctant permission of Caliph Omar to take a force of four thousand cavalry and men from Syria for the conquest of Egypt. In December of A.D. 639, Amr had captured Pelusium, and in July 640 he won the battle of Dalipolis. The Arabs were, naturally, vehemently opposed by the Greek forces of Byzantium. However, the Egyptians and Libyans in Dalipolis and elsewhere, saw no reason to fight against the invading Arabs, who, in their view, could not be worse than their Greek-Sassan overlords. Yet the final Arab victory did not come about until the capture of the famous fortress of Babylon which had been under siege for eight months. The Greek vicar, Cyrus, was persuaded to surrender to a Muslim Black general, Usaid ibn an-Samal. Meanwhile, and as if God had smiled at the Arabs, Emperor Heraclius died in Constantinople. In the midst of the power vacuum and uncertainty which always follow the demise of a great ruler, the Arabs captured Egypt. This was in April 641, the official date of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs. But in actuality the city of Alexandria did not fall until December 640, after months of siege and heavy casualties on both sides.

The reaction of the Arab invaders was typified by General Amr’s letter to the Caliph:

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I have taken the great city of the west. It is possible for me to enumerate the variety of its riches and beauty, and I shall content myself with describing that it contains four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four hundred theaters, or places of amusement, twelve thousand shops for the sale of vegetable food, and forty thousand inebriety laws. The town has been subdued by force of arms, without treaty or capitulation, and Muslims are impatient to reap the fruits of their victory.\textsuperscript{51}

The Caliph’s response was classic and in accordance with early Islamic practice. "No pillaging. The revenue should be preserved for the public service. A tribute was to be imposed, and the Jacobite Copts and the Melkite Greeks should be permitted to worship freely."

In order to protect the Muslim soldiers from the temptation of corruption, they were kept outside Alexandria and Egyptian settlements. Therefore, the Arabs erected a town of tents known as Al-Pastat. When Suhair, one of the leading generals, wanted land to be distributed among the Arabs as their right of conquest, he was promptly and effectively overruled. "Leave it in the people’s hands to judge and forgive," retorted Caliph Omar. Thus, as in the days of the deceased and the present, Egypt again was left to play its role of a granary for the conqueror. It was, indeed, for the purpose of transporting goods from Egypt to Arabia that he opened the canals linking Upper Egypt and the Red Sea.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51} Susan James Staff, 

But simplicity and refusal to seize land were not the only strategies that the Arabs used to win the hearts of the Egyptians. For almost two hundred years the Egyptian Copts (Jacobites) had waged a protracted spiritual war against the Byzantine Melkites. In Alexandria there were always two patriarchs—the officially appointed patriarch who was hated and disliked by the Egyptians, and the Egyptians' own patriarch who was often poor and a target of the Byzantine authority. General Amr won the hearts of the Egyptians by cancelling with the Coptic Patriarch Bethma. Moreover, since most of the Arabs were illiterate and those who were literate did not read Greek, the literate Copts proved highly useful to the Arab administrators which was conducted in Greek. Nevertheless, the Christians were discriminated against from the beginning of Arab rule in Egypt. For example, all Copts had to pay a non-Muslim tax known as jizya. No Coptic man could marry a Muslim girl, and while monks who had retired to the monasteries were not affected, the priests with shaved heads were given to choose between conversion and death. Naturally, most of them opted for conversion and life under Islam.

The treatment of the people of the Book, as Christians and Jews were known under Islamic Law, is a subject of endless academic debate. Muslim historians contended that Christians and Jews were well treated and that forced conversion was forbidden under Islamic Law by quoting

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64 Aquinas, p. 84.
such fabulous sources as the Bayt al-Ma'arif. He cited the letter of Muhammad to his commander in Syria stating: "Avert injustice and oppression. Let not your victory be stained with the blood of women and children—when you make any covenant, stand to it and be as good as your word." Yet it is this very Caliph, in the same edict, who decreed death or conversion for the priests with severed heads.

While the Muslim historians' position is not to be rejected in toto, one must take note of some other historians who have rightly contended that early Arab tolerance of the Christians and Jews was not so much a matter of adhering to Islamic law as a tactic and strategy dictated by the Arabs' own economic and political interests. Thus economically it was in the interest of the new Muslim state to have Christians and Jews handling economic matters and paying jizya, since the role of the Aghlabid was restricted to fighting. Politically, the Arabs needed the Christians and Jews to handle the administration, because the Arabs had no experience in administrative matters. Moreover, by giving the Christians and Jews freedom to follow their own religions, they curtailed political opposition. Thus Robert O. Collins and Robert L. Tigges, writing on early Arab policy in Egypt, have observed:

The conquerors were not experienced in the administration of settled and highly developed territories, let alone the vast territorial empire that they were overrunning. Indeed, they were not nearly as sophisticated in administrative, economic, and cultural matters as those they had conquered. They put the precedents to rely upon, for within the Arabian Peninsula from which they came their
basic social unity had been the tribe, whose organization was ill-suited to control the more highly developed economic and political institutions they had conquered.66

On the other hand, and with fairness to Islam, it is important to mention that the new community that the founder of Islam proclaimed was based more on religion than on a tribe. Prophet Muhammad had, indeed, laid down in the Quran some fundamental social and personal principles by which his followers were to be governed, at least in theory. These principles dealt mainly with religious duties—prayer, almsgiving, fasting—and with the regulation of personal life—marriage, divorce, wills, and testaments. Islam was thus more than just a religion. It was indeed a total and universal way of life enshrining the assumed Muslim's political, social, and economic requirements. But by making Islam the ideal religion, Muslims were forced to divide the world into Dar al-Islam or "the land of Islam," and Dar al-arb or "the land of war."67

With this kind of attitude towards the non-Muslim world, Islam made war against the non-Muslim world inevitable by its total negation of its own tolerant policy of tolerance and peace. Whether it was in pursuit of this anti-detente Islamic protocol that the Arabs moved against Egypt's southern neighbor, the Christian kingdom of Nubia, or it was a reaction to Nubia's alleged raids against Egypt remains academic.68

66Collins and Tignor, p. 21.
67This theoretical division of the world was accepted by all the Muslim rulers and scholars as a legitimate concept of relations between states. Inevitably the concept justified Muslim wars of aggression and invasion of the so-called Dar al-arb states.
68The contemporary Arab Sudanese historian, Yusuf V. Hassan, for
But if past Egyptian experience is anything to go by, conflict between Nubia and any power that occupies the former has always been inevitable. This and historical inevitability becomes doubly more true that Egypt was occupied by aggressive and expansive nomads, driven by religious zeal and a sharpened greed for booty.

The American archaeologist George A. Reisner once opined that the past history of Nubia was hardly more than an account of its use or neglect by Egypt, its enrichment or impoverishment by changes of the Nile and the climate. Unfair as this statement might sound, it contains some elements of historical truth. Except for Nubia's short-lived incursion and conquest of Egypt in 750-650 B.C., the history of Nubia is inundated with Egypt's aggression and inedible cultural influences. In fact, Nubia has known only one permanent enemy: Egypt. Otherwise, only Amur has once conquered Nubia but had then withdrawn. The rest of the African kingdoms, including the Beja, were either no match for the Nubian bowmen, or if they tried, they were defeated and absorbed into the latter's relatively superior civilization. In fact since 750 B.C., Nubia has enjoyed an undisturbed independence whose Golden Age expressed itself in the rise of Kerma, but this situation was soon to end with the appearance of a third enemy who had no plans to go away. This enemy was the Arabs and their religion of Islam.

example, contends that the Arabs in Egypt were provoked by the Nubians, thus placing the burden of Arab invasion on the Nubians. See Keen, pp. 77-81. For a non-Arab viewpoint, see Asfand, pp. 186-222.

99. See Reisner, Archaeological Survey of Nubia: Report for 1917-

100. Conner, A Civilization of The Sudan, pp. 52-55.
The first Arab attack against Nubia (Nakurra Kingdom) took place in A.D. 653. Reportedly, this attack was the culmination of raids and counter-raids that had been taking place since the Arabs seized Egypt. However, in A.D. 652 a well-equipped Arab expedition under Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Sallam was dispatched to attack Nubia. The Arabs marched to Dongola, the Nubian capital, and laid siege against the town, destroying the Christian cathedral. But the Arabs suffered heavy casualties; and perhaps because of this, Abd Allah ibn Sa'd agreed to a truce and extricated his battered troops.97 This truce or treaty (Jami' in Arabic) has been a subject of great debate among scholars as to whether it was actually a treaty or a truce.98 Some historians have argued that the purpose of this attack was neither booty nor the spread of Islam and Arab influence south of Egypt.99 Whatever was the underlying cause of the Arab attack—and whether the agreement was a truce, pact, or treaty—its effects on the Nubians were most serious.

Briefly, the Nubians were forced to deliver annually three hundred and sixty slaves and to allow Arabs to enter Nubia freely as travelers (the same privilege was apparently extended to the Nubians as well). However, if the Nubians were to kill a Muslim or harbor a runaway slave, the truce was to be considered null. The Nubians were also forced to return Abassids (people of the book) to the Muslims.

97Iswah, pp. 66-76.
98Iswah reproduces the text of the Treaty as it was preserved in Al-Naqshibandi Kitab (Cairo, 1968-1976), pp. 25-35, with commentaries translated from Arabic.
99Iswah, pp. 22-23.
Since the context and nature of this agreement remains controversial, it might be helpful to the reader to produce the text as preserved in Al-Maqrizi’s Kitab.

1. In the name of God—This is a treaty created by the Commander Abd Allah B. Sa‘d B. Ahl Sarch to the king of the Raha and all his kingdom, a compact binding of the Raha both great and small from the border of Yemen to that of Arabia.

2. Abd Allah B. Sa‘d B. Ahl Sarch made a compact of security and truce / Abbott (taken on behalf) / between them/the Raha/ and the Muslims—their neighbors in Upper Egypt. Together with other Muslims and Ali al-Abbas. The Raha people shall be safe under the safeguard of God and His Apostle, the prophet Muhammad may the blessing and peace of God be upon him. We shall neither fight, nor wage war on you, nor attack you, so long as you abide by the conditions made between us and you.

3. The Raha may enter our country Egypt which the Arabs had conquered and occupied in A.H. 647 as a travel visa and they may come into your territory or travel there and not as settlers. You shall protect those Muslims or their allies who tarry or travel there until they leave. They shall return to the land of Islam. Egypt has become land of Islam by reason of conquest even though the population at this time was still full of pagans and Christians. The nomadic tribes of the Muslims you may not take possession of them nor prevent any binder. Any Muslim who comes to take land and you must render him assistance until he leaves your country.

4. You shall permit the Muslims that the Muslims have built in the center of your city and not hinder anyone from praying there and you must keep it swept, illuminate it and treat it with respect.

5. Every year you shall deliver three hundred and sixty lamb of slave of good quality of your country, without defect both male and female, neither extremely sick nor children under age. These you shall deliver to the governor of Alwa. If you harbor a runaway slave of a Muslim or kill a Muslim on purpose or attempt to destroy the mosque which the Muslims have constructed in the center of your city or withhold any of the above hundred and sixty slaves, then the truce and the security shall be abolished and we
shall revert to hostility until God designs between us and He is the best judge.

6. Upon these conditions we are bound by the pledge of God, His Covenant and protection and that of His Apostle Muhammad—and you pledge yourself by all that you obey in your religion and community, and God is the witness between us and you. (Written by Fawz R. Shurshih in Kasr al-faraf 3, April-May 922) 76

Besides al-Maqrizi, there are other Arab historical sources that observe mention here: Tamid B. Abi Habib the Arabian; al-Askry B. Sadiq; Abdallah B. Aba al-Baqari; Abdullah B. Wahl; and Damur or Abu Tadmur. 77

A thorough examination of the comments on the different interpretations of this treaty leads one to conclude that the Arab attack on Singapura in AD 991-92 did not result in a decisive victory. On the other hand, the heavy sanctions that the treaty imposed on the Malayans leave no doubt that Singapura was in a weak position. Clause (3) of the treaty, for example, allowed the Arabs or any Muslim to pursue and arrest Malayan runaway slaves on Malay territory, while Clause (4) commands the Malayan government to maintain and take care of the mosque. But the most unjust part of the treaty was Clause (5) which commanded Singapura to deliver 360 slaves of good health annually.

In short, there is no principle of reciprocity in the treaty, except the section on travelers and settlers. But even here most Arab historians doubt whether the Arabs did not settle in Singapura. As Tuanku Raja Haji (K) writes: "Clause (3) did not permit the Arabs to take a fixed
above in Mada', but I doubt whether this restriction was enforced for long. Arab traders were granted a free passage and could now travel from the vast commercial potentialities further south. Through their knowledge and contacts with the Abyssines these traders began to lay a foundation for later Arab penetration, at the same time acting as missionaries of Islam among Christians and pagans alike.96

Erasut's comment is well taken. But it should also be emphasized that the Arab traders from Mecca into Mada', except to tie the latter's hands. As Muslims, the Arabs had been granted immunity to traverse the Abyssinian territory in search of slaves. Meanwhile, the Abyssinian government had been humiliated by being forced to deliver its own citizens as slaves to the Arabs. This act much has made the Abyssinian government appear weak and an agent of the Arabs.

To be sure, though, the Arabs' contact with the western coast of the Red Sea might probably be older than Islam. Abyssinia was particularly well known to Meccan traders, and after the death of Islam, it is reported that Muslim refugees fled to Ethiopia and were protected by its king. Muslim traditions claim that the Abyssinian king entertained Islam and corresponded with the prophet. The latter is alleged to have said, "Leave the Abyssinians alone as long as they leave you alone."97 But in 362 AD, King Yem Haile Eshow sent a naval expedition against Ethiopia at the port of Adulis, an attack that cost the Muslims three of their four ships. It was also in an attempt to contain Abyssinia that Sulayman bin

96 Ibid., p. 31.
97 Ibid., p. 32.
Ach al-Malik, the Tawqayd Caliph, attacked and occupied the Abyssinian Islands of Dallak in the Red Sea in A.D. 702, so the Muslims’ access to Bajiland was guaranteed. Two other places in Bajiland also deserve mention: the ports of Badi and Ayassah. The latter, like the Dallak Islands, was used by the first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Riddiq, in A.D. 630, and later by the Umayyads and Abbasids as a banishment area for undesirable Arabs. It is also mentioned that, on his way back from the Dorga campaign to Egypt, Abdullah B. Sa’id was met by a Baja gathering on the bank of the Nile. He reportedly mocked some Baja who then became Muslims; but the first official settlement between the Arabs and the Baja did not take place until about the end of the seventh century, when Ubaid Allah 3. al-Rahib, the Superintendent of Finance in Egypt, made a treaty with the Baja after defeating them. The Baja agreed to pay tribute of three hundred young camels annually and in return were granted the privilege of entering as traveling traders, though not as settlers. They were not to kill a Muslim or a Bajam; if they did so the treaty was to be void. The Bajas also agreed not to harbor fugitive slaves of Muslims and to return such slaves to the Arabs. In order to ensure the enforcement of this so-called treaty, a Baja agent was to be kept as hostage in B. 671.99

As a whole, then, it is correct to state that by the end of the seventh century the Arab conquerors in Egypt had made their presence and power felt and known to Egypt’s southern neighbors, the Abyssins and the

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
Hajja. Each had been forced to accept a treaty that in no uncertain terms subordinated it to the Arab and Israeli. The subordination was most unjust on Rubia, which was a sovereign Christian nation that had enjoyed diplomatic relations with Byzantium.

One important question, though, remains unanswered: What kept the Arabs from overrunning or conquering Rubia and Hijaz? There is no doubt that the Arabs possessed the capacity and means to defeat the Rubian forces. Yet, they allowed the Rubians to remain independent. The answer to this question may be deduced from the path of Arab conquests throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. It shows that the Arabs were only interested in those countries that had been under Roman-Roman and Persian control. In this sense, Arab conquest and colonization followed in Rome's footsteps. Whether this is because the hard core of upside-down of the Arab Empire included traders and merchants from the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, and thus urban-oriented, remains conjectural. The implied answer among the Arab historians is that the Rubian body was not worth the risk of conquering the Rubians. Under these circumstances.

100 This assumption is based on two possible factors: First, the Arab army had a much larger army. Second, the Arab army was better armed and probably more experienced in warfare, having fought in Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Lebanon, and Egypt. Also, in terms of resources, the Arabs were in a strong position being in control of the rich and relatively more developed economies of Syria and Egypt which had been centers of the Byzantine empire.

101 The alleged economic worthlessness of Rubia is also given as the sole reason why the Romans did not attempt to conquer Rubia. See L. F. de Vries, "The Economic Position of Rubia in Roman and Medieval Times," in Studies on the Arab States, Vol. XX (1958-63), pp. 23-27. But while this article does apply to the Arabs, it definitely does apply to the Rubians. Why, after all, do not subscribe to the view that Islamic conquest was motivated by economic gains despite the obvious fact.
the hard task of traversing the non-Palestine world was left to those hardened desert Arabs that The Khalid termed as illiterate and hereditary enemies of civilization and settled life. And in the words of Adams, “it was chiefly these illiterate masses who brought the last major transformation in the cultural development of the Sahara.” Thus, if the Numuik tribesmen were the hammer of Islam, the Arab tribesmen constituted who came to surround the Sahabi on the south, east and west were the anvil upon which post-Christian society was forged. 102 This is why the rise of the Numuik rule in Egypt with its prehistoric political culture and haremment of the Bedouin tribesmen is an apt starting point for the study of the rise of Islam and Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley. 103

that this assertion is in gross contradiction with the numerous economic actions the Arab-Muslim conquerors often imposed on their victims.

102 Adams, p. 106.

CHAPTER III

THE MARCHING ON EGYPT; THE UNIFICATION OF INDIA AND ASIA

EUPHRATES INTO THE SUDAN

A. THE RISE OF THE MAMLUK

Less than ten years after the premature death of the prophet of Islam, and during the Caliphate of Omar, Egypt was conquered from what Sir William Mair called the mosques of the Roman Governor, by the Arab general Amr ibn al-As. For more than two hundred years thereafter, Egypt was ruled as a granary province of the Islamic Empire with its headquarters in Damascus and Baghdad respectively. During these two hundred years, power was shared by two collection of dynasties, namely: The Rassafid dynasty of Damascus and the Abbasid of Baghdad. However, toward the end of the ninth century, the Governor of Egypt, son of a Turkish slave general, renounced his loyalty to the Abbasid Caliphate in Bahlul and proclaimed himself as the ruler of Egypt, thereby opening the Pandora box of Islamic internal conflict in Egypt. In 985 A.D., the

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Tulunids lost their power to the Aghlabids in 933. But by 933, a new Turkish governor, Ibn al-Tujjar, seized power, declared Egypt independent once more, and founded the so-called Fatimid Dynasty. While both the Tulunids and Fatimids were shortlived, they are important in the study of Islamic Empire in Africa in the sense that these two administrations marked the first appearance of Turkish slave soldiers in Egypt.

The Fatimids were overthrown by an Arab-Berber dynasty, popularly known as the Ayyubids. The Ayyubids ruled Egypt for two hundred years, depending heavily on Berbers, Turks and Slavish as soldiers. The Fatimids' role in the Ayyubid dynasty was significant. The Ayyubids' main strength was their ability to control the vast resource base of Egypt. The Ayyubids' strength was their ability to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt. They were able to control the vast resource base of Egypt.

2Khalai, Pp. 77-78.
7In their earliest days the Kansulzu were referred to as "Turk- tak" mercenaries even though not all of them were Turkish in fact. See
military aristocracy which is the theme of this chapter. But before
emerging on the role of this strange slave oligarchy, we must first
examine briefly its origins and the circumstances that contributed to
its rise to power.

It is customary to attribute the use of slaves as soldiers by
the Muslim Caliphate in the Abbasid of Baghdad without realizing
that the practice was, in fact, as old as the rise of Islam itself.
Indeed the earliest practice of using slaves as soldiers in Islamic his-
tory, may be traced to the Prophet Muhammad’s own wars in Mecca and
Medina, and to the conquest of Egypt where, we are told, that one of
the most illustrious and ablest officers who confronted the Roman Governor was
an ex-slave, Black General Caliph list al-Samit. In the face of this
evidence, it is only fair to admit that the Abbasid caliphates merely
improved and institutionalized a practice that had its roots in the
rise of Islam and Arab culture. This is definitely contrary to what
most historians have written. For example, Sir William Muir says:

Makht, Ith., pp. 260-263; M. Inamudin, Ith., and Sir John Globb,
Soldiers of Fortune (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1973), Sir
John, in particular, provides one of the most thrilling and objective
accounts of the Muslim armies and their patient care and rules in the
service of Islam and Arabia.

4. J. Butler. The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty
Years of the Roman Dominions (London: Oxford University Press, 1960),
pp. 246-248.

5. According to Butler, Caliph’s reply to the Roman governor was as
follows: “There are a thousand blanks, as blank as myself, among our
soupsons. If and they would be ready each to wait and fight a hundred
smiles together. We live only to fight for God, and to follow His
will. We gave thought for vassals, as long as we have bread to eat our
burden and to clothe our bodies. This world is bought to us, the next
world is all ours.”
For several generations the Caliphate of Baghdad had fallen into the dangerous habit of attracting to their capital thousands of slaves with barbarous names from Turcomans and Mongol hordes. These they used both as bodyguards and also as cadillages to counteract the overwhelming influence of the Arab soldiery. Woe to the and they supposed omnipotent. From the bondage, they became the masters of the court, mocked plate and revolted, and hastened the fall of the vast Caliphate.10

Perhaps it should be mentioned that upon assuming power, in 879 A.H., Caliph Al-Mutawakkil sent a message to Egypt ordering the termination of pension payment to the Arabs and eventually dropping them completely from their historical role as vandals of Islam.11 The result of this revolutionary change in policy was a massive exodus and unrelenting persecution of the Arabs into the Muslim and successful expulsion of the Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula after the conquest.12 This was the point where the Arabs from their assumed sacred role as avengers of Islam that gave birth to the turkification of the Islamic soldiery.13 Although the Fatimids were closer to the Arabs, they failed to change the policy and rehabilitate the Arabs. In fact, they continued the practice by employing Turks, Berbers, and Sudanese as soldiery. The Fatimid successors, the Fatimids, were no better either. Their forebears themselves (in fact Turks by descent), they naturally assimilated the

11Nisani, pp. 264-265.
13Over the beginning of the Turkification of the Arab Islamic armies, see Nisani, pp. 254-255.
The practice of depending upon captured slaves as soldiers was strongly aided by the conquered tribes of central Asia who made their children available to slave dealers. This became virtually a system dependent partly upon the threat of force and partly upon the lure of the great prosperity of the Islamic Empire in the west. There is no doubt that Egypt was a famed land of fortune and better life for the ex-slave soldier. Therefore it was not just captured children who flocked to Baghdad, but also free children whose parents thought that servitude in the Islamic military offered the best opportunity to better life and greatness. Militarily, these white slave children were preferred because of their martial outlook and natural propensity for excellent horsemanship.

In Egypt, these slave children were given rigorous training in Islam and horsemanship and then released on pledge of loyalty to the master and to the defense of the Islamic Caliphate. Such is the brief

14 Bair, p. 1.
15 This is a very controversial point. However, many Arab historians, e.g., Michal, Marzouk, Shaddad, and Aramaj, maintained that the steppes people sold their children voluntarily to the Arab pasha because of the better future that serving in the Islamic armies offered. This is also true of the same opinion. This author, however, does not share this view. He is unable to imagine of parents who would willingly sell their children to alien servitude.
17 For a comprehensive and thorough study of the Komoluk, see: Nair, Shi'ah, Irene-Poule, and David Ayallon, Weapons and Firearms in the Komoluk Kingdom (London: Valentine and Mitchell Publishers, 1968), and Robinwic, 1966.
principle of the rise of the Mamluk dynasty. As an institution it grew out of a need for security because it was necessary to replace the Arab soldiers on grounds that they were prone to mottilation and lacked a sense of both professionalism and personal loyalty. 18

The first Dynasty of the Mamlukes in Egypt may be traced to the Ayyubite princes who settled their Mamlukes, chiefly Turks and Mongols, on an island in the Nile Delta; hence the name of "Taly Mamlukes" of 1260-1280, A.D. 19 The later Mamlukes, known as Burjeises or Circassians, were later settled in the towns and were the founders of the second Mame-
luk dynasty of 1532-1577, A.D. 20 Armed with better training, loyalty to the master, and pride in their slave origin and racial enlightenment, the Mamlukes became the real power of Islam and kept its life until the rise of the Ottoman Turks during the second half of the fifteenth century. 21 As Max has observed:
The Mamlukes were for the most part attached faithfully to their masters, and the Mamluk, with their support, excelled themselves by services to the people, with the undoubted pride of office, as a body, and with rich from the state. The Mamlukes as a body thus occupied a prominent and powerful position, and often, especially in later times, forced the Sultan to bend to their will. 22

Thus, there were the people who for two centuries and a half ruled

19Ibid, pp. 11-20.
20Ibid.
22The Oxford History of the British Empire in the Western World (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Edward David-
Egypt with a rod of iron, and forced their frustrated and unhappy Arabs
to seek fortune, freedom and mere existence in Hejaz al-Sudan.

Although officially the Hamidian dynasty started in 1860 A.D., the
seeds of the Bayr Jamshides were sown in A.D. 1069 when Salilah az-Zim
took power as Prime Minister or Vizier of Egypt. Three years later,
the weakening caliph died, thereby bringing an end to the Fatimid dynas-
ty, and Salilah az-Zim assumed power as the Sultan of Egypt. Popularly
known as Saladin, he was the son of a Kurdish chief called Ayyub; hence
his dynasty is known as the Ayyubis. 73

Saladin, the non-Arab hero of the Arabs, died in A.D. 1193, after
a heroic battle and defense of the Islamic Empire against the Crusad-
ers. 74 He was succeeded by his brother, Alili, and then by his grand-
son, Ayyub. It was Ayyub who prepared the ground for the establish-
ment of the first dynasty by a brilliant Bayr Hamid general who had led
the Islamic campaigns in Palestine and Syria. This general was Abu 1-
Abd al-Rahman Ayyub. 75

Like all good Hamidians, Ayyub ben Bashir (1066-77), was a slave
of Sultan Ayyub. Bashir earned his fame and reputation at the battle
of Min Yebet where he defeated the Mongols so badly that they retreated
to Central Asia for good. 76 According to William B. Risbey it was this

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75 Risbey, pp. 16-17.
76 Risbey, p. 317.
victory that motivated Baybars to end the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt and rule in his own name. In a precedent setting Mamluk style, Baybars murdered his chief Sultan, Qutuz, and declared himself the Sultan. 26 Baybars' accession to power is very important in the study of the Mamluks in Egypt because it is the official starting point of the Mamluk dynasty in Egypt.

In order to lend legitimacy to his occupation, Baybars brought into Egypt a son of the Ilkhanid caliphate who had survived the Mongol onslaught of 1258-9, and proclaimed him Salih while denying him any political authority. 27 It was in this way that the Ilkhanid caliphate, which had collapsed in Baghdad under the Mongol invasion in 1256, was nominally restored in Egypt and maintained under Turkish control till the Ottoman Sultan Selim conquered Egypt and claimed it for himself in 1517. 28

2. THE MAMELUKS IN EGYPT AND THEIR POLICIES

Although Mamluks were literally brought within the Arab-Islamic Sphere of Influence in A.D. 652, for six hundred years prior to that date its

26 Ib., pp. 16-17.
27 Lane-Poole, pp. 260-275.
28 Meir, pp. 16-17.
Relations with Egypt were relatively good and even cordial. Indeed, many Arab and Muslim historians have been quick to use the absence of recorded wars between the Arab rulers of Egypt and Syria during the Mamluk, Saladin, Ayyubid and Fatimid periods as bonafide evidence of Muslims' desire for peace and good relations with Egypt's southern neighbor. Such Arab and Muslim historians are thus apt to point out that the hostility and violence that characterized Egyptian-Syrian relations between the second half of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were solely due to Syria's growing aggressiveness, refusal to honor its treaty obligations and the rise of a non-Arab political force, Nubians in Egypt.

Implicit in this kind of argument, of course, is the theory that the Arabs paid tribute to Muslims in Egypt, were justice bound and honorable peoples since they were guided by the principles of Islam. Thus according to the proponents of this theory, there was nothing wrong morally or otherwise with the tribute (jizya) which, among other tributes, obliged Syria to pay three hundred and fifty men and women annually to Egypt. Equally disturbing is the fact that Arab infiltration into Syrian territory is seen

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1. Sourif Paul Eissa, The Arabs and the Omayyads (Edinburgh, United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 89-93. In the opinion of this writer it is unrealistic to describe the relationship between Syria and Egypt as cordial as long as Syria had to suffer the sanctions of the Pact Treaty annually.
2. Ibid., p. 93.
3. Ibid., p. 92-93.
4. Ibid., p. 95.
as a normal and natural quest for Jehovah. Despite the obvious fact that such a free-wheeling movement even by innocent nomadic Arabs constituted a violation of Moabian sovereignty. Therefore, it is argued here that the good relations that prevailed between Egypt and Moab following the signing of the Treaty in 652 until 1260 were due to the following reasons:

(2) Moab's capacity and willingness to meet the just exactions of the Treaty, especially the border resources. It will be remembered that during the Greco-Roman occupation of Egypt, Moab had enjoyed relative peace and economic prosperity. With the exception of Wadiqrea, she was the strongest and only known world power south of the Sahara desert. This prosperity grew as Moab, once Egypt's reluctant protectorate, was drawn into Christianity, perhaps because the coming of Christianity to Moab meant more than spiritual enlightenment. For one thing, Christianity meant the introduction of new political and economic ideas. This is why, initially, Moab was able to pay the required tribute without much problems, probably from the sale surplus of accumulated slaves and other material goods.

(21) In the absence of any competing ideology and massive alien infiltration, Christianity had become an effective and probably a popular idea for the entire country. This unity of purpose and spirit


38 Adair, p. 515.
was thwarted by Islam and Arab infiltration into Rubia. These two factors (namely: Islam and Arab immigration) destroyed Rubia's internal harmony and stability.

(III) So long as the Red Sea coast ports of Aqaba and Shuqrah were free and open to Rubia, she was able to conduct her trade with the Islamic world irrespective of who ruled Egypt. This situation changed with the Mamelukes' assumption of power in Egypt in 1260; hence Rubia's attack on Aqaba in 1265 A.D.

(IV) The Crusades imposed severe economic strains and political insecurity on the Islamic world. The Mamelukes who had borne the brunt of these wars must have been anxious to extort whatever they could from Rubia.

(A) The sudden establishment of a Mameluk rule in Egypt in 1260 changed the position of the Arabs from one of constituent aristocrats (which they had been since the days of Aheed Ismail in 871) to one of unwanted displaced refugees.

With the above factors we can now understand why the rise of the Mameluk state in Egypt was greeted with a marked deterioration in Egyptian-Rubian relations with the displaced Arabs in the middle. Moreover, it must be noted that though Muslims in faith, the Mamelukes were essentially non-Arab, non-domestic and socially an insecure group that was always haunted by its slave origin. Nor was the fact that the Mamelukes rose to prominence during the war of the Crusaders helpful. In fact, the Crusades made the Mamelukes even more insecure and suspicious of their former overlords, the Arabs, whom they had now replaced. Indeed, any study of the Mameluk policy towards Rubia must include the Mameluk
policy towards the Arabs, especially the Arabs in Egypt.

Essentially, the immediate attitude of the Mamluk-controlled state in Egypt was one of a more active and aggressive policy toward Syria with a deliberate view of converting that country into a vassal kingdom. Consequently, the Mamluks wanted to export as much material goods as possible and enforce a strict implementation of the Treaty. Unfortunately Syria could not fulfill either condition without grave consequences on its weakened economy. This is because Syria was surrounded by hostile Islamic forces, especially in the north and the Red Sea coast which were the country's main trade routes. Moreover, by the thirteenth century Syria was already experiencing not just economic decline, but also internal political disunity prompted by growing Islamization and assimilation which followed conversion to Islam and the presence of Arab settlers in Upper Egypt and Syria's northern region of Al-Haur. In the circumstances, the rise of the Mamlukes in Egypt was bound to heighten Syria's problems.

Although in reality the Arabs in Egypt had lost political power from the time of Ahmad Ibn Tulun, it was the Mamluks who terminated once and for all the Arab's political unilingual word. Henceforth, the Arabs in Egypt felt depersonalized and humiliated. Describing the Arabs' reaction to the Mamluks' political ascendancy, Ezrahas observed:

The majority of the Arabs, who continued to lead a humble or semi-agricultural existence, living on the settled communities, and unafflicted by governmental decrees, found the changes disastrous. Their simple

39Ezrahas, p. 106.
mentality and code of ethics presented that soldiers who had been under the rule of non-Arab rulers, for example the Assyrians. The answer may be discerned from the origin and political culture of the Mamelukes. First, the Mamelukes were of "undesirable" ethnic origin. Second, unlike the Gallo-Huns and Ayyubids who had shown themselves as Geese and as culturally Arabized rulers, the Mamelukes only valued Islam and Arab civilization, but despised the Arabs and even the Arabic language. In fact, many of the Mamelukes spoke no Arabic at all. Moreover, being of sedentary culture, the Mamelukes viewed the nomadic Arabs as being unruly and inclined to a settled and productive life. Therefore, Arab presence in Egypt, especially in upper and lower Egypt, posed a serious threat to the Mameluk regime.

The Arab threat was translated into action earlier in 1293, when Shahrizur al-Din Thalab bin Majid al-Jabali called upon the Arabs to revolt. Jafari had seen the sedentarism of the Mameluk that the Arabs were the owners of Egypt (presumably by reason of conquest), and claimed: "We are the owners of the country, and are more entitled to rule it than the Mamelukes." Responding to Jafari's nationalism, the writer is aware that many historians and political scientists are unwilling to attribute nationalism to states made during this period since nationalism is considered to be a modern phenomenon. Nevertheless, he finds Jafari's cry classical nationalism.
appeal, the Arabs refused to pay land tax (kharaaj). In Upper Egypt, more than twelve thousand armed Arabs gathered and posed a serious challenge to the Mamluk authority in Cairo. However, the Arabs were soon routed out by Sultan Aybak (the first Mamluk Sultan) who commanded the rebels with a cavalry of five thousand men. Many Arabs were killed or captured, but some escaped into Nubia. fragmentation was captured and hanged in public during the rule of Sultan Baybars. Because of this daring Arab revolt the Mamluks imposed heavy taxes on the Arabs, partly as a punitive measure and partly as a way of forcing them to desert from their nomadic and pastoral practices. Nevertheless, the Arabs did not submit to Mamluk rule easily. In fact, whenever the Mamluks were preoccupied with wars in Syria and Palestine the Arabs would refuse to pay the taxes. Indeed, according to Baybars, there were many Arab revolts throughout Egypt until 1351 when over ten thousand Arabs led by Serf al-Din Shaghila were forced to flee to Nubia, leaving everything behind including their families and cattle.

In Nubia, the Arabs were soon joined by their pastoral kin, and religious clients of Mamluks, the Banu `Iyad. The Banu `Iyad were Isma`ili and Arabized Muslims of Al-Mar`i region who, according to Joseph Schatch, were products of conversion and intermarriages between Mamluks and Arabs. Being Muslims and half-Arabs, the Banu `Iyad

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15 ibid., p. 104.
had strong sympathies for the fleeing Arabs. Thus, in 1318, the two groups revolted and killed the Mamluk governor at Shum. Although their revolt was easily put down, the Mamluks had learned the need to establish a firm political control in their southern frontier. Moreover, because of their anti-Arab and anti-domestic policy coupled with the famine and epidemics which visited Egypt during the reign of the first Ayyubid sultans, many desperate Arabs were forced to flee to Muhia in search of food and a better life. However, in Muhia these Arabs became a source of serious social discord and political unrest. Moreover, and to make things worse for Muhia, the fleeing Arabs were often famine-stricken and could do nothing but continue their rapacious behavior of plundering the Muhian Christians and quarrelling with the Muhian rulers there or amongst themselves.

6. THE MAMLUK RELATIONS WITH MUHIA

Three factors determined and influenced the Mamluk policy towards Muhia. First was the active pursuit of the Treaty tributes, especially the annual delivery of slaves and cattle. It will be recalled that the regular delivery of tributes had become the cardinal principal governing the relationship between Muhia and the Mamluk rulers of Egypt since its proclamation in 652.11 However, after seven hundred years of annual delivery, Muhia was finding it hard to obtain three hundred and fifty healthy men and women to send to Egypt annually. Indeed, there is reason to believe that in order for small Muhia to meet this unjust demand,
it had to either engage in constant military raids against its southern neighbors for captives, or enslave its own people. The latter policy was definitely preferred because it was bound to render the government unpopular with its own citizens. The second factor that underlined the Hasmukh's behavior toward Nubia was the containment of the markedly Arab emirates in Upper Egypt and their social kin and religious cliques, the marginalized Arab tribes, the Jami 'El Zama in Al-Ma'ari. Displaced and harried, the Arabs were eager to reconcile to be loyal to the Hasmukh regime in Cairo. The result is that the Arabs were always attempting to organize an independent state in Upper Egypt with Nubia as a frontier safety valve. 48 At the same time, the Jami 'El Zama tribes were vying for the Nubian throne, which they could resist the Hasmukhs. The third factor that determined Hasmukh policy toward Nubia was derived from factors one and two. In order to collect the tribute, the Hasmukh had to eliminate any Arab resistance in Upper Egypt, the hostile Jami 'El Zama Muslims, and make sure that the ruler in Nubia was one who owed allegiance to Cairo. This meant making Nubia a vassal kingdom with a puppet king.

Perhaps it should be emphasized that by the time the Hasmukh ceased control of Egypt, Nubia was already experiencing internal dissention as a result of economic decline, many years of Islamic pressure on Christianity and the growing number of Arab settlers and their Nubian kinships or Muslim converts. Indeed, in order to understand Nubian-Hasmukh relations, one must always bear in mind the role of Nubia's

48 Ibid., pp. 67-70.
improvised economy, internal decline following the decline of Chris-
tianity on the face of vigorous Islam and Arab influx hastened by the
Mameluke anti-Arab and anti-nomadic policies. It was under these non-
violate circumstances that Ribia started to build what turned out to be
hopeless bridges with Mameluke-controlled Egypt. 48

The saga started in 1266, and it was initiated by King David of
Ribia, with a delegation bearing gifts to Raybars, the all powerful
Mameluke Sultan of Egypt. King David put just deposed his maternal uncle
(package Musall), Abu-1-lasr Murtazikar on the ground that the king had
given blind. The aim of King David's mission was apparently to obtain
the goodwill and approval of the new rulers of Egypt. But there is rea-
son to suspect that the Ribian delegation was also entrusted with the
responsibility of ascertaining the attitudes and policy of the Mameluke
towards Ribia. 49 Moreover, the fact that the new rulers of Egypt were
non-Arab might have encouraged King David to depose his apparent Musall
uncle.

As it turned out King David's optimism was misplaced. Raybars' re-
ply to the Ribian delegation was to demand the immediate delivery of the
fierce tributes. Apparently no payments had been made for some years
while the Mamelukes had been engaged in wars against the Crusaders
and the Mongols. In fact, according to Rasim, Raybars obviously postponed
any confrontation with Ribia for a while and turned all his energy to

49 Ibid.
the more pressing problems of Syria and Palestine. The misuse of the
Nemalak's intentions and their ability to carry out their threats, and
Nebi's adopted an intradienial policy towards Egypt. Thus, in August
1722, King Nebi attacked and sacked the port of Aqaba, killing some
Nemalak officials and Arab merchants. The aim of the attack was,
perhaps, to capture Nebi's commercial assets.

In order to understand the gravity with which the Nemalak
viewed Nebi's actions, one must realize how vital the Port of
Aqaba was to the Egyptian economy. First, the Red Sea was an im-
portant link with the holy cities of Mekka and Medina. Second, it was
a trade link with Yemen, the Hijaz and India. Third, since the Muslim
world was still battling with the Crusaders, there was suspicion that
the Nebi might have been attempting to establish some political al-
liance with the remnants of the Crusaders in Syria and Palestine.

Whether indeed the Nebi aimed at establishing some alliance with the
Crusaders remains academic. What is definite is that after the Nemalak
occupation of the ports of Aqaba and Jiddah, Nebi's encroachment by
the Muslim forces became a fait accompli. In the circumstances, Nebi's
attack on Aqaba must be seen as a desperate move by a kingdom whose e-
conomy was suffering from Muslim suppressions; hence the urge for survival.

Although Nebi's attack was a great victory, the Nemalak's response
was most cautious to say the least. The Nebi's governor at Aqaba, backed
with a cavalry, pursued the retreating Nebi forces deep into Nebi

51 Ebadi,
52 Iqbal, p. 147.
As has already been noted above, the followers of Islam in Egypt, strengthened by Arabization and the Arab influx, were now making a claim on the Christian throne. These internal squabbles over the Muslim throne by different branches of the Muslim royal family, some of whom solicited Mameluke support, gave the rulers of Egypt a golden opportunity to intervene more actively in the highly charged politics of Syria. As would be expected, this situation led to the rise of a "fifth column" of ambitious Muslim princes on whom the different Mamelukes in Egypt depended for the future selection of Nasirite kings for Syria.54

Thus in 1175 Prince Shamsa, a nephew of the late King Iko Isas Murashanur, the blind King who had been deposed and banished by King Nand in 1156, showed up in Baybars' court in Cairo seeking help against his cousin King Bowl who was denounced as a usurper on the Muslim throne. Since King Bowl had offended Baybars by his previous attempt on the part of Aybak, Baybars was enchanted by Shamsa's unexpected arrival and plan for help. Most naturally, Baybars sailed

the opportunity and dispatched three hundred Hasmath horsemen together
with provincial soldiers made up of wild eyed Arab fighters from Upper
Egypt, ostensibly to conquer Nubia and install Hakanda on the Nubian
throne. This grand force for invasion was dispatched on January 12th.55

With no apparent resistance from the Nubian troops, the Hasmath
forces seized and occupied the vital fortress of Al-Daw, where the Nubian
Lord of the Mountain resided. The same fate befall the strategic
Island of Mildew. To make things worse for Nubia, the Lord of the
Mountain capitulated to Hakanda and pledged his loyalty to the Hasmath.
The Hasmath showed their appreciation by having the Lord re-
confirmed in his position; a treacherous and treacherous practice that was
condoned by Hakanda's other courts of the mountain in the future.56 To add
insult to injury, Hakanda's capitulated Lord of the Mountain provided the
invading Hasmath troops with skilled Nubians to pilot the boats through
the hazardous cataracts of the Nile.57 Probably it should be mentioned
that the Hasmath had also obtained the backing of the Nubian Muslims,
the Imam 1-Lumin. After three months of travel, the Hasmath-led army
encountered the Nubian troops who proved a poor match for the Hasmath
forces. The Nubians retreated in utter confusion, leaving some ten
thousand troops in the hands of the Hasmath.58

Although King Sowad was able to escape, his capital city of Yonceka
was sacked and his family (including his mother, sister, aunt and niece)
was taken captive. With their mission accomplished, the Mamluk army anointed Shakhaneh after he had solemnly promised to remain loyal to the Mamluk rulers in Egypt. Shakhaneh also swore to fulfill a chain of capitulative obligations, most of which had been dictated by Sultan Baybars even before the campaign was launched. The principal terms of the agreement were as follows:

(1) Shakhaneh promised to send annually one half of the revenues of Baha to the Sultan of Egypt. The second half was assigned to Shakhaneh and was to be spent on defense and on the upkeep of the kingdom. He would also send annually three fire-teams, five one-jec-
panied, a hundred swift zebras, four in sales, and four
domed sheep over all that belonged to King Tawad, his relations and the soldiers who died during this campaign. The Baha-
ians were offered three chances: to adopt Islam, to live.
cast, or to pay the Jizya. They accepted the third o-
curse. A yearly poll tax of one thousand for each adult
was imposed on the inhabitants. The tax is not spec-
ific, but it can be assumed that the Muslims were sub-
ject to the same requisitions. Moreover, although the tax does not refer to the Treaty, it would seem to have been included in what al-Azazi calls "prevailing arrangements."

(2) The northern part of Baha, al-Hurj, which com-
piled one quarter of the country, was assigned to
the Sultan. This clause implies that the revenues of this region were probably paid directly to the Monarch treasury, since the Seer of the Mountain continued in office as a vassal of Sultan Baybars.

(3) Shakhaneh undertook not to allow any Arab nom-
ade, young or old, to remain in Baha. If any nomad
would be found there, they were to be sent back to
the Sultan. This clause reveals what an extent the Mamluks feared the Arab nomads; it does seems unfair to have suppressed them in Upper Egypt and to have sub-
сидized them from Baha.

(4) Shakhaneh took a second oath in public, con-
firming the above-mentioned terms and undertakings to
support all happenings in Baha to the Sultan and to go
to Cairo, whenever summoned to do so. The inhabitants
of dynasty also took an oath of allegiance to the Sultan and to his representative, that is, the king, whom they were to obey, so long as he remained loyal to the Sultan.  

Symbolically, also, the Hasmukh army did not hesitate to use this occasion to enact the memorial statues and other symbols that the late King Daud of Repha had erected during his victorious assault against the Hasmukh-controlled part of Syria in 1272. Importantly, this memorial site had churches and houses decorated with portraits of Muslims who were killed during the Hasmukh campaign. In a typical Islamic fashion, the Muslims reconquered the dynasty church of Jesus and plundered its treasures. A golden crown, whose value was estimated to be 1,600,000 dinars, and silver vessels, with the value of 9,400 dinars. But perhaps the most valuable treasure that fell into the hands of the Hasmukh were twenty Arabian princes (including King Daud’s brother) who were carried as hostages to Cairo. Describing the political value of these noble hostages, Manas has observed: “These Arabian princes, some of whom had claimed to the Arabian throne, were kept in Cairo for use, at an appropriate time, in the same manner as Harun and his brother had been used, that is, to accompany the Hasmukh expeditions whenever their greed and political expediency called for an assault against Syria.”

Tragically and quickly too, King Daud was added to the list of hostages. He had made a successful escape to Aila where he was

100, 111.
embraced, chained and delivered to Cairo as a gesture of friendship and goodwill by King Aref. Meanwhile, in Cairo, in an act of unusual cruelty and humiliation the two thousand Nubian captives were sold in the open markets of Cairo at 3 dinars per head. Suffice it to say, if this figure in 1905, it was a disastrous drain on the human resources of the already badly devastated and humiliated kingdom of Nubia. To make things worse, the southern region of Nubia, Al-Maris, had now been Islamized and extensively penetrated by Arab tribesmen who plundered and lived as parasites on the harassed and declining Christian population. In short, the northern Nubian defenses against Islam and the Arabs had not only collapsed but was now serving as a bridge for the final destruction of Nubia as a sovereign and Christian state.

However, after the Numeibahs had installed their puppet shaikhs on the Nubian throne, they were faced with the time honored problem of running a tottering state with an unrelenting external King. To solve this problem, the Numeibahs resorted to the usual colonial practice of appointing a resident agent whose task was to deal with the Nubian affairs, with the special responsibility of collecting Jizia (poll tax) and Kharaj (land tax). Since the successful assault had also increased the Arab population in Nubia and strengthened the Muslim position, the imposition of poll tax and land tax was bound to annoy not only the Muslim Nubians, but also the runaway Arab tribesmen whose cause of revolt has been

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., p. 112
63 The conversion of Al-Maris to Islam and the rise of the Hybrid Hashimites also had a very adverse effect on Nubia's northern defense posture.
in Egypt was peevy taxes. First, it will be remembered that according
to Islamic traditions, the payment of Jizya was the exclusive prerogative
of the Khilafah and the Isla.65 Second, whereas the payment of
Majz was legitimate, the policy was nevertheless most unpopular with
Arab mesads.

But despite the compounded fiscal strain that asphara imposed on
Raha, his remained uncertain and suspicions of Raha's continuing loyalty.
Consequently, asphara was forced to resort to yet another administrativ­
atorial move: destabilizing his rival kingdom. In a classic Nasirian
style he sent two second associates to keep an eye on King Shukranda with
orders to assassinate him should he fail to implement the movement un­
der which he had been propelled into the Sahil Union.65 One of these
associates was Shukranda's favor and became his personal bodyguard.
Within an unrecorded time, Shukranda was murdered and a certain Barak ascended
to the Sahil throne. However, because he owed no favor to the Nasirians,
Barak attempted to assert some degree of independence. The result is
that the Nasirians found anew a raison d'être for launching another mil­
tary expedition against Raha.

Thus, in 1219-20 during the reign of Al-Mansur Bulban, an expedi­
tion led by Samad al-Haruni was sent to depose King Barak and had him
murdered.66 Barak was succeeded by Prince Shukralla. But it was not too

65[al-[al-, D. A. p. 166; Shabati, 1914, p. 72, and in John B.
pp. 57-58.
66[akma, p. 112.
67al-[al-, pp. 271-72.
long before the new king was subjected to the same Mamluk practices of 
centralization and conspiracy. This time, however, the initiative 
came from King Abu al-A'la who made a dramatic visit to Cairo to 
complain to the Mamluk Sultan about King Shamsun's hostile attitude. 67 
In response the Mamluk sultan dispensed a delegation to the Shamsun 
court. According to Yusuf Hasan, the business historian, King Shamsun 
acted in a hostile manner towards officer 'Alam al-Din Sameh, and 
reportedly 'Alam al-Din would have been murdered had the nobles of 
Habab not intervened, warning the king that such an action would result 
in the ruin and loss of the kingdom. 68 For bad or good, the counsel 
of the Nobian nobles prevailed and 'Alam al-Din returned to Cairo un-
harmed. In fact, 'Alam al-Din was soon followed by a pleasing Nobian 
mission that brought with it an "appropriate" gift of one hundred and 
ninety slaves and two hundred cows as a token of Habab's desire for 
friendship. But despite these costly overtures, the belligerent Mame-
lukes remained unimpressed and ever distrustful of King Shamsun's in-
tentions.

Therefore, in February 1387, Sultan Qala'un dispatched another dele-
gation to Dongola, the capital of Habab, and to 'Ala al-Din, with instructions 
to report on the behavior of his belligerent vassals. 69 Probably unsatis-
fied with the reports of the state of affairs in Habab, Sultan Qala'un

67 It is not clear how King Abu al-A'la who was very hostile to 
Habab was able to reach Cairo. But according to similar records trans-
scribed by Hasan, the visit did not take place. Hasan, pp. 117
68 Hasan, pp. 116-77.
69 According to Hasan (p. 179) the delegation visited 'Ala al-
Din. If this is true, it clearly shows the degree to which both Habab 
and 'Ala were known to the Mamlukes.
launched yet a third invasion of Nobla. This time the
invasion was led by three of Salama’s ablest generals: Isa al-Din al-Arwa al-Jisrani,
Ali al-Din Sanjar and Isa al-Din Aydah, the governor of Qasr, in Upper
Egypt. As in all previous Mameluk invasions against Nobla, the Mameluk
horsemen were accompanied by the surplus Arab tribesmen from Upper
Egypt. According to Nasir these Arab tribesmen were from the Banu Abu
Hajir, the Banu Jurf, the Banu Sharif, the Banu Hilal, the Banu I-Kawr,
the Banu Shabani and other dispersed Arab tribes. Although King Sha-
mun was apparently well informed about the Mameluk arrival, his
army proved a poor match against the Mameluk horsemen and their horses
of Arab tribesmen. The Nobla army was defeated, losing many men al-
though Shamsun escaped to Egypt, his lord of the mountain, and a cousin
was taken prisoner to Dongola where, as usual, the Mameluk army
planned to appoint a new puppet king.

As in previous occasions, the Mameluks replaced their old chieftain
by installing King Shamsun’s nephew as the new king of Nobla. The cap-
tured Lord Sharif was capitulated and was reinstated in his office. 78 The
new king promised to deliver annually a special tribute in addition to
the tribute required in the Treaty. In order to ascertain the new king’s
compliance, the Mameluk sultan instructed one of the invading generals,
Isa al-Din Aydah to remain in Dongola with a Mameluk garrison to keep
an eye on the situation. To help Isa al-Din, the sultan released Ali-
Sharif’s son al-Din as’ad, a nephew of King Sharif, who was acting the twenty

85, 86, p. 113.
Nubian princes held in Cairo as hostages, to act as an advisor. From the prince’s name, al-Sherif es-Salhi, it is reasonable to assume that he had been converted to Islam while a hostage in Cairo. However, for unknown reasons, al-Sherif es-Salhi remained in Cæsarea in Egypt and never showed up in Denga.  

The rest of the Kusilak army, except the Arab mercenaries who were normally garrisoned in Nubia as a good insurance in Egypt, returned to Cæsarea with immense booty: Captives, cows, horses, camels and anything else that added to Kusilak’s greedy and luxurious living. Commenting on this large amount of plunder, Hassan has suggested that there were obvious economic motives behind the Kusilak’s repeated interventions in Nubia. It is also obvious that the Kusilak who were uneasy with the Arab nomads in Egypt were using these raids as a device for removing undesirable Arab nomads from Upper Egypt where they constituted a threat to Kusilak authority.

Significantly, just as the Kusilak were noted for their masterly conspiracies, plots and sheer viciousness, the Syrian kings too, especially Shamsun, had mastered the art of survival by playing the game of hide and seek. Shamsun seemed to excel in resourcefulness, cunningness and evasiveness in his policy, and it appeared to be devoid of any seriousness’ skillfulness with the bow. He simply compartmentalized the Syrian martial spirit with his evasiveness. Thus, no matter how the Kusilak army returned to Egypt than be appeared in his occupied capital Denga.

72 Ibid.
With no apparent resistance from the Mamluk puppet king, Baybars drove out the outnumbered Mamluk garrison and reestablished himself on the Mamluk throne. This puppet king, Al-Shirf, said, the captivated leader of the Mountain Swarms, and the routed Mamluk army, took for Cairo to report to the sultan who now dispatched by Ruba a bigger army headed by General Zia al-Din Ayub Al-Afraw.

This fourth invasion of Ruba was launched in October 1269. In conformity with the Mamluks' established manner of dealing with Ruba, Ayub was accompanied by the named puppet king as well as three sultans. However, on their way to Ruba, the puppet king died in Amara. Looking for replacement, the sultan reached into his pocket of Ruba hostages and picked prince Sulaiman, a nephew of King Savid who himself was still a hostage in Cairo.

In addition, the Mamluk army was accompanied by forty thousand Arab tribesmen collected from all over Egypt. Indeed, looking at this unusually high number of Arab nomads, one cannot but agree with Hassan's suggestion that the Mamluks were using the invasion of Ruba as a device for deporting the non-productive Arabs from Egypt. Need to say, the Arabs were also anxious to join the campaign because the occasion offered them an opportunity to share in the looting of

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74Hassan, p. 156.
75This was in October 1269.
76This was typical of the Mamluks' intrigues, using a nephew as an ally in a practice that hastened the internal disintegrating of the Ruba royal family.
77The 50,000 number does not include women, children, and perhaps, slaves who later, must have joined the Arabs once they settled in Ruba.
Habla as well as getting away from the Hama army by bureaucratic and heavy taxes. Morally too, such an occasion was welcome by the A-
rat, because it caused their dead tradition as victims of Ikhshid. In addition to fighting, the Hama army used Arabs as foot soldiers and
_ Arabians, a role for which their desert experience supplied qualified
them. It is most significant that this time the Hama army had five
hundred boats. Equally significant is the fact that the capitulated
former Hama lord of the Mountain was employed to procure the invading
army, calming the inhabitants and attempting to win their good will.
In this unholy task, Juraye was helped by the Islamized and Arabized Hu-
bian clan of the Sama I-Kama who also proceeded the massive invading
army to arrange for camping stations. Reportedly, Juraye was most suc-
cessful in his old domain of Al-Mara where, after all, the seeds of
Ikhshid and Arab influx had long betrayed the Hama sense of ethnicity
and Christianity."

As the invading Hama army and the Arab hordes moved deeper in-
to Hama territory, the inhabitants grew more and more hostile, adopt-
ing a scorched earth policy. Meanwhile, King Shamran ordered the e-
vacuation of the capital, Damascus, fleeing to the island of Aegina in
the Nile River, but since the Hama forces were well equipped with boats,

Rostov started the professional task of the Arabs in the earlier
days of the Arab Empire. In a permanent standing army of Ikhshid, the
Arabs lived on booty and salaries for those who held offices.

Hama were an amalgam of Keltic tribes that were molded to-
gether during the Phoenician, Meroitic and Christian civilizations.
This makeup, or would tend to suggest that Hama unity was always based
on some ideology. The weakening of Christianity must, therefore, have
eroded a YUGER.
they were able to confront Shanmash there with a promise of amnesty. This may have attracted further south to Abwa. Sudanese traditions tell us that the Nubians' troops penetrated deepest into Nahyan territory in pursuit of fleeing Nubians. But perhaps this is a

because of the degree which the Nubians had come to know the Nahyan terrain. The Nubians' casualties were almost nil, apparently because there was no significant encounter with the Nahyan who had decided to resist with their king. But there were some desertions by priests and princes who surrendered to the Nubian generals. Among the seized booty were the Nahyan crown and the silver cross which, incidentally, were regarded as Nahyan's symbols of sovereignty. The capture of the crown was without doubt both humiliating and demoralizing to the over-

81. The Nubian capital, where the Nubians held great influence and power, and which, by the end of the 16th century, had become the center of the Nubian state. The Nahyan, however, refused to recognize the authority of the Nubian king. As a result, the Nubian forces were sent to put down the resistance of the Nahyan. The Nahyan, however, managed to repel the Nubian forces and managed to hold out for several months before finally surrendering. The Nubian forces then occupied the Nahyan capital and subjected the Nahyan people to their rule.

82. This point is also confirmed by Senan, p. 114.

83. Senan, p. 115.
Significantly absent in this returning entourage were, of course, the forty thousand Arab knights. They were all left behind in Nubia to pursue and plunder the far-flung Nubian provinces. Yet despite the terror, looting and massacres conducted by the Hindu kings, the Nubian people remained loyal to King Shamsun. So long as the resplendent Shamsun was still alive, the Nubians’ loyalty to him was greater than any terror and gale of the Hindu kings. Thus, even though the Nubians could no longer confront the main army, they always retained enough tenacity to despoil the Hindu kings’ hands-plucked crops. Therefore, once the main Hindu army retreated to Egypt, Shamsun was always able to reassert his authority. This is precisely what he did again. He reappeared in Nubia and in a single night won over even those notable Nubians who had taken an oath of loyalty to Shamsun and the Hindu Sultan. In an unusual move this time, Shamsun disallowed the Hindu to flee to Egypt and had his executed together with the renegade Shamsun. The Hindu garrison pleaded for safe conduct and was allowed to hurriedly escape to Samaria.

Applying, Shamsun withheld any revenge against the Hindu garrison partly because he was planning for a reconciliation with the sultan

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51. The Al-Furat, VIII, 91, translated by Taha菲尔, quoted and translated by the same in The Arabs and the Sudan, p. 175. Also see Ibn al-Furat, Tahhit, 925, quoted by Shamsun.

52. Shamsun, pp. 57-58 and p. 560.

53. This is one of the rare occasions when a Nubian king acted for the murder of a successor.
in Cairo, and partly because he feared that such an act would invite the usual Mezublik punishment, or fear for the safety of members of his family who were hostages in Cairo. Thus, as soon as he settled on his throne he dispatched a letter to the Hafiz Sultan in Cairo asking for forgiveness and promising to deliver an increased tribute. As usual, such a letter had to be accompanied with hundreds of slaves as gifts.56

According to Balbess sources, the Hafiz Sultan was inclined to confirm Shamsun as his vassal in Hulfa for two reasons. First, the Hafiz Sultans were preoccupied with the Crusader siege of "Shahar" (Arabic) in Syria. Second, despite repeated Hafiz raids into Hulfa, experience had shown that the country could only be successfully conquered and occupied with a much larger army. But such a policy was too risky at this time since it could lead to the loss of the area had to the Crusaders.57 In the circumstances the vassal decided to solve the Hulfa problem for a while and let Shamsun have his day.

As for King Shamsun's change of heart, there is no doubt that it is because he had learned that his little kingdom with its devastated resources just could not take any more Hafizik invaders. Moreover, internall, Hulfa's security was increasingly being threatened by the Arab nomads who flooded the country with every Hafizik invasion. There was also the threat posed by the intifranted and aridized Bedou L-Lans. The other major problem of Hulfa was the state of the economy. The country

57. Hafiz, pp. 296-302.
was literally being strangulated by the Hormuzis and their arch-enemies. Its external trade had come to a halt because of the Hormuzi occupation of the ports of Aden and Sneakin on the Red Sea coast.

While in the south, King Asad of Alva had opted for collaboration with the Hormuzis. On a personal level, King Shamsun was worried about the safety and life of his mother, aunt and relatives who were held as hostages in Cairo. These were all compelling factors, each had its role in Shamsun's decision to use for reconciliation and became a Hormuzi vassal.

Although Sultan Shabab bin Gal&M did not accept Shamsun's apology and plans for reconciliation, he was apt to assure King Shamsun that relations were good as long as Mohia paid the tribute. In fact, it was not long before King Shamsun sent his brother Al-Burzi and Mohia's Lord of the Household, Sayf al-Dawla Jurzar al-Rabi, to Cairo ostensibly to convince the sultan to let Shamsun's aged mother return home by indicating that it was a Mohian custom for kings to conduct their state affairs with the advice of their queen mothers. In addition to the delivery of the tribute, the delegation also carried some other gifts to the sultan who accepted them, but refused to accept Shamsun's apology. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that the sultan did not add Al-Burzi's name to his long and useful list of royal hostages in Cairo.

92 There are no records to show what happened to King Shamsun. However, according to Shamsun there is some evidence to suggest that he reigned until the time of Sultan Al-Dini al-Din Kayhafa Al-Mansuri, who ruled Egypt in 1275-97, a.D.
Because we lack any information on what transpired between Kuba and Egypt after Shamsun's epilepsy and the plan for the return of his mother, we are left uninformed about Shamsun's remaining life and rule or what became of his mother and sister in Cairo. However, the scarcity of evidence that is available indicates that throughout the Kuba's reign, the rulers of the horsemen in the Near East (up to 1303 or so), Mubab enjoyed a peaceful decline and growing submission to Egypt and local Arab-Masalite feuds. The picture of peaceful decline and submission is supported by some facts of the visit of King Amy of Mubab to Egypt in 1301, perhaps as a successor to Shamsun. Undoubtedly, King Amy turned up in Cairo to deliver the tribute, but the king was also seeking the help of the Kuba sultan against an opponent at home. 29

As it would be expected, the Kuba's sultan seized the opportunity and provided the desperate king with Kuba's troops and a large body of Arab tribesmen who journeyed to Mubab, anxious to help King Amy retain power. This they did, but so soon as the Kuba's troops receded, the divided Minbas resumed their divisive politics. In the course of the conflict, in 1317, King Amy was murdered. Amy was succeeded by his brother, Shamsun, who soon had to make a political pilgrimage to Cairo to curry favor with Sultan al-Masalih Salamon at the exorbitant price of 1,000 slaves, 500 camels, and 500 donkeys. 30 Naturally, Salamon was pleased with the gifts, expressed satisfaction, and welcomed the young king. Shamsun was

29Ibn Tabar, p. 177.
30Ibn Tabar, 'Abd (Cairo), 7, 1971, dates this visit in 1312 A.D.
satified too, and started his journey back to his impoverished and revive kingdom.

At home, Karanak had to contend with the politically and economicaally unstable conditions caused by both the Mameluke's endless exploitation of Nubia's resources and the Arab influx. Economically, Nubia could no longer raise slaves, crops and other tributes that were demanded in the Arab treaty; and politically, the fearful injection of Islam and the Arabs had gravely weakened the kingdom's Christian ideology and national identity.

In the circumstances, King Karanak was forced to return to the legacy of his ancestors, especially that of the resourceful Shammun. This meant refusing to pay the tribute. After all Nubia was just too impoverished to afford any more human games for the avaricious Mameluke in Egypt. Unfortunately for Nubia, this could not be understood by the slave traders of Egypt. For the Mamelukes, and indeed the Arab Muslim world, Nubia existed for their luxurious living. For in the eyes of the Mamelukes and the Arabs, the Treaty was a morally legitimate agreement that Nubia had to fulfill. Thus, Karanak's refusal to deliver the tribute was seen as a breach of a legitimate Muslim treaty. Therefore the Mamelukes dispatched another military expedition composed of a Mameluke horsemens, the Arab tribemen and a captive Nubian prince picked up from that inhumanable list of useful royal hostages in Cairo. This time though, the prince was a faithful Muslim with no background to Christianity, a fact that was bound to spell disaster for the devastated, divided and impoverished Christian kingdom. Perhaps it should be mentioned that by now Christianity in Nubia was in its seventh
century of growing influence and assertive Muslim policies of re-establishment.

This Muslim prince wasBayad al-DinAbdallah Karakshah al-Mahdi, a nephew to the former king of Bubia. He had been taken hostage to Egypt while he was an infant, being among the twenty Muslim princes who were raised in 1276. We can therefore assume, without any danger of prejudice, that the prince had been expertly indoctrinated into Islam as a tender age and under conditions that gave him no choice.

The Hamalik troops and the Arab tribesmen were commanded by General Ima al-Din Arayh who, it will be remembered, had participated in a previous invasion of Bubia. The Hamalik troops and the tribes started their long march to Bubia in 1275 to carry out the eighteenth invasion in less than sixty years. King Karakshah was quite aware of Bubia’s disadvantaged ability to resist the powerful Hamalik army as well as the Hamalik sultan’s determination to have a vassal Muslim king on the Bubian throne. He therefore decided it was not to resist the Hamalik troops, or to object to the legitimacy of a Muslim king in what was still nominally a Christian kingdom, but to submit the name of a Muslim prince who was directly entitled to the throne.

This Muslim prince was his nephewZam al-Din Ibn Bubia al-DinNarir Ibn Fakhr al-Din Malik of the Bubian dynasty. In a letter to the Hamalik sultan, King Karakshah agreed that it was the sultan’s desire

\[\text{Text continues here}\]
to appoint a Mamluk to the Mamluk throne, the present king would propose Musa al-Jawla, his brother's son, to succeed him, as Muna al-Jawla was legitimately entitled to it. 25 Upon reaching Karakara's letter the Mamluk sultan moved quickly and had Musa al-Jawla committed to prison instantly.

Meanwhile, the invading Mamluk troops moved promptly against Dama, the Mamluk capital. King Karakara, who, as usual, had retreated to Abyssinia, was captured by the frightened king of that country and handed over to the Mamluk troops. The troops carried him to Calcutt, where his arrival caused the release to Musa al-Jawla he had pleaded for permission to go to Abyssinia to attend to his real estate interests and authorize the payment of Kharaj to the Mamluk authority. But, instead of proceeding to Abyssinia, al-Jawla traveled to Dama, and on the way the excited Mamluk sultan proclamed him the king of Muna. 26

25This is the beginning of the greatest confusion and misunderstanding of the so-called matrilineal system of succession. (See, according to Khaim, p. 119), "this legitimate right was based on the matrilineal system of succession, common among the inhabitants of the Sudan and by virtue of which the Arabs became the rulers of Muna." However, it is important to observe that this emphasis on the Muna matrilineal system of succession is not supported by the long list of Muna kings which show the throne being shared by brothers, sons, nephews, cousins and even uncles both material and potential. The Arabs became the rulers of Muna because they were captured into slavery by the Mamlukes in Egypt and not by virtue of the Muna matrilineal system. Without Mamluk power and the opportunities for unlimitedicolonialism with which each Mamluk conqueror provided, the few Arabs would have been absorbed into the Muna society as it happened in the east of Bash Africa and elsewhere in Islamic Africa.


26Kham, p. 119.
The ascendancy of Ans al-Dawla on the Abbasid throne, in effect, marked the beginning of a second phase of Hamalik war against Bagdad. The first phase, just prior to Ans al-Dawla’s reign, had involved a loyal and subordinate state who continued to pay the tribute annually and on time. Consequently, this phase involved the effective containment of Bagdad’s power versus alms, as well as using Bagdad as a dumping ground for undesirable Arab tribesmen from Libya. The second phase was characterized by a struggle to install a loyal and dependent Muslim king who, in effect, would continue the Hamalik’s economic gains from alms and unquestionable political hegemony. This is indeed the essence of the struggle between Ans al-Dawla, a benamie Muslim prince, and Abdullah Merekhsh, a Hamalik nominee who, though a Muslim, had no immediate sight of succession to the Bagdad throne. Perhaps it should also be mentioned here that militarily until at this stage, the Arabs were no more than desperate pawns in the hands of their former slaves, the Hamalik. The populace said that the Arabs seized political power through the heavily misunderstood Muslim system of matrilineal succession is far from being a historical fact. Bagdad’s sovereignty was destroyed by the Hamalik. The Arabs were political pawns of the Hamalik.

Enjoying clear political and military supremacy, the Hamalik troops had no problem in placing Abdullah Merekhsh on the Bagdad throne. The real problem posed to his acceptance was his acquired life-style. A Moslem and an unwavering believer of the Hamalik’s political life-style,

92 ibid., footnote 80, 93.
Barbarossa had an unusual capacity of offending the Subians who accused him of excessive cruelty and a costly life-style. Thus the Subians openly rallied behind Kham al-Dawla who, though a Muslim, was free of the Hameluka's ostentatious living and costly conspicuous consumption. Being a Muslim and partly Arabised, Kham al-Dawla had the full backing of the Subian settlers who, after all, had no love for the Hamelukas. Rejected and hated by his people, Barbarossa was ruthlessly assaulted and killed once the Hameluk troops retreated to Cairo to take home the booty (as was their established practice) and Kham al-Dawla was thus proclaimed king again, but this time the Subian crowd refused to wear the Subian crown, contending that the throne rightfully belonged to his uncle King Turabou who was detained in Cairo. The importance and significance of Kham al-Dawla's stand is that for the first time Subians were making it clear to their tormentors that religion was not the issue in their struggle against the Hamelukas.

In Egypt, the Hameluk elite refused to recognize Kham al-Dawla partly because he was not his appointees and partly because of his connection and good relationship with the Subian Arabs who had settled in Al-Mahi. Kham al-Dawla's stronghold. To the Hamelukas, therefore, the best and logical choice was to release another Muslim prince from Cairo where the Hamelukas kept a legion of captive Muslim princes.

The primary purpose of keeping these princes as hostages in Cairo, as it has been stressed before, was to use them one against another. Indeed, since 1275, the Hamelukas had perfected the art of using

96 Ibid.
brother against brother, uncle against nephew, or cousin against cousin. This vile practice did not stop with the recent decline of Muslim Christian princes.

Thus in the ninth Mamluk intervention in Yrbul, Prince Khosra, a brother of King Farahb, who was in custody in Cairo, was released and allowed to accompany the Mamluk troops to Engola to oust his nephew Emir al-Dawla.95 Nothing is mentioned about the prince’s religious affiliation, although it is safe to assume that since he had grown up in activity in Cairo, he was without the benefit of Christian upbringing. In an enhancement (in addition to the theme) Prince Khosra was promised the release of his brother, the detained King Farahb, if he got rid of Emir al-Dawla who, it will be remembered, had refused to wear the white crown because it rightfully belonged to Khosra. Meanwhile, in a move that clearly revealed the Mamluks’ preference for a rival Muslim, the detained King Farahb was induced into conversion to Islam and promised his restoration to the Yrbul throne by the same Mamluk sultan as Nasir al-Dawla who had dispatched Prince Khosra to oust Emir al-Dawla and place the throne. This is confirmed by Ehsan who has suggested that Farahb embraced Islam in order to increase his chances of regaining his kingdom.96

Unfortunately for the Mamluks, when Prince Khosra arrived in Engola he was welcomed by Ehsan al-Dawla who, in a remarkable show of mirth and good grace of Mamluks’ politics of tricks, and of using

95Nasir, Buluk, II, 161 (Quoted by Ehsan, p. 56).
96Ehsan, p. 121.
Bubiya against each other, elevated the throne in favor of Prince Aḥma and promised to serve him loyally. Tragically, and perhaps reflecting his Mamluk orientation, King Ṣaqqām raised Bāṣa al-Dawla (the man who had mounted the throne for him) and wanted to send him to the Mamluk sultan at Cairo. Only the timely and appropriate death of King Ṣaqqām saved Bāṣa al-Dawla. With Aḥma’s death Būṣa al-Dawla was once again proclaimed the king, with a strong backing from the growing Bubiya Muslims and the ever opportunistic Ṣaqqām tribe – men who opposed the Mamlukes in Egypt but amiably collaborated with them in every invasion of Bubiya. In the circumstances, the plotting Mamluk sultan had no alternative but to turn to the freshly converted Karambash tribesmen he had dispatched with the tenth Mamluk military expedition against Bubiya. This was in 1123.

Before the arrival of the Mamluk troops, King Būṣa al-Dawla withdrew to the south in lieu, thus leaving the throne for Karambash. In the absence of any resistance, the Mamluk troops were quick to return to Egypt with whatever booty they had collected. However, once the Mamluk troops retreated to Egypt, Būṣa al-Dawla reappeared, forcing Karambash to flee to Iwan (in Egypt), where, upon the advice of the Mamluk Governor, he waited for the reinforcement of Mamluk troops. Because of the famines and plagues that were ravaging Egypt, the Mamlukes were

99See Histoire, ii, pp. 96, translated and quoted by Hathi, p. 120.
100Prince Aḥma was one of the twenty Mamluk princes who were taken to Cairo in 1179, during the first Mamluk invasion hostage. This meant that he had been under the influence and tutelage of the Mamluk rulers in Cairo for more than forty years.

This was during the rule of Sultan al-Musta’in Musta’in. The aim of the expedition was to put Karambash back on the Bubiya throne,
forced to adopt a temporary policy of disengagement from Muslim af-
fairs; this left the disturbed kingdom of Mecca in the hands of the
Yemeni Ansar and the Arab tribesmen who were now replacing the war-torn
and harassed Christian rulers as the new political elite in Mecca.

Perhaps it should be emphasized that until this time, the Arabs
as such had scored no independent victory against the Muslims. On
the contrary, whenever power they had acquired in Mecca, including
their increased number, was lost due to their inevitable opposition,
the Meccans in Egypt. 108

Moreover, it should be remembered that in every military expedi-
tion that the Meccans launched against Mecca, their troops were accom-
panied by the Arab tribesmen who, on some occasions, numbered forty
thousand men. 109 Invariably these men were left in Mecca, actively pro-
tected by the Arab Treaty under which the Muslims were sworn not to kill
a Muslim. 108 Since the basic social unit of the Arab tribes in the plain,
we have every reason to speculate that once they settled in Mecca, they
either sent for their clans in Egypt or the Hijaz whence they originated. 105

108 This is not to deny or to minimize the role that individual
Arabs played in spreading Islam and Arab culture among the Hijaz, es-
specially in al-Hijaz. Rather, what is being suggested here is that
without gaining power from Egypt, the Arabs would not have been able
to move into Mecca so easily and to such a high number.

109 See the entire Bayt Treaty as reproduced by the Egyptian geogra-
pher and historian, Al-Maqdisi, and quoted by Abaza, pp. 461-463 and
Todtlingh, pp. 91-93.

105 Generally the Arabs moved in clans, and when the Muslims were
induced into Islam, the indigenous (Meccans) adopted the tribe of the In-
ductor as clients or Murabba, hence the rise of new clans in Mecca bear-
ing names such as Bani al-Aasim or Bani Hashim (making clients of
Yemen or Abalddi respectively).
There is also reason to believe that the Arab fighting men, who were used to being paid from the conquered booty and captives as slaves, must have seized the opportunity in Nubia to enslave themselves with Nubian women and girls to expand their homes or compounds. The end result is that the Arab population grew from two sources. One was the fighting Bedouin brought by the Nuboluk troops, and the other was through massive production with Nubian slave women. Ironically, it is this illicit process of cohabitation that many historians have termed intermarriage.

Perhaps more should be said about why the Nubolukas preferred to supplement their troops with unmated Arab steppemen. The first and obvious reason is that of reining Egypt of Arabs. The second was of course interest in the origin and availability of the Nubolukas. The Steppemen however were a minority who viewed themselves as special, rare and expensive import species. As nobles they could only ride on horses.

106 For a typical Islamic Sudanese attitude on Arab-African marriage, see Fannia Meda Deng, Arifamphi of Two Worlds: The Fire in Arifumch Subnon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 31-32. The author quotes that Meda on senatoral Sudan surveying a young Sudan for suggest- ing that there could be intermarriage between Africans and Arabs in the following words: "what kind of marriage do you say exist now? Marriages with prostitudes? Have you seen any decent girl, a daughter of a gentle- men, marrying an Arab?"—Deng, p. 31.

While it might be argued that this Arab's current South-Sudan conflict, there is no doubt that this symmetrical and somewhat prejudiced view is typical of most traditional African societies. And, in the experience of this writer, inter- ethnic marriages are an alien phenomenon whose practice and existence is restricted to uprooted and culturally alienated Africans or the adopted Africans who again, cannot claim to be free from alien socialization. Unfortunately, this classic African viewpoint is often suppressed with- held least it should be exploited by the white representatives of economic and political gain. The result is that both the Arabs and Europeans tend to think that it is only they, as members of a so-called superior culture, that are opposed to mixed marriages.
Professor Apolon, who is the leading authority on the Yemnīback Institu-
tion, has informed us that four things undermined the status of being
a Yemnīback. First was passage through slavery. Second was being freed
and swearing loyalty to one’s master. Third was a pledge to defend
the Islamic Caliphate. Fourth was devotion to horsemanship. The latter
point means that the Yemnībacks could only fight as a cavalry of chang-
ing horsemen. 

The second reason why the Yemnībacks used the Arabs in
Sulha was that they served as foot soldiers and cavalry for the Yemnīback
troops. The third reason was that the Arabs were plentiful and available
in unlimited quantity. But it is also possible that the Arabs, who
viewed themselves as warriors of Islam, enjoyed their new role even
though they had lost the power in the rapidly declining Arab empire. And
since Sulha was being opened as a new Islamic frontier, it is not hard
to imagine the Arab urge to participate in the conquest of new territo-
ries where a better life and new fortunes, free from Yemnīback harassment
and heavy taxation, could be reconstructed.

In Sulha, especially in al-Marīn, the Arabs had successfully settled
and through their socially expansive nature, created a climate that led
to the timely introduction and Arabization of that region. The end re-
result was the rise of an Arab hybrid population that enjoyed the Homeric
Arab title of the Banū Zana. It was, indeed, this Banū Zana class that
seized the Sulha throne. As Arab Sulhīs and Arab-converted, the Banū
Zana had the natural backing of the strong Arab settler communities, for

107 Yelgo ayel, IV, 516.

108 For an analysis of Yemnībacks’ Arta.
example, the Bani Murra and the Bani Jad.

Thus, by 1550, the date that is frequently mentioned as the end of Christian Mubia, the Islamized and Arabized Mubians had emerged as the strongest political force in the country. There is no doubt that the two decades during which the Mamelukes were preoccupied with domestic disasters had been well used by the Bani Kanu and their Arab supporters to consolidate their political gains in Mubia. This is not to suggest that the struggle in Mubia for the throne had ended. Far from it, a third phase of Mubia's long struggle for survival and independence was just beginning. This struggle was between the more sophisticated Mubian Muslims, who were sedentary or agriculturalists, and Arab settlers who were nomadic tribesmen with a traditional aversion to civic government and settled life.  

As evidence of this ongoing struggle we have the Rubian delegation that visited Cairo in 1565. This is also the same year that an intriguing episode took place in Dongola and highlighted Rubian-Arab struggle. An unnamed Rubian king who had ascended to the throne with the support of Arab chiefs turned against them and had nineteen of the Arab chiefs and notables burned alive; ostensibly he did this because he (the king) could not trust them (the Arabs). Hassan has described this morose act as follows:

Having committed this dishonorable performance, the king was in no position to defend his action nor is

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110) Blackburn, pp. 31-32.
111) Hassan, p. 191.
withstand Arab attack. South of al-khaw the country was
pounded by Beduins and to the north by the Jews and their
Allies the Mamluks, whose influence ex-
tended over the dunes region, the desert of Abysh and
possibly even Damascus. The Arabs pillaged caravans and
attacked farms relentlessly. Faced with these difficul-
ties, the Mamluks approached the Mamluk sultan in
Cairo 1295–96 asking for help to clear the Arabs and to
reclaim their lost domains, promising to pay handsome
tribute. 112

It is probable that the Arab Bosnian historian Farabi, sees fit to
describe the actions of the Mamluks when these dishonorable but sees no
dishonor in the Arab collaboration with the Mamluks in their endless
wars of aggression against Mamluks, as indeed the Arab addiction to
slave raiding and the adherence to the notorious Treaty that in their
days of glory, they had signed with the Kingdom of Mamluks. 115

By the second half of the fourteenth century, Mamluk's struggle
against the Mamluks has entered an inclemence phase. It will be re-
necessary that the first phase of the struggle was a resistance against
Mamluk control. The second (which was derivative of Mamluk policies
and tactics), was a struggle amongst the Mamluks themselves, Mamluks
versus Christians. The third phase was between the Mamluks and the A-
rab 'imamate' who were now vying for an internal political hegemony

112 Hist., 102–105
113 The African's identification of the Arabs with slave trade is
deeply profound. For example, in a recent field interview by a his-
crope scholar and diplomat, the following client statement was made
by a Zhaka: "This behavior (of the Arabs) we encountered a long, long
time ago, and we have long observed it. If they (Arab) were a people
who would abandon their vile gain, they would have abandoned
them a long time ago. But these are a people who God created in
their own way. From the time of creation, they liked things like slavery; they
love slavery—Franzis N'Dong Sang, 1967, p. 49.
over the Mamluks. Probably the most curious aspect of this third phase struggle is that, although the Mamluks were directly responsible for all the chaos that was now engulfing Mamluk Egypt, they nevertheless sought to be seen as responsible arbiters, especially by their perennial victims, the Cairenes who were now grappling with the Arab immigrants. 

Lower, in 1566, the Mamluk sultan responded to the Cairene request for help against the Arabs. While in all the past ten Mamluk interventions in Mamluk Egypt, the Arabs had been useful collaborators, now for the first time in Mamluk history were intervening against them. In modern history the parallel situation would be if the British had intervened in South Africa to help the Zulus against the Afrikaners or Boers. The Mamluk intervention in 1566 was led by Hajib al-Mujahid (the Chief Chamberlain) al-Munir ibn al-Majid. The expedition consisted of three thousand Mamluk horsemen. Interestingly enough, there were no Arab warriors included this time. The expedition was entrusted with three main objectives: first, to reinstate the Cairene king on his throne in Bengasi; second, to punish the intramural Mamluk ruler Moussa and their Arab allies; third, to re-establish the Mamluk writ in Mamluk Egypt, which, since their temporary disengagement in 1525, had ceased to operate. 

Although during the course of the invasion some of the Mamluk rulers in Mamluk Egypt were persuaded to come to terms with Mamluk rule, the rest

114 On the other hand, it would be argued that the Mamluks were simply being faithful to their traditional policy towards Cairene which was, to support whichever candidate that would be loyal to their writ in the running of Cairene affairs.

115 Shams, p. 125.
of the House of Quraysh, and their allies the Banu Suraqa, resisted the Me¬
naic kins, The result is that they were ruthlessly attacked and their
men, women and children reportedly taken to captivity in Cairo.16

Dungara, however, was never released. The city which was now in ruin
remained in the hands of the Banu Abd Arawa. Thus for the first time,
the chancy Muslim king had to do with a minor town of al-Daw where he
sent valuable gifts, including slaves, to the Meccaic caliph in Cairo.

Indeed henceforth, the Muslim kings had lost the initiative to the
Arab invaders. One partly justifying Ibn al-Haldun’s terrible misreading
of the events in Mecca when he wrote:

And with the conversion of the blacks the payment of the Jizya ceased. Then the tribes of the Ghassani Arabs spread over their country and settled in it and filled it withopathy and disorder. At first the kings of the busk attempted to remove them, but they failed: that they could only be removed by giving them their daughters in marriage. Thus was their kingdom disintegrated and it passed to certain of the pires of Ghassani on account of their mothers (being pires of the royal family) according to the custom of the Infidels as to the succession of the sister to the sister’s son. So their kingdom fell to pieces and the arab (nomadic Arabs) of Ghassani took possession of it. But their rule (Arabia) showed none of the marks of subjugation, because of their inherent weakness of a system which is opposed to discipline and subor-
dination of one to another. Consequently there are still divided up into parties, and there is no vestige of authority in their land, but they reign no more following the ruinous like the Arabs of the Abbasid.17

As it has been noted above, Ibn al-Haldun is only partly correct. In
fact, the only correct aspect of his quoted observation is his description

16Ibn Batuta claims that Arab men, women and children were taken to slavery in Cairo, but this claim contradicts the traditionally Muslim
held view that a Muslim cannot enslave a fellow Muslim.

17Ibn al-Tabari, pp. 17-17.
of the backwardness of the Arabs' political and social systems. The rest is a terrible misreporting of the facts that had led to the destruction of the Bulban Kingdom and the rise of the Arabs as a dominant political group in Bulba. 120

The objective truth is that the Arabs flooded into Bulba, initially, as fighting allies of the highly organized, powerful, Mamelukes in Egypt. Indeed the fact that Ibn Khaldun saw nothing objectionable in a century of Mameluke intervention in Bulban affairs is indicative of his strange loyalty to his Mameluke benefactors in Cairo. 119 It is unthink-
able that this renowned world traveler and commentator could have been ignorant of the Mamelukes' destructive role in Bulban affairs. Unfortunately, Ibn Khaldun's misinterpretation of the Arab role in Bulba has been accepted with very little questioning. Ibn Khaldun is also partly responsible for the exaggerated role that the so-called Bulban matrilineal system of succession is thought to have played in the rise of the Arabs in Bulba and elsewhere in the Saharan. Surely, the Bulbans were not the only people who allowed the children of the princesses to become kings. Needless to say, Baazu, whose claim to the Islamic caliphacy


119 Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406, a.d.), His full name was 'Abd-al-Rahman Abu Sayyaf ad-Din Ibn Khaldun. Born in Tunis, he was a historian and a celebrated traveler and author. One of his widely read books was Kitab al-Thayr wa-Dhayl al-Mah-tada 'il-Imarah [Sect. 721-1097], a History of Arabs in North Africa. He also wrote Mudawwanah or Introduction to the Philosophy of History. The Bulban who visited Bulba, made a casual mention of Mamelukes' intervention and invasion of Bulba, an affair that he deemed morally right if it was done because the Bulbans had reneged on the Ba'az tribulation. See Venturi, pp. 106-110.

120 Venturi, Ibid.
split the Arab and Muslim world into interminable wars of succession, was nothing but a male child of the prophet's only begotten child, a daughter.\textsuperscript{121} In the circumstances any allusion to the Nabataean matrimonial system as a factor leading to Arab seizure of the Nabataean kingdom must be rejected.\textsuperscript{122}

The Nabataean kingdom fell because of the rise of the Mesopotamian whose supposed military interventions devastated the country's economy and human resources and subverted Nabataean Christianity ideology by deporting it to the other churches in Alexandria and Constantinople.\textsuperscript{123} These military assaults were compounded by the influx of Arab tribesmen and their incredible plundering of the uprooted Nabataean peninsula. What is true, though, is that at the end, these Arabs who flooded the country were able eventually, to turn the screw against the hapless Nabataeans. It is also true that the impractical seditions imposed by the Arab treaty did play a major role in the depopulation of Nubia. If it is true that Nubia had to pay three hundred and fifty able-bodied men and women to Egypt annually, Nubia had lost over six hundred and fifty thousand people! This is, of course, without counting the number of Nabataeans who were killed in the wars, those captured and taken to be mentioned in Cairo, and those captured in Arab slave raids.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{121}Busey, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad who claimed the Caliphate after Umar's death, he had the support of the tribes (Support of Ali) in Ta'if. Busey was killed near Karbala in Iraq, in 692 A.D. See Bennet, cited, pp. 193-210.
\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., cit.
\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., pp. 275-278.
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., p. 111.
It is indeed strange that no Arab or Sudanese historian has effectively raised depopulation of Nubia as one of the major factors that led to its decline and collapse as an independent state. Equally unexamined and unsubstantiated is the degree of the so-called intermarriage between Nubians and the Arabs. Relics of "marriage" can means or includes the time honored Arab practice of "ubadization orouginal," cases of genuine marriage between black Africans and the Arabs, especially in the pre-Islamization and Arabization days were very rare. Rather, what happened is that the Arabs were in the habit of building large "camps" of African slaves with whom they produced a hybrid population that is typical of northern Sudan's Arabs of today.

To recapitulate, seven hundred years after the first Arab invasion of Nubia, its infant Christian faith and independence faced an unsurmountable challenge. While Nubia had experienced similar aggression from Egypt in the past, the invasions did not entail a massive influx of a totally alien race backed by an aggressive creed like the Arabs and Islam. Indeed, what happened during the Pharaonic colonization is that the Nubians were so well incorporated into that civilization that under the able leadership of plaatsi they were able to conquer Egypt and establish the twenty-fifth dynasty in B.C. 750. And after Nubia's

125 Dever, pp. 248-249.
126 Adams, pp. 246-247.
127 Although both the Greeks and Romans established settler-colonies in Egypt, they lacked two other forces that propelled the Arabs, viz.: a ferocious and fanatical state religion and a surplus of population to sweep all over the conquered territories.
withdrawn from Egypt, it enhanced the development of its own brilliant empire of Meroe while Egypt fell under the tutelage of Greece and then Rome. These two powers, being non-African, introduced non-African elements into Egypt that accentuated the differences between Egypt and its southern neighbor, Nubia. 150

Nevertheless, during the Roman rule, Egypt became a partially proud parent to the development of the Christian sect which passed to Nubia. Upon embracing Christianity, Nubia was commercially infiltrated into a new world-wide civilization. However, before Nubia made any effective headway under the new sacramental doctrine, she was invaded by the Arabs who savagely estranged her from the mother churches in Alexandria and Constantinople. 151

Underlying the Arab success was the birth of Islam, a creed that became a serious competitor with and challenger to Christianity. Unlike Christianity, Islam, from the moment of its inception, a theoretic movement with its founder as the chief of state, 152 the disciplines of Islam were the Arab warriors who burst from the desert of Arabia. These were the people who carried Arabism and Islam into Egypt in A.D. 640 and Nubia in A.D. 652.

In the introductory chapter it was observed how skillfully and

151 E. H. Gruner, Dubia, the World and Sex (New York: International Publishers, 1943), pp. 36-42.
152 Fantini, p. 276.
gallantly the Mubii archers fought the Arab invaders, but were nonetheless overwhelmed and forced to accept the humiliating Arab Treaty with its onerous demands. It was also noted how, through the conquest and occupation of Egypt, the Arabs, and their other subsequently hired mercenaries, were able to sever Mubii’s Christian uniligious core from Alexandria by depriving it of priests, and also by capturing, deporting and even killing Mubii’s political leaders who were the flowers of Christi-

anity in Mubii. 115

But the worst consequences of the Arab attacks on Mubii were not limited to the premature estrangement of the Christian church in Mubii. Starting with the Arab invasion in A.D. 652, and then under the Tulunids, the Fatimids, the Ayyubids and then the Mamelukes, Mubii and the lands beyond it became a market from which millions of Africans were captured to serve as slaves and soldiers in Egypt. The Tulunids, the Fatimids and the Fatimids in particular, filled the ranks of their armies with Bilad al-Sudan soldiers. However, the Fatimid rulers were forced by their white Egyptian and Turkish soldiers to discharge thousands of their Bilad al-Sudan soldiers because of racial conflicts. Thereafter, the role of Blacks as soldiers of Islam was deliberately ended making room for the Turkish slaves and mercenaries. The disadvantage of black soldiers also meant the decline of Black political fortunes in the Islamic empire.

Thus, the Ayyubids’ attack on Mubii was primarily aimed at the

115Pontini, cited footnote No. 131, ibid.
116Ibid, pp. 91-95.
acquisition of Rubia as a retreat territory if need arose and for the capture of slaves. However, when the Baal Hamalinum seized power in Egypt in A.D. 1260, and occupied the port of Cyphah on the Red Sea Coast, this posed a serious economic threat to Rubia. It was in response to this economic challenge that in A.D. 1272, King Dowud of Rubia moved against the Hamalinum. Unfortunately the Hamalinum took King Dowud's act as an attempt on Rubia's part to form an alliance with the hated Crusaders in Syria and Palestine. Henceforth the Hamalinum found a ready excuse for adopting an aggressive policy towards Rubia. But once Rubia lost the port of Cyphah and Sowakna, its trade and contact with the commercially organized world was sealed off just as much as its source of priests in Alexandria had been blocked by the Arab occupation of Egypt.

Although from A.D. 652 to A.D. 1050, the Rubian leaders had maintained steady Arab/Muslim contacts, they proved a poor match against the professionally trained Hamalin horsemen, supplemented with legions of Arab troops. The latter were always left in Rubia where they cultivated a Hamalian group of clients, who became a supranational fifth column in the Rubian society. As Hassan has correctly observed:

During these repeated campaigns by the Hamalinum, many Rubians were killed, many took to flight, while others were carried off to Egypt as captives. The Rubian manpower was thus greatly weakened. Moreover, the royal family was no longer united; some of its members...

155. Hassan, pp. 271-272. In fact, this was not the first time that Rubia attempted to retain Cyphah from the Arabs. It had done so in A.D. 955, too.
156. Hassan, pp. 107-108.
Thus the invaders or gught to be installed by them in previous greeues.\textsuperscript{157}

Therefore, and contrary to Arab Sudanese traditions, the end of Christianity in Abyssinia, and indeed that of the Abyssinian political kingdom, was not brought about by the Arabs but by the Mamlukses. And just as the Arabs had been expelled from Abyssinia by the Mamlukses' troops, victory was also catastrophic to them by their envious oppressors the Mamlukses. The only important role that the Arabs played were the supplementation of Mamluk power, internal subversion of the Abyssinian society, Islamisation and Arabisation.\textsuperscript{158}

But the impact of Islamisation and Arabisation did not attract the attention of the Mamlukses until in 1377 when they appointed Sayf Al-Din Abdallah Berchambo as King of Abyssinia. Even then, it must be realised that Berchambo's conversion to Islam had nothing to do with the Arabs in Abyssinia. Berchambo was converted in Cairo where he had been held as a hostage. Nevertheless, the desecration of the Cathedral of Alqybi by converting it into a Mosque in May 1377, must have heralded the final destruction of Christianity in Abyssinia and a welcome victory for the Arabs and Muslims.

The real product of Arab social advent and Islamisation in Abyssinia was Imaam al-Asmaa', a hybrid Arab who claimed descent from the Abyssinian royal family through his mother. To this extent, Islamisation of

\textsuperscript{157}Asmaa, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{158}By Arabisation is meant the adoption of Arabic language as one's first language as distinct from Islamisation which means cultural identification with the Arabs as a race or nationality.
the Christian king's office was the Arabs' serious assault that was visited on the Husban identity and sovereignty. In a country where the king was an absolute ruler and a symbol of religion, the Islamization of that office and its occupation by a hybrid Husban was the last act that the country needed.

With the collapse of Husba as a united Christian kingdom, and the rise of the Islamized Husba and their Arab allies as the dominant political group, the gates for further Arab infiltration beyond the Husban desert were now wide open. The Arab nomads from Egypt, the Hijaz, Yemen and the Maghrib began to flood the rich pastures of the Nila Valley almost unhindered. Thus, for almost a century and a half the lands between Husba and the only other African Christian kingdom of Alwa, became the domain of wandering Arab nomads and their battered Muslim walaabs.

But there is strong reason to believe that the narrative with which the Arab nomads wandered and occupied these lands between Husba and Alwa, is indicative of the degree to which the lands had been depopulated as a result of Husba's raids in search of captives to meet the Treaty tributes. This means that Askari's thesis that the pastures were sparsely populated without his mentioning the cause must be rejected. The possible historical truth is that this area had been raided by the Husban kings and troops in the course of their desperate struggles against...

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158 Askari, p. 129.
invading Mamluk troops.

It will also be remembered that the cause of the poor diplomatic relations between Nubia and Alwa was the former's drive for slave raids in these lands and Alwa's fear of offending the Mamluks in Cairo. Suffice it to say that the Mamluk occupation of the ports of Aydhab and Dowak and the destruction of the Nubia's economy must have had adverse effects on the isolated economy of Alwa as well as the Christian church there.

Like Nubia, Alwa's economy was dependent on trade with the Islamic world. Thus, once Nubia fell into the hands of Arab nomads and the battered Nubian Kawkas, the collapse of Alwa was rapidly set in motion. To paraphrase Hassan, as in Nubia so too in Alwa. The Christian church was isolated at its infancy age by the Arabs' occupation of Egypt and the Mamluks who thus prevented it (Alwa) from receiving effective Christian guidance and contacts from either Alexandria or Constantinople. Thus deprived of the guidance of the mother church, its commercial links destroyed and surrounded by the hostile Islamic influence, the Christian church in Alwa too began to wither away.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{111}}\text{Once Alwa saw what had befallen the Nubians, she adopted a very submissive policy towards the Mamluks.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{112}}\text{Trastini, p. 270.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{113}}\text{The claim that Christianity died a natural death in Nubia because it had not taken deep roots to give it a self-sustained growth cannot be treated accurately. Even without the support of the mother churches in Egypt and Constantinople, one may hazard to argue that Christianity in Nubia and Alwa would have survived, else with a strong tinge of Africanty, as in the case of Ethiopia. Moreover, as Mark Pecoul states out in his brilliant article, "Notes on Anti-Christian Propaganda in the Mamluk Empire," in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, I (1942-1943), pp. 84-308, the Mamluks were essentially}\]
In fact, the tragedy of the Christian church in Alwa may be inferred from the account of a Portuguese trader to Ethiopia. Father Francisco Alvarez, who was a Chaplain of the Portuguese Embassy to the Ethiopian court between 1530 and 1536, stated that, on the basis of his conversation with John of Tyre who had visited Alwa, there were still 750 churches in Alwa. This number compares most poorly with the one given by the Arab traveler, Abu Salih in 1200, who had recorded four hundred churches. Moreover, while Alvarez was still at the Ethiopian court, a delegation from Alwa arrived in Ethiopia asking for priests. De facto, the delegation from Alwa pleaded that in the past they used to get their priests from Alexandria, but since the last bishop died and because of the war in Ruba, none had been sent. However, the Ethiopians could not provide any priests because they too had to receive their own priests from the Patriarch of Alexandria. Indeed, according to John of Tyre, the people of Alwa then were so lacking in Christian instruction that they were not Christians.

anti-Christian in their policies. This seems historically correct because the Copts came to power by fighting against the Christian Crusaders and the Mongols. Furthermore, it may be pointed out that since the Coptic church in Ruba was closely linked with the state functionaries, there is no way that Christianity could have survived completely once the Rubaite state had been destroyed. Thus, the destruction of the political elite also meant the destruction of the church leadership.

144 Alwa, pp. 54-56.
145 According to Venturini, Abu Salih is generally accepted to be the author of a book entitled, "A Description of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Ruba." Although he was an Arab born, he was an American and perhaps a Christian or convert to Islam. See Venturini, pp. 23-27.
146 Alwa, p. 54.
In conclusion, then, it may be submitted that although the Arabs made a successful incursion against Mubia in 657 A.D., and imposed an unjust Treaty on that country, the effective erosion of Mubia's political independence was carried out by the constant Hamiluke military raids. Thus, although the Hamiluke were extremely opposed to Arab nomadism within Egypt, in Mubia it was the Hamiluke who encouraged Arab influx. Eventually these Arabs, aided by repeated Hamiluke attacks, were able to claim the Mubia throne through their Samu I-Kaza Mawali. Thus, if the Arabs made any contribution at all to the conquest of the Mubian kingdom, it was through the political manipulations of the Hamiluke in Cairo. Not another rigorous Islam nor Arab settlement alone, or Arabisation and Islamisation, would have made effective political headway in Mubia without the Hamiluke's repeated military interventions. Thus, the credit for real political breakthrough in Mubia must go to the Hamiluke who, in the course of one century carried out eleven military expeditions against Mubia. The Arabs were mere shock troops who triumphed on the firepower of their archery while slaves and later oppressors in Egypt. But once Mubia fell into the hands of the Arabs and their Mubian Mawali, it became the lynchpin of future Pan Islamic and Arabic in the large, evolving Sudan. However, even then, it was through a succession of Turkish rule in Egypt beginning with the Ottoman Conquest in 1517, and Muhammed Ali in 1806 that propelled the Nile Valley into full scale Arabism.

CHAPTER IV

THE OTTOMANS' CONQUEST OF EGYPT AND EARLY REIGN IN THE SUDAN

A. THE FALL OF THE MAIMULIDES IN EGYPT AND THE RISE OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS

From 1250 to 1517 Egypt was ruled by the Maimulides. During these two hundred and fifty years, Mameluk Egypt became one of the greatest Muslim powers in the world. Although their Mamluk origin has tended to obscure their contribution to Islam and Arab advance in Nubia, it is interesting to note that it was this feared and hated band of mercenary slave aristocrats who defeated the Mongols, expelled the Crusaders and reduced the Christian kingdom of Nubia into a Latino-Arab estate. As John J. Saunders has correctly observed:

The Maimulides rendered important services to Islam. They defeated the Mongols and expelled the Crusaders, and made Cairo into a second Baghdad, the last home of the old Arab caliphate. When the Mongols in 1260 sacked Baghdad and killed the last Caliph to exercise sovereign power there, the Maimulides installed a relative of the murdered prince as a puppet Caliph in Cairo, and, as custodians of a shadow line of Caliphs, they won additional prestige among their correligionists.

These were no mean achievements and services to Islam, for the Arabs had succumbed to religious alienation and tribal materialism.


long before the Mamelukes' military emergence and the arrival of the Mongols. Moreover, it must be remembered that the Mamelukes did not conquer the Arabs but rather, they simply filled a vacuum that Arab dynasty and religious rivalry had brought about. All the same, after two hundred and fifty years the Mamelukes, too, succumbed to the double pressure of the Ottoman Turks in the north and the Portuguese in the south. Thus, just as the Arabs had been pushed out by the Mongols, the Mamelukes too became the first important casualty of European intrusion into the Indian Ocean and the rise of the Ottoman Empire. And, although it has been customary for the native Egyptian Chronicles to attribute the fall of the Mamelukes to their arrogance and the misgovernance of the Circassian Mamelukes (1864-1917) (who despised the Arabs and oppressed other Mamelukes) the truth is that the

1Although Arabic and Islamic traditions place the burden of employing slaves in the Islamic milieu to the Abbasid Caliphate, especially Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (350-392 A.D.), serfdom and slavery constituted an important fraction of the rise of the Islamic empires from the time of the rise of the Islamic Empire. This contention is evidenced by the presence of black fighters (reputedly ex-slaves) in the Islamic army that invaded and conquered Egypt in 640 A.D. See Alfred S. Kizer, The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Occupation (London: The Clarendon Press, 1932), pp. 288-297. Also for interesting and provocative views on the role of black slaves in the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Arab society, see S. G. Kwok, "Black Africans in the Islamic World: An Understudied Dimension of Black Diaspora," in TAKΚΕΕ, Vol. 3, 4 (1916), pp. 19-46.


Mamelukes fell because of their numerically inferior number, their refusal to integrate with the Arab majority and their utter refusal or failure to adopt technology at a period when the horse cavalry was no match to the shrapnel and machine gun, as professor G. W. F. Strilzheim has argued.

In Egypt the Mamelukes were brought up as soldiers. Varying from 10,000 to 15,000 in number, they were successful in establishing their rule over the people of Egypt and Syria because the Mamelukes held together as a single people when they confronted their enemies. This was the result of their inferiority to their master and his descendants even after generations. Their rule was really an oligarchy in that whenever the necessary means were used, they would assert supremacy over their Sultan and his countries... And although they held the Empire with an iron hand, theiraj law was not popular, and their subsequent defeat by the Ottoman Turks was not regarded by the Arabs as a national misfortune.

The Arab dislike of the Mamelukes was, of course, due to a multiplicity of reasons. To begin with, the Mamelukes were Muslims of non-Arab origin, who neither spoke Arabic nor intermarried with the Arabs. Furthermore, the Mamelukes were immensely ambitious, and although they themselves were divided into many factions, each with a leader or patron, they still united against the Arabs and other Moslem peoples whom they ruled. And even though the Mamelukes were well paid, they were extravagant and given to exploiting the Egyptians beyond his reputed mischievousness. To quote Professor Strilzheim again:

But wealth was extracted from the subjects of the Empire, and rich state was obtained from the central government. In an effort to make them pay more to the rulers, peasants and town people were beaten mercilessly. The populace could neither bear arms nor ride horses or cattle unless...
in the presence of the Mamelukes. In fact, a traveller of
the sixteenth century said the Arabs lived under the Ma-
melukes like the latch under the well. If a Mameluke killed
an Arab in a dispute, there would be no one to behead him.
But if the Arab were not killed, he could be deprived of a
bath or an eye or bastinadoed if he dared strike the Mame-
luke in self defense. Though killings were probably not
very common, an Arab knew that if he failed to get out of
the way of a Mameluke quickly enough, or joined him in
passing, or did not give him, generously enough, the
Mameluke could beat him as much as he chose. Not even a
father or son could venture to help his child or sire when
undergoing such punishment. Even women were not safe from
their rulers, who could attack them with impunity, even
caring to enter their houses at high noon and drive out the
victim's family in order to fulfill their desire.7

It is likely that, although from this description one might be
tempted to wonder that the Mamelukes were shameless brutes, it is
they who raised Cairo into a haven of Arab men of letters who flocked
to Cairo and turned this otherwise oppressive rule into the Saturnian
age of Muslim Egyptian art and literature. Indeed, some of the great-
est Arab scholars of the time were welcomed in Cairo and became the
beneficiaries of the Mamelukes' jurtinous living. True, it was during
the Mameluk era that scholars like Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Tailam, Ibn Makrini,
Ibn Hazir and Ibn Iqraa to mention a few, sought and found intellectual
peace in Egypt, thereby turning the fifteenth century into the most
prolific period of Egyptian literature; and what was true to Egypt, was
also true about Syria.8

7. Saunders, p. 31.
Eleventh Dynasty of Egypt 1250-1299 A.D. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1894);
Flinders Petrie, History of Egypt in the Middle Ages (London: Smith, Elder 
& Co., 1911), and David Grierson, Criminals and Their Vitresses in the Mame-
The last effective Mameluk ruler of Egypt was Sultan Gawhur al-Churi (1591-1596) who ascended to the throne at the age of sixty-two. But this was a rapidly declining period in the Egyptian economy because the Portuguese Navy had effectively disrupted the Mamluk trade in the Indian Ocean following the Portuguese circumnavigation of the Cape route in 1507-08. Thus, by 1596 there were no Indian vessels coming to Egypt, and to make things worse, the Portuguese had made an appearance in the Red Sea, thereby posing the most serious threat to Egypt’s lucrative connections with the Hijaz, Aden and India. This threat was clearly underlined in 1599, when its fleet was unceremoniously routed out by the Portuguese navy at 2½% in Gujarat, India. Henceforth the Egyptian merchant vessels in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf had to sail from Great to creek, in order to avoid assault and destruction. The inevitable result was that the lucrative Indian trade, which once produced the legendary Karim merchants, dwindled to a trickle as the Mameluk state in Egypt sank into bankruptcy and rapid decay. The spirited Mameluk soldiers had had to without pay while popular discontent spread like wild fire.  

Perhaps the Mamelukes might have survived the Portuguese threat and the loss of the Indian trade had it not been for the rapid rising of the Ottoman Turks in the north and the heretical Shiites in Egypt in the northeast; both of which posed serious diplomatic problems for the


10 Ibid., p. 58.
aged Mameluk Sultan. An alliance with the Shite Safavid of Persia might have strengthened his position against the Ottoman Turks. However, this was deemed improper for the ruler of an orthodox Muslim state which controlled the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina. This, plus the worsening economic conditions at home made such a move costly and undesirable. Meanwhile, Al-Ghuri's failure to take a stand against the heretic Safavids was taken by the actively anti-Shite Selim I of the Ottomans as a tactical alliance, a fact that soon prompted Al-Ghuri's undoing. This occurred because once Selim finished with his arch enemy, Shah Ismail (1501-1524), the revered ruler of the Safavid Empire in Persia, he turned against Al-Ghuri. In order to understand this destroyer of the Mameluk dynasty in Egypt, and the man who carried the Ottoman flag into Africa, it is imperative that we detour briefly into the origins and rise of the Ottoman Empire.

3. FIREARMS AND THE RISE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

So study of the rise of the Ottoman Turks and their conquest of Persia (temporarily) and Egypt can overlook the hurricane effect of the application of firearms on the politics of the Middle East (which eventually spilled into Africa) during the second half of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This thesis is amply shared by Professor David Ayalon whose work on this theme is perhaps unsurpassed. Writing on the apt topic of "Gunpowder and the Mameluk Kingdom," Ayalon has discernibly

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11Hamid, p. 55.
The double victory of Sultan Salim, during his short reign of eight years, over the Safavid of Persia and the Mamluks of Egypt, was due, at least in part, to the superior firepower of the Ottoman artillery. It was crucial for the subsequent history of the Middle East, because it set a pattern that was not seriously altered for four centuries, that is, until the time of the First World War. For although firearms were in the Mamluk Kingdom on a very large scale they met total repulsion on the part of the army facing the social and military elite of the army. This fact not only determined the fate of the Mamluk Kingdom itself, but also had far-reaching effects on the future of Western Asia and Egypt for many generations to come. For it is inconceivable that the Ottomans, but for their total superiority in firearms, could have inflicted such crushing defeats on their two Muslim enemies, the Safavids and the Mamluks, or that they could have managed and held together until the very dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire such vast territories. 1

In order to test that validity of Ayalon's thesis one must examine and analyse the history of the rise of the Ottoman army and its adoption of firearms as instruments of war. The earliest Ottoman state to arise out of the Uspe tribe were, once one of the sources of slave soldiers for the Arab armies. The origins of the Ottoman state was the Seljuk Turks who entered Western Asia during the eleventh century and raised most of Asia Minor from the beleaguered Byzantines. Initially, these Seljuk Princes had been mere vassals of the Great Seljuk who ruled in Persia and Iran and claimed to be Sultan over all Islam. 2

(Now the Seljuk power decayed and disappeared, the Ottoman Turks stepped in, first an exilic of what had been Byzantine lands. This grand claim

1Ayalon, p. 20, and Saouett, p. 65.
and conquest was accomplished by Selim I, popularly known as Suleyman the "Grim," 1512-1520. 15

Contrary to the blaspheous epithet of tribe, the Ottoman Turks were honorable Ghazis who inherited a mature Islamic tradition of politics, government, and influence to which they lent their reputable martial spirit and dedication to the advancement of Islam. 16 This was evident in their admirable seafaring and the establishment of Istanbul which earned the envied title of the Third Mecca Sea. Whether such credibility was due to a matured Islamic experience or the rich Byzantine heritage in Anatolia remains academic. But that the Ottoman Turks were also generalized by Rumi (which they overran in 1453), is evidenced by the fact that, for a long while, the Turks were tempted to call themselves Rumi or Romans. 17 This, however, was after the country that they had conquered and came to inhabit. In fact, it was in this context that the Ottomans embarked on extending their Empire to Europe, perhaps following the footsteps of the Roman Empire. 18

As Sultan of the new Rumi, the Ottoman Sultan distinguished himself from the other Muslim Suilans of Egypt and Persia in a fashion and style that invested him with a sense of superiority that in turn merely

17 See Albert Remani, "The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East," in Kemal E. Karpat, pp. 61-78.
in him a new aspect of Islamic conquest and expansion in the name of Universal Islamic Empire. Thus, it was not long before the ambitious and highly organized Ottomans moved against their two Muslim contemporaries. It is here that Selim the Grim comes into the picture in 1512. Selim moved swiftly and effectively against his fellow Muslim Sultans, and established an Ottoman hegemony over Arab lands in Asia and Africa. This was indeed a reinforcement and restoration of the earlier Islamic imperial traditions with the string of regional universalism. In the works of Professor Bernard Lewis:

"The empire was no longer only that of Rome; it included the heartlands of Islam—the holy cities in Arabia, the seats of the great religion of Mecca, Medina, Makkah, Baghdad and Cairo. The feared Mahomet Sultan of Egypt was gone and the Shiite Shah of Persia was extricated from the community of Sunni Islam. Thus only the Ottoman Sultan remained of the orthodox ruler of a powerful Islamic state. Admittedly, there were still some orthodox Muslim sovereigns in remote places like Morocco, Transoxiana and India, but these were too small and far away to pose any serious problem to the Ottoman Sultan. The Turks were now to all intents the Romans of Islam."

This then brings us to the question of the military forces that made this mighty upswing possible. In this endeavor we may take a leaf from Professor A. S. Lewis's description. He writes:

"Perhaps no more daring experiment has been tried on a large scale on the face of the earth than that which was embarked in the Ottoman ruling institution. The nearest ideal analogue is found in the Republic of Plato, its actual nearest parallel in the federal system of Egypt; but it was not restrained within the aristocratic Etruscan limitations of the first, and it subordinated all to the second."

20 Quoted by Sanders, pp. 11-12.
The Ottoman system deliberately took slaves and made them ministers of state; it took boys from the sheep-run and the pivot and made them couriers and the husbands of princesses; it took young men whose ancestors had borne the Christian names for centuries and made them rulers of the greatest of the Muslim states, and soldiers and generals in invincible armies whose chief joy was to beat down the cross and alcatize the crescent. 21

The system that Lyber is referring to is, of course, the Ottoman Slave System: the devshirme or child tribute, the compulsory levy of Christian boys, who were taken from their families to be trained for posts in the civil or military establishment of the Ottoman Empire. 22 This practice arose in the last years of the fourteenth century. Ostensibly, the system was designed to provide a reliable and disciplined force of infantry for siege work and garrison duty, since the Ghazi Cavalry was, the typical Turkish soldier of the early period, was a free and independent-minded warrior, not amenable to control by the central government. In this, it should be recalled, the Ottomans were probably improvising on the old Islamic practice that was introduced by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil, 853-86 A.D., who, in order to contain the unruly and clan-bounded bedouin, recruited the Turkish tribesmen as his palace guards, thus sowing the seeds for the rise of the Kanlik dynasty.

Essentially, the Christian boys who were captured or bought and trained for the civil and military services in the Ottoman Empire were

legally slaves of Kullar. These helpless Christian youths were inducted into Islam, all their family ties, racial and religious connections were erased, and they were drilled for absolute obedience to their new masters. 

23 To be sure, this daring experiment was able to succeed because of the unrestricted rewards that the Ottoman Sultan granted to quasi-Kullar of slaves. Moreover, unlike the grafted Maussal system, the Ottoman slaveholders revered manumission. Thus, all promotions were based on merit, and the slaves could rise to the highest rank, becoming even Grand Viziers, Prime Ministers or Commanders-in-Chief of the army. To quote Lipsey again:

Every one who belonged to the ruling institution in any capacity from governor to Grand Vizier, was only the member of the royal family, bore the title of Kullar slave, of the Sultan. Nor was this mere form; with few exceptions, all members entered the system as actual slaves, and there was no where along the line of promotion any formal assimilation. The power of the Sultan over the lives, persons and property of the members of the institution, and his right to their absolute obedience, bear every mark of having been derived from the idea of slavery. 

24 The other curious aspect of this most peculiar institution or system is the way the youths or infants were recruited and trained. Four basic methods were employed in the recruitment of the youths into the system. These were: capture, purchase, gift and tribute. The youths were normally between the age of ten and twenty, with a strong bias for the under fifteen. Since the Ottoman Empire extended from

Europe to Asia and Africa, the Ottoman Empire was a vast multilingual and multiethnic empire. There were Turks, Arabs, Greeks, Kurds, Armenians, Serbs, Slavs, Greeks, and Albanians and Bulgarians, to mention a few. Thus, both Muslims and Christians were involved. However, in training they were all indoctrinated in the highest ideals of Islam and unquestionable loyalty to the Sultan as the supreme ruler who reinforced the sacred constitution known as the Sharia, which was based on the Holy Koran and upon the sayings of the prophet—The Smith. 26

There were no secular laws, although the rights of the Christians and Jews were apparently protected. However, as the Empire grew into a complicated system, the Sharia became insufficient, and the Sultan was forced to resort to the issuance of decrees known as Edicts. 27 The interpreters of the Sharia were learned Musilms jurists known as Ulama. 28 Although the Sharia left the Sultan with no apparent legislative power, his administrative powers were virtually absolute, thus enabling him to subordinate the supposedly sacred Sharia to his indomitable will. This was achieved because a great part of the standing army was composed of slaves over whom the Sultan had the power of life and death. It must also be mentioned that a great part of the Ottoman armed forces was made up of feudal territorial cavalry known as Spahis—a group of impoverished Musilim soldiers to whom the Sultan granted the right to collect certain taxes from specified villages. 29 Here, the size of the levy determined

26 Karpat, pp. 63-66.
27 Karpat, pp. 67-66.
28 In some cases the term “Ulama” includes all the learned Musilims.
29 For a penetrating study of the civil and military institutions
the number of extra horses that each Saha was required to produce or bring to the battle. This European-like system of tuition was quite extensive but more efficiently applied and centralized than in Europe, since no sub-inferior was permitted to weaken the relationship. Moreover, the Safabs were supervised by the United highly trained slaves who were sent from Constantinople to administer the districts. These officials were selected from the Samiak Bey (district governor) to the Shaykhber who was the lord of all the Keys in the Province. 30

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that the central government did not pay these administrators regular salaries from the treasury. Instead, it attached fees to the offices, and the proceeds from these fees were made available for the support of office holders. This made them look like feudal land-holders during the duration of their appointments. Only the Safabs enjoyed the hereditary rights within this complicated system of checks and balances. The basic difference between the ruling and Muslim institutions was that the former were slave-named, whereas the latter was exclusively managed by free-born Muslims. 31 Among these free-born Muslims were teachers, Judges (Hakim) and (jurists) Muftis. The Mufti of Constantinople, known as


the Shiek Ul-Islam, was the highest religious and legal authority of the extensive empire. All the learned men, whether teachers, judges or Muftis, were collectively known as the Ulama.

To appease the public, the Sultan had even a semblance of parliament known as the Divan in which officials members represented the various institutions of the empire. Although in reality the Divan had no legislative authority, it was, nevertheless, the top judicial and administrative organ of the state. In the words of L. S. Starriano, it was "the captain of the Muslim and ruling institutions." 12

The hard core of the Ottoman Army was made up of the Janissaries. Like the Devudurs, the Janissaries were primarily composed of well-trained Christian Koli boys who were recruited and trained in like manner. Thus, they, too, were indoctrinated to fight and die for the Ottoman Empire. According to Ambassador Guter Gheselin de Busbecq (a Flemish aristocrat who served as Emperor Ferdinand’s chief diplomat in Constantinople, 1555-1562) the Janissaries numbered 12,000 men when in full strength. 13 They were noted for their excellent training, discipline and unparalleled esprit de corps. Considered the immortal branch of the Ottoman Army, they were marshalled in 1514 by Sultan I. Yoruk, to eliminate the heretic Baha’i Persia and the victorious Mameluke dynasty in Egypt in order to restore the Universal Islamic Empire. This was the ideal that animated the Ottoman Sultan and propelled him into Asia and Africa, but it is with the impact of the latter that

12 Starriano, p. 59.
this chapter is concerned with.


c. THE OTTOMANS IN IDYLT AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AND
RELATION IN THE STRE2.

The vigor, swiftness and ease with which the Ottomans defeated
and overran the Seljuks in Persia and the Mamluks in Syria and
Egypt is reminiscent of the way that the Arabs conquered the Byzantine
during the seventh century. However, unlike the Arabs who were the
first raw materials of Islam (and were without an established system
for running their newly acquired empire), the Ottomans were Greeks,
and armed with well-established institutions with which to run their
empire. Militarily, the Ottoman army was the product of a new organi-
sation that was based on glorified slave institutions, military technol-
ogy, and Islam as the central idea.

The saga of the Ottoman’s expansion to the east against the Shite
Seljuks in Persia, and in the south against the Mamluks, starts in
Aqsa 1514. The first attack was strategically directed against the
Seljuks, who were considered heretics and an imminent threat to the
Ottomans’ internal security because of their religious ties with the
Shite Muslims in Anatolia. The encounter took place at Chaldiran
where the Ottoman artillery and arquebuses caused disastrous harm
among the ranks of the Seljuks who had no similar arms with which to reply.

33Boudraa, pp. 61-78.
35Aydan, pp. 106-111.
As a result, the panicked Safavids were forced to flee into the interior of the Persian Kingdom. Thus, although the Ottomans conquered large Safavid territories, they were unable to crush them and impose their will on the entire country. However, the temporary defeat of the Safavids gave the Ottomans enough relief to enable them to turn against the Mamelukes in Syria and Egypt. Moreover, the Ottomans had learned the advantages of their superior artillery and armamnents against the outdated horse cavalry. This, alone, if nothing else, it might be argued, was enough to persuade them to launch an attack against the Mamelukes. After all, not only was the Mameluk army weakened by internal dissension and deterioration, but it was also equipped with lances, sabers, and swords not much unlike the badly beaten Safavids of Persia. This, plus the fact that for a while Selim had induced a long lull on his European borders, is what encouraged the Ottomans to launch what Professor David Ayalon has called a brief blitzkrieg against the Mamelukes with an assured hope that the job would be brief and successful.

Unfortunately for the Mamelukes, their indecision and failure to strike against the Ottomans at the same time that the latter were attacking the Safavids, soon proved to be their greatest undoing. Thus, as soon as the Ottomans finished with the Safavids, they confronted the Mamelukes in 1516. It is true that, initially (in 1516) when Selim attacked the Safavids, the Mameluk Sultan had volunteered to act as an

37 Tabaq Armajan, pp. 152-77.
intermediary. However, not only was this offer rejected, but it also made the Ottomans wary of the Mameluk Sultan’s intentions. In the circumstances, the Mameluk Sultan was forced to move his troops, accompanied by the puppet Abbadid Caliph, to Aleppo in North Syria, thereby making the confrontation with the Ottomans inevitable once they finished with the Safavids.

The first clash between the Ottomans and the Mamelukes took place over the disputed territory in Mesopotamia, in classic Islamic style. General Al-Ghuri, the Mameluk Sultan, was accused of intriguing with the heretics of Persia, despite the fact that there was no treaty or alliance between the two Muslim states (this was in 1516) and at the famous battle of Marj Dabiia, near Aleppo, the Ottomans won a decisive victory against the Mamelukes causing defections and uncontrollable confusion in the ranks of the Mameluk army. Reportedly, the shocked and enraged Mameluk Sultan disappeared in the melee and died instantly while the Abbadid Caliph meekly surrendered to the Ottoman army. Perhaps the saddest incidents in this otherwise undramatic defeat of the Mamelukes, were the ignoble disappearances of Sultan Al-Ghuri’s body and the massive defection of the Mameluk troops including the former commander and governor of Syria. 39

In Cairo, the sad news of the disaster was received by the Chief Mameluk amirs who immediately raised to the throne one of Al-Ghuri’s relatives, Tuman Bey. However, the hastily enthroned Tuman Bey had very little chance of saving the failing kingdom, and the victorious Ottoman

39 His name was Jandali al-Abbasli. He was the Governor of Damascus at the time of the Ottoman invasion. (Ibii, p. 42).
army headed by its humbled Sultan was marching rapidly through undefended Palestine into the Nile Valley. Soon the remnants of the Mamluk army in Egypt were unceremoniously overrun at the battle of Badariya (just outside Cairo) in January 1517, causing the unprepared Tunis Bey to flee up the Nile river whilst he was pursued by the Ottoman conquerors. Reportedly, Selim offered to make peace on condition that his primacy was recognised and his name put on the coins. This benevolent offer was stubbornly rejected by Tunis Bey who, in desperate anger, ordered the murder of the Ottoman envoy. This act of criminal folly sealed Tunis Bey’s own fate and he was quickly captured and brought back to Cairo where he was hanged from one of the city gates where thousands of Muslim princes and nobles had met their unjust deaths at the hands of the Mamluks.

Thus, Egypt became a province of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the peculiar institution of the Mamluks was brought to an ignoble end. As for Sultan Qansuh Al-Ghuri, the last effective ruler of the Mamluks, we have in the following words a vivid description of his passing by the Egyptian Chronicler Ibn 'Asa, who died about 1521 and who was a contemporary witness: "The rule of Al-Ghuri came to an end, In the twinkling of an eye, as though he had never been. Praise be to him whose kingdom never wanes and who never changes." But the end of the peculiar institution also meant the end of the puppet remnants of the Ahmad Caliphates whose captive presence in Cairo had lost religious legitimacy to Mamluk oligarchy. The Ottoman Turks needed no

such success. Selim soon declared himself the Caliph of Islam even though he was neither an Arab nor a member of the prophet's tribe.  

This then brings us to the most important and immediate question that faces a student of Islam and the spread of the Arabs into the Sudan, namely: The role that the Ottomans were poised to play in the furtherance of Islam and Africans once they were firmly entrenched in Egypt and its nominal territories of Nubia, Arabia, Nubia and the Red Sea Coast. 

In the previous chapter it was demonstrated how the Mamelukes in Egypt propitiated the vanquished and frustrated Arabsheikhs into Nubia partly in order to eliminate Arab opposition in Egypt, and partly in order to establish firm control on the renegade Nubian rulers. This unwholesome task had been achieved by the collapse of the Christian Nubian Kingdom and its successor by the Muslim and Arabized Sambas and their Arab allies. Therefore, in any attempt to examine the role of the Ottomans in the further consolidation of Islam and Africans in the expanding Sudan, it is vital to note that by 1517 (the time when Egypt became an Ottoman Province), the needs of Islam and Africans had long been seen beyond Nubia, and, indeed, the entire

2) The English, who saw only the earliest phase of the Turkish contribution to Islam is reported to have said: "The Turks observed well of Islam. Their coming was proof of God's continuing concern for the welfare of Islam and Muslims. As a time when the Medusa Caliphate had become weak and degenerate and incapable of resisting its enemies, God in his wisdom and benevolence had brought new rulers and defenders from among the great and numerous tribes of the Turks, to revive the dying breath of Islam and restore the unity of the Muslims." see Bernard Lewis, "The Monopole, the Turks and the Media Policy," in "Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, Vol. 10 (1960), p. 30.
belt of the Sahara Desert. Within northeastern Africa only Aby-
синда (Ethiopia) and perhaps Libya still clung to the Christian faith.
In fact, in the case of Al-Andalus, we have only sketchy information regard-
ing the state of Christianity in that terribly isolated kingdom. Thus
the only threat against Islam and the Arabs that the Ottomans (as pro-
tectors of Islam) were ship-bound to respond to, was the one posed by
the Portuguese intrusion into what, it seemed, had been considered a safe
Islamic sphere of influence.

Ironically, the Portuguese assault against Arab-Islamic interests
(which had contributed to the collapse of the Hamahlic power) was con-
centrated in the East, namely in the Indian Ocean, leaving the west to
her Darian sister, Spain. This means that the establishment of Otto-
nan power in Egypt and North Africa was immediately confronted by two
powerful Christian nations: The Portuguese in the Indian Ocean and
the Spaniards in the Mediterranean Sea and the whole of Northwestern
Africa. However, since this study is only concerned with the Nile
Valley, our inquiry must be restricted to the Ottoman-Portuguese con-
flict and how it affected the momentum of Islam and Arabism in the e-
umerous large Sudan.

According to Sells, who was an eye witness in Cairo, Selimi the
Ottoman's conquest and occupation of Egypt in January 1577 was immediately
confirmed in the Friday prayer in Cairo. Here, the pious Arabs who
had little love for the overthrown Mamelukes, heard an appropriate Khut-
ba recited in the name of the victorious Ottoman rulers in the following


As it has already been mentioned above, two sad incidents greeted the defeat of the Naseebi army at the battle of Mauz, 1870. One was the sudden epileptic death of Sultan Al-Ghuri whose body was never found. The other was the treacherous defection of the Naseebi troops including the Governor of Aleppo, Khair Bey, who now was to render important services in the establishment and organization of the Ottoman regime in Egypt. The other notable Naseebi collaborator was Jafbari Al-Kassali, former Governor of Damascus, Al-Kassali, who had been appointed Governor of Damascus in February 1876 (a time when the Ottomans were already at war with the Sultanate of Oman). It is suspected to have been instrumental in the defection of Khair Bey, who was the Chief of Staff of the defunct Naseebi army. In recognition of this treacherous but advantageous role to the Ottoman victory, Khair Bey was appointed the Governor of Egypt as the victorious Ottoman Sultan prepared to return to Istanbul. What this meant in terms of de facto political power in Egypt is that the Ottomans had merely ended the Mamluk Sultanate, but left the Mamluks enjoying domestic autonomy over

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43, 44, 45, 46.
47, 48, 49, 50.
51, 52, 53.
the Arab majority. Consequently, it also meant that Egypt's Kemalik supremacy in Mubia was left undisturbed. Thus as Professor Peter M. Holt has correctly observed:

Egypt therefore was committed in its entirety to another survivor of the old regime, Sultan Selim's most trusted collaborator, Ebnir Bey, who ruled the country for the remainder of his life, as the Sultan's Vassal rather than as a provincial Governor of the usual Ottoman type. He retained his Kemalik title of Malik-Al-Shara, literally "King of the Commanders [of] Muslims," and kept his court in the Citadel of Cairo, the ancient residence of the rulers of Egypt. Selim had hardly left Cairo before Ebnir Bey began to act as if he were the successor of the Kemalik Sultan. He continued the traditional custom of receiving the four chief judges at the beginning of every Muslim month. The deposed Kemalikels, who had been dispersed and in concealment since the reign of Hareer which followed the battle of Al-kahfiya, emerged from hiding, restored their traditional costumes, and were restored to favor by the Viceroy. Before long, indeed, Kemalikels were being used to arrest the refractory Ottoman troops. The revenues of Egypt were held in fear by Ebnir Bey, to his considerable profit.60

Perhaps it should be emphasized that although there is no evidence to suggest that the Ottomans had any detailed plan for the conquest of new territories in Africa, the occupation of Egypt meant also the conquest of its extended vassal states of Mubia. This is indeed the way in which lower Mubia, known to the Turks as Berberistan, the land of the Berbers, was brought within the realm of the Ottoman Empire.61 However, while it is widely acknowledged that the Ottoman troops did march into Mubia and occupied its capital of Dongola, the exact date of this conquest (which probably was carried out as a part of the search and

destruction of the fleeing Mamluk troops) has remained problematic. Those who associate the conquest with Sultan Salim, do so the Mamluk and Arab traditions, place the invasion between the conquest of Egypt in 1577 and Salim's death in 1520. 80 Thus, 1520 is the conventionally fixed date for the beginning of Ottoman rule in Mamluk. On the other hand, Professor Solt has strongly disputed this date and has argued that the effective annexation of Mamluk to Egypt did not take place until during the reign of Sultan Selim the Magnificent (1520-66), as claim that it was connected with the Ottoman occupation of the Red Sea Coast in 1520. 81 Whatever the date of the Ottoman conquest and annexation of Mamluk to Egypt, there is no strong evidence to suggest that the Ottomans who ruled Egypt through the Mamluks took active interest in the administration of Mamluk, and definitely not actively enough to change the characteristics of the previous usurers and power-brokers who had assumed power once the Christian Kingdom was destroyed by the Mamluk-Arab invaders. 82 This is not a denial of the presence of the Ottoman military garisons, who probably were posted there to keep an eye on the rival King in Fayyum, further south on the Nile River.

According to William T. Adams, the Ottoman advance into Mamluk was

81 This was also the year that the Ottomans dispatched their biggest fleet of ships to India in response to the Portuguese seizure and occupation of Goa. See Adams, p. 560.
82 According to Gray, Solt and Adams, to mention a few, the Ottomans did not interfere with the Mamluks' administrative structure. See Adams, p. 669.
resisted by the Punj; a battle was fought at Hanak, north of Kermān, in which the Punj were defeated. Thereafter, the Ottomans set up a gūbās (tomb) on the site in commemoration of their victory. It is this site which marked the boundary between the Ottomans and the Punj sphere of influence. The historical presence of the Ottoman troops in this area was confirmed by J. L. Burckhardt, the noted explorer, who visited Nusha in '613. According to him, the Ottoman military garrisons were independent of the Khabīlī, traditional provincial agents of the Kanem-Bornu administration in Egypt both before and after the Ottoman conquest. These Ottoman troops consisted of Români, Hungarians, Albans, Turks and other Circassian groups. This is indeed a fairly typical assortment for an Ottoman frontier garrison. Adams confirms Burckhardt's report by noting that as recently as '952, the inhabitants of the Island of Majma'ah, near Wādi Halfa, insisted that they were of Hungarian descent (Mja- ma-ah signifying 'descendants' of Magyars which is the official Hungarian name for the country). Ironically, these various northern Nubians were and still are, collectively called Ghass (from Turkish Qopus, a name originally designating the Turkish Bedouin tribes of Central Asia). This is most interesting because many present-day Nubians are given to claim that they are descendants of the Ottomans.

51Adams, p. 610.
52Adams, pp. 610-612.
On the other hand, Professor Hall, writing in the *Cambridge History of Africa*, has associated the Ottoman conquest of Nubia with Osman Pasha, a Mameluk of Turkish descent who had been Governor of Yemen and who, about the middle of the sixteenth century, established Ottoman rule on the Red Sea coast in the region of Suakin and Massawa, thus initiating the first Islamic attempt to subjugate the Ethiopian region from the ancient kingdom of Abyssinia. This would suggest that it was Osman who, following the Mameluk administrative system in Egypt, helped to entrench the Mamluk system in Nubia and the rest of the northern Sudan during the early Ottoman occupation of Egypt and its annexed province of Nubia.  

Here it is important to mention that it was a common policy of the Ottomans to incorporate conquered territories into their empire in two stages. Firstly, they limited themselves to the imposition of their suzerainty over local of native dynasties; secondly, the native dynasties were eliminated, and direct control was imposed.  

This is precisely the process that was followed in Egypt and its annexed province of Nubia. In the first place Khair Bey was appointed as Viceroy and upon his death in 1522, an Ottoman Viceroy was appointed. Thus, although the local influence of the Mamelukes seemingly continued to thrive in Egypt, they were henceforth excluded from this highest position in spite of frequent attempts to reestablish it.  

The Ottoman’s problems in Egypt were not exclusively the making of the Mamelukes. In 1523, Ahmed Pasha, a frustrated Ottoman Viceroy of

55 Hall, pp. 50-51.
Osmanian origin, probably with a hope of gaining support from the Egyptian, fellow-Osmanian, Mamelukes, proclaimed himself the Sultan of Egypt. However, by 1524, Ahmad Pasha was overthrown by the loyal Ottoman troops; captured and hanged in public. This event necessitated the visit to Egypt by the Ottoman grand vizier, Ibrahim Pasha who proclaimed an edict, the Ramsuzname of Egypt, one of the earliest Ottoman edicts in Egypt, regulating the military and civil organization. It is interesting that although this document showed the rule of the Ottomans, Mamelukes and even Arab tribal elements in the administration of Egypt, it made no mention of the Mamluks or Black Horde. This means that, like the Mamelukes, the Ottomans literally surrendered Syria to the Novara Arabs who extended from Upper Egypt.

Following Ibrahim Pasha's attempted accession, the Ottomans reinforced their presence in Egypt, especially in Cairo, where they ruled the Arab world in the Hijaz, Yemen and Arabia where they protected the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina. At the top of the administration was the Ottoman Vicereign, the Beylerbeyi, or the Pasha, as he was popularly called. His residence was the Citadel in Cairo where four times weekly he held the Iwan, a Council of State, an institution not to be found in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Militarily, Cairo was entrusted by seven corps of cavalry, the two most important of which were the Janissaries and the Aslan, with headquarters in the Citadel. There were also three corps of cavalry, one of which was made up of the

57EULT, pp. 44-50.
58EULT, p. 57.
59Idem, pp. 560-562.
overthrown Cemal Shamseddin. But as time went by, effective power passed to the locally nominated Nasir al-Din Bays who functioned as the equivalents of the Sayyids. In Egypt, the Sayyids were responsible for commanding any military expeditions and operations against the nomadic Arabs. As Professor Holt has observed: "They established a prescriptive right to certain great offices of state: the command of the annual pilgrimage caravan to the Mecca, that of the annual tribute-convoys to Istanbul, the treasurership of Egypt, and, above all, the position of acting Viceroy on the death or deprivation of the Ottoman office holder.60 Eventually, through the institution of the viceroyate, and through the close connection between the viceroyate and these great offices, the Mamluks were able to reassert their influence and power in Egypt.61

However, perhaps the primary basis of the Mamluks' ascendancy to influence lay in four factors. First, there was the unwritten convention that Selim the Grim entered into with Khair Bey, the leader of the collaborationist Mamluks at the time of the conquest. Second, was the Mamluks' immense knowledge of Egypt, a country that had ruled for more than two hundred and fifty years. Third, was the Mamluks' superior number in Egypt which exceeded the Turks. Fourth, was the unwillingness of the Ottoman authority to replace the Mamluks with its own.62

60, "Mamluk" p. 19.
61 For an interesting viewpoint on the position of the Arabs under the Ottoman rule, see "Mamluk", p. 69-77.
The eventual consequence of this policy of retaining the Mamluk governors in their positions was that the Ottoman impact did not alter the old administrative structure that had prevailed during the Mamluk regime. In Upper Egypt, for example, the old Mamluk agents were reappointed under the new Ottoman title of the Khedive; a title that incidentally, became hereditary. 42 Isolated and free from the central administration’s supervision, the Khedives grew into autocrats who collaborated with both the Arabized Mamluk sheikhs now known as Mousie and the Mamluk merchants called the Jallabah to control the trade and caravans from Semna and Darfur in Western Central Sudan. Indeed, succeeding to occupied traditions, it was because of the burdens of the Khedives and Mousie that the harassed caravans and traders from Semna and Darfur re-routed to a new desert route which came to earn the name of Dar al-A’rakim (The Forty Days Road) which operated from Kharga in Darfur to Asyut and thence to Cairo. Thus, although the unreliable Mamluk Chronicler has claimed that Mousie was a tributary of the Funj Sultanate, the degree of its actual control on Mousie is debatable. In fact, one is forced to agree with O. G. S. Crawford who, commenting on the State of Affairs in Nubia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has observed, viz:

Control was loose, and subordinate riverine rulers, once they had bought their office, were left alone. We must, in studying the history of these regions, overlook our minds of all modern European conceptions of government. The concept of trusteeship was completely unknown; political power was exercised solely for the advantage

63. ibid., pp. 592-595.
of those who had obtained it (by force or marriage) without respect for inheritors of the subjects. Law and order were maintained because without that the bases of tribes might be undermined. The paramount ruler felt no moral responsibility for the good of his subjects. Medieval Kingship in England was based upon a similar political theory.10

Implicit in Crawford's unrestrained description is the fact that the Ottoman conquest of Egypt and the annexation of Muhia to Egypt, did not alter the anarchic decentralization that befell Muhia once its Christian monarchies were destroyed by the Mamluks and the Arabs invaded the country. This point is amply confirmed by Nandor Eri Mohil15 who has correctly observed:

When the Arab tribes first entered the Sudan they were unable to give the conquered territories a central government of any kind. Instead they divided up the country amongst themselves and, as a result, the only kind of government which rose in the Sudan was the traditional Arab Sheikdom, based on the tribe.15

Suffice it to say that the Ottomans did not do any better with regard to Muhia and the so-called Abyssinian province that Ottoman Pasha reigned from Abyssinia. In fact, even when the Ottomans passed any cur- riences, as in the cases of Tama, Oya and Kassawa, these curriences were left to perpetuate themselves through intermarriage, thereby being easily absorbed into the local population with the passage of time. Thus, although commercial activities increased and with it further Arab influx into the Sudan, the country never really fell under effective

Ottoman administration except for Northern Kordofan which was annexed to Egypt for good. The rest of the Sudan remained an open frontier region where armed bands of bedouins and Sudan Jallabas sided with Ottoman firearms continued to expand, seizing territories from the poorly armed Africans.

Perhaps it should be emphasized that both the Kassis and Mek were a peculiar breed of localized, alien rulers, noted for their treachery to travelers, who were continually at war with one another, and notoriously cruel to their helpless subjects. This, at least, is the concurrent opinion of some of the European travelers who ventured to traverse Upper Egypt and Kordofan during the eighteenth century. Foremost among these travelers were Captain Frederick Lewis Hope in 1733-34, V. G. Browne 1733-95, and J. H. Duxbecart in 1783. Browne's observations are particularly instructive. He wrote: "For many years Bengaia, Mekas and all the borders of the Nile as far as Kornar have been the scene of devastation and bloodshed, having no settled government, being constantly torn by internal divisions and harassed by incursions of the Shaike (Shagish) and other tribes of the Arabs." It is indeed, because of the danger to caravans, traders and travelers posed by the Kassis and the Meks that the caravan traders developed the Dar al-Arbain route to cater for the highly lucrative trade from Majar, Darfur, Kordofan and Central Sudan. As Adams has written: "That these traders should have moved by way of the countabul and uncertain western desert road in preference to

66Bolt, p. 23.
the Nile is perhaps our most telling evidence of the political and economic peace wrought by the Khedive and the Meke. The chaotic and anarchic situation still prevailed even after Mehemet Ali's brief invasion into Egypt and the reign of Mehemet Ali in 1806. This was amply confirmed by that observant traveler, Burne-Jones, who wrote:

At present the political state of the country may be said to be, nominally at least, the same as when Hoostan Cossy took possession of it. The present governor, Hassan, Ezz-ed-Deen, and Mohammed, are his descendants; their father was named Daud, and had acquired some property from his vigorous system of government. The title of Meke, assumed by the three brothers, is given in Egypt to the governor of districts. The brother pay an annual tribute of about £100 into the treasury of the Pasha of Egypt, in lieu of the levy of Moja for which the Pasha is accountable to Constantinople. In the time of the Mehemet Ali's the tribute was seldom paid, but Mehemet Ali has received it regularly for the last three years. The three Khedives paid about one thousand pounds in their service, consisting chiefly of their own relations or of slaves. These sums received in regular pay presents are made in three occasions, and are considered to be an duty only when their masters are upon a journey. Here is the chief weakness of the governors, but they are almost continually present for the purpose of collecting the taxes from their subjects, who pay them only on the approach of superior forces. During these occasions the Khedive commits acts of great injustice wherever they find that they are none to resist them, which is frequently the case. The amount of the revenue is shared equally amongst the three brothers, but they are all very strict, extremely jealous of each other, and each acts almost exactly like each other. I estimate their annual income at about £2,000 cash, or from 3 to £6,000 in the whole. Some of them spend more than £500 a year. Their principal wealth consists in Spanish dollars and slaves. In their quarters they affect the haughty airs and deportment of Turkish grandees, but their dress, which is more than that of a Turkish soldier would like to wear, ill accords with this assumed air of dignity.

The mode of estimating the revenue in Moja is not from a certain extent of ground, like the Syrian and Egyptian feddahs, but from every eagl or waterwheel employed by the natives. The notes of estimating the revenue in Moja is not from a certain extent of ground, like the Syrian and Egyptian feddahs, but from every eagl or waterwheel employed by the natives.
rate of taxation is different in different places; thus at
Wadi Halfa each male pays annually six fat sheep and six...
measures of durum. In Nubia the melk, or king, takes from
every wheel six sheep, two arats of melka (26 bushels) of durum, and
a linen shirt. The governor also takes from every date tree
two clusters of fruit, whatever may be the quantity produced,
and levy a duty on all vessels that land dates at Serr. But
the whole system of taxation is extremely arbitrary and ir-
regular, and poor villagers are soon ruined by it from their
inability to resist the extortion made upon them, while the
richer ones pay much less in proportion because the governor
are afraid of driving the inhabitants to acts of open resis-
tance. The Kandins derive also a considerable income from
their office of judge, the administration of justice being a
mere article of merchandize.

Although the governors of Nubia extort large sums by the
various means above-mentioned, yet their tyranny is exercised
only upon the property of their subjects, who are never beaten
or put to death except when in a state of open rebellion, which
happens not infrequently. If a Nubian from whom money is to
be extorted flees, his wife or his young children are imprisoned
till he returns. The following is a curious method with
the governors of Nubia here devised, of extorting money from their
subjects. When any wealthy individual has a daughter of marita-
ble age they demand her in marriage; the father seldom dare to
refuse, and sometimes flees (flattered by the honor, but he is
soon ruined by his powerful son-in-law, who extorts from him
every particle of his property under the name of presents to his
own daughter. All the governors are thus married to females in
almost every considerable village; Hassorio Kandins have above forty
sons of whom twenty are married in the same manner.69

This, then, was the practical result of the earlier Ottoman intru-
sion into the Nile Valley. But as Broere observed in Derfur, Nada, and
Norma, the Ottoman firearms, though restricted in supply, did enhance
Muslim power and prestige, thereby contributing in no small way to the
development and expansion of Islamic institutions that helped to lay a
foundation for the rise of both Islam and Arabic in the future Sudan.70

69 James L. Murchie, Travels in Nubia (London, 1889), pp. 135-139
and alans, pp. 41-44.
70 For an excellent discussion on the indirect role of the Ottomans
It is indeed most unlikely that without Ottoman firearms and prestige, the Arabs and their religious zealots, the Hanun Jama'ah, would have traversed the Suez, Saffur, and Zardun on their own. But in order to make a final statement on this earlier Ottoman incursion into Africa, one must also examine the Ottoman rule in the Red Sea coast and their confrontation with the Portuguese in this area.

Probably the greatest challenge that confronted the Ottomans after the conquest of Egypt in 1517 was the sudden upsurge of Portuguese supremacy in the Indian Ocean. Persian Gulf and their attempts to seize the Red Sea from the Muslims with grave dangers to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and, perhaps, to Egypt itself. The Red Sea was also a very important trade route for the commerce of eastern Bilad Al-Sudan (as distinct from Central Bilad Al-Sudan) which found an outlet by way of Egypt and the Persian to North Africa. Also, the Red Sea route was crucial to Mecca pilgrimages to Mecca and other holy places in Arabia. The encroachers that were known as Tekkur or Takurse ('singular, Tekkur') traveled from Western and Central Bilad Al-Sudan into Saffur where their number grew into tens of thousands and whence they marched to Suez on the Red Sea Coast ready to embark for Mecca. In the circumstances, the Red Sea Coast was vital to Egypt not just because of its connection with the Indian Ocean trade, but also in the consolidation of "Islam in Central Sahara and Sudan," see E. J. P. Fiskar in Richard Scott, The Cambridge History of Africa, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 50-161. 7"picer, p. 58.

because of its connections with Muslim Africa as a trade route and calling station for pilgrims to Mecca. Thus, the Ottomans, as protectors of Islam and its holy places, were busy-bound to assume the responsibility of defending the Red Sea coast as well as attempting to redeem the fallen Muslim commerce and prestige in the Red Sea coast, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

We say "redeem" because long before the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, the Mamluks had lost the war to the Portuguese at the battle of Jiz in Gujarat, India, in 1508-9.73 Indeed, it was the loss of this trade, so vital to the prosperity of Egypt, that led to the decline of Egypt. Therefore, in attempting to regain the control of this route, the Ottomans were not just doing what was incumbent upon them as Muslims, but they were also trying to revive the Egyptian economy and indirectly the revenue of Istanbul.74

Christians had, since the days of the crusaders, viewed Islam as an enemy that ought to be eliminated or contained politically and economically.75 However, thanks to the Mamluks and the pervasive divisiveness among the Christian war heroes, the Crusaders had been defeated, leaving Islam intact, also, in the hands of praetorian white slaves.76

76Muir, pp. xiii-xxxii.
If the rest of Christian Europe had accepted the distant existence with Islam in the Middle East and Asia, this policy was not shared by the ambitious and sea-faring Portugal, which after the second half of the fifteenth century, sought to circumnavigate the Islamic world by way of the unknown Cape route. This great and noble adventure was undertaken by Fonse da Gama who reached India in 1498.77 Until this time, all the Muslims from Oman, Muscat, Hormuz, Arabia and the Persian Gulf sultanates had paid some homage to the Quraids, but not to the Mozambik Sultanate in Egypt. However, with the coming of the better armed and aggressive Portuguese, the Muslim merchants and their petty coreligionist sultans on the Indian and East African coasts were eliminated almost in the twinkling of an eye.78 The age of Portuguese expansion reached its climax in 1506 and 1509 when the Mozambik fleets proved a poor match to the rough captains of the Portuguese ships. Thus, at both Diu and Acre in 1506 and 1512 respectively, the Mozambik were defeated on their own territories.79 Henceforth, the remnant Islamic trading centers of Malabar, Cochin, Calicut, Gujarat, and the entire of the East African coast fell into the hands of the Portuguese. Thus, if in Egypt the Ottomans inherited a strong Islamic economy, in the East they inherited an occupied and reviled empire whose destiny was now in the hands of the hated Franks.

79 Boxer, pp. 128-129.
Because of the premature death of Solim the Grim in 1520, the task of
confronting the Portuguese was undertaken by his successor, Suleiman the
Magnificent (1520–66), who launched a series of naval expeditions in
a desperate attempt to break the Portuguese strangle hold on Muslim
commerce in the Indian Ocean. In particular, SULAYMAN made strenuous
efforts to recapture Diu in Gujarat where the Portuguese had established
a strong naval base since 1537. 50

Like all Muslims, the Ottomans were extremely concerned about the
Christian intrusion into the Indian Ocean, and viewed the intrusion as
part of a grand Christian conspiracy to encircle the Muslim world and
probably strike an illicit military alliance with the infidels in Persia,
where the Sunni Ottoman rulers regarded an irredeemable heretics. There was
also genuine fear that the Portuguese might temper the Muslim holy
cities of Mecca and Medina, thus interfering with the Muslim annual pil-
grimages; which, incidentally, was a good source of income for Egypt.
Moreover, since the Portuguese had occupied Malabar, Cochin and the
city states of East Africa, the beleaguered Muslim rulers of these areas
were naturally looking up to the Ottomans for help and liberation. There-
fore, in 1536, the besieged Muslim ruler of Gujarat appealed for help
from SULAYMAN the Magnificent who, in 1538 dispatched a well equipped
fleet of thirty galleys from Damm commanded by Khedim Sulaiman Pasha,
chief of the Kamehuk amirs in Egypt. 51 Suleiman sailed to Aden and took
it with a view of launching an attack from there against the Portuguese

50 See Vincen Lopez de Castroaba, History of the Discovery and Con-
quest of India (Edinburgh, Britain, 1882).
51 Rajji Mawsia, History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks (London,
1831).
naval base and stronghold 56 in Gujarat. Before attacking 56, the
Persians sailed to Goa and East where he temporarily overawed the
Portuguese. However, when Sulaiman reached 56, the local Muslim
ruler proved uncooperative, because he had learned that Sulaiman's
attack had beheaded the hair of Eden for alleged anti-Turkish activities.
In the circumstances, the Ottomans were unable to dislodge the
Portuguese from 56.57

The next encounter between the Ottomans and the Portuguese was
over Abyssinia, an ancient, large and unduly Christian kingdom that
was humbled in by Muslim countries. For many centuries (in fact, since
the Time of Islam) Abyssinia, whose King (Negus) claimed descent from
King Solomon of the Old Testament, had earned the hostility of the Arabs
and Muslims for resisting the tide of Islam and Arab influx into Africa.
Large in size and extremely poor in terms of communications, Abyssinia
was a confederate empire of numerous feudal rulers. Because of these
weaknesses of organization and communication, Isma and the Arabs had
managed to penetrate and seize some of its coastal domains where strong
Muslim principalities grew, especially along the Red Sea Coast, which
by 1535 had been dismembered from Abyssinia and established as an Otto-
man province of Egypt.58

Fortunately for Christian Abyssinia, by 1520, the Portuguese, who
had been searching for the mythical Christian Kingdom of Prester John,

52Holt, Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, pp. 55-57.
53Larrain, pp. 17-38.
54M. Abir, "Ethiopia and the Sooth of Africa," in Richard Grant,
reached that country. This was during the reign of Lebom Dengel (1506-1520), who had just defeated the Muslims and was therefore less inclined to accept aid from the Portuguese (an act that he knew could provoke the Muslims). Therefore, after six years of apparently fruitless stay, the Portuguese mission departed. Scarcely has the Portuguese mission left in 1526, when a frightful storm burst over the country. A Turkish armed and directed Musulm Samail warrior, Ahmed bin Ibrahim (whom the Abyssinians dubbed Gram-the-left-handed), declared a Jihad against Abyssinia in 1527. In the course of a few years, the better armed and Turkish-led Muslims had almost overrun the whole country, burning, killing and plundering the peasantry. As would be expected, the native Muslims reportedly joined the invading Muslims and many native Christians apostatized to Islam. Threatened with the imminent destruction of his Christian kingdom, the Negus Lebom Dengel was forced to appeal for help from the Portuguese whom he had espoused in 1526. This was new in 1535. However, it was not until in 1541 that the four hundred musketeers arrived from Portugal’s new naval headquarters at Goa, in India. By then the Negus was already dead, and his son Imedes (1520-59) was the one who was striving to halt the carnage of the Muslims.

Although the Portuguese were few in number, and despite the fact

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86 Serjeant, pp. 19-21 and pp. 101-106.
87 See Miguel de Castro Moco, The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1521-1522 (Goedemans - Bekaert Societé, 1963), Translated, Title in English, pp. 76-97.
that Ahmed had received some cannon and musketeers from the Turks, the
Armenians’ spirits were so buoyed that they were able to defeat the
Muslims near Laka Tana. This was in 1523, and Ahmed Gurey was killed.
With Ahmed’s death went the Turkish-engineered Muslim insurgency and
Armenia was saved from Muslim conquest and what would, probably, have
been the opening of another wave of Arab expansion into Africa. Sur-
face it to say, here, that the credit must go to the Portuguese because
if the Muslim threat in this area had not been suppressed and eliminated,
the entire horn of Africa, and perhaps northern Europe, would have fallen
to Muslim influence.

It is possible that the Ottomans might have been able to intervene
more effectively on the Somal side but for the devastating defeat that
the Portuguese had inflicted on them in 1538 at Diu, in Gujarat, India.
However, after this defeat the Ottoman position in the east, even in
the nearby Red Sea, became so weak that in 1544 a sneaking Portuguese
squadron was able to sail as far as the Suez. In fact, so astounded
were the Portuguese that for a while the Muslims were forced to suspend
their activities in the Indian Ocean where the Portuguese now enjoyed
absolute supremacy. This lasted until they were dislodged by their fel-
low Ostirians, the Dutch, who seized Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the Far
East Indies.

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88. This is purely conjectural, but it is hard to imagine what would
have prevented the Muslims from overrunning most of the poorly armed African inhabitants of pre-modern Egypt.

89. Sterne, pp. 26-37 and pp. 4-137.

90. O. Schnurer, Political History of the Tappeh at the Beginning of
the Early Demacia (Utrecht, Netherlands, J. J. Brill, 1985), and
Eric Barre, Tappeh and the Western World, since 200 BC (New York, Praeger
Publisher, 1996).
The lack of effective Ottoman thrust in these frontier areas cannot just be explained in terms of Portugal’s possibly superior naval power. The more probable explanation lies in the fact that the greater thrust of Ottoman power was concentrated in the Mediterranean Sea and the Balkan territories in Europe where Christianity was a greater threat to Ottoman security than in Africa and the Indian Ocean. In fact, a survey of the Ottoman activities in Africa, outside Egypt, does indicate a policy of manifest disinterest and deliberate restraint. Aside from the doomed adventure to recapture Diu in Gujarat and other Muslim trading centers in India in 1538, and the backing of Ahmad Quraq in 1557, there is only one more Ottoman attempt to gain new territories in Africa. This was during the second half of the sixteenth century when, at the request of Osman Pasha, a Circassian Mameluk and a relative of Sultan Qubad Al-Ghauri who had been Governor of Yemen, visited Istanbul and proposed an expedition to conquer Abyssinia. At a meeting with Sulayman the Magnificent, this proposal was approved and Osman Pasha was authorized to enroll troops in Egypt for the expedition. 91 Ironically, this expedition did not march to Abyssinia directly. Instead, Osman first marched to Lower Nubia where, according to Kolt, “a struggle for the hegemony was proceeding between two local Arab tribes, the Jawahir and Ghaditaya.” The Jawahira were in alliance with the Funj and had won the upper hand, when the Ghaditaya sought Ottoman support. This is evidenced by the fact that Osman had to attack the Jawahir and

capture the key fortress of Brim, Javanm, and any which he stationed some troops loyal to Egypt before proceeding to the Red Sea Coast where he sought to establish an Ottoman base to guard against the Portuguese on the one hand and the Abyssinians on the other. This he did at Shakin, which at any rate, had been under Egyptian control since the end of the Thirteenth Century. In 1577c Omdemir took Massawa and made it his administrative center; Sayla too was taken from the Portuguese. The only recorded attempt that Omdemir ever made was from the Abyssinian Vicar, who proved a poor match against the Ottoman-armed Egyptians and Haเมรleches. However, for reasons best known to Omdemir himself, no further attempts were made to extend the war against the rest of Abyssinia beyond Debora where he died in 1559-60. According to Holt, Omdemir's body was later exhumed and removed to Massawa where, inter alia, was the administrative center of what came to be known as the Ot- toman provinces of Abyssinia (Ethiopia).92

After the so-called heroic age of Omdemir Pasha, Ottoman power outside Egypt and North Africa rapidly declined, except on paper. So did also the Portuguese threat and presence in the area. Thereafter, the Red Sea Coast became a backwater of Musulm commerce. This was confirmed by James Bruce's visit in 1769 at Massawa who found that the area no longer had an Ottoman governor.93 The only effective ruler was a local Musulm tribal chief who enjoyed the title of Sack of Deputy,

92Holt, Egypt and the Partial Revolt, 1516-1922, pp. 52-53 and Holt, A Modern History of the North, pp. 73-75.
perhaps cementing his alliance or vassalage to the Ottoman Governor in Jeddah, Arabia. As in the case of Muhia, the abandoned Ottoman garrison had intermarried with the local people and their descendants formed an hereditary military caste, but even though these Muhia were nominally subordinate to the Ottoman Governor, they were in practice much more dependent on the Vagage of Abyarimia, with whom they shared the customs revenue, while they rarely paid any tribute to the Ottoman Sultan.

In retrospect then, it may be stipulated that apart from the conquest of Egypt and the unsuccessful attempt to conquer Abyarimia by means of Somari-Muslim insurgents, and later by Oudezir Pasha, the St.

Ottomans made no decisive effort to expand Islamic influence into the Nile Valley militarily. However, it may be argued, as indeed A. J.

Arnold has, that the Ottoman appearance during the end of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was most crucial for the continuity of Islamic because of their possession of firearms. Thus, even though the supply of firearms was limited and few men had had any training as to how to use the new weapons, and their precision was far from being perfect, the possession of only a small number was capable of rendering the possessing prince irresistible in the eyes of the one who possessed none. This is amply evidenced by the swiftness with which the Ottomans and the Portuguese became the superior princes of the age. For this reason, the Ottoman conquest of Egypt was most important in the slow but systematic spread of Islam in the Nile Valley. In other words, the Turkish conquest of Egypt did infuse a new spirit into the war of Islam against the infidels.

Arnold, p. 351.
in this area and completely changed the political situation in the Red Sea Coast, and forced Abyssinia to retreat into the highlands, thereby leaving the seeds of Islam to germinate freely elsewhere in the Nile Valley.

On the negative side though, it may be argued that the strategic unwillingness of the Ottomans to commit their troops beyond Egypt, was a disservice to Islam because this policy enabled the Portuguese to salvage Abyssinia from Muslim victory with only four hundred men, thereby preventing the Muslims from joining with their fellow Muslims in Abyssinia, a fact that would have eliminated the Christian power in Abyssinia.

Here again, one must not overlook the strange, but perhaps necessary, symbiotic coexistence which characterized the Ottoman-Mameluke relationship in Egypt and its frontier domains in Arabia, Red Sea Coast and Arabia. As Professor Holt has astutely observed: "It is no paradox that Salim the destroyer of Damascus Al-Ahmar and Tanam Bay, all great Mameluke rulers, appears in later Mameluke legends as something of a folk-hero. Perhaps in order to understand the symbiosis between the Ottomans and the Mamelukes one must return to a story that took place in Cairo in 1517, as the Ottoman Sultan and his Grand Vezir, Yusuf Pasha were planning to depart from Cairo. Reportedly, Khair Bey, the newly appointed Governor of conquered Egypt, approached the Sultan and beseeched his to receive the Christian Mamelukes into his service, and to restore their wages. Upon hearing this, the enraged Grand Vezir reproached the Sultan for his favor to Khair Bey and the Mamelukes saying: 'Our wealth and our troops are wasted, while you surrender their land to them!'"
Thereupon Selim summoned the executioner who struck off the Grand Vezir's head. Later the Sultan declared, "We covenant with them that if they gave us possession of their land, we should continue them in it, and make them its commanders. Could we break the covenant and prove faith? What if we should put their children into our army? They are Muslims, the sons of Muslims and will be jealous of their homes."

The most obvious historical deduction that one can make from the above episode is that Sultan Selim, and perhaps his successors, too, had no intention of overwriting the Mamelukes' interests and policies in Egypt and its frontier domains in Arabia and the Red Sea Coast. The Mamelukes were satisfied with the creation of petty Muslim dynasties which in turn collaborated with the Arab settlers, rather than working for the establishment of an integrated empire under which Ottoman influence might have become more pronounced. Also, while such a policy might have brought Ibla and the Red Sea Coast under direct Ottoman influence, it is important to caution that not only would such a policy have been too costly to the Ottomans, but it would have been

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initial to earlier Arab life-style in the Sudan, which was opposed to centralized authority. In the circumstances, Ottoman detachment was bound to work in the interest of the nomadic Arabs because they were left to move freely and set up their tents of nomads, slave traders and wandering cattle herders, all of which helped to promote Islamic and Arab interests in the politically destabilized Sudan.

As for the importance of the Portuguese intervention in this period, nothing spells it better than Magus Claudius’ letter to John II of Portugal, in which he said:

God make you a great lord in the land, and place in your hand the sea, the islands and the continent. May He make you a greater lord in the heavens for all eternity, as He does to His friends and help men. Through your prayers God worked a great deed, with the help of your men we have captured the Mosque (Muslims and Arabs), and have always been victorious over them. 36

Ironically, while most historians have gone to great length to locate Ahmad Gras as a Syrian warrior, according to Magus Claudius’ letter, the invasion was carried out by Turks and Arabs. In fact, the Mada’i listed the number of Turks killed as being more than 300, while the rest of the Muslim troops are described as those bearing arrows. 37

In conclusion, it may be admitted that although the military contribution of the Ottomans in the Nile Valley was restricted to Egypt, South Africa and the Red Sea Coast, their fireams and the shadow of their overbearing presence in Egypt encouraged the rise and development

of Muslim dynasties in the Nile Valley and the rest of the greater
northwestern Sudan. In the circumstances, it was inevitable that one day,
the Turks were bound to play a greater role in the moulding and estab-
lishment of an Islamic Sudan. This is precisely what happened in 1822
once the Ottoman power in Egypt was rejuvenated (thanks to Napoleon’s
invasion of Egypt in 1797 and prompt British intervention in 1800) in
the name of an ambitious soldier known as Muhammed Ali. But even then,
the greater task of internal Afro-Arab cultural gestation was perhaps
accomplished during the Fuji regime, a hint to the unknown African mili-
tary hierarchy which is the theme of the next chapter.
THE FIRST EXPANSION AND THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM AND ARABS

A. THE RISE OF THE FIRST ARAB EMPIRES

Although the fall of Christianity in Rome and the rise of Islam were slow and gradual, the process of expansion began with the Arab conquest of Egypt, which marked the beginning of the Arab expansion and the formation of the first Arab empire in the Mediterranean region. The Arab conquest of Egypt began in 642 AD, with the arrival of the Arab army led by amir al-mu'minin, the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab. The conquest was swift and efficient, with the help of the local Egyptian military and the support of the local population. The Arab conquest brought about a significant change in the political and social landscape of the region, as the new rulers implemented a series of reforms and policies that transformed the society and the economy of Egypt.

that al-Fas, which was located further south of Tabas, did not experience direct and immediate Numidian intervention and Arab influx, it too, was affected by the growing Islamic pressure directed by the Hamalukus from Egypt and the two other Numidian groups that now converged on the Nile Valley largely unopposed. Hence, Islamic pressure manifested itself in political, economic, and religious ties. In terms of politics, by 625, the nominally Christian Numidian chieftain had been totally destroyed by repeated Numidian military interventions which culminated in the forcible installation of an Arabized and Islamized Numidian chieftain known as the Jumuruma. This clan collaborated with the Arab immigrants and exposed the name of Islam. Economically, the Ma'ali, whether Arabs, Hamalukus or Turks, controlled all the major trade routes in the north (Egypt) and the east (The


Red Sea Coast), 4 in terms of religion, Christianity had been smothered through power and disenchantment from the mother Church in Egypt, 5 a fact that entailed the denial of clerical supply from that country or Byzantium. Three of three factors plus the presence of uncontrollable Arab immigration combined to hasten the final demise of the Bubia kingdom and its Christian appendages.

However, because of all's location from the center of Arab-Islamic threat, its decline and disintegration was even slower than that of its neighbor kingdom of Bubia, which after the fourteenth century was submerged in the milieu of a transplanted Islam and Arabism. 6 Moreover, being farther north, all's was able, at least for a while, to reinforce its African vitality by drawing consistent reinforcements from the surrounding inhabitants of Bubia, Shiliko and perhaps the Bubia of Bahri El-Ghazal. Therefore, after the collapse of Bubia as a united African kingdom, for a while, all's emerged as a center of yet another great African kingdom to be known as the Jami al-Maghrib. 7 Therefore even if the fall of Christian Bubia did not affect all's political resources, it definitely spelled doom for the continuity and survival of the Christian doctrine in the Nile Valley.

6. Ibid., 211-12.
Economically too, Alva had been negatively affected by the Islamic forces’ control of Egypt and the Red Sea Coast ports which constituted Alva’s only access and contact with the commercial world. The gravity of this economic isolation which confronted Alva and its monarch, the Puni, has been discussed by Yusuf Fazl Hasan who writes:

Prior to the early days of the Mameluk sultanate in Egypt, the Muslim impact on Alva was felt only in the commercial transactions that flourished between Alva and the Muslim world. But with the increasing Mameluk pressure against Bulgaria, Muslim pressure became more deeply felt and its strength clearly realized.

Here it is instructive to observe that even during the first Mameluk campaign against Bulgaria, Alva was so alarmed that its king, Adur, was forced to adopt a hostile policy towards the fleeing king of Bulgaria who sought refuge in Alva in A.D. 1275. Thus, in desperate moves aimed at appeasing the Mameluk Sultan in Egypt, all subsequent rulers of Alva were quick to apprehend the fleeing Bulgarian kings and nobles and surrender them to their Mameluk masters. Perhaps as a reward for this unlicensed service, the Mameluks never made any direct attempt to subjugate Alva which, in their view and strategy, had become a willful vassal state without any loot to Egypt. But the commercial and religious isolation alone seem to have been sufficient to reduce Alva to an important and backward Christian kingdom which eventually succumbed to the new forces that were

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8 See E. J. Minster in Gray (ed.), *Illyria*, pp. 54-91.
11 Arbell, *Illyria*. 
infillating it from the south. These new forces were the Punj and their infiltration came to fruition during the sixteenth century, a time when Egypt itself fell to the Ottoman Turks. 12

Regarding the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, it is interesting to note that although there is no Arab consciousness on the positive contributions of the Turks to Islam and Arabism in the old Islamic world, this is not true in the case of the emerging Islamic and Arab frontiers of the Nile Valley. Here the Turkish impact and contributions were more effective and obvious. For one thing, the Turks ended the hated Ottoman slave enfranchisement in Egypt and moved Islam from the threat of Portuguese encroachments. This assessment is fully shared by Peter M. Holt who writes:

The early sixteenth century, which witnessed in Egypt the fall of the Mamluk caliphate and the imposition of Ottoman rule, was a time of even more far-reaching changes in the Nilotic Delta. The penetration of Arab tribal immigrants to the confines of the Blue and White Niles and northern Geeza, and the emergence of a semi-Arab power on the Upper Blue Nile in the Fashkelam, created conditions in which Islam and Arab culture expanded to limits they did not pass until the middle of the nineteenth century. 13

Peter Holt is writing at here is the significance and attribution that the rise of a new empire in the Nile Valley, devoid of Islam, must have presented to the yet unsettled Arab immigrants. To these Arab immigrants must, of course, and the Islamized and half Arabized Muslims who were now emerging as the new champions of Islam and Arabism in the Nile Valley.

To quote Malal: again:

From 1517 the rulers of Bengal were Muslims, almsgiving was widespread under the influence of Arab nomads, chiefly belonging to the race of Alhaya, and pressure on the southern part of the Aqan increased. The last two centuries of its history are a dark age, but Balochi tradition indicates that its final overthrow came with the fall of Sulu, the capital, about the beginning of the eighteenth century.\[1\]

Implicit in Malal’s observation is the obvious possibility that Alaga, like Buha, was a victim of the converging Islamic pressure just before its conquest by the Punj, who, probably, were reacting to Islamic and Arab infiltration from the north. Suffice it to say that whatever may be the factors that prompted the rise of the Punj, there is no doubt that pressure from the north was one of them. Therefore, in order to understand the rise of the Punj conquerors one must always bear in mind the impact and consequences of Arab influx into Buha. Concurrently, one must pay special attention to the southward movement of the apostatized Nabians who were now quasi-Arabised, and constituted the greater portion of the so-called Arabised sedentary population in the cultivable lands of the main Nile, the northern Germa, and the plain between the Blue and White Niles. Nor, it is here, more than anywhere else in the Sudan, that the seeds of Afro-Arabism were effectively sown.

Two groups of people played a crucial role in this southward movement and in sowing the seeds of Afro-Arabism. First, there were the nomadic Arabs of the Juhaya Tribe with strong ties to Egypt since their arrival there during the seventh and eighth centuries. Second, there were the

\[1\] Malal, Field.
Islamized and urbanized sedentary Subians with a strong tradition of literacy, farming and trade. It was in this group that the strange generic term of Juz'aliyyun was applied. Thus, as Holt has observed, “the term schematically covered all the riverine peoples dwelling on the main Nile between the Kabalanga Gorge and the confluence of the Atbara River. Perhaps as a token of their new social status, these Islamized Subians, now known as Juz'aliyyun, acquired a genealogy linking their diverse Subian class with Al-Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet and founder of the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad. Hence, in Subanian usage, Al-abbasil is a dignified alternative to al-imams.15

The significance of this apparently false genealogy was as follows: first, it falsely identified the conquered ascendant Subians with an Arab ruling class. Second, it gave Subanian Islam its own native spiritual aristocracy and effectively laid the foundation for the genetics of Sudanese Islam and the eventual rise of Arab-African hegemony in the rapidly changing political fortunes of the Nile Valley.

Consequently, as the social, economic and political fortunes of the Juz'aliyyun rose and Christianity crumbled, a new Subanian ethnic group from the unspecified borders of the materially unsophisticated southern Sudanese, burst on the political stage of the Nile Valley. Thus sudden and controversial political group, were the aforementioned Fung. Although the Fung have been described as cattle-herders, coming from the south (a fact that easily links them to the Shilluk) their identity and origin have remained elusive and controversial. For this reason, it is perhaps...
necessary to examine briefly the differently speculative theories that accounted the Punj identity and origin before we embark on discussing their catalytic role in the shaping and eventual rise of Indo-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley.

As with any other area of Black Africa, the history of Ibra and its subsequent successor (the Punj Sultanate) suffers from some lack of continuous native recorded evidence. Yet, in the case of Ibra, we do have some few surviving records that an objective historian can use to draw some viable conclusions. 16 This is because Ibra, unlike its southern neighbors, was not an illiterate kingdom. Indeed, like its northern sister kingdoms of Nubia and Ethiopia, Ibra was Christianized during the fourth or fifth century, long before the dawn of Islam. 17 Furthermore, there is ample archaeological evidence to suggest that the area within which Ibra arose was a part of the great empire of Nuer. 18 We mention these factors in order to show the possible historical connections between Ibra and its northern neighbors.

Nevertheless, the earliest allusion to a people who might be the ancestors of the Punj or their king is a letter written in A.D. 1275 by the King of Ibra. 19 This letter was addressed to the Nasir al-Din Sultan in Egypt.

expressing regret by the King of Axum’s inability to appear in person in
Cairo. Specifically, the king complained that he was unable to travel be-
cause he was involved in a conflict (war) with a king (name unspecified)
who had invaded the country of the Mamluks. Since the Mamluks lived north of
Axum, we may safely assume that the invaders were Hellenes, the forebears
of the Mamluks. Unfortunately, our knowledge of Axum, especially that of its
ethnic composition, is so sketchy and blurred by lack of recorded evidence
that we cannot draw firm conclusions without examining other speculative
theories. Hence the need to examine other speculations by travelers and the latter
day Mamluk Chronicles whose reliability has been questioned. 20

According to the Mamluk Chronicles, the Kingdom of Axum fell in A.D.
1673. 21 The fall was prompted by an alliance between the Egyptians-Beitar
Arabs and the Mamluks, an African people that came from the south. We say
“strange” because, as T. A. M. Mann has asserted: “It is not unlikely
that the Egyptians could have entered into a military alliance with a non-Mos-
lim group and, above all, assure a vassalage status under that group unless
the Arab’s political position was extremely weak.” 22 Moreover, according
to the Ottoman records, the Mamluk sovereignty extended to Dongola, an area
that had long been under Muslim-Arab control since A.D. 1317. 23 In the

20Mandell, 1946, pp. 205-216.
21Robert O. Collins and Robert L. Tignor, Egypt and the Sudan (Engle-
22Mann, 1964, p. 150.
23Mandell, 1946, pp. 194-199.
circumstances, it is unlikely that the Arabs who had failed to prevent the Punj from extending their rule over them in their conquered areas of Bakhtiar would have allowed the status of an equal ally in the conquest of Balkh to continue to the Muslims entering into a political alliance with black infidels who by definition were enemies of Islam.

The claims of the Punj Chronicles have long been a subject of intense criticism and rejection. In fact, many British historians who conducted research in the Sudan tend to place it in the class of "doctored" documents. For example, the noted archaeologist and historian, A. J. Arthurs, persistently argued against the reliability of the Punj Chronicles as a basis for record of the first two hundred years of the Punj Empire. 21

Arthurs quoted two of the earliest travelers to Sennar, the capital of Punj, to support his dissent. These travelers were: David Houghton, 1572, and James Bruce, 1772.

Houghton was a Jewish traveler who falsified his identity and projected himself as a Shari'iat and so away from Arabs, a fact that must have enraged his will to the Muslims and the Arabs. Although he was given to empty platitudes, his statement that the Punj rulers were black and non-Arabs should be accepted as a fact, because he had no reason to lie about the Punj racial identity, as for Bruce, this is what he had to say about the Punj:

In the year A.D. 1541, a black nation, hitherto unknown, inhabiting the western banks, of the Nile El Abiad (White

Hillel). In short, latitude 15°, made a descent, in a multitude of course, on Mada'in, upon the Arab provinces (Abdallah territory), and in a battle near Surwagh (Arabia), they defeated the Aus (the Abdallah ruler), and forced him to submission, by which the Arabs (Abdallah) were to pay their conquerors—and so thus became as it were, their clientage. 25

Renken and Bruce's accounts notwithstanding, the identity and origin of the Punti have remained problematic, evasive and controversial. The controversy has also been compounded by the three types of bias that continue to haunt and hinder the objective interpretation of the Elah Valley history.

First, the undue emphasis placed on the role of the Egyptians, the Arabs and Islam as the sole sources of civilization in the Sudanic Belt. Needless to say, post-Islamic Egypt, the Arabs and Islam are successive and complimentary to each other. Second is the European writers' addiction to the myth of the so-called Bantu factor in the development of African civilization. Thus, until recently, when J. H. Greenberg 26 pointed out that Hamitic and Bantu were linguistic groups and not a race, only the Hamites, or those influenced by them, were deemed capable of building civilizations and empires in Africa; hence the emphasis on the ancient Egyptians, the Ethiopians and the Subanese. Thus, according to this school of thought, even the nomads like the Cherew in the Sahara Desert, the Beja in the Sudan and the Somalis in the horn of Africa, were considered a better

25Enum (ed.), Eldg., p. 4); James Bruce Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile in the Years 1768-1772 (Edinburgh: Scotland; Edinburgh, 1859), and D. E. M. Renken and J. L. Cambel, Kingdoms of the Sudan (London; Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1976), p. 36.

...such for civilization then the Turke in Nigeria or Baganda in Uganda.

The third is the later-day attempt by many African Muslims, especially the culturally ambitious ones in the Sudan Belt, to claim Arab origin in order to give historical legitimacy to their newly acquired political status by using fake Arab genealogies in order to avoid the ills of slavery and colonially engineered malaise. 27

With the above caution in mind, we may now attempt to examine the origins of the Punj. To be sure, there is no lack of speculative literature on the Punj identity and origin. Rather, what is lacking is an objective interpretation that can agree with the circumstantial, geographical, and historical factors that preceded and surrounded the rise of the Punj as a superpower, a ruling oligarchy and later as a decisive element in the consolidation of Islam and Arabic in the Nile Valley.

In the previous pages we referred to the accounts of two travelers, namely David Behbeni, a self-appointed Jewish ambassador who visited the Punj court at Semna in 1572, and James Bruce, an inquisitive Scottish traveler who visited Semna in 1771. According to Behbeni, the King of the Punj, Anar Dunges (Dumba) was "a black potentate with a barbaric court—and ruled over black people and Whites. 28 The Whites have a separate quarter, meaning that they were probably transients. From Behbeni’s accounts we may safely assume that Anar Dunges was not a Muslim, and that

27 Most writers on the Sudan agree that the adoption of Arab geneology was fake and exaggerated because of the social and religious prestige that such practices, albeit fake, afforded to the new converts of Islam (Mamelukes). It was also the negation or fake slave origin. See J. R. Urquhart, Jalsa in the Sudan, Ch. 6, pp. 31-32 and O’Faley and Spaulding, Kingdoms of the Sudan, Ch. 1, p. 20.

28 O’Faley and Spaulding, Ch. 1.
the people whom Beckli referred to as Arabs were the Arabs of the Abdal-
lab or Qemmas Surat tribes and had settled from Somaliland and BejaLand
(the latter after the collapse of the gold rush there). In fact, Beckli
confirmed this was he referred to the Arabs as Abdal Lab Viceroy, a term
that signified wassalage rather than equal partnership and alliance.
Unfortunately, Beckli did not say anything regarding the origins of the Punj
beyond the fact that they were Blacks. But it is most significant that
Beckli, who was no stranger to the Indians and Ethipians, did not identi-
fy the Punj with either group or label them as Arabs.

James Bruce visited Somar two hundred and fifty years later, that
was in 1775. Unlike Beckli, Bruce was inquisitive and sought to know
the origin of the Punj. According to his own reports, he was told that
the Punj were Shilluk and came from the south in canoes or boats. He was
also told that the Punj were pagan (polytheists) at the Tuung of Semar.
Bruce's mention of the Shilluk is interesting because it implies that al-
most three hundred years after the founding of the Punj Empire, and despite
conversion to Islam, and perhaps intermarriages with the Arabs, the Punj
were still identifiable black. Bruce's accounts were further confirmed by
P'anee Caland, a French clergy, who visited Semar fifty years later.
Amongst the interesting descriptions which Father (Caland left were: An
account of the Punj versus the Abdal lab in the battle of Iraq), and the
so-called system of colour-classification of the peoples of Semar. Cal-
land, wrote: "The population of Semar was composed of six classes, so
distinct that there is not one individual who does not know to which he be-
longs." Caland identified five of the classes by colors, namely: blue,
green, yellow, green and yellow mixed, and red. The sixth--whose color was
copper—were the Puni). Calliand also noted that the Blues (Puni), and the greens had the same kind of hair and looked just like the Berbers in all their physical traits. 59

Calliand's color-classification is most interesting because it places a question mark on the Arabo origin of the Abdallah. Moreover, Calliand's classification of the Abdallah as green rather than yellow, a classification he gave to the pure Arabs, strongly agrees with Emanent's observation that: "Modern Abdallah are commonly considered to be greens and the historical identification may be confirmed by the tradition that the great Abdallah leader, Ali b. Abi Talib, was green." 50 This analysis indicates that the Abdallah were a part of the so-called al-quraysh Arabs which is a generic term that is applied to all Arabized sedentary and semi-sedentary riverine peoples of the northern Sudan. Viewed from this vantage point, Calliand was most accurate in his description of the yellow as Arabic. He wrote:

They are the least colored (mixed), and belong to the tribes of nomadic Arabs. They have straight hair. This hair grows evenly with others... It is easy to recognize, not only from the traits of their village, but from the pityry with which they still speak the Arabic language. 51

However, the travelers' description of the Puni does not often agree with the Puni Chronicle which, in fact, is supposed to be the official record of the Puni. The Chronicle was reportedly written toward the end

50Emanuel, Ibid., p. 110.
51Crawford, Ibid., p. 166.
of the seventeenth century, and its primary thesis was to establish a
genealogical connection between the founder of the Pmu Empire and the
Qaysite family. Upon reflection, many Islamic historians tend to argue
that this was a natural thing for any regime dominated by Ne’ewals (con-
verts) to do during the seventeenth century. In the case of the Hilita
Sudan, the seventeenth century was a period of intensive Islamisation
and Arabisation and characterised by a quest for acceptance in the Arab-
Islamic world. Hence, absolute identification with Arabism was not only
synonymous with being a good Muslim, but also an act of social and politi-
cal prestige. This may explain the notorious spread and adoption of un-
believably false Arab pedigrees which often ended up with the prophet’s
own tribe albeit imagined?

Nevertheless, there are three hypotheses that have been advanced con-
cerning the origin of the Pmu, that deserved the attention of this in-
quiry. The first hypothesis is the one advanced by Prince, that the Pmu
were Shiluk war-band that arrived in canoes via the White Nile. This,
at least, was the prevalent opinion in Sudan at the time of Prince’s Visit.
Perhaps it should be emphasised that the notion of a canoe is particularly
instructive because it occurs with the Shiluk’s recent tradition as can-
oe navigators. The second hypothesis traces the Pmu origin to Osman
S. Farah, a fifteenth century stray-away refugee Prince from Kordofan in Sudan. This hypothesis owes its strength to Dr. A. J. Adball,

37Sudanese Studies, Africa of Two Worlds: The Links in Afro-
38-375.
the well respected British archaeologist and historian.55 But despite Akhali's influence, the hypothesis is considered untenable for two basic reasons. First is religion. The alleged refuge Prince from Kass-Merwa was a Muslime, but all the available historical evidence are agreed that the Punj warriors were polytheists at the time of their rise to prominence. Second, the Punj warriors were a massive army of canes-warriors; a number that a runaway prince could not have raised so soon outside his own tribe and country. There is also the question of how invaders from Central Sudan could have traversed the White Nile waters. Moreover, it is unlikely that such a massive conquering migration would have forgotten their origin.

The third hypothesis links the Punj with Abyssinia, especially Ethiopia. This hypothesis owes its origin to O. G. S. Crawford.56 Although Crawford went to great length to demonstrate the validity of his thesis, which he calls "The Eastern Origin of the Punj," by quoting geographical names, he does not, however, produce any credible historical evidence to substantiate his hypothesis. In fact, one is tempted to suspect that the basis of Crawford’s thesis is the now discredited thesis of Beattie superiority. Moreover, if it were to be true that the Punj came from Ethiopia or any other part of Ethiopia, it is most likely that they would have been Muslimes or Christians. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine how the Punj would have forgotten their identity and origin so easily. In the circumstances we are forced to reject both the Kass-Merwa and Ethiopian.

56Ibid.
hypotheses and concede credence to the Shilluk thesis. From the above brief analysis, it is clear that all available circumstantial evidence (including the unreliable Pum Chronicle) leaves unquestioned the racial identity of the Pum, namely that they were black and came from the south of Numan. In terms of occupation, like most of the Nilotes, the Pum were primarily pastoralists. Time, race, occupation and locality strongly lean in favor of the Shilluk as the logical ancestors of the Pum. Yet, the only apparent reason why writers like Akalb, MacMichael and Crawford have seemed fit to dispute the Shilluk origin of the Pum is cultural bias and perhaps unconscious racial prejudice.

Like many nineteenth and twentieth century European writers, Bridge, Akalb, MacMichael and Crawford were (perhaps unconscious) victims of a false assumption that the Nilo-Saharan peoples were the primary source of civilization in Africa because of the Nilo-Saharan's association with Egypt and Kshatuka, two countries that have had long association with the nations of the Middle East. Such an assumption, however, is unsubstantial to say the least, because it disregards the fact that the builders of Alva Kshatuka and its capital of Kuba were closely associated with the Shilluk. Therefore, for a historian to begin the story of the Pum with the assumption that they could not have been Shilluk because the latter are not

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Hittites is not just unrealistic, but also methodologically dubious.

Furthermore, even though it may be argued that some of the Semitic-speaking people have enjoyed a relatively higher degree of material culture, it would be incorrect to credit all Semitic-speaking peoples with an unquestionable capacity to establish Empires and civilizations. One need only look at the Beja and the Senussi prior to their contacts with Islam, to discard the myth of Semitic superiority. Therefore, it is the contention of this writer that the Punj were Shilluk and not refugees from Benue-Benue or Ethiopia. This is because there is no way that a refugee prince from Benue-Benue could have mustered enough troops to conquer Alwa and yet not be able to remember his origin. As for Ethiopia, religious association apart, it is unlikely that such a massive military migration would have escaped the Ethiopian Chronicles. In terms of religion, there is ample evidence to suggest that the earliest Punj conquerors were polytheistic. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility that there might have been some Christian survivors from the Alwa Kingdom as indicated by some of the Allah traditions. Indeed, it is logical to assume that the collapse of organized Christianity did not mean the total and immediate evaporation of individual Christians. Nevertheless, because there are no accounts of the last days of the kingdom of Alwa, we have to accept Bric`e`s description of the Punj as the most apt general, namely: In 1564 the Punj invaded the Arab Provinces, and in a battle near Azwa in the Gheiza defeated an Arab chief West Agha (had Ajib-Jen of Alwa) and forced him to capitulate and he thus became, as it were, the Lieutenant of the
Even though the origins of the Sudan has continued to intrigue students of Sudan's history, the history of the Sudan is blessed with a vigor, consistence and continuity that is rare in Black Africa. Like Egypt and Ethiopia, the Sudan has been a crucible of many civilizations, and it is a remarkable thing that until the coming of the Arabs, all Sudanese civilizations were distinctively African. Thus, unlike Egypt, which was repeatedly catapulted into the Islamic and Mediterranean musical main, the Sudan was always ruled by its native sons, even though they may have borrowed some ideas from the Egyptians and Ethiopians.

Among the ancient empires or civilizations of the Sudan, we may mention Kassala, Kama, and Kerma. Of these, Kama occupies a unique place in the study of the Sudan because it was its destination by King Thutmose III and the central city of Kassala which established its capital for course as well as signalling the birth of Meroitic, Meroitic and El, all of which were later converted to monophyletic Christianity through the excommunication of

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38Ptolemaic *Oriental* (Ostia), and *Amin* (Ostia).
39Concern the non-African nations that ruled Egypt are: the Phoenicians, Persians, Greeks and Romans.
Egyptian bishops and Emperors dreamed of Byzantium during the fifth century. While these Christian kingdoms were eventually engulfed by Islam, it is not unreasonable to assume that the ideas and vitality accumulated by the populace could have survived the destruction and decline of organised Christianity. Thus, even though the Punt who comprised Alva in A.D. 500 did not inherit the famed ivory factories of Meroe or the city of Saba in Alva, the people of the region were far from being "uncivilised" or "primitive." In short, what is being postulated here is that whether the Punt came from within or without, the area they encountered was not one that was devoid of established institutions and learning traditions. Rather, what the Punt warriors did is that they imposed their hegemony on a dying Christian kingdom and a weak, but yet versatile and rapidly expanding Islam, as evidence of the quality of material culture in Saba, the capital of Alva and later the hub of the Punt Empire, we may quote the Arab traveler who visited the city during the fourteenth century. He wrote:

Saba, the capital of Alva, lies to the east of the big island which stretches between the two Eilans, the Blue and the White. In it, there are beautiful buildings and large monasteries, full of gold. The town is beautified by splendid gardens. The ruler of Alva is wealthy: he has ready money in basra and yields better returns, well bred horses are found in Saba. The books are in Greek.

Unfortunately, Saba crumbled in the wake of Arab-Islamic invasion and the rise of the Punt warriors. The result was that what had been a Christian and literate society fell into the hands of a military oligarchy

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avoid of literacy and organised religion. This military aligment was made of the FoMu warriors whose speculative origin has been analyzed above.

Ironically, even though the FoMu traditions claim that they conquered Aden, there is no evidence or mention of the name of the ruler of Aden when the FoMu overthrew. This silence is also shared by the Adalites, the alleged allies of the FoMu conquerors. This poses two important historical questions, namely: Was there a ruler in Aden at the time of conquest? If the answer is yes, what happened to him? The second question is whether the FoMu and the Adalites collaborators made a deliberate decision not to say anything about their victor. Equally puzzling is the decision of the FoMu to establish a new capital at Semar instead of inheriting the old capital of Saba. But on the other hand, the choice of Semar as the new capital may be explained by a number of factors, amongst which three are worthy of mention here. The first is the southward trend that had long been in motion since the pre-Christian days when the Red Sea, after falling to hold on in Egypt, retreated to the south. This withdrawal prepared the ground for the future rise of Narwa. But once Narwa was destroyed by the Ethiopians, there was a rupture and scattering of the population which culminated in the establishment of Aden in the south. The second was a personal retreat caused by the invasion and eventual destruction of the Muslim kingdom by the Yeminite and the Arab. This has resulted in a southward migration. The third was a general search for better resources provided by the fertile region of Semar with its easy access to Ethiopia and Yemen. These three reasons are implicitly acknowledged by G. B. G. Crawford in his discussion of why the FoMu chose Semar as the capital
Instead of Soba or ArwaJi, he writes:

For Semar is not in the geographical center of the kingdom; it was only about 150 miles from the frontier of Abyssinia in the northwest, but 300 miles from its northern frontier at the 3rd Cataract. The answer, one of course, only be speculative. I would suggest that it was chosen, in preference to other places farther north, because it was nearer to the source of raw-power in the south, whereas if I am right, the original Punj area came, it was situated almost exactly central in the region of cultivation directly controlled by its king.

Population and fertile soil apart, one suspects that the choice of Semar as a site for the Punj capital was dictated by the Punj's own sense of geography and military strategy. Semar was obviously the area that the Punj knew best and in which they felt safest. The area met the requirements of the Punj who, as pastoralists relied on the peasant population for their food supply and three other important needs, namely, land for grazing, fertile land for cultivation and a heavy population that could supply the required supplementary slave army. In addition, Semar was safe; it had not yet been flooded by the Muslims and Arabs from the north.

While the list of travelers who visited Semar is pretty impressive, there is hardly any reliable account of the exact structure and social organization of the Punj society. Thus, the only definitive (if it can be called so) information that has filtered to us is that the Punj were mysterious black warriors (again as if Alex was situated somewhere in central Europe and not in the heart of Africa where blackness is the standard

\[\text{Crawford, Ibid., p. 77.}\]
racial type), and that the indigenous people whom they conquered were called "Samaq," a term that seems to reflect affinity with any of the known Semitic ethnic groups. Similarly uncertain is the earlier religion of the Punj. Although Islam had been a Christian kingdom, there is no evidence to suggest that the nameless government that the Punj destroyed still adhered to this ill-fated faith. The result is a chain of conflicting information provided by the earlier travelers to Seman and the Abadullahs' immigrants.

According to Bruce, the earliest Punj were polytheists, whereas the Abadullah claimed that Anara Bungka, the first Punj king, was a Christian. In fact, according to the Abadullah's failed tradition, it was Abadullah Jannam who imposed conversion on his lord, Anara Bungka, as the price of peaceful coexistence in the following ultimatum: "The Sudan is a single land and it is narrow. It will not bear two religions. The Christian creed and the creed of Muhamed [sic], become a Muslim or face death." While the tone of this alleged ultimatum is totally out of place in the light of the fact that Abdullah Jannam was a Muhamedan [sic] of the Punj, the possibility that theearly Punj conversion to Islam was politically coerced cannot be ruled out. In fact, all the relevant political as well as economic


[17] O'Flaherty and Spedding, *Ed.,* vol. II. The authenticity of this statement is most questionable in the light of the fact that Abdullah Jannam was an unexpected vassal of the Punj Sultan.
conditions made conversion to Islam a logical strategy for the Punji's economic survival and political stability. This thesis is fully in agreement with Bruce's account. Bruce was told that the Punji became Muslims in order to facilitate trade with the neighboring lands, particularly Egypt. This is quite possible because the early sixteenth century was an era of increasing commercial activity in the Niger. This is evidenced by the rapid expansion of Samara, Arbaji, Borno and by the accounts of European travelers to Soudan and Upper Egypt. Moreover, there is ample evidence to suggest that most of the trade was handled by the Muslim merchants who, one suspects, combined trade with commercial penetration. In the circumstances we may agree with R. R. L'Amoros and J. D. Spaulding that, "the commercial incentive combined with the strategic motive was strong impulse for the conversion of the Punji." Also, a purpose complimentary to the choice of Islam as the official religion and its subsequent spread throughout the kingdom was the gradual increase in the use of Arabic as the *lingua franca* in administration and trade. The adoption of Arabic was of course made easy by the fact that the demise of Christianity had also culminated in the disappearance of Greek, once the symbol of literacy and Christianity in Hausa and Alawa. This, plus the fact that there were probably many

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Afro-as languages, made Arabic a useful lingua franca in a society that was experiencing rapid changes. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that an African language, presumed to be Pindi, continued to be spoken by the court society in Senegal until the eighteenth century. 50

Perhaps the most relevant question to tackle here is whether the Pindi's fast conversion to Islam was reflected in the organization of the ruling institutions and the structure of society at large. In order to answer this question, we must turn to the observations made by some of the earlier travelers to Senegal. According to C. J. Pruss, who was in Senegal in 1691, the Pindi kings lived and moved in styles that were typical of royalty during the seventeenth century. In a vivid account, Pruss described how the king moved from the palace to a country estate for dinner. He writes:

Between three and four hundred horsemen, mounted upon fine horses, make the first appearance. After three times the king, attended by a great number of footmen and armed soldiers, who with a loud voice call forth his people and pray upon the taller, which makes an unpleasant harmony, seven or eight hundred young males and women march together with these soldiers, and carry upon their heads great round baskets of straw, of different colors and finely made. These baskets, which represent all sorts of flowers and crescent-shaped are primispitories, are filled with copper dishes filled over and full of fruit and several sorts ready dressed. These dishes are served before the king, and afterwards are distributed among those who have the honor to assist upon him. Two or three hundred horsemen follow in the same order as those that went foremost, and close the whole march. 51

50 According to J. van Beveren, who visited Senegal in 1681, quoted by O'Fahey and Spieling, 118.
Although the reader must feel deprived of a great deal by Pommel's inability to understand the language, his description of the pomp and ceremonies that accompanied this rare appearance of a Punj king contains important manifestations that go along way to confirm the Near-Eastern origin of the Punj kings as well as the dominance of Islamic values and customs in the Punj court even after conversion to Islam. The appearance of women in public display is one of such values and customs. Among the Hindus, women were scarce to public display of women in a manner described by Pommel.

While the Punj kings were venerated by their subjects (especially in Roman), their powers were far from being absolute throughout the vast empire, since the empire was a miniature of a constitutional, that was made up of magnates or vassals, administratively, the decisions of state were made in council where, according to Pommel, the king was surrounded by twenty "vaees"—old men. And according to C. A. Crake, "great harmony could not exist in any assembly. The highest in rank expresses his sentiment on the subject first, and the others almost invariably coincide with him."


But this writer commends Wendy James for her contribution to the story of the Punj from an anthropological vantage point of view. It is the considered opinion of this writer that James' arguments are based on a negative assumption that the Punj were aliens. Otherwise, James' discussion of the Punj is a welcome contribution to a topic that still calls for further research and analysis.

government were reserved for the nobility. Thus, the positions of first minister (popularly known as ‘alim al-Sultān) and the secretary (qādi) both were hereditary within a family of nobility. Next to the ‘alim al-
Sultān and the qādi was id Al-Jalam or the court interpreter. But
Bruce and R. K. Bosworth also noted another important official at the Punj
court known as ‘id Al-Jam who served as the royal bodyguard in peace and
war. However, the importance of ‘id Al-Jam has been questioned because
his name does not appear on any of the Sultanic Documents of Sultān.

Nevertheless, some writers who tend to locate military power in every Afi-
can kingdom, have contended that ‘id Al-Jam who was also the lawful execu-
tioner of dethroned monarchs might have been the uncle of the king.

Since the Punj initially owed its power to military, soldiers
was a natural pathway to fame and gradual incorporation into nobility. Con-
msequently, captives were recruited into the military. These Punj sol-
diers were legally slaves or captives, although in practice they were im-
portant officials at the Punj court. For example, according to Bruce, the
commander of ‘amal al-bayt and the keeper of the royal seal were apparently of
slave origin or slaves.53 Slaves officials were known as Mungaja.

Although O’Fahey and Specking have contended that the Punj were matri-
lineal, this contention is not supported by the Punj system of succession.
In fact, according to the same authors, upon the death of a Punj Sultan,
the court assembled to elect a successor. Often the council simply

53 Bruce had an exaggerated view of slavery in Sennar as typified by
his statement that “slavery was the only true source of nobility in Sen-
nullified the right to succession of the heir-apparent; this was the first son of the late sultan born "in the purple," whose mother had been consequently rusticated so that she would not bear heirs to the first "Khan." If the heir-apparent had died or fallen into disfavor, the court enjoyed considerable latitude in selecting the next king from among the other sons. But in either case, once the choice was made all the other sons were executed by the 'Abd Al-Uum in order to remove potential rivals to the new ruler. Suffice it to say that in a typical African matrilineal system, it is the children of the sisters who are deemed heir-apparent and not the king's own sons.

Once the heir had been elected by the council, a coronation was held where the new king was seated upon a carved wooden stool called the fikiru.

54For an interesting and African viewpoint on matrilineality, see: J. A. R. Weeks and REID, *The Ethno-History of Matrilineal Peoples of South West Nigeria* (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1970). Although Weeks and Reid's subject of study is in the Yoruba and Edo States of Nigeria, they are North-African and not Atlantic, he nevertheless provides us with what might be considered an African view point on this widely misunderstood subject.


It is indeed, the opinion of the present writer, after scrutinizing all the observations of different writers on the Shilluk culture and the ritual practices that characterized the Punj culture, even after they were converted to Islam, that they were closer to the Shilluk peoples than the Ambos despite the so-called official records as presented in the Punj Chronicles. This view is also apparent in Evans-Pritchard's observations.
All those present were required to demonstrate their obedience to the new ruler. The next stage in the coronation ceremony was the marriage of the new king to a selected girl of the royal clan called the Fam. According to the Puni Chronicles, "as at the time when they appointed a new sultan, they would cause him to marry first among the descendents of the ancestral mother of the Fam.," once married, the royal couple had a secluded honeymoon for forty days in a house designated for this purpose, hoping that a heir will be conceived early in the reign. After the forty days of secluded honeymoon, the king underwent a rite of purification. In the words of the Puni Chronicles, "then they would go out with him to a place known to them (the elders), in which there was water coming out to them from the ground; they partook of it as it was coming out, and fumigated ill if it was lacking." 56

The council's control over the king through the affimation, and perhaps manipulation of rituals, did not stop at the investiture. Every year, following the harvest, there was a full month of festival during which the king's power was technically suspended and the council of the court exercised its prerogatives of judging the king, and determining his if found unfit. As it was the practice the deposed king was duly executed by the Old Council. These festivals were extended to the provinces where the citizens participated in the judgment of their provincial rulers. 57

The Punj empire consisted of provinces and districts. The former were ruled by manjils or vasals, and the latter, especially in the case of the Arabized northern province of the Aabulah, by the Habib or lesser vasals. But it was also from this loose confederal system that the seeds of discord were soon which eventually prompted the undoing of the empire. However, before we examine how the confederal system declined until it met its death in the ambition of Mohammed Ali, we must look at the manner through which the Punj aristocracy exercised their power through their separate manjils. To begin with, the Punj king was represented in each province by a trio of forces. First and foremost, there was a member of the Punj royal clan in each province sitting beside the respective manjil or vassal exercising the ultimate power of a vassal and the Habb Al-Habib. Second, there were the ubiquitous courtiers of the king who moved from one province to another. Third, and perhaps this was what held the empire together, there were imperial units of cavalry which rode imperially throughout the empire, demanding hospitality and unquestionable loyalty to the king. As T. Kühn, the German traveler to the Sudan in 1790 observed: "In these lands whole villages and towns quiver before such royal messengers, for they are obliged to provide horses and camels for him and his servants, along with whatever they need or demand." In addition, all vasals had to appear before the

59 One of the chief characteristics of the Aabulah Annals was the existence of many petty states known as the Habib or Habib. Also Aab al-Habib Aabid, "Some General Aspects of the Arabization of the Sudan," Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. XVII, 2 (1956), pp. 271-279.
king annually, ostensibly to conclude their support and deliver their respective duties. Any Vaisnava who failed to deliver the tribute charged to his province was subject to removal or an army was dispatched to collect it.

But perhaps the most ingenious tie that bound the vassals to their overlords in Senam was to be found in the dynastic marriage system that the Punt expanded and enforced throughout the empire and the rituals of investiture. Contrary to Renard’s erroneous observation that the Punt had the habit of making “the prince of the state they had conquered their lieutenant in the government of his own country afterwards,” the vassals were tied to the Punt aristocracy through marriage and in investiture. A prospective vassal was brought to Senam where he underwent a ceremony of investiture that was identical to the one administered to the Punt rulers, and required to take a wife from the royal clan. It was through this wife that legitimate heirs blessed with Punt royal blood were produced. As Berre correctly observed, “such royal wives were spies upon their royal husbands.” In short, Punt royal marriage practices made every vassal the son-in-law of the king.

This dynastic marriage system was effectively complemented by the

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Punj customs which required a wife upon becoming pregnant, to return to her mother's family until the child was born and weaned. This meant that the Punj princesses married to vassal rulers and their children who were future heirs, were born and raised in the imperial court at Semar under the care of the royal court, where they grew together with the king's own children. In the words of Krumy, "together with the vassals their sons they formed a distinct community at the court of Semar; they were looked up to higher than the ministered sons of Christendom." But most importantly, however, is the fact that they served as valuable hostages for the good behavior of their vassal fathers. If the vassal died, it was the Punj king in Semar who picked up the suitable heir from among the princes. In this case, of course, the remaining heirs apparent were kept as a reserve, ready to replace a misbehaving vassal brother.

Reportedly, the large Punj royal family was complemented by a host of slave retainers who constituted the army and civil servants. There were even royal counselors who were slaves and produced children for the court. And according to Krumy, "all illegitimate children of free women were considered slaves and property of the king." The end result was that the royal family was so large that it constituted a nation within a nation. In this way, the Punj king had enough people who were related to him or were technically his slaves to help in the administration of the empire and to collect the taxes. As it would be expected in a slave-feudal society, peasants were required to supply free labor to the king's projects.

69 Quoted by O'Mahony and Spaulding, The Kingdom of the Sudan. Phil., p. 19.
70 Ibid., p. 50.
especially in the cultivation of his larger estates.

Judiciary powers were exercised by the king, his vassals and sub-vassals helped by assessors. However, the final decision or ruling was often rendered by the king, vassal or sub-vassal, Kump, who observed the court proceedings at Gards had this to say:

In the morning and afternoon the Shirkh (Healed vessel ruler) held public court, in which both the plaintiff and the defendant chose advocates from these present. The plain-
tiff’s attorney would state what was said against the defend-
ant, and then the defendant’s representative would refute the charges and justify him. As soon as the two parties had pres-
tented their case, all present joined in joy and song, after which the Shirkh pronounced the sentence against which there was no appeal.65

Suffice it to say that although this system might appear to be arbi-
trary, judged in the context of the time and the kind of legal systems
that obtained in Islamic and tribal societies of Africa, the Punj Judicial
system cannot be considered unenlightened.

In the final analysis though, the pillar of the Punj autocracy was grounded in the army, and it is here that the well-known Punj
nihilism displayed and started the night of their rule. J. von Rassagen
described typical Punj warriors in the following words:

These black chieftains appeared clad in chain mail tunics
with spiked iron helmets on their heads, while their horses
were equipped in quilted blankets to protect them from lances
thrusts, and were equipped with large copper head guards.66

This uniform, of course, reflected the chivalric flair and bravado

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which characterized the Punduja noble warriors who revered personal valor. But the horror of fighting did not rest on the nobles alone; each feudal lord, depending on his means, maintained a professional army of slaves. Thus, each province maintained a well-equipped army, armed with the traditional weapons and even firearms. The horses, too, was the main feature of the Punduja militarism and valor. O’Fahey and Spalding have described the use of the horses in the following words:

The horse used by the cavalry of Sammar was bred with care. For battle it was fitted in armour of quilted cotton, with metal head and breast plates and sometimes trappings of beaten silver and many little bells. The saddle rose high at the Powell and behind the rider to make it difficult to unseat him. Horses were trained to keep so that a man in armour could mount without difficulty.87

As it has been mentioned before, while the imperial government had its own famed cavalries, the strength of Punduja militarism was based on the armies of the provinces. These provincial armies were commanded by their respective vassals, and it was these armies (in time of national need), which provided the effective fighting force of Sammar. As a measure of loyalty, each vassal king was required to produce units of cavalry which he commanded himself or placed under the command of a slave official known as the Ḥusayn al-Thayj.

The economic power of the Punduja king derived from his unlimited rights and control over land, trading rights and the material possessions of all his subjects.88 Only the Punduja king could grant land, trading

87O’Fahey and Spalding, 1914, p. 57.
882014.
promote and the right to visit or settle anywhere in the empire. The
king's power included the right to confiscate the property of any sub-
ject. In absolute was the king's control on the property of his subjects,
that it even extended to the determination of the amount of property per-
able as bridewealth. 70

At the heart of the Punj royal trade was the king's control on carav-
non trade and gold. All gold mined within the kingdom belonged to the
central government, which in reality meant the king and the royal court
with its high and lower officials. It was also through the control of gold
that the king and central government regulated its physical policy of the
empire. Gold also served as a "status quo currency" in settlement of
meat, grass and cloth were also im-
portant units of exchange. This is because Senus does not seem to have
developed any coin currency. There is also some evidence to suggest that
slaves were an important source of wealth for the king. According to
O'Byrne and Specchign, each year a government slave-hunt was organized by
a special official, the "Senus Ad-hunt." Some of the captured slaves
were reportedly exported. Some were kept by the king who incorporated
them into the army, the bureaucracy, and the homes, if they were females. 71

The Punj king had an absolute monopoly on major trades (especially
the export and import of luxury goods) in the heyday of Senus. The king

69 W. J. Seleg Awu, "Some Land Certificates From the Punj.,” Official
Papers No. 2 (Director: Sudan Research Unit, 1967).
70 P. M. Wilt, "Punj Royal Charters,” in Sudan Notes and Records,
71 O'Byrne and Specchign, 1965, pp. 45-67.
was the sole proprietor and owner of caravans to the outside world, particularly to Egypt. These royal merchant caravans were led by the king's favored emissaries who bore battle drums which were symbols of kingship. To facilitate trade, the king had royal agents in Egypt and Red Sea ports to encourage traders and persons with needed skills to visit Zanzibar. Within the Puni empire, the king's goods had first priority for sale while the demand was still high. Thus, even though foreign traders were encouraged to visit Zanzibar and sell their products, they were required to operate under the sponsorship and watchful eye of one of the king's relatives or officials. Perhaps it should be mentioned here that it was this royal grant and successive control on the growing trading classes within the empire, the employment of slave soldiers, and the uncontrolled proselytization by both local and alien holy men that planted the seeds of conflict and encouraged friction in the empire long before the Meroe-Egyptian conquest in 300.

C. THE CONQUEST OF THE MYAN EMPIRE AND THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM

The Puni empire arose during an opportune moment in the history of Arab immigration into the Nile Valley. Although the Portuguese entry into the Indian Ocean, the Gulf and the Red Sea posed a great threat to the Arab and the Islamic-controlled trade in the Indian Ocean, the situation was soon contained by the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in 1517, and by geography. By conquering Egypt and the large part of the Nile, the Ottoman

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72 According to the French traveler, J. Lapieoues (1802), the German traveler, E. Tropp (1710), and J. L. Burckhardt, Travels in Egypt (London, 1822), p. 365.
saved the Arabs from imminent defeat and annihilation by the Christians; had the Portuguese been tempted to conquer Musulim-ruled Egypt, as worst of all, the Holy cities of Islam in Arabia. In the case of the Sudan, however, the great advantage that the Arabs enjoyed was also neutralized by geography. The Sudan is situated in the heart of Africa and, as such, was far away from the threat of the Portuguese navy. Access to it was primarily through Egypt. Thus, the only effective barrier that stood in the way of Arab influence had been the kingdom of pasha which crumbled in A.D. 1559, leaving the gates to the north wide open. However, no effective barrier, became its sheer isolation from the commercially-oriented world of Islam in the north and the mother church in Egypt, had rendered it impotent, and the nascent Christian Church there evaporated accordingly.

Therefore, when the Bani appeared in A.D. 1890, their presence created a naturally attractive climate for the Muslim traders, wandering Arab nomads and Muslim holy men. Accordingly, it may be argued that the apparent swiftness with which the Bani conquerors accustomed to Islam was, perhaps, indicative of the growing impact of Arab-Muslim emigration southward. Thus within fifty years of the rise of the Bani empire, its rulers embraced the Islam faith. Whether these new converts were largely Arab, Sudan Muhajirs or the Hausa; natives of the region or who the Bani region is indistinguishable and unimportant as far as the spread of Arab culture and language is concerned. What is definite, and therefore crucial, is the fact that Islam had won the acceptance of the Benin and the acceptance of the native forces of power, namely the Benin aristocracy and its privileged bureaucrats. This is because once the Bani rulers accepted Islam, Arabic language and culture were bound to thrive as inseparable and precious values of a new Islamic state. Furthermore, the position of
Arabia was strengthened by its use as a *lingua franca* in a society where there was no single commonly shared language among the different ethnic groups of the Nile Valley. 72

In terms of international trade and politics, too, the use of Arabic must have proven attractive and useful as foreigners flocked to Semar, the cosmopolitan center of the Funj empire. This is confirmed by Kuemp, who writes: "This is a free city and home of all nations and beliefs may live in it without hindrance." 73 Amongst the observed foreigners in Semar were: Malians from Bobi, Coptic Egyptians, Turks, Britons, Armenians, Jews, Portuguese, Greeks and Americans. Most of these foreigners were merchants, traders, curious Christians missionaries and other transient visitors. 74 Since Coptic, once the only known literate language of Alma, and tied with the collapse of Christianity, we may safely assume that the language used in communicating with these foreigners was Arabic. This meant that as the ruling classes in Semar started to exchange communications with foreigners, the need to adopt Arabic as the official language must have become urgent.

Geographically, the converter of Funj meant that the versatile and assertive agents of Islam were now in control of Bobi, the Red Sea Coast, Horn of Africa and the entire Sudan belt from Senegal on the Atlantic Coast, to the Red Sea port of Aswak. In terms of mobility, it meant that the Arabs and Muslim immigrants from Egypt, Maghrib, Iemen and Arabia could

new trend in the loosely controlled Mamluk empire, reinforcing the Islamic forces without any organized resistance or hostility. Trade-wise, too, the rise of the Mamluk empire was most advantageous to the Arabs and the semi-nomadic Habban Hamah, because Mamluk soon became the virtual frontier supplier of gold, ivory, cattle and slaves. The demand for these commodities increased when Egypt became a province of the Ottoman empire, with its slave and servant-oriented bureaucracy.

Probably, it should also be mentioned that although the Ottomans assumed cautious control on the supply of firearms, individual traders were nevertheless, often able to have access to firearms. This, in turn, boosted Mamluk power, prestige and influence over the sparsely and under-ground unconverted Egyptians. Hence, if we accept the apogee that Egypt

76Pliny and Strabo, 87-88, have described the slave trade as follows: "The name of Mamluk responsibility of the new middle class was reinforced by the adoption of a new self-identity—they proclaimed themselves to be slaves. In support of these foundations claims there never first a trickle, a flow, a flood of positive genealogies, tracing family descent from sons to fathers generally back to various distinguished slaves of the early days of Islam." But perhaps Pliny and Strabo ought to have noted that the quest for racial identification with the distinguished slaves of the early days of Islam and the Prophet's tribe in particular was an age-old Islamic practice that was used by all converts to Islam (Moslem) in order to gain full acceptance in Arab-Islamic conquered and dominated societies. Thus, according to Ruben Levy, the practice was widely applied in Iraq by the end of the 9th century. See Ruben Levy, An Introduction to the Social History of Islam (London: Williams and Norgate, 1914, pp. 34-55). In the circumstances, it may be argued that the only reason why the Islamic adoption of Arab genealogies appeared strange and questionable, is because of color.

Gabriel Pate, "Slavery in Sixteenth Century Egypt," in JAN. VIII. 7 (1987), pp. 91-111. Although Pate's article is concerned with slavery in sixteenth century Egypt, it nevertheless provides the reader with an informative background on the institution of slavery in Egypt during the Mamluk rule until 1517 and thereafter under the Ottoman-Ottoman rule which ended with Napoleon's invasion in 1798, and the rise of Mohamed Ali in 1808.
was the influence of Islam and Arabs into Subia, we may also accept the
proposition that the conversion of the Punj created the ultimate centripetal
dual forces which prepared the final stage for the effective spread of
Islam and Arabs in the Punj Confederacy. 77

Unlike Subia, where Islam was adopted under Mamluk intimidation and
compulsion, the Punj rulers adopted Islam because of politics, economics,
social prestige, and the relatively modern material culture that it repres-
ented. Indeed, contrary to the Abdallah imaginary conquest, there is no
evidence to suggest that the so-called Arabs as represented by Wad Agib,
ever conquered the Punj. 78 In fact, all available evidence suggests that
in the first Punj-Abdallah encounter, at Astrasi, the Abdallah were de-
feated and forced to become vassals of the Punj. Thus, until the col-
lapse of the Punj sultaneate in 1829, the nominal leader of the Abdallah
was officially known as a sarjul or vassal of the Punj rulers. 79 However,

77 P. M. Holt, Serfs and the Pattia Conquest, 1537-1920, Pld. For
an excellent sociological study of the kind of society that existed in
Cairo during the Mamluk rule and their partial successors, the Ottoman,
see Jane Joule, Conquest and Pogonomy. The Social Evolution of Cairo. A.H.

For the role of Khurasan in Africa, see Ivar Skrøv, "Khurasan in
"Prayer and Military Activity in the History of Muslim Africa South of
n in the Central Sudan: A Revolution," J. A. S. K. 3 (1975), pp. 571-
607, and several articles in Showell (ed.), War and Society in Azia-
ica (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1995).

78 E. W. Revelin, The Golden Trade of the Moors (London: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, 1976), and Diane C. H. Lipman and Humphrey Pines, Slavery and

79 James F. Hasset, The Arabs and the Sudan, Pld., pp. 142-151 and P. M.
Holt, "A Sudanese Historical Legend: The Punj Conquest of Sudan," in
XXXII, 1 (1965), pp. 1-32.
there is no doubt that once the Punj accepted Islam and allowed the in-
flux of the Arab traders and holy men, the Punj identity, culture and
language were immediately subjected to rapid changes and eventual decline.
But here again it is important to mention that this later represents a
settling down rather than military conquest. Thus, according to the unrelia-
bale Punj Chronicles and later day Sufi traditions, Islam gained absolute
sovereignty in the Punj empire during the reign of Sultan Adil who
ruled from A.D. 1606 to 1611. Adil is credited with inviting foreign
Mu1lim Sufi men to Deccan, thereby making Islam a state sanctioned ideology.
People of the same lineage of holy men who were invited by Sultan Adil,
were not like Sheikh Efris Mohammed Ahmed, Sheikh Hassan Bonnet Al-ashfah9
(from Spain), and the immortalized Shaiik Fakrul-Ilahi, who are
respectively founded the famous Sufi Order of dervishes in Deccan.

This section of Shaiik Bahai is historically instructive because of two reasons.
Primarily, it reveals and introduces us to the crucial role that these holy
men played in creating the seeds of sufism into the Deccan soil. Secondly,
as an individual, Shaiik Bahai represents the introduction of sufism into
the Punj empire. Shaiik Bahai is regarded as the founder of the famous
Tanwir clan—a clan that continued to play a long line of Suflmites especia-
lly from the Mughal to the British era. In fact, Khaliq Allah was the trustee and suppot-
ner of Shaiik Bahai of the Deccan in 1656, was a revered member of the clan. 60

60. For some interesting observations on the Deccan Sufis, see: P.
(1997); and "The sons of Allah and their daughters: a class of Sufi religious

61. See H. Dhillon, "Sufi Holy Men and Allah: Studies in the Lives of
Therefore, even though the exact role of foreign Arabs in the earlier
days of the Funj empire remains uncertain, there is no doubt that their
presence contributed to the establishment of surplus. While the pro-
erious foreign trading communities in Semnar brought international trade
and commercial enlightenment to Semnar (especially to the newly waken
royal family and its trading bureaucracy), there is no doubt that this
prosperity was accompanied by the seeds of discord and division. Even
who was an eye witness to Semnar's booming commerce, had this to say:
"One should know that in all Africa—Seman is near to being the most
distinguished city. Caravans are arriving continually from Carma, Dongol-
a, Solila, from over the Red Sea, from India, Eulonia, Bahr Far, Senna,
Nesse and other kingdoms." 52 If this is true, one may safely agree with
O'Fahey and Spaulding that these traders from afar must have chafed at the
economic restrictions imposed on them by the Funj court, which
controlled all the trade routes and internal markets. 53 One also suspects
that the multi-worldly holy men cannot have looked at the royal family's
arrangements in commercial gains with favor.

This, then, brings us to the suspected economic motives which in-
flected the Funj conversion to Islam. Since the Funj sultans controlled
all external trade, a process that introduced new material culture in Sem-
mar, one must postulate that a new prestigious material value was inevita-

dly attached to these goods. If so, the Funj conversion to Islam might
have aimed at increasing trade with the Islamic world. Concurrently,

52 Quoted by O'Fahey and Spaulding, Kingdom of the Sudan, Ch. 1, p. 69-70.
53 This.
since the Punj rulers depended on the Islamic-controlled countries for the plentiful flow of their trade, it goes without saying that the question of political relationship must have cropped up. Thus, by converting to Islam and welcoming Muslim merchants and traders in Sumer, the Punj must have hoped to pre-empt Arab-Muslim hostility, not just at home, but also abroad. After all, it must be realized that even though the Arabs had lost political power, their successors the Ottoman Turks, had assumed the responsibility of defending Islamic interests in Egypt, the Red Sea Coast, and neighboring Islamic frontiers of the Punj empire in the Nile Valley.

It should also be emphasized that the idea of political security as one of the possible reasons for the Punj conversion to Islam was strongly hinted at in a letter alleged to have been written by Amr Bânas to Sultan Sulje I, pleading that the Punj were Arabs and true Muslims. According to Cavestrot, Simonart and others, the gist of the plea was that Amr Bânas and his followers were Arabs and true Muslims, and that there was therefore no ground for a religious war. Reportedly, the letter was accompanied by what must have been a forged genealogy (drawn up by the Bedâiû Khâma El-Samarqânî, who purported to be the descendent of Sem有效期) proving that the Punj were of Arab origin. However, there is strong disagreement concerning both the authenticity and authorship of this letter. Some sources have claimed that the letter was written by Amr, the leader of the


13The
Abdallah, while some have attributed it to Jumara Dongola. 56 Whoever
wrote the letter, the claim of Arab origin and fidelity to Islam do
point to the importance that the isolated rulers of Funj were attach-
ing to Arabism and Islam at this early stage of their rise to power.

It is also safe to assume that the influx of the Arabs and other
Muslim traders to Semnar must have encouraged assimilation, a prac-
tice that encompassed the funji's racial and cultural identity, thereby
laying foundation for the rise of a hybrid community which tilted to-
ward Islamic cosmopolitanism. This social and cultural change in the
outlook of the Funj population is alluded to in the Abyssinian Chronic-
les which referred to the Funj during the Abyssinian-Funj war of 1617-
1619, as Musulms. By Musulms, of course, the Ethiopians meant Muslims of
Arab orientation and not necessary Arabs.

The flow of foreign Muslim hajj men was not limited to Semnar alone.
Dongola, the ancient capital of Christian Bohia, had, since the second
half of the fourteenth century, become the calling-station of foreign Mus-
lim hajj men. Amongst such hajj men was the famous Gulnamallah the aid
from the Yemen who settled there, ostensibly to teach and improve the
level of Islamic faith among the new converts to Islam. Like many other
Arab religious leaders of his day, Gulnamallah claimed to be a descendant
of the prophet's tribe, the Quraish, and therefore a Mu'allaq. Because of
this lineage, but religiously important claim, Gulnamallah was able to
win acceptance and a substantial following among the articulate and per-
haps literate Bohian Muslims who had been disenchanted from the Christian

56 This, pp. 169-170.
faith upon the crumbling of the Mamluk kingdom. The significance and import-ance of Chulamallah may be discerned from the fact that he was later claimed by the Juhayna Arabs through the work of a mythical Sahih, an Arab clan, to be their ancestral father. To this day, the Juhayn clan is well known for its proliferation of religious scholars in the modern Sudan.

Back to Chulamallah was traced the Damasc, a reputable sufi of un-recorded lineage and origin. Like Chulamallah, Damasc claimed a common descent with the prophet. Damasc viewed the Sudan as a new Islamic frontier where there was a need for raising the quality of Islam. Accordingly, he established mosques and embarked on proselytization among the Nubians. We mention these two sufi masters because they are the ones who prepared the ground for the rise of Sudan's own brand of sufis known as Futzin (Futuwwa—singular), to whom the great task of spreading Islam in the Nile Valley is rightly attributed. The importance of these partly autononomous sufis in the development of Nubian Islam has been well explored by J. R. Thompson and Bradford G. H. Martin. Nevertheless, three of them deserve a special mention in this study.

The first was Sheikh Ahmad Al-Ari at who studied in Egypt during the nineteenth century and then returned to the Futa Section in the Nile Valley to teach the Quran. Al-Ari is credited with the establishment of many Chulamallah's schools along the White Nile. Although we have no evidence of contribution of these schools, there is no

57. J. R. Thompson, Islam in the Sudan, Pp 262, James W. Some of the most significant of these schools include the Futzin School, founded by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Ari at, and the Al-Amin School, founded by Sheikh Al-Amin Al-Nubi. These schools played a significant role in the spread of Islam in the Sudan and contributed greatly to the development of Sudanese Islamic thought.

58. J. R. Thompson, Islam in the Sudan, Pp 262, James W. Some of the most significant of these schools include the Futzin School, founded by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Ari at, and the Al-Amin School, founded by Sheikh Al-Amin Al-Nubi. These schools played a significant role in the spread of Islam in the Sudan and contributed greatly to the development of Sudanese Islamic thought.
reason to doubt that their presence and operation represented a great breakthrough in the introduction of Arabic literacy among earlier Sudanese Muslims by a native son. The second Sudanese born Muqta or Sufist was Sheikh Framin al-Heled, who also studied in Egypt and then returned to the Sudan where he taught Shari'a-Islamic law. Al-Heled is credited with the authorship of two standard texts of Shari'a which, to this day, constitute a part of Sudan's Islamic law. Since there is no separation between the state and religion in Islam, the importance of Al-Heled's legal texts cannot be underestimated. The third notable Sudanese Muqta was Sheikh Hamed bin Muhammad al-Majdub, the founder of the famous family of Holy men, the Majdub who, to this day, still carry on the tradition.

Admittedly, not all Sudan's earlier Arabic literary men were bona fide Muqta or Sufists. However, it is instructive to note that most of them belonged to some Sufi congregation or Bilati. This is because there was no religious hierarchy in the Sudan until the Tuareg-African conquest in 1122. This absence of hierarchy encouraged the Sudanese learned men and Pujara to combine teaching, traditional healing and the revered superstition practice of dispensing barma (blessing) under the umbrella of Islam and the Holy Quran. This strange combination of religion, medicine, healing and disguised witchcraft soon became the hallmark of Sudanese Islam. It is also the root of the immense influence and awe which the multi-faceted Sudanese Pujara exploited in the cultivation of Islam amongst the peasants of the Fari Confederacy.

Another important, but less publicized factor which contributed to

89. Trumpp, 1964, pp. 105-125.
the world spread of Islam in the Sudan is the slave origin of many of the earlier converts. Since both the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic kingdoms (that is, Buha, Alwa and Funj) were slave-owning societies, it is reasonable to assume that there was a large population of slaveless peasants which constituted a homo-pollasticus. This socially uprooted populace is easily attracted to any religious movement. In the Funj empire in particular, many of the soldiers were captured slaves who had no attachment to any given culture and identity and were bound to fall on Islam and Arabism. Most probably, it was amongst these uprooted soldier-slave pollastics that Islam, miscegenation and Arabism had their highest toll leading to the crumbling of African identity and its tribal cultures.

To recapitulate, it is feasible to attribute the spread of Islam and Arabism in the Sudan to a single phenomenon. Thus, while it is logical to argue that Arab conquest of Egypt, the Muslimies' political destabilization of Buha, Arab influx and the incorporation of the Funj rulers were the chief causes, there were also many internal factors that made Islam attractive to the native population. Amongst these internal factors were, of course, the religious vacuum which followed the untimely demise of Christianity in Buha and Alwa, the introduction of the market economy and the emergence of slave owners in the Funj empire. Concurrently, the conversion of the political elite gave Islam a unique value in society where the rulers and his nobles represented not only the revered ideology, but also constituted the only institution that could oppose alien intrusion. Viewed from this vantage point, there can be no doubt that the conversion of the Funj rulers was bound to contribute in the rise and establishment of a new Islam in the Nile Valley—without its conquest by
the laconic Mohamed Ali, who is often referred to as the founder of the modern Sudan. But the establishment of a new nation is far from being synonymous with new armies. The hallmark of African-wrap in the Nile Valley—Sudan. But, unlike Islam, the armies implied the rise of the Arab and the Arabized Africans as the ruling class in the Sudan.

The Meroitic Kingdoms' Expansion and Decline

Although the prehistoric period has been inaccurately projected as a mysterious people, this claim should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that they were heirs to a rich and ancient tradition of state-formation in the Nile Valley. The same claim, of course, cannot be made about that vast region between the Nile and modern Chad. However, this should not be taken as an invitation to draw a rigid line of demarcation between the peoples within this region. Not only is such a demarcation impractical, it also smacks of an unrealistic separation of the peoples of Africa. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to suggest that in this vast area between the Nile and modern Chad the climate was inhospitable to settlement. This is the reason for the absence of state-formation like the ones that characterized the Nile Valley. But if this area was not given to settled life, it was, nevertheless, most attractive to the nomads who continuously interacted and traded with their settled brethren in the Nile Valley long before the dawn of Islam.

The exception to this pattern and lack of settled life in Dar Fur, an area around the Jabel Marth mountains, was, the climate was most habitable and provided conditions that were favorable to state-formation, although even here, it was probably the external trade impacts, arising from the Nile Valley, Egypt, and Nubia, that stimulated the rise of some states not dissimilar to those of the Nile Valley. Nevertheless, economic differences to the north allowed these west-of-the-Nile states reached their maturity. European historians who fancied the Egyptian or Hellenic land in every corner of African civilization, have, of course, been quick to suggest that it was either the Negroes or Mahdists who exported the ideas of state formation into this region.31 Suspicious as this conjecture is, it cannot be rejected. In fact, until the ruins in Dar Fur have been excavated and studied, this is because Dar Fur, much unlike Nubia, suffers from a lack of records, either native or foreign. In fact, the first foreign visitor to Dar Fur who left us some written records was W. G. Browne, a remarkable and an intuitive English traveler who stayed in Dar Fur for three years (1793-96). Unfortunately, Browne's intuition and observations were concentrated on the commercial activities and slave-trade, rather than on the historical evolution of states.32

This leaves us with two more on-the-spot observations. These are by Muhammad B. Sharif Al-Din, who lived in Dar Fur from 1805 to 1811 when

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He moved to Kordofan. 28 Dear al-Dahiri's two books, as O'Fahey and Spalding have observed, were perhaps the last major Arab contribution to the exploration of Africa in the tradition of Ibn Batutta and Leo Africanus. 29 Another important source of information on Darfur is to be found in the autobiographical accounts of Gaafar al-Mahfiz, an Arab observer and traveler, who traveled to Kordofan and spent six months in al-Bashir, the capital of the state of Kordofan. 30

But the above sources are only relevant and interesting in the study of Darfur and not in the expansion of Funi into Kordofan which is the theme of this sub-heading. Moreover, although Darfur is an unquestionably integral part of the modern Sudan, it is outside the Nile Valley, and consequently outside the parameters of this study. Thus, the west-of-the-Nile region that concerns this study is Kordofan which lies north of Darfur. 31

The Funi's westward expansion to Jebel Naya and Jebel Sagadi, the two hills on the west of Kordofan, was initiated by Abü al-Qasim, who ruled from 1550 to 1558. But because of the brevity of Abü al-Qasim's rule, the greatest expansion to the west was carried out by Ralid II Abu Sagadi, 1646-1660. It was Ralid II, who conquered Kowa, an old Shilluk settlement on the eastern bank of the White Nile, and expanded further into the plains of Kordofan. 32 In order to manage and rule effectively the west acquired

29 O'Fahey and Spalding, Kingdom of the Sudan, p. 11.
30 Thores.
31 Gaafar did not become a part of the Sudan until in 1916. See Tringham, Islam in the Sudan, pp. 34-35.
32 Paul Balfour, 1916.
area, Bayaz Ii was forced to resort to the time-honored, but dangerous practice of recruiting a mass of slave soldiers whose sheer number gave them the eventual domination of the Punjab army.

Briefly, the massive recruitment of slave soldiers in the newly conquered area had two kinds of immediate social, economic and political impact. First, it weakened the area's political standing by depriving the indigenous people of potential soldiers or fighters in any ensuing struggle against the Punjab. Economically, the traditional economy was disrupted, thus creating social unrest under which the transient Muslim traders rose as a new economic force which was opposed to Punjab occupation. Secondly, the uprooted slave soldiers were eventually introduced to Islam and soon formed the nucleus of the Islamization process. It is hard to guess whether these consequences were within the objectives of Punjab's expansion or not. What is definite, though, is that they added insult to the wound that was already eating the body-politic of Punjab autonomy. On the other hand, it must also be acknowledged that the practice of recruiting slave soldiers was not without its familiar and traditional trend in Islamic experience. Islamic rulers often resorted to mercenaries or slave soldiers whenever they sensed that the free soldiers were posing a threat to their autocracies. In the case of Punjab this point is amply demonstrated by Bhit who writes:

A potential threat to the Punjab kings came from the Punjab warriors themselves. Bayaz Ii's expedition to Bighal may have been deliberately orchestrated (planned) in order to recruit slave troops, to form a personal bodyguard for the king, and as alternative military bases for the Punjab dynasty. On at least two occasions the four Punjab warriors rose against the reigning king. A revolt against Bhai Ii-e-Abass (1568-1776), led by the Punjab commander, his main lieiah, was supported by
the Abdallahi Shykh of the time, and by the governor of Khwez (Kharg). The rebels appointed a shadow king, and evaded Radd to keep the satraps, through hisStrictness; however, he succeeded in winning the support of these satraps by means with a small force of cavalry he routed his opponents and killed Sami Ishak.96

The mention of holy men and the Abdallahi Shykh here is very instructive, because it reveals the beginning of the clearance of hostility between the Punj dynasty and its rivalized vendela, the Abdallahs, who were spiritually the kith and kin of some of the holy men in the Punj Empire.97 Thus, in 1700, Radd III's son, Ummi III, was deposed by his people, the Punj from the south, known as the troops of his chief and installed a new king.98 The new king was named Radd. The nameless Radd's reign was short-lived; perhaps because he was not a Muslim, as his single and short name suggests. However, he was soon succeeded by his son Radd IV—Ali Spiritual (1706-40), who was a minor. For this reason, the kingdom was administered by a regent—minister. Although Radd IV grew to assume full responsibility, his reputation as one of gallows and cruelty, this is stated in the Arab written

Punj Chronicles, which reports:

He killed the rest of the Qasab, and took the estates from the great families. He gained for himself the support of the Radd, and gave the estates to the great families. Likeness he appointed as provincial governor the son, people of Shykh Shabaz Waliya Jangal, and gained their support against the Punj and the families of the previous kings.99

Several interpretations may be drawn from the above quotation. One

97. See Holt, 'Holy Families and Islam in the Sudan,' Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
in that Rādī IV attempted to extirpate the old families of his predecessors, and to replace the established aristocracy by reinforcing his rule with the support of the non-Arabized, and perhaps non-Muslim, John slave-soldiers and the people of Shāykh Khānīs (who was a Pun, and a refugee from Kordofan). The other possible interpretation is that Rādī IV might have been trying to save the Punč Kingdom from the influence of the Arabized Abdallāhī. This would definitely explain Rādī’s shift and reliance on the Arabs and the Puns. Because not only were the Puns non-Muslim and non-Arab, but they were also alien and powerless in Senara, in contrast to the Abdallāhī who were fully Arabized, and wielded great influence in Senara among the merchants, traders and royalty men.

Ironically, it was Shāykh Khānīs and his slave soldiers who soon proved the undoing of Rādī IV. As a refugee from Kordofan, Khānīs had his own long-standing grudge against a certain clan, the Mumhīb in his homeland, and longed to return there at an opportune moment. Thus, after rendering important services to his friend Rādī, against the Abyssinian invasion in 1804, Khānīs convinced the Punų king to send a military expedition against the Mumhīb clan in his homeland. Similarly, Rādī assented to Khānīs’ request and dispatched an expedition of Punų warriors to Senouran where, despite heavy losses in the ensuing battle, a handful of surviving Punų warriors prevailed by rallying around Muhammad Ibn Likālik on whom Rādī conferred the command and vassalage of Senouran. Likālik was able to expel the Mumhīb clan from Kordofan which became a dependency.

106 O’Shea and Spellings, Functions of the Senouf Punų, pp. 89-95.
of the Funj kingdom, but the occupation of Kordofan proved a costly and divisive exercise for the Funj rulers.

The victory in Kordofan, however, did not end the struggle for supremacy in Kordofan. Thus, in 1756 Radd was forced to kill a respected Alli (teacher), the preacher, in the royal mosque of Kordofan on what appear to be false accusations. As the news spread at home, suspicion increased, and all suspected political opponents were arrested, disgraced in public and sent to work with slaves on the royal estates. Plagued by fear of a possible internal revolt, the king decided to extend his vendettas and executions to all suspected officials, including those who were serving in Kordofan. This provoked General Likaylik, who now began to conspire and plot against the isolated and fear ridden king in Kordofan.

Under Likaylik's leadership, the army in Kordofan marched on the Gezira, at Kharga (Alay'a), they were joined by Radd's own son Hasir, to whom General Likaylik promised the throne. For unexplained reasons, Radd did not meet any resistance. So was, therefore, allowed to abdicate and seek refuge in Ethiopia where his host, the king of Ethiopia, installed him as the Governor of the frontier province of Gallabat. But he was subsequently induced to return to Funj and then executed.

Meanwhile, Hasir who had been allowed to occupy the throne (1750-63), was no more than a willing puppet of General Likaylik who was neither Funj nor Arab, an event analogous to the Mamelukes' assumption of power in Egypt in 1260. To be sure, Likaylik was no Mameluke. He was a Kordofan.

104 S. H. H., p. 97.
a term that is taken to mean the survivors of the native population of ancient Illyria. General Likaylik enjoyed the titles of Skajth and Viskla (Chief Minister) until he deposed the puppet King Basil, and had him executed. Unlike the pharaohs of Egypt, this time General Likaylik did not attempt to wear the honored crown of the Pung Dynasty. He therefore enthroned Skajth's brother Imsal as the new king, while he continued to hold all the power that was due to the king.

Curiously enough, this was also the time that James Bruce visited Susara in 1772. Soon, in 1776, General Likaylik died, and so did his favorite Minister Alian Waled Subahi, whom Bruce found acting as viceroy during General Likaylik's visit to Konstomen. Likaylik was succeeded by his nephew, Dadi, who, after a brief war, deposed the puppet King Imsal, and replaced him by his own son Alian as King Alian II (1777-89). However, the new king-maker, though a brother of General Likaylik, lacked the charisma and ingenuity of the latter. This meant that the death of General Likaylik had created a power vacuum that could not be filled. In the circumstances, the remnants of the Pung dynasty, the Abdallah theocratic princes and the descendants of Likaylik, embarked on a new struggle for supremacy over an empire that was already crumbling under the weight of internal discord.

As it often the case, the men with the guns won temporary victory. In this case it was, of course, the sons of General Likaylik. One of them, Imsal, became the viceroy. But the telegraphed King Alian was no longer willing to act as a puppet. He was determined to get rid of the

106.Likaylik, Pp. 94-100.
military encampers. Then, once Bajbuh was away in Kordofan and had left his brother acting as deputy viceroy, the despotic king consummated a conspiracy with Shajr Al-Sain Waled Mushar and the hashil royal clan of the Jalliyum Araba who, unknown to the king, wished to gain the kingdom for themselves. In 1735, buoyed by the support of the Jalliyum, King Adan arrested Bajbuh’s brother and his supporters, and had then assailed in front of the royal palace. And as if this were not enough, the king seized the daughters of Abu Likaylik and gave them to his supporters as concubines. Upon hearing of these humiliating events, Bajbuh returned swiftly from Kordofan, accompanied by Shajr Badd, the Jalliyum ruler. But the embittered Bajbuh was defeated and killed at the battle of Al-Chah, while advancing on Gurna, and his army was forced to disperse in utter disarray.

However, Bajbuh’s brother and successor, named Nasir, was able to re-mobilize and carry on the struggle. Eventually, King Adan’s forces were decisively beaten, and the king, already old and sick, died a broken man. Meanwhile, the two principal centers of towns of the Funi kingdom had been devastated beyond repair. The old Alzul in the Gazira had been raided by the Shukriya warriors from the north in 1735–36, under the incitement of Shajr Al-Sain Waled Mushar; Gurna itself had never recovered from Nasir’s assault when he captured it in 1739, during his war against Likaylik’s family.

Perhaps it should be emphasized that the rise of these two towns

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Footnotes:

107 This was a common Arab-Islamic practice and way of imposing maximum humiliation on defeated or runaway opponent.
reflected the resurgence of two phenomena which in turn signalled the prosperity and eventual decline of the Funj dynasty. First, the rise of the town or trading settlements reflected the resurgence of the Funj empire and its entry into the new economic order of the market-economy. As a system, the market-economy depended on traders from the north. These traders were exclusively Muslims and Arabs oriented in their culture and linguistic adaptation, two factors that made them the pillars of a nascent Afro-Arab force within the Funj empire. The second phenomenon was that these town or trading settlements became centers of attraction for the rise and saturation of Islam. Given these concomitantly occurring factors, we may safely conjecture that the attempts by the Funj kings to reinforce their armies with slave or mercenary soldiers from Kordofan represented a desperate move to counter-balance the growing pro-Arab armies by non-Arab and even non-Muslim forces from Kordofan. Yet, it was this very expansion into Kordofan that necessitated the need for a large army to police the newly acquired territories.

The danger represented by the Shukriya warriors from the north has been well discerned by Holt in his assessment of the decline of the Funj empire. He writes:

In 1779 the recent Sa'di Madi Sa'id suppressed a revolt of the Shukriyaa, and killed their chief, but the rebellion of Madi smashed only five years later. In 1784 a chapter in the same of the Funj puppet King Sa'id III, witnessed by the sultan Sa'id, granted a considerable block of cultivable land between the Blue Nile and the River Madi to Shukriya Abd al-Mannan ibn Ali, the grandson of the Shukriya Chief killed by Sa'id; Kordofan could no longer be said, and the power of the Macebuka revived.108

Indeed, what emerges from a close analysis of the Punj empire is that the desperate attempt to replace the Punj dynasty by the so-called Hoosag dynasty, that is, the descendants of General Likaylik, never brought stability and peace to the greatly expanded and economically changed Punj empire; and may, perhaps, have come too late and to have been tactlessly handled. Consequently, the descendants of Likaylik were caught in a perennial crisis of internal friction and strife. This is because by the time Likaylik raised power from the Punj, there were already other forces contending for supremacy in the empire. These forces were not just made up of Muslims and pro-Arabs elements; they were also members of the new class of traders, merchants and holy men. It was the expectations and demands of this new class that paralyzed the Punj empire from within and without. Thus, the fate that had befell the Christian kingdom of Babia in A.H. 1250, was, after five hundred years, repeated in Senussi. Therefore, even though the descendants of Likaylik were able to retain power until 1827 (when the troops of Mohamed Ali orchestrated terror in the Nile Valley), their rule had, for a long time, been characterized by endemic political friction and murderous rule. The destabilizing methods employed by different Muslim factions vying for control of the empire and succession reflected the anarchic input of the new and uncontrollable forces of frontier Islam. And, in the end (as in Babia), the warring pieces of the Punj empire fell into the hands of the Abdaullah, Izzel and Shukriyra Afso-arabs who now entrenched on the final marauding of Senussi and Arabian into effective occupation in the Nile Valley, albeit under the hated rule of Turkish-Egyptian occupation. But if an internal factor is required to explain the decline of the Punj empire, it is perhaps
to be found in the words of Crawford who wrote: "The kingdom was a union of incompatibles, of nomad Arabs and settled multitudes, some of whom were also Arabs. The king was the unifying factor, and as long as he was strong enough to exercise his power in person, some sort of equilibrium was maintained. But, as we have seen, Badii, by creating an army of conquest in Euphrates and redefining its command to a subject, had thereby dug his own grave."¹⁰⁹ Crawford’s assessment, though limited, in that it seeks to attribute the crumbling of a great empire to a single and personal cause, is reasonable, and is aptly supported by Herbert Reznik’s insightful statement on power and human destiny: "Power once developed has a tendency to make its own creator a slave and threaten his own very survival."¹¹⁰ This is precisely what happened to Badi IV and General Limylik, the two last competitors for power and eminence in the Fatimids empire. Such attempted to develop a power structure that eventually engulfed his and proclaimed his own destruction, leaving victorious Islam to fill the vacuum, albeit the aid of alien conquering forces. These alien forces were the Egyptians and their Turkish masters who now embarked on the great task of turning the Sudan into an Arab-Islamic state. Thus substantiating the claim of this study that the political fortunes of the Arabs and their Arabized African allies were strongly aided by external factors amongst which Muhammad Ali and his Egyptian collaborators were the most effective of all. But since the rise of Muhammad Ali cannot be divorced from the rise of European imperialism, Chapters VI and VII deal with the impact of

¹⁰⁹ Crawford, The Pedi Kingdom of Swaziland, P. 265.  
Imperialism in Egypt, the rise of Mohamed Ali and his subsequent intervention and conquest of the Funj Confederacy. For, it was this conquest that imposed the stamp of Pan Islamism and Arabia on the Nile Valley.
CHAPTER VII

INFLUENCE, IMPERIALISM AND TURCO-EGYPTIAN CONFLICT IN THE
FUKI CONFEDERATION, 1827 A.D.

A. TREATIES, FRANCO, AND OTTOMAN RULE

"The favourable geographic position of Egypt and its
natural resources as a growing, necessarily challenged the
ambition and rivalry of nations seeking to establish po-
litical and commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean East
and to command trade-routes to the Far East."

The above quotation from Arthur Silva White is, perhaps, the most
objective summary of Egypt's long history and over-burdened relation-
ship with the outside world. Blessed with the Nile River, its fertile
riverbanks, and the unquestioned longevity of its ancient people, Egypt
developed and built a remarkable civilization whose wealth and fame be-
came the envy of others and thus beckoned the ambitions of all nations
in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and beyond. Indeed, the list of
nations that have conquered Egypt and occupied it is synonymous with
the list of nations or empires that have influenced and shaped modern
civilization. Thus, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, the
Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Turks, the French, and the
British have all, at one time or another, imposed their will on Egypt
and attempted to influence or shape the destiny of that country, their

1Arthur Silva White, The Invasion of Egypt (London: Newman and
success or failure, depending on the time and circumstances that sur-
rounded the conquest. It is, indeed, perhaps this astonishingly long list
of alien conquerors and Egypt's enormous capacity to absorb the imprint
of each conqueror that prompted Lady Duff Gordon to declare, "Egypt is a
palimpsest, in which the Bible is written over Herodotus and the Koran
over that."  

But as White has discernibly observed, each conquest was, probably
always, a part of a strategically dictated grand scheme, which was at-
tracted to Egypt because of its strategic position and the conqueror's
need both to establish political and commercial supremacy in the Medi-
terranean Sea and to command the trade-routes to the Far East. However,
the concept of the East as the source of the revered Oriental luxuries
managed most dramatically with the rise of the Arabs and Islam, thus
adding a religious dimension to what hitherto had been a purely economic
issue. Thus the defeat of the Christian Byzantine by the Arabs was per-
ceived, at first, as a conflict in religion. And henceforth, especially
in the scope of the new converts of Islam, the East became synonymous
with Islam and its holy city of Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet Mu-
hammed, the founder of Islam. In fact, it may be argued that, from then
on, religion and economics, the classic ingredients of imperialism, be-
came in the Nile Valley region one and the same thing. But perhaps the
most important thing about the rise of Islam was that it heralded the
Arab's rise into a dominant political position in an area that hitherto

had been controlled by the Christian Byzantine. Meanwhile, Egypt, because of its strategic position on the Mediterranean Sea, its size, and highly developed material culture, assumed new importance in an expanding Islamic Empire. Soon Cairo became to the Islamic world what Alexandria had been to the Greco-Roman Empire. Therefore, any power that aspired to control the Mediterranean Sea and the trade-routes to the East had to control Cairo as well. However, the rise of Islam and its rapid spread into the interior of the Nile Valley and the Red Sea littorals, where gold and slaves were importuning to be in abundance, also added another dimension to the strategic importance of Egypt. And even though the Portuguese discovery of the Cape route had a diminishing effect on the importance of Egypt as a gateway to the East, nevertheless, the importance of Egypt as a center of Arab-Islamic power was not lost to the maritime nations, especially Britain and France. The former, rightly or wrongly, regarded the control of Egypt as crucial for the defense of India. And understandably, France, Britain’s arch imperial rival, sensed this British strategy and planned accordingly: if the British Isles were beyond France’s reach because of the impracticability of the Royal Navy, France could nevertheless assault Britain’s economic interests in Asia through the capture of Egypt.4


Historically, Egypt became a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1517, when Selim I (popularly known as Selim the Grim) conquered it in a desperate response to the Portuguese attempt to control the Islamic world. However, as Professor Bernard Lewis has correctly pointed out, the Ottoman occupation of Egypt in 1517 did no more than save it from the Portuguese navy, gain control of Mecca, and leave the rest to the Mameluke Sultans who administered it as a tributary province. Therefore, from 1517 to 1798, Egypt was, to all intents and purposes, ruled by the Mameluke who, it is widely agreed, were corrupt and intrigue-ridden. And, because of their maladministration and oppression, Egypt was culturally impaired and politically isolated from the rest of the world. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire was also undergoing a decline, beginning with its disastrous defeat at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and then culminating in 1770 at the battle of Trafalgar. The net result was that the Ottoman appointees in Egypt, the Viziers, became mere ambassadorial figures whose power began and ended with the symbolic collection of the annual tribute for the Porte in Istanbul. To be fair, though, there were many attempts, by different Ottoman Sultans, to reinforce their colonial writ in Egypt. Such was definitely the case in 1786, when the Ottoman Sultan tried to bring the Bey to heel. However, as

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Professor F. M. Bolt points out, such attempts were often defeated or frustrated by the Beys who were deeply entrenched in Egypt.7

The shadowy power of the Ottoman sovereignty over Egypt was discernably denied by George Baldwin, the British agent in Egypt, who wrote in 1785:

I am puzzled to define its government. And who has ever defined it? It is neither a dependent nor an independent state, yet it is nominally subject to the Ottoman Porte and virtually independent.8

The British agent was not alone in expressing dismay and surprise at the strange disparity between the status of Pasha and the status of Pasha in Ottoman-Egyptian relations. Later observers have expressed similar views about the ambivalent and even symbiotic relationship that existed and characterized the Ottoman rulers' attitude and behavior toward their kith and kin the Mamelukes, who, while despised as former "slaves," were nevertheless preferred over the Arabs because, unlike the latter, they were largely Turkish and Turkish-speaking. There is no doubt that this apparent discrimination contributed to the Arabs' dislike and distrust of the Turks and perhaps helped to erode the legitimacy of Ottoman rule in Arab lands. On the other hand, one must not forget the fact that the Arabs never accepted the Ottomans as being finite successors to the sacred Arab/Islamic Caliphate. On the contrary, it has often been the Arab contention that the Ottomans, or Turks, were usurpers.9

8 Quoted by Layid, p. 7.
9 Layid.
But while it may be accepted that the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 neither freed Egypt from the paralyzing grip of the Mamelukes nor made it an integral part of the Ottoman Empire proper, there is no doubt that the vague link with Istanbul aptly distinguished Egypt from its southern neighbor, the Mamluk Confederacy, with its capital in Damiette. However, like the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, the Mamluk Confederacy too was experiencing political faction among its khans and the Arab slave citizens in the northern provinces. And, upon reflection, it may be suggested here that this phenomenon of a weak central administration and growing political faction was perhaps an expression of a growing technological lag and poor communications in the Islamic world. Naturally, these factors contributed to the eventual collapse of Islamic power.

What makes the phenomenon of technology relevant and important in the rise of the European challenge to the Ottoman power and interests is the fact that, in the long run, it is not the old maritime republics of Spain, Portugal, and the commercial republics of Italy that destroyed Ottoman sea power. On the contrary, the challenge came from Britain and France, both of which had a technological lead. It is in regard to activities of these two nations which the term European "imperialism" refers to here.

Beginning with the second half of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, Great Britain and France embarked on brilliant maritime careers supported by rapid technological innovations. At first, Britain's ascendancy in sea power was primarily directed against the Dutch and the Spaniards. Thus by 1700, British had captured
Gibraltar and gained entry into the Mediterranean Sea without encountering serious challenge from the Spaniards, Portuguese, or the Ottomans. Yet it should be remembered that, at this time, the latter were controlling Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis, and Cairo. The significance of this gain is that it enabled Britain to establish contacts with Alexandria and Cairo from whence her sequacious trade agents were able to observe the weakness of the Ottoman power in Egypt.

Fueled too, under the charismatic impulse of Louis XVI, emerged as an important sea power during the eighteenth century. But because of the political rivalry that characterized the relationship between the two nations, they soon found themselves competing for control of trade-routes, markets, and influence outside of Europe. Thus, while it might be incorrect to define the French Revolution as a culmination of this competition, it is definitely correct to argue that it was the French Revolution that produced Napoleon Bonaparte. And, in turn, it was Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 that prompted British entry into Egypt and the rise of Muhammad Ali who not only became the ruler of Egypt, but also prompted Egypt’s conquest of the Panj Conferences.

But perhaps the most important aspect of the French expedition to Egypt is that it turned that country into a field for European conflicts. As John C. B. Richardson has stated, “The new struggle was for the mastery of the central heartlands of Islam, but it was fought not between Europeans. It was not against the Turkish Sultan but against England that Napoleon had sailed for Egypt, and Nelson’s victory over Abukir Bay founded British naval command of the eastern Mediterranean.”

10John C. B. Richardson, Africa 1750-1850 (New York: Columbia
basically true. The European struggle in Egypt was not a war against Islam, but a war to control trade-routes, markets, and natural resources. This trend was also inherited and manifested by Muhammad Ali once he assumed power in Egypt, and then he used that country as a launching pad against the Punj Confederacy where, as we shall see later in this study, Islam, Arabs, and European imperialism entered into an unholy triple alliance against African polytheism, thus paving the final roadway for the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley.

THE PREVIOUS INCIDENCE INTO EGYPT AND BRITISH INTERVENTIONS

After the defeat of the European Christian Crusaders in the Near East, Islam was immediately confronted by even more lethal invaders from the Far East—the Mongols, who invaded Baghdad in 1258, then the capital of Islam, and brought to an end the Abbasid Caliphate. With their arrival ended the glorious Arabo-Islamic Empire that had risen jointly with the religion of Islam. However, the failure of the Mongols to reach Egypt, the second most powerful center of Islam, enabled the Mamelukes there to assume political power in the Arab-Islamic World. The Mamelukes assumed power in Egypt in 1260, just before the collapse of Baghdad in 1258. In Egypt, the Mamelukes established a Pretorian Sultanate, with the only surviving member of the Abbasid ruling family as the nominal Caliph of Islam. But the real power political power was exercised by the Baht Mameluke Sultan who, it is widely agreed, became the pillar of what was left of the old Arab-Islamic Empire. Under the Mamelukes, Egypt assumed the leadership of Islam and became the

undisputed center of Arabic culture and learning. It was also during the Bahir Mameluk rule that the Christian Kingdom of Syria was destroyed, thus opening the Nile Valley to the Arab nomads and the rapid spread of Islam. The Mamelukes, too, were responsible for expanded Islamic trade to the Far East and India in particular. 11 However, by 1569, the Bahir Mamelukes were replaced by the lesser able Circassian Mamelukes, who ruled Egypt until 1577, when Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Sultan, Selim I, thus nominally ending two hundred and fifty years of a peculiar alien rule in Egypt.

Certainly, Selim I had decided to conquer Egypt because of three reasons. First, the Sultan suspected that the financially troubled slow pravunian rulers were about to enter into an alliance with his Arab enemies, the Safavids of Persia, who were Shiite Muslims and a political threat he had declared war. Second, it is alleged that the Sultan feared that the Mamelukes, who had already proven their weakness against the Portuguese appearance in the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and Arabia, were incapable of defending the Muslim Holy City of Mecca. Under the circumstances, it was imperative that Egypt be brought within the Ottoman Empire so that the Sultan could assume the duty of defending the Holy City. Thirdly, the Sultan was worried that Egypt itself might fall into the hands of the Portuguese, thus giving them an access into the Mediterranean Sea. 12

However, there is also a strong belief that the Ottoman Sultan simply wanted to legitimate his claim as the new caliph of Islam. This,

11 Layt, p. 1.
12 Zeb, pp. 53-56.
it is argued, he could only do if he eliminated the Safavids and the Mamelukes—especially the latter who since assuming power in 1556, had kept a puppet Abbasid Caliph in order to give the impression that they were bona fide servants of the Abbasid Caliphate. But whatever the reasons that prompted Sa'id's conquest of Egypt, most scholars agree that, by 1556, the Mamelukes were a sect forever totally incapable of waging war against the beard of firearms. This contention is strongly supported by David Aydan, who has made an extensive study of the Mameluk kingdom. Aydan's study is also supported by Sir John Blugg and Sir William Muir, who are recognized Mameluke biographers. 1)

Topically, even though the Ottomans conquered the Mamelukes in 1557, there is little evidence to indicate that the conquest cut off the Mamelukes' umbilical cord with Egypt. In fact, Egypt was never brought under a direct Ottoman administrative system. On the contrary, Egypt was ruled indirectly through Mameluk collaborationists. Thus, even though there was always an Ottoman appointee known as the Wali (viceroy or governor), who was helped by an Ottoman body of soldiers known as the Janissaries, real power rested in the hands of the Mamelukes, who came to be known as the "Egyptian Princes." It was this body of able slave soldiers who actually ruled Egypt. Their power naturally increased or decreased in proportion to the rise or decline of Ottoman power in the midst of a rapidly weakening and expanding Europe.

As Professor F. J. Wattenbier has correctly observed:

Mameluk supremacy in Egypt was further advanced by
the coincidental decline of Ottoman power towards the end
of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a result of
continuous warfare and the weakening of internal politi-
cal administration. Moreover, the frequent succession of
Ottoman viceroys in Egypt prevented anyone among them
from attaining unrivalled political strength, or great influence
in the country. The rival Mameluk Beys, on the other hand,
managed to retain their independenee and power of corps,
for they were able to continue to import their armies and
thus swell their ranks to their private empires. The Dey-
lis, however, and their troops were always negligible in
the country and their loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan was
weakened. They were thus unable to act as defenders of
the Sultan's interests in Egypt. Soon all civil and finan-
cial administration came in the Mameluk hands, enabling
them to distribute lands and other goods to officers and thus
attracting them to their side. All these developments under-
scored the authority of the Ottoman governors while the in-
fluence of the Beys increased. Led by a Bey of their own choice,
the Chief Mameluk of Cairo, better known as Shakh-Al-Islam, or
Governor of Cairo, the Mameluks became the actual rulers of
Egypt. 1

Interestingly enough, this second Mameluk rule in Egypt was per-
haps the greatest golden age in Egypt's relationship with its southern
neighbor, the Punj Sultanate in Senar, which had emerged in 1501, as
Black Africa's most renowned power. Whether this absence of conflict
was due to the fact that the Punj were Muslims or were too powerful or
the Mameluks, whose political energy was utilized to contain Ottoman
power, it is hard to speculate. Another possible explanation is that
the Mameluks might have owed external politics to the responsi-
bility and prerogatives of the Ottoman Sultan who, at that
time, was the ruler

1Fagginott J. Wattenbier, The History of Egypt (London:
of Egypt. But whatever the cause of this inward-looking policy, there is no doubt that Egypt stumbled politically, economically, and culturally at a time when Europe was actively engaged in commercial expansion and political control of the Mediterranean, the Near East and India. Therefore, as Egypt degenerated into a backwater state ruled by a brutal, corrupt, and intrigue-ridden caste, its strategic value began to attract the attention of trade-conscious European nations, notably Britain and France.

At first most of the Europeans who visited Egypt came as tourists or various amateur reporters-oum-scholars. Their interests in Egypt were often stimulated by the uniquely rich civilisation of that country. However, most of them were shocked by the corruption, degeneracy, and capricious political intrigues that controlled Egypt. Thus in a book published in 1781 James Capper made the following accusation about the Egyptians:

In my opinion they are now the most disagreeable and contemptible nation on earth, bearing no relations to the former Egyptians. 15

Another visitor, H. Booke, responded in a like manner in a book published in the same year, blaming the Egyptians for being languid, having an affeminate spirit, and lacking the courage to resist tyranny. 16 Similar views of dismay and shock were expressed by Professor J. White, who wrote: "Where shall we find a degeneracy like that of

16 H. Booke, Travels to the Coast of Arabia Felix and from Thebais by the Red Sea and Egypt to Europe (London, 1783), also quoted by Winfield.
the present race of Egyptians, or where an ancient inheritance of
greatness and glory, which has been so totally wasted and lost?"

From the knowledgeable Carsten Niebuhr, who visited Egypt from 1761
to 1765, could not resist castigating the Egyptians for being "a
malignant and obstinate people, people overladen with superstiti-
ion." One could go on mentioning the number of disappointed Eu-
ropians who visited Egypt during the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-
turies, envious by the country's ancient glory, only to encounter a
country barely surviving under tyranny, unabated exploitation, and
persecution.

But while most of these accounts were true, what the European
visitors did not realize is that the Egyptians were victims of many
years of alien conquest, occupation, and ruthless exploitation. This
is particularly true of the Egyptians, whose role in the affairs of
their own country ceased in 30 B.C., when the Greeks conquered Egypt.
Thenceforth Egypt became the victim of foreign conquests and occupa-
tions, one after another. Moreover, the Mamelukes, who were perse-
cuting the terror and exploitation that shocked the European visitors
were, ipso facto, a white ruling caste that discriminated against the
majority of the citizens, who were not white. And what is even more
curious about these British and French visitors is that they were
"white" citizens of countries which were thriving on the slave trade
from West Africa to the West Indies, South America, and North America.

72 J. White, Egyptians (London, 1901), quoted by Wetherfield. For
a contemporary Egyptian reaction to these foreign vicissitudes, see
K. al-Sisi, "British Travellers' Impressions of Egypt in the Late 19th
Century," Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, XIII, yam 'I University
(1957).
Under the circumstances, one is forced to suspect that the European visitors were simply preparing a case, a raison d'être as it were, for the impending European invasion of Egypt. In short, these European visitors—e.g., Richard Pococke (1704-65), who later became Bishop of Meath in England; Frederick Husain (1706-42), of the Danish Navy, who made the first survey of Egypt; Etienne Thévenot (1651-1745), the so-called French Orientalist; James Bruce of Kinnaird (1730-94)—and many others were the advance guard of European encroachments on Egypt. This is evidenced by the interest that their widely translated books evoked in the foreign offices in London and Paris. This, of course, is not a flat rejection of any possible scholarly and leisurely interests that publications on far-off countries were attracting among the leisure classes in Europe. But even after this concession is made, one may safely speculate that by the middle of the eighteenth century Europe's attitude toward the Ottoman Sultan (the "dick man of Europe"), the Arabs, and the Africans was one of unabashed superiority. And it is no wonder that, when W. G. Browne tried to question the widely held misconception that the reason behind the Egyptians' lack of progress is because they were Muslims and infidels, he was accused of being an infidel himself and prejudiced against Christianity.

Browne, who had followed in the footsteps of James Bruce, whose he admired greatly, visited Egypt in 1792 and traversed into the heart of Africa to Barbary. In a chapter of his book, entitled "Comparative View of Life and Happiness in the East and Europe," Browne contended that, "the backwardness of Egyptians was due to lives under foreign invaders,"
It was not due to any inferiority in themselves or their religion. 18 He went on to state that, "it was the Greeks and ourselves who have indeed stigmatized them with the name of barbarous, but impartial inquiry promises that they are susceptible of all that is admired in a polished people." 19 Unfortunately, cultural prejudice and the veiling technological gap that was being scored by Europe were leaving no room for impartial observation of the kind that Browne was trying to project. Therefore, even though Arabic literature on the arts, architecture, and other areas of Arabic education was being compiled by sympathetic scholars—like Claude Henri Savary (1750-1798), a Frenchman—Arabic scholar who stayed in Egypt for three years (1776-1779), translated the Koran and wrote a book on the life of Prophet Mohamed, and Baron C. F. Volney, who took great interest in Arabic studies—Europe's interest in Egypt was grounded too much on its strategic value to be postponed and transformed into one of mutual interests.

Here it is instructive too to remember that the second half of the eighteenth century was, perhaps, the golden age of the British East India Company. And the East India Company was the pillar of British imperialism in Asia—or, to be specific, the Indian subcontinent. In terms of Europe's politics, Britain had just emerged victorious from the Seven Years' War (1756-63). Therefore, the rivalry between Britain and France was still intact, even though the radical Maximilian P. M. L. de Robespierre had been forced by the need to consolidate the revolution at home to disavow France's colonial ambitions by stating, "that he would rather

see France's colonial ambitions abandoned than lose the revolution at home.”

20. But Robespierre's anti-colonial position was soon negated by France's war plans against Britain—plans that were based on two options. The first was a frontal attack against Britain, and the second was an expedition to conquer Egypt and cut the British trade-route with India which, the French believed, was Britain's main source of wealth and pride. These two options were presented to the young General Napoleon Bonaparte, who had recently defeated the Austrians in Italy and negotiated the Treaty of Campoformio in October 1797. Napoleon, who knew Britain's naval strength and the difficulties of conquering Britain in a frontal attack across the Channel Sea, rejected the first option as not feasible. Instead he opted for the occupation of Egypt, from which France could threaten the British hold over India and disrupt the trade on which British prosperity rested. 21

In France, the choice of occupying Egypt had another added advantage besides disrupting the British trade-routes to India. Bonaparte hoped not only to occupy Egypt permanently and thus to profit from its agriculture and trade, but at the same time to liberate the Egyptians from French tyranny. The essence of Bonaparte's envisaged liberation of the Egyptians was to be in the form of extending to them the benefits of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

It was with this mixture of assailing British interests, liberating the Egyptians, and finding a place in the sun for France that

20. Chartier, p. 68

Napoleon embarked on what ended as an ignoble and costly military adventure into Egypt. The invading expedition, which sailed from Marseilles and Toulon on 19 May 1798, was accompanied by a commission of scholars and administrators whose function was to investigate every aspect of Egyptian life both in ancient and in modern times. Among the scholars were France's own experts in the Arabic language and literature, but who apparently failed to take heed of Saunon Volney's warning that "the character of both nations (Egypt and France), being diametrically opposite in every respect, would become mutually odious." 22

Pressed by the desire to impose Britain, the missionary zeal of the French Enlightenment, and a conquering spirit, neither the French government nor Napoleon was inclined to heed Volney's advice. Moreover, the internal weaknesses of both the Mamelukes in Egypt and Turkey was such that Egypt seemed an easy conquest.

And this is precisely what happened. The leading Egypt port of Alexandria was taken without any concerted resistance, and immediately Napoleon issued his well-prepared proclamation proclamation in Arabic:

I have come to restore to you your rights and to punish the usurpers (the Mamelukes). I worship God more than the Mamelukes do, and I respect his prophet Moham- med and the admirable Koran—tell the people that the French are also true Muslims. 23

In a further note that was signed at the Damies (the religious leaders) who were known for their close role—namely, defenders of the peoples' plight, Islam, and the Ottoman Sultan as the honored Caliph:

22 Quoted by Waterfield, p. 67.
23 Waterfield, p. 69.
of Islam—Bonaparte emphasized that the French had come as friends of the Ottoman Sultan to overthrow the Mamelukes. Thus, from the start of the invasion, Bonaparte had singled out the hated Mamelukes as his sole target. By promising to liberate the Egyptians from Mameluke tyranny, pledging his loyalty to Islam and the Sultan, Bonaparte hoped to isolate the Mamelukes and obtain the support and collaboration of the population. Advancing toward Cairo, Bonaparte encountered a weak and divided Mameluke force led by Al-Qadushghi Murad Bey, leader of one of the two main Mameluke factions that were ruling Egypt, at two battles, Shubra-Khit and the Pyramids. The latter battle was fought on 21 July 1798, and it proved the undoing of Murad, who fled to Upper Egypt.

The other leading Mameluke, Al-Qadushghi Ibrahim Bey, who had adopted a policy of wait-and-see, escaped to Syria upon learning about the decisive defeat of Murad Bey at the battle of the Pyramids. He was joined by the Ottoman Viceroy. Thus ended the total run of the Mameluke resistance against the French invaders. The collapse of the Mameluke regime was greeted in Cairo with sporadic rioting and pillaging. On 25 July 1798, Bonaparte made a triumphal entry into Cairo and immediately embarked on the reconquest of Egypt. But Bonaparte's victory against Murad Bey and his triumphal entry into Cairo hinged on his own admissions: "Triumph and disgrace are never far apart." 23

Although there was no doubt that military superiority, coupled with efficient organization and surprise, had effectively delivered Egypt into the hands of Bonaparte, his position in Egypt remained precarious. The

French had occupied Alexandria and Cairo, but the rest of the country remained in the hands of the Mamelukes, especially the forces of Muhammad Bey, who had fled to Cyprus, Egypt and from whose he indulged in an active opposition to French occupation by cutting off the food supplies to Cairo. Within the two cities, the position of the Ulama, the spokesmen of the Egyptian Muslims, remained strictly non-committal despite Bonaparte's attempted seduction and flattery. Because of the lack of support from the Ulama and other Muslim notables, the French efforts to reform the administration of Egypt and generate public support were frustrated and often proved abortive.

But the real threat to Bonaparte's brief tenure in Egypt came from Britain. On 1 August 1798 a British fleet under Admiral Lord Nelson annihilated the French fleet at Abukir (Abu Qir), thus isolating Bonaparte's land forces in Egypt. This was followed by the Ottoman Sultan's declaration of war against France on 11 September 1798, in which the Sultan castigated Bonaparte as an atheist and the French as enemies of Islam. This devastating news, which gave the lie to Bonaparte's claim that he was a Muslim and friend of the Ottoman Sultan, was smuggled to Egypt through Syria by Ahmad Pasha Al-Jazaari. Thus, even though France's military grip on Egypt remained firm, Napoleon's successful naval assault at Abukir and the Sultan's declaration of war had the effect of demoralizing the French army and hardening Muslim opposition to French occupation. The Ulama, when Bonaparte had singled out as the key for the management of Muslim opinion, were increasingly becoming horrified by the behavior

of the French troops who were charged with the delicate task of maintaining security and collecting taxes. In particular, the Cizans were shocked by the introduction of a property tax, the implementation of which entailed the entry and inspection of the houses in order to assess their values. But this entry and inspection violated the privacy of the Muslim household, which was honored even by the oppressive Mamluk regime. Obviously, the French were unaware of the social sacredness that Muslims attach to the privacy of their households. And, as Professor P. M. Holt has observed, 'This was the final factor in accentuating the resentment and frustration of the people of Cairo, and on 21 October an insurrection broke out, centering, significantly, around the Mosque of al-Ashraf.'

The insurrection, though not a major threat to French military supremacy, was greeted by a brutal military bombardment that broke the Muslim resistance.

However, in terms of Napoleon's policy of consolidation, an irreversible change had been done. Henceforth, the French were seen in their true perspective: they were an alien and initial occupying force which was more objectionable to the Egyptians than the Mamlukes and the Ottoman Turks. In short, the French had shown themselves to be even more incompatible with the Egyptians than their Ottoman predecessors had been.

Nevertheless, Napoleon was still bent on consolidating his regime in Egypt. His forces were waging a successful war of pacification against Murad Bey in Upper Egypt. The only great threat to the French

26 Holt.
was coming from Syria where, it will be remembered, Al-Jazar Pasha had given asylum to Ibrahim Bey, and from whence an Ottoman attack could be expected. In order to forestall this threat, Bonaparte decided to attend his campaign in Syria, which, after all, was a well-known buffer zone between Egypt and Turkey.

On 20 February 1799 the Syrian front line fort of Al-Shair surrendered to the French forces who had marched to the coast of Palestine. Thus far the French troops met no resistance until they reached Jaffa, which was captured without surrendering. But the resistance at Jaffa proved stronger than Bonaparte's army. Two thousand survivors of the Jaffa garrison were lined up and shot in cold blood, which further damaged Bonaparte's policy ofconciliation. 27 Meanwhile, the plague that had been taking its toll on the French soldiers increased. Nevertheless, Bonaparte persisted and advanced until he reached Acre, the castle of Al-Jazar Pasha. To Bonaparte's surprise, the British were also there, cooperating with Al-Jazar. Once again the French ships were intercepted, and Bonaparte's siege train was captured. As a result, the French were forced to retreat without capturing Acre. Under pressure from both the Ottoman troops and the plague, Bonaparte returned to Cairo unaware of his success in Egypt. Not even the defeat that he had administered against the Ottoman troops at Ashbur on 11 July 1799 seemed to give him any assurance. To complicate the matter, he was worried about the political situation in France. His anxiety about the political situation in France led, perhaps, what forced Bonaparte to sneak out of Egypt on 27 August 1799, leaving the

27. Patkuti, pp. 45-46.
Leadership of the French occupation in the hands of General Jean Baptiste Kléber, a man not noted for colonial estimations. The fact that Bonaparte did not see it fit to make the appointment in person before his departure is indicative of the uncertainty and discomfiture which was already besetting the French army in a foreign and hostile country. As Professor Holt has discerningly observed,

Kléber found himself the unwilling commander of a dispirited army with a bankrupt treasury. His main anxiety was to secure the evacuation of his troops to France, and this he thought he had achieved when, on 12 January 1800, he signed with the Ottomans the Convention of Al-Arish.34

The convention that Professor Holt mentions is the one that had been signed on board the SMS Tiger under the unauthorized initiative and supervision of Sir Sydney Smith, the British ambassador to Constantinople, and his brother, Sir Spencer Smith, the Commander of HMS Tiger. Under the terms of this convention, the French troops were to be evacuated by sea in transports provided by the Ottoman government, which also undertook to provide for the needs of the French troops until they were ready to sail. It also laid down a timetable for the handing over of the bases and ports occupied by the French to the Ottoman army and the withdrawal of the French troops to Alexandria and Rosetta, where they were to await the agreed transports. However, because the British ambassador had acted without authorization from home, and the fact that the terms of withdrawal were too onerous for the Ottoman government which, it must be noted, was now dependent on British

34 Holt, p. 159.
gun power, the convention was disapproved by Britain. Meanwhile, the
Ottomans, writing under the terms of the then-disapproved convention, 
had already occupied Lower Egypt. The French troops at Alexandria 
and Cairo, long discontented with the war and homesick, were already 
waiting for the evacuation when General Kleber received an impossible 
communication from Admiral Lord Keith in London demanding the surren-
der of the French troops. This was obviously unacceptable to Kleber, 
who knew what the surrender of his troops to the Ottomans would entail. 
Under the circumstances, he had no option but to return to the arroyo 
and gate, which meant a bloody confrontation with the Ottoman troops. 
Despite the French troops' unfavorable position, Kleber inflicted a 
serious defeat on the Ottoman troops at the Battle of Ayn Shams (Hel-
gopolis) outside of Cairo. This was on 20 March 1800, almost two years after the French entered Egypt.

Some of the Ottoman troops had crept into Cairo to stir up insur-
rection against the French occupation. But the insurrection was effec-
tively suppressed, leaving the French even more in control. However, 
Kleber's tremendous victory was soon thrown into ashes by the Khedive Mu-
limi via assassination. Kleber was immediately succeeded by a pecu-
liar French apologist, General Abdulah Jacques Menou, who had converted 
to Islam in order to marry a Muslim girl. Although he was an avid co-
lonialist, Menou was not liked by most of the French officers, who 
resented his conversion with derision. Nevertheless, under him, for a 
while the French were able to hold on to Egypt for a while.

However, the arrival of the Ottoman troops and the possibility of 

the reposition of Ottoman rule had, ironically, granted the French
the revenge but important collaboration of Muzaf Bey, whom, in a
desperate appreciation, El-Baker had appointed as Governor of Upper
Egypt. But despite these gains, the French position was becoming
more and more untenable. The French army had been effectively block-
aded since entering Egypt. It had received no fresh reinforcements.
Its casualties from both war action and the devastating plague had not
been replenished. The food supply had been curtailed by the Mamelukes
in the countryside. And the morale of the troops was extremely low,
partly because of the above-mentioned problems and partly because many
of the French officers were dissatisfied with France’s policy in Egypt.
Many officers felt that Napoleon had conquered Egypt from the Mamel-
ukes not for France, but for the Ottoman Sultan, another Muslim tyrant.
The manpower crisis, especially in the provinces, was forcing the French
generals either to overwork their soldiers or to rely on uncooperative
Mamluks for the collection of badly needed revenue and food. Thus, by
October 1800, just as General Melou was celebrating his appointment,
General Gourlot, the French governor in Middle Egypt, had been forced to
purchase Black slaves from Darfur in order to supplement his depleted
troupes. Reportedly, he succeeded in obtaining 12,000 slaves and enlisting
them in the French army. But the general’s attempt to create a
Coptie legion was unsuccessful because the Copts, a Christian minority
and one not given to the martial spirit, were hesitant to offend the
Mamelukes and feared revenge should the French withdraw. This, of course,

Rich mond, p. 79.
makes one wonder what became of these Black draftees once the French withdrew from Egypt. That is certain, however, is that the news that the French general was supplementing his depleted troops with "African fighters" from the interior of Africa was not well received in London and Constantinople. In fact, both London and Constantinople interpreted General De la Roche's acts of desperation as being indicative of France's determination to remain in Egypt with the help of a locally recruited African military force. This incredible suspicion of French intentions in recruiting Blacks was also nourished by Europe's ignorance of African geography. For it must be remembered that those were the days when it was thought that the Nile's origin was somewhere in West Africa. Accordingly, it was thought that the blockedup French might be able to sneak in reinforcements through West Africa! The British response to this speculation was classic and very colonial: If the French had decided to hold on to Egypt through the deployment of African slave personnel, then Britain had no choice but to bring in a native Indian army from British India.11 Meanwhile, the Ottoman Sultan was persuaded to bring in more reinforcements through Syria.

Another factor that hastened the British decision to invade Egypt and the French was the changed political situation in Europe, especially in France, where Bonaparte had been elevated to First Consul only a month after his return from Egypt.12 This it was a combination of

11Holt, p. 159.
12Richmond, p. 32.
events in Egypt and France that prompted Britain to send British troops to force the French to surrender and evacuate Egypt in March 1801.

The occupation was finally terminated by a combined British and Ottoman invasion of Egypt. The main British force landed at Alexandria in March 1801 and subsequently joined the Ottoman troops at Rosetta for a march to Cairo. A British Indian force advanced from the Northeast on the Red Sea coast toward the Nile River. These forces, plus the Ottoman army which was advancing from Syria, are what compelled the French to surrender—first in Cairo, and later in Alexandria. The Cairo troops surrendered on 15 June, and on 3 September, General Moncey, commander of the French forces, surrendered in Alexandria. 1

Ironically, the evacuation was carried out under the terms that had been agreed on at the Convention of Al-Arida terms which had been rejected by the British government. The British condition had been that the French should surrender. But General Kleber had refused, only to leave the French holding on to the disastrous insanity of a prolonged occupation. But soon the surrender demanded by Admiral Lord Keith had been conceded to under threat of annihilation.

But the British, too, had lost one of their best soldiers, General Abercrombie, at the second and decisive battle of Alexandria. On the other hand, the forced surrender and disgraceful exit of the French expedition confirmed Bonaparte’s prophetic edict that “triumph and disgrace are never far apart.” But this, too, is a narrow and unhistorical way of looking at a major historical event with immense political, economic, and

1) Goddard, pp. 5-9.
social consequences. Therefore, it is imperative that the Bourbon
incursion into Egypt should be assessed in a much broader historical
perspective. As Professor Holt has carefully observed,

Brief and unsuccessful though the French occupation had
been, it was an episode fraught with consequences for
Egypt. Whether the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Em-
pire had lain outside the political sphere of the in-
terests of European powers. Apart from commercial deal-
ings, only isolated occurrences, such as the diplomatic
negotiations between Fadl Al-Din and Turco-Ary, or the dealings
of Ali Bey and Enver Efendi with the Russian fleet,
did not presage any fundamental change of interests.

With Bourbon's successful occupation, however, Egypt's iso-
lation from the rising conflicts of European imperialism was abruptly
ended. The Mamluks, the feared slave soldiers of the Arab
who defeated the Crusaders, salvaged the Arab Empire from the Man-
golian invaders, and reduced Mamluks into an Arab stable, were exposed,
deprecated, and left in an unworkable political jumble. Mamluk insti-
tutions and Islam, long the pillars of Egypt's political survival, had
been shaken and now replaced, albeit forcefully.

At the heart of Bourbon's short-lived reforms in Egypt was his
commitment to scholars, administrators, and scientists who had accompa-
nied him. These scholars and scientists came to Egypt to learn and
work wherever this was possible. Their investigations and findings
were published in the Bourbon Description de l'Egypte which, it is
widely accepted, laid the foundation of modern research into the history,
society, and economy of Egypt. Moreover, the activities of the

Holt, pp. 159-160.

Kathkot, p. 10; and Sayid, p. 6.
inquisitive and reason-oriented French scholars and scientists ex-
posed the indisputable weaknesses and sterility of traditional Is-
lamic learning as represented by the Ulema. Under the circumstances,
one may argue that the presence of an army of inquisitive European
scholars and scientists, combined with the shocks of military defeat
and alien rule, must have shattered the long held assumption of Mus-
im superiority, at least on the material level, thus creating a cli-
mate that was more receptive to scientific reasoning. Henceforth,
the revered but intellectually complacent Ulema were only exposed and
rendered questionable.

Administratively, the French destroyed the Mameluk institutions
and their symbiotic relationship with the Ulema. But what was intro-
duced was another symbiosis between the French and the Ulema. The new
institutions which the French created were called "divans." The first
divan was decreed in Cairo on 23 July 1798. It consisted of ten mem-
bres, most of whom belonged to the great Ulema, and the secretary to
the divan was a Frenchman who knew Arabic. This divan, or council,
was responsible for the local government of Cairo. Thus even though
it was closely controlled and supervised by the French, it was a great
innovation in that, for the first time, Cairo had a semblance of its
own municipal council. The next level of divan was the so-called Gen-
eral Divan, which was introduced under an order issued in October 1798.
The General Divan was intended to serve as a national advisory council to
headquarters. Its members, as in the case of the local divans, were un-
elected delegates chosen from Egyptian institutions. These delegations
came from all over Egypt, and each delegation consisted of three Ulema.
three merchants, and three village headmen. The significance of the
general defeat became most apparent when it objected to Benazara's
plan to repeat the Islamic Sharia and replace it with a code of civil
and criminal law. Thus, even though the disarray were unmistakable, the
view of their members reflected the Islamic view of society. Their
creation, on the other hand, represented a governmental structure
that was new, and therefore revolutionary, to a conservative Islamic
society.

But perhaps by far the most durable consequence of Benazara's
conquest and occupation of Egypt arose out of the rapid decline of
Mameluk political power. British intervention, and the return of the
Ottoman troops. To be sure, the rapid and final decline of Mameluk
political power did not come merely from the defeats that were in-
fricted on them by the French. A great deal of the final decline
came from the upturning circumstances in which the occupation was ter-
minal. By the time the French were forced to evacuate, Mural Bay,
the most experienced Mameluk grandee, was dead, leaving two of his
Mameluk aides, Osman Bay Al-Husseini and Muhammad Bay Al-Sufi, in
utter confusion. As a result, the Mamelukes were unable to unite a-
gainst the new contenders for power in Egypt. This is because, after
the French withdrew, Egypt was actually occupied by both the British
and the Ottoman forces—even though each had different objectives.

The Ottoman government was resolved to prevent any revival of
Mameluk autonomy and to bring Egypt under the tight control of an Ot-
toman viceroy. The British government, on the other hand, was quite
unenthusiastic about an Egypt controlled from Constantinople. Increas-
ingly conscious of the strategic importance of Egypt, Britain preserved
the restoration of a Mameluk regime which might be more susceptible to British influence than would a Viceroy acting for the Sultan. Yet, because of the Treaty of Adrian, and because Britain recognized Egypt as a province of the Ottoman Empire, Britain hesitated to adopt a resolute policy, thus leaving the struggle for power between the Mameluks and the Ottoman army, spearheaded by the Albanian contingent. As the struggle progressed, the leader of the Albanian contingent emerged as a distinct power broker standing between the Mameluk factions and the Ottoman army. This leader was Muhammad Ali, an obscure but capable leader who had won the hearts of the Egyptian Saphis and even of some Mameluks. Ali was eventually appointed to the viceiership of Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan, thus becoming the ultimate beneficiary of the Anglo-French conflict in Egypt. Henceforth, Egypt and the Nile Valley became synonymous to Muhammad Ali and the British interests. It is for this reason that a study of the component of the Pan-Isl Conferences must be preceded by an analysis of the rise of Muhammad Ali and a study of his political objectives in Egypt.

BRITAIN IN EGYPT AND THE RISE OF MUHAMMAD ALI

For Britain, after the French evacuated Egypt in 1801, it became an important aspect of her imperial policy to make sure that the French could not return to Egypt or anywhere in that area from which they could threaten British interests in India. In order to implement this policy, Britain adopted a dual policy toward France. First, it made sure that France's political supremacy in Europe and its expansionist policy were
curtailed. This was achieved under the Peace of Amiens in March 1807. 26 Since this treaty the two rivals agreed to evacuate their troops from the territories that they occupied in the Mediterranean. As it happened, the British were then occupying Egypt and Malta; the French, Naples and Portugal.

Although Britain had accepted the Treaty of Amiens, Napoleon's continued interest in Egypt made Britain re-examine its position in the context of the Ottoman Sultan's ability to exclude the French from Egypt and the Persian Gulf. This was, of course, the second aspect of Britain's dual policy towards France—namely, no government should emerge in Egypt that would be inclined to British interests or too weak to exclude the French.

France's intentions became most apparent in the mission of Colonel Sebastiau, who visited Cairo and the Suez in the autumn of 1803. Consequently, Sebastiau had visited Cairo to hasten the departure of the British troops from Egypt as required by the Treaty of Amiens. However, in a report published in Le Moniteur on 30 January 1804, Sebastiau made two points that disturbed Britain. These two points were:

(a) the weakness and inability of the Ottoman regime to control Egypt once the British troops were withdrawn;

(b) the welcome that a French return would receive in Egypt. 27

Because of this report, Britain decided not to evacuate Malta as stipulated in the Treaty of Amiens. However, it was too late to reverse the decision to evacuate Egypt. Moreover, Britain did not want to

26 Richmond, p. 37.
27 Richmond, pp. 34-36.
antagonise the Ottoman Sultan. Under the circumstances, Britain had to be content with holding onto Malta, which of course angered France, leading to a resumption of hostility. Meanwhile, France had intensi-

fied its courtship of Constantinople. Thus, in 1801 Bonaparte dis-
patched General Brune to the Porte to restore Franco-Turkish relations with the hope that the move would weaken the Sultan’s dependency on Britain and Russia.

With this background of the on-going political conflicts between Britain, France, and the Ottomans and Egypt in the middle, we may now turn to the events in Egypt and the rise of Muhammad Ali. Muhammad Ali was reportedly born in 1769 at the tiny walled republic of Salonica in Macedonia. Born in marginal obscurity and orphaned at an early age, there was nothing remarkable about Ali’s birth except that an enthralled astrologist might take note that the year 1769 is also the birth year of Napoleon Bonaparte and Britain’s Duke of Wellington. In fact, according to Ali’s own pathetic account of himself, his father was a petty official of the Ottoman Sultan who died prematurely, leaving Ali an orphan under the care of his uncle Tuman. But soon his uncle became the victim of the Sultan’s unforgiving pleasure and was beheaded. Fortunately for Ali, he was picked up by the local governor as a servant and companion to his son, Ali Aga.

There is speculation that Muhammad Ali did not receive any formal education and that he was reportedly illiterate until the age of forty.

38This speculation, which has been accepted by most biographers of Muhammad Ali, does not correspond with the historical events in which Ali participated. He was born in 1769 and came to Egypt in 1801 at the age of 32. But there is nothing to suggest that he was illiterate until.
when fortune started to smile upon him thanks to his holiness, feel-
advances, intelligence, self-discipline, and good physical stature.
His martial qualities did not escape the ever-vigilant attention of the
Ottoman tax collector, who recruited him in the local militia to
pursue tax evaders. Meanwhile, his retainer had married him at an
early age in 789/1387 to one of his own relatives, a wealthy divorcee.
It was reported with the money of his wealthy wife that Ali estab-
lished himself as a tobacco trader.

In 798, Ali's fortunes were helped by Mansur's invasion into
Egypt. The Ottoman Porte was forced to mobilize; but under the Otto-
man feudal system, mobilization meant a call on each governor to con-
tribute a number of fighters commensurate with the size of his feudal
holdings. Accordingly, Ali's retainer, Governor Charbash of Kavalla, was required
to contribute a contingent of three hundred men. This contingent was
naturally commanded by the governor's son, Ali Agha, and Ali, who was
a faithful member of the governor's household, was automatically made
his second in command. The contingent joined the larger Albanian contingen-
cent, about 6,000 strong, under the leadership of one Tadj Pasha and
was dispatched to Egypt in the spring of 1398, during the abortive with-
drawal of the French troops under the Al-Arian Convention which Britain
had by then rejected unless the French troops surrendered. Soon however,
Ali Agha had to return home, leaving the leadership of the Albanian

Note: This opinion is shared by Dr. Peter Gross, Professor of Islamic
History at Temple University, who told this writer that there are un-
confirmed letters written by Ali to his son, Zainal, in Lebanon, yet
before he emerged to power in Egypt. The writer has not seen these
letters, but is inclined to accept Professor Gross's contention.
contingent to his companion, Mohamed Ali. In the subsequent battle of
Mohamedia against the French, Ali was promoted to second in command of
the whole Albanian force, making him the right-hand man to his friend
and military mentor Taher Pasha, who, reportedly, claimed to have had a
dream of swatting an empire for himself. It is here, too, that Ali’s
deep identification with the Albanian contingent started. But this
was also a most crucial period (1802-1803) in Egyptian history which
was caused by the vacuum of authority that attended the French with-
drawal. It was a period when the British, the Ottomans, the resurgent
Mamelukes, and even the defeated French were all converging on Egypt to
galvanize their own interests.

In order to assess the impact of each participant, it is imperative
that we spell out the policy of each of them and how it influenced the
events that propelled Mohamed Ali to power as the Wali of Egypt. This
demands a return to 1801, the year when the French troops surrendered
and were expelled from Egypt.

When the French withdrew, Egypt was left under the occupation of
the British army and the Ottoman forces. The British army was under the
command of General Hutchinson. The Turkish army in Cairo was under the
Grand Vizier, Turas Pasha while the contingent in the delta was commanded
by Captain Redk, who also commanded the Turkish fleet at Alexandria.
But under the Anglo-Turkish treaty of 1799, Britain was under obliga-
tion to restore to Turkey all of its possessions as they were in July
1798. On the other hand, Britain was aware of the fact that it was the

29. Dodwell, pp. 22-23.
Hamelin Bey, not the Ottoman Wall, who was ruling Egypt in July 1798. The Mamelukes naturally looked forward to the restoration of their properties appropriated by the French and of all their power to rule and tax Egypt. Equally, Turkey naturally wanted to restore its own authority. The primary objective of Britain, on the other hand, was to create a government that would exclude the French, impose law and order in Egypt, be susceptible to British interests, and be free from the control of the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople. The French, too, had their own political hopes, hopes that hinged on a British withdrawal and improving relations with Constantinople as evidenced by Colonel Sebastiani and General Brune's missions to the ports in 1802 and 1803.

Militarily, Britain was in the strongest position and could have imposed its will on Egypt if it had wanted to. But such a move would have constituted a violation of its treaty obligations with the Ottoman government, the Russians, and the peace treaty of Jemour. Under the circumstances, Britain was forced to act as a hypothetical broker between the prospective Mamelukes and the Ottoman ally, what at heart was hostile and distrusted. This attitude was clearly reflected in the opinion of General Bruneaux, who reported that "Turkish rule in Egypt has become too corrupt and despotism to be capable of restoration."

Consequently, the British military in Egypt favored a compromise, weighted toward the Mamelukes, while the Foreign Office preferred one weighted toward the Porte. In fact, the British military representative in Cairo

[Whitfield, p. 35.]
tried to work out a reeve rivial between the Ottomans and the Kemalites, but to fail, leaving the Kemalites to withdraw to Upper Egypt, their traditional place for refoulement. When the British troops withdrew in 186, they took with them leading Kemalite, Mohamed Elfi Bey, who, it is believed, was anxious to obtain the support of the British government. 41

Meanwhile, the Ottoman Grand Vizier, who had been the commander of the Ottoman troops in Egypt, had returned to Constantinople leaving Emirwee (Sharaf) Pasha as the new Vizier of Egypt. The new Vizier depended on the Albanian contingent for his support. But this contingent melted as soon as the British left, claiming its pay, which was in arrears, forcing the new Vizier to flee from Cairo, and thus leaving Tahir Pasha in fleeting control of Cairo. Tahir petitioned the Porte to send a new and more acceptable Vizier to replace Khureiweh, but before the arrival of the new Vizier, Tahir himself was overthrown and murdered by the Turkish troops who apparently favored Khureiweh. With Tahir Pasha killed, Mohamed Ali emerged as the commander of the Albanian contingent—which still controlled Cairo. This was in the summer of 186, and the principal contenders for power now were clearly the Turks and the Kemalites. Unfortunately, however, both were militarily incompetent, unable to control or pay their own forces, and politically divided.

The principal Kemalite leaders, two rivals, were Osman Bartkay Bey and Mohammed Elfi Bey. But the latter was still in England seeking British support. At this time, the British interests were represented by Major Mixett. Mixett had been instructed by the departed British commander

to try to promote stability based on Mameluk central under a weak Turkish Wall as in 1798. The French interest were represented by Drovetti, an Italian from the diplomatic Republic. 42 Drovetti, a good observer, recognized Ali's towering ability and decided to lowest French front and goodwill in him.

Unlike the other Ottoman opponents (Valle) who looked upon the Mamelukes as rivals and enemies, Muhammad Ali tactfully sought and obtained the cooperation and support of the Mamelukes in the same war that his murdered mentor and predecessor Tahsin Pasha had done. Thus, it was with the help of Bartizzy Bay that he captured Kingdom Pasha and brought him to prison in Cairo. And when the indomitable Hisi Bay, who had British support, returned from London in 1810 to claim his old office of Hais Al Selat (Chief Mameluk of Cairo), it was again with the help of Bartizzy Bay that Ali drove him out. But since all the major opponents were done away with, Ali had to find a pretext to replace Bartizzy Bay, whose support he no longer needed. Ali tricked Bartizzy by demanding money from him so that he could pay his Albanian troops. To obtain the money Bartizzy imposed a special tax on the people of Cairo. When the people complained, Ali seized the opportunity to turn it against their defender against illegal exactions and used the incident as a pretext to recall Bartizzy and the rest of the Mamelukes from Cairo. 43 It is probably during this period that Ali established contacts with the anti-Mameluk and anti-Turks Shamsie in Cairo, who later proclaimed him the Wall

42Bernard Drovetti Pasha was the Consul-General of France in Egypt after the French withdrawal. His full name was Bernard Drovetti.
43Richmond, p. 38; Zinwell, p. 17; Fehlhofer, p. 20; and Holt, p. 17.
of Egypt. But before this moment came, Ali had to find a wall who
would be acceptable to his Albanian troops. They, it will be remem-
bred, were not on good terms with the Turks because it was the Turk-
ian troops who had murdered their leader, Tahir Pasha. Under the
circumstances, Ali had to bring Khurshid Pasha from Alexandria to
Cairo. As it was the policy of the Ottoman Sultan to legitimize the
fact accomplished when a local official demonstrated that he had enough
power to impose order on the situation, Khurshid was confirmed as wall.
But obviously, Khurshid had no power. Real power was in the hands of
Ali and his Albanian troops who continued to battle against the Mamel-
ukes. Meanwhile, in 1805, Ali obtained more troops from Syria in
order to reduce his dependency on the plundering Albanians and to de-
estabilize Khurshid’s position. As usual, Ali instigated the troops to
demand their pay which was invariably in arrears. But in order for
Khurshid to obtain the funds, he had to impose a special tax on an al-
ready impoverished population. Thus, when Khurshid imposed a special
tax there was a protest and revolt led by the religious notables, who
now called for the installation of Ali as the wall of Egypt.

Sure it is important to make some observations on the accumulated
political strength of the Sharifs and the Ulema as spokesmen of the
people since the days of the French occupation. This trend continued
after the French left Egypt. In fact, the chaos and misery that fol-
lowed the departures of the French and then the British armies tended
to strengthen the position of the Sharifs and Ulema, who developed a
dislike for the Turks and the Mamelukes. For this reason, the Sharifs
and the Ulema were ready to support anyone who was not Turkish or
Mamluk and who was able to impose some order. Muhammad Ali understood this populist sentiment and took advantage of it. Although he spoke Turkish, he was careful enough not to identify himself with the Turks. As for the Mamluks, he had now created the image of a man with a solution for these feared and hated Mamluk legitimacy. Thus in 1805, relying on his popularity with the Ulama and through the compliment masses of Cairo, Ali proclaimed Khurshid, the Vail, in the Ottoman. Meanwhile, Imam Malek, a radical spokesman of the people and a member of the Ulama, who held the modern title of Shayh el-Ain, let the people into the street, proclaimed Ali the new Vail, and declared Khurshid deposed. In doing this, Malek, an al-Ashraf who claimed descent from the Prophet, was exercising the rights of the common people, the Wali al-Had, to depose an unjust ruler. Yet in this case there is no religious evidence to show that Khurshid was an unjust ruler except that he was, perhaps, a victim of circumstances—the Ottoman's system, the Mamluk, and European imperialism.

However, despite the staged people's victory, the shrewd and master tactician Muhammad Ali did not crown himself. Instead, he directed the people's appeal to the sultan Turks in Constantinople who, as usual, sent an envoy with the authority to legitimize the act accomplished. It was then that Muhammad Ali, the marginal commoner and apparition, became the Vail of Egypt, the largest and most powerful province of the Ottoman Empire. The most remarkable thing about his rise to power is that he did so with the support of the Ulama and the sanction of the Sultan.

44 Ibid., pp. 177-178.
This was an old trait in him that had long been recognized by the French agent, Drevett Pasha, when he observed:

"The measures of the enterprising Albanian leader, much as I think he hopes to become Pasha of Cairo without fighting and without incurring the displeasure of the Sultan. Every act reveals a Machiavellian mind, and I really begin to think he has a stronger hand than most Turks here. He seems to aim at obtaining power through the favor of the sultana and the people, so as to reduce the Pasha to the necessity of giving him freely the position which he will have seized."

Drevett was prophetically correct. Like Napoleon, Ali was a popular autocrat and a benevolent dictator. But he was duplicitous, too, and regarded forgiveness as a vice. This is evidenced by his cruel liquidation of the Mamelukes. Nevertheless, Ali's rise to power was definitely the beginning of a new era in Egypt, an era that had been precipitated by the rise of European imperialism and its concomitant rivalry between France and Britain. But Mohamed Ali was more than just an opportunist who was a product of Anglo-French rivalry or the decay of the Ottoman Empire. He was an enduring soldier and a skillful politician who knew when to act and act effectively. As Professor Vititiotas has noted:

"Mohamed Ali succeeded because his choice of the plan for action was clear: to make each necessary alliance and alignment at various stages of his campaign as to eliminate one group of contenders for power after another."

There is no doubt that Ali rose to power through opportunistic alliances, elimination of political opponents, and constant fluctuation of

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55 Translated and quoted by Dewell from G. Devlin, Mohamed Ali Pasha at Cairo, p. 35. In Dewell, p. 70.
56 Vititiotas, p. 30.
the populace. However, it would be unrealistic not to recognize that these objectionable qualities were also dictated to him by the system and the cultures under which he functioned. For example, Ali realized that under the Ottoman provincial system power had to be seized and retained by whatever means. The role of the Ottoman Sultan was simply to confirm it and to receive tributes. Thus the holder of the power had to find the means of consolidating that power as well as paying the tribute to the Sultan. In practice, this meant that the holder of the office had to have some means of acquiring the troops and the money to pay them in order to retain their support. Tribute to the Porte, too, was an important factor, unless the office holder was strong enough to resist pressure from the Porte and his court. The cause of these problems lay in the fact that the Ottoman Sultan did not have a permanent consolidated fund from which the armies in the provinces could be paid.

In the earlier days of the empire the problem of finding troops was solved through the acquisition of new Mamluks (white slaves) from the Russian steppes in Asia and the Balkans. But by the end of the fifteenth century these sources had been closed to Egypt, leaving the existing Mamluks to perpetuate themselves. Money was obtained through taxation and custom reactions. However, these latter sources were also considerably reduced by the Portuguese control of the Indian Ocean trade and the end of the famous Farah emperors. 47

French instructors, the Mamelukes simply operated as a state of praetorian elites which controlled the military, the administration, and the land.

The three years of French occupation was too brief a moment to affect any meaningful changes in the social, economic, and political structure of Egypt. In fact, all that the French occupation did was to disrupt the old order and leave it hanging in the air. The Mamelukes, although shaken up and humiliated, were nevertheless virtually left intact. To these old problems one could also add the reappearance of the Ottoman troops and the Britons as further elements that complicated the political problems of Egypt. Thus, the main problems that confronted Ali when he assumed power were the British presence in Egypt, the Mamelukes, and the need for money and men for his army.

Although Ali was appointed as the wali of Egypt after he had deposed his Mameluke opponents, this did not mean that they had given up

the struggle. The British, the Ottoman Sultan, and the Mamelukes were all still in contention. The British, who had resolved that their interests in Egypt must become a permanent variable in Egyptian politics, were still pressing the Sultan to reconvene with the Mamelukes. In fact, the British tilt towards the susceptible Mamelukes increased Anglo-Turkish relations sour, beginning with the Sultan's last-ditch decision to recognize Napoleon as Emperor of France at a time when the latter was on the verge of another war with Britain. Once by 1806, Napoleon, now Emperor, whose prestige and power were growing over Europe, had succeeded in destroying the Anglo-Ottoman alliance forcing Britain to redeploy its forces in the Mediterranean accordingly. So in March 1807 British troops occupied Alexandria without any problems. However, when they tried to capture Rosetta, they were disastrously defeated by Muhammad Ali's troops. But this brief victory did not blind him to the actual power of Britain. Instead, Muhammad balanced his victory with remarkable tenacity and pragmatism, much unlike the typical Ottoman Turk or Muslin of his time, as Professor Godsell has commented:

The ordinary Turk would have been put up by his success, would have killed or imprisoned his prisoners, and would have hurried on to try and push the survivors into the sea, regardless of consequences.10

As it happened, Muhammad Ali decided to be magnanimous and use the occasion to make peace with Britain. Accordingly, he dispatched a confidential interpreter to the leader of the British forces at Alexandria

10Godsell, p. 75.
with an offer that Britain could not refuse. In a strikingly welcome note, Mohamed Ali proposed:

(a) to release all British prisoners of war;
(b) to protect British trade;
(c) to oppose any European power that should seek either to occupy Egypt or to pass through it with a view of threatening British interests in India;
(d) to grant amnesty to his opponents in Egypt.

Although this offer was at first rejected by Lord Castlereagh, the incoming administration of Lord Portland reversed Grenville’s decision and accepted Mohamed Ali’s offer on the grounds that Britain’s ability to protect its interests in Egypt and the trade-route to India did not rest on its continued occupation of Alexandria but on its naval supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea and the ability to recapture Alexandria should the need arise for such a move. Therefore, the Alexandria Convention was signed, and Britain withdrew from Alexandria. 50

This was a tremendous victory for Mohamed, who now turned all his energy to the reorganization of his defense forces in Egypt, the economy, and the elimination of the Mamelukes. But it was not yet apparent that Mohamed Ali had successfully outmaneuvered his major external opponents, namely the British and the Ottoman Sultan. Yet, Mohamed Ali was careful enough not to break his presumed umbilical cord with the Ottoman Sultan.

The mélange of Ottoman forces that Mohamed Ali inherited was

50 The convention was signed on September 14, 1807. See Sugiy, p. 5.
dominated by his Albanian troops who, as it has been shown, were prone to mutiny whenever their pay was in arrears. Moreover, there was always some ethnic tension and conflict between the Albanians and the Turks. But this tension could always be managed if the troops were paid on time and were well treated. Under the circumstances, Muhammad Ali had to give priority to the reorganization of the Egyptian economy in order to obtain money to pay the troops as they pressed the revolt in Mameluke, who were still interfering with the flow of food to Cairo. Finding a source of revenue was an enormous problem for Muhammad Ali because, as a populist liberator, he could not employ the methods used by his predecessors, the Turkish Pashas, or the Mamelukes. Moreover, because of the chaos that followed the French withdrawal, the economy was in shambles. In fact, according to the Arab Chronicle, the only people with money in Cairo were Muhammad Ali's Albanian soldiers.

In the words of Professor Bodwell: "The embarrassment of the situation lay in either having to pillage and provoke the population or disperse and dismiss the Albanian troops," to compromise with the Mamelukes who still controlled the country and interfered with production would have been unpatriotic, because of their unpopularity, and dangerous, because the Mamelukes were still plotting to upset him.

Therefore, in order to improve the economy Muhammad Ali adopted two measures. First, he united the Mamelukes' lands and villages in all the populated areas and bestowed them on his high officials, the Egyptian Shuyukh, and the notables. Second, in order to raise money without

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antagonizing the population, he created trading monopolies which were managed by his closest European friends in Egypt and members of his own expansive family. The trading monopolies included grain for which the British proved to be good customers.

As British goods began to fill the shelves of Cairo, Mohammed Ali's treasury improved, and the British started to view him as a potential ally and the only Muslim who understood the advantages of free trade. Thus, in 1811, the Pasha decided that the moment had arrived to implement his own cold solution to the malaria problem, and he did so with a celebrated impunity by using the inheritance of his son, Tawam, as the new Pasha of Jidda in the Hejaz Arabia. All the Mameluke chiefs were invited to the ceremony and encouraged to bring with them as many followers as they liked. As befits a fallen oligarchy who is still anxious to show its simmering status, the retired Mamelukes turned up in droves in their best regalia—all to be massacred by Mohammed Ali's Albanian troops. The few who had not shown up were hunted down and shot like rabbits and their women and children were distributed as booty. Those who still resisted in Upper Egypt were hunted down by Mohammed Ali's son, Ibrahim. Only those who fled to Nubia, the northern province of the Pari Confederacy, survived. But as will be shown later in this study, they would be used as a pretext for the invasion of the Pari Confederacy. With these Cromwellian measures, Mohammed Ali emerged as the unquestionable master of Egypt

and the Arabian Peninsula, where he had crushed the Wahhabi uprising. His new army, which ironically was being trained by French officers, was by now the strongest in the Ottoman Empire. This is shown by the fact that in all subsequent uprisings it was Muhammad Ali's army that rescued the sultan from defeat. And, but for the British intervention, Muhammad Ali might have ended up as the new Sultan of Mecca, the Caliph of Islam, and the Shadow of God on earth in the Constantinople.

In terms of international politics, Muhammad Ali was now an anxious simulator of Britain and France and a convert to European imperialism. Therefore, like the British and the French, the Pasha was actively prospecting for sources of gold and slaves. The latter human commodity was for the purpose of building a strong and substantial army which would reduce his dependency on the mutiny-prone Albanians. Since it is important to emphasize on this score, Muhammad Ali was simply adhering to the age-old Islamic practice of relying on slaves as the most reliable soldiers—a practice initiated by the Ahmadi Caliphs, Al-Mutasim, and the Ottomans too had their own slave soldiers, too, the Janissaries.

53 Salt, Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, pp. 179-180; Dodwell, pp. 63-65; and Leib, pp. 58-63.
54 Salt, pp. 183-185; Markova, pp. 35-36.
The best area for Muhammad Ali to seek gold and slaves was in the Nile Valley. And here he found Egypt to be an ideal launching point. Moreover, historically, since ancient days, Egypt had always practiced its own form of colonialism in the Nile Valley. Also, Egypt had been the gateway for Islam and the earlier Arab penetration into the Nile Valley. Indeed, in the post-Arab Empire, it was from Egypt that the Arab Muslims conducted their military expeditions into Christian Sudan until they reduced it into an Arab-Islamic state. But in using Egypt as a staging ground against the Funj Confederacy in 1820, the Pasha was placing Egypt in an unsavory partnership with European imperialism with Islam and the Arab in the middle. On the other hand, it may be argued that Muhammad Ali was simply reconnecting the Arab-Islamic ummahical bond to give further nourishment to the ethos of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley. Thus just as European expansion was using Christianity and commerce as the ideological rationales in the emergent scramble for Africa, Muhammad Ali, too, brilliantly used Islam and trade to launch an unprompted attack against the Funj Confederacy. The attack was a willy-nilly rehearsal of Scopes's incursion into Egypt in 1798.


Although the Sudan and Arabia have been labeled as the pillars of Muhammad Ali's empire, the history and the circumstances behind their conquests are quite different. Unlike the Sudan, Arabia had been a part of the Ottoman Empire since 1517, when Sultan Selim I conquered Egypt, and even before the Ottoman conquest, Arabia had always been a part of
the Islamic Empire, with its headquarters in Mecca, Damascus, and Cairo. Moreover, Muhammad Ali’s intervention in Arabia was officially sanctioned by the Ottoman government. The intervention was aimed at quelling an uprising by the Wahhabi Muslims purists. Under the circumstances, it may be argued that Muhammad Ali’s intervention in Arabia was merely an internal affair of the Ottoman Empire and not a drive for a new colony.

The same cannot be said about the unprovoked attack by the Pahlavi Confederacy. The Pahlavi Confederacy had never been a part of the Arab-Islamic Empire—or the Ottoman Empire, for that matter. Nor does the fact that the Pahlavi Confederacy was Islamic and marginally Arabised negate its sovereignty or subordinate it to Egypt or to the Ottoman Empire, whose Sultan claimed to be the Caliph of Islam.

Nevertheless, any study of Muhammad Ali’s conquest cannot ignore the practical military advantages and prestige that the Arabian campaign and a personal visit to Mecca in 1813 afforded him. As Richardson has observed:

“From his Arabian campaigns Muhammad Ali had gained religious prestige with Muslims everywhere and some credit and respect from his Turkish khan, Mahmud II.”

Militarily, Arabia was an excellent testing ground for the Pasha’s soldiers from Albania, Syria, and the Hejaz. What made Arabia so

56 Eventually, Muhammad Ali’s intervention in Arabia was requested by the Ottoman Sultan. See Sami, p. 341; Sahl, pp. 178-180; and Donald A. Cameron, Servit in the Eighteenth Century (London: Smith and Elder, pp. 58-61).
57 Richardson, p. 12; and Karleve, p. 56.
Ideal proving ground for soldiers in its desert terrain, the poor communications, and its unenlightened Benin Arabs. In terms of international politics, Muhammad Ali's campaign was hailed by his European allies—especially the British, who rejoiced at the destruction of a band of robbers who had proved themselves more brutal, intolerant, and far greater enemies to the progress of civilization than the very followers of that religion which it was their object to supplant. 38

The pleasure of the Ottoman Sultan was underscored by the appointment of Muhammad Ali's son, Ibrahim, as the Wali (Viceroy) of the provinces of the Ejea and Ethiopia, even though the latter was an independent Christian kingdom. But as Professor Dodwell has said:

The Turkish Rulers, like that of the Mamluks, the Marathas, the Persians, or even the Chinese, profited in the most explicit of boundaries, which enabled the imperial government to presuppose or to ignore, in profit or in disaster, the aggressions of neighboring rulers or of its own provincial governors. Beyond the provinces under the actual or nominal administration of the Sultan, there were stretched vague areas where Turks and once appeared as conquerors, where local chiefs had been frightened into temporary submission or where, in accordance with the universal ideals of Islam, the caliph ought to be recognized. These vague claims, which could not for a moment stand the tests of European justice, extended down the Red Sea and beyond it to Abyssinia, and across it to the small ports like Massawa and Suakin on its African shore. 39

Thus it is the complexity of the Ottoman imperial claims and the universal ideals of Islam that provided the ideological rationale for the inclusion in Turkish mandates of titular authority over Ethiopia.

However, it must also be emphasized that the appointment of governors

38 Samry Salt was the British Consul-General in Egypt. Quoted by Dodwell, p. 19.
39 Dodwell, pp. 43-50.
to such isolated and remote ports as Muscat and Oman. Economic and strategic gains for the Ottoman Sultan and his appointees in Egypt. These governors collected taxes at the produce from the Punt Confederacy—namely gold, gum, ivory, and slaves—which were supplied by caravans for sale to Egypt and the Indian traders who frequented the Red Sea ports. 40

Moreover, Muhammad Ali, whose rise to power in Egypt was prompted by European imperialism and its rigid and legalistic definition of colonial possessions and was eager to adopt European methods, could not be satisfied with the Ottoman's restrained and vague definition of possessions. Like the British and the French, Muhammad Ali wanted to control both trade and territories in a manner that would satisfy his competitors, the British and the French. And, like them, he believed that the Punt Confederacy possessed rich gold and slaves, commodities that had contributed immensely to the wealth of Britain and France. He also envisaged an important role for the African slaves. They would provide him with a tough, loyal, and sympathetic army that would balance the native-ruled Albanian and Egyptian and would enable him to assert his independence against the Ottoman Sultan.

This, then, brings us to Muhammad Ali's reasons for invading the Punt Confederacy. According to Nakh Shalhin, Yusuf Pasha, A. J. Nicholls, P. V. Holt, and others, Muhammad Ali's decision to invade the Punt Confederacy was motivated by two things: control of the gold and slave trade and the strategic control of Upper Egypt. Perhaps it should

be observed that these are the same age-old reasons that motivated European expansion into Africa, Asia, and Latin America. But whereas European expansion had to rely on the logic of technological superiority and economic gain, Mamluk All's expansion had the benefits of certain geographical, cultural, and economic links that existed between his imperial linchpin (Egypt) and the Punj Confederacy. First, the northern part of the Punj Confederacy shared a common and poorly defined border with Egypt. Second, the northern provinces of the Punj Confederacy had a history of Egyptian conquests, creating cultural and economic interdependence. Third, the Punj population, especially in the northern province, had been altered by its conversion to Islam, Arab immigration, and the slave trade. The consequences of these interplays manifested themselves in the rise of a strong Afro-Arab hybrid population. This hybrid population looked up to the Egyptian and Beja Arab tribes for inspiration in Islam and Arab civilization. And it was also an Arabic-speaking population. Fourth, the Punj rulers and its merchant classes depended on the Ottomans and the Arabs who supplied new products, brought Punj products, and controlled all of its access to the trade-oriented world.

But despite these links, the Punj Sultanate was a sovereign and independent state, especially during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and second half of the eighteenth centuries. This is confirmed by the charter of Sultan Shafi II (1711) which proclaims:

The Sultan of the Muslims, the Caliph of the Lord of the Worlds; who understands the affairs of the world and the Faith; who is raised up for the interest of the Muslims, who support the Holy Law of the Lord of the Prophets; who upholds the honor of justice and grace over all the worlds;
be by whom God witnessed the history and gave light to the land; the repentance of the people of Isra, according to the prophetic and the laws of the people. To the meek man and the woman he or she trusts in the king, the guidance: the Sultan, son of the Sultan, the victorious, the firmly \( \text{aided} \) Sultan Badi, son of the deceased Sultan, son of the Sultan, \( \text{Sultan} \). May God, the compassionate, the Merciful, grant him victory in the power of the great Koran and the noble \( \text{Prophet} \) Abul, Abul, a lord of the World. 61

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Sultan Badi's charter is that it does not mention anything about the Emir and his Abdullah Abul. This confirms the views of this writer that the Fulani rulers were Black Africans and not Arabs, as some writers have claimed. 62 The charter also confirms the Fum's assertion of sovereignty over the land even during the last decades; decades that were marked by civil war, usurpation, and endemic ethnic tension. The alliance to townsmen and nomads is definitely a reference to the rise of the merchant class and the Arab nomads respectively. Equally significant in the charter is the use of the term Caliph by Sultan Badi. It is to be sure, indicative of the Fum's desire to see the control of the title Caliph by the Sultan since 1977 claimed the Islamic caliphate. Therefore, it is possible that Hamoud Ali, who was the viceroy of the Ottomans, might have looked at the usage of this title by the Fum Sultan as a challenge to his own preventative look in Onde, Jemepapo and

61 From the Royal Charter of Sultan Badi (1791), quoted by Holt in A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 7.
his own rising power in Egypt. This latter point would definitely agree with Professor Dowell's view that the Turkish empires re-
joined in the most elastic of boundaries, which enabled the imperial government to resent or to ignore, to profit by or to disavow, the ag-
sumptions of neighboring states by those of its own provincial govern-
ment. It is also instructive to mention that Mohamed Ali was not
the first Ottoman agent to adventure into the Punj Confederacy. Two
centuries earlier, during the reign of Sultan Selim the Magnificent
(1520-66), Omeimir Pasha, once an Ottoman Governor General of the Ta-
men, made an incursion into Balis province and captured the key for-
tress of Ibraim from the Punj forces. However, unlike Omeimir Pasha,
Mohamed Ali, by 1850 was an autonomous viceroy of Egypt with all its
resources available to him. Furthermore, Mohamed Ali was a founder of
a dynasty and was strongly influenced by European imperialism. There-
fore his adventure into the Punj Confederacy must be seen in the cog-
text of his dynasty, European imperialism and the ultimate ideals of Islam.

Mohamed Ali’s plans to conquer the Punj Confederacy began in 1851
when he dispatched an Army to the Punj capital of Jammor at urge the
Punj Sultan to expel the surviving Mameluke who had fled to Bengal.
However, because of the civil war that was going on in the Punj king-
dom, the Punj Sultan lacked both the power and means to expel the Mame-
luke refugees. Under these circumstances, the Army ended up being more
intrigued by the political and economic problems of the Punj Confederacy

63Dowell, in Supra.
than interested in solving the problem of the Mamelukes. Meanwhile, one of the dissident minor rulers of the Punt, Malekumar Al-Dim, was seeking the support and help of Mohamed Ali in Egypt. There is no doubt that the civil war in Yemen and the ethnic cleavages in the Arabian northern provinces were affecting the flow of goods to Egypt and the Red Sea ports of Meknes and Makkah, whose role stood to benefit Mohamed Ali's treasury. He was also concerned about the activities and intentions of the Mameluke refugees in Yamnja who, reportedly, were attempting to raise an army of slaves with a view of attacking Egypt. The fear that Mameluke presence crept in the gold of Mohamed Ali has been reported by Professor Holt, who writes:

The history of the previous century had many times demonstrated the extraordinary vitality and tenacity of the Mamelukes; it was commonplace for a defeated faction to withdraw upstream until a convenient opportunity occurred for a defiant on Cairo and a political revolution. Although the Mamelukes of Yemen were perhaps too insignificant in number and too remote to follow the traditional pattern, their notoriety was certain to cause anxiety to the viceroy of Egypt.

With the political situation in Yemen, Maki Haddar Al-Dim of Yamnja was called upon by Mohamed Ali to march for help, and the lure of fame and gold and slaves at stake, Mohamed Ali decided to invade the Punt Confederacy. The siege started in 1825-27. It was a personal adventure, organized and launched from Egypt, with Mohamed Ali's third son, Ismail Pasha, at the head of the first expedition. This fact, namely that the expedition was a personal venture by the ruler of Egypt who was not Egyptian, has often created a problem of definition. Some historians have labeled the conquest...

[Note: A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 36.]
Egyptian. Yet as Professor Holt has argued, "to speak of Egyptian is liable to call up anachronistic associations. The Arabic-speaking Egyptian nation-state with its national army did not then exist: the Government of the Ottoman province of Egypt was in the hands of Turkish-speaking Ottoman subjected, a ruling elite linked by a complicated web of ties to the Arabic-speaking population. But it is also equally unsatisfactory to designate the expedition of the Ottoman conquest, because the expedition was not sanctioned by the Ottoman Sultan. On the other hand, it isued a historical fact that, after the conquest had been achieved, what ultimately became the Sudan was ruled by the same polity of Turkish-speaking elites who ruled Egypt under Muhamed Ali. The situation was even more complicated because, through Muhamed Ali, a Turkish kind of Ottoman sovereignty was extended to the Sudan. Also, since most of the high officials were Turkish-speaking, the Sudanese designated Muhamed Ali's regime in the Sudan as Al-Turkiyya. But Egypt too was seen as a partner in Muhamed Ali's conquest, partly because it was Muhamed Ali's base and partly because the


67. In February 1821, this became Ottoman sovereignty over the Sudan was proclaimed by Muhamed Ali's brother, Ali Kemal Pasha. It reads:

I here grant you—the government of the provinces of Khar, Dakh, Biyad, and Bahari, with all their dependent territories—that is to say, with all their adjoining regions outside the limits of Egypt—suited by the experience and wisdom that distinguishes you, you will apply yourself to administer and organize these provinces according to my equity. I have, and to provide for the welfare of the inhabitants, quoted by Holt in *A Modern History of the Sudan*, p. 33.
Egyptian troops were incorporated in the expedition and later came the Egyptian soldiers and administrators. Hence the clumsy adjective "Turco-Egyptian," became the official designation of the administration that followed until 1881.

The first expedition to the Punja Confederacy left Lahore in July 1820. It consisted of four thousand soldiers, mainly of Albanian and Turkish origin. But there were also other elements. There were the Arabs from the Maghreb, who had always served as mercenaries in the Ottoman armies. The Egyptian element consisted of the Ashaf Arab Bedouins who served as scouts and camel-transporters. But there were also Egyptian Ulama, who were to summon the Punja Muslims to obey the suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan, the Caliph of all Muslims. The commander of the expedition was (as has been mentioned) Alī's son, Ḥusayn Kamāl Pasā. He was young and incomprehensible. As leader, he was accompanied by a household staff and a personal secretary, Muḥammad Ṣalāḥ Bīlānī. There were also a number of renegade European military officers and curious observers. 60

Military action started in Lower Punjab, a buffer zone between E gypt and the Punja Confederacy. It was ruled by a dynasty of Khāshigs, the Khāshig family. The family was divided; one brother sided to Europeans and another sided to Alī and was confirmed in office. 60 This was in accordance with Muḥammad Alī's advice to his son to consolidate

60Ejil meets: George Cretzschmar Bingham, an American, Frédéric Cailliaul, a French traveler and archeologist; George Washington and Rev. Bernard Rebux, both Britishmen who inhabited in the collection of antiquities. See also Sutt, A Modern History of the Punjab, p. 19.

61The Khāshig family were rulers of the Khilfit of Lower Punja in 1821. Khāshig Khān, who was the ruler of Lower Punja died in Kashmir.
with the native rulers in order to discourage fear and resistance. To
Ismail's surprise, the Nneleleke at New Amsterdam did not offer such re-
sistance. Most of them fled further south into Jalijiyu's country where
they were given refuge by the Maxi Him of Shendi, a major center of
the Punj's merchant class, a class that was opposed to the Punj aristo-
cracy of Semar and the warrior-like Ismael who had usurped power in Semar.

But between Shendi and Semar were the inimitable Shagriyaa who
had tried to escape from Semar's sea created a Shagriyaa Confederacy
headed by two chiefs: Maxi Schawnt and Maxi Judaism. The Shagriyaa re-
sisted Ismail's army, but their primitive weapons were no match for
Ismail's artillery and firearms. As George Waddington and the Rev. Bern-
ard Hawsy (the two Englishmen who accompanied the expedition) re-
ported:

"A very few had firearms, but the possession of guns was
confined to the chiefs, and it is a singular proof of their
attachment to the weapons of their fathers, that having it
always in their power to be suddenly supplied with firearms
they would never consent to adopt them."

The scarcity of firearms in the Punj Empire and the unwillingness
of the rulers to adopt and develop them has also been noted by William
T. Adams, who has described the situation: "Firearms had been so scarce
as to be almost ritual weapons." By ritual, of course, Adams means
the importance that the rulers attached to firearms and yet made no en-
fert to develop the weapons for a wider use. Thus, one is reminded of

70 Waddington and Hawsy, Journal (London, 1830), p. 98. Also
quoted by Holt, in A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 37.
71 William T. Adams, Singapore to Abyssinia (Princeton: Princeton
the same kind of conservatism of the Mamelukes of Egypt, whose famed cavalry had been devastated by the Ottoman fire-power in 1517. It is indeed a tragedy that, three centuries later, the other rulers of the Nile Valley met the same fate. The Shapuqys were obviously good fighters, but they lacked the appropriate weapons. When their Mamluk, Shah Shapuqy, was forced to submit to Ismail and said, "I have fought against you to the utmost of my strength and power, and as now ready, if you will, to fight under the orders of my conqueror," naturally, Ismail accepted the Shapuqys' honorable capitulation and offered his collaboration. Shapuqy was confirmed in his position and given an army unit in Ismail's expedition. Henceforth the remnants of the Shapuqys cavalry were enlisted under the command of their chief as irregulars in the invading army and were known as the "harm buquk."

Marching downward into Jassilin's country, Ismail met with no resistance. All the petty rulers continued to offer their submission as if Ismail was a liberator. This absence of opposition was indicative of the failure and disintegration that had befall the Mamluk Confederae since the Mamluk emerged power and the Mamluk in the north began to succeed. The fate of Semar was sealed when the Mamluk army failed to show up at the crossing of the Elate Bula, which took ten days. As Professor Holt has observed: "And the kingdom of Semar possessed an effective army. Ismail's troops could have been caught at a serious disadvantage, but there was no enemy in the vicinity, the passage was unguarded, and the remainder of the advance was a military parade."  

72 Quoted by Holt in Modern History of the Sudan from George Sethone, English Narrative, p. 160.
73 Holt, in a Modern History of the Sudan, p. 60.
I saw these movements when they arrived. They were too, one a tall thin manly man of a middle complexion, dressed in green and yellow stripes of costly fabric, with a cap of a singular form, something resembling a crown, made of the same materials, upon his head. The other was the same young man who had come a few days past to the Dunda. He was dressed today in silks like the other, except that his head was bare of ornament. They were accompanied by a fine lad about sixteen, who was, if it could be said, the son of the predecessor of the present Sultan. All three were mounted on tall and beautiful horses, and accompanied by about two hundred soldiers of the Sultan, mounted on brocaded horses, and armed with broadswords, lances and swords.

Once again we are presented with the same poverty of weapons. The Punj had no firearms or artillery. Their country had been torn asunder by the ethnic friction prompted by Arab immigrants. Its conversion to Islam, the rise of a mixed-sea merchant class, and the desperate infant] occupation of power. The Sultan had become a weak and helpless captive.

73. "Ghulam: Narrative of an Account of an Asiatic Captive in the Ordeal of the Black Man's Life."

of the Mamluk Regency at a time when the country needed a strong ruler and an army.

Once the capitulation had been negotiated, Sa'di YI, the last Punji Sultan, appeared in person before the victorious Ismail and rendered his submission. Reportedly, Ismail received him politely and granted him a pension, together with other members of the royal family. On 13 June 1521, almost a year since the expedition started from Aswan, Ismail's expedition entered Senna. But Senna, once the proud capital of the largest Nile Valley kingdom, was in a state of ruin. The royal palace and even the mosque were deserted and dilapidated. Thus ended the glorious Black Sultanate after more than three hundred years. Conversion to Islam, Arab infiltration, and finally an Italian adventurer had finished the Punji, leaving its name to testify the rise of Afro-Arab culture under the umbrella of Tunisian-Regency power.

Meanwhile, Ismail, who had strict instructions from his father to obtain slaves and gold, began to traverse the densely populated Delta region searching for both and waiting for the results of another expedition which had headed for Kordofan.

Soon after Ismail's conquest of Bengala and the Shagyiyya country, Muhammad Ali had dispatched another expedition force of more than three thousand troops and a battery of artillery to conquer the Sultanate of Darfur to the west of Senna. This expedition was commanded by Muhammad Royi Khurram (popularly known as the Jaffar-ad-Din-Abad, who was Muhamed Ali's son-in-law. The expedition had left Cairo on 20 April 1521.

Like Ismail's expedition, the Darfuris was accompanied by a team of Egyptian sailors and had been assisted by Shagyiyya sailors, the chief of the Arabized and pre-Arabic Behistun tribe. The expedition followed the
notorious slave caravans route across the Sahara desert leading into Kordofan. Kordofan had once been a province of the Fatimid Caliphate, but had now been regained by the Sultan of Darfur, who assigned a garrison, the Madiya musallas, to rule it on his behalf. When the expedition reached Kordofan, Musallam was asked to surrender. He refused and submitted a letter of protest against what he legitimately termed "an unprecedented invasion of a Muslim country which was not subject to the Ottoman Sultan." The protest was rejected and fighting ensued. Although the horsemen of Darfur were excellent fighters, their spears and swords proved no match against the Defedar’s firearms and European artillery. Musallam was killed in the fighting while his horsemen were routed by the guns and artillery of the invaders, leaving El Obeid, the provincial capital, undefended against the triumphant entry of the Defedar.

Soon the news about the loss of Kordofan reached the Sultan of Darfur, Muhammad Pachir, who sent an army to recover the province. But it, too, was defeated, thus leaving the inhabitants of Kordofan to the military brutality and extermination of the Defedar. Only the Nuba hill population of Jabal Al-Daruf and the remote southern population re-
mained uncompelled. Darfur, too, the ultimate objective of the expedi-
tion, remained beyond the reach and military power of the invaders be-
cause of the feared superior numbers and proven resistance of the Darfur warriors. Even later attempts by Muhammad Ali’s agents to subdue Darfur militarily or by supporting the claims of the Sultan’s brother in El Fasher ended in failure. The reason for this rare victory by an African

75See: A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 67.
potestate against the beacon of firearms and artillery was, perhaps, to be found in the highly centralized power structure of Darfur and the lack of ethnic fissures that spelled doom for the Sudanese Empire. Unlike the Punj Confederacy, Darfur had not been subjected to Arab infiltration and settlement. Also, because of its isolation from the Nile Valley, Darfur was spared from the rise of an aristocratic and insubordinate merchant class that looked to Egypt and the Hejaz for guidance and inspiration.

But once the conquest of Senaar and Kordofan were achieved, Muhammed Ali dispatched his second son, Talaat Pasha, a seasoned veteran of the Wahhabi war, to Senaar to become the Commander-in-Chief of the troops in Senaar and Kordofan. While still in Senaar, the two sons repeatedly received demands from their father to send slaves and gold to Egypt. A similar message was dispatched to the Defterdar in Kordofan: “You are aware that the end of all our effort and this event is to procure Tesnes. Please show zeal in carrying out our wishes in this capital matter.”

Apart from pacification and intimidation of the potential troublemakers, the immediate problem that confronted both Ismail and the Defterdar was how to obtain the needed slaves. For, contrary to Muhammed Ali’s expectation, the sources of slaves were outside the Punj Empire and Kordofan, which were Islamic states. The main source of slaves was in the ploytechnic regions in the south, all of which still remained outside the two conquered regions. Thus, in order to get slaves, Ismail

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and the Defarzar had two options. The first was to send slave expeditions into the so-called pagan regions. But this was risky and militantly impossible. The second was to take a census of the slaves and finas (settles) held by the Sudanese and then impose a levy. In this way, those unable to pay the taxes would be forced to surrender their slaves in lieu of money. Since the first option was not feasible, the second option was adopted, and a committee to work out the so-called finas system was immediately constituted.

The fiscal committee consisted of three persons: Muhammad Said Kandii (Ismail's secretary), the Muallim Hamza Al-Taour (a Coptic financial officer), and the Arkab Dafa'al'ah (the collaborationist Punji minister). According to this fiscal plan, taxes were to be paid by all owners of slaves and animals at the rate of fifteen dollars per slave, ten dollars per cow, and five dollars per sheep or donkey. There was no mention of a tax on camels, the favorite animal of the nomadic Arabs. The burden fell on the settled Sudan peoples and not the Arab nomads, who apparently were still outside the control of the new regime.

The taxation was unbelievably onerous. It amounted to outright confiscation. Since currency was a rare phenomenon in the Punji Empire and Sudan, the taxes could only be paid with strong male slaves (fit for Muhammad Ali's army instead of cash). As Professor Holt has correctly observed:

Thus Muhammad Ali's immense demand for slaves to train as soldiers could be met by draining the reserves of slaves-

largely available in the newly conquered provinces, until such time as sufficient revenues could be obtained by raising the pagan tribute of the Upper Nile and White Nile and the Nuba mountains. 77

The system of taxation was extremely unpopular even among the Abyei and Amba Fasher rulers who had welcomed Muhammad Ali's expedition as a blow against their Fanz overlords in Shemla. The tax on slaves drove the middle-class merchants over the brink because for them slave ownership had become a symbol of prosperity and middle-class status.

Najwa Ali was taking a toll on Ismail's troops which forced him to shift his administrative headquarters to west Khartoum, a supposedly healthier location. In order to contain the simmering revolts, Ismail was forced to travel different parts of the Sudan in order to quell the uprising population. While in October 1881, he went to the convenient town of Shendi, the home of the Ja'aliya chief, Dawk Dervish, who, incidentally, had been confined in his position by Ismail during his past so Shendi. Ismail used the occasion to exact a heavy contribution of money and slaves. When the Dawk dared to express some ill opinion at Ismail's outrageous demands, the latter reportedly whipped the Ja'aliya chief with his Indian pipe and called him a slave. The Ja'aliya chief felt humiliated and humiliated. Thus on the following night he returned with his supporters and attacked Ismail's camp, burning down its tents and killing the entire entourage, including Ismail himself. The death of Ismail encouraged further revolts in the Sudan area.

Ismail's position was assumed by his secretary, Muhammad Said

77Salt, A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 45.
Efendi, who now became the commander of Ismail's troops. The alarming situation could have gotten out of hand but for two factors which worked in favor of the invaders. First, despite their inferior numbers, the invaders had superior arms and military experience as well as being better organized. Second, the rebels lacked coordination and a unified leadership. The Sharqiyya, who had capitulated and joined Ismail's "bandi forces" (irregular troops), remained loyal to the invaders. The survivors of the Pasha-Siman regime were also hopelessly divided between the supporters of Hassan Ved Rajab and the Arib Daf'allah. Under these circumstances, the invaders were able to regain their morale and defeat the rebellion, killing Hassan Ved Rajab and forcing the Arib Daf'allah to flee to Ethiopia.

But the revenge against the murder of Ismail had to await the arrival of his brother-in-law, the Deftedar from Khartoum. The Deftedar arrived with a body of his regular troops and a contingent of Fur warriors who, like the Sharqiyya, had given their support to the invaders. The Deftedar pursued an indiscriminate massacre throughout the Al-Alym country and the Cairo region, reportedly killing more than thirty thousand people. By January 1824, the Deftedar, who was now due for recall to Cairo, had reduced the rebels to merely simmering protests. In the remaining few months he oversaw all of the procedures of war and confiscated slaves sent to Cairo. Meanwhile, a new deputy governor to replace Muhammad Said Efendi, who had succeeded Ismail, was appointed to Ved Buland, and Efendi returned to Cairo with the remainder of the household and possession of Ismail Paşa. In September 1824, the Deftedar, too, left for Cairo and was succeeded by Ululnay Bey, a Cappadocian, who had the title of Commander-in-Chief of
the troops in Khartoum and Sennar—now called the Sudan. 80

Djuma Bay came with five battalions of infantry to reinforce the troops of occupation. Terminally, according to Sir David Mackintosh, Richard Hill, and Professor Sult, the five battalions, were soldiers of a new type, called the Jihadiyya, regular troops recruited from the slaves obtained in the Sudan, and trained on European lines in the training camp established at Aswan in 1827, soon after the invasion of Sennar. 81 In other words, these five battalions were, in effect, dividends of the invasion. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to suggest that Muhammad Ali's great project of a new Sudan army to replace his pachyderm troops in Egypt was only a partial success. Many of the slaves and war prisoners captured in the Sudan were so ill-treated that by the time they reached Egypt, only a few of them were fit enough physically for the millitary. Thus harsh methods and ill-treatment contributed more to the high mortality rate among the recruits than the climate, but even though Muhammad Ali was forced to turn to the Egyptian peasants (Fallahin) for the needed troops, nevertheless a high proportion of his new army, the Jihadiyya, was drawn from two sources within the Sudan: slaves obtained from the Sudan, especially from the southern provinces, and the Shagiyitt, who served as cavalrymen irregulars under their own chieftains. 82

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81 For the establishment of Jihadiyya as the army of the Sudan, see Hill, Report on the Sudan, pp. 16-20.
The appointment of Othman Bey as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the forces of occupation in Senaar in September 1821 was what marked the foundation of the modern Sudan. Initially, the term Sudan had been used to designate the entire black populated area south of the Sahara belt. But the individual kingdoms were referred to by their own ethnic names, e.g., Nubia, Beja land, Kordofan and later the Funj Confederacy or the black Sultanate of Senaar. However, with the successful conquest of the Funj Confederacy and the Darfur province of Kordofan, the hitherto racially generic term of the Bilad Al-Sudan was applied to these areas regardless of the racial, linguistic, or ethnic composition of the people. The greatest unifying factor of the region was Islam and the Arabic language, which had long emerged as the official language of the Funj court as well as the lingua franca of the different ethnic groups of the entire Nile Valley and Kordofan province.

Although at the beginning Othman Bey ran the country from Wad Medani, he was quick to realize the strategic importance of Khartoum, which was a minor village settlement at the confluence of the Nilo and White Niles, and build a fort there to serve as a military garrison. This was the beginning from which in a few years Khartoum developed into the military and administrative capital of the Turkish-Egyptian Sudan.

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects about Othman Bey, harshness and brutality aside, in that he was a Manulbek, the opportunistic caste that Mohamed Ali had done everything he could to eliminate in Egypt and Cyrenaica. Like his predecessor, the Dervish, Othman Bey ruled the Sudan with a vicious hand, scouring many settled peasants to flee into
remake means. These peasants were pursued with vigor and captured or shot down by government troops. The captured men, of course, dispatched to Egypt to be sold as slaves or seamen and recruited into the Janissary and returned to the Sudan to serve Mahomed Ali's new-founded empire. However, Dahan Bey's task was complicated and marred by an epidemic breakout of smallpox, which coincided with drought, famine, and the general disruption of the population. Personally, Dahan was an aging old man whose ability to move about was extremely curtailed by age and concern for his own precarious health. These circumstances forced him to delegate most of his responsibility to his subordinates. He died in May 1825 at a time when the country was still reeling from anarchy, smallpox and an intolerable famine.

Dahan Bey was succeeded by Maho Bey, a Hungarian cavalry officer who came with Ismail's expedition and had been appointed the governor of Kumber district in 1827, soon after its submission to the crown of Egypt. He had also served as commander of the troops in Sennar and Kordofan. In short, he had the experience and knowledge that his predecessor lacked. As Professor Beit has commented, "Maho Bey adopted a policy of conciliation towards the frightened and resentful Sudanese. Taxes were reduced, and the license of the Janissary was suppressed." Perhaps emulating Napoleon's tactics in Egypt, he summoned an assembly of the surviving Sudanese notables and religious leaders in the palace-hidden Gezira region and consulted with them on the possible feasible course of restoring order and bringing back the scattered refugees. Fortunately, he won the fruitful collaboration of Shaykh and Al-Qadir

85 Beit, A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 49.
Vad al-Qayn, whom he appointed as the adviser on native affairs. With the help of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir, the governor was able to visit the refugees at their hideouts in Qadarif and assure them of their safety. The confidence of the refugees was reinforced by the governor's steadfast policy of providing goods to the famine-stricken desert inhabitants.

It was Hahn Bey, too, who proclaimed Khartoum as the capital by transferring his residence there from Wad Medina. Thus even though Hahn Bey’s tenure in the Sudan was very brief, it was marked with conciliation, reappraisal, and the reassertion of the Arab-Islamic link which was still the controlling power of Turco-Egyptian hegemony. This assertion is based on the fact that most of the Sudanese that the new regime had to work with were exclusively Muslims and Arabs or Arabized Sudanese who, even though they might not accept Turco-Egyptian colonialism, were nevertheless staunch advocates of Islam and the Arabic language and culture. This was definitely in full accord with the internal dimensions of Muhammad Ali’s colonialism. He was a Muslim who, even though he did not use the Arabs in high-level administrative positions, shared the Islamic reverence for Arabic as the language of the Quran and the Prophet. Also, being the ruler of Egypt and the Sufis, countries that were predominantly Arabic, he had to treat the Arabs and those who identified with them with deference and respect. On the other hand, the masses of Sudanese who were black and so-called pagans were systematically excluded from power. Thus under Islamic law only Muslims could qualify for citizenship in a Muslim state; and the Sudan was, as an ARAB, a Muslim state by reason of conquest and past history. Perhaps here it is important to emphasize that, whereas all the Arabs and the
Arabized African polygists were automatically considered home fire citizens and Arabs, the non-Arabized African majority were considered potential slaves unless they could prove that they were in fact Muslims.

This policy, with its religious and racial overtones, was reinforced by the racial backgrounds of Muhammad Ali's appointees to the Sudan: invariably whites, they believed in the enslavement and colonization of the black races. Thus, until the death of Muhammad Ali in 1849, and even after his death, all the governors, high-level administrators, and military officers, were exclusively Turks, Circassians, Kurds, Greeks, Berbers, and Egyptians. But in matters pertaining to racial prejudice and Islamic religious bigotry, neither the Egyptians nor the pure Arabs were different or better. Moreover, the objective of Muhammad Ali's invasion of the Funj Confederacy and Darfur—the procurement of black people as slaves—clearly precluded any possibility of racial reconciliation and coexistence with the Africans. Consequently, the continuation and cooperation that marked the appointment of Ali Kheir al-Din as the governor of Kussur in 1826 was essentially a reconciliation with the Arabs and the Arabized Africans rather than with the non-Arabized African majority who, after all, like the famed gold, were the object of exploitation. This is why in this study, the appointment of Ali Kheir al-Din, who became the architect of the policy of conciliation and the reinforcement of peace in the new Sudan, is viewed as the beginning of an era of collusion and coalition between Sudanese Arabs and Egyptian Arabs which matured and triumphed with the Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley.
CHAPTER VII

CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION: THE TRIPOLI (AND ALGERIA)

You are aware that the end of all our efforts and this expense is to procure support. Please show zeal in carrying out our wishes in this capital measure.18

I have given you full power to govern your territories, to assure its development, the maintenance of order, security and defense against attacks—do not ask for my approval in matters of no importance.19

The third governor of the Sudan and successor of Mehmed Bey Suraili, the reconciliatory Kord, was Ali Emirshid Aga who took office in 1826, as his last name suggests, he may have been of Albanian origin. Before coming to the Sudan, he had war against the Greeks and served loyally under Mehmed Ali's son Ibrahim Pasha, a possible plausible explanation for the wise discretion that underscored his appointment. Ali Emirshid arrived in the Sudan in July 1826. Although he had been a military officer in Greece, his appointment to the Sudan was as a civilian. And, initially, he was given the lesser title of the governor of Kord, whereas his predecessor had enjoyed the more exalted title of the Commander-in-Chief of the Sudan. But if the absence of the title gives the appearance of lesser power, the wise discretion that underscored his


19Mehmed Ali's instruction to Ali Emirshid Aga on 9 September 1826. Quoted by Hill, p. 79.
Appreciation and the importance of the Semar provinces at the heartland of the Funj, fully compensated for the missing title. The reader should also be reminded that it was in Semar where, after the murder of Isma'il Pasha, there were spontaneous revolts and the massacre of more than thirty thousand people. Therefore, Semar was considered to be the perishing ground for Mohamed Ali’s policy in the Nile Valley.

Upon his arrival in Khartoum, Ali Sharmal was introduced to his new job by the outgoing governor, Mossa Bay, who also introduced him to the high Sudanese portico, Shargal and Kual, with the following words: “If you desire the prosperity of the country, then act according to the opinion of this man.” It is reasonable to speculate that the outgoing governor, who had been in the Sudan since its conquest and had borne the brunt of quelling the revolts that greeted the murder of Isma'il Pasha, was encouraging his successor to pursue his policy of reconciliation between Sudanese Islam and Egyptian ambitions with Islam as the unifying ideology. After all, peace and prosperity in the Sudan meant the opportunity to procure slaves, gold, and other materials for which the country had been colonized. The Arabs in the Sudan, like their counterparts in Egypt, had insatiable interests in the pursuit and preservation of the peculiar institution. \(^2\) Slaves could only be procured


if there was peace in the country and collaboration between the two parties through evoking Islam, race, and common interests.

With Muhu Sayyid's advice, and the loyal assistance of Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir, who was always instrumental in the convening of public meetings of Sudanese notables and religious leaders at which letters of mercy were sent out inviting refugees to return to their villages, Ali El-Mahdi was able to win the support of the people. Thus many refugees returned to their villages and resumed tilling their lands. The support generated through the services of Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir was supplemented by the over-ready collaboration and support of the war-like Sharmays who served as an irregular military force, thus strengthening the Turco-Egyptian army of occupation.

One of the classic examples of Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir's service to Ali El-Mahdi and the Turco-European regime was the celebrated reconciliation of Shaykh Isma'el bin Alas, the brother of the murdered regent, Hamed bin Alas, with the occupation regime. This remarkable success was immediately followed by the summoning of an assembly of all Sudanese notables, Sharmays, and Turks to advise Ali El-Mahdi on


The delegates to this assembly were elected by their own peoples on the basis of villages, tribes, and Islamic brotherhoods. Inevitably, the delegates were all Muslims and Arabic or Arabo-speaking—a process that automatically excluded all the non-Muslims and non-Arabs or non-Arabized Africans. If this assembly Ali Ahmed asked the delegates to choose one person who would serve as the paramount Shaykh and act as their official intermediary with the governor. But unfortunately, the carefully manipulated choice fell on Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir, who now was invested as the paramount Shaykh of the whole of the Sudan. Suffice it to say, much as awaited position had never existed in the country prior to Turkish-Egyptian conquest, even though Islam was the official religion of the Funj Confederacy. In practical politics, however, the role of Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir could be seen as the artery that provided nourishment to the Afro-Arab forces in the Sudan's placenta.

The role of Shaykh Abd Al-Qadir in strengthening the Turkish-Egyptian sympathies with indigenous Arabism raised further questions when, in 1888, he succeeded in convincing Ali Ahmed to exempt the Sudanese notables, Shaykhs, and Peuls from taxation in order to win their support for his policy. This policy was popular and effective because it helped the regime to improve food production since many notables, Shaykhs, and Peuls, new exempted from taxation, used their

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5Smith, p. 54.
7Ibid., pp. 51-52.
extensive family and religious ties and influence to win support for Ali El Nasir’s call to peasants to return to their lands. But the farmers too benefited from the improved food production and sale of their produce. Also, the exemption from taxation meant that the notables, Shaykha, and Pakia, who were the chief slave owners, did not have to pay taxes on their slaves. The crowning victory of this policy and Shaykh Abd al-Qadir’s influence was probably illustrated by the return of the most inveterate opponents of the Turco-Egyptian regime such as Shaykh Ahmed al-Misri al-Amali. Shaykh Ahmed came from one of the oldest of Sudanese families of holy men and had fled to Ethiopia during the Turco-Egyptian invasion. However, with Ali El Nasir’s policy of reconciliation with Sudanese notables, Shaykha, and Pakia and Shaykh Abd al-Qadir’s persuasion, Shaykh Ahmed al-Misri returned to the Sudan and endorsed Ali El Nasir’s policy. But in so doing, these Sudanese who, as it has been indicated, were invariably Muslims, Arabs, or Arabised Africans and slave holders were also reinforcing their own social, economic, and political status within the new order. They were also realising their economic interests to coincide with those of the Turco-Egyptian regime. The denominator of this symbiotic unity was, of course, Islam, Arabism, and slave ownership which, in turn, became the essence of Afro-Arab unity in the Sennar Valley.

It is also important to mention that the economy of the nineteenth-century Sudan was primarily based on slavery. First, the slaves were an important export commodity; second, the agriculture depended on slave

8 Eliot,
labor; third it was the slaves who served as carriers of ivory, another important exportable commodity of nineteenth century Sudan and South, it was the slaves who served as soldiers and domestic servants and filled the Arab harems or consolations. This analysis is supported by Richard Hill, who has made the following observation:

There were several good reasons why Mahomed Ali should wish to add the Sudan to his dominions though the Sudan never dispensed them. His first motive was probably slaves alone. Cheap labor formed the basis of the northern Sudanese economy, the country already had plenty of demand for slave labor, while in the south lay Negro Africa, a vast reservoir of almost unlimited slave supply. The vicissitudes of his avaricious commanders spurred his need for slaves in Egypt to work in his many agricultural and industrial enterprises, and more urgently, to swell the ranks of his armies. Despite Hill's incomprehensible and contradictory apology for Mahomed Ali's renowned addiction to slavery, three points can be deduced from his observations: that slave labor formed the basis of the northern Sudanese economy; that slaves were owned by the northern Sudanese; that the south was seen as the reservoir of an almost unlimited slave supply. Under the circumstances, it is safe to assume that any attempt to restore peace in the north and improve its economy had to address itself to the question of slaves as a source of capital and a taxable commodity, as well as the problem of obtaining them. Since the procurement of slaves hinged on successful raids to the south, it was imperative that the two sides—the Turco-Egyptian regime and the Sudanese—should strike an alliance on this vital common need upon which the prosperity of both groups rested. This is why one of the important concessions

Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 7.
that all Egyptians had to make to the nomads, Samaritans, and Arabs after the proclamation of amnesty and to exempt slaves from taxation. The aim was to make slave owning easy, encourage slave ownership, and increase agricultural production.

However, the procurement of slaves was a serious problem for the Turco-Egyptian regime and the Arabs. During the invasion, the latter had lost most of their slaves in the war through death, escape, and confiscation by the invaders. Consequently, at the end of the war there was a great need for slave labor to restore agriculture. But the slave hunters had lost their few costly obtained guns and armies of slave catchers neither of which could be reacquired without the consent and cooperation of the conquerors. Therefore, in order to procure slaves from the southern frontier, the Arabs needed guns and the right to retain private armies of slave catchers. On the other hand, it was impractical for the Turco-Egyptian regime to traverse the country to the south in the midst of hostile and unfamiliar terrains. Thus, there was a reason why all of Ali Emirzâd's expeditions against the Mina, Shilluk, and Hamboknow, respectively, were made jointly with the Arabs. Thus while the Arabs depended on the Turco-Egyptian regime for the provision of firearms, the latter were equally dependent on the Arabs' experience, knowledge of the potential sources of slaves, and tactics. The alliance was therefore dictated by a common need for slaves and methods to obtain them.

But there was also an external element that encouraged cooperation.

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11 Ibid., p. 53.
between the Turkish-Egyptian regime and the Arab Subasene. This ex-
ternal element was Mehemed Ali's preoccupation with Syria and the manpower
that was required for the Syrian campaigns and occupation. Syria occu-
pied a strategic position in Mehemed Ali's political career because of
its proximity to Turkey, the home of the sublime Porte. It was a useful
buffer zone that the Pasha preferred to control in order to make sure
that he kept the Sultan's troops away from his Egyptian territory. Be-
dcause of this, Syria had the priority of the Pasha's troops. Thus in
1815, when the Pasha's troops were preoccupied with the Syrian occupa-
tion, Ali Shereef, who was on a visit to Cairo, was instructed to con-
scise Sudanese forces in order to repelish the Sudanese Hithiyun.
So Mehemed Ali, this policy appeared simple because it was merely an
extension of the Egyptian solution of 1806, when he was forced to con-
scise Egyptian settlements in order to overcome the shortage of manpower.

Although Ali Shereef accepted the Pasha's proposal, the Sudanese
notables, Sharifa, and Pasha, opposed it on the slavery ground that it
would cause stagnation from the country and damage its prosperity.
But the more laudable reason was perhaps because the notables, Sharifa,
and Pasha were afraid of the creation of an independent army that would be
free of their control. Thus, after two days of private consultation

13See, A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 52.
15See, A Modern History of the Sudan, p. 52.
with Sheik Abd al-Qadir. All Egyptians opposed the proposal. Instead, he accepted Sheik Abd al-Qadir’s proposal which required the people of every locality to contribute a quota of their slaves as recruits for the Jihadiyya. But this proposal had several implications, all of which worked in favor of the Arabs. First, it saved the Arabs from serving in an army that, though nominally Sudanese, was controlled and commanded by aajif of Turkish-speaking officers. Second, it committed the governor to the protection of the institution of slavery as a source of manpower for the army as well as the Arabs’ own economic needs. Third, by filling the Jihadiyya with their own slaves, contributed on a quota basis, the Arab Sudanese created a Jihadiyya that reflected their tribal and religious brotherhood systems. Moreover, the new Jihadiyya became a reflection of the growing slave slave system which was subordinant to the Arab needs. This was, of course, an old Arab-Islamic tradition that was founded by the Abassid Caliph in Baghdad in A.D. 930.

It is also possible to speculate that the Arab Sudanese did not trust the old Jihadiyya whose recruits were slaves of the government and lacked the slavee loyalty. But whatever were the objections of the Arab Sudanese to the conscription of free Sudanese to the army and their choice of a Jihadiyya filled by their own slaves, there is no

16Bolt.
Almost that the Arabs' carefully worked-out plans for conciliation had ended up as a grand collision to promote Islam, Arabism, and slavery. This put the Arabs in a much stronger position than their previous subordinate role during the Funj Confederacy. This is particularly true of Kordofan province, where the Arabized pagan had been more concerned with their material condition than the traditional business of state affairs.

Military, the Sudan-Egyptian destruction of the divided Funj confederacy, the Kordofan military upsurge, and the dismemberment of Kordofan from Darfur eliminated the last African political force that had stood against the Arabs' southward push. The immediate consequence of this military breakthrough was the creation of a unified Islamic state controlled by the Sudan-Egyptian regime. But beneath this Sudan-Egyptian power were the Arabs or Arabized Africans who, rightly or wrongly, identified themselves with the Arabs and tried for a political coalition based on common interests. Like the conquers, the Arab Sudanese believed the basic colonial objectives of the Sudan-Egyptian regime. Both wanted slaves and welcomed the creation of the new state as an Arab-Islamic state in which the ideals of Arab culture and values were imposed over African political ideals and institutions. Thus, after the conquest, revolt, and reconciliation, the struggle shifted to the control of internal security, and it is here that the structure and
composition of the country's army became crucial.

Although the earlier Jihadiyya, which consisted of slaves from the southern frontier, might not ideally be termed an Arab army because it was recruited and trained by the conquerors, the new Jihadiyya was definitely an Arab Sudanese army. It was heavily loaded with the Arab slave-tribe slaves who were loyal to the Arab tribal system and social orders. This was evidenced by their names, religion, attachment to Arab culture, and tribal system. One suspects that this was the intention and spirit of the qurta concept system advocated by Shaykh Al-Ghazi, the notables, and Nubia who were the pillars of the emirates of Arabia and Islam. By accepting the new Jihadiyya, Ali Sharabi had given the Arab Sudanese an effective input into the security of the new state. Moreover, the Turkish-Egyptian conquest had introduced firearms in the country, thus enabling the Arabs with the most decisive weapon of war, a weapon that was effectively denied to the Africans in the southern frontier regardless of their religious inclinations. Thus, even though Harfur was an Islamic kingdom, the Turkish-Egyptian regime considered it a summary capital offense to supply firearms in that kingdom. But while this discriminatory policy against the southern frontier was being implemented, Arab Sudanese were consolidating their influence and power under the umbrella of Turkish-Egyptian regime in all areas of power. This development is amply confirmed by Mill, who writes:

Although the Egyptian government did not greatly love the popular Bedouin types, picturesque figures who defended the highly-colored Bedouin conception of Islam, it took particular pains to conciliate the orthodox professors of Islamic law. The landed men were of all the classes the most amenable to Egyptian rule, for these need their influence and their pay to the comparators. Sedensness members of the legal hierarchy early took their seats with the imported Islam and famed a class immediately friendly to the established order.21

Probably it would be stressed here that by the Egyptian government Hill means the Turco-Egyptian regime.22 But the Egyptian Arabs, and even the Copts, were in a unique and peculiar position in the regime of Muhammad Ali in Egypt and the Sudan. Yet even though the Albanian Pasha had adopted Egypt as his home and made that country the cradle of his dynasty, he was neither Arab nor Egyptian, and his link with the Turks and their Ottoman home was extremely tenuous. In fact, politically, he considered the link a threat to his power and dynasty. Because of this fear, Muhammad Ali adopted a policy of deliberate isolation and independence. Consequently, he was forced to rely on the Egyptians and a trifling of European acquaintances or necessities for the development and administration of his Sudan empire.23 However, because of the Arab distrust of Europeans and Sudan’s Islamic conservatism, the

21Holt, p. 63.
22Like Holt and many other British writers, Hill labels the Turco-Egyptian regime Egyptian. This view considers this label arbitrary and not wholly fair to the Egyptian Arabs who were more individuals in an administration that was essentially managed by non-Egyptians. See Nikki Rikim, Independent Sudan (New York: Robertspels & Sons, 1957), pp. 1-37. On the other hand, if the Turco-Egyptian regime is viewed from a religious, linguistic and cultural point of view, the administration was Egyptian in a sense that the culture that was fostered by the regime was essentially Egyptian and Arabic was not Turkish.
Paafa was forced to rely on the Egyptians as the most appropriate event guards in the Sudan. But the Egyptians were Arabs who also—because of their own historical connections (colonial in fact) with the Nile Valley, coupled with a common religion, language, and racial intermarriages—looked upon the newly conquered country as a logical extension of Egyptian domination in the Nile Valley and hence the birth of the concept of unity of the Nile Valley. To the Egyptians, this sense of the unity of the Nile Valley was amply fulfilled by the presence of Egyptian classic army officers, administrators, merchants, and other agents who were helping to rejuvenate Arab-Islamic culture and to introduce the Sudan into nineteenth-century concepts of government.

Bill, for example, has observed that although Muhammad Ali made sure that trade in the Sudan was a state monopoly by 1841, nonetheless,

26See Mustafa Abbas, The Sudan Question (London: Faber and Faber, 1941). In the introductory chapter Abbas writes: “The Egyptian claim that Egyptians and Sudanese are racially and culturally one and the same people can only be partially justified. The vast majority of the northern and central Sudanese are, like the majority of Egyptians, Muslims in religion and culture. There is also, in varying degrees, common ascendency and Arab blood. Nevertheless, there are differences between the population of Egypt and that of the northern and central Sudan which make it difficult, if not impossible, to regard them as being an homogeneous and assimilated as the people of any unified modern state,” p. 15. On the other hand, as a British historian looking at the genesis of the unity of the Nile Valley, Egypt, and Muhammad Ali has observed: “The period of Egyptian history spanned by the years from 1805 to 1822 may be called the Age of Experiment. Its history was that of a process of change consciously modelled on western patterns. But whereas Muhammad Ali saw change as serving the limited purpose of political survival and grandeur, Ennally saw it in a broader perspective as an end in itself. In the long run the experiment in Egyptian autonomy, the very opposite of Muhammad Ali’s motivation for initiating change,” S. A. W. Mohamed, “Egypt from Muhammad Ali to Ahmad Pasha,” in Durrani, p. 59.
encourage European acquisitiveness and Egyptian businessmen to stimulate

trades in the country. 75 But in order to appease the Arab Sudanese,
the new economic policy avoided conflict with the old traditions, the
corporal customs of the Arab Sudanese. The ancient trading centres
such as Khartoum, Omdurman, and Sennar were encouraged to establish
local trade organizations with the senior merchant, the maghribi, or
mahgrebi, as the merchants' representatives. But the Egyptians, who were anxious
to assert their influence in the new state, made sure that they always
retained the position of SIRI AL-DULAJ the through whom they were able to
conduct business with the local traders. 26

However, as the economic transformation of the Sudan gathered mo-
mement, and the need for the country to meet its new expanded budget
grew, so did the need for expert guidance from Egypt. Egyptians had
bitter knowledge and experience in administrating, commerce, and agri-
culture. In agriculture in particular Egyptian expertise in irrigation
and the cultivation of new cash crops was badly needed. The Egyptian
presence in the Sudan was also reinforced by the immigration of Arab
merchants from Upper Egypt, for whom Mohamed Ali's conquest of the
country and the containment of the feared Shagiryya bandits had opened
a new profitable trade route. The need for these trade alliances in the
Sudan was easily recognized by Mohamed Ali himself whom, soon after ap-
pointing Ali Khowfik el-governor, warned him that:

In order to develop agriculture in Sudan which we have

75p. 191, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 15.
76p. 21, This, p. 127.
The task—do not neglect this or you will bitterly regret it. 27

But the flow of Arab immigrants into the Sudan was not limited to Arab artisans and tradesmen. Egyptian peasants, too, pressed with the scarcity of land in their own country and high taxes, were quick to flee from Upper Egypt into Dongola where there was more land and the taxes were low. This flow of Arab Egyptians of all classes to the new El Dama" is recognized by Hill, who writes:

Other Egyptians came of their own accord. Peasants fled from Upper Egypt to Dongola in 1823–24 to a land where taxes were lighter, and orders were issued from Cairo that the summer taxes were to be brought back. 28

It is most probable that this Arab reinforcement into the Sudan was not limited to Egyptian Arabs alone. The Arab nomads, too, and the hardship-bound Arabs from Arabia cannot have missed the opportunities opened in a new Islamic state, famed for the supply of slaves, gold, ivory, and better lands for nomadic existence. This speculation is supported by the sudden expansion of the Bahraniya brotherhood which was founded by an immigrant Arab, Shaykh Muhammad al-Nabahin, whose arrival not only coincided with the Pasha-Egyptian conquest, but was also favored by the Turks and Egyptians because the membership of this order was largely drawn from people who were connected with Mecca. But whereas the primary concern of the profit-oriented Muhammad Ali’s regime in Cairo was the transformation of the economy and the establishment of a new European-inspired civilization that would make the Sudan economically

27 Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 30.
28 Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 30.
exploitable, the accumulative effect of Arab immigration into the Sudan was different, if not the opposite. Arab immigrants redefined and re-panegorized Arab solidarity, leading to the rise of after-Arab hegemony albeit amongst the weak embers of Al-Turkyya and its Egyptian middlemen.

But unlike the Turks, the Egyptians were advocates of Arabism as a tasteful process of integration for Sudan with Egypt. Thus, even though the Arab Hulames were not treated like their Egyptian counterparts, they were, nevertheless, encouraged to participate in all the institutions that laid the foundation of the new state. As Hill has observed:

The Sudanese participated in local government from the beginning of the Egyptian rule, for this was an economical way of keeping and collecting taxes. At first the Egyptian villages were governed with Turkish Style Magistrates, deputies of the district's wali. However, these while rhythmic were afterwards withdrawn and the district offices dealt directly with the Sudanese village notables. 22

In contrast, the Fula traditional and administrative institutions and their aristocratic princes who were the hub of African power were completely eliminated. Thus, the traditionally revered titles like Al-Jah, Al-Sheik, and Al-Mauli, which reflected the ability of the African aristocracy to adopt Islam to African institutions and control over Arab administrators, ceased to denote official functions and disappeared from the government vocabulary. The important titles now were those that were bestowed by the new Egyptian administration. Hence the more important Sudanese chiefs, who were inevitably Arabs or Arabized Africans, were bestowed with the religious title of Shaikh Al-Mauli while those

22Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 25.
23Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, p. 25.
various religious titles might have had some spiritual significance to all Muslims, their political significance was limited to the Arabs and the Arabized Africans who had lost their roots with the indigenous culture. And ostensibly, the process reflected the demise of indigenous African institutions and the disappearance of African identity in the restructured Sudan. The process was a virulently anti-Arab cultural ascendency.

To recapitulate, Muhammad Ali's conquest of the Funi Confederacy and Kordofan is what heralded the Arab cultural ascendency in the Nile Valley. The conquest served as a catalyst to a process that started in A.D. 631 when the Arab armies made an incursion into the Christian kingdom of Nubia. This process was reinforced by the Funjikun's respected aggressions against Nubia until it was reduced into being an Arab-Islamic stable with the demise of Christianity in A.D. 1555. But the Arab domination of Nubia and other northern districts alone was insufficient to supplant the vigor and staying of African political institutions in the large Nile Valley as evidenced by the rise of the Funj Empire in Senegal in 1556. In fact, all available historical records and oral evidences acknowledge the Funj domination over the Abdullah Amiri, whose leader, the so-called great Amiri, was a Funj (subordinate) of the black Slaves in Senegal. However, the Funj traditional institutions were eventually weakened by Islam, commerce, Arab immigration, and dependency on slaves as soldiers of the empire. Thus, even before Muhammad Ali's invasion, the Funj Empire had been polarized by growing ethnic tensions, military revolts, usurpation of political power, and dissatisfaction among the merchant classes and the Muslim clergy.
whose interests concurred with the merchant classes. But the root of the weakness of the Pahul Empire lay in its fragile political structure. As Hikind has pointed out, it was an association or confederation of a mosaic of small autonomous states scattered all along the river region of the country. Geographically, the confederation extended from Buganda in the north to Pembaia in the south and from the Red Sea in the east to the White Nile in the west.11 Its population consisted of some Arab settlers, the African Africans, and the non-African Africans in Senegal who constituted the base of the Pahul ruling class. Nevertheless, all the states, regardless of their racial composition, paid allegiance to the Pahul Kingdom in Senegal.12

There were two possible factors that held the confederation together: first, the military supremacy of the Pahul warriors in Senegal; second, the need to protect the trade routes, promote internal commerce, and provide defense against external attack. Nevertheless, allegiance to the center was apparently too fragile to prevent almost friction among the hereditary aristocrats, the religious leaders, and the military revolt led by an expanded slave army. These problems were also exacerbated by growing external pressures on the country's economy and poor communications which hindered the mobility of the security forces.

Therefore, toward the end of the eighteenth century the confederation was caught in two types of crisis. The first was a conflict between

11Macedo El Hadji, A Short History of the Sudan, pp. 35-60.
12Kabiru, The Pahul Kingdom, Ch. 21, 196-190; pp. 39-71; and Hikind, A Pahul History of the Sudan, p. 79.
the Punj aristocracy and their own military forces led by the Rajput soldiers who, it is believed, were of slave origin. This conflict is what led to the establishment of the Rajput military regency under the leadership of Muhammad Abu Lakhkaid, who ruled until his death in 1774-77. However, according to Professor Hall, the Rajput regency, inaugurated by Abu Lakhkaid, might have represented a last-minute attempt by the indigenous population of Senem to thwart Arab ascendancy and the Punj rulers who were now willing instruments of the merchant classes and the powerful Muslim clergy. The second crisis was ethnic friction and political competition, launched by the Arab petty rulers in the north and the mercantile classes who were dissatisfied with the state's monopoly on both internal and external trade. It was these internal weaknesses that made the Punj Confederation an easy prey to the conquering armies of Muhammad Ali in 1806-22. The invasion was a swift operation partly because of the internal conflicts that had rendered the kingdom defenseless, and partly because of the superiority of Muhammad Ali's military...

55Hall, pp. 22-23; and Antweju, pp. 24-25.
56Hall, p. 25.
organisation and possession of European firearms.

These were four immediate political consequences of Mohamed Ali's victory. First, it prevented the disintegration of the Punt Confederation and expanded it by the addition of Kordofan province, which was detached from the Kingdom of Shendi. Second, the victory opened the country to unprecedented Arab political ascendancy. Third, the victory marked the establishment of the modern Sudan. Fourth, the Nile Valley was opened to massive slave trade and European political intrigue. 56

Various interpretations have been given to Mohamed Ali's conquest of the Punt Confederation and Kordofan. According to Arnett, Hill, Holt, Tringham, Magdschini, Hassan, Badir, and Anderson, to mention a few scholars, the invasion was a private venture by the Egyptian ruler. Other scholars, notably Pashumi, Umar, and Maqzetan, have appropriately looked upon the invasion as an Imperialist move aimed at the acquisition of slaves, gold, and other materials from the Nile Valley. This study concerns with the Peshumi, Umar, and Maqzetan interpretation. But this study also unravels another dimension that the author believes has been obscured by the dual nature of Turkish-Egyptian imperialism in the Nile Valley. While Mohamed Ali's rise to power in Egypt was directly related to the rise of European imperialism and its rivalry in Egypt, it cannot be denied that he was a Muslim who rose to power because of his strong adherence to the universal ideals of that faith. Therefore, Mohamed Ali owed his legitimacy to Egypt's link with the Ottoman Empire.

and Islam. In fact, it is unthinkable that he could have risen to power in Egypt without the Islamic connection or link. But in addition to Islam, Egypt is also an Arab country, and neither Islam nor the Arabs were alien or opposed to the material attraction of imperialism. These material attractions included slaves, gold, ivory and the development of markets.

As for the Arabs, it is important to note that for more than one thousand years they had flocked into the Nile Valley in search of slaves and gold. Eventually the Arabs and Islam had been effectively established in the area. Because of the Arab-Islamic dimension in the Nile Valley, coupled with Muhammad Ali's involvement of Egypt in the invasion, the venture—whether privately or imperialismistically inspired—was bound to be transmitted into an Arab advance into the Nile Valley. This is what became the ultimate essence of Ottoman-Egyptian occupation of the Sudan: a dual imperialism in which the Arabs and Muhammad Ali had similar interests. It was this transmission of Muhammad Ali's imperialist venture that led to Arab political ascendency in the Sudan and the rebirth of Egypt's political catch phrase of the "unity of the Nile Valley."

This study conceives that it is motivated by the need to interpret Sudanese historical events in terms of their impact on the indigenous African peoples and their institutions. This approach is indirectly confirmed by the views of some current Sudanese scholars, especially with regard to the role of Egypt in the evolution of the modern Sudan. Thus in his recent book on the Sudan, Dr. Mohamed Omar Dabbil, a Sudanese scholar and diplomat, has observed:
One aspect which I have tried to indicate in this study is the continuous and continuing impact of Egypt on the Sudan. Both the present and modern history of these two countries has always been closely connected. Egypt's continuous and increasing influence in the political developments and changes in the Sudan cannot be underestimated. The employment at the beginning of the century of Egyptian teachers in the Sudan schools, which followed Egyptian patterns of education, laid the foundation for cultural unity. 37

Dr. Nashir is right. What he ignores, however, is the alien forces that have, since the rise of Islam and the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in A.D. 636, propelled and fostered Egypt's influence in the Sudan. Also, like many Arab spokesmen, Nashir is not to assume that the promotion of Aramaic in the Nile Valley was devoid of adverse effects on the indigenous African culture and institutions. For, unlike Islam, which is a universal religion, Aramaic in the Sudan was essentially a racial and cultural expression of the conquering immigrants. It is to this racial and cultural circumstance that the term "hegemony" has been applied. As Ronald Cohen, John Middleton, and Elizabeth Cohen have argued:

The concept of hegemony refers to that state of affairs whereby a group of people who derive their sense of unity from religion, race or ethnicity, establish a sphere of influence involving subject people. 38

This is exactly what happened in Nubia in A.D. 635 because of the Moslem support of the Arabs. The Arab immigrants and the Arabized Sudanese gained political control of that kingdom. This same process was

In 1820, after Muhammad Ali's conquest of the Sudan, the Egyptian Arabs and the Dinka were integrated into the Ottoman empire, and the Sudan was reconquered by the Egyptians. Thus, even though the new regime was not always accepted, it was, nonetheless, the ultimate step toward Arab political and cultural ascendancy in the Nile Valley. As Sehgal has observed:

Whatever its failures, this regime had an overall positive effect. It introduced and expanded schools and trade between the Sudan and its neighbors, encouraged the Sudanese to go to Egypt for education and training, and religious centers were not only tolerated but also encouraged and supported.

There is no doubt that the Turco-Egyptian regime implied unity and order among the Arabs and the Arabized Africans. That this happened was entirely due to the consolidation and collision between the Turco-Egyptian regime and the Arab Sudanese. However, as far as the Africans in the southern frontiers were concerned, the implied unity and order in the north meant the imposition of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Nile Valley and a great divide between the Arabized north and the non-Arabized south. Characteristically, the Arab and European slave dealers turned the south into a slave-hunting zone, thus reinforcing the cultural and political differences of the peoples of the Nile Valley. Thus, whereas Sehgal,

55. For a historical study of the north/south conflict following the establishment of the Turco-Egyptian rule in the north, see Richard Grant, A History of the Sudan, 1821-1984 (London: Oxford University, 1987), p. 36.
Arabia, and Turkish-Egyptian regime served as a catalyst to integrating the peoples of the north. In the south it was the opposite. Henceforth, the modern Sudan became a nation of two peoples: the Arabised north and the un-Arabised south. Whether this cultural division reflects the failures of Arab-Islamic civilisation or Turkish-Egyptian imperialism, or the living vigour and stamina of African institutions in the southern frontiers, it is hard to speculate. But in conclusion, it may be observed that the greatest achievement of Muhammad Ali's adventure into Sudan was the reintroduction of Egypt into the Nile valley and the consolidation of Arab-Islamic supremacy in an expanded Sudan at a time when the Arab had long been engulfed by the Ottoman Empire and the latter by European imperialism. Thus, as Professor Robert O. Collins perceptively observed:

Of all the African peoples living in the Southern Sudan, not one of them was prepared to meet the influx of alien civilisation which came up the Nile Valley after the mid-nineteenth century to trade, to penalise, and ultimately to conquer. These forces arrived in Southern Africa convinced of their own superiority and unwilling to compromise, let alone understand, the African cultures which they encountered. Unprepared, on the one hand, unready on the other, neither the Africans nor the intruders could find


Like the Turkish-Egyptian occupation imposed unity and order in the new Sudan, so was the classic religious principle of Islam used. Islam (literally means 'duty') was proclaimed and peaceably administered by the Egyptian Khan who acted as religious intermediaries of Muhammad Ali's rule. But importantly, Islam in the new Sudan became synonymous with Arabia and its madar gubran, thus isolating the south from a religious practice that Khartoum had been voluntarily adopted by the Africans as a new life style for social advancement.
a suitable middle ground upon which they could compose their differences and adjust their attitudes to the new situation in which they found themselves. The result was a clash of cultures out of which arose a violent new world in which the artistic and social values of African civilization were overshadowed by the superior technology of the invaders and made to appear as inferior as their primitive (infectious) weaponry and rudimentary agrarian practices. In such a conflict the southern Sudanese could only delay their subjugation by isolating themselves behind the geographical defenses which had protected the southern Sudan for so many centuries.16

What Professor Collins does not spell out clearly is the fact that the new technological superiority on which the Arabs and the Arabized northern Sudanese were riding was primarily the product of European imperialism which had transformed the Arab-Islamic advance in the Nile Valley into a new form of imperialism in the scramble for Africa. Henceforth, the Arabs and the Arabized Africans became the bona fide middle- men in all the ensuing struggles to control the expanding Sudan. Meanwhile the non-Arabized and non-Muslim African population was effectively excluded from the country's political process thus giving the impression that the Sudan was a predominantly Arab country. This assumption of political and cultural dominance by the Arabs and the Arabized Africans is what is termed in this study as the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony.

CHAPTER VII

NEW PERSPECTIVES, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Let us admit at once that history is not a scientific or mechanical, that the historian is human and therefore fallible, and that the black history, completely objective and dispassionate, is an illusion. There is bias in the choice of a subject, bias in the selection of materials, bias in its organization and presentation, and, inevitably, bias in its interpretation. Consequently, we must conclude that all historians are biased; they are creatures of their time, their own, their faith, their place, their memory.1

The above statement by Henry Steele Commager represents both a valuable relief and a challenge to African scholars who are engaged in the reconstruction of African history in order to redeem it from the asserted shadows of alien misunderstanding and misinterpretations. The statement is considered a relief because it constitutes a rare admission by a scholar on a point that is often raised by African historians who argue that African history has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and sometimes deliberately distorted in order to justify the exploitative interests of those alien forces that converged on Africa since the rise of the Arab-Islamic empire during the seventh century. The Arab-Islamic forces were, of course, later joined by the European-Christian forces during the sixteenth century. Henceforth, the history of Africa has been written and interpreted under the assertive values of those two monotheistic.

faiths and their competing universalistic ideals and economic interests.

On the other hand, Cosman's statement constitutes a timely and constant challenge to the African scholars because it reminds them that they, too, are human and, therefore, subject to the usual human biases: class, race, faith, ethnicity, or the new phenomenon of territorial nationalism. The latter points, nationalism and race, are particularly important because they are seen by most African intellectuals as the lively avant-garde of contemporary African cultural awareness. But while territorial nationalism may be welcomed as a legitimate liberating force to a continent that has been subject to unpleasant exploitation and racial humiliation, it is important to observe that territorial nationalism can also be a breeder of disruptive and unappealing racial chauvinism at a time when multi-racial consensus is one of the most desired or wanted qualities for world stability.

The topic of this dissertation, *The Genesis of the Modern Sudan: An Interpretive Study of the External Forces That Contributed to the Rise of Afro-Arab Dominance in the Nile Valley, 1600-1920*, grew out of a careful and intensive analysis of the existing literature on the Sudan. The topic was chosen because in the preliminary inquiry, three disturbing assumptions that tended to dominate the existing literature on the Sudan became most apparent to this writer: 1) The one-way and highly exaggerated contributions of Egypt to Sudan's history; 2) The unquestioned influence of the Arabs and Islam in the Sudan without due regard to the unique ancient civilizations of the Nile Valley which preceded the Arabs and Islam by many years; and 3) The exaggerated political capacity of the Arab refugees and immigrants alone to effect political...
changes in the Sudan without the active support of better-organized external political forces.

These three assumptions are disturbing because they are derived from an alien and alien conception that the Africans, whether in the Nile Valley or central Africa, were weak and ineffectual peoples who were totally immobilized, simply waiting for Egyptian enlightenment and, later, Islam and the Arabs to sow the seeds of civilization and the rise of African rulers. This, at least, is the silent assumption that one gets from E.W. Budge and Sæverud, two researchers who have documented Egypt's relations with the Sudan. The exaggerated influence of the Arabs and Islam in the Sudan is equally highlighted in the same vein spirit by Sæverud's noted Arab historian Yousif Pahl Hassan in his book, The Arabs and the Sudan. Yet, though these two authors are not alone, most European historians, and even some Africans, look upon Egypt as the linchpin of the continent. Nevertheless, Sæverud and Hassan have been selected for specific mention here because they are Egyptian and Sudanese respectively. And, as such, their views are important in the study and reinterpretation of the history of the Nile Valley. Furthermore, Sæverud and Hassan's views are considered important because both authors are Arab and Muslim. And, Islam and the Arabs are central in any attempt to

2E.W. Budge: From Nubia to Egypt (London: Longmans, 1930).

reconstruct Sudan's history—the history of a country that has been cor-
rectly described as a microcosm of the African-Arab encounter.¹

The need to reconstruct the history of the Sudan is clearly evi-
denced by its politics of ethnics and racial confrontation as shown by
the civil war that was settled in the Addis-Asaba Agreement of 1972.²

In the opinion of this writer the need to re-examine and recon-
struct Sudan's history may be fulfilled through two approaches.

The first approach has been recommended by Croighton Gabel and Horace
X. Bennett:

African history has yet to be written for the most part
and it has become perfectly obvious that traditional histori-
cal investigation based on written documents cannot accomplish
the task alone. There are two reasons for this. First written
history in Africa is severely limited in chronological depth,
especially in the interior where history, in the United States
of the West, covers only the last century or so. In order to
extend our time perspective, we must employ methods drawn
from other disciplines, such as archaeology, linguistics, etnology,
and the natural sciences.³

Unfortunately, this method of reconstructing the history of an
African country was denied to this writer because of a lack of funds,
time and travel facilities. Under the circumstances, a second ap-
proach was adopted: one which would look at Sudan's history through a

¹Francis Mading Deng, The Dinka in Anglo-Arab Sudan (New Jersey: Yale

²Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paper and Unity in the Sudan (Darfur: Kurzum

³Croighton Gabel and Horace X. Bennett, ed. Re-examining African
Defence History (Boston: Boston University Press, 1974), 33, VI-VII.
The assumption that the Arab refugees and immigrants, alone, conquered the Sudan and established the present Afro-Arab hegemony is a myth, and this study attempts to refute it by showing that the Arab refugees and immigrants were propelled and fostered into their present economic and political hegemony by external factors. Thus the Nubians and other Mediterraneans who assumed political control of Egypt and the remains of the Arab-Islamic Empire (after the Moslem conflagration of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad in 1260-1261, the Ottoman Turks of 1577-1798 (when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt), and Mohamed Ali 1809-1848 are considered to be the real factors that brought about, nurtured, and developed the Afro-Arab hegemony in Sudan.

This decision to look at the rise of the Arabs to political prominence in the Sudan through the external phenomenon was based on three historical factors. First, unlike Egypt and the Maghreb (North Africa), the Sudan was not conquered and brought under full Arab control during the heyday of the Arab-Islamic Empire, the only time when the Arabs enjoyed absolute political superiority. Second, Islamization in the Sudan took place not under and during Arab control of the areas covered by Arab settlements, but during the Funj emirates, who were non-Arab. Third, neither the Nubians nor Mohamed Ali nor acknowledged by the Arab historians as being Arabs. And yet, it is in the Nubians, the Djenne, and Mohamed Ali who, at different times, produced the many African kingdoms of the Nile Valleys into Arab-Islamic emirates, thus creating favorable conditions for the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the modern Sudan.

It is interesting to observe here that, although it is almost fashionable for the Arab Muslims and the more Arab-oriented Egyptians to conglutinate and condemn the Nusayrin, Turks, and even Hussein Ali for their oppressive and exploitative role in the Sudan, these same Arab Muslims and Egyptians do not hesitate to embrace the benefits that accrued from these oppressions. In fact, Egypt’s claim to the Sudan and the so-called unity of the Nile Valley is an undeniable consequence of Muhammad Ali’s conquest of the Funj Confederacy in 1822. However, because this study frames a distinction between the Nusayrin, the Turks, and Muhammad Ali and views the Arabs as victims in the middle of their fallen empire, it rejects the Arab claim to any military victory over the Funj sultans and rightly attributes the conquest of the Funj Confederacy to Muhammad Ali who, like his predecessor, the Ottoman Turks of 1517, is treated as an external factor.

By an external factor here is meant a force that, even though it pledged loyalty to Islam, it was essentially made up of non-Arabised peoples who assumed control of the Arab-Islamic Empire which ended with the collapse of the Arab Abbasid Caliphate in 1258. Henceforth, it is widely acknowledged by most Arab historians that the Arabs themselves became a subject people, albeit still under the name of Islam.

However, there are also other problems and terminologies in this study that call for clarification in order to be placed in their proper historical perspectives. These problems hinge on historical methodology, whereas the terminologies are primarily concerned with Arabic usage and

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experience.

Although the problem of methodology were referred to in chapter one of this study—that is, problems dealing with sources—there is one greater problem that hinges strongly on historical interpretation, which requires a new appraisal here. This is the problem of continuity and linearity of history, or what many historians have termed the problem of historiography.9

In the epilogue to the same book, this writer quotes Connager, who argues that all historians are biased, consciously or unconsciously, because they are creatures of their time, their race, their faith, and their country. Perhaps it should be emphasized here that the quotation should not be taken as an endorsement of Connager's negative stipulation or a defense of a total absence of objectivity in history as advocated by Batarian Von Tristano, who wrote that "a bloodless objectivity which 
does not sway in which side is the narrator's heart, is the exact opposite of the true historical sense."10

The guideline that has been emphasized in this study is that the existing historiography on the Indian, which has largely been drawn from Arabic-Spanish and European observations, is bound to reflect the interests and biases of these two sources. In particular, this writer is concerned with the historical importance that is generally attached to some unverifiability and uncollaborated Arabic chronologies as primary sources, even


10"Translated and quoted by Connager, In the Study of History, p. 53."
though a careful examination and analysis of these sources reveals that
Arabs were casual and transient observers who viewed the Sudan's situa-
tion from their own Arab-Islamic orientation. Perhaps the contentions
of this writer should become apparent when one realizes that none of these
Arab chronologists was a trained historian or was fluent in any African
language. Furthermore, it should be realized that most of these observers,
were adherents of the Islamic faith which viewed African polytheism and
culture as illegitimate and undesirable. Under the circumstances, it is
not presumptuous to suggest that the views that these Arabs recorded were
bound to reflect their own Arabic-Islamic biases and values.

Nevertheless, and despite these cautions, this study does not advan-
cate a total rejection of the Arabic-Islamic sources. Rather, what has
been adopted in this study is to look at the Sudan's historical events
from an African frame of reference—hence the confession at the outset
that this study has looked at Sudan's history from an African point of view.
Moreover, some of the materials that have been used are drawn from European
and Sudanese sources translated from Arabic by Arab Sudanese as well as
from the writer's own personal observations in the Sudan.

The insistence on this African frame of reference is grounded on the
fact that there were Arabic-speaking Africans with an African cul-
ture in the Sudan who, transmitted the coming of the Arabs and the introduction
of Islam, both of which were imported from the Middle East following the Arab
conquest of Egypt.\footnote{See John Spencer Tringham, 
Ileas in the Sudan (New York: Barnes
and Noble, Inc., 1965), pp. 77-82.} Concomitantly, this study also argues that the
Differences in race and culture between the Arabs and the Africans, or Black, have nothing to do with the introduction of the Moslems, Turks, or Europeans and the introduction of the large-scale conversion to Islam that followed the colonization of the Sudan and the rest of Africa. In fact, in the case of the Sudan, the differences in race and culture between the Africans and the Arabs were noted by ancient Arabs who referred to the Sudan as "Bilad al-Sudan," meaning the "Land of the Blacks." This is amply evidenced in the writings of earlier Arab writers and travelers like Thabit, who had this to say about the Sudanese and the Arabs:

And with the coming of the Sudanese, the burden of the tribute ceased. Then the wealth of the Negrym Arabs spread over their country and settled in it; and filled it with agents and deserters. At first the kings of the Huda attempted to rule them, but they failed. Then they were overthrown by giving them their daughters in marriage. That was their kingdom dissipated. And it passed to certain of the sons of Negrym Arabs as account of their mothers. So their kingdom fell into pieces and the Arab of Negrym tribes took possession of it. But the Arab made some of the marks of stolereignty of the Huda, because of their inherent weakness of a system which is opposed to discipline and subjugation of due to jackass. Consequently they [the Arabs] are still divided into parties and there is no vestige of authority in their lands, but they reveal signs relating the rainfall like the Arabs of Arabia.

Apart from many factual mistakes in this statement, it does confirm that the Arabs were a different people in terms of culture and race from the Sudanese despite the obvious fact that the Sudanese had already converted to Islam. In terms of racial differences, Herber Becher Thomas has recently provided us with a vivid example of the racial animosity...
which contributed to the rise of the Zend Rebellion that took place in
Kurish, Iraq, from 868 to 885 A.D. during the Abbasid regime. Talash
quotes from an essay by an Arab writer, Al-Ujanah Al Bayan wa'al-Tahawen
titled to “Fahir al-Dunan Ala al-Dihan” (“The Asians Born to Whites”),
Al-Ujanah, who used Zend interchangeably with Al-Hula (Mobian), or Black,
writes the dialogue between individuals of the two races—that is between
an Arab and an African or Black:

You, the White-Arabs, have yet to see the true Zend,
since you only know the enslaved kind brought from the
sources of Quishah—but the people of Zend have several
of brains, Zendans being the one place at which vessel’s
dock.

And that is because the Zend are of two main lines of
descendant, Zendans and Lequerity, just as are the Arabs of
two main lines of descent, Qabahs and Adans. You have yet

to see a member of the Langwaip kind either from the
AL-QABAH (Al-Dushahi—Quishah) or from the interior (Al-Deem).
If you could meet these, you would forget the same of fair
locks and perfection. Now if you refuse to believe this,
saying that you have yet to meet a Zend with big bones
even of a boy or woman, we would reply to you, how have
you ever met among the scattered India and Sinh individuals
with brains, education, culture and manners so as to expect
these same qualities in what has fallen to you from among
the Zend?13

This dialogue confirms that, long before the injection of the Turk
ish elements into the Islamic armies, the Arabs and the Africans, or
Blacks, clearly perceived and saw each other as members of distinct ra
cial groups. Moreover, it is most interesting to observe that the
Blacks, or Zend, viewed the Arabs as Whites, and the Arabs seem to have
raised no objection to the label. We shall return to this question when

13. Sada Baybi Talash, “The Zend Rebellion Reconsidered,” Inter
Dealing with the terms "race" and "Arab" as used in this study, especially in the context of Sudan's evolution and contemporary African perspectives, we must turn to the problem of essentialism and linearity of history, or what is generally referred to as the problem of historicism.

RACE AND THE UNDERESTIMATION OF HISTORY

Races reflect an individual's environment and socialization processes. Thus there are many levels and types of biases. Some reflect the individual's character, inclinations, and tastes. Others are acquired through affiliations with certain sets of beliefs and values that are associated with nations, states, religions, races, and times, or periods, which reflect stages of institutionalized civilizations. Thus, biases may reflect family, class, denomination, race, and nationality.

There can be no doubt that bias exists among all human beings. The question, therefore, is not whether there is a society or an individual who is without bias, but whether an individual who is involved in the study or investigation of a historical event or events can control either his or her personal biases or those of his or her culture, beliefs, and civilizations so that they will not influence his or her observations and judgment. In short, therefore, historical methodology is concerned with the investigator's ability to consider the problem or problems from all points of view.

In its strictest sense, historiography as a "theory" stipulates that all socio-cultural phenomena are historically determined, that all truths are relative, that there are no absolute values, categories, or standards, and that the student of the past must venture into the beliefs and attitudes...
of past periods, accept their point of view, and avoid all intrusion of his own standards or preconceptions. Thus, according to the historian, history should be studied periodically in order to avoid the danger of imposing the values of one period or civilization on another. In terms of peoples, it means avoiding the imposition of the values of one people on another. In short, historicism cautions us against the dangers of seeing history only through our own familiar values. It is therefore, both a theory and a caution which guards against bias while at the same time reinforcing it because of its denial of universal objectivity.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that some of the theoretical stimulations of historicism are impracticable because there is no human being who is not a product of his or her environment and culture. Nor is it feasible to expect an investigator to enter and re-live a past culture and not to see that society through the lens of the present.

Thus the circumstances, the most appropriate way of looking at historicism is to view it as part of a larger problem of acculturization and present-anachronism, which is sometimes called the problem of *past and present*. The way for them, the present for the past. In other words, historicism hinges on the question that Comarner has posed: what point of view should the historian adopt when he deals with the past, or with societies and civilizations very different from his own? Should he maintain his own standards and values, or should he try to adopt the standards and values of the peoples and ages with which he is concerned? Though Comarner's questions are not trivial, rather, they are pertinent questions that
continually intrigues the minds of many historians. And in the case of an African historian, the questions are most welcome because they also serve as a means of closing for re-examining and reconstructing the existing African historiography.

Ideally, perhaps, the most appropriate answer to Camouge’s question—and other scholars who have expressed similar anxiety, like Abdullah懊观 and Eraldo Pappal—would be simply to submit that we must imagine ourselves in the past that we can see with the eyes of those about whom we are writing. Let us hear what they heard, think as they thought, and feel as they must have felt. The presumption here is that, by so doing, we might extricate ourselves from the present and re-enter into the past. However, this entails the adoption of an ideal that is humanly impossible because it is impracticable to experience our alienation without reacting to the creation or adoption of another value system that also has its own sources. Moreover, while it is possible to overcome the biases of our orientation, belief, and culture through active reconstruction, there is a unique problem when dealing with societies and cultures that have their foundation on revelatory religious dogmas. This is particularly true of monotheistic societies like the Arab-Islamic societies. And here, it is instructive and historically crucial, to mention that Arab-Islamic thought and history is based on not revealed from two closely connected dogmatic assertions. These are the Islamic revelations, which are allegedly given to the Prophet Muhammad, and the Suna (traditions), which is a corpus of corpus of Hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

It is also instructive to mention here that all Arab-Islamic relationships with non-Islamic societies were based on these two dogmas.
This is most apparent in the way that the rulers of Arab-Islamic empires conducted their relations with Muslim and other non-Islamic countries. According to Islamic jurisprudence, the world was divided into two parts: the world of Islam, which was governed with peace, and the non-Islamic world, which was designated as a zone of war and conquest or ghaza. The historical sequence of this religious legal doctrine is that it justified and legitimized aggression and conquest of non-Islamic states.

Under these circumstances, it does not appear unreasonable, or indeed a reflection of cultural bias, for this writer to submit that Islam, which is the de jure and de facto foundation of Arab-Islamic beliefs and culture, was deeply biased against the historical evolution of polytheistic Africa societies. This was equally true of the Nile Valley societies which were founded on polytheism or so-called animism.

To be sure, however, the purpose of this contention is not to reject Laron’s argument against the dangers of studying the Arab-Islamic societies from outside and without due regard to the passage of time and cultural differences. Rather, what is being suggested here is that it is unrealistic for contemporary Arab-Islamic scholars to raise historism as a defense against the so-called Orientalist studies of the Arab-Islamic peoples. This submission is based on the fact that neither the theological degree of Islam nor the orientation of its scholars of the time, hence their culture and beliefs, encouraged the cautious approach and interpretation of other societies’ history than Laron projects.

Thus, while this writer accepts some of the cautions raised by Laron on historism, he is quick to point out that it is historically inappropriate to grant past Arab-Islamic history the protection and luxury
of modern historians because no Arab-Islamic scholar on either side ever adhered to it when dealing with African societies. Therefore, it would be historically incorrect to allow Arab-Islamic thought a benefit that never accrued the minds of Muslim scholars when dealing with events in the Sudan—or any part of Africa for that matter.

Definitive in this statement is the question of whether the Arabs and their Muslim allies who conquered the Sudan were ever guided by the ideals of historicism. In other words, did the Arabs, the Nubians, the Sudanese, and Mohamed Ali ever approach the their-African societies with the same cautious idealism as called for by historism? The answer to this question is definitely in the negative because Islam never extended its religious toleration to African polytheism. This is because, historically, Islamic religious toleration was only extended to the so-called religious of the Jews-Christianity and Judaism. This is what leads to the conclusion that it would be methodologically false to raise the iron wall of historicism's ideals in defense of the Arabs and their collaborators in the Nile Valley.

Nevertheless, this study has not sidestepped in any way the problems that any historian in the study of a distant past and the dangers of making overt moral judgments. This is why what has been attempted in the entire study has been a secular and analytical interpretation of the major external factors that altered Sudan's historical events in favor of the Arab landlords, refugees, and the landed Africans. Consequently, nothing approaching moral judgment has been made. It has been on the basis of the historically possible roles of drawing a distinction between right and wrong. And where this occurs in this study, the judgment
is hinged on a rational analysis of what happened—and only after a careful examination of the historical facts as they pertained to the quickly changing situations in the Nile Valley. Such a submission, whether considered as a judgment or not, should not be rejected because of the passage of time or the orientation of the writer. After all, like all other professions, historians cannot be denied the right to render a judgment on the basis of historical facts as they see them.

By taking this position, this study communes with as diverse a group of historians as Veronica Wedgwood, Isaiah Berlin, and Arnold J. Toynbee who have argued that a historian has an obligation or the necessity of rendering judgment in history. Thus, Wedgwood, who has written extensively on the great political and religious issues that stirred her own society [England] during the seventeenth century, has continued us against the...
an anti-Islamic and anti-Arab crusade. However, this is not the spirit of this study, which views the Arab who came to the Sudan, whether as refugees, immigrants, or Islamic missionaries, as victims of the collapse of the Islamic empire in 1914 and the rise of new ideas, particularly as the victims of the Arab-Islamic world. In addition to viewing these issues as victims of circumstances, this study acknowledges them as having.

Like settlers in the Nile Valley who contributed to the evolution of the modern Sudan, the Arab refugees, a credit to the Arab's own evolutionary nature and the remarkable resilience of Islam that these settlers soon evolved into a new type of Arab people (Afro-Arab to be specific). This point brings us to the question of the Arab as an alien racial group in the Sudan and the ancillary problem of defining an Arab in the context of Sudan's history in particular and Africa in general.

ANARCH, EARTH, ARAB, AND THE SUDAN

The *Dictionary of Anthropology* by David Davies defines race as "a distinct group of people sharing certain inherited physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair type, etc., which are transmitted to their children." Thus, according to Davies, most people belong to one of the four racial types of human beings: the Caucasoid, the Negroid, the Australoid, and the Mongoloid. The rest are a mixture of these four. However, according to the same author again, this classification is rather an over-simplification, because the Melanesians, Polynesians, and the Arabs do not fully fit into this pattern. Davies's definition may be supplemented by the following:

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Statement that was issued by United Nations: Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization:

Human races can be, and have been, classified by different anthropologists. Most of them agree in classifying the greater part of existing mankind into at least three large units, which may be called major groups (in French, groupes humains, in German, Rassenphänomene). Such a classification does not depend on any single physical character, nor does, for example, skin color by itself necessarily distinguish one major group from another. Furthermore, so far as it has been possible to analyze them, the differences in physical structure which distinguish one major group from another give no support to popular notions of any general "superiority" or "inferiority" which are sometimes implied in referring to those groups.

Broadly speaking, individuals belonging to different major groups of mankind are distinguishable by virtue of their physical characters, but individual mongrels, or small groups, are usually not so distinguishable. Even the major groups grade into each other, and the physical traits by which they and the races within them are characterized overlap considerably, with respect to most, if not all, muscular characters, the differences among individuals belonging to the same races are greater than the differences that occur between the observed averages for two or more races within the same major group.17

The UNESCO statement is very much in accord with the views expressed by Johannes Friedrich Blumenbach, whose 1775 treatise, On the Natural Variety of Mankind, is regarded as the foundation of physical anthropology:

Although there seems to be so great a difference between widely separated nations, that you might easily take the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope, the Greenlanders, and the inhabitants of so many different societies of men, yet when the author is thoroughly considered, you see that also you can not pass into one another, and that the variety of mankind does not sensibly pass into the other, that we cannot mark out the limits between them. Very mortality indeed both in number and definition have been the varieties.

Haeckel's laborable observations were soon supplemented by Joseph Conrad's great work, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, published in four volumes between 1781 and 1791, in which Haeckel observed:

I would wish the distinction between the human species, that have been made from a laborable idea for discriminating science, and carried beyond the bounds. Here for instance, have thought fit to employ the name races for four or five divisions, originally made in consequence of country or complexion but I am no reason for this application. One refers to a difference of origin, which in this case does not exist, or in each of these classes, and under each of these combinations, comprise the same different races... In short, there are neither four or five races, nor exclusive varieties, on this earth. Combinations run into each other: forms follow the genetic character, and upon the whole, all are at least but shades of the same great picture, extending through all ages, and over all parts of the earth. They belong not, however, so properly to systematic natural history, as to the physical-geographical history of such.

Similar views were expressed by other students of the Enlightenment like Jean Jacques Rousseau, Louis Leclerc Buffon, and the Humboldt brothers. And during the twentieth century A. F. Ashley Montagu, in *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, has written, perhaps, the classic study on the question of race.

*This brief detour into the problem of race is aimed at answering...*

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two pertinent questions that have been raised about the use of the term “race” in this study. First is the validity of the term “race”; and second is the applicability and use of the term during the period covered by this study. This writer would like to state emphatically that he does not believe in race as a valid and scientifically sound proposition. Accordingly, he agrees with Shaw that the classification of humanity into Caucasian, Caucasian, Negroid and Australoid is an oversimplification.

However, this observation does not answer the question of the context in which the term “race” has been used in this study. In order to answer this question, it is imperative and relevant to turn to the Arab-African perception of each other prior to European colonization of Africa. Yet this also entails, or calls for, a statement on how the different African ethnic groups perceived each other in their own languages and cultures. Because of the need for accuracy, the languages chosen here for illustration are those that are familiar to the writer. These languages are Kikurizi and Swahili. Kikurizi is an African language that is spoken by the Kikurizi who live in Kenya and Tanzania, whereas Swahili is a non-tribal language (Ujamaa language) that grew out of the different East-African ethnic groups in the course of their earliest trading encounters with the Arabs, Persians, and Indians who frequented the East African coast during the fifth and sixth centuries.

The Kikurizi language divides peoples according to their languages, countries of origin, color, and hair texture. Thus, the term refers to all non-Kikurizi-speaking peoples as "Abakahanya," which literally means "those not belonging to Kikurizi." However, this term "Abakahanya" is
restricted to those peoples who even though they do not belong to Kuru-
land, are, nevertheless, like the Kuru people in terms of skin color and
hair texture irrespective of differences in language, ethnic groups, cus-
toms, and rituals. And, historically, it was a common practice to accept
individuals from such different ethnic groups in Kuru societies, pro-
voked those individuals were perceived as honor pride immigrants and had a
Kuru sponsor who would initiate them into the particular clan as a means
of assimilating them into the Kuru society at large. Admittedly, it was
not unusual for some Kuru people to raise objections against such abop-
tions since it was feared that a large-scale assimilation of non-Kuru
people would weaken Kuru institutions and culture. Nevertheless, as
long as the immigrants were recognized as Black—i.e., the objections
were contained under the cultural mantra which states that "people to
be accepted," which literally means "a human being cannot be rejected."
Thus, the strongest argument used in favor of accepting and assimilating
non-Kuru peoples into the Kuru societies was similar skin color comple-
xion and hair texture, the two conspicuous elements of Black identity. This
is because the Kuru recognized that the only barriers that stood between
them and other ethnic groups were competition for territory or space, language differences, customs, and rituals. But those, especially
language, customs, and rituals, could be overcome through cultural adap-
tion and assimilation.

On the other hand, the Kuru people refused to all people with dif-
ferent skin color and hair as "wild men," which literally means "the wild
men"; this meant they could not be adopted or assimilated into any of
the Kuru clans or tribes despite a willingness to advance and practice
Hausa customs and rituals. Thus, the Arabs, Indians, and Europeans were all collectively referred to as "dabitiyar," a term that also implied that these people came from the other "world" and were outside Hausa's integrative and assimilative vision.

Yet it is interesting to note that the Hausa use of the unpalatable term "dabitiyar," or "wild ones" with reference to Arabs, Indians, and Europeans did not reflect a sense of biological inferiority. On the contrary, this term simply meant peoples whose physical outlook and cultures were pronouncedly different from the Hausa or other black peoples who, despite differences in language, customs, and rituals, were, nevertheless, Black like the Hausa and could therefore be integrated in the Hausa societie.

Whether the Hausa use of this bizarre term in their description of the peoples with light skin and straight hair reflected the Hausa's own limited perception of the world or pure and simple racial prejudice, it is hard to conjecture. But there is ample evidence to suggest that the Hausa's geographical hinterland, which entailed limited contacts with peoples of different skin-color complexion and hair texture, might have contributed to this cultural parochialism and prejudice against non-black peoples. Nevertheless, it would be unrealistic to assume that the Hausa, or any other African group, had no concept of race whether defined in terms of skin color and hair texture or modern-day physical anthropology. Nor would it be enough to interpret the Hausa classification of the Arabs, Indians, and Europeans as White in terms of their geographically hinterland position and its consistent limited contacts with non-Blacks from outside Africa, as the case of the Semitic people will demonstrate.
The earliest or earliest Swahili-speaking peoples lived along the East African coast (Kenya) from Mombasa in the modern Republic of Kenya to Mokshiga in the modern Republic of Somalia. Although historians do not agree on the date and precise nature of the evolution of the Swahili-speaking peoples, there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that the language was in vogue during the second half of the seventh century.) that their linguistic structure and words suggest the influence of the Sanskrit languages to the coast of East Africa; and that the language was strongly influenced by the Arabs, Persians, and Indians who frequented East Africa as traders. Moreover, the Arab-Islamic influences are clearly manifested by the fact that early Swahili was written in Arabic letters or transliteration. In fact, the word "Swahili" means "cosmopolitan people" in Arabic, which also suggests that the Arabs played a great part in the development of the Swahili language, especially its literary and African-Islamic culture. Under the circumstances, it would be interesting to find out how these oceanic-oriented African peoples who enjoyed the growing trade and cultural contacts with the Arabs, Indians, and Europeans as early as the ninth century perceived themselves. In other words, did the Swahili people perceive the Arabs, Indians, and even Europeans in the same terms as they recognized their fellow Africans in the interior?

But before we delve into how the Swahili saw the Arabs and the

Indians, it is instructive to find out how the Arabs themselves perceived the Swahili or any other African peoples who the illfortunes of history brought under the yoke of Islam during the tenth of Arab power.

In one of his sedating crusades against the claim that the Arabs and Islam were totally free of any racial prejudice until the coming of Europeans, Bernard Lewis has produced incontrovertible written evidence which suggests that "beneath a mantle of theological egalitarianism, there has always flourished a familiar pattern of sexual hierarchy, social and occupational discrimination, and an unthinking identification of lighter skin with better and darker with worse." Lewis quotes from a long list of pre-Islamic poetry, Arabic literature, and even the Koran, to dismiss the claim that the Arabs and Islam were color blind. For example, Lewis quotes from an Egyptian poet al-Mutanabbi who proclaims,

"You should turn a slave or his mate to his who
raises his master.
He who hides you up his word is unlike one who
holds you in his hand.
The morality of the black slave is bounded by
his teeth.
He does not keep his engagements of today, nor
remembers what he said yesterday."

There is no doubt that as much as the advocates of "color-blind Arabs
and Islam" may attempt to mitigate the vulgar color prejudice that exists...
from al-Mutanabbi's pen by pointing out that the Arabs had white slaves too, the poet was expressing his contempt for and prejudice against the black peoples. But if the above evidence is not sufficient to put the claim that the Arabs and Sa'idi were racially mixed to rest, we may return to Talhami's translation of a dialogue between a Sami (who, by the way, was a Dhubali from East Africa, Sa'idi being another term used for a black who came from East Africa) and an Arab, just before the rise of the Sa'idi rebellion in 1828, Iraq, during the Abbasid rule in 661 to 925, i.e. In this dialogue, which has already been quoted in full on page 1 of this study, the Sa'idi specifically referred to the Arabs as whites, thus confirming the Dhubali perception of the Arabs as whites long before the appearance of Europeans who allegedly are responsible for the concept of race.

In the light of the above evidence, it seems reasonable to submit that the Africans, whether Sami (Dhubali from East Africa) or Sa'idi from the Nile Valley, had their own racial perception of the Arabs even though it is, perhaps, unlikely that they associated these with claims of biological superiority, which is the essence of modern racism. This is shown by the fact that, in Dhubali, the term "w 가운데" which means "white" does not exclude the Arabs or Sa'idi. Hence, even though the Dhubali peoples have always been a relatively sophisticated and cosmopolitan community in their outlooks and culture, their language has never lost its association of the Arabs and Sa'idi with the term "white," even after the coming of Europeans—who wanted to claim the term solely for themselves. Thus, to this day, the term "Dhubali" specifically refers to adultized black Africans and not to Arabs or Sa'idi. This is so despite the obvious
fact that most of the Arabs in East Africa have African blood in them and only very few of them speak any Arabic at all. In fact, the mother tongue of the so-called Arabs in East Africa is Swahili and their religion is Islam, which is also the dominant religion of the truly culturally Swahili-speaking peoples of the East African coast. 23

The mention of the Swahili people here is very instructive because there is a great deal of similarity between the rise of Arab-Islamic power in the Indian and in East Africa. The similarity is particularly striking in the case of the islands of Zanzibar and the Kenyan coastal province of Mombasa which, until then Kenya attained independence in 1962, was ruled by Britain in payment of £60,000 to the Arab sultan in Zanzibar who was bin Sulayman, the ruler of the Zanzibar Islands. As in the case of the Arabs in East Africa the Arabs came as political refugees, traders, and immigrants. They introduced Islam, intermarried with the Swahili peoples, and used their access to superior weapons, better political organisation, economic power acquired in trade, and association with the founder of the religion of Islam to establish an Arab hegemony over the Swahili peoples who, even though they were Muslims, were racially identified as Africans or Blacks. And, as John Middleton, William Harris Harford, Sir John Kinlar Grefy, and Norman E. Bennett have shown in their studies of Zanzibar, it would be unrealistic to dismiss the role of race as perceived by the Arabs in their quest for economic wealth, religious influence, and ultimately political control as a pure guarantee for their

Unfortunately, any discussion of the Arabs is often hindered by the problem of defining "Arab" and drawing a legitimate line between Islam and its strong elements of Arab culture, especially the Arabic language which characterized the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the modern Sudan.

Therefore, in order to understand what is meant by the term "Arab" in the context of an Afro-Arab Northern Sudan, we must turn to the question of how the Arabs in the Sudan perceive themselves as a racial group.

Meanwhile, however, it is to be emphasized that the incidents that have so far been mentioned in this study are meant to indicate that the universal brotherhood preached by Islam can be confounded with the active policy of mass segregation that characterized Arab expansion and settlement in the Sudan, with both the mass segregation and Islam being used as means of reinforcing Arab culture and legitimacy over the African identity. Arab Imperialism, in the opinion of the writer, squarely falls within P. Vranjes' definition of racism: he writes:

"Racism is any set of beliefs which attempt genealogically to construct differences (whether real or imagined) between human groups are intrinsically associated with the perception or the absence of certain socially coherent entities or characterizations, hence that such differences are a legitimate basis of juridical distinctions between groups totally indefinable on other criteria."

Unfortunately, most of the literature on the Arabs, Islam, and the question of race is often riddled with the priority of religion that

26P. Vranje, Race and Religion (New York), p. 11. It is also quoted by Sandison, in Beyond Race and Color in Islam", p. 3.
the image and some Islamic scholars have hesitated on the theological
substance of Islam. But as Thibault K. Sundiata has recently argued,

The great fault of such discussion is that they assume the plurality of religions. Ideology does not exist in a vacuum; although it does influence them, as

Sundiata's interpretation derived partly from a religionists'type as well as illustrate the reality produced by the con-

Sundiata was almost paraphrasing the views expressed by another scholar

who, in his study of the Kamsu jihad, presented that,

We must establish what racial and/or shades of
color distinctions are rooted in ... Islam and to what
degree these color distinctions in particular social
organizations, or between ethnic groups, have transcended
into Islamic practices or conceptions of ideals.8

This is exactly the spirit which has guided this study. It has indi-
cated that, despite the ideals of Islam and the Arab claim to be pur-

pursuers of these ideals, economic interests and differences in skin color

and cultural orientations are what have molded Arab attitudes and expan-
sion in the Sudan. That the ideals of Islam did not subdue the cultural

prejudices of the Arabs was vividly expressed by Ibn Khaldun, one of the

Arab's most illustrious historians and thinkers who, in the words of Leon

Curt Brown, "preserves the most perceptive comments for those ideals about

from the North Africans Arabs had no firsthand knowledge."87 According to

Sundiata.

86. O. Steward, "Race and Color in Islam: Some Mauretanian Notes," a paper delivered at the conference on "The Maintenance and Transmission

of Islamic Culture in Tropical Africa," April 27-28, 1953, Boston Uni-

versity African Studies Center.

87 See Leon Curt Brown, "Color in Northern Africa," Sundiata, XVI

The Hamids:

To the south of the Nile (in actually most likely) there is a negro people called Hamids. They are unedu-
cated. They breed themselves in the form and manner... The people of Sudan and Towari have their country, cap-
ture gene, and sell them to merchants who transport them to the Nubia. There they constitute the ordinary uses of slaves. Depour their to the south, there is no cultivation in the proper sense. These are only hunters who are closer to such animals than to rational beings. They live in thickly and caves and eat bones and uncooked grinds. They frequently eat each other. They cannot be considered human beings. 25

The Hamids (1532-1606) traveled widely and visited the Sudan (Nubia). In also spent a good part of his life in Egypt, where he en-
joyed the favor of the Mamluks who, accidentally, were responsible for the destruction of the Chaldean and the replacement of its Caliphs by a basic Muslim king, then giving the Arabs a stra-
tegically important position in their future expansion onto the Nile Valley. The palm plant here, and hence the name for granting the Hamids, is that it is historically incorrect to attribute Arab racial

chromosomes solely to the Turks or to thirteenth-century European

imperialists. The historical truth is that the Arabs, however they perceived themselves, and despite their willingness to take African word as "breeding" genes, have always maintained a ruling-class mentality in their relations with the africains. 29. But in order to understand how the

25. From Essential text, Ibn Hamids's Chronicles, Vol. 2 (New
York, 1969), pp. 75. 76. In other connotations, the Hamid's known into

Ignatius cognizant about the "Nubia" as when we write: "There

ignorant, the territory includes any, as a rule, negligible or slavery because

Blackmen have little that is essentially human and have attributes

that are quite similar to those of such animals, as we have stated" (p.

50).

29. Foott A. Derrill, State's International Relations (Boulder Colorado:

partly Black Arab Sudanese have cast aside their Black identity and opted for a full-scale Arab identity, one must turn to the Arabs' concept of an Arab as it obtains in the Sudan and other places in Africa where Arab hegemony was established.  

THE ARABS AND ISLAM

An Arab is anyone who speaks Arabic as his own language and consequently feels as an Arab. -  John L. Jacobs

Any attempt to define an Arab Sudanese must start in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam, to which modern-day Arabism owes its rise and expansion. In our time, the twin nature of Arabism and Islam was spelled out by Gamal Abdel Nasser who, in his book,  

Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of Revolution, outlined the position of Egypt in relation to the world in terms of three concentric circles:  

The first is the Arab circle, which, according to Nasser, surrounds Egypt; and is thus a part of Egypt as much as Egypt is a part of it; the second is the African continent, to which Egypt is bound by geography, by the Nile, by the responsibility of leadership, and by an enlightened African consciousness. The third circle is Islam.  

It is perhaps interesting to note that Nasser lists Arabism before Islam despite the obvious fact that Egypt is Arab because of conquest.

14 Tippu Tip, Hajj zur Kannal bin Mohamed el Murzah-yummi Tippu Tip. Supplement to the East Africa Public Committee (Kerema) 28, 2 (July 1958) and 391 (January 1959).
conversion to Islam, and cultural assimilation. And as a religion, Islam owes its rise to the genius and vision of the Prophet Muhammad, a Meccan Arab who was born in 570 and died in 632 A.D. Although Muhammad did not live to see the hurricane impact of his ideas, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that it was his ideas that laid the foundations for the rise of the modern Arabs. Yet it would be historically incorrect to argue that Arabism is the child of Islam because, in a strict sense, Arabism is older than Islam; Islam simply enriched Arabism and provided the Arabs with a cohesion and a sense of a theocratic mission. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the impact of Islam on the Arabs than the fact that within a few decades after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, his armies had made a victorious sweep over the Byzantine Empire from Egypt to Morocco. 32 Talian Greek-Roman civilization which manifested itself in political control and economic exploitation while staying away from active intermarriage and assimilation, Arab colonization was typified by four things: conquest, settlement, conversion, and miscegenation. While conquest meant the acquisition of wealth by the Islamic soldiers, settlement, miscegenation, and conversion to Islam meant the reinforcement of the Arab population in the new colonies and the primacy of the Arab-Islamic culture over the dominated region. It is for these reasons that any attempt to define what an Arab is must be done in the context of Arab expansion, settlement, conversion, and miscegenation.

also turn to the appearance and use of the word. According to Professor Raphael Patai, the term “Arab,” as used in pre-Islamic times, “referred to the people who inhabited the Arabian Peninsula and the Syrian desert. It appears in Assyrian records: “In 854 B.C. Gindibu the Arab with one thousand camel troops from Arabia territory joined Shalmaneser III in the Battle of Qarqar.”

Two points here are of some interest. First is the fact that the term “Arab” appeared in the Assyrian records as early as B.C. 9th, clearly indicating that there existed a people called “Arabs” in pre-Islamic days. The second point is that of the association of Arabs with camel and the desert. In fact, there are many biblical references to the Arab with his camel, or his “tent in the desert.” Another word that has often been associated with the Arab is the term “Bedouin.” Thus, as Patai has observed.

The conceptual association between Arab and Bedouin was and remained so close that frequently when an Arab author uses “Arab” what he actually means is “Bedouin.” This is how Th’ Malik, the famous fourteenth-century historian, uses the term “Arab,” and this is how the Bedouin refer to themselves to this day.

The purpose of this brief detour into the historical uses of the term “Arab” in pre-Islamic times is to clear the confusion that has been built around the word since the rise of Islam and the assimilation of many different ethnic groups into the Arab culture. The process of assimilation was always preceded by conquest, settlement, and conversion to Islam. Specifically, it is important to mention that the term “Arab”

57. Jeremiah (3:7), and Isaiah (11:22).
58. Patai.
assumed a second meaning once the Arabs became a colonial or an imperial power with a democratic mission. Henceforth, write Petal, the term came to denote all the peoples who, after having been converted to Islam, grew up their ancestral languages and adopted Arabic instead.\(^{37}\)

An evidence of the success of this policy of assimilation through conquest, conversion to Islam, the adoption of Arabic languages, and intermarriage, many Arab historians point at the Arabization of the Egyptians, Syrians, and the Berbers in North Africa. According to these historians, this is largely due that nobody can become an Arab simply by adopting Arab culture, Arab language, and perhaps by converting to Islam. Thus, according to Rafael Aidan Paris and Mohamed Mustafa Elwan, the authors of *The Diffusion of Arabism: An Interpretative Study of the Modern Arab World*, "Arabs are those who speak Arabic, are brought up in Arab culture, live in an Arab country, believe in Muhammad's teachings, cherish the memory of the Arab Empire." Paris and Elwan's definition is interesting but like that of the Arab League, which defined an Arab as, "He who lives in one country, speaks the language, is brought up in our culture, and takes pride in our glory,"\(^{38}\) it is problematic and obviously questionable.

But before we examine the validity of these definitions, it might be helpful to look at what W. A. S. Gibb has to say. According to Gibb, "All these are forms for representing the central fact of history in the mission of Muhammad and the memory of the Arab Empire and who in addition cherish the

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\(^{37}\) Petal.

\(^{38}\) Paris and Elwan, pp. 177-178.
the Arabic language and its cultural heritage as their common possession. 59

From the above three definitions one may be tempted to conclude
that the prerequisites of being an Arab are: the acceptance of the
Arabic language as one's mother tongue, the acceptance and appreciation
of Arabic culture, being born and brought up in an appreciation of Arab
history and past glory, and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus,
in order to be an Arab one need not have Arabic blood or be a Muslim
(although Paris and Rome are included the teachings of Muhammad). Indeed,
this is the contention of James L. Jacob, the Iraqi writer who defines
an Arab as "anyone who speaks Arabic as his own language and consequent-
ly feels as an Arab." 60 But one wonders whether Jacob's definition is
not a trifle too modernistic or revolutionary and political in scope.
For one thing, "feeling" is far too subjective and difficult to pinpoint.
And while the Arabic language is acceptable as a definition because it
is the language of all Arabs, it is still important to note that there
are many people in Arab countries whose mother tongue is Arabic and who
have lived in the Arab world since the rise of Islam but are nevertheless
not accepted as Arabic. Egyptians and the Copts in Egypt are classic
examples. The case of the Bedouin is particularly instructive because they
have always lived in Egypt and have been Muslims since the ninth

59 Quoted by Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History (New York: Harper
and Row, 1966), p. 10. On the relationship between being Arab and Islam,
Paris and Rome have observed, "Arab history is a living reality in the
minds of Arab masses because it and Islam are to them one and the same
things." Paris and Rome, p. 76.
60 Michael Adams, ed., p. 176.
or tenth century. And the Captives, even though they are Christians, use Arabic as their mother tongue. There is also the case of the Jews who have lived in the Arab countries since the rise of Islam and speak Arabic as their mother tongue, and yet they too are not accepted as Arabs. This is most interesting because the Arabs who convert to Christianity do not forfeit their Arabness, as evidenced by the presence of Christians in some of the more enlightened Arab states, like Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. There are also Palestinian Arabs who are Christians and are yet strong advocates of Arab nationalism as well. Thus, as much as Islam is an essential ingredient of being an Arab, it is by no means a point of sale. Nor is the case of the Arabic language indispensable. In fact, there are cases of Arabs who migrated to non-Arab countries, settled and took non-Arab women as their wives, abandoned the Arabic language, and yet have remained totally Arab. The Arabs in Zambia and the Coast of Egypt, East Africa, are classic cases in point. Since Arab migration to East Africa took place at the same time that the Arabs started to flock into Biblical, an examination of the process or system through which these migrants were able to pass their Arab identity on to their children may provide us with what constitutes an "Arab" in the context of the African usage of the term.

Four factors make the cases of Zambia and the Coast of Egypt particularly relevant to the study of the Sudan. First, both societies, 

were isolated before European colonization—thus the encounter was between Africans and Arabs alone. Third, in both societies the Arab immigrants took black women as their wives or mistresses. And fourth, in both situations the encounter culminated in the assimilation of an Arab hegemony and an Arab identity despite the fact that most of the so-called Arabs were mothered by black women.

Non-African scholars examining the rise of the Arabs in Habsa and the Sudan at large have, uncritically, accepted Ibn Khalid’s ill-researched and over-quoted observation:

And with the conversion of the Buhays the payment of the tribute ceased. Then the tribes of the Ogonya Arabs spread over their country and settled in it and filled it with reign and disorder. At first the kings of the Buhays attempted to repulse them, but they failed; then they went them over by giving them their daughters in marriage. Thus was their kingdom dismantled, and it passed to certain of the sons of Ogonya on account of their mothers (being of the Buhay royal blood), according to the custom of the infidels as to the succession of the elder or the sister’s son.16

The key point here is the importance that has been attached to the role of the patrilineal system of succession and inheritance in the social and political ascendancy of the Arabs in Habsa. Ironically, no similar explanation has been provided to explain the social and political ascendancy of the Arabs in Wadai and Musulma where succession and inheritance among the Africans is through the father (patrilineal). Another interesting claim made by Ibn Khalid, and one widely accepted by those who agree with his faulty generalization, is that the Sudan kings gave their daughters in marriage to the Arabs. As such, this study is

not in a position to dispute the possibility that one or two Arabs may have ended up with Muslim princesses as wives, it is obviously preposterous to suggest that a small kingdom like Kuba could have had enough princesses for the demands of Arab refugees who were transshipped into Kuba. Moreover, from what is known, Kuba had only one king, and it was a policy of the leaders of all Kuba expeditions to Kuba to take members of the royal family to Cairo as hostages. But even if we accept the Chadyoum's unsubstantiated claim that most Arabs ended up with Muslim princesses as wives, there is a serious question as to how the children of these Muslim princesses came to be Arabic-speaking and not Muslim, which was the language of their mothers. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Arabs were in a majority. Under the circumstances, it is unlikely that children born to Arabic-speaking women would have been able to acquire Arabic as their mother tongue overnight. And surely, that is not the experience of Jamaahir and the Court of Denga whose Sumbull emerged as the language of the Arab-African progeny.

Although it is true that the nature of the Arab influx into Jamaahir and the Court of Denga was significantly different from that of Kuba in that there the Arab influx was voluntary and piecemeal, the evolutionary consequences were not necessarily different. Here we are referring to the impact of religion as well as the assumed identity of the progeny with their constituent political status. Those in both Kuba and Jamaahir the children became Muslim, assumed an Arab identity, and opted to belong to the Arab political heritage as soon as circumstances were favorable for them to do so. However, there was the similarity. In Jamaahir and the Court of Denga the half-breed children adopted Sumbull, which was
the language of their mothers, instead of Arabic.

A number of explanations have been given for the failure of these Arabic-African groups to adopt Arabic as their native tongue. O. S. F. Hove-Marriott, *Ethics of the East African Coast*, John Gray, *History of Juba-

ber From the Nile Area to 1800*, R. G. Meilhac, *East Africa and the In-

dus*, and Roland Oliver, *History of East Africa*, have emphasized the

fact that the Arabs came to East Africa many years before and were thus

naturally absorbed by the existing communities of the city states. This

conjecture was actually made by the famous Arab traveler Al-Madini who

visited Mombasa, Zanzibar and Zanzibar in 974 A.D. Thus according to

Madini, at the time of his visit the Arabs had lived long enough to

adopt the language. So referred to the native population as the Zanzib, a

term used by the Arabs in the Gulf to refer to East-African Blacks.

Other possible explanations are that the East African Coast was some

distance from any Arab land, and the journey by boat was quite hazardous

(consequently, only the bravest and most adventurous attempted the

journey); that the Oman and Muscat regimes, where most of these Arab

adventurers came from, were underpopulated; and that there was no political

upheaval similar to the crisis caused by the Mongol invasion of Baghdad

in 1258 and the Ottoman occupation of Egypt in 1516. These

may, indeed, be tentative explanations for the failure of the Arab groups

in Zanzibar and the coast of Kenya to adopt Arabic as their mother tongue

even though they retained Arab identity and were violently anti-black.

A number of scholars have attempted to tackle the question of the

identity of the Arab-African groups in Africa with specific references
to the Sudan and elsewhere. Among these are Professor Shadi el Din Fawer, Christian and Cultural Pluralism in the Sudan, Vacuuming the Question of Islam, Arabization, Arabization, and Self-Identification in the Sudan, drummer Aalad, aspects of Arabism in Sudanese Politics, and Ali A. Hamdallieh, The Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective: The Political Sociology of Race Mixing. To these specific works on studies, one may also add some other works that deal with the attitudes of Islam on the question of race and mixed marriages: Robert Levy, The Colonial Structure of Islam and Edward W. Bynen, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race.

Writing on the spread of Islam in the Nubian mountains in the Sudan, R. C. Stevenson once observed that there were two parallel processes of social change that concurrently took place—one linguistic and cultural by which the people of the land acquired Arabic as their language and certain Islamic cultural conceptions and concepts connected with the Arab system; and the other social, by which the incoming Arab stock was absorbed in varying degrees, so that today a portion of each blood flows in their veins. What Stevenson actually is referring to here is "parallel processes of social change," in a transfiguration that took place under conditions that favored the incoming Arabs and their Muslim co-religionists. Under such conditions it is not unusual for the weak or the overwhelmed group, to adopt the language and even identity of the victor as a measure of social prestige and new status, an example

注释:
of this kind of receptivity to changes under social, economic, and political stress is in Melvin R. Page's article, "The Masrasa-Bened of Tippu Tip: A Case Study in Social Stratification and the Slave Trade in Eastern Africa."

Yet what is suggested here is that the receptivity which Furennan refers to is not necessarily a voluntary one. Rather, the acceptance of both Islam and the Arabic language should be seen as a metamorphosis caused by the breakdown of the African tribal system under pressure from a better armed and far more organized enemy. Nevertheless, it is recognized in this study that any kind of acculturation and intermingling between races may lead to some form of bio-cultural assimilation. However, in order to understand this integrative process, it is imperative to know each group's attitude toward the mixing of blood and the fusing of cultural patterns. Obviously the beliefs, experiential-exposure, and contacts with other peoples, as well as the prevailing conditions (social, economic, and political) of each group at the time when the process of bio-cultural assimilation takes place, affects these attitudes.

In discussing the influences and impact of Arabic-African setting, Nourr has observed that there are two main concepts that are involved: These are symmetrical acculturation and symmetrical mixture. According to Nourr, symmetrical acculturation arises when a dominant group not only passes on its culture to the groups it dominates, but it is also significantly receptive to the cultural influence of its subjects or captives.

Thus symmetrical accommodation is arrived at when cultural transmission is a two-way affair. But as Marshall himself cautions us, "complete symmetry is impossible to achieve, and even if achieved, would be impossible to measure."

Perhaps it should be observed that there have been occasions in history when accommodation has been asymmetrical and yet the receiving group has been the politically dominant. This was definitely the case with regard to Greek-Roman encounters. How it was the conquered Greeks who extended their cultural influence over the Roman conquerors. But the classic form of asymmetrical accommodation is that of the British who transmitted their culture to the colonial subjects without even absorbing their culture. Commenting on the examples of the Greeks versus Romans and the British versus their colonial subjects, Marshall has suggested that, "we might call the former descending asymmetry and the latter ascending asymmetry."

However, what Marshall overlooks here, when discussing the case of the Greeks and the Romans, is that there were peoples of the same racial group and that their differences were largely cultural and linguistic rather than physiological. Thus while it is true that complete symmetry is impossible to achieve, it is nevertheless more likely to be achieved where the groups encountering each other are equal in strength and there are no religious, political, or racial differences.

The second concept that Marshall discusses is symmetrical accommodation.

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This article deals with two different races intermarrying and produces a comparable number of both men and women who cross their racial boundaries and obtain partners from each other. However, this ideal situation may often be threatened by a number of factors that claim the loyalty of the property. For example, if one group is patrilocal and the other patrilocal, or one racial group is Catholic and the other is Protestant. In the case where one group is matrilocal, for example, the children are often claimed by the side of the mother, whereas the patrilocal father may insist that the children remain on his side. The problem is even more serious in the event of divorce, which invariably destroys such the delicate possibility that the children might be allowed to enjoy a dual racial citizenship. But even on both racial groups are patrilocal, there is often a problem that arises regarding the racial citizenship of the children. This is because certain racial groups do not accept mixed race children as bona fide racial citizens of their groups. Nonacceptance of children who are products of interracial mating may be based on legalized racial prejudice, as in the case of South Africa, or merely tradition of custom, which amounts to legalized prejudice.

But intermarriage may also be asymmetrical in situations where most of the fathers, if not all of them, tend to be from one racial group which either exercises its predominance or lacks enough females from its own group and therefore desires to meet its need for partners through interracial mating. By predominance is meant the act of exercising political control which, may be acquired through the possession of better weapons and military organization, or a superior numerical number. The whites in North America and the Spaniards in Latin America are good examples of
predominance; whereas in the case of Africa one may refer to the Vahili or Vahile versus Sulu in Banda and Burundi. In all three cases the husbands have tended, at least in the past, to be from the predominant group.

However, regardless of the conditions that produce the bastards in situations of asymmetrical miscegenation, the identity of the progeny is bound to be harmonized by the laws and customs of all the races that are involved in the intercessial process. But in most cases, if the fathers coming from the predominant racial group are willing to claim the progeny, each progeny take the identity of the fathers’ group. Where, however, the fathers’ side is unwilling to claim the children, such children are often left to the mothers’ group and are thus likely to adopt her racial identity. The classic examples of this are to be found in white-black interracial mating in the diaspora.

With this analysis we may now turn to the Sudan, where Arab males took black women as their “breeding mates” under a process that we have defined as asymmetrical miscegenation. Perhaps it should be emphasized here that the term “breeding mates” is used between intercessial mating between Black women and Arab males often took place under conditions of slavery. Thus, as Heruli has observed, “in Arabised black Africa, slavery was the breeding ground of asymmetrical miscegenation.” In other words, it was the Arab males who (frequently) helped themselves to female black slaves or other socially uprooted and culturally alienated African women, and produced children with them.

*Heruli, p. 65.*
However, as it has been observed above, the fate of the progeny of children produced under asymmetrical miscegenation varies from one race to another. In discussing the fate of the children produced under asymmetrical miscegenation, Maruri has posed the following question: Do the children of a mixed marriage between a dominant race and an under-privileged race follow the father into the amenities of dominance or do they follow the mother into the handicaps of under-privilege? Or do they in fact become a class apart? Although Maruri answered his own question by arguing that the children are likely to follow the amenities of privilege, this does not always follow, because the choice of such children is, in the final analysis, determined by the racial attitudes of their parents' racial groups. Implicit in this statement is the fact that there are a number of models of descent within asymmetrical miscegenation that determine the racial citizenship of the progeny.

In general, there are four observable models of relationship between blood mixture and social structure at large. First, there is what may be called descending miscegenation. This arises in those situations where, whenever there is mating between two individuals of different racial groups, the resultant progeny is always considered to be a member of one group. A good example of this model is in North America where any mating between Black and White results in what is called a "Black" or "Negro." Second, there is what may be called equivalent miscegenation, or what Maruri has called the Latin American model. Here the mating between a Black and a White produces what is called a "Mulatto," or in the

Maruri, p. 19.
case of a white man and an Indian "Mestizo." In fact, many Mestizos are classified as White, depending on the individual country. Thus, as Jose Antonio Rodrigues has observed, in contrast to the North American model, in Brazil, for example, "many light Mulattoes, refined, educated, and of good appearance must appear to be white. Mestizos appearing to be white are classified as Whites contrary to the practice in the United States, where one-fifth of Negro blood classifies one as Negro." The curious point here is that it is the education, the degree of refinement and the aesthetic looks that determine the classification and not racial blood-content alone. But then, perhaps this explains why this model is often termed "mestizaje." The third model of racial descent is the one that obtains in the African continent which is the focus of this analysis. There, partly because of the Africans' attitude towards children of interracial mating and the Whites' attitude, especially as it obtains in South Africa under Apartheid, the progeny of a mixed marriage belongs to a group apart. This group is called "coloured" in the case of South Africa and the rest of English-speaking Africa. In South Africa the progeny are often referred to as "Mandacara" or "half-castes." In fact, the very term is used in a pejorative or in any other that African language, it does not necessarily imply separation or contempt, and while it is partly true that the rigid classification that has marked the presence of the colored population in Africa is largely due to the laws drawn by white colonial rulers, it is simply not true that

The rigid classification that has placed the existence of the colored population in Africa is sadly due to the laws drawn by white colonial rulers. It is simply not true that the Africans or Muslims are themselves always color blind.

In this day many Africans who are still operating within tribal traditionalism do not accept children of mixed blood as bona fide members of their tribe irrespective of whether they are patrilineal or matrilineal. Unfortunately, this aspect of African racial prejudice is benevolently shielded by Africa's past subjugation to white control and its resultant economic underdevelopment. Consequently, it is often assumed that the only people who discriminate against progeny of inter-racial mating are the whites because of their predominant position.

The fourth model of racial descent is the one that is practiced by the Arabs. It is this model that will now take us to the Sudan—the focus of this study—and to its influence as a corroborative case study.

In his study of Islam in the Sudan, Tringal has observed:

"The population of the Sudan falls naturally into two great divisions, a northern Muslim area and a southern pagan area. The two areas are not defined by any physical feature, but are very clearly distinct ethnologically and culturally. The Muslim area embraces the peoples of the dry desert and sparse regions of the north who are Arabic-speaking and Islamic. In this region there has been some admixture of Arab blood with that of the original population and the adoption of Islam has fused the peoples so that they are culturally homogeneous. For Islam is not so much a creed as a unified system... The term 'Arab' has significance in a linguistic and cultural, rather than in a racial sense, and is used in reference to the result of the recent admixture of the indigenous folk and the Arab tribes who settled in the northern and central regions in the Middle Ages. The Arabs brought with them their language and religion which supplanted the original language (except among some of the Sudan and Nilo-Speaking..."
Suffice it to say, it is in this imposition or supplementation of the Arabic language and the unusual concentration of power in the hands of the Arabs that the term Afro-Arab anthropologists refer to. Thus the following analysis is concerned with how this hegemony happened and to what extent it is academically viable to refer to these groups as Arabs since as Tringham has observed, "It is rare to find anything approaching a pure racial type among any of the peoples of the Sudan, for this land has suffered from many waves of racial dispersion."51

This study concurs with Tringham that it is rare to find anything approaching a pure racial type among any of the peoples of the Sudan. And, indeed, the writer would like to make it clear that he is not concerned with the "purity" of race within the Sudan or anywhere else for that matter. This is because the writer is fully aware that it is hard, and almost impossible, to define the term "race," especially as it pertains to the Arab peoples generally and the Sudan in particular. Nevertheless, the writer feels that it would be unrealistic and misleading not to give cognizance to the term "Arab" in a functional sense, since it is an accepted and operative phenomenon in the context of the Sudan. Thus the question is not whether the person who calls himself an "Arab" in the Sudan is an Arab per se, but rather whether he acts as an Arab and functions thus accordingly.

The chief criteria, therefore, is not physical or anthropological

50 Tringham, p. 5.
51 Tringham.
measurements, but functional self-identification. This point is not
recognized by most Sudanese. As Professor Abd Al-Bahim has observed,
the Sudan is, 'at one and the same time both 'Africans' and 'Arabs,' the
combination being present—especially in the six northern provinces.'

How this duality has been achieved is what this analysis addresses it-
selves to. Because, unlike other Sudanese Belt states like Chad, Mali,
Niger, Senegal, and even Somalia and Northern Nigeria, which are all
Islamic—a phenomenon that adds to their geographical links with the
so-called Arab world—the Sudan has laid a claim to being Arabic despite
the all-too-obvious fact that its claim is not supported by the country's
statistical distribution of people who consider themselves to be Arabs,
either racially or through self-identification.53

According to Abd Al-Bahim, Sudan's Pan Arabism and Arabism were
not primarily the result of conquest:


sus as produced officially, see the Republic of the Sudan, Ministry for
of power and political leadership in the host society.  

From the outset it seems to overlook here is the fact that neither the Sudan kingdom, as such, nor even its in the area of the Funi kingdom at Banu was actually occupied by Arab emigrants. As it has been demonstrated in this study in chapter III, the Sudan kingdom was destroyed by the Himilala. Moreover, even after the Himilala destroyed the Kingdom of Nuba, Kish and its subsequent successors, the Funi kingdom remained essentially Black and Nilo-chadic; even though the Funi rulers were converted to Islam, they still treated the leaders of the Arab emigrants as subordinates, or Mansir. However, since most literature on the Sudan claims that Arab dominance was attained through the twin means of racial assimilation and Islamization, no study of the Sudan can clarify the problem unless it points out how this process of racial assimilation was attained, and since the assimilation that is often referred to here (biological) rather than cultural, the process has to be analyzed in the context of interethnic mixing and the resultant self-identification of the progeny.

According to Sudan's population census of 1955, published on January 17, 1956, there were 10,662,516 people in the Sudan. Of this population, only 19 percent was considered to be racially Arab. And according to Marga, the racial definition of an Arab was in terms of membership, or claimed membership, to an Arab tribe. This constituted biological

inter relieve between the races, real or claimed. This seems to be in accord with this study's definition of an Arab, which is based on how the individual identifies himself and acts in relation to those that he does not perceive as Arabs. The reason for the adoption of this self-perceived definition is that it is the pillar of Sudanese Arabinism, which, as a new, might be called "Arabism-Sudanese." Of late, however, Abd Al-Sabah has added another dimension to what constitutes an Arab in the Sudan by adding the linguistic dimension. Thus, according to Abd Al-Sabah, all those Sudanese who speak Arabic as their first language must be deemed to be Arabs. This linguistic definition would push Sudan's Arab population to 51 percent. He justifies this rather strange classification of an Arab by observing that:

Although Arab tribes predominate in the province of Khartoum, Blue Nile, Kordofan, and Northern Province, the Beja in Kassala, Westerners in Darfur, and the Nile-Hamites in Equatoria, it is obvious that considerable racial mixing has taken place, particularly in the central parts of the country. A clear indication of this is the wide range of colors and features among Sudanese Arabs. Some half the total population, who are, on the whole, much darker than other Arab-speaking peoples north of the Sahara and across the sea in Arabia.

From the above statistical classification it is apparent that all means of accentuation have been utilized to increase the Arab racial group in the Sudan, albeit only to 51 percent. But it is the 51 percent which is definitely the key to Sudan's Arabism, that calls for examination.

56 First Population Census of the Sudan.
58 Abd Al-Sabah, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan, p. 1.
since not all of the people who comprise it can claim direct and uninter
terupted descent from the original Arab immigrants who came from Egypt,
Nubia, and Arabia. Moreover, as Masuri has observed, "the Arabs are a
race of fair, blue-eyed and white-skinned people." This is because
they vary in color from the white (Blacks) of Africa and Lebanon, the brown
Arabs of the Philippines to the Arabized Arabs of much of the Sudan and of some
of the eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, it may be argued
that, even within the Sudan, as in the case of language, the
majority of the people who classify themselves as Arabs are only partly
Arabs. This brings us to the relevance and significance of the Arab-
Islamic model of racial descent, because the model poses an interesting
contrast with the models of North America, Latin America in Brazil, and
the apartheid system in South Africa.

Masuri himself a Muslim and a product of Afro-Arab society stated:
the following words:

With the Arabs, the idea of "half-caste" is relative
tively alien. If the father is Arab, the child is Arab without
reservation. If we visualize a man accepting a mulatto
woman in the fourteenth century and visualizing the son being
born, the son would be Arab. If we imagine a man that
the son marry another mulatto woman who is half this
men, too, would be an Arab. If we then imagine that this
process be repeated, generation after generation, until a
child be born in the second half of the twentieth century
with only a drop of his blood still remaining of both de
rizcient and the rest of the blood inevitably Muslim, the
twentieth-century child is still an Arab.60

Perhaps it should be emphasized here that it is this all inclusive
interbreeding process that has ensured and helped to sustain such identity

59 Masuri, "Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective," p. 73
60 Masuri, p. 30.
in Black-Arab relationships. In fact, it may be argued that the process has served the Black-Arab division in Africa from being a diabolical gift—and instead has converted the process into a racial continuum of servile relationships, albeit at Black expense. For the resultant progeny has automatically assumed an Arab identity and contributed to the rise of Arab hegemony rather than setting up barriers here in African-Arab microcosms. Unfortunately, not all students of Arab-African relationships have recognised this subtle discrimination in Afro-Arab intermingling when it comes to the adoption of identity. As evidence of this we may turn to observations made by students of Afro-Arab intermingling experiences who have acclaimed the alleged harmony that characterises the Black-Arab intermingling process. Edward Blyden, the nineteenth-century Liberian intellectual of West-Indian birth, for example, had this to say:

With every wish, no doubt, to the contrary, the European sells or never gets over the feeling of distance, if not of repulsion, with the experience on first seeing the Negro... The Arab Mercantile, on the other hand, often of the slave capturer in his native, does not require any long habit to reconcile the eye to him. He takes up his abode in Belgian, often for life, and, mingling his blood with that of the inhabitants, succeeds in the most natural manner in engrafting Mohammedan (Islam) religion and learning upon the ignorance and simplicity of the people.6

What Blyden did not recognise is that Arab-African mixing has always been a one-way process, whereby the Africans or Blacks have provided women to meet the sexual needs of the Arab males and that this process

Inevitably results in the production of people who regard themselves as Arabs and not Blacks. Indeed it is questionable (as the Sudan and other experiences show) whether mixed marriages under which one racial group always provides the female can lead to social harmonization. This is particularly true where the resultant pregnancy rejects the identity of the mother unilaterally. Therefore, it may be argued that, as far as race relationships are concerned, both the Afro-African and Afro-Arab ideals have been violated by each group's need. For the Anglo-Saxon the overriding motive is intermarital ending, even sexual gratification and the need to increase the slave population; whereas in the case of the Arabs, the overriding motive were sexual gratification and the augmentation of the Arab population. This is exactly what W. E. B. DuBois meant when he wrote about the Black-White sexual relationship in America.

The law declares that the children of slaves are to follow the fortunes of their masters. Hence the practice of plunders selling and beheading their own children. 68

Here, it is best clear that what the North American slave master was concerned with was the augmentation of the slave population in the field. In contrast, slavery under the Arabs and Islam had a different definition for the progeny. Under Islam, any child born to a slave impale by her master is legitimate. This legitimacy confers upon the child descent from the father, including the status of being a free-born and the rights of inheritance in both the descent concern upon the child living with the slave master's tribe. Thus, as Naum, has observed:

In slave conditions Islam imprints an expanding consciousness. If the father is Arab the child is Arab, regardless of whether the mother is a wife or concubine, and regardless of the nationality of the mother.  

This is indeed the way that the Arab immigrants into the Sudan augmented their population; and this is the reason why they are a highly mixed racial group even though this intermingling did not upgrade the social conditions of the masses of non-Muslim Blacks who were treated merely as raw materials for Islam and Arabisation. Once, according to Fadl Hassan, the inhabitants of the northern Sudan were Arabised and assimilated into the Arab tribal system through miscegenation, conversion, and induction into the Arab tribal system. But Fadl is also quite to observe that not all those who claim Arab descent, or who have included themselves more specifically in a particular tribal genealogy, actually have Arab blood flowing in their veins. In fact, the fluidity of genealogies and tribal affiliations has tended to erode the degree of biological Arabisation in the Sudan. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, in the Sudan, the term "Arab" has been given a new dimension—a dimension that places emphasis on patrilineality and assimilation rather than on legality and color. This point has been well noted by Seiden Levey:  

In Islam it is sufficient for the father to acknowledge cohabitation with a woman (slave or free) to establish the legitimacy of the child—seeing that polygamy is lawful in Islam, it is not necessary for the mother of a child to be married to its father in order for it to be declared legitimate. The power of the father over his children is very  

66 ibid. The Arabs and the Sudan, pp. 174-75.
great, (but) he cannot sell them into slavery....

Morality, indeed, the legitimacy of a boy is a matter of some concern to the father's family or tribe. 45

Levy's argument regarding the liberalization of Islam and the Arabs' assimilative instinct is often echoed by some Arab observers who correctly attribute basic responsiveness to Arabism to decolonization and Islamization rather than military conquest. Thus Abd Al-Rahim, a contemporary Arab observer, has argued,

As with several other countries, both in Africa and Asia, the assimilation and Islamization of the Sudan was not primarily the result of military conquest. It was mainly brought about through the agency of Muslim Arab landowners who, coming from Arabia across the Red Sea, from Egypt after the conquest of 192, and, at later stages, from the Maghreb, gradually infiltrated the Christian kingdoms of Nubia. Their readiness to assimilate with the administrative system of the Sudanese on the one hand, and the Islamic patriarchal organization of the family and the tribe on the other, had the effect not only of facilitating the assimilation of the immigrants and the spreading of their culture and religion, but also of giving them the rating of power and political leadership in the host society. 46

Perhaps it should be mentioned here that Abd Al-Rahim is merely restating what the Khulad reported during the fourteenth century:

Various tribes of Jewish Arabs spread over the country, settled in it and made it their own. In fact the Jewish kings tried to resist, and failed. Later they tried to win over the Sudanese by giving them their daughters in marriage. But this led to the passing of power to some of the sons of Jewish in accordance with the practice of the Mahdiyyah, which meant the right of

succession to sisters and their sons. Thus did the Nabians lose their kingdom and their lands passed to the Bedouins of Juhayna.97

It is true, with this repetition of Ibn Khaldun’s overgeneralized conjectures that ‘Abd Al-Rahim jumps to another equally unchallenged pre-Arab conclusion:

The reality of the social and cultural revolution which had long been threatened by the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries was the total transformation of Mada’in and the establishment in 1004. of the Tulunid dynasty of the Fahl, which lasted until 912.98

This study accepts Levy’s and Mazar’s observations that the Arab-Islamic culture known as illegitimacy and that children fathered by Arab males invariably takes the identity of the father. However, the study rejects the claim that it was the Nabian’s matrilineal system that helped to pass the reins of power and political leadership to the Arab Immigrants and their Nabian-adopted children. This rejection is based on three historical and circumstantial factors. First, the Manazi kingdom as such was not established by the Arab Immigrants but by the Saljuqs who seized political power in Egypt in 1260. This fact was recognized by Adams and Bader, both of whom have been considerable work on Nabian-Islamic relationships. Second, it is erroneous to link the rise of the Fahl kingdom with Arab power. All available historical evidence indicates that Mu’tasim, the first ruler of the Fahl, was neither Arab nor Nabian. Indeed, his very name and the rituals of the Fahl rulers were a

97Turgot, Juna in the Judd, p. 71-72.
magnification of any Arab-Islamic annihilation. Third, there is the strange and exaggerated importance that the krubah—beginning with the Shihab—have attached to the role of Muslim matrimonial and Arab marriages to the daughters of Muslim kings as a means through which the krubah attained the reins of power and political leadership in the Sudan. While this study does not dispute the existence of Muslim marriage in pre-Islamic Sudanese society, it does not accept the claim that it was solely responsible. This is because the essence of African matrimoniality is that the children inherit from their maternal uncles, and, in some cases, take the name of their maternal uncle. Followed to its logical conclusion, African matrimoniality would have led to the children fathered by Arabs to identify themselves with the clan of their mothers' brothers and not the patrilineal systems of their foreign fathers. For this reason, it is the contention of this study that Arab ascendancy in Sudan owes its rise to other factors.

These factors are the Africans' exclusive concept of race, the Arab conquest of Egypt, the rise of the Mamluks, and the aggression that the Mamluks repeatedly committed against Makua until they replaced the Christian king with a hybrid Arab-Muslim king of the Hausa S'allu clan in 1321. The Mamluk policy of closing Makua with undesirable and alien groups from Egypt and the subsequent Ottoman Empire's conquest of the Mamluk supremacy are also factors as well.

Regarding the African concept of race, it is the experience of this writer, derived from his observation in Southern Mozambique, and other places in East Africa where Arabs and Indians settled and took slaves without consent, that Africans do not accept the progeny of such intermarriage acting as true black Africans. In a classic example one may mention Mauwaad.
Tippu Tip, the nineteenth-century slave trader who was a nephew of Pundikir, the Maqawwi king of Oryanga. On the other hand, however, it may be argued that many progeny of Arab-African mating opted for an Arab identity because of the Arabs' trading influence and Islam's prestige as a universal religion at a time when African traditional religious and political fortunes were on the decline. This conjecture is supported by the fact that Islamic influence and power were most effective in those areas where traditional religions had survived to Islam, there was an effective nucleus of Arab traders and settlers, and traditional rulers had converted to Islam or had been replaced by converts to Islam.

Nevertheless, this study makes a distinction between conversion to Islam as a religion and the acceptance of Arab-Islamic culture as it happened in a number of Sudanese states as opposed to the establishment of an Arab hegemony as it happened in the Sudan, Somalia, and the Coas of Kenya in Pala, Lamu, Malindi, and Mombasa. This is because the latter situation manifests the seizure of political power by alien immigrants, whereas conversion to Islam does not imply political control by immigrants who embrace an alien identity, as it happened in the Sudan, Somalia, and

the Coast of Egypt. Moreover, the familiar example suggests that where amalgamation is the product of a few Arab immigrants taking African women as mistresses it does not lead to the rise of Arabs as the dominant language, as it happened in the Sudan. On the contrary, where Arab immigrants relied on African women as their breeding stock, it is the local language that prevailed because there is no way that scattered Arab males could pass their language on to the progeny of their wives. It is also unlikely probability that has led this writer to accept Easen's thesis that there was a significant process of tribal amalgamation with whole populations settling in new areas and that it was these elements of Arab tribesmen who initiated the process of Arabization and Islamization. 70

What this variation suggests is that, as much as it is true that the Arab immigrants were not adverse to taking African women as their mates, it would be incorrect to assume, as Tim Huxley did, that it was only through interracial marriages and the Muslims' willingness that the Arabic language and tribal system were transmitted to the black population or that the Sudan became Arabized and assimilated into the Arab tribal system.

On the contrary, as Easen has argued:

"The dominance of Arab culture suggests, among other factors, that the Arab immigrants arrived in large numbers and came to dominate a considerable influence over the life of the local population. Indeed, when Huxley traveled the country in the 1870s he found a distinction between the indigenous population, who were already Muslim, and the Arabs (probably leading nomadic), except that the former continued to live in and bargain beside the river Nile, while the latter lived in towns. 71"

71Easen, p. 176.
This study has no dispute with Kazem's thesis except that it is the opinion of this writer that most of these Arabs who Kazem glorified as conquerors were refugees settled into Mecca by the Mamelukes who were in control of Egypt and Arabia. And, it was through the disruptive impact of the Mameluke aggression against Mecca that these Arabs gained ascendancy over the Nabataeans. This is why it is the thesis of this study that the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Sudan was fostered by external factors—among which were the Mamelukes. This, of course, is not a denial of the roles played by commerce, Islam, and intermarriage, which were taking place under conditions of an expanding slave trade with all of its devastating impacts on an overtaxed peasantry. As Haarmann has observed, slavery was a determining factor behind the rise of mixed populations in the Sudan and Nubia. Moreover, it must be realized that the results of Mameluke attacks against Mecca is that these attacks enhanced Islamic prestige and instilled the ascendancy of the Arab immigrants in the Sudan. Thus under this climate of political occupation, economic disruption, and social disintegration Islam and Arabians began their recruitment of an oppressed people. The Arab immigrants became the chief beneficiaries because, unlike in Egypt where the Mamelukes viewed them as unproductive economic "pests" and political malcontents, in the Sudan, they were seen as useful assets of Islam in a frontier state, hence they were a strong force for collaboration.

Thus, while this study does not dispute the willingness of the Arab immigrants to take black women as-breeding mates it does not view such a willingness as being indicative of the Arabs' lack of racial prejudice and their desire to construct a racially integrated society. On the
contrary, the Arabs' participation in intermarital mating is seen as a means both of supplementing the Arab population in the host and concurrently weakening African identity racially and culturally.

Under the circumstances, it would be erroneous to assume that the Arab's willingness to marry black women represented an honest desire on their part to create a racially integrated society. After all, it must be remembered that the mating was always a one-way enterprise, in the sense that it was always an Arab male who took an African female, as was a slave of 'free women, as a wife, concubine and lover with regard. There is no evidence to show that blacks, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, ever married Arab women. Thus the utilization of racial mixture as an integrative device was strictly a one-way concept in practice, and the resultant progeny were invariably Arab in their attitudes and culture. But even then, as Neal Ri has correctly observed:

"Evidently as to whether such-and-such a family is really Arab by descent or not, and evaluations of family genealogy partly in terms of lighter shades of color, have all remained an important part of the heritage of Sudanese life in the assimilated north and precedent based on color have by no means disappeared."

Whether the premium that has been placed on Arab blood and general preference in genealogy is due to the dominance of Arab culture and religion or it is merely reflective of a piscated-ness among racial prejudice or economic and political control is hard to ascertain. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Arab attitudes to intermarriage have always been repressive.

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77 Neal, Black Arabs in Comparative Perspectives, p. 67.
Historically, the Arabs have always tended to intermarry as long as it is an Arab man marrying other ethnic groups. In such marriages the Arabs have not attached any stigma to the union, and the progeny have always been accepted into the tribe of the father. However, when an Arab woman is married to a non-Arab man, a different set of stipulations has often arisen. As Mazrui has observed:

The logic of paternal descent necessarily entails that there should be disapproval of an Arab girl marrying a non-Arab (be he Negro, an African or European). After all, the children of such a union would not themselves be Arab.73

The conclusive logic of this approach is that it makes the blood of the Arab males and their male descendants the racial norm of Arabism, and just as Islam requires that all good Muslims who can afford it must undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca to kiss the black stone, so is it that only the Arab male and his male descendant can transmit and retain the perpetuity of Arab blood.

On the face of it, this rigid and asymmetrical marriage principle is almost racist but for the fact that it permits the Arab male to marry whomever he pleases regardless of color, race, tribe, or creed in accordance with the teachings of Islam. But while Islam recognizes no racial or ethnic distinctions in regard to marriage, it emphatically recognizes religious distinctions. Thus, while racially mixed marriages among Muslims are fully valid in Islam, religiously mixed marriages are more complex. Thus, while a Muslim male may marry a Jewess or a Christian woman without necessarily converting her (although a very rare phenomenon) a marriage between a non-Muslim male and a Muslim woman is not valid.

73Mazrui, p. 70.
In orthodox Islam, intrusion (fitrah), however, is not the only method that was used to enrich the Sudanese brand of Aramah since there was never enough Arab blood to transmit Arab blood to every Sudanese who embraced Islam and claimed Arab descent. Indeed, there is more evidence of supplementation by using the Sudan that calls for comment here. This is connected with the adoption of the Arabic tribal system that started with the Imam Jumea Mahdi during the fourteenth century. At its earliest stage, acculturation started through the trip processes of conversion to Islam, the learning of Arabic as the language of the Quran and sunnah, and the acceptance of Arab culture as a way of life for all good Muslims. However, as the Muslims in Egypt flooded the beleaguered Christian kingdom of Aulia with Arab political overlords, these three themes of acculturation were reinforced by the strength of Arab assimilation movements. Fortunately for the Aramah, the Sudanese population was under severe pressure of political attacks, which culminated in economic exploitation and the capture of the society's customs and beliefs—a process that occurred in the ruthless uprooting of the Sudanese population, thus leaving the Arab immigrants in positions of influence and leadership. The Sudan situation was further compounded by the constant demand for slaves by the conquering Hamilco peoples and those Arab collaborators who acted as principal and associates of the new frontier state of Islam. Naturally, the Aramah seized this opportunity to enrich themselves economically and

to expand their harvests.

In order to survive, the Subhims converted to Islam and took to Arab culture. Yet once they accepted Islam and the Arab culture, they sought to legitimate their new way of life by assimilating themselves into the Arab tribal system. This was particularly true of the uprooted peasantry which had become a target for enslavement. Indeed, for the Subhian peasantry, it may be argued that the adoption of Islam and its Arab culture was seen as the only way of escaping the burden of slavery. But the adoption of Arab tribal system also entailed a rejection of Subhims' polytheistic past, which many of them regarded as the basis of their enslavement in an emerging Islamic society.

Perhaps it should be emphasized here that this phenomenon of rejecting one's past after conversion to Islam was not peculiar to the Subhims. Other converts to Islam, the Egyptians, the Lebanese (Phoenicians originally) and the Assyrians, just to mention a few, had done the same thing by adopting an Arab identity. As Abd Al-Hamid has recently argued,

For the Subhims, their non-Islamic past, like their pre-Islamic past, was far from a part of the tablighiyya, the "age of ignorance," or "world of darkness," and they could not therefore identify themselves with either, any more than the Musa... populations of, say, Egypt or Iraq could identify themselves with Subhims.7

Therefore, as in Egypt, where a people with a glorious past had been forced to align itself in favor of Islam and Arab culture, the overburdened Subhims opted for a new identity of 'Arabism.' In religious terms, however, this was still rationalized because it is the time-honored claim of Islam...

that it is a religion, a civilization, a way of life, and a policy that
accordingly defines ethnic and racial distinctions. But the historical
truth is that "Arab" unscientific as the term is, has continued to
define the adoption of Arabs by people who were racially regarded as "Black" (Sudan) as distinct from the people of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and
the Berber of North Africa, who were regarded as "White" (Sudan) and
therefore akin to the original Arabs of Arabia who founded the Caliphate
empire. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the processes of Islamiciza-
tion and Arabization, coupled with assimilation, did culminate into a
racial and ethnic fluidity that led to the rise of a minority Sudanese
population that, collectively, claimed an Arab identity which is al-
though historically questionable.

Thus, commenting on the rise of Arabism in the northern Sudan,
Nawari has observationally argued:

"In the Sudan, ethnic fluidity has been a persistent
feature of the whole process of assimilation. It is true
that the initial hopes of assimilation did in-
clude the coming of large numbers of Arabs. It is
also true that Arab immigration continued in varying
volumes over many years. But Sudanese Arabs them-
selves often greatly exaggerate the number of Arabs
who came in. Much of the population of anything but
Arabs is a population of mixed heritage which
rather than being an exact, well-defined group, grew up,
of varying authenticity, establishing the awareness of
different groups."

Nawari is simply reconciling the terms projected by an Arab
Diplomat, Nawari.

Unfortunately we know remarkably little of the way in which Arabization was accomplished. The whole of our knowledge is derived from two different types of source: the first, a limited number of contemporaneous medieval Arabic writings and the second, a large body of Sudanese genealogical traditions which in their present form were compiled at a much later date.\(^7\)

But while there is a lack of evidence to substantiate the Arsames of many of the Arab Sudanese, there is no doubt that their claim to Arab identity is a good measure of the degree of their cultural absorption and a rejection of their Black identity. Furthermore, the choice of an Arab identity may also be seen as an indication of the potential social, economic and political advantages that could be derived from one's obvious association with the Arabs as a religious and economic elite group that was enjoying the support and prosperity of the external elements that alternately imposed their will on the Sudan. This point is aptly acknowledged by another Arab Sudanese, Said El Paawi,

The north is, and has been since the 16th century, predominantly Muslim and predominantly Arab, the last word being used in this context to refer not to a homogeneous racial type, but, in a historical sense, to denote those people who migrated from Arabia to the Sudan and their descendants and the continental Hejaz who were absorbed into the Arab and adopted their culture—thus the present "Arabs" of the northern Sudan reflect, therefore, the continuous long process of racial amalgamation between their ancestors and the then indigenous peoples of the country.\(^8\)

Historically then, the Arabs in the Sudan may be classified as follows: (a) the few "White" Arabs who have not mixed racially with the

\(^7\)Sa'eed, The Arabs and the Sudan, p. 195.

blacks, (3) the mixed Arabs, or "half-castes," who are the progeny of intermarriage among black females and Arab males; (4) the semi-
blackish Arabs who have adopted Arab tribal genealogies; and (5) the blackish Arabs who have adopted the Arab language and culture but who still acknowledge their indigenous tribal names, e.g., the Hadabe Muslims of Dongola and a large segment of the Bagawas of Kordofan and Darfur. Thus, commenting on the racial outlook of the Bagawas, G. D. Lampen has observed,

The men have usually thick lips and thick noses, and the women are short in stature and very often very short in height, and the prevailing color everywhere is dark rather than white.79

Perhaps nothing illustrates better the bases of Arabism in the Sudan than the case of the "Fallata," a term used loosely there to de-
scribe any immigrant from West Africa. The Fallata, who are found in eastern Sudan, are descendents of the Hausa, Fulbe, Kanuri, and Borki, all of which are leading ethnic groups in Cameroon, Chad, and northern Nigeria. These people were originally pilgrims who, during the nineteenth century, on their return from Mecca, settled permanently in the Sudan. As a floating laboring class, yet Muslim, they soon adopted the Arabic language and culture in order to align themselves with the politically dominant Arab groups, thereby avoiding any identification with the degraded image of "Blackness" in a society where that term was synonymous with "black" (slave) and the dreaded pre-Islamic world of Jabalistas.

79See G. D. Lampen, "The Sukari," in H. A. Gamal, The Arabo-
Egyptian Sudan from Within (London: Faber, 1954), p. 151 and Sudan Notes 
Reviews, XVII, p. 371; also quoted by Brann and, above in the Sudan, p. 30.
This, then, brings us to the question of whether the term "Arab" as used in the Sudan constitutes a racial classification or a cultural
superiority. In order to answer this question one must look at the
rise, development, and expansion of Islam in a historical perspective.
Yet, Islam, as a religion, cannot be discussed without taking into
account the racial attitudes of the Arabs who gave it birth, reared it,
and propagated it to Africa.

Although, racially, the Arabs are not as exclusive as other some-
said people, there is ample evidence to indicate that, in practice, par-
ticularly in their relationships with blacks, the Arabs have manifested
a great deal of racial superiority. This latter point is amply evidenced
in the story of the Zanj rebellion by Tachard. With regard to the impact
of color on the lives of slaves or ex-slaves and their relationships
with the Arabs, the reader may be referred to a poem written by an Egy-
ptian Arab that has already been quoted elsewhere and reads:

Now stupid that a slave or his mate is be who
holds you by his hands, as unlike one who holds
you in his palm.
The morality of the black slave is bounded by
his striking yokes and his teeth.
He does not keep his engagements of today, nor
remember what he said yesterday.\footnote{Also quoted by Landrata, "Beyond Race and Color in Sudan," in The
Journal of Color Residences, 61:7 (1977), 71 and Lewis, "Race and Color in
Sudan, American 3:2 (August, 1930).}

Of course, it may be argued that al-Aminabbi was referring to the
status of blacks as slaves rather than color as such. But this argument
is considered untenable by the writer because there is no similar utilization of the Meccahite, who after all, were also slaves of the Arab rulers and later became their protectors, rulers, and governors. Moreover, as Sundiata has indicated, there is evidence that even the half-brothers who were progeny of Arab-African intermarriage were often begotten by the fact that they carried African blood in them. As evidence, Sundiata quotes the Prophet of Islam's response to a believer who went to the Prophet and complained: "O Prophet, do my blackness, and the ugliness of my face bar me from entry into Paradise?"—how in my tribe I am noble, but in the case the dark complexion of my mother's family has predominated. 51

It is the contention of this study that this self-humiliating posture by the believer reflected the pre-Islamic and racial attitude towards peoples of dark complexion, even when such people were partly Arab by reason of being on Arab fathers; whereas The Shaldun's and al-Munawar's equation of blackness with ignorance gave a long way to confirm that the Holy Quran's statement on the unity of mankind did not eliminate Arab racial prejudice, prejudice which the Arab immigrant carried with them into the Nile Valley and injected into the minds of those who opted for Arab identity because of social, economic, and political reasons. Thus, even though the Arab Sudanese and exhausted consisted of full Arabs, part Arabs, and sub-cultured Arabs, what mattered most is not the ranges of the complexion of their skin color, but rather how they perceived themselves and acted accordingly. It is thus conceptual whether these people

Who took the Arab identity were not Arabs and/or were followers of a faith that rejects the racial categorization or classification of human beings. After all, it must be remembered, as C. G. Steward has correctly argued, that religion or any ideology for that matter, is not an opaque.

On the contrary, it must be realized that all religions are reflections of the social milieu of which they are a part.

We must establish what racial and/or shades of color distinctions are rooted in... Islam (seg) to what extent these color distinctions in particular social organizations, or between ethnic groups, were translated into Islamic practices or conceptions of Islam...8

Stewart's observations have recently received support from Sundiata:

Neither a stepwise image of color-blind Islam, nor its opposite, draw from the piling of vases upon vases, really says a great deal about the nature of race relations in the Islamic context. An attempt to delineate a society's functioning solely from classical literature may be nothing more than an exercise in antiquarianism.87

Moreover, in discussing race and color in Islam it is important to separate Islam as an ideology from Arabic civilization, which became Islamic civilization albeit with some modifications. As an ideology, Islam was embodied in the Qur'an, and by extension in the Sharia (Islamic Law) and ummah. The latter two were developed by those Arabs who helped in the expansion of Islam during the earlier days. These Arabs were sometimes of their imperial roles as Arabs and guardians of the empire. Yet it could also be argued that it is not enough to pursue the

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82. See Stewart, "Race and Color in Islam: Some Mauritanian Notes," Also quoted by Sundiata, p. 3.
87Sundiata, p. 2.
difference between Islam as an ideology and Islamic civilization, because Islamic civilization was never a mirrored reflection of Islam as an ideology. On the contrary, Islamic civilization reflected the multiplicity of factors that the expanding Umma encountered. As Dumbata has observed, it is out of this multiplicity of factors that different patterns of race relations emerged. In such situations, the race relations were characterized by different patterns and proportions of ethnic composition and contacts. Thus the Arab-African encounter must be viewed in the context of specific areas and times. This approach implies a disregard of what Islam as an ideology proclaims and an adoption of a critical stance that is dictated by, or based on, the actual local conditions. This is exactly what Dumbata means when he writes:

Discussions of Islam and race relations must be specific in terms of time and place. In spite of the frequent positioning of a monolithic Islam which acts as an institution and relationship in its own right, it is quite obvious that economic and social realities greatly determine racial interaction in a particular context. Race relations vary widely in contiguous areas and even among groups within areas. Within Islam (as a civilization) we must allow for the possibility of a range of realism and attitudes greater than that in Christian areas between Istanbul, Johannesburg, and Juba. 2

This is also precisely what this study has attempted to do with regard to the state of Afro-Arab societies in the Sudan. The study fully recognizes the fluidity of ethnic and race relations in the history of the Sudan and acknowledges that in the midst the term "Arab" acquired
a new and broader meaning. But it was, nevertheless, a meaning that em-
phized the black identity instead of supplementing it.

The immediate question that crops up when examining the nodes of 
self-identification in the Sudan is whether the social, economic, and 
political relations were molded by racial criteria alone. Put different-
ly, the question is whether the Africans or Blacks who have opted for 
arab identity in the Sudan have done so because of ideology—that is, 
the religion of Islam alone—or because of the social, economic, and 
political amenities that the volatile and destabilized political climate 
in the Sudan bestowed on those who claimed an Arab racial identity. 

It is important to observe that no ideology can successfully eliminate 
physical differences. Consequently, it follows that physical differences 
are more than likely to be incorporated into the social realities. This 
is not to suggest that all physical traits are not to be associated with 
institutionalized discrimination. On the contrary, as Ernest L. Barth 
and Donald L. Hoef have observed, “numerous physical traits are highly 
visible, but in any given society few are associated with institutionalized 
discrimination.” This is obviously true of the Sudan, where the term 
“Arab” does not reflect the Arabian physical traits alone, but the willing-
ness of the individual to forsake his or her Black identity and to adopt 
as Arab identity. Thus in defining an Arab in the Sudan, one must abandon 
the physical anthropological definition of race and acquire a function-
al definition.

8Ernest L. Barth and Donald L. Hoef, “Conceptual Frameworks for 
the Analysis of Race Relations: An Evaluation,” Sociol Profess 7 
(March 1972), 338.
A functional definition here is one that stems in large from the consumption of Islam and the Arab culture language and identity as the expressive arms with which to conflate rejection of an African or Black identity. Thus those who succumbed to this concept were accused as Arabs and mobilized in the crusade against Africans or Blacks (who in the eyes of the invading Mamlukes from Egypt and the Arab settlers who were seeking political control, represented a political opposition to the Arab-Islamic imperial culture). It is because of this functional definition that this study sees the adoption of Arab culture and identity as a strategic process of supplementing Arab-Islamic imperial motives rather than as a mere diffusion of cultural inspired by a central religious ideology. And the question of whether the adoption of an Arab identity carried with it the seeds of racism, as we know that term today, should depend on whether the expression of an Arab identity resulted in extra privileges or not.

As stated before, racism may be defined as a doctrine which attributes the evil or alleged features of a cultural or physical definable group and seeks or attempts to support those alleged features as criteria for the rewarding or withholding of desirable social, economic, and political amenities. In the case of the Sudan, therefore, the question is whether the adoption of an Arab identity enabled or qualified one to receive social, economic, and political privileges that the Mamluke invaders were carrying for themselves and their Arab collaborators.

The answer to this question has been well documented in the chapter...

dealing with the Mameluke destruction of the Coptic Christian dynasty, where it was replaced by the Ayma Khans, a branch of Subiates who, after Islamization, opted for an Arab identity. Henceforth, it must have become quite apparent to the rest of the Subiates that there were definite dividends to be gained by taking on this new Arab identity. Such an analysis is supported by P. Van de Berche's definition of what constitutes racism:

Racism is any set of beliefs that organizes unintentionally transmitted differences (whether real or imagined) between human groups are intrinsically associated with the presence or absence of certain socially relevant abilities or characteristics, hence that such differences are legitimate basis of limiting distinctions between groups socially defined as races. ⁶⁸

As such, it is unlikely that Van de Berche's definition of racism would stand up to the Sudanese racial classifications of the Arabs, there is no doubt that those who adopted the Arab identity acquired a new definition for themselves—a definition that granted them entry into the exclusive club of Arabs who, unlike the rest of the Sudanese blacks, were automatically linked to or associated with the stature of being Arabs from Egypt, Arabia, and Maghrib. Since there is no evidence that there were indigenous Arabs in pre-Islamic Sudan, there is no doubt that the Arabs who served as the nucleus of the Arabs in the Sudan came from Egypt, Arabia, and Maghrib and were invariably white Arabs (Sudan Arabs). Under the circumstances, it is not unreasonable to argue that the term "Arab" has continued to evoke a racial connotation even though not all of those who have embraced it in the Sudan have Arab blood in their veins.

⁶⁸ Van de Berche.
Nevertheless, to this day, the term "Arab" as used in the Sudan, implies a racial and cultural superiority that is associated with an Arab origin (albeit fictitious) and an Arab Islamic civilization that is the basis of Afro-Arab hegemony in the modern Sudan.

In this, Sudan's Arabism is no different from Lambaré's Arabism, which was destroyed by the Lambaré revolution of 1951, even though one must hasten to add that the Arabs in Lambaré spoke Wolof but not Arabic. All the same, the similarity between Sudan's brand of Arabism and Lambaré's Arab oligarchy cannot be denied. In both situations the original Arabs were a minority that inflated its ranks through miscegenation, cultural assimilation, and conversion to Islam. This is amply proven by statistical evidence. But the similarity is sociologically and politically remarkable in that, in both situations, a numerically a racial minority group had given its identity to a locally produced miscellaneous racial group, creating a basis for claims to political leadership and thus establishing a political hegemony. It is, therefore, the contention of this study that this type of hegemony cannot be divorced totally from the mythical display of race because it is not exclusively derived from aculturization and linguistic differences, as in the case of the Creoles in Sierra Leone or the Amharo-Liberians in Liberia. Even though the Arabs of the Sudan appear racially black (not all of them to be sure), they are nevertheless aware of their own Negroid or black in their orientation and physical identification.

This assertion to a black identity and a rigorous tilt towards Arabism has been noted by other observers, including Arab nationalists. Thus, in an interesting study of literary trends and self-identification in the Sudan,
Mohammed al-Numayy, an Egyptian Arab, was puzzled by the northern Sudanese attachment to Islam and their rejection of their black heritage and environment. And, it is most interesting that Numayy sought to explain the Sudanese attachment to Islam in terms of Anglo-Egyptian conquest:

The Sudanese, having been defeated and humiliated by the Anglo-Egyptian forces, needed psychological reassurance, which they could not find either in their Arabic past or in the realities of contemporary Africa. Instead of helping them to regain their lost self-confidence, Africa would have the effect of accentuating their feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis both the British and their nominal partners in the new regime, the Egyptians. Almost involuntarily, therefore, the Sudanese turned their backs on Africa and became pre-eminently attached to the glories of past Islam, which, together with the traditions of classical Arabic culture and thought, provided the necessary psychological props.

It is most curious that Professor Numayy sought to explain the Sudanese attachment to Islam in terms of a nineteenth-century external factor and overlooked the earlier and more crucial external factors such as the Mamelukes, the Ottoman Turks, and Mohammed Ali, which, in the opinion of this study, were the decisive embassiators of Islam in the Sudan. Otherwise, Islam would have been claimed by the entire Islamic belt were Islam as old as in the eastern Sudan. Under the circumstances, this study rejects Numayy's explanation of Sudan's easy entry into Islam as a psychological escape and adheres to the thesis that Islam in the Sudan was injected and fostered by external forces that were sympathetic to and supportive of the Arab-Islamic culture.

In taking this position, the writer is not unaware of the fact that

the Mamluks had been subordinated to the Arabs during their first encounter in 631 A.D. However, as the studies by Adams and Bosca have shown, this monarchy was almost a sham, even though Nabiya was forced to accept a treaty that reduced it to the lowly status of a tributary state. In practice, however, Nabiya retained a sovereign state and faithful to Christianity until the Mamluks assumed power in Egypt in 1260 and embarked on a policy of active aggression against Nabiya. Their reasons for this aggression were: First, the Mamluks wanted to take some of the Nabiya wealth to make sure that Nabiya was not used by Arab political ambitions in Upper Egypt as a retreating safety valve. Second, Nabiya had refused to pay the annual tribute to the Arab government in Egypt and had sought to capture the port of Nabiya because of its role for an exit and contact with the outside world. Third, the Mamluks, faithful Muslims who regarded themselves as the protectors of the Islamic empire who had successfully waged a war against the Christian Crusaders, were reluctant to consist with a Christian state on their southern flank. And fourth, the Mamluks viewed Nabiya as an unsanctioned frontier state where they could keep their Arab political influence who were destabilizing their regime in Cairo. Therefore the Mamluks, besides destroying Nabiya's political independence, flooded that multicultural society with a mass of Arab refugees and eventually installed a hybrid Arab king on an already polarized Nabiya kingdom.

Perhaps it should be mentioned here that the emphasis on external factors as the ultimate arbiter for the rise of an Afro-Arab hegemony in the Sudan does not completely exclude the role played by the Sudan's geographical proximity to Egypt, Arabia, and the Maghreb. Nor does it ignore the vigor of Islam as an all-encompassing doctrine and the Arabs as proud representatives of a successful imperial culture with immense symbolic power. Rather, the emphasis on external factors as the chief determining force in the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony is based on the obvious fact that, by 1935, the time when the Arabs gained ascendancy in Khartoum, the Arabs, as such, were a politically spent force. Consequently, it is unlikely that on their own they could have defeated the Mahdist Khedive. There are, of course, historians who would argue that it is more fruitful to distinguish the Hamalakes from the broader continuum of the Arab-Islamic empire since the Hamalakes were born free soldiers of the Islamic empire even though they were non-Arab and had a slave background. The response of this study to this argument is that the responsibility for deflecting the Hamalakes as being non-Arab and unrepresentative of the Arab empire rests solely with the Arab historians themselves.91

There has also been mention of Egypt's geographical proximity to the Sudan as a crucial factor in the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony in the Sudan. In a personal note to this writer Professor Peter Gross questioned the validity of this study's apparent projection of Egypt as an "oppressor" of the Sudan by stipulating that, in his view, Egyptian-Sudanese

relationships are characteristic of a coastal versus a hinterland state. This study does not accept the view that Egyptian-Sudanese relations have been limited to the normal disputes that are typical of exterior versus interior states. This is because all historical facts show that Egypt has always been a willing collaborator and partner in all the alliances that eventually reduced the Sudan into an Arab estate. It was, indeed, such collaboration and partnership that led to the birth of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium in 1908. This, of course, is not a denial of the historically shared cultural values that evolved between the two countries as a result of neighborly contacts and trade even before the rise of Islam. Rather, what this study has done is to point out that Egypt has always allied itself with every conqueror of the Sudan and then used that conquest to assert its claim on the Sudan as its home province.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To recapitulate, the Arab-Jewish conquests of the seventh century were political as well as religious ventures from Arabia who took on and defeated two mighty empires: Persia and Byzantium—Euphrates, of which Egypt was the leading province in Africa. And although Nebi had strong cultural links with Egypt, both in terms of ancient pharaonic culture and the ancient Christian faith, it had escaped the Roman "pacification," thus remaining outside the influence of Greco-Roman colonization.

The Arab warriors were fired by the new religion of Islam and viewed

themselves at its vanguard. Simultaneously, the Arabs were both and kin of the Prophet Mohammed. This fact alone was decisive in their looking upon themselves as the "harem folks" of Arabia and their language as the revered medium of the Qur'an. Thus, from the beginning, Islam and Arabian were synonymous in the eyes of these conquerors.

Therefore, it is no wonder that, despite their numerically small numbers, in all the countries that they conquered, Islamic and Arab culture were imposed with a remarkable swiftness simultaneously. The only immediate exception was Persia where, even though Islam was successfully imposed, the Persian language was able to survive. And here, it was because of the strength of the Persian civilization as an autonomous imperial culture that it was able to withstand the Arab impact, absorbing the religious aspect and interacting with others, but still retaining its distinctive personality as Iranian instead of Arab.

Unlike Persia, Egypt—"the gateway to India"—was obviously unable to resist and withstand the twin pressure of Islamization and Arabization, despite its reputa as the cradle of an ancient civilization.

Rightly or wrongly, the swift Islamization and Arabization of Egypt still remains academic. There are those who attribute Arab-Islamic success to the many years of Greek-Roman overrule and the sectarian enmities that had exposed its ancient Christian faith; but there are also those who attribute the Arab-Islamic success to the exhaustion of Egypt's ancient civilization because the many years of alien occupation had denied it a chance for self-revitalization.95 Whatever was the cause, 

95Timmingham, Islam in the Sudan, p. 62.
the consequences was that the Arabs were able to impose their religion, language, and culture on the Egyptians who, with the passage of time, embraced Arabic and came to feel that they too were Arabs. Indeed, unlike in Persia, where Arab-Islamic and Persian civilizations existed substantially on a level of balance and reciprocity, Egypt became a springboard of Arabs into an effective staging ground for further Arab-Islamic expansion into sub-Saharan and northwest Africa, which the Arabs named Maghrib.

To be sure, however, the initial Arab-Islamic incursion into Sub-Saharan was launched within the end of the first decade of Egypt's occupation. This happened in 651 A.D., when Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. ibn Tamim, the Arab governor of Egypt, led an unprovoked attack against the Christian kingdom of Sub-Saharan and imposed a tributary treaty on it. Although the terms of the treaty were a heavy burden on Sub-Saharan, the valiant resistance offered by Sub-Saharan was sufficient to keep the Arabs at arm's length, allowing Sub-Saharan to retain some of its sovereignty as long as it paid an annual tribute to Cairo and remained loyal to the new state that might prevent the Arab conquest of Egypt. However, since the tribute that Sub-Saharan had to pay to the Arab rulers of Egypt was in the form of slaves and cattle, Sub-Saharan was forced to become a slave-hunting state in order to meet its imposed obligations to the Arab overlords. This alone, naturally, intensified the hostility between Sub-Saharan and its southern neighbors, the Christian kingdom of Axum, thus making it impossible for the two isolated Christian states to build an effective and unified front against

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the Arab-Islamic forces that were converging on the Nile Valley. 25

Moreover, as the Arab-Islamic rulers adopted a policy of recruiting non-Arabs into the ranks of their fighting men, Egyptians too were added into the Islamic armies, thus being initiated into the Islamic faith long before Islam made a headway into Phuthia. As evidence of this, Carl Brookclain has observed that, during the Fatimid rule in Egypt, there were more than 20,000 Phutian soldiers in Egypt who later were expelled as a result of what appears to have been a racial conflict between them and the Berbers, who had joined with the earlier Transilc Manbulicans. 26 Reportedly, these Phutian soldiers retreated to the south towards their homeland. Although we have no evidence to suggest that these disbanded soldiers were hostile to their still-Christian kingdom, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that they might have constituted the earliest nucleus of Arabo-speaking Phutians and adherents of the Islamic faith. 27

But the most active and effective Islamic assault against Phutia did not come about until 1275 A.D., fifteen years after the Manbullic praetorians took over the Arab-Islamic empire and established the most historic and glorious slave dynasty in the world. Emerging victorious


26 See ibid.

against the Christian Crusaders, and having saved the Islamic empire from the Mongol onslaught which had ended with the destruction of Bagd
and the Abbasid dynasty, the Fatimids were extremely suspicious of all foreigners, especially Christians. For this reason alone, if not for the greed and stupidity that characterized their expeditions living, the Fatimids were the Muslim rulers least likely to coexist with a Christian kingdom on their southern flank. Nevertheless, available evidence suggests that the Fatimids' move against Mecca in 1779 was provoked by the Hijazi kings' [segment cut out against the part of Mecca, which the Fatimids misinterpreted as an attempt on his part to establish an alliance with theCrusaders who were still occupying Jerusalem]. All the same, and whatever were the intentions of the Hijazi attack on Mecca, the move amounted to a fatal invitation to the Fatimids to advance on a sector of aggression against Mecca which culminated in the destruction of the Christian kingdom of Mecca and the establishment of a hybrid Muslim king of the Hanun Karun clan. Henceforth Mecca was opened as an Arab-Islamic frontier state, and the Arab refugees began to flock into the Saj Valley. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to indicate that the reduction of Mecca into an Arab-Islamic territory did not signal the end of the African ability to resist the Arab-Islamic onslaught from the north. Thus, in 1904, another African kingdom, in the tradition of the Saj Valley emerged under the name of the Punt, or the Black Sultanate of

The first ruler of the Punj kingdom was Amara Bussina. Although the origin of the Punj warriors has remained clouded, it is the considered opinion of this writer that the Punj were either descendants of the Nabataeans from the north or a mixture of Nabataeans and the Shilluk. This conclusion is based on three factors. First, there is the evidence provided by the Jewish adventurer David Hebenst, who visited Bussina in 1922 and observed that Amara Bussina, the first king of the Punj, was black, as were all the citizens of the kingdom. Hebenst’s observations were confirmed two hundred years later by David Bruce in 1932. Moreover, Bruce went even further and stated that the original Punj were Shilluk warriors who came there by canoes. The second factor is the ritual and tools used by the Punj Royal Family. The crown of the Punj was decorated with the horns of a bull; while the royal chair was a stool, a time-honored symbol of African royalty throughout the Sudanese belt and the whole of West Africa. The third factor is the fact that the original Punj were polytheist and not Muslim. This is acknowledged by the Abdullah Asbe who were the sworn guards of the Arab-Islamic forces in the Nile Valley. Suffice it to say, the Abdullah Asbe were under the Punj, enjoyed the subordinate title of Mungil, and paid tributes to the Punj king until 1827, when Mahamed Ali overran the Punj Sultanate.

For the latest and stimulating work on the Punj, see Wendy James, "The Punj Mystique: Approaches to a People of Sudan History," in Bavilone, T. Jain, Punj and Contexts: The Social Anthropology of Preindustrial (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Languages, 1977), pp. 72-133. For Abdullah Asbe, see L. J. Asell, "Punj Origins," Sudan Notes and Records (1953), 2, 301; also see Trimmings, Islam in the Sudan, pp. 72-75 and pp. 93-98.
The fact that the Fulf kingdom rose almost two hundred years after Nobis fell into the hands of Arab-Islamic forces, and continued to prosper even after the Ottoman Turks took over Egypt from the Mamelukes in 1517, is very significant because it vindicates the contention of this study that the Arab alone did not possess enough force to establish a hegemony over the Sile Valley without the aid of external factors.

By the 16th external factors here is meant the non-Arab forces that assumed the control of the Arab-Islamic empire after the fall of the Mameluke rule in Baghdad in 1541. Thus, the Mamelukes, the Ottoman Turks, and later Mohamed Ali and his Egyptian collaborators in 1890 are the essence of these external factors.

Perhaps it should be made clear that the concept of external factors does not include Islam as a faith which is, nevertheless, recognized as an important factor in the cultivation and nursing of Arabism in the Sile Valley. However, it is the contention of this study that Arabism and Islam are two distinct phenomena, at least in the study of African Arabs. For, whereas Islam is a universal faith, Arabic reform to an attachment to Arab ethnic identity; whereas attachment to Islam as a faith does not imply attachment to Arab ethnic identity. It is this attachment to Arabic, not Islamization, that is the hallmark of Arab—Arab hegemony in the Sile Valley. This point is fully recognized by the northern Arab Sudanese themselves, as the author has observed.

In at least one respect, however, the Sudan is unique among African countries and differs from even those Sudanese states which resemble it best; it is at one and the same time both "African" and "Arab," the combination being present—especially in the six
northern provinces—to a degree and to a manner which are not paralleled in any other country. All Sudanese states share the attribute, frequently associated with the Nilo-Saharan, of forming a bridge between what are usually referred to as "Arab" or North African and "Black" or Sub-Saharan Africa and, as a rule, experience tensions between their northern regions—which are predominantly Islamic in character and outlook—and their southern, mainly pagan or Christian provinces. Not none of these can be said to constitute an Arab-African entity in the same sense or to the same extent as the Sudan. This is obvious for Somalia, Chad, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Senegal. For instance, all of which are to a greater or lesser degree Islamic, and therefore, closely connected with the Arab world, but none of which is either wholly or partly Arabic-speaking like the Sudan.

This writer agrees fully with Abd Al-Hadi that the Sudan is distinct from the rest of the Sudanese States because of its apparent subordination under Arabism. However, strong exception is taken to the claim that the Sudan is more Islamic than the rest of the Sudanese States because it is more Arabised. This writer sees no insurmountable connection between the adoption of an Arab identity and being truly Islamic unless, of course, Abd Al-Hadi is prepared to extend the same logic to the Turks, Iranians, Afghans, Pakistanis, Indonesians, and Malays—all of whom are indisputably Muslim, plus Islamic, but are not Arabised and do not speak Arabic except for religious purposes.

Thus, even though this study concurs with Abd Al-Hadi that the northern Sudan is unique among the Muslim states of the Sudanese Belt because of its adoption of the Arabic language and its assimilation into Arab culture, it still adheres to the thesis that this independent movement...

Arabism was largely affected through the help of external factors which propelled the Arab immigrants into positions of leadership. This process has been adopted without prejudice against other internal factors that facilitated assimilation and Islamization in the northern Sudan. For, as it has been mentioned, geographically, the northern Sudan (Nubia) is a meeting point of the Mediterranean world and Black Africa. This point is amply acknowledged by Abd Al-Rahim:

The fact that the Sudan in general and its northern provinces, in particular, constitute a unique meeting point of Arabism and Africanism is the result of its geographical and historical location. The country is bounded in the northeastern part of the continent so that it is separated from Arabia by the Red Sea (which has been crossed, particularly at its narrow southern end, since man was first able to devise canoes and boats); it similarly borders on Egypt, so which it is also lined by the Nile, while, at the same time, it stretches deep into the heart of Africa... Finally, the Nile and its tributaries, which link the Sudan with West and Central Africa as well as Egypt in the North, is, for the most part, easily navigable throughout the year. 

There is no doubt that, because of this geographical factor, Nubia, though racially and culturally a part of Black Africa, had a long history of close contacts with the Mediterranean world and the Biblical lands, particularly Egypt, and even Arabia. In evidence of this point one may point to the fact that the Nile, pharaonic sculptures, and the pyramids, as well as the ancient historical chronicles of Greece and Rome, have testified to the involvement of the Nubians in the affairs of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Arabia. 

Perhaps the most outstanding
The first example of such involvement in ancient times was the conquest of Egypt by the Muslim King Taha Ya‘qub (A.D. 735-746), who founded the twenty-fifth pharaonic dynasty and then proceeded to conquer Syria and Palestine during the illustrious reign of King Taharqa (A.D. 690-665), who is, by the way, mentioned in the Bible several times. However, because of the rapid development of its economic activities, and the trade that followed them, Palestine tended to be more on the receiving end of events and less of a prime mover, thus as al-Al’abs has observed,

In most cases, however, the trend of conquest or political domination was usually channeled towards Egypt, the most important link between the two worlds, especially after the rise of Islam—now in the opposite direction, both in ancient and modern times. Thus, the Pharaohs, the Persians, the Crusaders, the Ottoman, the Turks, and the Britons—all who governed or conquered Egypt in the past—have, in turn, found it either necessary or desirable to try—with different degrees of success—to extend their influence if not their power beyond the traditional boundaries of Egypt, between the First and the Second Caliphates, into the lands which now constitute the Republic of the Sudan. 103

Explicit in al-Al’abs’s concise observation are the facts that Egypt has always been a gateway to the Sudan and that Egypt’s impact on the Sudan has, on many occasions, been supplemented by external factors, which are, of course, a vindication of the thesis of this study. But it is, of course, more appropriate to add that, of all the invaders and occupiers of Egypt, the most successful ones were the Arabs, who effectively implanted their religion, language, and culture on Egypt and,

103 AL’ABS, pp. 356-357.
through it, attempted to channel the same to the Sahan.

However, this study considers it unrealistic to attribute the apparent successful transplantation of Arabism on the Sudan to the
view of Islam, the fighting ability of the Arabs, and geographical
proximity alone. For, if these were to be accepted as the sole explana-
tions for the success of Arabism in the Sudan, the question would arise
as to why the same process did not take place in Ethiopia and Somaliland,
either of which were equally near to Arabia and both had substantial
converts to Islam. Thus, this study is an attempt to show that external fac-
tors are more substantial causes for the success of Arabism in the Sudan.

The logic of external factors as the most decisive reason for the success
of Arabism in the Sudan is dictated by the fact that the Arab invader
into the Nile Valley did not materialize in large numbers until 1860,
a period when Arab military power was brought to an end by the Anglo-
Indian invasion and the destruction of the Arab Asaafid regime. Henceforth, the
Arabs, as such, became pawns of their erstwhile allies, the Nubians,
and then the Ottoman Turks. And it was the Nubians who destroyed the
Christian kingdom of Mada and flooded it with Arab refugees and immi-
grants who acted as the catalyst in the Islamisation and Arabisation of
the unfolding Islamic Sudan. Eventually, these Arabs, and those Arab-
ised Nubian supporters, were decisively placed in power when, in 1822,
Mohamed Ali overran the disintegrating Black Sultanate of Fumb, thus
turning the Sudan into a province of Egypt.

Admittedly, there is no doubt that the Fumb Sultanate had long
been Islamized and partly Arabized by the time of Mohamed Ali's conquest.
However, the historical truth is that, despite the later-day declared
chronicles that pictured the Punt as descendants of the Cushitic Arabs, this claim was more religiously based than racial or biological. Thus, as Professor Andrew Hess once explained to this writer, this claim was typical of a popular posture by all Muslim rulers who wished to legitimise their power in the eyes of their Muslim subjects. To confirm this, Hess mentioned the semi-Arab Ottoman sultans who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Mohammad despite the obvious fact that they were Turks. Another example of this latter Arab posture may be found in northern Nigeria, where the sultans of Sokoto have always claimed that they are descendants of the Prophet’s tribe, the Quraysh, a claim that has been openly rejected.

But even though external factors played a decisive role in the rise of Arabism in the Sudan, there were also internal factors that fostered the gestation of Islam and Arabism that call for further clarification here. According to Asma, Hashim, and Abd Al-Hasan, the process of the Arabisation of the Sudan, as of Egypt and North Africa, did not start until the rise of Islam in the seventh century, and it was a direct product of Islamisation. Thus, Abd Al-Hasan has made the following observation:

The Arabisation and Islamisation of the Sudan was not primarily the result of military conquest. It was mostly brought about through the agency of Muslim Arab conquerors, who, coming from Arabia across the Red Sea, from Egypt after the conquest of 639, and at a later stage, from the Hijaz, gradually infiltrated the Christian kingdom of Nubia.

That readiness to mix, coupled with the patriarchal system of the Bedouin on the one hand, and the Jewish patriarchal organization of the family and the tribe on the other, had the effect not only of facilitating the stabilization of the immigrants and the spreading of their culture and religion, but also of giving them the reign of power and political leadership in the host society. 68

There is no doubt that Islam bastardized the Arabs from the desert of Arabia. It is equally true that, henceforth, the Arabs, whether as conquering soldiers, traders, or refugees, moved hand-in-glove with their newly found faith wherever they went. Equally true is the fact that the Arabs had a policy of helping themselves to the women of the peoples that they conquered or came in contact with as a way of spreading Islam and expanding their own families. But it is simply not true to assume, as did Al-Rahim, that the Africaness intermarried with the Arabs freely, or that the Arabs married daughters of African kings and chieftains, because of their patriarchal system, passed the reins of power and leadership to the Arabs. The truth is that, even if the Africans had readily given their daughters to these invaders and slavetraders, there simply were not enough kings' and chieftains' daughters to satisfy the number of Arabs who flooded into Arabia, after all, Arabia had only one king. Indeed, if the vast African experience is not unique, most of the African women that the Arabs acquired for their harems were largely drawn from slaves during the course of destabilization caused by repeated rebel slave revolts on the harem.

Nevertheless, the myth that the kings took over Arabia through

marriages to the daughters of Sabian kings and chieftains has persisted simply because no historian has found it necessary to question the validity of this bizarre claim, whose origins may be traced to the Khabshun. Yet, it was this very Urain family that observed that, with the passage of political power into the hands of the various tribes of Juhayna from, the tribe ceased to have an organized and unitary form of government because of the nomadic ways of these Arabs.

And with the conversion of the Sabians the payment of tribute ceased. Then the tribes of the Juhayna arose against each other and divided it with rapier and lance. At first the kings of the Sabians attempted to regulate them, but they failed, then they went over by giving their daughters in marriage. Thus was their kingdom disintegrated, and it passed to certain of the sons of the Juhayna on account of their mothers being Sabian of royal blood. So that there was in the possession of the Juhayna took possession of it and their rule spread over none of the seeds of relationships, because of the separation’s weakness of a system which is opposed to discipline and the administration of one to another. Consequently they are still divided up into parties, and there is no real or authority in their land, but they remain nomads following the rainfall like the Arabs of Arabia.107

Perhaps it would be observed here that, notwithstanding the fact that the Sabian kingdom was destroyed by the Muslim and not by the Arabs, it is most unlikely that children begotten by Arabs with Sabian women (especially Sabian women of royal blood) would have been nomads, since their mothers (who, it is to be assumed, ruled them and brought them up) were unquestionably agriculturists. However, what is more incredible is the fact that most historians have accepted the Khabshun’s argument without any supportive data to show how many daughters of

Boiled kings and chiefs were offered to the Abaynaleaders for marriage. Under the circumstances, this study categorically rejects Im Eshal's thesis.

However, this study accepts the argument that the Abayna did convert to Islam and became one of the kings and their Christian religion was destroyed by the Muslims. This was because, in those days, Islam represented power and prestige in a country where religion had been identified with the royal family, which also meant power and prestige. Thus conversion to Islam was deemed necessary because of the economic and political advantage that it offered. Consequently, it is also emphasised here that conversion to a new religion because of desired economic and political changes is a phenomenon that has been widespread on the African continent and has not been restricted to Islam alone.

It is also equally true that, where conversion has taken place without the havoc of the slave trade and massive external interventions, followed by immigration of aliens who exploited the situation to their own advantage, as in the case of the Arabs in the Sudan, the African identity has not been destroyed or subverted totally by conversion alone. For example, one may mention the case of East Africa, where Islam was introduced by a few Arab immigrants who, instead of subduing the Swahili people, ended up being assimilated themselves. Just even when the Arabs were Arabised or Swahilised, there still was a consistent tendency among the economic, political, and religious elite to opt for Arab identity. This was particularly true in Uganda and Kenya, where the few Arabs established a political hegemony, thus giving the Arab identity certain privileges. However, unlike in the Sudan, Arabic in East Africa...
Lacked reinforcements in terms of a constant supply of new Arab immigrants. In the Sudan the flow of new immigrants from Egypt, Arabia, and Maghreb was permanently maintained because of geographical proximity and the social and economic advantages that the Ottoman Turks accorded to Islam and the Arabs within their empire.

Thus, even though the Fund were Africans, they soon tilted towards Arabism because of political opportunities and religious solidarity. Immigrants, Islam and Arabism became synonymous, especially among the religious elite who also functioned as traders and political leaders within their religious centers, or Darigue as they were known in the Nile Valley.

The role of the Darigue in the advancement of Islam and Arabism in the Sudan is amply acknowledged by Aramavi. Tchidjian. Hauge, and Al-Bahim. Writing on the role of the Arab immigrants and religious leaders in the Islamization and Arabization of the Sudan, Al-Bahim, for example, has observed:

With the added advantage of political control over the central Sudan, the by now largely Arabized groups were able to penetrate the remote parts of the land... the further they went, it became, the better conditioned they became to their new environment and the greater became their influence through the twin media of rural assimilation and Islamization which used a great deal in the religious pantheism or Darigue. 108

It is, perhaps, necessary to observe here that, although the Sudanese Darige have been assimilated by Tchidjian and other students of the Sudan’s Islam to be the main avenue through which Islam was Arabized,
the reverse is also true, in that Arabism was channeled through these
Turko. This point is amply acknowledged by the Arab Subsahceans them-
selves. Abd Al-Rahim, for example, has observed that:

Until at least the beginning of this century, the
Subsahcean Subsaceans identified themselves as members of
different tribes and subtribes, adherents to various
Turko or religious fraternities, belonging to this
or that religion of the country, and as Muslims and
for Arab people. 109

There is no doubt that the Islamization of the Nile Valley was
carried out through the expansion of the religious fraternities or
Taties. However, it is historically incorrect to assume that these
Taties were entirely autonomous and independent in their orienta-
tion, even though some of their leaders were born in the Nile Valley.
Moreover, what is important is whether these leaders viewed themselves
as Africans or Arabs. According to Abd Al-Rahim, most of the religious
leaders perceived themselves as Muslim and/or Arab people because of
their religious and social orientation; but never of themselves
as Subsahcean or Black unless they happened to belong to the less sophisti-
cated, non-Arabized and non-Arabized sections of the population. Thus,
according to Tringham, by the seventeenth century, the Islam of the
Nile Valley reflected ethnic fusion, economic occupation, and the chang-
ing political conditions in the country. Tringham has tabulated the
groups as follows:

First were the riverian sedentary peoples, mainly Subsahcean, who were
not emerging as an Arab-speaking group under the name of Jas'aidaqy-
(southern). These people were the first to take to Islam because of

political and economic pressures brought by the Mamelukes in Egypt. Most of these people had long been in contact with the Arabs in Egypt and converted to Islam as soon after the collapse of Christianity in Nubia. They thus became traders and religious leaders in the expanding Islamic frontier. Like the W奴隶 and Swahili traders of East Africa, they took to the Arab identity partly because they were Muslims and partly because of their new occupations.

Second were the pastoral-nomads. These were Arabs who entered the Nile Valley as political refugees. Pushed by the Mamelukes from Egypt, fleeing refugees, or merely wandering nomads who were looking for better pastures for their cattle, although these Arabs had a life-style that differed greatly from the masses of Africans, they were expanded their ranks by absorbing African nomadic groups and slaves into these, thus creating a new group of black Arab-Speaking people known as the jammam—cattle herders—with Islam as their main religion, thus adding a new dimension to the Arabization process.

Third were the 'Abaj, the black military aristocracy whose rulers converted to Islam during the sixteenth century. Their ability to create a stable atmosphere in the area gave Islam and Arabic language a new social leap forward and social prestige in the heart of the Nile Valley. For it was during the 'Abaj empire that Islam and Arabic made their decisive impact because of the protection that the converted rulers of 'Abaj afforded to the Islamic teachers, visiting holy men, and Islamic traders. 10

Tyringham has also observed that, whereas the second group who

10 Tyringham, Islam in the Sudan, pp. 6-9.
entered the Sudan had their own tribal codes and cared little about in-
Latin law, and the Fuls ruled arbitrarily over their peoples who adhered
in their own indigenous customs. It was not long after the rulers' con-
version to Islam that orthodox Islam began to affect the lives of the
villages and villages because of the changing economic conditions.

Thus, with Allah, a Sudanese account of the lives of the holy men in
the Fuls regime, begins with the following proclamation:

Knowing that the Fuls took control and conquered the land of the Fula in the beginning of the 19th cen-
tury in the year 910/1892, ... In those lands there is no concept of any schools for the current or
religious learning. It is said that a man could divorce his wife, and another man marry her at any time with-
out any period of probation until ShaliikHassan Al-Dawali came from Egypt and taught the people about the probation
period. He lived in the Silla style and built himself a
house, known as the Silla Hamod. At the beginning of the second half of the 19th century the Sultan Nnamu Al-
Dawali appointed the Shaliik as the primary (Jedali
governor), and early in his rule Shaliik Dawali Al-Dawali
came to Egypt to the Hadjdja country and there he
taught Shaliik and the Jedali and the science of Ziga spread
throughout the land... Then came AlDawali Al-Haddabi
Abu Bani and he taught the Sillaik (agricultural science)
and such science exclusive on taught (method of scientific
discovery) and vast reading, and he knowledge spread
in the country... Then came Shaliik Hassan i, Sillaik in
other district who introduced the Shaliik Hadjdah and his
Donodh agreed to the Sillaik, then came Shaliik Hassan al-
Hamid to Sillaik where he taught the science of (medicine of
the holy), science, and the Hadjdah...118

From the above quotation it is evident that the needs of Islamic
influence and science were seen by wise men who seized the
opportunity provided by the Fuls regime, but one cannot divorce the

The Pund and their non-Arab subjects were pagan. Amara Donga is stated to have joined Islam for political reasons. The story is that after Salim, the sulam of Turkey, conquered Egypt in 1517, he sent an expedition into Kond to help Ghurkha Barber (1540), and also established bases as Sawalk (Sawali) and Channow, thus threatening the independence of the Baja and the Punds. Amara took alarm at this as a threat against his own kingdom and sent a message stating that if Salim was thinking of taking the jihadi against him, he should know that he and people were armed and true believers. As proof of this he sent genealogical tables traced back by one Ali Ishaqali, who is responsible for most of the fictitious genealogies in the Baja. To prove that the Pund belonged to the Bani Umayyah—descendants of the Umayyad dynasty.

The Bajis that the Pund converted to Islam and opened their country to Mamluk holy men and Arab traders was also hinted at by Bruce, who, upon his visit to Sawali, the Pund capital, wrote:

The establishing of this monopoly, the king and the whole nation of Dabbeel (Dabali) were pagans. They were soon after converted to Mahommedanism, for the sake of trading with Cairo, and took the name of Pund, which they interpret sometimes jatee, or conquerors, and, other times, free citizens.

In conclusion, it may be observed that it was natural—during these

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112 James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768-1773 (Edinburgh, 1805), pp. 377-378.
113 Bruce, Ibid., pp. 573-574, also quoted by Trimminghan, Islam in the Sudan, p. 84.
The days of slave trade, Islamic expansion, and the Arab traders in the middle—no any ancient existing tribes to join Allah and their subjects to follow suit. And the Punj were no exception. They converted to Islam and encouraged professional holy men (ulfat) and traders from Egypt, Arabia, and Madina to visit and settle in their kingdom, because of political and economic rather than religious reasons.

It was these migrant professional holy men who were responsible for the Islamization of the populace in the Punj empire. And with Islamization came the quest for Arabization as a way of identifying with the Arabs, who were perceived as the original bearers of the new faith which had now become the state doctrine. Arabs also became not only the religious language, but also the lingua franca of an unfolding Islamic state. But even then, it is interesting to note that full Islamization and Arabization was not achieved until the nineteenth century, when the erstwhile Punj polytheism aligarchy was overwhelmed by Muhammad Ali's forces in 1857. This observation is based on the statement by Bruce, who wrote in 1772 that the central region during the Punj was really a mixture of "pagan" faiths and Arab-Muslim elements. 

His place of birth was in a village of Jamada, and it appeared to me that he was still a pagan. He was constantly attended by Hindu priests, powerful conjurers and exorcists, if you believed him. I often conversed with him in great freedom, when it happened that you underdid Hindu, and from then I learned from particularly concerning the situation of the inland part of the country, especially that vast ridge of mountains, Orey and Tangla, which are into
the heart of Africa to the westward, whence they may ancienly have came.\textsuperscript{114}

Bruce's statement clearly indicates that, even as late as the second half of the eighteenth century, the Punj empire was only partly Islamized, and Arabic was only spoken by urban dwellers, traders, and official functionaries. Moreover, Bruce's observation on the Punj empire and its relationship with the Abdullah Arab, whose nominal head was a Manjli, or vassal, is supported by Tristram, who has argued that the Punj king in Sewan exercised his authority by retaining the right to choose his Vaddâl's successor from his family and exacting tribute. For example, in 1610, the Abdullah Arab vicerey, or Manjli, had revolted, but he was defeated and killed. Nevertheless, in accordance with the Punj confederate practices, the Punj king nominated the murdered Manjli's son, Khallil, as successor. In most of the Abdullah Manjli, as the delegated overseer of the "Arab" tribes in the north of Sewan, appointed his own subordinate chiefs, who were known as the Hake, and invested them with the tagliya—late with the sables of the Punj crown.

Regarding the relationship of the Abdullah Manjli and the Hake, Han al-Ghazali, the author of the Sudan's Tahrirat (Lives of Holy Men), has observed:

"if one of these hakes died the whole tribe went together, chose a hake to be their shiek and bring him to the shiek. Then the shiek washed his hands, blessed him with the tagliya having two hakes stuffed with cotton..."

\textsuperscript{114}Bruce, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 377-378.
and wrote him on the hills [foo1] called Kasar. He then addresses him by the title Mass, saying: "Shake- tens be no run" and the Mass kisses his hand and prays for him. Then the Shain orders the name [foo2] dress to be beaten, thus publishing his appointment as Raja over his people.17

The meaning of the names, which was, and still is, the symbol of chieftainship in tribal ceremonies, is very significant, because it points to the undiminishing influence of the Baha and Vallah tribal rituals throughout the Punj empire, even in the largely Islamised and Anglicised north. Indeed, contrary to the popularised myth that the Punj were overwhelmed by the Arabs long before the coming of Muhamed Ali's invasion, the Punj supremacy was weakened not by the Arabs, but by the rise of Muhammad Abu Ikkalik, a Raja pretender who assumed power toward the end of the first half of the eighteenth century. According to Tindal's book, the Baha and Sialik were a Raja, a member of the indigenous groups whom the Punj had conquered. Tindal, commenting on the role of Ikkalik in the decline of the empire, Tindal's has observed:

The Punj supremacy was brought to an end by the rise to power of Muhammad Abu Ikkalik Karur (d. 1776) ... He was instrumental in the defeat of the Hyderabads in 1771, and placed the Punj under their de- fection in Kashmir by the Hyderabads, so that Ikkalik was turned into victory. He attempted to subdue the larger King Bani IV and replaced him by a puppet king. The subsequent history of the Ikkalik supremacy as hereditary rulers is one of internal dissensions, civil war, and civil war until the Turkish invasion of 1827 when they surrendered without fighting.18

17) From Shapil, Nepalese administration (Kathmandu, 1951), pp. 100-101; also quoted by Tindal, op. cit., p. 87.
18) Tindal, op. cit., p. 87.
Admittedly, Tringham points out that by the 1770s the Abdullahs were almost independent of the Pahlí in Semnan because of the fratricidal struggle. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the Arabs had overwhelmed the Pahlí before Muhammad Ali’s invasion—an invasion that was directed from Egypt and spearheaded by Muhammad Ali’s son, his son-in-law, and the Egyptian Arab Khama. This, of course, is not a denial of the Arab presence and growing influence in the Pahlí empire. Rather, it shows that Arab supremacy in the Jile Valley did not reach its culmination until the overthrow of the Pahlí king by his erstwhile slave minister Ishakli, and finally by Muhammad Ali. Yet, as Tringham has discernibly observed, the conditions of origin under the Pahlí was a real mixture of pagan Africa with Islamic-Admin elements. But neither conversion to Islam nor the presence of the Abdullah Arab community constituted a "true" or "pure" Arab hegemony over the indigenous Africans, albeit Islamized and partly Arabized.

Under the circumstances, this study has attempted to draw a distinction between the Islamization and the Arabization of the Pahlí because of political, economic, and religious reasons while still retaining political power and control as an African dynasty and the rise of the Arab immigrants and their African progeny as an elite ruling class in the Jile Valley. But, it is the view of the latter groups as a dominant political elite that the term "Afro-Arab hegemony" refers to. The basis of this distinction is that, even though the Pahlí dynasty was Islamized and Arabized, the title to authority was a mere political gesture not unlike that of the Ottoman sultans who also claimed descent from the Prophet’s family in order to legitimize their political power in the eyes of their
Islam as it entered the Muslim citadels. But much a State did not necessarily alter the racial makeup of the Punj dynasty.

This then brings us to another crucial aspect or process through which Islamization, Arabization, and Arabisation were achieved in the Punj empire. But before we tackle it, we must first define what we mean by Islamization, Arabization, and Arabisation for the purpose of this study.

Islamization is the act of accepting the five pillars of Islam. These are: (1) believing that there is only one God, Allah, and Mohammed is the last prophet, (2) paying the zakah tithe, (3) praying five times a day, (4) fasting during the month of Ramadan annually, and (5) making a pilgrimage to Mecca if one can afford it at least once in one's life. 177 Perhaps it should be emphasized here that of these five pillars, it is only '1' and '2' that are often adhered to by nominal converts. Unlike conversion, Arabization is the process of adopting the Arabic language as one's language and means of communication either because of religious needs or economic and political purposes. In the case of the Nile Valley, and the Punj empire in particular, the Arabic language was adopted because of all three reasons stated above. After the conquest and occupation of Egypt by the Arabs, Arabic became the most important language for all traders and functionaries in the Nile Valley. Thus, when the Punj kingdom became strong, it was in Arabic, since Greek had disappeared with the collapse of Christianity in Mughal and Ahwa during the fifteenth century. Under these circumstances, it is not unreasonable to conclude

that Islam was learned and adopted by the state functionaries not
merely because of conversion to Islam, but rather, because of official
transactions and trading purposes. Arabization, on the other hand,
refers to a more complicated cultural and biological process—a process
that entailed integration and assimilation into the Arab-tribal sys-
tem.

Perhaps it is necessary here to state that, as a cultural and
biological process, Arabization owed its origin to the presence of three
groups of Arabs in the Sudan: The Arab tribes who entered the country
through Khash as refugees and settlers; the Arab traders and Arabized
Negro merchants who flocked towards the south after the collapse of
Khash as an independent political entity; and the Maliki teachers and
soldiers who were invited by the Punt rulers after their conversion to
Islam. Although each of these three groups had its own role to play,
and functioned separately, they all encouraged and fostered the trial
process of Islamization, Arabization, and Arabization. It is also
important to mention that it is the presence of these native Arabic-speak-
ing groups that laid the foundation for the rise of a distinctive bi-
cultural experience in the Nile Valley or what has come to be known as
the Sudan Republic.

Now, the distinction between Sudan’s Islamic experience and the
rest of the Sudanese belt lies in the fact that it involved both a bi-
cultural and linguistic dimension. This point, which has escaped the
attention of many scholars, has recently been alluded to by Tull who
has Dissertation observed:

The Islamic experience in the eastern part of the
Sudanic belt, the northern part of the modern Sudan
represents a distinctive element within Africa's Islamic landscape. The distinguishing feature sets the general cultural background of the area, the way Islam was introduced, and the special character of the history of this part of the Nile Valley.103

Central to Yill's analysis is, of course, the Nile Valley's geographical and cultural connections with Egypt in both pre-Islamic and post-Islamic days, and the continual presence of the Arabs at the center of the evolution of Sudan's Islam. And it was this presence of these Arabs that fostered the development of two general sets of attitudes that have helped the perception of Arab identity in the Sudan. These sets of attitudes are: the identification of Islam with the Arabic culture, and the perception of the state as the protector of Islam. This, of course, created an inseparable relationship between political, social, and religious loyalties.

Therefore, in order to understand the nature and development of Sudan's Islam, one must look at the role played by the Arab immigrants. It is these Arab immigrants who were the central feature that dominated and dominated the development of Sudan's bicultural Islam, as Yill has observed.

The major vehicles for introducing Islam were the migratory Arab tribes and the conquering Arabic-speaking monarchies. These people came to dominate the northern Sudan and, despite much fighting and friction with local people and culture, they maintained their Arab character. Even now, through this cultural dominance, there is a strong tendency for non-Arab groups to adopt Arab customs, language, and Islamic dress, even to claim Arab origin. It is within this context...

context that Islam in the northern Sudan came to be closely identified with Arabic language and culture. Thus, the processes of Islamization and Arabization tended to be mutually supportive if not in fact virtually a single line of development. \textsuperscript{179}

This, of course, is not to deny the fact that many Nubians, both non-animists and Arabized, had taken to Islam long before the rise of the Funj empire. Rather, what is being suggested here is that these earlier Muslim Nubians and Ngees were Muslims only in terms of religious identification, but paid little attention to Islamic learning, and possessed little knowledge of many of the tenets of their adopted faith. It is, therefore, not surprising that their role in the spread of Islam was limited to the creation of a climate that was conducive to the future active proselytization which began at the end of the seventeenth century when the Hamilakbes had completely destroyed the Nubian kingdom and its Christian church, thus leaving the country open to Islamic influence and power.

As it happened, during the sixteenth century, the political vacuum was again filled by the Funj sultans at Sennar. However, because of political and economic reasons, the Funj, too, had to convert to Islam, and it was the Funj rulers who encouraged wandering Muslims and Arab teachers to come and establish themselves in all the regions of the empire and to develop institutions through which Islam and Arab culture were channelled. This point is strongly supported by Hill who writes:

\begin{quote}
During the sixteenth century most of the northern Sudan came under the control, either direct or nominal, of the Funj sultanes. These rulers in Sennar encourage wandering Muslims teachers to come and establish
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{179} Hill
themselves in the Sudan. It was through these men that an Islamic society became firmly established in the region. These teachers continued and confirmed the tendency to identify Arab and Islam. Virtually all of them were Arab Muslims, coming to the Sudan primarily from the Arab parts of the Islamic world. If they were Muslims they had received their education in Arab centers of Islamic learning and considered themselves Arabs. 100

Therefore it was these wandering Muslim Arab teachers who instituted the teaching of Islam, Arabic language, and culture in the country, thus making Islam and the Arab culture mutually inclusive. This process was, of course, made possible because of certain factors that favored it: the conversion of the Funi tribes who acted as hosts and patrons to the Muslim Arab teachers, the presence of Arabs in the country, and the prestige of Islam as the religion of the powerful northern neighbors on whom the Funi depended for their external trade. Under the circumstances, conversion to Islam and adoption of the Arabic language and culture were perceived as desirable tactical devices for strengthening Islam, increasing trade, and warding off Ottoman hostility from the north. Perhaps nothing illustrates the importance that the Funi attached to this strategy that unwittingly fostered Arabo-Islamic identity than the behavior of their own rulers who, despite their obvious African origins, soon opted for a cultivated Arab-Islamic origin. This is clearly admitted by Hassan, who has summarized that "as soon as the Funi converted to Islam and established themselves as the rulers of the Arab and Arabized Muslims they tended to associate themselves with the Arab, and thus adopted an Arab ancestry specifically claiming descent from the

100. Ibid., p. 89.
early noble Arab Swarthy clan."[121]

Commenting on this politically and economically motivated identification, Voll has also observed:

"This attitude of close identification of Arab and Muslim thus was built into the nature of Islamic Islam. There were many non-Arab elements in the north who did not specifically adopt the Arabic language or Arab society. However, the Islam in which they participated sustained no Arab orientation. Among the Buyides, for example, where the non-Arab identity was strongly maintained, religious teachings and rituals were still largely in Arabic because this was the preferred medium of instruction. The language of any education, especially religious (which was the basic formal education), was Arabic, and it was possible to stay as late as the beginning of the twelfth century that Arabic was the only written language in the Sudan. In this way any Sudanese, whether Arab or non-Arab, became at least partially Arabised in receiving religious education."[122]

From the above quotation it is most apparent that, because of the practical importance that the Sunni attitude of conversion to Islam, the privileges accorded to the wandering Muslim Arab teachers and Arab teachers, coupled with the presence of Arab immigrants in the country and the rapid disintegration of local traditions, Islam and the Arab culture acquired growing prestige that soon began to replace traditional religious, languages and cultures, thus clearing the way for the rise of the Arab-Islamic culture as the dominant culture in the Nile Valley. In this way, Islamisation and Arabisation became one and the same thing. To paraphrase Voll, where Islamisation was possible, Arabisation was also present. But most importantly, because Islamisation was carried out through the Sufi tariqas, or mystic brotherhoods, which were invariably

[121] Sassen, Arabs and the Sudan, p. 176.
led by immigrant holy men or teachers or Analised Ulama who had received their religious education in Arabic, Arabic became the only medium of religious education.

Observing on Islamisation and Arabisation of the Pari empire through the Sufi link, Till has further commented:

'It was largely through the backdoors that the Islamic atmosphere created by the expanding Sufi schools and wandering merchants was consolidated and formalised. During the Pari period Islamic life centered around pious leaders and holy families. As the travelling teachers settled they established religious schools and holy families, and virtually all of them came to be associated with tughra and provided the leadership for the newly converted masses who were anxious to perfect their faith.'

Suffice it to say that it was through the tughra and their religious schools that the religious leaders came to dominate the intellectual life in the Pari empire, thus also weakening the traditionally based Pari dynasty and its black identity. Moreover, most of these religious schools reflected the personality of the individual holy Sheikh or Sufi leader who demanded absolute submission and loyalty from his ill-enlightened and often socially and economically uprooted followers. Thus it was not uncommon for the followers to cast away their traditional ways, faiths, and languages, in favor of that of the Master who, in this case, was invariably an Arab immigrant holy man, teacher, or an Analised Ulama who, as has been mentioned above, had been educated in Arabic and in an Arab country. Beside serving as vehicles for reaching the common people, the leaders of the tughra were such men endowed

\[127\] Tills, p. 89.
by divine grace with special spiritual powers to dispense harsh or blessings. In this way, these holy men were teachers who seem to have been seen in both the literate and illiterate popular religion that characterized a quickly expanding Islamic society in the Nile Valley.

Under the circumstances, it may be submitted that, as much as it is partly true to argue that it was through the locally based religious brotherhoods that the mass intoxication of the Nile Valley was converted to Islam, one must not overlook the obvious fact that the leaders of these brotherhoods were by no means schismatics or Black Africans. On the contrary, the teachers, or holy men, and their supportive auxiliaries, the merchants, were invariably Arab immigrants or assimilated Nubians who, for the purpose of this study, are classified as a supportive element of the external factors that contributed to the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony. This thesis is strongly supported by Yellin.

The tariqas were highly effective in organizing and directing Islamic life, but they did not provide a vehicle for breaking the northern Islamic frontier. They were quite validly within the framework of the Arabo-oriental Islam, even in their dealings with non-Arabs. But, the Sufi traditions most popular in the Sudan were built around Arabic literature, and the leadership was largely Arab in origin and attitude. 172

It was, indeed, this alien Arab entrenchment religious leadership that served as the basis for Mahamed Ali's regime in 1832, after he deposed the Pasha dynasty. And as in the past, the highly centralized brotherhoods continued to associate either with the new Arab immigrates from the 1830 world or with Nubians who were Arabized and had received

172 Goldziher, A. 90.
their education in Arab centers of Islamic learning.

Therefore, it is not surprising that even the Mahdist movement, which is considered by Arbell, MacMichael, Holt, and Squire, just to mention a few, as a local movement, was closely tied to the Arab and Semitic elements of the northern Sudanese society. Thus the movement, which is presumed to have been against Mohamed Ali's dynasty and its Arab-Egyptian collaborators, was based on the Arab-controlled confinements of religious brotherhoods. As proof of this analysis one may mention the fact that not only did Muhammad Abdallah, the Al-Mahdi, claim Arab descent, but his proclamation and the ma‘zik, or religious literacy, were in Arabic, and most of the leadership was Arab or Arabized, ah. It was indeed this band of Arabized polyglot of tribesmen who constituted the backbone of the Mahdist solidarity with it, also came the control of the Mahdist state that unfolded in a bizarre outburst of religious violence. Henceforth, Islam and Arabism have been projected as the bedrock national ideology of the Árab-Árabi hegemony in the Sudan.

Yet despite the simplified and populist nature of both Islam and Arabism, especially the latter, it is still possible to argue that both phenomena (Islam and Arabism) are a living manifestation and vehicle of external factors that contributed to the political and cultural compo-

...
Arabism is disputed because, unlike the Egyptians (by no means all Egyptians; Muslims in Egypt are still not classified as Arabs despite the fact that they are Muslims), we have become Arabs and feel they are Arabs, not all Muslims feel they are Arabs. Thus, despite the Sudan's membership in the Arab League, since 1964, only 59 percent of its population is classified as Arab, and only 51 percent of the country's total population can speak Arabic. Regarding religion, even though the census claimed that all the inhabitants of the northern region were Muslims, this claim is contradicted by the presence of the Nuba tribesmen who still adhere to African polytheism. Moreover, because of the numerically small number of people who are classified as Arabs, Arabism cannot be accepted as a conscious identity or ideology. Naturally, this raises a serious question about the assumed authenticity and legitimacy of Arabism in the Sudan and, consequently, the authenticity of an Arab identity for the Sudan as a whole. This problem of identity is even further complicated by the fact that, according to the 1956 census, more than 30 percent of the Sudan's population, which is located in the three southern provinces of the republic, is unquestionably non-Islamist and anti-Arab identity.

These three provinces, as studies by Sir Richard Grant, Robert Collins, Ali Mamen, Dinistan Wai, and Francis Deng have shown, are totally un-Is- lamized and hostile to Islam because of its close association with Arabism. In fact, according to Bull, it is because of this strong


languages between Islam, which is a universal religion, and Arabism, which, in many's usage, connotes a racial connotation, the southern Sudanese are opposed to the idea of an Arab Sudan and to Islam. These well writers

By identifying Islamization with Arabization, by assimilating this Arabic Islam with the institution of political and religious structures, it has become increasingly difficult for this distinctive Islam to expand into the north. It was flexible and adaptable within its own society (north), and was able to develop its own distinctive character. But at the same time this successful synthesis has made the general phonological expression less possible, at least through the main structures that defined Sudanic Islam. The strength of Islam has become part of its weakness in bridging the gap to the south. This has joined with the historical events of the current century to create a reaction in the south and an attempt to assert its independent southern identity—a Black African identity. [7]

Perhaps it should be emphasized here that it is because of the essentially minority position of the people who classify themselves as Arabs, coupled with the rejection of the Arab identity by the majority of the Sudan's population, that this study views the imposition of an Arab identity as a hegemonic phenomenon. There are, of course, scholars who maintain that Arabism is not a racial concept but rather a cultural expression that goes far in language and culture and even religion. However, this study rejects such a black-and-white simplification of Arabism and maintains that Arabism as it exists in Africa has always been a racial expression, albeit a non-scientific one. [7]

[7] Ibid., p. 90.
Under the circumstances, it seemed natural and logical for a study that is aimed at marking some contribution to the reconstruction of African history and identity to raise questions about the present awareness of the modern republic of the Sudan. Viewed from this perspective, an inquiry into how the Sudan was propelled into its present bi-cultural status, and the subsequent imposition of Afro-Arab hegemony, should prove enlightening to Africanists. This is exactly the role that this study has attempted to fill by addressing itself to an analysis of the major events that brought the rise of Afro-Arab hegemony. To recapitulate, these events were: the rise of the Rumeilites in Egypt in 1800, with their dual policy of reducing Mubta into a Vassal state while using it as a stepping stone for Arab political movements from Egypt, resulting in the destruction of Mubta as a Moslem Christian state; the conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Turks, who also occupied the Red Sea coast, thus forcing the Punj Kingdom to submit to Arab-Islamic influences because of political and economic reasons; and the conquest of the Punj Sultanate in 1822 by Muhammad Ali, with the help of the Egyptian Army, imposed an Arab stamp on an expanded Sudan, thus reinforcing and giving political legitimacy to the rising star of Afro-Arab hegemony.

It should also be mentioned that, by placing emphasis on the role of these external factors, this study is not rejecting the existence of internal factors that also contributed to the development of Islam and

Achim in Sudan. On the contrary, this writer is fully aware of the important roles played by Sudanese converts and the king rulers who helped to legitimize Islam and the adoption of the Arabic language as the official language. Nevertheless, it is the contention of this study that the internal changes were a reflection of the irresistible external factors that tended to increase the number of Arab immigrants and to encourage Arab economic and political control of the state in the name of Islam, and it is this Arab political and economic dominance and Arab identity that is the essence of Afro-Arab hegemony. Also, it is this prevalence of the Arabic language, culture, and political control of the state machinery that distinguishes the modern Sudan from other Sudanic belt states like Mali, Chad, Niger, northern Nigeria, and Senegal which, not unlike her, are also predominantly Islamic, but not Arabised and under Arab control. It is thus the political as well as the Arab identity dominance that is the essence of Afro-Arab hegemony, not the religion factor, whose presence need not contradict an African identity, racial or otherwise.

There are, of course, many scholars who are apt to argue that the political dominance of the Arabs is solely due to their education and earlier participation in the market economy facilitated by their earlier contacts with Egypt and other Arab countries. This study does not dispute this point. However, it is also the contention of this study that mere exposure to better educational opportunities and a market economy alone are insufficient as explanations for the adoption of an Arab identity. The Sudanese who adopted an Arab identity did so partly because of the privileges accorded to the status of being identified as "Arab," and
partly because of a one-dimensional accommodation process that encouraged Arab males to take black women as wives while disallowing black men from acquiring Arab women as wives. This one-dimensional system of marriage was possible because of the favorable position that the external factors created for the Arab immigrants.

Thus, even though most Arab Sudanes are partly of African descent, this fact is immaterial when it comes to their self-identification. This is amply evidenced by the statistical figures. For this reason, the question is not whether these Arab Sudanes are partly African by descent, but rather, how they perceive themselves. Therefore, even though the Sudan has been described as an Arab-African mixture, it is important to point out that the resultant mixture is one that has tilted towards Arabism rather than towards a balanced and reciprocal mixture. It is this lack of a balanced political and cultural identification that justifies the concept of Afro-Arab hegemony.

Therefore, even though most of the Arab Sudanes are partly of African descent racially, this fact is disfunctional when it comes to their self-identification. This point is clearly spelled out by Kenneth N. Barbour, the British geographer, who has observed:

almost all the northern Sudanes are agreed on the characteristics of the Arab heritage, and of the Islamic faith and way of life that go with it. Nor is there any significant demand among those above thirty to go to Arabia, whether Beja, Mahali, or Fur, that their language be adopted in place of Arabic for administrative, educational, or general use.125

125Kenneth N. Barbour, Republic of the Sudan (London: University of London Press, 1965), p. 75. Barbour’s observations are strongly contradicted by the writer’s personal experience in the Sudan and the articles by Dr. Francis N. Deng, “The Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for...
A historian scholar who has observed the twin phenomena of Islam and Arabism and how they have affected the Sudanese self-identification pattern has also observed:

Although the cultural life of the uneducated Sudanese throughout the Muslim north is in an Arabic vein, not one that is highly diluted by traditional practices, this is not the case with the Sudanese, black or not, here in Khartoum. To be spiritually uplifted by Arabism requires a spiritualization of Sudanese culture in its highest form, Arab Sudanese regard Arab culture as an emperor to their own original African culture, whose elements are still present, as well as those of other ethnic groups in the country. 59

It should also be noted that whereas most scholars who have studied the Sudan's identification process tend to attribute the tilt towards Arabism to Islam, Arab immigrants, and even to that ever-ceased concept of Middle Easternness, this study is of the opinion that by far the most decisive factors that have contributed to Arab ascendancy and political leverage by the West African experience where the adoption of Arab identity tended to reflect the economic and political influence that the Arab immigrants and their Arabized African middlemen known as jihdis and mehali could command. These, Melville Z. Page, who has studied the expansion of Arab-Sudanese influence into the interior of Central Africa, has remarked:

Expanding empires generated demands for increased manpower, since human passage promised the only avenue of progress. Similarly, an increasingly trafficked slave trade required


larger numbers of retainers to manage the transfer of this human produce to the coastal and Southern. Initially, these needs were met by the engagement of paid mercenaries and soldiers; slaves also performed such tasks on occasion. Gradually, as both slave and hired functionaries adopted elements of the Southern and coastal culture (Arab culture), a new class of Vangana (Arabized Africans) emerged whose distinctions of skill, race, and race were blurred. The absence of precision in defining the status of the Vangana confounded the majority, who could not understand how free men could be slaves... but Arab and Swahili traders deliberately tried to disprove their followers from the mass of the African population.\footnote{Malcolm R. Price, "The Vangana Series of Kuba Upl: A Case Study in Social Stratification and the Slave Trade in East-Africa," p. 77.}

Although Price, too, attributes the Vangana's tilt towards the Arab and Swahili culture (which was essentially an adoption of an Arab identity) to Islam, there is no doubt that the chief motivating factors were economic and political incentives. As evidence one may point to the fact that, as Arab political fortunes declined with the coming of the Europeans, Arab ascendancy and identity began to experience some recession in the interior and even on the coast.

In the case of the Sudan, however, Arab political and economic fortunes were continuously secured and reinforced by external factors, thus enabling Arabs to thrive under the mantle of Islam. Therefore, even though most of the Arab Sudanese were partly of African descent, or simply Arabized Africans, they continued to choose an Arab identity because that identity represented a desired religious and political elite status in the unfolding Arab League state, albeit under the ruled Turkish-Egyptian occupation and, later, the Anglo-Egyptian condominium.

Consequently, the question is not whether these Arab Sudanese are Arabs, Arabized Africans, or mixed polychets, but how they perceive...
The phenomenon of Arabization and Arab domination have resulted from both the concentration of the Arab population in the north-central Sudan as well as in their dispersal throughout the country as traders and, in the last two generations, as state officials. While the dispersal has helped to spread Arab culture and produced Arab political-economic predominance through private enterprise, geographical concentration around the seat of power in Khartoum has helped to achieve their domination of the whole state apparatus—the political system, its administration and its economy, public or private. But in whichever part of the country they may live, the Arabs distinguish themselves from their "cousins" culture and way of life and the tenacity of the Arab state apparatus and sentiment to stick together as a ruling class. 12

Since Arab migration into the Sudan was largely affected during the Mameluke rule in Egypt 1750-1517, and later during the subsequent years by the different regimes of the Ottoman Turks which culminated in Muhammad Ali's conquest of the Nile Confraternity in 1822, it seems logical, in the opinion of this writer, to argue that it was these external factors that fostered the rise of the Arab dominance in the Nile Valley. This contention is definitely supported by the resistance to Arabization and Arab...
domination which erupted in the Sudan when the British and the Egyptians (who were a part of this continuum of external factors) pulled out in January 1956. The announcement of the termination of the external military cord was instantly greeted by a revolt that was essentially anti-Arab and against the Afro-Arab hegemony. Since forth, the newly born republic has been characterized as a testing ground for African-Arab bio-cultural encounter and political solidarity between the Arabs and the Africans, thus raising the question of whether the Sudan is a part of the Arab or the Sub-Saharan Black African world. Sifting it to say, it is this need to understand the circumstances that propelled the Sudan into this racial ambivalence that prompted this study and put the legitimacy of Sulem as the dominant organized religion in the nation.

With this in mind, it is hereby submitted that a study that questions the continuing projection of the Sudan as an Arab country, despite persistent evidence to the contrary, should prove stimulating and interesting, albeit provocative, to students of African Islam and Afro-Arab relationships.

111 It has been the policy of the Arab-dominated regime in Khartoum to suppress the anti-Arab domination movements in the north since 1956 while acknowledging only the movements' anti-Arabism for which they readily blamed the British and the Christian missionaries. Such a policy, however, ignores the fact that the first anti-Arab Black movement, Nijria as-Sheba (The Black Moon) was founded in the north by Mr. Adam Adam (a physician) from Khartoum, The Black Moon Movement is Historically interesting because Adam was an Arab-speaking Muslim. It is also interesting to note that the Black Moon Movement was copied verbatim by the British government at the behest of the Arab political parties which acquiesced it as model. For the article on this pre-Sudanese's anti-Arab revolt in 1956, see L. F. Wad- ler, "The Two Sudan" in J. D. de Basilien, ed., The Sudan from Ghala (London: University of London Press, 1955), pp. 60-67 also quoted by Velley, Johan Oostra, "Growth of Black Political Consciousness in Northern Sudan," pp. 78-83.
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