

## A SULTANIC CHARTER FROM SINNĀR.

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### *Introduction*

The Funj kings paid considerable attention to religious institutions through patronage and grants of land and privilege to holy men (*fuqarāʾ*, sing. *faqīh*) in order to win their favour and, perhaps, to make religious education self-supporting.<sup>1</sup> The present document is a sultanic charter in which lands consisting of *jarf* (a sloping riverbank), *bilād* (estate) and forest are granted by the Sultan Bādī IV (r. 1724-5—1762), the son of Sultan Nōl, to *al-faqīh* Madanī w. Muḥammad. The granted land lay on the west bank of the Blue Nile near present day Wad Madanī town. *Al-faqīh* Madanī w. Muḥammad (w. Madanī) probably appears as a witness to five charters (nos. 12, 14, 15, 16, 25) published by Spaulding and Abu Salim (*op. cit.*). He (or his grandfather) gave his name to the town which grew up in the vicinity. The document bears the seal of Sultan Bādī. A closer look at the seal reveals that it was made in the year of the sultan's accession to the throne, i.e. 1137 (1724-5).

The document belongs to Shaykh °Abd Allāh al-Amīn and was photographed by A. Bjørkelo in Wad Madanī on 24 February 1988 during a field expedition in cooperation with the National Records Office, Khartoum (NRO). As far as we know, the scholarly community has until now been unaware of its existence. Its accession number in Bergen is GE 97. 9/4. Another copy is in the NRO. The

1 J. Spaulding and M.I. Abu Salim (eds.), *Public documents from Sinnār*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1989, 3; M. H. Awad, 'The evolution of landownership in the Sudan', *The Middle East Journal*, xxv, 2, 1971, 219.

document was found in a very poor condition, having been folded, broken and repaired several times. This made it difficult to photograph and transcribe. Several lines are incomplete and names may be missing in the list of witnesses.

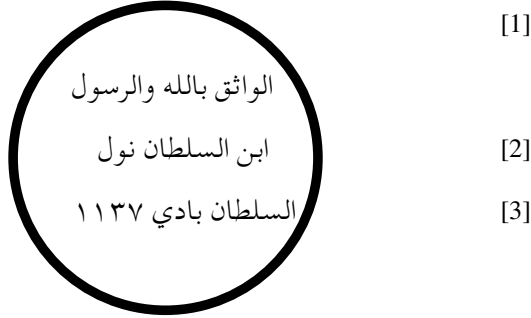
The date of the document has disappeared, but from circumstantial evidence we may assume that it was written in the middle of the 1750s, perhaps in 1753. From the published charters by Spaulding and Abu Salim (1989), we find that the scribe of this document, Ibrāhīm w. Ya<sup>c</sup>qūb, is also the writer of other charters issued between 1753 and 1770. Secondly, except for two witnesses being absent in the present document, we find that the first 16 witnesses in our document appear in the same order as the first 18 witnesses in document 12 (issued in 1753) in Spaulding and Abu Salim's book.<sup>2</sup> In addition eight other witnesses figure in both documents.

The analytical tools for analysing Funj charters in their historical, political and diplomatic contexts have been presented and demonstrated by Spaulding and Abu Salim and interested readers are advised to consult them.

Missing words in the Arabic text are indicated by empty square brackets [ ]; words that we guess have been there and words of explanation are also placed in square brackets; reconstructed words on the basis of fragments in the text are between curly brackets { }. The lines are numbered in square brackets [ ].

2 This charter was first published by M.I. Abu Salim (ed.), *al-Funj wa'l-ard*, Khartoum, 1967, 101-3.

## Text



[1]

الوائق بالله والرسول

ابن السلطان نول

[2]

السلطان بادي ١١٣٧

[3]

[4] [ حجة سلطانية ووثيقة ملوكية بمدينة سنار المحروسة المحمية اجلها

الله تعالى لدا متوليها الذي ايده ]<sup>3</sup>

[5] الله بالنصر والتمكين والرفعة والتحصين وجعله ظلا ظليلا ياوى

اليه كل مسكين الذي هو في الدنيا [سعيد]

[6] وفي الاخرة ان شاء الله شهيد من [ان] طوى باطنه على الصفا

وظاهره على الصّدق والوفا الصادق في قوله الأمين

[7] في فعله الذي اذا قال صدق واذا تكلم بالحق نطق مولانا السُّلطان

بن السلطان بادي بن السُّلطان نول نصره الله

[8] الرحمن الرحيم بجاه القرءان العظيم والنبي الكريم امين امين يارب

العالمين الى حضرت كل من تقف عليه هذه الوثيقة

3 The editors have reconstructed line 4 in accordance with the introductory line of another charter from the same sultan, document 12 in Spaulding and Abu Salim, *Public documents from Sinnār*.

- [9] والناظر لما فيها من الحقيقة وبعد فان السلطان المبرور المؤيد المنصور تصدق على الفقيه مدني
- [10] [ ] [ ] جروف البحر [ ]
- [11] [ ] [ ] من جهة الشرق [جر]ف حسب الله ولد بشير وجرف نوره زوجة الفقيه محمد ولد مدني [ ]
- [12] [ ] ومن جهة السافل البحر ومن جهة الصعيد بلاد ولد عوان ودرب مرئجال يقابل
- [13] للبحر ومن جهة الغرب فوق حد الفقيه ولد مدني القديم وجزيرة مرئجال المقابله البره وبلاد الفقيه مدني
- [14] وايضاً تصدق عليه بغابه الموارد الليلة ولد حلاب دار ولد ام داني وهي معلومة الحدود والبقعة
- [15] فحدها من جهة السافل فوق العقده [ ] ولد ضرس ومن جهة الصعيد فوق ابو سعد حد الفقيه القديم ومن جهة
- [16] الغرب درب الحادرب [ اربجي ] ومن {جهة الصد}بح البحر وايضاً السلطان تصدق عليه ببلاد الحمرب وير
- [17] معلومة الحدود [ ] بلاد قديم ومن جهة الغرب
- [18] ام برير ومن جهة الصبح الشريف [ ] [ ] وهذا كله ابتغاء لوجه الله تعالى وطلباً للثواب في دار المثاب وليوم [ ]

- [19] لا ينفذ فيه مال ولا بنون الا من اتى الله [بقلب سليم وصارت]  
الغيب المذكوره بحدودهن المعلومات [والجروف ]
- [20] المذكورات بحدودهن المعلومات والبلدات المذكورات بحدودهن  
كلهن الجميع صدقة وملكا للفقير مدني ولد محمد
- [21] ولذريته وذرية ذريته [ لا ينازعهم فيها منازع ولا يتعرض لهم  
فيها ] متعرض سالمة مسلمة من جميع الشرور والسبل
- [22] لا عليهن جساره ولا خساره ولا عادة ولا عانه ولا شي من السبل  
العادية ونؤكد عليكم يا جميع الشيوخ والمقاديم والجراي
- [23] الذين من تحتهم الى حد ملكي كله خصوصا في الغابة المذكورة  
الشيخ عزوزه شيخ حوش ناصر خال الملك وفي الجروف والبلدات
- [24] المذكورات الشيخ جمعه كاركاوي انتم الجميع وجرايكم ومن  
ياتي بعدكم الى قيام الساعة لا احداً منكم يتعرض لهذه الصدقة
- [25] ومن تعرض لها بعد كلامي هذا فقد عرض نفسه للهلاك والحذر  
ثم الحذر من المخالفه والمخالف لا يلوم الا نفسه
- [26] وشهد به الشيخ انقله ولد يونس [والجندي محمد] ولد دريش  
[ ولد بادي ] شيخ البس والشيخ عبد الله ولد عوض شيخ التاكة

- [27] والشيخ سبت ولد حيدر شيخ اتبره والشيخ عبد العاطي ولد الشيخ محمد قبلي شيخ بيله والشيخ قاسم شيخ القربين
- [28] والشيخ الضو ولد ارباب شيخ البحر والشيخ على كرار ولد عمر شيخ كردفال والشيخ محمد ولد محمود شيخ القواريه
- [29] والشيخ شنبول ولد ولد نوه شيخ ارجي والشيخ ادريس ولد نايل مقدم السواكره والسلطان بدر ولد السلطان خميس سلطان
- [30] فور المسبعات والسلطان حماد ولد مادبه والسلطان رجب سلطان قمر والشيخ حمد ولد بادي [ ] والشيخ
- [31] علي ولد حمد الله [ ] والشيخ حسن ولد مفتاح مقدم العدة والملك عدلان ملك برساج [ ] والشيخ بادي
- [32] مقدم السجادة والقاضي محمد ولد عبد الحي والطيب ولد ولد نونو والنايب [ ]
- [33] ولد نسي والارباب [ ] سليمان ولد مجيوه وعبد الكريم اسيد والارباب عبد القادر ولد الحكيم
- [34] عبد السلام المغربي [ ] والفقيه بلول حميرا والحاج عمران ولد الحاج سعيد والحاج عبد الله ولد الكرنسي [ ]

[35] [ ]

[36] سعيد والحاج عبد الله ولد [ ] اخيه والفقيه عبد الرحمن ولد

جابر والفقيه [محمد] {الألمين الحدادابي} [والفقيه الزاكي]

[37] ولد العجب والفقيه محمد ولد مدني ولد عبيدي والفقيه بلول

ولد ركابي نسيب الملك والفقيه [انوار ولد] عبد الحلیم المغزربي {

[38] رجل الحلفاية والفقيه والفقيه الجنيد ولد طه والفقيه [ ]

[39] [ ] [ ] والفقيه عبد الهادي [ ]

[40] دوليب والفقيه النور ولد عبد القاراد [ ]

[41] والفقيه عمر الفلاتي والفقيه احمد ولد النعيم والفقيه ولد

العجمي

[42] ومسطر الحروف ابنه ابراهيم شاهد بذلك وكفا [بالله شهيداً]

[ ]

*Translation*

[4] [A sultanic charter and royal document issued in the divinely guarded and protected city of Sinnār, may God Most High exalt her, in the presence of her warden, whom]

[5] God has supported, aided, invested, elevated, strengthened, and made a protecting shelter with whom every subject may seek refuge; who is [happy] in this world

[6] and in the hereafter, if God wills, will be a martyr. His interior is purity, exterior truth and fidelity, truthful in word

[7] and trustworthy in deed, who, when he speaks he speaks the truth, and when he talks he utters verity, our lord the sultan, the son of the sultan, Bādī, the son of Sultan Nōl. May God,

[8] the Merciful, the Compassionate, grant him victory through the influence of the sublime Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān and the eminent Prophet. Amen, amen, O Lord of the Universe. To the presence of all who come upon this document

[9] and read the truth it contains. Thereafter: The pious, divinely assisted and victorious sultan has bestowed as alms upon *al-faqīh* Madanī

[10] [ ] sloping river banks [ ]

*[Boundaries]*

[11] [ ] [on the eastern side] is the sloping riverbank (*jarf*) of Ḥasab Allāh w. Bashīr and the *jarf* of Nūra, the wife of *al-faqīh* Muḥammad w. Madanī [ ]

[12] [ ] and on the northern side is the River (*al-Baḥr*)<sup>4</sup> and on the

4 Here al-Baḥr means the Blue Nile.

southern side is the estate (*bilād*) of Walad °Awwān and the Marinjāl path which is parallel with

[13] the river and on the western side it is above the old border of *al-faqīh* Muḥammad w. Madanī and Marinjāl Island facing the riverbank and the estate of *al-faqīh* Madanī.

[14] [The Sultan] has also bestowed upon him the Mawwar forest of w. Ḥalāb Dār w. Umm Dānī. And its boundaries and the location are known.

[15] Its boundary on the northern side is above al-°Uqda [ ] of Walad Ḍurs, and on the southern side is above Abū Sa°d, the old boundary of the *faqīh*, and on

[16] the western side is the path of al-Ḥād.r.b [Arbajī] and on the eastern side is the river. The Sultan has also bestowed upon him the *bilād* of al-Ḥamrab Wayr.

[17] Its boundaries are known [ ] an old *bilād* and on the western side is

[18] Umm Birayr and on the eastern side is al-Sharīf [ ] [and all this is for the sake of God Most High, asking for reward in the life to come, for the day in which ]

[19] neither wealth nor sons suffice, unless one comes to God with [a secure heart]. The aforementioned forests with their known boundaries,

[20] and the mentioned [*jurūf*] with their known boundaries, and the aforementioned *bilāds* with their boundaries all of them have become a gift of alms and property of *al-faqīh* Madanī w. Muḥammad [21] and his descendant, and his descendants' descendants. Let no one dispute with them concerning it. Let no troublemaker interfere with them in it. It is completely free from all *shurūr* and *subul*

[22] and *jasāra*, *khasāra*, °*āda*, °*āna*, nor any of the customary *subul*.<sup>5</sup> We command you peremptorily, all you shaykhs and *muqaddams*, and the *jarāī*

[23] who are under them throughout my kingdom, especially in the [matter of the] aforementioned forest, al-Shaykh °Azūza, Shaykh of Ḥūsh Nāṣr, the King's maternal uncle, and in the [matter of the ]

5 Various obligations to the State. Cf. Spaulding and Abu Salim, *Public documents from Sinnār*, 20 and Glossary.

aforementioned *jarfs* and *bilāds*,

[24] al-Shaykh Jum<sup>ca</sup> Kārkāwī. You, all of you and your *jarāīs*, and whoever may come after you until the hour of resurrection, let no one of you interfere with this gift of alms.

[25] He who interferes with it after these my words, will expose himself to destruction. Beware then, beware of disobedience, and let the disobedient blame none but himself.

[26] [There] witnessed to it:

Shaykh Anqala w. Yūnis

[the Jundī Muḥammad] w. Daraysh, [ ]

[ ] {w. Bādī}, Shaykh of Alays

Shaykh °Abd Allāh w. °Awaḍ, Shaykh of al-Tāka

[27] Shaykh Sabt w. Ḥaydar, Shaykh of Atbara

Shaykh °Abd al-°Āṭī w. Shaykh Muḥammad Qaylī, Shaykh of Bayla

Shaykh Qāsim, Shaykh of al-Qarbayn

[28] Shaykh al-Ḍaw w. Arbāb, Shaykh of al-Baḥr

Shaykh °Alī Karrār w. °Umar, Shaykh of Kurdufāl [Kordofan]

Shaykh Muḥammad w. Maḥmūd, Shaykh of al-Qawwāriyya

[29] Shaykh Shanbūl w. w. Nawwah, Shaykh of Arbajī

Shaykh Idrīs w. Nāyil *muqaddam* of al-Sawākira

Sultan Badr son of Sultan Khamīs, the Sultan of

[30] Fūr of Musabba<sup>ca</sup>āt

Sultan Ḥammād w. Mādiba

Sultan Rajab, Sultan of Qimr

Shaykh Ḥamad w. Bādī

[31] Shaykh °Alī w. Ḥamd Allāh [ ]

Shaykh Ḥasan w. Muftāḥ *muqaddam al-°udda*

Malik °Adlān, Malik Bursāj

[and Shaykh Badī]

[32] the *muqaddam al-sajjāda*,

and the *qāḍī* Muḥammad w. °Abd al-Ḥayy,

and al-Ṭayyib w. Walad Nūnū,

and the deputy [ ]

[33] w. Nasī,

Arbāb [ ] Sulaymān w. Mujaywah

°Abd al-Karīm Isayd

Arbāb °Abd al-Qādir, the son of the physician,

- [34] °Abd al-Salām al-Maghribī [ ]  
*al-faqīh* Balūl Ḥumayrā  
*al-ḥājj* °Imrān w. *al-ḥājj* Sa°īd  
*al-ḥājj* °Abd Allāh w. al-Karsanī [ ]
- [35] [ ]
- [36] Sa°īd  
*al-ḥājj* °Abd Allāh w. [ ] [and] his brother [ ]  
*al-faqīh* °Abd al-Raḥmān w. Jābir  
*al-faqīh* [Muḥammad] {al-A}mīn al-Ḥ{arādābī}  
[*al-faqīh* al-Zākī]
- [37] w. al-°Ajab  
*al-faqīh* Muḥammad w. Madanī w. °Abidī  
*al-faqīh* Balūl w. Rikābī, a kinsman by marriage of the King,  
*al-faqīh* [Anwār w.] °Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Magh{ribī},  
[38] the man of al-Ḥalfāya, and the *faqīh*  
and *al-faqīh* al-Junayd w. Ṭāhā  
and *al-faqīh* [ ]
- [39] [ ] [*al-faqīh* °Abd al-Hādī] [ ]
- [40] Dōlīb and  
*al-faqīh* al-Nūr w. °Abd al-Qādir [ ]
- [41] *al-faqīh* °Umar al-Falātī,  
*al-faqīh* Aḥmad w. al-Na°īm,  
*al-faqīh* w. al-°Ajamī
- [42] The writer of these letters and witness to that is his son [*sic*]  
Ibrāhīm.<sup>6</sup> [God is] all-sufficient witness. [ ]

6 Ibrāhīm was a son of Ya°qūb °Abd al-Rāziq ibn Muḥammad Ḥumayrā, a clerk of the Sultan Bādī (See Abū Salīm, *al-Funj wa'l-arḍ*, 50).