

THE ARCHIVES OF SHŌBA PART ONE

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Some twenty-eight miles west-south-west of al-Fāshir, the capital of the Dār Fūr Sultanate, lay the fertile district of al-Ṭawīla with its centre at the village of the same name southeast of Jabal Shōba (993 feet). Thus, conveniently near the capital, it lay within an attractive area for the sultans to parcel out as estates (Ar. *ḥākūra*) for their officials and others. Al-Ṭawīla district appears to have formed an estate attached to, or least within the sphere of, the office of *āb shaykh daali*, “The Father Shaykh”, the sultanate’s chief slave eunuch and *ex officio* governor of the eastern province.¹ Similarly, the district of Tarnī, just south of al-Ṭawīla, was an estate belonging to the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn*, chief of the tax-collectors.² Elsewhere, I have distinguished between these large administrative estates, which I have so termed because they appear to have been attached to an office rather than to a person, and smaller estates granted to individuals, families or clans.³ Discussion of the nature and significance of the administrative estate within the overall administrative system of the sultanate has been hampered by the lack of any documents directly arising from such grants. However, in 1974 and 1976, I was able to photograph two groups of documents (in total, fourteen documents) that, together, throw considerable indirect light on several aspects of the administrative estate. I present the first group here, namely,

A. A transcript (*sijill*) of a court hearing before the *qāḍī al-ḥājj* °Izz al-Dīn; dated 1226/1811-2 (DF 255.29/4 and 257.29/6).⁴

1 See further my, *State and Society in Dār Fūr*, London 1980, 40 & *passim*.

2 *Ibid.*, 101.

3 See further, R.S. O'Fahey and M.I. Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr*, Cambridge 1983, 13-7.

4 These are the accession numbers of two documents in the photographic and xerographic collection of Arabic materials, Department of History, University of Bergen; see further my *A Catalogue of Dār Fūr Documents*, mimeograph, Bergen 1981. The first number refers to a photograph of the original *sijill* which is badly

- B. A decree (*rasm*) from Sultan Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn confirming the demarcation of a boundary; dated 1274/1857-8 (DF 254.29/3).
- C. A letter from the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn* Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn confirming an estate; undated (DF 253.29/2).

In the second part of this article, I shall publish a group of charters from various *āb shaykhs* granting or confirming the privileged status and estate of the Awlād Zaydān.

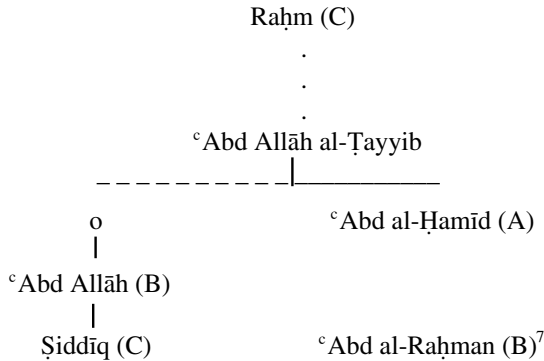
The documents given here concern the affairs of the Awlād Raḥm, a section of the Zaghawa Kapka (which appears in our documents as Kabqa),⁵ who settled in al-Ṭawīla at some unknown date and who appear to have been the descendants of a *faqīh* Raḥm (or Raḥma; see C). They enter the historical records when *faqīh* °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib was granted an estate near Jabal Shōba by Sultan Muḥammad al-Faḍl (reigned, 1803-38) sometime between 1803 and 1811-2. The charter (DF 252.29/1) recording this grant is too mutilated to produce a credible text and translation. What can be read is that the sultan assigned land “In the district of al-Ṭawīla” to °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib. As far as I can tell, the charter does not refer to any earlier grant, so °Abd Allāh would appear to be the first recipient of an estate. However, document C seems to imply that the Awlād Raḥma had some kind of estate in al-Ṭawīla district before the specific grant of an estate to °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib. This would fit a more general pattern whereby individual members of holy clans who held generalized privileged status, usually known as *jāh*, sought to turn these into precisely-defined freehold estates.⁶

A tentative account of the various members of the family mentioned in our documents is given in diagram 1.

mutilated; the second to a copy probably made early in this century when the original was more legible. The documents, photographed at al-Ṭawīla on 31 July 1976, were then in the possession of the brothers, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm °Abd Allāh °Abd al-Rasūl, who were able to give some exegesis of the documents (referred to hereafter as “The informants”).

5 On the Kapka, see M.-J. Tubiana, *Survivances préislamiques en pays Zaghawa*, Paris 1964, 77-85 & *passim*.

6 On this process, see O'Fahey and Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr*, 17-20.

Diagram 1

The *bayt* or sphere of influence of the *āb shaykh daali* is described in C as the district of al-Ṭawīla, including the land of Amqāīqū (probably Geiga on the 1:250,000 map series) and of Thāba (Thabit on the map), some eighteen miles southeast of Jabal Shōba. The southern border of the estate seems to have been Tarnī which is known to have been an estate of the *abū 'l-jabbayīn* (see commentary to C). Since we do not know how far west the estate extended, we cannot estimate its size. Nor can we say exactly what is meant by the expression *bayt al-āb shaykh*; apart from its appearance in documents from the Shōba district, it is not found in other Dār Fūr documents. Two observations can, however, be made; because land was within the *bayt al-āb shaykh*, this did not preclude the sultan granting it as a personal estate. Secondly, as will be clearer from “Archives of Shōba, II”, the *bayt al-āb shaykh* was seemingly regarded as synonymous with being the property of the sultan. This may simply be an expression of the principle that all of Dār Fūr was the sultan’s property, although evidently some districts were regarded as royal domain in the direct sense.⁸

The informants could not throw any light on what was meant by

7 Who was described by the informants as a “cousin” of °Abd Allāh, but they did not know the precise relationship.

8 See further, O’Fahey and Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr*, 13-4.

the description of Ṣiddīq b. ʿAbd Allāh in C as being, “From the house of the Father Shaykh”. Evidently some sort of client status is implied, as is spelled out in one of the documents to be published in part two, in which the Father Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qafā informs a local official that one *al-hājj* Ādam is his servant and that, “His property is my property”.

Document A records a judgment in a case of trespass delivered by the famous judge, *al-hājj* ʿIzz al-Dīn.⁹ It conforms to the usual pattern of his *sijills* in that he does not give judgment acting for (*bi-niyāba*) the sultan or one of the great state officials.

Document A: Text

الختتم

سبب

التقرير في حكم متوليه القاضى عز الدين
 فى قضية بين عبد الحميد ابن الفقيه عبد الله الطيب
 فادعا اولاً اود بوكالة الحبوب سلق تفويضاً بان
 لنا ارضاً بناحية شوب ارضى جماعتى ارفنا وذالحين
 اخذها منّا جوراً وسابقاً يوم ابه السيد
 السلطان اقطع له هذا المحل نحن قدمنا اليه وترك لنا زراعتنا ولما
 انتهى جوابه اجاب عبد الحميد قال هذا المحل ابى عبد الله
 الطيب طلبه من السلطان محمد الفضل واقطعه له وزراعة
 ارفنا داخلات فى الاقطاع وانا وارفنا متفقين الا انت
 يا اود دخلت بينى وبينهم بالخرابة لكل مضرهم وحضروا
 منهم خمسة رجال قالو الارض احيانا والسلطان اقطعها
 للفقيه عبد الله الطيب ونحن داخلين فى الاقطاع فلما نظرنا
 فى مكتوب السلطان وجدنا مصرحاً بالاقطاع للفقيه عبد الله
 الطيب ومحدد الارض من الشرق جبل شوية الحد مع ابون

9 On whom, see my, “The office of qādī in Dār Fūr: a preliminary enquiry”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xl, 1977, 110-24.

من ناحية الصعيد ومن ناحية الغرب ارقا وكتك
والى بيرام بلين والى قراود ك () ومن ناحية الريح نشا الى قرب جبل شوية
الكبير ووججر التلال وقرن الجبل الى جبل شوية فلما تبين لنا
امضينا حكم السلطان بعد
نزاع اود وموكلته الحبوب
وجماعته ارفنا لا تسمع له
دعوة ثانى مرة والشهداء
يوسف هدى والحاج اسماعيل
والفقيه عبد الرحمن الترجمى والفقيه
هدى والامام بلال والملك شى
والفقيه عبد الصادق والحكام
مروا والسجان عبد الله و
والجمع كثير لا نطيل بذكره
١٢٢٦
سنة

*Document A: Translation*¹⁰

Seal (illegible)

The reason for the document (arises) from a judgment by the one so-authorized *qāḍī al-ḥājj* °Izz al-Dīn, (given) in a lawsuit between °Abd al-Ḥamīd b. *al-faqīh* °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib (and Awad):¹¹

*Plea by the Plaintiff*¹²

First, Awad,¹³ representing the *ḥabbōb*¹⁴ s.l.q. with (her) authorization,

10 This *sijill* is written by the same scribe who wrote document XVI in *Land in Dār Fūr*, 61-3, which is dated 1220/1805-6.

11 The omission of the defendant's name despite the use of *bayn* is not uncommon.

12 I have added these headings for the sake of clarity, but plaintiff (*mudda* °ī) and defendant (*mudda* °ā °alayh) must be understood in the Islamic legal sense, since the decision as to who is which is an integral and decisive part of the judicial process; see J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, London 1964, 189-91.

13 Presumably a phonetic rendering of °Awad.

14 Here, and elsewhere in the document, it is written thus, that is, as if it were

made his plea, “We have land in the district of Shōb(a), (namely) the land of my community, the Arafāṇa,¹⁵ and now °Abd al-Ḥamīd has quite outrageously seized it from us. Formerly, in the day(s) of his¹⁶ father, the master, the sultan had assigned it to him - this place. We followed him, and thus our fields came to us.” Thus was concluded his reply.¹⁷

Plea by the Defendant

°Abd al-Ḥamīd answered, saying, “This is the place of my father, °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib. He sought it from Sultan Muḥammad al-Faḍl, who assigned it to him.¹⁸ The field of the Arafāṇa falls within the estate. And I and the Arafāṇa were in agreement until you, Awad, caused a problem between me and them, to everyone’s disadvantage”.

Testimony for the Defendant

Five men came and said, “The land forms our cultivations. The sultan assigned it to the *faqīh* °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib, and we fall within the estate”.

Investigation by the Judge

We examined the document of the sultan; we found that it promulgated an estate for the *faqīh* °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib;

masculine. I have assumed that *ḥabbōba* is intended, meaning an older female member of the Keira dynastic clan.

- 15 According to the informants the Arafāṇa were the people of the *mayram* °Arafa, a daughter of Sultan Aḥmad Bukr (reigned c. 1700-20); *-aṇa* is the usual Fur plural form for people. °Arafa was not the only sultan’s daughter to settle in the district; the *mayram* Amūna (whose father is not known) had an estate at Jabal Ungorei, some twelve miles WSW of Jabal Shōba; see further, “Archives of Shōba, II”. On named groups (orreṇa) among the Fur which is a complex ethnographic problem, see now Jörg Adelberger, *Vom Sultanat zur Republik: Veränderungen in der Sozialorganisation der Fur (Sudan)*, Stuttgart 1990, 98-131; Adelberger (p.143) lists the Arafāṇa among the orreṇa
- 16 That is, Awad’s father; there is a somewhat clumsy shift between direct and indirect speech, and back.
- 17 *Jawābihī*, correctly, “plea”.
- 18 The then reigning sultan, who reigned 1803-38; a reference thus to the grant recorded in DF252.29/1.

The boundaries

And the demarcation of the land is from the east, Jabal Shōba, (namely) the boundary with Abūn¹⁹ wad *al-mayram* (going) to the *wādī* with the Tunjur, and to the Kabqa (people) of the Awlād *al-ḥājj* m... from the direction of the south; and from the direction of the west, Arqā and Kotoko, and to the well of Umm Bilayn(a), and to the hillocks²⁰ of k..., and from the direction of the north, (the boundary) ascends to the big Shōba Hill and the rock of al-Talāl; and the hill adjoins Shōba Hill.

The Judgment

Thus, it became clear to us. We have confirmed the order (*ḥukm*) of the sultan following the complaint of Awad, of (the lady) who authorized him,²¹ the *ḥabbōb*, and of his community, the Araf+a. (Awad's) plea is not to be heard a second time (in court).

The Witnesses and date

The witnesses were Yūsuf Hudā, *al-ḥājj* Ismā'īl, *faqīh* °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tarjamī, *faqīh* Mahdī, *imām* Bilāl, *malik* Shay (or Shī), *faqīh* °Abd al-Ṣādiq, and the officials, Marū,²² and the *sajjān*²³ °Abd Allāh, and a large gathering. It is not necessary to prolong (the list) by recording it.

The year 1226.²⁴

Document B (DF 254.29/3): Text

... الختم

من أمير المؤمنين سيدنا ومولانا السلطان محمد الحسين المهدي المنصور بالله
تعالى أمين
إلى كل من يقف على هذا الرسم من الأمراء والوزراء والملوك والشراطي والدمالج
وأبناء السلاطين والمييارم والحبوبات والحبات والقوارين والمكاسين وكافة

19 Probably the Fur name or title, aboḡa,

20 *qirāwud*; usually, *qiyaywud*.

21 That is, authorized him to make a complaint on her behalf.

22 So vowelled.

23 "The gaoler"; this official only appears in the entourage of this judge; see O'Fahey and Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr*, 56 and 62.

24 1811-12.

العمال أما بعد فاني وجهة التوصار فصل بين الفقيه عبد الله وبين الفقيه
 عبد الرحمن فى حدود أرضهم القديم السابق مَشَى فيه ديموا موجه سيدنا
 المرحوم السلطان محمد الفضل اقطعها لجده الفقيه عبد الله وفصلهم يوجهنا
 بعد مصادقتهم من الزلطاية التى فى رهد كلك والتنضباية الكبيرة والتنضباية
 آخر والحجر والحجر الأخر والهجليجة والتنضباية والنبقاية والمردوية
 ونبقاية فى زريبة محمد فرجوا والزلطاية المتكى فى قعر جبل الجير والهجليجة
 وهجليجة أخرى وركز فى جبل شوية الكبير وحجر التلال هذه
 الاعلام بينهم مع الفقيه عبد الرحمن مَشَى فيه موجهنا بحضرة زول الفقيه
 عبد (الرحمن) . . .

وعرضوا لنا الحدود ونظرته وأتمته وفصلتهم بذلك ومنعتهم من التجاوز فلا
 أحد منهم يتجاوز لآخيه هذا جوابى ومشرطى ومهرى لمن يعرفه تحرير
 فى عام
 سنة
 ١٢٧٤
 عام

Document B (DF 254.29/3): Translation

seal²⁵

From the Commander of the Faithful, our lord and master, Sultan Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Mahdī, victorious through the Most High God. Amen.

To all who come upon this decree, namely the *wazīrs*, *malīks*, *shartays*, *dimlijs*, sons of the sultans, *mayrams*, *ḥabbōbas*, *jabbays*, *qawwārs*, *makkās*-s, and all the officials.²⁶

25 The same seal-type is reproduced in Na'ūm Shuqayr, *Ta'rikh al-Sūdān al-qadīm wa'l-ḥadīth wa-jughrāfiyatuhu*, Cairo n.d. (1903), ii, 148.

26 For these titles, see glossary in O'Fahey and Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr*, 151-3.

Thereafter: thus I sent al-t.w.šār.²⁷ He demarcated the boundary between the *faqīh* °Abd Allāh and the *faqīh* °Abd al-Raḥmān, in regard to the boundaries of the old land. Previously, there had gone around there²⁸ Dīmū (or Daymū), the commissioner of our lord, the late Sultan Muḥammad al-Faḍl. He assigned it to his grandfather, the *faqīh* °Abd Allāh.²⁹

Their boundary which [al-t.w.šār] reported to us after their agreement, [runs] from the pebbly outcrop (*al-zaltāya*) which is in the Kalaka rainpool (*rahad*); (to)³⁰ the big *tunḍub* tree³¹ and (to) another *tunḍub* tree; and (to) the rock and (to) another rock; and to the *hijlīj* tree³²; and to the *tunḍub* tree; and (to) the *nabaq* tree³³; and (to) the *mardūiyya* tree,³⁴ and the *nabaq* tree is in the household compound of Muḥammad Farajū and the pebbly outcrop³⁵ at the bottom of al-Jīr Hill,³⁶ and the *hijlīj* tree, and another *hijlīj* tree planted³⁷ at the big hill of Shōba and the rock of al-Talāl - these are the boundary-markers between them (*hādhihi 'l-a°lām al-baynuhum*).

Together with the *faqīh* °Abd al-Raḥmān, our commissioner went along it together with a fellow (*zōl*)³⁸ of the *faqīh* °Abd Allāh. They then presented (a report on) the boundaries to us. And I have confirmed it and have made a boundary for them and have forbidden them to trespass over it. Let neither of them trespass on his brother's land.

This is my letter, my stipulation and my seal for those who

27 Or l.t.w.šār, a name or title. The reading seems clear enough, but I have no suggestion to offer.

28 *mashī fihi*, but there appears to be a *fatha* over the *yā'* of *fihi*.

29 *li-jaddihi*: this presumably refers to °Abd Allāh al-Ṭayyib, who was "grandfather" to both °Abd Allāh and °Abd al-Raḥmān.

30 Since there are no verbs of direction within the description, one may presume that the boundary is an approximately straight line, going from one landmark to another and dividing the original estate in two.

31 I have added "tree", where appropriate, for the sake of clarity; *Capparis decidua* or *Capparis fascicularis*.

32 *Balanites aegyptiaca*.

33 *Ziziphus spina-christi*.

34 *Capparis macrantha*; the informants pronounced it *mardoīya*.

35 One word not read.

36 According to the informants, Jabal al-Jīr is near Shōba; seemingly not marked on 1:250,000 map.

37 *rukkiba*?

38 A colloquial word which occasionally appears in Sudanese documents; see, for example, Jay Spaulding and R.S. O'Fahey, "A Sudanese battle in about 1800", *Sudan Texts Bulletin*, ii, 1980, 42-3.

recognise it.

Written in the year 1274,³⁹ the year, the year.

Document C: Introduction

Document C is unique within the Dār Fūr corpus as being the only document surviving from the pre-1874 sultanate issued by one of the most powerful officials of the state, the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn*, the chief of the tax-collectors.⁴⁰ The sultanate's taxation system and the role of the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn* and his subordinate officials within it are described elsewhere;⁴¹ here I shall say a little about the background and career of the person who issued the document. He was Aḥmad Kobbei Nūr al-Dīn b. Ādam, a member of the famous Musabba^cāt clan, the Basaṇa, who played a prominent role in the history of Dār Fūr and Kordofan.⁴² When Sultan Muḥammad Tayrāb (reigned 1752/3 - 1785/6) invaded Kordofan in about 1784, he left behind as deputy to *al-ḥājj* Iṣḥāq, his son and chosen successor, the then *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn* Baḥr Kobbei.⁴³ Following Tayrāb's death in Kordofan, the Dār Fūr army there chose ^cAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad Bukr as their sultan; in the civil war that ensued between Iṣḥāq and ^cAbd al-Raḥmān, the latter's eventual victory was greatly helped by Baḥr treacherously deserting Iṣḥāq in battle.⁴⁴ Sometime afterwards, Baḥr apparently became involved in a conspiracy against the sultan and was executed; his office was given to the

39 1857-8.

40 For the sad history of the archives of the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn*, see O'Fahey and Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr*, x, n.2.

41 *Ibid.*, 6-8; see also, *State and Society*, 101-9.

42 See further, R.S. O'Fahey and J.L. Spaulding, "Hāshim and the Musabba^cāt", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xxxv, 1972, 316-33, and O'Fahey, "Kordofan in the eighteenth century", *Sudan Notes and Records*, liv, 1973, 32-42.

43 According to Gustav Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan*, transl. A.G.B. and H.J. Fisher, 4 vols., London 1971-, iv, 331, the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn* belonged to the Koraṇa. This was not confirmed by *shartay* Ḥasab Allāh Abū 'l-Bashar, a descendant of the Musabba^cāt *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn*; interview, Tarnī 9 April 1974. According to Adelberger, *Vom Sultanat zur Republik*, 164 there is a Koraṇa Fur section at Kās.

44 Muḥammad b. ^cUmar al-Tūnisī, *Tashḥīdh al-adhhān bi-sīrat bilād al-'Arab wa'l-Sūdān*, ed. Khalīl Maḥmūd ^cAsākīr and Muṣṭafā Muḥammad Mus^cad, Cairo 1965, 106-7; Mohammed El Tounsy, *Voyage au Darfour*, transl. N. Perron, Paris 1845, 93-4, and Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan*, iv, 290-2.

Musabba^cāwī, Aḥmad Tombokei. Tombokei was the great-grandfather of the *abū 'l-jabbāyyīn* who issued C; all that is remembered of Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn is that he died alongside Sultan Ibrāhīm at the battle of Manawāshī on 21 October 1874 which brought the old sultanate to an end.⁴⁵ Upon the restoration of the sultanate in 1898 by ^cAlī Dīnār, the office and lands were restored to the family in the person of Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn's son, Yāsīn.⁴⁶ The Jubaḡa clan (as they are called in Fur) still hold extensive lands in and around Tarnī.

The letter is itself a form of insurance document; owners of estates were assiduous in obtaining from the great ones of the state, restatements, confirmations and the like of their privileges. Presumably, ^cAbd Allāh al-Ṭayyib had obtained a confirmation from Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn's predecessor, Aḥmad Tombokei, as is alluded to in C, and his son sought to have it confirmed.⁴⁷

... الختم

... من المتوكل على الله الواحد الديان الاب الملك احمد نور الدين
الى كل من يقف هذا الرسم من عمالنا ملوك الجبايين وخصوصا الملك
... ف ... والفلقناوى الذى معك من قبل الفقيه صديق بن عبد الله ...
... الاب شيخ عرض علينا مكتوب سيدنا ومكتوب جدى الملك ...
... ونظرتة واتممت له الذى فى مكتوب ... ي
(صدقه) اتفضل واوهب له ارض شوبة بناحية طويلة بيت الاب شيخ
... ارض امقايق وارض ثابتة وانا اتممت للفقيه صديق حد ابية وجدى ...
اخوانه واعمامه وعماته من ذرية الفقيه رحم وجميع اهلهم
كبق من شوبة وثابت وامقايقوا ما يدينهم من زكاتهم وفطهرهم

45 Ḥasab Allāh Abū 'l-Bashar, interview, and Darfur Province Archives, file DP FD 66.K.I. 5, Fashir District, Tawila Omodia, note [G.M.] Moore, 13 February 1933.

46 Who writes in 1901 an injunction to his subordinates similar to C for a *faqīh* living at al-Firsh, just south of al-Fāshir; see R.S. O'Fahey and Abdel Ghaffar Muhammad Ahmad, "Documents from Dār Fūr", fascicle 1, Occasional Paper, no. 1, Programme of Middle Eastern and African Studies, Department of History, University of Bergen, mimeograph 1973, 44-7.

47 See O'Fahey, *State and Society*, 56, diagram 5, "The Charters of the Awlād Jābir", for an example of a cluster of charters from the sultans, local governors and others accumulated by a holy clan over nearly two hundred years.

... وما عليهم كيل ولا شيل وجميع السبل العادية من سروال
 ... امثلاثين ما ياخذ منهم شى انا عفوت منهم عفواً مطلقاً
 وكبار الحكام داوود وعبد الله تترى وفضل ابن خميس مع
 ... ود قدق وخليل ما عليهم كيل ولا شيل ذرية لبققيه
 رحم كافة واما حيرانهم وحيرانهم يكيلو لهم وياخذوا
 حساب عيشهم وينظرونى به الحذر ثم الحذر هذا مهري
 مشراطى لكم

Document C: Translation

seal (illegible)

...⁴⁸ from he who trusts in God, the One, the pious,⁴⁹ *āb malik* Aḥmad Nūr al-Dīn.

[To all] who come across this decree from among our officials, the kings of the tax-collectors, and especially the *malik* ...f... and the *faḷqanāwī* lwho is with youl.⁵⁰

Concerning the *faqīh* Ṣiddīq b. °Abd Allāh [from the house]⁵¹ of the Father Shaykh: he presented a document of our lord⁵² and a document of my grandfather, the *malik* I examined it and confirmed⁵³ for him that which was in the document of ... [who] favoured and granted him the land of Shōba in the district of al-Ṭawīla, the house of the Father Shaykh ... and the land of [Am]qāiqū and the land of Thāba.

I have confirmed for the *faqīh* Ṣiddīq the boundary⁵⁴ of his father and grandfather, his brothers, his paternal uncles and aunts, namely the

48 The alignment of the lines of the document would appear to suggest that at least one word is missing before the *min*, but there does not appear to be enough space between the seal and the first line for an *invocatio*.

49 *al-dayyār*, cf. O'Fahey and Abū Salīm, *Land in Dār Fūr*, 49 where the same epithet is used for the *āb takanāwī*.

50 Reading *al-adhī ma'ak*. The passage is unclear.

51 Conjectural restoration, *min bayt*.

52 *sayyidīnā*. Since this term is usually reserved for the sultan, this may refer to the original charter of Sultan Muḥammad al-Faḍl.

53 *naẓartuhu wa-atmamtu*: he is, of course, examining and reading his grandfather or ancestor's letter, not that of the sultan.

54 *ḥadd*, sometimes just meaning "land".

offspring of the *faqīh* Raḥm[a], and all his people, the Kabq[a] from Shōba, Thāba and Amqāiqū.

They do not owe either *zakāh* or *fiṭr*. [There is not due] from them *kayl* or *shayl*,⁵⁵ and all the customary dues, namely *sirwāl*⁵⁶..... *amthalāthīn*.⁵⁷ Let nothing be taken from them. I have exempted them with a complete exemption.

... and the leaders of the officials, Dāwūd, °Abd Allāh t.t.r.ī., Faḍl b. Khamīs, together with Wad q.d.q. and Khalīl.

There is not due from them *kayl* or *shayl*, the offspring of the *faqīh* Raḥm, all of them as well as their pupils and followers. Those who measure out and take the accounting of their grain,⁵⁸ they will answer to me for it. A warning, a warning. This is my seal and stipulation for you.⁵⁹

55 The precise meaning of these two taxes has yet to be established. They appear frequently in Funj documents, but rarely in documents from Dār Fūr.

56 Literally, “Trousers”; again, its meaning is unknown. It appears in a few other Dār Fūr documents.

57 *Umm thalāthīn*, “The mother of thirty”, the grain tithe; see further my *State and Society*, 102.

58 *yukayyalū lahum wa-yākhidū ḥissāb °ayshihim*: in the first instance, the tax officials measured out and recorded the amount of tax owed. The account (*ḥissāb, ṭaliba*) was sent to the palace and it was the sultan who authorized, through the *abū ’l-jabbāyyīn*, the actual collection and storage of the grain tax.

59. *wa-mashrāfī lakum*; this phrase is written in large letters.