
NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

A HITHERTO 'UNKNOWN' DARFUR KING-LIST*

R.S. O'FAHEY

My colleague here in Bergen, Ahmad Abu Shouk, has drawn my attention to a Darfur king-list undiscovered by me printed in a book in my possession for the last twenty-five years—truly an *ʿayb* for the present writer! The book in question is ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Amīn ʿAbd al-Majīd, *al-Tarbiya fī 'l-Sūdān* (3 vols., Cairo 1949). Volume 3 comprises a series of documents, interviews, and extracts from other works, the bulk of them being Turco-Egyptian official documents, illustrative of the themes discussed in the first two volumes, basically the history of indigenous and colonial education in the Turkiyya period (1820-85) and before.

Volume 3, pp. 191-2 reprints a copy of letter received by the Arabic Diwan of the central chancery of the Turco-Egyptian state in Cairo. What follows below is the text and annotated translation of this letter.

What is interesting about the king-list that makes up most of the letter is that it is in effect another presentation of a Musabba^ʿāwī view of Darfur's history. The Musabba^ʿāt are presented in Sudanese historiography as an offshoot of the Darfur royal dynasts, the Keira, who over several generations attempted to carve out for themselves a kingdom *à la mode* Sinnār or Darfur in Kordofan, but who failed. This failure has been discussed at some length in an article by the present writer and Jay Spaulding.¹ The most

* I hope, as time and opportunity allow, to follow the present article with a study of another compilation of Musabba^ʿāt tradition, unknown to Jay Spaulding and the present writer when we wrote the article noted below (n 1), namely Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, 'Mamlakat al-Musabba^ʿāt', *Umm Durmān*, iii, October 1936, 79-81, and iv, October 1936, 97-8. There is a copy in Bergen. I am grateful to Ahmad Abu Shouk and Knut S. Vikør for help with the translation.

1 O'Fahey and Spaulding, 'Hāshim and the Musabba^ʿāt', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xxxv/2, 1972, 316-33.

detailed record in any language of the Musabba[°]āt endeavour in Kordofan and their conflicts with Darfur and Sinnār is that recorded by two French travellers, E. de Cadalvène and J. de Breuvery, *L'Égypte et la Nubie* (2 vols., Paris 1841, ii, 197-215). An annotated translation of these pages was published some time ago by the present writer.²

Cadalvène and Breuvery give two sources for their history of Kordofan; notes from a French Orientalist-cum-traveller, Mathieu-Auguste Koenig (d. 1865) who visited Kordofan in 1825, but who unfortunately left no real account of his travels, and Tayma al-Musabba[°]āwī, a member of the Musabba[°]āt ruling clan, who after an adventurous life of intrigue in Darfur and Kordofan, ended up as a pensioner of the Turco-Egyptian government in al-Ubayyid, but who spent some time in Cairo, where Cadalvène and Breuvery met him.

In the earlier article I speculated that Koenig's notes were a *précis* of some kind of written Musabba[°]āwī chronicle,³ a speculation I repeated in *ALA*, 1, 49-50. In fact, A.E. Robinson, an official during the Condominium who wrote amateur and often unreliable historical studies of the Sudan, asserts that Koenig was indeed given a manuscript chronicle of Kordofan while at al-Ubayyid in 1824 and suggests that this may be in the [°]Abdīn Archives.⁴ The present king-list/chronicle may support my earlier speculation, since it gives, albeit more briefly, a version of Musabba[°]āt and Keira history that is virtually identical to that in Cadalvène and Breuvery and is at some distance from other king-lists and accounts.⁵

2 'Kordofan in the Eighteenth Century', *Sudan Notes and Records*, liv, 1973, 32-42.

3 'Kordofan', 33.

4 Letter from A.E. Robinson, *Sudan Notes and Records*, vii, 1924, 198, and *idem*, 'The Arab dynasty of Dar For', *Journal of the (Royal) African Society*, xxvii, 108, July 1928, 357. Robinson's papers at the Sudan Archive, University of Durham, contain a mass of unpublished and unpublizable typescripts on all aspects of the Sudan's history.

5 Most of the various Darfur king-lists, from the travel literature and Condominium sources, are brought together as an appendix in my

No source is named in the present version except that it was collected from the 'knowledgeable (*mimman lahum dirāya*) among the people and *faqīhs* of Darfur about the family (*fāmiyya*) of their *amīr*.' A week after the battle of Manawāshī, in the first days of November 1874, al-Zubayr entered al-Fāshir; a few days later the *ḥikimdār* Ismā'īl Ayyūb Pasha (governed 1873-76) arrived, to claim the new conquest for his master in Cairo—the account given below carefully screens out al-Zubayr. Ismā'īl was to stay in Darfur for nearly one and a half years organising the administration of the new province and quarrelling with al-Zubayr, who left for Cairo in mid-1875.⁶

The present account is couched in the form of a letter from Ismā'īl to Cairo, so he may well have collected it himself. He need not have gone very far from al-Fāshir to find a Musabba'āt settlement, since a few kilometres to the east of the town is the old-established Musabba'āt settlement of Jugo Jugo.⁷

The report has been sanitized for Egyptian consumption, as is clear from the use of *amīr*, *ḥākīm* and the like; nowhere are the Darfur rulers called 'sultan', their own designation in Arabic. Implicit in the account is a denial of the legitimacy of Keira rule.

As regards the authenticity of the account, unfortunately, there is another possibility; Richard Hill notes⁸ that Ismā'īl was reportedly 'educated at Marseilles and spoke French fluently'. What we

unpublished Ph.D. thesis, *The Growth and Development of the Keira Sultanate of Dār Fūr*, University of London 1972, 82-9.

- 6 For a detailed account of al-Zubayr and Ismā'īl in Darfur, see G. Douin, *Histoire de Règne du Khedive Ismaïl*, Cairo, 3 vols., iii A, *L'Empire Africain*, 1933-41, 399-504. Interestingly, the only Turkiyya document found in Darfur is a *sijill* dated 30 Rabī' I 1292/6 May 1875 of a land-dispute heard before the *ḥikimdār* (DF 12.3/1, Bergen Collection, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Bergen). It is written in a sultanic style, not Egyptian bureaucratic.
- 7 Unfortunately, the otherwise excellent collection of Musabba'āt traditions and folklore collected by Ādam al-Zayn contains no general account of Musabba'āt history, but only detailed traditions of the group at Jugo Jugo; see Ādam al-Zayn, *al-Turāth al-sha'bi li-qabīlat al-Musabba'āt*, *Silsila dirāsāt fi 'l-turāth al-Sūdānī*, no. 10, University of Khartoum 1970.
- 8 *A Biographical Dictionary of the Sudan*, London 1967, 183-4 and 402.

have below may be only a somewhat garbled version of Cadalvène and Breuvery! This supposition is strengthened by the striking fact that all the dates, except one where Cadalvène and Breuvery have 1011 and our king-list 1001, are identical. If we are dealing with two versions, one from Kordofan the other from Darfur, of a common tradition at several removes, some impressively accurate copyists were at work.

The verdict on what kind of document we are dealing with here remains unproven.

Text

دفتر رقم ٥ معية سنیه "عربي" وارد الافادات
 صورة المكاتبه العربيه رقم ٨ مرور ص ٤٨ بتأريخ ٨ ذي القعدة
 سنة ١٢٩١
 من حكمدار السودان الى المعية
 جواب يذكر أنه أعرض للمعية في شوال سنة ٩١ نمرة ٦ بان ولد
 سلطان دارفور لما بلغه وفاة والده هرب من الفاشر وأخذ ما أمكن
 أخذه من الأموال وغيرها والآن بالتفحص ممن لهم دراية من
 أهالي وفقهاء دارفور عن فاملية أميرهم قد صار الحصول على
 هذه النسبة المحتوية على من حكموا دارفور من هذه العائلة من
 أولهم لآخرهم وهو أنه -
 قبل الإسلام كانت دارفور محكومة بملوك سودان من الجوس من

قبيلة تسمى داجو ، وآخر ملك منهم يسمى تنجر
وفي سنة ٨٥٢ من الهجرة حضر شخص يسمى أحمد المعفو من
عربان رفاعه المجود منهم الآن قبائل بمديرية سنار ومعه جانب وافر
من قبيلته - وتولى هي دارفور وكردفان وأقام فيهما دين
الإسلام

وفي سنة ٨٧٧ خلفه رفاعه ولده وفي ٨٩٧ تولى شاوردن
شيت ولد رفاعه

وفي سنة ٩١٣ تولى ابراهيم الدليل أخي شاوردن المذكور
وهذا الأخير ترك ولدين أحدهم يسمى بحر جد عائلة مسبغات
والثاني يسمى صابون رئيس عائلة كتجارة. وهذين العائلتين
تملكوا دارفور وكردفان الواحدة بعد الأخرى ،

وصابون المذكور هو الذي قسم دارفور الى خمسة قسام وفضل
هذا التقسيم مستديم من هذه الى هذا الآن فأول قسم يسمى
بدار الفاشر وما حولها والثاني دار التكنياوي وثالث قسم دار
ابا دوما والرابع دار ابا اومه والخامس دار أبو شيخ

وتولية صابون المذكور كانت في سنة ٩٦٧

ثم من بعده ولده إدريس جال في سنة ٩٨٧

- وفي سنة ١٠٠٠ تولى كور ولد إدريس
- وفي سنة ١٠٠١ تنذم أخي كور
- وفي سنة ١٠٢٠ سولبوته أخي تنذم
- وفي سنة ١٠٣١ عبد الرحمن سرف أخي سلبوته
- وفي سنة ١٠٦٤ روم سام أخي عبد الرحمن
- وفي سنة ١٠٩٦ ولا تومه ولد روم سام
- وفي سنة ١١٠٠ سولوت بن أخي ولا تومه هذا الاسم يسمى
سولون هو بلسان فور وعربيته سليمان
- وفي سنة ١١١٣ تولى موسى ولده
- وفي سنة ١١١٦ محمد بولاد أخي موسى
- وفي سنة ١١١٩ رجع موسى للحكم بالثاني
- وفي سنة ١١٢٨ أحمد بكر بن موسى
- وفي سنة ١١٤١ اسماعيل أبو حرانه أخي أحمد بكر
- وفي سنة ١١٥٤ محمد حرانه ابن أخيه
- وفي سنة ١١٥٩ عمر ليل أخي محمد حرانه
- وفي سنة ١١٦٧ أبو القاسم عم عمر
- وفي سنة ١١٧٦ تيراب أخي أبو القاسم وهذا الأمير كان توجه

لمحاربة هاشم ريس عائلة مسبغات أمير كردفان وهزمه وتعبه الى أن وصل الى أم درمان وهي على شاطئ النيل الغربي من الخرطوم وفي غيابه كان أوكل ولده إسحاق محله وفي أثناء عودته في باره وهي قرية من قري كردفان فأمرء الجيوش الذين كانوا معه ولوا أخيه عبد الرحمن الرشيد بدله وحضروا به الى دارفور فلما استشعر بذلك اسحق قام من محله ومعه جيوش عديدة لمقاتلته حيث هو الآخر عند وفاة أبيه كان صار توليته أمير بواسطة من كانوا معه من أمراء دارفور واستمر القتال والشقاق بينهم مدة سنتين ، وأخيرا قد انهزم إسحاق وقتل بجوار جبال مره وتأييد الحكم الى عبد الرحمن عمه في سنة ١٢٠٤ ،

وهو الذي أسس بلدة الفاشر وجعلها مقر لحكومة دارفور ، وذلك في سنة توليته إذ الملوك الذين قبله كانوا يسكنوا القرية المجاورة لجبل مره والقرية التي بداخله

وفي سنة ١٢١٤ تولى محمد الفضل بن عبد الرحمن المذكور وفي مدة الأمير استولت الحكومة الخديوية على كردفان ودخلت مقر حكومتها المسمى الأبيض في ٣١ دي القعدة سنة ١٢٣٦ على يد محمد بك الدفتردار رئيس العسكر الذين حضروا

وقتها من المحروسة بعد المحاربة مع عساكر دارفور وقتل المقدم
 مسلم الذي كان حاكم كردفان وقتها
 وفي سنة ١٢٥٦ تولى محمد الحسين بن محمد الفضل المذكور
 وفي سنة ١٢٩٠ خلفه ابراهيم ولده وهذا آخر أمراء دارفور وقتل
 بالمحاربة الذي وقعت بينه وبين عساكر الحكومة الخديوية المصرية
 ببلدة منواشى في يوم الأحد ١٤ رمضان ١٢٩١ ودفن بجامعها
 وهذا بالاختار للمعلومية

Translation

Register number (*daftar raqm*) 5, 'The exalted court' (*ma'iyya saniyya*) 'Arabic'; incoming correspondence (*wārid al-ifādāt*).

Copy of Arabic correspondence, number 8 m.r.w.r.⁹ page 48, dated 8 Dhū 'l-qa'da 1291 [17 December 1874].

From the Governor (*ḥikimdār*) of the Sudan: to the Court (*al-ma'iyya*).

A letter recording that it was reported to the Court in Shawwāl [1291= November/December 1874], number (*numra*) 6, that the son¹⁰ of the sultan of Darfur, when he learnt of his father's death,¹¹ fled from al-Fāshir and took with him what he could manage to take of wealth and other items. Now, after an enquiry by those who were knowledgeable among the people and *faqīhs* of Darfur

9 This appears to be an internal reference mark.

10 This probably refers to Ḥasab Allāh, actually an uncle of Sultan Ibrāhīm Qarad (see next note), who seems to have been chosen as sultan (or acted as such) in the immediate aftermath of the defeat at Manawāshī; see my *State and Society in Dār Fūr*, London 1980, 16.

11 This refers to the death of Sultan Ibrāhīm Qarad at the battle of Manawāshī on 25 October 1874.

about the family (*fāmiyya*) of their *amīr*, this detailed pedigree (*al-nisba al-muhtawīyya*) was established of those who have ruled Darfur from this clan (*‘ā’ila*) from the first to the last of them. Here it is:

Before Islam Darfur was ruled by black kings from the Majūs,¹² from a tribe called Dājū; their last king was called Tunjur.¹³

In 852 [1448-49] of the *hijrī* era there came a person called Aḥmad al-Ma[‘]fū¹⁴ from the Rufā[‘]a nomads—of whom there are now to be found tribes in Sinnār province (*muḍīriyya*). And with him came a large part of his tribe. They ruled both Darfur and Kordofan and the religion of Islam was established in both countries.

In 877 [1472-73] Aḥmad was succeeded by his son, Rifā[‘]a.

In 897 [1491-92] Shāūrd.n shīt,¹⁵ the son of Rufā[‘]a, came to power.

In 913 [1507-8] Ibrāhīm al-Dalīl, the brother of the above-mentioned Shāūrd.n, came to power. He left two sons; one, called Baḥr, was the ancestor (*jadd*) of the Musabba[‘]āt clan, the other, called Ṣābūn, was the head (*ra’īs*) of the Kunjāra clan.¹⁶ These two clans ruled Darfur and Kordofan as one (country) in turn.

It was the above-mentioned Ṣābūn who divided Darfur into five provinces (*aqsām*) and this division has continued uninterrupted from his time until now. The first province is called Dār al-Fāshir and surroundings;¹⁷ the second is Dār al-Takanyāwī;¹⁸

12 Here, presumably, meaning ‘pagan’ rather than Mazdian.

13 This statement telescopes the Daju and Tunjur, usually describe as two successive dynasties, together. We have no certain information on either of them; see further my ‘The Tunjur: a central Sudanic mystery’, *Sudan Notes and Records*, lxi, 1980, 47-60.

14 More commonly, Aḥmad al-Ma[‘]qūr, i.e. Aḥmad ‘the hamstrung’; see the discussion in *ibid.*, 48-51.

15 More commonly, Show Dorshid or Dorshit.

16 Written Kutjāra.

17 In Cadalvène and Breuvery, ‘Kordofan’, 35, n. 7, the province is called Dār al-Fāshir al-kabīr. The report is anachronistic since al-Fāshir was only established as the capital in about 1206/1791-92 by Sultan ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rashīd.

the third province is Dār Ābā Dūmā,¹⁹ the fourth is Dār Ābā Ūmā,²⁰ and the fifth is Dār Abū Shaykh.²¹

The accession of the said Ṣābūn was in 967 [1559-60].

Then after him came his son, Idrīs Jāl, in 987 [1579-80].

In 1000 [1591-92] Kūr²² w. Idrīs came to power.

In 1001 [1592-93] Tindhim, Kūr's brother [acceded].²³

In 1020 [1611-12] Sūlbūta,²⁴ Tindhim's brother [acceded].

In 1031 [1621-22] °Abd al-Raḥmān Sarraf, Sūlbūta's brother [acceded].

In 1064 [1653-54] Rūm Sām,²⁵ °Abd al-Raḥmān's brother [acceded].

In 1096 [1684-85] Walā Tūma,²⁶ Rūm Sām's son [acceded].

In 1100 [1688-89] Sūlūt,²⁷ the son of the brother of Walā Tūma [acceded]. This name is Sūlūn in the Fur language and in Arabic it is Sulaymān.²⁸

18 I.e. northern Darfur. Interestingly, in all 'external' accounts of Darfur, whether in Arabic or European languages, the title, *takanyāwī*, is written thus. In Darfur sultanic documents, it is written *takanāwī*, although it is pronounced as *takanyāwī*. It is linked to the Fur title, *toḡoij*; see further my *State and Society*, 162 n. 16.

19 In error for Dār Ābā Diima; south-western Darfur.

20 More accurately, Dār Ābā umḡ; south-eastern Darfur.

21 More fully, Dār Abū Shaykh Daalī; eastern Darfur.

22 In Cadalvène and Breuvery, 'Kordofan', 35 n. 7, the name is given as Kuuruu.

23 In Cadalvène and Breuvery, 'Kordofan', 35 n. 7, the name is given as Terrindem (close to other versions of the name in other king-lists) and the date of his accession is given 1011 [1602-3].

24 In Cadalvène and Breuvery, 'Kordofan', 35 n. 7, the name is given as Sol Bute.

25 In Cadalvène and Breuvery, 'Kordofan', 35 n. 7, the name is given as Rumsam.

26 In Cadalvène and Breuvery, 'Kordofan', 35 n. 7, the name is given as Diatomé.

27 In error for Sūlūn.

28 This refers to Sulaymān Ṣolḡduḡḡ, the first official (in the sense of appearing on sultanic seals) ruler of the Keira dynasty; on the seals, see R.S. O'Fahey and M.I. Abu Salim, *Land in Dār Fūr. Charters and related documents from the Dār Fūr Sultanate*, Cambridge 1983, 28-9.

In 1113 [1701-2] Mūsā, his son, came to power.

In 1116 [1704-5] Muḥammad Būlād, the brother of Mūsā [took power].

In 1119 [1707-8] Mūsā returned to power for a second time.²⁹

In 1128 [1715-6] Aḥmad Bukr b. Mūsā [acceded].

In 1141 [1728-29] Ismāʿīl Abū Ḥarrāna, the brother of Aḥmad Bukr [acceded].³⁰

In 1154 [1741-42] Muḥammad Ḥarrāna, the son of his brother [acceded].

In 1159 [1746-7] ʿUmar Layl,³¹ the brother of Muḥammad Ḥarrāna [acceded].

In 1167 [1753-54] Abū ʿl-Qāsim, the uncle of ʿUmar [acceded].

In 1176 [1762-63] Tayrāb, the brother of Abū ʿl-Qāsim [acceded]. This is the *amīr* who went to fight Hāshim, chief of the Musabbaʿāt clan and *amīr* of Kordofan, and he defeated the latter and pursued him until he had reached Omdurman, which is on the banks of the Nile, west of Khartoum.³²

In his absence (*sc.* from Darfur), Tayrāb had appointed his son Iṣḥāq in his place. On his return journey he died³³ at Bāra, one of the towns of Kordofan. The leaders of the forces who were with him chose as his successor his brother, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīd,³⁴ and accompanied the latter back to Darfur. When Iṣḥāq learnt of this, he left where he was together with numerous

29 For an account of this episode, see 'Kordofan', 36.

30 Only Cadalvène and Breuvery and the present list include this ruler.

31 In all other accounts, ʿUmar is given as the son of Muḥammad, more commonly called Dawra (the Fur for 'iron'). Layl = lel, the Fur for 'donkey'.

32 The tradition that Muḥammad Tayrāb reached as far as Omdurman is *not* found in Cadalvène and Breuvery; it is, however, recorded in Naʿūm Shuqayr, *Taʾriḫ al-Sūdān al-qadīm waʾl-ḥadīth wa-jughrāfiyyatuhu*, repr. Beirut 1967, 451 and R.C. Slatin, *Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, London 1896, 46.

33 The Arabic as printed is unclear at this point is confused by the omission of a *waw*: the clause as reconstructed reads *wa-wuḥīya athnāʿ ʿawdatihi*.

34 This telescopes a long and complex succession crisis at Bāra; the most detailed reconstruction is in my *Growth and Development*, 164-71.

forces to fight him. Because he had been late at the death of his father, his appointment as *amīr* came through those who were with him of the Darfur chiefs. The fighting and dissension between them lasted two years.³⁵ In the end, Iṣḥāq was defeated and killed close to the Marra Mountains and the rule of his uncle, °Abd al-Raḥmān, was confirmed in 1204 [1789-90].

It was [°Abd al-Raḥmān] who founded al-Fāshir and made it the centre of the government of Darfur, and this was in the year of his accession.³⁶ The kings who were before him used to live in the villages near or within the Marra Mountains.

In 1214 [1799-1800] Muḥammad al-Faḍl, the son of the above-mentioned °Abd al-Raḥmān, acceded. It was in the time of [this] *amīr* that the Khedivial government³⁷ conquered Kordofan and entered the capital of its government, called al-Ubayyīd, on 21 Dhū 'l-qa' da 1236 [20 August 1821] through the efforts of Muḥammad Bey *al-daftardār*, commander of the soldiers who had come at the time from 'The Protected' (*al-maḥrūsa*, that is Cairo), after a battle with the soldiers of Darfur and the killing of the *maqḍūm* Musallam, who was the governor (*ḥākīm*) of Kordofan at the time.³⁸

In 1256 [1838] Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn, the son of the above-mentioned Muḥammad al-Faḍl, acceded.

In 1290 [1873] Ibrāhīm, his son, succeeded him. He was the last of the *amīrs* of Darfur and he was killed in a battle between him and the soldiers of Egyptian Khedivial government³⁹ in a

35 Again the most detailed reconstruction of the civil war between °Abd al-Raḥmān and Iṣḥāq is to be found in *ibid.*, 172-7, but see also my 'A prince and his neighbours', *SAJHS*, 3, 1992, 60-2, where I have modified my earlier analysis somewhat.

36 Other sources give 1206/1791-92 as the date of the foundation of al-Fāshir; see *Growth and Development*, 188.

37 An anachronism, since the title, Khedive, was only used informally from 1850 and only in 1867 officially conferred on Ismā'īl by the Porte; see Hill, *Biographical Dictionary*, xi.

38 On the Turco-Egyptian conquest of Kordofan, see Richard Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan*, London 1958, 12-13.

39 Thus, pompously, concealing the fact that it was al-Zubayr Pasha Raḥma

district of Manawāshī on Sunday 14 Ramaḍān 1291 [25 October 1874]. He is buried in the mosque [at Manawāshī]. And this is for the sake of information.

who conquered Darfur. The most detailed account of the battle of Manwāshī is Douin, *Histoire*, iii/A, 390-94.