SUDAN STUDIES

Number 25 March 2001

ISSN – [0952-049X]

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EDITORIAL

As announced in the last issue of *Sudan Studies* (June 2000) Number 25 will be my last as Editor. At the time of writing (March 2001) my successor has not been definitely confirmed, but is likely to be following a committee meeting next week. In the meantime, any articles or contributions may still be sent to me, and I shall forward them to the new editor.

Looking back over the issues of *Sudan Studies* since I took over for issue No. 9 (December 1990), I am impressed by both the variety and the quality of the material we have included over that decade or more. Being neither a fully-fledged academic journal, nor a simple society information sheet, there was always a risk of our publication "falling between two stools". In fact, I think we can be proud of our modest contribution to Sudanese studies in general. I would like to thank all those contributors for their efforts, for the help I have received from many quarters, including our committee, and to repeat a general apology for those occasions when publication has been delayed, for whatever reason.

Paul Wilson

Editor, *Sudan Studies*

March 2001

SUDAN STUDIES: Number 25 (March 2001)

MALARIA IN GREATER KHARTOUM

Samir M A Hassan Alredaisy and HR J Davies

Malaria is a serious tropical disease disrupting the social and economic life of many African communities in both rural and urban areas. *Plasmodium* is the agent of the disease. Of its various forms the most serious is *Plasmodiumfalciparum* which on average proves fatal in 10% of cases caused by it (Meade et al, 1988). The vector by which the disease is transmitted is the *anopheles* mosquito. As the breeding sites for the mosquito are stagnant water, malaria was originally associated with rural rather than urban areas. Modem life, migration and the very rapid growth of urban areas have begun to change this with the result that more recent investigations have begun to look at the relationship between the disease and urbanisation (Prothero, 1965; Eyles & Woods, 1983; Jones & Moon, 1992). Greater Khartoum is a case in point.

In 1995 malaria topped the list of disease admissions to Sudan's hospitals and it was the major disease killing children under 4 years of age, accounting for more than one third of all hospital deaths for this age group (Sudan Ministry of Health, 1995). Under-reporting in the Sudan of common diseases, such as malaria, and the inevitable inadequacies in its medical statistics, even for Khartoum State, must be recognised. Nevertheless, the Khartoum State Ministry of Health figures (Khartoum State Ministry of Health, 1996) are the most reliable in the Sudan and may be used with some degree of confidence to at least identify valid trends. The significance of malaria in Greater Khartoum can be gauged from hospital attendance for 1994-96. Malaria accounted for more than 20% of cases in 24 of the 36 months. 1994 was a bad year for malaria in Greater Khartoum. In January malaria cases accounted for 38% of hospital attendances and in October for 31%. It is clear that malaria plays an important part in

the lives of families living in Greater Khartoum, disrupting both their economic activities and social life.

Between 1981 and 1996 the population of Greater Khartoum doubled from just over 2 million to a little over 4 million. Unsurprisingly, the number of reported cases increased considerably though the incidence rate has varied dramatically from a low of 1.7% of the population in 1983 to 12.0% in 1987, 13.4% in 1992 and 19.1% in 1991 (Figure 1). The general trend based on a 5-year running mean suggests that the increase in the incidence of malaria has been rising faster than the population. Figure 2 (missing from original) shows the averaged monthly variation in hospital admission of malaria cases for 1994-96, with the peak period of August to November. It should be noted that hospital admissions for malaria are relatively unusual. For example, in 1994 there were 22,700 hospital admissions but 308,000 reported cases (i.e. 7.4%), and in 1996 only 10,700 admissions out of 394,000 reported cases (2.7%). Monthly hospital fatality figures for malaria have been complied for 1996 by Khartoum State Ministry of Health (Table 1):

Table 1

Hospital fatalities from Malaria in Greater Khartoum, 1996

(by month and % of hospitalised cases)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2.9	2.4	4.2	5.2	5.0	7.4	4.3	6.9	6.1	4.4	1.8	4.0

Figures also show that, in general, males are more likely to suffer from malaria than females, though there are age differences. Males seem to suffer particularly in the working age groups.

The figures for 1985 to 1996 suggest that there were overall more male than female cases in six of the nine years (Khartoum State Ministry of Health, 1996).

There are wide variations too within the three *mohafaza* (main administrative units) making up Greater Khartoum (Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman). In parts of all three there were areas where 10% or more of the population were recorded as being attacked by malaria in 1996, e.g. Idd Babiker and Khogalab in Khartoum North (13% and 11% respectively); Jebel El Tiena in Omdurman (10%); and Salamanya East in Khartoum (11%). All the worst affected areas were near the Niles. As might be expected, overall Khartoum had the best figures. Taking the ten neighbourhoods within each of the three *mohafaza* with the highest incidence of malaria, based upon proportion of the population the results were:

Khartoum North 5.7%; Omdurman 4.6% and Khartoum 2.4%.

The above discussion suggests that malaria:

- is a very common disease in Greater Khartoum and that its incidence is on the increase with numbers of cases increasing faster from year to year than the population increase, but with some very considerable variations from one year to another.
- is most prevalent between August and November.
- seems to be more prevalent among men than women, especially in the working age groups.
- varies in its incidence between the different *mohafaza* of Greater Khartoum and between riverain and non-riverain neighbourhoods.
- is a disabling disease rather than a fatal disease though it makes the path easier for other diseases to attack the individual.

How can these conclusions be explained?

Towards an explanation:

Physical factors.

Part of the explanation lies with the local climate of Greater Khartoum, its topographic characteristics and the influence of the Niles. Temperatures in Greater Khartoum are high for most of the year. Rarely do daily maximum temperatures fall below 25ºC and for much of the year days with over 40ºC are experienced. Such conditions suit the *anopheles* mosquito. But, as the Greater Khartoum climate is arid with long-term rainfall average of about 170mm, and with 90% of it falling between July and September, it seems hardly conducive to high incidence levels of malaria, though climate does in part account for the peak of malaria cases in August and September (Figure 2). Climate cannot account for the relatively high number of cases during the dry months of the rest of the year.

However, the rainfall varies erratically between years: 1984 was the driest year this century (total fall of only 4mm); by contrast 1988 was the wettest (total fall 420mm). It is noticeable that these years respectively recorded low and high incidence rates for malaria Nevertheless, other factors would seem to be partly responsible for the variations in incidence.

Khartoum itself was seen, in the Nineteenth Century, to be a most unhealthy site. It was suggested on several occasions that the capital should be moved elsewhere because of the high incidence of water-borne disease (Davies & Abu Sin, 1991). According to Santoni one-third of the European population of Khartoum died from water-borne disease in 1877 (Santoni, 1878), but the strategic nature of its position at the confluence of the White and Blue Niles prevented any change taking place. The problem was created by the Gezira area between the White and Blue Niles on which Khartoum is sited, a very flat clay plain such that when it rained the water drained very slowly towards the rivers and tended to stagnate in various hollows providing excellent breeding sites for mosquitoes and other vectors of disease to proliferate. Stagnant pools can be created by rainstorms of as little as 15mm (Walsh et al., 1994).

The same situation occurs when the Niles are in flood. When the Blue Nile peaks in August/September lands on both sides of this river and Main Nile are flooded. The extent of area flooded will depend upon the height of the flood. Furthermore, the force of water coming down the Blue Nile at this time of the year ponds back the White Nile causing flooding along its course too, particularly in the suburbs of Kalakla and El Shagara (formerly known as Gordon's Tree) (Davies and Walsh, 1997). The physical characteristics of Khartoum also hold true of Khartoum North, but are less true for Omdurman as the site here is composed of Nubian Sandstones rather than clays and silts and the banks of the river are steeper. Omdurman is also surrounded, except on the Nile bank side, by a desert landscape. These features in part account for the relatively lower incidence of malaria in Omdurman than Khartoum North and for the higher incidence of the disease in riverain areas. However, the lower figures for Khartoum suggest the intervention of non-physical factors.

Human factors:

The doubling of the population of Greater Khartoum in less than 20 years has been caused by migration rather than natural increase. It has been estimated that of the 2.2 million population increase between 1983 and 1990, 1.4 million was accounted for by in-migration (Davies, 1991). Most of these migrants came from rural areas, rather than from other towns, driven by economic hardship, particularly from Western Sudan, and driven from the south of the Sudan by civil strife. In many cases they brought their malaria with them creating a larger human disease pool (Prothero, 1965; Bauomi, 1972). These migrants have tended to occupy the less satisfactory sites from the viewpoint of disease and have led to higher population densities in the urban areas (Modawi & Siddig, 1995). Furthermore, the urban planners have not been able to cope with the size and rate of population increase (Mahmoud, 1991). All these factors have encouraged the spread of malaria.

The extension of agricultural schemes in recent years has been an important factor in extending malaria incidence out of the rainy season into the rest of the year. Official statistics show that agricultural schemes provide 25% of mosquito breeding sites in Greater Khartoum (Khartoum State Ministry of Health, 1996). It is noticeable that Khartoum North is almost surrounded by irrigation schemes producing vegetables for the people of Greater Khartoum and fodder for their animals, and goes a long way in accounting for the higher malaria incidence recorded for Khartoum North (Hag Ahmed, 1991). Perhaps 86% of agricultural scheme dwellers in Greater Khartoum are infected with the malaria parasite (Khartoum State Ministry of Health, 1996) and 45% of the population of Khartoum North were recorded as 'rural' in the 1990 Greater Khartoum Census compared with less than 20% for Khartoum and Omdurman. The rural area around Kadaro in Khartoum North had a population increase of some 300% between 1983 and 1990 (Davies, 1991).

The rapid expansion of the urban population has simply overwhelmed the standard public services of electricity, water supply, rainwater drainage and sewage disposal increasing the number of potential breeding sites for mosquitoes. Much of the pipework for the water supply is old and leaks are common, particularly in the winter season when demand is less and the water pressure within the pipes rises. The resulting pipe breakages provide mosquitoes with unexpected new dry season sites for breeding (Plate 1). During the heavy rainstorms of 1988 one of the main factors leading to property damage and stagnant water pools was the lack, or inadequate maintenance, of any street drainage systems to carry away excess water. Khartoum suffered less from flood damage in 1988 than the rest of Greater Khartoum and it is significant that it was only here that some street drainage operated reasonably well (Davies and Walsh, 1997). Similarly, the lack of public sewerage services to much of the area of Greater Khartoum leads to the proliferation of various alternative systems of 'private' sewage disposal, again providing new sites for mosquitoes to breed, especially when a property is unoccupied or the facilities are overused. Type of housing has an impact too on the

prevalence of malaria. Over 40% of housing in Greater Khartoum is of mud brick, with higher figures for Omdurman and Khartoum North than for Khartoum. If poorly maintained such buildings provide niches for mosquitoes to breed during the rainy season (Alredaisy, 1990). The generally better provision of public services and quality of housing in Khartoum accounts for the lower incidence of malaria there.

The apparent higher incidence amongst males may be due in part to the greater daily mobility available to them and the resultant greater degree of contact with other people outside the household. Poor nutrition with hard manual work, especially amongst the males without families, is an additional factor (Babiker & Alredaisy, 1995). On the other hand, there is an imbalance between the sexes. The male/female sex ratio for Greater Khartoum in 1993 was 115:100, with a figure for Omdurman of 118:100. In 1990 in much of the urban area the ratio was over 120:100 (Khartoum Governorate, 1990).

Conclusion:

Malaria is currently a serious health problem in Greater Khartoum and one which appears to be getting worse. This is a most unfortunate situation. With a long dry season and low annual rainfall the physical conditions, in spite of Nineteenth Century reservations, do not seem to make malaria control too difficult. During the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, Khartoum town itself was declared free of malaria from 1904 (Gleichen, 1905). The core of the problem is the vast increase in population caused by in-migration, especially in the lower income groups, without the commensurate development of urban infrastructure, public hygiene and reasonable housing. The city planners, with the resources available to them, have been unable to cope with the exodus from other parts of the Sudan to Greater Khartoum. The situation reviewed here in Greater Khartoum is replicated in many other African cities.

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Figure 1: Incidence of Malaria in Greater Khartoum, 1981-1996

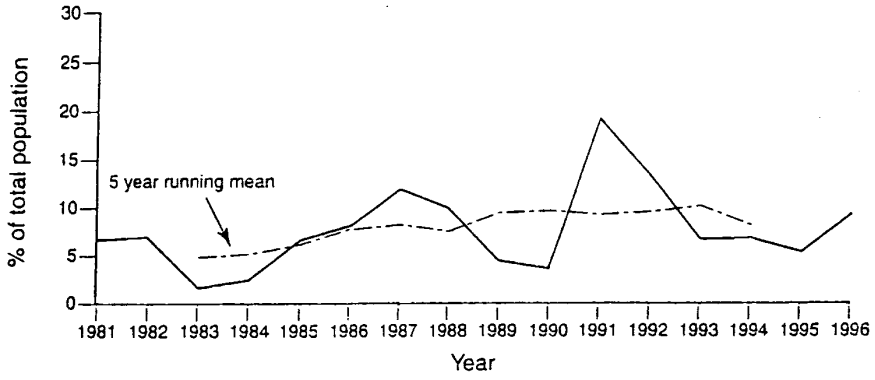
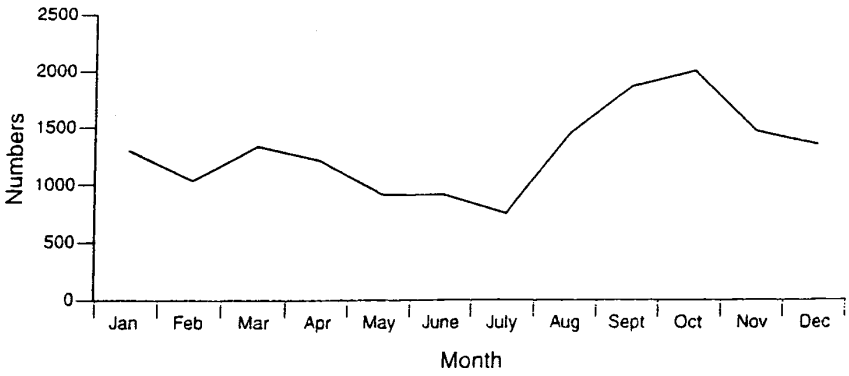


Figure 2: Average monthly hospital admittances for malaria in Greater Khartoum, 1994 -1996



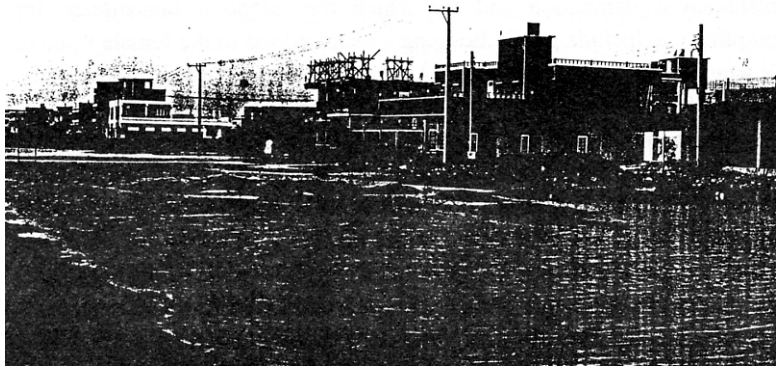


Plate 1: Flood in the Riadh District of Khartoum caused by burst water main.

SUDAN STUDIES: Number 25 (March 2001)

CHOOSING DEATH: A CONSIDERATION OF SUICIDE IN SUDAN

By Lillian Craig Harris, Ph.D.

Sudan Studies Society of the U.K. Annual General Meeting.
London, 25 September 1999

Although suicide occurs in every country and is part of the human condition, it is one of the most frequently denied human activities. Faced with self destruction by a relative or friend, people very often feel bewildered, fearful, angry, personally betrayed or humiliated. The response may be to describe the death as “unexpected”, “an accident”, or “the result of a sudden illness”. Because suicide carries such grave possibilities for scandal and legal complication, even medical professionals may resort to euphemism or denial of what is one of the world’s leading causes of death. This is true of all societies.

The desire to hide the reality of suicide becomes even stronger in societies in which most people consider the act a sin for which the eternal punishment is damnation and for which the temporal punishment for attempting can include public flogging - as happened to the female relative of a woman I know in Khartoum. Although this is admittedly an extreme response, family shame is a powerful emotion. And today millions of Sudanese, the majority even, live close to the extreme in many ways.

It should come as no surprise that little research has been done into suicide in Sudan - and most of what has been published is mainly of historical interest. For example, S.F. Nadel’s book The Nuba: An Anthropological Study of the Hill Tribes of Kordofan, published in 1947, documents cases of suicide among Nuba tribes.[1] Among the motives for suicide which Nadel cites are incurable disease, desire to escape from an unbearable life and “momentary impulse: resulting from sudden shock”. Other more recent research, published in 1968 and 1978, is likewise dated and - I would argue - unpersuasive, as the suicide rate claimed by both these

[1] S.F. Nadel, The Nuba: An Anthropological Study of the Hill Tribes in Kordofan, London: Oxford University Press, 1947

later authors is less than one per 100,000[2] which if true, would give Sudan one of the lowest suicide rates in the world.

Is it possible that recent indications of a high degree of suicidal ideation and behaviour among both northern and southern Sudanese in Khartoum and environs - which we shall discuss in a moment - result solely from the terrible social disruption of the past 20 years? Or can it be that suicide rates in Sudan, particularly among women, have all along been much higher than generally recognised? I discovered this to be true in neighbouring Egypt where the annual low rate of suicide reported to the World Health Organisation bears little relationship to the degree of suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour discovered by Befrienders Cairo after that listening service for the despairing and suicidal began in 1992. In Sudan the foundation of Befrienders Khartoum in early 1997 made possible the collection of similar, albeit informal, statistics.

In an article published in late 1998 in Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention. Australian psychiatrist Robert Goldney *et al.* reported that:

> "While it has not been possible to gain a sound epidemiological estimate of suicide, as there are formidable challenges in collecting such data, recently an opportunity arose to estimate suicidal ideation in two selected samples of Sudanese women. This was considered to be an important opportunity, not only because it would be for the first such research in Sudanese women, but its results would also have potential policy implications in terms of clinical services for Sudan. Furthermore, the recent establishment of the voluntary suicide prevention organization, Befrienders International in Khartoum, allowed the research findings to be viewed in the perspective of anecdotal information gained about suicidal behaviour."[3]

[2] cf. Abdel Hafeiz H.B. and Nadim A.A., "Suicide in Sudan," British Journal of Psychiatry 1978: 133: 380-381 and Elsarrag, ME. "Suicide in the Northern Sudan," British Journal of Psychiatry 1968; 114:1057-1058.
[3] Robert D. Goldney, Lillian Craig Harris, Alia Badri, Sara Michael, Laura Fisher, "Suicide Ideation in Sudanese Women," Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention 1998; 19/4: 154-158.

In this study 29 psychology students at Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman and 30 women from Jebel Aulia displaced settlement south of Khartoum were assessed for suicidal feelings on the basis of responses to four questions embedded in a 28-item General Health Questionnaire.[4] The result of this simple survey was that "no fewer than 55% of the Jebel Aulia women compared to 27 percent of those at the Ahfad University for Women reported some degree of suicidal ideation." The researchers were not surprised that such a high degree of war-displaced women, most of whom had lost family members, all their material possessions, their homelands, their cultural roots, should be despairing. But we were all shocked to discover that such a high percentage of apparently "normal" young northern Muslim women (as most of them were) from relatively well placed families were entertaining thoughts of self destruction.

Although he is careful to underscore the limitations of this form of research, Goldney points out that in the 1940s, Nadel "was frequently met with absolute denial that suicide actually occurred in some communities until he gained their confidence", and similarly concludes of the more recent research that, "It is possible that these relatively high levels of suicidal ideation are now able to be acknowledged because of a relative increase in freedom of expression of feelings, particularly in the context of responding anonymously to a questionnaire, rather than expressing such emotions to another person." The experience of befriending in Khartoum, as elsewhere, confirms that suicidal people may often mask their self destructive feelings and impulses - including from themselves - during a first or even subsequent conversation even with a sympathetic and supportive listener.

Furthermore, the simple statistics compiled at the Befrienders Khartoum centre itself during its first year of service also suggested far greater incidence of suicidal ideation among people in the Khartoum area than was previously known. It should, of course, be stressed that

[4] The General Health Questionnaire's "hidden questions" on suicidal ideation ascertained whether the respondent: "1) Felt that life isn't worth living; 2) Found yourself wishing you were dead and away from it all; 3) Thought of the possibility that you might do away with yourself; and 4) Found the idea of taking your own life kept coming into your mind." Considering the anecdotal evidence that many Sudanese have accepted their abnormal lives as "normal" and use by the questionnaire of the phrase "no more than usual" as one possible answer, Goldney concluded that the results of the questionnaire "would, if anything, *underestimate* the prevalence of suicidal ideation in these samples."

although all indications of suicidal thoughts need to be taken seriously, by no means do all people who express suicidal inclinations go on to take self harming action. There are many factors such as strong religious faith, family loyalties and responsibilities, and fear of death which help hold individuals back from self destruction. However, fully one third of the 246 caller contacts made with Befrienders Khartoum in the ten months between May 1997 and March 1997 indicated at least a limited degree of suicidal ideation. Problems presented by these callers ranged from loneliness, abuse, inadequacy, bereavement and other loss to difficulties in relationships, finances and housing. Poverty, joblessness and displacement were significant presenting problems masking emotions of anger, fear, inadequacy, humiliation, hopelessness and despair.

What are we to make of this? At the least that we have here an indication of widespread and possibly rising despair which threatens the lives of many Sudanese. Consider this, moreover. The majority of the initial callers to the Befrienders Khartoum office were northern Sudanese, not displaced southerners or westerners among whom as groups despair might presumably be higher. Secondly, due to inexperience among the befriending volunteers, 39 of the contacts were not asked about suicidal feelings - which raises the probability that the true total of suicidal contacts was under reported. Finally, the fact that only 47 of these initial 246 contacts were with women callers also suggests that the actual degree of suicidal feelings in Sudanese society as a whole may be much higher than indicated by these simple statistics.

Conversations with Sudanese women and anecdotal evidence suggest that suicide ratios in Sudan may follow more closely an “eastern” pattern of more female suicides (as in India) than the “European” pattern of more male deaths. In the West one reason more men than women die by suicide is that men choose the more immediate and lethal methods [hanging, shooting] which allow less margin for survival. In Egypt, and even more so in Sudan where drugs are not available to many people, the suicide methods chosen by women who determine to die are likewise less amenable to rescue: jumping into the Nile, burning with kerosene and

ingesting of henna hair dye. Is it also possible that Sudanese women are attempting suicide more often than Sudanese men?

A Sudanese forensic pathologist, Professor Ali Kobani claimed in 1997 that at least 20 cases of suspected suicide per month (gender not specified) are brought to the attention of the mortuary staff of the Khartoum Teaching Hospital. According to Professor Kobani, suicide is increasing among Sudanese women with the chief causes in addition to mental illness being marital suspicions, unwanted pregnancy and parental mistreatment. He cited hair dye, selected some 60 percent of the time, as the preferred method of killing both self and a husband who has decided to marry another woman.[5]

Sudanese women in psychological distress often mention a shortage of female therapists as a deterrent to seeking professional assistance. This is particularly relevant because, as Kobani and others point out, many of the difficulties which lead to suicidal thoughts among Sudanese women are sexually related and there are strong social and cultural barriers against discussing sexual matters with a man, even a medical professional. Moreover, in Khartoum there is a great shortage of qualified psychotherapists while elsewhere in the country such expertise is virtually unknown. Treatment of depression and other psychological disorders, when it occurs at all, is almost entirely through medical intervention, i.e. drugs which are beyond the means of all but the most affluent.

Nor, as is true everywhere in the world, is suicidal behaviour always treated with compassion, even by professionals. In 1998 a young woman who had a history of self harm was able to walk out of a private clinic in Omdurman, buy henna dye and return to the clinic where she drank it mixed with Tang. Though she was eventually found by staff and revived, her last conscious memory for several days was of being berated by a doctor who, while performing a tracheotomy, cursed her as a sinful wretch for bringing shame upon her family.

[5] Based on a private conversation in October 1997. I have been unable to obtain a copy of Professor Kobani's study, "Violence from a Forensic Point of View" which discusses statistical data compiled in Khartoum mortuaries from 1993-95. See Wafaa Kamil, "Suicide in Society" in New Horizon (Khartoum), 26 January 1997.

In October 1997 Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar, an Indian psychiatrist who founded Sneha, a branch of Befrienders International in Channai (formerly Madras), met with students at Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman. The Ahfad students provided the following reasons why Sudanese women kill themselves:

* They have been deserted
* The pressures of war
* Illegitimate pregnancy or birth
* Feelings, especially among the young, of oppression by society or religion
* Forced marriage
* Parental control and expectations
* Rape
* Rigid laws governing conduct between men and women
* The need for women to fulfil and sustain a “perfect marriage”
* Lack of someone to listen to her emotions
* No recognition that women have emotions just like men
* Feeling unvalued as a human being
* Lack of “relationship” (meaning friendship) between husband and wife

When I first moved to Khartoum in early 1995 and announced my intention of trying to establish a branch of Befrienders International, I was sympathetically advised by several prominent Sudanese that “not many people kill themselves here because we all believe in God.” But I had received that same well meaning advice in Egypt before establishment of Befrienders Cairo - whose simple statistics, as mentioned, soon revealed a degree of suicidal ideation that approximated that of London at the time -some 25 percent of caller contacts. In Khartoum, therefore, I began by asking people to tell me what they knew, what they had heard or observed about suicide in their society.

Soon I learned of the desperate southern mother of five who threw her children into the Nile and jumped in after them, of the displaced westerner who hanged himself after long unemployment, of the man who decided to leap off a building because he could not afford medicine for his old mother. (Fortunately, this man was rescued by sympathetic passers-by who pooled their scant resources for the old lady's benefit). In those early days, too, the daughter of an Arab diplomat whose two maids were clearly being abused at first dismissed my expression of concern for the women -and then confided that one of the maids had tried to kill herself the previous week! On another occasion, a friend who initially responded with considerable scepticism to my appeal for support to open Befrienders Khartoum, called later in the day to say that he had learned on return to his office the servant of a colleague had hanged herself that morning "with no warning".

My point is that much which is very unpleasant goes on around us and we are often not informed or we fail to pay attention because suicide is intrinsically so ugly, so painful even to think about. Both my sceptical friend and a well known surgeon who likewise considered suicide "only an infrequent occurrence in Sudan" when I approached the Khartoum Rotary Club for support are now members of the Executive Committee of Befrienders Khartoum.[6]

Given the physically and psychologically stressful circumstances in which so many Sudanese live, I once wondered why more Sudanese did not kill themselves. But I have come to believe that perhaps they are killing themselves and we simply do not recognise it. A young Sudanese recently admitted that because he wanted to die but was too frightened to kill himself, he joined the army and went south hoping someone would do the job for him. Fortunately this young man was not killed. Instead a terrible experience of being wounded while killing others helped him regain some hope of continuing to live although he has a long way to go towards finding a normal life.

We have no idea what the actual rate of suicide is in Sudan. What is clear is that to live in Sudan today is to risk death not only by disease, starvation and war but also by your own

[6] The Rotarians of Cairo and Khartoum were independently instrumental in establishment of Befrienders Cairo and Befrienders Khartoum and continue to provide major support to both branches of Befrienders International.

hand as the result of despair and hopelessness. The risks are all there. A list of "the factors which increase suicide risk" is drilled into the carefully selected befriender volunteers, with the admonition that the more of these factors present for an individual, the greater the risk she faces. Among these factors which often lead - anywhere in the world - to suicidal feelings are isolation, loneliness or uprooting, the prospect of having to live with few close human contacts, painful physical illness or long sleep disturbance, financial worries, feelings of uselessness, a family history of suicide, loss of religious faith or of a philosophy of life, dependence on alcohol or drugs, a definite idea of how it would be possible to kill oneself and access to this method.

All of these circumstances are rampant not only in the displaced settlements of perhaps two million people, mainly southerners and westerners, around Khartoum but also in the Three Towns themselves. Loss is the constant factor in suicide: loss of family, home, fortune, status, opportunity, love, health, all of which can lead to loss of hope. And all Sudanese have lost enormously.

"They have sold their jewellery, their window frames, even the taubs," a woman told me when describing the silent hunger which creeps through the hoshs of Omdurman. Laughing to mask her sorrow, another friend told me of a professional man who - because he could no longer afford to feed the hungry neighbours - could only shame them into staying away by coming to lunch in his underwear. How many of the factors which can lead to suicidal feelings does this small, sad incident portray?

Various comments I have heard, scenes I have participated in, come back to me:

* "We have had to learn to disregard our bodies," said a priest who supports about 30 people, many of them the children of his dead relatives.

* "Our lives are filled with such difficulty, we have seen such sorrow, that we have come to consider the abnormal as normal," a student told me.

* "Where will you get the volunteers?" a community health worker asked me in Juba where I had gone to see about the possibility of setting up a befriending centre. "Where will you get the volunteers?" he repeated, "We are all traumatised".

* "I thank God that my brother has been killed in the war for he is now in Paradise," a young woman replied when asked what had been the most traumatic event in her life. This loss, that of the right to grieve, may in its isolating effect be the most painful loss to bear.

Many of the Sudanese who remain in Sudan - and many outside - are "walking wounded," their minds and often their bodies damaged by great loss and continuing difficulties. An effort is being made to increase the emotional support available to Sudanese refugees in Cairo who are now reaching that city at the rate of about 200 families a week, usually finding little material, educational, or emotional assistance and often falling into despair. Under such circumstances, suicides have increased. Should that surprise us? According to the International Association for Suicide Prevention, "Suicide is a significant health problem in every country in the world, being among the ten leading causes of death. "[7]

An apparently growing incidence of suicide may be but one manifestation of the Sudanese crisis. But it is an aspect of the tragedy which has been ignored and now needs to be recognised and addressed. Professor Goldney, a cautious professional, says that recent information such as I have given here suggests "that the previous noted figures for suicidal behaviour in Sudan almost certainly needs revision. They also highlight the need for further professional and volunteer assistance with continuing evaluation and research of programs for this vulnerable population.

We all know that the most obvious Sudanese need is for peace. Nothing permanent can occur without peace and we all need to work towards that end. But in the meanwhile is there not something more we can do to provide increased emotional support to those who suffer loss of

[7] 'The Adelaide Declaration on Suicide Prevention," ratified by the Executive Board of the International Association for Suicide Prevention following the 19th Congress of the International Association for Suicide Prevention held in Adelaide, Australia, 23-27 March 1997.

hope both in Sudan and as refugees? Befrienders Khartoum is a tiny organisation. It needs more volunteers, more community awareness, telephone lines, branch centres, financial support. Much of this may not be possible without peace. But some of it may be.

I am reminded of an advertisement used several years ago by the Samaritans UK, parent organisation of Befrienders International. In this ad, a man encased in plastic wrap shouted but no sound emerged, gestured but remained entrapped. The caption read: “Is there anyone out there?” Is there?

SUDAN STUDIES: Number 25 (March 2001)

SUDAN: IN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR

Hans Veeken

Summary Points

- Areas of south Sudan have been cut *off for* years by the civil war, making it one of the most inaccessible areas in Africa with most of south Sudan accessible only from Kenya
- The local tribes are semi-nomadic cattle herders, and even without the effects of the war living conditions are extremely harsh
- Tuberculosis and pneumonia are highly prevalent as well as kala-azar and brucellosis
- In the marshy area of the Sudd malaria is an increasingly serious problem

"Do not worry, she will survive; she has meningitis and is on treatment. You'll see it tomorrow when it is light." William smiles confidently, sweeps his stethoscope round his neck, bends his back, and crawls out of the hut. I'm not convinced and examine the girl once more; I'm glad I brought my torch. She lies naked in the sand, obviously stiff necked, unconscious, and breathing superficially. The hut is pitch dark, and I can just see the shadows of some five relatives who cook and sleep in the same place. Except for nasogastric feeding, I have not much more to offer. I decide to follow the health worker and to re-examine the girl first thing next morning. William has received primary school education and upgraded himself to health assistant through "hands on" teaching for several years by our doctors. I feel proud but also a bit embarrassed at the ease with which he diagnoses severe illnesses so seldom seen in my home country, the Netherlands.

The most inaccessible place in Africa

We had been dropped at the village, called Lankien, by a small plane. While landing, I noticed a crashed plane at the end of the air strip. "The pilot forgot to pull up the flaps when taking off," the pilot explained casually. Lankien is situated in south Sudan, a "country" that is home to some five million black Africans, who have been driven to the extremes of life by nature, continuous exploitation, and a seemingly never ending war against the north (since 1959) for their liberty. Areas have been cut off for years, making it the most inaccessible area in Africa. During my trip I saw only one car, broken down beside the road, and no people

handled money, the economy is based on barter. Walking is the only means of travel, and it is still normal practice to use runners to carry messages from one place to another.

The tribes in south Sudan, such as the Nuer and the Dinka, are semi-nomadic cattle herders. They eke out an existence in surroundings that most people would call hostile. They can do so only by living in close harmony with their cattle: they need the cattle for survival, drinking their blood for nourishment, burning the dung to keep the mosquitoes at bay, and even using the cows' urine for washing their hair. Before coming here, I had been struck by the beauty of the living conditions in a book of photographs of the area, and during my stay I recognised the feeling so well put forward in its introduction: "It is difficult to describe the scenery and not to pass judgement on them, who are not less worthy; one should take care not to seem superior."[8] I experienced the same difficulties in describing what I saw. It is obvious that the people have a different concept of cleanliness, forced on them by living in an area with scarce water and in intimate contact with their cattle. That they have survived under these harsh conditions makes me feel very small.

Clinic in the bush

Lankien and its surroundings are certainly disease ridden. I attend a clinic under a tree. People are carried in on stretchers, one even in a wheelbarrow, and others are lying naked in the sand, too sick to be bothered with privacy. The scene is chaotic and there is little structure, yet William takes his time, stays calm, and without hesitation picks out possible cases of kala-azar and brucellosis for further testing. Most of the people are skin and bone anyway, the tribes are remarkable for their slimness and height, averaging almost six foot two inches. That afternoon I see several cases of pneumonia that are more severe than anything I have come across at home.

All the villagers have gathered to see the public performance of the doctors. If it were not for the severity of the illnesses, the scenery would carry a flavour of extraordinary beauty. Patients, mothers cradling children covered in rags (some ill, others not, but who can tell without uncovering the bodies?), bystanders, relatives, people that have already been helped, all crowd round us to watch the action. I'm reminded by the frightening sounds of throat clearing that tuberculosis is highly prevalent. Spitting is culturally accepted, and, at best, the

[8] Nomachi, K. & Moorhouse G. The Nile. Hong Kong, Odyssey Productions, 1989

phlegm is quickly covered with sand. I m aware that any unexpected movement makes me a helpless target for the flying spittle.

I decide to leave the crowd and set up practice under another tree; it will help for only a little while. I m aware that, as a visitor, it is better for me to let things happen. I attend a woman who is lying on the ground too weak to cough. “TB,” says William, “I will show you the AFB tonight.” A boy is screaming and seems to be having a fit. I examine him but cannot find anything abnormal and suspect psychosis. Afraid to miss out any disease, I examine him twice. In between the attacks he behaves normally, and I let him go with diazepam. But he will not go and continues to scream during the whole session, forcing me to examine him a third time. In the twilight a women is brought in with an abscess of the hand, smelling offensively, caused by a human bite. We end up performing a debridement under ketamine, right under the acacia tree (long live ketamine and thanks to Maurice King for his instructions).

After the clinic William and I retreat to our camp in the dark and relish our meal of pasta and tuna-what a delight. The team has seen 70 patients in that afternoon, of whom several needed hospital admission, but there is no such facility within reach. The camp is lit by the stars, as the moon is not yet up. A barrel that serves as an incinerator provides some light and warmth. Flames leak round its edges, and we hear unexpected popping sounds. “These are the empty ampoules,” says William. We still hear children moaning on the other side of the fence. I tell William that I’m more worried about children who do not cry. James, another health worker, is still busy colouring slides in the light of an oil lamp. James and William have moved out of their tent to let me sleep comfortably; they will bed down on the floor of the hut that serves as the kitchen. I tell them that one of them can, of course, sleep in the other empty bed in the tent. It is a bit odd to offer them one of their own beds. Laughing, they answer, “We both can,” and before I’m undressed they are already snoring.

Further south

The next day we are off to Panyagor, and for the first time I’m lost in the air. “There is the Jonglei canal,” the pilot points out with relief. At last he has found a landmark. The digging of the canal, to bypass the world’s largest swamp, has been stopped by the war, and the dry canal bed has a surrealistic appearance from the air. I was worried; dark clouds are closing in, and without adequate visibility it would be difficult to land anywhere. “They gave me the wrong coordinates,” the pilot says. Flying extremely low, we will follow the dirt road next to

the canal until we see people waving a sheet. “We will land there,” he says, and we skim over the children’s heads to get them off the airstrip. Hurriedly, we are dropped off, and the plane is back in the air before the rain starts. Children fight to carry our luggage, the lucky ones place the cases on their heads, and the troop moves on. We hop on bicycles for an hour’s ride to the health centre. Within minutes one of us has a flat tyre, the thorns have no mercy.

Ronnie, a Kenyan who teaches laboratory assistants, shows me his laboratory. “I’m proud of my job,” he says. “I must exhaust my knowledge and train my brothers. They might in their turn help my children later, it is my duty.” He shows me the working files and the examination questions he has made. To my surprise I see *Hymenolepsis nana*, a little tapeworm I have never come across except during my own training. The course seems quite detailed, and I wonder secretly whether I would pass his examinations. “The students sometimes look sleepy,” Ronnie says. “In fact I found out that they are not sleepy but hungry, so I give them a cup of tea and they can continue. Can we not get food?” he asks with a big smile. The hospital is located in an old veterinary centre. Ronnie shows me his classroom, formerly the stable to breed cattle for research. The hospital is small, yet serves its purpose.

In the evening we cannot miss out the local Dinka dances. We pass soldiers with AK47 rifles slung over their shoulders. But the real warriors gather on an open space and dance to the rhythm of a drum, covered in dust, ashes, and feathers. They jump high in the air to impress the women. We meet some of Ronnie’s pupils. There is a small incident because one of them spots the woman who refused to marry him. “She refused,” he says, “because I’m not pretty enough.” His friends roll with laughter. “She says she is prettier than I am. What do you think?” His friends beat me on the shoulder, and he does not seem to be embarrassed at all.

Later we sit in a “mosquito proof cage” outside. It looks a bit odd, but this lounge is a success and we are not bitten. We discuss the possibilities of extending our activities. The Sudd is a vast marshy area of papyrus and water plants as large as England. It is where the Dinka retreat to fish and to find water for their cattle in the dry season. These days, more people are moving to the marshes because of food shortages and security. Living conditions are harsh out there, and I m told that malaria is increasing. It seems an area in need. “The mosquitoes fly right into your mouth when you talk,” Sammy tells me. “They sting you through your jeans. You have to eat like this.” Sammy waves his left hand continuously before he opened his mouth to chase away the imaginary mosquitoes. I doubt if any of us would be able to live and work under these conditions for longer than a couple of days. It seems difficult to decide

where to work in south Sudan. I contemplate simply throwing a dart at the map of Sudan and start working wherever it lands.

Médecins Sans Frontières

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This article was originally published in the *British Medical Journal* volume 316, 9 May 1998: 1446-7.

SUDAN STUDIES: Number 25 (March 2001)

THE SUDAN ARCHIVE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Jane Hogan

A number of articles have been written about the range of material held in the Sudan Archive at Durham University and the associated printed collections in the University Library[9], but the last five years have seen many developments affecting the collections at Durham, with significant new donations of material and greatly enhanced access to information about the collections.

In 1995, the University Library was awarded over £1 million by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to improve access to its collections. The money was divided between eleven projects, four of them Sudan-related.

The first of these was a two-year project to catalogue collections in the un-catalogued backlog. Much of this was the legacy of the 1980s when a sustained high level of donations coincided with a shortage of staff and resources. The creation of a full-time curatorial post in 1990, with special responsibility for the Sudan Archive, had eased the situation somewhat, but despite this very welcome move, the un-catalogued backlog continued to increase at a rate of about ten boxes a year and by 1994 176 boxes of material, comprising 110 new collections, were awaiting sorting and cataloguing. HEFCE funding enabled the appointment of an archivist for two years to work exclusively on this material and by the end of the project, detailed handlists had been produced for over half the boxes and summary lists for the remainder.

Collections in the un-catalogued backlog are representative of the full range of material in the Sudan Archive and by making them accessible to researchers, we greatly enhanced the collections already available and increased significantly the depth of subjects already covered. Of the 64 collections catalogued during the project, 40% were papers of former officials of the Sudan Political Service, 14% soldiers of the Egyptian Army or Sudan Defence

[9] Forbes, L.E., "The Sudan Archive, Durham as a source for the study of modernization in the Sudan" in *Modernization in the Sudan: essays in honour of Richard Hill*, ed. by M.W. Daly (New York, 1985), 161-170; Sharkey, Heather J., "Beyond the Sudan Archive: a guide to doing research on the Sudan in Durham", *Sudan Studies*, 13 (1993), 10-19.

Force, 9% from the Education Department, 7% church or missionary collections, 6% medical staff, 4% from the Railways, the remainder being from a combination of other technical services, including Posts and Telegraphs, Irrigation, Agriculture and the Sudan Plantations Syndicate.

Notable among the Sudan Political Service collections is that of Sir William Luce, one of the most significant donations to the Sudan Archive in recent years. The arrival of his political and administrative papers coincided with the launch of the Sir William Luce Fellowship which enables the holder to undertake research for a term in Durham, using the resources of the University Library and the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. Sir William's papers cover in some detail the crucial period from 1953 to 1955 when he served as Adviser to the Governor-General on Constitutional and External Affairs, including a series of official correspondence between the Governor-General's Office in Khartoum and the Sudan Agency in London and draft chapters by Luce for a book on the transitional period of Sudan rule from 1953 to 1 January 1956.

Newly catalogued church and missionary collections include the papers of Bishop Oliver Allison, Ronald and Olive Gray, Roland Stevenson, as well as records of Khartoum Cathedral. Allison's collection is particularly rich and varied, comprising as it does eight boxes of papers, 1,000 photographs, over 2,000 colour slides, as well as cinefilms, audio cassettes, maps, press cuttings and numerous museum objects. The papers cover not only church affairs (expulsion of the missionaries, the closure of Khartoum Cathedral and the split within the Episcopal Church of Sudan in the late 1980s), but also political developments from the 1960s to 1980s (the civil war and the Addis Ababa agreement, internal conflicts within the SPLA, etc.)

Other government departments are well represented by such collections as those of J.E.M. Mellor, Assistant Entomologist at the Wellcome Research Laboratories in Khartoum in the early 1920s. He recorded his travels in the Libyan Desert, Palestine, Zanzibar and Tanganyika, as well as Egypt and the Sudan, and was involved in research into crop damage by sparrows in Dongola Province, bee-keeping in the desert oases and the identification and control of spiders, ticks and locusts. The papers of Charles Smith of the Sudan Plantations

Syndicate and the Gezira Board include reports on agricultural policy, entomological experiments and cotton yields, as well as annual reports of research stations in Northern Province and at Tozi and Yambio. Gerard Wood, former chief Mechanical Engineer with Sudan Railways has added to the archive's rich collection of railway photographs with additional images of steam trains, worksheds, stations and railway staff from the 1920s to the 1960s. These, and other "technical" collections, have greatly enhanced the range of material in the archive.

Photo: "Moving house, Southern Sudan, 1930s (SAD *835/4/10);* Q.C. Allison Collection. Reproduced by permission of Durham University library.

Information about collections in the Sudan Archive is now more readily available, thanks to work undertaken on another project, with the development of an information server for Archives and Special Collections. For the first time, handlists for collections in the University Library, including the Sudan Archive, are available on the World Wide Web, allowing free text searching across collections. The Web address is http://www.dur.ac.uk/Library/asc/

Perhaps the most exciting development has been the creation of a visual and text-linked database for the archive's photographic collection. At the start of the project, this numbered in excess of 46,000 photographs dating from the 1880s to the 1990s and covering all areas of the Sudan as well as neighbouring states in N. Africa and the Middle East. The majority are

black and white amateur prints of varying qualities, but the collection also includes numerous glass lantern slides, postcards, negatives and transparencies. A photograph librarian was appointed for four years during which time over 30,000 of the archive's images were re-photographed on to 35mm colour film, scanned to photo-CD using an external scanning company and then loaded on to a computer database using software developed specifically for photograph libraries. Detailed catalogue entries were attached to each image and the software allows free text searching of this information, or more structured searching via a thesaurus of subject terms.

The description above belies the enormous technical difficulties facing this project in its first year, but despite these, the project finished on time, and, as researchers who have used it will testify, the database is a very impressive tool for research, opening up this largely untapped resource and allowing quick and easy access to a large body of data. Due to copyright restrictions (many of the photographs are still in copyright and the University owns the copyright in only a small percentage of the images), the database is available only in the search room at Durham where thumb-nail copies of the images can be printed out for study purposes or prints ordered from the photo-CDs or by e-mail. Handling of the originals by researchers has been more or less eliminated, an important element in the long-term conservation of the archive's photographs.

The objective of the third Sudan-related project was to complete the remastering of the archive's growing collection of original cinefilms, a mixture of 16mm, 8mm and super 8mm amateur film (but thankfully no nitrate film). The major challenge posed by this collection was one of conservation. With age, the films were becoming increasingly fragile and brittle, liable to split if viewed. In addition we faced the problem of outdated projector equipment and were no longer able to view the 8mm film within the university. In short, we had a resource of great value which we were unable to exploit.

Requests from film-makers in both the public and private sectors, as well as visitors to the Sudan Archive, to view the films, had led us to investigate the possibility of copying the film into a more accessible format. Copying direct on to VHS video, often seen as a cheap and effective measure, was not seriously considered as it did not answer the long-term

conservation needs of the collection. On the advice of the National Film Archive, we embarked on an expensive programme of remastering the films, creating new 16mm negatives, fine-grain positives and time-coded video copies for ease of viewing. At the start of the project, all but 26 films had been treated and the grant from the HEFCE enabled the completion of the programme.

Photo: Family group *(SAD 877/7/3);* E.G. Sarsfield-Hall Collection.

Reproduced by permission of Durham University Library

There are now 110 films available for research, most of these black and white, but including twelve colour films and nine containing a mixture of both. The quality varies greatly, but on the whole the colour film is superior to the black and white. They are all silent, and with the exception of the films taken by J.G.S. Macphail in Upper Nile Province, we have no recorded commentaries. They provide a visual record of life during the Condominium period from 1927 to the early 1960s, both Sudanese and British. They provide insight into the lives of British officials and their families, at work and at play - taking the salute at tribal gatherings, inspecting guards of honour, travelling by steamer through the sudd, playing polo and tennis and so on, but even the films of a more colonial nature also contain footage on Sudanese life - street and market scenes in town and village, raising water by *saqiyah* and *shaduf*, building

tukls and gathering wood for steamers, as well as tribal gatherings with their mock battles, dancing and races.

Photo: Camel Corps on parade, 1930s (SAD 877/3/14); E.G. Sarstield-Hall Collection.

Reproduced by permission of Durham University Library.

The final project concerned the University Library's Sudan printed materials collection, a comprehensive collection covering all aspects of Sudanese history, culture, language, literature, archaeology, ethnography and social sciences. Heavily used, particularly by visitors to the Sudan Archive, it caused frustration to both readers and staff alike, with material either totally unrecorded or badly recorded in two manual catalogues, the on line catalogue, the archive catalogues and the separate database for material in the Middle East Documentation Unit. During the fifteen months of the project, on line records were produced for over 5,000 items, transforming access to this material.

While work on the projects described above was taking place, new donations of both archive and printed material continued to arrive, including a number of large and important collections. Further substantial deposits were received from the families of P.P. Howell, Richard Hill and Lilian Sanderson, all of them generous contributors to the Sudan Archive over many years. The Howell material comprises an additional 25 boxes of papers and

photographs, mostly related to his research interests after he left the Sudan in 1955, in particular his work on the Nilotic tribes and the waters of the Nile. Richard Hill's papers, like Paul Howell's, reflect both his career in the Sudan (notably a series of personal diaries covering the years 1921 to 1994), and his life as historian and scholar. Lilian Sanderson's papers on education have for long been a rich source for researchers. Newly acquired material reflects her dedication to the eradication of female circumcision from 1958 to 1996, including correspondence with fellow campaigners and reports and papers from relevant workshops and conferences.

Further donations have been received from the families of E.G. Sarsfield-Hall, Sir James Robertson, J.G.S. Macphail, J.F.E. Bloss, Sir Gawain Bell and F.D. Kingdon, while completely new collections of note include those of Maurice Lush, J.S. Owen, C. de Bunsen and H.A.L. Westgate. These and numerous other smaller, but nonetheless important collections, have ensured that we have plenty of work to keep us busy in the coming years and that visitors to Durham will continue to find new and exciting material to consult.

The printed collections too have benefited from many of the donors mentioned above. In addition, the library was delighted to receive the very generous gift from Professor Robert Collins of his personal library and working papers. Seven hundred and forty titles have been added to stock and many hundreds of items await cataloguing, while duplicates have been forwarded to the University of Bergen. Professor Collins' library has made a major contribution to the coverage of the Sudan printed collections, particularly for the period after independence and has greatly enhanced the range of material held there.

The past five years have been a period of great activity in the Sudan Archive and in the University Library as a whole, so it is good to be able to report some additional exciting news on the teaching front. Recognising the library's value as a resource for the study of imperial and colonial history, the History Department has appointed two new members of staff in this field. Joanna Lewis, a full-time lecturer in British imperial history and relations with the wider world since 1750, specialises in British colonial rule in Kenya and African history in the 20th century. Her colleague, Justin Willis, has been appointed Research and Development Associate. His primary interest is in 19th and 20th century social and political history in

Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, but he is currently developing a research theme which will in the first instance centre on the Sudan Archive. Classes in imperial history are already being offered at undergraduate level, and the department hopes to offer a taught MA in imperial history. These initiatives will no doubt help to open up the Sudan Archive to a new generation of Durham students.

For further information about the Sudan Archive, including a description of all the collections held, see the Summary Guide to the Sudan Archive on the library's web site (address as above), or contact the Assistant Keeper, Sudan Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Durham University Library, Palace Green, Durham, DH1 3RN; telephone 0191 374 3028 or by e-mail on j.r.hogan@durham.ac.uk

The Life and Lifestyle of the Baggara

By Gibril Ali

Continued from Part I, which appeared in *Sudan Studies* Number 19, 1997, pp. 16–28.

PART II

Mr. Ian Cunnison's character lingers in the memory of every Baggara of my age - since the man spent 25 months with my tribe in the camp of Omda Hurgas Marida Umbadi Mohamed Ganis. Cunnison learned Baggara Arabic and uttered the words with a native pronunciation. He was very popular among us, accompanying us in our movements, receiving guests, offering hospitality, looking for strayed beasts and always accompanying Baggara hunters when they hunted giraffe on horseback. Among those with whom an intimate friendship sprang up were el Juo Caman, who looked after Mr. Cunnison's horse, and Abakar Abbad, who made lines on the sand the day before a hunt to forecast whether the horses would kill giraffe the following day. Abbaker Abbad was a great eater of meat: He would roast a large portion of the giraffe and spend the whole night cutting bits off with his knife and eating them.

Mr. Cunnison once made a meal of giraffe liver mixed with giraffe bone marrow - which makes some eaters drunk; Mr. Cunnison was drunk and saw some wading fish eating birds locally called *Abu Um Karita*, a stork, and mistook them for Baggara oxen and shouted in warning that the oxen were going away. "Yes, ganabak (a word of respect for the British in Sudan) we shall get them back". Then they brought some cold water and washed Mr. Cunnison's head to dispel the effect of drunkenness.

Cunnison became so acquainted with Baggara life that he sent away his servant and paid an elderly servant-woman to cook for him. Omda Hurgas of the Mezaghna tribe [=Tribal sub-section], whose camp Cunnison stayed in, was a generous man as Cunnison stated. The Omda acquired a licenced shot-gun, which Cunnison said was sort of "an added prestige". When Ian Cunnison ended his research with the Baggara, which qualified him with a Ph.D., he returned to the University of Khartoum, where he became the chairman of the Department of Anthropology before returning to the UK where he joined the staff of the University of Hull.

Before leaving the Messeriya land he offered his horse to el Juu Caman since el Juu took care of the horse when Cunnison was in the ca[illegible] Omda Hurgas. He offered his shotgun, a Birmingham single-barrel model, to Mohamed Kubur, a man from Darin Sheba who accompanied Cunnison in all his excursions.

He wrote a book entitled *The Baggara Arabs*, a very truthful report on the Baggara which was enjoyable to read. When Cunnison later visited Khartoum University under the auspices of the British Council, he was introduced to me as a Baggara man and he started questioning me about the tribe. I told him about the only mistake in his book which was probably owing to mistranslation from Arabic into English: Cunnison stated in his book that Ali Nimir is half-brother of Babo Nimir, where in fact Babo and Ali are full brothers (Ali is the younger). He stopped questioning me: The fact that I am a Baggara in flesh and bone has been driven home.

Hamadain Idam, a man from Darin Sheba tribe, was Cunnison's companion and guide most of the time. The British were respected and awed as a result of the Battle of Omdurman. They raised their prestige in the eyes of the Baggara by their justice in administering law and their abstention from and disgust of bribes. This esteem was further increased by the fact that if a Sudanese kills a fellow Sudanese and on the day of execution the wife of the British Province Governor (The Mudir) gives birth to a baby boy, the death penalty is abandoned and the culprit is set free. One of the last Governor Generals, was so associated with the Messeriya when he was governor of Kordofan that he played polo with Ali Nimir and other Messeriya horsemen (of whom he said that they were fine horsemen but did not keep to the rules of the game). He used to attend the annual tribal gathering held on a large plain some ten miles east of el Muglad.

THE GIRAFFE HUNT

Boya el Zein Gumaa, Musa Hemir Osman and El Juu Caman, accompanied by Mr. Cunnison, would often go hunting giraffe on horseback. Horses on which giraffe were pursued by the Mezaghna were the white horse of Boyal el Zein Gama, *El Gamalai* of Musa Hemir Osman, *Meateeb* of Mohamed Henir, and *El Eneni* of Osman Hawit Gummaa. *Meateeb* was a

black horse; smallish and broad chested, it would walk behind all the horses but when they began to gallop it would in a few minute overtake them all, sniffing a giraffe like a guided missile sniffs heat emission in pursuing a combat plane. Other horses were *el Damin* and Torab Gassar, both belonging to Omda Hurgas Marida (*El Damin* means "in hand", i.e. when it pursues a fleeing giraffe it is certain to reach it), *Torab Gasar*, which is the second horse of the Omda means "there is less earth for running" - an indication of how swift the horse was. Another grey horse was called *el Hagal*, which belonged to Kibereh Bakur and el Shaggarah of Ismail Abu Aforah, and *el Kirkirayah Um Shig* which belonged to Musa Kuku. All these horses and their owners are from Aulad Salameh, the Omda's tribal group.

DAR HANTOUR TRIBE

This is another Mezaghna tribe whose famous horses were *Um Nabal*, a red horse (*Um Nabal* means the bow) belonging to Sheikh Mohamed Deedan. The rider of the horse was Tebeg Ma'ali. *El Shaykh*, a red horse with white patches on its four legs called *hoojool* and a white patch on its face, it is described as a *mookmas*, i.e. four hoojool and a fifth white path on the face. *El Shaykh* was ridden by Suleiman el Dudu for pursuing giraffe, *Abu Galag* (father of testacles), a red horse belonging to Adim el Buhrah, the rider was Abdullahi Ali, *Um Mashata*, a short grey horse belonging to Jadeed Hilu occasionally ridden by Hamad Abu Asab. *El Saroyeh*, a yellowish red horse belonging to Hamad Ahmed Um Baychi which was ridden by Mohamed Um Baychi, *Um Durnham*, Abu Jabar's red horse, ridden by Tebeg Ma'ali, el Dudu Azozah's horse ridden by Abdullahi Abu Sho or Abdullahi el Jedail of the Terraknah Mezaghna tribe.

EL TERRAKNA MEZAGHNA TRIBE

Most famous of the horse breeders was the Kabashi family. Horses belonged to el Shamoh Kabbashi ridden by el Tom Kabbashi. *El Gamali* of Umbadi Kabbashi, ridden by Umbadi himself. *Um Dardoom* ("the fist") of Osman Adamo, ridden by Ahayeh Kabbshi.

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE MEZAGHNA

These women were famous either for their beauty, their perfumes or their wealth of hair. Such women were el Gubesha - daughter of Marida and

full sister of Omda Hurgas, el Nago - daughter of Hamid el Daw, and Mariam Mohamadain. All are of Aulad Salameh Mezaghna tribe

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE EL TARAKNAH OR TURKANIYAT

Um Mona el Kawreteh - daughter of Kabbasi, Habsata el Mudeer (the governor of a province) -daughter of Hassaballa and the author's aunt, and El Zirega el Mashroob (tea) - daughter of el Shamoh.

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE DAR HANOUR

Um Id el Riz (rice) - daughter of Hammad, and el Simehe - daughter of Deedan.

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE BENI HALBA

Um Kheir and el Chakchaka - daughters of Mohamed Hawattah, Khadiga Um Karanj bint Makin, Ghalia el Tamur bint Ahmed and her sister Ghasiba, and Mekka bint Adim.

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE AULAD MOMIN OR EL MOMNIYAT

Fatomah bint Tereye, Harneh el Hamala bint Kajam and her sister Amna el Genenah (garden) Ajbaneh el Diregeh and her sister Mamouna. Fatima el Korab bint Mohamed. Hoteh el Nasah and her sister Fatouma (*taab el 'Ain* - tiredness of the eye from constant looking on her beauty).

MEZAGHNA ELEPHANT HUNTERS

Most of the Mezaghna are brave elephant hunters, but famous among them are: - Shegefa Wanasi, Keshir Shegefa Wanasi, Dahiya Hamdan, Ahmed el Kadrouk, Timan Khitim Abakar, Rashid Khitim, Hamadain Abu Rike, Wanis Mohamed Higeh Hassaballa, Jar el Nabi. These are simply examples.

MEZAGHNA BRAVES

Famous among the Mezaghna in bravery during the time of the tribal wars before the British Administration were Kir wad (son) Um Jereh, his father is a Humr but his mother was a captive (one of the bravery songs on Kir is the following):-

> "Tabaroh ma jafal, saaloh manakar, Wald Jereh el Dakar, horabah shook el Nazal"

"A lance was thrown, he did not swerve, he was asked, he denied none, son of Tereh is a man, and his spears are thorns as an indication their sharpness".

BAGGARA ATHLETES

There are many famous strong men but the most prominent contemporary physically strong man is El Salih Ahmed Hamid, nicknamed *Abu Afora*. He is a man from the Blebo family, of Aulad Salameh of the Mezaghna Tribe. Since we have a recorded birth register from about the year 1930, important events are remembered by physical events, such as floods, tribal wars or the death of important men. El Salih Abu Afora, as he personally told me, was born in the year that Chereh, a man from Gasheem of the Kalabna tribe, was killed and this would be about 1935. Abu Afora is now an old man with a painful left eye and has undergone an opthalmic operation to remove what is popularly known as white water.

Abu Afora tells me that he felt his strength when he was a boy playing with his comrades under the moonlight. When they played *Hoorukh*, a game in which a boy runs on one leg while holding the other in his right or left hand, being chased by members of the opposing team and protected by members of his own team, El Salih was scarcely ever defeated. He would be faced by two boys before he started running. One would hold him in front, the second would catch him from behind. El Salih would send the hind boy falling with one kick and push the front boy with one hand - running unchallenged to such an extent that nobody liked to play against him. Sometimes he would be excluded from the game. Without training, El Salih could jump higher than his own height.

Later, he discovered his swiftness in running. He could catch calves, hunt wild boar and catch gazelles on foot. Once, Babo Nimir was camping at el Lau, administering justice among his tribe, when el Salih and others were sitting with Babo Nimir under a large tree. At midday a spotted gazelle (ghazal Flatta) came to water. It was seen by the group of Arabs and several young men surrounded it, but the gazelle was able to find a way through and ran for its life. It was followed by el Salih like a hound. In a few minutes he caught it by the hind legs, and carried it to the Nazir, Babo Nimir. It was tied and fed on a leafy branch of a tree for the wandering people to see.

As the Baggara moved camp from place to place, some beasts of burden

felt tired under their loads and were not able to pass a stretch of a muddy strip on the track. Such animals were generally donkeys. Pass Salih asked the owner of the animal to take off the load from the animal and he then carried the donkey to firmer ground or across the running water of a riverlet. El Salih's physical strength had now become the talk of the tribe.

There was a tribal gathering in the vicinity of the Bahr el Arab, at el Lau. This gathering was attended by the British District Commissioner and other British figures of the civil service, such as the medical officer, the veterinary officer and the commissioner of prisons in the province. El Salih was called and tested in public. He was asked to throw the javelin with other selected Baggara men. He threw the javelin further than any. Then the best javelin throwers of the Dinka were tested and el Salih was asked to compete. He threw three lances (called *Kokab*) and outdistanced any Dinka to receive the javelin prize. Then a group of Baggara Arabs and Dinkas were raced; El Salih out-ran all of them and received the race prize. Then a skeleton-man was built of straw, a hat was put on the top of the straw man and both Arabs and Dinkas were asked to throw their spears to hit it. El Salih told me he was the only one to hit it with his spear.

Babo Nimir and four British officers withdrew to their tent and el Salih was invited to join them. El Salih sat down cross-legged on the ground and spread his hands. One of the British officers put his feet on each of el Salih's palms and el Salih rose with the officer balanced on his hands. They clapped their hands. Another heavier British officer repeated the test with el Salih and Salih was able to rise carrying him on his palms too. A third British officer wanted to do the same but was told by his first two British colleagues that it was pointless since both of them were heavier than him by a few pounds. El Salih's measurements of height, chest breadth and waist were taken. It was assumed by Babo Nimir that he would be sent to the UK for further training for competition in the Commonwealth Games and he whispered to el Salih to leave the place and hide from British eyes. Unfortunately el Salih complied with the Nazir's instructions. The Nazir's motives were sincere as he felt keen to keep such a man within his tribe: had they been confronted by tribal war the gap left by el Salih could not have been filled by any other.

Babo was travelling by lorry when the lorry stopped because of a

mechanical fault between el Nahud and el Odeyah just south of el Subag water pool. Babo Nimir was escorted by Bilal Dawdaw and including el Salih Abu Afora. Babo called for Abu Afora and asked him to go to el Odeyah and bring another car. He handed a written message by Babo to take to whatever authority was at the post ahead. Abu Afora tells me he set out running when the sun was in the middle of the sky, i.e. about 12 noon. He arrived at el Odeyah at about 3 p.m. and handed his message to the police. A car was sent back with him to pick up Babo and his company. They arrived at Babo before sunset. Babo was surprised and asked Abu Afora whether he met the car somewhere before reaching el Odeyah. Abu Afora replied that the horse was galloping with him until he arrived at el Odeyah. There was no horse. Abu Afora meant his own legs. Babo replied "It was for just such a necessity that I hid you from the British".

El Salih's Running Speed

El Salih was in his nomadic camp in a place at the Bahr el Arab called el Khashkash. It was the beginning of the rainy season. El Salih, accompanied by Abbakar Abbad and el Dudu Hawit, left the camp early morning and headed north towards Mahana and Dukduk Um Sagam. Somewhere in Dukduk Um Sagam they found two boars and their young. First they saw their traces in the mud. El Salih asked his colleagues whether they liked to eat the boar meat. They replied postitively. He brandished his spear and followed the trace. Shortly the boars shot out from the tall dry grass and were pursued by el Salih. He followed the boar. In a few minutes he reached it and speared it to death, covered it with some grass, lest the birds of prey may eat it, and returned to his colleagues whom he found some distance behind.

Shortly after he joined them, they saw a herd of giraffes. El Salih told his colleagues that he would pursue it on foot. They were puzzled. Only horses are able to overtake a giraffe. He brandished his spear and catapulted towards the giraffes. It was a deadly race and within minutes he speared a female giraffe, bringing it down, and also a male. The spear broke from its humar[1], leaving the blade in the animal while the wooden handle of the spear fell. They returned to the camp after cutting the tail

[1] Humar - is where the blade of the spear begins. The blade is the second part of the spear, the first being the cylinder where it fixes on the wooden handle.

off the giraffe as confirmation of the great feat. People of the camp rode on oxen and donkeys to collect the meat of the giraffe and the b[illegible] giraffe would load some seven oxen with meat. In two days time el Salih's camp moved north to the place where he speared the giraffe. As the cows were grazing on the plain, the herdsman saw some birds of prey with carrion. It was the giraffe speared by el Salih some two days ago. The spear was found in the carrion.

BAGGARA GAMES

All our games are played by night except the *Nuggara* and the *Dawriyah*. The latter is both a day and nightly dance.

El Shell

This is a game dependent on the muscular strength of the hands, running speed and the power of eyesight. After dinner, the youth of the tribe impatiently awaits the rising of the moon, the lips of the eastern sky quiver allowing a faint smile to beam over the forehead of the canopy of the sky and elders and youngsters unaware, our camp unsusceptibly moves towards the moon as the earth rotates on its hinges from west to east. The smile grows broader, gradually touching the tops of trees, with their thick foliage creeping down, with a flood of the cool silver light that kisses our shelters, our animals, our half-naked bodies and penetrates the still water in the surrounding water pools to diffuse in the reflected eyes of the twinkling stars up in the heavens.

Cows stand up, stretch their limbs, bellow, pass some urine, throw a few dung, horn their fellow cows and walk in groups to graze by night under the moonlight. The youngsters leave the camp in twos and threes, according to family size, and race towards the plain - bare-footed and shouting as they run to alert others. In a few minutes the plain is dotted with shouting boys and girls and some barking dogs - barking at the undistinguished forms of cows grazing in the distance. The moon is now reborn, creating long shadows of the trees and illuminating clear patches of ground. We bring our *shell*, which is a white joint bone of a sheep, short and small so it can be held in a man's fist. We group ourselves by selecting two boys who in turn will choose two teams to oppose one another. They do this by standing near each other and say "fifiny, tafetak, shilt el amood lafetak, fulan jambi", i.e. I hit you, you hit me, I take the big club and hit you, Mr. X is with me, naming a boy and so in turn until

we are all absorbed in one of the two teams. The *shell* is held ready in hand. We stand still, not making a whisper, a jiggle or push, to hear the thud of the bone on the ground when it is thrown a long way. Listening very carefully, we hear the thud of the bone upon the ground and start running. Arriving at the spot, we spread out looking for the bone under the moonlight. The *shell* could be lying under some grass or a bush or a piece of dry wood. Once it is spotted by someone and picked up, it should be announced that it is found. The finder utters a defiant sentence which runs "Um ban leko shell, min eid el rugal ma bin sal", i.e. the bone *shell* is in my hand, who dares extract it from the hands of men? He then runs fast towards the goal, protected by members of his team and hindered by members of the opposing team - who try to catch or fell him. If the runner falls down or is caught, he would be under a pile of players who try to extract the bone from his fist, while his own team members try to get the bone and run with it by saying, "this is me, give me the *shell*" and, thus, another pursuit begins until someone reaches the goal with it. The throwing is repeated. If a team manages to reach the goal with the bone for the first time, those members of the team are said to have opened their eyes; a second time means they are circumcised; a third time means the wound resulting from the circumcision has healed and the fourth time means worms going into the anuses of the opposing team. The game is continued until the players are tired, then we sit down - boys and girls - and laugh at the slow runners, the weak boys, those who asked for help because they were pressed very hard under the pile and those who even farted under the weight of the piling boys. When the shell is over we sit down in a circle and tell tales. A cow would bellow and we would tell the name of the cow because we could recognise them from the sound of their voice because of our close association. We are the herd-boys, we look after them during the day.

Nocturnal animals such as hares, porcupines and hedgehogs come out to feed either on grass or insects. We would hear the howl of a hyena as it prowled about. It howls to find out where the camp is and to attract the attention of the dogs to a certain direction so that it can attack from the opposite direction. By this time the moon would have been in the noon position, "wesheteh" or "meleheh (chilly or salt) sheteteh" means to disperse, and "meleheh" means to assemble. The majority would say "sheteteh", hence, we rub the sand from our buttocks and walk towards

the camp. We would enter our mothers shelters and climb onto the *darangal* (baggara collective bed). I recall pulling the edge of the sheet with which my mother covered my younger brothers. I would cover my naked body, leaving bare my other brothers to the cold. Feeling the cold, they would turn from side to side, push their hands between their legs and becoming roundish thus push the others either with their knees or their toes. This would awaken my mother who stretched out her hand in the darkness touching our sides, backs or faces whilst trying to adjust the sheet as far as possible. We had no mattress, just a hard ox hide under us. Either myself or one of my brothers would pass water while asleep and the cold urine would find itself under our bodies running to the lower spots of the *darangal*. We would become wet and the wind increased the cold as it fanned our wet sides. We grumbled in our sleep and mother awoke, discovered it and dropped us one by one to the ground while we swayed from side to side scratching and cursing. She would turn the hide on its other side and pick us up, one by one, onto the *darangal* to continue our sleep. My father would be sleeping outside on his *angareb* near the thorn *zariba* of the sheep to guard them from the hyenas. His dogs would be sprawled around him and near the fire that glowed and then died out as the wood was burned. Occasionally he would extend a hand to push the wood into the fire until it burst into flames, uttering with closed eyes the sound "ha" "ha" whenever the hyena howled and the dogs barked to encourage the dogs and frighten the hyena. The sheep peacefully ruminated inside their *zariba* which was made of two thorn circles, an inner circle which enclosed the sheep and an outer circle half a metre apart from the inner to hinder the hyena making one jump inside and outside when it attacked. The momentary delay allowed the dogs and my father to attack the hyena and release the sheep from the hyena. If it was badly bitten, we would be glad, as my father would then slaughter it and we would have good food the following morning; though one of my brothers, who owned the sheep, may have shed a few tears.

My father would usually have three or two wives at a time, up to a maximum of four. My mother would lament the death of the sheep but my father would sooth her, "Khadiga (her name), the sheep would be reborn my dear, please see if you can find some onions. I would like the liver and some ribs roasted". The following night after the hyena attacked, a pole would be fixed inside the *zariba* on top of which there

would be a bell. As the sheep continually rub their sides against the pole, the bell would be set ringing every now and then, thus frightening the hyena. Sheep are called "gold", and "the underdress of cows", in that they increase rapidly as a sheep gives birth twice a year. They are slaughtered for guests - as a nomadic community has no inns or hotels where passers-by can stay, so it becomes the responsibility of the camp to offer hospitality and a bed for guests. A sheep or two, taken to the market, are not missed as is a cow or an ox. As the Baggara correctly say, the space occupied by a cow is larger than that occupied by a sheep. Cows are called the "Silver with hair" and "el Dandor" (a type of dum tree with fruits red in colour and as large as a man's head which have delicious juicy flesh). "El Dandor shagar el laban", i.e. "el Dandor" - the trees of milk. Another pet name for cows is "manakreh el hoot", i.e. the nostrils of fish, "kazam el balom", i.e. the flat face of a cow is like the flattened face of a pigeon ("el balom", a special type of wild pigeon). "Shawir Ayah", i.e. consult my mother, an indication that a man who owns cows is never refused by a girl for marriage. "Um danaban ba'a, kin rahat mab tilagi musra'a", i.e. the cow whose tail is as long as two hands outstretched in a straight line, when lost, would not be compensated easily. "Banat um gran, kin bakat ouga, sida mayet", i.e. cows are also called daughters of the horn, if it bellows with a turned head, its owner would be dead. i.e. if a cow is plundered in a raid, it would always bellow with it's head turned towards its camp where the calves are and the owner would pursue the plunderers to recover it or die for its sake. "Ashayat el sagir bila nar". The cows feed a child without fire, i.e. with their milk.

Whey and ghee are collected in large calabashes or leather containers called *buttas* or *tugzos* and brought weekly or monthly to the market at the only market place at el Muglad. Babanousa, Abu Bateek and el Meram sprang up later on as the winds of urbanisation gradually fanned the area. The market day at el Muglad is still a Thursday. On a marketing occasion, my mother rode her ox loaded with *ruwaba* (sour milk), ghee and firewood. I rode behind her. The firewood was intended for our relative Gimiyeh, the wife of el Safi Wanis, a shopkeeper, from the Fayareen tribe, the tribe of the present Colonel, Hassan Mohamad Dahawi, General Supervisor for Sudanese Petroleum Development. Our camp is more than a day's journey by ox from el Muglad market place. I remember, we set off in the early morning from Um Sakina, a Fayareen farming and grazing area, rested somewhere at Fulla el Gitteh and started

again towards el Muglad when the midday sun was casting its rays on the long swaying grass, and angular shafts of light fell through foliage-laden branches of the trees. Our ox walked with long strides, leaving behind clear hoofprints on the damp sand of the country lane, occasionally sniffing the ground before it as it saw the hoofprints of the cattle ahead of us being driven to the market. When we came closer to the cattle the ox would see them and then bellow, its sides swelled as it inhaled the air, both the load and my short legs going up and down as the animal's sides inflated and deflated. We joined the cattle and tried to pass them. Our ox became restive for company. My mother would stretch her long arm and hit the animal from behind and force it to walk faster. The weather became cooler and cooler as the sun was slowly sucked by the western horizon. Glancing behind, I could see the vegetation getting darker and darker in the shadows with the gathering darkness of the setting sun. The sun is a glowing golden ball, dropping into the gaping mouth of eerie space. Little birds fly from their nests as we pass under the branches and settle in trees nearby, to return as soon as we have gone away. The stars emerge twinkling from the heavenly canopy like passengers emerging and spreading out of a tube-station in a Central London street. They ogled at us. Our ox, moving his ears forward and backward alternately, his eyes wide open, sailed through with long strides - puffing air through his wet nostrils like a steam train sailing forward. "Look, Gibril", my mother said, "those fires are the Muglad village, we are arriving". I looked over her shoulders and saw the fires with leaping tongues; some are moving fires - torches. We pass by grass-thatched walls, with huts inside and hear the voices of talking people. On our way to Gimiyeh hut we passed by the tribal chief's house. I heard a strong talking and singing voice using words unknown and unheard to me before. I asked my mother what it was and she replied "a talking box". When I opened my mouth in surprise, she added "The box talks". "How could a box talk?", I asked. "There is a *Khawaja* (a European) inside it".

We arrived safely at our relative's hut. We were warmly received and given a hot meal and a cup of tea. I slept comfortably on an angareb which had a cotton mattress covered with a bed sheet decorated in needlework. I had never seen things like these in my nomadic life. The following day we were given tea in china cups, shining clean, placed on china dishes that glimmered under the morning sun. Another plate

contained hard cakes made of wheat flour, baked over ghee and covered with fine sugar powder. Elders sipped the tea and bit at the cakes while I did the same but finding the cakes more delicious than the tea, filled both my hands, my mouth and my pockets and ran outside to join other children on the street. The children and I were frightened by a domestic ostrich which picked one of the cakes from my hand, towering higher than me and spreading its wings like a landing aeroplane. The children screamed and scattered and I screamed and ran past the gate of our relative's thatched walls. My mother came dashing outside like a milk cow whose young calf has been attacked. I caught her skirt and stood behind her panting vigorously. She carried me inside cursing the ostrich and threatening to cut off its head.

I accompanied my mother to the market place and saw wonders. Rows of rooms standing in a line, forming a large square. The rooms contained shelves stacked with reams of colourful cloth materials and shoes of different colours and sizes were placed on tables. I stared at the shoes and at my bare feet. Transparent bottles were filled with sweets of different colours temptingly facing children who were led off by their mothers. My mother explained that the rooms were called shops and the owners are called "Jallaba", people from the north - along the river (el bahar). My mother would sell her ghee and get me some dates and a handful of sweets and roasted peanuts. She would get herself some perfume, sandalwood and a few yards of cloth material. Apart from the Jallaba and their well-stocked shops, the market area teems with women sellers as a pond teems with fish. Every man or woman is talking with another, bargaining for their goods or paying in cash to each other or the shopkeepers. The hum of voices is like distant traffic or becs in a garden. The Jallabas at the cattle market were dressed in long white gowns (or "jallabias"), with turbans on their heads, beautifuly patterned caps under the turbans, nice looking shoes on their feet and swaying as they walked, holding hooked canes in their hands. Their pockets were stuffed with money to buy oxen at the cattle market. They pay some Baggara men to drive those oxen to el Obeid, en Nahud, Kosti, Wad Medani and Omdurman. Those Baggara would then would return home laden with cloth, sugar, tea and above all they would visit and see Sayed Abdel Rahman el Mahdi, the posthumous son of the Mahdi. Sayed Abdel Rahman is held in such high esteem by all the Baggara that we swear by his name on serious matters. The relation is religious leadership radiating from his Great Father - famous in world

history as a result of military involvement with the British Empire. The battle of Shekan in Kordofan, the siege and fall of Khartoum, the Gordon of China and the battle of Omdurman occupy a core position in military science and racked the brains of British historians. At midday my mother would leave the market and go home for lunch. She and I would then leave Muglad in the afternoon in the company of other Baggara on their oxen, horses, donkeys or walking. They would talk and laugh. We would leave some of our company on the road as they reached their camps; the farther we travelled, the thinner our company became. Near midnight we would stop and spend the night in the wilderness ready to set off early morning to our camps. Dogs would be the first to recognise our arrival. They barked and dashed at us followed by the children to meet their mothers. The mothers would stop their oxen, get down and hug them and give them some dates, peanuts or sweets. Our fathers would follow, hold the ropes of the animals and unload them. The fire had already been lit and kettles gurgled hanging from their tripods. Sacks of sugar and tea leaves were opened and tea was served, hot, black and sweet. Elders would drink two to three cups before starting to ask questions of relatives at Mugalad, prices in the market and the government. The children would gather and play near the elders who, when they had finished their tea, would put some wet tea leaves, which had already boiled and lost their red dark pigment, into milk, heat it and distribute it to the children in half-cup measures. I would be asked by a playmate child to give him some peanuts, or a piece of date or a fraction of a sweet. I would refuse and close my fist tightly. My playmate would then threaten that when his mother visited the market in a couple of days she would bring what I have been brought and that he would give me one. I would then give him a very little bite of a sweet, a few peanuts or half a date, emphasising that he should not forget my generosity when his mother brings him some next time. We would then continue our play with alacrity.

I remember a day when my parents, my brothers and I were sitting in the afternoon shade of our tree twig shelter and the sheep came running and bleating for their young ones. My brothers and I ran to separate the young ones from joining their mothers before we milked them. Poor Baggara milk their sheep and their goats, rich ones do not. My father was poor by Baggara standards, possessing about five cows of which only one

was a milk cow (called Hamra); one of its four teats was defaulted and produced no milk so we had to milk our sheep which were hundred and fifty in number. As we raced towards the sheep, I was followed by our she dog, Harassa, who was so excited by the running, boys and sheep that she bit me on the buttocks. I cried and ran to my mother who held me by the hand, brought some salt and rubbed it over the bleeding bite. It was in August, in the wet season, and we were far from our pearl millet gardens. Grain was scarce, as I remember, that year and most of the Baggara drank milk and ate fruit - such as the fruit of the *lalob* tree (*higlig* tree). The fruit is green before it ripens and the size of a date. My mother and other women from the camp would leave home early in the morning to go out and collect the fruits from their trees. The fruits were called "angalo", and very sour in taste. They would be put into a big jar and boiled in water over fires. The boiling water would turn dark green. It would then be poured out and replaced with fresh water. The process was repeated until the sourness disappeared and the fruit became flat or tasteless. It was then put into dishes and allowed to cool down before we ate its flesh, broke the shell and ate the kernel inside - delicious and rich with oil. I brought a few kernels of the *lalob* fruit and handed them to a researcher at the food research centre at Shambat. He sent them further afield, to California, and the report came back to the Centre that the kernel was protein rich food. The *lalob* and milk sustained us together with another grain collected from grass called "el kirraib". The grain is roundish, as small as sugar grain, starchy and white like rice. It has the same flavour as rice and is very nice in taste when cooked with milk and some sugar and ghee added: It makes a dish one would give to a guest unhesitatingly.

I remember that my elder brother, Mekki Gamar, and I were looking after sheep in a place called Ayorah, near Abeyei. Returning with our sheep in the afternoon, our mother gave us some food. We climbed and sat on the darangal, the Baggara collective bed, and started eating our food with shells, used as spoons. My mother casually said "our grain has finished today". I immediately threw away my shell and started eating with my fingers, lest the shell would not enable me to eat as much. Mekki, my brother, who shared the food with me, laughs at me whenever we meet and the occasion is remembered. Remembering it I would smile even when saying my prayers. Bygone, carefree days, folded under the

THE COW WITH LITTLE MILK

Abara, son of Feh - a Gidai from Aulad Omran Tribe of the Messeriya, was a wise man who knew a lot about cows and their breeds. He asked his sons not to milk his cow which yielded only very little milk and to leave the cow entirely to her calf. That cow delivered a heifer and since the date of birth, the heifer was left under her mother to suck milk any time it wished. The heifer grew into a little cow. It was a habit of Abara to set his camp away from other members of his tribe, near no other camp. One night a number of lions came to his camp roaring. The cows were frightened. Abara and his sons took their spears and stood on defence. Abara asked his sons to get the heifer of the cow with little milk outside the Zariba, lead her near the lions and then set her free. This done, the lions immediately charged and the heifer ran for her life. The heifer was chased from El Gara, passed Guganeh, Baggadi, Jadid, el Gahamah, Gimezeh, Himerat, Migeteeah, Mahi, Abu Adameh, Riyes el Feel, Fisheeg still followed by only one lion - the others having tired and stopped chasing - until the heifer, arriving at Fisheeg, saw a zariba of cows in an Arab camp. It jumped over the fence and settled inside the zariba. The lion, too tired, was unable to jump and stopped outside panting which woke up the Arabs who speared him to death. The wisdom of Abara had saved his cows from an attack by a number of lions. The lion's span when running was a spear plus an ax handle while the heifer's was a big spear and a tabeega (a small spear handle). I was told this story by Sayed Mohamed Muslim Daw el Beit from Abu Gidah of Auwlad Omran, cultivating at Khor Mudir.

Huruk

This is also a two-team opposing one another night game played under the moonlight, but it is tougher. One of the two teams chooses a runner and fixes a goal which is a point on the playground in which a pursued runner should not be touched. All team members should run on one leg, the other is held by hand behind one's back. The selected runner of either team is called a "jadi", i.e. the young gazelle. The jadi, poised on one leg, stands behind his team while the opposing team stands in between the goal and the protecting or defending team to which the jadi belongs. The opposing team would say "khalas", i.e. ready?, to which the other team

would reply "khalas". The opposing team attacks while reserving their fastest one-leg runner to slip through the ranks and attack the jadi well protected and helped by his team, find his way through the opposing team members and from there run towards the "morad", i.e. the goal area. Usually a young child is asked to sit there to indicate the morad. The two teams wrestle against one another, each boy trying to release the hand grip on his opponent's leg. He who loses his grip on his leg is considered inactive until all the players are made inactive or overcome by the Jadi before reaching the morad. Young boys under ten years participating on the game are allowed to hold one of their ears by hand and such a boy is put out of action by being forced to release or let loose his ear. If the morad is "killed", i.e. overcome, the second opposing team chooses a jadi and defends him. When the jadi reaches the goal for the first time, this team is said to be circumcised; on the second time, the team circumcision is healing; on the third time, the team is breaking a small calabash containing worms; on the fourth time, the winning team of the jadi is considered to be putting worms into the anuses of the opposing team members and the game goes on... As one team repeats victory over the other the number of worms entering the anuses of the other team members increases until the chance to overcome the jadi finally appears.

Karkoor el Feel ["The Elephant's Back"]
This is also a night game for moon-lit nights. In fact it is the Baggara tug of war. We do not use a rope but form our hands into an interlocking chain while dividing ourselves into equal teams - fairly dividing older and stronger boys between them.

Choice of Teams: We first choose two boys to select the contesting teams. The two boys having been chosen, stand a little distance from us and repeat the words "tifiny, tafetak, shiltal amood lafetak, fullan jambi", i.e. you hit me and I hit you, I take the mortar thick stick and club you, Mr. X is on my side... This statement is repeated until all the boys are chosen. Then a line is drawn on the sand by foot. An area of soft sand is always preferred to absorb the impact of the fall. As said before, we create an interlocking chain with our hands putting the bigger stronger boys in front of the line on each side. Then a referee says "Khalas", i.e. ready? We reply "Khalas" and the pulling begins. One of the teams may, because of the pull, become crooked, some members may start to laugh because of

a fart and some members fall down, losing their places on the chain, thus weakening their colleagues who are therefore pulled across the line ending the first round. The game is repeated and is enjoyed by older boys because they are brought into contact with the buttocks or nipples of teenage girls who happen to be sharing in the game. Older boys cover their purposes by a roar of laughter and hurry us up to repeat the play for apparent reasons.

Um Labadi - (Hide and Seek)

The selection of members for this play is made on the same basis as *Karkoor el Feel* except that the words and approach are different. The boys arrange themselves in pairs and ask the selecting boys what one of the selecting boys prefers, an Englishman with a moustache or an aeroplane with a tail. Another sentence offering choice is to choose between a double-barrelled shotgun and a two-edged sword. This goes on until the selection is completed. This game is played on moonless dark nights. Having thus divided ourselves we select a referee and ask him to close his eyes. We present him with two pieces of wood of different shapes or lengths, or a piece of wood and a bone, having already decided that each of the pieces refers to one of the teams. The referee is asked to open his eyes and take a piece and says "this one hides". The seeking team members close their eyes while the other team members scatter - either among cows which are peacefully ruminating or to go into their mothers' shelters sitting in corners near a water pot which may have a metal lid that speaks at a touch, or disturbing a brooding hen on her eggs or chicks who may sqawk, thus telling the seekers who listen tentatively for every noise and watch carefully for every moving dark figure among the trees. The hiding team are either naked or have tattered dark dresses to match with the darkness. Sometimes a dog may bark - seeing figures slipping from tree to tree or shelter to shelter. The seekers, like Red Indians, decipher every sound to reach their targets. The hiding team tries to approach the goal when it is left by the seeking group. A hot-tempered cow may stand up abruptly and try to horn one of us, who in turn, may utter a yelp, indicating our whereabouts. The seeking team then starts the pursuit, trying to touch by hand any part of the body of the hiding team members. If they manage to touch somebody, it will be for them to hide next time, otherwise the winning team continues to hide and try to reach the goal. The first arrival at the goal wins a team a "fatahna", i.e. an opening of our

closed eyes. Thereafter starts the entering of worms into the anuses of the losing team members.

El Sala Jaku

This is also a night game played under the moonlight. A bedsheet or a turban is woven into the shape of a thick rope and carried by one boy who walks in front of all the boys and girls. He is followed by many others. He walks a long distance from the goal point (the *morad*) and shouts the words "El Salah Jaku" ("el Sala" is the after-birth). All followers repeat the words "Rabani ma rabaco", in reply. The boy would then say another sentence which is "zub abu ku jack", i.e. the penis of your father is coming towards you, the followers would reply in chorus "rabani ma rabaco", i.e. it brought me up but not you. The leader shouts these sentences while still walking away from the *morad* and the followers would repeat in chorus, but with growing tension, as the climax is approached. The leader now waves the cloth rope high above his head and turns round and flings the thick cloth rope high into the air. As the rope descends it is met by wide flung arms trying to catch it while smaller or younger boys and girls start running towards the morad as they would be no match for what follows. Whoever catches it first starts beating the others with it while all start running back towards the morad. Some would fall, some would cry from the beating, others laugh and some are trodden on during the rush. It is a popular and exciting game.

Um Tubrah

This is a war-like game as it promotes the art of throwing a spear or lance to hit a target (and not for distance) to see who is stronger. It is played by both boys and mature men. It even lures tribal leaders such as sheikhs, Omdas and Nazirs to participate. Occasionally Sayed/Ali Nimir, the chief of native administration (Nazir) - fine looking and a born sportsman (fast runner, horseman, football player and polo player) - joins this game with the men of the tribe. Ali Nimir is also a dead shooter with a gun. Um tubra is built from supple twigs of trees curved into a circle the size of a motor scooter tyre, i.e. vespa. This twig circle is wrapped with layers of peel from the soft fibres of trees. These fibres are called "liha". As with every wheel *Um tubra* has an opening in the middle, which is used for a hand grip. The men players equip themselves with lances called "mazareeg" made from the roots of a special tree called kadad. A kadad

is a medium sized tree, the height of a man or a little higher. When in bloom it bears yellowish flowers the length of a finger - but These flowers are covered with short hairs and bear a pollen powder which is both fragrant and nice to look at. The kadad tree grows in firm *gardud* soil and has fibrous roots which span for long distances. These roots are never thicker than a cane and are straight and strong, hence, they are chosen for *um tubra* lances. They are cut into lengths of less than two meters and sharpened with a knife. The sharpened end is oiled and slightly roasted in a flame but not burnt. This makes the tip blackened, like the beak of an hawk, and adds further strength. The players arrange themselves in two rows parallel to one another but not facing one another; they occupy parallel slanting postitions to avoid spearing one another when they throw their lances. The game is played in the afternoon from 4 p.m. until sunset - when the players disperse for the sunset prayers. A selected player stands a little from the contestant rows and throws *um tubra* between the two rows. The wheel runs very fast while each man tries to hit it with his *muzrag*. Only the swift and strong-sighted manage to hit it. He who hits it would implant his foot in the sand to indicate his position and shouts the word "Tago, tago", i.e. come here, come here, while the wheel is still running. Wherever it stops, men from the other row would have to come to his place and try to hit the stationary wheel lying some distance away. The first winner is a circumcision, the second is a healing circumcision wound, third winner is breaking of the worm tin and the fourth is inserting worms into the anuses of the losing team members.

As the Baggara life is gradually gravitating towards urbanisation, and as their children are absorbed by schools in villages and towns and many of their young men have taken employment in agricultural schemes or factories and crossed the waters to Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States or Libya, some of their games such as Huruk, Um Tubrah and el Sala Jaku are slowly but surely submerging into a disappearing world: Others still survive and they are played on stage at the national theatre in Omdurman.

[To be continued...]

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KEEPING THE FAITH:

TRAVELS WITH SUDANESE WOMEN

By Lillian Craig Harris

Pauline Publications Africa, Faith in Sudan No. 7, Nairobi, 1999.

and

IN JOY AND IN SORROW:

TRAVELS AMONG SUDANESE CHRISTIANS

By Lillian Craig Harris

Pauline Publications Africa, Faith in Sudan No. 8, Nairobi, 1999.

At one point in the first of these two collections 'the Anthropologist' says to Lillian, 'You are a very strange ambassador's wife': indeed she was. Most ambassadors' wives in my limited acquaintance are predictably good at social management, and otherwise discretely obscure, apart from some uncontroversial good works. Lillian was not like that during her years in Khartoum beside her husband, Alan Goulty, Britain's Ambassador in Sudan from 1995-98. That is not to say that she was in any way lacking in the skills of social management, though even in those she was unconventional: mass singing always seems to be breaking out around her (as I have myself experienced once in the unexpected venue of a New Haven restaurant).

For the 'Ambassador' (as he is referred to, usually ironically - 'I told the Ambassador that he couldn't come with me because he doesn't like blood') and for many British men in Khartoum, Sudan is mostly encountered through their work with Muslim Sudanese male counterparts. Such relationships are often very warm and long lasting, as SSSUK's existence attests, and the links between the two peoples have remained strong for much of the last century. Lillian is never other than supportive of these activities, but she is also acutely aware of the less attractive side of war-torn Sudan. The titles of these books are indicative of her

natural empathy with two sections of Sudanese society who have suffered far more than most: women and Christians. Sudan often conveys the impression of being a male chauvinist society, and never more so than since 1989 when in effect the National Islamic Front seized power, often apparently giving official backing to discriminatory behaviour of all kinds. Some of the meetings that Lillian recounts from her travels around the country are enough to make one weep: chapter 20 of *Sudanese Women* is entitled 'Suicide and Other Signs'.

Lillian is a descendent of 'several generations of Baptist Missionaries' and her feelings for all Sudan's Christians is summed up in the titles. Her travels occasionally throw up the unexpected, as in the picture of the Coptic community in Gedaref; and often the grotesque as in 'Confronting Evil: The Church in Kalakala', one of the camps for the displaced into which many thousands of people have been pushed by the Sudan Government, apparently with the thought that out of sight is out of mind. Yet this is a warts and all picture of the Christians of Sudan. By no means all are depicted uncritically, though there were some saints, most notably Hilary Logali, whose death is narrated here. One feels the strain on both Father Paul Boyle (another deserving hero) and 'the Ambassador' when they demolish a bottle of Glenfiddich so that by the evening's end 'one priest and one ambassador lay on the floor giggling hysterically as a fat labrador ran circles round them.'

Both books have the feel of a cathartic exercise, as Lillian has come to terms with what clearly were tumultuous years for her personally. Yet she would not be herself if they stopped at being cathartic. Her sense of engagement with all Sudanese she came across (and not all positively by any means), continued into a commitment to help and involvement in a number of charities: those selected on the cover are, appropriately, The Women's Action Group for Peace and Development and the Bishop Mubarak Fund for Nuba Women. The books will I am sure encourage readers to want to help as well.

Lillian's activities understandably were viewed with horror by the Islamist government in Khartoum; so much so that she was denounced in the press and sometimes harassed as she went about her business. For her I am sure it was an honour to be so viewed by such a regime, for which she has numerous and well deserved scathing comments. It certainly did 'the Ambassador's' career no harm either, and all members of SSSUK will wish Alan well in his new post as Director of the Middle East section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Though moving on, I am sure that neither he nor Lillian will ever forget Sudan.

Peter Woodward

THE LONG ROAD TO PEACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN SUDAN

By Matthew Haumann MHM

Gracewing, 2 Southern Avenue, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 OQF.
First Published in 2000. ISBN 0-85244-520-2

Father Haumaim is a Dutch Mill Hill Missionary who has lived and worked in Kenya and southern Sudan since 1963. In his chosen role as observer, priest, learner, questioner and participant in the southern Sudanese drama, he tells a tale which is both inspirational and horrifying and due as much to southern Sudanese fratricide as to northern Sudanese aggression. We read not only of northern planes dropping bombs on southern children but of the 1991 Bor massacre of Dinka women and children by Nuer warriors and how Dinka-led SPLA fighters set fire to the grass in which the Azande were hiding, shooting the men who fled and capturing the young boys for training as “freedom fighters”.

Ending this brief book, Fr. Haumann raises no false expectations but simply reminds us, in case we missed the point, that “there seems to be no solution in sight. In the end, only the people of Sudan can resolve the conflict.” There are one or two historical errors (the British did not rule southern Sudan from Uganda) and I would have liked to see a date on each of the 21 essays. Observers of the Sudan situation need constant reminding that circumstances change frequently. But do not let the above put you off reading a valuable if brief record intended for our painful enlightenment.

Fr. Haumann describes and illustrates several central truths about southern Sudan which everyone who hopes to help the Sudanese needs to hear. This is a book filled with terrible stories and yet somehow also filled with light for it tells of good people holding back evil with only their bare bodies and their bare faith. The book is an account of both unbounded hope and plentiful, if frequently withheld, mercy.

Haumann is seen here stumbling through the bush, often in the train of that great man Bishop Paride Taban. With self-effacing grace he portrays himself as a foreign misfit who for some reason can’t let go of the wounded Sudanese lion. But do not be deceived. Fr. Haumann has understood the truth that the best theologians, historians and psychologists are both listeners and story tellers. It is also evident that his love affair with the Sudanese is reciprocated.

Among the truths illustrated through the words and stories of the southern Sudanese is the need for pluralism. Christianity has no monopoly on truth; missionaries are meant to be seekers and learners; God was not imported to Africa by white men but was there long before their arrival. There is, moreover, urgent need to respect traditional religious practices. "This place was not just any place and this tree was not just any tree. Here the Lutuko people prayed for rain; here they prayed for blessings for their people; here they brought their sacrifices. This was a holy place and not just anybody could come and live here" (p. 83). I am reminded of other missionaries, in other parts of Sudan, who encouraged the chopping down of such sacred trees. When the trees go, the land perishes, a truth which the southern Sudanese understood on several levels.

Outsiders seldom see the whole picture, Haumann says, and he recommends local direction and initiative. Though he writes with shame and regret of his own withdrawal time and again just before the fighters or bombers arrive, he also shows people subsequently coping with their shattered lives, even learning through the opportunity which crisis presents to be self sufficient in caring for lepers and feeding the poor (p. 47 and 48). In this vast learning experience, several stories stand out. In one, Mokokha who is a grassroots theologian points out to the missionary that God is far more interested in mercy than in punishment, leaving Fr. Haumann to ponder that "we have read the Bible only with our own eyes and have not listened to the Bible with African ears" (p. 89). And the following sentence will surely bring a smile of grateful recognition to many readers: "...the Sudanese are more inclined to celebrate what they have, instead of mourning what they have lost" (p. 93).

This brief but intense book is also filled with profound word pictures:

400,000 Sudanese crossing the Soba River near Nasir in 1991 and being welcomed home by Bishop Taban who stands for hours in the river shaking hands. Fr. Haumann's portrait of the formidable car mechanic turned bishop enlarges our understanding of Sudanese psychology as well as the character of a man who says, in the face of great physical danger, "We can only say it is impossible when we have tried. No one has tried so far" (p. 35). The bishop's diplomatic skills are awesome. Haumann concludes that, "It is not his way to talk about loving your enemy; that is not African; he simply refuses to see a fellow human as an enemy; that is more African" (p. 124).

The author does not dwell unduly on his own undoubted anguish and loneliness during his years in Sudan but often mentions his fear, frustration and anger in the face of senseless violence: "To watch people die without being able to do something is impossible to bear" (p. 65). Among the truths which Fr. Haumann points out are several which I, too, have observed in Sudan: people are more open to each other when they are all powerless, and hopelessness is not something which the Sudanese feel they can afford. In the face of circumstances which would make most other people give up, the Sudanese continue pushing towards life.

"I consider the situation hopeless," Fr. Haumann wrote in the aftermath of the Bor massacre, "but that is perhaps, a luxury which only those can afford who can get away from this war. Margaret who wants to live on with her children does not give up hope" (p. 96). Two final truths, then:

women and the Church are essential elements in helping the southern Sudanese hold on to hope. Haumann again quotes his favourite bishop who, because he eschews violence, must surely be speaking of the need for the world to seek political means to stop the longest war in Africa:

According to Bishop Paride Taban:

> "We are willing to carry our cross. But even Christ did not carry his cross alone: Simon of Cyrene helped him part of the way. We are not asking the world to carry our cross; we are only asking them to be our Simon of Cyrene" (p. 69).

Lillian Craig Harris

PERMANENT PILGRIMS: THE ROLE OF PILGRIMAGE IN THE LIVES OF WEST AFRICAN MUSLIMS IN SUDAN

C. Bawa Yamba

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995. 237 pages.

During the Anglo-Egyptian period, thousands of West Africans crossed into the Northern Sudan, hoping to fulfil the Muslim duty of pilgrimage *(hajj)* to Mecca. Arriving at a time of acute labour shortage, many settled in Sudanese towns and rural areas and took manual and agricultural jobs. Though these pilgrims regarded the Sudan as a mere stopping place, where they could work and save for the journey ahead, most in fact struck roots. In *Permanent Pilgrims: The Role of Pilgrimage in the Lives of West African Muslims in Sudan,* C. Bawa Yamba takes the story of these West African immigrants into the 1980s and '90s, to explore the dynamics of cultural identity among their third-, fourth, and fifth-generation descendants. In particular, he considers Hausa-speaking communities in the Blue Nile region, an area dependent on cotton-farming since the inception of the Gezira Scheme in the 1920s.

Between 1984 and 1992, Yamba (a Ghanaian anthropologist trained and based in Sweden) conducted fieldwork in "pilgrim villages", the residents of which - though born and bred in the Sudan - defined themselves as transient populations saving to perform the *hajj*. Constrained by poverty and local debt, however, few ever reached their goal. (In one "pilgrim" village, for example, only five out of 4,000 residents had ever reached Mecca.) Rare success stories nevertheless nurtured the pilgrim dream and identity among others.

Yamba's self-inflicted "pilgrims" did not define themselves as "Sudanese", but on the contrary chose a path of conscious non-assimilation. They resisted integration into mainstream Arabic-speaking Sudanese society in a variety of ways - for example, by building houses of impermanent or flimsy material, to stress their transience, and by preserving Hausa customs, such as wife seclusion (purdah). They also maintained separate village Qur'an schools *(khalwas)* for their children, where teachers applied strict discipline. They rejected Sudanese government schools with their "western" educations, and attributed moral laxness to Sudanese Muslims.

By insisting on their separateness, pilgrim communities remained economically and socially marginal within the Blue Nile region. Young men who wanted to break out of this mould - by getting a better education or a more lucrative job outside the community, or by taking a Sudanese wife (in a context where widespread polygamy put Hausa wives in short supply) risked ostracization. Once shunned by fellow "pilgrims", such individuals often tried to hide or erase their West African origins. Thus assimilation to Arabic-speaking Northern Sudanese culture became an all-or-nothing affair.

Permanent Pilgrims raises provocative questions about the demographic and cultural impact of West African immigration in the Sudan. How typical, for example, are these "pilgrim communities" in their adamant non-assimilation? And how distinctive are West Africans, as ethnic enclaves, after a century or more of settlement? This fascinating work, with its mixed historical-anthropological approach, points the way for further research on the plurality of Muslim culture in the Sudan.

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SUDAN STUDIES: Number 25 (March 2001)

IMPERIAL ECHOES
THE SUDAN -PEOPLE HISTORY & AGRICULTURE

By Arthur Staniforth

Oxford: Worldview Publishing, 2000. Paperback. £14.95.

This book is a fascinating account of the author's time in the Sudan, from 1944 to 1949, not long before independence. He describes his work and contacts with the diverse people of that interesting, very large, country. He has covered a wide range of farming conditions: irrigated, in the low-rainfall areas of the north, rainfed, in the south with very different people from those who irrigate in the north, and last but not least, life in the mixed Sudanese-Expatriate community in Khartoum. He makes many points that are of great significance; significance that became more apparent after "Imperial" became "Imperial Echoes". Although not elaborated in the book, he has made good use of them in his work in the Sudan and later, as a tropical agricultural expert: they deserve highlighting.

Perhaps most importantly, unless one is able to communicate with people with whom you are supposed to work in their own language, one cannot really understand what is going on and therefore cannot begin to devise ways to make conditions, practices, better. He highlights the Government regulation, only too well known to all who worked in Britain's colonies: unless one has passed a basic language examination within two years of arrival, there were no further increments to one's salary. (It is left to the readers' imagination what most people chose to do!) What a wise ruling that was and what a difference it made between the effectiveness and achievements of British colonial servants compared to nationals of countries that did not impose this requirement.

Being able to communicate in the local languages, and living in areas where his almost sole contact was with local people, and where the best way to spend the evening leisure hours - in his earlier days without even a radio - was, in the course of evening strolls amongst the villagers, farmers, to learn what they do, how they live. In other parts of Africa this was known as the "Swinnerton principle", named after the well-known Director of Agriculture in

Kenya: officials were expected to spend 20 days a month away from the comforts (such as they were) of their station, usually a district headquarters (a facility not always accorded to the author), to learn just what the problems are. Staniforth, and others who came under this requirement, were technicians, not sociologists. Therefore it took them years, with this approach, to learn what makes local communities function. A trained sociologist may have learnt all this in a few months, but not in a few weeks or days, and not at all if he could not communicate with people without interpreters. The presence of an intermediary - not necessarily the intermediary himself or herself, although that has been known to happen - always distorts responses, compared to what would have been said directly.

Yet another point he made is what, alas, has only been learnt slowly and quite recently. He describes how farmers in low rainfall areas developed techniques to catch what little rain there was, collect water not actually falling on their cultivated areas, and grow crops, survive. It is only recently appreciated that most local practices, agricultural or other, developed over decades, centuries, have much to recommend them. They must be good: if they were not, the people practicing them would have abandoned them long ago, and developed something more useful.

These points are hidden in the fascinating narrative: the author does not make use of them, just mentions what he saw, experienced. This is as it should be: it is for the reader to pick them up and, if young enough and enterprising enough to work in countries like the Sudan, to apply them.

The book is indeed “Imperial Echoes”, echoes of an age past, an age perhaps only partly understood by the present generation. Undoubtedly it did many good things, and is fondly remembered, be it not openly acknowledged, by the locals who lived through it and, often, by those who have just heard of it. Your reviewer visited the Sudan in the early 1980’s. He was asked about his background by a senior official with whom his work brought him into

contact. When he said that at one time he was a colonial agricultural officer, the Secretary immediately said: "in that case, you must come and have dinner with me." A delightful evening it was, due perhaps to Staniforth himself: I want to thank him for it. People like he, and his wife, have left an indelible mark on the country. They have established the basis for future development for the time when the other imperial legacy, the "Scramble for Africa", the lumping together of highly diverse peoples in most of the former African (and for that matter Asian) overseas possessions can be resolved and peace, in the full sense of the word, established.

Andrew Seager

SUDANQUOTE

The following passage is taken from the confidential *Reports on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of the Sudan 1904.* This was printed in Khartoum by F. Nimr and Co., 1905. Here Lord Cromer, His Majesty's Agent and Consul General at Cairo, offers to his superiors in London a very superior, indeed Olympian, view of those populations of the Sudan recently brought under administration

2. Condition of the Inhabitants.

A large number of the inhabitants of the Sudan, namely those who inhabit the southern provinces, are pagan savages. They are often a fine race, and are not devoid of the barbaric virtues which are sometimes to be found amongst savages. Save in some localities, visited in past years by a very few travellers, such as Sir Samuel Baker, and in one spot where an Austrian mission at one time existed, their sole knowledge of the outer world was, until recently, derived from the experience gained when Arab raiders descended on their villages, murdered many of the inhabitants, and carried off others into slavery.

The majority of the remaining inhabitants of the Sudan, though they can scarcely be called utter savages - inasmuch as they have made one distinct step forward in having embraced the Moslem religion - are in so backward a condition of civilization as to be but slightly removed from savagery. I can, perhaps, best give an idea of their manners and customs by describing an incident which occurred last year. It is given in the Report of the Legal Secretary, Mr. Bonham-Carter.

A man named Wada Wad Gharib, residing in the Province of Sennar, was accused of murdering his cousin, Hamid Wad Galis. On being arrested, he made the following statement:- "The natives in the neighborhood often complained that my cousin spoiled their crops by his sorcery. I warned him many times, but he did not cease from doing so. So I went to him in his house and spoke to him, but he struck me with his knife, so I stabbed him twice with a large knife that was in my hand, and slew him."

Mr. Bonham-Carter adds the following comment: -"The accused's statement that the deceased had struck him was not supported by the evidence. The sole motive for the crime appears to have been fear of sorcery."

Manifestly, a long time must elapse before the ideas usually current in civilized, or even semi-civilized communities, gain general acceptance amongst the numerous class of whom Wada Wad Gharib may be taken as representative.

ACCOUNTS 1998

SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UK

	1998	1997
INCOME	£	£
Membership dues 1998	1061.61	1051.00
Back Membership dues	8.00	195.00
Future Membership dues	119.00	199.00
Sale of Publications	32.00	37.17
Interest on Bank accounts	33.98	37.89
1997 AGM/Symposium	-	402.00
1998 AGM/Symposium	546.00	-
1998 Manchester meeting	218.45	
Deficit for year		828.72
	2019.04	**2750.78**

I have examined the accounting records kept in relation to the above period and certify that this income, expenditure and assets statement is in accordance with them

.....

E. J. M. Inglis., F.C.C.A

Accounts 1 January - 31 December 1998

	1998		1997
EXPENDITURE	£		£
Printing	369.08		534.93
Secretarial expenses	465.16		281.31
Committee Travel	240.70		512.30
Bank charges	-		2.50
1997 AGM/Symposium	-		519.74
1998 AGM/Symposium	619.99		
1998 Manchester meeting	270.00		
Surplus for year	54.11		
Assistance for 97 Cairo Conf.	-		900.00
	2019.04		**2750.78**
Assets			
Bank balance on 1.1.98	1944.91	2773.63	
Bank balance on 31.12.98	1999.02	1944.91	

D. K Lindley
Hon. Treasurer
02-Sep-99

ACCOUNTS 1999

SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UK

	1999	1998
INCOME	£	£
Membership dues 1999	1061.83	1061.61
Back Membership dues	34.00	8.00
Future Membership dues	142.00	119.00
Sale of Publications	153.00	32.00
Interest on Bank accounts	12.63	33.98
Donations	302.00	-
1998 AGM/Symposium		546.00
1999 AGM/Symposium	231.00	
1998 Manchester meeting		218.45
1999 Manchester meeting	149.00	
	2085.46	**2019.04**

I have examined the accounting records kept in relation to the above period and certify that this income, expenditure and assets statement is in accordance with them

.....

E. J. M. Inglis., F.C.C.A

DRAFT Accounts 1 January - 29 December 1999

	1999 £		1998 £
EXPENDITURE			
Printing	294.02		369.08
Secretarial expenses	242.61		465.16
Committee Travel	144.80		240.70
			-
1998 AGM/Symposium			619.99
1999 AGM/Symposium	281.25		
1998 Manchester meeting			270.00
1999 Manchester meeting	116.48		
Surplus for year	1006.30		54.11
			-
	2085.46		**2019.04**
Assets			
Bank balance on 1.1.99	1999.02	1944.91	
Bank balance on 29.12.99	3005.32	1999.02	

D. K Lindley
Hon. Treasurer
29.12.99

Expenditure Nov-Dec 1999 (& carry over to 2000)	1999	in 2000
Printing of Sudan Studies No 24	0.00	300.00 (not yet printed)
Additional secretarial expenses (advance)	0.00	100.00 (cq no 43 cashed in 1999)
Committee travel	54.90	
Hire of technician at London Symposium	82.25	
Total	137.15	

Sudan Studies[10] is published twice yearly by the Sudan Studies Society – UK (SSSUK).

Views expressed in notes, articles and reviews published in **Sudan Studies** are not those necessarily held by the Sudan Studies Society – UK, or the Editor. They are published to promote discussion and further scholarship in Sudanist studies.

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Notes for Contributors

The Sudan Studies Society welcomes notes and articles of any length. The normal maximum is 5,000 words including footnotes (longer articles can be accommodated usually in more than one issue). Ideally, articles should be typed in double spacing on A4 paper in Times 14pt.

Manuscripts are not normally returned to authors though original material such as photographs will be returned. The Society retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space and editorial consistency only, e.g. UK spelling. **Sudan Studies** aims to follow the editorial style of African Affairs, Journal of the Royal African Society.

It is helpful to have, very briefly (2-3 lines), any relevant details about the author - post held, time recently spent in Sudan, etc. and the history of the article or paper submitted, e.g. if prepared for presentation at a conference or seminar, please give the date, location and title of the meeting.

[10] Single issues and available back numbers can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary at the rate of £8 per copy.