The challenges faced and the role played by the Copts and other ethnic communities in Sudan during political and social changes in the late nineteenth century.

Gamal W. Meikhail

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy

Discipline of Studies in Religion
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Sydney

June 2023

Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Signature

Name
Gamal W. Meikhail

Date
12 January 2024

Abstract

The Turko-Egyptian invasion of Sudan in 1820 by Mohammad Ali was primarily to supply the Egyptian army with warrior fighters and gold to finance the military. As a result, his army occupied almost all the land of present Sudan. The first era of the Turkish occupation, which lasted until 1885, flourished with the trade of gold, ivory, Arabic gum, ostrich feathers and slavery. Moreover, Muhammad Ali's army accompanied many of the Coptic clerks by mandate in his campaign with their families to regulate the occupying force's income, besides other people from different nationalities. As a result, the Copt immigrants were the most significant number, and the nucleus of the Coptic presence in Sudan lasts to this day.

Sudan was a land of opportunities for every fortune seeker. Most merchants came from Egypt, the Middle East and Europe; the Turko-Egyptian Government employed European military personnel to rule over several of Sudan's provinces. However, the Egyptian rulers were the majority, and most had an unpleasant history of unjust and cruelty in the taxes collection in addition to their private business activities.

This congested social atmosphere created public exasperation. It caused a widespread popular revolution that acquired its legality from historical and religious texts. However, the course was initially unmotivated by belief or religion; it was purely economic. As a result, extreme religious fanaticism prevailed in all community strata; it affected well-off people, government employees, foreigners and locals, and every religion differently. Although the social change severely impacted many foreigners and the religious in different ways, they did not suffer more than the others—it was less even. Their suffering was due to cultural differences rather than anything else.

The political and social experience of Mahdism, with its positives and negatives, influenced Sudan's political and social future for decades.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for creating a suitable atmosphere for achieving my research.

Similarly, I am grateful to my supervisors for providing excellent academic advice to produce the best possible development.

Further still, I am grateful to all who provided me with books and documents.

Love Words Editing provided copyediting and proofreading services, according to the guidelines laid out in the university-endorsed national ‘Guidelines for Editing Research Theses’.

Table of Contents

List of Figures:

List of Maps:

Introduction

Background

The region extending between the Red Sea and the Northern African coast that faces the North Atlantic Ocean coast, previously Sudanic Africa, has the most Muslim believers in Africa. The root of the term 'Sudanic' refers to the colour black in Arabic, which implicitly denotes this term is meant for black Muslims and most possibly originated from an Arabian region source. However, the name Sudan, particularly regarding the country now known as Sudan, was given after Muhammad's Ali invasion of the country in 1820.

Along the six cataracts across the Nile River, known as the land of Nubia, Northern Sudan experienced advanced civilisations. Kush, the powerful Nubian Kingdom, existed for almost a millennium; it has been mentioned in the scripts several times. It was on its people's strength that neither the Romans nor the Arabs could ultimately defeat them. In addition, three Christian Nubian Kingdoms existed between late antiquity and the late medieval periods. The last Christian Kingdom fell about five centuries ago. These kingdoms were a safe refuge for the Copts during the different periods of Christian persecution in Egypt.

Egypt's Turkish ruler, Muhammad Ali, invaded Sudan in 1820 for economic reasons. As a result, by his orders, many foreigners accompanied his campaign to serve in Sudan; the most significant number was the Coptic clerks since they played substantial roles in Egypt as clerks in Egyptian history. Particularly as account-keepers managing financial records and so forth since the early Islam era. Their serving in Sudan was not optional, and from then until now, many existing families descend from the first generations of the first cohort of those clerks. However, the corruption and brutality of the Turkish rulers towards the Sudanese people caused the Mahdist Revolution to ignite. Sudanese Sufism played a significant role in legitimising the uprising that took a religious turn, despite the leading cause being financial. As a result, all foreigners from non-Islamic backgrounds in Sudan were forced to embrace

Islamic religious beliefs. They were sometimes forced to marry into different races against their will.

The Mahdism era can be divided into two segments: the revolutionary period, controlled by the Mahdi Mohamed Ahmed himself, and the estate era, which his successor, Khalifa Abdallahi, controlled. The charismatic personality of the Mahdi attracted almost all sections of Sudan's tribal communities, making the revolution most popular. During this era, a massive emigration occurred; virtually all of Western Sudan's population moved to the outskirts of its capital Khartoum, creating the new Mahdism capital, Omdurman. However, his successor's next ruling period was discriminative. The citizens were categorised and prioritised on tribal bases. Khalifa Abdallahi was the most brutal Sudanese ruler in Sudan's history. As a result, the revolution lost its zest, and he turned against early revolutionary supporters, including the Mahdi's relatives. The involuntarily forced emigrations ordered by Khalifa Abdallahi increased during his reign for authoritarian political reasons. His viciousness was one of the main factors that made the Battle of Omdurman unpopular among many tribal people, contrary to early Mahdism battles.

The many internal and external wars with neighbouring countries weakened its army, and the population decreased dramatically due to the wars and famines. However, the Sudan Mahdism era experience helped to create a unified nation and a solid army during the bilateral condominium ruling period and the independence era.

Justification of the research and its objectives

There were many foreigners in Sudan before the outbreak of the Mahdism revolution; most were merchants since Sudan was a land of opportunities and for getting rich quickly. They were from different nationalities; some were Europeans, but most were from Arab countries. The majority were Copts of Egyptian origin who came to Sudan as clerks mandated by the Turkish/Egyptian government. All played a significant role in improving Sudan's economic development and governmental management.

Although the causes of the revolution were primarily economic, it took the religious aspect to acquire the needed legitimacy to be accepted publicly. Consequently, all who were from Christian and Jewish religious backgrounds were forced to change their religious beliefs, even though both are recognised in the Islamic jurisprudence. It was the biggest

challenge for the minorities to adapt to the new spiritual and social conditions and keep their beliefs and social life secret.

Earlier studies and background information

Those who have written on Sudan's history and this subject are either foreigners or native Sudanese. The foreigners' literature was frequently militant, about the reconquest of Sudan by Major Kitchener, and can be considered propaganda war literature. However, the memoirs written by Fr Ohrwalder and Fr Rosignoli touched also on the social life. As for the literature written by Sudanese natives, it glorifies and venerates the Mahdism religious revolution and its successes against the occupiers.

There is no literature written by any of the ethnic minorities of that period or after, except the memoirs of Yusuf Mikhail, which is primarily a narration of events rather than a book. However, *The Expedition of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Land of Kush (Sudan),* written by two Copts, gave also some information in a few pages about the life of the Copts during that period.

Significance of the research topic

This research is the first academic study about the Copts and the other members of the ethnic communities during the Mahdism period documented by references, as well as opening the door for further studies in this field in the future, particularly during the 13 years of the Omdurman State era and the Anglo-Egyptian ruling period.

The reasons for choosing this topic:

Personal reasons: The researcher's interest in studying the history of the Mahdism period and its ethnic minorities.

Objective reasons: The lack of academic studies about the minorities' history and life during that period.

Statement of problem

One of the biggest problems in retrieving the unwritten history of the ethnic minorities from non-Sudanese backgrounds during the Mahdism era is that it is subject to

subjective interpretation of the events. Most ethnic minorities were either Christian Europeans or Jews and Christians from the Middle East. The source of their history was whatever they secretly kept in their memoirs preserved by their descendants, except whatever was written for the war propaganda. It has been supposed that all ethnic minorities were subjected to extra unfair treatment; however, the fact was different. Almost all of them were literate and relatively highly educated compared to the majority. They all contributed with their knowledge to the Mahdism state's survival for thirteen years.

The researcher's Professional Development

The most significant achievement acquired by the researcher from the research is the opportunity to access and evaluate undocumented historical incidents through family archives and partially preserved memories. These have been compared with similar documented ones in order to arrive at the actual events. The archives include personal written notes kept by the relevant families.

Research Obstacles, Limitations, and Delimitations of the Study

The most significant difficulty was accessing the sources, either personal notes or history books. Some books were not available in any university library or the internet, but were provided as personal loans. Other books from overseas universities were delayed for some considerable time due to COVID-19 health restrictions.

Critical evaluation of the research sources

Historical sources about that era were either political as war propaganda to justify the upcoming conquest or personal documentation, or mixed between the two. All such were overtly subjective, even if they contained valuable information and relevant data. The political books were combined with personal observation and political commentary for a conscious effect on the reader. It was hard to get a reliable single piece of information without comparing it with other sources. All personal impressions were affected by the writers' religious, educational, and cultural backgrounds. Each one impacted and influenced

the audience at the writer's cultural level. It is noticeable how cultural differences between the different societal backgrounds of the writers and the Sudanese influenced most of the history books, particularly the European ones.

The thesis outlines the methodology of the approach

The methodological approach that followed in the research was the standard traditional historical methods consisting of secondary and primary historical sources of that historical period of Sudan and classifying them according to their relevance and importance. Additionally, some memoirs are kept by the ancestors of some families that were contemporaries in that era. The descriptive analysis was beneficial in collecting most of the historical incidents and sorting them out according to their importance and chronological order as much as possible.

The methodology arguments and the research questions on which the research designed were:

- In what ways did the Copts and the other ethnic minorities contribute to Sudan's government management and political history throughout the Sudan's different ages?
- How did they survive during Sudan's upheaval periods, particularly during the various stages of the Mahdism era? How did they adapt to the new life conditions, and how did it affect their lives?

Structure of the research chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduces and outlines some of the essential books written about and during the Mahdism period that were used as primary references in the research.

Chapter 2: This chapter covers the different historical eras. It details the presence of the Copts in the Nubian region, and proves the contribution of the Copts and their cultural influence on Nubia, particularly during the Nubian Christian kingdoms' era. Similarly, with their assistance during the Ottoman period and beyond, a considerable number of Coptic clerks managed and contributed to the government offices in Sudan. Also, many others from different ethnic minorities came as traders.

Chapter 3: Mahdism has had a considerable influence on Sudan's history and on the different races of Sudan's people, including the ethnic minorities. This chapter discusses the idea of Mahdism and its religious background, proving that it had a mutual influence on and from the neighbouring countries.

Chapter 4: This chapter takes the clerk Yusuf Mikhail through his memoir as an example of Mahdism's cultural effect and impact on the different ethnic minorities, particularly the young generation of that specific time. This cultural influence demonstrates the excuses made for the cultural and religious duality of many ethnic minority members.

Chapter 5: The Mahdism mass hijras (emigrations) were a landmark of Sudan's Mahdism. It happened several times in massive numbers to and from the Mahdist capital Omdurman during that era. The experience of hijra with a vast number of people walking for several months was the virtual crucible that melted people with their different cultural differences into one new homogenous religious culture.

Chapter 6: The wars were a distinguishing feature of the Mahdist state. The wars and famine killed at least half of Sudan's population. This chapter discusses the effects of the different Mahdism wars and their impact on the people in general and the ethnic minorities in particular.

Chapter One

1. The historical sources recording the social environment and life during the Mahdism era

1.1 Introduction

Most research efforts and reflections on the Mahdism era were military analyses of combat strategies rather than human or social aspects. **As a result, most literature and books published in the few decades following recovering control and seizing power in 1898 were military studies.** For example, in Winston Churchill's book *The River War*, Churchill was a soldier in the Anglo-Egyptian campaign and participated in the Omdurman Battle. He detailed all the struggles they fought since the beginning, similar to many other authors' and newspapers' war correspondence. However, the writers who contemporise and survived that era documented the actual reflection of the Mahdist Revolution's social life and its impact on them and minority groups in general.

1.2 The available literature by those who survived the Mahdism era

About 10 books are authored in different languages by contemporaries of the Mahdism period. All published their memoirs after they left Sudan except for one who was a judge in the Islamic court. Each writer authored their book from their perspective and in line with their personal circumstances and incidents they witnessed. All of them complete the picture.

1.2.1 The memoirs of two clergypersons

During the revolutionary and state phase of the Mahdism era, some historians from European minority ethnic backgrounds were counted in the tens in Sudan. They wrote about their social condition and the suffering of ethnic communities. Two were most noteworthy: Fr Joseph Ohrwalder's memoirs, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp, 1882–1892*, and Fr Rosignoli's memoirs, *Omdurman During the Mahdiya*. Fr Ohrwalder was an Austrian clergy missionary who came to Sudan accompanied by nuns several years before the outbreak of the revolution. Their missionary base was nearby El-Obeid city and served the mountain Nubians. Fr Rosignoli was an Italian priest brought to Sudan in 1881 by Bishop Comboni. He served in Khartoum for some time and was later transferred to

Kordofan in El-Obeid. Unfortunately, the Mahdi troops captured Fr Ohrwalder and Fr Rosignoli, with several other clergypersons and nuns. One of the fathers did not survive the siege and died in El-Obeid, and another priest escaped Sudan with the help of paying a native merchant between Egypt and Sudan. Both the fathers and nuns transferred to Omdurman and were forced to find a profession for their living. They served all Christians of Omdurman spiritually and secretly outside their jobs. The fathers and the nuns (bar one) escaped to Egypt at different times. They published their memoirs after fleeing Omdurman; both books described Omdurman's social life and documented all major political incidents in detail. The first book was written in Italian, and the second in German; both were translated into English.

1.2.2 Memoirs of three fighters who served in the Mahdism army

Three memoir writers served in the Mahdi's army. One wrote his memoir during the early Mahdism era, and he was later persecuted by the Khalifa and killed. The memoir of Ismael Al-Kordofani mainly venerated the Mahdi and Mahdism during the revolutionary stage. The other two were Yusuf Mikhail and Babikr Bedri; they wrote their memoirs during Sudan's Anglo-Egyptian bilateral condominium ruling period. They participated in the final Battle of Omdurman, describing it in detail. They wrote their memoirs under no political pressure, so their history is considered a true reflection of their impressions. All three were written in Arabic; one was translated and published in English.

1.2.2.1 The memoir of Ismael Al-Kordafani

Ismael Al-Kordofani was an early follower of the Mahdi when his mission began in the province of Kordofan. His book, *The Pleasure of Who is Guided by God's Words, with Imam al-Mahdi's Biography*, was written during the revolutionary stage of the Mahdism movement. Most of the book venerates the Mahdi and the Mahdism Wars. He described the Mahdism Wars, in which he participated in detail and ended his memoir with the incident of building the Mahdi's tomb. His father founded one of the well-known Sufi orders in Sudan. He was well-educated, a poet, and partly educated at the Azhar Mosque Institute of Egypt. He held the position of judge in the Islamic court until haters and informers falsely accused him because of his close relationship with the Khalifa. He was exiled to South Sudan

in 1893 and died several years later. One of his grandchildren was Sudan's first prime minister after independence.

1.2.2.2 The history of Yusuf Mikhail, an officer of the Coptic company in the Mahdism army

However, the Coptic community was the largest ethnic group; its population during the siege one year before the fall of Khartoum was about 16,000 across Sudan. Nothing was published about their community history until recently. Yusuf Mikhail was an officer (ameer) in the Mahdist army and was descended from a Coptic family. He joined Mahdism following the fall of the city of El-Obeid. His memoirs of Yousif Mikhail document his experience of that period*: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan*, written by pure chance in minimal time 35 years after the fall of the Mahdism state. The other recent book to record a glimpse into the Coptic community of that era is *The Expedition of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Land of Kush (Sudan): From the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century*; both were written in Arabic. Other than those two, nothing was written to record that particular period. However, the author of this thesis discovered several other existing memoirs written in note form while researching and collecting information. Some families wrote memoirs of their ancestors who were contemporaries of that period. They kept them within their families as a record, secretly for their family members' safety. It is noticeable all who documented that period openly and in detail in published books had previously left Sudan; this could explain the reason for the late Coptic documentation. Both books are in Arabic, and no published English translation exists yet.

1.2.2.3 Babikr Bedri's autobiography

Bedri was in his early twenties when he joined the Mahdi's army. He joined the Mahdism movement later in line with his religious commitment and his family's traditional background. His family comes from the Rubatab tribe in North Sudan, well known for adhering to conservative family traditions. He was among the first cohort of the Mahdi's army that entered Khartoum; he provides a detailed eyewitness account of Khartoum's massacre. After that, he joined the army sent to invade Egypt, where he was taken captive for a few years. After his return, he participated in the Omdurman Battle and described the defeat at length. He wrote his memoirs, *The Memoirs of Babikr Bedri*, in three volumes; only the first was translated into English and published by Oxford University. All his books are

considered good references for Sudan's history. His history relays the political and social conditions before the Mahdism state and during the bilateral ruling period. Bedri was known for his contribution to Sudan's education system. He was the first to encourage female education as he opened the first secular girl's school in Sudan. However, the Quranic schools existed three centuries prior, educating boys and girls separately.

1.2.3 The memoirs of two military personnel

Two military personnel served in Sudan when the revolution broke out and wrote their memoirs mainly from an army perspective. They were the Egyptian officer Ibrahim Fawzi and the Austrian lieutenant Rudolf Carl von Slatin. After regaining power in Sudan, the Egyptian Government granted both of them the rank and title of Pasha. Consequently, both memoirs greatly emphasise the military aspects.

1.2.3.1 Ibrahim Fawzi

Ibrahim Fawzi was 26 years old, an Egyptian army officer who served in Sudan as the governor of the Equatorial Province in Southern Sudan. He returned to Egypt, and several years later, Gordon appointed him as a second-in-command in the capital Khartoum. He witnessed Khartoum's massacre and was lucky not to be killed. However, Fawzi could not escape and lived in the Mahdism state from the beginning until its end. The Khalifa imprisoned him several times, lasting many years, and he was released after the Anglo-Egyptian army entered Omdurman. He wrote his memoir *The Book of Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener* in two volumes. They are good references on the Mahdist state history. Unfortunately, both are written in Arabic, and no translation has been done.

1.2.3.2 Rudolf Carl von Slatin

Slatin visited Sudan more than once, the last when he was a lieutenant in the Austrian army. At the time, Sudan's Governor-General Charles Gordon offered him a job as governor of Darfur. Slatin professed his Islamic faith before the rise of the Mahdism state to earn his soldiers' loyalty. He served as one of the Khalifa's guards during his entire stay in Sudan. He was prisoned more than once on suspicion of disloyalty. Finally, in 1895 three years before the military campaign, Sir Reginald Wingate, the head of Cairo's Intelligence Office, organised his escape from Sudan. He was critical in managing the military campaign.

He wrote his book, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, in German, which was translated into English by Egyptian intelligence.

1.2.4 Two merchants

The revolutionists caught two merchants in Sudan during the Mahdism Revolution and could not escape. They had no opportunity to escape during the estate era, and both wrote their memoirs after leaving Sudan following the fall of Omdurman. The Italian merchant Guiseppe Cuzzi wrote his book, *Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet* in Italian. The only available translation was done in 1968 by the Faculty of Arts, Khartoum University. The other was the German merchant Charles Neufeld; he entered Sudan in 1887—two years after the establishment of the Mahdism state—which was a risky and unwise action. His book, *A Prisoner of The Khaleefa: Twelve Years Captive at Omdurman*, was published in English and very popular; it was reprinted several times. Both books describe each writer's personal experience and suffering during captivity.

1.2.5 Two foreign historians were interested in the history of Mahdism

Naum Shoucair was an employer in the Cairo Intelligence Office during the Mahdism era. He wrote two books in Arabic about Sudan, considered good, trustworthy references about Mahdism: *History of the Sudan* and *History and Geography of the Sudan.* Unfortunately, he was not in Sudan during its rampage or even visited it; however, he is considered a reliable source of information for his position at the Cairo Intelligence Office.

The other historian is Peter M Holt; he received his degree in Education in London in 1941 and joined the Education Department of the Government of Sudan in 1952. He worked as a part-time lecturer at Gordon's College (University of Khartoum) until he left Sudan in 1955, one year before the independence. After that, he was appointed lecturer in the History Department of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. He wrote several books about Sudan and Mahdism. The most important two are *The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of its Origins Development and Overthrow* and *The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898.* He is considered a reliable source of information because he was appointed part-time government archivist in addition to being a part-time lecturer. His excellent command of Arabic helped him see, understand and analyse the documents collected after the fall of Mahdism.

1.3 Key features of the points of argument and referencing methods in the research

All the reference books are ordered alphabetically according to the authors' surnames. The Arabic reference books are listed separately; only their titles have been translated into English (by the researcher) to understand the book's outline. The Arabic references are ordered alphabetically using the author's translated surname.

The referencing system used in the research follows The University of Sydney's Harvard Referencing Style Guide.[1] All Arabic books are referenced according to the translation of Harvard Style Referencing.

The footnotes for the English and Arabic references in every chapter are written in a complete referencing method, and every subsequent mention is written in an abbreviated style. However, the subsequent mentions of the Arabic references are written in English translation only.

In every chapter, the sentences in bold letters in the introduction; represent the chapter's points of argument, discussion and hypotheses.

1.4 Conclusion

Three categories of references were written by authors who contemporise the Mahdism era, everything they wrote before the invasion was mostly utilised as war propaganda to justify the coming military action. However, they included valuable social information on everything, including ethnic minorities. The books were written just after the Omdurman War and mainly discussed the military aspects of the war. Finally, the books written later during the bilateral ruling period are unbiased and reflect the social life of all strata of society without external political pressure. All three types complete the picture of the Mahdism era.

[1] https://libguides.library.usyd.edu.au/ld.php?content_id=50827391

Chapter Two

2. <u>An overview of the different ethnic communities' existence in Sudan during the different historical eras with an outline of the associated political and social profile:</u>

2.1 Introduction.

2.2 A historical introduction to the various periods of Sudan's history before the beginning of the nineteenth century until the second decade of the second millennium:

2.2.1 Introduction to the Nubian region's history.

2.2.2 The first recorded existence of the Copts in the Nubian region.

2.2.3 The Christian age and the different creeds in the Nubian Kingdoms until the late medieval period:

2.2.3.1 The first kingdom, 'Nobatia'.

2.2.3.2 The second kingdom, 'Makouria'.

2.2.3.3 The third kingdom, 'Alwa' or 'Alodia'.

2.2.4 Muhammad Ali's Era.

2.2.5 The Copts' clerking profession in Egypt and Sudan during Muhammad Ali's reign.

2.2.6 Social diversity and cultural difference tolerances during the Turkish era.

2.2.7 The Mahdist Revolution and its era of state.

2.2.7.1 The factors that led to the Revolution's success.

2.2.8 The political development age.

2.2.9 The Arab Spring Revolutions age.

2.3 Conclusion.

2. An overview of the different ethnic communities' existence in Sudan during the different historical eras with an outline of the associated political and social profile

2.1 Introduction

Sudan was known previously as the land of Nubia and was multicultural from its early ages. The presence of different ethnic communities in Sudan has been evident since the Fourth Pharaonic Dynasty. There are historical and archaeological shreds of evidence about the Jewish existence and practising Judaism in the Nubian region before and after Islam's presence. **The first recorded presence of the Coptic influence in Nubia was during the early ages of Christianity in Egypt, particularly during the fourth century.** Nubia was a land of human resource supply to Egypt that served in the army and supplied gold and consumable exotic African products. 'Kush', the Nubian Kingdom, had existed for a millennium; it was powerful and influenced the surrounding countries. **During the Christian era, the Christian Nubian Kingdoms were a safe haven for the Copts, the Christians of Egypt during the Roman era, the Byzantine Christian Kingdom and the Islamic period.** The Coptic existence in Sudan ended with the fall of the Alodia (Alwa) Kingdom, the last Christian Nubian Kingdom, by the early sixteenth century.

Sudan's modern history starts with the Ottoman invasion of Sudan during Muhammed Ali's era, the Ottoman Sultan of Egypt. He carried out the same objectives as the early Egyptian dynasties: human resources and commodities supply. **The first presence of the Copts in Sudan in the modern age was during his period; they were professional clerks to control the records of the new colony's resources; Yusuf Mikhail's father was one of them.** Sudan was a land of opportunities; many other nationalities emigrated to Sudan as traders and merchants, which Muhammad Ali facilitated. The most known groups were the Syrians and Greeks; others were from North African countries, and some were Europeans and Egyptian merchants.

The Mahdism era was a turning point in the history of Sudan. It was a popular revolution for independence, motivated by religious aspects due to the Ottoman/Egyptian Government's corrupted administrative system in Sudan. Due to the revolution's religious motives, many non-Muslim ethnic groups were forced to embrace and practice the Islamic

faith. During the years of Mahdism existence, there were many victims, disregarding race, ethnicity or faith background.

Egypt and Britain had to reconquer Sudan to protect their regional interests and constrain the Mahdist state's expansionary ambitions. **The bilateral ruling period was a period of political and economic development that founded the modern Sudanese state.** Nevertheless, the Mahdist Revolution developed from a revolutionary approach to the partisan political system and had one of the most intractable bloody histories. However, most of the population enjoyed fairness and equality during this period, including descendants of other ethnic groups. Equality extends from equality in injustice is justice. **Unfortunately, Mahdism's nostalgia reappeared in 1983 and 1989 by re-implementing the Sharia laws, which forced many of Sudan's different ethnic groups to immigrate.**

2.2 A historical introduction to the various periods of Sudan's history before the beginning of the nineteenth century until the second decade of the second millennium

2.2.1 Introduction to the Nubian region's history

Archaeologists proved that ancient Egyptians were present in the Nubian region as early as the first four ruling dynasties. In particular, the "Third Dynasty of the old kingdom King Sanakht (c. 2670 BCE)", was the first to occupy the First Cataract of the Nubia region. They imported human resources to their country as slavery and other daily commodity needs.[2, 3] One of King Sneferu's stone inscriptions, the first king of the 4th dynasty of the old kingdom (c. 2575–c. 2465 BCE), mentioned that his armies fought off the Nubians and brought home 7,000 prisoners (enslaved people) and 200,000 heads of cattle.[4]

During the Persian era in Egypt between the sixth and the fifth centuries BCE, there was a Jewish military colony at Elephantine Island (Lower Nubia) at the southern ancient Egyptian borders, near the city of Aswan.[5] Archaeological discoveries on the island showed a Jewish community and temple existed and were identical in measurement to one of Jerusalem's fortress temples. These discoveries were supported by the Elephantine Papyri, most probably going back to 342 BCE. One of those discovered papyri was a copy of a letter

[2] el Mahdi, Mandour 1965, *A short history of the Sudan,* Oxford University Press, London, pp. 6–7.
[3] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 133.
[4] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, p. 139.
[5] Rosenberg, Stephen 2004, 'The Jewish Temple at Elephantine', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, vol. 67, no. 1, p. 6.

sent by the Jews of Elephantine to Bagoas (dec. 336 BCE), the Persian governor of Judah, attached with the received reply memorandum. It detailed the temple destruction that occurred.[6]

The Jewish influence in Lower Nubia extended up to the first century CE. A historical incident mentioned in the scripture also supports their existence in the Nubian region. The book, *Acts of the Apostles*, is about the Ethiopian eunuch who was a court official of Candace and was in charge of all the Queen of Ethiopia/Nubia treasures. It is worth noting that Herodotus (c. 484 – 425/413 BCE), the Greek historian, first mentioned the name 'Ethiopia' and the city Meroe concerning the land south of ancient Egypt, the Nubia region. The title 'Candace' or 'Kendaka' is given only to the ruling queens of the Nubian Kingdom.[7] This eunuch was returning to his country from Jerusalem in his chariot. Near Gaza, he was chanting a section of Isaiah's prophet, possibly in the Aramaic language, the dominant Jewish language of the time (Acts 8:26–40). This information denotes the existence of Jewish culture in the Nubian region at that early age.

In the late third century CE, Galerius Valerius Maximianus (305 to 311), a Roman emperor under Emperor Diocletian (284–305) who followed him, tried to invade the Nubia region and settle in the Nile. The aim was to separate Roman Egypt from the Blemmyes attacks. He succeeded in his desire by agreeing to an annual payment to the Nubian Kingdom 'Nobatae' in return for protecting Egypt's southern borders; this agreement was valid until 350 CE. The capital of Nobatae was Faras, the first Christian Nubian Kingdom; it existed until 543 CE. The Kingdom extended between the First and Third Cataracts on the Nile River along the current Sudanese borders.[8]

In 1517, the Ottoman ruler Sultan Selim conquered Egypt. He had already seized Nubia, and a frontier garrison of Ottoman troops was established there. These troops were mostly Bosnians and Hungarians who intermarried with the locals. About 1545 CE, Sultan Sulayman I, the successor of Selim, captured Suakin Port, which became a major Ottoman port in the Red Sea region.[9]

---

[6] Smith, John 1908, 'The Jewish Temple at Elephantine', *The Biblical World,* vol. 31, no. 6, American Periodicals Series III, Chicago, pp. 448–51.
[7] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, p. 260.
[8] Vantini, Giovanni 2009, *Rediscovering Christian Nubia,* Linea Edizioni, Verona, p. 22.
[9] el Mahdi, Mandour 1965, *A short history of the Sudan*, Oxford University Press, London, p. 39.

2.2.2 The first recorded existence of the Copts in the Nubian region

During the various persecution waves, the Nubian region was a refuge for the Copt's clergy and laypeople.[10] Many Coptic clergies and laypeople fled Egypt to the Nubian Kingdoms region due to the repetitive waves of persecution. Historians divide these into three stages: the pagan Roman Empire, the Christian Roman Empire and several stages during the Islamic period. The early phase was during the pagan Roman ruling period in Egypt. Paganism was the official state religion before the Roman Christian era, particularly between the second and third centuries. Its climax was during the Diocletian reign (born 243–245, dec. 311). Many Copts escaped to Lower Nubia due to the severity of the persecution.[11] The Romans failed to completely subdue the Blemmyes and the Nubians, particularly during this period. This situation forced both sides to agree on a buffer zone between them. Some Copts and the Coptic Church clergy found this situation an appropriate refuge land.[12, 13] This was followed by the Roman Christian era persecution after the Church's Council of Chalcedon (451 ACE) due to the Miaphysite and the Duophysite conflict.[14] Many Copts remained in the Nubian region, as far as the city of Marawi, between the Third and Fourth Cataracts. It is believed to be earlier than the official evangelising mission of the sixth century to the Nubia.[15]

During the Egypt Islamic era, the Nubian region had already embraced Christianity. Similar to what happened with the Romans, in 652 CE, a treaty between the Nubians and the Arabs was signed after the Arab's army failed to invade the Nubian region several times. As a result, they officially established the frontiers between Egypt and the Christian Nubian region. Many Christians who suffered under the persecution of the Arab Government, particularly those of Upper Egypt, had an avenue to escape to Lower Nubia to be under the Christian rulers. The available archaeological excavations in Lower Nubia revealed two clergy tombs. One was for Joseph, the bishop of Aswan, who died in exile in Dongola in 668.

---

[10] Jakobielski, S. 1981, 'Nubian Christian Architecture', *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde,* vol. 108, no. 1, De Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 42-3.
[11] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, p. 480.
[12] Hendrickx, B. 2014, 'On the withdrawal of the Roman troops from the Dodecaschoenos in AD 298: many questions and few answers--the problems in perspective', *Akroterion,* vol. 59, Gale Academic OneFile, Stellenbosch, p. 47.
[13] Gadallah, F. 1959, 'The Egyptian Contribution to Nubian Christianity', *Sudan Notes and Records,* vol. 40, University of Khartoum, p. 38.
[14] Gadallah, F. 1959, 'The Egyptian Contribution to Nubian Christianity', *Sudan Notes and Records,* vol. 40, p. 39.
[15] Gadallah, F. 1959, 'The Egyptian Contribution to Nubian Christianity', *Sudan Notes and Records,* vol. 40, p. 38.

This bishop is not included in the consecrated 27 consecutive Coptic bishops list, specially ordained for Nubia during the Christian Nubia era.[16]

Similarly, many lay Copts fled and resided in Qasr Ibrim after the unsuccessful eighth-century revolt against the rulers. The likelihood of a long residence period suggests the possibility of intermarriage with the Nubians. Another tomb found in 738 was that of a monk named Theophilos, who died in Pachoras (Faras: a significant city in Lower Nubia).[17] It is noticeable there was an apparent Coptic influence in Nubian culture. It appears in the impact of some Coptic monastic traditions in Old Dongola (between the Third and the Fourth Cataracts). This Coptic influence was brought to Nubia by the Coptic monks who escaped the Arab persecution.[18]

2.2.3 The Christian age and the different creeds in the Nubian Kingdoms until the late medieval period

The ancient name of Nubia was Kush (Cush); it was a potentially powerful and influential kingdom. Its historical capital was Meroe, located some 200 km northeast of Khartoum, the current capital of Sudan. The Kingdom of Kush extended between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts, particularly in the land between the Nile and Atbara Rivers. The Cushite/Kushite rulers were the pharaohs of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty under their king Tirhakah. They invaded and occupied Egypt for almost a complete century. Tirhakah was the most renowned Cushian king; his name was mentioned in the scripture more than once (Isaiah 37:9) and (2 Kings 19:9). This Nubian Kingdom relocated its seat several times throughout history, and split and rejoined more than once.

Three Christian kingdoms existed in the Nubian region from late antiquity until the late medieval period. The first archaeological excavations occurred in Lower Nubia between 1907–11 by Prof GA Reisner from Harvard University and the Egyptologist CM Firth. They did not stop until the start of the second millennium.[19, 20] Until the end of the twentieth century, several foreign archaeological excavation missions took place in the Nubian area.

[16] L. P. & Shinnie M. 1965, 'New Light on Medieval Nubia', *The Journal of African History,* vol. 6, no. 3, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 269.
[17] Tada, R. 2015, 'Copts and robbers', *The Weekly Standard*, vol. 20, Washington, p. 36.
[18] Ajtar, A. 1992, 'Two Greek Inscriptions from Polish Excavations in Old Dongola in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw', *Aegyptus,* Warsaw University, Warsaw, vol. 72, no. 1, p. 128.
[19] Adams, William 1977*, Nubia Corridor to Africa,* pp. 78–80.
[20] Edwards, David 2004, *The Nubian Past: An archaeology of the Sudan,* Routledge, Oxfordshire, pp. 55, 219.

These excavations unearthed many church ruins before most of the land went underwater at Lake Nasir.[21]

By the second half of the sixth century, there were three Christian kingdoms with two Christian doctrines in the Nubian region. Two of them were followers of Egypt's Coptic Church belief (the Jacobines or the Monophysites), and the third followed the Byzantine Church (the Melkite or the Dyophysites). A rivalry existed between the two creeds over extending each one's belief to the other kingdoms' people.

2.2.3.1 The first kingdom, 'Nobatia'

This kingdom existed on the land extending between the First and Third Cataract over the Nile River. Then, its capital was Faras, a significant town; now, it is underwater at Lake Naser. In 543, the clergyman Julian arrived in Nobatia supported by the influence of Empress Theodora (Miaphysite follower), wife of Justinian (Dyophysite follower). The Nobatians embraced Christianity willingly, according to the Coptic Orthodox belief.[22] As a result, many of the unearthed churches' books and tombstones were written in fluent Coptic.

Map 1. The three Christian Nubian kingdoms

Some were also written in the old Nubian language using the Coptic alphabet.[23] This information denotes that educated Coptic people wrote them rather than the natives, with the insistence on using the Coptic language with no grammatical errors.[24] In addition, other archaeological evidence proves that many Coptic monks and several monasteries were in Faras.[25]

2.2.3.2 The second kingdom, 'Makouria'

This kingdom stood on the land extending between the Third and Sixth Cataracts, some 90 kilometres south of Khartoum's current capital, and its capital was 'Old Dongola'. In 569, the Church of Constantinople preached the kingdom according to the Melkite Christian belief; the Orthodoxy according to the Eastern Roman Empire. Accordingly, the dominant

[21] Edwards, David 2004, *The Nubian Past: An archaeology of the Sudan,* p. 5.
[22] Adams, William 1977*, Nubia Corridor to Africa,* p. 441
[23] Adams, William 1977*, Nubia Corridor to Africa,* p. 485.
[24] Adams, William *1977, Nubia Corridor to Africa,* p. 485.
[25] Vantini, Giovanni (2009) *Rediscovering Christian Nubia,* LINEA edizioni, Verona, p. 47.

religious influence and culture were Greek. Later, these two Nubian Kingdoms united to resist the Arabic culture's tide to Nubia. The Byzantine influence decreased gradually after the Arab invasion of Egypt in 641, and the sovereignty of the Byzantine Church almost vanished.[26]

Consequently, the Coptic religious influence increased and dominated the two kingdoms.[27] During medieval times both of these two united kingdoms survived. They resisted foreign culture until they fell into the hands of the Arabs in the year 1323.[28] The last consecrated Coptic bishop of Faras and Qasr Ibrim was as late as 1372.[29] Qasr Ibrim town is located 240 km south of Aswan and 50 km north of Sudan's border with Egypt, between the First and Second Cataracts within the current Egyptian frontier. It was a significant centre and the residence of the Eparch of Nobadia.[30]

2.2.3.3 The third kingdom, 'Alwa' or 'Alodia'

This kingdom extended over a vast area of present Sudan; its capital was Soba (22 km south-east of Khartoum). The Fifth Cataract was its boundary in the north and the Kingdom of Aksum (in Ethiopia) in the south. It extended towards the east to the Red Sea and the west from Central Sudan to Western Sudan. In 580, the Coptic Church bypassed the Makouria Kingdom and extended its evangelism to Alwa. Many churches were found in the Soba region, and the last Coptic bishop remained until the start of the sixteenth century. This kingdom ended in 1504 by the warriors of the Funj Kingdom of Sennar, the Bedouin Arabs and the natives of South Sudan.[31] This incident was the last existence of the Coptic Church in the Nubia region. However, evidence that churches and Christians existed was found after the Nubian Kingdom's end. In 1522, some Nubians sent the Ethiopian ruler asking priests to serve them after the last Coptic bishop's death. The recorded number of historic churches in the Alwa Kingdom is 150 churches out of 400 previously.[32]

---

[26] Holt, Peter 2013, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the eleventh century to 1517*, Routledge, London, p. 7.
[27] Adams, William *1977, Nubia Corridor to Africa,* p. 446.
[28] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, p. 529.
[29] Adams, William 1977*, Nubia Corridor to Africa,* p. 541
[30] Vantini, Giovanni 2009, *Rediscovering Christian Nubia*, p. 218.
[31] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa,* p. 538.
[32] Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, p. 471.

2.2.4 Muhammad Ali's era

Muhammad Ali (1769–1849) was born in Qavalla (Macedonia) and joined the Ottoman Army regiment of 300 Albanian soldiers in Egypt in 1801. In 1805 he was the successor of Egypt's Ottoman ruler Khurshid Pasha after he seized power. Subsequently, he was officially assigned by the Ottoman Sultan to be the ruler of Egypt. He played an essential role in Egypt and Sudan's history and is considered the pioneer of Islamic ruling modernism and the intellectual revival of Egypt.[33] In 1820–21, the third son of Muhammad Ali, Ismail Pasha, was on an expedition to Sudan. That military expedition comprised 3,000 infantry, 2,500 cavalry and 12 guns. The main aim of the expedition was 1) to destroy the remnant fugitive Mamelukes (they were the last formerly enslaved people who ruled Egypt), 2) to distract his insurgent Albanian soldiers, 3) gold mining, 4) to explore and secure the sources of the Nile (thought to be in Sudan)[34] and 5) to import 30,000 Sudanese and Nubian soldiers to his army.[35] However, the main reason was to eliminate his fugitive enemies, the politically motivated Mamelukes. Besides, he could renew the old caravan road trade between Egypt and Sudan by occupying Sudan. Moreover, applying taxes on the gold and ivory trade would be a good income for the Egyptian Government.

Further, he guaranteed the gold mines' revenue and enslaved people's supply and controlled Egypt's water supply from Nile sources.[36, 37] However, most Sudanese soldiers were replaced by Egyptian peasants because of the climate's maladaptation. As a result, Muhammad Ali could secure his reign and pass down his governorship of Egypt and Sudan to his heirs according to the 1838 agreement between Britain, Austria, Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. In 1840, Egypt accepted and signed the London Convention to abide by the 1838 accord. This agreement stated that Egypt relinquished some of its military and industrial power.[38]

---

[33] Goldschmidt Jr., Arthur 2000, *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Colorado, p. 134.

[34] Rifaat Bey, M. 1947, *Awakening of Modern Egypt*, Longmans-Green & Co., London, p. 35.

[35] Rifaat Bey, M. 1947, *Awakening of Modern Egypt,* p. 38.

[36] الإسكندراني, عمر, وحسن, سليم ٢٠١٤, *تاريخ مصرمن الفتح العثماني إلى قبيل الوقت الحاضر, مراجعة* أ. ج. سفدج, مؤسسة هنداوي للتعليم والثقافة, القاهرة, ص ١٤١-٢.

El-Eskandarany, O, Hasan, S 2014, *The history of Egypt from the Ottoman Conquest to the present time,* rev. A J Sfidg, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Cairo, pp. 141–2.

[37] Holt, P. M. 1961, *A Modern History of The Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, p. 43.

[38] Goldschmidt Jr.*, Arthur 2000, Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt,* p. 134.

2.2.5 The Copts' clerking profession in Egypt and Sudan during Muhammad Ali's reign

The Copts monopolised the clerking profession early, even before the Islamic era.[39] The Arab and Ottoman rulers trusted the Copts or the converted Copts of Egypt for the government's financial administration. At the end of the eighteenth century and the start of the nineteenth century, during Ali Bey Al-Kabeer's reign (Ali Bey the Great), the last Ottoman ruler before the French campaign in 1798, two brothers held the position of Chief Clerk of Egypt. Mu-allem (the chief) Ebrahim El-Gawhary (dec. 1795) was Chief Clerk all over Egypt. His brother Gergis El-Gawhary (dec. 1810) followed him to the same place, subsequently to his death.[40, 41] Likewise, the Coptic clerks, with several others from different ethnic backgrounds (i.e., Syrians, Greeks and Jews), obtained distinctive positions in the government during the French campaign, causing the envy of many peoples.[42]

The first recorded modern existence of Copts in Sudan is the few clerks accompanying the invasion campaign. Two decades later, Muhammad Ali gave a bigger group of clerks a no-choice mandate to 40 Coptic clerks (clerks/cashiers) immigrating with their families to Sudan to regulate the bureaucratic and organisational capacity of government offices.[43] The Copts have taken up and professionalised the accountant/cashier occupation in Egypt since the early times of the Islamic state.[44] Some historians believe the two factors that strengthened the Egyptian administration in Sudan were its financial system and the armed forces. The economic system in Sudan was established by several clerks who accompanied the invasion campaign of Sudan in 1820.

Moreover, it was mentioned that a Coptic clerk was executed during the managing period of Khurshid Pasha, the governor-general of Sudan (1826–1837) in Sudan. The Turkish governor assigned this Coptic clerk to work under a rebellious shaykh of one of the Nilotic tribes; both were executed for communicating and fleeing to the enemy country,

---

[39] Holt, P. M. 1961, *A Modern History of The Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day,* pp. 7, 74, 147, 212.

[40] الجبرتي, عبد الرحمن (مؤرخ ١٧٥٣-١٨٢٥), *عجائب الآثار في التراجم والأخبار*, موقع المصطفى, ص ٨٩٢.
Al-Jabarti, Abdul Rahman (historian 1753–1825 CE), *The History of Al-Jabarti,* al-Mostafa, p. 892, https://al-mostafa.info/data/arabic/depot/gap.php?file=m011689.pdf.

[41] Daly, M. W. 2008, *The Cambridge History of Egypt,* vol. 2, Modern *Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*, original work published 1998, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 81.

[42] Daly, M. W. 2008*, The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 2, Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*, pp. 124, 135–6.

[43] Holt, P. M. 1970, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898*, 2nd edn. Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 15.

[44] Holt, Peter 2013, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the eleventh century to 1517*, Routledge, London, pp. 7, 74, 147, 212.

Abyssinia.[45] Though the Coptic clerk who followed the rebellious shaykh was promised a pardon if he accepted to embrace the Islamic faith, he preferred to die.[46]

By 1839, 40 Coptic clerks and their families were mandated primarily from Upper Egypt to Sudan. They accompanied Muhammed Ali Pasha's first trip to Sudan to improve financial management performance. Those 40 clerks were distributed among the different occupied regions of Sudan, settling with their families. One of the abovementioned 40 clerks was the father of Yusuf Mikhail, who wrote his memoir during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium ruling period. Consequently, later generations born in Sudan consider it an immigration country, and their connection with their motherland has weakened.

Further, because of their experience and honesty, the Coptic clerks gained their superiors' confidence. For example, during the management of Khurshid Pasha, governor of Sudan (1826–1938), he had corps of advisers and Sudan's management officers. One of them was a Coptic; he was the financial superintendent of the government in Sudan.[47] Similarly, during Ismail Pasha's rule (1830–1890), the Ottoman ruler of Egypt and Sudan between 1863 and 1879, one of Sudan's three trusted tax system organisers and developers was Coptic, holding a financial officer position.[48]

As for the Mahdist state period, the clerk's profession was widespread and well demanded. It was one of the main reasons, if not the only one, that helped ensure the Copts' survival and wellbeing during that period. Similarly, throughout Sudan's Egyptian-British occupation ruling period, many Copts were in similar government office positions. Some even worked in managing the civilian services sections of the British Army in Sudan. Following Sudan's independence in 1956, of the first three Sudanese students who received scholarships to the United Kingdom to get the Royal Institute of Chartered Accountants degree; a Coptic student, Mr Sobhi Fanous Matta, was one of them. Within the following few years, another of the three was the minister of finance in Cabinet. Until the beginning of the 1970s, most bank employees were Copts, besides a few Greeks and Syrians. Similarly, during the same period, the manager and the personnel officer of Sudan's Central Bank were Copts.

[45] Hill, Richard (trans.) 1970, *On the frontiers of Islam*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 16.
[46] Hill, Richard (trans.) 1970, *'On the frontiers of Islam',* p. 195.
[47] Holt, P. M. *1961, A Modern History of The Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day*, p. 51.
[48] Holt, P. M. *1961, A Modern History of The Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day,* p. 43.

2.2.6 Social diversity and cultural difference tolerances during the Turkish era

Between 1820 and 1885, the main ethnic groups were Turks and Egyptians, mostly Muslim believers. In addition to Copts (Egyptian Christians), Greeks, Syrians, Italians and Austrians were Christians of different creeds. Additionally, there were Jews, Armenians and other Europeans, but they were fewer in number. Mainly, all who came to Sudan in this particular period, either assigned by the Turkish Government to serve in Sudan, such as the Copts and other ethnic communities of Egypt. Or, some other people were seeking fame and fortune in the land of opportunities by trade.

Socially this period was characterised by the self-identity of each group. However, the ruling regime and its rulers were Islamic religious believers. Still, there was religious tolerance and acceptance of different others, as it had been a common practice during Muhammed Ali's reign. Each ethnic group practised their religiosity and social habits with freedom. Besides, the rulers even permitted the preaching of Christianity. The central concept of a particular group's social identity is to understand and evaluate itself and its behaviour compared to people around them and identify themselves with them, which prevailed in the community then.[49] They all represented their social identity by accepting the differences between each other in harmony.

2.2.7 The Mahdist Revolution and its era of state

The age of the Mahdist state began with what is known as 'the Mahdist Revolution'. This revolution was initiated in Western Sudan in the province of Kordofan in 1881 and ended in 1885 with Khartoum's fall, the Turko-Egyptian Sudan's capital. Since then, the Mahdist state was established until the conquest of Sudan in 1898.

The idea of the Mahdi, or the redeemer, is not limited to the Islamic faith. It was and still is the saviour principle in Christianity, which came through Judaism. The three Abrahamic religions came from the same origin and are extensions of each other. Thus, it is little wonder we have the same idea but with different names for all three beliefs.[50] The Sudan Mahdist era can be divided into four periods: 1) the pre-revolution period, characterised by the religious preaching in Western Sudan through Sufism order teachings;

[49] Matsumoto, David (ed.) 2009, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 501.
[50] See chapter three.

2) the revolution period for five years until the fall of Khartoum; 3) the Mahdist state during the Mahdi Mahamed Ahmed, lasting for a few months after the fall of Khartoum and 4) the state era during the Mahdi's successor, Khalifa Abdallahi, lasting 13 years. In its beginning, the Mahdist movement was prevalent and thriving because of its genuine fairness, and all people were equal. However, by its end in 1898, there was tribal favouritism and general unfairness, in addition to turning against its supporters.

2.2.7.1 The factors that led to the Revolution's success

Doubtless, the Mahdist Revolution, in its beginning, was a popular revolt against the existing regime's protracted political and financial corruption. This upheaval triggered exasperation against the government's unjust taxation system and the tax collectors due to political and administrative corruption.[51] A notable feature was the economic hardship that followed the Suez Canal inauguration during Khedive Ismail's reign. This hardship caused the Egyptian Government in Egypt and Sudan significant political and economic turmoil.[52] It is conceivable that widespread dissatisfaction arose due to this administration's mismanagement. One of the notable success elements contributing to the revolution's outstanding success was the association between the people's discontent and religious sentiments. Undoubtedly, this movement was politically motivated but wrapped in religious and spiritual appearance. It took on a religious path and presence, but the economic and political motivations were the primary cause that ignited it.[53] This intelligent approach assigned a particular religious sanctity to the revolution.

A question arises: Why did this revolution take a religious path? By analysing the community's cultural and intellectual components, we can be mindful of why this revolution transformed from a revolt against the political and economic situation to an uprising that took the religious pathway. The social, cultural and spiritual beliefs of the Islamic Funj Kingdom's legacy affected the community immensely. The only available advanced academic education model and popular ambitions were religious. And the only available

[51] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow,* p. 6.
[52] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow,* p. 37.
[53] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow,* pp. 32–3.

institute was Al-Azhar Religious Institute/University in Cairo. Though during Muhammed Ali's reign, there were educational missions for students from Egypt to Europe, particularly France. Students numbered in the hundreds; some were Imams of Al-Azhar graduates (Rifa'a Rafi al-Tahtawi).[54]

Notably, during the Ottoman-Egyptian occupation of Sudan, the government usually assigned Al-Azhar graduates as Sharia judges or privately as religious instructors or teachers for young students in a private Quranic school.[55] Many students from the different African Sudanic regions enrolled and graduated from the Al-Azhar Institute.[56] One was Ismail Abd El-Kadir El-Kordofany, one of the few contemporary historians during the Mahdist period.[57]

This educational background was reflected in and influenced the thinking and behavioural pattern of the revolution and its leaders' mindset on national political interests. Eventually, a parallel developed between the Mahdist Revolution and the inherited jihad obligation during the early years of Islam's history. The religious model of the course influenced the Mahdist state's foreign and domestic policies during its existence. On one occasion, the ruler rejected the African alliance (Pan-Africanism) with the Ethiopian emperor against the Anglo-Egyptian occupation. The competition between England and France was intense for imposing dominance over African countries. The French Government commissioned the Emperor of Ethiopia to offer the Khalifa French protection by raising the French flag against invaders on Sudan's borders. The offer was refused, and the rejection was considered a political aspect favouring Pan-Islamism, represented in the jihad obligation. Had Khalifa Abdullahi accepted the offer, Sudan's history would have changed entirely.[58]

---

[54] Daly, M. W. 2008, *The Cambridge History of Egypt,* vol. 2, Modern *Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*, pp. 162, 169, 170.

[55] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, pp. 22, 19–20.

[56] In particular, the students who were from Sokoto Caliphate (see chapter three).

[57] الكردفاني, إسماعيل عبد القادر ١٩٨٢, *سعادة المستهدي بسيرة الإمام المهدي*, تحقيق محمد إبراهيم ابوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت.
Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, *The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*, ed. M. I. Abu Salim, Dar Al-Jeel, Bierut.

[58] ميخائيل, يوسف ٢٠٠٤, *'مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنافى فى السودان (شاهدعيان)'* , تقديم د. احمد ابراهيم ابوشوك, مركز عبد الكريم ميرغني الثقافي, امدرمان, ص ١٥٥.
Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, Abdul Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, Omdurman p. 155, https://www.academia.edu/4075756/

The Anglo-Egyptian forces caused the fall of Omdurman, the Mahdist state's capital, and ended the Sudan Mahdism era. A new condominium era began in 1898, ending in 1956 when Sudan gained independence.

2.2.8 The political development age

During the modern Sudanese era (1898–1956), Mahdism developed itself into neo-Mahdism by adopting a political orientation rather than the revolutionary jihad choice. **Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi** (15 July 1885 – 24 March 1959), Mohamed Ahmed El-Mahdi's son, established the **National Umma Party** in 1945. With the British Government's blessing and support, the party's establishment led to independent Sudan in several parliamentary sessions.[59]

Fig. 1 Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi with Winston Churchill, Downing Street (October 1952)

Though the Mahdist state was harsh and unjust in its last years, it is considered a popular revolution and national independence movement. Nostalgia for the Mahdist Revolution inspired Sudan's president to reapply Islamic Sharia law in 1983 to all Sudanese people with different beliefs and cultural backgrounds. With its different religious beliefs and cultures, multiethnicity characterises Sudanese society. The consequence of this unjust political decision was the cause of many citizens' departure. Additionally, this step led to the separation of Southern Sudan in 2011.

2.2.9 The Arab Spring Revolutions age

Comparing the Mahdist Revolution with the French Revolution model, we find both were motivated by economic reasons. However, the revolutionary understanding of religiocultural background differs entirely from secular society. The French Revolution was partly against the clergy; compared to the Mahdist religious course, the clergy ignited it and was based on religious fervour. The most famous religious revolution in Europe was the Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther. It was an internal Catholic Church revolt, causing the separation and reformation of a significant sector of the Church. However, the French

[59] Holt, P. M. 1961, *A Modern History of The Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day*, pp. 144–5.

Revolution was partially a rebellion against the religious influence and authority symbols, which was the beginning of the secular age in Europe. The secular ruling system is undoubtedly a developed and advanced form of rule. It guarantees the rights of society's various components with their different languages, cultures and religious beliefs. We notice some signs of secular awareness and movements in the Middle East during the second decade of this millennium. In 2011, during what we now call 'the Arab Spring', many Coptic activists in Egypt defied the Coptic Church's requests. The patriarch and many other Coptic Church bishops demanded their congregations not contribute to the revolution. However, denials to the Church's requests were public and overt, even on some television programs for the first time. Similarly, some Al-Azhar clerics and Egypt's mufti discourage Muslim activists from protesting against the lawful ruler.[60]

Further, in Egypt in 2013, the elected Islamic Brotherhood Government community sectors were widely rejected. So, too, was an overwhelmingly peaceful revolution underway in Sudan in 2018 against the extreme Islamist regime, and the primary demand was a secular civilian government. The secular government can accept the whole spectrum of Sudanese society as equal citizens. Awareness of the separation between practising religious beliefs and governance practice is growing faster than expected. Likewise, the recognition and understanding to disassociate between religious practising and extremism, which proved to lead to sectarianism, is also increasing. Although significant demand remains for secular civilian government systems, these are still far away.

2.3 Conclusion

Whether political or economic, the relationship and interaction between the Egyptian and the Sudanese people is an age-old association. During the Fourth Dynasty reign, the pharaohs of Egypt raided Sudan (Nubia) to supply slaves as soldiers in their army. However, during the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, the pharaohs of Egypt were Kushite kings. Similarly, the Nubian Kingdoms were influential during the Roman and Islamic eras. Many Copts fled Egypt to Nubia during the non-Christian Roman period, escaping persecution. In a similar situation, they fled again during the Church crises and the Islamic era.

[60] Bayat, Asef 2017, *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, p. 147.

The Ottoman ruling period was relatively peaceful; many Copts and other ethnic groups found better chances than before. The Coptic clerks were among the first ethnic groups historically reported to have immigrated to Sudan in modern history. They administrated the control of Sudan's financial system during the Muhammed Ali Dynasty era. Many other different ethnic races followed the Egyptians and immigrated to Sudan. The different races and cultures allowed diverse backgrounds to intermingle, creating a new unique culture.

However, the Ottomans' governance and administrative and financial corruption led Sudan to the Mahdist Revolution. This condition was simultaneously accompanied by a new religious standard for the entire population during the Mahdist state era. A complex societal problem arising during this period changed the social structure of many people's lives. Although the ruling system was harsh, it was almost fair to most and treated people equally since they embraced the same faith irrespective of their ethnicity. However, each ethnic group kept its customs and traditions, influenced by local culture.

The bilateral ruling period was the Sudanese development period, an economic and political development period. Therefore, all Sudanese of ethnic descendency received fairness and opportunities in all aspects of life. This situation changed little during the independence era until the reapplication of Sharia law in 1983. However, the militant religious coup in 1989 and its consequent dependencies on the situation encouraged many different Sudanese from foreign backgrounds to think seriously about the re-immigration.

Chapter Three

3. <u>The historical, social and political motives that helped the Mahdism appearance:</u>

3.1 Introduction.

3.2 The traditional religious conditions of Mahdi's character in the Islamic faith:

3.2.1 The Madi in Sunni's belief.

3.2.2 The Mahdi, in the belief of Shia.

3.3 The connection between Mahdism in Islamic theology and the Judeo-Christian influence background.

3.4 The phenomenon of the Mahdism claimers in Islamic history.

3.5 The development of the Mahdism idea in the eighteenth century.

3.6 Mahdism, Sufism and the connection with radicalism:

3.6.1 Sufism.

3.6.2 The connection between Sufism and Mahdism.

3.6.3 The connection between Sufism and extremism.

3.6.4 The Mahdi of Sudan and Sufism.

3.7 The religious jurisprudence background of jihad in the Mahdism ideology.

3.8 The Caliphate state system compared to the Mahdist state system in Africa.

3.9 The mutual influence between the Sudanese Mahdism and the Islamic Caliphate of Northern Nigeria.

3.10 The influence of the Nigerian clerics on the Sudanese Mahdism:

3.10.1 Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817).

3.10.2 Faki (sheikh) Dadari.

3.10.3 Said ibn Hayatu.

3.11 Conclusion.

3. The historical, social and political motives that helped the Mahdism appearance

3.1 Introduction

Mahdism was significant in the Islamic African region, particularly in modern Sudan. Its remaining vestiges are socially and politically evident in our present day. **The Mahdism idea refers back to the Islamic jurisprudence background, and its connection with Sufism is apparent in Africa and cannot be neglected. The historic religious examples formed many of Mahdism's essential characteristics, such as jihad and hijra.** The idea of hijra is to escape a current situation to protect the faith and believers from non-believers, which eventually must end with jihad. In almost all examples of Mahdism jihad, non-believers were the occupiers who disregarded religious belief.[61] In Sudan's Mahdism case, between 1881 and 1885, the non-believers were initially the Ottoman occupier, the protector of the Caliphate. However, in 1898, the Battle of Omdurman was against the Ottoman/Egypt-British occupation. In Nigeria in 1903, non-believers were the non-Muslims (i.e., British occupiers) in the Nigerian Mahdism. In both cases, the Mahdists were the sufferers; the number of victims was extremely high due to the severe disparity of weapons quality and advanced level.[62] **There was mutual and joint interaction between the Nigerian Caliphate and the Sudanese Mahdism, as there was later between the Sudanese and the Nigerian Mahdism.** However, there are essential jurisprudence differences, which had some consequences on the relationship between both.

The idea of Mahdism and the Mahdi (the saviour) always flourishes in times of political suppression, economic oppression or when it comes to societal and cultural challenges as a natural psychological escape.[63] The significant challenge of the Mahdism movement was new social principles and cultural habits based on religious beliefs and customs. The fascination with nostalgia for Mahdism history most likely inspires the

---

[61] ابو منقة, الامين ٢٠٠١, 'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني', *جامعة الخرطوم*, الخرطوم, ص ١١١.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001,'The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism', *Khartoum University*, Khartoum, p. 111, viewed 30 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263144988

[62] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001, 'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني'/The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism', p. 115.

[63] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001, 'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني'/The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism', p. 113.

revitalisation of a new Mahdism, as in implementing Sudan's Sharia laws in 1983[64] and the recent North Nigerian militant Islamic groups.[65]

3.2 The traditional religious conditions of Mahdi's character in the Islamic faith

The traditional religious belief of the Mahdi occurs with both Shias and Sunnis. It is about he who will appear at the end of time and convert the entire world to Islamic religious belief. However, differences lie in his nature and the role he will play.[66]

3.2.1 The Madi in Sunni's belief

The Arabic word 'Sunna' or 'Sunnah' means the corpus of traditional social and legal customs of the Islamic community's customary early-day practices. A Sunna doctrine follower is called 'Sunni', and he follows the Islamic Tafsir (religious interpretations), Fiqh (jurisprudence) and the Hadith (Prophetic tradition and sayings). Sharia law is mainly based on the Sunna, and Sunni supporters are those who advocate and apply Sharia law.

The clerics in Mecca (the Sunnis) mentioned several signs and conditions that must be fulfilled by the person called 'the Mahdi'. The primary requirement is that the person should be a *Sherif* (i.e., descendant of the Prophet's family), particularly from Fatima's lineage, the Prophet's daughter. The concerned person should not pursue proclamation for himself but be chosen by people against his will and should be proclaimed only in the mosque of Mecca. The declaration will not occur until the condition of no successor to the deceased Khalifa over the Muslims is fulfilled. Eventually, he will declare himself as the Mahdi and strive for that, even if it requires the use of force. The appearance of the Mahdi should coincide with the arrival of the Antichrist; sometime later, Issa (Jesus) will descend and join himself to the Mahdi.[67]

---

[64] Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn 2008, *Islamic law and society in the Sudan*, vol. 13, Routledge, London, p. 51.
[65] Hassan, Ibrahim H. 2015, 'An Introduction to Islamic Movements and Modes of Thought in Nigeria', *Religious Studies Nasarawa*, State University, Keffi, p. 32, viewed 4 January 2021, https://arch.library.northwestern.edu/catalog?f%5Bresource_type_sim%5D%5B%5D=Research+Paper&locale=en&search_field=all_fields&q=An+Introduction+to+Islamic+Movements+and+Modes+of+Thought+in+Nigeria
[66] The literal jurisprudence meaning of the word 'Mahdi' is the one who rightly guided by God, and will lead the sinful world to righteousness. However, it can generally be used for the religiously converts to the Islamic faith.
[67] Baring, Evelyn 1908, *Modern Egypt*, vol. I, Macmillan, New York, pp. 351–2.

3.2.2 The Mahdi, in the belief of Shia

The word 'Shia' in Arabic means 'faction' or 'sect' and is the second main branch of the Islamic faith besides Sunni. Followers believe Prophet Muhammad assigned Ali Ibn Abi Talib to be his successor rather than Abu Bakr, who the other Muslims unanimously chose to be the first Khalif. Persians and all Shias believe dignity (the Imamship) should remain hereditary within the Prophet's family, while the Sunnis thought it to be elective.[68] Ali was of the Prophet's bloodline; he was simultaneously his cousin and the son-in-law. This significant conflict and the eternal feud with the Sunnis initiated in 632 AD and continues to this day. However, Ali was the fourth successor, following the two other Khalifs.[69] The Shias' commitment is only directly to the Prophet's practices and family descent,[70] besides other jurisprudential differences distinguishing them from the Sunnis. The Shia believes some Imams have been chosen and taken from the world but still live somewhere unseen to people. One of them is the twelfth Imam, who will return one day and reappear to the people as humanity's saviour in the Mahdi's form. Noticeably, similar ideas of returning saviours are found in several communities of different beliefs, indicating it is a human instinct.[71, 72]

3.3 The connection between Mahdism in Islamic theology and the Judeo-Christian influence background

Both the Shia and the Sunna believe in the Mahdi's appearance. The Shia's doctrinal belief is that the Mahdi is a messianic figure. However, the orthodox Sunna belief is that God will send the rightly guided person (the Mahdi) to correct the strayed ones' evil at the end of time.[73] Further, the Sunna believes Jesus will return at the end of time, and the reign

---

[68] Wingate, F. R. 1891, *Mahdiism and The Egyptian Sudan*, Macmillan, New York, p. 6.

[69] Khalili, Emad 2014, 'Sects in Islam: Sunnis and Shias', *International Academic Institute for Science and Technology: International Academic Journal of Humanities*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 41–7.

[70] Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn 2008, *Islamic law and society in the Sudan*, vol. 13, p. 2.

[71] Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras & Ruth Hamor, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 194.

[72] محمد حسن, سعد ١٩٥٣, *المهدية في الإسلام منذ أقدم العصور وحتى اليوم: دراسة وافية لتاريخها العقائدي والسياسي والأدبي*, دار الكتاب العربي, القاهرة, ص ٤٣-٤.

Mohamed Hassan, Saad 1953, *Mahdism in Islam from the earliest times until today: a comprehensive study of its doctrinal history,* Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Cairo, pp. 34–4.

[73] Wingate, F. R. 1891, *Mahdiism and The Egyptian Sudan*, p. 2.

of justice will prevail worldwide.[74] Thus, both of them call him Imam El-Mahdi, which means the rightly guided leader.[75]

In that context, the eschatological belief of Jesus's reappearance (as in Christianity) established itself in the scene for both religious beliefs. This connection between the Mahdi's and Jesus's figures deepened the eschatological view in the background of both faiths. It is noticeable that Mahdism's ancient and recent ideas flourished in times of political, social or economic stress and trouble as it was initiated originally.[76]

The Mahdism doctrine was initially introduced within the Shia schism during Islam's early years. Due to religiopolitical differences, it was a natural consequence of great stress within some believers' communities. Many scholars believe that converted Jews and Christians to Islam had previously considered the saviour concept in their belief, and it was included in their original faith. So, the return or reappearance of the saviour idea prototype most probably came from Christianity, Judaism and other Persian beliefs.[77] This inherited idea subconsciously contributed to developing trust and confidence in Mahdism belief.

The saviour idea originated due to the strong connection and single and common root between the three Abrahamic beliefs: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, particularly Judaism. For example, in Judaism, the Prophet Elisha was taken to heaven by a chariot and horses of fire, and he will witness the return of the Messiah for judgment, and he is immortal. (2 Kings 2 and Malachi 4)

In Christianity, the belief about the fiery chariots and Elisha's return to Earth by the end of time is similar to Judaism (Matthew 11:14, 16:14 and 17:10–13); it coincides with the Messiah's return for judgment, except he is not immortal. Instead, he will be killed and die like everyone else, and after three and a half days, the breath of life from God will enter him and return him to life (Revelation 11). However, what was mentioned in Matthew's gospel denotes Elisha's return as a kind of reincarnation rather than a physical return, though the reincarnation concept is neither in Judaism nor a Christianity belief.

In the Islamic religious belief, 'Elias' (the Islamic pronunciation of Elisha) was a prophet sent from God. According to traditional Islamic tales, he was taken by a fiery horse

[74] Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 264.
[75] Mohamed Hassan, Saad 1953, *Mahdism in Islam from the earliest times until today: a comprehensive study of its doctrinal history/المهدية في الإسلام منذ أقدم العصور وحتى اليوم: دراسة وافية لتاريخها العقائدي والسياسي والأدبي*, pp. 47–8.
[76] Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, pp. 197-8.
[77] Darmesteter, James 1885*, The Mahdi Past and Present,* Harper & Brothers, New York, pp. 11–-5.

to heaven. However, there is no mention of his return. The Sunnis and Shias believe in the Quranic verse, 'And peace is on me the day I was born, and the day I will die, and the day I am raised alive' (Surah Maryam, 33), which is about Jesus. So, by matching and comparing the three beliefs and filling the gaps, we find that what is meant by Mahdi's figure in the Islamic religious belief is represented in the formation of the Messiah's figure mixed with Elisha's figure. So, everything is about the saviour coming by the end of time; he will be called the Mahdi. Accordingly, it proves the connection of 'Mahdi' with Christianity and Judaism.

The belief is that before the end of time, he must return to Earth and have a natural death like all humans.[78,79] Similar is the idea of the return of Jesus, that is, the second coming before Judgment Day and the end of time.[80,81] So the idea of Prophet 'Elias' (Elisha) being taken to heaven by a fiery chariot and the return of Jesus were introduced in Islam from Christianity and Judaism.

3.4 The phenomenon of the Mahdism claimers in Islamic history

A long history of Mahdism claimers in the Islamic faith indicates that it is not rare. Historically, it has been the last refuge for ordinary people in every social, political or economic crisis. In each movement, every *Mahdi promised* to overthrow the old unfaithful religious practice or political regime and replace it with the divine theocracy system.

During the medieval period, two successful political attempts lasted considerably. In the tenth century, the first was the Mahdi Ubaydallah, the Fatimid dynasty founder in Egypt and North Africa. The second was by Muhammad ibn Tumart El-Mahdi during the twelfth century, whose followers were known as the 'Almohads', who ruled north-west Africa (Morocco) and Moorish Spain (Iberian Peninsula, Sicily and Malta). Similarly, in modern history, during the eighteenth century, there was another one in Egypt, defeated by Bonaparte's troops. Under different circumstances, there were many other unsuccessful

[78] Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 194.
[79] Mohamed Hassan, Saad 1953, *Mahdism in Islam from the earliest times until today: a comprehensive study of its doctrinal history/المهدية في الإسلام منذ أقدم العصور وحتى اليوم: دراسة وافية لتاريخها العقائدي والسياسي والأدبي* , pp. 48–9.
[80] Mohamed Hassan, Saad 1953, *Mahdism in Islam from the earliest times until today: a comprehensive study of its doctrinal history/المهدية في الإسلام منذ أقدم العصور وحتى اليوم: دراسة وافية لتاريخها العقائدي والسياسي والأدبي* , p. 49.
[81] Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 198.

Mahdism attempts. That could be due to their unpopularity or did not meet the jurisprudence, political, or social conditions to succeed.[82]

Similarly, there was more than one Mahdism proclaimer in the nineteenth century. Besides the Mahdi of Sudan, in an earlier time, El-Mahdi Sheikh Mohammed es Senussi.[83] He was born in Libya, but his ancestors came from the Mount of Senus in Algiers; he proclaimed himself the Mahdi in 1837. He belonged to the Shadhili Sufi order of Sunni Islam; even the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Mejid (1823–1861) supported him in his mission. Sheikh Mohammed El Senussi established around three hundred Quranic lodge schools in the North African region in a self-sufficiency form similar to the Christian monastery style. The head management centre was in Al Jaghbub on the border between Egypt and Libya. Many students from North African countries attended those Quranic schools and were influenced by the Senussiyeh mystical order.[84]

3.5 The development of the Mahdism idea in the eighteenth century

According to the Mahdism ideology and the inherited religious eschatological belief of time signs and their conditions, the Mahdi's appearance will occur. He would be the rightly guided one God chose to lead the people from astray to righteousness. There is a definite connection between the Mahdist movements and the social, economic, and political conditions in the societies that appeared.[85] Notably, during the last few decades of the eighteenth century, some scholars were consumed by this apocalypse and jihad due to social and political changes in the Islamic African region.[86] The unanimous view of many jurisprudence religious school graduates from Nigeria and Mali, besides Al-Azhar in Cairo and Al Madinah Al Munawara (Yathrib) Saudi Arabia, believed that al-Mahdi must appear soon during that time.

---

[82] Holt, P. M. 1961, *A modern history of the Sudan, from the Funj Sultanate to the present day*, Weidfield and Nicolson, London, p. 78.
[83] Later, a descend of his became the king Senussi of Libya.
[84] Wingate, F. R. 1891, *Mahdiism and The Egyptian Sudan*, pp. 2–5.
[85] Warburg, Gabriel 2009, 'From Sufism to Funddamentalism: The Mahdiyya and the Wahhabiyya', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4, p. 661, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40262695
[86] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1999, 'Contribution of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders in Dissemination of Arab-Islamic Knowledge in Local Languages', *Khartoum University*, Khartoum, pp. 219–20, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263145543

In particular, to some Egyptian jurisprudence scholars' calculations, the Mahdi's expected appearance would be during the second half of the eighteenth century. This prophecy encouraged many religiously zealous scholars to claim or at least expect his appearance. The followers of the two well-known Sufi orders in the Islamic African region, the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, were too enthusiastic about this eschatological idea. Their expectation of the Mahdi's appearance was definite.[87]

3.6 Mahdism, Sufism and the connection with radicalism

3.6.1 Sufism

Sufism or Mysticism appeared in the late ninth century in the region known as Iraq today. It is a spiritual, mystical religious practice; gradually, it was recognised as part of the Islamic religious belief within the following two centuries. However, many historians believe it dates to the early Arab Judeo-Christian background (the Jewish Essenes and the Christian monks). Therefore, *Sufi* might return to the Arabic word *suf,* meaning 'wool' and refers to the Sufi people's woollen cloaks.[88] Similarly, the term *Sufi* could derive from the Arabic word 'safaa', which implies clearness and refers to spiritual practices to acquire mind clearness.[89] However, Sufi is more likely to derive from the Greek word 'Sophia', which means wisdom, since there is a significant connection between Sufism teachings and wisdom.[90] The Sufism practice is famous for its religious, poetic songs with distinguished musical rhythms accompanied by the chanters' repetitive body movements closest to dance with the divine

---

[87] Brakoniecka, Sabina 2016, 'Muhammad Yusuf's Jihad in the Light of the Mahdist Tradition of Northern Nigeria', *Hemispheres*, vol. 31, no. 3, p. 18, viewed 11 November 2020, https://www.proquest.com/docview/1867103388?accountid=14757&parentSessionId=Mc94CleFoFxp45ADGVlZLlw8VATqGnwhONVHGV39ufk%3D&pq-origsite=primo

[88] Warburg, Gabriel 2009, 'From Sufism to Funddamentalism: The Mahdiyya and the Wahabiyya', vol. 45, no. 4, p. 661.

[89] الشيخ محمد نور بن ضيف الله ١٧٢٧-١٨٠٩م, *وقفات مع كتاب الطبقات: 'طبقات ود ضيف الله'* , إعداد الشيخ الأمين الحاج محمد أحمد, طبعة أولى ٢٠٠٠, مركز الصف الألكترونى ، بيروت, ص ٤٨.

Sheikh Muhammed Nour bin Dhaif Allah 1727–1809 AD, *Pauses with the History Book of bin Dhaif Allah: Tabaqat Wad Daif Allah*, prepared by Sheikh Al-Amin Hajj Muhammad Ahmad, 1st edn 2000, El-Saf Electronic Center, Beirut, p. 48.

[90] Orfali, Bilal & Saab, Nada (eds) 2012, 'Sufism, Black and White: A Critical Edition of Kitāb al-Bayāḍ wa-l-Sawād by Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī (d. ca. 470/1077)', Sebastian Gunther & Wadad Kadi (eds), *Islamic History and Civilization*, vol. 94, Brill, Leiden, p. ix, https://brill-com.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/edcollbook/title/20812

experience's ecstasy.[91] They recite God's name and His epithet names repetitively for several hours in their collective singing. The Sufis are of different orders; each has its distinguished uniform and chanting poems. Primarily, the various Sufism orders are mostly pacifist religious groups with spiritual practices.

3.6.2 The connection between Sufism and Mahdism

The belief in the expected saviour (i.e., the Mahdi) is rooted in Islamic religious thoughts and religious beliefs since the beginning, but Sufism developed later. However, the connection between them grew in the late eighteenth century. The preaching of the Islamic religious belief in many African countries was by the Arab merchant trade convoys and Sufism practices rather than military conquests, as in many historical cases. A comparable matter, the fall of Alodia, the last Christian Nubian kingdom, was caused by the invasion of the Funj Islamic Sultanate of Sinnar in the fourteenth century:

> In the late eighteenth century, the clerics of Al-Azhar and the Islamic North African region clerics helped connect Sufism with the different Mahdism prophecies. However, considering the presence and spread of Sufism Islam, particularly those circumstances coincided with political and social unrest.[92]

3.6.3 The connection between Sufism and extremism

It is unmistakable that almost all Mahdist movements followed one or the other Sufi orders; nearly all led religiopolitical actions against foreign occupiers or rejected political corruption. The religious jihad obligation represented the opposition.[93] In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, while on a pilgrimage to Mecca, an Algerian Amazigh cleric named Ahmad al-Tijani was appointed by clerics as the designated West Africa deputy. During that time, the Wahabi movement was in full swing in Najd (central Saudi Arabia region), coinciding with the Ottoman Empire's expansion there. The Algerian cleric Ahmad al-Tijani established the Tijaniyya Sufi order, combining the jihad militancy principle with the

[91] Bayat, Asef 2013, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, 2nd edn, Stanford University Press, Stanford, P. 137.
[92] Warburg, Gabriel 2009, 'From Sufism to Funddamentalism: The Mahdiyya and the Wahhabiyya', vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 664–5.
[93] Abdel Rahman, Amani Mohamed El Obeid, 'Middle Class and Sufism: The Case Study of the Sammaniyya Order Branch of Shaikh Al Bur'ai', *University of Khartoum*, Khartoum, p. 52, viewed 10 December 2020, http://khartoumspace.uofk.edu/handle/123456789/12753

mystical Sufi order teachings.[94] Notably, the Wahabi followers represented religious extremism in Arabia; however, Sufism was resisted simultaneously. Still, some Sufi orders and extremism were associated in Africa. In most, if not all, cases, Sufism practices were used to gain popularity, and later, the extreme side appeared.[95]

Additionally, there is a significant connection between eighteenth and nineteenth-century extremism in African Sufism. This connection arises through Sufism's simultaneous spread with the clerics' prophecies of the Mahdi's appearance, occurring concurrently with European colonialism in Africa. We also consider the similarity and the synchronicity between the complicated inherited conflict of the historical Islamic Mahdism and the existence of Africa's social and political unrest at that time. Under those social, political and religious circumstances in Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, peaceful and spiritual mystical Sufism dragged into the extremism of the jihad ideology.[96]

Nowadays, almost all African Sufi orders represent the religious practising's middle path rather than the religious extremism approach. Today's general direction seems to be the increasing popularity of Sufism due to the rejection of the Islamist movements and extremism growing in the region.[97, 98]

3.6.4 The Mahdi of Sudan and the Sufism

Most Sudanese people belong to the Sunni Islam jurisprudence, the Maliki rite. Nevertheless, the Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad, in his Mahdism mission, adopted and followed the Shia Sufi belief. The Shia believes the Mahdi is the hidden twelfth Imam and will appear by the end of time. Therefore, it seems the Mahdism conditions of the Shia fitted him more to be accepted jurisprudentially by the people rather than the Sunni ones. Similarly, its followers adopted Persian names, such as Darwish or Dervish. This name later

[94] Esposito, J., Sonn, T., & Voll, J. 2016, *Islam and Democracy after the Arab Spring*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 155.
[95] Keddie, Nikki 1994, 'The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.36, no. 3, University of California, Los Angeles, p. 469.
[96] Brakoniecka, Sabina 2016, 'Muhammad Yusuf's Jihad in the Light of the Mahdist Tradition of Northern Nigeria', vol. 31, no. 3, p. 18.
[97] Bayat, Asef 2013, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, 2nd edn, p. 173.
[98] Bayat, Asef 2013, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, 2nd edn, p. 289.

changed to Al-Ansar (the constituencies and followers) and Al-Mujahideen (the strivers or the jihadists), which was not without some superstitious Persian beliefs.[99]

In a similar circumstance Muhammad Ahmad, later the Mahdi, acquired his popularity through Sufism practices. He visited the province of Kordofan with his disciples twice[100]; he stayed a considerable time in El-Obeid, the province's capital, before declaring his Mahdism in 1881. His popularity had grown from the sessions of the Sufi Dhikr (or Zhikr, the religious songs praising the Prophet). He was accustomed stay chanting, honouring and venerating the Prophet with his disciples' company and the local followers until dawn prayer.[101]

3.7 The religious jurisprudence background of jihad in the Mahdism ideology

The jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) concept of jihad in Islam has several meanings and aspects. The militant religious part of jihad[102] is one, but it has its conditions and restrictions besides the jihad's spiritual aspect. The clerics have explained its permitted political conditions, such as striving militantly against the infidels. However, the original category of unbelievers or infidels in the Islamic religious Fiqh jurisprudence does not include Christians or Jews since they are considered the 'People of the Book' (the Scripture). Even some clerics' interpretation of the jihad verses does not include the non-Abrahamic religion's followers unless they initiated the fight against Muslims.[103] However, the '*fatwa*' (the religious decree and edict) by clerics can give different interpretations and applications according to the current situation, including political matters, which are also permitted and acceptable religiously.

---

[99] Wingate, F. R. 1891, *Mahdiism and The Egyptian Sudan*, p. 5.

[100] Holt, P. 1961, *A modern history of the Sudan, from the Funj Sultanate to the present day*, p. 77.

[101] ميخائيل, يوسف ٢٠٠٤, *'مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان (شاهدعيان)'* , تقديم د. احمد ابراهيم ابوشوك, مركز عبد الكريم ميرغني الثقافي, امدرمان, ص ٣٤-٧

Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, Abdul Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, Omdurman pp. 34–7, https://www.academia.edu/4075756/

[102] A holy war undertaken by Muslims against the unbelievers. The name comes from Arabic jihād, literally 'struggling with effort', expressing, in Muslim thought, struggle on behalf of God and Islam.
Jihad, *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,* 2nd edn 2006, viewed 12 November 2020, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100020733#:~:text=A%20holy%20war%20undertaken%20by,Dictionary%20of%20Phrase%20and%20Fable%20%C2%BB

[103] محمود شلتوت ١٩٥١, *القرآن وآيات القتال*, دار الكتاب العربي, القاهرة,ص ٢٧, ٣٥-٧.
Shaltout, Mahmoud 1951, *The Qur'an and the Verses of Fighting*, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Cairo, pp. 27, 35–7.

Similarly, the permission of militant jihad against unbelievers does not include political opposers. This misunderstanding of that religious principle was admirable for most extremists. Ultimately, it legitimised the radical jihad application, which many believed would eventually establish a divine rule on Earth.[104] Despite the Senior Religious Scholars in Islamic jurisprudence, they do not include those two reasons for legitimate militant jihad (i.e. jihad against 'People of the Book' and the political opponents); however, extremists adopted it.[105] This contradiction in understanding the jihad's meaning was the main reason for the jurisprudence conflict between the Mahdi Muhammed Ahmed and the 'Ulama',[106] the Muslim sheikhs. He extended his battle to include whoever did not believe in his Mahdiship mission's authenticity and was considered an unbeliever in God and His Prophet.[107, 108] Sometime later, he prohibited and criminalised reading or possessing any Islamic Fiqh books. The Mahdi continually emphasised that all Sufi orders were invalidated with the emergence of his mission of salvation, though he started his mission through Sufism.[109] He replaced the jurisprudence books with the hourly devotional chanting prayer book called *El-Ratib* to compensate for this. Later during the bilateral ruling era, authorities prohibited the book's use and publishing.[110, 111]

3.8 The Caliphate state system compared to the Mahdist state system in Africa

Both the Caliphate and the Mahdism states' ideas were based on the same understanding of society's utopian style, modelled on the El-Madina Al-Monoura (Yathreb)

---

[104] Smaldone, P. 1977, *Wafare In the Sokoto Caliphate Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 20.

[105] الشامي, عقيل زيد ٢٠٠٨, *الجهاد في الاسلام*, مركز ابن إدريس الحلي للدراسات الفقهية, ص ٣٠, ٣٩, ٥٣.
Al-Shami, Aqil Zaid 2008, Jihad in Islam, Ibn Idris Al-Hali Center for Jurisprudential Studies, pp. 30, 39, 53, viewed 21 November 2009, http://ibnidress.center/library/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A7/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%20%D9%81%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85.pdf

[106] Senior Religious Scholars in the Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), usually they are Al-Azhar graduates.

[107] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan In the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, 2nd edn 1970, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 107.

[108] Layish, A. 1933, 'Sharia and the Islamic State in 19th-Century Sudan: The Mahdi's Legal Methodology and Doctrine', *Islam in Africa*, vol. 19, Mauro Nobili, Rudiger Seesemann, and Knut Vikor (eds.), Brill, Leiden, p. 20.

[109] Seesemann, Rudiger 2007, 'Between Sufism and Islamism: The Tijaniyya and Islamist Rule in the Sudan', *Department of Near East Studies*, Princeton University, Markus Wiener, Princeton, p. 24.

[110] Holt. M., & Daly, W. 2011, *A History of the Sudan: From the Coming of Islam to the Present Day*, 6th edn, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Abingdon, p. 89.

[111] Layish, A. 1933, 'Sharia and the Islamic State in 19th-Century Sudan: The Mahdi's Legal Methodology and Doctrine', p. 33

community during its early Islam years. It was a kind of escape from the harsh reality into the desired perfect ideal society.[112, 113] The only difference between them is that only one 'Mahdi' would lead the Earth's people. However, the Caliphate has several different Caliphs but for the same idea of the ideal society. The Mahdi's successors would be called Caliphs, in a comparable historical manner to the Prophet and his successors the Caliphs. Compared to the Caliphate state, the founder and head of the state was called Amir Al-Moumneen (Leader of the Faithful), and his successors were called Caliphs, as we see in the case of the Sokoto Caliphate state in Nigeria.[114]

The principle of 'hijra' before 'jihad' in the order was applied in both Sudan Mahdism and the Sokoto Caliphate, which echoed the historical incident of hijra (immigration) to Yathrib (the Medina city) before commencing the jihad (the striving by fight).[115] The principle of physical jihad was applied previously by two Caliphate states in the Sudanic region. They were Sokoto Caliphate and Bornu Islamic Empire, both in the order before the Sudan Mahdism state. The overwhelming feeling of understanding and applying the physical jihad principle thrived in both. It provided the needed 'unifying ideology'[116] adherence factor for the different tribal cultures and backgrounds. As this situation helped unify multiethnic tribal Islamic states in the Nigerian Caliphates, it did the same in the Sudan Mahdist state with its multicultural society.[117] Remarkably, this specific jurisprudence understanding of jihad survived unbroken in all African Islamic States until the end of the nineteenth century, with the European conquest of Sudan in 1898 and sometime later for the Nigerian region.[118]

---

[112] Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 198.
[113] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001, *'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني'/The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism'*, p. 122.
[114] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001, *'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني'/The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism'*, p. 110.
[115] Keddie, Nikki R. 1994, 'The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism', vol.36, no. 3, p. 470.
[116] Smaldone, P. 1977, *Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, p. 18.
[117] Smaldone, P. 1977, *Wafare in the Sokoto Caliphate Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, p. 18–9.
[118] Smaldone, P. 1977, *Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, p. 15.

3.9 The mutual influence between Sudanese Mahdism and the Islamic Caliphate of Northern Nigeria

There was a close religious and cultural correlation between the Nigerian Islamic and Sudanese Mahdist states. The relationship between the two peoples is ancient and characterised by spiritual affinity. During the second half of the seventeenth century, there was about 1700 student out of two thousand from the different Nigerian tribes in the Sudanese Quranic schools. The stay duration of those young students in Sudan could extend to several years, leading to many settling permanently in Sudan.

In addition to the immigration caused by religious studies, the relation extends to the Nigerians' pilgrimage route to Mecca via Sudan. Considering the pilgrimage trip on foot takes three to seven years, many travellers prefer to settle in Sudan. Besides the study and the pilgrimage immigration, there were trade and shared Sufi orders between the two peoples.[119, 120] During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the idea of the Mahdi's proximity was widespread in the Sudanic region. Still, it occurred more in the Hausa region than in Sudan.[121] Accordingly, many Nigerians immigrated to Western Sudan out of religious sentiment, awaiting the Mahdi's appearance.[122] That would raise the idea of the possible inspiration of Muhammad Ahmad with the concept of Mahdism in one of his trips to Western Sudan.[123]

As a result of reciprocal inspiration between the Caliphate states and the Mahdism of Sudan, the Nigerian Caliphate and its jihadi political movements inspired the Mahdi. Similarly, the Nigerians tried to copy the Mahdist state pattern in Nigeria sometime later,

---

[119] ابو منقة, الامين ٢٠٠٨, 'العلاقات التاريخية والمتجددة بين السودان ونيجيريا', *مركز دراسات الشرق الاوسط وأفريقيا*, الخرطوم, ص ٢-٧.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2008, 'Historical and renewed relations between Sudan and Nigeria', *Middle East & Africa Studies Center*, Khartoum, pp. 2–7, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261613602

[120] Miller, Catherine & Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2005, 'The West Africa (Fallata) Communities in Gedaref State: Process of settlement and local integration', *Land, ethnicity and political legitimacy in Eastern Sudan,* CEDEJ, Cairo, pp. 4–5, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253306894

[121] ابو منقة, الامين ١٩٩١, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية', *دراسات أفريقية*, جامعة إفريقيا الدولية, الخرطوم, ص ٥٩.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2014, 'Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', *Dirasat Ifrikiyya*, International University of Africa, Khartoum, p. 59, viewed 4 January 2021, http://dspace.iua.edu.sd/handle/123456789/1382 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261613760

[122] Voll, John O. 2000, 'The Eastern Sudan, 1822 to the Present', p. 204.

[123] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1991, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدي/Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', pp. 59–64.

even after the Mahdist state's fall in Omdurman in 1898. The Nigerian Mahdism ruling attempt was considered the main tributary of Sudanese Mahdism during its boom.[124] The Mahdi and his successor, the Calipha Abdallahi, relied extensively on Fulani supporters.[125]

The idea of a saviour leading the people from the wrong, sinful path to salvation still exists in many people's minds, including followers of Northern Nigeria radical groups.[126] The early Islamic history and the state model significantly inspired the model followed in many centuries until modern history, including implementing jihad, hijra's jurisprudence obligation and applying the Sharia law.[127]

3.10 The influence of the Nigerian clerics on the Sudanese Mahdism

Three Nigerian Islamic figures had a significant effect on Sudan Mahdism. Accordingly, they affected the future political and social structures for Sudanese occupants with their different ethnicities.

3.10.1 Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817)

The Western African region had several political, religious and socioeconomic crises during the mid-eighteenth century. This condition most likely leads to a natural rejection response, typically leading to religious extremism. This rejection took a similar appearance to early historical Islamic religious events. For example, a revolution led by the prominent Fulani cleric Usman Dan Fodio declared jihad in 1804.[128] However, many others besides Fulanis joined the course under his leadership, and many enslaved and dispossessed people joined him. This revolution created the Islamic Sokoto Caliphate state of Western Africa after the jihad declaration and application of the Sharia law. According to the religious discipline, jihad in this condition legitimised applying a particular divine set of rules to

[124] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1991, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية/Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', p. 53.
[125] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 8, p. 97, viewed 30 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261426372
[126] Brakoniecka, Sabina 2016, 'Muhammad Yusuf's Jihad in the Light of the Mahdist Tradition of Northern Nigeria', vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 18–9.
[127] Keddie, Nikki 1994, 'The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism', vol.36, no. 3, p. 481.
[128] Hansen, William. 'Boko Haram: Religious Radicalism and Insurrection in Northern Nigeria*', Journal of Asian and African studies*, Leiden, p. 553.

replace the existing legislated law.[129] In line with some extremist clerics' interpretation of jihad verses, these laws equated punishing the corrupted dishonest person and the ordinary unbeliever infidel or pagan person.[130] However, up to now, many Africans still embrace no religion.

Dan Fodio consolidated himself with Mahdism legitimacy at the beginning of his mission; however, he denied it sometime later. He sought to restrain his followers' expectations about his Mahdism several times since he did not fulfil the jurisprudence conditions, particularly the main legitimate Mahdi criteria: the claimer should be either of the Prophet's descent or born in Mecca.[131] However, his expectations about Mahdi's appearance are based on the clerics' prospects during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[132] He even specified his appearance would be from the east (Western Sudan); further, he encouraged his people to immigrate and join him. Dan Fodio's prophecy contributed to the massive number of Nigerian immigrants, a big boost for Sudan Mahdism and its jihadists.[133, 134]

3.10.2 Faki (sheikh) Dadari

'Faki (sheikh) Muhammad al-Dadari', a North Nigerian cleric from the Fallata tribe, was one of the hallmarks of the relationship between Nigeria and Sudan. He was a disciple of Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate. He moved from Sokoto to Western Sudan in about 1860 and was contemporary to most Sudan Mahdism events.[135] He met the Mahdi (the one guided by God) for the first time during the 1882 hijra

[129] Salau, M. Bashir 2018, *Plantation Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate: A Historical and Comparative Study*, The University of Rochester Press, Rochester, pp. 1–2.
[130] Hansen, William. 'Boko Haram: Religious Radicalism and Insurrection in Northern Nigeria', p. 556.
[131] Brakoniecka, Sabina 2016, 'Muhammad Yusuf's Jihad in the Light of the Mahdist Tradition of Northern Nigeria', vol. 31, no. 3, p. 18.
[132] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2014, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية/Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', p. 59, viewed 4 January 2021, http://dspace.iua.edu.sd/handle/123456789/1382 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261613760
[133] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, pp. 113-4.
[134] Hassan, Ibrahim H. 2015, 'An Introduction to Islamic Movements and Modes of Thought in Nigeria', pp. 30–1.
[135] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, pp. 90–1.

(immigration)[136] to Jabal (Mount) Qadir. In 1882, he became a Sharia judge in one of the Islamic courts in Western Sudan before the hijra to Omdurman.[137]

Faki Dadari was crucial in providing the order of succession following the Mahdi's death. There was a widespread controversy concerning the eligibility and the entitlement of the successor to lead the state; should it be the one recommended by the late Mahdi himself or one of his family? Due to the respected religious position of the cleric Dadari, the crowd accepted his judgment to resolve the dispute; he nominated Abdullah al-Ta'ashi as Calipha (the follower or successor).[138, 139, 140]

He is mostly credited for his role in Khalifa Abdullahi's choice as the Mahdi's successor in 1885.[141, 142] In return, the Calipha acknowledged his part with much gratitude, and Dadari was very close to him during his reign and considered a trusted Westerner.[143] Although he died before the fall of Omdurman, he witnessed most Mahdist state events; he died in Omdurman aged 120.[144]

3.10.3 Said ibn Hayatu

'Said ibn Hayatu', the grandson of Osman Fodio, founded the Sokoto Caliphate. He was born in Sokoto in either 1830 or 1840 (unconfirmed). His father was the sheikh of the

---

[136] The hijra or immigration was a landmark event in the Islamic faith proliferation history. The prophet of Islam immigrated with his followers twice. The first one was locally from Mecca to Medina (Yathrib). The second one was to Ethiopia before returning to his homeland and preaching with his prophetship and commencing jihad (strive physically for the sake of God). Symbolically when hijra is mentioned it means will be followed by jihad. In a matching historical event in the Sudan Mahdism, the Mahdi immigrated twice. The first one was to mount Qadir before proselytising with Mahdism and commencing the Turkish occupation's resistance. The second one was the immigration from the west to Omdurman, close to Khartoum city. The trip took several months with most Western Sudan region population.

[137] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, p. 96.

[138] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنافى فى السودان*, pp. 107–8.

[139] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, pp. 136–7.

[140] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, pp. 85–6.

[141] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنافى فى السودان*, p. 107.

[142] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan In the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 136.

[143] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, p. 88.

[144] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, p. 95.

Sokoto Caliph; with the help of some other clerics, his religious education was supervised. However, he left Sokoto in 1887–88 after a leadership dispute between his father and uncle. This disagreement was about giving the Caliphate leadership to his uncle rather than his father, which would affect his future religious leadership in Sokoto. As a result, he immigrated with his followers from Sokoto to Cameron. This immigration was in line with the sacred ritual of hijra to meet the Mahdi of Sudan in the future, where he appears according to his grandfather's prophecy request to join him and his followers. Likewise, Muhammad Bello (1781–1837), the father of Said and the son of Usman Fodio, sent spies seeking out the expected Mahdi several times during his Caliphate reign.

After the Caliphate's defeat in the decisive battle of 1903 by the occupier, the Caliphate's supporters recognised the futility of fighting and split it into two parts. One part favoured staying and defending Sokoto to strive against the occupier, fulfilling the religious duty of jihad. The other part preferred to practise the historical religious tradition, the religious immigration (*hijra*), to maintain the faith. The immigration was to Sudan. Though Hayatu was not with the immigrant cohort, some 25,000 followers arrived in Sudan in 1906. They settled in one of the Nilotic villages, 15 kilometres south of Sinnar city (300 km southeast of Khartoum).[145] Though the Sudanese Mahdist state fell in 1898, the Mahdist idea did not die in the Nigerian immigrants' minds, causing some trouble for the British ruling body in 1924 in Sudan.[146] Those Nigerians who belonged to Said ibn Hayatu were part of the Sudanese political resistance and unrest inflicted on the occupation authorities.[147, 148, 149, 150]

---

[145] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001, 'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني/The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism', pp. 115–6.

[146] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1991, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية/Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', p. 71.

[147] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2007, 'The patterns of the settlement of the West African immigrant communities in the Sudan during the first decades of the 20th century', *University of Khartoum,* Khartoum, pp. 135–6, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260434422

[148] Miller, Catherine & Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2005, 'The West Africa (Fallata) Communities in Gedaref State: Process of settlement and local integration', pp. 6–7.

[149] أبو منقة, الإمين ١٩٨٩, 'الأسس الفقهية لهجرة أمير المؤمنين الطاهر الأول من سكتو', *دراسات أفريقية*, جامعة أفريقيا الدولية, الخرطوم, ص ٢٧-٩.

Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1989, 'The jurisprudential foundations of the migration of the Commander/Prince of the Faithful, the Immaculate One, from Sukto', *Dirasat Ifrikiyya*, International University of Africa, Khartoum, pp. 27–9, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261433074

[150] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1991, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية/Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', p. 71.

Ibn Hayato preferred to stay back and regroup the jihadists to reconstruct a Mahdist state on Sudan's Mahdism model of resisting the occupier. He was the most prominent Mahdist leader of the Northern Nigerian region after the fall of Sudanese Mahdism. Notably, he was invited by the Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad himself in the early days to join Sudan's Mahdism. However, Said ibn Hayatu sought the Mahdi's propagandising him as the Mahdi of the Northern Nigeria region. Still, the Mahdi response denoted he was the only Mahdi; Hayato could join him if he liked. However, Hayatu did not join Sudan's Mahdism until the fall of Omdurman in 1898. He was sincere to Mahdism until he died in 1898.[151,152]

Said ibn Hayatu was a close friend of Faki Dadari. While Dadari was accommodated in Sudan, there was some correspondence between them; Dadari invited him in 1882 to join Mahdism in Sudan.[153] Nevertheless, individual connections between the Mahdi and the Khalifa with Hayatu existed.[154] The first correspondence between the Mahdi and Hayatu was in 1883. In his message, he asked Hayatu to be his vassal in the Western Africa region, and he was appointed the Mahdi's representative in the Nigerian area. Still, they never met in person.

Sometime later, under Khalifa's reign, the Mahdist army invasion extended to Borno and occupied some parts of Nigeria. Hayatu partnered with another Sudanese leader in the region's leadership. Still, the rivalry between them was severe and ended with the death of Hayatu. This Sudanese–Nigerian interaction helped to promote Mahdism in Nigeria even after the fall of Omdurman. Officially, Nigerian Mahdism fell in 1902 by the British occupation forces.[155]

3.11 Conclusion

Mahdism's idea has a religious background in the Islamic faith, although it appeared later. Many historians believe the idea's origin goes back to Judaism and Christianity.

---

[151]Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, pp. 94–5.

[152] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1991, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية/Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', p. 70.

[153] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, pp. 94–5, 103.

[154] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', vol. 8, p. 94.

[155] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2008, 'العلاقات التاريخية والمتجددة بين السودان ونيجيريا/Historical and renewed relations between Sudan and Nigeria', p. 9.

Notably, it flourishes during political, social or religious distress times. There is an apparent connection between Mahdism and Sufism. However, there is an evident connection between Mahdism and Sufism and extremism. This connection was associated with the nineteenth-century African liberation movements, but the link goes back to Wahabism in Arabia during the Ottoman occupation.

There was always an interaction between the different religious movements. First, the Nigerian Caliphate influenced Sudan's Mahdism, and later Sudan's Mahdism influenced Nigerian Mahdism. Although the Sokoto Caliphate preceded Sudan's Mahdism, Nigerian Mahdism inspired by Sudan's Mahdism followed its path even after the fall of Omdurman. The Nigerians firmly believed the Mahdi would emerge by the end of time but would not be from their Caliphate ruling system.

The political movement of Sokoto Caliphate's jihad inspired the Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad with the jihadi Mahdism in Sudan and encouraged him to proclaim himself as the Mahdi in 1881. Similarly, Sudanese Mahdism inspired the Nigerians by copying it even after Omdurman's fall, proving that the idea flourished in Nigeria. Mahdism in Sudan and Nigeria was the people's political manifestation of colonial rejection.

Based on the religious belief that only one Mahdi would lead believers to salvation, there should not be another Mahdi, contrary to the Caliphate system. After the fall of Mahdism in Sudan, several people claimed Mahdism in Nigeria and Sudan. The Nigerian claimers were almost all simultaneously leading to rivalry and antagonism to the extent of wars. The most well-known of them was Said ibn Hayatu.

Similarly, this phenomenon of Mahdism proclaimers is not rare. Just since the death of the Mahdi Mohammed Ahmed and until 2020, there were 24 Mahdi and Jesus claimers in Sudan.[156] However, the was one primary jurisprudence condition about the Mahdi's appearance: he should be born in Mecca or from the Prophet Muhammad's descendants. Muhammad Ahmad, the Sudanese Mahdi, was the only one who could track and prove his lineage to the Prophet, but neither the Nigerian nor the other Sudanese could. So, the primary jurisprudence legitimacy condition was fulfilled for none.

[156] https://www.alnilin.com/13237632.htm

Chapter Four

4. Yusuf Mikhail, the amir of the Copts:

4.1 Introduction.

4.2 Yusuf Mikhail's family history.

4.3 The most prominent features of Yusuf's personality during his childhood and youth.

4.4 The events that led to the script of this memoir.

4.5 Analysing the manuscript:

4.5.1 It reflected the actual social condition of the ethnic communities of the time.

4.5.2 Gordon of Sudan.

4.5.3 Comparing Yusuf's memoirs to the other biographies from the same era.

4.5.4 The linguistic mistakes in the memoir.

4.6 The importance of Yusuf Mikhail's memoirs.

4.7 Disagreeing with the editor's disappointment.

4.8 The interaction between the different cultures.

4.9 The social life and activities of the El-Obeid community before it fell into Mahdist hands.

4.10 The dependencies of the religious influence of the Mahdism era on the general public of Sudan and particularly on minority ethnic communities:

4.10.1 Dualism in the religious culture.

4.10.2 The perfect adaptation according to the current socio-political situation.

4.10.3 Points of convergence between the different beliefs.

4.10.4 The autocratic ruling system created a condition of hypocritical behaviour in the general populace.

4.10.5 A superstitious society.

4.10.6 Alcohol was not permitted but still consumed.

4.10.7 All those under the same harsh circumstances felt compassion towards each other.

4.11 Yusuf kept his same first name.

4.12 His marital status.

4.13 Yusuf's health condition.

4.14 The influence of the Islamic religious teachings on Yusuf's culture:

4.14.1 Quoting Quranic verses.

4.14.2 Sufi teachings.

4.14.3 Islamic jurisprudence.

4.14.4 Religious supplications.

4.14.5 General Islamic beliefs.

4.15 His attachment to the local culture.

4.16 The Mahdist state created a condition of two contradictory feelings in Yusuf.

4.17 The psychological impact that Yusuf suffered after the fall of the Mahdist state.

4.18 Yusuf's favour on the Copts of the Mahdist State.

4.19 Conclusion.

4. Yusuf Mikhail, the amir of the Copts

4.1 Introduction

There is insufficient written material in English about the memoirs of Yusuf Mikhail. The first was by Mr AF Eglen, the Assistant District Commissioner in El-Obeid (Central District, Kordofan); he encouraged Yusuf to write his history. The memoir was written in 1933–4 in Arabic with local accents in Western Sudan. Sometime later, the memoirs were sold by Yusuf and lodged in SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies) University of London library. In 1954, Mr Eglen wrote an introduction to the biography in English. Later, in 1958, Professor Peter Holt cited Yusuf's memoirs in his book *The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898*. That was due to Professor Holt's sound knowledge of the Arabic language. Finally, in 1963, Dr Salih Mohammad Nur received his doctorate on Yusuf's memoirs from the University of London under Professor Holt's supervision. Since then, very few further studies or research in English have been submitted. However, most Arabic or English studies approached the political and militant sides, but few explored the social ones. The historian Professor Ahmed Abu Shouk edited and analysed the memoir thoroughly. Doubtless, his effort gained Yusuf's memoir more fame and importance.

One of the significances of this memoir lies in its attribution of disclosing many social and political incidents during the Mahdism period. It covers the Turco-Egyptian occupation period, the Mahdist Revolution and state, and the early Anglo-Egyptian colonial period. Notably, it exposes many incidents that occurred to descendants of ethnic communities during the Mahdism period and their adaptation to the current theocratic regime.

The migration to a different society with its diverse culture created a distinctive new culture in the newborn generations that mixes the two in their various aspects. Yusuf Mikhail was an example of these generations who contemporise that era and were forced to change their religious belief. Nevertheless, his early education, culture and religious belief duality prevailed in his writings. Notably, his adaptation to the current prevalent religious and different community values was a phenomenon that dominated many who contemporise the Mahdism period. Mainly this phenomenon coincided with the young generations who were descendants of various ethnic communities of the Mahdism era.

They learned how to find points of convergence to survive; however, they needed to flatter the rulers to please them.

Doubtless, the demise of the Mahdist ruling period created a cultural vacuum with contradictory feelings of disappointment and complacency. However, many people were pleased with its diminishing. Conversely, many were heartfelt, sad and disappointed, particularly those in positions of influence. Strangely, Yusuf had both feelings simultaneously.

4.2 Yusuf Mikhail's family history

Yusuf Mikhail descended from a Coptic family, most probably from Upper Egypt. His father, Mikhail Mileka, came to Sudan with his family in 1839 with a cohort of more than 40 clerks and a chief clerk to increase the number of clerks to improve administrative functioning and governmental performance. The clerks first arrived in the newly established capital Khartoum and later were distributed to the different provinces of Sudan.[157] There is no accurate date of Yusuf's birthday, and he mentioned nothing about it in his memoir, but with the matching of some other events, it is estimated to be 1865.[158] He was the youngest of his brothers, contrary to Mr Eglen's mention on the introductory page of the memoir. Logically, he would not be the second youngest and would not be appointed as a clerk during the city siege. However, his two other brothers were already officially established clerks during the siege city of El-Obeid city.[159,160]

He attended the '*kuttab*' school, a schooling system similar to a primary school. It was a one-class school for all ages, in which they learned reading, writing, memorising Psalms and arithmetic basics. After Yousef finished his primary education, he waited to be appointed apprentice clerk, similar to most Coptic youth. However, before being permanently assigned, all trainees should be primarily in the main provincial office of El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan province. Moreover, it was customary for the clerk's

---

[157] ميخائيل, يوسف ٢٠٠٤, *مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان (شاهدعيان)*, تقديم د. احمد ابراهيم ابوشوك, مركز عبد الكريم ميرغني الثقافي, امدرمان.
Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, Abdul Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, Omdurman, pp. xvi, 3, https://www.academia.edu/4075756/

[158] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. xvi.

[159] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 214–5.

[160] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 59.

profession to continue and pass from father to son, as he and his two older brothers, Joarjios and Mileka, were in the same job.[161] Eventually, the revolution broke out before his official appointment as a government clerk was finalised.[162]

The extended family-style life was standard and typical of Upper Egypt people. The common practice was living together with their children's families in one big house. After his father's death, Joarjios, the elder brother, cared for all family members, his mother, brothers and sisters, including the young Yusuf.[163] The city had six months of complete siege during the Mahdist Revolution. His older brothers were locked out due to an official mission nearby.[164] Subsequently, Yusuf took charge of the family's care and safety; during this siege, the city citizens suffered severely from famine.[165]

4.3 The most prominent features of Yusuf's personality during his childhood and youth

Generally, Yusuf's childhood personality reflects the community features, particularly the general children's societal attitudes from the Coptic ethnic perspective in Western Sudan. For example, corporal punishment in schools was not only permitted but also recommended. Yusuf mentioned the severe punishment he suffered from his teacher when he was behind in learning the Psalms by heart. However, he was the kind of child who appreciated his teacher's moral lessons and pearls of wisdom, although the teacher was tough on him.[166]

It seems that Yusuf was a very active and playful child. Consequently, he and his student friends superstitiously believed that if they sprinkled graveyard dirt on their teacher during his midday nap, the nap would last a long time, giving them a more extended break to play more.[167]

One of Yusuf's lifelong characteristics was seizing every opportunity for his benefit. For example, he and students his age were waiting for the government's apprenticeship offer after finishing school. Meanwhile, General Gordon was on a visit to Kordofan. There

[161] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. xvi.
[162] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. xvi, 9.
[163] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. xvi
[164] Holt, M. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, 2nd edn 1970, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 126.
[165] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. xvi.
[166] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 5–6.
[167] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 6.

was a general malaise due to the unjust tax values. So, those students were offered to write 'letters of status and complaints' for the illiterate tribal people for a wage. Although they knew the students were not allowed to, as only qualified clerks were permitted to do this job, they accepted.[168]

When the revolution broke out, Yusuf was in his early youth; he quickly and easily gained the heart of the Mahdi through his courtesy. Sometime after Mahdi's death, he was very close and had good relationships with Mahdi's successor, the Khalif (Abdullah El-Taishi) and his brother Yakoub (Jacob). This unique relationship qualified him to be one of Khalifa's associates and a confidant secret keeper. Additionally, Yusuf became the Coptic Amir and the officer of the Coptic army company[169] under the leading Khalifa's battalion, besides his other clerical duties.

He acquired this distinctive status for the following main reasons: 1) his loyalty to the Khalifa, 2) both he and the Khalifa descended from the same region in Western Sudan and spoke in the same accent of the region[170] and 3) he perfected the flattering words to the Khalifa. However, his loyalty to the regime did not prevent him from committing to the Coptic community's wellbeing under his authority.

4.4 The events that led to the script of this memoir

This memoir was not intentionally written to document the historical events of the Mahdism period in Sudan's history. Fortunately, it was written by chance due to Yusuf's rotten luck. Several decades after the fall of Omdurman, Yusuf became acquainted with Mr AF Eglen, the Assistant District Commissioner in El-Obeid (Central District, Kordofan). Mr Eglen had a good relationship with Yusuf and his brother Ishaq. In August 1934, the inspector found Victoria, Yousef's wife, in the province jail. Victoria was caught red-handed distilling the favourable local liquor for her husband during a periodical police drive. She and her husband tried to convince the authorities the liquor was for his personal use only and essential for medicinal reasons, mainly for Yusuf's asthma, but it was in vain. The retribution was one month in jail. Yousef decided to join her in prison for the whole month. It was too late and tough for Mr Eglen to do anything to remit the punishment. However, due to

[168] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 10–11.
[169] The army company consists of between 80 to 250 fighters.
[170] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 1–4.

Yousef's advanced age and ill-health, the inspector decided to do something helpful and valuable for him during his stay with his wife. After obtaining the jail authorities' permission, he gave him paper and pencils to write his memoir about his contribution period to the Mahdia state in return for money.[171]

4.5 Analysing the manuscript

The handwritten document consists of loose-leaf papers, and it is without a title. It consists of 138 numbered pages, with one page unnumbered. It is written in pencil and copying pencil[172] on previously printed numbered pages, which suggests these were empty pages ripped from an old official government book. Unfortunately, no complete translation of Yusuf's memoir has been published commercially. Still, the Mahdism historian Peter Holt mentioned a few lines about Yusuf's biography in his book *The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898*. Many historians and authors analysing this memoir focused on its military information and government administration system. However, this study analyses Yusuf's memoirs from the human perspective embodied in his comments and impressions. Those comments reflect the true nature of Yusuf's personality, nonetheless, with a light touch on political and military aspects.

4.5.1 It reflected the actual social condition of the ethnic communities of the time

The memoir of Yusuf Mikhail was a mirror that reflected an actual image of Mahdism's community and the state structure. Moreover, he is a clear example of the young Christian generations from different ethnic backgrounds that were born or grew up under the Mahdism religious belief and cultural influence. The memoir was written under the perception and the personal impressions of an ethnic person from a non-Muslim religious background who willingly or forcibly changed his religious belief under the pressure of the prevailing circumstances. The Islamic religious education influence appears in his writing simultaneously with his original Christian background. It is a true example of people

[171] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. xix, 214–5.
[172] The copying pencil is an old official type of pencil whose lead contains unerasable permanent dye, and its writing changes to an indigo colour when it is wet.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copying_pencil

of all ethnicities with different beliefs and origins who felt and suffered the contradiction in values between their new religious beliefs and original cultural beliefs.

He launched his memoir on the first page with the sentence, 'The editor of this history is Yusuf Mikhail Melaeka, the **Coptic Sudanese**'.[173] An unnumbered page was found between the numbered ones that might have been written and added sometime after completing his history. Recently, this page was numbered and placed as the last page. The concluding sentence of this final page states the following: 'With the help of God and his support, I stated all the incidents that happened to me, and I had witnessed during my lifetime, and my success is only from God'. He signed, 'Yusuf Mikhail **Gordon of Sudan** (or **the Sudanese Gordon**)'.[174,175,176]

Those two sentences mentioned above reflect the emotional and deep feelings of the Coptic Yusuf. He is the first to document the unfamiliar term **'Coptic Sudanese'**, reflecting his belief in the dual identity. This emotional reflection could be related to his birth, living in Sudan or adopting the native citizen's qualities and values alongside his Coptic background and identity. He could not deny either of both influences on his personality. Indeed, he was not the only one from an ethnic background who felt these emotions, but unfortunately, he was the only one to document such feelings at that time. The dual-identity term is widespread nowadays in many Coptic communities, as we find the Coptic Australian and Coptic British; similarly, we see the Syrian Sudanese, the Jewish Sudanese, etc. Although he was of Coptic Egyptian origin, he called his new teacher 'the coward Egyptian', demonstrating his deep belief in his Sudanese identity. Even the Egyptian teacher called them 'Sudan's kids of the devil'.[177]

4.5.2 Gordon of Sudan

Peter Holt gave the title **'Gordon of Sudan'** to the untitled Yusuf's manuscript in his book, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan*, since Yusuf previously called himself 'Gordon of Sudan' in his memoir. It is an indirect way of expressing his admiration for General Gordon's personality, as we find several times in the biography. During his boyhood years, Yusuf

[173] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 3.
[174] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 215.
[175] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 202.
[176] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 8.
[177] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 6, 8.

repeatedly stated his respect for the braveness of the general. It is little wonder he led the boys of his class on strike to go and celebrate Gordon's arrival in the city. He sincerely believed, as did most Kordofan people, that justice would prevail and end the corruption through Gordon's wise and good governance.[178]

Or it is possible he described himself as 'Gordon of Sudan', which might imply Yusuf's belief in his great job for the state and particularly for the Coptic community in averting the Khalifa's anger and threats. On several occasions, he put his own life at risk instead of his tribe people, similar to Gordon, particularly in Gordon's last days.[179,180]

Additionally, Yusuf recounted several stories about Gordon's personality; no one mentioned them. For example, Gordon fined some people who left their lunch and stood up with respect and reverence while he passed by.[181]

4.5.3 Comparing Yusuf's memoirs to the other biographies from the same era

We have eight significant historical accounts written by people who lived in Sudan during the Mahdia state era. The first one was Sudanese; Abdel Kadir El Kodofani wrote his memoir favouring the Mahdi and Mahdism before the fall of Omdurman. However, he was exiled by the Khalifa to South Sudan in 1893 due to slander and died there in 1897. Regarding the other accounts, most were included under the 'war propaganda literature'. Two authors lived as citizens in Omdurman and escaped before its fall: Rudolf Slatin and Fr Joseph Ohrwalder. Since their memoirs were written before the conquest, their accounts could be considered war propaganda since they were written before the fall of the Mahdia state. Three were prisoners in Omdurman and freed after the conquest: Ibrahim Fawzi, Charles Neufeld and Giuseppe Cuzzi. However, Rudolf Slatin spent time in prison before Khalifa's pardon order. The memoirs of these three prisoners were written after the fall of Omdurman, sometime after they left Sudan. Two of the eight authors were born, lived and died in Sudan, besides El Kodofani, who died in exile; both participated in the Omdurman Battle. They were Babikr Bedri, of native background, and Yusuf Mikhail, descended from ethnic Coptic background. In both memoirs, we find some compassion for the Islamic state

[178] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 8, 10–11.
[179] Holt, P. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, 2nd edn 1970, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 275.
[180] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 101.
[181] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 27.

history, though Yusuf Mikhail expressed his clear annoyance and discomfort with several incidents. This discomfort could be due to cultural and religious background differences. Five of those authors were from Christian religious backgrounds; all five had to change their religious beliefs to escape death. The other three were initially Muslims. Although, in Islamic jurisprudence, Christians and Jews are allowed to keep their religious faith because they are considered 'People of the Book'.[182]

However, Yusuf's memoirs cannot be included in what is known as 'war propaganda literature' for the following reasons:

1) All war propaganda works of literature were written before the reconquest war or just after it to justify its purpose.

2) The memoir of Yusuf Mikhail was written 36 years after the reconquest war, and there was no need for propaganda.

3) Many war propaganda books depended on what the writers had heard and very little on what they witnessed besides their personal experience. Thus, expressing their suffering in general in their memoirs, particularly the prison ill-treatment, helped the purpose.[183]

4) In contrast, Yusuf's memoir was a firsthand, eyewitness account of many incidents close to the Khalifa, all the mentioned events.

5) The limited demonstration of his linguistic ability in his memoir could not give him the rhetorical capacity for any incident in a deceptive linguistic construction or writing, but only what happened.

4.5.4 The linguistic mistakes in the memoir

Apart from the historical value of the memoir, it was full of spelling errors and weaknesses in linguistic construction. It is unlikely to find any page without a spelling mistake. This lack of linguistic knowledge may go back to the dislikes of his class lessons. He

[182] '*Those We have given the **Book** follow it as it should be followed. It is they who ˹truly˺ believe in it. As for those who reject it, it is they who are the losers.*' (Surah of 'Al Baqarah' verse 121). https://quran.com/2

[183] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. xiv.

mentioned in his memoir he used to escape from his class before the end of the day, instead leading the class students to disobey the teacher's rules.[184] Besides, this expresses the limited education standard of the church's organised primary schools (the *kuttab*).

Most spelling mistakes were colloquially written in the Western Sudan people's accent. In addition, it is widespread for the people of Western Sudan to switch the pronunciation of some alphabet letters. Therefore, he wrote the words precisely as the people pronounced them locally.[185] As a general observation, no historians noticed that Yusuf had dyslexia. His numerous spelling mistakes in the memoir were due to switching the letters' positions in words.[186] However, despite his advanced age, he could remember many names and incidents in detail.

4.6 The importance of Yusuf Mikhail's memoirs

Yusuf was born and educated early as a Christian child and descended from a Coptic family. He converted to the Islamic religious belief in his youth and returned to Christianity. His conversion to the Islamic religious faith was not a choice; it was an imposition due to the political situation, besides being an adventure for him. His mixed emotions, social condition and feelings were typical of many converted families of different ethnic descent (i.e., the Copts, Greeks, Syrians and Jews). Most returned to their original religious beliefs; however, some preferred to stay for social and family reasons.

The memoirs of Yousif Mikhail Mileka place him at the centre of Mahdist state events and the nature of these events. His memoir documented the political, social and economic problems of Sudan. He wrote about the three controversial periods of Sudan's history in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These began with the Turkish-Egyptian occupation until the rise of Mahdism. The Mahdist revolutionary period followed, which began in 1881 and continued until the fall of Khartoum in 1885. Finally, they ended with the state period with Khalifa's reign era, which followed the Mahdi's death, lasting 13 years until the fall of Omdurman in 1889.[187]

---

[184] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 4–5.
[185] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. vi, xxii, xxv, xxvii.
[186] T, Editors 2021, 'Dyslexia', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, viewed 18 June 2021, https://www.britannica.com/science/dyslexia
[187]Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. xv.

Yusuf had a personal relationship with most contemporary figures of that time.[188] Moreover, his account was written in the active voice format, which denotes his confidence in the information and credibility. Further, he was very close to the Khalifa and his brother, the second man in the state; this allowed him to document many critical political incidents that few knew details of. Nevertheless, he described in his writing the people's mixed religious feelings due to the overlap between the different religious cultures' teachings and views. These all gave him credibility since he witnessed all incidents in his memoir.

Yusuf's memoirs are important because they manifest the ideas and impressions of one of the ethnic Sudanese-born generations and a descendant Copt contemporary of the Mahdia Revolution and the state era. He joined it as a rebel until its fall and beyond. He described the horrible six-month siege in detail, followed by the fall of El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan province. He is the only one who extensively recounted the immigration (hijra) of the enormous numbers whose pilgrimage way was to walk from El-Obeid to Omdurman. The immigration of Mahdi's army with the civilians took several months until they reached Omdurman. Then they crossed the White Nile to begin the siege of Khartoum. However, some of Yusuf's accounts gave a sincere impression of his sympathy for Mahdism history. He described the extreme conditions from the perspective of a youth full of ambition who got his way in the new regime.

Further, he was the only one to participate in most Mahdia wars, mentioning them in his memoir.[189] Additionally, he was one of two historians who participated in the final fight. He and Babikr Bedri were the only two who wrote about the Khalifa's army soldiers' conditions in the Battle of Karari. They both wrote their memoirs, describing the events of the final day of the Omdurman Battle and the following days. The impact of this last war that ended the Mahdism era caused spiritual conflict that swept almost all community members. The general firm belief was the perpetual existence of Mahdism.

The integrity of this memoir lies in its historical trustworthiness, firstly due to Yusuf's inability to achieve any linguistic manipulation because of his limited rhetorical ability and the lack of self-narration as it is known. Secondly, nobody knew or wrote about numerous incidents since he was one of Kalifa's associates and witnessed many political events.[190] He

[188] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. ix.
[189] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 194.
[190] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. vi–vii.

sometimes even recalled the names of living people as witnesses for events he mentioned.[191] Finally, it gave a factual narration of the general population's daily lives, with some information about the ethnic communities and their daily activities alongside political matters.

4.7 Taking the editor's note of disappointment with caution

I cannot entirely agree with the editor's note about all of the Mahdist prisoners' accounts.

All the accounts' writers embraced the Islamic faith as a kind of 'Taqiya' (or 'Taqiyya') for their safety and survival. From the religious Islamic jurisprudence perspective, the Taqiya is an acceptable reaction to lying to avert danger.[192] Rudolf Slatin, Fr Joseph Ohrwalder, Charles Neufeld, Giuseppe Cuzzi and Major-General Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha came from different cultural backgrounds. Most had different religious beliefs, except Ibrahim Fawzi, a Muslim. Except for Fawzi, they were forced to profess the Islamic religious faith, fearing for their lives. However, Charles Neufeld was Christian but preferred to keep his Islamic religiosity. A few years later, he visited Sudan during his trip to Mecca to perform the obligatory Hajj pilgrimage.

Fig. 2 Charles Neufeld in Suakin going to the obligatory Hajj pilgrimage in 1915.

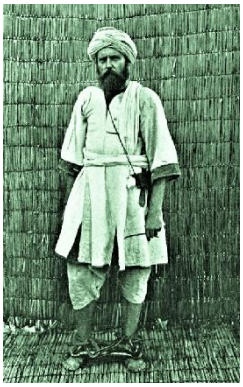


Fig. 3 Charles Neufeld in chains

Fig. 4 Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha

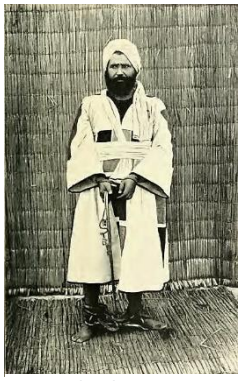


Fig. 5 Ibrahim Fawzi in chains

[191] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 182.

[192] The 'Taqiya' or 'Taqiyya' is a permitted and religiously accepted lie in the Islam and the Judaism as an act of warding off danger, but not accepted in Christianity.
"Believers should not take disbelievers as guardians instead of the believers—and whoever does so will have nothing to hope for from Allah—unless it is a precaution against their tyranny. And Allah warns you about Himself. And to Allah is the final return." (Surah of 'Al-Imran' verse 28).
https://quran.com/3
http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7341
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taqiya

The Mahdist authority figures ill-treated all of them, and all left the country after the regime's fall; it is little wonder they express their distaste in their memoirs. However, in all fairness, they were not the only cruelly treated people; there were much worse stories. Those mentioned above had the ability and opportunity to express their ideas, experience and feelings. Nevertheless, unfortunately, many citizens suffered even worse but could not express themselves openly for some reason or another. The occupation authorities might have used these memoirs to win international public opinion, but all written incidents were factual.[193]

Fig. 6 Slatin Pasha

Fig. 7 Slatin as a dervish

4.8 The interaction between the different cultures

After decades of inhabiting Western Sudan, and due to the direct contact of the Coptic clerks with the different classes of the natives, the populace accepted the religious and racial differences; they considered them one of their own. Thus, Yusuf mentioned that children from all different backgrounds played local plays and games after finishing their daily classes.[194] Similarly, he said some girls from one of the Western Sudan tribes flirted with his brother Joarjios with songs made especially for him. Still, they were embarrassed to mention his name directly, so they directed the courtship to his camel.[195]

Fig. 8 General Gordon's statue

At sunset, General Gordon saw Joarjios, Yusuf's brother coming home and riding his speedy camel; he liked it and asked his assistant to find a similar one to use. The assistant approached Joarjios asking for a similar camel for General Gordon. Joarjios swore in the name of God nobody else would ride this camel but Gordon, and he merely asked for the price he had previously paid for it. Later, Gordon asked Joarjios again for a similar camel, after the first one was impeded. Again, Joarjios found an even better one. Gordon paid its price and sent a letter of thanks to Joarjios. It is the same camel that Gordon depicted riding

[193] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. x–xi.
[194] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 33.
[195] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 28.

in photos; the original statue was placed in front of the governor-general's palace in Khartoum after the reconquest of Khartoum.[196]

4.9 The social life and activities of the El-Obeid community before it fell into Mahdist hands

Yusuf gave an accurate picture of the community and the social structure of El-Obeid before the surrender. Indeed, a Coptic Church existed because of a Coptic priest named Fr Phalta'ous, whose two sons were killed in the city invasion.[197] The Coptic community was committed to its church practices. Yusuf mentioned that the siege occurred during the great Lent; he asked the priest whether it was religiously acceptable to break the 55-day fasting period of Lent by eating the slaughtered donkey's meat. The priest told him it was religiously acceptable, and even the priest bought some for his family. However, Yusuf's family repulsed to eat it after it was cooked and gave it to their house servants.[198]

Yusuf described the social life of El-Obeid. Before the city fell at the hands of the Mahdi's revolutionaries and applied religious laws, there were social clubs and pubs. Yusuf mentioned they were stocked with alcoholic beverages that lasted six months of siege. Thus, even during the siege resistance period, alcoholic drinks were served to fighters. Further, he described the servant girls who served those drinks as 'Muwallads'. The Muwallads (or Muwalladein/مَوَلَّدين in Arabic)[199] are the offspring between non-Sudanese fathers or mothers (primarily fathers) from any nationality with Sudanese wives through marriage or just with concubine relationships.[200] However, the expression 'Mawalied' (Mawalied/مَوَاليدُ), which Peter Holt uses in his book, is not explained enough. The term 'Mawalied' is only for the offspring of any nationality born in Sudan from a married father and mother, mainly from the exact racial origin. In Yusuf's case, he was born out of married Coptic Egyptian parents who came to Sudan,[201] so he is considered 'Mawalied' but not

---

[196] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 28–9.

[197] تواضروس, نجيب يسى, وعبد السيد, زاهر يعقوب, ٢٠٠٧, *رحلة الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية في أرض كوش (السودان): من القرن التاسع عشر الى القرن الواحد والعشرين*, مركز الإشعاع الروحي-إبارشية الخرطوم والجنوب وتوابعها, ص ١٢٥.

Tawadros, Najib Yessa, and Abd al-Sayed, Zahir Yacoub, 2007, *The expedition of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Land of Kush (Sudan): from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century*, The Centre of The Spiritual Radiation - the Diocese of Khartoum and the South Sudan and its minions, p. 125.

[198] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 77.

[199] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, trans. F. R. Wingate, 3rd edn, Samson Low, Marston & Company, London, p. 189.

[200] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 71.

[201] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 194.

'Muwalladein', as Holt wrongly explained.[202] The Muwalladein generations were the offspring of the Sudanese women's or concubines' uncommitted marriages. It was a prevalent social phenomenon at the time. Thus, almost all those children were without fatherhood commitments towards them.

Moreover, Yusuf mentioned the city had a European community of Greeks and Austrians. He did not note whether there were Catholic and Greek churches. However, in other memoirs, there was mention of an Austrian Catholic Church and several priests and nuns in the capital city. Besides, the Austrian Catholic Mission was preaching and offering spiritual services to the Nubian community at Dilling City near the Nubian mountains, 160 km south of El-Obeid. So, it might include sacramental services to the mountains' Nubians. This preaching missionary consisted of priests and nuns brought to the El-Obeid surrendering camp. They were under the Catholic Syrian merchant Georgey Istambolia's supervision before his exclusion from this job.[203]

4.10 The dependencies of the religious influence of the Mahdism era on the general public of Sudan and particularly on minority ethnic communities

According to Islamic jurisprudence, there is no compulsion to particular worship in the Islamic faith,[204] though all non-Muslims were forced to profess Islamic religious beliefs. Nevertheless, non-Muslims who refused were killed, as in the case of the Coptic priest's two sons. Further, even the Islamic religious believers were forced to profess the Mahdi's Mahdism; otherwise, the same ruling of non-believers (every non-Muslim) would be applied to them. As a result, some Muslim clerics who rejected the Mahdism of Mohammed Ahmed according to the Islamic jurisprudence religious belief were killed. This complicated situation created general confusion in the religious belief unity, particularly for the descendants of non-Muslims in the ethnic communities. However, the new religious culture prevailed; Yusuf's early learned childhood values still appear in certain situations. Yusuf Mikhail was an actual example of this duality of religious belief phenomenon, and his memoir was the only available document.

[202] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, Oxford, p. 16.
[203] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 83.
[204] refers to Sura number 2 'al-Baqarah' (The Cow) verse 256.

4.10.1 Dualism in the religious culture

Yusuf Mikhail was a real example of religious culture dualism. His early religious-influenced childhood education was from his teacher, the Coptic Church hymns chanting leader. The influence of his religious education occasionally appears in his writing, alongside his later Islamic education. That was due to his daily homework of writing and learning the Psalms of the hourly prayers book by heart. Thus, for example, he used the verse, '*He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes, with the princes of his people*' (Psalm 113:7–8), one of the Ninth-hour Psalms of the prayer book. He used this verse to express his opinion about the rise of the Mahdi and his belief that Mahdism was by God's permission.[205] On a similar occasion, he used a verse from the Bible, '*Thousands upon thousands attended him ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him*' (Daniel 7:10), to express the enormous number of immigrants walking from Kordofan towards Omdurman.[206] Thus, Yusuf's early religious childhood education with the current imposed education created a unique situation of religious biculturalism.

4.10.2 The perfect adaptation according to the current socio-political situation

New generations who were Mahdism contemporaries mostly adapted to the current situation. Yusuf's personality was a true example of this adaptation. Thus, for example, he successfully won the heart of the Mahdi when he offered him and his followers a drink of water on a scorching day, although his family was in dire need of it. Consequently, his generosity in this incident and his admiration of the Mahdi allowed him to join the Mahdi's private security force.[207] Further, he expressed praise and flattery to the Khalifa loudly in front of the crowd on every possible occasion. This behaviour made him very close to Khalifa's heart and in a similar trusted position as his son.[208]

Though Yusuf was faithful to the Khalifa and his regime, he did not join him in his despairing escape after his defeat in the Omdurman War. His unique position in the Khalifa's heart did not avert him from observing the matter objectively. Once he recognised the Mahdist state was over, and the new governing authorities were in the hands of the

[205] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 194.
[206] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 95.
[207] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 97.
[208] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 14–6.

Egyptians and the British rulers, he prepared himself to adapt to the current situation. He dealt with the new conditions from a pragmatic perspective. This feeling was not Yusuf's alone, even for many from Islamic religious backgrounds. The historian Babikr Bedri expressed dissatisfaction in his memoirs over the behaviour of many of Khalifa's associates, who rejected Khalifa's offer to accompany him rudely. Although he was a fighter in the Mahdi's army until the final decisive war, he did not follow him.[209]

Similarly, almost all people of ethnic backgrounds adapted to their new life. Although Yusuf converted earlier to the Islamic faith and exercised its religious practices for more than 13 years, he found no difficulty returning to his original religion. There was some correspondence between him and the patriarch of the Coptic Church in Cairo through the Military Intelligence Office. The patriarch sent him a letter inquiring about the Copts' wellbeing under his leadership in the war. Amazingly, his writing style to the patriarch used a respectful decorum that suited his spiritual leadership position.[210] He had an exceptional place in the heart of the patriarch. He was the patriarch's guest during his accommodation in Cairo, during which he visited the churches and was acquainted with the newly ordained Sudanese bishop.[211]

4.10.3 Points of convergence between the different beliefs

One of the great lessons learned from the non-Muslim background of the Mahdist period was finding points of agreement and harmony between the different beliefs. Yusuf was perfect in finding these points of convergence between the two religious' faiths, Islam and Christianity. He referenced a verse from the Book of Psalms[212] when high-placed officials in the Egyptian War Ministry asked about his opinion of the Mahdi.[213] David's Psalms are recognised and well known in Christianity and Islam, in addition to Judaism originally. It was ingenious to use a holy verse from the Book of Psalms; in so doing, he gave a religious opinion recognised by both beliefs rather than a personal one. Thus, he could not be blamed for expressing his true feeling openly.

---

[209] Bedri, Babikr 1969, *The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*, trans. Yousef Bedri, George Scott, Oxford University Press, London, p. 242.
[210] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 189.
[211] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 192.
[212] Book of Psalms 113:7–8.
[213] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 194.

4.10.4 The autocratic ruling system created a condition of hypocritical behaviour in the general populace

The condition of autocratic rule taught the people to be hypocritical to acquire the ruler's satisfaction. So, the people learned whatever pleased the ruler; they would do—disregarding its irrationality. Similarly, Yusuf learned how to gain the Khalifa's and his brother's satisfaction. A few days before the final war, he knew that the Khalifa was inspecting the different fighters' tents while they were preparing for the battlefield. So, to impress the Khalifa, he asked his company fighters to pretend to practise loudly by hitting and crossing their lancers while he passed by. He was successful in his attempt. As a result, Khalifa stopped his convoy and complimented Yusuf's company. On the same occasion, Yusuf offered a portable bed to let the Khalifa rest. After he left, he made the bed available to the other fighters to receive the blessing by rubbing their hands and faces on its sheepskin covering.[214] Thus, Yusuf played the entire range of superstitious beliefs on the Khalifa and his brother to please them, though he believed it was mostly false.[215]

4.10.5 A superstitious society

It is doubtless that the metaphysical beliefs in nineteenth-century Sudan prevailed; it was a superstitious society. Yusuf mentioned the commonly known aphorism, 'Get your omen either bad or good from your children's words'. This denoted his belief in the coming unfortunate luck of a particular incident.[216] Similarly, it was believed a bad sign and a terrible fate would occur when the big copper war drum fell off the camel. So, the locals believed they could deter this misfortune by slaughtering a bull and stepping above its blood.[217] This habit is still practised in Sudan; it goes back to the biblical incident when Abraham redeemed his son Isaac with a ram. This incident is mentioned in the three Abrahamic religious texts, except in the Islamic belief text: Ishmael was the one instead of his brother Isaac.[218]

[214]Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 174, 180.
[215] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 180.
[216] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 39.
[217] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 57.
[218] refers to Sura number 37 'as-Saf' (The Rangers) verses 101–8.

4.10.6 Alcohol was not permitted but still consumed

According to Sharia law, the consumption of alcohol is prohibited.[219] However, it was consumed secretly by some people. Yusuf mentioned he used to have secret drinking gatherings with friends; some were amirs from the Khalifa tribe.[220] Similarly, he said that some of his companions (the fighters) secretly met to drink before the Battle of Omdurman.[221] This incident, in particular, reflects excesses committed by some people who consumed alcohol under Sharia law and the possible consequent punishment.

Additionally, Yusuf mentioned one of the hospitality items offered to the Ethiopian diplomatic mission when meeting the Khalifa was locally-made alcohol, which the Khalifa was definitely aware of.[222] These incidents indicate that law transgressions were occurring, possibly with the ruler's understanding.

4.10.7 All those under the same harsh circumstances felt compassion towards each other

It is a common phenomenon; we find almost all descendants of different ethnic groups (Copts, Greeks, Syrians, Jews etc.) who were contemporaries of the Mahdist period had a unique social relation with the natives and did not withdraw into themselves. For example, a day after the Battle of Omdurman, Yusuf went with his relations to the battlefield in search of the corpse of a Copt killed in the fight. While there, he met the relatives of one of the dead amirs, searching for his corpse. Yusuf gave them full attention and helped them find that corpse and bury it, even before searching for the corpse of the Copt.[223] Isaac/Mileka Yusuf's brother was in a similar situation in one of the earlier Mahdist Wars; he did the same thing.[224]

On one occasion, the Khalifa ordered the punishing of one of the Muslim clerics due to false accusations against him. The order to Yusuf was to deport the cleric to Omdurman to await his final judgment. Instead, Yusuf was convinced of the cleric's innocence and

[219] refers to Sura number 5 'al-Ma'idah' (The Food) verse 90–1.
[220] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 147.
[221] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 176.
[222] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 147.
[223] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 184.
[224] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 125.

followed his conscience rather than the orders. Since he was in a position of power, he ordered the jailer to treat the cleric kindly.[225]

Considerable numbers of the different non-Sudanese ethnic groups who descended from other religious beliefs were forced to profess the Islamic faith. Further, they were forced to marry native women from different Sudanese tribes; some bore offspring from these mixed marriages. Some who converted returned to their original faith—after the fall of Mahdism. Some did not; Yusuf was one of those who returned. However, he did not cut his relationship or social connections with the Muslim community. For example, he helped the people of El-Kuwa city (286 km south of Khartoum) by supplying them with enough timber to finish the doors of the only town mosque.[226]

4.11 Yusuf kept his same first name

The practice of changing people's non-Islamic names after converting to Islamic religious beliefs during the Mahdist Revolution prevailed. It was unacceptable to keep the original first names of converts if those names had no background in the Islamic faith's history. For example, Yusuf kept his same name after conversion because 'Yusuf' is mentioned in the Islamic religious scripts and was nicknamed Yusuf El-Kibty (the Coptic Yusuf, denoting another person went by the name Yusuf). However, according to Mahdi's order, the first names of his two older brothers were changed. Mileka is a common Christian name of Arabic origin, possibly from the word 'malāk' (angel) and Mileka (the tiny, sweet angel). The name of 'Melaeka' became 'Is-hak' (Ishak) or 'Isaac' in English, a common name in the two beliefs. 'Joarjios' is a Coptic name of Greek origin for 'Georgios', translating to 'George' in English. 'Joarjios' changed to 'Ismail' ('Ishmael' in English); similarly, it is common in both beliefs. However, historically, Ishmael and Isaac were the names of two half-brothers, sons of Abraham.[227]

Similarly, the name of the Greek merchant Georgey Kalamantino was changed to 'Jaber El-Ansary',[228] and the Syrian merchant Georgey Istambolia's name became

[225] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 144.
[226] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 195.
[227] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 75.
[228] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 163.

'Muhammad Said El-Mouslimany' and nicknamed 'Islamboulia'.[229] However, Yusuf did not mention the conversion names of the missionary priests and nuns.[230]

As a general phenomenon, many conversion names were attached permanently to those who resided in Sudan after Mahdism fell, even after returning to their original faith. Thus, for example, Yusuf almost always mentioned his brother by his conversion name, 'Ishak' (Isaac), rather than Melaeka.[231]

The Mahdi even changed the names of some Muslims whose names were Turkish or denoted to the Turkish culture.[232]

4.12 His marital status

We know very little about his marital status or offspring, except he was married to his Coptic wife, Victoria.[233] But we do not know when he married her. However, he mentioned in his memoir that he has old ladies and children at home.[234] So this might mean his mother, his wife, his brother's wife and his late brother's wife—all with their children—since he mentioned he and his brother lived together in one house.[235]

> He may have had more than one wife during the Mahdism era and perhaps several children due to Khalifa's decree, as all should get married to more than a wife. This Khalifa's order was for two reasons. Firstly, to ensure that all Christians were not following their previous religious one-wife practice, and secondly, to solve the widows' growing number problem caused by wars deaths.

4.13 Yusuf's health condition

Yusuf's health condition mirrors the community's health state, availability and preferred medications according to communal beliefs. Regarding Yusuf's health, Mr Aglen mentioned Yusuf's health in his introductory chapter, speaking about him as 'the older brother'. He supposed Yusuf was older than his brother Ishaq/Mileka, for he was slightly

[229] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, Oxford, p. 65.
[230] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 83.
[231] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 202.
[232] Bedri, 1969, *The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*, London, p. 20.
[233] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 214.
[234] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 191.
[235] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 184–5.

white-haired and frail.[236] However, Yusuf was, in fact, the youngest brother. He suffered ill-health almost all his life; he was asthmatic from age 12.[237] Belief in the efficiency of natural medication prevailed at then. One such belief was that drinking alcoholic beverages could help cure asthma, which was why he and his wife, Victoria, were jailed.

Similarly, the shaman was well known and practised therapy through insight, cauterisation and natural herbal substances. This kind of therapy is still practised today. Yusuf mentioned he was cauterised on the chest by the shaman during an asthma attack.[238] However, Noam Al- Atrash, a genuine Syrian doctor, was available. Noam was locked down in Omdurman during the entire Mahdist period. Yusuf asked him to help to remove a bullet from his leg after the end of the last war.[239]

4.14 The influence of the Islamic religious teachings on Yusuf's culture

Yusuf Mikhail's history reflected the Islamic religious influence on his education and personality, as with many children of his generation. Although he returned later to his original religious belief, Coptic Orthodox Christianity, it became part of his culture and education. This phenomenon appears in most Mahdist revolutionaries, particularly young people from different faith backgrounds. So, many sentences in his memoir refer to Quranic verses besides some of the Sufism teachings. Some examples of what is stated in his account:

4.14.1 Quoting Quranic verses

He used the Quranic verse, '**It is Allah's kindled Fire**'[240] when he replied sarcastically to some people's belief in the usefulness of fighting with lances against the machine gun fire in the Battle of Omdurman. It refers to Sura number 104, 'al-Humazah' (The Slander) verse 6.

Likewise, he used the Quranic verse, 'Then the pains of labour drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She cried, **'**Alas! I wish I had died before this and was a **thing long**

[236] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 214.
[237] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 60.
[238] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 121.
[239] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 184.
[240] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 130.

forgotten'.[241] He used these words to describe the Khalifa's sad state after Slaten escaped Omdurman. After a while, he forgot his sadness and returned to normal.

The verse 'So Pharaoh and his people were **defeated right there and put to shame**'[242] was used when Yusuf described the shameful condition of the surrendered authorities of El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan province, to the Mahdi's army.

Similarly, he used the verse, '**And the disbelievers made a plan** (against Jesus), but Allah also planned—**and Allah is the best of planners**'[243] when he described the Mahdist army's siege cunning to El-Obeid.

He used these verses, 'They are those who donate in prosperity and adversity, **control their anger** and pardon others. And Allah loves the good-doers'.[244] And, 'Have you not seen those hypocrites who ally themselves with a people with **whom Allah is displeased**? They are neither with you nor with them. And they swear to lies knowingly'[245] to express the anger of the wild inhabitants for their unjust taxes.

In a similar situation, he used the verse, 'You will remember what I say to you, and **I entrust my affairs to Allah.** Surely Allah is All-Seeing of all His servants',[246] to describe people's dependence on God's will. This incident happened while resisting the siege of the Mahdi's army attack on El-Obeid.

Equally, he used the verse 'I did not create **jinn and humans** except to worship Me'[247] to express the Mahdi's happiness and took control of everything after the fall of Khartoum.

---

[241] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 138
refers to Sura number 19 'Maryam' (Mary) verse 23
[242] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 81
refers to Sura number 7 'al-A`raf' (The Elevated Places) verse 119.
[243] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 74
refers to Sura number 3 'Al-Imran' (The Family Of Imran) verse 54.
[244] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 22.
refers to Sura number 3 'Al-Imran' (The Family Of Imran) verse 134.
[245] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 22.
refers to Syra number 58 'al-Mujadilah' (She Who Pleaded) verse 14.
[246] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 70.
refers to Sura number 40 'Ghafir' (The Forgiving One) verse 44.
[247] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 102.
refers to Sura number 51 'ad-Dhariyat' (The Scatterers) vers 56.

4.14.2 Sufi teachings

The Sufism chant, a well-known one, is about the '99 names of God'; it is called the '*The Names and Attributes of God*'. Yusuf used two of those names, numbers 58 and 59, '*AL-MUBDI*' (The Originator, The Initiator) and '*AL-MU'ID*' (The Restorer, The Reinstater). He used these in his memoir in the opening sentence as the title.[248]

The Prophet's presence in a dream, called the 'Hadra Nabawya',[249] accompanied by the four great poles of Sufism (i.e., 'toroq', meaning orders)[250] in a night dream, is believed to be a declaration from God about a particular matter. Yusuf mentioned this expression the Mahdi used to convince his followers of his mission.

4.14.3 Islamic jurisprudence

There is something known as 'esoteric knowledge' in Islamic jurisprudence, which is the knowledgeability and the ability to comprehend what is *in*comprehensible to most people. He used 'esoteric knowledge' expressions, flattering the Khalifa's brother (head of one of the three main army brigades) that his spiritual knowledge was above their understanding.[251]

4.14.4 Religious supplications

Many expressions are taken from Islamic religious supplications; most are of Sufi origin. Some examples are 'the creative king', a supplication by Imam Abu Alhasan Alshazly[252] and 'The Revolving Astronomy', a supplication by Imam Ali.[253] Similarly, a

[248] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 3.
https://99namesofallah.name/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_God_in_Islam
[249] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 40.
http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p8281/mobile/ch02s03.html
[250] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 40.
http://www.almirajsuficentre.org.au/qamus/app/single/2136
[251] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 165.
https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/ikhlas/previousevents/mystic-motherland-africa-the-quran-and-the-esoteric-sciences/
[252] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 93.
[253] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 84.

prophetic saying, 'practice du'a (supplications) too much because du'a (supplications) repels the bad fate'.[254] He used it to describe the calamity of the attack on El-Obeid.[255]

4.14.5 General Islamic beliefs

He used the expression 'corpse of the cross' instead of 'crucifix' or 'cross' when mentioning the incident of accusing Georgey Istambolia, the Syrian Catholic, of secretly being Christian. The family's servant told the Mahdi earlier about George's hidden Christian religiosity despite his previous conversion to Islam. One of George's children (daughter)[256] still wore the crucifix.[257] The 'corpse of the cross' is an Islamic expression. Since punishment in Islam involves hanging the corpse on a cross after the execution, conversely, the known Roman punishment is the execution on the cross, commonly known in Christianity.[258]

4.15 His attachment to the local culture

Yusuf's attachment to his local culture appears in using countless aphorisms and words of wisdom. Some of them reflect his Egyptian background, and others his local culture, the Sudanese. He used to repeat them well in rhyme, similar to storytellers.

Examples of these include:

> *Get your omen, either bad or good, out of your children's mouths.* This aphorism means that whatever comments the children say about a particular incident might be a heavenly message. He used it when the children were divided into two groups in their game: the Mahdi and government teams. This occasion was long before the rise of the Mahdi in the West.[259]
>
> *Feed the mouth, then the eye gets ashamed*. This aphorism means if you are generous and an excellent tipper to somebody, he will be ashamed and give you whatever you ask, even if it is illegal. He used this aphorism when one of the Khalifa's guard members gave him information on the subject of the Khalifa's meeting with several army leaders. Those guards of Khalifa were young Ethiopian

[254] https://www.duas.org/prophetprayer/prophetssuppl.htm
[255] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 71.
[256] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, trans. F. R. Wingate, 3rd edn, Samson Low, Marston & Company, London, pp. 96–7.
[257] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 91.
[258] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 135.
[259] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 39.

war captives. Their Arabic language knowledge and understanding were minimal, valuable and essential for Khalifa's security.[260]

There is no distinction between the enemy or the good guy. Yusuf used this aphorism to describe the consequences of the fight and the blood gushing from people on both sides.[261]

Caution does not exempt from fate. He used this aphorism to explain the misfortune of the treasurer who oversaw 'Bayt al-mal' (i.e., 'House of Wealth', which historically was the Islamic financial institution). That treasurer was executed because of rivalry between him and the Khalifa's brother about some management duties.[262]

The strong one would eat the weak one. This aphorism was used to explain the severity of the war's fights.[263]

4.16 The Mahdist state created a condition of two contradictory feelings in Yusuf

Without a doubt, Yusuf found that he and many other Mahdist state regime elites were powerless after its fall. He felt the leverage he acquired in his close position to the Khalifa had suddenly vanished.[264] However, although the Khalifa's admiration of Yusuf, whom he considered no less than his son,[265] Yusuf mentioned he was still terrified of him, the same way as everyone else.

On occasion before the final war, the Khalifa required Yusuf's attendance, only to tell him he had investigated Yusuf's reputation at every gathering he attended and found Yusuf flawless. This extraordinary action prompted mixed feelings of happiness, apprehension and fear in Yusuf's mind.[266] On a similar occasion, there was a rumour about the Anglo-Egyptian army's movement towards Omdurman. He secretly wished for the end of this oppressive regime, only in front of his family, whom he trusted.[267] Similarly, Yusuf revealed his contradictory feelings when he mentioned his disappointment and sadness after hearing of Hicks' Pasha campaign defeat due to the desert guide deceiving trick.[268]

---

[260] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 158,177.
[261] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 74.
[262] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 134.
[263] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 126.
[264] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 146.
[265] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 145, 158.
[266] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 145.
[267] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 146–7.
[268] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 85–6.

In his memoir, Yusuf mentioned the inhuman actions and atrocities committed during Khartoum's invasion. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the violations committed by the fighters, saying, 'They don't know that the avenge of the powerful and the mighty is coming'.[269] Either way, he meant the mighty God or the coming army.

It seems others were dissatisfied with the inhumane and unjustified killings. For example, in one of the wars with Ethiopia, they found four priests during their daily prayers; the fighters asked their amir whether it was religiously lawful to kill them or not. The amir ordered not to touch them or confiscate any of their church's property.[270] The same amir expressed his dissatisfaction with the unjust condition of the state. Unfortunately, he secretly uttered his discontent and intention to a few people about a plan to escape with his army to Ethiopia. The spies disclosed this news to the Khalifa; his punishment was to be killed by poison.[271]

Although Yusuf was dissatisfied with the state's unjust conditions and had a limitless fear of the Khalifa and his unexpected reactions, he still had loyalty. He visited the Ministry of War while in Cairo, claiming some money belonged to his family and was previously recorded in the government's official books. Yusuf could not stand the criticism against the Khalifa and the Mahdi from the returned Egyptian army staff from Sudan. Markedly, he defended both vigorously, although he knew this action could put him in a position of accountability.[272] However, the War Ministry appreciated his suffering as a son of a previous Egyptian government employee in Sudan and cashed him five Egyptian pounds as a hardship allowance, equivalent to five gold pounds.[273]

4.17 The psychological impact that Yusuf suffered after the fall of the Mahdist state

Although Yusuf, like many others, suffered in one way or another from the Mahdist regime and expressed his wish for its fall, his heart was still with the system he found himself in and had developed. Finding himself jobless and powerless after a position of leverage with a secured salary was devastating. Therefore, he needed to draw a line between his life before and after Mahdism. A trip to Egypt achieved the remedy and the

[269] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 102.
[270] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 116–7.
[271] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 120–1.
[272] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 193–4.
[273] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 193.

psychological healing. Thus, the returned Copts accompanied him to Egypt, those who preferred to leave Sudan permanently after the fall of the Mahdism. However, Yusuf's brother Issac/Mileka tried to discourage him from the trip to Egypt because they had no connection with *relatives* after those 80 years in Sudan.[274]

The hosting of Yusuf by the Patriarch to and the offered social connection, including the church visits accompanied by the immigrating Copts from Sudan, helped him overcome the psychological trauma and reconnect him with Coptic culture.[275] Yusuf mentioned the returning Copts to Egypt brought their *relatives* to see and acquaint themselves with the Sudanese Coptic Amir. Those who preferred to stay in Sudan were the offspring of generations whose parents immigrated during the Sudanese invasion in the early nineteenth century and had no connection with relatives in Egypt.

However, despite his cultural reconnection, he did not turn on his previous patron, the Khalifa. On the contrary, he refused any comment against him, and similarly, he rejected an offer from Egyptian army officers to lead an army force to attack the escaped Khalifa.[276] This offer shows that Yusuf's trip to Egypt was some time after the Battle of Omdurman on 2 September 1898 and before the combat of Umm Dibakrat on 24 November 1899, where the Khalifa was killed.

4.18 Yusuf's favour on the Copts of the Mahdist State

The Copts of the Mahdist state owed Yusuf their lives, safety and security. Some time after Fr Joseph Ohrwalder escaped from Omdurman, the Khalifa's adherents discovered correspondence between an unknown person from the Islamic belief confessors (Muslamany, pl. Muslamanies)[277] to a relative in Egypt concerning his escape plan. This incident caused the Khalifa's fury and anger; he ordered the Copt amirs and the Muslamanies to attend an urgent meeting, each with his people. He blamed them for not watching each other and guaranteeing they did not escape. Instead, he accused them of planning the escape, especially after begging for forgiveness on a previous occasion for the

[274] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 192.
[275] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 192.
[276] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 194.
[277] The Muslamanies who were Jews or the Christians from any other nationality background rather than the Copts before professing the Islamic religious belief. They had to live all together in one suburb with someone from his associates for watching them.

escape of three priests. Yusuf defended his people by saying they were not 'Muslamanies' but Copts, and they knew nothing about an escape attempt. However, some Copts helped in several escape preparations. Fr Joseph Ohrwalder mentioned in his memoir that a Coptic friend called Sidhom arrived and handed Fr Bonomi a small piece of paper describing his escape plan from Omdurman.[278] Yusuf's defence convinced the Khalifa, but the Muslamanies' punishment was the change of their tribal amir with the Greek merchant George Kalamantino, and he gave them a final warning.[279]

In another incident, the Khalifa ordered one of his security guards late at night to inform Yusuf to see him immediately. It was not usual to happen late at night unless something severe happened. The Coptic families near Yusuf's house were distraught and expected the worse. They were worried until he returned and reassured them about their safety as long as he was their amir; the matter had nothing to do with the Coptic community.[280]

One source of the Mahdist state's income was confiscating properties of the punished. In a similar incident, a new amir for the South-East Sudan region confiscated the Copts and Muslamanies' properties for no legitimate reason besides sending them to the Khalifa in Omdurman. They travelled for several days and waited for the rest of the punishment. The Copts requested their amir to beg the forgiveness of the Khalifa. Fortunately, Yusuf successfully retained their properties and found suitable land to accommodate them in Omdurman. Concerning the others, the Muslamanies, they will only be under their amir's responsibility in his suburb.[281]

4.19 Conclusion

Yusuf Mikhail's life was a true example of many people from different ethnic backgrounds who lived through the Mahdist era for 18 years. However, it significantly impacted the younger generations more than others. During that period, Yusuf had many ambivalent feelings and emotions due to his distinctive position of strength, besides the mixed religiocultural teachings of what he learned during his childhood and acquired during

[278] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in The Mahdi's Camp*, London, p. 178.
[279] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, pp. 162–3.
[280] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 160.
[281] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail*, Omdurman, p. 140.

the Mahdist era. However, his Muslim companions' relationship did not end despite returning to his original faith. This phenomenon, which prevailed among many people, could be one of the positive outcomes of the controversial Mahdist period.

The demise of Mahdism created a vacuum in Yusuf's life. Its impact was mainly psychological, and he had to draw a line or separation between the Mahdism years and those later. His trip to Egypt was therapy; it returned his emotional balance, and he started a trade business in Omdurman. Although his memoir was far from a definitive literary text, he disclosed numerous political and social things that no one knew of sufficiently. Unfortunately, he passed away a few years after finishing his memoir before anyone could translate it or cross-examine its information for credibility.

Chapter Five

5. The Hijra was the primary developer of the Sudanese Mahdist style and characteristics:

5.1 Introduction.

5.2 The hijra and its symbolic meaning in the Islamic religious belief.

5.3 The African immigrations that occurred before and after Sudanese Mahdism.

5.4 The very first emigration (hijra) during the Mahdist revolutionary period was to Jabal (Mount) Qadir.

5.5 The most enormous mass emigration in Sudan's history was the hijra to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan (it moved to Omdurman later):

5.5.1 The hijra experience, as described in Coptic officer Yusuf Mikhail's memoir.

5.5.2 The hijra as it was described in Fr Joseph Ohrwalder's and Rudolf Slatin's memoirs.

5.5.3 Two historians of Sudanese descent mentioned the hijra incident in their memoirs.

5.6 The subsequent emigrations/forced displacements that occurred during the Mahdist state period:

5.6.1 The Baggara tribes' emigration:

5.6.1.1 Who are the Baggara (Baqqara).

5.6.1.2 The Baggara emigration, as mentioned in Fr Ohrwalder's memoir.

5.6.1.3 The Baggara tribes' emigration incident, as mentioned in Slatin's memoir.

5.6.1.4 Yusuf Mikhail was one of those who facilitated the Baggara settlement in Omdurman.

5.6.1.5 The historical narrative of the event as documented by the historians Noam Choucair (Naum Shuqair) and Peter Holt.

5.6.1.6 Malik, Mohammed Mahjoub's historical analysis.

5.6.2 The Gezira people emigration.

5.6.3 The Batahin tribe's emigration.

5.6.4 Shilluk tribe emigration.

5.6.5 The Copts and the Muslimaniya of El-Qadarif (Gedaref) emigration.

5.6.6 The immigration of the defeated Mahdist fighters with their families to Egypt after the Tushki (Tushka) battle.

5.7 Conclusion.

5. The Hijra was the primary developer of the Sudanese Mahdist style and characteristics

5.1 Introduction

Sudan encountered the migration phenomenon during its different ages for different motives. Almost all migrations before and after Mahdism were voluntary. They were either local by Sudan natives or by foreign tribal people from Sudan's neighbouring countries. Political uncertainty, economic motives, hunger, drought and wars caused most outside Sudan migrations. **However, the most significant and distinguished migrations were religious during the nineteenth century, particularly during the Mahdist era.[282] The influence of religious teachings and their historical heritage on the course of events was enormous since it was almost the only source of education for most people in Sudan and surrounding countries. The enormous immigrant numbers characterised these religious migrations within Sudan or abroad as a form of exodus. Initially, the concept and action of Hijra (migration) at the beginning of Islam were employed for religious reasons.[283] However, although used for religious beliefs and connotations during the Mahdist era, it was motivated by political intentions, which progressed to hostile intentions during the Mahdist state era.**

Based on early ideal Islamic teaching and values and the desire for unity in religious belief, the communal society of the Mahdist hijra eliminated and dissolved all social classes and differences between emigrants from different social backgrounds. Bearing in mind the time for the largest hijra to Khartoum took almost a year. During this long time, members of hijra interacted culturally with different backgrounds in Sudanese and non-Sudanese societies. This long cultural interaction and a life of collective participation in one common culture had advantages and disadvantages for the newly created society on personal and public levels. The emigrants' society was the nucleus of Omdurman's distinctive society, the society of the newly created city.

---

[282] Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 8, pp. 96–8, viewed 30 November 2020, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25653299

[283] Masud, M. Khalid 1990 'The obligation to migrate: the doctrine of hijra in Islamic law', in Dale F. Eickelman & James Piscatori (eds.), *Muslim Travellers: pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination,* Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 30–1.

The hijra during the Mahdist Revolution and later during the Mahdist state significantly impacted Sudanese society and its diverse ethnic values. Almost all later emigrations were forced displacements. Correspondingly, the latter substantially influenced Sudanese culture, including its political and social values, state economics, social habits and demographic changes. The hijra during the Mahdist Revolution in Sudan can be divided into two stages: the hijra before the fall of El-Obiedin 1883 (the defeat of General William Hecks' campaign) and the hijra after. Before the fall of El-Obied, the capital of Western Kordofan, emigration within Sudan was from Aba Island in 1881. It occurred mainly for political reasons, escaping from the wrath of the central government. In addition, religious motives had already existed. However, during that period, the immigration from abroad was from Nigeria purely for religious reasons.[284]

As for the emigrations after the fall of Western Sudan, they were the biggest. Notably, the major one that influenced Sudan's history was that which caused Khartoum's Government fall, which took nearly a year. Mainly, almost the entire population of Western Sudan, including the people of the land between the two Niles, emigrated to Omdurman as a populous exodus. Although many emigrations during Mahdi's era were voluntary, all subsequent emigrations during Mahdi's successor era were forcible displacements for political ambitions.

The emigration's social effects could be felt since the Mahdists Group Camp outside El-Obied before its fall in 1883. Mainly, the social habits acquired during the eight months of the massive emigration time, together with the community social life of Omdurman city, could be considered the origins that primarily developed Sudanese Mahdism's distinctive societal characteristics. The interaction between the different cultures, either Sudanese of different backgrounds or foreigners caught in Sudan during that era, had positives and negatives. This forced cultural blending of diverse backgrounds, languages and dialects created a new shared culture in Omdurman society. The Arabic language became the

[284] ابو منقة, الامين ١٩٩١, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية', *دراسات أفريقية*, جامعة إفريقيا الدولية, الخرطوم, ص ٦٤-٥.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2014, 'Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', *Dirasat Ifrikiyya*, International University of Africa, Khartoum, pp. 64–5, viewed 4 January 2021, http://dspace.iua.edu.sd/handle/123456789/1382 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261613760

primary spoken language of the state. Each group's native dialects or languages were used extensively in the local suburbs they were assigned in Omdurman city.

5.2 The hijra and its symbolic meaning in the Islamic religious belief

From an Islamic jurisprudence perspective and inherited religious literature, the commonly known meaning of 'hijra' is either the act of immigrating to move permanently or emigrating to move temporarily within a particular country. Both cases are for religious reasons and motives, parallel to the circumstances of Prophet Muhammad's emigration with his followers to Yathrib in the Arab Peninsula or his immigration from Mecca to Abyssinia in Africa. However, the latter was not permanent.[285]

The physical action of hijra, or emigration/immigration itself, has a specific religious meaning. For example, the physical act of the moving represents a dividing line that creates a boundary between two eras, the Dark and Light Ages. Similarly, the Mahdists' different hijras during its revolutionary period symbolically followed the Prophet Muhammed's Hijra that escaped the non-believers' persecution and, simultaneously, a separator between the two eras.[286]

5.3 The African immigrations that occurred before and after Sudanese Mahdism

Historically, the line between religious belief and politics is not easily defined in the Islamic religious faith. It explains the common saying 'Islam is a religion and a state', except in some cases of Sufism Islam. The massive emigrations (hijra) within Sudan regions marked the Mahdist period, and in some cases, permanent immigrants (Muhajirin) came to Sudan from some Western African countries. These African immigrations to Sudan occurred before and during Mahdism, even after the Mahdism era in Sudan in 1902. Religiopolitical motives characterised most.[287] For example, before the rise of Mahdism in Sudan, Muhammad Bello,

---

[285] Sijpesteijn, P.M. 2012, 'Hijra', *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st edn, Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner (eds), Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 3215–6, viewed 23 June 2022, https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah12099

[286] Raven, Wim 2018 'Hijra' *In Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edn, Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson (eds), viewed 23 June 2022, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30461

[287] Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2007, 'The patterns of the settlement of the West African immigrant communities in the Sudan during the first decades of the 20th century', *University of Khartoum,* Khartoum, pp. l35–51, viewed 20 November 2020.

ruler of the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria, instructed his people of Adamawa to seek information concerning the prophecy of expecting the Mahdi's appearance in Wadai or Darfur. Since then, immigration waves eastwards sought to join the expected Mahdi, occasionally occurring in different batches.[288] After the fall of Mahdism in Sudan, particularly during the ruling of the condominium period in 1906, 25,000 Nigerian Said ibn Hayatu followers immigrated to Sudan. They all settled in a village near Sinnar (300 km southeast of Khartoum).[289] This example denotes a notable demographic change from abroad during that era due to the hijra.

5.4 The very first emigration (hijra) during the Mahdist revolutionary period was to Jabal (Mount) Qadir

In 1881, the Mahdi Muhammed Ahmed and 8,000 followers, later called the *Ansar* (the allies or supporters), fulfilled the emigration's symbolic religious action. He emigrated from Aba Island (on the White Nile) to Jebel/Jabal (Mount) Qadeer/Qadir or Jebel Massa,[290] one of the Nuba Mountains in Western Sudan.[291] The Islamic religious symbol and representation of the immigration act mean placing physical activity as a dividing line or a boundary between the dark and light Ages.[292] The Mahdi modelled his emigration act on the Prophet Muhammed's Hijra at the beginning of the preaching of Islamic belief. Prophet Muhammed crossed with the believers from the darkness of paganism and idols worshipping to the light of the Islamic religious faith.

Similarly, the Mahdi believed he crossed with his people from the incorrect faith to the correct and authentic Islam teachings.[293] The emigration trip took 79 days of walking. The Mahdi's emigration to the Nuba Mountains was according to a vision from God, as he

---

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260434422

[288] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow,* Oxford, pp. 113–4.

[289] ابو منقة, الامين ٢٠٠١, 'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني', *جامعة الخرطوم*, الخرطوم, ص ١١٥-٦.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001,'The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism', *Khartoum University*, Khartoum, pp. 115–6, viewed 30 November2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263144988

[290] The Mahdi changed the name of the mountain to mount Massa sometime later according to an inherited religious narration about the appearance of the expected Mahdi.

[291] Simner, Mark 2017, *The Sirdar and the Khalifa,* Fonthill, Stroud, chapter 'The Rise of the Mahdi'.

[292] مالك, محمد محجوب ١٩٨٧, *المقاومة الداخلية للحركة المهدية*, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ٥٨.
Malik, M. Mahjoub 1987, *The Internal Resistance of the Mahdist Movement,* Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 58.

[293] Asher, Michael 2006, *'Khartoum: The Ultimate Imperial Adventure'*, Penguin, London, p. 57.

declared to his followers.[294] However, his escape was from the wrath of the ruling authorities following his followers, who killed several government soldiers on Aba Island. Further, the emigration trip was during the fasting month of Ramadan and, at the same time, during the rainy season. Therefore, it was almost impossible for the government to mobilise its troops and follow him in unsuitable conditions.[295] One significant aspect that helped the Mahdi successfully spread his religious Mahdist principles was mainly choosing tribal communities of Western Sudan. Notably, most of the region's populace had no significant religious affiliations, neither to Sufism nor any of the four dominant Islamic schools.[296]

The Austrian officer Rudolf Carl von Slatin was an Egyptian Government employee in Sudan since the 1870s. He was appointed Governor of Darfur province and a contemporary of the Mahdist movement from its beginning. He stated in his memoir that though the Mahdi's movement was initially purely religious and spiritual, the Khartoum Government was apprehensive of the growing number of followers required to militantly oppose the Mahdist movement at Aba Island. Due to a tight trick, the Mahdi's followers could defeat the fire of the government troops with sticks, lancers and sords alone.[297] Fearing the government's revenge, the Mahdi's followers advised him to emigrate towards Mount Qadir/Masa in Western Sudan. The followers' numbers were huge, requiring several wooden boats to cross the Nile to the river's west bank. Nevertheless, the number of followers continued to grow. He mentioned that Western Sudan's population was divided between supporters and opponents according to each group's benefit at the beginning of the movement.[298]

Ismail Abdul Qadir Al-Kordafani, the Mahdist historian and only historian to write his memoir during the Mahdist state era, wrote about many historical incidents. For example,

---

[294] شقير, نعوم ١٩٨١, *تاريخ السودان*, تحقيق وتقديم محمد إبراهيم أبوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ٣٣٩.
Shoucair, Naoum 1981, *History of Sudan*, M. I. Abu Salim (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 339.

[295] Clark, P. 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies,* University of Khartoum, vol. 14, p. 6.

[296] Malik, 1987, *The Internal Resistance of the Mahdist Movement/المقاومة الداخلية للحركة المهدية,* pp. 58–9.

[297] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, trans. F. R. Wingate, Edward Arnold, London, pp. 59–60.

[298] Slatin, 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, p. 66.

he detailed in his memoir the happenings of the Aba Island battle and the hijra to Mount Qadir with all the stop stations in detail.[299]

5.5 The most enormous mass emigration in Sudan's history was the hijra to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan (it moved to Omdurman later)

5.5.1 The hijra experience, as described in Coptic officer Yusuf Mikhail's memoir

Since the hijra, or the immigration in the jurisprudence of the Islamic belief, has religious significance, the Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad bin Abd Allah had to fulfil the religious symbolic references to acquire the legitimacy for his Islamic religious call (Dawa). Accordingly, legitimacy and political sovereignty follow. Immigration was not optional; it was mandatory and a sign of accepting the Islamic religious call and loyalty. The massive population displacement that emigrated on foot from Kordofan was unprecedented then as it is now in the history of Sudan. It was obligatory and forced emigration; it was not a choice for many people. Yusuf Mikhail described the number of people forced to emigrate to Omdurman as massive as a torrent of water. All the people were moving with all the potential household properties they could carry.

Consequently, the demand for camels, the only available transport at that time, was enormous. And as the number of fighters under each amir increased, there was a dire need for accountants/cashiers to manage the accounting regulatory system and organise each amir fighter's wage payment. Consequently, the demand for available Coptic government accountants was significantly high. Under these circumstances, Yusuf's biggest brother's only chance was to accept an offered job under one of the amirs in exchange for supplying his family with camels, replacing his previously confiscated camels and horses.[300]

No document stated the total number of immigrants from Kordofan to Omdurman (Omdurman was initially a small village on the Nile River opposite Khartoum). However,

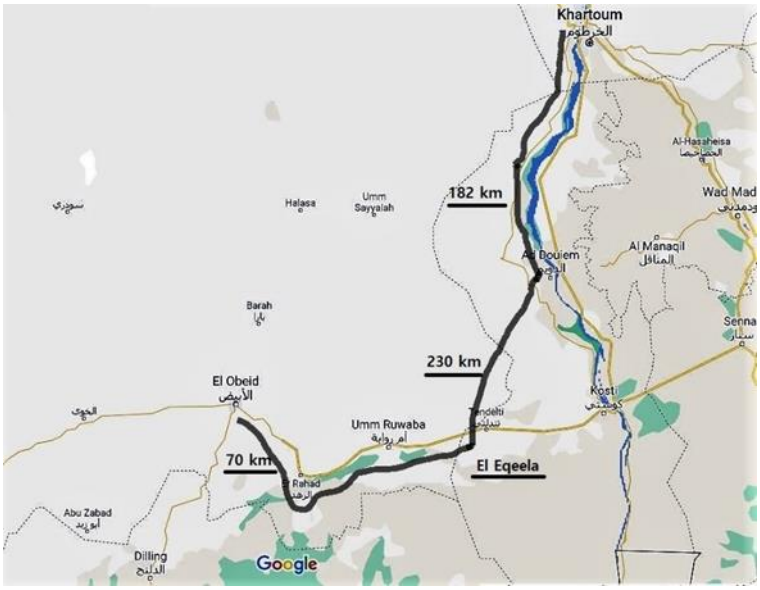
---

[299] الكردفاني, إسماعيل عبد القادر ١٩٨٢, *سعادة المستهدي بسيرة الإمام المهدي*, تحقيق محمد إبراهيم ابوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ص ١٢٦, ١٣٩-١٤٢.
Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, *The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*, ed. M. I. Abu Salim, Dar Al-Jeel, Bierut, pp. 126, 139–142.

[300] ميخائيل, يوسف ٢٠٠٤, *'مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان (شاهدعيان)'* , تقديم د. احمد ابراهيم ابوشوك, مركز عبد الكريم ميرغني الثقافي, امدرمان, ص ٩٤.
Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, Abdul Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, Omdurman p. 94. https://www.academia.edu/4075756/

Yusuf simply described the width of the moving mass, which included the fighters with artillery and the civilians, as a distance of a half-day walk across.[301] The vast number of emigrants was a massive human displacement of Western Sudan's populace. They stopped several times for several days during their trip at different rest stations. The total walking distance between El-Obeid and Omdurman was about 482 kilometres, or perhaps even more. Seventy kilometres between El-Obied and El-Rahad, 230 kilometres between El-Rahad and the White Nile city El-Doueim, and from El-Dueim to Omdurman along the White Nile River is roughly 182 kilometres.[302]

The estimated time spent on this trip was about eight months from the start, but the total walking time was nearly four months. According to Yusuf's dates calculations, the Mahdi declared his Mahdism in the 1297 Hijri (H) calendar, corresponding to 1880 on the Gregorian (G) one. His army captured the whole of Kordofan province in 1300 H, corresponding to 1883 G. He started the emigration in 1301 H, 1884 G.[303] However, during the emigration, the Mahdi decided to spend the fasting month of Ramadan (15 June 1884) and wait until the end of the rainy season (between June and August) before restarting moving. They reached Omdurman by December 1884. However, most did not settle until the Omdurman garrison surrendered in January 1885.



Map 2. The route of the emigrants' mass coming from Western Sudan to Khartoum

The trip was too long, and the demand for food was innermost. Also, Yusuf explained that his brothers earned their living on the journey by purchasing the available local products of each region and retailing them to the emigrants at a small profit, which helped

[301] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان*, pp. 94-5.
[302] https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1hjs3mIoZBblBP_CvxiP4w38STiY&hl=en_US&ll=14.418162663028165%2C32.2836166611552&z=8
[303] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان*, p. 103.

them buy necessities.[304] Similarly, he explained how he first joined the Mahdi's special security army division. The Mahdi admired Yusuf's personality when he offered him a drink of water for himself and his men. Consequently, the Mahdi joined him in his security forces. Though water was very scarce, Yusuf's family was in dire need; Yusuf preferred offering water to the Mahdi and his security forces over his family's needs.

Similarly, he explained how the Mahdist fighters he joined were looting the citizens' villages during their move. From their point of view and belief, this action was expectable and acceptable as long as they were the first people who pledged allegiance to the Mahdi and for the successful spread of the correct religious teachings.[305]

Here we see that during the hijra time, Yusuf was very young and susceptible to any behaviour changes. A significant shift in his moral behaviour and personality traits was opposite to what he had previously learned and grown on. Hypocrisy, iniquity and several other vices influenced his character during his leading position in the Mahdist state era.

5.5.2 The hijra as it was described in Fr Joseph Ohrwalder's and Rudolf Slatin's memoirs

The Austrian priest Fr Joseph Ohrwalder was a member of the Catholic missionary undertaken to Western Sudan. He was one of the foreign captives forced to join the Mahdist movement. Though they were forced to join Mahdism, they did not profess Islamic religious beliefs. However, he did not leave the El-Obied camp with the first emigration cohort; he gave valuable information about that historical action. He reasoned that the timing of the Mahdi's emigration, accompanied by the massive crowd of his followers from the El-Obeid region in Western Sudan towards Khartoum, was mainly determined by water availability. The Mahdi decided to move from El-Obeid as the followers' numbers increased; consequently, water demand increased in an area that had previously suffered from short supply. In addition, the nature of the underground wells of that region has a limited water supply out of the rainy season, which is between October and May.

Fr Ohrwalder mentioned in his memoirs that the growing number of people created fierce water competition between the Mahdi's followers. Similarly, this led to an expensive

[304] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان*, p. 95.
[305] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان*, p. 98.

water market. The crowd's emigration to a place with a better water supply was the only solution—however, the need to move created a transportation problem. The demand for riding camels and donkeys was huge, and availability was minimal. Therefore, the massive departure from the El-Obeid camp to the next station at El-Rahad started on 7 April 1884, and everyone should set fire to his hut as he left.[306] He described the vast procession that took three days to reach El-Rahad, usually taking one day and a half. The uninterrupted stream of human beings consisted of men, women and children, most walking accompanied by their family slaves. The camels, oxen and donkeys were used to carry the households and property. In particular, older people and women were transported on small beds fastened on camels. The enormous herds of cattle were moving in the same crowd as their owners.[307] As the mass kept moving, its number increased due to the new joiners; it was similar to a moving town. In every rest station, tents and temporary straw huts were set up. A market was erected to sell and buy food as well as other commodities by and to the same emigrant people.[308,309]

The Mahdi spent the fasting month of Ramadan at El-Rahad; by 8 August 1884, the crowd proceeded towards Khartoum. By the time of departure from El-Rahad, 204,000 more fighters had joined the mass. As a result, the newly merged number of fighters increased dramatically at every stop station. The next big rest station was the El-Dueim, where they walked along the White Nile until reaching the outskirts of Omdurman on 23 October 1884.[310]

Rudolf Slatin joined the Mahdist army at El-Rahad camp. He embraced the Islamic religious belief sometime before the spread of the Mahdism movement in Western Sudan to acquire the trust of his soldiers. Similarly, Fr Ohrwalder mentioned the water shortages; he stated the severe lack of water supply was the main reason for leaving the Obied camp. The Mahdi resolved the water supply scarcity by moving the camp to El-Rahad in April 1884, preventing quarrels over the water, and, at a later stage, they proceeded to move to Khartoum. Slatin described the El-Rahad camp as a sea of straw huts stretching as far as the

[306] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, trans. F. R. Wingate, 3rd edn, Sampson Low, Marston & Company, London, p. 101.
[307] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, pp. 99–102.
[308] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, p. 106.
[309] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan*, p. 95.
[310] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, p. 126.

eyes could see.[311] The water shortage created violent competition that progressed to physical fights between the slaves of different families.

One unique phenomenon was the minorities helping and looking after each other during this emigration. For example, Slatin looked after the French journalist Olivier Pain during the hijra period while he was sick until he died. Slaten looked after burying him and putting a sign on his grave.[312] Similarly, the Coptic man, a friend to the two Catholic fathers, helped with Fr Bonomi's escape plan.[313] Additionally, the Syrian Catholic merchant George Stambuli looked after the comfort and the needs of the fathers and the sisters of the Catholic missionary mission.[314]

5.5.3 Two historians of Sudanese descent mentioned the hijra incident in their memoirs

El-Kordofani, the Mahdist Revolution historian, was precise in his memoirs. For example, he mentioned that the Mahdi decided to spend the fasting month of Ramadan of 1301 H between the end of June and the end of July 1884 in El-Rahad. At the same time, the Madi wanted to be joined by the other Mahdist armies in the El-Rahad camp. He also detailed all the significant and minor rest stations and the time spent in each one until the crowd reached Omdurman. There were about 30 stops; eight months were spent moving until the crowd settled in Omdurman.[315]

In his memoir, the Sudanese historian Babikr Bedri mentioned joining the Mahdist forces later when the troops were near Khartoum. Also, he noted his father was summoned to join the advancing forces towards Khartoum for the second time. Previously, the warning was that any abstainer or late of the emigrants and all his possessions were liable for confiscation. However, there were some exceptions to these warnings. In his memoirs, he mentioned his brother Musa did not join the emigration crowd to Khartoum; he was left behind in their village with their family slaves cultivating their land.[316]

---

[311] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, *'Fire and the Sword in the Sudan'*, trans. F. R. Wingate, Edward Arnold, London, pp. 156–7.
[312] Slatin, 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, pp. 176–186.
[313] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, p. 178.
[314] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, p. 68.
[315] Al-Kordafani, 1982, *The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi/ سعادة المستهدي بسيرة الإمام المهدي*, pp. 322, 336–9.
[316] Bedri, Babikr 1969, *The Memoir of Babikr Bedri*, trans. Yousef Bedri, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 20–1.

5.6 The subsequent emigrations/forced displacements that occurred during the Mahdist state period

5.6.1 The Baggara tribes' emigration

5.6.1.1 Who are the Baggara (Baqqara)

The Baggara[317] are nomad tribes of Arab origin settled in the inner African regions. Their current population is nearly six million, spread across several African countries; Sudan is one. In Sudan, their living depends on cattle herding all over of Western Sudan region. They are a large ethnic group consisting of several tribes and clans. They have their own distinctive culture, different from African natives, and Islamic beliefs are their religion. Although they share the same religious belief as most African tribes of the region, they differ in many cultural aspects. The three major tribes in Sudan are Rizaygat, Habbaniya and Ta'aisha. Two of these tribes played an essential and particular part in Mahdism's rise; the Rizayqat and the Ta'aisha, Khalifa's tribe.[318]

5.6.1.2 The Baggara emigration, as mentioned in Fr Ohrwalder's memoir

Fr Ohrwalder was a contemporary of the Baggara emigration. He mentioned in his memoir that the Khalifa needed to have his tribe, 'El-Taisha', the sub-tribe of the Baggara tribes, supporting him in Omdurman's community to strengthen his ruling grip against the growing resistance. So, he ordered and forced his entire tribe population to emigrate from Kordofan to Omdurman–7,000 men–not including the women and children. Later this emigration created social problems, which the Khalifa himself regretted.[319]

The rivalry conditions between the Khalifa and the late Mahdi's relatives extended to any group of people or tribe who supported them or any tribe he felt could substantially endanger his regime. So, later, the Khalifa felt he required more supporters. He summoned the emigration of the whole population of the powerful Rezigat warrior tribe to Omdurman. Thirty thousand people, including women, children and the elderly, were forced to march to

[317] In Arabic, it means the cow owners and breeders.
[318] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State In The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, pp. 7, 161.
[319] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, pp. 308–9.

the Mahdist capital Omdurman to weaken the sway of the Northern Sudan Nilotic tribes and be under his continuous surveillance.[320]

These subsequent emigrations, particularly the Baggara tribes, created a disparate mosaic social structure among the different cultures and habits. The only common social bond between the different ethnicities of Omdurman's population was their religious practices. However, despite the unity of religious belief and practice, these demographic changes created more significant cultural differences and social problems in Omdurman's community.

5.6.1.3 The Baggara tribes' emigration incident, as mentioned in Slatin's memoir

Rudolf Slatin retold the incident of the Baggara emigration to Omdurman during his service in the Khalifa's security force. He stated in his memoirs that the Khalifa ordered all his tribal members, the Ta'aisha, to emigrate, marching from Kordofan to Omdurman. The main reason was his distrust of the riverine Northern Sudan Nilotic tribespeople. The only solution was to surround himself with the people of his tribe, his trustful supporters. He offered all possible amenities to satisfy them in their new environment.[321] However, he was later unconvinced by the numbers of his tribe's people, the Ta'aisha. So, he tempted the remaining Baggara tribes to march to Omdurman on a pilgrimage to the Mahdi's tomb, promising a glamorous new life in the city, exempting them from taxes and rewarding them with many allowances. Consequently, the Khalifa's supporters in Omdurman became the majority population. But this action came at the cost of decreasing his popularity.[322]

5.6.1.4 Yusuf Mikhail was one of those who facilitated the Baggara settlement in Omdurman

Yusuf Mikhail painted a detailed description of the incident in his memoir without explaining Khalifa's decision and motives for the emigration. He was one assigned by the Khalifa to supply food, means of comfort and anything needed by the big crowd. He detailed the name of each Western Sudan tribe that emigrated, big or small. Fifteen tribes and clans of the Baggara, including the Ta'aisha, arrived in the first cohort. The trip took more than three months, and the number of people was countless, as described in his memoir. They

[320] Ohrwalder, 1892, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahd's Camp 1882–1892*, p. 396.
[321] Slatin, 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, pp. 270–1.
[322] Slatin, 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, p. 326.

were like locusts on the ground. Driving their cattle, they finally arrived at the outskirts of Omdurman. The Khalifa mainly ordered his tribe members to emigrate first, to distinguish and honour them more than the others; only later did he summon the other tribes. He gifted each man of his tribe an honorary complete Mahdism uniform.[323]

Yusuf mentioned that this incident happened after the Ethiopian envoy offered the Khalifa the French flag to raise in front of the British creeping army to stop their advance. This offer implicitly meant the Mahdism state would be under the French Government's protection. However, the Khalifa refused the offer and preferred going to war against the Anglo-Egyptian army rather than being protected by a foreign country, France. Similarly, Yusuf's account stated that the Baggara emigration happened later in the Mahdist state era, particularly after the reconquest army left Egypt and advanced inside Sudan.

In Yusuf's memoir about the Baggara emigration incident, he avoided mentioning any adverse social outcomes resulting from the tribes' emigration to the Omdurman community, as most historians did. That likely reflected his hidden loyalty to the Khalifa.

5.6.1.5 The historical narrative of the event as documented by the historians Noam Choucair (Naum Shuqair) and Peter Holt

The Mahdi categorised his followers in honour according to their precedence of joining the Mahdism. Subsequently, the title, *Muhajireen* (the emigrants), was given primarily to those who followed the Mahdi from Abba Island to Mount Qadir. For example, Khalifa Abdullahi El-Taaishi was from the Ta'aisha tribe, one of the Baggara tribes; he was one of the Muhajireen because he emigrated earlier with the Mahdi to Mount Qadir. Accordingly, all this first group of emigrants should be given the Mahdi's priority in honour.[324] Realistically, the Baggara tribes later joined the Mahdism movement in Mount Qadir in Western Sudan, so they should be second or third in honour. However, they were prioritised and honoured by the Mahdi for contributing to his early war victories and the loyalty of Abdullahi El-Taaishi to him.

---

[323] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان*, pp. 148–151.

[324] شقير, ١٩٨١, *تاريخ السودان*, ص ٦١٧.
Shukair, 1981 *'History of Sudan'*, p. 617.

Nevertheless, this gave Khalifa Abdullahi and his tribe, the Ta'aisha, a special place in the Mahdi's heart.[325]

Although the Mahdist movement was primarily religiously driven and motivated, the Baggara tribes' main interest in joining Mahdism and guaranteeing the regime's continuation differed. In their understanding, Mahdism ended the government's unfair taxation system; the revolution to them was the lucrative valuables acquisition.[326]

5.6.1.6 Malik, Mohammed Mahjoub's historical analysis

In his book written in Arabic, *The Internal Resistance of the Mahdist Movement*, author Malik, Mohammed Mahjoub, listed the different reasons and the motives that led the Khalifa to force his populous tribes, the Baggara, to emigrate to Omdurman:

- A few months after the fall of the Khartoum Government, the Mahdi died. No longer was the religious motive the same as during the revolution stage. As a result, many revolutionists returned to their homelands, particularly the tribal people of Western Sudan.
- The Western Sudan tribal people initially supported the Mahdist Revolution and were central to its early revolutionary army. Later, the Northern Sudan Nilotic Arab tribes joined the process in an advanced stage of the revolution.
- Despite the late joining of the Arab Nilotic tribal people, they were relatively more educated and culturally advanced, besides having stronger religious connections, particularly with the Sufism orders. Moreover, most served in Egyptian government offices. Conversely, the relationship of the Western Sudan tribespeople was mainly with their rural lands and the tribal community lifestyle rather than the urban lifestyle. As a result, most of the Khalifa's supporters, his tribe people, returned to their homeland after the revolution's success.
- The animosity escalated between the Khalifa and the Arab Nilotic tribes, particularly with the late Mahdi's family from the Danagla tribe, predominantly about the Mahdism state Caliphate matter. As a result, once Khalifa Abdullahi El-Taaishi held

[325] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, pp. 120, 122.
[326] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 134.

the state leadership, he needed to increase his supporter numbers in Omdurman's community. This was essentially only available through his people, the Baggara tribes, by forcing their emigration to Omdurman.

- The Khalifa successfully supported his leadership of the state through the forced emigration of the Baggara tribal community to Omdurman. However, Omdurman's community was later divided into two groups. On the one hand, the Western Sudan tribal people of the Baggara, the nomad cattle herd breeders, and on the other, the Arab Nilotic tribal people. This condition created several social discrepancies and problems due to differences in educational and cultural habits.

5.6.2 The Gezira people emigration

The Gezira (the island) is the land that falls between the two Niles, the White and the Blue and is the most fertile land and significant crop supplier in Sudan. Therefore, to secure his grain reserves, the Khalifa's summoned the emigration of all Gezira farmers and their families to Omdurman. This action aimed to confiscate all their grain crops, disregarding the dependencies and the future consequences. As a result, the Gezira population had to move after demolishing their houses. Further, the Khalifa's order entailed forcing them to emigrate with their cattle herds to avert them from thinking of returning. This hasty action led to intensifying the famine and extending its effects. This incident occurred from the end of 1888 to the beginning of 1889 due to missing the agricultural season.

Ibrahim Fawzi was an Egyptian officer in Gordon's services in Khartoum. He lived during Mahdism in Sudan and was one of the few historians who wrote about Mahdism from its rise until its fall.[327] In his memoirs, he recounted the Gezira people's forced emigration; this action even included the farmers next to the Ethiopian borders. The main aim was to confiscate the farmers' stored annual crops, which they used to hide in unique, well-designed pits underground. Eventually, Omdurman's surrounding outskirts were insufficient to feed the emigrants' cattle herds. Later, most of those herds vanished or were sold very cheaply. A few months later, the Khalifa ordered the Gezira people to emigrate to their original regions.[328] However, they found that most of their stored crops were looted;

[327] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 275.

[328] فوزي, ابراهيم ١٣١٩هـ ١٩٠١م, *كتاب السودان بين يدي غردون وكتشنر*, الجزء ٢, مطبعة الآداب والمؤيد, القاهرة, ص ١٥٤-٥.

even so, the Khalifa ordered confiscating half of what little remained.[329] Eventually, they found themselves not the owners of their land but workers on it because its ownership was distributed among the Khalifa's tribe's people.[330]

5.6.3 The Batahin tribe's emigration

The Batahin tribe is one of the cattle herders in Sudan, occupying the area east of the Blue Nile. They were among the first supporters of the Mahdist Revolution and followed the Mahdi to Mount Qadir. As a reward, the Mahdi appointed one of their people as a subordinate. But, they disappointedly abused their power, in addition to the Khalifa's suspicions of them because of their strong alliance with the late Mahdi. Further, a considerable number of them had escaped the jihad obligation. So, the Khalifa ordered a disciplinary campaign army. As a result, the Khalifa's army killed nearly 2,000 fighters and ordered about 3,000 men, excluding the women and children, to emigrate to Omdurman as prisoners with their cattle.

When they arrived in Omdurman, the Khalifa randomly ordered 150 of them to be punished. Fifty men were punished by beheading, 50 by chopping a leg and a hand diagonally, and the other 50 by just chopping a hand; most died in the following days. Slatin was more specific in giving the total number of dead people as 67. He mentioned that death by decapitation numbered 23, and the rest was by hanging, which did not include the chopped their hands and legs.[331] Their cattle were confiscated and sold cheaply; half a thaler was the price for a single sheep.[332] Both children and good-looking women were taken and enslaved as war captives. Some were given to the amirs' possession as concubines, and some were offered for sale in the slave market. As for the rest, they added to the number of beggars in Omdurman.[333,334]

Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., *'The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener'*, part 2, El-Adab and El-Mouaid Press, Cairo, pp. 154–5.

[329] Fawzi, 1319 H, *The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*, part 2, pp. 198–9.

[330] Slatin, 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, trans, p. 327.

[331] Slatin, 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, p. 268.

[332] Fourty Turkish thaler equal seven British pounds.
Fawzi, 1319 H, *The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*, part 2, p. 199.

[333] Fawzi, 1319 H, *The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*, part 2, pp. 221–2

[334] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 177.

5.6.4 Shilluk tribe emigration

The Shilluk is one of the South Sudan Nilotic tribes; they occupy the region of Bahr al-Ghazal province, and their livelihood is from grazing cows. Their land was used as the exile punishment region throughout the Mahdist era. During the famine year, they refused to supply the central government with the required amount of grains per the Islamic religious tax obligation, the Zakah. Their retribution was killing many of them, including their tribal chief and confiscating their herds of cattle. Additionally, they were forced to emigrate to Omdurman, and many of their people were enslaved. Alone, the Khalifa recruited 5,000 of their young men and those considered the luckiest to his private guard forces. Further, their women were sold on the Omdurman slave market; due to the excessive number of the supplied enslaved women, each sold for just a few thalers, i.e., less than one British or Egyptian pound.[335,336]

5.6.5 The Copts and the Muslimaniya of El-Qadarif (Gedaref) emigration

El-Qadarif region lies near the Ethiopian borders in the southeast of current Sudan, one of Sudan's most fertile lands. It is distinguished by containing one of Sudan's most significant mechanised rain-fed massive crop projects. Before the Mahdist period, several Copts, Christian Syrians and Greeks bought land and invested in these agricultural projects. During the Mahdist era, those Christians who converted to the Islamic religious belief were categorised into two major groups, the Copts group or tribe as they were named and the Muslimaniya tribe, which included all the rest of the converted Christians.[337] However, Yusuf Mikhail mentioned in his memoirs the Khalifa's the new representative for the El-Qadarif region, confiscated all the lands and the belongings of all the converted Christians, Copts and Muslimaniya for no apparent reason.

Additionally, he ordered their emigratation to Omdurman with their families and see what the Khalifa would decide about their fate. The memoir did not mention their numbers,

[335] Fawzi, 1319 H, *The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*, part 2, p. 237.
[336] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 209.
[337] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 65.

but Yusuf noted that hiring a big wooden boat was necessary. Therefore, we can estimate the numbers, including their families, to be around 200–250 people.[338]

5.6.6 The immigration of the defeated Mahdist fighters with their families to Egypt after the Tushki (Tushka) battle

One of the Mahdists' fatal miscalculations was believing they could conquer Egypt with the same abilities and tactics they followed in defeating the Egyptian forces in Sudan. Based on the absolute faith in the Mahdi's prophesy in extending the Mahdist movement beyond Sudan, starting from Egypt. Therefore, the Khalifa equipped an army of several thousand fighters marching from Omdurman crossing the borders to conquer Egypt. Eventually, the army was defeated in August 1889 after three fierce battles near Tushki village inside the current Egyptian boundaries. Finally, they lost the war, and their army leader was killed; the famine's effect and the defeat were costly and bitter for the fighters.

Moreover, since the Khalifa's order was to wage war with the fighters' families to prevent anyone from escaping the fight, the defeat was extra disastrous for the families' members: about 1,500 fighters were killed, and 5,000 war captives were forced to immigrate to Egypt. This included civilians, women and children.[339] Five weeks later, 2,600 more civilians from the Northern Sudan region voluntarily immigrated to Egypt as refugees due to the severity of the famine.[340] The Mahdist historian Babikr Bedri was one of those war captives.

5.7 Conclusion

The multiple migrations, either locally through forced displacement or voluntary immigration from Sudan's neighbouring countries, created demographic changes in the local Sudanese community's social structures. As a result, most, if not all, of Sudan's population poured into one spot, Omdurman. These local emigrations and displacements also created complicated economic problems. As described by contemporary historians, Omdurman was

---

[338] Mikhail, 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan/(شاهدعيان) مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنائى فى السودان*, p. 140.

[339] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 182.

[340] Holt, 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, p. 184.

a multilingual community; one could find every race, language and dialect of the Sudanese people.

The hijra created the conditions for different cultures to intermingle, which had positives and negatives in the Mahdist capital. As for the negatives, we find these mainly stated by European memoirs due to the vast gap in customs and cultural differences. Conversely, some adapted to their new environment. They learned how to help and support each other. For example, one Italian priest admitted they acquired decent social habits and local cuisine items.[341]

The big winners were the Baggara tribes' emigrants from Western Sudan. They obtained power and wealth in addition to interacting with different cultures and civilisations, which were much higher than theirs. With this, they gained a definite civilisation boom. As for the losers, this was mostly Sudan's remaining population.

Every impression given by any of the contemporise historians stated in their memoirs completed the picture of Omdurman's community during the Mahdism era.

[341] Rosignoli, C. 1967, 'Omdurman During the Mahdiya', trans. ed. F. Rehfisch, *Sudan Notes and Records*, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, vol. 48, pp. 47–8.

Chapter Six

6. The demographic and social impact of the Mahdist armies' wars on the general population, particularly on ethnic minorities:

6.1 Introduction

6.2 The nature of wars, their customs and fighter behaviours in Sudan's tribal communities

6.3 The attack and the surrender of Western Sudanese cities:

- **6.3.1 El-Tayara city**
- **6.3.2 El-Obeid city.**

6.4 The surrender of the Omdurman military garrison and establishment of the Mahdism capital.

6.5 The situation in the capital, Khartoum.

6.6 History of the city of Khartoum.

6.7 The origin of the name Khartoum.

6.8 Khartoum's population throughout the years.

6.9 The siege that preceded the fall of Khartoum.

6.10 The consequences of the siege.

6.11 The impact and dependencies of the long siege:

- **6.11.1 Political.**
- **6.11.2 Economical.**
- **6.11.3 Moral.**
- **6.11.4 Creativity.**

6.12 Khartoum's massacre.

6.13 Khartoum before and during the holocaust day.

6.14 The carnage of Khartoum and the unspeakable atrocities that occurred.

6.15 The total number of victims killed.

6.16 The political situation that followed Khartoum's fall.

6.17 The controversial stories about Gordon's death.

6.18 The condition of Khartoum after the massacre.

6.19 Women's status during the Mahdism era.

6.20 The war looting practice.

6.21 What was left of Khartoum's population.

6.22 The Europeans and foreigners who were in Khartoum.

6.23 Conclusion.

6. The demographic and social impact of the Mahdist armies' wars on the general population, particularly on ethnic minorities

6.1 Introduction

It was noticeable that the main motives igniting the Mahdist Revolution were purely economic due to the Egyptian Government's mismanagement and corruption of its agents in Sudan. One of Sudan's mismanagement systems was the government appointees' recruitment system of the provincial governors. The practice was that employers pay the government for employing them, rather than the opposite, paying them salaries for their service. This practice was in return for giving them full freedom in their ruling methods. In addition, that system gave them the privilege of many different business trades, including the lucrative slave trade, conditional on collecting taxes on the government's behalf, facilitated by offering them government forces protection.

Moreover, dissatisfaction and increased anger were caused by the problem of excessive tax rises. The expenses of the Suez Canal construction, the overspend on the Canal opening ceremony and ensuing celebrations led to the government's financial distress in Egypt and Sudan, leading to the tax increase.[342] However, though the reasons for the uprising were initially economical, the revolution took a religious turn and motives due to the Sudanese community's profound religious sentiment and culture. We should remember that at that time, the religious revolution model was the only known model of revolutions in the Sudanese culture and educational background, which extended from the inherited religious history and culture. The general education level has much to do with people's fates, destinies and countries. During that time, Egyptian students were sent abroad to France to acquire higher education in various science fields, contributing to the educational and cultural renaissance. At the same time, Sudanese students were only sent to Al-Azhar for religious education through self-funded efforts. Abd El-Kader El-Kordofany was an excellent example. He was educated at Al-Azhar Mosque religious institute and was the only Mahdist chronicler of all revolutionary events during the era that preceded the Mahdist

[342] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, pp. 4,8.

state period.[343] Therefore, religious education was the sole inspiration of the Sudanese people for the Mahdist Revolution to reject the current political and economic situation.

The revolutionists believed the main reason for the existing calamities was deviating from the original Islamic religious teachings. That was the primary motive for the spiritual-religious revolution, eventually leading to fanatism. Ironically, Egypt and Sudan were under the Ottoman Empire's occupation, and the last Islamic Califate was in the Ottoman Empire, which was considered the protector and leader of Islamic teachings. Eventually, public anger and discomfort led to the religious revolution, which led to religious fanatism and violence, resulting from extreme doctrinal teachings and exceptional religious textual interpretations. Violence has always been expected in the history of revolutions. Sudan was not excluded; the course took the sacred aspect, which gave it the excuse and legitimacy for the cost overruns and violent abuse. During the Mahdist Revolution stage, it was against the Egyptian governing body and every government employee, including wealthy merchants of all different religious backgrounds and nationalities. However, later during the Mahdist state era, particularly during the Khalia's period, he was in first place against the revolution's foremost leaders and supporters and against everyone uncooperative with them.

Ethnic minority residents, including foreigners, particularly the wealthy and those of different religious beliefs, suffered the most during the revolution. At that time, there were many foreigners in Sudan since it was a land of opportunity and fast wealth. They were forced to change their religious beliefs in addition to confiscating their belongings, except very few were exempted, as in the case of Yusuf Mikhail's family.[344] However, during the state era, their sufferings were not more than the rest of the population's but even more minor. The frustration and hopelessness could be referred to the cultural background differences, customs and traditions of most of the local population.

The revolutionary stage was mainly characterised by violence, bloodshed, profound demographic shift and subsequent problems; it affected most of Sudan's cities, particularly

---

[343] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', analysed by M. I. Abu Saleem, Dar Al-Jeel, Bierut, p. 11.
الكردفاني, إسماعيل عبد القادر ١٩٨٢, *'سعادة المستهدي بسيرة الإمام المهدي'*, تحقيق محمد إبراهيم ابوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ١١.

[344] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan'*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, Abdul Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, Omdurman pp. 75–6, 78, 80. https://www.academia.edu/4075756/
ميخائيل, يوسف ٢٠٠٤, *'مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنافى فى السودان (شاهدعيان)'*, تقديم د. احمد ابراهيم ابوشوك, مركز عبد الكريم ميرغني الثقافي, امدرمان, ص٧٥-٦, ٧٨, ٨٠.

its capital Khartoum and other major ones. The new Sudanese capital, Omdurman, was established during the state era. **Significantly, the clans' and tribes' war practices became the state's practices and policy. Additionally, most social changes and habits occurred during this era, including deteriorating values, morals, religious transgressions and spurious practising. At the same time, it revealed the human side of people and their cooperation during times of distress. Further, the population's social structure and the ethnic communities' composition were deeply affected, particularly among minorities who previously held different religious beliefs; they learned how to adapt to the current situation.** The Mahdism era and its effects on Sudan can be divided into two, before and during Omdurman, considering that the effective Omdurman period started practically from the beginning of Khalifa's ruling era.

Chaos and bloodthirst were prevalent and profound during the revolution. However, it is noteworthy that almost all victims were males, and only a few female victims committed suicide of their own free will, as in the case of Khartoum's fall and other cities. That was because the women and the mature unmarried girls were considered part of the war spoils, which explains the vast difference in victims' gender numbers. The fortunate males from all the other different religious faiths who survived for one reason or another had to profess the Islamic religious belief; otherwise, they were killed, as happened to some others. Exceptionally, during Mahdi's era, some Christian clergy persons were exempted from killing when refusing to profess the Islamic faith. However, as in the case of the El-Obied Coptic priest, he was exempted, but his two boys were killed.

Similarly, the priests and the nuns of the Austrian Catholic Mission were also exempted.[345] However, they survived by accepting the Islamic faith but were obliged to fulfil all Islamic faith obligations, such as the daily five prayers in the mosque. Polygamy is one of the Islamic faith permissions but not a religious commitment. However, during his era, the Khalifa obliged mainly converted Christians and Jews, besides Muslims, to provide for widows by marriage due to the increased number of war victims. Sudan's cultures are tribal habits; marriage out of the tribe or the clan community is uncommon. This forced polygamy led to interracial marriages due to the limited availability from the same ethnicity or clan.

[345] Noble Quran, Surah 5, *'Surah Al-Ma'idah'*, verse 82.

This Khalifa decree significantly impacted the general Omdurman community, particularly ethnic minorities, with its social consequences.

6.2 The nature of wars, their customs and fighter behaviours in Sudan's tribal communities

The Sudanese community is a tribal one, as in most African countries, and one of its people's characteristics is courage and bravery. War between the tribes is a normality from the beginning. It is a feature of tribal communities, which sometimes reaches the point of brutality. So, it is natural that the tribal people of Sudan were and still are warriors. For example, Nur Bey Angara, a man who served under a slave trader, later under General Gordon, finally joined the Mahdist army. A bad revenge habit after killing the enemy was to slit them and eat their kidneys (liver) raw.

Similarly, Slatin Bey told Fr Ohwalder that the warriors of the Masalit tribe habitually made waterskins from their killed enemies' skin, and he owned two of those.[346] This behaviour and innate nature extended to their morals and character. One Sudanese moral is that it is shameful for anyone sentenced to death to beg for forgiveness or manifest moral cowardness during his execution.[347]

This kind of war's nature and warrior behaviour dominated all Mahdist Wars. For example, in one war against the Ethiopians, warriors raided a town on the border. They killed almost all the men, threw an old Coptic priest off a high building to his death, burned down the city and carried thousands of Abyssinian women and girl captives to Omdurman as concubines.[348,349,350] Nonetheless, what occurred while invading the towns of Western Sudan and Khartoum was not better but even worse.

6.3 The attack and the surrender of Western Sudanese cities

Few differences exist between the city invasions and their surrender from the point of people's suffering. However, two historians wrote extensively about Western Sudan's wars during Mahdism. Yusuf Mikhail was one and the only historian who was a

[346] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, trans. F. R. Wingate, 3rd edn, Samson Low, Marston & Company, London, p. 237.
[347] EL Zubeir Pasha 1913, *'Black Ivory and White'*, trans. H. C. Jackson, B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, p. 37.
[348] EL Zubeir Pasha 1913, *'Black Ivory and White'*, p. 38.
[349] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', trans. F. R. Wingate, Edward Arnold, London, p. 255.
[350] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 230.

contemporary of the period and wrote about the siege and El-Obeid's surrender. He also had reliable information about what happened in the nearby towns. The other, Fr Joseph Ohrwalder, one of the Catholic missionary priests, was outside El-Obeid and El-Tayara cities. However, he obtained reliable firsthand information from other missionary members in El-Obeid during the siege and the surrender. Additionally, he documented information circulating about the brutal invasion of El-Tayara city. Moreover, the Egyptian military commander Ibrahim Fawzi gave reliable information about several sieged towns because of his military position. However, the most important and noteworthy Western Sudan cities were El-Obeid and El-Tayara.

6.3.1 El-Tayara city

El-Tayara is a city near El-Obeid, and it was under the financial auditing duty and management of the central city El-Obeid. El-Tayara was a large commercial centre for the Arabic gum trade and one of the first cities to fall to the Mahdist revolutionists. The general public's anger over the government's mismanagement and religious justification of the Mahdist movement led to widespread chaos and excessive violence in the city's invasion. The Mahdi released a decree based on a religious matter (Fatwa) that everyone who killed a Turkish/Egyptian soldier would go to heaven without any doubt, regardless of whether the person they killed was a Muslim or non-Muslim. This Fatwa is even considered a religious transgression against Islamic teachings. It was a sufficient excuse to commit the worst atrocities. Yusuf Mikhail mentioned that most of the city's rulers, dignitaries and foreigners were killed. He noted that the 'dervishes' (the old name given to the Mahdi's followers) brutally killed young children by throwing them in the air and catching them by the tips of the lancers. And many women chose to commit suicide after the death of their husbands by falling on their husbands' swords rather than being taken captive.[351]

The Egyptian military commander, Ibrahim Fawzi, wrote in his memoir that the number of warriors from the two Arab tribes that invaded El-Tayara city exceeded 50,000, while the total number of government soldiers was only 500. Conversely, the number of merchants in the city totalled 10,000; all the government soldiers were killed, and only 20 of the 10,000 merchants survived. There was a focus on exterminating all new generations. As

[351] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan'*, pp. 68–9.

Yusuf Mikhail mentioned, they killed young children by throwing them in the air and catching them on the tips of the spears; they even killed around 1,000 pregnant women by slitting their stomachs and pulling out the fetuses.[352] The same practice of killing women and children occurred in the invasion of the nearby city of Asahf.[353]

Unfortunately, we have no detailed records about how many or who was killed from different ethnic descents and backgrounds.

6.3.2 El-Obeid city

El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan province, was a significant city that suffered from the atrocities of surrendering and its consequences. The city's population at that time was around 100,000, as Fr Ohrwalder, Fr Luigi Bononi, and Egyptian military commander Ibrahim Fawzi mentioned in their memoirs.[354,355] The city's siege lasted six months, from 2 April 1882 until the end of September, with severe armed resistance. Food scarcity caused a severe famine.[356] The sorghum price, the main food item and source of affordable carbohydrates for most of the populace, rose 35 times until it reached 65 golden pounds for about 3 kilograms or less. They ate even tree bark, roasted Arabic gum and boiled and ate leather products and donkey and horse meat, considered luxuries.[357,358] The famine and poor health conditions instigated severe diseases; one layman, two sisters and a priest named Giovanni Losi from the Catholic Mission group passed away. This situation was no better for the rest of the people—in fact, it was worse. Everyone became weaker, and no healthy people could be found to dig graves for the dead, leaving the corpses to rot.[359]

---

[352] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, El-Adahb and El-Moayyed Newspaper Press, Cairo, p. 104.

فوزي, إبراهيم ١٣١٩هج ١٩٠١م,'*كتاب السودان بين يدي غردون وكتشنر*', جزء ٢-١ مطبعة الآداب والمؤيد القاهرة, ص ١٠٤.

[353] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 11.

[354] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 35.

[355] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 109.

[356] Multiple authors 1900?, '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', James Sangster & Company, London, p. 495.

[357] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, 'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan', pp. 76–7.

[358] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, 'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892', p. 52.

[359] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', pp. 498–500.

When the city surrendered on 19 January 1883,[360] everything was confiscated from the government offices and houses of the city's notables and merchants, particularly the wealthy foreign merchants. Yusuf described the confiscated money and properties as 'humped in piles'. Everyone was inspected personally; women were searched down to their underclothes and private parts, particularly those of Egyptian or Turkish origin (and any light-skinned women). They were tortured vigorously to disclose their belongings.[361,362] They even exhumed graves searching for money, particularly gold, as with one of the deceased Catholic missionary priests.[363]

El-Obeid flourished, with many different nationalities and races seeking wealth. However, most foreigners had moved to Khartoum after the first invasion and surrender of the significant Western Sudan cities.[364] Fortunately, due to his previous distinctive government position, besides the amnesty that the Mahdi accorded Yusuf's brothers, all their family members could peacefully leave the sieged city. Additionally, all their extended family, neighbours and those taking refuge with them could accompany them.[365] However, this did not prevent other Copts (both men and women) from being tortured by flogging for two weeks to guide them to their precious possessions. Many did not survive the torture and died inhumanely, as with many others.[366] Despite this, the Coptic clerks were distributed as clerks to the Mahdist army's different sections to regulate its income sources and confiscations.[367] During the city's invasion, the two sons of the Coptic priest of the El-Obeid church were killed, possibly because they resisted the Mahdists or refused to profess Islam.[368] According to Sharia law, the Mahdi ordered his followers to spare the lives of three

---

[360] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 56.
[361] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, pp. 81–2.
[362] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 124.
[363] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 58.
[364] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, p. 60.
[365] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, p. 82.
[366] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', pp. 148–9.
[367] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 59.
[368] Tawadros, Najib Yessa, and Abd al-Sayed, Zahir Yacoub 2007, *'The expedition of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Land of Kush (Sudan): from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century'*, The Centre of The Spiritual Radiation - the Diocese of Khartoum and the South Sudan and its minions, p. 125.
تواضروس, نجيب يسى, وعبد السيد, زاهر يعقوب ٢٠٠٧, *'رحلة الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية في أرض كوش (السودان): من القرن التاسع عشر الى القرن الواحد والعشرين'*, مركز الإشعاع الروحي-إبارشية الخرطوم والجنوب وتوابعها, ص١٢٥.

Catholic priests, four nuns and possibly the Coptic priest as long as they offered no armed resistance.[369,370] However, without pressuring them, this did not prevent him from preaching peacefully to the Catholic clergy staff, enumerating the benefits of the Islamic faith.[371,372] The Mahdi was very generous to them. However, the Syrian merchant George Istanbulia offered the Mahdi a considerable sum of money as ransom to spare their lives, which the Mahdi refused to take.

Conversely, the Khalifa was historically cruel and gruesome in his punishments. For example, he distributed nuns to the emirs as enslaved people. Similarly, he ordered the nuns to walk barefoot from El-Obeid to El-Rahad. Their crime was refusing to profess Islamic religiosity.[373] Later, George Istanbulia was appointed their guardian by the Mahdi's deputy, Khalifa Abdullah. He was responsible for them, looking after their needs, and was honest and faithful.[374,375] Of the four surviving sisters, only one died before the immigration to Khartoum, and the other three were falsely married to three Greek merchants.[376,377] Unfortunately, we have no documented information about the number of people killed, women taken as concubines or their ethnic background in El-Obeid.

The Mahdist Revolution generally changed many people's values by exploiting religious teachings and textual interpretations; some changes were for the better, but others were for the worse. For example, Yusuf Mikhail mentioned that general societal values were affected after the Mahdist practice of confiscating people's belongings. Thus, the virtue of hospitality and honouring the country's Arab tribes' guests were no more.[378,379]

---

[369] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 46.
[370] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 495.
[371] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 42.
[372] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 496.
[373] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 500.
[374] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 46, 68.
[375] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 498.
[376] One of the sisters preferred to stay with her husband Dimitri Cocorempas and she had offspring of him.
Guissepe Cuzzi 143
The Sirdar and the khalifa-Chapter 13 p. 184
[377] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 500.
[378] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, p. 36.
[379] Pallme, Ignatius 1844, *'Travels in Kordofan'*, J. Madden and Co., London, pp. 103, 106.

On the other side, ethnic minorities learned to care more for each other for their wellbeing, one of the advantages of these general catastrophes. Similarly, Yusuf's family accepted everyone who came to them to escape from the sieged city before its fall.

6.4 The surrender of the Omdurman military garrison and establishment of the Mahdism capital

Map 3. Khartoum, the triangular capital of Sudan

Before the fall of Khartoum, Omdurman was a tiny village and crossing point to Khartoum situated on a spacious sandy plain. It was mainly a military garrison and telegraph office, and it was located on the western bank of the White Nile opposite the meeting point of the two Niles: the White and the Blue.[380] Historians believe the name Omdurman *(Umm-Durman)* derived from the Arabic 'Mother of Durman', besides a few other suggestions. However, long before the Mahdia, the site was known as 'Washal'.[381] Therefore, the spot of Omdurman was the most suitable crossing point for merchants and anyone travelling from Western Sudan to Khartoum, the capital.

Similarly, the Mahdi reached the outskirts of Omdurman on 23 October with his troops and the emigrant mass.[382,383] His temporary camp remained there until the fall of Omdurman's garrison.[384] Previously, the siege of Khartoum went on for several months before Omdurman's. As Khartoum's siege tightened, Governor-General Gordon Pasha ordered most Egyptian soldiers of Omdurman's garrison to return to Khartoum. Still, only one army company numbering 200 soldiers, stayed to defend the fort.[385,386] The siege of Omdurman by the Mahdi troops lasted over two months. It began on 19 November 1884

---

[380]Abu Saleem, M. Ibrahim 1979, *'Khartoum history'*, 2nd edn, Dar El-Jeel, Beirut, p. 53.
أبوسليم, م. إبراهيم ١٩٧٩, *'تاريخ الخرطوم'*, الطبعة الثانية, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ٥٣.

[381] Kramer, Robert 2010, *'Holy City on the Nile: Omdurman during the Mahdiyya, 1885–1898'*, Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, pp. 21–2.

[382]Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, pp. 377, 495.
شقير, نعوم ١٩٨١,*'تاريخ السودان'*, تحقيق تقديم محمد إبراهيم أبوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ٣٧٧, ٤٩٥.

[383] Holt, M. 1958, *'The Mahdist State In The Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow'*, 2nd edn 1970, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 101.

[384] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 379–380.

[385] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 386.

[386]Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 445.

and ended on 5 January 1885 with the garrison's surrender due to supply shortages.[387] However, the Mahdi did not enter Omdurman with the troops and the emigrants until the last days of February. Suddenly, Omdurman's population increased from a tiny village to nearly a million, similar to a city's population.[388,389] However, the population of Omdurman decreased dramatically after the smallpox epidemic; more than 126,000 people perished by April 1885.[390]

Since the Mahdi accepted the surrender of the Omdurman garrison, and the troops' main target was to invade the capital Khartoum, no battle or victims were recorded in entering Omdurman.[391] However, with a limited population, possible incidents may have happened and gone unregistered in the village. Unfortunately, while Khartoum was yet to fall, several cities along the Nile River fell or surrendered to the Mahdi's army in Northern Sudan; besides, the telegraph line was disconnected. Sudan was thus almost isolated, and escaping from Khartoum, or Sudan in general, was virtually impossible. The last steamer that left Khartoum was Colonel Stewart's on 10 September 1884, and all passengers perished in a Mahdist attack before it reached the borders.[392,393] In addition, because many people preferred not to leave Khartoum after General Gordon's arrival, the general populace firmly believed the British troops should follow his arrival to recover Sudan.[394]

At the same time, considering the possible number of successful escapees from West Sudan to Khartoum via the village of Omdurman, the most suitable crossing point to Khartoum increased while Khartoum was besieged. Therefore, Khartoum's population remained almost the same for the whole year of the siege since Gordon's arrival. Moreover, was a possible increase in the civilian population of Omdurman and the nearby garrison. So, Khartoum's last statistics observed before Colonel Stewart's departure of 200,000, not including those who left before, would be the most reliable ones.[395]

---

[387] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, pp. 516, 552.
[388] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 587.
[389] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri'*, trans. Yousef Bedri, George Scott, Oxford University Press, London, p. 34.
[390] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 597.
[391] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 522.
[392] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 363–4.
[393] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 127–30.
[394] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 122–3.
[395] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 309.

After the fall of Khartoum, the Mahdi and Khalifa preferred to make Omdurman the Mahdist capital rather than Khartoum for ease of escaping to Western Sudan without the obstacle of crossing the Nile River in case of foreign attack.[396,397] The Mahdi died of typhus in Omdurman a few months after the fall of Khartoum. The population of Omdurman decreased during Khalifa Abdullah's reign to 4000,000, including his 50,000 guards. The city was six miles in length and three miles in width. The town was unplanned; all residences were built randomly. During the Khalifa's reign particularly, Omdurman was divided demographically according to people's ethnicities, with a leader of their own to represent them. Every tribe of native origin was in a particular spot or suburb. Therefore, the Khalifa considered and called every native and ethnic group of foreign origin a tribe. All the Syrians, Greeks, Jews, Armenians and the Catholic clergy (i.e., the Muslimaniya) were in the well-known suburb of El-Masalma, meaning the converted Christians to the Islamic belief.[398] Even the Muslim Egyptians were separated into one separate suburb. However, the Copts were considered neither Egyptian nor Muslimaniya but by their name as the Coptic tribe. They were not confined to a particular suburb; they lived in several suburbs in Omdurman, including that of El-Masalma, according to their jobs' locations and convenience.[399,400,401]

Noticeably, almost all streets in Omdurman were unplanned due to the random settlements and constructions. They were small, narrow and dirty, and the city's water source was the wells, though the city is on the White Nile bank. Moreover, according to the residents' financial ability, all kinds of dwellings existed, from thatched huts to unbaked mud-brick buildings. However, the Khalifa's residence was the only building erected with baked red brick. Besides, it was the only one consisting of two floors, and all the rest of Omdurman's residences must be ground floor ones, by the Khalifa's order.[402]

---

[396] Holt, M. 1958, *'The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow'*, p. 104.

[397] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 59.

[398] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 283.

[399] Holt, M. 1958, *'The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow'*, p. 65.

[400] Kramer, Robert 2010, *'Holy City on the Nile: Omdurman during the Mahdiyya, 1885–1898'*, pp. 135–6.

[401] Kishah, Solomon 196?, *'Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism'*, Omdurman, p. 114.
كشّة, سليمان؟١٩٦, *'تأسيس مدينة الخرطوم والمهدية'* , أمدرمان, ص١١٤.

[402] Shoucair, Naum 1903, *'History and Geography of the Sudan'*, pp. 92–3.

6.5 The situation in the capital, Khartoum

The worst atrocities occurred during Khartoum's invasion massacre. What was written and documented was just some of what happened. Some historians from different ethnicities who were contemporaries of that period recorded those incidents in their memoirs, but many others of diverse backgrounds did not. Each wrote in their memoir narratives that which was acceptable and unacceptable from their perspective, reflecting their cultural values that naturally differ from one person to another. Three Catholic priests, an Austrian, Fr Josep Ohrwalder, and two Italians, Fr Luigi Bononi and Fr C. Rosignoli, wrote their memoirs. Both Fr Ohrwalder and Fr Rosignoli's memoirs implied the social and cultural aspects of the Mahdist era, particularly in Omdurman, more than anything else. Also, two military men documented that era, the Austrian Major-General Rudolf Carl von Slatin Pasha and the Egyptian General Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha. Their memoirs emphasised the military aspect above anything else. Fawzi was later under General Gordon's command during the siege and the fall of Khartoum.

Moreover, three other historians were in the Mahdi's army that invaded Khartoum. The Mahdist Coptic Amir (officer grade of the Copts army company in the Mahdist army), Yusuf Mikhail and two natives, Babikr Bedri and Ismail Abdul Qadir Al-Kordafani, all described in detail Khartoum's fall and massacre. Two other historians were captives and spent almost all their time in prison, the German Charles Neufeld[403] and the Italian Guissppe Cuzzi; both were merchants. However, there were two major groups of different ethnicities—the Copts and the Muslimaniyas—; none wrote about the details of their inner life, their adaptation to the current situation, or what happened during the fall of Khartoum. The Muslimaniya group included Syrians, Jews, Italians, Greeks and other foreigners of Christian background. For both groups, their only available history is what they received through inherited oral histories told by their great-grandsons and daughters of the massacre survivors. Unfortunately, many others perished during the carnage, and nobody knew about their stories.

[403] He could be developed Stockholm syndrome. He suffered from the Khalifa's punishments against him by applying the extreme of the Sharia laws; however, he converted his religious faith from Christianity to Islam.

6.6 History of the city of Khartoum

The city Khartoum, or primarily the location named Khartoum established by Ismail Pasha, the son of Egypt's Kedaive Muhammed Ali Pasha, during his campaign to conquer Sudan. Prince Ismail found the land position at the meeting point of the two Niles, the White and the Blue, was the most suitable place logistically and the most appropriate position for administration. Besides, it is the best position to establish a military station to control the conquered lands of Sudan. Initially, Khartoum was used as the central enslaved person collection point besides being a military garrison. But sometime later, Khartoum became Sudan's capital due to its accessibility for all of Sudan's lands through the two Niles.[404] Khartoum was primarily a small town, and in 1825 it was made the seat of the governor-general by the area military commander Uthman Bey Jarkas. In 1826, the city was developed by Ali Khurshid Pasha, and it officially became the capital of Egyptian Sudan in 1834.[405,406]

6.7 The origin of the name Khartoum

Khartoum was not well-known internationally before the death of the British General, Gordon Pasha, not before one of the worst massacres in modern history. Originally Khartoum was merely a city established by Ottoman Empire rulers in one of their occupied territories for its ease and convenience of management. At a later stage, it became the territory's capital city. Finally, it became known internationally through the memoirs of several travellers, particularly after imposing British protection on Egypt and consequently on every land belonging to it. After the fall of Khartoum and the vast number of deaths, historians (mainly British) began tracing the city's history, which later became the subject of several books and British films.[407]

Since most names in the Arabic language have meanings or refer to a particular meaning, many historians have searched for the term's origin. Initially, those who tried to explain the name Khartoum were Arabic (mainly Egyptians) and primarily the only source of

[404] Alfred, Henry & Sword, W. Dennistoun 1898, *'The Egyptian Soudan: Its Loss and Recovery'*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, pp. 4–5.
[405] Hill, Richard (trans.) 1970, *'On the frontiers of Islam'*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. xvi.
[406] Hill, Richard 1959, *'Egypt in the Sudan'*, Oxford University Press, London, p. 19.
[407] The films 'Khartoum (1966)' and 'The four feathers (1939)'.

information. Later, many historians, either foreigner or Arab, cited their writings based on this information. Below are some of these name explanations and the most reliable ones:

1) Some historians assume the name Khartoum extended from the name of someone living in that area,[408] as in the case of Omdurman's name. Or possibly a name of a plant cultivated in the area.[409] However, there is no proof for this assumption.

2) A common mistake and the most circulating explanation of the name Khartoum probably came from an Egyptian source. This is because Khartoum means 'hose' in the Egyptian dialect. At the same time, the same word is used for the elephant's trunk for its shape similarity, or vice versa, which explains the similarity between the land's shape between the two Niles when they join in the Khartoum area and the elephant trunk. Unfortunately, this relatively wrong new explanation[410] is used in many textbooks and references, which extends from Egyptian text references.[411,412,413,414,415] First, the name Khartoum was given to this inhabited piece of land long before the Egyptian occupation of the region. The historian cleric Wud Deaf-Allah who lived between 1727 and 1809 (i.e., before the Egyptian military campaign), mentioned the place name 'Khartoum' three times in his memoirs.[416] Even earlier, in 1691, the place called Khartoum was populated.[417] Second, it must be observed from above to prove a connection between the two terms: Khartoum (as an elephant trunk) and the land shape between the two Niles. That was

---

[408] Sayed Ahmed, Ahmed 2000, 'History of the City of Khartoum Under the Egyptian Rule 1820–1885', The Egyptian General Book Authority, Cairo, p. 81.
سيد احمد, أحمد ٢٠٠٠, *'تاريخ مدينة الخرطوم تحت الحكم المصري ١٨٢٠-١٨٨٥'* , الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب, القاهرة, ص ٨١.
[409] Walkley, C.E.J. 1935, 'The Story of Khartoum', *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 18, no. 2, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, p. 225.
[410] Sayed Ahmed, Ahmed 2000, *'History of the City of Khartoum Under the Egyptian Rule 1820–1885'*, p. 85.
[411] Toniolo, Elias & Hill, Richard (eds) 1974, *'The Opening of the Nile Basin'*, C. Hurst & Company, London, p. 41.
[412] Junker, Wilhelm 1890, *'Travels in Africa: During the Years 1875–1878'*, Chapman and Hall Ltd., London, p. 173.
[413] Kishah, Solomon 196?, *'Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism'*, Omdurman, p. 7.
[414] Walkley, C.E.J. 1935, 'The Story of Khartoum', *Sudan Notes and Records*, p. 225.
[415] Shoucair, Naum 1903, *'History and Geography of the Sudan'*, p. 90.
[416] Wad Daif Allah, Muhammad Nur (1727–1809) 2000, *'Book Quotes the Layers of Wad Daif Allah in the Righteous, the Scholars, and Poets of Sudan'*, Sheikh Al-Amin Al-Hajj Muhammad Ahmed (ed.) 1st edn, El-Saf Electronic Centre, Beirut, pp. 67, 155.
الشيخ محمد نور بن ضيف الله (١٧٢٧-١٨٠٩م) ٢٠٠٠, وقفات مع كتاب الطبقات. *'طبقات ود ضيف الله'* , إعداد الشيخ الأمين الحاج محمد أحمد, طبعة أولى, مركز الصف الألكترونى ، بيروت, ص ٦٧, ١٥٥.
[417] Kishah, Solomon 196?, *'Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism'*, p. 8.

impossible then, either before or after the Egyptian invasion. Even with today's advanced modern topographic observation facilities, no connection exists between the two shapes. So, finding a relationship between the name 'Khartoum' and the Elephant trunk shape is impossible.[418] The hypothesis that the name Khartoum was given to the place long before the Egyptian campaign is the most reliable. Wud Deaf-Allah, the Sudanese Islamic cleric, mentioned in his memoir that the Shilluk warriors[419] of the Islamic Funj Sultanate (south-east Sudan between 1504–1821)[420] demolished the place of Khartoum, where at that time, there were 17 Quranic schools for teaching the children.[421] However, a historian mentioned that in 1831 there were native Koranic schools in Khartoum where many students sought religious education under the Imam Malik Islamic jurisprudence right.[422]

3) The same Funj warriors destroyed the last Christian Nubian Kingdom, Alodia (a few miles south of Khartoum), circa 1500. The Islamic Funj Kingdom/Sultanate, of Arab tribes' descent[423,424] covered a vast area, the entire Blue and White Nile regions of South and South-East Sudan, up to the Fifth Cataract in the North, including the Khartoum area.[425]

The name Khartoum or the word 'keer-tum', has a meaning in one of the Southern Sudan tribes' languages, and one of them was the founder of the Funj Kingdom, which means the place of the water steam connection or joining, in their language. Also, it is noticeable that the word 'keer-tum' is given to several places of water stream joinings in the Dinka tribe's region in Southern Sudan. This information denotes there were inhabitants

[418] Abu Saleem, M. Ibrahim 1979, *'Khartoum history'*, p. 9.
[419] one of Southern Sudan tribes.
[420] Holt, P. M. 1961, *'A Modern History of the Sudan, From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day'*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, pp. 5, 9.
[421] Wad Daif Allah, Muhammad Nur (1727–1809) 2000, *'Book Quotes the Layers of Wad Daif Allah in the Righteous, the Scholars, and Poets of Sudan'*, p. 155.
[422] EL Zubeir Pasha 1913, *'Black Ivory and White'*, p. 4.
[423] Abu Ali, Ahmed bin Hajj 1838, *'The manuscript of the writer of Al-Shuna in the history of the Sennari Sultanate'*, Al-Shater Basili Abdul Jalil (ed.) 1961, Ministry of Culture and National Guidance, Cairo, p. e.
أبو علي, أحمد بن الحاج ١٨٣٨, *'مخطوط كاتب الشونة: في تاريخ السلطنة السنارية والادارة المصرية'* , تحقيق الشاطر بصيلي عبد الجليل ١٩٦١, وزارة الثقافة والارشاد القومي, القاهرة, ص هـ.
[424] Peacock, A.C.S. 2012, 'The Ottomans and the Funj Sultanate in The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Bulletin of SOAS*, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 96.
[425] Werner, R., Anderson, W., & Wheeler, A. 2000, *'Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years'*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, p. 108.

from Southern Sudan in Khartoum's area long before the Egyptian campaign and the strong possibility of Funj settlers in the Khartoum area.[426]

6.8 Khartoum's population throughout the years

The first documented estimate of Khartoum's population was in a letter by Italian priest Fr Luigi Montuori (1798–1857) on 23 September 1843. He estimated the city's population as 13,000 people, not including 200 Copts, a few Catholics, Turks, Algerians and very few Arabs (natives) from the neighbouring provinces; possibly, the rest were enslaved people and some soldiers.[427] Then, in February 1848, a Catholic Mission arrived in Khartoum from Europe, heading to El-Obeid. The mission members estimated Khartoum's population at 15,000 people (in another more reliable source, 60,000),[428] with most enslaved in a transitional stage. In contrast, El-Obeid's population was at least three times greater.[429] A few years later, in 1853, Fr Giovanni Beltrame (1824–1906) mentioned in one of his books translated from Italian in 1879 the population of Khartoum consisted of at least seven distinct groups. The major groups were the Europeans, between 40 and 50, and the Turks were few, possibly the same number as the Europeans. The traders' group mainly were equal to the Europeans and Turks together. The Copts were clerks by profession but few in number (but not less than previously estimated). The numerous groups were the travelling merchants and the ex-soldiers.[430] However, by the late 1870s, the city's population rose to about 50,000; almost half were enslaved.[431] The German explorer Dr Wilhelm Junker mentioned in his book that Khartoum's people in 1875–1878, while his trip to Sudan, numbered around 70,000.[432] During the 1881 Catholic missionary campaign in Sudan, Bishop Comboni and Fr Bonomi estimated the city's population at about 30,000, including Copts and Greeks families;[433] however, this estimation is not accountable for its decreased number. Later in 1881, there was another estimation of 50,000 to 60,000 people (and

---

[426] Sayed Ahmed, Ahmed 2000, *'History of the City of Khartoum Under the Egyptian Rule 1820–1885'*, pp. 86–7.
[427] Toniolo, Elias & Hill, Richard (eds) 1974, *'The Opening of the Nile Basin'*, p. 33.
[428] Kishah, Solomon 196?, *'Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism'*, p. 8.
[429] Werner, R., Anderson, W., & Wheeler, A. 2000, *'Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years'*, pp. 132, 146.
[430] Toniolo, Elias & Hill, Richard (eds) 1974, *'The Opening of the Nile Basin'*, pp. 37–8.
[431] Asher, Michael 2005, *'Khartoum: The Ultimate Imperial Adventure'*, Penguin Books, Dublin, p. 6.
[432] Junker, Wilhelm 1890, *'Travels in Africa: During the Years 1875–1878'*, p. 178.
[433] Werner, R., Anderson, W., & Wheeler, A. 2000, *'Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years'*, p. 178.

another of 70,000).[434] In 1883 there was another estimation of between 50,000 to 55,000, and the slave population in the city was about 27,000.[435,436]

An accurate and dependable historical source, Khartoum's Egyptian/Turkish Governor-General (1882–1883) estimated the population around 1883 was about 200,000. Among those, 50,000–60,000 were enslaved people. Those of Egyptian origin totalled 70,000,[437] and there were 3,000 foreigners (Europeans, Syrians and North Africans). He estimated the total number of European traders in Sudan was only 30,000, 2,000 of whom were Greek, and they had their consulate, similar to the other Europeans who had consulates.[438] However, Khartoum's population increased during the final years before the city's fall due to economic growth, the increase of foreigners leaving Sudan, or possibly both. In his memoirs, the Egyptian officer Ibrahim Fawzi indicated Khartoum's last estimated population of 200,000 was made by the British officer Stewart in September 1884, before leaving Khartoum. He noted the last steamer to leave Khartoum was his, accompanied by several other European consuls; all the passengers perished except one native[439] before reaching Sudan's borders.[440] He noted the average capacity of a steamer at that time was around 25 persons. In addition, Stewart's steamer was towing several wooden boats of Syrian merchants and their families, totalling 30 passengers.[441] Thus, the last reliable estimation of Khartoum's population was 200,000 a few months before its fall.[442,443] Importantly, this figure does not include the 30,000 who joined the Mahdists or those who had previously left for Egypt.[444] In another estimation, in 1896 (i.e., two years before Sudan's reconquest), an Egyptian explorer wrote an official newspaper article about his

[434] Shoucair, Naum 1903, *'History and Geography of the Sudan'*, p. 90.
[435] Hill, Richard 1959, *'Egypt in the Sudan'*, p. 162.
[436] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', trns. Hildegund Sharma 1968, *Sudan Research Unit*, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, p. 13.
[437] This figure could include the Copts because they were considered Egyptian government employees.
[438] Kishah, Solomon 196? *'Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism'*, p. 15.
[439] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 368.
[440] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 363–4.
[441] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 272–3.
[442] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 361.
[443] Kishah, Solomon 196?, *'Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism'*, p. 111.
[444] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 309.

previous trip to Khartoum sometime before the city's fall. He mentioned the population was about 250,000; only one-fifth were of Sudanese origin, and the rest were of different nationalities: Turks, Egyptians, Syrians, Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, and Europeans. The Europeans comprised 20 French families, 15 Italians, 40 Austrians, 100 Greeks, 20 Russians and 10 Armenian families.[445]

6.9 The siege that preceded the fall of Khartoum

Before Gordon arrived in Khartoum and following Hecks' army defeat, many government employees expected the imminent danger. Therefore, they resigned from their governmental positions and left Khartoum for Egypt.[446,447] The main aim of the Egyptian and the British governments was to retreat and evacuate all Egyptian Government officials, traders and Europeans, including the Egyptian military forces, as soon as possible. He considered a priority of maintaining order in the country was to give the authority back to the previous national rulers, the Sultans.[448,449] Unfortunately, the number of Egyptian officials and military personnel in Khartoum and elsewhere waiting to leave after General Hecks' defeat and before Gordon's arrival was over 200,000. It would take two years to evacuate that number.[450] Gordon found the job given to him was impracticable. Eventually, Khartoum's siege began on 15 March 1884,[451] with the first attack on 16 March. An army of 70,000 Mahdist fighters surrounded the city and bombarded the governor's palace after disconnecting the telegraph lines.[452] As a result, contrary to government norms, General Gordon accepted around 1,000 horrified people as refugees in the government palace. The attack on the city was so severe that some people needed the protection of the government

[445] Abu Saleem, M. Ibrahim 1979, *'Khartoum history'*, p. 49.
[446] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 276.
[447] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 204.
[448] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), pp. 435–6.
[449] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 295.
[450] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 153–4.
[451] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 55.
[452] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 330, 202–3.

forces.[453] This incident signifies the severity of the first stage siege of Khartoum just one month after Gordon arrived in the city (18 February);[454,455] the siege lasted 317 days.[456] Khartoum's citizens' morale was very low, compelling Gordon to issue false government circulars about rescuing military forces.[457] Since then, the city has been in total isolation. However, British Government's side had no intention of breaking the siege and saving Gordon's life with some 50 European hostages in Khartoum.[458,459,460]

Additionally, as of April, no steamers had been arriving from Egypt, and the escalating Mahdist combat operations and the low river water level made it impossible to leave Sudan for Egypt safely.[461] However, the travellers' inconvenience and harassment occurred long before Gordon's arrival.[462] During the siege, several battles arose between the two armies around Khartoum. Sometimes, the government troops were victorious; at others, it was the Mahdists. By May 1884, most of the Mahdist army corps was a few miles from Khartoum, and the siege became extremely tight.[463]

6.10 The consequences of the siege

Three historians were in the Mahdi's army and were contemporary to the siege and invasion of Khartoum, and they explained its severity. They were Yusuf Mikhail, Babikr Bedri and Ismail Abdul Qadir Al-Kordofani. Two were in the besieging forces. The third was Yusuf Mikhail; however, in his memoir, he wrote about the incident in the third person, denoting

[453] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 302–3.
[454] Holt, M. 1958, *'The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow'*, p. 95.
[455] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 192–4.
[456] Thornton, J. Howard 1895, *'Memories of Seven Campaigns'*, Archibald Constable & Co., London, p. 217.
[457] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 475.
[458] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 61.
[459] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 297–8, 300, 302, 361.
[460] Hake, A. Egmont 1885, *'The Journals of Major-Gen. C. G. Gordon, C. B. At Khartoum'*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, pp. 212–3.
[461] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 318.
[462] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 316.
[463] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 343.

he was not a participant.[464] This explanation is logical because he was in the Mahdi's special security forces, whose camp was across the river in Omdurman at the invasion time. However, his narration and explanation of the siege and the invasion cannot be neglected.

While Gordon was in Egypt on his way to Khartoum, before arriving at Aswan on Egypt's border, he met some Catholic priests who fled Sudan after recognising the imminent danger. This incident signifies that many foreigners had already left Khartoum before Gordon's arrival.[465] When he arrived in Khartoum just days before the siege, he found the Coptic bishop, Makarios, was still in the city. He ordered him and two priests to depart as soon as possible for their safety because of the uncertainty of the coming days.[466,467] Additionally, about 1,000 people left Khartoum after Gordon's arrival and before the travel lines were cut.[468] A main reason that many people stayed in Khartoum was they firmly believed that military troops would arrive with Gordon.[469] However, the opposite happened: both Egyptian and British governments decided to evacuate their officials from Sudan due to General Hecks' campaign defeat. Therefore, there was no need to bring troops with him.[470] Unfortunately, all European consuls were trapped in Khartoum at a later stage. During the siege, they requested Gordon for their leave after realising his arrival was not about restoring government control. Gordon's mission was only to evacuate government officials and withdraw the garrison and Europeans, but it was too late for a safe trip.[471]

Khartoum was a populous city; the last estimation of its population by the Egyptian military commander and city governor Ibrahim Fawzi was 200,000 during the blockade. This assessed figure does not include the 30,000 people General Gordon previously opened the city gates to and permitted to leave.[472] Nor does this figure include those who had left

---

[464] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, p. 101.

[465] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 266.

[466] Suleiman, S. M. Ahmed 2013, *'Copts of Sudan: Past and Present'*, Imprensa Printing Press, Bahrain, pp. 34, 56.

سليمان, سعد محمد أحمد ٢٠١٣, *'أقباط السودان: الماضي والحاضر'* , إمبرينزا للطباعة والنشر, ص ٣٤, ٥٦.

[467] Butcher, E. L. 1897, *'The Story of the Church of Egypt'*, vol. II, Smith Elder, & Co., London, p 368.

[468] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 438.

[469] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 268.

[470] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 153–4.

[471] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', pp. 170–1.

[472] Bedri, Babikr 1969, *'The memoirs of Babikr Bedri'*, trans. Yousef Bedri, George Scott, Oxford University Press, London, p. 34.

Khartoum for Egypt.[473] Gordon's decision to reduce the city population came late, though it helped secure the city's food situation for more time. Additionally, they used the wooden materials of the evacuees to fuel the steamers for routine military use. Notably, there was a decline in morals following the loss of the Omdurman garrison. Eventually, those permitted to leave joined the Mahdi's camp to fight against Khartoum.[474]

Despite the hermetic siege and the uncertain safety, many people took the risk and departed, but few were successful. On 10 September, Colonel Stewart and two consuls left for Egypt with a military force on three steamers, and their steamers simultaneously towed two wooden boats. One contained Greek families consisting of 12 people, and the other Syrian families of 15 people. All, including the accompanying military force, perished due to a trick.[475,476]

6.11 The impact and dependencies of the long siege

The siege's severity and extended duration were a unique experience. It revealed several adaptation skills, such as the creative ability of the alternatives to the norms, plus some tough financial and political decisions. At the same time, it revealed some social outcomes and positive and negative human morals.

6.11.1 Political

Gordon was confident in his ability to solve Sudan's problem. He relied on his previous experience and his charisma rather than the military force that was severely needed. Many Sudanese people, particularly in Khartoum, were surprised to find Gordon arrived with personal security only, which negatively impacted Sudan's political situation.[477]

As the siege tightened, it caused some soldiers to take the expected winning side. Several Khartoum forces soldiers secretly dealt with the Mahdi's camp by giving them the expected military action plans.[478] Additionally, some of Khartoum's population tried every

[473] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 309.
[474] Holt, M. 1958, *'The Mahdist State in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow'*, p. 101.
[475] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 127–30.
[476] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 363, 366–7.
[477] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', pp. 215–6.
[478] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 327.

trick to escape, even bribing the guards of the surrounding city trench. Initially, the government dealt with them by shooting. However, Gordon later recognised the political situation and legally permitted their departure.[479]

The food scarcity caused high prices resulting in severe hunger, particularly among the poor, the elderly, the enslaved and the weak. They ate dogs, donkeys, palm tree cores and tree leaves. Therefore, in a win-win action, Gordon permitted them to leave; it benefited the people and saved food for the military forces for longer.[480] Releasing thousands of people from the city was a wise decision, albeit late. The previous government's commitment was to feed everyone. In one suburb alone, there were 4,000 people, all belonging to the tribe of the Mahdi, and their loyalties were doubtless to him.[481] Although this decision affected Gordon politically and militantly, he secured the food situation and extended the resisting period in the hope a military rescue could arrive in Khartoum before it was too late.[482]

The correspondence between the Mahdi and Gordon during the siege was regular and frequent. Several times the Mahdi urged Gordon to surrender. However, he challenged and rejected all offers from Greek and Italian merchants. At a later stage, Gordon refused to meet any of them.[483,484] He was convinced his country's government would not abandon him. All Mahdi's messages were either written or delivered verbally by Europeans who had surrendered to the Mahdi earlier.[485] In contrast, the Mahdi used the Europeans to write to Gordon in English and translate the return letters; one was the Austrian officer Slatin, who had a good command of Arabic.[486]

[479] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', pp. 325–6.
[480] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 347.
[481] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 384.
[482] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 203.
[483] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, pp. 84–5.
[484] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 378.
[485] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 173.
[486] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', pp. 190–2.

6.11.2 Economical

Fig. 9 The government-issued bonds

During the siege, currency was scarce in Khartoum's treasury, and the cash shortage was severe. Therefore, Gordon sought any available money to be lent to the government treasury. One of the trapped foreigners in Khartoum was a wealthy Jew merchant called Ben Zion Koshti, the son of Hebron Rabbi in Palestine; he came to Sudan around 1879. Koshti lent Gordon some money besides some of Khartoum's wealthy inhabitants, including Ibrahim Bey Khalil, a well-off Coptic merchant. This Jewish merchant survived the Khartoum massacre, and later in Omdurman, he became close to the Khalifa. Therefore, the Khalifa trusted him, and he was assigned several tasks.[487] Surprisingly when Gordon asked about borrowing in the name of the government, nobody replied to his request. However, when he changed the loan plea by guaranteeing it himself, he collected 10,000 pounds in a day.[488]

The borrowed money was enough to solve the government's problem. In April 1884, Gordon invented a way to overcome this obstacle by issuing paper government bonds signed by himself to replace actual money, starting from the value of one piaster to one thousand piasters and even more.[489,490,491] However, there was a problem with accepting them. Many could not deal with them, particularly the merchants, but their fate was punishment.[492] As a result, inflation increased intensely, and the actual Egyptian piaster became equal to one hundred piasters (i.e., one Egyptian pound of the bond value).

Similarly, inflation hit the British pound: one pound equalled roughly 32 Egyptian piasters (one-third of its actual value). Inflation even hit gold; one ounce of gold equalled eight Turkish thalers. However, gold coins were always preferable to the same weight in gold as metal. The excessive number of bonds possibly caused this inflation due to their

[487] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, pp. 47–8.
[488] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 356–7.
[489] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 517.
[490] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 351.
[491] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 207.
[492] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 132.

ease of forgery because they were handwritten. Their forgery was discovered later, and the bonds were printed later.[493]

6.11.3 Moral

Times of trouble are a real test of morality and values. Unfortunately, however, sometimes the survival instinct always dominates. Following the Omdurman garrison's surrender, many people's disappointment made them question the utility of their alliance with the government troops. Thus, it was not excluded or unexpected that many officers and merchants communicated with Mahdi's army.[494]

Famine and hunger due to food scarcity exhausted the people, eventually affecting their morality. It was typical to find people stealing or taking food forcibly.[495] Ibrahim Fawzi, the Egyptian military commander and governor of Khartoum, mentioned in his memoirs that many soldiers rebelled against their officers, looted and escaped and joined Mahdi's camp. In addition to the escape of two officers with their soldiers, soldier numbers doing this ran into several hundred.[496,497] To replace the escaped number of soldiers, on one occasion, the British Consul and Gordon helped soldiers defend the city, firing cannons side by side with them.[498]

Despite the food scarcity and hunger, the historian Babikr Bedri mentioned in his memoirs that he was among those who invaded Khartoum, and they found food stored and stacked in a well-known merchant's house. They also found a bull hidden in another merchant's house.[499]

---

[493] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 351–2.
[494] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 132, 135.
[495] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 358.
[496] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 386, 393.
[497] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 21.
[498] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 305.
[499] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*', p. 37.

6.11.4 Creativity

Khartoum's siege was less severe than El-Obied's.[500] However, people in Khartoum devised and invented alternatives to typical food types. For example, they cooked palm tree cores and ate boiled leather.[501] They also cooked strange types of green leaves, Arabic gum, donkeys, and everything edible that was available. Unfortunately, these various items caused various health problems. Khartoum lies on the Blue Nile River bank, but astonishingly, the fish in the river disappeared, possibly because of firearm sounds. Before the siege, it was customary to find food stored in every house; therefore, it was expected to be hidden within some families' homes. So, Gordon ordered an uncommon decree that the food be shared with all; he ordered a campaign of forced inspection to disclose the hidden food.[502]

6.12 Khartoum's massacre

Khartoum's massacre is considered one of the worst butcheries in human history. It received considerable international attention due to the number of European victims, mainly British, who unmercifully perished—namely the British army officer Gordon Pasha. However, the whole population suffered equally, irrespective of race, nationality or religious belief. Moreover, the city's extended siege increased people's suffering and hunger. Nevertheless, the misery that followed the massacre was not less than the massacre itself but worse.

The consequences that followed Khartoum's fall denote a real example of the known upshots of the bloody revolution. The upheaval revealed the different hidden essence of other people's nature, particularly the Mahdist fighters. We find all various contradictions and contrasts of human dispositions, cruelty and aggressiveness versus kindness and mercy. It is documented that some Mahdist fighters tried hard to save the lives of their trapped friends. However, some were lucky and responded positively, while others failed to find a way and were killed later. Others refused help because of their meaningless life after they

[500] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 147.
[501] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, p. 100.
[502] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 384–5.

lost their beloved ones. Surprisingly, some refused the support offered to them due to apprehension or religious reasons.

The people who survived the massacre documented their experiences and penned the most reliable writing of that period. We have the testimony of three surviving merchants who resided in Khartoum; one was Greek, and the other two were possibly Egyptians.[503] They testified in the book *The English in Egypt: With Life of General Gordon*; their testimony can be considered the most reliably documented eyewitness evidence.

Three historians fought in the Mahdi's army and mentioned the massacre in their memoirs. Two among the first cohort that crossed the Khartoum fortress—Babikr Badri[504] and Ismail Abdul Qadir Al-Kordofani—witnessed the massacre from its beginning. The third was Yusuf Mikhail. However, he mentioned the incident in the third person in his memoir. This could be logical because he was assigned to the Mahdi's security group but not to the army fighters.

However, more than one historian was in Sudan during the Khartoum invasion, but not in Khartoum or the Mahdi's army. They were Fr Joseph Ohrwalder, Fr Luigi Bononi, Fr C Rosignoli, Major-General Rudolf Carl von Slatin and the merchant Guiseppe Cuzzi. The historian Naoum Shukair (or Choucair) wrote a considerable history of Sudan and Mahdism, particularly the fall of Khartoum. Although he was not in Khartoum or Sudan, he is considered a good source of reliable information because he was in the Cairo Egyptian/British intelligence office.

6.13 Khartoum before and during the holocaust day

The general situation in Khartoum started to deteriorate after General Hicks's military mission defeat on 5 November 1883 (i.e., more than two months before General Gordon arrived on 18 February 1884). As a result, many Khartoum residents anticipated the unpleasant outcome in the following days. So, they began leaving, particularly those from foreign origins. One was a member of the Austrian mission in Khartoum, who left the city on 11 December 1883.[505] However, the Coptic bishop did not leave until two months later.

[503] From their way of pronouncing the names.
[504] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*', p. 29.
[505] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 121–2.

Gordon's arrival played a significant role in Khartoum's massacre. Many would have left had he not arrived; his appearance gave many people the false hope of an upcoming military force. Further, he disclosed to one of the district managers on his way to Khartoum that his mission was to evacuate the Egyptian garrisons because the government had abandoned Sudan.[506] One month later, the city was fully blockaded; it fell under siege for almost a year until its fall on 26 January 1885. The siege lasted precisely 317 days.[507,508] The famine was extremely severe during its last weeks because the city was in total isolation for the three months before the massacre. People were forced to eat tree leaves, donkeys, camels, cats and dogs—even rat and donkey tails were sold.[509]

During the siege, there was some correspondence between the Mahdi and Gordon. At a particular stage, the Mahdi offered Gordon and all foreigners, including Egyptians, a safe departure from Sudan, in return for a military surrender and handing over the government's and people's money to the revolutionists. However, Gordon rejected this generous offer because of his strong confidence in the coming British military force.[510]

Khartoum's total population just before the invasion was around 200,000.[511] The number of soldiers in Khartoum's fort between December and January 26 was around 10,000–20,000.[512,513] However, due to treason, infiltration occurring behind Khartoum's fortress reduced the number. On 24 January 1885, one of Khartoum's army leaders escaped with several of his soldiers to the Mahdi's camp.[514]

6.14 The carnage of Khartoum and the unspeakable atrocities that occurred

The Mahdi's army was progressing all over Sudan, and a division of his army had previously surrounded Khartoum. Once the Mahdi's army leaders knew that the British

---

[506] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 122–3.
[507] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 57.
[508] Thornton, J. Howard 1895, *'Memories of Seven Campaigns'*, p. 217.
[509] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 377.
[510] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 389.
[511] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 361.
[512] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 201.
[513] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 130.
[514] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 529.

campaign for saving Gordon was approaching, they informed the Mahdi. He ordered the hurried-up Khartoum invasion. Before dawn on 26 January 1885, the attack occurred.[515] About 10,000 fighters from a Mahdist army division who initiated the siege previously, joined by several other thousands of different divisions, crossed the river, and about 50,000 marched towards Khartoum.[516,517] Compare this to the roughly 5,000 regular soldiers in the Khartoum garrison, supported by irregular soldiers and volunteers of a similar number.[518,519] The number of fighters was highly unequal, and the famine effect on the soldiers was immense.

The battle between the two armies was very short, but the operation occurred from dawn until midday. They killed whatever they could, even civilians who locked their doors, mainly searching for loot. The people's screams were heart-wrenching. The killing continued until the roads were coloured red by the blood and full of corpses.[520,521] Those who survived the massacre could successfully hide or escape from their homes to the nearby farms, besides those who were spared because they could help institute the new Mahdist state.[522] The survivors mentioned that the streets were coloured red. They slaughtered as many as possible until the roads were slippery.[523] The amount of blood spilled was tremendous. One of those who survived the massacre was a Greek merchant; he was taken hand-tied and fell several times during his walk because of the spilled blood on the roads. While walking, this merchant saw many killed people and several mutilated limbs. However, he was fortunate to survive with several other Greeks because they hid in the upper room of one of the houses. Mainly the killing was for looting and captivating women. They intended to kill every man possible and keep all women's lives as war spoils. Most killings were in the wealthy suburbs, the market area, where all the merchant stores and houses were located. Some lucky family members found a way to hide and survive, but they were separated for months.

---

[515] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 532.
[516] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, p. 401.
[517] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 137.
[518] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, p. 36.
[519] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 201.
[520] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 350.
[521] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), pp. 533–4.
[522] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 351.
[523] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 373.

The incident had an enormous emotional and psychological effect, particularly on the Greeks, because it brought back memories of a similar incident between the Greeks and the Turks in their homeland.[524,525]

This horrific incident revealed the different elements of various people's morals. It is documented that many of the Mahdi's army fighters and sympathisers saved or tried to save as many people they knew in Khartoum as possible. For example, the historian Babikr Bedri and his father were among the Mahdists who invaded Khartoum and witnessed the massacre. They were in the first cohort to infiltrate Khartoum fortifications. Badri mentioned in his memoir that his father did not believe in the Mahdi or Mahdism. However, he was afraid to make it public and was forced to join the Mahdi's army.[526] His father extracted eight of Khartoum's notable men he did not know before under the pretext a well-known amir had ordered them to spare their lives for their knowledge and experience of serving the expected Islamic state. Babikr secured the safe exit of the daughter of one of Khartoum's sheikhs who was killed rather than taking her as a war spoil; she was grateful to him all her life.[527]

We have similar stories through the oral history received by the Coptic families who survived that period. One well-known Mahdia amir, Mohammad el-Khair, saved the unkilled members of a notable Coptic family from murder. However, the head of the family lost an arm. Likewise, some Muslims obtained a decree of forgiveness and safety from the Mahdi himself; they offered their help to some Coptic families. Though very few Coptic men's lives were spared, sadly, later in Omdurman, all the other light-skinned victims' wives were in an awful situation. Miserably, their primary source of income was begging if they had not been lucky and taken as concubines.[528] As for the remaining city notables, all were killed, including the European consuls and wealthy merchants.[529]

Many of the deceased were murdered by their escaped enslaved people and servants. Sadly, many others preferred not to hide and be killed after they lost family

---

[524] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', pp. 378–9.
[525] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 374.
[526] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*', pp. 29–30.
[527] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*', pp. 36–7.
[528] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 141, 145.
[529] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 351.

members.[530] The killing was not discriminatory but against all Khartoum people, foreigners, natives, Christians and even Muslims. It was a revolution motivated by hunger more than by religion. Two of Khartoum's victims were Muslim sheikhs, killed after their bodies were mutilated.[531,532] The massacre continued until midday. By then, they received orders from the Mahdi to stop the bloodshed, and all the hidden people came out peacefully.[533] However, it continued until sometime before sunset. One reason the rage was enormous was the revolutionists' disappointment in finding less in Khartoum's houses than expected. Many wealthy Khartoum people buried their gold and valuables in the ground or dumped them in lavatories and water wells.[534] All the war spoils should be handed to the position of the Islamic state treasury. However, many fighters kept the loot for themselves, necessitating the Mahdi to issue a decree warning of the dire consequences of disobeying.[535]

Despite their pleas, all Egyptian males were slaughtered before their wives and daughters. All females were later sold as slaves or taken as concubines.[536] This proves the revolution was mainly for economic reasons, but it took the features of a religious one specifically to be popular and acquire social legitimacy.

6.15 The total number of victims killed

We have four documented figures, three more reliable than the fourth, Fr Joseph Ohrwalder. The most reliable ones were Ibrahim Fawzi, Naoum Shukairn (or Choucair) and Joseppy Cuzzi. The Egyptian officer, Ibrahim Fawzi, was in charge of the city council until the last moment. He mentioned that the killed were 24,000 men, and a few women preferred to commit suicide rather than be taken as concubines.[537] The second source was the

[530] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 212.
[531] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, p. 38.
[532] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 20.
[533] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 379.
[534] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*', p. 37.
[535] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 351.
[536] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', pp. 374–5.
[537] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, pp. 2, 4, 18.

Egyptian/British intelligence office employee in Cairo, Naoum Shukair. His information sources are also reliable; he estimated that the victims totalled 35,000 men.[538] The third source was the merchant Juseppi Cuzzi; he estimated the total lost lives was around 20,000.[539]

However, Fr Joseph Ohrwalder, the fourth witness, estimated the total number at 10,000 men.[540] However, his figure is unreliable because he was not with the immigration crowd that arrived in Omdurman or was in Khartoum. But, he came later to Omdurman, a year after the massacre, and his information was second-hand. As for the Mahdi's camp victims, according to one of their fighters, the number of dead did not exceed 10.[541] Slatin estimated them at around 80–100 Mahdi fighters, compared to the Egyptian soldiers, who were too many.[542]

Concerning the Copts' victims, unfortunately, we have no documented figures. However, according to church statistics, the number of Copts in Sudan until the last Coptic bishop in Khartoum, who General Gordon had ordered to leave Khartoum[543] a month before the siege; the population exceeded 16,000 Copts all over Sudan.[544] Therefore, the estimated number of those in Khartoum who lost their lives could be several thousand.

6.16 The political situation that followed Khartoum's fall

The horrific death of Gordon greatly affected the British people emotionally, though his death was not an aberration of the other incidents that occurred. The terrible news of his last moments shocked them enormously. Consequently, the British community tried to find convincing reasons to justify his death. It was logical they tried to find a scapegoat for his death: Mr Gladstone, the then-prime minister. The opinions were and still differ on this point. Was it the British Government's neglect or Gordon's, by disobeying the orders and

[538] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 536.
[539] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 133.
[540] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 144.
[541] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 351.
[542] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 209.
[543] Butcher, E. L. 1897, *'The Story of the Church of Egypt'*, vol. II, p. 368.
[544] Youhanna, Fr Manasseh 1983, *'History of the Coptic Church'*, re-print, El-Mahabba, Cairo, p. 527.
يوحنا, منسّى (قس) ١٩٨٣, *'تاريخ الكنيسة القبطية'* , إعادة طبع, مكتبة المحبة, القاهرة, ص ٥٢٧.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ebWpk2URYqTX3U0L54Ln7-5lpeLqELl8/view

aim of his mission for the moral commitment towards the sieged people of Khartoum?[545] However, the unique political situation between England as an occupier of Egypt and the Egyptian Government as the original occupier of Sudan and had their military forces, and Gordon as the newly officially assigned governor-general of Sudan; created decision confusion and conflicts. The decisions were always slow and late due to these three independent poles.[546] Still, there were proven, undeniable signs of intentional neglect by the British Government.[547]

Initially, Gordon was not the primary target of the Mahdist Revolution; on the contrary, he was a likeable character and a symbol of administrative justice for many. However, his appointment by the Egyptian and the British Government as governor-general gave him the unlikeable and unpopular image of the Turkish-Egyptian governors among the Sudanese. Astonishingly, he was titled by the Sudanese as the Turkish rather than the British governor. The Turkish-Egyptian Government in Sudan was brutal and unjust. One of the leading causes of the Mahdist Revolution was its rulers' cruelty; they collected taxes by whipping and flogging those late. When Gordon arrived, he tried to halt the revolt by abolishing this practice, but it was too late.[548,549]

Although the Sudanese people and the Turkish Government were Muslim Sunnies, the Turks simultaneously held the Muslim Caliphate. Still, the differences between the devotional practices of the Turks and most ordinary native Sufi Muslims caused many misunderstandings.[550] Eventually, Gordon was the victim of these accumulated political and religious differences between the two, in addition to governmental violence and mismanagement in Sudan.

The Mahdit movement and revolution coincided with another similar course in Egypt. Both upheavals were almost simultaneous, General Orabi's military uprising in the Egyptian army and Mahdism in Sudan. One of the main reasons for the British occupation of Egypt was to protect their assets in the Suez Canal project. There was empathy and

[545] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, p. 49.
[546] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, p. 28.
[547] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 61.
[548] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 438.
[549] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 63.
[550] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, p. 27.

interaction between the two revolutions: Mahdism in Sudan and Orabi's in Egypt.[551] There were even telegram communications between these two revolutions.[552,553] This explains the Mahdi's plan and intention of capturing Gordon alive to redeem the exiled General Orabi with him. Babikr Bedri, the Mahdist historian and fighter, witnessed the Mahdi's order in his last sermon before Khartoum's invasion to not kill Gordon and four other Sheikhs of Islam in Khartoum; however, the Khalifa ordered his killing.[554,555]

The Mahdi decided to invade Khartoum at dawn on 26 January 1885 after receiving information about the rescue campaign just a few days from Khartoum.[556] The argument was whether it would make any difference if the campaign had been one week earlier. The answer would be a week earlier invasion, which would make no difference because the siege had started almost a year earlier and would not change the situation.[557]

6.17 The controversial stories about Gordon's death

There was unbridled public passion about Gordon's death, and at the same time, many different stories about how he died. However, his horrible death was not an aberration from what happened in Khartoum that day. All stories about the massacre were horrific. Nobody witnessed Gordon's controversial death and survived to tell what occurred in his last moments or how he was killed because all those in the palace were dead. Nevertheless, the most reliable stories came from those who survived and documented the massacre in Khartoum. In order of importance, the following were those who lived in Sudan during that era and recorded their eyewitness accounts.

Rosti Penago was a Greek merchant who lived in Sudan and survived Khartoum's siege and massacre. He described in his account the severity of each in detail. Later, he was lucky to escape to Egypt through the desert without any guide's help. He testified to a

---

[551] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 535.
[552] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 359–60.
[553] Toson, Omar (prince) 1936, *'The Sudanese Issue'*, El-Mustakbal, Alixandria, pp. 5–9.
طوسون, عمر (أمير) ١٩٣٦, *'المسألة السودانية'* , مكتبة المستقبل, الاسكندرية, ص ٥-٩.
[554] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri'*, p. 35.
[555] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 398, 402.
[556] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), p. 531.
[557] Clark, P 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies-University of Khartoum*, vol. 14, p. 40.

journalist sometime later, after the government's restoration in 1889. His testimony confirmed that Gordon's assassination occurred within the scope of the Governmental palace and not outside.[558] Firstly he was fired shot by one of the Mahdists who snuck into a palace's room while he was reading his Bible. He was speared but not yet dead. He was dragged downstairs, beheaded, and his head hair and beard were plucked. Next, they placed his head on a spear and paraded around, holding it in the streets of the newly established city of Omdurman across the White Nile after they showed it to the Mahdi. Finally, the rest of his body was torn to pieces due to the spearing.[559]

Babikr Badri was one of those who entered the palace with the other fighters; he admitted that he saw Gordon killed and saw his body inside the palace walls and not outside, despite the Mahdi's order in his sermon two hours earlier, to keep him alive.[560] Similarly, two Egyptian merchants were in Khartoum and survived the massacre, and they were more specific. They documented Gordon's killing inside the palace walls near a well-known large tree.[561] Guiseppe Cuzzi mentioned in his memoirs that Gordon was inside the palace and armed only with his sabre, and he was speared inside the palace gallery by someone from downstairs. Then, he was slain along with his servants while they tried to shield him. Finally, his body was dragged to the entrance of the place garden and beheaded.[562]

Ibrahim Fawzi, the Egyptian officer, mentioned that Gordon ordered his security not to resist them and let them come to him. Gordon wore his daily official dress and sat on his chair, awaiting them. They asked him about his hidden money before stabbing him. They pulled him downstairs, and he was still conscious until they beheaded him. Then his head was placed on a spear after showing it to the Mahdi. The rest of his body was mutilated with the fighters' spears.[563] The intelligence officer Naoum Shukair added that Gordon was killed at the top of the palace stairs, dragged downstairs and then beheaded. His head was on

---

[558] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 376.
[559] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', pp. 378–9.
[560] Badri 35 arabic
[561] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 373.
[562] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 134.
[563] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 1, pp. 402–3.

display for three days.[564] The Austrian Priest, Fr Joseph Ohrwalder, added that he was speared while he was up the stairs and fell forward. He was dragged downstairs and beheaded; his head was hung on a tree in Omdurman's marketplace[565] for display for some time. One year later, when Ohrwalder came to Omdurman, he was shown traces of Gordon's blood on the palace stairs.[566]

Another story was told verbally by the Copts who survived Khartoum's massacre. When Gordon saw the fighters, he lay on the floor a tanned sheepskin, which generally is used for praying, and placed his sword beside it as a sign of peaceful surrender. This action is an accepted and respected general custom of surrendering in Sudan; however, they neglected the request and used the same sword to behead him.

6.18 The condition of Khartoum after the massacre

The war started in the early dawn and lasted around six hours. Then, the Mahdi ordered the battle to stop; however, the plundering and destruction lasted three consecutive days. Previously, the Khartoum garrison soldiers were feeble due to starvation, and few could oppose the intruders; almost all were killed. Intentionally, all Khartoum's dead were male, except very few women.[567] The men and boys' assassination was often preceded by horrible torture.[568] Their torture was by any possible means. However, the worst was the mutilation of limbs before killing and beheading. The streets were filled with headless corpses; the most horrifying was burning people alive.[569] For example, the Austrian consul's hands were cut off, and he was beheaded and followed body his burning.[570]

This similarly happened to the American consul's brother and other Greeks. As for the consul himself, he fell dead when he saw his brother killed before they mutilated him alive.[571] Very few males were exempted from death for one reason: to disclose their presumed hidden savings.[572] Logically, before the invasion, most of Khartoum's people hid

[564] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), pp. 534–5.
[565] Al-Kordafani, Ismael 1982, '*The pleasure of the guided with the biography of the Imam Mahdi*', p. 351.
[566] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 137.
[567] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 18.
[568] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 133.
[569] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 134.
[570] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 140.
[571] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 141–2.
[572] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 133.

their valuables by different means. So, all surviving people, young or old, male or female, were tortured by any means to disclose their valuables. Even older women were not exempted; those who were, were young and good-looking women and girls.[573]

This torment continued for three months. Around 3,000 more were killed later through excessive torture.[574] After the massacre, Khartoum was unsuitable for living due to the smell of putrid corpses.[575] Fr Ohrwalder visited Khartoum's ruins after arriving in Omdurman from El-Obeid a year after the massacre. He found the massacred corpses were still in their streets. They even exhumed the Catholic Mission members' graves, searching for gold and valuables; he recognised Bishop Comboni's grave by his bishopric dress.[576] The revolutionists' rampage was uncontrollable and unpredictable.

6.19 Women's status during the Mahdist era

Women were treated as war booty or assets during the Mahdia era, and that practice was across its wars. This practice explains why almost all battle victims were men. Nearly all Khartoum's married women were widowed that day, in addition to those already widowed during General Hecks' campaign defeat.[577] By midday of Khartoum's invasion, the Mahdi ordered his army to stop the fighting and for any woman who had a surviving relative to be under his care before sunset.[578] He also issued a decree; every woman with a surviving husband should return to him. However, he considered every woman's marriage before his Mahdism void. Consequently, she would be regarded as a single woman. The same rule applied to the formerly emancipated enslaved people before Mahdism.

Fig. 10 Contract of a slave-owning

The total number of captive girls and women considered as war booty and given as concubines totalled about 35,000 women and girls. One thousand were adult unmarried

[573] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', pp. 211–3.
[574] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, pp. 17–8.
[575] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 376.
[576] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 149–50.
[577] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 374.
[578] Bedri, Babikr 1969, '*The memoirs of Babikr Bedri*', p. 38.

women and young girls. Then, all females were to be taken to the Mahdist treasury, and distributed as concubines, first to the notables and then to the fighters. The Mahdi's share was 30 of the most beautiful young girls; any who refused to surrender to her master was tortured. Some committed suicide rather than submit themselves.[579] Many women disguised themselves to conceal their beauty and gender by cutting their hair, fearing being taken as concubines to the various army leaders.[580,581]

The Coptic women were more significant in number than the other non-native, light-skinned women. They were taken to a place big enough for their number; after whoever was suitable for the amirs was taken as concubines and enslaved people. Very few went to their surviving husbands; some unwanted were released to find husbands. Some Greek women were released to their surviving husbands and carers. Most white-skinned ladies, including Egyptians and Turkish of Islamic background, were enslaved.[582] Ultimately, all the unwanted girls and women of the deceased men were sold as enslaved people, plus those enslaved already in Khartoum.[583] Each slave was given to their enslaver with a receipt as proof of ownership. This was to prevent enslaved people and concubine theft. Therefore, the practice of properly evaluating the enslaved person or concubine's price was first done by undressing the person. The value was estimated according to the number of physical body defects.[584]

The enslaved person's skin colour was a significant factor in determining the price, in addition to age and good looks:

- For mature, white-skinned women, this varied between 250 and 340 thalers.[585]

[579] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, pp. 4–6.
[580] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 144.
[581] Similarly, during the Omdurman era, many Copts mentioned they used to disfigure their daughters' faces with black soot and other methods when they had to go outside their homes; for the same reason.
[582] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 379.
[583] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 374.
[584] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 5.
[585] Five thalers equal one Egyptian pound, almost equal to a British pound.

- Dark-skinned and already enslaved ones price's varied between 70 and 100 thalers, and their children were sold separately.[586]

6.20 The war looting practice

The primary source of the Mahdist state's income was confiscating enemy properties for some years after Khartoum's Government's fall. The same practice occurred during the revolutionary period previously. This tradition was expected and acceptable in all clan and tribal wars, as with many religious wars in history.

After the killing of Gordon, which was a primary aim, they started searching public and private properties for weapons and assets. However, following orders to control the confiscations, this became almost impossible under the condition of rage. They gathered whatever was left of the loot in considerable piles to be moved to Omdurman's treasury. The women and the previously enslaved people, male and female, were also considered confiscated assets. Confiscating valuables and captivating women were the primary motivating factors for most fighters. The women were gathered and transferred to the treasury for their later distribution or sale.

By the end of the day, the Mahdi's orders were to gather all Khartoum's valuables to be kept in the Mahdist state treasury. This order came with the warning that whoever possessed these would be subject to Sharia punishment and eternal divine punishment. However, the fighters and amirs smuggled much of the loot and distributed it among themselves despite the warnings; very little went to the Islamic treasury. Moreover, the vast amount of the confiscated gold and silver they handled, with its excessive supply, created local economic problems. The demand for gold and silver was less; eventually, its value was reduced compared to the actual coin money.[587, 588]

As for the female captives, Shukair had a detailed narration concerning this incident. They were gathered all in one place and divided according to the degree of beauty and good looks, age and marital status. The priority of choice over the unmarried and most beautiful was given to the Mahdi; he chose 20. The rest were sent to be distributed among the army

[586] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 374.
[587] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 145.
[588] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, '*Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*', p. 213.

leaders and amirs. The less fortunate women of beauty, good looks and age were released without a livelihood. Consequently, some died of hunger, and the rest became beggars in Omdurman's streets.[589,590] Many surviving women lost their minds due to the horrific killing scenes of their male children and husbands; a few months later, they died due to this horrible trauma.[591,592]

6.21 What was left of Khartoum's population

We have no accurate figures for Khartoum's population before the massacre except the one just before the siege, which was 250,000. However, it is documented that many army soldiers and their leader escaped to Mahdi's camp two days before the invasion. In addition to too many people, Gordon permitted them to exit the city because of a food shortage. In both cases, we have no accurate figures.

However, we can estimate what remained of Khartoum's population from the documented figures of the deceased. The average available number of dead was in the range of 30,000, and almost all were men. Moreover, the estimated number of captured females was about 35,000 women and girls, which is a reasonable ratio compared to the males' number. So, the estimated Khartoum's population up to January 1885 could be 100,000 people.

Similarly, we have no figures about the remaining number Khartoum's survivors except for a hint mentioned in Yusuf Mikhail's memoirs that we could estimate. He noted the remaining survivors were held for about a month a few kilometres south of Omdurman near the Emir Wad-el-Nujumi and the Mahdi's camps—until they disclosed their hidden valuables under severe torture. All were assembled under a large tree known as Gordon's tree (also previously known as Mahi Bey's tree, the Turkish Governor) in

Fig. 11 Gordon's tree

[589] Shoucair, Naum 1981, *'History of the Sudan',* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), pp. 536–7.
[590] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 14–6.
[591] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 17.
[592] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 141.

the freezing weather at night and scorching weather during the day.[593,594,595] At most, their number could be between 100–200 people, which included elderly women, surviving males who were hiding during the massacre and those kept for revealing their hidden valuables.

6.22 The Europeans and foreigners who were in Khartoum

The total number of Europeans in Khartoum during the siege until the invasion was between 50 to 60,[596] and the Greeks totalled 42 in number. They were the most prominent European group in Khartoum. Gordon gave the Greeks more than an escape plan in a specially prepared steamer; the disagreements between themselves and their consul failed the endeavour.[597] In the end, only eight survived the massacre.[598] The American and Austrian consuls were killed along with their family members.[599] Gordon was the first to be killed, and no other person in the palace survived, including any surviving staff or Coptic clerks in his service. All were slaughtered, and their corpses were left inside.[600] An Italian was Khartoum's postmaster, and he was killed, also.[601] Most surviving Europeans during the Mahdist era came from Western Sudan with the emigration group with the Mahdi. Very few European males of Khartoum's residents survived. Similarly, 10 Jews were in Khartoum[602] who possibly came from one of the Arab countries, and only one mentioned survived.[603]

The total number of Europeans and foreigners killed in Khartoum was insignificant; however, the percentage of their total number was very high. As for the dead Copts, their number was unspecified but could reach into the thousands. However, they were not considered foreigners during the Mahdia era.

---

[593] Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., '*The Book of the Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener*', vol. 2, p. 3.
[594] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 145.
[595] Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *'Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness Testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and Bilateral Rule in Sudan'*, pp. 101–2.
[596] Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', *Sudan Research Unit*, p. 83.
[597] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 134.
[598] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 379.
[599] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, pp. 140, 142.
[600] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', pp. 376, 379.
[601] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 377.
[602] '*Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*', p. 379.
[603] Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, p. 360.

6.23 Conclusion

The Mahdist Revolution, without a doubt, was a popular one against the corruption and mismanagement of the Ottoman/Egyptian occupier. It was a typical bloody revolution like many others. However, it took the religious path to acquire popular legitimacy since religious education and culture were profoundly deepened in Sudanese culture. The only available example of revolution available to the people at that time was through the inherited religious history. Thus, it copied seventh-century revolutions with all their positives and negatives, but these did not necessarily suit the nineteenth-century ones. Despite its atrocities, it created a homogenised, classless society and a sovereign state that enmeshed all Sudan tribal societies into a new culture, which was the first pillar of modern Sudanese society.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the Mahdist era was one of the harshest in Sudan's history. As a result, many people were unfairly treated. Those of non-Sudanese ethnicity in general, and of different religious beliefs to the majority in particular, felt isolated and suffered the pressures and impacts more than the others due to cultural differences. However, none of the different ethnicities from that period suffered overall more than the majority; on the contrary, they were fewer, and there were others who fared worse. It was not documented that any were executed or beheaded by sword or whose hands were chopped. Certainly, it is reported how some Copts were among the victims of the Mahdism Wars. Some historians estimated Sudan lost between 60 and 75 per cent of its population due to wars, famine and epidemics.[604,605,606]

One of the main points of controversy in Sudan's history is how far the Copts and other ethnic minorities have contributed to that history. Research has shown through historical and archaeological studies that the Copts moved to Nubia and had a Christian cultural influence on a least one of the Nubian Kingdoms. Similarly, the Byzantine Church spiritually affected one of the Nubian kingdoms. Nonetheless, during the modern age, starting from the Ottoman Empire occupation through Mahdism and beyond, the Copts and other ethnic communities contributed substantially to Sudan's financial management and trade development.

Sufism appeared in the Islamic faith and tradition one century after the rise of Islam, between the seventh and the eighth century. It existed in both the Sunni and Shia beliefs; it has a solid historical connection with Judaism and Christianity. The research has demonstrated a significant association between Sufism and Mahdism in Islamic faith and traditions, particularly in Sudan. Sufi teachings and practices are peaceful and represent moderate faith practice. However, it could take a violent direction in Africa and particularly

---

[604] فوزي, ابراهيم ١٣١٩هـ ١٩٠١م, *كتاب السودان بين يدي غردون وكتشنر*, الجزء ٢ مطبعة الآداب والمؤيد, القاهرة, ص ٣٦١.
Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., *'The Book of Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener'*, part 2, El-Adab and El-Mouaid Press, Cairo, p. 361.

[605] شقير, نعوم ١٩٨١ *تاريخ السودان*, تحقيق تقديم محمد إبراهيم أبوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت, ص ٩٦٠.
Shoucair, Naum 1981, *History of the Sudan,* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, p. 960.

[606] Slatin, R. Carl 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, trans. F. R. Wingate, Edward Arnold, London, p. 404.

in Sudan, which was undeniable during the revolution phase of the Mahdism era. It is noticed through the historical events of the research that this violent inclination corresponded to the mixing between politics and spiritual beliefs.

In chapter four, we took Yusuf's life and personality as an example of the generations born in Sudan from immigrant parents who descended from different ethnic backgrounds. The research shows that Yusuf's memoir is rich with historical and social events that reflect the Mahdism community's daily life during the hijra and in Omdurman. However, his religious duality and the contradictions between his original spiritual belief learned in his childhood and what he acquired during the Mahdism era were evident. Yusuf's life is a true example of the younger generations and the conflict of cultures among those who descended from different ethnicities during the Mahdism era.

Chapter five discussed the hijra from the religious perspective during the revolution and state phases of Mahdism in Sudan. The hijra, or the emigration phenomenon in Sudan, influenced the social structure of the Mahdism state. The biggest hijra was the one from west Sudan to Khartoum before its fall. Similarly, during the reign of Khalifa, forced displacements were a feature of that era for political reasons as it was a kind of punishment. The researcher found that Omdurman was the centre of all different cultures prior to the demographic changes that came to result in Sudan's cultural unity through diversity. It was a place for exchanging other cultural habits. Even some Europeans acquired some local cuisine habits, as mentioned in Fr Resignoly's memoir. The different hijras and emigrations created a new community with diverse cultural practices, some of which exist today, even with the various ethnic groups in Sudan.

In chapter six, the researcher discussed the phenomenon of wars during the Mahdism state. All the Mahdist wars were characterised by violence. There was no army combat regulation as we know of in today's wars. A substantial part of Sudan's population vanished due to the continuous wars throughout the fifteen years of the Mahdism state. During the Khartoum massacre, almost 25 thousand were killed in a few hours. It was found that there was a significant connection between politics and religious practice. One can manipulate the other since either influences people's behaviour and consequently controls them. However, morals sometimes could overcome religious teachings. During Khartoum's holocaust, we found that some fighters' morals helped some people survive, though the orders took a religious aspect. The hunger and injustice were causes to change people's

morals and create violence, which was enough to overthrow an organised army with all its advanced war equipment.

One of the results of the Mahdist period was the forced intermarriages between almost all ethnicities and the Sudanese natives who created a buffer generation loyal to both. Moreover, it helped those who did not leave Sudan in the decades following the conquest live in harmony with the general population's different societal strata. Another political side benefit is that the boundaries of the Mahdist state later became the boundaries of Sudan.

The research looked at the ethnic minorities' life during the Mahdism revolution and state, particularly in the Coptic community. Unfortunately, none of the ethnic communities documented their life during that era or even for sometime after. It was problematic to retrieve that undocumented history and also to depend on the inherited narrated history. However, almost all the Coptic inherited narrated history was proved from written sources to have happened; the problem was the chronological order. This research is the first about the ethnic minorities' life during the relevant era, and hopefully, can be the start of further studies about the period of the Mahdism State in Omdurman and the bilateral ruling period in the future.

The Mahdist era was an experience in Sudan's history with all its negatives and positives, and it was the basis and foundation for the proper modern independent Sudan.

References

English References

Abdel Rahman, Amani Mohamed El Obeid, 'Middle Class and Sufism: The Case Study of the Sammaniyya Order Branch of Shaikh Al Bur'ai', *University of Khartoum*, Khartoum, viewed 10 December 2020, http://khartoumspace.uofk.edu/handle/123456789/12753

Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1999, 'Contribution of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders in Dissemination of Arab-Islamic Knowledge in Local Languages', *Khartoum University*, Khartoum, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263145543

Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2007, 'The patterns of the settlement of the West African immigrant communities in the Sudan during the first decades of the 20th century', *University of Khartoum,* Khartoum, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260434422

Adams, William 1977, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, xx.

Ajtar, A. 1992, 'Two Greek Inscriptions from Polish Excavations in Old Dongola in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw', *Aegyptus,* Warsaw University, Warsaw, vol. 72, no. 1.

Alfred, Henry & Sword, W. Dennistoun 1898, *The Egyptian Soudan: Its Loss and Recovery*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London.

Asher, Michael 2006, *'Khartoum: The Ultimate Imperial Adventure'*, Penguin, London.

Baring, Evelyn 1908, *Modern Egypt*, vol. I, Macmillan, New York.

Bayat, Asef 2013, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, 2nd edn, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Bayat, Asef 2017, *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Bedri, Babikr 1969, *The memoirs of* Babikr *Bedri*, trans. Yousef Bedri, George Scott, Oxford University Press, London.

Brakoniecka, Sabina 2016, 'Muhammad Yusuf's Jihad in the Light of the Mahdist Tradition of Northern Nigeria', *Hemispheres*, vol. 31, no. 3, viewed 11 November 2020, https://www.proquest.com/docview/1867103388?accountid=14757&parentSessionId=Mc94CleFoFxp45ADGVlZLlw8VATqGnwhONVHGV39ufk%3D&pq-origsite=primo

Butcher, E. L. 1897, *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, vol. II, Smith Elder, & Co., London.

Churchill, Winston 1899, *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan*, vols I & II, Longmans, Green, and Co., London.

Clark, P. 1977, 'Three Sudanese Battles', *Institute of African and Asian Studies,* University of Khartoum, vol. 14.

Cuzzi, Guiseppe 1900, 'Fifteen Years Prisoner of the False Prophet', trns. Hildegund Sharma 1968, *Sudan Research Unit*, University of Khartoum, Khartoum.

Daly, M. W. 2008, *The Cambridge History of Egypt,* vol. 2, Modern *Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century*, original work published 1998, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Darmesteter, James 1885*, The Mahdi Past and Present,* Harper & Brothers, New York.

Edwards, David 2004, *The Nubian Past: An archaeology of the Sudan,* Routledge, Oxfordshire.

el Mahdi, Mandour 1965, *A short history of the Sudan*, Oxford University Press, London.

EL Zubeir Pasha 1913, *Black Ivory and White*, trans. H. C. Jackson, B. H. Blackwell, Oxford.

Esposito, J., Sonn, T., & Voll, J. 2016, *Islam and Democracy after the Arab Spring*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn 2008, *Islamic law and society in the Sudan*, vol. 13, Routledge, London.

Gadallah, F. 1959, 'The Egyptian Contribution to Nubian Christianity', *Sudan Notes and Records,* vol. 40, University of Khartoum.

Goldschmidt Jr., Arthur 2000, *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Colorado.

Goldziher, Ignaz 1981, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras & Ruth Hamor, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Hake, A. Egmont 1885, *The Journals of Major-Gen. C. G. Gordon, C. B. At Khartoum*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

Hansen, William. 'Boko Haram: Religious Radicalism and Insurrection in Northern Nigeria*', Journal of Asian and African studies*, Leiden.

Hassan, Ibrahim H. 2015, 'An Introduction to Islamic Movements and Modes of Thought in Nigeria', *Religious Studies Nasarawa*, State University, Keffi, viewed 4 January 2021, https://arch.library.northwestern.edu/catalog?f%5Bresource_type_sim%5D%5B%5D=Research+Paper&locale=en&search_field=all_fields&q=An+Introduction+to+Islamic+Movements+and+Modes+of+Thought+in+Nigeria

Hendrickx, B. 2014, 'On the withdrawal of the Roman troops from the Dodecaschoenos in AD 298: many questions and few answers--the problems in perspective', *Akroterion,* vol. 59, Gale Academic OneFile, Stellenbosch.

Hill, Richard 1959, *Egypt in the Sudan*, Oxford University Press, London.

Hill, Richard (trans.) 1970, *On the frontiers of Islam*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp.

Holt, P. 1958, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan in the Sudan 1881–1898: A Study of Its Origins Development and Overthrow*, 2nd edn 1970, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Holt, P. 1961, *A Modern History of The Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London.

Holt, P. 1970, *The Mahdist State in The Sudan 1881–1898*, 2nd edn. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Holt. P., & Daly, W. 2011, *A History of the Sudan: From the Coming of Islam to the Present Day*, 6th edn, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Abingdon.

Holt, P. 2013, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the eleventh century to 1517*, Routledge, London.

Hunwick, J., Kanya-Frostner, S., Lovejoy, P., O'Fahey, R., & Abu-Manga, A. 1997, 'Between Niger and Nile: New Light on The Fulani Mahdist Muhammad Al-Dadari', *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 8, viewed 30 November 2020,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261426372

Jakobielski, S. 1981, 'Nubian Christian Architecture', *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde,* vol. 108, no. 1, De Gruyter, Berlin.

Junker, Wilhelm 1890, *Travels in Africa: During the Years 1875–1878*, Chapman and Hall Ltd., London.

Keddie, Nikki 1994, 'The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.36, no. 3, University of California, Los Angeles.

Khalili, Emad 2014, 'Sects in Islam: Sunnis and Shias', *International Academic Institute for Science and Technology: International Academic Journal of Humanities*, vol. 1, no. 1.

Kramer, Robert 2010, *Holy City on the Nile: Omdurman during the Mahdiyya, 1885–1898*, Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton.

Layish, A. 1933, 'Sharia and the Islamic State in 19th-Century Sudan: The Mahdi's Legal Methodology and Doctrine', *Islam in Africa*, vol. 19, Mauro Nobili, Rudiger Seesemann, and Knut Vikor (eds.), Brill, Leiden.

L. P. & Shinnie M. 1965, 'New Light on Medieval Nubia', *The Journal of African History,* vol. 6, no. 3, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Masud, M. Khalid 1990 'The obligation to migrate: the doctrine of hijra in Islamic law', in Dale F. Eickelman & James Piscatori (eds.), *Muslim Travellers: pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination,* Routledge, Abingdon.

Matsumoto, David (ed.) 2009, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Miller, Catherine & Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2005, 'The West Africa (Fallata) Communities in Gedaref state: Process of settlement and local integration', *Land, ethnicity and political legitimacy in Eastern Sudan,* CEDEJ, Cairo, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253306894

Multiple authors 1900, *Pictorial Records of the English in Egypt: With a Full and Descriptive Life of General Gordon, the Hero of Khartoum*, James Sangster & Company, London.

Neufeld, Charles 1899*, A Prisoner of the Khaleefa: Twelve Years' Captivity at Omdurman,* 3rd edn, Chapman & Hall, LD, London.

Ohrwalder, Fr Joseph 1892, *'Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882–1892'*, trans. F. R. Wingate, 3rd edn, Samson Low, Marston & Company, London.

Orfali, Bilal & Saab, Nada (eds) 2012, 'Sufism, Black and White: A Critical Edition of Kitāb al-Bayāḍ wa-l-Sawād by Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī (d. ca. 470/1077)', Sebastian Gunther & Wadad Kadi (eds), *Islamic History and Civilization*, vol. 94, Brill, Leiden.

Pallme, Ignatius 1844, *Travels in Kordofan*, J. Madden and Co., London.

Peacock, A.C.S. 2012, 'The Ottomans and the Funj Sultanate in The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Bulletin of SOAS*, vol. 17, no. 1.

Raven, Wim 2018 'Hijra' *In Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edn, Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson (eds), Brill, Leiden, viewed 23 June 2022, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30461

Rifaat Bey, M. 1947, *Awakening of Modern Egypt*, Longmans-Green & Co., London.

Rosenberg, Stephen 2004, 'The Jewish Temple at Elephantine', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, vol. 67, no. 1.

Rosignoli, C. 1967, 'Omdurman During the Mahdiya', trans. ed. F. Rehfisch, *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 48, University of Khartoum, Khartoum.

Seesemann, Rudiger 2007, 'Between Sufism and Islamism: The Tijaniyya and Islamist Rule in the Sudan', *Department of Near East Studies*, Princeton University, Markus Wiener, Princeton.

Sijpesteijn, P.M. 2012, 'Hijra', *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st edn, Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner (eds), Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Hoboken, viewed 23 June 2022, https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.library.sydney.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah12099

Simner, Mark 2017, *The Sirdar and the Khalifa,* the chapter of 'The Rise of the Mahdi', Fonthill, Stroud.

Slatin, R. Carl 1914, *Fire and the Sword in the Sudan*, trans. F. R. Wingate, Edward Arnold, London.

Smaldone, P. 1977, *Wafare In the Sokoto Caliphate Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Smith, John 1908, 'The Jewish Temple at Elephantine, *The Biblical World*, vol. 31, no. 6, American Periodicals Series III, Chicago.

Tada, R. 2015, 'Copts and robbers', *The Weekly Standard*, vol. 20, Washington.

Thornton, J. Howard 1895, *'Memories of Seven Campaigns'*, Archibald Constable & Co., London.

Toniolo, Elias & Hill, Richard (eds) 1974, *The Opening of the Nile Basin*, C. Hurst & Company, London.

Vantini, Giovanni 2009, *Rediscovering Christian Nubia,* Linea Edizioni, Verona.

Voll, John O. 2000, 'The Eastern Sudan, 1822 to the Present', Nehemia Levtzion & Randall L. Pouwels (eds), *The History of Islam in Africa,* James Currey, Melton.

Walkley, C.E.J. 1935, 'The Story of Khartoum', *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 18, no. 2, University of Khartoum, Khartoum.

Warburg, Gabriel 2009, 'From Sufism to Funddamentalism: The Mahdiyya and the Wahhabiyya', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4, Tayor & Francis.

Werner, R., Anderson, W., & Wheeler, A. 2000, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi.

Wingate, F. R. 1891, *Mahdiism and The Egyptian Sudan*, Macmillan, New York.

Arabic References:

أبو علي, أحمد بن الحاج ١٨٣٨, *مخطوط كاتب الشونة: في تاريخ السلطنة السنارية والادارة المصرية*, تحقيق الشاطر بصيلي عبد الجليل ١٩٦١, وزارة الثقافة والارشاد القومي, القاهرة.
Abu Ali, Ahmed bin Hajj 1838, *The manuscript of the writer of Al-Shuna in the history of the Sennari Sultanate*, Al-Shater Basili Abdul Jalil (ed.) 1961, Ministry of Culture and National Guidance, Cairo.

أبو منقة, الإمين ١٩٨٩, 'الأسس الفقهية لهجرة أمير المؤمنين الطاهر الأول من سكتو', *دراسات أفريقية*, جامعة أفريقيا الدولية, الخرطوم.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1989, 'The jurisprudential foundations of the migration of the Commander/Prince of the Faithful, the Immaculate One, from Sukto', *Dirasat Ifrikiyya*, International University of Africa, Khartoum, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261433074

ابو منقة, الامين ١٩٩١, 'العلاقات السودانية النيجيرية في إطار المهدية', *دراسات أفريقية*, جامعة إفريقيا الدولية, الخرطوم.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 1991, 'Sudan-Nigeria relations within Mahdia', *Dirasat Ifrikiyya*, International University of Africa, Khartoum, viewed 4 January 2021, http://dspace.iua.edu.sd/handle/123456789/1382 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261613760

ابو منقة, الامين ٢٠٠١, 'موقف الخلافة السكتية من الاستعمار البريطاني النصراني', *جامعة الخرطوم*, الخرطوم.
Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2001,'The position of the Sukkite Caliphate towards the Christian British colonialism', *Khartoum University*, Khartoum, viewed 30 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263144988

ابو منقة, الامين ٢٠٠٨, 'العلاقات التاريخية والمتجددة بين السودان ونيجيريا', *مركز دراسات الشرق الاوسط وأفريقيا*, الخرطوم.

Abu-Manga, Al-Amin 2008, 'Historical and renewed relations between Sudan and Nigeria', *Middle East & Africa Studies Center*, Khartoum, viewed 20 November 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261613602

أبوسليم, م. إبراهيم ١٩٧٩, *'تاريخ الخرطوم'*, الطبعة الثانية, دار الجيل, بيروت.
Abu Saleem, M. Ibrahim 1979, *'Khartoum history'*, 2nd edn, Dar El-Jeel, Beirut.

الجبرتي, عبد الرحمن (مؤرخ ١٧٥٣-١٨٢٥), *عجائب الآثار في التراجم والأخبار*, موقع المصطفى.
Al-Jabarti, Abdul Rahman (historian 1753–1825 CE), *The History of Al-Jabarti,* al-Mostafa, https://al-mostafa.info/data/arabic/depot/gap.php?file=m011689.pdf.

الكردفاني, إسماعيل عبد القادر ١٩٨٢, *سعادة المستهدي بسيرة الإمام المهدي*, تحقيق محمد إبراهيم ابوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت.
Al-Kordofani, Ismael 1982, *The Pleasure of Who is Guided by God's Words with Imam al-Mahdi's Biography,* ed. M. I. Abu Salim, Dar Al-Jeel, Bierut.

الشامي, عقيل زيد ٢٠٠٨, *الجهاد في الاسلام*, مركز ابن إدريس الحلي للدراسات الفقهية.
Al-Shami, Aqil Zaid 2008, Jihad in Islam, Ibn Idris Al-Hali Center for Jurisprudential Studies, viewed 21 November 2009, http://ibnidress.center/library/%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A7/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%20%D9%81%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85.pdf

الإسكندراني, عمر, وحسن, سليم ٢٠١٤, *تاريخ مصرمن الفتح العثماني إلى قبيل الوقت الحاضر, مراجعة* أ. ج. سفدج, مؤسسة هنداوي للتعليم والثقافة, القاهرة.
El-Eskandarany, O, Hasan, S 2014, *The history of Egypt from the Ottoman Conquest to the present time,* rev. A J Sfidg, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Cairo.

فوزي, ابراهيم ١٣١٩هـ ١٩٠١م, *كتاب السودان بين يدي غردون وكتشنر*, الجزء ١ أو ٢ مطبعة الآداب والمؤيد, القاهرة.
Fawzi, Ibrahim 1319 H. 1901 G., *'The Book of Sudan between the Hands of Gordon and Kitchener'*, part 1 or 2, El-Adab and El-Mouaid Press, Cairo.

كشّة, سليمان?١٩٦, *تأسيس مدينة الخرطوم والمهدية*, أمدرمان.
Kishah, Solomon 196?, *Establishment of the city of Khartoum, and the Mahdism*, Omdurman.

مالك, محمد محجوب ١٩٨٧, *المقاومة الداخلية للحركة المهدية*, دار الجيل, بيروت.
Malik, M. Mahjoub 1987, *The Internal Resistance of the Mahdist Movement,* Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut.

ميخائيل, يوسف ٢٠٠٤, *'مذكرات يوسف ميخائيل: التركية والمهدية والحكم الثنافى فى السودان (شاهدعيان)'*, تقديم د. احمد ابراهيم ابوشوك, مركز عبد الكريم ميرغني الثقافي, امدرمان.

Mikhail, Yousif 2004, *Memoirs of Yousif Mikhail: Eyewitness testimony on Turkish, Mahdia and bilateral rule in Sudan*, ed. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, Abdul Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, Omdurman,
https://www.academia.edu/4075756/

محمد حسن, سعد ١٩٥٣, *المهدية في الإسلام منذ أقدم العصور وحتى اليوم: دراسة وافية لتاريخها العقائدي والسياسي والأدبي*, دار الكتاب العربي, القاهرة.
Muhammad Hassan, Saad 1953, *Mahdism in Islam from the earliest times until today: a comprehensive study of its doctrinal history*, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Cairo.

سيد احمد, أحمد ٢٠٠٠, *تاريخ مدينة الخرطوم تحت الحكم المصري ١٨٢٠-١٨٨٥* , الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب, القاهرة.
Sayed Ahmed, Ahmed 2000, *History of the City of Khartoum Under the Egyptian Rule 1820–1885*, The Egyptian General Book Authority, Cairo.

محمود شلتوت ١٩٥١, *القرآن وآيات القتال*, دار الكتاب العربي, القاهرة.
Shaltout, Mahmoud 1951, *The Qur'an and the Verses of Fighting*, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Cairo.

الشيخ محمد نور بن ضيف الله ١٧٢٧-١٨٠٩م, *'وقفات مع كتاب الطبقات: طبقات ود ضيف الله'* , إعداد الشيخ الأمين الحاج محمد أحمد, طبعة أولى ٢٠٠٠, مركز الصف الألكترونى ، بيروت.
Sheikh Muhammed Nour bin Dhaif Allah 1727–1809 AD, *Pauses with the History Book of bin Dhaif Allah: Tabaqat Wad Daif Allah*, prepared by Sheikh Al-Amin Hajj Muhammad Ahmad, 1st edn 2000, El-Saf Electronic Center, Beirut.

شقير, نعوم ١٩٨١, *تاريخ السودان*, تحقيق تقديم محمد إبراهيم أبوسليم, دار الجيل, بيروت.
Shoucair, Naum 1981, *History of the Sudan,* M. I. Abu Saleem (ed.), Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut.

شقير, نعوم ١٩٠٣, *'تاريخ السودان القديم والحديث وجغرافيته'* , مطبعة المعارف, القاهرة.
Shoucair, Naum 1903, *History and Geography of the Sudan*, Ma'arif Press.

سليمان, سعد محمد أحمد ٢٠١٣, *أقباط السودان: الماضي والحاضر*, إمبرينزا للطباعة والنشر.
Suleiman, S. M. Ahmed 2013, *Copts of Sudan: Past and Present*, Imprensa Printing Press, Bahrain.

تواضروس, نجيب يسى, وعبد السيد, زاهر يعقوب, ٢٠٠٧, *رحلة الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية في أرض كوش (السودان): من القرن التاسع عشر الى القرن الواحد والعشرين*, مركز الإشعاع الروحي-إبارشية الخرطوم والجنوب وتوابعها.
Tawadros, Najib Yessa, and Abd al-Sayed, Zahir Yacoub, 2007, *The expedition of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Land of Kush (Sudan): from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century*, The Centre of The Spiritual Radiation - the Diocese of Khartoum and the South Sudan and its minions.

طوسون, عمر (أمير) ١٩٣٦, *المسألة السودانية*, مكتبة المستقبل, الاسكندرية.

Toson, Omar (prince) 1936, *The Sudanese Issue*, El-Mustakbal, Alixandria.

الشيخ محمد نور بن ضيف الله (١٧٢٧-١٨٠٩م) ٢٠٠٠, *وقفات مع كتاب الطبقات: طبقات ود ضيف الله*, إعداد الشيخ الأمين الحاج محمد أحمد, طبعة أولى, مركز الصف الألكترونى ، بيروت.

Wad Daif Allah, Muhammad Nur (1727–1809) 2000, *Book Quotes the Layers of Wad Daif Allah in the Righteous, the Scholars, and Poets of Sudan*, Sheikh Al-Amin Al-Hajj Muhammad Ahmed (ed.) 1st edn, El-Saf Electronic Centre, Beirut.

يوحنا, منسّى (قس) ١٩٨٣, *تاريخ الكنيسة القبطية*, إعادة طبع, مكتبة المحبة, القاهرة.

Youhanna, Fr Manasseh 1983, *History of the Coptic Church*, re-print, El-Mahabba, Cairo, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ebWpk2URYqTX3U0L54Ln7-5lpeLqELl8/view