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CARAVAN TRADE AND ROUTES IN  
THE NORTHERN SUDAN IN THE  
19TH CENTURY.

A STUDY IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

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THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M.A.

BY

HASSAN ABDEL AZIZ AHMED

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UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM, U.K.

MARCH 1967.

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## ABSTRACT

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Trade is an important aspect of the economic geography of any country and during the 19th century trade in the Sudan laboured under peculiar difficulties. A harsh physical environment, presenting many difficulties, not least the absence of water, was associated with economic backwardness and political unrest. Thus in the 19th century trade was still limited to certain basic natural products, such as gum and ivory which had been articles of trade from earliest times. Further development was curtailed by a scarcity of capital, the absence of a standard currency, heavy and arbitrary taxation associated with administrative incompetence and short-sighted monopolistic policies.

Underlying many of these problems was the absence of a cheap and efficient means of transport. As a result of physical barriers along the Nile in form of cataracts, trade routes were forced to cross barren deserts and hence the only mode of transport available was the camel. Slow and temperamental, this beast possessed only a limited carrying capacity and this fact, together with the nature of the routes followed, to a great extent determined the type of articles which could be transported. All fragile and bulky goods were necessarily excluded, and for export, traders of necessity concentrated on those products with a high value per unit weight, such as perfumes, spices and cotton goods. In addition to this trade in high value materials there was internal trade consisting mainly of provisions dealing which tended to be seasonally variable and relatively localised.

Throughout the 19th century in an attempt to stimulate trade successive governments resorted to various schemes, attempting to improve communications and develop agricultural resources so as to diversify the articles available for export. These were some short-term successes but in general most of these attempts were a failure because of a singular lack of overall economic planning and the high cost and inadequacy of transport.

P R E F A C E

Sudanese caravan trade and routes, which persisted up to the beginning of the 20th century, have never been given a full consideration as a separate topic, and what little has been written about them largely consists of a rather casual treatment in general historical accounts. Such accounts, however, contain mere lists of trade centres and routes in so far as they are relevant to the writers' theme, and fail to appraise the geographical factors underlying their existence.

The aim of this study is to show how the geography of the Sudan influenced trade and routes, that is, to explain, geographically, the nature and significance of this aspect of economic life during the 19th century.

This, however, has not been easy in a country which never enjoyed autonomy, where administrative continuity was always at the mercy of the viceroys in Cairo and where personal initiative played a large role in getting things done. Accordingly, there are many problems that face geographers as well as historians. First, statistical information, especially in the field of economics, is meagre and unreliable. The figures for external trade compiled by officials and individuals during the Egyptian period (1821-1883) show great contradictions and are irregular in incidence except from 1879 to 1898 when reports on Suakin's trade were compiled by the British Consul there. Secondly, the emphasis on export trade resulted in the complete neglect of internal trade in the sense that all the travellers' and officials' as well as individuals' reports did not comment on internal trade in any way. There is no statistical data and the reconstruction is based on a few comments by some writers, especially B. Badri and J. L. Burckhardt. Similarly, in the field of agriculture there is a lack of information about acreages and yields except for one or two years. A list of arable lands and areas actually cultivated compiled by the Finance Minister in Cairo in 1872 gives grossly exaggerated figures that make the



delimitation of such areas and their exact location quite difficult. Thirdly, the lack of western fiscal procedures makes investigation more hazardous ; there are no acts regulating import and export trade that can be used to throw light on trade and commerce during most of this century. Fourthly, documentation for the Egyptian period in the Sudan is very poor, many of the state archives having perished in 1885 when Khartoum fell into the hands of the Mahdists. There is even less information concerning agriculture and trade in the Mahdist period (1885-1898), and what information is available is frequently not of much use to the geographer.

As a result, the framework of this study is mainly based on the accounts of the various travellers who visited the Sudan during the 19th century, and commented on the routes, the character and centres of trade at the time of their visit. In addition, relevant reports made by British and Egyptian governments' officials, such as those of Stewart and Prout, will be used together with other documentary material such as the Parliamentary papers or the Blue Books. Other material includes more general historical accounts dealing with both periods, the Egyptian and Mahdist, which are either purely historical in approach or include only some rather casual geographic and social treatment of life in general. Another source of some importance is the various articles in geographic journals and the Sudan Notes and Records, about the centres of trade and routes which will be listed in footnotes. The main source of maps has been the various travellers' books, especially those which give details concerning routes together with some material from the Sudan Survey Department, geographical journals and reports such as those of Stewart and Prout.

The lack of information in all economic fields which characterise most of the 19th century makes a proper reconstruction exceedingly difficult, and it is perhaps not unreasonable to draw

a comparison between the fiscal records of the Sudan at this period and those of England in the Middle Ages<sup>(1)</sup>. The most recent period, the Mahdiya, is very poorly documented as far as trade conditions are concerned and the figures for 1886-1898 only show the trade of Suakin with the interior. The Turkish period, which covers over 60 years, also suffers from this lack of statistical information, but the fact remains that this is the period which is the best known because of the various travellers and officials who visited the Sudan and left accounts and reports about trade conditions and routes. Moreover, the establishment of law and order during this period was followed by an expansion in trade, the introduction of new crops, the coming of Europeans and the export of Sudanese products to European markets. These factors, in the view of the general scarcity of sufficient data for the whole century, make this period the best documented in comparison with the others. For the period preceding the Turkish period, that is 1800-1821 Burckhardt's book 'Travels in Nubia', London (1819), is undoubtedly, the best available. He visited the Sudan from 1813-1814, first the Nubian reach of the Nile until Argo in 1813, and secondly Berber, Shendi, Takka and Suakin in 1814, and commented on the past trade and trade prospects of the Sudan beside discussing in detail the trade conditions of the trade centres he visited. This follows the chronological sequence of events during this century. The approach in this study is, therefore, chronological in the sense that it begins at the beginning of the 19th century which is also the best known in terms of general economic conditions. A rigid adherence to a chronological sequence of events has, however, been subordinated to the main theme of this study, namely, a systematic appraisal of the factors influencing the geography of the trade and trade routes of the Sudan.

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(1) H.C. Darby : Historical Geography of England before 1800, London, (1951), especially Chapters V, VI, VII and VIII.

It should be remarked that maps, unless the source is shown, have been compiled by the author from information obtained from the sources given below each map. This particularly applies to all Figures in Chapter Three and also the maps showing irrigable and cultivable areas by provinces in Chapter Two. When source is not indicated, the map has also been compiled by the author from information gathered from scattered sources, such as Figure 13.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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INTRODUCTION.

The country known as the Sudan today has been known by various names throughout history, and although each name designated certain areas rather than others, travellers have tended to apply them indiscriminately for the whole country. Thus, the Medieval Arab Geographers gave the name 'Bilad es Soudan' (the Country of the Black) to the belt that stretched across Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea between  $10^{\circ}$  and  $15^{\circ}$  N<sup>(1)</sup>. For a more limited sub-division, however, this vast territory was divided into 'Eastern Bilad es Soudan', lying to the south of Egypt and east of Darfur, and 'Western Bilad es Soudan' comprising the territories to the west of Darfur (Fig.4).

'Eastern Bilad es Soudan' was known by other names, namely, Nubia and Ethiopia<sup>(2)</sup>. Traditionally the name 'Nubia' was given to the whole riverine region extending from the first to the sixth Cataracts<sup>(3)</sup>. This was in turn sub-divided into 'Lower Nubia' from the first Cataract to the third, and 'Upper Nubia' above the third Cataract<sup>(4)</sup>.

The other name, Ethiopia, is an ancient name and was applied to the eastern Sudan including Nubia<sup>(5)</sup>. The Island of Meroe was also given to the land between the Atbara river and the Blue Nile east of their confluence with the main Nile. This name is derived from Meroe, the ancient capital of the Meroetic Kingdom (Fig.1)<sup>(6)</sup>. The Red Sea region was given the name 'the Land of the Beja', the tribal group that live in this area (Fig.13 inset map) and which were recognised early by the Medieval Muslims as a distinct ethnic group, not Nubians, nor Arabs nor 'Sudan' (Blacks). Darfur and Kordofan in the west (Fig.4) remained independent - in fact Kordofan was a vassal state of Darfur - until they were annexed to the rest of the country during the Egyptian period.

These regions, which comprise the Sudan, can be divided into two major regions according to their cultural outlook ;

first, the whole region bordering the Nile as well as Kordofan and Darfur looked to Egypt, and Egyptian influence, especially in Nubia, has been great. Secondly, the Red Sea region looked to the Red Sea and Arabia rather than to the Nile valley, from which it was separated by hills and deserts. Politically, the former region, except Darfur, has normally fallen under Egyptian control while the latter, including Suakin, has at least nominally been under the rule of Turkey proper from the sixteenth century.

Politically, the Sudan passed under three regimes during the 19th century.

1800 - 1820 : This period witnessed the last years of the Fung power during which the Kingdom disintegrated into petty principalities which were either completely independent, such as Damer, Shaigia and Berber, or semi-independent and paying nominal homage to the King at Sennar. However, each ruler, called Mek, exercised full authority over his territory, and imposed his own dues on caravans passing through it.

This break-up of the kingdom was inevitably followed by political chaos, especially along trade routes. Many highway-men and predatory tribes such as the Bisharin, the Mograt Arabs near Abu Hamed, the Shaigia, and many others were notorious for their marauding activities against caravans. Moreover, each Mek attacked the other, and the weak sought asylum in Egypt for help. This internecine war weakened the country politically and economically and the time was ripe for a foreign intervention, and in 1819 Mohamed Ali Pasha, the ruler of Egypt, who for long coveted the country, decided to conquer the Sudan.

1820 - 1883 : This is the Egyptian period. In this essay two designations are used, namely 'Egyptian' and 'Turkish', for this period. Both of these terms should, however, be used with discretion. Egyptians, as a nation-state like today, did not exist, and the Sudan was not ruled by them, but by a Turkish-speaking elite who had dominated Egypt since Medieval times, and later conquered

the Sudan. Hence the name 'Turks' was used by both the Sudanese and Europeans, and the name 'Egyptian' was used only in the sense that it, i.e. the Sudan, was a dependency of the Ottoman province of Egypt. A similar discretion should also be observed when using the term 'Turkish', since the ruling Turks were not of purely Turkish origin, but were composed of multi-racial subjects of the Sublime Porte which were composed of Circassians, Kurds, Greeks, Albanians, Turkmans, slaves and Bosnians and Turks. Thus, in default of a proper name or an exact name both terms are used in this essay to designate this period.

The reasons behind the Egyptian conquest were, first the need for slaves to work his agricultural and industrial enterprises and to strengthen his 'black' army. Secondly, the political disintegration of the Fung Kingdom into tribal factions, each vying for power and each spying on the other and reporting to the Pasha in Egypt, convinced him of the need for a successful conquest. Thirdly, he was obsessed by the illusory abundance of gold and other minerals in the Sudan. Fourthly, he wanted to crush the Mamelukes who fled from his massacre in Cairo, and established a state in Dongola.

During Mohamed Ali's rule (1821-1849) law and order were established, but the first two years after the conquest saw bloodshed, devastations and tribal revolt, especially after the Shendi Massacre in 1822<sup>(7)</sup>. The main cause was due to the unjust and excessive taxes that disrupted the economic life of the people. Although it took sometime to recover from the results of the revolt, such as widespread depopulation, the country was subject to the rule of law from 1825 onwards. The country was divided into provinces, each under a governor who was responsible to the Governor-general at Khartoum. The government then embarked on a vast scheme of exploiting the mineral wealth, exploration of the Nile sources, the development of external trade, and introduction of new cash crops such as indigo, opium and cotton and for this purpose experts from Egypt were sent to do the cultivation and to teach the

Sudanese this art. However, several of the government's experiments in planting new crops and starting new industries failed. Yet, the coming of the Egyptians brought a great increase in external trade and with it a vastly extended use of money. There was a steady increase in the export of gum, ivory, and ostrich feathers which were monopolised by the state; river navigation was facilitated by encouraging boat-building, and with the intention of promoting trade Mohamed Ali leased the ports of Suakin and Massawa from Turkey. However, the monopolistic policies of the Pasha, especially in the field of trade, were resented by other powers, especially Britain, which were vying for a sphere of influence in the Nile valley. Thus harassed by their continuous protests, the Pasha had to abolish all the monopolies. This brought Europeans, priests and merchants, and slowly a sizeable but an influential community emerged which later played a great part in developing the external trade of the Sudan.

However, the death of Mohamed Ali in 1849 had an immediate effect on the spirit of the government in the Sudan. His successor, Abbas Pasha (1849-54) not only slowed the pace of the government, but in many ways reversed the policy of Mohamed Ali, for where he had stood for progress after his fashion, Abbas followed a policy of retrenchment and conservatism. His reign saw a rapid succession of inefficient governors and the Sudan was used as a place of banishment for all his opponents and politically undesirable people. However, the only two events of importance were the declaration that navigation and commerce be free of restrictions and the loosening of the control from the capital as one puppet Governor-general followed the other.

From 1854-63 followed the reign of Said Pasha who had more common sense in many of his acts than Abbas; yet the tenure of office of the Governors-general of the Sudan became so short that there comes a time in 1856 when it is difficult to pace with the quick succession of appointments and recalls which marked the less responsible aspects of Said's rule<sup>(8)</sup>. He delegated much of his authority to others, and instead of appointing Governors-general himself, he chose from a list of candidates nominated by

extraordinary councils, but experience and a certain standard of literacy in the governors became important. In 1856, he visited the Sudan, and the results of this visit was reduction in taxes, the participation of Sudanese in local administration and the decentralization of the government and everything had to be referred to Cairo for decision. However, the European commercial influence began to grow, and European firms and traders dealt directly with Sudanese agents. We also hear of a chamber of commerce in Khartoum in 1862 and of the Banque du Soudan to finance trading operations in the Sudan.

Attempts to clear the cataracts from the Nile, however, failed, but a few steamers were introduced in the navigable reaches of the river. Moreover, the Suez - Cairo railway was completed in 1858 and a cable was laid from Alexandria to Suakin; a railway line from Aswan to Berber was recommended, but the project was shelved because of inherent economic problems. But the decentralization was having disastrous political effects, on the country, and the succession of Ismail (1863-79) marked the end of fourteen years of uneventful and undistinguished rule. His policy for the Sudan was to develop the country commercially, to give it strong government, to extend its frontiers, and to develop inland communications, ports and sea transport. But his lack of a money sense, his failure to visit the Sudan and his despotism put him at a disadvantage. However, the Sudanese were promoted to the posts of provincial governors, and with the expanding frontiers, trade preceded the flag to the Nile - Congo divide. He was well aware of the main problem that hindered the expansion of trade : lack of efficient means<sup>of</sup> transport. But his choice of routes, mainly influenced by his unhappy relations with the Suez Canal Company, was all defective; he wanted the railway to be Egyptian, serving Egyptian interests, and, therefore, must be passing along the Nile Valley. For economic reasons, the envisaged railway lines failed; the Sudan company was liquidated after five years of its formation. Only the telegraphic communications and river transport



did much to develop trade and administration. The Sudan future, according to the Khedive, lay in cotton and sugar, but chiefly in cotton. Cotton, under the demand created by the American Civil War, was successful; but to increase production, heavy taxes were levied in cotton instead of in cash. Taxes on other crops and property were also raised, and the result was economic ruin for people and the government. The lack of a rational customs policy was hindering trade. The crippling financial debts of Egypt, had their effect on the Sudan; proposals for the devolution of financial control from Cairo were rejected. Yet, the last years of the Khedive saw great expansion in the external trade of the Sudan, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

Generally speaking, the administration was carried on chiefly by soldiers, with the outlook and limitations of soldiers, and because of the chronic shortage of money, the government tried to make the Sudan pay its way. As a result, it began to over-assess and consequently to overtax, and this fact was the main cause of weakness in the Sudanese finances, and the root of all complaints and grudges against the Egyptian rule. It was against these abuses that the Mahdi rose in 1881.

#### The Mahdist Regime (1885-98):

However, the main aim of Mohamed Ahmed, the Mahdi, was to end the foreign rule and establish a religious rule in the Sudan. In this he was assisted by the popular hate against the 'Turks'. His rapid victories over the government forces were due to the whole-hearted support that the Sudanese gave him, as a messenger of God, to deliver them from the miseries and abuses of the 'Turkish' rule. It took him 3 years to bring the whole country under his sway, but he died in 1885, just after a month from the fall of Khartoum. However, his early death deprived the country from a strong leader that could have united the different tribal groups in a common cause, and this led to the division of the country into rivalry factions and later to civil war. The choice of Abdullahi el Taishi, a Baqqari from western Sudan, as the Mahdi's successor

or the Khalifa, led to a breach of faith between him (the Khalifa), and the relatives of the Mahdi, the Ashraf, whose influence was mainly in the riverine areas north of Khartoum. To counterbalance, the Khalifa had to depend on his own people, the Baqqara, whom he brought in large numbers to support him. Thus in order to ensure their continuous support, he had to appoint them at higher positions in the army and civil service, and accorded them preferential treatment in trade and agriculture. Eventually, this led to dissensions between the Baqqara and the riverine people, mainly the Jaalin and the Danagla. Then he fashioned the lives of the people into a narrow religious theme, and as a result tribes revolted in the Gezira and Kordofan against the Khalifa's injustices and were ruthlessly annihilated. Moreover, the heavy taxes, the declining volume of trade, the impoverishment of the country and the people due to wars and famines, the rigid and aggressive policy of the Khalifa towards neighbouring countries especially Egypt and Abyssinia, and the economic and military blockade at Suakin and Halfa, all led to the economic disintegration of the country and eventually to the collapse of the regime in 1898 in the hands of the Reconquest Army.

This more or less chaotic political history had inevitable repercussions economically and socially, not least in considerable fluctuations in the boundaries of the Sudan, both internal and external.

The Sudan consisted of various regions with no definite boundaries. During the latter part of the Fung period, the country was divided into hundreds of factions without any arbitrary boundaries between them, the territorial extent being dependent on the power of the ruling Mek. External boundaries were not permanent and varied with the political vicissitudes of the time; the wars between Sennar and Darfur, and between Sennar and Abyssinia plus the common raids from the east, south and the north,

resulted in great fluctuations. It was only during the Egyptian period that the Sudan was bounded by more or less arbitrary boundaries.

Mohamed Ali, when he conquered the Sudan in 1821, applied Egyptian political organization to it. The first parts of the Sudan conquered were Dongola, Sennar and Kordofan. These formed the nucleus of the Egyptian administration from which other parts were gradually conquered. To the east the Abyssinian foothills were reached and in 1840 Takka was annexed, followed by Suakin in 1865. By 1874 Lake Victoria was reached to the south, and Darfur was conquered in 1874. Thus by 1883, the Sudan measured 1650 miles from north to south and 1200-1400 miles from east to west.<sup>(9)</sup> To the north it followed the 23rd Parallel in a straight line from the Red Sea to about 28° Long. E. and then south, and southwest and due south to about 11 or 12° N. Then it overpassed the Nile-Congo divide, touching the headwaters of Welle to the western shore of Lake Albert and to Lake Victoria near the modern town of Jinja. On the East, excluding the Red Sea provinces of Massawa and Harar, the boundary ran in a wide sweep from the Red Sea, and then followed west and S.W. passing within about some 40 miles of Lake Tana down to the region of Beni Shangul, and on in a westward arc, over Sobat river to end at Lake Victoria (Fig.1).

It should, however, be borne in mind that this boundary is just an approximation. A boundary in the modern sense, with visible demarcation and regular frontier guards, did not exist. It is better to think of these boundaries as no-man's lands, varying in depth according to wars and political vicissitudes.

Except for the brief period of supremacy, when the boundaries remained the same, the Mahdists lost jurisdiction over many parts of the former Egyptian Sudan. To the north Wadi Halfa was in Egyptian hands, and the territory to the south of it was divided in loyalty. In the east Suakin and its neighbourhood were controlled by Britain and Egypt. Along the Abyssinian foothills, wars made a permanent boundary impossible. The whole territory of

Bahrel Ghazal and Equatoria, except for a strip of land along the Nile, was outside the Khalifa's domain (Fig. 58). By 1897, the Mahdists lost all territories from Halfa to Shendi and from Suakin to Kassala; by the fall of Omdurman in 1898, all the country passed under the new Condominium government. But how did the Sudan of 19th century look? Has there been any climatic changes?

(10)

CLIMATE : So far, there is no evidence that the climate of the Sudan has changed during the last 200 years, and there is no evidence that the desert has advanced during this period. The accounts of the travellers who visited the different parts of the country depict a picture that in no way differs from that of today. The salient features of relief and climate were the same as they are today. In 1772, Bruce described the treeless area between Gadaref and Metemma as it is today except for some ebony between Gadaref and Beila and along the Dinder. But from Dinder to Sennar, there was 'no wood, and not even a tree'.<sup>(11)</sup> It is very probable that all forests in the neighbourhood of Sennar had been denuded during the Fung period for agriculture and for firewood for Sennar. Between a point, 12 miles N.N.W. of Sennar, and the White Nile the country was full of trees and favourite stations with camel, and just north of Sennar there was plenty of acacia Nubica; thick forests of sunt lined the Blue Nile bank to the neighbourhood of Kamlin, where no trees were found away from the river.

In 1779 Browne noted firewood and coarse grass for camel for 4 days travel north of Cobbe in Darfur, and after that complete desert conditions prevailed except in Wadi Shau (W.Hower) where Saloddora bushes abound. Cobbe is now in ruins, but the cause is not due to climatic changes (see Chapter 5). The desert edge does not seem to have been far from its present day position.

In 1823, Ruppel recorded summer rains falling usually a few times in the year as far north as Latitude 20° N, and enough to produce low bushes in favourable localities. He stated that thunderstorms could be expected as far north as Lat. 18° N.<sup>(12)</sup>

Though such rains are not common now, the fact remains that the areas he mentioned receive some summer rains, but at long intervals, and it is probable that his visit coincided with one of these 'wet' summers.

Pallme's description of the climate of Kordofan in 1830s is typical of that of today in summer temperatures (177 - 122° F); the hurricanes (haboobs), and the rainy season (June-October) and even the way of life of the nomadic tribes, and their seasonal movements are strikingly the same.

In 1853, Lepsius saw thick forests near Abu Haraz including tamarinds which have now disappeared, leaving Kerib (gullied) land which could be a consequence of deforestation, especially for cultivation, grazing and boat building. In 1875, Prout gave an account of climatic conditions in Kordofan which are similar to those of today. In 1899, Garstin recorded much scrub near Shendi as a result of depopulation during the Mahdiya. He also described thick forests of acacia Nilotica along the Rahad near Abu Haraz, and along the Blue Nile to the south, and also south of Dueim along the White Nile. All these forests are now ruined.

The denudation of forests started during the Egyptian period because of great increase in the cultivated area<sup>(13)</sup> which was probably followed by a parallel increase in the number of population in northern and central regions. The encouragement of Western immigrants in the empty lands between the Blue Nile and the Atbara denuded the forests and began to change the face of southern Butana. Gash and Baraka deltas were largely cleared for cultivation, but during the Mahdiya thorny jungles encroached and swallowed up the areas under cultivation due to neglect.

Thus, apart from changes in vegetation cover, due solely to human influence, the climate of the Sudan shows no change during the 19th century from that of today. To the north lay the desert across which the caravans toiled for generations to reach the better-watered places in the south, passing through the same zones of rainfall and vegetation that characterize the Sudan today.

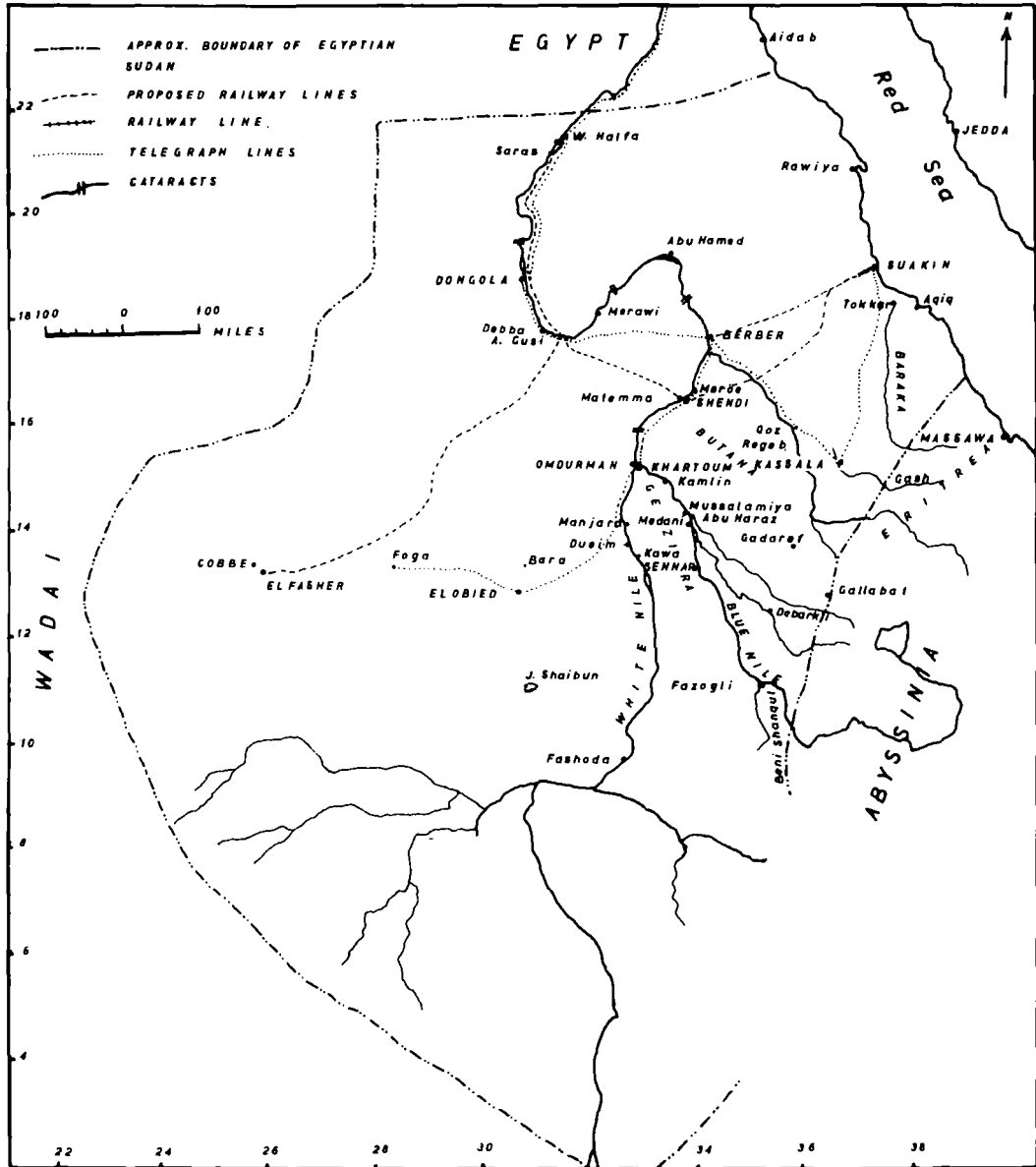
References :

- (1) This formed the zone of contact between the Arabs and the African Negroes.
- (2) In fact, it was the Greeks who applied the name 'Ethiopia' and later 'Kush' to Nubia which covered a wide area extending northwards from Merowe.
- (3) There are six cataracts along the Nile, the first being near Aswan and the other five up the river.
- (4) Burckhardt in his "Travels in Nubia" applies the name to both regions. His first journey (1813) was through lower Nubia and the second one (1814) through Upper Nubia. Ensor (1872) applies the name to the region from the first to just south of the third cataract.
- (5) Lepsius and Hoskins in their books 'Travels in Ethiopia' apply the name for this region.
- (6) Even as late as the 1840s, 'Sennar' was applied to the whole country by Europeans.
- (7) In October 1822, Ismail was murdered at Shendi. He demanded outrageous contributions of 30,000 dollars and 6000 slaves within two days. The Mek protested that his people simply could not produce what was demanded in the specific time, and Ismail angrily hit the Mek across the face with his pipe. The Mek revenged by burning Ismail and his men. This outraged the Dafterdar, son-in-law of Mehamed Ali, who burned, killed and slayed everything that lay in his path. Many villages and towns were burned including Shendi. The revolt of the people was without leadership or a definite aim, and so it failed.
- (8) PRO, F.O. 78 No. 1338. Consul-General Bruce to the Earl of Clarendon, 2 April 1857. "Nothing contributes so much to perpetuate the disorder and confusion which prevail throughout the different branches of the Egyptian administration as the frequency with which officers are removed from

important posts, by secret intrigues, or from motives of mere personal caprice'.

- (9) D.H.Stewart , Report on the Egyptian Provinces of the Sudan, London (1885) p.2
- (10) This section is based on H.C.Jackson's "Climatic Changes in the Sudan" S.N.R. (1952) pp.25f.
- (11) People cooked their food by camel dung and dura stalks.
- (12) He experienced five rainstorms at Ambigol to the east of Debba.
- (13) Boat-building on the White, Blue and the main Niles also denuded much of the sunt stands.

FIG. 1 SUDAN IN THE 19th CENTURY





CHAPTER ONETHE NATURE OF TRADE

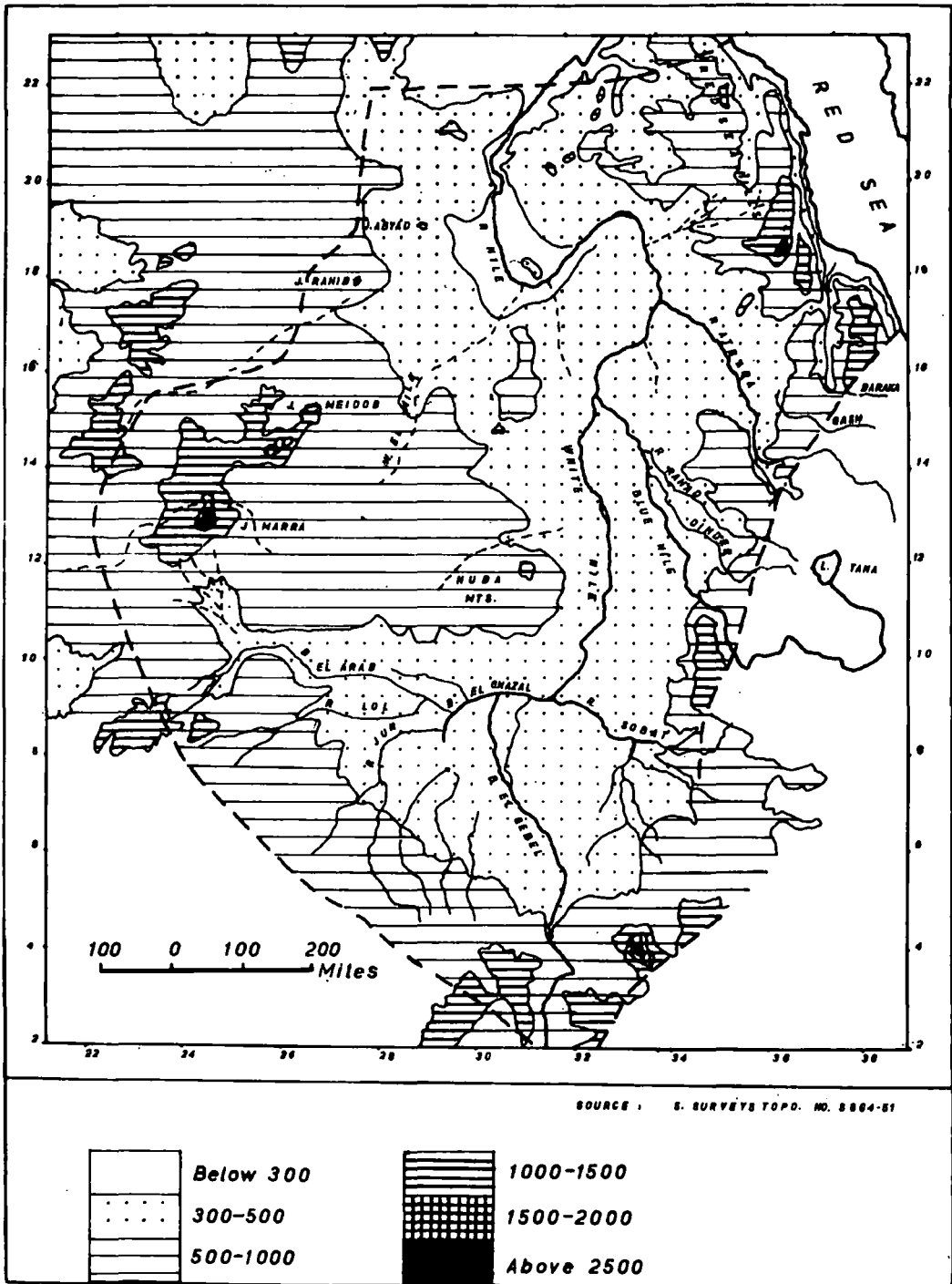
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Trade usually arises from the desire of people to exchange their own products for those of others which they cannot produce either because of climatic conditions, that is, geographic factors in broad terms, or economic factors. Thus, trade, in a small scale, existed in the Sudan from early times, and was mainly carried on with Egypt from which the first impetus for trade came. The need of Egypt for Sudanese products gave rise to this trade and up to the beginning of the 20th century, Egypt remained one of the main markets.

Once trade relations are established, the people try hard to keep them thriving; it is, however, true that, during periods of political instability, trade languishes and often comes to a standstill, but there is still a momentum that pushes trade into new and wider channels. Thus, if a route is made impassable by raids and pillage, another one is seen opened up, and every effort is made to keep trade alive and markets secure because trade is lucrative. In contrast, trade may be rendered unprofitable by harsh taxation and exorbitant duties, but there is always the chance of procuring a return through illicit means.

Thus, there were factors, geographical and social, operating to make people develop trade contacts. A look at a physical map of the Sudan will show that the northern part of the country, which first traded with Egypt, is a vast desert except along the banks of the Nile. It is a country of finely dissected topography and small land

Fig. 2 - SUDAN RELIEF (METRES)

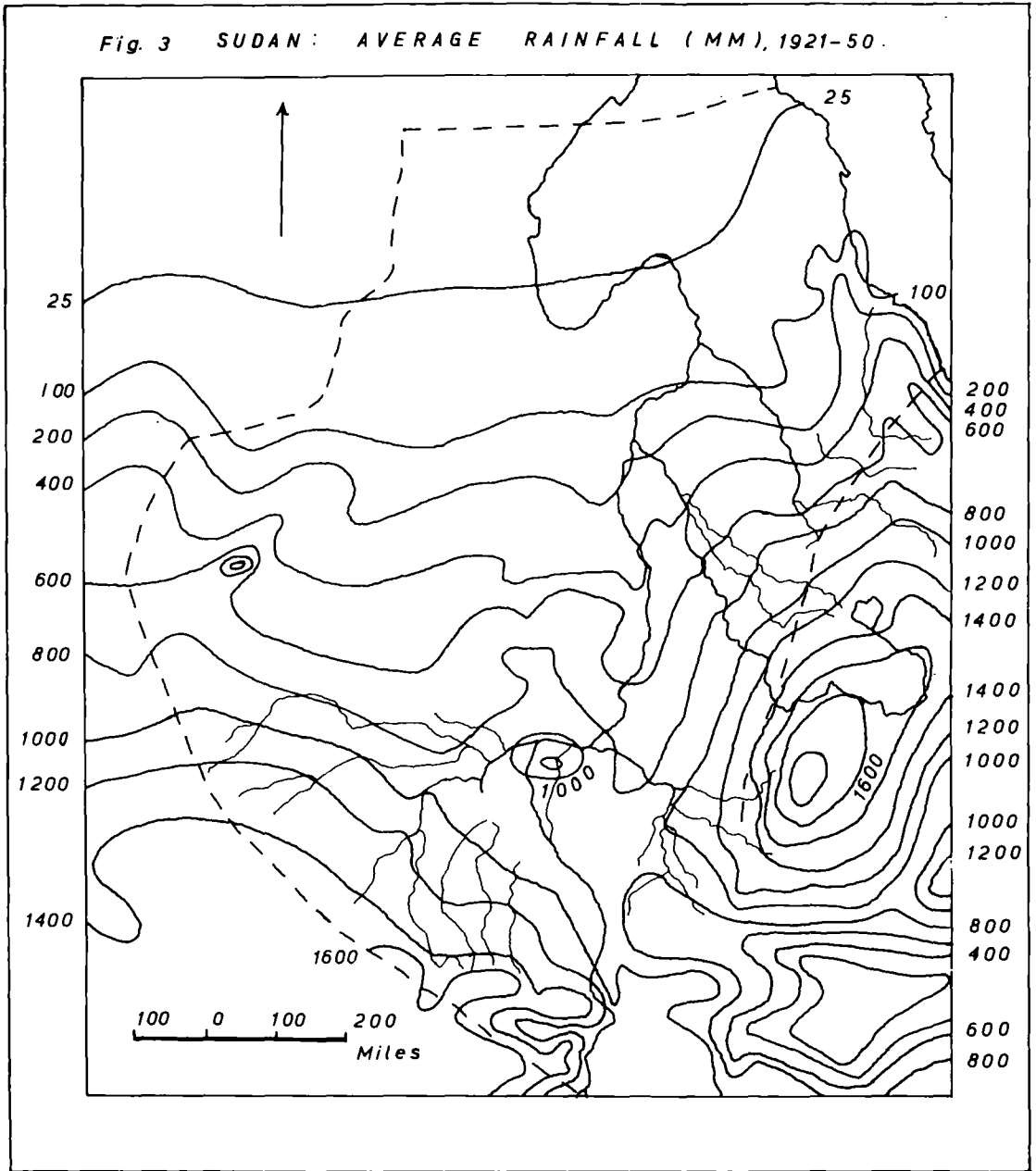


holdings; generations of hereditary splitting up of land among the members of the family resulted in fragmented holdings that were barely enough to support a family. The cultivable land was limited and restricted to a narrow strip along the banks of the Nile, and if there was good land away from the river, it lay idle because the means for extensive irrigation were not available. There were only the waterwheel or 'sagia', and the 'shaduf' both of which had such a small irrigation capacity that the cultivable land was necessarily limited to a narrow strip along the bank. Though the waterwheel and shaduf were made of locally available materials, mainly wood, and manufactured by the natives themselves, their running operations were costly. The former depended on oxen or cows for its motive power while the latter depended on human labour. Thus, the maintenance of the wheels and the ditches, the procuring of fodder for animals together with the small area irrigated made returns unremunerative. The yields failed to support the family for the whole year after paying all the expenses; the income from the few date-palms was not enough to supplement that from the fields. This fluctuation in yields, both of the fields and date palms, was due mainly to fluctuations in flood levels; thus during low flood levels, many cultivable lands were left untilled and yields from palms decreased. Such conditions forced the peasants to fall into debts. Moreover, this precarious subsistence economy was made even more unbearable by excessive taxation. The Turkish and the Mahdist rulers found it easy and profitable to levy taxes on lands and wheels, and this, in the course of time, led to the flight of most of the peasants from their lands to take part in the more remunerative hunt for slaves and ivory.

However, in the central Sudan trade was carried by the nomadic Arabs to whom trade was a part of their life from early times; indeed, according to their religion, it was a blessed business. (1)

To them sedentary life meant cultivation, labour requirements, subjection to taxation and, above all, uncertainty of yields because of the unreliable rainfall. This was completely alien to the virile, tough and freedom-loving

Fig. 3.



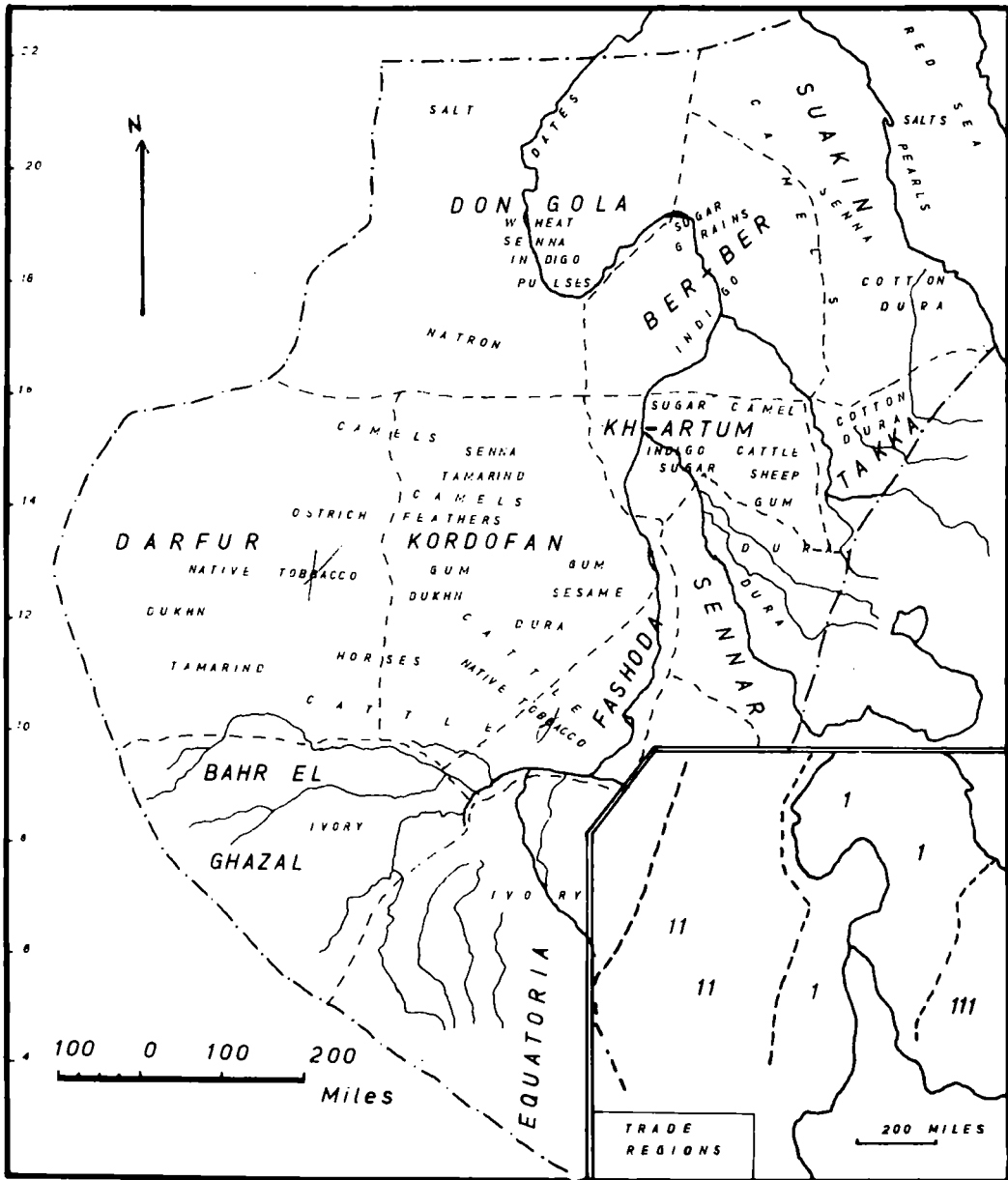
Arabs. They possessed the camel, the only mode of transport, and there were natural products, such as gum, which were profitable, easily collected and provided a means of livelihood without the risks involved in agriculture. Coupled with this was the strong mercantile instinct of these people. Even when they settled in the main centres of trade they seldom took to agriculture, with the result that many centres had to depend for their food supplies on distant areas where the motive was also commercial. Moreover, all the governments that ruled the Sudan during the nineteenth century were biased towards trade and regarded it as the best source of revenue. Furthermore, trade had almost been the mainstay of the Fung Kingdom in the 17th and 18th centuries, and it was to control this trade that the Turks conquered the Sudan in 1821 and developed the export trade to new dimensions. This latter, however, was nearly killed by the Khalifa, the successor of the Mahdi (1885-98), because he saw in trade the only source with which to finance his holy war.

As a result of these factors, large numbers of the population were connected with commerce in one way or another, and this link was strengthened by the nature of the products that constituted the main articles of trade.

#### THE NATURE OF THE PRODUCTS : (Fig.4).

From the time of the Ancient Egyptians until the 19th century, the Sudanese traded in products which never varied much with the result that the export trade shows a similar structure throughout history. These products included slaves, ivory, ebony, gold, gum and feathers, but broadly speaking, trade in terms of these articles falls into about three broad phases. First, from 2800 B.C. to the seventh century during which the main stress was on gold and precious metals. The gold mines of the Nubian Desert and the Red Sea attracted the attention of the Ancient Egyptians. Ebony, slaves and ivory, however, were also needed for boat building, as soldiers and labourers and for ornaments respectively. Secondly, from the 7th century until the late 18th century, the stress shifted to the slave trade. While it is true that the Arabs were attracted

Fig. 4 - SUDAN : MAIN PRODUCTS.(INSET MAP SHOWS TRADE REGIONS)



by the emerald and gold mines of the Red Sea, the lure of the slave trade was infinitely more great. Slaves were the mainstay of the Fung and Darfur Kingdoms in the 17th century and Darb el Arbain, from Darfur to Asiout in Egypt, was one of the main slave throughfares in N.Africa. Gold from Beni Shanqul and southern Kordofan ranked second in importance; nevertheless, throughout this period ivory, gum, feathers and hides were slowly gaining importance. The third phase, from the early 19th century onwards, saw the vigorous expansion in trade and in the number of articles exported.

However, the main attractions at first were undoubtedly slaves and gold, and in fact they constituted the two main reasons which led Mohamed Ali Pasha to conquer the Sudan in 1821. But failing to obtain enough gold and continually harassed by the advocates for the abolishment of slave trade, the Egyptian rulers had to depend more and more on other products for export. Thus, trade in gum, feathers, ivory and hides was developed both by the government and European traders, to become the principal articles of export, but gum always headed this list. For a short period during Egyptian rule new articles such as cotton and indigo appeared in the lists of exports to the north, but during the Mahdist period the mainstays of the export trade were again gum, feathers and ivory, though in much reduced quantities. A brief account of these articles is now necessary.

GUM : (Fig.4).

Gum is widely distributed in the Sudan north of  $11^{\circ}\text{N}$ , but the main producing areas lie between  $12^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $14^{\circ}\text{N}$ . However, there are two types of gum, first gum arabic which comes from the acacia senegal. This is the main gum-producing tree in areas of lighter soils and lighter rainfall as, for example, in Kordofan. Secondly, gum talh which comes from the acacia seyal. This tree thrives well in areas of clay soils and heavy rains as in the Blue Nile and Gadaref districts. Of the two, gum arabic is the best. It was in great demand for use in the confectionary and paper industries, as adhesives, in textiles, varnishes, medicines etc. Since climate is the dominant factor in production, it is subject to

fluctuations according to the amount of rainfall.<sup>(2)</sup> As regards to portability, gum used to be transported in lumps, partially dried, and without any form of grading ; consequently there were great losses in weight despite the use of oxhides for packing. Grading was not introduced until the late 1870s, first in Khartoum and in 1890 in Suakin. The sorting was determined by size, relative hardness and colour of the pieces, and each was packed in cases for export.

#### IVORY : (Fig.4).

This article mainly came from Bahrel Ghazal and Equatoria. Ivory differed in quality according to the age of the elephant, its freedom from crevices and the sex of the beast, since the ivory of the female was more fresh than that of the male. There were, however, great variations in the size and consequently in the weights of the tusks. Thus, of those tusks weighing between 25-60 lbs, it took 100 lbs of ivory to make one 'quintar', the basic unit of weight, but it required 150 lbs of ivory to make one quintar of tusks weighing between 60 and 100 lbs each. The smaller tusks, 5 to 24 lbs, were rated at 175 lbs per quintar, while the smaller pieces were thrown together in bundles of 200 lb a piece and similarly rated at one quintar.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus, quantity was made to compensate for quality, and the best, most valuable tusks were those weighing between 25 and 60 lbs. Ivory was sorted into these various four categories, but some authorities list five, priced according to quality, and then packed into cases for export. (Table K. Appendix VII. ).

#### FEATHERS : (Fig.4).

Kordofan and Darfur were the main source areas for ostrich feathers, and here most of the birds were wild. Very few were bred in captivity as this seemed to have produced feathers of inferior quality because of the lack of experience in breeding. To take the feathers of the wild birds, however, it was necessary to kill them, so that after 1827 the Turkish authorities introduced breeding establishments where the feathers could be taken without killing the bird. The feathers were then taken to Khartoum to be sorted into different kinds according to colour, the white



plumes commanding the highest price followed by greys and then blacks. Each parcel of 10 lbs. weight contained one lb. of the finest quality, white, one pound of the second quality, and 8 lbs. of other sorts with different shades of colour.<sup>(4)</sup> Since feathers were susceptible to moth attack, aeration and dusting with pepper were practised. The fashion business was, of course, the main consumer.

SENNA. (Fig.4) :

This abounds in Dongola, Kordofan and Suakin provinces where it grew wild and in large quantities. The trade in this item was developed by the Egyptians from Kordofan and Dongola whence the leaves were exported to Egypt in unsorted form. Cleaning and sorting were introduced later in the 1880s in Suakin. However, Egypt received her share in unpicked form, but England and Austria received their share in cleaned form. It was made up of 3 qualities : first, the best picked leaves, secondly, broken leaves, and thirdly, pods.<sup>(5)</sup> The pods were mainly used for imparting a gloss to silk fabrics while the leaves were used as laxatives.

HIDES AND SKINS : (Fig.4) :

The main source areas were Kordofan and Sennar, but before the coming of the Turks in 1821 trade in hides was not organized; the Sudanese wasted the hides after slaughtering the beast as they had no good tanning equipment. Few, however, were tanned by the pulse of acacia for making waterskins and sandal shoes. The Egyptians gave a special attention to this trade, and tanners were sent from Egypt to teach the Sudanese, and a steady export of leather and hides then followed.<sup>(6)</sup>

Other articles included tamarinds from Kordofan and Darfur which, before 1883, were exported to Egypt in cake form for use as a cooling drink during the summer. The same provinces also exported shishme, which was a small grain used as eye ointment in pulverised form.

Honey and wax came from eastern Sudan while india-rubber came from Bahrel Ghazal; the Red Sea coast produced pearls and salt. Except for pearls, all these articles were exported to Egypt before 1883.

If these articles are examined, one cannot miss the fact that they are all entirely natural, and formed the backbone of the Sudan's foreign trade from the earliest times until the end of the 19th century. Throughout this period there had been no fundamental change by the way of diversification; this, however, needed both great effort and capital which neither rulers nor people could provide. Moreover, these products were easily collected, and once the traditional markets were established and a crude notion of supply and demand for these articles was grasped, it was difficult for the people to change to new articles.

Turning to cultivated crops, dates and grains were grown for local consumption, while cotton was commercially introduced in the 1860s, but a wild and semi-cultivated variety had in fact already been known in the Sudan for at least 2000 years. However, due to the nomadic life of most of the people, the crushing taxation system of the Turks and the Khalifa, the tendency to get crops the easy way, plus the high cost of transport and the long haulage necessary to bring these products to the markets, cash crops played but an insignificant role in the export trade of the Sudan. Cotton and indigo were introduced only because the world market was highly favourable at the time, but when prices came down to normal level, production was neglected. Coffee was introduced without even realizing the physical conditions for its growth, and the result was complete failure.

Thus, failing to secure these crops as a permanent source of the revenue, the Turks and the Khalifa began to depend more and more on the natural products, and to secure their trade, the articles most in demand were monopolised. To obtain them natives were forced to collect gum, ivory and feathers at fixed prices, and inevitably the unwilling people did this in the most reckless way. To avoid having to collect gum,

trees were cut down or large quantities were simply left to rot on the trees so that yields and quality deteriorated. Moreover, the yields from these natural resources fluctuated from year to year due to geographic and social reasons. Climate is important in gum production ; ivory hunting depended on the relation between the tribes who collected it and the traders, and the physical nature of the source area which became inaccessible during the rainy season. The revolt of the tribes in western Sudan during the Mahdiya led to a marked decrease in gum production because of the punitive expeditions against them. Consequently people used to pick gum and other products only when prices were higher or when their food crops failed in which case they had to collect gum to exchange it for food ; when food supply was ample, collection was neglected. In contrast, trade in feathers was subject to severe fluctuations because of the changing world of fashion.

Thus, these natural products, despite the great fluctuations that beset them because of physical and political conditions, formed the mainstay of the export trade of the Sudan for centuries, since they suited the small capital investment of both the government and the traders.

#### THE SCALE OF CAPITAL OUTLAY.

In a country where illiteracy was prevalent and where no records of statistics had been compiled, it is very difficult to get at the true figures. All the information needed was in the hands of the itinerant petty traders, the 'Jellaba', and others derived from European or Asiatic stocks, who showed great reluctance in giving any account of their capital outlay or profits, simply to preserve their own interests. They avoided paying taxes and duties either by giving wrong information or by by-passing trading stations. Bribing of officials, smuggling and forging official stamps, especially during the Mahdiya, made a true assessment of the capital outlay quite impossible. Moreover, this situation was aggravated by the fact that there was no strong national currency, but instead several media of exchange that ranged from simple bartering to money dealings. Several currencies were circulating throughout the country,

and their values even varied from place to place. There were Spanish, Austrian, Egyptian and Turkish dollars ( 1 dollar = 4 shillings) which were used in large bargains, while for small dealings salt, iron and 'damour' - a coarse cotton cloth - were used. The debased currency of the Khalifa had no fixed values.<sup>(7)</sup> Such transactions, however, were effected between dealers only, and thus it is difficult to get to the exact value of the money invested or even an estimate of it. Moreover, the irregularity of departure and arrival of caravans and their fluctuating size make reconstruction very problematic.

In a country where over 80% of the population was nomads who cultivated little, or just enough, for their bare subsistence, one cannot expect high incomes. The cash they needed was obtained by hiring their camels to traders or by collecting some natural product for sale or by acting as guides for the caravans. With this money, food and other necessities of life were bought, leaving nothing or but a small<sup>amount</sup> to invest in trade or other enterprises.

Thus, the riverine people of the reach extending from Khartoum to Dongola were traditional peasants, but the harsh habitat and the means of irrigation made yields from the fields precarious. But they, nevertheless, possessed a keen mercantile instinct, and when they were forced out of their areas by taxes<sup>(8)</sup>, they turned to trade in which they invested any money they earned. They were mainly retail traders and distributors of goods throughout the country. They were like pedlars and chapmen, and as such, they had traded in local products since the Fung period, but it is doubtful whether most of them could raise capital for a journey to Egypt. This was when trade was free. But during the Turkish period the picture was quite different. Although trade expanded to new dimensions, the heavy taxes and duties made it impossible for the small traders with small capital investment to prosper since the expenses of trading far outran any profits. Only those with sufficient capital to permit a journey to Suakin or Egypt, and procure a profit, dealt in the export trade. They were mostly aliens, Levantines and Europeans, who

established commercial firms in the large centres. Even many of these did not venture into the source areas to get the articles, but bought them from native traders for export to outside.

This lack of sufficient capital encouraged trade to be conducted in a communal way, that is, two or more traders put their money into a joint pool, and traded in small articles, usually of low value, or, if the capital was sufficient, made a journey to Suakin. They used donkeys or camels of their own and moved from one centre to another selling their goods until enough money was accumulated to permit them to deal in articles of higher value, such as ivory and gum.

However, trade must have been lucrative since much merchandise was bought on credit. Many traders resorted to this type of transaction despite the exorbitant interest rates exacted from them. But the risks of travel across barren deserts, the heavy duties exacted and the difficulty of procuring camels at reasonable prices deterred merchants from investing heavy capital in trade. The government monopoly of trade in the most lucrative articles also hindered the inflow of foreign capital.

Thus, the Egyptian trade was not heavily capitalised, and the capital invested in a whole caravan varied from about 250 dollars for the common merchant to about 1000 dollars for the rich families.<sup>(9)</sup> The total capital invested in Sudan trade in the 1810s was about 60,000 - 80,000 dollars.<sup>(10)</sup> Moreover, the size of caravans fluctuated according to market and political conditions, but usually, according to Burckhardt, they consisted of 200-250 camels and 20 to 25 slaves.<sup>(11)</sup> Most of the Egyptian caravans terminated at Berber and did not proceed to Shendi, the entrepot of trade, since in Berber they found articles that suited their small capital.<sup>(12)</sup>

Moreover, most of the petty traders had little notion about supply and demand and rarely considered the element of time in their transactions ; there were but few who thoroughly considered the changing tastes of the people. Many of these traders usually purchased the same articles year after year, and waited until the articles in their possessions were sold to the last when they began to buy new supplies.

Articles such as beads, for example, were subject to the changing taste of the natives who rejected beads brought last year. Thus, if the merchant did not sort his beads well every year, he returned without selling anything.<sup>(13)</sup> Nevertheless, he made frequent journeys year after year to the same place with the articles he bought one or two years ago until he disposed of them. Prices were the same for all articles irrespective of quality and demand.<sup>(14)</sup>

Moreover, trade in many articles between the producer and exporter was loosely organised. There was a large number of unstable and inexperienced middlemen. In addition a lack of capital and large turnover, an absence of markets before the capital town and the large element of speculation in trade, all made prices high and returns unremunerative for the producer. Thus, to cover the uncertainties of trade, prices for articles, particularly gum, had to be set low. This led to neglect in collection except when cash was needed, in which case the collector sold his gum to a small local merchant. If the price was not pleasing, the collector sought other bigger merchants to whom also the petty merchants sold their stocks of gum, which in both cases were not large.

The safe conduct along the routes and political conditions of the time had also their bearing on capital investment. Thus, on the raid-infested eastern routes, the capital invested was small, while the Darfur merchants were entrusted with more considerable sums of money upon credit at Asiout<sup>(15)</sup> than the merchants of the Eastern Desert. In return there was a preferential treatment in collection of duties for the Egyptians who paid only 20 piastres (about 2½ shillings) for every camel load of 200 pieces, while the natives paid more.<sup>(16)</sup>

These variations in trade prospects between the different parts of the country do not conceal the fact that trade was lightly capitalised, and to aggravate matters there was no strong and standard currency in the country.

CURRENCY :

As already mentioned, lack of a standard currency greatly hindered smooth transactions and affected the prices of articles. Nearly every part of the country had its own media of exchange which had their own local values. In Nubia, for example, dates and raw linen were used ; this, however, depended on the harvest of dura : during bad grain harvests dates were used for exchange purposes, but if the harvest was good, the Egyptians paid dollars instead of dates. Other articles of exchange used by the Egyptians included coarse linen and bed-sheets.<sup>(17)</sup> A small measure of dura called 'moud' was also used in small bargains while senna, salt and nitre were also exchanged for some Egyptian articles.

In Shendi and Berber dura and damour were also the main media of exchange, but only for small bargains. Damour, a piece of coarse cotton cloth, was in fact widely used, but its value changed from place to place, and it rapidly devaluated through constant handling. It served as a dollar in northern Darfur, but, due to some setbacks, it suffered great fluctuations in value which caused inconvenience in transactions and losses to the merchants who eventually rejected it in favour of silver dollars. This process set its value to a sixth part of its former value in Om Badir and to a third in Broosh.<sup>(18)</sup> In other parts of Darfur, according to M.O.El Tunisi, the media of exchange included bars of 'pentar' - not described - which were used for buying the daily needs of necessary articles while a long material, also not described by the author, was used for expensive items.<sup>(19)</sup> In addition glass beads and salt cakes were common in the main centres of trade, while tobacco, small bands of cotton fabrics, onions, millet, iron and cattle were utilised in different places. Gold and other precious metals, however, were used only by the rich merchants, including the Sultan.<sup>(20)</sup>

At some stage in the eighteenth century iron coins were introduced from Darfur into Kordofan<sup>(21)</sup>. When first introduced 150 pieces of iron were equivalent to one dollar (c. 4 shillings), but the value fell

to 800 pieces at the time of Pallme's visit (1837). Iron was also used in Sennar where, in 1699, Poncet found it in form of 'a little iron with a cross'.

Salt was also used, but was not of wide occurrence. According to Hamilton, salt rock was broken into different sizes of 80, 40, 20, 10 and 5 lbs. and these were usually made into bars and half bars for exchange with other products.<sup>(22)</sup> It was common in eastern Sudan, near Abyssinia, and Darfur where the best salt came from Meidouh. However, since salt was difficult to obtain and much dearer, its use was kept down by using ashes from certain types of plants as an alternative.<sup>(23)</sup>

These were the main articles used in small bargains, but their importance in the life of the people cannot be ignored. Iron, if its value decreased, was readily turned into lances, axes, knives, etc. Dura was the mainstay of the people, and was readily converted to dollars for purchasing other articles ; so it was in strong demand for the commissions of the brokers. The need for salt does not need any comment, nor does the importance of cattle and millet, 'dukhn', as food and trade articles. However, the demand for these articles greatly determined their value. Thus, the low purchasing power of the people, their dependence on subsistence agriculture and their modest wants, made bartering an important media for exchange ; that it could hold its own until very recent times is due mainly to the lack of a strong currency.

The main currencies used in big bargains before 1821 included the Spanish, Austrian and Turkish dollars. After 1821 the Egyptians introduced the piastre, the 'para', the Maria Theresa<sup>(24)</sup> and the 'Column' dollars and five franc pieces of which there were three varieties, all valued at 20 piastres. This diversification of currency followed the great increase in external trade. A variety of European gold and silver coins in the higher denominations circulated in the large centres ; in addition there was an assortment of Ottoman gold coins.<sup>(25)</sup> Gold coins, however had no strong currency value during the early 19th century, but pure gold in small pieces, crumbs or ear-rings could always be procured from Sennar merchants at market value.<sup>(26)</sup> In Darfur, dollars



had variable values, and were paid at with 22, 23 or 24 piastres. Also Egyptian weights and measures such as 'quintar', 'rotte', 'okke', 'ardeb', 'feddan', etc. were introduced. The following tables show equivalents in English currency and weights.

Table 1 : to show Egyptian Money, Weights and Measures and their Equivalents in English.

Coins.	Egyptian Currency			English Currency		
	£E	P.T.	Para	£	s	d
One Piastre (P.T.)	1/100	1	40	0	0	2½
One Para		1/40		0	0	negligible
100 piastres	£1	100	0	1	0	6
1 Dollar	0	20	0	0	4	2
½ Dollar	0	10	0	0	2	1
5 piastres	0	5	0	0	1	½
1 Turkish dollar	0	36	0	0	4	0
½ Turkish dollar	0	18	0	0	2	0
1 Egyptian shilling	0	10	0	0	1	0
1 Egyptian dollar	0	40	0	0	4	0
½ Egyptian dollar	0	20	0	0	2	0

Rate of exchange £ 1 (sterling) = 97½ piastres.

Egyptian Weights and Measures	Equivalent in English
Dirhem	3.120 grams or 1.76 drs. Avdp.
Okke	2¼ lbs. avoirdupois.
Quintar or Cantar	99 - 100 lbs. avoirdupois.
Rottle	0.99 lb. avoirdupois.
Ardeb	5.44 bushels.
Feddan	1.038 acres.
Source:	Murray's Handbook, Egypt, London 1873. p.9

The first Sudanese national currency was struck during the Mahdiya. Instead of using the large amount of the currency that accumulated in his Treasury after the fall of Khartoum in 1885, the Mahdi struck his own coinage which consisted of a gold pound and a silver dollar. But he was forced to stop striking more coinage because his issue was regarded with mistrust by the people and was only accepted by the merchants at less than its face value ; moreover, ingots made of gold pounds and silver dollars were being exported to Egypt and Suakin. But the Khalifa, however, resumed striking coinage to stop this secret trade in gold and silver. He struck four coins : 20, 10, 5 and 1 piastre pieces. But the poor quality of dies and no change in the date of strike resulted first in low standards and later in debasement when gold and silver stocks began to decrease, as the following table summarises : (27)

Table II. : Mahdist Money	Weight in Dirhem	
	Proportion of Silver to Copper	
The Mahdi Dollar (1885)	7	1
First dollar made by Adlan (1885)	6	2
2nd " " " " (1885)	5	3
The first 'Makbul' Dollar (1885)	4	4
The 2nd " " (1885)	3	4
Abu <u>Kib</u> or Crossed Spear Dollar (1886)	2½	4½
First dollar of A.Majed (Makbul)(1886)	2½	4½
Dollar of Wagia Alla (1886)	2½	4½
Dollar of Omla Gedida (1887)	2	5

Despite these reductions in weight and the proportion of silver strict orders were issued for coins of the same value to circulate at their face value regardless of their condition. (28) The result was the debasement of the first dollar struck. To avoid circulation of any other dollar, the Sudanese currency had the stamp 'Makbul' (Acceptable) on it. However, as demand for foreign exchange increased and because the debased currency could not meet this demand in foreign trade, more debased currencies were struck which the people rejected. The result was decrease

in value.<sup>(29)</sup> The Khalifa insisted that all transactions were to be done in this currency and also in damour.<sup>(30)</sup> But in the face of continuous opposition, it was withdrawn in 1886. Then the Makbul dollar was struck and its value was set at 20 piastres. This was met with strong resistance from merchants who, in the face of the Khalifa's insistence, raised the prices to exorbitant levels.<sup>(31)</sup>

The Mejadi (Turkish) dollar found its way into the market, but was used at half value of the Austrian dollar which was current in Suakin at a value of 20 piastres. This led to a steady flow of Turkish dollars to Suakin. To stop this the Khalifa had to ban trade with Suakin, and this resulted in a fantastic rise in prices of all consumer goods. Thus, 'Ferda' cloth rose from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 6 dollars a piece; ordinary linen from a dollar for 12 yards to 8 dollars for the same amount, and half a pound of sugar cost one dollar.<sup>(32)</sup> Local produce such as cattle and grain diminished in value as a result of bad sales, depression of trade and the general poverty of the people who had to sell their property to buy needs of life and pay taxes.

#### TAXATION :

The heavy taxes collected from the people and their properties greatly discouraged them from settling down and cultivate cash crops which might have diversified the export articles and increased the incomes of the people. To understand the restiveness of the Sudanese under the Egyptian rule, a brief account of the taxation system before their conquest of 1821 is important. There was a tithe on crops both irrigated and rain grown with a surtax of about 10 lbs. of millet per camel load in good harvests. From the crops grown on land seasonally inundated by the Nile, the government claimed half, plus sales tax on slaves and cattle, all taxes being paid in cash, mostly gold, or in damour or in livestock.<sup>(33)</sup> For the poor, the government was cheap, since the small men were left at peace on their lands.

When the Egyptians came, new and unjust taxes were levied without any sense of proportion. Capitation tax on slaves was assessed at £2. 5s. Od., on cattle at £1. 10s. Od., on sheep and goats at 15s. Od. and on working people 15s. Od., all these taxes being paid in cash or slaves. The total tax levied on the people of Sennar, Wadi Halfa and the nomads of the White Nile in 1822 amounted to £E. 58, 540. However, the depressing effect of taxation extended to commerce. The octroi dues imposed on sales in the market were sold by public auction under a farmer or trader. This led to robbery and later resulted in the decadence that befell many of the flourishing towns. Thus, a butcher had to pay 1 to 2 piastres (P.T.) for every slaughtered bullock ; grass mats, valued at 2 P.T. paid a tax of 20 paras ; wood was charged at 2 P.T. per bullock load, beside giving two logs per load to 4 officials ; salt valued at 2 dollars per half quintar paid a tax of 4 P.T. , the legal tax on all these articles being 5% on the selling price. For the privilege of putting up a screen or seat in the market place, 1 P.T. was charged per day, beside giving the official in charge a handful of all articles the trader sold.<sup>(34)</sup> In addition, the monopolising policy of the government extended to weighing goods in the market, measurements, transport and handling of goods, the rights over which were all farmed out. Thus, ivory per quintar of 100 lbs. paid 4 P.T. ; copper per quintar 4 P.T. ; feathers per lb. 10 P.T. ; Cairo goods 2 P.T. ; Sudan goods per quintar 2 P.T. ; gum per quintar 1 P.T. , measuring per Ardeb 20 paras.<sup>(35)</sup>

During the Mahdiya, matters got worse because of the rigid attitude of the Khalifa towards traders and his interest in trade as a source of revenue only. Money was needed to finance his holy war and to feed his own people whom he brought from the Western Sudan, and the only way of getting it was by levying taxes on every taxable object. Thus, the sources of his revenue included Zaka<sup>(36)</sup> ; confiscated property ; 'ushr' (a tenth), a 10% tax paid by merchants on goods at various centres ; gum tax ranging from 1/3rd to 1/10th. of the amount paid ; boat tax, including all boats farmed to merchants ; loans from merchants, which were never repaid, and ferry tax.<sup>(37)</sup>

Such an atmosphere was, undoubtedly, not conducive to the healthy growth of trade or development of agriculture, and had in addition serious social repercussions. First, many people were ruined, especially in the northern riverine areas where agricultured products were subject to social and natural conditions that made yields highly precarious. The low income of the peasants could not bear these heavy taxes. Secondly, in the face of these harsh conditions, the reach between Shendi and Dongola was depopulated, and this emigration drained the region of its young and robust people who were much needed to develop the area. Those who were left behind were the old men and women, and this affected the area socially and economically. Thirdly, depopulation meant abandonment of waterwheels and lands. Thousands of people from Sennar fled to the borders of Abyssinia ; by 1881, 1442 wheels in Berber province and 615 in Dongola were abandoned.<sup>(38)</sup> Even as early as the 1830s, Hoskins noticed many houses entirely covered up by sands and many lands untilled between Merowe and Urbi. The encroaching sand made people shift from the banks to the islands.<sup>(39)</sup> Some of these displaced people found employment with the European traders who dealt in ivory and slaves while many of them became itinerant merchants and as such found their way into all corners of the country.

#### HUMAN ELEMENT :

As Boville put it "the desire to seek the origin of strange and valued products, to discover unmapped sources of wealth and to get behind the middleman's back and buy cheaply, is deeply ingrained in human nature".<sup>(40)</sup> The Sudanese had a passion for trade and the adventures of caravan travelling. In large centres like Shendi and others there was not a single family which was not connected, more or less, with some branch of traffic, either wholesale or retail, and "the people of Shendi and Berber appear to be a nation of traders in the strict sense of the word".<sup>(41)</sup>

However, the people principally engaged in trade can be divided into two major groups, denizens and aliens, but amongst the former it is convenient to recognise two sub-groups, the Riverine people and the Beja.

The Riverine People :

These include the people who occupied the reach of the Nile extending from Khartoum to Halfa in the north. The most active of these were the Jaalin, Danagla and the Mahass (Fig. 13 inset map). Long before they were displaced by taxes during the Turkish rule, these people found their way into Kordofan, Darfur and Sennar, most probably during the Fung period. In their movement, they introduced their own food crops such as dates, tickpeas and lupin into areas in which they are no longer grown today. They even founded villages such as Bara in Kordofan.<sup>(42)</sup> The northern Sudan had, and still has, a common religion, trading traditions and transport facilities to Egypt in the north and other parts of the Sudan. Consequently an interzonal trade in food products sprang up, and in time this trade has encouraged a degree of specialisation in food production. Thus, with this genuine peasant outlook and an enterprising mind, these people penetrated into the trading machine of the country. The crushing taxation of the Turks increased the number of emigrants and huge numbers gravitated to the trading centres where they built their own quarters and traded in the products of their home-lands<sup>(43)</sup> or engaged in other branches of trade. The wholesale trade of Shendi was conducted through the agency of brokers, most of whom were Danagla.<sup>(44)</sup> All the retail trade was in their hands. It is highly probable that the Danagla and Jaalin were the first to establish trade connections between Kordofan and Dongola and north to Egypt.<sup>(45)</sup> Most of the 'Jellaba' were either Danagla or Jaalin, and they carried most of the internal trade in gum, ivory and dates, and the Jaalin conducted caravans to and from Suakin with other Beja tribes.

The Beja : (Fig. 13 : inset map) :

These tribes, which include the Bisharin, the Hadendowa and the Ababda, first traded with the port of Aidab in the 14th century from where they conducted caravans to the Nile Valley. They supplied these caravans with provisions for which they claimed a share in the revenue of the port which amounted to 2/3rd of the import.<sup>(46)</sup>

When the port was destroyed in 1426, Suakin took its place and again the Beja<sup>(47)</sup> served as camel providers and convoys on the routes to the interior. When the Egyptians came, the Ababda tribe gained importance as trade carriers along Berber - Aswan and Abu Hamed - Korosko routes. The government confirmed their rights over these routes and even granted them the privilege of collecting a tax of 10% on the value of exports from the Sudan in return for the obligation of policing the route, providing camels and protecting caravans.<sup>(48)</sup> The Ababda also reopened the shorter Abu Hamed - Korosko route and cleaned the wells at Murrat, besides building a fortified caravanserai at Abu Hamed as a safeguard against marauding tribes, especially the Bisharin.

Other nomadic tribes engaged in trade were the Kababish and the Shukria. The former were the main transport providers in Western Sudan together with other camel-owning tribes. During the reign of Khedive Ismail, the Kababish were given the right to convoy caravans over the Beyuda routes to Khartoum and Kordofan. The Shukria also carried much trade, especially in grains, between the various centres of eastern Sudan.

Though most of the internal trade was in the hands of the denizens, it was the alien traders who developed the external trade of the Sudan.

#### Aliens :

Under this category are included Egyptians, North Africans, Levantines, Indians and Europeans. Every major market town had a number of one or all of these groups. The Egyptians knew the country long before the conquest of 1821, but the actual settling down began after the 1820s. Cobbe and Sweini in Darfur were exclusively inhabited by foreigners whom Browne called 'Geira', who were mainly derived from Upper Egypt; there were also Tunisians and natives of Tripoli.<sup>(49)</sup> Similarly, a large number of the inhabitants of Suakin were derived from the Hadarma<sup>(50)</sup> who controlled the whole trade of Suakin and acted as agents for Jedda and Yemen merchants. Other people of Turkish and Egyptian origin came mainly as soldiers to garrison the town, but later settled down to

engage in trade. Indians were used to the port from early times, but few were those who settled there to deal in Sudan trade until the 1880s when a sizeable number of them, mainly Banians, settled there as agents for Indian firms.

The most influential of the aliens, however, were the Europeans. The first European residents were military instructors, doctors and dispensers, and a few privileged traders. Their number began to increase after the monopoly of trade was abolished in 1849 and the White Nile was opened for navigation. This brought Greek and Italian merchants in great numbers to swell the already existing community.<sup>(51)</sup> Many of these established trading posts along the White Nile and commercial houses in Khartoum<sup>(52)</sup> and actively engaged in slave, ivory and gum trade. Many acted as agents for other companies, and during the reign of Said Pasha, Europeans dealt directly with the natives and other Sudanese agents in all branches of trade. By 1860 some consulates such as the Austrian, French, Italian and English were opened. The French and Italian consuls made a cooperation in 1862 to safeguard their interests against the vicissitudes of import and export trade in the country.<sup>(53)</sup> It was by these traders that the direct trade between the Sudan and Europe was developed. But during the Mahdiya, many of these aliens had to leave the country because of the hostile attitude of the Khalifa towards them. Under the dire economic conditions, many fled the country to the frontier stations of Halfa, Korosko and Suakin. Moreover, many of the tribes were greatly shattered by immigration into Omdurman for enlistment in the army and by the ruthless treatment of those who revolted such as the Kababish. This affected trade conditions which declined at a rapid rate.

All these elements were active traders who, despite the inefficient mode of transport and the harsh taxation system, did much to develop the export trade of the Sudan. It is true that many of them were driven by mere profit motives, but their absence had its serious effects on trade as it happened during the Mahdiya when few channels of trade remained open.



TRADE CHANNELS :

The location of the various parts of the Sudan in relation to the major trade routes exerted a powerful influence on the development and character of trade in each part. Thus, the northern, central and eastern parts, which had easy access together with proximity to the Red Sea and Egypt, were those which produced the trade articles and took part in the export trade of the Sudan. On the basis of major trade links, the country can be divided into 3 regions (Fig.4 inset map) :-

- I. The basin of the Blue and White Nile including eastern part of Kordofan, with its centre at Khartoum, was connected with Egypt via the Nile valley and the eastern desert routes, and with Suakin via Berber - Suakin and Gadaref - Kassala - Suakin routes.
- II. Darfur and western parts of Kordofan were connected with Egypt via Darb el Arbain and with Dongola across the Beyuda Desert.
- III. The northern riverine areas traded with Egypt through the Nile valley to Halfa and also connected with Suakin via Berber. The Abyssinian route, with Massawa as its outlet, was less important than others and commanded only the area of Gallabat.

These were the main trade regions and their outlets. But to develop, trade needs impetus such as inequality in demand and supply as well as encouragement of rulers, an advantageous position and abundant resources derived from agriculture and industries. But in undeveloped countries trade initially was concerned with luxury goods for the reigning clans. The rulers of Sennar and Darfur were traders themselves and, together with the rich merchants, they imported, and consumed, luxury goods such as silk clothes and fine cotton or linen fabrics as well as swords, beads etc. In fact most of the imported articles such as tea, sugar, coffee etc, became luxuries enjoyed by the rich during times of dearth. But whether this trade is in luxury or necessity goods, an advantageous position in relation to other countries is important for the development of trade. The Sudan has a good position for commercial intercourse ; it forms a link between the Mediterranean world in the north and the Negroid Africa in the south ; via the Nile it is the

gateway to the heart of an entire continent. But due to reasons, the country always looked to the north. Historically, the first commercial contact was with Egypt from which the first impetus for trade came thousands of years ago. Once established, this connection could outlive all political vagaries and created an influence on the delineation of routes, beaten as they were across the desert. There is always the tendency to cling to what is familiar among all people. Politically, the influence of Egypt over the northern Sudan dates back to 2800 B.C. This was crowned by the conquest of 1821, and to the end of the 19th century, the Sudan was considered as a private Egyptian domain by the Viceroys at Cairo. Accordingly, they strove hard to hinder any contact, whether commercial or political, with any foreign country<sup>(54)</sup>. This destination had great effect on river ports, trading companies and other financial institutions which became aligned to these routes. The northern riverine areas were given more attention because of their proximity to the routes that led to Egypt and the Red Sea.

From the east contact with Arabia and other Red Sea ports was maintained from early times. Here the narrow and relatively calm Red Sea, with its numerous havens, offered passages, as well as safe anchorage during vile weathers, for the enterprising people of Jeddah and South Arabia.

This easy contact was facilitated by the absence of obstacles for movement. The country (Fig. 2) is a vast plain which offers easy movement from, and in, all directions. The only hilly area, the Red Sea Hills, can be negotiated by wide wadis. The barren desert to the north has been rendered pregnable by the Nile valley through which people moved to and fro from early times in history. But it is unfortunate that the Nile itself remained a negative factor in developing the country's commerce due to cataracts and rapids. To the south rainfall and pasture became plentiful, and from early times the savanna belts offered easy movement from east to west and vice versa. (Figs. 3 and 43).

But despite this good position, the rigidity of marketing policies, however, had its effect on the commercial contacts of the Sudan with other neighbouring countries, and whatever trade carried on was not in the same magnitude as that with Egypt. To the people who

engaged in trade, whether natives or foreigners, the known markets lay in the north, that is, in Egypt and, later in the century, Europe. Moreover, all the countries bordering the Sudan from south and west, had nearly the same climate, and this implied similarity of products which were, in most cases, natural. The brisk trade with Abyssinia can be explained by the desire to find an outlet for the commodities of S.E. Sudan through Massawa. Only coffee figured high in the list of Sudan trade with Abyssinia. Darfur looked to the north rather than to the east for her imports. With the southern countries, there is no record of active trade because first, the people were too primitive to take part in any trade ; they were tribal groups living at a subsistent level. Secondly, these countries were not surveyed and natural obstacles such as swamps and tse tse flies hindered movement and hence the development of trade. The people who came here for trade were northerners whose markets lay in the north. Thirdly, the products were similar and in most cases consisted of slaves and ivory.

Thus, this delineation of routes had a marked effect on the regional development of the Sudan . All the cash crops, such as indigo, cotton and sugar cane were introduced in the northern riverine areas because they were nearer to Egypt and Suakin. However, despite the changes in pattern of trade from early times, the areas bordering the Nile together with Eastern Sudan remained the most important in terms of trade.

#### THE CHANGING PATTERN OF TRADE :

As already stated the trade of the Sudan developed through centuries of contact first with Egypt and later in the nineteenth century, with Europe. Direct and close contact with Egypt had been maintained since 2800 B.C. The first part of the country to engage in this trade was modern Nubia which became more or less Egyptianized. Via the Nile Valley, the Nubians carried their products to Egypt, but in many cases the Egyptians sent expeditions to obtain these products or to

explore and conquer. So to facilitate their movement some improvement in river navigation was made to supplement the slow land transport by donkeys and slave-porters.

Thus, this section of the Nile remained the zone of contact between Egypt and the territories to the south until 725 B.C. when the centre of power, and consequently commerce, moved south to Merowe, the capital of the Kush Kingdom, and later in 538 B.C. to Meroe (Fig.1). During this period, there were interludes of prosperity when contact with the outside world, especially the Greek, Roman and Egyptian, was free and friendly. Again the zone of contact was Nubia which, however, was reduced to a throughfare to these prosperous areas to the south. Darfur, on the other hand, was occasionally visited from early times by traders from Egypt via Darb el Arbain, and maintained some contact with Meroe to the east.<sup>(55)</sup> All trade contacts during this period seem to have been via the Nile routes, and the Red Sea ports were not commonly frequented from the interior.

However, the Egyptians frequented the Red Sea coast on their way to Punt<sup>(56)</sup>; later the Greeks and the Romans were common visitors, but there seems to have been little trade with the interior except for some local trade by the Egyptians through the port of Adulis.<sup>(57)</sup> Apart from this, all the havens along the Sudan coast of the Red Sea seem to have been ports of call for provisions or for escape from rough seas.

However, the trade of the Sudan began to be orientated towards the Red Sea probably during the period of the Axum Empire which traded busily with the Arabians, Greeks, Romans and Indians through the port of Adulis from the first century A.D. onwards, thus eclipsing Meroe which she conquered in the 4th century A.D. With the coming of Islam in the Sudan in 600 A.D, the importance of the Red Sea as a trade and pilgrimage route was considerably enhanced and contact with Arabia began to grow. Moreover, the Arabs brought the camel with them, thus making long-distance travel more easy. As a result, the routes began to leave the tortuous Nile Valley in favour of short cuts across the desert to Egypt,

and the Red Sea. Thus, by virtue of its proximity to the Red Sea, eastern Sudan began to gain importance and flourishing trade stations emerged on the coast and further inland.<sup>(58)</sup> But it is of great significance that none of the natives of the Sudan (the Beja) tried to control the trade of these ports and indeed until very recently those who controlled the activity of these ports were foreigners,<sup>(59)</sup> who acted as agents for other ports along the Red Sea and India.

However, with the founding of the Fung Kingdom in the sixteenth century, the axis of trade shifted towards the central Sudan. In the Geziera Sennar emerged as the hub of trade, with trade connections extending north to Egypt, west to Darfur, and east to Abyssinia and Arabia. In the 17th century Shendi emerged as the entrepot of Sudan trade, and the territories lying to the east of the Nile, north of Fazogli and south of Berber became the most important in terms of trade. Kordofan, on the other hand, was brought into close commercial contact with the eastern Sudan in 1770 when it was conquered by the Fung. Actually it was coveted by both Sennar and Darfur because of its valuable resources of gum, cattle and camel and gold. Thus, it began to gain importance as a rich province as well as a link between Darfur and the eastern Sudan.<sup>(60)</sup>

Darfur seems to have been a world of its own until the 1870s when it was conquered by the Egyptians. It had affiliations more towards Egypt across Darb el Arbain and with Wadai to the west than towards the east. After the seventeenth century, its contact with the east began to grow via Kordofan which came under her suzerainty in 1775.

However, the decline of the Fung Kingdom in late 18th and beginning of 19th century, led to political instability, pillage and raids along the Nile routes to Egypt, and as a result trade began to divert more and more to the Red Sea. This annoyed the Turkish rulers of Egypt, who for long coveted the Sudan. In 1821, the Egyptians conquered Dongola, Kordofan and Sennar, and by the 1870s all the country was subject to their rule. To ensure a strong contact with Egypt various measures, such as the monopoly of trade, were vigorously implemented by the Viceroys.

But due to the influence of Europeans, both consuls and traders, who were in favour of trade via Suakin, the controversy on the economic viability of the Red Sea or the Nile routes as the geographic outlet for the Sudan started. The government wanted, and tried, to maintain close links with Egypt via the Nile routes. In this she was aided by cultural and historical factors. Once the market was well known and the routes to it were familiar, it was difficult to abandon them.<sup>(61)</sup> The Red Sea routes were shorter, and eventually reasserted itself as the natural outlet for the country. This change greatly increased trade with India which began to replace Egypt and Jedda as the exporter, mainly of foodstuffs and cotton fabrics, to the Sudan. Europe, mainly England, after being tied to Alexandria and Trieste for Sudan products for decades, increased her direct shipments with Suakin, and by 1883 completely replaced Egypt and Jedda as the main market for gum, ivory and Senna.

Thus, in this changing pattern of trade, the influence of an easy, cheap and direct contact was paramount. The riverine areas and eastern Sudan had these easy links with the Red Sea and for that reason they were more affected economically and politically, and consequently had a leading role in the trade of the country.

REFERENCES :

- (1) The Prophet was a trader; and according to Caliph Omer, "Trading is the true test of man, and it is in the transaction of trade that his piety and religious worth become known".
- (2) Gum does not exude well in heavy rainy season.
- (3) W.Junker : Travels in Africa, London, (1890). p.337. The Egyptian authorities, however, list five categories as in Table K in the Appendix, VII.
- (4) J.L.Burckhardt : Travels in Nubia, John Murray, London, (1819). p.289. Before the Egyptian conquest (1821), feathers were sent to Cairo where Jews sorted them into these various grades.
- (5) Account and Papers, Vol. 93 (1893), p.147 f.
- (6) Trade in hides and skins declined during the Mahdiya.
- (7) See section on currency.
- (8) See section on taxation.
- (9) Burckhardt, J.L. op.cit, p.272.
- (10) ibid, p.274.
- (11) They could be reduced to half this number because of risks encountered along the desert routes.
- (12) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit, p.275.
- (13) Junker, W. : op.cit. p.338.
- (14) I. Pallme : Travels in Kordofan, Meiden, London (1844), p.273.
- (15) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit. , p.273. See Chapter 3.
- (16) W.G.Browne : Travels In Africa, Egypt and Syria, London, (1806) 2nd edition. p.299.  
1 piastre = 2½d.
- (17) Burckhardt, J.L. , op.cit. , p.139.
- (18) F.S.Ensor, C.E. : Incidents on a Journey Through Nubia to Darfur, London (1881), p.153.
- (19) M.O. El Tunisi : Travels of an Arab Merchant in Sudan, the Black Kingdom of Central Africa, Chapman and Hall, London (1882). Abridged by Boyle St. John. p.128

- (20) *ibid*, p.128
- (21) Pallme, I. : *op.cit.* , p.302.
- (22) J.Hamilton : Sinai, Hedjaz and Sudan, London, (1857). p.201.
- (23) *ibid*, p.203.
- (24) This was the most widely accepted coin in the Red Sea trade.
- (25) R.Hill : Egypt in the Sudan, 1820 - 1881, O.U.P. London (1959). p.38.  
The exchange value of the Egyptian piastre was regulated by the Egyptian government after reference to Istanbul. The Maria Theresa dollar-piastre rate was controlled summarily by the Egyptian government. Separate coins included the piastre, para (1/40 of a piastre), and a small base gold coin.
- (26) Burckhardt, J.L. : *op.cit.*, p.289. According to him, the dollar current at Shendi in 1813 was the Spanish, known by different names all of which should have the inscription 'Carolus IIII' to pass at their full value. It should also be round since the square ones were not current in trade.
- (27) R.C.Slatin : Fire and Sword in the Sudan, Arnold, London (1898). transl. by F.R.Wingate. p.541.
- (28) P.M.Holt : The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881 - 1898, O.U.P. London, (1959). p.238
- (29) Earlier Mahdist dollars were exchanged at rates varying from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ; Omla Gedida (new currency) at  $\frac{1}{8}$  to one Mejedi (Turkish) dollar ; One Maria Theresa dollar = 5 Omla Gedida ; One Mejedi dollar = 8 Omla Gedida.
- (30) This was circulating due to scarcity of money, and had different sizes of different values of 10, 5 and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  piastre.
- (31) F.R.Wingate : Ten Years Captivity in the Mahdist Camp, Sampson Low, London, 1892. p.279.
- (32) Slatin, R.C. : *op.cit.*, p.542.
- (33) Hill, R. : *op.cit.*, p.14.
- (34) D.H.Stewart : Report on the Sudan, Harrison and Son, London (1883). pp. 13-14.
- (35) *ibid*, p.14. The remaining monopolies were ferries, portorage on quays, portorage of goods to the market scale, loading and unloading boats, public auctioneer, right of hiring donkeys, etc. et



- (36) 'Zaka' was a 2½% tax on all imported goods. Originally, it signifies alms given to the poor, but in the religious administration of the Khalifa, it was a holy tax which was demanded on all grains, property, money, and later goods, and was collected either in money or in kind.
- (37) Slatin, R.C. ; op,cit. p.540.
- (38) Stewart, D.H. : op.cit, p.13. M.Shebeika, (Sudan in a Century, Cairo, (1959) (Arabic). p.30), gives variant figures : out of a total number of 5900 wheels in Dongola, 55 were completely ruined, owners and working people of 2010 wheels ran away, and in some only one man and one ox or two of both were left. In 1897 nearly 7000 wheels were out of use in Dongola.
- (39) G.A.Hoskins : Travels in Ethiopia, Longmans, London. (1835). p.174.
- (40) E.W.Boville : The Golden Trade of the Moors, Oxford, London (1958). p.19.
- (41) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit. p.299
- (42) Pallmé, I. : op.cit., p.5
- (43) The Danagla used to trade in dates, horses and other products of Dongola province with Berber and Shendi.
- (44) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit., p.266. All the avarice and jealousy that accompany brokerage were common, and this made the Danagla to be disliked by the natives.
- (45) Browne even states that "these people from the Nile" were the first to open the route between Darfur and Egypt.
- (46) A.Paul : A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan, Cambridge, (1954) p.112
- (47) Mainly the Bisharin and the Hadendowa.
- (48) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.59. Their Chief excercised wide jurisdiction over the territory extending from Aswan to near Berber.
- (49) Browne, W.G. : op.cit., p.140.
- (50) They originally came from S.Arabia.
- (51) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.78. Most of these were Italians, few Frenchmen, and some Germans. These are, however, variant assessments of European population in Khartoum : 1833 all foreign merchants numbered 2,000 ; in 1841 only 9, and in 1870s 3,000.

- (52) There were seven firms in Khartoum.
- (53) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.98
- (54) This can be seen in the monopoly of trade by Mohamed Ali, and the attitude of Said towards foreigners and the insistence of all the viceroys to see all trade channelled to Egypt.
- (55) A.J.Arkell : A History of the Sudan to A.D. 1821, University of London, (1955). p.176.
- (56) This place has not yet been clearly identified, but many agree that it lay somewhere near the modern Somaliland.
- (57) J.W.Crowfoot, Some Red Sea Ports in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Geographical Journal (May, 1911) pp. 523-50.
- (58) *ibid*, p. 530. Many of these ports were known from early times, but unfortunately there are no continuous records or history because many sprang into glory and then went into obscurity or decay in short periods.
- (59) Mostly Hadarma, Yemenis, Jeddawis, Abyssinians, etc.
- (60) Kordofan maintained brisk links with Shendi in the east and Dongola in the north.
- (61) Even today when a newly independent country breaks economic ties with the former mother country, securing new markets, after being bound to one for years, becomes problematic. Many of the native Sudanese used to trade with Egypt and Jedda in 1879-83 when direct trade with Europe was maintained.

Chapter TwoFACTORS AFFECTING TRADE

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The Sudanese are said to have been born traders and dealers ; trade was almost a passion with them, and they liked the travelling which trade necessitated. Thus, they traded with Egypt and other neighbouring countries from early times, but this trade was subject to the political conditions in the country which were not always stable. However, there were factors, political and economic, affecting trade in the Sudan in the 19th Century.

POLITICAL FACTORS :

The decline of the Fung power by the beginning of the nineteenth century was followed by political instability which made trade quite risky because of raids and pillage along the routes. Trade relations with Egypt began to languish to the great annoyance of Mohamed Ali, the ruler of Egypt, who coveted the country for years. A vast literature by travellers <sup>(1)</sup>, who visited the Sudan in the 17th and 18th centuries, threw much light on the conditions and trade prospects of the country. Egypt, undoubtedly, needed the various products of the Sudan first, to relieve her treasury from expenses of administration in the Sudan and, secondly, to produce products for home market and for foreign markets to secure foreign exchange.

Thus, to achieve this, law and order had to be restored, and for this purpose the conquest of 1820 was followed by the establishment of a strong central government at Khartoum. Then the country was divided into provinces with a governor at its head and an array of officials helping him. The provincial governors were responsible to the governor-general at Khartoum who was in turn responsible to the Viceroy in Cairo. To help these officials rule the country properly and develop trade, commercial communities<sup>(2)</sup>, which existed in the main centres long before 1820, were called upon to assist the government. Thus, they were grouped in councils called the Council of Merchants, their main duty being the right to see into, and settle, commercial disputes and other affairs relating to trade. Later, when trade was monopolised these councils acted as intermediaries between the government and European firms. As a result, export trade greatly expanded, but, unfortunately, the system of government introduced and the steps taken to achieve their ends did not work satisfactorily neither in the interest of the people nor of the government because of, first, the system of taxation introduced. It was a combination of old and new systems which disrupted the economic life of the people. Moreover, it created a good environment for the spread of bribery and corruption because all the officials appointed to collect these taxes were ignorant, degenerate and corrupt. Secondly, there was instability in political and economic fields. This was mainly due to the great number of governors and governor-general, who were appointed and then rapidly called back to Cairo before they got acquainted with the problems of the country, to be replaced by an incompetent and inexperienced person. In fact the vast country, which was loosely linked by an inefficient means of transport and inhabited by diverse tribal groups with conflicting interests, needed strong and competent men with a long background of experience in public administration to bring political cohesion and economic integration and progress. On the contrary, politically undesirable people were exiled to the Sudan, and, except for a few, many of the governors were corrupt.

Thirdly, close supervision by the Viceroys was rendered difficult by the great distance and the inefficient means of communication between Khartoum and Cairo. Correspondence, before the introduction of telegraph system in 1870s, took months to reach Cairo. Moreover, the Viceroys were afraid to alienate the governors-general, especially before the right to rule the Sudan was given to Egypt by Turkey (1841), since it was possible they would declare independence from Egypt. Fourthly, some European powers, mainly England and France, and later Italy, had covetous eyes on the Nile Valley and the Red Sea littoral as possible future spheres of influence. Following the motto of 'Flag follows trade' they wanted to supplant the Egyptian rule ; their protests against the monopoly of trade and the slave trade were used as pretexts. Thus, they, particularly Britain, successfully concluded some commercial treaties with Turkey permitting free trade in all her African and Asian dominions for all nations<sup>(3)</sup>. The result was the abolishment of trade monopoly and the coming of European traders in its wake.

However, economic factors had a more strong effect on the development of trade than the political factor.

#### ECONOMIC FACTORS :

In their attempt to turn the Sudan into an exporting country, the Egyptians were faced with an inadequate system of transport, a backward commercial organization, and inefficient agricultural methods. Thus, the first task before the new regime was to improve them, and the priority was, undoubtedly, given to transport.

#### TRANSPORT :

With the most productive areas widely separated and loosely linked by the slow camel transport, the need for improving transport system was stringent. The immediate problems to be faced in this respect,

however, were insecurity along the routes and lack of water supplies. As regards to the former, pillage and raids were common along many routes and the first task of all the provincial governors was to ensure a safe passage for caravans and travellers through their respective provinces, while policing the major routes was the responsibility of the central government in collaboration with the local governors.<sup>(4)</sup> Thus, the Abu Hamed - Korosko and Berber - Aswan routes were put under the jurisdiction of the Ababda tribe ; the Beyuda routes from Kordofan and Khartoum to Dongola were under the auspices of the Kababish. Moreover, routes from Takka and Berber to Suakin were improved and made secure from raids to facilitate the transport of cotton <sup>(5)</sup> which was introduced in these provinces in the 1860s.

With reference to water supply, this was a critical factor along the desert routes, and actually it was the main problem that rendered the caravans vulnerable to the crushing bargains of the tribes in whose territory these wells lay, and caused the long delays along the routes. Thus, some new wells were dug along Berber-Suakin route, and those already existing were improved. The Wells of Murrat, along Abu Hamed - Korosko route, were cleared and put in charge of an Ababda man to protect them from being swamped by sand. New wells were also dug to supply Suakin with fresh water, and in the 1860s a barrage was built just outside the town to store rain-water to meet the demand of increased shipping.

But, unfortunately, these efforts did not produce the required result ; first, due to the fact that a 10% tax was levied on the value of traffic to pay these services, and secondly because the problems of water supply were not solved as they should have been. Only a few wells were dug along one or two routes; moreover, there was no thorough survey of water supply possibilities and the full exploitation of those already available along the routes.

Thus, in the face of these difficulties, the government thought of improving river navigation.

River Transport :

Before the coming of the Egyptians in 1820, navigation on the river Nile was primitive, and only rafts and crudely-built boats were used to ferry people across in two or three places. The Egyptians, however, were aware of the importance of river transport in the development of trade. Thus they encouraged boat-building from the plentiful wood stands in Dongola and along the Blue and White Nile. Shipyards were erected at Al Manjara, Dueim, Kamlin, and Berber and Dongola (Figure 13); attempts to blow up the cataracts by dynamite, however, were not successful. Thus, failing to ensure an all-river link between Khartoum and Cairo, the navigable reaches<sup>(6)</sup> inside the Sudan were fully developed, especially after the problems of manning the boats were solved. It took the authorities a long time to induce the natives to take to this art.<sup>(7)</sup> The few steamers introduced were for official use only since the high cost of maintenance and fuel made them unfit for trade purposes. But the frequent wreckages and delays by adverse winds, and the cumbersome and inconvenient change of transport between land and river at many points did not stimulate trade as had been envisaged. Thus, in the face of these difficulties along routes and rivers, the government contemplated building railway lines.

Buildings of Railways :

Because of his unhappy relations with the Suez Canal Company, the Khedive Ismail wanted to maintain a close link between Egypt and the Sudan via the Nile Valley rather than via Suakin. So he embarked on a grand scheme of building railways but mainly for political and military rather than economic reasons. Thus, three lines were planned as Fig.1 shows. The first one was to be from Wadi Halfa to Metemma, the second from Abu Gussi to el Fasher and the third from Shendi to Suakin. This was, undoubtedly, an enormous undertaking in the face of the physical and economic obstacles that lay ahead. It was actually impossible in the face of the financial difficulties facing the Khedive himself. Moreover, the

lines to el Fasher and along the Nile were not justified economically because of lack of products to cover the cost of construction. The only line constructed, from Halfa to Saras, did not stimulate export trade. However, the only line that had economic viability was that from Shendi or Berber to Suakin. Suakin was the geographical entrance to, as well as outlet for, the Sudan whence a short route, only 270 miles, led to Berber.<sup>(8)</sup> But the Egyptians turned their face against this route because they were afraid it might lead to separation of the Sudan from Egypt.<sup>(9)</sup> However, after one year of controversy (1875-6), the settlement was in favour of the latter, and the construction started in 1883 from Suakin. But the line stopped after laying 22 miles because of the hostility of the Mahdists, and because difficulties inherent in such an undertaking had not been adequately realized, plus being planned in haste. Moreover, the arrangement for the dispatch of material and for the execution of the work were all alike defective. However, telegraph lines had more effect on trade than railways.

#### Telegraphic System :

The purposes behind construction of telegraph lines were to develop trade, to help in the work of the Nile control and in the close supervision of the government in the Sudan.<sup>(10)</sup> Laying of lines began in 1864 from Egypt and by 1870 Halfa, Dongola, Berber and Khartoum were linked with Cairo. In 1871-3 Suakin and Kassala were linked with Berber and hence with Cairo and Khartoum. In 1874 the line was extended from Khartoum to El Obied in Kordofan and to Foga in Darfur (Fig.1). Thus, these telegraph lines put the main centres of trade in direct contact with Cairo and Alexandria and hence with the outside world.

Moreover, Suakin was leased from Turkey for £25,000 per annum. The harbour was improved, custom offices and government houses were built and water supply was made available to cope with the increasing shipping traffic. Further inland along the Nile attempts were being made to explore the sources of the Nile. The first three expeditions sent in 1842 could get as far south as 4° 42' N (Figure.1). As a result, the White Nile was opened up for trade in 1853, and traders, both Europeans



and natives, flocked into the source areas of ivory and slaves and built trading posts along the Nile from which these commodities were shipped, clandestinely and openly, to the north.

However, schemes for the development of the Sudan embraced every phase of economic planning. Thus, in 1863 the Sudan Company was formed with a capital of about £2,000,000 of which £1½ million were subscribed by financial houses in Alexandria and Europe. (11) The purpose was to develop the resources of the country, to foster export trade, to build railways and launch river steamers. But none of these purposes were fulfilled, and without railways and steamers to carry the produce to the frontiers, there could be no serious development in trade. In 1868 it was liquidated. We also hear of a commercial bank and a Chamber of commerce in Khartoum for financing trade, (12) and through such institutions plus their firms and consuls, European influence in the economic sphere was growing, but slowly, because of the government's heavy hand on trade in the form of heavy customs and duties.

#### CUSTOMS AND DUTIES :

The decline of the Fung power resulted in the breakup of the Kingdom into semi-independent sheikhdoms which depended on dues levied on caravans as their main source of revenue. Thus, in the 1810's merchants were continuously exposed to vexations from local chiefs and tribes. Caravans had to pay a transit duty at Berber, and to the Ababda and Bisharin tribes. (13) Similarly Suakin ruler remitted 2 to 3000 dollars per year to the governor of Jedda, this being duties levied on all imported goods. (14)

However, after the Egyptian conquest of 1820, all the important articles were monopolised from the start. The merchants had to sell to the government at a fixed price and this greatly discouraged the merchants, as well as the natives, from collection of

these articles. <sup>(15)</sup> Before the monopoly, for example, a gum load (480 lbs) cost between 5½ to 6 dollars (Table 1) ; the export duty was 12 shillings, and to Alexandria the whole custom amounted to 16 shillings per cwt, and £4. 3s. Od. for the load (3½ cwt). But after the monopoly, the average cost for the same amount of gum reached £12. <sup>(16)</sup> Moreover, all imported goods were subject to import duties at Alexandria, then an average of 12 shillings in Cairo, and a further 30 piastres per camel load at Dongola. At El Obied, for example, cotton goods paid 500 piastres and rice 50 piastres per camel load. <sup>(17)</sup>

Until 1825 there were no customs receipts in the Sudan except at Halfa <sup>(18)</sup> ; many parts of the country lacked regulated custom services. The first taxing station, however, was built at Mogren, the confluence of Blue and White Niles, for Kordofan goods, and other posts were built at Metemma and Berber. But these stations had no fixed tariffs, and accordingly the amount paid differed from one station to another. It was to regulate this that the tariff system was introduced, but the dues turned out to be equally unbearable : separate sums were paid at each of the chain of stations until the arrival of the goods in Cairo where the final impost was charged. <sup>(19)</sup> Moreover, no goods imported via Suakin paid custom dues there since, according to the 'raftieh' system, they had already been paid at another Ottoman port. Moreover, trade on the White Nile suffered from the heavy hand of the government between 1857-63. A 10% impost was levied on ivory and other articles from the White Nile areas to be imported into Egypt for export to Europe plus another 12% on purchase at Khartoum and at Suakin on the same products. European goods imported via Egypt for local consumption in the Sudan had to pay 5% on the amount, and an additional 12% if going to Darfur or Abyssinia. Moreover, there was a poll tax (werko) of 50 piastres per annum on each daily labourer, another 100 piastres on men who worked on the boats engaged in the White Nile trade and 150 piastres on those who remained at the trading stations on the White Nile. <sup>(20)</sup>

The attempts to reduce custom dues on goods intended for local consumption in the Sudan in 1858 proved a failure<sup>(21)</sup>; even the money paid on Sudanese goods at Alexandria was put to the credit of Egypt, and not the Sudan, revenue.<sup>(22)</sup> During the Mahdiya, however, customs and taxes were similarly oppressive. Gum purchased by the government at 20 to 30 dollars (Omla Gedida), (Table. II), was sold to the merchants at the rate of 30 to 40 dollars while an extra tax was paid at Berber, and another 5 dollars if it was to be taken to Aswan, plus 1/3rd of the gum given to the Treasury.<sup>(23)</sup> Moreover, there was the 10% duty levied at Suakin, Dongola, Kassala, Gadaref, KoKrayib, Berber and Omdurman on both exported and imported goods. Thus, during both periods, the Egyptian and the Mahdist, these heavy duties retarded the healthy growth of trade and later, during the Mahdist period, led to the economic disintegration of the country.

However, mention also must be made of some external factors that influenced trade during the nineteenth century. First, the effect of the American Civil War on cotton trade needs little remark. The cutting off of American cotton from England, and the consequent high prices, led Britain to encourage cotton cultivation in Egypt and the Sudan. But unfortunately for the Sudan, the end of the war also brought the end for cotton. Similarly, the growing textile, paper and confectionary industries in Europe caused a boom in indigo and gum trade, particularly the latter. Secondly, the construction of the Suez-Cairo railway line greatly influenced the importance of Suakin since the Sudan products found a quicker and cheaper way to Cairo and Alexandria than the cumbersome Nile routes. Thirdly, the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the Red Sea as an avenue of trade between east and west. As a result traffic in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and in the Red Sea ports increased. Many European steamers plied the coast in search of products, and eventually the Sudan trade was put in direct contact with European markets.

However, agriculture was the main economy of the country, but it was backward and inefficient. This inefficiency of the Sudanese agriculture was met with by introduction of new crops and new methods of farming, and a more detailed survey of the agricultural conditions of the nineteenth century Sudan is necessary.

#### AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS :

According to the Muslim laws, all lands held from the state on payment of a rent were the property of the public domain ; the cultivators had, therefore, been merely the usufruct and the right of inheritance did not exist as we know it today, but nevertheless, the traditional laws gave the preference to the heirs of the deceased holder if they were in a position to pay the rent. Accordingly, the government took from the cultivator a tithe of the land's produce plus further taxes levied on the livestock and other agricultured plants.

Taxes on waterwheels and lands were a feature of the Turkish rule, the wheels being divided, for fiscal purposes, into four classes based on the area watered. The tax on wheels was first assessed in 1856 at 500 piastres per wheel, and then it was reduced to 150 piastres to be

Table III : To show Taxes levied on Lands and Wheels.

Objects	Taxes first levied 1856.	Reduction of 1857.
Waterwheel	££3 to ££5.	150 to 200 piastres
<u>Shaduf</u>	250 to 350 piastres,	-
Wheel-on-wells.	175 to 350 piastres.	-
Land on island/feddan.	52 to 60 piastres.	25 piastres.
Riverine banks/feddan.	22 to 45 piastres.	20 piastres.
(Source: Stewart, D.H., op.cit., p.13)		(See table 1).

( See Appendix X Table M ).

raised to 600 piastres in 1870. The tax on land was payable by all the cultivators along the Nile valley, and for that purpose these lands were classified into two main categories (see table above) according to ease of irrigation. ( see Appendix X Table M).

All these taxes the peasant paid by order of the governor or the local ruler (sheikh), and the Central Government kept no supervision over these functionaries, with the result that the land of the weak was overtaxed to make up for any deficit of taxes from rich and powerful people. <sup>(24)</sup> Thus, all these factors contributed to render the condition of the peasants one of almost unparalleled poverty and wretchedness.

Taxation was not in fact established on any clear cut basis ; it was not proportional either to the quality of land or the capacity of each respective individual to pay it. The peasant was ignorant of the laws by which tax collection was made ; if he could not pay in cash, he was obliged to sell his standing crops at half their value or borrow money from a merchant usurer at from 4 to 7% a month. <sup>(25)</sup> Moreover, the exaction of taxes was carried on in the most arbitrary manner, and imprisonment and corporal punishment were inflicted to enforce payment. According to Stewart, for every pound that reached the treasury, the tax collectors robbed an equal amount from the people. <sup>(26)</sup> Moreover, these taxes did not vary with time and the same amount had to be paid whether the number of inhabitants of a village had decreased or not, or whether the date trees which had been taxed perhaps 10 years ago, still existed or had been cut down or destroyed by storms or floods. <sup>(27)</sup> Other taxes such as that on salt, the professional tax, tax on sale of cattle etc. were also extracted from the poor peasant, thus ruining him and putting a stop to any small scale local commerce that might have arisen. The result was the depopulation of the area as has been discussed in Chapter One.

AGRICULTURAL REGIONS : (Fig. 5).

To understand the crop pattern of N. Sudan, a brief account of the main agricultural regions and the physical factors affecting them is necessary. To begin with, topographic factors had little direct influence on the crop pattern though they are of considerable importance in modifying edaphic and climatic factors. Edaphic factors affect crops everywhere ; the main biotic factor, Man, affecting crop production was greatly influenced by climatic and other physical conditions because of the primitive way of life in those days. The major factor that influences the crop pattern of the Sudan is the climatic ; even if we consider other biotic factors affecting crop ecology, such as vegetation, fauna, pests and diseases, the main causal factor is again climate.

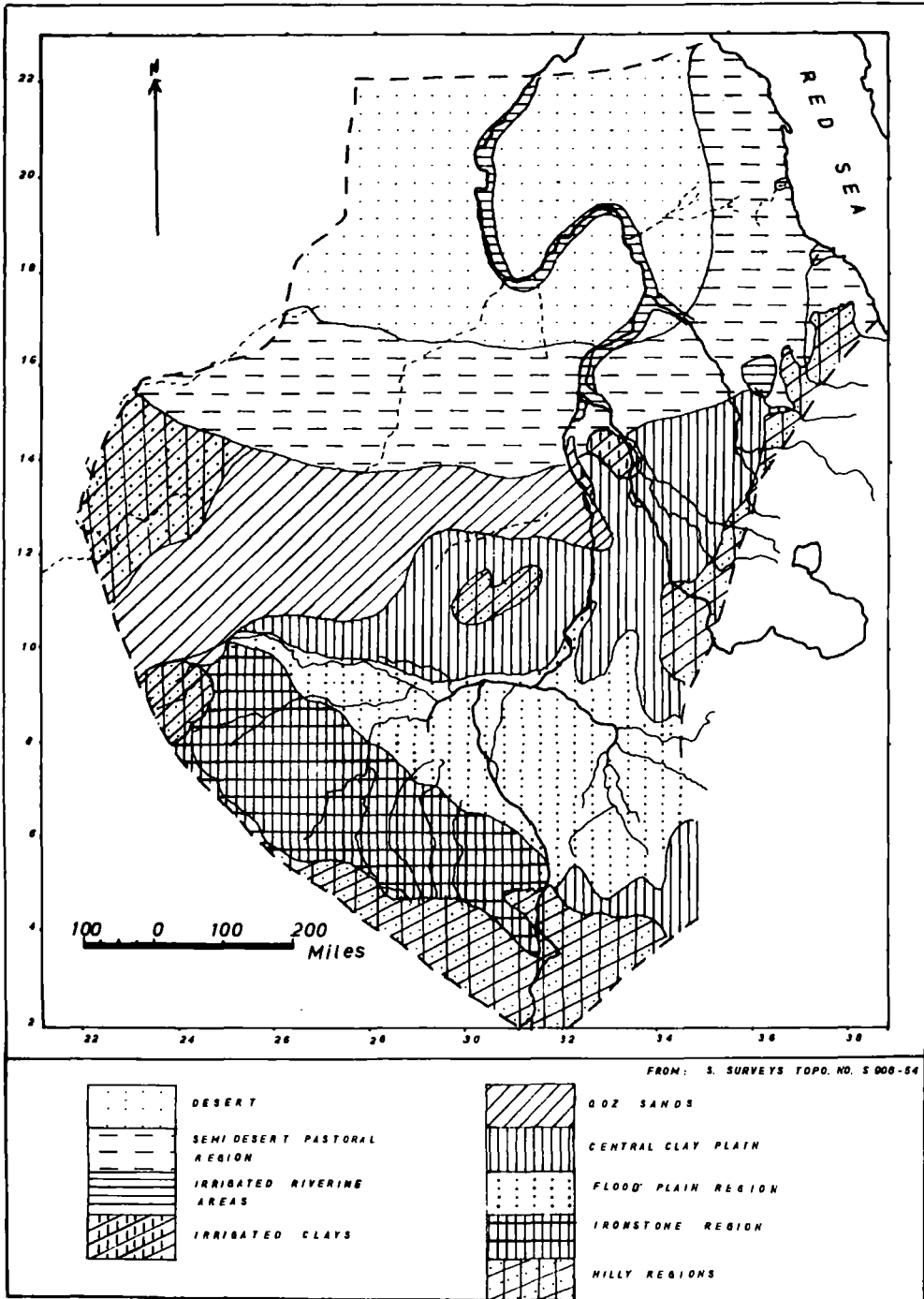
Because of the great latitudinal extent of the Sudan, variations in rainfall and temperature were, as they are now, great but broadly speaking the climate is continental tropical. As Fig.3 shows, rainfall decreases as one moves to the north, seasons also become shorter, and distribution <sup>of rainfall</sup> irregular and erratic until at latitude 19° N. true desert conditions are met. However, if the minimum rainfall for crop production is taken at 250 mm (C. 9.6 inches) per year, it becomes clear that except where a certain supply of water is available, people abandon agriculture in favour of nomadism or collect natural products.

Accordingly, N.Sudan can be divided into 5 main agricultural regions from north to south as Fig.5 shows. <sup>(28)</sup> (See also Appendix IX).

1. DESERT : This consists of wastes of sand and stony surfaces which are quite unsuited for any type of cultivation except along the river bank.

2. SEMI-DESERT AND PASTORAL REGION : here rainfall is too little to ensure crop production, but it produces enough vegetation to maintain livestock for part of the year at least. The soils consist mainly of sand and clays, and the main inhabitants are the camel-owning nomads.

Fig. 5- **SUDAN : MAIN AGRICULTURAL REGIONS**



3. THE RIVERINE AREAS : these consist mainly of the narrow strip along the river Nile from Khartoum northwards which can be irrigated from the river. Soils are mainly alluvial, and both lift and flush irrigation are practised, the former by waterwheels and shadufs.

4. THE CENTRAL CLAY PLAIN : this is characterised by heavy clay soils which become more saline to the drier north. Rainfall is sufficiently reliable for crop production, especially for dura. The favoured spots include the Gadaref district, and the land along, and between, the Blue and White Nile. Away from these areas nomadism prevails with occasional cultivation in favoured localities.

5. THE 'QOZ' SANDS OF KORDOFAN AND DARFUR : This zone can produce a crop only during the limited rainy season, but levels of production were not great and most people depended on gum collection, feather and cattle for cash. The main crop of the area, dukhn, however, thrives well. To the south there are clay lands where cattle rearing dominates the way of life ; to the north the region merges into the pastoral sandy areas.

Within these different regions, different types of agricultural practice were developed.

#### AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES :

These consisted mainly of :

##### 1. Irrigation :

This was done by waterwheels and shadufs, and was practised mainly along the Dongola reach of the Nile but was later introduced up the Nile as far south as Kamlin on the Blue Nile and also on the Gash. Flush irrigation was common in the Gash and Baraka deltas (Figure 5),

##### 2. 'Gerf' or River Bank Cultivation :

This was practised along the river banks. When the flood receded the banks were exposed and consequently tilled. So it was



seasonal and the area cultivated depended on the level of the flood.

### 3. Shifting Cultivation :

This was common in all rainlands because of its simplicity and less labour requirements, but the technique was precarious and casual and yields fluctuated with rains. Hence quick growing crops were grown exclusively for family consumption, and the method was not conducive to production of perennial crops for cash because of its marginal nature.

### 4. Hoe Cultivation :

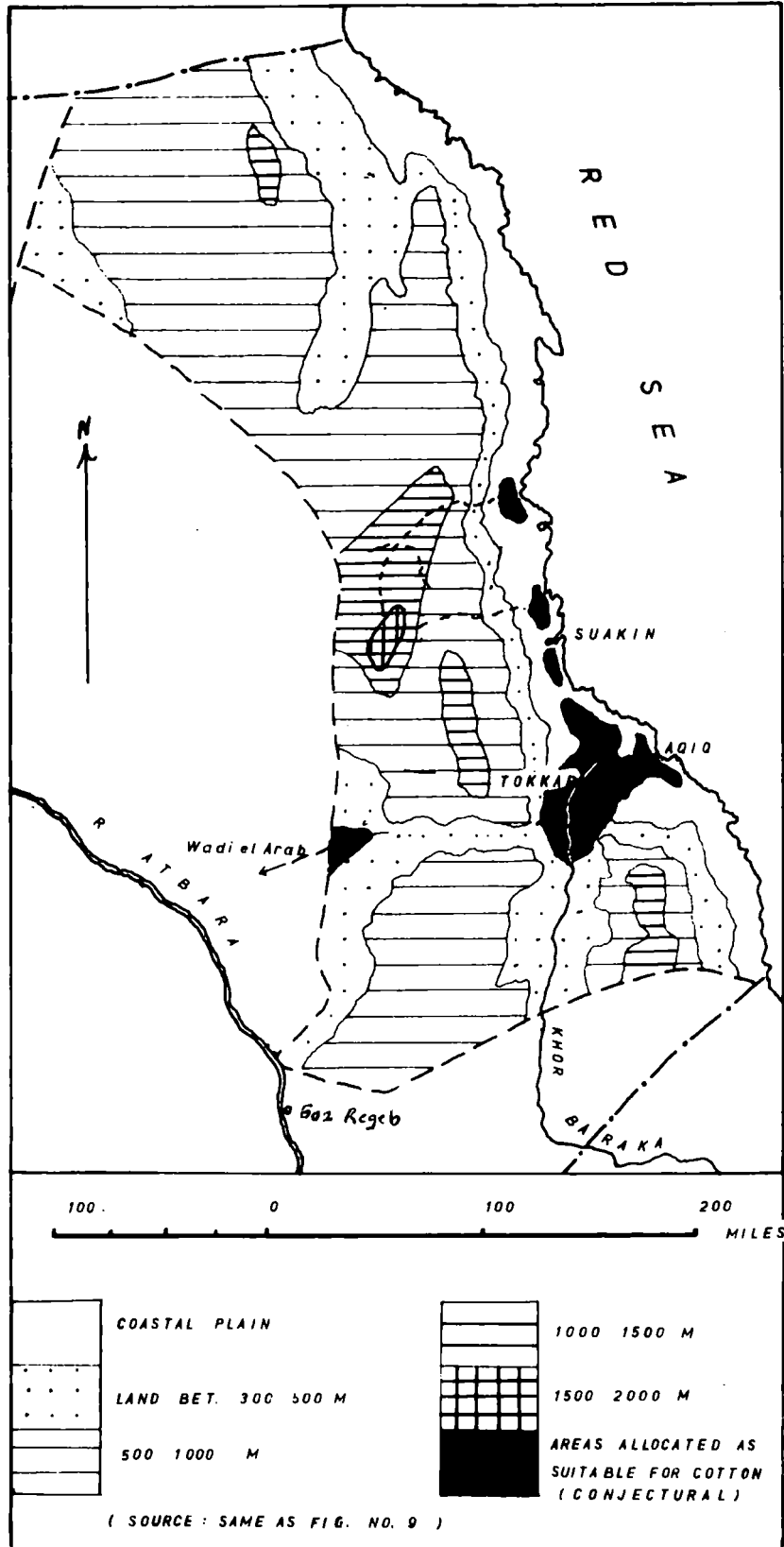
This was prevalent in central, eastern and western Sudan, but was limited to the deltaic regions and some areas in the Clay Plain. It was not efficient because only surface scratches were made, and this led to crop failures, especially when rainfall failed and inundation not adequate.

It is clear that such practices, with over 80% of the population being nomads, were not conducive to production of cash crops on a large scale as envisaged by the Egyptian authorities. Drastic measures, however, were needed to achieve their ambitious ends, but, unfortunately, they overestimated the potentialities of the land, often being deceived by flat clay lands covered by 'luxuriant' vegetation during a brief rainy season.

### FERTILITY OF THE SUDAN : ARABLE LANDS (Appendix XI).

Many articles and reports were written in which the Sudan was pictured as a very fertile country. In his Memorandum about the Sudan, Munzinger gave this striking statement : "To give a short resume of what I am going to explain, I will state that in the Sudan there is no dead desert. There is rain enough for any cultivation. There are rivers and torrents easy to be made use of for irrigation and navigation .... the Sudan ought to be one large cotton field".<sup>(29)</sup> Such optimistic views

Fig 6- SUAKIN POSSIBLE CULTIVABLE AREAS



seem likely to have influenced the Khedive Ismail in formulation of his grandiose, but unrealistic, schemes.

Similarly, M.F.W.Fox, in his report about the Sudan (1887) stated that with the exception of the belt of desert to the north, the larger proportion of the land of the Sudan may be described as most fertile, offering great potentialities for development and abounding in agricultural resources and, it was believed, in mineral wealth.<sup>(30)</sup>

Thus, as a result of such over-optimistic reports, in particular that of Munzinger, a grossly exaggerated estimate of the cultivable areas in the Sudan appeared in the Statistique de l'Egypte (1873), according to which the cultivable area was put at 14,125,000 feddans.<sup>(31)</sup>

Fox's estimation was even more exaggerated and came to between 21,000,000 and 28,000,000 feddans. In 1871, however, an official paper<sup>(32)</sup> was issued containing an account of potential arable land, by provinces, in N.Sudan (Figs. 6-12) as follows :

SUAKIN PROVINCE : (Fig.6)

This province, according to the report, contained large areas suitable for cotton cultivation to the N.W. of Aqiq, Tokkar and Suakin as the Fig. shows. Tokkar alone was estimated to contain 200,000 feddans and it was claimed that another 200,000 feddans in the coastal area could be irrigated by wadis draining from the hills. So if Arabs were encouraged, a total area of 20,000 feddans could be brought under cultivation in Tokkar plus another 20,000 feddans in Khor el Arab. The produce in the former case was to be ~~marketed~~ at Suakin and in the latter at Qoz Regeb.

TAKKA PROVINCE : (Fig.7)

Here the total cultivable area was estimated at 7,000,000 feddans of which the Gash delta alone contained 2,000,000 feddans. Most of these lands, however, were not occupied. So if cotton culture was introduced, the report goes on, the crop from the northern part was to be dispatched to Suakin for export, and that from the southern part was

Fig. 7- POSSIBLE CULTIVABLE AREAS IN TAKKA PROV.

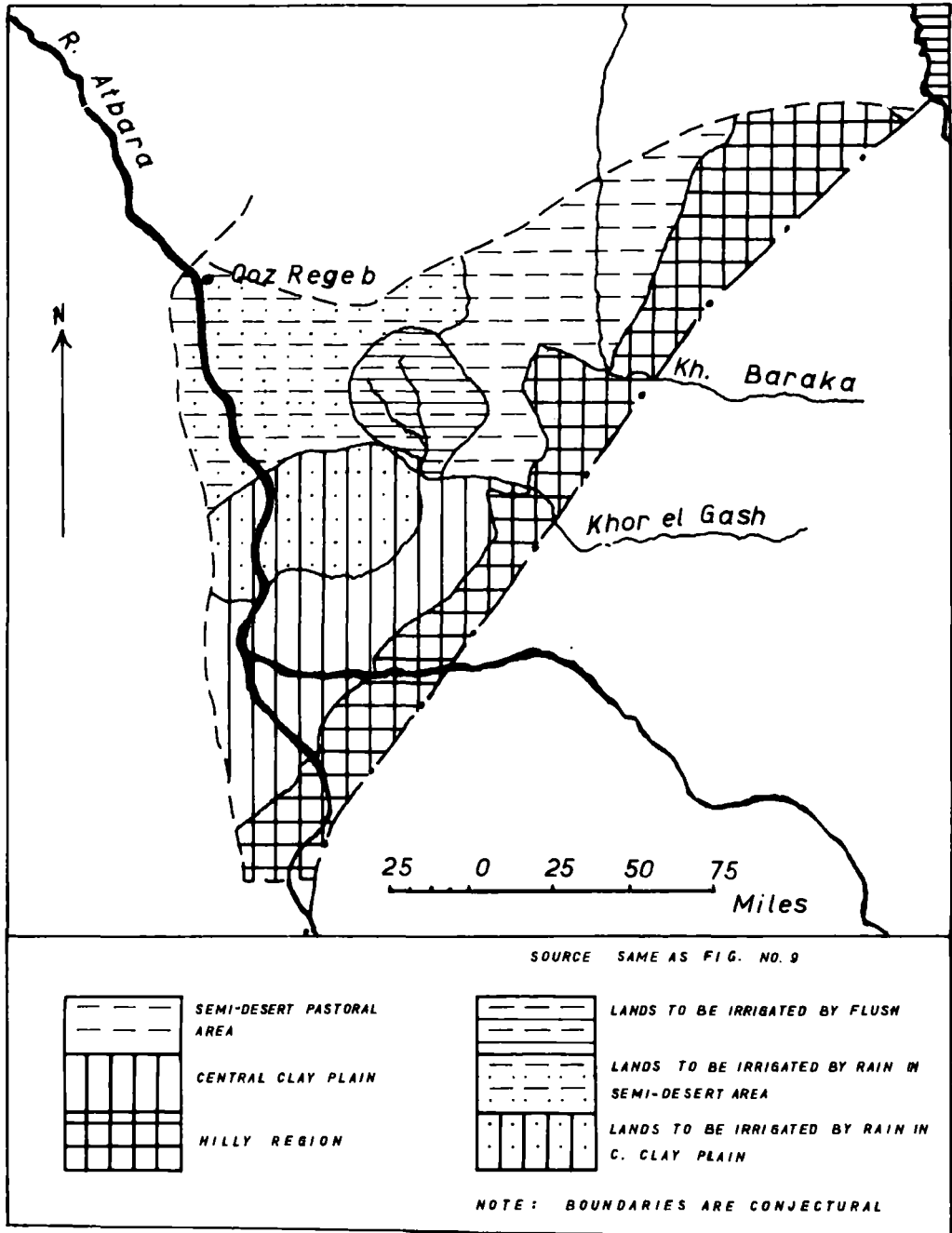
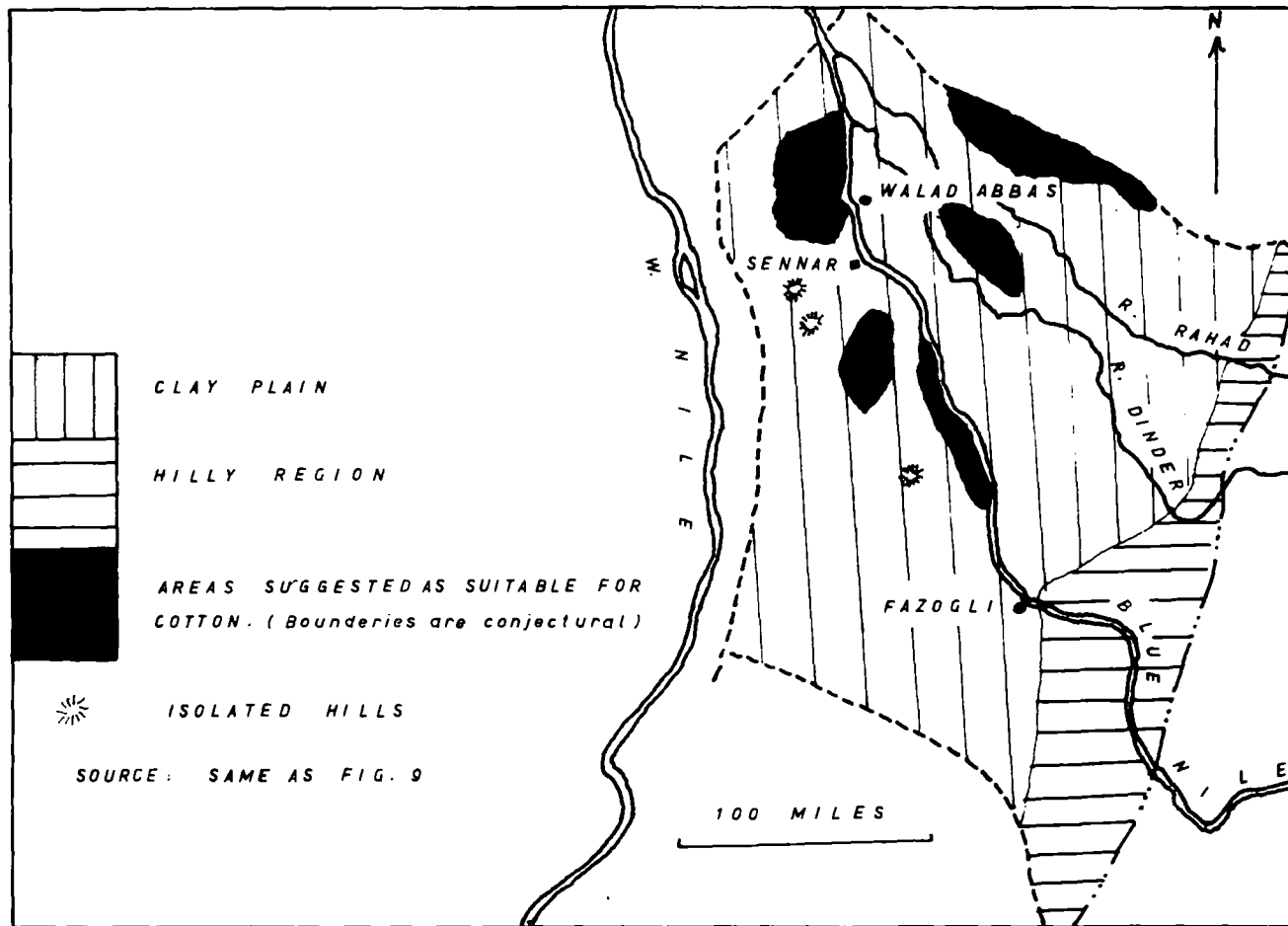


FIG. 8- SENNAR: POSSIBLE CULTIVABLE AREAS



to be sent to Qoz Regeb and down the river to Egypt during the flood time. Accordingly, the Arabs were to be encouraged to grow 100,000 feddans in 1872.

SENNAR PROVINCE : (Fig.8)

According to the report, the Gadaref district was well suited for cotton cultivation but due to marketing difficulties, only a small quantity of cotton was grown for local consumption together with dura. However an area of 200,000 feddans could be brought under cultivation if marketing facilities were provided at Safiya (Gadaref ?). The products could then be dispatched either north to the Atbara or east to the Blue Nile where, in both cases, boats were available. Moreover, to the east and west of the Blue Nile between Walad Abbas and Fazogli, the report says, there was no trace of hills or sandy tracts, rainfall was enough and the land fertile for producing large quantities of sesame. But since cotton was of first rank here and the population enough to provide labour, the land under cotton could be increased to 300,000 feddans within two years.

KHARTOUM PROVINCE : (Fig. 9)

The most fertile lands in this province, according to the paper, extended on the 'east' and 'west' of the town and could be irrigated by rain, while the lands adjacent to the river were to be irrigated by the 1000 waterwheels found here. Thus, since the province was well situated in terms of transport, being near the Blue, White and the main Niles as Fig.9 shows, the land under cotton could be increased to 200,000 feddans within two years.

KORDOFAN PROVINCE : (Fig.10).

The soils in this province were sandy in the north where tobacco was grown, but to the south and adjacent to the White Nile there were fertile lands, where, according to the report, 100,000 feddans could be grown with cotton as the Figure shows. Marketing could be done at the various villages along the White Nile whence cotton was to be shipped to Egypt during the flood time.

FIG. 9- POSSIBLE CULTIVABLE AREAS IN KHARTUM PROVINCE

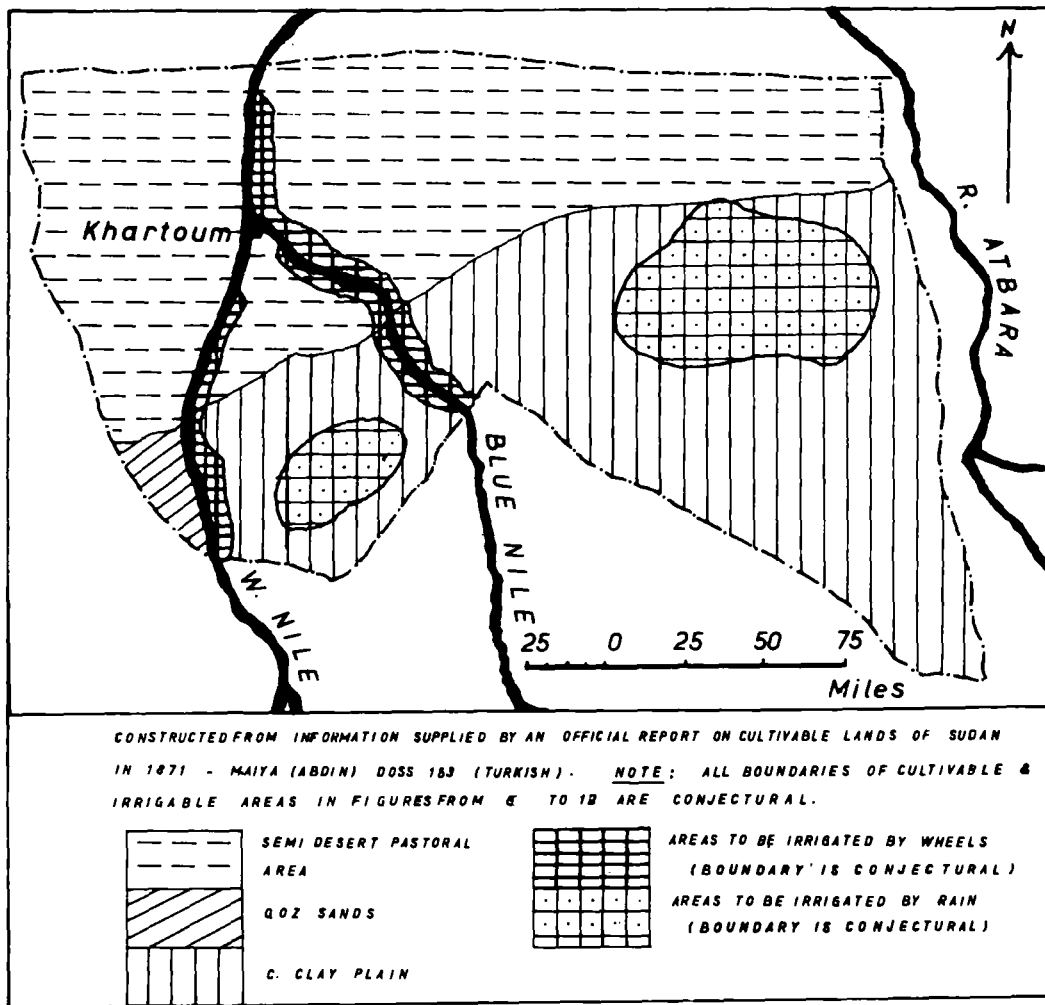
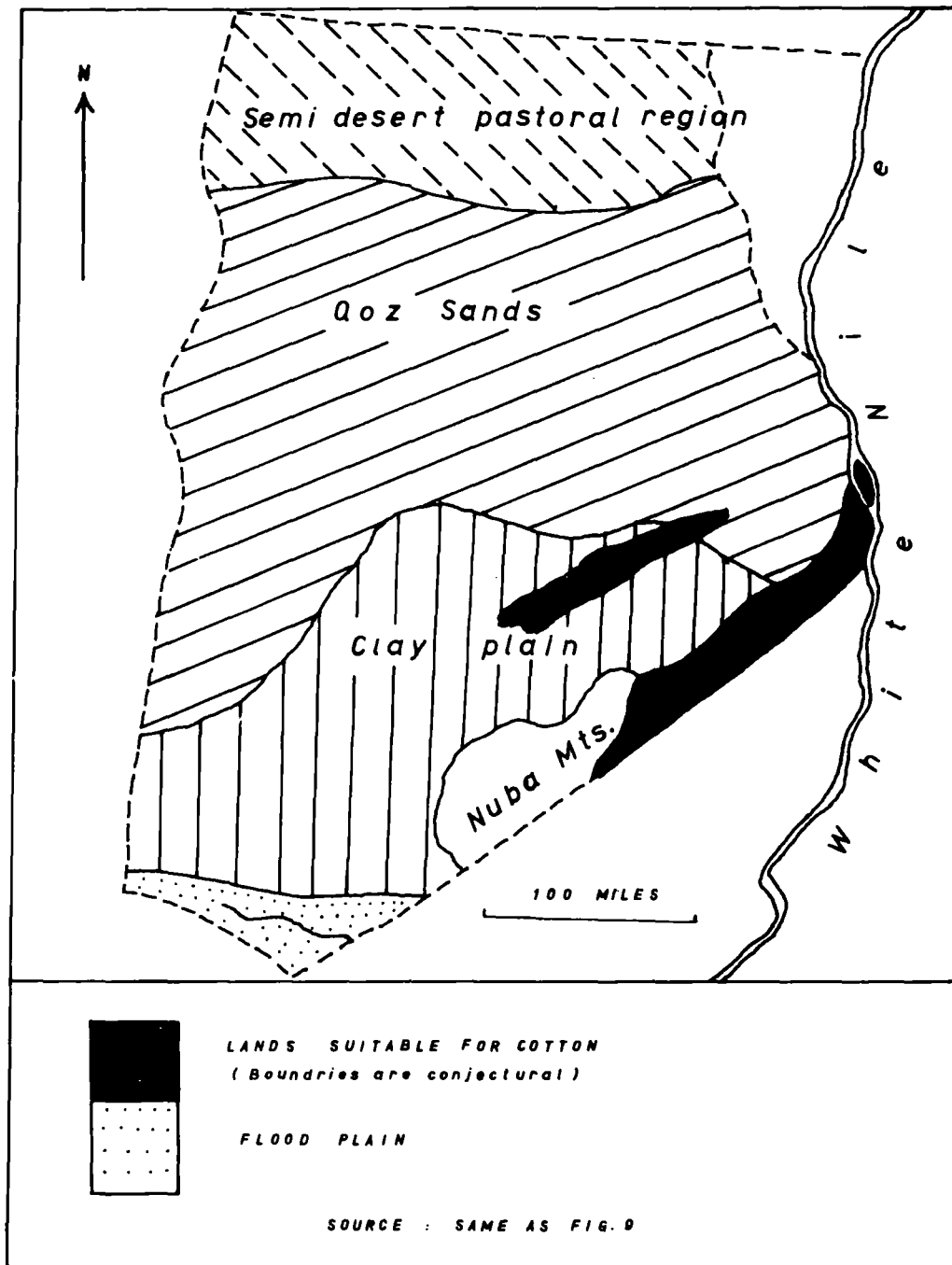


FIG. 10- KORDOFAN: POSSIBLE CULTIVABLE AREAS





BERBER PROVINCE : (Fig.11)

According to the report, there were more than 3,000 waterwheels between Hager el Asal and the end of Rubatab area, excluding the islands, plus an area of some thousand feddans on the eastern side of the Atbara - Nile confluence that could be irrigated by rain as the Figure shows. If a canal was dug on this side, some 100,000 feddans could be cultivated.

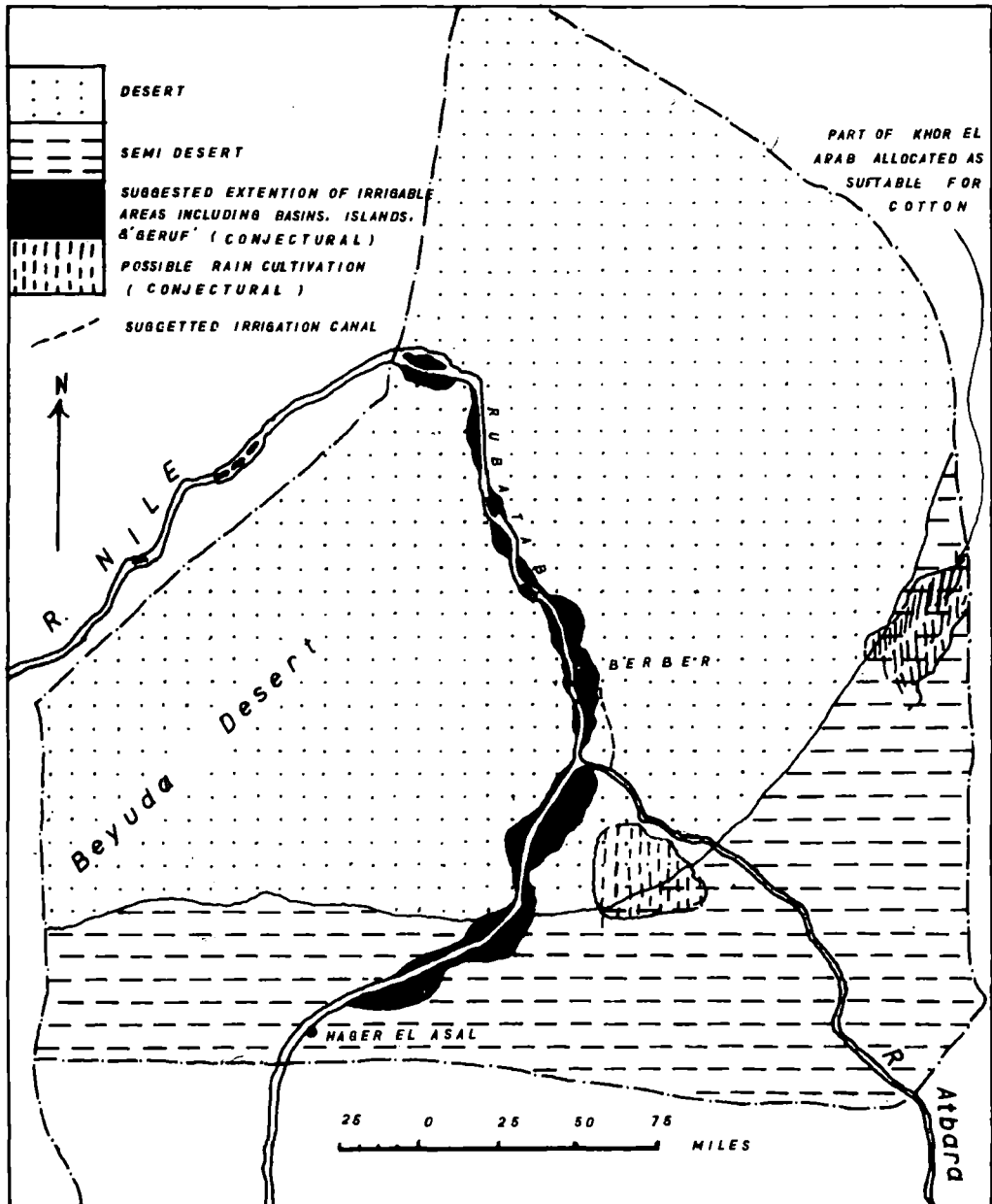
DONGOLA PROVINCE : (Fig.12).

After draining and cleaning the Walta (?) basin (possibly Letti ? or Kerma ?), it was possible, the report says, to cultivate 60,000 feddans on the islands and on the banks extending along the Nile by means of waterwheels.

If we closely examine these maps and the figures of cultivable lands and consider them in terms of climate and soil, the overestimation can readily be discerned. Even today, with more efficient agricultural techniques, the cultivated area, whether by rain or irrigation, amounts to about one-third of this total. Thus in terms of soils and rainfall, the Central Clay Plain had high potentialities, but the peculiarity of the soil necessitates careful management, if cultivation of any commercial crop, cotton and otherwise, was to be introduced.<sup>(33)</sup> The clay plains of Takka, Sennar and S.Kordofan, with adequate rainfall, are also lands of high capabilities, but proper soil and water conservation and utilization practices had to be applied. Moreover, the undulating lands of Kordofan were large, but of low and medium capabilities because of steep slopes and shallow soils in presence of heavy rains.

Thus, conservation is the first pre-requisite in planning or developing any agricultural scheme whether it was in the rain or irrigated lands. Rainfall, and consequently rural water supply, was very unevenly distributed.<sup>(34)</sup> Perennial irrigation was only possible along the Nile and tributaries ; elsewhere there is lack of information about

FIG. 11-BERBER PROV : POSSIBLE IRRIGABLE AREAS



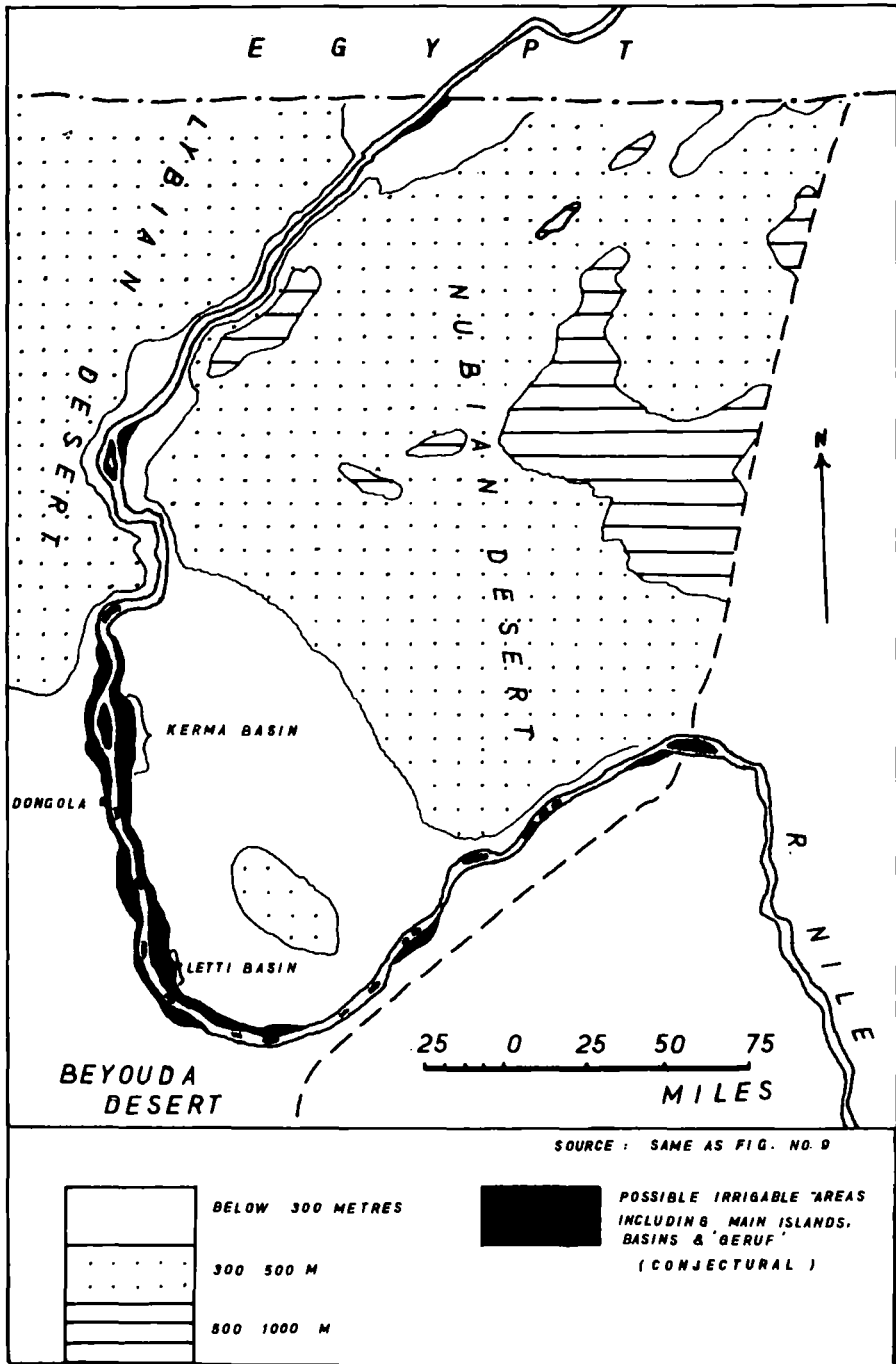
SOURCE : SAME AS FIG. NO. 9

soil characteristics, rainfall, vegetation, pest and diseases, and consequently the difficulty of exactly delimiting the boundaries of areas to be utilised for crop production is great. These difficulties together with the absence of land capability surveys were the problems facing any effective use of these areas. Moreover, the low population (5 million in 1871), and the low cost of investment made agricultural development of the rainlands quite impossible without serious social, economic and political problems.

Lack of water supply, however, was one of the main problems facing land use and the productivity of the people themselves. (35) Much potential labour was lost in search of water and many people were unable to look after their rain cultivations during the dry season. Thus, the more cultivable areas, under the prevalent conditions, were those adjacent to the rivers and the Gash and Baraka deltas. The latter had the advantage of fertile soils renewed every year by the inundation of the streams. However, until the 20th century the Gash delta remained uncultivated. In 1814, Burckhardt described it as fertile, but not properly tilled, and that cultivation was done in the most desultory and casual way. In 1871 only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the delta was cultivated according to Munzinger, while in 1870 Langham described it as "... not much cultivated ... with an alluvial soil left sprinkled with thorn bushes left untouched amid the growing crops". (36) As a result, yields of crops were low because of improper tillage and clearing, the primitive implements used, the 'seluka' (37) and ploughs drawn by men, and the unwillingness of the people to clear land because of the heavy taxes.

Along the riverine areas, however, there was enough water and a traditional peasant population. But waterwheels, with their limited irrigation capacity, were not enough (38) for thirsty crops like cotton and indigo. Irrigation should have been developed or, otherwise, the numerous basins along the Nile from Shendi to Dongola could have been utilized. Again the main problem here was that basin irrigation depended

FIG. 12- DONGOLA PROV.: POSSIBLE IRRIGABLE AREAS



SOURCE : SAME AS FIG. NO. 9

on flood level, which was variable.

Thus, any production of cotton on a commercial basis, and for the world markets, should have considered these problems if it was to procure a profit and stand the competition of other producing areas which, definitely, had the advantage of better means of production and transport than the Sudan.

CULTIVATED AREAS :

In the face of these hazards, the area actually cultivated was very much less than the optimistic estimates. However, different sources gave the following variant figures :

Table IV : To show Areas Actually Cultivated.(Cotton).

<u>Blue Book</u> (Egypt) No. 2		<u>Statistique de l'Egypte.</u>		
Areas	Feddans	Areas	Feddans	Yields/Ton
Berber	150,000	Takka	37,600	3600
Kordofan	36,000	Berber & Dongola	9,885	8236
Tokkar	25,000	Tokkar	26,000	
Suakin	600	-	-	
Aqliq	500	-	-	
Total	212,418		73,485	

According to the latter source the cultivated area in Berber and Dongola was irrigated by 6590 wheels. According to another source,<sup>(39)</sup> these two provinces yielded 3,207 tons per year. In Sennar and Khartoum provinces cultivated areas were 3000 feddans.

However, such contradictions and lack of proper scientific surveys make mapping such areas quite difficult since all acreages and

yields are unverifiable. They represent incomplete samples taken at random from the various producing areas which, if taken as being remotely true, suggest a great change in the location of productive areas of the Sudan since that time.<sup>(40)</sup> Moreover, it should be remembered that these figures were compiled by a Finance Minister who was negotiating for loans with foreign money-lenders.

Concentration of cultivation in Takka and Baraka and the riverine areas may reasonably be attributed to ecological conditions and transport facilities. In terms of the former, the Gash and Baraka streams (Figure 1) come flooding from the highlands of Eritrea with enormous quantities of silt and lose their water in inland deltas. The result is very fertile, moisture-retentive and disease-free soil. Irrigation is by flush, the only disadvantage being the tendency of the streams to change course during heavy floods and fluctuation of the cultivated area due to variability in flood levels. The riverine areas similarly enjoy the advantage of rich soil plus perennial irrigation. In terms of transport, Baraka and the Gash deltas (Takka) have the advantage of being nearer to the Red Sea which was a vital asset in those days. Berber and Dongola were nearer to Egypt and also the Red Sea area, while other areas in Sennar, Khartoum and Kordofan had the advantage of the cheap river transport. But sending the cotton from these areas down to Egypt by rivers or combination of land and river transport would have meant increased cost, thus making the Sudan cotton unable to compete in the outside markets with other producing areas, Egypt being first. However, it may be true that the high prices during the American Civil War made such costs to be felt little; but the fact remains that the cost of transport, plus other problems, was the main reason for the premature neglect of cotton cultivation after the break up of hostilities between the warring factions and the resumption of normal trade relations between the U.S.A. and other countries.

Other new crops introduced, besides cotton, included indigo, sugar-cane and coffee. To encourage people to cultivate these crops,

first, taxes on lands and crops were reduced by Khedival orders ; only lands actually under crops were to pay a tax of 25 piastres per feddan,<sup>(41)</sup> mainly to attract the peasants who fled from their lands. Moreover, the local chiefs were to pay for only 14 wheels in every 20 ones, and 4 feddans should be tax free in every 100 feddans they owned. Secondly, irrigation methods were to be improved. Thus, many Egyptian peasants were brought to the Sudan to teach the Sudanese the methods of irrigation and cultivation of these crops. Moreover, some engineers were sent to install some pumps for irrigation of cotton, especially in Berber and Dongola provinces. Many sagias or waterwheels were built along the Nile. Thirdly, seeds were to be distributed free ; thus, a 100 ardebs of cotton seeds were sent to the Governor of Berber who was told not to charge the peasants with the price or expenses of cultivation.<sup>(42)</sup> Fourthly, lucrative prices were offered for cotton. Thus, in 1873, the offer price at Khartoum was made at 70 piastres per quintar of cotton ; at Abu Haraz, Kawa and Medani at 65 piastres ; at Fashoda and Fazogli at 55 piastres, and at Sennar at 60 piastres per quintar. Moreover, the government offered an extra 10 piastres per quintar to encourage the people to pay the arrears in taxes.<sup>(43)</sup> However, the main reason behind these measures was to encourage people to return to their lands. Thirdly, ginning plants were introduced (Figure 13). The first was a steam-driven ginnery owned by a Syrian merchant in Baraka delta in 1867.<sup>(44)</sup> Another complete cotton factory was also erected in Takka in 1874 with a 100-horse-power steam engine and 12 gins, but it had never been worked since the successful harvest of 1875.<sup>(45)</sup>

Despite these measures, all the attempts to make these crops permanent cash sources, except for three instances, were a failure. Coffee could not grow in the hot plains of the Sudan ; silk culture was abandoned from the start. Similarly wool production failed despite the introduction of 150 rams and another 10 merinoes to better the "ovine race" of the Sudan.<sup>(46)</sup> Indeed, all methods to improve agriculture ended in failure because of the oppressive illegal taxes, the hasty way in which these economic ventures were carried out, the difficulty of transport, indolence of the people and their dislike to agriculture. The

only crops that succeeded were sugar-cane, cotton and indigo. Despite the early setbacks, the land under sugar-cane increased in Berber province near Abu Hamed, and in Sennar province near Kamlin, on the Blue Nile, where there was a large state plantation, managed by a government foreman, and with a refinery and an 'arrak' distillery.<sup>(47)</sup> Indigo was successful because the textile industry in Europe created a demand for it, and indeed the Sudan was the main source of supply to Egypt until the invention of aniline dyes supplanted the industry as a whole. It was introduced at Berber and Kamlin and a steady export to Egypt then followed. Cotton, despite lack of labour, proved to be successful, but only for a short period. Moreover, a tobacco farm was established at Assar, near Gadaref, which produced fine Syrian leaf to be cured by imported varieties at Khartoum.<sup>(48)</sup>

Besides tobacco blending, other processing industries were introduced. Most of these, however, were agricultural, and included distilling of sugar, soap-making, tanning, extraction of indigo, gum grading, ginning, oil pressing etc, as shown in Figure 13. There were 4 indigo extraction plants, at Dongola, Khandaq, Old Dongola and Merowe, each producing 1,846 okke per year (Table 1), in Dongola province<sup>(49)</sup>, and another 3 plants in Berber province, at Berber, Aliab and Tamaniat, the total export being 17 tons of dye per year to Cairo. Dongola and Kamlin, however, exported 12 tons per year.<sup>(50)</sup>

Besides developing agriculture, attention was also given to mineral exploitation. The minerals that attracted attention from the beginning were the gold of Sennar and Kordofan and the iron deposits of Kordofan. The latter, however, had already been in use by native smelters in making spearheads, farming tools, rough nails and token money. Exploitation on a large scale was inaugurated by Mohamed Ali, and some European experts were sent for the purpose, but all attempts ended in failure because of bad transport and lack of skilled labour. Only a small proportion of it was used for making nails in the shipyards at Manjara.<sup>(51)</sup> Copper was not attempted at all, and was left to the local smelters. Gold, however, was the main attraction, and since the early days of the Conquest (1821), experts were sent to Beni Shanqul region and washing plants were set up, but the output was not as big as the authorities expected. The



Fig. 13

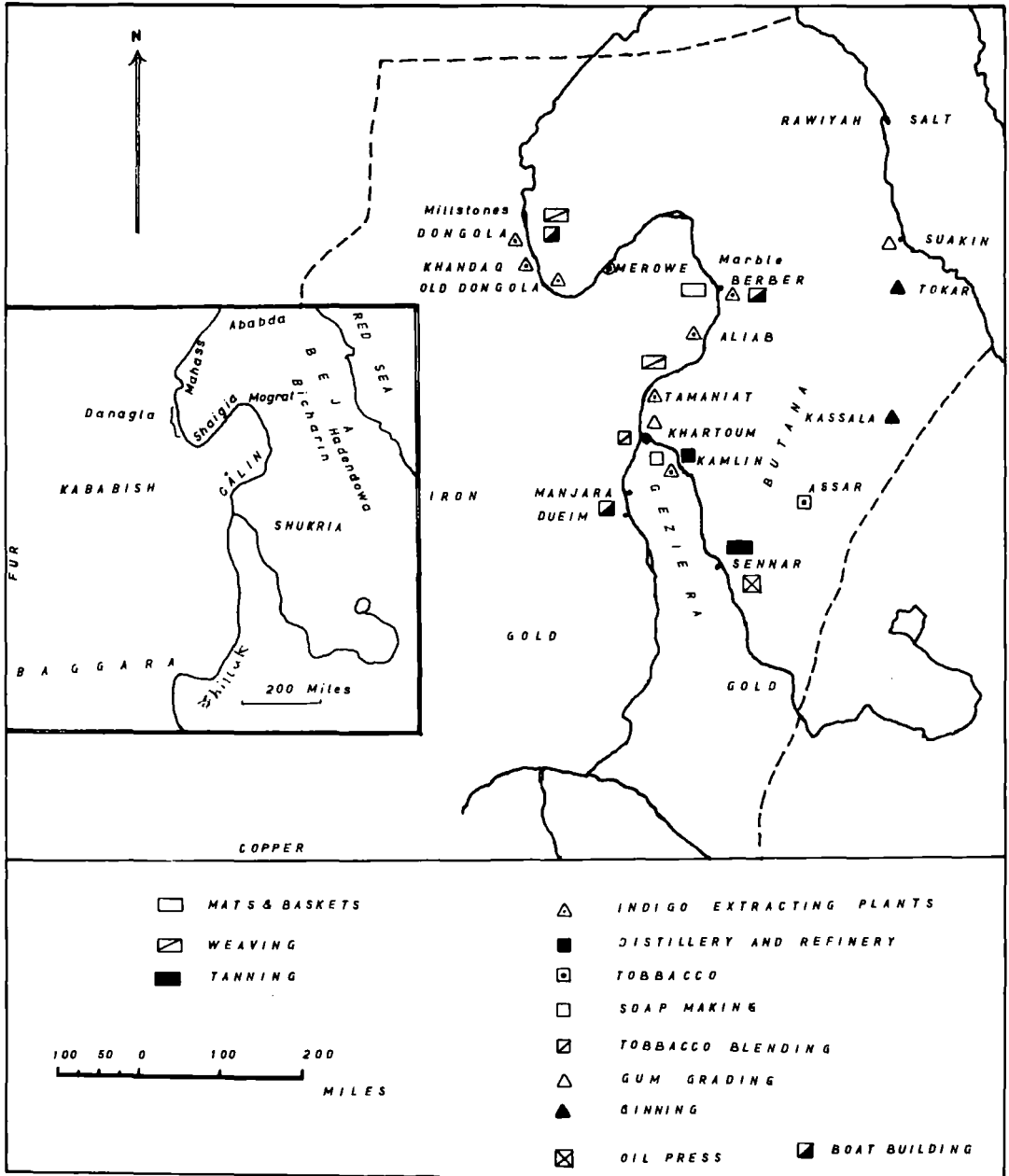


Fig.13- Some industries of the Turkish period.(Inset map shows the main tribes )

salt pans of the Red Sea at Rawiyah were operating at great odds since all salt produced were sent to India and Jeddah and not to the interior. Other things that attracted attention were stones for making millstones from Dongola and white marble from Berber. (Fig.13).

Thus, the great struggle for the economic development of the Sudan between 1821 and 1880 had but little effect. The governors were incompetent in this mundane sphere. Moreover, there was lack of efficient supervisors, lack of amiable way of life,<sup>(52)</sup> and lack of geological surveys and scientific research and economic planning.

However, all these factors, political and economic, operated in different ways to stimulate trade, some stimulating it and some retarding it. But whatever stimulus was produced, the fact remains that all efforts to develop the country economically were a failure, and the rosy hopes first entertained by the authorities to make the Sudan into an exporting country gave way to utter pessimism in the end. Thus, from the late 1870s, the Egyptian government contemplated the abandonment of the Sudan because it was becoming a financial burden on the Egyptian Treasury which was already crippled by foreign debts. However, they were forstalled by the Mahdists' revolt in 1881.

#### THE MAHDIYA :

The rise of the Mahdi and the success of the revolt resulted from the grievances of the people towards the abuses of the Turkish rule. However, the main aim of the Mahdi, besides abolishing the causes for these grievances, was to establish a divine rule in the country, but the measures taken to achieve this end were also the main causes that eventually led to the decline of the regime itself. The Mahdi, however, did not live long to carry out his mission, and after his death in 1885, the whole affair was left to his successor, the Khalifa Abdullah. To carry out the Mahdi's aims, he declared the 'Jihad' or the holy war on infidels, and geared everything to that end. He fashioned the life of the people into a narrow religious system that eventually strangled every aspect of economic life of the country. Many tribes were forced to join the army, and those who showed

any resistance, like those of the Geziera, were punished by expropriating lands from them to be given to nomadic immigrants from western Sudan such as the Taisha and Baqqara. This resulted in very low yields. To aggravate the problem, the onset of a dry season in 1888 resulted in failure of all crops and the onset of the Great Famine. The starved people from all over the country flocked into Omdurman in search of food, thus creating one of the worst slums in the history of the Sudan.

Moreover, people were not cooperative, many of the peasants hid their harvests in underground stores to avoid paying the zaka to the Treasury because they did not see any reason why they should do it. Thus, the ill-fed soldiers, unable to find food, plundered villages to take food by force, and such things led to a breach of faith between the Khalifa and the mass of the people. The people were longing for peace after years of conflict and warfare ; they wanted to settle down and trade to be resumed under normal conditions, but, unfortunately, there were many factors operating against this. First, the position of the foreign traders was precarious. The Khalifa viewed all foreigners as spies and infidels who should be fought. The tolerance shown by the Mahdi and the Khalifa until 1886 quickly dissipated and the merchants were subjected to various vexations such as heavy taxes, ill-treatment and expropriation of property. He declared Egypt as the country of unbelievers that should be purged ; thus traders from Egypt were banned from trading with the Sudanese unless they accepted the Mahdist's faith and principles. (53)

However, the religious fervour under which this policy was pursued soon succumbed under its economic consequences. Forced by dire economic conditions, the Khalifa had to open trade with Egypt and also Suakin in 1888 and 1890. Thus, the merchants of the Sudan were encouraged by giving money to purchase commodities and the Egyptians were promised protection and nominal duties, (54) and easy transit at the frontier stations. This led to an immediate stimulation of trade, and profits of 100% on cloth, 250% on oil, 300% on sugar, and 400% on soap were procured by the Egyptians after paying the tithe levied by the government. (55)

This prosperity, however, did not last long because the

Khalifa monopolised gum and ivory trade which was already in reduced form because of decrease in the quantities entering trade.<sup>(56)</sup> Secondly, the heavy taxation and duties and the debased currency had adverse effect on trade as has already been discussed. Thirdly, some routes, especially those to Abyssinia, were closed because of wars along the border and the occupation of Eastern Sudan by the Italians in 1894. Fourthly, an embargo was set at Suakin in 1885 to cut off supplies, especially ammunitions<sup>(57)</sup>, from the Mahdists.

This blockade, however, had serious consequences on the economy of the country. Egypt lost one of its important markets for her exports and was unable to secure Sudanese products. Many of the merchants who fled from the Sudan had business agents or partners in the country from whom they were cut off, and as a result all goods destined for the Sudan were stockpiled at Aswan, Korosko, and Wadi Halfa. Consequently a chronic stagnation of business in Egypt followed,<sup>(58)</sup> and many petitions were forwarded by the merchants to the authorities concerned,<sup>(59)</sup> to re-open trade.

There were, however, two opposing views about the blockade. First, the military view which was in favour of the blockade as the best means of curbing the Mahdist regime financially, and secondly, the civil view which advocated the re-opening of trade as a means to pacify the rebellious people, to engage the Sudanese in trade, and to avoid the ill-feelings of the mercantile carrying, and consuming, classes in Egypt and the Sudan. Moreover, they maintained that trade was the only means for the merchants to get out their capital or money from the Sudan and this would eventually deplete the Mahdist's Treasury of money.<sup>(60)</sup>

However, the military view advocates won, and the result was more stagnation of business which was even felt by the English companies that produced cotton goods for Sudanese markets.<sup>(61)</sup> But under constant pressure trade was declared open through the sub-ports of Aqiq, Halaib and Rawiya in 1888, but under vexatious conditions. First, the government (of Suakin) was in no way responsible for anything that may happen to the merchants and their goods once they were clear of Suakin wall. Secondly, any one who wished to send goods to Berber was to petition

to the Governor (of Suakin) stating the quality and description of the goods to be despatched before being granted a pass. Thirdly, all goods passing through the port of Aqiq were put under the jurisdiction of the custom house, and any 'dhow', (or boat), carrying prohibited articles was subject to confiscation of all its cargo and the trial of the crew ; moreover, the government was not responsible for any damage, harm or interference that might occur to the merchandise, dhows or persons engaged in this trade through such search.<sup>(62)</sup> The result of this was, first, that the trade, both export and import, of 1888 reached its lowest ebb, and many foreign communities were feeling the pinch.<sup>(63)</sup> Secondly, the trade of Suakin was being usurped by Massawa, then under the Italians. Thirdly, Darfur and Kordofan trade began to divert to Wadai-Tripoli route,<sup>(64)</sup> and fourthly, smuggling reached its peak during this period (1885-1888) between Jedda and the Sudanese Red Sea littoral because of inefficient patrolling of the coast.<sup>(65)</sup> An average of 10 ships left the small smuggling ports, after having been cleared, for the ports of Massawa or Yembo to the north of Jedda.<sup>(66)</sup> Goods to the value of 20,000 dollars were smuggled into the country in 1887.<sup>(67)</sup>

In their attempts to break through this blockade, the Mahdists, led by Osman Digna, put up a staunch resistance and even tried hard to occupy Suakin. Although they put a short seige on Suakin (1888), the whole operation amounted to skirmishes along the routes that led to the interior. This led to political instability that convinced the militarists in their view that blockade was the best means of crippling the Mahdist regime.

Thus from 1886 to 1898 the trade of the Sudan passed through many ebbs and flows ; export trade was paralysed, and Suakin became more and more a port of import rather than export.

REFERENCES :

- (1) The travellers who visited the Sudan before the Egyptian conquest (1821) were J.F.Poncet (1698-1700) ; T.Krump (1701-2); J.Bruce (1770-73); W.G.Browne (1775-79); M.O.El Tunisi (1803-20), and J.L.Burckhardt (1813-15).
- (2) Two or three such communities were found in every major centre, each being headed by the richest and most influential trader called 'Sir el Tujjar'.
- (3) F.O. 78. 2287 - 2288 (P.R.O.).
- (4) Abdin (Maiya), Doss. No.537 (1865) p.56.
- (5) From the Khedive to Jaafer Mazhar : Abdin (Maiya), Doss. No.558 Corres. No. 27 (1866), p.59.
- (6) Some reaches of the Nile were only navigable during floodtime ; the Blue Nile, due to a 10 metre variation between flood and low river level, was seasonally navigable.(Fig.44)
- (7) Most of the people in charge, however, were Nubians and Egyptians.
- (8) Many travellers and officials recommended this line; See H.Russel : The Ruin of the Soudan Sampson Low, London (1892). pp.346-50.
- (9) C.M.Watson : Trade Prospects with the Sudan, The Journal of Manchester Geographical Society, Vol.III (1887) pp. 170-180.
- (10) Hill, R : op.cit, p.130.
- (11) The company opened agencies at Suakin and Khartoum ; later the head office was transferred to London under the name of the Egyptian Trading and Commercial Co., before its liquidation.
- (12) M.F.Shukri : op.cit. p.105.
- (13) J.L.Burckhardt : op.cit., p.393.
- (14) *ibid*, p.435. Merchants had to pay 2 dollars per each slave, 3 s. per each horse ; moreover, the chief of the caravan exacted  $\frac{1}{2}$  a dollar for each slave, two camels from Negroe merchants, and one dollar from every non-Hadarebe merchant.
- (15) I.Pallme : op.cit., p.280

- (16) *ibid*, p.283.
- (17) *ibid*, pp.288-96.
- (18) Since Suakin was under the jurisdiction of Jedda Governor, the whole hinterland; the centre of which was at Berber, wanted to levy duties of her own at Suakin. This request was forwarded to the Governor of Jedda by the Governor of Berber, and was accepted on condition that the latter, that is Berber Governor, would raise it to £25,000, and in 1830 this was ratified by the Egyptian Government.
- (19) R.Hill : *op.cit.*, p.42
- (20) F.O. 78. 2253 (P.R.O.)
- (21) Shukri, M.F. : *op.cit.*, p.54.
- (22) Watson, C.M. : *op.cit.*, p.174.
- (23) Slatin, R.C. : *op.cit.*, p.552.
- (24) F.O. 78. 2447 (P.R.O.)
- (25) *ibid*. If the sale of crops did not suffice to pay the requisite contribution, he was forced to sell his cattle and eventually to part with the land itself, on the produce of which he was striving to subsist.
- (26) Stewart, D.H. : *op.cit.*, p.14
- (27) A survey of wheels in Berber province in 1827 showed a total of 706 operated by the Jaalin in contrast with 2437 recorded in the Tax registers.
- (28) These divisions are modern, but are strikingly similar to those of Munzinger, 1870, according to which the Sudan was divided into 6 regions, the only difference being a matter of delimitation. That is, the Central Clay Plain, for example, was divided into 3 areas, not based on ecological condition, but merely for the convenience of the writer and his knowledge of the area. The ecological conditions he mentions are very similar to those of today.  
(See Appendix 1X.) )

- (29) F.J.Cox : Munzinger's Observations on the Sudan, 1871, Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 33 (1952).  
p.213F. J.A.W.Munzinger was a Swiss adventurer who was in 1871 appointed as the Governor of Massawa, and in 1873 as the Governor of the Red Sea provinces of Abyssinia, or Habesh.
- (30) Russel, H. : op.cit., pp. 344-45.
- (31) Blue Book (Egypt) No.2 (1887), inclosure 2 in Despatch 65.
- (32) Abdin (Maiya), arch. No. 153, June-July 1871.
- (33) The Gezira has heavy cracking soil with high sodium content ; it has been proved to be fertile provided that its fertility be maintained by careful management of soil and by fallowing and drainage.
- (34) About 1/3rd of the country is semi-desert, and the area west of the Nile and north of 18° N. is in fact an extension of the Sahara.
- (35) Even today, one person, in Kordofan, Darfur and Kassala provinces, is estimated to be getting less than half the minimum requirements of water for domestic needs set at 4 gallons a day.
- (36) F.Parry : Narrative of an Expedition from Suakin to the Sudan, Compiled from the Journal of the Late Captain Langham Rokeby, R.M., Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. VI (1884) pp. 152-164. There were wild jungles until 1910.
- (37) A Seluka is a long stick with a pointed end for making holes in the ground.
- (38) The maximum is 5 to 6 feddans. Introduction of cotton and indigo by waterwheels meant abandonment of other food crops because of the limited motive power of the ox. The peasant could not keep a large number of oxen because of his limited income. Only after strong appeals was the compulsory cultivation of indigo, sugar cane and cotton abolished in Berber, in 1838.



- (39) Shukri, M.F. : op.cit., p.102.
- (40) Potentially productive areas in Northern Sudan today are 30% of the total area. River flood plain 29,000,000 feddans (5%), Central rainlands, 74,000,000 feddans (12.5%), and western cattle country 47,000,000 feddans (12.5%). (Soil Conservation office (1953) ).
- (41) Abdin (Maiya), Doss. 1946, Corres. No.2. p.15 (1872), and Doss. 1874, Corres. No.9, p.18 (1873).
- (42) Abdin (Maiya), Doss. 1938. Corres. No.8 (1871) p.24.
- (43) Abdin (Maiya), Doss. 1875, Corres. No.1 (1873) p.48.
- (44) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.41.
- (45) Stewart, D.H. : op.cit., p.14. It cost from £20,000 - £30,000.
- (46) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.53.
- (47) *ibid*, p.54. 'Arrak' is an alcoholic drink distilled from dates and cane.
- (48) *ibid*, p.98.
- (49) Hoskins, G.A. : op.cit., p.162.
- (50) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.55.
- (51) *ibid*, p.58.
- (52) Many of the European experts sent to Kordofan to exploit the iron deposits perished because of diseases.
- (53) Holt, P.M. : op.cit., pp. 236-7. In a proclamation issued in 1886, he addressed traders from Egypt as follows : "Your coming is for the sake of trade ; so, in the best interest of the Faith, we have thought it most expedient that there should be no sale in the Sudan of the goods you have brought".
- (54) The government even went to the extent of compelling merchants from Egypt to proceed as far as Omdurman, and promised them safe return to Egypt.
- (55) Holt, P.M. : op.cit., p.177
- (56) Slatin, R.C. : op.cit., p.550.

- (57) All goods of iron, copper, brass, or utensils made of these, were declared contraband of war.
- (58) Blue Book (Egypt) No.2 (1887). Inclosure 2 in Despatch 65.
- (59) *ibid*, Inclosure 2 in Despatch No. 65.
- (60) *ibid*. Memorandum upon the Re-opening of Trade between Egypt and the Soudan, Inclosure in No. 75.
- (61) *ibid*. Messrs. Matheson and Co. to Mr. J.Fox Turner (1886), Inclosure in Despatch No. 99. "A profitable and not inconsiderable trade in Lancashire manufactures is being stopped" by difficulties thrown in the way of trade ; "We have had considerable orders for Lancashire manufactures nipped in the bud during the last few weeks, and feel much agrieved at this unnecessary restrictions to our trade".
- (62) *ibid*, Proclamations by Col.Kitchener, No.1 and No.2 in Despatch No. 129.
- (63) *ibid*, British Indians Merchants at Suakin to Sir.E.Baring, 19th April, 1887. Inclosure 1 in No. 81. "For the last three and a half years, our trade has been stopped ; .... the capital has been sinking, and unless trade be opened we shall be forced to leave here (Suakin)".
- (64) *ibid*, From Sir. H.D.Wolff to the Earl of Iddesleigh, Aug. 8th, 1886 Despatch No. 96.
- (65) A.B.Wylde : The Red Sea Trade, The Journal of Manchester Geographical Society, Vol. 3 (1887). pp. 170-201.
- (66) Blue Book (Egypt) No. 2. Consul Jago to Sir.E. Baring, Inclosure 2 in Despatch No. 42.
- (67) Wylde, A.B. : *op.cit.*, p.183.

Chapter ThreePATTERN OF TRADE I - EXTERNAL

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The need of foreign countries for the Sudanese products coupled with the mercantile instincts of the people, made foreign trade an important feature of the economic geography of the 19th century Northern Sudan. This trade had been brought about by centuries of commercial contact first with Egypt and later with Europe. It was on a small scale at first, and began to develop slowly during the Fung period in the 17th and 18th centuries, and reached its peak during the last decade of the Egyptian rule. But the lack of statistical information makes a re-evaluation of trade volume quite impossible for the period preceding the Turkish conquest in 1821 and much of the Turkish period. In 1796, however, Bröwne<sup>(1)</sup> estimated the value of goods carried by the caravan with which he returned to Egypt at the high figure of £E 115,000, but the Darfur-bound caravans were usually small. This was on Darbel Arbain. In 1813-14 Burckhardt<sup>(2)</sup> estimated the annual imports from Egypt at about 1500-2000 dollars via Berber - Aswan route. Since transport was cheaper to Aswan because of the cheapness of camels at Berber<sup>(3)</sup>, Egypt-bound trade, derived mainly from slaves, feathers and gum, must have been relatively considerable before 1813. The annual export of gum to Egypt before this year amounted to 2000 cwt ; during Burckhardt's visit, only 100 cwts were exported thither annually.<sup>(4)</sup>

Similarly the Turkish period shows great variations in details of the estimates for external trade as well as their totals according to each

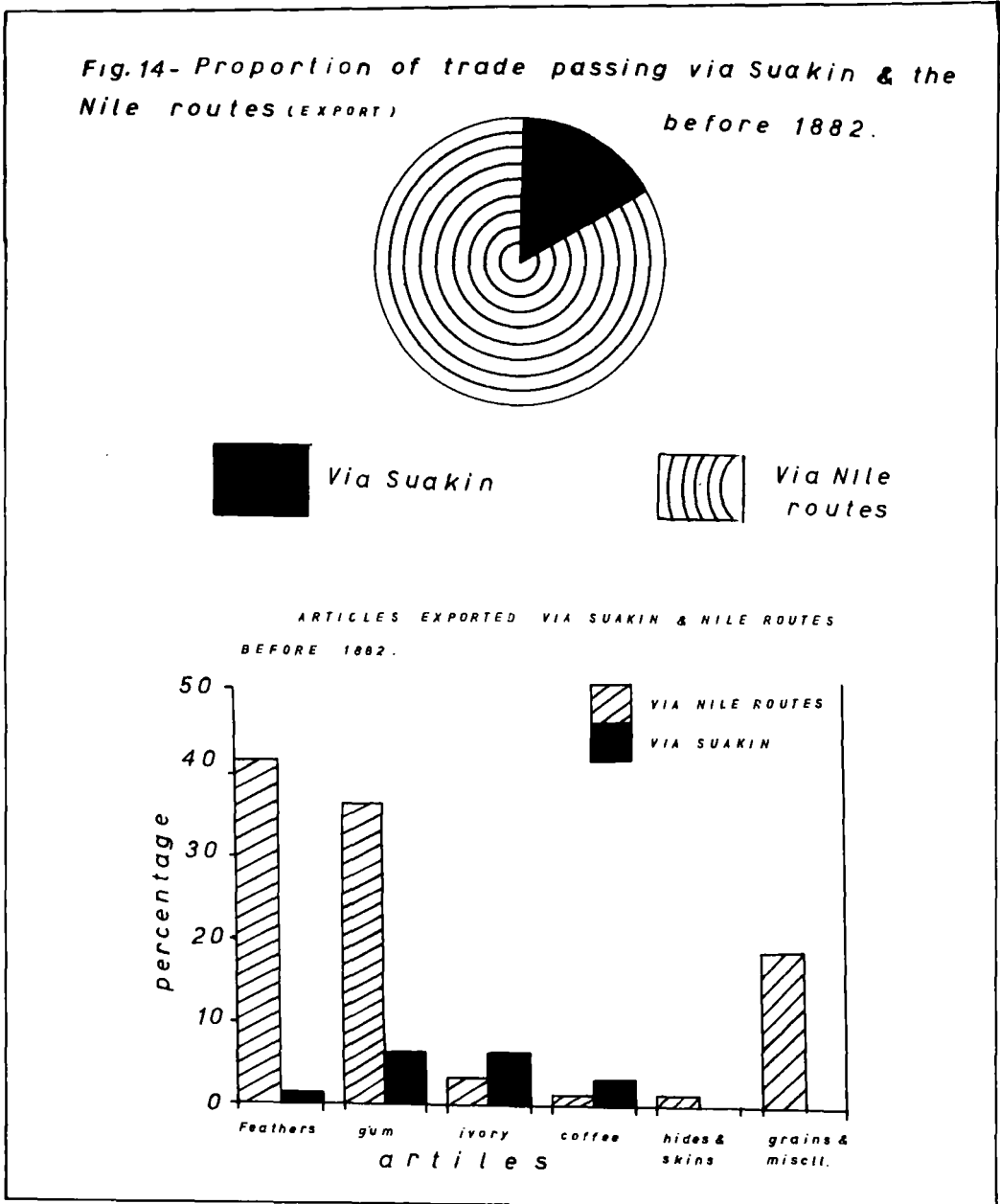
authority. In 1862, export trade was valued at £E 477,896 and imports at £ 397,451 <sup>(5)</sup>; in 1872 the estimates were £500,000 and £400,000 respectively <sup>(6)</sup>. In 1873-4 exports amounted to £1,554,600, <sup>(7)</sup> and to £1,993,968 in 1878-9 <sup>(8)</sup>, and to £2,000,000 in 1882 <sup>(9)</sup>. The estimates of 1883, the last year of the Turkish rule, put exports at only £127,263 and imports at 288,054. <sup>(10)</sup>

These figures, however, do not show the exact trade of the Sudan ; they only show the articles sold in Cairo market, and nothing is mentioned about trade with foreign countries. The same ambiguity also shrouds details of import trade, and information obtained from these figures is of little value upon which to base any calculations. Moreover, many European articles imported through Egypt were listed as originating from Egypt ; in the same way many articles of export passing in transit through Egypt from other countries, were shown as being exported from Egypt.

Despite these hazards, the trade of the Sudan expanded as never before during the Turkish period. This, however, was under the most disadvantageous conditions when difficulties of transit were great, and very little had been done, according to modern ideas, to improve the means of communications. Yet tonnage on the routes increased, especially the Nile routes ; Suakin began to revive after a period of stagnation mainly due to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The number of ships calling at Suakin increased from 146 in 1869, most of which were Egyptian, Arabian and Indian, to 230 in 1877, many of which were European. <sup>(11)</sup> This was under inadequate harbour facilities, narrow entrance, lack of deep-water quays and freshwater supplies. <sup>(12)</sup>

Although traffic was increasingly being diverted to Suakin, the Nile routes still carried much of the export trade before 1882. The value of the principal articles of export amounted to £1,942,500 by the Nile routes and £302,000 by Suakin. <sup>(13)</sup> (Fig.14). From this Figure, it is clear that the Nile routes handled most of the gum, feather, hides and grains. This was carried at the disadvantage of long distance and a cost

Fig. 14



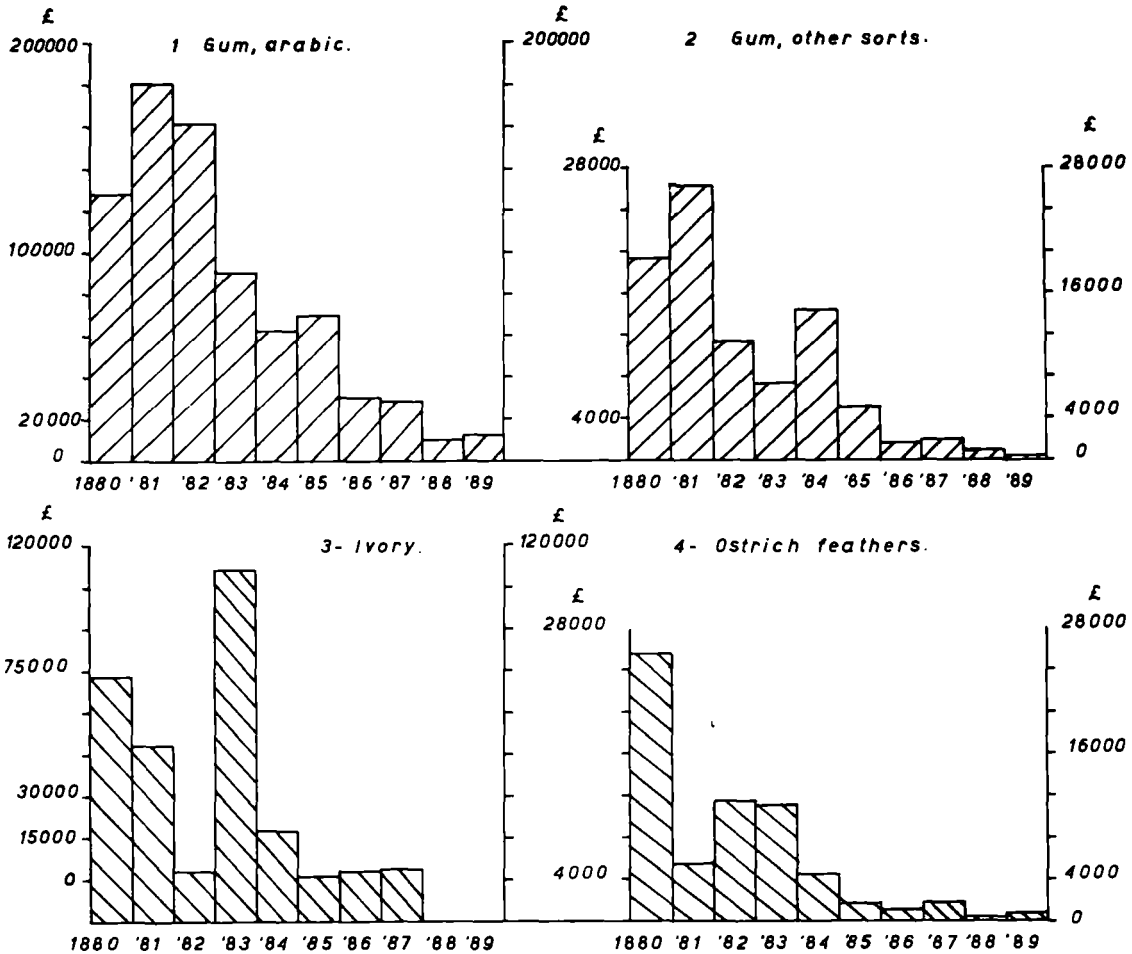
of £5 to £10 per ton or even more according to the state of the Nile.

The Berber-Suakin route, however, carried little trade except ivory and coffee ; ivory because its trade was mainly carried by the Europeans who preferred Suakin, and coffee because it came from Abyssinia. Yet, the route had the advantage of being shorter (270 miles), and cheaper, the cost being £5 per ton<sup>(14)</sup> for the whole journey, a rate which was exclusive with regard to those articles which were heavy in comparison to their weight. Moreover, Suakin had the big advantage of all sea route from Europe and India. Thus, despite the incessant efforts by the Khedive Ismail to see all trade handled through Egypt, the pattern of trade began to change in favour of Suakin from 1877. The direct trade between Europe and Suakin began to increase, and the Egyptian share of the foreign trade of the Sudan began to decline (Fig.15), because : first, there had been a shift in the pattern of the Sudan's total imports away from goods which Egypt could supply and towards others that could be supplied by Europe and India; secondly, Egyptian cotton textiles, formerly an important item, had been priced out of the market by the Indian textiles in the low quality market and the British products in the high quality market ; thirdly, the financial difficulties and the enormous foreign debts crippled most of her established industries, and the inelastic system of the customspolicy made her products unable to compete with foreign products.

Thus, despite the sanitary measures imposed on the Red Sea ports and the prevention of foreign ships from calling at Suakin<sup>(15)</sup>, trade was slowly drifting from the traditional markets into foreign hands. The trade between Suez and Suakin for 1877 shows a decrease of 10% from that of 1876 because of the "daily increasing facilities for direct shipment from the Sudan to Europe".<sup>(16)</sup>

In the same way, the dependence of Suakin on Jeddah for its sale of produce and purchase of manufactures was dented by opening of the Suez Canal. Trade began to decline ever since until 1879 when it reached its lowest ebb, except for gum (Fig.16), which, although there is a decrease

FIG. 15- EXPORTS FROM EGYPT TO BRITAIN

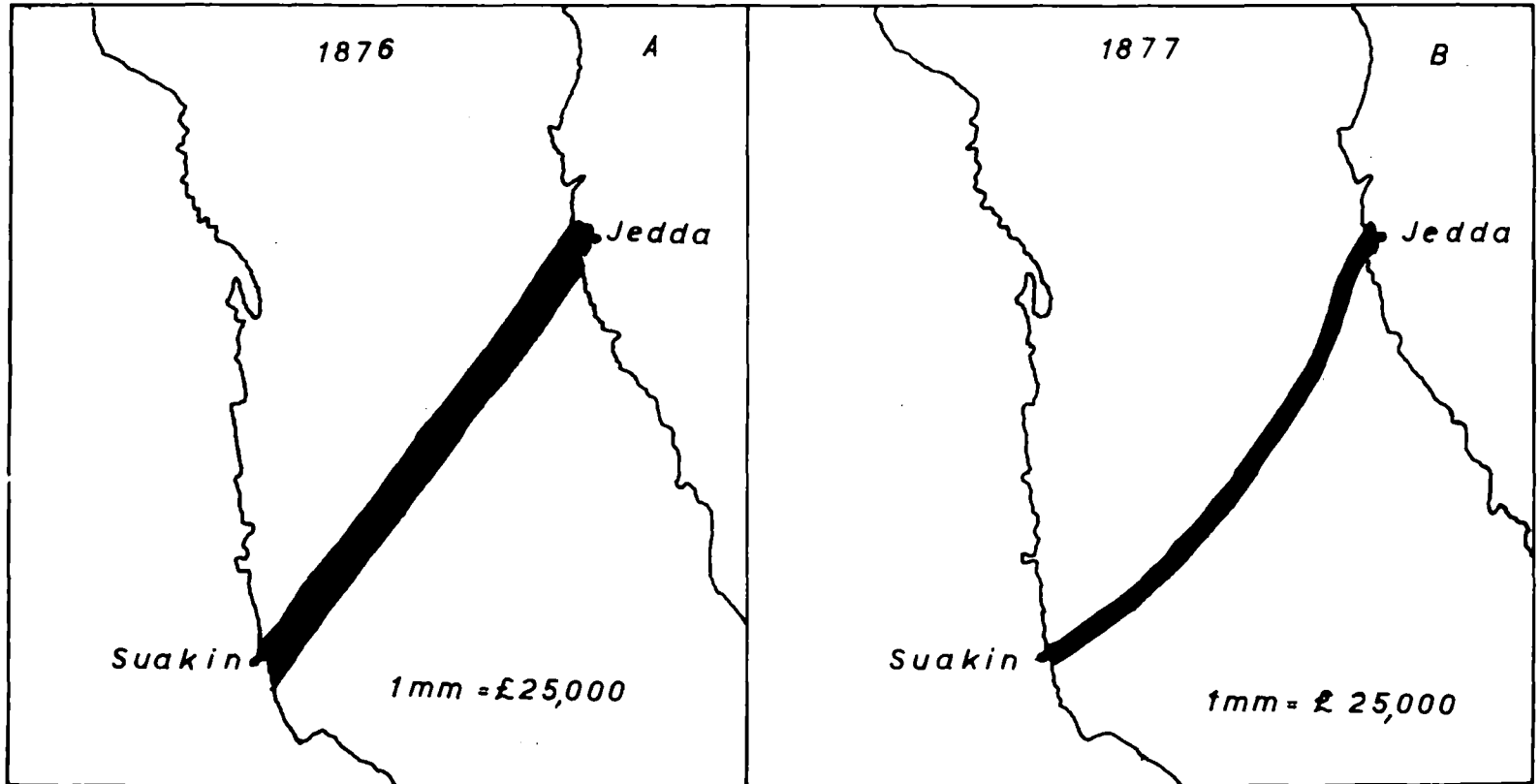


SOURCE SAME AS FIG. 17

Fig. 15

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FIG. 16- SUAKIN - JEDDA TRADE (EXPORTS)



Source of information : P. P. vol. 79, 1884, p. 364.



of £3,000 than in 1876, was still carried via Jedda. This decline was due first, to the doing away with the necessity of Jedda as an entrepot for merchandise by establishment of lines of steamers working every port in the Red Sea, and placing them in direct communication with the chief concerning centres in Europe and elsewhere and at much cheaper rates. Secondly, the excessive imposition of quarantine in connection with arrivals and departures from Jedda consequent on outbreaks of cholera in Hedjaz during 1880-3<sup>(17)</sup>, causing Jedda to be, for all commercial intents and purposes, blockaded by the world of commerce; thirdly, the fact that Jedda solely depended for her prosperity on foreign trade without anything coming from her hinterland, did much to bring her commercial decline, and fourthly, the partial suppression of slave trade between the two ports did much to injure Jedda by doing away with large purchase of manufactures made there in former years by the slave dealers of the Sudan with the result of the sale of their slaves.

Accordingly, there was a steady decline in trade between the two ports (Fig.16). Coffee and gum, the main export articles, show a decline from £600,000 in 1876 to £59,000 in 1883, and from £20,000 to £3,100 in 1883 respectively.

These years, however, saw a steady expansion of Suakin's trade from £398,513 in 1882 to £415,317 in 1883,<sup>(18)</sup> most of which consisted of imports (Fig.17). Indeed, the balance of trade via Suakin was in favour of import due probably to the competition of land routes in export trade before 1882, and the troubled political conditions after 1883.

Thus, to give a summary of the general trade conditions of trade after 1883, it should be borne in mind that this year is considered the last year of prosperity in the Sudan so far as trade is concerned during the nineteenth century. The fall of Berber in 1884 in the hands of the Mahdists involved trade in a series of marked ebbs and flows until the end of the century. Thus, from 1884 to 1896 started the period during which the trade of the Sudan was paralysed by the spread of the Mahdist's influence and the military operations round Suakin. As a result, routes

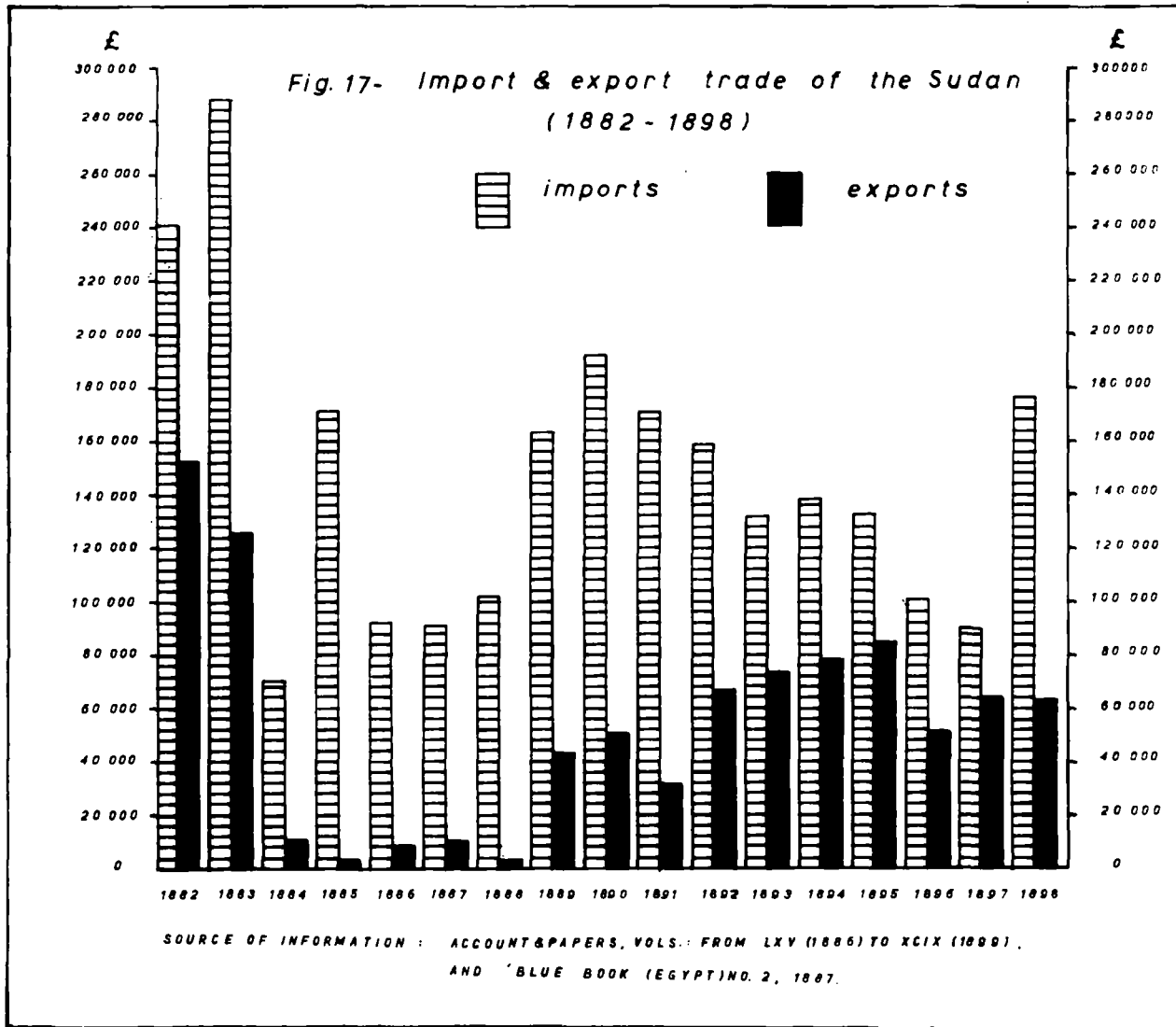


Fig. 17

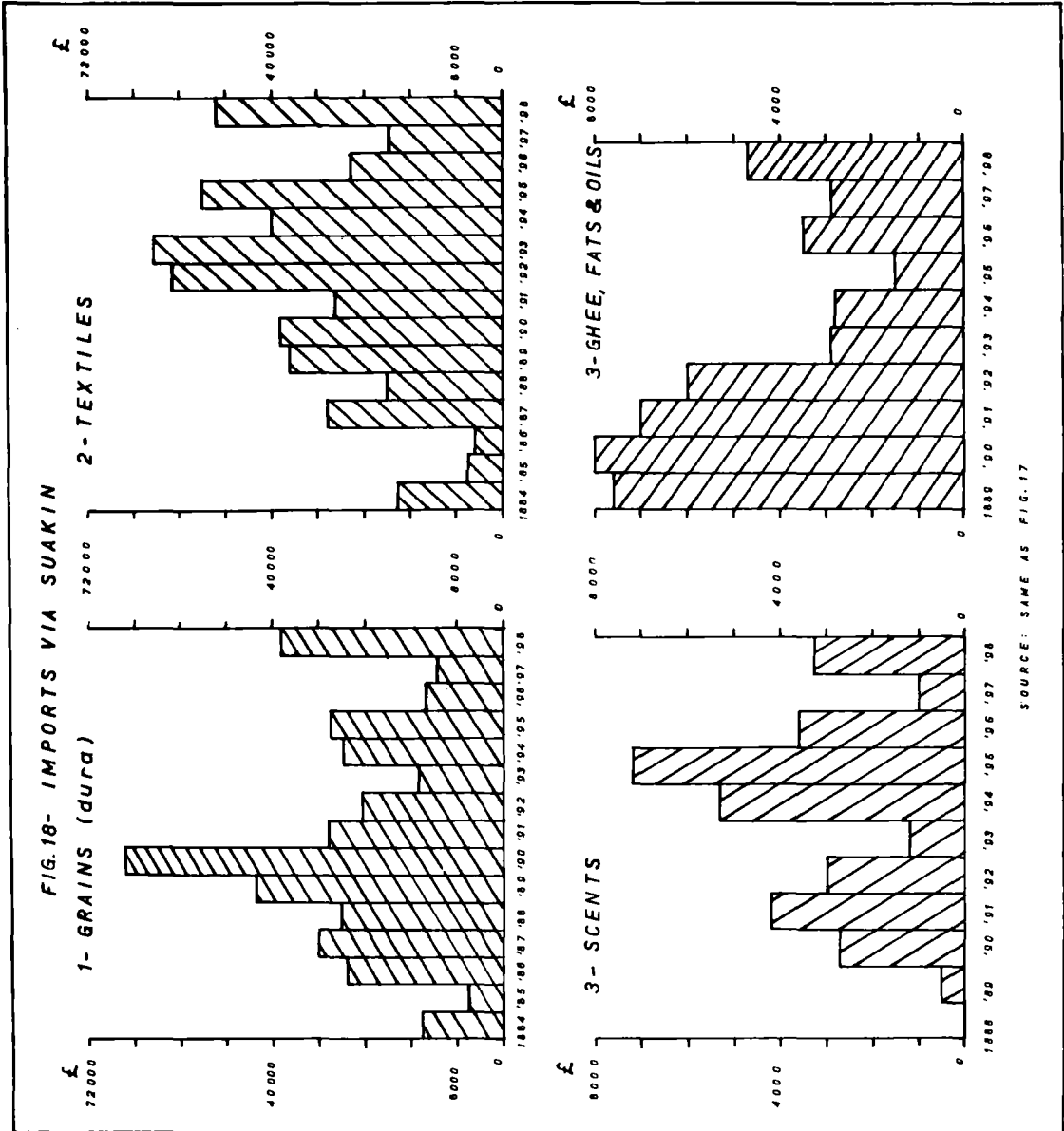
were subject to raids and hence came to be spasmodically used. Moreover, the blockade at Suakin in 1885 cut her off from the rest of the country. Consequently, Suakin trade consisted mainly of imports, largely for local consumption and for despatch to the interior during breaks in hostilities (Fig.17). But because of the various events that influenced trade from one year to the other, during this period, both forms of trade, import and export, will be studied separately.

### EXTERNAL TRADE , 1883 - 1898.

#### Import Trade, 1883 - 1898 :

The feature of Suakin trade during this period was the predominance of import trade because of lack of communications with the interior due to the Mahdists' activities along the routes and in the main centres of trade. Moreover, the blockade at Suakin hit the import trade seriously, especially those articles intended for the interior markets. Thus, from Figure 18 the steady decrease in cotton goods can be noticed. The totals of 1884-1885 (Table A, App.1) are exclusive of all the government commissariat stores<sup>(19)</sup>, but they include a large quantity of coal for the navy and the condensers<sup>(20)</sup> and other provisions. At least one-fourth of the total of 1886 imports, however, consisted of commissariat stores. This shows that Suakin had to depend on outside for her food supplies, and that her trade was mainly with the local people. Most of the miscellaneous goods under the head of "other articles" in 1886, however, were chiefly for the consumption of the Anglo-Indian garrison, naval transport and European colony<sup>(21)</sup>, while "other articles" in 1887 included much larger proportion of goods suited to the local people such as ghee, spices, perfumes and grains (Table A, App.I). The rise in cotton goods was due to hopes arising from an official announcement that trade was to be re-opened in April<sup>(22)</sup>, 1887.

Fig. 18



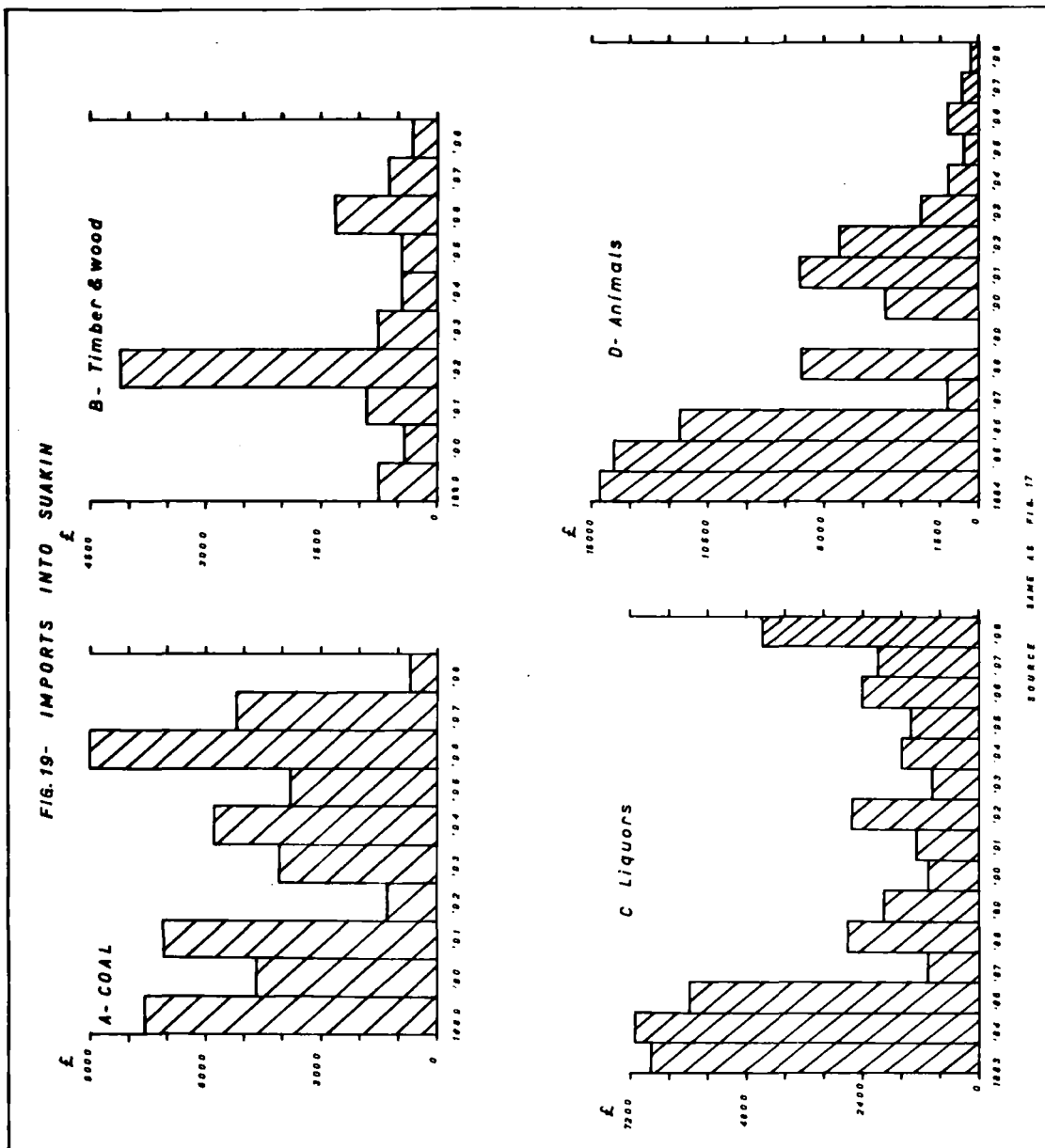
However, the total imports of 1888 (Fig.17) show an increase of about £7000 than in 1887, but an examination of the items involved (Figs.18 and 19) shows that whilst there had been an increase of £16,000 in goods consumed by the garrison and the towns-people<sup>(23)</sup>, there had been a falling off of nearly £12,000 in cotton goods which were always the main article of trade with the local tribesmen. As regards the sources of import trade, it will be noticed that trade with India had decreased to the small amount of cotton goods sold to the people. The year 1889, however, marks the end of this phase and the slow revival in both forms of trade because conditions became stable by the end of 1888. As a result, trade began to revive (Fig.17) and imports increased by £63,000. But if we look at the import figures for 1889 (Table B, App.1), the same structure of the import trade can be noticed ; the food products (Fig.18) constitute about 60% of the total value of imports, the rest being consumer goods some of which, particularly alcoholics, provisions, petroleum and coal, were for European and Suakin consumption only<sup>(24)</sup>. Of the total value of imports, about 5/8th came from India (Fig 22); most of which in form of grains and cotton goods which show an appreciable increase.

#### 1890 - 1891 :

The great famine of 1890 did much to produce an imbalance in the whole import trade which was still in a state of disorganisation. Thus, the failure of the Sudan crops necessitated the huge importation of foodstuffs so that all ports were swollen by the volume of extra food, and consequently the value of imports reached a peak second only to that of 1883 (Fig.17). Although the figures for the whole trade were modest considering the large field of trade for which Suakin might have been a point of departure and exit, at the same time they show that there was a strong desire for trade which was capable of being expanded as restrictions<sup>(25)</sup> were done away with.

However, the intensity of the famine can be gauged by the food articles imported (Figs. 18 and 20, Table C, App.II). Dura, mostly from India, exceeds the amount imported in 1889 by 30% ; similarly, flour

Fig. 19



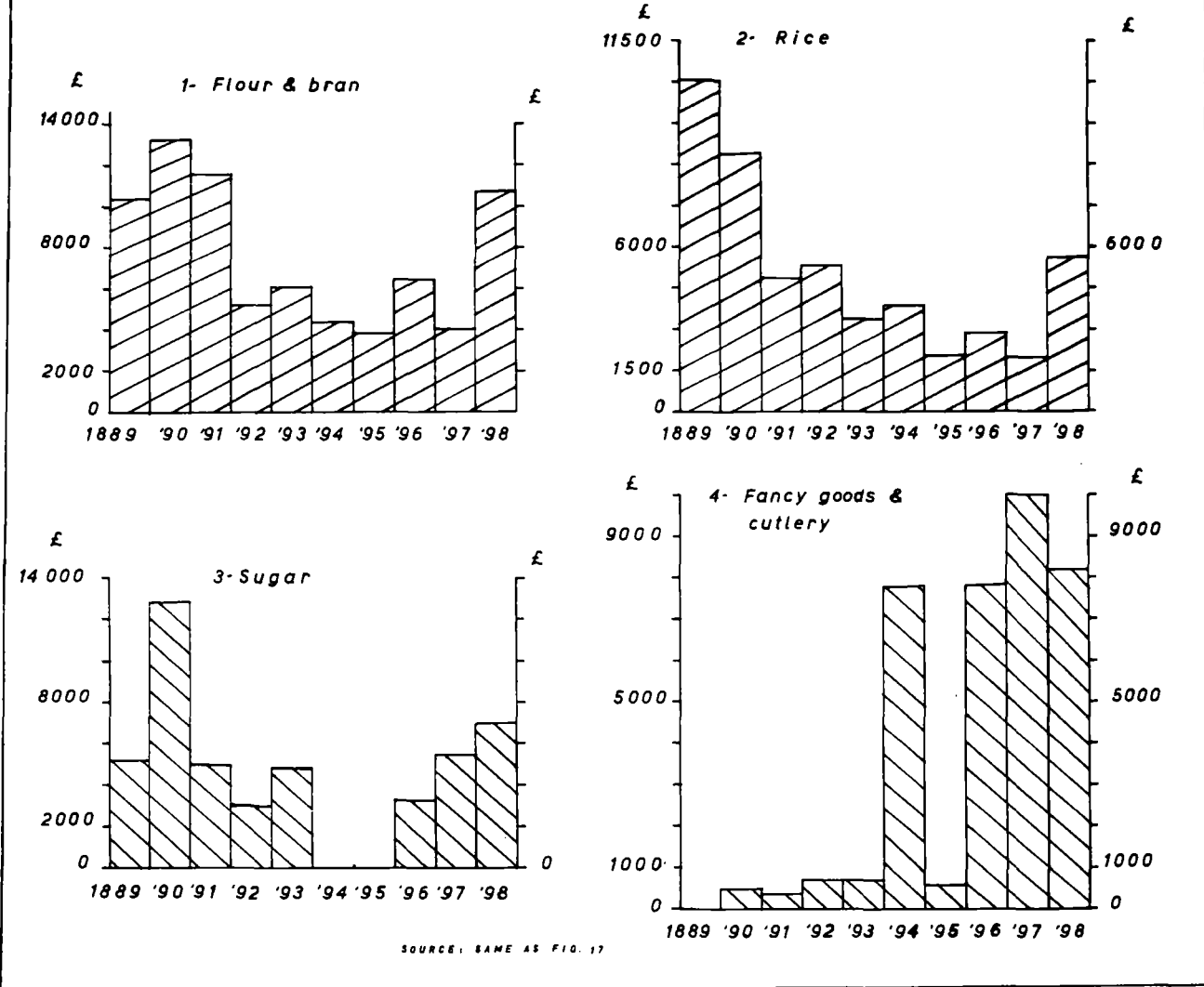
sugar, barley, ghee, rice, etc. show a considerable increase. There is also an increase in the value of manufactured goods of which the greater portion came from Bombay. The highly prized articles of import, however, were the spices and scents and manufactures for which the market value remained high <sup>(26)</sup> in the interior as the following table shows.

Table V. Market Prices for some Commodities at Berber and Suakin  
( 1890 - 91 )

Articles	Measure	Market Value in Dollars	
		Suakin	Berber
Cloves	quintar	6	25
Coffee	" "	27	75
Fats	Okke	$\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Ghee	quintar	27	90
Manufactures	20 pieces	46	130
Oil of sesame	quintar	11	50
Pepper (black)	" "	30	40
Pepper (red)	" "	20	75
Rice	" "	$4\frac{1}{2}$	14
Sandalwood	" "	14	60
Sandal oil	" "	$3\frac{1}{2}$	9
Scents	" "	2	5

The immediate effect of the famine, however, can be discerned by looking at the figures for 1891 (Table C, App. II), which show a decrease of £23,500 in the value of the imports (Fig. 17). But, on comparing the imports of 1891 with those of 1890, this decrease is

FIG. 20 IMPORTS VIA SUAKIN



SOURCE: SAME AS FIG. 17

Fig. 20



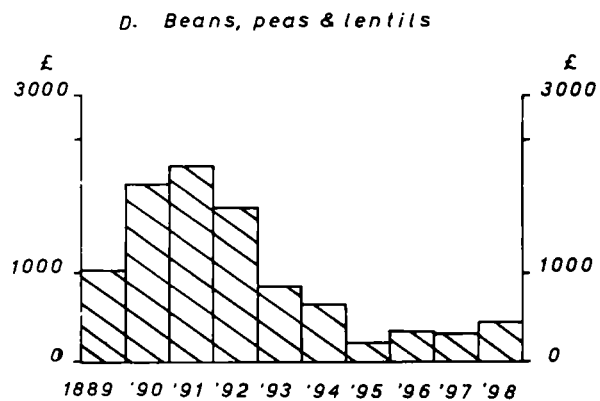
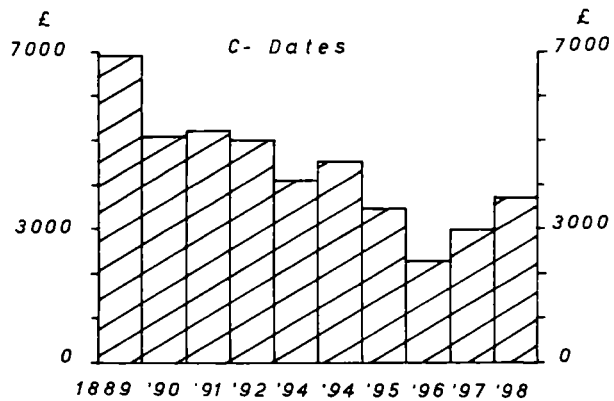
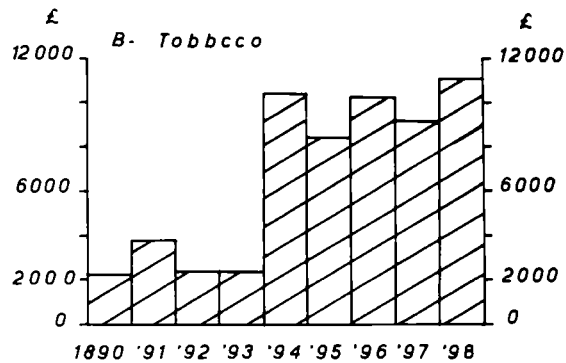
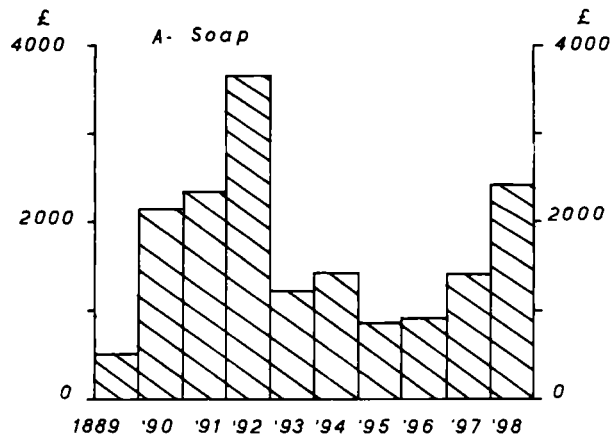
rather apparent than real, for it is restricted solely to foodstuffs the supply of which during the famine was abnormally large, whereas the importation of clothing material and fancy goods had greatly increased because of the great demand in the interior (Figs. 18 and 20).

1892 - 1893 : This is a transitional period for trade with the interior which was slowly reviving, although still impeded by fear of raids along the routes after the setback that befell trade generally during 1891. As regards to imports, there is further decrease in value by about £14,000 (Fig.17). This decrease, however, affected nearly all articles (Figs. 18,19,20 and 21), and was due to the existence of surplus stocks remaining over from the previous year.<sup>(27)</sup> Similarly, imports of grain, liquor and coal<sup>(28)</sup> show a decrease while trade in timber increased by 5% because of high demand for constructional purposes. Two-thirds of the amount, however, were plain wood from Trieste and the remainder from Singapore<sup>(29)</sup>.

The raids at the beginning of 1893, however, affected trade with the interior, and as a result the import trade shows a further decrease of 15% (Fig.17), which is, again, clear in the case of foodstuffs including dura, as the staple native food, and food for the use of Europeans, due to surplus stocks from 1892<sup>(30)</sup> (Table C, App.II). Only manufactured goods show an increase. It should, however, be remarked that Manchester goods of this class had no market at Suakin<sup>(31)</sup>, those imported being of Austrian or Italian origin or native Indian fabrics.

However, the natural cost to the importer was probably 15% more than that given in the returns of the custom-house, including, as it did, cost of freight, insurance, dock and other charges. Though duties were small on import (8%) and export (1%) goods, and nominally paid on the transport camel, they were in practice paid by merchants who made a venture to the interior.

FIG. 21. IMPORTS VIA SUAKIN



SOURCE : SAME AS FIG. 17

1894-1895 : The first year in which more or less normal conditions were re-established was 1892 since when trade with the interior had been gradually, though slowly, reviving. The fall in import trade since the peak of 1890 was reversed in 1894 (Fig.17). This increase, though slight, can very possibly be ascribed to over-importation arising out of unduly sanguine expectations of a rapidly reviving trade after the collapse of the Mahdist regime, and in part, perhaps, to falling prices than to any actual diminution in the local consumption of Suakin District. Thus, as compared with 1893, the imports of 1894 show an increase of over £2,700 in its aggregate value. Yet, on close examination, some articles show a decrease such as manufactures and all articles of food (Figs.18 and 20, and Table D App, III), except dura of which £10,000 worth more was imported from India in consequence of the failure of the Tokkar crops. (32)

However, the general position underwent no appreciable change in 1895 but the decrease in imports, though small, is noticeable (Fig.17). A look at Table D, Appendix III and Figures 18 and 20 calls for little remark, the principal variation being in manufactured goods which show an increase by £8000, but still, however, remaining short of the figures for 1893 by a like amount (Fig.18). Importation of dura also increased due to the failure of Tokkar crops, but other articles of food show a decline except dates.

1896 : The more or less peaceful conditions that prevailed for the past 3 years were disrupted in 1896. As a result, the returns from the custom-house show a considerable decrease in every branch of trade (Fig.17) because of the renewed Mahdist activities in the Red Sea area, along the routes and then in the main centres of trade in the interior, all leading to a feeling of uncertainty. (33) Consequently, Berber-Suakin route was closed to out-going caravans for nearly 8 months (34), and as a result, imports show a low figure because of the appreciable decrease in goods sent to the interior (Fig.25). As regards individual articles, textile manufactures show a decrease of 50%, and all cereals show a falling off (Fig. 18) owing to the exceptional success of crops in Baraka

(Tokkar). The slight increase in the consumption of ghee and congeners and others, however, could be due to the presence of Indian troops and followers. The increase in imports of liquor (Fig.19) was possibly due to rumours that the force to be employed in garrisoning Suakin would be a British<sup>(35)</sup>, while the increase in coal was because the annual shipments from England were received earlier.<sup>(36)</sup> (Table E App.IV).

1897-1898 : Figure 17 shows a still further decrease in the total value of trade, especially imports, of 1897. This, however, was due to the outbreak of plague in Bombay which affected all the Red Sea ports ; but the effects weighed heavily on the small community of the Hindu traders at Suakin (27) of whom no less than 10 quit the place within one year.<sup>(37)</sup> In ordinary years (Fig.22), however, about 45% of the goods imported into Suakin came from India, and 27% of the whole aggregate trade of Suakin was with that country. In 1896, India's share was 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ % and something less than 7% respectively mainly because of the discontinuance of the services of the Bombay and Persian Gulf steamers for 10 months.<sup>(38)</sup> As a result, Indian textiles suffered a sharp decrease, all textile imports from all sources, however, showing diminution. Importation of Indian dura also ceased because the Egyptian Sanitary Authorities prohibited the introduction of grains in sacks<sup>(39)</sup>, and all grain needed was supplied by Egypt, Syria and the local harvest<sup>(40)</sup>. In like manner, flour, rice and ghee show a decline (Figs. 18 and 20). Only Indian tobacco seems to be not affected by the dislocation of Bombay trade because it came from unaffected areas. Similarly sugar, soap, dates and fancy goods show an increase. However, only Indian goods show a decrease while other levels were more or less maintained (Table F, App.V).

However, this downward trend in import trade was reversed in 1898. Under the impulse given by the Sudan Expedition involving, as it did, the occupation of Kassala by an Egyptian garrison mainly dependent on Suakin for its supplies, the encampment of 4 British battalions in the vicinity of Berber for 5 months, and the subsequent despatch of a second British brigade in August, the import trade rose at a bound to nearly double that of 1896 (Fig.17). Moreover, the sanitary restrictions against Bombay were not reinforced in 1898 and Bombay steamers freely visited Suakin<sup>(41)</sup>

and consequently India all but regained her former relative position among the importing countries, nearly 40% of the imports coming from there. The increase, however, was in dura, rice and flour (Figs. 20 and 18) which constituted two-thirds of the whole imports from there. Only Indian cotton piece goods show a proportional decline, namely 19.3% of the whole, because the Banians found it more convenient to procure these goods from Egypt or direct from England<sup>(42)</sup>. At the same time the proportion of direct importation from Britain likewise appears to have fallen off (Table F. Appendix V).

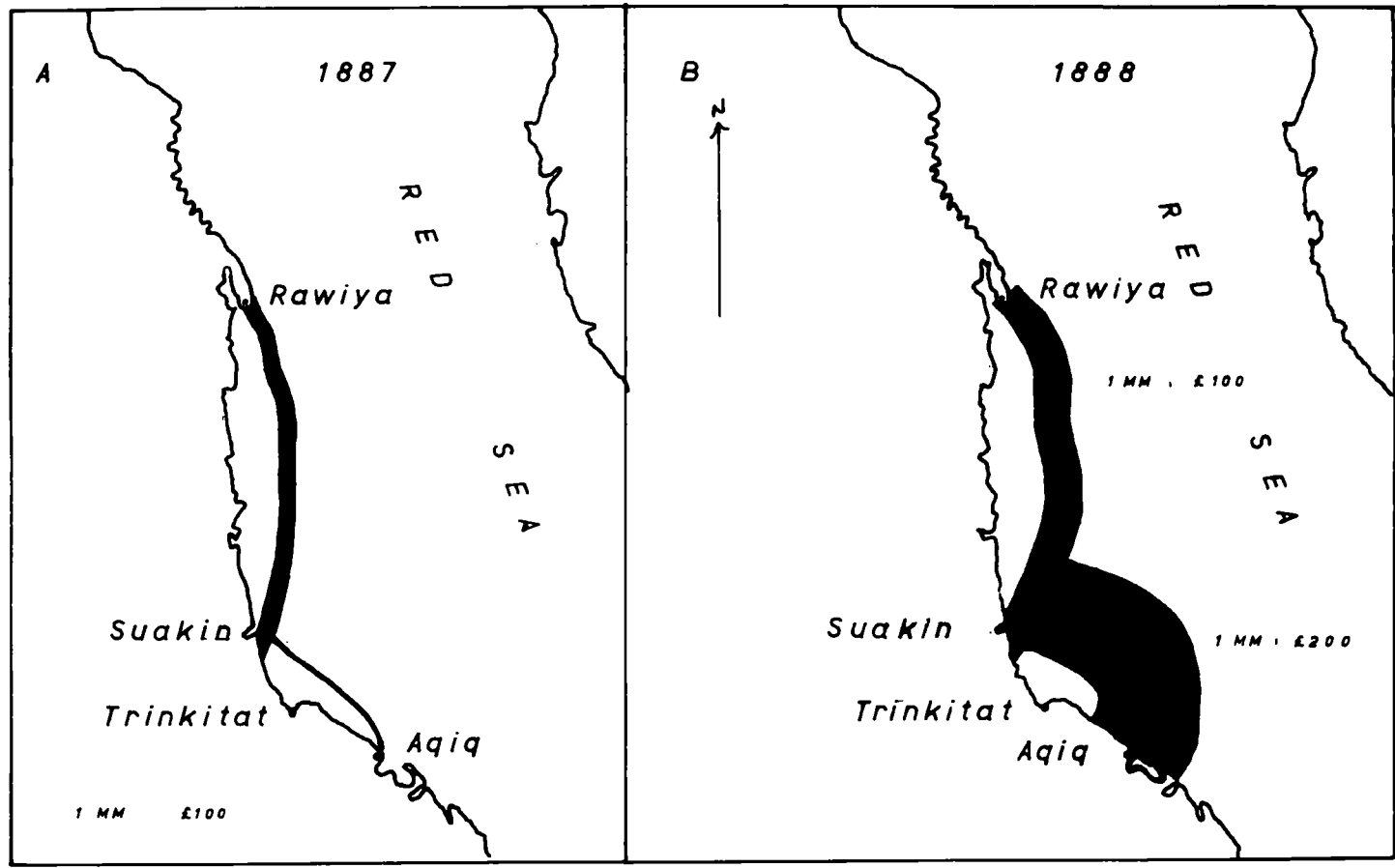
General Pattern of Import Trade, 1883-1898 : (Table L. Appendix VIII)

The year 1883 was the last year of trade with the interior before the Mahdist rebellion, and out of the total £288,000 (Fig.17), only £91,000 came from England, while that by the 'raftieh'<sup>(43)</sup> amounted to £168,000. This means that only goods to the value of £91,000 came direct from England, while the £168,000 came by 'raftieh' bills of lading, the goods having been transferred here from some other port of Egypt or Turkey where they had already paid duty. If this share is, however, deducted from the total import value (Table A. Appendix I), England's share of the remainder shows that the proportion of English goods coming direct from England was increasing.<sup>(44)</sup> India's share also shows an increase. But in 1886, however, England's share show a drop of 35% while those of India and Egypt show an increase due to importation of cattle and grains to maintain the garrisons and the town. But the withdrawal of both garrisons, Egyptian and English, in 1887, resulted in a decrease in both England's and Egypt's shares, while the impending re-opening of trade made the merchants to import cloth, perfumes and spices from India, which led to an increase in her share (Fig. 22). The imports of 1888 shows the same structure, only the 'raftieh' countries showing an increase. But in 1889, 5th of the imports came from India, two-thirds of the cattle from Egypt and the rest of the provisions from the 'raftieh'; only coal came direct from England<sup>(45)</sup> (Table B, App.1). Similarly, India ranks first



1890 (35%) and 1891 (31%). Jedda, however, fell from the second position in 1890 to third in 1891 to be succeeded by Egypt (27%), followed by England, then Austria and Massawa (Fig.22). Again in 1894-95, India was coming more and more to the front in the import trade with the Sudan, 43% of the total value of imports coming from there followed by Egypt (26%), Britain (16%), most of which was coal, the Ottoman Empire (6.8%), Austria (2.6%), Italy (1.3%), France (0.8%) and others (2.3%). (Fig.23). It should, however, be remarked that 4/5ths of the imports from Egypt especially textiles, preserved provisions and liquors were, in reality, articles of European manufacture, the original source of which is not indicated. In 1896, however, England ranks first with 18%, followed by India (4%), Egypt (3.9%), Turkey (4%) and Austria (1%). The increase in England's share is due to the large importation of coal and liquors. The year 1897, however, shows a drastic fall in India's share because of the plague at Bombay, while Egyptian share of imports stands at 56% (Fig.22) due to increased importation of grains, flour and sugar to meet the deficiency resulting from the disruption of Bombay trade. Likewise British share stands at a higher level (16.9%) due to direct importation of coal and textiles, and are followed by Turkey, Austria, Italy and France. In 1898, the direct imports from Britain, after Manchester goods, consisted of tinned provisions, liquors and cutlery, and coal, thus giving it a share of 12%. Direct imports from Austria were about 3.3%, the increase from last year being due to larger importation of sugar, candles, and liquors. Egyptian share, however, declined from the peak figure of 56% in 1897 to 39% mainly because of the resumption of trade with India ; similarly, Turkey shows a decline to 1.9% for the same reason, the main articles being dates, cattle, coffee and honey, while France shows an increase to 0-80%, the main imports being brandy, wine, flour and candles. 'Other countries' show a slight decrease to 2.22%.

FIG. 23. COASTAL TRADE



SOURCE OF INFORMATION : BLUE BOOK (EGYPT) NO. 2 VOL. 92 1887, p. 918



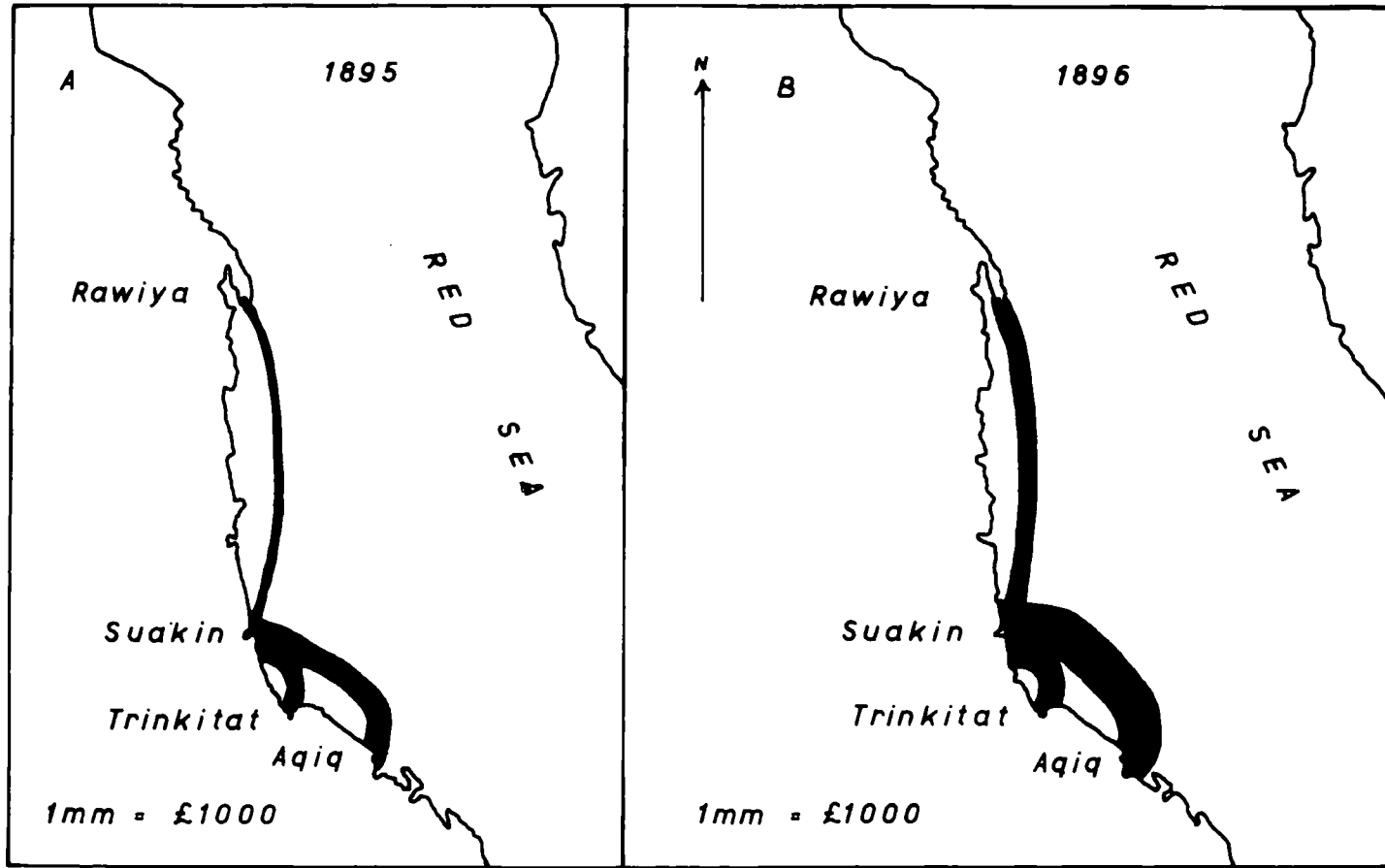
Coastal Trade, 1887 - 1898 :

Aqiq and Trinkitat together with other small sub-ports, such as Mohamed Qul and Rawiya, were declared open for trade as a prelude to the re-opening of trade with the interior, which was done in February, 1888. Consequently, the total exports from Suakin to Aqiq jumped from nothing to the value of £4200<sup>(46)</sup> (Fig.23). The failure of rainfall, however, together with locusts, plus the military operation in Tokkar delta greatly reduced the supplies of grain, and as a result an active trade in this article sprang between Suakin and these ports in exchange for cattle, sheep and goats.<sup>(47)</sup> The saltworks of Rawiya depended for its supplies on Suakin and consequently, imports increased from £321 in 1887 to £796 in 1888. During the same period, exports to Aqiq (Fig.23) increased from £48 in 1887 to £4219 in 1888. Most of the articles, however, were for local consumption, but a good many were destined for the interior markets. In 1895, the value of goods re-shipped to these ports amounted to £16,105, while in 1896 the value of manufactured goods sent to Aqiq and Trinkitat show a slight decrease below that of 1895 (Fig.24), only manufactured goods showing an increase due partly to the prosperity resulting from the good harvest, but mainly because of the greater facility with which goods could be smuggled into the interior from an open village like Tokkar than through the tight gates of Suakin. Other articles included sugar, tea, coffee, scents, etc., with little weight per unit value<sup>(48)</sup>. In 1897, the value of exports to these sub-ports amounted to £18,486 which increased in 1898, to £23,479 to supply the troops in the interior.

Transit Trade with the Interior, 1890s :

As has been already mentioned, trade with the interior was spasmodic and varied according to the political conditions along the routes and in the market centres in the interior. Between December 1892 and January 1894, imports via Suakin were worth £47,297 (compared with £18,429 via the northern frontier) which mainly consisted of sugar, coffee, Manchester goods, fats, scents and spices. However, when Berber was occupied in 1897, permission was given to merchants to despatch

FIG. 24. COASTAL TRADE



SOURCE OF INFORMATION : PARL. PAPERS VOL. XC, 1896.

goods there at their own risks, and this led to a lively trade until the end of the year without interception<sup>(49)</sup>. But the country was still impoverished, and the population decreased and dislocated, and many years had to elapse before the economy of the country was restored. However, of the total goods despatched to the interior, nearly half went to Kassala, of which half was cotton goods, and the rest to Berber (Fig.25 and the following table).

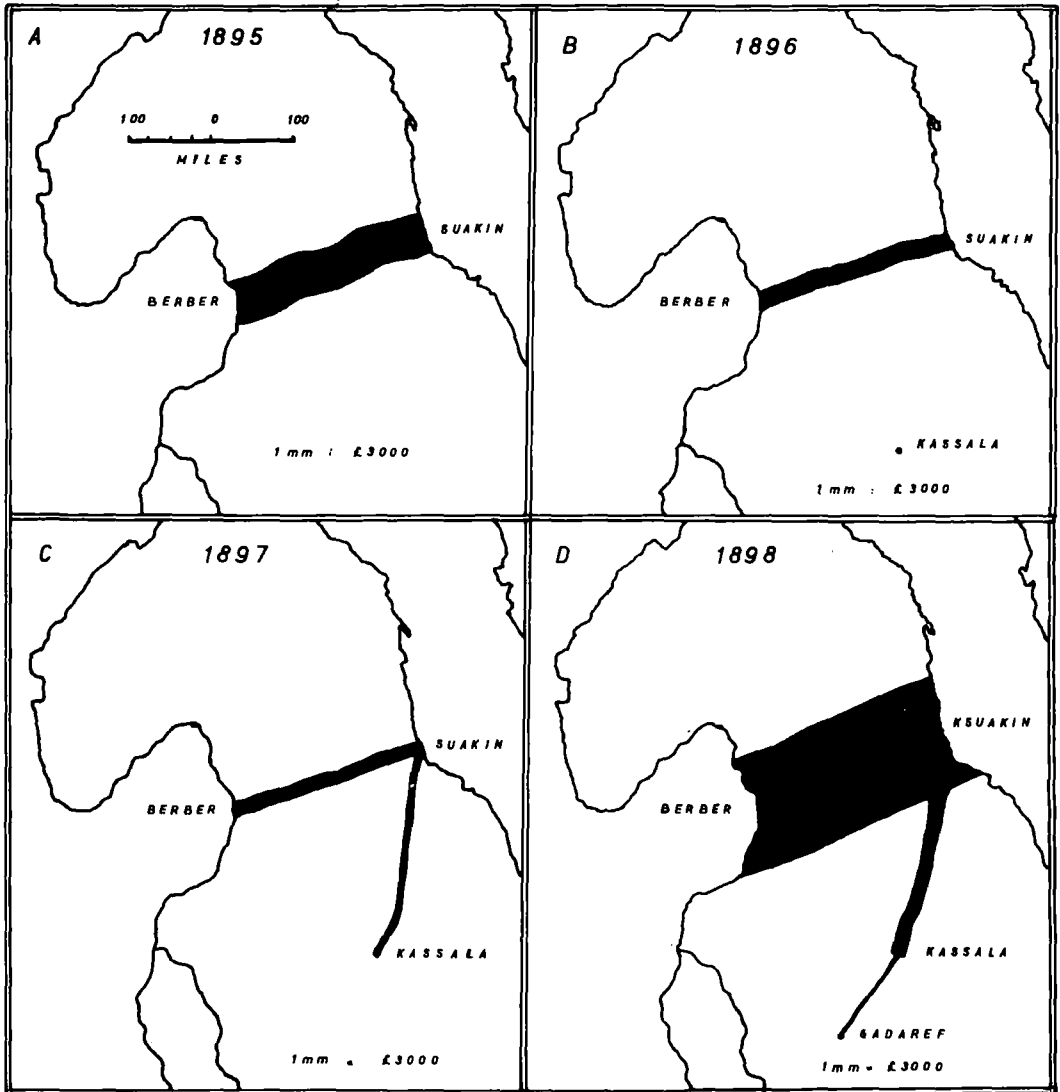
Table Vi : Goods Despatched to the Interior (1897-8).

Articles.	Estimated Value in £.	
	1897	1898.
Textile manufactures	1300	45,759
Sugar	712	8031
Coffee	41	266
Other edibles	1879	27,872
Drugs, scents, etc.	-	4950
Liquors	1192	2528
Cutlery and Fancy wares	310	2559
Tobacco	403	1583
Candles	82	918
Miscellaneous articles	834	1665
Provisions	1460	-
Spices	413	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6753</b>	<b>91,131</b>
Sources : <u>Accounts &amp; Papers</u> , Vols.XCV (1897), XCIX (1899), p.147 & 171		

It should be remarked that provisions, liquors, drugs, candles and tobacco and some of the articles under 'miscellaneous articles', such as petroleum and timber, were for the consumption of the troops.

Fig. 25

Fig. 25. Suakin trade with the interior



SOURCE OF INFORMATION : PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, VOL. XCIX 1899

In 1898, however, conditions were considerably improving and the main routes to the interior became safe. As a result more than half of the total imports was forwarded to the interior (Fig.25) besides £23,000 worth reshipped to the sub-ports, leaving less than £63,000 for purely local consumption. The figures (Table VII) will show that the balance, or the annual consumption of Suakin, is remarkably stable.<sup>(50)</sup> However, of the goods despatched to the interior in 1898, £8,720 worth was destined for Kassala and Gadaref and the remainder for Berber. These figures may be of interest as showing how essentially the trade of Suakin was a transit trade, and to what an extent the activity of the port was dependent on the state of affairs in the interior which it supplied and of which it was the natural outlet.

Table VII : Goods Transmitted to the Interior (1895-98).

Transmitted to -	1895	1896	1897	1898
	£	£	£	£
Berber (reoccupied Sept.1897)	30,000	9,623	6,353	82,236
Kassala (Taken Dec. 1897)	-	-	400	7,752
Gadaref (Taken Sept.1898)	-	-	-	962
Sinkat	-	-	-	175
Sub-ports (Aqiq,Trinkitat,etc)	16,105	15,786	18,486	23,479
	46,105	25,409	25,239	114,610
Balance	89,100	84,756	65,606	62,948
Total Imports	135,205	110,165	90,845	177,558
Source:	<u>Account &amp; Papers, Vol.XCIX (1899).p.171</u>			

EXPORT TRADE, 1883 - 1898 :-

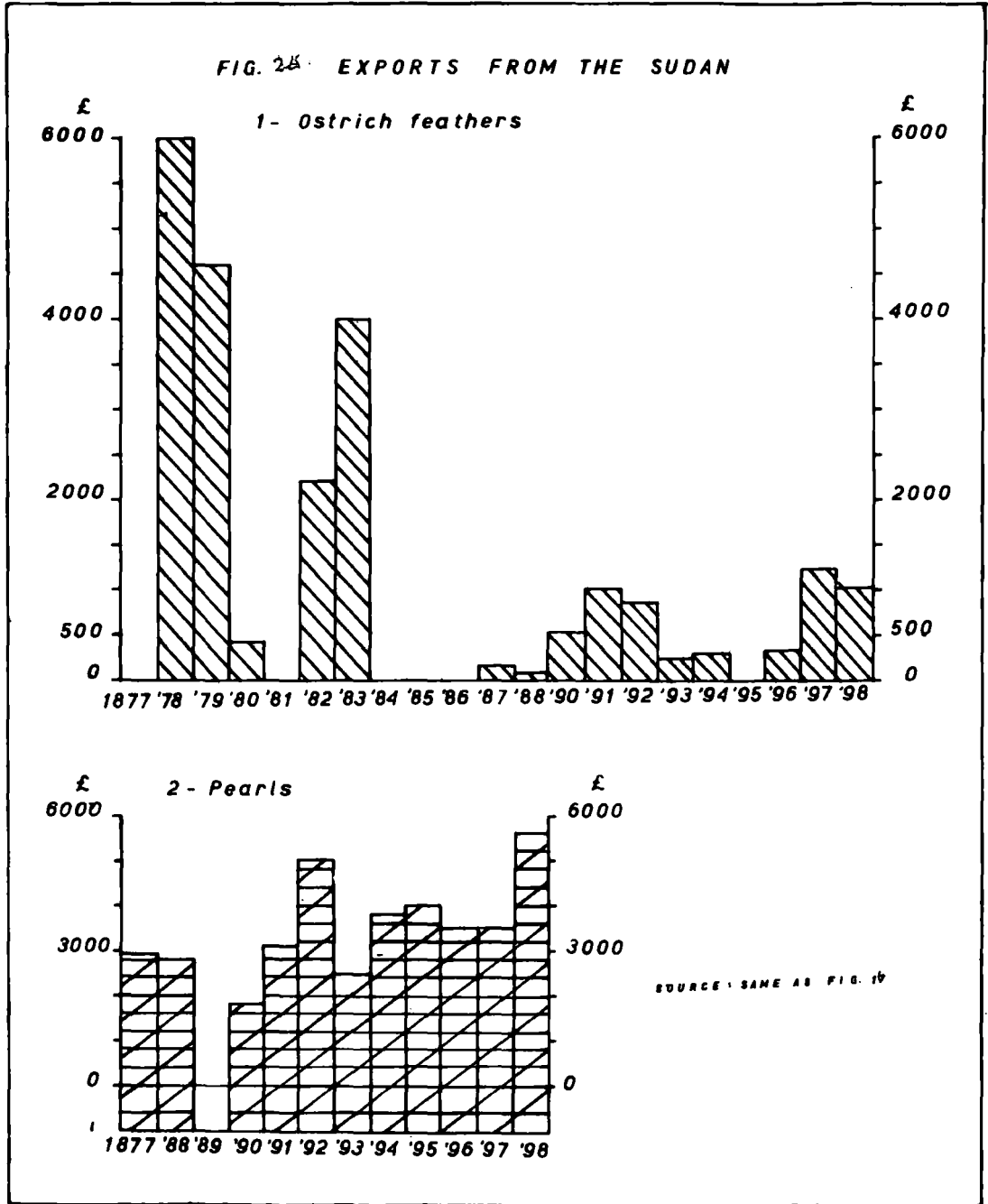
The effect of the blockade, and the rigid trade policy of the Khalifa, on the export trade was more disastrous than on import trade. The fall in the value of exports (Fig.17) and the diminution in the quantity and number of the articles exported, after the diversity of

1882<sup>(51)</sup>, was rapid (Table G.App.VI and Figs.26,27,28). Thus, from the peak figure of £160,000 in 1882, exports fell nearly by 50% in 1883 and to only £10,000 in 1884 (Fig.17). The slight increase in exports of 1886, however, was due to the gum captured at the fall of Tamai, a stronghold of the Mahdists, and a clearance of camels and mules and miscellaneous unsaleable stocks in the town.<sup>(52)</sup> Similarly, the slight increase in 1887 was due to the relaxing of tensions and more gum, ivory and feathers being allowed to come to Kokrayib (Figs.26,27 and 28) to exchange for ammunitions. Some loads, however, could escape to Suakin, and larger consignments of these articles were smuggled out via the northern sub-ports such as Halaib and Rawiya. The drastic decline in exports of 1888, however, can be attributed to cessation of trade from the interior, only mother-of-pearl, a coastal produce, showing an increase.

As has been mentioned, the year 1889 marked the end of the disturbed years during which trade was paralysed. But the failure of Suakin siege, and the opening of the sub-ports led to an appreciable increase of nearly tenfold in the export trade (Fig.17). The same quiet conditions also led to an increase in the returns of 1890, the main increase being in gum and ivory (Fig.28). The famine, however, was reasserting itself in the interior, and as a result trade was declared open by the Khalifa. But the effects of the famine made themselves felt on export trade, and consequently a sharp decline is noticed (Fig.17), only gum showing an increase (Fig.28) probably due to surplus stocks from previous years. This downward trend was, however, reversed in 1892, and an increase of about 80% over 1891 can be noticed, mainly due to the freedom with which trade was conducted with Berber, the main increase being in gum, ivory and senna (Fig.27 and Table H. App.IV). This increase was maintained until 1895, the articles showing increased exportation being gum, ivory and pearls while feathers and senna show a decline.

However, the resumption of hostilities in 1896 led to a decline in all articles except senna and pearls, both being coastal products. In 1897, however this trend was reversed, and the increase seems to be

Fig. 26



fairly evenly distributed amongst the different articles, but is not always, however, accompanied by a corresponding increase in bulk.

The same conditions of affairs that led to the increase in imports in 1898 (presence of troops), was, however, rather of the reverse effect on export trade of the year. Thus, Figure 17 shows a slight decrease, but the returns of articles arriving from the interior tell a different story (Table VIII).

Table VIII : Articles Despatched from Interior to Suakin (1897-8)

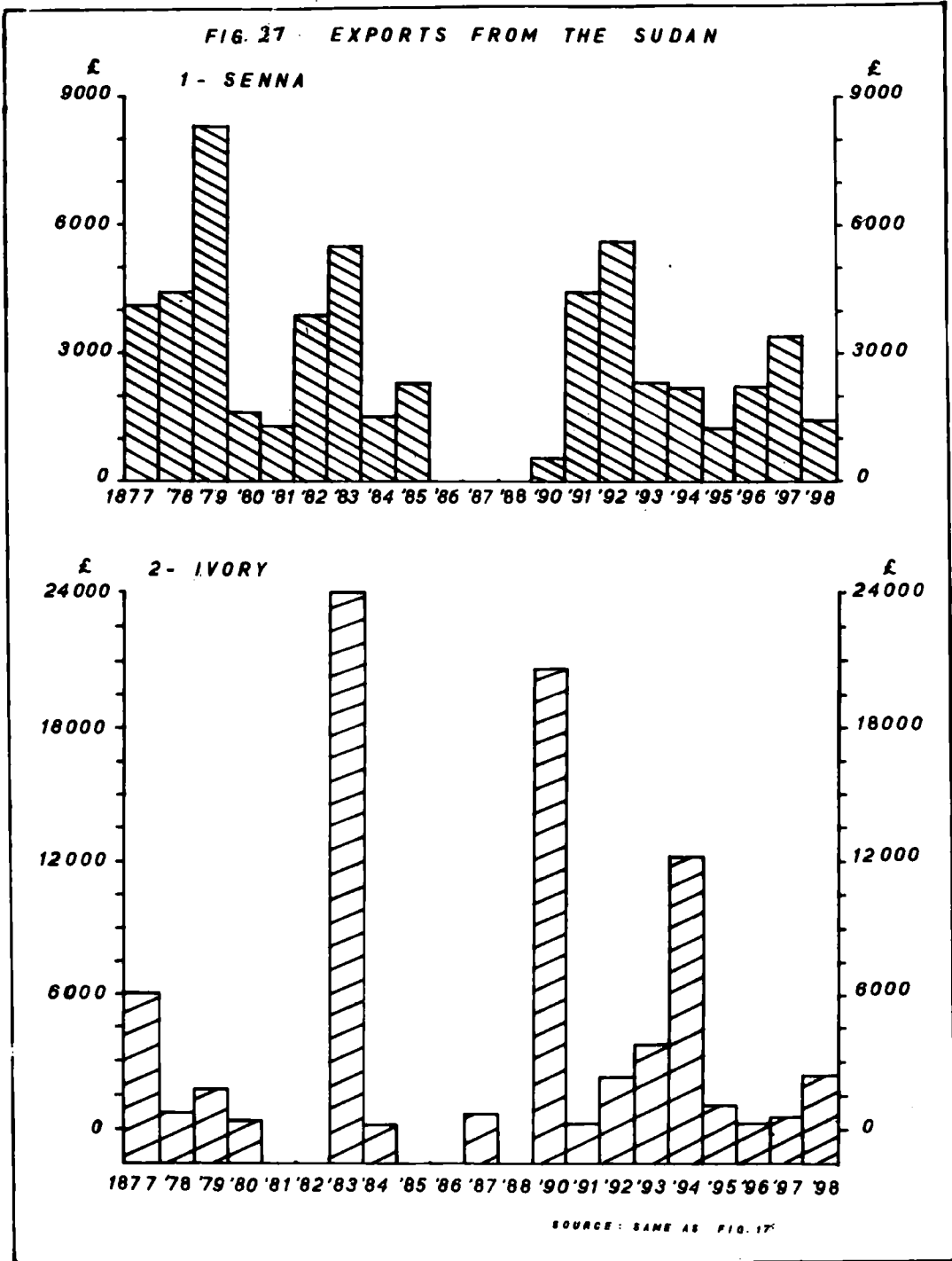
Articles	Estimated Value £	
	1897	1898
Gum	7284	39,685
Ivory	924	1362
Senna	104	270
Nitre	30	-
Feathers	2000	9709
Matting	191	96
Edibles	9	17
Miscellaneous Articles	50	142

Source: Accounts & Papers, Vol XCIX  
(1898), p.173.

Most of what figures as exported from Suakin in the early part of 1898 was produce which, probably, had found its way down there from Berber in 1897, particularly in the last two months when special conditions prevailed.<sup>(53)</sup> This little movement towards Suakin was mostly due to great difficulty in obtaining sufficient number of camels for transport of merchandise from Suakin to the interior ; but the



Fig. 27



difficulty was far greater at Berber where all available camels were required for military transport.

General Pattern of Export Trade, 1883-1898. (Table L. App.VIII).

Table IX : Value of Exports from the Sudan.  
(1883-88)

Countries	1883	1886	1887	1888
	£sterling	£sterling	£sterling	£sterling
England	84,855	1300	1423	-
Egypt and Turkey	28,587	1400	2193	570
India via Aden	521	600	2156	875
Other countries	13,300	1000	5932	3313
Raftieh	-	4000	-	-

The fall in trade with countries after 1883 can be noticed from these figures (Table IX), especially for the 'Raftieh' countries, and much of the £4000 that came from these in 1886 was returned to Egypt as unsaleable<sup>(54)</sup>. The increasing trade with other countries, mainly European, is also clear, the fluctuations in shares, however, being due to the unstable trade conditions and the decrease in the quantity of articles coming from the interior.

However, owing to the increased direct shipment to Europe via the Suez Canal, trade with European countries began to increase, especially by the 1890's, at the expense of the traditional markets in Egypt and Jeddah. England and Austria were the main markets for most of the Sudanese products, with an average of 28.9% and 27.9% respectively, followed by India (17%), Egypt (14.8%), and then Turkey, Italy and France (Fig.22).

The main trade with these countries, however, consisted of gum, ivory, feathers, pearls, senna, etc, and a brief account of some of these articles will be of significance in assessing their relative importance as the main articles of export.

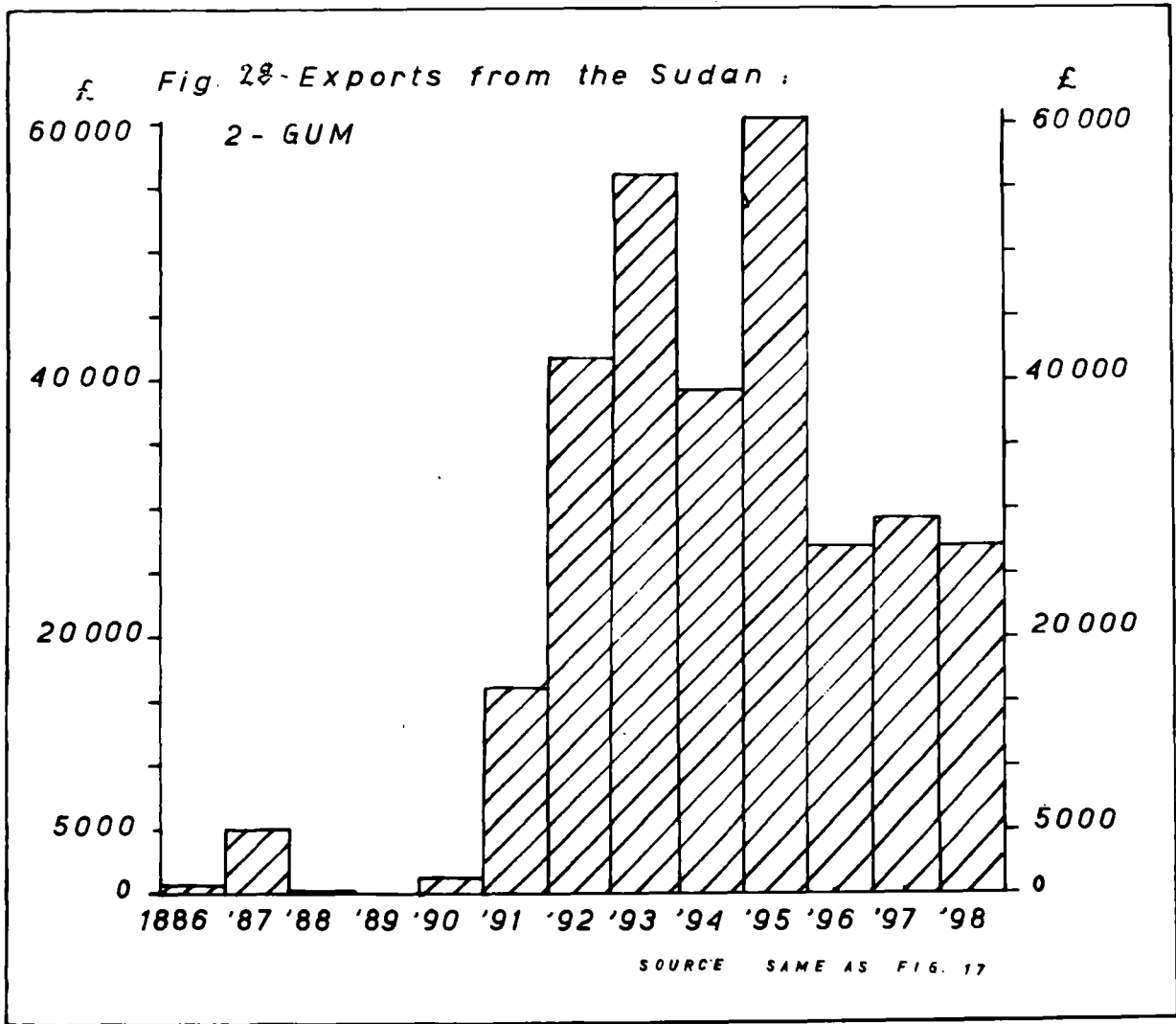
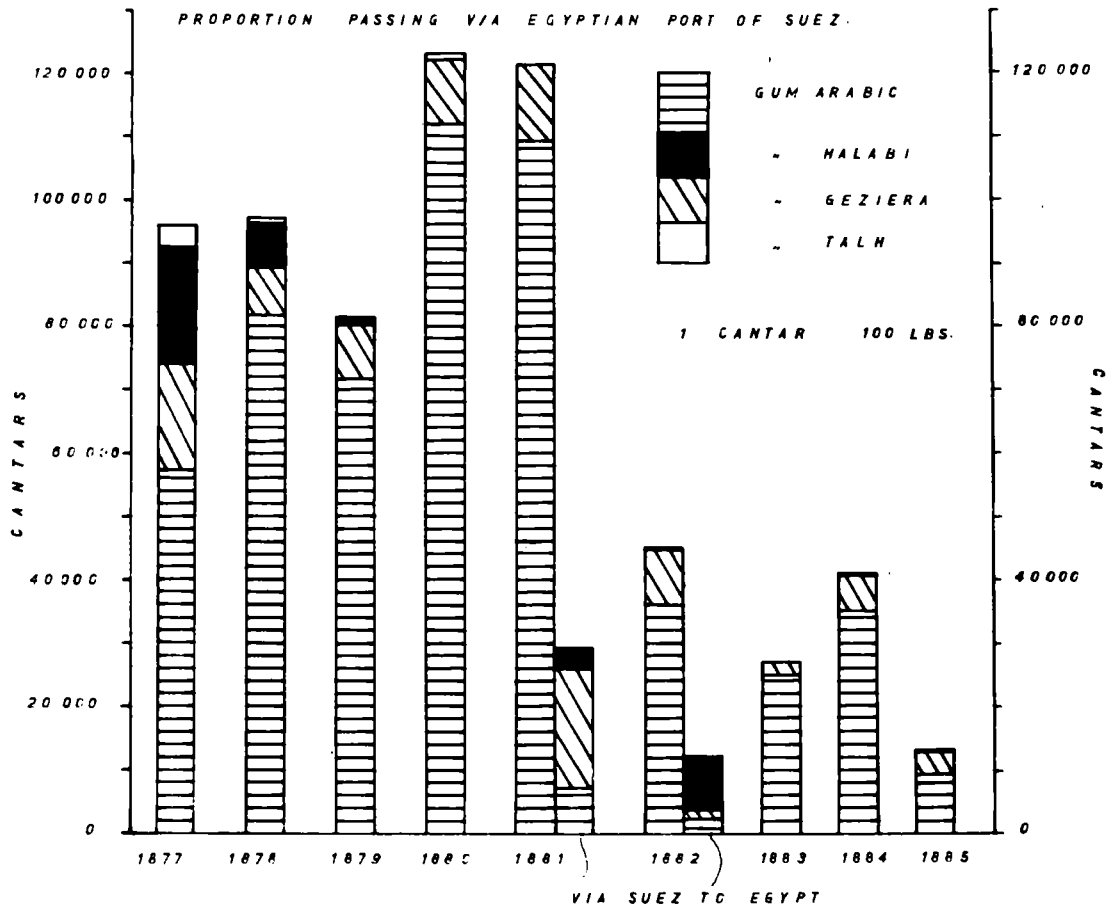


Fig. 28

Fig. 28 TYPES OF GUM EXPORTED FROM THE SUDAN, ALL OF WHICH FOUND ITS WAY DIRECT INTO EGYPT, WITH A SMALL PROPORTION PASSING VIA EGYPTIAN PORT OF SUEZ.



SOURCE: BLUE BOOK (EGYPT) NO 2, 1887.

THE MAIN ARTICLES OF EXPORT :

As has been stated in Chapter One, the important articles of trade, during the 19th century, were almost entirely natural products, and of these, gum, ivory, feathers, senna, etc dominated the export list of the Sudan for the whole of the nineteenth century.

GUM :

Gum trade in the Sudan was known from the Christian era, but it was in a small scale, and until early 19th century, most of the gum found its way to Europe via Jedda (as Turkish gum) and from Bombay via the Cape of Good Hope (as East Indian Gum arabic). The name 'gum arabic' however, was given to it in Europe.

However, in the 19th century, the world saw an enormous increase in the consumption of confectionary and paper, in the manufacture of which gum arabic is an important ingredient. The Turks realised this fact, and after two years of their conquest in 1821, the state monopoly was imposed on gum trade (1825), and consequently the first yield came to 1260 quintars. In 1829, the value increased to 25,000 dollars (Table 1), and in 1831 to £48,000.<sup>(55)</sup> In Kordofan alone, however, the average annual yield came to 3500 to 4000 cwt in 1837.<sup>(56)</sup> Thus, trade began to increase, but most of the gum found its way into Egypt via the Nile routes, whence it was re-exported to Europe. Although the trade monopoly was officially abolished in 1849, most of the gum was carried via the Nile routes until 1883 (Figs. 15 and 29). Moreover, a considerable amount also found its way to Jedda of which a large proportion went to Egypt whence it was re-exported to Europe under the name of 'Jedda gum' (Fig.30).

As regards to importing countries, the main markets lay in Europe. England, however, used to obtain her share of Sudanese gum from the Austrian Territories, or from Jedda via Bombay. None was imported from Egypt before 1821, but within seven years of the conquest, 1828, England received 6165 cwts. of gum of which 379 cwts. were from Egypt while the

FIG. 30- GUM TRADE OF SUAKIN WITH JEDDA

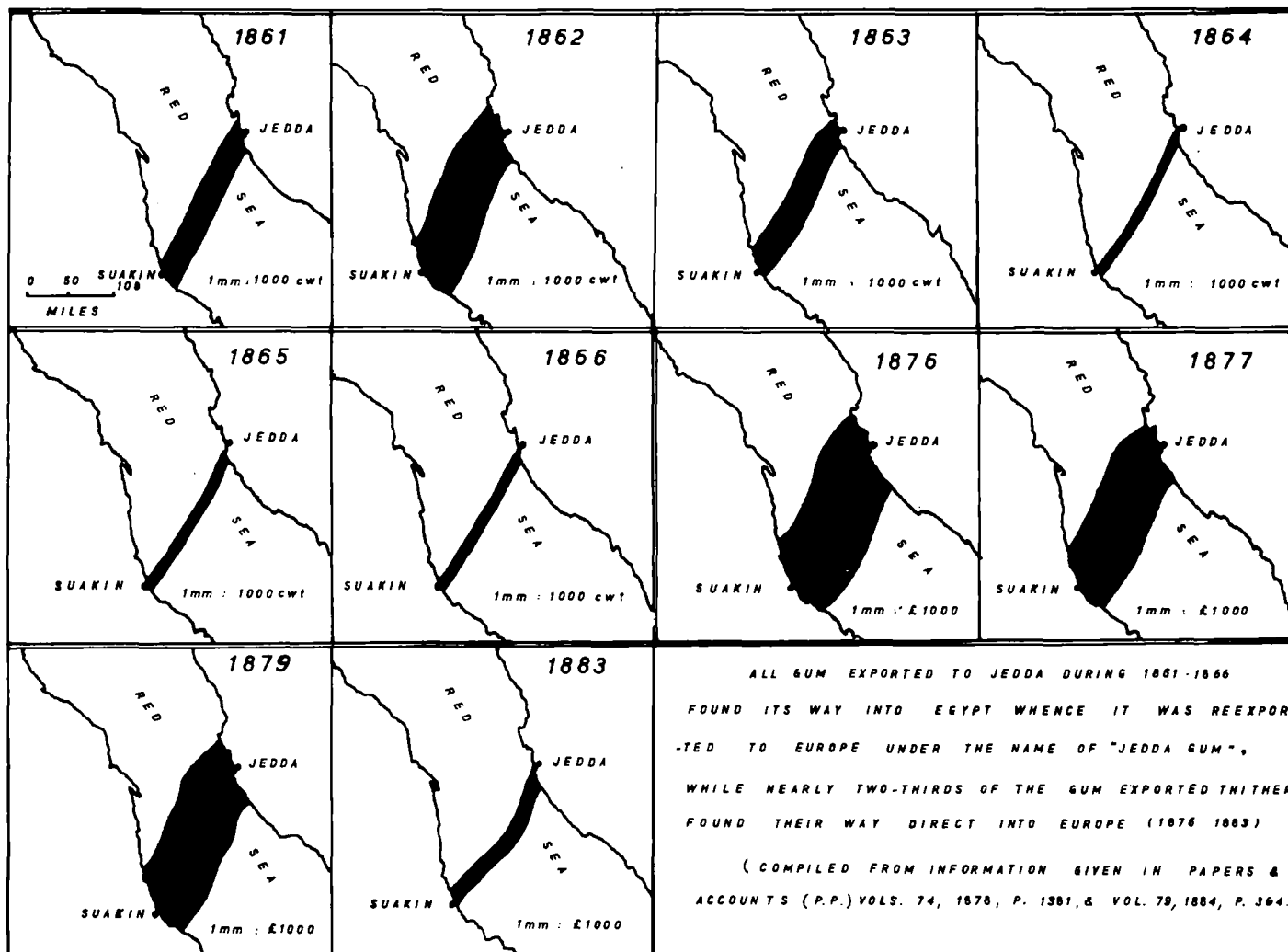


FIG. 30

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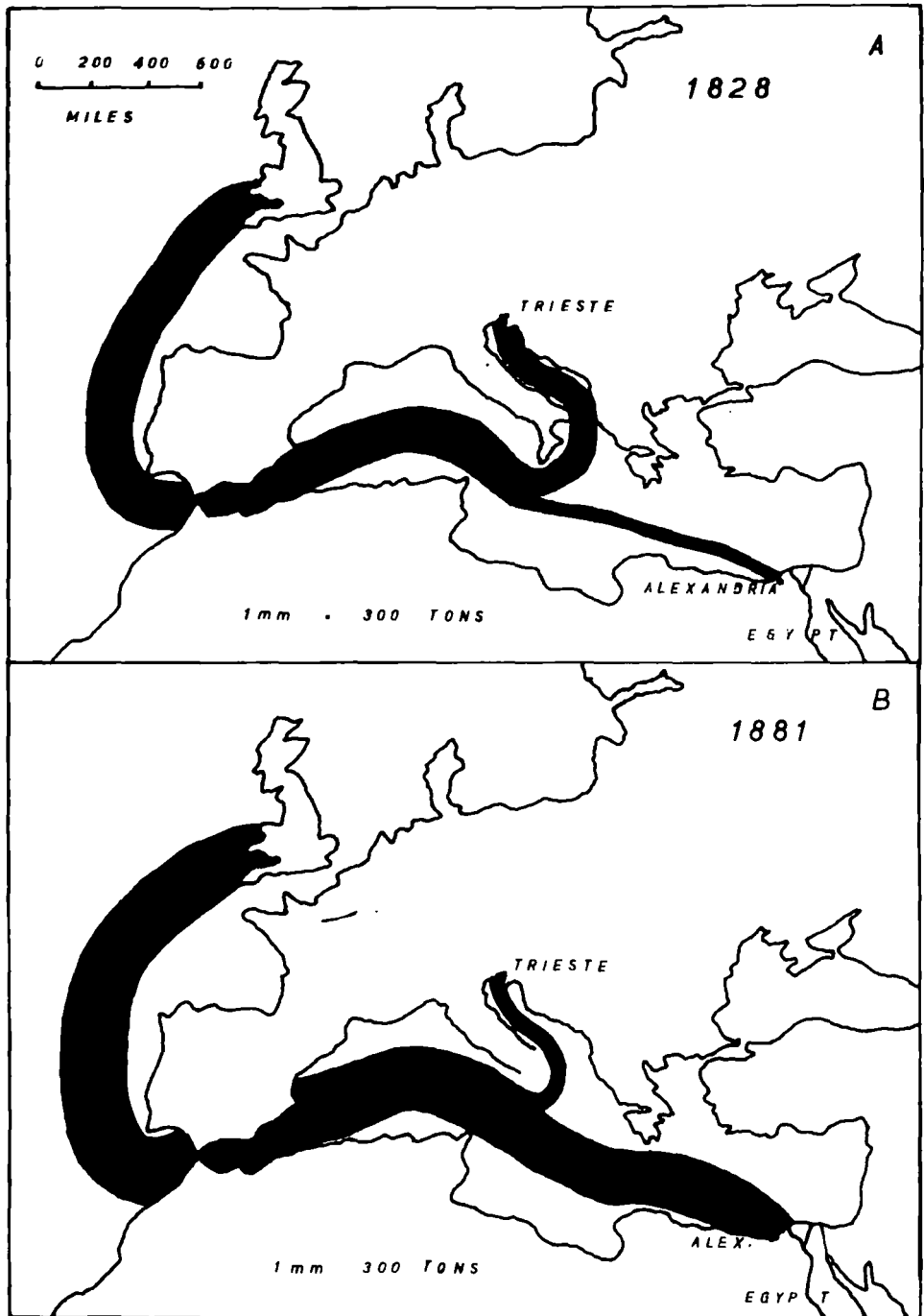
remainder was from Trieste (Fig. 30). England's share, as the main buyer, began to increase by direct importation from Egypt, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Thus, by 1881, import by Britain amounted to a total of 3620 tons from Egypt of which only 590 tons were in transit from Trieste (Figs. 15 and 31).

At the same time, the growth of shipping facilities at Suakin had a marked attraction for gum trade which steadily deserted the Nile routes for the Red Sea (Fig. 26). Moreover, direct shipping with Europe, via the Suez Canal, after 1869, diverted gum from Egypt which was steadily losing the market for England and Austria from 1882 onwards (Figs. 15 and 29), and from 1890 onwards, Egypt received no gum. As a result, all gum found its way to Europe (Fig. 32) direct from Suakin (Fig. 28). This, however, was in a reduced form because of decline in production during the Mahdist period (1884-1888). Thus, failing to secure supplies from the Sudan, foreign countries turned into the use of substitutes or effected economies in the use of gum; France and England encouraged production in Senegal and India. But the Sudan gum still fetched higher prices in the world markets because of its good quality.

Thus, there were two main types of gum : pure Sinnari or Hashab (from Acacia Verek) and 'Baladi' or 'Talh' (from Acacia Seyal) which fetched half the price of Hashab and was a laggard seller. Sinnar gum was better graded than that from Kordofan and consequently commanded higher prices. All gum, however, was graded into different types according to quality and size of the pieces ; thus, gum arabic, which commanded the highest price, constituted the bulk of export, followed by Gezira, Talh, and Halabi gums which commanded nearly the same prices (Fig. 29 and Appendix VII. Table K. App. VI). Thus, during the whole Turkish period, the value of gum amounted to about 45% of the total value of exports followed by feathers.

Fig. 3I

Fig. 3I- SUM IMPORTED BY BRITAIN FROM EGYPT AND TRIESTE



SOURCE OF INFORMATION R. HILL, p. 53 p. 156.

N.B. THE RECEIVING ENGLISH PORTS ARE NOT KNOWN AND THE DESTINATION SHOWN IS FOR CONVENIENT MAPPING.



OSTRICH FEATHERS :

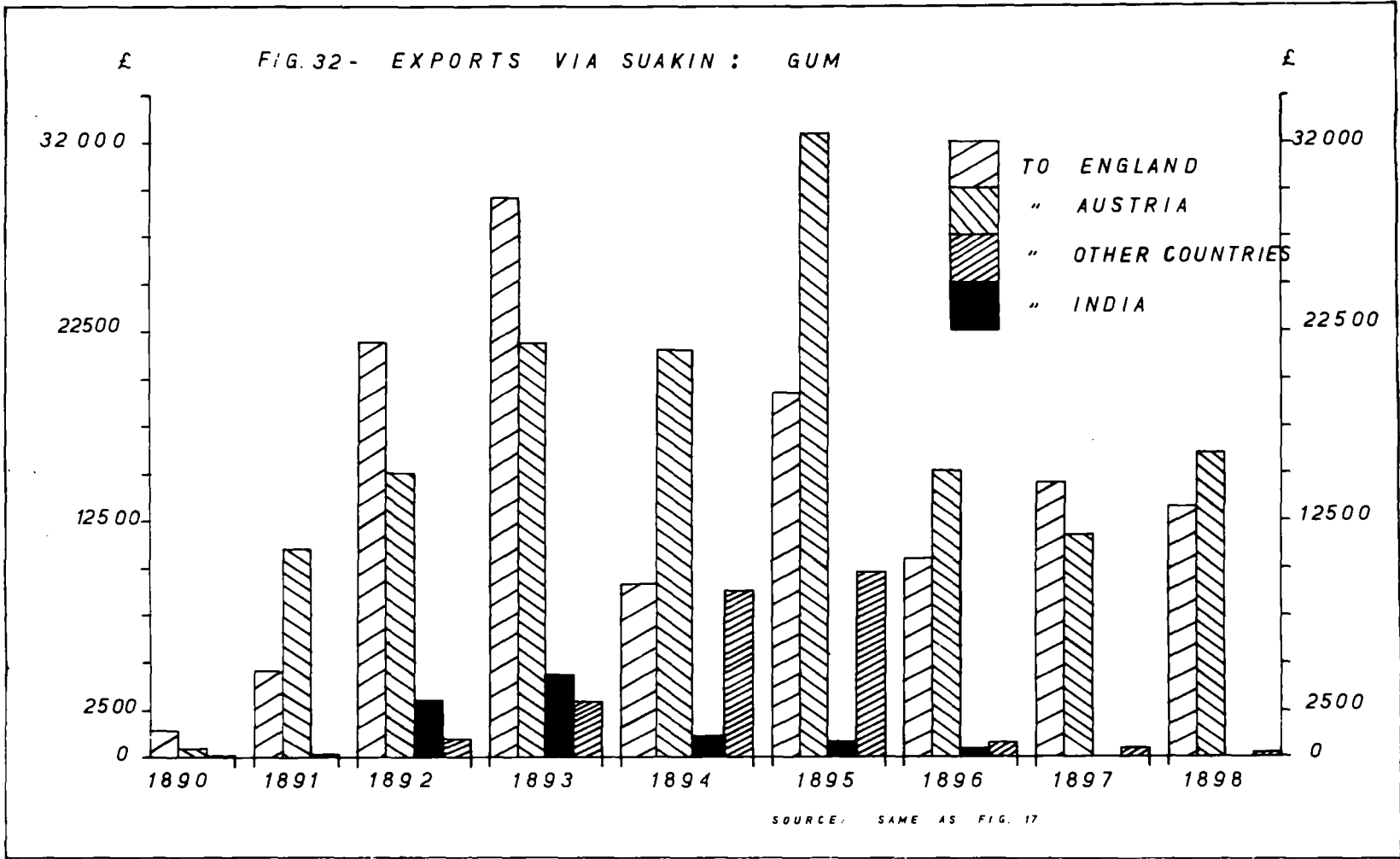
Feathers commanded the second place on the export list, accounting for about 35% of the total value of exports, but unlike other articles they were subject to the fluctuations in markets so sensitive to feminine caprice.

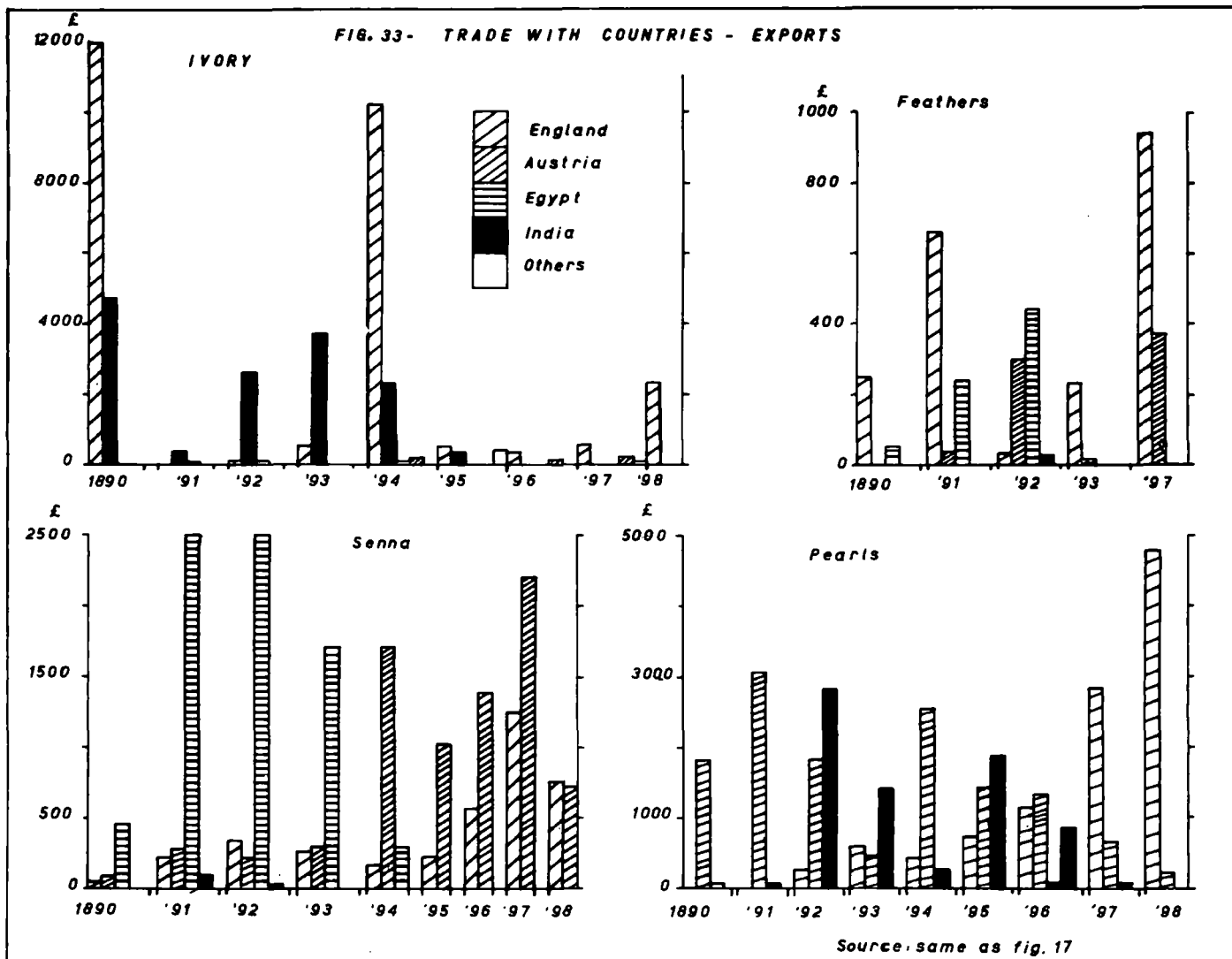
However, their high price led to monopolisation by the Turks who introduced methods of breeding as a means of improving the quality, but the feathers so produced were of inferior quality because of a lack of experience in breeding and packing (see Chapter One). In 1827, however, the market in Egypt had serious setbacks to such an extent that supply at Dongola had to be suspended<sup>(57)</sup>. Coupled with these fluctuations, the Pasha exacted a levy of 60 piastres per lb. in Cairo<sup>(58)</sup>, since all feathers used to go via the Nile routes to Egypt (Fig.14) from where they were exported to Europe, mainly to England (Fig.15), followed by France and Italy.

Kordofan, however, was the main source of ostrich feathers, and from there, and also Darfur, most of the feathers found their way into Egypt. In 1871, the Nile routes carried feathers to the value of £75,000 out of a total value of £86,000<sup>(59)</sup>, the remainder passing via Suakin. But from 1880 onwards, export of feather via Suakin began to increase and that via Egypt to decrease (Figs. 15 and 26), and from 1887 to 1898, all feathers found their way out via Suakin, but in reduced volume mainly because of neglect in collection during the Mahdiya (Fig.26), and the consequent deterioration in quality and price.

However, prices seem to have differed according to the kind of feather. White feathers always fetched the highest price, while greys and blacks commanded lower prices. So different types were mixed in certain proportions for sale (Chapter One). In 1837, the prices were as follows :<sup>(60)</sup> (see also Appendix VII Table K).

Fig. 32





Two-thirds Black and 1/3rd White	10 to 13s. per lb.
Greys	5s. per lb.
Blacks	6d. per lb.
White plumes of inferior quality	£2 to 10s. per lb.
White plumes	£4 per lb.

As regards the importing countries, England and Austria were the main importers in Europe (Fig.33), followed by Egypt and India. France, however, mainly depended on England and Austria for her own supplies of feathers. (61)

#### IVORY :

The ivory trade was an extensive business, and ivory was one of the oldest articles to appear in the external trade of the Sudan. But its trade began to flourish strongly during the latter part of the 18th century and reached its peak during the 19th century. Like gum, it found its way into Europe by various ways, either via the Cape as 'Cape' or 'Asiatic ivory' or via Tripoli and Alexandria as 'African ivory'. The main markets, however, were Marseilles, Trieste and Livorno, and from there it found its way into other countries, mainly England.

However, ivory suffered more from the state monopoly than other articles. This was because of the high prices it commanded in local and world markets (62) (Appendix VII Table K), and its special link with the slave trade in the Sudan. Thus, when the White Nile was opened for trade in 1850, the merchants, who acquired licences to take part in the ivory trade, were later found to be engaged in slave hunting. Accordingly, the government began to impose heavy duties on ivory trade (Chapter Two). Thus, as a result of this monopoly, the bulkiness of the commodity together with its tendency to crack after long exposure to the sun, the ivory trade was diverted from the Nile routes to Suakin by late 1850s, because the latter offered the advantage of a shorter land route and easy and cheap sea communications. Thus, the carriage of one load of ivory (500 lbs) to Alexandria, via the Nile routes, cost five times that to Suakin where it was 14% higher than the interior. As a result, ivory trade remained a

Suakin monopoly (Fig.14) except for the consignments that went to Egypt via Darb el Arbain and Dongola. After 1883, however, no ivory went to Egypt via the Nile routes.

As regards trade with other countries, England gradually increased direct importation from Egypt, and by late 1870s became the main market for Sudan's ivory. With her increasing activity in the Red Sea, especially after 1869, her direct shipment from Suakin began to increase while that from Egypt declined (Fig.15). During the 1890s, England remained the main importer followed by India (Fig.33), but the trade was much less in volume than in previous years (before 1883). This was because the supply area, Bahrel Ghazal and Equatoria, was not fully controlled by the Khalifa<sup>(63)</sup>. Moreover, it was monopolised until 1892 when the monopoly was abolished in place of a 10% duty, and the unsettled conditions in the source area and along the routes to Suakin, led to fluctuations in supplies.

However, ivory differed in quality according to age and sex of the beast (Chapter One). Accordingly it was graded into six types for sale, each commanding different prices (Appendix VII Table K). The trade of ivory could have flourished more strongly if it had had easier accessibility to Suakin, like Senna and pearls, because of the high price it commanded.

#### SENNA :

Senna leaves, in considerable amounts, were exported to Egypt, Europe and Arabia. Egypt, however, received her supplies from Kordofan and Dongola, which were sold under the name of 'Alexandrian' or Egyptian senna.<sup>(64)</sup> Dongola senna seems to have been of good quality since the merchants of Dongola received from 200 to 400 piastres per a camel load of 3 quintars (Table 1); senna from Kordofan had to pay 60 to 80 piastres more on the carriage of each camel load from Kordofan to Dongola where it commanded lower prices than the Dongola senna.<sup>(65)</sup> As a result, senna collection in Kordofan was neglected. Egypt, however, remained the main market until 1885 after which senna dropped out of the list of exports for 3 years (Fig.27). This was because the main supply area, Kordofan and Darfur were occupied by the Mahdist with the result that collection was completely neglected.

However, trade in senna began to revive when, in 1890, some parcels were sent to England from the Red Sea area, which proved to be of good quality and, consequently, highly profitable. This brought six commercial firms to engage in this industry<sup>(66)</sup> which led to increase in senna exports, thus reaching the peak in 1892, mainly because of improvement in collection and grading. The decline that beset the trade later can be attributed to fluctuations in rainfall and political disturbances along the routes and in the hills, where the main supply centres lay.

As regards the importing countries, Egypt was the main importer from 1891-93, followed by England and Austria. However, Egypt dropped out of the list by 1894 and Austria remained the main importer followed by England. Austria imported leaves and pods while England imported only leaves.<sup>(67)</sup>

Thus, the nearness to the coast was a great asset during those troubled conditions, and as senna trade could flourish because of that asset, pearls quickly reappeared on the export list mainly because they were a coastal product.

#### PEARLS :

Fishing for pearls was known long before the Turks came to the Sudan<sup>(68)</sup>, but it was during their rule (1821-1883) that the trade in pearls expanded. The fisheries were found along the Red Sea coast from Suakin to Halaib in the north, the main centre being at Mohamed Qul (Fig.4). They were mainly exported to Europe, first via Egypt, and later, especially from late 1870s, direct from Suakin. Thus, being based on a coastal product, this trade was not affected by the military operations inland, but it was not entirely free from interference by authorities, particularly after 1885 when Suakin was blockaded. As a result, trade declined because slaves were shipped to Jedda, clandestinely, in pearl boats and thus they were subject to thorough search by military patrols. This eventually led to many pearl fishers resort to Italian waters to the south, where the Italian government paid a small bounty to them to bring their harvests to Massawa where the prices were also higher than at Suakin.

Moreover, freight rates to Trieste, the main market, were cheaper by Italian boats from Massawa than by Egyptian boats from Suakin<sup>(69)</sup>. By 1890, however, trade began to revive, and Suakin began to attract the pearl fishers of Jedda because of the higher prices offered<sup>(70)</sup>.

Exports of pearl were subject to little fluctuations compared with other articles of export (Fig.26), the fluctuations shown being due to occasional fleeing of fishers from Suakin to avoid their crew, which consisted mainly of freed negroes, being conscripted into the Egyptian Army<sup>(71)</sup>, and also to great fluctuations in prices from as low as 38s. per cwt. to 90s. per cwt.<sup>(72)</sup>. During high price period, production, undoubtedly, increased.

As regards the importers, most of the pearls found their way into Europe, mainly Austria and Britain. Austria, except for 1892-93, was the main market, followed by Britain and India (Fig.33). Egyptian share, however, declined to nil except for 1896-97 when a very small quantity found its way there, thus emphasising the fact that trade was being diverted to other countries, especially when Suakin became the main outlet for all the products from the interior. This, however, was natural for a country where everything was geared for export, and where trade was looked upon as the main source of state revenue. Thus, the Turkish government tried hard to develop the resources of the country for export (Chapter Two), but due to lack of proper planning and pure profit-motives together with a lack of organised production and marketing, many articles disappeared from the export list when the special circumstances that necessitated their introduction came to an end (Chapter Two). Thus, the whole economy came to be rigidly tied to the centuries-old articles, almost entirely natural, and easy to produce without much effort, until the 20th century when the changing demand of the world excluded ivory and feathers. Gum, due to its versatile uses, has remained to supply nearly 80% of the world's needs.

REFERENCES :-

- (1) Browne, W.G. : op.cit., p.249.
- (2) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit., p.294. According to him profits on some articles of import reached as high as 150 - 500%.
- (3) At Berber one camel cost 8-10 dollars while in Cairo it cost from 50 to 60 dollars.
- (4) ibid, footnote in p.304. This decline was due to the unstable political conditions and the raids and heavy duties by the local chiefs.
- (5) N.Shukair : History and Geography of Modern Sudan. (Arabic), Cairo (1904). p.153
- (6) Shukri, M.F. : op.cit., p.104
- (7) Report on the Egyptian Provinces of the Soudan, Red Sea and the Equator, War Office, London (1884). The Khedive's own estimate of Sudan's export trade at Bulaq was £E.1,500,000 (Shukri, p.104).
- (8) Blue Book (Egypt) No.2 (1887), Despatch No.77. Consul Baker put the total annual export trade before 1882 at £E. 2,244,500 while a leading Sudanese merchant put it at only £E. 541,212 and imports at £E. 700,000-800,000 (ibid, Despatch No.65).
- (9) Watson, C.M. : op.cit., p.173. W.M.Fox gave a total of 2½ million pounds sterling, equally divided between import and export.
- (10) Blue Book No.20 (1885), Inclosure 1 in Despatch 77, Consul Baker's Report.
- (11) Shukri, M.F. : op.cit., p.104.
- (12) Massawa, during the same year, received 1285 ships because of its deep-water quays and spacious harbour.
- (13) Blue Book (Egypt) No.2, Inclosure 3 in Despatch No.77 (1887)
- (14) ibid.
- (15) F.O. 78, Nos. 2510 and 2253. The first British steamer to call at Suakin was in 1875.
- (16) Accounts and Papers, Vol.74 (1878), p.1381.
- (17) F.O. 78, No.2253



- (18) Accounts and Papers, Vol.79 (1884), p.366.
- (19) These include flour, grain and cattle.
- (20) Some time in 1880s, boilers and steam engines were brought for distillation of sea water, but were not erected until 1890s when a small condensor was put up.
- (21) Accounts and Papers, Vol. C, (1888), p.681.
- (22) *ibid*, p.638.
- (23) These come under 'cattle', 'liquor', and 'other articles'.
- (24) Accounts and Papers, Vol.74 (1890), p.722.
- (25) These restrictions included an 8% tax at Suakin, a 10% at Handub and a 10% at Berber customs.
- (26) Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXXXV (1891), p.671.
- (27) Accounts and Papers, Vol.93, (1893), p.148.
- (28) This was mainly due to the laying down of pipelines from Shaata wells to Suakin which, before 1892, depended on condensers. The decrease in imports of liquor was due to Suakin being within the coastlands on which the importation and sale of liquors had been prohibited according to the Brussles Act.
- (29) Accounts and Papers, Vol.93 (1893), p.149.  
All timber from Singapore did not come directly : £10,184 worth coming via Turkey (Jedda), £1800 worth coming via Massawa and £9,661 worth from 'other countries'. That coming from Egypt was probably of European origin.
- (30) Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXXXV (1894), p.747
- (31) *ibid*, p.749.
- (32) Accounts and Papers, Vol. 97 (1895), p.430.
- (33) Accounts and Papers, Vol. XC (1897), p.424.
- (34) *ibid*, p.424.
- (35) Doubtless some goods found their way secretly into the interior.
- (36) Accounts and Papers, Vol. XC (1897), p.425.
- (37) Accounts and Papers, Vol.XCV (1898), p.146.

- (38) *ibid*, p.146
- (39) *ibid*, p.147. Conditions at Suakin did not allow receipt of grains in bulk due to lack of facilities, and conditions in Bombay did not allow shipment of grains in sacks because of the plague.
- (40) *ibid*, p.147
- (41) Accounts and Papers, Vol. XCIX (1899), p.168
- (42) *ibid*, p.170. From 1890 to 1896, the percentage of India in this class of imports ranged from 30% to as much as 48% of the whole; even in 1897, it was 28.7%.
- (43) 'Raftieh' is a transmission certificate whereby all goods that had already paid customs duty at some other Ottoman port entered Suakin without further payments.
- (44) Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXV (1886), p.217. Nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 'raftieh' total came originally from England.
- (45) Accounts and Papers, Vol.74 (1890), p.723.
- (46) Accounts and Papers, Vol.110 (1889), p.277.
- (47) *ibid*, p.278.
- (48) Accounts and Papers, Vol.XC (1897), p.426.
- (49) Accounts and Papers, Vol.XCV (1898), p.147.
- (50) Allowing for the presence of considerable garrisons (gradually withdrawn in 1897-98), and also for the fact that so long as the government prohibited certain goods, such as piece goods, grain and sugar, to the interior, an important contraband trade in these goods was carried on, which, obviously, found no place in the returns of merchandise passing through Suakin customs-gate.
- (51) Stewart, D.H. : *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35.
- (52) Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXXXIII (1887), p.668.
- (53) Accounts and Papers, Vol. XCIX (1899), p.171..
- (54) Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXXXIII (1887), p.669.
- (55) Hill, R. : *op.cit.*, p.53

- (56) Pallme, I. : op.cit., p.281.
- (57) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.52.
- (58) Pallme, I. : op.cit., p.289.
- (59) Prout, H.G. : op.cit., pp. 66-67.
- (60) Pallme, I. : op.cit., p.290.
- (61) Accounts and Papers, Vol.52 (1862), p.382.
- (62) In 1837, profits of about 500% were procured per camel load in Egypt.
- (63) The raid on the Shilluk territory also bred hostilities against the government. As a result supplies were often cut off, and this led to fluctuations.
- (64) Pallme, I. : op.cit., p.295.
- (65) *ibid*, p.296.
- (66) Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXXXV (1891), p.672.
- (67) Accounts and Papers, Vol. 93 (1893), p.148.
- (68) Burckhardt, J.L. op.cit., p.286. A small shell fish called 'Surumbak' was exported, together with pearls, to Jedda.
- (69) Blue Book (Egypt) No.2 (1887), p.264.
- (70) Accounts and Papers, Vol.93 (1893), p.148.
- (71) *ibid*, p.149.
- (72) Accounts and Papers, Vol. XCV (1898), p.147.

CHAPTER FOURPATTERN OF TRADE II - INTERNAL

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Conditions of internal trade have been neglected by all travellers who visited the Sudan during the 19th century. All attention was directed towards external trade which was the mainstay of the economy of the country, especially during the Egyptian period. This complete dependence on export trade was undoubtedly at the expense of internal trade which was left in the hands of the petty itinerant traders who gave no information lest they should be taxed. Moreover, they were some factors that impeded the healthy progress of this trade. The first was the vastness of the country and the long distances separating the various productive regions which were linked by an inefficient and slow means of transport. Secondly, the country was sparsely populated, 85-90% being nomads and peasants who led a subsistent living. Thus, since all foreign capital was invested in export trade, internal trade was in the hands of the petty native merchants who, because of their small capital, could not develop it. Moreover, they received no encouragement from the government to develop internal trade because of her continuous concentration on cash crops for export to earn foreign currency. Thirdly, the high cost of transport affected this trade because inferior articles that could not compete with the articles of export were left to be distributed in the country. This means that these commodities were not of high value, but because of the high cost of transport from one place to another, the prices of these articles were forced up. Fourthly, there were few industries, and those set up by the Egyptians (see Chapter Two and Fig.13) were meant for export; moreover, many of the native industries,

especially cotton spinning and weaving, were killed by cheap foreign articles such as cloth and soap.

Thus, because of these factors, internal trade was neglected and consequently came to depend more and more on the petty traders who took to this trade either to supplement their incomes from the land or to escape the payment of the various taxes levied by the government on land and its products. The initial capital, however, was obtained by the sale of small or trifling articles, such as beads, and when enough money was accumulated, the merchant took to bigger trades, such as cloth and perfume. In many cases the capital was not enough to sustain a journey to one of the large centres where he could obtain goods cheaply. Thus, under such circumstances, trade was frequently carried on through partnership with a relative. They pooled their money into a common capital and the profit was divided according to their shares.<sup>(1)</sup> This partnership continued until enough money was obtained to enable each to carry on trade separately, mainly as butchers, grain dealers, or cloth merchants or any other profitable trade.<sup>(2)</sup> Moreover, this close relationship and blood kinship between merchants led to trade by credit. Thus, if a merchant ran short of money while he was at Suakin, he could purchase the articles he needed on the account of another known merchant who resided, for example, in Omdurman and who happened to have some money in Suakin<sup>(3)</sup>. Such money was paid back at a very small rate of interest, or nothing in many cases when the personal relationship was very close. In other cases, some rich merchants, mostly Egyptians, Levantines or denizens, used to enter into partnership with the poor natives, or petty traders, to whom they advanced sums of money to induce them to try a trading journey to one of the main centres of trade or to the source area of an important article, and on return took half the profits ; they were families who had thus been mutually travelling partners from early times.<sup>(4)</sup>

However, most of the trade was conducted through brokers, and was accompanied by the avarice that normally accompanies brokerage. No merchandise had a fixed price ; there was no such thing as a current price; everyone sold according to the prospect he had of cheating the buyer and bribing the broker. The purchase money, or in cases of barter its equivalent in merchandise, was almost immediately paid. In most cases, however, it was the custom for the purchaser to bid and not for the merchant to state the price. (5)

However, the process of internal trade can be illustrated by considering the trade in two of the main articles of export, namely gum and ivory. During the Egyptian rule, the government bought gum directly from the natives at a fixed price since most of the natives were ordered to pay their taxes in gum instead of cash. (6) The merchants either obtained their consignments from natives or hired camels to transport gum collected by their own labour or hired natives (7). During the Mahdiya, however, pickers brought gum to their own village by their own camels to sell to a local small merchant for cash. Sometimes, the small merchants sent animal transport to collecting centres which lay away from villages. However, in case the price offered them by the small merchants was not satisfactory, some pickers would load their camels to other big merchants in search for better prices. The petty merchant, with his small capital, could not hold large stocks of gum, so he passed his available consignments to a bigger one along the route to Dueim or one of the smaller gum shipment centres on the White Nile. Camel owners sometimes carried consignments forward for a fixed charge or share in the selling price to the next merchant. In bigger villages dealers assembled larger parcels to be sent by camel to Dueim and hence to Omdurman. However, since this trade was monopolised by the state, the government bought up all the gum available, thus leaving nothing or little for the merchants. (8)

With regards to ivory, its trade was mostly carried by the petty itinerant merchants who traded with the natives. The purchase

was effected by barter against cotton, beads and other articles. In some cases, a kind of agreement was reached between these merchants and some tribes by which the latter supplied the former with ivory in return for beads or other articles the tribes wanted. But the tribe could refuse to sell ivory if the merchant failed to supply the goods they desired or if the beads, for example, were not well sorted and different from those brought the year before.<sup>(9)</sup> The small merchants finally sold all the quantity in their possession to bigger merchants who, after paying the taxes, dispatched it either to Egypt or Suakin. This was in the 1830s ; but later, from the 1860s and onwards, the petty merchant sold the ivory either directly to European traders or to the government at a price fixed by them.<sup>(10)</sup> The commercial firms at Khartoum arranged ivory into various cases of various weight and size for dispatch to Europe.

However, the merchants, generally speaking, often traded far and wide to any place where profits could be procured. They spent months purchasing gold, ivory, gum, coffee, and selling lentils, rice, cotton, spices and perfumes, and then dispatched either to Berber, Sennar or Fazogli or to Kordofan and Darfur. During the Mahdiya, however, internal trade was more brisk than export trade, but was very disorganised. The idea of free trade was not acceptable to the Khalifa, and this led to small quantities of merchandise being left to the merchants on which they had to pay taxes. Thus, all goods had to be stored at Omdurman pending their dispatch to Berber and whence to Suakin, and the merchants had to pay a tithe on every item at the chain of stations along the route to Suakin which, eventually, led to bankruptcy for the merchants. Moreover, high rents were levied on shops. Another reason for the decline of internal trade was the seizure of boats from their owners, and levying an annual tax on those who owned them. The taxed boats also included ferries farmed out to merchants<sup>(11)</sup>. All new boats built after the permission by the Khalifa were taxed by the Treasury<sup>(12)</sup>. Moreover, camels and cattle, many of which were exterminated during the internecine wars and the punitive expeditions of the Khalifa against the tribes and the cattle plagues, such as that of

1889, were a monopoly of the government.<sup>(13)</sup> Most of the remaining camels were employed in tasks other than trade, and this led to rise in cost of transport. The only beast of burden available in considerable numbers was the donkey, which, due to scarcity of camels, fetched from 40 to 200 dollars<sup>(14)</sup>. Thus, transport became more slow, tedious and costly than ever. Moreover, swindling and deception discouraged people from investing their money in any trade, and especially from entering into partnerships with strange people. Offenders' goods were confiscated but the abuses continued, and large sums of money were exacted by the government itself from the rich merchants in the form of "presents"<sup>(16)</sup>.

However, the breach of faith between the riverine people and the Baggara tribes led to an atmosphere of hatred and mistrust. This was the creation of the Khalifa's internal policy which was based on the tactics of divide and rule. Thus, the Baggara were given all high posts and were preferentially treated<sup>(17)</sup>; they were encouraged to partake in trade, and eventually much of the retail trade in Omdurman passed into their hands<sup>(18)</sup>. Moreover, all the fertile lands in the neighbourhood and the best cultivated portions of the Nile banks as far as Berber were made over to them whilst the original owners of the soil were turned out without a piastre's compensation.<sup>(19)</sup> This policy eventually led to bitter animosity in such a way as to make a safe conduct of trade quite risky, especially in Omdurman. Thus, due to these reasons, the majority of the products, which mainly came from Kordofan and Darfur, were reduced in quantity. The main articles of internal trade will now be considered in some detail.

#### Trade Articles :

Internal trade consisted for the most part of provision dealing. This situation can be attributed, first, to the unreliability of rainfall. The Sudan was subject to devastating famines mainly because of

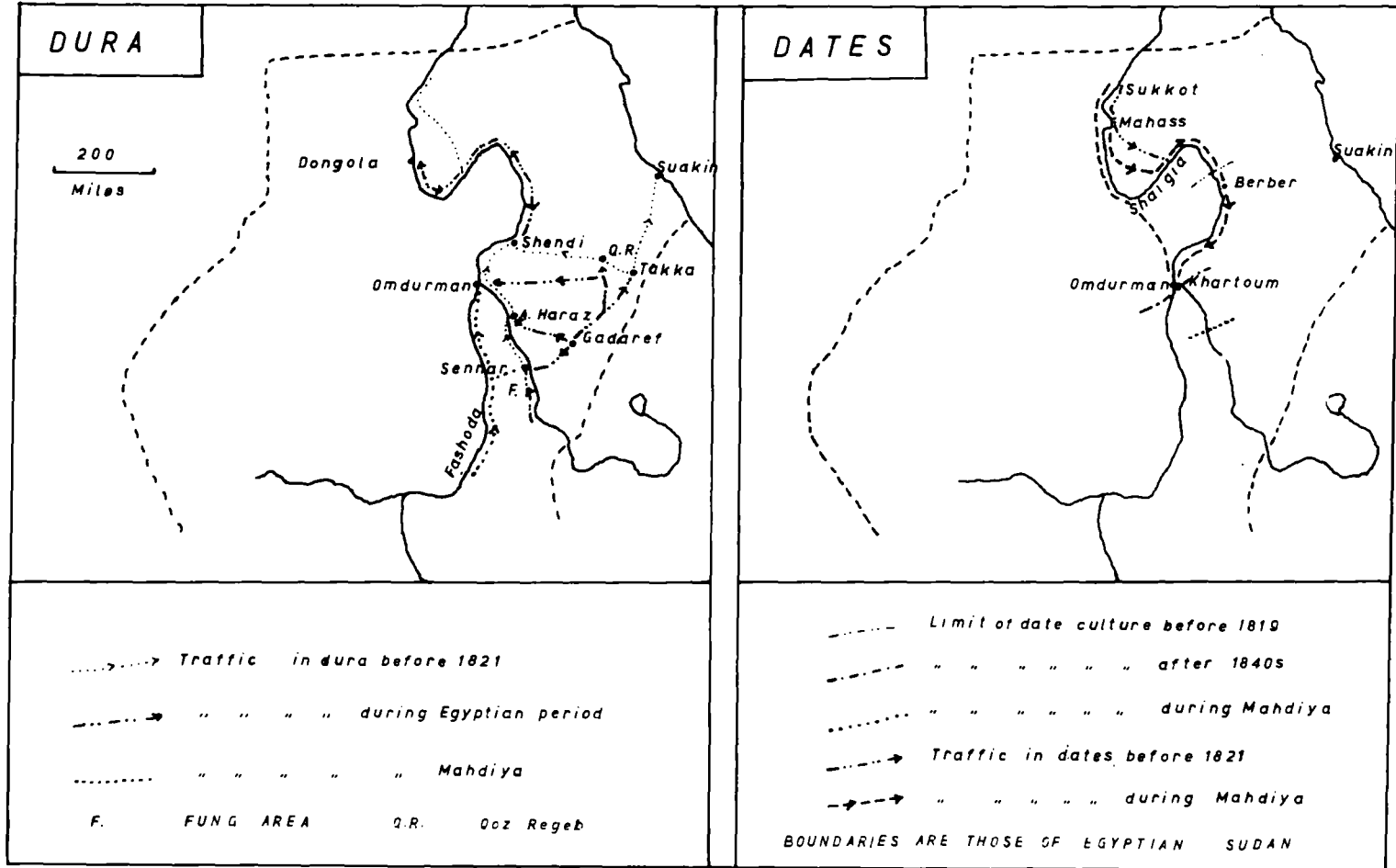


failure of crops due to 'dry' rainy seasons as, for example, in 1813 and 1888-89. The most affected areas, however, were the central rain belt, where all cultivation depended on rain, thus necessitating complete dependence on the riverine areas where also crop failures were common because of the fluctuating levels of the Nile. Secondly, the nomadic nature of the people was, not conducive to sedentary life, and consequently many tribes depended on other producing areas for their supplies of provisions rather than cultivate the land themselves. The cash for buying grains was obtained by hiring camels and collection of natural products, such as gum, for sale to merchants. Thirdly, the complete dependence of many centres, such as Shendi, on trade as the mainstay of their inhabitants made them rely on other producing areas, such as Takka and Gadaref, for their needs of food products. Moreover, caravans calling at these large centres had to be provided with provisions, and this sometimes necessitated the importation of a certain type of grain for some caravans. Thus, Shendi used to import millet, dukhn, for Kordofan caravans, and dates for Dongola people<sup>(20)</sup>. Fourthly, when the Egyptian government introduced forced cultivation of indigo, cotton, and cane, many parts of the riverine areas had to look for their grain supplies to Gadaref, Takka and the Geziera. Thus, all these factors led to a brisk trade in food and other articles between the different parts of the country. In this trade, however, dura always headed the list.

Dura : (Sorghum millet) : (Fig.34) :

From early times, dura has been the staple foodcrop of the Sudan. The producing area lay in the Central Claylands, but this cereal is drought - and heat - resistant, and grows well on a wide range of soils, and suits clays as well as alkaline soils. Production, however, was concentrated in the northern clay rainlands, which include areas north of the Geziera and Gadaref, and the southern rainlands which include Gadaref district and the Fung area. But these areas were not fully cultivated, mainly because of primitive agricultural practices, the

Fig. 34- INTERNAL TRADE, 19th. C.



nomadic nature of the people who lived in these places and the heavy taxes levied by the governments, both Turkish and Mahdist. Consequently, many cultivators did not find the impetus to produce food crops in large quantities for the country's consumption ; instead they cultivated small areas that produced enough for their needs, and the rest of the land was left to bake under the sun. In case any surplus grain was produced, it was left to rot on the ground, though demand was at its peak in other places<sup>(21)</sup>. This was because the grain could not be moved quickly and cheaply to the markets due to the inefficiency and high cost of transport. Thus, finding no remunerative returns for his labour, the cultivator declined from expanding the output, and consequently production fluctuated, and surpluses were not large compared with the productivity of these lands.

However, trade in dura was brisk. Thus, in 1814 Burckhardt noticed a thriving traffic in this crop between Shendi, the entrepot of trade, and other parts of the country, mainly Abu Haraz, Sennar, and Takka. Abu Haraz, which was the main exporter, used to send about 300 camel loads of dura annually to Shendi, and dura was said to be so plentiful here that forty measures were sold for one dollar.<sup>(22)</sup> The prices, however, varied almost daily, the market being affected by the arrival of every caravan of traders who always bought up considerable quantities for the food of slaves and camels. From Sennar, on one hand, the dura caravans consisted of 5 to 600 camels, and constituted nearly five times those of goods and slaves.<sup>(23)</sup> Takka, on the other hand, seems to have produced dura of the best quality, and exported large quantities mainly to Suakin and Shendi, despite the primitive methods of cultivation ; not less than four-fifths of the ground remained unsown.<sup>(24)</sup> Yet, Takka was the cheapest grain market, 24 mouds cost only one dollar, and because of its good quality, it was sold 20% dearer than that of Egypt at Jeddah.

During the Egyptian period, however, many parts of the riverine areas were allotted for production of cash crops for export, and as a result, grain production shifted to the rainland districts near Gadaref. Thus, by 1870 Takka imported dura from Gadaref, and Qoz Regeb

had to do the same because the government imposed cotton cultivation and prevented growing of grains<sup>(25)</sup>. But dura was still cheap, the cost for a bushel being only 1s.8d.<sup>(26)</sup> The Baraka delta mainly supplied Suakin district.

As the case in other crops, the government took part of the taxes in grain, and of the 20 dollars levied on each waterwheel, 5 dollars' worth was paid in produce, mainly cereals. Thus, while the price of dura in the market was 3s. per ardeb (c. 5 bushels), the government price was 3s.9d. for the same quantity.<sup>(27)</sup> However, most of these grains were consumed by the troops and the towns-people, and except during times of dearth<sup>(28)</sup> there was enough grain to supply the needs of the country.

During the Mahdiya, however, the relation between rural and urban areas was upset. First, thousands of people flocked into Omdurman, the capital, either as soldiers or ordinary citizens, such as the Baggara. Secondly, many of the people were forcibly enlisted into the army and, as a result, there was a lack of labour to till the land. Thirdly, lands were confiscated from their owners and were given to nomadic tribes from Western Sudan, and this led to decrease in production. Thus, those who were displaced from their lands, together with thousands of others, emigrated to Omdurman where chances of finding food at reasonable cost were, more or less, greater than in the country. To feed these hungry mouths, dura had to be brought from the Geziera and Fashoda, and to obtain it, the Khalifa had to resort to force because of the unwillingness of the people to cooperate.<sup>(29)</sup> As a measure against this, grain trade was monopolised and during the famine of 1888-9, all the available grain was stockpiled by the purchasers in Eastern Sudan; in other parts the harvest turned out so badly, and all measures to stop blackmarket sale ended in failure. Consequently, the price per ardeb rose from 1½ dollar before the famine to 6, and then to 12, 20, 30 and 60 dollars as the famine began to assert itself. In 1889, Fashoda, the only supply mart that was not affected by famine, was occupied, and the inhabitants were ruthlessly treated, and this cut off all supplies from there ; consequently, dura began to disappear from the market.

Production never recovered fully from the disastrous effects of this famine<sup>(32)</sup>, and the ruthless ways in which the Khalifa dealt with the cultivators, and despite the good harvests of 1890 and other years, price per ardeb still remained high, being 36 dollars in 1898. This scarcity was mainly due to the unwillingness of the people to help the government, the drastic reduction in population, the rural depopulation of all the producing areas, and the monopoly of this trade. Just after the fall of Omdurman in 1898, the price went down to 6 dollars per ardeb.

However, during such times of dearth, dates were inevitably a welcome substitute for dura.

Dates: (Fig. 34)

Trade in dates seem to have been confined to the reach lying north of Berber in the early 19th century, and Mahass and Sukkot were the main supply areas, mostly of the best quality dates. The southernmost extent of date seem to have been the Shaigia country, where, according to Burckhardt<sup>(33)</sup>, dates were few and of bad quality. Even as late as 1819, Cailliaud noted that there were no date-palms south of Abu Egli, which was situated just above the Fifth Cataract.<sup>(34)</sup> However, the gradual spread of date culture towards the south started during the Egyptian period, and by the 1840s the first date shoots from Dongola were planted in Khartoum<sup>(35)</sup>, where they still adorn the water-front. During the Mahdist period, it extended south on the Blue Nile, but because dates cannot tolerate rain, the reach north of Berber remained the main suppliers of good-quality dates.

With regards to trade in dates, there seem to have been little traffic between Mahass and Egypt before 1821 although much demanded there for their good quality<sup>(36)</sup>. This was due to the absence of navigation to the north because of rapids and cataracts.<sup>(37)</sup> So most of the dates were sold to the Shaigia who arrived in Mahass in large caravans and bought them in exchange for dura, butter and targets made of hippo skins which were highly prized by the Nubians.<sup>(38)</sup> Dates were also

sold by the Mahass people to caravans passing through their territory. Of its by-products, arak, a spirit drink, was the most prized, and Dongola bouza, made from dates and dura, was well known in Berber and Shendi. But there was no trade in dates with the Eastern Sudan, which had to depend for its quotas on Suakin, which relied in turn upon Jedda. <sup>(39)</sup>

During the Egyptian period, there is no evidence of any considerable trade in dates, but it is probable that it was encouraged, like that of other products, either for export to Egypt or to other parts of the country. There was a 5% duty on the price of palm leaves, and 60 piastres on each ardeb of dates used to distil arak <sup>(40)</sup> in Dongola and Berber provinces. This means there was some considerable traffic in dates between the different parts of the country, or that trade in these items - palm leaves for mat and basket making and the fruit for distilling arak - was profitable. But against this one can put the fact that all Europeans and other foreigners imported their need of wines and alcohols from outside, and that the natives in other parts of the country used spirits distilled from grains. Moreover, the spread of date culture towards the south, made these areas less dependent on Mahass and Dongola for their supplies of dates. But whenever supplies of grain became less due to failure of rainfall, there must have been considerable traffic in dates.

During the Mahdiya, trade in dates was a profitable field of investment, especially for the petty traders. There was a brisk trade between Omdurman and Mahass to feed the huge population in the capital town and the army. It constituted the mainstay of the whole army that was sent to invade Egypt in 1889, and caravans and boats were brisk supplying it with dates from Mahass and Sukkot <sup>(41)</sup>. During the famine of 1888-9, its price soared up due to scarcity in supplies of ripe dates since all the fruit was devoured by the hungry people and locusts while still green.

Thus, these two crops, dura and dates, constituted the main food articles of trade in the country. There were, however, other food crops at least three, each of which was used more or less exclusively

by a considerable section of the population<sup>(42)</sup>. Some communities were restricted to one or two crops whereas others might have more than two, but in both cases dura was one of the ingredients.

However, besides trade in food articles, there was brisk traffic in salt.

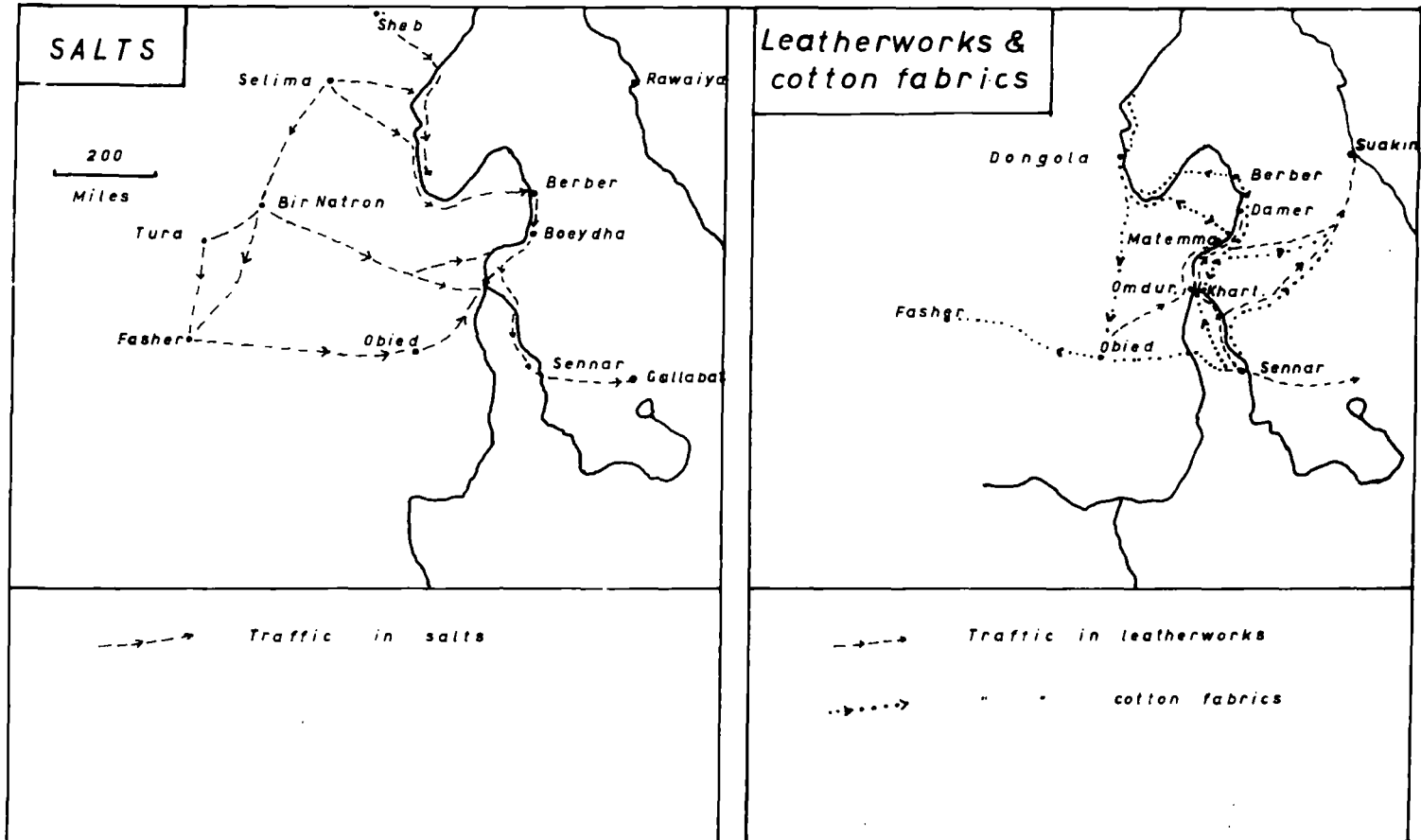
Salt: (Fig.35) :

Trade in salt might have been known from early times inside the country, but there is no evidence of traffic in salt between the Red Sea and the interior ; if it ever existed, it must have been very little<sup>(43)</sup>. As a result most of the salt either came from the oases of northern Darfur or was locally made. One method of making salt consisted of mixing earth that contains salt with water, allowing the sediment to settle and then evaporating or boiling away the water. This was the method practised at Baeydha, (of Burckhardt), which lay about 7 hours' march north of Shendi, and from here all Eastern Sudan was supplied with salt.<sup>(44)</sup> The salt was made into small cakes a dozen of which made a basket, and four of these baskets made a camel load. Large quantities of this salt were bought up by Sennar merchants for the Abyssinian markets where it was exchanged for slaves and gold at Gallabat.

The other method was simply boiling salt water from salty wells until it had all evaporated. Such salty wells abound in the northwestern desert, but most of the rock salt came from Selima, Zaghawi, Malha, Tura and Bir Natron. Selima oasis was well known for its rock salts from early times. There was considerable traffic between the Nile valley and these oases, and the salt<sup>(45)</sup> obtained was exchanged for dura. Natron also formed an important article of Darfur trade with Eastern Sudan. It was found in abundance at Bir Natron, and was obtained, like rock salt, by scooping the top surface sand below which was the natron; but since the top was usually bad - being mixed with sand - it was scraped away for the seam below it, which was of good quality.

However, salt prices remained high, the small fluctuations being due mainly to the irregularity of the arrival of

Fig. 35 - INTERNAL TRADE, 19th C.



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caravans. When, during the Egyptian period,<sup>(46)</sup> some salt found its way to the interior from the Red Sea, it became an expensive luxury by the time it reached the interior markets because of cost of carriage.<sup>(47)</sup> During the Mahdiya, salt came from Berber, which was probably imported from Suakin or from the western desert through Dongola.

Generally speaking, most of the trade in salt was carried with the northwestern desert oases, and the long haulage from there to the Nile valley and Eastern Sudan made it expensive. Moreover, the methods to exploit the salt resources were not enough to satisfy the craving need of the people, and the centres of production were predatory and exposed to the raids of the tribes. Thus, when the local markets were flooded by cheap salts from the Red Sea littoral in the 20th century, the local trade in salts declined sharply.

Besides salt-making, there were other crafts, such as leatherworks, spinning and weaving of cotton, and manufacture of mats and baskets.

#### Leather Works: (Fig.35)

These included camel saddles, leathern sacks and skins, and sandal shoes. Beautifully ornamented camel saddles, which cost 20 dollars per each, were exported to Egypt.<sup>(47)</sup> The leather, however, was of good quality, and the saddlebags from Sennar found a ready market in all parts of the country, especially in Suakin where they were in great demand for export to Jedda. They were used for carrying provisions and other articles during travelling ; some were secured with a padlock, and were used by peddlars for carrying their goods from one village to another.

Sennar was also famous for its sandals, and were worn by all the well-dressed men and women throughout the country. They were sewn with such a precision that a pair fetched as high as 2 dollars at Shendi<sup>(48)</sup>.

Kordofan was famous for its leather ropes and water skins. The leather thongs, very strong and supple, were a very important advantage in travelling through the deserts with heavily loaded camels,

and were more durable than ropes made of coir. Moreover, Kordofan was specialised in making large sacks made of very thick ox-hides, which were much prized by the merchants for transport of dura from one place to another, and also through the desert for the food of the slaves and camels. The Kordofanis also excelled in making water skins from ox-hides and sheep - and goat-skins. The large ones were bought up by the caravans for transport of water along the desert routes, while the small ones were used locally, and by single travellers, for transporting water from wells to villages. Another article from Kordofan was the large wooden dishes or bowls, which were carved from the root of a tree, then rubbed with butter and held over a fire to blacken them. They were skilfully made and beautifully carved, and some were big enough to hold food for a dozen people<sup>(49)</sup>.

Tanning, however, was done by the pulse of acacia, but the method was not efficient. Thus, to meet this deficiency, many skilled tanners from Egypt were dispatched in the 1830s to teach the Sudanese this. As a result, a steady export of skins to Egypt followed.<sup>(50)</sup> During the Mahdiya, however, there was a good deal of leatherwork, which included red and yellow shoes, sandals, harnesses and scabbards<sup>(51)</sup>.

Besides leatherworks, weaving and spinning cotton were a feature of the household craft.

#### Domestic Textiles (Fig.35).

Weaving of cloth of a crude type was probably known long before the coming of the Egyptians in 1821. Most of these clothes were made of cotton which was grown for this purpose nearly around all the important trade centres, such as Dongola, Damer, Shendi and Sennar. Every women or girl spun for her own use or for sale, and in every village there was a number of weavers who worked the spun-yarn into a variety of materials. Thus, Sennar was well-known for its tob damours, which were worn by all the Sudanese from Darfur to the Red Sea, and Sennar to Nubia<sup>(52)</sup>. Besides being used as dress, they were

taken in exchange for almost every article of trade. From Darfur also came nice cotton stuffs dyed with locally grown indigo. They were in different lengths, but 10-yards pieces were the most common. It was a piece of this cloth that started cotton culture in the Sudan during the Egyptian period<sup>(53)</sup>. However, of all the cotton piece goods made in the Sudan those from Dongola were considered in Egypt to be the most solid, although there was a steady local demand for the cloth woven in Matemma and dyed deep red. Berber province was famous for the finest spun-yarns during the Egyptian and the Mahdist's period, and here stripes of coloured silk were frequently interwoven in the cloth, which was used principally for turbans as well as coverings of various sorts and shawls. The Geziera was also known for common cotton stuffs which were brought to the market in large quantities, and were principally used for the clothing of the commoner classes. Dongola was famous for the manufacture of sail-cloth, and materials from Kordofan were noted for their durability rather than for their beauty.

In addition to spinning, the women occupied themselves largely in plaiting mats of various shapes and sizes from the leaves of dom-palms, which were sold largely in all parts of the Sudan. The main centres were in Dongola and Berber provinces. The best quality of these mats, however, were those made from the narrow strips of the date-palm leaves, barley or wheat straw and thin pieces of leather. Mats of similar description were also made for serving food at dinner-tables, and all were coloured by locally-made vegetable dyes. Darfur women were specially clever in making these mats into which were interwoven various sorts of glass beads. The workmanship of some of these mats and also baskets was so fine and good that a certain quantity found its way into Egypt before the Egyptian conquest (1821).

Thus, the internal trade during the 19th century consisted mainly of provision dealing and consumer goods that were locally made. These articles were, undoubtedly, cheaper than the imported ones, and

suited the small income of the majority of the people. Moreover, they constituted a source of income for many families, for it was by the money they obtained by selling these articles that they could buy spices and perfumes, which were highly prized by the Sudanese women. It should, however, be remembered that these crafts were not in the hands of specialists, but were widely distributed in every household ; it was an art that was acquired through generations of practice in such a way that it became a family tradition. That is perhaps why these crafts persisted through all periods while other trades declined.

References :

- (1) B.Badri : History of My Life (Arabic), Khartoum (1959).  
p. 127.
- (2) *ibid*, p.73. Many separations were effected by quarrels  
breaking out between partners. (p.127).
- (3) *ibid*, p.128.
- (4) Burckhardt, J.L. , *op.cit*, p.18.
- (5) *ibid*, p.298.
- (6) F.O. 78. No.2253
- (7) Pallme, I., *op.cit.*, p.288.
- (8) Badri, B., *op.cit*, p.132.
- (9) Junkar, W. , *op.cit.*, pp.337-8.
- (10) F.O. 78. No.2253
- (11) Holt, P.M., *op.cit.* , p.241. The tax was paid to the  
Privy Treasury.
- (12) Slatin, R.C., *op.cit.*, p.342.
- (13) Wingate, F.R., *op.cit.*, p.379.
- (14) *ibid*, p.379.
- (15) *ibid*, pp.337-9.
- (16) *ibid*, p.397. Confiscation ran to as high as 30,000 dollars  
excluding that taken in goods. The same merchant, especially  
if he was rich, was subject to confiscation any time for an  
offence he did a year ago and for which he had already paid  
penalty.
- (17) *ibid*, p.393. During the famine of 1888-9, the Baggara paid  
only 6 dollars for an ardeb of dura whilst everyone else had  
to pay 60 dollars for the same quantity.
- (18) *ibid*, p.399.
- (19) *ibid*, p.393.
- (20) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, p.
- (21) Stewart, D.H., *op.cit.*, p.23.
- (22) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit*, p.285. At Shendi prices  
fluctuated from 12 measures to 20 measures for one dollar  
depending on supply. Grain trade, however, was monopolised by

the Mek.

A measure was usually taken as the content of a wooden bowl or vessel the capacity of which was previously ascertained in handfuls, and was used to measure large quantities of dura, and might be equivalent to one Egyptian 'kirat' or 0.45 gill or 1.81 gallons.

- (23) *ibid*, p.309.
- (24) *ibid*, p.389. The 'moud' was the common currency for all articles of low value; it was a small measure of dura which amounted to about eight handfuls of dura of a flat-extended hand of a full-grown man. It may be easily conceived that disputes often arose between buyers and sellers from the unequal size of their hands; in such a case a third person was usually called upon to measure the dura.
- (25) Parry, F., *op.cit.*, p.163.
- (26) *ibid*, p.159.
- (27) Hoskins, G.A., *op.cit.*, p.178.
- (28) Abdin (Maiya) Doss. 557, corresp. No.69 (1864). p.39.  
As in 1864 when, due to failure of rainfall, large quantities had to be imported from Egypt. The famine was so acute that one ardeb cost £ E. 8 (160 dollars).
- (29) In 1892, the population was about 150,000 according to Wingate, but was not fixed.
- (30) Wingate, F.R., *op.cit.*, p.394.
- (31) *ibid*, p.285, and Badri, B., *op.cit.*, p.132.
- (32) See Wingate, F.R., *op.cit.*, pp.284-90.
- (33) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, p.57.
- (34) Crawford, O.G.S., *op.cit.*, p.56.
- (35) Hill, R., *op.cit.*, p.54.
- (36) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, p.56.
- (37) This belt of cataracts and rapids is known as Batn el Haggar or the Belly of Rocks, and the river here is very difficult to negotiate.
- (38) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, p.57.

- (39) *ibid*, p.441.
- (40) Stewart, D.H., *op.cit.*, p.16.
- (41) Badri, B., *op.cit.*, p.50.
- (42) In northern Sudan, for example, wheat and barley were used while dukhn was used in Kordofan and Darfur.
- (43) Hill, R., *op.cit.*, p.58. The rich salt-works of Rawiya used to export salt to Bombay and Aden.
- (44) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, pp.276-7.  
There were 20 large boilers on fire when he passed the place.  
Long distances were divided into so many 'sheds' or marches of about six hours' duration.
- (45) *ibid*, p.31.
- (46) Salt trade was a government monopoly, and salt valued at 2 dollars for half a quintar paid a tax of 4 piastres although the legal tax was 5% on the selling price.
- (47) Parry, F., *op.cit.*, p.160.
- (48) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, p.314.
- (49) *ibid*, p.314.
- (50) *ibid*, p.318.
- (51) Hill, R., *op.cit.*, p.56.
- (52) Slatin, R.C., *op.cit.*, p.142.
- (53) Burckhardt, J.L., *op.cit.*, p.309.
- (54) Hill, R., *op.cit.*, p.51.

CHAPTER FIVETRADE CENTRES

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From early times, there existed in the Sudan a number of important local trade centres to which people brought their daily produce and other cash crops for sale or for exchange for other products they needed. The prosperity of these centres, however, depended very much on the political conditions of the time as well as other factors, such as accessibility, proximity to centres of production, or sufficient water supply. It is highly probable that such focii might have originated as insignificant villages, and emerged later as important centres, such as Khartoum and Omdurman, or they might have been former centres that lay dormant because of political or other reasons, and revived later under the influence of new trade relations, such as Gadaref and Kassala. However, the factors mentioned briefly above had varying degrees of influence, and, therefore, must be considered in more detail.

A tranquil atmosphere and friendly disposition to traders from other parts, together with a strong political control give protection and attracted trade. Thus, in the Sudan, where internecine wars between tribes were common, this need for protection was vital, both for the tribe in whose territory the centre lay, and for the trader, to assure him that his goods would not be raided or confiscated. Thus, the tribal chiefs<sup>(1)</sup>, such as those of Shendi and Berber, did their best to ensure a safe conduct for the caravans passing through their territories, and to



accord protection during their stay in the centre itself. The importance of such potentates undoubtedly increased during periods of political chaos such as that which followed the decline of the Fung Kingdom in early 19th century, particularly the decade before the coming of the Egyptian in 1821.

However, the strong centralisation of power at Khartoum after 1821, made it the hub of commerce, but the de-centralisation of 1860 had, undoubtedly, its impact on trade centres; Khartoum, for instance, lost much of its trade to new provincial centres. Thus, Mussalamiya sprang from obscurity to an important trading centre, while Wad Medani dwindled and stagnated, and Abu Haraz was reduced to a mere transshipment point on the trade route between Khartoum and Abyssinia. Gadaref, once a thriving centre and a collecting point for Abyssinian products and pilgrims from the west, gave way to the new emergent town of Kassala, to which was diverted the export trade of Abyssinia destined for the ports of Massawa and Suakin. The 1860s also saw the revival of Suakin after a period of stagnation, due mainly to the construction of the railway line between Suez and Cairo, thus according a cheaper and quicker contact with Alexandria and hence with the outside world.

Besides the political factors mentioned above, there were also the problems of water supply. Along the Nile valley, where many trade centres lay, water was no problem. In the western Sudan, however, the lack of rivers and the sandy nature of the soil made water supplies a vital factor in the location of villages and towns. It was at such favoured localities<sup>(2)</sup> that the main trade centres of the western Sudan grew up, such as el Obied, el Fasher, Cobbe and Bara. At these points, local people congregated with their animals and other products, and, thus, in time, they began to attract trade from distant parts, and, eventually, became focal points for long distance traffic.

However, Shendi grew up at a point where the north-south and the east-west trade axes intersected, and from the early 18th century to 1822, it was the main centre for the whole eastern

Sudan. Here the strength of its chief and ease of accessibility from different parts of the country were undoubtedly contributory factors.

Thus, to the caravans that came toiling across the desert, the stretch of the Nile between Berber and the Sixth Cataract acted as a sort of "arrival-platform". As a result, virtually any point along this reach could theoretically have developed into a thriving town, but it was logical that any trade centre which grew up should be located, as far as possible, in such a way as to make it the nearest point of arrival after crossing the desert. Thus, Berber developed at the point on the Nile which was convenient for caravans coming from Aswan in Egypt; but, as a matter of fact, it was not the nearest point, for Abu Hamed, for instance, was closer and possessed similar site potential, but the nature of the route and attempts to avoid the notorious Shaigia and Mograt Arabs, encouraged traders to follow the desert areas and to strike due west to meet the Nile, the nearest point in this case being Berber. Later in the 1820s, when conditions became more stable during the Turkish period, Abu Hamed, situated at the northernmost point of the Nile Bend, was chosen for the shorter route that led to Korosko, which was similarly situated at a point where the Nile makes a southerly bend into the desert - (Fig.56). In the same way, the southward bend of the Nile into the Beyuda Desert offered sites for many departure and arrival villages, such as Debba, Abu Gussi, Korti and Ambikol, for the various routes that crossed the Beyuda Desert to Darfur, Kordofan or the Nile valley to the south (Figs. 1, 49 and 50).

Besides easy accessibility, such points frequently offered defensible sites. In a flat country like the Sudan, defence measures were not secured by hills or mountains, but by such natural obstacles as bends of rivers,<sup>(3)</sup> or by shrines of some holy men to which people resorted.<sup>(4)</sup> The magic power believed to be invested in the religious men of Damer made all tribes avoid incurring their wrath by attacking the caravans passing through

Damer territory.<sup>(5)</sup> The defensive possibilities offered by the Gash river and the steep Jebel Kassala together with the reliable supply of drinking water from the river, made the garrison town of Kassala an obvious site for this purpose.

All these centres, however, differed in their importance according to their commercial activity, nevertheless, they had a number of common features. First, their impact on agriculture and other aspects of economic life in the surrounding countryside was almost negligible. There were, more or less, collecting centres<sup>(6)</sup>, to which caravans resorted to dispose of their goods and load the local products collected together at that point. This situation can be attributed to the primitive commercial organization of the time, when all business transactions were entrusted in one man, the tribal chief,<sup>(7)</sup> whose only concern was to carry out these transactions as quickly as possible so as to minimize the period of stay in the centres, and consequently the expenses of the journey<sup>(8)</sup>. Moreover, the chiefs were inevitably not interested in developing the social and economic aspects of these centres, for instance, the incomes from caravans entering Berber, calculated by Burckhardt at 3000-4000 dollars from each caravan, were distributed by the 'Mek' of Berber among his family and relatives.<sup>(9)</sup> It is symptomatic of this situation that the commercial supremacy of Shendi failed to stimulate the exploitation of the surrounding rich basins; instead, the town had to look to distant areas for its supply of grains. Although this situation led to brisk trade between the centres and different regions, the fact remains that these trade centres did little for the material and social progress of their respective territories.

A second common feature among these centres was a similarity of forms; each town usually consisted of the chief's house<sup>(11)</sup>, the market-place or 'souk', and the residential quarters for craftsmen, peasants, and merchants. The chief's house was usually the largest local residence and was sited near the market-place, or in the middle of the town, but the economic core

of the town was the market-place, which must be considered in more detail.

Thus, as the life-centre of the whole town, the size of the market place differed according to the importance of the centre and its commercial relations. It was usually situated in an open place, either surrounded by the residential quarters, or just in the outskirts of the town. The market was held either weekly or daily, but, usually, the big centres, such as Shendi, Gallabat, Kassala, Medani, Cobbe and el Obied, held both weekly and daily markets. In the daily markets, however, the commodities exposed for sale usually consisted of local produce, while the larger weekly ones were attended by all the surrounding Arabs and caravans from within and without the country, where local and foreign articles were exchanged.

All these articles, however, were not displayed haphazardly, but each kind of commodity had to be exposed in a separate section of the market. Thus, one encountered forage market<sup>(12)</sup>, onion market, gum market, wood and grass market, etc.<sup>(13)</sup> Women had their own mart where they sold eggs, butter, spices, etc.<sup>(14)</sup>

In this array of commodities, the transactions were done in many ways. First, there were the opulent merchants who displayed their articles in mud-built shops, while the petty retail traders used the ground or shelters made of mats. Other merchants used to carry their articles, usually perfumes, spices and beads, on a donkey and roam about the surrounding villages, while some women went from one house to another selling their goods to housewives. There were also the 'public criers' who dealt in old clothes and other articles in auction<sup>(15)</sup>.

Surrounding this medley of shops and marts were the different residential quarters. These quarters, however, were often occupied by the people of one tribe such as the Danagla, Jaalin, Shaigia, or foreign merchants of the same nationality such as the Maghrabeen of N.Africa, Egyptians, Levantine, or Europeans<sup>(16)</sup>. However, these divisions into quarters were not based on religion,

although the Europeans, who were Christians, used to occupy certain quarters as in Khartoum, such as the Italians, Greeks and Copts; they were mainly due to the feeling of security and safety these people felt by being together either to safeguard their interests or as a protection against raid or attack by the natives. The Europeans usually clustered near the government buildings, and this led to a marked demarcation of the towns into European and native sectors. This was typical of Khartoum, and this division has been maintained ever since. The desire for security also explains the grouping of the members of the same tribe in quarters in the major trade centres.

These were the main features of the trade centres of the 19th century Sudan, of which the main ones will be studied in more detail.

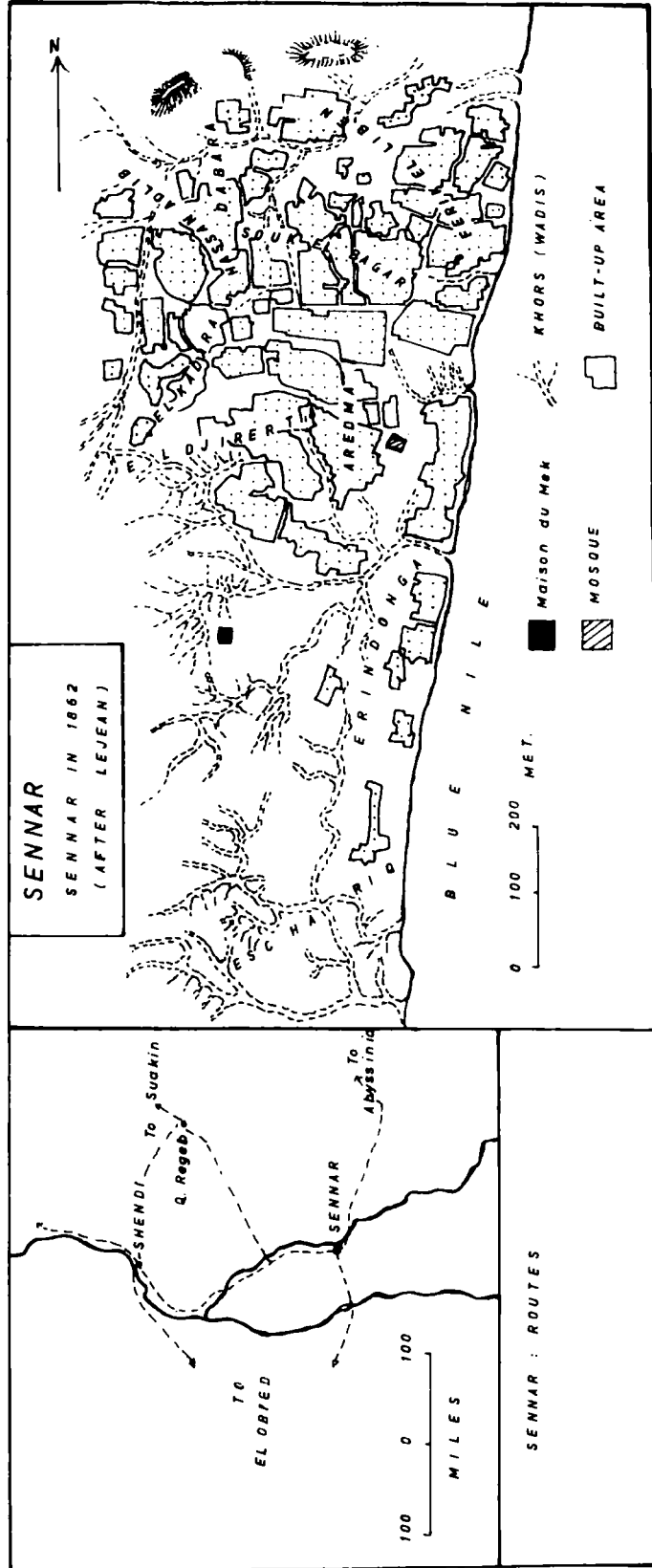
#### The Main Trade Centres :-

These centres varied in size, according to their commercial activity, from small villages,<sup>(17)</sup> where day-to-day transactions consisted mainly of the produce of the neighbouring villages, to the major centres to which the products of the whole country gravitated. Among the latter category, we can include Sennar, Shendi, Berber, Suakin, el Obied, Cobbe and el Fasher, Kassala, Khartoum and Omdurman.<sup>(18)</sup>

#### Sennar (Fig. 36) :

Sennar was situated about 150 miles above Khartoum, and, as a centre of trade, it had already lost much of its former importance when the Turks came in 1821<sup>(19)</sup>. Thus, by 1860, the population dwindled to about 4000 people and most of the town was in ruins, and by the 1890s, the town disappeared to become just an ancient site composed of rubble and mounds. In fact, Sennar began to lose much of its trade to Shendi from late 18th century onwards, and although Burckhardt (1813) put Shendi as being the most important centre after Sennar and Cobbe, it is doubtful whether

Fig. 36- TRADE CENTRES : SENNAR



Sennar could compare with Shendi in trade, or whether it commanded the supremacy it attained in the 17th and 18th centuries as the capital of the Fung Kingdom.

Geographically, however, Sennar was not in the centre of the Kingdom; it was situated about 500 miles from the northern frontier at Mushu. As regards to its choice as the capital, Crawford<sup>(20)</sup> suggested three speculative, yet plausible, reasons. The first is its nearness to the source of man-power in the south whence the original Fung Army came; the second is its central location in the region of cultivators directly controlled by its kings, and the third is that it was placed in the far side of the Blue Nile - a wide natural moat that saved it from certain destructions. In addition, nearness to Abyssinia could have been another factor, since from that country, Sennar used to import all its needs of coffee and slaves, mainly female.

For these reasons, and probably others, Sennar came to be the meeting place for caravan routes from different directions (Fig.36), but Crawford relates this fact to being a consequence and not a cause<sup>(21)</sup>.

As far as trade is concerned, Sennar had commercial contacts extending to Cairo, Abyssinia and Darfur, and used to have three market-places during her glorious days (17th century), where every kind of articles, foreign and local, were exposed for sale. But, as has already been stated, the town had lost much of its former trade, and in 1862 (Fig.36), there was only one market, the 'cattle market' (Souk el Bugar). The process of decay can be perceived by looking at the many khors or wadis which had already penetrated into the heart of the town<sup>(22)</sup>. The different quarters seem to be remnants of earlier thriving trading communities that carried trade with other centres, especially Shendi.

Shendi (Fig.37)

Shendi is situated more or less in the region of regular rainfall which, geographically speaking, belongs to the south rather than the north. Its rise to supremacy, however, is mainly derived from its location at a bottleneck of caravan routes<sup>(23)</sup> (Fig.36 and 55). Here, at the intersection of the main trade axes, Shendi grew into the metropolis of trade in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with trade connections extending north to Egypt, west to Darfur and Wadai, and to Abyssinia and Suakin to the east and to Sennar in the south (Fig.37). In 1814, it consisted of 800-1000 houses and a population of 6000, derived mainly from the local Jaalin, and merchant sellers from all parts of the country who occupied the various quarters of the town, each quarter being separated from the other by public places or markets<sup>(24)</sup>. But, despite its commercial importance, there were few artisans, and in 1814, Burckhardt met some blacksmiths, tanners, silversmiths, potters and carpenters, but no weavers<sup>(25)</sup>. This can be attributed largely to the fact that such crafts were not concentrated in the hands of specialists, but were widely distributed<sup>(26)</sup>. Moreover, all people depended on commerce as their main source of income, and, as a result, agriculture was neglected except for some market-gardening and cattle breeding to supply the market with provisions.

The market was held in an open space, and consisted mainly of three main rows of small shops built of mud, one behind the other, in the shape of niches covered by mats, and mainly occupied by the rich merchants<sup>(27)</sup>; other merchants used the ground and shelters made of mats. Here were displayed European, Egyptian, Indian, Levantine as well as local products from all over the country<sup>(28)</sup>. Foreign goods included soaps, cotton fabrics, hardware, cambrics, muslins, spices and perfumes from Egypt, the Levant, Germany and Trieste, England and India. A great part of these articles were exchanged for slaves, the staple



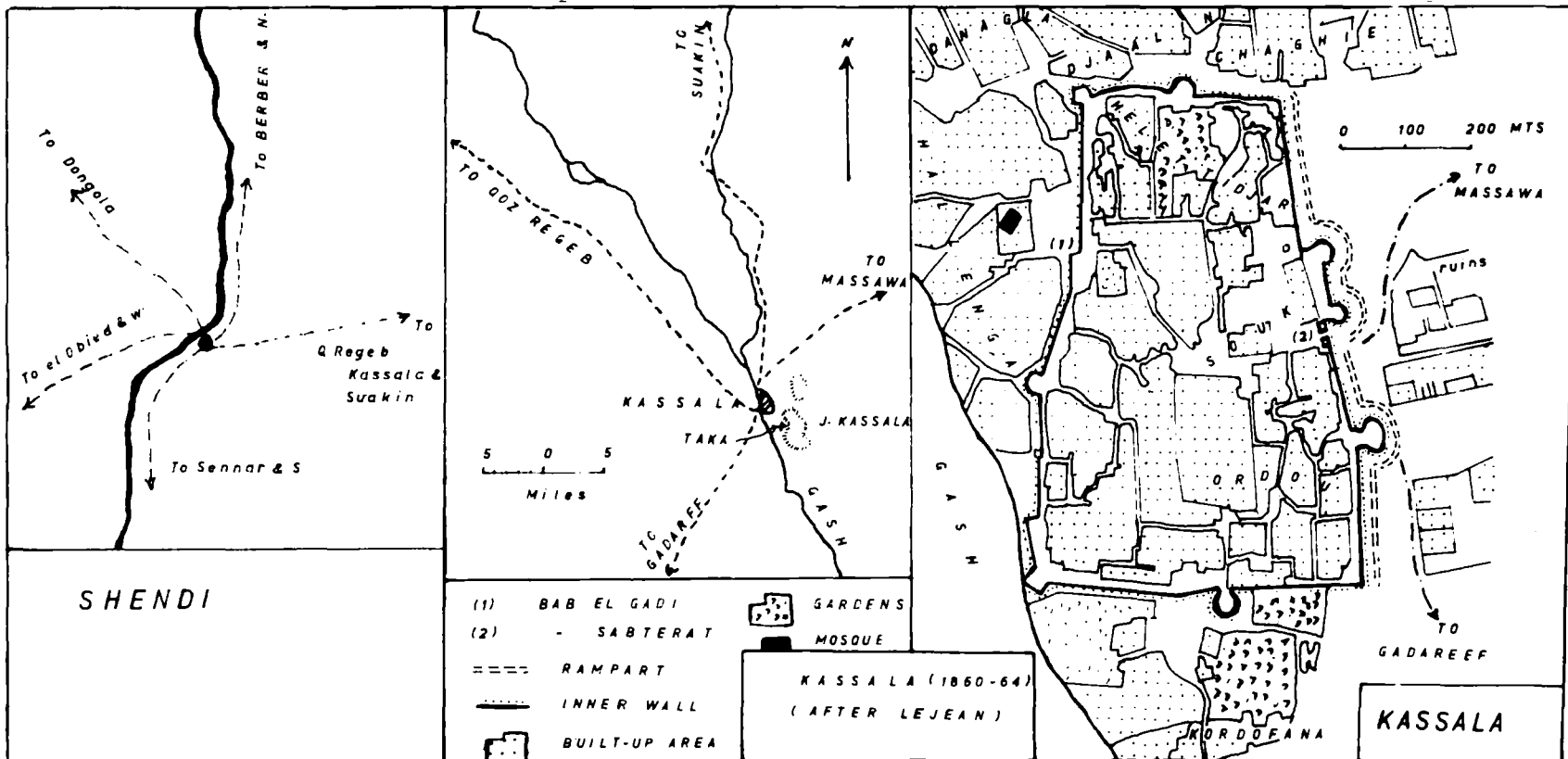


FIG. 37- TRADE CENTRES : SHENDI AND KASSALA

article of trade in Shendi before 1821; millet and damour formed the media of exchange for small bargains, while foreign silver coins<sup>(29)</sup> were used in large transactions. It is curious that, inspite of this great commercial activity, the ruling class could not coin its own money.

It is, perhaps, due to such snags as absence of coinage as well as its complete dependence on distant areas for her staple food supply, grains, that Shendi could not recover from the devastations of 1822 in the hands of the Egyptian army. With the new regime other centres, both old and new, such as Khartoum and Berber, began to emerge.

### Berber (Fig.38)

The importance of Berber as a port of call and as a trade centre came from its location, for here the Nile comes to the nearest point to the Red Sea. Moreover, it was the first port of call for caravans coming from Egypt via the eastern desert route. Thus, it had the first pick of goods from Egypt and, later in the 1880s and 1890s, from Suakin, but its importance as a trade centre was more or less enhanced after the decline of Shendi in 1821. Before this date, however, its trade came not from the south, but from Dongola and Shaigia country in the west, which was small compared with the bigger volume of trade that Shendi attracted from Sennar, Kordofan and Darfur. Thus, when the Shaigia raids put a stop to trade from Dongola in the 18th century, Berber began to decline, and in 1814 Burckhardt found most of its buildings in ruins<sup>(30)</sup>. Thus, as a result of the marauding activities of the Shaigia and the Mograth Arabs together with the rapacity of the ruling Mek, the caravans had to take a more southerly route to Shendi, and those which resorted to Berber, except for a few, stayed as short as possible before passing quickly to Shendi.<sup>(31)</sup> However, there was no direct intercourse with the south except with Shendi to which it always remained second in importance, and all caravans coming from the south stayed there to engage proper guides and for other preparations for the desert journey to Egypt.<sup>(32)</sup>

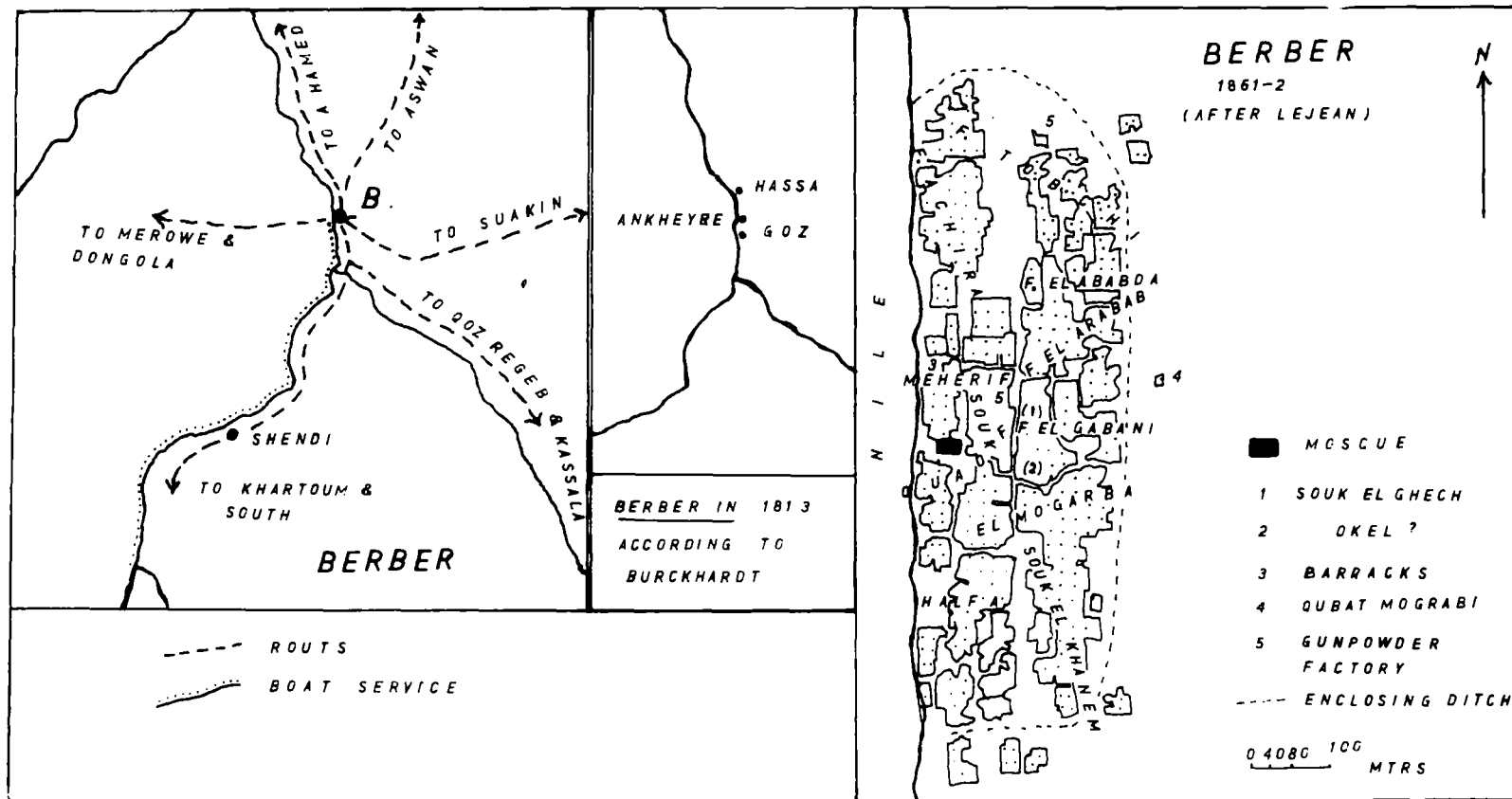


FIG. 38- TRADE CENTRES : BERBER

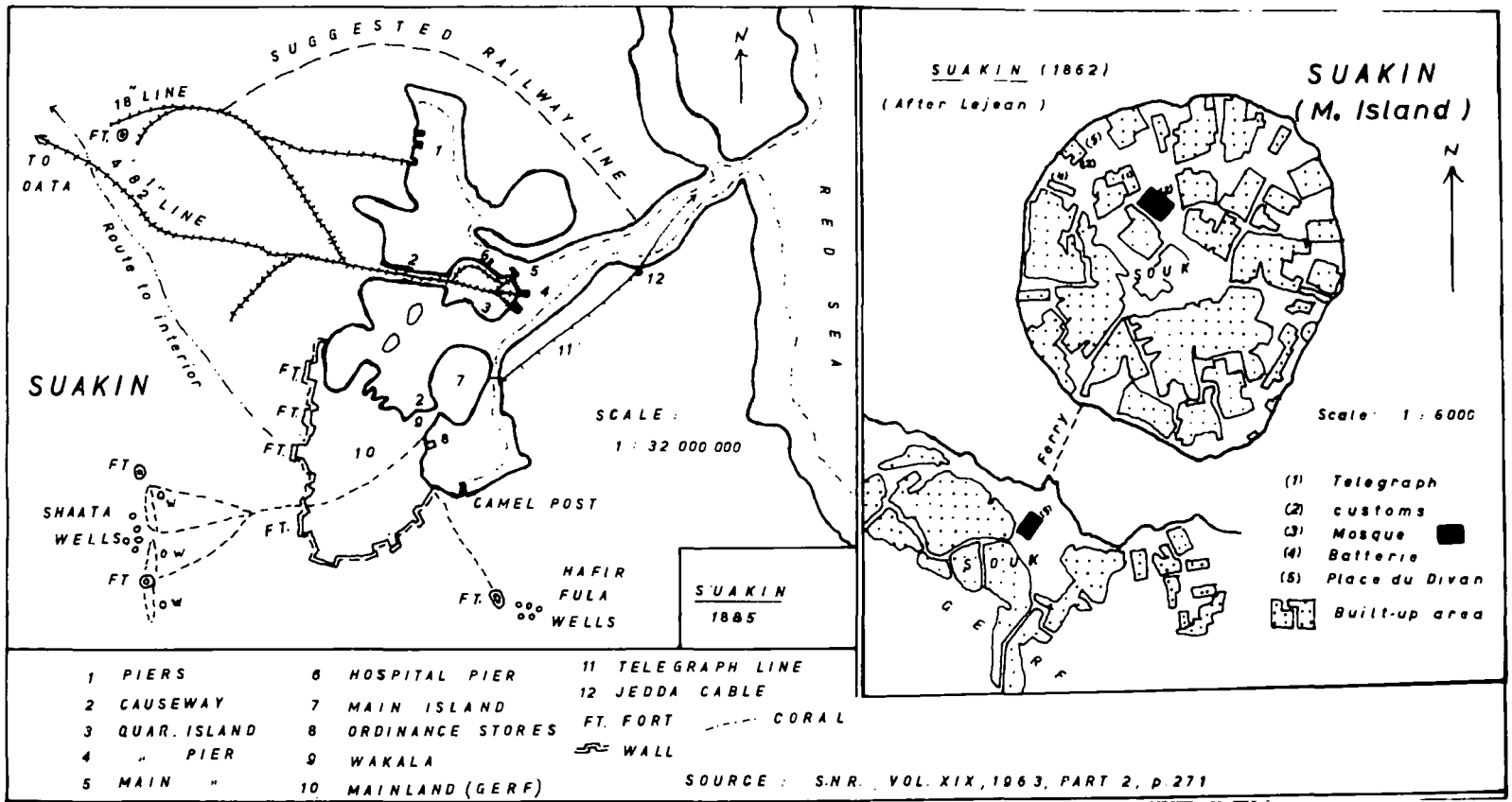
As regards the origin of the name 'Berber' and the date when the town came into being, very little is known. In 1814, the town consisted of four distinct villages, each with a name, known collectively under the general name of Berber, which Burckhardt called Ankheyre, Goz el Funnye, Hassa and Goz<sup>(33)</sup> (Fig.38). They were situated at about half an hour's walk from the Nile, and without regular streets<sup>(34)</sup>. In 1821, Cailliaud described Berber as being situated 300 yards from the river and a quarter of a league from north to south, and the main village, el Mekheyer, consisted of three lines of houses separated by two streets<sup>(35)</sup>. In 1861-2, it consisted of one big village (Fig.38) divided into different quarters which were occupied by different people. The main market (souk) was situated about 160 metres from the river, and consisted mainly of blocks of houses separated by narrow streets. The town was surrounded by a ditch, and as the administrative centre of Berber province and as a market-town, it had connections with Khartoum via boats and land routes, and with Egypt via Abu Hamed and Aswan, and with Kassala via Qoz Regeh. During the Mahdist period, Berber flourished as a custom-town on the only open route to Suakin.

#### Suakin (Fig.39)

The early history of Suakin is more connected with the history of the Red Sea than that of the Sudan from which it was separated by a desert belt of about 200 miles. Thus, it did not actually belong to the hinterland it served, which was inhabited by nomadic tribes who had no use for the port and could not, themselves, develop it. But the dependence of foreigners, who controlled all trade, on these nomads for their water and food supplies, led to a dual control of the port, and eventually resulted in the emergence of communities of traders whose vying interests created a continuity of a sort in the life and trade of Suakin,<sup>(36)</sup> and other ports.

However, the supremacy of Suakin dates back to 1422 when it replaced Aidab as the main port on the African side of the

Fig. 39- TRADE CENTRES: SUAKIN



Red Sea until 1905 when it was replaced by Port Sudan. During the period 1851-65, it was under the Turkish governor of Jedda, and during this period, the port was enlarged and the harbour was improved, taxes and custom were levied on ships and water supply problems were solved by digging wells on the mainland. Traders from India, Cathay, Ceylon and Arabia frequented the port for slaves<sup>(37)</sup> and other articles such as gum and ivory; there was no European enterprise yet. But the closing up of the Red Sea to all vessels to prevent the penetration of the Portugese, led to stagnation in trade.<sup>(38)</sup>

However, in 1865, Suakin was leased to Egypt, and under its rule new houses were built and Egyptian traders began to settle, and as a result trade began to expand.<sup>(39)</sup> This expansion, however, was followed by heavy taxes and custom dues which, coupled with lack of regular shipping, resulted in an increase of storage charge. Thus, the trade was crippled and population began to decrease until 1869 when the Suez Canal was opened<sup>(40)</sup>. Suakin began to revive with the increased shipping in the Red Sea, and began to attract traders from Europe, India and the Arab countries. Yet, the trade of Suakin was still in the hands of Jedda merchants to whom Suakin merchants were only receiving and forwarding agents. The land routes, however, still carried much of Sudan trade to Egypt until 1878-9 when Suakin began to attract much of the trade from the interior. Thus, to cope with this growing trade, a large warehouse (wakala) was built in 1881 and trade reached its maximum ever in 1882-83.<sup>(41)</sup> But this did not last long, and from 1884 to 1898 Suakin maintained spasmodic connections with the interior because of the blockade there and the military operations inland and the troubled political conditions in the interior (see Chapter Two).

However, the main town of Suakin is built on an island, the Geziera, which housed all the government houses and the residences of the rich people and the ruling elite<sup>(42)</sup> (Fig.39). The mainland, called 'Geyf' or 'Gerf', was inhabited by the

natives who were derived from the local Beja tribes and the Nile people; here were the main market, the wakala and the ordinance stores. In 1881, the island was connected with the mainland by a causeway, and the hospital, quarantine and more piers were built to cope with the increasing trade. In 1883, the railway lines were laid and the town was surrounded by a wall from the landward side as a protection against the impending Mahdist attack. The main source of water supply was the Shaata wells<sup>(43)</sup> from where pipelines were laid to the town in 1892. However, the narrow and coral-fringed entrance, the lack of light-house and deep-water quays made the harbour unfit to accommodate the large steamers, and, eventually, in 1905, Suakin was replaced by Port Sudan.

In the western Sudan, the main trading centres were el Obied, Cobbe and el Fasher.

El Obied. (Fig.40)

This town was, and still is, the main trading centre in western Sudan, and seems to have flourished as a market-town long before its occupation by the Egyptians in 1821. Thus, according to Burckhardt, it had close trade connections with Shendi, Dongola and Darfur<sup>(44)</sup>.

However, the exact date of its emergence as a market-centre is not known, but it is very probable that it existed as a small settlement from early 17th century; but it is definite that it owes its existence and location to presence of water supply.<sup>(45)</sup> Thus, around these water sources, the village grew up into the political and commercial centre of Kordofan until 1821 when it was destroyed by the invading Egyptian army. However, the town was rebuilt in the 1820s and, although it shrank in size, it consisted of four residential quarters and a population of 12,000<sup>(46)</sup> in 1837, derived mainly from local natives, Fur, West Africans, N.Africans, Turks, Danagla and Jaalin.

The residential quarters, comprising six villages in all, were distinct in population and appearance, and were separated from each other by small wadis<sup>(47)</sup>. The villages were situated at random and, except for the mosque, which was built of brick, the official houses were simple huts of clay, and the rest were straw huts. The six villages were, first Wady Neghele, which was entirely inhabited by the Danagla and foreign merchants; secondly, el 'Orta', the Camp, or, as it was generally known, the town of the Turks, where all the government and army buildings were situated; here the Bazaar was also situated. Thirdly, Wady Soffie where Negroes, mainly of Fur origin, resided; fourthly, the Takruri, the village of the pilgrims from West Africa; fifthly, Kongeri, the village of immigrants from Darfur, and sixthly, Mogghrebeen, which was resided by people from N.Africa.

However, the life-centre of the town was the market which was held in an open sandy plain near the government buildings. Here the merchants exposed their goods, but they were not displayed at random since every kind of good had its own mart. Thus, first came the animals mart where sheep, cattle, goats, camels, etc. were exposed for sale. Then came the 'Jellabas', who mainly dealt in Egyptian and European goods, followed by water dealers and lastly the women market and the slave mart.<sup>(48)</sup>

Thus, situated nearly midway between el Fasher and the Nile valley, it attracted traders from within and without the country.<sup>(49)</sup> This was facilitated by its wide trade connections (Fig.40), and the variety of its products which included gum, feathers and hides<sup>(50)</sup>. Thus, although its trade languished during the Mahdiya, nevertheless, it has emerged as the main trading centre of western Sudan,<sup>(51)</sup> followed by el Fasher.

#### Cobbe and el Fasher (Fig.40).

Cobbe, the terminus of the famous Darb el Arbain route from Asiout in Egypt, lay some 35 miles northwest of el Fasher. Although deserted now, it was once the main commercial



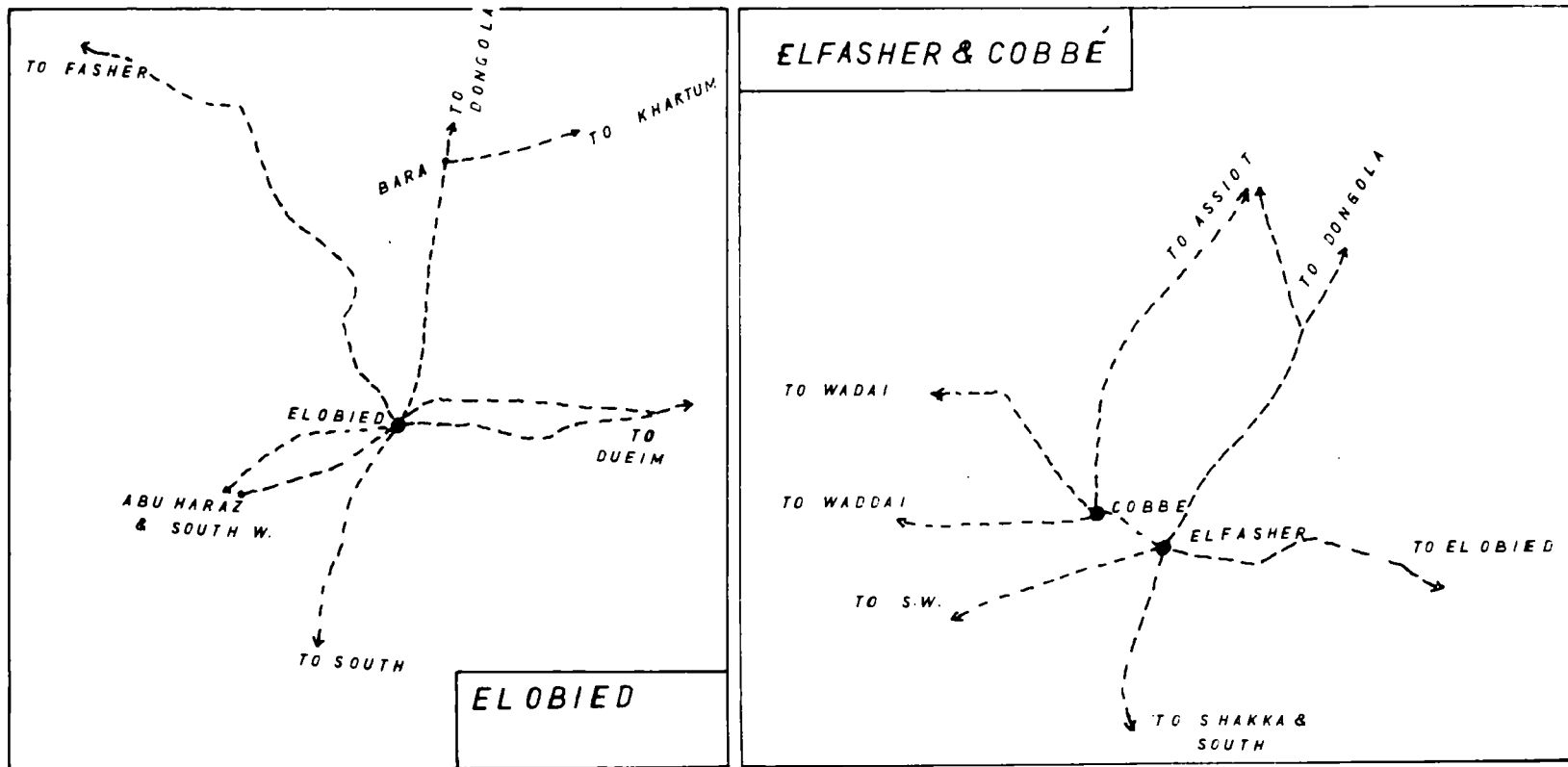


FIG. 40- TRADE CENTRES : ELOBIED, ELFASHER & COBBE

town of western Sudan, and in 1814, Burckhardt<sup>(52)</sup> cited Cobbe, after Sennar, as the second town of the whole country in terms of commerce. In 1797, Browne<sup>(53)</sup> described it as a long narrow town of scattered houses lying in a wide plain surrounded by low hills. It had an uncertain water supply from shallow wells dug in the bed of a wadi running on the southeast side; many of these wells, however, ran dry during the dry season. He estimated the population at 6000 most of which were derived from foreign stocks such as Egyptians, Tunisians, N.Africans, and the riverine people of Dongola and Mahass. To supply these people and the market need of provisions, about 10-15 oxen and 40-60 sheep were slaughtered<sup>(54)</sup> on the market days.

However, Cobbe seems to have been an agglomeration of four villages which depended on it for their supplies of food and goods. These villages were first, Hillet Hassan, occupied by the Danagla; secondly, Hillet Humonar and Nukti; thirdly, Hillet Atama and Hillet Yemin Ullah, and fourthly, Hillet el Fuggara and Bweri<sup>(55)</sup>.

El Tunisi,<sup>(56)</sup> however, states that Cobbe could produce 6000 fighting men, but goes on to say that in his time (1803), el Fasher (Tendetly) was the capital of Darfur, having been made by Sultan Abdel Rahman in 1791. Cobbe must have remained the main commercial centre for some time after this date; but it is difficult to state exactly when and why it was deserted. However, the cause has been attributed to lowering of water-table, but this seems to have been a contributing factor or the result of neglect due to social factors that are not clear<sup>(57)</sup>. It is also probable that when Darfur began to look more to the Nile valley and the Red Sea for her trade, especially during the Egyptian rule, the more easterly-situated el Fasher, with better supplies of water, proved to be more suitable than Cobbe which often looked to the west and north.

Yet the fact remains that Cobbe was a flourishing trade centre until some time in the first half of the 19th century. It had a large market which was held twice a week (Monday and Friday) in a large space to the southwest of the town where all foreign and local articles were displayed<sup>(58)</sup>. It had trade connections with Wadai to the west, and whence to Tripoli, and Kordofan to the east, Egypt to the north and with the southern parts of Darfur (Fig.40), until it was superseded by el Fasher.

el Fasher :

This town might have existed as a small settlement before it was chosen as the capital of Darfur in 1791. It was then known as Tendelty, and was built on a plain traversed by a torrent which, according to el Tunisi, joined a stream called Kour, which ran dry in summer when wells were dug in its bed<sup>(59)</sup>. It lies in the zone where the sand-dunes gradually peter out more or less in an irregular alternation of clay wadi-bottoms liable to flooding and dunes of red sand. The town consisted of huts made of straw, but were decorated differently to reflect the social status of the owner. Thus, some used ostrich eggs as ornaments, while those of the Sultan had red and white bands, and only his women's quarters having mud walls and roofed with rare reeds<sup>(60)</sup>. The imperial inclosure was situated on a high elevation, with all the huts and sheds for women, officers and slaves inside<sup>(61)</sup>.

As regards to its trade, the clothes the people wore reflect the wide trade connections of this town. There were shirts of fine stuff from Egypt<sup>(62)</sup>, cashmere cloth from India via Suakin, Muslins from Egypt, calicoes from England and silk dresses from the Levant and Europe. Women wore necklaces made of ambre, beads, coral, agate and glass; perfumes included 'sembul' from Egypt, sandal wood from India and myrtle from Europe. In return for these articles, el Fasher used to export gum, ivory, feathers, but slaves constituted the backbone of Darfur exports until its abolishment in 1878, which did much to kill much of her former

trade, especially with Egypt via Darb el Arbain. As a result, her wide trade connections (Fig.40) dwindled more, and during the Mahdiya, it maintained spasmodic contacts with Egypt and the Nile valley, and in the 1890s, it began to look to Wadai for her imports. In the east, where the actual fighting was going on, many important centres, such as Kassala, were also declining under the stagnant trade conditions.

### Kassala (Fig.37)

Kassala is situated at the head of the Gash Delta, and probably the site is ancient since the name appears in inscriptions found at Axum<sup>(63)</sup>. In 1814, the village consisted of many tents divided into 'duars' or circles, each duar being separated from the other by fences lower than the thorny inclosures which surrounded the whole encampment<sup>(64)</sup>. However, there were two types of houses : the permanent ones on higher ground, which were mainly built of mats, except for some with mud walls, and temporary camps on the plain which were entirely made of mats and thatch. The market place, called 'Souk el Hadandawa' (1814), was situated in the outskirts of the village, and was held once a week during which foreign and local goods were displayed for sale.

The town Kassala<sup>(65)</sup> was founded by the Turks in 1841 as the administrative centre of Takka Province. It is surprising that the town had little to do with the rich Gash delta to the north; its primary function was that of a garrison-town, situated near a lawless and raid-infested borderland. Even when cotton was introduced in the delta in the 1870s, Qoz Regeb, and not Kassala, was chosen as the marketing centre for cotton from the southern part of the Delta while that from the northern part was to be sent to Suakin. In 1860 it was surrounded by mud walls or ramparts pierced by gates with flanking towers (Fig.37), mainly to keep off the predatory Arabs. The rampart enclosed the market and the government houses, but the

residential quarters were outside the wall. In 1870, it had a population of 5000 which was already decimated by epidemics and fevers<sup>(66)</sup>.

Despite these hazards, the town was a flourishing trade centre, and was connected with Suakin, Massawa, Gadaref and with the Nile valley via Qoz Regeb (Fig.37). In 1860, it replaced Gadaref as the main centre for Abyssinian products which, together with other products, such as gum, ivory and feathers, collected here in transit to Suakin. Locally cultivated crops included cotton, tobacco, grains and market-gardening, and there was brisk trade in grains between Kassala and other centres. In the 1890s, however, the town declined as many other centres, and maintained spasmodic trade connections with Suakin because of the military operations in the Red Sea area, and carried some clandestine trade with Massawa by smugglers and slave traders (Fig.58).

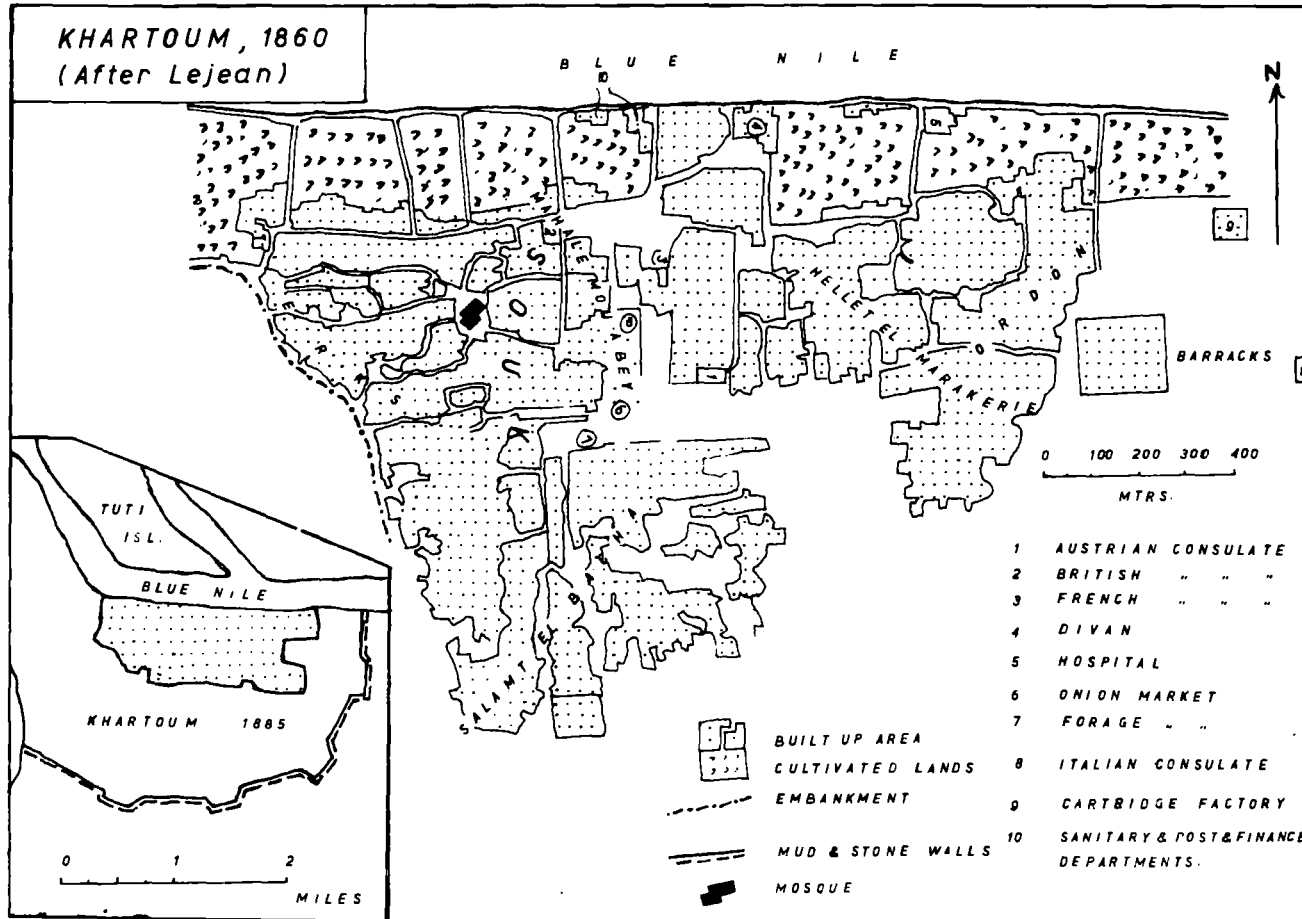
However, Khartoum and Omdurman has remained the main commercial centres of the Sudan.

#### Khartoum (Fig.41).

There is little information about early Khartoum, and until early 17th century the site of Khartoum is believed to have been occupied by hunters and fishermen, and was used as a halting place for people crossing the Nile<sup>(67)</sup>. Only Tuti Island was inhabited, mainly by the Mahass some of whom left the Island in 1691 and settled in Khartoum, and were later followed by the Jaalin and Mahass<sup>(68)</sup>. But it is curious that neither Poncet (1698) nor Bruce (1771) mentioned Khartoum despite the strong tradition that a considerable village in the vicinity had been plundered by the Shilluk<sup>(69)</sup>.

However, the town, with its name, Khartoum, was founded during the Egyptian period, but as to who laid the foundation of the town, there is no consensus of opinion. An English map of "Africa Including the Latest Discoveries", dated 1817 has no reference to any town at the confluence of the two rivers.

Fig. 41- TRADE CENTRES : KHARTOUM



Yet it is agreed that the first Egyptian governor-general selected the site of Khartoum, then merely huts, as the headquarters of the new administration<sup>(70)</sup>. From then Khartoum began to gain importance as the main administrative and commercial centre of the Sudan. Thus, in 1826, the 'Mudiria' was built, and Khartoum was described as consisting of a collection of thirty mud houses and straw huts. Population began to increase and, consequently, the town grew in size, and in 1839 it consisted of barracks, a hospital and some 400-500 houses.<sup>(71)</sup>

Nevertheless, Khartoum possessed no industries except an excellent location that gradually led to a thriving commerce which, later, attracted merchants and adventurers from inside as well as outside the Sudan. Thus, Egyptians, Greeks, Syrians, Italians, French and Maltese came as merchants and established firms. From Dongola and Berber provinces were attracted those who fled from their lands (Chapter One), and when the White Nile was opened for navigation in 1850, boat-builders and sail-makers came, and, thus, slowly an industry came into being including oil pressing and soap making.

By the 1860s, foreign consulates were established, namely the British, Austrian, French and American, and as a result of the commercial activity of the consuls and European firms<sup>(72)</sup>, Khartoum became the main centre of slave and ivory and gum trade. But it was not healthy and due to lack of drainage, breakouts of malaria and typhus were common and this led to fluctuations in the number of the inhabitants, which, however, was never counted.<sup>(73)</sup> Nevertheless, trade still flourished and, in 1873, we hear of dockyards and steam engines, and gum sifting by size and quality in 1874.

Originally the town seems to have been built on no precise plan except that the gardens wanted proximity to the water and the government offices the protection of the troops and points of embarkation<sup>(74)</sup>. Thus, bordering the river was the fringe of

vegetation, then the gardens and date-palms, with the palace, divan, hospital, and other departments (Fig.41). Along the narrow way shelving the water was the main depot for merchandise for either shipment or for camel transport. Further inland were the different residential quarters and bazaars. However, these quarters differed in terms of residents. The first of these, Hakimdariya Quarter, housed the government offices, the barracks, the quays, the hospital and the Divan and the palace. Then the Mosque Quarter to the west, and here were situated the mosque, and the market which was divided into European and Arab markets. Later, it became the residential area for Europeans and other rich merchants, and here were situated the Austrian and the Italian consulates and the Roman Catholic missionary buildings. The Native Quarters were situated in the fringes of the town, such as Salamt el Bacha where Nubians and Danagla lived; then Teres, near the earthen embankment, where Egyptians and Sudanese lived. There were also separate quarters for soldiers and ex-service men of Negroid origins. From the dangerous floods of the White Nile, the town was protected by earthen embankments.

Thus, situated at the confluence of two rivers, Khartoum was the gateway through which all communications between north and south passed. It was connected by boat and land with Berber and hence to Suakin and Egypt, and with Kordofan, Darfur, Dongola, and the southern provinces of Fashoda and Equatoria. As a result, all goods collected here before dispatch to Suakin or Egypt for export to the outside world. Thus, the bazaars were the life-centre of the town, where were assembled every commodity ranging from those intended purely for the consumption of foreign communities to those imported for the Sudanese all over the country.

However, this commercial activity did not last long; thus with the fall of Khartoum in 1885 in the hands of the Mahdists, a period of stagnation followed. As a result, many Europeans found their way out of the country, and many native traders went bankrupt



or crossed the river, with their remaining capital, to Omdurman, the capital of the new regime.

Omdurman (Fig.42)

With the establishment of the Mahdist regime in 1885, Omdurman succeeded Khartoum as the main commercial and administrative centre of the Sudan. Before being chosen as the capital, it consisted of a few huts, and the place was famous for its quarries from which building stones and lime were brought for building construction in Khartoum during the Egyptian period. The site where the capital was first erected was a jungle of bush and pits. However, it began to gain importance as a commercial centre during the short period of the Mahdi and the first years of the Khalifa rule when foreign merchants, mainly Syrians, Greeks and Jews, were still tolerated. Later, due to the monopolisation of trade and the strong centralisation of government at Omdurman, the town began to attract trade from all parts of the country. Thus, warehouses for gum, ivory, grains and feathers were built where all these articles were stored before dispatch to Suakin for export. From Omdurman boats and caravans left north for Berber and south for Dueim and the Geziera and west to Kordofan.

The principal market place was situated in the western outskirts of the town (Fig.38), and was attended by merchants from all over the country. It consisted of a strange medley of shops and stalls, workshops and straw huts; <sup>(75)</sup> the whole affairs in the market was supervised by one of the Khalifa's men. The market was divided into marts separated from each other by lines, and each mart was apportioned to a certain kind of goods. Thus, cloth dealers, druggists, green grocers, salt and meat vendors and craftsmen had their special quarters as well as coffee shops, firewood vendors, builders, etc. There were special sections allotted for women. <sup>(76)</sup> There were some brick huts for storing goods during the night. The residential quarters housed people from all parts of the country, who flocked in during the famine of 1889-90, thus resulting in acute

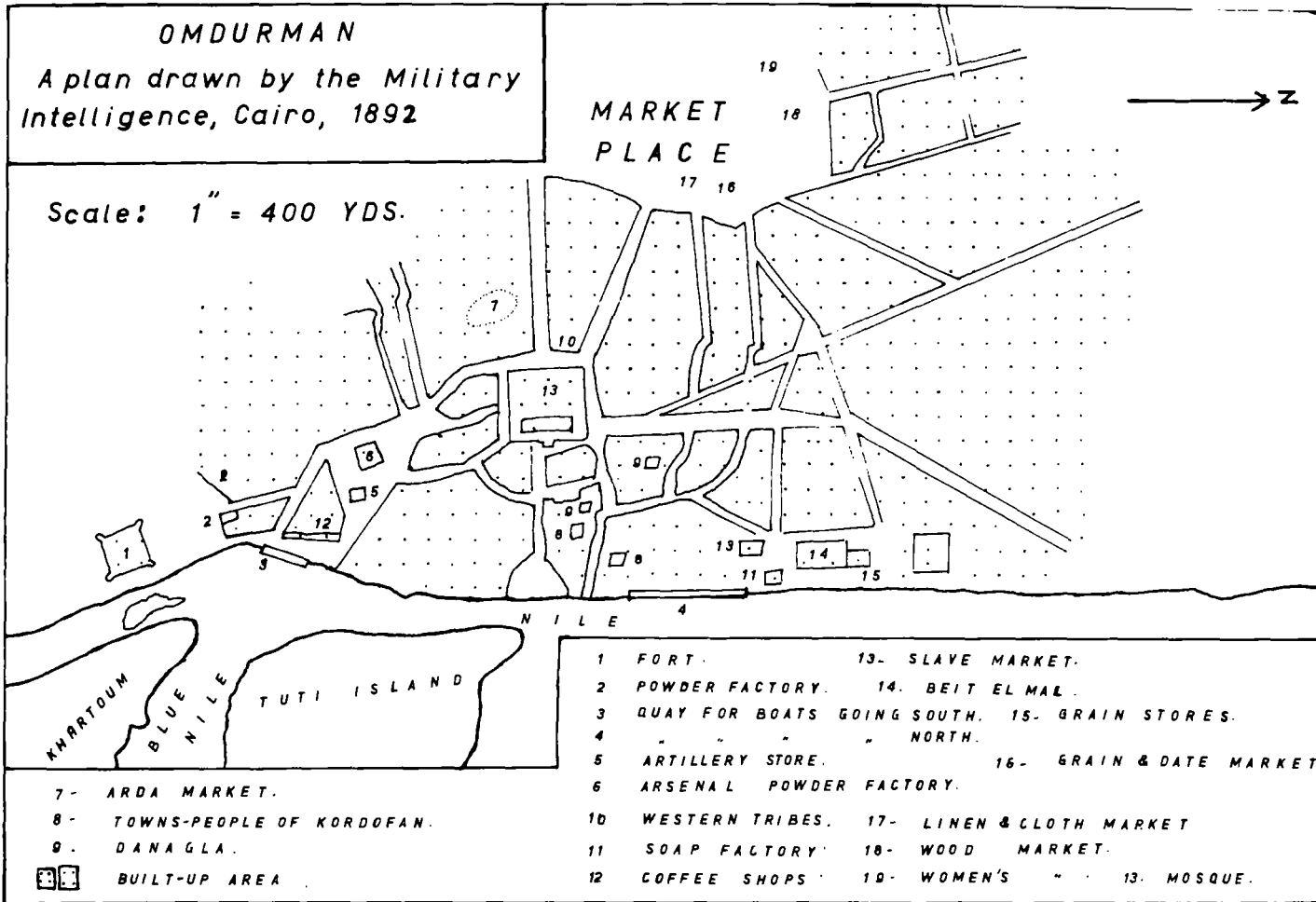


FIG. 42- TRADE CENTRES : OMDURMAN.

slum problems. But due to the bad economic conditions during the whole Mahdists' period, trade passed through ebbs and flows; there was a blockade at Suakin, and, to aggravate matters, there was no strong currency to facilitate transactions. Moreover, the country was impoverished by famines and wars, and finally in 1898 the regime fell. With the new regime, the Condominium, Khartoum once more became the capital, and as before, it has remained the main centre of European enterprise while Omdurman still houses the largest native traders community in the Sudan.

To generalise about the Sudanese trading centres is difficult, but the following points may be made with Figures 36 to 42 in mind.

Taken as living social units, these centres show some variety of pattern and any attempt to generalise in this respect is, therefore, hazardous. However, these centres were not planned; they grew or decayed, as the case may be, according to their changing fortunes which, in turn, were subject to the changing political conditions of the time. Buildings were not set up according to any visible plan; lanes and paths simply went where no houses blocked the movement of traffic, and in most cases were irregular except for some quarters of Khartoum and Omdurman (Fig.41 and 42). The choice of the site for a house was likely to be determined by many considerations without sociological relevance, but among the sociological reasons that played an important role was the desire to build as close as possible to one's next of kin. Thus the presence of different quarters occupied by the same tribal group can be explained (Figs.37 and 38). This is how clusters of houses and large family compounds came to feature as often rather notable elements in the structure of most of these centres. Of course, the style of building varied greatly throughout the country according to the available material and local traditions.

However, a rather high density of buildings in the built-up area was fairly common; people lived together rather than each on or near his land. Usually, the religious centre, the mosque, was more or less centrally located, and it was not unusual to find some village shops or the main market nearby as for example in

el Obied. In other cases, the chief's palace or the government offices acted as an attraction for houses and also the market place. This urban concentration can be explained in part by the generally sparse distribution of water supplies, as in the western and central Sudan, but more especially by the need for security in a thinly populated area where predatory nomads ranged uncontrolled. This security was provided, on one hand, by clustering round the Chief's dwelling, or the shrine of a holy man, as for example at Abu Hamed and Damer. Khartoum's nucleus developed around a religious school. On the other hand, security was provided by rivers or steep hills as in the case of Sennar, Khartoum and Kassala. In western Sudan, where water supply determined the location of villages, houses naturally clustered round wells or straggled along wadis such as el Obied, el Fasher and Cobbe.

In the northern riverine areas, where settlement was possible only along the Nile, a more or less linear type of settlement was common, the built-up area being separated by the strip of cultivable land along the river as in the case of Berber, Shendi and Khartoum (especially at the early stages of its growth; see Fig. 41).

However, despite these variations in patterns, all these centres had more or less similar forms and functions. Most of them were commercial and administrative centres, either of their respective provinces, such as Berber, Kassala (Taka), Suakin, Sennar, el Fasher (Darfur) and el Obied (Kordofan), or the whole country, such as Sennar (16th-early 19th centuries), Khartoum (1821-1885) and Omdurman (1885-1898). These functions were reflected in their markets, government buildings and also fortifications which either enclosed the whole town, as in the case of Khartoum, Suakin or Berber, or just the centre of the town, as in the case of Kassala (Figs. 37, 38, 39 and 41). The market was usually situated within the walls of the old town, or near the main mosque, and this, as already mentioned, was dictated by the needs of defence in case of raids from outside, as in the case of Suakin, Khartoum and the garrison-town of Kassala. Moreover, people took the opportunity by their visit to the mosque to combine

business and prayer.

Thus, the mosque came to be a typical institution of all major centres in the Sudan. However, although some large centres, such as Khartoum, Omdurman, and Suakin, had more than one mosque, there was normally one large principal mosque in every centre, which most of the people attended. The mosque was not only a place for praying and sermons, but also had extensive social functions, as a place of judgement and law courts, as in Omdurman, and centre of learning and education as in Damer<sup>(1)</sup>.

Another feature of these centres were the public places or the 'bouza' before the Turkish rule, and the cafes after, as in Omdurman, el Obied, Khartoum. The former, the bouza, or drinking houses were common in every centre such as Berber, Shendi, Sennar and Dongola and the debauchery and drunkenness within these were the subject of comment by all the travellers who visited these centres, such as Burckhardt, Hoskins, and Cailliaud. The cafes came to be dominant features of nearly every centre during the Turkish and Mahdist's periods. To them people resorted, particularly in the evenings, to talk over their business and transactions as well as friendly chat. They were usually situated near the market and were the traditional form of entertainment, or the equivalent of cinemas in modern times.

Besides these, each of these centres had government institutions, such as the 'Divan', the local seat of government, and the barracks and other military institutions, such as gun-powder factories and arsenals as in Berber, Khartoum and Omdurman (Figs. 39, 41 and 42). Some big centres, such as Khartoum and Suakin had hospitals and quarantine areas. Then there were the residential quarters.

All the governmental institutions were built either of sun-dried brick or, in some cases, of stone, as in Khartoum while the other quarters were built either of mud, sun-dried brick or poles and thatch. But, generally speaking, types of housing and the layout of the building differed from one part of the country to another.

Thus, north of about latitude  $14^{\circ}N$ , houses were built of mud or sun-dried bricks because of the lighter rainfall, and had flat roofs made of matting supported by beams cut from palm

trees, which were then plastered by a layer of mud to stop any rain-water from percolating through. However, since foundations were shallow and the materials not strong, houses consisted of one storey, except at Suakin, where coral rocks were available, together with pressures created by the lack of space on the island. Windows were usually small, and many dwellings had no windows except small openings. In the central Sudan, south of  $14^{\circ}\text{N}$ , the heavier rainfall and, in part, the lack of enough water during the dry season, made mud-building inadvisable. Here the main building materials, millet stalks, grass and wood poles, were used to build round huts with conical thatched roofs. These formed common articles of commerce in the main centres. However, where these materials, particularly poles, were difficult to obtain, walls were usually built of mud or stones, the latter being common in Jebel Marra (Fig.2).

With regards to the design of the house, this was affected by the social customs of the people which can in turn be explained by their religion, Islam. Thus, the desire to seclude women from the eyes of strangers necessitated the building of a high wall around the rooms, or the rooms were built at the sides or the corners of the wall. The houses were usually large, but the size varied according to the wealth of the owner, and ranged from one or two-roomed houses for the poor to the large, multi-roomed ones of the rich and rulers, where, as a custom, the whole family used to reside. Beside family rooms, some rooms were reserved for strangers. Some houses in Berber and Shendi, had store rooms where grains and other food articles were stored; some also contained an 'inner court' to keep in animals, such as cattle, sheep and camels, and their fodder, while the 'outer court' contained a well (to provide drinking water for the animals) and mud benches where men sat and transacted their business; the same yard also housed the rooms of the 'public women' - emancipated slaves - who

made bouza and took care of the travellers.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus, most of these large houses were self-contained and this was necessitated by the common outbreaks of famines and the fear of raids.

These were the main trade centres of the Sudan in the 19th century. It should, however, be remembered that most of them grew into important market centres under the prevalent conditions and commercial organisation of the time when transport depended on camels, when political stability was at stake, and when longer journeys meant extra taxes which, consequently, raised the cost of transport and finally resulted in small profits. It was when modern means of transport were introduced and distances became shorter in terms of time that the importance of these centres was put to a severe test which many of them failed to pass. Today, Berber, Shendi, Damer and Sennar are shadows of their pasts; empty shells of ruined buildings are what have remained of Suakin. This decline can be attributed, first, to the centralisation of import and export trade in Khartoum, Omdurman and Port Sudan, and, secondly, to the diversion of the routes to the Red Sea.

References :-

- (1) Those of Shendi and Berber were secular while that of Damer was religious.
- (2) In most cases, they are in form of depressions which act as collecting place for water draining from neighbouring high ground.
- (3) Rivers were not a source of trouble or invasion since navigation was at a primitive stage before 1821.
- (4) Many merchants left their goods at the shrine, as in Abu Hamed, and nobody dared to touch them for fear of being accursed forever. Many travellers offered votives to the shrine after a safe passage through the desert routes.
- (5) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.268. All caravans coming from Damer were not attacked by the marauding Bisharin for fear of being deprived of rain by the religious men of Damer.
- (6) Except for Damer which was a great educational centre.
- (7) He was the chief guide for the whole caravan and thus was responsible for its safe conduct, providing camels and men, and also for other dealings such as sale of goods in the markets.
- (8) According to Burckhardt (p.238) the Egyptian merchants preferred Berber to the more southerly ones, such as Shendi, since they could finish their transactions more quickly and profit by the first opportunity to return through the desert.
- (9) At the time of Burckhardt's visit (1813), many houses were in ruins.
- (10) This complete dependence on trade led later to the sudden decline of most of these centres under the influence of changing trade pattern and economic conditions.
- (11) During the Turkish period, the governor's house, barracks and custom-houses were common features.



- (12) Each market had to provide forage for the caravans and also for the animal population of the centre itself. Other provisions for the caravans included sheep, goats and grains.
- (13) These consisted of firewood and grass or thatch for building purposes.
- (14) During the Mahdiya, the mart for women was rigidly demarcated from that of men for religious reasons.
- (15) Pallme, I. : op.cit., p.209.
- (16) The main centre of European community was Khartoum.
- (17) These were usually halting places on the routes to, or points of arrival or departure from or to, one of these major centres.
- (18) These centres are not arranged according to their importance.
- (19) The process of decay seem to have been accelerated by raids from pagan mountaineers from the hilly region to the south.
- (20) Crawford, O.G.S. : op.cit., p.77
- (21) *ibid*, p.77. He argues on the point that the route from Abyssinia to Egypt, via Gallabat and De barki, which crossed the Blue Nile at Sennar, had to do so by diverging from its true course; the natural route should have been more to the north, and might have crossed at the junction of the Dinder with the Blue Nile, and not at Sennar.
- (22) The process of erosion can be attributed to clearance of forest for cultivation, but later spreading through neglect.
- (23) Here the main east-west and north-south trade route axes, from Darfur and Kordofan to Suakin, and from Abyssinia and Sennar to Egypt, intersected.
- (24) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.256.
- (25) *ibid*, p.257.

- (26) Every household had such crafts as cotton spinning and making of mats and baskets. Apart from these, there was no craftsmanship; the rich merchants used to import what they needed from other places. Thus, the commercial prosperity of Shendi was harmful to its home products.
- (27) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.258. They used to carry their goods to their respective shops every morning and back to their houses in the evening.
- (28) For a complete list of these articles, see Burckhardt, op.cit., pp. 259-74.
- (29) These included the Spanish Dollar of Charles IV in 1814, and other coins known under different names (see Burckhardt, op.cit., p.258).
- (30) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.235.
- (31) ibid, p.235.
- (32) ibid, p.234.
- (33) ibid, pp.209-12.
- (34) From this description, Crawford (op.cit., p.55) concluded that the plan of the village had grown out of the round nomad encampment and later developed into the castle.
- (35) Crawford, O.G.S., op.cit., p.54.
- (36) According to Burckhardt, the Berber market contained a small quantity of goods which suited the Egyptian traders with small capital.
- (36) Crawford, O.G.S., op.cit., p.118.
- (37) Slave trade was mainly in the hands of the Arabs.
- (38) J.F.E. Bloss : The Story of Suakin, Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XIX (1936). Part II, p.276.
- (39) In 1865, cotton was introduced in the Baraka delta, a few miles inland from Suakin.
- (40) Bloss, J.F.E., op.cit., p.278
- (41) It was during this period that the idea of connecting Suakin with the interior by a railway line blossomed, but only to revert to disuse after a short time of its inception.

- (42) Most of these were foreigners derived first from the Hadarma, and later from the Turks.
- (43) A distilling plant and a pulsometer were used for a short time in the 1890s.
- (44) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.261.
- (45) The town lies in a low-lying area with wadis flowing from the nearby high ground.
- (46) Pallme, I., op.cit., p.258
- (47) ibid, p.259
- (48) ibid, pp.268-70
- (49) These were mostly North Africans and Egyptians. Since the town was on the main pilgrimage route from West Africa, many West Africans flocked here on their way to Arabia or Egypt.
- (50) Most of Darfur products, excluding, of course, those passing via Darb el Arbain to Egypt, passed via el Obied to the east : Khartoum and Suakin.
- (51) The extension of railway line to el Obied in 1912 gave a great impetus to trade and enhanced the importance of the town.
- (52) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.258
- (53) Browne, G.W., op.cit., p.242
- (54) ibid, footnote 1 in p.243. However, all caravans used to take all the provisions needed for the desert journey to Egypt from Cobbe, especially meat.
- (55) ibid, p.244
- (56) El Tunisi, M.O., op.cit., p.100
- (57) According to Browne (op.cit., p.243) wells were constructed in a primitive way and many of them choked up unless constantly maintained.
- (58) Browne, G.W., op.cit., p.245
- (59) El Tunisi, M.O., op.cit., p.189. This course, probably Wadi Halouf, has been much obliterated and now el Fasher obtains its water from a large reservoir 15 km. to the south of the town.

- (60)           ibid, p.90
- (61)           Moreover, all inhabitants remained in the same place or house where they or their ancestors were born.
- (62)           Darfur used to make her own cloth using locally grown cotton and indigo as a dye, and used to import deep-red dyed cloth from Bagirme, a small state lying to the south west.
- (63)           Crawford, O.G.S., op.cit., p.94
- (64)           Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.354.
- (65)           The old site seem to have been to the south east at the foot of J. Kassala.
- (66)           Parry, F.           , op.cit., p.158
- (67)           C.E.J. Walkley : The Story of Khartoum, Sudan Notes and Records, vol.XVIII (1935), and vol.19 (1936), Part II, p.225
- (68)           These mainly came as followers of Sheikh Khogali, a religious man of wide reputation who emigrated from Tuti to Khartoum during the same year and established a religious school there.
- (69)           Walkley, C.E.J., op.cit., p.228. When the Egyptians came in 1821, they found only three huts and a large cemetery.
- (70)           ibid, p.230
- (71)           ibid, p.230
- (72)           By 1870s there were seven principal European firms in Khartoum, beside many smaller ones that dealt in European articles. The seven firms included four French companies : Barthlemy and Bros., Poncet Co., Vayssiere Co. and Malzak Co.; two English Companies : Petherick, and Dobono and Ambile; One Italian Company : Angelo - bolognesi - Antognoti, mainly specialised in Ethiopian trade. In 1873, Albert Marquet established a firm for sifting gum. Of the Arab companies, four were famous : El Aqqad Co., el Busaili Co., Abu Amouri Co., and Abdel Hamid Co.

(73) Hill, R. : Footnote 1, p.162. There were a number of estimates :

1837	A.T.Holroyd	14,000-15,000
1840	J. von Russeger	20,000
1843	Don L. Monlouri	13,000
1854	C. Didier	30,000-35,000
1854	J. Hamilton	40,000
1856	A.E. Brehm	20,000-25,000
1856	E. Rossi Bey	50,000
1863-4	R.Comte du Bisson	30,000
1883	J.D.H. Stewart	50,000-55,000
		(of whom $\frac{2}{3}$ rd slaves)
1883	Latin missionary	45,000-50,000
		(of whom $\frac{3}{4}$ slaves)

Other estimates, according to N.Shukair, op.cit., p.141, reached 200,000 of which 50,000-60,000 were slaves, 70,000 were Egyptians, and 30,000 of European and Asiatic stock.

(75) Wingate, R.F., op.cit. p.282

(76) ibid, p.282

(77) Burckhardt, J.L., op.cit., p.212-13.

CHAPTER SIXC A R A V A N R O U T E S

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Routeways are the product of man's desire to facilitate his movements. Thus, in his constant movement, throughout history, in search of food and water supplies, he has gradually developed tracks leading to favoured points. Later, when he began to settle down and till the land, he toiled along these tracks to convey his surplus products to nearby markets. As trade began to expand into other domains and with the increasing complexity of economic life, a change in the mode of transport from his own head to another which could cover longer distances and with a larger load capacity became stringent. Thus, at this stage, he began to use pack animals or to resort to rivers using canoes and rafts. But the limitations imposed by these modes of transport determined the routes to be followed; donkeys had to cling to areas where water and pasture were plentiful, and canoes and boats had to operate in the quiet navigable reaches of rivers. Unknown and dangerous tracts, such as jungles and deserts, were avoided. In the Sudan, however, these tracts were in the form of desolate and barren deserts which, in the face of the physical challenges they offered to the existing mode of transport, diverted the traffic to the more hospitable Nile Valley. On all sides of the valley, the desert remained a barrier in the face of trade with Egypt where the main market lay.

This orientation to the north, therefore, was not deliberate; it was the outcome of centuries of cultural contact with Egypt. The early evidence of trade contact with Egypt, however, dates back to about 2800 B.C., and at first it was in the form of border

raids that gradually developed into a peaceful and organised contact by about 2600 B.C., especially with the northern part of the Sudan that constitutes modern Nubia. Eventually, this trade contact culminated in direct conquest of the northern part as far south as Merowe, and fortified trading posts were built along this reach of the Nile. As a result, the main goods, such as ivory, gold, ebony, slaves and feathers, found their way easily into Egypt. This trade thrived well until the 2nd. Millennium B.C. when the Egyptian Empire declined to be followed by the Nubian conquest of Egypt in 1750 B.C ; in 660 B.C, however, they were driven out of Egypt by the Hyksos. Then followed a period of stagnation in trade contacts<sup>(1)</sup> until 651 A.D. when the Arabs conquered the Sudan, and in the 16th century, the Fung Kingdom of Sennar was established. It had thriving trade connections with Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia and Darfur until the beginning of the nineteenth century when it declined. This was followed by the Egyptian conquest of the Sudan in 1821. It was during the Egyptian rule, however, that trade contacts with Egypt, and later with Europe, entered upon their golden stage until 1883 when the Mahdists' revolt put an end to all achievements done during the preceding reign. Thus, to the end of the nineteenth century, the country was economically stagnant and, as a result, trade contacts dwindled to spasmodic ones with Suakin only.

Thus, except for this brief Mahdists' period, Egypt remained the main market for the Sudanese products, and to reach it, the routes had to cross the desert or follow the Nile and its valley. But the crude and primitive modes of transport, the unstable political conditions and the unknown geography of the lands away from the Nile valley, combined to make movement away from the known areas quite risky and perilous. As a result, caravans had to cling to the Nile valley. But the Nile was infested with cataracts, rapids and bends which were difficult to negotiate at the time.<sup>(2)</sup> Only the valley of the Nile offered the best routes for the existing modes of transport, the donkey and human porters neither of which could remain

long without water and food. Moreover, the sandy tracts of the deserts were unsuited to the strong-hoofed ass, and the rocky and sandy surfaces were likewise inimical to any wheeled carts, even if water was available.

As a result of these factors, the movement of goods was a slow, laborious business, with small quantities of merchandise limited by the carrying capacity of the animals and taking months to reach their destinations. Moreover, the whole process was made more expensive by the necessity of maintaining armed guides for the caravans, buying fodder for the beasts and food for the porter-slaves. Thus, to cover the expenses involved, only articles of high value per unit weight were carried, and only a constant demand for luxury articles together with freedom from raids and pillage, which were common along the Nile Valley, could keep the trade going profitably. The constant attempts to lower the cost of transport, such as the combination of both land and river transport, did not prove successful. Thus, the people were left with one alternative : the desert. Despite the obvious physical difficulties it offered to easy movement, nevertheless, it had wider possibilities of providing short cuts and safer routes than the Nile valley; yet it was quite unsuited to donkeys and human porters.

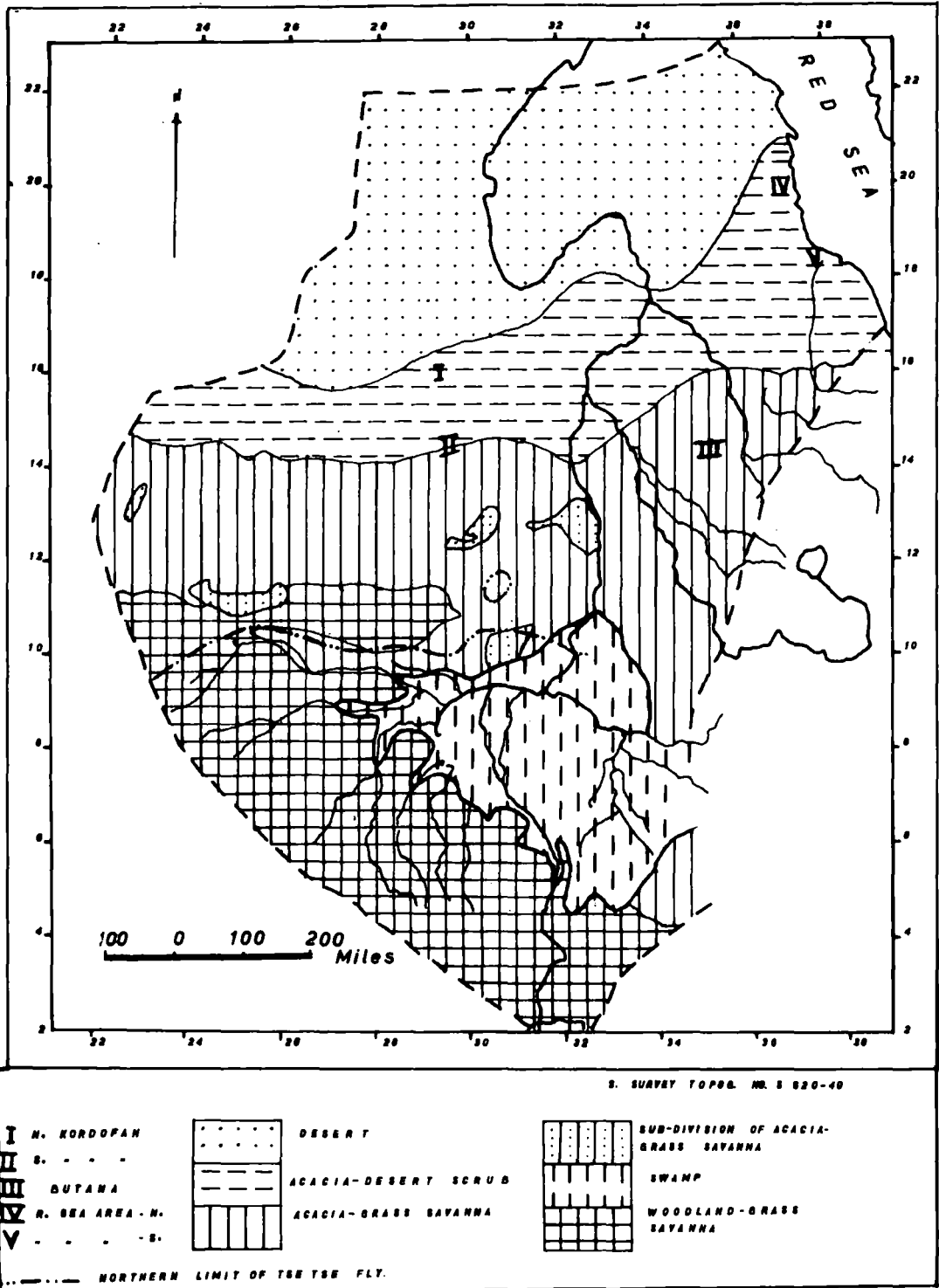
It was at this stage, however, that the need for a change in the mode of transport became necessary; thus, an animal with physical properties to endure such harsh conditions and, at the same time, not expensive to keep, was the answer to these problems. But before going into this aspect, it is worthwhile to give a brief account of the physical geography of Northern Sudan and the possibilities it offered for easy movement.

Generally, the country can be divided into desert, semi-desert and grasslands from north to south (Fig.43). Moreover, the relief offers no obstacles for movement in the form of mountains<sup>(3)</sup> (Fig.2). It mainly consists of vast flat plains with clay and sand surfaces. The only hilly section of the country, the



Fig. 43

Fig. 43 **SUDAN: MAJOR VEGETATION AND GRAZING ZONES**



Red Sea Hills, can be negotiated by numerous valleys and gaps. Moreover, water supply and pasture become more plentiful towards the south, but are seasonal in character except at perennial stream courses. The desert to the north was barren, as it is today, except at oases and some beds of large wadis where water could be obtained by digging wells<sup>(4)</sup>; during the dry season, the only source of water in the semi-desert and grassland belts was wells.

It was more or less a harsh baitat, and it is worthwhile to ask : what animal was best suited to such an environment ?

If bullocks are taken first, there is, however, no evidence of their use in the Sudan, and this can be attributed to the physical conditions of the country. First, bullocks need flat and hard surfaces; unfortunately, the part of the Sudan that first traded with Egypt is a land of finely dissected relief and of uneven surfaces. Away from the Nile valley, waterless and barren desert prevailed. Thus, since donkeys, a possible supplement to bullocks, cannot endure thirst more than two days, and bullocks set a strict limit to the range of travel<sup>(5)</sup>, this environment was not conducive to such a mode of transport. Secondly, the central Sudan has more rainfall and pasture, and also surfaces that range from clay to stabilized sands (Qoz). But the seasonal character of rainfall and pasture, and the soft nature of clays during the rainy season, set a limit to the range of movement. Moreover, the tsetse fly spreads north to about latitude 11° N. during the rainy season<sup>(6)</sup> (Fig.43), and this again limits the field of operation. As a result, all these factors would limit the use of bullocks to the dry season and to the clayey surfaces only, but the difficulty of procuring pasture and water<sup>(7)</sup> during this season along many routes, made long distance travel quite hard.

Thus, in the face of the difficulties, the Sudanese had to wait for an animal that could cope with such an environment, and eventually, this momentous period came about some time during

the 7th century A.D, and camel was introduced. Since that time, it remained the main mode of transport until the 20th century when it was replaced by modern means of transport. Thus, the introduction of camel caused a boom in the trade of the Sudan, but it should be borne in mind that the coming of the Arabs, with their camels, was in no way a response to the need for a long distance mode of transport, or a growing demand of an expanding trade. Their motives, however, were those common to all phases of great religio-racial movements everywhere, and the political conditions of their country, Arabia.

Thus, in conclusion, one can say that while trade certainly did not have to wait the introduction of camel, it was the camel which made possible the fuller development of caravan routes into channels of trade and culture. By virtue of its physical properties, its keen sense of direction, the ability to withstand thirst for longer time and to subsist on the meagre desert scrub and bush, made the camel quite suitable for the long journeys across the desert and semi-desert regions of the Sudan.

#### The Camel :

When the camel-owning tribes moved into the Sudan, their line of movement, and later settlement, greatly coincided with the vegetational belts of the country. In other words, the habitat they chose to settle in was, to a great extent, influenced by the opportunities it offered for the healthy breed of their beasts as determined by climate and, to some extent, relief. Thus, as Figure 43 shows, the northern desert was too barren to sustain any kind of life, and, consequently, it was avoided. To the south, between  $12^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $18^{\circ}\text{N}$ , lay the savannah belts which had wider opportunities for breeding camel. Into these belts, they moved, and here they developed a seasonal movement, through time, that gave them the best method of fully utilizing the available resources<sup>(8)</sup>.

However, the main camel-owning tribes in the Sudan are the Kababish of northern Kordofan, the Shukriya of the Butana, and the Beja tribes of the Red Sea Hills. These habitats, however, differ

in terms of relief and, in the case of the Red Sea, in terms of rainfall. Thus, while northern Kordofan mainly consists of undulating Qoz sand in the south and red sand in the north, the Butana consists of heavy clay soil, and the Red Sea Hills of ancient rocks, sand-bedded wadis and coastal plain of marine sediments. Rainfall comes in winter in the Red Sea area, while northern Kordofan and the Butana receive their rain in summer. As regards the grazing opportunities these habitats offer, there are also some differences (Fig.43).

Thus, the drier parts of the Red Sea area support some trees, shrubs and tussocks, such as 'seyal', 'araks' and 'tumam', which provide grazing near the hills and on stony surfaces, but dry up during the dry season. On the saline soils, 'adlib' abounds within a small distance from the sea, but it is unpalatable except for camels used to it. To the south, where rainfall is more abundant, grazing is much better and grasses are taller and remain green longer than in the north.

The Butana constitutes one of the best grazing grounds for camel in the Sudan. The clay plain merges to the pastoral region to the north, where some fine grass, such as 'Hantut' and 'Siba' grow.

In the southern part of northern Kordofan, grazing is mainly composed of annual grasses, such as 'haskanit', and undershrubs and trees such as 'merekh' and 'hashab'. In the northern part, however, grazing is generally poor except in good rains when the 'gizzu' vegetation comes up about the end of September and remain green till the end of winter (c. February).

Thus, from this account, it can be discerned that these habitats were suitable for camel breeding, and although harsh for comfortable human life, these virile and tough people, with their simple needs, have managed to adapt themselves to them, and to become the main transport providers for the Sudanese, as well as other, trading communities.

Transport by Camel :

So far as transport is concerned, the camel population in the Sudan can be divided into two types. The first type is the riding camel, which is bred by the Shukriya, and is generally swift, and, consequently, ~~was~~ used for riding and for services such as police and postal, before the introduction of modern means of communications. The second type is the baggage camel, which is mainly bred by the Kababish and the Beja. It is heavily built, with an average load capacity of 500 lbs,<sup>(9)</sup> and was the main mode of transport during the 19th century.

However, the baggage camel is slow and its speed differs according to the type of surfaces. Thus, on sandy surfaces, the camels moved abreast and could spread out so that movement was quicker than on stony surfaces where movement was in file and, consequently, slow because of rock splinters that might injure the foot<sup>(10)</sup>. As a result, the speed of movement was limited to an average of 2 to 3 miles per hour, and the total time was about 12 hours per day, or an average of 14.4 miles per day for loaded caravans.<sup>(11)</sup> This, however, was because the journey was done with many halts, and the march was in the cool hours of the day. Thus, before the start of the journey, the camel needed 2 to 3 days of full rest, and during the journey, it needed at least 2 to 3 days of rest after each week of the journey. This period of rest, however, varied from one route to another, since it depended on the distance between watering places, and the abundance or scarcity of water at such places (Figs. 55, 56 and 57). Thus, along the desert routes, such as Darb el Arbain and the Nubian Desert routes, resting time was long, especially when the next watering place was far as between Zaghawi and Sweini (10 days' march); if distances were shorter as between Maks, Bulac and Shebb, the resting time was, definitely, short<sup>(12)</sup> (Fig. 55).

On Abu Hamed - Korosko route, however, the first 23 miles from Abu Hamed to Abu Intér Shurut took 13 hours, or about 1.7 hours per mile<sup>(13)</sup> (Fig. 55). The whole time taken along the

route, which took seven days to cross, was calculated at  $165\frac{1}{2}$  hours, divided as follows :<sup>(14)</sup>

Day marching	$53\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
Night marching	36 hours.
Halts for sleep and rest	76 hours.

Moreover, delays were caused at frontier stations, such as Sweini, Mushu, Berber, Suakin, and Kokrayib where duties had to be paid, and also by sandstorms in the deserts<sup>(15)</sup>, or when water had to be procured from distant wells<sup>(16)</sup>.

However, these long delays, necessitated as they were by the nature of the routes, were not without their merits from the point of view of merchants. They meant rest for them and for their camels, thus eliminating the danger of perishing because of fatigue and a lack of water; they also meant saving the grains they had already bought as camel food, since this saving reduced the expenses of the journey and, consequently, the cost of transport.

These delays, however, determined the type of goods carried by the caravans. Thus, perishable goods were excluded; moreover the bad freighting, the frequent loading and unloading during halts together with the jerky movement of camels excluded all fragile commodities. Moreover, such commodities as sugar, soap, etc. had to be transported during the dry season because of damages incurred by the intense showers during the rainy season. Thus, demand for transport was almost seasonal in character<sup>(17)</sup>. This was more common in central Sudan, north of  $12^{\circ}$ N. The areas south of this latitude, however, were deprived from camel transport because of the tse-tse fly and the swampy nature of the soil during the rainy season. As a result, movement was restricted to the dry season. Thus, many fertile areas in the Clay Plain (Fig.43) were left uncultivated because it was impossible to carry away the products<sup>(18)</sup>. In the Gadaref area, "... grain is allowed to rot on the ground in those districts while it is at famine price at Suakin and Jedda".<sup>(19)</sup> Thus, camel services

**Table X :** The Speed and Charges of Transport on the Main Trade Routes between Egypt and the Sudan in 1850<sup>(1)</sup>.

The Main trade Routes	Distance in kilometres	Journey time in days	Speed in kiloms per day	Charges in Milliems <sup>(1)</sup>	
				Total cost of camel load (500lbs)	Cost of camel load per kilometre
<b>I. BY CAMEL:</b>					
Khartoum-Berber	370	10	37	500	1.35
Dongola-Halfa	340	12	28	500	1.47
Khartoum-Debba	355	12	30	550	1.55
Khartoum-el Obied	290	10	29	550	1.89
Berber-Korosko	660	17	39	1,700	2.58
Average	-	-	32	-	1.92
<b>II. BY RIVER:</b>					
Aswan-Cairo	885	17	52	110	0.12
Halfa-Aswan	370	8	46	55	0.15
Khartoum-Berber	370	7	53	60	0.16
Korosko-Aswan	180	3	60	35	0.19
Average	-	-	52	-	0.14

(1) These figures are compiled from Le Desert et Le Soudan, Paris (1853), p.574 by M. Le Comte D'Escayrac De Lauture. The charges refer mainly to the exports of gum from western Sudan to Cairo.

(2) A milliém is one-tenth of a piastre or 1/1000th of a pound (see table 1).

Source : O.M.Osman : Development of Trade and Communications in the Sudan, Ph.D. Thesis, Leeds (1960), p.247.

Fig. 44

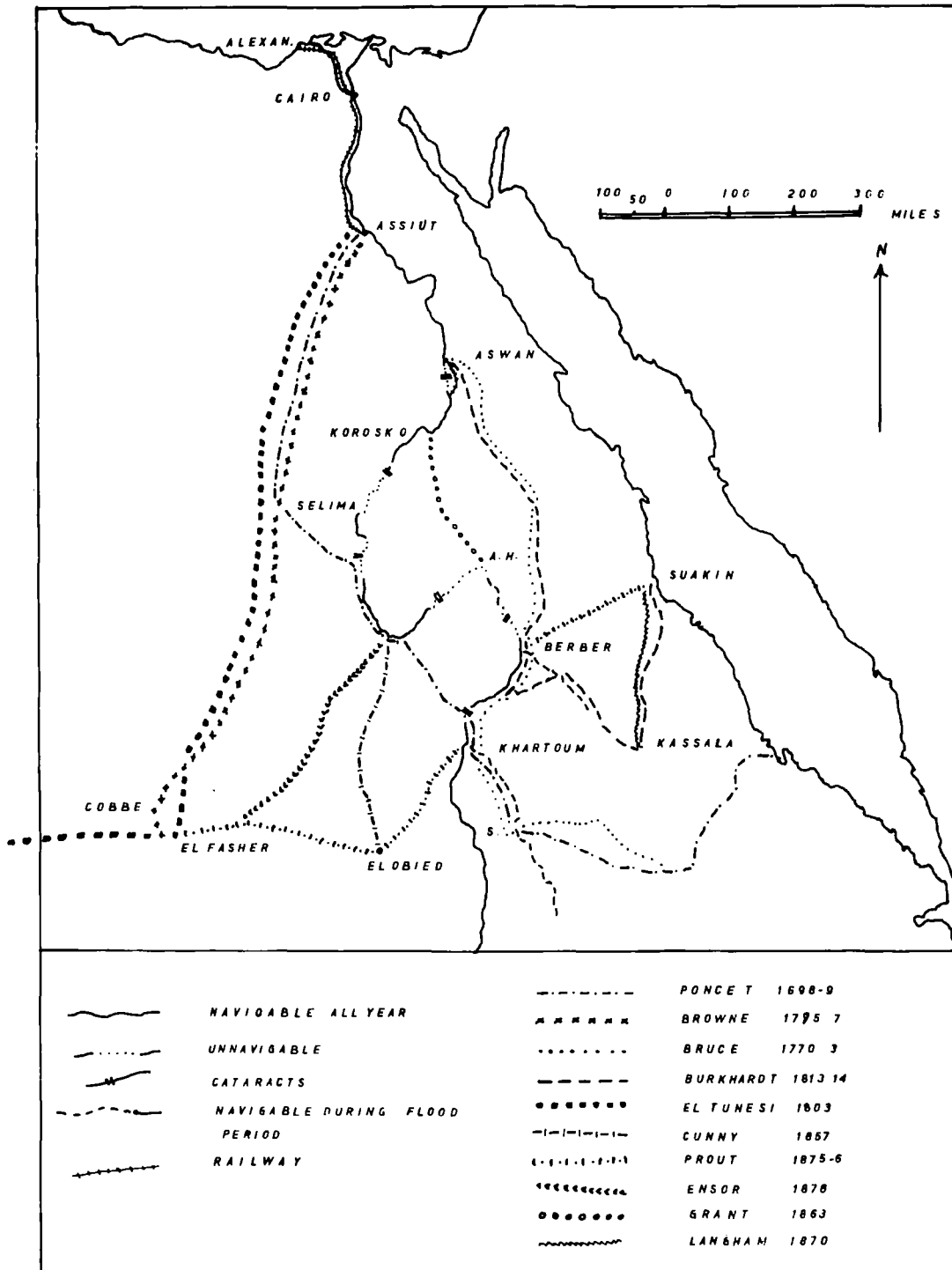


Fig. NAVIGABILITY OF THE NILE AND ROUTES FOLLOWED BY TRAVELLERS



were not available where they were most needed.

This situation was even more aggravated by the great distances that separated the main productive regions from the Red Sea and Egypt, which increased the cost of transport, especially on the land routes. Thus, the Nile provided less charges on transport than the land routes (Table X), and the charges increased with distance. But, as seen from the table, the physical nature of the routes seems to have great influence on the charges of camel transport. Thus, the charges on the desert route of Berber-Korosko were higher than on the routes that clung to the Nile valley such as Khartoum-Berber, Khartoum-Debba and Dongola-Halfa, especially when free from pillage. As a result, camel charges were on the average twelve or thirteen times river transport charges, but the cataracts and rapids rendered the river useless for transport in many of its important reaches<sup>(20)</sup> (Fig.44). Thus, if the river was navigable all the way, the cost of a camel load of gum (500 lbs.) would have cost less than 450 milliems (45 piastres); if camel transport, by direct routes across the desert, was used all the way, the same quantity would have cost about 10 times that of river transport.

During the Egyptian period (1821-1882), however, a combination of both modes of transport was used<sup>(21)</sup> instead of the cheap sea route to Suakin and whence to Berber by camel. Thus, a bale of cotton goods from Manchester to Berber, via the Nile routes, had to pass through seven cumbersome breaks (Fig.44) between railway, boat and camel<sup>(22)</sup>, over a length of 1200 miles. Similarly, ivory reached London "... in less than six weeks from Khartoum (via Suakin) and was sold six months before the government ivory (via the Nile routes) arrived in London".<sup>(23)</sup> In a like manner, English goods shipped via Suakin to Berber in 1897-98 effected a saving, in carriage, of nearly £14 per ton compared with the alternative route by Alexandria via the Nile<sup>(24)</sup>.

This, however, can be attributed to the fact that goods could be sent directly to Suakin by sea, and from there by camel to Berber on one of the best routes in terms of water supply, availability of camels and provisions, and the advantage of being shorter (about 270 miles) with the consequent reduction in the rate of charge or hire.

However, camel hire and price varied from place to another according to the need for transport. Thus, in 1850, the price of camel in Western Sudan was about 150 piastres, and this was less than its gross earnings from a return journey between Western Sudan and the Red Sea.<sup>(25)</sup> In 1871, one camel cost 10 to 100 dollars, in Kassala, according to type<sup>(26)</sup>, while in 1872, the price of camel near Dongola and Debba was only £2, and to Darfur one camel was hired for 15 dollars, including a driver for every six camels<sup>(27)</sup>. Even during the disturbed years of 1896 to 1898, the rates paid for camel hire varied considerably in Eastern Sudan, thus ranging from as low as 13 to as much as 25 Maria Theresa dollars from Suakin to Berber and 28 dollars from Suakin to Kassala<sup>(28)</sup>. These rates, however, varied according to the type of goods. Thus, badly-shaped loads, such as planks, poles or iron, frequently failed to obtain carriage even at the highest rates<sup>(29)</sup>.

In other cases, especially during the 1830s when trade was completely monopolised, the government used to pay the price of transport partly in cash and partly in kind. Thus, against the cash part of the price of gum transport from Kordofan to Dongola, for example, were debitted all costs of damages done to the article, and the remainder was paid in cotton stuffs manufactured in Dongola at a value of 20 piastres per piece, while the original market price at Dongola was only 12 piastres per piece<sup>(30)</sup>.

Thus, under such circumstances, one of the big assets was nearness to one of the main routes that led to the Red Sea or Egypt. As a result, the northern riverine areas, Berber and Dongola, were the only prosperous provinces, together with Suakin, that

could remit some surpluses to the revenue of the government in 1880<sup>(31)</sup>, though they were not as rich as, for example, Takka, Sennar or Khartoum provinces. Moreover, the routes were not the cheapest from their original centres of production since the main centres of trade, which changed with change of political power<sup>(32)</sup>, had to be reached. There were also other factors that affected the routes and movement along them and, consequently, the rate of charge.

#### FACTORS AFFECTING ROUTES :

Although some land surface preserves many early routes, not all the surface of the earth, however, offers easy routes for movement, or is capable of preserving such routes when beaten out, as, for example, in the deserts where agents of erosion are working at a fast rate to obliterate such marks. Yet, from early times, certain places offered the best routes and became more frequented by caravans than others because of certain advantages they possessed, such as ample water supply and pasture, good surfaces, and freedom from pillage and raids.

However, these factors varied in their importance from one route to another. Thus, on the desert routes, the dominant factor was water supply which determined the route to be followed and the rate of movement. Moreover, the barren nature of the deserts was not conducive to any kind of settlement except at favoured spots, such as oases, which afforded living for a very small number of people. Thus, freedom from pillage and raids was, to a great extent, secured.<sup>(33)</sup> Along the Nile valley and the rainy parts of the country, however, chances of being exposed to raids or heavy tolls by the chiefs, became more important than water supply. As regards to the nature of the surface, the sandy or stony desert surfaces were suited to the camel, while the clayey surfaces of central Sudan were only fit when dry because of their swampy nature during the rains. Thus, there were physical, social and political factors operating to influence the routes, and a

brief account of each factor is necessary.

### I. Physical Factors :-

These factors can be divided into relief, water supply and pasture.

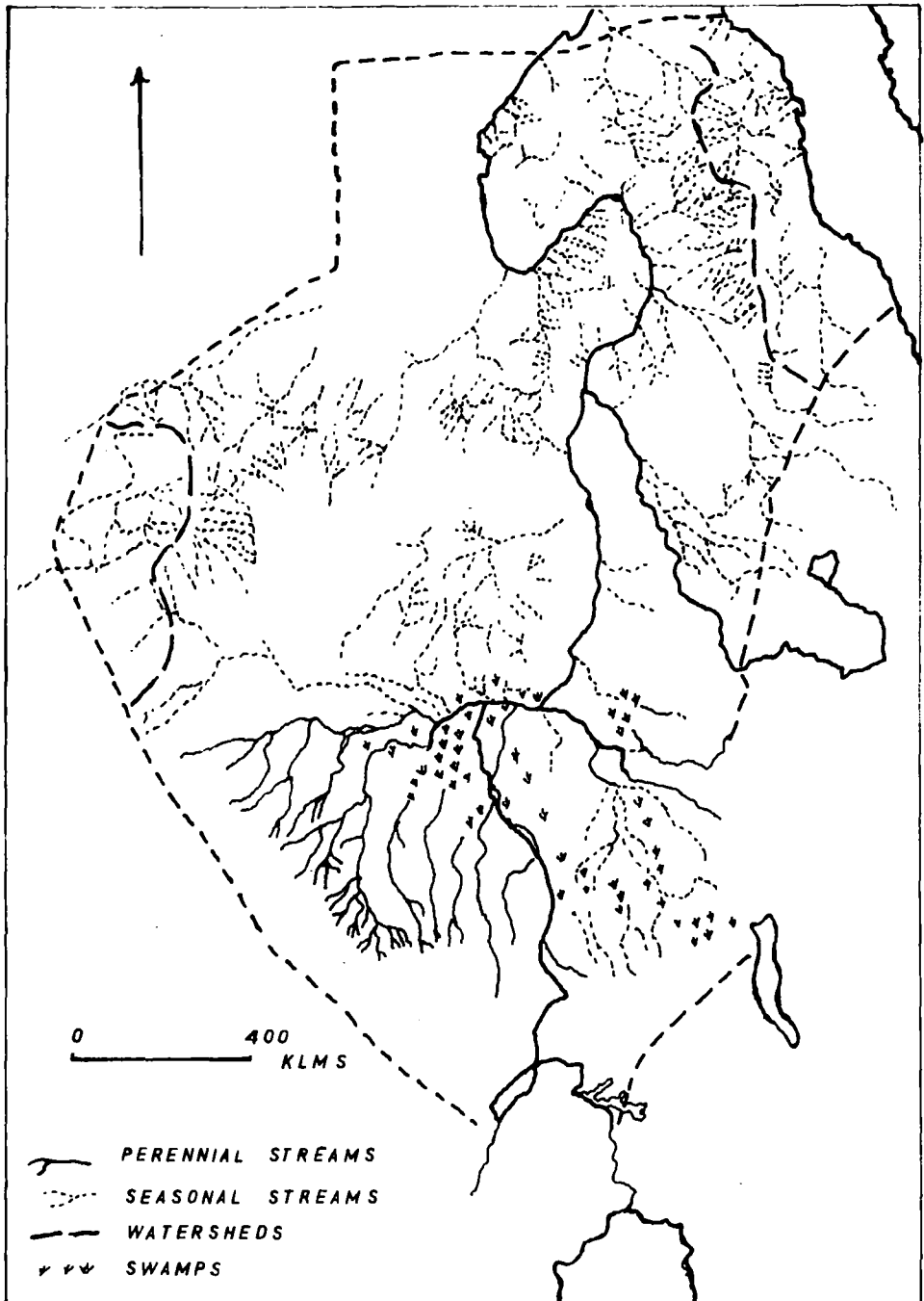
a. Relief : The salient features of the relief of the Sudan have already been briefly discussed at the beginning of this chapter in so far as they influenced the routes and facilitated movement along them. Only a brief account of the drainage pattern is needed because of its role in facilitating movement along the desert and semi-desert routes (Fig.45).

In the absence of marked local relief in many parts of the country (Fig.2), the type of drainage pattern that develops is dependent on the nature of the surface. Thus, on the flat clay plain, there is very little run-off and almost no percolation. As a result, rain lies on the surface, thus making the ground soft and forming swamps and pools that make movement quite difficult. Eventually, such water bodies evaporate, with the result that drinking water becomes unobtainable during the dry season except from perennial streams.

On the 'Qoz' sands, on one hand, chances of run-off are almost nil since all rain soaks into the sand as soon as it falls, and, consequently, no stream beds can be seen (Figs. 43 and 45). Thus, only on the margins of the Qoz sand region are the depressions between dunes linked together in a unified drainage system. The rocky outcrops, however, act as catchment areas for the few drainage courses seen in Figure 44. Consequently, movement is possible just after the rain stops. In the rocky, but undulating, and more dissected areas, such as the Red Sea Hills and western Darfur, on the other hand, the run-off is quick and a considerable amount of rain finds its way into the sandy water courses which provide some grazing and water supply by digging wells.

b. Water supply and Pasture : There were different sources of water supply, permanent and temporary. The permanent sources, however, include the Nile, the oases, such as Selima, and deep wells, while

Fig. 45 DRAINAGE AND WATERSHEDS



FROM S. SURVEYS NO. S 741-46

temporary sources comprise seasonal pools, the baobab tree, and shallow wells. The pools mainly consist of clayey depressions which become filled up during the rainy season, and usually last for two to three months after rains. The baobab tree is scooped out at the top, and water is stored in the hole for about a year. Shallow wells, however, were dug in the bed of some wadis mainly during, and just after, the rainy season when water table is usually high; nevertheless, many of them dry out after the rains.

However, a brief account of water supply possibilities along the main routes will throw more light on this vital factor.

(i) Suakin-Berber Route (Figs. 46 and 47) :-

According to Prout<sup>(34)</sup>, who travelled in 1872, this route was well supplied with water, particularly for the distance of 190 kilometres from Suakin to Ariab, wells being found at an average distance of 30 kilometres. They ranged from large ones furnishing sweet water and capable of supporting large parties, such as Handub, Otoa, Bir Tuahwah and Ariab, to small ones, such as Bir Mahwa and Bir Sallalat. The possibilities, however, were considerable, but wells demanded great manual labour from both the merchants and government. In practice, the merchants used to hire a well or two for the duration of their stay, rather than digging a new one since this would have involved the expense of keeping guards to protect and maintain them.

(ii) Khartoum-el Obied Route (Fig.48) :-

This route traversed the savanna belt, and followed the White Nile southwards before striking south west across the 'Qoz' sands to el Obied. According to Prout,<sup>(35)</sup> the route was well supplied with water and could easily support the caravans. Moreover, prospects were promising, but he attributed the main obstacle to the great manual labour needed to draw water from the deep wells. Some wells, such as those of Abu Garad and Helba, yielded only brackish water, while all the others (Fig.48) yielded sweet water. Generally, water was found at an average distance of 25 hours' march (c. 20 miles). Moreover, pasturage was sufficient and villages were numerous.

Fig. 46

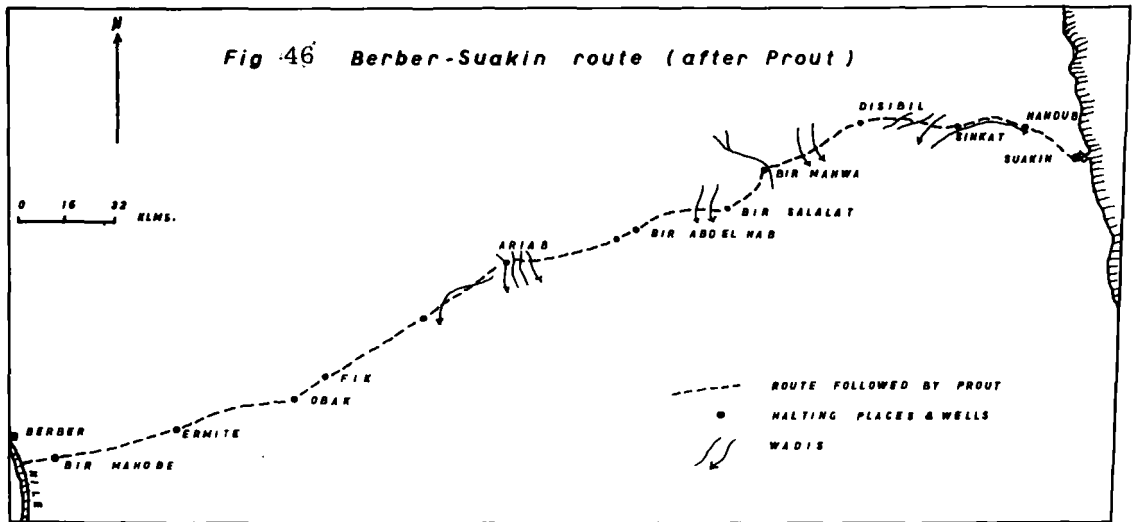


Fig. 47

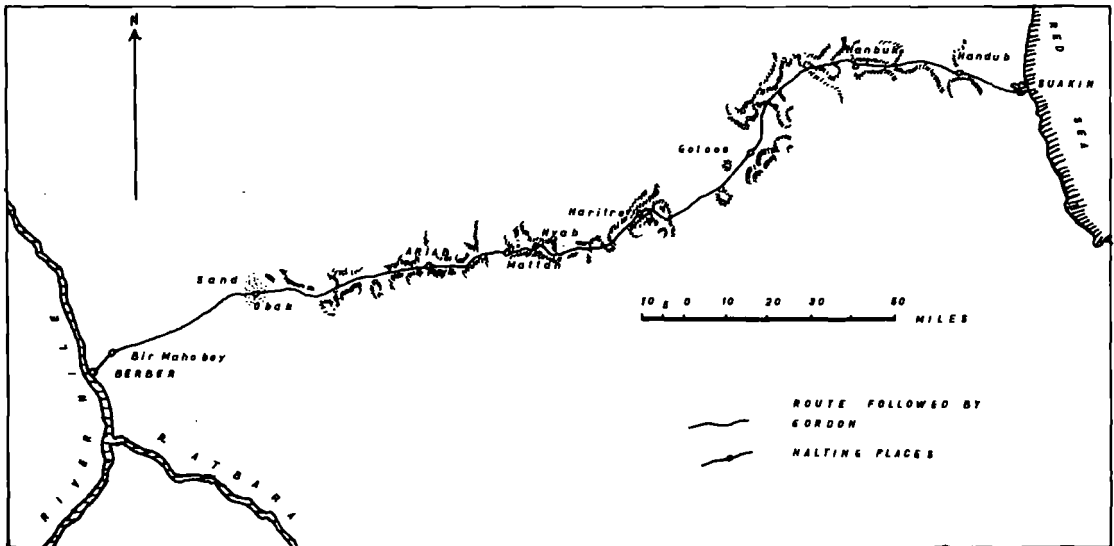


Fig. 47: Berber-Suakin Route (redrawn from a facsimile map by GORDON, 1874)

(iii) el Obied-Fasher Route (Fig.48) :-

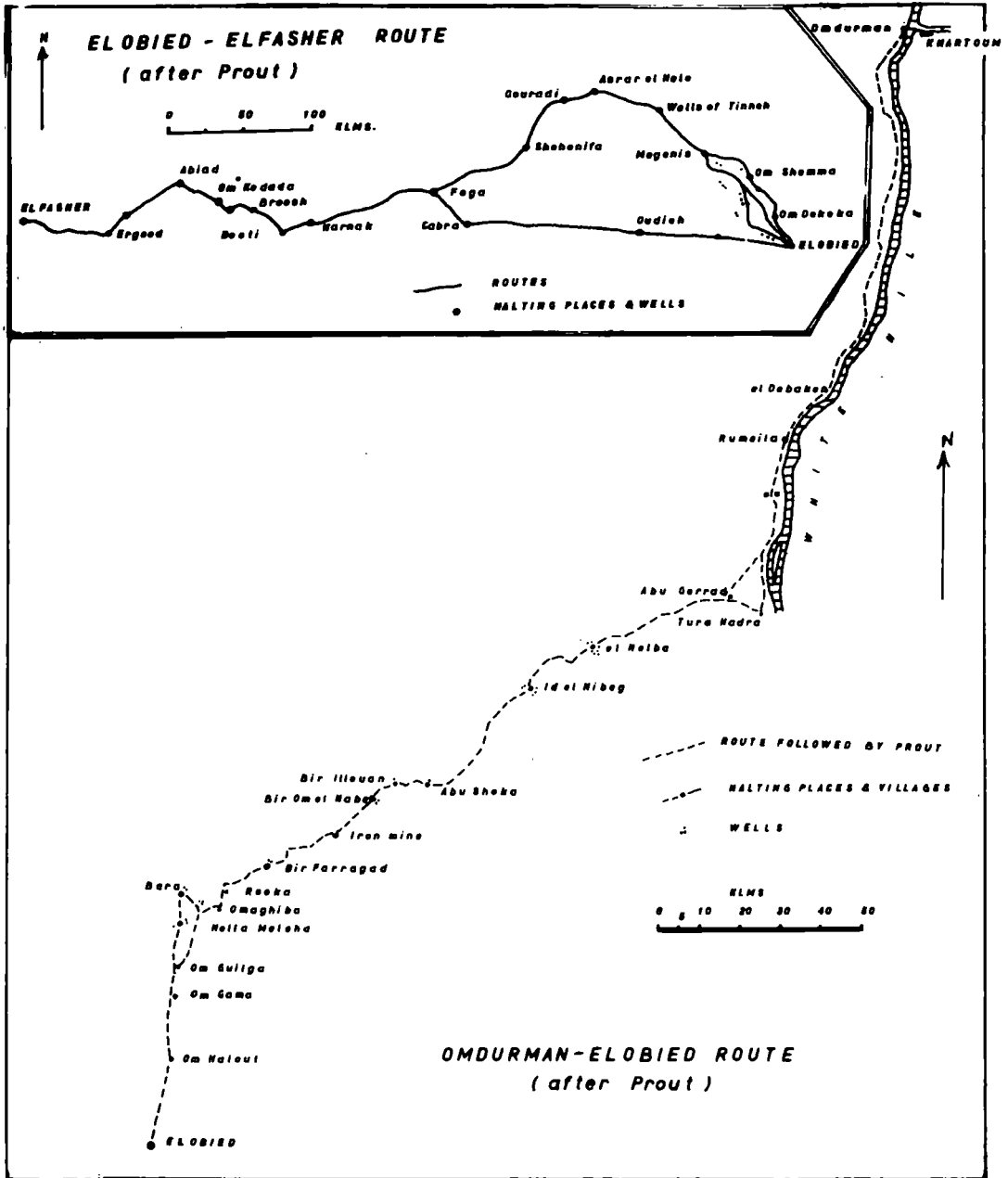
From Abu Haraz, a route started to Foga in Darfur, but it was waterless during the dry season. However, since it was shorter, it was used after storing enough water in the baobab trees along the route during the rainy season.<sup>(36)</sup> The main route from el Obied, however, passed through cultivated lands, well-supplied with wells many of which, especially between el Obied and Meguenis, could not stand the pressure of constant drawing. Thus, after such pressure, the caravans had to wait long for the wells to fill up again<sup>(37)</sup>, which inevitably caused great delay to large caravans. The best route from Meguenis, however, was the one passing through Bir Soudari and Gouradi<sup>(38)</sup>, where water was abundant all the year round. Thus, all water needed for the dry route to Foga was taken from Gouradi since no water was available along this route during the dry season. At Foga, and along the route to Ergood, however, water and pasture were abundant, and at Ergood all water needed for the drier route to el Fasher was taken. One of the disadvantages of some wells was their great depths, the average depth ranging from 100 to 130'; some individual wells went as deep as 250 - 300', and the most were within the range of 50 to 100' except those dug in the beds of the clayey depressions.

(iv) Dongola - el Fasher Route (Fig.49) :-

This route was followed by Ensor in 1872, and for a long part of its course, it followed Wadi el Milk, and as far as Bagharèesh water was found in abundance all the year round from wells dug in the bed of the Wadi or springs such as Ain Hamed. There were some wells at Um Badir, but, since they filled in slowly, conflicts often arose between the local tribes and the caravan guides on the wells. Thus, to avoid such conflicts, some Dongola merchants owned some wells there<sup>(39)</sup>. After Um Badir wells were also found at Karnak and Boota where the route joined that of el Obied - Fasher. However, water supply in the wells varied according to the amount of rain during the previous year. Thus, the wells at Sotaire and Baghareesh, except for the deep ones, ran dry during the dry season, and supply diminished



FIG. 48 CARAVAN ROUTES



at Ain Hamed and also Um Badir.

(v) Darb el Arbain (Fig.50) :-

The only source of water along this route was to be found at oases, which were situated at varying distances. Thus, from the Kharga Oases to Maks enough water could be procured at comparatively short distances. From Maks and southwards, however, distances between halting places became longer and conditions harsh<sup>(40)</sup>. The first stop after Maks was Shebb, with brackish water, and then to Selima Oases where "... best water and green shade"<sup>(41)</sup> were encountered. Here, all water needed for the rest of the journey to Bir Natron (Zaghawa) was taken since water at Laghea, or Lagia, was not drinkable. Again from Zaghawa all water necessary for the 10 days' journey to Browne's Sweini<sup>(42)</sup> was taken. From there to Cobbe water became abundant.

(vi) The Beyuda Routes (Figs. 51 and 49) :-

Many routes crossed the Beyuda Desert, but there were three main routes which were linked by wells at varying distances, at Beyuda and Hambuti on the southernmost route, and at Kalas, Jakdul, Fura and Abu Tuleih on the middle route to Metemma (Fig.51). Then the routes followed the Nile to Omdurman and Khartoum. Another route branched from that of Dongola-Fasher to Omdurman, the most important wells being Elga and Gabra. Another one passed via Safiyah to el Obied.

(vii) Berber-Aswan Route (Fig.52) :-

This route was followed by Burckhardt in 1813. It traverses the Nubian Desert, but unlike the barren Abu Hamed-Korosko route, it was comparatively well-supplied with water and coarse bushes and scrub which were provided by the many wadis that drained from the Red Sea Hills to the Nile (Fig.45). In many of these wadis, such as Om Rokbe and Abu Kebir, water was obtained by scooping the sand in the bed. There were also some natural reservoirs as in Abu Agag, Wadi Gedir and Wadi Om Ghat. Wells were found at Zokran, Wadi Negeb, Napeh and Shigre. In many cases, however, these wells were

Fig. 49

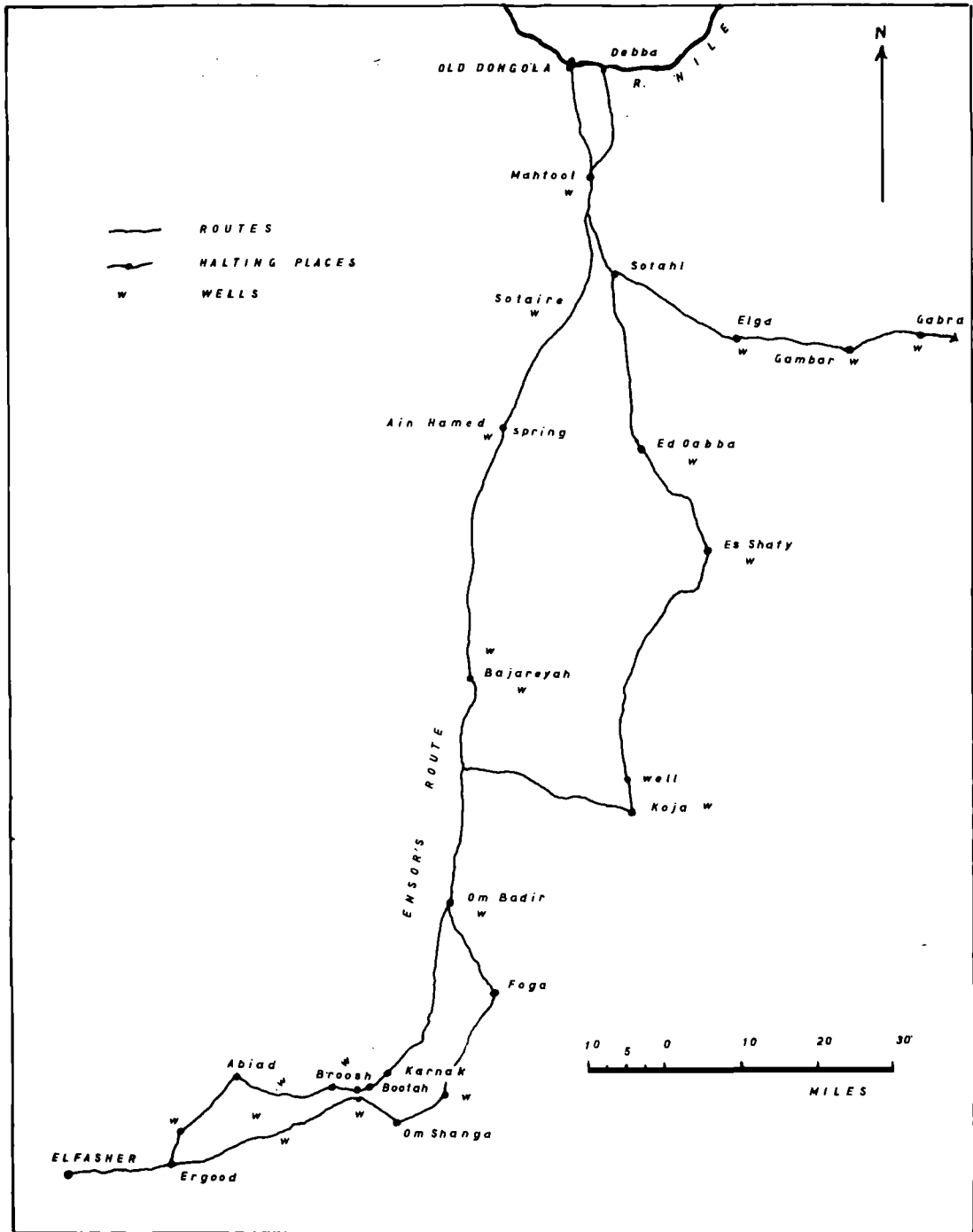


Fig. 49 DONGOLA-EL FASHER ROUTE. (After Ensor)

linked by wadis rich in vegetation, and only in some occasions were they separated by desolate tracts, such as the one from Shigre to Berber. <sup>(43)</sup>

(viii) Abu Hamed - Korosko Route (Fig.53) :-

This was one of the driest routes in the Sudan; permanent water was found only at Murrat Wells, which were 8 in number and situated in a sandy valley surrounded by rugged hills <sup>(44)</sup>. Moreover, the water was salty and disagreeable to the taste. So all the water and provisions needed for the journey had to be taken from Abu Hamed or Korosko, depending on the direction of the journey. Along the route, some wadis offered few acacias and one or two shallow wells during the rare occasions when it rained their, and at such places the caravans halted for rest. Attempts to dig wells in sandstone rocks to collect rain water proved a failure because of the excessive heat and the porous nature of the rocks.

Thus, these physical factors, in the same way as they facilitated movement along the routes, they also imposed some limitations.

Limitations Imposed by Physical Factors :

One of these critical limitations was the drying up of wells and bodies of water due to excessive heat. The natural reservoirs, such as the 'fulas' <sup>(45)</sup> of Kordofan, and reservoirs found in rocky areas, such as those of Berber-Darau (Aswan) route, exposed as they were under the severe tropical sun, must vanish quickly. Many of these 'fulas' dried up just after the rains <sup>(46)</sup>. Thus, water supply problem became acute during the dry season, and, consequently, many <sup>(47)</sup> villages had to migrate to areas where permanent water was available. Moreover, water became a regular article of commerce during the dry season. The consumer paid not merely for the labour of bringing water from wells, but he also paid to the owner of the well a price constantly increasing as the supply diminished. Thus, in October, 1875, just after the rains, a vase of water (c.2 gallons) cost  $\frac{1}{2}$  piastre in Kordofan, while the same quantity cost 3 piastres in February, and 12 piastres later in

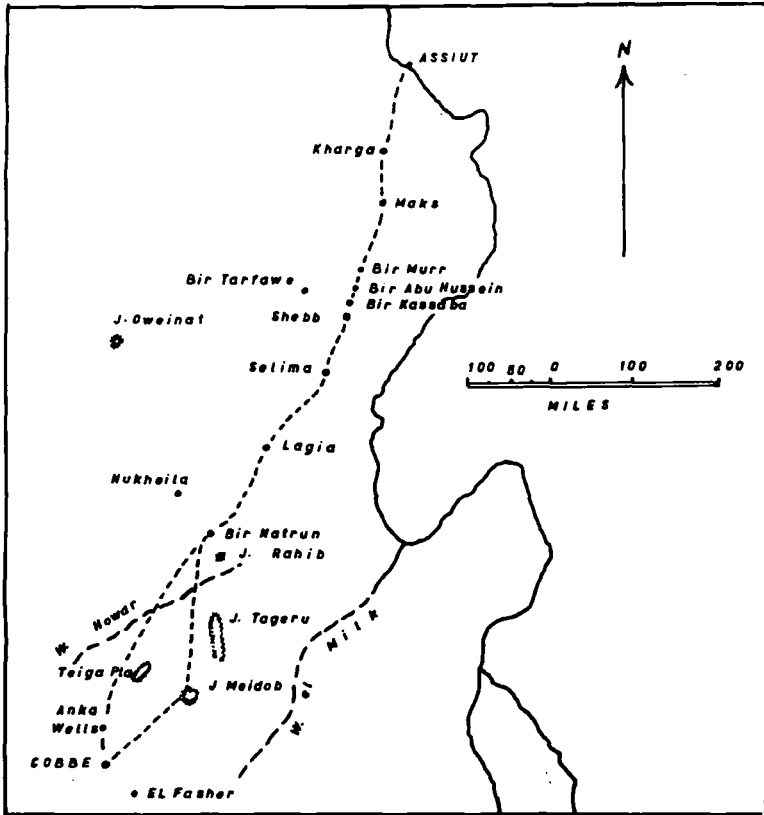


Fig. 51 DARD EL ARBAIN (AFTER W. B. K. SHAW)

FIG. 51

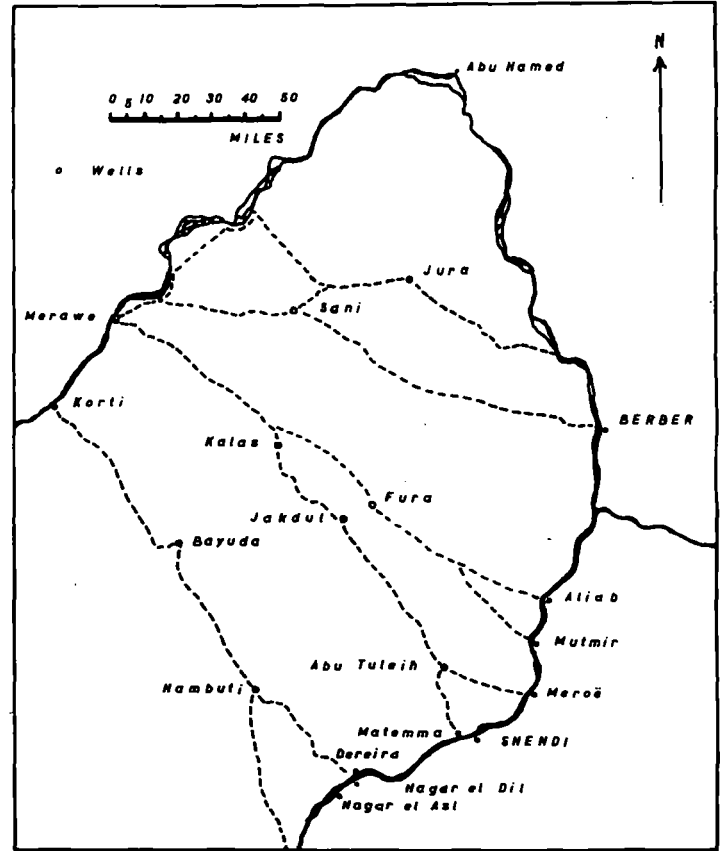


Fig. 50) BEYUDA CROSSINGS (modern). (AFTER D. G. S. CRAWFORD)

FIG. 50

summer, <sup>(48)</sup>. Similarly, many of the natural reservoirs and shallow wells along the Nubian Desert routes dried up after the rains, and caravans had to depend on the few permanent wells, such as Napeh and Shigre (Fig. 52). At such points, however, some tribes established themselves to sell water to caravans at exorbitant rates <sup>(49)</sup>, or even levied a tax on caravans for the water supplied as at Murrat wells <sup>(50)</sup> (Fig. 53). Moreover, the excessive heat, especially during the summer, caused great delays, since it was to avoid this heat that journeys were done at night and the cool hours of the day.

Besides heat and drying up of water bodies, wind was one of the most dreaded things, especially on the desert routes. 'Simoum', or the 'poison wind', with its blistering heat and excessive dryness, had disastrous effects on caravans for the fatigue and thirst it produced. Equally hated were the duststorms; the choking effect of the dust particles, and the biting of sand, often led to the whole caravan being dispersed, and some to be lost for ever, because camels became nervous and difficult to control just at the sight of a storm even at a great distance. At such gestures <sup>(51)</sup> from the beast, the caravans were stopped and the camels kneeled and shackled well to prevent them from fleeing <sup>(52)</sup>. Moreover, the obliteration of tracks and the burial of cairns and small landmarks by winds were common along the desert routes, especially in flat sandy areas. Here, caravans used to be guided by boulders and small cairns laid down, at certain intervals along the route, by the guides of the caravan. Such features were noticed by Browne in Darb el Arbain (1795). It was on such tracts that chances of losing the way were great because the drifting sand often covered up such signs.

The effect of intense tropical rain on the movement of caravans on clayey surfaces has already been referred to (see section on Relief). However, it often happened that caravans were held at bay by gashing torrents in the desert and semi-desert regions, but usually journeys were commenced after the rains.

Fig. 52

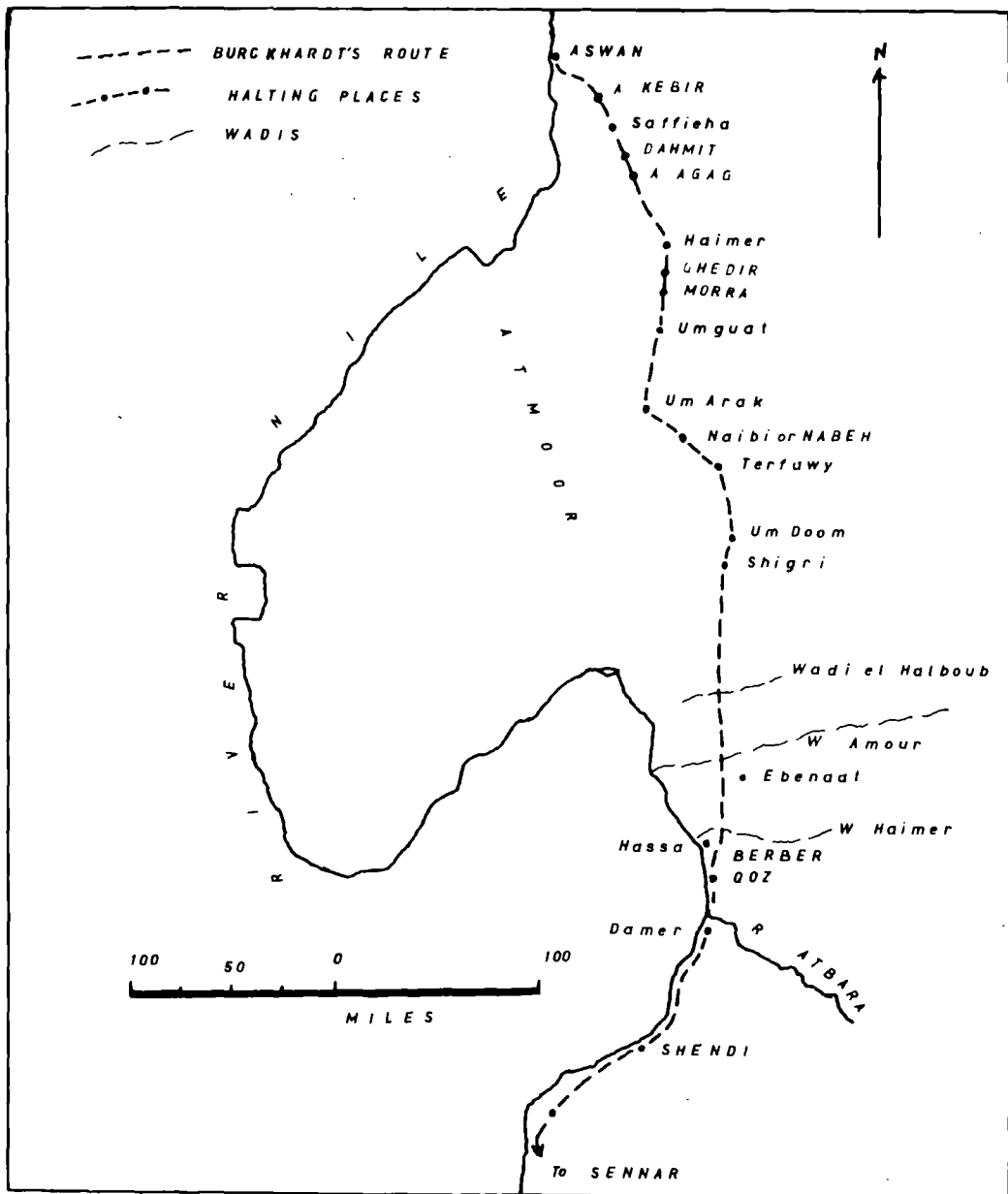


Fig. 52) Aswan-Berber Route (After Burckhardt)

Besides physical factors, there were social factors which had far reaching effects on the continuity of routes and the safe conduct of trade along them.

## II. Social Factors :

The limitations imposed by these factors were great, and, in fact, these limitations, whether wars, raids, famines or disease, constituted the main reason behind following the desert routes despite the difficulties and hardships encountered. However, they were more free from raids and pillage than the riverine areas, especially during periods of political instability. Thus, from 1793 to 1821, the Nile valley was the scene of tribal raids, blood and devastation, and as a result some important routes were abandoned. Thus, due to the Shaigia raids, the route that ran along the Nile, from Berber to Dongola was cut off in favour of another that started from Matamma to Debba and hence to Dongola (Fig. 55)<sup>(53)</sup>. For the same reason, the Beyuda routes had to take a more southerly direction before striking east to reach the Nile. Similarly, the marauding activities of the Arabs of Mograta nearly killed all trade on Abu Hamed-Korosko (Sebu) route,<sup>(54)</sup> and the attacks of the Shaigia on Mahass caused the route along the Nile to be dangerous (Fig. 55). Moreover, the wars between Mamloucks of Dongola and the Shaigia cut off any intercourse between Berber and the riverine areas lying to the north<sup>(55)</sup>. Great battles were fought between tribes and the government as when the Howawir tribe of northern Darfur raided a caravan bound for el Fasher, killing the merchants and looting the merchandise (1838).<sup>(56)</sup>

Besides raids and wars, famines and diseases caused hazards to movement along routes. Inevitably, raids increased during times of dearth, which were mainly due to crop failures because of unreliable rainfall and the fluctuating levels of the Nile. Thus, according to Burckhardt<sup>(57)</sup>, the route through Nubia to Egypt was suspended in 1813 because of famine which broke out due to the failure



Fig. 53

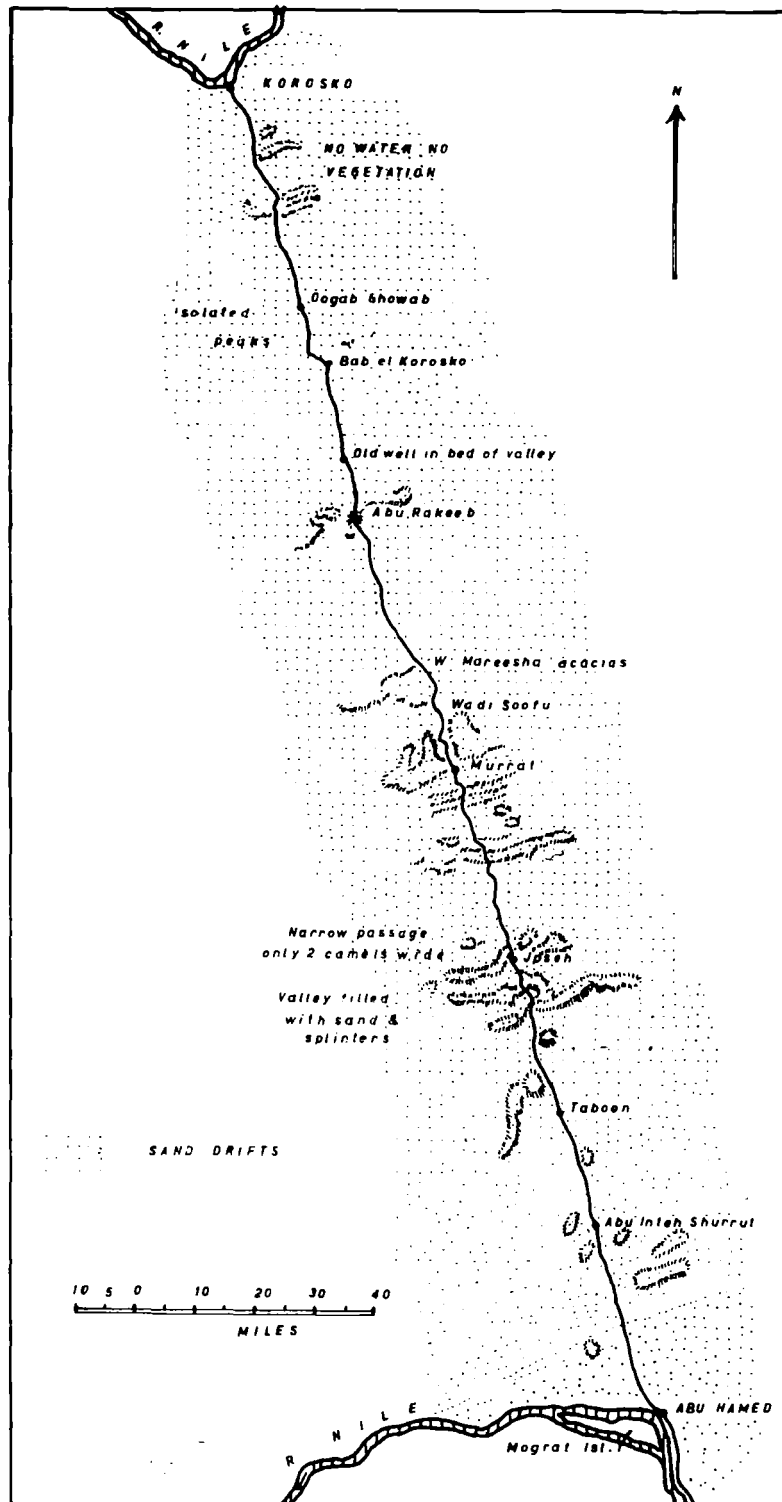


Fig. 53 : Abu Hamed-Korosko Route. Redrawn from map in Proc. of Geogr. Soc. vol. VI (1884) p. 326.

of dura crops. So the merchants were afraid of the expenses to be incurred in feeding their slaves, which would eat up all their profits, and thus the route was avoided. Similarly, communication between the Nile valley and Suakin, and also with Egypt, was broken off in early 1872 due to a break-out of cholera in Suakin<sup>(58)</sup>. Later, in November, all communications with the affected areas<sup>(59)</sup> and Egypt were stopped either by the Nile or the land routes, and, as a result, all traffic with Egypt had to pass by sea from Suakin.

### III. Political Factors :-

These factors often manifested themselves in form of border conflicts, rebellion of tribes against the government, and other factors that have a political bearing that led to some routes being closed off and others being more intensively used. Thus, the border region of Gallabat was one of the most unstable areas in the Sudan due to wars between the Sudan and Abyssinia, and the consequent raids that follow political disturbances. The first of these wars, however, occurred in 1837, when a series of raids and counter-raids began, which continued with varying intensity until 1889. The absence of defined frontiers, the opportunities for raiding, which local war-lords on both sides found irresistible, made such clashes inevitable and, eventually, leading to the close-up of these frontier routes, and diversion of trade to other more safe and stable ones. Thus, Abyssinian coffee was imported via Suakin or Kassala. Similarly, the Mahdists' holy war against Egypt led to the decline of the Nile routes in the 1890s.

Moreover, the monopoly of trade by the Egyptians led to more traffic being carried along the Nile routes, and, annually, 30,000 to 40,000 camels made the desert journey to Egypt by 1881.<sup>(60)</sup> But from late 1860s, however, Berber-Suakin route was slowly taking much of the trade of the Nile routes, and with the increasing European activities in the Sudan, it became an effective rival by 1870s. During the Mahdist period (1884-98), Suakin route was the only one through which an appreciable form of trade was carried on with the

outside world, but it was interruptedly used, especially between 1885 and 1896, because of the military operations in the hinterland (see Chapter Two). The Nile routes began to decline as trade languished between the two countries ; Kassala-Suakin route was re-opened only in 1897. Moreover, the Beyuda Desert routes became a scene of military operations, and traffic on Darb el Arbain declined to such an extent that Darfur used to import Egyptian goods through Wadai<sup>(61)</sup> (Fig.58).

However, Darb el Arbain was the biggest slave route in the Sudan through which Egypt and, through it, the Levant and Turkey, were supplied with slaves. In 1796, Browne estimated the number of slaves carried by the caravan with which he returned to Egypt at 1000<sup>(62)</sup>. Thus, and consequent upon the suppression of slave trade in the Sudan in 1878, a sharp decline in traffic along this route was inevitable. Moreover, the Sultans of Wadai and Borno, frightened by the never-ending conquests of the Egyptians, banned all connections with Darfur, and their trade was diverted to Wadai-Marzouk-Tripoli route.<sup>(63)</sup> Similarly, the Sennar-Abyssinia route carried a good deal of traffic in Ethiopian slaves, especially women, which were much sought for as concubines, and the suppression of this trade also had the same effect. In a like manner, the decentralisation system introduced in 1860 led to the decline of some centres and the emergence of others (Chapter Five) and, as a result, routes began to by-pass such declining centres to the new ones to which trade began to divert.

Thus, a brief and general account of the routes themselves, and their changing positions, will be of importance.

#### THE ROUTES :-

The term 'Sudan' has been applied until recently to the Savanna belt that stretches from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, but, within this broad region, the Medieval Arab geographers used to recognise two regions, according to their outlets : first, the 'Eastern Sudan', which includes the modern Sudan, with its outlet

through Egypt and the Red Sea; secondly, the 'Western Sudan', which lay to the east of Darfur with its outlet through North Africa, but in this essay, we are not concerned with the latter.

As regards to the routes of Eastern Sudan, they, more or less, lay along two main axes, one almost running in a north-south direction linking Sennar with Egypt, and the other from east to west linking Darfur with Suakin. Sennar had also commercial relations with Abyssinia and a route existed between her and Gondar (Fig.54). From the eighteenth century onwards, a route ran along the western bank of the Blue Nile to Arbagi, where the river was crossed. Then the route continued north to Gerri, a frontier post, and from here, there were alternative routes to the north (Fig.54). However, the revolt of the Shaigia in the 17th century diverted the routes that followed the Nile valley to the Beyuda Desert, and these crossed the Nile at Dereira<sup>(64)</sup>. The Beyuda route joined the Nile again at Korti or any one of the small villages that lay in the bend. Then, the route continued along the west bank of the river, passing via Dongola, to Moshu whence it turned into the desert to join Darb el Arbain at Selima Oasis. This route, along with Darb el Arbain to Darfur, seems to have been the main one used by travellers to Sennar. It was followed by Poncet in 1696.

However, the date when the Nubian Desert routes began to be used is not exactly known; they might have been used spasmodically after the decline of Aidab in the 16th. century, and developed into main arteries of commerce as a result of increasing political instability along the northern riverine areas before 1821. Thus, the usual route from Gerri followed the eastern bank of the Nile to Shendi, Damer and to Berber, after crossing the Atbara river. From Berber, the route turned into the desert until it struck the Nile at Darau (Aswan).<sup>(65)</sup> Another route started from Abu Hamed to Sebu, but it was not safe because of the marauding activities of the Shaigia and Mograt Arabs. Berber, however, seem to have no direct connection with Suakin except via Qoz Regeb or Takka.

Fig. 54.

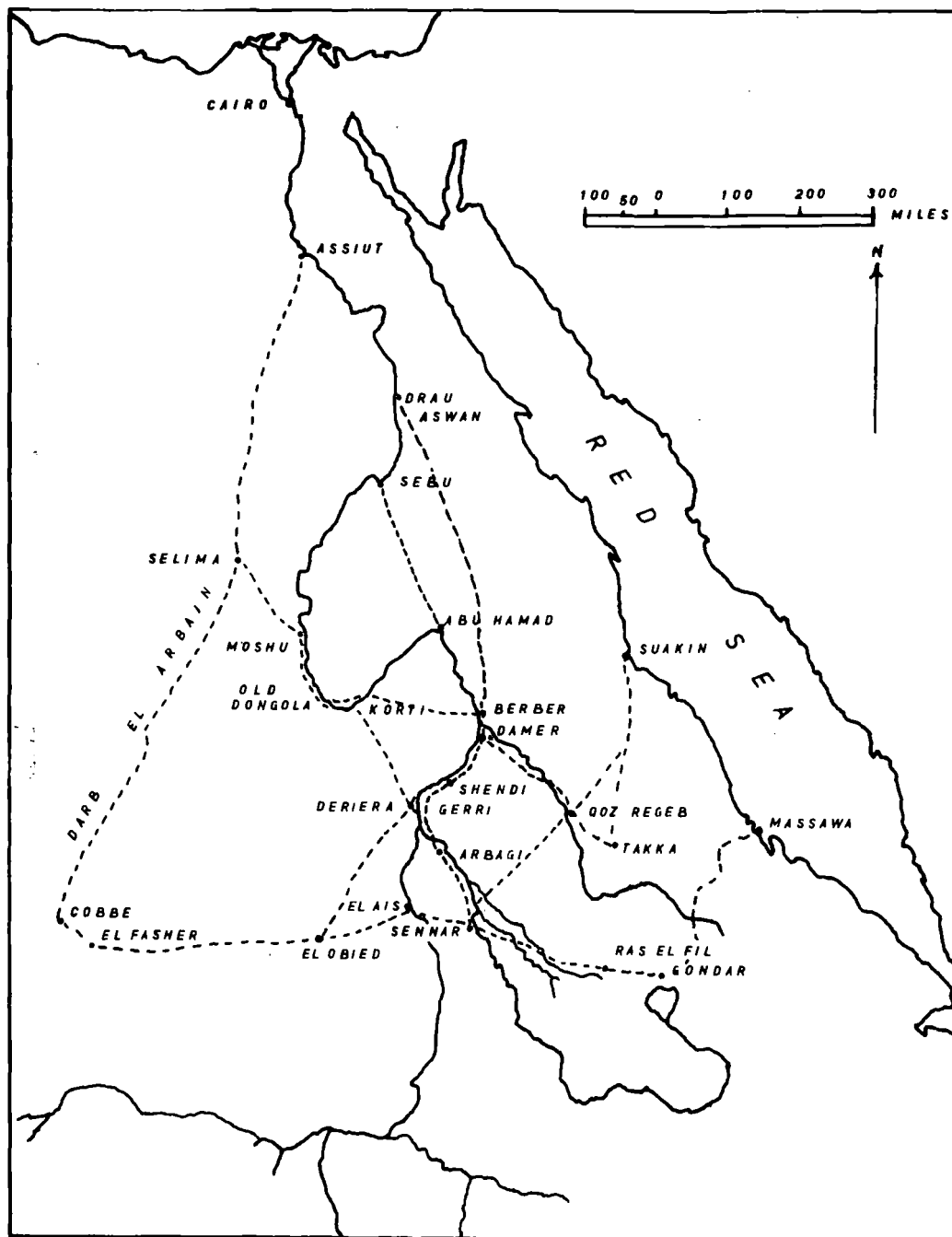


Fig. 54 MAIN CARAVAN ROUTES DURING THE FUNG PERIOD 17th. AND 18th. CENTURIES BASED ON O.G.S. CRAWFORD'S MAP (P. 64) AND P.M. HOLT'S MAP (P. 214)

This was during the Fung period. During the period preceding the Turkish period (1800-1820), Sennar still maintained contact with Gondar (Fig.55), but the direct route to el Obied and Cobbe had already been cut-off because of continuous Shilluk raids. The route to Shendi was also still in use, and from there, it continued northwards to Berber and across the desert to Aswan. Berber had intercourse with Shendi from where the caravans started for Suakin, passing via Atbara, Qoz Regeb and whence to Suakin or Takka. Shendi also had contacts with el Obied and Old Dongola, but due to increased political instability and excessive taxation, the riverine areas were avoided except at peace times.

However, with the coming of the Egyptians in 1821, law and order were restored, and as a result trade began to develop. This was followed by peaceful penetration by travellers and merchants into many parts of the country. As a result, the country became webbed with routes (Fig.56) connecting the main centres of trade with the capital and whence to the outside world via Egypt and Suakin. Moreover, the riverine areas were pacified, and the routes followed the Nile all the way, supplemented by boat services in the navigable reaches. The shorter Abu Hamed-Korosko route was re-opened, and as a result it attracted much of the trade that used to pass via Berber-Darau (Aswan) route.

However, after the destruction of Shendi in 1822, Berber emerged as the main centre of trade north of Khartoum, and, naturally, was chosen as the terminus of the route from Suakin, which took a more northerly direction. From Suakin another route went to Kassała, which was also connected with Massawa to the east, and Gadaref and Gallabat to the south. Dongola was connected with Khartoum, el Obied and el Fasher. Darb el Arbain still carried vigorous trade with Egypt, but since the decline of Cobbe, el Fasher became the terminus and the commercial centre from which routes radiated east to el Obied, south to Deim Zubair and west to Wadai. Other minor routes included those from Suakin to Rawiya salt-pans and Halaib, from where some routes went inland to meet Suakin-Berber route at Ariab (Fig.57). These latter routes, however, were not

Fig. 55

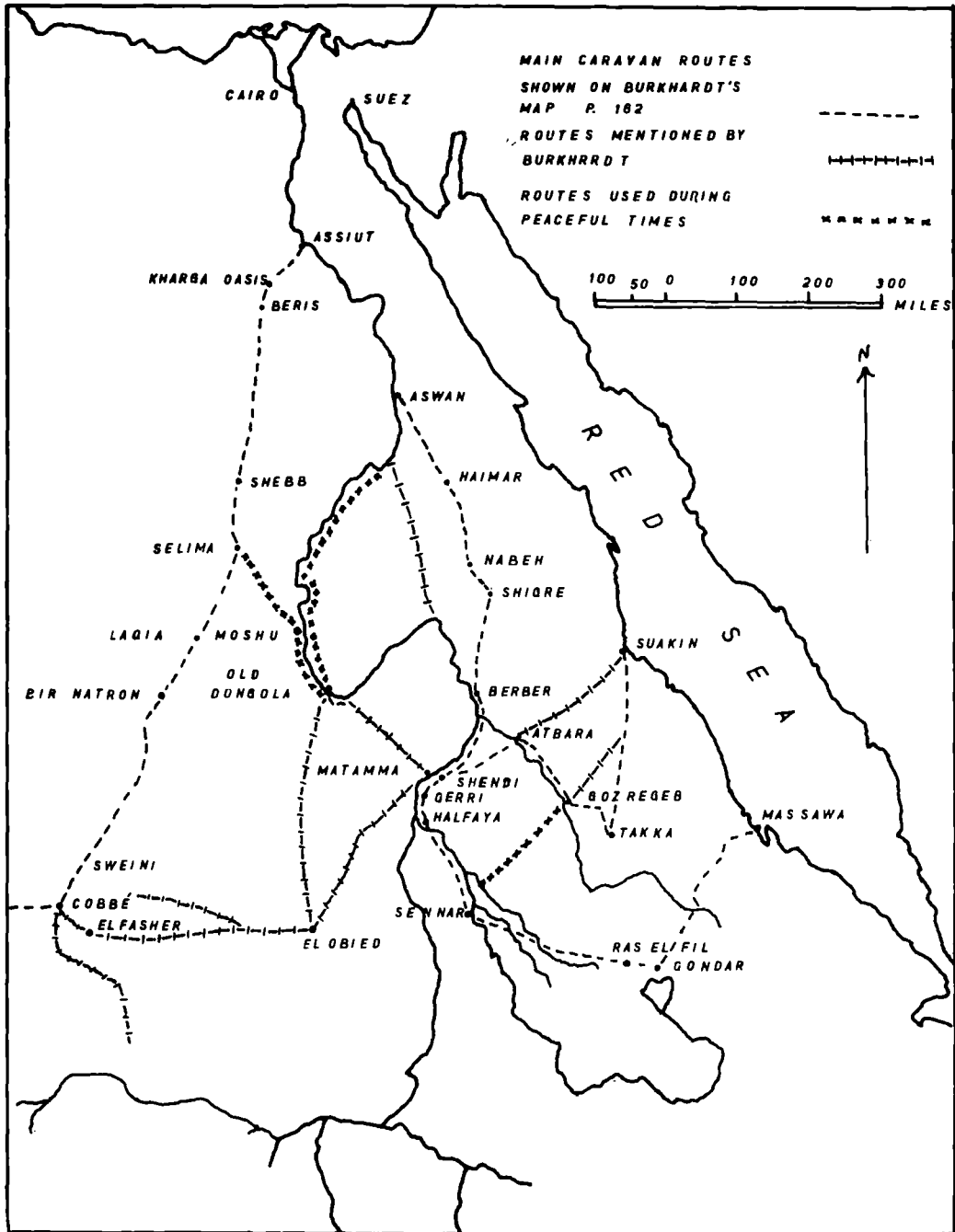


Fig: 55 MAIN CARAVAN ROUTES DURING THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE TURKISH CONQUEST IN 1821. SOURCE: "TRAVELS IN NUBIA PART II

Fig. 56

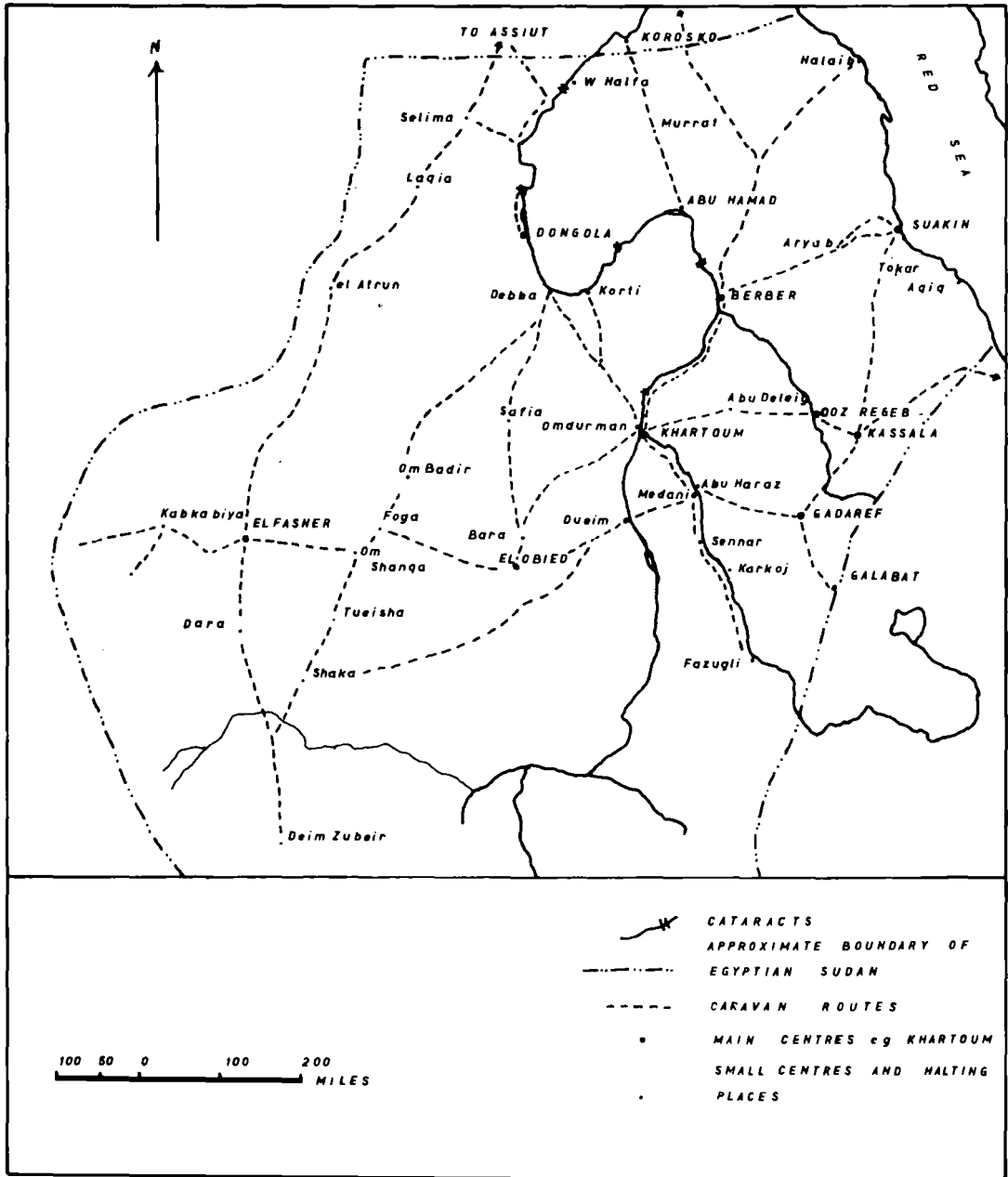


Fig. 56 MAIN CARAVAN ROUTES DURING THE TURKISH PERIOD (1821-1885). MAINLY BASED ON STEWART'S MAP AND REPORT (p. 8).



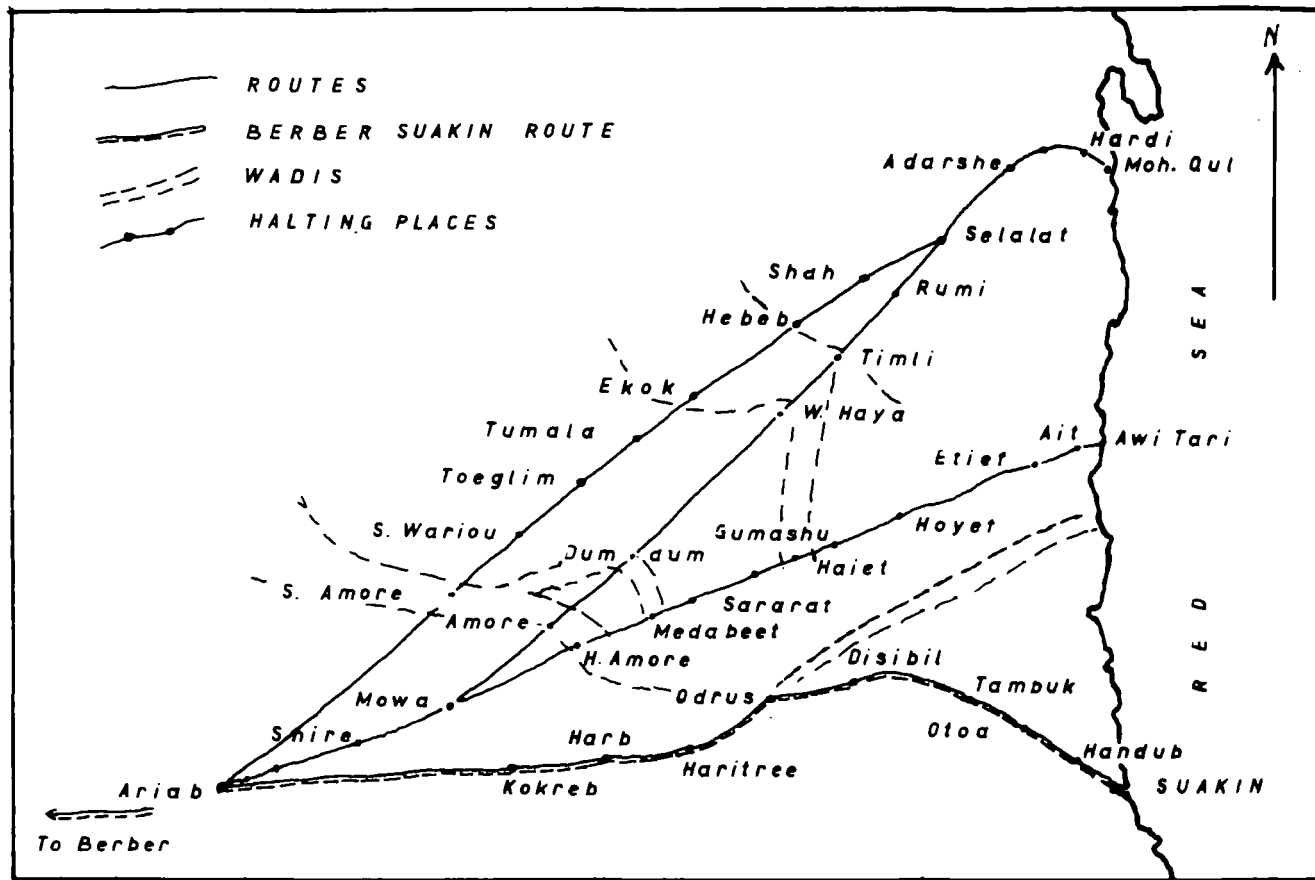


Fig. 57

Fig. 57 SKETCH MAP TO SHOW THE NORTHERN RED SEA ROUTES ACCORDING TO A. B. WYLDE. (From The J. of the Manchester Geogr. Society vol. III (1887) p. 181)

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However, climatic changes had played an insignificant role in the decay of these routes because this trade commenced long after the climatic changes that befell Northern Sudan set in. It was almost as dry as it is today. Only the factors mentioned above plus the facility and cheapness with which some articles began to be obtained<sup>(66)</sup>, robbed the trade of its most important items. So, this decay of routes was solely due to man's action. It was Man who replaced them by more modern and efficient ones, and who brought in a political system that made it impossible for marauding tribes to go on in such a way that trade lost much of its fervant and stimulating atmosphere.

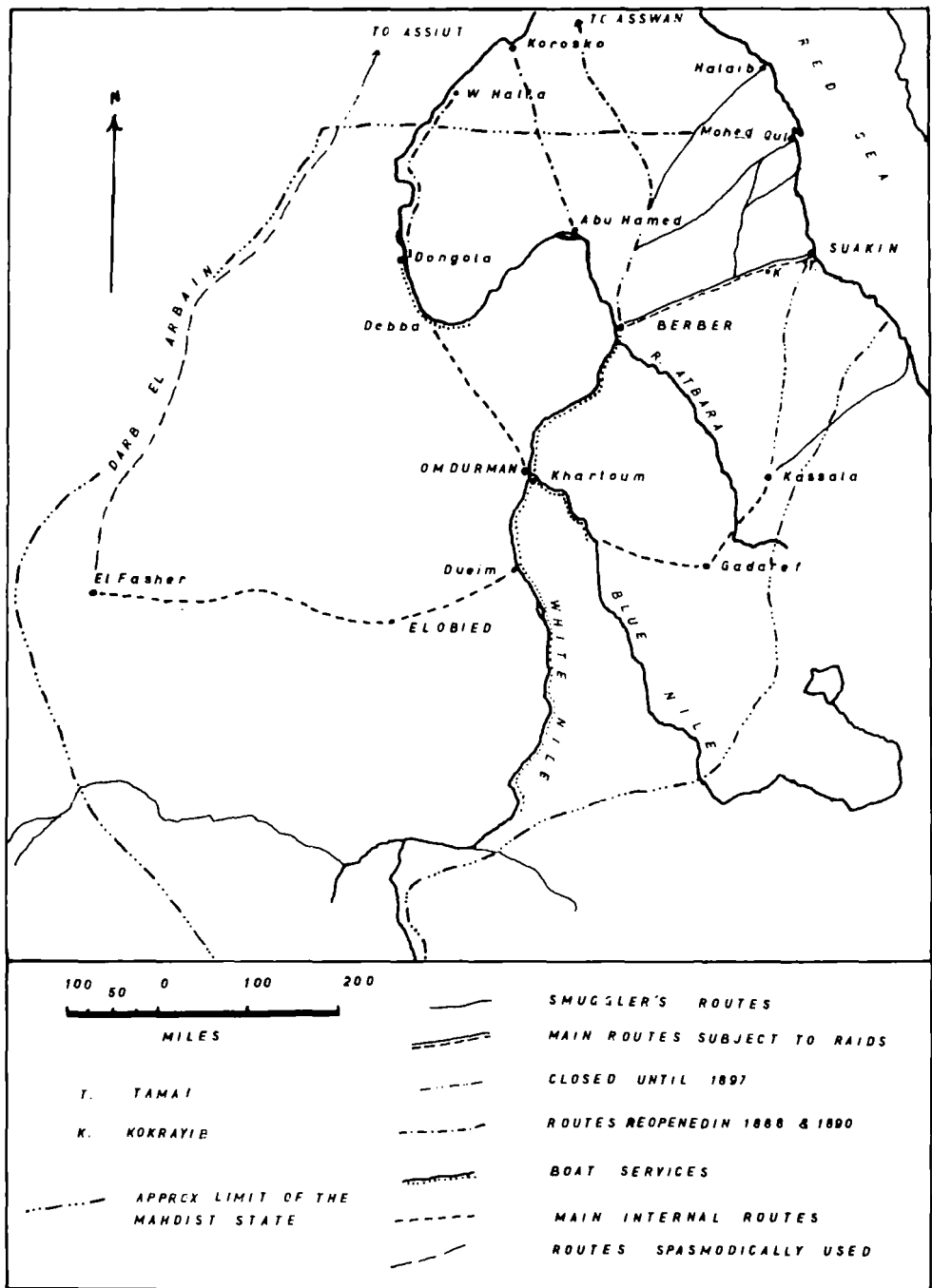


Fig. 58 MAIN CARAVAN ROUTES DURING THE MAHDIST PERIOD (1886-97)

References :

- (1) Trade was still carried on, but not in the same scale as that of earlier periods.
- (2) Even today, steamers find great difficulty in crossing the cataracts during the flood time; during low Nile, it is quite impossible.
- (3) Of the whole country, less than 2.5% lies lower than 200 metres above sea-level, 45.5% lies between 300 and 500 metres, and a further 51% below 1500 metres.
- (4) Some natural reservoirs scoured in the rocks preserved some water after the rains.
- (5) This was determined by the nature of the surface and the distance between watering places.
- (6) This can be noticed today in the movement of the Baggara (cattle-owners) of southern Kordofan and Darfur. When the rain starts, they move northwards, and spend the whole rainy season in the southern fringes of the Qoz sands; when the rainy season is over, they move south to Bahrel Arab basin where they spend all winter and the dry summer period.
- (7) Many water bodies dry up and pasture becomes hard and unpalatable.
- (8) They move southwards where rain starts first, and stay there until the rain reaches its northern limit when they trek northwards. Pasture near their permanent camps is preserved for winter grazing, and so they stay away from it as long as possible, and this in turn depends on the amount of rain, the length of the rainy season, and the latitudinal extension of the rain. Thus, if rain extends further north (to about 18°N.) and gizzu vegetation springs up, this prolongs the period of stay away from the grazing grounds near the camp, and vice versa.
- (9) Some camels can carry up to 800 lbs., but only for shorter distances.

- (10) Grant, J.A. : op.cit., p.326. The feet of the camel were usually covered by small sacks made of leather as a precaution against injuries by splinters.
- (11) Crawford, O.G.S. : op.cit., p.319
- (12) Browne, G.W. : op.cit., p.212
- (13) Grant, J.A. : op.cit., p.335
- (14) ibid, p.327
- (15) ibid, p.330
- (16) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit., pp. 201-3; such as from Shigre wells.
- (17) The harvest season of many products came after the rains, and so there were little products to carry during the rainy season.
- (18) Watson, C.M. : op.cit., p.173. "Vast districts capable of growing cotton, sugar, etc., were left uncultivated because it was impossible to carry away the produce".
- (19) Stewart, D.H. : op.cit., p.14.
- (20) Even in the navigable reaches, navigation varied with the height of the flood plus the risks involved in depending on winds for movement.
- (21) This was mainly due to the monopoly of trade in the early years of the Egyptian regime and, later, as a measure to curb the activities of the European traders.
- (22) Watson, C.M. : op.cit., p.176
- (23) Wylde, A.B. : op.cit., p.270
- (24) Accounts and Papers, vol. XCIX (1899), p.175.
- (25) Lauture, M. Le Comte : Le Desert et Le Soudan, Paris, (1850) p.573.
- (26) Parry, F. : op.cit., p.152. The type of camels he mentioned are the riding camel, which cost higher prices, and the baggage camels. According to J.A.Grant, op.cit., p.329 in 1863 a Hageen or riding camel cost between 20 and 50 dollars and baggage camel between 14 and 16 dollars at Abu Hamed. However, many camels were being serviced in the construction of Suakin-Kassala telegraph line under Rokeby himself (1872).

- (27) Ensor, S. : op.cit., p.112. The charges by tribes of this area varied from 22 dollars per camel to Darfur by those leading a sedentary life, to 15 dollars by the nomads.
- (28) Accounts and Papers, vol.XCIX (1899), p.174.  
About £24,000 passed into the hands of the camel-owning tribes during this year.
- (29) *ibid*, p.175
- (30) Pallme, I. : op.cit., p.154
- (31) Stewart, D.H. : op.cit., p.34. Suakin and Kordofan were among these provinces, the former for its nearness to the sea and the latter for its products, mainly gum, feathers and hides.(See Appendix XII Table O).
- (32) Such as Shendi and Sennar in 1800; Khartoum, el Obied, Kassala, Gadaref, Berber, etc. during the Turkish period ; Omdurman, Dueim and also Berber during the Mahdiya.
- (33) The source of occasional raids, however, was watersupply (see "Limitations Imposed by Physical Factors").
- (34) Prout, H.G. : op.cit., pp. 120-155
- (35) *ibid*, p.155
- (36) *ibid*, p.200
- (37) *ibid*, p.201
- (38) Here wells were dug in a clayey depression which also acted as a collecting point for water from the surrounding high ground during the rainy season.
- (39) Ensor, S. : op.cit., p.65
- (40) El Tunisi, M.O. : op.cit., p.15
- (41) Browne, G.W. : op.cit., p.196
- (42) El Tunisi mentions Mazroub, which lies to the east.
- (43) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit., pp.
- (44) Grant, J.A. : op.cit., p.333
- (45) These are depression in the ground, mostly of clay, which become filled up during the rainy season.
- (46) Prout, H.G. : op.cit., pp.55-6

- (47) It was at such places that quarrels often arose between tribes and caravans over water supply.
- (48) Prout, H.G. : op.cit., p.50. In 1873, a dry year, a vase cost one dollar (20 piastres).
- (49) See Browne, G.W., op.cit., p.231 and Burckhardt, J.L. op.cit., p.199
- (50) Grant, J.A. : op.cit., p.327
- (51) These gestures are usually characterised by unsteadiness of gait, and by drooping of the head towards the ground.
- (52) Such scenes have been vividly described by many travellers ; see Browne, G.W., op.cit., p.228; Grant, J.A., op.cit., p.331 ; Pallme, I., op.cit., p.6, and Parry, F.. : op.cit., p.155
- (53) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit., p.238
- (54) ibid, pp. 163-4, and also pp. 71-2.
- (55) ibid, pp. 255-56
- (56) N.Shukair, op.cit., p.
- (57) Burckhardt, J.L. : op.cit., p.164
- (58) F.O. 78. 2232.
- (59) These included the areas extending from Khartoum to Wadi Halfa and the whole of eastern Sudan north of Takka.
- (60) Hill, R. : op.cit., p.129
- (61) J.Bramdey : Tales of the Wadai Slave Trade in the Nineties,  
S.N.R. vol. 21 (1935), p.171
- (62) Browne, G.W. : op.cit., p.250
- (63) Stewart, D.H. : op.cit., p.23
- (64) It is probable that the Nile was followed all the way before the 17th. century, when the Shaigia revolted.
- (65) This route was followed by J.Bruce (1772) and J.L.Burckhardt (1813).
- (66) The cheap European goods such as textiles and hardware, and also cheap sea salts, sapped many of the local industries.

CONCLUSION.

To us who live in the age of jet planes, the idea of caravan travelling may appear primitive, awkward and laborious. It is now a thing of the past - part of history that can never come back in whatever form history repeats itself. But the historic role of caravans in developing trade, despite their obvious limitations, and stimulating cultural and economic contacts between various countries cannot be ignored. Throughout this study, it has been repeatedly emphasised that the export trade of the Sudan was hindered by this inadequate and costly mode of transport. This is true. Yet one cannot deny the fact that it was the camel that made long-distance travel possible.

A lack of market contacts beyond Egypt, coupled with the inefficiency of transport, hindered the expansion of trade. The active participation of Europeans in the export trade of the Sudan during the latter part of the Egyptian period, and the direct contact between Suakin and Europe via the Suez Canal after 1870, led to the rapid expansion of 1879-1883, which was unfortunately brought to a premature end by the Mahdist revolt.

However, this expansion in trade was comparative ; the volume of trade was still small, and the number of articles exported to outside world was limited, compared with the potentialities that were capable of being developed to supplement the natural products. There were potentially productive lands that could have produced permanent cash crops if means of perennial irrigation and scientific management were provided. Similarly, the natural products that constituted the backbone of the export trade were not developed ; the nomads resorted to their collection whenever the shortage of food supplies compelled them to do so for it was only by selling these articles that they could obtain food. In times of plenty, collection was neglected and even gum trees were cut



down to make space for agricultural land. The government, on the other hand, did not offer remunerative wages for the collectors; they did not organise collection on a long-term basis so as to ensure a constant supply. As a result the volume of these articles was small.

However, the development of agricultural resources for cash crop production needed large capital investment which neither the government nor the people could provide. Moreover, the government consistently failed to provide political stability that would attract foreign capital ; even those Europeans who opened commercial firms in the Sudan found free enterprise quite handicapped by the heavy hand of government on trade.

It is also unfortunate that this expansion in trade did not lead to, or result from, economic development or progress. This was mainly due to the limited carrying capacity of camels and the nature of the routes which excluded the import of goods, such as machinery, and limited articles of import to consumer goods of high value per unit weight. The Nile, which could have been a reasonable alternative, was rendered unuseable by cataracts and rapids in its northern, but most important, reach. Moreover, the railway lines, which the Egyptian government contemplated to build, were not economically viable because two of them ran through almost unproductive areas (Fig.1 and Chapter Two).

Accordingly, there was a kind of tug-of-war game between the Nile routes that led north to Egypt and the routes to the Red Sea. The former were long, hazardous and across barren deserts, but for political and historical reasons were the most favoured. The latter were the natural geographical outlet for the country and had the advantage of proximity to the Red Sea, of shortness and of facility of movement along them, but were not politically favoured by the Egyptian rulers. However, in late 1870s this controversy over the economic outlet for the Sudan trade was finally settled in favour of the Red Sea ports.

Other factors that hindered the economic development of the country include the rigid and unimaginative trade policies pursued by the Egyptians and the Khalifa, namely, monopolising of trade, the imposition of heavy custom duties and excessive taxation, and the acceptance of a viewpoint which regarded trade as the only source of revenue. But underlying all these was a vast country, poorly serviced by an inefficient and costly means of transport. A good illustration of this point is the immediate increase in the production of certain areas following the introduction of railway lines in the wake of the Reconquest. Thus, gum production increased from 1890 tons in 1898 to 2745 in 1900 and 7695 tons in 1901, and by 1911 the line reached el Obied, the centre of gum producing area, and production reached 80% of the world output. Similar increase is also noted in ivory, feathers, pearls and above all in dura from the Gadaref area which now forms a transport problem because of the inability of the railways to cope with the increase in production.

To this day, however, the vastness of the country poses great transport problems, and many areas are still remote and backward, mainly because of a lack of modern transport facilities, especially railways and roads.

GLOSSARY.

Adlib	<i>Suaeda monica</i>
Arak	<i>Salvadora persica</i>
Dura	Sorghum millet
Dukhn	Bulrush millet
Dom	<i>Hyphaene thebaica</i>
Ferda	A piece of cotton cloth of various measures and usually wound round the body by women.
Fula	A large pool.
Gerf	The sloping land of a river-bank or small pockets of silt cultivated by ' <u>seluka</u> ' as the water subsides after the annual flood.
Gizzu	To subsist on juicy plant without water, and is applied to a waterless area in northern Kordofan and Darfur where camels are put out to winter grazing and in which the peculiar vegetation supplies the only moisture.
Haboob	To blow violently; locally a strong wind usually accompanied by thick dust and very common during the rainy season.
Hantud (Hantut)	<i>pomoea cardiosepala</i> .
Hashab	<i>Acacia senegal</i> .
Haskanit	<i>Cenchrus biflorus</i>
Karu or Keru	Land in the riverine areas lying behind the ' <u>saqia</u> ' land cultivable only during exceptionally high Nile.
Kerib land or Kerrib	Land consisting of eroded water channels cutting from plain to valley along the Atbara and the Blue Nile.
Khor	A dry stream course
Kittir	<i>Acacia mellifera</i> .
Marekh	<i>Leptadenia pyrotechnica</i>
Mehleb or Mahleb	The aromatic weed <i>Ruta tuberculata</i> used as a corrective against sterility in women as well as a cosmetic.

Samr	Acacia tortolis.
Saqia	Persian waterwheel.
S S seluka	Digging stick.
Senna	The yellow-flowered Cassia acutifolia.
Seyal	Acacia radiana.
Shaduf	This is a very primitive but quite effective means of lifting water by man power through a limited height, usually from a pool or river. It consists essentially of two wooden posts, or pillars of dried mud, supporting a cross bar on which is pivoted a long wooden lever. To the shorter end of the lever is fixed a stone or ball of dried mud; this acts as a counterpoise to a rod or a rope and dipper attached to the longer arm. Below this end is the inlet channel from which the water is to be lifted. The rod is seized high up and pulled down until the dipper enters the water. The full dipper is then allowed to rise, pulled up by the counterweight until it reaches the level of the upper channel into which it is emptied. The dipper may be a bag of leather, but the 4 - gallon petrol tin is commonly used. Lifts of up to 3 metres can be obtained, but the greater the lift the fewer the strokes per minute. At a lift of 2.0 metres, a shaduf worked by one man would have an output of about 3-5 m <sup>3</sup> . per day per hour, or, say, 24-30 m <sup>3</sup> . per day which would suffice for one-half or two-thirds of a feddan.
Sunt	Acacia arabica.
Tebeldi	Adansonia digitata.
Tumam	Panicum tergidum.
Sembel	V Valeriana celtica

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## APPENDIX I

TABLE A : Value of Imports into Suakin (1883 - 1888).

Articles	£ 1883	£ 1884	£ 1885	£ 1886	£ 1887	£ 1888
Cotton goods	204,261	19,508	7794	7000	31,900	20,000
Grains	5069	14,598	6912	24,500	32,000	25,000
Cattle	-	14,258	13,567	11,000	1322	7,100
Liquors	6882	7119	12,806	6,000	1160	2640
Others	71,842	17,876	126,271	47,000	26,900	36,836
Total	288,054	123,359	176,350	95,000	94,282	101,576

Source : Accounts and Papers (P.P.), Vols. LXXIX (1889),  
C (1888), LXXXIII (1887), pp. 53, 68, 609.

TABLE B : Value of Goods imported into Suakin, 1889.

Articles	Value £	Articles	Value £
Barley	1082	Liquors	2083
Beans and Lentils	1079	Manufactures	36,246
Beer	1335	Mats	233
Carpets	160	Oil	1455
Cattle	4559	Petroleum	537
Cement	271	Provisions	5933
Clothing	770	Rice	11,041
Coal	7640	Scents	514
Coffee	755	Soaps	506
Cotton seed	72	Spices	2015
Dates	6952	Spirit of wine	532
<u>Dura</u>	42,602	Straw	1051
Flour	10,380	Sugar	5642
Ghee	6,243	Wood	764
		Others	13,650

Source: Accounts and Papers, Vol. 74, (1890,) p.721



APPENDIX IITABLE C: Imports Into Suakin (1890 - 1893).

Articles	1890	1891	1892	1893
	£	£	£	£
Barley	1315	1997	1719	875
Beans & (lentils)	1747	2207	1755	898
Beer	745	1020	852	434
Cement	105	-	278	-
Clothing	-	570	507	522
Cloves	115	1367	1071	-
Coal	4737	7111	1327	4172
Coffee	1152	651	934	1138
Dates	5121	5278	5077	4150
<u>Difr</u>	390	521	550	271
<u>Dura</u>	64,385	28,513	24,390	15,826
Flour	13,540	11,875	5,468	6209
Ghee	8,509	5121	2060	538
Lentils	267	-	-	-
Liquors	1207	1557	2675	997
<u>Mahlab</u>	486	-	907	473
Manufactures	30,579	57,895	57,403	59,082
Oil (of sesame)	2932	2900	3009	2420
Oxen	1687	1188	2192	2089
Petroleum	94	830	805	893
Potatoes	586	5567	4860	1203
Rice	9568	4896	5087	3500
Scents, sandal	2747	4189	2716	1253
Sheep & goats	2087	3478	2572	301
Soap	2137	2335	3663	1236
Spices	878	330	852	213
Spirits of wine	237	427	420	-

APPENDIX II : CONTD.TABLE C. Imports Into Suakin (1890 - 1893)

Articles	1890	1891	1892	1893
	£	£	£	£
Straw	629	1045	1107	523
Sugar	12,970	5634	3108	4966
Timber	475	908	4143	790
Tobacco	2,217	3905	2625	2656
Sundries	15,915	9670	9370	11,538

Source : Account and Papers, vol. 74 (1890), p.722;  
 vol. LXXXV (1891), p.671; vol. 110 (1889),  
 p. 278; vol. 93 (1893), p.148; vol. LXXXV  
 (1894), p.747.

Difr is the claw of a shell-fish; Mahlab, an aromatic grain.  
 These two were ground, mixed with sandal wood and oil and made  
 into a pomadé used by the Sudanese.

## APPENDIX III

TABLE D. Imports Into Suakin (1894-95).

Articles	Measure	Total for 1895		Total for 1894	
		Quantity	Value £	Quantity	Value £
Textile manufactures	various	580,329	51,141	437,936	43,352
Provisions	"	173,277	2978	135,348	3158
Fermented liquors	"	31,807	1541	24,082	1676
Groceries	cwts.	5794	5001	-	7477
Dura	Bushel	253,279	28,555	303,232	25,741
Rice and other grains	cwts.	4047	1722	6194	3914
Flour and bran	"	10,416	3967	11,089	4524
Beans, peas, lentils	Bushel	1431	237	4294	680
Dates	cwts.	18,295	3577	15,992	4515
Fresh fruit and veget.	various	4470	35	136,319	1032
Fancy ware and cutlery	"	5320	687	670,044	7805
Drugs, perfumes etc.	"	184,983	7127	-	5400
Ghee and Fats	cwts.	723	1501	2161	2857
Coal	Tons.	3331	3865	4231	5842
Petroleum	cases	893	196	2970	615
Mother of pearls	cwts.	1560	3829	-	3644
Animals	head	288	516	728	1084
Soap and candles	cwts	705	881	986	1433
Tobacco	"	605	10,470	500	8735
Sundries	various	326,146	7201	-	5842
Total			135,205		139,325

Source : Accounts and Papers, Vol. LXXXV, 1896, p.545, and Vol. 97, 1895, p.432

APPENDIX IV.TABLE E. Imports into Suakin in 1896.

Articles	Measure	Total imports for 1896	
		Quantity	Value £
Textile manufactures	Packages	292,841	26,057
Provisions	"	250,194	2525
Fermented liquors	"	59,599	2466
Groceries	Cwt.	5,415	4781
<u>Dura</u> and <u>Dukhn</u>	Bushels	3,452	14,362
Rice and other grains	Cwt.	6,657	2953
Flour and bran	Cwt.	17,486	6714
Beans, peas, lentils	Bushel	289	353
Dates	Cwt.	11,261	2371
Fruit and vegetables	Package	270,231	1453
Fancy wares and cutlery	"	185,139	7825
Drugs, dyes, perfumes	Cwt.	1680	3678
Ghee, oils, fats	Cwt.	2089	3563
Coal	Tons	2025	9037
Petroleum	Cases	5099	1177
Mother of pearl	Cwt.	1893	3938
Animals	No.	3503	1099
Soap and candles	Cwt.	761	905
Timber	pieces	25,049	1235
Tobacco	Cwt.	602	10,269
Sundries	Package	541,747	3404

Source : Accounts and Papers, Vol. XC (1897), p.430.

## APPENDIX V.

TABLE F . Imports Into Suakin (1897 - 98)

Articles	Unit	Total 1897		Total 1898	
		Quantity	Value £	Quantity	Value £
Textile manufactures	Package	270,715	20,868	608,297	51,955
Provisions	"	55187	1730	166,016	9443
Fermented liquors	"	39,744	3219	55,013	4591
Groceries	Cwts	8275	7242	14,611	12,263
<u>Dura</u> and <u>Dukhn</u>	<u>Quintar</u>	8597	10,148	28,537	39,310
Rice	Cwts	985	1930	6,503	5856
Flour and bran	Cwts	7468	4171	20,064	10,530
Beans, peas, lentils	Quarts	280	348	2349	453
Dates	Cwts.	11,949	3017	9831	3793
Fruit and vegetables	No.	68,076	604	2284	931
Fancy and Cutlery	Package	127,514	10,008	228,574	8263
Drugs, dyes, scents	Cwts.	875	1035	1432	3352
Ghee, oils, Fats	Cwts.	2,126	2955	2987	4792
Coal	Tons	3,165	5200	500	769
Petroleum	Cases	1960	414	2678	622
Pearls	Cwts.	1153	2788	688	2462
Animals	Head	508	683	243	330
Soap, candles, matches	Package	52,834	1403	2406	4008
Timber, firewood	Pieces	102,634	637	40640	334
Tobacco	Cwt	558	9691	686	13667
Others	-	-	2654	-	1434

Source : Accounts and Papers, Vols. XCV, (1898), p.147. Vol.XCIX (1899), p.171

APPENDIX VITABLE G : Value of Exports via Suakin (1883-1888).

Articles	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888
Gum	£ 56,609	£ 2414	£ 2	£ 1500	£ 5000	£ 15
Cotton	40,432	1045	13	500	-	-
Hides	5760	1453	2941	1600	1100	970
Coffee	8338	-	-	-	10	-
Ivory	-	-	-	-	1050	-
Feathers	-	-	-	-	144	95
Sesame	3496	419	-	-	-	-
Pearls	-	-	-	-	2900	2870
Others	14,034	5123	11,669	4700	1500	774
Total	127,263	10,454	14,655	8300	11,704	4724

TABLE H : Value of Exports via Suakin (1889-1898).

Year	Gum	Feathers	Ivory	Senna	Pearls
	£	£	£	£	£
1889	-	-	-	-	-
1890	2681	335	20,836	561	1883
1891	16,043	1018	398	4466	3157
1892	43,796	883	2715	5681	5098
1893	56,855	249	4357	2337	2557
1894	39,320	-	12765	2283	3857
1895	-	-	1002	1293	4064
1896	27,347	-	435	2241	3501
1897	29,793	1386	684	3472	3521
1898	27,347	-	2348	1497	5679

Source : Accounts and Papers, Vols. LXXIX (1889) to XCIX (1899).

APPENDIX VIITABLE K: Prices of some Articles in Khartoum and Cairo (1870).

Articles	Khartoum		Cairo	
	Measure	Price (P.T.)	Measure	Price (P.T.)
Elephant Teeth:-			1 quintar	2200-3000
i. Brimi	100 lbs	2500	-	-
ii Zahr Brimi	150 lbs	2500	-	-
iii Bade	150 lbs	2500	-	-
iv Kilindji	400 lbs	4000	-	-
v Machmouch	100 lbs	1200	-	-
Rhino Horns	100 lbs	1200	-	-
Ostrich Feathers :				
i. Robda	200 lbs	8000	1 <u>quintar</u>	1200-1500
ii Black	100 lbs	800	1 <u>quintar</u>	700-1000
iii White	100 lbs	12500	1 <u>quintar</u>	5000-6000
Gum:	130 lbs	200-220	-	450-600
i. Gezira	105 lbs	- ?	1 <u>quintar</u>	250-350
ii Hashab (arabic)	105 lbs		1 "	350-450
iii Talh	105 lbs		1 "	160-300
Senna	100 lbs	40	1 <u>quintar</u>	125-160
Wax	100 lbs	500	125 lbs.	1400-1500
Tamarind	100 lbs	60	100 lbs.	480-525
Hides	1 piece	2	1 piece.	17-18
Cotton	100 lbs.	250-300	-	-
Sugar Cane	100 lbs.	2000	-	-
Iron	100 lbs.	175	-	-
Gold	ounce	18-20	-	-
Indigo	1 <u>okke</u>	70-90	-	-

TABLE K (Cont): Average Prices of (A) Different Types of Gum, and of (B) Senna, Ivory and Feathers in Cairo (July 1877 to June 1886).

YEAR (A)	I. Gum exported via Nile routes. Price in piastres/quintar.			
	Arabic	Gezira	Halabi	Talh
July 1877-June 1878	500	360	260	240
July 1878-June 1879	480	330	280	210
July 1879-June 1880	435	280	260	-
July 1880-June 1881	350	240	-	130
July 1881-June 1882	300	210	-	-
July 1882-June 1883	350	230	215	-
July 1883-June 1884	590	400	-	-
July 1884-June 1885	820	590	-	600
July 1885-June 1886	1260	840	-	650
II. Gum received at Suez via Suakin.				
July 1881-June 1882	350	240	200	-
July 1882-June 1883	350	230	215	-
YEAR (B)	Price in piastres/quintar			
	Senna	Ivory	Feathers	
July 1877-June 1878	220	3100	-	
July 1878-June 1879	220	2800	1760	
July 1879-June 1880	270	3300	1320	
July 1880-June 1881	150	3400	3100	
July 1881-June 1882	150	-	-	
July 1882-June 1883	170	-	900	
July 1883-June 1884	400	3400	740	
July 1884-June 1885	200	5200	-	
July 1885-June 1886	280	-	-	
Source: <u>Blue Book (Egypt) No.2</u> , (1887), Inclosure b in Despatch No.65.				



APPENDIX VIIITABLE L : Value of Import and Export Trade with Countries.

YEAR	England		Egypt		Austria	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
1883	91,044	84,855	2700	28,587	-	-
1884	-	-	-	-	-	-
1885	-	-	-	-	-	-
1886	13,800	1300	25,000	1400	-	-
1887	7500	1423	-	-	-	-
1888	7146	-	-	-	-	-
1889	-	-	-	-	-	-
1890	8521	17,125	27,716	872	6697	2345
1891	13,471	5,442	43,918	4024	6829	14,652
1892	21,471	21,887	31,422	1024	4800	17,968
1893	14,972	30,771	41,794	1729	2263	22,026
1894	23,460	20,178	37,234	15352	3640	25,796
1895	23,182	20,320	39,869	16105	2071	35,605
1896	20,163	14,703	34,077	16045	672	18,788
1897	15,390	20,835	51,246	21123	-	18,108
1898	21,432	22,184	70,358	24598	-	16,914

TABLE L (CONTD) :

YEAR	India		Turkey		France	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
1883	11,528	521	168,133	-	-	-
1884	-	-	-	-	-	-
1885	-	-	-	-	-	-
1886	26,800	600	27,000	4000	-	-
1887	30,000	2156	46,282	-	-	-
1888	26,760	875	49,860	-	-	-
1889	-	-	-	-	-	-
1890	82,211	29,960	53,435	142	-	-
1891	63,101	10,405	30,111	10	168	-
1892	61,805	13,220	19,849	15	197	-
1893	50,692	12,277	7492	-	491	-
1894	60,459	6,247	9486	-	-	-
1895	57,623	3,440	7212	-	-	-
1896	44,320	1,355	4520	185	-	-
1897	12,510	-	4100	-	-	-
1898	69,850	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE L (CONTD) :

YEAR	Italy		Massawa		Other countries	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
1883	-	-	-	-	14,619	1000
1884	-	-	-	-	-	-
1885	-	-	-	-	-	-
1886	-	-	-	-	2,900	13,300
1887	-	-	-	-	3,500	5932
1888	-	-	-	-	17,810	3313
1889	-	-	-	-	-	-
1890	-	1173	7612	-	-	-
1891	-	163	1772	-	-	-
1892	-	-	2350	1024	905	21
1893	-	-	1003	1693	1004	57
1894	-	-	-	-	5046	10,542
1895	-	-	-	-	5248	11,215
1896	-	-	-	-	6413	1722
1897	-	-	-	-	7599	6088
1898	-	-	-	-	15,918	1958

Source : Accounts and Papers, Vols. LXV to XCIX (1885 - 1898).

APPENDIX IXSummary of Munzinger's Division of the  
Sudan (1872).

- (1) The Blue Nile Land from Sennar and along the main Nile from Khartoum to Dongola : This mainly consists of strips of alluvium along the bank, and irrigation is mainly done by wheels. Though cultivable land is narrow, the region is well peopled, the main products being dura, sesame and wheat. To the south along the Blue Nile, especially near Fazogli, the country is hilly and rich in timber, (acacia and ebony) and gold.
- (2) The Delta Regions of the Gezira and Meroe :  
These possess rich alluvial soil, but inundation is not so easy except in parts. However, there is 'good' rain to allow for cultivation, but nomadism prevails and there are large herds of cattle that use the fine pasture. Thick mimosa forests cover large parts of the deltas. Atbara river, however, has high banks that are not much suited for agriculture.
- (3) Kordofan : This mainly consists of light soils of sand in the north and clays to the south. Dukhn, the staple food crop, is widely grown, and there are large forests of gum and immense prairies inhabited by nomads, but it is less peopled to the south. The main products are gum, hides, ghee and ostrich feathers.
- (4) Riverine Lands between the Nile, Dinder, Rahad and the Gash :  
These are the richest parts of the country, with rich alluvial soil and heavy clays. The land between the Rahad and the Nile, however, is little disturbed with prairies and forests inhabited by cattle-owning nomads, and consequently no great cultivation. The Gash delta contains more than half a million feddans about  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of which is only cultivated with dura. Although there is no ploughing, production is so large that people do not know where to sell it.

(5) Gadaref : This is a sort of oases, mainly consisting of undulating ground, and separated by plains covered with forests but deprived of water. The inhabited part of the country is covered with hundreds of villages and is highly cultivated with dura and some cotton using rain-water only. The output of dura is large, and cultivable land extends to Gallabat.

(6) Hilly Country to the north of 15° and 19° N. :

Except for Baraka and Gash deltas, cattle breeding by some Beja tribes is dominant.

The main agricultural products are dura, dukhn and sesame, and much could be cultivated for export, but the isolation of the Sudan resulted in production for local consumption only. During the American War the Sudan, especially Gadaref area, sent a great deal of cotton to Egypt together with seeds, but in 1870 little cotton was grown for export. However, cattle breeding is more important than farming, and the country abounds in cows, sheep, camels and horses; cows count by millions and there is a large export of hides. But difficulty of transport confines this trade to more accessible areas.

With regards to methods of irrigation, Munzinger mentioned three :

- (1) Rain irrigation : most of the cultivation is done during the rainy season.
- (2) Saqias and Shadufs along the Nile banks to the north.
- (3) Innundation produced by primitive dam works in the Gash delta.

APPENDIX X.

TABLE M : Classification of Waterwheels and Lands and Taxes Levied on them in Dongola and Berber Provinces during the Egyptian period (1820-1883).

ITEM	Tax in P.T.				
	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E
<u>Wheels Tax:</u>					
Wheels per each (Dongola)	500	400	350	300	-
Wheels per each (Berber)	450	400	350	281	-
<u>Shadufs</u> / each	350	250	-	-	-
<u>Land Tax :</u>					
Land irrigated by rain or well per feddan.	350	250	175	-	-
Islands per <u>feddan</u> .	60	60	52	-	-
<u>Geruf</u> (banks) per feddan.	45	26	22	-	-
<u>Karu</u> land per feddan (Berber).	56	40	28	28	15
Palms / tree	2	-	-	-	-
<p>(1) Taxes on wheels depend on the ease of irrigation and the fertility of land.</p> <p>(2) <u>Karu</u> land is a land of clayey soil, with a rather high content of salt, and is usually situated away from the Nile.</p> <p>Source : D.H. Stewart, op.cit., p.14.</p>					

Moreover, there was a fractional addition, calculated at the rate of 5.94 P.T per each Egyptian pound in Dongola and 1.13 P.T. in Berber in lieu for taxes abolished on boats and local beers and to pay for the salaries of tax collectors, and the whole tax amounted to £4,228 per annum.

Against these grievances the Commission of Dongola Notables was set in the 1880s and assessed the net returns from one

wheel, irrigating average land, at 391 and 201 for others. This assessment they arrived at by calculating earnings and working cost of two wheels irrigating fair average land. The committee then proposed :

- (1) to reduce taxes from 500 to 400 P.T. per wheel with the exception of some 130 wheels which should only be charged 350 P.T., because the land is below average in fertility, and some wheels at the cataracts to be charged only 250 P.T. because of narrowness of cultivable land and uneasiness of irrigation there.
- (2) Each shaduf 100 P.T.      (3) Land irrigated by rain (amtar) 300 / feddan ;      (4) islands 40 P.T. per feddan, and
- (5) Geruf (banks) 35 P.T.
- (6) The government was not to charge the owner for land he no longer irrigates.
- (7) To remit the taxes due on ruined wheels since 1877 to encourage the owner to cultivate the land;      (8) To appoint capable land surveyors, and not to continue to levy taxes on lands and date-palms carried away by the flood and
- (9) to diminish tax on karu land to 25 P.T. per feddan.

APPENDIX XITABLE N : Arable Lands in the Sudan.

Place	Blue Book (Egypt) No.2 (feddans)	M.W. FOX (feddans)
Between Blue and White Nile	7,000,000	
Islands on B. and White Nile	1,000,000	8,000,000-15,000,000
Between Rahad and Dender	3,000,000	
West of The Atbara	3,000,000	10,000,000
Tokar	125,000	500,000
TAKKA	-	2,500,000
Total.	14,125,000	



APPENDIX XIITABLE O : Summary of Accounts of the Provinces of the Sudan for 1882.

Provinces	Revenue collected £ E.	Revenue arrears due £ E.	Expenditure £ E.
Province of TAKKA	53,596	15,363	112,416
" " SUAKIN	26,668	1,964	20,492
" " SENNAR	40,875	13,729	42,708
" " BERBER	42,530	-	18,614
" " FASHODA	7,596	12,247	25,698
" " KHARTOUM	74,139	17,908	123,391
" " EQUATORIAL	31,385	-	35,449
" " DONGOLA	55,681	82	10,605
" " Kordofan	47,459	8,339	70,404
" " DARFUR	37,056	-	70,056
" " B. el GHAZAL	14,669	-	9,740

Source : D.H.Stewart, op.cit., p.14

The deficit and surpluses (1882) were as follows :

Takka (deficit) £E 67,820, Suakin (surplus) £E 6176 ;  
 Sennar (deficit) £E. 1832 ; Berber (surplus) £E. 23,916;  
 Fashoda (deficit) £E. 18,102 ; Khartoum (deficit) £E. 49,252 ;  
 Equatorial (deficit) £E. 4046 ; Dongola (surplus) £E. 45,076 ;  
 Kordofan (surplus) £E. 4055 ; Darfur (deficit) £E. 14,421 ;  
 Bahrel Ghazal (deficit) £ 3856.