

## Historical Socio-economic Relationships between the Rashāyda and the Beja in the Eastern Sudan: The Production of Racing Camels and Trade Networks across the Red Sea

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## **Historical Socio-economic Relationships between the Rashāyda and the Beja in the Eastern Sudan: The Production of Racing Camels and Trade Networks across the Red Sea**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The one-humped camel (*Camelus dromedarius* L.) belongs to the family Camelidae of the order Artiodactyla. It is well known so far that one-humped camels have been used for multiple purposes throughout a history: for riding, packing, carrying or lifting water, milling and cultivation, in addition to their use for milk, meat and hide production (Bulliet 1975; Wilson 1984).

However, recently it has become less important to human life in general. For example, in the Arabian Peninsula, cars started to substitute for camels as a means of transportation in the desert. People whether living in a desert or in towns still love to drink camel milk and eat camel meat, but they have fewer opportunities to do so than before (Chatty 1986; Katakura 1991).

On the other hand, a particular type of one-humped camel has become highly valued in the Middle East over the last several decades. That is a racing camel.

In this paper, I analyze historical socio-economic relationships between the Rashāyda and the Beja in the eastern Sudan, focusing on the production of racing camels and its trading networks across the Red Sea (Figure 1).

### **RACING CAMEL PRODUCTION AND TRADE NETWORKS**

#### **1) The production of racing camels in the United Arab Emirates: Sudanese merchants and pastoralists take the lead**

In the past it was common for the Bedouins to race camels in the desert for recreation, particularly on occasions such as weddings, Islamic holidays, and tribal gatherings. Camel races were held during weddings, before the bride and groom had actually been married. The groom had to prove himself worthy of the bride by racing with some of the other young men. He did not have to win the race, and even if he came in last it did not matter; the important thing was to participate (Young 1996: 120–121).

Camel racing became more popular and developed into a more formal sport or

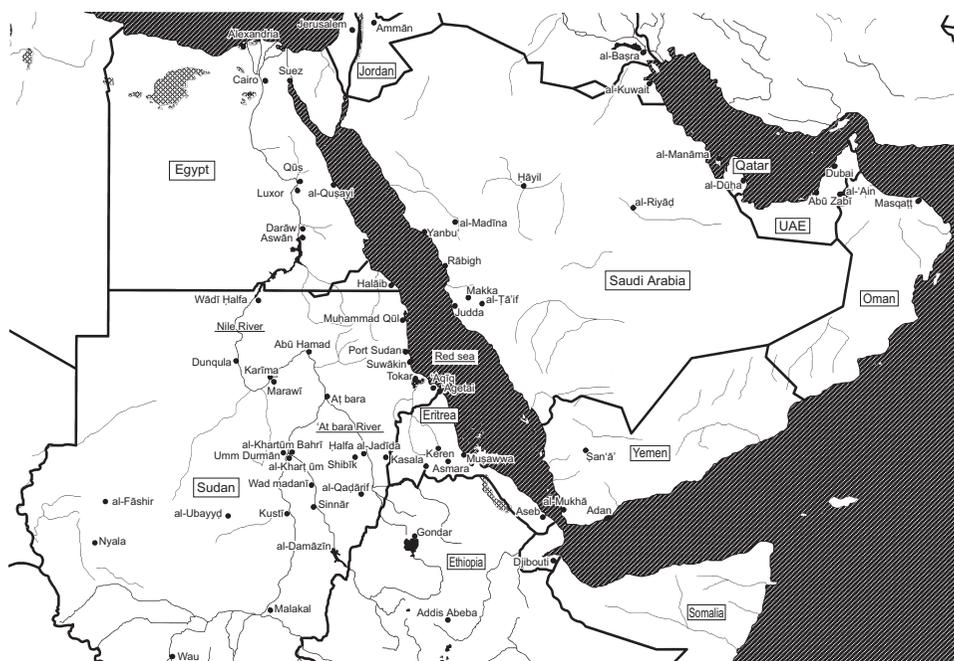


Figure 1 Research Area

cultural event after oil exploitation in the Arab countries such as the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman (Abu Sin 1986: 4–5; Saltin and Rose 1994: 9–10).

In the UAE, currently there are approximately 14,000 racing camels and up to 40,000 breeding camels. Races are subdivided according to age and sex. In major races, female camels older than seven years of age are generally used. Camels race over distances between four and ten kilometers. As many as fifty camels, ridden by lightweight jockeys, may complete in each race. The camels are quickly out of sight of the spectators in the central grandstand and therefore the races are televised and broadcast on local television stations. Cash prizes are paid to the owners and trainers of the successful camels and prize money is paid down to the tenth place (Saltin and Rose 1994: 9–10). Before the race starts, a traditional band plays drums and girls dance and shake their hair. The owners of the camels follow their racing camels with cars along the road beside the race track (Katakura 1991: 52–53).

As a result of this increasing demand, the price of a mature fast racing camel has increased ten times in local markets in the Sudan and more than twenty times in Arab countries in 1983, compared with 1970 prices. Only after this price boom, did the breeding and marketing of racing camels develop into a business involving a chain of interested people, including herders, middlemen, dealers, exporters and speculators, as well as trainers and riders (Abu Sin 1986: 2).

I had the chance to carry out a short term general survey in the UAE in April 1997. I interviewed in Arabic some racing camel breeders around al-Wathba, the race track

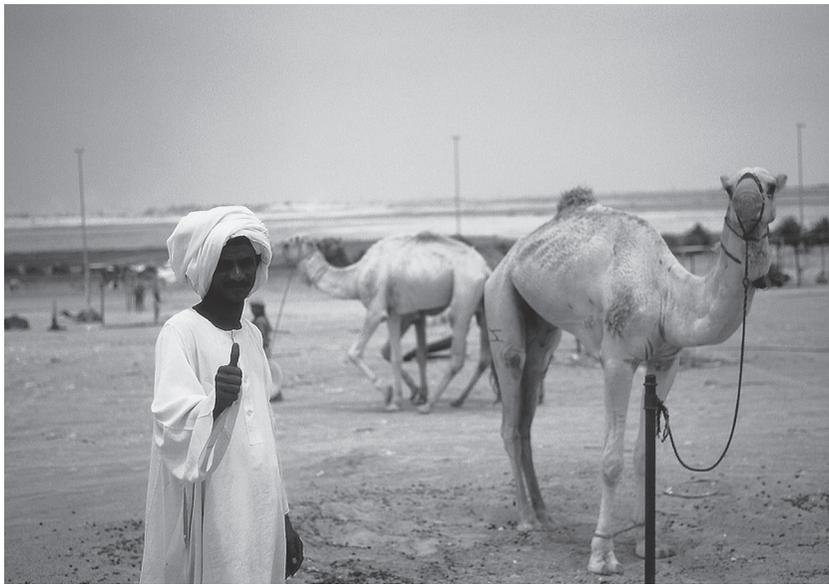
in Abu Dhabi (Abū Zabi). I met many Sudanese merchants and pastoralists who were taking the lead in the racing camel trade there.

The following information was given mostly by al-Haj Qurīth from New Halfa (Ḥalfa al-Jadīda) in the Buḥāna<sup>1</sup>) in the eastern Sudan (Photo 1). For the last ten years, he has stayed in the UAE from October to April, and in the Sudan from May to September in every year. In the Sudan, he mostly stays in al-Markhiyāt of Sūq Libya, Omdurman (Umm Durmān). He has been to Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia mainly for the camel trade. He thinks that camel racing is most active in the UAE. Here, many people from Pakistan, Bangladesh or Somalia stay for training and trading, but only the Sudanese actually bring camels from their country.

The Sudanese merchants bring mostly male camels from the Sudan, and crossbreed them with female camels in the UAE. Because while Arab camels are good for short distance races up to six kilometers, they lose speed after that. If the camel is crossbred, she will not lose stamina for up to ten kilometers.

Therefore, the best method of producing excellent camels with both speed and stamina is to crossbreed a female camel from the Arabian Peninsula and a male camel from the Sudan. The reddish camel from the Arabian Peninsula is excellent for speed, and the whitish camel from the Sudan is better in stamina. This crossbred type is called *muhajjin*.

Furthermore, the camels from the Sudan are mainly divided into two distinctive categories; ‘Annāfi camels of the Rashāyda and Bushārī camels of the Beja. The ‘Annāfi camels of the Rashāyda are good for long distance races, and the Bushārī camels of



**Photo 1** Sudanese camel trader/ trainer, al-Haj Qurīth, and his camel at al-Wathba, Abu Dhabi, the UAE.

the Beja are good for short distance races. (I explain these types of camels and ethnic groups later more in detail.)<sup>2)</sup>

The price of the most of Sudanese male camels ranges from 150,000 to 1,000,000 dirham, that is equivalent to approximately 40,000 to 270,000 US dollars<sup>3)</sup>. The best camels cost as much as 3,000,000 dirham (US \$800,000)! When they bring the one from the Sudan to the UAE, the price generally goes up 1.5 times the original price.

Al-Haj Qurīth hires two brothers from Dacca, Bangladesh to take care of the camels and to ride the racing camels as jockeys. Their salary is 600 dirham (US \$160) a month. The best jockeys can get 5,000 dirham (US \$1,350) a month and some jockeys from the Sudan can get 2,000 dirham (US \$540) a month. The camels are fed mainly Egyptian clover (*Trifolium alexandrinum*) called barsīm in Egypt and the Sudan or al-jat in the UAE. They are also fed barley, butter, dates, camel and goat milk, and powdered milk, especially in the summer.

## **2) Racing camel trade networks between the Arabian peninsula and Africa: from the Sudan to the gulf countries**

Al-Haj Qurīth takes camels overland from Khartoum (al-Kharṭūm) in the Sudan via Daraw in Upper Egypt to Cairo in Lower Egypt. He has some pastoralists take the camels, and he himself goes by airplane to Cairo. A camel caravan consists of 100–150 camels, some of which are sold in Egypt for meat or pack animals. It takes around one month. The camels do not drink any water for more than two weeks. Then from Cairo in Egypt to Abu Dhabi or Dubai in the UAE, the camels are sent by airplane.

There is a special agent in Cairo who specializes in camel trading. The agent's father is from the Ja'aliyyīn<sup>4)</sup>, living on the Nile River in the Sudan. He started camel trading in the 1950s, though he passed away in around 1985. The agent's mother is an Egyptian.

Sudanese camel traders working in the UAE are from the Kababīsh<sup>5)</sup> in the western Sudan, the Kawāhla<sup>6)</sup> in the eastern and western Sudan, the Hadanduwa or Bushārīn of the Beja, and the Rashāyda in the eastern Sudan. The informant (al-Haj Qurīth) is from the Jama'āb<sup>7)</sup>.

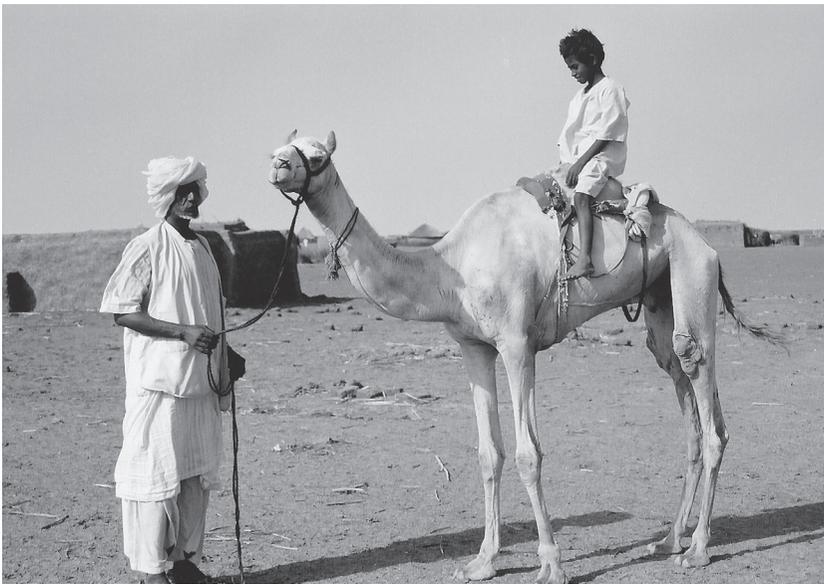
Hjort and Dahl (1984: 63–64) reported on camel exports from the Sudan in 1980. According to them, many animals were taken from the area to larger markets inside the Sudan, in Egypt or in Saudi Arabia. The Sudanese markets are in Aṭbara and al-Dāmar, and from there, the camels are taken to Umm Durmān. Most of the demand in these markets is for good pack animals. Saudi Arabia buys animals for riding and transport, while the Egyptian market takes slaughter animals, female breeders and transport camels. The Beja traders drive herds of 50–150 animals in a fifteen day day-and-night trek through the Nubian desert, preferably during the winter time when the demand in Egypt is at its highest and the journey is least arduous. The camels are then sold in Daraw, Aswan (Aswān), Esna or even Cairo. Such traders should be formally licensed but a good deal of smuggling and black-market exchange of currencies takes place at the boundary. The Rashāyda are also heavily involved in camel exporting and handle much of the Saudi Arabian trade. According to local opinion, the Beja trade in

export camels has declined. There are small price differences between Egypt and the Sudan compared to fifteen years ago. There is also severe competition from camel traders coming from the west of Sudan and using the traditional 'forty-day route' to Egypt.

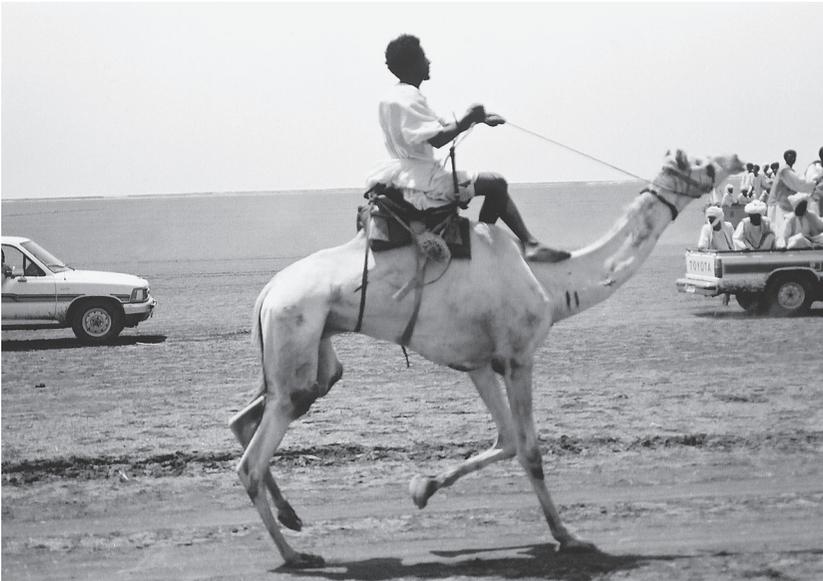
Training camels for racing is a hard job. It demands careful selection of breed, age, physical fitness as well as a suitable trainer, rider and training program. I visited Shibīk of the Buṭāna in the eastern Sudan in July 1993. There, Shaykh Ḥasan from the Khawālda<sup>8)</sup> oversees the production of racing camels (Photo 2). He, like Al-Haj Qurīth, lives in the Sudan for half a year and in the Gulf countries for the rest. He is admired by his colleagues because he has outstanding knowledge and can find and train potential racing camels. He has a broad network of camel pastoralists and traders in the eastern and western Sudan. He told me that he was planning to catch camels that have reverted back to being wild and are living in the mountainous areas in the western Sudan, and to breed them with his tough, speedy camels.

He also gave me some information about the recent ethnic conflicts caused by camel robbers. Three camels of Shukrīya were stolen at night. After following the footprints of the robbers, it was finally discovered that they were members of a certain ethnic group in the Buṭāna. This incident almost caused ethnic fighting between the two groups because these three camels were for export as racing camels. Their potential of values is equivalent to the price of one four-wheel drive car, I was told.

I also participated in their racing camel training in Shibīk. There were many camel pastoralists of different ethnic origins such as Shukrīya<sup>9)</sup>, Rashāyda, the Bushārīn of



**Photo 2** Camel trader, Shaykh Ḥasan, and his son on his racing camel at Shibīk, the Buṭāna, the eastern Sudan



**Photo 3** Pick-up trucks running beside the racing camels to check their abilities and conditions, Shibik

Beja and others. They exercised the camels regularly to keep them in a good shape. Every Thursday morning, some of the camels were gathered together to compete in a race to improve camel's performance.

Their jockeys were either young men in their twenties or boys around at ten years of age. They would start to walk into the middle of the desert with the racing camels early in the morning. After about one hour, the owners of camels drove their pick-up trucks and followed the camels' footprints. When they caught up the jockeys who were waiting for them, they ordered them to mount the camels and started the race with signals. Some of the jockeys rode the camels with saddles, and others did not. The riders shouted, whipped and kicked their camels. The pick-up trucks ran beside the racing camels to check their abilities and conditions (Photo 3). Through this kind of training, the pastoralists could select the racing camels to be exported to countries in the Arabian Peninsula.

Before this experience, I also had the chance to participate in what was called – “The First Camel Race in the Sudan” at Kassala (Kasala) in April 1993. The organizer of this race allowed me to watch the race, but he did not give me permission to take pictures or to videotape it, because he thought that these were sources of income. After I explained that I was a researcher, he permitted me to take pictures and a video only after the camels had reached the goal (Photo 4).

Middlemen who mediate between these groups and dealers who have more access to external markets are able to organize to test races. According to Abu Sin (1986: 3–5), these groups, mostly from the Rashāyda, have a long tradition in the camel trade



**Photo 4** Racing camel owners of the Shukrīya (left) and Rashāyda (right) celebrating their victories in ‘The First Camel Race in the Sudan’ at Kasala, the eastern Sudan

and control the racing camel market. They buy potential racing camels and train them. They sometimes organize visits by Arabs who come to buy camels. In 1984 about 120,000 Sudanese Pounds (US \$40,000) was paid for a first-place winner in a grand race at Mastūra, a Rashāyda village one kilometer from Kasala in the eastern Sudan. In 1990, as Köhler-Rollefson et al. (1991: 71) have reported, the prices ranged up to one million Sudanese Pounds (US \$80,000).

## THE RASHĀYDA AS MIDDLEMEN IN CAMEL TRADING

### 1) Ethnic characteristics of the Rashāyda

The Rashāyda are an Arabic-speaking nomadic people who live in the northeastern Sudan and Eritrea. They emigrated from the coast of Arabia across the Red Sea in the middle of the nineteenth century. Their population was estimated in 1922 at one to two thousand and in 1986 at 40,000 in the Sudan. They are less numerous in Eritrea. They specialize in herding camel and goats, but some of them engage in farming and fishing. They mainly live in three areas: along the Red Sea coast, in the region west and south of Kasala, and on the banks of the Aṭbara River (Rouaud 1995: 437–438; Young 1992: 177).

During the chaos of the Mahdist period in the eastern Sudan, they sought refuge in Eritrea, returning to their present locations after 1900. In the 1970s many men went to Saudi Arabia as migrant laborers (MacMichael 1967: 345–346; Young 1992: 117).

The Rashāyda can be divided into three groups according to their geographical

locations: the Northern, Red Sea, and Southern Rashāyda. In the case of the Southern Rashāyda, they adhere to a northwest-southeast movement pattern. The pastures they utilize during the rainy season (from the end of June until October, with a peak in July and August) are in the area between Kasala and Qoz Rajab. During the dry season they move south, utilizing the aftermath of the sorghum fields in the mechanized farming areas around Showak and as far south as Doka and Rashid (Köhler-Rollefson *et al.* 1991: 70).

The Rashāyda consider camel milk the most important element of their diet. The only other significant dietary component is sorghum, so camel milk can be regarded as their almost exclusive source of protein and vitamins. Camel husbandry among the Rashāyda is largely a family-based operation. Camel milk represents the foundation of the diet, and it is regarded as crucial for the well-being of the children. The sale of slaughtered camels and the breeding of racing animals provides the necessary cash to buy other essentials of life and sorghum for the herd (Köhler-Rollefson *et al.* 1991: 71, 74).

The Rashāyda have no traditional rights of their own in the eastern Sudan as they have only recently migrated there. Successive governments in the Sudan have recognized the fact that they should have access to adequate pastures, watering points and agricultural land, but the traditional claims by the Hadanduwa of the Beja have always put restrictions on this access, and even excluded them from the only area of potentially rich grazing, the Qāsh Delta. In 1970s, the Rashāyda were divided into three main groups, each under an independent ‘*umda* (a tribal chief), and the authorities have been unsuccessful in unifying them under one shaykhship or nazirate like other tribes in the region (Salih 1980: 127–130).

However, in November 1993, I was able to meet the *nāzir* (the paramount chief) of the Rashāyda, and have an interview with him in Kasala. His name is Aḥmad Ḥamīd Bārki. He was forty-eight years old, and had three wives and children. He called the three branches of the Rashāyda: al-Brā‘asa, al-Brāṭikh and al-Zunīmāt. He told me that the people moving between the Red Sea coast in the winter and the Kasala area in summer were from al-Brā‘asa, and the people working as fishermen on the Red Sea coast and trading across the Red Sea were from al-Brāṭikh.

He estimated an approximate the population of the Rashāyda outside the Sudan as 15,000 in Saudi Arabia; 50,000 in Kuwait; 25,000 in Jordan; 40,000 in Egypt (particularly in Upper Egypt); and more than 20,000 in Eritrea. He mentioned the exact places where they live in Saudi Arabia as al-Madīna and Ḥāyil<sup>10</sup>).

The original ancestor of the Rashāyda is said to be a man named Rashīd or Rashīd al-Zaul. Most of Rashāyda simply assume that they are somehow descended from him and at least three ‘tribal branches’ claim him as their ancestor. Young suggested that geneologically the Rashāyda is a collection of groups that have their origins in many places, including Libya, Sinai and al-Ḥijāz. Historical research forces us to ask whether the Rashāyda were a single, unified community - a ‘tribe’ - at all before they emigrated to the Sudan. It could well be that a number of separate groups, all calling themselves Rashāyda but none claiming a close relationship with any other, all emigrated from

Arabia and migrated to the Sudan during approximately the same period. Once they reached the western shore of the Red Sea, they may have found it advantageous to unite under a common leader and form a new 'tribal' confederation. This would have helped them penetrate the coastal territories of the eastern Sudan and resist the counterattacks of the Hadanduwa and Banī 'Āmir of the Beja. Since then, the 'genealogical' identity of the Rashāyda has probably changed continuously from one decade to the next, as new 'foreign' groups have been added (Young 1996: 87, 101–104).

Young has also mentioned the name 'Zubaydīya', calling it "an outsider's name for the Rashāyda that apparently has a long history in eastern Sudan" (Young 1996: 109–110)<sup>11</sup>.

Besides herding, the Rashāyda are actively involved in the profitable camel trade between the eastern Sudan and Egypt. Surplus young male camels that are strong enough to travel long distances are sent to meat markets in Egypt (Salih 1980: 122; Young 1996: 43–44)<sup>12</sup>. The males not slaughtered at rituals, and that are kept for stud or pack animals are sold for slaughter around the age of 6–8 years, usually to Egypt. This may be done through agents and middlemen at the Kasala or al-Qaḍārif markets or, alternatively, several Rashāyda families will entrust several young members of the tribe with a herd to drive and sell at the camel market in Cairo. At the time of this research, prices ranged from 7,000 to 12,000 Sudanese Pounds (US \$600–1,000) (Köhler-Rollefson *et al.* 1991: 71).

## 2) The Sudanese and Eritrean Red Sea coast:

### The first place the Rashāyda immigrated to from the Arabian peninsula

The coastal area between Port Sudan of the Sudan and Massawa (Muṣawwa) of Eritrea is known as the first area where the Rashāyda started to live in Africa (Rouaud 1995: 437–438).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Italian administrator in Nakfa of Eritrea, Tenente Pavoni, reported that the Rashāyda traded slaves from the African interior to Arabia, and from the Arabian Peninsula they traded foodstuffs such as sorghum and dates for the Mahdists, and often cattle as well as commodities which they expected to exchange for slaves. One of the reasons the Rashāyda came from Arabia and settled just to the north of Sawākin (Suwākin) was to become cameleers in Napier's army at the time of the campaign of 1867 against Emperor Theodore (d'Avray 1996: 212, 216).

The greater part of the slaves for the Rashāyda were brought from the interior to the coast by the Aflanda and Hadanduwa of the Beja. Then almost all of slaves were taken over to the Arabian side of the Red Sea, and sold there in open markets. The Rashāyda were the principal middle-men in the transfer of slaves, in their purchase from the runners who brought their cargos down from the mountains and from the borderlands between the Sudan and Ethiopia, and in the resale in the markets of Arabia and Egypt (d'Avray 1996: 217–219). They were well equipped with rifles which had been banned in most parts of the Ottoman Empire in 1857, in order to protect their

illegal trade from both government inspectors and rival merchants (Young 1996: 113).

Even in the second half of the twentieth century, they kept crossing the Red Sea in small boats and took various raw materials from the Sudan to Arabian ports and returned with firearms, cloth, and other goods. The trade in firearms was both a source of cash income and of useful weapons. They were also smuggling weapons from Eritrea, where battles between Eritreans and Ethiopians were occurring. They took automatic rifles across the border and resold them in the Sudan (Young 1996: 105, 132).

Therefore, from the very beginning of their immigration to Africa, the Rashāyda engaged not only in subsistence activities such as herding, cultivating and fishing, but also in trading with the Beja. By staying near the coast, the Rashāyda have been successful in combining subsistence economies with trade. Their current identity as camel pastoralists and traders has its roots in these historical events.

According to d'Avray (1996: 219), the beaches of the Red Sea from Ras Kasar down to the outskirts of Massawa remain much as they have always been, and the Rashāyda and others continue to engage in raiding and trading outside by the rules set by governments. There are dozens of quiet inlets, where there is water to be had – as Pavoni described<sup>13</sup>), by digging close to the sea – and where, if care is taken, the chance of encountering the authorities is remote.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE RASHĀYDA AND THE BEJA**

### **1) The Rashāyda and the Beja on the coastal plain of the Sudanese Red Sea**

My survey area was around 'Agetai village on the coastal plain of the Sudanese Red Sea coast. The village extends about 3 km long by 5 km and has an estimated population of about 2,000. My fieldwork was carried out during the period 1992–1997 (Photo 5).

There is a place called '*Chabbalīt*' near the village on the Red Sea coast. People remember that this was the main battlefield between the Mahdist army led by Abū Qarja from the interior and the Rashāyda from the sea at the end of the nineteenth century. There are around ten tombs of those who died in this battle on the hill called '*Tikkat kire*' ('a left silver bracelet' in Tigre) at the village.

All the inhabitants are Muslims, and speak Arabic. The majority of the inhabitants of 'Agetai is the 'Ejlāb clan of the Banī 'Āmir of the Beja. The Banī 'Āmir is less a tribe than a loosely knit confederation of groups of different origins (Paul 1954: 17–18). There are 'Ejlāb, Aflanda and some other clans of the Banī 'Āmir in 'Agetai village. The 'Ejlāb is thought to be the ruling caste of Aflanda (Paul 1954: 83–84, 138). Other than the Banī 'Āmir of the Beja, the Rashāyda own small boats to fish in the Red Sea, and herds camels and other livestock. The Danākil (or Afār), who are immigrants from what is called the "Afar Triangle in the Horn of Africa" (Lewis 1955) engage in the same kind of work with the Rashāyda<sup>14</sup>).

Based on my intensive fieldwork, I clarify that the one humped camel plays an



**Photo 5** The Beja watering their camels at ‘Agetai village on the Red Sea coastal plain, the eastern Sudan.

invaluable role in the process of approaching and carrying coastal resources because of its outstanding abilities to walk on both soft substrates (mud and sand) and coral-rich hard substrates in littoral and sublittoral zones. I also demonstrate that the Beja living along the Sudanese Coast of the Red Sea target (a) driftwood, (b) mangroves, (c) gastropods and (d) fish in gathering and fishing activities. The principal types and purposes of resource use are (i) for food; (ii) as a means of subsistence; and (iii) for daily life materials (Nawata 1997, 2001).

Some of the Rashāyda live around the Gash Delta, some 300 kilometers southwest from the Red Sea coast. In May (when the first rains reach the coast) they move with their herds between the city of Port Sudan and the southernmost coastal town of ‘Aqīq on the border with Eritrea. After this they make the arduous journey across the Red Sea Hills, to the west, and descend to the savanna between the Gash and Atbara rivers to utilize the pastures there. When the rains in these inland pastures cease they return to their home territories along the Red Sea (Young 1996: 31). Around the Gash Delta in the interior of the Sudan, it is said that the Rashāyda do not recognize or appreciate the values of the Hadanduwa of the Beja in relation to ownership of land utilization of natural resources, whereas other Beja groups do (Salih 1980: 127).

In contrast to this case, there is no serious conflict between the ‘Ejīlāb/Aflanda clan of the Banī ‘Āmir of the Beja and the Rashāyda over territorial rights around ‘Agetai village on the coastal plain. Basically the Rashāyda follow the customary regulations of the Beja.

When any of the Rashāyda come to this village, they meet with the leaders of the



**Photo 6** A camel herder of the Rashāyda (left) asking a permission of watering their camels to one of the leaders of the ‘Ejlāb clan of the Banī ‘Āmir of the Beja (right) at ‘Agetai, the eastern Sudan.

‘Ejlāb to obtain permission from them to graze (or cross) their customary territories and water their animals. They can also exploit the coastal resources by gathering and fishing along the Red Sea coast. There is no problem at all to sell their sheep and goats in the village markets, either (Photo 6).

The Rashāyda have no right to dig (or repair) wells or even to build a drinking pan out of mud next to the well and pour water into it for the camels to drink<sup>15)</sup>. Yet, I sometimes heard that some of the ‘Ejlāb complain that the Rashāyda let their animals drink too much when the rains are poor.

The Rashāyda are also not allowed to cultivate the agricultural land, either. But some of them are hired by the ‘Ejlāb to watch the camels and make sure they are kept away from the fields and the harvested crops (millet). Then, they are given some portion of the harvested crops.

There are about fifty Rashāyda living in ‘Agetai village semi-permanently. The majority of them engage mainly in net-fishing with small boats. There are three boats here. Two of them belong to the Rashāyda and one to the ‘Ejlāb. All of these boats are about six meters long, and two have a sail (Photo 7). They put out to sea and do net-fishing at night. When they catch extra fish, they walk around the village, riding on camels to sell the fish to the villages in the morning. Dory snapper (*Lutjanus fulviflamma*), Yellowfin bream (*Rhabdosargus sarba*) and Red Sea houndfish (*Tylosurum choram*) are the species most frequently caught. Occasionally, they catch dolphins by chance and eat them.



**Photo 7** Small boat with a sail for net-fishing on the Red Sea coast at ‘Agetai, the eastern Sudan.

## **2) Interbreeding camels between the Rashāyda and the Beja in eastern Sudan**

Since their arrival in the Sudan, the Rashāyda have remained in isolation from the Beja groups among whom they live, and preserved their own cultural characteristics and ethnic identity. There is a continuous conflict especially between Hadanduwa of the Beja and the Rashāyda over territorial rights, because they are in competition for the utilization of scarce natural resources such as pasture and water. An other conflict was over a claim from the Rashāyda to have a nāzir claim to which the government was sympathetic given their long history of residence in the region. The Rashāyda had only managed to carve out a niche for themselves by specializing in camel breeding. They move much longer distances than the Beja. In recent years many men have purchased pick-up trucks and work as drivers during the dry seasons (Salih 1980: 122; Sørbo 1991: 218; Manger 1996: 186; Young 1996: 13, 26, 42).

I observed many times, surprisingly, that the Rashāyda and the Beja do not greet each other when they pass with camels even in the middle of desert. It is easy to distinguish most of the Rashāyda from the Beja and other native Sudanese, because of their costume (especially that of the women) and their Arabic dialect. One of the



**Photo 8** The Rashāyda women riding on camels at Red Sea coastal plain, the eastern Sudan.

distinctive differences in camel riding between the two groups is that the Rashāyda women always ride on camelback but the Beja women do not (Photo 8).

The Rashāyda and the Beja have only rarely intermarried with each other, but they do exchange and interbreed camels. For example, the Rashāyda living in the Tokar Delta crossbreed their own camels with the Shallāgiai, one of the best milking camels of the Beja. The reverse happens in the Halāib area, where the Bushārīn cross their Banāgir breed with Rashāyda stock (OXFAM 1990: 59–62). It also happens that the Rashāyda ride the Bushārī camel of the Beja (Young 1996: 24).

The Rashāyda report that they know the pedigrees of their racing camels for the last seven generations. They do not keep track of such data for their food-producing camels. Purposeful selection appears to be restricted to male animals only, which are chosen from high milk yielding female lines, and for nice temper and good conformation (Köhler-Rollefson *et al.* 1991: 71, 75).

Riding and racing camel breeds in the Sudan are divided into two types: ‘Annāfī camels and Bushārī camels (Wilson 1984: 39).

The Bushārī takes its name from the Bishārīn of the Beja who claim to be its original breeders<sup>16)</sup>. It is small to medium sized with sharp features, and brownish to whitish in color (Abu Sin 1986: 2–3). It is not so fast under light weights over short distances, but it is a good general-purpose mount. It is the breed preferred for mounted police and similar work. The Bushārī is a slightly stronger and sturdier camel than the ‘Annāfī (Bennett *et al.* 1948: 646) (Photo 9).

The ‘Annāfī is the riding camel in its extreme form. Light in body (also usually in color), leggy, and with a small hump, it is the cameline equivalent of the 5-furlong



**Photo 9** The Bushārī camels of the Bishārīn of the Beja, the eastern Sudan.

sprinter among horses. Judged by native standards, it is the best camel in the country because it is the fastest, but its weight-carrying capacity and staying power have been sacrificed to speed to the point that the European of medium weight finds it a rather unsatisfactory mount (Bennett *et al.* 1948: 646). The general conformation suggests speed rather than stamina. The animal is leggy. The neck is long and ribs are not very well sprung. The bone is lighter and muscle development inferior to that of the average Beja camels. Their color, which is often white, and the long narrow head with its low domed forehead is a hallmark of the breed. Although they are less robust than the Beja camels, on a level field they are useful riders. They are fast and smooth and over a distance of up to 25 miles, they have no equal (Gillespie 1962: 42). It is mainly a grazing type and only does really well where grass is available. Its speed has been archived by sacrificing strength and stamina. It was rarely able to carry the weight of an average police or army officer but was often the pride of the traditional owner (Wilson 1984: 41) (Photo 10).

The ‘Annāfī was originally bred by the Shukrīya, Laḥāwīn, Baṭāḥīn, Rufā‘ al-Sharq, Kawāhla, etc. and could be mainly a Buṭāna breed. It is tall, leggy, with fine, sharp features and whitish in color (Gillespie 1962: 42; Abu Sin 1986: 2–3). However, recently the Rashāyda, instead of these other tribes, are known for ‘Annāfī camels. The ‘Annāfī can be recognized as a type of Rashāyda camel (Wilson 1984: 41; OXFAM 1990: 59–62). However, so-called ‘Annāfī are really half-breeds (‘Annāfī x Bushārī or ‘Annāfī x ‘Arabī) (Gillespie 1962: 42) and may be called a hybrid type (Kingdon



**Photo 10** The ‘Annāfi and Rashaydi camels of the Rashāyda, the eastern Sudan.

1990: 133).

There is also a range of half-breeds and cross-breeds which provide potential racing camels under intensive training. The most popular combination in cross-breed are of ‘Annāfi bull and ‘Arabī cow, Bushārī bull and ‘Arabī cow; in half-breed, ‘Annāfi bull and Bushārī cow. The closest combination to the pure ‘Annāfi or Bushārī, the better the racing capabilities of the breed. The ‘Arabī is a pack camel (Abu Sin 1986: 2–3, 10).

It is said that the Rashāyda breed two distinct types of camels. For racing and riding they breed the elegant, long-legged and light colored ‘Annāfi camels. For providing meat and milk they keep the Rashaydi camel which is of relatively small size, stocky, and characterized by its dark gray shade in infancy and reddish color when adult (Köhler-Rollefson *et al.* 1991: 71). A distinctive breed of pack camel is named the Rashaydi. The main features which distinguish the Rashaydi from the ‘Arabī (common pack camels owned by other native ethnic groups in the Sudan) are its pinkish red color, its shorter legs and its faster pace. In spite of its slightly smaller size and its relative speed, weight-carrying capacity has not been sacrificed and it is at least as capable as the common Arab in this respect (Bennett *et al.* 1948: 645; Wilson 1984: 41).

In November 1993, I had an interview with a camel herder of the Rashāyda, Ḥāmid Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Muṭīrī at Mastūra, a village established by the Rashāyda in the 1970s (Photo 11). The son Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ Ḥāmid Muḥammad introduced me to him. His grandmother is a native Sudanese. He was born in al-Dāmar, educated there, and became the first governmental officer from the Rashāyda. He can speak both Arabic



**Photo 11** A camel herder of the Rashāyda, Ḥāmid Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Muṭīrī, and his relatives at Mastūra, Kasala, the eastern Sudan.

and English, and worked with an American anthropologist, William Young.

Ḥāmid Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Muṭīrī mentioned fourteen camel types. He started with four types which are breeds of the Rashāyda; 1) Sāḥilī (coastal type), 2) ‘Annāfi (tough type), 3) Zurq (blue type), and 4) Buyud (white type).

Then, he continued with types named after their colors and its owners; 5) Khuḍr (green type) owned by the Hadanduwa of the Beja, 6) Laḥwānī (mixed-color type) owned by the Shukrīya, 7) Dahāsiri (?) owned by the Banī ‘Āmir, 8) Bushārī (Bishārīn’s) owned by the Bishārīn, 9) Nūrāb (Nūrāb’s) owned by the Nūrāb, one clan of the Hadanduwa, 10) Azraq (blue type) owned by the Nūrāb.

Finally, he added 11) Shukrī (Shukrīya’s) owned by the Shukrīya, 12) Kāhilī (Kawāhla’s) owned by the Kawāhla, 13) Kināna (Kināna’s) owned by the Kināna<sup>17</sup>, and 14) Rahad (from the Rahad River area).

The reason they recognize each individual as a particular type of camel is that they have developed a male succession principally for the genealogy of the camel.

When I interviewed camel herders from the ‘Ejīlāb clan of the Banī ‘Āmir of the Beja in ‘Agetai village, I made sure that they recognized the type of their camels as follows. The type (jīns or anwā’ in Arabic) of their camel is “Sāḥilī”, which can be translated as “coastal breed”. This breed is characterized by the ability to walk in mountains, deserts or coastal areas, and can browse the leaves of mangroves.

Their recognition of interbreeds of camel types as follows. The bull Sāḥilī and the cow Sāḥilī have, of course, Sāḥilī offspring. The bull ‘Annāfi and the cow Sāḥilī have ‘Annāfi offspring. The bull Sāḥilī and the cow ‘Annāfi have Sāḥilī offspring. In short,

the bull's type is passed on to the calves.

As I mentioned earlier, for example in the UAE, the camels from the Sudan are mainly divided into two distinctive categories; 'Annāfī camels of the Rashāyda and Bushārī camels of the Beja. The 'Annāfī camels of the Rashāyda are good for long distance races, and the Bushārī camels of the Beja are for short distance races.

In Qatar, according to Shukrī (1992: 11–13), camels in the Arabian Peninsula can be categorized into five types: 1) al-Sūdānī originated from the western Sudan for traveling in the desert (approximately four kilometers per an hour); 2) Bushārī originated from the northeastern Sudan on the Red Sea coast for riding (approximately ten kilometers per an hour); 3) al-Sūmālī originated from Somali for riding, milk and meat; 4) al-'Arabī al-Najdī originated from the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula for packing and milk; 5) al-'Umānī originated from the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula for racing under the current conditions in Qatar.

The Rashāyda own the type of camel called 'Annāfī, which are famous as riding or racing camels. However, the most famous brand of a racing camel from the Sudan is known in the Gulf countries as the Bushārī, which is named after Bushārīn, one of the ethnic groups of the Beja in Eastern Sudan.

### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CAMEL PRODUCTION AND TRADE NETWORKS ACROSS THE RED SEA: THE RASHĀYDA AND THE BEJA ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RED SEA**

When the Rashāyda migrated from Arabia in the nineteenth century they traveled on ships, each carrying about 30 camels or 100 sheep (Ḥasan 1967: 219) and they brought their special breed of camel with them in small sailing boats (Young 1996: 104).

At present, we can still find the Rashāyda moving between the Sudan, the UAE and Oman through Saudi Arabia or Yemen<sup>18</sup>). The Rashāyda use small boats to cross the Red Sea, and some of them trade their camels, goats and sheep either legally or illegally. In April 1997, I actually met the Rashāyda merchants who raise goats and sheep in the eastern Sudan to take to the livestock market in al-'Ain at the border between the UAE and Oman (Photo 12).

However, we can find in the medieval Arabic texts, that the Beja had been the leaders of camel production and its trade networks across the Red Sea.

The Beja was first mentioned in Arabic as *al-Bujat* by al-Wāqīdī in the seventh century. *al-Bujat* is also written *al-Bujāt*, *Bujāh*, *al-Bujā* or *al-Bujāwat* in other Arabic sources. This name actually would have a historical connection with *Bega* in GE'Ez, *Blemmyes* in Greek, and *Medjay* in Egyptian (Nawata 1997). Either Tibḍaawye (the Northern branch of Cushitic) or Tigre (the North Ethiopic branch of Ethiopic Semitic) is spoken as a first language by most of the Beja, and Arabic (Egyptian or Sudanese dialects) is also widely used (Moseley and Asher eds. 1994).

Ibn Hawqal, the tenth century Baghdad geographer, mentioned that the Beja territories stretching between the Nile and the Red Sea are the places where merchants



**Photo 12** The Rashāyda merchants from the Sudan selling their goats and sheep at al-‘Ain, the UAE.

come to buy wool, cotton, slaves and livestock such as camels (Ibn Hawqal 1938: 55).

Al-Idrīsī, the twelfth century Sicilian geographer, wrote that the camel of the Beja, al-Bukhtīya, was outstanding, both in stamina and speed and the best in the world (al-Idrīsī 1970–1975: 27).

Al-Maqrīzī, the thirteenth to fourteenth century Egyptian historian said that al-Ḥadārib lives in an area that spreads from the Egyptian border, al-‘Allāqī, ‘Aydhāb, and crosses the sea to Jidda and its hinterlands (al-Maqrīzī, vol. 1, p. 195). It is known that al-Ḥadārib became powerful from the middle of eleventh century to the middle of fourteenth century through intermarriage with Rabī‘, the group from the Arabian Peninsula, and took advantage of taxes at ports along the African side of the Red Sea.

This means that one of the groups of the Beja had lived on both the African and Arabian sides of the Red Sea. There was a camel-centered livestock production across the Red Sea.

## DISCUSSION

There is another interesting example of livestock exported from Northeast Africa to the Arabian Peninsula. Little (1992) examined the behavior of cattle and other livestock traders in southern Somalia under conditions of market uncertainty, macroeconomic decline and political instability. He showed that under the current

apocalyptic conditions in Somalia those traders have become agents of large, export-oriented merchants.

The export of cattle and other products from the Kismayo District started to take on importance in the 1880s and 1890s. By the 1970s the dominance of Saudi Arabia as a market for Somali cattle had grown rapidly, and by the early 1980s it accounted for more than 95 per cent of the external market for Somali cattle. One of the largest traders in the town of Kismayo exported 47,000 head of cattle and 18,000 camels to Saudi Arabia between 1971 and 1983. This growth in Saudi demand correlated with the general oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s that drove up Arabian incomes.

However, the period 1983–89 saw a reduction in total animal exports to Saudi Arabia. This was because in 1983, Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on cattle imports from Somalia in response to unwarranted fears of rinderpest in southern Somalia. The loss of the Saudi market was particularly disastrous to the economy of the lower Jubba because of its dependence on cattle exports. New markets in Egypt and Yemen partially compensated for the loss of the Saudi market, but annual exports from Kismayo in 1985 and 1986 remained at only 50 per cent of the 1982 volume.

Despite this discrepancy, some camels and small stock are exported from Kismayo to the Middle East. However, neither animal type is exported from the region to Kenya. Camel markets are poorly developed in Kenya and therefore relative demand for the animal there is low, while exports of sheep and goats to Kenya are inhibited by adequate supplies of the animals in the country. With the collapse of the overseas cattle trade, merchants who were involved at least partially in the trade – local or export – of either small stock or camels were better prepared to confront the market crisis of the 1980s.

This example emphasizes that livestock trading between Northeast Africa and the Arabian Peninsula is a kind of modern phenomena.

Abu Sin (1986: 4–5) divides the development of racing camels in the Sudan into three phases: 1) a phase of breeding for prestige and smooth riding, 2) a phase of increasing demand for transport and trekking by the police force and government officials, and 3) the current phase of demand exclusively for racing in the Arab countries.

It is certainly true that racing camel production is also a recent phenomenon in terms of the developmental stages of utilization. However, in this article, I am stressing the historical continuity of Arab-African trading networks since medieval times.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the socio-economic relationships between Northeast African and Arabian Peninsula pastoralists is the camel-centered livestock production that has taken place and stretched across the Red Sea over centuries. These relationships are still working and strengthen as trading networks of racing camels.

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## NOTES

- 1) The Buḫāna is the flat clay plain roughly bounded by the main part of the Nile, the Atbara River, the Blue Nile and the present railway line from Sinnār to Khashm al-Qirba. It is inhabited by almost twenty different groups for all or part of the year (Sørbø 1985: 97; 1991: 214).
- 2) The racing distance also depends on ages of camels. Roughly speaking, two-year-old camels are for the two kilometer races; three-year olds are for the four kilometer races; the five-year olds are for six kilometers; and those between six and ten years old are for the eight or ten kilometer races.
- 3) In the UAE, one U. S. dollar was worth 3.70 dirham in April 1997.
- 4) The term Ja‘aliyyīn is used in the Sudanese Arabic traditions both in a general and a restricted sense: the former included all the riverain dwellers between Dunqula and the Sixth Cataract, while the latter was restricted to the Ja‘aliyyīn proper and live between the confluence of the Atbara and the Nile and the Sabalōqa Gorge. The Ja‘alī tribes claim descent from al-‘Abbās, the Prophet’s uncle, through their eponymous ancestor Ibrāhīm Ja‘al. Ibrāhīm Ja‘al was probably an ‘Abbāsī whose ancestors might have entered the Sudan in the Fatimid period. The settlement of these Arabs and their intermarriage with the Nubians gave rise to an Arabized Nubian stock who spoke only Arabic and who professed Islam. Their claim to Arab ancestry is historically established, but to say that they were all ‘Abbāsīs is inaccurate (Ḥasan 1967: 146–152).
- 5) The Kabābīsh are nomadic pastoralists living in the arid belt of land in northern Kordofan (roughly between latitudes 14 and 16 North, and longitudes 21 and 32 East). They keep camels, sheep, goats everywhere, and cattle mainly in the south. It is said that the Kabābīsh regard themselves primarily as camel pastoralists even though they own more sheep than camels. In practice, most Kabābīsh try to herd all three varieties of animals. The Kabābīsh are classified in tradition as Juhayna, descendants of Kabsh b. Ḥamad al-Afzar b. ‘Abs b. Sufyān al-Afzar b. Dhubyān and ultimately of ‘Abdallāh al-Juhanī or Juhayna. But, first, this ancestry is widely claimed by all the Arab of Kordofan; second, it seems that the Kabābīsh were nomads of unknown or of heterogeneous origins who expressed their unity by creating a fictitious eponym, Kabsh. Therefore, there it is likely that Kabsh in Arabic simply means ram, around which the livelihood of the Kabābī revolves. The term Fazāra was used traditionally in a generic sense to designate several closely affiliated sub-tribes, who were principally camel breeders in northern and central Kordofan and northern Darfur until the eighteenth century. After that, the Kabābīsh appeared to be the masters of the trading routes between the western Sudan and the Nile River, given the monopoly

of state transport of Muḥammad ‘Alī dynasty in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the Mahdist period, there were tensions with the Mahdiya fighting against the invading Anglo-Egyptian forces. The leader of the Kababīsh, al-Tūm Faḍlallāh Sālim, had been put to death by the Mahdī at al-Ubayyīd in 1883. The attitude of his family to the Mahdia had never been very friendly and his brother, Šāliḥ Faḍlallāh Sālim, was also killed in 1887, because he ignored the summons of Khalīfa ‘Abdallāhī b. Muḥammad to Umm Durmān. It was not until 1934 that the ordinance of the Native Administration of the Sudanese government (the principle of Indirect Rule) was applied to ‘Alī al-Tūm as paramount shaykh, and that the Kababīsh started to establish their territories and social structures as a whole. It is after the rainy season that camels are driven to Egypt; along the Wādī al-Malik to its junction with the Nile at Dabba, and then down the west bank of the Nile. In the 1960s, hundreds of boreholes were drilled by the government in a ‘Freedom from Thirst’ campaign, funded by Western donors. This caused many changes in patterns of settlements and herding (Ḥasan 1967: 164, 166; Asad 1970: 32–33, 167–169; Holt 1977: 6, 154–155; Peters 1996: 26).

- 6) The Kawāhla claim descent from a certain Kāhil, a descendant of al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām, a companion and cousin of the Prophet. The same ancestry, through the same person, is claimed by the Bishārīn and ‘Amarar of the Beja. Generally however, these two groups are not included in the Kawāhla. The Kawāhla living along the White Nile are also known by a separate name, the Ḥassānīya. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reported that the Banū Kāhil had mingled with the Beja and spoke their language around Sawākin on the Red Sea coast in 1325. They spread into many locations in the northern Sudan: 1) along the Atbara River, 2) around Kasala, 3) along the Blue Nile, the Rāhad River and the Dindir River, 4) al-Jazīra area, 5) the northern and eastern parts of the Nuba Mountains, 6) along the White Nile between Jabal Awliya and Abā island, and 7) around Umm Bādīr in Kordofan. Most of the inhabitants of the White Nile and al-Jazīra area are today sedentary cultivators who grow cotton and sorghum in irrigated lands. But they were originally pastoralists grazing sheep, goats, camels and cattle (Ḥasan 1967: 162; Mohamed 1980: 8–10, 22; Beck 1988: 49–51).
- 7) The Jama‘āb claim Ja‘alī - ‘Abbāsī ancestry as same as other Ja‘alī groups do. Their habitat is on the western bank of the Nile from Sabalōqa Gorge to the lowest part of the White Nile. The mere fact that the name could have been derived from the word *Jama‘a* (to collect), was taken to mean that they were mixed tribes (Ḥasan 1967: 153–154).
- 8) The Khawālda are nomadic pastoralists (or agro-pastoralists) living in the Buṭāna and al-Jazīra. They are also classified as Juhayna (see Note 5 for Juhayna) (MacMichael 1967: 249–250).
- 9) The Shukrīya are nomadic pastoralists (or agro-pastoralists), and are, numerically and politically, the dominant group in the Buṭāna. They are classified as the Juhayna Arabs in the Sudan through a certain Bashīr b. Dhubyān. The Shukrīya themselves trace their origins to a certain Shukr b. Idīs, and ultimately to ‘Abdallāh al-Jawād b. Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib, thus connecting themselves to the family of the Prophet. They may presently number somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 people, and keep numerous camels along with cattle, sheep, and goats, and also engage in rainfed sorghum cultivation traditionally. In the north, due to the sandy soil and low rainfall, nomadism is the main form of land use, and camels are the dominant livestock. In the central Buṭāna, permanent settlements have been established, based on a combination of animal husbandry and rainfed sorghum cultivation. The New Halfa Agricultural Production Scheme, a large irrigation project, started in the mid-1960s with the construction of a dam on the Atbara River. It caused a number of changes with their subsistence economies, residence patterns, patterns of pastoral movements and social structures. Some of the most fertile agricultural and grazing lands were lost through a land-grabbing process whereby the government issued licenses to private enterprises for undertaking sorghum and sesame cultivation on a large scale. Management has come to allow

- the tenancy holders to keep sheep, goats and cattle in small numbers all year and in any number after the harvest (April-June), whereas camels are not allowed at any time. Therefore, camels have become concentrated in the hands of the Shukrīya outside the Scheme, and an increasing number of tenant households keep sheep, goats, and cattle in different combinations. The Shukrīya were also forced to live with resettled Nubians who were displaced and moved from Wādī Ḥalfā, a flooded area at the border between Egypt and the Sudan along the Nile, because of the construction of Aswan High Dam (Ḥasan 1967: 157–158; Sørbo 1985: 12–13, 97–98, 105–109).
- 10) Ḥāyil is located in Najd in the Arabian Peninsula. Āl Rashīd, an Arabian tribal dynasty, ruled over parts of northern and central Arabia from 1835 until 1921. Their power base was in the Jabal Shammar region of northern Najd where they could rely on tribal allegiance and make the small town Ḥāyil their center of government. They lost their power in a long contest with Āl Su‘ūd (Sirriyeh 1995: 438–439). I would suggest that this power struggle may be one of the reasons that some people of Āl Rashīd migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to Africa in the nineteenth century and then integrated as one ethnic group under the name of the Rashāyda in the Northeast Africa.
  - 11) MacMichael has a different view of the Zubaydīya as follows (MacMichael 1967: 296–298, 345–346): The Zubaydīya are also comparatively recent immigrants from Arabia, where their main habitat is around the small port of Rābigh, a nest of pirates that lies between Yanbu‘ and Jeddah. There, their immediate neighbors to the north are the Juhayna. The Zubaydīya of Arabia are a group of Ḥarb, who have always been neighbors of the Juhayna and who accompanied the Juhayna in large numbers to the Sudan and were equally concerned with them in forming the Baqqāra congeries. It is clear therefore that the influx of the Zubaydīya as well as Rashāyda to the eastern Sudan has not been confined to modern times but that it had a counterpart several centuries ago when the ancestors of the Banī Rāshid (or Rowāshda, as they are often called) and Ziūd (considered a branch of the Banī Rāshid) crossed over to Africa, and instead of remaining in the east, pushed through Kordofan and Darfur and, leaving a certain number of their men among the other Baqqāra in those provinces, finally settled in Bornu and Wadai. The name of the Zubaydīya is a very ancient one and is taken from Zabīd, a town in Yemen.
  - 12) Young describes this in detail as follows: It takes the trail drivers ten days of almost constant riding to reach the Egyptian border. They pair off into teams, two men strapping themselves into their saddles and sleeping while two other men keep the herd moving. Speed is imperative, first because of the danger of thieves and second because of the scarcity of wells in the northern deserts. If thieves get wind of the presence of a herd they will congregate and attack. Furthermore, if the camels do not move quickly enough to cover the long distance between one well and another in two or three days, some of them will start to weaken from thirst. After arriving in Egypt, the trail drivers put their animals in quarantine for a few days, in accordance with Egyptian law, and then sell them off at an auction. They use part of the proceeds to buy gifts and trade goods (cloth, cooking pots, knives, etc.) in Egypt and then return to the Sudan by train. After selling their trade goods in Sudanese towns they go back to their camps (Young 1996: 43–44).
  - 13) Tenente Pavoni reported that “the measures taken by the British have the result that whilst those who bring slaves from the interior prefer the road from the lower Barka, the Rashaida find our coastline more convenient, both because it is more extensive, less capable of being supervised and less populated, and because by reason of the vast terrain, with little water, that separates the coast from the mountains, they are the less easily surprised. ... Each inlet within 500 meters of the beach has water in many wells which the Rashaida dig with their hands so that the sea water through infiltrations becomes brackish [and drinkable]. The sambuks take on slaves at night and set sail before dawn (d’Avray 1996: 218).”
  - 14) Here, many of the Afār are treated (regarded) as freed/former slaves. Young (1996: 112–115)

explains slaves of the Rashāyda as follows: A number of non-Rashāyda were incorporated into the Rashāyda 'tribe' as 'slaves' ('abīd) in about 1890. This development was due to three factors: (1) the geographical location of the Rashāyda on the slave-trading route between Arabia, on the one hand, and western Ethiopia and southern Sudan, on the other; (2) the Rashāyda's long-standing involvement in commerce and their familiarity with firearms; and (3) the economic incentives for purchasing captives that stemmed from pastoral production. Only a small number actually purchased people for resale in Arabia. Some did buy captives so that they could keep them in their homes as servants, however. No Rashāyda have purchased captives since the early 1930s, when the trade in humans was completely suppressed. Nevertheless, there are still three categories of Rashāyda: the 'slaves' ('abīd), who became members of Rashīdī households (and so became members of the tribe) through purchase alone; the 'free' (aḥrār), who are members by virtue of descent alone; and the mawālīd, who are related to other Rashāyda by virtue of both descent and purchase. Relations among the 'abīd, aḥrār, and mawālīd are not the same now as they were at the turn of this century. Prior to 1956, when the Sudan gained its independence, all three categories of Rashāyda were represented in every Rashāyda camp.

- 15) According to Young (1996: 55–56), when the Rashāyda use a well that is owned by other groups, such as the Hadanduwa or Banī 'Amīr of the Beja, they must pay to draw water and construct drinking pans.
- 16) The Bushārī (or Bishārī) can be used as 1) a generic term used by outsiders to refer to all Beja camels, or 2) by the Beja to refer to those bred by the Bishārīn. The Rashāyda name for the Bushārī can be 'al-abyaḍ' (meaning 'white'). Among the Bishārīn themselves or local people, four other names are used. The Salawī is a type of the Bushārī bred by the Kurbeilāb lineage of the Aliāb Bishārīn, and reputed to be the best of the Bushārī riding camels. The Banāgir is a type of the Bushārī by the Hamadorāb Bishārīn on the coastal plain and khors south and west of Halāib town, said to have originated as a cross between the Shallāgiai females and Bushārī males, and are famous riding camels. The Kilaiwāu is a type of Bushārī bred by the Aliāb Bishārīn in Khor Oko and the Nubian Desert, and are famous riding camels, though the Banāgir are said to be better. The Elāt-kam is a type of the Bushārī bred by the Amrāb Bishārīn, and are said to be the slowest of the Bushārī camels (OXFAM 1990: 60).
- 17) The Kināna are cattle pastoralists who herd sheep, goats and camels as well in the southern part of al-Jazīra and southern part of Kordofan. Some of them are sedentary cultivators on irrigated lands. They graze livestock in the same pasture that the Rufā'a al-Hūi use in the al-Jazīra area. The Kināna mainly move in an east-west direction and the Rufā'a al-Hūi move in a north-south direction. The Kināna are, according to tradition, a branch of the Arabian tribe by that name. The territories of Kināna were around Mecca (Makka) in the seventh century, the time of the Prophet. In the ninth century, some Kināna still lived near Mecca (Makka) but were apparently weak. A group of the Kināna settled in the neighborhood of Damietta in Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt in the twelfth century. Right before the Mahdist movement started in the Sudan, they were around Abā island in the White Nile. In 1881, they joined the Green Flag army led by 'Alī b. Muḥammad Ḥilū who was appointed Khalīfa by the Mahdī, Muḥammad Aḥmad (Ḥasan 1967: 160–161; Holt 1977: 46, 66, 135; Watt 1986: 116; Simpson and Simpson 1991: 256).
- 18) Some merchants were exporting livestock to Saudi Arabia illegally, where the meat brought better prices than in the Sudan (Young 1996: 132).

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