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THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON DARFUR ARCHITECTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

The region of Darfur is located in the western part of the Republic of the Sudan. In the west, it borders the Republic of Chad, in the north Libya, in the south-west the Central Republic of Africa and in the south South Sudan. The region of Kordofan lies to the east and the Northern State to the north-east.¹ Past research activities in Darfur led to the discovery of many archaeological sites that vary in their cultural characteristics. The wide space of Darfur contributed on the rich cultural heritage of the area. In this article, the writer will particularly focus on Islamic architecture.

The most abundant accounts on the archaeology and historical architecture in Darfur are owed to British researchers such as Anthony J. Arkell and Glencairn Balfour Paul, who studied and reported on Darfur's archaeological sites in the first half of the 20th century.² In the 1980s, Ibrahim Musa Mohammed studied the settlements in Central Darfur (Map 1).³

Darfur appears to have absorbed many cultural and religious influences in its architecture,⁴ from western empires such as Kanem-Bornu and Bagirimi or the northern regions of Africa now known as Tunisia and Libya.⁵ The introduction of Islam had profound cultural effects on Darfur, which also seem



Map 1: Archaeological sites in Darfur, edited by Ibrahim M. Ali and Ameer Babikr, 2018.

to appear in the building styles. In this paper, the writer will deal with this phenomenon. The article will discuss several important buildings in Shoba and Al-Fasher as examples for Islamic architecture in Darfur.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Several research questions can thus be formulated: Did the introduction of Islam contribute to the emergence of a new architectural style in Darfur? What are the architectural elements that can be understood as indicators of Islamic culture in Darfur? From which of the Muslims kingdoms was this new architecture introduced to Darfur? How do Islamic architecture and earlier buildings in Darfur differ in terms of form and orientation?

1 Musa & Tango 2010, 21.

2 Arkell 1936, 301-310, Arkell 1937a, 89-105, Arkell 1946, 185- 202, Arkell 1952, and Balfour Paul 1955a.

3 Musa 1986, 177.

4 Most of the Darfur tribes were 'pagan' before the coming of Islam. There are not enough studies about the ancient religions in Darfur, although Arkell referred to the existence of Christianity at Ain Farah (Arkell 1959, 115-119).

5 McGregor 2011, 140.



3. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Archaeological studies on built remains were carried out by several researchers in Darfur mainly in the 20th century. One of the most important was Arkell who investigated many archaeological sites in Northern Darfur including the Ain Farah and Turra palaces.⁶ In the 1950s of the last century, Balfour Paul explored several of the palaces in Darfur and made comparisons between them and the palaces in Wadai.⁷ This work was published by the Sudan Antiquities Service in its journal *Kush*.⁸ Natalie Tobert studied the transient settlements of Zaghawa blacksmiths in Darfur. She undertook her research during two seasons, the first in 1982 for six months and the second in 1984–85. Tobert dealt with issues of movement between the villages, between craft working camps and within the village.⁹ An important study about the archaeology of Darfur was undertaken by Musa Mohammed for his PhD at Cambridge. He worked about the settlement archaeology, pottery industry and modern iron industry in the region.¹⁰ More recently, Andrew McGregor dealt with the history and geography of Darfur and discussed architectural construction methods in the kingdoms of Darfur (Daju, Tunjur and Fur).¹¹ The most current account of previous work and studies about Darfur can be found in an article by Adrian Chlebowski and Mariusz Drzewiecki.¹²

4. FIELD WORK AND METHODOLOGY

The present author's work and methodology comprised two phases. The first phase was to establish the theoretical framework of the study and to get acquainted with the historical background of the region and the most important monuments in Darfur based on the available literature. The second phase comprised visits to Darfur itself, where the palace of Sultan Ali Dinar in Al-Fasher and the royal buildings in Shoba were studied. Additionally, information was collected from the villagers near these two sites as well as from the descendants of Sultan Tirab in Kabkabiya in order to gain an insight into the individual

and historical connections of the local residents to the sites. Finally, the architectural aspects of the sites visited were studied.

5. THE PALACES AND MOSQUES IN DARFUR

5.1 *Earlier architecture in Darfur*

The most important sites from which earlier structures are reported are Ain Farah and the palaces of Turra (Jebel Marra). They were for the first time studied by British researchers (McMichael 1920, Arkell 1959, and Balfour Paul 1955a). Additional sites in central Darfur are discussed by Musa (1986). Recently, a building in the Jali mountains in Northern Darfur has been visited by the writer. These structures represent a common style which is different from the later palaces that will be discussed in this article.

Most of the earlier architectural structures are circle-shaped (like huts), even if they functioned as residences. In comparison with later structures such as the compound of Sultan Tirab at Shoba and the palace of Ali Dinar in Al-Fasher, they considerably differ in style. Here, the circular buildings are not an important part of the palace anymore, they were probably only used by guardians and servants of the sultan. Moreover, stone blocks are now used to build all parts of building except the roof.

McGregor also dealt with the earlier architectural construction methods in Darfur, considering it as Tora style, which was adopted by the Daju, Tunjur, and Fur kingdoms.¹³ He describes some of its characteristics as follows: “– Multi-chambered structures are found within a massive oval or circular compound wall. – Large stone plinths are commonly used. – Round casemate cupboards provided storage areas. – Terracing of mountain building sites is done with large boulders.”¹⁴ There are several known archeological sites with buildings of the earlier architectural style, but the writer will present only some examples in this paper.

5.1.1 *Ain Farah*

Ain Farah is one of the most famous archaeological sites in northern Darfur. It was attributed to the Tunjur kingdom, which ruled Darfur from the 12th

6 Arkell 1937a, 89-105.

7 The Waddai kingdom or sultanate was a kingdom located to the east of Lake Chad in present-day Chad (Insoll 2003, 310-313).

8 Balfour Paul 1955b.

9 Tobert 1994, 11-13.

10 Musa 1986.

11 McGregor 2011, 130-139.

12 Chlebowski and Drzewiecki 2019, 1029-1049.

13 Tora, Daju, Tunjur, and Fur are early inhabitants of Darfur. They ruled the region consecutively (Arkell 1937a, 92, and Balfour Paul 1955a, 10-16.

14 McGregor 2011, 131.



to 15th centuries AD.¹⁵ According to Balfour Paul, “Ain Fara, located around 20 miles south of Uri on a summit in the Furning Hills in northern Darfur, comprises several archaeological structures [including] a palace which consists of a number of red-brick buildings.”¹⁶ “The whole town is defended by solid stone walls blocking the gaps and linking the precipitous ridges”¹⁷ (Fig. 1).

5.1.2 The house of Dali

Gustaf Nachtigal¹⁸ who visited the region in 1874 considered Dali as the one who established the rules of governance of the Fur sultanate and who divided the area into the regions.¹⁹ As regards the location and archaeology of the house of Dali, that is to be found on Jebel Foga in Turra (Northern Darfur), Arkell gives the following description: “It lies near the top of the hill on the saddle of a spur on the north-east side of the highest crest, a large roughly circular compound, built of faced stone masonry [...]”²⁰ He then provides more details about the construction of buildings, referring to the existence of walls and rooms: “The eastern block contains about ten rooms, the southern four or five, and that at the southern-western corner four rooms (Fig. 2). More or less in the centre of the compound is another semi-circular string of six rooms, which is continued to north-west by four more individual round huts and to the north-east of these again is another small semi-circle of five single huts.”²¹

15 MacMichael 1920, 24, and Balfour Paul 1955a, 11-12.

16 Balfour Paul 1955a, 10,12,13.

17 Balfour Paul 1955a, 13.

18 A German explorer of Central and West Africa, who arrived in Darfur in 1874 after a long journey through Baqermi and Waddai. He spent about six months in El-Fasher. There he collected oral narratives on the history of the region and its inhabitants, the systems of governance and administration, published in his book *Sahara and Sudan* Vol. IV: Wadai and Darfur.

19 Nachtigal 2011, 224.

20 Arkell 1937a, 92.

21 Arkell 1937a, 92-93.

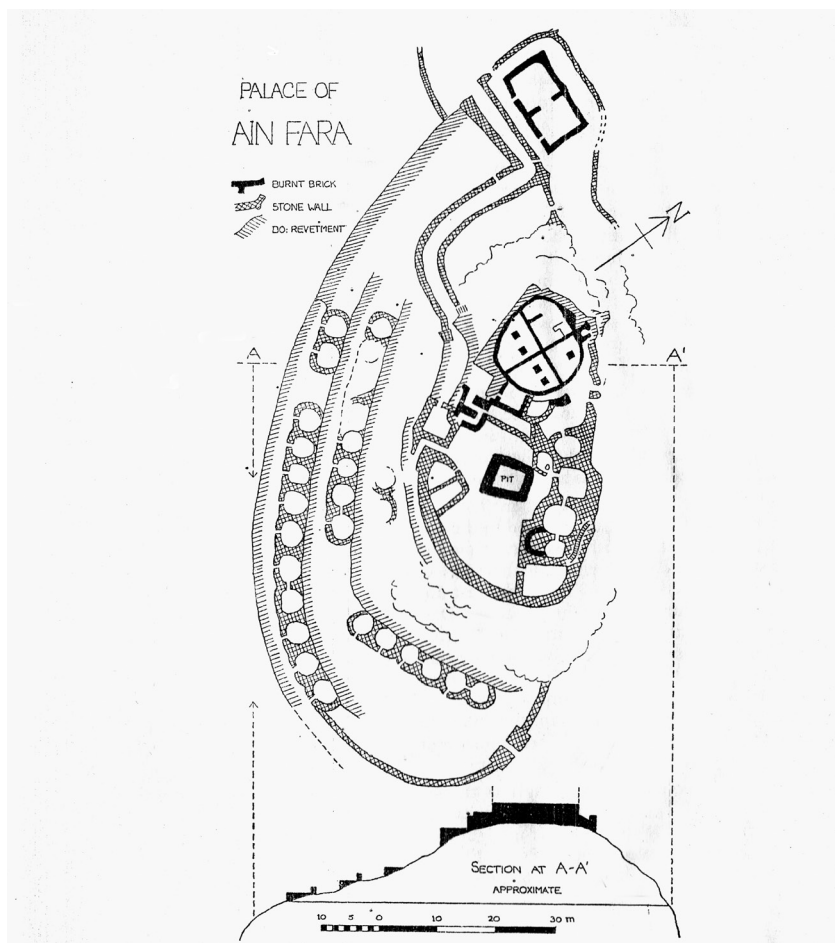
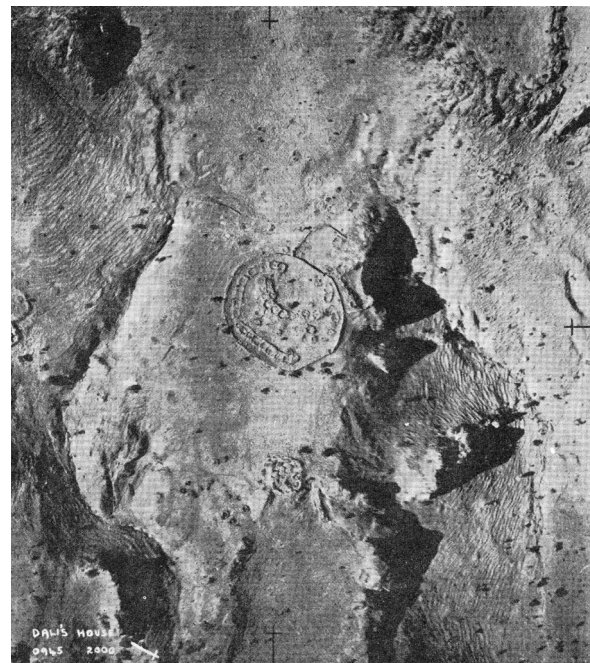


Fig. 1: Ain Farah Palace (Balfour-Paul 1955a, 12).



THE HOUSE OF DALI ON J. FÖGA.

Approx. Scale | 0 | 100 | 200 yards.

Fig. 2: The House of Dali on Jebel Foga (Arkell 1937, pl. I).

5.1.3 The palace of Sultan Suliman Solong at Jebel Nami

Suliman Solong was the first Muslim sultan who ruled over the Fur sultanate after he seized power at around 1640.²² An initial study of his palace at Jebel Nami was carried out by Arkell during his visit to Turra, northern Jebel Marra. He described the palace as follows: “It consists of an inner and outer compound, the inner containing four or five circular huts, and the outer 15 huts and two other groups of buildings. The whole ruin is built in stone masonry roughly faced and rubble-filled [...]”²³ (Fig. 3).

Other buildings have been visited by the present writer in the Jali mountains in the Krobat tribal area in northern Kabkabiya. The local tradition attributes the site to Suliman Solong. The general shape of the whole building does not differ much from the palaces previous dealt with. The building is surrounded by a stone wall. Inside of it, there are foundations of huts and several big circular rooms in the eastern side.

Due to the trees which now grow in the whole area of the palace, it was not easy for the writer to take suitable photos of the building (Figs. 4, 5). Additionally, there are towers in the south and west of the house and the northern and eastern sides are surrounded by the Jali mountains (Fig. 6).²⁴

5.2 LATER ROYAL PALACES

Many reasons that have contributed to the locational transfer of the Fur capitals and palaces were probably strongly associated with political and expansionist events. Mohamed Bin Omer El-Tunisi, a great Arab traveler who visited Darfur in the 19th century, mentioned El-Fasher as the later capital of the Fur sultans. He said it was not stationary at one place, as he comments as follows: “The transfer of capital from Shoba to the east came as a result of the emergence of the rebellion of Birgid tribe against the sultanate, additional to the attack of Sultan Hashim (King of Kordofan) and the tribes on the eastern border of Darfur.”²⁵ These events resulted in the transfer of the capital from Shoba to Reel, followed by the sultan’s

22 Theobald 1965, 17.

23 Arkell 1937a, 96-97.

24 The description of this building depends on a recent survey which was done by the writer in 2018. The oral information and the historical resources refer to the period before Suliman Solong became sultan. There were many political conflicts and he took several of the places. Nachtigal 2011, 224, Shukeir 1981, 152.

25 El-Tunisi 1965, 144.

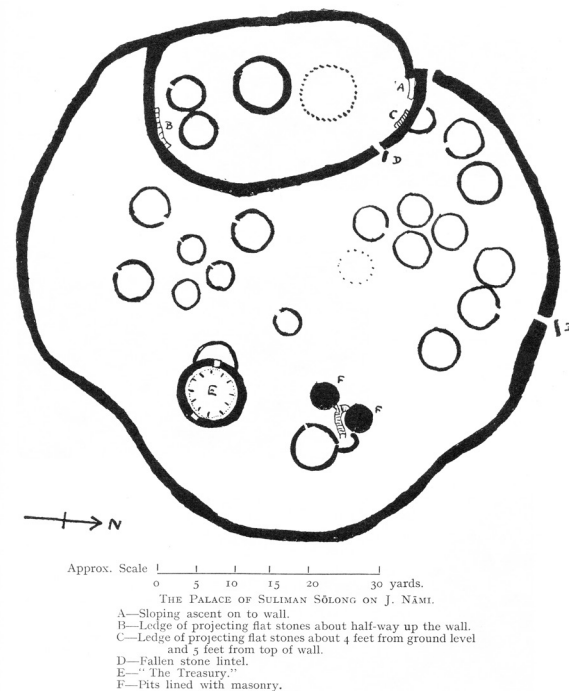


Fig. 3: The palace of sultan Suliman Solong at Jebel Nami (Arkell 1937, pl. VII).

move eastward until he reached Omdurman and settled there. After Sultan Abdelrahman Al-Rasheed (1787-1805) assumed power, he transferred the capital to El-Fasher, where the seat of government was established.²⁶

5.2.1 The palace of Sultan Mohammed Teirab in Shoba

This palace was built in the Shoba area. It was part of a group of buildings, including a palace for his mother or sister, and a large mosque attributed to the Fur Sultan Mohammed Teirab (1752-1785).²⁷ These structures are situated on either side of the small Wadi Shoba, at the foot of the jebel of the same name.²⁸ The palace is located near Shoba village, about 9 km south of Kabkabiya, at 13°34'3.20"N 24°7'50.11"E. It consists of a square building (ca. 40 × 40 m), a series of rooms around a courtyard built over a rocky block, surrounded by three stone-built defensive fences with a thickness of 1.70 m, and three entrances (Fig. 7).²⁹ The writer ratiocinated that the royal buildings in Shoba show us the political stability and economic prosperity of the sultanate.

26 El-Tunisi 1965, 144.

27 O'Fahey 2000, 41.

28 Balfour Paul 1955b, 5.

29 This description and the measurement depend on the survey done by the author in 2018.



Fig. 4: A photo of a part of the wall surrounding the residence of sultan Suliman Solong (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).



Fig. 5: Foundation of a circle room inside of the wall (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).

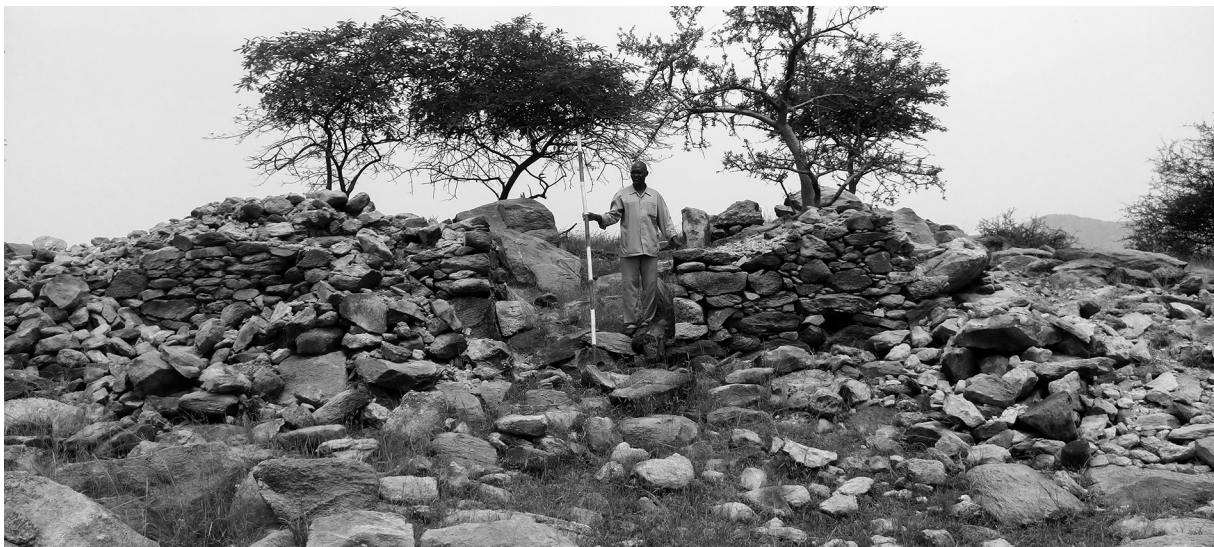


Fig. 6: Tower in the south-east of Suliman Solong residence (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).



Fig. 7: Palace of Sultan Tirab in Shoba (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).

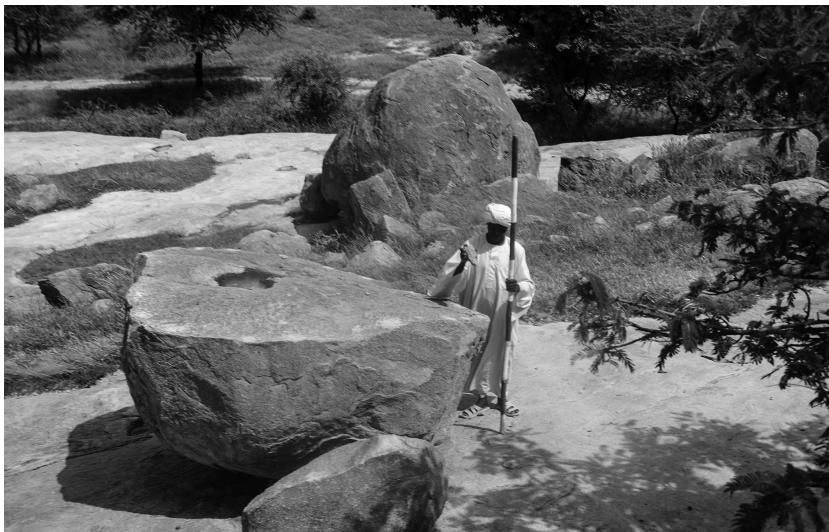


Fig. 8: Rock drum, near Shoba palace (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).

The site was also chosen because it provided fertile agricultural land, as it does today. There is also an old commercial road linking west Africa to the Darb al-Arba'in and passing through Kabkabiya, which was part of Shoba city (Map 2).³⁰ The locals said: "Shoba was a large city and on several general occasions, the inhabitants of the city were beating the rock drum to alarm people to come" (Fig. 8).

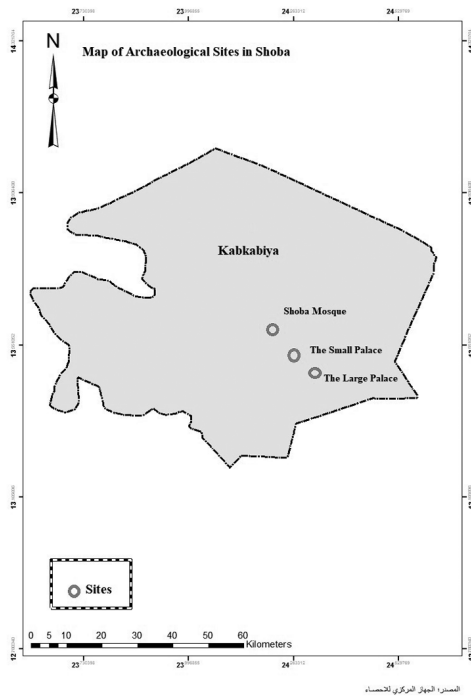
30 Hassan 2012, 104.

5.2.1.1 *The construction of the palace*

A combination of two styles was used. The first one is a local style illustrated by the foundations of the circular buildings around the palace and the construction of the defensive walls (Map 3).³¹ The second style is influenced by Islamic ideas which appear in the square shape of the building and the orientation of the main door of the palace to the east, although this is the side where the rain comes from. Moreover, in the first and large wall surrounding the palace, the eastern

side was built in a shape like a Mihrab, an indicator to the Muslim Qibla (Fig. 9). The local people told the writer "The red bricks used in the building were brought from the area of Maylo Fagu Greto about 35 km southwest of the site, and the transfer was done by taking people from Maylo to Shoba." The following description of the Shoba palace by Graham

31 The information in this paragraph depends on the notes of the author taken in 2018.



Map 2: Archaeological sites in Shoba, edited by Ibrahim. M Ali and Ameer Babikr, 2019. After: Central Bureau of Statistics in Sudan 2018.



Map 3: Palace of Shoba (Google earth V 7.3.2.5776. (June 21, 2019). 13° 34' 03.85" N, 24° 07' 49.12"E, Eye alt 1,35 km. CNES/Airbus 2019. <http://www.earth.google.com> [18.09.2019].

Reed provides more details: “The central area of the palace building is occupied by an open rectangular court surrounded by a raised walkway at first floor level. A staircase is situated in north-west corner of the walkway providing access down to the court from this levels. The area between the walkway and outer walls of the palace is then divided up into a sequence of rooms. The rooms are approximately 4 × 4 m wide with total of 14 surrounding the central area”³² (Fig. 10).

32 Reed 1994, 13.

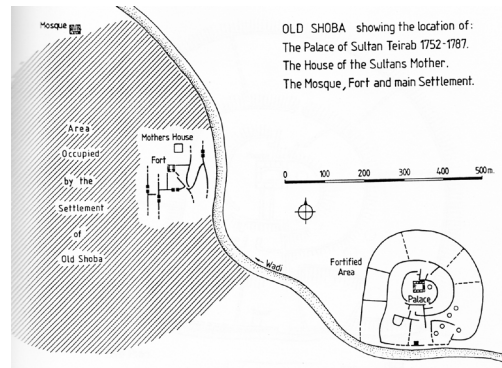


Fig. 9: Plan of Shoba including the large palace, small palace and the mosque (Reed 1994, 13).

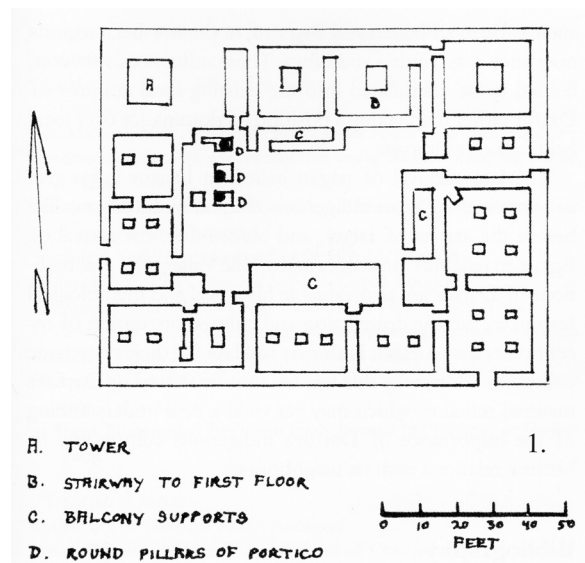


Fig. 10: Plan of Shoba palace (McGregor 2011, 139).

5.2.1.2 The relationship of the people with the palace

According to Sheikh Osman Siddiq, the local people’s connection with the site is as follows: “The general population still lives in their villages close to the palace, while some members of the royal family are still part of them. The other part moved to the capital of El-Fasher (Tindlati) during the reign of Sultan Abdul-Rahman al-Rashid (1787-1802) and during the later conflicts, especially the invasion of the Turks by Al-Zubayr Pasha Rahman.”³³

Balfour Paul also commented about the style of the Shoba architecture of Sultan Tirab: “The Shoba palaces have no basis in the earlier Fur building traditions and they bear no resemblance to the Mek”³⁴

33 Siddiq: personal interview, September, 2018.

34 The word Mek means “ruler”. It also stands for the crown of the rulers of some tribes in Sudan (Tajalsser 2017, 23).

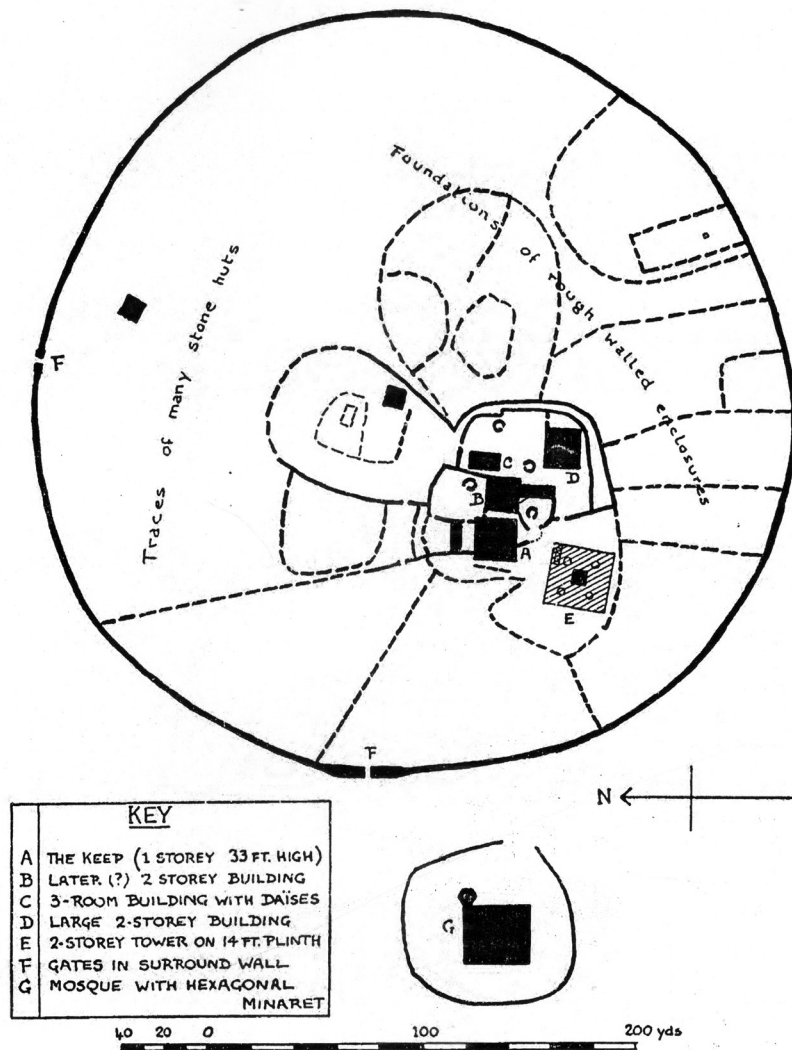


Fig. 11: Plan of Wara-Palace (Balfour-Paul 1955b, Fig. 4).

palaces in the northern part of the Fung kingdom and little to the Fung kings palaces in Sennar which are believed to be roughly contemporary. It seems most likely that the technicians were obtained from what is now northern Nigeria. There is a vague tradition that they came from the west – as did so many of Fur sultans devotees down to the present to the century.”³⁵ On other hand, a local informant told the writer that the style of the large Shoba palace is similar to ancient buildings in Al-Madinah, now in Saudi Arabia. But this information needs more investigation.

Discussing the palace of Shoba leads to highlight the Wara³⁶ palace of the Waddai kingdom in Western Darfur (today in Chad). El-Tunisi gave a descriptions of the Wara palace when he visited Waddai (1810-

1811): “Wara was a nice city, and the place is spectacular. It has four buildings built by brick.”³⁷ The building currently visible was built by later sultans.³⁸

Balfour Paul conducted a study of this palace in the 1950s of the last century. He mentioned that the palace consists of many buildings, marked in his plan by letters (A, B, C, D, and E) (Fig. 11, 12).³⁹ The main group of buildings are A, B, and D. He describes them as follows: “A 50 ft. square wall, 33 ft. high, encloses a 21 ft. square inner room, set concentrically within it, the space within the concentric squares being divided by diagonal walls [...]. Despite

35 Balfour Paul 1955a, 11.

36 Wara was selected as capital of the Waddai sultanate by Sultan Abd Al-Karim Ibn Yame (1635-1655) and functioned as residence of the ruler until Sultan Ali (1858), Nachtigal 2011, 168-182.

37 El-Tunisi 2001, 94.

38 The literature does not explicitly mention who built the presently standing buildings of Wara. They may have been built after Abd Al-Karim Sabon (1803-1811), until the capital was transferred to Ebeche by Sultan Ali Mohamed Sherif in 1850. El-Tunisi 2001, 94, Nachtigal 2011, 168-182, Balfour-Paul 1955b, 11-18.

39 Balfour-Paul 1955b, 15.

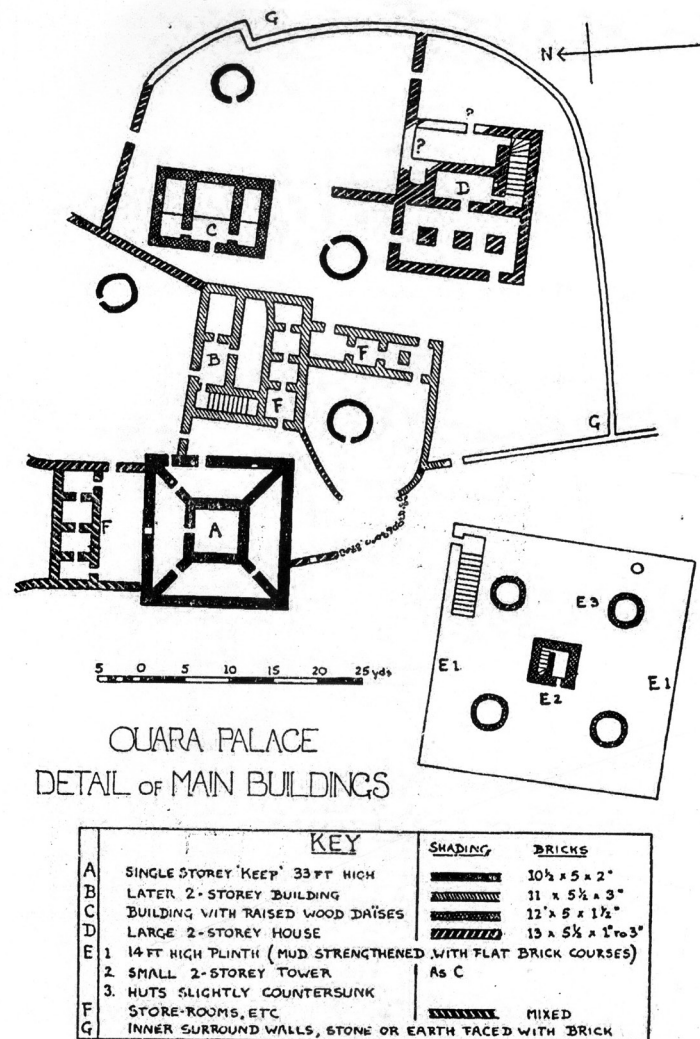


Fig. 12: Detail of plan of Wara-Palace (Balfour-Paul 1955b, Fig. 5).

its 33 ft., the building is of one single storey. The only entrance is on the east side. [...] immediately east of Building A is a two-storey house (B). Its north wall is projected to meet the east wall of Building A. [Building D] consisting of a rectangular hall, its roof supported on three massive square columns, fronting a two storey block.⁴⁰

Wara and Shoba are contemporary, and the Islamic influence is very clear in their architecture. Although they are not similar, they share some characteristics which can be summarized as follows:⁴¹

- Square-shaped buildings were used in both Shoba and Wara.
- Storeyed houses are present at both sites. At Shoba palace, the rooms are connected in line with each other, while in Wara they are separated.

- There are mosques at the western sides, outside the first walls of the palaces. At Shoba, the mosque is, however, in a greater distance.
- The first walls surrounding the palaces have also enclosure walls and two main gateways at the northern and western sides.

5.2.2 The palace of Sultan Ali Dinar in Al-Fasher

The capital stabilized in El-Fasher⁴² at the end of the 18th century, after Sultan Abdul Rahman Al-Rashid (1787) took residence near Rahad Tindliti, later known as El-Fasher. The large palace was built by Sultan Ali Dinar in El-Fasher city. Al-Khatem Mohamed describes it: "It was completed around

40 Balfour-Paul 1955b, 15.

41 Balfour-Paul 1955b, 15.

42 The comparisons depend on Balfour-Paul's studies at Shoba and Wara in 1955 and the notes of the writer at Shoba palace, taken in 2018.



Fig. 13: A part of the palace of Sultan Ali Dinar (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2016).



Fig. 14: Cornks in the palace of Sultan Ali Dinar (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2016).

1912 under the supervision of Al-Haj Abdul Razek, who was brought to El-Fasher from Baghdad. It was built in a large area by using burnt bricks. The Greeks (Dimitri and Thomas) did the carpentry work. The ceilings of the palace are made of wood. The palace buildings comprise different architectural styles.”⁴³

Particular building forms in the palace:

- Two floor building: There are two rooms on the top floor and two on the lower floor. In a separate part of the palace there are five other rooms, and the building opens to the north (Fig. 13).

- Cornks: A cornk is a rectangular building built of two parts. The lower part is built with bricks, and the top is closer to the conical shape covered with cane. It is one of the architectural styles imported into Darfur⁴⁴ (Fig. 14).

The British were impressed when they occupied Darfur and entered the palace of Sultan Ali Dinar. They considered it one of the greatest palaces of the rulers of Africa in that period. MacMichel says about the palace: “The palace of Sultan Ali Dinar was the Al-Hamra Sudanese Palace and the Khalifa

43 Khatam 2016, 1.

44 Notes of the writer during his first visit to the site in 2017.

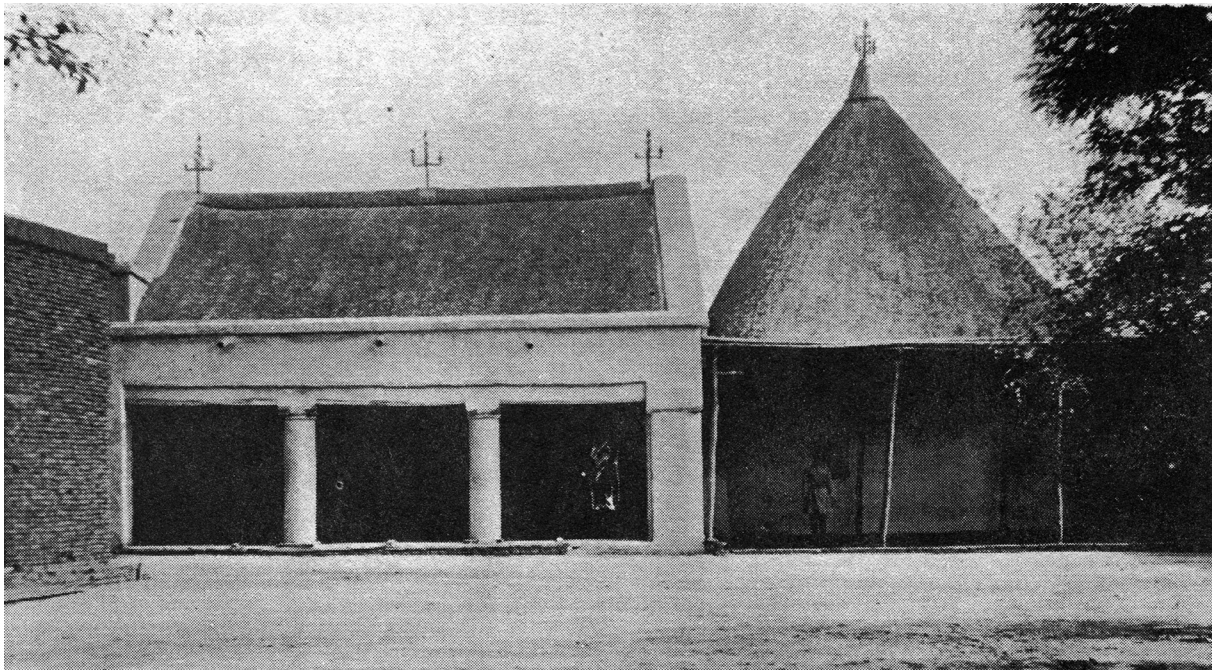


Fig. 15: Harim or women's part in the palace of Sultan Ali Dinar in 1916 (Gillan 1939, Pl. V).

House⁴⁵ in Omdurman is a shack compared to this palace. There were small shaded gardens, arched corridors, rows of columns, warehouses and all kinds of buildings. The roof straw had a beautiful view, and looked as if it had been cut with scissors. The walls were beautifully painted in red and the interior walls of the halls were covered by Quranic verses, also using the best types of brush or bamboo in the ceiling⁴⁶ (Fig. 15).

More than one style had been used in the Ali Dinar palace. The first is a colonial vials style which was also used in Khartoum, and the second is the traditional Fur building style.⁴⁷ The Islamic influence appears for the writer in the covering of the walls with Quranic verses and the writing of the name of Prophet Mohammed's companions on the doors of the palace (Fig. 16).

5.3 The Mosques

According to the archaeological evidence, the sultans of Darfur were interested in building mosques as much as they cared about their palaces. In some places, they were no less dignified as the Shoba mosque. That may have led to an increase of the people's appreciation of the sultans.

45 Khalifa Abdullah Ben Mohammed ruled the Sudan after Mohammed Ahmed Al-Mahdi, leader of the Mahdia revolution (1885-1899).

46 MacMichael 1916, 2-12, Theobald 1965, 149.

47 Tesch 2007, 120.



Fig. 16: A door in the palace of Sultan Ali Dinar, written on it in Arabic language "La Ilah el Allah Mohammed Rassol Allah" and the four names of the followers of prophet Mohammed (Abubaker, Omer, Osman, Ali) (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2016).

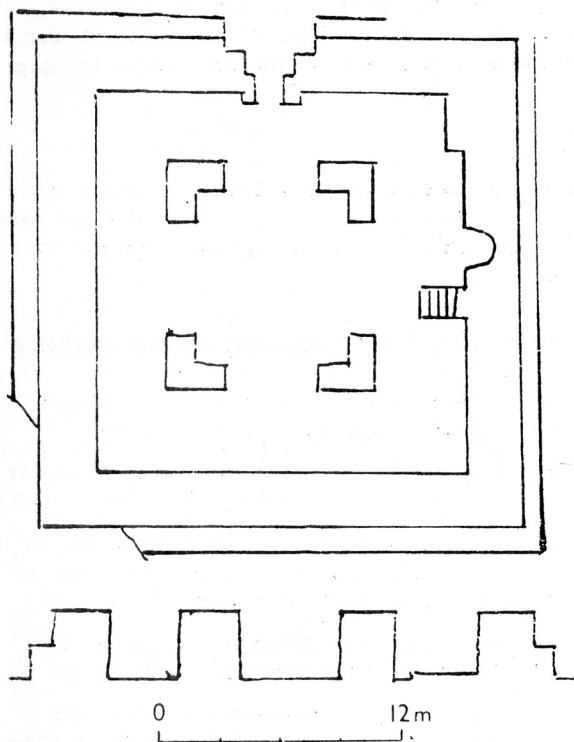


Fig. 17: The large Ain Farah Mosque (Musa 1986, 221).

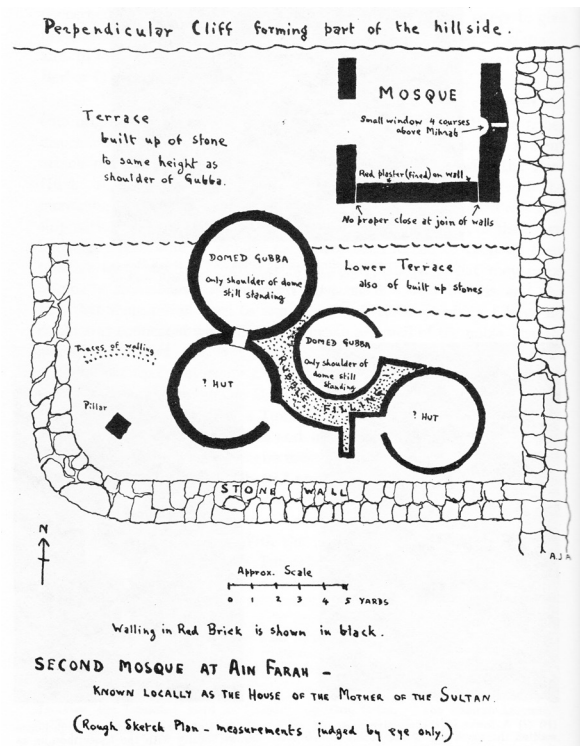


Fig. 18: Small or second mosque at Ain Farah (Arkell 1936, 308).



Fig. 19: The mosque of Shoba (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).

5.3.1 Ain Farah Mosque

This mosque is one of several archaeological sites at Ain Farah in the Furnung Hills in northern Darfur. Musa Mohammed dealt with this mosque after Arkell. In his description, he states “It is a 17 × 17 meter square building with four columns. The inner

wall and the four L-shaped columns were built of burnt brick. The stone walls were built outside as abutters to the brick walls of whole structure. It had a Mihrab at the inner face of the eastern wall” (Fig. 17).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Musa 1986, 220, after Arkell 1936, 302.



Fig. 20: Columns of the mosque of Shoba, (photo: Ibrahim Ali, 2018).

5.3.2 The second mosque in Ain Farah

This smaller mosque is located near the building which local people identified as the house of the Mother of the sultan. According to Arkell, the mosque can be described as follows: “In the mosque itself, the eastern wall has been bulged to strengthen it where the Mihrab has been constructed, and four courses above the mihrab is a tiny window. [...] In the west wall was the main door which gave on to a level, carefully built up, terrace [...]”⁴⁹ (Fig. 18).

5.3.3 The mosque of Sultan Tirab in Shoba

The mosque of Sultan Mohammed Tirab is one of the most beautiful mosques which the writer saw in Darfur. It is thought to have been built in the 18th century together with the palaces. It is located in the north-west of the smaller palace of Shoba⁵⁰ (Fig. 19). There are two studies dedicated to the site by Balfour Paul and Ibrahim Musa, respectively, undertaken in the 1950s and 80s. The measurement and description of the mosque is based on the latter’s research and the writer’s data: The mosque is built of red bricks. It has a rectangular shape (38.4 × 29.4 m). It was equipped with 47 round brick columns with 1.2 m diameter each⁵¹ (Fig. 20). According to Balfour Paul,

49 Arkell 1936, 305.

50 Balfour-Paul 1955b, 10.

51 Musa 1986, 218.

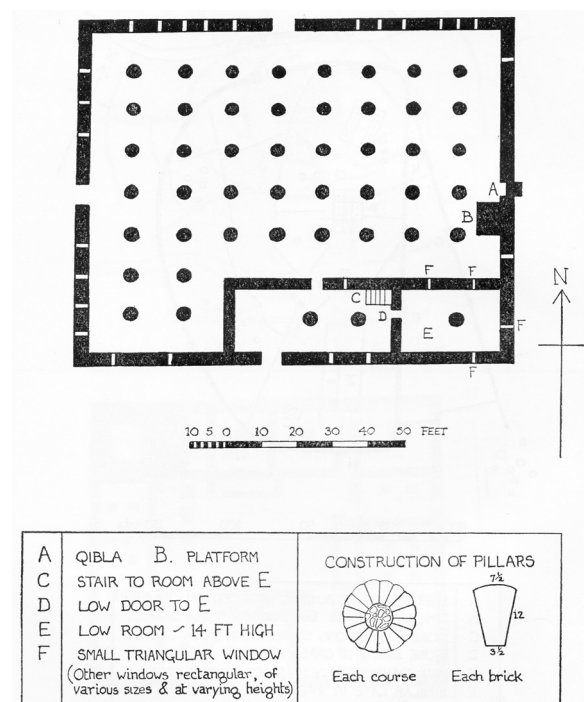


Fig. 21: Plan of the mosque of Shoba (Balfour-Paul 1955b, 2).

“the columns supported the flat roof, the south-east corner of this mosque is occupied by a two-storeyed partition.”⁵² The lower room, which is only 4 ft. high, was, according to local tradition reported by Balfour Paul, used for storing books, while the upper level served as Khalwa or Koranic school⁵³ (Fig. 21).

52 Balfour-Paul 1955b, 10.

53 Balfour-Paul 1955b, 10.



During the visit of the writer, the mosque was not in a good state of preservation in comparison with the time when Balfour Paul and Musa Mohammed visited it. There are fissures in the walls of the mosque caused by rainfall. The red brick used for building the mosque is still quite well preserved, however. The roof did fall probably in an earlier time.

6. CONCLUSION

The archaeological evidence for Islam in Darfur emerged in the material culture since the early periods of the entry of Islam into Darfur. However, it is particularly apparent in the elements of royal architecture during the Fur sultanate (1640-1916). This influence took shape in the form of the palaces, mosques and the writing of Islamic texts on doors and walls of the palaces. Until now, we cannot identify the specific area (Northern Africa or western Africa or eastern Sudan) which had the most effect on the architectural style.

Thus, this topic needs more studies in the future. The results of the present study can be summarized as follows:

1. The introduction of Islam had an influence on the architecture and the construction of royal palaces.
2. The emergence of new forms of buildings such as the mosques with east-facing Qiblas are indicators for the Islamic influence on the architecture style.
3. The building of a mosque is mostly associated with palaces, showing the interest of the sultans in the Islamic idea.

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- Faqih / Osman Siddiq Abdul Karim, Imam of the Shoba mosque, he inherited the Imamate from his ancestors and is also an administrative sheikh, age about 56 years (Shoba, September 2016).
 - Dr. Amin Mahmoud Mohamed Osman, Emam of the mosque of Turra, supervised the ceremony of selecting and crowning Sultan Ahmed Hussein Ayoub Ali Dinar, age about 64 years (Khartoum, October 2017).
 - Prof. Ibrahim Musa Mohammed, Professor of History and Archeology of Darfur, Al-Neelain University, age about 65 years (Khartoum, April 2017).

INTERVIEWS

The researcher collected oral narratives through personal interviews with the descendants of the sultans, with local administrators, and with some educated people from the region. The literature of British researchers who studied archaeological sites in Darfur, especially Arkell, became a historical source for the people in Darfur. The oral narratives collected in this study concern the Shoba palace and mosque and the residents of Suliman Solong in Jali. The Shoba sites were studied also before by Balfour-Paul. When the descendants of the sultans gave the information to the writer they said they got and keep the information from their grandparents for many generations. Most of the information is not included in Arkell's articles. Furthermore, the building in Jali is attributed by local tradition to Sultan Suliman Solong, which was not mentioned in previous research accounts. Additionally, there are many other sites in the area that need to be record for the first time.

The following names are the ones on whose oral accounts this study mainly relies:

- T. Abker Mohammed Hassan Shawkar, teacher of basic education in Kabkabiya district, one of the grandsons of Sultan Tirab, age about 64 years (Kabkabiya, September 2016).
- T. Hamid Mohammed Abdullah, former education director, age about 66 years (Kabkabiya, September 2016).
- Al-Shartai: Al-Tayeb Abakoura Ahmaday, age about 55 years (Kabkabiya, September 2016).
- Al-Omda: Adam Ibrahim Mansur, mayor of Shoba village, age about 73 (Shoba, October 2016).
- Al-Omda: Yousif Ali Mohammed Al Hassan, mayor of the Jali district, North Darfur, age about 78 years (Kabkabiya, April 2017).

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Artikel beschäftigt sich mit dem Einfluss des Islam auf die Architektur in Darfur (Sudan). Um die folgenden Überlegungen zunächst zu kontextualisieren, werden der historische Hintergrund der Region sowie frühere Studien zur Archäologie Darfurs kurz diskutiert. Zweitens beschäftigt sich der Beitrag dann mit den Merkmalen der frühen Architektur in Darfur, die durch lokales Design geprägt waren, und beschreibt einige Gebäude, die auf die Spätgeschichte des Sultanats (1750-1916 n. Chr.) zurückgehen. Für die Erstellung des vorliegenden Artikels nutzte der Autor die verfügbare Literatur zur historischen Architektur in Darfur. Darüber hinaus besuchte er die Stätten, sammelte mündliche Informationen von der lokalen Bevölkerung, machte persönliche Notizen und nahm Messungen an den Gebäuden vor. Das wichtigste Ergebnis liegt in der Beobachtung, dass die Ankunft des Islam in der Region der Grund für das Entstehen eines neuen Baustils war, der sich in quadratischen Grundrissen und Moscheen an verschiedenen Orten manifestiert.