PREFACE

This book is the result of a long process. It began because we felt too much scholarship on Islamic Africa has focused on state and nation. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this approach, much remains unsaid. For huge regions, such as Kordofan, this neglect is especially unfortunate. On the one hand, it is impossible to understand states as political entities without properly recognising the dynamics between centres of state power and regions. On the other hand, lack of scholarly books giving comprehensive and challenging perspectives on regions hinders emergence of local discourses that can be a means to deal with invasions, be they political, cultural or economic.

With Kordofan Invaded, we have sought to bring together the most recent research from the Sudan, Europe and the United States. The eleven contributors use different approaches to elucidate the processes of resistance, peripheral incorporation and sectoral transformation. Together they provide a complex picture that we believe will enable the reader to appreciate the vitality of local social practice. We hope this effort will encourage others to produce similar volumes on regions that have given birth neither to strong states nor comprehensive scholarship.

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Footnotes and Bibliography

Unpublished material, government gazettes and newspapers are not included in the bibliography but fully referenced in the footnotes. The bibliography includes only material on Kordofan and the Sudan, and we have added a number of important titles that are not referred to in the contributions. In the bibliography Arab names are sometimes listed after first name, sometimes after “family name”.

Transliteration and spelling of non-English words

Writing about Kordofan presents huge problems with regards to the spelling of names and phrases in local languages. When transcribing Arab names and words, we have tried to follow the system used in Hans Wehr’s Dictionary, but in quite a few instances we have opted to employ conventional English spelling, therefore we write Kordofan and not Kurdūfān, and Khartoum and not Khartūm. In some cases we also have deferred to conventional Sudanese pronunciation, for instance writing Kadugli for Kādūqli. For Arabic plurals we tended to anglicise by adding an “s” to the singular, thus writing nāźīrs and not nuẓẓār. Names from the Dinka and Nuba languages have in general been rendered without diacritical marks and as they are spelled in most English publications. As for the prose, we have altered the different texts to conform with standard English spelling, even though this is not the preferred orthography for some of our contributors (and one of the editors). We recognise, of course, that our approach to applied linguistics may offend both purists and pragmatists, but hope that the reader (of whatever persuasion) will bear over with what he or she might consider unwarranted inconsistencies or even mistakes.

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