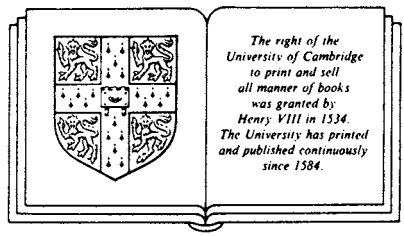
EMPIRE ON THE NILE

The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1898–1934

M. W. DALY



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011–4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

http://www.cambridge.org

First published 1986
Reprinted 1988
First paperback edition 2002

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Daly, M. W.
Empire on the Nile.
Bibliography
Includes index.
1. Sudan – History – 1899–1956. I. Title
DT156.7.D345 1986 962.4'03 85-30870

ISBN 0 521 30878 X hardback
ISBN 0 521 89437 9 paperback

Contents

Illustrations

All photographs are reproduced by permission of the Librarian of the University Library, University of Durham, with the exception of No 20, for which the publisher wishes to thank the copyright holder, Mrs C. Bloss.

1

The foundation of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium

BLOOD AND CHAMPAGNE

At ten o'clock on the morning of Sunday, 4 September 1898, in the ruins of the governor-general's palace at Khartoum, a ceremony was held, Sir Herbert Kitchener, conqueror of the Sudan, presiding. At his sign, the band of the Grenadier Guards played the National Anthem as two British officers hoisted the Union flag on a staff planted in a ruined wall. An instant later an Egyptian flag was raised beside it, to symbolise that the conquest had been accomplished by the joint efforts of Britain and Egypt. Then the khedivial anthem was played, after which cheers were raised for Queen Victoria and for Abbas Hilmi, *khedive* of Egypt. The gun-boat *Melik*, anchored in the Blue Nile, fired a 21-gun salute.

When these essential preliminaries were completed, and an as yet undefined regime thereby inaugurated, a religious service began. Officers and men from all the available British and Egyptian units were drawn up behind Kitchener, facing the army chaplains. Hymns were sung, prayers said, the scriptures intoned. The Roman Catholic chaplain, last to speak, prayed that God would 'look down . . . with eyes of pity and compassion on this land so loved by that heroic soul' whose memory they now honoured:[1] Charles George Gordon, Gordon Pasha of Khartoum, who had died there almost fourteen years before. Assembled dignitaries were 'much affected' by the poignancy of the scene, and Kitchener himself broke into sobs.[2] When the service had concluded, the soldiers strolled in the ruins, examining the spot where Gordon had fallen; or in the choked gardens behind the palace, where the untended passion flowers and pomegranates gave bloom and the oranges and limes still bore fruit. Then they walked to their boats and returned to the charnel-house of Omdurman.

Across the Nile from the abandoned capital of the Turco-Egyptian Sudan lay the metropolis of its successor state, the Mahdist city of

Fig. 1 Flag-raising ceremony in the ruins of the governor-general's palace, Khartoum, 4 September 1898

Omdurman. The city itself had been largely spared two days before when the Anglo-Egyptian forces under Kitchener had met the army of the Khalifa ʿAbdallahi at Karari, seven miles to the north. The gunboats of the invaders had pelted Omdurman with shell-fire before and during the battle, damaging the tomb of the Mahdi, holing the great defensive walls, and demoralising the population, but widespread damage was avoided.[3]

Sudanese casualties from the battle were enormous, the dead counted on the field at Karari alone amounting to about 10,800. The number of wounded is impossible to estimate with any accuracy. Official reports, which have been followed in the secondary accounts, spoke of sixteen thousand. This figure was based on no sound calculation, relying on the 'fact' that 'there were wounded in almost every house in Omdurman'.[4] One correspondent wrote that 'over 9,000' wounded were treated by the allies' medical staff, but he gave no evidence for this highly unlikely figure. The number of dead, however, was certainly higher than the official figure, which did not include soldiers who died away from the battlefield.[5]

Civilian victims of the shelling and of sporadic street-fighting cannot be known, but eyewitnesses gave evidence of numerous civilian casualties.[6] Of the bodies observed in the streets, many must have been of battle casualties who had regained the city before dying.

Controversy surrounds several aspects of Kitchener's and his army's conduct during and immediately after the battle. In reply to criticism, he 'categorically' denied in February 1899 that he had ordered or allowed Mahdist wounded to be massacred, that his troops had carried out such a massacre, that Omdurman was looted, and that civilian fugitives in the city were deliberately fired upon.[7] There is, however, evidence to support each of these charges except the last, which appears to have been without foundation.

An early, official statement of the allies' treatment of wounded Mahdists was already defensive in tone, probably because of criticism directed against Kitchener for his previous conduct at the battle of the Atbara. This report, written by F. R. Wingate, the director of intelligence of the Egyptian Army, stated that because there were so many wounded, it was impossible to 'attempt' their treatment.[8] Winston Churchill, however, in *The river war,* criticised Kitchener for not having republished before the battle an order he had given before Atbara, that wounded enemy soldiers should be spared. This omission, combined with 'the unmeasured terms in which the Dervishes had been described in the newspapers, and the idea which had been laboriously circulated, of "avenging Gordon", had inflamed [the soldiers'] passions, and had led them to believe that it was quite correct to regard their enemy as vermin – unfit to live. The result was that there were many wounded Dervishes killed.' These fell into three categories: soldiers who still threatened allied forces; severely wounded men with no hope of recovery; and those, 'certainly not less than a hundred', who were killed even after they had thrown down their arms 'and appealed for quarter'. According to Churchill, most of these were killed by Egyptian and Sudanese troops, particularly those under the command of Colonel John Maxwell.[9]

The killing of wounded soldiers on the day of battle pales in comparison with the horrific neglect, related by Churchill and others, of the wounded left on the battlefield. Three days after the battle, Churchill revisited the site: 'The scenes were pathetic,' he wrote. 'Where there was a shady bush four men had crawled to die. Someone had spread a rag on the thorns to increase the shade.' Legless and armless men had dragged themselves unaided for miles to the river. Even a week after the battle 'there were still a few wounded who had neither died nor crawled away, but continued to suffer'.[10] Privately Churchill went even further: 'I shall merely say', he wrote in January 1899, 'that the victory at Omdurman was disgraced by the

inhuman slaughter of the wounded and that Kitchener was responsible for this.'[11]

The fate of wounded soldiers was shared by some others in the city itself, where a number of murders were perpetrated by allied officers, for personal or political reasons. Churchill hints at this when he states that on the night after the battle, 'only Maxwell's brigade [the 2nd Egyptian] remained in the city to complete the establishment of law and order – a business which was fortunately hidden by the shades of night'.[12] Ten years later, in a letter to Wingate, Maxwell himself wrote jocularly: 'I have always considered a dead fanatic as the only one of his sort to extend any sympathy to – I am very sorry for them when dead! For this reason I quietly made away with a bunch of Emirs after Omdurman and I was very sorry for them after all was over.'[13] Slatin Pasha, the former prisoner-servant of the Khalifa 'Abdallahi, has also been accused of using the confusion in the city to settle old scores. A recent account charges that important *amirs*, including al-'Arifi al-Rabi, were brought before him, and that he ordered their execution.[14] Among the official reports of the occupation is a list of 'Emirs of Mulazimin' who 'were wounded in the battle, and were subsequently killed in the town', one of whom was al-'Arifi.[15]

Controversy surrounds the question of looting. A British witness reported that 'every variety of loot was hawked about the camp for sale': shields, weapons, coins, 'and other trophies of battle or pillage. . . . Everybody brought back a Dervish sword or two. . . . The pretty gibbehs, too, were brought home in large numbers.'[16] Bennet Burleigh, the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, described the looting of the Mahdi's tomb, and the catafalque that had been 'stripped of its black and red covering'.[17] If he had arrived at the scene sooner he might have seen Ernest Bennett of *The Westminster Gazette* stealing it.[18] Churchill observed that the *khalifa*'s house had been 'picked clean'.[19] Babikr Bedri, the Sudanese diarist, has supplied a vivid account of the three days of looting: the soldiers, he wrote, 'entered our houses and took and ate everything within reach of their eyes and hands . . . furniture, fittings and jewels. We had to leave doors, cupboards and boxes unlocked and the street doors open.' Two British soldiers took money and candlesticks. Three Sudanese soldiers 'began to take everything they could find – copper, beads, money, ornaments and animals', but were stopped by an officer because the time-limit for looting had passed.[20]

The most controversial incident during the aftermath of the battle was the destruction of the Mahdi's tomb and the desecration of his remains. The tomb had been built over the spot where the Mahdi had died, and its high dome dominated Omdurman. It had become the object of veneration,

Fig. 2 The Mahdi's tomb after the bombardment of September 1898

and its location made it the focal point of the religious and political life of the capital.[21] During the bombardment of the city on 1 September the dome had been a particular target,[22] and had been badly damaged. It was later claimed that this had rendered the structure unsafe, but the main justification for its destruction was political. Kitchener said that he considered it 'politically advisable . . . that the Mahdi's tomb, which was the centre of pilgrimage and fanatical feeling, should be destroyed'.[23] In this Lord Cromer, the agent and consul-general in Egypt, supported him, and wrote to Salisbury, the prime minister, that the destruction of the tomb 'was not only justifiable, but very necessary'.[24] It was, as Churchill said, a 'gloomy augury for the Sudan that the first action of its civilised conquerors and present ruler [Kitchener] should have been to level the one pinnacle which rose above the mud houses'.[25] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the arguments of safety and expediency were hastily contrived to answer unexpected criticism in Britain. The officer detailed to blow up the tomb was Lt-Colonel W. S. Gordon, General Gordon's nephew.

The same conclusion may be reached concerning the remains of the Mahdi's body. With the exception of the skull these were thrown into the Nile, on Kitchener's order. Political necessity was again the reason proposed. 'I was advised . . . by Mahommedan [*sic*] officers', Kitchener wrote defensively, 'that it would be better to have the body removed, as otherwise many of the more ignorant people of Kordofan would consider that the sanctity with which they surrounded the Mahdi prevented us from doing so'.[26] Again Cromer agreed, but half-heartedly: 'If the body had been taken up and buried in the ordinary cemetery, no one could have said a word.'[27] Instead, the skull was given to Kitchener as 'a trophy'. Some friends of his suggested that he should have it 'mounted in silver or gold, and that he should use it as an inkstand or as a drinking-cup'. Kitchener 'played with that idea and with the skull for a short time', which was both insensitive and politically inept.[28] The scandal reached the queen who, although confirmed in her adulation of the conqueror, let it be known that she was 'shocked' by the way in which the Mahdi's body had been treated.[29] Kitchener later tried to deflect the criticism by pleading his absence en route to Fashoda when the tomb was destroyed and the bones scattered.[30] But the orders were his, and the mere mention of the word 'Fashoda' did not exempt him from every censure. The skull was eventually buried in a cemetery at Wadi Halfa.[31]

Whatever Kitchener's apprehensions about the Mahdi's tomb, there was little sign of popular resistance in Omdurman after 2 September. But that an army of some fifty thousand had on that day attacked the Anglo-Egyptian forces, and that unbowed remnants of that army had evacuated the capital with the *khalifa*, testified certainly to the power that Mahdism had retained. This made a deep and lasting impression on the conquerors. They found it difficult to explain the heroism and loyalty shown at Karari except by an all-encompassing reference to 'fanaticism'.

Contemporary British journalists' accounts describe Omdurman after the battle in Danteian terms. One correspondent found the streets 'perfectly loathsome', fouled by the 'decaying bodies of dead animals' and human casualties.[32] Another saw the city as 'just planless confusion of blind walls and gaping holes, shiftless stupidity, contented filth and beastliness'; 'a huge harem, a museum of African races, a monstrosity of African lust'. All was 'wretched' and 'foul': 'You could not eat; you dared not drink'. The army moved out after a day, and 'the accursed place was left to fester and fry in its own filth and lust and blood. The reek of its abomination steamed up to heaven to justify us of our vengeance.'[33]

That a sprawling and populous city, hours after its bombardment and occupation by an invading army, host to thousands of the wounded and dying who had escaped the carnage of the battlefield, should offend the

aesthetic and moral senses of war correspondents may be surprising. Perhaps to exaggerate the wretchedness of the prize enhanced the selflessness of its winning, and mitigated the slaughter of its defenders. In any case, a first priority of the city's new masters was to restore order. Maxwell's brigade occupied the main buildings and policed the city. Thousands of Mahdist prisoners were put to work clearing the streets of rubble and carrion. These workers were drawn both from those captured in battle or after, and from the ranks of those in the city caught wearing a patched *jibba*, an outward sign of allegiance to Mahdism.[34] Kitchener had established his headquarters on 2 September in the great square in front of the Mahdi's tomb, apparently disinclining towards occupying the *khalifa*'s house. Although he anticipated little serious impediment to the final defeat of the fugitive *khalifa*, he was occupied chiefly with military matters before his departure for Fashoda on 10 September, and after his return to Omdurman he left almost immediately for Cairo and England.[35] He did not return again to Omdurman until 28 December.

Despite the escape of the Khalifa 'Abdallahi, the overwhelmingly superior capabilities of the Anglo-Egyptian forces, especially their mobility, allowed a rapid occupation of the riverain territories east and south of Omdurman. North of the capital the lands along the Nile were all in their hands before Karari, as were the Berber–Suakin road, Kassala, and the northern Butana. After 2 September the main tasks were the assertion of authority in the southern Sudan and the elimination of the *khalifa*'s and other hostile forces. Among the 'outlying forces' listed in an intelligence report were 'the whites at Fashoda'.[36]

Although it was not until September that the British knew for certain of the presence and nationality of these 'whites', a policy had been decided in June for dealing with any French presence discovered in the Upper Nile. Cromer had then proposed to Salisbury the despatch, after the capture of Khartoum (Omdurman, the capital, being seldom mentioned), of 'flotillas' up the Blue and White Niles to establish a claim to outlying territories. In August Salisbury authorised the flotillas, specifying that Kitchener should personally command the White Nile fleet, in anticipation of an encounter with the French. The latter were to be told that their presence was 'an infringement of the rights both of Great Britain and of the Khedive'. If French 'forces', rather than merely 'authorities', were encountered, Kitchener was to use his own judgement to decide what course to follow.[37] Lord Edward Cecil, Salisbury's son and Kitchener's aide-de-camp, told Wingate that the British government was 'relying on K. to pull them out of the difficulty of having to send France an ultimatum'.[38]

The French presence was finally confirmed by Mahdist officers returning by steamer from Fashoda. Kitchener and Wingate set out from

Omdurman on the 10th on the steamer *Dal*, accompanied by a mixed force aboard the gunboats *Sultan*, *Fateh*, and *Nasir*. A fifth boat, the *Abu Klea*, joined the flotilla on the 15th, further upstream.[39] At Renk they met the Mahdist steamer *Safia* and eleven sailing boats, which had just encountered the French at Fashoda. This force and the Renk garrison were quickly overwhelmed. From Fabiu, fifteen miles north of Fashoda, on the 18th, Kitchener despatched his first message to the French, nonchalantly addressing it to the chief of the 'European Expedition', and announcing his capture of Omdurman and arrival at Fashoda.[40]

The vast superiority of the Anglo-Egyptian force made the outcome of any local hostilities with the French a foregone conclusion. It was the likely result in Europe of such hostilities that concerned Kitchener and Wingate. Moreover, Kitchener had not been left with as much latitude as his vague official orders suggested. According to Wingate, Kitchener had also 'some private letters which pointed to there being no fighting and . . . he intended to go as near force as possible without actually exercising it'. He had 'express instructions not to "have corpses" '.[41]

On the morning of the 19th a boat flying a large French flag approached the anchored *Dal* and Marchand's reply was handed over. This welcomed Kitchener to Fashoda 'in the name of France', and 'rather staggered' its recipient. The *Dal* steamed on to Fashoda where Marchand and his deputy, Germain, came aboard. Supported by Wingate, Kitchener overcame his irresolution and made it clear that he had orders to raise the Egyptian flag at Fashoda. Would Marchand attempt to resist this? The ploy of hoisting only the Egyptian flag was Wingate's: it allowed the British to assert their control behind a facade of Egyptian sovereignty, and it presented Marchand with an exit from the choice between death and dishonour. He offered no resistance, and the Egyptian flag was duly raised over a ruined wall of the old fort.[42] Colonel H. W. Jackson was appointed commandant of a large Anglo-Egyptian garrison; the British and French officers toasted each other with champagne; Kitchener delivered a formal protest to Marchand, now referring explicitly to the rights of Britain as well as of Egypt; and the flotilla proceeded up the White Nile. Another flag-raising was staged at the mouth of the Sobat, where an unlucky force was left to establish a post. Kitchener then returned to Omdurman, arriving on 24 September. Further expeditions to show the flag had been set in motion on the Sobat and the Bahr al-Ghazal. The diplomatic contest between Britain and France that followed the Fashoda meeting does not directly concern the history of the Sudan. The eventual retirement of the French, via Ethiopia, marked the close of this remarkable episode.[43]

While the 'whites at Fashoda' were the problem of most concern to the authorities in London and had therefore required Kitchener's personal

attention, they were certainly not the most dangerous forces to be dealt with after Karari. East of the Blue Nile the Amir Ahmad Fadil remained unsubdued, in command of a considerable force. He had been en route to assist in Omdurman's defence when word reached him of the *khalifa*'s defeat. An Egyptian force under Colonel Parsons had meanwhile been despatched from Kassala to Gedaref, which was occupied after three hours of fierce fighting on 22 September. The second of Salisbury's 'flotillas' (two boats), under General Hunter, departed from Omdurman on 19 September. His orders were to 'hoist flags and leave garrisons at such points' as he thought 'advisable to prevent encroachment by any Power in Sudan territory'; and, if he encountered Ahmad Fadil, to offer clemency but to act on his own initiative if the offer was rejected.[44] Egyptian and British flags were raised at Roseires on the 30th, witnessed by 'about a hundred native men' who, it was reported, 'cheerfully accepted the fact that they were to be ruled by the British and Egyptian Governments'. On the return journey to Omdurman (which he made in fifty hours), Hunter raised the flags at Sennar.[45] He had left no garrison at Roseires, however, and while stopping off Wad Medani he ordered Major Nason to proceed to Roseires with a force, and arranged for another force of 220 men to remain at Sennar to watch for Ahmad Fadil. On 28 September the *amir*, having at last been convinced of the *khalifa*'s defeat at Omdurman, yet unwilling to surrender, attacked Gedaref in force and was driven off with heavy losses. This reverse did not prevent his ravaging the countryside (and absconding with a treasury of £E1,600 being conveyed from Kassala to Gedaref), as he moved southwards. He was finally confronted on 26 December near Roseires, when his men were on a small island attempting to cross the Blue Nile to the Gezira. Fierce fighting ensued, and resulted in heavy losses on both sides.[46] Ahmad Fadil himself escaped to fight another day, eventually joining the Khalifa 'Abdallahi in Kordofan, but his army was destroyed.

Meanwhile Gallabat was occupied by Colonel J. Collinson on 7 December. Two Ethiopian flags that had been hoisted there after the Mahdist evacuation were left flying, pending instructions from Cairo,[47] but the town was garrisoned by two companies of the 12th Sudanese Battalion and two Maxim guns. Although the elimination of Ahmad Fadil as a threat cleared the eastern Sudan of major Mahdist resistance, the attitude of the Ethiopians was undetermined, and the Anglo-Egyptian forces in the region were considered by Collinson, their commanding officer, to be weak. Indeed, the garrison at Gallabat was in an 'intolerable position, unless all danger of ... being attacked has been removed by negotiations'.[48]

Until mid-November, the Gezira was 'in great confusion', as 'a large number of dervishes were still roaming about, pillaging and killing the

natives, and looting the cattle and big stores of dhurra which belonged to the Khalifa and other Baggara Emirs'.[49] A patrol under Tudway Bey was despatched from Omdurman on 27 September. Ahmad al-Sunni, the *khalifa*'s chief official in the Gezira, had been offered clemency, and he surrendered at Wad Medani on 15 September. Other Mahdist officials in the region eventually surrendered or were tracked down.

With the *khalifa* free in Kordofan, and the Anglo-Egyptian forces rapidly depleting (as British troops had begun to be evacuated to Egypt shortly after the battle of Omdurman), the western Sudan remained out of control. Even the parts of Dongola west of the Nile were said to be in a state of anarchy in late 1898, and the garrison of Kababish auxiliaries at Safia was actually withdrawn because it 'was not strong enough to keep order'. Disarming the tribes, to whom the British had given weapons during the campaign, would prove to be a long and difficult task. In Kordofan there was no government, the Mahdist administration having collapsed and the new regime being incapable of asserting itself before a final accounting with the *khalifa*. Shaykh ʿAli al-Tum of the Kababish, whose opposition to the Mahdists was valued, and who was in later years to be viewed by British officials as a paragon of tribal virtue, was in these early days a considerable nuisance. One official's candidly expressed desire to 'beat first and then hang . . . the insolent scoundrel'[50] for his raiding of neighbouring tribes, shows how far the government writ extended west of the Nile. In the far west, in Darfur, the British had allowed ʿAli Dinar, a grandson of Sultan Muhammad al-Fadl, to install himself at El Fasher where, after eliminating rival claimants, he succeeded in consolidating his position as an independent ruler. El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan, was not occupied until December 1899, by which time it had been 'completely deserted'.[51]

After the battle of Omdurman, when it was discovered that the Khalifa ʿAbdallahi had fled, a cavalry force under Slatin was sent in pursuit. This failed to intercept him, as did gunboats that steamed some ninety miles south but lost contact with the *khalifa* when he moved westwards from the river. In January 1899 the Kordofan Field Force under the commander-in-chief's brother, Lt-Colonel Walter Kitchener, was sent against the *khalifa*, and came within striking distance but retired when it was seen that ʿAbdallahi had a force far in excess of what intelligence reports had indicated. Another expedition in October 1899 failed to bring him to battle. Finally, in November, a force under Wingate tracked him down and the decisive battle was fought at Umm Diwaykarat, south-west of Kosti, on the 24th. The confrontation lasted little over an hour, superior organisation and weaponry again winning the day. The number of Mahdist dead was put at one thousand, with 9,400 prisoners taken. Among the dead was

the Khalifa 'Abdallahi. According to Wingate, when the *khalifa* had recognised

> that the day was lost, he called on his Emirs to dismount from their horses, and seating himself on his 'furwa' or sheepskin, – as is the custom of Arab Chiefs who disdain surrender, – he had placed Khalifa Ali Wad Helu on his right, and Ahmed Fedil on his left, whilst the remaining Emirs seated themselves around him, with their bodyguards in line some 20 paces to their front and in this position they had unflinchingly met their death.[52]

As at Omdurman, so at Umm Diwaykarat there would be no compromise with the invader: Wingate was never to forget that militant Mahdism had been beaten down, it had not given up; that the Sudanese had surrendered not to the inexorable force of European arms, but to the unarguable will of God; and that more than Maxim guns would be needed to win the battle for the respect of the Sudanese. But large-scale Mahdist resistance was at an end. The renowned Amir 'Uthman Diqna was finally captured in 1900. Of the surviving Mahdist notables, some were imprisoned, some were allowed to live in supervised retirement, others entered into positions of responsibility in the new regime.

THE CONDOMINIUM AGREEMENT

The decision to adopt in the Sudan what in theory would be a novel form of government was not hastily taken after the battle of Omdurman, but was the result of several years of desultory consultation between Lord Cromer and London. When the Sudan campaigns were launched in March 1896 it was accepted that the territory won from the Mahdists would be restored to Egypt, but there was no urgent necessity to reach a final decision in the matter. This solution was intended in part to overcome Egyptian opposition to what was (correctly) seen as a campaign undertaken in pursuit of British rather than Egyptian interests, and partly to forestall European criticism of British expansionism.[53] In his communications with the Foreign Office Cromer continued to assume that 'Egyptian authority' would be 'reasserted' over all territories won from the *khalifa*.[54]

From this position of simply repossessing 'lost' territories to one whereby those territories would be administered by Britain alone was a step not to be taken lightly. That Cromer was prepared to take it, after the occupation of Dongola, was a result of his desire to avoid European entanglements. In December 1896 he told Salisbury that Kitchener 'should issue a proclamation in the Soudan' to the effect that he had 'undertaken the administration of the Dongola province on behalf of H.M.G. from January 1 until such time as the money advanced to [the] Egyptian Govt. [from the

Reserve Fund, for the Dongola campaign] is repaid'. At the same time, Kitchener 'would continue to fly [the] Egyptian flag'. This would exempt Sudan revenue from the exactions of the Caisse de la Dette in Egypt, and would, Cromer thought, forestall French and Russian objections.[55] Under an Egyptian flag of convenience, British control could be exercised. Salisbury was not impressed, at least for the moment. He argued that for Kitchener to have conquered Dongola for the *khedive* but now to administer it for Britain upon orders from London would in itself excite European opposition.[56] Cromer therefore set himself the task of devising a solution that might win the acquiescence of the Egyptian government and avoid 'stating openly that the Soudan is to be administered direct by England'.[57]

The question was reopened when it was decided that the Egyptian advance should continue from Dongola to Khartoum. Uppermost in Cromer's mind was the effect this major campaign would have on the carefully nurtured Egyptian finances. In November 1897 he told Salisbury that while he would not prefer to see the French established on the Upper Nile, he did not 'share the somewhat extreme views . . . as to the absolute necessity of preventing them from doing so'. What was the point, he wondered, of acquiring 'on behalf of ourselves or the Egyptians large tracts of useless territory which it would be difficult and costly to administer properly?'[58] The danger of opposition from the Powers, and the growing conviction that only British control in the Sudan was an acceptable political outcome of the Nile campaign, moved the Foreign Office to pursue a policy that led to the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement (later called the Condominium Agreement) for the administration of the Sudan. In June 1898 the Ottoman sultan, whose previous intrusions into British plans for the Sudan had been curtly rebuffed,[59] seemed about to urge a khedivial reassertion of Ottoman rights. Thus Salisbury warned that it was necessary to acknowledge 'Egyptian title by itself', as the army moved deeper into the Sudan. 'Would it not be wise', he asked Cromer,

> if you take Khartoum, to fly the British and Egyptian flags side by side [?] We might treat Khartoum as the capital of the Mahdi State; and the capture of Khartoum would deliver by right of conquest the whole of the Mahdi State from Halfa to Wadelai into the power of the capturing army. That army would consist of two allied contingents. . . . If we establish this position we shall shake free of a good deal of diplomatic hamper.[60]

Such an arrangement would also placate public opinion in Britain, where the simple reincorporation of the Sudan with Egypt would have been unacceptable.[61] Thus the idea of a condominium originated. Despite the fact that the Sudanese had revolted against the *khedive*, and it was in his name that the 'reconquest' had been undertaken, the separate rights of