The Archaeology of Settlement and Migratory Patterns of the Fur Tribe in Darfur, Sudan

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Abstract

The state of Darfur is located around the Jebel Marra Mountains in western Sudan, Africa, and was first established around A.D. 1630 by the ruling African tribe known as the Fur. The Fur tribe homeland is divided amongst three Fur divisions, speaking six traditional dialects, and is located in the center and western border of Darfur. These dialects and traditions are quickly being erased by the assimilation Darfurians face by being forced to migrate across Sudan, often into eastern Chad, leaving behind their native culture. The detriment of militia groups in Darfur, Sudan upon the personal Sudanese identity can be examined in the archaeological record by comparing the transitional settlement patterns and purpose of the Meidob Hills and Tila Island against those of the modern villages Mukjar, Dor, Shoba, and the Turra Burial Grounds. Understanding the shift of traditional living and settlement patterns of the Fur tribe is beneficial to archaeologists, because it will be reflected in the archaeological record as a precursor signature of cultural genocide.
Introduction

The most influential archaeological research conducted in Darfur was done by English researcher A.J. Arkell in the 1920’s and 1930’s, because he helped popularize the study of Sudan’s people and their varying ethnic cultures (McGregor 2001:8). Influenced by Arkell’s studies, the most influential archaeological research post-independence in Darfur has been done by Ibrahim Musa Mohammad. He carried out archaeological surveys and a number of small-scale excavations in al-Fashir, Merbo, and Kutum in the period 1978-1981. The reports were published in The Archaeology of Central Darfur in the 1st Millennium AD in 1986. This work combines ethnographic observations, archaeological surveys, and collections of oral traditions from local tribes in Darfur (McGregor 2001:9).

Ibrahim Mohammad’s work is important to the overall understanding of the Fur people from a chronological perspective, because Mohammad tied together data pertaining to the Tora, Daju, Tunjur, and Kayra dynasties of Darfur. Knowledge of a chronology of Darfur had not been previously pieced together before 1970. The first step in intensive archaeological research is to establish a chronology of the region that is not known, as is the case of the Fur people. A direct focus is to assess the internal reasons as to why Darfurians have abandoned their traditional lifestyles; it is important to understand the movements of the Darfurians, because in this way archaeologists can examine Sudan and understand the regional chronology of the Fur people. I will be addressing the detriment of militia groups in Darfur, Sudan upon the personal Sudanese identity by comparing settlement patterns and settlement purpose of the Meidob Hills and
Tila Island against the modern village settlement patterns in Mukjar, Dor, Shoba, and the Turra Hills around the Jebel Marra Mountain range. Understanding the shift of traditional living and settlement patterns of the Fur tribe is beneficial to archaeologists, because it will be reflected in the archaeological record as a precursor signature of cultural genocide.
Methodology

Three questions that I addressed while researching were:

• Can cultural genocide in Darfur, Sudan be proven by the archaeological record?
• Why is cultural genocide happening to the Fur tribe?
• What cultural traditions of the Fur have become erased, and how is this reflected in the archaeological record?

Cultural genocide is described as the deliberate destruction of the cultural heritage of a people or nation for political, military, religious, ideological, ethnical, or racial reasons. The methodology used to complete this project was heavily dependent on literary research of books, monographs, journal articles, and the diary accounts of Darfurian civilians and journalists. Supplemental resources include video documentaries, mapping imagery, and aerial photography of all the sites examined to ascertain spatial and migratory patterns of the Fur tribe in Darfur, Sudan. With these specific pictures and maps, I have established migratory patterns going away from Darfur, and also analyzed destroyed village patterns to establish the impact that militia groups have specifically on Fur traditions and their language. Statistical figures analyzed were population sizes of refugee camps in Darfur, the rise and fall of death rates versus the location of them, and regional destroyed villages to establish militant attack preference.

Results

My results have established a main migratory pattern of the Fur people out of Western Darfur, over the boarder into Eastern Chad to refugee camps similar to those found in Darfur from A.D. 2000-2008 (Present). Statistical data given by resources
establishes the detriment that militia groups in Darfur has upon Sudanese civilians, and the Sudanese identity. I have used the sites of Tila Island and the Meidob Hills to establish a historical pattern of settlements and their purposes, and compare that to modern sites of Dor, Mukjar, and Shoba, because the results showcase the loss of the historical genealogical linguistics and traditions including economic, religious, and kinship of the Fur tribes from A.D. 1600 to the present day.
Environmental Geography

The present area of Darfur covers approximately 193,000 square miles in Western Sudan (McGregor 2001:3). Most of Darfur’s landscape consists of vast plains, though the eastern part of state, hills develop into mountains. The most prominent of these ranges is Jebel Marra Mountain, consisting of volcanic hills rising up to 3000 m above the plains below. The whole of the mountain range only consists of 50 km east to west, and 110 km north to south, as shown in Figure 1a. The mountain range is important for water drainage purposes, but is also regarded as the ancestral homeland of the Fur people in Darfur. The amount of rainfall each year that the mountain receives, up to 75 cm, allows for the soil to support an agricultural lifestyle for the Fur people. The Fur people terraced the sides of many of the hills to utilize irrigation techniques to grow such crops as cotton, melons, and tobacco (McGregor 2001:3). Northern Darfur is a relatively dry area, making this area largely preferred by nomads, because it is covered with plants from autumn to January which provides good grazing for nomads’ herds. The western and southern regions allow more crops to grow because it is generally well watered, and are considered home for nomadic cattle owning Arab groups (McGregor 2001:3).
Historical Background

The Tora Darfurians are thought to have entered the northwest Nuba mountains of Darfur by the eleventh century, where they helped develop the first substantial polities with parts of the Chad Basin (Edwards 2004:212). Darfur’s Arab groups began arriving largely between the 14th and 18th centuries, settling around the south-eastern regions, as shown in Figure 1b. The four main Arab groups became known as Ta’aida, Beni Halba, Habbaniya, and Rizeigat (DeWaal 2005:9). The Tora Darfurians were overthrown by the Daju dynasty, whose rule only lasted from A.D. 1400-1600 before the political polities moved to the village of Dor in the northern Jebel Marra Mountains. As shown in figure 2, around A.D. 1600 the Daju dynasty was overthrown by people in northern Sudan who belonged to a dynasty called the Tunjur. The Tunjur rule likely ended during the later 16th century when they were displaced by the first Kayra Fur sultan, named Sulayman Solong
By A.D. 1800, the Fur Sultanate was the most powerful state within modern Sudan, with Islam adopted as the official state religion. Once the Kayra Fur began to rule, new caravan routes were developed for new long distance trade. West of the Nile, the Drab al-Arab (Forty Days Road) ran south from Egypt into Darfur, where it linked with other routes running across Sudan (Edwards 2004:267). Main exports were slaves, gold, camels, ivory, and ostrich feathers. Imported goods were textiles, copper, tin, lead, beads, and cowries. These imports had considerable importance with in Fur contexts, because these could represent considerable wealth (Edwards 2004:267). French sources of the Napoleonic period estimated that between 5,000 and 6,000 slaves were traded on the Drab el-Arab Road each year (O’Fahey 1971:92). The Fur Sultanate expanded south past the foothills of Jebel Marra by force when Islam was introduced around A.D. 1780. A Fur elder described the expansion of the Fur Sultanate by the first sultan Sulayman Solong travelling to each hill and claiming that each leader of a tribe must be Muslim or face a civil war. (O’Fahey 1980:72-4).

Kayra Fur Sultanate

The Fur tribes form the largest non-Arab ethnic group in Darfur with a language divided into six different dialects over the last 300 years, they are Jebel Marra located in central and around the Jebel Marra Mountains, Zalingei located in the western Fur area, Northern Fur located around Jebel Si, Geneina located in Western Darfur with Dar Masalit tribes, Kulli located in the southwestern region of Darfur, and Nyala located in the southeastern region of Darfur, as shown in Figure 3. The Fur people are all a part of what they call three divisions: the Tamurkwa are located in the west of Jebel Marra, the
Kunjara (Kayra) are located on the eastern side of the Jebel Marra Mountains, and the Karakirit are located on the eastern side of the Jebel Marra Mountains (Edwards 2004:86). Archaeological sites associated with the Kayra Fur Sultanate were largely grouped together around the Jebel Marra region; these include Tila Island, the Meidob Hills, Dor, Kutum, Tong Kilo, Mukjar, Shoba, and Tong Kuri. The burial grounds of the Sultanate are located at Turra, these tombs were restored by Ali Dinar, the last Kayra Fur sultan, at the beginning of the 20th century (McGregor 2001:96).

The state of Darfur began to develop largely in the village of Dor, in the northern region of the Jebel Marra Mountains around A.D. 1400 by a people in northern Sudan who belonged to an empire called the Tunjur. In the northern Jebel Marra Mountains there are various Tunjur ruins inscribed Tunjur King lists. Their rule likely ended during the later 16th century when they were displaced by the first Kayra Fur sultan, named Sulayman Solong. The Sultanate experienced a period of increasing influence of Islamic law, customs, and trading practices that reshaped the Darfur identity in the 17th and 18th centuries (Edwards 2004:262-63). Darfur’s Arabs arrived in two main groups called the scholars and traders of the east and west, and the Juhayna of the north-west. People who moved from the south became known as the Baggara and Abbala (DeWaal 2005:9). During the 18th century, a system of land grants was created by ever increasing number of Arab and African tribes, who for many centuries lived in peace through economic trade of goods, as shown in Figure 4. Arabic was taken in as a major language of the Arab tribes moving into Darfur (DeWaal 2005:5-9). By A.D. 1800, the Fur Sultanate was the most powerful state within Darfur and modern Sudan, with Islam adopted as the official state religion.
Once the Kayra Fur began to rule, new caravan routes developed for new long distance trade. West of the Nile, the Drab el-Arab (Forty Days Road) ran south from Egypt into Darfur, where it linked with other routes running across Sudanic Africa (Edwards 2004:267). As shown in Figure 5, imports of goods had considerable importance within Fur contexts: cloth, iron (hoes), copper, and tin rings because these could represent considerable wealth (Edwards 2004:267). The inhabitants of Dar Fur traded in the Mediterranean and Egypt, while raiding their southern neighbor countries, particularly for slaves (DeWaal 2005:8).

Current Background

The Fur population is estimated to be 500,000 people in the Dar Fur Providence, though the language Fur is also spoken in Eastern Chad. Darfur has four main ethnic groups called Zaghawa, Fur, Tunjar, and Kaitinga. The Meidob population is centered in the Jebel Marra Range in the Dar Fur Providence, with a population of 50,000 people. One of the Meidob dialects is known as Shelkota, and it is mostly spoken in the city of Malha, located in Jebel Meidob. The Zaghawa population is estimated to be 186,850 people and is located in northwest Darfur, and scattered in the south. The Zaghawa language is also spoken in Chad and Libya. Ethnic subgroups of Zaghawa are Dor, Anka, and Kobe; these people are semi-nomadic. Birked is an extinct language of the north Dar Fur Providence, and east of the Jebel Marra Mountains. This language at one time was also spoken north of Nyala; this language dialect is the closest to Meidob (Gordon 2008).

In 1967 and 1968, a fight between Rahad Gineid, an Arab nomad, and Zaghawa herdgers broke out over animal theft. This encounter escalated to three days of armed encounters with rifles between the two groups. After this incident, ethnic groups in the
village of Dor that were non-Arab began to doubt the old ancestry lines with the Arabs, which was one of economic cooperation (DeWaal 2005:7). This fight had a deeper link to an Arab identity struggle taking place within the Rizeigat sect and the Mahamid and Mahariya sects, which stoked the fire for the up and coming three generations, partly resulting in warfare seen against the Fur in Darfur today (DeWaal 2005:8).

In October 1987, a group from Darfur called the Committee of Arab Gathering sent a letter to the Sudanese prime minister complaining about ethnic problems. The Arab Islamic regime had already been involved in a long war against black Christian and animist groups in southern Sudan. This letter claimed, “The Sudanese ethnic group currently known as the Arab tribes of Darfur entered Sudan in the 15th century.” The letter claimed that the Arabs made up 70 percent of the total population of Darfur, and occupied 80 percent of south Darfur, and 50 percent of north Darfur (Kiernan 2007:594). These numbers were found to be over exaggerated because the Arabs wished to express their apparent right to control natural and political resources of Darfur, including the land around Jebel Marra that the Fur tribe held.

When fighting escalated in the early 1990’s, the Fur began to organize the scattered resistance activities that were emerging all over Darfur, starting from the mountainous stronghold of Jebel Marra, these activities were to prepare against violent actions being forced upon them by the government military. From 1996-1997, Fur men were urged to stay in Jebel Marra to become trained for the resistance army against government troops. Members of the Fur resistance deemed the message, “The Arabs will not allow us to stay in our land unless we defend ourselves. It is a war of ‘to be or not to be’” (DeWaal 2005:71). Individual identity, including language, and its recognition are
important within Darfur, because one’s identity constitutes his/her way of life due to divisions of labor and social status (DeWaal 2005:5).

By December 1997, the whole of Jebel Marra was mobilized, and troops began to be stationed around the mountainous area. The Darfur rebels are a coalition of male Fur and Masalit villagers living around Jebel Marra Mountain (DeWaal 2005:69). By 1998, rebel African forces fought against government Arab forces whom were burning villages surrounding Jebel Marra and western Darfur. In 1998, 10,000 Masalit civilians migrated into Eastern Chad from western Darfur (DeWaal 2005:69).

In 2001, with the support of the government in Khartoum, the government-created Janjawid militias launched a murderous fight against Darfur’s Fur agricultural tribes. From 2001-2005, the Janjawid killed, starved, and displaced 300,000 people of Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa descent to Eastern Chad. The Janjawid fighters were mostly Arab camel-herding pastoralists who claim that they are not displacing civilians, only rebels, though researchers believe the soldiers want to expand their own territorial ownership (Kiernan 2007:596).

Results

Villages

Dor village lies north of Kutum in northern Darfur, in an area surrounded by dry granite hills. By the 18th century, the village was governed by the ruler of Darfur, Sultan Mohamed Teyrab. The inhabitants of Dor speak Fur, Zaghawa, and Arabic, and use animals as the store of wealth. Most of Dor’s animals are sheep goats, camels, and donkeys (DeWaal 2005:5-7). The village of Dor lies close to one of just three all-season livestock routes called Masars, which was often used by camel herders on their annual
north-south migrations. In January camel herds move south spending the winter and dry
seasons south of Kutum. (DeWaal 2005:7) The majority of Dor’s inhabitants are from
ethnic groups called Seinga, Berti, Jawamaa, and Masalit. Two of these groups come
from Arab categories, and are called Jallaba and Rizeigat. Jallaba are local traders from
the Nile, and Rizeigat are Darfur Bedouins (DeWaal 2005:7). In 2003, over sixty
mosques in western Darfur were burned alone (DeWaal 2005:115).

The area of Mukjar located in the Sindu Hills of the Jebel Marra Mountains was
among the most fertile agricultural land in Darfur. Historically, the area was part of the
“Dar” or homeland of the Fur tribe, from which Darfur takes its name and who’s
Sultanate ruled most of Darfur for several hundred years before the British captured the
area in A.D. 1916 (HRW 2005). As shown in Figure 6, Mukjar was an administrative
center and have a greater ethnic mix due to the presence of merchants, traders, military
forces and migrants from other parts of Sudan (HRW 2005). In 2004, nearly 145 men
were executed in the night by Janjawiid soldiers, and deposited into three mass graves
within the village (DeWaal 2005:115). As shown in Figure 7, huts, animals, wells, and
mosques were all destroyed by Janjawiid soldiers.
Inhabitants of Mukjar remembered being threatened by Janjaweed Arab soldiers that the penalty of death waited if they tried to return to their village; instead they were to stay within the refugee huts and survive on humanitarian aid. In 2003, aid workers reported that the Janjaweed soldiers had destroyed Mukjar village so thoroughly that there was not much to fight over among the civilians (Reeves 2007). Most rebels and Janjaweed are gone from the Mukjar area, leaving nearly the entire village burned to the ground and the Sudanese government considers the Mukjar area peaceful by Darfur standards. One civilian named Ibrahim stated, “We live in Mukjar like in a prison without walls, we’re not safe, but we can’t leave” (Reeves 2007). As of 2005, around 14,000 refugees moved back into Mukjar, though air bombing in May 2007 near Mukjar displaced 6,500 people once again (Reeves 2007).

Mukjar lies along the line where Arab tribes and Fur communities trade livestock annually. Over the last few decades there has been conflict over the migration trade routes, especially between the sedentary Fur farming communities and migrating Arab...
nomads, particularly landless nomad groups. Some of the reasons for these conflicts are increasing human and livestock populations, environmental degradation, expanding agricultural cultivation, inadequate water resources and the migration of nomads from Chad into Darfur, and Darfur into Eastern Chad. These local clashes have contributed to the pressure that the government has inflicted upon the Fur groups in the form the Janjawiid militia attacks from 2000 to the present day (HRW 2005).

The Arab Gathering Society that the Janjawiid leader Musa Hilal is a part of, states its mission is to “change the demography of Darfur, and empty it of African tribes.” Hilal believes he raised a tribal militia to fight against the rebellion in Darfur, and the Fur people. Hilal is also waging jihad in Darfur by “cleaning our land of agents, mercenaries, cowards, and outlaws,” which he views as the African tribes such as the Fur (DeWaal 2005:71). Shown in Figure 8, the Janjawiid militia leader was heard by a tape recorder thanking neighboring Chad for “supplying him and his tribe with necessary weapons to exterminate the African tribes in Darfur” (Kiernan 2007:595).

Shoba village consists of mainly a Fur population, and lies in a fertile area of Darfur where inhabitants grow millet in the fields. Many women within this village are potters, while many of the men work on plantations to harvest and maintain crops (Tobert 1988:231). As shown in Figure 9, in 2002 the village of Shoba was attacked by the Janjawiid who killed many people, burnt 600 homes, and stole herds of cattle. Civilians tell aid workers and reporters of how as a member of the Fur tribe, while going to school they would be beaten if they didn’t speak Arabic, instead of their native language (SAGC 2005).

There are an estimated 4.7 million conflict-affected people in Darfur and eastern
Chad due to militia attacks in Darfur, and more than 2.5 million displaced from their homes. The majority of Fur tribes have lost everything, with no prospect of returning to their traditional ways of life, as shown in Figure 10 (Reeves 2007). There are presently approximately half a million conflict-affected persons in eastern Chad 240,000 of them Darfurian refugees, and over 100,000 conflict-affected people have attempted to return to their homes and villages (Reeves 2007). Hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur have perished, namely those members of the Fur tribe who once lived around the Jebel Marra Mountains in central Darfur.

Conclusions

Tila Island

Tila Island was excavated by the Sudan Antiques Service (UNESCO) survey team between 1966 and 1968. This is located 5 km south of the Semna cataract, at the boundary between Semna and the Dattiri districts. With minimal cultivatable land, the settlement lay upon the rocky island and enclosed by stone wall structures. As shown in Figures 11 and 12, there were up to 10 house complexes built and dispersed over a range of 2.25 hectares. Much of the surface material recovered was of a Christian date (Edwards 1996:106).

The architectural development of the individual house complexes suggests that some at least may have been occupied over an extended period, although with the lack of any horizontal stratigraphy between the different houses it is impossible to suggest any developmental sequences across the site. Within House I, the remodeling of the primary structure and construction of additions may reflect a significant period of occupation, but this need not have extended over more than one or two generations. The varying levels of
occupation could be pointed out, because of the demolition of house levels and their rebuilding. This settlement was likely abandoned by the late A.D. 300 (Edwards 1996:114).

The settlement pattern of Tila Island is much larger and complex as compared to the earliest architectural styles of the Tora Darfurian sites around Jebel Marra. The housing complexes of Tila Island though larger in size than those studied in Jebel Meidob, and those of modern villages Mukjar, Shoba, and Dor were much fewer in number, totaling to eleven. The Sudan Antiques service team determined that these complexes were used for shelter, food production, and possibly trade, like those studied in Shoba, Mukjar, and Jebel Nami’s Tong Kilo village.

As shown in Figure 13b, this structure was built out of mudbrick, in a rectangular shape measuring 26 x 12.5 m. The structure is believed to be a housing complex with two defined phases of construction, built on top of a sandy mud floor. During the second phase of its building, two new rooms were added onto its south side. Some of the rooms within this house were used as a toiletry, a kitchen, and store-rooms, though an added room was believed to have been used as a social courtyard (Edwards 1996:106).
As shown in Figure 13a, house 2 was situated toward the northern end of the Tila Island settlement, about 75 m away from House 1. The complex consists of nine rooms with four distinct occupation levels in two major building phases. Archaeologists believe that four of the rooms within the complex were used as kitchens, because of the presence of ash deposits and an oven sunk into the floor (Edwards 1996:106).

_Turra Burial Grounds_
As shown in figure 14, the Turra Hills region is located in the southeastern portion of the Jebel Marra Mountain range, and is widely considered by most Fur as being the link to their ancestry. The Darfur sultans from Sulayman Solong to Mohammad Husaya are buried at the Turra Burial Grounds. On the outer hills of the Turra Burial Grounds are traces of stone that may have been from earlier tombs predating the Kayra Fur dynasty, likely affiliated with the Tunjur dynasties (McGregor 2001:96). The ruins predating the Kayra Fur dynasty could have possibly provided a better chronology of inhabitants that were a part of the transition from the Tunjur, to the Kayra Fur dynasty. Inscriptions upon the ruins may have been able to correlate a linguistic link to languages spoken around the Jebel Marra Mountains presently, however, proof of a link may never be found due to the assimilation, displacement, and extinction of language and oral traditions in Darfur villages during the 20th and 21st centuries.
Village sites affiliated with the Turra Burial Ground region are Tong Kilo, Dulo Kuri, Tong Kuri, and Abu Asal. These sites consist largely of religious mosques and rectangular stone palaces built in the Tora architecture style, as shown in Figure 15a and Figure 15b. This architecture presence suggests a connection with the Meidob ruins in the city of Malha. The plateau that the Turra Burial Grounds sit on suggests that a heavy population may have been supported at one point. Many of the structures on this plateau now lie in ruins, however, foundations of what archaeologists believe were at one point compounds with living quarters inside also may have served as slave prisons. The site of Tong Kuri specifically was believed to be the location of the Sultan Kuru and Sulayman Solong slave prisons. As shown in Figure 16a and 16b, the pits located within the compounds are said by local villagers to have been the prisons of slaves and those who resisted Fur rule.

![Figure 15b Palace Complex Layout in Jebel Marra (Edwards 2004: 275).](image)

The Turra Burial Grounds had a main purpose of holding the tombs of the Tunjur
and Kayra Fur Sultans. The proper burial of the sultans was practiced by the Fur people who carried out a procession with ritual rites on the corpse’s body. One main ritual practiced by the Fur people at the burial grounds is called the Konda Festival, where cattle from all over the kingdom are brought to the sultan’s tombs and sacrificed for the well-being of the Sultanate.

As the Tunjur rule slowly faded around A.D. 1600, and the Kayra Fur Sultanate came to rule, structural shape changes of compounds, mosques, palaces, and huts transition from the Tora fashion of rectangular and largely spaced apart, to smaller, close together, and mostly wooden circular shaped structures, as shown in Figure 17. This shift in settlement size still allowed the Kayra Fur to live in a village setting as the population size increased, and focus remained on agricultural practices and slave trade. The Turra Burial Grounds not only represent the religious grounds of the Fur tribe, but the structural and settlement purpose transitions throughout the Sultanate rule.

Figure 17 Current Architecture Style of the Fur Tribe (Tobert 1988:225).
Meidob Hills

As shown in Figure 18, the Meidob Hills are located in Jebel Meidob in the north-eastern corner of the Darfur province. These hills are a concentration of volcanic hills and deep ravines. The depression in the west side of the hills is known as the Malha crater, which contains valuable deposits of rock salt and muddy salt. This crater also has fresh water springs and a small lake. The salt gathered from the lake by the Meidob inhabitants is sold to the neighboring Arabs on the trade markets (McGregor 2001:116).

Archaeological sites containing cities, stone borrows, and rock paintings are found all over the hills. The hills were populated by groups of people who spoke a Nubian related language, and were semi-nomadic. This region’s ruins, the language, a tradition of matrilineal succession, and a claim by the Meidobis to be Mahas Nubians in origin are all usually offered up as proof of rising influence in Darfur by Christian Nubians (McGregor 2001:116). Nubians likely migrated to Jebel Meidob from Kordofan, not the Nile Valley. Traditional customs found to be Nubian from the Nile Valley were likely brought in over time through trade and further migrations. During the rainy season, the deserts of the north attract the herds from the Zaghawa and the Meidob from Darfur (O’Faheyn 1980:2). Artifacts found within these cities place the occupancy up until the presence of iron tools around the 15th and 16th centuries (McGregor 2001:120).

Within the lava field of the Malha crater in the Meidob Hills is a large unwalled settlement known as the Malha City. This city consists of stone-ridged huts, with the stone remains consisting of fortification on the perimeter (McGregor 2001:118). The cities of Malha and Abu Garan are estimated to have supported population sizes of 6,000 people during a time of significantly higher rainfall. In the Meidob Hills, people thrived
on a salt trade in the city of Malha (O’Fahey 1980:3). The origins of the Meidobis are estimated to be somewhere around the later Meriotic culture of the Nile Valley, and transitioned in the Tora culture of early Darfur (McGregor 2001:120).

The Meidob dialect is part of the Nubian language group that is divided into five groups: Nobin is located near the Nile River, the Meidob is located in the Meidob hills of north-eastern Darfur, the Birged (Birked) is located in Central Darfur, the Kenzi-Dongola is located near the Nile River, and the Hill Nubian is located near the northern and northwestern Nuba mountains near Kordofan (McGregor 2001:120). The inhabitants of the Meidob Hills are divided into four sections: the Uri located in the northern hills, the Torti whom are located in the west hills, the Shelkota whom are located in the southern hills, and the Wirdato whom are allied with the Shelkota in the southern hills. The Shelkota line of kings has gone through three dynasties, and the last dynasty passed through its generations until the late 19th century (McGregor 2001:116).

The settlement pattern of the Meidob Hills located in Jebel Marra is quite different than the rectangular architecture complexes built by the Tila Island inhabitants. Variation in the traditional building styles of the Meidob Hills and Tila Island are present by basic structural shape and size transition, as well as overall settlement size reduction. As shown in Figure 19a and 19b, housing complexes of the Meidob Hills were mainly created out of stone, and in a circular shape that became the dominant shape of huts and mosques affiliated with the Fur architecture style from the 17th century to the present. The barrows of the Meidob Hills served as shelter, religious centers, and tomb complexes. Though the Meidob inhabitants worshipped Islam, they also kept the practice of worshipping holy stones in their religious complexes. Ceremonies of worship were
primarily for making rain for the lakes in the city of Malha.

*Mukjar*

The village of Mukjar was once primarily an administrative center, but no longer is able to maintain the presence of animal trade due to its destruction from Janjawiid soldiers. In October 2005, the UN completed a rapid assessment of Mukjar town in Wadi Salih Province, Western Darfur, stating that “31,097 residents fled their villages and sought protection in Mukjar due to increased hostilities and armed militia activities between August 8 and 29, 2005. Ongoing insecurity in the area prevents the internally displaced people (IDPs) from returning to their homes and engaging in agricultural and commercial activities. Many of the 7,169 affected households in and around Mukjar lack supplies and access to health services, potable water, and latrines” (HRW). As shown in Figures 20a and 20b, the annual livestock trade in Mukjar is no longer maintained, not merely due to the destruction of the village, but the village inhabitants were massacred, and those that escaped militia attacks were permanently displaced, fleeing to Eastern Chad.

*Shoba*

As shown in Figures 21a and 21b, the village of Shoba though mainly a herding center for trade was also the location of a school for village children and teenagers. Children of the village were taught in the language of Fur, however, when the village was attacked by militia groups, students of the school were beaten and murdered if they did not speak Arabic. Language control in Darfur was used by the Janjawiid to further impair knowledge of Fur traditions, and settlement in the village of Shoba is a representative example of the loss of the Sudanese identity that have been caused by the militia
Janjawiid soldiers across Darfur.

*The Fur Tribe*

At its greatest extent, the Kayra Fur Sultanate was supported by taxes placed on economic trade between the Fur agriculturalists, the Arab cattle herders, and the imported goods via the Drab el-Arab Road. A Fur village can range from around fifty huts, or some 150-200 people to 200 huts or more (O’Fahey 1980:2). The slave trade was a main economic facet of the Kayra Fur Sultanate until its fall in 1916 due to British colonial rule. The Fur people historically appear to have moved south and southwest wards away from the mountains, this movement was accelerated during the British colonial rule (O’Fahey 1980:3). Since Darfur’s independence in 1956, the main economic facets have been pottery production, animal herding, crop sales, and travel. As shown in Figure 22, the villages of Dor, Shoba, Mukjar, and Malha were primarily used to serve as housing, shelter, and trading settlements for the Fur people whom were agriculturalists around the Jebel Marra Mountains.

*Darfur Languages*

The Fur language most resembles that of the Masalit, now spoken in Central and Eastern Chad (O’Fahey 1980:9). The Berti, Zaghawa, and Biddeyat languages infiltrated northwestern Darfur into northern and central Dar Fur (O’Fahey 1980:6). The Sudan government in A.D. 1928 wanted to get a representative policy for the African alphabet in regards to southern languages and which should be selected for uniformity for educational purposes. Text books were discussed to be in production to help provide a unified system of orthography and would have been distributed by the International Phonetic Association (Stevenson 1968:22). As shown in Figures 23a and 23b, the Birged,
Berti, Tunjur, and Mima languages were acculturated to Arabic, which happened to a much greater degree than were enculturation of Fur, Meidob, or Zaghawa languages. Evidence of the Berti and Birged languages is largely lost, while the Meidob, Fur, and Zaghawa languages are still thriving (O’Fahey 1980:84). A number of languages including Gule, Berti, Tabi, and Birged are fast disappearing before satisfactory research has been done on them, and it is likely since Janjawiid attacks that the Fur language will follow suit (Stevenson 1968:23).

_Migratory Patterns_

Beginning in 2001, the movement pattern of the Fur people away from Jebel Marra villages has been a direct south-west and western direction across the Sudan border into Eastern Chad villages, as shown in Figure 24. Northern villages in Darfur fled in a northwestern direction toward northeastern Chad. Since the beginning of 2001, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Darfurians have had their villages destroyed, and their traditional ways of life erased, mostly caused by the remaining occupation of Janjawiid soldiers and the impossibility to rebuild burnt settlement villages. As shown if Figure 25, as of May 2005, from the Jebel Marra Mountains to the western border of Sudan, there were four refugee camps that held greater than 100,000 people, six refugee camps with 10,000 people, and two refugee camps with greater than 200,000 people within them.

As of 2003, since the beginning of the Janjawiid attacks, Darfurian refugees have been forced to abandon their traditional way of life to make a meager living under the stressed conditions inside of the camps. This way of life has also forced Darfurians to assimilate their traditional languages into Arabic. Many of the men in the Fur tribes were
traditionally only supposed to learn Arabic, women were never pressured to, since they did not travel outside of their villages to trade. In northern Darfur, there are a total of thirty-seven refugee camps. In southern Darfur, there are a total of forty-six refugee camps. In western Darfur, there are a total of fifty-three refugee camps. The majority of refugee camps show a pattern of existing near the Chad border and just south of the Jebel Marra Mountains along travel routes.

As of 2005, the United Nations estimates that there have been 1.2 million internally displaced persons in Darfur, whom have no where to flee except refugee camps, because Janjawid soldiers loot food, clothes, and animals from villages before burning and bombing the region, leaving nothing behind. The U.N. also estimates that at least thirty thousand civilians have been killed in attacks by the Sudanese government militia forces (HRW 2004). As of July 31, 2007 the affected population of Darfur was 4.1 million people, and the number of internally displaced people was 2.1 million people (HRW). As shown in Figure 26 and 27, Darfurian refugees do not want to go back into their native villages, because there in no government protection, the refugees can’t return to the villages because there are no resources to live (HRW 2004).
A refugee woman named Teresa told aid workers in 2005, that when villagers desert a town it is because of an incoming Janjawiid group, and that sometimes the army will take up residence in the village. Teresa says that Darfur is still this way, except the armies burn the villages once they have taken what they need (Tagreed 2005). People within the refugee camp of Abo Shoak, located in north-western Darfur, are by majority from the Fur tribe. Aid workers within Abo Shoak recall the Fur women describing many cases of sexual assault by Janjawiid soldiers; sexual assault is one of the many ways that militia groups are destroying the traditions of the Fur tribe (Tagreed 2005).

Archaeological Signature

The migratory movement of the Darfurians away from the Jebel Marra Mountains as of 2001 supports my thesis that militia groups cause a permanent detriment to the traditional way of life of the Fur tribe. The number of refugee camps throughout Darfur is over two hundred, with the majority as of 2004 located in western Darfur, and many
along the boarder of eastern Chad, and this supports the idea that Fur people fled in a northwestern, southwestern, or western migratory pattern since the beginning of 2001. Refugee camps with the largest number of Fur people within are also located in western Darfur, and within these camps the Fur people are forced to adapt to the resources available, which are little to none without humanitarian aid volunteers. As of 2007, the United Nations estimates that due to militia attacks in Darfur, there have been 4.7 million conflict affected people, and 2.5 million internally displaced Fur people. The United Nations estimates that as of the beginning of 2008, 100,000 Fur have been forced to flee their homes due to violence, or at a rate of about 1,000 people per day.

The number of internally displaced Fur people is important for archaeologists and ethnologists to understand, because the cultural contexts in which the Fur tribe would traditionally be participating in is no longer existent, and this may continue on for many years. The chronology of Darfur, Sudan’s occupancy is little known, because historical information by tribal tradition in Darfur has always been given by oral accounts. With the massacres of the Fur people and their language, knowledge of their traditions is lost daily. The destruction of Fur traditions architecturally is shown in the villages of Dor, Mukjar, Shoba, and the Turra Burial Grounds, and through the massacre of Fur people numbering to nearly 400,000. It is imperative that archaeologists of current generations gain knowledge of and understand the cultural contexts of the Fur tribe historically in the material and ethnographic record, because interpreting the material record will be left to future generations of archaeologists who will be attempting to understand and interpret the current archaeological record that is being left before our eyes. As shown in Figure 28, the destruction of Fur traditions by militia groups in Darfur, Sudan has been done
linguistically, architecturally, economically, religiously, and by the overall displacement, assimilation, and murdering of Fur civilians.

The forced relinquishing of the Fur traditional settlement patterns is not only reflected through the loss of Fur languages, but also as a transition from one architectural style regarding structure shape and size to another style of considerable difference and purpose than is traditionally observed. The change in structure and settlement purpose derived by archaeologists in the record reflects possible adaptive changes within a culture that may be due to situations regarding environment, political, economic or warfare changes. In the context of the Fur settlement shift, archaeologists would mark the abandonment of their traditional way of life as a forced adaptation ultimately to the political and warfare pressures of the Janjawiid militia groups. Archaeologists can

Figure 28 Government Supported Janjawiid Helicopter Bombing Fur Villages Around Jebel Marra (2006) (Cheadle 2007).
accurately examine these pressures through botanical remains recovered through floatation techniques, and fluctuations of material artifacts regarding tools, clothing, and jewelry. Archaeologists can further develop general theory about tribal relations of Sudan, and link that theory to cross-cultural tribal theory of not only northern Africa, but also in a global context.

Historic archaeologists and forensic archaeologists can learn to interpret the migratory patterns of the Darfurians from 2000-2008 as the precursor signature stipulation of what is considered cultural genocide. Cultural genocide can be examined by a number of methods listed above, and through a number of approaches that an archaeologist chooses to employ, whether processual, post-processual, or processual-plus. The archaeological signature of the villages of Dor, Shoba, and Mukjar in the Jebel Marra Mountain range will have burned foundation residues of 50-200 structures around the settlement, scattered, broken, and burnt artifacts, charred crops outside of the settlement, and lastly burnt, ravaged, and mutilated bodies of massacred civilians that may or may not have been native to that particular settlement. Bodies and bones discovered will be in varying degrees of preservation and context, likely secondary and not primary, and not as one individual find, because a characteristic of the Fur villages are mass graves as of 2008.
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Figure 20a Picture of Man in Destroyed Village of Mukjar, Western Darfur (Reeves 2007).

Figure 20b Picture of Man in Destroyed Village of Mukjar, Western Darfur (Reeves 2007).
Figure 7 Characteristic Village Settlement Layout of the Fur Tribe – Village of Mukjar 2007 (HRW 2005).
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Figure 10 Characteristic Destroyed Village Debris – Dor Village (Reeves 2007).
Figure 28 Government Supported Janjaweed Helicopter Bombing Fur Villages Around Jebel Marra (2006) (Cheadle 2007).