

Kaskara Fuller Styles & Names

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Recently, I read an article in a 1938 issue of *Sudan Notes and Records* that provided the names of three distinct types of *kaskara* sword blade fullering designs. The names are descriptive, and in at least one case the Solingen sword maker's marks have been converted into native cultural relevance. With the exception of my five channeled *Suliman Mukammus*, this was the first time I've encountered named fuller styles.

In case you're not familiar with a sword *fuller*, an explanation can be found in this Wikipedia article: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuller_\(weapon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuller_(weapon))

There is a vast wealth of information on fullers posted by highly knowledgeable members on this site in previous EAA Forum threads. The fuller patterns of individual blades and blade families have been discussed at length - I have done some preliminary "mining," but have only scratched the surface. We have debated whether certain patterns and forming styles are from imports or native forges, but didn't know their names. Hopefully, this presentation can help us to better organize and guide our assessments. My goal is to identify and define Clark's typology (below) and offer visual examples, but to engage in minimal analysis. No doubt my knowledge is limited, and hopefully other forum members will add their comments and discussions to expand our understanding of Sudan's iconic *kaskara* sword.

W. T. Clark was a British colonial administrator who surveyed the ethnological background of the Northern Beja ethnic groups in the Atbai region of NE Sudan. He was specifically assessing the Bisharin, related to the Hadendawa. He commented on the roles that swords play in Bisharin culture and then reported:

"...Among the types of swords seen in the Atbai are:

- ***Sulimani Daud*** – the blade has three parallel grooves, the center one of which is prolonged to the point while the flanking grooves are cut short.
- ***Sulimani abu Shabeish*** – fullers similar to the above but the part of the blade near the handle is decorated with engraved scrolls.
- ***El Kar*** – a single groove running down the blade from the handle to point.
- ***Dukkeri abu Dubban*** – the blade has a short central groove and carries three marks known as *dubbana*, *nugara* and '*asad*.'
- ***Suliman Makhummas*** – not part of Clark's list, but included for identification and comment; this form has five fullers that extend down about half the length of the blade.

Clark goes on to name other components of the sword:

- The tassel tied to the handle is *el jedla* (I assume this is the thick tassel of the Hadendawa and other Beja swords rather than the more stringy item often seen on high-end presentation pieces);
- the cross piece (quillon) is *el bershem*;
- the (bottom?) langet is *el toma* (A Kassala informant told me in 1984 this term meant “two boys walking together”); and
- the handle itself is *el gaim*.

Rampel, in a 2016 thread, relayed a portion of an interview by a local news service from the Upper Nile Region refugee area:

Reporter: “We have noticed that you sell swords as well as knives. Can you tell us a bit about these swords?”

Merchant: The most important swords we sell are **Dukari Sword** and **Suleimani Sword** in addition to **Kar Sword**. It must be noted that the swords are used only in ceremonies and cultural events.” (Emphasis added.)

So in 2016, seventy-eight years after Clark’s publication in 1938, the names that define sword styles remained the same. I suspect that the interviewed merchant had commercial ties with the still-active sword makers’ suq in Kassala.

There are also other *kaskara* with different fuller configurations. These are usually one-off bespoke designs intended to enhance the intended speciality of regalia, presentation or diplomatic gifts or for personal reasons of individuals. As far as I know, these designs do not form a defined category and are not named. Examples of these others will be presented below.

The fuller types also are sword type names and have persisted until the present. Thus, the sword is apparently defined by its fuller pattern.

No longer are we limited to generic names like *saif* and *kaskara* to discuss these iconic weapons. Now we can use fuller and cross-guard types (detailed in a following paper in this series) to define our investigations. For example a *Dukkeri abu Dubban* blade with a *Sennari* quillon now evokes an image and has meaning. Let’s investigate each fuller treatment style in more detail and see what we can learn. Arabic speakers please chime in to correct transliteration and translation errors.

In some places within this monograph sources are quoted merely by a nickname or with a first name. This reflects that this document began as a thread on the Ethnographic Arms and Armour Forum and those are the user names of contributing members; see original at <http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=24259>



Fig 1. *Sulimani Daud* - the blades have three parallel grooves, the center groove being prolonged to the point while the flanking grooves are cut shorter. The one in the center was made by Hussain Mohammad, and the other two have the mark of Hassan Shaykh Idris (Author's photograph).



Fig 2. Scratch engraved half-moon and star designs on the center blade of Fig. 1 (Author's photograph).

Sulimani Daud

- The blade has three parallel grooves, the center one of which is prolonged to the point while the flanking grooves are cut short.

An online translator says that *Daud* is Malay, *Dawud* in Arabic for David. The Hebrew David has a place in Islamic theology. Most relevant to us is “Among the things taught to David was the ability to make armour (21:80, 34:10–11), a suggestion that David’s military exploits were the acts of God.” [Wikipedia article *David in Islam*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_in_Islam]

There are apparently many three-fullered blades in collections of museums and EAA Forum members. Talismanic marks are often associated with this type as well as native makers' marks. I have three that were made in Kassala (see fig. 1 on previous page). Their fullers are deep and well formed. They have maker's marks reminiscent of the moon faces of export blades. I'd place their quality against any made in Europe for the export trade. The one in the center was made by Hussain Mohammad, and the other two have the mark of Hassan Shaykh Idris, although they vary in punch dimensions. I'd date the ones with deeper, broader fullers to the early-20th century due to their similarity to the c. 1914 five channel blade below (see fig. 16 on p. 14).

It's interesting to note that the scratch engraved half-moon and star designs on the center blade of fig. 1 (see fig. 2 on the previous page for its enhanced engraving) is almost a duplicate of the blade in Reed's Plate LV, B (see fig. 3, right.) While Reed's Darfur blade has only a single narrow fuller, it was likely made and engraved in Kassala by the same hands as the example in Fig. 1. This Kassala example was purported to have been "a Mahdi sword" supported by the talismanic moons and text engraving suggesting a high level of religious devotion.

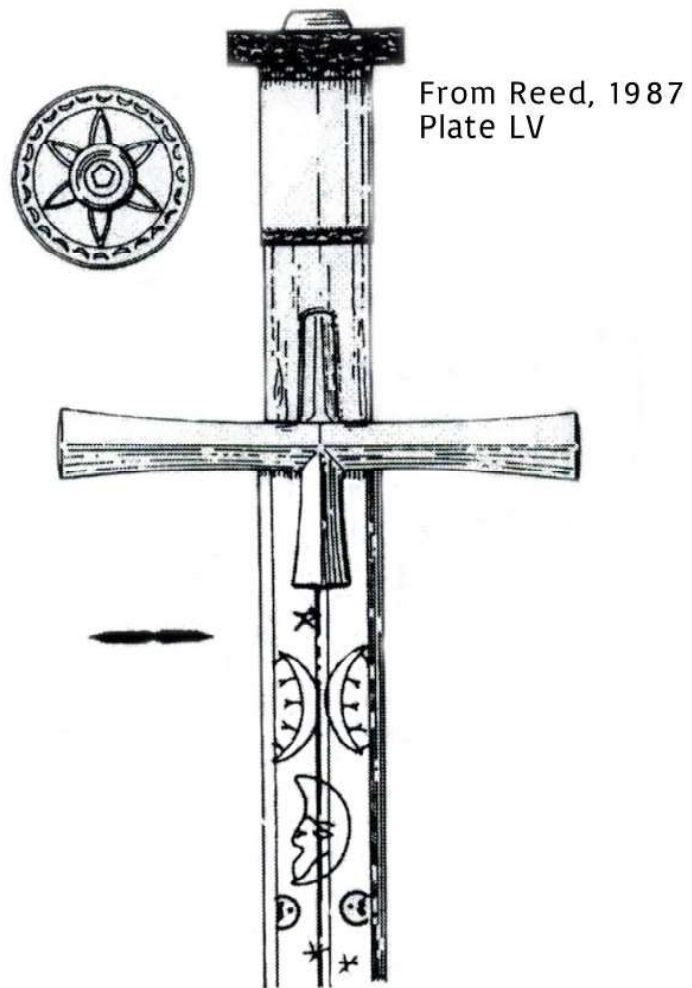


Fig 3. Plate LV, B from Reed (1987) who regarded this blade to be locally made with motifs crudely copied from an earlier blade (p. 169).

Sulimani abu Shabeish

- Similar to the *Daud* but the part of the blade near the handle is decorated with engraved scrollings.

Abu means "Father of" in Arabic, but not always in biological terms. No translation of *shabeish* was available, so I have no idea what this name means. The notion of "engraved scrollings" is vague.

One example of this type is depicted in Reed (1987) Plate LIII. (See Fig 4, following page). The scroll work is of a flowing design and well executed. Reed estimates that the sword was "probably German, Spanish or Italian manufacture, dating from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries" (p.169).

It is tempting to say the designs were produced prior to importation, and this may well be true. But in my opinion, the floral work, moon face and stars (based on imported examples) and the locally inspired snake motif were all likely performed by a local artisan on the unadorned imported blade. I base this attribution on this snake design's similarity to the one on Fig. 8, and that to my knowledge, no snakes have been shown on imported decorated blades. Also, both snake designs, as talismanic representations, may likely be dated to the Mahdist Era during the time of heightened conflict and religious feeling as suggested by Fig. 8. See Corkill's 1935 comment on the magical power of snakes, etc. on pages 7 and 8.

There apparently was a consolidation in the *Sulimani* type fullers. A member from the Royal Dragoon Guard's Regiment Museum, RDGAC on the EAA forum, presented a description of fullers:

"It exhibits three fullers, the outer two extending a little less than 11.4 in. (29 cm) from the cross guard, while the innermost runs some 17.25 in. (43 cm) down the blade. To either side of this central fuller sits what appears to be a depiction of a crescent moon, but with an unusually jagged "cut" to its crescent; it may be Arabic text, or perhaps a depiction of something else entirely (sunrise over mountains?)"

This depiction (see fig. 5, following page) would fit the Solingen munitions grade trade blades with three short-fullers imported during the late 19th Century and replicated by Sudanese smiths. It's reasonable to assume that as market conditions changed sword merchants ordered blades with shortened center fullers and those devoid of scroll engraving. Also, it is not clear that the extension of the central fuller beyond the forte actually has structural benefit. Thus, labor saving/pricing demands and losses in popularity may have caused the *Daud*, *abu Shabeis* and *Mukhammas* variations to collapse into a basic *Sulimani* form.

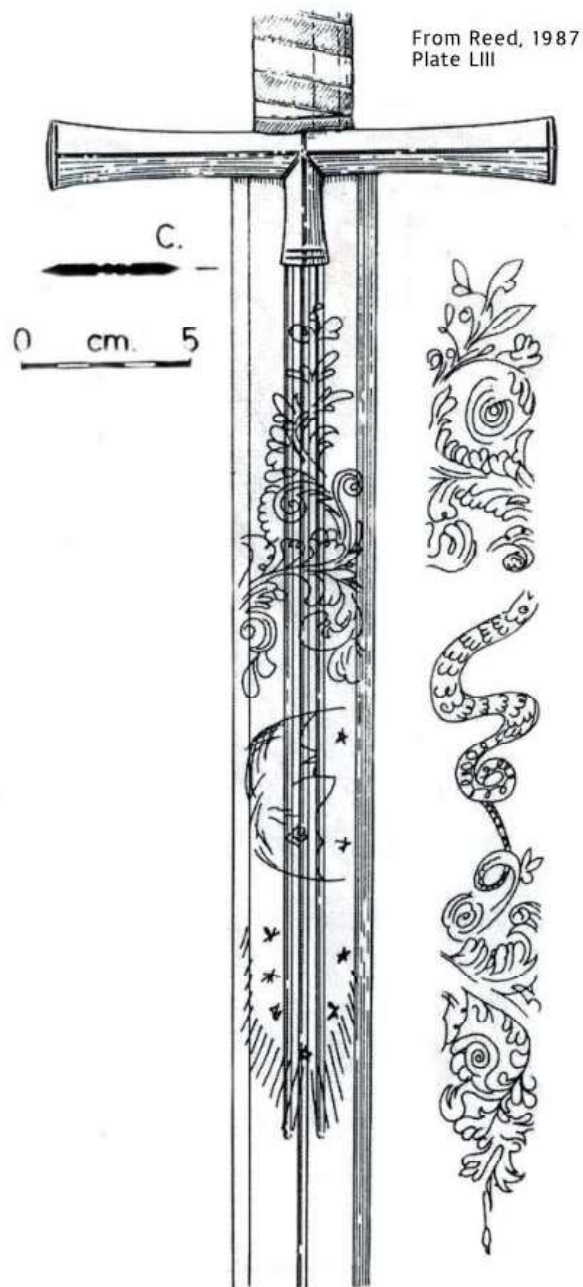


Fig 4. Plate LIII from Reed (1987) showing scroll work of flowing design well executed on both sides of a blade of European manufacture.



Fig. 5. Simplified variant devoid of scrolling and with a shorter central fuller.
(Image posted by Katana/David.)

El Kar

- A single groove running down the blade from the handle to point.

This style presents a larger channel than the *Suliman* type. An informant in 1984 Kassala called it a *Khar* (channel) *Hongoog* (straw) for straw channel, “a wider line than *Suliman*.” The informant said that Ethiopian swords were blank (no lines), but had a mark. A contemporaneous blade smith, Fateh Hallak, made swords with a scooped-out blade called *Khar* (canal or channel) for lighter weight and used the Ethiopian style mark. I have not seen one of his blades, but assume they are heavily fullered.

Lew Waldman had one of the few of this style that I have seen (see Figs. 6 & 7 on following page.) Note the *Hadendawa* tassel at the top of the hilt. These blades seldom if ever have European makers’ marks. I know of none. Others contain inscriptions.

In 2011 DaveS presented a superior El Kar fullered sword with possible links to Ali Dinar. It had no maker’s mark, but was highly engraved with Arabic text in the central channel. See on this link: <http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=13142>

The fuller on a Beja *kaskara* from CharlesS <http://vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7668> has a snake engraving (see fig. 8 on the 2nd following page). Follow the link for detailed description and discussion of the entire sword, but a focus on the snake is revealing for its talismanic intent.

The quote below (Corkill, 1935) is in regard to the attributes of amulets (*qua*) of sympathetic magic in which the wearer acquires certain qualities of the object in question, in this case the snake. Inscriptions and engravings on swords seek the same application of qualities. The snake on CharlesS’ *kaskara* likely seeks for the owner the acquisition of similar qualities as enumerated below and likely is not worshipful of some type of snake cult. Images of other strong animals on other swords are likely intended to provide similar outcomes.



Fig 6. An *El Kar* blade with a single wide fuller from the collection of Lew Waldman.
 (photo courtesy of the Estate of Lew Waldman)
 Additional images and description of this sword may be found at
<http://vikingsword.com/lew/w1005/w1005.html>



Fig 7. Continuation of the broad fuller to the tip on the *El Kar* blade in Fig. 6.
 (photo courtesy of the Estate of Lew Waldman)

“The attributes of the snake, the lion and the leopard are obviously intended to be transferred to, or shared with, the wearer by the process of sympathy. The mechanism is no doubt considered to be reinforced by the fact that the animals concerned are left alive. From the snake *qua* snake the wearer will derive the universal attributes of the serpent, sharp-sightedness, strength, length of life, cunning and deadliness. From the snake in the form of *abu darraga* i.e., the Egyptian Cobra, *Naja haje* (Linn.), the snake most feared by the Sudanese, these qualities will be received in increased degree. The aggressiveness of the snakes of this genus, their lethality, their size and quickness, the impressiveness of the swaying raised body with the expanded hood and the ability to spit their blinding venom, all contribute to give the cobras that degree of pre-eminence amongst snakes which gained for them the Pharaohs’ brow,



Fig 8. An engraved snake likely of talismanic intent on a *kaskara* with a broad *El Kar* fuller presented by CharlesS.

and an apotheosis which Oldham has shown to have been practically universal in the ancient world. From the lion, of course, the amulet wearer would derive the strength and courage conventionally accorded to that beast, and from the leopard, no doubt, cunning, quickness, silence of movement and ability to hunt undetected.”

Dukkeri abu Dubban

- The blade has a short central groove and carries three marks known as *dubbana*, *nugara* and *asad*.

The interpretation of this style addresses several issues we have long debated. Its name and descriptions correspond to maker's marks from Solingen's Peter Kull's Standing Cat, Orb & Cross (1830-1870, Bezdek) and Samuel Kull's Fly (1847-1860, Bezdek) marked swords (Fig. 9, below). The *Dukkeri abu Dubban* incorporates these three symbols from R. Cronau, 1885 and may suggest a mid-19th Century origin of the type. Cronau's work, in German, can be accessed from this link:

<http://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16028coll4/id/29401>

- *Dukkeri*. This may be Brigg's *dukeri* for crescent moon with man's face in profile. A Kassala informant said it meant “for men.” Swordsmiths there describe a sword called a *duk'ri* (my transliteration) and is decorated with an orb & cross and a rampant cat/lion.

- *Dubbana or Duban*. Fly. Likely signifies the biting fly that appears with the rains and is very harmful to camels. Its arrival prompts camel herding pastoralists to take their animals north

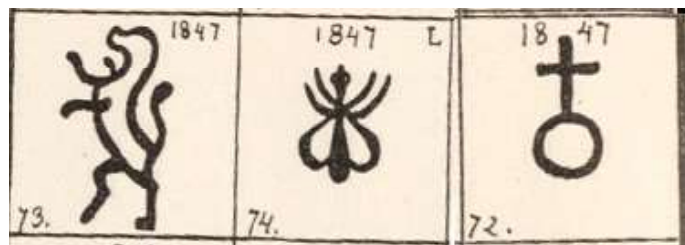


Fig 9. Marks from Solingen blade makers of the 19th century depicting a standing cat, a fly and an orb and cross (from R. Cronau, 1885, table I).

out of its range. *Dubban* also means “thousands” in Hausa, maybe signifying the number of flies that swarm about. It also may indicate Hausa smiths’ possible role in applying this fuller type to Sudanese blades. The informant said it encourages “jumping like a fly when fighting.” See the fly symbol on Jeff D’s sword, (fig. 10, below left). His sword also has a lion and orb & cross on it.

- *Nugara* means “drumming”. Informants used *daluka* for drum and (perhaps hearing the drum beat) say that it “builds courage”. The drum symbol they presented was the famous Orb & Cross. Among most northern Sudanese ethnicities the large copper kettle drum is central to their culture. According to Clark, p.13, it may only be beaten in mourning of a death in the chief’s family, to summon the tribe to war or at a festive occasion for the tribe. The tribal drum also is used in Darfur, the Medieval Funj Kingdom, and may be universal in Northern Sudanese culture.

The Funj Kingdom (1504-1821) had its capital at Senner on the Blue Nile River. Its lands were mainly on the east side of the White Nile north into the Gezira and included the Butana Plain. Arkell (1932) reports that the Funj had a brand put on their beasts and slaves called *Noggara wa Asaiya*. This means “drum and stick” and the symbol is **O+**, rotated 90 degrees clockwise. With the cross at the top this symbol looks the same as Peter Kull’s Cross & Orb. It is conceivable that the Kull sword mark culturally replaced the Funj symbolism that had been abolished by the Egyptian conquest of the Funj, and it became highly valued on the *kaskara* blades. One culture often borrows from another. If a cultural feature persists for generations it has continued relevance. If not, it no longer has meaning. Steven Wood’s sword has a properly oriented Funj “Drum & Stick” mark. (See Fig. 11, bottom of previous page on the right.)

- *Asad* means “lion”. The informant said it is for “brave men”. A full-bodied lion is often lightly engraved, maybe etched, on native blades, but the Rampant Lion/Cat in #73 (fig. 9 on bottom



Fig 10 (left). *Dubbana* or *Duban* fly mark seen in the solitary wide fullers of the *Dukkeri abu Dubban* style made by Samuel Kulls in Solingen and later imitators (photo courtesy of Jeff D).



Fig 11 (right). *Nugara* locally interpreted as a drum symbol in Africa but as a cross and orb by the German trade blade makers (photo courtesy of Steven Wood).

of page 8) is sometimes seen. The informant said that the lion is placed on the front of the blade and the drum and fly placed on the back.

In a 2010 post, Steven Wood commented on the orb, the lion and the fly and, based on references to Burckhardt and Cabot-Briggs, concluded that *dukare affring* means “Frankish mark.” My field notes written under a sketch of the same three symbols records the local understanding of the terms: *dukare* = “for men”, *al fringe* = sharp, and then the note that the swords were “made in Europe – brought to Ethiopia by Italian soldiers.” Thus, the interpretation may be drawn that when Italian troops occupied Kassala (1894–97) during the Mahdiya, they presented some German made blades with the Kull marks and moon faces saying in Italian “these are German marks.” The local bladesmiths understood the blades are “for men” and are “sharp”. This scenario would indicate that this type of Solingen blade was introduced to the Kassala sword-making community about 1895. They then became part of the culture of sword making there and expanded broadly. My notes may be a thin reed on which to hang this narrative, but it does have the elements of a factual encounter. The Italian military also did occupy Kassala in 1940 for six months, but that situation doesn't really support the delivery of German sword blades to local blacksmiths, and 1940 post-dates Clark's 1938 report.

Plate LII of Reed (see Silver Dress monograph, fig. 7) has what is likely an original European blade prototype of this type. It is marked with an early version of the Orb & Cross and a Passau works running wolf. (Reed reports that the sword's owner thought the symbol was a tree.) Note that the end of the fuller appears circular and not sloped to the blade surface as are the examples shown by Katana and Chris. Reed dates it “between the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.” The sword's owner says it's before the time of Kassala exports. My research in Kassala confirms that Sudan-wide export of Kassala made swords dates from 1960. There are many examples of this type in collections, including the Royal Armouries collection (Cat. Nos. XXIVS 165 and 166) and others.

Several posts on the EAA Forum have exhibited swords with the three symbols apparently originally struck by Solingen makers as well as those etched on locally made swords. Katana/David's W. Clauberg marked (Standing Knight) *Dukkeri* is datable. Bezdek's German makers' marks book shows that the Standing Knight was used after 1847. David's sword is shown in Figure 12 on the following page along with the Standing Knight example in Figure 13.

Mefidk/Chris' blade with the crocodile skin grip has a W. Clauberg Standing Knight (hidden) and the “enigmatic” mark and is shown in Figure 14 on the following page.

Steven Wood has a single fuller sword with a Lion mark on a single groove blade. It looks more European than native-made and does not resemble the Kull mark to me, see fig. 15 on page 12.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a *kaskara* (Cat. No. 1977.162.4) with a *Dukkeri* fuller. It is classified as late 19th century Sudanese with a late 15th–16th century Italian or South German blade and shows a Passau wolf and a maker's mark of a seven-pointed star. If the attribution is accurate, this blade would date the fuller from a century earlier than Reed's LII.

Unfortunately, the MMA web site does not have a photo of this sword. However, it can be viewed via an illustration in an article available through JSTOR: Author(s): Helmut Nickel and Stuart W.



Fig 12 (above). The short, wide fuller of a *Dukkeri* blade (photo courtesy of David).



Fig 13 (right). W. Clauberg standing knight mark on a *Dukkeri* blade indicates manufacture after 1847 (photo courtesy of David).

Fig 14 (below). An enigmatic mark on a W. Clauberg blade also with the standing knight mark obscured by the langet. (photo courtesy of Mefidk/Chris).





Fig 15. A lion mark on a single fuller blade most likely of European origin (photo courtesy of Steven Wood).

Pyhrr, Source: Notable Acquisitions (Metropolitan Museum of Art), No. 1975/1979 (1975 - 1979), pp. 27–29.

However, I am skeptical about the dates. Both Mefidk/Chris and Katana/David's *Dukkeri* blades have Clauberg Standing Knight marks on each that date from circa 1850. It is hard to believe that this single deep fuller design would persist for 250 years, although it is structurally efficient and easy to forge. Also, the apparent long life of the *Sulimani abu Shabeish* design mentioned above augurs well for the long term persistence of European fuller designs in Sudanese sword culture. While some heirloom blades may be long lived, apparently a crudely chiseled wolf on a blade is good for 200 more years of attribution.

I offer an alternative explanation without documentation, but it makes an interesting, even believable, story. The Passau marked blades may, in fact, be 200–300 years old as attributed. But rather than have them circulating around North Africa for 200 years, they spent most of that time as obsolete weapons in European armories. (Remember that European armies of this period were transitioning to narrower and curved swords for cavalry and firearms for infantry.) Spears and small javelins were the main weapons of agriculturally-based North African infantry and only the elite used swords as symbols of authority, and light cavalry composed mostly of Arabic pastoralists who used swords as well as javalins. Those kingdoms that had relatively few firearms armed their slave troops with them. Even Central Sahalian heavy cavalry used mainly spears. Once the West-Central African jihads began in the late 17th & early 18th centuries, enterprising European arms merchants scoured the European armories and bought up large amounts of obsolete broadswords, some highly engraved, removed the hilts reducing most of them to raw blades, and introduced them into the North African long distance trade networks. These blades were then fitted with native hilts in centers like Kano, as was done in the 19th Century, and distributed throughout the region. Imports via the Red Sea ports

may have supplied the Northern Bega's conversion from spears to swords in the mid-1700s. Thus, the Sudanese heirloom blades may have begun their lives in Africa mainly in the early-mid 1800s rather than 200 years before. Continuing conflicts prompted the Solingen blade houses to enter the export trade in time for Clauberg's and Kulls' marks to appear in the 1850s on their now familiar *kaskara* swords. Period travelers' narratives did not mention whether the European sword blades they saw in area markets were used, unused old stock or brand new.

In the article linked below Ohio State University presents a short history of firearms exports to Africa, beginning circa 1698. No doubt there are certain parallels between firearms and surplus sword traffic into the Sahalian region. See: <http://origins.osu.edu/article/merchants-death-international-traffic-arms>

Suliman Mukhammas

- This type has five forged fullers of graduated lengths that extend about a third of the way down the blade and is not included in Clark's topology.) *Khamisa* is the number "five" in Arabic.

This is a rare blade form with only five examples having been revealed so far. Two have a Sun symbol at the end of the fullers. The sun does not appear to be a maker's mark, but it likely has some unknown symbolic meaning. The informant called these *Suliman Mukhammas abu Shammish*. (*Shams* is Sun in Arabic, *Shammish* may be some grammatical variation or I misunderstood the word.) None of the other examples have apparent maker's marks either. Images of three are linked below and the fifth has no image.

- My sword has the five grooved *Makhummas* with a sun at the end. Made circa 1914 in Kassaka. (Figure 16, next page).
- Lew's post on "Makhumas with Sun," virtually identical to mine.
<http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showp...07&postcount=21>
- RDGAC Comments on *Kaskara* #3 in Post #10 on the below thread that is a war trophy collected c. 1882 and shown in figs. 17 & 18 on the following page.
<http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=11950>
- Paolo's sword. See Post #1.
<http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=15749>
- Clement's sword that is decorated with silver inlays. See Post # 1.
<http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=23098>

There was a rich discussion of Five-Fullered blades back in 2012 in which Lew's and Paolo's swords were reviewed. I won't replough that land too much. However, since then I have looked up Mukhammas on the web and found on Wikipedia that:

Mukhammas (Arabic 'fivefold') refers to a type of Persian or Urdu *cinquain* or *pentastich* with Sufi connections based on a pentameter and have five lines in each paragraph. More details here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mukhammas>



Fig 16. *Mukhammas* reportedly made circa 1914 by a Kassaka smith (author's photograph).



Fig 17 (upper) & 18 (lower close-up). *Mukhammas* captured as a war trophy circa 1882 and presently in the collection of the York Army Museum.
(These images were provided for use by permission of the York Army Museum who requested notice of the images being copyright by the Museum.
Special thanks to Aline Staes, Collections Manager, York Army Museum.)

Native and Arabic poetry is a feature of Sudanese culture. But who would have thought that a special Kassala-made sword blade (5 channels are much more difficult to make than 3 fullers) would have a link to a Persian and Urdu (Muslim part of India) poetry form? There may be a prosaic explanation. *Mukhammas* may be just a grammatic feature of Arabic for Five = *Khamasa*, but I prefer the poetry connection.

My *Mukhumas* was reportedly made circa 1914 by a Kassaka smith who supposedly said he saw another being made and decided to give it a try. The RDGAC example was recovered circa 1882, almost a generation before mine was made. This suggests that mine was at least a second generation example of the type. When and how did it originate, and what symbolic or other purpose prompted its fabrication? These blades were not made for the general market. Who were their clients?

Other Fuller Types

Kaskara enthusiasts will encounter swords with fuller types different from those presented herein. These are typically two and three fuller designs on high quality, usually foreign made, presentation and regalia blades. They are often adorned with gold filled engravings and text. Mostly, these swords are “symbols of authority” of political figures, sultans and tribal leaders, but many may be “fighting weapons” of serious users. Their visual qualities testify that some were meant to be seen and not used. However, there are tribal traditions of competing tribal champions engaging in single combat using named swords. For example, in about 1770 in the Butana, Abu Ali of the Shukriyya squared off on horseback against the Batahin’s chief, Sigud with his famous sword al-Nena. Abu Ali cut off Sigud’s head in a single stroke and captured his sword (al-Hardallo, 1975). Of course we don’t know if these swords were *kaskara* as we know them. That is irrelevant. The sword in different forms has persisted within the Arab and Arabized Sudanese cultural context from the time of the Prophet and even before until today.

The following are examples of the outstanding craftsmanship and artistic diversity.

- The sword shown as Fig. 3 in the Quillons section of these essays from Christie’s auction site shows an Ali Dinar sword with no foreign markings. It is discussed in detail in Anderson (2016) (see link below) and shown in her Plates 10 and following. The semi-*Dukkeri abu Dubban* type central fuller is flanked by smaller and shorter, but deep fullers. Considering the quality of the quillons, the silver dress, and that presentation swords were made in Ali Dinar’s workshops, it is not out of the question that the entire sword was produced for him in Darfur. (Kapeijns & Spaulding, 1990) http://www.vikingsword.com/ethsword/hunley/S%26N20_Anderson_et_al.pdf

- A *kaskara* from Lew Waldman’s Ethnographic Arms & Armour Collection obviously has an imported blade (see fig. 19 on the following page). Lew attributed this blade as 17th century German with mid-19th century mountings. The blade features a short ricasso (overlain by the langets) with the central third concave, before three fullers, the central slightly wider and shorter, abruptly arise in the forte and continue for about two-fifths of the current length of the blade. Despite the appearance in the images, the continuation of the blade beyond the fullers is ever so slightly convex over the central faces and this extends to the tip in such a manner to suggest that, at a present length of just 23 inches, the blade likely has been shortened at some time. This ‘recycled’ blade most closely resembles, but does not conform to the *Sulimani Daud* type.



Fig 19. European 'Andre Ferara' marked variant blade, ex Lew Waldman collection.
Additional description at <http://vikingsword.com/lew/w0102/w0102.html>
(Photo courtesy of Lee Jones)

- This European made blade features the Ethiopian arms on the ricasso (not shown) and features a pair of fullers exhibiting a fine quality floral design (see fig 20 below.)

- Snake two-fullered blade is displayed in fig. 18 in the Silver Dress section; Double Pommels topic. The sword was apparently a diplomatic gift from a Qajar Shah, perhaps given to an Ethiopian dignitary and recovered at Omdurman, 1898. The very strong two-headed snake motif must have meant to convey a very strong message. The sword is described in detail as “Sword 68” in Alexander, et al, 2016. Also see link to it at the MET.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/27262?exhibitionId=%7Bf9335363-16b7-41db-a7d9-6775cdc3e327%7D&o>



Fig 20. European made straight blade with two fullers with floral etching and also featuring the Ethiopian Lion of Judah on the ricasso. This blade is not mounted as a *kaskara*, but in a style typical of work from Sanaa, Yemen, however these blades may be seen recycled into *kaskaras*. (Photo courtesy of Lee Jones)



Fig 21. Exceptional *kaskara* with a maker's name 'Abdallah bin Ibrahim' in gold kuftkari in London's Victoria and Albert Museum (M.47-1953). The present mountings date to the 19th century while the blade harkens back to the 17th century.
(photo copyright © 2017 Victoria and Albert Museum, London. All Rights Reserved)

- Victorian & Albert Museum (Cat.No. M.47-1953) blade attributed by North (1985) p. 30 to the early 17th Century with hilt dated to the 19th Century. Grip cover is of the Star & Comet motif (see Fig. 21, above) <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O71642/sword/>

- These links provided by Teodor show discussions of swords with interesting non-standard fullers. They were likely introduced into Sudan as post-battle collections from Ethiopian foes and converted with kaskara mounts.

- Triple fullers with strange engraving plus a Lion of Judah. This fighting blade is likely of Ethiopian origin.

- <http://vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=21372>

- Another fighting blade with an engraved and etched double fuller. Perhaps a French blade produced for the Ethiopian market.

- <http://vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=23900>

Two of these blades have rare and technically sophisticated decoration. The Snake and the Victoria & Albert examples are graced by the gold inlayed Indo-Persian Kofkari technique. They obviously had their origins as major presentation pieces, but when collected in the 1890's in Sudan they had middling quality kaskara quillons and one only has a stacked fiber pommel. Ann Feuerbach presents a detailed description of the kofkari technique in a related paper, p. 33-42.



Fig 22. The three major types of *kaskara* blade fuller patterns; from top to bottom they are *Dukkeri*, *El Kar* and *Sulimani*. (Photo courtesy of Chris Topping)

Summary

The kaskara sword is defined by its straight broadsword blade and its distinctive cross-guards and hilt. The blades have a mixture of mainly three fuller styles drawn from imported mostly 19th century European trade blades and those forged during the same period by indigenous swordsmiths. The Sudanese identified the three styles as *Sulimani*, *El Kar* and *Dukkeri*. (Chris's first image on Post # 20 visually summarizes the major contemporary types, top to bottom are: *Dukkeri*, *El Kar* and *Sulimani*. See fig. 22 above.)

We do not know how each was identified by the European blade makers, but they likely had a long history. The *Sulimani* variations are the most common on imported trade blades. The simple *Dukkeri* style is likely the oldest with European examples dating to at least the 13th Century. This type is often decorated with German makers' marks and was greatly prized. The *El Kar* was common in Ethiopia and none that I know of have been identified with European makers marks. The only fuller attributed to exclusive Sudanese origin is the five-groove *Sulimani Mukhummas* and it has only be attributed as far back as a well used example collected in 1882.

There are great relevant discussions on the origin of trade and local blades in this thread that feature Jim McDougall, Iain Norman and Chris Topping. Of note is a discussion of the so called "enigmatic mark." I've found that the only type blade to have such marks is the imported German *Dukkeri*-type. Surely, this is significant. Perhaps others can help determine how.

<http://www.vikingsword.com/vb/showthread.php?t=14806>

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This revised version, formatted for printing, was prepared with the assistance of Lee Jones and may be accessed at http://vikingsword.com/ethsword/hunley/kaskara_fullers.pdf

The companion monographs may be accessed at the following locations:

http://vikingsword.com/ethsword/hunley/kaskara_guards.pdf

http://vikingsword.com/ethsword/hunley/kaskara_silver_dress.pdf