

unlettered villager and a lady now in her seventies who had experienced this in her own "*rahat's*" ritual. The learned attributed the "*rahat*" denuding to an origin of pre-Islamic Jahilia paganism. The unlettered villager thought that the denuding was mean a manifestation of the healthiness of the bride's body bearing no signs syphilis which is said to have been prevailing in many areas before the coming of modern medicine. The lady simply said that such had been people's custom and that it has completely changed since the days of her marriage. She added by way of comment that the denuding was customary.

### **The Jartig**

The is similar to the ritual "*jartig*" of circumcision. There are Sudanese saying (it also Arabic in origin): The son of the Arabs invested as a king on the days of his circumcision and on the days of his wedding. However, the appearance of the bridegroom after the completion of "*jartig*" ritual with his "*Dafeerah*" sandal and *mahalab* paste on his with a band of red "*harirah*" and a gold necklace of beads and long sword and his unseamed wrapper-very much resembles the picture of a Meroetic king on the Sun temple at *Masawarat Nag'a*.

The "*jartig*" occurs on the afternoon of the day following "*dukhlah*" and "*Gat'a-l-Rahat*". The bridegroom goes back to mother's house after the ritual of "*jartig*" is performed. His sisters and women of his family all come with him together with many others they come to participate



in the rejoicing. Whilst the bridegroom is being ornamented the women sing the "*baneenafi*" and onomatopoeic express denoting the rhythmic character of a tune, like, for example, Shakespeare's: "With a hey and ho and hey nony no". the traditional "*beneenafis*" would praise the "*Aris*" and his genealogy. Seated on an "*Angaraiḅ*" decorated with arched palm fronds, he is anointed with "*Dilkafi*" and "*Kḥumrafi*". On the completion of this he gets up with a sword hanging in its leather scabbard from his shoulder, a hippopotamus-hide whip in his right hand whilst his wrist is decorated with red silk bracelets and tassels. His "*wazir*" is given a more abbreviated "*jartiq*" with sandal and *mahalaḅ* and a sword and a whip. Then the drumming of the "*dallukafi*" and "*shatam*" and dancing in the open air follow. Three or four or more women dancers from the bridegroom's family enter the arena, to be followed by an equal number from the bride's family. As each girl dances, she uncovers her hair revealing the "*rashshafi*". Young men enter the arena with their sticks and swords, and they jump about hopping high in the air in harmony with the sound of the "*dallukafi*", or leap in a movement called "*sagriyyafi*" (like the hawk). The dance of the young woman is like the movement of a wood-pigeon. Each young woman as she dances approaches the dancing young man and shakes her "*rashafi*" plaits near his shoulder almost touching him therewith. This is called "*shabbal*". The price any young man has to pay on this occasion is to accept a whip lashing on his bare back from the bridegroom who enjoys this privilege as a part of the



ritual kingship of a bridegroom.

No wedding dance in the past was without whipping. No "shabbal" was awarded without its painful price. Young men, and sometimes older married men, stood for the whip as an expression of support for the bridegroom who had taken some beating in the same manner on a similar occasion of a wedding dance in their family sometime before. This was treated as a debt to be repaid by one of the members of the indebted family.

The dance was also an occasion offering the maidens and the young men the opportunity of looking and being looked at "Come and illuminate your vision with the sight of youth". Young maidens danced to display their beauty, their dancing skill and their "shabbal". Young men stripped their waist in defiance whilst the whip cracked on their bleeding bare backs:

(o) *"My uncle is from the centre of the tribe not the border,*

*He is the great Nile flood, not a mere pond,*

*The whip wept on his body without stopping.*

*His bare back, like the rugged rock bank did not tremble".*

A famous wedding singer renounced for her passionate "dalluka" songs is once said to have stirred the enthusiasm of the young competing for the "shabbal" by singing:

(p) *If the whip is not hot*

*Try the dagger !*

One of the fatherly men watching did not hesitate to pierce "shatam" and the "dallukafi" with his knife and told her