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Caravan Trade between the Maghreb Countries and Western Sudan and its Cultural Influences between the 16th and 19th Centuries

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Abstract:

Since ancient times, trade relations between the peoples of the world have played a role in cultural communication, and this was evident in the caravan trade between the Maghreb and Western Sudan. The commercial centers and the movements of merchants, despite the difficulties of the journey, had civilization effects in the countries of Western Sudan in the period 16-19, and their manifestations emerged in the spread of Islam and the emergence of cultural cities and urban expansion.

Keywords: Caravan trade - Western Sudan - Commercial centers

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Introduction

The history of the African continent is full of important roles that it has played over several centuries, as it preceded the continents of the world in terms of its formation of diverse relations, perhaps the most prominent of which is economic relations, and it was able, through its natural capabilities, to be a commercial movement that has expanded over the years in light of the emergence and fall of successive entities and empires, thus cutting through the empty deserts separating Algeria and Central Africa or the countries of Western Sudan.

From this, we raise the following problem: What were the nature and manifestations of the commercial movement between Algeria and Western Sudan during the 16th century AD until the 19th century AD? What are its various civilization contributions? Introduction: The roots of communication between the two banks of the Sahara Desert.

History has confirmed that relations between the Maghreb and Western Sudan in general preceded the spread of Islam by several centuries, and writings were found that documented the existence of communication relations since the Old Testament, as Herodotus mentioned about a journey of a delegation of five people who set out from Sirte heading south to discover Central Africa, and this was indicated by the presence of drawings on rocks of horse-drawn carriages in the Fezzan region, as the discoveries indicate that transportation in the desert was done by these carriages, then camels appeared, which made a difference, especially with their low prices and endurance compared to horses.

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The trade movement continued with the arrival of the Phoenicians to the coasts of the Maghreb and their establishment of cities that had commercial dealings with Sudan, which were also documented by drawings, and it became more consolidated about five centuries BC and flourished with the construction of Carthage.

The Roman era came, which imposed its mark on the desert, as it worked to create roads across it, especially by the Germanic tribes who were interested in organizing trade in the 5th century BC, and one researcher believes that this stage was divided between the stage of paving roads, and the stage of expansion and the use of camels.

The existence of kingdoms and civilizations in Africa cannot be denied. Even before and after the advent of Islam to the dark continent, the tribes were able to create successive empires for themselves and were linked by commercial and military relations with their neighbors and even beyond the desert to the north. Among the most important kingdoms we find the Kingdom of Ghana (300-1076 AD), the Soninke (1200-1240 AD), Mali (1225-1488 AD) and Songhai (650-1780 AD) and others. The prominent role played by the Almoravids who unified the tribes and expanded to the west of Sudan is also not hidden. With their control over the roads and interest in them, trade increased between the two banks of the desert and flourished during their reign. "Their days were days of ease, luxury, continuous prosperity, health and security".

First: Commercial centers and the most important routes

1-Algerian centers:

Algeria knew prosperous and important commercial centers during the 16th century AD, which worked to extend economic and commercial communication with Western Sudan, and those centers led this role, the most important of which are:

***Touat:**

Due to its location in the southwest of Algeria today, it is in contact with the countries of Western Sudan and has more dealings with it in the commercial field, and it became famous in the writings of travelers, including Ibn Battuta during his journey that led him to it in 754 AH, as Ibn Khaldun mentioned in his description of it as a homeland with palaces.

Touat flourished since the 14th century AD in the commercial field, especially after the deterioration that Sijilmasa experienced, and the presence of Jews in the region and their effective contributions to trade exchanges with the Kingdom of Songhai, and Touat was considered a meeting place for caravans from every direction, and merchants stocked it with provisions and water and changed camels and even guides, as various goods were often displayed and marketed there.

***And two men:**

Yaqut al-Hamawi mentioned it by this name and described it as having many palm trees and inhabited by Berbers. It was mentioned by several names, including Wargla and Raklan, as mentioned by al-Ayashi, who happened to see the Burglan caravan on his pilgrimage trip,

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carrying many different goods, and they were sold to people, including the pilgrims accompanying him.

The prosperity of Burglan trade made the Ottomans seek to extend their influence in this region because of what he saw of the movement of caravans and the benefits from them.

2-Sudanese centers:

***Timbuktu:**

It is considered the most prominent and important center in western Sudan, while visions differed about its origin, and it is likely that it was founded by the Tuareg at the end of the fifth century AH, as confirmed by al-Saadi. While al-Wazzan mentions that it was established by al-Mansa Sulayman during the seventh century AH, and it is located on the southern edge of the Great Desert on the left bank of the Niger River.

Its distinguished location enabled it to take an important economic position as a final station for caravans coming from the Maghreb and even from the Levant, and its golden economic prosperity reached during the 16th century AD in terms of the large number of caravans and their cargo.

***Walata:**

Al-Saadi mentioned it as Walat when Al-Mansa Musa left to perform the Hajj pilgrimage, and Al-Wazzan says about it that it is a small, inactive kingdom with no dwellings except three large villages and scattered huts.

However, it occupied a special commercial position after the fall of the Kingdom of Ghana and the rise of the Kingdom of Mali, which annexed it to its borders, and it is a transit area on the western side of the desert, and its people were interested in providing provisions and water for merchants.

***Jenny:**

It is mentioned that it was founded between 1043-1044 AD and is located in the southwest of Timbuktu and is also called Djia. It was built by the kings of Ghana during the 13th century AD, while Al-Saadi mentions that it was founded in the 2nd century AH / 8th century AD.

It was known for its importance as it was considered a meeting place for caravans coming from all over the place from Ouargla and the far west, and Al-Saadi also describes it as having a great market where salt and gold merchants met, it was said that its first establishment was in the form of a small village on the Niger River Delta, Islam entered it in the 16th century AD and it knew its golden age during the reign of the Kingdom of Mali.

***Adaghasht:**

Or Adaghasht, it is originally the capital of the Lamtuna tribe, one of the branches of the Sanhaja in the 4th century AH, Ghana was able to take it from the Almoravids, but they regained it during the reign of Abdullah bin Yassin 446 AH, and Al-Bakri describes it as a prosperous town

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full of Berbers, Sudanese and Berbers, and they are mostly rich, and it has buildings, markets and many palm trees, and Ibn Hawqal mentions it as a nice city similar to the lands of Mecca in its valleys, located adjacent to the Sous.

The Kingdom of Ghana included it in its expansions and it has active markets and a meeting place for caravans coming from the cities of the northern desert.

***Gao:**

Or Gao, the political capital of the Songhai Kingdom and its economic engine, is located near the Niger River from the south and is characterized by the abundance of river navigation that increased its commercial importance, although it is the oldest city established around 700 AD.

It was economically active during the reign of the Mali and Songhai Kingdoms, but its actual activity did not begin until the reign of Songhai and it flourished and began to impose tribute on neighboring regions, and Islam spread there when its king embraced it in 1019 AD, but many tribes remained pagan for a long time.

***Ghana:**

Al-Bakri calls it the city of Ghana Al-Akkar, and it is located in the region of Kombi Saleh, about 50 days' journey from Sijilmasa, and consists of two areas in a depression on the Niger River. Al-Bakri says that it is a large city inhabited by Muslims and has the city of the king, which separates it from the first by six miles.

3-Roads and commercial paths:

The vastness of the Sahara desert allowed commercial movement between its north and south to multiply its roads and paths, thus forming a network of land roads that were able to connect commercial centers and cities throughout different eras. We review the most important paths below:

***Algiers-Timbuktu Road:**

It starts from Algiers, passing through Blida, Laghouat, El-Kalaa, Ain Salah, Touat and from there to Timbuktu.

***Ouargla, Taghaza, Awdaghst, Ghana Road:**

This road is known as the gold road starting from Ouargla or Ouargla, El Menia, Taghaza, Oualata, and from there to Awdaghst, then Ghana. This road was active until the 19th century.

Oran and Arzew Road to Timbuktu: It passes through Kheither, Mechria, Ain Sefra and Figuig and follows the course of the Zouzfana Valley to Igli where it meets the Fez to Timbuktu road.

There are also roads that start from Fez and Meknes via Touat, and from Marrakesh to Tindouf to Western Sudan.

Second: Preparing the caravans and the nature of the exchanges:

1-Preparing the caravan and its course:

The merchants set out to prepare the caravan from all sides and this takes several days in order to provide all the needs, because this journey involves a kind of risk and adventure and lasts more than 70 days round trip, depending on the starting point and the place of arrival.

Preparations begin with a meeting in which a number of matters are set:

- Choosing a person responsible for the trip.
- Choosing an accompanying imam (whose duties include leading the people in prayer, and a physician who treats various diseases with medicinal herbs).
- The clerk who records the sales and purchase contracts, records the accounts, and records deaths if they occur among the members of the caravan.
- Al-Barah is responsible for announcing loudly among the passengers when any event occurs during the trip.

During this session, the location of the caravan is also determined, and its path, which requires the presence of water points, and the nomadic Bedouins to help them in knowing the location of water.

Then, the implementation is carried out by purchasing or renting a sufficient number of strong camels, and they are stamped with the stamp of their owner, and an expert or guide who has strong insight into knowing the desert paths during the day by means of landmarks and archaeological points is hired.

He has knowledge of how to find guidance by stars, knowledge of soil characteristics, and knowledge of the locations of wells and pastures for camels. He is assisted by a person called a shawaf who must have sharp eyesight to be able to detect any distant movement, provide guards, and then collect food supplies that cover the caravan's need for water throughout the journey.

After taking all these measures, the date of the caravan's departure is determined, which is usually in the fall, so that the caravan can go and return before the summer, which threatens the caravan with thirst.

2-The risks and challenges it faces:

The commercial caravans that take the paths are often exposed, and from here we can divide the obstacles and problems it faces according to their nature, either natural or security:

***Natural:**

Getting lost in the desert:

Which may be the cause of the death of the entire caravan or some of its members, as these caravans avoided the large sand dunes and avoided the large labyrinths such as the surfaces of the Tadmait Plateau in tracking the locations of valleys and water collection.

Water scarcity:

The scarcity of water and the long distance between its wells were among the most serious problems that the trade caravans faced, so the fate of the caravans and their success depended on this vital substance with the availability of water in the wells, which could be obliterated by the winds.

Which leads to the entire caravan perishing from thirst. Al-Wazzan states, "In some areas there is no water for a distance of six or seven days".

Al-Wazzan also explains the danger of covering up water sources with winds: "... It is very dangerous for merchants to undertake this journey outside of winter, because in this season, strong winds blow, carrying with them sand that covers the wells, so that whoever goes hoping to find water in the usual places does not find a mark or trace of the wells that have been covered by sand, and is forced to die of thirst." To solve the water problem, they were forced to take several measures, including:

- Digging wells that do not exceed half a fathom in depth in some areas, and as for the broken ones, a wall is built around them and they are repaired using the bones of dead camels, then they are covered with their skins to preserve them.

- Taking guides with them who are knowledgeable about the locations of the wells.

- Carrying water on the backs of camels, which can sometimes reach half a camel.

- Killing the camel, drinking, and extracting the water from its stomach, so some drink and the rest divide until a well is found.

*Weather and winds: In addition to what we mentioned regarding filling in wells, winds cause the caravan owners to be scattered and lost, so Al-Idrisi mentions the times when the caravan travels in order to avoid weather fluctuations: "The description of the journey is that they respect and tie up their camels... and they camp themselves in a shade that protects them from the heat of the midday sun... and they stay like that until the beginning of the afternoon, and when the sun begins to decline and set in the direction of the west, they leave from there and walk the rest of their day until darkness..." While Ibn Hawqal talks about the fact that most caravans specify the necessity of travelling in the winter to avoid heat and thirst, and the caravan is also exposed to vermin, predatory animals, and others. * Security risks:

Political and security factors are considered among the most important changes that affected the caravans, and this in turn affected the routes due to the change in circumstances. The roads moved from the west to the east, and perhaps the best witness to this is the Sijilmasa road, which abandoned its role due to the spread of bandits. Rather, these factors were a reason for the strength or weakness of the commercial movement, and the Barabish, Tuareg and Fulani tribes often went beyond the scope of the ruling authority and forced the merchants to pay expensive tributes in order to allow them to pass. This trio of tribes moved on a very large axis, and this is what Al-Wazin indicated: "... the emir of the district, who is an Arab, and he has a branch of his tribe that no one can penetrate his territory without explicit permission. If these soldiers encounter a caravan without a pass permit, they immediately loot it and strip the merchants and

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pioneers...” As Al-Wazzan mentions, "...the others are rich because they control the road leading from Fez to Sijilmasa, and force the merchants to pay a high sum of money...", and therefore the merchants would arm themselves in anticipation of any attacks, and the caravans would be provided with guards, often from different tribes, to increase their tribalism and protect the caravans.

3-The nature of exchanges and dealing systems:

***The nature of exchanges:**

***Exports of the country of Sudan:** The goods coming from western Sudan played a major role in stimulating trade between western Sudan and the northern cities, and among these exports, the most important are:

-Gold:

Gold is considered the first commodity brought from Sudan, and gold was exported in raqibiat, which are leather bags made from camel skin to store the valuables of the goods, and they are in the troughs and boxes.

The kings monopolized the gold, which the subjects collected, and no one was allowed to take anything from it except under his supervision, as it was the property of the Sultan, so that the gold would not increase in the hands of the people and its value would decrease.

-Slaves: The slave trade has been widespread in western Sudan since ancient times. Tribes used to fight each other and whoever was captured was sold, thus the tribe lost him. Al-Wazzan referred to this, which clarifies the role of the Sudanese in the phenomenon of slavery. He noticed the large numbers of slaves in the markets sold at reasonable prices. He said that the king of Timbuktu "...was fighting the enemies among his neighbors and those who refused to pay the tax to him, and if he was victorious, he sold in Timbuktu all the fighters and children he captured..." Marmol Carvajal mentioned the role of the wars that the Sudanese incite among themselves in the prosperity of this trade "...in which slaves are sold at low prices, and the price of a young male or female slave does not exceed sixteen dirhams. It is no wonder that the slave trade flourishes with wars".

Ouargla or Ouargla represented an important station for receiving slaves, and they might stay there for months to regain their energy and convert to Islam. Slavery was also exploited as gifts, Al-Wazzan points out that the King of Bruno preferred to pay the price in slaves.

-Ivory:

It was available in large quantities, especially in the eastern regions such as Kano and Borno, and it is made from the tusks of elephants and rhinoceroses. This material was used in making sword handles, knives and some precious antiques.

-Ostrich feathers: It was very popular, while ostrich eggs were brought from Sudanese markets in two forms: either empty of yolk and covered in some parts with leather and decorated with

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ostrich feathers and used for decoration in homes, or the egg in its natural form was used in preparing medicines, and its prices in foreign markets were high.

-Leather and cotton fabrics: Some areas of western Sudan were famous for producing significant quantities of leather, especially cattle hides of all kinds, and fabrics. Sudan also exported dried cheese, peanuts, gum, alum, cola beans and honey to the Algerian markets.

2*Imports of Sudan:

Just as Sudan exported many goods, it also worked to bring special products that were not available to it, and they were:

-Salt:

It has been considered one of the important goods in the desert trade for a long time, and Ibn Battuta mentions in this regard that the people of Sudan used salt as a currency like gold and silver, and this indicates the importance and scarcity of this material, and salt was closely linked to gold because the people of Sudan used to exchange it for gold due to its importance, and among the most famous places that exported salt to Sudan are Taoudini Salt Mill and Taghaza Salt Mill.

-Dates:

Large quantities of it were imported from the desert oases, especially from Warjlan and the Zab region, and they were also taken from the valley market. Traders usually used verbal contracts, and Hopkins likened this to letters of credit, which are one of the techniques of international trade in our world today.

-Camels and horses:

Although camels are a means of transportation, they are sold after their services are no longer available or because they are no longer able to bear the return of other goods.

Al-Wazzan refers to horses: "The horses come from the Berber lands with the caravan, then after ten or twelve days they are presented to the king to take the number he wants and pay a suitable price for them." Al-Wazzan confirmed that the kings were interested in buying horses, and also Marmol Carvajal, and he refers to the poor quality of the horses of the Sudan, which are distinguished by the palace, while the good ones are imported to the Maghreb countries and the king takes what he likes from them. In addition to that, the Sudan imports other goods: Various woolen, cotton, silk, and linen fabrics, and various weapons to arm the local forces such as shields, helmets, daggers, and arrows. The sultans competed in arming their forces so that they could impose their power on their neighbors, as well as aromatic scents, herbal medicines, spices, dyeing materials, and perfumes, in addition to food items such as dried vegetables, olive oil, fats, sheep, and wool.

Manuscripts and copied books also had their share, as well as paper, which became widely popular in the desert due to the flourishing of Arab Islamic culture and the widespread spread of its sciences, especially in the city of Timbuktu.

***Systems of dealing:**

All merchants coming to the Sudanese markets deal in buying and selling with the prevailing currency there using common measures, weights and measures, and sell their goods at the prices in circulation in the season in which they arrive or the market they go to, which is controlled by the economic rule of supply and demand. Among the aspects of these exchanges are the following:

Barter: Barter was one of the means by which merchants dealt, and it depends on the agreement between the two parties regarding the goods they offer. The Sudanese merchant.

Offers gold as a main commodity, and the newcomer offers salt, and each one places his goods and disappears from them until they agree. This type of trade is called silent trade.

Wadaa: These are small shells that were dealt with in the land of western Sudan, and simple benefits are exchanged with them.

Cotton textiles: which the people of Takrur call (checks) or there is another fabric that is used in the land of Kanem called (Dendi) and it is a local woven, each garment is ten cubits long and they buy a quarter of an cubit with it, because its value was of high quality.

Salt sales: The rare salt in Sudan was used as a commercial currency at one stage of its history, where a slave was sold for a piece of salt the size of his foot, then its price rose to a camel load of it.

Currency: It was mentioned that it was circulated in the markets in a homogeneous manner, where all the currencies of the markets were found, especially the currencies of the countries of the Maghreb, in addition to the local currencies, some of which were primitive and some of which were developed. Among the common currencies:

Al-Sal': A local Sudanese gold currency that was commonly used in the Tadamka region, valued at two dinars, and it is not stamped.

Copper: Copper was used as a currency in Tadmeka and consisted of copper rods, the length of the rod was a span and each bundle of four hundred rods equals a mithqal of gold and was commonly used in Takeda and was red, thin and thick and of very low value.

Songhai currency: A currency of pure gold was prevalent in the Songhai Kingdom and printed.

Checks: In addition to metal currency, Sudan was known for its use in commercial transactions. Ibn Hawqal mentioned that he saw in Awdaghst a check written by a Moroccan merchant named Muhammad Ibn Abi Saadoun.

Kori: It is an Indian and Persian currency, of low value, imported by merchants coming to the desert, where 1000 koori equals 0.75 francs.

Dawkha: A local currency, some of which is gold and some is silver.

Drachm: It is a currency imported by merchants from abroad.

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The golden mithqal: a Sudanese currency spread in all regions, especially in Timbuktu, and is equal to (69) francs in Timbuktu.

The Majidi: a local currency and is equal to 4.5 gold francs.

The beloved and the golden sultan, the weighed and the silver dur, and the copper sa'imah, all of these currencies were commonly used in the countries of the Maghreb.

***Weights and measures used in Algerian-Sudanese trade:**

The western Sudan had fixed measures, measures, and balances, which were exchanged and dealt with in all parts of the country and outside it, and it seems that they were transmitted to them via the far west of Morocco.

***Weights:**

Mithqal: It is used to weigh metals, and is equal to (72) seventy-two grains of medium-sized wheat.

Dirham: It is equal to seven-tenths of a mithqal.

Dinar: It is equal to forty dirhams.

Ouqiyah: It is equal to approximately twenty-seven and a half grams.

***Measures:**

Mudd: It is equal to four mudds by putting the two hands together.

Saa: It is equal to four times a mudd, which is equal to three kilograms.

Marta: It is equal to four sa'an.

Qintar: It was estimated at approximately one hundred pounds.

Mawdi: It is what a slave or man carries of grains or the like in a leather bag.

***Measures:**

Span: It is equal to the extension between the little finger and the thumb, and it was estimated at approximately 21 cm.

Dhira: It is the extension between the elbow joint and the end of the middle finger, and it is equal to approximately 50 cm.

Mil: It is used to measure distances in particular, and it was estimated at approximately one meter.

Farsakh: It is used to measure long distances and is equal to three miles.

The post was also used, but infrequently, and was equivalent to the speed of a horse.

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Western Sudan markets and some of the prices of its goods and means of transportation:

Among the most important markets of Western Sudan, whose echoes exceeded its geographical borders, we mention:

-Timbuktu market: which had a special importance during the Middle Ages commercially and culturally in the far south, Touat, in the Tidikelt region in the north. And between the Timbuktu market, and the markets of Touat and Tidikelt along the roads, there are markets, Arouan, Mabrouk, Taoudini, Walton, Bertir Chomin and other markets in the region of Central Sudan and Eastern Sudan.

Prices of some of the goods traded in the markets:

The desert caravan trade was very comfortable despite the fatigue and hardship incurred by the merchants, and this was among the incentives that pushed them to compete and cross the desert, as some goods were sold at the following prices:

A piece of Maltese cotton cloth: measuring 22 meters, sold in Algeria for 3.5 francs, and in Timbuktu for a mithqal and a half of gold, and a mithqal is equal to 19 francs, in addition to a good horse that is worth 30 dokhas and is sold in Sudan for 17 black slaves, and the average price of each one of them is 25 dokhas in Morocco, on the basis that the male is worth 20 dokhas and the female is 15 dokhas, ivory: from 200 to 220 thousand kore, ostrich feathers: from 50 to 60 thousand kore, gold nuggets: from 7 to 8 thousand kore per mithqal, male slave: from 120 to 130 thousand kore, female slave: from 150 to 200 thousand Corey.

Third: The civilizational effects of the commercial movement on the countries of Western Sudan:

1-Cultural prosperity:

The commercial movement played an important role in spreading Islam and Arab culture in Western Sudan, as trade and Islam in Western Sudan are closely linked and led to its civilizational influence despite all the natural obstacles that hindered the arrival of commercial caravans to Western Sudan, and we highlight this influence in the following points:

-The spread of Islam:

The merchants were able to interact with the pagan Africans, especially the kings, so the merchants were able to establish good relations with them through the tolerance of Islam, and with their conversion to Islam, these worked to encourage their people to embrace Islam, and from this improved trade relations and established mosques that were visited by merchants and attracted Africans, and the enthusiasm of the Africans and their acceptance of Islam was evident and was reflected even in the language that became colored with Arabic, and the Frenchman Julie mentioned that with the entry of Islam into it, Africa entered the historical era and flourished civilizational with Islamic nationalism.

-Social life:

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The commercial movement contributed to social life, as the trade routes strengthened the ties between Algeria and Western Sudan, and it was a result of the successive human migrations that took those routes as outlets for their passage.

Among the cities that documented the connections was the city of Timbuktu, which became home to many races, especially from Tuat and others, and this in turn led to its emergence as one of the civilized cities in Western Sudan, like Jenne and Gao. The population of Timbuktu, for example, reached about 80 thousand people, and this was during the reign of Askia Daoud.

It was Islamic since its inception, as Al-Saadi said about it: "... It was not defiled by the worship of idols, nor did anyone prostrate on its surface to anyone other than the Most Merciful...". As for some of their customs and traditions, they were similar to the Maghrebi Arabs in everything, their clothing, their art, etc. This was the result of the migrations.

As for the urban aspect, their homes were built in the Moroccan and Andalusian style, as Al-Wazzan said about a mosque built in the center of the city by an Andalusian engineer with stones made of clay and lime. - Cultural cities:

At the forefront of which is the city of Timbuktu, which was dominated by the cultural character, as its strategic location for caravans made it a focus of interest for merchants and even scholars. The cultural momentum that this city experienced gained wide fame during the 16th century AD through the movement of the sons of Sudan to the Al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez, which resulted in a Sudanese intellectual movement, and was aided by the commercial surplus that encouraged the growth of a class of educated and students. It also communicated with Al-Zaytouna and Tlemcen, and the Al-Sankouri Mosque became similar to Al-Azhar and was crowded with students of knowledge. Where the history of Islamic culture is linked to it, it was the center of cultural life and the heart of the intellectual movement, thanks to its rulers who worked to make it a beacon of knowledge and the spread of the Islamic religion, headed by Sultan Mansa Musa, who made it a center for teaching and science, where students flocked to it from all over the Arab countries, and mosques were the first institution for that, and the most famous of those mosques was the Sankore Mosque, and this is what made professors flock to it from the countries of the Maghreb, so they contributed to activating and deepening education, and it was similar to Al-Azhar Mosque and Kairouan in its heritage and scientific status. In short, the city of Timbuktu is considered one of the most prominent centers of civilization and culture, in addition to the economy in the countries of Western Sudan, as it is the most important center of radiance in trade, civilization and communication, and it is like the lung in the region of Western Sudan, and for this we find that the aspects of the city had a profound impact, especially the cultural ones, which contributed to the Sudanese writing several books on Islamic law, biographies and history, including Ahmed Baba Timbuktu, Abdul Rahman Al-Saadi, and Mahmoud Kaat. The emergence of the corners that came with the prosperity of trade was also an important aspect. With the increasing importance of roads, in addition to the lack of large civilized places that include facilities and places to stay, the corners were established on the side of the commercial roads. Examples of these corners include the corner of Abd al-Qadir bin Umar bin Fughil, the corner of Sidi Sheikh bin Hanini and the palace of Zaqlu, Sidi Abdullah bin Tamtam, which was initially a center dedicated to feeding passersby from merchants, pilgrims and students of knowledge. It practiced some scientific activities.

2-Urban development:

Cities emerged and developed urbanly through the commercial movement, and through that they contributed to the transition of social classes from the stage of Bedouin urbanization to the stage of urban urbanization, and this historical development is what Ibn Khaldun started from when he said that "the Bedouins are those who are limited to the necessary in their circumstances and are unable to do anything above it, and that the urbanites are those who care about the needs of luxury and perfection in their circumstances and customs".

Ibn Khaldun adds to this that if a person obtains the luxury, he thinks about civilization. "... Civilization is the goal of the Bedouin, he runs to it and ends his pursuit of his proposal from it, and when he obtains the luxury with which he obtains the conditions of luxury and its customs, he rushes to comfort and enables himself to lead the city. "..

The caravan trade brought about the conditions of luxury for the social classes gathered around it, and this prosperity appeared clearly in the cities that were linked to this trade, as Al-Wazzan refers to Timbuktu as the rich and luxurious "... and the residents are rich and luxurious. "...

Al-Saadi referred to the urbanization movement in Timbuktu thanks to the commercial movement, "The architecture of Timbuktu was a ruin, and architecture did not come to it except in Morocco, neither in religions nor in transactions. At first, people's homes were thorn farms and houses of wood, then they moved from farms to sanasin, then they moved to building very short walls, then they built mosques according to the homes..." He says, "Then people began to live in it and, by the power and will of God Almighty, the architecture increased".

By projecting the Khaldunian theory, we conclude that there is a close connection between the commercial movement and urban expansion, and this is what Ibn Khaldun referred to as urban renting, where he says, "When income increases, the expenditure increases, and vice versa, when income and expenditure increase, the conditions of the resident expand and the country expands".

Al-Bakri also mentions that Adaghasht has houses built in the style of the Berber countries, and foreign merchants inhabited it. It has a well-built architecture, many markets, various trees, and beautiful houses.

The mosques of Timbuktu are the greatest example of the civilizational development in the field of construction in the Maghreb style, and it is said that it was designed by Abu Ishaq al-Sahili who met al-Mansa Musa in Mecca and was tempted by the latter to return with him to his kingdom, and houses with flat roofs appeared.

3-The status of African trade:

Thanks to the slave and gold trade, gold was of great importance, as it enabled Sudan to emerge from its isolation, which brought it into the global economy and became, at the end of the Middle Ages, West Africa the main source of gold supply to Western Europe. Indeed, it was the main supplier of gold in the world between the 11th and 17th centuries AD until the discovery of the Americas.

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In this regard, Abdelkader Jagloul says, "... European merchants were initially in a state of apprenticeship, and trained in Arab commercial techniques, and the monetary renaissance in Europe was the result above all of Islamic gold, which Christian merchants obtained in exchange for their raw materials..." The value of the gold exported across the desert was estimated at about 200 thousand pounds sterling annually.

The caravan trade was able to ensure a high-quality distribution network, which created a foreign capital market.

Conclusion

By examining the subject of trade movement between the countries of Western Sudan and Algeria, we came out with the following observations:

-The movement of communication between the two banks of the Sahara Desert was never the product of advanced ages or the entry of a race into the region of Western Sudan, but rather it is ancient and preceded political ties.

-Despite the primitiveness of desert trade, it indicates its African authenticity, as it was not that chaotic or random, but rather was subject to strict controls and conditions as permitted by the capabilities and circumstances of that time, and it was able to maintain its continuity for centuries.

-The Middle Ages is considered the era of the prosperity of trade communication across the desert and between the countries of the north and central Africa, especially after the era of Islamic conquests in the Maghreb and the formation of independent Maghreb entities that made them take it upon themselves to establish routes across the desert, and they were not only for commercial movement, but were considered bridges for civilizational communication.

-That civilizational communication was able to have a special character, as the development and cultural blending (religious, Islamic civilization, the movement of scholars, etc.) in parallel with the Sudanese urban development that was strongly influenced by the Maghreb highlights the extent of the contributions made by trade relations that characterized the relationship between Sudan and Algeria in its general appearance.

-While those centers worked to spread culture among the Sudanese, they clashed with the colonial expansion movement that extended to the region in the hope of its goods and wealth after the fame of its goods in the countries of the Maghreb, and thus the trade relations between the two banks of the Sahara and its prosperity opened the eyes of the Europeans to precious African capabilities, which aroused in them the desire to seize the region and exploit the people and stones in it.

-Finally, despite what happened to Central Africa by colonialism, it can be said that the mixing of trade with Islamic culture in the western Sudan region led to a kind of cultural integration in it and formed a strong influence on it, meaning that the commercial centers were culturally adorned with scholars and visitors due to the commercial movement, and we are not surprised by

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that the city of Timbuktu remains to this day an example of a civilized capital and an African Islamic beacon.

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