

Trade Relations Between The Ports Of Central Morocco And The Country Of Sudan

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ABSTRACT

The issue of the mutual trade relations between the ports of the Middle Maghreb and the countries of Sudan constitutes one of the most important aspects of economic activity from the fifth century AH until the end of the seventh century AH, because the ports of the Middle Maghreb were a crossing point for the trade of the countries of the Sudan destined for Andalusia and Europe, as well as the countries of the Islamic Mashreq, especially after The subordination of the Almoravids and the Almohads to the regions of the Islamic Maghreb under one authority, keen to establish security and order, which helped in the regularity of the trade convoys heading to Sudan and the desert regions and coming from it, for this reason the trade relations on both sides returned to goodness and wealth .

Keywords: Central Maghreb ports, trade, Sudan, salt, gold, slaves

The emergence of trade relations with Sudan

The activity of trade relations with Sudan goes back to the land routes that linked Egypt and the East with Sudan and Ghana. Which at the end of the fourth century AH became unfit for commercial convoys to travel through it, due to the geographical nature of the area, which is a vast prairie where there is no water, as well as the weather conditions that are severely represented by continuous sandstorms. Especially the land road linking Egypt and Ghana, as a number of camels used by merchants in their commercial caravans were destroyed for several times, and for this reason the merchants left the mentioned road and moved to the road linking Sudan to Sijilmasa[1].

In addition to that, another reason that contributed to the invalidity of using the road linking the countries of the East with Egypt is the danger of thieves and bandits, who were looting the caravans and the expensive goods they carried, which represent the capital of traders[2].

On the other hand, the sabotage and destruction that afflicted Africa at the hands of the Arabs of Bani Hilal, had bad commercial effects on Africa, as it distracted traders from passing through the usual roads, and perhaps the most prominent of them was the two caravan routes that reached across the desert between the coasts of the Mediterranean and between Sudan and Niger; These are the roads, one of which passes through Awjila Oasis, and the second through Ghadames Oasis. As a result, the flow of gold has stopped from the eastern part of the Maghreb[3], and Middle Maghrib has become the safe way for transporting shops from Sudan to the Mediterranean ports, and from there to the East and vice versa[4].

Ibn Khaldun[5] expressed the phenomenon of transporting goods and merchandise from one country to another far away from it in times of extreme danger on the roads in times of war or the danger of bandits, which is more beneficial to merchants, because many merchants fear for themselves and their money from the danger of the road, and the hardship which They suffer from thirst while walking on the desert roads, and for this reason we find them afraid to transport goods in times of danger, so they are few in the markets to increase the demand for them, and for this reason traders achieve abundant profits, due to the increased demand for them. Therefore, we find that the merchants who used to enter the country of the Sudan, achieve abundant profits, as they are among the most wealthy people, and they live a luxurious life.

For this reason, Sudan's goods are few in Islamic countries, so their prices are high, as well as the goods transferred to them. This is why the goods that merchants deal with have become of great importance to both parties, and traders increase with much wealth and wealth as a result.

Sudan had active trade with all the major cities in North Africa, such as Tripoli, Awjila, Orqlan, and Sejmasa, as the last three cities were outposts of the Great Sahara, and these cities supplied the countries of the Mediterranean basin with Sudan's goods, foremost of which is gold[6]. Sudan and the shores of the Mediterranean.

Sijilmasa was inhabited by many merchants from Baghdad, Basra, and Kufa, who used to use the desert road, until these people inherited the commercial business with their children, and obtained great profits from the trade of commercial caravans with the countries of Sudan, as the profits obtained by these merchants exceeded what Muslim merchants obtain in All Islamic countries. Ibn Hawqal states that he saw a check certified by the notary and signed by witnesses, for a debt owed by one of the merchants, the amount of which was forty-two thousand dinars[7].

This indicates the strength of the commercial movement, and the amount of trade exchange with Sudan, and it is certain that these relations were primarily economic in essence, because the commercial factor represented in the pursuit of abundant profit, was the main incentive for crossing the desert, and bearing the hardships of travel, for what that trade brings of profits.

Then land trade with Sudan gained special importance after its main roads were shifted towards the ports of central Morocco, which became an important mediator in the transportation of Sudan's goods to the countries of the outside world, which contributed to the activity of the commercial movement between the two parties[8]As the city of Bejaia was famous for its economic relations with Sudan, and because its port contains the most active commercial movement in the Mediterranean, therefore, Bejaia was described as "a pole for many countries"[9], as merchants of the Mashriq, Maghrib and countries of Europe, which confirms that it is an important station for merchants working in trade desert.

The city of Constantine, which is located in the eastern part of the central Maghreb, contributed to trade with the city of Argelan - located in the oases - as its merchants, trading with the cities of Sudan, Egypt and the Far Maghreb, and the convoys coming out of Constantine loaded with woolen and linen textiles, silk and oil, and back loaded With gold, dates and black slaves, Constantine was one of the most traded in these things in the Middle Maghreb[10], and Warklan became one of the most important trading cities, and its market became a complex of various commodities and merchandise, to which the trade caravans came out of Constantine loaded with goods twice a year, to return with gold and slaves[11].

The merchants of the Middle Maghreb played the role of the commercial mediator between the countries of Sudan and the countries of Europe, as Al-Wazzan[12] praised the importance of the city of Timbuktu, - which is one of the important commercial centers on the commercial road between the oasis of Jerid and Ghadames[13], and expressed his admiration for the abundance of its shops filled with traders and craftsmen, especially shops Weavers of cotton fabrics, and pointed out that European fabrics were arriving in the city of Timbuktu, by local traders from the Berber tribes.

First: Exports to Sudan:

1 . Salt:

Salt tops the list of goods and commodities exported to Sudan. Because it was not available to them, and their urgent need for it, as the people of that country used it to dry food and preserve it, as the people of that country used to dry meat or fish; And to keep it until the time of need[14], in addition to the use of salt in medical matters[15].

Salt is the most accepted currency in the country of Sudan, Ibn Battuta says[16] It is not necessary for the traveler to the country of Sudan to carry money or food with him, but it is sufficient to carry salt, and some types of glass ornaments that people call "the systems", which are like their currency Through these things, he can obtain all the necessities of life during his travels. For this reason, salt has become a very profitable commodity, due to the remoteness of its mines from the main consumption centers, the difficulties of transporting it, and the great demand for it with the limited quantities supplied[17]. It is the main commodity that can be exchanged for gold, and given the importance of salt to them; If the merchants transferred it to the rest of Sudan[18].

The price of salt in the country of Sudan was very high. In the fourth century AH, the price of carrying salt inside the country of Sudan was between two hundred and three hundred dinars; Because they lack[19]. That is why salt was usually exchanged for a similar weight of gold, and sometimes merchants sold the amount of salt twice or twice its weight in gold, according to the abundance or lack of trade[20].

In view of the importance of salt and the increase in demand for it in the countries of Sudan, the slave was sometimes sold with a quantity of salt not exceeding the size of his foot, Al-Shanqiti mentions[21],The high level of his country's trade[22] of salt with the countries of the Sudan; The slave was sold in proportion to his shoes [meaning his shoe] of salt. The salt was cut in the form of large slabs, and ropes were tightened on the backs of camels and transported to Sudan, and after the salt reached there, the slave's feet were placed on the salt slab, so the price would be equal to the size of his shoe of salt.

Then it happened with the expansion of trade and the frequent arrival of what merchants carried of salt to the country of Sudan, if the usual price for a slave or nation became the amount of carrying a camel of salt, and all the commodities that were brought from the country of Sudan were exchanged for salt, such as horses, clothes and crops, and it is said that they were selling their children for salt[23].

Salt was extracted from mines located in the desert of Ghazah in the north, and Moroccan merchants carried it to the country of Sudan, and about the fame of that region for salt, Ibn Battuta[24] says about the wonders he witnessed, that the construction of its houses and mosques of salt stones, and the roofs of camel skins, nor There are trees in it, but it is a sandy land in which salt is available in the ground, in the form of huge slabs superimposed as if they had been carved and placed under the ground. Small parts they deal in.

Ibn Battuta states that the amount of salt a camel carried was equal in the country of Ayolatan [wolata] between eight and ten shekels or gold dinars, and in the country of Mali the salt load was sold for an amount ranging from twenty to thirty dinars, and it may reach forty dinars in some sometimes[25].

The country of Sudan obtained a huge wealth from the taxes that it imposed on goods entering and leaving its country, after the King of Ghana imposed a tax of one dinar of gold on every load of salt that entered his country, and two dinars for every load of salt that came out of it[26].

2 . copper:

He used cast and colored copper metal, and bronze metals, as a type of common currency in Sudan[27], Al Bakri[28] says about the merchants heading from the city of Aghmat to the country of Sudan, they used to accompany many numbers of camels that carried large amounts of money, such as red and colored copper[29], and types of iron machines manufactured for daily use, as well as other types of manufactured copper required for luxury and adornment, such as earrings, copper rings, and red copper bracelets[30].

For this reason, it was famous that copper was used as one of the common currencies in the countries of western and central Sudan, and copper was made in the form of thin or thick rods, the length of an inch or half an inch, and the thick ones were sold every four hundred copper rods for a weight of gold, and as for the thin copper rods, every six hundred or seven hundred for a weight of gold. Gold, which is a common currency in the country of Sudan, they buy by means of it; meat and wood, bought with thickets; Slaves, servants, corn, ghee and wheat, and some of this copper is carried to the city of Kober from the countries of the infidels, to Zghay, and to the country of Bornu, which is on a forty days' journey from Tekka, and its people are Muslims[31].

3 . Clothing :

The merchants going to Sudan were carrying many types of clothes, clothes, woolen clothes, and various types of turbans, aprons[32], says Al-Bakri[33], and carried to them "clothes dyed in red, and winged blue."

4 . Coral, beads and deposits:

Traders carry coral from the ports of central Morocco to Sudan, because Sudan lacks coral and it is available in the waters near the port of El Kharaz, Tennis, and Ceuta[34], and coral is a plant that grows

in the sea in the form of trees, and it is extracted from the sea by specialized workers[35] Coral is a metal that has neither brightness nor color[36], and from it is sold in its raw form before it is polished, but at a cheap price, and from it is sold at a good price, after it is cleared and manufactured in some markets of ports and cities near the areas of its extraction. It is cut and polished so that it has a beautiful luster and shine, and it is perforated to make necklaces and necklaces, and other expensive things, such as beads and jewels, and traders carry it in abundance to the countries of Ghana, and all the countries of Sudan, due to the great demand for it in those countries[37].

The merchants of the Middle Maghreb used glass beads and deposits in their commercial dealings with the countries of the Sudan - especially the small commercial deals from them - and for this reason the merchants carried with them to the countries of the Sudan, many types of deposits, beads, glass, shells and precious stones[38], and the common beads were in the work of exchange The commercial is characterized by a brown color, and a white ring surrounds the middle of each bead. As for the deposit, its importance is due to its small value, and all commercial transactions conducted by the people of Sudan to meet their daily needs; It was made either with glass beads, or farewells or Euphorbia, the latter two of the most acceptable types of materials used as a substitute for coins on the entire African continent[39].

5 . horses:

Horses are one of the important commodities that are exported from the countries of the central Maghreb to the countries of Sudan, and the exchange of slaves was like exchanging gold for salt. The horses that were brought from the East and North Africa to the land of the Berbers were re-exported to the countries of Sudan, and in the latter their prices would reach about ten times the prices in their original countries[40].

6 . Other exports:

Wool[41], and types of perfume[42], Mersin trees[43], wheat, dates and raisins[44], crockery[45], and a variety of European goods, such as swords brought from Germany, mirrors and glass from Venice[46] were exported to Sudan. The commodities exchanged with the countries of Sudan were in very large quantities carried by means of many camels[47].

Second: Imports from Sudan:

1 . gold:

Gold is the main profitable commodity for the existing trade movement in Sudan with the countries of the Central Maghreb, and it is the main engine for the exit of commercial convoys towards the countries of Sudan[48], for this reason, the Middle Maghreb countries played the role of commercial mediator in transporting Sudan's gold to Andalusia and Europe, to be used in striking the railways in most main cities[49].

Traders used to obtain gold by replacing it with salt in most cases. The merchants of the city of Sijilmasa are among the most important traders who dealt with the countries of Sudan, until they became one of the richest people and the most wealthy, because Sijilmasa is located on the trade route that connects the ports of central Morocco with the country of Ghana, which is the source The main source of gold, and that the merchants of Sijilmasa had the possibility and audacity to reach the country of Ghana for trade[50].

Al-Gharnati says[51] the merchants carry stones of mineral salt on camels to the country of Ghana, so they leave the country of Sijilmasa, and they walk in the sands described as seas, and they have guides who depend on the stars in their walk and determine the roads and places, and they take camels as their boats in the desert, and they carry with them Types of food sufficient for a period of six months. When they reached Ghana, they sold the salt they carried with a similar weight of gold, and sometimes the merchants sold the amount of salt twice or twice its weight in gold, according to the abundance or lack of trade.

The country of Sudan obtained a huge wealth from the taxes it imposed on goods entering and leaving its country, as the king of Ghana imposed a tax of two dinars of gold on every load of salt donkey entering his country, and two dinars for every load leaving it, and on carrying copper five shekels[52],

and to carry other types of goods ten weights[53].

Gold is the commodity for which the Kingdom of Ghana was famous, which is one of the most important areas that supply the Maghreb with gold [tibur], and it was known in the past[54], and gold is found in the southern regions of it in the region of Wankara, which Arab writers described as the land of gold[55], And the gold imported from the Kingdom of Ghana is used in the manufacture of currency, after the merchants of Maghrib take the gold to the mint and there are minting dinars and dispose of it in trade and the purchase of goods[56].

The merchants travel from the city of Sijilmasa to Ghana after they cross the desert road on foot for twelve days, and the land of Ghana is all gold, and its people extract gold and make it in the form of building stone[57], so the kings of Ghana obtained the largest share of this wealth, until they accumulated money from the gold trade[58].

Gold is also brought from the city of Goka[59], which was described as the most gold in Sudan[60], and brought from Auhst, which was famous for its abundance of gold, and its inhabitants sold in it, and traders carried it to the markets of the countries of the Maghreb[61].

It appears that the middle Maghreb merchants dealing with the countries of Sudan, played the role of mediator between the areas of gold extraction in the countries of Sudan, and between the Muslim Arabs in the north, who in turn sold it to Europe, as the African markets were the main source of gold for Europe before the discovery of America, so the European countries relied on The gold coming to it through the countries of the Sudan is heavily dependent[62], and this matter greatly contributed to reviving the economic activity in the ports of the countries of the Middle Maghreb.

Gold exchange method:

The arrival of the middle Maghreb merchants to the countries of Sudan, where there are gold mines, was not an easy matter, as the sources[63] reported how the merchants from the countries of the Maghreb arrived to the Kingdom of Ghana from the countries of Sudan, which is known as the countries of gold, in order to obtain it, and what the merchants experience There are hardships in order to obtain gold, as merchants carry what they can carry by means of camels, from commodities that are in great demand in those countries, such as "salt, pine wood necklaces[64], blue glass beads, red copper bracelets, earrings, and copper rings[65] And fabrics, dried fruits, and other goods, to be exchanged for gold owned by the owners of mines from the people of those countries[66].

The merchants go to Ghana, and they bring with them guides who guide them to the locations of the gold [tabr] with a group of brokers from the Ghanaian merchants, for the purpose of conducting transactions between them and the owners of the gold[67], and they head to the upper reaches of the Senegal River, and in known places, the merchants beat with great drums that are heard from Far away, announcing their arrival with the goods, then they put what they carry of goods and merchandise on the river bank in the form of heaps or certain quantities, then they hide from view, and the owners of the gold [gold] come forward to put next to each heap or amount of the brought goods; What they value in gold, as a price for the imported goods, then they withdraw and the merchants appear, and if they are satisfied with the amount of gold as an appropriate value for the goods; The drums sounded signaling their departure, so they took the goods and proceeded, and if they were not satisfied, they disappeared again, so the owners of the gold would return and increase it - if they wanted to complete the sale to them - and so on until an agreement is reached between the two parties[68].

The way in which the gold commodity was exchanged, between traders coming from the countries of the Maghreb, with the owners of gold in the countries of the Sudan, was called "silent trade"[69], which takes place in some places close to gold mines.

This method of exchange shows that both sides are completely honest, for merchants never touch gold until its value equals what they offer for sale, and the people of the country never touch the goods until their owners take the gold..

It seems that the designation of this type of commercial transaction, "silent trade" is due to the barter trade mentioned in exchanging gold for commodities coming from the north, between peoples who do not know the language of the other, or their desire to keep the secret of the sources of this wealth, for fear of looting and robbery. The silent exchange method was the best method, they believed that it

would achieve their goal by avoiding all contact, and for this reason it was done silently without the Muslim merchants seeing or speaking[70].

The merchants tried to know something about the sources of gold, when they arrested a nigger, and tortured him until he died, but without declaring anything, which led to their distrust of them, and as a result of this incident; Negroes have refrained from appearing and dealing with these merchants for about three years, until they had to resume dealings because of their acute need for salt in particular[71].

2 . Slave:

The black slave is one of the important commercial commodities brought by the merchants from the country of the Sudan, and they are the ones who were called “servants”[72], as trading in this type of commodity was among the types of lucrative trade that made huge profits, so working in the trade of these slaves and searching for them ; constitutes a major motive for obtaining the abundant profit after gold; Because this type of trade generates profits for its dealers. For this reason, human hunting and trafficking were the mainstay of the economy in all the countries of the Sudan[73], so slaves were the backbone of their exports and the predominant commodity in them[74].

And slaves were the best means of payment for foreign merchants. Al-Wazzan mentions that the Sultan in Brno used to buy items that foreign merchants wanted to buy, until he would go out on a campaign to capture slaves. For every mare there were fifteen or twenty slaves[75].

The black slaves were brought through the desert trade centers, as the sources mention[76] that most of these are black servants who are brought from Sudan to Zuweila, which is one of the most important trade centers, and to it the slaves are brought, from which they are exported to different countries[77] .

In the city of Bejaia there was a market for slaves, who were sold there, and about the prices of these black slaves who were sold in a place called “Houmt al-Madhab”, near the port of Bejaia, Al-Ghubrini says that the price of black slaves was more than the price of selling the white captives brought in From piracy, until two white-skinned Roman prisoners were sold to a black woman. In the sense that white slaves are less expensive than these blacks, and some black women were slaves who worked in the profession of washing clothes in the port of Bejaia in the Bab al-Bahr market[78].

3 . Alum:

White alum is one of the commodities imported by Moroccan traders, and its importance is almost equal to gold and slaves, and it is used in leather tanning and textile industries. A lot of alum is extracted from the mountains of Bilad Kuwar, which is famous in central Sudan, which is called Kuwari alum, which is distinguished by its great quality. From these countries, very large quantities are produced every year to different countries[79].

4 . Musk and amber:

Musk is brought from the countries of Sudan, as the musk gathers in the navel of the deer, and they have an animal that resembles a cat, from which a kind of perfume known as “civet” is extracted, and it was exported in large numbers to the countries of the Maghreb, as a substance similar to sweat is extracted from that animal, a substance like black tar. Thick, flowing from his body, and its smell increases in the evening so that it is more pure than musk, and this is one of the most sought-after luxury materials, and musk is obtained by beating that animal until it spurs it. Amber sea ocean [Atlantic ocean][80].

5 . leather:

From the country of the Sudan, various types of leather are brought, such as Circassian leather, and different types of goats’ skins tanned with a wonderful tanning. One skin is thick, large, soft and grainy, in the color of violet to black. The weight of one skin is twenty minas, and shoes are made of it for kings, and water does not affect it It does not wear out, and remains soft, smooth, and smells good. One leather is sold for ten dinars[81].

Conclusion:

Therefore, this trade brought great profit to the merchants working in this field, who used to send commercial caravans with their men and their slaves to the territory of Sudan and the country of Ghana for trade, to the extent that some merchants had camels more than seventy, eighty or one hundred

camels, all of them Loaded with all kinds of goods, even these merchants in the era of the Almoravid state, are the most wealthy people.

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60. Ghouka: A city located on the northern bank of the Niger River, fifteen days away from Ghana, and its inhabitants are Muslims. Al-Bakri, Volume 2, pg. 877. Unknown author, Book of Insight, p. 222. Al-Humairi, Al-Rawd Al-Maatar, p. 504

61. Al-Bakri, Paths and Kingdoms, Volume 2, p. 877; Unknown author, Book of Insight, p. 222.
62. Al-Bakri, Paths and Kingdoms, Volume 2, p. 85.
63. Tarkhan, Empire of Ghana, p. 70.
64. Yaqoot al-Hamawi's Dictionary of Countries, Volume 2, p. 13; Al-Qazwini, Athar Al-Bilad, pp. 18-19; Ibn Fadlallah Al-Omari, Masalak Al-Absar, Part 4, p. 48.
65. It is one of the types of tar wood, but its smell is not bad, and it is aromatic, which I tend to exhale. Yaqoot Al-Hamawi, Mujam Al-Buldan, Volume 2, p. 12
66. Yaqoot al-Hamawi, Lexicon of Countries, Volume 2, pg. 13; Al-Qarmani, News of the Countries, p. 438
67. Al-Qazwini, Athar Al-Bilad, pp. 18-19; Ibn Fadlallah Al-Omari, Masalak Al-Absar, Vol. 4, p. 48.
68. Yaqoot Al-Hamawi, Mujam Al-Buldan, Volume 2, p. 12
69. Al-Masoudi, Akhbar Al-Zaman, p. 88; Yaqoot al-Hamawi, Dictionary of Countries, Volume 2, pg. 13; Tarkhan, The Empire of Ghana, p. 71.
70. Panikkar, Paganism and Islam, p. 36, p. 390; Tarkhan, The Empire of Ghana, p. 70
71. Tarkhan, The Empire of Ghana, p. 70
72. Tarkhan, The Empire of Ghana, p. 71; Pankyar, Paganism and Islam, p. 36.
73. Al-Idrisi, Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq, vol. 1, p. 18; Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-Asha, Part 5, p. 286
74. Tarkhan, The Empire of Ghana, p. 73
75. Al-Idrisi, Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq, part 1, p. 71, p. 19; Pankiar, Paganism and Islam, p. 10.
76. Al-Wazzan, Description of Africa, pp. 157, 158, 176, 177; Pankiar, Paganism and Islam, p. 397
77. Astakhri, Paths and Kingdoms, pg. 40; Al-Bakri, Paths and Kingdoms, Volume 2, p. 658; Unknown author, Insight, p. 146
78. Unknown author, The Book of Insight, p. 146.
79. Al-Ghubrini, title of knowledge, p. 178.
80. Al-Idrisi, Description of Africa, p. 52; Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq, Volume 1, pg. 29, 116, 117-118.
81. Al-Bakri, Paths and Kingdoms, Volume 2, p. 850; Maghrib, p. 159
82. Abu Hamid Al-Gharnati, Tuhfat Al-Albab, p. 40.