

Motives for the Influx of Moroccan Scholars and Traders to West Africa and Their Settlement in the Region During the Modern Period

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Abstract

This research paper aims to highlight the primary motives behind the movement of Moroccan scholars and merchants towards West Africa during the modern period, specifically from the 16th to the 19th centuries. This research includes a set of important elements through which it attempts to trace and analyze the motivations behind this influx, which played a pivotal role in building bridges of cultural exchange and strengthening commercial and cultural ties between the two regions. Discussing this topic presents numerous challenges due to several factors, as this presence was not a recent phenomenon—a product of this period alone—but rather dates back to a very ancient era, to the point that some attribute it to the period before the advent of Islam in the Maghreb. However, it undoubtedly intensified with the arrival of Islam. Therefore, it remains difficult to distinguish between the factors contributing to their migration and its increase during the period under study.

Keywords: *Scholars, Moroccan merchants, West Africa, Timbuktu, Islam.*

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Introduction

Various studies have indicated that Moroccan scholars and merchants have long been characterized by their dynamism and lack of stability. Their active trade, which extended towards West Africa for centuries, played a pivotal role in shaping a vast network of cultural, economic, and political relations. The motivations behind these relations were diverse and varied, stemming from several overlapping factors. It can be said that initially, these motivations were primarily economic and commercial. The region's wealth, particularly gold, attracted large numbers of Moroccan merchants seeking to control its trade routes and caravans. Undoubtedly, these motives formed the basis for the spread of Islam and its entry into the region, especially after their arrival and settlement, as it served as the primary means of communication between the two regions. In addition, other motives contributed to directing their attention towards these lands, particularly cultural and political ones, namely the dissemination of Arab culture on the one hand, and the expansion of influence and securing strategic extension on the other.

For centuries, West Africa (Bilad al-Sudan) has constituted a vital extension and strategic depth for the Maghreb countries. During the modern period, specifically beginning in the 16th century CE, this region was no longer merely a stop for trans-Saharan trade caravans, but rather a final and settled destination for many Maghrebi scholars and merchants. A combination of geographical, commercial, religious, and cultural factors contributed to this influx and settlement, leading to the flourishing of major centers of civilization. Among the most important of these factors are:

First: The Geographical Factor

Geography, as is well known, is the primary determinant of relations between peoples, whether on an economic, political, cultural, or historical level. Geographical proximity between peoples strengthens these relations through the ease of interaction (influence and being influenced), unlike distance. Based on this, the geographical factor played a role in the Maghrebis' orientation towards West Africa. Tracing the course of trade relations that linked the two regions clearly reveals that these relations are ancient, with the Sahara Desert playing a civilizational role that contributed to building bridges of communication between them. Due to the importance of this It is therefore impossible to understand the history of Sudan without linking

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it to the Sahara. For this reason, many historical studies conclude that the Sahara never hindered communication between West Africa and the Maghreb and Egypt.

Historical writings confirm that the ties between the two regions predated the spread of Islam by several centuries. Writings have documented connections dating back to antiquity, with Herodotus mentioning five individuals who set out from Sirte and headed south to explore Central Africa.

Furthermore, modern technology has revealed two series of rock carvings depicting horse-drawn chariots. These carvings originate in two locations north of the Sahara, one in southern Morocco and the other in Fezzan, and then proceed along two paths towards a bend in the Niger River. This indicates that these two routes represent ancient roads connecting the Maghreb with West Africa. Perhaps the Phoenicians, when they consolidated their control over the southern Mediterranean coast (841-146 BCE), provide a clear example of the long-standing connection between the two regions. Although the Phoenicians were unable to penetrate inland, their trading colonies along these coasts became gateways for African trade. Local people brought goods from Africa to these colonies via caravans, as evidenced by Tripoli's nickname, "Gateway to the Sahara." However, this trade did not reach the level of importance it attained in later periods.

Trade relations between the two regions continued until the Roman era, which gave them further impetus three centuries later with their expansion into North Africa and the subsequent arrival of the camel. Further evidence of trade links between the Romans and the Sahara and its southern regions is found in Fezzan and elsewhere, including archaeological remains such as glassware, pottery, and other artifacts. This is in addition to Roman coins discovered in Taghaza and silver coins found in parts of Niger.

Trade did not remain unchanged. It was affected by the Vandal invasion of the Maghreb in the 6th century CE, which led to a decline in trade volume. This decline continued until the arrival of the Muslims in the region, at which point trade in the Sahara flourished again.

It is worth noting that the Islamic conquest of the Maghreb, their settlement there, and the penetration of Islam into the Sahara and its spread into West Africa gave trade a powerful impetus, enabling it to reach unprecedented levels of growth and prosperity.

Among the natural factors that contributed to the migration of many tribes to West Africa was the abundance of water wells along the trade routes connecting the north and south across the Sahara. These wells were a crucial factor in facilitating the movement of trade caravans, and they served as landmarks for caravans and travelers heading towards West Africa.

Among the wells mentioned by al-Bakri in this regard are: Aman Tissin, Tanudaden, the well of Tutin (or the Prince's Wells), and the well of Aman Sidan (Ostrich Water). These wells were found along the route between Draa and Sijilmasa, in addition to the well of al-Jamalin, the wells of Ma'tandafs (which were dug by travelers), the well of Witnunan, and others. In the same vein, Ibn Khaldun spoke of the existence of wells along the caravan routes that traversed the Sahara, saying: "In these desert lands beyond the Erg, there is a method for extracting running water that is not found in the hills of Morocco. The well is dug deep and far apart, its sides lined until the digging reaches solid rock. This rock is then broken open with picks and axes until its thickness rises. The workers then climb up and throw iron slurry over it, breaking the surface and releasing the water, which then gushes forth, filling the well and flowing across the land in a valley. They claim that water can travel faster than anything else." Elsewhere, Ibn Khaldun himself indicates that caravans traveled to West Africa from the hills and cities, and that trade with Africa was widespread in Morocco during his time, involving both nomadic and urban populations.

Secondly: The Economic and Commercial Motive

Undoubtedly, the trade ties between the Maghreb countries and West Africa are deeply rooted in history, stemming from the needs of both regions. The Maghreb countries required many products available in various parts of West Africa, such as ostrich feathers and eggs, cotton, ivory, hides, peanuts, and other

goods. Caravans began crossing the Sahara Desert early on, heading south until they reached some areas of West Africa and established strong trade relations. As Al-Salawi stated: "Moroccan merchants would gather in Sijilmasa, specifically between Midrar, and then travel in their caravans towards Ghana. The journey took three months outward and one and a half months back, during which they would sell their goods, cargo, and gold." These trade caravans had a direct and significant impact on the migration of many Maghrebi merchants, leading to a surge in their movement to the region. Trade routes and methods diversified, and the number of merchants arriving increased.

As a result of this trade connection, a number of Muslim merchants settled in the major cities and formed their own neighborhoods, such as the neighborhood established by the Ghadames merchants in Timbuktu, which was known as the Ghadamesi neighborhood.



Figure 6: A Picture Showing the Ghadames Neighborhood in Timbuktu

Taken from: Islah Muhammad al-Bukhari Hammoudi: *The Spread of Islam and Arab Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa: Timbuktu-Ghadames as a Model (7th-11th AH/13th-17th CE)*, 1st ed., National Books, 2004, p. 336.

They established mosques and schools there, which had a significant impact on spreading Islam and its principles. Among the economic motives that drove these merchants to the region were:

A- The Role of Gold: As is well known, gold was one of the most important commodities that the Maghrebis imported from Sudan for centuries. It seems that they had knowledge of gold deposits from an early period and were drawn to them through trade caravans, especially the route known as the "Golden Route" during the Middle Ages, which began in Sijilmasa and eventually ended in the city of Timbuktu.

Many Muslim merchants recognized the abundance of gold in West Africa and the wealth its people enjoyed, which brought them prosperity and well-being. The gold that flowed freely in the region was not appreciated or valued by the locals, either due to ignorance of its worth and economic importance, or because they lacked the skills to refine, smelt, and market it. They preferred other, inferior metals like copper, from which they crafted jewelry for their women. This encouraged many North African merchants to settle permanently in the region.

As for the locations of gold in the region, Arab travelers mentioned some of these places that gained great fame and renown, from which gold continued to flow until the 19th century. Among them was Al-Bakri, who referred to these mines, saying: "The best gold is found in the city of Ghiarro." He also added, "The area around the city of Kouga has many gold deposits, and it is the richest region in the Sudan in terms of gold." Al-Idrisi, in the same vein, pointed to a region of greater importance than others, namely the region of Wanqara, because of which the Islamic Mali Empire became one of the richest regions in terms of gold. He said of it: "This land of Wanqara is the land of gold, famous for its quality and abundance... It has populated areas and famous strongholds, and its people are rich, and gold is plentiful in their hands..."

Among the other gold sources in the region are the Bambauk mines, located high in the Senegal River highlands, an area renowned for its gold trade. Moroccan merchants arriving from the Maghreb cities to Gao would exchange goods—some from Europe—for gold from the Bambauk mines, indicating the region's fame and the abundance of gold extracted from them. It was even said that "gold flowed from the Bambauk mines like waves of the sea," confirming the region's immense wealth in this precious metal. The abundance of gold in the markets of the Asqayin era, extracted from the mines of Bouri and Bambauk, also located on the upper edge of the Senegal River (facing its course), encouraged the influx of merchants to West Africa during the 16th century. Other gold mines mentioned in Arab sources include those of Taghaza (Taghazah being a center for salt extraction). Merchants would come to Taghaza seeking this commodity—though many historians indicate its scarcity—and they would bring gold with them. They would import salt from their lands and then exchange it for gold. During the reign of Al-Mansur Al-Dhahabi, trade with the lands of West Africa relied on selling the salt of Taghaza and exchanging it for gold. The kings of West Africa paid taxes to Al-Mansur on the quantities of salt they imported. In a letter to the Songhai king, Askia II, he wrote: "Addressed to you... to the great leader of Kago, its prince, and the one who holds the reins of its affairs... Prince Askia... I inform you that the salt mine in Taghaza, which is under our rule and within the firm authority of our Imamate, is, as you are well aware, among the minerals whose revenues are the property of the Muslim treasury. The Imam has the authority to oversee and exercise discretion in this matter. Accordingly, we have decided... to impose a tax on it that will, God willing, bring greater benefit to the Muslims and harm to the polytheistic enemies of God. This tax is a mithqal (approximately 4.5 grams) on every load of camels that come to it from all directions. We intend to use the proceeds from this tax, God willing, for the purposes of conquest and jihad, and for the sustenance of our high-ranking soldiers." And the troops...". Faced with the refusal of the Emir of Kagu to do so, Al-Mansur found in this refusal a direct reason to carry out the campaign against Western Sudan in order to bring as much gold and Sudanese materials as possible towards Morocco. Al-Mansur also wanted to protect the Saadian Saharan trade from the influence of the Iberians who tried to divert it to their interests.

In addition to the region's abundance of gold, the availability of various types of gold also contributed to attracting Moroccan traders, including those dealing in slaves.

B- The Flourishing of Commercial Centers in West Africa: The development witnessed in West Africa attracted many Moroccan traders. Its cities experienced significant prosperity and influence, boasting major, thriving commercial centers and markets. This was one of the commercial motives behind the attraction and settlement of these traders in the region's major commercial centers. Geographical travelers who visited the region, including Al-Hasan Al-Wazzan, noted that the centers of commercial activity in West Africa were a destination for many traders.

From the names of some Moroccans mentioned in the sources, we observe that the Saharan trade attracted merchants from various Moroccan cities. Al-Umari mentions that Abu Uthman Saeed al-Dukkali "lived in the city of Biti (the capital of the Mali Empire) for thirty-five years." As for Ibn Battuta, in addition to his references to "Maghrebis" or "Beidane" (white people) and "merchants" in the plural, he mentions the names of a number of Moroccan intellectuals and merchants residing in various cities of Sudan. However, these names only partially reflect the reality of the Maghrebi commercial presence in Sudan and the extent of this presence.

Among the centers that witnessed significant activity during the 16th century CE was Timbuktu, which experienced unparalleled economic prosperity. Al-Hasan al-Wazzan, who visited it around 1511 CE with

his uncle, who was serving as an ambassador between the Wattasid king of the Fays and the Songhai king, Muhammad al-Kabir, noted the presence of numerous workshops for artisans and merchants, particularly those specializing in cotton textiles.

Based on al-Wazzan's account, the city appears to have enjoyed considerable economic growth during this period. He indicates that the inhabitants were wealthy and affluent, especially the foreigners residing in the country, to the point that the kings married two of their daughters to two wealthy merchant brothers. Timbuktu's prosperity was likely primarily due to its abundance of natural resources.

Its commercial importance stemmed from its excellent location on the Niger River, making it the closest station for trade caravans coming from the north. Its position on the Niger River also made it a vital link and a Saharan trading port for the exchange of goods between West Africa and North Africa. This led al-Sa'di to describe it as: "One of God's greatest lands in terms of blessings, prosperity, security, and well-being."

Among the important commercial centers that emerged and flourished as a result of North African influences on the economic life of West Africa during the period under study was the city of Jenne. It was a great market where salt and gold traders met. Al-Sa'di described it as: "A great, auspicious, and blessed city, abundant in resources and blessings. God has placed in its land a character, nature, and disposition among its people, who are compassionate and empathetic... It is a great market among the markets of the Muslims, where salt merchants from the Taghaz mine and gold merchants from the Beit mine meet... People found great blessings in trading there, and they amassed wealth there that only God Almighty can count..." Due to its important geographical location, none of the region's kings were able to conquer it except King Sani Ali Bir, after a siege lasting more than seven years. After that, Jenne fell under the rule of the Asqayin, and in the 18th century, the latter came under Moroccan rule, and many Moroccans settled there: merchants and scholars... Thirdly - The Religious Motive: The religious motive, primarily the spread and teaching of Islam, is considered one of the most prominent and important motives behind the migration of Moroccans to the lands of West Africa. These individuals exerted efforts to extend its influence and elevate the priority of its teaching everywhere and at all times. Since the establishment of the Islamic Mali Empire in the early 7th century AH/13th century CE, large numbers of Moroccan migrants have continued to settle there for various purposes and desires. The religious factor was evident in the activities of many of these migrants during their stay in the cities, towns, and rural areas of West Africa. Whether these were collective or individual migrations, the religious activities practiced by these newcomers demonstrate their zeal for missionary and educational work. As a result of the increasing Their numbers made it necessary in western Sudan to establish cities for them to live in, some of which were created as independent cities, while others were attached to Sudanese cities. The scientific and religious fame of these centers shows the extent of the desire and effort made by the immigrants to revive the Arab-Islamic culture in the region, which was a strong motivation for them during their migration to it.

Furthermore, it can be said that the Hajj pilgrimage also contributed to the spread of Islam. Considering Hajj as one of the pillars of Islam, Muslims were extremely keen to perform its rituals despite its hardships, difficulties, and the long distances required to reach the holy sites in the Hijaz, the destination for Muslims worldwide. This was confirmed by Ibn Abbad al-Rundi in one of his letters, where he states: "Walking to Hajj in these times is something that greatly increases people's eagerness for it, and their souls are drawn to it. They prefer the hardship, scarcity, and loneliness it entails to comfort, ease, and stability." This is alluded to in the verse: "And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every distant pass." (Quran 22:27)

The caravans of Moroccan pilgrims, during their journeys to and from Mecca, took a long time. At that time, they built mosques on the roads, which increased the speed of the spread of Islam on the one hand. On the other hand, the journeys of the kings to Hajj created important contacts between them and the accompanying scholars, teachers, and engineers, resulting in a cultural and scientific exchange. After taking them with them to their countries, these people worked to raise the cultural and urban level of their countries. Mansa Musa, after his famous journey to Hajj, was known to have brought a large number of scholars, especially from Morocco, to revitalize this movement and spread Islam in the region, so his

country was filled with scholars, both black and white. Among them were the poet-engineer Abu Ishaq al-Gharnati and the judge Abu al-Abbas al-Dukkali. Immediately upon his arrival in the country, the latter oversaw the construction of several public buildings in various regions, most notably Niamey, the capital of King Mansa Musa. Upon completing his work, the Sultan rewarded him with twelve mithqals of gold. Mansa Musa's journey was not the only one described as the most famous; the pilgrimage of Askia Muhammad the Great had a similar impact on the intellectual and cultural movement in Sudan. He brought with him a number of Muslim thinkers from various Arab countries, in addition to purchasing valuable Arabic manuscripts from the Arab countries he visited during his famous journey. It is worth mentioning that these two journeys left a significant mark on history books and a clear imprint on the flourishing of Islamic jurisprudence in Sudan.

Fourth - The Scientific Motivation

Historically, the emergence of scientific journeys, which are among the oldest reasons that motivated people to travel, dates back to the early days of the spread of Islam, as it always encouraged travel in pursuit of knowledge. Long ago, it was narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Seek knowledge, even as far as China," and, "Whoever travels a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise." Based on this, we can see the eagerness of scholars and students to acquire knowledge, to be enriched by learning, and to endure various hardships and difficulties in pursuit of it. Throughout their long history, Muslims spared no effort in utilizing any means to achieve their noble goal. Among these means were scholarly journeys, which Muslim scholars considered essential for every student of knowledge to undertake in their academic life.

Scientific journeys, as is well known, represented a genuine scientific exchange and cultural interaction between the two regions throughout the ages. Scholars traveled between Sudanese and Maghrebi cities, creating a continuous movement that allowed students to learn from multiple scholars and diversify their knowledge. Sudanese families would send delegations of their sons to study in these regions. Al-Saadi recounts that Sultan Mansa Musa was keen on sending numerous scientific missions from his country to Fez and Marrakesh to learn and deepen their understanding of Islamic sciences. This type of journey was a source of pride among Sudanese scholars, as it bestowed upon its participants prestige and high standing in society. These journeys were undertaken on an individual level, driven by a desire to acquire knowledge. They would travel to various Maghrebi cities, especially Fez, to learn from its sheikhs and scholars. On an official level, sultans and kings would seek out students from the region to study in different Maghrebi cities, intending to utilize their expertise administratively and religiously upon their return.

Among the cultural centers in the lands of West Africa that scholars and Moroccan students of knowledge frequented was the city of Timbuktu. During the 16th century, it occupied the first position as one of the largest scientific centers in the region, as many students of knowledge from every color and race flocked to it: Andalusians, Easterners, Sudanese, Ghadamesis, and others. What increased Timbuktu's scientific status was that "there is no rule in Timbuktu except the rule of the guardian of Sharia, and there is no sultan in it, and the judge is the sultan, and in his hand is the resolution and binding..." This led to Timbuktu gaining a high fame that made hearts yearn for it and people flock to it from all directions. Thus, university life around the Sankari Mosque, which is considered one of the prominent landmarks in this city, was considered an opportunity for new students to meet important figures, princes, and sons of merchants, and to create friendships and working relationships that may be the beginning of wealth and advancement to important positions in the state.

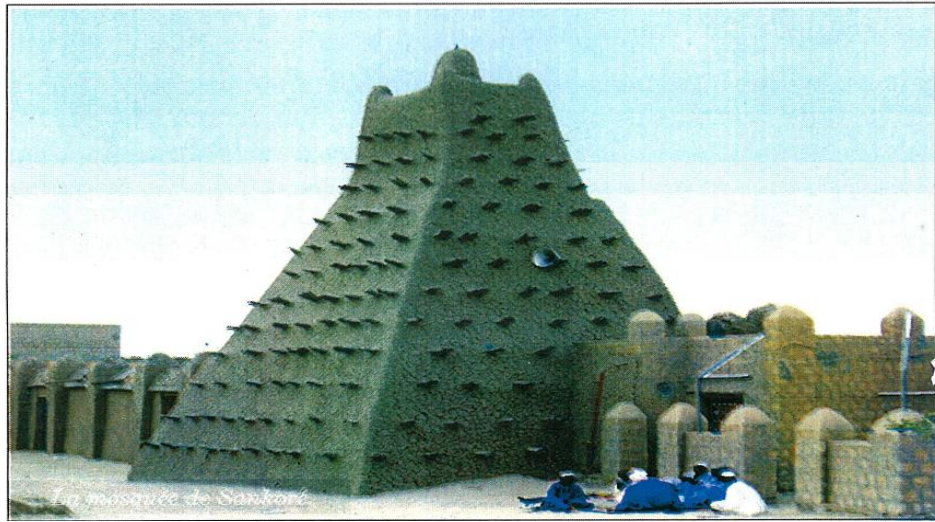


Figure 7: A photograph showing the Sankari Mosque in Timbuktu.

Quoted from: Chirfi Moulaye Haidara: op. cit., p. 44.

Fifth: The Political Motive

It is a historically established fact that political conditions have the ability to directly influence migration patterns, both positively and negatively. A stable political life and secure internal conditions were among the most attractive factors for migrating groups. Sources have documented the political and security situation in West Africa. Among the most important political motives that encouraged Moroccans throughout various historical periods to migrate to the region and increased their migration rates were:

A- The Political Stability of the West African Kingdoms: This factor greatly facilitated the arrival of a large number of Moroccan scholars and merchants to West Africa. Security is a crucial element for the prosperity of anything. Therefore, the prevailing security and wealth in the region encouraged Moroccans to migrate there, especially during the reigns of powerful kings. Since the establishment of the Islamic Mali Empire, political life in the country has been characterized by stability and security – with the exception of some periods of war – to the point that its kings were described as: "The greatest and most expansive kings of the Sudan." The lands were the most numerous, with the largest armies, the most valiant warriors, the greatest wealth, the best circumstances, the most powerful enemies, and the most capable of bestowing blessings. Thus, the long period of political stability created a favorable climate for living and settling there. The lands of West Africa continued to experience stability and prosperity throughout the 16th century, the period in which the Islamic Songhai Empire reached the zenith of its glory and flourishing. Security prevailed throughout its territories, its fame spread far and wide, and its reputation resonated east, west, south, and north. This served as an encouraging factor, increasing the influx of scholars and merchants to the region and their settlement there. Sources mention many names of Moroccan merchants who settled in Sudanese cities, including the Ghadames merchants. Ghadames trade documents shed light on the names of many of them and the places where they settled, mentioning cities such as Timbuktu, Gao, Jenne, Kano, Agadez, and others.

As a result of their extensive trade, their city's important and strategic location on trade caravan routes, and its proximity to trading centers in West Africa, many of them settled in these centers, particularly in Timbuktu, where they established their own quarters. This explains their large numbers, the importance of their trade, and their permanent settlement there. Among these merchants who settled were the sons of the merchant Ibn Ahmad: Muhammad al-Saghir, Muhammad, Abdullah, and Muhammad al-Kabir. The latter had a wide trade in Ghadames and Kano. Other migrant merchants included Muhammad ibn Haydara, Abdullah Bushi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Faqi, Abdullah ibn Uthman, and others.

B- The Role of Sudanese Rulers in Bringing in Scholars: The keen interest shown by the sultans and rulers of the Islamic kingdoms in West Africa in bringing in numerous Moroccan scholars and jurists to educate and enlighten their people cannot be ignored. From the very beginning of the Islamic Mali Empire, its kings demonstrated their welcome and appreciation for Moroccans arriving in the region. During the reign of King Sakura, the kingdom witnessed mass and individual migrations thanks to the facilities and incentives he offered. As for Mansa Musa (1312-1337 CE), Arabic sources indicate that he "loved the white people and treated them well."

The Sudanese kings continued this policy of courting newcomers, appointing them to administrative positions, and presenting them with gifts, which further increased Moroccan migration to the region.

In addition to this role, the country's vast potential, lucrative trade conditions, and the efforts of the Asqiya kings to spread knowledge throughout their lands, along with the high aspirations and perseverance of Sudanese students in their pursuit of knowledge from its original centers, all contributed to attracting a large number of Moroccan scholars to the country during this period. Among the most prominent of these scholars brought to the Islamic Songhai Empire was Imam Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili. He traveled the region during the reign of Asqiya Muhammad the Great, who appointed him as his advisor and posed several questions to him.

This role was not limited to the kings of Mali and Songhai, but also included the Mayatkanem-Bornu. These were distinguished by their love and encouragement of science and scholars. In addition to sending their students to various major scientific centers in the vicinity for the purpose of increasing their knowledge and jurisprudence, these Mayatem worked to bring scholars to the region and rewarded them generously. Some of them settled in the land of Kanem as a tribute to them and settled there permanently. Thus, the region was enriched with groups of scholars and jurists coming to it from all Islamic countries who responded to the requests and invitation of its kings.

Conclusion:

Based on the foregoing presentation of this model in this study, we conclude that the influx of Moroccan scholars and merchants to the lands of West Africa and their settlement during the period under study was driven by multiple motives: economic, religious, cultural, and political. Other motives were also evident, some initially apparent, particularly the economic and commercial ones, stemming from their control of gold trade routes and the exchange of goods between the two regions. We also observed that, over time, the motives were no longer limited to trade alone; other religious and cultural factors emerged. Moroccan merchants and scholars introduced Islam and the Arabic language to the region. The spread of Islam, the adoption of the Maliki school of thought, and the recitation of the Quran are clear evidence of this. Given that the Sahara served as a passage for trade caravans traveling from the north to the south, this greatly facilitated the influx of Moroccans, thus forming a strong bridge for cultural exchange. In general, it can be said that West Africa was an important stop for successive Maghrebi migrations since ancient times, due to its geographical location bordering other countries. Despite its harshness, the Maghreb, and thus the cultural and interactive movement was not merely a passing geographical journey, but rather a complete integration of newcomers into the various societies of the West African countries - as a result of several factors - which greatly resulted in the emergence of scientific centers of influence such as Timbuktu and others.

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- The caravan: The word "qafil" means returning or coming back from a journey. Those who are going are not called a caravan. It was named "qafilah" as an expression of optimism for its return from the journey it had begun. According to the modern usage of Arabic terminology, the caravan encompasses both meanings. Thus, the caravan is that organized human, material, and animal group that merchants resorted to since pre-Islamic times to sell their goods within or outside their immediate surroundings. With the domestication of the camel, humans emerged from their isolation, where they had been confined within the economic framework of their environment. See: Ahmad ibn Faris ibn Zakariya Abu al-Hasan: Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah (Dictionary of Language Standards), 1st ed., Dar al-Jabal, 1991, p. 112. Ismail al-Arabi: The Sahara and its Shores, National Book Foundation, Algeria, 1983, p. 48.
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- Ahmed Shalabi: Encyclopedia of Islamic History, 5th ed., Egyptian Renaissance Library, Cairo, 1990, Vol. 6, p. 206.
- Al-Ghadamsiya Quarter: Considered one of the most prestigious quarters in the city of Timbuktu, it was founded in the early 10th century AH by Ghadamesi merchants. This quarter was distinguished by its elegance in terms of layout and architectural design. In the late 10th century AH/16th century AD, they chose a location in the quarter. The Ghadamesians came to witness the construction of the citadel there, given its excellent location. This is what al-Sa'di reported, saying: "...Then they entered the city on Thursday, the sixth of Sha'ban, and toured it. They looked around and found the largest building to be the Ghadames quarter, so they chose it for the citadel and began its construction..." See: al-Hadi al-Mabrouk al-Dali: *History of Africa Beyond the Sahara* (A Documentary Study), 1st ed., National Library, Benghazi, 2002, p. 115; Faraj Mahmoud Faraj: *The Tuat Region During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, University Publications Office, 2007, Algeria, p. 125.
- Hassan Ali Ibrahim Al-Shaykhi, The Influence of Islam and its Culture in Western Sudan from the Eleventh Century to the End of the Sixteenth Century AD, PhD dissertation, supervised by Muhammad Ali Al-Tayeb, Omdurman Islamic University, 2008-2009, p. 270.
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- Joseph Camm: Explorers in Africa, translated, introduced, and annotated by Al-Sayyid Yusuf Nasr and Muhammad Ali Waqad, Dar Al-Maaref, 1983, p. 23; Zahra Yusuf Ismail, the aforementioned reference, p. 91.
- Abu Abdullah Ubayd ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Bakri: Al-Maghrib fi Dhikr Bilad Ifriqiya (The Maghreb in the Description of the Lands of Africa), and Al-Maghrib is part of Kitab Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik (Book of Routes and Kingdoms), Dar Al-Kutub Al-Islami, Cairo, p. 176.

- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idris Al-Idrisi (d. 560 AH/1164 AD): *Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq Al-Afaq* (The Delight of the One Who Yearns to Traverse the Horizons), Maktabat Al-Thaqafa, Cairo, 2006, pp. 24–25. - Ismail Hamed Ismail Ali: Previous reference, p. 48.
- Bouri Mines: These are located in the area where the Niger River flows, specifically in one of its branches known as the Tinkisso River. What distinguishes these mines from others is their accessibility. Furthermore, gold extraction from them is easier than from other mines, especially those in Bambuk. Regarding this method and its importance, orientalist such as MacFaddy stated, "The gold was easier to extract compared to the traditional goldfields in the Bambuk region..." See: Abdelkader Zabadia: Previous reference, p. 188; - Ismail Hamed Ismail Ali: Previous reference, p. 49.
- Adam Bakonare: *Political and Cultural Relations between Morocco and Mali throughout the Ages*, Publications of the Institute of African Studies – Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, 1991, p. 13.
- Abdelaziz Ben Lahcen: "The Reality and Prospects of Trade Cooperation between Morocco and the Countries "Atlantic Africa," Morocco in its African context: New strategic areas and stakes, previous reference, pp. 231–232. See also: Al-Hassan Al-Wazzan bin Muhammad, known as Leo Africanus: *Description of Africa*, translated by Muhammad Hajji and Muhammad Al-Akhdar, 2nd edition, Dar Al-Maghrib Al-Islami, Beirut, 1983, Vol. 2, p. 108.
- Adam Bakonare: Op.cit, p.14.
- Zahra Youssef Ismail, previous reference, p. 91.
- Zuleikha Ben Ramadan: *Society, Religion, and Power in West Africa between the 5th and 10th Centuries AH/11th and 19th Centuries CE*, 1st ed., Dar Abi Raqraq, Rabat, 2015 CE, vol. 1, p. 284.
- Al-Baydan: The term refers to the light-skinned inhabitants of the Sahara Desert. Its use dates back to the medieval period when travelers and geographers distinguished the inhabitants of the Sahara bordering the Sudan from other inhabitants of that region. Al-Bakri used the term Al-Baydan to refer to the Sanhaja inhabitants of the Sahara living around the city of Awdaghost, whose ruins now stand in the northeast of the Hodh El Gharbi region of southeastern Mauritania. However, by the 17th century CE, the term had come to denote the Saharan groups who speak the Hassaniya dialect and whose origins trace back to the integration of the Sanhaja group, with their distinctive customs in terms of tents, camel saddles, lifestyle, and way of thinking. The formation of the Moors began in the regions of Wadi Nun and Saguia el-Hamra, where the modern Moorish tribal institution was established and then spread to present-day Mauritania and other countries. See: Musa Kamara, *History of the Moorish Tribes, Arabs of the Great Sahara*, edited by Hamah Allah Ould Salem, 1st edition, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 2009, p. 73; Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Lawati Ibn Battuta (d. 779 AH/1377 CE): *A Gift to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities*, Dar Sader, Beirut, Lebanon, 2001, vol. 2, p. 195. - Muhammad al-Sharif: "The Moroccan Community in the Land of West Africa (8th/14th century CE): Observations on its Role in the Cultural Interaction Between the Two Shores of the Sahara," *Journal of Western History*, No. 15, Summer 1421 AH/2000 CE, p. 198.
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- Zaman Ubaid Wanas: *Timbuktu and its Cultural Impact on the Later Islamic Civilizations*, 1st ed., Dar al-Ayyam, Amman, Jordan, 2015 CE, p. 97.
- Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd Allah ibn Amran ibn Amer al-Saadi: *The History of al-Saadi*, edited, annotated, and introduced by Hamah Allah Ould Salem. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 2012, pp. 11–12.
- Abdul Rahman Muhammad Miga: *The Jurisprudential Movement and its Men in Western Sudan from the 8th to the 13th Century AH*, Publications of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco, 2011, p. 123.
- Zahra Yusuf Ismail, previous reference, pp. 86–87.
- Lamia Zakri: *The Scientific Journey between Andalusia and the Marinid State and its Role in Strengthening Cultural Ties during the 7th/9th AH - 13th/15th Centuries CE*, Master's Thesis, Supervised by: Boudouaya Mabkhout, University of Abi Bakr Belkaid - Tlemcen, 2009–2010, p. 31.
- Surah Al-Hajj: Verse 27.
- Abdul Rahman Muhammad Miga: previous reference, pp. 61–68. - Abdul Qadir Silla: *Muslims in Senegal: Present Landmarks and Future Prospects*, 1st ed., Qatar National Library, Qatar, 1986, p. 58.
- Zaman Obeid Wanas and Hashem Nasser Hussein Al-Kaabi: The aforementioned reference, p. 144. - Abdul Qadir Muhammad Miga: The aforementioned reference, p. 68.
- Journey: Linguistically, the word "journey" means travel, migration, and movement. It is said that a man "traveled" when he went on a journey. In its technical sense, it refers to a person's movement from their original homeland to distant places in order to explore, discover, and describe them. It is, therefore, an interaction between the describing self (the traveler) and the other (the described) or (the field of the journey). The traveler undertakes the journey to gather some impressions and general perceptions about others, that is, about other people, by moving to their world and interacting with them through contact. Its historical significance stems from the fact that the traveler has direct, firsthand contact with the realities of daily life in those places, rather than relying on hearsay. And the peoples and nations that he targeted for leadership. See: Abu al-Fadl Jamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzur: *Lisan al-Arab*, Dar Sader, Beirut, 1970, Vol. 11, p. 230; Awatif Muhammad Yusuf Nawwab: *Moroccan and Andalusian Travels: A Source for the History of the Hijaz in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AH - A Comparative Analytical Study* - King Fahd National Library, Riyadh, 1417 AH/1996 AD, p. 40; Mubarak Ait Addi: "The Contribution of Moroccans to Building the Civilization of the Sudan through the Writings of European Travelers of the 19th Century AD," *Moroccan-African Relations: Achievements and Prospects*, edited by: Bahija al-Shadhli, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Ain al-Nasq, Casablanca, 2012 AD, p. 86.
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- Sankari Mosque: It is considered one of the prominent landmarks in the city of Timbuktu. It is said that the first to build it was a wealthy woman named Fatima who was keen to spend her wealth on charitable works. Al-Sa'di referred to this when he said, "As for the Sankari Mosque, it was built by a single woman from Ghallaliya who had great wealth and dedicated it to charitable works." It was renovated by Al-Aqib, and then its construction was completed by King Al-Asqiya Dawud in the mid-16th century CE. This mosque became, along with Time has passed, and it is a beacon of knowledge that shines its light across the globe. A number of Moroccan scholars have studied there, including Sheikh Ahmed Razouq Al-Fasi, Muhammad bin Ali Al-Kharroubi, and other scholars. A number of imams have also succeeded one another there, including Al-Fahiyya Mahmoud bin Omar bin Muhammad Aqit and others. See: Chirfi Moulaye Haidara, Tom Bouctou Meurtrie, Editions Jamana, Bamako (Mali), 2013, p. 44; Abd al-Rahman al-Saadi, op. cit., p. 61; Moulay Ahmad Babir al-Arwani, Al-Saada al-Abadiyya fi al-Ta'rif bi-Ulama' Timbuktu al-Bahiyya (Eternal Happiness in Introducing the Scholars of Timbuktu al-Bahiyya), study and verification by al-Hadi al-Mabrouk al-Dali, introduction by Abd al-Hamid Abd Allah al-Harama, 1st ed., World Islamic Call Society, National Library, Benghazi, 2001, p. 74.
- Zuleikha Ben Ramadan, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 285-286. See also: Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Miga, op. cit., p. 115.
- Zahraa Yusuf Ismail, op. cit., p. 87. - Abdul Rahman Muhammad Miga: Previous reference, p. 64.
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