

# **Transformations and Changing Patterns of the Caravan Slave Trade in the Regency of Tunis, 1782-1814**

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## **1 Introduction**

Beginning in the late 1780s, the slave trade from the African interior while becoming a principal branch of the Regency of Tunis' network of overland trade, was typically not considered important for burgeoning European commercial expansion that stimulated agricultural production, commerce and the Tunisian trade economy.<sup>1</sup> Nearly a century prior to the late 1780s, the Muradites, who undertook the consolidation of various economic infrastructures following the Ottoman conquest of Tunisia in 1574 (along with corsair expeditions, they developed as a "legitimate commerce" of the Ottoman province), integrated the trans-Saharan slave trade into the nascent Tunisian economy. Successors of the Muradids, the

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<sup>1</sup> For the persistence of this idea see, among other sources, Lucette Valensi, "Esclaves chrétiens et esclaves noirs `a Tunis au XVIII siècle," *Annales Economies Sociétés Civilisations*, 6 (1967): 1275; Valensi, *On the Eve of Colonialism: North Africa Before the French*, trans. Kenneth J. Perkins (1977), 43; Khalifa Chater, *Dépendance et mutations précoloniales: la régence de Tunis de 1815 à 1857* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1984), 141-50, and Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 59 and 105.

Husaynids (1705-1957), maintained the trade via Ghadames. Until the early 1780s, however, it remained a marginal branch of the Husaynids' trade economy. Nevertheless, between 1786 and 1808, the slave trade peaked at 1,300 to 1,000 slaves per annum.<sup>2</sup> Yet still, after reaching this peak, the trade declined slightly and then grew even more, particularly during the 1830s and early 1840s, to reach levels above the previous peak. Shortly after its second peak, by April 1841, the slave traffic from Tunis across the Mediterranean was outlawed. Four months later, in August 1814, the slave trade from the African interior was prohibited, and within less than half a decade, slavery itself was abolished throughout Tunisia.

The paper, which is part of a study of how the slave trade from the African interior and its abolition was shaped by local, European and structural transformations around the western Mediterranean between 1782 and 1846, aims to explore effects of these developments on the slave trade. While the small amount of literature available commonly stresses the insignificance of the slave trade to Tunisia, this paper examines the complex interplay of local, European and Mediterranean factors that shaped the Tunisian trade economy and, in turn, the trans-Saharan slave trade. These developments' impact was not limited to Tunisian trade with Europe and the Levant. A significant increase in trade activities between the Regency and the African interior can be observed on a number of levels. In particular, aside from the favorable conditions the Hammuda Pasha's economic and commercial reform policies created, expanding European trade in Tunisia, mainly after 1788, was a major force behind the significant growth of the slave trade.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ralph Austen has discussed and assessed the Tunisian branch of the slave trade. According to Austen's estimates, the total quotas of Tunisian share of the slave trade the between 1700-1900 averaged 125,000. Of this total average, Austen estimates that there were about 800-700 annual average for the period between 1782-1814 examined in this paper. In developing his estimates of the Tunisian share of the slave trade, Austen relied on a meticulous method of calculations and quantitative assessments of sources known to him on the slave trade. While this paper builds on Austen's methodology, it only seeks to generate some understanding of the general pattern of the slave trade. But understandably, rough estimates in order to comprehend the directional trend of the slave trade is unavoidable. Although few scholars disputed Austen's estimates, see his valuable assessment of the slave trade Ralph A. Austen, "The Mediterranean Islamic Slave Trade out of Africa: A Tentative census," in *The Human Commodity. Perspectives on the trans-Saharan Slave Trade*, ed. E. Savage (London: Frank Cass, 1992). For a discussion of Austen's estimates of the Mediterranean Islamic slave trade see, for example, Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: a History of Slavery in Africa*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 46-7.

<sup>3</sup> On this, in general, see Ralph A. Austen and Dennis D. Cordell, "Trade, Transportation, and Expanding Economic Networks: Saharan Caravan Commerce in the Era of European

In fact, while Hammuda Pasha's economic reform policies led to the integration of the Ghadames caravan trade into burgeoning trade economy, from 1788 until 1841, the growth of trade between the Regency of Tunis and the African interior was further fueled by European trade with the Regency. More dramatically, the structural transformations that followed the Napoleonic wars from 1798 onwards in the western Mediterranean rim, like Tunisian trade growth with Europe and the Levant, impacted the Ghadames caravans operating the slave trade between the Regency and the African interior.

Using a combination of secondary sources and available contemporary European travelers' accounts and memoirs in North Africa, consular official reports, and local Tunisian chronicles, this paper attempts to make forays in the following directions: first, rehabilitate the slave trade from the African interior into the directional trend of the expanding Tunisian and European trade economy; secondly, explore the shifting patterns of the Ghadames caravan trade; and thirdly, use the few available contemporary sources to document the effect of the above changes on the scope and structure of the slave trade. As the effects of these changes on the slave trade vary, the paper focuses only on the period between 1782 and 1814. This period was of historic significance for its witnessing numerous clear 'ends' and 'beginnings' of vast changes in Tunisian and across the western Mediterranean basin.

## **1. Rehabilitating the Ghadames Caravan Trade into Tunisian Trade Economy**

At the time Hummada Pasha succeeded his father in 1782, the ruinous economic impact of the civil wars, coupled with a series of periodic epidemics that plunged the Regency of Tunis into nearly half a century of economic and political instability, was so enormous that his early years of rule were tremendously difficult.<sup>4</sup> As has been noted, although throughout the first part of the eighteenth century, this climate of instability affected the slave trade from the African interior, the shrewd Ghadames merchants who monopolized trade since the seventeenth century

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expansion, 1500-1900," in *Black Business and Economic Power*, ed. Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> See Rachad Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha, (en arabe)* (Tunis: 1980), and Charles-André Julien, *History of North Africa: from the Arab conquest to 1830*, trans. John Petrie (London: 1970), 330-31.

were able to maintain the flow of the trade. Until the beginning of the early 1780s, however, the trade was poorly organized. In the same manner that he revisited existing trade arrangements with European traders from the beginning of his reign, which was in line with his general commercial reform policies, Hammuda reorganized the Ghadames caravan trade.

Likewise the European commerce, the reorganization of the Ghadames caravan trade cannot be solely attributed to Hammuda Pasha's commercial reform policies. The outbreak of the great plague (*al-waba` al-kabir*) that erupted in 1784 was another cause of Hammadu's regulation of the Ghadames caravan trade with the African interior.<sup>5</sup> Described as the worst of the epidemics that struck the Beylik in the periods, 1776-80, and, 1784-85, it occurred for two main reasons.<sup>6</sup> First, the plague broke out on a French ship carrying returning pilgrims from Alexandria, Egypt, to Tunis. Second, it spread into Tunis through the negligence of the ship's captain who ignored the quarantine orders and allowed the infected passengers to disembark at La Goulette port. Within days, the resulting epidemic spread throughout the Regency.<sup>7</sup> It lasted for eighteen months and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. As a result, the Beylik authorities imposed quarantine upon the entire population of the Regency including Tunisian nationals, European merchants, consuls and priests. European consuls and merchants who survived the plague estimated that it killed between one-sixth to one-third of the Tunisian population.<sup>8</sup> Alphonse Rousseau, who served as a dragoman in the French consul and documented the affects of the plague in Tunis, estimated that in Tunis alone, the plague claimed up to 50,000 victims.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The great plague of 1784 hindered trade through the imposition of quarantine. According to statistical data available on Tunisian imports and exports from the late eighteenth century, the whole trade economy dropped significantly during the period of the great plague. See Nancy E. Gallagher, *Medicine and power in Tunisia, 1780-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 32-39, and Lucette Valensi, "The Tunisian Fallaheen in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700-1900: Studies in Economic and Social History*, ed. A. L Udovitch (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, INC, 1981), 719-23.

<sup>6</sup> For a general idea about the great plague see Nancy E. Gallagher, "Epidemics in the Regency of Tunis, 1780-1880: A Study in the Social History of Medicine" (Ph.D, University of California Los Angeles, 1997), Gallagher, *Medicine and power in Tunisia* and Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*.

<sup>7</sup> Gallagher, *Medicine and power in Tunisia*, 24-5.

<sup>8</sup> Several studies have detailed the population loss caused by the great plague. See, among others, Gallagher, "Epidemics in the Regency of Tunis," and Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*.

<sup>9</sup> Alphonse Rousseau, *Annales tunisiennes; ou, Aperçu historique sur la régence de Tunis*

Tunisian authorities seeing the magnitude of the epidemic, put in place every measure within their reach to combat the epidemic. During this mass mobilization effort, Hammuda Pasha issued several preventive orders including enforced quarantine restrictions in seaports and overland caravan entry points.<sup>10</sup>

According to Gallagher, the Tunisian authorities' experience with prior plagues allowed them to contain the great plague. Already, in 1772, when a plague erupted in Marseilles ships from the infected regions except those originating from other European ports were refused disembarkation.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the case of the French ships, similar quarantine measures had also been applied to Constantine overland caravans after a plague broke out in the Regency of Algiers in 1755. That year, the caravans from Algiers were refused entry into the Regency.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, by the spring of 1785 when the epidemic of the great plague was over, ships were authorized entry and were issued clean bills of health, thus allowing normal trade through the seaports to resume.<sup>13</sup>

After suffering severely during the great plague, agricultural production, the backbone of the Tunisian trade economy, resumed. Between 1786 and the 1820s food production, especially grain, wheat, barley and olive oil reached the highest levels ever in the Husaynid era.<sup>14</sup> Along with the resumption of agricultural economic production, the Tunisian trade economy not only resumed, but also accelerated to levels incomparable to any period after 1705. As will be further detailed, this acceleration of Tunisian trade after the great plague can be seen, for instance, in the Regency's cross Mediterranean trade with the Levant, and across the Maghreb and the interior of Africa.<sup>15</sup>

As was the case with the Tunisian government's regulation of the seaports, enforced quarantine restrictions were also imposed on overland caravans. Some of the Europeans who survived the great plague's accounts of the epidemics effects contained some reference to the

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(Alger, Paris: Bastide; Challamel, 1864), 313.

<sup>10</sup> Gallagher, *Medicine and power in Tunisia*, 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-39; Valensi, "The Tunisian Fallaheen," 719-23, and Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*.

<sup>15</sup> Rachad Limam, "The Commercial Policy of Hammuda Pasha Al-Husayni," *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine*, 2 (1974): 194; Gallagher, *Medicine and power in Tunisia*, 33.

Ghadames caravan trade crisis with the Tunisian government during the critical phase of the great plague. In 1784, the most devastating year of the great plague, a German traveler and a survivor of the plague, Baron von Einsiedel (who, in 1785, became one of the earliest Europeans to have written a report on Tripoli-Hausa trade<sup>16</sup>) was in Tunis en route to the interior of Africa when the plague erupted.<sup>17</sup> Due to the French government's special interest in exploring the African interior, it had commissioned von Einsiedel and his three German colleagues to explore the interior, especially the region around the Niger between Senegal and Fezzan. However, three of von Einsiedel's colleagues, while in Tunis collecting some intelligence information on the interior as part of their preparations, unfortunately fell victim to the great plague.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, during his sojourn in Tunis, von Einsiedel managed to collect, perhaps by way of interviews, an account of the Regency's trade with the interior. In it, he accurately spoke of Ghadames as a famed caravan entrepôt but depicted it as a town in decay.<sup>19</sup> Just as Abbey Raynal had in 1780, von Einsiedel described the Ghadames caravan trade as an insignificant branch of the Regency's foreign commerce. In explaining the causes of the Ghadames caravan trade's decay in Tunisia during 1784, he alluded to a crisis that it was encountering obviously as a result of the enforced quarantine:

In this town [Ghadames] a fair is held every year, which was very famous before; but nowadays it has fallen into utter decline because of the troubles to which it was exposed in its trade by the Tunisian government. It is only visited by some negro caravans from Ogadez [Agadez], which trade slaves and gold dust for cotton from the East and all sorts of knicks which traders bring to Barbary.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the noted effects of its crisis with the Tunisian authorities, von Einsiedel further observed that the decay of the Ghadames caravan trade with Tunisia was largely the result of other trans-Saharan trade factors, particularly the emergence of the Tripoli-Fezzan route, which became the most active route from the late 18th century on.<sup>21</sup> According to von Einsiedel, the

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<sup>16</sup> Cited in Lucie G. Colvin, "The Commerce of Hausaland, 1780-1833," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, ed. Daniel F. McCall and Norman R. Bennett (Boston: Boston University Press, 1971), 102-3.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in John E. Lavers, "Trans-Saharan Trade before 1800: Towards Quantification," *Paideuma* 40 (1994): 255.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> On the emergence of the Borno-Fezzan route during the late eighteenth century, see

revival of the Tripoli-Fezzan route further worsened the Ghadames's caravan trade's decay during 1784: "Ever since a merchandise depot for trade with African interior was erected in Morzuk, [von Einsiedel explained], the trade of Ghadames has declined even further. . ." <sup>22</sup>

By 1786, it appears that the above crisis was short-lived. Hammuda Pasha's regulation of the overland caravans greatly helped to create the conditions for a revival of the Ghadames caravan trade. As noted earlier, as soon as the epidemics of the great plague were over in the spring of 1785, Tunisian authorities lifted the ban on foreign commerce and normal trade resumed. In the meantime, Hammuda introduced solid commercial measures intended to control foreign commerce. Again, along with the Bey's stringent regulations of the European foreign commerce, overland trade, including the Ghadames caravan, was strictly regulated. As Bdira stated, "Le gouvernement a, aussi, activé et contrôlé le commerce transsaharien. En effet le commerce avec l'Afrique subsaharienne, le Maghreb emprunte les voies traditionnelles du désert." <sup>23</sup>

Without a doubt, once the great plague of 1784-5 was over, the period that followed marked a significant turning point. With the resumption of trade and commercial activities after the great plague, and with Hammuda's commercial reforms, the Ghadames caravan trade was now integrated into a new economy. This new economy, characterized by rapid economic growth in the agricultural sector, and, in trade with Europe, fueled the Ghadames caravan trade with a momentum unmatched prior to 1782.

A key contributing factor to the aforementioned momentum was the integration of the Ghadames caravan trade into a network of lucrative overland caravans that grew gradually at first but increasingly flourished after 1785. <sup>24</sup> Consequently, Gabés, for instance, which was at edge of the southwestern frontiers of the Regency's border with Tripoli, linked Ghadames

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Adu Boahen, "The Caravan Trade in Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History* III, no. 2 (1962): 21.

<sup>22</sup> Cited in Lavers, "Trans-Saharan Trade before 1800," 255.

<sup>23</sup> See Mezri Bdira, *Relation internationales et sous-développement: La Tunisie, 1857-1864* (Upsala: 1978), 27.

<sup>24</sup> For a general idea about the growth of the caravan networks during this period see Khalifa Chater, "Le Commerce Caravanier au Maghreb et ses mutations au cours de l'ère précoloniale," *Maghreb Review* 12, no. 3-4 (1987); Bdira, *Relation internationales et sous-développement*, 27. On the impact of the growth of the caravan networks on the trans-Saharan trade see Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302-4.

caravans with lucrative overland caravans from Egypt and Tripoli respectively.<sup>25</sup> Within the Southwestern part of the Tunisian interior, Jerba, a port city and a transit link for the Ghadames caravan trade route between Tunis and the African interior further linked Ghadames merchants with trade prospects in southern Europe, particularly, Italian and Maltese trade.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, Le Kef (the principal route connecting Tunis with Algiers, which was only 105 miles west of Tunis) also connected the Ghadames caravans in Tunis with regular Constantine caravans that brought the fruits of Algerian commerce from Algiers, Oran, and Tlemcen. As well as links with Algerian commerce, the Constantine caravans also linked Tunis with Moroccan trade from Féz.<sup>27</sup> Further was Sousse a “gateway” for several inland caravans from Sahel, Mahdia, and Monastir along with inland caravans from Kairouan and Sfax.<sup>28</sup> Further south still, inland caravans from the Jerid region via Gafsa linked Ghadames trade by way of Gabés and Tunis.<sup>29</sup>

The increased momentum of the Ghadames caravan trade impacted the local economy in the southern parts of the Regency. Across the frontier towns that lay on the Ghadames caravan route in the southwest, for instance, trade activities with the Ghadames caravan trade flourished.<sup>30</sup> Effects of these activities were particularly pronounced, for example, in the al-Aradh region in the Gabés district. Throughout the al-Aradh, especially around the frontier towns and villages that lay along the caravan route, the Ghadames caravan trade produced secondary economic effects. In addition to acquiring slaves for use in the subsistence economy, the Ouerhemma tribesmen who occupied the al-Aradh district made economic profits by servicing the Ghadames caravan trade. Since the Ghadames merchants were not indigenous Tunisians, their caravans were sometimes plundered. While paying customs duty to the provincial

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<sup>25</sup> See for example, Ali Zouari, *Les Relations commerciales entre Sfax et le Levant aux XVIIIème et XIX siècles* (Tunis: 1990), 248. Though somewhat focuses on a late period see also A Martel, "Gabes, Port Caravanier du Sahara Algerien (1899-1917)," *Travaux de l'institut de recherches Sahariennes* tome XIX (n/a).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Chater, "Le Commerce Caravanier au Maghreb et ses mutations au cours de l'etre precoloniale." See also Zouari, *Les Relations commerciales entre Sfax et le Levant aux XVIIIème et XIX siècles*, 126.

<sup>27</sup> Chater, "Le Commerce Caravanier au Maghreb et ses mutations au cours de l'etre precoloniale," 138.

<sup>28</sup> Zouari, *Les Relations commerciales entre Sfax et le Levant aux XVIIIème et XIX siècles*, 126.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Chater, *Dépendance et mutations précoloniale*, 138-41.

governors who controlled the southwestern frontiers, they were also levied informally by the Ouerhemma shaykhs (tribal chiefs) to ensure safety passage of their caravans. The local populace also profited from the Ghadames caravans by offering various services including providing water and camel feed for the caravans.

Even more lucrative was the local craft industry in Gabes (the capital of the al-Aradh district) and Jerba (the home of the shrewd Ibadite traders in Tunisia), which flourished, as did the local trade in Tunis. While Tunis furnished the bulk of the Ghadames caravans' goods returning to the African interior, both Gabès and Jerba received up to one-third of Ghadames trade goods brought from the African interior. In return, they loaded the Ghadames caravans with local crafts goods that the Ghadames merchants took with them on their journey back to the African interior.<sup>31</sup>

Until 1814, the Regency's overland trade with the African interior was not confined to the regular Ghadames caravans. Trade with the interior was sustained by way of smaller caravans. Daniel Schroeter, who takes issue with historians for basing their assessment of the slave trade solely on the large caravans, notes how this type of caravans was important for trans-Saharan commerce.<sup>32</sup> Like the great caravans (*qawafil al-Akbar*), smaller caravans sustained commercial exchanges between North Africa and the African interior. For example, in 1789, less than a decade after Hammuda's accession, Tully, an Englishwoman and a sister-in-law of the British Consul in Tripoli (Richard Tully), observed while in Tunis an intern of a "Black Borno Prince" who was visiting the Regency from Borno. This prince, who was an emissary of the king of Borno was accompanied by his three wives and an entourage composed of numerous Turks and black guards.<sup>33</sup> Tully made noteworthy remarks concerning the military and intelligence aspects of the prince's visit. According to Tully, the king of Borno, who sent this emissary to Tunis, was renowned for his military prowess throughout North Africa:

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<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Zouheir Gouja, "Communaute noire et tradition socioculturel Ibadhite de Jerba: Approche Ethnomusicologique" (Universite Paris-VIII, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Daniel J Schroeter, "Slave Markets and Slavery in Morocco Urban Society," *Slavery & Abolition [Great Britain]* 13, no. 1 (1992): 190-1.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 238. See also Abdeljelil Temimi, "Les affinites culturelles la Tunisie, la Libye, le centre et l'ouest de l'afrique a l'epoque moderne," in *Etudes d'Histoire Arabo-Africaine*, ed. Abdeljelil Temimi (Zaghouan: Foundation Temimi pour la recherche Scientifique et l'information, 1994), 38. See the Arabic version of this article.

“The moors [Tully wrote] have such an idea of the forces at Bornu, that among the fabulous stories they recount of that kingdom, they say when the king of Bornu sends out his troops, the body of a large date tree is laid down before the gate of the city, on which the troops step as they go out before the gate of the town, and as the foot soldiers go through the gate they wear out the body of this tree.”<sup>34</sup>

From Tully’s account, the militaristic reputation of the king of Borno makes it clear that this emissary’s caravan in Tunis was there on interstate political, intelligence and diplomatic business. At the same time, Lovejoy notes that “government officials” (like that of the emissary of the king of Borno), had access to “large number of slaves seized in wars and raids and as tributes.”<sup>35</sup> Although there is no evidence to suggest whether the emissary of the king of Borno that was in Tunis political reasons engaged in the slave trade, slaves should not be excluded from such intergovernmental commercial exchanges. Citing the Tully letters, Hallet points out that the emissary of the Borno king although significant was actually small, comprising only twenty camels. This caravan returning to Borno via Tripoli also carried with it free slaves returning to the homelands.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, historical evidence shows that interstate diplomatic, political and commercial exchanges date long before the Husaynids to when their Hafsids predecessors first laid the foundation of these exchanges with Borno in central Sudan.<sup>37</sup> The Muradids, and later the Husaynids themselves, maintained interstate ties with Borno. The continuation of these interstate ties is evident, for example, in al-Sabai and Bin Diyaf’s account of Ali Bey’s (1724-1756) importation of black slave soldiers directly from the bilad al-Sudan (land of the blacks).<sup>38</sup> Following the civil war between him and his cousin Husayn b. Ali and with the defeat of Husayn and his factions, Ali Bey imported black slave soldiers *en masse* from the Sudan. These black slave soldiers known as *bawaba* were employed in lieu of the Turkish and Arab *jund* (soldiers)

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<sup>34</sup> Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, 240.

<sup>35</sup> See Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 91-2.

<sup>36</sup> Robin Hallett, *The Penetration of Africa: European Exploration in North and West Africa to 1815* (New York; Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 207.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Temimi, "Les affinités culturelles," and B.G Martin, "Kanem, Bornu, and the Fezzan: Notes on the Political History of a Trade Route," *Journal of African History* X, no. 1 (1969).

<sup>38</sup> Cited in Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha; Ibn Abi Diyaf, Ithaf ahl al-Zaman*, 9 vols., vol. 2 (Tunis: (Reprinted) 1999), 122.

as his bodyguards.<sup>39</sup> According to al-Sabai, these black slave soldiers were imported between 1738 and 1740. The Bey facilitated their settlement by allowing them to build their own *nawadi* (clubs), each of which was called a *kofa*.<sup>40</sup> The combination of the name of the clubs and the function of *bawaba* as palace guards strongly suggests that the *bawaba* may well have been transplants of *kofafi* (intermediary military guards) employed in the pre-Jihad Hausa-Borno political organizational structure. This strong connection of the *bawaba* with the central Sudanese political and administrative structure further points to slaves as an integral component of interstate diplomatic, political and commercial exchanges, especially since evidence abounds that central Sudanese leaders also obtained horses for military purposes.

Equally important to interstate ties in sustaining the growing momentum of the Ghadames caravan trade was Hammuda Pasha's promotion of the trans-Saharan trade. Limam, the Tunisian historian who studied the reign of Hammuda Pasha extensively, perceives the growing momentum of the Ghadames trade as a unique by-product of Hammuda's trans-Saharan trade policy. Limam holds the view that along with the Regency's ever increasing trade with Europe and the Levant, the Bey also promoted commerce with the African interior largely because of his self-interest in the commerce.<sup>41</sup> Limam illustrates the Bey's promotion of Tunisian trade with the African interior not only through his regulations of the Ghadames caravan trade and its integration into the Tunisian trade economy that prospered after 1785, but also in the diversification of the trade with the African interior. Prior to 1782, the Regency's trade with the African interior mainly occurred through the trans-Saharan trade, with the Ghadames merchants monopolizing trade since the 17th century. Limam suggests that because of the economic boom during the reign of Hammuda Pasha, the Regency's trade with the African interior was diversified to include transit trade via Gibraltar. However, the transit trade by sea, according to Limam, was very minimal.<sup>42</sup>

Of course, throughout its history, Tunisia, like other parts of the Muslim world, acquired gold from the *bilad al-Sudan* (land of the Blacks). From the eighth century onwards, the Aghlabids, but more successfully the Fatimids and their successors obtained gold from the

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<sup>39</sup> Cited in Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 241.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Limam, "The Commercial Policy of Hammuda Pasha"; Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302-3.

<sup>42</sup> Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302.

African interior to strengthen the economic power during the Ifriqiyyan era.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the search for Sudanese gold was a hallmark of Hammuda Pasha's trans-Saharan trade policy. Following the turbulent civil wars beginning in 1724 and ending with period in which the Algerian Deys beheaded Ali Bey I in 1756, and his replacement by Mohammad Bey (ruled 1756-1759), throughout this period the Beylik was demoted to tributary to Algiers.<sup>44</sup> In the course of the Algerian Deys interference in the Regency's internal affairs, the Deys had not only plundered its treasury by emptying its gold, but they also transported gold imported by caravans from the African interior to Algiers.<sup>45</sup> Ali Bey II (ruled 1759-1782), who successfully strengthened the Beylik's and political and economic independence from the Deys began to replenish the Tunisian treasury with gold from the African interior. Bin Diyaf, the Tunisian chronicler, wrote that Ali Bey II was the first of the Husaynid rulers who minted gold coinage called "al-Mahboub."<sup>46</sup> This gold coinage was minted in abundance, and Bin Diyaf observed that this was so because of the facility with which gold was imported from *Sudan* (the African interior). However, other reasons accounted for the plentiful importation of this gold, "*bi kasrat min ard al-Sudan*," from the African interior.<sup>47</sup> According to Bin Diyaf, the abundance of the gold was due, in part, to its exemption from customs duty. Unfortunately, Bin Diyaf did not clearly indicate whether the smaller caravans, which conceivably could have enjoyed such privilege, brought the aforementioned gold. If so, then his account could hint at frequency of these caravans, which unlike that of the Ghadames regular caravans, remains unknown. Otherwise, the Ghadames merchants might have imported the abundant gold. Perhaps, since it was urgent for Ali Bey to overcome the financial crisis created by the Algerian Deys' plunder of the Tunisian treasury, the Bey may well have preceded his son (Hammuda Pasha) in encouraging trans-Saharan trade by exempting gold from the tariff in order to encourage its gross importation.

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<sup>43</sup> For the Sudanese gold in the Ifriqiyyan era see Michael Brett, "Ifriqiya as a Market for Saharan Trade from the Tenth to the twelve Century AD," *Journal of African History* 10, no. 3 (1969).

<sup>44</sup> On the turbulence and crisis period see Mohamed-Hédi Chérif, *Pouvoir et société dans la Tunisie de Husayn bin Ali: 1705-1740*, vol. II (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1984).

<sup>45</sup> Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302-3. See also de Candia (J) Farrugia, "Monnaies Husseinite: Monnaies frappées de l'année 1196 à l'année 1262 Hég (1782 à 1846) depuis l'avènement de Hamouda Pacha Bey," *Revue Tunisienne*, no. Nouv serie, 17 (1934): 84-5.

<sup>46</sup> See Ibn Abi Diyaf, *Ithaf ahl al-Zaman*, 171.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Eventually, after his ascension to the throne in 1782 and his subsequent implementation of his own ambitious commercial reforms, Hammuda Pasha continued his father's policy of obtaining gold from the African interior in order to replenish the Beylical treasury currency.<sup>48</sup> When writing in the early decades of the eighteenth century, Louis Frank, the French traveler and Hammuda's medical aide, gave an account that also sheds some light on the trans-Saharan trade commerce during this period. Prior to serving Hammuda, Frank had served in Egypt after Napoleon's invasion in 1798 but left after the British occupation of Egypt in 1801. His memoir, written while he was in Egypt contains some of the most reliable information on the Egyptian slave trade during the late 18th century, and contains some valuable information on slave prices and diseases slaves were subject to in Egypt.<sup>49</sup> Frank's second memoir, published in 1811, is particularly informative of Tunisian trade with the African interior. According to Frank, during his time in the Regency, the trade between the Regency and the interior of Africa became so prosperous that he described Tunis as being the financial capital of the African interior: "Tunis entière pour l'Afrique ce que sont pour l'Europe les Bourse de Marseille, d'Amsterdam, de Londres et de Paris."<sup>50</sup> Consequently, to Frank, the reign of Hammuda was the heyday of the trans-Saharan caravan trade between Tunis and the interior of Africa.

Quite apart from Hammuda Pasha's domestic commercial reforms, the rise of the French revolutionary wars that led to major structural changes (political and economic) in the Mediterranean basin had significant implications for the Ghadames caravan trade.<sup>51</sup> Between 1798 and 1800, France's ambitions for territorial gains led Napoleon to invade Egypt in May

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<sup>48</sup> On Hammuda Pasha's quest for gold from the African interior see Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302-3; Farrugia, "Monnaies Husseinite." and Mustapha Kraiem, *La Tunisie Précoloniale: Economie, société*, vol. II (Tunis: Société Tunisienne de diffusion, 1973), 70, and Chater, *Dépendance et mutations précoloniale*, 148.

<sup>49</sup> See Michel Le Gall, "Translation of Louis Frank's *Mémoire sur le commerce des nègres au Kaire, et sur les maladies auxquelles ils sont sujet en y arrivant*," in *Slavery in Islamic Middle East*, ed. Shaun E. Marmon (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> Louis Frank, *Tunis, description de cette régence*, (Paris: 1850), 103, and Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302.

<sup>51</sup> Discussion of implications of these structural developments on the trans-Saharan caravan trade in general may be found in Chater, "Le Commerce Caravanier au Maghreb et ses mutations au cours de l'ère précoloniale"; Ralph A. Austen, *African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency* (Portsmouth, N.H.: 1987), and J.C. Anene, "Between Sea and Land Routes in International Trade from the 15th century: The Central Sudan and North Africa" (paper presented at the XIIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques par la Commission Internationale d'Histoire Maritime à l'occasion de son VIIe colloque, Paris, 1965).

1798.<sup>52</sup> By July of the same year, France had occupied Egypt. In the meantime, in June of the same year, the same Napoleonic expedition forces that occupied Egypt had expelled the Knights of St. John from Malta and occupied the island as their outpost on the western Mediterranean. Prior to the French revolutionary wars, Tunisia had been one of the most important French trading partners on the Barbary coasts. Between 1788 and 1798, France imports of food, for example, grain, wheat and olive oil increased to levels higher than any time before the early eighteenth century.<sup>53</sup> There were several reasons for this increased demand for food, which greatly boosted the Tunisian trade economy. First, in 1788, France needed food from Tunisia because of a severe winter that caused famine and starvation, especially in the countryside. Second, between 1788 and 1798, France had been struggling to meet an increased demand for food caused by a population explosion that had outpaced her food production. Thirdly, Napoleon's continental army needed food.<sup>54</sup> To meet this demand, Hammuda Pasha encouraged agricultural production and was successful in using this growth in agriculture to success of Tunisia's trade economy.<sup>55</sup> While importing food to meet France's mass demand, French merchants also flooded Tunis with European manufactured goods.<sup>56</sup>

Significantly, a considerable quantities of the European manufactured goods imported during this time to Tunis were intended for retail trade with overland caravans conducting trade with the African interior. As will be further demonstrated, the increased trade between 1788 and 1798 boosted Ghadames caravan trade with the African interior.

Unsurprisingly, by 1798, as France launched her expansive revolutionary wars, she provoked intense superpower rivalry for balance of power in the Mediterranean. For Great Britain, there were three main reasons to resent the French revolutionary wars occurring

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<sup>52</sup> Several scholars have examined the British presence and her establishment in the Mediterranean since the eighteenth century. See, for example, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: MacMillan and New York: St. Martin Press, 1981). See also P.J Cain and A.G Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1993).

<sup>53</sup> Valensi's numerous studies of the startling growth of Tunisian trade economy from the late eighteenth century onwards abound. See, for example, Lucette Valensi, "La Conjuncture agraire en Tunisie au XVIIIe et XIXe siècle," *Revue Historique* 494, no. Avril-Juin (1970), Valensi, "The Tunisian Fallaheen." See also Julien, *History of North Africa*.

<sup>54</sup> Valensi, "The Tunisian Fallaheen," 722-3.

<sup>55</sup> On Hammuda Pasha's encouragement of the agricultural production see Zouari, *Les Relations commerciales entre Sfax et le Levant aux XVIIIème et XIX siècles*.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Julien, *History of North Africa*, 331.

throughout the Mediterranean. First, Britain's resentment of France's expansive ambitions stemmed largely from Great Britain's own preoccupation within the eastern zone of the Mediterranean for reasons of securing her ever increasing commercial activities in the Middle East. Furthermore, Britain wanted to safeguard the route to India. Second, the British wanted to contain the vacuum created by the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the 'Sick Man of Europe,' whose power was eroded by Austria's defeats. Nowhere was Britain's policy of containment more obvious than towards Russia. Russia regarded herself as a protector of rights of the Slavic minority in the Ottoman Empire and the self-professed heir to the Byzantine Empire. Consequently, Russia sought the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, if Britain was to fill the vacuum created by the declining power of the Ottomans, she had to contain France in the western Mediterranean, where France sought to make up for her territorial loss in the Americas.

Still unchallenged as a continental and global super power, Britain prevented France from asserting her ambitions throughout the Mediterranean. In August 1798, Great Britain, under admiral Horatio Nelson, destroyed the French Toulon fleet in Aboukir Bay (Egypt) and cut off the French army's communication with Europe while establishing British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean. Two years later, Britain again successfully thwarted France's ambitions in the western Mediterranean. Notably, in September 1800, Britain recaptured Malta and expelled the French from the island. A year after the expulsion of the French from Malta, Napoleon's army surrendered to the British army in Egypt, yet again preventing France from securing her aggrandizement in the eastern zone of the Mediterranean. While Tunisian trade with France declined, as a result of British continental blockage, trade with Britain via Malta rose suddenly because Britain needed food from Tunisia for her troops stationed in Malta.<sup>57</sup> All the while, Britain's assertion of her naval supremacy in the Mediterranean also signaled a turning point for British trade growth in the eastern Mediterranean, particularly with Tunis and Tripoli.<sup>58</sup> As

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<sup>57</sup> Tunisian trade with Britain via Malta during this period is well discussed in Lucette Valensi, "Les relations commerciales entre la Régence de Tunis et Malte au XVIIIème siècle," *Cahiers de Tunisie* tome XI (1963).

<sup>58</sup> For Tunisian trade in the Mediterranean in general see, S Boubaker, *La Regence de Tunis au XVIIIe siecle, ses relations commerciaux avec l'Europe mediterraneene* (Toulouse: Université de Toulouse, 1978); D Panzac, "La Régence de Tunis et la mer à l'époque de Hamouda Basha (1782-1814)," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* CLXV (1993) and Julia Clancy-Smith, "The Maghreb and the Mediterranean World in the Nineteenth Century: Illicit Exchanges, Migrants, and Social Marginals," in *The Maghrib in Question: Essays in History and*

Britain's trade increased with Tunisia via Malta, her control of the western Mediterranean was a key factor in creating favorable conditions for Tunisian trade to further flourish with Levant, mainly the Ottoman Empire.

In the same way that European developments, particularly those occurred in France between 1788 and 1789 fueled the Ghadames caravan trade's growth momentum, structural transformations in the Mediterranean, especially Britain's and France's preoccupation with the Napoleonic and revolutionary wars and the British recapture of Malta and her subsequent assertion of the naval supremacy in the Mediterranean's implications on Tunisian trade also greatly benefited the Ghadames trade. Again, from 1798 until 1815, the expulsion of the Knights of St. John, coupled with the revolutionary wars resulting from the European struggle for balance of power in the Mediterranean, encouraged the revival of corsair campaigns in North Africa against the weak Mediterranean islands, including among others, Sicily, Naples and Sardinia.<sup>59</sup>

Prior to 1798, the Mediterranean coast had always been a source of piracy. Following 1798 (like the Regency of Algiers), Tunisia increased her corsair expeditions around the western Mediterranean coast. Although never reaching the levels of the corsairs golden age during the Turkish era, the corsair activity that occurred after 1798 rose dramatically to levels comparable only to the high point of the corsair campaign during the seventeenth century.<sup>60</sup> Even though a marked qualitative difference exists between the two periods, quantitatively they shared the

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*Historiography*, ed. Le Gall Michel and Perkins Kenneth (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1997). For trade in the Ottoman context see D Panzac, "International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24 (1992).

<sup>59</sup> The Knights of St. John carried out officially sanctioned piracy against Muslim vessels and enslaved Muslim captives in Malta for centuries. Until their expulsion in 1798, they regularly raided vessels along the Tunisian coast. Their expulsion paved the way for Tunisian and other North African corsair expeditions to flourish. The literature on the corsair is extensive. See, for example, Mohamed-Hédi Chérif, "Expansion européenne et difficultés tunisiennes de 1815 à 1830," *Annales Economies Sociétés Civilisations*, Mai-Juin (1970) and Jacques Godechot, "La course maltaise de long des côtes barbaresques à la fin du XVIIIème siècle," *Revue Africaine* (1952).

<sup>60</sup> For Tunisian corsairs expeditions in the late 1780s see P Grandchamp, "Documents concernant la course dans la Régence de Tunis de 1764 à 1769 et de 1783 à 1843," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* (1957), Julien, *History of North Africa*; Paul Sebag, *Tunis au XVIIe siècle: une cité barbaresque au temps de la course*, Collection "Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes" (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989) and Chérif, "Expansion européenne et difficultés tunisiennes de 1815 à 1830."

common feature of the corsair's campaigns, constituting a source of legitimate commerce for the Regency's maritime economy. As an illustration, between 1778 and 1813, the number of corsair expeditions documented by historians averaged between 24 and 97 per year. In 1798, which saw the expulsion of the Knights of St. John and Britain and France's preoccupation with Napoleonic and revolutionary wars, the corsairs reached 97 expeditions. Compared to the immediate period between 1783 and 1787, in which the largest number of corsair expeditions occurring was 46, the year 1798 marked the high point for corsair campaigns and remained so until 1805.<sup>61</sup>

Since the state levied tax on corsair profits, it encouraged these expeditions. As a legitimate form of commerce, Hammuda Pasha and his ministers, particularly Yusuf Saheb al-Tab`, participated in the corsair trade. However, it was mainly wealthy Tunisian moors, such as the provincial governors, who operated the corsair expeditions. Records dating back to the late 1780s, for example, credited Mohammad Jalluli, a family fleet consisting of thirteen ships carrying cannons and sailing under British protection. After 1798, 13 boats belonging to Mohammad Jaluli alone participated in the corsair activity. The Caid of al-Aradh, Hmida ben Ayed, also took part in the Corsair from Jerba.<sup>62</sup> According to Chérif, the financial gains brought about by these campaign between 1799 and 1800 alone furnished the state treasury with over two-fifths of the Tunisian government's revenue.<sup>63</sup> By 1808, MacGill, after dividing the Regency's sources of revenue into regular and irregular sources, also said that *ushr* (the tithe) levied on the sale of slave placed the revenue generated from the sale of slaves among the regular sources of the Beylik's income.<sup>64</sup>

More sustainable than the profits from the corsair tax levy were the gains made from the acquisition of maritime infrastructure. Until 1789, the Tunisian government was virtually unable to transport trade goods by its own ships. As Moallah explains, up until 1798, "All Tunisian travelers and goods were taken on board foreign vessels, especially French ones." After 1789,

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<sup>61</sup> Cited in Chater, *Dépendance et mutations précoloniale*.

<sup>62</sup> Asma Moalla, *The Regency of Tunis and the Ottoman Porte, 1777-1814: Army and government of a North-African Ottoman eyalet at the end of the eighteenth century* (London & New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 64.

<sup>63</sup> Chérif, "Expansion européenne et difficultés tunisiennes de 1815 à 1830," 14-5. See also

<sup>64</sup> Thomas MacGill, *An account of Tunis: of its government, manners, customs, and antiquities; especially of its productions, manufactures, and commerce* (Glasgow: Longman Hurst Rees Orme and Brown, 1811), 81-82.

however, a number of boats confiscated by Tunisian corsairs were converted into trade vessels. Consequently, the corsairs' activities indirectly benefited Tunisian state maritime trade. Thus, for example, from 1798 until Lord Exmouth's expedition of April 1816, which terminated the corsair campaigns under European gunpoint (because of the infrastructural capacity gained from the corsairs campaigns), the number of Tunisian trade vessels during this period increased.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, "In Marseilles, for instance [Tunisian vessels] rose from two in 1802 to nine in 1809, reached 20 in Leghorn between 1809 and 1814, and 224 in Malta between 1801 and 1816."<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, other aspects of Tunisian trade growth can be seen in the increased involvement of Tunisian merchants in Tunisian foreign commerce and, most notably, their increased trade in a number of countries across the Levant, particularly Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. While Valensi wrote that by the early 1800 Tunisian merchants dominated foreign trade, André Raymond additionally "found that, out of 99 Maghribis merchants living in Cairo during the eighteenth century, 26 were Tunisian."<sup>67</sup>

Within this context, Britain's successful campaign against France, and her establishment of naval superiority in the Mediterranean, also paved the way for an Ottoman trade fleet to operate in the Mediterranean. Until 1815, aside from achieving a balance of power in the Mediterranean, one of the cornerstones of Britain's Mediterranean policy was to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. As an ally, Britain's naval superiority in the Mediterranean enabled the Ottoman trade fleet to sail in the Mediterranean basin despite France attempts to disrupt the Ottoman trade with her North African regencies.<sup>68</sup> Yet, throughout early 1800 until 1840, the Ottomans used Greek captains to command their ships sailing with her North African countries.

In the long run (as this study will further detail), all the above developments that arose from the structural development in the eastern Mediterranean were foundational not only for creating favorable conditions for further increases of the slave trade, but also for its suppression and abolition of slavery in 1846.

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<sup>65</sup> Moalla, *The Regency of Tunis and the Ottoman Porte*, 65.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See Valensi, "The Tunisian Fallaheen."; André Raymond, "Tunisiens et Maghrébins au Caire au XVIIIe siècle," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 26-27 (1959).

<sup>68</sup> Panzac, "La Régence de Tunis et la mer à l'époque de Hamouda Basha (1782-1814)."

So far, I have attempted to unravel the structural transformations that occurred locally, Mediterranean basin and in European stages from the early 1780s in order to establish analytical framework and examine the shifting patterns of Ghadames caravan trade in relation with broader implications of the above transformations. In the following sections, I will use the extant contemporary European accounts, memoirs, official reports, as well as local chronicles to quantitatively reconstruct the less studied patterns of the frequency of the Ghadames caravans, the scale of its slave imports, and the caravans trade's relation to the above-discussed processes of structural transformations. To the extent that secondary goods carried by the Ghadames caravans also diversified, as was the case of a shift in the structure of the Tunis' slave market, the study will further use this diversification and shift as indicators to documents further effects of the structural transformations on the slave trade.

## **2. The Shifting Patterns of the Ghadames Caravan, Routes and the Slave Trade, 1786-1811**

In 1786, Edward Stanley became the first English traveler to write a detailed account of the Regency's trade in the Mediterranean since Shaw's visit to Tunis in 1727.<sup>69</sup> It is not clear whether Stanley's detailed account of Tunisian trade was commissioned by Lord Viscount Duncannon (the Earl of Derby) whom he dedicated it to.<sup>70</sup> At any rate, his manual written only less than two decades after Europe's industrial revolution of the late 1760s was written with such fervor to propagate and stir up British commerce in Tunisia.

Without referring to the great plague that plunged the Ghadames caravan trade into crisis with Tunisian authorities, Stanley was, instead, struck by the sale of slaves in the bazaar located inside the Turkish's market, which he said was booming to "a great extent."<sup>71</sup> Within the bazaar,

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<sup>69</sup> Shaw was in Tunis at the beginning of the civil wars over succession crisis. He complained that the civil war climate hindered his observations of trade activities in Tunis. See Thomas Shaw, *Travels or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant* (Oxford: 1738), 308-9.

<sup>70</sup> See his dedication of the manual, E Stanley, *Observations on the City of Tunis and the Adjacent Country, with view of Cape Carthage, Tunis bay, and the Golleta, taken on the spot* (London: 1786), iii-iv.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-15.

Stanley observed that “the market for black slaves” was held every Friday.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, the slave market was well structured and the manner of slave sale in the market was arranged, in strict manner, in accordance with Muslim custom. For instance, upon purchase of a slave, the buyer was allowed to publicly inspect a slave. Stanley’s account shows that this, careful, inspection of slaves occurred in tandem with a form of auction displaying the slaves “on a place like a stage, raised about three feet with benches round, and a platform in the middle, to walk them up and down to show their limbs to the purchasers.”<sup>73</sup> In addition to its regulation, the auction and inspection of the slaves displayed on stage for sale, Stanley remarked that Muslim custom governing sale of the slaves prohibited a non-Muslim from purchasing a slave in the slave market. In other words, “no Christian [was] allowed to buy a black slave.”<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately, in spite of Stanley’s richly detailed report of European and, notably, Jewish commerce in Tunis, he offered no statistics indicating either the scale of the slave trade or the price range for which the slaves he observed fetched.

Nevertheless, the account offers some insight into the regional sources of slaves sold in the Tunis’s slave market. That Stanley clearly lacks an insider’s view of the slave trade is illustrated by his further speculation about the regional origins of the slaves he observed. Based on the physical characteristics of the slaves he observed in the slave market, Stanley remarked that the vast majority of these slaves were distinguishable by their “fine features,” unlike “the Guinea Blacks,” whom he said were fewer.<sup>75</sup> Stanley’s less acquaintance with the African interior may have hindered his ability to, fully, delineate the regional original of the slaves. Nonetheless, his speculation suggesting that the slaves he said were the majority might have been brought from Borno should not out of place, at least not in the late eighteenth century. As will be further detailed, until early 1800, the vast majority of slaves imported to Tunis were brought mainly from Borno.

Not only did Stanley documented the structure of the Tunis slave market and the source of the slaves he observed in the market, he also was curious about the extent of the slave trade. In writing about the extent of the slave trade between Tunis and the African interior, he remarked that the slaves were “brought . . . by caravans which come regularly once a year, but from which

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

part [he] could never learn.” According to Stanley, in addition to slaves, who constituted the chief import of these caravans, the traders also imported “ostrich feathers, gold dust, slaves, gums, and a variety of other articles, which they [sold] and exchange[d] for goods proper to carry back.”<sup>76</sup>

Two years later, Antoine Nyssen, another contemporary European observer of the burgeoning state of the Tunisian trade economy also attested to Stanley’s depiction of the slave trade as a key feature of the booming commerce in the Tunis’ bazaar. Nyssen, unlike Stanley was a Dutch consul who lived in Tunis during the late 1780s.<sup>77</sup> Likewise Stanley’s, his account of the Ghadames caravan trade is filled with other reasons for its increased acceleration. In 1788, Nyssen reported that three regular Ghadames caravan frequented the Regency every year.<sup>78</sup>

Yet the most important point deserving mention in Nyssen’s report is the interaction between the Ghadames caravan trade and European trade. In contrast to Stanley’s depiction of the Ghadames slave trade as a part of the booming Tunis bazaar, Nyssen described it as an integral aspect of the expanding European trade. According to Nyssen, European traders exchanged trade directly with the Ghadames caravans. European products such as habershery, (including linen, wax, clothes and a great variety of textiles) as well as European hardware were shipped to the African interior via the Ghadames caravans.<sup>79</sup> According to Nyssen, a proportion of these products the caravans transported to the African interior, were, in fact goods, usually, intended for retail in the African interior. These products were catered to stimulate European trade, as Nyssen stated: “qui [peuvent] servir à alimer le commerce qu’elle fait dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique.”<sup>80</sup> Consequently, in Nyssen’s account, the notion of “liaison” can be discerned clearly in the level of interaction between European commerce and the Ghadames caravan trade. Prior to 1782, this liaison, although present, involved only a limited number European products carried into the African.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>77</sup> See Ch Monchicourt, *Documents Historiques sur la Tunisie: Relation de Nyssen, Filipi et Calligaris (1788, 1834, 1834)* (Paris: Société d’édition, Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniale, 1929), vii.

<sup>78</sup> Cited in Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, "The Tunisian State in the Eighteenth Century," *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 33 (1982): 57.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Considered together, both Stanley and Nyssen's accounts of the Ghadames caravan trade are indicative of a directional trend of the trade that was taking place, at least from the period after 1786. Both accounts appear to suggest that the Ghadames caravan trade between the Regency and the African interior took a different turn after the resumption of economic activities in Tunisia in the spring of 1785. That is to say, the Ghadames caravan trade appeared to grow between 1786 and 1788. In addition to the Hammuda Pasha's commercial reform policies that led to the integration of the Ghadames caravan trade into the prospered Tunisian trade economy following the spring of 1785, the Ghadames caravan trade flourished for other reasons:

First, in the period between 1785 and 1786, it appears that there was a clear relationship between the Ghadames caravan trade and the trend in the Tunisian trade economy. As the prosperity of the Regency's economy increased, so too did trade between the Regency and the interior. Second, the French increased demand for Tunisian agricultural products between 1788 and 1798 that gave momentum to the Tunisian trade economy also appeared to have affected the Ghadames caravan trade. Both Stanley and Nyssen's emphasized this increased in European goods in Tunisia. Therefore, while importing food from Tunis, French merchants flooded Tunis with French and other European goods including Spanish wool, coffee, sugar, spices, clothes, and linens. As Nyssen noted, a fraction of these goods were intended for retail in the African interior. Needless to say, Europe's industrial revolution of 1769 was equally significant in fueling the growth of the Regency's caravan trade with the African interior.

Although both Stanley and Nyssen's observations of the Ghadames caravan trade's interaction with Tunisian trade include underlying assumptions about the caravan trade's shifting trends and emerging pattern of growth, neither of these accounts were written exclusively on the Ghadames caravan trade. The intensification of European attempts at exploring the African interior were crucial in leading to a more systematic account of the Ghadames caravan trade in Tunisia during the late 1780s.<sup>81</sup> As noted earlier, in 1784, von Einsiedel and three of his German colleagues were commissioned to set out from Tunis and travel to Fezzan and Senegal in the African interior. With the establishment of the African Association in London in 1788, and with the British growing interest in western Mediterranean commerce, the desire to collect

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<sup>81</sup> For the British systematic exploration of the African from this period see A. Adu Boahen, "The Africa Association, 1788-1805," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* V, no. Part I (1961); also for Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara, and the Western Sudan, 1788-1861* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) and Lavers, "Trans-Saharan Trade before 1800."

information about the extent of the Regency's commerce would further lead to a systematic account of the trade patterns of the Ghadamas caravan trade.<sup>82</sup>

By late 1788, the substantial increase in Britain's commercial interest in the western Mediterranean was illustrated by Lord Sydney's requests sent to British Consuls in the Barbary states, including Tunisia, Tripoli and Morocco to furnish him with reports on the extent of these countries' commercial exchanges with the African interior.<sup>83</sup> It is not entirely clear whether Lord Sydney's requests were precipitated by Edward Stanley's manual, which strongly advocated British commercial presence in the Barbary states, as was the case of France. Whether Lord Sydney's requests were precipitated by Stanley's manual or its like, Hallet presupposes that the African Association was the main reason behind such an implicit request on the trans-Saharan commerce.<sup>84</sup>

Consequently, on 6 October 1788, like all the aforementioned consuls in the Barbary states, Lord Sydney wrote to Robert Traill, British Acting-Consul in Tunis asking him to:

procure and transmit to [him] for the information of the Lord of the Committee of Council of Trade, an account of the trade in slaves carried in the Dominions of the Bey of Tunis, stating the numbers annually brought into them and sold, distinguishing those that are natives of Asia from those that are natives of Africa, and specifying as far as may be possible from which parts of Asia and Africa the so [slaves] sold in the Dominions of the Bey are brought and stating whether the male slaves are usually castrated.<sup>85</sup>

Trade in slaves asides, Traill was to further report in detail on the extent, structure, and mode of the commercial operations including an:

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<sup>82</sup> On the British commercial interest in North Africa across the Saharan and the African interior for this period see, Hallett, *The Penetration of Africa*, Robin Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association, 1788-1831* (Toronto & New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1964). Also for the same author, *The Penetration of Africa*.

<sup>83</sup> Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 79.

<sup>84</sup> Hallett believes that "some members of the African" were behind Lord Sydney's request for the detailed reports on the North African countries' state of commercial exchanges with the African. See *Ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Lord Sidney to Consul Robert Traill, Whitehall, 6th October, 1788"; Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 79. See also Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, Rachad Limam, "Some Documents Concerning Slavery in Tunisia at the End of the 18th Century," *RHM [Tunisia]* 8, no. 11 (1981).

. . . account of the caravan, if any periodically sent from Bey's Dominions into the interior parts of Africa, to what countries they go, of what commerce thereby carried on to and from the interior of Africa consists, and the probable annual amount of each article; together with all circumstances which you may be able to collect that may tend to throw a light on the nature and extent of their commerce and on the condition, population, state of cultivation and governance of those countries in the interior of Africa, with which this trade is carried on.<sup>86</sup>

Although Traill did not receive Lord Sydney's letter until late December, he collected one of the most noteworthy first-hand reports from this period of the Ghadames caravan trade operating between the Regency and the African interior.<sup>87</sup> The report is of major importance in that it is the first systematic account of the trade, seemingly based on interviews of some knowledgeable Ghadames merchants operating the caravan trade. This report, according to Hallett "Was the first of its kind to be received in Europe."<sup>88</sup> As will be further explained, the report was, as well, the earliest report to trace the caravan trade route from the North African coast to the Atlantic coast in West Africa.<sup>89</sup>

Traill's report began by noting that Tunisian trade with the African interior was not conducted by the Tunisian government, but rather by a "particular people called Godempsis" (Ghadames merchants). The *Godempsis*, Traill remarked, imported slaves and other products through Twerkians (Tuareg slave agents and intermediaries) in the African interior. According to Traill, the Ghadames merchants generally imported 1,000 to 1,300 slaves per annum.<sup>90</sup> However, not all of these slaves were destined for the Regency. A few of these slaves were occasionally sold in Ghadames.<sup>91</sup> Yet the greatest amount of slaves, approximately 1,000 was destined for the Tunisian market.<sup>92</sup> While the report is the first of its kind to offer such estimate of scale of the slave trade in Tunis, Traill (unfortunately) failed to note the price for which these slaves were fetched. Still, the report contained valuable insight into the demographic

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<sup>86</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Lord Sidney to Consul Robert Traill, Whitehall, 6th October, 1788."

<sup>87</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 82-84.

<sup>88</sup> See Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 82.

<sup>89</sup> Hallett, *The Penetration of Africa*, 210; Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 84.

<sup>90</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, *The Penetration of Africa*, Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

<sup>91</sup> 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789."; Hallett, *The Penetration of Africa*, and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 82-4.

<sup>92</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789." And Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

composition of the slaves. He notes that the vast majority of these slaves were “men and boys.” However, “women slaves being much more useful in the Moorish family,” were at the forefront of the slave trade.<sup>93</sup>

Part of the slave trade featured prominently in Traill’s report was trade in eunuchs. According to Traill, in addition to the annual average of 1,000 to 1,300 regular slaves, the Ghadames merchants also imported between four up to five eunuchs to Tunis.<sup>94</sup> Traill said that these eunuchs were procured from *Giauri* (Gwari) south of Katsina. However, it is likely that Kanuri merchants might originally have brought these eunuchs from Borno since they traded extensively in Hausaland during the late eighteenth century. Even the Burno merchants may themselves have procured the eunuchs from Baghirmi, which was known for their production. Unlike the hundreds of regular slaves who were auctioned at *Suq el-Berka* (Tunis slave market), these few eunuchs were instead “dispose[d] of among the principal people here [Tunis] at a very exorbitant rate.”<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, in spite of his detailed account of the location the eunuchs were imported in the central Sudan, unlike James Matra, Traill did not paid attention to the price at which the castrated slaves fetched. Instead, Trail remarked that because of their exuberant cost, eunuchs were only imported by the Arab merchants on a special request, implying correctly that these eunuchs did not constituted part of the regular slaves sold in the Tunis slave market. According to Trail, such a request when made, came from the “principal families” in the Regency and occasionally entailed re-exportation to the Levant.<sup>96</sup>

While Traill did not indicate the Levantine destinations where the eunuchs were destined, the Tunisian chronicler, Bin Diyaf, pointed out that during the same period, Hammuda Pasha occasionally sent *raqiq al-Sudan* (black slaves) as an customary annual gift (*hadiya*) to the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>97</sup> All the while, Toledano, who meticulously examined records of the eunuchs’ in the Ottoman imperial Porte cites Tunis as well as Algiers and Tripoli as well-established

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<sup>93</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 84.

<sup>94</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

<sup>95</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

<sup>96</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

<sup>97</sup> See Ibn Abi Diyaf, *Ithaf ahl al-Zaman*, 28. On the practice of gift from the Regency to Sultan see, Moalla, *The Regency of Tunis and the Ottoman Porte*, 127.

source that furnished the Porte with eunuchs.<sup>98</sup> Of course, this is another strong indication that these eunuchs may have been re-exported to the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time, Valensi, who surveyed the inventory of vessels that were registered with the Venetian consul in Tunis during the late eighteenth century point to Alexandria, Egypt, as a destination, if not for some of the eunuchs, then for a considerable number of the regular slaves. Using the above records to study Tunisian commerce with the Levant, Valensi discovered that in the early 1790s, slaves were a regular part of Tunisian Levantine commerce. She found that between 1792 and 1797, of the 284 vessels sailing out of the Regency, 29 vessels, ten per cent of the total were destined for Egypt or Istanbul.<sup>99</sup> In the course of Tunisian Levantine commerce, she noted that along with Tunisian products including woolen *shashiyya* (fez) and woolen products, black slaves were regularly shipped to Alexandria, which appeared in this period to have been the principal destination for Tunisian Levantine exports. Valensi, therefore, concluded that these slaves, indeed, “frequently rounded out a cargo” headed to Alexandria.<sup>100</sup>

Another feature of Traill’s report that deserves a special attention was his documentation of the shift in the trade route. As said earlier, the report was the first to link the North African caravan trade from Tunisia to the west coast of Africa. Notably, the report’s presuppositions that there was a slight shift or at best a diversification of the locations from where slaves were imported by the Ghadames merchants into the Regency during the late 1780s. From the beginning of the sixteenth century until the late 1780s, the bulk of slaves reaching the Regency had traditionally been imported from Borno in central Sudan via the Fezzan Borno route. As the overall sketch (**Figure 2.1**) based on the *Godempsis’s* itinerary indicates, while central Sudan remained the main centre of commercial exchange with the African interior, the extent of the Ghadames merchants’ activities combined with the locations in central Sudan of where they imported slaves point to a shift from Borno to Hausaland. In particular, Katsina, which emerged as the most competitive commercial centre in Hausaland during the late 1780s and its adjacent areas appeared to have become the main centre for the Ghadames Arab merchants, and remained

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<sup>98</sup> Ehud R Toledano, "Imperial Eunuchs of Istanbul: From Africa to the heart of Islam," *Middle Eastern Studies [Great Britain]* 20, no. 3 (1984).

<sup>99</sup> Valensi, *On the Eve of Colonialism*, 62.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

so until the 1830s.<sup>101</sup> As illustrated below, from Katsina, the Arab traders even ventured farther south to ‘Giorback’ (Yoruba) in the Oyo kingdom on the Delta forest belt.

Traveling south from Tunis to reach Katsina (the main caravan entrepot for the Ghadames caravan and their “gateway” into the African interior from the North Africa across the Sahara), involved a 40-day journey to Ghadames, where the Ghadames caravan from Tunis joined other *Godempsi* merchants who coordinated the journey to the interior. Next, these caravans left *Godempsi* (Ghadames) and crossed the Sahara to *Gats* (Ghat), which was a hub for Tripoli-Fezzan caravans headed to Borno. The journey from Ghadames to Ghat lasted about twenty days. From Ghat, they passed through a number of Saharan towns such as *Jennese* (Djanet), traveling about seven days further to *Ayir* (Air) via *Aghdir* Agades. According to Traill, Air was the principal place where they secured the finest quality of senna, which they exchanged for European products on their way back to Tunis. The next place they reached after Air, *Aghdir* (Agades), took another seven-day journey south from Katsina, their first point of entry into the interior.<sup>102</sup>

As illustrated in (**figure 2,1**) the *Godempsi* merchants’s itinerary into the interior went beyond the limits of Katsina. In fact, moving progressively from Katsina, they penetrated further south on an approximately 20-day journey to *Giuri* (Gwari). In addition to eunuchs, a considerable amount of slaves were also imported from Gwari and around the *Biurgu* (Borgu) kingdom on the western frontiers of the Nupe kingdom. In fact, from Borgu, the Arab merchants followed their *Twerkians* (Tuareg) slave dealers, progressively to southwest for another ten days to “a very extensive forest,” whose exact location is not clearly specified, is only described as “Gabba.”<sup>103</sup> Traill’s sources accurately described the said “Gabba” as a forest producing a great quantity of logwood and other dyers woods, which were usually sent to *Giorback* (Yoruba), a sea port eight days in distance from said “Gabba” forest and sold to Christians who traveled to the coast of Guinea.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, if seen in relation with the Ghadames traders’ interaction and liaison with European trade in Tunis, here too, the report presupposes yet a similar liaison

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<sup>101</sup> See Colvin, "The Commerce of Hausaland," 121 and 32.

<sup>102</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 82-3.

<sup>103</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

<sup>104</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

between the Ghadames traders and their African counterparts trading along the west coast of Guinea.<sup>105</sup> This is evident, for example, in the Arab merchants' penetration into African interior beyond Katsina, to the area around Nupe in the southwest. Obviously, from Nupe, the merchants ventured further south (through their Tuareg intermediaries) perhaps to the Kulfu confluence where they might have traded with other Borno and Hausa merchants, who, in turn, traded near the coast in Oyo or *Giorback* (Yorubaland).<sup>106</sup>

Not only does Traill's report offers useful information on the Ghadames merchant's itinerary and the process of procuring slaves and other trade products, but it also describes the complex manner of these merchants' operations in the African interior. Contrary to the evidence of Ghadames diaspora merchants stationed in a number of Saharan, western and central Sudanese towns by the mid-to the late-nineteenth century, Traill's report made no mention of Ghadames merchants stationed in any of the towns mentioned in their itinerary. This should not be surprising. Likewise, Louis Brenner, Lucie Colvin's study of Hausaland commerce from the late eighteenth to the second quarter of the nineteenth century suggests that although a few foreign merchants of Arab descent were known to have settled in the region, not until after the period following the consolidation of the Sokoto caliphate in 1820s onwards, did the settlement grew.<sup>107</sup> From Traill's report, it is obvious that when in the African interior the Ghadames Arab merchants procured merchandise through Tuareg agents. Throughout the late eighteenth century, the Tuareg were not only famed slave agents and intermediaries between the Ghadames merchants and their African counterparts, but also as Colvin has demonstrated the Tuareg of Agades controlled the Air-Ghat-Ghadames route.<sup>108</sup>

Traill report also helps to ascertain the nature of trade relations between the Ghamades merchants and their Tuareg agents. According to Traill, when the Ghadames caravan pass

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<sup>105</sup> For a general idea about North African merchants' liaison trade in the west coast of Guinea see Anene, "Between Sea and Land Routes". See also Austen, *African Economic History*.

<sup>106</sup> On the liaison trade in the African interior near the west coast see Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 82; Colvin, "The Commerce of Hausaland," 115 and Anene, "Between Sea and Land Routes", 195-6.

<sup>107</sup> See Colvin, "The Commerce of Hausaland," 109, and Louis Brenner, "The North African Trading Community in the Nineteenth-Century Sudan," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, ed. Daniel F. McCall and Norman R. Bennett (Boston: Boston University Press, 1971).

<sup>108</sup> Colvin, "The Commerce of Hausaland," 133.

through Tuareg lands, the merchants complained that they were burdened with taxes from “despotic commanders” who controlled the trade routes into interior.<sup>109</sup>

Unsurprisingly, when compared to previous periods before late 1788 and early 1789, Traill report presupposes that 1788 and 1789, in particular, marked the height of the Ghadames caravan trade since its reintegration into the burgeoning Tunisian trade economy. This height of the trade, indeed, is illustrated by the frequency of Ghadames caravans, especially their sudden leap between 1788 and 1789. Between the second-quarter of the eighteenth century and the early part of 1788, the annual average number of Ghadames caravans entering Tunis was between one to three caravans. In the early 1789, Traill noted that “there [we]re five or six yearly caravans.”<sup>110</sup> Despite Valensi’s belief that from the early eighteenth century on, the Ghadames caravan trade was static and unimpressive,<sup>111</sup> increases in the number of caravans would suggests that, indeed, the Ghadames caravan trade adapted to the economic transformation that occurred from 1786 on, and, like the Regency’s foreign trade in general, it enjoyed marked progress.

Again, in 1786, a growth in the Ghadames caravan trade was already noted as a feature of Tunis’ booming trade. Then by the early 1788, the caravan trade was fully integrated with European trade. By early 1789, it had reached its apogee. Undoubtedly, this gradual acceleration of the Ghadames trade was a spin-off of the Tunisian economic trade ‘boom’ that began in 1786, accelerated by 1787 and reached its height between 1791-1792.<sup>112</sup>

Although no other empirical estimates of the scale of the slave trade exist from the late eighteenth century, given the increased growth in the number of the Ghadames annual caravans, the period between 1788 and 1789 can be seen to represent the height of the slave trade during the late eighteenth century. Granted, Traill’s noting of period in which the number of slaves imported by the caravans was low as 150 may refer to the performance of the caravans during the last years of the turbulent period. Throughout this turbulent period, like the pattern of Tunisian trade economy as a whole, the Ghadames caravan trade in the Regency was occasionally interrupted.

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<sup>109</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 83.

<sup>110</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789," and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 82.

<sup>111</sup> Valensi, "Esclaves chrétiens et esclaves noirs," 1274-5.

<sup>112</sup> On the startling trend of Tunisian economic growth see Chater, *Dépendance et mutations précoloniale*, 175.

Until 1808, Jackson and Frank's accounts of the increased growth of Tunisian trade also shed light on the trend of continuous growth of the Ghadames caravan trade. In 1799, Jackson, a staunch advocate for British "Mediterranean trade," was in Tunis as part of his mission to draw British merchants' attention to the Mediterranean:

For many years past there have been much more attention paid to the West India than the Mediterranean trade; and our government making treaties of peace, have always been more attentive to hold West India possession, than any acquisitions in the Mediterranean."<sup>113</sup>

Jackson's mode of listing principal exports of the Mediterranean countries whose trade he reported on is especially significant in further placing the Ghadames caravan trade at the forefront of expanding European commerce in Tunisia. When explaining in detailed the Tunisian branch of the Mediterranean commerce, he correctly depicted European commerce carried with Tunis ". . . [as] very extensive," and as, in fact, the lucrative of all the northern Mediterranean commerce.<sup>114</sup> Unlike the twelve principal export products he listed as Algerian exports across the Mediterranean,<sup>115</sup> he listed up to twenty-one Tunisian export products as chief exports across the Mediterranean.<sup>116</sup> Of this list, except slaves, Jackson included four trans-Saharan trade products namely, ivory, gold dust, senna and ostrich feathers, as being among the most valuable Tunisian exports<sup>117</sup> but later remarked that "these articles of export [were] from Tunis, yet they [were] . . . not the produce of the country."<sup>118</sup> According to Jackson, they were imported by "caravans from *Tombucko*, a large city in the interior of Africa," and from the "coast of Guinea."<sup>119</sup> Interestingly enough, throughout the late eighteenth century, Jackson was the only contemporary writer to refer to caravans from Timbuktu as part of the interior trade. Up until the 1830s, except for the interstate smaller caravans that operated alongside the Ghadames regular caravans, no previous writer before the nineteenth century referred to caravans originating from

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<sup>113</sup> John Jackson, *Reflections on the commerce of the Mediterranean ... Containing a particular account of the traffic of the kingdoms of Algiers, Tunis, Sardinia, Naples & Sicily; the Morea ... the manners and customs of the inhabitants, in their commercial dealings. And a particular description of the British manufactures properly adapted for each country* (London: W. Clarke, 1804), 6.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-7.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

Timbuktu. Likewise Stanley, Jackson was not versed about the African interior. Nevertheless, his reference to caravans from *Tombukto* deserves attention. In March 1789, when James Matra filed his report on Morocco's commerce with the African interior, the consul remarked that "*Tambuctoo* . . . [was] a general Rendezvous not only for the people of this Country [i.e. Morocco] but likewise for the Traders of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, who, as [Matra was told] go through Oledulgerid" in order to partake in the commerce at Timbuktu.<sup>120</sup> In this sense, Jackson might have actually observed, perhaps, this atypical branch of trade with Timbuktu.

All the while, around 1808-9, al-Timbuktawi, the Timbuktu Muslim cleric who sojourned in Tunis and wrote his *risalat* (treatise) condemning the Hausa-bori practitioners in Tunis, also pointed out that some of the slave population he found in Tunis came from Timbuktu or its adjacent areas. Out of the seven households that he identified as having ethnic or hometown associations of the bori practitioners in Tunis, al-Timbuktawi associated two households, (1) Dar Songhay and (2) Dar Bambara, with the Niger Bend.<sup>121</sup> Both were closely related to Timbuktu.

Until 1808, the increased growth of the slave trade continued. While al-Timbuktawi's treatise offers a rare insight into pattern of west and central Sudanese slaves settlements that evolved in parallel with the increased growth of the slave trade, except his advocate for re-enslavement of those slaves he charged as *kuffar* (infidels), the treatise contains less significant information on the slave trade.<sup>122</sup> Frank detailed account of Tunisian trade with the African interior is more revealing about the pattern of the slave trade in the early 1800. This account based upon his previous experience in Egypt is as valuable as Traill's official detailed report. More than Traill, Frank, before coming to Tunis in 1802, already wrote a memoir, in which he described in detailed the Egyptian branch of the slave trade. Likewise Traill, compared to the nearly ten caravans entering the Regency from Constantine, Frank reported only three regular annual *Ghadamissyah's* caravans "seulement" as entering Tunis from the African interior but concluded that, except for the Constantine caravans, the *Ghadamissyah* caravans were "les plus

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<sup>120</sup> Cited in Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 79-80.

<sup>121</sup> See Ismael Musah Montana, "Ahmad Ibn al-Qadi al-Timbuktawi on the Bori Ceremonies of Sudan-Tunis," in *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy (New Jersey: Marcus Weiner Publishers, 2003), 179; Limam, "Some Documents Concerning Slavery in Tunisia," 352, and Chater, *Dépendance et mutations précoloniales*, 147.

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, Ismael Musah Montana, "Enslavable Infidels: Sudan-Tunis as a Classificatory Categorization for New Wave of Enslaved Africans in the Regency of Tunis," *The Maghreb Review* 29, no. 1-4 (2004).

considérables sont celles qui viennent de l'intérieur de l'Afrique."<sup>123</sup> In fact, quite the contrary to Chater's belief that the increased European trade encouraged inter-Maghreb caravans while at the same time led to a decay in ability of trans-Saharan caravans to survive, Frank's image of the Ghadames caravan trade points to its continuous growth.<sup>124</sup> It is clear that at the time Frank was in Tunis, the Regency's trade with the African interior was steadily flourishing at impressive levels such that he depicted Tunis as being financial capital, similarly to London, Marseilles and Amsterdam, for the African interior.<sup>125</sup> In a sense, his report that there were three annual caravans "seulement"<sup>126</sup> entering Tunis from the African interior, if viewed in relation with Traill previous report of frequency of the caravans tends to suggest Frank might have been aware of previous average of the caravans ranging "five or six yearly caravans."<sup>127</sup>

Apparently, the continuing trend of the Ghadames caravan trade's growth was further illustrated in Frank's estimate that at his time the annual average number of slaves imported by the caravans amounted to between 1,000 and 1,200 slaves.<sup>128</sup> Yet again, his estimate suggests that the annual average of slaves imported to Tunis stayed, consistently, at the same level or even increased after the late 1780s, especially if one considers that not the whole of the 1,000 to 1,300 slaves Traill reported did reached Tunis. Frank's account taken overall with Jackson's quantitative description of slaves as the "chief products" of the Ghadames caravan trade, further bolster the continuous influx of slaves. To be sure, this continuous influx of slaves suggests that the duration of the increased growth in the scale of the slave trade may have lasted for almost two decades. In assessing Traill's figures (1,000 to 1,300 per annum) and Frank's figures (of 1,000 to 1,200 slaves,) it can be presupposed that there was an increase of about 20 percent in the scale of the slave trade between the late 1780s and the early 1800s. This is not to suggest, however, that this increased influx of slaves was not without interruptions. According to Frank, there were times, in which slaves imported by the caravans were only about 200 slaves.

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<sup>123</sup> Frank, *Tunis*, 122.

<sup>124</sup> See for example Chater, "Le Commerce Caravanier au Maghreb et ses mutations au cours de l'etre precoloniale," 99.

<sup>125</sup> See Frank, *Tunis*, 103. See also Limam, *La Politique de Hammouda Pacha*, 302.

<sup>126</sup> According to Frank, compared to the three annual caravans "seulement" entering Tunis, caravans from the interior entering Cairo was limited to one annual caravan. See Frank, *Tunis*, 116.

<sup>127</sup> See F.O. 77 1789/3, "Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789."

<sup>128</sup> Frank, *Tunis*, 116.

However, Frank also implied that when the number of slaves brought by the caravans was fewer than its annual average of 1,200 to 1,000, it usually was exceptional case.<sup>129</sup> According Frank, such exceptional cases at times reflected on the significance attached to the arrival of the entire *Ghadamissya* caravans as disappointing. Hence their arrival caused “no sensation.”<sup>130</sup>

Although Traill report showed that Hausaland was the centre of the Ghadames caravan trade in the African interior, Frank, like Stanley, observed that in addition to few slaves brought from *Houffeh* (apparently, Haussah) or Hausaland, the vast majority of the slaves sold at the Tunis market were those imported principally from Borno.<sup>131</sup> Next in proportion to Borno slaves were Fezzani slaves who were less valued compared to the slaves from Borno. Accordingly, other slaves also originate from a yet unidentified place that Frank said was Hawnia.<sup>132</sup>

Again, in spite of evidence of the increased growth of the Ghadames caravan trade, between 1808 until the end of Hammuda Pasha’s rule in 1814, the post 1786 golden age was slowed down. After 1808, there was a gradual slowdown in the growth of the Ghadames caravan trade. In 1808, the famous Scottish and English merchant, Thomas MacGill, was the first to refer to declining of the Ghadames caravan trade. Like Frank, MacGill reported that three annual *Gdamsia* caravans from the interior of Africa still came to Tunis, however he remarked that these caravans “[we]re not by any means reckoned rich.”<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, MacGill also observed that compared to the entire caravan network in the Regency, *Gdamsia caravans* remained the “chief” caravans entering the Regency.<sup>134</sup> Unsurprisingly, the decline of significance of the Ghadames caravans was reflected in the number of slaves imported by these caravans. After his explicit reference to a drop in the value of the *Gdamsia* caravans, although giving no estimate of the average number of slaves brought by these caravans, unlike Trail and Frank, MacGill, at least vaguely stated that some of these caravans “bring slaves to the amount of two hundred slaves.”<sup>135</sup>

By 1811, Blaquièrè, another British advocate of Mediterranean commerce who stayed in Tunis only three years after MacGill gave a gloomy account of the Ghadames caravan trade. Prior coming to Tunis Blaquièrè reported (in the same year) on the caravan trade between Tripoli

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> MacGill, *An account of Tunis*, 148.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

and Tunis as “very remarkable.”<sup>136</sup> However, while in Tunis, he implied that the Ghadames caravan trade was in utter decline. More so than MacGill showed in his account of the trade slowdown during 1808, Blaquièrè implied that during his stay in Tunis, like the Constantine caravans, the Ghadames caravans were in apparent state of decay:

an extensive and lucrative commerce was formerly established between this [Regency of Tunis] and the interior, particularly Ghadames and Constantina: caravan went to and from the former twice a year, bringing with them the productions of the Nigritia, and taking back those of Europe; a similar trade was kept up with the latter.<sup>137</sup>

The decline of the Ghadames caravan trade that both MacGill and Blaquièrè documented after 1808 was not unexpected. It could conceivably be traced to two main causes. First of all, Hammuda Pasha’s successive wars with Venice (resulting from trade dispute) intensified after the late 1780s. Between 1807-8 wars with Algiers, which led to the blockage of the La Gollete port proved destructive for the Regency’s foreign trade across the Mediterranean.<sup>138</sup> By 1808, when MacGill noted the full economic effects of this instability on European trade, he also remarked the effects of this instability on the Ghadames caravan trade as ruinous:

They [ostrich feathers] were brought from the interior of Africa by caravans of Gdamsia. During these few years past, they have not been brought in such quantities as formerly, perhaps on the account the difficulty in transporting them to Italy; but there is no doubt that if they were sought for, they would again become abundant.<sup>139</sup>

Second, regional developments in central Sudan that weakened Katsina in Hausaland, in part, had some effects on the decline of the slave trade after 1808. Throughout the late 1780s, Katsina, which had been important commercial trading point, like Tripolitanian merchants, for Ghadames caravan trade. After 1804, and until the 1820s, the instability caused the Jihad wars’ disrupted the trans-Saharan trade flow.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Edward Blaquièrè, *Letters from the Mediterranean; containing a civil and political account of Sicily, Tripoly, Tunis, and Malta: with biographical sketches*, vol. 1 (London: H. Colburn, 1813), 48.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, Moalla, *The Regency of Tunis and the Ottoman Porte*. See especially chapter three. See also Julien, *History of North Africa*, 331.

<sup>139</sup> MacGill, *An account of Tunis*, 147.

<sup>140</sup> For extensive coverage on this point see Richard Hull, "The Impact of the Fulani Jihad on Interstate Relations in Central Sudan Katsina emirate: A Case Study," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, ed. Daniel F. McCall and Norman R. Bennett (Boston: Boston University Press, 1971) and Colvin, "The Commerce of Hausaland."

### 3. The Shifting Patterns of the Ghadames Caravan and Diversification of its Secondary Goods

Besides the noted increases in the frequency of the Ghadames caravan and the scale of its slave trade, a noted diversification in secondary trade articles became evident. While slaves, gold dust, leather products and ivory had a long history as chief staples of the caravan trade, a number of secondary trade articles burst upon the scene from the late 1780s and began to assume more significance. However, they did not become as important as slaves. Especially noteworthy in this period were senna and ostrich feathers, which were re-exported in large quantities across the Mediterranean to European destinations, particularly to the Italian cities of Leghorn, Venice, and Genoa. Prior to the reign of Hammuda Pasha, these articles were not a major component of the Ghadames trade.<sup>141</sup>

In 1789, after listing senna, gold dust, ostrich feathers and some few elephant teeth as the principal articles of commerce, Traill noted that “the most considerable article of all these was senna.”<sup>142</sup> Until the late 1780s, senna, a bush plant whose leaves were widely used in Europe for papermaking and other industrial purposes had not been a significant part of the Ghadames caravan trade to the Regency. However, from the late 1780s until the early 1840s, it did become a principal import of the Ghadames caravan trade. According to Traill, when entering the Regency from the African interior, Ghadames merchants brought up to 3,100 weight of cantaar of senna to Gerba (Jerba), which being the first place the Ghadames caravan stopped after returning from the interior in the Regency. There, they were forced by the Ben Ayeds Caidat family controlling the southwestern route of the caravan trade to dispose of at least two-thirds of the quantity to the governor of Jerba.<sup>143</sup> Again, like Tunis, Jerba was an important commercial

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<sup>141</sup> Dyer’s study of Libyan foreign trade between 1750 and 1830 also stresses a diversification of the caravan trade goods. Similarly to the trade dynamics in Tunisia, Dyer sees this diversification as a response to the caravan trade’s interaction with expanding European trade in North Africa. See Mark Frederick Dyer, “The Foreign Trade of Western Libya, 1750-1830” (PH.D, Boston University, 1978). See especially chapter two.

<sup>142</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, “Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789,” and Hallett, ed., *Records of the African Association*, 84.

<sup>143</sup> F.O. 77 1789/3, “Robert Traill to Lord Sidney, Tunis, February 1st, 1789,” and Hallett,

entrepôt for Jews and European merchants trading with Malta and other Italian cities such as Leghorn, Venice and Genoa. Jewish merchants monopolized the island's trade to Italy; in turn, they shipped the bulk of the senna that was retained in Jerba to Italy. Traill stated that, indeed senna was of little use in Tunis and was generally sold for about £3. 10. to £4. Sterling per 100 weight and shipped to Europe. It is unclear if the gold dust, which he said seldom amounts to the value of £500 sterling was also re-exported to Europe.

In addition to senna, trade in other trans-Saharan products such as ostrich feathers flourished. Ostrich feathers, used in the textile industry, did not become a well-known article until the late 1780s, with their increased re-exportation to European destinations across the Mediterranean. Traill noted that in early 1789, ostrich feathers were of little value and were sold at £5 to £6 pounds sterling per skin. Between 1789 and 1808, however, they saw enormous growth as a result of continuous expansion of European trade in the Regency. While Frank described ostrich feathers as the main trade article of *Ghadamisyyah* caravan trade "après la vent des esclaves noire,"<sup>144</sup> because of their value to the European commerce, Jackson divided them into three main classes according to their weight and quality.<sup>145</sup>

Conversely, a survey of the shifting nature of European goods exported from the Regency of Tunis into the African interior also point to the diversification of Ghadames caravan trade goods. This trend can be seen clearly in the European products destined for retail in the African interior, particularly following the increased trade's interaction between the European and the Ghadames caravan trade after 1788. In 1799, Jackson, for instance, noted that in return for ostrich feathers, ivory, senna and gold dust, European goods that the Ghadames merchants took back to the African interior mainly consisted of "long ells, coarse woolen, fire-arms, gunpowder, watches, and hard-ware."<sup>146</sup> Compared to period before the late 1780s, Jackson was among the earlier writers to explicitly list firearms and gunpowder as among the European hardware re-exported from Tunis to the African interior.<sup>147</sup> Throughout the previous period leading to the

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ed., *Records of the African Association*, 84.

<sup>144</sup> Frank, *Tunis*, 123.

<sup>145</sup> Jackson, *Reflections on the commerce of the Mediterranean*, 76-7.

<sup>146</sup> See *Ibid.*, 76. For Nyssen, see Abun-Nasr, "The Tunisian State in the Eighteenth Century," 57-8.

<sup>147</sup> According to Smaldone, firearms trade did not become extensive in the central Sudan until much later in nineteenth century. See Joseph P. Smaldone, "The Firearms Trade in the Central Sudan in the Nineteenth Century," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, ed. Daniel F.

1790s, firearms are hardly discernable in the extant Europeans account of European goods exported from Tunis to the African interior. Overall, the above noted diversification of secondary trade goods was a by-product of the increasing interaction between the Ghadames caravan trade and the expanding European trade in the Regency.

#### 4. Changing Structure of the Slave Trade

Again, the effects of the structural transformations, discussed earlier, on the slave trade are especially noticeably in its increasing complexity as well as the organization of *suq el-Berka* (the Tunis slave market). Once in Tunis, the slaves imported by the Ghadames caravans were auctioned by an appointed broker called a *dellel* or *sensal* (*simsar*),<sup>148</sup> who in turn was regulated by the *caid el-abid* (office of the slave trade) as well as the *amin* of the *Suq* (private trustee of the *suq el-Turk*, Turkish Market) to which the slave market was adjacent. Since the slave market was adjacent to the *suq el-Turk*, it is not clear if the *dellel* was a Ghadamesi. As was generally the case, the *dellel*, however, was patronized by the, *amin*, private trustee in charge of regulating the market.<sup>149</sup> Still, the *dellel* conducted auctions for the sale of slaves and also played an intermediary role between the Ghadames merchants and the Moorish or Muslim clients who alone were allowed to purchase slaves sold in the market.

As was the case when Stanley reported restrictions imposed on the sale of slaves in 1786 in the slave market, at the turn of the 1800 these restrictions remained strictly enforced. Frank stated that “les Chrétiens et les juifs ne peuvent acheter des Nègres, cette prérogative n’étant accordée qu’aux Musulmans.”<sup>150</sup> In the process of the sale of slaves, Frank revealed that slaves were to be subjected to a careful examination. Once a deal was reached for the purchase of a slave, the transaction was then transferred to the *katebs*, (clerks) who sat in a small-room adjacent to *suq el-Berka* and who were responsible for drawing up a *heddjéh* (bill of contract) to avoid any kind of litigation between parties involved in the transaction.<sup>151</sup> In a sense, the purchaser of a slave was not obliged to pay the total sum of sold slave instantly, and as condition

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McCall and Norman R. Bennett (Boston: Boston University Press, 1971), 152-4.

<sup>148</sup> See Frank, *Tunis*, 116.

<sup>149</sup> N. S. Hopkins, "Traditional Tunis and Its Transformations," in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* (1974), 430.

<sup>150</sup> Frank, *Tunis*, 116.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

of the sale, he could retain a slave for further inspection for up to three days.<sup>152</sup> Frank also observed that some proportion of the slaves sold at Tunis was destined for re-exportation to the Levant.<sup>153</sup> Surprisingly, although Stanley mentioned the basic structure of the slave market, most of the intricate complexities of the market documented in Frank's memoir did not appear in Stanley's account.

As Klein and Robertson have shown, compared to the Atlantic slave trade, slaves imported across the Sahara were mostly female slaves and children who tended to have been at the forefront of the slave trade due largely to domestic demand.<sup>154</sup> Accordingly, the vast majority of slaves imported to Tunis since the late eighteenth century and sold in the Tunis slave market reflect Klein and Robertson's thesis. According to Frank, most of the slaves bought or resold at the Tunis' slave market were women and children. The mode of sale of slaves was generally a direct sale. No written evidence of barter is available in this period although some oral accounts do point to barter as another form of the sale of slaves. The range of prices that slaves fetched varied according to age and gender. Young, prepubescent female slaves sold in the range of 600 piastres. However, the closer a female slave girl was to puberty, the higher her price was. According to Frank, both young boys and adult male slaves were less expensive than female slaves.<sup>155</sup>

Aside from gender and age factors, defects found in the physical character of a slave could affect the price for which he or she fetched.<sup>156</sup> As a result, provisions were made to return slaves with physical defects to the market. In this sense, if a person purchased a slave and was not satisfied, the slave could be returned to the dealer and the slave in question would be resold. Conversely, slaves themselves could ask to be resold if they were not satisfied with the person who bought them.<sup>157</sup>

A careful analysis of Frank's account of the manner slaves were sold at the *suq el-Berka* suggests that a great deal of shift occurred in the organization of the slave market. For instance, when Stanley observed the slave market in 1786, he reported the market for black slaves was

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, *Women and slavery in Africa* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

<sup>155</sup> Frank, *Tunis*, 117.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 116-7.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 116.

held every Friday. After 1808, this was clearly no longer the case. As the slave trade increased, the weekly market for sale of slaves became a daily affair. Undoubtedly, the increase in the influx of slaves to Tunis that occurred in 1788 accounted for the noticeable changes in the slave market. Added to this, the custom of reselling and returning of suspected slaves for defects also contributed to the daily business of the slave market. Consequently, the sale of slaves in the market was no longer limited to the arrival of Ghadames caravans from the interior.

## **5. Conclusion**

This paper has emphasized the implications of the local, regional, Mediterranean and structural transformations in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Tunisia on the slave trade. From the early 18th century, the Ghadames caravan trade, which conducted the slave trade between Tunisia and the African interior, had been a marginal branch of Tunisian foreign trade. Despite the slave trade common depiction as insignificant, the structural transformations that occurred after 1782 affected the dynamics of the slave trade. It needs to be stressed that, in spite of the compounded economic effects of the great plague of 1784-5 on the Ghadames caravans entering Tunis, following the resumption of economic activities after the spring of 1785, the slave trade enjoyed significant growth in scope, pace and scale.

This significant growth in scope, and the scale of the slave trade was particularly pronounced between 1786 and 1788. As shown in the study, this significant growth was paralleled by the growth of the Tunisian trade economy. Following the great plague of 1784-5, the solid economic and commercial reforms that Hammuda Pasha implemented led to the flourishing of the Ghadames caravan trade, especially in the last few years that followed the trade's reorganization and its integration into the Regency's foreign trade. Then, from 1789 until 1808, increased European trade in Tunis further boosted the growth of the Ghadames caravan trade. The far-reaching implications of the increased European trade on the Ghadames caravan trade can be discerned, first, in the increased number of its caravans entering Tunis, mainly between 1788 and 1789. Similar to the effects of structural transformations on Tunisian trade economy, these developments signaled a turning point for the Ghadames caravan trade, just as it did for Tunisian external trade. This is especially evident when Ghadames trade in this period is compared to that of the early part of the 18th century, a time that Valensi describes the slave trade as static and unspectacular.

Along with implications of the structural transformations on the scale of the slave trade, the burgeoning trade of the Ghadames caravan trade also shaped the structure of the Tunis' slave market. Consequently, as Stanley noted, while in 1786 the Tunis slave market was held every Friday, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the market was open seven days a week.

Conversely, from 1806 until 1814, just as the Tunisian trade economy was declining as a result of Hammuda's successive wars, the Ghadames caravan trade was slowed down. A key factor behind this trend was Hammuda Pasha's lengthy war with Venice, which unstabilized Tunis' trade across the Mediterranean. However, the Bey's disastrous wars with Algiers proved destructive for the Ghadames caravan trade (as was the case with the Constantine caravans). Other developments in central Sudan, especially the Sokoto caliphate pre-consolidation wars, causing instability in Katsina and around the main areas of the Ghadames trade in Hausaland, were no less a contributing factor in the slowdown of the Ghadames caravan trade.

Thus in order to develop a deep and thorough understanding of the changing patterns of the slave trade in the period examined in this paper, it is necessary to place the slave trade within the implications of the broader spectrum of the structural transformations occurring from the late eighteenth-century Mediterranean basin.