

The Influence of the Hilalian Tribes on Social Culture in Central Maghreb During the Hammadid Era (457–547 AH / 1065–1152 AD)

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Abstract

The Hamadid state emerged following Hammad ibn Bulukin ibn Ziri secession and subsequent autonomous governance over an extensive region of central Maghreb, stretching from Bouna's eastern frontiers to Tlemcen's western boundaries, He established his capital in Kalaa, where he fortified his position during his administration of Ashir and conflicts with the Zirids. Subsequently, Al-Nasir relocated the state's administrative center from Kalaa to Bejaia, designating it as his residence. Both cities flourished as cultural hubs within central Maghreb. Toward the conclusion of the first half of the fifth century Hijri (eleventh century AD), Hilalian tribes began expanding throughout the rural and desert regions of central Maghreb. This expansion generated immediate socioeconomic consequences while Moreover, its social and cultural repercussions, which have profoundly reshaped the demographic composition, customs, traditions, and culture of the central Maghreb by giving them an Arab-Bedouin imprint, have left lasting traces for long duration.

Keywords:, central Maghreb, Hamamadids, Hilalian Tribes, Arab-Bedouin Imprint.

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I- Introduction:

The Hammadid dynasty represents the second most expansive political entity to emerge in the central Maghreb region. Established by Hammad ibn Bulkan following his secession from the Zirid administration in Kairouan, the state continued under his successors' governance. This polity benefited from its strategic geographical positioning, and at its territorial zenith during certain historical periods, it extended from the western outskirts of Fez in the far Maghreb to the eastern boundaries of Kairouan, while reaching southward to encompass the Zab territory. During the fifth century AH (eleventh century CE), a significant religious and political schism developed between the Zirids and the Fatimid Caliphate based in Egypt. This conflict prompted the Fatimids to dispatch the Arab Hilalian tribes, previously settled in Upper Egypt, toward the Maghreb region. Consequently, substantial military confrontations erupted between the Zirid state and these Hilalian tribes, resulting in detrimental outcomes for the Zirid administration, including territorial contraction and urban devastation. Subsequently, these Hilalian tribes began penetrating the Hammadid territories in central transformations in the state's demographic composition as well as its economic Maghreb, establishing their presence throughout rural and desert regions, thereby instigating, social, and cultural frameworks.

This article aims to highlight the aspects of sociocultural influences generated by the establishment of the Hilalian tribes in central Maghreb under the authority of the Hamadids; influences that have far transcended the mere spread of the Eastern Bedouin language in rural areas and have significantly contributed to the formation of the social and cultural identity of central Maghreb, while consolidating its ties with the East in cultural and social terms, where these ties had previously been limited to the political and religious spheres alone.

Research Problem:

And the topic raises the following question: how did the entry, spread, and settlement of the Hilalian tribes in the Hamadid central Maghreb from the fifth century of the Hijra / eleventh century AD influence social culture, and what are its manifestations?

In order to respond to this question, the article first focuses on defining the Hamadian state, then examines the entry and diffusion of the Hilalian tribes

into its territories in central Maghreb, before presenting significant examples of the various sociocultural influences generated by this new population influx.

Importance of the research:

The significance of this research lies in the fact that it addresses a pivotal period in the history of the central Maghreb under the Hammadid dynasty, during which the Hilalian tribes exerted a decisive influence, imparting to society a significant Arab social and cultural imprint that deserves to be further highlighted.

Previous studies:

The subject of the impact of the Hilalian tribes on the Maghreb in general has been studied by Orientalists and Maghrebian researchers influenced by French Orientalism, such as Ernest Mercier, Georges Marçais, and El Hadi Roger Idriss, who sought to minimize this social and cultural impact, limiting it to the diffusion of the Bedouin Arabic language in desert regions, and to the integration of the Hilalian tribes into the local social and cultural fabric, while ignoring the role of these tribes in the significant change in demographic composition and the extent of their social and cultural influence over a large part of central Maghreb

II- The Hammadid State in Central Maghreb:

The Hammadids state originated as an offshoot of the Zirid state in the central Maghreb, emerging following Hammad ben Bulukin ben Ziri's separation and declaration of independence. This state controlled significant territory in what constitutes modern Algeria, extending from the Bône region in the east to Tlemcen's boundaries in the west. Initially establishing its capital at Kalaa, where it consolidated power during its governance of Achir and military campaigns against the Zirids, the Hammadid state later pledged allegiance to the Abbasids, contrasting with the Zirids' support of the Fatimids. This positioned it as the second prominent state in Algeria during the medieval era. After Al-Nasir ben Aalnas founded Béjaïa, the capital was relocated there from La Kalaa, with both cities subsequently developing into significant civilizational centers in the central Maghreb.

II.1 The Castle Phase (398 AH – 461 AH / 1007 – 1068 AD):

The Beni Hammad Castle was established by Hammad ibn Bulukin ibn Ziri ibn Menad al-Sanhaji in 398 AH/1007 AD as the inaugural capital of the Hammadid dynasty, following their separation from the Zirid state (Oewais, 1991, p.89). This division began manifesting in 387 AH/996 AD when Hammad opposed the Zirids' Fatimid allegiance, instead declaring loyalty to the Sunnis and Abbasids (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p.325). Hammad subsequently fortified the castle, making it his permanent residence throughout his reign while competing with Badis for dominance over central Maghreb. The fortress served as a sanctuary for the Hammadids during their conflicts with the Zirids since Bulukin's era. In 407 AH/1016 AD, hostilities erupted between al-Mu'izz ibn Badis and Hammad ibn Bulukin (Ibn Adhari, 1983, p.269), resulting in Hammad's defeat and a conditional peace agreement. This formally divided the Sanhajian state in 408 AH/1017 AD into two distinct entities: the dynasty of Mansur's descendants (Banu Bulukin) in Kairouan and Lower Maghreb, and the Bnu Hammad ibn Bulukin in the castle in Central Maghreb marking the official establishment of the Banu Hammad state (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p.324).

II.2 Béjaïa period (461–547 AH / 1068–1152 AD):

The Banu Hammad Fortress served as the capital of the Hammadid dynasty from its establishment by founder Hammad, who passed away in 419 AH/1027 AD, through successive reigns including Al-Qa'id ibn Hammad (deceased 446 AH/1054 AD), Muhsin ibn Al-Qa'id (whose brief reign lasted merely nine months), and Bulukin ibn Muhammad ibn Hammad, whose period represented a transitional phase between Muhsin and Al-Nasir (Ibn al-Wardi, 1996, p.303). Despite the fortress flourishing as a prosperous metropolis and formidable stronghold during his sovereignty, Al-Nasir ibn Aalnas ibn Hammad preferred not to reside there, ultimately establishing Béjaïa and relocating his capital there in 461 AH/1068 AD (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p.43).

The renowned geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi portrays Bejaia in his distinguished Book of Countries thus: "A coastal city situated between Ifriqiya and the Maghreb. It was established by Al-Nasir ibn Aalnas ibn Hammad ibn Ziri circa 457 AH / 1064 AD. It lies four days' journey from the Algiers of the Banu Muzghanna (modern-day Algiers). Serving as the

capital of the Banu Hammad kingdom, it was also referred to as Al-Nasiriya after its founder. Unlike other towns, the city possessed no distinct provisions or special resources; rather, it functioned as a royal seat from which vessels could embark and voyage in all directions" (Al-Hamawi, 1995, p.339). According to historical sources, the impetus for its construction and Al-Nasir's relocation there stemmed from counsel provided by an envoy of the Zirid prince Tamim ibn al-Mu'izz ibn Badis, who was mediating their disputes (Zaghloul, 1993, p. 456). While journeying to the citadel, this envoy traversed Bejaia, an area inhabited by a Berber tribe of the Sanhaja, and recognized the strategic importance and defensive capabilities of the location. Upon his recommendation, Al-Nasir commissioned the city's construction and subsequently relocated there. Following his death in 481 AH/1088 AD, his son Al-Mansur continued the city's development, establishing its Grand Mosque and erecting palatial structures (Ibn al-Athir, 1987, p. 373).

II.3 The Battle of Sabiba and the Entry of the Hilalian Tribes into the Central Hammadid Maghreb:

Following the defeat of al-Mu'izz ibn Badis and his Sanhaja allies at the Battle of Haydaran in 443 AH/1052 AD, instability ensued as Hilalian tribes seized control of fertile lands, diminishing the Zirid state's influence. Recognizing the imminent threat posed by the Hilalians, the Hammadi rulers strategically renewed their allegiance to the Fatimid Caliph in Egypt to prevent him from mobilizing these tribes against them. Subsequently, Al-Nasir established an alliance with the Athbaj Hilalian tribe to counter the growing power of the Banu Riah, who were aligned with the Banu Ziri (Mercier, 1888, pp. 28-35). The Athbaj sought Al-Nasir's support against Banu Riah, presenting him with an opportunity to resolve longstanding conflicts with the Zirids. Upon learning that al-Nasir intended to advance upon his capital al-Mahdiyya, having formed coalitions with the Zenata under al-Mu'izz ibn Ziri ibn Atiya, as well as with Sanhaja and the Athbaj of Banu Hilal, Tamim ibn al-Mu'izz began preparations for defense. He successfully rallied the Banu Riah Hilalian tribes, persuading them of the necessity to unite against al-Nasir's campaign, which threatened their established privileges and presence in the region.

The two factions mobilized their respective armies in anticipation of the impending conflict. Al-Nasir's coalition comprised his conventional military units, including Sudanese enslaved warriors and contingents from the Sanhaja and Zenata tribes, alongside his Hilalian confederates from the Banu Uday and Banu Athbaj. Conversely, Tamim ibn al-Mu'izz's forces incorporated the Hilalian tribes of Banu Riyah and Banu Sulaym. The military engagement occurred in 457 AH / 1065 AD on the Sbeiba plain (Al-Hamawi, 1995, p.76), situated west of Kairouan. Al-Nasir's forces suffered a decisive defeat, with casualties among the Sanhaja and Zenata amounting to twenty-four thousand personnel. The Hilalian Banu Riyah appropriated the wealth, armaments, and livestock from Al-Nasir's encampment and forwarded Al-Nasir's standards, percussion instruments, pavilions, and ceremonial trumpets to Tamim ibn al-Mu'izz, who declined these offerings and returned them, expressing regret for his refusal out of deference to his familial connection with Al-Nasir al-Hammadi (Al-Hamawi, 1995, p.351). The catastrophic outcome at the Battle of Sbeiba rendered the central Maghreb vulnerable to the Hilalian tribes previously allied with Al-Nasir. Following his retreat from the battlefield in defeat and return to his fortification, his adherents from the Athbaj and Uday tribes pursued him, dispersed throughout the rural territories, encircled the fortress, and established their hegemony over its periphery (Mercier, 1888, p. 36).

III- The spread of the Hilalian tribes in central Maghreb:

The Battle of Sbeiba precipitated the expansion of Hilalian tribes, enabling them to establish dominion over extensive territories across central Maghreb. Each tribe maintained distinct domains commensurate with their societal position, military prowess, and diplomatic relations with the Hamadid state. These tribal confederations comprised the Athbaj, Riyah, Zughba, and Maa'qil.

III.1 The Athbaj Tribes:

The Athbaj Tribes of the Hilalian group migrated into the central Maghreb, establishing their presence around Zab (Al-Hamawi, 1995, p. 123), Tebessa, and M'Sila regions, extending as far as Qal'at Bani Hammad. They formed strategic alliances with the Hamadi tribes against other Hilalian factions, subsequently dividing the Zab territories that faced the

Aurès Mountains—from eastern regions to Tolga (Al-Bakri, 1992, p. 740) in the west, and from Constantine southward to Hodna—among themselves. The Doreid tribes subsequently occupied territories spanning from Annaba to Constantine (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 52) El Tarf, Meskalla (Khenchela), and the southern Aurès along the northern desert periphery, thus controlling the most fertile lands from Annaba to southern Constantine. The Dhahak and Latif tribes established settlements in the Zab region proximate to Biskra. Meanwhile, the Qarfa tribes expanded throughout the eastern Aurès Mountains to the Zab, ultimately reaching desert territories. Concurrently, the Ayad tribes dispersed across the Hodna Mountains, spanning from east to west (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 53, 54).

III.2 The Riah Tribes:

Originally situated on the periphery of Béja (Al-Hamawi, 1995, p. 314), these nomadic groups gradually expanded into central Maghreb during the Hamadid era, with some factions dispersing across the regions of Bône and Constantine. Additional tribal segments entered through Sebiba, extending their presence to Tébessa, the Aurès mountains, and Zab. Characterized by their perpetual mobility, the Riah tribes continuously migrated between El-Jérid and Kairouan, and from Zab to M'sila, ultimately reaching as far as Ouargla (Hassan, 1999, p. 50). By the late fifth century AH (eleventh century AD), they had established themselves as rivals to the Athbaj tribes for control of the Zab and Hadna territories (Ibn Khaldun 1983, vol. 6, 1983, p. 74).

III.3 The Maaqil Tribes:

Among the Hilalian tribes the Maaqil were both numerically inferior and militarily weaker, consequently restricting themselves to the peripheries of the African desert and central Maghreb regions (Al-Nasiri, 2001, p. 231). Subsequently, a faction known as the Tha'aliba migrated toward the highlands of central Maghreb near Médéa (Al-Bakri, 1992, p. 732), encircling the Beni Mezghenna territory in Algeria. The remaining Maaqil population advanced into the desert, establishing settlements adjacent to the Zenata Berber communities in the barren territories south of Tlemcen, as well as in the desert expanses of far Maghreb and Sijilmasa (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 119).

III.4 Zughbah Tribes:

The Zughba tribes established settlements in the vicinity of Tripoli and Gabes (Abu al-Hassan, 2019, p. 117) following the Hilalian tribal division of Ifriqiya (Lower Maghreb). They maintained their presence in these regions until the arrival of the Banu Sulaym tribes, descendants of Mansur, who constituted the second wave dispatched by the Fatimids to the Maghreb. The Banu Sulaym exerted pressure on the Hilalians, compelling them to migrate westward. Subsequently, the Banu Riyah tribes engaged in conflict with them and expelled them from Ifriqiya in 466 AH / 1073 AD. In response, the Zughba tribes proceeded toward the central Maghreb, traversing the southern edge of the Saharan Atlas Mountains until they reached the territories of the Hammadi state in the desert near Jabal Rashid (presently known as Jabal Laamour). The Zughba tribes then commenced a northward expansion, extending their presence to the Hamza Plain (Al-Bakri, 1992, p. 731) and the Matiya Plain (Ibn Khaldun 2004, vol. 2, p. 86).

IV- The stance of the Hammadiyya regarding the entry of the Hilalian tribes into the central Maghreb:

The Hilalian tribes occupied a significant position within the Hammadian state, with the Hammadian princes acknowledging their formidable strength and importance. Consequently, they implemented a strategic policy of reconciliation and alliance with these tribes, bestowing gifts and financial subsidies upon their sheikhs and chieftains to preserve peace and stability. Al-Nasir ibn Aalnas regularly designated a portion of the annual harvest to the Hilalians to prevent insurrection and safeguard his capital, a diplomatic approach subsequently adopted by other princes of the state in their dealings with the Hilalian tribes (Ibn Adhari, 1983, p.124).

It can be inferred that the Hamadi state rulers lacked the capacity to challenge the Hilalian tribes, thus allowing these tribes to establish a dominant position. Consequently, the Hamadi princes came to depend on them during both peaceful and wartime periods, as well as for political and diplomatic engagements. When Al-Mansur ibn Al-Nasir gained control of Constantine, he selected one of the Athbaj sheikhs to govern the city (Idris, 1992, p. 327).

In general, the Hamadid state demonstrated a successful diplomatic approach in its relations with the Hilalian tribes, as evidenced by the contrasting outcomes observed when these nomadic groups entered Zirid

territories versus Hamadid domains. The Hamadid fortress suffered considerably less damage compared to Kairouan, which endured substantial destruction, pillaging, and devastation. This suggests the Hamadids implemented superior policies compared to the Zirids, effectively mitigating the Hilalian threat to the central Maghreb region, even though these tribes did exert some pressure on the fortress (Al-Mili, 1989, p. 250).

The incursion of the Hilalian tribes into the Lesser Maghreb precipitated a profound disruption to agricultural activities, ultimately resulting in their deterioration. These nomadic peoples appropriated extensive cultivable territories; however, being unfamiliar with sophisticated tillage and cultivation methodologies, they implemented agricultural practices only minimally. Their primary occupation remained pastoral husbandry, with their migratory patterns dictated by the pursuit of suitable grazing lands for their livestock (Marçais, 1991, p. 238).

The infiltration of these tribes into the central Maghreb and Hammadi territories occurred under varying circumstances. Their strategic alliance with the Hammadi forces against the Zirids, followed by their retreat alongside Al-Nasir after the Sebiba defeat, facilitated their initial entry and subsequent expansion throughout the central Maghreb. They transported substantial livestock assets (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 293), including pedigreed Arabian horses, camels, donkeys, and various ovine herds. Their animal inventory introduced previously unknown breeds to the region, particularly the purebred Arabian horse and the distinguished Egyptian donkey—a breed still recognized today for its distinctive coloration, physical structure, and remarkable stamina.

Upon establishing dominance over expansive, fertile territories, these tribes recognized agriculture's significance and developed it complementary to their animal husbandry practices. They cultivated cereal crops such as wheat and barley, constructed storage facilities, and implemented strategic harvest preservation methods—practices indicative of abundant agricultural yields that enabled complete self-sufficiency (Marçais, 1991, p. 244).

The Hilalian people exercised dominion over both internal and external trade routes connecting Central Maghreb to the Sahara, Western Sudan, Lower Maghreb, and Far Maghreb. They established a monopoly on trade caravans, compelling all commercial traffic to render tribute for passage. Consequently, they controlled the commerce of dates, salt, wool, slaves, and gold, which transformed the urban centers of Central Maghreb into significant commercial hubs (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 305).

With the Hilalians exerting complete control over roadways and trade caravans, passage was permitted solely under their protection. Consequently, Berbers relinquished these routes while the Hilalians established an effective monopoly, managing them with exceptional efficiency. They facilitated expanded commercial exchange between mountainous regions and desert territories, contributed substantially to state prosperity, and developed significant livestock resources that enhanced agricultural development. Eventually, they achieved complete assimilation into Middle Maghreb society (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 312).

Regarding territories allocated to them by the Hammadid state, these strategically selected lands held tremendous economic and commercial significance within Middle Maghreb. These regions were situated along crucial trade corridors traversed by caravans journeying southward toward Western Sudan, eastward to Egypt, and westward connecting M'Sila (Al-Idrisi, 2002, p. 254) with Fez via Achir, Ténès (Al-Idrisi, 2002, p. 250), Tahert, and Tlemcen. Additional routes linked northern Middle Maghreb regions through Mila (Al-Bakri, 1992, p. 245) and Setif (Al-Istakhri, 1927, p. 46), while another pathway connected eastern Aurès and Al-Hodna via Nqaous (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 306).

The Hilalian tribes emerged as a novel demographic component in the Maghreb region, gradually establishing robust social connections with Berber tribes before ultimately intermingling with them. Though certain Hilalian tribes preserved their ethnic purity by avoiding Berber intermixing, and similarly, some Berber communities maintained their distinct identity, the predominant pattern saw extensive integration between Hilalian and Berber populations across the central Maghreb. This incremental process of amalgamation significantly facilitated the dissemination of cultural practices and the Arabic language, particularly in its Hilalian dialectical form (Bel, 1987, p. 215, 216).

The expansion of the Hilalian tribes into Hammadid territories encroached upon Berber tribes' traditional plains and plateau habitats. This territorial competition fostered intermarriage and strategic alliances between Arab and Berber communities. Consequently, numerous Berber lineages assimilated into Arab tribes, while certain Hilalian groups merged with Berber populations. This cultural exchange facilitated significant demographic shifts, as Arab and Berber bloodlines intermingled through matrimonial bonds and tribal affiliations, producing ethnically diverse communities (Bel, 1987, p. 220). The Banu Hilal migration, representing the second major Arab movement following the Islamic conquests, substantially

influenced regional culture by disseminating Arab customs, establishing Arabic as the predominant language, and thoroughly integrating Arab peoples into Maghreb society. These profound demographic and cultural transformations ultimately rendered ethnic distinctions between Arabs and Berbers increasingly imperceptible (Bel, 1987, p.221).

V- The cultural influence of the Hilalian tribes on central Maghr

V.1 Spread of the Hilalian dialect:

The Hilalian tribes contributed significantly to the dissemination of the Bedouin Arabic dialect throughout the central Maghreb (Ibn Khaldun 2004, vol. 2, p. 57), distinguishing it from the Arabic dialects introduced during the Islamic conquest (Marçais,1991, p. 235). A distinctive characteristic of the Hilalian dialect is the Bedouin Qāf, articulated in a manner between the urban Qāf and Egyptian Jīm. This dialect flourished predominantly in desert and rural regions, with Berber tribes adopting it as their communication medium, subsequently leading to their Arabization. Examples include the Hawwara tribe, Wilhassa tribe, and various other Berber communities during the Hammadid state period, ultimately resulting in the replacement of the Berber dialect with the Hilalian Arabic dialect (Abu Deif,1982, p. 263).

The eastern territories of central Maghreb were more significantly influenced by the Hilalian Arabic dialect owing to the earlier expansion of Hilalian tribes in the fifth century AH, contrasting with the western regions where the Hilalian dialect arrived later, thus exerting less linguistic impact (Marçais,1991, p. 335). This linguistic exchange was bidirectional; the Hilalian dialect incorporated notable Berber linguistic features, particularly intonation patterns and the tendency to commence words with consonants rather than vowels as in traditional Arabic. The Hilalian vernacular assimilated numerous Berber lexical elements, resulting in a distinctive Hilalian Arabic dialect with substantial Berber characteristics that became prevalent in northern territories. Nomadic tribes residing distant from urban centers maintained a more authentic Hilalian dialect, experiencing minimal Berber linguistic influence (Ibn Khaldun ,2004, vol. 2, , p. 380). As Charles André Julien observes: " The Bedouins introduced their distinct language,

easily distinguishable from all urban dialects inherited from the early conquerors, and from this Bedouin language emerged most rural Arabic dialects currently employed throughout North Africa" (Julien, 1983, vol. 2, p. 98).

The Arabic language assumed a pivotal role in the central Maghreb during the Hamadid state period, subsequent to the Banu Hilal and Banu Sulaym migrations into Africa. Prior to this campaign, Arabic functioned as the language of governance, while the indigenous population predominantly spoke the Maghrebi Berber dialect. According to Muhammad al-Tammar: "Arabic served as the official language of the Hamadid state, despite its Berber leadership, owing to its status as the sacred language of the Qur'an and religious practice; they revered it and endeavored to advance its use. The arrival of the Hilalians, Athbaj, Zaghbah, and Riah tribes with their linguistic traditions further expanded Arabic's influence, creating significant competition for the Berber language, which subsequently retreated to mountainous regions" (Al-Tammar, 1969, p. 116).

V.2 Arab customs and traditions:

The Hilalian tribes, traditionally nomadic Bedouins, preserved their ancestral customs and traditions throughout centuries, dating back to their origins in the Arabian Peninsula. These cultural practices remained intact during their migration to Upper Egypt and subsequent expansion throughout the Maghreb regions. They steadfastly maintained their distinctive societal values, including tribal allegiance, neighbor protection (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 235), prowess in raiding and acquisition of spoils, equestrian excellence, and battlefield valor. A particularly significant tradition that the Hilalians introduced to the Maghreb was the inclusion of women in military campaigns, who fought with remarkable resolve and refused to retreat from combat. This practice proved instrumental in their triumph over the numerically superior and better-equipped Zirid forces.

It was traditional for the Hilalians to don turbans, ensuring no male would appear without head covering, their guiding principle being "turbans represent the Arab crown". In combat dress, they would first place a helmet on their head and subsequently wrap the turban around it (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 239). The Berbers, who historically went bareheaded, adopted both the turban and flowing white garment from the Hilalians in emulation of Arab customs (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 176).

Another Hilalian tradition introduced was the palanquin, in which women traveled seated atop camels. These palanquins, resembling tents, featured square shapes with decorative elements. Some variants were nearly spherical, termed 'basur.' This conveyance provided protection from sunlight and ensured privacy, while the male escort walked alongside holding the camel's reins, suggesting the camel carried his most precious possession (Marçais, 1991, p. 338).

V.3 The Bedouin character:

The Hilali tribes, akin to other Bedouin communities, were distinguished by their nomadic lifestyle (Marçais, 1991, p. 337), residing in portable dwellings crafted from camel hide or goat hair, necessitated by their transient existence. Upon arriving at a location, they expeditiously arranged their tents (Abu Deif, 1982, pp. 242-243) in a circular configuration known as a 'Dawar,' (Despois, 1953, p. 316) with entrances oriented inward and exteriors facing outward. During overnight respites in their migrations, they deployed tents in a dispersed pattern termed a 'Nazlah,' designating their temporary settlement as a 'Manzil.' When departure beckoned, they efficiently dismantled their habitations, transported them via camelback, and proceeded to establish residency elsewhere. Their dwellings exhibited two distinct chromatic identities: ebony structures characteristic of the Riah and Athbaj tribes, and crimson abodes associated with the Zeghbah (Despois, 1953, p. 316) clans, these hues serving as tribal identifiers. The resplendent tents, adorned with vibrant colors and intricate designs, blanketed the central Maghreb plains during summer months and migrated to the Zab region and desert terrain in winter, imbuing the landscape with a quintessential Bedouin aesthetic that persisted across numerous centuries.

V.4 Poetry:

The Hilalians, akin to other Arab Bedouins, harbored a profound affection for poetry (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 39). Following their dispersal and establishment across the Maghreb, their poetic compositions represented a seamless continuation of the Arab poetic legacy dating back to pre-Islamic times (Ibn Khaldun, 2004, vol. 2, p. 415). Their verses articulated the rigorous Bedouin existence that they cherished and celebrated. These compositions depicted their conflicts and intense

sentiments (Abu Deif, 1982, p. 237), imbued with uncomplicated, inherent wisdom, while reflecting their religious devotion through abundant prayers, exaltation, and veneration of the Divine. The poems also illustrated the virtues of masculinity and gallantry (Ibn Khaldun 2004, vol. 2, p. 416). Women occupied a significant position in this literary tradition; scarcely any verse lacked admiration for feminine beauty and descriptive tributes. Their poetry encompassed diverse forms and objectives, including praise, eulogy, and satire. A singular composition frequently incorporated all these elements before arriving at its intended message, though occasionally poets would address their subject directly (Ibn Khaldun, 2004, vol. 2, 2004, p. 415). This distinctive Bedouin poetic character persists today and continues to garner considerable interest throughout central and southern Algeria.

V.5 Folk stories and novels:

The Hilalians significantly contributed to Central Maghreb's cultural landscape. Throughout desert and rural settlements, they introduced their Bedouin Arabic dialect, recited poetry, and shared folkloric narratives (Shawqi, 2014, p. 11). Their established marketplaces, created for trading goods from highlands and desert regions, evolved into cultural venues where poetic performances, war chronicles, and legendary tales were presented. Among their most renowned narratives stands the enduring legend of Al-Jaziya Al-Hilaliya, associated with the Hilalian migration from Upper Egypt to the Maghreb. Al-Jaziya, sister to their chieftain Al-Hasan bin Sarhan Al-Duraïdi Al-Athbuji, was wedded to Mecca's ruler, Al-Sharif bin Hashim, with whom she established a family. Upon the tribe's decision to relocate to the Maghreb, they strategically persuaded her to join them. Al-Jaziya proved instrumental during this migratory journey, offering sagacious counsel to the Banu Hilal. She abandoned her privileged existence in Mecca to accompany and assist her kinsmen in this momentous relocation. This narrative, derived from historical occurrences (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 39), is conveyed through sophisticated literary techniques featuring poetry and instances of wisdom, valor, and intellectual prowess, lending it mythical dimensions while maintaining its historical credibility (Ibn Khaldun, 1983, vol. 6, p. 40).

The narrative concerning Al-Jaziya Al-Hilaliyya and the displacement of her tribe, Banu Hilal, transcended the Maghrebian boundaries. This prominent figure and her nomadic community were

chronicled throughout Egypt and the Levant, achieving substantial recognition that extended to the Hijaz region of the Arabian Peninsula, despite certain variations in events and characters between the occidental and oriental iterations of the account.

Conclusion

In conclusion, research demonstrates the following findings: The Middle Maghreb was not directly targeted by Hilalian tribal migrations; rather, these groups primarily expanded into and captured territories within the Zirid state of the Lower Maghreb, generating political and economic instability there. Their subsequent presence in the Middle Maghreb during the Hammadi era resulted from specific political developments and circumstances. Through their extensive rural presence and control of commercial activities between the Tell region and desert areas, Hilalian tribes significantly contributed to the Arabization of the Middle Maghreb. Their Bedouin Arabic dialect ultimately superseded the Berber language and exerted considerable influence upon it. The Hilalian people transported their traditional Bedouin customs and cultural heritage from the Arabian Peninsula and Upper Egypt to the Middle Maghreb, thereby strengthening the region's tribal social structure. While nomadic movement between Tell and desert regions existed previously in the Middle Maghreb, Hilalian tribes institutionalized this practice and disseminated desert culture along with its distinctive elements—including tents, equestrian traditions, camel husbandry, and livestock herding—consequently transforming substantial agricultural territories into pastoral lands.

The Hilalian tribes introduced epic poetry to the central Maghreb in a form of Arabic remarkably similar to Classical Arabic, thereby preserving the traditional elements and thematic essence of Arabic poetic expression, including laudatory verses, elegiac compositions, satirical discourse, chivalric narratives, and philosophical wisdom. The Hilalian epic, chronicling the migration of these tribes to the Maghreb region, represents one of the most profound cultural contributions to vernacular literature in the central Maghreb. This narrative masterpiece has immortalized the most illustrious Hilalian figures, encompassing both male and female personages.

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