

Commercial Relations Between Hijaz and Neighboring Countries العلاقات التجارية بين الحجاز والدول المجاورة

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Abstract:

Due to its strategic location between the Arabian Peninsula and the ancient world, the Hijaz region served as a major caravan route, enabling it to establish local trade relations with areas such as Yemen (during its independence) and large tribal confederations. Additionally, it maintained external trade ties with powerful political entities like the Sasanians, Byzantines, Romans, Africans, and Egypt. Since trade was their primary livelihood, internal security and stable relations with neighboring regions were essential. As a result, Hijazi merchants secured treaties and guarantees from surrounding states, allowing their caravans to move freely between Hijaz, Syria, Iraq, and Abyssinia—unhindered by ongoing wars or conflicts. This facilitated vibrant commercial activity, leading to the emergence of key trade hubs that strengthened civilizational ties and fostered economic growth.

Keywords: Hijaz; Trade; Arabian Peninsula; Romans; Persians.

الملخص:

بفضل موقعها الاستراتيجي بين شبه الجزيرة العربية والعالم القديم، مثلت منطقة الحجاز طريقاً رئيسياً للقوافل التجارية، مما مكّنها من إقامة علاقات تجارية محلية مع مناطق مثل اليمن (خلال فترات استقلاله) والتجمعات القبلية الكبرى. كما حافظت على روابط تجارية خارجية مع كيانات سياسية قوية مثل الساسانيين والبيزنطيين والرومان والأفارقة ومصر. ولما كانت التجارة تمثل مصدر رزقهم الأساسي، فقد أصبح الأمن الداخلي والعلاقات المستقرة مع المناطق المجاورة أمراً بالغ الأهمية. ونتيجة لذلك، حصل تجار الحجاز على معاهدات وضمائنات من الدول المحيطة، مما سمح لقوافلهم بالتنقل بحرية بين الحجاز وبلاد الشام والعراق والحبشة—دون عوائق من الحروب أو النزاعات المستمرة. وقد أسهم ذلك في ازدهار النشاط التجاري، مما أدى إلى ظهور مراكز تجارية رئيسية عززت الروابط الحضارية وحفزت النمو الاقتصادي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحجاز؛ التجارة؛ شبه الجزيرة العربية؛ الرومان؛ الفرس.

• Introduction

The general economic situation of the Arabian Peninsula in the pre-Islamic era was characterized by a diversity of resources resulting from the diversity of land and climate. The most important and oldest source of wealth for the Hijazis was pastoral life, which dominated the region's economy for a long period. Another important resource for the region, which overshadowed all

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economies of Hijaz and the Peninsula as a whole and changed the economic and social structure of the Hijazis, was trade.

Trade was one of the important crafts in Hijaz, and the people of the region traded in various economic products, whether local or imported. Many caravans used to leave Hijaz carrying various goods to the north, south, east, and west of the Arabian Peninsula. Hence, as a result of the prosperity and expansion of commercial activity in various parts of Hijaz, major commercial cities and metropolises grew, and with them, Hijaz came to control the reins of caravan trade and maritime trade. Thus, the Arabs of Hijaz were able to lead the large commercial caravans that traversed the land, and it allowed them to lead the region towards fundamental radical changes in the structure of Hijazi society.

The Arabian Peninsula had extensive land and sea trade connections with its neighboring peoples. Perhaps this activity is what drew the attention of the ancient neighboring peoples to the importance of trade and the enormous profits it generated for them.

The economic activity of Hijaz expanded at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth centuries AD. This was after the Byzantine-Sasanian conflict, which crippled India's trade towards the Gulf, and the problems of the Red Sea route. All this enabled the Hijazis, headed by the Quraysh, to control the trade route passing through the western Arabian Peninsula, and the rich caravan trade with its diverse merchandise fell into their hands. So, what were the commercial conditions and capabilities of the Hijazis? And to what extent did trade develop with neighboring countries?

1. Factors for the Prosperity of Hijaz Trade:

There is no doubt that there were many factors that contributed to and helped the prosperity of this vital economic activity. Historians and scholars of this region have agreed on factors that they considered to be the main factor in stimulating Hijaz trade, which are as follows:

A. The geographical location of Hijaz, as this location made the region a corridor for the main maritime routes through the Red Sea and the global land route linking East and West, and Hijaz became a more strategically important region than other regions. Two main global routes passed through it: a land route taken by caravans between Yemen and Syria via Taif and Yathrib, from which two routes branched off, one to the northeast and the other to the east, and a sea route through the Red Sea connecting to India and Southeast Asia.⁽¹⁾

B. The comprehensive religious sanctity of the region and its inhabitants as a whole. The presence of the Sacred House in the region secured the lives of merchants. If any Hijazi traveled or traded in an area, he would hang a piece of bark from the trees of the Haram around his neck or the neck of his camel. Hence, the Hijazis, and the people of Mecca in particular, exploited their sanctity.⁽²⁾

(1) - برهان الدين دلو، مساهمة في إعادة كتابة التاريخ العربي الإسلامي، دار الفكر، بيروت، ص ص 45، 46.
(2) - لطفي عبد الوهاب يحيى، العرب في العصور القديمة، دار المعرفة الجامعية، ط2، مصر، 1986م، ص 290.

C. The Roman-Persian wars, which ended with the victory of the Persians and the closure of trade routes through Western Asia. The Hijaz region became a meeting point for merchants coming to Yemen or Taif and heading to Syria and the East.⁽¹⁾

D. The decline of Byzantine influence from northern Hijaz and the Red Sea within the framework of the conflict between the ancient great powers over who would dominate the maritime and land trade routes.

E. The end of Abyssinian influence in the Red Sea region following their defeat and withdrawal from Yemen.

F. The diversity of resources of the Arabian Peninsula, due to the diversity of land and climate, as well as the region's location between the Far East and the Middle East. Consequently, transportation and movement operations emerged between the two regions, and some parts of the region produced certain materials commonly used in the ancient world, such as perfumes and incense.⁽²⁾

G. The emergence of an aristocratic class that practised trade and knew how to benefit from it, a class of regional merchants, including the Quraysh, who took commercial leadership and began to negotiate on behalf of the Hijazis with the Romans, Persians, Abyssinians, and others, regarding trade in these countries.

H. The arrangement of markets with the sacred months so that the necessary security for the safety of caravans and the continuation of buying and selling operations would prevail, as well as the Hajj season, which is important for the Hijazis. The Bedouins and people of neighboring Arab regions would come to visit the region, and during this time, commercial exchange operations took place.⁽³⁾

I. The proximity of commercial cities to markets, such as the Ukaz market, which was held between Mecca and Medina, or the Majanna market, which was held at the bottom of Mecca like Bani Kinana, and Dhu al-Majaz near Arafat.⁽⁴⁾

J. The Hijazis' attempt to revive trade in the region, especially the Quraysh, by concluding agreements and establishing commercial relations with the powers of the region, whether local or foreign.⁽⁵⁾

K. The passage of international trade by land and sea through Hijaz encouraged internal trade, and the Hijazis moved from being a center and a transit point for trade and traders to be, contributors to it, and an intermediary between Yemen and Syria.

L. The tribal conflicts that prevailed in the desert, and the outbreak of conflict in Iraq and Syria between the Persians and the Romans, and the Lakhmids and Ghassanids, made Hijaz the only safe haven for wealthy groups, who guarded their personal interests.⁽⁶⁾

(1) - برهان الدين دلو، المرجع السابق، ص 47.

(2) - لطفي عبد الوهاب يحيى، المرجع السابق، 290.

(3) - برهان الدين دلو، المرجع السابق، ص 47.

(4) - عبد العزيز سالم، تاريخ العرب في العصر الجاهلي، دار النهضة العربية، بيروت، 1976م، ص 193.

(5) - سعد زغلول، تاريخ العرب قبل الإسلام، دار النهضة العربية، بيروت، 1976م، ص 193.

(6) - عمر فروخ، تاريخ الجاهلية، دار الملايين، بيروت، 1964م، ص 76، 107.

M. The increase in agricultural production in oases producing crops such as Yathrib and Taif, and the creation of a surplus in these areas allowed for export and exchange with neighboring areas, and in return, they obtained resources not available in agricultural areas.⁽¹⁾

These are among the most important factors that helped the prosperity and revitalization of trade in the region and allowed Hijaz to lead the region in several fields..

2. Commercial Relations with Yemen:

The Hijazis, especially the Quraysh, made great efforts to revive their trade through agreements and commercial relations, as they followed a policy of concluding treaties with various kings, including the kings of Yemen. Thus, their trade towards the region was secured, their merchandise in it increased, and the diversity of their trade grew.⁽²⁾

However, these relations were subject to external political influences, and the Hijazis' dealings with the people of Yemen changed as the Hijazis controlled the region and its people. The fall of the Himyarite state at the hands of the Abyssinians, and the outbreak of disturbances between the Persians and Romans in the 5th century AD, led to the disruption of global trade passing towards Iraq, and the increase in the commercial importance of Hijaz, which became a region through which most commercial caravans passed. Here, the balance of economic power changed to allow the Hijazis to participate more in global trade, after Yemen lost its importance, and Hijaz became in a position of strength in these relations, where most of the trade between Yemen and the rest of the Hijaz regions fell into the hands of the Hijazis. Over time, the Hijaz region began to transform into an important commercial and financial center, where various banking operations were carried out on a large scale.⁽³⁾ They also used to make their winter journey to Yemen, acting as intermediaries between the Mediterranean region in the north and Yemen in the south. Their main goods were hides, cloth, swords, and perfumes.⁽⁴⁾

3. Commercial Relations with the Persians:

The Hijazis paid attention to trade and did not let their region remain merely a transit point for caravans. Persia and its markets constituted one of the most important points reached by Hijazi caravans. They established these relations with the Persian Empire and obtained approval from the Persian government to trade in the lands of the kings of Iraq and Persia. It was narrated that Abu Sufyan himself used to go to Iraq to trade, carrying with him the products of Yemen and Hijaz and returning with the products of Iraq and the goods needed by Hijaz. It was even mentioned that he used to carry gifts to Khosrow to get closer to him. He went to him once and had horses and leather with him; Khosrow accepted the horses, returned the leather, and gave him gifts. It was in Khosrow's and the Persians' interest to get closer to the people of Mecca because they were

(1) - سعد زغلول، المرجع السابق، ص 204.

(2) - نفسه، ص 193.

(3) - نبيه عاقل، تاريخ العرب القديم والعصر الجاهلي، المطبعة الجديدة، دمشق، 1975م، ص 114.

(4) - جواد علي، المفصل في تاريخ العرب قبل الإسلام، ج7، مكتبة النهضة العربية، ط1، بغداد، 1983م، ص ص 293، 295.

merchants and a critical center politically and economically. Therefore, it was in his interest to deal with the people of Hijaz. Abdullah bin Jud'an is considered the most famous among those who traded with Iraq and Persia, as well as Al-Asir bin Wa'il bin Hashim Al-Sahmi, one of the merchants of Mecca.⁽¹⁾

These merchants and others took Hijazi trade outside the region. It is noticeable that these relations were based on bad faith on the part of the Persians, as they soon expanded their influence in the center of the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, the Roman Justinian's intervention against Persia to control the region overlooking the Red Sea led to Persia controlling Mesopotamia and its estuaries, which are considered the key to Central Asia. Thus, they formed a wall against Rome, and the Persians were able to replace the Abyssinians in Yemen, turning their attention northward in the hope that circumstances would enable them to seize the entire region and paralyze Roman expansion.⁽²⁾

The Hijazis traded with the Persians in silver, and they were famous in the region for their silver-minted dirhams and were known as the people of paper (silver)"⁽³⁾. Persia was also a constant importer of goods that complemented its luxury, especially what East Africa and southern Arabia produced in terms of incense, perfumes, spices, ivory, and silk. It also exported its surplus products to Hijaz, such as textiles and glass... The inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent successfully participated in this process.⁽⁴⁾

4. Commercial Relations with the Romans:

The Hijazis were able to consolidate their relations with the Romans. Many classical historians have spoken about the intensity of Hijazi commercial activity with Rome.⁽⁵⁾

One of these studies confirms that these relations were based on achieving Rome's aims and the ambitions of Aelius Gallus and Justinian, which was to control the centers of trade routes in central and western Arabia to impose a comprehensive siege around Persia and its commercial dealings. Hence, Rome welcomed the Arabs to trade in the northern cities and their markets supervised by the Romans. From here, Rome knew how to employ the Arab element according to the requirements of circumstances and situations. Here, some historians go so far as to say that Roman-Arab relations became clearer in Syria, where the Ghassanids, allies of Rome against the Lakhmids, allies of Persia, resided. Consequently, Rome's relations with the Arabs in the north were political and military, while with Hijaz, they were predominantly economic and commercial rather than political and military, because the Hijazis maintained a neutral stance towards the ongoing conflict between the Persian and Roman powers. This allowed the Arabs of Hijaz to be intermediaries between the regions of Iraq, Syria, the south, and the north. Their neutral policy supported the security of their trade and various caravans.⁽⁶⁾

(1) - الأزرقى أبي الوليد محمد بن عبد الله، أخبار مكة، ج 1، ط 1، المطبعة المأجدية، مكة المكرمة، 1352هـ، ص ص 122-123.

(2) - جواد علي، المرجع السابق، ج 7، ص 297.

(3) - عبد العزيز سالم، دراسات في تاريخ العرب قبل الإسلام، مؤسسة شباب الجامعة، الإسكندرية، 2006م، ص 410.

(4) - أنور الرفاعي، تاريخ العرب قبل الإسلام، المكتبة العصرية، 1961م، ص 51.

(5) - Henri Lammns, « Le Berceau de l'Islam », Rome, 1914, p 26.

(6) - نعيم فرح، تاريخ بيزنطا، ج 1، مطبعة طبرين، (د ت) ن ص ص 138، 139.

Roman ships also frequented the coasts of Hijaz for trade. In addition, some local circumstances witnessed by Hijaz led to the intervention of foreign powers. The rivalry between the leaders of the region over presidency and leadership, especially in Mecca, being an important strategic center, all led to seeking foreign assistance to consolidate the influence of a particular leader. Hence, foreign intervention began in Hijaz when Uthman ibn al-Huwayrith ibn Asad ibn Abd al-Uzza, known as al-Bitriq, asked to be crowned king of Mecca. He sought the help of the Roman Caesar after converting to Christianity and converting some Arabs of Hijaz to Christianity. The Caesar crowned him king of Mecca and wrote him a covenant, sealed with gold. However, al-Aswad ibn Zam'a refused for the Quraysh to submit to Uthman, and the latter failed in his mission.⁽¹⁾

Here it appears to us that the Romans were the ones who pushed Uthman ibn al-Huwayrith to obtain the holy city, enabling them to control Hijaz and thus reach Yemen. Likewise, the Romans desired to establish commercial ties with the merchants of the region and make them deal while subject to the Romans, who considered the region to fall within their sphere of influence. Therefore, they exploited ambitious leaders seeking kingship and control to achieve their goals.

It is likely that the spread of tribal fragmentation and the struggle for leadership, along with the accompanying violent conflicts and the absence of a central government in the correct political sense, were due to other reasons and variables that led the Romans to fail in this policy. They resorted to maintaining commercial relations, considering themselves (the Romans) the stronger party, until Islam came with its call to reject fragmentation and the necessity of unity and a single goal, as stated in the Almighty's saying: "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided."⁽²⁾ Thus, Byzantium's ambitions in the region vanished, and its challenge to the people of the region was lifted.

Also, Rome's eagerness for the products of India, China, Yemen, and Africa made them rely on the Hijazis, led by the Quraysh, as intermediaries for trade and for importing Eastern products.⁽³⁾

It is noticeable that despite Rome's connection with the Arabs in its trade, it did not accept negotiating with the Arabs on the principle of an open door, as it considered every foreigner a spy who must be monitored. Therefore, it allowed commercial freedom for Arabs only in specific areas, such as Palestine, where Arabs were allowed to trade in the ports of Ayla and Gaza, and in the city of Jerusalem. As for Syria, the market of Bosra was the only one open to them, a city primarily established as a defensive line for Syria, and considered the final station for Hijazi caravans and the major market for grains in Hijaz.⁽⁴⁾

(1) - جواد علي، المرجع السابق، ج7، ص 88.
(2) - القرآن الكريم، سورة آل عمران، آية 103.

(3)- Henri Lammns, op cit, p 36.

(4) - (Kammer. A, « La , mer rouge » tome 1 –le Caire, 1929, pp 65-80.

In addition to the city of Gaza, which is considered the first frontier facing Hijazi merchants coming from the desert, its warehouses were flooded with Egyptian goods and products of the Greek and Roman world. It is rightly considered the gateway to the West for all Arabs.⁽¹⁾

5. Commercial Relations with Abyssinia:

It is considered as one of the most important regions to which the Arabs turned and has historical ties with the Arab countries. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss the Arabs' relations with Abyssinia because the Hijazis' relations with it are part of the series of Arab-African relations throughout ancient and even contemporary history.

Most studies that have addressed the subject of Arab-Abyssinian relations conclude that the Arabian Peninsula was a great human reservoir that continued to overflow with human migrations throughout the ages, especially after the end of the rainy era 10,000 years ago. Many Arabs were forced to migrate to East Africa, where there was no significant barrier between the two shores.⁽²⁾

Desert and Bedouin life also meant that Arabs lived a life of movement and travel in search of grazing lands. Tribes moved to nearby and distant places, and primitive economic relations arose between them. Over time, they turned to the surrounding seas in search of other sources of livelihood, so they built ships and sailed the seas and gulfs.⁽³⁾

The first to connect with the coasts of East Africa were the Hadhrami Yemenis. They sailed this African coast north and south and connected with the human groups residing on it. Thus, they were the first to connect and settle in Africa since ancient times.⁽⁴⁾

Some studies mention that the Arab countries were the center of trade between the East and the West, and the Arabs were the ones who explored those lands south of the strait, and other nations arrived after them.⁽⁵⁾ They developed ships in the region, sailed the coasts, and exchanged their goods in the markets of East Africa for goods from India and the Arabian Peninsula, such as frankincense, incense, coffee from Ethiopia, ivory, slaves, and gold dust from East Africa. The abundance of diverse trade, which ancient states relied upon, in addition to the islands surrounding the coast, served as natural harbors for their ships, trade centers, and protection from tribal raids. However, they soon mixed with them and intermarried.⁽⁶⁾

Adal or Adulis became famous as an important commercial port on the Abyssinian coast. They carried coffee, fruit, wood, and other goods from the interior to the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, where they were transported to the famous world markets of that time. Their settlement in the Abyssinian plateau itself, their engagement in agriculture, their intermingling with the Cushites,

(1) - عبد العزيز سالم، المرجع السابق، ص 307.

(2) - محمد عوض، الشعوب والسلالات الإفريقية، ط1، القاهرة، 1965م، ص 11.

(3) - المسعودي، مروج الذهب ومعادن الجوهر، تحقيق محي الدين عبد الحميد، ج2، القاهرة، 1958م، ص 152.

(4) - جورج فضل حوراني، العرب والملاحة في المحيط الهندي في العصور القديمة وأوائل العصور الحديثة، ترجمة يعقوب بكر، (د ت)، ص ص 22، 24.

(5) - نفس المرجع، ص 24.

(6) - صلاح العقاد وجمال زكريا قاسم، زنجبار، ط1، دار الطباعة الحديثة، القاهرة، جويلية، 1965م، ص5.

and their intermarriage with them reached its peak between 1500-500 BC. They controlled various activities, especially trade, and their commercial influence began to flourish.⁽¹⁾

Some research indicates the migration of some Arab tribes from southern Arabia to East Africa, where they settled. In 1950 AD, many antiquities were found in the excavated islands near the southern coast, confirming Arab settlement in those areas long before Islam.⁽²⁾

Historical accounts also indicate that the Himyarites launched military campaigns in the first century BC in the middle Nile Valley and northeastern Africa. Groups of them settled in these areas as well as in Nubia.⁽³⁾ The Arabs traded with them on the coast, including slaves and gold, exchanging them for the goods they carried and brought from India. Arab trade from East Africa thus became active and flourished, and they established commercial centers on the African coast.⁽⁴⁾

As for the migration of African Abyssinians to the Arabian Peninsula, there is not much specialized research on the role and impact of Africans in the Arab region, nor even on their migration, as much as it talks about them being brought as slaves and forced labor to meet the needs of the masters. In one of the Arab periodicals specializing in historical studies, especially the issue of Arab-African relations, a study was published discussing ancient Arab-African relations and the injustice of specialized studies regarding this topic, and the shortcomings of Arab and African writers and historians in covering this point. It is noteworthy that this study was general and not microscopic, despite relying on important sources. It can be inferred from these studies that the Arabian Peninsula was a population-expelling region, which is why few migrated to it. In addition, those Africans who did come to it mixed completely with the Arabs and acquired Arab identity. This concept is not based on ethnic grounds but on cultural grounds, which broadened the meaning of Arabism. This made the groups that entered the Arabian Peninsula maintain their African identity through their color, which made color a barrier, albeit temporarily, to the individual's integration into their new society, as happened in the experience of Antarah, the black poet.⁽⁵⁾

From this, it becomes clear that a group of Abyssinian Africans came to the Arabian Peninsula as free people or slaves, and they spread first in Yemen and then in Hijaz. The Abyssinian presence in the region was further supported after the Abyssinian invasion of Arab lands, especially during the Najashi of Abyssinia's campaign in 525 AD or during Abraha al-Habashi's campaign against Mecca in 570 AD. Perhaps one of the confirmations of the existence and strength of these relations is the migration of Muslims to Abyssinia via the Red Sea. It is illogical for them (the Hijazis) to migrate to a region that was not known to them before, and this indicates that Abyssinia was one of the countries that the Hijazis described in their maritime trade journeys. Moreover, the ship that

(1) - سعيد عاشور، أضواء جديدة على العلاقات بين مصر والحبشة في العصور الوسطى، المجلة التاريخية المصرية، العدد 14، 1968م، ص 3. ابن خلدون (عبد الرحمن بن محمد)، العبر وديوان المبتدأ والخبر، ج1، 1965م، ص 176.

(2) - جمال قاسم، استقرار العرب في ساحل شرق إفريقيا، حوليات أداب عين الشمس، المجلد 10، (د.ت)، ص 280.

(3) - الطبري (محمد بن جرير)، تاريخ الأمم والملوك، القاهرة، 1358هـ، ص 328.

(4) - جمال قاسم، المرجع السابق، ص 283.

(5) - يوسف فضل حسن، تبادل التأثيرات الثقافية بين الحجاز واليمن، ومصر من جهة وبين وسط الشمال الشرقي من جهة أخرى، المنظمة العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم، تونس، 1985م، صص 96، 97.

transported them to Abyssinia was Abyssinian, as Quraysh rented Abyssinian ships, and their ships used to dock at the port of Shu'ayba. This can deepen our understanding that the ties were strong and the extent of mutual value between the two parties.⁽¹⁾

Abd Shams negotiated with the Abyssinians regarding Quraysh's trade, securing their businesses and the freedom of their merchants. Therefore, the Hijazis traveled to the region without fear, and even established quasi-commercial offices to trade with Abyssinia and look after their interests.⁽²⁾

However, it seems that the Abyssinians realized the importance of Yemen and its trade routes heading towards various regions of the peninsula. Therefore, we see a disruption in commercial activity after Abraha's campaign and the attempt to change the balance of economic power in the region.

The Hijazis used to buy frankincense, incense, and coffee from Abyssinia, and slaves, ivory, and gold dust from Ethiopia, in exchange for flour, gold-embroidered fabrics, and golden utensils from Constantinople.⁽³⁾ These coastal cities and their numerous markets remained in this state for many centuries. Commercial contact between the two shores continued to grow and expand during those centuries, and many Arabs from Yemen, Hijaz, and other regions of the Arabian Peninsula migrated to East Africa.⁽⁴⁾ This situation continued until the advent of Islam, where they had diplomatic agreements with the chiefs of the tribes through whose territories their caravans passed, such as the alliances they concluded with neighboring states,⁽⁵⁾ so that they would not be looted or attacked, and these were called al-Alaf (the agreement).⁽⁶⁾ Hence, the Hijazis, led by the Quraysh, sought by various means to preserve their commercial gains.

6. Commercial Relations with Egypt:

Arabs have ancient ties with Egypt. Although the eastern Delta borders were fortified during the Middle Kingdom, Egypt witnessed the infiltration of Semitic elements either for trade or settlement. Researchers infer from inscriptions found in a temple near Beni Hassan and from other texts that these elements came from Asia and were mistreating the Egyptians; they were the Hyksos, or shepherd kings (Bedouins).⁽⁷⁾ The term Hyksos originally derives from two Hieroglyphic words: "Heq" (ruler) and "Shasu" (desert or Bedouin pastoralists) who used to move from the eastern desert.⁽⁸⁾

It is likely that these elements settled in the eastern Delta, and not long after their settlement, they became a force feared by the Egyptians, and their danger grew and increased until they were able to impose their authority over Egypt.⁽⁹⁾

(1) - صلاح عقاد، جمال زكريا قاسم، المرجع السابق، ص 5.

(2) - برهان الدين دلو، المرجع السابق، ص 47، 48.

(3) - محمد عز دروزة، تاريخ الجنس العربي، ج5، المكتبة العصرية، بيروت، 1961م، ص 178.

(4) - محمد عبد الله النقيرة، انتشار الإسلام في شرق إفريقيا ومناهضة العرب له، دار المريخ، الرياض، 1982م، ص 30، 32.

(5) - عبد العزيز سالم، المرجع السابق، ص 312. جواد علي ج4، المرجع السابق، ص 266.

(6) - حسين الحاج حسن، حضارة العرب في عصر الجاهلية، المؤسسة الجامعية، ط1، بيروت، 1984م، ص 192.

(7) - محمد أبو المحاسن عصفور، معالم تاريخ الشرق الأدنى القديم من أقدم العصور إلى مجيء الإسكندر، مطبعة المصري، الاسكندرية 1968م، ص 156.

(8) - عبد الفتاح محمد وهبة، الجغرافية التاريخية بين النظرية والتطبيق، دار النهضة العربية، بيروت، 1980م، ص 303، 306.

(9) - نفس المرجع، ص 320.

In addition to other Semitic groups that entered Egypt as invaders or settlers, including the Israelites. As for commercial activity with the Arabian Peninsula, and by virtue of the geographical location of the two regions which facilitated contact across the Red Sea, Egypt used to import some slaves, weapons, various utensils and jars, incense, and livestock from Hijaz. Hijaz played the role of an intermediary in delivering many Syrian goods to Egypt, such as timber for building ships and vehicles, types of fish, horses, and other Syrian products. In return, Egypt exported linen products such as textiles, utensils, jewelry, and statues.⁽¹⁾

Scholars and historians assert that this trade brought a wealth of Semitic words into the Egyptian language and led to the entry of some Syrian deities into Egypt. Despite what the ancient Egyptians imported, they did not acknowledge the superiority of their neighbors. Since the Ptolemaic era, they tried to control the East and its routes passing through the peninsula.⁽²⁾

During the Roman era, Egyptian trade with the Arabian Peninsula remained active, and Hijaz remained a strong intermediary between the various trading parties, transporting Egypt's exports to Syria, such as paper, textiles, and glassware, and exchanging them for manufactured products from the East and South, such as perfumes, artifacts, and jewelry.⁽³⁾

Through these relations, Hijaz achieved enormous wealth, and local and foreign interests turned towards it, especially as it was able to maintain its independence in the midst of the turbulent international situation and paved the way for this region to lead the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula towards changes in Arab society.

• Conclusion :

From our review of the subject's particulars, it becomes clear to us that:

- Hijaz held great importance in the pre-Islamic period and contributed significantly to enriching ancient civilizational heritage. Hijaz reflected the region of the peninsula in the southwest, and spent long centuries in semi-isolation from the civilized world. Its people remained in their Bedouin state and nomadism until commercial cities appeared in the region. Commercial activity flourished and became centered in the region, and Hijaz was able to build a civilizational background with institutions that were initially primitive but developed due to many events.
- Hijazi trade is considered as one of the most important factors that contributed significantly to shaping the region socially, politically, economically, and culturally (civilizationally). It strengthened the bonds of connection and relationship between the regions of the Arabian Peninsula on one hand, and between the countries of the ancient Near East on the other. Consequently, it played a major role in civilizational prosperity, strengthening the economy, and attracting trade movement and its main routes.

(1) - نفس المرجع، ص 314.

(2) - نفسه ، ص 321.

(3) - Kammer. A, « La , mer, op cit, p 80.

- Transportation and trade are considered as means of civilizational communication between the centers of ancient civilizations in the ancient East and other different peoples and nations, and a strong reason for their interaction. This begins with goods and products that represent aspects of mobile material civilization, or through people who carry with them ideas, customs, systems, and traditions. Therefore, Arab Hijazi trade and its caravan routes played a great role in creating opportunities for civilizational interaction between the centers of ancient Near Eastern civilizations, and extended it to Greece and Asia Minor. For these reasons, Hijaz and the rest of the peninsula's regions became a target for the ambitions of foreign countries. Also, these goods and products, in addition to the components of their manufacture in terms of shapes, sizes, decorations, and technology, carry with them a part of ideas, customs, and traditions, leaving their impact in the areas of their use over time. For example, the use of incense spread with special utensils used in specific places, and with their movement, the technology of their manufacture, their shapes, and their decorations gradually moved.

- Likewise, those working in transporting and protecting goods come into contact with people different from them in their language, religions, customs, and lifestyle. Thus, the process of civilizational give-and-take begins, as was the case with the Quraysh in their winter and summer journeys. Thus, the main commercial market centers can be envisioned as a crucible in which the cultures and customs of all those who work in them are melted.

- Also, the need for trade and its affairs to be familiar with reading and writing was the reason for the intellectual openness experienced by the Quraysh. In addition to its commercial role, it was an arena for exchanging opinions, presenting ideas, and consultation, a field for boasting, and a club for reciting masterpieces of poetry, which led to the knowledge of linguistic craftsmanship. Narrators and critics gathered there, playing a major role in refining and polishing poetry.

- The period of Hijaz's prosperity coincided with two great empires that had commercial interests intertwined with those of Hijaz: the Persian and Roman Empires, in addition to the state of Abyssinia. It was natural for the commercial aspect to be the axis around which relations between these states and Hijaz would revolve.

- It can be said that the Hijazi region became a resource for various services and commercial exchanges where conditions for creating productive work were available, and internal and external trade were stimulated through agreements and treaties. This was tantamount to an economic opening to the outside world, which led to the expansion of exchange operations, increasing opportunities for civilizational influence and being influenced more.

- The economic activity that Hijaz uniquely possessed during this period played a decisive role in creating the civilizational identity of Hijazi society, and indeed of the Arabs as a whole before Islam, and in crystallizing their concept of civilization. Consequently, by the seventh century AD, it had a sound civilizational foundation for launching, after shaking off the dust of desert poetry tents and Bedouin life and leaning towards a life of stability, in search of a resource that would help in that. It was able to adapt its economic and political conditions to local and external circumstances, which brought wealth to the region's society and raised its spirit, appreciation, and respect among the surrounding political entities. This development itself created an anxious situation in Hijazi society, resulting in a new social division and a new life.

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