

A Historical and Monographic Study of the Algerian LAAMOUR Mountains

دراسة تاريخية ومونوغرافية لجبال لعمور الجزائرية

Received: 16/01/2025

Accepted: 21/04/2026

Published: 11/06/2026



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Abstract :

The Laamour region holds significant importance due to its location in the heart of the Algerian Saharan Atlas Mountains, where it intersects with the Tell Atlas. It has been the stage for numerous historical events, thanks to the protection, security, and resources these mountainous areas provide. The region was ideally suited for raising livestock and generating wealth, due to its diverse flora and fauna. This is evidenced by archival documents, maps, field data, and oral traditions. This study employs two main methodologies: the historical approach, which traces the historical development of the Laamour Mountains across different periods, and the monographic approach, which focuses on the Algerian Laamour Mountains as a unified geographical and human entity.

This study aims to document the rich history of the Laamour Mountains, highlight their natural and demographic characteristics, and reveal the dynamics of transformation they underwent under political and economic changes, particularly during the French colonial period. The results showed that the Laamour Mountains have historically formed a strategic space linking the steppes and the high plateaus. They also witnessed ancient human settlement, as evidenced by archaeological evidence.

The results also showed that the tribal structure played a pivotal role in organizing the local community, in addition to the profound transformations in lifestyles and ownership that the region experienced as a result of the occupation policy. The study concluded that the region possesses important natural and archaeological assets that made it a promising area for development and the preservation of historical memory.

Keywords: Geography of the Lamour Mountains, Local History

المخلص :

تكتسي منطقة لعمور أهمية كبيرة من حيث موقعها في وسط الأطلس الصحراوي الجزائري وتتقاطع مع الأطلس التلي فكانت مسرحا للكثير من الأحداث بما توفره هذه المناطق الجبلية من حماية للإنسان وتوفير الأمن والموارد المعيشية، إذ كانت مكانا ملائما لتربية أنواع المواشي وصناعة الثروة وهذا بسبب تنوعها البيئي الحيواني والنباتي، وذلك من خلال الوثائق الارشيفية، والخرائط، والمعطيات الميدانية، والتراث الشفوي. وتقوم هذه الدراسة على منهجين أساسيين: المنهج التاريخي الذي اعتمدته في تتبع التطور التاريخي لجبال لعمور عبر مختلف الحقب، والمقاربة المونوغرافية التي ركزت فيها على إقليم جبال لعمور الجزائرية كوحدة جغرافية -بشرية متكاملة.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توثيق التاريخ العميق لجبال لعمور وإبراز خصائصها الطبيعية والسكانية، والكشف عن ديناميات التحول التي عرفتها في ظل التغيرات السياسية والاقتصادية، خاصة خلال فترة الاحتلال الفرنسي.

وقد اظهرت النتائج أن جبال لعمور شكلت عبر التاريخ فضاء استراتيجيا يربط بين السهوب والهضاب العليا، كما أنها شهدت استقرارا بشريا قديما تدل عليه الشواهد الاثرية، كما بينت ان التركيبة القبلية لعبت دورا محوريا في تنظيم المجتمع المحلي، بالإضافة الى تلك التحولات العميقة في أنماط العيش والملكية التي عرفتها المنطقة جراء سياسة الاحتلال، كما خلصت الدراسة إلى أن المنطقة تمتلك مقومات طبيعية وأثرية هامة جعلتها مجالا واعدا للتنمية والحفاظ على الذاكرة التاريخية.

1. Introduction

The overlap between historical and geographical studies is a subject that preoccupies human thought, as the connection between them is close. Geography, which represents the science of place, and history, which represents the science of time, are two essential elements in studying the nature of human society that creates civilization, meaning that it is not possible to separate the factors of time and place. Therefore, it is not possible to separate the two studies, and without a geographical study of any region, territory, or event, its history cannot be known. Place has an influence that appears in many forms, such as: food and climate... and it affects human groups as well as individuals. Therefore, the mutual relationship between the two sciences is a complementary relationship, in which one complements the other, and it is a strong and inseparable relationship.

Historical geography is also characterized by the addition of the element of time, which is essentially considered one of the features of history, which gave it a vital dimension. The element of time makes it easy to link, analyze, and interpret historical events in a logical manner within the temporal framework, so that the past creates the present and builds the future, through cultural and natural study...on which it is based to become an independent science in which facts are formulated in a geographical manner.

The field of study is of great importance due to its location in the middle of the Algerian Saharan Atlas and its intersection with the Tell Atlas. The mountainous regions were a fortress that provided protection for people and provided security and livelihood resources.as it was a suitable place for raising types of livestock and creating wealth, and this is because of its environmental diversity in animals. And vegetation, which made many French writers pay attention to this region and have geographical, topographical, anthropological and demographic studies, including, for example:

Wolff, Charles-Joseph-François, Sur les Aryas, 1893.

L'Harpe, Frédéric, Dans le djebel- Laamour,1902.

Capot-Rey Robert, Le Sahara Français, 1953.

In order to focus on local history as a primary means of writing national history, research and study should concentrate on the impact of natural and human geography on human life, behavior, and lifestyle. which was reflected in the history of the residents of the Jebel Laamour region, as they contributed to

ancient, modern and contemporary history, and they played a major role in confronting the invaders and connecting regions. Western, central and Saharan Algeria. Therefore, we pose the following forms:

To what extent have geographical studies contributed to writing, reading and analyzing the historical phenomenon, the Laamour Mountains as a model? To answer this problem, we divided the research paper into four axes as follows:

1: the natural geography of the Laamour region

2: Demographic study of the Lammour tribes

3: The strategic importance of the geography of the Laamour region

4: The historical and military importance of the region

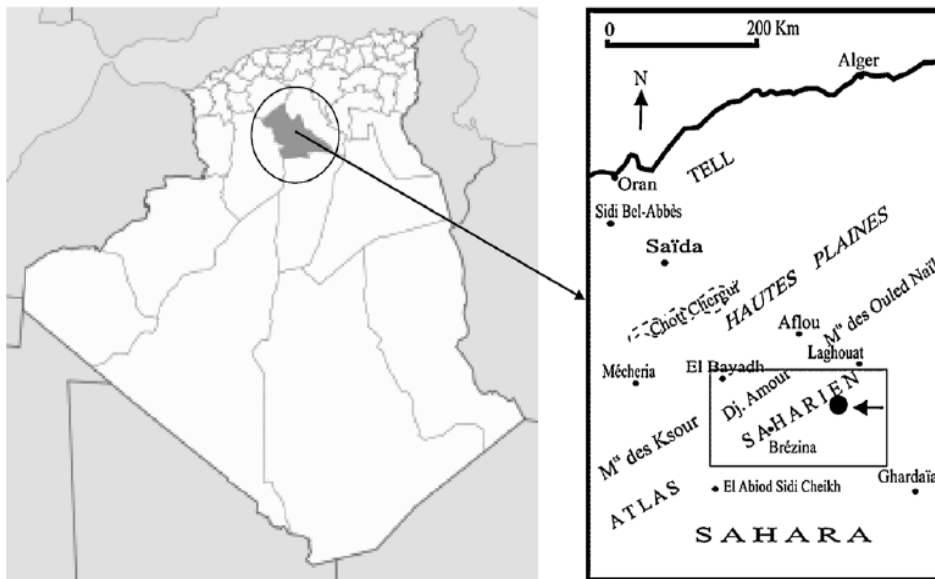
We concluded this work with important conclusions about the geography of the Laamour Mountains region and its strategic, economic, military, and historical importance, which made it the focus of attention of researchers and historians.

2. the natural geography of the Laamour region

2.1 the location

- 1- **Astronomical location:** The study area is located in the steppe region, at the following coordinates (33' 48° north, 02' 35° east), and extends geographically from the south of the Hill Atlas to the borders of the Saharan Atlas, which is an ancient mountain range of forma (Ritter, 1902).
- 2- **Geographical location:** The Laamour Mountains are part of the Saharan Atlas, located northwest of Laghouat, and are located between the Ksour Mountains in the west and the Ouled Nael Mountains in the east, but it is difficult to draw their borders, as they extend more than 100 kilometers in length from the southwest to the north. East and 60 km wide to the desert to the sout.

Map No. 01: Geographical location of the Algerian region of Laamour ([\)](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Algeria-, s.d.)



In terms of geomorphology, the region is distinguished as described by **the geographer Despois**: The geography of the Laamour region varies between a steppe region in the north and a mountainous region in the centre. It is also bordered by lowlands to the south ((J.), 1958).

2.2 The topography of the Laamour region

1- **Mountains**: The Laamour Mountains are a mountain range in Algeria located in the center of the country, characterized by a special character and forming part of the Saharan Atlas. It is 130 km long and 60 km wide. It is located between the Oulad Nile Mountains to the east and the Ksour Mountains to the west, at high altitudes. **Appendix No. 1** The Oulad Nile Mountains are considered a continuation of them in the east (Ritter, 1902).

The Laamour Mountains are a link to the high steppe areas and the desert. The rocky massif of the Laamour Mountains is formed next to the Aflou Basin in one of the highest areas in Algeria and one of the coldest areas, at an altitude estimated at 1426 meters. It has a white sandy nature as a result of limestone depos.

Its elevation varies between the northern and southern parts of the region. In the north, the elevation reaches 1500 meters, sometimes 1700 meters, with a base of approximately 1200 meters. In the south, it ranges between 900 and 1000 meters. The northern part of the region is characterized by its complexity and difficulty, featuring major highlands, the most important of which are Mount Gorjo (1706 meters), Mount Guern-Arif (1721 meters, the highest peak in these mountains), and Mount Sidi Okba (1707 meters). In the central region, we find Mount Azraq, Mount Zarqa, and Mount Ain Madhi. In the south, the mountains are characterized by their length, such as the mountains of Dakhla, Milq, Umm Dloua, Al-Hawita, and Lalmaya.

It extends south of the Aflo Basin with a slope from Mount Taouial to Mount Mahasser at an altitude of (1418 m), and Mount Chebka, which is a composition of limestone with a yellowish color. These mountains are surrounded by ancient terrain (Bernard Augustin, 1902).

2- Plateaus: The plateau region is defined as a natural extension between the interior plains and the Saharan Atlas with an average elevation of 1000 m. This region is confined between two parallel mountain ranges: the Hill Atlas in the north and the Saharan Atlas in the south. It is also called Al-Nujoud, as it is a country of pastures, it has many cities and extensive urban areas, and it has a water spring or a valley stream. In the mountains of Laamour is a large plateau, almost entirely made of sandstone (1968 ، حليمي)

3- Nature of climate: The climate of this region is continental, with little rainfall that allows for the cultivation of grains. It is characterized by hot summers and colder winters. The Atlas hill range separates the high plateaus from the westerly winds. The northern part of the mountainous region of the Laamour Mountains is characterized by harsh, sometimes cold winters and a rainy climate, while the lowlands in its south are hotter and drier, leading to a desert climate (Despois, 1959).

Rainfall ranges between 300 and 500 mm and falls in the winter. It is also rich in valleys, orchards and forests. During the drought period, the

summer temperature is high and the daily and seasonal temperature differences increase.

The maximum temperature reaches 35°, the minimum falls below 0° (freezing point) in the winter, the average temperature reaches 20°, the temperature range is 35°, and the precipitation rate is 450 mm. Snow falls in the high areas of the high plateaus, at least 600 meters above sea level (Pouget, , 1979).

In the plateaus, where there is neither spring nor fall, there is an almost direct transition from the heat of summer to the cold of winter, and snow may sometimes remain for entire weeks, especially on the tops of the mountains, so temperatures drop for a long period to 4° or 5° below zero, and in return the temperature rises in summer (Despois, 1959).

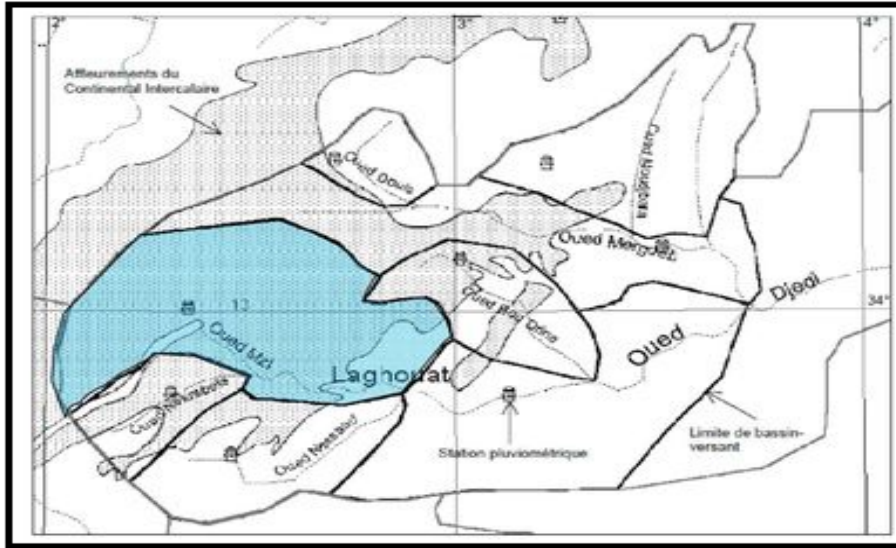
4- Hydrographic network of the Laamour region

- **Valleys and rivers:** The Laamour region is a water basin that leads to three large watercourses: Wadi Chelif, which flows to the north, Wadi Mzi, which flows to the east towards Laghouat to empty into Chott Malghig, and Wadi Zarqou.

Oued Amzi: One of the most important valleys in Algeria. It runs through the provinces of Laghouat, Djelfa, Biskra, and Wadi Souf. It contains the Saklafa Dam in the Tagamout region, Laghouat Province. It empties into Shatt Malghig, east of the city of Biskra. It is called Bamzi from the source up to the Taunza area, then it becomes called Wadi Gedi until the mouth.

It flows from west to east and represents the upper part of that long valley known as Wadi Gedi, which separates the Sahara from the Saharan Atlas, from the mountains of Laamour to Biskra, until it empties into the desert at Chott Malgheig, which is located 32 meters below sea level, which is the lowest known depression in the country. Wadi Amzi, which takes its upper sources, descends from the southern slopes of the Laamour Mountains near the city of Gisha. The Tajmut Dam was built on it in 1947 (Aissaoui , 2016).

Map No. 02.: Wadi Mezi in the Laamour Mountains



2- Chlef Valley: One of the most important valleys in Algeria, 725 km long to the northwest of the city of Algiers, specifically in the state of Chlef, and it is the longest valley in the country and the most flowing. **(Appendix No. 02)** It originates from the Saharan Atlas Mountains, from the Laamour Mountains, specifically from the municipality of Saqqaq. In the state of Laghouat, passing through the city of Chlef, its waters flow into the Mediterranean Sea near Mostaganem.

3- Wadi Zarqoun: which heads south, feeds the artesian aquifer of the Mzab and Kolea. The Laamour area has many streams, with 100 streams, and a large river, the Al-Khair River, originates from it, making some of Laamour's lands suitable for agriculture (2017 ، ، بفادي)**5- The soil and vegetation of the area**

* **Soil:** It is the surface crust of the Earth's surface that varies in area between:

A/ **Yellow soil:** (yellowsoil) (semi-sandy) It is steppe soil as semi-permeable steppe soil, with low fertility and poor salts and organic materials. It is suitable for growing grains... It is found in lowlands, basins, and valleys.

B/ **Saline soil:** (saline soil) is not suitable for agriculture due to the high percentage of salinity, so plants do not exist in it. It is particles of silt deposited by valleys in marshes and banks. Its texture is coarse to medium, sandy-silty-silty, its structure is lamellar and lacks organic matter, and halophytes grow in it. It forms rare pastures for use as fodder for livestock.

C/ **Calcareous soil:** (calcareous soil) is divided into:

The soil of the limestone slopes (Les rendzine) has a granular structure with little organic matter. It is characterized by the presence of some quarry remains in its sections. It is somewhat thick, and short and allied plants grow in it.

Calcareous soil: (calcareous soil) * It has a non-calcified crust: horizontal, shallow, its thickness is between 10-30 cm, its texture is sandy clay and contains a little organic matter. This soil is found west of Mount Antar (2010-2009، زعنون)

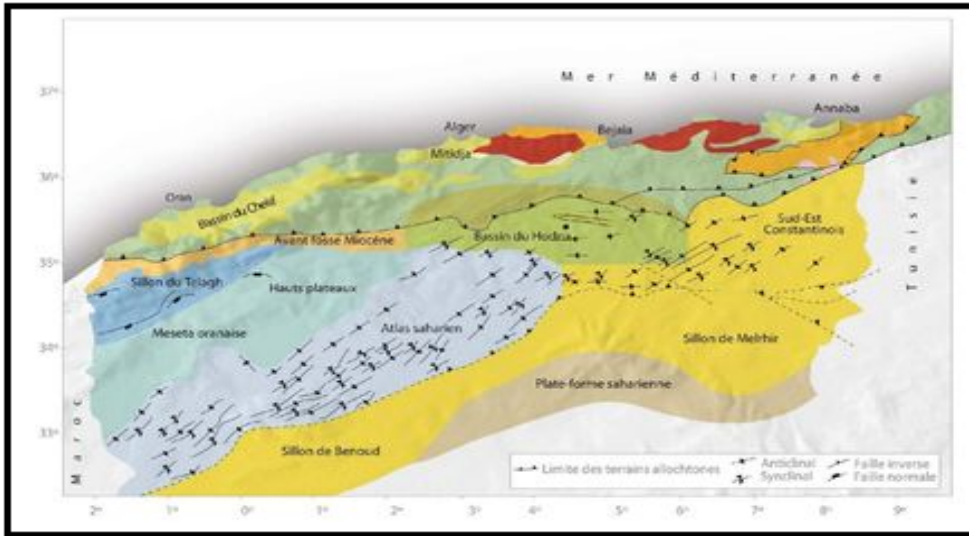
* It has a calcified crust: its depth is approximately 40 cm. Its texture is a sandy clay cartilage with a lamellar structure, near the roots.

* It has a limestone crust: its depth varies between 15-30 cm, its texture is medium rough, it contains a little organic matter, and its structure is lamellar.

* With a limestone plate: with a depth of 10-30 cm, its texture is moderately coarse and its structure is lamellar, in which safflower and safflower plants grow.

Through the types of soil in the area under study and their structural properties, it is clear that surface formations often lack organic matter, and arable soil is scarce except in lowlands, valleys, and some slopes. (زعنون، 2010-2009)

Map No. 03: The most important layers forming the Saharan Atlas (Chenafi,, 2012-2013,)



* **Vegetation cover:** Low density in Algeria, as forests constitute only 1.7 percent of the total area of Algeria. Its distribution is subject to several factors, the most important of which are:

The amount of precipitation and climate, and the vegetation cover increases as we go north, and decreases as we go south.

The dense forests disappear and are replaced by wide pastures of weak pasture. Its plants are few and far between due to the lack of rain and the poor soil. Its plants are short grasses, and other plants are widespread, such as juniper, wormwood, tamarisk, tamarisk, elm, oak, Aleppo pine, and some thistles (Ritter, 1902).

3. A Demographic Study of the Tribes of the Region

3.1 The Origin of the Tribes of the Laamour Region: It was named after a large Arab tribe that was known as Laamour. They are one of the major tribes of the region, specifically the Hilal Aflo tribe, and they are Arabs who were sent by the Fatimids to eliminate the rebellion in the region. The region was known as Mount Laamour after them. They are an Adnani Hilal tribe that has known the mountain for centuries, and they are among the most important tribes of the Hilalites.

Before the arrival of the Amorites, Jabal Laamour was home to the Berber tribe of Beni Rashid. In this regard, **the geographer Despois** states:

Arabic-speaking nomads arrived in the mountains of Laamour in the 12th century AD, when the region was under the authority of the Berbers. The inhabitants of the region practiced irrigated agriculture devoted to grazing, and the lifestyle depended on animal husbandry and grazing (Despois, 1959).

The Beni Rached tribe became one of the tribes inhabiting the Laamour Mountains, and they are currently known as the Rahamna. The mountain was formerly known as Mount Sidi Rached, and they are residents of the city of Aflou in the Laghouat Province. Their language is Arabic.

The Laamour Mountains, or formerly Jabal Rashid, are linked to the name of the Laamour Adnaniyah tribe. The Laamour tribe are the descendants of Amr bin Abd Manaf bin Hilal from the Adnaniyah Arabs, sons of our master Ismail bin Ibrahim, peace be upon them both. Thus, they are brothers of the Qara bin Abd Manaf tribe, which revolted against the Shiite Fatimid state, in Egypt and eastern Libya, and Ibn Khaldun did not rule out that they were from Amr bin Ruwaina bin Abdullah bin Hilal. During his reign, their habitats were between Mount Auras in the east to Mount Laamour, which was attributed to them from the Hodna and Sahara regions. Today, they constitute the largest tribe in the city of Aflou, Laghouat Province. During the era of Ibn Khaldun, they were divided into two large clans: Qurra and Abdullah (**Appendix No. 04**).

3.2 Development of the population of the Laamour Region:

The population of the Jabal Laamour region is estimated at about 35,000 people, consisting mainly of ten nomadic tribes, mostly concentrated within the mixed municipalities. According to archival statistics, the population is estimated at five hundred to one thousand people per kilometer in the center of Aflou. The number of other tribes exceeds four thousand people, including one hundred Europeans and about 800 Jews who came from the M'zab at the beginning of the century (سعد الله).

It belongs to the Laamour El Gheisha region, which is located on the Saharan Atlas chain in the Gaada Mountains, that is, between the Koussor Mountains to the southwest and the Ouled Nile Mountains to the

east. It is located on a valley bordered to the north by Aflou and Sqbaq, to the south by Ain Madi and Tajrouna, and to the east by Wadi Mezi. It was founded by the Zanakhra tribe about 3 centuries ago in an old palace.

Historical sources state that the Zanakhra tribe was of Berber origin and then Arabized. Its lineages are: the sons of Sidi Haj Suleiman, the sons of Sidi Muhammad bin Mansour, and the sons of Ibrahim, the Naqba, and they are from the wombs of the Laamour Hilalia tribe, who inhabited the Al-Jarid area. It was pushed west and then north by the steppe highlands, then was defeated in the 19th century AD by the sons of Madi bin Muqarrab. According to statistics from 1863, Al-Gheisha Palace included 20 to 60 houses. The palace had been lively for a century and a half, frequented by the free Mukhalif tribes. The desert quarters also brought grains and dates and traded for fabrics.

On the southern side of Jebel Laamour, we find Tajrouna, which was administratively affiliated with the municipality of Aflou until 1976 AD. It is a modern village north of the old palace, including modern settlements. Its administrative borders are to the west of Buraidah, to the east of Ain Madi, to the north of Ghisha and Tawiala, and to the south of Ain Madi and Buraidah. The town is about 20 km away from Jebel Laamour. Its establishment dates back to the years between 1613 and 1616, by Sheikh Al-Wali Al-Saleh Sidi Muhammad bin Youssef, who was famous for his work and righteousness. He had a mobile corner. He had three sons: the sons of Al-Shinaf bin Youssef who lived in the west, the sons of Mayhoub in the east, and the sons of Issa in the centre. Statistics showed that in 1844, Tajrouna had a number of houses estimated at 63 dwellings, inhabited by 44 residents, and in 1956 it had 42 families with a population of 326 residents. There is no doubt that the years of famine had a role in the population's migration to Aflou and Laghouat.

The municipality of Wadi Mzi lies on the southern side of the Laamour Mountains, at the foot of the mountain. It is bordered to the northwest by the municipality of Wadi Mra, to the north by the municipality of Tajmount, to the east by Ain Madhi, and to the south by

the municipality of El Ghaicha. Its inhabitants are the Laqamata, the oldest inhabitants of Laamour. Some accounts suggest that they and the Awlad Ali bin Omar are of the same lineage. This suggests that the Laqamata are from the Sanjas tribe, a branch of the Maghrawa Berber tribe who inhabited Mount Rashid (Laamour) and Mount Mushtal. They were absorbed into the newer Laamour community, a branch of the Bani Hilal tribe that migrated from the Levant. The Laqamata are a nomadic tribe who roam the Mount Rashid and the area near the sources of Wadi Mzi. Their leadership had intended to build a fortified village (qasr), but this was halted by the revolution. They later built a village in Al-Rabiq in 1970, starting with 20 houses (Ben Aoun, 2020).

The strategic importance of the geography of the region: The Laamour region occupies a geographical location that allows for the diversity of animal and plant wealth. Plant wealth is the natural plant that is used in industry, such as sorghum, wood, etc., especially in the steppe region, and the raising of sheep, cows, and horses. The Laamour Mountains region is important for trade exchanges in peace and war.

1- Economic Strategic Importance

- Plant Wealth

- **Allied Plant:** This plant is very widespread in the steppe regions because the climate is resistant to drought and is compatible with the poor calcareous soil. The steppe region is rich in it, and French colonialism took an interest in it (Gautier , 2003).

It was harvested by the Algerians, who called them “snails” because they carried the Allied packages on their backs, as mentioned in colonial archival sources (Kateb, 2010). According to the decision dated April 29, 1874, between the Governor-General of Algeria and the French-Algerian Company, they agreed on a concession to complete the line linking Arzew - Saida, with its extension by a distance of 70 km to El Bayadh, without financial credit and interest guarantee, in addition to obtaining a concession of 300,000 hectares of land located in the high plateaus in the southwestern region of the country, for the purpose of

exploiting the esparto grass. And transporting it to the areas where railway lines are located in the center and west.

In the same year, implementation of a program began for the law dated July 12, 1865; which was to transform the railway from a “public benefit” framework to a “local benefit” framework. Until this date, no lines had been granted to the three workers in the colony, so the decision dated May 7, 1874, was issued. The major role played by the workers’ councils in rushing to open new lines that the colonial administration had refused to establish before 1870 for funding reasons due to their high cost and difficult terrain (Poggi , 1931).

The occupation administration also encouraged the extension of railway lines to most of the important residential areas in that part of the country, even to the Bashar area and the western borders, to tighten control over them, especially after the Sheikh Bouamama uprising (Bernard , 1913).

- The halifs are used in the manufacture of paper, and plant fibers are extracted from them, which are among the insulating materials used in heating and cooling devices, in addition to their use in mattresses, and they are harvested throughout the year (بن داهة ، ، د.س.ن.) - An important economic resource in terms of the availability of sulfur, which has double economic importance as a raw material, and as natural pastures, along with sidr, sidr, and wormwood. Plant cover has a role in protecting the environment and preserving the soil from erosion.

- Forest wealth and agriculture: The Laamour region is one of the most important regions in grain production, so crops took the place of natural plants. It also has forest wealth, especially wood, which is used in several industries, in addition to the availability of many types of plants that are considered drought-resistant and environmentally adapted to the climate of this region. The region and its various benefits, such as rosemary.

Wood was used as a raw material by Europeans, and at the beginning of the twentieth century they began to use it in various fields. The region has diverse forests and flora, including Aleppo pine trees, oak trees, and pistachio trees. The Laamour Mountains represent the

true hill of the desert, with its moderate climate and abundance of resources (Bernard Augustin, 1902).

2- Livestock

- **Pastures:** The Laamour region is characterized by sheep raising, with wide pastures. The region is also famous for its adapted pastoral plants, such as wormwood and sagebrush, which represent natural pastures, which helped raise livestock due to their pastoral and steppe character. The pasture area is estimated at approximately 7,710 square kilometres. French writings have described the Laamour Mountains region as the most It is green, it is a beautiful natural area, and 3/4 of its population is shepherds who live in tents and raise cows, camels, especially sheep, and thus it is a pastoral area par excellence (2017 ، بقادى) The plateaus in the Laamour region form natural fortresses for the population and sheep. Because they are pastures for livestock and natural pastures (Bernard Augustin, 1902).

Les plateaux de la région de Laamour constituent des refuges naturels pour les habitants et leurs troupeaux. Ces pâturages, riches en fourrage, présentent une grande diversité de contrastes environnementaux qui ont suscité un vif intérêt et de nombreuses études, influençant profondément la vie des populations sédentaires. Cette diversité environnementale a permis l'élevage d'une variété de bêtes, notamment des moutons et des chameaux, favorisant ainsi leur reproduction et leurs déplacements malgré les risques de froid et de sécheresse. On estime que 82 % de la superficie de la région est consacrée au pâturage, où la vie pastorale s'est traditionnellement caractérisée par un mode de vie nomade et l'utilisation de la tente comme moyen de subsistance (Despois, 1959).

4- The HISTORICAL and Military Importance of the Laamour Region

4-1- Historical Importance

Antiquities and inscriptions in the region confirm that it has known human civilizations and stages that highlight the historical depth from the Stone Age man, to the succession of civilizations, the first of which was the ancient civilization founded by the Berbers until the Islamic and Arab

civilization, in addition to its national history and its struggle against foreign invasion.

A - Prehistoric Area of Laamour

In the absence of written monuments of the prehistoric period, the researcher finds it difficult to write about them. However, the intellectual and cultural development of man enabled him to create rock art as a tool, with which we learned many of the peculiarities of this stage, as researchers consider it an alternative to written monuments, because of the scenes that took up a large part in it. In his life, we mention many types of animals, as well as people who appeared in different scenes. All of this was either for an artistic or ideological motive, or both. What increases the depth of this art is its specificity and its difference from one region to another due to the nature of the climate and the different lifestyle that resulted in customs and traditions. Distinctive through the artistic achievements in the Saharan Atlas and the Central Sahara, the Laamour mountain range located in the Sahrawi Atlas includes a large amount of artistic creations of prehistoric man (حمدي ، ، 2018)

The region has three historical eras. In the prehistoric period, we find in these murals historical events, including the daily life of man who lived inside caves and painted on their walls the rituals of his daily life (Ben Aoun, 2020) With the French campaign to discover southern Oran in the year 1847 AD, the researcher Koch Jacquot discovered the first two sites in the Saharan Atlas (Al-Tiout-Mughrar Al-Tahtani), after which the French campaign penetrated into southern Oran, in which French soldiers, doctors, geologists and geographers participated, resulting in many sites. The new one, where he discovered Pomel in the year 1826 in the district of Aflou, the station (Oued Noureen), then Arnaud, the site (Safia El Maktoba), followed by the year 1828 and the discovery of the “Tawiala station.” Then, in 1829, Flamand discovered about 20 stations during his geological research in the Saharan Atlas, while Commander Joly A is the one who is credited with the discovery of the Al-Hamra station at the Al-Ghaisha site (**Appendix No. 05**).

In the Al-Ghaisha region, three historical eras were known, namely the prehistoric period, and this is what was found in the archaeological murals. This is in addition to the cities and palaces of the tribes that inhabited the region, such as the Red Palace (Tarifiyya) of the sons of Aoun around the year 1450 AD, and the ruins of ancient Berber palaces. We also mention the many historical monuments, such as the Al-Namous Palace in Skalafa, Al-Malikiyah, Al-Farouj Palace, and others, all of which date back to the Amazigh civilization (Ben Aoun, 2020).

All of these researchers, especially the researcher Flamond, developed the approaches and methods of this art, its chronological eras, and its geographical distribution, while the Laghouat region, which includes the Laamour mountain range, remains one of the regions that still gives this art new sites that help prove its seniority, and the Qarn Arif Association and those in charge of it remain active in the field has been in the field since the 1990s. It was discovered in 2004 during an inventory of rock art sites in the northern part of the region, stations (Fijah Sebaa, Kaf Raml, Al-Farsha, and Bouzertala), and research continues to this day (حمدي ، ، 2018)

b- History of the Laamour Region:

Historians mention that the history of the Laamour region begins with the first data of the Getulia region from the Roman era until the Islamic conquest. The Maghrawa tribe belonging to the Zenata, which refused to submit to Roman and Byzantine authority, and did not convert to Christianity despite the pressures, inhabited it. However, historical documents It have not been determined exactly when it was founded, and it seems that the beginning of human settlement in this place goes back to very ancient times due to the availability of the necessary conditions for life in terms of water, agricultural lands and a fortified location, which indicates the influence of the ancient Berbers in the region (Al-Shafi'i, 2007).

Among what **Ibn Khaldoun** mentioned about the city of Laghouat and Laamour, one of its cities, is his saying: "As for the Laghouat (thus in the Qaf), who are a part of Maghrawa. They are in the outskirts of the desert between Al-Zab and Jabal Rashid, and they have a palace there

famous for them, in which is a group of their followers”. There is another saying that mentions the origin of the city and goes back to the Hilal Arabs.

Historians definitively date the establishment of the city to the beginning of the 11th century AD, according to the scholar Ibn Khaldun. The invasion of the Hilalids in the year 1045 is considered the beginning of this date. The region witnessed the exodus of Arab tribes such as the Banu Hilal and the Banu Sulaym, who came from the Arabian Peninsula (Hijaz and Najd) and from the Fatimid state in Egypt, as well as the Dhawawda. This Arab exodus to the region was identified by historians after the Islamic conquest of North Africa, where the conquering Arabs flocked to it and founded the city they called Laghouat (Ben Aoun, 2020).

According to historical accounts, the city of Laghouat, of which Laamour is a major center, may have originated as a small settlement established by the Maghrawa tribe. Later, the Hilalians settled there, expanding its urban development and giving it an Arab character. It became a town that blended urban life with nomadic traditions, similar to many towns and villages in the steppes and deserts of Algeria and the Arab world in general since ancient times. The nomadic Bedouin maintained good neighborly relations with the city's inhabitants based on kinship and shared interests. The established rule was to refrain from harming the orchards and grain fields, and to rally in defense of the inhabitants of the fortified village (ksar).

Trade exchange existed between urban areas, Bedouins, and nomads. The city provided them with agricultural products, consumer goods, textiles, and artifacts they needed in exchange for animals and their various products. Each of these nomads had a relative or friend in the palace with whom he deposited his stock of grains, wool, and other materials, and found hospitality with him, especially during market days. Some of them bought or built houses for storage or housing as needed.

Many of the city's wealthy people owned a wealth of livestock, which they kept with their friends or nomadic partners to develop and trade in. There is a phenomenon that remained until the seventies of the

twentieth century, which is that almost every family in the city owned one or more heads of goats to benefit from its products, and they were taken out every day to graze. Outside the city, within the herd they called “Al-Harraq,” this was what, in addition to the yields of grains, vegetables, and fruits from the orchards, enabled the city’s residents to achieve self-sufficiency.

Until a decision was issued to prevent this in the context of modernity and health prevention, to protect trees and green spaces, and to avoid the herd obstructing the increasing traffic as it leaves in the morning and returns in the evening through the city streets. Historians and popular accounts of the ancient residents of Laghouat mention that they were divided into two groups: the first was called the sons of Sarghin and lived in the west of the palace, and the second was called the Ahlaf and lived in the east of it. The two parties lived in harmony most of the time, and some disputes and skirmishes occurred between them at times.

Together, they appointed a council to manage the affairs of the city, headed by a sheikh chosen sometimes from among the allies and sometimes from the sons of Sarghin. The city received the righteous saint, Si Haj Issa, in the year 1698 AD, around whom the residents rallied and he was able to put an end to the disputes and bring them together. In the eighteenth century, both parties agreed to install a sheikh called Zanoun to manage the city’s affairs, and he remained until the French occupation (Al-Shafi’i, 2007).

4-2- The Military Importance of the Laamour Mountains Region - Resistance of the Laamour Region to the French Occupation

The period between 1844-1852 is considered a decisive stage in the policy of colonial expansion towards the south. The French occupation extended to the gateway to the Sahara, such as Ziban, Laghouat, the Laamour Mountains and El-Baydh. These areas later became military bases and political and administrative departments to occupy the desert (بن يوسف،، 26/25 جوان 2013).

The colonial authorities felt that the Sahrawi tribes enjoyed complete freedom that would make them ready to prepare themselves to

confront the French forces, and that the southern tribes in the province of Oran and the Laamour mountains were preparing to repel the expected French attack on the region. The colonial administration worked to subjugate them (مياسى،، 2012).

After news spread that Emir Abdul Qadir would march towards the southwestern region, the colonial administration assigned General Youssef to lead a military column to move immediately towards Thaniyat al-Ahad, to reinforce the forces present there and move south, if necessary. It also assigned him to comb the area extending to the Laamour Mountains, and to sensitize the residents. These areas are subject to the constant presence of occupation forces.

At the same time, they gave moral, military and political support to agents of the colonial administration, such as Jalloul Agha Jabal Laamour, and the Caliph of Laghouat, Ahmed Ben Salem.

News was received denying the possibility of the prince in the southwest, and therefore General Youssef ordered to head towards Jebel Laamour as a maximum, and thus the matter would be limited to the second goal of imposing colonial authority on the residents of the region and making them aware of its continued presence.

The column penetrated from Taqin towards Al-Bayda and then Jabal Arsh Al-Gharbi, and forces from the people joined it under the command of Jalul, Agha Jabal Laamour and Agha Masoud, with his son and grandchildren, in the hope of not exposing the residents of Jabal Laamour to more looting and killing, as they returned with the results of these campaigns, especially those that General Yusuf took over.

This campaign included Qasr Aflou, Al-Ghisha, and Ain Al-Jedara. The officers took advantage of their proximity to Ain Madi, the headquarters of the mother corner of the Tijaniya order, to organize a visit to the city with Ahmed bin Salem, Caliph of Laghouat. French reports state that they received a welcome from Sheikh Al-Tijani, as military columns were prevented from entering Ain Madi, in reference to the respect that the French have for places with religious significance, trying to capitalize on what Ain Madi was subjected to at the hands of Emir

Abdul Qadir, and thus exploit the influence of the Sheikh of the Tijaniya order. In eliminating resistance. (بن يوسف ، ، 26/25 جوان 2013).

The colonial forces led by General Youssef subjugated Laghouat and its environs on December 12, 1852, and the echo of its fall was widespread throughout the desert, where it was rumored among the people that the French had “won another Desire” in the south, similar to what happened in the city of Algiers in the year 1830, including the expansion of General Pélissier. His influence extended to Ghardaia, and he indicated in his reports the necessity of occupying it because it was one of the most important advanced centers of the French authority in the south, because preserving the northern regions and continuing peace in the hill required control of the desert (مياسى، 2012).

Since the year 1852 AD, the French authorities have sought to bring the Bedouin population to settle in the region, which has become a gathering of several lineages of sheikhs, families, and tribes under the control of French colonialism. (**Appendix No. 06**)

4-3-- The Laamour Region during the Period of the Liberation Revolution

At the beginning of the twentieth century, political awareness appeared among the elite group of Algerian nationalists. The political struggle appeared as an alternative to the armed struggle, and the ideas of the political national movement spread in many regions of the country. There was a group from the Aflou region who joined the national movement and embraced its principles. We find in the People's Party all of The brothers Saeed Tabdallah, Zakhouh Si Moh, Abdelkader Salmani bin Belkacem, Khanfoussi Al-Jilali, Muhammad bin Yaqoub Taheri, Yahya Laouti and others joined the lovers of the statement and freedom, which was led by Farhat Abbas. As for the Association of Muslim Scholars, we mention among them: Abdelhafid Azouzi, Ben Al-Sassi Quraishi, and Boumediene Muhammad Al-Qadi (بن يوسف ، ، 26/25 جوان 2013).

With the outbreak of the liberation revolution, the region, like other regions of the country, was waiting for someone to direct it to join the

armed revolution. Two years after the revolution, the region entered with the decisions of the 1956 Fasting Conference, and the Battle of Mount Laamour took place on October 2, 1956, in which 500 soldiers from the Liberation Army participated, and the French forces were in return. It numbered in the thousands, and the battle continued for a full week.

The Liberation Army achieved a great victory in it, as the colonial losses amounted to 1,375 dead, including 92 officers who were buried in Tiaret, and 22 cars were burned. Colonel Lutfi says about it: We obtained abundant weapons, such an enormous abundance that one soldier carried with him four or five. Of guns, French warplanes were also shot down, and we lost only 40 Mujahideen in this battle, because we benefited from the element of surprise, and nature was in its favor with its impregnable mountains and rugged lands, and as a result of the decisions of the Somam Conference and the division of the homeland into six (06) states, the region of the Laamour mountains became (Aflo).) belonging to the fifth state. The second district, then the third district, the fourth district. This is in addition to many battles against the French occupation for which the Laamour region became famous, (بغادي ،، 2017)

Including: the First Battle of Al-Khatifah on 10/02/1956, the Battle of Al-Shawabir on 10/03/1956, the Second Battle of Al-Khatifah on 04/02/1956, and the Battle of Al-Qa'dah on 02/22/1958. The Battle of Sidi Khaled in 1960, the Battle of Al-Mazbouha in 1961, and others (Sheikh Bouzid, Zawi , 2012)

5.Conclusion:

A geographical study of the Laamour region of Algeria, analyzing its natural and human characteristics, has allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of its historical trajectory. It reveals the close relationship between humankind and its environment, demonstrating how topography, climate, vegetation, and water resources have all contributed to shaping the events that have shaped the region throughout history. The data confirms that the Laamour Mountains have always been a vital area, combining the characteristics of steppes and the edge of the Sahara. This made them a natural gateway and a strategically vital passage, which is reflected in their cultural role and their position on caravan routes and trade routes.

The findings also highlight the region's rich flora and fauna and abundant resources, along with the presence of prehistoric remains and artifacts, indicating ancient human settlement and the succession of multiple civilizations that left their mark on the local culture. The study further reveals that the region's strategic location made it a target for colonial powers, particularly France, which sought to control it to secure the route to the Sahara. France transformed the Laamour Mountains into a crucial military area and a formidable stronghold for the Algerian resistance during the War of Independence, from which many military operations were launched. The research has shown that the inhabitants of the region resisted the French occupation fiercely and steadfastly, and the Laamour Mountains have witnessed decisive battles from the beginning of the revolution until independence, which reflects the historical, geographical and social importance of this region and its role in shaping an important part of the Algerian national memory.

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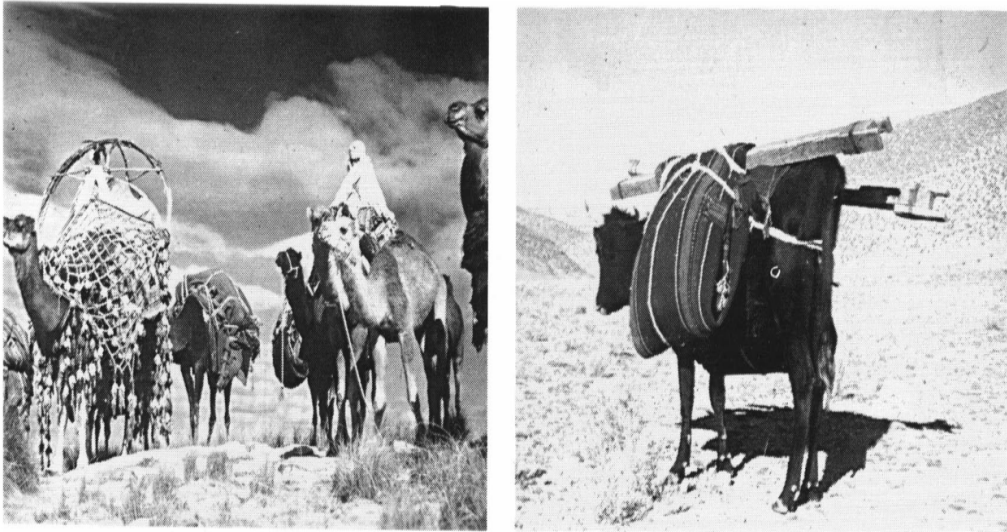
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7. Appendices

Fig.1. Livestock in the Laamour Mountains



Source: Djebel Laamour, site web :
<https://doi.org/10.4000/encyclopedieberbere.2479>

Fig.02: Oued Chlef empties into Mostaganem



Source: French archive website. <http://alger-roi.fr>

Fig.3: Rock drawings in Ghaisha (Laamour Mountains).



Fig.5 Traces of prehistoric man in the Laamour Mountains



Source: Algérie : à la recherche du mystérieux béliet à disque du Djebel Laamour. Site web :

<https://fr.sputniknews.com/maghreb>

Fig. 06: Laamour region under French colonial control



Source: French archive website. <http://alger-roi.fr>