

Features of Convergence between Sufi Orders and Ottoman Rulers in the Beylik of Constantine between (1671-1837 CE)

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Abstract:

The Marabouts (Almoravids) and Sufi Orders Played a Key Role in Shaping Aspects of the Relationship between the Inhabitants of the Beylik of Eastern Algeria and the Ottoman Authorities. A Review of this Relationship reveals that it was Characterized by Rapprochement (Convergence) and Cordiality for Most Periods, particularly towards the End of Ottoman Rule, though Occasional Instances of Rebellion and Estrangement Occurred Under the Influence of Various Factors.

Therefore; We will Highlight the Manifestations of Rapprochement between the Ruling Authority and the Sufi Orders in the Eastern Beylik, in order to Showcase One of the Most Important Aspects of the Relationship between the Ruling Authority in the Beylik and those who represented the Sufi Orders in the Beylik Society. They Played a Prominent Role in Strengthening the Relationship between the Authority and the Tribes on the One Hand; And in Legitimizing the Authority in the Region and Benefiting from it on the Other Hand.

Keywords: Sufi Orders, The Authority (Power), Rapprochement (Convergence), The Marabouts (Almoravids), The Chabbiyya.

Introduction:

The Ruling Ottoman Authority; Since its Entry into Algeria Desired to Extend its Influence Over All the Lands of the Beylik. It Used Many Methods to Impose its Control Over this Region through Wisdom, Politics, and Cunning; This Helped it to Get Closer to and Win Over the Almoravid Class, who Played the Most Prominent Role in Consolidating the Authority in Governance and Imposing Control Over the Tribes in this Region. In light of this; The Following Question Arises: **How did the Almoravids Influence Sufi Orders in Determining the Relationship of Rapprochement between the Two Parties? And what were the Repercussions of that?**

This Main Issue Encompasses Several Sub-Issues; Including:

What was the Social Standing of the Marabouts in the Beylik? What was the Role of Sufi Education and the Relationship between Sufis and the Ruling Authority?

What were the Points of Convergence between Sufi Orders and the Ottoman Rulers in the Beylik? And what was the Relationship between the Rahmaniyya and the Chabbiyya Orders and the Ruling Authority in the Eastern Beylik?

To Answer this; We Followed the Historical Approach Based on Description and Analysis to Highlight the Data, Facts, and Events in Studying the Underlying Relationship between the Authority and the Region, from the Perspective of the Influence of Many Factors. This Approach is the Most Appropriate for this Type of Modern Historical Study.

1. The Social Status of the Almoravids in the Beylik:

The Name “Marabouts-Almoravids” is Mostly associated with Sufis. As for the Reason for this Name; Opinions Differ on this. Some Historians have Said that the Reason for this Name is the Ribat (Belt) that these Sufis Used to Wear;¹ While Others have Said that the Origin of the Name goes back to the Mission of “Ribat/ Ligature” in the Way of Allah, as They were Known for Jihad and Ribat in the Way of Allah, leading People to Jihad, and Giving the Highest Example of Ribat (Ligature) in the Frontiers to Confront and Repel Danger, and Defend the Sanctity of the Muslims.²

The Sufis were also Called “Dervishes”; A Term that Means “Poor”, and it also refers to A Pious Man who lives an Ascetic Life out of His Own Desire to Do so. The Word is also Used to refer to Pious Men who Practice Sufi Paths or Sufis.³

The Marabout is Considered the Spiritual Leader of the Tribe and its Villages, deriving His Authority from the Influence of His Zawiya (Sufi Lodge) and the People's Connection to it. This Makes His Personality Central to the Administrative and Judicial Organization. Due to His Spiritual Influence and the Respect His Word Commands within the Community; The Leaders, Beys, Arab Aghas, and Some Tribal Cheikhs were Keen to Maintain Cooperative Relations with Him by Acknowledging His Privileges, Affirming His Status, Showing Him Respect, and Refraining from Any Action that might Harm the Zawiya's Standing or Diminish it in the Eyes of the People. Shrines, Tombs, and Zawiya (Sufi Lodges) are Sacred Places and Sanctuaries whose Sanctity Cannot be Violated.⁴

In His Book “The Mirror”; Hamdan Khodja Discusses the Role of the Marabouts, specifically their Role in Securing Roads as a Form of Rural Administration in Eastern Algeria. He writes about the Region of Bejaia, explaining that Trade Caravans would Entrust their Safety and Security to a Marabout, protecting their Goods from Bandits. Even the Ottoman Turkish Garrisons Heading to the Fortress of Bejaia Annually were Obligated to be accompanied by a Marabout or Take the Sea Route, despite the Fact that Some Tribes bore the Responsibility of Securing the Roads.⁵

1 - Jules Liorel, *Races Berberes, Kabylie du DJURDJURA*, Ernest Leroux editors, Paris, 1892 CE, p. 449.

2 - Abdul Mun'im Al-Hafni, *Lexicon of Sufi Terminology*, Dar Al-Masira, 2nd Edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 1987 CE, p. 108.

3 - Hamilton Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Influence of Western Civilization on Islamic Culture in the Near East in the Eighteenth Century CE*, translated and studied by: Ahmed Ibesh, National Library, 1st Edition, Part Two, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 2012 CE, p. 257.

4 - Nāṣir Al-Dīn Sa'īdūnī, *Algerian Papers (Studies and Research in the History of Algeria in the Ottoman Era)*, Dar Al-Basair for Publishing and Distribution, Hussein Dey, Algeria, 2nd Edition, 2009 CE, p. 236.

5 - Hamdan ibn Uthman Khodja, *Al-Mir'ah (The Mirror)*, Introduction, Translation, and Investigation by: Muhammad Al-Arabi Al-Zubayri, National Publishing and Distribution Company, 2nd Edition, Algeria, 1982 CE, p. 112.

At the Beginning of their Rule in the Eastern Beylik; The Ottoman Rulers Sought to Win Over the Marabouts and Sufi Cheikhs by Seeking their Blessings and Forming Alliances with them. This Policy Stemmed from the Fact that these Figures Enjoyed Considerable Support among the Populace, which Ensured the Loyalty and Obedience of the Local Population.⁶

The Scientific and Religious Status that the Almoravids Enjoyed in the Beylik with the Turkish Rulers and the Population Played a Role in their Assuming Religious and Scientific Positions during the Ottoman Period. This, in turn; Contributed to the Administration of the Beylik and Endorsed the New Regime by Linking the Population to the Rulers who approached the Almoravids by All Means, due to the Social Status that this Group Represented, and because the Population Believed in these Spiritual Leaders More than They Believed in the Politician and the Ruler. Therefore; The Rulers in the Eastern Beylik Sought to Avoid the Wrath of these Leaders, and their Efforts were Crowned with Success through Marriage Alliances, which Helped to Restrain the Rebellious and Insurgent Tribes.⁷

2. The Educational Sufism Role and the Relationship of Sufis to Authority:

The Ottoman Era in the Eastern Beylik was Characterized by the Widespread Presence of Sufi Orders and the Abundance of Buildings Dedicated to them. The Social Role Played by Saints and Sufis were among the Most Important. Seeking the Intercession of a Saint was the Only Way to Achieve One's Goals, and this Social Role Underscored the Sufi's Position within his Community; Indeed, there is Scarcely Any Sphere of Life in which the Saint did not Intervene and Exert his Influence.⁸ The Role of Sufis was Most Prominent in the Educational Sphere. Education in Religious Institutions and Rural Areas was Largely Characterized by Sufi Teaching, which Included Memorizing the Holy Qur'an, Jurisprudence (Fiqh), Theology (the Islamic Doctrine), Spiritual Training, and Preparation for Jihad. It appears that Sunni Jurisprudence and Theology Formed the Basis of All Teachings, and Various Sufi Orders, with their Differing Approaches, were Integrated within them. This Explains the Coexistence between Different Sufi Lodges in the Eastern Beylik during Ottoman Rule.⁹

The Role of Sufi Orders was Characterized by Spiritual Education, Discipline, and Instruction, which Some Orders Placed Great Importance on. This Led to their Widespread Adoption in Cities before Rural Areas, as Most Sufis Emerged in Large Cities Like Constantine.¹⁰ Sufi Orders Focused on Teaching the Holy Qur'an to Both Young Children and Adults, which Helped Eradicate illiteracy. Furthermore; They Played a Role in Spreading Islam to Remote Areas and Regions where it had not yet reached, especially

6 - Abu Al-Qasim Sa'd Allah, *The Cultural History of Algeria (1500-1830 CE)*, House of Islamic West, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st Edition, 1998 CE, Part One, p. 464.

7 - Abbou Ibrahim, *Transmitted Sciences in Algeria during the Ottoman Era (10th-13th AH/16th-19th CE)*, PhD Dissertation, Supervised by: Professor Dr. Buchnafi Muhammad, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Djillali Liabes University, Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria, 2017-2018 CE, p. 93.

8 - Hicham Al-Baqali, *The Role of Sufis in Addressing Issues of Injustice During the Almoravid Era in Morocco and Andalusia Through Books of Hagiographies*, Al-Ibar (Lessons) Journal for Historical and Archaeological Studies in North Africa, Volume Two, Issue Two, Ibn Khaldoun University, Tiaret, Algeria, October 2019 CE, pp. 24-25.

9 - Abbou Ibrahim, *Transmitted Sciences in Algeria during the Ottoman Era (10th-13th AH/16th-19th CE)*, PhD Dissertation, Supervised by: Professor Dr. Buchnafi Muhammad, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Djillali Liabes University, Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria, 2017-2018 CE, p. 98.

10 - Abu Al-Qasim Sa'd Allah, *The Cultural History of Algeria (1500-1830 CE)*, House of Islamic West, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st Edition, 1998 CE, Part One, p. 463.

the Distant Desert Regions. This was Seen as a Way to Combat Ignorance and illiteracy and to Disseminate Education and Knowledge as Widely as Possible. The Sufi Lodges were also Used as Stores and Archives for Books and Scientific Records in Various Types of Sciences, Arts and Knowledge, due to the Interest of the Cheikhs of the Lodges and their Students in Science and Education, as well as in the Transfer and Copying of Books, Authorship, Collection and Purchase. However; Education among the Almoravids was Mostly Limited to Teaching Males without Females, but Despite that; There were Some Orders that Supported the Education of Women, which We Find especially among the Rahmaniyya and the Tijaniyya Orders.¹¹

3. Relations of Convergence between Sufi Orders and the Ottoman Rulers of the Beylik:

❖ Manifestations of Convergence:

Friendly Relations Existed between the Almoravids and the Ottoman Rulers of the Eastern Beylik, manifested in Several Fabricated Privileges; Including:

- Fixed Shares of Algerian Naval Spoils were allocated to Many Shrines. The Amounts allocated to the Shrines were Kept in a Special Box in the Government Palace, and remained there Until the Annual Celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, when They were Distributed by the Grand Khodja.¹²
- Many Ottoman Rulers took Great Care of the Various Institutions associated with the Marabouts, such as Shrines and Zawiyas (Sufi Lodges). They also Showed Great Concern for the Marabouts and the Students of the Zawiyas, especially during Religious Occasions Like Festivals and the Annual Celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, by Providing them with Gifts and Financial Assistance. This is Evident in the Correspondence the Marabouts Sent to the Rulers, which Contained Expressions of Gratitude and Praise, as well as Prayers for their Well-Being, Blessings, the Love of the People, Divine Favor, and Victory Over their Enemies.¹³ One Such Letter, sent by Ali ibn Omar to the Pasha, who had gifted him a Watch, states that He Spent the Money He received on Water-Related Projects. Meanwhile; Some Marabouts would Reciprocate the Pasha's Alms and Gifts with a Token Offering, usually Dates or Olives, and Sometimes Send a Gift to One of His Officials, such as the Agha or the Khaznaji (Treasurer).¹⁴
- The Ruling Authority in the Beylik Issued Several Decrees Obliging the Population to Respect the Sufi Cheikhs and Zawiyas, as well as to Respect their Descendants, including the Decrees Issued by the Bey of the Eastern Beylik in Favor of the Descendants of Abdul Rahman Al-Akhdari and their Zawiya (their Sufi Lodge).¹⁵

11 - Muhammad Ajila, Al-Jilali Bahaz, and Mustafa Abdul Nabi, *The Influence of Sufi Orders on Saharan Society in Algeria, Al-Wahat (Oases)*, Journal for Research and Studies, Issue: 15, University Center, Ghardaia, Algeria, 2011 CE, p. 371.

12 - Abdul Hakim Murtad, *Ibid.*, p. 285.

13 - Aisha Dabbah, *Op. Cit.*, p. 225.

14 - Abdul Hakim Murtad, *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

15 - Bouziani Deradji, Abdul Rahman al-Akhdari, the Sufi Scholar Who Excelled in His Time, Ministry of Culture, Algeria, 2nd Edition, 2009 CE, pp. 48-49.

- Many Ottoman Rulers granted Various Privileges to Prominent Sufi Figures, their Descendants, and their Institutions. Among these was a Letter Written in (1825 CE) by Bey Muhammad, the Ruler of the Eastern Beylik, known as Al-Manami, in Favor of Several Members of the Awlad Sidi Ahmed ibn Bouzidi Family Residing in Belzma and Batna. The Letter Stipulated that those Named were Exempt “from All Treasury Demands and Sultanic Duties”, and Further Stated: “They Shall not be Subject to Punishment, nor Shall They be treated as Others for Any Reason, nor Shall They be required to Pay Any Fines or Anything Else...We have Enjoined that They be treated with Respect, Care, and Honor...The Recipient is Obligated to Act accordingly and not to Violate this”. Ahmad Bey renewed these Privileges in a Letter Issued in (1828 CE).¹⁶
- Due to the Prestigious Status of the Sufi Cheikhs; They replaced the State in Securing Some Functions. For Example; In the Aurès Region, the Cheikhs of the Ibn Abbas Zawiya in Menâa were Working to Secure the Road through the Wadi Abdi Pass so that the Turkish Garrison in Biskra [Nuba] Could renew its Personnel after the End of their Military Service, despite the State of Rebellion that the Inhabitants of that Region were in. Many Sufi Cheikhs also mediated to Resolve Disputes that Sometimes Occurred between the Residents and the Civil and Military Officials. One such Incident Occurred in (1718 CE), when a Ship Sank in the Mediterranean Sea, and Only Three French Sailors Survived. The Waves Directed their Boat towards the Algerian Coasts, so they landed between Bejaia and Jijel. After Providing them with Assistance, the Residents Handed them Over to a Man Famous in the Province in that Area, who Sheltered them and Sent Word to the Dey Informing Him of their Situation. The Dey then arranged for them to be transferred to the City of Algiers and Handed them Over to their Country’s Consul.¹⁷

4. The Rahmaniyya and Chabbiyya Sufi Orders and their Relationship with Authority in the Eastern Beylik:

4.1. The Rahmaniyya Order:

The Rahmaniyya Order was One of the Most widespread Sufi Orders in Algeria during the 19th Century CE, controlling More than (50%) of the Zawiyas (Sufi Lodges) in the Country. According to a Statistic Compiled by “the Orientalist René” in (1892 CE); The Rahmaniyya Order Had Approximately (177) Zawiyas and (156,214) Followers. These Zawiyas were Particularly Prevalent in the East, Center, and South of Algeria, and Even Extended into Tunisia. Their Influence grew Significantly in Eastern Algeria, especially in the Constantine Countryside, where They Played a Prominent Role in Fostering Solidarity among the Region's Inhabitants and Promoting Knowledge and Brotherhood.¹⁸

4.2. The Rahmaniyya Order's Relationship with the Ottoman Authority in the Beylik:

16 - Abdul Hakim Murtad, Op. Cit., p. 283.

17 - Abdul Hakim Murtad, Ibid., pp. 285-286.

18 - Zerari Shams Eddine and Ben Zeroual Djemaa, The Role of the Rahmaniyya Zawiya in Fighting French Colonialism in Algeria, Al-Muqaddimah Journal for Human and Social Studies, University of Batna 1 Hadj Lakhdar, Algeria, Volume: 06, Issue: 02, December 2021 CE, p. 563.

The Rahmaniyya Order Faced Several Difficulties during its Early Stages. The Ottoman Authorities were Spying on it out of Fear, especially after it Spread in the Kabylie Region, following the Praise Heaped Upon its Cheikh, Muhammad ibn Abdul Rahman Al-Azhari. The Latter Visited the City of Algiers and its Suburbs to Establish Another Zawiya there in the Hamma Region, which Made More Disciples Flock to it and Draw from the Cheikh's Teachings, and this Earned Him More Sympathy and Fame.¹⁹

Relations between the Cheikhs of the Rahmaniyya Sufi Order and the Ottoman Rulers of the Beylik Fluctuated between Cooperation and Conflict. In General; Their Relationship was Characterized by Contradiction. To Further illustrate the Strengthening of Ties between the Ottoman Authorities and the Rahmaniyya Order through Cooperation, Consider, for Example; The Darqawi Revolt in the Early 19th Century CE. The Good Relations between Algiers and the Rahmaniyya Leader Enabled the Isolation of Potential Rebels, Limiting the Involvement of the Berber Tribes to the Kabylie Region, the Ouarsenis Mountains, and the Coastal Mountain Ranges of the Dahra and Tarza. Furthermore; The Major Tribes Provided Assistance to the Dey in Suppressing the Darqawi Sharifs' Revolt, and this Alliance between the Two Sides Continued for Many Years.²⁰

Relations between the Rahmani Leaders and the Ottoman Authorities were No Longer Amicable, deteriorating during the Reign of Omar Agha in (1813 CE), followed by Further Uprisings. Omar Agha Faced Difficult Times due to His Inability to Stop the Flissa Tribe and Other Tribes from Destroying the Eastern Mitidja in (1814 CE). However, during the Reign of Dey Ali Khodja; The Course of Events was Completely Reversed. He adopted a Policy Favoring the Tribes of the Kabylie Region, renewing His Alliance with them in (1816 CE). Units from the Zouaoua Tribe then Helped Him Subdue the Janissaries in (1817 CE).²¹

4.3. The Rahmaniyya Order's Relationship with the Authority in the Beylik:

This Sufi Order also gained Widespread Fame in the Eastern Beylik., leading the Beys of Constantine to Utilize the Hanancha Tribe—which Adhered to the Chabbiyya Sufi Order—and incorporate them into their Authority; Despite the History of Conflict between them. They Succeeded in Forging Closer Ties and Establishing Friendly Relations, which were Strengthened. In this Regard; Féraud notes: “After Settling in Constantine; The Ottomans, having Come from Annaba and Tunis, Divided Power into Three Parts: One-Third for the Cheikh of the Arabs, One-Third for the Hanancha, and the Final Third for the Ottomans. Hence; The Tradition arose that after the Appointment of the New Bey; He would Send a Caftan to the Cheikh of the Arabs, and then to the Cheikh of the Hanancha”. Due to the Tribe's Influence and Status; It wielded Considerable Power Over its Region, given its Population and Economic

19 - Nour El-Din Abu Lahia, *The Association of Muslim Scholars and Sufi Orders and the History of their Relationship*, Dar Al-Anwar for Publishing and Distribution, 2nd Edition, 2016 CE, p. 86.

20 - Boyer Agha, *Encyclopédie Berbère* [En ligne], 1985 CE, Document: A95, Mis En Ligne Le 01 Décembre 2012 CE, Consulté Le 19 Novembre 2024 CE. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/encyclopedieberbere/915>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/encyclopedieberbere>.

21 - P. Boyer, *Op. Cit.*, p. 915.

Resources. Its Responsibilities Included Ensuring Security, Collecting Taxes on the Lands within the Hanancha Territory, and Appointing the Sultan.²²

The Spiritual and Sufi Approach of the Chabbiyya Order Played a Significant Role in Influencing the Hanancha Tribe and Drawing them into its Fold. The Hanancha Tribe, through its Tribal influence and Extensive Human and Financial Resources; Contributed to the Chabbiyya Order's Economic and Political Flourishing. Cheikh Ibn Makhlof Successfully Persuaded His Followers to Pledge Spiritual Allegiance to the Chabbiyya Order during His Leadership, thus Highlighting the Role of the Hanancha Cheikhs in Supporting the Order. This does not Negate the Dual Allegiance the Order Maintained to the Political Authority in Tunisia and the Beylik of Constantine. Al-Adwani Cites a Highly Significant Passage in His Account of a Man Named (Al-Hadif - The Purposeful) addressing Al-Hanachi: "You Possess Half of Ifriqiyya (Tunisia Land) and Half of Constantine, for You are between Two Powerful Rulers". According to the Book's Investigator's Interpretation: "It is Prudent to Always Maintain Good Relations with Your Two Neighbors; That is, the Ruler of Tunisia and the Ruler of Constantine".²³

Conclusion:

It is Clear from the Foregoing that:

- The Ottoman Authorities were able to Win Over Many Tribes through their Policy of Securing the Loyalty of their Marabouts (Religious Leaders) in the Beylik; Thereby Ensuring Peace and Security in the Region.
- The Marabouts Became Safe Havens for Representatives of the Authorities in Many Circumstances, and They were Also Relied Upon to Win Over Many Tribes.
- The Authorities Benefited from the Support of the Marabouts in Consolidating their Rule in the Region.
- Through A Policy of Tax Exemptions for Some Sufi Orders and Marabouts; The Ottoman Authorities were able to Guarantee Relative Peace in the Region.
- Some Beys Contributed to Organizing Endowments (Waqf) and Supporting and Establishing Zawiyas (Sufi Lodges), which Yielded Positive Results for Both the Ottoman Authorities and the Tribes. The Authorities Benefited on Many Occasions from the Support of the Zawiyas.

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22 - Youssef Ben Haida, *The Relationship of the Tribe to the Sufi Order in Algeria and Tunisia during the Modern Era (the Chabbiyya and the Hanancha as Examples)*, *Al-Mi'yar Journal*, University of Islamic Sciences, Prince Abdelkader, Algeria, Volume: 24, Issue: 02, March 2020 CE, p. 203.

23 - Youssef Ben Haida, *Ibid.*, p. 204.

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