



# مجلة العلوم الإنسانية

علمية محكمة - نصف سنوية

تصدرها كلية الآداب / الخمس

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فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً <sup>ط</sup> وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ <sup>ج</sup>

صدق الله العظيم

(سورة الرعد - آية 17)

## هيئة التحرير

- د. علي سالم جمعة رئيساً  
 - د. أنور عمر أبوشينة عضواً  
 - د. أحمد مريجيل حريش عضواً

المجلة علمية ثقافية محكمة نصف سنوية تصدر عن جامعة المرقب /كلية الآداب الخمس، وتُنشر بها البحوث والدراسات الأكاديمية المعنية بالمشكلات والقضايا المجتمعية المعاصرة في مختلف تخصصات العلوم الإنسانية.

- كافة الآراء والأفكار والكتابات التي وردت في هذا العدد تعبر عن آراء أصحابها فقط، ولا تعكس بالضرورة رأي هيئة تحرير المجلة ولا تتحمل المجلة اية مسؤولية اتجاهها.

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## قواعد ومعايير النشر

-تهتم المجلة بنشر الدراسات والبحوث الأصيلة التي تتسم بوضوح المنهجية ودقة التوثيق في حقول الدراسات المتخصصة في اللغة العربية والانجليزية والدراسات الاسلامية والشعر والأدب والتاريخ والجغرافيا والفلسفة وعلم الاجتماع والتربية وعلم النفس وما يتصل بها من حقول المعرفة.

-ترحب المجلة بنشر التقارير عن المؤتمرات والندوات العلمية المقامة داخل الجامعة على أن لا يزيد عدد الصفحات عن خمس صفحات مطبوعة.

-نشر البحوث والنصوص المحققة والمترجمة ومراجعات الكتب المتعلقة بالعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية ونشر البحوث والدراسات العلمية النقدية الهادفة إلى تقدم المعرفة العلمية والإنسانية.

-ترحب المجلة بعروض الكتب على ألا يتجاوز تاريخ إصدارها ثلاثة أعوام ولا يزيد حجم العرض عن صفحتين مطبوعتين وأن يذكر الباحث في عرضه المعلومات التالية (اسم المؤلف كاملاً- عنوان الكتاب- مكان وتاريخ النشر- عدد صفحات الكتاب- اسم الناشر- نبذة مختصرة عن مضمونه- تكتب البيانات السالفة الذكر بلغة الكتاب).

## ضوابط عامة للمجلة

- يجب أن يتسم البحث بالأسلوب العلمي النزيه الهادف ويحتوى على مقومات ومعايير المنهجية العلمية في اعداد البحوث.

- يُشترط في البحوث المقدمة للمجلة أن تكون أصيلة ولم يسبق أن نشرت أو قدمت للنشر في مجلة أخرى أو أية جهة ناشرة اخرة. وأن يتعهد الباحث بذلك خطيا عند تقديم البحث، وتقديم إقراراً بأنه سيلتزم بكافة الشروط والضوابط المقررة

في المجلة، كما أنه لا يجوز يكون البحث فصلاً أو جزءاً من رسالة (ماجستير - دكتوراه) منشورة، أو كتاب منشور.

- لغة المجلة هي العربية ويمكن أن تقبل بحوثاً بالإنجليزية أو بأية لغة أخرى، بعد موافقة هيئة التحرير..

- تحتفظ هيئة التحرير بحقها في عدم نشر أي بحث وتُعدُّ قراراتها نهائية، وتبلغ الباحث باعتذارها فقط إذا لم يتقرر نشر البحث، ويصبح البحث بعد قبوله حقاً محفوظاً للمجلة ولا يجوز النقل منه إلا بإشارة إلى المجلة.

- لا يحق للباحث إعادة نشر بحثه في أية مجلة علمية أخرى بعد نشره في مجلة الكلية، كما لا يحق له طلب استرجاعه سواء قُبِلَ للنشر أم لم يقبل.

- تخضع جميع الدراسات والبحوث والمقالات الواردة إلى المجلة للفحص العلمي، بعرضها على مُحكِّمين مختصين (محكم واحد لكل بحث) تختارهم هيئة التحرير على نحو سري لتقدير مدى صلاحية البحث للنشر، ويمكن ان يرسل الى محكم اخر وذلك حسب تقدير هيئة التحرير.

- يبدي المقيم رأيه في مدى صلاحية البحث للنشر في تقرير مستقل مدعماً بالمبررات على أن لا تتأخر نتائج التقييم عن شهر من تاريخ إرسال البحث إليه، ويرسل قرار المحكمين النهائي للباحث ويكون القرار إما:

\* قبول البحث دون تعديلات.

\* قبول البحث بعد تعديلات وإعادة عرضه على المحكم.

\* رفض البحث.

-تقوم هيئة تحرير المجلة بإخطار الباحثين بآراء المحكمين ومقترحاتهم إذ كان

المقال أو البحث في حال يسمح بالتعديل والتصحيح، وفي حالة وجود تعديلات طلبها المقيم وبعد موافقة الهيئة على قبول البحث للنشر قبولاً مشروطاً بإجراء التعديلات يطلب من الباحث الأخذ بالتعديلات في فترة لا تتجاوز أسبوعين من تاريخ استلامه للبحث، ويقدم تقريراً يبين فيه رده على المحكم، وكيفية الأخذ بالملاحظات والتعديلات المطلوبة.

- ترسل البحوث المقبولة للنشر إلى المدقق اللغوي ومن حق المدقق اللغوي أن يرفض البحث الذي تتجاوز أخطاؤه اللغوية الحد المقبول.

- تنشر البحوث وفق أسبقية وصولها إلى المجلة من المحكم، على أن تكون مستوفية الشروط السالفة الذكر.

- الباحث مسئول بالكامل عن صحة النقل من المراجع المستخدمة كما أن هيئة تحرير المجلة غير مسئولة عن أية سرقة علمية تتم في هذه البحوث.

- ترفق مع البحث السيرة العلمية (CV) مختصرة قدر الإمكان تتضمن الاسم الثلاثي للباحث ودرجته العلمية ونخصه الدقيق، وجامعته وكليته وقسمه، وأهم مؤلفاته، والبريد الإلكتروني والهاتف ليسهل الاتصال به.

- يخضع ترتيب البحوث في المجلة لمعايير فنية تراها هيئة التحرير.

- تقدم البحوث الى مكتب المجلة الكائن بمقر الكلية، او ترسل إلى بريد المجلة الإلكتروني.

- اذا تم ارسال البحث عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني او صندوق البريد يتم ابلاغ الباحث بوصول بحثه واستلامه.

- يترتب على الباحث، في حالة سحبه لبحثه او إبداء رغبته في عدم متابعة

إجراءات التحكيم والنشر، دفع الرسوم التي خصصت للمقيمين.

### شروط تفصيلية للنشر في المجلة

-عنوان البحث: يكتب العنوان باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. ويجب أن يكون العنوان مختصراً قدر الإمكان ويعبر عن هدف البحث بوضوح ويتبع المنهجية العلمية من حيث الإحاطة والاستقصاء وأسلوب البحث العلمي.

- يذكر الباحث على الصفحة الأولى من البحث اسمه ودرجته العلمية والجامعة او المؤسسة الأكاديمية التي يعمل بها.

-أن يكون البحث مصوغاً بإحدى الطريقتين الآتيتين: \_

1:البحوث الميدانية: يورد الباحث مقدمة يبين فيها طبيعة البحث ومبرراته ومدى الحاجة إليه، ثم يحدد مشكلة البحث، ويجب أن يتضمن البحث الكلمات المفتاحية (مصطلحات البحث)، ثم يعرض طريقة البحث وأدواته، وكيفية تحليل بياناته، ثم يعرض نتائج البحث ومناقشتها والتوصيات المنبثقة عنها، وأخيراً قائمة المراجع.

2:البحوث النظرية التحليلية: يورد الباحث مقدمة يمهد فيها لمشكلة البحث مبيناً فيها أهميته وقيمه في الإضافة إلى العلوم والمعارف وإغنائها بالجديد، ثم يقسم العرض بعد ذلك إلى أقسام على درجة من الاستقلال فيما بينها، بحيث يعرض في كل منها فكرة مستقلة ضمن إطار الموضوع الكلي ترتبط بما سبقها وتمهد لما يليها، ثم يختم الموضوع بملخص شامل له، وأخيراً يثبت قائمة المراجع.

-يقدم الباحث ثلاث نسخ ورقية من البحث، وعلى وجه واحد من الورقة (A4) واحدة منها يكتب عليها اسم الباحث ودرجته العلمية، والنسخ الأخرى تقدم ويكتب عليها عنوان البحث فقط، ونسخة الكترونية على (Cd) باستخدام البرنامج الحاسوبي (MS Word).

- يجب ألا تقل صفحات البحث عن 20 صفحة ولا تزيد عن 30 صفحة بما في ذلك صفحات الرسوم والأشكال والجداول وقائمة المراجع .  
-يرفق مع البحث ملخصان (باللغة العربية والانجليزية) في حدود (150) كلمة لكل منهما، وعلى ورقتين منفصلتين بحيث يكتب في أعلى الصفحة عنوان البحث ولا يتجاوز الصفحة الواحدة لكل ملخص.

-يُترك هامش مقداره 3 سم من جهة التجليد بينما تكون الهوامش الأخرى 2.5 سم، المسافة بين الأسطر مسافة ونصف، يكون نوع الخط المستخدم في المتن Times New Roman 12 للغة الانجليزية و مسافة و نصف بخط Simplified Arabic 14 للأبحاث باللغة العربية.

-في حالة وجود جداول وأشكال وصور في البحث يكتب رقم وعنوان الجدول أو الشكل والصورة في الأعلى بحيث يكون موجزاً للمحتوى وتكتب الحواشي في الأسفل بشكل مختصر كما يشترط لتنظيم الجداول اتباع نظام الجداول المعترف به في جهاز الحاسوب ويكون الخط بحجم 12.

-يجب أن ترقم الصفحات ترقيماً متسلسلاً بما في ذلك الجداول والأشكال والصور واللوحات وقائمة المراجع .

### طريقة التوثيق:

-يُشار إلى المصادر والمراجع في متن البحث بأرقام متسلسلة توضع بين قوسين إلى الأعلى هكذا: (1)، (2)، (3)، ويكون ثبوتها في أسفل صفحات البحث، وتكون أرقام التوثيق متسلسلة موضوعة بين قوسين في أسفل كل صفحة، فإذا كانت أرقام التوثيق في الصفحة الأولى مثلاً قد انتهت عند الرقم (6) فإن الصفحة التالية ستبدأ بالرقم (1).

-ويكون توثيق المصادر والمراجع على النحو الآتي:

أولاً: الكتب المطبوعة: اسم المؤلف ثم لقبه، واسم الكتاب مكتوباً بالبنط الغامق، واسم المحقق أو المترجم، والطبعة، والناشر، ومكان النشر، وسنته، ورقم المجلد - إن تعددت المجلدات- والصفحة. مثال: أبو عثمان عمرو بن بحر الجاحظ، الحيوان. تحقيق وشرح: عبد السلام محمد هارون، ط2، مصطفى البابي الحلبي، القاهرة، 1965م، ج3، ص40. ويشار إلى المصدر عند وروده مرة ثانية على النحو الآتي: الجاحظ، الحيوان، ج، ص.

ثانياً: الكتب المخطوطة: اسم المؤلف ولقبه، واسم الكتاب مكتوباً بالبنط الغامق، واسم المخطوط مكتوباً بالبنط الغامق، ومكان المخطوط، ورقمه، ورقم اللوحة أو الصفحة. مثال: شافع بن علي الكناني، الفضل المأثور من سيرة السلطان الملك المنصور. مخطوط مكتبة البودليان باكسفورد، مجموعة مارش رقم (424)، ورقة 50.

ثالثاً: الدوريات: اسم كاتب المقالة، عنوان المقالة موضوعاً بين علامتي تنصيص " "، واسم الدورية مكتوباً بالبنط الغامق، رقم المجلد والعدد والسنة، ورقم الصفحة، مثال: جرار، صلاح: "عناية السيوطي بالتراث الأندلسي- مدخل"، مجلة جامعة القاهرة للبحوث والدراسات، المجلد العاشر، العدد الثاني، سنة 1415هـ/ 1995م، ص179.

رابعاً: الآيات القرآنية والاحاديث النبوية:- تكتب الآيات القرآنية بين قوسين مزهرين بالخط العثماني ﴿﴾ مع الإشارة إلى السورة ورقم الآية. وتثبت الأحاديث النبوية بين قوسين مزدوجين « » بعد تخريجها من مظانها.

ملاحظة: لا توافق هيئة التحرير على تكرار نفس الاسم (اسم الباحث) في عديدين متتاليين وذلك لفتح المجال امام جميع اعضاء هيئة التدريس للنشر.

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## **Caravan trade between Kuwait and "markets of Arabian Peninsula, Levant and Southern Iraq" in the pre-oil era (A study in modes and relations of production)**

\* د/مصطفى أحمد صقر

### **1.Introduction**

Although pastoralism was the common occupation of all nomads, this does not mean that raising animals was their only economic activity. During the modern history of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Bedouin tribes had also intermittently engaged in considerable trade (mainly the caravan trade) with urban markets. The flexibility so characteristic of pastoral nomadism and the ability to transport goods and people have meant that pastoralism has long been associated with the caravan trade as one of the major livelihood strategies. Prior to the evolution of modern transport, animals were the only method of moving large quantities of goods across land. Consequently, pastoralists often became heavily involved in trade caravans, guiding, managing and supplying the appropriate livestock. In Arabia, this evolved into a quite sophisticated form of blackmail, whereby the nomads both guided the caravans and required payments to protect them.<sup>2</sup>

However, commercial caravans had effectively contributed to the activation of Kuwait's external trade and were one of the primary pillars for the growth and development of the Kuwaiti economy. Long-distance trade caravans played a major role in the economic exchanges and commercial relations that took place between Kuwait and the major centres of Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. They were the main links for Kuwait with distant cities in Syria, southern Iraq, eastern and central Arabia. These economic ties had an enormous impact on Kuwait's internal development and its external political relations. Another reason for the active caravan trade were the needs of the consumer Kuwaiti

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<sup>1</sup> - أستاذ مشارك بقسم التاريخ - كلية الآداب الخمس.

<sup>2</sup> Louise E. Sweet, "Camel Pastoralism in North Arabia and the Minimal Camping Unit" in: *Man, Culture and Animal: The Role of Animal in Human Ecological Adjustment*, Edited by Anthony Leeds and Andrew Vayda (Washington: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1965), p.137.

society and the needs of the neighbouring societies, which relied on the Kuwaiti market to supply the material and necessary commodities.

Accordingly, caravan trade, as an economic activity, attracted a considerable part of the Kuwaiti population who participated in it whether directly as merchants, money lenders and cameleers, or indirectly as guards and guides, .etc. Most importantly, the caravan trade was the most important economic activity jointly practiced by both the nomadic and the settled people of Kuwait. There was a complex system of interaction between the nomadic tribes and the settled population in which goods and services were exchanged between the two sides. Throughout their long history, nomadic tribes had lived on their herds, supplying the surplus Bedouin products to the sedentary communities in return for manufactured and agricultural goods that they were unable to produce. They also controlled the desert trade routes, escorted caravans, and provided them with drivers and guides. This economic interdependence between the nomadic and settled populations of Kuwait had been an important characteristic of society for several centuries.

This study, therefore, presents a complete historical analysis of Kuwait's caravan trade and the economic interactions between the settled and nomadic communities of Kuwaiti society. The object of this study is to ask how far the caravan trade contributed in the prosperity of the Kuwaiti economy in the pre-oil era? And to what extent did the caravan trade —as a critical element of the traditional nomadic mode of production with its specific patterns of ownership and relations of production— contributed in determining and affecting the social structure of Kuwaiti society? This will be attempted through a study of patterns of ownership of capital and animals (means of transportation), ways of finance and economic and social relations between the participants in this economic activity. This study will also investigate the size of caravans, destinations and types of commodities, with special attention being paid to the market of Kuwait and the Bedouin participation in its prosperity. It is hoped that this will help to elucidate the significance of this economic activity and thus its impact on the social structure of the Kuwaiti society. It is of utmost importance to mention at this point that the information regarding the caravan trade, its organization and the participation of Bedouin tribes is not exclusive to Kuwait only. It can be applied to all northern and central

Arabia, southern Iraq and Syria as this area was the homeland of the 'Anzah, Mutair, 'Ajman, Shmmar, Utaibah, Bani Khakid, Bani Hajer, Sbai'a, 'Awazim, Rashaidah, Harib, Sahul and Dhafir tribes to which the Bedouins of Kuwait belonged.

## **2. Factors Contributing to the Prosperity and Decline of the Caravan Trade**

Since its inception, Kuwait has played an important role in the transit trade into the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Syria. Goods and commodities were imported from India, Iran, and east Africa to the Kuwait port, and then re-exported to the Arabian Peninsula, southern Iraq, and Syria by using commercial caravans. And conversely, products of these areas were brought by caravans to the Kuwait City and re-exported to the international markets. What helped Kuwait play such a role was the period of instability that Basra had experienced due to the spread of plague in 1773 which led to immigration of large numbers of its inhabitants, including merchants, to Kuwait and so they practised their trade activities in Kuwait.<sup>1</sup> Another reason for the decline of the commercial status of Basra was the siege imposed by the Persians and the subsequent occupation of it by the Persians from 1775-1779. The result was the decline of trade in Basra and the transfer of its Indian trade with Baghdad, Aleppo, Constantinople and the hinterland of Arabia into Kuwait. This was also added to the transfer of the British East India Company's factory from Basra to Kuwait in 1775. Since then, Kuwait turned into a very important port and accordingly became a significant station for commercial caravans from Kuwait to southern Iraq, Syria, and eastern and central Arabia.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the factors mentioned in the commercial sea transportation, Kuwait was also helped by its geographical proximity to these regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Mustafa Abu Hakimah, *The Modern History of Kuwait 1750-1965* (London: Luzac & Company, 1983), p.110. Faiq Tahboub, *Tariekh Al-Bahrain Al-Siaysi [The Political History of Bahrain]* (Kuwait: Dar Dat Al-Salsil, undated), p.45.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Hakimah, op. cit., pp.23-27, Mohammed Hassan Al-'Adarous, *Tariekh Al-Khalij Al-Arabi Al-Hadit [The Modern History of the Arabian Gulf]* (Cairo: Dar 'Ain Lil Dirasat wa Al-Bohouth, 1996), p.62.

The caravan trade enjoyed the attention and the protection of the rulers of Kuwait, especially during the reign of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, 1896-1915. Because of its economic significance, Sheikh Mubarak paid a special attention to this trade, and encouraged those who were involved in it. He made constant efforts to secure the caravan trade routes and guarantee the safety and protection of caravaneers and their goods by punishing those who attacked them.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that, in spite of its critical importance during the 18th and 19th centuries, the caravan trade declined and suffered during the first half of the 20th century. The caravan trade was often influenced by the current political circumstances and sometimes ceased completely due to the political disputes between Al Sabah and Al Rashid, and between the latter and Al Saud in the hinterland of the Arabian Peninsula. This situation might have been aggravated by the political disputes between the Ottoman State and the influential European states such as Britain. However, reasons for the decline of the caravan trade can be summarized as follows:

- The siege imposed by the British forces during the First World War in order to prevent the supply of food and goods from Kuwait to Britain's adversaries such as the Ottomans, the Germans in Syria and Lebanon, and Ibn Rashid, the ally of the Ottomans, in Arabia.<sup>2</sup>
- The commercial disputes between Kuwait and Najd (one of the most important destinations for this trade). This problem occurred because Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the governor of Najd at that time, prevented his subjects from trading with Kuwait as a result of his inability to reach an agreement with the ruler of Kuwait regarding the customs tax between the two countries.
- The dispute with Iraq over the lack of a definite custom tax between the two states. These two problems led to an increase of smuggling between these areas and the ceasing of the caravan trade.

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Aziz, Al-Rashid, *Tariekh Al-Kuwait [The History of Kuwait]* (Beirut: Dar Maktabat Al-Hayat, 1978), p. 64. H. R. P Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1951), p.443.

<sup>2</sup>Hussein Khalaf Al-Sheikh Khaz'aal *Tariekh Al-Kuwait Al-Siaysi [The Political History of Kuwait]* (Beirut: Dar Maktabat Al-Hilal, 1962), p.129. Al-Rashid, op. cit., pp.238-40.

- The economic great depression of 1930s and its negative implications for the economic life in general and trade in particular. However, shortly after that, trade started to prosper again during the years of the Second World War. This was because of the resumption of work for the Kuwaiti sailing ships and the stopping of the European steamers to come to the region. This enabled the Kuwaiti merchants to work as commercial mediators in the region and supplying food to the armies of the alliance working in Iran and Iraq during the war.<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Routes of Commercial Caravans, their Sizes and the Time Needed for their Trips**

The most important routes of the commercial caravans from Kuwait to Basra, southern Iraq, central and eastern Arabia and Syria<sup>2</sup> were as follows:

A- The route from Kuwait to Basra passes by Qasr Al-Sheikh, Umm Qasr, and Saffwan. It continues to Zubier or Basra. The length of this route from Kuwait to Safwan is 111.5 miles, and from Saffwan to Zubier is 17 miles.<sup>3</sup>

B- The route from Kuwait to Basra through Jahrah and then to Saffwan directly. This route goes in a straight line for around 56 miles north to Saffwasn. The total distance of this route is around 76 miles.<sup>4</sup>

C- The way from Kuwait to Al-Qasim towards Najd passes through Jahrah, Umm Al-‘Amarah, Wadi Al-Shiq then to Al-Qasim. The length of this route is between 25 to 30 miles.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Isa, Al-Qatami, *Dalil Al-Muhtar fi ‘Alim Al-Bihar [The Guidebook of Seas Science]* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1964), pp.216-7, Badder Al-Deen Abbas, Al-Khususi, *Dirasat fi Tariekh Al-Kuwait Al-Iqtisadi wa Al-Ijtima‘ai [Studies in Economic and Social History of Kuwait]* (Kuwait: Dar Dat Al-Salasil, 1983), p.264.

<sup>2</sup> The Kuwaiti Ministry of Guidance and News, *The Annual Book* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1972), p.11.

<sup>3</sup> J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, vol.1, Historical (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1915), pp.1067-70.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp.1070-71.

<sup>5</sup> Amin Al-Rihani, *Muluk Al-Arab: Rihlah fi Al-Bilad Al-Arabia [Arab Kings: Trip in Arab Land]* (Beirut: Dar Al-Jeel, Undated), p.671.

D- The way to Hafar towards Najd passes through Jahrah, Umm Al-‘Amarah, Wadi Al-Shiq, Al-Qasim, Riq‘ai, Qasr Ballal in Wadi Al-Batin, to Hafar. The distance from Kuwait to Hafar is 180 miles.<sup>1</sup>

E- The route from Kuwait to Hafar directly through Warah ‘Adan, Dibdibah plain until Hafar. It is around 180 miles.<sup>2</sup>

F- The route from Kuwait to Zilfi in Najd.<sup>3</sup>

G- The route from Kuwait to Najd through Wabrah. The distance is around 140 miles.<sup>4</sup>

H- The route from Subihah in Kuwait to Al-Hasa.<sup>5</sup>

J- The route from Kuwait to Aleppo in Syria. This route was very important during the 18<sup>th</sup> century but lost this status in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the prevailing political conditions and particularly with the eruption of the First World War.

The size of caravans varies according to the volume of the goods shipped and the commercial conditions in the destinations. Therefore, there was no fixed system for the size of caravans. Furthermore, the numbers of animals and camels were difficult to count due to the fact that, in some cases, these animals were bought from Bedouins on the way to destination and so did not count among the animals of caravans.

Despite the lack of detailed information on the size of the commercial caravans during the period under investigation, it is possible to make use of the information given by the European travellers, who accompanied such caravans in earlier times. This is because caravans, during the period under investigation, maintained the same routes in the desert and continued using the same means of transportation used by those travellers. If there were a difference, it was only in the types of goods and prices.

The traveller Bartholomew Plaisted mentions that the caravan that he accompanied from Basra to Aleppo in 1763 was composed of around 2 000 camels at the beginning. Some camels were not loaded but were only intended to be sold in Aleppo. In the middle of the route another caravan

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<sup>1</sup> Lorimer, op.cit., pp. 1070-72.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 1072-73.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.1073.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Rihani, op. cit., p.671.

joined with 3 000 camels. Therefore, the subtotal was 5 000 camel and around 1 000 men<sup>1</sup>. The caravan that Edward Ives intended to travel with from Kuwait to Aleppo in 1758 was composed of 5 000 camel guarded by 1 000 men.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the fact that this information refers to an earlier period, it is possible to say that the size of caravans was not defined. The increase or decrease in the size of caravans was due to several factors such as the volume of the goods to be transported, the commercial conditions in the intended markets, the probability of other caravans joining in the route, and buying animals during the trip in order to sell them in the intended markets.

The duration of trips through the desert varied according to differences in the size of the caravans, and the differences in the distances between different markets. Big caravans used to travel at a slower speed than small caravans. Furthermore, the nature of the landscape played a role in limiting the speed of the caravans. This is confirmed by the traveller G. Forster Sadleir who said about his trip across the Arabian Peninsula in 1819 that he calculated the average speed according to the number of hours as follows:

When the trip is no more than eight hours, there would be a decrease in the calculated distance to two miles and a half-mile to two miles and three quarters of a mile. The reduction in speed was due to the mountain and rocky nature of the land.<sup>3</sup>

In the light of what Forster Sadleir mentioned, it is difficult to calculate the time needed for a trip from Kuwait for example to Najd or Basra and vice versa. This is because it is not possible to define the speed of the caravans, the period of recess to get water, and the time needed to negotiate with tribes about the tribute of passing, and so on.

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<sup>1</sup> Bartholomew Plaisted, A Journey from Busserah to Aleppo, in: *The Desert Route to India*, edited by Douglas Carruthers (Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967), p.80.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmed Mustafa Abu Hakimah, *History of Kuwait*, vol.1, Part 1 (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1967), p.277.

<sup>3</sup> G. Forster Sadler, *Dairy of a Journey across Arabia 1819* (Cambridge: Falcon & Oleander Press), 1977), p.27.

## 4. Economic Rewards of the Caravan Trade

To realise the size of the financial revenues of the Kuwaiti caravan trade for the period of this study, it would be helpful to shed some light on the organization of the Kuwaiti markets, transactions, currency and commercial dealings between nomads and merchants in these markets. Furthermore, an analysis of the caravan trade, as one of the critical pillars of the Kuwaiti economy, inevitably entails a close examination of the Kuwait customs as the place concerned for obtaining the most important revenue for the government treasury and because the caravan trade and the selling of Bedouins was part of it.

### 4.1 Kuwaiti Markets

Kuwaiti markets were the starting point and the returning point of the caravans to the neighbouring areas with economic and commercial links. These markets were the centres of trade activity and so it warrants giving some details about them.

The city of Kuwait, during the period under investigation, was composed of a number of neighbourhoods that were separated by a main road that connects the important markets with the beach.<sup>1</sup> One of the most distinctive features of these neighbourhoods was the existence of the markets where people assembled to sell and buy. The yard of Al-Safah was regarded as the main market in Kuwait. In this market, caravaneers used to do all their commercial transactions. This was also the main market for Bedouins who used to come to exchange their products such as ghee, sheep, and wool and for what was available such as clothes and food.<sup>2</sup>

Besides this central market, there were other markets that had special features such as the meat and fish markets, the blacksmith market, the vegetables market, and so on.<sup>3</sup> There were also many shops for different

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<sup>1</sup> Khalifa Al-Nabhani, *Al-Tuhfa Al-Nabhania fi Tariekh Al-Jazera Al-Arabia [The History of Arabian Peninsula]* vol.8 (Cairo: Al-Matba'ah Al-Mohamadia Al-Tijaria, 1949), p.144. Also Al-Rashid, op. cit., p.38.

<sup>2</sup> Faisal Al-'Adhamah *Fi Bilad Al-Lulu [In the Country of Pearl]* (Damascus: Committee of Culture in the Arab Youth Association, 1945), p.126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.126.

trade activities.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, it is possible to argue that Kuwait, as well being a commercial centre for importing and exporting goods to the international markets (Iran, southern coast of Arabia, India and East Africa) was also a commercial link between these markets and the hinterland of Arabia, southern Iraq and Syria. This clearly illustrates that the economy of Kuwait City was not a subsistence-oriented economy but one in which trade was a key element. It should also be noted that Kuwait market served as a social and cultural centre in which distinctive systems and different cultures had evolved. The following table gives a clear picture for the commercial transactions and the number of people who specialized in them as merchants and craftsmen in the Kuwait for the year 1904.

**Table 1**  
**The Number of Merchants and Craftsmen in Kuwait Market for the Year 1904<sup>2</sup>**

Number	Type of Trade or Vocational Activity	Number	Type of Trade or Vocational Activity
36	Piece goods dealers		
21	Goldsmiths	32	Dates merchants
11	Blacksmiths	16	Druggists
12	Tinsmiths	28	Fruiterers
7	Gunsmiths	24	Rice merchants
11	Lamp makers	15	Wheat dealers
132	Dealers in Bedouin requests (such as carpets, cheap cloaks, nails, horseshoes, lead and shot).	13	Leather workers
		3	Professional cooks
		2	Oil presses
13	Leather workers	147	Grocers and druggists
17	Quilt makers	9	Ghee sellers
23	Haberdashers	9	Grass sellers
21	Tailors	35	Brokers of private goods on commission who had fixed places of business.
37	Cloak embroiderers		
7	Gold and silk braid workers		
12	Arab head fillets makers	12	Tea shops
13	Barbers	7	Cafés
11	Confectioners	250	Warehouses for the storage of grain.
8	Bakers		
11	Fishmongers	70	Business offices
36	Butchers	6	Stores for the material used in pressing oil.
14	Tobacconists		

<sup>1</sup> Rasim Rushdi, *Al-Kuwait wa Al-Kuwaitiein [Kuwait and Kuwaitis]* (Beirut: Al-Matba'ah Al-Rahbania Al-Libnania, 1959), p.34.

<sup>2</sup> Lorimer, op. cit., p.1054.

The logical conclusion to be drawn from the above table is that Kuwait City was very important commercial centre for both the nomadic and the sedentary population. Within this commercial centre a complex division of labour existed. The major discernible divisions included the dealers in Bedouin requests and the craft workers whose products and work were marketed beyond the bounds of the city to the Bedouins.

More importantly, Kuwait market provided the framework that linked the sedentary community in the city with other communities in the region and the region as a whole to a wider world outside the Arabian Gulf. Of special significance in the regional economy were the Bedouins. Bedouins had completely relied on the Kuwait market for obtaining food, cloths, weapons and all of the manufactured goods and equipment required for herding activities. They also relied on the market of Kuwait in marketing their products which were sold to the Kuwaiti merchants who then either marketed them locally or sent them abroad as exports.

It can, however, be said that Kuwait City was the commercial centre not only for the city dwellers but also for the Bedouins and urban centres in different parts of central Arabia, Syria and southern Iraq who made good profits from trading in Kuwaiti markets. Among the most important commodities that were carried by caravans from Kuwait to the hinterland of Arabia were rice, wheat, barley, coffee, sugar, tea, cloths, weapons, and other materials which came to the Kuwaiti port from Iran, India, Arabian Peninsula, and East Africa and re-exported to the markets of Najd, Al-Qasim, 'Aneizah, Buridah, Al-Hasa, Jubayl, and others.<sup>1</sup>

Kuwaiti imports from these places were Bedouins products such as sheep, camels, skins, and wool.<sup>2</sup> In addition, they come back with the products of the markets that the caravans reached in order to sell them in Kuwait or re-export them.<sup>3</sup> Kuwait also played an important role in exporting horses

<sup>1</sup> Al-'Adhamah, op. cit., p.71, Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqer, *Al-Kuwait Qabl Al-Zait [Kuwait before the Oil]* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1984), p.17.

<sup>2</sup> Al-'Adhamah, op. cit., p.71, Ghanim Sultan, *Al-Milaha Al-Arabia wa Ahmiatuha Qadiman wa Haditan [Arab Navigation and its Ancient and Modern Importance]* (Kuwait: Moasasat Al-Taquadum Al-'Almi, 1988), p.119.

<sup>3</sup> "Markets in Kuwait: Old and Modern", *Al-Arabi Magazine*, (66), May 1964, pp. 129-

from Najd which were gathered in the Jahrah village in Kuwait to be re-exported to India. This trade was practised by a number of Kuwaiti traders and it prospered during the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Lewis Pelly mentions in his reports on Kuwaiti trade between 1863-65 that Kuwait was exporting 800 horses annually, the average prices of each horse was 300 rupees, and it exported wool with annual income of 40 000 rupees. The value of the Kuwaiti trade from horses at the beginning of the 19th century was expected to have reached 90 0000 rupees annually.<sup>2</sup>

Although these figures go back to earlier times, they show clearly that Bedouin products were of greatest importance to the Kuwaiti external trade. These products kept flooding Kuwaiti markets during the first half of the 20th century, except for horses, which suffered a decline in demand in the Indian markets. The volume of trade between Kuwait and Najd was estimated at the beginning of the 20th century to be around 500 000-600 000 rupees annually, however it decreased to 300 000 rupees yearly with the outbreak of the First World War and the eruption of disputes in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula between Al-Saud and Al-Rashid.<sup>3</sup>

Another relevant point which needed to be highlighted here is the Kuwaiti currency. Kuwaitis in their commercial dealings used to employ different types of currency. For example, the gold Ottoman lira, the British sterling, the Maria Teresa dollar or riyal, which was known as the French riyal, the Indian rupee, and the Iranian *gawareen* were all used in Kuwait. In addition, other currency existed made of bad silver metal such as the Basri riyals, and the copper riyals.<sup>4</sup>

This situation was imposed on Kuwait because it was a desert state with an economy that relied on pearls and trade with neighbouring and distance countries. The sheikhs of Kuwait tried to issue their own

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<sup>1</sup> Yosif bin Isa Al-Gina'ai, *Safahat min Tariekh Al-Kuwait [Pages from the History of Kuwait]* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1968), pp.61-62.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis Pelly, quoted in Abu Hakimah, *History of Kuwait*, p.232.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Rihani, op. cit., p.668.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.319.

currency in 1886 from copper but the use of this currency was short-lived.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is difficult to define the periods of dealing with the currencies mentioned, it is possible to have an idea about the exchange rate by comparing the percentage of these currencies with each other. The Maria Teresa dollar during the period 1905-30 averaged between 133-165 Indian rupees,<sup>2</sup> it also equalled five Iranian gawareen. The Indian rupee was equal to 2.5 grain or 0.186621 grams of pure gold. <sup>3</sup> It was also equal to 1.5 British shilling or 33 American cents.<sup>4</sup>

The merchants agreed among themselves on the exchange rate of these currencies, and therefore they had no preferences of a specific currency. This situation was changed with the outbreak of the First World War and the decline of the Ottoman influence, especially in Kuwait. This pushed merchants to deal basically in Indian rupees because of the close trade connection between India and Kuwait.<sup>5</sup> This was the currency that Kuwait and all other Arabian Gulf sheikdoms were unofficially tied to since 18356 and continued until 1959 when the Indian government issued issued special rupees for the Arabian Gulf region. These rupees continued

<sup>1</sup> Majidah Faiq Jundi, *Al-Siayah Al-Naqdhiah fi Al-Kuwait 1970-79 [The Monetary Policy in Kuwait 1970-79]* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, undated), p.17.

<sup>2</sup> The Persian Gulf trade Reports 1905-1940, *Reports on the Trade of Kuwait 1905-1940* (Trowbridge: Redwood, 1987), different pages.

<sup>3</sup> Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, *Kuwait Guidebook* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1951), p.319. See also Abdullmuna'aim Al-Sayid Ali, *Al-Tatwar Al-Tariekhi lil Al-Andhima Al-Naqdhiah fi Al-Aqtar Al-Arabia [The Historical Development of the Monetary Systems in the Arab Countries]* (Beirut: Centre of the Arab Unity Studies, 1983), p.135.

<sup>4</sup> Sayid Nofil, *Al-Khalij Al-Arabi aw Al-Hodod Al-Sharqiah Lil Al-Watan Al-Arabi [The Arabian Gulf or the Eastern Borders of the Arab World]* (Beirut: Dar Al-Talabah, 1969), p.196.

<sup>5</sup> Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, *Kuwait Guidebook*, p.320.

<sup>6</sup> Nourah Al-Qasimi, "Al-Wojoud Al-Hindi fi Al-Khalij Al-Arabi" [The Indian Presence in the Arabian Gulf], Unpublished MA Thesis (Cairo: 'Ain Shams University, 1984), p.107.

in Kuwait until the issuance of the first Kuwaiti currency, the Kuwaiti Dinar, in 1961.<sup>1</sup>

## 4.2 Kuwait Customs

The customs tax from the caravan's trade, which was given to the sheikh of Kuwait before the reign of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, was calculated according to the kind of goods. A merchant paid a certain amount of money for each camel.<sup>2</sup> Some revenues were occasionally in kind such as fish and some of the Bedouin products.<sup>3</sup> The tax was three percent of the goods and this tax was voluntary self-imposed by the merchants due to the absence of any customs departments in Kuwait at that time.<sup>4</sup>

The first customs department was established in Kuwait during the reign of Sheikh Mubarak. It was a small and simple administrative unit. The sheikh instructs one of his guards (*fidawi*) to supervise all the revenues of land and sea.<sup>5</sup> The customs fees were fixed at the beginning, when the department was set up, by 4% of the goods size. This rate was increased to 5% and later to 10% on some items. In addition, Sheikh Mubarak imposed tax on houses that were sold. The amount of this tax was a third of the price of the property.<sup>6</sup>

In 1908, Sheikh Mubarak summoned all merchants and asked them to define a fixed percentage on all imported goods in order to cover the government's expenses. The merchants decided to pay a percentage of 4%. This percentage remained unchanged until Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber

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<sup>1</sup> The Kuwaiti Dinar equals 2 48828 gram of pure gold. It is divided into 1000 pennies (fills). The Indian rupee equals 75 Kuwaiti pennies which mean that the Kuwaiti Dinar is 13 30 Indian rupees. Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, *Kuwait Guidebook*, p.320.

<sup>2</sup> Khalid Al-Sa'adoun, *Al-'Alaqat Bain Nijd wa Al-Kuwait (Relations between Najd and Kuwait)* (Riyadh: Matbo'at Darat King Abdul Aziz, 1983), p.140.

<sup>3</sup> Hassan Mahmoud Suleiman, *Al-Kuwait Madhiha wa Hadhiruha [Kuwait: Its Past and Present]* (Cairo: Al-Maktaba Al-Ahlia, 1986), p.49.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Khususi, op. cit., p.96.

<sup>5</sup> Musa Hanoun Ghadban, "Tatwer Nidham Al-Hukum wa Al-Idarah fi Al-Kuwait" [The [The Development of the System of Governing and Administration in Kuwait], Unpublished MA Thesis (Cairo: 'Ain Shams University, 1988), p.58.

<sup>6</sup> Suleiman, op. cit., p.49, Al-Sa'adoun, op. cit., p.190.

Al-Sabah (1921-50) raised it to 6%.<sup>1</sup> The revenue of this tax was divided among the government department of the state, which started to emerge in the early 1930s. It was decided that 1% would go to health services, 1% to education, 0.5% to municipality, and the rest to other government expenditures.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, these taxes represented an important income for the sheikh of Kuwait. It was regarded the largest source of revenue for the government for that time. The customs tax on importation was estimated to be \$20 000 annually, the sea customs were \$150 000 annually<sup>3</sup> whereas the sheikh of Kuwait received \$28 500 annually from the Bedouins as shown in the following table:

Table 2

The Annual Proceeds of the Sheikh of Kuwait from the Bedouins<sup>4</sup>

\$25 000	Alms on Bedouins' flocks
\$2 000	Tax on sheep sold in the Kuwait market
\$1 500	Tax on camels sold in the Kuwait market

The number of annual trade caravans between Kuwait and the neighbouring counties was estimated to be around twenty caravans from south of Najd and two caravans from Jabal Shammer in central Arabia.<sup>5</sup> This was the case until the eruption of disputes between Al-Saud and Al-Rashid. There is no accurate information about the number of caravans between Kuwait and southern Iraq or between Kuwait and Syria.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that making an accurate account of the volume of the financial rewards coming from the trade exchange between

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.50.

1-Ibrahim Abduh, *Dawlat Al-Kuwait Al-Hadithah [The Modern State of Kuwait]* (Cairo: Dar Al-<sup>6</sup>Aroubah, 1962), p.135.

2-Lorimer, op. cit., p.1076.

3-Ibid.

1- Ibid., p.1316, and also Adel Mohammed Abdulmugani, *Al-Iqtisad Al-Kuwaiti Al-Qadim [The Ancient Economy of Kuwait]* (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, Undated), p.138.

Kuwait and the adjacent countries is difficult. This is due to the lack of accurate statistics that could define the volume of these annual dealings. Furthermore, the prevailing political conditions which governed the increase and decrease in the level of interactions made the above-mentioned statistics not one hundred percent accurate. However, it is possible to measure the volume of this interaction and its importance for Kuwait by noticing the impact of the trade problem between Kuwait and Najd and between Kuwait and Iraq and by noticing the impact of the British siege during the First World War on the economic life in Kuwait.

The problem between Kuwait and Najd goes back to 1913 when Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the governor of Najd, dominated Al-Hasa and controlled important naval outlets at Al-Uqair, Al-Qattif, and Jubayl. Ibn Saud sought to make these ports a substantial source of income for his country and benefit from their financial rewards. Another reason for this problem was the inability of Ibn Saud to impose customs fees on goods coming to his country through caravan routes. It is well known that a large number of his subjects, the inhabitants of Najd and central Arabia (merchants or Bedouins) favoured dealing with the Kuwaiti markets through desert routes.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, he made many efforts to solve this problem with the sheikhs of Kuwait by giving some suggestions such as setting up a customs firm for him in Kuwait to collect the tax on these goods before they reach his country or appointing a Kuwait officer to collect this tax and send it to him. All these suggestions were rejected by the Kuwaiti sheikhs. Constantly, Ibn Saud ordered his subjects (merchants and Bedouins) to stop trading with Kuwait and to turn to his ports instead. This caused a very big crisis between the two countries which remained having a negative impact upon trade and the economic situation, until 1942 when the two sides signed a general agreement regarding trade, borders and travelling issues.<sup>2</sup>

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1- Ibid., Najat Al-Gina'ai "Al-Tatwer Al-Siaysi wa Al-Iqtisadi lil Kuwait Bain A - Harbain 1919-1939" [The Economic and Political Development of Kuwait in the Inter War Period, 1919-1939], Unpublished MA Thesis, (Cairo: 'Ain Shams University 1972), p.84.

2-Ibid., pp.108-9, also Dickson, op. cit., p.49.

This impasse was a commercial disaster for Kuwait whose markets experienced serious losses. Kuwaiti income of customs declined from 100 000 rupees in 1922 to 60 000 rupees in 1932.<sup>1</sup> With regard to this, the historian Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid writes:

This crisis—between Kuwait and Najd—led Kuwait to the verge of bankruptcy...after you were seeing the markets and shops full, and after you were seeing caravans coming and going one after another, after all of this, the situation became desperate to the extent that if the ruling sheikh felt it, he would know that the country was going to ruins...the reason for all of this was the problem between Najd and Kuwait.<sup>2</sup>

This clearly shows the importance of trade exchange through the desert and the economic role it could play in raising the living standards and the development of the economic life in the city. It also shows the implication of the economic recession that was inflicted on Kuwait.

The importance of this trade interaction is also shown through the rejection of the Kuwaiti sheikhs to offer any solution to the smuggling problem with Iraq. This problem emerged due to the differences in the customs systems in both countries. In Iraq, the system was designed to increase the revenue of the state. As a consequence, the Iraqi government was increasing the tax to more than 100%. On the contrary, in Kuwait, the system was based on decreasing the customs fees in order to attract merchants to its ports and markets and this would ultimately lead to the increase in the volume of external trade exchange.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the customs fees did not exceed 6%.<sup>4</sup> The difference in the two customs system led to the spread of the process of smuggling from Kuwait to Iraq due to the gap in prices between the two countries and the huge profit smugglers could make. This problem persisted until the discovery of oil when trade and fees were no longer the primary source of income for both countries.

The importance of this trade can also be seen through the response of the sheikh of Kuwait, Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah (1917-21), to the British

3- Al-Rihani, op. cit., p.668.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Rashid, op. cit., pp.65-56.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Gina'ai op. cit., p.148.

<sup>4</sup> Abduh, op. cit., p.135.

request to stop exporting foodstuffs to their enemies during the First World War. The sheikh of Kuwait was completely unwilling to implement the siege imposed by Britain on the export of the food from Kuwait during the war. Therefore, the British were forced to place some of their officers to control and supervise the implementation of the siege on the borders of Kuwait.<sup>1</sup> This was because the Kuwaiti commitment would only mean depriving itself of an economic reward that comes from its borders through trade.

All these three problems indicate clearly that the caravan trade was a very important economic activity not only for Kuwait but for the region as a whole. It was an essential economic activity for a substantial part of the population and any decline or prosperity this occupation witnessed reflected directly on all other aspects of life.

The prosperity of caravan trade and the increase of the volume of trade between Kuwait and the neighbouring countries were due to the lack of restrictions on trade in Kuwait, low customs fees, simplification of procedures, and the Kuwaitis' good manners and treatment. These factors, in addition to the strategic location and the big trade fleet, had an impact on the development and prosperity of this important economic activity.<sup>2</sup>

## **5. Organization of Work and Economic Relations Involved in the Caravan Trade**

The trade caravans were often comprised of a number of camels, and sometimes donkeys and mules owned or hired by professional persons called *Jammaleen* (cameleers). Each cameleer mostly owned a fleet of between 40 and 140 camels and used them as means of transportation between different cities throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The task of those cameleers was not only to rent their camels but also to accompany the caravans from the start until the destination and to provide guards and apprentices who were responsible for loading and unloading camels. All these tasks were done for an amount of money paid by the merchants to

<sup>1</sup> Al-Sheikh Khaz'aal, , op. cit., vol.4 , p.106.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Saqer, op. cit., p.67. Also Al-Khususi, op. cit., p.265.

whom these caravans were transporting goods. This amount also included tributes to be paid to tribes in the routes of caravans.<sup>1</sup>

It might be useful to realise at this point that there is a mix-up between the terms *Jammaleen* and *'aqilat*: many resources have used the two terms to refer to the same category of people. It should be pointed out that there was not a great deal of variation between the two categories and many *jammaleen* worked as *'aqilat* and vice versa. The *jammaleen* can be best described as the organizers of the trade caravans between different cities of Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Arabian Gulf. The *'aqilat*, on the other hand, is a term used to refer to a group of people who were primarily engaged in buying animals (camels, horses and in a lesser degree sheep) from Bedouin tribes in Arabia to re-sell them in the markets of Syria, Iraq and Egypt. They were town dwellers but specialized in buying animals from the Bedouins and selling them in the markets of the cities. Although some resources have mentioned that the *'aqilat* was a particular pure Arab race or even tribe,<sup>2</sup> this interpretation is completely wrong: the *'aqilat* was not a tribe, it was an occupational category or identity referring to a group of people who were of various tribal origins and had formed a network that specialized in buying and selling animals. They operated on a wide scale throughout Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. Some of the *'aqilat*, especially those who traveled frequently between the Bedouin camps in Arabia and urban markets in different cities, might have originally come from the same ancestry but this can not be applied to other *'aqilat* who were settled in communities in Baghdad, Kuwait, Al-Qasim and Buridah in Arabia, Syria and Egypt.<sup>3</sup> The only distinction, therefore, between the cameleers and *'aqilat* was that while the cameleers were traders for themselves who buy goods from one place and re-sell them in another one or transporters of goods for a merchant in one place and his agent in another one. The *'aqilat* were an animal's wholesale

<sup>1</sup> Soraya Al-Torki and Donald Cole, "Mujtama'a Maqbl Al-Naft fi Al-Jazera Al-Arabia: Mujtama'a Morakab am Faudhah Qabalia" [The Arabian Peninsula's Society before the Oil: Tribal Anarchy or Compounded Community], *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi Magazine*, (141), November 1991, p.50. Also Charles M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia*, vol. 1 (London: Jonathan & The Medici Society, 1926), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Dickson, op. cit., p.112. Doughty, op. cit., p. 11. Lady Anne Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Alois Musil, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), pp.278-79.

traders who work for themselves by buying animals from the Bedouins and re-selling them in higher prices in the urban markets.<sup>1</sup> It was also possible for the *Jammaleen* and *'aqilat* to be engaged with these two occupations at once, for example the *'aqialy* can buy animals from the Bedouin camps on his way to the city and sells them in the city market, then returns with a load of goods to a particular merchant in his own city.

Although there is no detailed information about the occupation of cameleers and *'aqilat* —how they acquired it or if it was heredity— it is possible to argue that their tasks were based on their relationship with the tribes on the ways of the caravans. They might have belonged to one of these tribes or there might have been a sort of agreement between them and the tribes that the tribes would guarantee the security of the caravans for certain amount of money to be paid.

In most cases, the cameleer would deal with a particular merchant who had trade relations with an agent in the market of the destination. The merchant would give the cameleer a list of the goods he wanted to purchase in order to give it to the agent who in his turn would prepare the demands and would give them back to the cameleer to be given to the merchant. For example, a merchant from Najd would agree with a cameleer to bring his demands from an agent in the Kuwait market or vice versa. In other cases, if there was a relationship of trust, the merchant would give the money to the cameleer and ask him to make the purchases on his behalf. This way of obtaining goods was more advantageous to the merchant, because the agent charged a commission while the cameleer would charge only for the service. The merchant, in all cases, would pay the cameleer a certain amount of money for the service. This amount of money, however, was not defined. It varied according to the size of the caravans, the distance of the route from the departing point to the arrival point, and the volume of the goods carried by each camel.<sup>2</sup> In most cases, payments were paid per load and according to the types of goods. The

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<sup>1</sup> Louise E. Sweet, "The Arabian Peninsula and Annotated Bibliography", in: *The Central Middle East: a Handbook of Anthropology*, edited by Louise E. Sweet, vol.2 (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1968), p.329.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Hakimah, *History of Kuwait*, pp.276-77.

camel roughly carried about 200 kg of sugar or rice. Some of this money had to go to the camels' owners if the cameleer was not the owner.<sup>1</sup>

Although wages and fees had always been the method of paying for work in caravan trade, the sharing of profits, taking into account capital and labour, and often also responsibility, was also common. Sometimes the merchant and the *jammal* would work together on a shared basis in which the merchant would provide money and the cameleer would provide work. In such a case the net profit would be divided between the cameleer and the merchant in a way that the latter would get two-thirds or half of it. If the agreement was that the merchant was to get two-thirds, he must stand the entire loss that might result from the transaction. In the other case the loss was shared equally.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the cameleers, in addition to their work as transporters, worked as merchants for themselves: they used to export goods from one city and re-sold them at a higher price in another one. They also used to buy camels, horses, sheep and other Bedouin products and re-sold them at higher prices in the markets of their destinations. They also supplied the Bedouins with arms, cloths, coffee and many other manufactured goods.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible to obtain a clear picture on how the caravan trips through the desert were organised from Ahmed Abu Hakimah's, book, History of Kuwait, in which he cites Captain Matthew Jenour. Jenour travelled the desert route from Aleppo to Iraq in 1785 and offered the following description:

Preparations hinged on the way the person want to travel, does he want a quick trip or slow or does he want to reduce expenses? If he wants a quick trip, he should agree with 4-6 Arabs, to take the minimum possible of stuff, and in this case he leaves everything to his guards to secure him because they know better what should be done and the best routes to be taken. If he wants a slow trip, he should buy in this case tents, mules, donkeys, camels, and food and this required larger number of the guards. The third way, which is the cheapest and most common, was caravan, this

<sup>1</sup> Al-Torki and Donald, op. cit, p.50.

<sup>2</sup> Musil, **op. cit.**, p.279.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Al-Torki and Cole, op. cit., p.50.

comprises of a number of traders, travellers some of them ride horses and majority ride camels. They move regardless of their numbers under strong security. All of them move with instruction of sheikh. The shortcoming of this way that it takes a longer period.<sup>1</sup>

Although Jenour was talking about the trade between Iraq and Syria in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the third way he mentioned —caravans— was the one which continued until the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the region of the Arabian Gulf in general. The sheikh of the caravan that Jenour mentioned was the cameleer (the *Jammal*), under whose control and leadership the caravan was. In most cases, the cameleer owned a private herd of camels and animals. He may have obtained them through inheritance, but the major way of obtaining them was through a process known as *buda'aah*. This process was a way of joint investment between a merchant and a cameleer. The merchant would buy camels and entrust them to a cameleer who made journeys with them until the money obtained from the transports of goods by them covered their cost. At this point, the merchant and the cameleer became owners of the camels on a fifty-fifty basis. If one of them no longer wished to continue the relationship, the camel was sold and the money obtained from the sale was split in half and shared. If, on the other hand, both wanted to continue the relationship, the merchant would pay the cameleer half the market value of the camel. Then the process would begin over again as though the camel had been newly purchased.<sup>2</sup>

Each cameleer would have a number of apprentices (*subiyan*) working for him and accompanying the caravan. The number of these apprentices depended mostly on the number of camels in the caravan. They were either the cameleer's own sons, relatives or hired by him. The main task of these youths was loading and unloading the camels. These youths were divided into groups within the caravan. Each group was responsible for loading and unloading a certain number of camels in the caravan. In addition, there was a herdsman, usually a Bedouin, who accompanied the caravans with the task of supervising and grazing the camels and the animals along the way. All these apprentices and herdsmen were waged

<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Mustafa Abu Hakimah, *History of Kuwait*, p.277.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Torki and Cole, op. cit., p.50.

workers who were paid according to an agreed upon method of payment before the start of the caravan journey.<sup>1</sup>

## **6. The Bedouins' Contribution to the Caravan Trade**

The caravan trade was not only confined to merchants and caravans, it was also a very important source of income for the noble Bedouin tribes. The Bedouins were an influential part of it. It should be remembered that the noble tribes throughout the Arabian Peninsula remained as independent camel breeding societies whose social status, power and prestige depended on their great camel herds and means of maintaining them at full strength. Accordingly, these tribes were essentially autonomous and wielded a great deal of military strength by which they occupied huge territories in the desert and controlled all caravan trade routes throughout Arabia. The control of caravan routes had long been one of the sources of tribal income and power. However, the relationships between these tribes and other societies were managed in terms of mechanisms of inter-chiefdom, not mechanisms of state apparatus. And their control over caravans' routes and imposing tributes for the right of passage should be seen not only as a tribal custom but as a mechanism which provided protection and safe passage in the absence of state control.<sup>2</sup>

There are, however, two important points to be emphasised when considering the Bedouin participation in the caravan trade. On one hand, Bedouin tribes were the only producers of camels (the principal means of transportation in the caravan trade). The camel, by its capacity to tolerate heat and lack of water and moist forage and to bear heavy loads, was the most favourite and suitable means of transportation for caravaneers throughout Arabia. More importantly, Bedouins were the key source of many principal goods traded by caravans to be consumed by the cities' dwellers or re-exported to the international markets (such as animals, meat, wool, skins, ghee, dried cheese, etc).

Accordingly, during the summer, where the weather was very hot and the temperature was extremely high, cameleers and *'aqilat* did not make commercial trips. Instead, they used to go out to the Bedouin camps based

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.49.

<sup>2</sup> Louise E. Sweet, "Camel Raiding of North Arabian Bedouin: A Mechanism of Ecological Adaptation", *American Anthropologist*, vol. 67, 1965, p.1134.

around wells to buy camels and other Bedouin products to re-sell them in urban markets. In such a case, the cameleer or '*aqialy* would travel to the Bedouin camp —whether as a trader for himself or as an agent for a city dweller merchant— and after permission from the sheikh of the tribe or the clan he would put up his white tents in the same camp. The Bedouins then would bring their camels and other products to be sold to him for cash. Sometimes, if the cameleer brought arms, ammunition or other manufactured goods from the city, the Bedouins might exchange their animals for these articles.<sup>1</sup> It worth pointing out that the sheikh of the tribe or clan —in which the cameleer had put up his tents to buy the Bedouin products— used to take a commission from the cameleer on the sale of every camel. The amount of this commission was estimated by Alois Musil during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be one-half or one *majidi* (Ottoman currency) (\$0.45). In return, the cameleer was regarded as the host of the sheikh and enjoyed his protection along his stay within the *dirah* of this sheikh.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, when cameleers or '*aqialt* bought animals from the Bedouins, these animals were branded by the marks of the tribe and left to graze within its territory until they took them to the market. Cameleers mostly had their own herdsmen who would accompany their herds along the way to the urban market but they also used to hire herders from the tribe from where they were buying at the time. These herdsmen were usually from sheep and goat herding tribes.<sup>3</sup>

Camels and other Bedouin products were also brought by the Bedouins themselves to the town market during the summer to be exchanged for foods and manufactured goods. It is worthy of note, however, that each tribe throughout Arabia had its special or favourite towns which they used to go up to for their necessities. For instance, from time immemorial, Kuwait was the supply town and favourite market for the Mutair, Harb, Shummar, 'Awazim and Northern 'Ajman tribes.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, many merchants worked in connection with Bedouin caravans which came to the *Safat* market where they unloaded their commodities. Other

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<sup>1</sup> Musil, *op. cit.*, pp.279-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Also Sweet, "Camel Pastoralism in North Arabia", p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Dickson, *op. cit.*, p.49.

merchants in the town managed to specialise in supplying the Bedouins' needs. Most of them were from Bedouin origins, and there were some 132 merchants specialising in selling to suit the Bedouin needs.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, and in spite of their adaptability as producers and consumers, the Bedouins never took part in commerce (as merchants) on a large scale and never became merchants on their own account. Historically, Bedouins regarded themselves as free camel herders and raiders—these were the only manly jobs. They scorned other labour in agriculture, trade and crafts which were performed by slaves or by the settled population. More importantly, production, in the nomadic perspective, was evaluated not by its exchange value, but rather by its use value. Describing a camel merchant's trip to a Bedouin camp in Northern Arabia Doughty noticed that:

They purchase only of the best beast: although they bid high prices the Arab [Bedouins] are never very willing to sell them. They camel they think is a profitable possession, a camel will bring forth a camel, but money is a barren good that passes quite away in the using. Commonly, they will sell of their beats only when they have some present need of riyals, and then sooner of the males; but they are the better of carriage.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Donald Cole stated that: "the Al-Murrah keep camels for subsistence and only rarely exchange them for cash or barter in any markets".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, money as a medium of exchange was not a new thing in the desert.

The other point which needs to be mentioned here is that, as Bedouins used to move freely across the borders of Kuwait, Najd, and Iraq, they became one of the reasons for the economic problems between Kuwait and other adjacent countries over smuggling. By no coincidence at all, pastoralism had been associated with smuggling. The consolidation of national borders and the evolution of contradictory tariffs in neighbouring countries made nomads the ideal group to smuggle contraband between these countries. This was particularly highly developed between Kuwait,

<sup>1</sup> Lorimer, op. cit., vol. 2, p.1054.

<sup>2</sup> Doughty, op. cit., p.233.

<sup>3</sup> Donald Powell Cole, *Nomads of the Nomads* (Chicago: Aldine, 1975), p.102.

Najd and Iraq where extremely different economies border one another and long featureless frontiers were almost impossible to control<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, the second and most important part the Bedouins took in the caravan trade was their control of the caravan routes and imposing of tributes on their passage. With the relative absence of any other means of extracting surplus tribal chiefs depended, to some degree, on the extraction of surplus from other societies through tributes and fees. It can be said that the history of the caravan trade in Arabia was intimately connected with the history of the Bedouin tribes and completely subjected to their tribal organization. Movements of caravans across tribal territories, however, were controlled by the tribesmen through a general custom in all tribal territories of Arabia.

All caravans had to pay tributes (*Al-Khawah*) to the superior and powerful tribes while they were passing or trading throughout their *dirahs*. These tributes were paid for the safety and rights of crossing the territory of the tribe. In return, tribes who extract tributes had to grant full protection to the caravans while they were crossing their territories. It should be noted that the grantee of protection and free passage was only exclusive to tribes or clans who were paid. Accordingly, caravaneers used to deal and pay each tribe and, sometime each clan, separately.<sup>2</sup>

The amount paid to the tribes was subject to bargaining. They either would pay the highest percentage or the tribe would not take responsibility of securing the caravans, which practically meant that the caravans would be subject to raid and loot.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, trading through lands belonging to Bedouins tribes known for their militancy was very expensive. So there were certain procedures to guarantee the immunity of caravaneers and their goods. These procedures included what was known as *al-wajeh* (literally face; honour) or the sending of *al-rafiq* (companion) to personally guarantee free passage. *Al-Wajeh* was a sign mostly on a stock or cane with a special notch, the same as the tribal *wasim* (brand)

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed Al-Farhan, *Al-Kuwait Bain Al-Ams wa Al-Yaom* [Kuwait between Yesterday and Today] (Damascus: Dar Samir Amis, 1959), p.111, Al-Gina'ai op. cit., p.149.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Torki and Cole, op. cit., p.50.

<sup>3</sup> Sadlier, op. cit., p. 85. Dickson, op. cit., pp.442-43.

given to caravaneer meaning that he is under the protection of this tribe. *Al-Rafiq*, on the other hand, was a man whose duty was to accompany the caravan along the tribe territory and personally guarantee its safe passage.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, tribes who gave *al-wajah* or sent *al-rafiq* with the caravans became partners in the trade activity in the desert.

It is worth pointing out that tributes were not only paid by caravaners or cameleers. Travellers and *'aqialt* were also subject to the Bedouin raids and, accordingly, they used to pay tributes to the Bedouin tribes. Furthermore, the *'aqialt* used to have in every large tribe or clan what was called *akh* (brother) to whom they pay an annual amount of money in addition to one good riding camel and some gifts. The main task of this *akh* was to restore to them every camel stolen by a member of his clan.<sup>2</sup>

Although there is an ample indication in the literature that tributes were transmitted to the sheikh of the tribe or the clan who would redistribute them among the kin groups of his tribe or clan,<sup>3</sup> a great deal of confusion still remains on the questions of how these tributes were distributed and on what basis? And did the distribution include all the tribe members (sheikhs, tribesmen, servants and slaves) or was it only limited to the sheikhs and tribesmen? And were these tributes distributed equally or not?

However, there is no clear evidence that there was a specific principle of distributing tributes between sheikhs and their followers or whether these tributes were distributed equally or not. It is most likely that the distribution of tributes was based on the same principles of distributing the booty of raids. According to Musil —who spent many years with the *Rwala* Bedouins of North Arabia— the booty of raids was distributed unequally between the participants. By custom, the leaders of expeditions, who were mostly aspiring young men of the chief lineage, received more

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<sup>1</sup> Doughty, op. cit., p. 235. Dickson, op. cit., pp.125-26. See also Christina Phelps Grant, *The Syrian Desert* (London: A. & C. Black, 1937), p.172.

<sup>2</sup> Alois Musil mentioned that the *akh* receives from the *'aqialy* 4 to 5 Turkish pounds (\$18-22.50), one good riding camel and two or three good cloaks annually for this task. Musil, **op. cit.**, p.280.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Torki and Cole, op. cit., p.50. Sweet, "Camel Pastoralism in North Arabia", p.140.

of the booty than the rank and file of raiders<sup>1</sup> and other clients and servants were regarded as non-combatants and received nothing.<sup>2</sup> On this basis, the chief lineage members of the tribes and clans were entitled to receive more of the tributes than their tribesmen. While other subordinate groups (herdsmen, servants and slaves) were definitely out of the distribution process at all.

The chief lineage members of the tribe were, by custom, entitled to enjoy many rights than others. They restricted the shiekhship as a legitimation for themselves. They maintained their exclusiveness through rules of martial exchange with their close relatives (first cousin marriage system) or with the chief lineage members of other tribes. They were also the collectors of tax and alms from their followers and tributes from other subordinate tribes, villagers and caravans. One result of this is that all these rights enforced the sheikhs' position both within the social structure of the nomadic society and with the central government they belonged to. It is important here to mention that central governments in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula as whole were so dependant on the Bedouin tribes who provided a crucial source of income and a significant and indispensable military force for their protection. Accordingly, most of these governments paid special attention to the sheikhs of Bedouin tribes to obtain their loyalties and to achieve strong backing from their tribes.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, it is possible to argue that with the absence of state control in the desert, Bedouin sheikhs had enjoyed an ultimate authority and high position among their people. The superiority they achieved was derived mainly from the power they wielded in society through the economic resources they owned. Furthermore, this situation was consolidated by the encouragement of central governments which used the Bedouin sheikhs as representatives of the central authority in the desert. Besides their essential task as the leaders of the tribes, Bedouin sheikhs became the representatives of central governments in the desert. They used to collect tax and alms and keep peace among the Bedouin tribes on the behalf of the government during peacetime and lead tribesmen as military forces during war. In return, central authorities reinforced their positions among

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<sup>1</sup> Musil, op. cit., pp.441-61.

<sup>2</sup> Sweet, "Camel Raiding of North Arabian Bedouin", pp.1136 -46.

<sup>3</sup> Jacqueline Ismael, *Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspective* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), p.27.

their tribesmen by supporting them and giving them part of the tax they collected.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is evident that the caravan trade was a key element of the Kuwaiti economy in general and the traditional mode of production in particular. Besides being a key pillar of the Kuwaiti economy in the pre-oil era, this economic activity was a very important link between the Kuwaiti market and the regional economy (Bedouins) and between the region and other different economies outside Arabia.

More importantly, this economic activity, as an essential element of the traditional mode of production, was characterized by its particular mechanism and its specific relations between those who were involved in it. The caravan trade or camel transportation was organized as a profit-making enterprise which entailed the participation of many members from both nomadic and settled communities. These participants, however, were from different economic and social standings and, accordingly, their relationship was established on an unequal basis and unsurprisingly led to an unequal result.

It is important to note that, whether or not the relationship between those participants was exploitive and led to an equal distribution of the final product. These factors were of intrinsic interest, but they should not obscure the fundamental point that the monopoly of capital and means of production (camels) was the key element of determining the nature of this relationship.

In order to obtain a clearer idea of how relations of production were organized and how surplus was extracted in the caravan trade, the participants in this occupation should be divided into two categories:

1-City dwellers: merchants (the capital owners), cameleers and '*aqilat* (the organizers and leaders of caravans) and loaders (the apprentices or *subiyan*) who do most of loading and unloading work.

2-Nomads: Bedouin sheikhs (the tributes and commission takers) guards and *rafiqs* (guides and protection providers) and herdsmen who were hired by caravaneers to graze their animals along the caravan way.

As this economic activity entailed the availability of money to buy goods and animals (the principal means of production) and to hire labourers and pay tributes and fees along the caravan route, the caravan trade depended almost entirely on the merchants (the capital owners). The ownership of capital was the major and indispensable element in this economic activity. As a consequence, the class of merchants, whether in Kuwait or in other urban centres throughout Arabia, Southern Iraq and Syria, was the backbone of the caravan trade and all other participants from both the settled and nomadic categories were connected to them.

Within the city dwellers category, merchants occupied the key position in this economic activity. All other participants (cameleers and *'aqilat* and their apprentices), because of their capital shortage, were completely dependant on them as this occupation was their key source of living. Within the nomadic category, all partakers (sheikhs, guides, *rafiqs* and herdsman) were also connected to the merchants through the tributes and fees they received for their participation.

The distinction between the relations of these two categories with the merchants was based on the nature of the relations of production involved in this economic activity and the method of surplus extraction. Taking into account the unequal amount of effort expended in obtaining profits and ways of distributing them in the caravan trade, it seems apparent that relations between the merchants and other city dwellers participants took an unequal form: the merchants were the most advantaged group in this activity followed by the cameleers and then latter the loaders. It is evident that the ownership of capital and means of production (camels) was severed from ownership of labour power. In addition, the relationship between the owners and non-owners permitted the transformation of labour power into a commodity (wage-relations). Through their exclusive control of capital and then the means of production, capital owners were able to control both the conditions under which others can work and the ways of distributing the final product.

On the other hand, relations between merchants and nomadic participants took another form. Nomadic participants (sheikhs, guides and *rafiqs*) had never taken direct part in trade or had become merchants on their own

account. Consequently, they had never become under the control of the merchants or were in desperate need to work with them. On the contrary, Bedouins, by virtue of their camel pastoralism which provided the basis of a viable economy and by virtue of their ability to move and dominate huge territories and control communication routes, maintained a distinctive pattern and a dominant position over other societies and settlements in their territories.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, they were in a superior position over the merchants who were in a constant need for: Firstly, Bedouin products which constituted a substantial part of the merchants' transactions and, secondly, the Bedouin sheikhs' consent and protection to use communication routes within their territories. As a result, the caravan trade played an essential part in the nature of relationships between the merchants and Bedouin chiefs because it made possible the transfer of part of the surplus from the former to the latter.

To some extent, it is also possible to talk about exploitation and unequal distribution of gains within the Bedouin category participating in the caravan trade. Taking into account the amount of effort expended by each of these partakers (sheikhs, guides, guards and *rafiqs*) in obtaining profits from caravans and comparing that with the distribution of these profits between them, it is very clear that there was a great deal of variation. Bedouin sheikhs, the aristocrats of the Bedouin society, who had never taken a direct part in this commercial process, were the most benefited group while others (guides, *rafiqs*, guards, etc.), who were involved directly in this business, gained less portion from the returns. Most importantly, it should not be forgotten that although tribal territories were owned communally by all members of the tribe, Bedouin sheikhs had the final word in using them and giving permission to other tribes and caravans to use or cross them. No Bedouin would think of disobeying the mandates of his sheikh. Accordingly, giving permission to caravans to pass and taking part in them was based on the consent and decisions taken by the Bedouin sheikhs and no Bedouin can do so without his sheikh's permission.<sup>2</sup> As a result, it is possible to say that the role of the Bedouin sheikhs in the caravan trade was not less important than that of the

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<sup>1</sup> Sweet, "Camel Pastoralism in North Arabia", p.130.

<sup>2</sup> Grant, op. cit., p.172.

merchants. Both played a distinctive role as a dominant group within their categories and as an essential part in this occupation in general.

In the light of these considerations, one can argue that merchants (in the city) and Bedouin sheikhs (in the desert) were the two major effective participants in the caravan trade. Both were in a superior position that enabled them to control this economic activity. Because of their high positions, which were derived primarily from the power each group exercised in society through the economic resources they controlled, these two groups were able to set up an established mechanism by which they benefited more and made others completely dependent on them to take part in this economic activity.

Moreover, one may conclude that, in spite of their spatial and cultural differences and political rivalries, these two groups were economically interdependent. And despite what can be described as their inconsistent or quasi-antagonistic relationship, the dominant nomadic strata and merchant exploiting class were able to attain alliances or cooperative relationships that seemed to be aimed at maintaining and consolidating their economic gains in special circumstances.

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