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THE IMPACT OF ARAB TRADE ON THE TRANSFER OF CULTURAL  
INFLUENCES TO EUROPE

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**ABSTRACT**

Trade is considered one of the most important ways through which civilizational influences moved to Europe, but to all parts of the world, especially in the medieval period. The reason for liberating Europe from the ages of darkness and backwardness that it was living in at the time to the ages of civilized development.

**INTRODUCTION**

Undoubtedly, trade had an important place for the Arabian Peninsula before Islam, and that importance increased with the advent of Islam, as Muslim Arabs linked trade relations with most countries, especially after the Arab conquest and liberation operations, which reached the borders of France, so the Arab Islamic state established relations Reciprocal trade with European countries, especially Spain and Sicily, and the activities of merchants varied there.

Trade is the first way through which Islamic influences were transmitted to Europe, and it was a manifestation of the life of human societies since the early stages of their development, but it occupied a special place in Islamic civilization.

As a result of the delay of the Christian countries of Spain in industry and agriculture, there was a popular trade between them and Islamic Andalusia, especially in times of peace. It is strange that wars were followed by great commercial activity, because merchants from Jews and others used to accompany armies and walk behind them, waiting for what falls into their hands of captivity and spoils. And what was most of it in those days, and the

Andalusians offered humanity, and Europe in particular, a great deal in all areas of life, and only arrogant arrogants of justice and fairness can argue about that . They wish to conquer Spain, so that they began to carry out their educational mission in it, and in less than a century, they were able to revive the dead of the earth, rehabilitate the ruins of cities, erect the most luxurious buildings, and achieve close trade links with other nations .

### ***The status of trade in Islamic countries***

#### ***The status of trade among the Muslim Arabs:***

There is no doubt that the spread of Islamic civilization has greatly contributed to it, the activity of the Arabs and their sophistication in the field of trade. The matter was not limited to the spread of a relatively homogeneous culture in all the countries under the rule of Muslims, but also the goods produced by Muslims moved to areas far from the borders of the countries. Islam, trade has always occupied a special place in Islamic civilization, and the Islamic religion has been first and foremost a religion in the interest of trade, not a religion of the desert or the religion of the countryside.

Certainly, the flourishing of industry and agriculture in the Islamic state was followed by commercial activity that helped stabilize security throughout the Islamic state and take care of the roads, so shops started moving between East and West, and the Arabs played the role of commercial mediators between Asia, Africa and Europe even before Islam, due to the location of the middle Arabian Peninsula The ancient world , as well as being surrounded by seas, which was referred to by Ibn Khaldun by saying: “The entire Arabian Peninsula was surrounded by seas from three directions” , and land, river and sea trade routes were established, and the Islamic cities (Baghdad, Damascus, and others) became the destination of merchants. In those cities the process of exchanging crops takes place, and this stability, security and economic prosperity led to the flourishing of literature, sciences and arts. Intellectual activity in the Islamic state , and Hunka says that the East had a vast trade in which the Christian countries almost disappeared under its shadow, a trade that extended across the Caspian Sea and the Volga to the north, Sha The religion of all beaches, and the land of those countries poured out thousands or even millions of Arab currency from the third fifth century AH / ninth until the eleventh century AD, and this is evidence of the extent of the radiation of Arab civilization .

#### ***The role of the Arab merchant in the spread of Islam:***

During their visits to pagan countries, Muslim merchants used to publicly perform their five prayers, in addition to their sincerity and trustworthiness, which left a strong impression on the hearts of the pagans who entered into their commercial dealings with them, and this led to intermarriage among them, and even the turn of some pagans to embrace Islam, and this was the case All over the Islamic world encouraging the revival of commercial activity.

Trade is an important factor in the spread of Islam in many regions of the world, as (international Arab trade linked India, the East Indies, and China to the ancient world) . The Islamic da'wah who carried with their trade their religion, morals and honesty with which they distinguished themselves, all these qualities made Muslim merchants the focus of the lovers' attention to converting to Islam. On his journey in the regions to which he goes , and as a natural result, Muslim merchants tended to learn the language of the country in which they settled, by practice and the length of their stay there, and by learning the language of the country, where they established good relations with the leaders of the country . Muslims carry the language of the Noble Qur'an to the countries they roam , that each of the means that the merchants used to spread Islam is complementary to the other, and the issue of marriage is one of the most important issues affecting in countries where polytheism and polytheism abounded. Atheism, through marriage paganism collapses to be replaced by the Islamic faith, and it seems that what made the merchants marry the women of those countries either because they did not have women with them or to increase their relations with the leaders of the country, because their stay was long in the countries they intended for trade, where the Muslim merchants married women from African tribes and others, so Islam spread in those parts , and many Muslim merchants married Sijilmasa women and had children from them . If he embraces Islam, he is able to change his people from polytheism to Islam, and the merchant upon his marriage teaches the woman the duties of Islam such as prayer and fasting in order to spread it among the people, and that the idea of marriage came from establishing commercial relations, teaching the language of the people and mixing with the people of the country.

#### *Arab-Muslim trade with Spain and Sicily:*

When the Islamic rule was established in Spain and Sicily, Al-Qatar immediately established commercial relations with other Islamic countries, and gradually adopted the aspects of Islamic civilization, and the result in Spain and Sicily was that the Islamic presence there became a civilized presence, not just a military presence. and political.

Spain, when the Muslims conquered it in the early eighth century AD, was not different from the rest of the countries of Western Europe at that time in terms of the spread of ignorance, delay and chaos. Late industry, until Andalusia, under the Caliphate of Cordoba, became the richest and most populous European country.

As for the second crossing (Sicily), from which Muslim sciences moved to Western Europe, the Muslims, when they established their feet in Sicily, were interested in agriculture, so they dug canals and canals and introduced the cultivation of cotton and sugar cane. Its scope over the days of the Arabs after it reached the bottom in the previous era .

The Islamic conquest of those countries had its satisfactory effects, which did not stop, but flourished, including pilgrimage and trade. Securing transportation routes and merchants had a great impact on their prosperity. We

find Christian pilgrims who did not stop visiting Jerusalem, as well as Christian merchants who go to the countries of the East for the purpose of trade in Egypt and Syria in particular. And that they roam the countries of the East in complete freedom, and the prosperity was not limited to pilgrimage and trade, but was followed by a flourishing in science and the arts. There is no doubt that the Muslims' conquest of Andalusia and the countries of the West, reaching France and Switzerland, was recorded as a full page in the history of the West, and Reno says: The public opinion attributes to the Arabs all that is great and huge of civilizational achievements.

The ports of Sicily and Gibraltar became, thanks to Islam, an open site on the major trade routes, which in turn helped the continuation of the Islamic conquest and the spread of the Islamic call . Their sciences, in addition to their religion and the gentleness of their rule , and the orientalist Le Bon says: "The Arabs were able to transform Spain financially and culturally in a few centuries and make it at the head of all European kingdoms" . (Religion, arts, sciences, architecture, literature, language and others) spread all over the world and the recognition of the beauty of our crafts by the West, gratitude and fascination with our civilization is the biggest truth we stand at .

### ***Second - Trade between Western Europe and the Islamic World:***

It is certain that the European economy has adopted a purely agricultural character since the second century AH / eighth century AD, so the land became the main source of wealth, and trade was non-existent or almost non-existent. Approximately 500 and 1000 AD represent a dark era in the history of European cities, during which civil life disappeared from Europe and this was accompanied by the fading of trade and industry.

There are those who believe that the Islamic expansion in the Mediterranean basin since the seventh century AD has weakened commercial activity in it, but it did not eliminate it, because the failure of the Muslims to seize Constantinople left the door open to trade exchange between Italian cities on the other hand , and I do not agree here With what some sources said about the lack of information that was mentioned about Muslims' trade with Europe in that period, we have found some sources that give information on this subject.

The people of the Levant coasts known as the Syrians assumed the largest share of the burden of trade in the Mediterranean, and they had communities in all the ports of this sea , and these communities settled in the frontiers of Britain, Spain and others , and besides these Syrians, the Greeks and Jews shared with them in carrying out the burden of maritime trade , as there were groups of Africans (Moroccans) working in the transport of goods , and the trade exchange movement between Spain and France on the one hand and the eastern Mediterranean on the other hand was active, so the south of France continued until the year 716 AD importing products The East, such as papyrus, spices, and others , and the work of the Jewish, Greek and Syrian merchants was not limited to export, as it is clear that their ships were carrying other goods upon their return such as flour and fur that was carried from the country of the Russians . Likewise, the slaves that the Jews used to bring to

the Muslims of Spain , and during the third AH / ninth century AD, there were individuals from the Jews infiltrating Ghala via Andalusia, carrying with them what was light in weight and expensive in Eastern products .

***European trade in the fourth century AH / tenth century AD:***

Some sources mention that the commercial activity between Muslim Arabs and Europe dates back to before the fourth century AH / tenth century AD. He transgressed to different countries of the world, whether with the East, especially India and China, and with European and African countries and their eastern shores, and Muslim merchants used to bring many goods from the markets of the East to European markets and return with other goods to trade in the markets of the Eastern world with the products of their countries. Muslims play a role similar to the role of a commercial intermediary, helped by the location of their country, and the relative security in all parts of the Islamic countries.

The Muslim Arabs crossed the borders of the state of Islam to the European kingdoms until they reached its north, south, east and west for the purpose of trade. While the Jewish merchants came from Franca (France) to the Arab countries, and that there were some relations before the fourth century AH between the countries of the Russians and the countries of the Muslims. The countries of the Russians, the Bulgarians, and the neighboring countries. He mentioned that the Volga River was used by Muslim merchant ships: "When the Muslim ships came to them, they took a tenth of them." The Khazar lands and that Muslim merchants traded with the Koyaba (Kyiv) ). About this Adam Matz speaks: "The important thing that the Arabs reached in the fourth century AH was the opening of the trade route to the country of the Russians in the north" and the country of the Russians from that era until after the Crusades was the road between northern Europe and the East. In addition to that, extensive commercial relations were established between the countries of the Arabs and the countries of the Franks, and the Arabs used the road from Damascus to Ramle, then to Egypt, then to Ifriqiya, and then to Tangier and from there to the countries of the Franks , and Andalusia also entered many Moroccan and Mashriq merchants, carrying with them the goods of their country After they found in Cordoba and other cities dead markets and endless trade, and some of these merchants, especially the people of the East, were distinguished by promoting the trade of rare books and literature.

What indicates the expansion of the volume of exchange between Arabs and Europe is the huge quantities of Arab-Islamic coins that were found in different parts of northern Europe and near the coasts of the Baltic Sea , as this money came from Muslim merchants who were paying it as a price for the primary commodities they obtained . Adam Metz says that Muslim trade in the fourth century AH (tenth century AD) occupied the first place in world trade, until Alexandria and Baghdad became the ones that decided prices for the world in that era.

### ***European Trade During the Fatimid Era:***

As for the turning point that prompted Europe's trade with the Islamic world, it occurred during the era of the Fatimids. Around the year 1000 AD, there were changes in the volume of trade exchange through different routes, due to the growing power of the Fatimids, who were known for their expansionist goals and thus increased their need for timber to build ships, or to buy ready-made ships. And the need to buy iron from Italy and other European countries

It seems that the revival of Arab-Muslim trade in the Fatimid era is due to the policy of religious tolerance that distinguished some of the Fatimid caliphs towards the trade of dhimmis, and allowing them to engage in economic activity, so that many merchants came to the country from Europe and the countries of the East, carrying various goods, This prompted the caliphs to conclude commercial treaties, and the reason behind the Fatimid caliphs racing towards concluding those treaties with the West for the purpose of developing the country's economy, and taking trade as a means to impose political and sectarian loyalty, especially among the countries of the Arab Mashreq, and the internal prosperity of Egypt was in the Fatimid era, which included various Aspects of life, in addition to security and stability, the Fatimid state came out into the realm of globalization in its trade, so Egypt became dominant over the Mediterranean trade, and secured for Muslims complete control over the seas, especially after seizing many islands, in addition to the exit of the Byzantine state from the circle of trade conflict, All this made the road passable for the cities of Italy, especially Venice, and Amalfi, the most important Italian cities, and the Italian city of Pisa was keen to strengthen the ties of peace. Trade with the Fatimid Caliphs, as well as the city of Genoa. This is in addition to the trade relations between Fatimid Egypt and Sicily, which was previously subject to it, but fell into the hands of the Normans, and despite that, relations remained between the two parties. And it seems that European trade declined in the tenth century AD until the end of the eleventh century AD when the Crusades began, and the trade exchange of the maritime cities doubled.

### ***Europe's Imports and Exports:***

Most of Europe's imports from the Islamic world consisted of consumer goods, while raw materials and slaves were exported to Muslims. The bulk of the slave trade was through Spain and then transported to the Islamic East. As for the raw materials, the most important were ship wood and iron, due to their scarcity in the Arab countries. However, we find one secondary case, which is that Europe was importing alum, which was needed by the textile industry in Europe.

As for what was mentioned about the products that Europe imports, as we mentioned above, they are consumer goods such as clothes, cotton, soap, dates, carob, ropes, sugar, glass, beads, white stones, marble, textiles, figs and pistachios, in addition to spices and incense), Hunka says: "I entered The goods imported from (the ends of the East) to (the ends of the West) European daily life, and were not limited to the use of spices and incense only, but also

to the use of medicinal herbs, so all of these became one of the necessities of the lives of churchmen and monks of monasteries who could no longer afford to do without. The products that Muslim Arabs imported from different countries with which they dealt commercially varied. The most important goods from India that Muslim merchants imported are, for example, tigers, elephants, sandalwood, ebony, coconuts, gold, cinnamon and iron ore, as for China they imported kagad, silk, peacocks, drugs, musk, camphor, and pottery, and from the Khazars, slaves and female slaves and shields, and from Russia they brought beaver, black fox skins, and slaves (And from Europe came Muslim merchants with servants, maidservants, boys, swords and others and brought to Europe the products of their country and some of the goods they had imported from India and China, and the alum that Europe imported from the Islamic East was used to make wicks for lamps and fire-resistant clothing).

Here we can conclude that Arab-Muslim trade has results in all areas of life, as it was not limited to trading and making profit through buying and selling transactions, but rather to results that included various aspects of life. Islam is a creation whose number only God knows, especially since the moral element is dominant in the relations between Muslims and others, in addition to the civilizational impact that emerged from trade in Islam. On the false claim, and contemporary Western tendencies that call for conflict between civilizations, claiming that Islamic civilization represents the greatest danger to Western civilization. peoples each other.

### ***Third - Technical Expertise Related to Marine Navigation:***

Ships and marine navigation are linked to commercial activity, which played an important role in the popularization of material civilization. The Arabs brought to the Mediterranean region the fruits of their navigational experiences in the Indian Ocean, where the Indian Ocean witnessed the invention of the triangular sail and the Arabs brought to the Mediterranean. The Europeans borrowed and developed this type of ship so that they were able to build larger ships capable of crossing the Atlantic, which led to the advancement of the great voyages of exploration.

### ***Compass:***

There are many navigational experiences that Europeans borrowed from Muslim sailors, including the navigators' needle (the compass). In the following stages, it was preferred to make improvements to it, and Le Bon says about the use of the compass in navigation, which is undoubtedly the fact that the Europeans took this important invention from the Arabs, and the Europeans did not use it before the seventh century AH / thirteenth century AD, although al-Idrisi who spoke about it in the middle of the sixth century AH / twelfth century AD, he mentioned him as being very common among his people, and the compass, printing, and gunpowder were known in the countries of the East before the end of the Crusades, and perhaps it moved to Europe in the wake of those wars, and the Europeans were more ignorant than that. They mean "Arab" poetry, science, and philosophy; For this reason, the

influence of the West on these Islamic influences came through Spain and Sicily, not through their contact with Muslims during these wars, and Durant says in another place in the book *The Story of Civilization*: “And the marine compass appeared, whose beginning is unknown in the face of investigation”, and Akef The Muslims were encouraged to study marine sciences, shipbuilding, how to arm them, the method of combat on top of them, astronomy related to their conduct in the seas, and to know their positions on the various marine images, later on. Westerners, such as: Christopher Columbus, and others in their discoveries, and this Columbus read many books on geography and travels - among them the books of the Arabs - before he embarked on his journey that approached the discovery of America, and remembered Hunka in 1269 AD that Peter von Maricor quoted (Peter al-Salibi) about the Arabs directly, his information about the magnet and how to use the compass, and he introduced its use to Europe, and fifty years later, i.e. around the year 1320 AD, an Italian from Amalfi discovered the compass. We Europeans used to believe that it was invented by a man from the Italian city of Amalfi, and Joseph says: “If the Arabs of Spain gathered in the conquest of Europe and stayed there for two centuries and established their civilization in it as they did in Spain, we would have been five centuries ahead of us now than we are today.”.

### *Naval Charts:*

The Arabs contributed to the development of European technical expertise in sea navigation. The maritime maps that were important to navigators were drawn by the Europeans from the Islamic art of cartography, and it is worth noting here in this regard that the Arabs were credited with expanding the geographical knowledge of Europeans.

Here we say with confidence that the Muslim Arabs were the first to invent and lay the foundations of science and human knowledge, and it is not surprising, then, in this case, that we are the first in the science of geography after our ancestors recorded their name in the brightest pages of history, as the first human beings to draw a map of the earth, but rather More than this, they were the first to talk about the sphericity of the Earth, and longitude lines, and to draw a modern picture of the Earth in the Middle Ages, showing the ancient world with its three continents. They are credited with establishing oceanography, and it is sufficient for the Arabs to become involved in the science of geography that they corrected the grave geographical errors that the Greek geographers themselves had fallen into, and what is more, they added a lot from their geographical experiences to what Europe was learning in the field of geographical knowledge, and it is said that Vasco De Gama studied the maps that the Arabs made for the seas, and he greatly admired them, and the interest of the Muslim Arabs in the science of geography was a natural result of the major Arab-Islamic conquests and the resulting expansion in the world of trade, by land and sea, and the journey in search of world Hence, the Muslims did not control the global trade routes, and most of the Arab geographical books were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages were taken from Arabic books alone, and it is clear that the Muslim Arabs paid great attention to the science of geography and reached a high level



in it, and they corrected many of the illusions that prevailed among previous civilizations, and their information is similar to what was captured by satellites.

### CONCLUSION

- 1- Trade played an effective role in transferring civilizational influences to Europe, and at the forefront of those influences was the transfer of the Islamic religion, which was embraced by a character whose number is known only to God.
- 2- The Arab Islamic state has established commercial relations with most of the countries of Europe, especially Spain, France, Sicily and others.
- 3- Arab-Muslim trade with Western Europe flourished during the Fatimid era.
- 4- The Arab Islamic state's imports and exports to and from European countries varied.

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