

TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE BEFORE 1800: TOWARDS QUANTIFICATION*

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The subject of trans-Saharan trade looms large in most accounts of West African history. Nearly every school textbook has a chapter or at least several paragraphs on it. Sweeping assertions are made about the rise and decline of particular routes, of termini, of specific commodities — but when we look for the evidence in support of these assertions, it is generally absent. There has been a tendency in recent years to deflate the importance of trade in the overall context of the economy of West Africa. The importance of trans-Saharan trade has certainly been exaggerated in the past and some deflation is necessary; but such revisions are based as much on scholarly guesswork as were the former exaggerations. For all the talk about it, the trans-Saharan trade remains a neglected theme. Relatively few scholars have been attracted to the subject, and most of them have been concerned with limited areas or periods of time.

The one work to concern itself explicitly with the subject — Bovill's *Golden Trade of the Moors* — while a useful introduction to the history of the region, is hardly very informative for those seeking economic data.¹ Mauny's *Tableau géographique* is much more comprehensive, drawing its source material from the distant past to the near present, but it too is very much concerned with the *moyen âge*.² The trans-Saharan trade between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century has hardly been studied at all. The nineteenth-century trade has been treated in a number of important studies: Miège on Morocco;³ Martel and Boahen on the Central Sahara.⁴ Other writers too have contributed to our knowledge of various aspects of the trans-Saharan trade, notably Marion Johnson on the cloth trade and the gold *mithqal*,⁵ Louis Brenner on the North African trading community in the Central Sudan,⁶ and Terry Walz on the Egyptian trade with the African interior, especially in the seven-

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1 Bovill 1968.

2 Mauny 1961. This major work still forms an essential source for the historian.

3 Miège 1960–63: vol. IV. See too Miège 1975.

4 Martel 1965; Boahen 1962; 1964. Martel's work is a mine of information on nineteenth century Saharan trade and politics. It also has an invaluable bibliography. Boahen's article and a chapter of his book deal with the organisation and content of the trans-Saharan trade.

5 Johnson 1968; 1976.

6 Brenner 1972.

teenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷ But the trans-Saharan trade receives only eight pages in A.G. Hopkins' valuable *Economic History of West Africa*.⁸

The most striking feature of these studies is their essentially qualitative character. Hopkins provides a few figures, Miège and Martel a few more. Johnson's work is more solidly grounded in figures, but the topics of her studies tend to be limited. Only Newbury has undertaken a more broadly based quantitative study, building on Mircher's report on the trade of Ghadames in 1862.⁹ Newbury's attempt to provide quantitative evidence is important as an indication of the type of material available. Although a careful reading of the travellers in the Saharan regions — from Hornemann to Monteil¹⁰ — enables us to extract a great deal of valuable evidence from them, many other important reports, published and unpublished, lie hidden away in archives or obscure journals. For example, Di Hemso's three-part study, "Prospetto del Commercio di Tripoli d'Affrica, e delle sue relazioni con quello dell'Italia", published in *Antologia* during the 1820s, is an amazingly detailed source for the commercial life of the Pashalik of Tripoli in the years immediately before the revolt of the Awlad Sulayman and the Turkish re-occupation.¹¹

This very brief outline of the material available makes no mention of the Ottoman records which, if they come to light, will provide us with even more information, or of the family and business papers of European and local merchants which remain to be found. It is only a matter of time before we shall have detailed studies of the nineteenth-century trade, with breakdowns of commodities, prices and profits along the various routes criss-crossing the desert. But what of the centuries before 1800? So far as this writer is aware the only serious attempts to deal with this earlier period are those of Terry Walz and Marcel Emerit, and the latter's article, written in the 1950s, is ultimately disappointing because it tries to cover too much.¹²

The Sixteenth Century

There are three main contemporary sources for the early sixteenth century. The most familiar is Leo Africanus — whose value is limited to some extent by the modern view that he never travelled to Borno or Hausaland but obtained his material from those who had.¹³ The second is Piri Ra'is, whose *Kitab al-Bahariye*, *The Book of the Sea*, was intended as a handbook for Ottoman naval officers but contains much historical and economic data on northern Africa and the Sahara.¹⁴ His information on Tripoli and Fezzan was apparently obtained in 1510, on the eve of the Spanish occupation and a few years before Leo Africanus visited Tripoli in 1518. The third is

7 Walz 1976; 1978.

8 Hopkins 1973.

9 Newbury 1966. Newbury's article was based on Mircher's unpublished report in the *Archives Nationales*. Mircher 1863, the published account, contains supplementary material.

10 Hornemann 1802; Monteil 1895.

11 Di Hemso 1827–30.

12 Emerit 1954: 29–47.

13 Leo Africanus 1956.

14 The relevant passages are translated in Soucek 1973.

a manuscript entitled *Histoire chronologique du royaume de Tripoly de Barbarie*.¹⁵ The author, a French surgeon of Provençal origin named Girard, was captured in 1668 and became a slave of Uthman Saqizli Pasha (1649–1672). After his release and return to France, he became surgeon to the Swiss Guard of Louis XIV. As a highly privileged slave of the Pasha, he had access to the archives and was able to gather many oral traditions as well. He then used all the material he had collected to compile a detailed history of the Pashalik. In an appendix — *Discours historique de l'estat du royaume de Borno* — he brought together most of the data relating to the history of that state between 1500 and 1670.¹⁶ Much of his information came from Madicon, a nephew of Mai Ali b. Umar (c.1639–1677), who had been enslaved in 1667 and subsequently freed. Despite its many chronological errors, Girard's account is an invaluable source for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the fifteenth century, Tripoli had formed part of the Hafsid domains. Fezzan seems to have been in a state of some confusion, with no central authority and with its various oases dominated by petty warlords.¹⁷ In the *bilad as-sudan*, the Saifawa and their following had been driven from their kingdom of Kanem and had taken refuge in Borno, where a civil war initially retarded the restoration of their power. Only in the 1460s did Mai Ali b. Dunama (1465–1497) bring an end to the troubles.¹⁸ This was also an important period in the development of the area we now call Hausaland, where earlier polities were overthrown or amalgamated to form the states we now know as Kano, Katsina, Zazzau and others.¹⁹ To the north, the Sultanate of Agades, under the patronage of the Tuareg of Asbin or Aïr, also came into existence at this time.²⁰

It cannot be coincidental that the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were the period in which the Akan gold fields began to be exploited by Mande speakers, and the overland route to northern Africa and Egypt through Hausaland and Borno became a viable alternative to the old routes through Jenne to Morocco or through Timbuktu to the eastern Maghrib. We learn from Girard that trade between Tripoli and Fezzan was re-opened in 1462 after a period of disturbance.²¹ Gold certainly formed an important part of Tripoli's trade at this time, for its ruler told Piri Ra'is that his tribute to Tunis amounted to 70,000 *mushari*, a vast sum even if we allow for a certain amount of exaggeration. "Tripoli was a great commercial port at the time we were there", Piri went on:

At all times no fewer than 10-15 ships of the infidels would be lying in the harbour... Caravans travelling [from] Tripoli ... take as their goods horses and oxen, and in return bring gold dust from Fezzan to Tripoli. For one horse they have brought from Tripoli, they receive in Fezzan 10-15 negroes, it is said. And dates from Fezzan are constantly exported to Rum; they are not overshadowed even by those of Medina — they are superior, unique dates...²²

15 Girard, "Histoire chronologique du royaume de Tripoly de Barbarie", Bibliothèque Nationale Paris, Fonds Français, Nouveau Fonds [BN FF] 12,219, 12,220.

16 The appendix is in BN FF 12,220.

17 For Fezzan during this period, see Lavers 1979.

18 The Borno chronology followed here is that advanced by Lange (1977).

19 Hunwick 1976.

20 Smith 1976; Last 1979.

21 Girard, "Histoire", BN FF 12,219.

22 Soucel 1973.

Elsewhere, Piri refers to the exchange rate between slaves and horses as being as high as 15 to 20. However, the lower figure of 10–15 slaves agrees with the one given by Leo, and it may thus represent the price close to source whereas the higher figure was the price on the coast.²³ Leo also emphasised the importance of Agades as a centre for North African merchants trading to Kano and Borno. For the most part, such merchants seem to have confined their activities to the areas west of Lake Chad, regions to the east being serviced from Upper Egypt.²⁴

Mai Ali b. Dunama made the pilgrimage in 1484, travelling by way of Fezzan which had been a Saifawa dependency in the previous century. Thereafter, Borno took a close interest in Fezzani affairs, and it is possible that the Awlad Muhammad, a family originating in Saqiyat al-Mamra, began to establish its control over Fezzan with Borno's aid. It certainly did so under Bornoan patronage.²⁵ The flourishing commerce described by Piri was cut short by the Spanish occupation of Tripoli, "for as soon as the infidel entered the place, everybody began to avoid it".²⁶ But Borno was so dependent on the port that the Mai was forced to negotiate with the invaders, sending a mission in 1512 to obtain "the merchandise of Europe of which they had need".²⁷ The Spaniards agreed, and for several years "the garrison of Tripoli made a great trade in black slaves in Sicily, which they doubtless obtained by way of Fezzan".²⁸ When the ruler of Borno learned that a Muslim military leader, Khayr ad-Din, had established himself at Tajura, he sent a mission to propose an alliance, stressing that he preferred to deal with another Muslim ruler rather than with the Knights of St. John who were then occupying Tripoli. Unfortunately, Khayr ad-Din "did not have the goods which Mahi-Haly [Mai Ali] asked for, and the latter was obliged to obtain them in Tripoli".²⁹ In 1555/6, Mahi Mahomet (Mai Dunama Muhammad, c.1539-57 or possibly Abdullahi b. Dunama 1557–1564) concluded an alliance of friendship and trade with Turghut Rais, Pasha of Tripoli, which each ruler of Borno and Tripoli then renewed on his accession. The parties to the alliance frequently exchanged gifts and embassies, most notably perhaps the famous mission of *al-hajj* Yusuf which Mai Idris (Aloma) b. Ali (1564–96) sent to the Ottoman Sultan in 1573.

There was of course a commercial side to all this diplomatic activity. After their occupation of northern Africa, the Ottoman authorities sought not merely to foster trade but also to control the major ports on the Mediterranean coast and the key commercial centres in the northern interior — Wargla and Tugurt (1552), Ghadames (possibly after 1574) and Fezzan.³⁰ The generally accepted date for the first Ottoman occupation of Fezzan is 1574; but recent research supports the earlier date of 1549

23 Leo Africanus 1956.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Lavers 1979.

26 Soucek 1973.

27 Girard, "Histoire", BN FF 12,220.

28 Girard, "Histoire", BN FF 12,219.

29 Girard, "Histoire", BN FF 12,220. Girard gave the name of Borno's ruler as Mai Ali. In fact it was Muhammad b. Idris b. Ali (c. 1519–1538).

30 Hess 1972.

suggested by Ibn Ghalbun.³¹ Orhonlu has shown that Fezzan was paying an annual tribute of 1,440 *mithqals* of gold from the time of Murad Pasha (before 1556), and in March 1574 the Sanjak Ali Bey was ordered to increase the tribute to 3,000 *mithqals*.³² The Porte's instructions also emphasised the need to encourage trade and maintain security. Security was a concern throughout the empire, but especially so in Fezzan, the focal point of trade routes from east and west of Lake Chad, as well as from the Niger Bend, Egypt and northern Africa. Fezzan was one of Tripoli's largest districts or *sanjakates*. At times it was even referred to as a viceregency or *beylerbeylik* in its own right, and its importance was further illustrated by the speed with which the Tripoli authorities crushed all attempts by the region's Awlad Muhammad sultans to re-assert their independence. Ottoman determination to maintain central control was undoubtedly linked to sixteenth-century inflation and the empire's need to secure its own supply of gold.³³ It is certainly no coincidence that most of the Ottoman advances beyond the coastal plains occurred during the latter part of the sixteenth century, suggesting that they were centrally directed from Istanbul rather than the result of local initiatives. In order to encourage merchants to frequent Fezzan, the Porte drafted detailed regulations for the gold trade and for maintaining the security of trade routes even beyond Ottoman territories. In 1574, Ali Bey was ordered to make peace with the rulers on Fezzan's border, to reopen the trade routes which had been blocked by *qa'id* Abdu's incursion, to permit free travel throughout his district, and to "continue to make alliances and to secure the well-being of merchants coming to this territory".³⁴ In 1579, the Sultan ordered the Viceroy of Egypt to ensure that the ruler of Borno and his subjects had "freedom to travel along the roads and trails and to rest at the hostels and stations in security and contentment, whether as merchants or as pilgrims":

From the arrival of this order, you are bound in this regard to take no extra exactions from the travellers, to devise more necessary and suitable regulations about goods, and not to molest any travellers wishing to visit or return home from the Holy Ka'ba or any merchants from this territory on the roads or trails at the hostels or stations or anywhere.

Similar instructions were sent to the Sanjak of Fezzan, Sinan Bey.³⁵

Given the extent of Ottoman authority and the government's interest in trade, it is not surprising that information about the interior was freely available. Nor is it surprising, given the intellectual curiosity of the time, that much of this information was gathered and published in Italy. Giovanni Lorenzo Anania published several editions of his *Universale fabrica del mondo, overo cosmografia* after 1573, each of them containing additional information. Lange and Berthoud have published a French translation of all the passages relevant to West Africa.³⁶ Of particular interest is the material relating to the Central Sudan obtained from Vincenzo Matteo, a Ragusan

31 Ibn Ghalbun 1936. For a discussion of this problem see Lavers 1979.

32 Orhonlu 1969.

33 Olsen 1976; Orhonlu 1974.

34 Orhonlu 1969. It was probably *qa'id* Abdu's incursion which prompted Mai Idris b. Ali of Borno to send his embassy to Istanbul.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Lange and Berthoud 1972.

merchant who had lived in the area for seven years. Matteo recorded the presence in Kano of “many white gentlemen” who had arrived by way of Cairo. He also reported a curious proposal by the Portuguese to open a trading post and its rejection by Kano’s ruler, acting on the advice of the Cairo merchants. Matteo’s own presence in Kano is not at all surprising. At the time, Ragusa was an Ottoman vassal state and was also under the special protection of the Pope. Ragusan merchants could thus travel freely in most of Christendom and the *Dar al-Islam*, and they exploited this advantage to the full. The Ragusan archives, which have never been used by African historians, would almost certainly yield valuable data. According to Braudel, their massive collections of documents, especially the reports from the city’s Agents to the Rector, are full not only of political information but also of “the banal but useful details of everyday life”.³⁷ Matteo’s information was supplemented by that of Giovanni di Vesti, a captive in Tripoli, who referred to the export of iron by Mandara to Borno, as well as the extensive importation of horses from the north which were sold in Borno for 700–1,000 *escudi* each.³⁸

The Seventeenth Century

Data relating to the early seventeenth century are largely restricted to Girard’s *Histoire*, which becomes increasingly detailed as it approaches his own time. Embassies continued to be exchanged between Borno and Tripoli. In 1614 or 1615, Mahi Idris (probably Ibrahim b. Idris, 1612–19) sent an envoy with rich presents to “thank them very kindly for the trouble they were taking in supplying his king with the diverse merchandise of Europe of which he was in great need and to implore them to keep this trade continuing in the future”. The envoy returned with gifts of horses and firearms.³⁹

In 1636 the Pasha Muhammad Saqizli (1633–1649), “realising the great profits made by those engaged in business with Borno, resolved to draw all the trade to himself alone”:

For this purpose he wrote to the Prince of Fezzan and to Mahi Hamour [Mai Umar b. Idris, c.1619-39] ... offering to supply them with large quantities of copper in sheets, paper, Venetian beads and cloth; but he declared that none of his Tripolitanian subjects should have any part in this trade without his consent. These princes were delighted to deal with one of their equals and accepted these offers with great civility. Then Mahomet [Muhammad Saqizli], having received their reply, forbade any person of the state from trafficking with Borno without informing him on pain of death. And all the goods which arrived in Tripoli suitable for this commerce were brought by his officers ... so that in a little while he saw himself sole master of this trade.⁴⁰

37 Braudel 1972–73.

38 Lange and Berthoud 1972.

39 Girard, “Histoire”, BN FF 12,220.

40 Girard, “Histoire”, BN FF 12,219. This is the first reference to the commodities which were to become important on this route: copper, paper, beads and cloth. Doubtless they had been traded for years without being recorded.

A year later, "to conclude this alliance more effectively, Mahomet made ready a caravan with a quantity of merchandise and sent off at the same time an intelligent person with a letter to King Hamour in order to complete the establishment of this commerce... In exchange for the merchandise brought, [Mai Umar] sent back a quantity of gold dust which they call 'teber' and several presents for Mahomet."⁴¹ In 1638, Mai Umar sent a larger present, "consisting of 30 eunuchs, 100 young negroes, 50 negro girls and diverse other elegant gifts produced in the kingdom of Borno, remarkable among which were a golden tortoise of considerable size and several cups of porcelain". In return, Muhammad Saqizli "sent to King Hamour 200 fine horses, some young European renegades and several muskets and swords enriched with precious stones which the king accepted with great satisfaction and as a result of which the trade continued between them without interruption".⁴²

Relations with Tripoli were broken for a time by Umar's son Ali (c.1639–1677); but when Uthman succeeded Muhammad Saqizli as Pasha, he offered to renew the alliance and resume trade. Mai Ali agreed and sent the new Pasha a gift of "70 head [of slaves] large and small, 30 head of small [slaves] and five *Kamous* [Kanuri female] dwarfs, making in all 100, [as well as] 20 eunuchs and 24 camels to carry provisions for the above, with four robes, two white and two green, and 30 cups to drink water".⁴³ In 1655, Mai Ali sent another embassy with a gift of 200 young male and female slaves as well as several eunuchs. Because the European renegades given to Mai Umar had rendered such valuable service, Mai Ali asked for more Christians, and several more were sent to Borno.⁴⁴ The Borno envoys on this occasion were described as wearing "robes of white or blue cloth, with wide sleeves", one of the first references we have to the indigo-dyed cloth for which Hausaland became so famous.⁴⁵ The alliance with Borno was renewed by Pasha Bali Day (1672–73) and by his successor, Rejab Bey, as well. In 1674, the latter asked for a giraffe on behalf of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, one of Tripoli's major trading partners. The beast was duly sent but unfortunately died. Gifts of exotic animals from the interior were not uncommon and are reported from the days of Ibn Khaldun through to the late nineteenth century.⁴⁶

Mai Ali made his fifth and last pilgrimage in the late 1670s and died on his return journey just east of Cairo, where he had always been well received by the local ad-

41 *Ibid.* *Teber*, more correctly *tibr* (ar.): gold dust.

42 The source of the porcelain cups, unless they came from the coast, is unknown. The presence of a large gold tortoise is equally surprising, although Walz (1976) noted that purses of West African gold reaching Cairo in the seventeenth century contained a mixture of gold dust, small nuggets and "small gold tortoises". Perhaps they were early examples of Akan metal work.

43 Girard, "Histoire", BN FF 12,219.

44 Mamluks remained in demand into the nineteenth century. They were employed by the Awlad Muhammad rulers of Fezzan, and mamluks of French origin in Borno were reportedly trying to cast cannon on the eve of the *jihad* (c.1807–8). Shehu Hashim b. Umar al-Kanemi owned at least one Lebanese mamluk in 1892.

45 In all probability, the dyed cloth industry of Hausaland and of the Kano region in particular was already established by then, although not on the scale it later assumed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

46 Gwarzo 1968. The Duke of Tuscany's dominions included Leghorn (Livorno), which was an important centre for trade and communications between the Near East, North Africa and Europe. Many goods were trans-shipped there.

ministration. During his last pilgrimage, Mai Ali also met the Turkish traveller Evliya Celebi, who later published a great deal of material relating to the African interior in his great *Seyahatname*. Celebi's account is confused in several places as he often failed to realise that he was reporting on the same peoples under different names. Nevertheless, it does make a significant contribution to our knowledge of the extent of Borno trade. For example, it records the annual Borno caravans to Cairo bringing gold dust "with which they enrich Egypt" and taking back small glass beads.⁴⁷

Material on Egypt and its trade with West Africa — a matter of some importance and one which often escapes the eye of the economic historian — is to be found in the writings of Fr. Johan Michael Wansleb. Employed by Colbert to collect Arabic, Hebrew and other manuscripts, he was in Egypt during the 1660s and again in the 1670s. He wrote accounts of both his journeys, providing considerable detail on the trade of Egypt, in particular on prices for the staples of internal trade and data on exchange rates, some of which can be extrapolated to Tripoli. Among the staples were sugar, gum (Tuareg gum, almost certainly from Agades, at 9 *abu kelb* for 130 *rotals*), ostrich feathers of first and second quality at 24 piastres a *rotal*, black and tail feathers at 24 piastres for 4 *rotals*, and ivory at 25 piastres for 110 *rotals*. Paper of various qualities was sent to the interior at prices ranging from 12 to 20 piastres for 24 reams. The rates of exchange which Wansleb noted were:

1 <i>abu kelb</i>	=	1 Dutch dollar
1 Dutch dollar	=	33 <i>maidans</i> (38 in specie)
1 ordinary piastre	=	30 <i>maidans</i>
1 Spanish real	=	33 <i>maidans</i> (40 in specie)
1 <i>sakin</i> or ducat of Venice	=	100 <i>maidans</i> ⁴⁸

Largely through the initiative of the French consul in Cairo, Benoît de Maillet, several attempts were made between 1690 and 1715 to reach Abyssinia and even Borno by way of Sennar.⁴⁹ De Maillet's *Description de l'Égypte*, the memoirs he published after his retirement, contains a section entitled "Du commerce de l'intérieur de l'Afrique". In it, de Maillet notes that "the 'croy' [Takruris] from near Faisan bring gold dust to Cairo where it is exchanged for copper and cutlery".⁵⁰ The missions to Abyssinia generated considerable correspondence; some of it contains economic data, as do the many works published by the various participants. These are valuable for their indication of the commercial links between the Nile and West

47 Hodgkin 1975: 184-5.

48 Wansleb 1678. A list of the manuscripts collected by Wansleb appears in Omont 1902. The manuscript account of Wansleb's first journey is housed in the Göttingen University Library. It was published, with additions by J. Ludolf, in Paulus 1794: vol. III.

49 These are discussed in Crawford 1951; and by Spaulding in Spaulding and O'Fahey 1974.

50 Maillet 1735.

Africa. Further evidence of trade between the Nile and Borno has been uncovered by R.S. O'Fahey who has found specific references to trade during the 1650s.⁵¹

The French consuls in Tripoli were also very active in gathering information. One of the Lemaire brothers, perhaps prompted by Girard, actually visited Fezzan in 1686 and afterwards prepared a report for de Lagny, the Director of Commerce:

The Dey sends to Fessant twice a year a caravan of about 100 camels loaded for the most part with "de contarie", bracelets and necklaces of beads of various colours, coarse paper and sometimes bales of cloth from St. Pons, brass rods and in sheets, cheap everyday cloth from Xio. He exchanges this merchandise against the gold dust, senna and black slaves who are the subjects of the King of Bournoux [sic] of whom they bring every year 5 or 600. The goods that the Dey sends come mostly from Venice. It would be good to tell you that the Fessant is a city, forty days from this city, inhabited for the most part by Negroes who are Mahometans, and their commerce consists of gold dust which is brought by the merchants of the King of Bournoux, a very powerful king. He is black and Mahometan, but [there is] great freedom of conscience in his kingdom so that a good part of his subjects are Christians. He always has more than 300,000 men in his pay... It is three months journey from here to where he normally resides.

Seczem is a considerable town close to Mt. Atlas which is called Ghubit... There is made at Seczem a great trade between the Tripolis and the merchants of Borneo [sic], Agades and other Numidians who carry there gold dust, senna and negroes for sale. They exchange these against strips of brass, brass wire, iron wire, pins, needles, knives and spices that the Tripolis carry to them.⁵²

The French scholar Pétis de la Croix, Arabic and Turkish interpreter to Louis XIV, accompanied Marshal d'Estrées' expedition against Tripoli in 1685. Based on this experience, he wrote a history of Tripoli and its trade, *Tripoly de Barbarie autrefois les Lotophages*, supplementing the data compiled by Lemaire. Some years later, in 1697, he served as the official interpreter to the mission which *al-hajj* Mustafa led to Paris. Mustafa was accompanied by two slaves of Borno origin who provided further material on the interior, including vocabularies of the Borno and Afuno — i.e. Kanuri and Hausa. Pétis used this additional material to compile another account, *Suite des remarques de Tripoly de Barbarie*, and included the vocabularies as an appendix.⁵³ According to his account, up to 200 camel loads of ivory at three quintals a load were taken to Cairo each year. This information is of particular interest, for ivory rarely figures in descriptions of trade until the nineteenth century, even though Fr. Wansleb did mention it as one of the items traded in Egypt. Other items sent south from Tripoli included tin, mainly English which was the best, and copper, which was reckoned to be more valuable than gold. In exchange came gold and slaves, the latter costing — according to age — four *mithqals* or eight piastres in Borno, 12 *mithqals* or 24 piastres in Fezzan and 40, 50 or even 60 piastres in Tripoli. The caravans set out in October for Fezzan, where they separated either to return to

- 51 Crawford 1951. T. Krump's account contains several details on traders from Borno and the west. Marginal comments found on a copy of al-Nuwayri's *Nihayat al-Arab* refer to Tunjur and Fur merchants travelling to Borno by way of the land of al-Salih (Wadai) and Fur in the 1650s. O'Fahey, Hunwick and Lange 1979: 16–24.
- 52 Lemaire to de Lagny, 1686. The consular reports from Tripoli (1642–1791) are to be found in Archives Nationales, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance reçue, Tripoli de Barbarie, B¹ 1088–1113.
- 53 F. Pétis de la Croix, "Tripoly de Barbarie autrefois les Lotophages"; "Suite des remarques de Tripoly de Barbarie", Bibliothèque Nationale, nouvelles acquisitions françaises [BN n.a.fr.] 7488. The Kanuri material has been published in Lange 1972.

Tripoli or to go on to Timbuktu, Borno or other places in the interior. Such caravans often consisted of 3–4,000 camels, although much smaller caravans set out at other times. At the time, France provided many of the items for this trade: paper, serge, metal utensils, glass bracelets, pearls and diamonds, “small shells for money among the Blacks ... shiny yellow amber in strings” and other items.⁵⁴

Lemaire’s example was followed by a number of his successors. In 1698, Consul Delalande forwarded another report entitled *État du gouvernement présent de Tripoli et du commerce qui se fait dans l’étendue de cette régence*:

The most considerable part of this country’s commerce is that which is carried on with the Kingdom of Faisan, which is about 25 days distant, due south, from this city. This kingdom, which has for a long time paid tribute to Tripoli, ten or twelve years ago wanted to escape from this burden. This obliged them [Tripoli] to send 12 to 1500 spahis or horsemen commanded by the Bey who made themselves masters of the chief place where the king was living, even capturing the king and then subduing 103 or 104 towns and villages of which the kingdom is composed. They carried off considerable riches and made the king suffer cruel tortures so that he would reveal to them where he had hidden his treasure, and as they were able to learn nothing, they brought him to this city, where they futilely tortured him for two [more] years for the same reason. Finally, wearying of his steadfastness, they came to terms with him, freeing him on condition of a number of *marcs* of gold dust that he promised to give them and an annual tribute of 100 *marcs* and 20 young negro boys or girls, with this further condition that the Tripolens would keep a bey in the principal place of this said kingdom, who would be considered a governor of the province and who could serve as protector of the merchants who wished to trade from there. This king, who is black, punctually fulfilled all that he had promised, and the commerce develops with enough good faith.⁵⁵

To this country are conveyed fabrics of gold and silver that come from Venice, paper, small bars and sheets of yellow brass which also come from Venice, red caps, Saint Pons cloth that comes from Marseilles, and a small amount of tobacco, cloves and nutmeg that come from Livorno. On the return are carried back Negroes, gold dust, elephant teeth and a quantity of senna.

The Negroes transported here are then conveyed to the Levant, and this gives use to the chartering of seven or eight French barks a year. The senna and elephant teeth are sent mostly to Livorno, a little to Venice and Marseilles. With the gold dust, *sultanins* are made here, which are the best money in the world because the gold is highly refined.

The merchandise carried to Faisan is not only for the use of the said kingdom; there are fairs in the principal place, where merchants from the Congo, Guinea and several other places farther to the south are found; they are the ones who bring the gold dust and the elephant teeth; they are Mahometans and travel from Faisan to Mecca, and on return they take their goods. These same merchants also bring the Negroes from the lands of Prester John, who were originally Christians and are distinguished by certain marks that they have on their faces; they immediately make them Mahometans. In return for the Negroes that are brought for the Levant, goods are brought back here for the use of the country, such as linens, raw silks, Turkish carpets, iron, tobacco and several types of wood for the construction of their homes.⁵⁶

These consular reports also drew the attention of officials in the *Propaganda Fide* to the possible presence of Christians in Borno, which in turn led to the establishment of the Borno Mission and the appointment of an Apostolic Prefect. Although the missionaries died in Katsina in 1711, they were able to send back several reports containing much material of value to the economic historian of the Central Sahara and Sudan.⁵⁷

54 Pétis de la Croix, “Suite des remarques”, BN n.a.fr. 7488.

55 This is a reference to Sultan Muhammad Nasir and the invasion of 1685.

56 Delalande, “État du gouvernement présent de Tripoli”, 22 Dec. 1698, Archives Nationales, Ministère de la Marine [AN MM] B’ 220.

57 Gray 1967.

Eighteenth Century

French sources continue to provide much of our evidence, at least for the first half of the century. The first account is that of Claude Lemaire (1706), describing geographical, political, commercial and even archaeological conditions in most of the Tripoli Regency. Lemaire reported that Fezzan was paying 2,000 *mithqals* of gold a year to Tripoli, worth 14,000 French *livres*, together with a number of slaves and eunuchs to the same value. The importance of Fezzan is highlighted by his observation that Tripoli's revenue came only from "piracy and the Fezzan trade".⁵⁸ Savary de Bruslons and Abbé Raynal both provide data, the former on ivory, gold and especially the trade of Timbuktu,⁵⁹ the latter on the caravans of Sale and "Gademes" which formed a rich branch of the Tunis trade: "The caravan of Gademes, which makes 2 journeys each year, carries Negroes and gold dust. In exchange it takes French cloth, paper, Venetian glass, iron wire and coral beads".⁶⁰

European interest in the trade of northern Africa revived during the mid-eighteenth century. The French consul in Tripoli, de Lancey, wrote a report on the trade in 1761 and produced a more detailed account in 1766 which the Minister, the duc de Praslin, forwarded to the Marseilles Chamber of Commerce for comment. This latter report — *Note concernant le commerce qui pourrait se faire sur cette échelle et ses dépendances* — contains many valuable details on the trade of Tripoli both with the Mediterranean world and with the African interior.⁶¹ De Lancey noted that Fezzan still sent three caravans a year to Tripoli (in January, May and October), and assessed the total value of the trade at some 154,000 *livres* (which would appear to be a serious underestimate). Senna was another important commodity, along with dates and gold dust, the latter "of very good quality from Kosina [Katsina] beyond Gadems [Ghadames]". The Ghadames caravan carried items similar to those of Fezzan, including slaves to a total value of some 111,000 *livres* (11,891.9 sequins). This caravan also carried good quality senna from Agades, to a value of 16,650 *livres*, as well as 45-62,000 *livres*' worth of gold dust. Every four or five years, the Ghadames caravan was joined by one from Timbuktu carrying some 200 slaves valued at 74,000 *livres*, along with gold dust worth some 107,000 *livres*. The senna was transported to Europe; the slaves were taken to Constan-

58 "Mémoire des observations que le sieur Claude Lemaire, consul de France au royaume de Tripoly, a fait en voiageant le long de la coste de Derne et du golfe de la Sidre en 1705 et 1706, et sur diverses relations qu'il a eu du Soudan, qui signifie pays de Nègres", AN MM B⁷ 224. See too Omont 1902: II, 1037.

59 Savary de Bruslons 1742.

60 Editors' Note: We have been unable to trace this reference. However, in his *Histoire ... des Établissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, Raynal did write: "Les caravanes de Gadême & de Tombut portoient autrefois beaucoup d'or à Tripoli: depuis quelque tems, elles sont moins riches & moins régulières. Celle de Maroc continue à s'y rendre en allant à la Mecque & en revenant de ce lieu révééré par les Musulmans: mais comme le nombre de pèlerins a sensiblement diminué, ce passage n'est plus si utile." Raynal 1780: VI, 27.

61 Extrait du mémoire de M. de Lancey sur Tripoli", March 1761, AN MM B⁷ 418; "Note concernant le commerce qui pourrait se faire sur cette échelle et ses dépendances", March 1766, Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, CC 156. Most of the relevant material is reproduced in Masson 1903: 605ff.

tinople, Smyrna, Salonika and the Morea. Although Christians were forbidden to participate in the slave trade as such, they were allowed to transport them, and slaves provided the cargo for eight or nine French ships a year. If the French were to participate more actively in the trade, de Lancey suggested, then they would have to do so — at least at first — through “a clever Jew” who was well known to the commercial community.⁶²

The British were equally interested in the North African trade and just as determined to win a greater share of it. In 1765 the President of the Board of Trade, Lord Halifax, instructed British consuls to report on the trade of the various territories to which they were accredited and assess the prospects for increasing British trade with the region. Presumably, they all complied; but this writer has been able to consult only the report of the British consul in Tripoli.⁶³ When cross-checked with the French material, however, Consul Frazer’s detailed account does enable us to make a serious start on the task of quantifying trans-Saharan trade:⁶⁴

Table I: Tripoli’s Trade with the Interior of Africa in the Year 1767

	From		To	
	Sequins	Sterling	Sequins	Sterling
Fezzan	37,380	£15,886.500	26,475	£11,251.875
Ghadames	9,725	£ 4,133.125	7,610	£ 3,234.250
Total	47,105	£20,019.625	34,085	£14,486.125

Although he acknowledged the prohibition against participating in the slave trade, Frazer stressed that the transportation of goods, including slaves, could still be encouraged. Port Mahon in Minorca, then in British hands, would be a most convenient base for such a trade, especially since its small Minorcan vessels were ideally suited for challenging those of Marseilles and Leghorn (Livorno). In the event, nothing more was done. Minorca was eventually lost, and Britain did not acquire another commercial (and military) base in the Mediterranean until the occupation of Malta at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There is a considerable body of material for the remainder of the eighteenth century, much of it in the French archives — a reflection of continued French interest in the trade of the African interior. In 1783, for example, there was even a project to send the son of the archivist of the Marseilles Chamber of Commerce to investigate

62 *Ibid.*

63 Although the instructions were issued by Halifax, the Earl of Shelburn was in office when the report from Frazer, the British consul, was submitted. Frazer was in fact recalled in disgrace, and his covering letter is dated from Portsmouth. His report may thus have been an attempt to regain favour. Frazer’s report is reproduced in the Appendix.

64 Source: “A General State of the Commerce of Tripoli, 1767”, Consul Frazer’s (No. 1) of the 24th August 1767, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Correspondence [FO] 76/2.

Table II: Summary of the Trade of Tripoli in the Year 1767

Port	To Tripoli		From Tripoli	
	Total in Tripoli sequins	Total in £ Sterling 8/6 per sequin	Total in Tripoli sequins	Total in £ Sterling 8/6 per sequin
Leghorn	21,346	£ 9,072.050	14,930	£ 6,345.250
Venice	10,765	£ 4,575.125	5,575	£ 2,369.375
Levant			42,485	£18,056.125
Constantinople	14,345	£ 6,096.625		
Smyrna	18,943	£ 8,050.775		
Island of Scio	680	£ 289.000		
Scala Nova	4,500	£ 1,912.500		
Candia	3,745	£ 1,591.625		
Alexandria	7,010	£ 2,979.250	8,000	£ 3,400.000
Malta	1,495	£ 635.375	1,815	£ 771.375
Tunis	2,300	£ 977.500	paid in bullion	
Barca	10,000	£ 4,250.000		
Bengasi	5,270	£ 2,239.750		
Derna	5,650	£ 2,401.250		
TOTAL	106,049	£45,070.825	72,805	£30,942.125

commercial prospects in the region.⁶⁵ In 1784, under the patronage of the French Minister of Marine, four German travellers set out to make their way to Senegal via

Fezzan. They were presented to the Bey of Tunis by the French consul, Venture de Paradis; but two of them died of the plague and the survivors were forced to abandon their plans. However, the leader of the mission, Baron von Einsiedel, did make use of his time to collect intelligence on the political geography and trade of the interior, including information about the decline of Ghadames:

In this town a fair is held every year, which was very famous before; but nowadays it has fallen into utter decline because of the troubles to which it was exposed in its trade by the Tunisian government. It is only visited by some negro caravans from Ogadez [Agades], which trade slaves and gold dust for cotton from the East and all sorts of knick-knacks which traders bring from Barbary. Ever since a merchandise depot for trade with the African interior was erected in Morzuk, the trade of Ghadames has declined even further...⁶⁶

65 Masson 1903: 609. See too Abitbol 1979. Other powers were interested as well. Isnard, the son of the Marseilles archivist, reported meeting a Venetian who claimed to have visited Fezzan on behalf of his government. Some years later, the French scholar J. de Lalande reported on a meeting in 1783 with Joseph Montemurli, a Veronese who claimed to have visited Fezzan in 1773. See Lalande 1794.

66 Cuhn 1790–1791: vol. III.

Much of the information about the African interior was provided by envoys from Tripoli. The role of *al-hajj* Mustafa, leader of the Tripoli mission to Paris in 1697, has already been noted. As diplomatic exchanges became more common during the eighteenth century, other envoys added to the fund of knowledge which was rapidly accumulating in Europe. Among the most frequently cited sources was *al-hajj* abd al-Rahman Aga, who served as ambassador to most of the courts of Europe at one time or another. While ambassador to Copenhagen in 1772, abd al-Rahman had been interviewed by the Danish scholar and traveller Christian Niebuhr, who later published an extensive account of their discussions.⁶⁷ Abd al-Rahman had visited Borno and Hausaland as a boy and remembered a great deal about conditions in the region. Two slaves in his entourage supplied additional details. Another envoy, *al-hajj* Mahmud, proved a rich source of information for the French orientalist and consul to Tripoli, Venture de Paradis, who used the material to prepare a lengthy report on Fezzan.⁶⁸ Venture's report was published in 1803 by Langlès as an appendix to his translation of Hornemann's *Travels*, and again in 1835 by Bianchi in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*.⁶⁹ In his report, Venture also noted the decline of trade in the late eighteenth century, along with the fact that much of the Fezzan trade was now conducted by merchants from Awjila, a point later confirmed by Hornemann himself.

The role of the Awjila community in Saharan trade before the nineteenth century remains obscure. Evliya Celebi had reported in the 1670s that slaves from Afuno, captives taken in war, were sold in Awjila.⁷⁰ Girard too emphasised, albeit indirectly, the importance of Awjila's gold trade, noting the 28,000 *mithqals* of gold paid by the *shaykh* of the oasis as ransom to the Ottomans in 1639 and the annual tribute of 15,000 *mithqals* thereafter.⁷¹ In his report of 1706, Claude Lemaire remarked that "the inhabitants [of Awjuila] have no other revenue than from their dates and the passage of caravans from Cairo going to Faisan", adding that "the inhabitants of Siounne [Siwa] also trade to the Faisan; they carry there the merchandise of Egypt, which they exchange against Blacks".⁷² Finally, Venture noted in the 1780s that Awjila merchants were conducting much of the gold trade to Egypt because the Pasha of Tripoli had forced his own merchants to sell him gold dust at prices fixed by himself, thus driving them out of the trade.

Notwithstanding its overall decline, the Saharan trade was still profitable for a few. The Pasha and his kin remained deeply involved in it and had an interest in nearly every caravan travelling to the interior. The old staples of the trade were still sought after: ostrich feathers were sent by the Jews to Paris by way of Leghorn; alum and natron were distributed throughout Barbary for use in the manufacture of Morocco leather, the bleaching of woollens and linen, and as an ingredient in snuff.

67 Niebuhr 1790.

68 "Notions sur le royaume du Faizan et sur la route qui y conduit en partant de Tripoly", 1788, AN MM B' 462.

69 Langlès 1803; Bianchi 1835.

70 Hodgkin 1975: 185.

71 Girard "Histoire", BN FF 12,219.

72 Lemaire, "Mémoire", BN MM B' 224.

Fezzan senna was largely consumed in Barbary, but some of it reached Leghorn. The slave trade also continued to flourish. Seven or eight hundred slaves a year were obtained from Fezzan, most of them having been “brought there by the merchants of Borno, who themselves take them from Kachenek [Katsina]”. The price for females — the most sought after — ranged from 1,000 to 1,200 *livres* each, with some fetching as much as 1,500 *livres*.⁷³

The formation of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa in 1788 ushered in a new era of European exploration, and thereafter information about the African interior came to be collected much more systematically. The work of the African Association and the material gathered by its agents — Lucas, Ledyard, Hornemann and others — are well known and need no further discussion here.⁷⁴ It is nevertheless worth repeating that a great deal of material about trans-Saharan trade, both in the nineteenth century and especially in the three centuries before 1800, remains to be uncovered.

Further Sources

The principal sources which might fruitfully bear further investigation are easy enough to identify. British, French and other European archives are almost certain to contain as yet undiscovered material. One potentially invaluable source of data would be the replies from the various North African consulates to Lord Halifax's circular of 1765. It is worth noting that a similar circular from Lord Sydney in October 1788 produced reports from most of the Barbary consuls.⁷⁵ The Marseilles archives, both municipal and those of the Chamber of Commerce, have still to be systematically mined. If Braudel's work is any guide, Spanish archives — not merely those of Simancas but those of Valencia and Barcelona as well — should yield much valuable material relating to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁷⁶ Italy poses a monumental task for the scholar, given its many states whose diplomatic and commercial undertakings drew them into the orbit of northern Africa. The archives of Genoa and Naples will clearly be very important; but those of Leghorn and Venice will surely be significant as well. Ragusa might be considered an extension of Italy, and historians have already noted the rich potential of the Dubrovnik archives.⁷⁷ The Vatican archives remain something of an unknown quantity. Richard Gray has indicated their importance for the west coast of Africa and the significance of the files of the *Propaganda Fide* for the Borno Mission. One must also wonder what lies in store for the researcher who consults the records of the various religious orders — especially those of the Redemptorist Fathers and the Franciscans, both of whom were active in Tripoli.⁷⁸

73 Venture de Paradis, “Notions sur le royaume du Faizan”, 1788, BN MM B⁷ 462.

74 On the African Association and its activities, see Hallett 1964; Hallett 1965.

75 Hallett 1964: 79.

76 Braudel 1973: vol. II.

77 Carter 1972.

78 Gray and Chambers 1965.

The various archives of *Dar al-Islam* must also contain untold riches. The few documents published by Orhonlu can only be a foretaste of what awaits us in Istanbul.⁷⁹ Will there be similar riches in Smyrna, Salonika or Chios? The vicissitudes of recent history have tragically caused much destruction and disorder in many North African archives. For example, the bulk of the Libyan archives for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were disposed of as waste paper by an officer of the British Military Government during the Second World War. Notwithstanding his diligence, however, scattered items — some of considerable value — do survive. Martin and Gwarzo have drawn our attention to some of them.⁸⁰ There have also been several forays into the Egyptian archives, in recent years by Rivlin and Stanford Shaw and earlier by Deny — but most of the material they recorded seems to be from the nineteenth century.⁸¹ Although access to the principal Egyptian archives seems extremely difficult to secure, Walz has shown what can be found in other, often unexpected, sources.⁸² Nor have the “archives”, either public or private, of Fezzan ever been investigated. We know that the al-Kanemi family owned property in Murzuk as late as the 1920s — and that the house contained papers. There must have been many other such collections. We also know of two thick files of Arabic papers, ranging from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, in the Public Record Office in London. And we might mention that the papers of several nineteenth-century Jewish and European merchants and financiers — Riley, the Raccas and the Abulafias to name but the most prominent — still await discovery.⁸³ Mantran’s survey of the Tunisian archives suggests that pre-nineteenth century materials there are scarce,⁸⁴ but there may still be private papers. Most of the pre-1830 Algerian archives have vanished; but again there may be private papers awaiting discovery in Wargla, Tuat and elsewhere. The account book of an important Tuati trader in the Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna, gives rise to some hope that other such evidence might be discovered.

In this very rapid survey, we have merely scratched the surface of the wide range of source materials which have or may still come to light. Most of the materials we have identified are qualitative in nature. Based on what has already been found, however, there should be sufficient quantitative data for scholars to approach the study of trans-Saharan trade before 1800 in much the same way as they are now beginning to treat the nineteenth century. If this survey encourages them to do so, it will have served its purpose.

79 Orhonlu 1969. See too Martin 1972: 470–90.

80 Martin 1964; Gwarzo 1968.

81 Deny 1930; Rivlin 1970. Both these works deal with the same collection of largely nineteenth-century material, but they do give some idea of what is available. See too Shaw 1956; 1962.

82 Walz 1978.

83 Racca and Abulafia were Jewish merchant-financiers who moved from Tripoli to Manchester in the late nineteenth century and thence to Kano soon after 1910.

84 Mantran 1961. Notwithstanding the paucity of material, Valensi (1967: 1267–88) has shown what can be done.

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APPENDIX

For the Earl of Shelburn, His Majesty's Principal
Secretary of State
A General State of the Commerce of Tripoli
1767
Consul Frazer's (No. 1) of the 24th August 1767⁸⁵

Some Account of the Trade carried on by the Tripline Moors to the Inland Parts of Africa

The Port of Tripoli has for some centuries been the Mart for Black Slaves in the Mediterranean which are annually Exported thence to Constantinople and a few other Ports in the Turkish Dominions.

The Mahomedan Law which does not allow a Christian within their Dominions to be Possessed by Purchase or otherways of any slave professing that Religion — is the cause of this Trade being so little known to Europeans and of its being wholly in the hands of the Moorish Merchants.

This Mediterranean Slave Trade is carried on by Annual and Six Month Caravans (or Kirwans) into the Inland Country, including their going out and their coming home, agreeable to the distance of Places whence the slaves are brought.

A Camels load of 4 or 5 quintals costs the Merchants nearly Two Pence Sterling per League Carriage.

The Commodities sent from Tripoli to Fezzan are Value[d at] zecchins 26,475

The return [goods] are Value[d at] 37,380
10,905 Above 1/3 clear Gain

A Tripoli zecchin is value[d at] 8 Shillings Sixpence or thereabouts

The Carriage Part of this Trade is performed by Camels. Each Camel being able to carry four or five Quintals so that 5 Camels carry one Tun of Bale Goods.

The Commodities hither too consumed in this Trade are Imported from Venice and Leghorn Regularly twice a year and from the Levant and Greek islands as occasion serves. They are:

- Coarse Neapolitan Cloths
- Coarse Levant Linnens
- Smirna Cottons Strip'd and plain
- Plain Coarse Stuffs
- Sowing thread, Needles and Thrum
- Glass Beads and Trinkets
- Coral
- Paper
- Cloves

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Tobacco
 Drugs
 Brass in Bars, old Brass and Brass pans
 Tin in bars
 Tunisian and Fezz caps
 Levant carpets
 Venetian Damask with gold sprigs
 Levant Shoes
 Oil and Salt

Sena — the Phisical Drug Sena
 Tron — a mineral salt put [into]
 Strasbourg Snuff

I have seen the Gum at Tripoli & I think
 it is not from the Sanaga [Senegal] River

The Commodities sent from Tripoli to
 Gadamis are Value[d at] zecchins
 7,610
 The Returns are Value[d at]
9,725
 2,115 Not quite a 1/3 Clear Gain

The returns are:

Negroes
 Sena
 Tron
 Dates
 Ostrich feathers
 Some Gold Dust
 A small quantity of Gum Arabic

The Commodities employed by the Moors in this Trade have been always Imported by Christians and Jewes residing at Tripoli, and there sold to the Moorish Merchants of Tripoli who transport them Inland — Tho' of Late years some Fezzan and Gadamis Merchants as well as the Adventurers who are continually moving from Place to Place with the Carravans come to Tripoli[,] and having there sold their Slaves, Sena, Tron, Dates, and Ostrich Feathers (for ready money) to the Tripoli Merchants trading in the Levant — Purchase the goods they want as it were at first hand from the Importers.

The Carravans from Tripoli Travel nearly South to Soukena and Fezzan and Southwest to Gadamis and by either of these Routes the Trade is no farther carried on Directly by the Tripoline Moors.

The Carravan to Fezzan setts out in the beginning of the Spring [and] is from 30 to 40 days on its Journey out. The Merchants remain there Four or Five Moons (or months) to Trade, Bartor & Exchange with the Carravans which meet them at Fezzan from Bornou, Zanfara, Agdes, and Tombukto, and afterwards return to Tripoli sooner or Later according as the Crop of Sena and Dates come to perfection.

The Carravan goes with goods but once a year to Fezzan. Their returns come back to Tripoli not together but at different times, some sooner some later.

The Carravans to Gadamis generally go regularly twice a year & are about half the time on their Journey that the Fezzan Carravan is: tho' the distance is more than half the distance to Fezzan. The Rout being less difficult having Springs on the road where they can water their Camels — whereas on the Road to Fezzan they are obliged to carry water with them for several days together — The commodities they carry with them are nearly the same kinds, so are the Returns, only the qualities of the Returns are different. Negroes to Negroes comparatively, Sena to Sena etc.

The Fezzan Negroes [are] counted the best. Agdes Sena comes from Gadamis by that name[;] of course there is a Carravan from Gadamis to Agdes. Agdes lays in the Centre of Africa.

It is here to be observed that the proportion of Gold Dust in return from Gadamis greatly exceeds the proportion that ever came from Fezzan. The journey to Gadamis being southwest from Tripoli and Tombukto lying in the same direction[,] it merits enquiry wether this larger proportion of Gold Dust in return from Gadamis is or is not owing to its being nearer to Tombukto than Fezzan is — or whether the gold is found in the Country of Gadamis which has mountains. Certain it is that in the Country of Fezzan there are no gold mines and probably not in Bornou[,] for of late years Gold has been carried from Tripoli to Fezzan and thence to Bornou.

The People of Fezzan are all black of the Mahomedan Faith; Governed by a Black Prince Tributary to Tripoli.

The Greater number of the People of Gadamis are the white Spanish Moors. Their Government Republican acknowledges Tripoli but are almost independent and pay no Tribute.

The Account given by Mons De la Brue, Director General of the African French Company and some other English and French writers who have been up the Gambia and Sanaga [Senegal] from the West Coast of Africa of caravans of Whites coming annually to Tombukto with Guns etc., and speaking the Arabick language — if there [be] any such they must be the Caravan from Gadamis as there are none goes from Tripoli, Tunis or Algiers to Tombukto.

I have heard at Tripoli of the Inland Trade to the Southwest amongst a people who never see another when they barter, which corresponds with the accounts of the Voyage writers up the Sanaga [Senegal] and Gambia — but in a Country where everything goes by oral Tradition there is no determining whether they speak from the Experience of People who have been there, or have heard it from others.

Species of Merchandize Exported from Tripoli to
Fezzan Inland Annually

		Value in Tripoli Zecchins at 8s 6d each
Glass Beads.....	value	1,335
Paper	1,500 reams	975
Narrow English and Neapolitan cloths		3,375
Tin & Brass ware utensils		1,800
Cloves		130
Brass Barrs made at Tripoli		6,000
Needles.....		30
Damask with gold flowers.....		300
Enamel'd Beads and Trinkets.....		2,580
Brass Clippings		550
Old Brass		200
Brass in small Piggs.....		100
Coral olive shape & pierced fine		2,000
Tobacco in Leaves		500
Mutton Suet.....		200
Barracans or Morrish Cloaks		1,000
Smirna Linnens.....	value	3,000
Tunis Caps.....		300
Fez Caps		400
Levant Carpets.....		300
" " in colour		200
Alexandrian Linnen		600
Levant Shoes.....		150
Divers Drugs		200
Divers Mercury Goods		50
Oil		200
	Total	26,475

Species of the Returns from Fezzan which are
Annually Imported to Tripoli

800 Negro Slaves	32,000
600 Quintals of Sena	3,300
400 " Dates	480
200 " Suckna Dates	200
200 " Tron, a mineral Salt put into Snuff	250
Ostrich Feathers from Suckna and Other Places in the Road to Fezzan	1,000
15 Quintals Gum Arabic	150
Total	37,380

Balance in Trade in favour of Tripoli — 10,905 sequins.

Species of Merchandize Exported from Tripoli to
Gadamis Inland Annually

Narrow English and Neapolitan Cloths....		1,125
Tin Wares		900
Paper		325
Cloves		130
Glass Beads.....	80 quintals	400
Enamel'd Beads		1,360
Brass Clippings		330
Old Brass		200
Tobacco in the Leaf		300
Barracans or Moorish Cloaks		500
Cotton Cloth in pieces.....		700
Needles.....		15
Fezz Caps		200
Levant Carpets.....		100
" " in colours		100
Alexandrian Linnen		300
Silk made at Tripoli		300
Divers drugs.....		100
Divers Mercury Goods		25
Tunerzeen coral		150
Brass in Small Piggs		50
	Total	7,610

Species of the Returns from Gadamis which are
Annually Imported to Tripoli

200 Negro Slaves.....		8,000
70 Quintals Agdes Sena.....		525
800 Parcels Gold Dust		1,000
Ostrich Feathers	Value	200
	Total	9,725

Balance in Trade in Favour of Tripoli 2,115 sequins

Species of Merchandize Imported at Tripoli Annually
From the 3 Provinces in the Kingdoms of Barca and Cyrenaica Subject to Tripoli.

<u>Garian</u>		
Saffron	value	8,000
Ostrich Feathers	"	2,000
		10,000
<u>Bengasi</u>		
Wool	2,000 quintals	2,500
Goat Skins	2,000 "	170
Lamb Skins	300 "	50
Tent Covers	value 200	
Butter	500 quintals	1,250
Ostrich Feathers	value	500
Tallow	"	300
Cattle & Sheep for Exportation	"	300
		5,270
<u>Derna</u>		
Wool	500 quintals	1,250
Wax	value	100
Butter	1,000 quintals	2,500
Ostrich Feathers	value	1,000
Tallow	"	500
Goat & Lamb Skins	"	300
		5,650
	Total	20,920

The General Ballance of Trade against Tripoli is paid off by the sale of Slaves taken in their Piracies & the Money Spent among them by the Agents and Consuls of the several European powers with whom they are at peace.

Species of Merchandize Imported at Tripoli
Annually From Venice

Glass Beads.....	200	quintals	900
Serpentine Beads.....	150	"	750
Enamel'd Beads long & round			
" 4,000 in a Paper	600	papers	900
" Oline.....	10,000	packs	300
" of inferior sort.....	10,000	"	150
" white & black.....	10,000	"	250
" white round.....	1,000	"	250
Beads called puntini Gelosia			
Perusini being not in		value	1,000
Esteem lately there comes only			
" white Enamelles.....	15,000	packs	200
Venetian Deal Boards.....	2,000	pieces	400
Venetian Nails	10	Barrills	100
Paper stamped with 3 Moons.....	80	Reams	520
Writing Paper	200	"	100
Outside Quires	300	"	120
Another kind ditto.....	150	"	70
Small Rafters and double Pantile lathes....	1,000	Pieces	100
Vitriol.....	100	quintals	125
Steel	20	"	70
Razors.....	300	dozen	200
Chip boxes 4 in a sett.....	1,000	setts	40
Painted ditto 12 in a sett	200	setts	25
Damask with Gold Sprigs		value	300
Gold Thread		"	300
Silver Thread.....		"	50
Gold & Silver Lace		"	150
Ditto wire assorted	2	quintals	70
Files	1,000	packs	100
Empty Boxes or Sheets.....	30	pieces[?]	50
Cases fill'd with common drinking			
Glasses & small & large lamps.....		value	50
Sowing Thread white		"	50

Wooden Whistles for Children		"	60
Pierced Agates, Cornelian & false stones..		"	2,115
Brass in Barrs, Rods and Wire.....	50	quintals	900
		Total	<u>10,765</u>

Species of Merchandize Annually Exported
from Tripoli For Venice

Crimson Dyed Goat Skins	10,000		2,000
Brass in Cakes	100	quintals	900
Sena from Fezzan	100	"	900
" from Agdes	20	"	150
Barzane	200	"	600
Ostrich Feathers assorted		value	600
Yellow Wax	20	quintals	300
Sprunge	50	"	125
		Total	<u>6,025</u> [5,575]

Species of Merchandize Imported at Tripoli
Annually From Leghorn

			Value in Tripoli zecchins at 8s 6d each.
Utensils of Brass and Tin, as			
Pans, Wire etc.....	100	quintals	1,800
Narrow Neapolitan Cloths	500	Pieces	4,500
Paper	800	Reams	800
Tin	16	quintals	225
Gelamina in Cakes	100	"	750
Gum Lae.....	65	"	1,200
Fernambucco Wood for Dy[e]ing.....	25	"	225
Campeachy " " "	25	"	80
Cochineal	5	"	1,600
Benjamin of different qualities	15	"	500
Sugar	15	"	150
Pepper	22	"	450
Ginger	20	"	120
Cloves	5	"	650
Nutmegs	50	pounds	75
Rock Alum of Holland.....	30	quintals	150
Iron Wire to the Value of.....			520
Iron in Barrs	200	"	600
Rose Pink	4	casks	100
French Knives with wooden handles.....	300	papers	75
Wrought Florence Gun Barrell and Silks Value			1,200
Needles from France	200		60
Knives with Tortoise Shell handles	50	Doz	20
Snuff Boxes	25	"	20
Knives with Tin handles	5	"	13
French Looking Glasses	50	"	20
Flasks covered with Straw.....	5,000		125
Smoked Herrings	2	casks	8
Salt "	5	casks	13
Plates and Common Stone Ware.....	8	casks	32

Deal Boards from Sweden	600	pieces	140
" " " Norway	200	"	140
Silk Flowers from Genoa to value of.....			400
Gold and Silver lace to value of.....			150
White thread to the value of			50
Linnen to the value of			100
White Genoa Earthen Ware, as plates etc			20
Cups with Covers and Cristal Glasses			
Bohemian			30
Coral Beads			2,000
Gun Barrells	1,500		1,125
German Pistols	300	pairs	500
Gun Locks	500		170
Silver mounted Pistols	100	pairs	300
Sabres	400		140
		Total	21,459
			[21,346]

Species of Merchandize Annually Exported
from Tripoli [for Leghorn]

Sena from Fezzan	500	quintals	2,750
" " Agdes.....	50	"	375
Yellow Wax	50	"	750
Barzane	100	"	300
Ostrich Feathers assorted		value	6,100
Brass in Cakes	400	quintals	3,600
Raw Hides	100	"	300
Squills	100	"	80
Gum	100	"	200
Ciculi, a small Insect	5,000		350
Spunge	50	quintals	125
		Total	14,930

Species of Merchandize Imported at Tripoli Annually
From Malta

Tartar	200	quintals	750
Pack Thread	4	"	35
Martinico Coffee.....	5	"	80
Cordials from France		value	200
Capillaire		"	50
Sardinian Small Herrings		"	90
Different Kinds of Gum		"	100
Cotton Thread		"	25
Cotton Stockings & Caps		"	25
Shoes & Slippers		"	40
Barcellona Handkerchiefs		"	100
			1,480
		Total	[1,495]

Species of Merchandise Annually Exported from Tripoli
For Malta

Raw Hydes	150	quintals	450
Sponge	50	"	125
Small Crimson dyed Skins		value	200
Wax partly in cakes and partly in candles	20	quintals	300
Fezzan Dates.....	200	"	240
Suckna Dates.....	200	"	200
Barzane	50	"	150
Burdetts of Smyrna & of Alexandria		value	150
			1,815
		Total	

[Species of Merchandize Imported at Tripoli Annually]
From Tunis

Crimson Caps	200	dozen	1,000
Silk Goods Manufactured at Tunis.....		value	400
Mirtle Berrys	50	quintals	100
Earthen Ware in Stain'd Tiles etc		value	200
Gold Thread Manufactured at Tunis.....		"	150
Silver Thread		"	50
Old Silver		"	100
Wrought Coral		"	300
			<hr/> 2,300

Ballance against Tripoli paid in Bullion.

Species of Merchandize Imported at Tripoli from
the Levant

			Value in Tripoli zecchins
<u>From Constantinople</u>			
Brass in cakes	1,000	quintals	8,500
Brass in Barrs	100	"	2,000
Old Brass	50	"	500
Brass Clippings	800	"	1,100
Mens Shoes	1,000	"	85
Irons for Shoeing	1,000	"	40
Wooden beads for rosaries	1,000	Strings	70
Silk unwrought from Brusa	10	quintals	1,800
Gold Thread			250
		Total	14,345

From Smirna

Rock Allum	500	quintals	1,500
White Cotton Cloth in small and large pieces	20,000	pieces	11,000
Dyed Cottons Red and Blue etc	400	"	200
Unwrought Silk from Tyrra	5	quintals	750
Mens Shoes	1,000	[pairs?]	60
Iron	200	quintals	500
Gelamina in Cakes	100	"	750
Cochineal	100	pounds	520
Cloves	100	"	130
Cotton unwrought	20	quintals	160
Cotton thread	5	"	100
Figgs in Boxes	100	Boxes	25
Plums in Boxes	100	"	25
Kitchen and Smiths utensils			13
Carpetts	50		200
" Smaller size	200		200
" Smallest size	200		200

Bed Covers fine	25		75
Persian ditto with Fringed Borders	300		185
Cutts of English and Dutch Cloths		value	50
Smirna Wool	10	quintals	400
Strip'd Silk & Cotton Cloth		value	200
Tobacco in the Leaf		"	1,700
		Total	18,943

From the Island of Scio

White Mastick	6	quintals	180
Black "	6	"	100
Strip'd Silk & Cotton Cloth		value	400
		Total	680

From Scala Nova

Beans		value	4,000
Figgs Dry'd		"	500
		Total	4,500

From Candia for the Feast of Ramadan

Silk	10	quintals	1,600
Honey	100	"	400
Cheese	50	"	125
Dry'd Grapes	1,200	"	1,360
Dry'd Currants	260	"	260
		Total	3,745

Species of Merchandize Exported from Tripoli
Annually to Constantinople, Smirna and the Levant

		Value in Tripoli zecchins
Negro Slaves	1,000	40,000
Crimson Skins.....	4,000	1,800
Fine Woollen Girdles.....		500
Fezzan Dates.....	100 quintals	120
Small Knap Sacks.....	value	65
	Total	42,485

Merchandise Imported at Tripoli Annually
from the Levant

From Alexandria

Rice.....	500	quintals	850
Lentils	500	measures	250
Beans.....	2,000	"	1,000
Linnen of Divers Qualities		value	2,000
Cotton Cloths White	2,000	pieces	900
" " Blue	500	"	170
Lint seed	100	quintals	550
Black Wool	50	quintals	330
Brown Sugar.....	5	"	10
Ostrich Feathers Assorted		value	200
Ivory Bracelets for Women		"	100
Mocca Coffee	10	quintals	250
Persian Burdotts	300	pieces	200
Gold Thread		value	200
		Total	7,010

Species of Merchandise Annually Exported from Tripoli

To Alexandria

Barracans or Moorish Clothes		value	4,900
Susa Soap		"	500
Saffron	5	quintals	1,000
Squils	100	"	300
Tripoli Root.....		value	200
Crimson & Yellow Skins for saddle covers.....		"	500
Coarse Strip'd Woollen Cloth for Hangings to Rooms		"	600
		Total	8,000

Goods Exported Annually from Leghorn to Tripoli
which might be Exported from Mahon, were it once to become a Mart

500	Pieces of Coarse Cloth	value	4,500
25	quintals of Gum Lac	"	1,200
15	" Benjamin	"	500
100	" Gelamina in cakes	"	750
25	" Pernambucco	"	255
25	" Campeachie	"	80
5	" Cochineal	"	1,600
22	" Pepper	"	450
5	" Cloves	"	650
20	" Ginger	"	120
1/2	" Nutmegs	"	75
30	" Rock Allum.....	"	150
1,200	Reams Coarse Paper	"	800
200	quintals iron in Barrs	"	600
4	" Steel in Barrs	"	225
	Some iron wire	"	
	Coarse Cutlery & Knives	"	295
	Gun Barrils, Pistols & if Manufactured cheap.....	"	2,000
		Total	22,650
			[14,250]

Goods Exported Annually from Venice to Tripoli
which might be Exported from Mahon were it once to become a Mart

Tin Ware.....			1,000
Paper with 3 Half Moons	800	reams	520
Writing Paper	200	"	100
Other Coarse wrapping paper		value	190
Vitriol.....	100	quintals	125
Coarse Razors.....		value	200
Files for workmen		"	100
Sowing Thread		"	100
			2,335

Many of the above Articles in Trade are Exported from Britain
to Leghorn as appears from the Customs House
Printed Entrys