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THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF AIT ATTA TRIBES IN THE SOUTHERN MOROCCO AND ZEMMOUR TRIBES IN THE CENTRAL PLATEAU

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Summary

Most of Moroccan tribes were characterized by traveling in search of pastures to cater for the needs of cattle pasture. So, by their repetitive movements, it was caused some conflicts among themselves. It was only the results of practising the farming under the pressures of authorities. Thus, they began to know the kind of stability in the regions that they resorted to them. Despite this shift on the level of production systems, the conflict continues to fester over the resources, which were offered by the space and mainly represented in pastures and water, and the other as in the case with the tribes of Ait Atta and Zemmour. Consequently, they were prompted to put a Charter called the Tadda or Tatta in order to avoid disputes and conflicts and peacefully take advantage from economic resources, which are provided, by the space. Besides, the Tatta played an important role in stabilizing the peace and solidarity between tribes or between a family group tribe (subfraction) with another family group tribe. And, its implications extend to this present time. Furthermore, the Al-amazigh tribes retained those values that have become to reflect its identity as well as its heritage value which have made them cohesive despite the transformations that took place since the beginning of the 20th century.

Due to this important subject, we will try to treat the importance of the Tada convention of Al-amazigh tribes and its impact on agricultural activity especially the grazing, in the tribes of south-east (Ait Atta) and the tribes of the central plateau (Zemmour) so as to view more on its position as well as its various geographical spaces. In this context, some questions arise in this principal issue, which we will try to answer later:

- What is meant by the Tada convention?
- What are the reasons for putting this convention?
- What is its impact on agricultural activity especially grazing; on the

relationships as well as the social ties with the unit spatial of tribes?

Keywords: Al-amazigh, Tada convention, family groups (Subfractions), the tribes of Zemmour, the tribes of Ait Atta.

Introduction

Most of Moroccan tribes were characterized by traveling in search of pastures to cater for the needs of cattle pasture. So, by their repetitive movements, it was caused some conflicts among themselves. It was only the results of practising the farming under the pressures of authorities. Afterwards, they began to know the kind of stability in the regions that they resorted to them. Despite this shift at the level of production systems, the conflict continues to fester over the resources which were offered by the space and mainly represented in pastures and water, and the other as in the case with the tribes of Ait Atta and Zemmour. Consequently, they were prompted to put a Charter called the Tadda or Tatta in order to avoid disputes and conflicts and peacefully take advantage from economic resources which are provided by the space. Besides, the Tatta played an important role in stabilizing the peace and solidarity between tribes or between a family group tribe (sub-fraction) with another family group tribe. And, its implications extend to this present time. Furthermore, the Al-amazigh tribes retained those values that have become to reflect its identity as well as its heritage value which have made them cohesive despite the transformations that took place since the beginning of the 20th century.

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1. Structured concepts of the subject

Al-amazigh: is the original inhabitant of Morocco. Their language is

commonly known as “Tifinagh¹”. It is the oldest written in the languages of the African continent. According to the narrations, the word of Al-amazigh means the noble free man, who is the owner of the land. Then, the Amazigh is present in all areas of Morocco in the High Atlas, the Anti-Atlas and the Middle Atlas.

The Tada convention: is an Amazigh word which indicates the breast-feeding, it is an action linking the tribes among themselves or the family groups (Sub-fractions) of some tribes with an artificial links; it is considered as a pact between the contracting parties, and this is done through the exchange of milk or slaughter of cattle type in order to lay affinity relationships based on fake.²

Al-Khawa: means solidarity and brotherhood between the members of the tribe, where this cohesion makes them one hand as the interests are jointly defended when conflict over the pasture with other neighboring tribes.

The sub-fractions: include the fraction or the “Macheikha”³. It is called bone (Ighess)⁴, which occupies the second level of the uniformity of the Zemmour social structure. It consists of several tents that vary in terms of population density and distribution at the geographical space level.⁵ The fraction unit is based on kinship ties that combine families or (tents) for the bone. These families have one grandfather and a common name that unites individual's fractions and contributes to the exploitation of pastures in a democratic manner, the protection and the defense of property and land.

The tribes of Ait Atta: Ait Atta or Al-Attawyen is a federation of Al-amazigh tribes that is geographically linked to the South-East of Morocco in the area of the Anti-Atlas, Tafilalt and Daraa, or the current provinces of Ouarzazate, Azilal and Errachidia; their mother tongue is the Amazigh of Middle Atlas.

The tribes of Zemmour: The origin of the Zemmour tribes is Amazigh. They are semi-nomadic and adjacent to the Zair tribes in the west, and the tribes of Arabic Beni Hssen in the north. And, the dam of Al-Qansra is located in its northern lands as well as the Vally of Abu Ragrag in the west which is separated it from the Zair tribes.

¹ It is an alphabet used by Al-amazighs in North Africa.

² Bourkia, R. (1991): «State and authority and society, study hard and convertible relationship State tribes in Morocco». The first édition Pioneer House Publishers, p. 168

³ It is a tribal fraction which gathers a certain number of *Douars*.

⁴ It is an Amazigh word which is largely used in Al-amazigh tribes.

⁵ Achak, M. (2005): «Aspects of the Zemmour region». Federant Rabat Press, first edition, p.61.

2. The importance of the subject

It was not our choice for this subject from pure coincidence, but it is imposed by its maximum importance arising from the need to preserve the patrimony and its development; we find the manifestations of it in the fact that the tribes of another tribes still cling to this belief, despite the spatial and economic transformations which experienced it since the early 20th century. This is shown that the importance of Tada convention and its impact on tribes that leads us to highlight it so as to know its reasons accurately.

3. The geographical location of the tribes

3.1. The tribes of Zemmour

The province of Khemisset is located outside of the North-West of central Morocco between Rabat and sale, the Zemmour region covers an area of 8,305 km. The model of the region is characterized by the diversity. The territory stretches from the borders of the plain Atlantic caste, the Gharb to the borders of the Middle Atlantic Mountains. It crosses the Meseta of the Central Plateau formed of staged plates and a succession of hills. At the level of semi-arid area, the precipitations do not exceed 540 mm per year. Two elements play a major role in the distribution of precipitations, the latitude and altitude situation. The latter is favorable to the increase in rainfall amounts.

3-2-The tribes of Ait Atta

It is located in the South-East of Morocco, particularly in the Anti-Atlas, which is bordered to the north by the valley of Dades, Toudaghi and Sidi Bouyakoub, the east of the vally of Ziz (Errachidia), and the west of Daraa. It covers an area of 70,000 square kilometers. It has settled in the Southeast since the Middle Ages due to the abundance of the space at the level of climate and vegetation.

The reasons put of the Tada convention in the studied tribes:

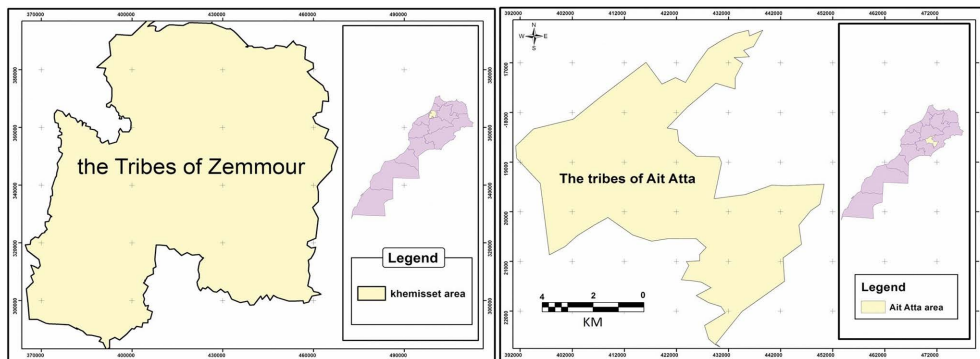
The main reasons behind the adoption of the Tada as a convention for the conflict management and tribal differences are the strengthening of the friendly relationships between two groups, and each tribe chooses to put with the Tada. It is a system that takes a barbaric formula, which goes beyond blood relatives to establish a symbolic relationship between the

different groups in its origin and its geographical location, locally, regionally and nationally. And, thus, it becomes a powerful force, granting protection and security, accommodation, movement of herds and commercial convoys in a safe manner, based on the Al-ansar brothers and immigrants, where the Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) brothers among them: “ Brother in God as brothers and brothers”.

So, the Tada convention in its content is based on:

The conflict management:

If a Tada permits to pacify or to agree the contracting units by stipulating that the exchange of any kind of violence is strictly prohibited. It also serves as a means of managing the conflicts opposing between them; the respective members of these units or each of them had a non-allied community. The Tada is solicited as the conciliators or arbitrators in the settlement of civil and criminal disputes.



The shape N° 1. Géographical localisation of Zemmour tribes. Source: <http://tribus-maroc.blogspot.com>, consulted on March 12th, 2017

The shape N° 2. Géographical localisation of Ait Atta tribes. Source: <http://tribus-maroc.blogspot.com>, consulted on March 12th, 2017

The management of the various inter-groups:

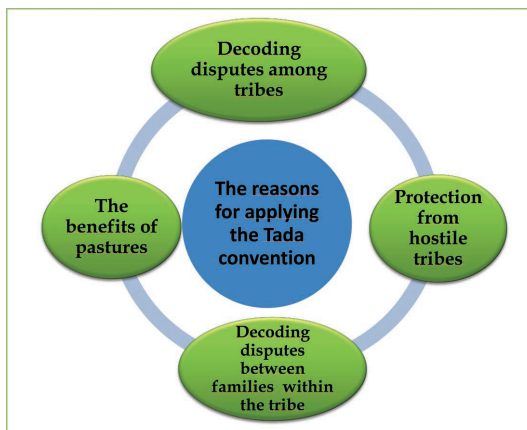
The term of the inter-group disputes which could apply to any disputed situation of which social groups whatsoever, it refers here to any kind of conflict opposing two lineage or tribal family units.

This is in general, but concerning the tribes which are the subject of our study, we find:

At the level of Zemmour tribes: the tribes that go to grazing and pass over

the territory of a certain tribe, pays the expatriate tribe to provide donations and different gifts as well as allow the host tribe to graze during the summer harvest. Thence, the content of the Tada convention is not without benefiting from the vast potential which other tribes have, and that enters within the framework of the Tada alliance in order not to compromise the vital interests of the receiving tribe. However, the tribes which do not have forests and have few pastoral spaces have the possibility of exploiting the lands of the tribe which contracted with it the Tada convention.

At the level of Ait Atta tribe: the purpose of the contracted alliance between the tribal sub-groups composed of the Ait Atta Federation is to manage the affairs of the tribe and the distribution of economic resources such as grazing areas, especially water, which is known as a kind of scarcity in these areas. These can lead to many conflicts around them. In that case, the contracted alliance through the Tada is considered as a peace for these tribes. But, the other reason is political rather than economic. The Al-attawiya tribes did not sweep the south-east by relying on military action and the use of force, but they also created a socio-political space for them. They developed a range of tools and methods that enabled them to reach a number of regions⁶; this is through the alliances which contracted it with other tribes and this strengthened its influence from Daraa to Twat and within its expansion without resorting to conflicts and wars.



The scheme N° 1. The reasons put of Tada

Subsequently, we can say that this Charter and this imaginary association are an effective means for the benefit of the majority of the tribes from the prosperities of each other, especially at the level of the provision of cattle, which is considered as the most important economic activity in the tribes and also at the level of strengthening the influence. Consequently, the main reasons for the enactment of the Tada

⁶ Stitou, A. (2006): «The importance of Taferkhat and Tada in the expansion of Al-atawiya». Journal readings, Academic Magazine, n°4

convention remain not only in the tribal peace or the so-called "Al-khawa", but also in achieving the objectives of the tribes politically as it is the case at Ait Atta and economically for the Zemmour.

This does not mean that the Tada organization is only limited to the Al-amazigh tribes, but its manifestations were extended to Arab tribes such as the stable tribes in the region of Al-gharb as well as the community of Ouelad Slama which is belonging to Kenitra province in the region of Rabat, Sale and Kenitra as an example. In addition to this, the community of Ouelad Slama knows two systematizations of Tada, in which there are ethnic collectivities consist of groups or sub-fractions of another tribes that are not affiliated to the community, for instance, the ethnic collectivity of Ouelad Slama, which represents the Tada with the "Ouelad Asbih" tribe in Bouznika city. Then, there is an ethnic collectivity of Ouelad Chekar with the "Ouelad Asbih" tribe in the community of Al-mnasra in the province of Kenitra⁷.

The method of organizing a ritual of Tada

In the Al-amazigh tribes:

This convention is done by a meeting of representatives of the families of the two parties, who wish to contract a custom of the "Tada" in a certain place; in the presence of influential personalities who have an impact on the group or tribe. They are keen to respect the Tada custom and apply its provisions. They are called "Tafardest". They often meet to contract among themselves in one of the shrines. Above all, all the parties of this convention are present to remove their shoes (Slippers) and each side of Douar, group or tribe covers his shoes with Selham and starts to pull the shoes. An individual of the Douar pulls a shoe (individual shoe) and another of the second Douar pulls a shoe. And further, after three or four days on the contract of Tada alliance, the contractors exchange hospitality. And so, sacrifices are slaughtered as well as milk and honeys are provided between the contractors parties as an expression of the sanctity of this alliance. Besides, these contractors are considered as brothers that's why we say the Tada or Al-khawa. Moreover,

⁷ El Otmani, M. (2006): «The real estate structures, economic, social and spatial transformations in the rural community of Ouelad Slama, Kenitra province».Project of the Master degree program in Geography. Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, 189 pp.

the relationship of Tada is surrounded by a kind of sanctity and proscriptions and so the allies do not marry from each other as it is not permissible for them to curse and lie, not to sell and buy.

Thenceforth, the Tada is considered as twin brothers including social solidarity groups. More importantly, the structure of the Al- amazigh tribe has so far been characterized by cohesion for its respect for the principles of the Tada which enacted by its ancestors. This act is still embodied in the "Moussems" (Seasons) which are organized by the tribes, where they host another tribe for a period of more than one week. And before the entering the latter, it informs the host tribe by a means of a "Loud voice" and walking without shoes or what is known as "habit" with the respect and fear of any incidents may lead to members of the tribe. During the approval, the tribe comes with equipped horses and possessions to celebrate the fantasia and thus the ceremony annually takes place.

In the Arab tribes:

These tribes retain the same adopted rituals as the Al-amazigh tribes. Each year, a local Moussem is organized in which the parties meet with rotation in its convening.

Conclusion

The sweep of material and symbolic capital of the social fields dislocated the social structures and the references of public values, and the social implications were left to the organizational experience in the joint reconstruction bet on land, water, rural society and the restoration of bones within structures of social organizations. Within this logic, it presents the brotherhood links in the Tada formula as an extension of traditional organizations between legitimate and customary⁸.

As a result, the «Tada convention» is considered as one of the most important means that enabled the tribes, whether Al-amazigh or Arab, to unite, combine and defend their common interests against other tribes or against the authority. It also contributed to achieving peace and benefiting from the good of the areas that are settled by benefiting from pastures, water resources and others.

⁸ El Otmani, M. (2006): Project of the Master degree program in Geography, Op.cit. P.188

It is, therefore, an intangible heritage inherited by our ancestors of ancient times, which must be preserved and valued because of the role it played at the political, economic and social levels.

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