

Libyan tribes in diaspora

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Abstract

Tribal immigration into and out of Libya has been largely unexplored. This study, based on Arabic and Libyan sources, begins to rectify this. It aims to examine the causes that have led tribes to flee the country voluntarily or by force and will follow the hardship of immigrants during the Qaramanli rule (1711-1835) and their establishment in neighbouring countries.

Based on the author's own fieldwork and that of others, the methodology focuses on primary Arabic sources including interviews and oral traditions to establish a chronology of tribal movements to Egypt, Tunisia and Chad. Once settled outside Libya, these ex-patriot Libyans were involved in key events in their host countries.

Tribes, geography and immigration

When the Prophet Muḥammad left Makka and migrated to Madīna, a tradition was created that has been venerated ever since. It marks not just the passage from one place to another, but is the starting point in time for the Hijrī calendar and marks the founding of the Muslim community. Commemoration of that first migration remains a pillar of Islam, a migration undertaken voluntarily by millions every year. But sometimes people are compelled to flee their homes, as did those first Muslims when they fled Makka; and though such people may wander far, home is ever-present in the consciousness of the exile.

Tribe, in Libya, in its most fundamental sense, is a concept of home country or the territory it actually occupies: it is their pasture land and where their tents are pitched. With the extension of tribes living side by side and adjoining their camps, the greater home, as we know it now as Libya, emerged. But when 'home' lacks stability, when resources become scarce, and when the theory and practice of justice for all is lost, then there is no choice but to immigrate as sanctioned by Islam. In the past, borders between tribes were not so clearly defined as modern state boundaries. Libya's first border between Tripolitania and Tunisia was only fixed in 1806 by mutual agreement between Yūsuf Pasha Qaramānli and Ḥamūda Pasha (1781-1813), the Bey of Tunis.¹ The other Libyan borders were fixed by the European colonial powers, such as the settlement of the Libyan-Egyptian border drawn by the Italians and British in 1935 and the Algerian-Libyan border decided between French colonial authorities in Algeria and the Kingdom of Libya in 1956.² As late as 1994, the dispute with Chad over the Uzū strip was settled.

Though Libya has the longest coast in North Africa, approximately 1,900 km, the majority of her people have traditionally lived away from the sea and its resources. Perhaps this reflects a bedouin mentality that leans towards the desert, towards the *qibla*. The city of Miṣrāta, for example, is far from Qaṣr Ḥamad, the Mediterranean outlet for the region. Benghazi, too, has noticeably expanded towards the *qibla* towards Bū'aṭni.

Libya's geography and climate have imposed natural boundaries between Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fazzān. Each had its own history which further widened the gap among them until the rise of the Qaramānlis who enforced unity in a single state.

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Not surprisingly, Tripolitania has always had closer ties with Tunisia than with Cyrenaica and Fazzān. Cyrenaica, in turn, maintained stronger historical social and economic ties to Egypt and its tribesmen of the Western Dessert than to Tripolitania and Fazzān. The latter was always linked to Africa to the extent that their skin darkened and their features became noticeably African. This regional distinctiveness was further strengthened during the brutal Italian occupation when tribes withdrew to those areas they knew best: Tripolitanian tribes went to Tunisia, the Cyrenaicans mostly went to Egypt, while the people of Fazzān sought refuge in Chad.

Arab nation-building over the last two centuries partitioned and tore apart tribes and tribal alliances. Some of those tribes, which are always on the move, had never had borders of any sort. Some such as the Arab al-Nwāiyl and Awlād ‘Alī or the Berber of the Tuareg or Tebu have suffered tremendous rupture and displacement.³ This breaking-up of families and communities is a worldwide phenomenon rather than a regional one. But the uniformity of language, ethnicity and religion in North Africa has meant that exiled Libyan communities in Egypt, Tunisia and Chad have not suffered the same level of disruption as could be found, for example, among displaced people in Europe.

The causes of migration from Libya

Libya has historically long associations with Egypt, Tunisia and Chad as well as further afield with Turkey, Malta and Algeria all of whom have provided sanctuary when conditions deteriorated in Libya. Her immediate neighbours, however, have most influenced inner-Libyan relations—whether among tribes at home, between tribes and the government, or with tribes and the outside world. They were the first ports-of-call to Libya’s ruled and rulers alike. Most famous was the escape of ‘Alī Pasha Qaramānli to Tunisia when the Caucasian mercenary, ‘Alī Burghul, craftily seized Tripoli and power in 1793.⁴ Eighteen years later, Aḥmad, the brother of Yūsuf Pasha Qaramānli, sought protection from Egypt’s Muḥammad ‘Alī where he remained until he died in 1811. His nephew, ‘Uthmān, son of Yūsuf Pasha, followed in his uncle’s footsteps when he fled to Alexandria where he, too, remained until his death.⁵

Al-Nā‘ib wrote that in his final days Yūsuf Pasha Qaramānli faced ever-increasing revolt and turned for help to the Tunisians⁶ who had no appetite for a civil war between Libya’s tribes and the Qaramānli. Left with no other choice, Yūsuf Pasha abdicated and named his son, ‘Alī, as the new Pasha of Tripoli in August 1832.⁷ One of the causes of turmoil and resulting immigration was the reckless policy of the government clashing with fanatic tribalism. Widespread tribal raids had invited vengeance that eventually pushed bedouin society to the brink of destruction.⁸ As a consequence, many Libyan tribes and families fled to neighbouring countries and were in a position to offer refuge and assistance to subsequent waves of immigrants. This was not done deliberately but was the result of flight from prosecution, famine or economic hardship.

Over time, Libyan immigrant communities became firmly established in the surrounding countries, and whenever tribesmen decided to immigrate they went straight into those communities who had left earlier. Eventually, most Libyan tribes or families had some members living outside Libya which made it considerably easier for them to settle there. A good example of this is the Awlād Sulaymān in Chad. There are uncountable number of Libyan tribes from Tripolitania represented in Tunisia and and Cyrenaican tribes in Egypt—all of whom looked forward to returning to Libya. Some of them returned after Libyan independence in 1951; others are still waiting; while for the rest, it is enough to be of Libyan descent.

Perhaps the most important incentive for immigration especially during the Qaramānli rule was a string of natural calamities of drought, famine, and disease which brought death

to Libya on a massive scale, particularly to Tripolitania. The first was a drought followed by starvation that gripped Tripolitania from 1767 to 1771. This resulted in more than 40,000 Tripolitarians seeking refuge in Tunisia and Egypt.⁹ A second devastating famine occurred in 1776 and almost wiped out the entire population. Shortly after that, Tripolitania was further scourged by drought, famine and a killer plague that claimed many lives in 1785.

Miss Tully,¹⁰ the sister of Richard Tully the British Consul in Tripoli, wrote a powerful description of the events of the summer of 1785:

It is impossible to give you a just description of this place at present; the general horror that prevails cannot be described ... Tripoli is sinking under plague and famine ... The cries of the people for the loss of their friends are still as frequent as ever ... Women, whose persons have hitherto been veiled, are wandering about complete images of despair, with their hair loose and their baracans open, crying and wringing their hands and following their families. Though a great deal of their grief here by custom is expressed by action yet it is dreadful when it proceeds so truly from the heart as it does now, while all those we see are friends of the departed. No strangers are called in to add force to the funeral cries: the father, who bears his son today, carried his daughter yesterday, and his wife the day before: the rest of his family are at home languishing with plague, while his own mother, spared for the cruel satisfaction of following her offspring, still continues with her son her wretched daily walk. Since the beginning of this dreadful infection, which is only two months, three thousand persons have died in this town (nearly one-fourth of its inhabitants), and its victims are daily increasing.

The drought of 1792 continued the misery to the point where people ate what is regarded by Islam as prohibited and Tripolitarians ground dates' stones, usually eaten by their animals, and ate them to survive. But, other disasters—apart from the natural ones—were Libyan-made. The expulsion of some tribes had dire economic consequences.¹¹ The population of Tripolitania fell dramatically as a result of death and immigration. Seasonal crops and animal production, mainstays of the country's economy collapsed leaving a serious shortfall in income and taxes. In the resulting economic chaos, tribes such as al-Firjān, al-Qdhādhfa, al-Tbūl, al-'Ibīdāt immigrated to Egypt in search of a better life.¹²

Libya lost more of its people as a result of tribal in-fighting than by famine and disease. The Libyan historian Bazama believes that this went largely unchecked by the Turkish and Qaramānli rulers who saw such tribal war as a means of retaining their power.¹³ One of the most infamous of these tribal wars was between the Tripolitanian tribes of al-Firjān of al-Dawūn area and Awlād Sulaymān that resulted in the expulsion of some of al-Firjān to Tunisia in 1767.¹⁴ Other disturbances occurred around Zāwiya al-Gharbiya between the tribes of Wrishfāna and al-Nwāiyīl in 1781 and claimed hundreds. It started when 200 Wrishfāna horsemen raided ten tents belonging to al-Nwāiyīl, as the old Arabs used to do. Al-Nwāiyīl responded by sending 400 horsemen and 400 on foot to avenge the ten pillaged tents. The al-Nwāiyīl attacked at Janzur, and the Wrishfāna called upon their allies al-Maḥīmīd. Hundreds of lives were wasted on both sides and increased the hatred between tribes in the region.¹⁵

Cyrenaica, too, saw the expulsion of tribes. What happened to Awlād 'Alī is still widely remembered. They had settled on Jabal al-Akhḍar, around the city of Darna and on the plateau of al-Baṭnān. Nearly annihilated by the Ḥarābi tribes of the mountain, led by al-'Ibīdāt, the Awlād 'Alī were pushed east of al-Sallum well inside the Egyptian border. The al-'Ibīdāt received help from the Ottoman authority in Tripoli who suspected the Awlād 'Alī of collaborating with the Mamluks of Egypt¹⁶ and wanted to put an end to the tribe's considerable influence. The result has come to be known as Tajrīdat Ḥabīb (*Ḥabīb's expeditionary force*). The government in Tripoli mobilised Tripolitanian Arabs from towns like

Tājūra, Zlīṭin, Warfalla and Miṣrāta to support Ḥabīb al-‘Abaydi’s revenge of the killing of his father, ‘Abdal-Mawla al‘Abah— assassinated by Awlād ‘Alī. Launched from Tripoli, the expedition marched east and eventually succeeded in driving the Awlād ‘Alī into Egypt after a great deal of bloodshed. Many of those Tripolitanian warriors remained in Cyrenaica and, through intermarriage, were eventually welcomed in the city of Darna.¹⁷ By so doing, they founded a mosaic community in Darna where the west of Libya meets the east along with Andalusians that made Darna anomalous in a largely Bedouin Libya. The Libyan writer, ‘Alī Muṣṭafa al-Muṣṭati described it thus:

Darna—the face of civilisation and struggle—is indeed worth attention and study. There is no other place [but Darna] where you find the skills of saddle-making unless there are cavalry and horsemen.¹⁸

The Tajridat still lives on in the people’s memory and folklore as a reminder of how tribal or governmental greed leads to such misery, subjugation and immigration. The al-‘Ibīdāt could not have expelled their foes without the tribes of al-Ḥarābi and Tripoli’s-sponsored horsemen. The Awlād ‘Alī fled east towards the Nile—driving weaker tribes before them into Upper Egypt—and settled on the strip between Sallum and Alexandria.

The last to be expelled on a large scale was the influential Cyrenaican tribe of al-Jawāzi in 1817. It was orchestrated by Yūsuf al-Qaramānli who drew on his ‘Alāya alliance (tribes of al-‘Awāqir and Maghārba) and found backing from the Ḥarābis led by al-Brā‘aṣa. It all began five years earlier when the al-Jawāzi threatened the very existence of the al-‘Awāqir and Maghārba, between 1811-12 when it drove them into the sanctuary of the much-revered Murābit Sīdī Khrībīsh. The al-‘Awāqir, in particular, suffered and were forced to subsist on seaweed to survive. Known in Cyrenaican folklore as Khrībīsh siege, it lasted nearly five months.¹⁹ An Italian doctor, Paolo Della Cella witnessed the siege.²⁰ He was physician to Yūsuf Pasha’s own son Aḥmad Bey who led the the Pasha’s army from Tripoli.

The Qaramānlis viewed al-Jawāzi with suspicion just as they did Awlād ‘Alī. Both tribes were seen as obstacles to the state’s hegemony. Aḥmad Bey invited the eminent shaykhs of al-Jawāzi to a *al-baranīs al-ḥumr* (*red barnous giving*) (Fig. 1), a ceremony to honour loyal tribal shaykhs. More than forty shaykhs of al-Jawāzi attended in good faith in al-Birka Palace in Benghazi in a spirit of reconciliation. Aḥmad Bey’s intention, however, was revenge. Once all the shaykhs had entered, he ordered his eunuchs to murder them all and then commanded his troops to attack al-Jawāzi’s tents with help from their enemies. None were spared and those who were left were deported en masse during Ramaḍān in 1817. Al-Jawāzi settled in Upper Egypt where they remained.²¹



Figure 1. Tribal Shaykhs in *al-baranīs al-ḥumr* (red mantles).

With the expulsion of al-Jawāzi, the tribal balance of Cyrenaica tipped in favour of al-‘Alāya tribes who became the new masters after years of al-Jawāzi subjugation. The tribe of al-‘Alāya and their urban allies, known as al-Miṣrāṭiyya of Benghazi, pledged allegiance to the government which ensured their supremacy of the region of Benghazi until the present day.²²

A Jawāzi poet wrote about the atrocity of the Qaramānlis and their al-‘Alāya allies and vowed that one day they would return to Cyrenaica:

We bid farewell to you now Cyrenaica
 but we shall comeback, God willing.
 We will never forget who expelled us —
 the Turkish ruler and with him was al-‘Awāqir.²³

Early waves of migration within Libya

Despite the natural and political barriers, tribes managed to link the country together. Each tribe was allied to another. The tribe of Awlād Sulaymān, for example, could find reliable partners among the al-Jibārna tribes. Cyrenaica was seen to always offer relief as in the epithet: *Cyrenaica would care for anyone homeless*.

Amongst the first to settle in Benghazi along with the Andalusians and Jews were Tripolitanian merchants from Tājūra, Zlīṭin, and Mislāta, known collectively as al-Ṭwāhir at the beginning of the sixteenth AD century. They were attracted to Benghazi's markets. As early as 1555, Darghūt Pasha found that the people of Tāwirghā and Miṣrāta to whom he had marched to discipline, had already left for Benghazi. The traders from Miṣrāta soon dominated the market and city and expelled al-Ṭwāhir to Darna. Miṣrātīs established in Benghazi the first urban centre in a predominantly bedouin Cyrenaica²⁴ as well as a commercial monopoly. Their properties in a largely tribal territory brought them wealth that spilled over to revive the economy of the region and benefit others. For that reason, these Tripolitanian immigrants are credited with the development of Benghazi and maintaining its economy. Streets and quarters of the city are named after Tripolitanian tribes and places—especially from Miṣrāta such as al-Ṣabrī, Miṣrāta, Qaṣr Ḥamad, etc. Tripoli, too, has its share of quarters reflecting the tribal origins of her inhabitants: al-Raqī‘āt and ‘Alāwna and others such as the Arabs of Jabal Nafūsa whose quarter is called Ḥawmat Ghiryān. Whenever people descended from Ghiryān to Tripoli, they came to their a little Ghiryān inside Tripoli and felt at home. Even the Jews of Ghiryān had their little ghetto in Ḥawmat Ghiryān, which had links with the larger ghetto in the old city in the heart of Tripoli.²⁵

Assimilation within Libya

The Tripolitanian ‘ulamā and dā‘īs served the religious and administrative needs of Cyrenaica. They were privileged in the sense that they were educated and knew *Sharī‘a*, which enabled them to teach, interpret the law and administrate—skills lacking among native Cyrenaicans. Demand for such skills attracted more educated Tripolitarians to Cyrenaica, and led to closer ties enhanced through intermarriage, continued immigration and even tribal alliances. The Cyrenaican expression “Arab al-Gharb”, which formerly had referred to those from Miṣrāta to al-Ḥuḍūr, came to embrace all Tripolitarians who made Cyrenaica their home. The Ḥuḍūr of Darna, in turn, were sometimes known as al-Dimāwīya, referring to the mixed background of city's people. Even the Murābiṭs of Awlād Shaykh of the Fwātir tribe came to be known in Cyrenaica as “Awlād Shaykh Barqa” to assert their tie to Cyrenaica and to distance them from other Awlād Shaykh. They adopted bedouin ways and were accepted as local bedouin with its tribal and political trappings.

Other Awlād Shaykhs like those settled in Bani Walīd are known as Awlād Shaykh Warfalla; and the Awlād Sīdī Fathālla, Bi‘ayyu, and Bu Sha‘īla are collectively known as Awlād Shaykh Miṣrāta who live in quarters bearing their names. There are even Awlād Shaykh in Zlīṭin like the Awlād Sīdī ‘Abd al-Samī‘. All of these are branches of the al-Fwātir tribe who over the years have become affiliated to their host communities, often feeling greater kinship with their neighbours than with kinsmen elsewhere. In Benghazi and Darna, the number of Ḥuḍūr has increased, through higher birth levels and immigration, to the point where they became the dominant force.

This process can be seen in reverse as some sections of Cyrenaican tribes have made Tripolitania their home such as al-Barāghtha (ʿAwāqir) in Warfalla areas, and al-Rawājih (Awlād Hamad) in al-Qarabūli district.²⁶ But Tripolitarians settled in Cyrenaica far exceed those from the east settled in Tripolitania. One could go so far as to say that some Tripolitarians in Cyrenaica’s strongest tribes have become indistinguishable such as the al-Balʿaza, ʿAmaym, and Qumāta in ʿAwāqir. Tripolitarians are not the only people to be so assimilated. Muslims who came to Libya during the Ottoman Caliphate, such as Cretans from Khania who fled Orthodox Greek prosecution came to Cyrenaica in 1898.²⁷ Most landed in Sousa, under the control of al-Ḥasa tribe who welcomed them and dubbed the refugees “al-Ḥasa al-Ḥumr”—a reference to their paler skin.

Immigration to Egypt

Many tribes of Libyan origin can be found in Egypt such as Awlād ʿAlī, al-Jawāzi, Khuḍra section of al-Brāʿaṣa, al-Fwāyid, al-Hanādi, al-Firjān, al-Bhāja, al-Jimīʿāt, al-Qiṭʿān, al-Jibāliya, al-Rimāh, al-Ḥabbūn, al-Fwākhir Awlād Shaykh and other Arabs who are collectively known as ʿUrbān or bedouin. These tribes arrived in Egypt at different times under different circumstances. From amongst those tribes came men who shaped modern Egypt such as the al-Bāsil family of the al-Rimāh tribe, also known as al-Barāghīth. From the Bāsils were the distinguished brothers, Ḥamad Pasha al-Bāsil and ʿAbd al-Sattār Beg al-Bāsil. Ḥamad Pasha (1871-1940) (Fig. 2) was one of al-Wafd party founders and a permanent member of its Lajnat al-Taʿsisiya [polit-bureau] led by Saʿd Zaghlūl, later to be fellow-exiles in Malta.²⁸ He was a poet laureate and extolled Bedouin culture, dressing as a Bedouin and known as Shaykh of al-Rimāh. His brother ʿAbd al-Sattār Beg al-Bāsil was a prominent senator and a senior member of the Liberal Constitutionalists Party in Egypt. They championed the Libyan cause and refugees who fled Italian occupation (1911–43) opening their homes—including their famous palace in al-Fayyūm—to those beleaguered Libyans.

Also from al-Rimāh, was the learned Shaykh, ʿIsā ʿAbd al-Jalīl, an Azhar graduate who by royal decree was appointed in 1947 dean of the Arabic department at al-Azhar university. Later, he became a member of the Lajnat al-Iftāʾ at al-Azhar al-Sharīf which hands down religious judgements and issues fatawas. He left behind numerous books on Islamic themes.²⁹

The Jibāliya is a Libyan tribe that rarely receives attention by historians. An Arab tribe, unrelated to the Berber Jibāliya of the Jabal Nafūsa, it acquired its name from a forebear who before his birth was predicted to stand “like a mountain” amongst the tribe. The name stuck. Al-Jibāliya are a part of al-ʿAyāyda who, in turn, are a part of the larger Tripolitanian tribe of Swālim (Awlād Sālim) who lived along the coast from eastern Tripolitania to Jabal al-Akhḍar around the 17th century AD. Infamous for their rough ways, Ottoman rulers sought through flattery to placate them and limit their influence among Cyrenaica’s tribes. It could not last, and they attacked neighbouring Awlād Sulaymān and al-Jihāma who sought assistance from their ally, al-Maḥamid. Together they succeeded in toppling al-Jibāliya and driving them to Upper Egypt where they settled in Fayyūm. Shaykh al-Zāwi described al-Jibāliya:

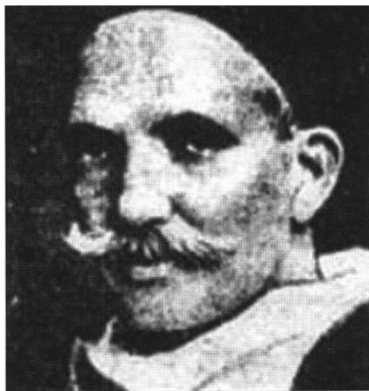


Figure 2. Ḥamad Pasha al-Bāsil.

They are still known as al-Jibālī family, and are cherished and famous for their power and affluence. They are in the forefront of the noble Arabs of Egypt, and counted amongst those Arab families of strength and ability.³⁰

The al-Jawāzi mentioned above (p.124) were another pre-eminent Libyan tribe in Egypt. They became famous for

breeding horses and importing camels and cattle from Cyrenaica to Egypt. There was also a famous encounter with the governor of Egypt, Muḥammad Saʿīd Pasha, the youngest of Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha's sons in 1854. This is a long story known as "Umr al-Miṣrī and the Maghribi Fezzes" when the Pasha wanted to set Awlād ʿAlī against al-Jawāzi.

Al-Fwāyīd, too, in al-Mīnya in Upper Egypt, had its share of eminent men. At their head was the al-Kīshār family. Related to them on his mother's side was al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām al-Kizza, one of the great Cyrenaican resistance leaders against the Italians. After ʿUmar al-Mukhtār's execution and the collapse of the bedouin-led resistance, al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām took refuge in al-Mīnya where the Kīshārs welcomed him until his death in 1940.³¹ Famous Kīshārs included Lamlūm Bey al-Saʿdi who was frequently commissioned many times by the Egyptian government and Ottoman authorities in Benghazi to reconcile the Cyrenaican tribes. There was also Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh Lamlūm, member of the Egyptian constitutional committee in early 1950s, and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīm al-Miṣrī, a founder of the Bank of Egypt. ʿAlyā, the daughter of ʿAbd al-Qādir Pasha, grand daughter of Lamlūm Bey al-Saʿdi, married King Idrīs in 1955. The announcement, made at the Libyan embassy in Cairo, was in the presence of President Gamal ʿAbd al-Nasser.

Those Libyans who exchanged Cyrenaica's steppes for Egyptian cities like Alexandria, al-Fayyūm and al-Mīnya lent their names to their new homes. In Alexandria, for example, there is a market known as Sūq al-Maghāriba; in the Sūq are streets called Zanqat al-Sittāt (Ladies' Lane), and Zuqāq al-Maghāriba.³² Libyan tribes can be found from the outskirts of Alexandria all the way to the hill of Sallum on the Libyan-Egyptian border. They also live in al-Buḥayra, the Oasis of Siwa, Daqahlīya, Manūfiya, al-Sharqīya, al-Gharbiya and al-Giza. They also went south to the al-Ṣaʿīd (Upper Egypt) and settled in al-Fayyūm, Bani Suwayf, al-Mīnya and Asyūt. It is worth noting that Libyan tribes settled away from large cities such as Cairo and Alexandria where there were no Sanūsi zāwiyas with a single exception in Cairo. They were given liberty to colonise the western desert and to water their livestock in the Nile. They formed autonomous communities in villages and naj's (camps) along the entire coastal strip from the Alexandria to the western borders, and into the South in Upper Egypt.³³ Libyan tribesmen stand out with their bedouin ways and manners. There are naj's for particular tribes such as naj's for Awlād Shaykh and another for al-Qiṭʿān and so forth. They preserved their bedouin dress, accent, and still use traditional names like Ḥamad, Iṭaiwa, Amrājī, Bu ʿAbʿāb and Iḥmāida. Their poetry, too, is distinctively Cyrenaican.

There is some truth in the assumption that more Libyans live outside than inside Libya. According to the general secretary of Maṭrūḥ municipality, there are more than two million Awlād ʿAlī, alone. A Libyan-Egyptian writer, Iṭaiwa, asserted in 1982 that the Awlād ʿAlī constituted the largest Arab tribe in Egypt.³⁴ The al-Jawāzi who had been the second biggest tribe in Cyrenaica was almost entirely expelled to Egypt.³⁵ If one adds such tentative sums from Egypt and Tunisia, and Chad (of which we know so little), then the case suggesting that more Libyans live outside Libya is proven. However, there are a number of unanswered questions about the expulsion of Awlād ʿAlī.

During fieldwork in Egypt, the author asked some Awlād ʿAlī to which state they belonged? The majority replied that they are neither Libyans nor Egyptians, but bedouin Arabs living in Egypt. While they acknowledge that they lived in Cyrenaica in the past, Egypt, now, was their home.

The exile of Awlād ʿAlī remains a vivid memory among the tribes of Cyrenaica and the western desert. There had been nothing comparable since the Berber migration of the Zuwayla from the Fazzān to Egypt in the tenth century. The story of Ḥabīb's Tajridat or expeditionary force, mentioned above, blurs the history of the expulsion with folkloric epic.³⁶ In time, it became Cyrenaica's equivalent to the story of Abū Zayd al-Hilālī, hero of

the great Hilalian myth. However, this *Tajridat* remains a one-sided story, mostly told by the victorious al-*Ibīdāt* tribe and their bedouin allies. For starts, it lacks a chronology; the Cyrenaican historian Bazama believed al-*Tajridat* took place in 1633, whereas Iṣṭaiwa in his study of his tribe, *Awlād ‘Alī*, gave a date almost forty years later, 1670.³⁷ Another short-coming is that it does not mention the role played by the Tripolitanian government and other tribes with very few exceptions. Yet, it remains our only source.

It was only with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt that Libyans stepped into Egyptian politics. Many joined the Egyptian national movement of resistance. Led by al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mahdī, leader of the *Awlād ‘Alī* in al-Buḥayra, the Libyan tribesmen took an active part in the popular resistance in Damanhūr, Sanhūr, and al-Raḥmaniya in al-Buḥayra at the start of the French campaign from Alexandria in July 1789. Alexandria’s population was then only 8,000, whereas the French invaders were more than 36,000 equipped with the latest European weapons. The heavy responsibility of defence was left to the mayor of Alexandria, al-Sayyid Muḥammad Karīm who called upon the bedouin tribes of *Awlād ‘Alī*, al-Jimi‘āt and al-Hanādī exhorting their Islamic faith to fight the enemies of Allāh and Egypt. The tribes organised with the *fellaḥīn* or peasantry and seriously hindered the French march on Cairo. Twelve years later, in 1801, bedouin tribes again blocked a French move to land troops in Darna and march on Egypt across the Libyan desert—a plan designed between Yūsuf Pasha and the French emperor.³⁸

After the defeat of the French, the prominence of the tribes and the role they had played became evident to all especially to those competing for power and influence. The *Awlād ‘Alī* stood out, and its leader, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mahdī, became so prominent that alongside al-Sayyid ‘Umar Makram, the Naqīb al-Ashraf in Egypt, and ‘Abdullāh al-Sharqāwī Muḥammad, he appointed Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha (al-Kabīr) governor of Egypt in 1805.³⁹ The *Awlād ‘Alī* helped Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha (1770-1849) in establishing himself and strengthening his grip on Egypt. They helped root out the Pasha’s opponents, notably the slaughter of the Mamluks in Cairo’s castle and the subsequent pursuit of survivors into Lower and Upper Egypt. They were instrumental in creating the ‘Alīd dynasty in Egypt.⁴⁰ Relations between the two were further strengthened in the Pasha’s later wars. In return, Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha gave them free rein; whereupon, they evicted al-Hanādī tribe to al-Sharqiya, and later to Syria. Thus the *Awlād ‘Alī* gained unrivalled control of two thirds of al-Buḥayra. Weak rulers sought their support while strong rulers sought to reduce their power. During the reign of Sa‘ūd Pasha, particularly in 1864, the government tried to inflame relations between *Awlād ‘Alī* and al-Jawāzi to the brink of tribal war—all attempts fell flat.⁴¹ Unable to control the tribesmen, officials came to realise that they could, indeed, be useful. Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha al-Kabīr knew their value. He showed the shaykhs his gratitude and conscripted their youth into his army which was regarded as a goodwill gesture. They participated in the offensive campaign in al-Ḥijāz under the leadership of his elder son Ṭūsūn, and later with his other son Ibrahīm in Syria and Anatolia. Those Libyan tribesmen under the Egyptian banners fought in Greece, and defeated Prince Sa‘ūd al-Kabīr, and after him his son Abdullāh b. Sa‘ūd and his Wahhābī followers in al-Ḥijāz and Najd in 1811 (1226 AH).⁴² They even went south to Bilād al-Sūdān and al-Nuba, and the neighbouring equatorial countries.⁴³

Some claim that Aḥmad ‘Urābī Pasha wrote to the bedouin tribes of Cyrenaica and Egypt seeking their help against the British in 1882. This is the view of the Lebanese historian, Nicola Ziadeh and the Sanūsi historian, al-Ashhab. The latter maintains that the Pasha wrote to his father. Naturally, this caused consternation to the British, who quickly asked their consul in Tripoli to confirm the authenticity of the report’s ‘5,000 tribesmen’ poised to cross into Egypt from Cyrenaica. The report further pointed to al-Sayyid al-Mahdī al-Sanūsi as their leader. Al-Dajāni has cast some doubt on this when he wrote that “al-Mahdī did not



Figure 3. Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz Khalil Jāwish.

try to help him [‘Urābi], because he was not convinced of the benefits of his revolution.” This would have been the first time that the Sanūsi leadership refused help to fellow-Muslims.⁴⁴

Finally, it is worth mentioning a final example of a notable Tripolitanian in Egypt. That was Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Khalil Jāwish (1876-1929) (Fig. 3) born in Alexandria, he was the son of a famous literary man, Shaykh Khalil Jāwish, originally from Yadr tribe of Miṣrāta, whose fathers were among the early settlers in Egypt. He graduated from al-Azhar, and later became Professor of Arabic Literature in Cambridge University. He returned to Egypt and supported Muṣṭafa Kāmil and helped found the National Party, from which the present the ruling party of Egypt claims to have inherited its political philosophy. He became the editor-in-chief of the party’s newspaper, al-Liwā’ (*Standard*), in 1908. He threw his support behind Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Ḥarb, in setting up the famous Muslim Youth Association. A great orator and powerful communicator, he often inflamed passions in the street and was an ardent defendant of Islamic issues, and supported jihād in Libya against the fascists. He was also one of the closest advisors of al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharif al-Sanūsi, until his death in Cairo in 1929.

Immigration to Tunisia

Tunisia has always been Libya’s closest neighbour. Libyans adore Tunisia’s beauty, and the island of Djerba, in particular, whose history was written by Abū Rawwās who came from Jabal Nafūsa. Such was its beauty that many Libyans settled there in successive waves of migration. Berber tribes like the Hawwāra were pushed westward as Arab tribes moved into North Africa until every major town and city in Tunisia had at least a family of Libyan origin. There was also a Tunisian immigration, including Andalusians and Jews, to Libya; they were mostly merchants who settled in Benghazi and Darna in 19th century.⁴⁵ There were also tribes and sections of tribes that came from Tunisia and melted into Libyan tribal society like al-Jallāsi in Tarhūna, whose name is derived from the great Tunisian tribe of al-Jallāsi. No Libyan could forget Libya’s national poet, Aḥmād Rafiq al-Mahdawi, whose grandfather was the Tunisian Consul in Benghazi during the second period of the Ottomans.

Tunisian names are common in Libya and often indicate Tunisian places of origin such as al-Mahdawi, al-Mistīri, al-Benzirti, al-Gābsi, al-Tūnsi, al-Jirbi, al-Qarqni, al-Ḥami, al-Jeridi, Zaghwān, al-Maṭmāṭi, al-Sūsi, al-Qumūdi, and so on. But the greater influence was that of Tripolitaniāns in Tunisia who settled more frequently than Cyrenaicans in Egypt. Tribes like al-Nwāiyi and al-Marāziq and literally thousands of families are split along the border between Tunisia and Libya. Certain families have shifted to Tunisia almost entirely, almost 80% of the inhabitants of al-Aṣabi’a area in Jabal Nafūsa have left.⁴⁶ The same can be said about the rest of the Jabal Nafūsa, Arabs and Berbers alike. As a matter of fact, the area of Kikla in Nafūsa comes first in the export of immigrants to Tunisia and followed by the Berber areas of Kabāw and Yifrin.

Like everywhere else where they settle in large numbers, Libyans have kept their identity and tribal structure. A notable characteristic is the regional titles that the tribal leaders have adopted to indicate their points of origin. Such names as al-Ṭarābulsiya, referring to Tripolitania, or the shaykhdom of al-Ghādamsiya, from Ghādamis, and the shaykhdom of al-Fazzāniya for those who came from Fazzān. Curiously, these exclusively Libyan place-names in Tunisia have subsequently become Tunisian surnames in their own rite such as

al-Ṭarābulṣī, al-Tarhūnī, al-Wirfillī, al-Ghriyānī, al-Firjānī, al-Rayyānī, al-Ghidāmsī, al-Miṣrātī, al-Zliṭnī, al-Qumātī, al-Kiklī, al-Riqīʿī, al-Zwārī, al-Yifranī and al-Wirshfānī. In addition, there are entire neighbourhoods in Tunisian towns and cities that carry Libyan place and tribal names such as Warfalla, referring to the tribe of Warfalla. It is part of the municipality of Testour about five kilometres east of al-Suluqīya, as well as the area of Tarhūna, referring to the Libyan tribe of Tarhūna south of the city al-Faḥṣ by ten kilometres. Another example is Jabbānat al-Maḥāmīd, a cemetery where the tribe of al-Maḥāmīd bury their dead, as well as Wādī al-Ṭarābulṣīya, a valley which extends from Buqarnayn towards Ḥammām al-Anf (Hammām Lif).

Neighbourhoods in the capital Tunis with Libyan names are the quarters of al-Ghadāmsīya, and Nahj al-Fazzāna near Bāb Swīqa. Both clearly received immigrants over those years as well as visitors from Ghadāmis and Fazzān back in Libya. In the area of al-Naḍūr, previously known as al-Jibibbīna, in Zaghuan province, there is the quarter of al-Ṣibiyīya inhabited by Libyans from al-Aṣabīʿa. Only a few meters separate the Libyan quarter of al-Ṣibiyīya from the native Tunisian quarter of al-Ḥumr.

Perhaps the most famous toponym is Ḥawmat al-Ṭarābulṣīya in the city of al-Monastir. This is a Tripolitanian quarter from which came the most famous Tunisian of Libyan origin, the late president al-Ḥabīb Bourguiba (1903-2000) (Fig. 4), founder of modern Tunisia. His family, Bourguiba, have roots going back to al-Drādfa tribe of Miṣrāta;⁴⁷ his grandfather immigrated via the sea to Tunisia in 1795. The family was entrusted with the shaykdom of the Tripolitarians in al-Monastir. Another influential figure from 1956 till 1970, was Bahi al-Adgham, who had Miṣrātan origins as well—specifically of Yadr of al-Karāghla tribe. Al-Adgham was a distinguished leader of the Destour party in its struggle for independence after which he served in the cabinet, most notably as Prime Minister until 1969.

Other families made their mark on literature and politics. One, the al-Zliṭnī family in Djerba and Tunis goes back to the 15th century.⁴⁸ Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Zliṭnī was the main imām of al-Zaytūna Mosque until his death in 1406AD/808AH. One of Tunisia's leaders of the national partisan struggle was 'Alī al-Zliṭnī who played a pivotal role in organising demonstrations and resistance between 1952-54. When the noose was tightened around their movements, he fled to Libya and carried on training his men, some of whom died in Tunisia's battle of liberation. 'Alī al-Zliṭnī also oversaw the establishment of the first military college and was known for his bias towards Ṣāliḥ ibn Yūsuf in opposing Bourguiba, and was a firm believer in a complete and unconditional independence for Tunisia. Another distinguished member of the al-Zliṭnī family was Muḥammad Lüṭfī al-Zliṭnī who wrote his doctoral thesis on the great Arab poet al-Mutanabbi in record time between 1975-77 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.



Figure 4. The late president al-Ḥabīb Bourguiba (1903-2000), the founder of modern Tunisia wearing the Libyan traditional costume in 1945.

The Mosque-University of al-Zaytūna, like al-Azhar university and its famous Maghribi student hostel, has seen generations of Libyans over the centuries. Its most famous Libyan graduate was al-Shaykh Sulaymān al-Bārūnī from the town of Jādū, and the leader of the Berbers in Jabal Nafūsa. He was a close friend and fellow-student of 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tha'ālībī, who became one of Tunisia's well-known dignitaries in the mid-1880s. Al-Shaykh al-Bārūnī is celebrated as both a scholar and

his adamant opposition against the Italians. Necessarily, he sought refuge in various countries including Iraq and the Sultanate of Oman where he served the Sultan, Sa'īd Ibn 'Al-Taymūr, as a personal advisor. It was in this capacity, on a state visit to India, that he died in Bombay in 1940.

One of the reasons for immigration to Tunisia was the absence of political oppression that Tunisia enjoyed when Libya suffered under the Qaramānlis. The border was not well defined. Indeed, both states were more closely linked socially and economically than the link between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. A vacuum existed in Tunisia in the aftermath of widespread disease that took the lives of more than half of Tunisia's population in 1865 AD /1282 AH.⁴⁹ Fields laid empty in Tunisia's hinterland. This encouraged the import of Tripolitanian labour to revitalise the land—labour to which they were suited given their proximity and acquaintance with conditions in Tunisia. The geographical proximity as well as the availability of Tripolitanian labour, and heavy Ottoman taxation, all conspired to make many go to Tunisia. Parts of some of those tribes who went to Tunisia were from the tribes of Tarhūna, Maḥāmīd, Zintān, Warfalla, 'Alāwna, 'Ijīlāt, Blā'za, 'Alālgā, Mzāwgha, Mrāghna, Firjān, Brakāt, Rgī'a;t, al-Aṣabī'a, Awlād Misallām, Ryayīna, Jbāliya, Wrishfāna, Miṣrātans, Zliṭniya (including 'Amāyim, Fwātīr, Awlād Shaykh, Barāhma, Awlād Ghayth and Karāghla), and from Cyrenaica were some 'Ibīdāt and 'Urfa in addition to al-Fazzān and others. Those Libyans spread out in Tunisia from the northern coast to the inner south in places such as Tunis, Qayrawān (Kairouan), Sūs (Sousse), Bijāya (Béja), Silyāna (Siliana), Jirba (Djerba), Qābis (Gabès), Qafṣa (Gafsa), Šfāqis (Sfax), Jarjis (Zarzis), Zaghuan (Zaghuan), Qrumbāliya (Grombalia), Nābul (Nabeul), Qlibia (Kēlibia), Hammām al-Anif (Hammam Lif), Qriqna (Kerkenna), Maḥdiya (Mahdiya), Munastīr (Monastir), Ben Qirdān (Ben Gardane), Benzirt (Bizerte) and others. The extent of the Libyan spread was such that four main groups shared the city of Gabès. The first quarter was for the locals, the second for those who came from the interior, the third was populated by the Libyans known locally as al-Ṭarābulsiya, whereas the fourth group was for the Turks and others.

Tribalism was one of the bonding factors between Libyans and Tunisians, as was Islam with its Maghribi Māliki and Ibāḍi schools as well as the common Berber-Arab culture. Libyans had no trouble assimilating in the broader Tunisian society, and were influenced by the same variables—political, economic and social—experience by Tunisians. The Libyans did many jobs but mostly were employed in either farming or raising livestock and, like their brothers in Egypt, showed skill in breeding pedigree Arabian horses. That brought them the attention of the Tunisian ministry of war who bought many of their horses for combat. That, in turn, brought them into the lines of 'Askar al-Mizārqiya, or cavalry, which many young Tripolitanian tribesmen joined. The Tunisian State heavily relied on this force for levying taxes and war. There were, however, some Tripolitaniāns who declined service like Tarhūna, al-Firjān and al-Mzāwgha because their religious affiliation to their zāwiya's opposed such work and the financial returns were not worth the risks.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Tripolitaniāns gained importance as their ability to fight grew. They joined Tunisians in their uprising headed by 'Alī ibn Ghadhāhum in 1864 against a 100% increase in taxes. Such a burden of taxes was similar to that in the Libya they had left when they took refuge in Tunisia. So they joined their fellow-Tunisians until the government retracted and withdrew the tax increases. They brought this same sense of patriotism and responsibility to the fight against the French along with their Tunisian brothers in 1881.

Libyan immigrants were vital in Tunisia's economy. They worked in the south mining phosphate and constituted about 50% of the mining work force (Tunisians made up 40%, and Algerians 10%) under French management. Quite a few were bakers: immigrants from Kikla were famous for owning and running bakeries in Tunisia as well as Libya. Despite the academic influence of Tunisian schools—especially in al-Zaytūna and Djerba—on many

Libyan scholars, Libyan *zāwiyas* were visibly active in Tunisia. At the fore were Sanūsi *zāwiyas*, but there were others *zāwiyas* such as Sīdī Shīyib al-Dhir‘ān, Bū ‘Āisha and Awlād al-Mirghani.⁵¹

To conclude, Tripolitania and Tunisia were so similar that it was sometimes impossible to differentiate between them. National dress, especially for women, is more or less the same, as is their cuisine, Andalusian music, proverbs, versification and spoken Arabic particularly in Tripolitania and southern Tunisia.

Immigration to Chad

While Chad’s pasture, plentiful water and climate were attractive, its greatest attraction was its inaccessibility to the Ottoman authorities in Tripoli, notwithstanding the prevalent weakness of its Sultans. Large-scale immigration to Chad began after the failed revolt and death of ‘Abd al-Jalīl Sayf al-Naṣr in 1842 (see below). His tribe, Awlād Sulaymān, their allies al-Manāṣīr immigrated en masse along with Warfalla, al-Ḥasāūnna, al-Qdhādhfa and especially al-Rīḏāt section of Maghārba who settled near Lake Chad.⁵²

As in Egypt and Tunisia, Islam was the common denominator smoothing the way between Libyans and their hosts to mutual benefit. Most people in Chad adopted the Māliki School of jurisprudence and Arabic became both the language of learning as well as the medium for day-to-day business. Initially, the first wave of Awlād Sulaymān allied themselves with the local tribe of Qadiwa, but as Libyans grew stronger such alliances became unnecessary. The Libyan presence in Chad manifests itself in placenames with distinctly Libyan flavour such as Om Zoer, Bhar Salamat, Bir Alali, Ouadi Kandor, Ouadi Haddad, Bhar Ghazal and others.

The concentration of Libyans around the lake of Chad meant that they became a force to be reckoned with. The Sultans of Kānim and Ouadai recognised their tribal strength and sought to recruit them to their service. Al-Shaykh ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad al-‘Amin al-Kānimī (1835-80), the leader of Borno, was the first to enter an alliance with the Libyan tribes in exchange for weapons and ammunition. This was to deter his rival the Sultan of Ouadai (1858-74) from threatening Borno’s trade. The tribesmen were effective and the Sultan had to recognise their control and his attempts to woo them to his side failed.⁵³ The tribes went from strength to strength and became a dominating force in the region until the French campaign headed by Colonel Joalland in 1899. The French advance to Chad’s interior was seriously impeded by a coalition of Libyans, Chadian Tuaregs and al-Gur‘ān.

Barring the French Christian advance was Shaykh Ghayth ‘Abd al-Jalīl Sayf al-Naṣr whose localised resistance was dubbed Ḥarb al-Anṣār (the supported-coalition war). Al-Shaykh Ghayth was a descendent of that earlier Libyan warrior whose family contributed to many wars inside and outside Libya. Few could compete with them. His grandfather, ‘Abd al-Jalīl Sayf al-Naṣr had been sent by Yūsuf Pasha al-Qaramānli to rescue Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Amin al-Kānimī in Kānim in 1826AD/1242AH.⁵⁴

After Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jalīl Sayf al-Naṣr returned victoriously from Kānim, he built up following amongst tribes in Tripolitania, and led an insurrection to overthrow Yūsuf Pasha. The insurrection was a major factor in the collapse of the Qaramānli State once Sayf al-Naṣr had seized most of Tripolitania and Fazzān and left the government bogged down in Tripoli. However, after the removal of the Qaramānlis, Libya came under direct Ottoman rule from Istanbul. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jalīl Sayf al-Naṣr continued his rebellion but slowly began losing tribal support and eventually was pinned down in the valley of Sūf-I-Jīn in the Banī Walīd region where he was captured after the battle of Qārrah and was killed in 1842. His severed head was sent to Tripoli—a message for its people.

Some fifty-eight years later, the French faced his grandson, Shaykh Ghayth ‘Abd al-Jalil Sayf al-Naşr. Declining any sort of negotiation, Shaykh Ghayth instead organised and led the Mujāhidīn with other tribal and Sanūsi leaders such as al-Shaykh al-Barāni al-Sā‘idi, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Thinī al-Ghidāmsī and al-Shaykh Fuḍayl Bukhrays al-Kizza. Those leaders were in the forefront of five thousand fighters mostly from the tribes of al-Zuwayya and Awlād Sulaymān and their alliances of Warfalla, al-Maghārba, al-Qdhādhfa, and from Chad were Tuaregs and al-Gurān. The stand-off culminated in a bloody confrontation in Bir Alali in 1901 when the Mujāhidīn strove hard for martyrdom. One of those martyrs was al-Shaykh Ghayth Sayf al-Naşr himself. From the tribe of al-Zuwayya alone, there were more than a hundred martyrs led by a shaykh called Bū Bakr Bū Quwṭiyyin whose mother on hearing of his death uttered trilling cries of joy upon his martyrdom.

Mujāhidīn resistance continued with important help from Sanūsi fighters in Libya, including al-Sayyid al-Mahdī al-Sanūsi himself, in 1898 until his sudden death in 1902. His support was of great importance in the struggle against the French, which in due course slowed down the rapid colonisation of sub-Saharan Africa. Another source of support was the Bahij section of al-Maghārba tribe who were led by a zealous shaykh, Mustāfa Bū Ṭayghān. These Bahijī kinsmen numbered more than seventy and came all the way from Cyrenaica across the Sahara into Chad and were all killed in 1907.⁵⁵

Many al-Zuwayya shaykhs faithfully served al-Ṣanusīya in Chad such as al-Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Ṭuwayr who was killed fighting the French there in 1906. His son, Muḥammad, became a member of Chad’s national parliament. There was also al-Shaykh Bū ‘Aqila al-Zuway, and al-Shaykh al-Sā‘idi al-Barāni who was killed by the French in northern Chad in 1907. His son carried on the fight with al-Sayyid Aḥmād al-Sharif in Egypt against the British, and later returned to join al-Shaykh ‘Umar al-Mukhtār in the national government of Ajdābiya.⁵⁶

There were other tribesmen who accompanied al-Sayyid al-Mahdī on his journey to Chad to fight the French. From al-Brā‘aşa tribe was al-Shaykh Māziq Bū Bakr Ḥaddūth, the grand-



Figure 5. Al-Hajj ‘Abdullah al-Bishāri.

father of the famous Cyrenaican governor Ḥusayn Māziq. Amongst the Brā‘aşa there was their famous poet, Muḥammad Bū Farwa, the father of al-Sifaṭ, one of al-Brā‘aşa’s famous resistance leaders, as well as al-Shaykh ‘Abdallāh Ḥafālish and al-Shaykh ‘Abdurrabbih Buḥintisha. There was also Jādallāh Zanayn one of al-Mahdī’s procession desert pilots. As for the tribe of al-‘Awāqir there was al-Shaykh al-Fuḍayl Bū Khrays al-Kizza and al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Kizza. There were also representatives from the ‘Ibīdāt tribe such as al-Shaykh Muḥammad Bū Zayd and al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Aqila, and from al-Maghārba tribe were al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Barāni and al-Shaykh Mustāfa Bū Ṭayghān, and from the Drusa tribe was al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm Mūsa. From the tribe of al-Mnifa was the Libyan symbol of jihād against the Italians, al-Shaykh ‘Umar al-Mukhtār, and also the poet, al-Shaykh Rajab Bū Ḥuwaysh, renowned for his poem about the terrible al-‘Aqilla concentration camps. al-Mjābra tribe was also represented by al-Ḥajj Ftayta al-Majbari and al-Ḥajj ‘Abdullāh al-Bishāri (Fig. 5), and representing the Jirrār tribe was al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Jirrārī, and many others.

Conclusion

Libyan tribesmen in diaspora still represent a bond between the Libyan homeland and the countries they have settled in. Theirs is a unique social, economical, political and intellectual life deserving further study. They have a role to bridge those countries and societies over whose the borders they have passed so fluidly in the past. They can energise present brotherly relations in the context of a much desired economical and political integration of the region.

Notes

- 1 Juhaydar 1991, 179.
- 2 Ḥamdān (n.d.), 81-90.
- 3 This process has not been unique to Libya. Some tribes within Saudi Arabia were curtailed and left for neighbouring countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen and the shaykhdoms of the Gulf. Al-Zuwayy 1998, 278.
- 4 He was a Georgian renegade who embraced Islam, and went on to live in Algeria where he acquired his nickname, al-Jazā'irī. He was also known as al-Burghul because he fed his mercenaries crushed wheat. Micacchi 1961, 119-30. Juhaydar 1991, 179.
- 5 Al-Zā'idi 1974, 75-9.
- 6 Kamali 1965, 87-8.
- 7 Al-Nā'ib 1984, 96-7.
- 8 Al-Zāwi 1970, 207.
- 9 Feraud 1994, 324.
- 10 Tully 1957, 27, 29, 115-23.
- 11 Sharaf al-Dīn 1998, 308.
- 12 Al-Zuwayy 1998, 252.
- 13 Bazama 1968, 266.
- 14 Located nearer Tarhūna and mostly inhabited by the tribe of al-Firjān. Al-Firjān is one of the largest and most revered murābiṭīn tribes in Libya with branches in Tunisia and Egypt. Some of its sections live around Sirt and Cyrenaica where they are regarded amongst the most holy. Feraud 1994, 324.
- 15 Feraud 1994, 331.
- 16 The Baṭnān area is mostly populated by Murābiṭīn tribes of al-Manifa, al-Ḥubbūn, al-Qiṭān and al-Jirāra who are allied to the larger tribe of 'Ibidāt. Sharaf al-Dīn 1998, 245.
- 17 Najem 1996-99.
- 18 al-Mušrātī 1993, 293.
- 19 Agostini 1998, 63-5; Bazama 1968, 269-325.
- 20 Cella 1975, 113-41.
- 21 Mannā' 1991, 98-101.
- 22 Bazama 1968, 270.
- 23 In this particular verse the poet states in an emphatic manner that one-day they would go back to their land in Cyrenaica. A book written by the late historian Muḥammad Mannā' furthered this, who happened to be a Jazwī himself. In his book he named the 40 slain shaykhs in al-Birka Palace. A friend of his told me that he thought the book would ignite a tribal rivalry that was buried a long time ago.
- 24 Bergna 1985, 59.
- 25 Sharaf al-Dīn 1998, 24.
- 26 Al-Tallisi 1997, 97, 178.
- 27 Agostini 1998, 54.
- 28 Al-Zerekly 1999, 273.
- 29 Al-Ḥabbūni 1960, 108-9.
- 30 Ibn Ghalbūn 1967, 240-7.
- 31 Al-Zāwi 1970, 221.
- 32 Add to note: Zanqat and Zuqāq are both Maghribi words for street. In this very market is found some of the best of Libyan tailoring—known as Kaṭ Malif—whose fine quality and “Alexandrian embroidery” constitute a designer label. Al-Mušrātī 1968, 235, 238; Shalābi 1990, 33.
- 33 Other places included al-Ḍab'a, al-'Alamain, al-Ḥammām, SidiBarrāni, Burj al-'Arab, al-Āmrīya, and in the south in al-Dilinjāt and Kafr al-Zayyāt. Al-Zāwi 1976, 11-3; Iṭaiwa 1882, 189; al-Ḥabbūni 1960, 84.
- 34 Iṭaiwa 1882, 47.
- 35 A few families remained and were assimilated within other tribes in Libya, or went and settled in Algeria or even Morocco. Mannā' 1991, 93-115.
- 36 Bazama 1994, 305.

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- 37 Bazama 1994, 309; Iṭaiwa 1882, 13.
 38 al-Fardi 1994, 3-5, 104.
 39 al-Fardi 1994, 9.
 40 Iṭaiwa 1882, 218.
 41 Iṭaiwa 1882, 226-31.
 42 al-Ghazāl 1980, 75-85.
 43 Ashhab 1952, 57-9.
 44 Evans-Pritchard 1949, 23.
 45 Bilqāsīm 1861-81, 121.
 46 Bilqāsīm 1911-57, 26.
 47 Agostini 1978, 267.
 48 Bilqāsīm 1911-57, 66-72.
 49 Bilqāsīm 1861-81, 51.
 50 *Ibid.*, 96.
 51 *Ibid.*, 109, 113, 114.
 52 al-Ḥindiri 1998, 20-1.
 53 al-Ḥindiri 1983, 24.
 54 It is also said that al-Kānīmī, himself was from the town of Traghīn in Fazzān. A revered Islamic scholar, he came to Kānim to spread the word of Islam amongst the pagans. He later established himself there and proclaimed a protectorate over the Kānim region that gave him his name. The sultanate of Kānim lasted for about eight decades during which his sons reigned after him. al-Barghūthi 1973, 445-6.
 55 al-Ashhab 1945, 243.
 56 al-Qashāt 1997, 50-2.

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