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The Ḥafṣid domination of Northwest Africa in the 15th Century: The reign of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān (1435–1488)

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Abstract:

In 1427, the Mamlūk Sultanate, ruled by Al-Ashraf Barsbāy (1422–1438), seized Cyprus. In 1453, the Ottoman Sultanate, ruled by Meḥmed II (1444–1446/1451–1481), captured the city of Byzantium, Constantinople. Hence, Western and Eastern historians and scholars have focused their writings on these two states.

This research highlights the efforts of the Ḥafṣid ruler, Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān (1435–1488), and clarifies the results of those efforts. This paper also outlines the political statuses of the kingdoms in Northwest Africa. It illustrates how ʿUthmān exploited the circumstances of the Northwest African kingdoms to extend his influence. Consequently, it affirms that ʿUthmān was a Majestic sultan in Northwest Africa. This study uses the historical method and examines primary sources on the subject of the reign of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān.

Keywords: Ḥafṣids, Tlemcen, Fez, Domination

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An Overview of the Northwest African Kingdoms during the 15th Century

During the 15th century, Northwest Africa was ruled by four different dynasties. The Ḥafṣids ruled the Ḥafṣid Kingdom, which was situated in what is now Tunisia and northern Libya (1229–1574). The second, the Zayyānid dynasty, ruled the Kingdom of Tlemcen, located in what is now called the Republic of Algeria (1236–1556). The third and fourth dynasties, the Marīnids (1244–1465) and the Waṭṭāsids (1471–1554), ruled the Kingdom of Fez, cited in the modern-day the Kingdom of Morocco.

The Tlemcen and Ḥafṣid kingdoms were established following the decline of the Muwaḥḥids, a Berber Muslim Empire that once ruled the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula and Northwest Africa (1121–1269). The decline of the Muwaḥḥids began in earnest following their defeat in the Battle of al-ʿUqāb in the Iberian Peninsula in 1212 by the Catholic forces represented by the Catholic crowns in the Iberian Peninsula, Castile, Aragon, Portugal as well as some volunteers from France.

The Ḥafṣids were a Berber dynasty from Hintātah, from the Berber confederation of Maṣmūdah, one of the largest Berber tribes along with the Zanātah and the Ṣinhājah.(1) The Ḥafṣids differed from the Zayyānid, Marīnid and Waṭṭāsid dynasties, who were Zanātah. The Ḥafṣid Kingdom was founded by Abū Zakarīyā Yaḥyā al-Ḥafṣī (1229–1249), the Muwaḥḥid governor in the *Ifrīqiya* region (which included the city of Tunis, the west of Libya and the east of Algeria), after he declared his independence from the Muwaḥḥids in 1229. The Waṭṭāsids were related to the Marīnids in Fez. The Waṭṭāsids effectively shared the responsibility for ruling the Kingdom of Fez with the Marīnids after they assisted the Marīnid Abd al-Ḥaqq II (1420–1465) to victory in the Marīnids' conflict for the throne of Fez in 1420.(2) The last Marīnid emir, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq II, then decided to end the

(1) Harry W. Hazard and Kenneth M Setton, *A History of the Crusades: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1975), 766.

(2) Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣrī, *Al-Istqṣā ĩ akhbār al-Maghrib al-Aghṣā* (Investigation of the News of Morocco) (Casablanca: Dār al-Kitāb, 1954), 4:118.

Waṭṭāsids' sharing of power. He executed most of them in 1458, except for Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Waṭṭāsī (1471–1504). The latter then established the Waṭṭāsid dynasty in 1471, a few years after the collapse of the Marīnid rule.(1)

Many historians and scholars have concentrated on the biographies of the Mamlūk and Ottoman sultans and their achievements as well as analysing Ottoman-Mamlūk relations, particularly in the 15th century.(2) This is due to their religious and military suzerainty. Other historians and scholars have examined the political and economic circumstances of the Northwest African kingdoms from the 13th century to the 16th century.(3) In addition, many scholars have examined various aspects of the Ḥafṣid Kingdom, such as education, markets, the life of the Ḥafṣid sultans, the Ḥafṣid architecture, and the relations between Tunis, under the Ottoman rule and the Republic of Venice during the 16th and 17th century. (4) They have not, however, given

(1) Ibid., 119.

(2) Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk War, 1485–*91 (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Jem Duducu, The Sultans: The Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Rulers and their World (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2018); Nezar Al-Sayyed, Cairo: Histories of a City (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

(3) Robert Brunschvig, *Tārīkh Ifrīqiya fī al-ʿAhd al-Ḥafṣī,* 2 vols (The History of North Africa During the Ḥafṣid Dynasty), translated by Ḥamādī al–Sāḥilī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1988); ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Fīlālī, *Tilimsān fī al-ʿAhd al-Zayyānī* (The Kingdom of Tlemcen During the Zayyānid Dynasty) (Algiers: Dār Mūfam, 2002); Jamil Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Al-Aʿraj, *ʿAlāqāt duwal al-Maghrib al-Islāmī bi dūlat al-Mamālīk siyāsīyan wa thagāfīyan bayn al-qarnayn al-sābiʿ wa al-tāsiʿ hijrīīn* (Political-Cultural Relations Between the Mamlūk Sultanate and the other North African States Sometime Between the 13th and the15th Centuries) (Ph.D. diss., Tlemcen: Jāmiʿat Abī Bakir, 2013); Drīss Muṣṭafā, *Al-ʿAlāqāt al-siyāsīyah wa al-iqtiṣādīyah li-Duwal al-Maghrib al-Islāmī fī al-fatrah (13–16AD)* (Political and Economic Relations Between North African Countries in the 13th–16th Centuries) (Ph.D. Dissertation in Tlemcen: Jāmi ʿat Abī Bakir, 2014).

(4) Majānī Būbah, " al-Madāris al-Ḥafṣiyah: Nidāmaha wa Mawāridha," *in Majalat al-ʿilūm al-Insāniyah fī Jāmʿat Mantūrī,* no. 12 (1999):157-164 ; Samīr Saʿad, "

attention to the efforts of the Ḥafṣid sultan, Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān, who made the Ḥafṣid Kingdom strong and stable.

Internal Issues during the Reign of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān

In 1435, the Ḥafṣid Kingdom was ruled by Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān, whose reign extended for half a century. At the beginning of his rule, he suffered through a long period of rebellion that spanned more than a decade and a half, from 1435 to 1452, and that was spearheaded by his uncle, Abū al-Ḥasan b. Abī Fāris (d. 1452). Abū al-Ḥasan was supported by an Arab sub-tribe, the Sons of Abī al-Layl, who were related to the Arab tribe of Banū Salīm.(1) This sub-tribe was spreading through the territories of the Ḥafṣid Kingdom; through this sub-tribe, the rebel uncle separated the city of Bougie from the authorities of ʿUthmān in 1436.(2) The inhabitants of Bougie preferred Abū al-Ḥasan, who had been the governor of Bougie since the beginning of the 1430s, to the Ḥafṣid sultan, ʿUthmān, who was seen as being too young at the time.(3) The inhabitants of Bougie put the name of Abū al-Ḥasan on Ḥafṣid coinage, the *đīnār*, during his rebellion against ʿUthmān.(4) Despite the killing of Abū al-Ḥasan in 1452, Bougie

al- ʿAāmilūn bi Aswāq al-Dawlah al-Ḥafṣiyah," *in Majalat Kuliyat al-Adāb- Jāmʿat al-Fayūm,* no. 17 (2018): 610-638; Ṣāliḥ Abū Diyāk, " al-Mawākib al-Sulṭāniyah fī al-Dawlah al-Ḥafṣiyah," *Dārat al-Malik ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* 12, no.1 (1986): 168-181; Ḥusayn Qays, " al-ʿAmārah al-Ḥafṣiyah fī al-Maghrib al-Adnah," *in al-Itiḥād al-ʿAām ll-Athārīn al-ʿArab,* no.20 (2017): 858-883; Al-Shāfiʿī Darwīsh, " ʿAlāqāt Tūnis maʿah Jmhūriyat al-Bunduqiyah Khilāl al-ʿAṣr al-Ḥadīth min al-ʿAdā' ilā al-Silmiyah," *in Majalat Jāmʿat al-Shārqah* 18, no. 1 (2021): 334-356.

(1) Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī, *Nihāyat al-irb fī maʿrifat ansāb al-ʿArab* (The End of Need in Knowledge about Genealogy of the Arabs) edited by Mufīd Qamīḥa and Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2012), 113, 150.

(2) Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Waz*ān*, *Waṣf Ifrīqiya,* translated by ʿAbd al-Raḥm*ā*n Ḥamīdah (Riyadh: Imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd Islamic University, 1979), 421–422; Al-Sayid ʿ**Abd** al-ʿAzīz Sālim, *Tārīkh al-Maghrib fī al-ʿaṣr al-Islāmī* (The History of al-Maghrib in the Islamic Era) (Alexandria: Mu' assat al-Shabāb al-Jāmiʿīyah, 1999), 793.

(3) Robert Brunschvig, *Tārīkh Ifrīqiya fi al-ʿAhd al-Ḥafṣī*, 1:273–274, 276.

(4) Robert Brunschvig, «Un dinar hafside inédit,» *Bulletin de la Société Historique et Géographique de Sétif*, no.2 (1941), 180.

remained separated from the Ḥafṣid Kingdom.(1)

After his uncle's rebellion, ʿUthmān did not attempt to subjugate the coastal city, Bougie, for several reasons. ʿUthmān preferred to focus on controlling other coastal cities in North Africa, such as Tripoli (Ṭarāblus) and Misrata (Miṣrātah) in the north of Libya. The inhabitants of Misrata, particularly the merchants, had effective economic relations with Ottoman merchants.(2) Bougie thus became an attractive centre for aspirants to the throne of the Ḥafṣid Kingdom, e.g. Abī Naṣr (d. unknown) in April 1453.(3) The inhabitants of Bougie also preferred to remain independent from the authorities of the Ḥafṣid sultan. According to al-Waz*ān*, Bougie was considered a city-state in the last decades of the 15th century.(4)

From 1453 to 1470, the Ḥafṣid Kingdom faced natural disasters and internal issues, such as famines, plagues and two rebellions in 1457 and 1463.(5) The rebellions were instigated by several sub-tribes, including the Sons of Muhalhil and the Sons of Yaʿqūb, who were related to Banū Salīm. Some members of these sub-tribes emigrated from the Arabian Peninsula to North Africa and spread throughout the Ḥafṣid Kingdom.(6) These uprisings affected the Ḥafṣid Kingdom's economy, as ʿUthmān was obliged to prepare military campaigns to suppress them in the *Ifrīqiya* region.(7) ʿUthmān succeeded in halting both uprisings.

(1) ʿUmar b. ʿAlī al-Jazā'irī, *Makhṭūṭ: Man*āqib *Sīdī Aḥmad b.* ʿArūs (Manuscript of the Virtues of Aḥmad b. ʿArūs) (Tunis: Al-Zaytūnah Mosque), manuscript no. 3/187/ 1598, p. 507.

(2) Al-Waz*ān*, *Wasf Ifrīqiya*, 482–483.

(3) Robert Brunschvig, *Tārīkh Ifrīqiya fī al-ʿAhd al-Ḥafṣī*, 1:277.

(4) Al-Waz*ān*, *Wasf Ifrīqiya*, 421–422.

(5) Robert Brunschvig, *Tārīkh Ifrīqiya fī al-ʿAhd al-Ḥafṣī,* 1:286–287.

(6) Muḥammad b. al-Shmāʿ, *Al-Adilah al-nūrānīyah fī mafākhir al-dawlah al-Ḥafṣīyah* (Transparent Evidences in al-Ḥafsīyah State's Feats) edited by Ṭāhir al-Maʿmūrī (Tunis: Dār al-ʿArabī ll-Kitāb, 1984), 209.

(7) Ibid., 132–133, 209.

Economic Relations between Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān and the Italian Republics

The abovementioned events drove ʿUthmān to enact processes to reinforce his kingdom's economy. He improved relations with the Italian republics of Genoa and Venice, offering protection for Venetian ships in his kingdom's ports from 1456 to benefit from the goods they carried from the Italian Peninsula, Egypt and the Levant.(1) From 1465, he also offered security for Genoese merchants and their goods while in the cities of the Ḥafṣid Kingdom, although the Genoese did not feel safe.(2) One year after the signing of the treaty with the Ḥafṣid authorities, Genoese merchants suffered robberies by the inhabitants throughout the kingdom and floggings implemented by the governor of the city of El Kala (el-Q***ā***lah), which was under the Ḥafṣids' control and located in what is now the Republic of Algeria. Nonetheless, these merchants earned considerable profits, and they revived the economy of Tunis.

As part of ʿUthmān's efforts to deal with the natural disasters in his territories, he imported seventy-five thousand quintals of wheat from Sicily in 1455.(3) During this period, the Kingdom of Sicily was a subject state of the Crown of Aragon. This importation was likely the prime rationale behind establishing relations with the subject states of the Crown of Aragon in the Italian Peninsula, particularly the Kingdom of Naples. In May 1478, a diplomatic-economic treaty was signed between the Ḥafṣids and the Kingdom of Naples. This treaty allowed the Kingdom of Naples to appoint a councillor in Tunis and also provided protection for the merchants of Naples

(1) Domenico Malipiero, *Annali Veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500,* edited by Francesco Longo (Firenze: Vieusseux, 1844) 2:618.

(2) Louis de Mas-Latrie, «Des Traités existants entre la republique de Genes et le roi de Tunis Abou-Omar-Othman in 1465,» in *Traités de paix et de commerce et documents divers concernant les relations des chrétiens avec les Arabes de l'Afrique septentrionale au moyen âge* (Paris: H. Plon, 1865), 150–151.

(3) Roman Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 62.

while in the Ḥafṣids' territories.(1) However, the political situation in the Kingdom of Sicily was different to that in the Kingdom of Naples resulting in its failure to establish a diplomatic-economic treaty with ʿUthmān in the 1470s.(2) Naples was more independent in its political affairs and external relations and was ruled directly by a member of the House of Trastamara, who ruled the Crown of Castile (1369–1516) and the Crown of Aragon (1412–1516). Ferdinand I of Naples (1458-1494), cousin of Ferdinand II of Aragon (1479–1516), ruled the Kingdom of Naples. Sicily was ruled by the viceroy of the kings of Aragon, John II (1458–1479) and then Ferdinand II, whose attentions were focused on the War of Castilian Succession during the 1470s.

During the 1480s, ʿUthmān sought to persuade Ferdinand II, a king of Sicily (1479 -1516), to establish relations between Tunis and Sicily to allow him to obtain Sicilian wheat. This wheat was desired by the North African kingdoms, particularly the Ḥafṣids and then the Mamlūks during their conflict with the Ottomans in 1488.(3) ʿUthmān, however, did not obtain this wheat due to Ferdinand II's preoccupation with the Granada War (1482-1492) and ʿUthmān's eventual death in 1488.

The Domination of ʿUthmān on the Kingdom of Tlemcen

The Kingdom of Tlemcen was ruled by the Zayyānid dynasty, which was also known as Banū ʿAbd al-Wād of the Zanātah tribe. In 1424, the Ḥafṣid kingdom, ruled by Abū Fāris ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz II (1394–1434), the grandfather of ʿUthmān, established dominion over the Kingdom of

(1) Julián Ribera Tarragó, "Tratado de paz ó tregua entre Fernando I, el Bastardo, rey de Nápoles, y Abuámer Otmán, rey de Tùnez," in *Centenario della Nascita di Michele Amari*, edited by Giuseppe Salvo Cozzo (Palermo: Stab. Tip. Virzi, 1910), 2:373–386.

(2) Louis de Mas-Latrie, «Votes du conseil des notables de la ville de Palerme relatifs au traite de paix qu'il s'agissait de conclure avec le roi de Tunis,» in *Traités de Paix et de Commerce et Documents Divers Concernant les Relations,* 180–181.

(3) «la carta de Fernando II a Inocencio VIII (Zaragoza, 3 de enero de 1488),» in Documentos sobre relaciones internacionales de los Reyes Católicos, by Antonio de la Torre (Barcelona: CSIC,1951), 3:9-10.

Tlemcen. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz II had exploited the continued conflict for the throne of Tlemcen between Zayyānid family members.(1) According to al-Waz*ān*, this domination resulted in Tunis' annexation of Bougie, which had been part of the Kingdom of Tlemcen since the 14th century.(2) This domination continued in the second half of the 15th century. The emir of Tlemcen, Muḥammad III al-Mutawakil (1461–1468), seized the throne of Tlemcen via a military coup in 1461. He temporarily declared his submission and obedience to the Ḥafṣid sultan, ʿUthm**ān**, in 1462 to prioritise dealing with an internal conflict (3) – the continued rebellion against his rule by members of the Zayyānid dynasty, including a deposed emir of Tlemcen, Abū ʿ*Abb*ās Aḥmad al-ʿ*A*āqil (1431–1461), in 1462 and Muḥammad b. Ghāl*ī*yah in 1463.(4)

In 1466, the Ḥafṣid sultan, ʿUthm**ān**, lay siege to al-Mutawakil for providing asylum to some Arab sub-tribes, in particular the Dhwāwdah, who had spread throughout the Ḥafṣid and Tlemcen kingdoms and who rejected obedience to ʿUthm**ān**.(5) During ʿUthm**ān's** siege of Tlemcen, al-Mutawakil apologised to ʿUthm**ān** and presented him with a gift in the form of his older daughter as a wife for ʿUthm**ān's** grandson, Abī Zakarīyā b. Masʿ*ū*d. This ended the siege.(6)

Following the death of al-Mutawakil, the throne of Tlemcen was transferred to his son Abū Tāshfīn III, who ruled for a month before being

(1) Muḥammad al-Tinsī, *Tārīkh Banī Zayy*ān *muqtaṭaf min nuẓm al-dur wa al-ʿuqyān fī bayān sharaf Banī Zayyān* (The History of the Zayy*ā*nid Dynasty), edited by Maḥmūd Bū ʿAyād (Algiers: Mufim, 2011), 235, 241–243.

(2) Al-Waz*ān*, *Wasf Ifrīqiya,* 421.

(3) Abī ʿAbd All**āh** Muḥammad al-Zarkashī, *Tār*īkh *al-dawlatayn al-Muwaḥḥidīyah wa al-Ḥafṣīyah* (The History of Two States: Ḥafṣid and al-Muwaḥḥid) edited by Muḥammad M**āḍūr**, 2nd ed (Tunis: al-Maktabah al-ʿAt**īghah**, 1966), 152–153.

(4) Ibid., 152–153.

(5) Al-Fīl*ā*lī, *Tilimsān fī al-ʿAhd al-Zayyān*ī, 73.

(6) Al-Zarkashī, *Tār*īkh *al-dawlatayn*, 158.

deposed by his brother, Abū ʿ*Abd* Allāh IV (1468–1504). (1) The latter did not concentrate on ending Ḥafṣid dominance at the beginning of his reign as he was more concerned with internal issues, such as the emergence of thieves on the roads between the cities of Tlemcen and Fez in 1463.(2) This emir also faced discontent, particularly from the tribe of Banī ʿ*A*āmr, an Arab tribe settled in Tlemcen and Oran. This tribe had been allied with earlier emirs of Tlemcen since the establishment of the Kingdom of Tlemcen and had helped them combat both internal and external threats to the kingdom.(3) Hence, the emir himself worked to satisfy this tribe by providing them with money and agricultural lands in various territories of the Kingdom of Tlemcen.(4)

Throughout Abū ʿAbd Allāh IV's reign, the Ḥafṣid Kingdom did not attack or besiege the Kingdom of Tlemcen, as had happened during the rule of his father al-Mutawakil in 1466. Two possible reasons led ʿUthm**ān** to avoid launching an offensive on the Kingdom of Tlemcen during the reign of Abū ʿAbd Allāh IV. First, it seems that Abū ʿAbd Allāh IV did not anger ʿUthmān, as he did not intervene in ʿUthmān's internal affairs.(5) Perhaps Abū ʿAbd Allāh IV feared that ʿUthmān could reignite internal political issues in his kingdom by, for example, inciting quarrels between the Zayyānid family members for the throne of Tlemcen.(6) Second, trade was one of the primary sources of revenue for the Kingdom of Tlemcen. The profits Tlemcen obtained from trade had declined due to tensions in the Mediterranean between Tlemcen merchant ships and those belonging to the

(1) *Tilimsān fī al-ʿAhd al-Zayyānī*, 74.

(2) ʿAbd al-B*āsiṭ* b. Khalīl, "Riḥlat B. Khalīl il*ā* al-Gharb al-Isl*āmī*," (The Journey of B. Khalīl to North Africa) published by Robert Brunschvig, *Deux R*écits *de Voyage Inédits en Afrique du Nord au XVe Siècle* (Paris: Larose, 1936), 42.

(3) Yaḥya b. Khald*ūn*, *Baghīyat al-ruwā**d** fī dhikr mulūk Banī* ʿAbd *al-W**ā**d* (The Desire of Pioneers in the Mention of the Emirs of ʿAbd al-Wād) edited by Bū Zayy*ān* al-Dr*ājī* (Algiers: Dār al-Amal, 2007), 2:59–60.

(4) *Tilimsān fī al-ʿAhd al-Zayyānī,* 74.

(5) Ibid., 73-74.

(6) Robert Mantran, *Les Grandes Dates de l'Islam* (Paris: Larousse, 1990), 74.

Crown of Aragon, which had begun in 1464.(1) However, during the period of Ḥafṣid dominance over the Kingdom of Tlemcen's political authorities, the emir, Abū ʿ**Abd** Allāh IV, was obliged to pay tribute to the Ḥafṣids of half of the profits earned through trade.(2) The Kingdom of Tlemcen likely depended on the wealth of its Jewish inhabitants, who lived close to the emir's palace in the city of Tlemcen, to revive its treasury when the profits obtained from trade decreased. The Jews in the Kingdom of Tlemcen were divided into the native Jews, who had been settling in the kingdom since 973, and the Iberian Jews, who had begun to emigrate to Tlemcen in 1400.(3) The political authorities of Tlemcen had settled the Iberian Jews in the proper and safe places in the city of Tlemcen beside the native Jews to benefit from the Iberian Jews' craftsmanship and money, which had been acquired from the Iberian Peninsula.(4)

The Domination of ʿUthmān on the Waṭṭāsid Dynasty

The revolution in Fez in 1465 resulted in the collapse of the Marīnid rule and the execution of its last emir, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq II. Following the revolution, the inhabitants of Fez first chose as leader Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-ʿUmr**ānī** (1465–1471), who was related to the Adrīsid Shīʿī family, who had ruled the Moroccan and some Algerian territories (788–974).(5) Al-ʿUmr**ānī** faced many internal challenges. Ongoing Portuguese colonisation in Ceuta (Sabtah) and al-Kasir al-Saghir (al-Qasir al-Ṣaghīr) along with the

(1) Charles André Julien, *Histoire de L'Afrique du Nord: Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc,* translated by Muḥammad Mazālī and al-Bashīr b. Salāmah, (Tunis: Dar al-Tūnisīyah, 1978), 2:326.

(2) Al-Waz*ān*, *Wasf Ifrīqiya*, 380.

(3) Al-Fīlālī, *Tilimsān fī al-ʿAhd al-Zayyān*ī, 194.

(4) Fāṭimah Bū ʿAmāmah, *Al-Yahūd fī al-Maghrib al-Islāmī fī al-qarnayn 13–15* (The Jews in al-Maghrib During the 13th and 15th Centuries) Ph.D. dissertation (Algiers: Jāmiʿat Yūsuf b. Khadah, 2008), 236.

(5) Amira K. Bennison, *Jihad, and its Interpretation in Pre-Colonial Morocco: State-Society Relations during the French Conquest of Algeria* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 19.

colonists' plundering of surrounding towns were weakening the Kingdom of Fez. Moreover, he was unable to offer the inhabitants any change for the better. He was thus unable to defend himself and his throne against Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Waṭṭāsī, who had ambitions to become the sultan of the Kingdom of Fez. Consequently, al-Waṭṭāsī deposed al-ʿUmr**ānī**, who fled to Tunis in 1471, and gained the throne of Fez.(1)

At the beginning of the rule of Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Waṭṭāsī, the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Fez witnessed the peak of Portuguese colonisation of their territories. The Portuguese seized Asilah (Aṣīlah), a town in the northwestern Kingdom of Fez, on 24 August 1471, while Tangier (Ṭanjah), another northwestern city, was seized on 28 August 1471.(2) The consequence of the Portuguese colonisation of Asilah and Tangier was that the Waṭṭāsid sultan was obliged to sign a peace treaty with the Portuguese in 1471. This treaty forced the sultan of Fez to recognise Asilah, Tangier and Larache (Al-ʿArā'sh) as Portuguese colonies.(3) The primary reason the sultan signed the treaty was because the Portuguese soldiers had kidnapped his wife and sons. However, following the signing of the treaty, the Portuguese delayed the release of his son, Muḥammad al-Purtughālī (Portuguese), in order to compel the sultan to prevent the inhabitants of Fez from attacking the Portuguese garrisons.(4)

ʿUthm**ān** exploited these events in Fez and worked to dominate the Waṭṭāsids by providing asylum to Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-ʿUmr**ānī**, who was the political challenger of the first Waṭṭāsid sultan, Muḥammad al-Shaykh

(1) Amira K. Bennison, "Liminal States: Morocco and the Iberian Frontier between the Twelfth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of North African Studies* 6, no.1 (2001): 21.

(2) Martin Malcolm Elbl*, Portuguese Tangier (1471–1662): Colonial Urban Fabric as Cross-Cultural Skeleton* (Peterborough: Baywolf Press, 2013), 10.

(3) Ambrosio Huici Miranada, "Al-ʿArā'sh," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed, edited by Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb (Leiden: Brill Press, 1967), 1:605.

(4) Shawqī ʿAṭā Allāh al-Jamal, *Al-Maghrib al-ʿArabī al-kabīr fī al-ʿasr al-ḥadīth: Lībyā, Tūnis, al-Jazā'ir, al-Maghrib* (Arab Maghreb in the Modern Age: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria Morocco) (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣrīyah, 1977), 49.

al-Waṭṭāsī, for the throne of Fez.(1) ʿUthm**ān** dominated the Kingdom of Fez because he was preferred by its inhabitants. He raised religious awareness among them, which encouraged the *jihād* (struggle against non-Muslims) to resist Portuguese colonialism.(2) This stopped the Portuguese expansion in the Kingdom of Fez until the death of ʿ**Uthmān** in 1488. In 1488, the Portuguese occupied Asfi (Aṣfī), a coastal city in the western Kingdom of Fez on the Atlantic Ocean.

The transfer of political authority in Fez between the Adrīsids and the Waṭṭāsids, occurring over only a few years from 1465 to 1471, weakened the economy of Fez. Additionally, the existence of the Portuguese in the north of the Kingdom of Fez probably ended economic relations between the European states and the Waṭṭāsids. ʿUthm**ān** did not, therefore, take a tribute from the Waṭṭāsids.

ʿUthmān's Relations with Other Islamic States

Notwithstanding Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān was working to keep the Ḥafṣid's domination on the Islamic polities in Northwest Africa, he created diplomatic relations with the Islamic states in the Near East, such as the Ottoman Empire and the Mamlūk Sultanate. In addition, he kept the links with the Islamic polity in the Iberian Peninsula, the Emirate of Granada. In 1453, ʿUthmān received a delegation from the Ottoman sultan, Meḥmed II, to inform him of the conquest of Constantinople.(3) ʿUthmān congratulated Meḥmed II by sending two men from Tunis carrying a congratulatory letter to Meḥmed II in 1454. The two men were captured by the Kingdom of Naples on their way to Constantinople, but the king of Naples, Alfonso I (1442–1458), ordered his authorities to release them, and they arrived Constantinople.(4)

(1) Abī ʿAbd All**āh** Muḥammad al-Zarkashī, *Makhṭūṭ: Bulūgh al-am**ān**ī* (The Manuscript: Achieving Wishes), Algiers: National Library, Manuscript no. 239, p.108.

(2) Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies,* 2nd ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 328.

(3) Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East*, 77.

(4) Robert Brunschvig, *Tārīkh Ifrīqiya fī al-ʿAhd al-Ḥafṣī,* 292.

In 1464, the Emirate of Granada sent an appeal to ʿUthmān because the forces of the Crown of Castile had seized Granadan towns and cities, Gibraltar and Archidona. ʿUthmān sent financial support to the emirate. (1) He continued to send financial support to the emirate to help it combat the attacks from the Crown of Castile until his death.(2)

With regards to the relations with the Mamlūk Sultanate, ʿUthmān sent gifts, including horses and fabrics, to the Mamlūk sultans in 1446, 1454 and 1468 because pilgrims had been able to safely cross from the Ḥafṣid Kingdom to Mecca (Makkah). The Mamlūks were highly respected due to their control over the holy sites of Muslims and Christians, namely Mecca and Medina (al-Madīnah) in the Arabian Peninsula and Jerusalem (al-Quds) in the Levant.

The Ḥafṣid sultan, ʿUthmān, did not seek to stop the conflict between the Ottomans and the Mamlūk, which lasted for six years from 1485 to 1491, because he had fallen into a state of despair. He had lost his son, Abū Sālim Ibrāhīm, the alderman of Annaba (ʿ***An****ābah*), as well as his grandson, al-Muntṣir Masʿūd, in 1485. ʿUthmān then lost his crown prince, his elder son, Masʿūd, in 1487.(3) The death of the latter likely caused ʿUthmān to neglect external affairs.

ʿUthmān died in 1488 and was succeeded by his grandson, Abū Zakarīy**ā** Yaḥyā III (1488–1489). However, Yaḥyā III could not thwart his uncle's desire to inherit the throne of Tunis and was killed in 1489.(4) The

(1) Ana Echevarría, *Knights on the Frontier: The Moorish Guard of the Kings of Castile (1410–1467),* translated by Martin Beagles (Leiden: Brill Press, 2009), 79–80.

(2) Muḥammad b. al-Shmāʿ, *Al-Adilah al-nūrānīyah fī mafākhir al-dawlah al-Ḥafṣīyah,* 126.

(3) Edouard Fagnan, *Extraits inédits relatifs au Maghreb (géographie et histoire), traduits de l'arabe et annotés* (Alger J. Carbonel, 1924), 322.

(4) Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad b. Iyās, *Badā'iʿ al-zuhūr fī waqā'iʿ al-duhūr* (Beautiful Flowers in the Events of Ages), edited by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿAāmah ll-Kitāb, 1984), 3:256.

Ḥafṣid Kingdom thus entered a period of conflict, which only ceased in 1490 when the son of Yaḥyā III, Zakarīyā II (1490–1494), came to control the throne of Tunis.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the famines and rebellions the Ḥafṣid Kingdom suffered during the rule of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān, it managed several achievements. The Ḥafṣid sultan, ʿUthmān signed several treaties with the Italian republics Genoa, Venice and Naples. These treaties improved diplomatic relations between his realm and these Italian states, which were considered the most powerful trading countries. In addition, the ships and merchants of Venice and Genoa improved the economy of the Ḥafṣid Kingdom with the goods they carried.

In terms of political achievements, ʿUthmān continued the Ḥafṣid Kingdom's dominance over the Kingdom of Tlemcen. This domination began in the reign of his grandfather, Abū Fāris ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz II, in the first half of the 15th century and resulted in the Ḥafṣids receiving a tribute from Tlemcen. Furthermore, ʿUthmān controlled the Waṭṭāsids' Kingdom in 1471. ʿUthmān's domination of the Waṭṭāsids temporarily stopped the Portuguese expansion in their realm.

Given these achievements, we can conclude that ʿUthmān was indeed a Majestic sultan in Northwest Africa from 1435 to 1488. In addition, he had friendly relations with the Islamic states in Near East that had religious and military suzerainty, such as the Mamlūk Sultanate and the Ottoman Empire. Further research relating to the period and area of the current research should be undertaken. Studies on the relations between ʿUthmān and the Ottomans from the second half of the 15th century, should be studied in the future.

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الهيمنة الحفصية على شمال غرب أفريقيا في القرن الخامس عشر: عهد أبي عمرو عثمان (1435- 1488)

مشعل محمد العنزي[1]

ملخص البحث:

في النصف الأول من القرن الخامس عشر، استولت السلطنة المملوكية، التي حكمها الأشرف برسباي (1422-1438)، على قبرص في عام 1427. وفي النصف الثاني من القرن الخامس عشر، استولت السلطنة العثمانية، التي حكمها محمد الثاني (1446-1444/ -1451 1481)، على القسطنطينية، عاصمة الإمبراطورية البيزنطية، في عام 1453. لذلك، ركز المؤرخون الغربيون والشرقيون في كتاباتهم على هاتين الدولتين.

يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على جهود السلطان الحفصي أبو عمرو عثمان (1435-1488)، ويوضح نتائج تلك الجهود. كما يعرض الأوضاع السياسية للممالك في شمال غرب أفريقيا. ويوضح هذا البحث أيضا كيف استغل أبو عمرو عثمان ظروف الممالك في شمال غرب أفريقيا لتوسيع نفوذه. ومن ثم، فإن هذا البحث يؤكد أن أبا عمرو عثمان كان سلطانا مهيبا في شمال غرب أفريقيا. وتسير هذه الدراسة وفق المنهج التاريخي، الذي يبحث في المصادر التاريخية التي تناولت عهد أبو عمرو عثمان.

الكلمات الدالة: الحفصيين، تلمسان، فاس، الهيمنة

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