

"Taqadmet" The Capital City Of Prince Abdelkader Of Algeria

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Abstract:

The biographies of the great men are few and far between, and those who have possessed all the virtues and qualities of perfection are rare, so they are found one after the other in the distant past, one after the other.

He is the standard bearer of the jihad against the brutal French colonialists who invaded the land of Algeria, and we will look at a trace of the jihad of this man, especially his transformation from his capital, Camp, to the new capital, Taqadet, a capital that gained a great place with its glorious past and history, in the struggle of Prince Abdelkader for the liberation of Algeria.

Through this study, we have tried to shed light on an important era in the biography of Amir Abdelkader, by highlighting the history of his new capital "Taqadet", the reasons for his settlement there, and the prominent events in the life of Amir Abdelkader before he founded this city, and we will also look at the motives behind his settlement in this city and the reasons for his choice and its condition when he arrived there.

Then we will return and talk about the most important buildings and facilities that were built during his reign and under his leadership, and finally we will conclude by talking about the French campaign against the city and the reason for its destruction and burning.

Keywords: Taqadmet, Algeria, Prince Abdelkader.

Introduction

Taqadmet City before the Arrival of Emir Abdelkader (1252H/1836 AD):

The ancient city of Tahert-Taqadmet¹ is one of the oldest Islamic cities in the western Maghreb. It was founded by Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rustam the Ibadi in 144H/761 AD and made his capital.

Situated 8 kilometers west of the current city of Tiaret, on the slopes of Mount Jazoul, which ranges in altitude between 800 and 1000 AD above sea level.

Due to the wisdom and prudence of its founder, Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rustam, he was appointed Imam of the Ibadis. During his reign, the nascent Rustamid state in the western Maghreb grew and developed, and Taqadmet became the capital of the western Maghreb, achieving political independence from the Caliphate in the Islamic East.

It also played a significant role in the economic life of the region, as it was connected by roads to the cities of the Maghreb and Sudan. It was a meeting point for caravans coming from all parts of the Arab world and a point of contact between nomadic herders and settled farmers. It was also surrounded by fertile agricultural lands and rich pastures suitable for raising livestock. However, after the death of Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rustam, the city experienced a political life marred by frequent disturbances that led to divisions, weakening it to the point where it offered no resistance to the Fatimid invasion.

Thus, Tahert lost its importance after the fall of the Rustamid state in 295H/908 AD and its influence faded. During the Almohad era, the Almoravid Ibn Ghaniya made it the poorest and most miserable city. To such an extent that when Emir Abdelkader arrived there in 1836, he found it in ruins and rebuilt it, making it his main base and capital, instead of Mascara, his birthplace. In his era, it became known as "Taqadmet"².

Emir Abdelkader Before Establishing Taqadmet:

Following the French colonization of Algeria in 1830 AD and their seizure of numerous territories, they faced fierce resistance from the Algerian people who refused to surrender their freedoms and possessions. Amidst these events, a group of tribes in western Algeria rallied around a man known for his piety, righteousness, courage, and decisiveness: Emir Abdelkader.

His Birth and Upbringing:

The Emir was born on the 23rd of Rajab in the year 1222 AH, corresponding to September 25, 1807 AD, in the village of Qaytanah located on the Wadi el Hammam, west of the city of Mascara. His father was Mahiyy al-Din and his mother was Zahra bint Abdelkader ibn Dukha al-Hasani. His lineage can be traced back to the Ahl al-Bayt, descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatimah al-Zahra, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

He grew up under the care of his father, "Mahiyy al-Din," who was a Sheikh of the Qadiriyya Sufi order. He began reading and writing at the age of five and memorized the entire Quran by the age of twelve. He studied Islamic jurisprudence and received his early education in the book of his ancestors' zawiya in Qaytanah from his father and some of the zawiya's sheikhs at his grandfather's school in Ghrisi. Thus, he was raised in a household of knowledge and piety, in a learned and conservative religious environment. He absorbed the principles of Islamic and linguistic sciences and acquired broader knowledge in Islamic sciences. He studied tafsir (Quranic exegesis), hadith (prophetic traditions), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), nahw (Arabic grammar), and usul al-din (principles of religion) from his father. He also studied nahw and Jawharat al-bayan (a book on Arabic grammar) from some of the scholars of Oran³.

At the age of fifteen, he traveled to Arzio to study under its judge, Sheikh Ahmad bin al-Tahir, before he moved to the city of Oran and enrolled in the Ahmad bin Khoja School, which is dedicated to the sons of notables, where he spent about a year, where he learned and expanded his knowledge and honed his literary and poetic talents, then he traveled to al-Zaytuna in Tunisia and studied hadith [Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim] and jurisprudence. Then he traveled to Zaytuna in Tunis, and studied hadith [Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim] and jurisprudence, and took sciences from a number of its sheikhs such as al-Itqan in the science of the Qur'an, and psychological beliefs in monotheism, and fell in love with the works of Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, and at the age of seventeen, his father married him, Balala Khaira, daughter of his uncle, Sidi Ali Ibn Abi Talib.

The prince's leadership personality emerged after his multiple travels, his interest in horsemanship and hunting, his early marriage, his Hijazi journey, his visit to Alexandria, and other elements that contributed to the formation and strengthening of his personality, especially those that led him to Alexandria,

as he was guided by his sharp intelligence and foresight to the fact that order and tight organization are necessary. The proof of this is the organization of Khedive "Muhammad Ali" for his army, as he noticed that everything he was able to achieve was thanks to this army, so when he was crowned Emir, his first concern as a leader was to have a modern army in order to be able to unite the tribes that did not have any contact between them.⁴

The pledge of allegiance of Algerian Prince Abdelkader as leader of resistance and jihad:

When the French colonialists set foot on the land of Western Algeria, the notables of the region gathered to pledge allegiance to Sheikh Muhyiddin, the father of Prince Abdelkader, to lead the popular resistance against the French colonization that began approaching their homeland, especially after his occupation of Oran in 1831. In fact, Muhyiddin responded to the call and launched fierce battles in which he achieved great victories over the French enemy, such as the first and second battles of Kheng Al-Nattah in 1832 AD¹⁰, then the battle of Burj Ras Al-Ain in Oran, and because of his old age and his inability to bear the burdens of the emirate, he entrusted it to his son Abdul Qader, because he saw in him courage, bravery and good manners, so he was crowned. The Emir at the head of the Emirate and recognized him as the leader of the Jihad in two successive sales, the first private sale, on 3 Rajab 1247 AH / November 27, 1832 AD at the Dardara tree, where the notables of Grace used to meet, in the presence of his family members, his relatives, his elders, and the notables of the people in the Wadi al-Hammam area, and the second or general pledge of allegiance took place. Since then⁵, the Emir took the city of Camp as the capital of his emerging state, and began to form his government, organize his administration, and extend his influence over the tribes to unite their ranks and confront the enemy.⁶

And indeed, he managed to tighten the noose around the occupation forces in Oran, Mostaganem, and Tlemcen, and won over many tribes who submitted to his authority. Eventually, the French general, De Michell, the governor-general of the province of Oran, was forced to sign a peace treaty with the Emir on February 24, 1834, known as the "De Michell Treaty". Under this treaty, the Emir ruled over all of western Algeria, except for the cities of Oran, Mostaganem, and the port of Arzew. It also guaranteed him a period of peace and security during which he was able to expand his influence in the Titteri region, where he seized Medeah and Miliana in

April 1835 and placed them under his command. He also captured Beskra in the south and managed to obtain a significant amount of weapons and ammunition. He also established a regular army⁷

When France realized that the treaty was not in its favor and that the Emir had grown stronger and his state's influence had expanded, it decided to break the treaty and resumed the war after De Michell was dismissed and General Trezel was appointed in his place in 1835.

The first confrontation between the Emir and General Trezel was at the Battle of Siq on June 26, 1835, where the Emir was victorious. To erase the shame of defeat, the colonialists regrouped their forces to take revenge. They faced the Emir again in the Battle of al-Maqta on June 28, 1835, but he managed to achieve a brilliant victory in this battle as well. News of the disastrous defeat spread throughout France, resulting in the dismissal of General Trezel and the Governor-General, the Duke d'Orleans, the eldest son of King Louis Philippe. Marshal Clauzel was appointed in place of the latter in July 1835 .

The policy of the new governor, Clauzel, was no different from his predecessors in terms of consolidating the occupation and weakening the Emir's power. He occupied the capital city of Mascara on December 3, 1835, and burned and destroyed some of its important architectural structures before leaving for Tlemcen, which he occupied in January 1836. He also sent another army to Medeah, which it also occupied. While Clauzel was busy occupying Tlemcen and Medeah, the Emir was subduing the tribes that had rebelled against him, then besieged Tlemcen and prevented supplies and reinforcements from reaching it. He also besieged the camp that the occupation forces had established between Reshgun and Tlemcen, and cut off communications between the latter and Oran. He achieved brilliant victories over his enemies, which prompted France to send a force led by General Bedeau, who managed to lift the siege and inflict a defeat on the Emir at the Battle of al-Sakak in July 1836 AD .⁸

After a period of these events and battles, Emir Abdelkader felt that he was not safe, so he decided to establish a city that would be more secure and far from French attacks. He chose the city of "Taqadmet," or as some call it, the new Tahert, which he made his capital instead of his first capital, Mascara.

The Second Founding of Taqadmet by Emir Abdelkader and the Reasons Therefor:

1. The Re-planning of the City of Taqadmet in 1836:

Taqadmet had been inhabited since ancient times and was built during two main phases: the first by Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rustam and the second by Emir Abdelkader. Some historical sources mention that the city consists of two hills, a northern one and a southern one. The northern one is 862 meters above sea level, and the southern one is 850 meters. While some sources mention that the Rustamid city of Tahert was built on the northern plateau, the fortress of Emir Abdelkader was built on the southern plateau, adjacent to the Wadi Mina. However, when we conducted a field visit to the site and contacted some professors and archaeologists, we understood that there is still an issue regarding the separation between the ruins of the Rustamid city of Tahert and the ruins of the Emir's fortress of Taqadmet, despite the historical and geographical distance between the two cities. This is evidenced by the fact that the historical texts they relied on did not accurately specify the locations. For example, the professor and archaeologist Dahdouh mentions in his research that the researchers "Marçais and Lamar," who conducted an excavation at the site, discovered a citadel and considered it to be the citadel of the Rustamid imams. However, the researcher "Kadna" has a different opinion. After examining the site, he indicated that it was the Emir's citadel. Referring to what Ibn al-Saghir mentioned quoting Buruibah, "...that when the city expanded during the Rustamid era, palaces and fortresses were built outside its walls," we are inclined to believe the opinion that says that Emir Abdelkader may have built his fortress adjacent to the citadel on the ruins of the remnants of the Rustamid state. This does not preclude the possibility of overlap between them.

De France, who was a prisoner of Emir Abdelkader, mentioned that this site was slightly sloping, covered with stones, and there were some remains of walls, towers, and the Rustamid citadel. On these foundations, the Emir built his new fortress in September 1836. Churchill believes that the construction took place in May 1836. The camp was located on the slope of a small hill near the ruins of the Rustamid city and a short distance from the spring. After the inspection, he ordered the removal of the ruins and debris and the start of construction.⁹

The Emir adopted a policy of exempting the tribes from paying taxes and offering prizes to all the tribes surrounding the city, provided that they send workers to help build the forts. He also supervised all the work personally and continuously, in order to provide himself with resources and obtain from the neighboring tribes supplies, food, and much help during the work.

The residents of Camp were responsible for providing baskets, shovels and shovels, and Alby confirms this: "...that he came from Camp with fifty donkeys loaded with axes and all kinds of digging and construction tools," and the neighboring tribes supported him with provisions and supplies after they were exempt from taxation, while the residents of Medea and Maliana were responsible for providing cheese, various fruits, good white bread and meat. According to Churchill, and from these supplies, the wages of workers and their food were provided, and soon the houses were built and the streets appeared, and the prince took special care of it, and after the completion of its construction, he moved to it with his family and his entourage, and the Arab, Andalusian, and Kargilian families, as for the number of the population of Taqadet, Colonel Scott mentioned during his stay there in recent years that it does not exceed 5,000 people.¹⁰

2- Reasons and motives for Amir Abdelkader's choice of the city of Taqaddumt:

When Emir Abdelkader saw that General Cluzel easily occupied the city of Camp in 1835 due to its immunity and its proximity to the French colonial base in Oran, he thought about choosing a site to build a new capital instead of Camp, and his choice fell on Tahrt, which became known as Taqaddumt.

Colonel "Paul Azan" recalls in this regard: "... When he realized that Camp and Tlemcen were very vulnerable to French raids, he decided to move his warehouses and supplies to the south and deposit them in the great ruins of Taugdat, and he intended to turn this fortified stronghold after restoration and repair into a military capital and a fortress from which to launch his military campaigns aimed at expelling the French from Algeria ...".

Auguste de France (a prisoner of the Emir) adds that when he spoke with Emir Abdelkader about his intentions to raise the ruins of this place, he replied: "...I want to build this city and make it bigger and more prosperous than it was in the days of my sultans... He adds, "...first, I will find in it a safe fortress that will protect me from the attacks of the French...then, after I

gather my tribes and complete my new progress in its greatness and majesty, and make it an impregnable stronghold, I will launch like an eagle from this nest with steep rugged sides and swoop down on the Christians and expel them from all the places they have taken...”.

In general, we can summarize these reasons as follows:

*** First the natural immunity of the Ta Taqaddamt region:**

Perhaps because of its excellent geographical location and its historical and cultural importance, the Emir chose this area, which is characterized by its natural immunity, as the hill is connected to the steppe, as it controls areas with difficult paths and varied terrain, in addition to that it is located in an inland area and is centered between mountains and valleys, which makes access to it difficult and difficult, and it hinders the access of French forces to the desert because of the difficulty of its paths, as well as the difficulty of transportation that was burdening the French army and impeding their progress, in addition to the city's location is a central location that facilitates communication between it and all southern military centers.

In addition to this, the abundance of water that comes to it from rivers and springs (e.g. Wadi Mina - Tach River), as well as the fertility of its land, the abundance and quality of its planting, and its proximity to pastures due to the nature of its hilly location overlooking the desert, which qualified it to be a headquarters for raising livestock.

In addition to the above, Emir Abdelkader wanted to extend his control over the tribes, as he made Taqaddum a thorn in the eyes of the tribes traveling in the desert that were disturbing his comfort, and when he built this castle, those tribes began to submit.

In addition to the above, Taqaddum is a transit center and a link for commercial exchange between the hill and the desert on the one hand, and on the other hand, it ensures continuous communication between the residents of the north and the nomadic tribes of the south, which can be placed under the control of his forces, and because of the importance of the commercial city, people and merchants came to it because of the great opportunities for profit, and thus Prince Abdel Qader considered the fortress of Taqaddum as the greatest, strongest and best located fortresses, according to the owner of the visitor's Tahfat al-Zayyar.

The locations of the castles built by Emir Abdelkader were characterized by strategic, military and economic importance, as they have all the necessary conditions for the establishment of castles and cities, which ensure security, stability, and a good life.

Architectural Structures and Urban Planning in the City of Taghdemt During the Reign of Emir Abdelkader:

Emir Abdelkader paid great attention to organizing his new city. He divided the structures within the citadel into two sections: one dedicated to government buildings and the other to civil structures.

Government buildings were situated on a slightly elevated location in the eastern part of the city. These included the kasbah, the fort, and the stables. Civil buildings, consisting primarily of public housing, were constructed along the slope of the plateau.

Archaeologists Marcei and Lamar conducted excavations in Taghdemt in 1941, relying on the remaining ruins of the city. They discovered a kasbah and attributed it to the Rustamid imams. However, researcher Cadenat expressed surprise after his excavations at the site in 1979, questioning these assumptions. Historical evidence clearly indicates that the structures belonged to Emir Abdelkader.¹²

The following is a detailed description of these structures based on archaeological findings and eyewitness accounts:

The Kasbah:

A kasbah is a fortified building that serves as a military headquarters to defend a specific area. It was considered the first military structure and is described as a rectangular building with two floors. It had two entrances: an eastern entrance overlooking other military structures within the citadel and a western entrance overlooking the city built below the plateau. Four towers were strategically placed at the corners of the kasbah, projecting above the walls and directly above the roof. The walls were topped with crenellated parapets, and openings were made in their upper sections.

Sources also mention that the kasbah had a hearth for preparing food for guests, a resting place for guards, and a tomb for Emir Abdelkader and his prominent commanders. There were also tombs for regular soldiers, as well as storage rooms and warehouses for supplies, located in lower areas similar to cellars. A weapons and currency workshop, shops,

underground passages, and twenty-three rooms capable of accommodating 1800 soldiers were also found. These rooms contained stores of weapons, ammunition, sulfur, and building materials, according to Yver.¹³

Colonel Escotet described the government buildings as being surrounded by square walls measuring 50 meters on each side. Within these walls were the manufacturing house (for weapons), the courthouse, and the sultan's hall, where he would sit to settle disputes between litigants, as was customary for kings in previous eras.

The Fort:

The fort refers to fortified buildings that defend specific regions and house soldiers. It's a military structure designed to withstand any attack, consisting of an area surrounded by a sturdy wall. It was the second military building constructed by Emir Abdelkader in the citadel of Taghdemt after the kasbah. Located to the east of the kasbah, it is approximately 150 meters away.

Daumas referred to this fort as the "Sultan's Storehouse." It was a square-shaped, closed warehouse protected by the kasbah and the citadel. A garrison was stationed there to guard it, and it also contained a prison and stores for butter, oil, honey, gunpowder, and shells.

The author of a book on the city of Tiaret, the capital of Emir Abdelkader, describes the fort: "This military site and fortified defense, established by Emir Abdelkader, served as a storehouse for his provisions and ammunition amidst hills covered with oak and wild almond trees, a short distance from the Mina Wadi. This site was undeniably one of the most important and largest institutions established by Emir Abdelkader since the infamous Treaty of Tafna. The citadel, warehouses, underground passages, and hiding places formed a harmonious group of defensive structures."

Emir Abdelkader established a workshop for manufacturing weapons and gunpowder stores in the fort, supervised by ten French workers. Emerit adds that this fort was built for French workers and was protected by two six-pound cannons, two howitzers, and eight mortars. It contained a collection of war machines sent from Paris, a mint, a shell factory, and stores of wheat, barley, and other supplies.

De France Auguste states: "...In addition to building the citadel, Emir Abdelkader ordered the excavation of a very old and

extensive cistern located a few steps east of the kasbah..." He adds, "...I later learned that Abdelkader had used it as a storehouse for quantities of iron, lead, gunpowder, saltpeter, and sulfur. To dispel doubts and suspicions, he blocked the entrance with a wall and built a house-like structure of reed (qasb or tree) in the form of a sentry box above it. About ten soldiers participated in the excavation."¹⁴

The stable:

The stable was the first architectural structure built by Emir Abdelkader in the citadel of Taghdemt. According to some historical sources, it was referred to as the "stronghold," but it is more commonly called the stable based on its function. It is located in the southeastern corner of the plateau, approximately 20 meters from the fort.

On the southern side, it is bordered by a slope formed by a group of large rocks and boulders, increasing its strength and fortification. The remaining three sides were surrounded by a moat, parts of which were filled with earth.¹⁵

Several sources have described this stable. De France, who witnessed the first buildings constructed by the Emir in Taghdemt, stated: "...The workers were digging a trench around an area of forty meters, and they were throwing the earth in the place where the stronghold was built, just as we do when we build a small fort. This fort was intended to house a military garrison to protect the workers."

Daumas also describes it, saying that it was a temporary fortification built primarily to protect the workers. There is an opening facing south, surrounded by a moat six feet wide and deep. In this stronghold were the Emir's mules and their fodder, and it also protected the cisterns that were almost connected to it.

The Mint:

Historical sources agree that Emir Abdelkader established a mint in Taghdemt. According to Daumas and the researcher Boudans Van, this mint was located inside the kasbah. However, Emerit suggests that it was inside the fort, and this latter statement seems more accurate since the kasbah served as the residence of the Emir and his family and contained a court and a place to receive visitors.

According to Professor Bushnaqi, the minting of coins in this mint began in 1252 AH, corresponding to 1836-1837 AD. Emir Abdelkader minted two types of coins based on their value: the

Muhammadiyah and the Nisfiyah. The Muhammadiyah was named after the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, while the Nisfiyah was named after its value, which was half of the Muhammadiyah coin.

The Weapons Factory:

Taghdemt was a military city equipped with a weapons factory, cannons, and a gunpowder mill. It was independent of the fort, as confirmed by Colonel Escotet, who stated: "...the weapons factory is a building separate from the kasbah and the fort." He adds, "...and the weapons factory is located a few hundred yards from the surrounding wall, built on the side of a stream that descends from the mountain and flows into the Mina River after Taghdemt has taken its water needs. It is about half a mile below the city..." This factory was established by a French expert brought by the Emir from Paris.

Emerit also states: "...the Emir established a weapons factory on the banks of a river where a water mill and special houses were placed."

From these texts, it appears that the weapons factory was independent of the other buildings and was built on the banks of the Mina River. It could not have been inside the kasbah or the fort.

Emir Abdelkader paid great attention to weapons and established factories for them, including the factory in Taghdemt, of which little remains. However, some sources mention that the factory did not produce many rifles, according to Daumas and Massou. The latter states: "...There are also two buildings adorned with the name 'weapons factory,' but this factory does not produce anything of good quality at all, and the use of the French workers who were placed at the disposal of Abdelkader before the war did not result in any significant progress in this factory, and thus they were expelled to France...Of the seven or eight rifles produced by the factory each week, at least two-thirds may not withstand any test or the simplest experiment..."¹⁶

Fournier confirms this, stating: "...only one rifle was produced in Taghdemt per week, and it was a rifle of poor quality..."

Youssef Manasra, in his book about Leon Roche's mission in Algeria and Morocco 1832-1847, explains the reason why the factory was not destroyed, saying: "...Roche began to inspect the Emir's strategic locations to sabotage their sites, as he

asked the Emir to give him the task of inspecting the weapons factories located in various cities, and he succeeded and spent months (March, April, May, and June, 1839) inspecting weapons and ammunition factories and all basic institutions, and worked to destroy them, as evidenced by the fact that they had not produced anything since their inception..." He adds, "...and it is most likely that he worked to sabotage it with the help of the French fugitives who were in the service of the Emir and were responsible for managing these factories and their affairs..."¹⁷

Manasra affirms in his book that the French factory workers in Taghdemt ceased their work immediately after the Emir's council decided to resume the jihad against the enemy. They were eagerly awaiting 'Roche', considering him a spy, to intercede with Captain 'Dumas' to return them to their families in France. Not only that, but Leon Roche himself confirms his betrayal of the Emir regarding the establishment of the factory. He mentions on one occasion that he met Emir Abdelkader in October 1839 in the city of Taghdemt, and informed him of the establishment of a weapons factory there, and placed some weapons in it as if they were of his production. However, in reality, according to him, the factory was not producing anything meaningful, and the weapons were placed in it to deceive the Emir..

On the other hand, the author of the book 'Al-Tahfa' mentioned that the fort of Taghdemt was the greatest, strongest, and best of forts. He adds, '...and he established a weapons factory in it and brought workers from Spain and France. They used to manufacture cannons, their projectiles, swords, and other tools and equipment of war...' He also adds, '...he used to buy a large quantity when necessary from the kingdoms of Tunisia and Morocco, and French merchants used to bring salt and sulfur to the ports of Algiers, and he would buy it from them. During times of truce, he would bring it from France...

"The gunpowder mill:

The mill was located on the banks of the Mina River, as identified by Wernier, but it no longer exists today. Dumas referred to this mill in a letter dated April 14, 1838, saying: '...An Arab man from the city of Algiers and another Swedish man tried several times to build a gunpowder mill in Taghdemt, and after spending a large amount of espionage, their work did not yield any results...'"

In another letter dated August 13, 1838, Dumas mentions that an attempt was being made to establish a gunpowder mill on the model of the Tlemcen mill, which was said to produce one and a half quintals of gunpowder per day. It was supervised by workers who had deserted from the French army.

The Grand Mosque:

The citadel of Taghdemt included a grand mosque and secondary mosques for the neighborhoods. According to researcher Abdelkader Dahdouh, it was located at the bottom of the plateau. Unfortunately, little evidence remains of it today, except for what can be inferred from the few sources that mention this mosque, such as Escotet and the researcher Boudans. Escotet states, "Prince Abdelkader visited Taghdemt on August 16, 1841, at eleven o'clock, and when he dismounted from his horse at the main mosque, which was located within rifle shot of the city, he entered the mosque and stayed there for about an hour." Boudans states that the French colonization destroyed the citadel of Taghdemt, leaving only the mosque, whose sanctity was respected. However, reality does not reflect this, as it was destroyed like the rest of the citadel's architectural structures.

The Hammam (Bathhouse):

The hammam is one of the architectural structures built by the Emir in Taghdemt. It is located at the bottom of the plateau, and its remains still exist. J. Marcais and D. Lamar conducted excavations and created a plan for it, but they considered it a water reservoir. Some sources tend to believe that it was a hammam rather than a reservoir.

Urban Structures:

The urban structures no longer exist, and their features have completely disappeared. However, some historical sources mention that the civilian buildings were built about a quarter of an hour's walk from the Emir's kasbah. They were huts built of straw and hay, and others were built of stone and brick.

Escotet describes them as follows: "...they are located on the slope of a western hill of the citadel - the kasbah - and extend to the end of this hill. They are built of solid stone and lime, and have flat roofs. The main street, which is still under construction, was planned in the European style. This street is unique, and I have never seen anything like it in Africa. It is 30 feet long and 10 meters wide." Boudans describes them as consisting of 100 to 600 single-story houses made of unhewn stones, roofed with wood, and with narrow streets. He also

adds, "...Under these humble dwellings, and on a less steep slope, about 100 modern houses rose, forming a parallelogram shape similar to that of the city of Algiers. These houses, many of which were not yet completed, were built solidly, with spacious rooms painted with lime and roofed with tiles. A space separated them, which any inhabitant could take as a small garden. The Emir's palace rose in the middle of this archipelago of buildings, and this palace was a kasbah in the shape of a square surrounded by high and thick walls that could withstand a siege." Charles Andre Julian mentions that the number of houses did not exceed twenty houses covered with tiles.

As for the inhabitants of the city of Taghdemt, they consisted of the Emir's family, people who came from various parts of Algeria, Sudan, and Europeans, as mentioned by Rashid Bouraouiba. Dumas adds in a letter sent to General Rabatel on June 3, 1838, that 150 Kroumirs arrived from Medea and Mascara. He adds that after fourteen days, there were 600 families in the city of Taghdemt who came from Mostaganem, Mazagran, Cherchell, Medea, and Miliana...

Massou, quoting Rashid Bouraouiba, also mentions that the Arabs from the cities of Medea and Miliana had taken refuge in Taghdemt after the French forces occupied these cities.

Fournier adds in the notes attached to this letter the following information: 'In Taghdemt, according to the newspaper published on November 1, 1840, there were 300 dwellings. Garcin says that it housed 2,000 inhabitants. As for the Europeans, they consisted of workers contracted by the Emir from among the prisoners, about ten of them. Massou says that their number in 1841 increased to 97 prisoners, and 48 prisoners died due to the harsh climate and the spread of disease.' Dumas adds in this regard, saying: 'Many people have died in Taghdemt since last month, and their number has risen to about one hundred.'

From what has been mentioned, we see that historical sources have differed in determining the number of dwellings inhabited in Taghdemt and the materials with which they were built, due to the disappearance of their features. It seems very difficult, if not impossible, to find a dwelling or house dating back to the Emir's era, unlike the government buildings (the kasbah, the fort, the stable) located on the top of the plateau, on which no buildings have been built until now, and the place is still vacant and suitable for excavations.-

The Fall of Emir Abdelkader's Capital - Taghdemt - in 1841:

Him in his account of the preparations and departure from or evacuation of the city in the twenties of May. The same date is mentioned by Henry Churchill.

How were the preparations for this campaign made? And what were the procedures and recommendations taken regarding it?"

General Bijou prepared a complete project for the occupation of Algeria, and how to eliminate the resistance of Emir Abdelkader in particular. This project was submitted to the French Parliament and approved, so General Bijou was appointed commander-in-chief of the French army in Algeria in 1841, and thus the first preparations began. A study was prepared by Alexis de Tocqueville on the method of warfare to be followed against Emir Abdelkader, who advised the need to lure the tribes with the manifestations of Western civilisation and give them money in order to make them follow the French and extract their support by creating internal problems with the Emir.

In accordance with these recommendations, General Bijou was appointed at the head of the campaign, and Léon Roche provided him with a detailed report on the political conditions of Algiers and Oran, which enabled him to accurately plan the upcoming military operations against the Emir. Sources mention that the French government provided him with about twenty thousand men who landed in the port of Mostaganem and joined the forces of Lamorcier, who was tasked with attacking the city of Taqadet, and besides Lamorcier, Montignac participated in the campaign (this is on the French side).

From inside the camp of Emir Abdelkader, Escot mentions that the Emir received information that the French army was moving towards Taqadet, so they started to take the necessary measures to evacuate the place, so they started moving what remained in the castle from their belongings with the utmost speed and regularity. Two days later, news arrived that the French army had stopped one day away from the city, and they became restless and confused at the imminent arrival of the French army, so the speed of moving what needed to be moved on camels and horses increased, and meanwhile the fleeing population left Taqadet towards the desert.

In the face of this new situation, the Emir decided not to let the French army take advantage of his cities on the one hand, and

on the other hand, according to his new system, he decided not to waste his strength in attempts to defend his castles, so he abandoned them, starting with Ta Taqaddumt, and preferred to put his forces in obstructing the army's advance, in order to preserve the loyalty of the tribes that appeared to be reluctant. It also seemed to him that the method of defending cities had become a heavy burden for him, so he took the decision to burn the city of Ta Taqadet before the arrival of Marshal Bijou, as the Emir did not care about the fate of an internal city as much as the lives of its inhabitants, so he ordered its evacuation and then its burning.

Escot described the burning of this city: 'The burning of this city was carried out in the afternoon, as was the destruction and burning of the castle and the arsenal, so that Taqaddum became a great mass of smoke and ash, which the inhabitants left behind to greet the French army. Saint Arnaud, an eyewitness from the French side who came after the destruction of this city, mentioned that it had become deserted and lifeless, and in front of the entrance of the judge in the main street there was a dead dog and a dead cat, and between them was a paper on which was written: "This is the delegation that we have decided to leave to receive you, the cat for the son of your king and the dog for the governor... The wooden and stone houses were burnt, the factory collapsed and the fortress exploded.

Montignac, who took part in this campaign, reported that he found only dogs and some poor cats in the city, so the French army vented its anger on them, killing them in the streets of the city and its suburbs.

Conclusion:

Taghdemt represented a significant cultural landmark in the Tlemcen region throughout the ages. This is due to several factors, foremost among which is the geopolitical aspect of the region. This indicates that Emir Abdelkader was wise in choosing this city for several reasons, including its geographical, historical, and cultural importance. Therefore, this city occupied a prestigious position among the other hill forts that he built at that time, which qualified it to be the capital of Emir Abdelkader for four consecutive years. Its burning by the Emir signaled his entry into a new and innovative system, through the establishment of what is known as the "zamala" or the mobile capital.

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