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A century of hands : work, communities, and identities among the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans in a Moroccan Oasis

Tanabe, M.

Citation
Tanabe, M. (2015, June 17). *A century of hands : work, communities, and identities among the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans in a Moroccan Oasis*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/33291

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Author: Tanabe, Mayuka
Title: A century of hands : work, communities, and identities among the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans in a Moroccan Oasis
Issue Date: 2015-06-17

Chapter 3 – Imagining *Tamazirt*

> 'In *tamazirt* [village, land or homeland] we can trust each other. It's like my family. But here in Rissani I have to be careful, because it's a town [not because we live with the Arabs]. I will not allow my daughters to marry the Arabs, though. But for one from Tafraoute, he can work and settle down in town … because I myself was in the village before, and asked the hand of a girl who lived in town, and her family had accepted … We sold the land and moved to Rissani. I prefer living here, but I feel it's dirty compared to my village. *Tamazirt* is beautiful, even if it's far away, and without electricity, water or telephone when I left.'
> <Lhou, 14 June 2012, Rissani>

3.1 Introduction

Among the Rissani fossil and barite artisans, the standardised discourse of *tamazirt* as an eternal ancestral land, which is a source of tribal pride and identity, is commonly heard in contrast to their current life in town (*tamdint*) which is full of 'dirt' and insecurity. They appreciate and enjoy the living standard of Rissani, such as tap water, electricity and easy access to the *suq*, but associate a negative image with the town and conclude that it is the place where one cannot be one's 'true self'. When migration and sedentarisation became a new way of life among the Ayt Khebbash people of the Tafilalet, they began to organise their lives around the departures and arrivals, from/to the imagined *tamazirt* and imagined *tamdint*. The narratives that connect the Ayt Khebbash migrants to their *tamazirt* at the same time help them establish a connection to the destination, which means they are creating a new social space wherein their actions are justified within a trans-local context.

The home villages of the Ayt Khebbash people are, in fact, a fairly 'modern' creation, as a result of the administrative and economic changes on the national and international level, which led the previously nomadic Ayt Khebbash groups to seek for permanent settlement in the form of villages, and eventually in towns. One of the examples is Tafraoute of Sidi Ali Commune, a small desert village located on the southern end of the Ar-Rachidia Province, which is the 'place of origin' for many of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani. The village started to take its form in the late 1960s, when the first group of Ayt Khebbash nomads started to settle down. There were numerous water holes in the pre-Saharan area, but except for the oasis of Tabelbala, which was occupied by Algerian forces in 1910, the oases were uninhabited by sedentary settlers

(Trout 1969). The nomadic population in the region were the Ayt Khebbash, Ayt Alwan (belonging to Ayt Aṭṭa group), Aarib, and the Ayt Oussa, all of whom had interests in the oases to the immediate south of the Atlas ranges and whose southward migration was affected by the seasonal precipitations in the northern part of the Sahara. During the resistance of the Tafilalet tribes against the French forces, many of the Ayt Khebbash people started to move westwards, from the Bouhyara and Sarhro region to the Tafraoute area, in search of water and refuge. The first settlers dug the wells in Tafraoute, Ighef n Ighir, Ramilia, etc., and found that the water was suitable for drinking and agriculture. Some of the current inhabitants of Tafraoute are from the surrounding Sidi Ali region, whereas some others took refuge from Tiharyine or Daoura when the border dispute between Morocco and Algeria broke out in 1978.

In 1934, after the French finally conquered the Tafilalet, the government of Paris decided a joint Algero-Moroccan control of the Western Sahara (Cf. Dunn 1977). During the Protectorate period, the 1564 km Algero-Moroccan border had been officially defined only as far as Figuig, and the rest of the disputed territories such as the iron-rich Tindouf were *de facto* controlled by the French military presence (Ruedy 1992). After independence, Morocco claimed the Western Sahara, and occupied the northern part of the territory in 1975, while Mauritania occupied the south. When Algeria recognised the Saḥrawi Arab Democratic Republic as an independent nation, the Saḥrawi resistance movement, Polisario, moved to the Tindouf area in Algerian territory. In 1976 Morocco broke off diplomatic relations with Algeria, and the border was closed, which resulted in the two countries' enduring proxy war for the next ten years (Zoubir 2000). At this time the nomadic tribes who settled down in the disputed border area were forced to evacuate the villages by the Algerian army, and many of them were arrested and sent to prisons in Algeria.

In this chapter I shall discuss in what ways the lives of the Ayt Khebbash artisans were transformed from subsistence agriculture and herding to the newly created domains of fossil extraction/sculpting, tourism and barite mining, in the context of these processes of administrative and economic changes. I will first draw the geographical contours of the village Tafraoute, followed by the locally believed 'history' and myth of the village formation, in order to reveal the ways in which oral history functions to justify the political relations between the existing clans. Second, I shall discuss the political system of the village during the Protectorate period and after Moroccan independence, for the purpose of highlighting the ways in which the inter-clan and inter-per-

sonal relationships have been transformed by the administrative change brought by the Moroccan state. Thirdly, I shall turn to the subject of the village's incorporation into the global capitalist economy by discussing the Ayt Khebbash people's involvement in new domains of work and their identity transformations vis-à-vis the foreign and domestic cultural and economic influences. Lastly, I will analyse the local political tension which resulted from the village's increasing involvement in regional and national politics. This internal tension was created by the local electoral candidates who attempted to use their clan background to gain support from the group to which they belonged, which resulted in stressing the differences between the clans. The villagers responded by 'traditionalising' their social interactions and marriage patterns, in order to defend their own interest. Throughout the chapter, I pay particular attention to the local people's narratives, their own versions of histories and biographies, so as to shed light on the Ayt Khebbash artisans' processes of identification as part of the wider socio-economic changes, and how they traditionalise their daily practice in response to the local politicians' new administrative manoeuvres.

3.2 Tafraoute Since the 1960s: Original Settlement and Its History

Prior to the French conquest of the Tafilalet in 1934, the Ayt Khebbash nomads and the Arab population of the *qṣur* lived in a patron-client relationship to ensure mutual survival. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Arab farmers and the Ismkhan paid the Ayt Khebbash in animals or grain each year in order to receive their protection from raids and abductions. By the time they entered the war against the French, several Ayt Khebbash men started to assemble their forces in a single space and therefore many of the slaves were freed, and the former patron-client relationship started to disappear. In 1936, the commander of Taouz Post notes that the Ayt Khebbash 'finally started to get out of their problematic attitude of contempt and arrogance' (Lefébure 1986: 144), indicating that the final 'pacification' of the Tafilalet tribe was accomplished.

By this time, many of the Ayt Khebbash people were cultivating wheat on the vast plain called Daya-el-Maïder and the other alluvial basins nearby, the territory considered to be their tribal land. The cultivation was further encouraged by the Bureau of Indigenous Affairs, to increase the density of cultivation to five or six times. Lefébure notes that in 1962, 7939 persons had the right to about thirty centimetres in width and five kilometres in length, vertically, in the sense of the underground water current (1986: 147). An Ayt Khebbash man who emigrated from Tafraoute to Rissani in the

Source: Google Maps 2012

Map 3-1 Tafraoute

1980s recalls that most of the original population of his home village started agricultural activities in 1964, either in the oasis surrounding the village or in Daya-el-Maïder where they planted wheat. In fact, long before the existence of Tafraoute, the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe used to gather at Daya-el-Maïder after the seasonal flooding of the Oued Rheris, where they decided each family's lot for cultivation. They originated from the Sarhro Mountains just like other fractions (*khems*) of Ayt Aṭṭa, and like the Mhamdi (Arab Shorfa), who were also considered members of Ayt Aṭṭa. An Ayt Khebbash man explained that their history of wheat cultivation in this area dates back to two thousand years ago, even if they are considered nomads whose core livelihood is based on animal herding. He recalled that he used to transport their harvest to the mausoleum of Sidi Ali, as all the families in the region used to do by assembling caravans. According to several Ayt Khebbash men who used to cultivate the area, Daya-el-Maïder was divided into five plots for the five fractions of the Ayt Aṭṭa tribe. They came from places as far as Ouarzazate or Boulemane to cultivate wheat, but in 1965 a conflict rose due to the arrival of other people such as Imlwan, the Tamazight-speaking Ḥaratin population from Achbarou, Azequr and Alnif, who claimed their plot of land. Due to this conflict and the severe lack of water, all agricultural activities were completely abandoned by the 1980s.

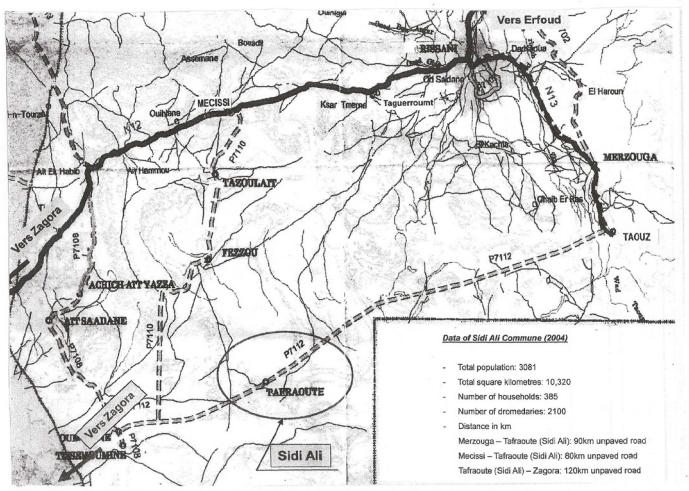
In the meantime, many of the Ayt Khebbash men who abandoned agriculture started to work in the lead mines. The mining activities of the region date back to the 1930s, when the Mining Centre of Mfis established by the Protectorate government started to recruit the local population as a labour force. There were several mines in the Taouz and Tafraoute region, where French engineers opened the veins of lead and galena deposits, and passed their report to the Service for Indigenous Arts in Fès. In turn, according to Lefébure, the French ordered the Ayt Khebbash to extract three tons of galena per month (1986: 148). And when the international demand started to favour lead, the Mfis mine managed to produce 300 tons of lead per day. Lefébure estimates that there were more than 2700 Ayt Khebbash artisans, who worked with Dwimniaa and Ismkhan (1986: 149-150). The mine provided 8 per cent of the Moroccan national production in the 1950s. An elderly Ayt Khebbash man, who is blind, and currently living in Rissani, told me about his experience working in the French mines of Mfis in the 1950s. His village of origin was Taouz, but later he moved to Mfis in search of wage labour:

> *Lahcen*: 'We used to dig out the lead to sell it to the French companies.'
> *Question*: So it's the French who showed you the lead?
> *Lahcen*: 'Yes, at first we just collected the lead on the ground surface, then we observed how others did. We dug two to three metres … like that it became my work. I worked for the French company and then for myself. We lived in Mfis and then in Khemliya for a long time … Once we found very good veins of lead [in Mfis]. That's what we call *le pain de ni ni* [*lban di nini*, a variety of lead]. There were times when we earned millions [of centimes] per day. How could we not be satisfied? But sometimes we worked for more than two months without any income. In such case we became impatient and angry. One day in Chaïb er Ras [a village in the south of Rissani], we worked, then the motor fell down there [into the mine]. But fortunately nobody was injured.'
> *Question*: What was the difference between the French company and working on your own?
> *Lahcen*: 'In the company they got everything, and we are labourers. After the French left, we started to work for ourselves. We dug the well [the veins] with manual tools. But you know in another time [the Protectorate period] the company mobilised 400 or 500 workers, and they were well equipped with all the machines … In our independent work, we extracted four or five *qantar* [400 or 500 kg] maximum.'

Question: Did you work in another domain before?
Lahcen: 'I was in Khemliya, we cultivated wheat on the non-irrigated land [relying on rain water]. But my job since childhood had to be the mining work, I worked for 50 years as a responsible for handling explosives.'
<22 January 2013, Rissani>

As in the experience of Lahcen, many of the Ayt Khebbash people abandoned agriculture and herding as their primal source of subsistence, and looked for wage labour, first in the French-run lead mines, then as independent miners of lead, barite and fossil, depending on international demand. The natural environmental factor as well as colonialist and capitalist forces were the motors of the accelerated rural-urban and rural-rural migration of the Tafilalet inhabitants since the 1930s. Three types of labour migration can be discerned: 1) military conscription by the colonial government; 2) labour recruitment; 3) voluntary migration. The military conscription caused a large number of men to leave the Tafilalet, which accelerated rural-urban migration. On the other hand, the labour recruitment by the colonial administration encouraged rural-rural migration, as seen in the case of Lahcen and several Ayt Khebbash miners. The third type, voluntary migration, involved two destinations; a largely Arab population moving out into large cities, either permanently or seasonally, and a predominantly Amazigh nomadic and village population flowing into the Tafilalet towns seeking for wage labour and permanent residence. In this chapter I shall focus on the migratory stage prior to the rural-rural migration to regional towns; the first stage of sedentarisation of the Ayt Khebbash nomads in the villages.

The village of Tafraoute is situated on the south of Daya-el-Maïder, on a desert basin surrounded by black granite mountains (map 3-1). The name Tafraoute means 'the basin (in the middle of mountains)' in Tamazight, which explains why there are several villages called 'Tafraoute' in Morocco. The Tafraoute in question is often called 'Tafraoute n Sidi Ali', to distinguish it from other places with same names. It was the home of three Ayt Khebbash clans in the 1960s, and continues to be the *tamazirt* of those who eventually moved out to Rissani later on. The village is divided into two areas – Tafraoute *taqdimt* (old Tafraoute) and Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* (new Tafraoute). The former existed as a settlement since the early 1960s, and the houses display 'traditional' characteristics of the region, whereas the latter was built during the 1970s after an increasing number of nomads started to move in due to the Algerian border dispute. For this reason one can observe a marked architectural difference between the two



Map 3-2 Data of Sidi Ali Commune (2004)

areas of Tafraoute: the houses in the new village were built with concrete blocks reminiscent of town buildings in Rissani or Erfoud, which is different from the 'traditional' style commonly seen in Tafraoute *taqdimt*. There are approximately seventy houses in each area, of the total of 140 houses only 120 are said to be actually inhabited. The population of the entire village can be estimated at about 840 people.[25] It consists of three Ayt Khebbash clans: Ayt Taghla, Irjdaln and Ayt Amar. There are very few Ismkhan and Hassani Arabs, who are integrated into one of the three major Ayt Khebbash clans and therefore regarded as members of the Ayt Khebbash.

In the early 1960s the Tafraoute inhabitants used to be self-sufficient, by cultivating wheat, carrots, turnips, and *lfeṣṣa* as fodder for animals, with sales of henna to obtain fuel such as natural gas for motors to pump up underground water. A Tafraoute inhabitant in his early forties recalls his family history as follows:

> *Zaid*: 'We used to be nomads, my parents used to be [nomads]. Our surname Amharich comes from our home village Mharich [located to the northeast of Ta-

25 This estimation was made by the *muqaddam*-s of Tafraoute *tiwjidt*, and complies with my own calculation, assuming an average of seven persons in each household.

fraoute] where we used to engage in agriculture in the 1950s. There was a military post which we call Bouziane, he [my father] used to bring them [the soldiers] things like turnips, carrots that we produced, to exchange these for cereals, cans of sardines, etc. In this period, they used to see us coming from the village straight ahead since there weren't these fields [that hinder the view].'

Question: Did your parents work in the fossil craftwork?

Zaid: 'In the beginning, they worked in lead extraction in Lemrakib. Their wells had reached a depth of almost 80 m [they worked for a long time]. Myself, I worked in the domain of fossils [in the 1980s] at first it was goniatite, then I shifted to sculpting trilobites, before I got employed as a technician at the school where I am now.'

<17 October 2012, Tafraoute>

The work cycle of Tafraoute villagers corresponds to that of the Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani – only that the major village out-migration stopped since electricity arrived in 2007. The presence of electricity allowed the villagers to use modern machines for fossil sculpting and also allowed the use of water pumps. The drinking water supply arrived slightly earlier in 1997, although the provision is limited to two hours per day, which means that the villagers have to stock up water early in the morning when it is available from either private or communal taps. Although the living standard is a far cry from that in towns, the villagers still appreciatively say that if they compare to former times, when women had to travel on the back of the donkeys to fetch water from remote wells, the situation has improved significantly. However, the subsistence economy based on agriculture had already come to a halt in the early 1970s, for the very limited availability of water was not sufficient for the fields to grow wheat and vegetables, without the use of costly pumping machines. The groundwater became increasingly salty and scarce since then, and most of the villagers abandoned their fields and palm groves in search of cash income in fossil, lead and barite mining, as well as engaging in tourism and illegal smuggling of goods in and out of Algeria.

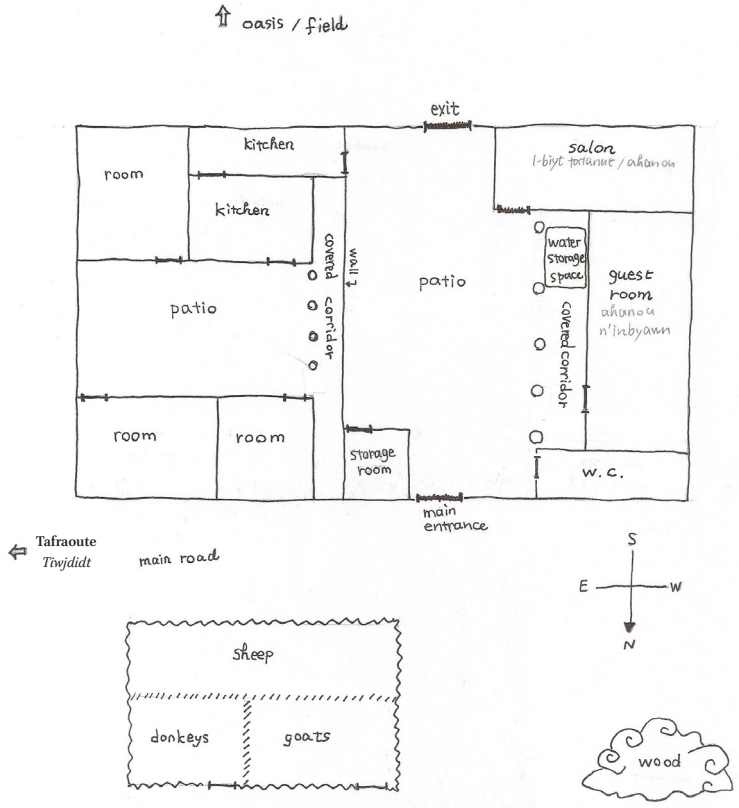


Figure 3-1 House in Tafraoute *taqdimt*

3.3 The formation of the Village: From Myth to Algerian Prison

According to the local myth, the Ayt Khebbash group has migrated from Tunisia and has Arab Shorfa roots. One can see in this claim of origin that Islam and the 'noble' bloodline associated with Arab Shorfa groups has been the dominant value in the region with which Ayt Khebbash people historically identified themselves, especially prior to the arrival of the Amazigh cultural movement in the 1990s. Several versions of myths concerning the Ayt Khebbash group exists in the region, but here I took one complete version of an oral legend told by a 92-year-old Ayt Khebbash man in Tafraoute, who is locally revered as a 'living history'. The first Khebbashi, called Sidi Mhammed, was from Seddrat (Sarhro Mountains) where he was found and raised by the local Ayt Yahya tribe. He eventually got married to a woman from Seddrat who bore four sons. The eldest was called Daoud, or 'Arjdal' (the one who limps) – because he used to walk with a limp. The second was named Mohammed, and since he had a long and dense beard, he was nicknamed 'Alḥyan' (the beard). The third one, Lahcen, was squint-eyed, so was called 'Azulay' (the one who has a squint). The youngest son was called Amar, and didn't have any nickname.

Azulay and Alḥyan were jealous of the goats and other animals the eldest son Arjdal owned, and they plotted to assassinate him. The youngest, Amar, heard about this plot and told his father Sidi Mhammed. When he heard this, he was infuriated and asked God to curse the two plotters. It is locally believed that because of this incident the Izulayn (sing. Azulay) and Ilḥyan (sing. Alḥyan) clans have decreased in number; only a few Izulayn with the surname of Bokbot exist in Merzouga, and the Ilḥyan almost vanished in the Tafraoute region. Furthermore, in memory of the goodwill of Amar, it was decided that all Ayt Khebbash reunions should not take place without the presence of Ayt Amar clan members, since the day Sidi Mhammed said to Amar, 'My son whose words were blessed by God, all the reunions (and decisions) without you should never be valid'. Based on this story of Sidi Mhammed, every single gathering of Ayt Khebbash requires the presence of an Ayt Amar clan member, a symbolic practice that has continued even after the replacement of the tribal political system with the commune system.

As explained in the myth, four clans were present in the Tafraoute region in the 1960s: Irjdaln, Ilḥyan, Izulayn and Ayt Amar. Later on, the Ayt Taghla group (a fraction of Ayt Aṭṭa), one of the major clans in Tafraoute now, came by and joined the Ayt Khebbash. Their arrival is explained in the following legend about the Ayt Taghla having

escaped from the Sarhro Mountains because they killed a local tribal member and got into conflict. They first settled down in Imaoun, and set up their tents in Tamasint, south of Bouhyara. One day they were informed that their dromedaries were stolen. Alarmed by the news, a tribesman called Ou Baydir went to Ouyhian, an Ayt Amar, to tell him that it had been already twenty days since the disappearance of the dromedaries and he needed the help from the *shaykh* to pursue the thieves. Ouyhian told this to the *shaykh* Hmad Ou Mhammed, who refused by humiliating Ou Baydir by inserting his two fingers into the sides of his beard. Infuriated, Ou Baydir was obliged to leave on his own, with three Ayt Amar members and one Irjdaln, who had also lost his dromedary. The other tribal members in Tafraoute remained indifferent by saying 'It merely touched the wool (*tusad g tadut, jat f lewber*), meaning the bullets did not penetrate the skin, thereby conveying that they did not really matter because the Ayt Taghla were merely 'foreigners'.

The dromedary thieves were Arabs from the west (Hassani Arabs). Ou Baydir and the persecutors arrived at Iguidi, when Moha Ou Amar asked his companions to stop. They ate and drank, and afterwards Moha Ou Amar climbed the dunes just before the sunset where he found the thieves, the glittering reflection of the swords against the sun betraying them when they were trying to kill an animal. He returned and told the Ayt Taghla men what he saw. As soon as they heard the news, they opened fire against the thieves. Startled, the thieves pleaded, 'Peace, here are your dromedaries, our souls! (*ksatagh, hann ilghman nnun aynagh, ha larwaḥ nnegh*), to which the Ayt Taghla replied, 'lay down your arms and leave! (*nnan asn ayt taghla sersat lemdafi at teddum s ibṭṭan nnun*), but the thieves refused, by saying 'death is a destiny, but dishonour is not! (*lmut fard o lefdiha mahi fard*)'. They fought until sunrise, and there were some casualties on the side of the Arabs. They got back their dromedaries, except for Ben Yacoub, a Rajdali (Irjdaln), who did not find his animal among the recaptured dromedaries. He insisted that he could not return home without his animal, and asked the group to give him a few elite members to go on pursuing the thieves. Finally he found them, but the Rajdali died in the battle and the others returned without recapturing his dromedary.

Although the Ayt Taghla had recuperated their dromedaries, they were not happy that the Ayt Khebbash did not offer them a helping hand when they were in trouble. As soon as they returned from the battle, they decided to pack up and leave the region. When they arrived from the Sarhro Mountains, there were only two households, but

now their tents had increased to forty households. Two or three days before returning, the Ayt Taghla informed their women to collect the household objects they had left at the Ayt Khebbash while absent in order to leave. Moha Ou Amar, the Ayt Amar, told the Ayt Khebbash people that they were wrong to let the Ayt Taghla leave, since they had lived with them for a long period of time. He feared that the Ayt Taghla, who knew about the Ayt Khebbash territory very well, would enter the territory of Ayt Ouahlim, their enemies, and eventually would lead them to attack the Ayt Khebbash. Therefore, the Ayt Khebbash agreed to call the Ayt Taghla back.

When Moha Ou Amar went on to search for the Ayt Taghla, he reached a place called Taghbalt where he found only an old man. Moha said, 'Mohammed Ou Brahim! Return!' but the old man replied, 'I don't find any reason to do so, we have stayed there for a long time and believed we were united, but alas, there was nothing…now the Ayt Taghla went on to find their *qṣar* of origin. Wait until they return'. The Ayt Taghla found their *qṣar*, by asking the young men, who they did not know, but they brought their father, a man with wounds on his face and his eyebrows overshadowing his eyes to the degree that he could no longer see anything. After lifting his brows and fixing them with pieces of cloth so that he could see, he told them 'It's here from where you have left, if you want to stay in the *qṣar*, come and contribute to the reconstruction because it is so small that we cannot afford to live with so many people. If you prefer to stay nomads in this mountain or others, it's your territory'. When Moha Ou Amar arrived, he asked Mohammed Ou Brahim to lend or sell him one of his animals. He went on to sacrifice the animal in front of Ayt Taghla, and they agreed to come back to Bouhyara and reunite with the Ayt Khebbash. So all the clans arrived in Bouhyara and built their tents, when a swirl of *sherqi* (sand storm) came and blew away the tents of Ayt Taghla on to those of Irjdaln … when they rebuilt the tents, the same phenomenon happened three times again. Upon seeing this, the Ayt Amar said to Irjdaln, 'You Irjdaln and Ayt Taghla and Ayt Bourk (also known as Ayt Ali) take the half, and we, Ayt Amar, Ilḥyan and Izulayn shall take the other half (of the plot)'.

For the people living in Tafraoute this oral history explains the way in which the major clans came in and claimed their territories, and how the Ayt Taghla clan, which did not belong to the Ayt Khebbash group, came to be part of it through the mediating efforts of the Ayt Amar clan. In present days, the Izulayn and Ilḥyan clans have disappeared from the Tafraoute area; the two major clans are Irjdaln and Ayt Taghla, while the Ayt Amar is a minority clan. Since the local concept of history is not structured by

a strict chronology, it is not clear when exactly the 'incident' concerning Ayt Taghla's arrival in Bouhyara occurred, although it might have been sometime before the 1930s. However, the melange of myth and history reveals the organisational principle behind the local hierarchy: Firstly, it lends religious and political authenticity to the Ayt Khebbash group by claiming their Arab Shorfa roots. Then, the myth gives an elevated status to certain members of Ayt Amar clan, which justifies their political privilege. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the group boundary of 'Ayt Khebbash' is constantly negotiated and renewed according to the local geo-political manoeuvres.

Before the French colonial period, due to drought, several of these nomadic tribes who used to live around Bouhyara started to move towards the west in search of fodder. During the war between the Ayt Aṭṭa and the French army in the Sarhro Mountains, which culminated in the battle of Bougafer in 1933, they found refuge in Goulmime, and most of the tribes stayed there for roughly three to four years before returning to the southern Tafilalet region in 1934. An elderly man in Tafraoute recalls they gathered in the west when the French army was in the Sarhro, and most of the Ayt Khebbash groups in the Tafilalet followed suit after the French army occupied Rissani in the Tafilalet. Although it was because of the drought that they had moved into this area, the Ayt Khebbash man claims he was one of the 45 men, consisting of Ayt Seghrushen and Ayt Khebbash combatants, who 'ambushed the French army passing by Goulmime and assassinated ten soldiers and robbed their arms'.

> 'The French patrol circulated around the region to make the tribes surrender, they sent the soldiers to the *shaykh* and *muqaddam* of the tribes, but we surprised them en route, we saw their camps, and then we escaped to the west … the French did not shoot us, but the people of the adjacent village did shoot at us, because the French gave them weapons. They opened fire but when they saw we were not a huge group, they let us go …'
> <Abdelali, 6 December 2012, Tafraoute>

When the Ayt Khebbash returned to the southern Tafilalet, Morocco was already occupied by the French army. A French officer called Charian accompanied the tribe until they arrived at their original territory in 1934. They arrived in Daoura and returned to their nomadic lives, whilst engaging in agriculture in Lahfira with the help of Imlwan (Ḥaratin, the Tamazight-speaking black population) who worked for them. They cultivated wheat there, and from time to time returned to Daoura and lived there for

several years. Eventually some families moved into Ighef n Ighir and Tafraoute and started building houses, while still leading a nomadic way of life. As mentioned earlier, the first inhabitants of Tafraoute say they moved in from Ighef n Ighir and bought a plot of land in the 1960s.

One of the major factors which accelerated the migration of the Ayt Khebbash group to Tafraoute was the Algerian border dispute in the late 1970s, when the nomadic population living around Daoura, 700 km southeast of Tafraoute, was expelled from their territory. It was in this period that Tafraoute started to take its form as a village. Assou, one of the first settlers, claimed that it was his brother who solicited the government to help the nomads, to build their houses to settle down, who were refugees because of the Algerian border dispute:

> 'I don't know the exact year [when Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* was formed], but it was after the Algerians expelled us from Daoura. The nomads found refuge here, they needed houses to settle down. My brother El Haj Yidir spoke to the authorities … The *makhzen* built twenty houses, five in Saf Saf and twenty here. It was my brother who was the responsible [*shaykh*] of the tribe in this period, and so the authorities gave the keys to him. Once the houses were constructed, the authorities decided to pay a visit – my brother bought a female dromedary for 6000 DH and three sheep, he gave a *sadaqa* ['gift'] to them! And they gave him the keys of the houses, so he sent them to all of those who had registered before, who came from Daoura. Like this we have also lived in Ighrem [Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*] for a long time.'
> <Assou, 6 December 2013, Tafraoute>

The Ayt Khebbash moved into Tafraoute, Lahfira and Ighef n Ighir and engaged in date palm cultivation, agriculture and animal herding, while building their own houses and eventually settling down in the villages. However, there were also several cases in which the nomads had fallen victim to the war, when they were captured and detained in Algeria for many years without trial. During my third visit to Tafraoute in October 2012, I encountered a villager in his late fifties, Lhou, originally from the Saf Saf region. He told me about his 21 years of exile in the Algerian prisons since the war broke out in 1976, until his final release in 1997. He was born in Kem Kem (Saf Saf region) to an Ayt Taghla family in 1955, and was leading a nomadic life herding his animals. In 1976, when he was near Remlia watching his dromedaries, all of a sudden the Algerian army arrived and confiscated his 200 goats and 31 dromedaries (his

entire livestock). He recalls how he was firmly blindfolded and imprisoned in several locations before he arrived in Bechar (Algerian territory). According to him, he was in a group of 500 prisoners among whom he encountered several captives of Polisario. Displaying his handcuff wounds on his wrists, he told me about the severe torture he underwent during the first few years, such as beating, being put on electric chairs, and countless humiliations:

> 'They didn't really interrogate me. Questions like, "Do you like Hassan II" … etc. It wasn't something concrete. Mohammed [his cousin captured together with him] and I were put into an underground cell together for four months … later we were taken out and met the military people [the Moroccan prisoners of Polisario], there was no more torture … just hunger. Three years [out of the whole period in prison] were not bad, the years of [President] Boumediene, the food was not terrible … after that came Boudiaf, who also treated us well, but he just governed six months and then was assassinated. Then came Liamine Zéroual. The period when we suffered a lot was during the reign of Chadli Bendjedid, for twelve years …'
> <Lhou, 18 October 2012, Tafraoute>

He finally returned to Morocco with the help of the Red Cross in 1997, first being transferred to Agadir. He stayed there for eighteen days for medical treatment, and then moved to Rabat before he finally returned to the Tafilalet. At his time he found that his former wife had remarried during his 21 years of absence and he met his daughter, who was still in the womb of her mother at the time he was captured, who had grown up and gotten married. He claimed that he did not receive much support from the Moroccan government, except for a transport licence in 2004 and a job as border guard. The compensation was not enough for living, so he rented out the transport licence at the rate of 850 DH per month. For housing, he had not received anything until present, and his job as border guard lasted for only three years from 2007 to 2010. At the time of our meeting he was jobless, but since his cousin Mohammed had spoken to the responsible person of la Promotion Nationale, he was called to Ar-Rachidia and was offered to work for the local administration of Tafraoute as a temporary employee. From then on he started to receive 450 DH per two weeks, plus 850 DH of rent for the licence. He had only three animals at home and lived with his second wife and two daughters.

Much later when I encountered Lhou's cousin Mohammed in a café in Rissani, he refused to talk about the way in which he was captured and taken to Algeria, but he confirmed that the health care and material conditions had not been too bad over there. He only said that they were tortured for three consecutive months before the authorities decided to put them together with Moroccan soldiers who had been either captured by Polisario or by the Algerian army at the border. During the years in exile the Algerian authorities had 'stolen' their well-being, 'violated' their youth and they had become poor. He told me not to ask about the torturing because he was frustrated by the fact that Algeria did not have pity on them, nor offer them compensation, and the only proof of 'torture' was that they spent twenty years in prison without any trial.

Many inhabitants came to Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* shortly after the Algerian independence (1962) when the flood water swept the fields and arrived at the foot of the mountains. An old villager claimed that at that time 'there were only wolves' around in the arid landscape which is now dotted with some seventy houses. When we look at the way in which the settlement was formed, it is clear that Tafraoute is a fairly recent village, which has been set up because of drought and two wars against both French and Algerian forces.

3.4 Political System

Before the rural and urban communes (*jamʕa*) system was introduced in the Tafilalet region in between 1958 to 1960, it was the *ayt l-ʕashra* (the tribal court consisting of elected members) – represented by ten Ayt Khebbash men – that resolved political and other disputes. This system, enforced by the French colonial government, was abolished at the time of Moroccan independence in 1956. Usually, it was the colonial authority (also called *makhzen*) which demanded the tribe to choose the ten representatives, who should be respectable individuals. In addition, the *amghar n tazigzawt/tamazirt* (*shaykh* of the greenery/land) was elected every year, unlike today, when the *shaykh*-s and *muqaddam*-s appointed by the central government stay in their positions for life. An elderly Ayt Khebbash man remembered that the tribal chief, the *amghar* of the entire Ayt Khebbash group, existed by the time of the historic combat of Bougafer in 1933. The last *amghar* before the central government's intervention in local politics was Youssef Ou Hmad Ouffa from the Ayt Lahcen group of the Ayt Amar clan. As noted earlier, there were four primordial Ayt Khebbash clans in Tafraoute – Ayt Amar, Irjdaln, Izulayn and Ilḥyan. According to the tribal norms, the amghar had to be chosen from the Ayt Lahcen of the Ayt Amar clan, or from the

four groups within Irjdaln – Ayt Brahim, Ayt Khoya, Ayt Kherbouch and Inoguden. The other Ayt Amar groups such as Ayt Hafi and Ayt Hami were excluded from the candidacy, as well as the Ayt Kara and Ayt Yacoub of Irjdaln and the entire Izulayn and Ilḥyan clans.

In the epoch of *ayt l-ʕachra*, which lasted from the French colonial period (1934) until Moroccan independence in 1956, each clan started to choose their own *amghar,* who was in principle elected every year. Bassou, an elderly Ayt Khebbash man born in 1923, recalls the day when the tribal delegates returned from Rabat in order to discuss the issue whether they needed to elect multiple chiefs from each clan:

> 'We had chosen Ourahma and Hmad Assini [in the *ayt l-ʕachra* period]. Ourahma was chosen by the tribe, but Ou Assini was only chosen by the Irjdaln. I was present [at the meeting], we gathered [nine people] in the house of a Soussi in Erfoud. Four Irjdaln had returned from Rabat at that time. After the lunch we asked the late El Haj Mhammed [Ou Yahya] to prepare us tea. Ou Attou said to the *shaykh* [*amghar*] Hda n Alla: "Don't be angry, we went to Rabat and we said to the ministers that the Ayt Khebbash are divided into two sides, that of Ayt Amar, Izulayn and Ilḥyan, and of Ayt Taghla and Irjdaln, and that there are two *shaykh*-s on one side already but none on the other side" Before, the *shaykh* was elected for one or two years. Hda n Alla interrogated about the reply of the minister: "What did he tell you?" Ou Attou replied: "He told us that Ourahma was chosen by the tribe so Hda n Alla will be chosen by the *makhzen* to serve him".'
> <Bassou, 27 October 2013, Rissani>

From then on the *shaykh* was chosen by the *makhzen* to serve the interest of the central state and to decrease the power of tribal authorities. The last *amghar* of the entire Ayt Aṭṭa confederation was Ou Hafi, who is said to be responsible for the dispersion of the tribe. It is often told in local legend that the reason for the dispersion is that the *amghar* did not observe the rules of warfare when they fought against the Shorfa in Achich (in the Alnif region). When the Ayt Aṭṭa gathered in Achich, the home of Ayt Iazza, in order to choose a new *amghar*, a pregnant woman put a crown made of herbs on the head of Baha Ouhra, the new *amghar*. At this moment, the new *amghar* stroked her face, which meant an insult. There were a few tribesmen who observed this from a distance, and they said to others that the *amghar* was trying to threaten them. When they ended the meeting and the new *amghar* climbed on a horse, he

threw the end of his *bournous* on his shoulders, which could also be interpreted as a threat.

At the time of this incident, the five fractions of the Ayt Aṭṭa were still united, so they all went in the direction of Touroug in order to drive out the Shorfa from Qṣar Agni. The Sherif Sidi Abdellah of Agni was informed that the Ayt Aṭṭa had arrived. So he warned them that he would shoot them first, and he put gun powder in the cylinder and asked his fellow to bring him a date seed, since he did not want to kill anyone by using the real ball. When he shot, he ordered the Shorfa to go and attack the Ayt Aṭṭa and chase them away until they had passed the river, telling them not to cross the boundary of river. But the Shorfa did not observe the order of their chief, and went across the river. At that moment the Ayt Aṭṭa counter-attacked them and killed 42 Shorfa, finally succeeding in chasing them away from the *qṣar*. However, although they won the battle, the fact that they attacked the Shorfa is said to have brought them bad luck, which resulted in the dispersion of the Ayt Aṭṭa tribal confederation. This story again reveals the symbolic power of the Shorfa in the Tafilalet, and the identification of Amazigh nomads with the Arabo-Islamic authority.

The difference between the tribal chief (*amghar n ayt khebbash* or *ayt aṭṭa*) and the chief of the greenery/land (*amghar n tazigzawt/tamazirt*) is that the former is the political authority of the entire tribe, whereas the latter is specifically responsible for the management of the land, especially the fields. Before the modern commune system was installed, the *amghar n tazigzawt* played an important role in resolving various conflicts such as border disputes of fields and plots of land.[26] The tribe gathered together to hold a *jmaʕa* in order to divide the land, when all the population around Tafraoute were nomads. Each period the people returned to the place decided by the *jmaʕa* to distribute the plots of cultivation to every household. For example, the *amghar* paid a few men to trace the fields of hundred metres in width and the length just running to the foot of the mountains, but generally left one part of the plot boundary open. Then, if another person arrived, they would measure the adjacent hundred metres and this field would become his property. In that way, when the field was irrigated with rain water or flux, the tribe would gather again to divide it in the same ways the Ayt Aṭṭa cultivated in Daya-el-Maïder.

26 For Ayt Aṭṭa tribal organisation in general after independence, see David Hart, 1984. *The Ait Aṭṭa of Southern Morocco: Daily Life and Recent History*. Wisbech, Cambridgeshire: MENAS Press, p. 187-190.

During the French colonial period the Bureau of Indigenous Affairs was established, but the local political system survived until Moroccan independence, albeit in a re-organised form, when the Tafraoute region was attached to the rural commune of Taouz. Since then the tribal system started to dissolve, as the *amghar* of the entire tribe was not elected any longer and people started to bring the conflicts directly to the authorities:

> 'We can say that the influence of the tribe has ended; since it no longer has the power … there is state authority instead. Before, until the 1980s, when problems arose, such as the animal of A that entered the field of B, etc., the owner of the fields would warn the owner of the animals, and when he could not tolerate [the situation] he would bring the animal found in his fields to a communal yard, near the mosque over there [pointing to the direction of Tafraoute *taqdimt*]. In this case, to get back the animals, the owner had to pass by the *shaykh* [*amghar n tazigzawt/tamazirt*].'
> <Said, 5 December 2013, Tafraoute>

Said, now in his early forty's, recalled the 1980s when he was a herder. When asked who was the *shaykh* (of greenery) then, he replied he knew several including the one who made him pay the *izmaz* ('almond', signifying a payment, such as a fine):

> 'I had the habit to bring my goats to the other side of the river. I sometimes felt stressed, I could not sleep, so I went out for distraction, to look for *aḥaydus* [collective dance] … in the morning I had to bring my goats [back home]. I resisted falling asleep until nine or ten, and then I slept in the shadow of a tree, because it was summer. When I woke up, I turned my head … here and there … there was nothing! I followed the traces [of dung] … Later, I no longer followed the traces, when I woke up and I did not see my goats, I knew that they were at the communal yard of the tribe [in Tafraoute *taqdimt*]. Many times before, once they entered the fields of Ayt Haddou, or another time that of Aoujil, the *shaykh* had brought them to the yard.'
> <Said, 5 December 2012, Tafraoute>

Later, he said he did find his animals, and had to pay the *izmaz*, 2 or 2.5 DH per goat. 'I remember I paid 50 DH (1,000 ryal). It's like when we pay 300 or 400 DH nowadays'. After this incident he was physically punished by his father, since he had to make his

son 'pay' what he had paid. 'He made me pay in another way – the stick', he laughed. During this period, it was not only *izmaz* that was a form of payment, but also the obligation of banquet invitations. The 'punishable' one had to invite six to eight people of the tribe (or village) for lunch or dinner as a form of compensation.

The *amghar/shaykh* of the greenery was responsible for the fields, and he was usually elected on a Friday decided by the *ayt l-ʕachra*, in a ceremony where the elected one was decorated with a crown of green branches, such as *lfeṣṣa*. Still now the *amghar n tazigzawt* and the *bab n umur* (meaning proprietor of the land/fields, his actual function is settling disputes) exist as a part of the informal political system. For example, in 2012 the *shaykh* of Magamane in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* was Amar Ouddou from the Ayt Amar clan. From Magamane (Tafraoute *taqdimt*) to Aqqa n Turza (the boundary of *taqdimt*), there is one *amghar* who is responsible for the fields, and from there to the north another *amghar* is in charge, so there are three *amghar*-s within the whole of Tafraoute. They collect 'tax' from the people to pay the *fqih* ('imam'), since traditionally it is the tribe who has to pay him. The *amghar*-s choose four collaborators (vice-*amghar*) who collect the money according to the group of houses, and bring it to the *amghar*-s who will then give the money to the *imam*.

In addition, there is a representative of each group of houses called *bab n umur*, which is chosen by the people of each quarter, such as Ayt Magamane or Ayt Udika. When there is a problem, the *bab n umur*-s get together and inform the *amghar* (they do not represent the clans but belong to the quarters). Still now, the conflicts among the inhabitants which are not too disruptive or dangerous do not require the intervention of the authorities, but are brought to the *amghar*, such as the cases of animals entering others' territories. The *amghar* will meet his collaborators and decide the amount of fine in almond (*izmaz*) which should be paid by the 'transgressor'. Although the *amghar* of the entire Ayt Khebbash or Ayt Aṭṭa has not been elected since independence, the remnants of the political system based on tribal units is present in the functions of the *amghar n tazigzawt*/*tamazirt* and the *bab n umur*, as they continue to resolve small problems related to the fields, based on their understanding and observation of social rules related to the neighbourhoods. This system, however, was complicated by direct state intervention through the rural commune, which brought the tribal people under the jurisdiction of state law rather than allowing them to live their lives according to their customs.

In summary, the independent Moroccan state inherited the system of strong central control from the colonial administration, and the tribes as political units were effectively dissolved, since the decision making power was held by the elected commune councils instead of tribal councils. The new administrative system led to the emergence of inter-clan tension, since the *amghar*-s were no longer in the position to resolve serious disputes, and people found themselves in a new social, economic and political context wherein they had to adjust to sectarian politics and modern electoral system, which, ironically, divided the villagers based on clan affiliations.

3.5 Relationship Between the Clans and External Links

In this section I will discuss the marriage practice and the labour migration patterns in Tafraoute. By taking the collective marriage in 2012 as an example, I will first shed light on the external connections established by the villagers through the movements of women. This is followed by an overview of another form of external links created by the migration of male villagers to regional and national economic centres.

3.5.1 Marriage in Tafraoute

The marked characteristic of the marriage pattern in Tafraoute is village endogamy. The villagers practice 'collective marriage' once a year. Most engaged couples wait until September to get married in a collective ceremony subsidised by all the villagers' donations. It is the way to express solidarity and also to cut the expense of food and other provisions necessary for the occasion. As the table shows, most of the brides are chosen within the village or from close proximity (e.g., Ighef n Ighir, Remilia, Lahfira, Lembidiaa), and some from Merzouga-Taouz region (Merzouga, Jdayd). Mezguida is a *qṣar* in the Rissani area, but it does not necessarily mean that the bride came from the *qṣar* itself, but from the surrounding desert, i.e., from a nomad family. There was one bride from Rissani, which is rare because the usual population movement is from village to town. However, this bride was married to a paternal cousin from the same Boumeshoul family from the Ayt Taghla group, which is a common case of inter-cousin marriage.

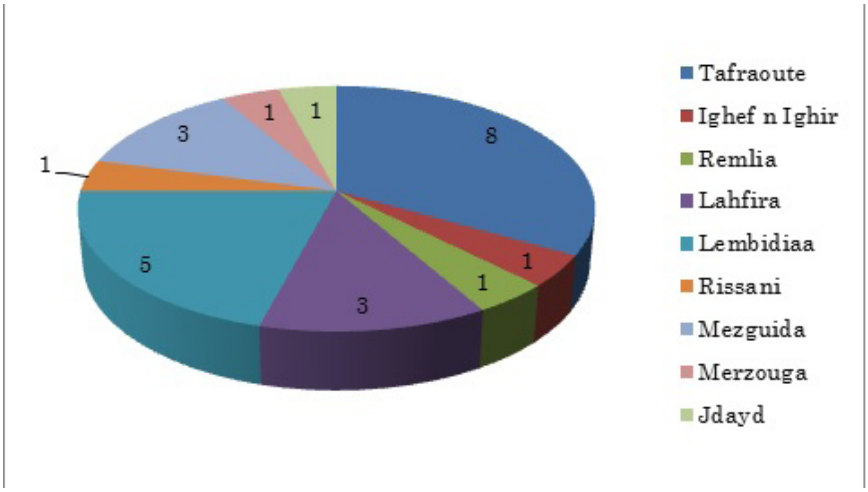


Table 3-1 The home villages of the brides in Tafraoute (2012)

Total: 24 women married to 24 men from fourteen families in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt* and *taqdimt*. Data collected on the annual occasion of collective marriage, 3-5 September 2012.

A second characteristic of marriage in Tafraoute is a very high rate of clan endogamy. Thirteen of the twenty-four couples were married within the same Ayt Khebbash clans, four of which were cousins. At the same time, intermarriage between different clans was still not exceptional, such as Irjdaln and Ayt Taghla, although the number has diminished in recent years due to the political tensions created by the election, which I shall discuss later in this chapter. Although Ismkhan and Imlwan are 'integrated' into one of the Ayt Khebbash clans through the ceremony of animal sacrifice, they do not intermarry with the fair-skinned Ayt Khebbash: as in the case of marriage in Rissani, inter-ethnic marriage is extremely rare to the point that it does not exist in the Tafraoute/Sidi Ali region.

Table 3-2: External connections established by marriage

Family	Distant places	Villages/Towns in Ar-Rachidia	Tafraoute
Ould Ali (Ayt Amar)		Sister: Douar Draoua (Erfoud) Sister's husband from Ighef n Ighir	Wife (Ayt Amar)
Ou Moh (Irjdaln)		Son: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Wife (Ayt Taghla, cousin)

		Daughter: Ighef n Ighir	Daughter
Ou Saadane (Irjdaln)		Daughters: Lembidiaa (cousin)	Wife (Irjdaln)
Ou Chaouech (Irjdaln)		Sister: Kem Kem	Wife (Irjdaln)
Ayt Bouni (Ayt Taghla)	Sister: Alnif	Wife: Lahfira (Ayt Taghla)	
Ou Mouch (Ayt Amar)		Sister: Rissani	Wife (Irjdaln)
		Sister's husband from Ouzina	
Ou Baqadir (Irjdaln)		Daughters: Rissani, Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	
Ou Brahim (Irjdaln)		Son: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Daughter (Irjdaln)
		Daughter: Rissani	
Bouni (Ayt Taghla)		Daughters: Merzouga	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Daoud (Ayt Taghla)		Daughters: Ighef n Ighir, Kem Kem	Wives (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Assou (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Erfoud	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ou Ali (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Rissani	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt El Qayd (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Rissani (cousin)	Wife (Irjdaln)
Ou Youssef (Ayt Taghla)		Daughter: Missour (married to an Arab)	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Ali (Ayt Taghla)		Wife: Kem Kem (Ayt Taghla)	
Ou Ali (Ayt Taghla)			Wives (Ayt Taghla)
Boumeshoul (Ayt Taghla)		Wife: Kem Kem (Ayt Taghla)	
		Daughter: Kem Kem	
Azigane (Irjdaln)		Wife: Remlia	
Boumrour (Irjdalin)			Wife (Irjdaln)
Ayt Yacoub (Ayt Amar)		Daughter: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Wife (Ayt Taghla)
Ayt Baha (Ayt Taghla)		Daugter: Douar Draoua (Erfoud)	Wife (Ayt Amar)
		Sisters: Remlia, Rissani, Merzouga	

Data collected from 17-19 October 2012 among 23 Tafraoute inhabitants.

Furthermore, most of the Ayt Khebbash women marrying out from Tafraoute remain in close proximity to the village, usually within the Sidi Ali Commune or the Ar-Rachidia Province region, creating connections between their extended families or with another Ayt Khebbash clan (table 3-2). Their external links are geographically limited

to the Sidi Ali, Taouz, Rissani and Erfoud region and remain within the networks of Ayt Khebbash clans, with very few exceptions of men out-migrated to towns and marrying Arab women.

3.5.2 Labour Migration

In recent years seasonal labour migration has become rare in Tafraoute since nowadays the wage difference between large cities and the Ar-Rachidia Province region is not so great, which means that many young men prefer to work near their home village. Typically, they work as drivers, construction workers or fossil artisans in Rissani or Erfoud and come back to the village during *ʕid* holidays, such as the end of the month of Ramadan or the feast of sacrifice, or get married and settle down in towns. As seen in table 3-2, a number of villagers emigrated to the 'illegal' settlement, Douar Draoua in the southeast of Erfoud without purchasing the land, and engaged in fossil work and other seasonal jobs in the informal sector. Several mountains with barite mines in the Sidi Ali region started to provide a source of income for the villagers since the early 2000s, to the extent that labour migration to towns and cities became unnecessary for most of the families. During my second visit in 2012, I accidentally came across the former president of Rissani's fossil co-operative in front of a house that occasionally provides photocopying service to the villagers. He had some papers in his hand and apparently came back to his village to get the authorisation for barite mining from the rural commune. His son was still active in the fossil domain in Rissani, working as a president of the association, so it seemed that the father had moved into the barite business, which resulted in 'reverse labour migration' from town to village. Furthermore, the illegal smuggling of cigarettes and goods from the Algerian border allowed some villagers to make a fortune, as in the case of one of the most influential political figures of the village, Hamid Ou Moh, who lived in Erfoud. Some others worked in tourist transportation and later on built small hotels in the village.

Summarized, the circular, seasonal and rural-rural labour migration patterns of Tafraoute inhabitants are colonial and post-colonial phenomena, and the process of economic development and modernisation is associated with the increasing movement of economic agents from agriculture and herding into informal artisanal/commercial sectors. The local population's incorporation into the wage labour economy since the Protectorate period resulted in widening inequalities between the households, and the newly rich villagers started to control the local politics, dividing the population into two opposing political groups. As I shall discuss later in this chapter, the in-

ter-personal and inter-clan networks created by the town inhabitants from Tafraoute continue to influence the regional politics of Ar-Rachidia, which further accelerated the endogamous marriage patterns of the villagers.

3.6 Work, Village and the Development Project

As noted earlier, Tafraoute in its early days used to be primarily an agricultural village where the Ayt Khebbash people cultivated date palms, wheat, cumin, henna, and other vegetables. However, nowadays, a significant number of date palms is 'dying' for lack of irrigation, and many of the villagers have abandoned agriculture altogether in search of better income-generating activities. Corresponding to the drought-epoch of the 1980s, the water has become increasingly salty, which has made it unsuitable for agriculture. Each household needed to purchase a water pump, and dug their own wells, since the boundaries between the fields were clearly marked and the households did not share water. The only exception was the field near Tafraoute *taqdimt,* which was never exploited by individuals but divided by the tribe into *tagurt* (small rectangular plots), so that each family would cultivate wheat when the land was irrigated by the river. Otherwise, the land in Tafraoute was taken by the Ayt Khebbash families randomly, settling in on a first-come first-served basis, determining their territories and digging their own wells. By the time of my visit in 2012, approximately 20 per cent of the village population was still engaged in some sort of agricultural activities, whilst many of the people were oriented towards the extraction of barite in the nearby mountains. When I asked a villager how was life back then, some fifteen or twenty years ago, he replied that he felt that the natural environment used to be far better, although life improved in terms of infrastructure or the way people thought. There is a certain nostalgia in the way how people describe the past, as they claim that before there was agriculture and sweet water close to the surface. In the past they used to produce and sell the harvest, there were more domestic animals, wheat, cumin and henna, but now there is 'nothing' at all, except for that 'horrible salty water'.

Back in the 1960s up to the 1970s, the major income generating activity used to be agriculture and lead extraction around Lemrakib and various other locations. As already stated in the previous chapter, in the 1970s fossils were discovered as commercial objects and the extraction work became a popular occupation in Tafraoute in the 1980s, replacing agriculture and other mining activities. A fossil artisan who migrated to Rissani from Tafraoute in mid-1990s said that he had known for long time that there were fossils on the surface of rocks, but they were really 'discovered' in the 1970s when

Europeans started to come and commission them to extract the goniatites and trilobites from the mountains. Corresponding to this period of 'fossil as primary revenue' in the 1990s and 2000s, major labour out-migration to nearby towns or large cities took place.

By the time of my visit there were only four men still working in the fossil domain, as the majority of male villagers had started to work in barite mines since the late 2000s, although the Association Konouz for fossil sculpture was established at the initiative of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) in 2010. Two other associations were created at the same time; the Association Ayt Aṭṭa for cumin and henna, and Association Dar Sania for carpets and local crafts. By the time JICA came up with the project, using INDH (Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain, 'National Initiative for Human Development') as a platform, the rural commune of Sidi Ali was chosen to be one of the five communes in the Tafilalet region in which the project of rural development was to be implemented, in order to promote local income generating activities. This is because nowadays, in Morocco, it has become common to create associations to conduct politics and to promote economic interest at a local level. For example, JICA, together with the Artisanal Delegation in Ar-Rachidia, aimed to valorise the local crafts as 'national heritage', and to educate the young population to acquire artisanal skills in carpet weaving or fossil sculpting. The objective of this project was mainly linked to rural tourism, aiming at making 'every aspect of daily life' a source of revenue, such as incorporating traditional bread-baking, carpet weaving, fossil sculpting and the performance of folklore music in organised tours for tourists.

In 2012 I made regular visits to the fossil association where the artisans work to ask questions on the ways in which they used to work, and to observe how they work presently. Hmad (35), was one of the fossil artisans who usually worked in the *atelier* inside the building of association in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*. He used to be a nomad, herding animals around Remlia before he moved into Tafraoute *taqdimt* in 2000. Living with his wife who was from the same clan Irjdaln and with their four children, he worked exclusively in the fossil domain now, while his parents were still herding dromedaries in Ouzina. His three brothers emigrated to Merzouga, one worked as a camel guide for tourists, one was a driver and another a seasonal worker. Like other artisans, he started with fossil extraction in the mountains, then gradually learnt how to sculpt using hand tools such as a hammer and chisel, fixing the piece in the cylindrical chunk of trees known as *ziyar*. Following the first three years of work he gradually started

to earn well, since according to him there was still demand for fossils from 2003 to 2005, which allowed him to sell at high prices. The demand started to decrease in the past three years (since 2009), but the fossil association could not help him with commercialisation. He claimed, however, that they helped him enormously in terms of improving the work environment, providing him with electric machines such as a '*chicago*' (a type of electric chisel, made in Germany or the US), and a peaceful workplace. He works on three to four pieces of 'matacantina' a day, but only one piece if they are 'felinix' or 'facobs' (different species of trilobite). As for 'pretoce', he can finish up to twelve pieces per day. 'Pretoce' is locally called *izan* (flies), because they are numerous and therefore 'mass produced'. 'Felinix' is the most rare and sought after species of trilobite, which can be sold at a price of 1,000 DH or more. Hmad told that his revenue depended on the demand, starting from 1,000 DH and up to 3,000 DH per month. 'Life has gotten better after we started to use *chicago*', he says. 'It is better than going to the mountains (for extraction)'. He did not miss his place or origin, for he considered Tafraoute as his 'home'. 'The place of work is my home (*tamazirt*)', he said. 'I work without distraction or obligation. I don't work for others, so I am free'.

Apparently the establishment of association in 2010 had dramatically improved the work environment, but due to the decreasing international demand for their merchandise the cost of extraction and tools started to weigh on the artisans' household budget. The president of the fossil association, Youssef (27) explained about the costs and difficulties in extracting raw materials. He was from the rather influential Taghlaoui family (Ayt Taghla clan) and had just gotten married in the collective marriage in 2012:

> *Youssef*: 'When we go to the mountains [for extraction], we need to buy the food provisions first, then take our tools with us; the pick axe, shovel and hammer in order to break the rocks, and we also have to buy a glue to attach the broken pieces. We need to work several days before arriving at the mine.'
> *Question*: How many days it takes until you arrive at the veins?
> *Youssef*: 'It depends on the veins. For 'matacantina', for example, we need a week or more before starting on the vein, then you break … for such as 'sertaguis', we bring a dredger. In addition, we need to look for a mean of transportation to go to the mountains. There are some who go by bike, I usually rent a car.'
> <7 December 2012, Tafraoute>

A hammer costs about 250 DH, a pick axe 80 to 100 DH. The food expense is approximately 250 DH, and they have to pay for the transport which is 300 DH or more. The place of work in the mountains is about twenty kilometres away from the village, and once they go there they have to stay for at least a week. That is the most difficult part of their work, for the sculpting is relatively less tiresome, although they experience hardship when it comes to commercialisation. In Tafraoute, the artisans have to sell the finished products to intermediaries in Rissani and Erfoud since they cannot find sufficient numbers of customers in the village, except for the foreign tourists who buy directly from the association.

Youssef claimed the budget of the association had already been 'exhausted', and that he had to pay with his own money for various activities, including many phone-calls, and an exhibition in Merzouga in which he participated. 'The Association must have its own revenue, in order to make the young people learn the work', he insisted. He seemed to believe in the continuity from one generation to another, and that the youth should make an effort to develop the fossil domain, despite all adversities in commercialisation, and the effects of the European financial crisis. He talked about his efforts in preparing the papers to participate in exhibitions abroad, such as in the US, France or Germany, which should, in his opinion, lead to more people getting involved in the fossil work.

In the case of Youssef, his household budget was not so tight, since he lived with his four brothers, their wives and children in the same house. All of his five brothers worked in barite extraction at Rask Mouna, including the one who lives separately in Rissani. They earned 30,000 to 50,000 DH per month, apart from the month of Ramadan, depending on the market. Their household account book (table 3-3) represented a typical consumption pattern of an 'average' rural family in Ar-Rachidia Province which was neither poor nor affluent. Much of the expenses were food, including 'luxury' items such as coffee, with occasional spending on clothes and children's school books. The brothers did not share the expenses for *fourgonette* (mini-van) rides to visit the Rissani *suq*, or other small personal shopping ,so they are not represented in the table. When it comes to the barite extraction costs, those who established their independent business, such as in the case of the Taghlaoui family, they had to pay the monthly authorisation charge to CADETAF,[27] gasoline for the lorries and compressors,

27 Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, la Centrale d'Achat et de Développement de la Région Minière du Tafilalet et de Figuig (C.A.D.E.T.A.F.)

and the salary of workers (table 3-4). Although the monthly expense in barite mining was enormous, they made about 10,000 to 20,000 DH profit per month, which was a good amount of money in local terms. While Youssef remained in the fossil domain, his brothers moved on to seek for other work, to be prepared for the changing international demands and economic situation in Europe, as in the cases of many other Rissani artisan families.

Table 3-3: Household account book of Youssef Taghlaoui's family in Tafraoute

Number of household members: 20

Type of family: Extended family household

Occupations (five married brothers): Fossil (one), Barite (four)

	Item	Quantity (per month)	DH
Food	potato	15kg	60
	tomato	15kg	90
	onion	15kg	30
	carrot	10kg	35
	grape	15kg	120
	apple	15kg	150
	pomegranate	15kg	90
	flour	75kg	180
	cooking oil	5litre	80
	meat	10kg	160
	salt		1
	sugar	4 cones	60
	eggs	10	10
	tea	1kg	50
	coffee	1/2kg	30
	condensed milk	1/2kg	100
	jam	2 bottles	20
	cumin (home-grown)	250g	0
Other	gas	1large, 2 small	64
	washing powder	10kg	150
	soap bar	10 bars	60
	medicine (aspirin)	5 boxes	5
Total of household expense			1,545

barite extraction costs	45,190
Total including barite extraction costs	46,735
INCOME	
Fossil	3,000
Barite	30,000-50,000[1]
Total	33,000-53,000

Data collected on 14 November 2013, Tafraoute.

Table 3-4: The expense in barite mining of Youssef Taghlaoui's family (per month)

Item	Quantity	DH
gasoline for compressor	100L	1,000
gasoline for lorry		15,000
food (five workers)		2,600
gas (for cooking)		90
drinking water	1,000L	4,000
workers' salary		15,000
CADETAF authorisation		7,500
TOTAL		45,190

Data collected on 15 November 2013, Tafraoute.

The initial role played by the three associations established in Tafraoute was well appreciated locally, in terms of providing resources and places to work. The Association Dar Sania for women's handicrafts has been particularly successful so far in providing local women space for work and for young girls a learning environment, not only for crafts, but also for Arabic lessons for small children of the villagers and nomads. However, when it comes to linking the local produce to tourism – generating income by selling the crafts and agricultural products to the tourists – there are a number of unresolved problems which are hindering successful implementation of the project. Firstly, young villagers are unwilling to work in the domains of fossil extraction/sculpting and agriculture since they are considered to be jobs linked to 'by-gone days' – the common preferences for work have already shifted to barite mining and tourism.

The development project that has been implemented by the local government and JICA aims at tourism promotion, which makes it sound as if tourism is a promising domain of work, and that locals can earn their living in the hotel business and tours,

which does not necessarily involve selling local crafts. But in fact tourism in Tafraoute remains to be a modest source of income. The village is in 'the middle of nowhere', some 90 km to the southwest of the popular tourist destination Merzouga and 120 km to the east of Zagora. The roads to both places are rocky, stony and incredibly bouncy unpaved 'routes'. As a result, the tourists who stop by the village are limited to French and Spanish people with land rovers who just stay overnight en route from Merzouga to Zagora or vice versa. In addition, the 'tourist resources' – the ordinary life of people and handicrafts – were merely promoted by the JICA at the time of the establishment of the associations and therefore lacked a continuous local effort to advertise their objectives. Since then people have already forgotten about it and do not endeavour to propagate these any further. What is left were overtly inflated prices specifically created for foreigners, for many of the locals came to believe that whatever they would do or sell to tourists should be a 'major source of income', for the rest of the time when they would not see tourists.

For example, during my first visit to Tafraoute in 2011, I asked a local woman if she could show me an *aḥaydus* performance. Delighted, she went out to gather four women of the village and brought them inside the house to make them perform. They sang and played with the drums for half an hour, in a joking way which was far from 'authentic' and then asked me to pay 'whatever price' I wanted. However, when I gave them a 100 DH note – which I considered still a touristy price but not too much – the women were infuriated and insisted that the other tourists gave them more, 500 or 1000 and up. This infuriated me as well, and when the women saw I turned purple, they lowered the price and insisted I would give them 100dh each, 400dh in total. It commonly happens in touristy places that the villagers get used to receiving inflated amounts of money or gifts from foreigners in return for mediocre performance or service of whatever sort. When I talked to the villagers about this incident, they replied, 'Yes, these days people have changed. Once they get a sum of money without much effort, they cannot go back to where they were before. They got lazy'. One can also say this is a 'positive progress', that indeed tourism is generating more income for the locals. However, if the tourists do not feel comfortable to pay the amount of money for what they were offered, it will negatively affect the village reputation, and therefore cannot become a long-term solution for establishing a solid income base. When local resources become 'products' for a global market of tourism, they have considerable social and cultural impact on the interactions of tourists and the local people. As my experience demonstrates, the manipulation of what is perceived as 'authentic' cul-

tural elements to satisfy the needs of tourist consumption through their commodification, paradoxically may have the opposite effect of making those elements less attractive to tourists.

Furthermore, while there is ample evidence demonstrating that the development of tourism is real and has been moderately sustained over the past few years, there is also indication that the growth is rather limited. Although there are more visitors to the region, the average number of nights spent in the village hotels has not increased at all; in fact it has remained stable from one to two nights.[28] Therefore, tourism provides limited benefits to the villagers, and accordingly people working for fossil sculpting and agriculture (cumin and henna) have not yet found a way to effectively commercialise their products, since the majority of the tourists are just 'passing through', without paying much interest to the souvenir objects. By the time of my latest visit in November 2013, two of the three associations, Dar Sania for carpet weaving and Ayt Aṭṭa for cumin and henna, had already closed down due to 'budget problems' after they had spent the initial budget allocated by JICA and INDH. This project failure could be attributed to the lack of understanding of local cultural and social norms on the side of JICA, and also the people's lack of positive effort in commercialising the products. However, the primary reasons hindering the sustainable development in Tafraoute is the lack of interest and involvement of the 'economically relevant elite' from the local and the central government. In fact many of the local elites are interested in personal empowerment by investing primarily in projects outside of the village and keeping the rest of the villagers 'poor', in order not to cede more power to the opposing political sect. It is a well-known fact that Hamid Ou Moh, the wealthy merchant from Tafraoute, invested in a gasoline station on the road to Merzouga, where many buses and tourist vehicles pass by, but does not contribute to the improvement of infrastructure in the Tafraoute region. These complex interactions, between national institutions, local authorities and economic elites as emerging social and political forces, are an undercurrent to the social and cultural 'displacement' and contradictions the villagers are experiencing in everyday life.

28 According to the information from the twenty local hotels located in Tafraoute *taqdimt* and *tiwjdidt*, even during the high season the majority of the tourists only stop by for a night or just have lunch and continue on road without sleeping in the hotel. One of the reasons for this is that the village is isolated in the desert without paved roads, making it difficult for tourists to access.

3.7 The Cold War: Election and the Invented Conflict

The most striking question which is generally avoided by the local authorities is 'Why are there no roads to Tafraoute?', or, if we assume that there are roads at all, 'Why do they remain unpaved?' It is not only that the villagers suffer from the lack of water, but also that they are left isolated in the desert with 130 km of rocky distance to the nearest town Rissani.

With the introduction of the rural commune and modern political system of 'democratic elections' in the late 1980s, the village entered the epoch of severe rivalries between the clans. The first election took place when the Sidi Ali Commune was established in 1992, at which the village chose two candidates from different clans. Baha Amraoui, who was from the Ayt Amar clan, was an influential merchant in Tafraoute who had made a fortune by working in the field of tourist transportation. On the other side, Yidir Ou Hda from Ayt Taghla was chosen to represent the interest of RNI (The National Rally of Independents), and later of PAM (Authenticity and Modernity Party). The first round ended in the victory of Baha, creating tensions between the clans, notably Ayt Amar, the clan of the elected president, and Irjdaln, against Ayt Taghla. This was because the two rivals used their clan backgrounds a base of support for their political parties, which emphasised the 'differences' that did not really exist before. A Tafraoute resident claimed that before the election started, there was 'no discrimination' based on whether somebody was Ayt Taghla, Ayt Amar or Irjdaln, but a sense of solidarity existed thanks to the presence of the *amghar*. However, since the commune system was introduced, the dual opposition emerged as each candidate started to manipulate the population in order to dominate the commune. For example, it seems that Ayt Taghla was 'alone' on one side, but in fact they also gathered some Ayt Amar and Irjdaln, even if they were very close to the antagonists. In other words, the tension prevalent in the village was not an internally emerged clan or tribal conflict, but a consequence brought about by the centralisation of the Moroccan state and the implanted modern political system aiming at dissolving the tribal identities. A villager described the consequence of the emerging duality in the following way:

> 'The effect is terrible. Each party searches for a trap to denounce the other parties, to send them to the hands of the authorities or to prison. There are people who were thrown into prison because of that [elections]. Even if you work legally, we can denounce them anonymously, often give them labels like: "you work in illegal trafficking" for example … there are men in the village who never worked in *con-*

> *trebande* [illegal smuggling] and they are poor, but they were sentenced to eight or ten years, they did nothing illegal … it is only the dual electoral politics which is the cause … there are those in whose houses the authorities found nothing, but they captured them, they are starving to death!'
> <Hakim, 6 October 2013, Rissani>

For example, there were victims who were pursued by the authorities based on anonymous phone calls, since they were searching for a 'criminal' related to illegal smuggling. A villager attested that there was someone who was captured in Tanamoust (near Merzouga), apparently because of an anonymous informer, although the 'convict' was 'so poor that he didn't even have a chicken in his backyard' (a figurative expression of poverty). As a result his children who were left behind had to live on the donations of friends and relatives.

Another example of such case was a distant relative of my friend in Rissani. When I visited this Ou Baydir family in Tafraoute, the head of the household, Brahim Ou Baydir (67, Ayt Amar), was absent, so I talked to his wife Zahra (55, Ayt Amar). The only male workforce in the household, Assou, Brahim's son, went to prison some years ago due to an unreasonable allegation that he worked in *contrebande*. According to the local people, it often happens in Tafraoute nowadays that the most deprived people are denounced because of inter-clan disputes and sent to prison without any tangible evidence that they are involved in smuggling. The villagers say that if they had been smuggling, they wouldn't be living in Tafraoute but got a comfortable large house somewhere in towns and might aspire to be a candidate in the next communal election.

The strain caused by the electoral conflict on the lives of the most marginal part of the population is synonymous to the forever-unpaved route to Tafraoute; since it is evident that with the wealth of the power players of the village and their connections to party authorities, paving the 130km route in the desert would not be a difficult project. However, the outcome of 'democratic elections' was the proliferation of corruption and the birth of inter-clan tensions. If one side proposed a project which would contribute to the welfare of the population, the other side would oppose it, so as not to let them benefit from it. Since each party tried to defend its own interest, the welfare of the entire village became just a peripheral subject in the local politics.

For the third election in 2003, one part of the village population, largely Ayt Taghla, insisted that Baha Amraoui was 'old' and 'sick', so he needed to be replaced. They had chosen another candidate from their clan, Hamid Ou Moh, who built his fortune by illegal smuggling. Although he lived in Erfoud and did not stay in the village, he still had his house and fields there, so he was considered to be a good candidate to protect the interest of Ayt Taghla group. On the other hand, Baha Amraoui, elected president twice, held a meeting with close allies and told them he was 'tired', that he wanted them to find a successor so that he could retire. They had chosen Ali Ou Mouch, but some people insisted Baha should stay in his place and that Hamid Ou Moh become the first vice-president as a proposal of reconciliation. Baha, however, opposed this idea, saying he didn't want to have the 'youths' – the people who represented the young population on the side of Hamid – in his bureau, and that he didn't trust them. As a result, Ali Ou Mouch was elected president in the third round, while Baha became the first vice-president, *de facto* guarding his position in power. In short, the vested interests of one group continue to rule the local politics at the cost of the well-being of the general mass.

The Tafraoute electoral rivalries were closely connected to the Rissani Municipality, as the Sidi Ali Commune was an important base of support for party politics. The two candidates who won the 2011 parliamentary election, Amin El Yahiaoui and Hassan Zoubir, both Arab merchants from Rissani, had close connections to Tafraoute political figures: Hamid Ou Moh supported El Yahiaoui (PAM), and Baha Amraoui was in the camp of Zoubir (PPS: Party of Progress and Socialism). In the past, El Yahiaoui used to be the front runner, occupying the presidential seat in the Rissani Municipality for twenty-five years, from when it was founded thirty years ago. In the 2011 election, however, Zoubir was elected president for the first time, reflecting the support he received from an influential lawyer: El Alami from the Istiqlal Party. El Alami was the president of the *jamʿa* Beni Mhammed, and originally came from Meknès. He was from a poor background, and first approached El Yahiaoui, attracted by his money. However, the two men got into a problem, and El Alami started to take a distance from El Yahiaoui and instead approached his rival Zoubir. Shortly afterwards, El Yahiaoui got into trouble and was sued for corruption, and was sentenced by the court to a year in prison and a fine. Behind the scenes El Alami had played a role in putting him into this situation. Since then Zoubir became increasingly strong, thanks to the help of El Alami.

It is evident that the newly implemented electoral system created inter-clan conflicts which affected the Tafraoute villagers' relationship to each other, as well as friendships and marriage patterns. For example, a villager from the Irjdaln group explained to me that when he wants to work for someone from the Ayt Taghla group, as a driver for instance, his friends will not allow him to do so by putting various forms of pressure on him. Although there are lucrative business chances, he cannot take them because of the inter-clan conflict. In terms of marriage, before it didn't matter if an Irjdaln clan-member wanted to marry an Ayt Taghla clan-member, as long as the individuals concerned agreed amongst another. However, in recent years there is increasing pressure to avoid inter-clan marriage (Irjdaln/Ayt Amar – Ayt Taghla), hence clan endogamy has become more prevalent. As discussed in section 3.5.1, the predominant trait to marry within one of the Ayt Khebbash clans, inter-cousin marriage, has long been a social norm among the Ayt Khebbash people, even after their sedentarisation in villages and towns. However, the abstinence of intermarriage between Irjdaln/Ayt Amar and Ayt Taghla clans is a newly emerging practice in Tafraoute since the 1990s, which can be seen as a form of traditionalisation in response to the tension brought by the modern electoral system. The dominant group, represented by the electoral candidates, invoked 'tradition' and stressed the difference between clans in order to control and administer the subordinate group. The villagers know that marriage exclusion is not part of their 'tradition', so it is by no means important, symbolic or emotionally necessary for them to practice it. Rather, they responded to the political manoeuvres in this way because of the possibility of 'material remuneration' (Cf. Gillman 2001; 2004) and political participation. By demonstrating support to the 'clan representative', some villagers gain political and social recognition and could avoid being denounced behind their backs. Therefore, clan endogamy in Tafraoute is on the one hand informally enforced by the local authorities as an effective means of control, but on the other is a tactic of participation maintained by the villagers through experiences of implicit privilege and marginalisation.

3.8 Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter how the Ayt Khebbash villagers' social relations underwent a dynamic re-organisation process in the course of the formation and development of Tafraoute. The process of state formation, capitalism and globalisation that penetrated the Tafilalet, imposed on the formerly nomadic Ayt Khebbash population a sedentary way of life in search of cash income. Not only the previous economic structures changed but also the Ayt Khebbash people's cultural world view and their

relationship to one another. In this process of globalisation, the dusty oasis villages near the Algerian border were created and integrated into the world market for money, material goods and migration. The flows and interactions that occurred in these processes have diminished the autonomy of local traditions, and have fostered a greater variety of hybridisation in production, communication, and styles of consumption as compared to the past (Cf. Canclini 1995 [1989]).

Meanwhile, we can observe that the Ayt Khebbash people have actively transformed the 'disorder' of the everyday world they live in, by the creation of myths and fictive clan affiliations. Even those seemingly fixed institutions such as kinship, ethnicity and traditional customs are in fact constantly reformulated and manipulated by the local people without altering the outer form of appearance. We have already seen that the 'Ayt Khebbash' group category itself is flexible, as in the case of Ayt Taghla clan joining them by creating a fictive affinity. However, the interaction with the outside world and the recent implementation of a modern political system did not only integrate the Ayt Khebbash by producing 'hybrids', but also segregated them by producing new inequalities and marginalising the already impoverished members of the population.

The living world of Tafraoute villagers has been transformed from subsistence agriculture and herding to wage-earning labour, in which they strive to traditionalise modernity to make sense of the new social and cultural norms. Yet this contradictory aspect of the identification processes is far more complex than what it seems, if we take a close look at how people respond to the imposition of discourse practices. The general picture is that the power players of the village utilised their existing family connections and clan affinities in order to survive and exploit the newly implemented electoral system, which some villagers consider as a 'tragedy born out of ignorance'. A former nomad of the Tafraoute region who currently lives in Rissani told me that during the time he spent in the Algerian prisons he learnt about international politics and Western concepts such as 'democracy', which he believes need to be better understood by the villagers. He insisted that the ignorance of democracy by the villagers was the primary reason behind all the corruption, denunciations and inter-clan conflicts.

Apart from this viewpoint, many of the villagers explicitly or implicitly deny the discrepancy between their mode of living and the modern political system, because they more or less seemed to counteract the discourse power by tactically internalising it

within their age-old web of social relationships. The result, however, is not integration but segregation, since the social actors have discovered in this complex process the means for resisting or modifying globalisation, when they participate in social practice in ways that are constitutive of power relations. In other words, by traditionalising their social relations and marriage patterns the villagers also strive to claim a position of power in the newly created political and economic order. Many of the Ayt Khebbash villagers do not consider such practices as actually related to their 'tradition', but rather perceive these as an artificial segregation from their own history wherein different clans co-habited and inter-married. They are marginalised and segregated from their historical 'roots' and 'self', but at the same time complicit in their own domination by seeking political and economic opportunities. This profound complexity of power relations is engrained in the Ayt Khebbash people's identification processes, which continue to shape the meanings they attach to the *tamazirt*, long after their migration to the towns.

3-1 Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*

3-2 A house in Tarfaoute *taqdimt*

3-3 A salon in a house in Tafraoute *taqdimt*

3-4 Field in Tafraoute

3-5 Irrigation

3-6 A Tafraoute inhabitant in his field

3-7 A tent in Tafraoute *tiwjdidt*

3-8 Dressing a bride

3-9 A bride in the collective marriage (2012) in Tafraoute

3-10 Finished trilobites

3-11 Fossil association in Tafraoute