

## **Abstract**

This bachelor's thesis focuses on various ethnic groups in the region of the Sahara, particularly during the golden age of medieval empires. It also emphasizes the importance and influence of Islam in the whole region and its role among key ethnic groups. Geographically, the thesis spreads from today's Mauritania to the region around Lake Chad. Sahara is viewed in a wider geographical sense, as it also includes regions considered to be in the Sahel. Also due to extensive historical scale of this thesis, it also deals with influences within concerned ethnic groups. Main goal of this thesis is in depth description of intellectual centers, such as Timbuktu or Walata and the current state of manuscript research in Mali and Mauritania. Repeatedly throughout the thesis, involvement of elite tribal groups into the large scale Trans-Saharan trade is also mentioned, as are some of their mutual alliances that are key factors in today's understanding of this turbulent region.

**Keywords:** Ethnic groups, Sahara, Manuscripts, Timbuktu, Tuareg