BARBARY CORSAIRS

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ITS HERITAGE

Politics, Society and Economy

EDITED BY

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BARBARY CORSAIRS

The End of a Legend 1800-1820

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Few regions in the world have given rise to as much fantasy and as much misunderstanding as the part of North Africa known as the Maghreb.[1] The three centuries of Ottoman rule, corresponding to the golden age of the Barbary Coast corsairs, are chiefly responsible for this. The sea has always played an important role in North Africa, but it was not until the sixteenth century, with the arrival of the Ottomans, that it acquired such undisputed preeminence. It was by sea that the Ottoman military contingents arrived, and it was the ports of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli that became the capitals of those new Ottoman provinces. And it was eventually by means of naval warfare, rapidly transformed into a privateering war, that those states that the Europeans would later call the Barbary Regencies established their power.

From the beginning of the sixteenth to the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Barbary corsairs struck fear into the hearts of the occupants of the northern coasts of the Mediterranean and plagued European imagination. In the south, on the other hand, these seamen were considered the spearhead of Islam and were the pride of the Muslims. On both sides of the Mediterranean the dominant idea was of an almost permanent confrontation without any particular change lasting for three centuries. In reality, this exaggerated vision of tense and constant confrontation is inaccurate. This is not to say that the corsairs did not really exist! Their misdeeds, or, if we prefer, their exploits were real enough, and for a long time their boldness weighed heavily on navigation and the coastal populations of Mediterranean Europe. This one-sided European point-of-view has persisted for a long time and numerous are the books in

[1] We have frequently used the geographical term 'Maghreb', which, in addition to the present countries of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, usually includes the Kingdom of Morocco, although this work deals primarily with the regencies that were Ottoman provinces, which was not the case of Morocco. Although from time to time we refer to the Moroccan commercial fleet, the country itself is not included in our study.

which terrible North African pirates are set against heroic European sailors, defenders of the Cross against the Crescent. The change that has recently taken place in European historiography is exemplified by the eminent Italian historian Salvatore Bono's well-documented work published in 1964, *I Corsari barbareschi.* In 1993, he brought out another work bearing the significant title: *Corsari nel Mediterraneo, Cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio.* The existence of Barbary privateers has certainly not been refuted over the past thirty years, but re-examined in its context and put into perspective. This has had as a primary result the discovery by the European public of an important fact that had been previously more or less hidden: the existence of an active and effective form of Christian privateering whose most famous practitioners were the Order of Malta.

Within those three centuries of tormented and much-debated history, the years 1798 to 1818 occupy a special place. It was, during those two decades, with events moving at a rapid pace, that there was in the Maghreb a spectacular return to privateering activities, then economic development and finally, the at-first-sight unanticipated unexpected collapse of the Regencies, soon bringing about a major shift in the destiny of the Maghreb.

That series of events is the subject of this book, a work based on substantial, varied documentation. The local sources include: official chronicles like those of Ben Dhiaf from Tunisia, and private ones like those of Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, a merchant from Tripoli, in addition to compilations, especially the *Tachrifats* from Algiers. We also used those available administrative archives, especially for Tunis, regarding taxes, customs duties, and rent registers relating to the estates of the ruling beys. Apart from using those sources, we have also to a certain extent made them the subject of publications aimed at facilitating their consultation and utilisation.[2] For our specific purposes, the register of the successive captures of Algiers is a particularly valuable document, as it records the results of the Algerian corsairs campaigns between 1765 and 1829.

The European sources provide indispensable additional information. Added to the voluminous consular correspondence are two sets

[2] This is particularly the case of Algiers, with the works of Amine, Saïdouni, and Shuval; and of Tunis, with those of Bachrouch, Benachour, Chater, Cherif, Valensi and Zouari.

of records kept by the North African consulates. Firstly, copies of passports that served as a sort of safe-conduct pass, provided for privateering captains by the consuls of those states having signed agreements with the Regencies. Dedicated to privateering, the North African seamen ignored normal maritime trade, which was in the hands of the Europeans: the details of the charter contracts for the ships that handled this trade appear in the registers of the consular chancelleries. To this locally-held documentation must be added the registers of the health authorities of the European ports recording the arrival of all ships and including some very valuable information concerning the vessels themselves.

It has therefore been possible to study the seafaring activity of the North African Regencies for that period in a both consecutive and concrete manner and in a personalised, biographical manner. Throughout we have attempted to present, quantitatively and in detail, the facts related to privateering and maritime trade and also to the diplomatic and commercial relations of the Regencies. At the same time we have provided the personal histories of several of the men, both corsairs and merchants, who were the actors in the story. Here, however, there is an important reservation. Although these sources exist, they are far from complete in their coverage of all the Regencies and facets we had initially planned to treat for the entire period of this study. For example, unlike what we know of the Algerians we have traced the movements of the Tunisian corsair ships but are not knowledgeable of the results of their campaigns. The information available concerning port movements and commercial activities in Algiers and Tunis, also Tripoli, is fragmentary; whereas we can follow the North African ships' frequentation in the European ports (sadly, the Maltese archives end in 1816).

During the three centuries of Ottoman rule the activity of the Barbary corsairs, underpinned by the religious factor, provided a fundamental basis for organisation and development in the Barbary Coast Regencies. We therefore begin there. The special characteristic of the Regencies from the seventeenth century resides in their considerable autonomy in relation to the central power in Istanbul, an independence translated by their diplomatic emancipation and the establishment of dynasties in Tunis and Tripoli. The changes in the relations between the Regencies and the European states reveal the lessening of privateering activity in the eighteenth century, in favour of increased trading. The year 1793, which marks the beginning of

the wars that arose in the wake of the French Revolution, heralded a spectacular return to activity by the Barbary corsairs. Existing sources enable us to study the ships, the men and the campaigns of the corsairs in a systematic way and also make it possible to present, for the first time, an economic evaluation of privateering at the change of centuries.

In 1806, in the very middle of the wars of the First Empire, the booming Barbary privateering activities suddenly came to an almost complete halt. This did not result from interventions by European states, most of them on the French or English side: it was the North Africans themselves who took the initiative to reduce their privateering and to devote themselves to another activity, sea transportation. We know how rapidly the Greek-Ottoman merchant marine developed in this period, taking advantage of the neutrality of the Ottoman Empire. What we find in the case of North Africa was that the regional shipowners and seamen followed the same example, thereby demonstrating a real capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. They were also accompanied and supported by North African merchants attempting to establish themselves directly in Europe. Thus, in the course of one short decade, the ports of Mediterranean Europe, for the first time in their history, started to welcome North African shipping and merchants.

The North African initiative filled a definite gap and was at first welcomed by the Europeans without significant opposition. But quite soon the competition represented by this trade and the Maghreb shipping created ever-growing, stronger opposition: irksome local administration was followed by official interdictions. It was the return to a peace generally in Europe that meant failure for the North Africans. Incapable of competing with the massive return to North Africa by European ships and merchants, the Maghreban sailors went back to their old privateering activities. It was once too many: and, unlike the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the tacit pact between both sides of the Mediterranean; there were no pacts, all to the advantage of Europe. Not only was Algiers crushed by Lord Exmouth's fleet in 1816, but Europe's economic domination became patently evident from this point on. After the abortive attempt at marine transportation, privateering now became moribund, and for the first time in three centuries, the Maghreb found itself, as it

were, forbidden from engaging in maritime activity. Henceforth, deprived of an important part of their resources, and also further weakened by natural disasters, the now marginalised and exhausted Regencies were at the mercy of Europe.

PART ONE

PRIVATEERING: AN AGE-OLD PRACTICE

CHAPTER ONE

THE BASES OF PRIVATEERING

It is appropriate to stress the fundamental difference between the pirate, faithless and lawless without conscience or decency, known in the Mediterranean as a *bandit*, and the corsair or privateer, who, in the Maghreb, only existed through his faith and as one who respected the law. Indeed, privateering was based on two fundamental principles: it was one of the forms of war practiced by the Maghreb against the Christian states, which conferred upon it a dimension that was at one and the same time legitimate and religious; and it was exercised in a framework defined by a state strong enough to enact its rules and control their application. I am not proposing to provide a chronological or institutional history of Ottoman North Africa here, but to present elements that are indispensable to an understanding of the environment in which corsair activities were able to flourish.

Regional Conditions

The Origins of the Corsair State

A result of the weakness and disintegration of the local Berber dynasties, North African privateering pre-dated the regencies of the Ottoman era. In the fourteenth century, the coastal cities, which had become more or less autonomous, could no longer count on their rebellious hinterland, and began to turn to piracy for survival. In the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, political uncertainty and inter-dynastic wars favoured the Iberian *Reconquista*, which took hold in the Maghreb and multiplied the bases of occupation, the *presides*: Ceuta in 1415, Tangiers in 1471, Melilla in 1497, Mers el-Kébir and Agadir in 1505, Oran in 1508, Bugie and Peñon of Algiers in 1512.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Barbarossa brothers, independent privateers, members of a Greek family from Mytilene

who had recently converted to Islam, were invited by the Hafsid sovereign to set themselves up in Djerba. In 1514, Arouj seized Djidjelly, and, at the invitation of its inhabitants, became the ruler of Algiers in 1516, before taking Tlemcen, where he was eventually killed by Spaniards from Oran in 1518. His brother Khayr al-Din, who had inherited a very difficult situation, then made a decision that was to have grave consequences: he called upon the Ottoman sultan Selim, and in return for his assistance, offered to place himself and his possessions under the sultan's rule. The offer was accepted, and the sultan conferred upon him the title 'Pasha', appointed him *beylerbey* (provincial governor), and, above all, sent him several thousand seasoned soldiers with artillery. This constituted the military force which, supported by the Sublime Porte, linking the naval mastery of the privateers with the power and efficiency of a modern and disciplined infantry, restored the religious and political order of Islam in the Maghreb. After many attempts, Khayr al-Din finally captured Peñon of Algiers from the Spaniards in 1529; in 1551, Turgut ('Dragut' to the French) captured Tripoli, where the Knights of Malta were stationed; and then in 1574, Sinan Pasha and Uluç Ali took Tunis and Goletta from the Spaniards. The corsairs had thus played a decisive role in the Muslim reconquest of North Africa from the Spaniards.

The Ottoman state organised its new provinces by placing them under the pashas created in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. They had considerable difficulty in establishing their authority faced with the militia of the janissaries, the *odjak*, directed by its *divan*, or group of principal officers, and also the *taïfa*, the fellowship of privateer captains, the *raïs*. The seventeenth century, which saw the apogee of corsair activities, and therefore of the prestige and power of the *raïs*, was also the period of increasing powerlessness of the pashas appointed by the Porte. The *de facto* authority, acquired after a considerable struggle, was in the hands of fiercely rival leaders from the *divan* or the *taïfa* and who were attempting to concentrate power exclusively in their own hands.

Beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century, these governorships underwent a fundamental transformation. The heads in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli who exercised power in the name of the sultan attempted to extend their influence to the hinterland in order to procure resources to supply the cities they ruled, and, in particular, to raise the necessary funds to pay the janissaries. This

subjection was not only fiscal, it also became economic. Relations with the European states, still marked by conflict, were now furthered by commercial exchanges. The products of the Maghreb, primarily of agricultural origin—cereals, leather, wool, oil—were sought after by the Europeans, who in turn offered various manufactured goods prized by the North Africans. This trade was difficult to reconcile with the risks run by the European merchant ships in the Mediterranean. Then, after 1660, naval supremacy in those waters passed from the Spaniards to the English and, especially, the French. The latter would subsequently obtain by force, repeated naval bombardments,[1] a number of peace treaties and commercial treaties with the political entities that came to be known as the Barbary regencies. The corsairs of the Maghreb were forced to respect the French flag; and also the English and Dutch flags, after signing treaties obtained by force by the English, or in the case of the Dutch, by substantial gifts. In addition to the exchanges between North Africa and Europe, trade was developing between the Maghreb and the other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, in particular Egypt. The North Africans, concentrating on privateering, had no merchant marine, and it was the European ships, primarily French, that provided the maritime links between the Maghreb and the rest of the Ottoman world, practicing what was known at the time as the 'maritime caravan'.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the Barbary regencies had changed considerably. Their port-capital now extended its authority over a substantial stretch of inland territory; it traded with the whole of the Mediterranean and beyond; its government, operating as an equal party, had signed treaties with the European powers, without having to worry about the opinion of the sultan. The first years of the eighteenth century saw the culmination of this development. The permanent state of war between Islamic North Africa and Christian Europe came to an end, in spite of the fierce opposition of the *taïfas*. The corsairs' period of glory was over, and the janissaries' officers, and their entourage, now had the sole power to designate the real heads of the regencies. In 1705, Hussein Ben Ali in Tunis, in 1711, Ali Chaouch in Algiers and Ahmed Karamânli in Tripoli, seized

[1] French squadrons bombarded Goletta in 1672 and especially Algiers in 1682, 1683 and 1688, then Tripoli in 1683, 1685 and 1692.

power, and, more importantly, obtained from an Ottoman state weakened by serious defeats at the hands of the Hapsburg Empire, the right to be appointed pashas. What is more, the new pashas of Tunis and Tripoli managed to pass their powers on to their descendants, creating dynasties that lasted until 1835 in Tripoli, and as late as 1956 in Tunis.

The Regencies in the Eighteenth Century

The Heads of State

In 1730, the official titles of Hussein Ben Ali, founder of the dynasty of the beys of Tunis, formed a long list of honorific names and laudatory epithets that revealed the ambiguity of his position as well as his acknowledged ambitions: first of all, the real function of *wâlî* (one responsible for) that suggests relations of vassalage with the Porte; then the assumed dignity of *mâlik* (sovereign), which was slipped surreptitiously among vaguer and more harmless terms, and which appears at the very end of the list following the royal title 'Our Master'; the functional attributions of 'Guarantor of Happiness', 'Our Protector'; and finally, the epithets lavished on him by the sycophantic pens of the scribes: 'the Glorified', 'the Highly-Placed', 'the Eminence with Efficient Virtues'.[2]

This prominent figure, now legitimised and exceeding the prestige conferred upon him through his nomination by the sultan, possessed real power; he was considered indispensable, his authority uncontested, even if for the most part a mere formality. This allegiance consisted chiefly in symbolic acts: the Friday prayer in the Great Mosque, the *khutba*, was offered in the name of the ruling sultan; coins struck in the North African mints bore his *tughra* (monogram); letters to him exhibit an obviously affected but indispensable deference: as late as 1827, Hussein, the dey of Algiers, was addressed as "the Vizier assigned to protect the interests of the victorious *odjak* of our master [. . .] whose servant I am."[3] There were also more material displays of allegiance, like the obligation to participate militarily in wars in which the Ottoman Empire was engaged: Algiers,

[2] Cherif, *Pouvoir et société* . . ., 1986, Vol. II, pp. 74–75.
[3] Boyer, *La Vie quotidienne à Alger* . . ., 1963, pp. 85–86.

Tunis and Tripoli sent their naval divisions to fight against the Russian fleet which had appeared in the Mediterranean in 1770; Algiers sent more divisions in 1774, 1788 and 1790; and the Algerian and Tunisian *flags were present* at Navarino in 1827. After Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798, the sultan enjoined the regencies to rally to his side and declare war on France, which they eventually did, belatedly, and with considerable ill will. The sultan still had a real means of exerting pressure on the regencies: he had authority over the recruitment of the new janissaries (infantry) for the militias; quite important in Tripoli, more so in Tunis, and essential in Algiers, and surely behind the latter's pronounced naval involvement at the end of the eighteenth century.

In contrast to the seventeenth century, the eighteenth was one of political stabilisation and the establishment of a system of succession, most often peaceful, for the heads of state of the three regencies. Although there were eleven deys in Algiers between 1671 and 1710 (ten of whom died by assassination after serving for an average of only three and a half years), in the period from 1710 to 1798 there were nine (seven of them dying in bed) and in the latter part of the same period, between 1754 and 1798, there were just three, including Mohammed Ben Osman, who ruled from 1766 to 1791. There were several attempts at hereditary transmission: Baba Ibrahim (1732–1745) was the brother-in-law of Kûr Abdi (1724–1732) and the uncle of Kütchük Ibrahim (1745–1748). In Tunis, Hussein Ben Ali (1705–1740) was succeeded by Ali Pasha (1740–1756), then after the brief rule of Mohammed Bey (1756–1759) came Ali Bey (1759–1782) then his son Hammuda Pasha (1782–1814). In Tripoli twenty pashas succeed each other between 1672 and 1711; Ahmed Karamânli ruled from 1705 to 1745. His son Mohammed succeeded him (1745–1754), then Ali Pasha (1754–1793). In 1793 Ali Pasha was driven out by Ali Burghul—an Algerian usurper who claimed to be supported by the sultan—but was restored two years later through the good offices of the bey of Tunis. Ali Pasha's son Ahmed II succeeded him for several months in 1795 before he in turn was driven out by his brother Yussuf, who ruled from 1795 to 1832.

State and Government

This great stability at the head of the three regencies favoured the development of a fledgling state whose characteristics and ways of

functioning were similar, with minor differences of course, in the three North African states.

Table 1: Dignitaries of the Eighteenth-century Regencies

Dignitaries	Algiers	Tunis	Tripoli
Military	aga of the Arabs	kiaya aga of the janissaries bash mamluke	bey 2nd kiaya raïs el-bahr
Civilian	khaznadji wakil al-kharj beit el-mâl khodjet el-kheil	khaznadji sâhib at-tabaa bash kâtib	khaznadji kiaya

The dey of Algiers, the bey of Tunis and the pasha of Tripoli carried out the functions of government together with a select group of trusted men who took care of the most important civil and military affairs of the regencies, in Algiers the French referring to them, from the seventeenth century on as the *Puissances* (Powers). There was no real hierarchy among them, but the favour of the ruler of the day gave a temporary lustre to their posts. The military dignitaries were in principle just delegates of the head of state, whose basic function was to command the army. The commanders of the ground troops were known as *agas* by the Arabs of Algiers (originally such leaders only commanded the indigenous auxiliary cavalry) but *kiaya*, 'delegate', in Tunis, and 'bey' in Tripoli. These generals were provided with assistants: an aga of the janissaries plus the commanders of the bodyguards, *bash mamlukes* in Tunis and a second *kiaya* in Tripoli. The navy in Tripoli was under the orders of the *raïs el-bahr*, the commander of the sea, who was a sailor; while in Algiers, the *wakil al-kharj* was a civilian who was initially responsible for the provisions of the fleet as well as for relations with the European nations.

With the exception of the treasurer, who was called the *khaznadji* in all three regencies, the other civilian functions differed from capital to capital. In Algiers there was *khodjet el-kheil*, the 'horse secretary', originally responsible for receiving the horses that were supplied by the heads of the inland tribes, and by extension collected all taxes in kind, and was responsible for supplies for Algiers and the regency;

whilst the *beit el-mâl* executed inheritances, executed confiscations determined by the courts, and managed the fortunes of dignitaries who had been relieved of their functions. The key post in Tunis, especially during the time of Hammuda Pasha, was the *sâhib at-tabaa*, the keeper of the seals; complemented by the *bash kâtib*, the head clerk, who handled relations with the provincial kaids and foreign states. In Tripoli, the *kiaya* was the leading civil dignitary as well as being the principal advisor to the pasha.

The governments of the regencies thus comprised five or six people practicing "solidarity based on mutual suspicion": they had areas of responsibility that were common to all three regencies, but could be extended considerably depending on the favour of the head of state. Working for them was a staff of *khodjas*, clerks responsible for keeping records of decisions and accounts, and directed by the *khodjas bashi*, four of them in both Tripoli in Algiers. The hierarchy of the *khodjas bashi* in Algiers was as follows: at the head there was the *bash defterdar*, the head registrar, then came the *mukataadji*, who kept the rolls and the pay records for the janissaries, no doubt assisted by a third *khodja*, a fourth being responsible for the customs registers. To these governmental figures must be added the civil head of the capital city strictly speaking i.e., the *cheikh el-beled*, or *cheikh el-medîna*, who was assisted by *naïbs* (lieutenants) and *amins* (heads) of the corporations.

These official figures all resided in the three capitals, but authority over the hinterland was maintained by means of an administrative structure common to all three regencies, allowing for a few minor differences. Territories were divided de facto into three zones:

– The *makhzen*, i.e., the territory that was permanently under authority, governed by representatives of the head of state. The regency of Algiers was divided into three provinces, the *beyliks* of Constantine in the east, those of Titteri in the north, with their administrative centre in Medea, and the western *beylik*, administered first from Mazouna, then Mascara, and finally from Oran from 1792, the date of the recapture of the city by the Spaniards. Tripoli likewise delegated a *bey* in Bengazi. The regency of Tunis included a considerable number of territories that were placed under the authority of the kaïds who resided in Kef, Bizerta, Sousse, Monastir, Gabes, Sfax, Djerba, Mateur, Djerid, Kairouan and Cape Bon. Beys and kaïds, who bought their offices, *ittifâk* in Tunisia, were responsible for keeping order, dispensing justice and collecting taxes. The taxes were

usually farmed out, *lizma*, and the kaïds were often the principal 'farmers' (*lazzâm*). For all these tasks, both beys and kaïds depended on permanent garrisons, whose different locations give us an idea of the way the governmental authority established its presence. In Tunisia, in addition to Tunis, there were garrisons of Mamlukes in Tabarka, Bizerta, Porto-Farina, Kelibia, Hammamet, Mahdia, Djerba and Gafsa, as well as auxiliary troops, *hanbas, zouaouas* (zouaves) or *spahis*, in Cape Bon, Sousse, Sfax, Gabes, Zarzis and Biban. Garrisons of the regency of Algiers with detachments of janissaries were: Zemoura, Mostaganem, Oran, Constantine, Bona, Biskra, Bugie, Tebessa, Tlemcen, Mascara, Djidjelly, Hamza, Kechtoula, Tamenfous, Benidjenet, and Merseddeban.

– The tribal territories, often inhabited by semi-nomadic peoples whose leaders recognized the authority of the bey or dey, and were officially invested with the administrative and fiscal functions of kaïds, without any intervention from the staffs of the beys. They also provided auxiliary troops to reinforce the army. These regions were visited once a year by the *mehalla*, in reality a mobile small army appointed to levy taxes. That of Algiers, which included around 2,500 janissaries reinforced by local cavalry, set off in July and combed the western province for four months then the province of Constantine for another six months. Tunisia was covered by two *mehallas*; one in the summer in the northwest after the harvest, and the other in the winter in the Sahara and the south during the date- and olive-picking season. Except when there were uprisings, rare by the second half of the eighteenth century, the *mehalla*'s visit cannot be considered a fiscal raid, and was in no way a pillaging expedition. It was henceforth an organised collecting and transporting of taxes, in money and in kind, which also enabled the central power to establish its presence and demonstrate its power throughout most of the state.

– The virtually-independent regions in remote areas difficult of access, the Aures and Saharan Sahel in Algeria, the region of the Matmatas and outer edges of Tunisia on the southwestern Algerian border, and the Fezzan and the Ghadames oasis in Tripolitania. Opposed to all practical and fiscal submission, these regions, whose perpetual ferment made communication in the interior difficult, frequently rebelled, threatening neighbouring regions and bringing about reprisals from the central government.

M.H. Cherif has demonstrated clearly the three zones that existed in Tunisia.[4] By far the biggest region where the power was permanently present was centred in Tunis and bordered by Bizerta, Beja, Zaghouan and Hammamet. There was a coastal area from Sousse to Mahdia, with enclaves like Sfax, Gafsa, Kairouan, Gabes, Tozeur and Kef. Central Tunisia, from Zaghouan in the north to Gafsa and Gabes in the south, a vast region covered by the *mehalla*. Finally, extending along the Algerian borders from the Kroumirie range in the north to the Chott region in the south, are the territories where the authority of the bey was more or less problematical.

The Army

Established through force of arms, the regencies were also maintained in power by arms. Each sovereign was first of all a military leader, and the good condition of his army was at one and the same time the justification for his function and, often, the condition of his own survival; it was also the guarantor of the existence of the state, and of its security both within and without. Identical in the beginning, the armies of the three regencies later evolved, and eventually, by the eighteenth century, showed marked differences. In Tripoli, the armed forces were composed of *kuloghlus* (sons of Turkish janissaries and local women) and of Arabs once Ahmed Karamânli became pasha. A *kuloghlu* himself, Karamânli, shortly after seizing power, had the Turkish janissaries murdered after the Ottomans attempted to overthrow him with the support of the militia.

Tunisia had a composite army that included a militia of janissaries estimated at eight thousand men at the end of the eighteenth century. Half of these were recruited in Anatolia, and the rest were *kuloghlus*, whom the beys used in combat, or sent on the *mehalla*, while remaining suspicious of them. There was also a corps of Mamlukes, consisting of around two thousand men primarily from the Levant, but also from Europe. They were slaves who had been bought and later freed by the bey, to whom they were totally devoted. Some of them gained his favour, becoming familiars at the Bardo palace, and rose to the highest positions, e.g. the famous Yussuf,

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[4] Cherif, *op. cit.*, 1986, Vol. I, pp. 362–363.

Tunis: former barracks of the janissaries, built during the rule of Hammuda Bey (author's photograph)

Tunis: former palace of the sâhib at-tabaa
(author's photograph)

who became *sâhib at-tabaa* under Hammuda Pasha. Then there were the indigenous troops, foot soldiers and cavalry. Added to the regular troops were auxiliaries recruited temporarily or provided by the *mazhken* tribes. In the decisive battle of Sarrât (July 1807), a contingent of barely 1,500 Turks fought in a 'Tunisian' army numbering 20,000 in all.

The situation in the Regency of Algiers was completely different. The *odjak*, the militia, which represented the major part of the armed forces, numbered from eight to ten thousand men. Among them were a number of local people and renegades—those who had turned from Christianity to Islam—who accounted for around ten to fifteen percent of the militia at the end of the eighteenth century, judging by the inventories of deaths kept by the *beit el-mâl*; but there were no *kuloghlus*, according to the rule that was still in force in Algiers. Most were from the Levant, and had been mainly recruited in Anatolia. The arrival of these 'Turkish' contingents, if not regular, was at least frequent, and their numbers were considerable: from 1216 to 1225 Hegira (1801–1809), 2,264 new recruits were enrolled, but none from 1221 to 1223; then 4,115 were signed up between 1225 and 1236 (1810 to 1819), 1,232 of them in the single year 1232 (1816), and finally, 2,154 between 1236 and 1245 (1820–1829).[5] Around 1800, according to the registers of the *beit el-mâl*, sixty-two percent of these janissaries, for the most part unmarried, lived in one of the eight barracks in Algiers; the others, usually married, and the noncommissioned officers, lived in the city. Divided into 424 companies—*ortas*—they were subjected to strict discipline, with their ranking as follows: *yoldash* (soldier), *wakil al-kharj* (a non-commissioned officer and supply clerk), *odabashi* (subaltern), *bulukbashi* (senior officer), *agabashi* (general of the militia).[6] In spite of local marriages and the involvement of a good many of the members in local economic activities, the *odjak*, by its system of recruitment from outside, its refusal to allow the sons of janissaries to become members, as well as its reticence in regard to local inhabitants, remained primarily foreign to the country. To this corps was added local auxiliary units pro-

[5] COLOMBE, "*Contribution*...", 1943.

[6] SHUVAL, "*La Ville d'Alger*...", 1994, pp. 106–114. From 1671 on, the rank of *agabashi* was primarily honorific; the holder of the title was responsible for the internal discipline of the corps, and only served in this capacity for a period of two months per year.

vided by the *makhzen*, the *zouaouas* (foot soldiers from Kabilia) and the mounted *spahis*.

Privateering and Religion

In the relations between Europe and North Africa, the corsair war was one aspect of the war the Muslims were waging against the Christians. Originally set up to resist the Iberian *Reconquista,* and later caught up in the maritime wars that pitted the Spanish-Italian fleets against the Ottoman navy in the sixteenth century, the navies of the regencies pursued the same combat in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in forms adapted to the circumstances and to their capabilities. The naval superiority of the Europeans in the Mediterranean was widely established by the end of the sixteenth century, and the North African captains tried to avoid confrontations with the European warships, usually attacking their enemies weakest points—their merchant ships or poorly protected coastal areas. The regencies suffered the consequences of their activities in the almost total demise of their maritime trade, in reprisals that took the form of attacks against their coastal populations and naval bombardments of their ports and especially their capitals. These were real wars, exacerbated on both sides by the religious issue, and wars in which slavery was practiced on both sides.[7]

In the regencies, the corsairs were the heroes of Islam: they practiced the *djihad,* and in the eyes of the population, were the *mudjâhid,* fighters for the faith, *ghâzis,* soldiers waging war against the Infidels. An eighteenth-century Tunisian chronicler, basing his observations on the *hadiths,* the sayings of the Prophet, described the virtues of the corsairs:[8]

> In the year 1123 [1711], the emir [bey] armed his ships to fight against the enemies of the Word of God [which] is the highest in its conformity to the word of the Prophet. He who fights at the sea has ten times the virtue of he who fights on land. The blood of the martyr [*shahîd*] that dissolves in the waves is like that of the martyr on land that flows into the earth. God has charged the Angel of Death with

[7] *Cf.* for example, Bono, "*Achat d'esclaves turcs,*" 1985.

[8] Al-Wazîr Al-Sarrâj Al-Andalusî: *al-H'ulal al sundusiyya,* 1985, Vol. III, p. 159. The author compiles the *hadiths* that figure in Suyuti: *al-Gâmi al-Sagîr,* II 76 and II 41.

> taking possession of all souls except of those who fall as martyrs at sea, because it is God himself who takes care of them. God forgives all the sins of one who dies as a martyr on land, except his debts; whereas he forgives all the sins of one dying as a martyr at sea, including his debts.

It was therefore in an atmosphere of religious exaltation that the corsairs carried out their campaigns:

> On leaving the port, he [the raïs] fires a cannon shot to salute the house of the dey, and when he reaches the open sea, he fires another, in honour of the highly-venerated muslim monk buried in the northern part of town, near the Bab el-Oued gate, one they call Sidi Abd al-Rahman.[9]

Group departures are also described:

> On the 4th of *Redjeb*, 1227 (1812), nine small and large ships left Algiers; may God give them safety for a companion, and may he make their route easy. So may it be, O God, protector of Muslims.[10]

Returns to port, especially if they were successful, were presented in the same spirit:

> By the grace of the Most High, six warships from Algiers, bulwark of the Holy War, went out into the Ocean and there captured four ships.[11]

These *mudjâhids*, fighters for the faith, were devoted to the cult of saints, both male and female. When the booty was divided up, a part of the proceeds was reserved for them.[12] We know the names of twenty-three male and two female saints who benefitted from such distributions in Algiers in the eighteenth century. The distributions are described as follows:

> The clerk recording the capture of ships deducts from the booty taken from the enemy the share destined for the marabouts and the sum for buying back captives. These portions of the spoils are put in a chest deposited in the palace and placed in the keeping of the *Khodja-Defterdar*,

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[9] Venture de Paradis: *Tunis et Alger*, 1983, p. 146.

[10] Devoulx, *Tachrifat*..., 1852, p. 28.

[11] *Registre des Prises*, p. 102.

[12] In 1799, the raïs Ben Tabak of Algiers captured a Portuguese warship, taking 79 prisoners. One of the prisoners was given to Sidi Aberrahman el-Talbi, the local saint whose highly venerated tomb is located near the Bab el-Oued gate. The raïs Hamidou did likewise in 1802, after capturing a Portuguese frigate and its 282–man crew. *Registre des Prises*, pp. 70 and 77.

> the chest has two sections, one containing the marabouts' share, the other the fund for ransoming Muslims. The ransom money was allocated as: 4 *mahbubs* for captains and 2 *mahbubs* for other captives. The marabouts' share is distributed once a year, on the anniversary of the birth of the illustrious Prophet, under the direction of the *Khodjet el-Kebir*; this portion is divided into approximately 60 shares. The key to the coffer in question is entrusted to the *Khodjet-Errekamdji*.[13]

Indeed, the greatest fear of the Muslim corsairs was the risk of capture, and the prospect of ending up in the Christian galleys. At the end of the seventeenth century, almost a quarter of Louis XIV's 12,000 slaves came from the Ottoman Empire, including the Maghreb. From the eighteenth century on, North African slaves were to be found chiefly in Spain and Malta. After the capture of Malta in 1798, Napoleon apparently freed without ransom all the 2,000 Muslims in the prisons.

The quantity and frequency of these captures by the Christians led to the elaboration of a special jurisprudence by the Muslim theologians. This was particularly the case in North Africa, especially in the western part, following the Iberian *Reconquista* and its extension into the Maghreb. The possessions, rights and family of the captive were protected until it could be determined exactly what had become of him.[14] The freeing of Muslim slaves took place in two different ways: diplomatic agreements between a Muslim state and a European power generally provided for an exchange of captives, though this was rarely effective, with the result that buying back slaves, considered to be a religious duty, was strongly encouraged. Collections in the mosques, legacies, and the allocation of a portion of the revenues of religious foundations, the *waqf-s*, called *habous* in the Maghreb, were the most widespread forms of this activity. Naturally, intermediaries—known as *al-fakkâks*—were indispensable. These were semi-professionals with some knowledge of European languages who circulated here and there in the Mediterranean. In order to bring a successful conclusion to these difficult negotiations, some of them

[13] DEVOULX, *Tachrifat*, 1852, pp. 47–48.

[14] A captive's wife could not be declared a widow nor ask for a divorce and the return of her dowry until it had been proven that her husband, about whom no news had been received, was definitely dead; whereas in the other cases, the legal waiting period was 52½ months. MOUDINE, "*Le rachat*...," 1996, pp. 128–129.

ended up spending several years in Christian lands, such as Abd al-Hêdi al Hâfî in the eighteenth century, in Malta in the employ of the Sultan of Morocco.[15] Occasionally, Muslim merchants also served as intermediaries thanks to their relations with their Christian counterparts and their ability to advance funds if necessary. Needless to say, they were available above all to serve the most solvent among the captives.

The policy of liberating slaves entered a period of much greater activity in the second half of the eighteenth century as a result of the initiatives of the Sultan of Morocco, Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah (1757–1790), who used the freeing of captives, Christian or Muslim, as a diplomatic lever. On this basis, he signed a series of peace treaties and trade agreements with various European states.[16] Motivated by a true spirit of piety, but also desirous of reducing the prestige of the dey of Algiers, of making friends with Tunis and Tripoli, and of developing closer relations with the Ottoman sultan, the Moroccan ruler applied himself to redeeming captive Muslims in Malta. After a first unsuccessful attempt in 1782, he managed to redeem six hundred slaves in 1789, at a cost per head of 450 riyals or Spanish piastres. On the third of July of that year, 57 Moroccans and seven other North Africans sailed for Tangiers; and on 20 August, 536 Muslims left for Istanbul on two French and one Ragusan ship. The negotiations had taken seventeen months.[17]

These deliberations were always long, difficult, expensive and risky, and therefore the Maghreban sailors, in order to protect themselves in case of a capture, called willingly upon certain holy persons reputed to have protective powers in such circumstances. This was the case, for example, of the Tunisian saint al-Sayyida Agûla who died in 1786 or 87, probably from the plague. She founded her *zaouia*, seat of Sufi brotherhood, in the middle of the eighteenth century, in Ras-Jebal on the coast north of Tunis. Of Sherif origin, from the Sâqiyya al-Amrâ, she acted as a protector of wives who were powerless against tyrannical husbands. In particular, a strong oral tradition holds that her reputation derives from miracles she accomplished in providing

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[16] With Denmark in 1753–1754, England in 1760, Sweden in 1763, Venice in 1765, Spain and France in 1767, Portugal in 1773, and the Netherlands in 1777. CAILLÉ, *Les Accords internationaux du sultan*..., 1960.

[17] ARRIBAS PALAU: "*Un rescate*...", 1987.

succour to captured corsairs. Legend calls her the *gayyâbat al-asîr*, 'she who brings back the [corsair] captives'; votive objects, knives and chains dating from this period are on display in Ras-Jebal.[18] Another Tunisian lady saint, al-Sayyida al-Mannûbiyya, engaged in similar activities on behalf of captives.

Privateering and Diplomacy

Real diplomatic relations between the regencies and Europe did not officially begin until the seventeenth century, and were at one and the same time created and conditioned by the practice of privateering. Throughout the sixteenth century, the situation was quite simple: the Ottoman Empire—and therefore its North African provinces—was in a constant state of war, on land and sea, with the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburgs and their possessions and allies in Italy. Since the time of François I, France, also an enemy of Spain, had enjoyed the status of ally, a fact that was officially recognized in the Capitulations (article of a treaty), and had become established in North Africa in the 1560s, with permission from Algiers to establish a trading post—the Bastion of France, near Bona—and to be represented by consuls in Algiers and Tunis. In the last years of the sixteenth century, privateering and merchant ships, Dutch and English, those other enemies of Spain, appeared in the Mediterranean, being welcomed as such in the North African ports. In that same period, the great naval battles which pitted the fleets of the Ottoman galleys against their Spanish counterparts, ceased almost totally after the battle of Lepanto, being replaced by privateering vessels, which attacked merchant ships as well as enemy coasts.

1600–1650: The First Agreements[19]

In around 1600, the various belligerents, exhausted by decades of war, signed peace treaties, or at least lasting truces. This was the case of Spain; with France in 1598, England in 1604, and the United

[18] Henia, "*Mémoire lignagère . . .*", 1992.
[19] *Cf.* especially Wolf, *The Barbary Coast . . .*, 1979.

Provinces in 1609; while the Ottoman and Austrian Empires did the same in 1606. Only Spain and the Ottoman Empire maintained hostilities, particularly in the Maghreb. There followed a remarkable flowering of French maritime trade, but even greater was that of the English and especially the Dutch, who could now frequent Italian and Spanish ports. But the newfound peace meant many English and Dutch corsairs, whether or not converted to Islam, were now available and went over to serving the North African regencies. In the period from 1609 to 1614, the Spanish state expelled hundreds of thousands of Moors, most of whom took refuge in the Maghreb, where they played an active role in society and the economy, all the while nurturing a profound and lasting resentment against Spain. Importantly, the seamen from the north brought with them the art of sailing—and eventually of building—a type of ship that until that time had been very little used by Mediterranean fleets only composed of rowing ships of various types. This vessel, capable of sailing for long periods on the high seas, had gun ports on their flanks and had great cannon power. With thousands of renegades from all over Mediterranean Europe, Tunis, Tripoli and especially Algiers, in the first half of the seventeenth century, became bases for corsair raids, the repercussions of which were felt not only in the Mediterranean but as far away as the British Isles.

In addition to these Ottoman ports there was also the Moroccan port of Salé. Situated at the mouth of the Bou Regreb facing Rabat, Salé, the only Atlantic port in Morocco not occupied by the Portuguese or Spaniards welcomed the first Muslims to arrive from Spain. These were the Hornacheros, Arabic speakers from Hornacho in Estremadura, who settled in Sla el-Bali on the right bank. After the expulsion edicts of 1609–1610 came the Spanish-speaking Moors, or Andalusians, who settled in Sla el-Djerid on the left bank.[20] As of 1617, Salé, virtually independent, with a population further swelled by the influx of renegades, threw itself into the corsair war. Its corsair ships began by raiding the Spanish coasts, then in 1622 appeared in the English Channel before going off to ravage Reykjavik in Iceland (1627) and Ireland (1631) in partnership with the Algerians.

[20] Coindreau, *Les Corsaires de Salé*, 1948, pp. 35–40.

The new fleets, especially that of Algiers, rapidly became powerful and formidable:

> In Algiers, there are seventy ships, as many big vessels as polaccas or large barks, all going out on corsair campaigns, some carrying twenty-five cannons, others thirty-five and forty . . . On the seventh of August, in the year one thousand six hundred and thirty-four, I saw departing from Algiers a fleet of twenty-eight of these ships, the finest and best armed ships that it was possible to see. They sailed West, seeking Breton, Norman and English vessels that around that time of year sailed to Spain to load wine, oil and spices. About a week later, a squadron of five other ships taking the route for the Levant set out from the port. All the rest had already been at sea for some time.[21]

In spite of the capitulations contracted with the sultans by the French in 1535 and renewed in 1569 and 1581, by the English in 1579 and the Dutch in 1612, which, theoretically protected their ships from Ottoman attacks; their vessels, like those of the Spaniards and Italians, were preyed upon by the Barbary corsairs. Information collected for the ten-year period between 1613 and 1622 gives an idea of corsair activities: during this decade, 963 prizes, most of them admittedly of limited tonnage, were brought back to Algiers, 447 of them Dutch and 253 French.[22] Although most of the commercial vessels were of modest size and could neither resist the corsairs nor flee, certain of them, notably English and some Dutch were of impressive size and well-armed, but sailing alone with necessarily small crews, they were vulnerable to a combined attack by several corsair ships. Once seized, these captured ships reinforced the corsair fleets. The near impunity enjoyed by the corsairs in the first half of the seventeenth century was also due to another factor: the incapacity of European military fleets to intervene effectively. The Spanish navy in the Mediterranean was composed essentially of galleys, which were almost powerless against the Barbary vessels and incapable of attacking their home ports. The French, English and Dutch navies of course had warships, but they suffered from three handicaps in relation to the corsairs: their limited numbers made it difficult for them to constitute a squadron capable of intervening; except in rare cases

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[21] DAN, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses corsaires*, 1649, p. 315.
[22] WOLF, *op. cit.*, 1979, p. 190.

their size and armaments were roughly the same as those of the corsair ships, so they therefore did not outclass them; and finally, setting out from the Channel or the North Sea with the intention of operating in the Mediterranean was a long, expensive and uncertain exercise.

The near powerlessness of the European navies from a military point of view, and the gravity of their situation, were the direct causes of the diplomatic action initiated by the European states. Their first step was to approach Istanbul in order to win acceptance by the pashas of the North African provinces of the capitulation clauses concerning the protection of their ships and the return of slaves. In 1604, the Bastion of France was captured and pillaged by the Algerians. Henry IV protested to the sultan—who had the Pasha of Algiers strangled and confirmed the protection the French were supposed to enjoy. But apart from this satisfaction, nothing actually changed on the ground. Henri IV then adopted strong-arm tactics. Lacking a fleet, he called upon the services of a French *condottiere*, Philippe de Beaulieu-Persac, who, in July 1609, with the help of the Spaniards, destroyed the major part of the Tunisian fleet at Goletta—which of course did not prevent the Algerians from continuing to seize ships. The only possible solution was to negotiate a direct agreement with the Divan of Algiers, despite the fact that the first such agreement signed with Tunis in 1605 had produced hardly any concrete results. After a new and useless appeal to the Porte, talks began in 1617, and seemed about to lead to some positive results in 1619. Unfortunately, when the people of Marseilles learned that an Algerian raïs had captured a Provencal vessel and executed most of its crew, in reprisal they killed the Algerian delegation in an inn in the city. Everything had to recommence, and it was not until 1628 that a treaty was signed between France and Algiers. Over a twenty-year period, France, the first European power to attempt to establish ties with the Maghreb, had used in succession the three possible means—asking upon the Porte to intervene, using strong-arm tactics, and making an effort to negotiate—with results that were usually disappointing in each case. The English adopted the identical approach, and it was the English ambassador in Istanbul who, in 1622, negotiated a first peace treaty "with those of Algiers".

The Netherlands, which had become the most important country for maritime shipping in Europe—roughly 1,200 Dutch ships a year passed through the Straits of Gibraltar around 1620—was also seek-

ing favourable grounds for an agreement with the Barbary corsairs. The Dutch, too, used the three means at their disposal: in 1617, the Dutch Ambassador in Istanbul organised a three-way meeting with the Grand Vizir and the *beylerbey*, or governor, of Algiers. Apart from its innovative character, this meeting had no practical oucome. Without appealing to the Porte, the Dutch signed an initial treaty with the Algerians in 1622—which the Algerians failed to respect. Then they, too, tried the promising combination of force and negotiation. In 1624, a Dutch squadron dropped anchor off Algiers, and its commander, Admiral Lambert, demanded that all Dutch slaves be freed and that a new treaty be signed and respected. He stated that on his way to Algiers, he had beaten and captured Algerian corsairs, and they would be hanged if his proposal were refused. The Pasha and the Divan treated his announcement as bluffing, and refused the offer. Lambert kept his word, and the prisoners were hanged from the topsails of his ships, which hoisted anchor shortly afterwards. He continued to cruise along the North African coast, and whenever he managed to capture any Algerian corsairs, he returned to hang them just off Algiers. Agreement was then made and a treaty signed in January 1626. In the same year, an almost identical treaty was established with Tunis.

In the manner in which it was obtained and in its provisions, this treaty would serve as a model for many agreements that would be signed later by other European states. For one thing, from now on the European negotiators would no longer be diplomats, but admirals commanding a squadron of warships. In addition, the terms employed and the principles contained in the texts provide an insight into the difficulties and ambiguities of the relationship between Europe and these corsair entities. The corsair ships were authorised to frequent the Dutch ports, just as Dutch vessels could engage in trade in Algiers. The Dutch slaves were to be freed for ransom or exchanged for North African slaves held by the Dutch. The treaty provided for the presence of a consul in Algiers, when one was not already in place, to take care of the interests of the Dutch. Above all, the corsairs of Algiers were granted right of access to the Dutch ships, which were considered neutral, and also permitted to seize merchandise and passengers from countries that were enemies of Algiers, in this case the Spaniards, while refraining from molesting the Dutch, and paying the freighting charges for the cargo they carried off. The

implementation of the conditions of the clauses found in these treaties signed by the French, the English or the other European states, and the climate in which they had to be applied, would be sources of insoluble problems.

First was the question of the slaves: only the Mediterranean European countries held Muslim slaves who had been recruited by force by each state and used them as rowers in their galleys. Freeing this irreplaceable workforce was in practice impossible, a situation making relations between the regencies and the Europeans very difficult. The Christians however could be bought back from their North African owners, most often private individuals, the Catholics redeemed through the mediation of the specialist religious orders, Mercedarians and Trinitarians through private charitable organisations in the Netherlands or by funds from the application of a 1% tax on foreign trade by the House of Commons in England. This was an unavoidable source of tension and disputes, especially since the consuls did not have diplomatic status and could easily become hostages themselves and end up in prison if a disagreement arose between their countries and a regency. Because the North Africans had no merchant marine, foreign exchange remained entirely in the hands of merchants and European seamen interested in local products (grain, leather, wool and oil) while offering European merchandise in return. Instead of butter, herring or cheese from the Dutch, the local authorities insisted on 'strategic' materials that in principle were forbidden to export to the Maghreb: gunpowder, cannons, shot, masts, rigging and sailcloth. The clause granting the right of access to ships naturally occasioned all sorts of abuses impossible to control. Finally, in that beginning of the seventeenth century, privateering was a 'raison d'être', and for the time being the principal source of revenue for the janissary militias in North Africa as well as the source of glory, wealth and power of the *raïs*, whether Muslims by birth or recent conversion.

The Table in the Appendix indicates all the treaties, ratifications and revisions made between the Western states and the Barbary regencies between 1605 and 1830. Although probably containing some inaccuracies, the list reveals clearly the developments in the relations between Europe and North Africa for that period spanning two centuries. Except for an agreement signed in 1640 with Algiers

providing for the payment of a tribute by France, enabling the recovery of the Bastion of France, no other treaty appears between 1628 and 1658. The various conflicts comprising the Thirty Years' War, setting almost all the countries of Europe against each other from 1618 to 1648 (France and Spain until 1659)—not to mention the civil wars in England and France—left relations with North Africa a very secondary concern. The corsairs had never before been so audacious nor their prizes so numerous; and it is estimated that there were from twenty to twenty-five thousand Christian slaves in Algiers between 1650 and 1660. There were predominantly Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians; but also French, Dutch and English captives. The restoration of peace enabled the European states that had formerly worked to establish ties with North African to renew them and now try to found their mutual relations on solid bases.

1650–1720: The Diplomat Admirals

During the decade from 1658 to 1668, earlier treaties dating from the 1620s were either reactivated or put into effect; the Europeans used the same procedures of sending out the admirals and squadrons, but a greater emphasis was placed on discussion. In 1658, England became the first European power to establish relations with Tripoli. Relations were restored with Algiers in 1660, and then in 1662, new treaties, going back more or less to the terms of the earlier ones, were signed with Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. For the first time, the treaty with Algiers included an important clause: from now on the British ships would be supplied with a passport, issued in England, which should in principle protect them at the time of an inspection by corsairs.[23] That same year, the Dutch renewed their treaties with Algiers and Tunis without significant incident, but without much success when it came to the matter of redeeming slaves. After an unfortunate expedition to Djidjelly in 1664, France also signed treaties with Algiers and Tunis, in 1665 and 1666. It is of note that in 1663, the English ambassador in Constantinople obtained a declaration

[23] The passport (a sheet of paper) was at first handwritten, then later became a printed form to be filled out. It was then cut in half unevenly, with one part going to the captain of the ship and the other sent to Algiers. Confirmation was made by bringing the two halves of the sheet together.

recognising the right of the English to punish the Barbary corsairs. In effect, the sultan was acknowledging the right of the regencies to deal directly with the European powers.

In reality, relations between the European states and the North African regencies had reached an impasse. The treaties were not respected by the North Africans for two main reasons: the Muslim slaves chained in European galleys were never returned; and as we have seen, privateering was not only an economic and religious neccessity, it was also a political one, which, when it came to the exercise of power, especially in Algiers, saw the heads of the militia opposed to the *raïs* of the *taïfa*. On the other side, the Europeans were exasperated by the capture of their ships and the difficulties of getting returned captives—chiefly related to the sums demanded in ransom. In the beginning of the 1670s, tensions were mounting and new confrontations were in the making; but within half a century, the conditions had changed dramatically. Since 1660 in particular, the Netherlands, England and from then on, France, had thrown themselves into a naval arms race which, from the 1670s on, saw them equipped with much more powerful fleets than those of the decade 1620–1630. Not only did the number of ships increase, but in addition, many of them were equipped with eighty, ninety and even a hundred cannons, thereby totally outclassing the corsair ships.

Nevertheless, the Netherlands, worn out after three successive wars against England then drawn into a difficult conflict with France (1672–1678), was ready to make concessions. In 1679, a new treaty was signed between the United Provinces and Algiers, picking up the clauses of the previous treaties and detailing them in 21 articles, with several additional provisions.

On the other hand, the England of the Stuart King Charles II, and especially the France of Louis XIV, refused to practice this policy, which they considered shameful, and made a deliberate choice to use force. In 1670, an imposing English squadron sailed to Algiers with orders from the Duke of York, First Admiral of England (the future King James II) to use force if necessary. The English squadron was then reinforced by a Dutch division: the combined fleet first sank a big Algerian vessel and then, during a battle fought in September near Cape Sparrel, destroyed seven others, including four forty-four gun ships, with the killing of 2,200 Algerians, among them several *raïs*. The following year a new English squadron attacked Bugie and managed to destroy seven of the ships sheltering in the

port. This new disaster provoked a violent revolt in Algiers that brought to power a *raïs* who took the new title of dey, with total authority, at the expense of the pasha who had been appointed by the Porte. A new treaty was signed in 1673, renewing the terms of the earlier treaties. In March 1675, an English squadron came to recover the vessels that had been captured by Tripolitan corsairs who refused to return them. Admiral Narbrough blockaded the city and destroyed part of the fleet, forcing the pasha to sign a new agreement in March 1676, and to return the captured ships. In 1686, an English squadron arrived in Algiers to announce the death of Charles II and renew the treaty in the name of James II; then went on to Tunis, where an agreement was signed immediately.

In the beginning of the 1680s, the France of Louis XIV was at the height of its power. It was a period of brutal actions in a time of peace: the annexation of Strasbourg in 1681, the occupations of Casal in Piedmont in 1682 and Luxembourg in 1684, and the violent naval bombardment of Genoa in the same year. The French were expanding their maritime trade in the Levant considerably, encouraged by Colbert, and later, beginning in 1683, by his son Seignelay, who continued to promote the expansion of the French fleet. It was in this context that the Algerians took note of the fact that the majority of the Knights of Malta were French, and that France had still not returned the North African slaves it was holding.[24] Confident of their good relations with the English and the Dutch following the recent signing of treaties with both countries, Algiers declared war on France in 1682, and its corsairs seized a French royal navy ship, selling its crew on the slave market. Louis XIV now had a 'legal' reason for finishing off the *Barbaresques* of Algiers.

On 29 July 1682, Duquesne, who had sunk six ships from Tripoli at Chios in 1681, arrived in the waters off Algiers at the head of an imposing squadron that now included galliots with bombs whose target, no longer the ships or the coastal fortifications, was the city itself, behind the ramparts. He left on the 12th of September, after causing significant damage and refusing to enter into the discussions proposed by the dey. He returned on the 26th of June 1683, and

[24] In 1675, there were around 12,000 galley slaves in Marseilles, of whom one quarter, 3,000 men, were 'Turkish' and North African Muslims. ZYSBERG, *Les galériens . . .*, 1987.

the bombardment—even more heavy and effective than the previous year—was resumed. Hundreds of houses and many mosques were destroyed, but relatively few inhabitants were killed, as many of them had left the city. The Divan, without demanding ransom, freed more than five hundred slaves and called for negotiations, which Duquesne refused. A notorious *raïs*, Mezzo Morto, seized power, galvanised the population, and retaliated by firing French captives from the mouths of his cannons! Although informed, the Porte did not intervene: the great Ottoman offensive against Vienna was under way at the same moment, and the sultan did not want France to form an alliance with his enemies. The situation was a stalemate. In April of 1684, Tourville arrived off the coast of Algiers, accompanied by an envoy of the sultan, guarantor of peaceful Franco-Ottoman relations. Rapid negotiations were held, and three weeks later a treaty was signed, essentially retaining the provisions of the earlier treaties. This led to the arrival in Versailles of an important personality, Hadj Djafar Aga, received in audience by Louis XIV on the 4th of July 1684—the doge of Genoa would follow him not long afterwards.[25]

Having at long last managed to stand up to France, with their galley slaves still in chains in Marseilles, and at peace with both the Netherlands and England—that is, with no possibility of booty—it was Algiers that took up hostilities with France again in 1687, with predictable consequences. In the spring of 1688, another squadron arrived and again violently bombarded the city. But d'Estrées was called back to France as revolution in England drove James II from the throne and war seemed inevitable. A French plenipotentiary arrived unobtrusively in Algiers in April of 1689 to sign a new treaty similar to the previous ones, but with the additional stipulation that

[25] Naturally we find the same European policy in Morocco. The Dutch signed a treaty in 1656 providing for reciprocal passports, and the English did the same in 1657. Louis XIV, after sending squadrons to Salé to carry out several fruitless bombardments (the city was well protected by the sandbar of the river), managed to arrange for a Moroccan ambassador to be sent to France, where he signed a treaty in St. Germain-en-Laye in January 1682; another did the same at Whitehall, England in April of the same year. It is true that since 1668, the city had been under the authority of the Moroccan sultan, and that the sultan, Moulay Ismaïl, wished to enter into an agreement with the European states, in particular France. COINDREAU, *op. cit.*, 1948, pp. 188–196.

France would provide, free of charge, four mortars, 9,000 bombs and a chief gunner for the Algerians to use in the siege of Oran, all on the pretext that Oran was Spanish, and therefore the enemy of France! At the same time, Tripoli became the object of the same policy: bombardments by Duquesne in 1683 and then d'Estrées in 1685 culminating in the signing of a treaty in 1685, renewal of hostilities by Tripoli in 1692 with the announcement of some French reverses, in particular the naval defeat of La Hougue in 1692, which led to further bombardments in 1693, and a new agreement that took up the terms of the earlier ones that same year. In 1685, wishing to avoid the fate of Algiers and Tripoli, Tunis, at the first request, signed a treaty based on the earlier ones.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the three naval powers, England, France and the Netherlands, had managed to establish relations with the Barbary regencies and obtain respect for their ships and nationals in order to develop their commercial activities in the Mediterranean. The manner in which these negotiations had been conducted reveals much about the way the different countries conceived international relations in this period. The Netherlands preferred peaceful negotiation, and accepted to pay a regular subsidy in both money and naval and military equipment, rather than to risk a costly test of strength with an uncertain outcome. England chose the strong-arm approach, operating efficiently and showing no weakness in a realm in which she excelled i.e. war at sea. In fourteen months, the English navy destroyed thirty corsair ships—enough to persuade the heads of the regencies to sign peace agreements. The glory and the grandeur of Louis XIV dictated the choice of brutality above all others, though it was no more effective for all that. We should note in passing that operations carried out against Algiers and Tripoli were more akin to siege warfare than naval battles, with the same results, mainly at the expense of the civilian populations. The imbalance in strength between these states and the modest corsair cities is clear, but the North Africans knew how to make clever use of the rivalries between the states and how to profit from the international context to limit European ambitions and redress sometimes difficult situations.

All things considered, only an article-by-article comparison of the treaty signed by the Dutch and that obtained by France provides a means of judging the efficacy of the two different diplomatic

approaches.[26] The first articles of both texts establish peace; the second and third Dutch articles and the third, sixth and fourteenth French articles provide for freedom of navigation, free access to the ships in their respective ports, as well as the right to do business there; article four of the Dutch treaty and five of the French specify in almost identical terms the system of passport control for their ships; article five in the Dutch document and eight in the French one provide for the protection of the goods and persons travelling on ships of other nationalities; according to article six of the Dutch treaty and eight of the French one, ships would be assisted in case of shipwreck along the coasts of the signatories; article seven of the Dutch document and fifteen of the French one forbade ships and men to offer their services to states with which the other signatory was at war; article thirteen in the Dutch text and twenty in the French defined the role, identical, of the consuls in case of the death of their nationals in Algiers, and both articles seventeen guarantee the presence and immunity of consuls in Algiers, as well as the right to practise their respective religions; article fourteen in the Dutch treaty and sixteen in the French treaty allowed the European captains to refuse a shipment or a trip that Algiers might wish to force on them; articles fifteen and sixteen of the Dutch document and nineteen of the French one established the competence of the Algerian courts in case of a dispute between European and Algerian, leaving it to the consuls to settle disputes between their own 'nationals'; and finally, article twenty-one in the Dutch treaty and twenty-three in the French one specified that fortuitous violations of the treaties would not cause the treaties themselves to be called into question.

There are significant differences in the treaties, however. When the articles in the Dutch document refer to Dutch subjects, they always specify 'Christians and Jews', thereby revealing the position and role of Jewish merchants in the Netherlands. They had come from Iberia, and one of them had participated in the treaty negotiations. Concerning slaves, the Dutch did not demand the return of their enslaved nationals, but would leave it up to private initiatives to take care of redeeming them, with the understanding that

[26] De Groot, "Ottoman North Africa and the Dutch Republic...", 1985, and *Articles de la paix accordée par le chevalier de Tourville, au nom du Roy, au Bacha, Dey, Divan et Milice d'Alger, signez le vingt cinquième Avril 1684*, Paris, 1689. Charles Roux, *France et Afrique du Nord*, 1932, p. 185.

there should be no further captures (article 12). In the case of visits to Algiers by Dutch warships, article 11 stipulated that the owners of Dutch slaves should be notified, so that they could anticipate any attempts at escape. Finally, article 2 stated that although merchandise brought to Algiers would be subject to the usual duties, strategic material (gunpowder, arms, masts, spars, sailcloth and rigging) would be exempt. Article 4 of the Franco-Algerian treaty provided for the reciprocal exchange of slaves, and article 11 specified that French slaves captured before 1670 would be freed without ransom; article 24 allowed Algiers to establish a consul in Marseilles, and article 28 granted French merchants three months to conclude their affairs and leave Algiers in the event of war with France; finally, article 27 regulated the rules for saluting, according to the rank of the visitor.

Taken as a whole, the two treaties were very similar, and the great majority of their articles were found in both documents. The mercantile aspect of the treaty between Algiers and the Netherlands is seen in particular in the easy terms offered—indeed, demanded—for strategic materials, and the compromises, if not actual weakness, in the provisions related to Dutch slaves. The Franco-Algerian treaty does indeed show much greater concern for the welfare of slaves, especially French ones, and for the diplomatic aspect of relations, even to point of stipulating the correct protocol for salutes.

The period 1689 to 1714 was an era of great confrontations between France and the other European powers. At sea, this meant an increase in the presence of the warships of different nationalities, activity by European privateers, and the organisation of convoys for merchant ships—in other words, most unsuitable conditions for the Barbary corsairs! Two other circumstances also had the effect of limiting their activities: the wars waged by Algiers against Tunis, which led to the occupation of Tunis in 1704—and also against the Spaniards of Oran, with the capture of Oran in 1708—and land wars that turned Algiers' attention away from the sea; plus the growing integration of the regencies into maritime trade, within the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and with Europe on the other. For example, the ever-increasing demand for North African grain, especially for Provence, provided monetary resources from the sales themselves and also customs duties, thus guaranteeing larger and surer revenues than booty from privateering, a practice that had become risky and uncertain. In fact, incidents and tensions were rare, and never

reached the paroxysms of the preceding decades, all the more so because the reduction of the fleets of galley ships that began in 1710 considerably reduced the need for rowers.[27] The Table in the Appendix provides an indication of the new treaties signed in this period, but these were usually no more than a renewal of previous agreements; except in 1704, when the Netherlands established official relations with Tunis for the first time.

1720–1795: Appeased Relations

Apart from an agreement with no future between Genoa and Tripoli in 1712, only England, France and the Netherlands had maintained effective and official relations with the regencies of North Africa for over a century. Beginning in 1725, other European states attempted in turn to bring about the signing of peace and trade treaties with the regencies. These lesser maritime powers usually adopted the clauses and the approach inaugurated by the Netherlands in the previous century, and accepted without hesitation, though not without bargaining, to pay tributes in exchange for unmolested passage for their ships. Austria, following on the treaty of Passarowitz (1718) and its victory over the Ottomans, planned a commercial policy in the Mediterranean, and, intending to make Trieste the maritime outlet for its empire, considered it indispensable to obtain from the corsairs of the Maghreb a benevolent neutrality towards its future commercial fleet. In 1725–1726, Austria thus signed treaties with Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. Several years later, the extension of its maritime trade into the Mediterranean led Sweden to establish relations along similar lines to those of Austria; in 1729 with Algiers, in 1736 with Tunis, and finally, in 1741, with Tripoli.[28] From 1748 to 1749, Tuscany, whose Grand Duke Francis of Lorraine was the husband of Maria-Theresa, Empress of Austria, also signed treaties with the Barbary regencies. In 1751–1752, it was Denmark's turn to take a similar step. The establishment of these treaties was greatly facil-

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[27] With the exception of a period of high tension between France and Tripoli which led to the bombardment of the city in 1728 by Admiral de Grandpré's squadron, and the signing of a treaty identical to the earlier ones the following year.

[28] The alliance of Sweden and the Ottoman Empire against Russia during the wars of 1768–1774 and 1788–1792 earned it a dispensation from the tribute to Algiers during those years. HERVÉ, "Campagnes navales d'Alger", 1996.

itated by the disappearance at that period of the use of galley slaves in the European fleets.[29]

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the majority of the European states were at peace with the Barbary regencies. The only implacable states were those whose squadrons constituted the Catholic fleet that had faced the Ottoman fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1572: Spain, the Kingdom of Naples, the Venetian Republic, and the Order of Malta, with whom war continued when much later in 1732 Spanish troops managed to re-take Oran from the Algerians. The political stability of the regencies described above also contributed to a desire for the calming of hostilities. Furthermore, the growing economic integration of North Africa into the great Ottoman and international commercial continued, but with total maritime dependence on European merchant fleets, chiefly those of France. These not only guaranteed shipping between North Africa and Europe, but also provided links with the Ottoman Levant according to a practice then called the 'maritime caravan'. It is of note, however, that disruptions in peace, as for example the Seven Years' War fought by France and England between 1756 and 1763, created a confused situation from which the North African corsairs were able to profit; this naturally resulted in further tensions and the necessary ratification of earlier peace treaties.

Immediately following the Seven Years' War, the major diplomatic concern was the desire of the last states that were still at war with the regencies to make peace with them. Venice, whose maritime trade was undergoing a spectacular resurgence, needed peace to maintain it. This was easily established with the three regencies in 1764–1765. Things were understandably more difficult with Spain, but an initial treaty signed with Tripoli in 1785 was followed by another with Tunis in 1791. Relations with Algiers, on the other hand, were even more difficult. On the 7th of July, 1775, a Spanish armada initiated an attempt to take Algiers, landing troops near the city and blockading the port. A month later, the expedition had turned into disaster, and its survivors sailed off. In 1784, with the American War of Independence over, a Spanish squadron than set about bombarding the city, but with equally poor results. It was

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[29] France ceased to maintain its corps of galley slaves in 1748, Spain having already abolished hers in the 1720s. Only Venice preserved a small number, based in Corfu, for its surveillance of the Straits of Otranto.

imperative that an agreement be signed, but the question of Oran had to be decided. In October 1790, as the Algerians began the siege of Oran, a violent earthquake erupted, destroying the city and killing more than two thousand people. An agreement was signed in September 1791 and the Spaniards abandoned the city leaving the Algerians to enter in February 1792.

A fundamental principle of the corsairs was never to be at peace with all the European states at the same time, including even those that had signed peace treaties with them. Otherwise they risked seeing their activities cease; and if they abandoned privateering, or at least the threat of it, they would lose the means of applying the pressure that was indispensable for obtaining the gifts and financial contributions that were stipulated in the treaties. Thus Tunisia, unhappy about France's occupation of Corsica, which deprived it of the possibility of capturing Corsican ships, declared war on France. Retaliation was not long in coming. In June 1770, a French squadron bombarded Bizerta, Porto-Farina and Sousse; a new treaty was signed in September, with an added provision ceding Bizerta to the French. A dispute around the issue of the payments to be made to Algiers by Denmark degenerated into a war in 1772: a Danish squadron arrived and bombarded Algiers without much success, before signing a new treaty and furnishing the required gifts. More serious was the war opposing Tunis and Venice, which began in 1784 and led to a blockade and the bombing of Tunisian ports before ending at last in peace in 1792. In the years 1795–1797 the fledgling republic of the United States, whose maritime trade was developing rapidly (several dozen American ships were in the Mediterranean in the 1790s), being without a navy, was forced to sign peace treaties tied to significant payments in money and in kind.

So, the very end of the eighteenth century, the Barbary regencies had survived two centuries of pressure, blockades and bombardments by European states much more powerful than they. Better still, they had managed to exploit the latent threat of capture to obtain gifts and regular payments, which were far superior to uncertain booty. They had at last managed to win de facto—then official—diplomatic recognition, in total independence of the Ottoman state. From the middle of the eighteenth century, the corsairs carried with them on each of their campaigns a passport established by the French and English consuls which protected them from pursuit by the warships of those countries, granted them permission to anchor in their ports,

and authorised them to request aid in case of need.[30] When all was said and done, it was the official recognition of an activity that had previously been considered contemptible, but was accepted from now on—as long as it remained directed against other flags! Finally, diplomatic visits were no longer one-way, in the form of admirals at the head of threatening squadrons; the regencies now sent ambassadors to the countries of Europe to resolve problems, but also as an act of courtesy, as is seen in the case of Tripoli: Mohammed Khodja went to Paris in 1719 to demonstrate Tripoli's good will towards France and to renew the treaty which was signed in 1720. In 1735, another ambassador went to the Netherlands, another to Stockholm in 1756, and one to Venice in 1764 on the occasion of the preparation of a new treaty; London received two ambassadors, one in 1765 and another in 1773. Abdel Rahman Aga went to Paris in 1774 to congratulate Louis XVI on his recent coronation and returned in 1785 on the occasion of the birth of the dauphin.

Changes in the Corsair Fleets

The development of diplomatic and economic relations between the Barbary regencies and the Western states necessarily reduced the possibilities for the corsairs to carry out their activities. This was compensated for by significant payments and an increase in commercial transactions, and the changes in the composition of the corsair fleets reflected the new situation.

According to information gathered on the spot by the English Admiral Narbrough, the armed fleet of Algiers in 1676 included the following: two vessels with 50 cannons, five with 40, one with 38, two with 36, three with 34, three with 30, one with 24, and finally, an indeterminate number of smaller ships armed with from 10 to 20 cannons. Taken all together, this represented seventeen ships totalling 626 cannons which, according to the system of classification in use in the British navy of the period, would have been divided and classed into seven third-rate, nine fourth-rate and one fifth-rate vessel. It was therefore an imposing fleet comparable to that of European navies, with the exception of those more powerful battle squadrons.

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[30] After this date, the registers in which the consuls recorded the issue of these passports constitute an essential source for studies of the activities of the corsairs.

Sixty years later, the most powerful armed ships in Algiers, in 1737, had only 18 cannons in one and 16 in another; there were three pinks with 10 or 8 cannons, and two xebecks with six and four cannons. These were sailing ships, although the small xebecks could use oars. There were also nine galliots, a type of small galley with from seven to seventeen benches of rowers, armed with from one to six small cannons and several pedreros. In all, there were seventeen ships totalling a hundred cannons. This naval force calls for several observations: the Algerian fleet was greatly diminished in number, and even more in power, by comparison with the situation in 1676; the ships were small, with weaker firepower, and incapable of opposing European warships; the models in use in the previous century, of large vessel type, had disappeared, to be replaced by Mediterranean vessels, pinks or xebecks, and there was a return to a significant use of boats with oars, the galliots. The composition of this fleet meant that its use was limited to fine-weather periods and restricted to the western Mediterranean, at best capable of reaching the Andalusian or Sicilian coasts, but certainly incapable of venturing into the Atlantic. The possibilities of captures during the Seven Years' War led to a more powerful fleet: twenty-seven ships totalling 268 cannons were at sea in 1761: 10 xebecks, two armed with 26 cannons and one with 14, the others with only 4 to 8 pieces of artillery; eleven barks with 8 to 16 cannons, a brigantine with 4 cannons, and four galliots with from 9 to 18 benches of rowers and two small cannons apiece. Not only had the number of ships greatly increased in comparision to 1737, but the number of sailing vessels had increased at the expense of the galliots, an indication of campaigns farther afield confirmed by the presence of the two big 26-cannon xebecks. The end of the century saw the multiplication of peace treaties and a further decrease in the possibilities for privateering: in 1790, Algiers armed only four ships, a bark with 26 cannons, a 4-cannon xebeck, and two galliots, totalling only 36 cannons!

Information concerning the fleets of Tunis and Tripoli in the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth century is much more fragmentary than for Algiers in the same period. Tripoli armed four galliots in 1754, then seventeen in 1761—five xebecks and twelve galliots—to make do with five ships in 1785, a xebeck with 18 cannons and 4 galliots.[31] In 1764, Tunis armed fifteen ships, totalling

[31] Panzac, "*Une activité en trompe-l'œil: la guerre de course à Tripoli . . .*", 1988.

80 cannons: four pinks, two with 4 cannons, one with 6 and one with 14; a polacca with 14 cannons, a 20–cannon bark, and nine galliots. In 1786, nine ships went out on campaigns: two xebecks with 6 and 8 cannons, and seven galliots.[32] These facts confirm the observations made in connection with Algiers: there was a generally modest fleet of Mediterranean type, a marked increase at the time of the Seven Years' War, then a distinct falling off with the French Revolution arriving. One is left with the impression that at the end of the 1780s and the beginning of the 1790s, the activity of the Barbary corsairs, assisted by diplomatic and economic developments, was moving without too many shocks towards a progressive and doubtless early demise.[33] This situation was brought abruptly into question in 1793, and the years that followed marked a return to corsair activity in North Africa that was as spectacular as it was unexpected.

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[32] GRANDCHAMP, "*Documents concernant la course dans la Régence de Tunis...*", 1957.

[33] Moroccan corsair activity underwent a much more spectacular decline. From this time on it was placed under the direct authority of the Sultan, who after 1668 became the principal owner of active corsair ships: eight of the nine vessels outfitted in 1698 were equipped through his efforts; Salé lost its dynamism and gradually abandoned privateering almost completely. Sultan Mohammed Ben Abdallah showed an interest in the navy, and founded Essaouira (Mogador), a deep-water port, in 1760. Lacking ships and, even more serious, men, this attempt had very little impact.

CHAPTER TWO

OF SHIPS AND MEN

The resurgence of corsair activity in the Maghreb, which began in the final years of the eighteenth century, and would last until around 1816 to 1818, has left significant, if uneven, archival documentation. But for the first time, it has been possible to draw up a quantitative and numerical description of the practice, its features and results, which has enabled us to present a more precise picture, one that is in contrast to the more often impressionistic character that marked studies from earlier periods.[1] The different naval powers of the regencies, although fairly small, included a great variety of types of ships, which can be divided into two 'families':[2]

1) *Mixed ships*, with both sails and oars:

– *the half-galley*: This was a somewhat smaller galley, requiring a good-sized crew (150 to 200 men), equipped with twenty rowing benches, and lightly armed with 5 cannons in the prow;[3]

– *the felucca*: "It can be considered a small version of the old galleys, whose sails it has preserved, in the form of two sails with lateen yards, carried on forward-inclined masts."[4] It had 8 to 14 rowing benches, from 2 to 4 cannons, and boarded 40 to 80 men;

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[1] Apart from those related to Tripoli, and to some degree Algiers, these sources have been known and published for some time without ever having been used—to my knowledge—in the consecutive fashion to which they lend themselves.

[2] It has seemed useful to bring together here the contemporary descriptions of the types of ships most widely used by the sailors of the Maghreb for war and for commercial activities. In reality, we have no illustrations of North African ships strictly speaking, but only of European ships. The vessels used by the North Africans, however, were either built in their dockyards with the help of European carpenters, or were of direct European origin through capture or purchase. This is to say that in that period, very few features apart from the flags distinguished the ships of the regencies from those of the European or American states. We believe this justifies our presenting them here. (See pp. 165–169).

[3] Exclusively Tunisian, they were used very little, serving only in brief campaigns in 1798, 1804 and 1812.

[4] Bonnefoux and Paris, *Dictionnaire*, [1857].

– *the galliot* was like the felucca, but often smaller, with a crew of from 20 to 60 men.

All of these ships sat low in the water, required a good-sized crew, carried few guns, and in general only went to sea from May to October. But both feluccas and galliots were well adapted to corsair activity, as they could easily lie in ambush along the coasts, and attack even when there was no wind, or an adverse one; and they were also inexpensive to build and equip.

2) *Sailing vessels*: the principal types that were in use in the Maghreb were as follows:

– *the xebeck*: "A small fast Mediterranean vessel, very slender. Some are rigged with square sails carried by a pole mast [in one piece]; others have lateen sails spread on lateen yards; the foremast usually inclined forward. The xebecks have a strong protruding stem [. . .], and their rear section ends in a gallery that juts out well beyond the stern [poop]."[5] In the beginning, the xebecks had by both sails and oars, but from the end of the eighteenth century, only the smallest of them still used oars, used just to enter and leave the ports. The smallest, carrying from 8 to 16 cannons, had from 40 to 80 men, and the largest, with from 20 to 30 cannons, could have a crew of as many as 130 to 170 men.

– *the polacca*: "A Mediterranean ship, usually with a pole mast and square sails; some rigged like xebecks, and others with lateen yards bearing Bermudo sails. The polacca is built in much the same way as the pink."[6] It could also be either totally or partially rigged with square sails. This ship closely resembled the pink, i.e. with a flat bottom and a long protruding stem. The crew, which naturally was in proportion to its size, could number as many as 150 men; the bark was a fairly similar type.

– *the bark*: in reality the *chitiha* ('saëte' in eighteenth-century French), a North African ship the size of the xebeck, fitted with two masts: "What characterises the *chitiha* is its immense foresail hoisted on a gaff, which by itself makes up the whole mainsail; the foremast is a pole mast, and carries three square sails; there is also a small ringtail mast . . . and an inclined bowsprit."[7]

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[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Hennique, *Les Caboteurs et pêcheurs de la côte de Tunisie*, 1989, p. 7.

– *the schooner*: a ship with graceful lines, with two masts inclined to the stem, and rigged with Bermudo sails (trapezoidal);

– *the brigantine*: a two-masted ship equipped with "square" sails; the brig that replaces it in this period is an improved version;

– *the corvette*: "A low-built, slender, light warship, well rigged with sails . . . It has three masts that carry from 20 to 30 guns."[8] It required a crew of 150 to 240 men. Similar ships were used for purely commercial purposes;

– *the frigate*: "A three-masted ship that today carries 40 to 60 guns . . . the frigates resemble the first-rate corvettes, but differing from them in size and in artillery."[9] The crew consisted of from 350 to 400 men;

– *the shallop, gun or mortar*: most often equipped with a single high-calibre cannon, of 24 pounds or more, or a mortar, with 20 to 30 men on board. It was used only for coastal and defensive purposes, and rarely strayed from its home port. This type of vessel, which appeared in the 1770s in Spain, was adopted by other regional navies, in particular Russian and Ottoman Empire who had several dozen at the time of the war that pitted the two powers against each other in 1788–1792.[10]

With of course the exception of the shallops, all these ships had decks, rode higher in the water than the sailing ships with oars, and could navigate year round and in any weather. Polaccas, schooners, brigantines and even xebecks could all be used for commercial purposes, or be armed as corsairs by increasing their gun-power and crews: their cannons, which were of low calibre, were put on deck, leaving the hold free. On the other hand, the corvettes and frigates were above all warships, their fire-power being placed in the hull.[11]

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[8] Bonnefoux and Paris, *op. cit.*, [1857].

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Glete: *Navies and Nations*, pp. 710–711. These shallops were also in use in the Baltic Sea during the same period.

[11] Polaccas, schooners, brigantines and xebecks carried six- and eight-pound cannons, while the corvettes also had twelve-pound cannons and the frigates eighteen-pound cannons. The Algerian shallops were armed with a big twenty-four-pound cannon. A.H.N. Madrid, Argel 6147 of 2 April 1803.

The Barbary Fleets

The Ships

Several years before the French Revolution, in the years 1785 to 1787, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli had at their disposal the following ships:

– Algiers:[12] four xebecks (4, 16, 24 and 34 cannons); six barks (18, 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 cannons); three galliots with 2 to 4 cannons. Total: thirteen ships armed with 218 cannons.

– Tunis:[13] five xebecks (6, 8, 10, 12, and 14 cannons); two brigs (6 and 16 cannons); one bark (18 cannons); thirty galliots with 2 to 6 cannons. Total: thirty-eight ships armed with 202 cannons.

– Tripoli:[14] two xebecks (10 and 18 cannons), twelve galliots with 2 to 4 cannons. Total: fourteen ships armed with 54 cannons.

Thirty years later, in 1815–1816, on the eve of the arrival of Lord Exmouth's Anglo-Dutch fleet, the North African fleets had changed considerably:

– Algiers could arm five frigates (one with 50, one with 46, two with 44 and one with 40 cannons), four corvettes (one with 30, two with 24 and one with 20 cannons, three brigs (one with 22, one with 20, and one with 8 cannons), two schooners with 16 and 4 cannons, one half-galley with 3 cannons, fourteen gunboats with decks and masts for protection on the high seas, and thirty shallops for the immediate defense of the port.[15]

– Tunis possessed three frigates with 48 cannons, two corvettes (26 and 20 cannons) five xebecks (two with 36, one with 12, one with 10 and one with 4 cannons), one brig with 20 cannons, two schooners (16 and 8 cannons), two feluccas and one galliot with 4 cannons, four shallops or bomb-vessels. This was the state's navy,[16] to which were added "twenty-four privately-owned small corsairs, crewed by poor sailors";[17]

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[12] DEVOULX, "*La Marine de la Régence d'Alger*," 1869, p. 410.
[13] A.N. Paris, A.P. 134/13.
[14] *Amis du vieux Toulon, Fonds Vallière* [former French consul under Louis XVI], *liasse 7: "Mémoires sur Tripoly de Barbarie au 30 décembre 1785."*
[15] DEVOULX, *art. cit.*, 1869.
[16] GRANDCHAMP, *art. cit.*, 1957.
[17] FRANK, *La Tunisie*, 1850.

– Tripoli had at its disposal one frigate with 40 cannons, one corvette with 20, three polaccas with 12, three xebecks with 12 cannons and one with 6, one galliot and fifteen shallops each armed with a large cannon.[18]

At the end of the eighteenth century the regency fleets consisted of only a limited number of ships, most of them of modest size and Mediterranean type: xebecks,[19] feluccas and galliots, *chitiha*-barks and polaccas. This naval mediocrity reflected the relative decline of privateering in the second half of the eighteenth century, as previously described. Although they had an identical purpose, there was an appreciable difference in the composition of the three navies. Tunis had a majority of small mixed ships, galliots supplemented by some xebecks of limited power, with from 6 to 14 cannons, all obviously earmarked for corsair activities. Tripoli had a flotilla of the same type, but on a more modest scale. Algiers' fleet had almost completely abandoned the galliot, concentrating on larger ships, heavily armed xebecks and barks with from 16 to 34 cannons. In 1785, the fleet in Algiers numbered eight 'big' ships, totalling 204 cannons, while Tunis had only six and Tripoli two, much more poorly armed, with 82 and 28 cannons respectively. This difference resulted primarily from the geographical conditions of privateering. Tripoli, and especially Tunis, are close to the coasts of Sicily and southern Italy, principal areas for the chase, where small oar-powered ships and modest xebecks were perfectly suitable. Added to this was the fact that the Tunisians and the Tripolitans avoided confrontation with the European cruisers. The Algerian corsairs, at a greater distance from these areas, had to cruise for longer distances and travel farther afield, and did not hesitate to take to the high seas as far as the Balaeric Islands or Catalonia, and even to cross the Straits of Gibraltar.

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[18] A.M.A.A.E, C.C.C. Tripoli, 34.

[19] The xebeck appeared for the first time in Algiers in 1737. It was a small ship lightly armed with four cannons, but because of its qualities (speed, stability, mix of sails and oars, and ease of manœuvre), it had a promising future, at the very time that its firepower was increased from the four cannons of 1737 to twelve in 1741, 18 in 1742, 26 in 1752, reaching 32 cannons, doubtless of fairly small calibre, on a xebeck built in Algiers in 1763. Because of their size, the largest of these ships no longer used oars. The first xebecks appeared in Tripoli in 1761, and in Tunis in 1768; in 1785 they were still fairly small in size.

The spectacular renewal of corsair activities beginning in the 1790s led to a considerable increase in the North African fleets. If the list is limited to ships with more than ten cannons, Algiers had twelve, Tunis eleven and Tripoli eight. This increase was accompanied in addition by a change in the choice of these new ships, which from now on would be European models, frigates, corvettes, brigs and schooners. With the obvious exception of the shallops, all of these ships had decks, rode higher in the water than the galleys, and were able to navigate throughout the year and in all weathers. The first Algerian frigate, armed with 44 cannons, was built in Algiers in 1791, under spanish supervision. Tunis acquired a first ship of this type in 1796, and Tripoli in 1799. Another innovation was reported for Algiers: the construction of fifty shallops intended, in principle, to protect them against landings at the port. This warlike posture by Algiers was also shown against its North African neighbours, in particular Tunisia, and led Algiers to reinforce its fleet even further as it encountered setbacks on land. "After the last Spanish bombardment [in 1783–1784], the Algerians decided that from then on, the state would always maintain 60 shallops with cannons and 40 bomb-vessels."[20] These shallops, assigned to protect the access to Algiers, were used in 1807, 1808 and 1813 to carry out the blockade along the Tunisian coast. For the same reasons, Tripoli also had fifteen of these small vessels.

These demonstrations of power, especially by Algiers and Tunis, far more than a mere indication of the requirements for corsair activities, are a reflection of the rivalry between the two regencies. This race for naval armament was expensive, and resulted in a sacrifiice of the number of ships in favour of more powerful ones. From 1815 on, the North African capital ship would be a frigate, armed with from 40 to 50 cannons of the same type as those found in the contemporary European squadrons. Algiers had five of these, and Tunis three. Although Tunis and Tripoli still possessed xebecks, Algiers had totally abandoned ships of the Mediterranean type, notably the galliots and the xebecks that had dominated the scene in North Africa a half century earlier. The Europeanisation of the naval forces in North Africa, at the same time that the Ottomans and the Egypt of Mohammed Ali were making similar efforts, took place in the

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[20] Venture de Paradis, *op cit.*, 1983, p. 116.

beginning of the nineteenth century, well before that of the ground forces.

Construction and Maintenance

Most of our information about Tripoli comes from a report on the pasha's navy written by the French consul and dated 1st January 1820.[21] Although the document covers a somewhat later period, it gives an account of a situation that had lasted for several years. The report states that the corvette, the three polaccas and two of the xebecks, as well as the shallops, had been built in Tripoli by Spanish carpenters who were also building a 20-cannon corvette and a 12-cannon xebeck. The two other xebecks were captured Genoese ships and the galliot was of Danish origin. As for the frigate:

> A ship that was no longer young when it was given as a present by the Emperor of Morocco to the Pasha of Tripoli in Barbary, in such a state of delapidation that, since it could not be suitably repaired in this port, the Pasha considered it appropriate to send it to Malta addressed to his agent on the island. This private Maltese national spent around a hundred and fifty thousand francs on it, but at the same time, he opposed the return of the ship to Tripoli until he had been reimbursed his costs [. . .] As the affair has already been thus for almost two years, there is reason to believe that the frigate, without any maintenance, is now in a worse state than before.

The report ends with a description of the conditions for the building and maintenance of Tripoli's navy:

> One could estimate at around a hundred thousand francs the cost of replacing the equipment in the arsenal. As for the personnel, the Pasha provides no salary except to the Spanish master builder and around 54 master carpenters and paid caulkers, some at 6 francs and others 3 francs per day . . . The timber for construction is usually brought from Albania, the Morea, the Levant and Leghorn. The Kingdom of Tripoli provides only mulberry timber in very small quantities for curved sections that are carved by private individuals, and today this resource has even run out. All the cables and rigging come from Genoa, Leghorn and Malta.

The Tripolitan navy was almost totally dependent on Europe: the ships were either of European manufacture incorporated into the

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[21] A.M.A.E., C.C.C. 34.

navy after capture, or, more often, manufactured in Tripoli but by European workers with imported raw materials; and finally, major repairs, as in the case of the frigate above, were also carried out abroad. We possess few useful details on the Tunisian navy,[22] but fortunately some information is available for Algiers, which had the most powerful navy in North Africa.

According to the report of the Spanish consul mentioned above, the origin of the Algerian ships in 1803 was as follows: one of the two frigates had been built in Algiers and the other captured from the Portuguese; the 34-cannon corvette was a gift from the United States, as were the brigantine and the two schooners; another corvette was presented by the Pasha of Tripoli in June 1815;[23] the xebecks came from Algerian shipyards, as did the galliots and the shallops; the two polaccas were of Greek origin. We have only fragmentary information for the next twelve years; we do know, however, that one of the new frigates had been captured from the Tunisians, that the 30-cannon corvette was a prize taken from the Greeks, and the 8-cannon brig was a captured American ship; the small schooner with four cannons had been brought to Algiers by Turkish janissaries from Tunis who had revolted against the Bey.[24] The other vessels had very likely been built in Algiers, which would therefore be an indication of the importance of the naval shipyards of this regency, from which frigates, corvettes, brigs and shallops all emerged.[25]

The reconstruction of the Algerian fleet after its near destruction in 1816 by Lord Exmouth's squadron shows clearly how this regency acquired its ships.[26] In 1817, Algiers bought four ships: a 22-cannon brig and a 14-cannon schooner from Leghorn, a 14-cannon brig and a Neapolitan polacca with 16 cannons, and received as a gift

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[22] Like the other Regencies, Tunis exacted financial contributions and shipments of military hardware, especially naval, from European states wishing to sign peace treaties. Thus in 1804, Spain provided the Bey with eight thousand piastres and two xebecks armed with 26 cannons. Rousseau, *Annales tunisiennes*..., 1864, p. 242.

[23] Devoulx, *Tachrifat*..., 1852, p. 43.

[24] Devoulx, *art. cit.*, 1869.

[25] The Dey Hassan had asked the Directoire to send a naval engineer, and the naval architect Geoffroy was designated. According to instructions received in *Brumaire* of Year VI (October–November 1797), Geoffroy had allowed things to drag on, and when Hassan died, the engineer was sent back to France by Hassan's successor Mustafa. Belhamissi, *Histoire de la marine algérienne*... 1986, p. 79.

[26] Devoulx, *art. cit.*, 1869.

an 18-cannon polacca from the Pasha of Tripoli. In 1818 the regency was the beneficiary of two valuable gifts: a 46-cannon frigate sent by the Ottoman Sultan Mahmoud II, and another with 36 cannons presented by the Sultan of Morocco. In addition, a frigate with 32 cannons was launched in Algiers. To these vessels were added several others whose origins we do not know. Although Algiers enjoyed the certain solidarity of the other Muslim heads of state, the purchase of ships, as well as their complete repair, was very expensive. We do not know the prices paid for these ships, but the cost of a contemporary French warship gives a close idea: in 1815, a new 40-cannon frigate ready to take to sea, complete with rigging and guns, cost 880,000 francs, a 32-cannon frigate, 690,000 francs, a 20-cannon corvette, 383,000 francs, and a 16-cannon brig, 250,000 francs.[27] Algiers certainly bought some ships second-hand, doubtless at lower prices, but refitting all these vessels was very expensive: in 1822, one of the frigates was overhauled in Toulon, from 8 February to 12 October, at a cost of 298,720 francs, of which 17,460 francs covered the provision of 44 *caronades*, guns that were shorter than cannons, with a shorter range, but were easier to manipulate. All of which explains the significant role given to local shipbuilding.

The provision of raw materials for these shipyards was naturally a major preoccupation of the Algerian naval authorities, beginning with timber, which was not available in the areas surrounding the city. Most of the timber came from the eastern part of Kabylia, between Bugie and Djidjelly, a region that was difficult to reach, and whose vast forests of oaks (*quercus casteifolia*) earned it the name Kerasta (from the Turkish *kereste*, construction wood). In order to procure this indispensable timber, the Algerian state managed to win its way into the good graces of the local people, partly through the intermediary of the families of the local marabouts, and also by scrupulously paying for and keeping an accurate tally of the required supplies.[28] A representative of the navy, *wazîr el-Kerasta*, who lived in Bugie, provided examples of different pieces of naval carpentry, specifying the number of pieces required, their price, the date and place along the coast where delivery was to be made.[29] Once inspected

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[27] A.N. Paris, Marine B5, *dossier* 29: "*Etat comparatif de la valeur des bâtiments de guerre de divers rangs en 1789 et en 1815*."

[28] FÉRAUD, "*La forêt de la Kerasta*...," 1868–1869.

[29] The standard pieces included: the *krinia*, otherwise called the *carène* or keel;

and paid for by the wazir, the selected pieces were brought in small coasters as far as Bugie, from which point seafaring ships transported them to Algiers.[30] An almost identical system, called *Krista* locally, was operating in the regency of Tunis. The forests of Khrumiri, which are an extension of the Kabylia forests, provided the lumber, which was cut and roughly hewn on the spot, then hauled as far as the port of Tabarka, from which point it was carried by sea to Goletta.[31]

> A few days later, our captured vessels, entirely emptied, were totally demolished; the wood that could be used for shipbuilding was carefully set aside, and the rest became wood for heating, which was in very short supply in the country.[32]

This scene of salvage, reported by the Dutch master of one of these ships, must have been frequent in Algiers, and gives a good picture of the constant preoccupation over the provision of timber. But a ship is not only made of wood; it also requires metal fittings, rope, sails and cannons, which the Algerian state did its best to procure. As we have seen, there were gifts of some complete ships, but the hull of a ship lasts longer than the equipment necessary for outfitting it, and presented a problem for the Algerian naval shipyards. Algerian industry was far from being able to satisfy such demands on it.

The many peace treaties signed between the dey and the European states usually included clauses referring to monies to be paid, but also related to military and especially naval supplies. For example, in April 1787, the English gave Algiers four cannons with their gun carriages, 200 kegs of powder, 400 cannonballs, 8 rammers, 9 gun-cleaning brushes, 25 cases of shot, etc.;[33] in 1811, Spain provided a

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el-maoudj, a curved piece for the stem and the sternpost; the *rebiba*, or false keel, which also included the framework of the flanks of the submerged hull; *el-khazen*, the belt or [midship] beam, the butt-jointed beam that ran along the planking of the ship; *el-kursia*, that is, the flanks above the waterline; *es-sari*, the mast. The work was carried out not with a saw, but with an adze, a procedure in which only a single piece could be carved from each trunk of a tree. *Ibid.*

[30] Kerasta also supplied some of the timber and wood for construction and heating in Algiers.

[31] CHERIF, *Pouvoir et société*..., Vol. I., 1986, p. 171.

[32] METZON, *Journal de captivité*, 1950, p. 170.

[33] DEVOULX, *Tachrifat*..., 1852, p. 42. The other regencies, like Tunis, benefitted from similar gifts: in 1792, Denmark provided Tunis with 30 cannons, 6,000 cannonballs, 42 thick cables, 100 kegs of powder, 20 bales of sailcloth and 600 *quintals* of rope; in 1799, the United States presented the regency with 28 cannons,

large quantity of cables and rigging of different degrees of thickness for the navy;[34] contributions from the Scandinavian states consisted above all of pieces of timber for making masts, yards etc., for which Kabylia oak was unsuitable.[35] One of the biggest suppliers of the Algerian navy was the sultan himself, thus finding a way to bring the dey into his debt, and to remind him that the territory he governed was in fact part of the Ottoman Empire, while at the same time thanking him for his tribute in the form of gifts. The list of these gifts also provides information about the considerable size of Constantinople's arsenal:

> During the reign of Mustapha-Pasha, the Hadj-Youssef, Oukil-el-Hardj of the navy arrived from Constantinople bringing the following gifts: 29 *choual* 1215 [14 March 1801]; 50 copper cannons, 6 mortars, 40 jib booms, 1,000 xebeck oars, 1,000 rowboat oars, 1,000 beams, 40 rudders, 1,000 large oars, 60 tillers, 1,500 quintals of powder, 200 quintals of lead, 12,000 Howitzer shells, 30 quintals of tobacco, 1,500 quintals of rosin, 500 quintals of tar, 500 quintals of saltpetre, 1,000 cannon carriages, 1,500 quintals of wire, 13,000 cannonballs.[36]

Although the Algiers arsenal was very active, the small size of the city as well as its layout made it impossible to build a single big complex. As far as we can glean from the sources, there were at least three sites: the shipyard reserved for the major constructions was near Bab el-Oued, as were the Dâr al-barûd, the explosives factory, and the cannon foundries.

> The cannon foundry known as 'Dahr en-Nahs', or 'house of copper' . . . dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century. It seems to have been designed and built by a European.[37] The masters of the foundry who succeeded each other were either French or Spanish. In 1775, the master was a Frenchman named François Dupont. In 1808, the last foundry-master, a Spaniard, died and was not replaced . . . It

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10,000 cannonballs, 300 *quintals* of gunpowder and 600 *quintals* of rope. *Cf.* Hassine, *Un interlocuteur pour la France*, 1996, p. 53. In December 1814, in the context of its triennial contribution, Sweden delivered 44 cannons, 4,000 cannonballs, gunpowder, iron, planks and sailcloth, to a total value of 75,000 piastres. Rousseau, *Annales tunisiennes* . . ., 1864, p. 297.

[34] A.H.N., Madrid, Argel 6147.

[35] Belhamissi, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[36] Devoulx, Tachrifat . . ., 1852, p. 42.

[37] This was the Dey Mohammed Ben Osman, who decided in 1775 to construct the new foundry in order to make use of the iron supplied by the Swedes. Hervé, "*Campagnes navales d'Alger*" 1996.

> was a building of thirty metres, very tall, including a tower twenty metres in height. Its equipment consisted of a single furnace of careful construction. The mould designed to receive the cast metal was placed in a furrow dug under the conduit through which the molten metal flowed. The piece was lifted from its mould by means of an enormous winch, and the cannons were bored in a highly complex system of towers activated by superimposed wheels up to the top of the building. In an annexe, small ovens and several forges were deployed in the manufacture of projectiles. Certain moulds of astonishing size served to make the cannonballs used in Peñon's large ordnance.[38]

Another establishment, near Bab Azzoûn, manufactured the smaller pieces. Here too were found vast vaulted premises where cannon shallops were stored during the off-season. On the old Peñon site there were also smithies and workshops for rope- and sail-making. Although there are records of the presence of foreign engineers like Master Antonio, builder of the *raïs* Hamidou's frigate in 1802, it appears that most of the supervisors were Muslim. On the other hand, the manual labourers were primarily slaves assigned to tasks according to their actual or supposed skills:

> Such craftsmen as blacksmiths, masons, carpenters, sail-makers, and those with a fixed task, went to their workshops; the others were divided into small groups and, under the supervision of a warder, made to do the hardest jobs, such as unloading the ships or transporting heavy stones [to reinforce the harbour wall of the port], which rarely took place without a rain of blows from a stick . . . One of the secretaries led me to the workshop where sails were made, and where thirty slaves, all masters or pilots of small ships, were hard at work—while the captains of the bigger vessels were in general free on parole, thanks to the consuls' interventions.[39]

The Men

Privateering played a considerable role in the life of the Barbary regencies. It was an effective part of the economic activity of the region, involving, directly or indirectly, a considerable segment of the population; it had a strong influence on the diplomatic orientations of the leaders, and provided a justification for the very exist-

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[38] Boyer, *Vie quotidienne* . . ., 1963, p. 186.
[39] Metzon, *op. cit.*, 1950, p. 58.

ence of these states: the corsairs were the heroes of the Dar el-Islam (land of Islam), and fought its enemies in the Dar el-Harb (land of war, land of infidels). Those involved in corsair activities participated in this double role: on the one hand, they exercised an essential socio-economic activity, and on the other, they carried out an importantly religious mission. This explains the important place held by these men in North African society.

The Shipowners and Fitting Out

Fitting out the corsair ships represented at one and the same time a necessity for the state, a religious duty, and an economic investment that was practiced by two categories of people: the head of state or his direct representatives on the one hand, and private individuals on the other. These practices varied according to the regency: as far as it is possible to tell from references in the sources, which are not very explicit, fitting out the privateers in Tripoli was entirely the affair of the pasha. In Algiers, and especially Tunis, on the other hand, both heads of state and private individuals fitted out vessels.

Private individuals who fitted out ships in Algiers were in fact very rare, which is hardly surprising for a state in which privateering played a much greater political, ideological and economic role than in the other regencies. It therefore seems normal that the deys who followed each other, sometimes in rapid succession, should be guaranteed near-exclusive rights to this function. From 1798 to 1816, 239 Algerian corsair captains obtained passports from the French consulate, which in some measure legalised their future activities. Of these 239 ships, we note only 12 that were fitted out not by the dey but by a private individual.[40] In 1798, a certain Ben Zerzou equipped a xebeck ordered by the *raïs* Hassan that carried out four campaigns, and another in 1799, which he entrusted to the *raïs* Ali; also in 1798, el-Hadj Ali prepared another xebeck that went out on two campaigns, and in 1800, it was the *khaznadar* (treasurer) who equipped a corsair ship. After a complete hiatus of several years, the *terdjüman* (palace interpreter) fitted out a corsair that participated in four campaigns in 1807 and 1808. From 1800 on, the rare examples

[40] A.O.M. Aix, 1AA 42.

of private enterprise in this sphere involve men who were close to the ruling powers.

The situation in Tunis was totally different. Without dwelling on the overall changes in the way the corsair ships were fitted out, a subject to which we will return, one can define two distinct periods: 1798–1805, during which privateering was in full swing, and 1806–1816, when corsair campaigns were much less numerous. The marked contrast between these two periods has little to do with the activities of the beylik, that is, the state, in fitting out the ships: it remained relatively constant, at an average of a dozen ships a year, with a drop between 1804 and 1808 and a distinct high point around 1809 to 1812, and again in 1815. The differences were above all due to the fitting out of corsair ships by private individuals, which was considerable up until 1805, after which point it collapsed. Before 1806, fitting out of ships by private individuals represented 80 to 95% of the total, and after that date, only 20 to 30%. From then on, privateering lost much of its appeal.

An examination of the types of ships preferred by the different actors reveals quite a lot about their intentions. For the period as a whole, the beylik fitted out 182 corsairs, i.e., 26.1% of the total, and private individuals equipped 516, or 73.9%. Out of the 245 feluccas and galliots, both modest ships with oars, 24 were chartered by the beylik, while all the others were chartered by individuals. Of the 200 xebecks that went out on campaigns, 40 were fitted out by the beylik and 160 by private individuals, which corresponds to the ratio for the larger ships. But the firepower factor, and therefore an indication of the size of ship and crew, shows that almost all the xebecks filled out by private individuals had fewer than 18 cannons, and the majority had only 8 to 12 cannons, while most of the beylik's had more than 20 cannons. We are therefore hardly surprised to learn that the large corvettes and all the frigates were fitted out by the beylik. Unfortunately we possess no documents on the results of the Tunisian corsair campaigns, but it is clear from these facts concerning the ships that the pursuit and capture of easy prey was behind the fitting out by private individuals, i.e., the profit motive; while in the case of the beylik, it was the military factor that dominated, even if prizes were not unwelcome.

With rare exceptions, the document used here provides the name and, more often than not, the position of the owners of the corsair

ships.[41] Apart from eight cases in which the ships were fitted out by anonymous (and perhaps collective) 'individuals', the 508 others, are designated by name and number twenty-seven: thirteen of these appear only once or, rarely, twice, and can therefore be considered very occasional participants. The fourteen others were much more active; especially seven of them, because by themselves they supplied 430 of the vessels that were equipped by individuals, i.e., 83.5% of the total. These fourteen individuals belonged to two social groups that were closely connected. First of all, there were several important merchants: Salah Bugdir, who fitted out nine ships; Mohammed Koptan eleven; and especially Ahmed and Yûnis Ben Yûnis, who equipped thirty-six corsairs. But most of the fitting out of vessels to be used for privateering was done by highly-placed people with important official functions: Mohammed Hodja, *amîn el-Tersane* (director of the arsenal) with seven ships; Ahmed Hodja, *kiaya* (governor) of Bizerta, six; Mohammed Hodja, *kiaya* of Porto-Farina, 43, Hassan Nouira, *kaïd* of Monastir, 8, Mohammed el-Ayashi, also *kaïd* of Monastir, 31. Also found are members of the great families, like that of Mahmoud Gelluli, *kaïd* of Sfax and then Sousse, with 98 corsairs, and the Ben Ayed family—Mustafa, Regeb, *kaïd* of Djerba, and also, Mohammed—who by themselves sent 78 ships on corsair campaigns. These men, who founded their fortunes on trade and farming out taxes found privateering a profitable investment—at least until 1805. Representative was Yussuf *sâhib at-tabaa*, the bey's keeper of the seals, with 127 vessels, was the biggest owner of corsair ships in the regency.

In addition to the principal minister and favourite of the bey, it was the governors of the coastal provinces as well as those of the regional ports of Tunis who fitted out corsair ships in their own names, thus demonstrating a strong contrast between an isolated inland Tunisia and a coastal one with maritime interests. These administrators, who bought their positions, were also traders, and thus were in close commercial relations with the great merchants. Indeed, both constituted the essential core of the group of emminent people who, during the long reign of Hammuda Pasha (1782–1814), under his direction and with his support, powered the

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[41] Grandchamp, *art. cit.* 1957.

economy of the country and oriented it resolutely towards foreign trade. Fitting out corsair ships thus represented one branch of their activities, one likely to be abandoned if others, including maritime activities, turned out more profitable and more reliable—which is what happened from 1806 on.

All the Algerian corsairs set out from Algiers and all of those from Tripoli took to the sea from the port of Tripoli, but their Tunisian counterparts had seven different bases. Naturally Goletta—the true port of Tunis at the entrance to the lagoon—was the busiest by far, with 525 departures (75.2%) of which 182 were underwritten by the beylik, and the other 353 at the initiative of private individuals. A quarter of the departures on corsair campaigns, however, were from half a dozen other Tunisian ports: Bizerta, 13 departures, Djerba, 28, Monastir 29, Porto-Farina, 12, Sfax, 75 and Sousse, 16. They reflect the involvement of their governors in the sphere of corsair activities: each gave preferential treatment to the city placed under his authority. The eight ships fitted out by Hassan Nouira, *kaïd* of Monastir, set out from his own port. Out of 98 corsairs chartered by Mahmoud Gelluli, 75 were from Sfax where he was *kaïd*, 12 from Sousse, where he also became governor, and 17 from Goletta. The 13 corsair ships equipped by Regeb Ben Ayed all left from Djerba where he was *kaïd*, as did 13 others chartered by one of his relatives, Ahmed Ben Ayed.

The Corsair Captains

Barbary privateering was conducted in a context of a generally-observed respect for the diplomatic agreements signed between the North African states and certain European states, as well as submission to the rules in use in the Maghreb governing the distribution of booty. Every corsair captain setting out on a campaign carried a passport delivered by the consuls of these states, indicating, in addition to the date of issue of the document, his name and the type of ship he commanded, details of its gunpower, crew, and the name of its owner. This information was entered into a register and, in certain consulates, the secretary took note of the date of return and the result of the campaign. These passports were intended to protect the possessor from possible attacks from warships belonging to the power that was signatory to the peace treaties: in return, the corsairs had under no circumstances to attack the merchant ships of this power.

French diplomatic archives have preserved these sets of documents for the three North African ports at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. In spite of their diversity and their incompleteness, these documents enable us to gain a quantifiable knowledge of corsair activities.[42] They are complemented by a remarkable Arab document that unfortunately relates only to Algiers: the register of prizes recording the authors of the captures, the composition of the booty, its value, and the manner in which it was distributed according to the system of shares.[43] The only individuals named in these documents are the *raïs*, or captains, and no other members of the crew.

Origins

Records show the presence of 38 corsair captains operating out of Tripoli between 1805 and 1816, 48 in Algiers, and 192 in Tunis between 1798 and 1816. A degree of uncertainty associated with these numbers arises from the identification of the individual captains. In most cases, the various titles and nicknames enable us to recognize them without too much difficulty; however, sometimes we do not know whether certain names refer to the same person or to different people with the same name. Except in Tunis, where this professional group seems to be very numerous—almost two hundred people—we find in Tripoli, as in Algiers, that there are only a few dozen active *raïs*. Quite often geographical origins are indicated, admittedly in a general manner, but although this information concerns the captain, it at times also includes his father or even grandfather, the nicknames in some cases being accompanied by additional details.

In Tripoli, ten of the 38 captains, nearly a quarter, were considered Levantine, which, according to the thinking of the times, would correspond to the islands of the eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia and the Balkans—all Turkish-speaking regions. The others, by contrast, would be Arabs or assimilated Arabs originating in the Maghreb. This distinction is found in the other North African ports. Of the 239 passports delivered by the French authorities in Algiers between 1798 and 1816, 23 carry no references of this type. Of the 216

[42] For Algiers: A.O.M., Aix-en-Provence, 1AA 42; for Tunis: M.A.E., Nantes, A.R., Tunis 600; for Tripoli: M.A.E., Nantes, A.R., Tripoli 795.

[43] Published in Devoulx, *Le Registre des prises . . .*, 1872.

others, 99 are described as Algerians, a designation that probably applies across the whole of the *Pashalik*, to which we can add three 'Moors' and a captain from Bizerta, i.e., 103 'Arabs'. The 113 others, the Levantines, constitute the majority of the Algerian *raïs*.

No systematic geographical details are given in the available documentation for Tunis; on the other hand, 82 *raïs* out of 192 have nicknames indicating their origins, either the Maghreb or the Levant. It would doubtless be risky to conclude from this that the 110 others, i.e., 57.3% of the total, were Tunisian, but it is surely true for the great majority of them. Of these 82 *raïs*, 28 were North Africans: five were described as coming from Djezairi, Algerians, three were Gharbhis, from the west, three came from Monastir, three from Tripoli, three were Zouaouis, one was from M'Saken, two were from Djanet, one was from Bizerta, one from Djidjelly, one from Sousse, one from Zuara, one from Tetuan, and one from Morocco. The total group of North Africans represented 138 persons, i.e., 71.8% of the total, which is close to Tripoli's 75%. In the same way, the indications about the 'Levantines' make it possible to localise the recruitment zones of the corsair captains. With 22 names out of 54, the islands of the eastern Mediterranean constitute the first zone: nine were from Crete, four from Lesbos, three from Rhodes, three from Cyprus, two from Kos and one from Chios. The second recruitment region was the Balkan coast, especially Albania, with twelve *raïs*, and the Morea, with six; three others were from the area of the Black Sea, one from Salonika, and one was described as a 'Roumeliot'. There was also a captain from Istanbul, as well as one from Smyrna, one from Fochia, and six listed as 'Turks'. Similar details found in Algiers confirm this distribution: three Albanians, one Cretan, a *raïs* from Rhodes, one from Smyrna, and one from Tekirdag (Rodosto) on the Sea of Marmara.

A number of these captains whose geographical origin is not listed bear Turkish nicknames: thus we find Uzun Ali (Ali the tall), Kütchük Mohammed (Mohammed the short), Halil Burunlu (Halil [big] nose), Kara Mustafa (Mustafa the black) etc. There are also Arab nicknames that are doubtless references to the professions exercised by the *raïs* before they enlisted in the navy. In that list one finds: Messaoud el-Haddad (the blacksmith), Mohammed Sebag (the dyer), Mohammed el-Hallâl (the butcher), Ali es-Saatchi (the watchmaker).

Among the Algerians there was a Maltese, doubtless converted from Christianity to Islam, as was very common in the seventeenth

century, but less so in the eighteenth century, when they represented 9.5% of the corsair captains in Tripoli between for example 1750 and 1770. We have no information about them for the first part of the nineteenth century, but everything would lead us to believe that their numbers diminished rapidly from this time on. Aside from the Maltese captain, there was a famous case—Peter Lyle, a Scottish sailor who became one Murad, a corsair captain in Tripoli.

In spite of the somewhat vague information concerning the origins of the *raïs*, we are left with the general impression that they came from all the coastal provinces of the Ottoman Empire; with a clear predominance of the Maghreb itself, followed by the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean islands. Anatolia provided very few corsairs, and the Arab Near-East practically none. The respective positions of the North Africans and the Levantines, in effect Turks or converted individuals, varies from port to port. The percentages of converted corsairs above are approximate, and probably lower than in reality, indicated by the limited use of nicknames, but they still illustrate an important phenomenon: the opposition between Tripoli and Tunis on the one hand and Algiers on the other. In the first two, where for a century the power had been in the hands of a dynasty that was of course Turkish in origin, but from then on was firmly established and Arabised, the recruitment of the *raïs* was henceforth primarily from the Maghreb, and in particular local. In Algiers, power was still in the hands of the dey, who was appointed by the Turkish militia, the *odjak*, which was regularly renewed by reinforcements from the Turkish East. The corporation of the *raïs*, known as the *taïfa*, while less strict than the militia, still generally respected this principle, which resulted in there being always a majority of Turkish *raïs*.

The Careers

In Tunis, 615 departures on corsair campaigns, carried out by 192 captains, were recorded for the period between 1798 and 1816. Out of this total, 85 of the captains, i.e., 44.3%, appear in the records only once, and 26 (13.5%) twice. The majority of the *raïs*, 57.8% of the total, were only active very briefly, in fact, only occasionally. One third, or 66 of them, went out on from three to nine campaigns, and only fifteen, 8% of the total, exceeded ten campaigns, and of these only one reached the respectable figure of 23. True professionals, therefore—those whose names were found in the registers

year after year—were indeed rare: *raïs* were under the constant threat of death, serious injury, captivity, ill luck, unfavourable circumstances, or the mistrust of the shipowners, which often forced them to find other occupations.[44] It was the same in Tripoli, where, out of the 40 corsair captains listed in the records, 22.55% appeared only one or two times, while five others went out on more than ten campaigns and one led 25. Since the French consul in Algiers delivered two, even three, prize certificates to the corsairs at the same time, which spared them from having to return to port, an accurate comparison with Tunis or Tripoli is impossible, but an examination of the register of prizes reveals the same pattern.

Only a minority of the *raïs* in the three regencies had true careers as corsair captains. This was the case of six of them in Algiers: Ahmed el-Haddad participated in the capture of eleven European ships between 1798 and 1815; Na'man, whose name appeared in 1797, was active until 1815, as was Hassan. Hamdan was first a commander in Tunis in 1797–1798 before moving on to Algiers, where he was present until 1812. Salah, who appeared in 1802, was one of the rare *raïs* to continue corsair activities after the disaster of 1816, figuring in the register of prizes up to 1818. The career as a corsair captain thus lasted for an average of fifteen to twenty years, sometimes more, as in the case of Hadj Sliman, whose captures can be followed from 1788 to 1812. The most famous and distinguished Algerian captain was the *raïs* Hamidou.

The son of Ali, a tailor from Algiers, Hamidou enlisted as ship's apprentice before receiving his first command under the bey of Oran.[45] His tactical skills against the Genoese polacca warships brought him recognition, and he was hired from 1790 to 1797 by Hassan Ben Hussein, the dey of Algiers, formerly *wakîl el-kharj*, Minister of the Navy. In 1797, Hamidou appears for the first time in the register of captures, where he continues to figure some thirty times. In 1801 he was placed in command of a new 44-cannon frigate, with which he accomplished an exploit that caused him to be both famed and feared. On 28 May 1802, the Portuguese frigate *N° S° do Bom*

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[44] "The *raïs* who have been removed because of bad campaigns or being too old, are employed serving as interpreters for the consuls [or] as pilots on merchant ships entering or leaving ports on the coast of the kingdom." VENTURE DE PARADIS, *op. cit.*, 1983, p. 148.

[45] DEVOULX, *Le Raïs Hamidou*, 1859.

Despacho, with 36 cannons, commanded by Captain Joao Luis de Seguin Deshon, was cruising in the Mediterranean off Gibraltar when the lookout indicated the presence of a frigate flying the English flag. Hamidou, using a ruse that was frequently practiced during this period and even later, was therefore able to draw close to the unsuspecting Portuguese ship. At the last minute he lowered the British flag, replaced it with the flag of Algiers, sent off a murderous broadside, and then boarded the ship. After a short but violent bout of hand-to-hand combat, during which the Portuguese commander and several of his officers and men were killed, the Portuguese ship surrendered. It was then led to Algiers in triumph.

Exiled by the dey in 1808, Hamidou took refuge in Beirut, only to be summoned back a year and a half later to take to the sea again and return to his corsair exploits. On 22 May 1811, at the head of an Algerian naval division of ten ships, he ran into a Tunisian squadron of twelve ships. The battle that ensued, lasting several hours, which in fact only involved the two flagships, ended in the defeat and capture of the Tunisian ship, which lost 230 men, as against 40 on the Algerian ship.[46] On 8 September 1815, the American naval division of Commodore Decatur, which was pursuing Barbary corsairs, surprised Hamidou's frigate, which offered resistance, but Hamidou was killed and his ship taken.

The same sort of career is found in the other regencies. In Tripoli, the principal *raïs* were Mohammed Arnaout and Omar Chelly, who commanded corsair ships from 1796–1798 to 1815. But Tripoli's most famous captain was Peter Lyle, the 'renegade' Scottish seaman now named Murad, who married a daughter of the pasha and attained the high rank of Admiral of the Fleet. Records for Tunis show fourteen *raïs* who participated in at least ten campaigns. The most active were Baba Halil Maghrebli, who carried out 18 campaigns from 1798 to 1811; Djema Bugdir, with 19 campaigns between 1796 and 1815; and Kütchük Ali Arnaout, with 19 campaigns between 1798 and 1817. Mohammed Lazoghlu had the longest career, with 17 campaigns from 1797 to 1820; and Ramadan Arnaout the most prolific with 24 campaigns from 1797 to 1815.

If we know little about the careers of the corsair captains, we know almost nothing of their training, which was above all practical.

[46] Devoulx, *Tachrifat,* 1852, p. 13.

The case of Hamidou, first a ship's apprentice then a sailor before becoming the owner of a small ship with which he proved himself before being able to obtain command of a large vessel, is exemplary. Taking charge of a felucca or a galliot, even a small xebeck or schooner, can come via experience only, but commanding a corvette or a frigate of war with three or four hundred men on board requires much more theoretical knowledge and skill, and unfortunately we do not know how these were acquired. In examining the names of the commanders of the bigger ships, however, when they are clearly identifiable, it becomes apparent that they were rarely North African. The frigate from Tripoli was captained by Murad (the Scot Lyle) and the captains of the Tunisian corvettes and frigates were almost always Levantine *raïs*, Kütchük Ali Arnaout (Albanian), Mustafa Midilli (from Lesbos), Mustafa Morali (Morea) or Ibrahim Kiprisli (Cypriot). We do not know whether these were true Turks, or, more likely, Greek converts or descendants of converts; but they were from the eastern Mediterranean where navigation was an ancient art and better mastered than in North African. Appointing captains for the corsair ships was the responsibility of the deys, beys or pashas, according to methods that were probably similar to those practiced in Algiers:

> This is how a new *raïs* is appointed. The dey informs the *vekil khradg* of the one he has chosen. According to the custom, the *vekil khradg*, with all the *raïs* assembled in the morning, announces the orders of the dey from his kiosk. The *raïs* who has been chosen presents his thanks by reciting the *fatiha*, that is, the first chapter of the Al-Koran. All those attending including the *vekil khradg* do the same, with much gravity and reverence. When this is completed, the *raïs* rises and boards the vessel assigned to him and immediately calls for the hoisting of the flag, firing off five cannons. The other *raïs* also hoist their flags, saluting their new colleague with five cannon shots.[47]

The Crews

The personnel of a large warship were numerous, and established in a distinct hierarchy, as is shown in the following list for an Algerian vessel:[48]

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[47] Venture de Paradis, *op. cit.*, 1983, pp. 147–148.
[48] Devoulx, *Tachrifat*, 1852, p. 29.

OFFICERS:
Raïs, captain
Bash-Raïs, second-in-command
Raïs el-Assa, lieutenant
Yakandji, boatswain
Ourdian, quartermaster
Raïs-Etterik, prize-captain; each warship that took to sea carried several; they had no on-board duties, their mission was to take command of captured ships
Bash-Tobdji, chief-gunner
Khodja, combined functions of secretary and chaplain
Bash-Demandji, chief helmsman

MASTERS AND LEADING SEAMAN:
Yarkandji, master-sailer
Garda-Kabou, topman
Britadji, topman for the topgallant sail
Demandji, helmsman
Sandal-Raïs, coxswain
Mesteurdach, carpenter
Kalafat, caulker
Amberdji, steward's man
Khaznadji, powder-room master
Oukil el-Hardj, a type of superintendent in charge of supplies. There were three: one for the Kamera (officers), one for the Komania (crew) and one for gunners.

The SAILORS
These were divided in two sections: *Behari*, forwardmen, and *Sotta-raïs*, aftmen.

The watches were in six-hours shifts, beginning at midnight. The watch-officers were the *Bash-Raïs*, with the *Yakandji* under his orders; and the *Raïs el-Assa*, with the *Ourdian* under him.

The origin of these terms designating the functions of the leadership aboard these ships reflects the diversity of the influences on the Algerian navy. In addition to *raïs*, there are Arabic terms like *raïs el-assa*, word-for-word meaning 'master-armed-with-a-stick', evoking the image of the galley slave drivers, *raïs-etterik (raïs al-flarîq)*, the prize-pilot, *oukil el-hardj*, superintendent, or the *behari (bahri)*, the seaman. There are many terms of Turkish origin like *bash-demandji*, *yarkandji*, *amberdji*, *sandal-raïs*; Persian words like *khodja*; Arabic words 'naturalised' to become Turkish, such as *khaznadji*, formed from *hazîna* (treasure) and the Turkish suffix *-dji*, indicating professional function;

terms of French origin, like *ourdian* (keeper) and *mesteurdach* (master-of-the-axe, or carpenter) or of Italian origin, *kamera (camera)* and *komania (compagnia)*.

A report from the French consul general in Algiers dated 24 April 1820 provides information about the sailors and their salaries.[49] At that date, the personnel of the Algerian navy consisted of:

> [. . .] 100 Turkish captains or officers of various ranks,
> 260 captains or koul-ogli officers, i.e., sons of Turks,
> 360 officers each receiving the top salary of the militia, fixed at 48 *pataques* every two months,
> 500 Moorish sub-officers of every listed rank, each receiving a salary of 36 *pataques* every other month on average,
> 700 sailors, employed daily for the tasks of the navy in Algiers, who make up the corps of seamen. At the end of each six-day week, they are paid approximately three *mozones* plus 4 loaves at a mozones each, i.e., 4 mozones per day, which makes 24 *pataques* every two months. Each year on the First of April, the commanders, officers and non-commissioned officers of the 14 principal warships are chosen from among the 360 officers and 500 non-commissioned officers enrolled in such a way that as soon as fitting out of one or several vessels is ordered the officers and non-commissioned officers are at their posts; and only then do they form the crews of sailors taken from among the 700 corps of seamen. If extra crew-members are needed, they pressgang Moors from the country into service.

This was the roll of enlisted personnel, i.e. those who were available, only some of whom were actually needed for the annual staffing of the ships. The ratio of officers to sailors was excessive there; were 720 officers for 700 sailors, not counting the 500 noncommissioned officers. In addition, even leaving aside the question of the accuracy of the figures, it is not certain that this Western terminology corresponds to the actual Algerian situation. It is very likely that besides the hundred officers who constituted the *taïfa* of the *raïs*, an acceptable total, the other officers were rather older sailors, receiving higher pay than true noncommissioned officers. It is also noticeable how the personnel of the Algerian navy reproduces the hierarchy of regency society, the Turkish officer caste over the *kuloghlus*, who in

[49] S.H.M., BB7–8. ("The Report of the Consul General chargé d'affaires of the King in Algiers concerning the naval forces of the Regency of Algiers, expenses for the personnel, maintenance and replacement of equipment, as well as the total annual revenues and expenses of this regency.")

turn outranked the Moorish noncommissioned officers. Note, too, the superiority of the city-dwellers over the 'Moors from the country,' who at times were subject to being press-ganged to complete the crews.

The document also provides information about salaries. In 1788,[50] the highest salary was 24 *pataques* i.e., half the sum that would be paid in 1820, which suggests that the doubling of the salary in thirty years resulted from the pay-rises decreed by the deys, who wished to be popular with the militia,[51] and also of course from monetary deflation and devaluations, which were considerable from 1816 on. In 1820, a sailor received a cash payment of 144 *mozones* every two months, or 6 *budjus*,[52] to which should be added the supply of bread he was given; while naturally the noncommissioned officers received higher pay according to their rank. This is exactly the sum indicated in the Arabic documentation, datable to the end of the eighteenth century,[53] which confirms the reliability of the report. In addition, the document specifies:

> [. . .] in the same way, the naval officers and crews [. . .] receive at sea only the same fixed pay they receive on land. The regency, however, grants a bonus of five hundred to a thousand *pataques* for each vessel fitting-out according to its size, it is distributed to the officers on land and on sea, and around double this bonus to crews at the time of their departure.

Here again, the Arab sources describe this bonus, called the *komania*, and indicate the sum paid to certain ships around 1810, specifying the amount in *sultâni*, a gold currency worth 108 *mozones*: 150 to the frigates, 86 to the brigs and polaccas, and 60 to the xebecks and

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[50] Venture de Paradis, *op. cit*, 1983, pp. 160–165.

[51] *Rapport concernant les forces navales* (quoted previously), S.H.M., BB7/8. "The false measure adopted by the Dey Ahmet-Pasha, who in 1806 rose to the highest office of the Regency through the murder of his predecessor Mustapha-Pasha, and who, to attract a large number of men to the militia, doubled the salaries . . ."

[52] The *mozone* [*muzûna*], the smallest coin in the Algerian monetary system, was the one most used as a unit of measure for prices in daily life. Eight *mozones* made up what the Europeans called the pataque-chique [*riyâl darâhim sighâr*], also frequently used. Three *pataques-chiques* were worth one *budju* [*riyâl budju salîh*]. During the period from 1798 to 1816, the *budju* was valued at around 3.35 francs, which places the pataque-chique at 1.12 francs. The devaluation of the Algerian money by about a third in 1816 lowered the value of the pataque-chique to 70 centimes. Saïdouni, "*La vie rurale* . . .", 1988, pp. 370–380.

[53] *Tachrifat*, p. 29.

other smaller ships.[54] Although the pay and bonuses were limited, there of course remained the attraction and the hope of valuable booty.

The Janissaries (on-board Infantry)

In addition to the sailors as such, officers, noncommissioned officers and sailors responsible for rigging the ship or for the guns, chosen by the captain (with the exception of the *khodja* and the *wakîl al-kharj* who were appointed by the dey), there were also janissaries on board the ships. Serving aboard a corsair ship was an obligation for the janissaries in the Algiers militia. In around 1800 to 1810, the *mehallas* had 2,200 to 2,500 janissaries, while the navy used around fourteen percent of the full complement of the militia, i.e., at most 800 to 900 men.[55] We do not know the ratio of janissaries aboard, but if we compare their numbers with the maximum number of sailors, 2,500 men, we can assume that there was about one janissary for three sailors aboard the Algerian corsair ships. This is confirmed in a document on the Algerian navy in 1820: "each complement of ship's personnel includes, in addition to its crew of sailors, a garrison of infantry formed from the Turkish militia, of not more than a hundred men for the frigates, and not less than forty men for the schooners and polaccas."[56]

> These soldiers assigned during the year for service at sea were taken aboard vessels that belonged to private individuals as well as those that belonged to the state. It was the new recruits who were assigned to serve at sea. They took their rifles, pistols, swords, and a blanket for sleeping; their entire equipment. The beylik provided neither bunk nor hammock nor mattress; he supplied old sheets for binding up wounds and a medicine chest . . . [They] were not involved in ship manœuvres; they were assigned to the musketry and to be the first to make boardings with knives and swords. Their stations were on the quarter-deck, where soldiers could not go without permission, except to serve them.[57]

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[55] This ratio is based on a study of the death registers for janissaries. Shuval, "*La ville d'Alger* . . .", 1994, p. 137.

[56] *Service historique de la Marine*, S.H.M., BB7/8.

[57] Venture de Paradis, *op. cit.*, 1983, p. 150.

Soldiers and naval artillery were under the orders of an *aga*, who had the rank of *bulukbashi*, an officer of the militia with a rank equivalent to captain, assisted by *odabashis*, noncommissioned officers, sergeants, and by a *wakîl al-kharj*, a kind of noncommissioned officer responsible for stores. We do not know how the soldiers were allocated aboard the ships, but we can speculate as follows: although there were many men on all types of ships, the numbers seem particularly high on the mixed ships, xebecks, feluccas and galliots; tactically nimble ships that sat low in the water, and for which boarding was certainly the main way, if not the only way, to seize a merchant ship. These were surely the vessels on which the largest groups of janissaries served. The high-sided ships, corvettes and especially frigates which were more tricky to manœuvre, overcame their prey by the simple threat of opening fire, and by their great size, so that a ship under attack could not even contemplate resisting. Doubtless the janissaries were less numerous on these ships, because less necessary.

All this information is related to Algiers, where the janissaries constituted the majority of the armed forces. On the other hand, although it is likely that a segment of the on-board troops in Tunis came from their ranks, the rest would have come from among the local soldiers. Furthermore, we have seen that some of the owners of corsair ships of the Tunis regency lived in the provinces, particularly in Djerba, Monastir, Sousse and Sfax, where the garrisons of janissaries were small, even non-existent as in Sfax, the second corsair port of the regency. Since there were almost no Turkish janissaries left in Tripoli, its naval infantry was of entirely local origin. Like the sailors, the janissaries and soldiers on board the ships received the same pay they received on land. In 1788, the starting pay for the soldiers of the militia of Algiers was 1¾ *pataque-chiques* every other month; three months later the figure was doubled, and then it increased every year until it reached the highest pay of 24 *pataques* every other month. As for sailors, the attraction of serving on a corsair ship was the prospect of captures and the hope of a share in the booty.

Life aboard Ship

During the summer of 1814, a Dutch ship fishing for herring was captured by corsairs from Algiers. The ship's skipper, Gerrit Metzon, who was freed in 1816, published the journal of his captivity in 1817. In it he described the daily life of the corsairs:

> [. . .] the Turks slept throughout the voyage stretched out on the deck, on a mat or blanket they had brought for this purpose, covering themselves with another blanket, or with a greatcoat [. . .] They spent their time in the following manner: at sunrise, the helmsman washed his hands, feet and face, then spread out his blanket on the deck, where he knelt to say his prayers, kissing the deck three times: after this, he stretched his hands and his feet heavenwards, rubbing his beard and muttering loudly, the muttering sometimes becoming shouting [. . .] At sunrise, the cook prepared a cup of coffee for each of them, which they drank while smoking a tobacco pipe. After this, he cooked some beans, peas or gruel in a faience pot they had brought. When they prepared to eat, they spread a piece of sail cloth on the deck, onto which bread was placed for each man. After this, they formed a circle, and with their legs crossed underneath them, they served themselves using a piece of hollowed-out wood as a spoon. After the meal, they stretched out again, or busied themselves looking for vermin . . .[58]

Rest, prayer and meals provided the rhythm of daily life onboard Barbary corsairs ships, in conditions which were really quite similar for all Mediterranean sailors of that time.

[58] Metzon, *op cit.*, 1950, p. 51.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CORSAIR CAMPAIGNS

The Temporary Return to Corsair Activities

International Relations in Upheaval

Until 1792, the French Revolution had almost no impact on France's economic activities and relations with the Maghreb. It was less the proclamation of the Republic than the declaration of war against France by England in February 1793, along with the other states allied against France, that upset the maritime equilibrium in the Mediterranean. Until then, France had occupied a dominant position: it now rapidly declined. Its navy, totally disorganised and weakened, proved incapable of opposing the British navy, with as a result the almost complete disappearance of the French merchant flag from the North African ports. Between 1784 and 1788, an average of 148 ships per year arrived in Marseilles from the Maghreb; 151 between 1789 and 1792—then only 28 from 1793 to 1799.[1] Although part of the traffic was assured by neutral nations,[2] the collapse of their principal commercial partner, like the war in the Mediterranean, brought into question the whole system of relations between the regencies and Europe.

Indeed France had been by far the most important commercial partner of the Maghreb, which is how Marseilles in the 1780s could account for two-thirds of the value of European trade with Tunisia, the most active of the three regencies. By interrupting most of the exchanges, the state of war greatly reduced the revenues the regencies received from customs duties. Even further, it disturbed and

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[1] Carrière, "*Les entrées de navires dans le port de Marseille . . .*", 1957.

[2] *Ibid.* From 1789 to 1792, Marseilles registered the arrival of ships annually; 548 for the whole period, with a majority of small coasters of several dozen tonnes, originating in Liguria and Tuscany, where the rival ports of Genoa and Leghorn were located, and 1,106 between 1793 and 1799. In this way, relations between Marseilles and the Maghreb survived to a degree, but in an indirect fashion.

weakened their economies, in particular the income of their governors and the groups of notables around them. A significant portion of the agricultural output and livestock production was destined for export and organised towards this end in different forms: taxes in kind, and monopolies or trading licenses, whose proceeds went first to the pasha, bey or dey. The situation deteriorated further in the following years, especially after 1796, when Napoleon's troops entered Italy, seriously disturbing relations between the Maghreb and Genoa, and particularly Leghorn. The military and diplomatic upheavals in Europe delayed or rendered illegal the regular payments to the regencies provided for in treaties. The Netherlands was invaded by France and its fleet captured by the French army in 1795; the Republic of Venice was abolished by Napoleon and its territories divided up between France and Austria in 1797. In addition, the ships of the United States, a new naval power making an appearance in the Mediterranean in these years, were tempting prey, since, through the force of circumstances, the country had as yet no diplomatic agreements with the regencies.

The drastic drop in resources, the desire to retaliate, and the diplomatic uncertainty of the times, pushed the corsairs of the regencies to take to the sea again, all the more so because in June 1798 Napoleon, who was advancing with his Army towards Egypt, seized Malta and abolished the Order of Malta, established there since the sixteenth century. And yet that old enemy of the Barbary corsairs remained aggressive right until its disappearance. In Tunisian waters alone, the ships of the Order, reinforced by corsair ships from the island, captured 33 ships in the decade 1770 and 1779, 28 in 1780–1789, and 32 more from 1790–1798.[3] In addition to the ships, the Maltese corsairs attempted to eliminate Malta's adversaries by reducing them to slavery. Around 500 new slaves were recorded between 1780 and 1789, and 468 between 1790 and 1798. The Order of Malta was the last obstacle to the rapid increase in corsair activities in that period. Furthermore, the French conquest of Egypt brought an end to more than two and a half centuries of peace and good relations between France and the Ottoman Empire.

[3] Valensi, "*Les relations commerciales*...", 1963. The last battle, on 26 April 1798, caused thirty deaths among the Tunisians, including the *raïs*, and the xebeck together with 95 slaves were taken to Malta.

From 1798 on, the Sultan, not without difficulty, forced his North African provinces to go to war with France. In doing so potential new prey became available to the corsairs: French ships, those of the territories annexed by the Republic, and also those of France's allies.

The Resumption of Corsair Activities

The changes in the campaigns of the Tunisian corsair ships illustrate this resurgence of corsair activities.[4] The graph shows a virtually steady growth from 1792 to 1798 with 97 campaigns maximum in 1798 followed by a sustained rhythm until 1805 (79 departures). Beginning in 1806, there was a drastic reduction in the campaigns, and their annual total until 1814 was always under 29, and sometimes fell below ten. The strong rise in 1815–41 campaigns—did not continue and the slight increase for 1820–1821, twenty campaigns in two years, was just the final, modest burst of activity. It would be moribund from then on, lasting until around 1830. Our information concerning the corsair campaigns of Tripoli is sketchier, but confirms that for Tunis. The number of campaigns rose from 13 in 1796 to 20 in 1797, then after an interval of several years,[5] reached 29 in 1805; from then on, 9 to 17 departures were recorded until 1813, rising to 35 in 1815, before dropping to four in 1816.

The register of prizes taken by the Algiers corsairs also confirms these trends in activity. The document records the capture of 67 ships in the period from 1783 to 1792—between three and ten a year; 172 are reported between 1793 and 1802. The numbers rise from six in 1792 to 15 in 1793, reaching 22 ships captured in 1797 and 42 in 1798, the record for the period covered by the register i.e., 1765 to 1829. On the other hand, from 1804 to 1813, only 60 captures are listed, from six to twelve a year, and the upsurge heralded by the 17 captures in 1814 was not sustained in the following years: eight captures in 1815 and none in 1816. The keeping of the register was somewhat erratic in the following years, but it still reveals the decline of corsair activities, with from one to four captures a

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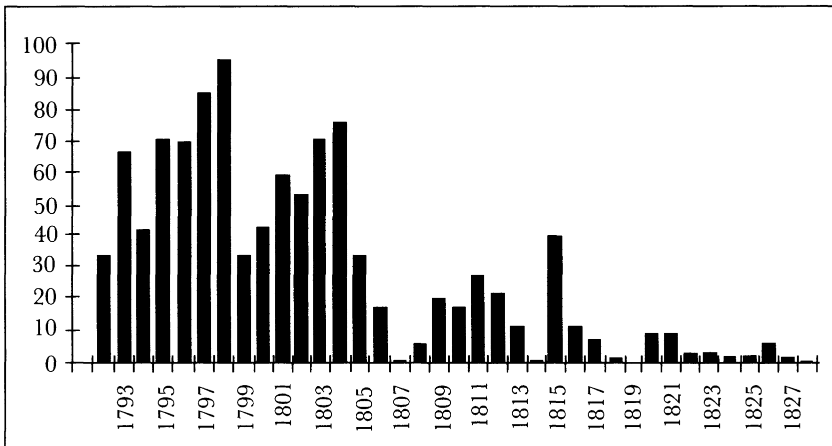
[4] GRANDCHAMP, *op. cit.*, 1957.

[5] During the war between Tripoli and the United States, an American squadron blockaded the port of Tripoli from 1800 to 1804.



Corsair Campaigns from Tunis (1792–1828)

year at best except for pattern of 1826, which numbered thirteen, before ceasing altogether after 1828. The chronological agreement of the activities of the three corsair cities is too similar for it to be fortuitous that, over a period of a third of a century, the following phases occurred in all of them:

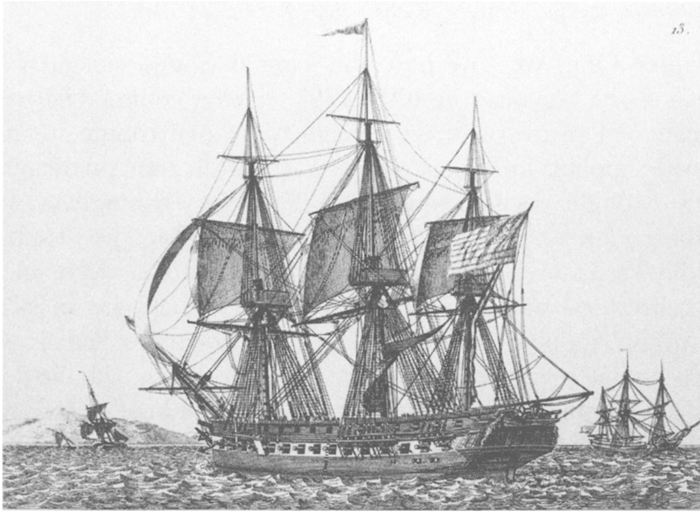
before 1792: moderate activity
1793–1805: a spectacular increase, peaking in 1798
1806–1813: a significant decrease
1814–1815: a tentative, aborted, at increased activity
after 1816: residual, until virtual finish

We know that the first phase was the result of the multiplication of diplomatic agreements, accompanied by a ban on corsair activities, between the regencies and the European states; while the second phase came about because of the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire. Between 1800 and 1803, a series of treaties at last brought peace to Europe, including that between France and England. And yet this return to tranquillity in Europe did not dampen the North Africans' zeal for privateering, any more than did the restored peace between France and the Ottoman Empire in June, 1802. Corsair activities sometimes led to war, as was the case between Tripoli and the United States, 1801 and 1805, a war whose features were characteristic of the conflicts in which a Western power was pitted against a North African regency.

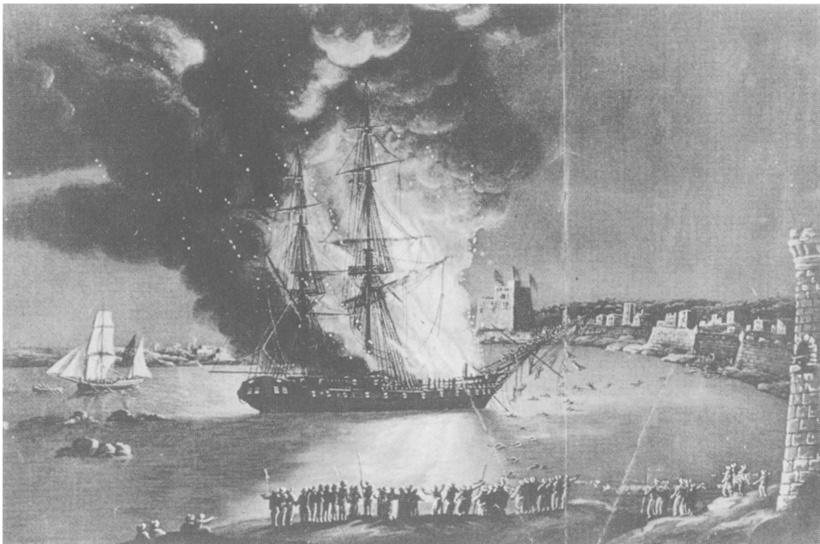
One Consequence: War between Tripoli and the United States

In Chapter One, we saw how the United States yielded to the demands of the regencies in 1795–1797, signing commercial treaties and treaties of peace, with an agreement to pay tribute in money and naval supplies, including warships. In 1796, the American government made the decision to equip itself with a wartime navy, something the country had totally lacked until this time. In October of 1800, the Pasha of Tripoli, displeased because of a delay in payments, called for a revision of the treaty, and especially for an increase in the tribute monies. The American government replied by sending three frigates and a brig to the Mediterranean, all the vessels available at the time, arriving in Gilbraltar on the First of July, 1801.

The conflict involved three types of action, usually initiated by the Americans. There was firstly, pursuit, and if possible, the destruction or capture of the Tripolitan ships, like the polacca overpowered by American brig in August 1801, or the surrender of the *Meshûda*, Tripoli's most powerful ship armed with 28 cannons, to the frigate *John Adams* on 23 April 1803. The second form was the naval blockade of Tripoli, which was reinforced from spring to autumn by the presence of larger and larger naval divisions; in 1805 it consisted of six frigates, seven brigs and schooners and sixteen cannon shallops, six of them Neapolitan. The blockade was reduced in the winter period, maintained by just one or two ships. The purpose of the blockade was meant to keep corsair ships from taking to the sea, but it also led to serious disturbances in the maritime trade of the port, including disruptions for ships flying neutral flags. A famous incident now broke the incessant surveillance: on 31 October 1803, while chasing two Tripolitan ships, the frigate *Philadelphia* ran aground on rocks near Tripoli and the 308 members of the crew were taken prisoner. On 2 November, the Tripolitan navy managed to refloat the ship and bring it into the port in triumph but on 16 February 1804 the lieutenant Decatur and several volunteers succeeded in setting fire to the ship and making their escape. The third form of action was the bombardment of the city, with the intention of involving the civilian population and hoping they would exert pressure on the pasha to sign a peace treaty. On three different occasions during August 1804, American ships bombarded the fortifications and the city, but with mediocre results, as the Tripolitan ships, especially the gun-vessels, retaliated effectively, in spite of sustaining losses.



3. The American frigate 'President'
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



4. The burning of the frigate 'Philadelphia' in the port of Tripoli
(Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, U.S.A.)

In an effort to bring an end to a war that was dragging on, the Americans now attempted a manœuvre of politico-military diversion. William Eaton, the former American consul in Tunis, contacted Ahmed Karamânli, the former Pasha of Tripoli who had been deposed in 1795 by his brother Yussuf and had taken refuge in Egypt. Eaton mounted an overland expedition that left from Alexandria, covering the eight hundred kilometers that separated the city from Derna. Supported by the firepower of the American ships, Eaton succeeded in taking Derna on 27 April 1805 and in resisting two attempts by Yussuf to retake it; but he was unable to go on to Tripoli. The stalemate situation opened the way for negotiations and a treaty was concluded on 10 June 1805 that resulted in the liberation of the American prisoners in return for $60,000 and the freeing of the hundred captives from Tripoli who were in American hands.[6]

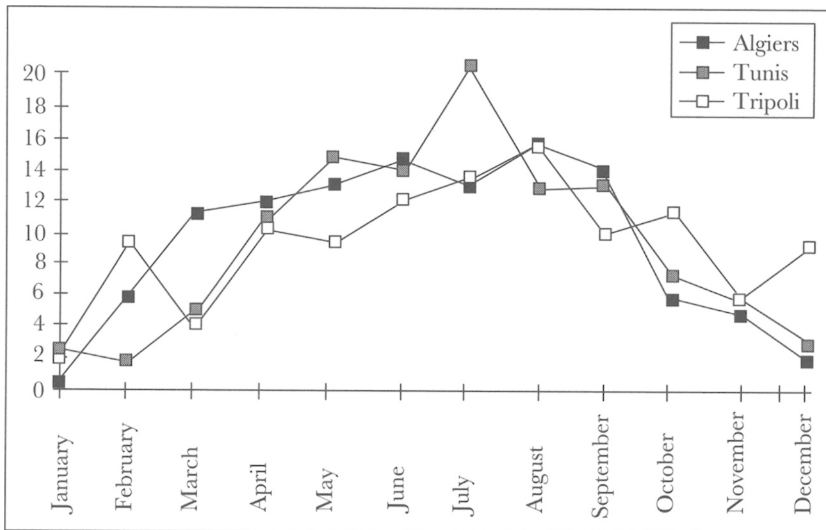
Day-to-Day Corsair Life

The Campaigning Season

The general impression that emerges from the graph below confirms what numerous works devoted to the Barbary corsairs and navigation of the period emphasise at every possible opportunity—maritime activities were undertaken above all in the warmer months. The three curves of the graph indeed show a limited number of departures in the beginning of the year, then a steady increase peaking in the summer months and then decreasing until December. A closer look reveals that these curves are quite dissimilar from city to city, like their 'seasons' of privateering activity. The season in Algiers lasted for at least seven months, from March to September inclusive, with very slight varieties from month to month, with 10% of the total in March and 13.9% in August, the first departures starting

[6] This war between Tripoli and the United States was the subject of a television series made by Syria in 1989 at the request of Libya. The director was Haytham Haqi, very well known in the Arab world, and the role of the Pasha of Tripoli was played by Hasanad Fedda, famous actor and director general of Syrian theatre. The series was a great success in Libya as well as in Syria, as it was made and televised shortly after the United States attacked Libya—this time by air. I am grateful to Mr. Salam Kawakibi for providing this information.

in February. In Tunis, the period with the most intense activity was shorter, lasting only five months, from May to September, and really beginning only around March–April. This quite clear difference is the result of the composition of the fleets of the two regencies. The Tunis fleet included a significant number of galliots without decks, which could only go out in the warmer months, while the fleet of Algiers consisted almost exclusively of sailing vessels with decks, and of a high tonnage, which were capable of venturing out into the sea almost all year round. The changes in the seasonal calendar of corsair departures from Tripoli over half a century (in percentages) confirm this observation (see Table below).



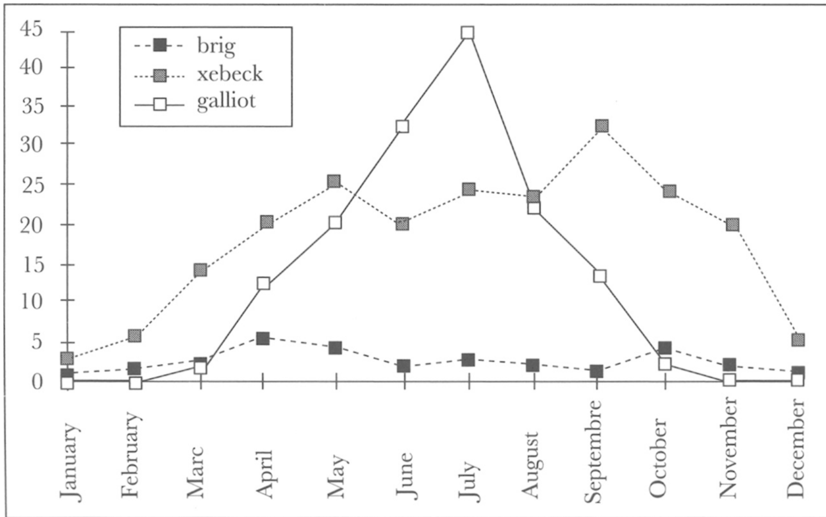
Monthly departures of corsair ships (in monthly percentages)

	1754–1773	1805–1815
Winter	4.5	13.7
Spring	19.3	27.9
Summer	61.4	34.6
Autumn	14.8	23.8

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Tripoli's modest fleet consisted of a few small xebecks and mostly galliots (70%) that could hardly venture out into the sea outside the warmer months, when they accounted for more than three-fifths of the total sorties. There were considerably fewer sorties in the spring, less than one-fifth, even fewer in the autumn, and almost none at all in the winter.[7] The contrast between this and the situation forty years later is striking. Although the winter shows a marked decline in activities, the spring and the autumn, with around a quarter of the annual sorties, now only show a limited reduction compared to the summer, which only accounts for a third. This is the result of a profound change in the composition of the fleet in the beginning of the nineteenth century, which, like the fleets of the other corsair cities, showed a much greater emphasis on sailing vessels that rode higher in the water and were more seaworthy than the ships with oars. From this period on, the ships were used for most of the year, as is seen in the Table below.

The breakdown by months of the sorties for three types of ships belonging to the regency of Tunis enables us to refine these observations. The brig was used all year long, with somewhat more frequent departures in April–May; the xebeck could be used over a very long period extending from March to November; the galliot only took to the sea in April, to be disarmed in September. The annual activity of several Tunisian *raïs* provides firm evidence of this. In 1798, Ibrahim Giritli, master of a two-cannon galliot with 15 benches of rowers and 70 men aboard, took to the sea for the first time on 26 April, and a second time on 17 July; in 1803, Abdallah Ben Abdallah's 14-row, two-cannon galliot with 60 men aboard set out on 23 July, and again on 26 August. In 1798, Ali Arnaout, captain of a xebeck with 22 cannons and 140 men, went out on 23 March, 25 September, and finally 16 October; Baba Halil Maghrebli, commander of a xebeck with 16 cannons and 120 men, only began his outings for 1803 on 6 May, set out again on 19 August, and once more on 28 November; in 1815, Ismaïl Midilli went out four times with his 12-cannon xebeck and 80 men, on 31 March, 2 June, 14 August, and a final time on 8 November. The lengthening of the annual period in which the sailing ships could be

[7] PANZAC, *art. cit.*, 1988.



Departures from Tunis (according to type of ship)

used made it possible to increase the number of sorties, and therefore the chances of taking booty, a factor that must have counted in the shipowners' choices of vessels.

Only the documentation concerning Tripoli includes both dates of departure and dates of return. Three types of ship were used often enough to provide significant details: the bark, the xebeck and the corvette; all sailing vessels, as Tripoli no longer equipped galliots and feluccas in this period. A complete sortie lasted 40 days on average for the barks, 47 for the corvettes and 52 for the xebecks, i.e., from six to eight weeks. Some *raïs* stayed at sea for longer periods, doubtless taking refuge in some port, as it is difficult to see how these ships could remain at sea for three, even four months without a stopover.[8] These are examples of sorties that were fruitless. Campaigns ending in a capture were shorter, averaging 31 days for the corvettes and 32 for the xebecks, since the *raïs* liked to take the captured ships back to port themselves, or to accompany the captain they had installed on the captured ship.

[8] Ali Gergachi, captain of a ten-cannon xebeck, took to the sea on 20 December 1808 and did not return until 16 April 1809, without a capture, i.e., a campaign of 117 days. Omar Chelly, commander of a 16-cannon brig, left Tripoli on 12 June 1815 and returned 137 days later, on 27 October 1815, with a captured ship from Hamburg.

Corsair Geography

Many things had changed for the Barbary corsairs since the last years of the eighteenth century; in particular, the possibility now open of frequenting the European ports including—and we might be tempted to say especially—the port of Malta, as is shown in the registers of their health authorities. Between 1801 and 1807, nine corsair ships, two Algerian and seven Tunisian, passed through Barcelona, and a corsair from Tripoli came to Leghorn in 1809 in order to deliver the French consul. But it was Malta that the corsairs frequented most. In fifteen years, from July 1801, the date of the reopening of the port, to February 1816, 66 North African corsair ships were registered by the Maltese health authorities: four Algerian, 38 Tunisian and 24 Tripolitan. This frequentation differed from year to year, going from nine ships in 1801 and 1810, to eight in 1804, six in 1808, five in 1809, three in 1806, then two a year from 1812 to 1815, and down to just one in 1807, 1811 and 1816. Altogether, this presence reveals the changing patterns in corsair activities that we have already described: from 1801 to 1805, there were 34 visits, and only 32 from 1806 to 1816.

The register provides details of the purposes of these stopovers for a number of the ships, shedding a little light on the practice and the pressures of corsair life. The corsair ships, which were usually fast, were used on several occasions to carry the official mail of the regencies.[9] But the principal reason given for visits to the port of Malta was the need to take on supplies, especially water, cited a dozen times, and food, four times, as these ships, which were often quite cramped, usually had large crews. The ships also came to Malta when in need of repairs: on 3 November 1802, Ahmed el-Kelibi, master of a xebeck with a crew of 45 men that had set out from Sfax, dropped anchor in the port to seek repairs after sustaining damage during a storm.[10] On 14 June 1805, Hadj Osman, a corsair

[9] Heading out from Tripoli on 31 March 1808, the xebeck of the *raïs* Omar Chelly arrived in Malta on 2 April with mail for the English governor of the island. On 19 July it was the Algerian *raïs* Ibrahim's turn to bring the dispatches. N.L.M. 813–3.

[10] The list of departures of corsair ships from Tunis shows that on 10 October 1802, the *raïs* Ahmed el-Kelibi, commander of an eight-cannon xebeck belonging to Mahmoud Gelluli, left Sfax on a campaign with 50 men aboard. Grandchamp, *op. cit.*, 1957.

from Tripoli, who had left the port seven days earlier, arrived in Malta to have the damaged rudder of his bark repaired.[11]

Malta was even directly involved in corsair activities. Certain corsairs did not hesitate to stop over with a captured ship when they felt the need, in particular to take on supplies, like the Tunisian *raïs* Ali when he arrived on the First of September 1801 with a captured Neapolitan ship, and returned on 20 October 1804. Others did likewise; Abdallah, a Tripolitan, on 28 September 1805, and Omar Chelly, also from Tripoli, in October 1810. A few went so far as to confide to the director of the Maltese health authority—surely heaving a big sigh—that they had not yet captured any ships![12] Even captured vessels with their captive crews aboard sometimes stopped over in Malta. Between 10 and 12 December 1805, four captured Neapolitan and Sicilian ships, without their former crews—replaced by capture crews from Tunisian corsair ships commanded by the *raïs* Ali Wahrânî, Fredj Ben Slam and Mohammed Morali—came into port to take shelter briefly in bad weather.[13] More surprisingly, a former Sicilian *balancelle*, with a seven-man capture crew from Tripoli provided by the corsair Ali Gergachi, still had its eight Sicilians on board when it arrived in Malta on 10 November 1815.

There were many other reasons, sometimes surprising ones, for the presence in Malta of the North African corsairs. On 2 July 1809, a caique arrived with twelve Moors aboard. They explained that they had come from the *raïs* Halil's corsair xebeck that had dropped them off near Marsala for a *raid*. At nightfall, however, they had lost their way and had been unable to find their way back to the xebeck. However, the caigue was recognised by a Maltese shipowner, Paolo Micallef: his xebeck had been chased by the same caique and to avoid capture had run aground near Cape Passaro in Sicily on the 27 June. Micallef lodged a complaint, demanding that the caïque be seized as compensation for his loss and the case was submitted to the English governor. On 29 December 1810, Omar Chelly, a

[11] The "*Etat des bâtiments corsaires appartenant à S.E. le Pasha de Tripoly*" mentions the departure, on 6 June 1805, of the bark of the *raïs* el-Hadj Osman. A.M.A.E., Nantes, A.R. Tripoli 795.

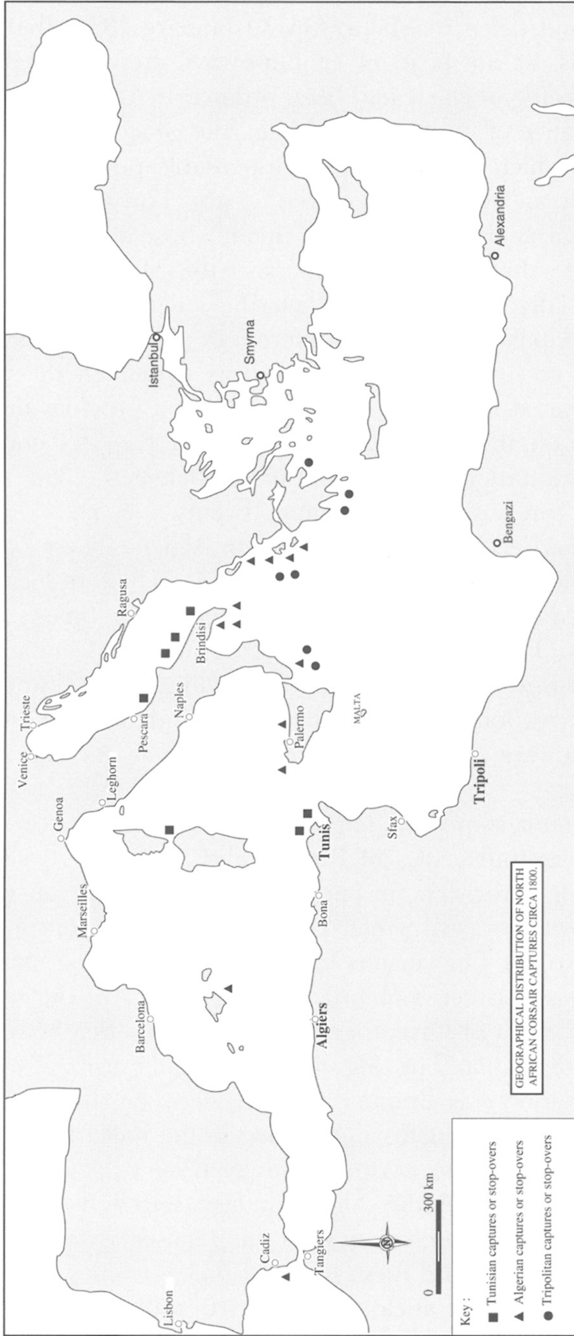
[12] N.L.M. 818–4.

[13] N.L.M. 818–4. These captured vessels boarded by capture crews have not been included in the totals of corsair ships.

corsair from Tripoli, came to reclaim a Tripolitan ship captured by Algerian corsairs and taken to Malta. On 10 January 1814, the *raïs* Hassan from Tunis, at the head of an impressive crew, arrived to take delivery of two frigates that had been ordered by the bey. Soon after the disappearance of the Order of Malta, the geographical position of the island, which had been an indispensable port-of-call for navigators, made it an attractive stopover for the Barbary corsairs, especially those from nearby Tunis and Tripoli, whose activities integrated perfectly into the maritime practices of the Mediterranean.

Stopovers, especially in Europe, explain the lengthy duration of certain corsair campaigns, but these were not the only reasons. Muslim ports also received the corsair ships, as is seen in the register of captures related to Algiers, which in addition provides interesting information on the traffic in booty. Out of the 122 entries concerning the liquidation of captures made between 1798 and 1815 (entries that can cover several ships), twenty-one, i.e., 17.2% of the total, were carried out elsewhere than in Algiers. These other ports, like Oran and Morocco with one reference each were located above all in the Maghreb. Tripoli is mentioned three times, and Tunis eleven times. There were ports in the Levant like Candia, in Crete, and even some final European destinations like Gibraltar. These destinations no longer figure after 1804; and in 1807, only Morocco and Oran were still receiving ships captured by the Algerian corsairs.

Taking into account stopovers, references in correspondence and in the varous administrative files of Ragusa and Austria, as well as in the health authority registers, in particular in Malta; we can gain a fairly clear idea of the areas preferred by the Barbary corsairs in this period (Map No. 1). The corsairs from Tunis and Tripoli mainly plied the Ionian Sea between Calabria and the islands of the same name, as far as the Strait of Otranto, or the Tyrrhenian Sea between Naples, Sicily and Sardinia. The Algerians frequented especially the 'Mediterranean Channel'; as Braudel called it, between the coast of Maghreb to the south the Andalusia extending to the Balearic Islands and as far as Sardinia to the north. Naturally these were not protected hunting grounds, and the Algerians also seized Neapolitan ships between Naples and Palermo, just as the Tunisians worked the Catalonian coast, since we find them in Barcelona. At times a group took the risk of going farther afield: thus in 1810, a division of three



Map 1.

frigates and a brig commanded by the *raïs* Hamidou was present in the Atlantic Ocean; in June 1802, Admiral Decrès, Minister of the Navy under the Consulate, received a furious letter from Napoleon, who had learned that "a Barbary bark is blockading twelve or fifteen Ligurian ships in Saint Tropez" and that the port admiral in Toulon had done nothing about it yet![14] Between 1798 and 1800, taking advantage of the uncertainty hanging over the dividing up of the territories of the former Republic of Venice between France and Austria, and therefore of their two merchant fleets, the corsairs of the three regencies captured several dozen ships, which proved to be a serious bone of contention between the Austrian Empire and the Sultan, who was in theory responsible for the regencies. We will come back to this affair later, but the files related to these ships provide specific information about the place of capture of twenty of them.

Of the three ships captured by the Tunisians, two were taken in Tunisian waters, one near Bizerta and the other near Porto-Farina, showing that their captains believed themselves to be protected by the treaties established between the Austrian Empire and the regencies. The Algerians captured twenty ships, but we only know the places where eleven of these were captured: one near the Island of Majorca, two along the northern coast of Sicily, at Cape San Vito near Trapani and off the coast of Palermo, one at Cape Spartivento, the promontory at the extreme southwest end of Calabria, three around Cape Santa Maria, the southern limit of Puglia, south of Otranto, and finally four in the Ionian Islands, off Santa Maura (Lefkada), Kefallinia, Paxos and Fano. The documents record the place of capture of seven of the fifteen ships seized by the Tripolitans: two at Cape Spartivento, two near Kefallinia, two south of the Morea (Pelopponese) and one off Cape Sounion.

Only the Algerians and the Tunisians were active in the Western Mediterranean, Sicily and the Balearics; the Algerians worked in the Ionian, along the Italian coast as well as around the Ionian Islands strictly speaking; corsairs from Tripoli likewise held sway in the Ionian, but also farther to the east, towards the Pelopponese and as far as Attica, at the extreme end of the Aegean North African corsair activities covered most of the Mediterranean, and only its eastern

[14] Quoted in Berbrugger, "*La Régence d'Algers*", 1871.

extremity, between Crete and the Syrian coast, was more or less unhindered by those corsairs. Because the home ports of the ships targetted by these activities were in the Adriatic, it is easy to understand why the Ionian Sea, receiving maritime traffic in and out of the Strait of Otranto, was a favourite hunting ground for the corsairs. The places where the Austrian ships were captured were near the coast, and more particularly, at points where the ships had no choice but to pass, such as capes like San Vito, Santa Maria, Spartivento or Colonus which they had to skirt around, or near islands they were to obliged to pass. These observations are more general in import, and in fact apply to the corsair wars as a whole.

Littorals also were raided by the corsairs, who made brief landings, several hours at most, to carry out surprise raids on the populations. Their favourite places were the islands and the southern territories of Italy. Without claiming to be exhaustive, which would be almost impossible here, the following examples show clearly the dangers to which these coastal populations were subjected by the corsairs in this period. Ciro, a small town in Calabria, south of the Gulf of Taranto, was attacked on three different occasions in 1803 by corsairs, who carried off thirteen people on 3 June, six on 30 June, and another six on 27 July; they returned on 17 and 27 July 1804, and once again in June 1805, this time carrying off some fishermen they had captured several hundred yards from the shore. The southern coast of the Adriatic, between Pescara and Brindisi, was attacked eleven times between May and November, 1815, and the list of the villages or nearby areas that were victims of the corsairs is long: Silvi, Termoli, Vasto, Melito, Pizzo, Montauro, San Foca, Lecce, Ostuni, Brindisi, Carovigno etc.

The islands which were more isolated were of course very tempting targets. Sardinia and Sicily were often attacked, but the Barbary corsairs seem to have viewed the smaller islands as easier prey. The most tragic and famous case of this period, to which we will return, was the attack against Carloforte, on San Pietro island, southwest of Sardinia, on 2 September 1798. On 14 October 1799, a fleet of Tunisian corsairs attempted to take the island of Maddalena, north of Sardinia. The resistance of the small garrison, which was supported by the local populace, caused the corsairs to re-embark: on 18 November, they attacked the Island of Giglio, between Elba and Civitavecchia, but once again they failed. On 15 October 1815, however, the Tunisians renewed their 1798 exploit against Carloforte,

this time attacking the neighbouring island of Sant' Antioco, where they captured 150 people.

Risks and Conditions of Corsair Life

Corsairs or Pirates?

We have already explained, by describing the diplomatic and administrative frameworks that the warships of the North African regencies were required to respect, that they were considered privateering and not pirate vessels. By way of contrast, alongside the presentation of these corsair activities, we thought it would be useful to provide an introduction to the actual pirates, who were encountered quite frequently in the Mediterranean during this period. The following letter was sent by Vice Admiral Burgues-Missiessy, Commander of the Navy in Toulon, to the Chamber of Commerce in Marseilles on 19 August 1806:

> I have been informed in a letter that I have just received from Algiers that several barks belonging to pirates sporting the black flag are cruising in the Mediterranean, and that they are wreaking terrible havoc there. I am assured that they have already wrecked several ships and massacred their crews. A child from a Catalan boat managed to escape in a shallop, the pirates thinking him dead among the other slain sailors. Two of these barks have already been identified: one has a single mast and carries 3 cannons and 30 crew members, and the other is a brigantine with 10 cannons and 50 crew. It is believed that they came from the Adriatic Gulf. I hasten, Sirs, to advise you of this dire news so that you may give it the greatest possible public exposure, and so that our navigators may remain alert and be wary of encountering these villains.[15]

Everything is there: the black flag, an uncertain nationality, the vandalising of the ship, and especially the killing of the crew in order to leave no trace. The origin of the letter, Algiers, may seem surprising at first. Detailed descriptions of the pirate ships circulated in this manner, like the list of seven vessels specifying, among other things, that "ships 6 and 7 are commanded by Turks, their crews are partially Turk, and the rest a collection of men from Mania and

[15] A.C.C.M., M Q 5–1.

other Greek islands."[16] Admittedly, even compared to these pirates, the Barbary corsairs were hardly civilised seamen with refined methods, but their contemporaries, although they feared them, made a clear distinction between the two types of marine occupation.

The Organisation of Corsair Campaigns

We have seen how the sorties were spaced out throughout most of the year, and how great their hunting areas were, usually close to jagged coast lines. Merchant ships went up and down these coasts, hoping to find a refuge if need be in this preferred territory of their pursuers. The date of the issue of passports seems to indicate that certain ships left at the same time, or at least on the same day, which would suggest a concerted plan by the corsairs to act 'in a pack'. What is clear is that the Tunisian attacks against coastal targets, and particularly islands, employed several hundred men, sometimes even more, which indicates a definite organisation and an ability to assemble many ships for a specific objective. To judge from the Tripoli register, the only one that also shows the return dates, they took place in a purely individual manner, which means that the departure dates may simply represent a convenience for registration. The register of Algiers captures is much more explicit on this question of corsair partnership, however. For the years 1798 to 1815, the document includes 122 reports on the division of booty between those responsible for captures. We note that the number of beneficiaries, who are listed against to a *raïs* and his ship, varies from report to report in the same year. Out of these 122 captures or group of captures, 78, i.e., 64% of the total, were made by a single corsair who alone pocketed the proceeds from the operation. The others result from partnerships: 18, or 14.8% of the total, involved two corsairs and seven, 5.7%, involved three. Less frequently, there

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[16] "No. 1: a pink with square sails on the main mast, lateen sails on the forward-inclined fore-mast, a mizzen mast with a lateen sail, a goose-beaked prow . . . [. . .] No. 3: a 'tratte' or type of large local fishing boat, captured in Smyrna, taken to Maina and armed as a pirate ship. This tratte was rigged with two lateen sails on removable masts that were taken down for the sails to be attached and hoisted; it had eight pairs of oars . . . [. . .] No. 4: a galliot with three large and well-proportioned lateen sails. This ship is very long, slender, and of Neapolitan construction, with a goose-beaked prow and a flat stern . . ." A.C.C.M., M.Q. 5–1.

were groups of even more partners, from four to nine, and once, eleven! Since partners changed several times in a given year, we do not know how these reorganisations took place—whether they were the result of chance encounters at sea, or of decisions made at the outset. An examination of the careers of the most active corsairs reveals nothing very specific. It was noted however that some of them, such as Ali Tatar, Hadj Sliman, Hamdan, Hassan and Hamidou, were just as likely to go out privateering on their own as in a group; while others like Kara Danguezli, Mohammed Ben Zeurman, Na'man, Tchelebi or Hadj Yakub, always worked in association with another corsair.

The Campaigns

The Tripoli passport registers show that on 30 October 1815, the *raïs* Mohammed Karabak left Tripoli in his ten-cannon xebeck with 70 men aboard. He arrived in Malta on 11 December to seek shelter from bad weather, describing his campaign to the secretary of the Maltese health authorities. He was sailing around Calabria and encountered several merchant ships, whose official papers he had checked before letting them sail on: an Ottoman polacca from Corfu transporting oil to Messina; an English bomb-vessel based in Malta heading for Trieste; near Cape Spartivento, he had encountered two Albanian (and therefore Ottoman) *trabacolos*, on their way from Sicily to Dulcigno; and finally, an English xebeck that had set sail from Cortone and was bound for Naples. In addition, he had captured two Neapolitan ships, a xebeck and a bomb-vessel, the first empty, the second loaded with grain, which he had sent to Tripoli with sixteen-men capture crews, which explains why he had only 38 men on board his own ship. He had been able to capture only one of the Neapolitan crews, as the other had managed to reach land by means of its shallop. An entry shows his return to Tripoli on 22 December. Here, then, is an everyday Barbary corsair run, without significant incident, if we overlook the bad weather; but it took place in the autumn, and in the end had been a lucky venture, resulting in the capture of two ships and one crew.

The majority of the hundreds of North African corsair campaigns during this twenty-year period resemble that of the *raïs* Mohammed Karabak, more or less successful concerning booty. But if routine seems to predominate, the unexpected, more often bad than good, was more frequent than it may seem. Another example is the

campaign of the *raïs* Hassan, who related his misdeeds to the authorities of Tropea in Calabria after he was captured following the wreck of his felucca. His account is confirmed by the corsair register of the Tunis regency, which mentions the departure on 18 September 1805 of a large four-cannon felucca with 40 men aboard, commanded by the *raïs* Hassan Lazoghlu of Monastir. This was certainly the corsair captain who had been ravaging the coasts of Sardinia and Calabria, because after this sortie, he disappears from the register of the regency. Hassan harrased merchant ships and captured a *schifazzo* from Trapani that was transporting a cargo of oil, but, was abandoned, according to a common practice, by its crew on the first sighting of the corsair ship, and a polacca from Genoa with 20 persons aboard, including a woman. The two ships were taken to Tunisia by capture crews of seven and nine men. Because his felucca was a mixed ship equipped with oars, Hassan was also able to make coastal attacks: he captured a swineherd and a cowherd, then two fishing barks with eleven men aboard. December was a dangerous month for his deckless ship and its small crew, however, and a storm drove him to the coast. He and his men were captured, his expedition probably ended in a Naples prison.

Misfortunes at sea, such as serious navigating incidents, in particular shipwrecks, were not uncommon. The cutter of Ibrahim Zouaoui from Tripoli sank on 17 October 1810 as it was leaving port, but the crew—or at least its captain—was able to escape, as he was to be found commanding a brigantine shortly afterwards. On 19 December 1811, the *raïs* Omar Chelly returned to Tripoli laden with booty, but his ship was driven into the rocks at the entrance to the port and smashed to pieces.[17]

Storms and rocks were not the only problems. Near Ancona, on 28 May 1803, five Tunisian corsairs came upon an 'unidentifiable' merchant polacca and captured it, without its crew which was able to reach land in the ship's shallop. A capture crew of fifteen men commanded by Mohammed Ali from Constantinople manned the polacca and sailed it towards Tunis. On 5 July, near the island of Linosa, halfway between Sicily and North Africa, the polacca was then captured by the English brig *Maddalena* commanded by Captain Becker. The Tunisian capture crew was put in chains and replaced

[17] Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, *Al-Yawmiyyat*..., 1984, p. 189.

by a British crew commanded by first-officer James Weller and the vessel arrived in Malta on 7 July. And there was worse: on the First of August 1801, near the Island of Gozo, a corsair polacca from Tripoli, armed with 14 cannons, encountered the 12-cannon American brig of war *Enterprise* with 95 men aboard, at the very moment when war was raging between the regency and the United States. The battle ended in victory for the American vessel, which emerged almost unscathed, while the Tripolitan ship, severely damaged, was granted permission to return to Tripoli with 20 dead and 30 injured.

The corsairs also experienced reprisals from the states with which they were openly at war, notably the Kingdom of Naples.[18] From February to April 1798, a Neapolitan naval division, including in particular the vessel *Sannita*, the frigate *Aretusa* and the corvettes *Cerere* and *Sirena*, escorted several convoys of merchant ships between Naples and Genoa or Leghorn. The ships then crossed the Tyrrhenian Sea and gave chase to the Barbary corsairs. On 15 May, the two corvettes seized a pink from Tripoli with a crew of thirty-five. On 18 May the *Sannita* chased and captured a Tunisian brigantine, while the *Aretusa* recovered a Genoese polacca with a Tunisian capture crew aboard.

Corsair Practices

The corsairs' objective was to capture booty and prisoners and to bring them back in the best possible condition to their home port, avoiding storms, enemy ships—and diplomatic problems. Therefore on both land and sea, they attacked coasts or ships whose sovereign they considered be at war with their regency. The booty was sold, and the slaves were usually redeemed later in a negotiated settlement. This is to say that the corsairs avoided killing or injuring people who represented a commercial value and did not destroy goods, especially if they were transportable. They followed the practices

[18] We know that Spain was at war with the regencies until the end of the eighteenth century, a situation not without risks: from 1740 to 1789, the corsairs captured 955 Catalans, who became slaves in the Maghreb, whilst in the same period, 916 Maghreban slaves were brought into the Catalan ports by the Spaniards. Martin Corrales, "*Esclavos norteafricanos*", 1996.

accepted and used by their European contemporaries. Roaming the seas, they attacked two types of prey, coastal villages, and more importantly, merchant ships. We will now consider their methods and the different ways they behaved.

Raids on Land

The most spectacular example of a raid on land was the attack against Carloforte on the island of San Pietro in September 1798. The reason for this expedition, although like something out of a novel, is considered to be true. A sailor from the island of Capraia married to a young woman from Carloforte, thought, rightly or wrongly, that his wife had been unfaithful to him; in a fit of pique, he became a 'Turk' in Tunis, and bent on vengeance, persuaded the corsairs to attack the island of San Pietro, which he knew well. On the night of 2 September, around a thousand Tunisians arrived in ten ships and landed on the island, occupying the shore and blocking all escape routes by which the population could have fled. The sentry on duty at the fortress was beheaded before he could give the alarm, and a party of corsairs invaded the island, throwing the little garrison—which an officer was attempting in vain to assemble and prepare to offer resistance—into a state of panic. The soldiers were captured and immediately taken aboard the ships. Meanwhile other Tunisians firing indiscrimately, were throwing the local population into a panic then rampaged by torchlight all over the island breaking down doors and seizing the terrorized inhabitants and putting them in chains. With little regard for diplomatic immunity, the corsairs also seized the consuls of Sweden, Denmark, France, the Empire, the Netherlands and Spain as well as their families, after pillaging their houses, the church and the rest of the houses on the island. Twenty-four hours after they landed, on the night of September 3rd, the corsairs departed.[19]

Speed was the necessary condition for the success of an operation of this magnitude, which explains why a number of inhabitants managed to escape, hide in the countryside, take refuge on small islands nearby or reach the coast of Sardinia. Some, barricaded in

[19] Bono: *I Corsari barbareschi*, 1964, pp. 180–183.

their houses, were able to resist the corsairs' attempts to break in—about a thousand people in all. All told, aside from the booty as such, the corsairs carried off to Tunis about 200 men, 150 children and 550 women—almost nine hundred people—of whom fifty, members of consular families and Corsicans of French nationality, a friendly nation, were set free by the bey, while the other unfortunates had to wait many years for their freedom. This expedition, in spite of its unusual size (the biggest of the period), was characteristic of the raids on land. The corsairs came by surprise, seized everything within arm's reach, people and goods, backing off if there was resistance, and departing as quickly as possible in order to avoid a possible counter-attack. Most of the time, they avoided unnecessary brutality and violence; for example, there do not seem to have been any cases of rape during the attack on Carloforte.

The Capture of Ships

Although the rare captures of warships were the result of victory in battle, the frequent captures of merchant ships generally took place without violence, as the captured ships did not seek to resist, and in any case, did not have the means to do so. The corsairs took advantage of the surprise effect and the terror they inspired, but they preferred to use administrative and diplomatic arguments. In this way, from 1798 to 1799, they boarded and inspected, and declared fair capture, forty ships flying the imperial flag, vessels they considered to be Venetian, which was in fact the case! The corsairs worked on two levels: they knew very well that the vessels, Austrian since 1798, had been Venetian before that, and they judged them to be Venetian still in order to be able to stop them, because they had not been paid the Venetian tribute since the disappearance of the Republic. They now pretended to be unaware of the new political ownership of the vessels, with the pretext that they had not yet been officially notified of the transfer of sovereignty, when in fact the captains had among their papers a personal *firman* from the sultan! Captain Steffano Iovovich, master of the polacca *Austria*, gave an account of his adventure to the Austrian consul in Tripoli:[20] on

[20] A.S.T., *Governo per il littorale, Commercio per I barbareschi*, B. 2.

11 September he had been at sea off Cape Ducato near Kefallinia when two corsair ships boarded and inspected his ship, an operation to which he submitted without apprehension, as he had in his possession a firman from the sultan, who in addition was at peace with the emperor. At first the good faith of the Austrian captain and his evident conviction that everything was in order seemed to be met with a courteous response from the Tripolitan *raïs*, but the corsair captain was only being clever. First he separated the captain from his ship, making it easier to capture the vessel, and then he waited until the following day to demand the ship's money. Once on land, good manners disappeared and the unfortunate subjects of the emperor, barefoot, attacked and jeered by the crowd, now realised they were now slaves.

It was the same fate for the crews of forty newly-Austrian ships, like the brigantine *San Giorgio*, commanded by Captain Spiro Annetti, who also made a report to his consul, this time in Algiers. He explained that his ship had been chartered to transport 26 newly-freed Barbary corsairs from Naples to Tunis. On his return journey, on 29 October 1799, he was captured off the coast of Bizerta. The scenario was exactly the same, but this *raïs* was more cynical, as he did not even bother to look at the papers of the ship he had ostensibly boarded for inspection and admitted without beating around the bush that he had received an order to arrest all 'imperial' ships. The tried and tested method was of course put into effect: the Austrian crew was subdued and replaced with a large capture-crew. Once again, there is no doubt about the good faith of the imperial captain, or that of all the other commanders sailing under that flag, as is seen in the following extreme case of Captain Ivanich.

On 25 August 1799, the brigantine *Amazone*, commanded by Captain Gaspare Ivanich, left Augusta, a port in eastern Sicily between Catania and Syracuse, with a cargo of salt destined for Trieste. The next day, a leak was discovered and the pumps were applied. Nevertheless, the level of water in the hold continued to rise, and it was determined that the breach through which the water was entering was substantial. As the sea was getting rougher, the captain decided to lighten the ship by jettisoning the cargo into the sea. In spite of this measure, the ship continued to sink, and on 27 August at around 8 o'clock in the evening, when the vessel was about 120 miles east of Cape Passaro, the decision was made to abandon ship, which sank shortly afterward. The captain and his nine-member crew

climbed into the shallop, taking with them half a bag of bread, a small amount of water, a compass, the ship's papers and a little money. The sea was rough, it was raining, and it was difficult to steer, so the shallop drifted until the morning of the First of September, when the weather bettered and shore, which they recognized as the Libyan coast, was only ten miles away. A providential encounter with a fishing bark saved them, as the fishermen, on seeing the firman of the *Grand Signior*, agreed to give them water and food, and, more importantly, to tow them to Tripoli. Once safe in the port, convinced that they had arrived in a friendly place, they fell asleep, only to be awakened and brought before the '*Raïs di Marina*'.

After a courteous interrogation about the shipwreck, and the presentation of the ship's documents, the crew was stripped of the few goods they had been able to save, in particular any coins, to which were added the watches of those who had them, as well as the objects and clothing that remained in the shallop. They were then led to the fortress and the section reserved for slaves, and "*subito li misero al travaglio, facendoli portare da un luogo all'altro travi, tavole, pietre, etc. Li miseri, infelici ancora morti dalla fame e dalla sete cascavano quasi per terra ma con totto cioè dovessero farlo per forza.*" The captain protested, and had the consul notified, but in vain. Nevertheless, after several days, he managed to arrange a meeting with the consul and presented a detailed deposition of all these "*avvenimenti sinistri che mi potrano arrivare a cause di quest'ingiusta detenzione, schiavitu e perdita delle mie spedizioni.*" It was the same scenario as the one endured by the other Austrian captains, worse in this case for the shipwreck, and by the awful disillusionment of one who believes himself to be saved when in fact he has been reduced to slavery and condemned to hard labour.

The high number of captures of Austrian ships in identical conditions by the corsairs of the three Regencies during the same period—from July 1798 to October 1799—is certainly more than a simple coincidence, and raises the question of whether this was a concerted effort by the trio. The affair provoked vigorous protests on the part of the Austrian ambassador in Istanbul, because the ships were carrying a firman from the sultan. The sultan sent emissaries to the Maghreb to arrange for the release of the Austrian crews as well as the ships and their cargo. In spite of their obvious reticence, certain regencies obeyed, which proves that the authority of the sultan was more than a mere formality. The crew of Captain Ivanich left Tripoli

after a forced stay of five months and 23 days. Since some of the ships as well as their cargo had already been sold, the Ottoman government agreed to pay damages of 200,000 piastres, leaving it to the Austrian authorities to arrange for its distribution.

If what one might call an abuse of confidence was behind the capture of the Austrian ships and the orderly methods of the corsairs, this was not the case for most of the other ships they seized. The Dutch Captain Gerrit Metzon's description of his capture in his *Journal of Captivity in Algiers*,[21] already quoted above, is certainly representative of the experience of most of the victims of the Barbary corsairs during this period. On 19 June 1814, a herring boat from Vlaardingen, *Les Deux Frères*, commanded by Gerrit Metzon, left Cadiz loaded with salt and cork destined for the Netherlands. On 25 June, near Cape Saint Vincent, at the southwest tip of Portugal, the vessel was boarded and its documents examined by corsairs from three Algerian ships, two frigates and a brig, which had already captured two Danish vessels and a Swedish one.[22] The Dutch crew, immobilised in a calm, saw a shallop approaching:

> [. . .] we saw with terror and astonishment the turbans of the officers who were sitting in the back, and the rowers, almost naked, with daggers beside them; this was the announcement of the visit and the fate that awaited us. As they drew alongside, they jumped aboard, daggers in hand [. . .] and forced our men [who were taking a nap], naked as they were, onto the deck, while they stole everything they could find. They kicked open the chests and took out whatever pleased them, so that, having arrived almost naked, they were completely dressed in less than a quarter of an hour. They threw whatever remained into their boat, and did not allow a single one of our men to take anything, or to put on any clothing; they threatened with death anyone who would dare to resist them. [. . .] They ragged me into my cabin and told me that I had to give them everything. Since I did not act quickly enough, as much from sadness as from pique, they pushed me out of the cabin and, once outside, one of the Moors stole my watch. Next they took everything it was possible to take, stuffed it in bags and threw the rest, just as it was, into their boat.

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[21] METZON, *op. cit.*, 1950.

[22] "In the year one thousand two hundred and twenty-nine (1814), two frigates captured (from the Swedes) a ship loaded with fabrics and two Dutch vessels with cargoes of salt and cloth," *Registre des prises*, p. 99.

Metzon was led aboard one of the frigates and interrogated by its commander, who, after inquiring as to the name and nationality of his prisoner, attempted in vain to obtain from him information about the ships that were present in Cadiz. He was taken back on board his ship, from which the helmsman, his son and the cook had been taken away.

> By then we were only five men remaining [. . .], but on the other hand, we had a Turkish pirate captain, a helmsman, three sailors, a sergeant and three soldiers. We left the frigates, which moved off towards the north as we moved south. [. . .] One can imagine in what a sad state, we found ourselves as from 25 June to 19 July we were forced to lie on the deck, on bare boards, wearing only a shirt, an old pair of trousers, and without a handkerchief or hat on our heads. [. . .] We no longer had any means of cooking our food, because we had been left with nothing. Through our passenger [who spoke Italian], we asked to have a mash of lard and flour that had remained on board cooked for us every day. This was granted and we dipped a small piece of salted meat into a little salt water and fried it as well as we could in the pan. The captain also allowed us a barrel of wine to enable us to drink something while eating. [. . .] each time we were near other boats, we were locked up way below in the dormitories, guarded from the outside by a soldier.

> When we arrived on land, we were received by a young gentleman, impeccably dressed in the Turkish manner with braided hair and a long pigtail. He was one of the Christian servants of the bashaw. He signalled for us to follow him, bareheaded, to the place where his master was. [. . .] the bashaw received us seated on a stone bench, his legs crossed under his body in the Turkish manner, a pipe in his mouth with the end touching the ground. He was wearing a jacket embroidered in gold with magnificent gold buttons, trousers of the finest cloth, and, on his head, a turban with gold edging. In a gruff voice, he asked us if we were Dutch, to which we replied 'yes'. Next he said a few words to two people who [. . .] we were led to the Naval base, and as we passed by we saw a great number of prisoners now in slavery labouring at various tasks; it gave us an inkling of our fate. Once through the gate to the base, they made us cross a large section of the city, whose streets were filled with numerous spectators, many of whom mocked and insulted us.

When the initial bustling and systematic pillaging, especially of clothing, were over, the different stages following the capture of a ship unfolded in the practical manner already described. One part of the Dutch crew was kept on board the corsair while the prize ship had a capture-crew boarded that included sailors and janissaries

assigned to the task of taking the ship to the corsair captain's home port; in this case Algiers. The three weeks of cohabitation on board passed without incident and without needless brutality. On the other hand, although the appearance before the dey was a mere formality, the arrival in the city was hard, and the new captives' uncertainty about their future even more worrying—they were just a part of the booty.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIVATEERING AND THE ECONOMY

Although privateering had a recognised religious dimension and its political role was not negligible, its primary purpose was obviously an economic one. Our first task will involve assessing the value of the booty collected during the campaigns, i.e., a quantitative approach which will inevitably involve us again in the problem of reliable sources. For the period in question, the sources are very uneven, depending on the regency, and we have already presented and drawn upon them in the preceding chapters. For Tunis we possess just a little indicative information, unfortunately very limited. As for Tripoli, there is a register containing the dates of departure and return of the voyages undertaken by the ships from Tripoli, with indications of the vessels captured (though usually lacking information about their flags), but this document only covers the years 1805 to 1816. There remains the case of Algiers, which is by far the most interesting because of its register of prizes. With the help of Western sources—the documents concerning the affair of the Venetian-Austrian ships, for example—it is possible to attempt an assessment of the economic importance of the booty of the North African corsairs.

Corsair Booty

Composition

We saw in the previous chapter that the corsairs attacked coastal regions as well as ships. This is confirmed by the Table whilst noting an important feature, at least concerning Algiers: the major part of the value of the prizes is the result of maritime captures. For the 17-year period, the register seems quite incomplete for the years 1803 and 1816. The figures show that the corsairs undertook operations on land in only nine of those years, with meagre overall results. Only 1804 and 1805 show significant figures, but these are still well

below the proceeds from maritime captures. After all, the corsairs were sailors; and furthermore, the Algerian ships, which were usually quite large, were much better adapted to pursuit on the high seas than to approaching difficult coastlines, requiring much navigational skill and a sure knowledge of the area.

Table 2: Results of Privateering Activities for Algiers (1798–1816) (in gold francs)

Year	Corsair vessels	Total Value of Captures	Maritime Captures		Value of Land Raids	Percentage Values	
			Ships	Value		At Sea	On Land
1798	27	1,510,528	42	1,505,812	4,716	99.7	0.3
1799	15	1,583,482	31	1,573,911	9,571	99.4	0.6
1800	16	523,574	19	508,760	14,814	97.2	2.8
1801	5	340,318	4	333,853	6,465	98.1	1.9
1802	20	575,152	20	567,840	7,312	98.7	1.3
1803	17	?	?	?	?		
1804	10	272,850	9	229,663	43,187	84.2	15.8
1805	10	190,433	8	133,159	57,274	63.9	36.1
1806	15	283,439	6	283,439		100	0
1807	9	357,294	10	347,561	9,733	97.3	2.7
1808	20	297,105	10	297,105		100	0
1809	8	114,496	7	104,541	9,955	91.3	8.7
1810	11	171,347	1	171,347		100	0
1811	7	513,167	4	513,167		100	0
1812	15	2,136,675	12	2,136,675		100	0
1813	7	172,329	3	172,329		100	0
1814	9	1,954,132	17	1,954,132		100	0
1815	10	770,415	8	770,415		100	0
1816	15						

Table 3: Maritime Captures for Algiers (1798–1816)
(in gold francs)

Year	Corsairs vessels	Captured Ships	Captures per Corsair	Total Value	Average Value
1798	27	42	1.6	1,505,812	35,853
1799	15	31	2.1	1,573,911	50,771
1800	16	19	1.2	508,760	26,777
1801	5	4	0.8	333,853	83,463
1802	20	20	1	567,840	28,392
1803	17	?		?	
1804	10	9	0.9	229,663	25,518
1805	10	8	0.8	133,159	16,645
1806	15	6	0.4	283,439	41,240
1807	9	10	1.1	347,561	34,756
1808	20	10	0.5	297,105	29,710
1809	8	7	0.9	104,541	14,963
1810	11	1	0.1	171,347	171,347
1811	7	4	0.6	513,167	128,292
1812	15	12	0.8	2,136,675	178,056
1813	7	3	0.4	172,329	57,443
1814	9	17	1.9	1,954,132	114,949
1815	10	8	0.8	770,415	96,302
1816	15				

The results from privateering were very unpredictable: the number of ships captured each year was not directly linked to the number of corsair ships. There were rare good years like 1799 and 1814, in which each corsair ship captured an average of two vessels; or 1798, with three captures for two corsair ships. The average years were the most numerous, with roughly one capture per corsair, e.g. 1800, 1802, 1804, 1805, 1807, 1809, 1812 and 1815. There were the bad years like 1806 and 1808 in which, in spite of significant fleets, from fifteen to twenty ships, an average of two corsair ships was required to capture a single vessel. There was even one totally disastrous year, 1810, in which the eleven corsairs captured only a single ship! There is no apparent relationship between the number of ships operating in a given year and the number of captures. Admittedly 1798, the year with the most significant number of ships in this period, 27 corsairs, also showed the largest number of captured ships, 42, but this was an exception, and it was not repeated. In 1799, 1806 and 1815, Algiers armed the same number of corsairs, 15 ships, capturing respectively thirty-one, six and twelve vessels. In 1807 as in 1808,

the total of captures was ten, when there were respectively nine and twenty corsair ships on campaign.

Privateering booty consisted of three principal elements:

- the ships themselves, which by law were the property of the dey of Algiers, or his counterparts in Tunis and Tripoli;
- their cargoes after sale value divided equally among the owners of the ships and the corsairs;
- the slaves, acquired in raids on land as well as in maritime captures. A variable number were allocated to the heads of state of the Maghreb regencies, and the rest sold for the benefit of the shipowners and the corsairs.

The Ships

According to the prize register, the Algerians captured 211 ships between 1798 and 1815. The activity of the Tripolitans was almost totally stopped by the blockade imposed by the Americans from 1801 to 1805, whereas 81 captures were then recorded between 1806 and 1816, i.e., around a hundred for the period that concerns us, from 1798 to 1816. There remain the Tunisians, whose considerable activity we know from the frequency of their departures on campaign. Though we do not know the actual results we can nevertheless estimate that the number of ships taken by the Tunisians must have been roughly equivalent to the Algerian captures, i.e., around two hundred ships. In total, then, over a period of 18 years, we can assess at around 500 vessels the number of captures made by all of the North African corsairs. Although it is almost impossible to determine the effect this had on the ensemble of the Western merchant fleets (ships operating on the high seas and coasters inclusive), it remains a very impressive figure.

The destiny of the captured ships differed from one regency to another. In Algiers they belonged by right to the dey, who disposed of them as he saw fit: sometimes he incorporated them into the fleet, which was the case, for example, of the Portuguese frigate captured by the *raïs* Hamidou; or he might also have them dismantled in order to recover the best materials, as reported by the Dutchman Gerrit Metzon. More often, he sold them. In Tunis, the bey had rights to only a third of the ship, with the rest going to the owner, but as was often the case, especially in the nineteenth century; this worked out to be about the same thing, as the head of state was

the principal, even the only, owner involved. The situation in Tripoli was the same as in Algiers, since here too, the pasha was the only shipowner of the regency. The possession and free use of these numerous ships thus represented very significant sums for the regencies. Although the information we have concerning these sums is fragmentary, it does give us some idea of the situation.

The register of the Algerian captures barely mentions this aspect, as it deals with the proceeds of the captures that were to be divided among the beneficiaries after the dey had taken the ships. We do find references, however, to two vessels sold in Tunis with the 'proceeds' transferred to Algiers. From Tunis we have six contracts of sale for ships whose buyers and sellers we know, as well as the type of ship and the price.[1] And finally, the files concerning some Austro-Venetian ships captured by the Algerians in 1799—thirteen vessels in all—include estimates of their value as well as details about their type and tonnage. In spite of the small number of vessels involved in these documents, 21 in all, and the paucity of information contained in them, the results that can be deduced from them are of considerable interest.

We must begin with the facts in the available documents concerning the Austro-Venetian ships, which are more complete and more numerous than the other records, and can therefore be used as a basis for evaluation. There were five brigantines of from 215 to 258 tonnes, whose estimated value ranged from 36,240 to 75,600 francs,[2] three vessels that weighed from 245 to 445 tonnes, and were worth 72,000 to 97,920 francs; two *trabacolos* of 100 and 175 tonnes, worth 24,550 and 47,872 francs; a 200-tonne tartan, valued at 42,170 francs; a 100-tonne polacca worth 24,000 francs; and a 40-tonne *pieologo* valued at 16,000 francs. In passing, it is interesting to note that with the exception of the *piegolo*, a small 40-tonne coaster, and a large vessel weighing 445 tonnes, all the other ships weighed between 100 and 260 tonnes. Naturally these estimates, which were intended for eventual compensation, were higher than the real value of the ships, as they represented the replacement value, or the cost

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[1] A.N.P., A.P., 134–10.

[2] The figures were presented in Levantine piastres, worth 1.6 francs at the time. All the estimates have been converted to gold francs (highly stable at that time) for obvious ease of comparison.

of a new ship, which would doubtless not apply in most cases. The value per tonne, which was between 200 and 400 francs, is a more practical figure, and offers more possibilities for comparison.

The value of the vessels sold after capture by Algerian or Tunisian corsairs seems usually to have been much lower. The two ships seized by the Algerians and sold in Tunis brought in 4,860 and 7,290 francs; the six transactions recorded in Tunis range from 6,885 to 37,800 francs. With the exception of a single ship, the tonnages were unfortunately not indicated, but it is apparent that the total sums of the transactions concerning these eight ships were much lower than the sums estimated in Europe: three were below 10,000 francs, three were between 10,000 and 20,000 francs, and only two were above this; whereas the Austrian estimates assess one ship at between 10,000 and 20,000 francs, three at between 20,000 and 40,000 francs, four at between 40,000 and 60,000 francs, and five between 40,000 and 100,000 francs. As the ships are similar types—brigantines, polaccas and pinks—it is very likely that the tonnages were of the same order. The only vessel whose tonnage we know, an American brigantine weighing 150 tonnes, was sold for 22,680 francs, that is, 151 francs a tonne, which is clearly very expensive for the Maghreb. In this period of great corsair activity, the market for second-hand ships in the Maghreb was surely one more of supply than demand, which would have led to a significant drop in prices. An Austrian ship in Europe was worth 50,000 francs on average; a ship sold in Tunis would sell for an average of 15,000 francs, which would mean a loss of around two-thirds of the value. These are rough estimates, but, doubtless with some degree of exaggeration, they reveal a very real situation. They indicate that during this period, in spite of everything, the North African state and shipowners found in corsair activity a considerable source of profit, which we can assess at around three million francs for the Dey of Algiers, probably about the same amount for the Bey of Tunis, and at least half of this sum for the Pasha of Tripoli.

The Cargoes

Here again, only the register of the Algerian captures provides useful information, with, however, an important limitation: the reports do not distinguish the cargo from the men who had fallen into the hands of the corsairs; most of the time, the sums found in the lists cover both without distinction. These valuable figures are still use-

able, however, as the captured merchant ships usually had crews of from eight to fifteen men, even fewer for the coasters and fishing boats, so that differences in the estimated value from one capture to another are certainly related above all to their cargo.

The number of captured ships is of course a good indication of corsair activity, but it is insufficient if it is not completed by figures concerning the value of the captures. We can agree that the years 1798 and 1799, which hold the highest numbers for this period, with 42 and 31 captures, each one bringing in more than a million and a half francs of booty, present impressive results. The total value of the captures of 1812 and 1814 is even higher, around two million for a much smaller number of ships, seventeen in 1814, and only twelve in 1812. From year to year, there are significant differences in the average value of the captured ships. In 1805 as well as in 1815, the Algerian corsairs seized eight ships, but in the first case the total value was 133,159 francs, i.e., an average of 16,645 francs, and in the second, 770,415 francs, or, 96,302 francs per ship.[3] A final observation that emerges from the Table is that from 1798 to 1809, the average value of the captured ships—except in 1801—was always below 50,000 francs, whereas from 1810 on, with the exception of 1813, the average almost always exceeded 100,000 francs. The explanation for this distinct change in the results of the corsair campaigns, also for the considerable difference observed from one capture to another, is obviously found in the flags of these ships, and in the cargo they were transporting.

Of the 211 ships captured by the Algerian corsairs between 1798 and 1815, the prize register makes it possible to identify 145, two-thirds of them. This means that we know the flag, the precise contents of the cargo, and the net value of the proceeds of the capture. The documentation also enables us to know more about the corsairs' prey, and to penetrate even further into the politics behind privateering.

First of all, the value of the captures made by the Algerian corsairs was extremely variable. Between the poorest capture, a Neapolitan ship that brought in 1,126 francs, and the most valuable, a Greek

[3] These were the net profits, mainly that of the cargo after the ship had been allocated to the Prince and the state's share had been deducted.

ship that provided 339,880 francs, there is a ratio of one to 300! In addition, 70% of the captures represent only a little more than a quarter, 27%, of the total value of the captures, whereas by themselves, the 18 most valuable cargos, one-eighth of the total, constitute half the booty of the Algerian corsairs. The value of the ships captured by the Algerians in francs-*or* can be divided into four categories as follows:

- poor captures: 1,000–10,000, from 16 ships, or 11% of the total
- mediocre captures: 11,000–37,000, from 77 ships, or 53.1% of the total
- average captures: 44,000–111,000 from 33 ships, or 22.8% of the total
- valuable captures: 148,000–340,000 from 19 ships, or 13.1% of the total

Poor captures, which were disappointing to the corsairs, were in fact quite rare, 11% of the total; they were less numerous than the most valuable captures, sixteen as against nineteen. In reality, the majority were modest prizes, from ten to less than forty thousand francs.

Dividing the ships captured by the Algerians and sailing under the five most important flags into four groups according to the value of the captures, as we have done above, reveals considerable differences from one flag to another. With 59 ships out of 145 (40.7%), the Kingdom of Naples provided the greatest number of victims for the Algerians, but the value of the great majority of these captures was low: 81.3% of the poor captures, at less than ten thousand francs, were Neapolitan, as were 48.1% of the mediocre ones, at below 37,000 francs. On the other hand, the Neapolitans seldom figure among the average captures, at 21.2%, and even less often in the list of the valuable captures, with two ships, that is, 10.5% in this category. The document unfortunately gives no data concerning the type and tonnage of the captured ships, but the statement relating to their cargo, though cursory, sheds some light on the question of their value.

Three of the thirteen Neapolitan vessels that provided less than ten thousand francs worth of booty were empty; the ten others had only a single or mixed cargos of wheat, salt, wine, sardines and wood for burning. The 37 ships in the next category, from 10,000 to 37,000 francs, also carried basic foodstuffs: wheat, wine and salt, with the addition of more expensive food products such as oil and

almonds, as well as industrial raw materials, cowhide, sulphur and sponges. The average and valuable cargos, quite rare, were similar to the previous ones, which indicates that the difference in value is based above all on the size, and thus on the capacity, of the ship. In fact, the great majority of the Neapolitan ships were small boats, coasters that transported local products into the ports of the peninsula, inaccessible by land at that time, and to the islands.

The Greek ships present quite a different picture. The captures can basically be divided into two groups, those of mediocre value, at from 10,000 to 37,000 francs, which included almost half of the ships, and the ships with valuable cargo, which constituted almost a third. The cargo of the first group consisted primarily of wheat, wine, paper and soap. The second group included all of these, with the addition of raisins and rice. Also of note is the lone ship that was sailing on ballast, but carrying 202,000 francs in currency. There, too, the difference in the value of the cargoes is less the result of their composition, even though raisins were luxury goods, than of the size of the vessels. The smallest ships provided local service, in the Adriatic and the Ionian, and the second group voyaged the whole of the Mediterranean, from Anatolia or Egypt to Western Europe.

Thanks to the documents concerning indemnities and the prize registers, we can gain some idea of the Austro-Venetian ships captured by the Algerians. Of the two ships in the 10,000–37,000 franc category, one was probably the 100 tonne polacca *Due Benefattori* with eight men aboard, and commanded by Captain Luca Bersacina from Venice. In the report of his losses, the captain specified that he had been transporting soda, found in the prize register as 'soap-earth', with an estimated value of 14,927 francs. The second ship in this category is the brigantine *Ulisse* under the command of Captain Agostino Orlandini d'Udine (Friuli), with a cargo of raisins and figs entered in the register of captures at a value of 32,185 francs. The higher level, with the 44,000–84,000 franc captures, includes twelve of the fifteen ships, that is 80%, of that nationality. Since three of these were identified, we can form a good idea of these Algerian captures: the 215-tonne brigantine *Achille*, with 14 men captained by Antonio Premuda from Lusin (Dalmatia), and the 230-tonne brigantine *Quatro Fratelli* with 13 men under Captain Marc Antonio Budenich, also from Lusin, were both transporting around 3,500 quintals of a variety of acorn used in dyeing and tanning, which

yielded proceeds of 73,556 francs for each ship; the tartan *Fedele*, 230 tonnes and carrying ten men, commanded by Captain Antonio Cerignac from Kotor, was transporting a cargo of raisins, cotton and oak apples, valued in Algiers at 78,984 francs.

The breakdown for the Spanish and Portuguese ships is almost identical: there is a high proportion of smaller ships with less valuable cargos estimated at between 10,000 and 37,000 francs, consisting of alfa, wheat, charcoal, sardines and tuna, all indicators of coastal shipping, most likely in the Mediterranean, at least for Spain. Several much more valuable cargoes were made up of sugar, cotton and cocoa—exotic goods brought back from America by much larger ships that were captured in the Atlantic as they approached Cadiz or Lisbon.

Captures of ships flying other flags, especially those from the countries on the North Sea and the Baltic, or America, were few, but because these vessels were engaged in navigation over the long haul, they were usually transporting valuable cargo. This was particularly the case of the six Scandinavian ships, four Swedish and two Danish, which had in their holds cargoes worth a hundred to two hundred thousand francs consisting of coffee, sugar, cochineal (all American products) but also fabrics and timber from their own countries. The two Dutch ships, which were loaded with salt and fabrics, belong in the same categories. Of the three American ships, two also carried valuable cargos, 80,956 and 161,948 francs, consisting of flour, anise, opium, senna and tobacco.

This cursory examination of the Algerian captures has given us a picture of the maritime activity of the Mediterranean and its neighbouring oceanic waters, a whole range of vessels from large ocean-going vessels to small coasters, herring-boats and ships carrying exotic goods from Northern Europe and the Americas. All of these ships, which flew many different flags (fourteen here) unfortunately ended up in the hands of the corsairs of Algiers. After our examination of the booty, we might be tempted to characterise the prizes as shares in some vast lottery—with chance alone dictating the way the money would be distributed—to some lucky and some unlucky corsairs. In reality, things were much more organised and premeditated than they might seem, as is apparent in a chronological presentation of the captures.

The years 1798 and 1799 saw a spectacular increase in corsair activities, in this case Algerian. In spite of the number of captures

carried out by the corsairs, it is important to note that they attacked only the ships of countries with whom they considered themselves to be at war. We know that the pretext usually cited was a lack of respect for clauses, real or assumed, of a treaty made earlier with a particular state, as in the cases of Spain, Naples and the United States. The situation with Genoa was somewhat different, because the statute of the republic had changed at the time of Napoleon's Italian campaign, providing the regency with an opportunity to be released from previous agreements. This was particularly true for the ships of the former Republic of Venice, since 15 out of the 22 identified as Venetian had become Austrian, and the Algerians were failing to acknowledge this fact, in order to be able to sieze them. We may suppose, in the absence of further information, that the ships designated as 'Greek' in the register of captures in this same period probably came from the Ionian islands. This archipelago was Venetian until 1797, before passing under French control. In considering the ships to be 'Greek' and not French, just as they treated as 'Venetian' the ships that had become Austrian, the Algerians could declare them 'fair game'. In this way, 29 of 55 ships identified and captured in two years, i.e., half of them, were former Venetian vessels.

We have already noted that the regencies preferred never to be at peace with all their potential enemies at the same time, in order to keep the corsairs in fighting trim and maintain a certain pressure on the other countries. Whilst arrangements were soon made with the Austrians, the French, the Spaniards and the Americans, the Kingdom of Naples, until 1805, remained practically the only enemy of Algiers. From 1806 on, the throne of Naples was occupied first by Joseph, the Emperor Napoleon's brother, then in 1808 by Murat, his brother-in-law. The agreements that controlled the relations between France and Algiers, in particular those guaranteeing the French ships protection from the corsairs, now also applied to the Neapolitan ships, and these disappeared from the prize register until 1815. They were replaced in the following years by Portuguese, Sicilian, Tunisian, Greek and one Sardinian ship. The pursuit of Portuguese ships came to an end after the signing of a treaty in 1810 which, in addition to providing for the redemption of the Portuguese captives, stipulated the payment of substantial compensation. Although Piedmont and Naples were considered French from this period on, their insular provinces, on the other hand—Sardinia

and especially Sicily—remained free under British protection, and were considered by the corsairs to be hostile territories, and therefore, their ships were pursued.

There remains the case of the Tunisians and the Greeks. This time, the ships involved belonged to subjects of the Sultan, and originated in the nearby ports of Tunisia, the Cyclades Islands or Anatolia—Ottoman provinces just like Algiers! This was a deliberate decision of the Dey of Algiers, Hadj Ali (1809–1815), who throughout his reign, ordered the corsairs to attack not only Ottoman ships, but also Atlantic and North European, American, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, even English and Moroccan vessels. We know that these were usually captures of considerable value, irresistible to the greed of the corsairs—in a period when circumstances had become unfavourable to them—in spite of peace treaties and protests from the Sultan, revealed in the firman of Mahmoud II addressed to the Dey of Algiers, Omar Pasha, dated the first days of the month of Ramadan 1230 (7–15 August 1815):

> The corsairs of the Regency of Algiers capture merchant ships belonging either to the subjects of the Sublime-Porte or to the nations that are at peace with it; they reduce their captains and their sailors to slavery and seize their cargoes. The Sublime-Porte, however, is responsible for these ships; they possess the appropriate safe-conduct passes, and the Sublime-Porte is at peace with them. The governments of Europe are constantly lodging complaints against you and exposing the fact that you are capturing their ships. This warning is for the purpose of causing you to cease these aggressions and to abandon this blameworthy course. Remember how I defended you in allowing you to recruit soldiers in Smyrna, and listening to the views of your agents throughout the Empire. I sent you firmans on the subject; furthermore, I recently sent you a *kopdgi bashi* (an ambassador) named Mahomed to represent me in these matters. But during his trip, the Dey of Algiers, El Hadj Ali, died [He was assassinated on 22 March 1815]. This *kopdgi bashi* went to Algiers in order to deliver written orders and oversee their execution. You above all, you Prince of Princes, and all of you, captains and heads of the regency, submit yourselves to God and his Prophet, and obey the orders of the Prince of believers, the Representative of God on the earth. May my firman be carried out, and may my orders no longer be disobeyed. This is my will.[4]

[4] DEVOULX, *Le Raïs Hamidou*, 1859, pp. 77–79.

Revived by a dey impoverished by frequent rebellions in the interior of the country, the corsair activities were intended to furnish the resources necessary to suppress them, at the proven risk of stirring up the animosity of the European states—that had been reunited at the time of the Congress of Vienna—and also that of the Sultan, whose authority had been spurned, in spite of his threats concerning the recruitment of janissaries. The results speak volumes: in 18 years, from 1798 to 1815, the proceeds of the maritime captures were 8,558,013 francs, of which 5,546,718 francs, i.e. 64.8% of the total, were brought in in five years, from 1811 to 1815.

Although unfortunately we possess no information on the results of Tunisian corsair activities, the statements concerning the movement of ships from Tripoli, which are available for the years 1806 to 1816, provide some significant insights. In eleven years, the corsairs of Tripoli captured 81 ships; of these, we know the flags of only 48, chiefly from the last years. Thus, for the year 1814 to 1815, we arrive at the following breakdown of the 37 ships identified out of the 43 captured:

The Number and Origin of the Ships	%	The Number and Origin of the Ships	%
3 Austrian	8.1%	5 Danish	13.5%
1 French	2.7%	5 Genoese	13.5%
1 Hamburg	2.7%	20 Neapolitan	48.5%
2 Sardinian	5.4%	2 Tuscan	5.4%

The geographical situation of Tripoli explains why four-fifths of the captures were Italian; among these, the ships of the Two Sicilies were preponderant, with almost half of the total of captures. There were also Danish ships and a ship from Hamburg, which, because of their Northern origins, recall the victims of the Algerians. In the same way, the 81 ships captured by the Tripolitans in the very period when the Algerians seized 86 shows that the activity of the two corsair cities was comparable.

The Captives

Much has been written about the slaves of the Barbary corsairs, and apart from paraphrasing the authors who have preceded us, we do

not see what we could usefully add here.[5] Our primary purpose is to examine the demographic and economic aspects of slavery underlying the mechanisms of capture and liberation, the two complementary faces of slavery. What is striking when one attempts to discern the characteristic features of the practice is the constant activity it involves: new slaves are constantly arriving, others are freed, still others die. This is illustrated in the Tunisian statistics listing the fate of the slaves in the penal colony of Hammuda Bey who were captured in the first years of his reign.[6]

Ransomed	92
Set free	2
Traded	2
Renegades	2
Sent as gifts to the West	2
Died in slavery	28

Of the 128 captives, 96, that is, three quarters of them, found freedom, most of them by ransom; almost all the others died in captivity, usually from illness. We know that because the purpose of their capture was obtaining ransom—torture and various forms of abuse were almost non-existent. The few facts that we have tried to assemble here, when they are reliable and complete, which is rare, can only provide a rough idea of the situation. The restoration of corsair activities at the end of the eighteenth century is shown in the increase in the total number of slaves, as can be seen in the case of Algiers:[7]

Year	Number of Slaves	Year	Number of Slaves
1795	630	1813	1,645
1799	1,050	1815	1,487
1802	937	1816	1,065
1811	1,494		

The figures related to the slaves in Tunisia are less precise: there were apparently almost a thousand slaves in 1806, 1,600 in January 1810, and 1,200 in March 1811. What is certain is that Lord Exmouth, in the spring of 1816, obtained the freedom of almost all the slaves

[5] The two works by Bono, *I Corsari barbareschi* and *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, present a thorough treatment of this question, and include a substantial bibliography.
[6] Valensi, "*Esclaves à Tunis*", 1966.
[7] *Tachrifat*, p. 87.

held by the regencies, i.e., 1,606 in Algiers, 900 in Tunis and 580 in Tripoli. In addition to these overall figures, we have some information on the breakdown by nationality of the slaves, whose geographical origin and relative numbers reflect the corsairs' choice of victims. The most precise details again come from Algiers. In 1795, the most numerous were the Spaniards, with 217 captives, constituting 34.4% of the total; there were still 193 of them in 1799, but only 33 in 1802, and they disappeared altogether after this date; and yet there had been 886 in 1787, the high figure being due to the war between Spain and Algiers during the previous years. Once peace was signed in 1792, the Spaniards were progressively ransomed and able to return to their country.

With some discrepancies related to the variable speed of diplomatic moves and the economic possibilities of the states concerned, this rough summary applies to the other nationalities that were victims of the corsairs. The war with Portugal soon resulted in an increase in the number of Portuguese among the captives. There were 40 in 1795, then 95 in 1799; the celebrated victory of *raïs* Hamidou over a Portuguese frigate in 1802 brought the figure to 366 that year; in 1811, right after the signing of the peace treaty, there were still 360 Portuguese slaves, and all were subsequently freed, as none were left in 1813. The same situation existed in relation to the Greeks: there were only 11 Greek slaves in 1795, but 372 in 1799, probably Ionians, who were former Venetian subjects, after which time the number dropped to 8 in 1802. They reappeared ten years later, although this time they were Ottoman Greeks, who, like the Algerians, were subjects of the Sultan; they numbered 116 in 1811, then 372 in 1813; the Sultan's firman of August 1815 was obviously effective, as there were only 30 at the end of that year. During these years there were still from 150 to 200 citizens of the Papal State, the same number of Spaniards from Melilla, 33 Sardinians, 24 Americans, 26 Austrians, 26 'Flemish' (who were in fact Dutch, including Gerrit Metzon and his sailors), a diversity that reflects the renewal of corsair activities in those years.

The case of the Neapolitans is more tragic: there were none in 1795 and 1799, but they appear in 1802, with 365 captives, a figure that rose to 634 in 1811, and remained around this level at 625 in 1813 and 693 in 1815. The situation was the same in the other regencies, where the subjects of the king of the Two Sicilies constituted the largest contingents of slaves: 400 Neapolitans in Tunis, 422

Neapolitans and Sicilians in Tripoli; because their sovereign had refused to take any diplomatic initiatives, or to make the slightest financial effort to free his nationals. The majority of these slaves were land-dwellers carried off as entire families: out of a group of 155 Sicilians freed in 1804, the adults, between 20 and 50 years of age, represented only 60% of the group—as against 90 to 95% when the captives were sailors—whilst the remaining 40% was made up of the youngest and the oldest, including many women.[8] It would take the expedition of Lord Exmouth in 1816 to bring about the repatriation of some 1,500 Neapolitan and Sicilian captives from the Maghreb, out of a total of around 3,000 people.

Many of the captives, especially those belonging to the bey or the dey, housed in penal colonies, were often compelled to do extremely hard work, sometimes in the countryside, but most often in the arsenal, the workshops or on the building sites of the state,[9] whereas individual slave-owners reserved a less painful fate for their slaves. In the Maghreb, however, the aim of slavery was not to acquire cheap labour, even if this was the case in the short term, but to receive ransom in exchange for the release of the captives. Whether seized on land or at sea, the captives' destiny, once on land, followed the rules outlined by Venture de Paradis en 1788.[10]

> The bey [in Tunis] takes one man out of eight from the crew as customs duty. The captain always belongs to him, even when there are only four men in the vessel. He also appropriates all the slaves, paying three hundred piastres a head for them.
>
> The dey [in Algiers] . . . takes the captain, the pilot, the purser and the carpenter. The slaves are then sold at auction, and all proceeds above sixty Algerian sequins go to the *khrasne* [State Treasury]. Turk, Moor and Jew are all permitted to make bids. If there are fewer than 8 slaves, the beylik always takes the captain for customs duty; if there are 11, he takes two people, the captain and the purser, and one out of ten above 20.

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[8] Bono, *Siciliani nel Maghreb*, 1989, p. 31.

[9] *Tachrifat*, p. 79. "The Hadj Ali Pasha ordered his minister Omar Agha to build a bridge on the Oued Chelif. This work was entrusted to workmen and unskilled labourers, took more than three hundred Muslims and one hundred and sixty-seven infidel slaves of the Greek nation. Work on this bridge lasted two months, day and night, and was completed on 30 *redjeb* 1229 [18 July 1814]."

[10] Venture de Paradis, *op. cit.*, 1983, p. 61.

The two systems that were in use in Algiers and Tunis have points in common. By virtue of their positions, the dey and the bey controlled the slave market; most prestigious because it provided concrete proof of the victory of Islam over its enemies and most significant economically, but also the market most affecting international relations. It had been decided that they should take the captain first, and the officers of the captured ship as well, in addition to one man out of eight. On the other hand, there was a different system for other slaves: the bey bought all the slaves, or rather, those that interested him, at the fixed average price of 300 Tunisian piastres, or 420 francs. As for the dey, he put the slaves up for sale, but by taking out for the Treasury, at the seller's expense, anything above 60 Algerian *sequins*, or around 380 francs, he partially discouraged possible higher bidding, and was thus able to buy the slaves at a price that was probably quite close to what the bey was paying. In Algiers, and increasingly in Tunis, the dey and the bey were also the owners of the corsair ships, which, gave them the right to obtain a large portion of the slaves directly.

We have seen that the prize register for Algiers distinguished between maritime and land captures, whilst indicating the total sum of the proceeds of the capture. Although it is impossible to distinguish between, and thus to evaluate, the worth of the men from that of the ship's cargo, and no easier to separate the slaves from the booty taken in a land raid, we can advance the theory that the principal value of the booty from land raids lay in the captives. On that basis it is possible to estimate the average value of the slaves in each raid:

1798: 637 francs	1803: 664 francs
1799: 758 "	1805: 734 "
1800: 823 "	1807: 973 "
1801: 718 "	1809: 553 "
1802: 665 "	

The sale price of a slave in Algiers was between 553 and 973 francs, or an average of 725 francs, figures that are confirmed by those rare annotations in the register concerning the proceeds of a capture that distinguish between the value of the crew, specifying its numbers, and that of the cargo: 722 francs for the members of the crew of the Portuguese frigate captured by the *Raïs* Hamidou in 1802, 531.5 francs for the sailors from a Sicilian ship in 1814. Now we must

determine the total of the ransom monies demanded and obtained through bargaining by the slave owners in return for releasing the slaves.

First of all, there was that exceptional situation, the good fortune all corsairs longed for; the capture of an extremely important person, which could bring them a fortune. On 26 July 1797, a Tunisian corsair galliot captured a Greek merchant ship on its way from Palermo to Naples. One of the passangers turned out to be a highly important person, Giovan Luigi Moncada, Prince of Paterno, Duke of San Giovanni, Count of Caltanissetta and elsewhere. Transported to Tunis and housed not in the penal colony but in the house of a French merchant, the Prince became the stakes in an intense diplomatico-economic discussion between the Neapolitan State and the Regency of Tunis. The initial ransom demanded, 600,000 Spanish piastres (3,240,000 francs) was reduced by half, and the agreement was concluded in the following terms: 60,000 piastres (324,000 francs) to be paid immediately, which would allow the Prince to leave Tunis on 17 December 1797 for Malta, from which point he could return to Sicily. The remaining 240,000 piastres, which were to be in instalments, fractions of the total sum, were never paid. This led to tension between the two states, and, most astonishing, to a trial before the High Commercial Court of the kingdom. The Court ruled in favour of the Bey of Tunis against the Prince—who appealed against the decision. When Hammuda Pasha died, the affair was still dragging on, and, in 1823, his successor planned to take it up again![11]

The social rank and position held, the amount of the suspected fortune, the sex and age of the captive, all went into the determination of the sum of the ransom demanded. An individual transaction usually made rapid release possible, but was more costly, and obviously applied only to wealthy captives. If we look at the situation of the Sicilian captives in Tunis alone, four middle-class people paid around 8,200 francs each to obtain their freedom in 1802; while priests were considered to be worth 7,500 francs each. On the other hand, in 1812, the 394 Sicilians still present in Tunisia were set free collectively for 315 Spanish piastres, or 1700 francs, per head.[12] In this period, the release of groups of captives was frequent,

[11] Bono, *Siciliani nel Maghreb*, pp. 95–103.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 30–34.

appealing to public opinion and bringing diplomacy into play, which necessarily implied the cooperation of the states. Government intervention was undertaken at the expense of the former specialised charitable institutions, especially the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians, who disappeared from the territories under French rule, as did many religious orders. The treaty that brought an end to the war between the United States and the Regency of Tripoli provided for the exchange of one hundred Tripolitan prisoners for as many Americans, and a payment of 60,000 dollars for the two hundred others, or 300 dollars (1,500 francs) per person.[13] In April 1816, Admiral Exmouth demanded and obtained the liberation of the 422 Neapolitan captives in Tripoli for the lump sum of 50,000 Spanish piastres, or 640 francs a person, which is rather little, but at this point the Pasha of Tripoli was in no position to haggle.[14]

The most tragic, and most famous, example of a collective raid is the case of the inhabitants of Carloforte, who were deported to Tunis on 2 September 1798. Once the facts were known, individuals like the ruler of the island, as well as the Sardinian authorities, including the King of Piedmont, mobilised themselves in an attempt to bring about the release of the Carlofortans. The bey himself, who had apparently disapproved of this corsair expedition, helped in this effort by allowing the captives to remain together, and by barring their sale to the Algerians or to private individuals. Discussions began early in 1799: Tunis initially demanded 300 *sequins* per person, i.e. 2,475 Tunisian piastres, or 3,465 francs a person, plus 10% for the *sâhib at-tabâa* and various other Tunisian dignitaries but finally, in June, the *sum of one thousand piastres* (1,400 francs) was agreed upon; plus 10% for the Tunisian dignitaries. Unfortunately, the war began to preoccupy Piedmont, and the Carlofortans appear to have been forgotten. The restoration of peace in Europe in 1801 brought the problem to the fore again: Czar Alexander I appealed to the Sultan who in August 1802 sent a firman to the bey ordering him to set the captives free—to little effect. It was the intervention of Napoleon in 1802 that proved decisive. After an exchange of 22 Tunisian captives in Cagliari for the same number of Sardinians, the rest were

[13] Anderson, *Naval Wars*..., 1952, p. 425.
[14] Rossi, *Storia di Tripoli*..., 1968, p. 273.

freed in exchange for a payment of 95,000 Spanish piastres for the 630 captives who were still present in Tunis, i.e. 810 francs a person. On 20 June 1803, the last of the Carlofortans finally reached home and were reunited with those who had been freed earlier, a total of 775 people. During the five year period; 11 were sold to the Algerians on arrival, 23 had been freed earlier, 6 converted to Islam, 117 died in Tunisia, and 95 births were recorded.

The captives who were victims of the Maghrebi corsairs in this period can be divided into three groups:

- the rich; freed relatively quickly, for a high, even very high, ransom individually-negotiated by private persons, family members, or institutions: these captives were a real source of wealth for their owners, who were usually the heads of the regencies.
- the poor; sailors, fishermen, peasants, who most often gained their freedom after long years spent in penal colonies, and who benefitted from a collective release obtained by their governments by means of the payment of a lumpsum. The price paid per person was usually rather low, from 600 to 1,700 francs a person, against a purchase price of between 500 and 1,000 francs.
- slaves freed without the payment of a ransom after an exchange with North African captives, or to honour earlier diplomatic agreements, or at the end of a lost war. The hundred American sailors set free in 1805 in Tripoli were examples of the first situation; the crews of the Austro-Venetian ships captured in 1799 were set free without payment of ransom in the weeks and months following their capture; after the terrible bombardment to which Lord Exmouth subjected Algiers in 1816, 1,606 captive slaves were also freed without ransom.

Although most of the slaves were employed in often unpleasant tasks thereby providing for their own needs, a number of them, in particular some of those who had lived on the land, were too weak—or unable—to work, and were therefore dependent on their masters. Furthermore, deaths were fairly frequent among the slaves: fifteen percent of the Carlofortans died in Tunis in under five years. The corsairs' problems increased with the free release of some slaves, the mediocre sums paid for the ransoms, and the considerable investment necessitated by the campaigns; raising the question

as to profitability of slavery in the Maghreb in the beginning of the nineteenth century—a question we really do not have the answer to.

We should not forget that the changes that were taking place in the Maghrebi navies of the period did away with the need for rowers on the corsair ships. In any case, to reduce slavery in the Maghreb just to its economic dimension would be a misunderstanding, as it was much more than that. It provided tangible proof of the regencies' victorious struggles against the Infidels, thereby providing a justification for their existence and the maintenance of their social structures. Privateering was a source of potential enrichment for those who participated in it directly. What share the corsairs came away with after they had brought their captures into a safe port is not so clear.

Dividing the Booty

The Principles of Distribution

To produce a complete accounting report on corsair captures and calculate the profits to be shared out, it is necessary to analyse the total investment, the purchase and depreciation of the ships and their armaments, the provision of supplies, pay for the crews, etc.,—an almost impossible task. The few useful facts on the subject in the preceding chapters are too rare, scattered and vague to allow us to venture such an evaluation. The only specific information concerning booty that we have concerns the spoils taken by the corsairs of Algiers, described in the prize register as we have already seen. Before making use of this information, it is important to remember that the division of booty was carried out according to precise regulations, which differed from regency to regency.

In Tunis, the rules for the distribution of booty were as follows:

• The State: 12%, 10% of which was for the pasha, 1% for the maintenance of the port, 1% for the marabouts;

• The shipowners: 35–40% (in agreement with the captain, since together they received half of the booty);

• The sailors: 33%, including 10–15% for the captain, 8% for the second in command, 3% for the pilot, 3% for the master sailmaker, 3% for the surgeon, 2% for the carpenter, 2% for the caulker, 2% for those sailors who were slaves;

• The janissaries: 15%, including 3% for the head janissary, 3% for the lieutenant, 3% for the soldiers, 3% for the chief gunner and 3% for the gunners.

As explained above, the bey, in addition to his tenth of the booty, also had rights to one third of the value of the captured ship, and could buy the slaves, who were part of the booty, for 300 piastres a head. The shipowner received two-thirds of the value of the ship and from 35 to 40% of the booty. The captain was given from 10 to 15% of the booty, and the heads of the navy received a share in proportion to their rank, a distribution that was also made to the soldiers and artillerymen on board. The sailors were not included in the distribution, they had the right simply to pillage the personal effects of the passengers and crew, a privilege that was called *cara porta.*[15]

The regulations in force in Algiers were very different. As we have already indicated, the dey received the whole of the captured ship, and in addition, any surplus from the sale of the slaves. The best way to demonstrate the Algerian system is to present one of the detailed balance sheets from the prize register:[16]

> [No. 317] The frigate of El Hadj Yakoub, the *raïs* Ahmeds' polacca, the *batache* (corvette) of Kara Danguezli, the *raïs* Hamidou's corvette, Hadj Sliman's xebeck, the *raïs* Na'man's xebeck and the *raïs* Mustapha's xebeck captured eight Greek ships loaded with wheat, paper, soap and eau de vie.
>
> Deductions and distribution, 4 *redjeb* 1213 [12 December 1798].

Banjek	57,865
Eight capture crews	603
Unloading	1,000
Divan	84
Ourdian (keeper)	27
Frigate	43
Money changers	1,620
Muslim tchaouch	288
Jewish tchaouch	144
Sentries	18

[15] Venture de Paradis, *op. cit.*, 1983, p. 70.
[16] Devoulx, *Registre des prises*, 1872, pp. 66–67.

Storehouse for booty	21
Weigher	150
Port duties	4,000
	65,864
Net proceeds	397,062
Half of proceeds:	198,531
Number of shares:	3,879
Value per share:	51 *rials*
(Gross earnings):	520,791.75 francs

These figures cover eight captures made by seven corsair ships, the assessment and the sale being carried out at the same time. The gross evaluation was 462,926 *riyal draham sirar*, known as *pataques-chiques* among the Europeans, and worth 1,125 francs-*or* at the time. The balance sheet has two accountancy items:

• A list of the various deductions: the State received a *banjek*, which was theoretically one fifth of the gross value, but this was usually reduced, as here, to one-eighth, to which the port duties were added. There was the remuneration for each of the two *tchaouches* of the *banjek*, a Muslim and a Jew, who were responsible for levying this tax. (The Jew received half as much as the Muslim.) To these large sums were added various bonuses for members of the crew who had played a part in the capture: a bonus for boarding granted to the first man who had set foot on the ship, and one for the lookout who had spotted and reported it; members of the *divan*, or group of officers, who in this case served as the docking committee, responsible for drawning up the ship's inventory. Next came costs related to the sale of the captured vessel: the charges for unloading, the fee for the keeper protecting the booty on land (*ourdian*) and for the ship (frigate) protecting it at sea; the storage area for the booty (*boutique*), and finally, the fees for the person who weighed the merchandise and the money changer who had handled the foreign currencies found on board;

• The distribution of the net proceeds that had been thus determined. After all the deductions had been subtracted from the gross proceeds, i.e. 17.2%, the remaining sum was divided into two equal parts. The first half went to the shipowner and the second was distributed among all the members of the crew according to the system of shares. Each category of personnel on board received a sum

based on the specific number of shares allotted to him: sailors received three shares, as did the purser, the pilot, the aga of the janissaries and the chief gunner, the janissaries themselves were only given one and a half shares. The *raïs* had a much higher number of shares, which varied according to the size of his ship, as the document specifies elsewhere. The captains of the corvettes and frigates received from 32 to 45 shares; the xebeck captains were given from 25 to 28 shares, except for two small groups that received only 8 shares; the captains of the brigs and polaccas were given from 20 to 25 shares, and schooner captains from 16 to 18 shares.[17]

The Corsairs' Share

Naturally the value of a share was dependent on two factors: the number of beneficiaries and the value of the captures, which varied considerably, from less than 1,500 francs to over 300,000 francs. The number of beneficiaries is directly related to the size of the crew of the ship that had brought off the capture, and in particular, to the number of corsairs participating in the operation. The result for the beneficiaries could vary greatly from one capture to another, with the value of a share going from one-eighth of a pataque-chique, or 14 centimes, to 419⅜ pataque-chiques, or 472 francs. Out of the 264 corsair ships that figured in the prize register, we know the value of the booty of 252 of them, along with the number of participants in the different captures, as well as the number of shares they represented and the value of the shares.

The vast majority of the shares were not worth a great deal. We know that the pay of a sailor was nine pataques a month, or 108 a year, and that he was a legal claimant for three shares of the captures. At that rate, it was only when a share was worth more than

[17] By way of comparison, the following was the system of distribution, established by the Order of 2 *prairial*, year IX, for the French corsairs in the same period: before any distribution was made, 13 to 15% of the proceeds were deducted for various reasons, including 6% for customs duties. Two-thirds of the rest went to the shipowners. But these in principle did not receive their money until the general settlement of the campaign was completed, whereas the crew received the third part that was their due after each sale of a capture, which was described as the partial liquidation of the capture. The schedule of payments was as follows: twelve shares to the captain, ten to the vice-captain, six to eight to the officers, two to four to the petty officers, one and a half to the sailors, and one half to the ship's apprentices." Boyer, "*Alger et les corsaires français*", 1990.

40 pataques that those who had participated in a capture received a sum that exceeded a year's pay, i.e. barely 20% of them. The proportion of small and medium shares, from 10 to 40 pataques, was much higher, 42.8% of the total, and many had to be satisfied with still less, because in 37.3% of the cases, a share was worth less than 10 pataques, and of these, 35 were worth less than two. We are therefore obliged to recognize that in the majority of cases, the results were surely not equal to the participants' hopes!

Four-fifths of the captures made were the result of combined operations involving at least two corsairs ships, which had a direct effect on the total of the sums distributed to the crews. The smallest shares were overwhelmingly the result of captures carried out in partnership, 87 cases out of 94 (92.6%), and captures worth very little. In 1805, nine corsairs carried off a raid on an unspecified coast, which yielded gross proceeds of 18,900 pataques. Once the deductions had been made and the owner's shares subtracted, 8,416 pataques remained, to be divided into 4,809 shares, at 1¾ pataques a share! Of course there could be more significant gains, but as we have seen, these were rare. In 1814, eight corsairs scoured the Atlantic between Portugal and Morocco, capturing four Swedish, two Danish and two Dutch ships, the sales of which yielded 89½ pataques a share.

Of course solitary vessels also experienced disappointments; like Hamidou's frigate, which captured a small Neapolitan ship in 1804 that yielded one-eighth of a pateque per share. Then, there were those that captured nothing, or worse, were themselves captured, or shipwrecked. Only ships acting alone obtained spectacular results: in 1799, Hadj Sliman captured a Venetian ship loaded with wool, with a total value of 203,460 pataques, which guaranteeed the crew shares worth 309 pataques; in 1807, Salah, by capturing a Portuguese vessel that had probably come from Brazil, did even better, with shares worth 355 pataques. But the record was set by Hamdan, with shares worth 419⅜ pataques apiece, thanks to his capture of two ships, one Spanish and one Sicilian, providing his sailors with earnings equal to almost twelve years pay.

The attraction of the corsair life for the sailors and the janissaries on board can be confirmed by the probate inventories drawn up after their deaths.[18] For the years 1799 to 1803, with all grades taken

[18] Only one register covering this short period was preserved. SHUVAL, "*La ville d'Alger au XVIIIe siècle...*", 1994, pp. 136–137.

together, the sailors left personal legacies estimated, on average, at 873 riyâls or pataques-chiques, as compared to 203 for the janissaries who had served on the ships. This considerable difference resulted in part from a disparity in their rights to the booty, three shares for the sailors as against one and a half for the soldiers, and also from the short length of time the soldiers served on board, usually beginners, compared to the obviously much longer service of the sailors. But for the janissaries, the corsair campaigns, even limited, were profitable. The goods they left after their deaths were worth twice as much as those left by their colleagues whose service had only been on land: 203 riyâls as against 104.

In any case, these figures, which certainly give us a general picture of the situation, are only average statistics, and thus impersonal. Since no *raïs* died during a campaign in the years 1799 to 1803, we have no information about what sort of legacy they left behind in this period. However it is possible to calculate approximately what their corsair life might have earned them officially.[19] As examples, we will present the earnings of several *raïs* whose careers that were sufficiently active and varied to demonstrate this essential aspect of their profession.

Kara Danguezli, who commanded a corvette in 1798, appears on six different occasions in that year in the register of captures. His earnings varied greatly from one capture to another, with four captures netting below 60 *riyâls draham sirar*, (pataques-chiques), while two exceeded one thousand riyâls, all of which brought him a total of 3,648 riyâls for that year (4,104 francs-*or*). The following year, he appeared on two occasions in the register, for a total of 622 riyâls, after which he disappeared altogether, with no indication of why. The case of Hadj Sliman is similar: in 1798–1799, he commanded a xebeck, then moved to a frigate in 1800–1801; during his short career, he participated in eight captures, which provided him with earnings of 6,652 riyâls, and then he, too, appears to have given up the pursuit of this activity.[20] The example of Na'man is different.

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[19] The reports seldom indicate the exact number of shares the *rais* received, but since the type of ship they commanded is almost always listed, we can reconstruct the figure with relative accuracy. In any case, what we are hoping to give here is merely a general idea of the amounts, as close to reality as possible.

[20] Neither he nor Kara Danguezli died during their campaigns, as they do not figure in the death inventories.

From 1798 to 1800, he participated in nine captures, five of them in 1798, with very irregular proceeds, from three to 1,832 riyâls, that is, 5,518 riyâls in three years. He was less lucky in the following years, because, although he is certainly present in the register of passports delivered to active corsairs until 1803, he no longer figures in the register of captures! Perhaps this put him off the profession for a while, as he disappears for ten years, reappearing in 1812 and persevering until 1815. In those four years, either alone or in partnerships, he made four captures, earning 3,145 riyâls.

Alongside these part-time or outshone *raïs*, we find corsair captains who figure in the register of captures almost every year, indicating ongoing professional activity, efficiency and good luck; for them it is quite easy to trace their careers. Commander first of a xebeck, from 1802 to 1808, then of a frigate, from 1809 to 1915, Ali Tatar appears nine times in the register of captures. Although the first part of his career was rather lean from the financial point of view, the second was much more profitable: in seven years, from 1809 to 1815, he collected almost 11,000 riyâls in earnings out of a total of 13,400 in 14 years, 4,900 of these in the single year 1815. Ahmed el-Haddad, like most of the Algerian *raïs*, also appears for the first time in the register of captures in 1798. At that time he was commanding a xebeck, which he abandoned soon afterwards for a polacca that he kept for several years. He returned to a xebeck in 1808–1809, and obtained the command of a 34-cannon corvette in 1812, which he kept until 1815. In eighteen years, he participated in twelve victorious campaigns, five times on his own, and seven in partnerships with other corsairs. According to the register, his best years were 1807 when he made 4,835 riyâls, 1808 with 3,510 riyâls, and 1812 with 3,800. In eighteen years, his shares in the captures earned him almost 14,500 riyâls, an average of 850 a year.

But the most prestigious career,[21] and the most profitable, was Hamidou's. His early fame soon earned him the position of commander of large ships assuring him a high number of shares from captures: a corvette in 1798, followed by a large polacca, and finally,

[21] This prestige continues to the present day: the three missile-launchers of the Algerian navy bear the names of famous Algerian captains; *Salah Raïs* and *Ali Raïs*, sixteenth-century corsairs, and *Hamidou Raïs*.

from 1802 until his death, a frigate. He was very active, and participated almost every year in many corsair campaigns, with results that speak volumes:

1798:	6 captures, netting him	3,405	*riyâls*
1799:	2 " "	1,572	"
1800:	2 " "	2,081	"
1801:			
1802:	2 " "	5,275	"
1803:	1 " "	60	"
1804:	2 " "	1,337	"
1805:	2 " "	952	"
1806:	1 " "	5,044	"
1807:	3 " "	721	"
1808:	2 " "	1,463	"
1809:[22]			
1810:	1 " "	3,872	"
1811:	2 " "	3,916	"
1812:	2 " "	4,917	"
1813:			
1814:	2 " "	5,363	"
1815:	1		

The career of the *raïs* Hamidou was pretty consistently successful, with fifteen positive years out of eighteen! Apart from 1798, an exceptional year for many corsairs, which provided him with six captures, the following years usually produced two, with, of course, very uneven proceeds. In 1803, the lone captured ship earned him only 160 riyâls, whereas he netted 5,044 riyâls from another one, captured in 1806. In total, over eighteen years, the *raïs* Hamidou captured, either by himself or in the company of other corsairs, 31 ships, which, when the shares were distributed, provided him with nearly 41,000 riyâls, around 2,400 a year. Although it is impossible to evaluate today the real value of his fortune, it is certain that he had one, the superb villa, the Jenan Ali Raïs, he owned near the city on the road to Sidi Ferruch bears witness to that.[23]

[22] Exiled to Beirut in 1809 after a disagreement with the dey.

[23] This residence was also known as the Villa of the Arcades, after the private aqueduct that supplied its garden with water, or the Villa of the Treaty of the capitulation of Algiers, as it was here that the treaty was signed on 3 July 1830. With its inner patio and its two storeys of colonnades, "it was an urban residence literally transplanted to the countryside, with several adaptations." GOLVIN, *Palais et demeures d'Alger*, 1988, pp. 120–123.

These few facts about the *raïs* show that at least some of them became rich as the result of their corsair activities. In the absence of information on the incomes for Algiers the only points of comparison we have are the inventories drawn up after their deaths. The statistical bases are more complete for the army, with at least several dozen inventories for each grade, as opposed to only five to seventeen for the civil professions. Nevertheless, even if merely indicative, the information available has proved to be very instructive. With the exception of the *agas* of the janissaries, who (in a purely honorary manner) were at the top of the hiearchy of the *odjak*, the other army officers left less on average than the *raïs*, with 305 to 325 riyâls, compared to 520. This economic superiority of the marine over land-forces is confirmed by the legacies of simple janissaries. The average left by soldiers who had served aboard ship, 167 riyâls, was almost twice that of those who served on land, which only reached 86 riyâls. In passing, it is worth noting that the respective estates reflect the hierarchy of the grades: working up from the simple soldiers, shipboard or otherwise, then the corps of land officers, the officers at sea, to the *agas* at the top. A comparison with urban civil society gives an idea, at least as concerns wealth, of the place of the military in Algiers society.

By far the largest fortunes were those of two categories of merchants, first the silk merchants with an average of 6,916 riyâls and then the pipe merchants with 4,459 riyâls. Next came the spice merchants and tailors, but with an average worth of only a third or a quarter of the first group, 1,873 and 1,613 riyâls respectively. There was a significant gap between these and the third group, whose members left an inheritance of between 516 and 685 riyâls, and included brokers and tobacco and fruit merchants. With the exception of the tailors, all of these legacies, whether large or small, were those of merchants. The estates left by craftsmen and service providers were on a lower level. There were those of the barbers, café owners and tanners, between 426 and 469 riyâls, then the still more modest ones of the cobblers, weavers, gunsmiths, blacksmiths and masons, between 181 and 246 riyâls. The poorest were the fishmongers, who on average left to their heirs the equivalent of only 77 riyâls.

Estates left by members of the military correspond to different levels of this very wide range (from one to ninety) from fishmonger to silk merchant. The janissaries in the infantry were close to the fishmongers, while their opposite-numbers serving aboard corsair

ships were on a par with the weavers and cobblers. The officers of the *odjak* figured better, between the masons and the tanners. As for the *raïs*, their wealth was comparable with that of tobacco and fruit merchants, who were outstripped by the *agas*. By and large, all these military figures remained at a considerable remove from the fortunes of the great merchants. Only the estates of Ali Tatar, Ahmed el-Haddad, and of course Hamidou, could rival and perhaps equal, or even exceed, those of the merchants and manufacturers of silk, the symbol of luxury and wealth.

The State's Share

The campaigns undoubtedly enriched the corsairs, at least the luckiest and boldest among them, but they also brought monetary gain to the state. Attempting to assess the benefits gleaned by the state from the activities of the corsairs is a risky and a disappointing exercise. With the present state of research there is no utilisable information concerning Tripoli, and for the two other regencies, we possess only unreliable and incomplete data that must be used with caution. We know the total of the resources of the beys in Tunis for the years 1214 and 1215 of the Hegira (1800–1802); an annual average of 1,420,800 piastres, to which were added the revenues from the corsair campaigns, 264,268 piastres, or a total of 1,685,068 piastres.[24] In those years corsair earnings provided 15.7% of the beylik's resources, at a time when we know that the corsair activities in Tunisia were considerable. It is important to remember, however, that although the bey received ten percent of the value of all the captures, he only received the shipowner's share for twenty percent of the corsair vessels that he armed and fitted out. The significant decline in corsair activities in the following years led of course to a decline in his earnings.

In the case of Algiers, for the years 1786 to 1788, the resources of the deylik, not including corsair earnings and payments from the European states, apparently came to around two and a half million francs-*or* a year,[25] although we cannot confirm the accuracy of these figures, used here only to give a general idea of the amounts. Thanks

[24] Cherif "*L'Etat tunisien et les campagnes* . . .", 1973.
[25] Venture de Paradis, *op. cit*, 1983, pp. 242–247.

to the prize register, we know the annual total of the resources that accrued to the dey through the activities of the corsairs. We know what was set aside for the dey: 10% banjek dues, and half of what remained after the various deductions; his dues as owner of the ship, i.e. 56.3% of the captures. The corsair campaigns thus brought him 870,000 francs a year in 1798–1799, 270,000 francs in 1800–1802, 125,000 in 1804–1810, and 625,000 francs in 1811–1815, which sums were added to revenues gained 'on land'. If we accept that the latter remained more or less stable in the course of the following two decades, we arrive at the following figures:

- 1798–1799: 3,370,000 francs, incl. 25.8% from corsair earnings
- 1800–1802: 2,770,000 " 9.7 "
- 1804–1810: 2,625,000 " 4.8 "
- 1811–1815: 3,125,000 " 20.0 "

Compared with the significant, diversified and relatively reliable income from customs duties, various taxes and payments from the beys in the provinces, the contribution from corsair activities seems very variable and unreliable. They provided significant benefits during the spectacular renewal of the corsair campaigns at the very end of the eighteenth century, furnishing more than a quarter of the state's income, to fall to less than 5% in the following decade. The considerable increase in the years 1811 to 1815, to a fifth of the income on average, includes however significant variations from year to year. In spite of the approximate nature of the figures, they do give a clear idea of corsair activity during those two decades.

The substantial if irregular revenues discussed here represent the direct contribution of corsair activities to the incomes of both the bey of Tunis and the dey of Algiers, to which should be added the payments provided by most of the Western states to protect their commercial ships from the corsairs. It was not strictly speaking a question of regular annual dues, but rather one of payments made at the time of the signing of a treaty or of its renewal, or again upon the arrival of a new consul or a change in the head of state of one of the Barbary regencies; or on some pretext, usually the threat of terminating earlier agreements. We have already mentioned the affair of the pursuit of the Austrian ships by the corsairs during the years 1797 to 1800. Out of 44 captured vessels, twenty were declared fair game, and four saw only their cargo taken. These losses were estimated at around four million francs by the captains and

the owners of the ships, and reduced to three million by the Austrian state, which had, finding almost two hundred thousand francs in compensation for the victims, thus partially completed the insufficient indemnity paid by the Ottoman state. To these outright losses must be added the indirect losses occasioned by the temporary paralysis of Austrian maritime trade because of fear of the corsairs. It is not difficult to understand why Austria agreed to pay 50,000 Spanish piastres (270,000 francs) to Algiers in 1807 in order to be spared such difficulties, whilst, in the same year, the Netherlands paid 40,000 piastres, Spain 12,000 and England 10,000.

By means of these massive influxes of money, the corsair campaigns promoted the use of cash payments in the Maghreb, first in the corsair cities, and then in the hinterland, thus promoting the growth of a merchant class and stimulating the development of an exchange economy on a local and international level. But by increasing the risk of diplomatic and military confrontations, the campaigns seriously disturbed the very economic relations they fostered, as is apparent in the war between Tripoli and the United States. However, a time comes when commercial exchanges can become more profitable than privateering.

PART TWO

SHIPPING AND MARITIME TRADE: CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHANGED POLICY

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MAGHREB'S MARITIME TRADE AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Along with privateering, which was clearly in decline at the end of the eighteenth century, the regencies of the Maghreb were engaged in significant maritime trade with Europe as well as with the other Ottoman provinces. As for the corsair activities, it is important to describe and evaluate the commercial activities that were beginning to play an increasingly important role in the economy of the Maghreb and to represent a growing source of revenue for the governments of the regencies. The available documentation, which is primarily European, is very uneven, depending on the year and the regency, but it still enables us to formulate a probable, if not exact, assessment of this maritime trade that constituted the second chapter in the relations of the Maghreb with the sea.[1]

1780–1789: A Decade of Multiple but Unequal Relations

We possess elements of information for the three regencies covering the decade from 1780 to 1789 that are quite specific concerning the relations of each regency with Europe, but much more vague and impressionistic when it comes to trade with the Ottoman provinces.

[1] The European sources provide overall figures on the number of ships and the value of the traffic in the ports of the Maghreb or the European ports in relation to those of North Africa. They also include charter contracts for ships based in the ports of the Maghreb. These are preserved in the *Archives nationales*, A.E., BIII, 276–277, for the period before 1792, and for the subsequent period, in the *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Correspondance et commerciale, série C.C.C.* in Paris, and in the repatriated *Archives, A.R.*, preserved in Nantes. Added to these are the *Archives* of the Marseilles *Chambre de Commerce.* The local Arabic sources consist primarily of correspondence and business papers of North African merchants, providing selective but indispensable information on day-to-day commercial practices.

Algiers

Thanks to the contracts relating to the charter of thirty French ships based in Algiers from 1784 to 1792, we have some information concerning the destinations, and therefore the trading partners, of that regency. Although the available facts concern only some of the ships leaving from that port during that period (the French ships chartered in Marseilles for a straight round-trip voyage are missing from the list), we can still gain a revealing picture of the situation. Fourteen vessels went to Europe: three to Alicante, two to Cadiz and two to Gibraltar; only one to Genoa, four to Leghorn and two to Marseilles. The Ottoman Empire was the destination of sixteen of the thirty ships: five went to Alexandria, all transporting pilgrims to Mecca, six were headed for Tunis, two for Djerba and three for Smyrna.

In 1785 to 1786, the average yearly figure for trade with Europe was 2,846,238 francs, of which 706,536 were from exports and 2,139,702 from imports. This trade was very uneven, to the disadvantage of the regency. The exports, which were composed of agricultural products, cereals, wool and leather, were destined in particular for Marseilles, 67.8% of the total, then Leghorn, 12.4%, Spain, 10.6%, and Gibraltar, 5.5%. Imports, which included cotton and wool fabrics, a few manufactured articles, and the colonial staples of sugar, tea and coffee, came especially from Leghorn, 59.6%, which acquired most of their goods from England, ahead of Marseilles, at 36.8%.

We lack information on the value of trade between Algiers and the rest of the Ottoman Empire, whether the Maghreb or the Levant. Commercial exchanges with the Levant must have been very limited, to judge by the movement of ships between Alexandria and the Maghreb in this period.

Table 4: Destinations of Ships leaving Alexandria

Regency	1782			1785		
	Total	European ships	Ottoman ships	Total	European ships	Ottoman ships
Algiers	3	3	0	6	6	0
Tunis	37	37	0	16	14	2
Tripoli	26	12	14	9	9	0
Total	66	52	14	31	29	2

Compared to Tunis, Algiers seems to have been a secondary destination for ships departing from Alexandria, as was Tripoli, to a lesser degree. The figures for 1782 are certainly more representative of normal traffic: in 1785 a violent epidemic of the plague ravaged Tunis and Tripoli, deterring many from calling.

Tripoli

The available figures are not from annual statistics, but primarily from two important reports prepared by the French consuls in Tripoli, dated 1766 and 1797. These include a number of precise figures for averages and estimates which are doubtless quite close to the truth.[2] A comparison of these two sets of documents prepared thirty years apart reveals the very clear continuity in the partnerships and the products involved and also the developments in this activity.

Imports to the regency from Europe were estimated at less than 400,000 francs in 1766, of which 150,000 came from Leghorn, 180,000 from Venice and 50,000 from Marseilles; the merchandise consisted of fabrics, metals, paper, glassware, and weapons. Thirty years later, the same merchandise still made up the bulk of the imports, which continued to be supplied from the same ports, with Leghorn now distinctly preeminent, easily now ahead of Venice and even more Marseilles, for a total value of between around 400,000 and 500,000 francs. The figures related to exports are more precise and the goods are described in greater detail. Their total value was 495,387 francs, according to the estimates of 1766, for exports consisting primarily of merchandise brought from Black Africa, with gold the leading product by far, 54.5%, then ostrich feathers, 8.6%, and senna, 3.4%. Local products like cereals, 10% and wool, 5.6%, wax, dates and leather, were of lesser importance. In 1797, exports were valued at 462,312 francs, a little less than the figures from thirty years earlier, but if we keep in mind the approximate character of this data, in spite of their apparent accuracy, they are still of the

[2] Values were given in 'livres tournois' in 1766 and in francs in 1797. In reality, the two currencies were worth exactly the same amount; after the monetary reform of Year III (1795) the only changes were the appearance of the coins and the name of the currency.

same order. On the other hand, the composition of the exports has changed, not so much in the commodities themselves as in their individual volumes. Gold had become rarer, and now constituted only 9.1% of the exports to Europe, whereas ostrich feathers represented 20% and senna 28.2%. These three products, which constituted 66.5% of the exports in 1766, now represented only 57.3%. Quantities for local goods, on the other hand—cereals at 12.5%, wool at 16.9%, and livestock, had increased.

Little is known about Tripoli's relations with the rest of the Ottoman Empire, and it is difficult to put a figure on this trade. In the 1760s, imports consisted of foodstuffs like Egyptian rice, raisins from Crete and Morea, wheat from the regencies of Algiers and Tunis when the local harvests in Tripoli were poor, linen from Alexandria and fezes from Tunis. Thirty years later, the list had not changed. As with Europe, we have better knowledge of the exports. In 1766, the bulk of the traffic from Tripoli to destinations in the Ottoman Empire transported 2,500 to 3,000 slaves brought from Black Africa, to a value of an estimated 1,110,000 livres, or 88% of the exports. In 1797, the French consul estimated at 1500 the number of slaves exported annually for a total of 665,700 francs, representing 73.9% of the exports to the Ottoman Empire. The rest consisted of butter, saffron, barracans, coarse local cloth, and wax.

Table 5: Tripoli's Maritime Trade (1766–1797)
(In Tours livres/francs)

	1766	1797
Imports	**763,963**	**983,334**
From Europe	363,963	511,321
From the Ottoman Empire	400,000 ?	472,013
Exports	**1,689,308**	**1,363,226**
To Europe	495,384	462,312
To the Ottoman Empire	1,193,924	900,914
Total	**2,450,271**	**2,346,560**

From 1766 to 1797, Tripoli's maritime trade remained at a modest level, just under two and a half million francs, and even showed a slight decline over the thirty years. Imports were well below exports, in spite of an appreciable rise between these two dates, due primarily to the arrival of goods from Europe, which now exceeded imports from the Ottoman provinces, 52% as against 48%. Exports, while still of higher monetary value than imports, showed a marked decline, almost 20%, between 1766 and 1797, which can be seen both in the shipments to Europe and in those to the Ottoman provinces. This drop reflects above all the decline, as well as the difficulties, in the relations between the regency and Black Africa, which is apparent in the significant decrease in the proceeds from gold dust and slaves. Considered overall, the bulk of the Tripoli regency's external trade was with the other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, though relations with Europe were improving, with exports to Europe passing from 35.1% in 1766 to 41.5% in 1797.

Tunis

The series of Tables on the following pages shows the main features of Tunis's maritime trade.

Points of Departure and Destinations

Most of the commercial ships in the Mediterranean in this period were small in size and roughly similar, and so by merely counting the number of ships, we can arrive at a fairly reliable estimate of the amount of maritime traffic. Table No. 6 shows Tunis had direct trade relations with the whole Mediterranean, with however a marked preference for its western basin, 134 ships out of 184, or 72.8% of the total. Europe was the principal destination, with 111 ships, (60.3%), against 73 (39.7%) to Ottoman ports. Marseilles was by far the major partner of Tunis, with 68 ships, 37% of all the destinations, almost twice the number for Alexandria (37 ships). Malta was the third preferred port: the island was supplied by Tunisia and served as a stopover on the route to the Levant. Then came Leghorn and Tripoli, Genoa, Smyrna, Barcelona, etc. Taking account of a few probable gaps in our information, there were around 200 departures a year; and adding the arrivals to this figure, the total movement in the port of Tunis represented approximately 400 ships a year. Breaking

these down according to their flags reveals two original features of the port activity in Tunis:

Table 6: Traffic ex Tunis in 1788
(departures of ships, according to nationality)

Destination	Total	French	Ragusan	Imperial
Ottoman Emp.				
Alexandria	37	26	7	4
Tripoli	8	8		
Northern Tunisia	1	1		
Southern Tunisia	7	7		
Smyrna	5	4	1	
Crete	2	2		
Istanbul	2	2		
Morea	5	4	1	
Algiers	1	1		
Unspecified	5	2	2	1
Total	**73**	**57**	**11**	**5**
Europe				
Marseilles	68	63	3	2
Balearic Islands	1	1		
Genoa	6	3	2	1
Leghorn	8	7	1	
Trieste	2	1	1	
Ragusa	1		1	
Malta	16	11	4	1
Palermo	1			1
Malaga	4	2	2	
Barcelona	4	3	1	
Total	**111**	**91**	**15**	**5**
Grand Total	**184**	**148**	**26**	**10**

• The complete absence of the Ottoman flag: the North Africans were absent from commercial navigation as much by their commitment to the corsair war as by the fact that their ships were not allowed in the European ports. Added to this was the corsair activity of the Christians, notably the Maltese, which led the Ottomans, for reasons of security, but also of efficiency, to make use of Christian merchant ships practicing what was known at the time as the 'maritime caravan', to which we will return later.

• The uncontested prevalence of the French flag, with 80% of the ships that passed through Tunis. This domination was exerted equally forcefully over the Ottoman ports, in particular those of the Maghreb, as over the European ports. The French, in addition to their Marseilles traffic, handled the main traffic between Tunis and Leghorn, Malta or Spain, to the disadvantage of their rivals from Ragusa or the Hapsburg Empire.

Commercial Exchanges

The information we have is very uneven: quite good on relations with Marseilles; incomplete, though still useful, for the other European ports; but inadequate when it comes to the Ottoman Empire.

Trade with Europe

Although the facts we can provide here only refer to the first six months of 1788, they are fairly representative of trade between Tunis and Europe.

Table 7: Imports from Europe to Tunis in the first six months of 1788 (in Tours livres, or francs)

Products	Total	Marseilles	Leghorn	Genoa
Manufactured textiles	321,780	33,512	288,268	
Raw textiles	245,600	116,000	129,600	
Timber	11,824	5,944	5,880	
Metal goods	60,004	29,054	30,950	
Jewellery	116,100		116,100	
Food	175,105	131,330	43,460	315
Spices, Medicines	44,594	24,474	20,120	
Chemicals, dyes	186,614	60,572	122,542	3,500
Others	54,613	9,785	44,828	
Total	**1,216,623**	**410,671**	**801,748**	**3,815**

Imports consisted primarily of manufactured goods: textiles (woollen sheets, silks, gold braid, haberdashery), metal objects (crude metals and hardware), chemical products and jewellery made up 56% of the imports. Next came goods from the European colonies in America, especially sugar and coffee, then timber, and large quantities of superior-quality Spanish wool to be used in the manufacture of fezes—also known as 'Tunis-style' hats. Two ports supplied Tunis, Marseilles

and Leghorn, which in the first six months of the year for which we have information, were handling two-thirds of all trading.

The exports were exclusively goods from the Tunisian countryside: olive oil, 48.2%; cereals, especially wheat, 26%; beans; and lastly, products derived from livestock farming, especially wool and leather.

Table 8: Exports from Tunis to Europe in the first six months of 1788 (in Tours livres, or francs)

Product	Total	Marseilles	Leghorn	Genoa	Barcelona	Malaga
Oil	1,336,050	1,318,550		17,500		
Wool	274,510	182,920	29,190	62,400		
Wax	30,200	16,200	14,000			
Leather	50,000	50,000				
Wheat	732,822	303,030	115,440	146,002	114,219	54,131
Barley	55,428	46,848	8,580			
Beans	170,661	32,700	63,675	19,500	35,196	19,590
Others	62,352	30,672	31,680			
Total	**2,712,030**	**1,980,920**	**262,566**	**245,402**	**149,415**	**73,727**

Export figures were much higher than those for imports; 2,820,000 Tours livres (francs) as against 1,216,000. The imports arrived from Marseilles, and especially from Leghorn, 65.9% of the total, while the exports involved both of these ports, as well as Genoa, Malta, Barcelona and Malaga. The chief trading partner by far was Marseilles, 70.2% of the total. The considerable imbalance in the exchanges led to significant movements of funds. To compensate for the difference between imports and exports, Marseilles sent 2,685,975 livres (francs) to Tunis, of which 666,534 were in letters of credit, and more than two million in cash. Leghorn, on the other hand, with its relatively lower level of imports, recovered 600,000 francs in cash. These significant movements of money also provide an indication of the security that reigned in the Western Mediterranean at the end of the eighteenth century.

This external trade exerted a considerable influence on the overall economy of Tunisia, in particular on its agriculture, much of which was commercialised and exported, while at the same time stimulating its crafts. 'Tunis-style' hats were sold all over the Ottoman Empire: the manufacture and distribution of these woollen fezes provided work for around fifty thousand people.

Trade with Marseilles

An examination of the documents available for the years immediately prior to the French Revolution reveals that the figures for exports are much higher than those for imports, in particular in 1787 and 1788, with marked differences from one year to the next. Although there was relatively little variation in imports, from 726,000 to 1,133,000 francs, exports show much more pronounced differences, from less than two million livres to over five million.

Imports: The most significant import was Spanish wool, which continued to increase in volume, passing from 24.4% of the total in the middle of the eighteenth century to 27.5%, then 27.9%, until it represented 34.1% of total imports in 1789—an indication of the boom in the manufacture of fezes. It is noteworthy that the French merchants and ships served as indispensable intermediaries between Spain and Tunisia. The import of woollen textiles declined significantly from the middle of the eighteenth century, and dropped to only 10 to 15% of the total, valued at from 123,000 to 166,000 livres a year, in the same order as the two commodities from the West Indies, sugar and coffee. There is a noticeable stability in imports of metals and metal objects, as well as in 'medicines', spices and dyes, including vermilion which was being brought in increasing quantities at the expense of American cochineal.

Exports: Variations in exports were linked first of all to the uneven Tunisian harvests, and also to the differing requirements of Marseilles. Thus exports of olive oil dropped from 3,251,520 francs in 1788 to 397,800 in 1789. In other words, a seven-eighths market collapse! Exports of wool varied less and depended on the year: second place behind oil in 1787 and 1788, and first place in 1786 and 1789. Wheat was in third place and demand for it remained constant, as did that for beans.

Trade with the Ottoman Empire

The information we have for the Ottoman Empire is much more general and is also poorly dated. Half of Tunis's commercial activities were conducted with Alexandria, and we know that the principal imports from Egypt were linen and cotton fabrics, as well as coffee and perfume. Exports included olive oil, fezes and above all quality craft articles made of wool: shawls, blankets and burnouses. The same merchandise was sent to the Levant—with the addition of African slaves—primarily to Smyrna. Some ships also transported

pilgrims on their way to or returning from Mecca. In 1788, twelve French ships in Tunis took on board from 50 to 250 pilgrims each, for passage to Alexandria. In addition to these activities were the irregular but steady relations with Tripoli, based chiefly on the shipment of cereals in times of shortage due to poor harvests in one or another of the regencies.

The family archives of the merchants of Sfax, the major southern port, confirm this type of trade and the preeminence of the ties with Alexandria, which were far more significant than those with Smyrna and Istanbul. Sfax exported agricultural goods from its hinterland (oil, almonds, pistachios, butter) and also products from its fishing industry (octopi and sponges) as well as woven goods from Kairouan. Imports were very varied: from Egypt came linen, spun cotton thread, rice and various types of fabric; Anatolia provided textiles, tobacco, iron bars, pottery, weapons. This trade, which resembles that of Tunis, but in provincial mode, illustrates the dynamism of the merchants of the city, some of whom reached national if not international stature, like the Gellulis.[3]

Allowing for the gaps in information on the one hand, and the wide variations noted on the other, it is very difficult to estimate the overall value of the commercial activities of Tunis; but we can still hazard some figures to give an idea of the scale of business:

• Trade with the Ottoman Empire: In 1782, imports from Alexandria were estimated at 1,549,000 Tours livres (francs), and 1,050,000 in 1783; with exports at 1,500,000 livres and 1,164,000 livres respectively. If we remember that trade with Alexandria mobilised half of the ships linking Tunis to the rest of the Ottoman Empire, we can safely double these figures. Annual imports as well as exports would therefore have come to between two and three million livres, i.e. from four to six million in total, with a reasonable average of five million.

• Trade with Europe: Imports from Tunis fluctuated between 1.5 and 2.5 million livres, and exports from four to seven million, or a total of somewhere between seven and ten million.

The maritime trade of Tunis at the end of the eighteenth century taken as a whole mobilised an average 200 ships and represented

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[3] Zouari, *Les Relations commerciales entre Sfax et le Levant*..., 1990.

from four to six million livres for imports and from eight to ten million for exports, i.e. a total of between twelve and sixteen million. Tunis was therefore by far the most active of the ports in the Maghreb, way ahead of Algiers and Tripoli. By way of comparison, the maritime trade of Alexandria during the same period has been estimated at around 40 million livres, Smyrna's at 60 million, Barcelona's at 70 million, Marseilles' at 230 million. Essential for Tripoli and important for Algiers and Tunis, the commercial relations conducted by the regencies within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, by integrating them economically into the system, reinforced their participation in that vast political ensemble.

The Economic Actors: The Carriers

The European Monopoly

In 1788, around two hundred merchant ships entered and departed from the port of Tunis-Goletta, i.e. four hundred ship movements. The activity of the port of Tripoli attracted a hundred ships a year, i.e., two hundred movements. We lack satisfactory data for Algiers, but it is not unreasonable to assume that the frequentation of ships in this port was roughly the same as that of Tripoli. To these regional capitals we must add the more limited traffic in the secondary ports, such as Bona in the regency of Algiers; Bizerta, Monastir, Sousse and Sfax in the regency of Tunis; and Misurata, Derna and Bengazi in the Tripoli regency. We can safely estimate that five hundred commercial ships stopped over every year in the ports of the Maghreb at the end of the eighteenth century. This figure concerns only large vessels on medium- or long-distance voyages, to the exclusion of the small coasters and fishing boats that also participated, within a restricted radius, in the activities of these ports.

In 1788 for Tunis, out of the 184 registered ships, 148 were French, 26 Ragusan and 10 Imperial.[4] According to the chancellor of the British consulate, 92 ships made a stopover in Tripoli in 1765:

[4] The absence of Venetian ships, which were active elsewhere, was due to the war between the Regency of Tunis and the Serene (Venetian) Republic from 1784 to 1792.

46 were French, seven English, three Dutch, two Danish, one Swedish, six Venetian, eighteen Ragusan, one Neapolitan, six Albanian and two Greek-Ottoman. From 1766 to 1777, the Arab merchants of Sfax chartered 103 ships. We know the flags of 61 of these: 39 were French, nine Ragusan, three Swedish, two Venetian, two English, one Spanish and five Ottoman.[5] Although irregular, these figures reveal that the North African ports were almost exclusively frequented by European vessels, whatever their home ports or destinations. Of the numerous flags flown by the ships stopping over in the Maghreb, the French one appeared by far most frequently, representing 80.4% of the ships in Tunis in 1788, 50% in Tripoli in 1765 and 63.9% in Sfax. The second flag in order of frequency was that of the small republic of Ragusa, respectively 14.1%, 19.6% and 14.8%.

On the other hand, there is no record of any merchant ship from the Maghreb and very few Ottoman, or Levantine, vessels. None were present in Tunis, but eight were listed in Tripoli, including Albanian ones, or 8.7% of the ships, and five in Sfax, 8.2% of the total.[6] For a coastal region which, through its corsairs, had long exercised an attraction for and displayed its competence in maritime activities, the absence of merchant ships flying the flag of the regencies is surprising. This absence is of course the result of the North Africans' choice of corsair activities over trade, for reasons already given. But if privateering prospered in the seventeenth century, it was much less profitable later, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century, when it was in the process of becoming a minor activity. The existence of substantial maritime trade in the Maghreb ought to have promoted the development of a local merchant marine, but no such thing occurred, in spite of the fact that the different peace treaties and commercial agreements signed by the regencies with the European states provided for reciprocity in the form of mutual respect for each other's ships and merchants.

In fact, such a reciprocity did not exist. The rare North African ships that dared to venture into the European ports, and especially into Marseilles, were the object of all sorts of harassment designed

[5] Zouari, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 193.

[6] The situation was about the same in the Levant: from 1776 to 1799, 776 ships stopped over in Rhodes; among these, 174 were Ottoman, i.e. 22.4% of the total, but 411 were French, 53%, 95 Venetian, 12.2%, 59 Ragusan, 35 English. A.N.P., A.E. BI 953.

to discourage them from coming again, and so Arab merchants found it almost impossible to sell their goods. But it was not only against such difficulties that the dey of Algiers, for one, protested. Trade, in particular international trade, must of necessity be based on a pool of economic and also political information that would normally be provided by the consuls present in the countries in question. The European states maintained in the Levant and on the Barbary coast an important network of consulates, all equipped with interpreters—(dragomans), especially France;[7] whereas the North African regencies were totally lacking in such a service. But there were even more serious difficulties than this diplomatic handicap.

The Maritime Caravan

We know that from the beginning of the seventeenth century, Barbary privateering was particularly active, seriously hindering the navigation of European merchant ships. The situation changed in the last quarter of the century, when France and England adoped a policy of force to oblige the regencies to respect their ships. Backed up by a system of treaties, this policy proved effective, making it possible for commercial navigation, particularly French maritime trade, to develop. In the same period, the Ottomans lost their mastery over the eastern Mediterranean to the Venetians at the time of the first war of the Morea (1684–1699). The Venetian vessels pursued the Ottoman ships and blocked the entrance to the Dardanelles, thereby preventing maritime links between Istanbul and the other provinces of the Empire—Syria, Cyprus, Crete and especially Egypt. In 1686, through an edict granted to Pierre de Girardin, the French ambassador, the Ottoman authorities offered favoured status to the French merchant ships that were providing transport for the Ottomans, making official a practice that went back to the Middle Ages.

This activity, known to contemporaries as the 'maritime caravan', became increasingly important. The Ottomans, whether merchants, administrators or pilgrims, appreciated the French ships (that would

[7] In 1776, according to the *Almanach royal*, France maintained consuls or vice-consuls in the Maghreb in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli and Tangiers; in the Levant, in Istanbul, in the Dardanelles, Rhodes, Naxos, Smyrna, Chios, Salonica, Coron, Paros, Athens, Arta, Candia, Cyprus, Cairo, Alexandria, Rosetta, Saida, Tripoli (Syria), Aleppo, Alexandretta and Baghdad.

later meet with competition from other Europeans) for their crews' competence, superior to that of the Ottoman sailors; and especially for the security they provided. Indeed, they protected Ottomans who had chartered them from the risks they would be taking aboard vessels flying a Muslim flag encountering hostile cruisers from the Christian states that were still fighting against the Barbary corsairs—Venice, Naples and Spain—and especially the Order of Malta backed by private Maltese corsairs. In the eighteenth century, the Europeans, who already dominated international trade through this maritime caravan, also had the lion's share of the internal shipping of the Ottoman empire. This activity, which was vital for the Empire, also guaranteed considerable profits, several million livres worth of shipping transactions per year for the French alone,[8] employed two or three hundred European vessels and thousands of sailors.

It is understandable, therefore, that French shipowners and merchants took considerable pains to maintain, and even develop, an activity that was so profitable, solliciting and receiving the support of the authorities. Their main argument was to convince Ottomans who wished to charter ships to choose the French 'caravanners' rather than Muslim ships. For that, Christian privateering activities had to be maintained at sufficient level to discourage Muslim navigation, or at least make it risky enough to persuade Muslim charterers against it. At the request of the business community in Marseilles, the minister of the Navy intervened, discreetly on several occasions, with the principal leaders of the Order of Malta to urge them to take naval action against the Barbary corsairs, not hesitating to finance them if necessary. Furthermore, protected by peace treaties, signed and renewed, the French 'caravanners' and the owners of their ships wanted the activity of the Barbary corsairs to continue, but at a modest level, as its existence justified the indispensable, ongoing presence of Christian corsairs: a status quo thereby eliminating possible competition from the ships of the states that remained at war with the regencies.

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[8] In around 1775, the maritime caravan brought in 400,000 livres a year to Tunis (*cf.* Emerit, "*L'essai d'une marine*...", 1955) and at least two million in 1786, in spite of strong competition from the Ragusans and the Venetians. In addition, earnings from the caravan largely compensated for the negative trade balance between France and the Ottoman Empire. Carrière de Courdurié, "*Un sophisme économique*...", 1984.

The Ottoman charterers and the captain of the chartered ship had an agreement in the form of a standard contract which was identical, whatever the captain's nationality and whatever the language used, based on a model established during the previous centuries. The original, signed by the two parties and two witnesses, was kept in the chancellery of the consulate of the commercial port of the Levant where it was drawn up.[9] In addition to the place of signing and date, each contract included information about the captain and his ship, the charterer or charterers (name, residence, ethnic/religious group), the planned destination and places of stopover, and finally, the cost of the voyage and the conditions of payment.[10]

Studies of these 'caravan' contracts, already partially undertaken for several of the ports, provide invaluable information about the activity of the Ottoman ports and particularly about the Ottoman charterers—with, however, two reservations. From 1732 the French 'caravanners' were required to register their contracts in the chancellery, and in spite of the vigilance of the consuls, it is likely that the habit of writing up contracts in the form of private agreements without witnesses had not disappeared altogether, depriving the consul of his fees—and the historian of a part of his source material! The same situation could also apply to the caravanning ships of other nationalities. The second unknown was related to the fact that some of the ships arriving in Ottoman ports had been chartered elsewhere, and therefore might not figure in the chancellery register. This is particularly the case of ships making a 'straight' round-trip, for example, a ship hired in Marseilles travelling to Tunis to pick up a load of wheat, and immediately heading back to Marseilles.

The Economic Actors: The Charterers

An examination of the caravan contracts provides the opportunity of introducing by name the principal actors of the Ottoman maritime

[9] A consequence of the legalisation of the maritime caravan was that contracts had to be registered officially in the chancellery registers of the consulates. A number of these registers have come down to us. Most begin in 1686, e.g. those of Algiers, Alexandria, Tripoli in Barbary, and Candia.

[10] Since a ship was rented as a whole, the cargo was only mentioned when the price for chartering or for freighting was based on the nature of the cargo.

trade, determining the communities they belonged to, and pinpointing their fields of professional activity. For the Maghreb at the end of the eighteenth century, the contracts for the 'maritime caravan' have disappeared, but happily the French registers for Algiers and Tunis have been preserved. For Tunis, the most important port in the Maghreb, we also have the Ragusan, Venetian and Austrian contracts (unfortunately with some chronological gaps). We therefore have access to documentation which, if not complete, is at least plentiful and varied enough to permit a more thorough study, bearing in mind that the information concerns exclusively departures, because the contracts took effect in Tunis, or, in certain cases, in one of the other regency ports.

In the years we have selected (1785 to 1786), the principal destinations of the caravanning ships leaving from Tunis were of course the same as in 1788: the preponderance from the Ottoman Empire, with 80 contracts, or 55.6%, (to which can be added one contract for Morocco), at the expense of Europe with 60 contracts, or 41.7%. In addition, the list includes three ships that had been chartered for a period of three months rather than for a specific voyage. What is of significance here is the identity of those chartering the ships:

Destination:	Charterers:
Maghreb: 44 ships	– 38 Muslim, 6 European
Alexandria: 15 ships	– 14 Muslim, 1 European
Smyrna: 6 ships	– 5 Muslim, 1 European
Balkans & Aegean: 14 ships	– 13 Muslim, 1 Greek
Syria: 1 ship	– 1 Jewish
Morocco: 1 ship	– 1 Muslim
Marseilles: 22 ships	– 19 European, 2 Jewish, 1 Muslim
Genoa: 10 ships	– 10 European
Leghorn: 20 ships	– 8 European, 11 Jewish, 1 Muslim
Trieste: 2 ships	– 2 Muslim
Malta: 3 ships	– 1 Jewish, 2 Muslim
Spain: 3 ships	– 3 European

In total, of the 80 ships sailing to Ottoman ports, 70 were chartered by Muslims, 87.5% of the total, 8 by Europeans (10%), one by a Jew and one by a Greek. Details concerning European destinations are as follows: out of 60 contracts, 40 were with Europeans, or 66.6% of the total, 14 with Jews (23.3%), and 6 Muslims (10%). There is a striking contrast between maritime trade with a destination in the

Ottoman Empire, which was overwhelmingly in the hands of the Ottomans, principally Muslims, and trade destined for Europe, which was dominated by the Europeans themselves, followed by Jews, while the Muslims only held a very small share. We must remember, however, that if the ships bound for the Ottoman Empire were all caravanners, the situation with the ships headed for Europe was different, as it included ships on 'straight' runs to and fro, obviously all chartered by Europeans leaving from European ports, again reinforcing European domination of the commercial traffic of this type. This contrast between the regions frequented by the Muslim charterers on the one hand and those frequented by the Europeans on the other—so clear in Tunis—was characteristic of the Ottoman Empire in this period, and has also been observed in Alexandria, Candia, Istanbul and Saida.

Out of the dozens of charterers that figure in these contracts, we have singled out thirteen of the most active, who hired at least three ships in two years: six Europeans, the same number of Muslims, and a Jew. In fact this last, Abraham de Joshua de Paz, who lived in Tunis, represented a group of Jewish merchants known as 'by-the-day Jews,' who hired out five ships all having Leghorn as their destination. Of the six European charterers, three were French companies established in Tunis; Arnaud et Cie, Arles et Cie, et Minuty et Cie, the most active of them chartering ten ships. Although the first two houses did business primarily with Marseilles, the Minuty company (which admittedly also chartered six ships for Marseilles), hired two bound for Tripoli in Barbary, one for Alexandria and one for Djerba, thereby demonstrating its willingness to operate throughout the Ottoman Empire. The other three active charterers were Genoese, and dealt exclusively with the European ports of Barcelona, Leghorn, and principally Genoa. The most important of these was Dr. Lagomarsini, the bey's doctor and a prosperous merchant, who hired ten ships in two years, four of which were bound for Leghorn and Genoa and two for La Spezia.

The most active Muslims charterers dominated the trade with the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed Bariani from Tripoli in Barbary chartered four out of five of the ships headed for Tripoli; Ahmed as-Sallâmî, from Sfax, in choosing his destinations, also favoured his birthplace. The four others who chartered ships belonged to two large families: the Ben Ayeds, natives of Djerba, Ahmed and Regeb—the chief customs officer in Tunis—chartered eleven ships, in partnership,

separately, or with other merchants, with Djerba as their almost exclusive destination. Only the Ben Yûnises, Yûnis and Ahmed, seemed to demonstrate a broader vision of a maritime trade extending to the whole Ottoman Empire. They alone chartered twelve ships; four of which went to Djerba, three to Tripoli (Barbary), three to Alexandria with pilgrims for Mecca, and two to Istanbul.

A Decade of War (1793–1802)

New Conditions

The eighteenth century was punctuated by the Franco-British wars, which led each time to a temporary but significant drop in French maritime trade. During the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), the number of caravanning French ships chartered in Alexandria fell from 130 in 1754 to 29 in 1758, then down to 21 in 1761, before rising again to 92 in 1766. The situation was similar in Tunis, with 14 ships in 1757, 2 in 1761 and 22 in 1763. In Candia, 25 contracts were recorded in 1755, 1 in 1761 and 19 in 1766. This reduction in the traffic is naturally reflected in the arrivals in Marseilles, which received 234 ships from the Levant and Barbary in 1755, 64 in 1760 and 173 in 1764. It was the maritime caravan that suffered the most from the wars, losing nine-tenths of its activity, whereas the straight to-and-fro trips decreased less, as the activity in Marseilles in the same period indicates. The phenomenon was reproduced to a lesser degree during the American War of Independence (1778–1783): Marseilles received 243 ships from the Levant and Barbary in 1777, 123 in 1779, and 283 in 1783.

The war that began in April 1792 had no great repercussion in the Mediterranean until 1793, when France, on the First of February, and Spain on 7 March, went to war against England. This war was distinguished from earlier confrontations by its length of an entire decade (peaces were not signed until 1802) and by the number and intensity of the battles—naval battles and also the sieges of ports which made the Mediterranean an important battleground. It also differed in the political and ideological implications behind it, and the furious expenditure of energy to which it led. It resulted in total disruption in the commercial relations between the regencies and France, their principal economic partner, which, as we have seen,

provoked the renewal of corsair activities by the North Africans. The uncontested primacy France had enjoyed in the Tunis regency's international trade, as in other spheres, was not only rapidly brought into question, but largely supplanted by competitors in the commercial realm, as well as in shipping.

Unlike the previous wars, this war led to consequences for France's maritime trade that were almost immediate and extremely serious; the result of English naval superiority and the Toulon catastrophe which meant the disappearance of the French naval fleet in the Mediterranean from the summer of 1793. The French commercial fleet ceased to operate: 191 vessels from the Maghreb had arrived in Marseilles in 1792, 28 from January to June of 1793, and then none, until February 1794; in Tunis, the chancellor of the French Consulate registered 83 caravan contracts in 1792 and 10 in 1793, the last of which was on 4 June. From 1784 to 1788, an average of 148 ships a year arrived in Marseilles from the Maghreb; 151 were recorded between 1789 and 1792, but only 28 from 1793 to 1799, the great majority of which were the ships of neutral powers.[11]

New Charterers

As we saw above, close study of the charter contracts has enabled us to determine which merchants, on the eve of the French Revolution, were running the maritime trade departing from Tunis. The existence of the contracts, at least for the principal European caravanners, gives us the opportunity to examine the way these merchants adapted to the new circumstances brought about by the war during the period between the eve of the Revolution and the restoration of peace. We will examine the facts available to us in sections, because we only possess the totality of the contracts for certain years, and also because it is easier to make comparisons if we use this approach. In addition to the years 1785 to 1786, which have already been discussed, we have chosen the periods from March 1795 to September

[11] Between 1789 and 1792, the annual register recorded the arrival of 548 ships, with a majority of small coasters of several dozen tonnes, coming from Liguria and Tuscany, where the rival ports of Genoa and Leghorn were located, and 1,106 from 1793 to 1799. Relations between Marseilles and the Maghreb partially survived, but in an indirect fashion. CARRIÈRE, "*Les entrées de navires . . .*", 1957.

1796, and from January 1802 to September 1803, a choice dictated by our sources.

1795–1796

In a reversal from the preceding decade, the majority of the contracts in the period involve Europe, 83 contracts, at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, with 40 contracts. Half of the ships in the Ottoman contracts were bound for Alexandria, with eight out of twenty specifically assigned to the transport of Muslim pilgrims headed for Mecca.[12] The second destination, with eight contracts, was Smyrna. Compared with the situation in the 1780s, both Alexandria and Smyrna remained major destinations, with the total number of contracts even increasing—a clear indication of the importance of the links between the Maghreb and the Levant. On the other hand, relations with the Balkans and the Aegean seemed to have considerably decreased, especially with Istanbul, which now only figured in 3 contracts as against 14, and even more so with the other ports of the Maghreb. The links that were favoured in 1785–1786 may have been cut back, but these were probably handled in part by local coasters, or by ships that did not issue charter contracts, such as those of the Greek-Ottoman captains. As for Europe, the reorientation of maritime trade following the war was spectacular. The charterers ignored Marseilles almost entirely, drawing up only five contracts in two years, which benefitted its traditional rivals, who experienced a considerable boom. In the same period, Genoa went from 10 to 19 contracts, and Leghorn from 20 to 54!

Even more than in the 1780s, maritime relations with the other Ottoman provinces were almost entirely in the hands of the Muslims, with 37 out of 40 contracts. The three other contracts involved Jews: two for the Maghreb and one to carry 112 Jewish pilgrims to Jaffa, the port for Jerusalem. Paradoxically, the Europeans, who were not present in the Levant, were in the minority among the European destinations for ships leaving from Tunis: 22 out of the 83 contracts recorded.

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[12] Their number varies from 175 on the Ragusan *checchias* of Captains Francesco Matcovitch and Nicolo Svilocosi to the 450 aboard Captain Antonio Biscuira's Venetian xebeck.

1802–1803

The years 1802–1803 correspond to the very brief period of peace following almost ten years of war sparked off by the French Revolution. In the preceding year, 1801, France had signed successive treaties with Austria, Portugal, Spain and Russia.[13] Then the first six months of 1802 saw the ratification of new peace treaties, one between France and England at Amiens on the 27th of March and the other between France and the regencies and the Ottoman Sultan, from December 1801 to June 1802. Between France and England this was no more than a brief truce, because the war resumed de facto on 18 May 1803. The charter contracts prepared in Tunis, fortunately available, provide an opportunity to see how maritime trade in the Mediterranean reacted to these diplomatic twists and turns.

Out of a total of 163 contracts, 105 cover the year 1802 and 58 the period from January to September 1803. The monthly record of these contracts shows that the charterers—clearly being kept abreast of the talks that were being held and confident of their outcome—had acted in anticipation of their coming into force. The number of contracts rose from January 1802 and remained high until May 1803. After this, there was a significant drop: from June to September 1802, the records show 39 contracts, and only 18 for the same period in 1803. This development suggests that the charterers were fearful of the beginning of a new war, which they sensed would become general, although only France and England had begun hostilities.

Five of the 163 contracts were drawn up for a period of several months for three Muslim and two Jewish charterers. The 158 others were for 51 planned trips towards Ottoman provinces, one to Morocco and 106 to Europe. European relations appear to take on increasing importance at the expense of Tunisia's Ottoman orientation, confirming observations made for 1794 to 1795. Although the Ottoman connection did not regress, it stagnated. It is worthy of note that the number of voyages to Alexandria or Smyrna, twenty and eight repectively, was the same for two other roughly similar periods, 19 and 21 months, for both 1794 to 1795 and 1802 to 1803. Commercial relations between Tunis and the Levant were

[13] The Franco-Austrian Lunéville treaty on 9 February, the Franco-Portuguese treaty on 6 June, the Franco-Spanish treaty in Madrid on 29 September, and the Franco-Russian treaty in London on 1st October. FUGIER, *Histoire des relations internationales*, 1954, pp. 121–156.

definitely solid, especially with Egypt, with a regular flow of pilgrims and various agricultural products: rice, wheat, oil, and manufactured items like the 'Tunis-style hats' or metalwork. A specialist in this particular segment of maritime trade in a study of the activities of a group of Tunisian merchants—the Sfax group—had the following to say:

> The organisation of the trade [with the Levant], in its techniques, its instruments (weights and measures), its tools (routes and means of transport), its handling of information, its customs restrictions, dates back to the Middle Ages.[14]

As usual, of the 51 contracts, the overwhelming majority were drawn up by Muslims, with 43, or 84.3% of the total, two by Jews, and something new—six by Greeks. The presence of the Greeks in Tunis is evidence of the commercial expansion of the Greek-Ottoman community in the Maghreb. It reflects the expansion of trade by these Aegean merchants, already very active in the Levant and in Europe since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In contrast to Levantine commercial activities, Tunisian maritime trade was particularly directed towards Europe, and it was here that the most significant changes took place.

The effects of peace were felt in the destinations, as shipping contracts for Marseilles were by far the most numerous, at 42, ahead of Genoa with 24, offset by the considerable reduction for Leghorn, from 54 to 19 contracts, thereby confirming the role of the Tuscan port as a substitute when Marseilles was unavailable. Also of interest is the not insignificant position of Spain (8 contracts), which until this time had been almost totally absent from Tunisian commercial activities, as well as the role of Malta, in the hands of the English, who had reopened the port after the surrender of the French garrison. But the statistic that holds the biggest surprise is the community membership of those who chartered vessels. The majority of those who hired ships bound for Leghorn were still Jews, ten in all, against two French charterers, but there were also seven Muslims. The Muslim contracts were predominantly for Spain (six out of eight contracts) and Genoa (12 out of 19). However, it is the community membership of those who chartered ships bound for Marseilles that

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[14] Zouari, *Les relations commerciales*, 1990, p. 68.

is completely new. Out of the 42 planned crossings, even taking into account the straight round-trip crossings leaving from Marseilles, only four contracts were drawn up for French ships, which is above all an indication of the considerable decline of the French caravan. On the other hand, the list included a Dutchman, ten Jews, and no less than 27 Muslims!

Fifteen European charterers drew up 23 contracts, of which eleven appear only once. The case of four Maltese, three after arriving from their island turned right around and went back, while the fourth headed for Naples. An English widow, originally from Gibraltar, chartered a ship for Genoa, an Austrian hired one to go to Trieste, and a Dutchman—the consul Nyssen—chartered a ship for Marseilles. In addition, there were four Genoese charterers who dealt almost exclusively with Genoa, eight out of nine voyages. Andrea Poggi and Giovanni Battista Re hired, respectively, three and four ships in 21 months. Of the four French charterers who had hired seven ships, one for Genoa, two for Leghorn and the others for Marseilles, only Barthez et Cie, with three ships, seems to have operated on a larger scale than the others, but their activities were limited to the western Mediterranean, and unlike the situation fifteen years earlier, they no longer ventured to the Levant, at least not with the maritime caravan.

The Jewish group hiring ships were very similar to the Europeans, both in their numbers and in their geographical orientations. There were fourteen of them, chartering 27 ships, 26 of which went to Western Europe and only one going to Sousse. Although over a period of almost two years, nine of these merchants entered into only a single contract, four of them demonstrated greater enterprise: Abram Setbon chartered three ships; one for Sousse, one for Barcelona and one for Marseilles; Nissim Attal sent three to Leghorn, and David Bessis hired the same number, ships bound for Marseilles and Genoa. Only one, Moïse Hay, was particularly active, chartering eight ships: two for a period of three months, one for Barcelona, one for Naples, and four for Marseilles. It is evident that the privileged trading relations of the Jews with Leghorn, which had been quite marked during the previous decade, had mostly dwindled, and that Marseilles and Genoa now seem to have become equally or more attractive destinations.

Unlike the French and the Genoese, the four Greeks who chartered ships were not based in Tunis; arriving from their different

provinces, they hired ships to return home, three to Morea and the fourth to Crete. There remains the group that will be the most important from now on, the Muslims. There are 42 names of Muslims who chartered 106 ships. As with the other groups, the great majority, 31 out of 42, appear in the records just once: five chartered two ships, one a year; only six of them, with at least three contracts each, demonstrated sustained activity during this period.

First of all, there was the bey himself, who chartered five vessels, for reasons that were sometimes diplomatic—such as the ship he sent to Algiers—but also for commercial purposes, like the ones hired for such destinations as Modon, Prevesa or Tabarka. Ahmed Ben Ali Kassem, *wâkil* (representative) of the pasha of Tripoli in Tunis, chartered three ships, two bound for Tripoli and one for Genoa, illustrating the at-least partial reorientation of the trade of the Tunisian merchants. This can also be seen in a change in the activities of one of the most important personalities of the regency, Mahmoud Gelluli, kaïd of Sfax, who chartered seven ships: three bound for Alexandria, one for Barcelona, and three for Marseilles. Soliman Ben Hadj had lost interest in all but European destinations, Barcelona and especially Marseilles. The same was true of Soliman Melameli Bachamba, whose five chartered ships went to Genoa, Marseilles, Naples and Leghorn.

And finally, there was that exceptional figure in the chartering business, Yûnis Ben Yûnis, who hired 41 ships in 21 months. Three of them were for a period of several months, which enabled him to have ships available at all times. The others went out all over the Mediterranean: five to Alexandria, six to Smyrna, one to Derna and one to Tangiers, i.e., thirteen ships serving the Islamic world. Simultaneously, one ship went to Trieste, one to Barcelona, one to Malta, one to Mahon, four to Genoa, five to Leghorn and twelve to Marseilles: 25 ships in all, voyaging over Europe. The commercial orientations of Yûnis Ben Yûnis in the very early years of the nineteenth century—one third in contracts for the Orient, two-thirds for the West, perfectly reflect the new directions of the Regency of Tunis, and of the Maghreb as a whole. Admittedly these tendencies had existed before the French Revolution, but there was a new politic: adding to their former domination of trade in the east, the Muslim merchants of the Regency of Tunis would now attempt to obtain a share of the European market.

The Shippers

The near-monopoly of maritime shipping between the Maghreb and Europe that the French had enjoyed on the eve of the Revolution was totally undermined several years later.

In 1802 to 1803, the short period of peace between two decades of war, the 163 charter contracts drawn up in Tunis that are available to us today were divided up as follows: 21 French ships (12.9%), 27 Austrian ships (16.6%), 91 Ragusan ships (55.8%) and 11 Russian ships (6.7%). The ships of these four flags totalled 150 contracts, or 92% of the whole. The thirteen others are listed as two Genoese, a Moroccan, three Neapolitan, an Ottoman, a Sicilian, two Tuscan and three Ionian[15] ships. In spite of the restoration of peace, which admittedly was of short duration, the French flag was unable to rectify a situation that was already becoming disastrous during the period from 1794 to 1795. It now only occupied third place, after Austria, whose captains were mostly Venetian, and whose territories, as we have seen, had been allocated to it by Napoleon in the Treaty of Campo Formio. By themselves, the Ragusans monopolised more than half of the contracts, and from the beginning of the wars of revolution, steadily improved their position in shipping in the Mediterranean. Also noteworthy is the new and not insignificant presence of the Russian flag, which was in fact flown by Ottoman-Greek ships and crews.

We do not know what criteria those who chartered ships used when selecting them, but we can attempt to detect possible preferences, or, on the contrary, those vessels that were actually rejected. Mahmoud Gelluli used two French ships and five Ragusan ships, while Moïse Hay chartered three Austrian, a Neapolitan, and four Ragusan ships. Yûnis Ben Yûnis might have been demonstrating a preference for Ragusan ships, with 35 of his charters out of 41, or 85%, but he also used French and Austrian ships. If Arnaud et Cie chartered two French ships, Barthez et Cie, plainly indifferent to any

[15] The Republic of the Seven Islands was composed of the Ionian Islands which had been Venetian until 1797, French until 1799, and then established as an independent republic under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan, on the Ragusan model, by the Russo-Turkish agreement of 21 March 1801. FUGIER, *op. cit.*, 1954, p. 131.

idea of national preference, were content to charter one Austrian and two Ragusan ships. Indeed, it seems to be an established fact that the only criteria governing the choice of ships by the merchants of Tunis were the availability and the professional competence of the crews, and especially the price.

CHAPTER SIX

FROM PRIVATEERING TO SHIPPING

We have seen how the signing of the different peace treaties in 1801–1802 contributed to the rapid re-establishment of maritime relations between Marseilles and North Africa. This resumption of activities was only temporary, however, since the war, which soon started up again between France and England, progressively drew most of the other European states into a generalised conflict. Now there remained the problem of how economic relations between Europe and the Maghreb could be maintained—relations which were important for both parties.

The Rise of the Neutral States

In wartime, because of the incontestable British naval superiority, only neutral ships could safely ensure maritime links between the Maghreb and the ports of France and its allies. The Table below shows the increase in the activity of the two principal neutral flags involved in these exchanges, Marseilles and Leghorn, with the situation of Malta, which had remained under English rule,[1] presented by way of contrast. We should nevertheless remember that Marseilles and Leghorn were above all destination ports, whereas Malta, while it was also a destination port for a good number of ships, was at the same time an important stopping-off place. The Maltese activity of the port, strictly speaking, was thus less than the movements of the registered ships, which in no way modifies the conclusions drawn from an examination of those ships.

[1] These figures are from the registers of the health authorities of the three ports. We know that in this period, all ships coming from the Levant or the Maghreb were subjected to a preventive quarantine due to the threat of the plague. Panzac, *Quarantaines et lazarets*..., 1986.

Table No. 9: Ships arriving from the Maghreb 1802–1806

	Marseilles			Leghorn			Malta		
Flag	1802	1804	1806	1802	1804	1806	1802	1804	1806
French	31	-	-	3	5	4	-	-	-
English	-	-	-	5	-	-	9	-	4
Spanish	2	9	-	1	1	-	-	4	-
Danish	3	4	-	9	1	7	-	-	-
Russian	2	-	-	2	-	-	4	4	4
Maltese	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	31	30
Austrian	11	15	3	27	4	4	3	12	6
Ragusan	18	46	11	53	7	9	17	19	10
Ottoman	-	0	-	-	-	4	4	4	10
Barbary Regencies	2	2	13	-	-	-	18	14	20
Others	4	3	1	3	3	4	1	4	4
Total	73	79	28	103	21	32	84	92	88

In 1802, the return to activity in the ports was immediate and vigorous. Marseilles received four ships from the Maghreb in 1801 and 73 in 1802, while Leghorn received 103 in the same year, and Malta 84. Although the demand for shipping was great, supply had changed considerably in ten years. In 1802, in spite of the restoration of peace, the French flag, with 31 ships out of 73, or 42.5% of the total, was unable to re-establish the hegemony it had had ten years earlier in its relations with the Maghreb. In addition to ships that had rarely been seen in Marseilles before (Spanish, Danish and Russian), it is striking to note the significant number of Austrian ships, most often ex-Venetian, with 15% of the traffic, and particularly the number of Ragusan ships, which handled a quarter of that region's trade with Marseilles. Added to this was the even more astonishing arrival of two ships flying the flag of the Barbary Regencies. At exactly the same date, Leghorn's traffic was provided mainly by Ragusa, with 53 ships, or 51.5% of the total, and Austria, 26.2%. Malta quickly recovered its substantial activity, with 84 ships from North Africa, of which 31.8% were sailing under the Maltese flag and 20% under the Ragusan. But the most significant development was the arrival of four Ottoman vessels, and especially, the presence of 18 ships from the Maghreb, which accounted for 21% of this activity.

Many of these flags provide evidence of the changes that had taken place in shipping in the Mediterranean since the end of the eighteenth century. We have already mentioned the newfound importance of the Austrian flag. But certainly the most striking change is the position of the Ragusan ships: by supplying a quarter of Marseilles' traffic, more than half of Leghorn's, and a fifth of Malta's, the flag of the little Adriatic republic took on a preponderant role in the western Mediterranean. Reappearing around the middle of the eighteenth century after a long period of decline, the Ragusan ships now profitted from the disappearance of the French to regain the position they had held fifteen years earlier. And finally, the real change in these ports was the presence of flags that had been virtually unknown until this time: the flag of Russia, complementing the activity of the Czar's naval fleet in the Adriatic, and an even greater novelty—the flags of the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary Regencies. These were Muslim states, which for centuries had been looked upon as formidable and feared enemies, and only a few short years earlier—at least as far as the North African regencies were concerned—had been considered hostile and had had their ships virtually barred from the port of Marseilles. Their presence is an indication of the profound political and psychological changes that had come about in recent years, but also of the modifications and economic necessities that had accompanied those changes.

War started up again in 1803, and its effects were soon felt. In 1804, Malta, which had remained under British authority—at least the initial cause of the resumption of hostilities between France and England—did not suffer from the war, and since it benefitted from British naval superiority, its traffic remained at previous levels. The situation was altogether different for the French ports, or those that were French protectorates, such as Leghorn.[2] The year 1804 marked the beginning of the collapse of the traffic in Leghorn, which dropped from 103 ships to 21, slightly picking up in the following years, with 32 ships in 1806. Although Marseilles held its own in 1804, it was only to succumb in turn in the following years. In fact, from 1804 on, the French flag disappeared totally, and the only ships that frequented Marseilles and Leghorn were foreign, i.e. neutral. In 1804,

[2] Since the Treaty of Aranjuez (21 March 1801), Tuscany had become the Kingdom of Etruria, for the benefit of the King of Spain's son-in-law, and a veritable French protectorate.

Ragusa, with 46 ships out of 79, carried 58.2% of that traffic, and Austria 19%. The war then spread to other states: on 14 December 1804, Spain allied herself with France and declared war on England. In 1805, the French hold over Italy, where Napoleon had proclaimed himself King on 18 March, was intensified; Napoleon annexed the Ligurian Republic in June, eventually dividing it into three French departments.

In the same period, England and Russia signed a pact of alliance on 11 April, 1805, joined by Austria on 16 June and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies on 10 September. These diplomatico-military realignments changed shipping activities dramatically and rendered the presence of neutral ships exceedingly rare. The flags of France's enemies, in particular Russian and Austrian, disappeared from Marseilles and Leghorn in 1806, as did the flag of France's Spanish allies, who had been supplying 11.4% of the Maghreb-Marseilles traffic in 1804. But the year 1806 presented even more surprises: the number of Austrian ships dropped from twelve to six in Malta, as a consequence of the Treaty of Pressburg of 28 December 1805, which officially recognized the defeat of the Austrians at Austerlitz and the secession to France of the Venetian territories annexed in 1797. Still more astonishing was the considerable reduction in the Ragusan presence in the three ports under discussion. In fact, the neutrality of the little republic had been under strain since the Treaty of Pressburg because of the French presence in Dalmatia in the north and the arrival of the Russians at the Gulf of Kotor in the south. In 1806, France occupied Ragusa, destroying its neutrality and then stripping it of its economic viability, announcing in a decree in January 1808 that "the Republic of Ragusa has ceased to exist" before integrating it into the newly-created Illyrian Provinces the following year.

In 1806, whether in Marseilles, where the traffic had collapsed, from 79 to 28 ships, or in Malta, holding its own with 88 ships, the neutral flags began to yield ground, mainly to the Ottomans and to the Maghrebi, who supplied 46.4% of Marseilles' meagre traffic with North Africa as well as 34.1% of the much more substantial traffic with Malta. We know that it was chiefly the Greek ships and crews, subjects of the Sultan, that flew the Ottoman flag, and that those years provided them with an opportunity for a well-recognised, extra-

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[3] Kremmydas, "*Capital et déploiement du commerce*", 1990; Leon, "*The Greek merchant marine*", 1972.

ordinary mercantile expansion.[3] The situation was completely different for the Maghrebi merchant ships, whose presence, as noticeable as it was unexpected, merits our detailed attention.

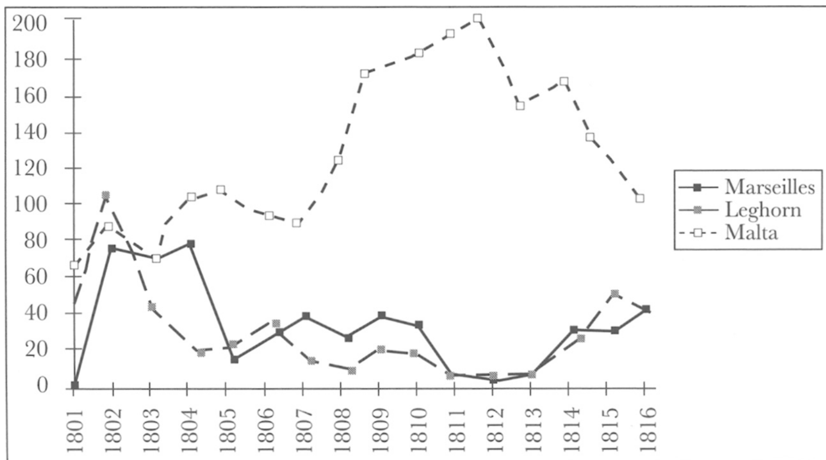
The Maritime Activity of the Maghrebi

The North African Presence in Europe

It was in Europe first of all that the North African presence was the most tangible and the most quantifiable. The best source for a study of the arrival of ships in most of the European ports during this period is the registers of the different port health authorities. All ships coming from the Levant and Barbary were required to provide a statement from their captains to be recorded in a register, and to undergo a compulsory period of quarantine.[4] These documents enable us to obtain information concerning the date of arrival, the name and type of the ship and its flag, as well as the captain's name, the point of departure, and often the stopovers, the composition of the cargo, a description of any noteworthy incidents, and of course the bill of health, providing information about the conditions of health and hygiene at the port of departure. The four ports studied were: Barcelona, the principal Spanish port in the Mediterranean; Marseilles and Leghorn, both with strong and ancient ties to the Maghreb; and finally Malta, which had come under British control, and whose growing importance we have mentioned above. The details available have enabled us to obtain two types of information: one, a series of facts concerning the general development of maritime traffic between the principal ports of Western Europe and the Maghreb; and the second, a breakdown of the respective positions in this activity held by the vessels flying the flag of the Barbary states.

The overall trend of the traffic in these ports shows a striking contrast for Marseilles and Leghorn against Malta. At the time of the Peace of Amiens in 1802, relations between Leghorn, Marseilles and

[4] PANZAC, *op. cit.*, 1986. For Marseilles: *Archives départementales des Bouches du Rhône*, AD BDR 200E 553–568; for Leghorn: *Archivio di Stato di Livorno*, ASL MS 704–705; for Malta: National Library of Malta, NLM, MS 818; for Barcelona, where this type of document does not exist, we used a report on ship movements in a contemporary periodical, the *Diario de Noticias*, through the good offices of Professor Eloy Martin Corrales of the University of Barcelona, whom we wish to thank here.

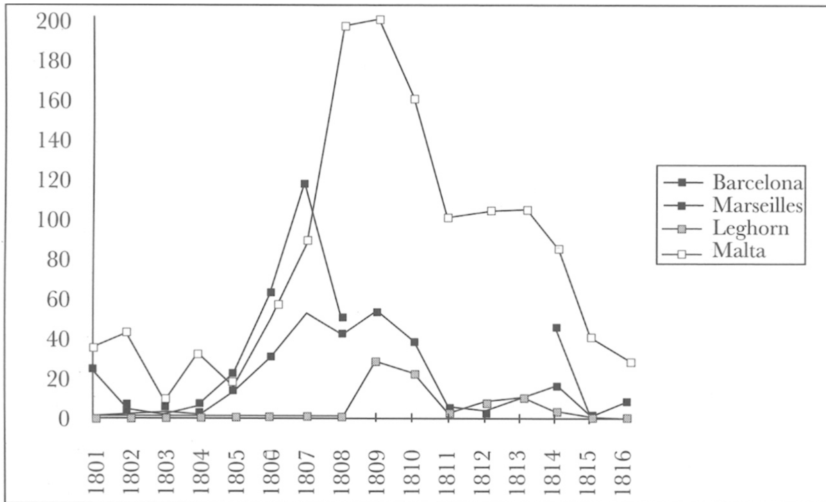


Ships from the Maghreb to Western ports (1801–1816)

Malta with North Africa, assessed according to the number of arrivals of ships, were roughly comparable, ranging from 78 in Marseilles to 105 in Leghorn. The resumption of hostilities in the following years brought about a severe drop in the number of arrivals, first in Leghorn, then in Marseilles. Between 1805 and 1810, thirty vessels a year were recorded for Marseilles, and only twenty for Leghorn; in the two years from 1811 to 1813, traffic was almost non-existent in the two ports, which received fewer than ten ships a year. A spectacular contrast is provided by the dramatic increase for Malta, whose traffic doubled between 1806 and 1812, reaching almost 200 ships in that year. During the Napoleonic Wars, Malta had become a highly active port, with a double function: it was first of all the principal English naval base in the Mediterranean, where the numerous warships blockading the coasts of the French Empire and pursuing its corsairs put in for supplies and repairs; it had also become the largest *entrepôt* port for the redistribution of merchandise in the Mediterranean. The restoration of peace in 1814, however, led to a marked decline for Malta,[5] which returned in 1816 to the level of 1804–1805, a trend that contrasts strongly with the resumption of

[5] The trough in 1813 is attributable to the plague, which had reached the island and diverted a significant number of ships. CASSAR, *Medical History of Malta*, 1965.

activities in Leghorn and Marseilles. The graph underlines the close relationship that existed during these fifteen years between Malta on the one hand and the ports of the French Empire on the other. The inactivity of the French ports, especially between 1808 and 1813, allowed Malta's prosperity; but the return of peace in 1814, which revived the activity of Marseilles and Leghorn, brought about Malta's decline. It is in this context that the activity of the ships of the Barbary states was taking place.



North African ships in Europe (1801–1816)

A small number of ships flying the flag of a North African state began to appear in Marseilles in 1802, maintaining a limited presence in 1803–1804, which corresponds to the period of the Peace of Amiens and a fresh increase in the commercial traffic of Marseilles. The return to war, the effects of which began to be felt from 1805 on, led to a drastic decline in the frequentation of the port of Marseilles by ships from the Maghreb, averaging thirty between 1805 and 1810. What is striking during these six years is the role played by the Maghrebi ships, which handled at least half of the traffic. The years 1811 to 1813 were the most difficult for Marseilles, whose relations with North Africa were nearly interrupted altogether—down to from three to seven ships a year—but with such low figures, the fact that Maghrebi ships were in a distinct majority of these is not

of great significance. The restoration of peace in 1814 stimulated a return to trade with North Africa, but at the same time it led to the reduction and then the disappearance of the Maghrebi ships from the port after 1815.

Developments in Leghorn were similar to those in Marseilles: the effects of war were felt earlier, beginning in 1804; during the period from 1804 to 1811, the level of traffic dropped even lower, with an average of twenty ships a year. The presence of North African ships in the port began later, in 1809, but their numbers were more significant, on average they supplied three-fifths of the traffic. The years from 1812 to 1816 were similar to those for Marseilles, characterised by the near-disappearance of all activity in the port, followed in 1814 by the restoration of commercial activities accompanied by the disappearance of Maghrebi ships.

The facts gathered for Barcelona show obvious similarities with Marseilles and Leghorn, at least until 1808. First, the low-level presence of North African ships during the Peace of Amiens, then a considerable increase beginning in 1805, when Spain's resumption of war alongside France took effect, with similar consequences. The presence of European ships, in particular those of Spain and France ceased, to be replaced in a spectacular manner by the dramatic increase in Maghrebi ships: nine in 1805 and 25 in 1806, peaking to 47 in 1807! Both the severe fall in 1808 and then the total disappearance of the ships (until 1814) were linked with military events. The French occupation in 1808 and the war led to a total paralysis of the port due to an extremely severe English blockade. The reopening of the port of Barcelona in 1814 was met with a return to maritime traffic, for which we know only about the Maghrebi participation, 19 ships in that year, only one in 1815, and four in 1816.

The situation in Malta during these sixteen years was very different. From 1801 to 1806, the volume of the island's maritime traffic with North Africa increased as of 1804, but up to 1806, the frequentation of Maghrebi ships was irregular, fluctuating between 5 and 20% of the total.[6] The years from 1807 to 1810 were marked at one and the same time by a considerable increase in overall traffic, and by

[6] We should not forget that in the initial years a number of the Maghrebi ships stopping over in Malta were none other than officially welcomed corsairs.

the place of the Maghrebi in the new activity. Ships from the Maghreb went from 89 in 1807 to 180 in 1810, and North African ships alone rose from 35 to 80, i.e. from 40 to 60% of the total, depending on the year. Quarantine of ships then brought a reduction in the Maghrebi presence, already only 20 to 27% of the total in 1811, in 1813 began a significant decline. This reduction only increased, and after 1814 took on the character of a radical fall for the Maghrebi flags, representing in 1816 no more than 11% of a traffic already greatly reduced.

Unlike what had happened in the total of ship arrivals, where Malta's curve is the opposite of those of Marseilles and Leghorn, arrivals involving Maghrebi ships alone all show the same pattern. Although the presence of a small number of North African ships is attested from 1801 on in Barcelona and in Malta, they did not arrive until 1802 in Marseilles, and 1809 in Leghorn. On the other hand, the pattern of the presence of these flags in the different European ports is perfectly parallel: a boom beginning in 1806, peaking in 1808 to 1810, followed by a fall, returning in 1816 to a situation almost identical to the one in 1801: a few ships in Barcelona and Malta, none at all in Marseilles and Leghorn. If the reversed overall situations of Marseilles and Leghorn on the one hand and Malta on the other resulted from the international context of the period, the changes in the traffic of ships flying Maghrebi flags reveal other factors, which are certainly intrinsic to the North African fleets, factors which we elucidate below.

Table 10: The Total Number of Maghrebi Ships in Europe (1801–1816)

State	Barcelona	Marseilles	Leghorn	Malta	Total
Morocco	53	30	2	23	108
Algiers	83	67	5	22	177
Tunis	10	17	20	258	305
Tripoli	0	2	8	218	228
Total	146	116	35	521	818

In reality, the term 'Maghrebi' covers four distinct flags, four different states, whose corsair activity was variable. The most active were the Tunisians and the Tripolitans, who were unable to return to action

until 1805, after the lifting of the American blockade imposed in 1800. The Algerians, who had maintained a more active involvement in privateering than the Tunisians and Tripolitans, were still ahead of the Moroccans, who, admittedly, divided their activities between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Table No. 10 also reveals the striking contrast between the considerable presence of the Maghrebi in Malta, with 521 ships, and their small number in Leghorn, 35. The Table also gives the geographical distribution of the different flags. The Moroccans and even more so Algerians made up the greater part of the Maghrebi presence in Barcelona, where Tunisians were rare and Tripolitans absent altogether. Roughly the same distribution was found in Marseilles. In spite of the relatively-low numbers, it is still possible to observe that the Maghrebi presence in Leghorn was very different. Tunisian ships represented more than half of the North African vessels, followed by Tripolitan ships: Algerian ships were rare, and Moroccan ones almost totally absent. The contrast is even more striking for Malta, where Tunisians and Tripolitans represented more than nine-tenths of the Maghrebi presence. Distance is obviously the principal factor in the distribution; creating a northwestern zone dominated by Algerians and Moroccans, and a southeastern zone where Tunisians and Tripolitans were by far the most numerous.

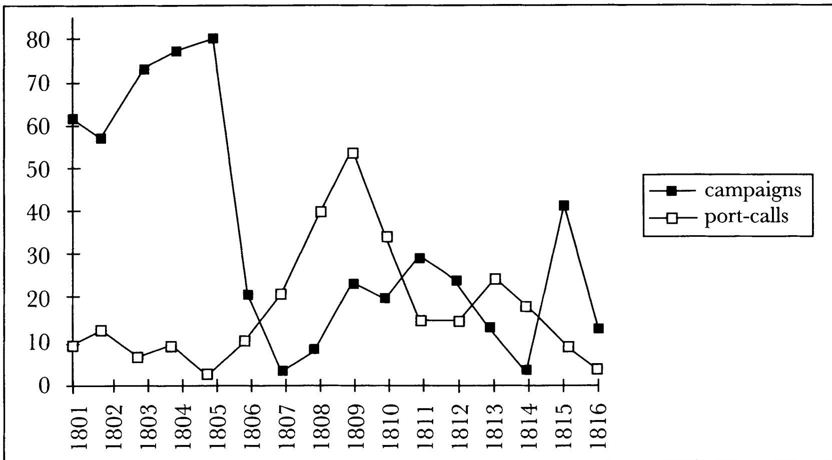
Shipping Replaces Corsair Activities

Of the hundreds of stopovers in Europe of ships flying North African flags, it is important to distinguish those of the corsairs from the merchantmen, a distinction that is made in our source material. Taken overall, out of the 818 Maghrebi ships passing through these four European ports, 83 were entered as corsair vessels, i.e. only one in ten. But their chronological distribution shows a totally new development, as is seen in the case of Malta, by far the most heavily frequented of the four ports.

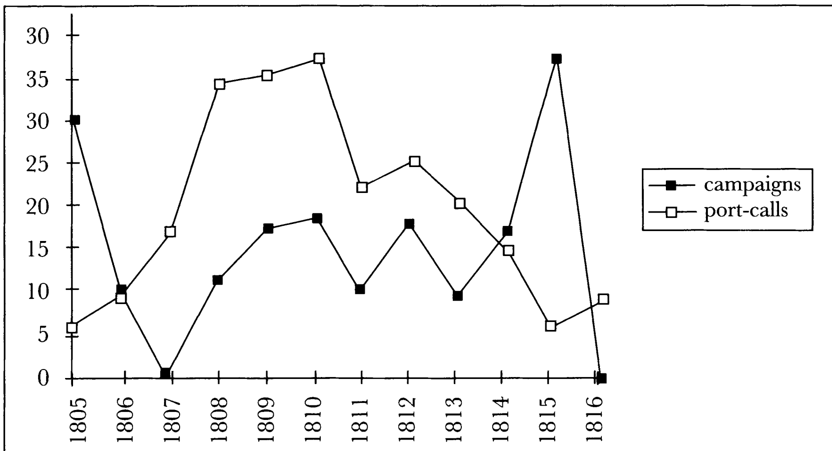
Table 11: Maghrebi Ships in Malta (1801–1816)

Year	Corsairs	Merchantmen	Total
1801	9	5	14
1802	8	10	18
1803	1	3	4
1804	8	6	14
1805	6	0	6
1806	3	17	20
1807	1	34	35
1808	6	73	79
1809	5	75	80
1810	9	56	65
1811	1	39	40
1812	2	40	42
1813	2	40	42
1814	2	32	34
1815	2	14	16
1816	1	13	12
Total	66	457	521

In sixteen years, Malta received 521 Maghrebi ships, of which 66 were corsairs (12.7% of the total). The chronological breakdown shows a very strong contrast beginning in 1806. From 1801 until 1805, 56 North African ships stopped over in Malta, of which 32 were corsairs, 57.1% of the total; whereas from 1806 to 1814, 437 ships were noted, of which 31 were corsairs, only 7.1% of the total. In the first period, the total was a yearly average of six or seven corsairs, as against only three or four in the following years. On the other hand, merchantmen, which could be counted in single figures until 1805, were now being counted in tens between 1806 and 1814. The following charts clearly illustrate this change in orientation: they include both the annual departures of corsairs from Tunis and Tripoli and the number of annual stopovers by merchant ships from the two regencies in the four European ports.



Corsair campaigns and commercial voyages from Tunis (1805–1816)



Corsair campaigns and commercial voyages from Tripoli (1805–1816)

On the two charts it is easy to trace the spectacular decline in privateering, admittedly continuing, but at a low level, from 1808 to 1814, finding fresh impetus in 1815, only to all but stop in 1816. In contrast, we notice the rapid and no less striking increase in maritime shipping, which rose to a peak in the years 1807 to 1811 before decreasing—more rapidly for Tunis, less so for Tripoli—to disappear almost totally in 1816. This change in the maritime activity of all the North African states obviously resulted from developments in international relations, which were followed with interest across the whole Mediterranean basin. It was in fact just after 1806 that the situation was the most favourable for the North Africans. The naval weakness of the French was such that it was rare for a ship flying the imperial flag to get past the British blockade. In Marseilles, 138 ships arrived from the Maghreb in the three years from 1807 to 1809: 37 of these were French, (37.3% of the total) as opposed to 76 North African vessels with 55.1% of a traffic which, although considerably reduced, was still not negligeable. In 1811–1813, only sixteen ships managed to get through the British net, ten Maghrebi and six French vessels. Thus over a period of seven years, Marseilles' maritime trade with North Africa had been largely catered for by Maghrebi ships, a generally ignored fact that deserves to be underlined.

The state of affairs in Leghorn was reminiscent of the situation in Marseilles, with several minor differences. In 1807–1808, only 22 ships arrived from North Africa, seven French and the others neutral: Austrian, Danish and American. There were no Maghrebi ships. Between 1809 and 1813, 59 ships from North African ports were registered, including 22 French vessels (37.7% of the total) and 31 Maghrebi ships, or 52.5%. Apart from a slight chronological discrepancy, these are practically the same ratios as in Marseilles, with the same conclusions.

The English, because of their supremacy at sea, were able to navigate with their own ships and those flying the Maltese flag without much risk.[7] Malta was also open to neutral flags and to allies of

[7] The British presence in Malta was theoretically temporary, whence the two flags. The Congress of Vienna of 1815 gave official recognition to the English possession of Malta, thereby bringing about the disappearance of the Maltese flag in favour of the Union Jack.

Great Britain. This explains why we find several ships flying the flag of Sicily, which had been saved for the Bourbons through the good offices of the English fleet, along with ships under the authority of the Spanish junta, an English ally, as well as Ottoman ships, which were present during the whole period apart from 1807 to 1809, years in which the Ottoman Empire was at war with Russia and England.[8] Here again, what is striking is the high number of Maghrebi ships. In four years, from 1807 to 1810, Malta received 562 ships from North Africa: 245 English or Maltese (43.6% of the total) and 259 Maghrebi (46.1%), a ratio similar to that for Marseilles, with a much greater overall number of ships. It was not due to a blockade but a rapid rise in the demand for ships, to cater for the ever-growing traffic created by the war, that had led to the rapid increase in the Maghrebi presence in Malta. From 1811 to 1814, traffic continued to grow, reaching 712 arrivals in four years. Among these, 479 were Anglo-Maltese (67.3%), as against 158 Maghrebi (22.2%). This represents a significant reversal of the situation. The demand for ships was greater than ever, but the ships meeting that demand were now English and Maltese, almost doubling their numbers, whereas the Maghrebi were experiencing a 40% cut-back. It is this regression, observed in all the ports, and its acceleration in the following years, that we must now explain.

The Geography of Maghrebi Shipping

Beginning in 1805, North African ships were increasingly replacing European ships immobilised by the war now become generalised. From then on they occupied a preponderant position in the traffic between the Maghrebi and European ports, but this was not the unique focus of their activity, as their vessels were also providing links throughout the Mediterranean.

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[8] Documents record the presence in Malta of ten Ottoman ships from ports in the Maghreb in 1805, the same number in 1806, then six in 1809, 19 in 1810, 18 in 1811, 14 in 1812, and 6 in 1813.

Arrivals in European Ports

The precise origin of the Maghrebi ships in the four European ports serving as our points of reference are a first indication of the new maritime activity of the North African states and the priorities of the ports that received them.

Table 12: The origins of the Maghrebi Ships in Europe (1801–1816)

	Barcelona		Marseilles		Leghorn		Malta	
Region	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Maghreb	27	20.9	83	78.3	32	94.1	328	74.7
Levant	0	0	4	3.8	2	5.9	82	18.7
Europe	102	79.1	19	17.9	0	0	29	6.6
Total	129	100	106	100	34	100	439	100

The number of Maghrebi merchant ships received in these ports was very uneven: Malta received twelve, Marseilles and Barcelona three and Leghorn only one; but for all that, the division of the originating ports of these ships into three regions is no less revealing of the principal orientations of this activity. Except for Barcelona, the Maghrebi ships, infinitely more than any others, provided for the ongoing relations between Europe and the Maghreb, accounting for 74.7% of the ships in Malta, 78.3% of those in Marseilles and 94.1% of those in Leghorn. Conversely, once again with the exception of Barcelona, which was the predominant place of origin (79.1%), arrivals from other European ports were minimal, even nonexistent, as in Leghorn. For the Levant, which held only a very minor place everywhere, a destination that diminished as the distance between the port in question and the eastern Mediterranean increased. Ships of Levantine origin represented 18.7% of the total in Malta, 5.9% in Leghorn, 3.8% in Marseilles, and 0% in Barcelona!

However new this activity was for the Maghrebi states, they clearly respected the rules of economic profitability imposed on the captains of the ships by the charterers. If commanding a merchantman was a novelty for most of the *raïs*, maritime trade was obviously much more familiar to the Maghrebi merchants, who found in the international circumstances of the moment the perfect occasion to enlarge their field of activity.

Leghorn
Of all the Mediterranean ports in the Napoleonic Empire, Leghorn was probably the one that suffered the most from war, which is confirmed by the small number of Maghrebi ships arriving in the port during those years. Out of the 34 ships noted in the documents, twenty were from Tunis, six from Tripoli, five from Algiers and a couple from the Levant.

Marseilles
Politically and economically sharing the same fate as Leghorn, the great French port presents certain similarities with its Tuscan counterpart. As with Leghorn, its relations with North Africa were seriously affected by the war and were maintained chiefly through the good offices of the Maghrebi ships. Here the Regency of Algiers was in the privileged position with 55 ships, of which 39 represented direct relations with Algiers itself, 16 with Tunisia and 12 with Morocco. If the Levant was almost out of reach, the links with Europe were far from negligeable—Europe now meant just Spain—although with 19 ships, its position was superior to those of Morocco and Tunisia.

Barcelona
As we have seen, the maritime traffic of the Maghrebi ships in Barcelona was in stark contrast to the situation in the other European ports. Relations between Barcelona and the Levant were nonexistent, and direct ties with the Maghreb were greatly reduced, to barely a fifth of the total, primarily with the Regency of Algiers—twenty ships against three with Morocco, the same number with Tunisia, and only one with faraway Tripoli. The major activity of the Maghrebi ships—Algerian, and even more importantly, Moroccan—consisted above all in linking the Spanish ports to each other, and then to France. The list of Spanish ports includes seventeen names of towns spread all along Spain's Mediterranean coast, from Algeciras to Barcelona, passing principally via Malaga, Motril, Almeria, Aguila, Cartagena, Alicante and Valencia.[9] But even more than the coast,

[9] Other ports mentioned one or two times are: Almazzaron, Ayamonte, Denia, Jabez, Torrevieja and Xabea.

the Maghrebi ships linked the Balearic Islands to Barcelona: thirty-nine ships, including 26 for Palma—as compared to 49 for the coastal region—supplied this service from 1801 to 1808, the years that concern us here.

The second task to which the Maghrebi captains were committed was providing links with France. A comparison of the French and Spanish sources brings to the light the pendulum effect of this traffic. For example, in the entries into the registers for the winter of 1807–1808: on 27 December 1807, the Moroccan *raïs* Abdelfassi Youssef's merchant xebeck arrived in Marseilles from Cartagena; two months later, on 28 February 1808, Abdelfassi Youssef reached Barcelona from Marseilles; on 18 August of the same year, his arrival in Barcelona was recorded, with no specific mention of his point of departure, except that it was a French port. Another Moroccan, Ahmed Kardam, arrived in Barcelona from Torrevieja on the First of January 1808; he then left for Marseilles, which he reached on 4 February, leaving shortly afterwards for Barcelona, where he landed on 20 March of the same year. These movements between European ports were relatively fast, since the quarantines were brief, unlike those for the ships coming from the Levant and Barbary. This great inter-Spanish coastal traffic, with its extension into France, represented three-quarters of the activity of the Maghrebi ships in Spain from 1801 to 1808. Through an astonishing reversal of situations linked to circumstances, these ships were practicing the very trade to which the Europeans had devoted themselves throughout the eighteenth century, the maritime caravan, but this time in European waters.

Malta

Malta was certainly the most active port in the Mediterranean between 1804 and 1815, the war years of the Consulate and the Empire. The single existing list of the ports of departure of the Maghrebi ships arriving in Malta provides information about this activity, and includes fifty names of towns spread all around the Mediterranean basin. Quite a few of these places figure only once, the products of chance linked to a shipment of cargo or to some urgent necessity for transport to Malta. On the other hand, there do appear to be favoured destinations for the North African ships. Ships from ten of the fifty ports used for the departures account for 363 entries out of 439, 82.7% of the total. These are:

Alexandria:	15	Smyrna:	23
Bengazi:	18	Sfax:	55
Crete:	13	Sousse:	31
Djerba:	10	Tripoli:	121
Morea:	17	Tunis:	62

Whatever else they were, these departure ports of the North African ships in Malta were first of all situated in the Ottoman Empire, with a marked predominance of the Maghreb over the Levant, 295 against 68, or 81.2% and 18.8% respectively. It is of course readily apparent that the two most heavily frequented Levantine ports were Alexandria and Smyrna, followed by the ports of Crete and the Morea. But the favoured partner of Malta was clearly the Maghreb: the ports of the Regencies of Tripoli; Tripoli itself and Bengazi, total 137 arrivals; whilst those of Tunisia; Tunis, Djerba, Sfax and Sousse, account for 158.

In comparison to the three other ports, Malta also had two original features. The first is obviously linked to its importance, during those years, at least, when it was frequented by great numbers of ships (the Maghrebi alone represent several hundred); the second is related to the island's situation in the Mediterranean. Malta was a port of call for ships with cargoes destined for the island itself, as were Marseilles and Leghorn for their own trade, but, because of its geographical position, it was also a stopover on the Mediterranean maritime routes. On arrival in port, each ship was registered by the Maltese health authority, with a brief indication of the type of vessel it was. A distinction was made between those that must immediately go into quarantine and those that could leave without submitting to this formality, obligatory in every European port during this period. The first category usually had Malta as a final destination, while the others were merely stopping over. Out of 439 Maghrebi ships, 305 (70.5%) belonged to the first category, the destination of their cargoes or passengers was Malta itself. Not all merchandise that was unloaded was destined for local consumption, and a significant portion of it was transshipped and taken to other ports. This activity, to which we will return, gives evidence of Malta's role as a crossroads for maritime trade in the Mediterranean during the wars of the First Empire.

Even though the role of the port as a stopover had diminished, it still remained an important function, representing 30% of the passage of Maghrebi ships. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few

cases, the registers do not indicate the eventual destinations of the ships. We have a few examples: the *raïs* Ismail's Algerian polacca which, on arrival in Algiers on 23 October 1806, landed a Maltese woman before sailing for Istanbul in order to drop off thirty-four Turks. On 8 August 1808, the Tunisian polacca of the *raïs* Ali Capta arrived from Sfax with a load of paper, fezes and woolen fabrics to be taken to the Levant. In 1810, a polacca from Tripoli stopped over in Malta: after having unloaded 130 head of cattle and 30 sheep, it took on board 130 bales of cotton destined for Morocco.

The traffic between the different Maghrebi states and the European ports was composed above all of ships flying the flags of those states. In Marseilles, out of 55 ships arriving from the Regency of Algiers, four were Moroccan, one Tunisian and fifty Algerian; 121 ships arrived in Malta from Tripoli, four of which were Tunisian and 117 Tripolitan, while in the group of 61 ships that linked Tunis to Malta, it is no surprise to find three Tripolitan and 58 Tunisian vessels. This veritable 'national preference' is one of the striking features of Maghrebi navigation, as is revealed in its frequentation of European ports, or more precisely, of several of them. In spite of the quantity, quality and diversity of the information gathered in Malta, Marseilles and Barcelona, it is obviously indispensable to examine the movements of the ships flying the flags of the regencies in the ports of the Maghreb itself.

Ship Movements in Ports of the Maghreb

For our evaluations of the activity of the European ports we had access to the registers of the various health authorities, documents that are considered trustworthy. There is no equivalent source for the Maghrebi ports, and therefore we have used a more heterogeneous and, most often, fragmentary or partial documentation. What conclusions we can draw from it are nevertheless useful, and illustrate quite clearly the maritime activity of the ports of the regencies during these exceptionally fruitful years.

Algiers

The information is mainly from commercial documents, chiefly a few manifests of ships' merchandise prepared for a small number of ship charters and customs receipts related to vessels coming from or going to Algiers. Here again, we cannot be exhaustive, as the source

documents preserved in the French Consulate in Algiers only cover the years 1809 and 1810.[10] According to details listed in them, Algiers received 47 ships originating from:

Alicante:	6	Tetuan:	1
Cartagena:	30	Marseilles:	1
Torrevieja:	9		

Here it is the ports of southeast Spain, Alicante, Cartagena and Torrevieja, all very near Algiers—around two hundred nautical miles—that are the most frequent. A breakdown of ship movements according to flag also confirms the place occupied by the Maghrebi fleets. Of the 47 arrivals, 30 were Spanish (68.3%), 14 Algerian (29.8%) and three Moroccan (6.4%). Further information of some interest is found in the correspondence of the Spanish Consul in Algiers, which unfortunately only concerns the Spanish ships for 1812. In that year, 43 ships came to Algiers, primarily from Majorca (15 ships), Gibraltar (13) and Alicante (11), but also from Cartagena, Cadiz, Ibiza, Malaga, Almeria and Benidorm. At the same time, Oran recorded the arrival of 50 Spanish ships, primarily from Majorca (28) and Cartagena (9), Alicante (2), as well as Valencia, Vinaroz and Ibiza. These rare pieces of information confirm Spain's important place in the maritime trade of the Regency of Algiers, one which we have already pointed out in connection with Barcelona.

Tunis

Unfortunately the information concerning Tunis is very limited as well as disparate. In 1811, 67 ships flying the English flag arrived in the Regency of Tunis, 50 in Tunis, eleven in Sousse, five in Sfax and one in Monastir, though we do not know what ports they left from.[11] In the same year, 14 ships left Tunis for Europe, for the ports of the French Empire or those of allies like the Kingdom of Naples. These figures reveal the recent increase of English maritime presence in Tunisia, and the spectacular decrease of the French. Our details concerning the French come from various quarterly statistical reports on the movements of French ships in Tunis, which were sent to Paris by the French Consul in the years 1809 to 1814. The

[10] *Archives d'outre-Mer*, Aix-en-Provence, A.O.M., Alger 1A 118–119.
[11] Public Record Office, London, F.O. 77.

series is incomplete, the result of the risks run by French ships, and their small number in this period. Those that managed to cross the Mediterranean bear witness in particular to the low level of French maritime trade in Tunisia at the time of the First Empire. For two quarters, the last of 1813 and the first of 1814, the Consul attempted to paint a picture of the movements in the port of Tunis including therein the flags of all ships. His reports, although only covering the last six months of the war, are quite revealing as to Tunis's maritime trade situation at the time.

In total, the document recorded 42 arrivals and 38 departures, that is, 80 movements in the port in six months. Of this number, Mahon,[12] with 26 entries (32.5%) was the most important partner of Tunis, followed by Malta, with twenty movements (25%). Next came Naples, with ten movements (12.5%), Cagliari, six, Marseilles and Leghorn, three movements each. Also appearing on the list were Alicante, Genoa, Ancona, Palermo and Gibraltar. If the primacy of Mahon is somewhat surprising, Tunis's other trade relations are in comformity with the international situation of the moment: the importance of Malta, Naples and Cagliari, close partners, and of course, the disappearance of Marseilles and Leghorn, which we have noted elsewhere. What leads us to question the completeness of this picture is the signal absence of the Ottoman world with just four movements—a round-trip to Alexandria, an arrival from Bona and a departure for Sousse—that represents a mere 5% of the Tunis traffic. It is impossible to verify these figures, which reflect a certain reality, but which surely attribute a better share than is deserved to Tunis's European connections.[13]

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[12] The importance of the port of Mahon is related in particular to the key role of its quarantine post for the Spanish health authorities. Built in the last decade of the eighteenth century, it received most of the ships coming from the Levant and Barbary, obliged to submit to a very strict quarantine because the plague had been rampant in the Ottoman Empire since 1812. Ships were not admitted into the Spanish ports until they had undergone the quarantine. PANZAC, *op. cit.*, 1986, pp. 177–179.

[13] The increasing rarity of links between Tunisia and the Levant was real, however, as is shown by the changes in the number of charters by the merchants of Sfax, always biased towards the Levant. From 1801 to 1806, they hired an average of 24 ships a year; this figure fell to four or five in the period from 1807 to 1811, and to zero in 1812–1813, rising back to three at the end of 1814. ZOUARI, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

The Consul also noted the flags of these ships, whose percentages clearly reflect their origins. Spanish ships contributed 31.3% of the total, English ships 28.7%, and Sicilian 8.8%. The English and their allies thus constituted more than two-thirds of the traffic in the port of Tunis, well ahead of the combined flags of the Ottoman Empire representing a quarter: 18.8% for Tunis, 5% for the Ottoman flag per se, and 1.2% for Tripoli. The humble position of the Tunisian flag reflects the withdrawal of the Tunisian ships, evident in 1811–1812. The small number of French ships (5, representing 6.2%) is an indication of the ongoing situation of near-disappearance of France from the Maghreb for almost a decade.

The consular document also provided a brief description of the cargoes of these ships as well as an approximate estimate of their value. For the six-month period, the figures that emerge from this source show a total of 1,256,014 francs in imports and 1,573,048 francs in exports, which, if we double these figures to obtain a yearly estimate, adds up to 5,662,125 francs in maritime trade, with imports representing 44.4% and exports 55.6% of the total. This is a far cry from the figures for the 1780s, when this trade was evaluated at between 12 and 16 million francs, and over twenty million in the beginning of the 1790s. In spite of their limitations, these figures point to two ongoing features of the maritime trade of the Tunis regency: the clear superiority of exports over imports, which has already been noted, and the preponderant role in this trade of France, whose almost total absence in this period is not filled by any other countries.

Tripoli

This is the only port for which we possess continuous information (1805 to 1815) covering the ships flying the flag of this regency and belonging to the pasha. Unlike the ships of Tunis and Algiers, the Tripolitan ships received French passports, whether or not they were corsairs, and we feel justified in thinking that any lacunae in the register related to them are insignificant. According to this document, Tripolitan merchant ships made 212 voyages between 1805 and 1815, divided up as follows:

- Levant 38 (17.9%): Acre 3; Alexandria 14; Athens-Piraeus 1; Crete 8; Rhodes 1; Smyrna 12.

- Maghreb 85 (40.1%): Algiers 3; Bengazi 56; Bona 7; Derna 5; Morocco 5; Misurata 1; Sfax 4; Tunis 4.
- Europe 89 (42%): Spain 1; Lisbon 3; Leghorn 5; Malta 77; Marseilles 2; Trieste 1.

The pasha's Tripolitan ships were present in the whole of the Mediterranean Basin, and several even braved the Atlantic to serve the ports of Morocco or Portugal. The majority of them (58%) provided the links with the Arabo-Muslim world, especially the Maghreb, more than with the Levant. But Europe, destination of 42% of the voyages, was an important destination. Although Alexandria and Smyrna were the most heavily frequented of the Levantine ports, it was chiefly the ports that depended on the pashalik of Tripoli, Misurata, Derna, and above all Bengazi, that made up almost three-quarters of the Maghrebi destinations. The ports of the regency of Algiers, Algiers and Bona, like those of the regency of Tunis, were only a very secondary destination. It is clearly the distribution of the voyages to Europe that best reflects the effects of the European wars. Although Leghorn, and even more importantly, Marseilles, were now no more than almost insignificant partners, Malta had become the principal destination for the Tripolitan ships, with 77 voyages out of 212, i.e., 36.3% of the total. In fact, Malta, Bengazi, Alexandria and Smyrna accounted for three-quarters of the activity of the Tripolitan ships.

Although the pasha of Tripoli owned the major part of the commercial fleet of the regency in those years, he was not the only shipowner. Unfortunately, accounts and information concerning the ships belonging to private individuals are fragmentary, although they do give some idea of the situation. The first indication of the existence of these privately-owned ships comes from Maltese sources. For the period from 1805 to 1815, there are entries concerning 121 Maghrebi ships arriving in Malta from Tripoli, of which 117 were flying the flag of that regency, while the passport register for Tripoli records only 77 voyages with Malta a destination. Thus, the ships belonging to the pasha were providing around two-thirds of the maritime traffic, with the remaining third ensured by the ships belonging to private individuals.

A document in Arabic is a further source of information of great interest, although it must be used with discretion. It is the contemporary ledger of an important merchant in Tripoli, Hassan Al-Faqih

Hassan. The section of this ledger that has been published, covering the years 1810 to 1832, includes numerous entries related to maritime trade, primarily for the two years from 1812 to 1814.[14] The author mentions the arrival and departure of various ships in the port of Tripoli, but there is no way for us to verify his critera of selection. We can nevertheless imagine that the ships that figure in his ledger are those in which he had an interest, directly or through associates; whilst vessels in his list may have been included simply because he knew the captain, the charterer or the passengers. Altogether, for the two-year period from 1812 to 1814, we have found seven references to ships belonging to the pasha that figure in the register of passports, and nineteen that are missing, whose owners we are unable to determine with any degree of certainty.[15]

Nevertheless, the merchant's records also provide a list of the ships' destinations: two vessels were going to or returning from Alexandria, another three were going to or from Bengazi; other destinations were Crete, with one ship, Istanbul and Izmir with seven, Leghorn with one, Morocco with three, Marseilles with three, and Sfax with one. The statistical base is very sparse, but one cannot help but be struck by how little Europe is represented, with only four ships out of nineteen, when the Ottoman world (completed by Morocco)—especially faraway Anatolia and the capital of that Empire—seems to have carved out the lion's share for itself. Without more complete information, we cannot venture beyond this observation, but we feel that an analysis of the traffic in Tripoli based on the movements of the pasha's ships alone should be used with prudence, and that the commercial relations of Tripoli were more 'oriental' than we may at first think. Such an observation does not, however, contradict the idea of the strengthening of economic ties between Tripoli and Europe.

A comparison with the main features of the maritime trade of the port of Tripoli almost half a century earlier has much to teach us. We know that in the eighteenth century, this trade was provided by

[14] Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, *op. cit.*, 1984, pp. 179–280.

[15] Several of these clearly belong to private individuals, because the author specifies that they were rented by the Pasha; one left for Istanbul on 30 November 1813, another, owned by Mahmoud Gomeira, left for Marseilles on 24 December 1813. Similarly, the ship chartered by Youssef Missaoui belonged to Hadj Ali Ben Ibrahim.

European ships, chiefly French. The movements of these ships in the port of Tripoli from 1766 to 1773, the only years for which we have any information, reflect quite clearly the nature of the maritime links of the period. By comparing them carefully with the facts we have gleaned from the passport register, we notice that in forty years, the role of the European ports grew appreciably, passing from 26.7% to 42% of the total, chiefly at the expense of the Levant, which declined from 29.2% to 17.9%. Bengazi was an important destination in 1766, and its position became even stronger in the beginning of the nineteenth century, at the expense of Tunisia. In the period from 1766 to 1773, the Tunisian ports constituted 22.8% of the total of Tripoli's traffic, and 51.9% of the traffic of all the Maghrebi ports. From 1805 to 1815, the figures dropped to 3.8% and 9.4% respectively. It would not be unreasonable to believe that part of the maritime trade between the two regencies was provided by Tunisian ships, but what can be called a collapse was above all the result of the boom in the trade of both regencies with Europe.

In the years 1766 to 1773, Malta was already the principal partner of Tripoli, ahead of Marseilles, but the war obviously accentuated their difference in market shares, causing the traffic of Tripoli to rise from 10.5% to 36.3%. Behind these figures, which reflect both the changes and the constants in Tripoli's maritime trade, it is important to emphasise a fundamental reality. In the eighteenth century, whatever trading partners the regency may have had, the links were provided by European ships. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the vessels maintaining these links were primarily Tripolitan. A question remains: What were all these Maghrebi ships transporting around the Mediterranean and even beyond?

Maritime Transportation

In the absence of satisfactory sources, it is impossible to paint a complete picture of the maritime traffic of the regencies of the Maghreb in the beginning of the nineteenth century—and in any case, this is not really our intention. On the other hand, we do know that from this time on, the young commercial fleets of the Maghreb would handle an important segment of this trade, and also, that we possess a not insignificant amount of documentation related to them. It

is therefore from this information that we will attempt to outline the salient features of that activity, and to ascertain in what measure the North Africans engaged in shipping resembled or remained distinct from the Europeans they had partially replaced.

The Charter Contracts

Chartering, i.e. hiring a ship, necessarily involved the establishment of a contract between its captain and the temporary user or users of the vessel. This contract, which set forth the conditions of the charter, could take different forms. The simplest was the oral contract, based on the good faith of those entering into it, often strengthened by the presence of witnesses. This was the method usually chosen by the Muslim merchants using the services of ships commanded by captains who were also Muslims, most often for coastal navigation or for voyages to ports in the Islamic world. Clearly this type of agreement left no direct trace, but could be mentioned in correspondence. The other method had a private character, but in a simplified written form drawn up by the two parties. Examples of such contracts are rare, as they were usually not preserved once the voyage was completed but one dated 14 October 1803 between Yûnis Ben Yûnis and Steffano Cavalli, captain of the Ragusan vessel *Pallade* states:

> . . . the present [document], although privately written, is intended by the contracting parties to have the same force and authority it would have if it were a public act . . .[16]

We have seen how the Maghrebi charterers normally drew up contracts with European captains based on precise and detailed wording, in order to avoid, as far as possible, any risk of later disputes.

In the early nineteenth century, this practice, seemingly usual between representatives of two such different cultures and henceforth secular, was unexpectedly extended. The documents show that the captains of Maghrebi merchant ships, who from now on were in competition with the European ships, had adopted the same form of charter contract. It was also the case, of course, when the captain

[16] A.N. Paris A.P., 134/10. ". . . *la presente, ben che privata scrittura, ma che intendono le parti contraenti abbia la stessa forza e vigore come le fosse un'atto publico* . . ."

was Muslim and the charter company European, since it was the same situation in reverse. On 27 July 1810, the Algerian *raïs* Hadj Mohammed Ben Soliman agreed, in a contract written and signed by the two parties in Tetuan, to take a cargo of "320 to 335 quintals of Mogador gum" to Algiers on behalf of François Lagarde, a French merchant. Written in Spanish, this contract consisted of all the articles that were found in the other documents of this type. But there was something even more unexpected: contracts written according to the same model, with the same clauses, between a Muslim captain and the owner of the chartered ship, also a Muslim. For example, the contract concluded on 11 February 1806 in the chancellery of the Austrian consulate, between again Yûnis Ben Yûnis, a merchant in Tunis, and now the *raïs* Saïd, commander of a brig flying the Tunisian flag, at anchor in Porto-Farina. Note that the contract bears the Christian date and the signatures of the charterer and the representative of the illiterate *raïs* '*in idioma arabo*'.

Yûnis Ben Yûnis treated a Tunisian captain just as he would a Ragusan or French captain, drawing up in a European consulate a charter contract that contained the same clauses and, very likely, a price based on the same rates, payable in Spanish currency. By this procedure, one of the most important merchants of the regencies and very much involved in trade with Europe, he was openly acknowledging the qualities of European maritime law with its precise details and written guarantees. In the same period, the charterers from Sfax, although they exchanged written contracts with the Christian caravan captains, did not do so with the Muslim owners of the local coasters serving the neighbouring ports of Djerba, Gabes and even Tripoli, but trusted in simple verbal agreements.

The Cargoes

The ships' cargoes provide the basis of our knowledge of maritime trade. We know them because of the ships' manifests, detailed inventories which enable us to produce statistics, distinguish between imports and exports, follow commercial trends—in short, let us make a detailed evaluation of the economy of the port, region or country in question. These practices were used by Europeans and Muslims alike, with the difference that the practice of writing manifests had become usual with the Europeans, whereas it was still rare for the Muslims. The habit of having written documents now becoming

established among the Muslims was however not an indication that they were renouncing Muslim law. As for the regencies, we have only a few dozen of these documents, which concern Tunisian ships, and only for the period from 1809 to 1813. They are all the more valuable for revealing the way maritime shipping was organised and operated. The ship's manifest, which was also called the declaration, or bill of lading, was the receipt delivered by the captain, acknowledging that he had loaded certain merchandise aboard his ship. It included information about the ship, its captain, its destination, detailed facts about the merchandise on board, including indications about which part of the cargo belonged to which individual as well as the name of the consignees to whom the goods were to be delivered.

The manifests discussed here concern only Tunisian ships whose papers, charter contracts and bills of lading were drawn up and authenticated by the shipper in the presence of the chancellor of the Austrian consulate in Tunis. We should not forget that the charterer was the one who hired the ship, whereas the shipper only furnished the merchandise being carried. Each ship's voyage therefore necessitated two distinct documents, the charter contract and the bill of lading. Both were provided for the ship of the *raïs* Ali Coli, whose charter contract we possess, drawn up in the name of Yûnis Ben Yûnis, as well as the bill of lading for the cargo dated 21 April 1813. In addition, it was the *raïs* who was responsible for the sale of the merchandise, acting as the supercargo. There was a single cargo, which was composed of only two products whose origin was unusually indicated: the salt was from Tunis, but the valonia, a type of acorn that was used for tanning leather and dyeing fabrics, had been brought aboard in Tunis and was being re-exported to Naples by the shipper.

A second example, from 9 December 1812, involves again only one shipper, but an important personage, the bey's prime minister, who, alongside his high functions, or rather, thanks to them, doubled as an active businessman, to this end making use of the services of an agent. In this case the cargo was much more varied, primarily cowhide, but also oil, dates, pistachos, scagliola (a type of millet) and wax. The shipper added to this merchandise, *in extremis*, a considerable sum of money in Spanish currency, equivalent to about a hundred thousand francs, whose ultimate destination we unfortunately do not know. Here, too, the consignee was the captain, Hassan

Morali, one of the most reputable Tunisian *raïs*, who was also a businessman, which explains the trust shown in him by Yussuf sâhib at-tabaa.

The cargo listed in the third example, merchandise shipped in Ali Mistiri's xebeck, included a collection of goods destined for Malta loaded by four shippers: Polizoi Crendiropulo and Antonio Vafiopulo, both Ottoman Greeks, Gabriel d'Abram Enriques, a Jew, and Hadj Abdan Seda, a Muslim, all Tunisian subjects. This religious coexistence, found quite often in the business world, was strengthened here by the merchants' obligation to combine their loads of goods in order to dispatch them. They hired a supercargo named Anastasio Janopulo, as indicated in the health register for the port of Malta, which logged the arrival of the ship on 14 February 1809. All the shippers had different consignees: those of the two Greeks, like those of the Muslim, were Greek, whereas the Jew's consignee was an Italian. The bill of lading carefully distinguishes between the loads of the four merchants, providing details for each of them, while the Maltese register enumerates in a single line the main goods that were unloaded: oil, leather, paper, octopi, hats. Dividing up shipments was at one and the same time an economic necessity and a measure of prudence.

These three examples show that in practice, the charterer, who went aboard the ship, was also the shipper, or one of the shippers. If he was not present on the ship, he was represented by an associate, who was therefore also a shipper. Another solution was for the one who chartered the ship to designate an agent to handle his affairs, a supercargo, who in certain cases could be the captain of the ship himself, especially when there were many shippers. The other bills of lading that are available to us belong in one or another of the categories we have described here.

In 1810, the war between Imperial France and England and its allies became markedly more economic, forcing the French consuls to specify the port of origin of merchandise exported from the Maghreb towards imperial ports. The statements preserved for Tunis[17]

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[17] "Merchandise coming from foreign countries included in the present certificates are all accompanied by their certificates of original provenance from the consuls of His Majesty in the places from which they come, and the captured objects have been sold at public auction in a consulate before being shipped, as having come from the different captures taken by French corsairs to the ports of the Kingdom of Tunis." A.M.A.E., C.C.C. Tunis 39.

provide details for both the French and the Tunisian ships, concerning not only their cargoes, but also their origins. On 22 March 1810, Amor Galban, a merchant from Tunis, loaded into the Tunisian xebeck of the *raïs* Ibrahim el-Kabat bound for Manfredonia; twelve barrels of molasses, ten baskets of dates from Tunis, one case of wax candles from Algiers and twenty bunches of grapes from Tunis. On 9 May of the same year, R. Forbes, an American merchant established in Tunis, loaded a shipment of goods onto the Tunisian schooner *Fatima* commanded by the *raïs* Mohammed Uskuplu, consisting of 67 bales of cotton, 278 barrels of potash and 1,200 lengths of timber all brought from the United States. The *Fatima*, which left Tunis on 12 May, arrived in Marseilles on the 19th, according to the register of the health authorities in Marseilles, which duly noted its cargo. The list was identical to the one in the bill of lading prepared in Tunis. Naturally the diversity in these shipments is also found in the merchandise loaded onto the French ships in Tunis, like Captain Antoine Ville's schooner *La Veloce*, bound for Genoa, which, on 9 January 1809, took on board a cargo consisting of 40 bales of cotton and four barrels of mastic from Smyrna, five baskets of wax from Algeria, a case of elephant tusks from Morocco, barilla ash from a captured corsair ship, along with soap, dates, alfa and coils of rope from Tunisia.

Exports from Tunis that were headed for Napoleonic Europe were therefore made up of two categories of merchandise. The first included local products, such as wool, sponges, barilla, soap, dates and dried fruits, supplying a time-honoured flow of trade; and the second was much more diversified, with products from much farther afield. The list of goods brought to Tunis and then re-exported is very long: Egyptian natron, wax from Algiers, senna, wool and barilla from Tripoli, elephant tusks from Africa brought in from Morocco, valonia from the Morea, and especially raw cotton from Smyrna. In 1810, out of 67 ships that had set sail for the ports of imperial Europe, Marseilles, Leghorn, Naples and Civita-Vecchia, 22 were transporting cargoes of Anatolian cotton, with a total of 856 bales, 150,000 pounds weight, relatively little compared to the imports of Marseilles alone in the years 1785 to 1789 (6.8 million pounds a year), but it was an indication of efforts made to lesson the effect of the English maritime blockade. In the holds of these ships could also be found various exotic goods: coffee and pepper from Java, coffee and sugar

from Cuba, tobacco and cotton from Virginia, quinine from Vera Cruz, and on two occasions, packages of porcelain from Nankin, China! Trade in these goods was particularly tied to international circumstances. In the decade from 1805 to 1814, Tunis, because of its neutrality of geographical position, became a centre of redistribution for merchandise bound for Europe. In such partially reorientated maritime trade, the Tunisian ships had no shortage of work.

The wars in the beginning of the nineteenth century were to profoundly alter maritime trade in the Maghreb, partly by considerably reducing the role of France, and further, by providing new partners for the North Africans. We have seen the rapid increase in the maritime links between the ports of the Maghreb and the regions allied with England, Sicily, Sardinia or Spain claiming its allegiance to Ferdinand VII. But the most striking case is that of Malta. Occupied by the English from 1801 on, equipped with a powerful garrison, the principal naval base of an important fleet, and in addition, densely populated; Malta became the favoured client of the nearby regencies of Tunis and Tripoli. This emerges clearly from an examination of the cargoes of the dozens of North African ships that plied back and forth from the Maghreb to Malta every year.

Because the cargoes were often composed of shipments belonging to several shippers, we have noted entries for each individual product. We are not attempting to produce exact statistics, absence of precise information makes it impossible, but to indicate the principal features of these commercial relationships.

The Regency of Tripoli

We noted 30 references to goods coming from Bengazi, including 26 related to livestock cattle, and especially sheep), two references to wool, one to barley and another to oil. The list for Tripoli is longer and more varied, with 238 references that can be divided up as follows: 92 (38.7%) concern livestock, generally on the hoof, made up of two-thirds cattle, one-quarter sheep, and the rest horses for the British Army. The second group consisted of foodstuffs, with 73 references (30.7%): cereals (28 entries) dates (34 entries), and olive oil (10 entries). The third group, which includes industrial raw materials, is much more varied, and includes leather (15 references), wool, cotton, silk, alizarin (madder root), ostrich feathers and soap.

The Regency of Tunis

Three Tunisian ports had ongoing relations with Malta:

- *Sfax*: 22 references to food products, twelve to dates, seven to dried octopi, two to cereals and one to oil; 21 references to raw materials, including six to coal, six to wool, one to sponges and eight to a finished product, soap.
- *Sousse*: 47 references in all, of which 23 are to food products, nine to oil, six to cereals, three to beans, two to semolina and one to dates: in addition, there are 21 references to soap.
- *Tunis*: The references (88) are more numerous and more diversified. There are nine references to cattle on the hoof, then 42 to agricultural products: 16 to cereals, nine to oil, seven to beans, five to dates, to which we must add the references to hazelnuts, semolina and olives. There are also 17 references to raw materials, seven to leather, six to wool, but also to barilla and to wax. Finally we should mention 20 references to finished products; including nine to soap, seven to hats, two to paper, one to woollen fabrics and one to angora wool shawls.

It therefore appears that Malta received a significant amount of food supplies from the Maghreb. Products from livestock farming and agriculture exported by the two regencies represented 69% of the references to cargo for the regency of Tripoli, and 55.4% for Tunisia. They furnished mainly livestock, cereals, olive oil and dates. It can be seen that the five North African ports were relatively specialised: Bengazi exported mostly livestock, oil came from Tunisia (especially Sousse), dates came particularly from Tripoli and Sfax, wheat from Tripoli and Tunis. Although raw materials—wool, wax, leather—came from almost everywhere, we should notice the importance of articles made in Tunis, especially the 'Tunis-style hats', and soap from Sousse. The presence of cotton, shawls, woollen fabrics and paper is finally a reminder of the role of these ports in re-exporting goods. Once again, taking advantage of international circumstances, the North African ports managed to adapt, thanks to their seamen and their entrepreneurs. The next chapter describes the vessels, their crews and voyages in detail.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE COMMERCIAL FLEETS OF THE MAGHREB

The Maghrebi states transferred a significant, even vital, part of their maritime activities from privateering to commercial shipping in record time. It was a difficult exercise, involving the acquisition of new equipment, the transformation of the old, the recruitment of new personnel, and the reassignment of existing members of the work-force who would now need to adapt to a new maritime environment.

The Ships

We have attempted here to assess the size and composition of the commercial fleets of the Maghreb at their moment of greatest activity, the years 1808 to 1810. To produce these figures, given the total lack of overall statistics, we have made use of the sources that do exist—the registers of the health authorities of the European ports, charter contracts, records of movements in the ports, local chronicles. Considering the unevenness of the available sources, the figures presented here are likely to be closer to the reality for the fleets of Tunis and Tripoli than for those of Algiers and Morocco, which were surely much larger than we give here. In any case, we are dealing with a lower-than-real figures, since a part of the shipping activity—difficult to estimate—is unknown to us, in particular, those ships that frequented only the ports of the Levant, and whose charters were based on oral contracts or written contracts that were not registered.

The fleets were mainly composed of fifteen types of ships. Among them are the three most widely represented, the xebecks, polaccas and brigantines, which could serve for corsair activities as well as for trade, and were in use throughout the Mediterranean. The choice of ship of the Maghrebi sailors was influenced above all by local traditions, by their different objectives, and by the availability of the vessels. It is apparent that the xebeck, with its sleek lines, its reputation for speed—admittedly at the expense of its carrying

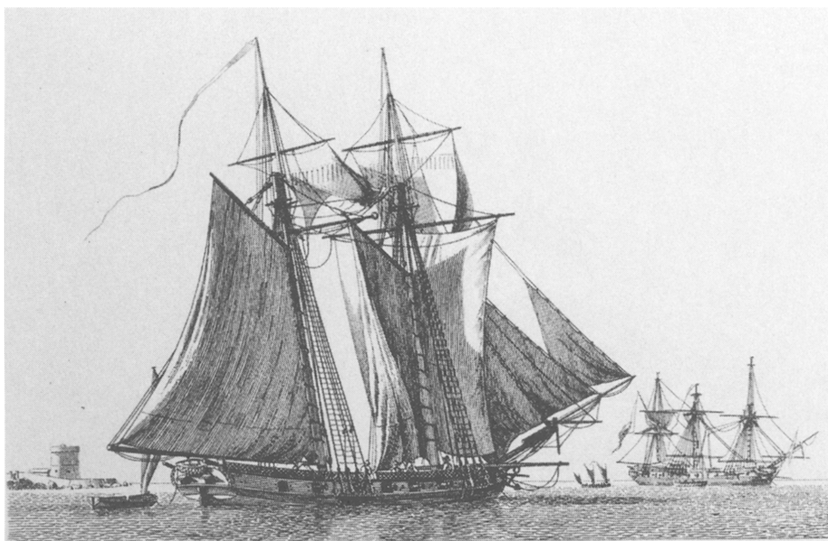
Table 13: The Maghrebi commercial fleets (1808–1810)

Type	Total	Morocco	Algiers	Tunis	Tripoli
Bombard	3			2	1
Brigantine	19	3	2	11	3
Xebeck	40	8	3	17	12
Chitia	2				2
Corvette	2		1		1
Cutter 1	1			1	
Felucca	2		2		
Schooner	8	1	3	4	
Martingana	1			1	
Pink	4	1	3		
Polacca	39	2	6	14	17
Sander	1			1	
Sereau	3	2	1		
Tartan	5	1	1	1	2
Trabacolo	4			1	3
Vessel	6		2	4	
Total	**140**	**18**	**24**	**56**	**42**

capacity—was the preferred choice of the North Africans. It is true that the xebeck served in privateering and at least a percentage of the ships assigned to shipping merchandise were converted corsairs, with somewhat reduced gunpower and much smaller crews.

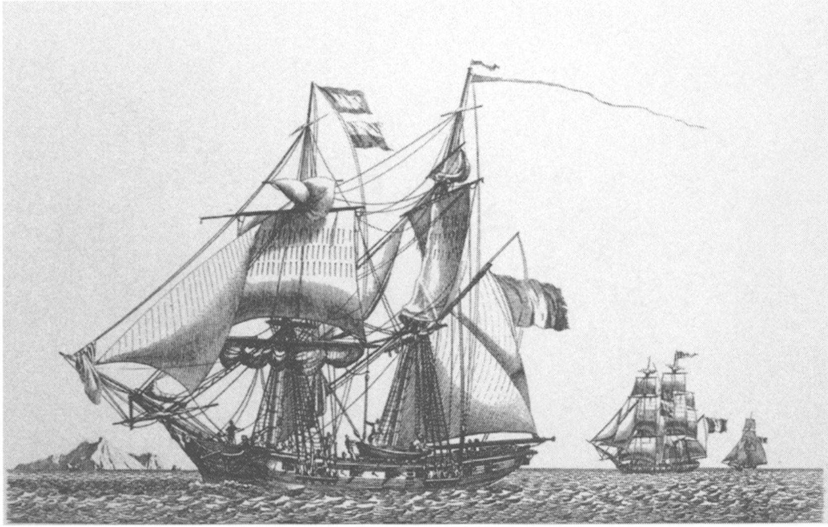
The *raïs* Kütchük Ali Arnaout commanded a twelve-cannon brig that carried a crew of 60 when it set out on a corsair campaign. In 1809 its outfitter, the beylik of Tunis, entrusted it with a commercial mission, probably to the Levant, with its crew reduced to 25 and its artillery down to eight cannons. Hassan Morali was the captain of a 14-cannon polacca with a crew that numbered 60 men when he was on a campaign, but only 35 when he shipped merchandise from Tunis to Marseilles in October 1809. And there was Soliman Arnaout, who went to *Civitavecchia* on 17 September 1813 with an 18-cannon xebeck and a crew of only 25, when he would have taken at least a hundred for privateering.

Other ships in use were acquired through the numerous captures brought off by the corsairs, which, as we have seen, formed a significant trade in itself. On 21 December 1805, Mahmoud Gelluli, *kaïd* of Sfax and Sousse, through his agent Abraham Setbon, sold a

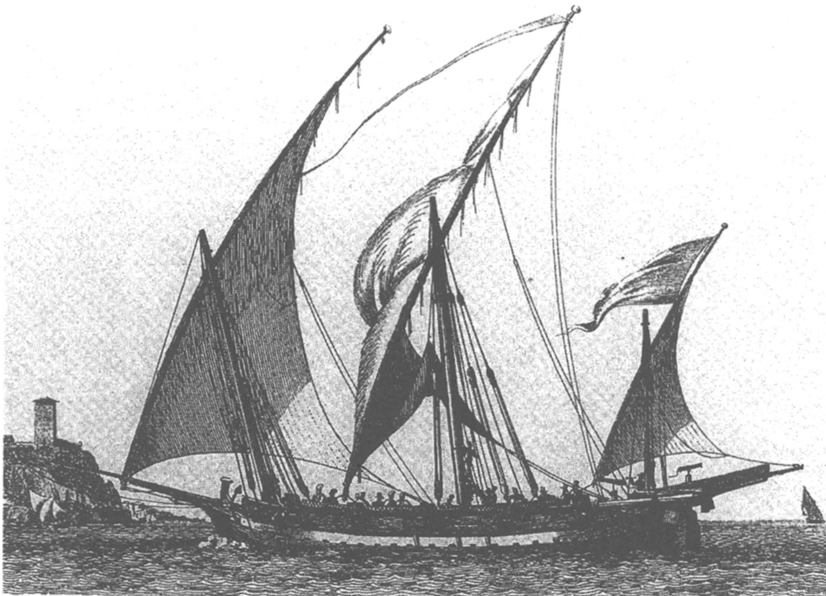


5. Schooner at anchor
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)

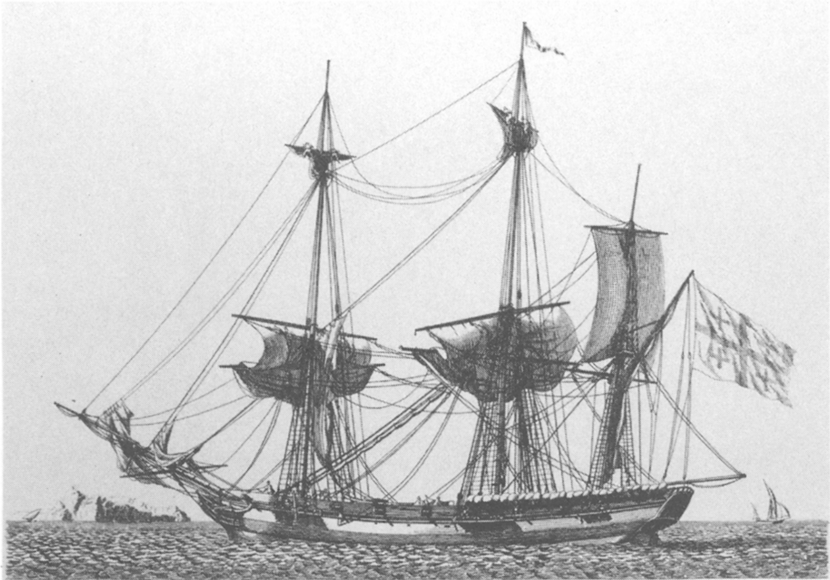
6. Front view of a half-galley
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



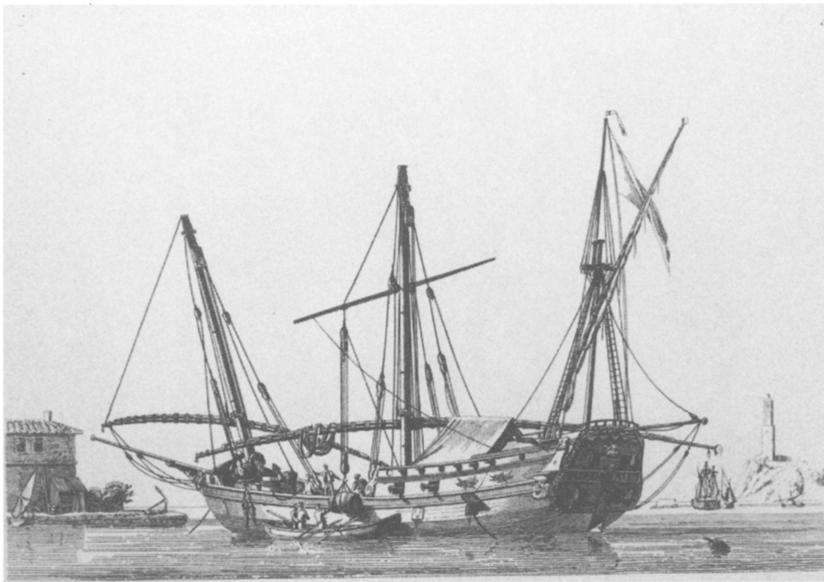
7. French brig of war
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



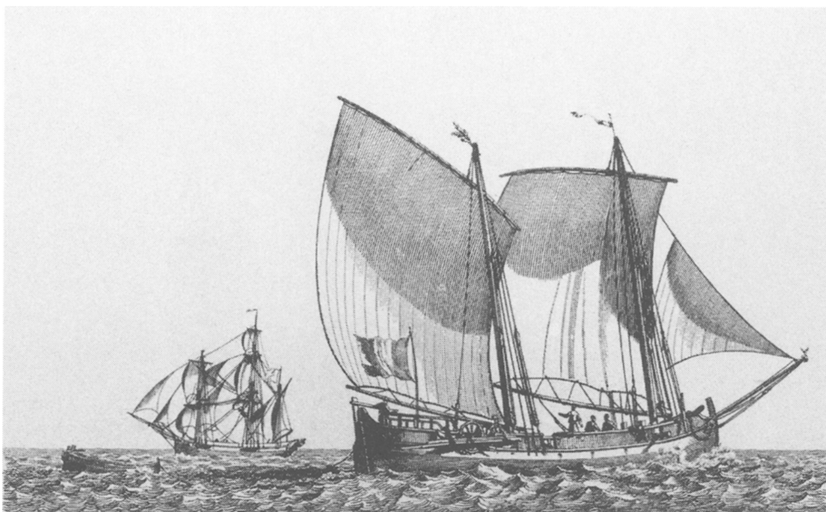
8. Spanish xebeck with lateen sails
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



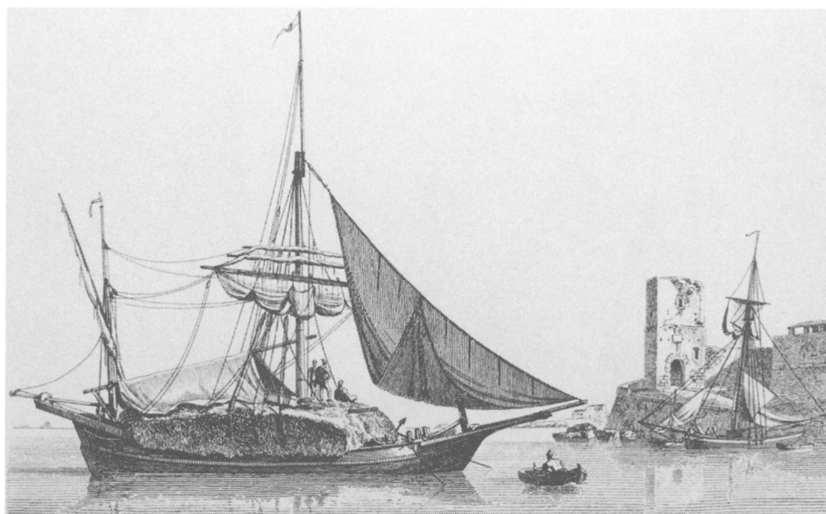
9. Greek merchant corvette
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



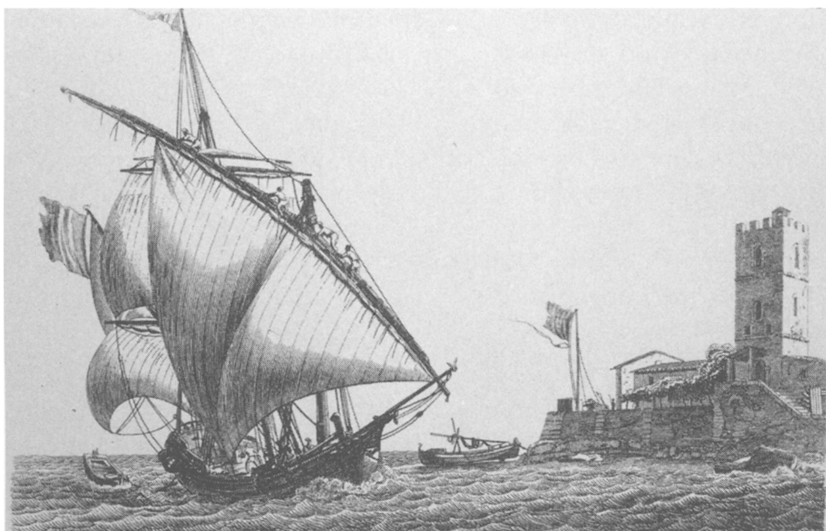
10. Genoese pink
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



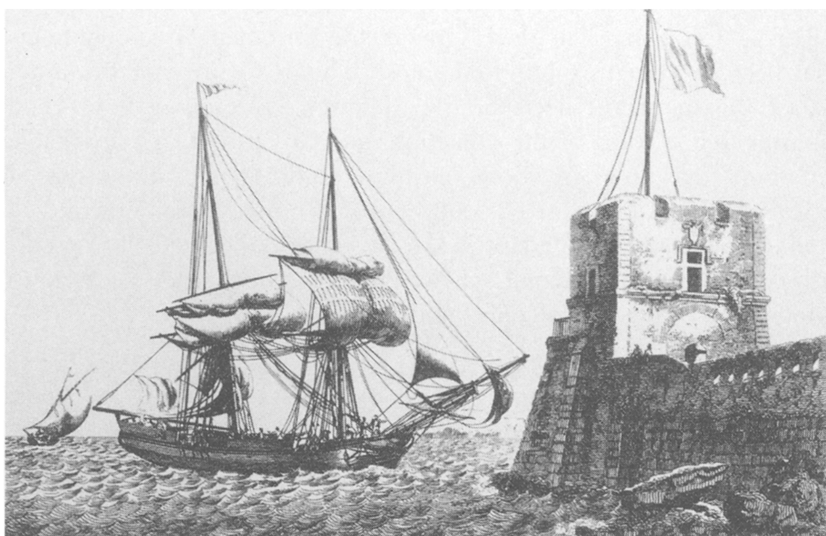
11. Trabacolo
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



12. Neapolitan tartan
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



13. Provencal bark
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)



14. French merchant brigantine
(Baugean, *Collection de toutes les espèces de bâtiments*)

captured Neapolitan polacca to Captain Lichiardopulo, a Russian of obvious Greek origin. On the First of February 1806, he sold a captured Neapolitan xebeck to a Sicilian captain, and on 15 June of the same year, he sold another xebeck that had been captured by one of his ships to an Ottoman, Niccolo Crissico, also a Greek. And there are other examples: in the single year 1809, Yûnis Ben Yûnis, on April First, bought a polacca from two Greeks; on 2 May, he sold a Genoese brig to Mohammed Hodja in Porto-Farina, and on 14 August, he bought an American brigantine from its captain. In addition, we know that he also owned another brigantine, for which he hired a *direttore* on 9 September of the same year. Herein lies the an explanation for the lack of freshness of the Tunisian fleet and those of the other regencies of the Maghreb.

In a few short years, taking advantage of circumstances, the Maghrebi states managed to acquire commercial fleets composed of several dozen ships each. The most dynamic in this enterprise were the Tunisians and the Tripolitans, although in Tripoli the pasha was virtually the only shipowner: in Tunis, alongside the bey, private owners were in the majority. All told, the combined fleets of the Maghrebi states accounted for 140 identified commercial vessels, possibly up to 200. In 1788, at the height of its strength, the commercial fleet of Provence numbered around eight hundred ships; in 1813, at the peak of its development, the Ottoman Greek commercial fleet had over six hundred ships.[1] This is to say that the totality of the merchant fleets of the Maghreb represented between a quarter and a third of the contemporary Greek fleet, a remarkable situation for a region whose maritime tradition—for hundreds of years—had been exclusively one of privateering. It demonstrates a remarkable capacity to adapt to circumstances, and the will to establish control of an economic activity that was essential for these states which were, after all, of only moderate size.

[1] Pouqueville, *Voyage dans la Grèce*, 1821, Vol. V, pp. 68–71. The Island of Hydra alone had 120 ships, that is, twice the number of the totality of the Tunisian ships.

The Personnel

The Captains

There were commercial captains just like there were corsair *raïs*! Information on them is found only in the records available giving their names, the ships under their command, and their different stopovers or campaigns. Only the registers of the health authorities cover the four European ports in our study, indicating the Maghrebi captains who stopped over in their ports, but not telling us anything of those who may have gone elsewhere. Nevertheless, to a certain extent, they do enable us to retrace the careers of these men, and to see whether—depending on circumstances—some of them might have commanded both commercial and corsair ships.

Morocco
The question does not arise for Morocco, which abandoned the corsair war at the end of the eighteenth century. The majority of the captains of ships flying the Moroccan flag appear for only one, sometimes two voyages, but a few had more sustained activity. Abdelfassi sailed to Barcelona five times between 28 January 1807 and 18 August 1808; Mohammed Mezero dropped anchor in Marseilles on 21 March and 26 November 1807, then again on 7 April 1808, before stopping over in Barcelona on 8 May of the same year; Tager Agem first showed up in Marseilles on 24 July 1806, before making regular calls at Barcelona, on 10 October and 29 November 1806, then on 2 February and 12 April 1807.

Algiers
Although Algiers was still involved in corsair activities between 1800 and 1815, shipping was now added to the picture. To judge by the captains of these ships, the two activities seem to have been totally separate, as we find no corsair *raïs* among the captains of the commercial ships that were frequenting the European ports in this period. Therefore, at least in Algiers, it is likely that the corsair ships were not put to another use, even when the campaigns slowed markedly between 1806 and 1812. The *taïfa*, the corporation of corsair captains, had to be on its guard to avoid any real change from privateering activity. There were many captains, but their careers were

less than continuous. One name is worth mentioning, however—that of Mohammed Ben Kaddour. He appeared for the first time in Marseilles on 8 August 1807, returning on 4 November of the same year, then again a year later, on 15 November 1808, before being in Barcelona on the 18th of December. He then disappeared altogether for several years, reappearing in Barcelona on 26 June 1814 and returning there three more times before the year was out.

Tunis

The activity of the Tunisian captains was rather similar to that of the Algerians. Out of the 192 corsair *raïs* counted between 1798 and 1816, only eight of them commanded ships for commercial voyages at the request of the owners, and then very sporadically. It is also symptomatic that these voyages figure in documents related to departures of corsairs specifying that they are actually on commercial trips. The *raïs* in question were all experienced seamen, as is evident from their numerous voyages, and trusted by the owners of the ships. All sailed with a reduced crew, from fifteen to thirty men, although their ships were large—xebecks, brigs and similar.

It was especially in 1809, when the commercial market was globally at its peak, that the change in corsairs' activities took place. For example, Kütchük Ali Arnaout went on two commercial voyages, as against 16 corsair campaigns, Mohammed Magdich commanded a ship on one commercial voyage and went on seven campaigns, like Mohammed el-Cheikh, Aziz Arnaout with one voyage and thirteen corsair campaigns, Soliman Arnaout, with one voyage and ten campaigns, and finally Ramadan Arnaout, with one commercial voyage and 22 corsair campaigns.

Alongside these 'part-time' cargo captains we find many whose exclusive function was the command of commercial ships. As in the other Maghrebi states, they are numerous, and usually appear in the records only one or two times. There is one exception to this, however: Hassan Yussuf Morali, who made the following impressive list of calls in the largest European ports:

18 July 1807	Malta	20 October 1810	Malta
5 November 1808	Malta	10 February 1811	Leghorn
7 February 1809	Malta	4 July 1811	Leghorn
14 February 1809	Malta	30 January 1812	Leghorn
3 July 1809	Malta	21 December 1812	Leghorn

31 October 1809	Marseilles	27 September 1813	Leghorn
30 December 1809	Malta	4 February 1814	Malta
11 May 1810	Malta	20 December 1814	Malta

First sailing a xebeck, Hassan Yussuf Morali then had a polacca named *Kara Soliman* from 1809 to 1813, which he replaced with a corvette in 1814. In eight years, he frequented the principal European ports regularly, Malta under English rule as well as Leghorn and Marseilles, which were part of the Napoleonic Empire, thereby illustrating the neutrality of the Tunis regency, and the advantages that went along with it. In the next chapter we will see the economic aspect of this navigation, and of the voyages undertaken by Morali during those years.

Tripoli

The case of Tripoli is particularly interesting because of the available documentation, which, like that of the other regencies, consists of the information found in the registers of the health authorities of the European ports, completed by the records of the departures and arrivals in the port of Tripoli of the Tripolitan ships belonging to the pasha.

This means that all the maritime activity of the ships of the regency is revealed to us by different observers. The comparison of the two sources has proved to be particularly fruitful, not only in relation to the ships, but also for our study on captains in the commercial sector.

We will begin with the type of information we have already analysed in connection with the three other North African flags. A large number of commercial captains are found frequenting the principal European ports, in this case mainly Malta, with 194 entries out of 202, while there are only seven stopovers in Leghorn and one in Marseilles.

We should nevertheless remember that although Malta was of course a destination, it was above all a stopping-off place, while the other ports were pure destinations only. As with the other regencies, there were many commercial captains in Tripoli; but those who appear in the records more than a few times are rare. Among these were Mohammed Zurieki, who stopped over in Malta on four different occasions, on 12 March and 2 June, 1809, 10 April 1810, and 7 December 1812; Ali Redjeb put into port in Malta four times in

the single year 1814, on 10 June, 17 July, 19 August and 19 September, like Ibrahim Guardariva, who is mentioned in four entries between January and September 1809; Ali Akari turns up in the port eight times in a period of six years, from 1807 to 1813, three times in 1807 with a pink, twice in 1809 in a polacca, and as the commander of a schooner once a year, in 1811, 1812 and 1813.

A very different picture emerges from the archives of the French Consulate in Tripoli. These contain records of the issue of passports to the captains by the French Consul at the time of a ship's departure and collected at the end of the voyage or cruise. They provide the dates of departures and returns, complete with origin and destination—and sometimes even corsair booty—of the Tripolitan ships in Tripoli between 1805, the year the American blockade was lifted, and the arrival of Lord Exmouth's squadron in 1816.[2] The extract is imperfect: of the 394 ships mentioned in one or two movements, it can be seen that 47 departures (11.9% of the total) and 71 arrivals (18%) are missing.[3] In spite of the obvious negligence of the chancellor of the French Consulate, who was more diligent in recording returns than departures, the information that we can draw from these documents is far from insignificant. In spite of a few doubts linked to the imprecise nature of the references to certain names, we can observe that from 1805 to 1816, the Pasha of Tripoli had made use of the services of 69 different captains: 20 were exclusively corsair captains, 31 commanded commercial ships only, and 18 were involved in mixed activity, switching from transport to corsair ships. Among the last group, only eight had stopped over in a European port, in Malta only.

We will not return to the privateers, presented in Chapter Two, but will consider first of all the 31 shippers and their vessels. The great majority, 21, or more than two-thirds, appear only once or twice in the records. Eight were more dynamic, undertaking from three to seven voyages, but only two left evidence of significant activity. Ali Redjeb completed twelve voyages between 1810 and 1814, aboard a four-cannon xebeck until 1812, then as captain of a brigantine equipped with the same modest artillery that was found on

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[2] M.A.E., Nantes, A.R. Tripoli, 795.

[3] There is a similar register concerning just the Tripoli corsairs, for the years 1754 to 1773, which is complete. PANZAC, "*Une activité en trompe-l'œil*...", 1988.

all the commercial ships of the period. He went to Malta eight times, twice to Alexandria, once to Piraeus and Candia. Ali Bellazah carried out similar activities between 1812 and 1814: he too started with a four-cannon xebeck, and became the commander of a six-cannon brigantine in 1813. He completed seven voyages to Malta, one to Bengazi, Alexandria and Trieste.

The careers of the great majority of the captains in 'mixed' service, 16 out of 18 were distinguished on the one hand by their length (most of these *raïs* commanded ships from 1805 to 1815) and on the other by their great activity. Two of the captains carried out from five to nine voyages or campaigns, seven went on from ten to fifteen expeditions, seven others even more, including four who accomplished more than twenty. They were competent professionals and doubtless also lucky, which earned them the confidence of their owner, the Pasha of Tripoli, who entrusted to them more than to any others the responsibility for risky or sensitive military or commercial missions. We lack information concerning the activity of these men before 1805 and after 1816, but their activity during the eleven-year period when they were commanding different ships reveals a great deal about the life of these seamen. By way of example, we have singled out those who completed more than twenty expeditions.

Ali Gergachi's activity was uninterrupted throughout the eleven years, during which he served as commander 29 times. He embarked on his first corsair campaign in 1805, in a six-cannon xebeck that he then exchanged for a 12-cannon corvette, with which he carried out a mixture of corsair campaigns and commercial voyages. The corvette was later replaced by a 14-cannon xebeck. With this ship, he was more corsair than merchant ship captain, though he did complete one or two commercial trips. From 1811 on, he went to sea only as a corsair, in a 14-cannon corvette. He was thus above all a corsair captain, totalling 24 campaigns, productive beginning in 1811, whence he captured a total of eight prize ships, six of them in 1815, in addition to a raid on land near Naples in 1816, from which he brought back 25 slaves. His five commercial voyages took him twice to Smyrna, twice to Malta and once to Bengazi.

Halil Ghiaour had 22 commands between 1809 and 1816. In 1809–1810, he was the captain of a xebeck corsair with eight cannons, which he left in 1811 to carry out several commercial voyages with a four-cannon brigantine. In 1812–1813 he went on a new series of corsair campaigns with a ten-cannon xebeck, before taking

command of a ten-cannon corvette in 1813. Until 1816, he alternated corsair campaigns and transportation in this ship, which carried only four cannons during the shipping journeys. In all, his fifteen corsair campaigns brought him four prizes, one in 1810, a Spaniard in 1812, and two in 1815, a Spaniard and a Genoese. In addition, he completed six voyages to Bengazi and one to Alexandria.

Khalifa Lomba was the commander of 21 ships between 1805 and 1815. His activity is representative of the general developments in this period: in 1805 he commanded a six-cannon *kirlangish* fitted out for corsair activities, with which he went on two fruitless campaigns: from 1806 to 1813, with, successively, a four-cannon xebeck, a tartan then a polacca, both lightly armed, he carried out 14 commercial voyages, which took him once to Candia, five times to Malta, twice to Bengazi, Leghorn and Morocco. From 1813 to 1815, first with a ten-cannon xebeck then with a 14-cannon xebeck, he completed five corsair campaigns, bringing back three captures, two Genoese and one Neapolitan.

Omar Chelly served as a commander 21 times between 1806 and 1816. He was primarily a corsair captain, and had under his orders successively a 12-cannon xebeck from 1806 to 1812, a 34-cannon frigate in 1812, and finally, two corvettes with 12 and 16 cannons. His 19 campaigns were highly effective: he captured a ship from Hamburg in 1806, made two more captures in 1808, another two in 1809, four more in 1810, four in 1811, three (all Spanish) in 1812, a Genoese ship in 1814, another from Hamburg in 1815, and two more in 1816—a Neapolitan ship and one from the Papal state—that is, a total of twenty European ships captured in eleven years! In addition to his 19 corsair campaigns, he completed two shipping runs to Bengazi in the xebeck he was commanding at the time, one in 1808, the other in 1812.[4]

The pay for the captain of a commercial ship was of a completely different order from that of a *raïs* commanding a ship on privateering duty. As we have seen, the earnings of a corsair captain were

[4] The chronicle of Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, *Yawmiyyat*, gives an account of the departure of his brother-in-law, Omar Chelly, on a corsair campaign on 21 November 1811; the different captures he made in the following days and his return on 19 December. But it does seem that Hassan Al Faqih Hassan only mentions ships in which he has an interest, to the exclusion of the others.

unpredictable and tied to his captures, while the captain of a merchant ship was first of all salaried.[5] These incompatible systems of remuneration, plus the preferred personal sphere of the individuals, explains why captains in 'mixed' service were rare. There was, however, a certain basic difference from one regency to another. As far as we can gather the separation between the two activities was total among the Algerians and very frequent among the Tunisians; but the Tripolitan captains were quite different, a significant group of them alternated between corsair activities and shipping. The difference in attitudes reflects quite well the role of the military class in the various societies of the regencies. Algiers was dominated by the *odjak* of the janissaries, for whom the military class was definitely superior to the civilians. This view was also found in the *taïfa* of the *raïs*, who must have viewed the change from captain of a warship to that of a peaceful cargo ship as a loss of standing. The more mixed military society of Tunis and the greater importance of the role of private business in that regency had a tempering effect on this attitude, although it still existed to a considerable degree. Things were very different in Tripoli, where the janissaries had been totally replaced in the beginning of the eighteenth century by the descendants of the *kuloghlus* and local men. Added to this was the fact that the pasha, as the owner of most of the regency fleet, was in a position to impose his wishes on his captains.[6]

The Crews

We possess 27 muster rolls for the crews of Tunisian commercial vessels, recorded in the years 1803 to 1813. Each one includes a list of all the men on board, with their names and their function on the ship. A number of the rolls also provide the geographical origin of

[5] We know very little about the pay of a captain, with its likely supplementary benefits, in the Maghrebi merchant marine in around 1800. But from this time on, these were strongly influenced by European practices; we also find bonuses paid by the charterers as well as benefits from personal trading, called *pacotille*, a practice engaged in by the whole crew with the permission of the owner. This features, for example, in the details of the cargo imported from Tunis to Leghorn on 25 January 1811 in the polacca of Hassan Youssef Morali.

[6] To judge from the chronicle of Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, a few private individuals were owners of commercial ships.

the crew members, and, in the case of two of them, even ages. Some give information about the same ship at different dates, which makes it possible to observe the changes in the crew of a ship with time. These ships varied greatly in size, from a small felucca with a four-man crew or a bomb-vessel with five, to a polacca with 45 and a corvette with 55. The fleet as a whole was mainly composed of brigantines and brigs with crews of 12 or 18, and polaccas with, as a general rule, over 20.

The personnel aboard these 27 ships totalled 472 men, including the *raïs*. The composition of the crews of the great majority of them (22 out of 27) was quite diversified. In addition to the *raïs* and the sailors, we find two *direttori*, 13 pilots, 14 pursers, 14 *nostromos* (boatswains) and seven seconds-in-command, officers exercising supervisory functions. Naturally their number varied in proportion to the size of the ship. On 5 May 1810, the personnel on board Hassan Yussuf Morali's polacca *Kara Soliman* included the *raïs*, his second-in-command, pilot, first and second purser, boatswain and a boatswain's mate, i.e. six officers, then two gunners, a carpenter and a cook, and 34 seamen, a total of 45 men. Seven ships had to be content with a single officer, ten had two officers, and the five vessels with crews of over twenty men, had three or more. While the ten Austrian ships already referred to had a total of 111 men, 21 of whom were officers, the crews of the Tunisian ships were much larger, averaging 17 or 18 men as opposed to eleven, with a much lower ratio of officers to crew, one officer for nine men, as opposed to one out of five for the Austrians.[7]

Because the muster rolls provided the names of the men, we have been able to identify the religious of the members of the crew, making a total of 274 Muslims and 198 Christians, or respectively 58% and 42% of the total. Although the distribution of the simple seamen was obviously close to this ratio, 231 Muslims as against 158 Christians, i.e. three Muslims out of five men, there was a significant difference in the distribution of officers. Christians, with 38 positions out of 50, occupied more than three-quarters of the officers posts on the Tunisian ships. The two *direttori*, 13 pilots, 13 pursers out of 14, and 10 boatswains out of 14, were all Christians, whereas only

[7] Most of them had a pilot or a boatswain and a purser.

the seconds-in-command were Muslim. This meant that in the majority of cases, although the command was officially in the hands of a Muslim *raïs*, decision-making and implementation of decisions eluded him. Navigation as such, like the management of finances, and the orders to the crew, came under respectively: the pilot, the purser and the boatswain, almost all of whom were Christians.

The geographical origins of these seamen was indicated in seven of the muster rolls. The Muslims, mostly Tunisians, came from the ports or surrounding areas of Bizerta, La Marsa, Tunis, Menzel, Sfax, the Kerkena Islands, Djerba and Zuara. The Christians were Italian, Dalmatian or Greek, although there is no indication of exactly where they came from.[8] These purely administrative lists of names show family groupings, and mention places that give a more human touch. Aboard the polacca *Mabruka* commanded by the *raïs* Ali Coli were four members of the Gargiulo family: the *direttore* Vittorio, the boatswain Natale, and two tars, Steffano and Antonio. We do not know their precise relationships to each other, but it is not difficult to imagine that at the time of the discussions on their hiring, the head of the family, probably Vittorio, insisted that all the members of his family should stay together. Another example is the *raïs* Mohammed Haddad's polacca *Beia*, whose crew included 19 people, of whom thirteen were Christians from the island of Procida. Here too we find members of the same family, the Lubranos: Pasquale (50 years old) and Domenico (40), very likely two brothers, but also Porfirio (18), probably the son of one of them.

Two of the muster rolls show the ages of the crew members (for both Muslims and Christians), a total of 35 men. The two *raïs* were 30 and 35 years old, the Christian *direttore*, an experienced man, was 45, and the boatswain 28. There were two ship's apprentices, a Muslim and a Christian, both twelve years old. As for the sailors, seven Muslims and 22 Christians, most were from 20 to 40 years old, although a few were 18, and among the Christians were also two men in their fifties.

For several of the ships, we possess muster rolls of the crews for different dates. Not only did the *raïs* Hassan Yussuf Morali renew the entire crews of his polacca *Kara Soliman* between 9 February 1809

[8] One of the pilots, named Théric, who boarded the brig of Hadj Abdallah in May 1813, came from Marseilles.

and 2 May 1810, he also substantially increased it, because the numbers went from 28 to 45, including the *raïs*. Between the First of February and the 21st of April, 1813, the religious composition of the crew of the *raïs* Ali Coli's polacca *Mabruka* changed: in February, there were six Muslims and fourteen Christians, and in April, thirteen Muslims and eight Christians.[9] Only eight men figure in both the crews; the *raïs*, two Muslim sailors and five Christians, including the purser. An examination of the three muster rolls of the *raïs* Yakub's brigantine, for 21 July, 6 October and 11 December 1813, shows the same partial replenishment of the crew after each voyage. What seems to emerge in these muster rolls is that hiring was mainly done for each individual voyage, and instability was the norm, which is confirmed by the examples of employment contracts that are preserved in the Austrian chancellery.

On 16 October 1806, Djema Bugdir, commander of a trabacolo, hired four sailors—Nicola Sciobel, Andrea Burich, Franco Lobrovich and one Pietro—for a round-trip Tunis-Malta voyage. The men promised to remain on board and not to jump ship in Malta, and accepted fact that their salary, not specified, would be paid to them only on their return. On 9 December 1809, the *raïs* Yussuf, commander of a three-masted vessel, hired Pietro Villaneuva, who "*s'obbliga di piloteggiare la detta nave in qualità de Piloto da questa rada della Goletta, per l'Arcipelago fino a Smirne*" ("who committed himself to piloting the said ship, in the capacity of Pilot, from this port of Goletta through the Archipelago to Smyrna.") His salary would be forty Spanish piastres, half of it payable on departure and the rest on the day of arrival. The pilot would have a small room, and would be allowed to take on-board free of charge a bale of silk and seven *cantars* (around 350 kilos) of merchandise. The functions of *direttore*, on the other hand, presupposed too many responsibilities to be limited to a single voyage, and all three contracts related to *direttori* provide for a monthly salary supplemented by various material advantages. In addition, it was the owner of the ship and not the commander who recruited the *direttore*. Thus Yûnis Ben Yûnis hired Nicolo Bogdanovich on 8 April 1809 for his Brigantine *Messaoud*, commanded by the *raïs*

[9] The four members of the Gargiulo family who were members of the first crew are absent in the second.

Ibrahim Haddad; and Mohammed Hodja hired Marco Castrapelli from Chios for his polacca *Kara Mabruka*, commanded by the *raïs* Mohammed Ben Ibrahim Morali, on the First of December 1812. On 21 April 1810, Halil Ben Hadj Ibrahim, a Turkish merchant based in Tunis, hired Spiro Anneti as *direttore* of his brigantine, under the command of the *raïs* Ahmed and flying the Tunisian flag. His contract, guaranteeng him a salary of thirty Spanish piastres a month, clearly defined the *direttore* as the personal representative of the owner. He was responsible for acting in the owner's place and in his best interests in his dealings with the *raïs*, the official commander of the ship, who himself was required to carry out the decisions of the *direttore.* Unfortunately we have no documents that refer to the relationship between these two men, any more than we have for the *raïs* and the other Christian officers aboard their ships. The rapidity of the changes of crew members, affecting the Muslims as much as the Christians, makes it impossible to point to any particular difficulties. What is striking is the significant number of Christians in the new Tunisian commercial fleet. At one and the same time this highlights the spectacular development of the young fleet, which obviously filled a real need, and exposes the crying shortage in competent personnel in this field in the regency of Tunis. We lack the corresponding facts for the other Maghrebi states, but is is very likely that their situation is similar to Tunisia's, at least in the case of Algiers.[10]

Commercial Navigation

A Convoy Arrives in Marseilles in 1809

On 5 November 1809 a convoy of merchant ships hove into view in Marseilles. In these times of British blockade, the arrival of a single ship was the talk of the town in a port whose activity had

[10] We have the muster roll of a single Algerian ship, the polacca *Yussuf*, commanded by the *raïs* Mohammed Aga. On 13 February 1809, the crew of 14 men was the Muslim *raïs* and able seaman; twelve others, a pilot, purser, a boatswain, a cook and eight sailors were Christians, (five Ragusans, four Austrians, two Neapolitans and a Levantine Greek). A fine example of international cooperation in the Mediterranean! A.O.M., Aix-en-Provence, 1A 118.

been greatly reduced—but here was a whole convoy! Surprise gave way to amazement when it was learned that these ships were flying the flag of a Barbary regency Tunis. The *raïs* of the six ships began by submitting to the orders of the health authority of the port, obligatory for all ships coming from the Levant or Barbary, regions considered to be permanent sources of the plague. Each one presented a declaration, which was registered in the presence of the health authorities, who recorded information about the arriving ships and the circumstances of their voyage. First came the corsair xebeck *Gamba*, captained by the *raïs* Mohammed Morali, who was also the commander of the fleet. It was a large ship armed with 38 cannons, with a crew of 200, loaded with barilla.[11] Next came a second xebeck, commanded by Hassan Yeiss, fitted out as a merchant ship with no artillery and fifteen men aboard, also transporting barilla. After this came Ahmed Tibib, skipper of a bomb-vessel with a ten-man crew, transporting a thousand quintals of barilla soda and nine hundred packages of osier. Mohammed Migdeis, commander of a large polacca with a crew of thirty, submitted his declaration, listing a mixed load of 27 bales of wool, 192 bales of sponges, 613 baskets of barilla soda and three jars of oil. He was followed by Mohammed Hakim, also commanding a polacca, with a crew of 26. In his declaration, Hakim indicated the presence on board his ship of 21 passengers, including the French consul in Tunis and his family. His cargo was made up of 340 bales of wool, 24 baskets of *escayolle* (a type of grain), and sacks of horns. The last to present his papers was the Algerian Hadj Mohammed, commander of an Algerian vessel, the *Messaoud*, with a crew of 24. He explained that on 5 August he had gone to Sfax on behalf of the charterer of a Tunisian ship, to pick up 223 bales of wool, 78 baskets of soap and 9 baskets of pistachios destined for Marseilles, and that he had joined Mohammed Morali's convoy on 15 September.

Mohammed Morali stated that the convoy of seven ships had left Tunis on 15 September. On the 19th, they had made a stopover in Palma in the southern part of Sardinia, not far from Carloforte, whose population had been carried off by Tunisian corsairs ten years

[11] Barilla is soda obtained from burning certain plants that grow by the sea. It is chiefly used for making soap.

earlier! The convoy took to the sea again on 24 September, but when the ships encountered contrary winds they were forced to head back towards the southwest, coming in to drop anchor at Bugie on 28 September, where they remained until 7 October. They hoisted sail again and in two days arrived off Mahon on the island of Minorca, but the weather had worsened considerably and the tartan of the *raïs* Sala Boulaba became separated from the convoy. Dropping anchor in the magnificent sheltered bay of Mahon, the convoy waited twenty days for Sala Boulaba to show, but in vain.[12] On 29 October, the six ships took to the sea again, and on 2 November they arrived off La Ciotat where they remained until the 4th before finally coming in to drop anchor in the bay of Marseilles on the following day. Altogether, the crossing had taken 50 days, 36 of which had been spent in stopovers and 14 in navigation.

On seeing 'clean' bills of health, indicating that Tunis and Tunisia were free of the plague, the officer on duty in the health authority gave the new arrivals a minimum quarantine period of three weeks. Passengers and merchandise were unloaded in the quarantine station located north of the city, while the crews took the ships to a cove of the island of Pomegue. At the end of the three weeks, passed without incident, the ships picked up passengers and merchandise and went to moor in the port of Marseilles, two and a half months after setting sail from Tunis.

Aside from the unusual situation of ships coming into the port in convoy, arrivals of Maghrebi ships had been commonplace in Marseilles, as in the other ports of Europe, for several years. In 1809, Marseilles received 37 ships from North Africa: 15 were under the authority of the Napoleonic Empire, two were from Languedoc, three from Provence, and the others were Ligurian. The 22 others, that is, three-fifths, were Maghrebi: four Moroccan, eight Tunisian and ten Algerian. They had therefore largely replaced the European ships, which were absent because of the extension of the war. Ten years earlier, the vessels handling the transport of merchandise would probably have been Ragusan, and twenty years before that, only

[12] We did not find Sala Boulaba in the documents in our possession for the period after this date. It therefore seems likely that his tartan had gone down in the storm.

French ships would have been able to arrive from Tunis in this way. The cargoes of these ships—soda for soap factories, sponges, oil, alfa, even pistachios—were identical to those handled by the Europeans in preceding years, and likewise, the consignees in Marseilles were still the same.

Simple Crossings

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, navigation was still an adventure, and it was never possible to be certain of a safe arrival. Ibn Uthman, Ambassador of the Sultan of Morocco, Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah, who played a vital role in redeeming Muslim captives at the end of the eighteenth century, made numerous crossings, but he had a horrible memory of them. He described his trip to Malta in 1788 in the following terms:

> Upon arrival in a place called *Gulfu Alio* [Golfe de Lion] we were overtaken by fear. This sea is calm from the island of Ibiza to Sardinia, over a distance of three hundred miles if one passes to the south of these islands; the distance is shorter if one passes between the islands and the continent of the Christians, for the traveller who leaves the islands to the right, except that this place is a fierce enemy, pitiless in its horrors, because the passage is narrow and the water much rougher there than on the other side. Once in the middle of this part of the sea, the wind ceases, and the waves besiege us from all sides. Unlike the other seas, this one is disproportionately agitated by the wind. The waves draw back, then approach [the ship], rise and then break fiercely. How many times did they lift the ship up, to hurl it farther on! Our lives were saved only by the grace of the One who protects souls, the help in situations of distress. Sometimes a pit opens up between the waves and us and we in the ship are like worms on a piece of wood. Sometimes the crests become troughs, and at other times it is the opposite. We could no longer drink or eat, or say the prescribed prayers, or the one that is optional [. . .] The waves continued to advance towards the ship like racehorses in a hippodrome. In these awful moments the heart is thrown into confusion by this faithless sea. We should not be surprised this sea is called Gehenna.[13]

Admittedly, these are the reactions of only a single passenger, but the risks were very real. The tartan of the *raïs* Sala Boulaba went down with all aboard in these waters in October 1809. Navigation

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[13] Quoted in Moudine, "*Le rachat des esclaves . . .*", 1996, p. 101.

was therefore uncertain and also slow, as the ships waited for favourable winds, for the end of a storm, for merchandise and passengers to be unloaded. It was not that people in this period did not wish to travel rapidly, but weather could not be controlled, and they were forced to adapt to it, which explains the variations in the length of the maritime voyages.

As we have seen, the registers containing the declarations of the captains in Marseilles included brief notes about the crossings, particularly the dates of departure and any incidents along the way, as well as the different stopovers. 106 Maghrebi ships arrived in Marseilles between 1805 and 1814, so from seventeen different ports we have in these registers an important document that enables us to reconstruct the conditions of navigation in this period. The great majority of these ships, 83 out of 106, were from North Africa, nineteen from Spain, and four from the Levant. We will return later to the economic aspects of the origins of these ships, in order to concentrate for the moment on the maritime aspects.

It was not a question of coastal navigation. All of these ships were involved in long voyages, which found them plying around the entire Mediterranean. The nearest port of origin was Palma de Majorca, situated 240 nautical miles, or 444 kilometres, from Marseilles, a distance covered by the two ships arriving from that port, on different dates, in three days—a very respectable average speed of 3.3 miles or knots an hour. The case of Algiers provides a good illustration of the uncertainties of navigation during this period, because of the number of crossings (39) and the distance, 410 miles, involved in crossing the Mediterranean. Twenty ships made the crossing from Algiers to Marseilles without a stopover, taking an average of ten days to make landfall, whereas nineteen, because of stopovers, required an average of 42 days to complete the same crossing. The record on this route was first held by Mohammed Ben Ali, a Moroccan, who covered the distance in five days in his bomb-vessel *Messaouda*, an average of 3.4 knots an hour. An Algerian, Mohammed Bougemat, matched the record in March 1806 in his polacca and bettered it the following year, taking only four days to go from Bugie to Marseilles (390 miles), or four knots an hour, which is remarkable for a commercial ship of that period.

Alongside these tactically-skilled captains, admittedly helped by favourable winds, were other less lucky or more mediocre sailors. On 24 December 1809, two ships left Algiers for Marseilles. The

first was the polacca *Messaouda*, with a crew of nine men commanded by Ahmed Hayrout, an Algerian. On the night of his departure a storm broke imperilling the ship, whose deck was cluttered with merchandise. The captain had several tonnes of barilla thrown overboard. On 3 January 1810, a corsair from Mahon forced him to return to port, where he stayed until 12 January. He left again, but on the 15th, the ship ran aground on sandbanks a league and a half from Bouc, to the great surprise of the captain who thought himself ten leagues away from the spot. Thanks to the help of the inhabitants, he managed to free himself: most of his cargo, 102 bales of barilla out of 130, the osier and tackle were retrieved by two skippers of lighter barges from Martigues. At last he arrived in Marseilles on 30 January, after a difficult voyage of 37 days. The other ship that ran into severe difficulties was the felucca *Teni* with a crew of eleven commanded by Hadj Ali Ben Mohammed, also Algerian. Although the storm that struck during the night of 24 to 25 December spared him, his ship was hit again by violent winds on the 29th, which broke the storm-jib yard,[14] drowning the sailor who had been stationed there. She made landfall at Port-Vendres on 3 January 1810 and remained there until the 5th to have her rigging repaired. On 6 January, the vessel encountered another strong gale, which broke the rudder, forcing her to return to Port-Vendres. When the repairs were completed, she took to sea again—only to run aground on the Languedoc coast. Thanks to two local fishermen and the decision to jettison part of his cargo, he managed to refloat his ship and sail it to the channel of Aigues-Mortes. He stayed there for three weeks for repairs, and it was not until 3 March 1810, 70 days after he had left Algiers, that he finally arrived in Marseilles. Probable incompetence and obvious bad luck combined to make the crossings of these two ships a succession of catastrophes. Incidents of this kind are an indication of a demand for shipping that was enough to tempt sailors like these to undertake such hazardous crossings and to run the risks of winter navigation.

Of course we also find similar disparities in transit times between ports, and similar navigational adventures among the ships arriving

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[14] The *misaine* (foresail) and *vergue* (yard) on the Atlantic coast were called respectively *trinquette* (storm jib) and *antenne* (lateen yard) in the Mediterranean.

from other ports. Sixteen Maghrebi ships arrived in Marseilles from Tunis: Hassan Morali, in his polacca *Kara Soliman*, made the best time, taking six days to cover the 470-mile crossing at 3.3 knots an hour. He was certainly an excellent sailor, and his exploit can be compared with that of the convoy described above. The latter left Tunis on 15 September 1809, arriving in Marseilles on 5 November, while Hassan Morali left on 25 October 1809 and arrived on the 31st. This means that he had faced the same climatic conditions as the ships in the convoy, and still beat their time easily. The records show five other direct crossings accomplished in from six to nine days, whilst others took much longer. In addition to the six-ship convoy's 50 day-voyage, there were two similar voyages that took 39 and 43 days, and others whose length is baffling. The Tunisian *raïs* Yahya left Tunis on the First of November 1808 in his xebeck with a crew of 25 aboard; arriving in Mahon on 10 November, he stayed until 5 December before heading for Palma de Majorca, where his ship was quarantined for 18 days. The quarantine over, he stayed on in the port for 52 days before setting sail for Palamos, north of Barcelona where he remained from 22 February until 30 March 1809 before finally reaching Marseilles on the First of April—in other words, a voyage of five months! Unfortunately we do not know the reasons for these prolonged stays in the Spanish ports.

Such differences in the lengths of time required for these voyages become apparent when there are documents related to several voyages originating in the same port: the four crossings from Bona to Marseilles lasted 7, 10, 11 and 83 days; ships covered the 700 miles between Tetuan and Marseilles in anything from 13 to 82 days; those coming from Cartagena, a distance of 500 miles, took 15, 45, 95 and 134 days; most of the vessels that provided the link between Aguila, a port near Cartagena, and Marseilles managed the journey in from 12 to 18 days, except for two: one covered the distance in six days, and the other in 76! The length of this second trip can be explained by the stopover in Palma de Majorca for the purpose of making up the load, a quarantine, followed by another stopover, this time at Port-Vendres to unload part of the cargo. Poor weather conditions and the Maghrebi ships practising the maritime caravan explain the sometimes surprising amount of time taken for these journeys. Even though there were only a limited number of crossings (in some cases only one) for most of the ports of origin, it seems

useful to present them here. The two polaccas from Tripoli which left Patras on 28 February 1810 arrived in Marseilles the following April 19th and 21st, covering the 970-mile crossing in 40 and 42 days; the Moroccan Ahmed Chechely's polacca made the Gibraltar-to-Marseilles trip, a distance of 693 miles, in 11 days in July 1809; the Algerian Mohammed Aga's polacca *Yussuf* travelled from Acca, 1,300 miles away, in 70 days, while Ali's polacca *Aziza* took 143 days for the journey from Larnaca, 1,500 miles from Marseilles.

These observations are confirmed by the notations in the registers of the health authorities in Leghorn, which show a total of only 34 entries from 1809 to 1814, twenty of them originating in Tunis, five in both Tripoli and in Algiers. There are significant variations in the length of these voyages: from 14 to 62 days from Tripoli, and 9 to 47 from Algiers. All in all, the most numerous crossings, those originating in Tunis making direct trips, were of more regular duration—but one crossing took 120 days and two took 37 because of various stopovers. The 340-mile crossing, depending on the ship, took from three to 19 days, with an average of six-and-a-half days. The record, three days, was held by the Tunisian Ali Wahrânî, captain of a xebeck that had reached the remarkable average speed of 4.7 knots an hour. We should also mention Hassan Morali who in his polacca *Kara Solimon* made the crossing in four days.

During the years 1805 to 1814, the ships flying the flag of a Maghrebi state were considered neutral, and were therefore allowed to navigate freely, but the European war remained very present, and was felt in the form of inspections by British warships after French troops had entered Spain. Indeed, it was chiefly after 1808 that most of the Maghrebi ships refer to being boarded and having their papers inspected by the English. The ship of Mohammed Bougemat, the expert navigator, was boarded and inspected in December 1808 off Mahon by an English frigate during a voyage from Bugie to Marseilles. The Algerian Ahmed Ben Aouda, having left from Bona, was inspected by a French frigate near Cape Sicie on 18 November 1808; several hours later, in the waters off La Seyne, he was also inspected by an English frigate. The English blockade was certainly very severe: an Algerian *raïs* named Mohammed reported to the Marseilles health authorities on 9 September 1811 that on 7 September he had been boarded south of Cassis and his ships's papers had been checked by an English vessel, and that he had gone through the same routine the following day with another English ship off the

island of Frioul outside Marseilles! In December, 1812, the Moroccan Embarek's schooner *Messaouda* out of Tangiers was visited in succession by British ships: on the 9th east of Malaga, on the 14th off Barcelona, and on the 17th at Mayre Island, near Cassis' *Calanques.*

The Long Voyages

The crossings constituted only part of the voyages undertaken by these ships. Most of them returned to their port of origin, sometimes after various stopovers and complicated journeys. To gain an idea of the commercial navigation of this period as it was practised by the Maghrebi ships, which was of the same order as the navigation of all the Mediterranean peoples engaged in shipping, we have made use of the very informative document concerning Tripoli already mentioned in the previous chapter. We should remember that when the ships were leaving port, the French consulate issued a passport to the Tripolitan captains, which it retrieved on their return, noting the dates and the destinations of the ships. We have records for 139 complete voyages for the period from 1805 to 1815.[15] The length of these voyages was of course variable, but more often than not they were long. The twelve trips to Alexandria took an average of 146 days, or nearly five months. The fastest time was 69 and the longest 218 days. A trip to Crete took between 92 and 205 days, and to Smyrna between 68 and 183; the round trip to Morocco took from 157 to 237 days. The facts are the same for the European destinations: from 148 to 246 days for Lisbon, 94 and 95 days for Leghorn, and 172 for Trieste. The Maghrebi ports, although they were relatively close to each other, presented similar figures: from 39 to 270 days for Tunis and from 21 to 136 for Bengazi. We should point out however that three quarters of the 34 voyages destined for Bengazi took from 33 to 75 days. Malta, with 52 voyages, was also the closest destination (200 miles) and the most heavily frequented by the Tripolitan ships. Three of them completed the round trip in less than nine days, and six covered the distance in between 10 and 19 days. Half of the trips, 27 of them, required from 20 to 39 days. Nine took more than 60 days, including five of over 100.

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[15] For different reasons—a ship's failure to return, or carelessness in the registration procedures at the time of departure or return—the records for a number of these trips are incomplete.

A sea voyage consisted of two crossings, whose rather random character we have observed, as well as a stopover in the port of destination for a length of time that was also usually impossible to predict. Of course, distance is a factor that prolongs a voyage, and the average trip to Alexandria naturally took longer than the trip to Bengazi; but once again, the time factor could not really be controlled in this period. In the ships they used, their navigational practices, as well as the recruitment of the major part of their crews, the merchant fleets of the Maghreb rapidly learned to adapt to the maritime trade in the Mediterranean, a trade which had until then been the special preserve of the Europeans.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MAGHREBI MERCHANTS AND THEIR TRADE

The Careers of Several Merchants

The involvement of the Maghrebi merchants in maritime trade, like their particular practices, took many different forms. Rather than presenting a series of paragraphs according to category with various general comments, we have chosen to present a number of merchants whose existence and professional life demonstrate this diversity. The information depends on the available documentation, which is very uneven, and differs from case to case. This is why we have had to emphasise one aspect at the expense of another, but in our view this does not detract from their diversity and interest.

Ahmed and Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan

Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan was born in 1783 in Tripoli, where his father, Ahmed Al-Faqih Hassan was a rich merchant, the *shâbandar al-tujjâr* (head of the merchants). He became his father's partner, not only in his professional activities, but also in his work as chronicler. Ahmed Al-Faqih had developed the habit of keeping a record of family events (marriages, births, deaths), and also details concerning his professional life (trips, business transactions, current exchange rates, etc.). Hassan Faqih continued this practice, giving it a more systematic and more general character, mainly after 1819.[1] We found thirty entries in his chronicle for the period from October 1810 to October 1813 illustrating the three main commercial activities of the Al-Faqih Hassans.[2]

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[1] Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, *Al Yawmiyyat*. . ., 1984. The personal chronicle of Hassan Al-Faqih, who died in 1867, covers the years from 1819 to 1859. The work was continued by his son Ahmed (1843–1886).

[2] The chronicler, or chroniclers, as it is impossible to know for these years whether it is the father or the son who holds the pen. The comments refer in particular to voyages in which they had a personal investment.

• Privateering: Hassan Al-Faqih's chronicle shows an interest in corsair activities, but only in the campaigns of the *raïs* Omar Chelly. We learn that Omar Chelly departed on a campaign on 21 November 1811 and captured several ships, which arrived in Tripoli on 29 November and 7 December, and that on 19 December, on his return trip, his vessel was wrecked on the rocks at the entrance to the port. There is no further mention of corsairs until 29 January 1813, with an entry indicating that the same Omar Chelly had taken to the sea again, in a period when we know that other corsairs were also active. Everything becomes clear on 12 December 1811 when the author of the chronicle lists his share of the captured booty, mainly remnants of fabric and scarves, which gives reason to believe that the Al-Faqihs were among those who had fitted out the ship.

• Maritime trade: This activity is better documented, beginning on 31 October 1810 with the establishment of a *bûlisa* (bill of exchange) for six thousand *douros* (Spanish silver piastres) between three partners for Tunisia, of which 500 were provided by the author of the chronicle. The other references are to goods received and to the movements of ships on which the Al-Faquis had merchandise, particularly in 1813. On 12 June, the departure for Alexandria of a ship commanded by the *raïs* Moursi, followed on 15 July by another commanded by the *raïs* Zurieki for the same destination; on 5 September the *raïs* Ahmed set sail for Rhodes, and on the 30th, the *raïs* Mahmoud Gomeira left for Marseilles. On 20 October the chronicler notes the arrival of a ship from Smyrna, on the 22nd the return of the *raïs* Moursi, and shortly afterwards of another ship from Smyrna.

• Money-lending: The chronicle records that on 9 January 1812, Abdul Rahim Toloz borrowed a hundred douros from the writer in the presence of witnesses; on 2 November 1812, Al-Faqih lent some money—the equivalent of 128 douros—to Ahmed Qadi, specifying that he had obtained this sum from the sale of oil, and that the borrower had used the money to cover shipping costs and and pay customs duties in a maritime transaction. On 18 December 1812, he advanced the equivalent of 78 douros for a period of one month to Hadj Hamida Ben Cha'ban. On 5 January 1813, he heaved a sigh of relief because 'thanks be to God' he had managed to recover the loan he had made to Ahmed Qadi two months earlier. There is an entry for 11 March 1813 concerning two loans at interest (the rate

regrettably unspecified) to two Jewish merchants; 1600 douros to Rahmin and 300 to Jacob Farfar. These loans were followed by another, for 20 douros, to Tosson the Turk, on 20 April.

The particular trait that characterised the activity of the Al-Faqih Hassans was caution. They diversified their activities, took risks with a certain amount of money in corsair campaigns, preferred maritime trade, but did not neglect to offer loans at interest. Above all, they spread out the risks, never alone chartering a ship, acting only with partners, and investing their capital in limited quantities as can be seen in the contract concerning a voyage to Tunisia in October 1810. They had commercial relations with Jews and Muslims alike, and their field of activity was mainly limited to the Ottoman Empire: Tunisia, Alexandria and Smyrna. The economic upheavals in the Mediterranean, the new possibilities offered, seem not to have affected them. This continuity recalls the practices of the merchants of Sfax, neighbours of Tripoli, so well depicted in Ali Zouari's description of their routines! The correspondence of the merchants from Sfax provides information about their business methods, which was clearly just like that of the Al-Faqihs. An extract from a letter of Ali Ben Tazaït written in Alexandria and dated 23 April 1806, addressed to Hadj Mahfûz Maqnî in Sfax, gives us a glimpse into the commercial practices common to both.

> You are not unaware of the fact that we sent you, under the supervision of your nephews Sidi Ahmad and Sidi Muhammad, and of Sidi al hadj Utman Bakkar, 625 *kaïlas* of wheat at the price of 5¼ *qirshes* and 6 *fiddas* per unit, as well as 1,000 bowls at the price of 68 *qirshes*, and a case of merchandise. The total cost was 4,530 *qirshes*. We informed you that you can sell all these articles as you wish, taking for yourself out of the proceeds the sum of 703.5 *qirshes*, which we will send you from Sma-'îl Sgayyar, to deduct 100 *mahbubs* and arrange to send them to our brother Sa'ban b. Tazaït, and to credit the balance to the accounts of our blessed association [. . .]
>
> We contracted to send you 120 bundles with Sa'îd b. al hadj Zikrî. In fact, I have not yet done this. Fear not, if God permits, they will arrive as soon as we have found a supercargo. We inform you that salt is much in demand in our markets these days. If you have an opportunity to find a suitable ship in Sfax, rent it, load it with salt and send it without delay. At the present moment, salt costs 70 *paras* per *kaïla* here. If, with a little luck, this operation is willed for us by God, I will not fail to notify you immediately of the arrival of your

> ship. In the opposite case, send us, as soon as possible, either a batch of fezes from Tunis, or a batch of shawls from Djerba.[3]

The author of this letter, a merchant from Djerba established in Alexandria, was in partnership with a merchant from Sfax who had returned to his native city after having lived in Egypt and Anatolia. The two men sent each other merchandise, informed each other of the trends and needs of their local markets and sent instructions about transferring funds on behalf of other merchants. Indeed, most of these men were simultaneously members of several associations with several different partners. This trade proved to be very lucrative. The partnership between Ali Ben Tazït and al-Hadj Mahfûz Maqnî, established in August 1803 with an initial capitalization of 1,600 *qirshes* was interrupted in June 1809 after the death of al-Hadj Mahfûz Maqnî. The accounts drawn up at this time show that the initial capital of 1,600 *qirshes* had risen to 14,686 *qirshes* in six years, a fine gross result. These merchants, who were careful and no doubt kept to their working methods, made considerable profits in spite of everything. Their fortunes were substantial without, of course, equalling those of the powerful Egyptian merchants.[4]

Hamdân Ben Uthman Khodja

He was born in Algiers in 1773 to a family belonging to the high administration of the regency. His father, who was of Turkish origin, was a scholar, an *alim* and also the *defterdar* of the deylik. His maternal uncle, Mohammed Amîn as-Sikka, an Algerian, was the director of the monetary committee of Algiers during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. Hamdân Khodja, as a *kuloghlu*, received an excellent education which gave him the opportunity to discover the world. In 1784, when his uncle, in the capacity of *âghâ al-hadiyya*, had the responsibility of taking the dey's gift to Constantinople, he

[3] Zouari, "Deux documents d'archives . . .", 1985.

[4] A. Raymond studied the incomes of the Egyptian merchants of the eighteenth century through the inventories drawn up after their deaths. In the period from 1776 to 1798, 8.6% of the estates were worth more than the equivalent of 4,162 douros (Spanish piastres), and 3% 10,405 douros. The largest fortunes were between around 80,000 and 200,000 douros. Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire*, 1973, p. 411.

took his nephew with him. After the death of Hamdân's father, his uncle brought him into his business and sent him in his stead to Tunis, Leghorn, Marseilles, London, Gibraltar etc., thereby giving him the opportunity to learn Turkish, French and English. Hamdân Khodja became one of the most important merchants in Algiers, where he was in very great demand from colleagues desiring to participate in his commercial operations which extended to the Ottoman Empire as well as to Europe.[5] He became known as one of the richest men in Algiers. When he became a victim of the French conquest of 1830, he sent a petition to King Louis Philippe to complain about the atrocities committed against him by the French army, describing his erstwhile fortune in order to back up his demand for compensation:[6]

> Before the French government seized Algiers, I, your servant, was one of the most highly regarded and richest citizens. In my farms in Mitidja I had 10,000 sheep and ewes, 600 milk cows, 200 pairs of bullocks, 60 camels, 200 stallions and mares, and in addition to this livestock I also had other riches in rural goods, such as 600 beehives, between 5,000 and 6,000 *kîla*[1 *kîla* = around 25 kg] of wheat and barley, and on the threshing floor several thousand measures of such grain. As soon as Algiers fell into the hands of the French, the Arabs pillaged and destroyed all these goods. Out of goods worth 400,000 francs, I had nothing left. Everything was lost. But independently of my role as a farmer, I was also a merchant in Algiers, and was involved in great commercial activity, with funds of more than 300,000 francs in movement in Algiers as well as in the regency. After the occupation of this place by the French, it was not possible for me to get a penny from my debtors outside the city. As for those who lived in Algiers, most went abroad, and the French officers, after having questioned a great many people, came to the conviction that these debts which had been lost forever were worth a total of 300,000 francs. In addition, I had in stock a great quantity of commodities and fabrics that had not yet been sold. Since the caravans from the interior were no longer coming to Algiers, I was forced to sell all this merchandise at a loss. I had thus to give up both farming and my commercial activities. When the French army descended on Sidi Ferruch, Hussein Pasha

[5] In 1814, he founded a commercial association to operate in the Balearic Islands, Gibraltar and London. Thirty people participated with a capital investment of 14,406 *riyals duru fidda* (pataques-chiques) of which 3,133 were for himself, his uncle and his wife. AMINE, "*Commerce extérieur et commerçants d'Alger*...", 1991, pp. 339–341.

[6] TEMIMI, *Recherches et documents d'histoire maghrébine*, 1980, pp. 93–94.

> took from my stock 100,000 francs worth of paper that was used in the manufacture of cartridges, without paying me for it.

Not unaturally Hamdân Khodja owned fine houses. One, in the city, was known as the *dâr az-zarqâ* (the blue house), the other was located in the countryside and surrounded by a vast garden. He described it with satisfaction in one of his writings, emphasising the luxury objects it contained:

> [. . .] linens, rugs, Sèvres porcelain (this porcelain formed a collection of more than five hundred pieces), and a tea service that was also in Sèvres porcelain which had cost me three hundred francs in Paris, a complete set of pots and pans, every sort of earthenware, jars full of oil, butter and a thousand other provisions that we had the habit of keeping in the country.[7]

Of course, even if we take Hamdân Khodja's figures with a grain of salt, his fortune before 1830 was considerable, comparable to that of the richest Tujjâr Egyptians at the end of the eighteenth century.[8] Our merchant diversified his fortune: about half of it remained invested in trade based on imports of fabrics and paper from Europe and on the export of foodstuffs, especially cereals. These were the goods that were found in his warehouses. But the other half of his possessions consisted of rural properties whose production also supplied his export trade: sheep for wool and leather, bullocks for labour as well as for skins, cereals, honey and wax. Finally, Hamdân Khodja had considerable debts due from two categories of clients: those who were outside Algiers, who might be provincial merchants to whom he had granted credit, and former residents of Algiers who had fled abroad. The overseas group was evidently the last dey Hussein and his entourage, with whom Hamdân Khodja was in constant contact in connection with business and money matters.

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[7] In the *Miroir* or *Aperçu historique et statistique sur la Régence d'Alger*, quoted by Amine, "*Commerçants d'Alger*", 1980, p. 376.

[8] Hamdân Khodja estimated at 800,000 francs the value of the lost goods, without specifying the value of the merchandise sold at a loss, or that of his urban real estate, which is not mentioned here. The 800,000 francs he claimed here represented around 150,000 douros.

Ahmed and Yûnis Ben Yûnis

These two men from Djerba who had settled in Tunis while maintaining close links with the region of their birth had a long and significant business career. Unlike most of the other families of Tunisian notables, who were involved at one and the same time in administrative responsibilities, farming out taxes, and practicing big business—like the Gellulis and the Ben Ayeds—the Ben Yûnises limited their activities almost exclusively to the commercial. Thanks chiefly to the many deeds preserved in the registers of the chancelleries of the European consulates in Tunis, we can follow the developments in their business activities from 1779 to 1813, a period of thirty-five years. For reasons we do not know, the name of Yûnis Ben Yûnis disappears completely from April 1786 to January 1793, and is replaced by the name of Ahmed Ben Yûnis. After this date, Yûnis Ben Yûnis reappears, while Ahmed no longer figures in any of the numerous deeds that are available to us. In the Tunis of this period there were two types of maritime activity that could be of interest to businessmen: privateering and international trade. The Ben Yûnises practised both.

The Ben Yûnises and Privateering: The Ben Yûnises entered the corsair world indirectly. On the First of July 1782, Yûnis Ben Yûnis, acting as proxy for Ahmed Ben Ayed, *kaïd* of Djerba, sold to Minuty, a French merchant established in Tunis, a Genoese pink captured by the *raïs* Ibrahim Papasoglou, who was probably employed by Ahmed Ben Ayed. Several years later, on 24 July 1788, Ahmed Ben Yûnis played a similar role in the sale of a Maltese tartan for the benefit of the same *kaïd* from Djerba. In 1789, Ahmed Ben Yûnis served in the same way as a middleman; first on 14 September in the name of Yussuf sâhib at-tabaa, the Bey's Keeper of the Seals, and then on 9 October, again for the *kaïd* of Djerba. It is of interest that in both cases the buyer was a French company established in Tunis, Etienne Fuzier & Cie, which thereby acquired two Neapolitan ships that had been captured by corsairs from Tunis.

Until this time, the Ben Yûnises had been involved only as intermediaries in the activities of the privateering entrepreneurs, to whom they were in a way obliged: the all-powerful favourite of the bey, and especially the *kaïd* of Djerba, their home region. But as experienced businessmen, they understood very quickly that the wars stirred up by the French Revolution were turning international maritime trade

on its head, and that corsair activities offered opportunities that were not to be missed. In 1793, Ahmed Ben Yûnis fitted out a modest galliot with 16 men aboard which went out on two campaigns, and another one the following year. Unfortunately we do not know the results, but the operation must have been profitable, since he then fitted out two corsair ships in 1795, this time xebecks with crews of a hundred. We note four ships in 1796, and three in 1797. The results seem to have justified the investments, because we have three contracts of sale for ships captured in the month of November alone made at the French Consulate for French buyers from Yûnis Ben Yûnis who still continued to serve in his role of agent for the *sâhib at-tabaa.*

From 1798 on, it was Yûnis Ben Yûnis who fitted out corsair ships with seven campaigns in 1798, then from two to four in the years from 1799 to 1803, up to seven again in 1804, and eight in 1805 (the last two years corresponding to the resumption of hostilities at the beginning of the First Empire). Two types of ship were used: modest galliots armed with two cannons with crews of fifteen to twenty men, and xebecks or brigs with ten cannons and crews of 60 to 80 men. The first group went out on short crossings, the others on campaigns much farther afield. The loyalty of the owners towards their captains is evident. Out of the 36 campaigns organised by Yûnis Ben Yûnis between 1798 and 1805, sixteen were led by three *raïs*: Ali Dermich Kiprisli, Kütchük Ali Arnaout and Salah Ben Attia Zouari. Then suddenly, just when the activity of the ships had picked up and the future seemed rosy for the corsairs, Yûnis Ben Yûnis, along with a considerable number of other outfitters, brought a definitive end to his privateering activities at the close of the year 1805. In fact, his preferred field of activity had always been maritime trade, and although he continued to fit out vessels, they were now merchantmen. A symbol of this about-face in the situation was his purchase in 1809 of two commercial ships: on the First of April he bought a polacca from two Greeks and on 14 August he bought an American brigantine from its captain, William Brown. Both of these ships were entrusted to Tunisian *raïs*.

The Maritime Trade of the Ben Yûnises: We have 228 charter contracts for commercial ships chartered by the Ben Yûnises between 1779 and 1813. This impressive number, in spite of the fact that it reveals their considerable activity in maritime trade over thirty-five

years, is incomplete however. Missing are the contracts made with Muslim *raïs*, particularly before 1800, as well as those made in the European consulates, whose registers no longer exist or could not be consulted. The contracts used here come from the registers of the consulates of France, Venice and Austria, whose series are complete, and those of Ragusa, which contain some gaps.[9] Nevertheless, as these are the countries whose flags handled by far the largest share of maritime trade in the Tunis regency, we can safely consider that we have most of the contracts signed by the Ben Yûnises, and that the observations we are able to draw from their use are certainly close to the reality.

Their chartering was obviously not regular. After humble beginnings, only four contracts from 1779 to 1782, the Ben Yûnises then became among the principal Tunisian merchants involved in maritime trade, chartering thirteen ships in 1783 and 14 in 1784. This rapid expansion was doubtless linked to the end of the American War of Independence, and to efforts to 'catch up', but the level of involvement remained high from 1784 to 1792, with from six to ten ships per year. This activity was seriously disturbed beginning in 1793, the start of a decade of wars in Europe which also affected North Africa, as the records show only thirteen contracts for the Ben Yûnises between 1793 and 1799. The considerable withdrawal of French ships in the years 1793 to 1794 and 1798 to 1801, the end of the Republic of Venice in 1797, and the war that the regency of Tunis, an Ottoman province, was obliged to declare against France, on the orders of the Sultan in 1799, were all particularly unfavourable elements for maritime trade. It was in this same period that the Ben Yûnises, like most of the Tunisian merchants forced to cut back their commercial activities, started fitting out corsair ships for preference.

The year 1800 marked the return of the Ben Yûnises to maritime trade with ten charter contracts, a restoration of activities that was confirmed in the following years, with 26 contracts in 1801, a record 38 in 1802, and another 13 in 1803. This period, corresponding to the general restoration of peace after a decade of wars, was of short duration, because hostilities were formally resumed in 1803. The total absence of contracts for the years 1804 and 1805 is very likely

[9] The years 1780 to 1784 and 1787 to 1793 are missing from the Ragusa register.

Map 2: Destinations of Ships Chartered by the Ben Yûnises (1783–1803)

due, at least in part, to gaps in the archives, as we know of twenty contracts for 1806: but let us not forget that it was in 1804 and 1805 that Yûnis Ben Yûnis had the greatest number of ships out on corsair campaigns. From 1807 to 1809, the records show only three to five contracts a year, but it is also true that Yûnis Ben Yûnis became a victim of the dey's displeasure, which resulted in the confiscation of the major part of his fortune.[10] He later resumed his business activities, but only temporarily and at a reduced level, with only a single charter contract in 1810 and another in 1813, before stopping for good.[11]

During these thirty-five years, the Ben Yûnises used the ships of nine different nationalities. Two criteria may have influenced their choices: the cost of hiring and the availability of ships. Unfortunately it is not possible to judge the first category, because the contracts almost never mention the tonnage of the ships, and where the type of ship is indicated—tartan, brigantine, polacca, etc.—their variations in capacity are too great to provide us with any reliable information. Nevertheless, keeping in mind the competition, the differences between flags could not have been too marked. The choice was determined above all by international circumstances. From 1783 on, ships that had previously been Venetian since 1779, because neutral, became almost exclusively French until the beginning of 1793, which is a reflection of the preeminence of the ships and the commercial activities of the French in Tunisia.[12] The near-disappearance of the French flag after this date made it necessary for the Ben Yûnises to turn to other flags. From 1794 to 1797, the Venetians returned in force, with 18 out of 21 contracts, but the annexation of the Serene Republic that year forced Yûnis Ben Yûnis to find new shippers. In 1800 to 1803, and 1806, the height of his activities, he chartered 107 ships in five years: ten were Austrian, eight Russian, 88 Ragusan, one Ionian, six Ottoman, two Tuscan, and one Tunisian. After the period of French supremacy from 1783 to 1792 and Venetian supremacy from 1779 to 1782 and 1793 to 1797, it was the turn

[10] Cherif, "Hammuda Pasha Bey", 1977.

[11] We should remember that Yûnis Ben Yûnis bought merchant ships for his own use, and that he did not draw up official contracts when he used them. The number of ships he chartered after 1809 is probably higher than these figures.

[12] Tunis and Venice were at war from 1784 to 1792.

of the Ragusans to furnish the majority (82.2%) of Yûnis Ben Yûnis's charters in those years. But the other flags he used illustrate the unrest in the Mediterranean in this period. We know that the Austrian ships were primarily ex-Venetian vessels, like those of the Ionian islands. The Greek ships, whether sailing under the Russian or under the more official Ottoman flag, experienced a rapid development that increased in the following years. Finally, we note the humble appearance of a single Tunisian ship in 1806. From 1807 on, the activity of Yûnis Ben Yûnis was considerably cut back, to judge by the charter contracts, but it is significant that most of these were now drawn up for Tunisian ships.

We have seen how the commercial activities of the Ben Yûnises were seriously disturbed by the revolutionary wars of the years 1793 to 1799. Since the contracts indicate the destinations of the chartered ships, a comparison of the destinations before and after this period enables us to see how the Ben Yûnises took advantage of the new situation in the Mediterranean. Comparing the years 1783 to 1792 and 1800 to 1803 is all the more instructive because by a happy accident, the total number of ships chartered is exactly the same in both cases: 87. The list of ports the Ben Yûnises were involved with is long—27 destinations—located almost the whole way around the Mediterranean, but there is concerning their traffic shares an astonishing contrast between the two periods in question (See Map 2). In the decade from 1783 to 1792, the Ben Yunises did business primarily with the Ottoman Empire, with 82 contracts out of 87 (90.9%), and certain ports in Europe and others located on the periphery; Malta, Ragusa or Cagliari, five in all (5.7%). Ten years later, things had changed dramatically. Europe now became the favourite destination of Yûnis Ben Yûnis with 64 ships chartered in four years (73.6%), way ahead of the Muslim world with 22 ships (25.3%). But here, too, there were major changes. In the period from 1783 to 1792, the Maghreb was as attractive a location for the Ben Yûnises as the Levant (41 ships), in particular Djerba, with Tripoli in second place. But the preferred distant destination for the Ben Yûnises was Alexandria, well ahead of Smyrna and Istanbul, the capital of the Empire. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Maghreb held little attraction for them, and it appears that their link with their native island was severed from then on. There were also changes in connection with destinations in the Levant: because

of the war and the presence of the French, Alexandria was a risky destination, which explains the increasing appeal of Smyrna.

In fact, for Yûnis Ben Yûnis, the best business from this time on was with Europe, from Lisbon to the west in the Atlantic to Trieste at the far end of the Adriatic; but above all Genoa, with seven contracts, Leghorn, nine, Malta, twelve, and Marseilles 15, in four years. These four ports represented three quarters of the European destinations and more than half of all his business put together. Their growth becomes more apparent when considered in terms of annual averages. In the decade between 1783 and 1792, the Ben Yûnises chartered almost nine ships a year, of which more than eight went to Ottoman ports, as opposed to only one every other year in Europe. In the years 1800 to 1803, Yûnis Ben Yûnis chartered almost 22 ships a year, five or six of which went to Muslim ports and sixteen to European ports. Admittedly, the Muslim world had lost part of its economic appeal, which can be seen in the drop of a third of the annual destinations, but the most striking feature of this period is the extraordinary attraction to Europe. The expansion and reorientation of the Ben Yûnises' business beginning in 1800 made the management of their affairs more complex and found them using representatives in the principal places of their activities. An example of this is the registration on 12 January 1802, by the Consulate of Ragusa in Tunis, of a deed naming Joseph Vinent as the family company's agent and proxy in Mahon.

Here again, the contracts provide information, albeit succinct, about the composition of the cargo of 97 of the 228 chartered ships, 22 of them for the decade between 1783 and 1792 and 57 for the years 1800 to 1803. As for the Muslim world, we discover in particular that the Ben Yûnises organised the passage of pilgrims for Mecca from Tunis to Alexandria, 18 contracts out of the 22 we are aware of, and that the other ships carried various types of merchandise.[13] Our information concerning goods destined for Europe is more complete. First of all, there was wheat, with 25 contracts out of 57, especially with destinations of Barcelona, Leghorn and

[13] In Alexandria, the Ben Yûnises probably had to provide transportation for the return trips of the pilgrims, with the help of local contacts; but the contracts from Alexandria during this period have disappeared.

Malta, and also barley, five contracts; 14 shipments of olive oil were sent chiefly to Marseilles along with wool, and finally cattle went to Malta. The cargoes shipped by Yûnis Ben Yûnis were all products from Tunisian agriculture and livestock, and his activity quite naturally fits in with the external trade of the regency, whose main features had been established and known for a long time. What is striking, on the other hand, is the rapidity and efficiency with which this merchant adapted to the new conditions. Up until 1793, the Ben Yûnises were hardly distinguishable from such traditional Maghrebi Arab merchants as Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, or the tradesmen from Sfax described by Ali Zouari. The Ben Yûnises saw very early that the collapse of France's role in Tunisia, along with the decline of the French merchant fleet, presented previously unknown possibilities for expansion, and that this was a unique occasion that should be grasped. They, and several of the notables around the bey of Tunis, knew how to take advantage of the situation, demonstrating a remarkable capacity for adaptation.

The Busnach and Bacri Families

These were two famous families of Jewish merchants in Algiers who, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth not only played a significant economic role but were also involved in high-level political activities. Both families originated in Leghorn, appearing in Algiers separately in the eighteenth century; the Busnach family in 1721 and the Bacris, after a first attempt in 1716, in 1770. Until around 1790, the two families were involved in independent commercial activities, mainly between Algiers and Leghorn, as can be seen in the charter contracts and the bills of lading of the European caravanning ships. It was in the last decade of the eighteenth century that their destinies underwent a change that soon found them in extraordinary circumstances, but by different routes, before they joined forces.

In 1782, the five sons of Michel Cohen-Bacri—Joseph, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham and Jacob—formed a partnership, but it was not until ten years later that the upheavals in France, a country that until this time had been closed to them as to all merchants of the Maghreb, opened the way for a spectacular development of their activities. In addition, the growing need for cereals of a France at war cleared away the obstacles that had been hampering maritime

trade since the seventeenth century and gave them their opportunity. Without necessarily neglecting their relations with Leghorn, where Solomon lived, or establishing themselves in Spain, in particular in Cartagena, the Bacris became the main suppliers of cereals to Marseilles. This significant role was due in part to the collapse of the Compagnie d'Afrique and the near-disappearance of the French merchant ships, as we have seen replaced by ships of neutral powers. In 1794, Jacob Bacri settled in Marseilles, opening a branch of the family business, a proof if ever there was one of the important position of France in the commercial activities of the Bacris, and, vice versa, of the importance of France in the trade of Algiers.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Naftali Busnach was an equally important merchant in Algiers, but he also had close ties with the ruling military class of the regency. First of all, he established good relations with the bey of Titteri, Mustafâ Waznâgi, who had fallen out of favour, appealing to the dey on his behalf and urging that his name be cleared. When Mustafâ became bey of Constantine, he made Naftali Busnach his advisor and financier, a position Naftali retained when Mustafâ became dey in 1798. In this period, the Bacri and Busnach families already had family ties, because not only was Naftali Busnach the brother-in-law of Joseph Bacri, but also, he married his young sister Aziza to David, Joseph's son. It was probably around this time that the firm of *Bacri Frères et Busnach* was founded. Strongly supported by the dey—who granted the company export monopolies, in which he himself had an interest, and did not hesitate to send pressurizing letters to the Directoire—the new company multiplied its commercial activities. These were carried out primarily with France, but also with Italy and Spain. The trade involved primarily the export of cereals and untreated skins in quantities that are unfortunately difficult to assess for lack of satisfactory information. The company used chartered ships, but appears in several documents as the owner of several ships that had been originally captured by French corsairs and sold in Algiers.

This economic domination was matched by an equally powerful role in the political realm, which was played above all by Naftali Busnach, who in February 1800 was made *muqaddam*, head of the Jewish community, by the dey Mustafâ. Personal inclinations, but also the importance of the firm's economic relationship with France, instilled in Bacri and Busnach a strongly pro-French attitude. They managed to bring about the liberation of some French prisoners,

including the personnel of the consulate, who had been imprisoned by the dey when he had been obliged in 1799, under orders from the Sultan, to declare war on France after Napoleon's conquest of Egypt. Busnach became the indispensable intermediary between the dey and the European powers. He intervened at the time of the Anglo-Algerian tensions, and received the new English consul upon his arrival in 1800. In 1801, he welcomed the Dutch, Danish and Swedish consuls, calmed the disagreements between Spain and Algiers, and in 1803, served as mediator between Portugal and the regency.

Such a dominant role in both economic and political realms was a very vulnerable situation for persons who were only *dhimmis*, or members of a 'protected' group. Discontent and jealousy developed in a segment of Algerian society. First of all among certain members of the Jewish community, supporters of the former *muqaddam* who had been dismissed by the dey, as well as among other Jewish merchants; and later among the Muslim merchants, for whom Hamdan Khodja served as spokesman: "These Jews have made their fortune at the expense of the inhabitants of the regency; they all had the advantage of this monopoly, while we [the Muslim merchants], unable to buy at the prices they offered, found ourselves excluded from this trade."[14] Finally, there was dissent also among the corps of janissaries, who became furious when they realized that the dey made no decisions without consulting Busnach and his associates. A first attempt to assassinate the dey, his principal ministers and his counsellor was made in 1801. In 1804, Naftali Busnach managed to escape once again from a janissary who wanted to kill him, and several months later it was the dey who was wounded by four soldiers. On 28 June 1805, Naftali Busnach was killed by a janissary for whom he had refused to serve as mediator. The next day, with the agreement of the dey, who saw in it a means of deflecting the anger of the *odjak* against himself, the janissaries, accompanied by a segment of the Muslim population, gave themselves over to a pogrom against the Jews of the city, wrecking a synagogue, pillaging shops—the Busnach shops first of all—and assassinating several dozen Jews. Two months later, the dey Mustafâ was assassinated in turn.

[14] Quoted in Amine, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 427.

The Cohen-Bacris escaped the mob and along with three hundred other Jewish families sought refuge in Leghorn, Tunis or Tripoli. Some members of the Bacri family later returned to Algiers, and Joseph even became a *muqqadam* in 1811, but their greatness and their power had gone. They resumed their commercial activities but no longer benefitted from the support of the dey: they also became involved in complex rivalries within the Jewish community, and furthermore, they were handicapped by the pressure of debts and the extra taxes exacted from them. The archives of the French consulate in Algiers covering the period of around a year-and-a-half from August 1808 to March 1810, give us a glimpse into the way the Cohen Bacris—in this case Joseph, his son David and his nephew Nathan, the son of his brother Jacob—carried on their maritime trade. They imported a variety of goods, in 21 different shipments from Alicante and Cartagena and a single shipment from Marseilles, and exported goods twice to Marseilles and twice to Leghorn. This activity was only a pale shadow of what it must have been ten years earlier. The Bacris no longer chartered entire ships, but had to be content with shipping just a few items on each vessel.

Trade and Religion

The North African merchants who were engaged in maritime trade, both Muslims and Jews, were integrated at one and the same time into three social circles that constituted an increasingly complex whole: the family, the religious community, and the political structure. On the professional level, the only one that concerns us here, the first, involved an almost total solidarity for the individual merchant. The second necessitated cohesion and mutual assistance, but did not rule out commercial competition between families. The third, less easy to identify though real, led to rivalries, sometimes even veritable confrontatons between the different religious elements of the regency; rivalries whose economic dimension revealed, even created, social or political difficulties. Unlike the situations in Anatolia, the Near East or the Balkans, where the merchants involved belonged to three different religions, but were actually members of four distinct communities—Muslim, Jewish, Greek and Armenian—we find only the first two in the Maghreb, as the European merchants were part of a different system.

The Family

This was the basic social structure, which we find in all the religious groups and which conditioned the very existence of these men as well as their activities. All the merchants we have just introduced did not work alone, but in association with their fathers, brothers, sons, brothers-in-law, uncles, nephews etc. For these men, direct family ties alone seemed sufficient to establish the reputation for reliability that was indispensible to their profession. The family character—even the hereditary character—of their trade was another common feature of these merchants: all followed in the footsteps of their fathers, who had initiated them into the business by bringing them into partnership, a fact confirmed by the several genealogical details that we have for certain families. We saw Joseph Cohen-Bacri, son of Michel, who himself was a merchant, enter into partnership first with his brothers, then with Naftali Busnach once he became his brother-in-law, before establishing a partnership with his sons and nephews. The situation was similar for the Gelluli family. Mahmoud Gelluli (1750/55–1839) succeeded his father Bakkar as *kaïd* of Sfax in 1782, and became *kaïd* of Sousse in 1801. Important customs official and major outfitter of corsair ships, he was engaged in big business, like his father before him, who had begun in around 1770. He formed a partnership, gradually handing over his activities and functions to his descendants, his sons Farhat, Hassan, Hussein and Mohammed, and Mohammed's son Bakkar II. From 1766 to 1833, the most important merchants in Sfax, representing 61 people, belonged to just nine families. While we find no merchant working on his own, two families had more than ten members associated with the family business: the an-Nûrîs with eleven and the Sallâmîs with seventeen!

The Community

In the Maghreb at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, being a member of a community had different meanings, depending on whether the person in question was a Muslim or a Jew. In the case of the Muslims, the individual and his family were members of the principal religious group, which had a crushing demographic, political and religious dominance in the country. For a Jew, membership of his religious group meant being integrated

into a community that was in the extreme minority, primarily urban, and whose members had a socially-inferior status. On the other hand, only their integration into this community provided the Jews with a recognized social framework, legal protection, and the possibility of engaging officially in a professional activity. To be an Arab merchant in the regency of Tunis was by itself a relatively insignificant indication of a person's standing. The merchant's membership in a community was therefore determined according to two different criteria that were also, to a certain degree, complementary. The first becomes apparent in the choice of associates at the time of the creation of limited partnerships, or simply whenever a ship was chartered. An examination of the company contracts of the merchants of Sfax provides an excellent example of this. All the merchants or members of merchant families who invested in these contracts were Muslim. The idea of bringing a Jew into partnership could only have been out of the question to them; but it is true that the Jewish community in Sfax was very small, consisting of only a hundred families. The situation was the same in Tunis, however, where there were many Jews, and where they were active in the economic life of the city. The second criterion was geographic: to the membership of a religious group was added one's hometown. For example, the partnership contract established in Sfax in December 1802 by Hadj Mahfûz Maqnî includes the names of his associates and the sums they entrusted to him on the eve of his departure for the Levant. Of the fifteen people who raised 16,250 Tunisian piastres, thirteen were from Sfax, and their capital represented 15,650 piastres, or 96.3% of the total.

This marked preference for their fellow believers from the same city is also seen in the charter contracts. An examination of the available contracts for Tunis covering the period from 1799 to 1815 reveals that 160 were drawn up by Muslims; forty containing indications of the presence of one or two partners. Two of these contracts were made out in the name of two Turks, Ahmed Aga and Ahmed Bacha, who had Greek partners, from Crete like themselves. A third contract however, consisted of a Muslim, Ahmed Constantini, who chartered a ship in partnership with an Italian and a Jew. All the other contracts involved exclusively Tunisian Muslims. We have 66 contracts for the same period that were made out by Jews, 29 of which involved partners—all were Jews, and more specifically,

Tunisian Jews. A community may, however, include clearly-defined sub-groups, as is seen in the Jews of North Africa. Particularly in Tunis where we find two distinct groups: Tunisian Jews per se and Jews from Leghorn, called *Grana*, who had settled in the Maghreb in the eighteenth century. The charter contracts show that whenever there were associates, the Jews from Leghorn chose partners who were also from Leghorn and never the 'Tunisian' Jews, and that the 'Tunisian' Jews behaved in exactly the same manner when choosing their associates. We see the same phenomenon with the fifteen ships chartered by Greeks between 1799 and 1806: seven involved two partners, who were always Greek.

Community Rivalries

This compartmentalisation into communities in the maritime trade of the North African regencies led to rivalries between the two main groups involved, the Muslims and the Jews, with sometimes tragic consequences. It is therefore tempting, if not also necessary, to assess the importance and the role of these two communities in this field of activity. The problem is to define criteria that are sufficiently convincing and significant to provide valid comparison. Although we know that the Jews had a substantial role in the commercial life of Tripoli in this period, we lack elements of information that would be useful in forming an accurate evaluation. And we hardly know more about the Muslims! The documentation for Algiers and Tunis, however, though insufficient and rather impressionistic, does enable us to make out the key features of the two groups of merchants present in both cities.

Algiers

The significance of the role attributed to the Jews in the maritime trade of Algiers resides primarily in the importance of the position held by the firm Bacri-Busnach, and by the tragic end of Naftali Busnach in 1805. There were other active Jewish merchants, but we lack the kind of quantitative economic data on their activities that would make it possible to gain a clear idea of their supposed preeminence over the Muslims. Although we do not know the annual turnover from the activities of the merchants in Algiers, or that from the ships they chartered, we have quite an accurate idea of their

numbers, even if we are unable to distinguish the major merchants from the smaller traders:[15]

- 1798–1805: 22 Muslims, 36 Jews
- 1806–1813: 29 Muslims, 10 Jews
- 1814–1816: 47 Muslims, 40 Jews

For the period from 1798 to 1816, the records show 65 Muslim and 75 Jewish names, but the above totals are higher, because each merchant has been listed for the periods during which he was active. The years 1798 to 1805 confirm the superiority, at least numerically, of the Jewish merchants over the Muslims. These seven years, which correspond to the government of the dey Mustafa, were also the best years for the Bacri-Busnach firm. The years 1806 to 1813, directly after the pogrom of June 1805, saw the exile of part of the Jewish community and the collapse of their positions, which were now taken over by Muslims, whose numbers increased appreciably. From 1814 on, numbers of Jews were again in trading, but the domination of the Muslims, although less marked after this time, remained firm. The year 1805 was a time of transition for trade in Algiers, as can be seen in the study of the merchants' careers. Among the Jews, 29 out of 36 appeared only in the first period; conversely, in the third period, there were 30 new Jewish arrivals. Four of those present in the years 1798 to 1805 must have been among the exiles of 1805, as they do not reappear until 1815. Only one Jewish merchant out of 75, Joseph Cohen-Bacri, continued in the trade almost without interruption during these nineteen years, as compared with 16 out of 65 among the Muslims. Interruption and withdrawal for the Jews against continuity and growth for the Muslims characterise the positions occupied by the actors involved in maritime trade in Algiers.

Tunis

To assess the respective positions of the Muslims and the Jews in the maritime trade of the Tunis regency, we have two types of information sources:

[15] M. Amine noted the names of all the merchants who figured in the *daftars* (registers in Arabic), as well as those in the archives of the French Consulate in Algiers for the years 1792–1830. Amine, *op. cit.*, 1991, pp. 350–357 for the Muslims and 400–409 for the Jews.

• *The Teskérés*: These were export licenses delivered by the bey to the exporters, with the total amounts to be paid determined in proportion to the volume of the merchandise involved. For the year 1229 of the Hegira (24 December 1813 to 13 December 1814), the total revenue from *teskérés* related to cereals and oil collected by the beylik was as follows:[16]

Tunisian Muslims	155,218 piastres	46%
Jews	69,342 piastres	20.57%
Europeans	107,071 piastres	31.77%
Tripolitans	830 piastres	0.34%
Moroccans	4,500 piastres	1.33%
Total	336,961 piastres	100%

The Tunisian Muslims handled almost half of Tunisia's exports of wheat and oil, ahead of the Europeans, and well ahead of the Jews. This preeminence of the Muslims in maritime trade was a recent phonomenon, dating from the reign of Hammuda Pasha. In 1763 to 1764, the customs registers carried the names of 230 Muslim merchants, who took care of around 30% of Tunisia's imports by sea. The great majority of these merchants only showed a modest turnover, from 2,000 to 2,500 piastres, with only ten exceeding 5,000 piastres. A hundred Jewish merchants, with an average turnover of 6,000 piastres, handled almost a third of the imports. The remaining 35% was in the hands of the Europeans: six French firms and two English ones that carried out an average of 70,000 piastres worth of operations a year; and forty small merchants, Italians and Greeks, whose turnover only reached two thousand piastres on average.

• *The charter contracts*: These contacts were drawn up between 1799 and 1815 in certain European consulates in Tunis, and concerned primarily French, Ragusan, Austrian, Ottoman, Russian and Tunisian ships. The collection of contracts, in spite of gaps, is large enough to provide a fairly accurate picture of the situation. In total, 28 Jewish merchants, alone or in partnership, chartered 66 ships, while 121 Muslims, including partners, chartered 260 ships. The ratio of Muslims to Jews in these figures is around four to one, both for the number of tradesmen and for the ships used. There is therefore no doubt concerning the relatively minor place held by the Jews in

[16] Chater, *Dépendance et mutations*, 1984, p. 185.

comparison to the Muslims in the maritime trade of the Tunis regency in the second half of Hammuda Bey's rule, which doubtless presents a rather different picture from some received ideas on the subject.

The destinations of these chartered ships, the ports and the countries with which these merchants maintained relations, reveal a marked contrast between the merchants of the two communities. Out of the 66 ships chartered by the Jews—apart from three ships hired for only several months—three went to the Maghreb and 60 to European ports. With 23 ships, 36.5% of the total, Leghorn remained the traditional partner of the Jews of Tunis, as it had been for almost two centuries. Marseilles occupied the second place, receiving 14 ships, or 22.2%, ahead of Genoa with six ships and Messina with five. Barcelona, Naples, La Spezia, with two ships apiece, were occasional destinations, not to mention Malaga, Mahon, Malta or Trieste, with one ship each. Although the majority of these 28 Jewish merchants appear in contracts only once or twice, the frequency of the charters of some of them suggests a steady activity. This was the case of David Bessis, who appears on nine different occasions, of Moses Hay Darmon, who had eight contracts, six of which with his relative Solomon Darmon, and Abraham Setbon, six contracts.

On the other hand, maritime trade as practised by the Muslims covered the whole Mediterranean. In spite of this, destinations in the Maghreb accounted for only a very limited number of ships—23—or 8.9% of the total of 257 ships chartered; here too three ships were hired for several months. Eight of the ships did business with the Tunis regency, and the same number with the regency of Tripoli, four went to the Algiers regency, and three to Morocco. Links with the the Levant were much more numerous, involving 83 ships, or 31.9% of the total. Alexandria, which received 32 ships, and Smyrna, 23, were the principal partners of Tunis, to which must be added Crete, ten ships, the Morea, six, and faraway Syria, four, as well as the capital of the Empire, three ships. Nevertheless, with 40.8% of the total, the Muslim world was relatively neglected, to the advantage of Europe, which received 152 ships, or 59.2% of the total. We are therefore hardly surprised to discover that the destinations favoured by the Muslims were Marseilles, which received 35 ships, Malta, 27, Barcelona, 23, Leghorn, 19, Genoa, 17, Trieste, seven, and the Balearic Islands five. If Marseilles, Leghorn and Genoa were

as attractive to Jewish merchants as to Muslims, the Muslims seem to enjoy a kind of exclusive relationship with Malta and Barcelona.

The charter contracts show more or less explicitly the place of residence of most of the merchants who chartered ships—one hardly dares use the term 'nationality'—which reveals a rather marked contrast between the merchants of the two communities. With the exception of a single Jewish charterer living in Algiers and another in Tripoli, all the other Jewish merchants were Tunisian. It was quite a different story with the Muslims. Tunis was frequented by merchants from virtually the whole of the Islamic Mediterranean, so much so that the Tunisians themselves were in the minority, only 41.2% of the total. We find 31 'Turks' residing especially in Crete and the Morea, and of course North Africans from Algiers, Tripoli, and also Morocco. Altogether, the 60 non-Tunisian Muslims chartered 54 ships, while the 42 Tunisians hired 187. In fact, the majority of these 'strangers' chartered ships in order to return home: this was the case of the contracts for ships going to Coron, Modon or Patras for the benefit of 'Turks', like the contracts for ships bound for Morocco, Tripoli or Algiers established by Moroccans, Tripolitans and Algerians. As for the Cretans, they alone chartered all ten of the ships bound for Candia. The only exception to this rule of 'national' preference was Alexandria, which was not only a great Egyptian port, but also the port of pilgrims bound for Mecca, and brought in ships from Algiers, Morocco, Tripoli, Crete, and of course, Tunis. Only a minority of these, ten contracts out of 54, in particular four Moroccan and three 'Turkish' contracts, indicated Tunis as a stop on the way to Europe, especially to Marseilles, Barcelona and Malta.

Of the 42 Tunisians, only a small number were consistently involved in maritime trade, and it is not surprising to find alongside other personalities like Soliman Ben Hadj or Soliman Melameli Bachamba, the name of the great owners of corsair ships, the bey of Tunis, the Ben Ayed family, Mahmoud Gelluli, Yussuf Sahib at-tabaa, and especially Yûnis Ben Yûnis. The number of contracts related to these different figures involved in chartering ships is, however, puzzling. The documentation used here includes 17 contracts connected with Mahmoud Gelluli, ten for the bey, five for the three Ben Ayeds, the same number for the Sahib at-tabaa, and 104 for Yûnis Ben Yûnis! Such a disparity between the last-named merchant and all the others leads us to believe that Yûnis Ben Yûnis could well have

served, at least in part, as a proxy for these personalities with important official functions who might not have been especially eager to be seen to be involved in commercial activities. We have already seen how Yûnis Ben Yûnis had served as a proxy for the *kaïd* of Djerba in the sale of ships captured by corsairs that had been fitted out by him.

The dynamism of these particular Tunisian merchants can be seen in two ways. Restricted almost exclusively to relations within the Islamic world until the beginning of the 1790's, they rapidly took advantage of the changes occurring during that decade and established themselves in the European ports, usually ahead of the ships flying the other North African flags, for which they thus opened the way. Furthermore, the 41% of Tunisians accounted for more than three quarters of the Muslim maritime activity of Tunis; not only in the direction of Islamic lands, but also towards Europe, where they entered into direct competition with the Jews in the ports where Jews had been established for many years—Leghorn, Genoa and Marseilles—while also establishing a kind of exclusive relationship with Malta and Barcelona. Faced with this group of bold and entrepreneurial businessmen, the majority of the others continued to engage in a much more traditional form of maritime trade, turned primarily towards the Islamic world, operating at a slower place, taking more cautious steps; but which did not rule out prosperity, as exemplified by the merchants of Sfax and the Tripolitan Hassan al-Faqih Hassan.

The Maritime Trade Conditions in the Maghreb

The activities of the North African merchants were carried out within the framework of Islam, and with respect for its principles and requirements in the private realm, the realm of trade strictly speaking, as well as in the public sphere, which was the province of the prince, pasha, dey or bey. More generally, until the very recent opening up of Europe, the Muslim merchants had been carrying out their activities only in a single, vast sphere where Islamic law prevailed—the Ottoman Empire, which extended from the eastern side of the Atlas Mountains to the Persian Gulf and from the shores of the Dniestr to the rapids of the Nile at Aswan.

Commercial Practices[17]

The picture we wish to give of these practices is intended to be very concrete and is based primarily on *daftars* (registers) and accounting documents drawn from the private archives of Tunisian or Algerian merchants from the period that concerns us. Being involved in this trade presupposed the existence from the very outset of an initial capital investment that could take different forms. The simplest form was when an individual merchant undertook this activity on his own, using his own money. This is also the form for which there is the least documentation, as the rare registers that have been preserved were natually very vague concerning a merchant's business operations, since he did not have to give account to anyone. In reality, it seems that this solitary exercise, in which the merchant alone pocketed the proceeds, but also ran the risks on his own, was not very often practised, and that instead, the various systems of partnership were preferred. These required a written agreement that was recorded either on a separate sheet or in the register of the contracting parties.

• The egalitarian partnership, *Shîrka*: in this form, which was widely used, each partner committed half of the capital in money or in merchandise. Following is an example:

> Praise be to the One and Only God. May God grant His eternal blessing and mercy to His Prophet Muhammad, his family and his companions. During the month of safar, blessed and of good omen, of the year 1222 [April-May 1807], the respected and honoured Mahmûd al-Gallûlî, owner of this ledger, and Sidi Ahmad al-Lawmî, enter into a partnership which has been happily concluded, and with the blessing of God, it will have a profitable outcome. The capital of 200 gold *mahbubs* is contributed in equal parts. It is entrusted to Ahmad al-Lawmî, the partner indicated above. It will be used to buy a consignment of fezes, which he will take to Egypt. May God grant him success. So be it.

This very simple partnership existed only until its objective was achieved and the accounts were rendered. Mahmoud Gelluli remained in Tunisia, and it was his partner in this affair who made the trip, and of course deducted his travel expenses when the accounts were rendered. This practice was not exclusive, and any merchant could

[17] Most of the information used here comes from works already cited: AMINE, pp. 333–343, and ZOUARI, 1990, pp. 154–182.

invest in several *shîrkas* at the same time. Furthermore, one of the two associates, even in the interests of the partnership, might very well invest a part of the collected capital in another partnership with a third person. As a general rule, these partnerships lasted for at least a year and no more than five years, as the partners would feel the need to do their accounting—and to divide up the proceeds.

• The limited partnership, *Qîrât*: this was an ancient practice, already used by the Prophet, which associated work and capital. A financier would entrust a sum of money or some goods to a merchant who was assumed to be an entrepreneur, who would be responsible for making a profit from his partner's capital. When the partnership came to an end, if the business had prospered, the investor recovered his capital, and after expenses were deducted, the proceeds were divided between the two partners according to a percentage determined in advance, usually in equal shares.[18] In theory, if the enterprise failed, the sleeping partner lost his capital and the active partner lost his time and received nothing for his trouble. In reality, the contract stipulated that the active partner must reimburse all or part of the capital if it was proven that he had not respected the initial terms contained in the contract, and could, in short, be accused of professional misconduct.[19] This type of contract was called a *mudâraba*. There was also a variant called an *al-musharaka*. In this form, the active partner was able to supply part of the necessary financing, and the rest was provided by a variable number of investors. In 1814, Hamdân Khodja mounted a commercial operation that took him first to Mahon, then to Gibraltar, and finally to London. To do this, he raised 14,406 riyâls from thirty different people, whose contributions ranged from 160 to 1,500 riyâls. He himself provided 1,500 riyâls, his wife 1,000 and his uncle 333; unfortunately we do not know the outcome of this operation.

• Sales on credit: the *daftars* of the merchants contain a significant number of these. As a precautionary measure, Muslim law, following the Koran, recommended entering into an agreement in writing:

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[18] When the active partner was young and inexperienced and the contributing partner was a close relative making use of this procedure in order to provide training for him, the proceeds were divided up according to a ratio of one-third/two-thirds. Zouari, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 161.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 180–182.

> To God alone be praise; may safety and peace be granted to the Messenger of God, written by Muhammad Abd al-Qâdir, who acknowledges his debt to Alî Bin Saîd al Bahhâr for the price of six bolts of Hindi cloth each costing twenty-four *bûgû riyâls*, sum which will be paid two months from the day of purchase. Transaction enacted during Ramadân, the month of the glorified God.[20]

• Money transfers: There were two procedures for these. In the first case, the merchant entrusted bags containing cash, *surras*, to people responsible for delivering them to the merchant's correspondent, who would have been informed of their arrival by courier. The messenger signed a discharge, but this never indicated the amount or the composition of the contents of the bag. Depending on its destination, the bag might pass from messenger to messenger until it reached its final destination. This system, based on trust, was strengthened by the fact that the bags were considered *amânas*, sacred deposits, and for this reason, under religious protection. The second procedure was the *bulîsa*, which could be considered as a kind of simple letter of credit. Without being negotiable notes, as in Europe, *bulîsas* provided a way to avoid having to send cash, and made it possible to transfer money and make payments in different currencies.

• Litigation and disputes: At times disputes broke out in commercial partnerships, usually between contributing and active partners, such as Mahmoud Gelluli's disagreement with Mohammed as-Sallâmî and Ahmed al-Harrât in 1800. Mahmoud Gelluli had entrusted 39,600 Tunisian piastres to the other two for the purchase of goods in Egypt to be taken to Sfax and sold there. The affair was badly handled and the capital was lost. Gelluli took his partners to court of the *qadi* (judge), arguing that the instructions set down in the act establishing the partnership had not been respected, and demanding to be reimbursed for half of the lost capital. The two accused merchants defended themselves, citing the particular circumstance of the fluctuations in the market, but in the end they were found guilty, and Ahmed al-Harrât had to sell part of his property to pay Gelluli. The trial brought to light the amount of the capital investment, the diversity of the trading routes used in acquiring the merchandise in Alexandria for Sfax, but then sent to Smyrna, Candia and Trieste; and finally, the number of merchants involved

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[20] Quoted in Amine, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 342.

in these exchanges, because in addition to the three partners, other merchants established throughout the Levant appear sporadically in the records. This was a purely commercial trial, in which the maritime aspect hardly figured, but a good number of cases were directly linked with commercial navigation and the difficulties it could involve, as the chronicle of Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan demonstrates.

In the spring of 1813, merchants from Tripoli chartered a ship commanded by the *raïs* Mursi in order to travel to Alexandria. Shortly afterwards, the Navy in Tripoli informed them that hostilities had broken out between the regency of Algiers and the regencies of Tunis and Tripoli, which led to the closing of the ports. The merchants abandoned their plans for the trip and asked the *raïs* to unload their merchandise. He refused, stating that he had nothing to do with this setback, and demanded instead that they pay transportation costs. This affair was not settled by a *qadi* but was submitted in June to the arbitration of a local notable, a procedure that was often used in simple cases. The notable decreed that the merchandise should be unloaded and ordered the merchants to pay half of the charter fee. In August of the same year, some other merchants became aware that merchandise of theirs that had been unloaded in Tripoli had been partially damaged by seawater when the ship passed through a storm during the crossing, and held the captain responsible. The arbitrator chosen by both parties decided that the captain should buy the damaged goods at the original purchase price, but not charge for the transport.[21] These examples illustrate the two main risks associated with maritime shipping: the complications of international trade and the perils of the sea. They also show how, where possible, disputes were settled promptly and at reasonable cost, within the same economic milieu, with reference to the Muslim community alone.

The use of European ships by Muslim merchants could lead to complications when problems arose. Captain Vangeli Valsamacchi, commander of the polacca *San Teodoro*, flying the flag of the republic of the Ionian Islands, was to take from Marseilles to Mahmoud Gelluli in Tunisia 1,100 piastres from Spain. The ship encountered a violent storm and sustained serious damage, and the captain used

[21] Hassan Al-Faqih Hassan, *op. cit.*, 1984, pp. 209–216.

the money for repairs. Gelluli lodged a complaint with the consul of the Ionian Islands through Mohammed Cherfi, and Valsamacchi was represented by a certain Giovanni Barbera. On 14 March 1803, the two representatives, under pressure from the consul, signed a deed in which Valsamacchi agreed to mortgage his polacca and pay the debt from of the charter fees for a voyage to Sousse and another to Malta. In another example, on 20 November 1813, Yûnis Ben Yûnis lodged a complaint with the Austrian consul in Tunis against an Austrian merchant in Leghorn, S. Klieber. He reproached him for having caused his brig *Saad*, which was flying under the Tunisian flag, to lose a great deal of time waiting in vain for a cargo of marble. Yûnis Ben Yûnis demanded compensation for his financial loss, and announced that he would arrange for the seizure of whatever belonged to Kleiber at his agent's in Tunis, Marco Aurelio Pieve, until the debt was repaid. Delays and the perils of the sea were at the origin of disputes, but since the Tunisian merchants were dealing with European opponents, they lodged their complaints with the appropriate consuls; and furthermore, they obtained satisfaction, as they were perfectly aware of the procedures to follow, and did not hesitate to use threats if necessary. It is true that these were powerful personages who moved in the immediate circle of the bey, whom the consuls had to handle with kid gloves.

The Role of the State

Information

The regencies only maintained diplomatic personnel abroad or, as we have seen, sent ambassadors to Europe, to a very limited degree. On the other hand, various personages represented the dey, the bey or the pasha in the Ottoman Empire. With each change in the head of a regency, a special envoy was sent to Istanbul bearing the tribute and a request for the firman of investiture for his master. He returned from this trip bearing the precious document, the caftan (ceremonial robe) of an Ottoman pasha, and laden with different gifts, which might take the form of military hardware. The bey of Tunis, the dey of Algiers and the pasha of Tripoli, however, had permanent envoys at their disposal in a number of ports of the Ottoman Empire, and also in Europe. In Istanbul, they naturally had envoys responsible for defending their interests and informing them of the policies of the Ottoman government. There were also

envoys known as *wakils*, who had neither diplomatic status nor a regular salary, but were above all commercial agents representing the interests of their masters. On occasion they might intervene in other spheres, for example, in settling the legacies of nationals from the regencies who had died in the cities where they were living, or, as in the case of the *wakil* for Algiers in Smyrna, handle such matters as the recruitment of janissaries in Anatolia. Hammuda Bey of Tunis was certainly the bey who maintained the most widespead network of representatives during his reign. The following list is doubtless incomplete, and the chronology of these *wakils* is uncertain, but, in spite of these gaps, it provides a good indication of the diversity of Tunisian interests at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century:[22]

- Alexandria: Abderrahman Badreddin
- Cairo: Abderrahman Touïr
- Smyrna: Hadj Hussein Ben Daoud, Algerian
- Tripoli: Regeb Ben Ali Kassem, a native of Djerba
- Tangiers: Hadj Mohammed Merivi in 1798
- Malta: a Maltese merchant in 1799, Mahmoud Gelluli in 1811–1813
- Marseilles: the brother of Joseph Fremier, a French merchant based in Tunis, from 1795 to 1810; followed by Peretier
- Genoa: Nicolo Petro Codriani, around 1810
- Toulon: Paul Flamenq, then Molla Osman, a native of the Morea, in 1797
- Lisbon: Aron Cardoso, a Portuguese Jew, around 1810
- Cagliari: G.A. Rundaccio

The correspondence—mostly commercial in nature—addressed by these *wakils* to Hammuda Pasha reveals an activity similar to that of the representative engaged by Yûnis Ben Yûnis in Majorca. Their locations are an indication of the principal cities, mainly ports, with which the regency of Tunis maintained economic relations. First of all, in the Muslim world there was Egypt then Alexandria and Cairo, Smyrna and the two main Maghrebi ports, Tripoli and Tangiers. There was no representative in Algiers, with which Tunis was at war in this period. As for the European ports, it is not surprising that we find references to Marseilles, Genoa, Cagliari and Lisbon,

[22] Most of this information was graciously provided by Dr. François Arnoulet, whose scholarly research on the history of Tunisia is well known to researchers. I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to him.

which we know to have been among the principal destinations of the ships coming from Tunisia. The information provided by these agents, who were Muslim in the Ottoman ports and European in Europe, were intended for the bey, but certainly will have benefitted the powerful personages around him, who were businessmen themselves. The decisions they made were based, at least in part, on this information.

Intervention

In reality, the Maghrebi states had only limited means of intervention in the sphere of maritime trade. The most significant monopoly on trade with the outside world was without doubt in the hands of the three princes who granted export licenses (*teskérés*) to the merchants, North African or foreign, who asked for them. This practice, aside from the gains it brought to the prince, also enabled him to grant favours to a community, a restricted group, or even an individual, by offering the sort of preferential treatment that would enable them to realise considerable financial gains. This was how the firm of Busnach and Bacri, thanks to concessions granted by the Dey Mustafa, reached the dominant and dangerous position it held until 1805. In Tunisia, Hammuda Bey had used this method to support Tunisian merchants at the expense of the Europeans. We know how, before 1792, the Europeans, above all the French, dominated Tunisian trade and held a near-monopoly of exports of local foodstuffs, in particular grain and oil. All the documents show that Hammuda Bey was concerned to defend and promote the economic interests of the regency. The collapse of the French positions after the revolutionary and imperial wars had provided the occasion for him to succeed in his objective, at least partially, because at the end of his reign, as the *teskérés* show, the Tunisians were handling almost half of the trade, against the third covered by the Europeans.

Compared to the *teskérés*, customs duties in the Maghreb represented only a minor deduction taken out of the proceeds from trade with the outside world. In 1815, out of a sale price of 66 Tunisian piastres for one *qafīz* (3.84 hectolitres) of wheat, the *teskéré* was 45 piastres, or 68%, plus export duties of 3%, 3⅓ piastres for the total, which in fact represented 5% of the initial price of 66 piastres. In the same year, the *teskéré* for oil was 3 piastres per *metar* (0.3 hectolitres) bought at 12.5 piastres, or a rate of 24%, well below that for wheat,[23] with the customs duties remaining at 3%. The official

rates, in addition to being relatively low, were not always applied with the necessary rigour. This is how the duties on imported merchandise in Algiers, theoretically 12.5%, were in fact reduced to 5% for the French and English merchants, and to around 4% for the Jews. It is true that the Muslim merchants, technically liable for paying 5%, in fact paid around 1% of the value of the cargoes they imported.

The above rates are just averages, resulting from the specific conditions of the custom's administration and the collection of duties, as the case of Tunisia shows. Like most of the taxes, the customs duties were farmed out to a contractor on the payment of a sum to the beylik, like the 17,000 piastres paid by Mahmoud Gelluli in 1808 for customs in Sfax. Gelluli, like his father Bakkar before him, was also the chief customs officer of Tunis, and had authority over the other customs administrations of the regency. When we realize that Mahmoud Gelluli was also *kaïd* of Sfax and Sousse, and above all, one of the principal Tunisian merchants and ship owners, we have reason to doubt his promptness and fairness in paying the customs duties he was liable for! A judgement based on suspicion, it might be said, but the eagerness with which the Tunisian merchants, especially Muslim, but also Jewish, sought to enter into partnerships with him is evidence of the gains to be had in sharing in his business. Furthermore, the enormous variety of the goods and their packaging, as well as the price fluctuations to which the merchandise was subject, made calculation of the customs duties very difficult and the object of continual contestation and attempts at fraud. This was particularly the case with foodstuffs, which were subject to strict controls at the time of export, notably wheat and olive oil, which merchants and captains attempted to leave with in a clandestine manner, risking seizure of the goods and prison if they were caught.

In order to promote the development of the maritime activities of their nationals, the importance of which they perfectly well understood, the Maghrebi states used various procedures that usually provoked recriminations from the Europeans. Two examples: the first concerns the attempt by the bey of Tunis to initiate the Tunisians into coral fishing; the second demonstrates the way in which the

[23] CHATER, *Dépendance et mutations . . .*, 1984, pp. 183–184.

pasha of Tripoli forced his subjects to use ships flying the Tripolitan flag at the expense of European ships:

> [. . .] the Bey's resentment because he [Raimbert, the French agent] did not want to accept Moorish tars in the crews of coral-fishing ships. The real objective of this Prince was to train two to three hundred Tunisians in coral-fishing in order to exclude foreigners later, and to grab from us the best branch of French industry on the Barbary coast.[24]

> [. . .] as concerns shipping business, or the caravan, which amounts to the same thing, it is the prohibition by the Pasha of his subjects' using any ships other than his, when he has any on hand in the ports from which they wish to export goods. The following example will prove this claim: a farmer producing wine and eaux de vie, of Jewish faith and subject of the Pasha, had chartered the same English bombard by which the present reaches you; he had even already loaded various kinds of merchandise destined for Malta. The Pasha let it be understood that he had to cancel this contract, unload his goods and ship them on a *kirlangish* belonging to himself and preparing to leave for the island [. . .] This Hebrew obeyed instantly without any protest. Who, after this, would risk being involved in the [maritime] caravan in a country where most of the merchants are subjects of the Pasha?[25]

In the preceding chapter we noted the rapid development of the Maghebi commercial fleets in the beginning of the nineteenth century. For the most part using ships that had been constructed in Europe, employing a majority Christian personnel, mainly in supervision, employing contractual methods that were also introduced and spread by Europeans, the Tunisian captains and merchants strove to establish themselves as direct competitors of the Christians in an activity that was new to them—maritime shipping. Supported by their leaders, a group of the most important and dynamic North African merchants sought, at the same time, to play an active role in the vast economic reorganisation that was taking place in the Mediterranean following the French Revolution. This reorganisation took the form of a considerable strengthening of Europe's place in the international trade of the regencies, in which these merchants now made a major effort to establish themselves. This often meant them also setting up transactions and contracts in which they had

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[24] Letter of 11 August 1811, *cf.* PLANTET, *Correspondance des beys de Tunis*... III, 1893–1899, p. 497.

[25] Letter from the French Consul in Tripoli, 10 October 1814. M.A.E., C.C.C., Tripoli, 34.

to deal with the chancellors of the European consulates; not only when their partners were Europeans, which is understandable, even normal, but also when the two parties concerned were Muslims. In this case, everything took place as if the practices in use in the first case were passed on to the second; perhaps by habit, but probably more in a desire to operate with efficiency and reliability rather than stick to Muslim practices that were simpler but less precise. This was therefore an attempt by the Maghrebi to become integrated into the mainstream of Western, even international, economy, through two activities that were closely linked, international trade and maritime shipping, activities in which the North Africans displayed a definite dynamism, taking advantage of particularly favourable circumstances. In the years 1806 to 1812, this voluntarist policy, unique in the history of the modern Maghreb, began to bear fruit, as we have seen, particularly in Tunisia. But the trend was rapidly reversed, and beginning in 1813, the failure of this policy became apparent—a development that we analyse in the next section.

PART THREE

THE FINAL BREAKDOWN

CHAPTER NINE

THE WESTERN COUNTER

As we have seen, it was imperial wars on both land and sea that had allowed the rapid increase of commercial shipping flying the flags of the Barbary regencies, just as it had allowed the expansion of activity by Maghrebi merchants. The Western powers, chiefly the French, accepted these changes willy-nilly, changes in striking contrast to tradition however. The economic turn of events brought about by war, through the successive forms of the continental blockade, created a system of severe restriction, imposed by an all-powerful administration that was not well disposed towards the Barbary states. In 1814, the restoration of peace made the situation even worse by doing away with the obstacles to trade and promoting the commercial re-conquest of the regencies by the Western powers. At first disconcerted, the North Africans then reacted suddenly and violently whilst the European heads of state were meeting at the Vienna Congress. They were unanimously condemned in a tense atmosphere of mutual misunderstanding aggravated by incidents that finally ended up in military confrontation.

From War to Peace

Wartime: from Uneasiness to Overt Opposition

The arrival in Marseilles on 5 November 1809 of a convoy of six Maghrebi commercial ships was an exceptional event, not only because of the number of ships, but also because of their flag—North African ships were now replacing French vessels that were victims of an implacable British blockade. Even their limited cargoes provided a valuable contribution to a maritime market that was particularly depressed. We might then be justified in thinking that the French government had encouraged this initiative, yet it appears that this was not really the case. The report sent in February 1813 by the

French consul in Tripoli to the minister of trade in Paris gives a clear picture of the attitude of the French administration:

> The subjects of this regency have always had very close relations with the city of Leghorn. These have deteriorated since Tuscany became part of the French Empire [1808] because of changes and difficulties they experienced there. I never ceased, however, to encourage them to continue to import products from there and to export needed products in exchange. In February and December 1808, two cargoes were shipped, and in October and December 1809, two more.[1]

The consul then listed the obstacles and inconveniences these shipments had encountered:

> The first [cargo] loaded onto an Austrian ship anchored at Porto Ferraio was sequestrated there for several months, and finally delivered to the consignees with a guarantee that the value of the goods would be represented at the first requisitioning, a promise that was not honoured until long afterwards. This significant wrong only came about because of a letter from the head of this regency found in the ship's papers addressed to the governor of Malta in order that the property of his subjects could be restored in the event that an English warship stopped the ship and took it to that island.
>
> The second [cargo] was not delayed, but on his return the captain of the Tripolitan ship who had transported it reported to the pasha that the entire crew had been subjected to questioning during which it became clear that the intention was to confiscate the ship and the cargo if it had been stopped an inspected at sea by the English.
>
> The ship carrying the third cargo, also Tripolitan, was subjected to the same exorbitant freightage as the previous one.
>
> The fourth shipment, loaded aboard another Tripolitan ship belonging to the regency, was sequestrated for over a year along with the ship because while it was on the high seas an English warship had forced it to take onboard some French prisoners [. . .] The soda that made up the bulk of the cargo was confiscated, although it was a product of the country and had arrived in Leghorn before the prohibition against importing it. The captain was taxed a thousand francs, which obliged him to make the trip from Paris to obtain an exemption from this tax and to find out from whom he was to collect the freight charges for the merchandise.[2]

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[1] A.N. Paris, F12 1850 B.

[2] The quarantine registers recorded these ships as follows:

Inevitably, all of these vexations, delays and losses annoyed the regency and caused it to retaliate more than once, with the result that great damage was done to our representation. However, after an interval of more than three years, during which imports and exports went elsewhere, there was a new consignment to Leghorn, which I myself had brought about in order to obtain raw materials for the Empire, and to put our customs offices to work, for imports as well as for exports. I promised the pasha, who had supplied the ship, and whose subjects had furnished the merchandise, that he would have good reason to be satisfied with the way things would now be in Leghorn [. . .]

The ill will, not to say dishonesty, shown by the imperial officials responsible for applying the decrees resulting from the continental blockade policy took the concrete form of arbitrary taxes and unfair confiscations, resulting in the collapse of a maritime trade that was already experiencing difficulties. The victims were above all the Maghebi captains, as is shown in the case above, in which three of the four ships in question were Tripolitan. All the French consuls posted in the Maghreb protested against this behaviour which they considered both an economic and a diplomatic disaster. Delaporte, the chancellor and interim chargé d'affaires of the consulate in Tripoli, enumerated clearly the purely administrative difficulties that had victimised the Tripolitans in Leghorn. In the same period, Dubois-Thainville, general consul of France in Algiers, presented a broader and more incisive view of the problem which he too had reason to deplore.[3]

No one is persuaded more than I of the damage done to our enemy by the severity of our customs offices, and it is primarily in foreign places—where one hears the cries of the merchants of London and sees the degradation of the English merchandise—that it is easiest to be convinced; but may I be permitted to say that the customs houses of Marseilles and Leghorn have perhaps shown to the citizens of the Barbary states a gratuitous harshness which in no way belongs to the Emperor's policy. When in Marseilles in January 1811, various Algerian ships were sequestrated there: the crews had been forcefully removed from their vessels and thrown onto the street without any assistance

– a polacca commanded by Ali Ambar that left Tripoli on 28 December 1808 and arrived in Leghorn on 17 January 1809.

– The bombard of Ali Harsia, which left Tripoli on 14 January 1810 and arrived in Leghorn on 13 March 1810, after a stopover in Tunis.

– The brigantine of the *raïs* Mohammed Massa, which left Tripoli on 13 January 1810 and arrived in Leghorn on 14 March 1810 with 14 French prisoners.

[3] Letter of 10 February 1813, A.N.P. F12–1848.

> whatsoever. They came to me despair shouting in an outbreak of: "Give us bread or kill us." I arranged for them to be given sustenance, but this was stopped as soon as I left Marseilles. What happened when the Algerians returned here? They came en masse to the palace of the dey crying out "*Char-Allah!*" (God's Justice) against the French consul. This event exposed me to the greatest danger. And in addition, the sequestrations may have been extended unnecessarily: they have exposed the merchandise to ruinous deterioration and in some cases even total loss for the owners.[4]

The consul then related the troubles of an Algerian ship whose cargo of salted fish had rotted after an interminable holdup. When notified, the dey of Algiers compensated the victims to a large extent, by making use of the funds of the French consulate, which he had sequestered during the Consul's absence. In the face of such actions on the part of the French authorities, North African ships are now rare: the Tripolitans have deserted Leghorn for several years; and whereas ten Algerian ships entered the port of Marseilles in 1810, only one arrived in 1811 and one again in 1812. It seems that the North Africans were specific victims of this hostile behaviour, it is not experienced by other neutrals, such as the Ottoman Greeks. Animosity towards the Barbary sailors was too old and too profound. Their conversion from corsair campaigns to maritime trade too recent for the old fear of them to disappear, and for the European spirit of revenge to be silenced. The North African merchants also suffered from this hostility, and it was their trade that paid the price.

Fleeing the extension of the Napoleonic Empire, a number of the English businesses in Leghorn, Trieste and Palermo took refuge in Malta.[5] At their instigation, the British authorities multiplied the administrative harassment designed to discourage competition from North African merchants. In a letter dated 8 January 1811, Mahmoud

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[4] The existence of more than 60 British businesses was noted in Malta in 1811, as against 20 in 1806. Between these two dates, the official value of merchandise shipped from England to Malta was multiplied by twenty, making of the island 'the emporium and metropolis of Mediterranean trade." CROUZET, *L'Économie britannique et le Blocus continental,* 1958.

[5] A Maltese ship contaminated in Alexandria was at the origin of the epidemic whose first case was reported on 7 April 1813. Although it was forcefully resisted, the disease led to 4,572 deaths out of a population estimated at a hundred thousand inhabitants. CASSAR, *Medical History of Malta,* 1965.

Gelluli, envoy of the bey of Tunis in Malta, explained to Youssuf Sahib at-tabaa that the English governor was refusing to allow the Tunisian ships to unload their merchandise and offer it for sale. Only the English had such permission, and the Tunisians waited in vain until they realised that they had no choice but to go through the local merchants. The Tunisians had also to contend with the Greek merchants who had become established on the island, who used the many available Greek-Ottoman ships, and had a perfect knowledge of the places, practices and languages of the Ottoman Empire.

The graphs back in Chapter Six illustrate the annual frequentation of the Maghrebi ships in European ports. They reveal that after a period of growth culminating in 1810 to 1811, their number declined markedly beginning in 1812, in Leghorn as well as in Marseilles and Malta. Administrative problems certainly account for this, at least in part, but these were not the only factors contributing to the decline. There was also the war, to which we will return, which saw the regencies opposing each other, and in particular, Algiers imposing a blockade against Tunis and Tripoli in 1812 to 1813, which greatly restricted the shipping of those regencies. Furthermore, the plague reached Malta at the end of March 1813, keeping ships away from the island until the spring of 1814. At this point there was a decisive event: the restoration of peace following on the collapse of the Empire of Napoleon I.

Peacetime: the Great European Return to the Maghreb

The Table below separated into three-year periods illustrates clearly the vagaries of the arrival in Marseilles of ships from the Maghreb. From 1805 to 1810, the number of ships was limited, a modest thirty per year, but half of these were flying the flag of the regencies. It was during the period from 1811 to 1813 that the real recession occurred, reducing arrivals to only five ships a year; due to the reinforcement of the English blockade, the French customs policies and the attitude of the administrations applying them. Peace took the form of the reappearance, along with English ships and those of their allies, of flags belonging to states integrated into the French Empire, in one way or another which could not venture out onto the high seas, or even do any coasting, without risk of capture by

British vessels. This is how ships from Piedmont-Sardinia, Tuscany, Spain and Naples, and also of Sweden and Austria, arrived now in Marseilles from the Maghreb, alongside the French ships.[6]

Table 14: Arrivals in Marseilles (1802–1828)

Period	Total	Maghrebi Ships	Percentage
1802–1804	232	5	2.2
1805–1807	82	39	47.6
1808–1810	100	55	55
1811–1813	16	10	62.5
1814–1816	93	-	-
1817–1819	180	-	-
1820–1822	258	-	-
1823–1825	203	-	-
1826–1828	259	-	-

The restoration of activities was slow: the years 1814 to 1816 only reached the level of the years 1805 to 1810, and it is not until 1820 that we find the number of ships equalling the number recorded during the short period of the Peace of Lunéville in 1802–1804. But it was in 1814 in particular that the North African ships disappeared completely from the port of Marseilles. The same situation prevailed in the other European ports, as well as in the North African ports, as can be seen in the case of Algiers and Tunis.

[6] From 1815 to 1829, 987 ships from the Maghreb were registered in Marseilles: 660 were French, 181 Sardinian, 41 Swedish, 36 English, 24 Spanish, etc. The near-monopoly the French flag had enjoyed before the Revolution disappeared with the abolition of the 20% duty dating from the time of Colbert, and foreign ships, notably Sardinian, now handled a significant portion—around one-fifth—of the traffic in Marseilles.

Table 15: Commercial vessels in Algiers (1814–1820)

Flag	1814	1820
Spanish	13	-
English	16	11
French	7	11
Austrian	-	8
Danish	-	1
Swedish	1	3
Neapolitan	-	1
Sardinian	-	6
Tuscan	-	1
Russian	-	12
Ottoman	2	19
Moroccan	2	-
Tripolitan	1	-
Algerian	13	-
Total	**55**	**73**

The frequentation of the port of Algiers increased by a third between 1814 and 1820 as a result of the restoration of peace, but it was the division by flags that was the real change in this period. The frequentation of French ships increased, while the number of English ships decreased; the Spaniards, so active during the Imperial Wars, disappeared, while the Italian states now arrived. We also note the discreet presence of the Scandinavians, the increase of the Russians, and the marked increase in Ottoman ships. But above all, it is striking that in 1814, although their activity in transportation was already in marked decline, the various North African flags were still providing 29% of the Algiers traffic, with the Algerians alone furnishing almost a quarter. Six years later, in 1820, they would not be present at all.

Table 16: Movements in the Port of Tunis in 1816

Flag	Arrivals	Departures	Total	Percentage
Spanish	19	24	33	11.4
English	42	41	83	28.7
French	27	19	46	15.9
Austrian	2	2	4	1.4
Danish	1	1	2	0.7
Swedish	7	4	11	3.8
Neapolitan	6	6	12	4.2
Sardinian	44	33	77	26.6
Russian	1	1	2	0.7
Ottoman	4	13	17	5.9
Tunisian	0	2	2	0.7
Total	**153**	**136**	**289**	**100**

A look at the above Table shows clearly that the maritime activity of Tunis represented easily double that of Algiers in 1820, with the year 1816 marking a return to normal after a long period of wars. The breakdown by flag confirms the difficulties of the French in regaining the predominant role they had held in North Africa before the Revolution, particularly in the face of competition from the English and the Sardinians. But above all, the Table highlights the near disappearance of Tunisian commercial ships from 1816 on. Unfortunately we have no example for Tripoli, but the case of Algiers and Tunis prove without a doubt that the restoration of peace nullified the fairly successful attempts of the regencies to equip themselves with commercial fleets thanks to the European wars.

If the North African commercial ships were obliged to stop sailing, the Muslim merchants, who supplied the goods, and were often also shipowners, experienced the same difficulties. Not only did they have to face in Europe the hassle and dishonesty of the European administrations egged on by local merchants, but in North Africa they also faced competition from the Europeans, who had returned in force after 1814–1815. What happened in Tunis is very revealing in this connection. We know that those exporting products from the regency had to purchase export licences, or *teskérés*. In 1229 *Hegira* (1813), based on this indicator, the Muslim merchants of Tunis handled 47.6% of the exports of olive oil, plus wheat, from the regency,

the Jewish merchants handled 20,6%, and the Europeans accounted for 31.8%. For the years 1235 to 1237 (October 1819 to September 1821), the Europeans accounted for 82.5% of the *teskérés* for oil, the Jews 6.8% and the Muslims 10.7%.[7] Even if the North Africans still retained the lion's share of commercial relations with the Levant, trade with Europe had assumed such vital importance in recent years that to be almost totally excluded from it was now unbearable for them.

Corsair Activities as a Last Resort

The Return of the Corsairs

More or less openly ousted and discouraged from being both shippers and merchants in Europe, the North Africans returned with renewed zeal to their ancient practice of privateering. Admittedly they had never abandoned the activity altogether, but from 1806 to 1812 there had been a general reduction in favour of maritime shipping. The Tunisian corsair campaigns, which totalled 13 in the years 1812 to 1813, rose to 41 in 1815. We do not know the precise results of these raids, but the coastal regions of southern Italy suffered numerous land raids: twelve between May and November 1815, notably in Calabria and Sardinia. The most spectacular was the raid that victimised the little town of Sant' Antioco, in south-west Sardinia near the town of Carloforte, that had been pillaged in 1798. The Tunisians carried off 160 inhabitants on 15 October 1815. In 1812–1813, there were 19 corsair campaigns in Tripoli, and 53 in 1814 to 1815, with impressive results. In the years 1808 to 1811, the Tripolitans captured twenty ships, and between 1812 and 1815 the figure went up to sixty. In the same period, captures by the Algerians went from 22 ships for a total value of 1,086,160 francs, to 40 ships which fetched 5,033,551 at sale.

With an assumption that the results achieved by the Tunisian corsairs were similar to those of Algiers and Tripoli, forty ships per year would have been victims of the Barbary corsairs in the years

[7] Chater, *op. cit.*, 1984, p. 332.

1812 to 1815, with sixty of them in the single year 1815! Apart from its suddenness, this fresh upsurge endangered all ships frequenting the Mediterranean, whatever their flag. Contrary to the practices established during the eighteenth century, in which only ships not covered by a peace treaty could be attacked, the corsairs now attacked practically all the commercial traffic within their reach. Once again the principal victims were the fleets of the Italian states: Roman, Tuscan, Sardinian, Sicilian and especially Neapolitan vessels, which were the preferred prey of the Tripolitans. Many Spanish and Scandanavian ships were likewise victims, but especially the ships that were under the authority of the great powers, and therefore, in theory, protected from the greed of the North African *raïs*: there are records of the capture of a French and three Austrian ships by the Tripolitans, and an English and two American ships by the Algerians. To the corsairs, any method was permissible for ensnaring their victims, as was explained by the French consul in Tripoli when the *raïs* Murad's polacca departed on a corsair campaign:[8]

> The plan was obviously to deceive some valuably-loaded Portuguese or Spanish ship from Mexico or Brazil, or flying the flag of some other nation that was neither at peace nor at war with the regency, and surprise it outside the Straits [of Gibraltar], because they boarded twenty new uniforms in European style, each made up of a blue jacket with little silver buttons, a white linen waistcoat and trousers and a raphia hat. The captain decked himself out in a blue morning coat trimmed with gold braid, double on the collar and sleeves.

From now on, the North African corsairs' greed and their contempt for earlier treaties had no bounds: in addition to their other captures they no longer hesitated to even take Ottoman ships. Having reached this stage, corsair activities were now very close to becoming pure and simple piracy, something the Ottoman state did its best to curtail by sending threatening firmans to the heads of the regencies:

> Firman of Sultan Mahmoud to Omar, present dey of West Algiers: The corsairs of the regency of Algiers are capturing commercial ships belonging either to the subjects of the Sublime Porte, or to nations that are at peace with it; they reduce to slavery their captains and sailors and seize their cargoes. The Sublime Porte is responsible for

[8] A.M.A.E., C.C.C. Tripoli 33.

these ships; they are in possession of safe-conduct passes, and the Sublime Porte is at peace with them. The European governments never cease to lodge complaints against you and to make it known that you are capturing their ships. I am giving you this warning in order to cause you to cease these aggressive acts and abandon this sanctionable course of action.

Recall how I defended you in allowing you to recruit soldiers in Smyrna, and in listening to the speeches of your agents throughout the Empire. I sent you firmans on this subect; furthermore, I recently sent you a *kapidji bashi* named Mohammed with the mission of representing me. This *kapidji bashi* is in Algiers bearing written orders and is responsible for supervising their execution. You, first of all, prince of princes, and all of you, captains and heads of the regency, submit yourselves to God and to His Prophet, and obey the orders of the Prince of Believers, the Vicar of God on earth. May my firman be carried out, may my orders no longer be ignored. This is my will. [. . .]

The first days of Ramadan of the year 1230 [7–15 August 1815][9]

In reality, the Sultan was virtually powerless when confronted with the activities of the North African corsairs. Firmans and words by emissaries from the Porte had no effect. The only method the Sultan had at his disposal for exerting pressure on the corsairs was his option to grant or oppose permission for the recruitment of janissaries in Anatolia; but this was a limited argument whose effect was only felt over the medium or long term, while the action of the *raïs* was immediate. Exasperated, the Western states decided to intervene on their own. Most of them began by arming warships with instructions to patrol around the Mediterranean and show their flags in the ports of the regencies in order to demonstrate their resolve. In 1814, Algiers received the visit of a Spanish frigate, a Swedish frigate, two French and thirteen English warships. The most famous episode of this corsair hunt resulted in the end of the most famous Algerian corsair, the *raïs* Hamidou.

[9] Devoulx, *op. cit.*, 1859, pp. 77–79.

The Western Response

The Americans go it Alone

The Algerians took advantage of the Anglo-American war of 1812 to 1814 to extract an increase in the 'gift' made by the United States and to attack the rare American ships present in the Mediterranean. The Peace of Ghent, signed on 24 December 1814, freed the American naval fleet, and on 23 February 1815, the United States declared war on the regency of Algiers. An American squadron under Commodore Decatur,[10] consisting of three frigates, two corvettes, three brigs and two schooners, arrived in Tangiers on 15 June 1815 and discovered that an Algerian squadron of three frigates and several other ships commanded by the *raïs* Hamidou was present on the Spanish coast between Malaga and Cartagena. Decatur sent his lightest ships on ahead as scouts to locate the Algerian ships, and on 17 June one of them reported the presence of a large Algerian frigate twenty nautical miles off Cape Gata. The Algerian vessel, with Hamidou aboard, on learning the nationality of these ships, first attempted to flee, then turned around in an effort to reach Cartagena, a neutral port, and attacked the American frigate *Constellation*, which was soon assisted by the frigate *Guerrière*. The battle was fierce, but although according to witnesses the manœuvres of the Algerian ship were swift and effective, its artillery was much inferior, slower and less efficient than the murderous broadsides of the American ships. The *raïs* Hamidou, injured at the start of the action, was killed shortly afterwards on the poop of his ship by a large-bore cannonball. During the battle, the other American ships in turn came to within cannon's-reach of the Algerian frigate, which then struck its flag in surrender. Out of a crew of 436 men, thirty Algerians were killed and a hundred injured, as against three dead and eleven injured on the American vessels. On 19 June, pursued by American ships, a 22-cannon Algerian brig lost twenty men in battle; it attempted to make for the coast but was captured and the 83 survivors of its crew taken prisoner. Strengthened by these successes, the Americans arrived in Algiers on 29 June and quickly obtained the signing of a new treaty abolishing the payment of any tribute and providing for an exchange of

[10] It was Decatur who in the port of Tripoli in February 1804, had succeeded in burning his frigate *Philadelphia*, captured shortly before.

prisoners. In July, Decatur went to Tunis then Tripoli to re-establish relations between the United States and those regencies, which in September received the visit of another American squadron, under the orders of Commodore Bainbridge.

The Problem becomes International

However brilliant, this American campaign was only one in a long series of intimidatory naval interventions that had been going on since the seventeenth century, determined by each state according to its current interests, with effects which, as we know, were usually of short duration. Although this type of intervention was still practiced, in 1825 by Piedmont-Sardinia and of course by France in 1830, the years from 1815 to 1820 saw a spectacular development—its extension internationally. The initiative for this came from the English Admiral Sidney Smith who in the summer of 1814 addressed a memorandum to the European governments entitled "Memorandum on the Necessity and Means of Ending the Piracy of the Barbary States." The key passages of this document are as follows:[11]

> While discussions proceed on ways of bringing an end to the slave traffic on the west coast of Africa, [. . .] it is astonishing that no attention is being paid to the northern coast of this same land, inhabited by Turkish pirates, who not only oppress neighbouring populations, but carry them off or buy them as slaves to be used in armed corsair ships, tearing from their homes honest farmers, peaceful inhabitants of the coasts of Europe [. . .] This shameful banditry not only disgusts humanity but hinders trade in the most harmful manner, because a sailor cannot navigate today on a merchant ship in the Mediterranean, or even in the Atlantic, without being haunted by the fear of being captured by pirates and taken to Africa as a slave [. . .] In order to shelter Europe forever from attacks by African corsairs and to see governments that will foster trade and be capable of living in harmony with civilised nations succeed to power in nations that have basically been pirate states since Barbarossa [. . .] a proposal to the nations that are the most interested in the success of this noble enterprise to commit themselves by means of treaties among themselves to provide their contingent with a combined Naval and amphibian force which, without compromising any country's flag and independent of wars or

[11] "*Mémoire sur la nécessité et les moyens de faire cesser les pirateries des États Barbaresques.*" Published in French, in Paris, in October 1814. Charles-Roux, *France et Afrique du Nord*. . ., 1932, pp. 497–499.

> political crises of nations, would constantly protect the coasts of the Mediterranean and perform the important task of pursuing and arresting all pirates, on land and sea.

In order to back up his proposal and stigmatise not only the continuation of white slavery in the Maghreb but also the apparent indifference towards it, Sydney Smith than refers to the efforts—crowned with partial success—of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, under the leadership of William Wilberforce, who in England in 1807 obtained the abolition of the black slave trade. He pointed out the opposition between the native inhabitants, that is the Arabs, who were also victims, and the Turks, foreigners who since the sixteenth century had mistreated and exploited them; whereas if only they could be rid of them, the Arabs would be able to organise pacific states open to international trade. After presenting this centuries-old scenario of the misdeeds of the Barbary corsairs along the Mediterranean coasts and on the high seas, Smith proposed an original solution: the establishment of a permanent international amphibious force, i.e., a fleet with an onboard military contingent for operations on land. Adding finally that he offered to head this force, basing his proposal on his experience and knowledge after twenty years as a seaman serving in the Mediterranean.

At first Smith's proposals met with only limited interest, even suspicion, even in England,[12] and especially in France; and some people went so far as to propose the restoration of the Order of Malta to provide policing for the western Mediterranean. Things began to change in the summer of 1815, however. To the impact of recent American military successes against Algiers, which worried England, and pressure from economic quarters, must be added the new openness in European public opinion to the 'humanitarian' cause, an opinion that was increasing in indignation with the multiplication of

[12] The British position was clearly presented in an article from the *Quarterly Review* for August 1816: "Generally speaking, they [the Barbary Regencies] kept their treaties with England, which were ancient. From the point of view of our national policy, it would be folly and bad faith if we acceded to the holy league imagined by Sidney Smith. We do not wish to provide protection for a crossing in order to defend foreigners, but if the Dey breaks his treaties with us or insults our flag, the question takes on a different aspect: we will be able to maintain our rights, but we will be able to do so on our own." Cited in VALENSI, *Le Maghreb avant la prise d'Alger*. . ., 1969, pp. 102–103.

North African captures, particularly after the Sant' Antioco raid on 15 October 1815.[13] Two weeks later, after a proposal from Piedmont-Sardinia, Barbary slavery was unanimously condemned by the participants in the Congress of Vienna, and the obvious conclusion drawn—that England, the only true naval power in the Mediterranean, should take the responsibility for applying that resolution.

Lord Exmouth's First Naval Campaign (April-May 1816)

Soon afterwards, Lord Exmouth, admiral of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, was given the responsibility of organising a campaign for the fleet in the spring of 1816: to visit the regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli and present the decisions of the Congress of Vienna, seeing to it that these decisions should be respected. The English squadron left Leghorn on 4 March and arrived in Algiers on the First of April. During his meeting with the dey, Lord Exmouth asked for and received assurances that the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands, henceforth under British authority, would benefit from the same advantages as English subjects. He signed peace treaties on 3 April, in the names of the Kingdoms of Piedmont-Sardinia and the Two Sicilies, redeemed 357 Sicilian slaves for a price of a thousand Spanish piastres per person, and forty Sardinians for five hundred piastres each, in addition to the 33 Maltese and Gilbraltarians who, as British subjects, were set free without cost. The squadron then went to Tunis, where Exmouth, now experienced in the art of bargaining for human lives, redeemed 267 Sardinians at 250 piastres each, and achieved the liberation without cost of 257 Sicilain and Genoese captives. The bey declared his intention to abandon slavery, and announced that he would henceforth consider captives as prisoners-of-war. The campaign ended in Tripoli, where the English admiral was given a courteous reception and was able to secure the release of 414 Sicilians and Neapolitans, 140 Sardinians and Genoese as well as several Romans and Germans for a lump sum of 50,000 piastres—a bargain, compared to the Algerian prices! From this time

[13] On 6 April 1816, the *Chambre des Pairs* voted on a motion presented by Chateaubriand, from which a description of Tunis figures in *l'Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, which for the most part reiterates the ideas of Sidney Smith, with, however, the following conclusion: "It was in France that the first Crusade was advocated; it is in France that the standard for the last one should be raised."

on, as in Tunis, captives were considered in theory to be prisoners of war.

Having failed to obtain this provision for captives from the Algerians at the time of its first visit, the English squadron returned to Algiers on 14 May. The meeting with the dey Omar in the presence of the English consul McDonell was stormy. The dey refused to abandon corsair activities, or to consult the sultan. Exmouth replied that if this was the case, the situation was heading towards a breakdown in relations: he announced that he would take the consul on board with him and bombard Algiers. Tensions rose, the dey gave an order for the arrest of all the English who were present in the regency, notably in Bona and Oran. Finally, on 19 May, there was a return to better feelings on both sides; gifts were exchanged and the English squadron left for Gibraltar and thence England, arriving in the home port on 30 June. Lord Exmouth's tour was highly criticized in Europe, including England, in the light of the results—disappointing compared to those achieved by the Americans the previous year. He was reproached for having merely redeemed captives, sometimes at very high prices, and for accepting no more than fine words about slavery as such, in particular in Algiers. This was clearly set forth in the Liberal Party newspaper, *The Independent*:

> You must know in England, long before this time, that our Admiral has been honoured with a mission to the Prince of Ruffians at Algiers, and that he has patched up something, which is called a Treaty with him, as if the ringleader of a banditti of Corsairs would adhere to any treaty longer than necessary and a superior force compelled his observance of it. It is quite a farce to talk of a treaty with this rascal.[14]

War had hence become inevitable, and the weeks that followed were spent organising a new squadron which again under the leadership of Exmouth set sail on 28 July. On 9 August, the squadron arrived in Gibraltar, where a Dutch squadron commanded by vice-admiral Van Capellen was waiting for them. Thus the expedition took an international turn, to the satisfaction of the Europeans.

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[14] Perkins and Douglas-Morris, *Gunfire in Barbary*, 1982, p. 74.

War On Algiers

The Military Forces Involved

After taking considerable time to organise the campaign with his staff, Lord Exmouth left Gibraltar on 24 August, alerted to the fact that the Algerians, aware of his plans, were preparing for his arrival. Given the imbalance in the naval forces of the warring parties, it would be a maritime attack against land positions, a scenario that had been enacted frequently, without any decisive success, in previous centuries—against Algiers especially but also against the other North African ports. A description of the military forces involved will make it easier to follow the unfolding of events and assess their consequences.

The Coastal Defences of the Maghreb

Having lived under the constant threat of attacks from the sea rather than from the land, the capitals of the regencies had equipped themselves with extensive fortifications which had been reinforced and improved over the centuries.

Algiers:[15] built on a hillside, Algiers was roughly triangular in form, with the citadel of the Casbah at the highest corner, protected to the west by the fort of the Emperor, overlooking it by fifty metres and equipped with 35 cannons. The city proper was surrounded by ramparts 2,500 metres long and 11 to 13 metres high, reinforced with round towers and set behind a moat that was some ten metres deep. The parapet walks around the battlements widened from time to time to become terrepleins, ten in all, five of which faced the sea and were equipped with batteries of cannons. In total, the ramparts were armed with 89 cannons, 18 of which were at the Casbah. Two forts, the *Bordj-el Bahr*, with 34 cannons, and the *Bordj Bab Azoun*, with 69, formed the two other corners reinforcing the intersections of the ramparts facing land with that facing the sea. The key element in the defense against an attack coming from the sea was the Mole, the former Peñon or Djeziret (the islets), which protected the

[15] Boutin, *Reconaissance des villes, forts et batteries d'Alger*, 1927. An officer of the corps of Engineers, Boutin made a proposal in 1808 for a land attack on Algiers after a troop landing on the beach of Sidi Ferruch. His plan was used in 1830.

port in the direction of the open sea. Added successively to the round four-storey gun-battery tower topped with a lighthouse, built by Barbarossa at the beginning of the sixteenth century, were several important sections of fortification that practically transformed the peninsula into a vast casemated installation equipped with 180 cannons. In all, according to commander Boutin, Algiers was protected by 658 cannons, 529 of them pointing towards the sea.

Only the French possessed these specific details: they figured in a report complete with maps and plans that had been drafted by the above officer in the Engineers, commander Boutin, who had been sent to Algiers in 1808 on orders from Napoleon the First when he was planning an expedition to North Africa. The report would eventually serve as the basis for the taking of Algiers in 1830. Lord Exmouth, lacking similar information, in January 1816 (and therefore before his first pacific tour), sent one of his officers, commander Warde, to Algiers, for whatever purpose it might serve, to gather the same sort of information as Boutin. Warde submitted his report at the end of February 1816, just before the departure of the squadron. He too, equally well-informed, described in detail the fortifications, the placement and orientation of the openings, and the number and calibre of the cannons, generally confirming the information collected by Boutin.[16]

Tunis: Tunis was different from Algiers and Tripoli as it was not situated at the edge of the sea, but separated from it by a lagoon, the Lake of Tunis, which had been impraticable for ships since it had silted over in the seventeenth century. From then on, the real port had been Goletta, built on a canal pierced through the tongue of land separating the lake from the sea, and it was the fortifications protecting this port, the only one threatened by naval attacks, that were improved over the years. The citadel, founded by Khayr al-Din Barbarossa in 1534, which had been considerably reinforced and enlarged by Charles V beginning in 1535, was taken over by the Ottomans in 1574 and partly demolished before being later restored and improved. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, it consisted of two large bastions dating from the time of Charles V,

[16] Perkins and Douglas-Morris, *op. cit.*, 1982, pp. 63–67.

linked by curtain walls and reinforced under Hammuda Bey by an imposing demilune and equipped with a gun battery just above the water-line in 1796.[17] The citadel was equipped with a total of sixty cannons for the protection of the canal, which had been widened and deepened during the same period. On the other side of the canal, a hundred metres from the citadel, rose the Little Fort, built in around 1640 and armed with fifteen cannons. Added to these two forts was a fortified wall of little military value built under Hammuda's orders around the town of Goletta, and an arsenal for its navy. The rest of the Bay of Tunis roadstead was equipped with little more than a few lookout towers in poor condition, usually going back to the Middle Ages, notably at Sidi Bou Saïd and La Marsa.

Tripoli: The form of the city, encircled by ramparts, was roughly rectangular and faced the sea to the north and the roadstead to the east. The port itself was limited by the city, the breakwater of Fort Mandry and a jetty about three hundred metres long that stretched out from the fort towards the south. Our information on the defences of the city is taken from contemporary maps of the expedition of the Venetian admiral Angelo Emo to the Maghreb in 1784–1786,[18] which were still viable for the beginning of the nineteenth century. The northern approach to the city was impeded by the presence of banks of reefs that lined the shore and the breakwater of Fort Mandry and extend in a scattering of rocks and islets separating the roadstead from the open sea. The wall surrounding the city was reinforced here and there by platforms and bastions equipped with artillery on their upper levels. On the side facing the sea, the strongest points of the defence were at the Pasha's Castle, a quadrangular enclosure punctuated with towers behind a moat and equipped with twenty cannons. A large tower, known as the French Chateau, with fifteen cannons and built on the reefs in front of the north rampart, and Fort Mandry, which covered the port with its 18 cannons, complete the picture.[19] In all, Tripoli was substantially protected, with

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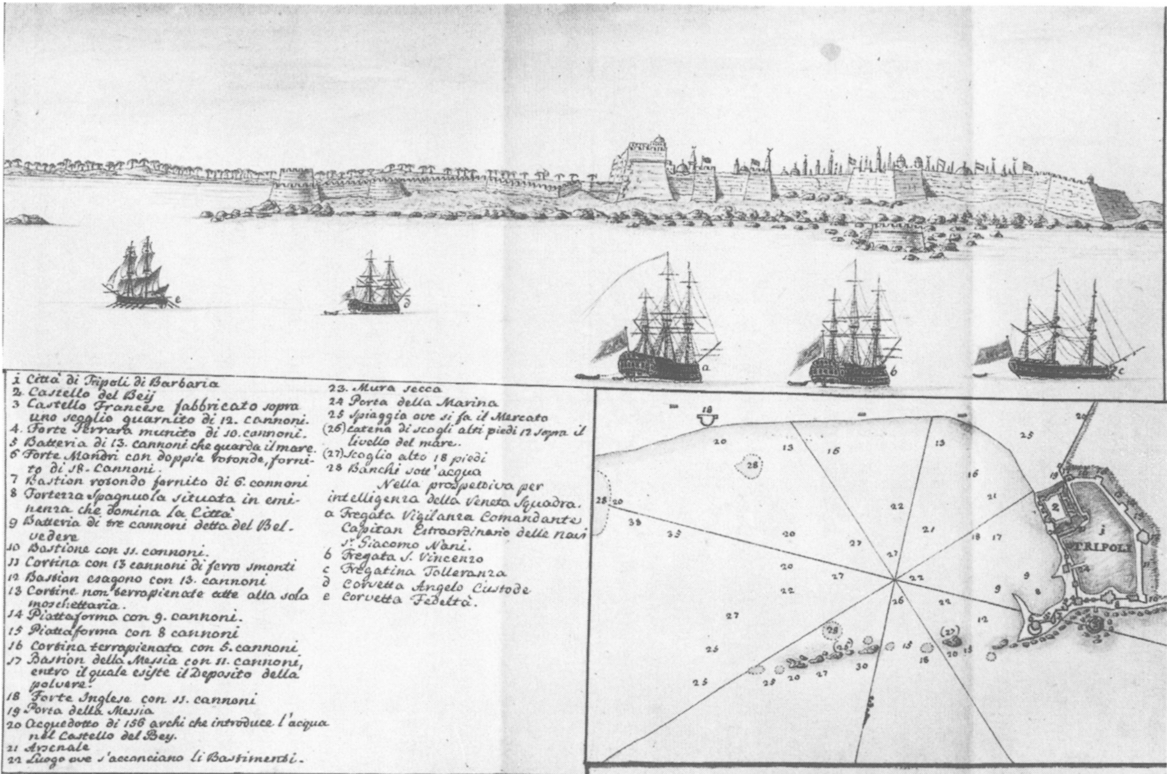
[17] Djelloul, *Fortifications de la Régence de Tunis*, Vol. I, pp. 136–151.

[18] Venice, Correr Museum, Photo Archives, M. 3328, 3330, 3332.

[19] After the arrival of Lord Exmouth, the Pasha decided to build a new fort at the tip of the breakwater in order to provide it with better protection. The *bordj al-djadîd* (new fort) was completed in 1820. Rossi, *Storia di Tripoli*..., 1968, p. 274.

15. Goletta: entrance to the arsenal built by Hammuda Bey
(photograph by the author)

16. Goletta: front view of the citadel
(photograph by the author)



17. View and Plan of Tripoli (Marciana Library, Venice)

around 170 to 180 cannons.[20] Furthermore, the sandbanks and the rocks at water-level made an efficient contribution towards keeping enemy ships at a distance, as demonstrated in several episodes in the war against the United States twelve years earlier.[21]

The Anglo-Dutch Fleet

The complex fleet was made up of two groups of vessels:

• Ships-of-the-line:[22] 15-warships in a British squadron made up of two triple-deckers, the flagship *Queen Charlotte* of 104 guns and the *Impregnable* with 98, three 74-gun two-deckers, five frigates (one 58, two 50's and two 36's) and five brigs with from 10 to 18 guns, together with seven smaller vessels including transports and dispatch boats; plus a Dutch squadron consisting of five frigates, four 40's and one 30, and an 18-gun corvette.

The firepower for the combined fleet from Europe thus totalled 736 guns.

• A flotilla: entirely British and consisting of 55 craft built or fitted-out in Gibraltar and composed of 37 cannon- and 10 mortar-shallops plus another 8 fitted with launchers for Congreve-rockets.[23]

Vessels armed with cannons and mortars were nothing new—the Algerians possessed about the same number as the British—but those capable of firing rockets were a recent development. It was Sir William Congreve, a British artillery officer, who had designed and developed this weapon system just a few years earlier. His rockets consisted of a metal cylinder that carried an explosive charge in its head and a propulsive one at the rear, the projectile being stabilised by an impressively-long metal stick, or tail. The 32-pounder model had a 1-metre by 105-mm diameter cylinder and a 5-metre stick! Congreve's rockets had a curved-flight range of approximately 2 miles—they were not particularly accurate, but they greatly disconcerted the enemy.

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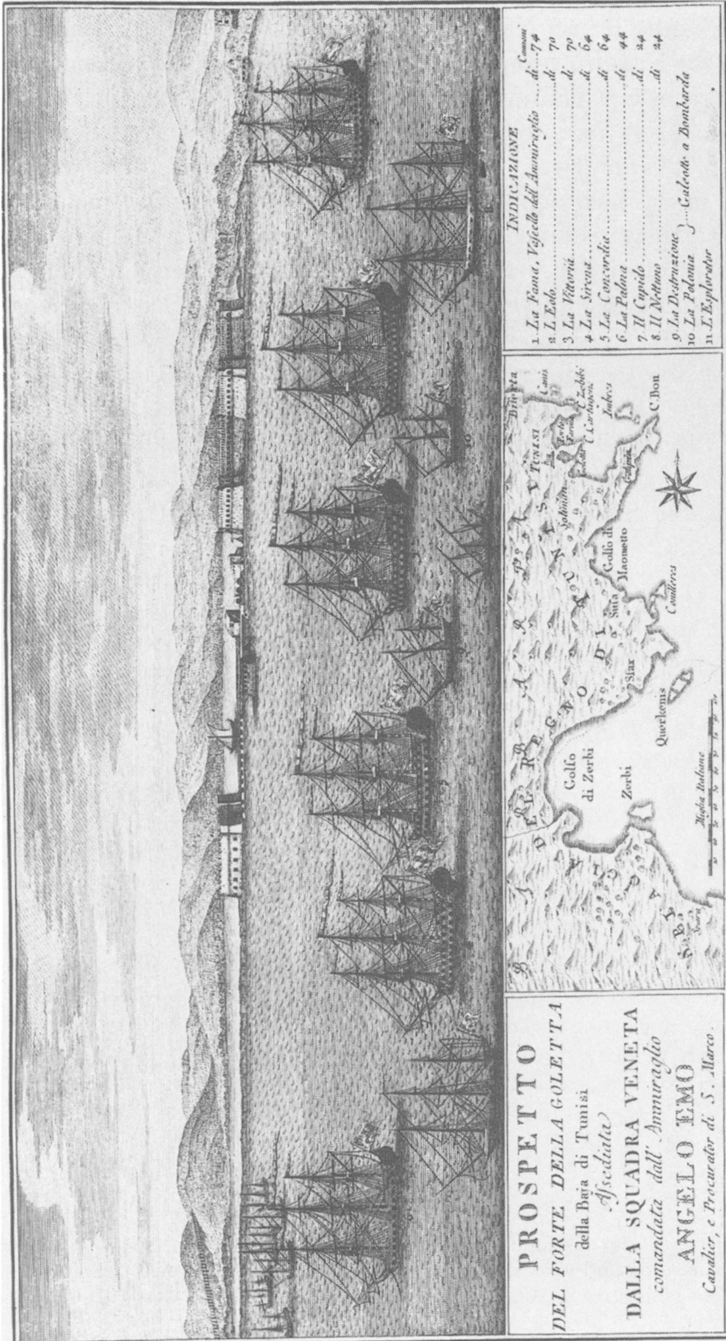
[20] A knowledge of the number of cannons a fortress is equipped with is of course useful, but insufficient. It is equally important to know their calibre, their range, their location, and, even more significant, the competence and zeal of the crews using them.

[21] The American frigate *Philadelphia* ran aground against these rocks in 1804.

[22] Perkins and Douglas-Morris, *op. cit.*, 1982, pp. 180–185.

[23] Congreve rockets were used for the first time on 18 October 1806, on English vessels to bombard the port of Boulogne, with some success. Their use in land battles, notably in Spain and at Waterloo, was less convincing.



18. View of Goletta (Marciana Library, Venice)

If we accept that the manning numbers provided for in the regulations of the British Navy were respected, there were around 5,600 men in the squadron commanded by Lord Exmouth, including landing troops of a thousand naval infantry, plus 1,100 men on the shallops, i.e. 6,700 men, to which was added the 1,300 Dutch seamen. These 8,000 men were set against the land forces of Algiers garrisoned in the ramparts and forts of the city, numbering roughly ten to twelve thousand men.[24] Exmouth's forces had on their side the equipment, discipline, training, and confidence gathered and demonstrated during twenty years of war against France. Their opponents were inspired by the religious fervour of *Dar el-Harb* warriors, reassured by the strength of their fortifications, and convinced of their invincibility, after the vain attempts of the Spaniards in 1775 and 1783–1784. While waiting for battle, the Algerian soldiers had very likely sung a number of the songs composed thirty years earlier during those Spanish attacks, such as this one written by a certain Seferlioghlu:[25]

> We learnt of the approach of the Infidels
> And they'd sent a warning to the city of Algiers:
> We prepared for war, crying out: 'Allah, Allah!',
> We drew our swords for the holy religion.
>
> The fleet of the Infidels came, and appeared.
> The soldiers of Islam all went out to the shore;
> They got ready the shallops and prepared the xebecks,
> They drew their swords for the holy religion.
>
> Beside every cannon the wick was alight,
> The warriors (*gâzi*) like butterflies, rose up in flight;
> Blood flowed and mothers wept.
> They drew their swords for the holy religion.
>
> The shallops went out and confronted the fleet;
> Many a warrior in red blood was covered;
> Angels in heaven and men on earth marvelled.
> They drew their swords for the holy religion.

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[24] Out of the eight thousand janissaries in the *odjak* in this period, it is probable that only six thousand were in Algiers, the others being stationed in provincial garrisons. The janissaries in Algiers were reinforced by local auxiliaries. SHUVAL, "La ville d'Alger...", 1994, pp. 93–125.

[25] DENY, "Chansons des janissaires...", Song XIII, 1927, pp. 92–93.

19. Beginning of the bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth's squadron (Musée de la Marine, Paris)

Seferlioghlu drank the wine of holy ardour;
Without ceasing he glorified the Supreme Warrior,
Good luck to the Turk, to the Arab:
They drew their swords for the holy religion.

In any case, since the departure of Lord Exmouth in May 1816, the Algerians were convinced that the English would return in force. On the First of June, the dey wrote to the sultan:[26]

> From Malta, your janissaries are informed that an allied fleet of the Christian nations with infantry is preparing to attack us; it is obvious that they have evil intentions towards us. We wish to inform Your Majesty that we are devoting all our will, attention, and all our vigilance, and will sacrifice our rest in order to defend the Muslim population under our protection; because it is a duty that it is incumbent upon us, just as we will defend our coast against these enemies. [. . .] In any case, with our men and equipment we shall be strong. Sultan, may God preserve you in victory. The present Governor of Algeria, the Dey Omar. The 2nd of *redjeb* 1231 (June First, 1816).

The Battle

The Anglo-Dutch fleet arrived off the coast of Algiers on the morning of 28 August. Lord Exmouth dispatched ashore an officer and his interpreter, a Syrian Christian named Abraham Salamé, whose precise and detailed account is the principal Western source concerning the events of that day. Salamé delivered to the Algerians an ultimatum demanding the immediate liberation of all Christian slaves without ransom, reimbursement of the sums paid in April for the release of the Sardinian and Neapolitan captives, and an end to such slavery. A deadline of one hour was given, which, for practical reasons, was extended to two. Taking advantage of this extra hour, the ships of the fleet moved to their assigned positions just off the mole, the port and the city, anchoring as near as possible to their eventual objectives, with the flagship blocking the port serving as the pivot of the manœuvre. Shallops armed with cannons, mortars or rockets stationed themselves in the gaps between or in front of the war-ships. All these manœuvres unfolded before the eyes of the Algerian soldiers, who had quitted their casemate positions unaware

[26] Temimi, *Recherches et documents*, 1980, pp. 109–110.

20. Night bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth's squadron
(Musée de la Marine, Paris)

of the brevity of the negotiations by the Dey, and the imminence of the British action if the discussions failed. We have no information concerning the discussions that took place with the Dey, but since the deadline passed without an answer, the British negotiators returned to their ship, while foreign shipping anchored in the port of Algiers headed out to sea and out of danger.

The bombardment of the city, extremely violent, began immediately, and from the very outset the English cannons, manned by seasoned crews, ravaged the Algerian gun batteries, which had been taken by surprise. The Algerians made a recovery, bravely returned fire, and even organised a counter-attack: forty shallops armed with small cannons and loaded with men moved towards the English ships anchored at the entrance to the port. Three quarters of them were eliminated by British cannon and rifle fire, and the others turned back to port. Cannonade and bombardment continued for hours with the same intensity between the forts and the ships. The strict record-keeping of the British Navy shows that the nine principal English ships had used a total of 84 tonnes of gunpowder and 36,912 pieces of shot, 810 heavy mortar shells and around 500 rockets![27] Night fell, and the battle, increasingly turning to the advantage of the English, was pursued into the night by the light of the fires that were ravaging the Algerian ships and the buildings close to the port.

The following morning, 29 August, the British negotiators returned ashore with the same conditions they had presented the previous day. Salamé, again a member of the group, commented on the result of the English bombardment:[28]

> This time I was indeed quite surprised to see the horrible state of the batteries and the mole, compared to the preceding day. I could not distinguish how it was erected, nor where the batteries had stood, as well as many fine houses which I had seen in the city the day previous, and I observed too, that they had not more than four or five guns mounted on their carriages, and that of all the rest, some were dismounted, and some buried in the rubble. Besides this, all the bay was full of the hulks of their navy, smoking in every direction, and the water inside of the mole was all black, covered with charcoal and

[27] These rockets were primarily responsible for setting fire to the Algerian ships that were crowded together in the port.

[28] Perkins and Douglas-Morris, *op. cit.*, 1982, pp. 136–137.

> half-burnt pieces of wood. But the most shocking and dreadful sight was the number of dead bodies which were floating in the water.[29]

The account of the events sent by the Dey Omar to the Sultan the following September 12th confirms Salamé's description of the anchoring of the English and Dutch ships, the British ultimatum and the lack of response to it, as well as the results of the battle:[30]

> [. . .] the most frightful war ever seen in the course of human history; it lasted 11 hours and 23 minutes; in that sombre night, all the corsair ships and their commercial vessels were burned; there was not a single minute of respite, and at every moment a considerable number of shells were fired; at the end of an hour, our port and our forts collapsed. The firing was so intense that we were receiving a veritable hail of projectiles. Many of your servants, courageous heroes, fell as martyrs of this war, defending their religion and their Sultan; their souls have gone up to God and dwell in Paradise; may God grant them his mercy. The number of dead infidels was four times higher than that of the Muslims; many were injured, their ships were damaged, two vessels were set on fire. [. . .] Once more, the janissaries beg that you defend our religion and country, and ask Your Majesty to send, as before, soldiers, gunpowder and everything that is needed to defend the country and religion, along with any advice you might send that could enlighten us.

In order to mitigate his own responsibility, the Dey had considerably exaggerated the European losses, and reproached the Sultan for not having sent reinforcements and materiel prior to the battle. In fact, the disproportion in damage and loss of human life between the two camps was enormous; the English dead numbered 128, with 690 wounded, the Dutch 13, with 52 wounded. There is no precise count of the Algerian losses; the estimates, which are very approximate, vary between three hundred and two thousand dead![31] It seems clear that the greater part of the losses were due to the first English

[29] The American Consul, William Shaler, wrote to Washington: "The city has suffered incredibly; there is hardly a house without some damage, and many are ruined."

[30] TEMIMI, *Recherches et documents*, 1980, pp. 111–112.

[31] The minimum figure was put forward by the Dey in a letter to the Sultan; the American Consul, William Shaler, an eyewitness to the battle, estimated Algerian losses at six hundred; Abraham Salamé, deeply shocked by the battle, assessed the loss of life on the Algerian side at two thousand, which was probably an exaggeration.

broadsides when many Algerian soldiers were still outside their casemates. The dey now had no choice but to accept Exmouth's conditions. On 30 August, he signed the treaty, and freed without ransom all the European captives who were still being held by the regency,[32] abolished slavery and in a total reversal, paid the English 382,500 Spanish piastres in war reparations. On 31 August, Exmouth wrote to the bey of Tunis and the pasha of Tripoli informing them of the events in Algiers and demanding that they set free any captives they were still holding. On 5 September, the fleet left Algiers for home making landfall in Gibraltar on the 12th; from there, after several cursory repairs, it set sail for England, arriving on 6 October.

The Algerians were naturally very bitter about the defeat they had suffered, but even more furious that they had been tricked, as the dey's envoy reported to Istanbul: "The English violated the peace agreement [made in April] by means of a ruse; they took advantage of the deadline to get close to our fortifications (*Kala'a*) and the entrance to the port. They had prepared cannons and arms, and all of a sudden, they unleashed the battle."[33] The Algerians contended that if they had not been fooled by the envoy's negotiation yawl, the English ships would never have been able to get within range of their fortifications. A later incident between Algiers and England in 1824 seems to vindicate their claim. In January, the British consul was forced to leave Algiers after a disagreement over slaves. On 12 June, an English squadron of sixteen ships approached Algiers, and Algerian men-of-war and shallops went out to meet them. There was a fierce battle, and the English ships withdrew. Six days later the British squadron returned, reinforced by six new ships, and bombarded the city; but too far away, barely reached their targets and returned to their base five days later after an unsucessful mission.

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[32] 1,642 in all: 1,110 Sicilians and Neapolitans, 68 Piedmontese-Sardinians, 174 Romans, six Tuscans, 226 Spaniards, one Portuguese, seven Greeks, 28 Dutch, 18 English, two French and two Austrians. Perkins and Douglas-Morris, *op. cit.*, 1982, p. 147.

[33] Temimi, *Recherches et documents*, p. 114.

An Impossible Dialogue

> Under the forceful leadership of the Dey Omar, the Algerians rapidly undertook to restore the buildings, repair the fortifications and rebuild their fleet.[34] The city itself had not greatly suffered, as the buildings were chiefly of masonry; what had burned was the ships, the arsenal with its stock of timber and rigging. We saw in Chapter Two how Muslim solidarity had come into play, with the Sultan, the Pasha of Egypt and the Sultan of Morocco[35] sending ships to replace some of those that had been destroyed by the English; consequently, beginning in the month of October, the first Algerian corsairs took to the sea, followed by the Tunisians and the Tripolitans in 1817. Once again the Europeans were confronted with the recurrent activities of the Barbary corsairs.

The question was debated at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in November 1818. The participants had diverging opinions on the issue, primarily as to whether or not the Sublime Port could and should be held responsible for acts committed by those who considered themselves its subjects. Finally, England and France, re-entering the Alliance of Powers, were given the responsibility of informing the regencies that they had to cease all corsair activities or face reprisals from a 'European League' assigned to punish them. In September 1819, a modest Franco-English squadron of six ships under Rear-Admirals Fremantle and Jurien de La Gravière, arrived to inform Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli of these dispositions. Although the Pasha of Tripoli committed himself to respect this injunction, the Dey of Algiers and the Bey of Tunis rejected it. The bey explained his reasons in a letter addressed to the French Admiral:[36]

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[34] The Algerians had taken the precaution of deliberately sinking some of their ships before the battle; these vessels were refloated and it was not difficult to restore them to good condition. In 1825, the Algerian fleet consisted of three frigates, two corvettes, two brigs, five schooners, a polacca and a xebeck. SHALER, *Esquisse de l'Etat d'Alger*, 1830, p. 61. A significant fact: the dey of Algiers had reported the destruction of all the ships of the regency, warships as well as commercial vessels, but only ships in the first group were replaced, as those in the second were of no use after the restoration of peace in Europe.

[35] The destruction of Algiers in 1816 was not unrelated to the decision of the Sultan of Morocco to abandon corsair activities, which he announced officially in 1818. COINDREAU, *Les Corsaires de Salé*, 1948, p. 204.

[36] Quoted in BACHROUCH, 1989, pp. 522–524.

> We have received your notification and have understood the whole content of your demand, in which you tell us that you have been sent to us [. . .] to hold discussions with us in the name of your sovereigns, as well as in the name of all the sovereigns of Europe, [resolution] that you tell us you formed at the conference last year in Aix-la-Chapelle, in which the abovementioned Powers agreed to appeal to the Barbary Powers to abolish the corsairs who leave from their ports, navigate, act as pirates and spoil universal trade through their robberies and acts of piracy.
>
> Our reply on the subject is:
>
> Let him be called robber and pirate who captures ships and takes belongings without reason, without justice, and outside all laws, disregarding customs and treaties. As for us—thanks be to God!—we have never had evidence, or heard it said, that in our ports we have failed to respect customs or treaties; to deserve such intimidation from you [. . .] it is not appropriate, since in the past the goods of our own merchants have been taken, and treaties of friendship have been broken by people of whom we would never have believed it possible. [. . .] How can we agree to your demand that we never again arm our ships? And if it happened that war broke out between one of the Powers and the Ottoman Porte, what would we answer, when asked to arm our ships to go to its aid, following the custom that we have always practised?

In response to the challenge to suppress what the Europeans called piracy harmful to maritime trade, the Bey of Tunis stated once again the position of the regencies and the convictions of the Maghrebi: their ships only went to war against their enemies; they honoured past treaties agreed upon with the European states and respected their nationals, while the reverse was far from true. Faithful subjects of the Ottoman sultan, they were required to supply him with warships if he deemed it necessary. These were respectable arguments, which had been advanced for centuries and tacitly accepted for a long time by the Europeans, who now rejected them.

Thirty years earlier, it had appeared that the activity of the Barbary corsairs was slowly dying out with the multiplication of bilateral peace treaties between the regencies and the Western states, who had agreed to pay for freedom of navigation and respect for their coasts. After a quarter of a century of wars requiring the establishment of greater military forces that ever before, the former enemies, aware of their power, no longer accepted to be defied by the little Ottoman provinces of North Africa. They would no longer tolerate the capture of Europeans and the practice of redeeming them with ransom money,

just as they refused from now on to pay tribute to guarantee their security. Slavery, at least White slavery, considered at one and the same time an economic anachronism and an inadmissable infringement of what henceforth we call human rights, was an object of scandal, and no longer to be considered an exchange process of any sort.

But these respectable sentiments reveal above all that the equilibrium that had been established between the modest Ottoman principalities of North Africa and certain of the most powerful European states was destroyed in 1816, never to be restored. Whereas in earlier periods, the corsairs renewed their campaigns with equal intensity as soon as the European squadrons left, the action of Lord Exmouth's fleet had a decisive effect. In 1815, 41 ships left on campaigns from Tunisian ports, and 12 from February to July 1816; but from 1817 to 1821, there were only five corsair outings a year on average, then four from 1822 to 1826, and only two from 1827 to 1830. As for the Algerian prize booty, we are far from the five million francs in the years 1812 to 1815: the register of captures we have already used, which as it happens was poorly kept from this time on, showed a total of 394,777 francs from 1817 to 1827, i.e. an average of 35,824 francs a year, as against 1,269,250 francs from 1812 to 1815. It is true that after 1820, the Ottoman state, confronted by a Greek uprising, called on the North African corsairs. The naval divisions provided by the regencies participated alongside the Ottoman fleet in the numerous battles that took place in the Aegean. The war-fleet that Mohammed-Ali, the Egyptian Pasha, endeavoured to form preferred to recruit Algerians because of their much-appreciated competence.

The Anglo-Dutch fleet's action had brought a definitive end to the activities of the Barbary corsairs and had at the same time meant a profound change in the balance of power and in relations between Europe and the Maghreb. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the peace treaties signed between the European states and the regencies placed the two parties on an equal footing. The majority of the states that had accepted to enter into these agreements were evidently much more powerful than the regencies, and their willingness to enter into such agreements indicated that they gained far greater benefits from treaties than if they invested in the annihilation of the Ottoman provinces. The Europeans found their considerable autonomy in relation to the Ottoman State very convenient.

Above all, the Maghreb supplied Europe, and primarily France, with vital goods, notably leather, wool, olive oil, and especially cereals; and then, the corsair campaigns had turned the North Africans away from maritime shipping, which had worked in favour of shipping for the Europeans, not only in the direct relations between Europe and the Maghreb, but, more generally, in the Empire as a whole, thanks to the maritime caravan.

The near-suppression of all corsair activities after 1816 not only represented a loss of resources for the regencies—resources which, since 1805, with rare exceptions, had provided little more than a modest financial benefit—but it also brought into question the very reason for their existence. As the initiatives of the North African merchants and merchant ships, undertaken as a substitute for privateering, were no better tolerated, it was apparent that the equilibrium between the West and North Africa had been shattered. The Maghreb was no longer considered a significant partner, and henceforth the disadvantages—slavery and maritime insecurity—weighed heavier than the previous advantages. The weaknesses and insufficiencies of the regencies, which until this time were not common knowledge, or just passed over, were clear for all to see.

CHAPTER TEN

THE MAGHREB FACES UP TO ITS PROBLEMS

The year 1816 saw a major turning point in the history of the North African regencies. In spite of obvious handicaps they had been integrated up to this time into the general economic system and their position, although modest, was real. They were effectively considered by the Western states as necessary partners, and treated as such in both diplomatic and economic realms. The bombardment by the fleet commanded by Lord Exmouth was no more brutal than those of Duquesne a century-and-a-half earlier, but this time the regencies proved unable to recover the necessary momentum to again take up their maritime activites—whether military or commercial. Added to their weakness and structural deficiencies, which up until this time had been a matter of indifference to their partners, were many crises, temporary, it is true, but which further aggravated situations that were already severely compromised.

Political Fragility

In spite of different political organisations, stability of leadership seemed to be well established in the regencies at the end of the eighteenth century. Hammuda Bey, of the Husseinite dynasty, had reigned in Tunisia since 1782, and Yussuf Pasha Karamânli had occupied the throne of Tripoli since 1795: even Algiers seemed to be advancing in the direction of a dynastic solution: Mohammed Ben Osman, who became dey in 1766 and lived until 1791, handed over power in 1788 to his son Hassan Khaznadji, who was succeeded in turn by his nephew Mustafa Pasha in 1798, again without any serious difficulties. But the nineteenth century saw this stability severely disturbed, with power vacillating and weakening dangerously, in a period that was particularly difficult for the Maghreb. This weakening was primarily the result of an opposition that contested the ruling authority and sought either to soften its policies or, more often, to overthrow it. The opposition took out its grievances on the figure who

embodied and possessed the power—dey, bey or pasha—in the capital itself, but the provinces were also hotly contested areas. A circumstance that aggravated the situation was the fact that although the regencies were all provinces of the Ottoman Empire and claimed this status, particularly Algiers, the relations they maintained between themselves were often tense, and periodically degenerated into open conflict.

Internal Power Struggles

Algiers

Mustafa Pasha, who increased the state's role in the economy, especially through the firm of Busnach and Bacri, was assassinated by rebellious janissaries in August 1805, several weeks after the pogrom against the Jews. Ahmed Pasha, who had been elected by the *odjak*, was confronted by growing tensions with France, which was planning an expedition against Algiers. Above all, the Algerian army sustained a serious defeat at the hands of Tunis in 1807 in the battle of the Oued Sarrât. The janissaries sustained severe losses, and it proved difficult to replace them.[1] Ahmed Pasha, accused by the janissaries of ineptitude and cowardice, was assassinated by them in November 1808. His successor, Ali el-Rassal, proved incapable of satisfying the requirements of the *odjak*, which was also divided into factions: the unmarried *yoldashes*, who wanted to pillage the city, especially the souks, and the married *yoldashes*, who often had possessions, and whose family members were at risk from the looters. Unable to settle the problem and restore order, Ali was put to death in February 1809, and replaced by Hadj Ali Pasha. Hadj Ali was able to re-establish the dey's authority, at least for a time, and in order to satisfy the financial demands of the soldiers, revived the corsair campaigns, declared war on the United States, and renewed hostilities with Tunis. The disastrous consequences of his policies led

[1] The Algero-Tunisian war exacerbated the problem of the search for soldiers, as the French consul in Tunis reported: "A ship coming from the Levant [January 1807] carrying 150 recruits for Algiers dropped anchor at Goletta. The Bey kept them for his own service, and the Algerian officers accompanying them were taken as prisoner." A.C.C.M., MQ5-1.

to his assassination on 22 March 1815, but the new dey, Mohammed Khaznadji, as a result of his attempts to correct abuses he had discovered in the register of the janissaries, was executed on 17 June of the same year. Omar Pasha did not survive the disaster that resulted from the bombardment by Lord Exmouth's fleet, and was assassinated in September 1817. Ali Khodja, newly elected, and aware of the tyranny of the *odjak* against the power and the very lives of the deys, abandoned the Djanina Palace near the port and withdrew to the Casbah, along with the contents of the treasury and the archives of the *deylik*, under the protection of a guard of two thousand locally-recruited *zaouaouas* and six thousand *kuloghlus*. His efforts to re-establish order led to a new rebellion by the janissaries, which was crushed this time by his new guard. Ali Khodja died of the plague on the First of March, 1818, and his successor, Hussein Khodjet el-Kheil, who was dethroned by the French conquest in 1830, died in exile in Leghorn in 1838.

Parallelling the mutinies disturbing the capital were the frequent uprisings in the provinces. Naturally, the inhabitants of the provinces were all opposed to Turkish rule exerted through the garrisons designed to provide support for the actions of the deys, for the collecting of taxes in kind and in coin, and for the levying of auxiliary troops. Although the opposition took the form of armed rebellion everywhere, it took distinct forms according to region. There were local particularities, notably in Kabilia, and even more in the Bibans and Hodna mountainous regions separating the inhabitants of Algiers from those of Constantine, which was ruled by the powerful Mokrani family, who practiced a balancing act with the deylik, serving as allies of Algiers at times, and as enemies at others. The Tunis regency exerted its influence to the east, in an effort to counteract the aspirations of Algiers in the region, by encouraging the signs shown by the beys of Constantine for their independence.

But the most serious threat to the domination of the *odjak* of Algiers was in the province of Oran, where the Darqawas brotherhood held sway, more or less encouraged by the sultan of Morocco, Moulay Sliman (1792–1822). In 1804, a Darqawi leader, Mohammed Ben Abdallah Ben el-Harch, even managed to win over Kabilia, and, by inciting a segment of the population, defeated the bey of Constantine, who was killed on the Oued Zhour along with five hundred janissaries. Ben el-Harch was killed in 1807, when the *raïs* Hamidou

arrived by sea to punish Djidjelly, which he had made his base. Another Darqawi marabout, Ben Cherif, stirred up the province of Oran and most of the Turkish garrisons there were massacred, with the exception of those in Mostaganem, Oran and Mers el-Kebir. The new bey of Oran appointed by Algiers was forced to reach the city by sea, and it took him four years to recapture Tlemcen and Mascara, where Ben Cherif was killed. In fact, from 1804 on, the authority of Algiers was constantly under attack, especially between 1804 and 1811, and it was never fully restored.[2]

This armed opposition from within had serious consequences. Taxes and levies in kind and in coin were becoming more difficult to collect, reducing the resources of the deylik and therefore the disbursement of ordinary pay, and, even more significant, of funds to meet the extraordinary demands of the *odjak.* In addition, the need to repress uprisings mobilised more and more personnel and led to substantial losses among the soldiers, weakening the garrison in Algiers. All of these were causes of discontent among the janissaries and reasons to incite mutiny. Between 1805 and 1818, seven deys succeeded each other in Algiers, and all succumbed to a violent death: the last one to the plague but six others assassinated by janissaries, dissatisfied after having chosen them. Rejecting any reform and the slightest infringement on their prerogatives, but incapable of competently ensuring their military duties, the soldiers of the militia of Algiers at the beginning of the nineteenth century constituted an anarchic mass, inefficient and demanding, that paralysed the leadership of the regency.

Tunis

Although the Husseinite dynasty had ruled Tunisia for a century, the succession of the beys was always a difficult matter, and the sudden death of Hammuda Pasha on 15 September 1814, after thirty-two years of rule, again marked the beginning of a period of serious political troubles. Ali, the father of Hammuda Pasha, had designated him as his successor during his lifetime, at the expense of his first

[2] Following is an example among thousands depicting the situation in Kabilia: "The aga, who had gone out to fight the Kabils of the Beni-Abbas tribe, attacked them on 20 *hidja* 1239 [17 August 1824], burned twelve of their dwellings, cut off seven heads and took sixteen prisoners, who were taken to Algiers and sent to work in the quarries located at Bab el-Oued." *Tachrifat,* p. 36.

cousin Mahmoud, the son of his older brother and older than Hammuda. Consequently when Hammuda died, Mahmoud believed that he would finally be able to succeed to the throne. It was not so. The all-powerful minister, the *sâhib at-tabaa*, managed to convince the small informal council of the *Ahl el-hâl wal-aqd*[3] made up of the members of the divan and principal military chiefs, to appoint Osman, the brother of Hammuda, as bey, who in turn quickly confirmed Hammuda Pasha's ministers in their functions. Osman, who was ill and self-effacing, in effect let his sons and favourites rule in his stead. Mahmoud and his supporters then mounted a coup d'état, which ended in the assassination of Osman Bey on 20 December 1814 and then the murder of his two sons Salah and Ali. The perpetrators seized power the following day. There remained the problem of the *sâhib at-tabaa*. Very powerful until this time, and also very rich, because of his involvement in maritime and commercial activities with the encouragement of Hammuda Pasha, he represented an obstacle to the new bey's entourage. He too was assassinated, on 22 January 1815, and his disappearance was greeted with satisfaction by the European merchants, in particular the French, who considered, not without reason, that he had been an impediment to their activities.

The beys and their circle also had to contend with the weight and influence of the Turkish militia in the affairs of the state. They were less powerful in both the military and the political realm than the *odjak* of Algiers, but their power was real nonetheless. The presence of these janissaries, who in principal constituted the core of the Tunisian army, provided evidence of the regency's links with Istanbul, and proof of its commitment to fight for Islam. We have seen that Hammuda Pasha was involved with the recruitment of the janissaries, and provided barracks for them; but at the same time, he increased the proportion of local troops in his army at a time when the spectacular reduction in privateering in favour of maritime trade had further reduced the necessity for Turkish janissaries. On 30 August 1811, there was an uprising among the five thousand discontented *yoldash* Turks, who planned to kill the bey and pillage the city. Lacking leaders and specific objectives, however, they were

[3] Literally, "those who have the power to bind and unbind".

finally defeated. Several hundred of them perished during and after the battles, around the same number were deported, the majority surrendered and a thousand fled. Reconstituted in the following years, the militia revolted again on the First of May, 1816. Angry over the murder of the *sahib at-tabaa*, who had favoured the Turks, and furious about the apparent submission of the Bey Mahmoud to the ultimatum of Lord Exmouth, who had left the day before, the janissaries forced the *Ahl el-hâl wal-aqd* to meet again and declare that Mahmoud must be deposed in favour of his brother Ismaïl who declined the offer. Mahmoud assembled the troops who were loyal to him, and, assisted by the civilian population, managed to recapture Tunis, while a faction of the rebels took Goletta, seized five ships and made their escape. The authority of the Bey Mahmoud was never really contested again, and on his death in 1824 his son Hussein II succeeded him.

These troubles and disturbances in the capital were not without consequence for the populations in the interior of the regency. The increasing fiscal pressure, applied by Hammuda's successors in an effort to compensate for the losses occasioned by the decrease in maritime commerce and the near-disappearance of privateering, provoked uprisings in the countryside. This was the case in 1817, when the tribes of the Kef region in the west of the country launched a rebellion. In the spring of 1819, the southern tribes living between Sfax and the borders of Tripoli revolted in turn; and in 1824 to 1825, the tribes of the northeast also rose in rebellion. Admittedly, none of these uprisings was as serious as those in Algiers, and they could all be put down without too much difficulty. But after a third of a century of peace during the reign of Hammuda, these agitations revealed the profound discontent in the Tunisian population towards his successors.

Tripoli

The Tripolitan troops, unlike those of the other regencies, included only a few soldiers from Anatolia; there was no militia of Turkish janissaries, with the usual risks of insubordination. On the other hand, the other obstacles to the pasha's authority were of the same type as those already noted for his neighbours. There was insubordination of certain members of his family, rebellion among the provincial populations, and a feature that was peculiar to this regency: the

varied nature of the population, and the immensity of the territories that were theoretically submitted to the Karamânlis. This is how, in 1813, Mohammed Bey, the eldest son of the pasha, after attempting in a fit of rage to stab his father, was appointed governor of Bengazi. Shortly afterwards, he rebelled against his father, who, in February 1816, sent his second son, Ahmed Bey, at the head of a veritable army, to bring him to obedience, and with him, the region of Cyrenaica. Defeated, Mohammed Bey fled to Egypt.

The chronology of the provincial uprisings provided a sort of regular pattern to the reign of Yussuf Pasha. In 1803, the inhabitants of Gharyan, a region a hundred kilometres south of Tripoli, revolted and killed the chief treasurer of the regency, the son-in-law of the pasha, before they were defeated the following year. In 1806 and 1807, the tribal confederation of the Awlad Suleymans, who controlled the access to the Gulf of Syrte, started their own rebellion. It was the oldest son of the pasha, Mohammed Bey, who put down the rebellion, while another of his brothers crushed the Ghadames revolt, in addition exacting an enormous ransom. In 1811, the Syrtan inhabitants rose up once again, to be again crushed by Mohammed Bey, who profited from the occasion to firmly establish the control of the Karamânlis in Bengazi.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century in different degrees, the three Barbary regencies saw their political organisation weakened and their power contested in the interior of territories that they considered to be under their authority. The forms of this resistance varied, and were not necessarily found in all three states. Although there was everywhere the presence of the Ottoman janissary militias who plainly exhibited their origins, their influence from now on was very uneven. Essential in Algiers, their Turkish identity remained substantial in Tunis, but no longer amounted to much in Tripoli, while only Tunis and Tripoli experienced the disturbances related to the tensions within the ruling dynasties. The sovereignty of Tripoli was contested periodically, but was never in serious danger, while that of Algiers was opposed almost constantly, and often in a very preoccupying manner. On the other hand, the regency of Tunis, with its relatively limited territory, where the relief presented few obstacles and only a small area was covered by desert, was only troubled by limited opposition in the interior. It is significant that the *kaïds* were part of the immediate circle around the bey, and that

the heads of tribes were closely supervised and integrated into the apparatus of the state. Established for a century, the dynasties of the Husseinites in Tunis and the Karamânlis in Tripoli had become somewhat Arabised, and it was only when exasperated that the inhabitants revolted. The situation was altogether different in the *odjak* of Algiers, where the ruling authorities were perceived as foreign, which gave the opposition in the interior, notably in the province of Oran, a weight and a legitimation that were not found in the opposing parties of the other regencies.

Algiers: The Dominating Regency

The militia of the janissaries, which ruled and administered the regency of Algiers, maintained closer links than Tunis and Tripoli with Istanbul and Anatolia, the base for the recruitment and renewal of the *odjak*. This militia asserted its Ottoman identity much more forcefully than its neighbours, and displayed expansionist tendencies and a will to dominate, in particular in relation to Tunisia. Furthermore, until the end of the sixteenth century, the beylerbey of Algiers exercised administrative supervision over Tunis; and in the periods that followed, Algiers often intervened in the internal affairs of its neighbour. In 1756, the Algiers *odjak* seized Tunis in order to re-establish the legitimate branch of the Husseinites there, pillaged it, and imposed an annual tribute in olive oil (to light mosques) as a demonstration of its ruling authority. There were frequent incidents in Tunis, as when a group of Algerian *raïs*, during a stopover at Goletta, refused to pay for the provisions they had requested, and behaved with insolence and brutality. At the end of a half century, Hammuda Bey tried to rid himself of this domination, and attempted to capture Constantine in January, 1807. The attempt failed, but the brilliant victory at Oued Sarrât in July eliminated the threat from Algiers on land.

It was at sea that Algiers attempted to take revenge:

> On 28 *rabia-ettani* of the year 1226 [22 May 1811], the *raïs* Hamidou captured a Tunisian frigate and led it to Algiers after a brilliant battle. The Algerian fleet was made up of six warships and four gunboats, and the Tunisian fleet of twelve warships, but the action only took place between the frigate of the *raïs* Hamidou and the Tunisian frigate in question. The battle lasted six hours, and did not end until well after the *Acha* [the prayer after sundown]. Forty-one men were killed

> on our frigate, and two hundred and thirty on the Tunisian frigate. May God have pity on them, as we are all Muslims.[4]

This extraordinary battle between the two flagships within sight of two squadrons that did nothing to intervene, perhaps in order to spare Muslim lives, as the final explanation might suggest, resulted in an acceptance of the naval supremacy of Algiers. The threat was taken seriously in Tunis:

> The Bey has ordered a state of naval alert against the Algerians; new batteries in masonry-work have been erected at Goletta and armed with heavy-calibre cannons. There will be fifty cannon shallops and a thousand seamen to man the batteries and the gunboats.[5]

Taking advantage of the inactivity of the Tunisian fleet of war, the Algerians seized several Tunisian commercial ships in 1812, and then, in 1813, set up a blockade along the Tunisian coast, which they maintained with 39 gunboats and 11 bombard vessels. The results were far from negligeable, and contributed to reducing Tunisian commercial navigation, as is seen in the drop in the frequentation of European ports by Tunisian ships. In the same period Algerian arrogance was directed against Tripoli. In May 1811, after a disagreement connected with the liquidation of Algerian prizes brought to Tripoli:

> The Dey ordered his corsairs to seize Tripolitan property at sea, and already one of the regency's ships returning from Morocco with a load of wheat has been captured, and a Greek-Ottoman ship with a cargo of live cattle, and also carrying cash from Tripoli, was pillaged during the crossing from Tripoli to Malta. No declaration of war has been made, nor has there been any notification of a blockade. It appears that the Dey only wanted to retaliate, and pay himself back a hundredfold the sums that had been withheld from him. Meanwhile, that regency fears attack, arms and equips all its gunboat launches, doubles and triples the guard in its forts, and delays the departure of four corsair ships that had been ready to cast off.[6]

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[4] *Tachrifat*, p. 13.

[5] Letter from the French consul, 2 January 1813, in Plantet, *Correspondance des beys de Tunis*..., Vol. III, 1893–1899, p. 505.

[6] *Bulletin des nouvelles*, No. 1, 10 July 1811. M.A.E., C.C.C., Tripoli 34.

The Algerian threat continued throughout the summer:

> The regency could not send out any corsair ships through fear of the Algerians, whose naval forces numbering eight sailing vessels plus several frigates and corvettes appeared just outside this port on the 10th, 11th and 12th of last August. Happily the only Tripolitan corsair ship that was still out at sea returned on the 16th of the same month.[7]

Finally, on 31 December, the pasha sent an emissary to find a solution to a disagreement that was causing him great harm. Although everything seemed to suggest that the situation between Tripoli and Algiers was settled, it was not the case with Tunis, since the bone of contention had existed for a far longer period, and was much more serious. In 1811, the Sultan sent emissaries to Algiers and Tunis in the hope that a lasting agreement could be concluded, but in vain. It was the expedition of Lord Exmouth in 1816 that caused the two regencies to recognize their common situation under the European threat, and led to a rapprochement. In 1817, the new dey, Ali Khodja, sent a representative to Tunis who agreed, in his name, to cancel the requirement of the Tunisian tribute in oil and to take responsibility of the behaviour of the Algerian *raïs* in Tunis. A peace treaty was finally signed when Algiers agreed to recognize that Tunis was an Ottoman pashalik of the same status as Algiers, free of any dependence or vassalage. But beginning in 1820, the Algierians broke this agreement by attacking Tunisia on land, crossing the border to conduct raids, and also at sea, by seizing several ships. As the bey was preparing to counteract these moves, the Sultan intervened once again, and managed to restore peace, for which a treaty was signed on 21 March 1821 with the same provisions as that of 1817.[8] The situation really was urgent. An uprising among the Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire presented a serious threat to the Ottomans, and confrontations between Muslim provinces were no longer acceptable.

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[7] *Bulletin des nouvelles*, No. 2, 30 September 1811. M.A.E., C.C.C. Tripoli 34.
[8] Chater, *op. cit.*, 1984, pp. 275–277.

Population Weakening and Decimation

We know how precarious daily life was for populations at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, particularly in North Africa. In normal periods, in spite of a very high birth rate, the death rate was so great that the increase in the number of inhabitants, though real, was slight. To this difficult reality were added frequent demographic crises originating in that sinister trio of medieval headings: war, plague and famine. Famines could be provoked by wars or rebellions, which prevented work on the land or led to pillaging of the reserves of the inhabitants, but they were primarily the result of exceptionally bad weather, droughts, flooding, or excessively cold or hot spells, to which should be added the depradations of locusts, which reduced or utterly destroyed a season's crops. Among the different epidemics that arose periodically, the most serious and the most deadly was the plague. In periods of crisis, the population stagnated, even regressed, sometimes in significant proportions.

The Table below records the principal natural disasters that struck North Africa between 1795 and 1824. Two observations need to be made, however. If the data is more or less complete for the regencies of Algiers and Tunis, which have benefitted from considerable research in this field, it is much more sketchy when it comes to Tripolitania. The table only indicates the existence of a calamity. To gauge its impact it is obviously essential to take into account its extent and severity.[9]

[9] The publications used here are: Valensi, *Fellah tunisiens*..., 1977; Saïdouni, "*La vie rurale dans l'Algérie*...", 1988; Speziale, *Oltre la peste*..., 1997; Boubaker, "*La Peste dans les pays du Maghreb*"; Panzac, *La peste dans l'Empire Ottoman*..., 1985.

Table 17: Natural Disasters in the Maghreb (1795–1824)

Year	Regencies of Algiers	Regencies of Tunis	Regencies of Tripoli
1795	plague, food shortages	plague	
1796	plague, food shortages	plague, smallpox	
1797	plague, food shortages	plague	plague
1798	locusts, food shortages, plague	plague, smallpox	
1799	locusts, plague	plague, smallpox	
1800	locusts, food shortages	plague	
1801	plague		
1802	plague, earthquake	food shortages	
1803	smallpox		
1804	plague, locusts, food shortages	food shortages	
1805	drought, food shortages	food shortages, typhus	typhus
1806	drought, food shortages	food shortages, typhus	typhus
1807			typhus
1808			
1809			
1810			
1811	earthquake		
1812			
1813	locusts		
1814	locusts, drought		
1815	drought, locusts		
1816	food shortages	food shortages	
1817	plague	plague, food shortages	plague
1818	plague, food shortages, earthquake	plague, food shortages	plague
1819	plague, food shortages, earthquake	plague, smallpox	
1820	plague, food shortages	plague, food shortages	
1821	plague	plague	plague
1822	locusts, plague		
1823	locusts, plague		
1824	locusts		

Only three years out of a period of thirty, the years 1808 to 1810, were disaster-free, and, let us add, free from major internal or international military activities. It is noteworthy that these disasters, especially famine and plague, most often appear at the same time in the records of all three regencies. Locusts were a frequent phenomenon in the province of Algiers, which does not mean that they were not present in Tunisia or Tripolitania, but simply that we do not have the facts concerning them there. The same is true of the smallpox and typhus epidemics mentioned in connection with Tunisia, and in

particular Tripoli, but not noted for the regency of Algiers. With these reservations, two sorts of disaster should hold our attention, because they were the most serious and had the most significant consequences and as a result we are better informed concerning them.

The Plague

Our discussion will be limited here to retracing the course of the disease and attempting to evaluate its overall impact on the populations and their activities. In this period, the pockets of the plague were located in the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire, from whence the disease reached the Maghreb, most often by the maritime route. Despite the absence of sanitation measures, the distance separating the Levant from North Africa spared the Maghreb, to a relative degree, from the outbreaks in the eighteenth century. This was particularly the case of Tunisia, which remained mysteriously unscathed over an eighty-year period, from 1706 to 1785, while records for the same period show almost ten years of plague in Algiers, and almost forty in Alexandria, with which the regencies were in constant contact. Beginning in 1785, North Africa was included once again in the terrible 'relay race' of the plague around the Mediterranean, following the maritime and land routes chosen by travellers, merchants, soldiers, sailors or runaways—all propagators of the disease.

The Epidemic of 1792–1801

In 1792, the plague arrived in the port of Algiers from the Levant. From there it reached Oran by sea, and then spread overland, into the interior of the province of Oran, where it reached Mascara in 1793, and on to Morocco from Oujda. One after the other, Fez and Meknes were stricken in 1798, Rabat and Marrakesh in 1799, and Mogador in 1800. At the same time, the disease spread towards the east, touching Blidah and Constantinople in 1793, then arrived in Tunis in 1794, by way of Kef. From the capital of the regency, the plague then spread in all directions. To the north, by land, it reached Bizerta in 1796, whilst in the south it arrived in Kairwan then Gabes and from there following the coast to Tripoli, which had already been infested by maritine traffic. In fact it had been ships departing from Goletta that had first brought the plague to Tripoli in 1794 then, a year later, in 1795 to Sfax and Djerba. Varying in

intensity, with occasionally long remissions and sudden murderous upsurges, the disease usually persisted for several years in cities as well as countryside. It was recorded from 1792 to 1802 in Algiers, from 1794 to 1797 in Tunis, and from 1794 to 1799 in Tripoli.

The Epidemic of 1816–1821

After an absence of fifteen years, the plague came again to the Maghreb in the same way as the preceding epidemic. In June of 1817, an Ottoman polacca carrying Muslim pilgrims from Alexandria to North Africa back from Mecca landed groups of passengers successively in Bona, Algiers, and then Oran. On 9 June, the plague was reported in Bona, and on 21 June, three *biskris*, porters from Biskra, who had helped to unload the merchandise from the pilgrims' ship, died of the disease, with the characteristic bubo swellings. The sickness spread cruelly in Algiers, spreading from there to Morocco both by land and sea, and into the interior of the regency of Algiers. In 1817, Tunis was contaminated in turn by traffic from Alexandria; and once again, starting with the capital, the whole of Tunisia was affected, between 1817 and 1820, primarily from traffic on land. The oases of Tozeur and Nefta, which seem to have been spared in 1792–1801, were grievously hit in 1819. The disease also reached Tripoli by the sea route in 1817, from both Alexandria and Tunis, reaching Bengazi from there, while a plague-infested ship that had left from Alexandria contaminated Derna.

The consequences of the plague were first of all demographic. During an epidemic, the disease usually went through only one veritable murderous outbreak of a few weeks, followed by a discreet, though disturbing, presence, sometimes lasting several years. It is very difficult, even risky, to attempt an accurate estimate of the total number of deaths from the plague in a region where the number of inhabitants is itself unknown and the subject of differing estimates. All that we know, from the testimonies of witnesses, is that here and there the disease was particularly serious, with a hundred, two hundred, or even three hundred deaths per day; when at other times it only manifested itself in a few scattered cases. We also have several estimated totals: in 1796 to 1797 in Tunis 25,000 Muslims are said to have died of the plague, along with 7,000 Jews and 150 Christians, out of an estimated population of 120,000 inhabitants. The disease is believed to have killed 13,330 people in Algiers between

21 June and 6 September 1817, i.e. at least a third of the city's population.

When used with caution, these figures make it possible to make an overall estimate of the effects of the plague, at least in Tunisia. The epidemic of 1784 to 1786 killed from three to four hundred thousand people; the one from 1796 to 1797 at least a hundred thousand; and the one from 1817 to 1820 three hundred thousand. The population of Tunisia in 1784, on the eve of the first epidemic, has been estimated at two million inhabitants, then a million and a half in 1820, at the end of the third epidemic. The severity of the outbreaks and the incapacity of the population to restore its numbers had led to these disastrous figures. Held back by other negative factors, in particular economic but also health-related, like cholera, Tunisia did not regain the figure estimated for its 1784 population until 1921! The impact of the plague in the regencies of Algiers and Tripoli is more obscure: it seems to have been serious, but perhaps not as catastrophic as in Tunisia. The size of these states, their compartmentalised character, broken up as they were by their relief and their desert areas, were obstacles to the spread of the disease—the opposite of the situation in the more open and densely-populated Tunisia.

Food Shortages and Famines

A number of book-keeping sources, in particular the registers of the deylik of Algiers and records related to the management of properties belonging to the beys of Tunis, provide quantifiable facts that make it possible to reach an accurate assessment of the agrarian situation in the Maghreb, and to modify the more subjective contemporary observations. In spite of the fragmentary character of the available information on the Algerians, it can be seen that the reign of Mohammed Ben Osman (1766–1791) taken overall was a period of relative prosperity in which calamities were isolated and their effects limited. The situation worsened later, in particular during the years 1798 to 1800, when harvests were disastrous. The price of a *saâ* (weight of wheat), which was worth seven or eight francs in the years 1775–1785, rose to 28 francs in 1800; and the regency of Algiers, which usually exported wheat, was obliged to import quantities of it in 1798 and 1800. Things hardly improved after this; in

particular in 1804 when there were again food shortages, and the *saâ* went back up to twenty francs. Between 1816 and 1820, the price of the *saâ* rose as high as fifty francs (in 1816), and the dey had to send soldiers to guard the bakeries in order to limit pillaging in Algiers, Boufarik and Blidah. In 1818 the drought was so intense that the dey had to import cereals once again—and to call for public prayers to plead for rain. From 1820 on, reasonable harvests alternated with mediocre ones, never returning to a totally satisfactory level.

The agrarian circumstances in Tunisia had strong similarities with those of the regency of Algiers. One indicator, the land areas planted in crops every year, obtainable from the leasing records of the *henchirs* (rural properties of the beys) is particularly revealing in this connection. A good harvest increased the negotiable and exportable portion of the output, and made it possible to increase seed quantity and therefore extend the cultivated area. Conversely, a bad harvest reduced seed, and led to a reduction in the areas planted the following year. In the region of Mateur, in the north of Tunisia, a region devoted to cereal crops, it is recorded that in the years 1774 to 1777, 36 *mechias* (units of area that can be worked by a team of oxen) of a certain henchir were under cultivation. In 1778 to 1781, the records show only 26 *mechias* under cultivation, then 16 in 1786, dropping to 11 in 1797. Another indication of a food shortage period is the variation in the price of cereals. A *qafiz* of wheat, was worth 50 piastres in 1800, but rose to 168 in 1804, a year with a poor harvest. Without doubt the worst period was in the years 1816 to 1818, with disastrous harvests that made it necessary for the bey to import cereals in an effort to limit the catastrophe, at least in the capital. The *qafiz* of wheat went from 66 piastres on 2 October 1815 to 104 on 3 February 1816, reaching 120 piastres on 10 November 1817 and remaining at about 100 piastres until October 1820.[10] The surface area of cultivated land, which, after 1797, had begun to increase again in the *henchir* of Mateur—15 *mechias* were worked in 1801–1803, 20 in 1807, 22 in 1810 to 1815—shrank drastically again, falling back to 10 *mechias* in 1819 to 1821.

[10] Chater, *op. cit.*, 1984, p. 279.

At the end of the eighteenth century, and even more at the beginning of the nineteenth, the Maghreb suffered from the deadly combination of plague and famine. The great epidemic of 1784 to 1785 had taken place in a Maghreb that was relatively prosperous and, at least in Tunisia, well-populated. The demographic consequences of the epidemic, however traumatic for the inhabitants, were somehow absorbed, and did not hinder the momentum of the economy, as is shown in the continuation, even the increase, of commercial exchanges with the outside world. A first disturbing sign appeared, however, with the beginning of a reduction in the amount of land under cultivation, primarily because of a lack of labour force, since the plague had ravaged the countryside populations. The effects of the second epidemic, from 1796 to 1797, were less drastic, but because the populations were already weakened, the damage to both agriculture and demographics was exacerbated. The severe food shortages of 1804 were followed by a decade of relative prosperity that allowed a modest restoration both of crop farming and the economy. On the other hand, the years 1816 to 1820 were among the most catastrophic, at least in the regencies of Algiers and Tunis, as was the case in the whole western Mediterranean basin. The medieval trio described above returned in force: a succession of prolonged famines plus a severe epidemic of plague, in a context of uprisings in the interior and instability and confrontation in relations with Europe.[11]

The outcome of this period of crisis was serious. Tunisia, the only regency for which we have several quantifiable elements, lost a quarter of its 1780 population, and the land now cultivated for cereal crops represented barely more than half that of forty years earlier. Perhaps to a different degree, but as a result of the same circumstances, the other regencies had similar situations. In these conditions, what was left of the maritime and commercial activities and the Maghreb's integration into the general economic situation?

[11] Surprising as it may seem, famine neither promotes the spread of the plague nor increases its severity. Admittedly it seems only logical that a population weakened by lack of food would provide a more favourable environment for disease, but epidemiology and historical studies of the plague show that the most lethal epidemics are unrelated to the dietary situation of the victims. PANZAC, *La Peste dans l'Empire ottoman . . .* 1985, pp. 45–47.

A Marginalised Exchange Economy

Although neutral, the North African regencies suffered severe repercussions from the wars of the Revolution and the Empire, notably in their foreign trade. Unfortunately, although we have used it, the information we possess for the regency of Algiers is fragmentary; only Tunisia has provided us a satisfactory amount of reliable information.

The Weaknesses of the Algiers Regency

We lack complete trade figures for the regency of Algiers from before the French Revolution. Estimates for the year 1800 are 2.6 million francs in exports and 2.2 million in imports. The picture that emerges from this, based on figures provided for 1822 by the consul of the United States in Algiers, shows that the situation changed considerably after the restoration of peace:

– Exports, 1,474,200 francs, including:
wool shipped to Marseilles, Leghorn and Genoa, 864,000 francs
leather and hides, 432,000 francs
wax, 97,200 francs
other products, 81,000 francs

– Imports, 5,832,000 francs, from the following countries or regions:

British possessions:	2,112,000 francs, 36.2%
France:	1,200,000 francs, 20.6%
Tuscany:	1,440,000 francs, 24.7%
Piedmont-Sardinia:	384,000 francs, 6.6%
Scandinavian countries:	144,000 francs, 2.5%
Maghreb:	120,000 francs, 2%
Levant:	432,000 francs, 7.4%

The international trade of the regency, therefore, represented 7,304,200 francs—80% in imports against only 20% in exports! This disturbing imbalance was the result of an increase in the purchase of expensive products of European manufacture, or costly exotic goods, but also of the near-disappearance of the shipments of wheat that had constituted the primary staple food export in the eighteenth century. In addition, France, which had been the preponderant actor in Algerian commerce before 1792, had not recovered its former position, and its exchanges with the regency only represented a fifth of the total, behind Great Britain and Tuscany. A final observation:

more than nine-tenths of the foreign trade of the regency of Algiers was transacted with Europe, while the Ottoman Empire, the Levant and the Maghreb had become almost marginal trading partners.

Tunisian Trade Imbalance

The annual figures for Tunisia's international commercial activities, including trade with the rest of the Ottoman Empire, underwent the following fluctuations:[12]

- 1785–1787 10,055,770 francs
- 1791–1792 22,884,337 "
- 1816 8,559,677 "
- 1828–1830 13,848,892 "

A spectacular upsurge in trade occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, with the figures for international trade doubling in several years—between 1785 and 1787, and 1791 and 1792—proving that the first epidemic of the plague, from 1785 to 1786, had not stopped the growth of foreign trade for that period. We lack overall information for the following period, but the figure for 1816,[13] which is decidedly lower than pre-Revolution figures, is an indication of the problems endured by Tunisia, as much on the domestic front as in international trade. The revival of trade was a laborious affair, and the average figures for the years 1828 to 1830, although higher than those for 1785 to 1787, are still well below the figures for 1791 to 1792. The growth at the end of the eighteenth century had been cut short, and now seemed forever beyond reach. The more detailed Table below gives us the opportunity to make several further observations.

[12] CHATER, *op. cit.*, 1984, pp. 175 and 318.

[13] The lack of data for Tuscany, where the port of Leghorn is located, very likely lowers the figures for the year 1816.

Table 18: Tunisia's International Trade in 1816 and in 1828–30 (in francs)

Country	1816			1828–30		
	Total	Imports	Exports	Total	Imports	Exports
England	2,163,400	1,049,900	1,113,500	1,429,362	891,556	537,806
Two Sicilies	337,310	128,010	209,300	306,933	257,627	49,306
Spain	931,430	486,030	445,400	136,309	130,821	5,488
France	1,923,625	1,103,682	819,943	3,100,389	2,273,910	826,479
Piedmont-Sardinia	1,679,770	591,770	1,088,000	1,273,841	427,630	846,211
Tuscany				2,314,029	1,572,940	741,089
Ottoman Empire	1,524,142	583,290	940,850	5,288,029	2,381,878	2,906,151
Total	8,559,677	3,942,682	4,616,993	13,848,892	7,936,362	5,912,530

In 1816, most of Tunisia's trade was with Europe, 7,035 million francs out of a total of 8,559 million, 82.2% of the total. Trade with the rest of the Ottoman Empire, the Levant, was modest, but chiefly favoured the regency of Tunis, which exported to the Levant almost twice as much as it imported from that region. The commercial balance with Europe was slightly in favour of Tunis, with 52.3% in exports as against 47.7% imports, which harked back to the situation before the Revolution, when there had been an almost perfect balance of trade in the years 1785 to 1792.

Twelve years later, things had not improved; quite to the contrary. Indeed, the only positive aspect was the remarkable increase in trade with the Levant, which went from 1,524 million francs in 1816 to 5,288 million in the years 1828 to 1830, with the balance still in favour of Tunisia. In fact, trade between the regency and the Levant had simply returned to the levels recorded at the end of the eighteenth century: the situation was quite different with the European states. During this period, exchanges either remained steady or deteriorated. They represented 7,035 million in 1816 and 8,560 million in 1828 to 1830, but if, as with 1816, we do not take Tuscany into account, we only arrive at 6,246 million. Even more serious for the regency, the balance of trade had reached a critical threshold: Tunisian exports to European destinations fell from 3,676 million to 3,006 million, a drop of 18.2%, while imports went from 3,359 million to 5,554 million, an increase of 65.3%. In the years 1828 to1830, imports constituted 64.9% of the trade with Europe, and exports

35.1%. This worrying situation was partially compensated for by trade with the Levant, but in total, Tunisia's imports represented 57.3% of its foreign trade and exports only 42.7%. The need to compensate for this imbalance was a daunting financial problem, one to which we will return.

Table 18 shows that Tunisia's partners and their relative importance had changed since the end of the eighteenth century. In this period, with 65.6% of the total, France held the preponderant position, with Marseilles furnishing 60% of Tunisian imports and absorbing 72% of the regency's exports, way ahead of Leghorn and Genoa. By 1816, France's share had been reduced to 22.5% of Tunisia's trade, after England, at 25.3%, which had profited from the period of the wars to become established in Tunisia, as had Spain. Piedmont-Sardinia, with Genoa serving as middleman, was also firmly present. If the figures from 1816 show that the French had not yet recovered the position they occupied in the 1780s, the facts for 1828 to 1830 demonstrate that this decline, which could have been considered temporary, now seemed to be firmly established. With 22.4% of the Tunisian trade, it appeared that France was no longer able to recapture its former position, or perhaps did not seek to. In the years from 1786 to 1790, Marseilles' total trade was 230 million francs, of which 7.9 million, or 3.4%, was from exchanges with Tunisia. In the years 1826 to 1830, Marseilles' commercial activity had only just returned to the level it had reached forty years earlier, 232 million; but with 3.1 million francs, Tunisia represented no more than 1.3% of this trade. This weakness was not the result of foreign competition. English trade, so tenacious, and in full development in other Mediterranean ports, dropped by 40% in Tunisia between 1816 and 1828–30, that of Piedmont-Sardinia by 24%, and of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, by almost 10%; and Spain's trade with Tunisia collapsed completely, falling from 931,430 francs to 136,309 francs, a decline of six-sevenths in twelve years. The general mediocrity of Tunisia's trade with Europe cannot be attributed to indifference on the part of Europe, but was rather the result of weaknesses and economic inadequacies within the regency. Details enabling us to establish the breakdown of trade for the year 1829, although sometimes only approximate, provide a clear picture of the main features of Tunisian foreign trade in this period:[14]

[14] CHATER, *op. cit.*, 1984, pp. 318–320.

– Exports:	4,807,366 francs	
oil:	1,980 francs	
wheat:	20,648 francs	(0.4%)
dates:	17,716 francs	
wool:	602,860 francs	(12.5%)
leather and hides:	454,304 francs	(9.5%)
tuna:	244,392 francs	
fezes:	2,605,013 francs	(54.2%)
woollen cloth:	301,693 francs	(6.3%)
miscellaneous:	449,805 francs	
– Imports:	8,078,592 francs	
grain and flours:	480,343 francs	(5.9%)
Spanish wool:	719,875 francs	(8.9%)
vermilion:	310,925 francs	(3.8%)
raw silk:	957,821 francs	(11.9%)
spun cotton:	30,435 francs	(0.4%)
wood:	248,587 francs	(3.1%)
fabrics, material, haberdashery:	1,045,560 francs	(12.9%)
misc. manufactured goods:	3,083,991 francs	(38.2%)
tropical goods (pepper, sugar, coffee):	698,355 francs	(8.6%)
wine and spirits:	163,680 francs	
jewellery and coins:	339,220 francs	(4.2%)

The difference between imports and exports was particularly marked that year: 8,078,592 francs against 4,807,366, imports almost twice the value of the exports. This gap is chiefly due to the very poor harvest of olive oil, which nearly brought an end to all sales outside the country. If we take between one and two million francs as the average annual figure for oil exports, we can see that in spite of this trade, exports remained way below imports. Besides oil, the bulk of Tunisian sales consisted of fezes and goods derived from livestock farming: wool, leather and hides, and rather-rough quality woollen fabrics bound for the Levant.

A glance at the imports reveals that grain and flours were purchased outside the country, an indication of the decline in the production of local cereals. The cost of the raw materials used in the manufacture of fezes—Spanish wool and vermilion—added up to 1,030,800 francs, 12.7% of the imports. Also of note is the existence of a significant silk industry that required almost a million francs worth of raw material. These figures show that Tunisian industry definitely remained important; however, more than half of the imports now involved manufactured goods—admittedly, some fabrics, but especially an infinite variety of objects made in Europe, which were

highly prized by the family of the bey and his circle. The Ben Dhiaf chronicle gives the sums spent on building, improving and decorating the palaces, as well as on donations and gifts—clocks, racehorses, jewellery, and valuable weapons—for the princes and favourites of the bey. A study of the three principal products of the Maghreb provides a better idea of trends and the increasing imbalance in trade.

North African Production Difficulties

Cereals

Before the Revolutionary wars, ships arriving in Marseilles loaded with cereals—mainly wheat, with occasional cargoes of barley—represented almost half of the ships coming from the Maghreb. Between 1775 and 1789, 690 cereal-carrying vessels were registered, as compared with only 26 between 1815 and 1829! Among the 26, fifteen were from the regency of Algiers, including fourteen from Bona, seven from Tunisia and four from Tripolitania. A collapse of this magnitude was the result of a combination of two circumstances; the first originating in the Maghreb, and the second from outside. The considerable reduction in the area in wheat cultivation, mentioned above, was one of the results of the unrest of the population and the lack of labour caused by the ravages of the plague. The resulting shortfall in the harvests was periodically aggravated by poor climatic conditions like those of 1816 to 1820. At a time when the crops were already insufficient to feed the reduced population and provide the necessary portion for the next sowing, it was impossible to export; and, as we have seen, the local producers were sometimes even forced to import wheat.

The second cause of the decline in sales of North African wheat in Europe was a new and very significant source of competition from southern Russia. This 'New Russia', with a surface area of around 250,000 square miles, bordering on the Black Sea, its population growing from 200,000 inhabitants in 1789 to two million by 1823, underwent spectacular economic expansion during this period.[15] The fertility of the land favoured the development of wheat cultivation,

[15] HERLIHY, "Russian Grains . . .," 1963, p. 121.

and the beginning of a considerable flow of exports to the Mediterranean, promoted by the restoration of peace in 1814 and the disastrous harvests in Europe between 1816 and 1820. The Russian ports, in particular Odessa, exported 2,242,800 hectolitres of wheat in 1816, and 2,520,000 in 1817, of which almost a quarter was unloaded in Leghorn. Imports of Russian wheat to Marseilles were just as high: for example, records show 60 ships from Odessa in 1825, as many as from the Maghreb forty years earlier. Russian wheat replaced that from North Africa at the moment when the Maghreb, as a result of internal natural and human difficulties, was incapable of providing large and relatively regular shipments of cereals. Added to this, at least for France, was a serious dispute over payments for previous Algerian shipments, which contributed to driving away a previously essential supplier.

Olive Oil

A typically Mediterranean product, olive oil had three main uses: food, soap-making and also lighting. Marseilles was the principal market for oil in this period, absorbing most of the commercial output in the Mediterranean basin.[16] This particular product will serve as the basis for our examination of North African production and commercial activities.[17] The North African olive oil production, according to the statistics from Marseilles, had three characteristics: it consisted only of oil for industrial purposes, with half the monetary value of table oil; it originated almost exclusively in Tunisia; and the harvests varied considerably from year to year. Thus Marseilles received 2,862 milleroles (one millerole is the equivalent of 64 litres) of North African oil in 1816, 80,662 in 1817, and 21,666 in 1818. In order to eliminate such drastic fluctuations we have elected to use two decades that were also periods of peace: 1783 to 1792, and 1815 to 1824.

In the decade before the wars of the Revolution, Marseilles received 401,437 milleroles of oil from the Maghreb, 15.5% of the total, com-

[16] The second was unquestionably Leghorn, which received the equivalent of a quarter of all the shipments of olive oil sent to Marseilles in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Valensi, *op. cit.*, 1977, p. 341.

[17] This presentation is based on the work of Boulanger, *Marseille, marché international de l'huile d'olive*, 1996.

ing behind the Levant, at 19.5% and especially Italy, at 56.2%. Shipments during the years from 1793 to 1814 were apparently very irregular: only 11,924 milleroles in nine years, from 1793 to 1801, then 203,122 from 1802 to 1804, which corresponded to the short period of the Peace of Amiens; and finally, 56,445 milleroles for the decade of the Empire wars, from 1805 to 1814. The restoration of peace made the return to normal trade possible, but during the decade from 1815 to 1824, Marseilles received only 318,838 milleroles of oil from the Maghreb, which represented a 20.6% drop compared to the decade between 1783 and 1792. This decline, however significant, was in no way comparable to the near-disappearance of that other export wheat, although it reflected a worrying situation. But demand from Marseilles was all the higher for lack of any new competition, and also because since 1820, Levantine oil production had decreased following the uprising of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the cultivation of wheat, an annual crop that required seeds and a considerable workforce throughout the year, the production of oil is based on sturdy trees which required little labour except at harvest-time, which in any case could cover a period of several months. The reduction noted here points to a deterioration of the olive groves, and a shortage of workers at the time of the harvests due to the epidemics of plague and rebellions among the tribes of the Sahel who usually ensured labour for the harvest.

Fezes

Although agricultural products and livestock farming provided the bulk of the domestic and international trade of the countries of the Maghreb, they were not the only commodities. In the first part of this study we mentioned craft goods that figured in the cargoes destined for overseas clients. The most enduring and important of these was certainly the fez made in Tunis. Because of the number of people involved, the complexity of the successive tasks associated with its manufacture, the necessary raw materials, the size of the production and the profits gained, the fez industry had a special place in the activity of the Maghreb craftsmen.[18] Another particular feature

[18] Valensi, "Islam et capitalisme . . .", 1969.

of the product involves the raw materials used in making it, the wool imported from Spain, and the vermilion dye from Portugal. Only the workmanship, of very high quality, was Tunisian; craftsmen who through their craftsmanship and techniques added considerably to the value of the product. Looking again at the figures for foreign trade in 1829, we find that a million francs were spent on imported raw materials, and 2.6 million received for the exported hats. Adding local sales to these figures, we can estimate the value of fezes produced to have been at least three million francs, or a local profit of around two million francs. Much appreciated and in considerable demand in the Levant, their primary outlet, the fezes were exported in huge quantities, constituting four-fifths of Tunisian exports to 'Turkey' in 1820.

This prosperous industry had to contend with serious obstacles however. Like all North African imports, the wool and vermilion could only reach their final destination after a detour via Marseilles or Leghorn, and on European ships, which immediately increased their cost considerably. It was not until the decade 1805 to 1814 that several North African merchantmen were able to go to Spain and Portugal to acquire these products. But there were more serious problems. In the face of the success of the Fez, French manufacturers, beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century, and then the Italians early in the following century, also threw themselves into this type of production, giving rise to an increasingly intense competition with Tunisians. The Tunisians relied on the quality of their product, their ability to adapt to demands, and also the fidelity of a clientele that was resistant to change. They managed to preserve their position in the Levant, in particular during the period of the Revolution and the Empire, but experienced great difficulty in holding their own when the European manufacturers returned in full force after 1815. It is very hard to evaluate the production of Tunisian fezes, and even harder to determine how many were exported. The figures used here are estimates rather than hard facts, but the picture they present is certainly close to reality. In the 1780s, the production of Tunisian fezes must have been around 1,200,000 units, and the French production, located in Marseilles and in Orleans, around 720,000–960,000. In the 1820s, the Tunis saw its annual output drop to 720,000–840,000 units, while the output of the combined French workshops was kept to the level of the 1780s. Prato

in particular, a little Tuscan village, launched its own fez-manufacturing operation in turn, flooding the market with as many hats as France or Tunisia. Competition was severe between the makers of European fezes, perhaps of inferior quality but certainly cheaper, and the Tunisian manufacturers, whose product was clearly better made but more expensive. In spite of their loyalty, Levantine clients were hard put to to resist the less expensive hats. The situation worsened in the following years, as the French consul, Mathieu de Lesseps, indicated in the beginning of 1830:

> The manufacturers [of fezes], few and ruined, sell in advance their putative products, that have lost their former standing in the Levant because of declining quality and the European imitations. One by one they go bankrupt, because of these forced sales, which exorbitant and usurious interest on money have made necessary, swallowing up products, costs and profits. The decline of this important export article is seriously damaging the trade in importation of Spanish wool, which has diminished considerably.[19]

Through these three examples—and there are others[20]—one can grasp the enormity of the threat hanging over not only international trade, but also the entire economy of the North African regencies. European competition was now in a position to triumph, whether in industrial goods like fezes or in agricultural products like wheat. It could also influence prices of other commodities that it also needed, as can be seen in the changes in the price of Tunisian oil, which, whatever the fluctuations in the harvests, continued to fall, 50 per cent between 1820 and 1830. The result, as we know, was a drop in the quantity and especially in the value of Tunisian exports at the same time that imports were continuing to rise.

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[19] Quoted in Cherif, "*Expansion européenne en Tunisie . . .*", 1970.

[20] Other widely exported Maghrebi products, wool and sheepskins, were also subjected to Russian competition. In the "Nouvelle Russie" 9,000 head of sheep were recorded in 1806, and 3,700,000 in 1837, most of them merinos. Herlihy, *op. cit.*, 1963, p. 48.

A Disturbing Monetary Depreciation

By chance we possess useful information concerning the monetary systems of all three regencies. The fact that they were different in character makes a comparison between them all the more instructive. It is important to remember that in the Maghreb, as throughout the Ottoman Empire, two currencies circulated freely: coins struck in the different imperial mints, in the capital as well as in the provinces, including those minted in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli; and foreign currencies, notably Spanish silver coins, piastres known as Mexican, strong or douro, Austrian thalers bearing the image of the Empress Maria-Theresa, and gold coins like the Venetian sequin. Of course, these currencies experienced fluctuations in relation to one other, and underwent adjustments according to their weight and metal content on the one hand, and the economic and political situation on the other. One key element was however the remarkable stability of the European currencies, which served as a kind of standard for measuring fluctuations in the North African currencies.

We know the rate of exchange fixed by the deylik in Algiers for the foreign currencies circulating abundantly there.[21] It was based on the Mexican piastre and its value in *pataque-chiques* or *ryâl dirhâm sghâr*. From the middle of the eighteenth century until 1815, the douro had been worth five *pataques*; it rose to six in 1816, then eight and a quarter in 1822, and nine and a quarter in 1823; it dropped down to nine pataques again in 1829, ending at nine and three-fifths in 1830 on the eve of the French conquest. In the case of Tunis, we know the weight and metal content of the coins struck in the local mint. To illustrate our point we have chosen to examine a series of silver riyâls.[22] In 1782, the riyâl weighed 14.75 grammes, with a silver content of 39%, i.e. 5.8g of pure silver. In 1794, there was a new minting and although the weight remained high, 15.2g, the silver content was reduced to 34%, or 5.2g of silver. The successive mintings of 1807 and 1815 retained these proportions but the new coin struck in 1817 still weighing a little over 15g, had its silver content decreases to 30%, or 4.6g of silver. Finally, in 1827,

[21] Merouche, "*Les fluctuations de la monnaie dans l'Algérie ottomane*", 1996.
[22] Fenina, *Les monnaies de la régence de Tunis*, 1993.

the weight of the riyâl was reduced to 11.4g and a silver content of 28.6%, or 3.3g of silver.

Tripolitan merchant Hassan Al-Faqih recorded in his chronicle the rate of exchange of the many types of currency commonly in use for trade in his city.[23] Three series of coins, which we can only trace from 1805 to 1815, were legal tender: the Mexican silver piastre; the *bunduqi*, the Venetian sequin; and the *mahbûb masrî*, a gold coin minted in Egypt. The exchange rate of these currencies was given in *paras*, an Egyptian money of account that was also in use in a large part of the Ottoman Empire. On the First of October 1805, the Mexican piastre or douro was worth 145 *paras*; 185 in 1808, 240 in 1810, remained at 310 *paras* from 1811 to 1813, reaching 400 *paras* on the First of April 1815. The *bunduqi* and the *mahbûb masrî* followed a similar pattern, which saw the *bunduqi* rise from 360 *paras* to 900, and the *mahbûb masrî* from 180 to 500 in the same period. By converting this information into indices, we can compare the changes in the different currencies.

Table 19: Value of Currencies in the Maghreb (in indices percentage)

Date	Algiers	Tunis	Tripoli
1782	100	100	
1794		90	
1805			100
1808			80
1813		90	53
1815		90	36
1816	83		
1817		79	
1822	61		
1823	54		
1827		57	
1829	56		
1830	52		

[23] Hassan-Al-Faqih Hassan, *op. cit.*, 1984.

The currencies of Algiers and Tunis evolved along parallel lines, and in a similar pattern. The difficult years from 1816 to 1818 led to a drop in value of about 20% in relation to the European currencies, which were perfectly stable during this period. This weakness was exacerbated in the 1820s, stabilising in around 1830 at a level that was lower by half than the level in the decade beginning in 1800. The changes in the Tripolitan currency came earlier, starting in 1805, and were also more serious, as there was an almost two-thirds loss in value by 1815, although we lack the information that would enable us to follow this trend beyond that year. These figures indicate that Tripoli's economy was more fragile than those of its neighbours, and also more vulnerable because of internal problems experienced by that regency at the time. This monetary depreciation, which reflected the various economic difficulties the North African states were undergoing during this period, necessarily called for state intervention. The successive monetary adjustments the leaders of the three regencies were forced to implement (by striking new currency or adjusting the rates of exchange) constituted but one form of their action in the economic realm.

The Reactions of the Regencies

Demographic decline, falling production, destabilised foreign trade, monetary depreciation, internal rebellions, tensions with Europe: from 1815 on, the general situation of the regencies continued to deteriorate. The earnings of the inhabitants and, even more, the resources of the North African states, depended chiefly on peace within the country, economic prosperity, and a satisfactory level of trade. In the hope of re-establishing positions that were already sorely compromised the North African leaders took firm action in what they considered to be priority areas.

First Attempts at a Sanitary Policy

Devastated for centuries by epidemics of the plague, the Muslims of the Maghreb, like their co-religionists in the rest of the Ottoman Empire, endured their own personal fate with resignation and with compassion and charity towards others, without necessarily attempt-

ing to escape the divine will. Beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century, however, following the example of a segment of the Ottoman Muslim elite, in particular certain Turkish pashas, the Tunisian beys tried to protect their territories from the plague by following the European methods of quarantine. In the 1750s, travellers reported that Chikly islet, located in the Lake of Tunis, was used as a kind of quarantine station. Later, the island of La Galite off Tabarka was set apart for the same purpose: to subject ships suspected of coming from plague-infested regions to an observation period, and to prevent those aboard from disembarking in areas that were as yet unaffected. These efforts, clumsy, incomplete, and poorly respected as they were, did not succeed; as born out by the terrible epidemics that ravaged the regency at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. It would not be until the 1830s that more efficient North African sanitary administrations would be established, with the help of the presence of Europeans.

There are records of similar attempts by Yussef Pasha of Tripoli, who was also anxious to protect his states from the plague. In 1818, at the height of the epidemic that was ravaging Tunisia, he established a sanitary cordon along their common border, consisting of a line of military posts set up to check on travellers and prevent any who were suspected of being infected from entering the regency. These measures did not prevent the disease from reaching the regency, any more, indeed, than they would in 1826.

Territorial Expansion

If the *odjak* of Algiers already had considerable difficulty in maintaining its authority over the vast territory that was theoretically under its control, and the bey of Tunis seems to have limited his ambitions to protecting himself from his neighbours, the situation was completely different for the pasha of Tripoli. From 1811 on, the authority of the Karamânlis was firmly re-established all along the coastal zone from Tripoli to Bengazi, as well as in the near interior, including the rich oasis of Ghadames. Yussuf then embarked on a veritable policy of penetration into the interior of the northern part of Africa. In 1815, an armed expedition seized the oasis of Sîwah, located on the borders of Egypt in a strategic and trading position of prime importance. Yussuf sought to penetrate into deepest Africa,

with his eyes in particular on the Fezzan, whose capital, Murzuk, was an essential cross-roads of caravan trails leading to Ouadaï, Bornu, Kano, Sokoto, and the faraway and legendary Timbuktu on the Niger.

The kingdom of the Fezzan, which had been ruled for generations by a local dynasty, was in theory a vassal of the pasha of Tripoli, and as a result, paid him a symbolic tribute. Rather than taking the risk of sending a Tripolitan army into the desert, Yussuf made use of Arab tribes, investing their leaders with an official authority that it was then up to them to establish for themselves. In this way, al-Mukkanî captured Murzuk, killed all the members of the previous dynasty, and became the official governor of the country, paying a substantial tribute, while promoting the movements of caravans from Tropical Africa to Tripoli. Another Arab chieftain, el-Kânemi, became the strongman of Bornu and attempted to extend his authority to the area around Lake Chad, while recognizing, in a more or less formal manner, the authority of the pasha of Tripoli. Although it was a difficult and risky enterprise in these desert expanses, Tripoli had managed, at least theoretically, by around 1820 to establish its authority over the central part of the Sahara south of the pashalik.

The data we have for the 1820s, however approximate, provides an indication of the increase in the proportion of African products exported by the regency. The figures show the African portion to have been around 2.3 to 2.5 million francs, of which two-thirds—slaves, gold-dust, ivory and ostrich feathers—came from beyond the Sahara, while imports represented an average of between 2.8 and three million francs. From this time on, therefore, there was a negative difference of half a million francs, which was a lot for a state which, all things considered, was of limited size and importance. Added to this was the fact that although imports were more stable, even increasing, exports were subject to considerable fluctuations. It would take only one caravan being reduced in size, delayed, even cancelled, for the shipments from Tripoli to collapse; just as the local products—livestock, wool and cereals—were at the mercy of climatic conditions. As it was very difficult for the pasha to subject the small and also highly dispersed population to increased taxation, only an increase in trans-Saharan traffic, as far as he could control it, could provide him with the necessary financial resources.

An Invasive Fiscal Policy

After 1815, the pasha of Tripoli, the dey of Algiers, and also the bey of Tunis, adopted, to different degrees but on similar terms, fiscal policies that were designed in principle to shore up financial situations that were becoming more and more problematical.[24] Once again the case of Tunisia, which is the best known, will serve to illustrate these practices. Established, or rather reorganised, at the end of the seventeenth century, on a basis that had not been modified since, the taxes imposed on the subjects of the bey were numerous, sometimes obscure, and of highly uneven yield. The principal taxes were as follows:

- the *achour*, the local version of the *zakkat*, the legal tithe for the care of the poor, deducted for the benefit of the sovereign, was imposed on farming land; ten piastres per mechia, very heavy and represented on average the equivalent of a fifth of the harvests;
- the *kânoun* was paid by the arboriculturists, at the rate of an eighth of a piastre per olive tree, which placed the tree-growers at a considerable advantage over the farmers;
- the *mejba*, initially intended for the upkeep of the Turkish militia, imposed primarily on tribes that were exempted from other taxes;
- breeders of livestock paid a contribution in hides and fleeces;
- the *mahsûlâts* were taxes on consumption applied to products brought to the markets;
- the customs duties on merchandise, import and export;
- the *djiziye*, a per capita tax paid individually by non-Muslims, in this case Jews.

Some of these taxes were farmed out, notably the *mahsûlâts*, the contribution of the breeders and the customs duties. Hammuda Bey had inaugurated the principle of the *ittifâk*, the sale of the position of *kaïd*: in return for their investment, the holders of these titles were authorised to collect special taxes from their constituents, among which,

[24] At the time of the uprising of the Greeks of the Empire, the Ottoman Sultan called for military—in fact, naval—assistance from the regencies, who responded positively. Raising and equipping the naval divisions that were sent to the Levant was very costly and put a strain on budgets that were already stretched.

one of the heaviest and most arbitrary was the *khtiya*. This was a fine that took far more account of the resources of the offender than of the gravity of his infraction.

Table 20: Income of the Beylik of Tunis (1815–1818) (in Tunisian piastres)

Regular income	1815		1816		1817		1818	
	Sum	%	sum	%	sum	%	Sum	%
Corsairs	0	0	428,725	24.5	85,255	3.6	17,500	1.2
Customs	110,408	12.9	150,217	8.6	113,706	4.8	130,083	9.3
Teskeres	0	0	0	0	1,123,274	47	112,787	8.1
Urban revenues	142,185	16.6	179,861	10.3	169,388	7.1	132,228	9.4
Rural revenues	600,617	70.3	982,789	56.2	799,373	33.4	962,888	68.7
Miscellaneous	1,408	0.2	7,552	0.4	101,450	4.1	45,318	3.3
Total	854,618	100	1,749,144	100	2,392,446	100	1,400,804	100
Fiscal expedients	160,595		358,686		270,000		180,000	
Real income	**1,015,213**		**2,107,830**		**2,662,446**		**1,580,804**	

The Table above shows the income of the beylik over a four-year period that was a critical time for Tunisia. Urban income consisted primarily of the sums provided by the *mahsûlâts*, the *djiziye*, and the taxes on the craft industry. Rural income was derived primarily from the *mejba*, the *achour*, the *kânoun*, and the tax imposed on livestock breeders. Urban or rural, these were well-established resources in the traditional economy of Tunisia, which implies a relative regularity, but also a certain inertia. On the other hand, the three other categories—customs duties, the sale of export licenses (*teskérés*), and the corsair war—were based on maritime activity, and were turned towards the exterior. They were therefore much more speculative, and subject to a great irregularity in yield. We will return later to the last category, the different fiscal expedients.

For the year 1815, most of the regular income of the beylik, 77.1%, came from taxes imposed on the traditional activities of Tunisia, urban and especially rural, which alone provided 62.3% of the revenues available to the government of the bey. The 'maritime' resources made up 22.9% of the total, just from customs duties and sales of export licenses, as we do not know the proceeds from privateering, which must have been considerable in this year of great corsair activity. The year 1816 was a prosperous one, the regular

income was double that of 1815. Urban income rose by 26.5% and revenues from the countryside went up by 63.6%! In that year the regency underwent a heavy increase in fiscal pressure combined with a no less spectacular leap in maritime earnings, which represented a third of all takings. Customs taxes went from 110,408 piastres to 150,217, demonstrating the return to foreign trade after the restoration of peace, and the 428,725 piastres shown against corsair activities was in fact the result of the freeing of captives, for a fee, after the passage of Lord Exmouth's fleet. The year 1817 was better still, with a total of 2,392,740 piastres. The fiscal pressure of 1816 could not be maintained, however, and the income from the cities, and even more from the countryside, diminished, accounting for less than half of the income of that year, or 44.7%. Although the earnings from corsair activities dropped considerably, along with the income from customs duties, the sale of export licenses (teskeres), due to a record harvest of olive oil, reached the exceptional total of 1,123,568 piastres, more than the total income in 1815 and exceeding the year's income from farming! In stark contrast, 1818 was disastrous, with total resources at barely over half of those from the preceding year. Privateering, which was now moribund, no longer brought in much, the mediocre olive-oil harvest yielded only a tenth of the previous year's gain from export licenses, leading to a drop in foreign trade, and therefore in customs duties, to a total of only 260,417 piastres against 1,322,529 in 1817! The 22% drop in urban revenue is a clear reflection of the demographic regression and the impoverishment of the population following the plague of 1817–1818. In order to compensate for these losses in revenue, the government again increased its fiscal pressure on the rural areas, where income was climbing back up towards the yield of a million piastres as in 1816, before the epidemic.

In spite of the considerable progress made by the Tunisian state in raising income, it was insufficient to cover expenses. In order to make up for the deficit, the government tried different methods. Monetary manipulations like those of 1817, which reduced by 10% the content in precious metals of the currencies of the regency,[25] and

[25] The information concerning revenues presented in Table 20 was presented in standard piastres, which means that the figures for 1818 were in fact 10% lower in value in comparison to those of the previous years; this would indicate that the the collapse of 1818, when the figures are compared with those of 1817, was even more severe.

also what one author has called 'fiscal expedients'. This expression covers the more or less arbitrary confiscations, the sale of goods belonging to the beylik, the use of treasury reserves, the more or less justifiable collection of outstanding debts, etc. This policy, which was developed especially after 1815—efficacious in the short term as demonstrated in the 1816 results (nearly 360,000 piastres)—reached its limit rapidly, inexorably falling off in the following years, falling from 270,000 piastres in 1817 to 180,000 in 1818, and down to 140,000 in 1819.

Unfortunately we have no information concerning the Tunisian budget for the following years, but what we do know of the policies of the bey indicates that the situation can only have worsened. Expenditure remained at a high level, increased periodically by catastrophes like the shipwreck of most of the Tunisian fleet near Hamman Lif in 1821, which resulted in the deaths of 1,500 sailors.[26] The replacement of the ships that had been destroyed cost several million piastres, half a million of which went into the construction of a new frigate, which was built in Marseilles in 1822. The bey Mahmoud, in an effort to increase his revenues, undertook a revision of the fiscal system unchanged for over a century. Since it was hardly possible to increase the high *achour* tax on worked land, which had already been raised, it was the *kânoun*, tax on olive trees that was increased, then replaced in 1819 by a much heavier *achour*. And in particular, in the same year, the sale of teskeres, or export licenses, was abolished and the bey took over the monopoly, following the model set up in Egypt by Mohammed-Ali.

Obliged to reimburse the European exporters for the value of the unused export licenses because of poor harvests, the bey became the sole middleman in the sale of olive oil, now the principal exportable product of the regency and therefore its primary source of revenue. By means of the *achour* paid in kind, as well as purchases of oil from the producers at government-controlled prices at the time of the pressing of the olives (*mouchtara*), the bey built up significant stocks of olive oil that he sold to European merchants. In 1824, still short of funds, the bey introduced another money-making method: the *slam*. This was an anticipated sale, at a low price, against the future

[26] Four frigates, two corvettes and two brigs were destroyed.

harvest. The harvest of 1826 was excellent, which resulted in a good deal for the bey, but the following harvests were poor or mediocre, especially that of 1828. Having sold 120,000 metars of olive oil at seven piastres a metar in the beginning of 1828, he was forced to reimburse his creditors at 12 piastres—the market rate in Marseilles from November 1828 to March 1829—at a loss of two million francs, a situation which worsened the following year for the same reasons.

At the end of the 1820's, the bey of Tunis, like the pasha of Tripoli, was at the mercy of his European creditors. In spite of the increase in his income, chiefly from traffic in slaves, his growing expenditure led him to borrow large sums from the Europeans, sums which he was unable to repay.

Finally, we should mention here the thorny problem of the Bacri debt, which had embittered Franco-Algerian relations since the time of the Directoire. From 1793 to 1798, the firm of Bacri and Busnach (already described in Chapter VIII) supplied Algerian wheat to the southern departments of France, and then to the French armies in Italy and Egypt. Taking into account the financial difficulties of the Directoire, the dey had advanced the sum of 1,250,000 francs without interest to the Directoire to enable it to pay for a part of its purchases. The Bacri debt was eventually paid by the French government, first under the Consulate and then in the early years of the Restoration, thanks to the self-interested intervention of Talleyrand, but the money lent by the dey was always forgotten. Therefore, a difficult financial dispute was now worsening the unequal economic relations between France and Algeria, in a diplomatic climate of mistrust and misunderstanding.

EPILOGUE

During the period from 1795 to 1815, the regencies demonstrated their presence in the Mediterranean as rarely before. They began by reactivating the corsair war with a fervour reminiscent of the seventeenth century, but it was soon abandoned in favour of a new activity, maritime transport with and serving Europe, thereby promoting the development of an international North African trade. This return to maritime activity, occurring at a moment that was particularly propitious, during the wars of the First Empire, not only benefitted the maritime and urban society of the regencies, but was also able to make its influence felt in the hinterland, whose production was redirected little by little towards satisfying demands from overseas. This boom was cut short by the return in force of the Europeans, who were bent not only on appropriating the activities now being carried out by the Maghrebi, but also on establishing themselves permanently in North Africa. The years 1815 to 1818, therefore, constituted a major transition period for the Ottoman Maghreb, which was now almost totally forbidden to use the sea, for the first time in three centuries. Its destiny, which until that time had been maritime, was sealed.

Deprived of the revenue furnished by maritime activities, the leaders of the regencies now sought, with little success, to compensate for the considerable reduction in their income by means of an intensive exploitation of the interior of their territories, even to the point of attempting to extend their rule geographically. During the two decades of maritime prosperity, the material Europeanisation of the regencies, admittedly already begun in the previous century, had increased considerably. Ships, arms, jewellery, construction materials, objects of every kind, were added to the list of traditional imports like fabrics and colonial products. Europe was now the principal—even favoured—trading partner, whose currencies and contractual practices were in regular use. For the Maghreb, Europe had become a fascinating model, while still remaining the traditional enemy.

Now in debt, weakened, marginalised, victims of natural disasters and unexpected competition, prey to political instability and troubles in their interior, the Maghrebi states proved incapable of standing

up to the pressure from the West, or of adapting to the new conditions. In fact, through a series of circumstances that they were far from being able to master, and also because of their own risky behaviour, sometimes even irresponsible, the masters of the North African regencies found themselves at the end of the 1820s in situations of growing economic and political dependence on the European powers. The European merchants, money-lenders and ship captains all benefitted from the unfailing support of their respective consuls, who did not hesitate to request, and obtain, the dispatching of warships to enforce the claims, justified or not, of their nationals.

Crises and tensions continued to multiply, but unlike the previous centuries, their outcome was very different now. The dey of Algiers, exasperated by the contempt he had encountered when requesting payment for money owed him, created repeated incidents with the French consul, leading to the famous fly-swatter episode of 29 April 1827. This altercation led to consul Deval's return to France and the dispatch of a French naval division to demand an apology. The refusal of the dey meant the establishment of a maritime blockade against Algiers beginning on 19 June 1827. In Tripoli, the French consul, considering that he had been dishonoured by the pasha's attitude towards him at the time of a dispute with the English consul, quit the regency on 5 September 1829. This was the period in which rumours were circulating about an alliance being formed between France and the Egypt of Mohammed-Ali to conquer the whole Maghreb, causing extreme anxiety amongst the North African leaders.

Emboldened by the weakness of the regencies, some of the lesser powers did not hesitate to demonstrate a sometimes excessive dissatisfaction, arrogantly demanding compensation on pretexts which often barely concealed their other ambitions. In 1828, Filippi, the consul of Piedmont-Sardinia in Tunis, considering that the Sardinian flag had been 'insulted' by the bey, arranged for a Sardinian naval demonstration along the Tunisian coast. He repeated this exercise in 1830, complaining of 'new humiliations against Sardinian citizens' and 'violations' of the Tuniso-Sardinian treaties. Surprised, the Tunisian government demanded an explanation from Turin, that responded by sending likewise a naval division, with its commander under orders to set up a blockade if necessary. The Sardinian admiral, on his arrival off the coast of Tunis on 18 May, saw most of his demands

met, thanks to the intervention of the English consul.[1] In fact, the imminent possibility of a French expedition against Algiers had stirred up similar ambitions on the part of the Sardinians towards Tunisia, and the purpose of their expedition had been to test the waters and evaluate the possible attitude of the different parties. It was because England was resolutely opposed to this prospect that the English consul stepped in as mediator, in order to remove any pretext for a Sardinian intervention.

The French army, which had departed on 25 May 1830, landed on the beach of Sidi Ferruch on 16 June and accepted the surrender of Algiers on 5 July. On the First of August, the French frigate *La Bellone* brought to Tunis an envoy extraordinary, the Count de La Rochefoucauld; while a French squadron under the command of rear admiral de Rosamel arrived off Tripoli on 8 August. That same day, the bey of Tunis, followed on 11 August by the pasha of Tripoli, signed new treaties with France. The two very brief documents, with only ten articles each, were very similar in content. The ban against all privateering was reiterated, as was the interdiction against the enslavement of Christians and the exaction of any tribute from the European states. The European states were to be free to establish consulates, and their nationals would be allowed to import and export any type of merchandise without hindrance. Furthermore, from now on the bey or the pasha would be forbidden to establish any sort of economic monopoly. The document concerning Tripoli also provided for a letter of apology from the pasha to the king in connection with the French consul Rousseau, 800,000 francs of compensation to be paid in two instalments, and information concerning the naval and land forces of the regency. The treaty with Tunis stipulated in addition that France would benefit from exclusive rights to coral fishing in the Tabarka region, and be assigned a plot of land for the erection of a monument to Saint Louis, who had died while laying siege to Tunis. With these texts, things were now very different from the numerous peace and trade treaties signed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between the European states and the Barbary regencies under terms of equality and reciprocity that in

[1] This was chiefly a matter of compensation for Sardinian merchants, who had been deprived of shipments of olive oil because of poor harvests in the Maghreb.

fact had given the 'better deal' to the North African states. The treaties of 1830 were the first of the lopsided treaties that the European powers—thanks to their naval power—would impose on the states of Africa and Asia right throughout the nineteenth century.

APPENDIX

Treaties signed between the Maghreb and the West (1605–1830)

Year	Algiers	Tunis	Tripoli
1605		France	
1617	Netherlands		
1622	Netherlands	Netherlands	
	England		
1626	Netherlands	Netherlands	
1628	France		
1640	France		
1658			**England**
1660	England		
1662	England	England	England
	Netherlands	Netherlands	
1665		France	
1666	France		
1668	England		
1672		France	
1673	England		
1676			England
1679	Netherlands		
1681			**France**
1682	England		
1683			**Netherlands**
1684	France		
1685		France	France
1686	England	England	
1689	France		
1693			France
1699	England	France	
1703	Netherlands		Netherlands
1704		**Netherlands**	
1708		Netherlands	
1710		France	
1712	Netherlands		Netherlands
1713		France	
	Netherlands		
1716		England	England
1719	France		
1720		France	France

(*cont.*)

Year	Algiers	Tunis	Tripoli
1725		**Austria**	
1726	Netherlands		**Austria**
1727	**Austria**		
1728		Netherlands	Netherlands
	France		
1729	**Sweden**		France
1730			England
1731	Netherlands		
1736		**Sweden**	
1741		**Netherlands**	**Naples**
	Sweden		
1742		France	
1743		France	
1748		Austria	
1749			
1750			
1751	**Denmark**	England	England
	Denmark	**Denmark**	
1752			France
1754			England
	Sweden		
1757	Netherlands		
1758		Austria	
1760	Netherlands	Netherlands	
1761			England
1762	England	England	
1764	France	**Venice**	
	Venice		
1765		France	**Venice**
1766			Venice
1768	Netherlands	France	
1770		France	
1772	Denmark		
1774			France
1780			France
1781		France	
1784		Austria	**Spain**
1785			Naples
1790	France		
1791		**Spain**	
1792		**Venice**	
1794	Netherlands		
1795	**USA**	France	Spain

(cont.)

Year	Algiers	Tunis	Tripoli
1796			**USA**
1797		**USA**	Denmark
1798			Sweden
1799		**Portugal**	**Portugal**
	Naples		
1800	France		
1801	France		France
1802		France	Netherlands
	Sweden		
1805			USA
1808			Sweden
1809			
1810	**Portugal**		
1812		England	England
	Naples		
1813		England	Spain
	Portugal		
1816	England	England	England
	Piedmont	**Piedmont**	
	Portugal	Naples	
	Naples		
	Tuscany		
1817		England	
1819			England
	France		
1822		Tuscany	
1824		France	
	England		
	USA		
1825			Sweden
	Piedmont		
1826		**Papal States**	
1830		**France**	**France**

Bold: new or modified treaty
Normal: confirmation of an earlier treaty

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