

## The economic and social impacts of Maritime Jihad on Western Algeria during the 17th Century

Rabia GRIZA <sup>1</sup>, Rahima BICHI <sup>2</sup>, Amar BENGAIID <sup>3</sup>, and Aicha MAHMA <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Ghardaia, Algeria. Email: [griza-rabia@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz](mailto:griza-rabia@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0671-2957>

<sup>2</sup> University of Ghardaia, Algeria. Email: [bichi.rahima@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz](mailto:bichi.rahima@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3559-5712>

<sup>3</sup> University of Ghardaia, Algeria. Email: [bengaid.amar@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz](mailto:bengaid.amar@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-000-3676-3876>

<sup>4</sup> University of Ghardaia, Algeria. Email: [mahma.aicha@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz](mailto:mahma.aicha@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5803-4856>

**Abstract---**The paper addresses the economic and social impacts of maritime jihad in Ottoman Algiers during the 17th century, known as the “Golden Age of Algerian Sea Raids.” This period was marked by the intense activity of the Algerian fleet against European powers, which in turn generated significant internal transformations. The study seeks to highlight the dual role of maritime jihad both as a military defensive tool and as a mechanism for achieving economic and social gains, while also examining its repercussions on the social fabric and local economy. The central research question was: To what extent did maritime jihad contribute to activating the economic cycle of Ottoman Algeria, and how did it affect the social structure in the 17th century? The research adopted a descriptive-analytical method, relying on historical sources (accounts of historians, reports of captives and diplomats, as well as registers of booty and ransom) to understand the dimensions of the phenomenon. The content of the study was structured around two key axes:

1. **Economic Aspect:** Naval raids represented the primary source of revenue for the Regency through booty, the sale of captives, ransom payments, customs duties, and trade in confiscated goods. This not only stimulated commercial activity but also employed nearly a quarter of the labor force.
2. **Social Aspect:** The influx of European captives, converts to Islam (‘ulūj), foreign merchants, and diplomats created a complex human mosaic. Ransom negotiations reshaped relations with European states, while Jews consolidated their role as intermediaries and brokers in the captive trade.

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**Findings:** The study concludes that maritime jihad played a decisive role in financing the Ottoman Regency in Algiers and preserving its autonomy. It also facilitated the integration of Algerian markets with Europe through the influx of goods and spoils, while producing profound demographic and social transformations where locals intermarried with foreigners (captives, converts, merchants). Captives also served as a powerful diplomatic bargaining tool for the Regency. Thus, maritime jihad embodied a cross-border economic force as well as a significant political and social instrument that shaped the history of the Western Mediterranean during the 17th century.

**Keywords---**Maritime Jihad, Western Algerian Regencies, 17th Century, Economic Impacts, Social Transformations, spoils and captives.

## Introduction

The seventeenth century constituted a pivotal stage in the history of Ottoman Algeria, when maritime jihad reached the height of its power in the western Mediterranean—so much so that this era came to be known as “the golden age of Algerian naval raids.” During this period, Algiers transformed into a formidable regional naval power in the western Mediterranean. Its fleet served as a protective shield for the Muslim world against Spanish and Portuguese expansion, while at the same time becoming a highly lucrative economic instrument that enriched the treasury of the Regency through spoils, ransoms, taxes, and trade.

However, this phenomenon was not limited to its military or financial dimensions; it also generated significant transformations within Algerian society. The influx of diverse human elements—European captives, consuls and emissaries, Jewish merchants, and renegades who embraced Islam—shaped a new social mosaic and influenced the social structures and diplomatic role of the Regency. Thus, maritime jihad cannot be understood merely as a sequence of naval confrontations, but rather as an institution in its own right, with economic, social, and political dimensions that contributed to shaping the contours of early modern Algeria.

The significance of this study lies in shedding light on an often-overlooked aspect: while maritime jihad has traditionally been presented as a military tool of resistance against European incursions, it was also an institutionalized economic and social framework. Moreover, this approach allows us to better grasp how Algeria interacted with its Mediterranean environment, and how such naval activity impacted both its social fabric and its local and international economic structures.

Accordingly, the guiding research question of this paper is formulated as follows: To what extent did maritime jihad during the seventeenth century contribute to strengthening Algeria’s economy through spoils, ransoms, and trade, and how did its activity, in turn, affect the social structure of Western Algiers within the broader context of Ottoman–European Mediterranean balances?

## FIRSTLY – THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF MARITIME JIHAD ON WESTERN ALGERIA DURING THE 17TH CENTURY:

### 1The Algerian Naval Jihad Movement During the 17th century

The Algerian fleet was the spearhead against the Crusader world, serving as the protective shield of the Islamic world. From it, Algeria drew its strength, prestige, and regional sovereignty in the western basin of the Mediterranean Sea. Maritime raiding was one of the most prominent economic activities it practiced during the 17th century, as it generated enormous wealth. This century came to be known as

“the Golden Century of Algerian Raiding.” The abundance and richness of the spoils aroused the envy of those who did not share in them<sup>1</sup>.

Maritime raids were a shortcut to glory and wealth despite their risks, but the spoils obtained—especially captives—were a vital source of revenue for the treasury of the Regency. Captives became the most traded commodity in Algeria during the 17th century, particularly in its first half, leading to the emergence of specialized trade centers for captives in places such as Livorno, Genoa, Malta, Naples, Marseille, Tripoli, Algiers, Tunis, and Salé in Morocco.

Hamdan Khodja, in his book *Al-Mir'āt* (The Mirror), stated that the Algerians equipped their ships, which resembled those of the Spaniards, and engaged in trade while simultaneously monitoring the coasts and seizing Spanish ships (in a period of about 5 to 6 days). As for the Ottoman administration, it had a forward-looking vision by encouraging the population to pursue maritime jihad, since this activity brought significant benefits, including customs revenues<sup>2</sup>.

After the completion of the raid and the arrival of the ships in Algiers loaded with spoils, they would be docked at the port after paying taxes and customs duties. Their cargo would then be unloaded at the harbor and placed near Bab al-Jazira<sup>3</sup>, where it would be inventoried and recorded by the **Wakil al-Khar**<sup>4</sup> (the Minister of the Navy). Once this process was completed, the spoils would be divided: the governor of Algiers received one-eighth of the captives, while the remainder was distributed among the shipowners, sailors, and crew according to their respective shares. However, Hamdan bin Uthman Khoja noted that precious items were often taken before the loot was officially examined<sup>5</sup>.

As for the ships, they would remain in the port for repairs and were later returned to the sea under different and new names.

#### A - The number of ships captured by the Algerians between 1613 and 1621, of various nationalities.<sup>6</sup>

NATIONALITIES OF SHIPS	NUMBER OF SHIPS
Dutch ships	474
French ships	192
English ships	60
Spanish ships	120

<sup>1</sup> **The information in this section is drawn from:** Sarhān, Ḥalīm, *Nazarāt ḥawla al-sufun al-ḥarbiyya al-Jazā'iriyya fi al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī*, Majallat al-'Ulūm al-Ijtīmā'iyya wa-l-Insāniyya, no. 09, University of M'sila, July 2015, p. 177; 'Ā'isha, Jamīl, *Al-Jazā'ir wa-l-Bāb al-'Ālī min khilāl al-arshif al-'Uthmānī 1520–1830*, PhD Dissertation, University of Sidi Bel-Abbès, 2017–2018, p. 124; Miḥraz, Amīn, *Al-Jazā'ir fi 'ahd al-Āghawāt 1659–1671*, Master's Thesis, University of Algiers, 2007–2008, pp. 202–204.

<sup>2</sup> **The information is drawn from:** Marūsh, al-Manūr, *Dirāsāt 'an al-Jazā'ir fi al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī (al-Qarṣana: al-Asāfir wa-l-Wāqī')*, vol. 1, Dār al-Qaṣaba li-l-Nashr, Algiers, 2009, p. 303; Sa'ūdūnī, Nāṣir al-Dīn, *Waraqāt Jazā'iriyya: Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth fi Tārīkh al-Jazā'ir fi al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī, al-Baṣā'ir li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī'*, Algiers, 2nd ed., 2012, p. 126; Mashūsha, Samīr, *al-Mawārid al-Baḥriyya li-l-Jazā'ir al-'Uthmāniyya khilāl al-qarnayn 17–18*, PhD dissertation, supervised by Aḥmad Ṣārī, University of Constantine, 2018–2019, p. 210; Khūja, Ḥamdan ibn 'Uthmān, *al-Mir'āt, taḥqīq: Muḥammad al-'Arabī al-Zubayrī*, (Sh.W.N.T), 2nd ed., pp. 79–80.

<sup>3</sup> Miḥraz, Amīn, **previous reference**, p. 203

<sup>4</sup> **Wakil al-Khar:** The Algerian Naval Comptroller responsible for supervising the arsenal (tersana), overseeing naval construction works, accounting for military equipment, and recording maritime spoils; see : Ḥanafī Hilāyī, *Buniyat al-Jaysh khilāl al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī*, *Silsilat Turāth al-Jazā'ir al-Ḥadīth*, Algiers, 1st ed., 2007, p. 51; Khūja, Ḥamdan ibn 'Uthmān, **previous reference**, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> **The information is drawn from:** Mashūsha, Samīr, **previous reference**, p. 232; Hilāyī, Ḥanafī, *Buniyat al-Jaysh khilāl al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī*, **previous reference**, p. 142; Miḥraz, Amīn, **previous reference**, p. 203; Khūja, Ḥamdan ibn 'Uthmān, **previous reference**, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Qannān, Jamāl, *Nuṣūṣ wa-Wathā'iq fi Tārīkh al-Jazā'ir al-Ḥadīth 1500–1830*, *al-Mu'assasa al-Jazā'iriyya li-l-Ṭibā'a*, Algiers, 1987, p. 97.

**B-Increase in the Number of Algerian Ships during the 17th Century<sup>7</sup>:**

YEARS	NUMBER OF SHIPS
1028 AH / 1619 AD	3 frigates and 73 warships
1032 AH / 1623 AD	75 frigates and 100 ships
1033 AH / 1624 AD	About 200 ships
1044 AH / 1634 AD	More than 160 ships in addition to boats and small vessels
1069 AH / 1659 AD	23 sailing ships

This led to the stimulation of both domestic and foreign trade in Algeria, and contributed to strengthening the Algerian market, especially with goods that were not locally produced, such as sugar and coffee. For example:

Between the years 1688–1695, **Hajj Shaaban Pasha** was able to sell a ship to the French merchant **Jean**. In 1698, **Denis D'Issaut** managed to rent two ships in order to purchase goods (such as transparent Mosuli fabric, silk, velvet, sugar, and tobacco) from the Algerian corsairs<sup>8</sup>.

**c- Other financial revenues from goods seized on warships and commercial ships"**

Maritime spoils were obtained either through raids on coastal areas or by capturing ships at sea. Haedo spoke about this, saying: **"The spoils were so numerous that they could not be counted."**

The resources of the Regency were not limited to captives alone but encompassed everything acquired from the fleet's activities: ships, foodstuffs (spices, coffee, tea...), munitions (weapons, cannons, etc.), shipbuilding materials (sails, masts...), and money. After being divided among their rightful claimants, the seized goods were sold in the market. A small portion of these items might eventually return to the European market through European merchants and Jewish traders who monopolized the spoils trade, particularly **the Jews of Livorno**. They derived considerable profit by purchasing these goods at very low prices<sup>9</sup>

**D - The Algerians' spoils during the period from May to October 1619<sup>10</sup>.**

DATES	THE NUMBER OF SHIPS	THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS	OBSERVATIONS
<b>May 9</b>	Ship from Marseille	4 prisoners (Genoese, Portuguese, Gramay, Maltese knight)	French ships, crews, and passengers released
<b>June 1</b>	4 Hamburg ships	Number not specified	Ships and cargo seized
<b>June 5</b>	2 Dutch ships	/	Cargo seized. First ship and sailors released immediately, second ship released on July 12
<b>June 8</b>	Spanish ship	40 Spaniards	Ship and cargo seized
<b>June 25</b>	2 ships coming from Spain	Spaniards, Flemish, and Frenchmen in service of Spain	Ships' nationality and exact number of prisoners not specified. Ships and cargo seized
<b>July 1–10</b>	/	160 Sicilians and 2	Joint raid with Tunisians on

<sup>7</sup> Spencer, William, *Al-Jazā'ir fī 'Ahd Riyās al-Baḥr*, trans. & ed. 'Abd al-Qādir Zabādiyya, Dār al-Qaṣaba li-l-Nashr, Algiers, 2006, p. 172.

<sup>8</sup> Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, p. 270; Sarḥān, 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, previous reference, p. 272.

<sup>9</sup> Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, pp. 209–274; Hilāyī, Ḥanaḥī, *Buniyat al-Jaysh al-Jazā'irī khilāl al-'Ahd al-'Uthmānī*, previous reference, p. 143; Miḥraz, Amīn, previous reference, p. 203.

<sup>10</sup> Miḥraz, Amīn, previous reference, pp. 207–209.

		escapees from Tunis	Sicilian coasts, rich booty captured
<b>July 13</b>	French frigate	/	Cargo seized, sailors released, but the frigate escaped
<b>August 5</b>	Spanish ship	28 Spaniards	Ships and cargo seized
<b>August 27</b>	Hamburg ship	17 Germans	Ship and cargo seized
<b>August 31</b>	/	72 Spaniards	Raid on the coast of Galicia
<b>September 6</b>	/	19 Spaniards	Raid on the coasts of Galicia and the Canary Islands
<b>September 15</b>	Spanish galleon	25 Spaniards	Ship and booty seized from Spaniards
<b>September 16</b>	At least 4 ships (Flemish, English, and French)	/	Ships and cargo seized; they carried Spanish goods
<b>September 20</b>	/	21 Canarians and many Spaniards	Raids on Spanish coasts and Canary Islands, sugar cargo seized
<b>September 22</b>	Ship from Toulon	/	Crew and ship ransomed
<b>September 29</b>	Ship from La Rochelle	/	Crew, ships, and cargo released, but crew and passengers of one ship drowned
<b>September 30</b>	2 French ships, 1 Flemish, 1 Dutch	/	Ships and cargo seized; crew and passengers of one ship drowned
<b>October 6</b>	2 Dutch ships	/	Ships and cargo seized
<b>October 7</b>	English ship	/	Ship and cargo seized
<b>October 8</b>	/	24 Germans and 35 Canarians	/
<b>October 9</b>	Portuguese ship	36 Portuguese	Ship and cargo of sugar seized
<b>October 19–26</b>	2 Portuguese ships	77 Portuguese and 18 Spaniards	Ships and cargo seized, raid on Spanish coast
<b>Totals 25 ships seized 578 prisoners of various nationalities</b>			

## 2/The returns of the naval invasion

The activity of the Algerian navy contributed to the development and prosperity of the state's economy. During the 17th century (11th century AH), Algerians widely practiced maritime raids. Fontenay stated that "piracy ensured the employment of a quarter of the workforce in Algiers<sup>11</sup>." This was achieved through the selling of captives, who played a major role in the commercial movement of markets, following established procedures required for ransom operations — starting from setting the price to the actual payment, each according to the demand. In addition, there was the sale of goods and merchandise seized and channeled to European traders. It is worth noting that Algiers became one of the largest markets after the city of Naples.

Between the years **1613 and 1621**, about **1,200 European commercial and warships** were captured (193 of them French). The captives were an important source of income for the treasury, while both foreign and domestic trade in Algiers flourished. This transformed the situation into a form of financial

<sup>11</sup> Marūsh, al-Manūr, previous reference, vol. 2, p. 203.

investment, attracting a great number of investors, and turned maritime raids into wars with a commercial and economic character<sup>12</sup>.

This situation had a strong impact on the Reis (naval commanders), upon whom wealth poured down like rain—we have many examples of that.

- **Ali Betchen (Ali Betshin):** He owned 200 maidservants and 400 slaves to level the terrain of his country estate, as well as 40 boys<sup>13</sup> and a bathing villa, according to Aranda's account. Meanwhile, Wolff stated that he possessed two palaces, thousands of captives, in addition to jewels, silver, gold, and vessels, based on the French narrative.
- **Mohammed the Flemish Captain, son of Abdullah:** He left behind 27,405 dinars in the year 1665.
- **Muslih al-Din ibn al-Turki:** He left behind 73,789 dinars (including furniture, real estate, and jewelry). He died in the year 1686<sup>14</sup>.

**A-The system of distributing the spoils of war according to Father Dan and Albert Dufourcq<sup>15</sup>.  
"Divided from 100%"**

BENEFICIARY	GOVERNOR-GENERAL	WHARF / PIER	MOORING
PERCENTAGE	%12	% 01	%01

**"The remaining 86 to 88% is divided as follows:"**

BENEFICIARY	SHARE OR NUMBER OF SHARES
Ship owners	43–44%
Sea captains	shares 12–10
Agha (commander)	3 shares
Janissaries	2 shares each
Chief of Artillery	3 shares
Al-Rayyan	2 shares
Sail monitor (Rigging officer / Sail overseer)	3 shares
Gatekeeper (Doorman / Keeper of the gate)	2 shares
Surgeon	3 shares
Sailors	2 shares
Men not in the crew	1 share
Captives (prisoners)	Belong to their owner and count as his shares

As for the captives, they were placed in prisons to be sold in markets known as the **Badistan** (slave market). Through a public auction, the prisoner would be sold by brokers, and the price was determined according to his age, social status, profession, and physical build. At this stage, the captive could also enter the process of ransom.

It is worth noting that the group of captives chosen by the Dey, estimated at between **10% to 12%**, could increase through purchases. These captives were then employed in his service, or in the Dar al-Sina'a (the naval arsenal), shipyards, and quarries<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Dahhān, Sulaymān, previous reference, pp. 222–224.

<sup>13</sup> Raḥmūna, Balīl, al-Qunāṣil wa-l-Qunṣuliyāt al-Ajnabiyya fi al-Jazā'ir al-'Uthmāniyya min 1564 ilā 1830, PhD dissertation in Modern and Contemporary Algerian History, unpublished, supervised by Daḥḥū Faghrūr, Department of History and Archaeology, University of Oran, academic year 2010–2011, p. 122.

<sup>14</sup> Ghaṭṭās, 'Ā'isha, al-'Alāqāt al-Jazā'iriyya al-Faransiyya khilāl al-qarn al-sābi' 'ashar (1619–1694), Master's thesis in Modern History, supervised by Mulāy Balḥamīsī, unpublished, University of Algiers, 1984, pp. 350–351.

<sup>15</sup> Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, pp. 275–276.

<sup>16</sup> Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, p. 233; Wolff, John, previous reference, p. 210; Hilāyli, Ḥanafi, previous reference, p. 64

**b – The number of captives and ships in the period from 1607 to 1618, excluding the year 1615:**

YEAR	NUMBER OF SHIPS	NUMBER OF CAPTIVES
1607	Attack on Calabria	1400
1608	42 ships	860 captives
1018 AH / 1609 AD	-36 ships	- 632 captives
1610	- 23 ships	- 384 captives
1611	- 20 ships	- 464 captives
1612	/	3804 captives
1613	- 16 ships	- 230 captives
1614	- 35 ships	- 467 captives
1616	- 34 ships	- 767 captives
1617	- 26 ships	- 1763 captives
1618	19 ships	1468 captives

**c- The number of ransomed captives during the 17th century in the period from 1618 to 1669.**

YEARS	NUMBER OF PRISONERS
1618	141
1627	143
1642	142
1649	106
1651	238
1660	368
1662	285
1664	262
1667	211
1669	189

**D-the process of redemption:**

The process of ransom was most often carried out through specialized religious institutions, envoys, and consuls of European countries. As a result, the Regency of Algiers obtained considerable sums of money, which significantly contributed to strengthening its economy<sup>17</sup>.

The value of the ransom was determined by the Dey, who also received gifts for himself and his council from the envoy. In addition, the envoy was required to pay port anchoring fees set at 3.5%. Once this process was completed, the captive was handed over to the envoy and dressed in a white cloak as a sign of repentance. Afterwards, a certificate of freedom was issued by the municipality. Finally, the envoy had to request permission from the Dey to depart. It should be noted that the consuls also supervised the ransom process, as their primary concern and fundamental duty was to protect their compatriots<sup>18</sup>.

Al-Manour Marrouch pointed out that during the 16th and 17th centuries, the ransom price ranged between 125 and 150 Spanish reals according to Friedman's statistics, but for certain prominent figures it could reach up to 30,000 **Spanish reals**<sup>19</sup>.

The process of ransoming captives was influenced by international relations; if there was a conflict at the time, the conditions for the captives became harsher. Thus, the captives were used as a pressure

<sup>17</sup> Sa 'idūnī, Nāṣir al-Dīn & al-Shaykh al-Mahdī Bū 'Abdlī, previous reference, p. 29; Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, p. 274

<sup>18</sup> Spencer, William, previous reference, pp. 158–159.

<sup>19</sup> Marūsh, al-Manūr, previous reference, vol. 2, pp. 209–210.

card by Algiers against their countries in order to conclude agreements. For example, Spain used to pay Algiers about **60,000 reals** annually in exchange for the release of **200–300 captives**<sup>20</sup>.

And we must not forget to mention the Jewish merchants who had their share in this commercial field, as they invested their money in the ransom of captives. This, of course, is not surprising, since they were always present in the commercial and economic arena. For the Jewish merchant, his true concern and aim was to turn the captive into a mere commodity, nothing more and nothing less. There was no place for humanitarian considerations, as they claimed; rather, financial brokerage was the core of their work, along with profit and gain<sup>21</sup>.

We also point out that there was another type of ransom, namely the individual ransom, which was common among captives belonging to wealthy families and prominent figures in Algeria. For example, we mention the case of the Englishman **Thomas Smit**, captured in 1646, who was released after his master, the Commander of the Janissaries, promised him freedom on the condition that he accompany him in the collection of the “mahalla” (taxes)<sup>22</sup>.

**E- Table of the evolution of ransom prices for Spanish captives in Algiers during the periods (1617–1689) and (1618–1692)<sup>23</sup>.**

YEARS	NUMBER OF RANSOMED CAPTIVES	COST IN PESOS	AVERAGE RANSOM PRICE PER CAPTIVE (IN PESOS)
1618	144	324.276	2251
1651	232	449.424	1,937
1660	366	708.379	1,935
1667	196	997.076	8,087
1668	450	798.190	1,773
1686	320	724.704	2,265
1692	156	31.764	204

**F-And the evolution of ransom prices from the time of Khayr al-Din up to the year 1099 AH / 1690 CE<sup>24</sup>.**

YEARS	RANSOM PRICE
"During the reign of Khayr al-Din"	"A thousand copper dinars for the captive during the era of Khayr al-Din."
1642	1,500 dollars for the prisoner
1675	297 pieces of eight.
1682	200 – 300 Pieces of Eight
1683	200 – 300 Pieces of Eight
1690	366 Pieces of Eight

<sup>20</sup> Spencer, William, previous reference, p. 159; Hilāyli, Ḥanafī, previous reference, p. 65; Sa'īdūnī, Nāṣir al-Dīn & al-Shaykh al-Mahdī Bū'Abdlī, previous reference, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Riḍā ibn Rajab, Yahūd al-Balāṭ wa-Yahūd al-Māl fī Tūnis al-'Uthmāniyya (1685–1875), trans. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Arqash, Dār al-Madār al-Islāmī, Libya, 2010, pp. 309–324–325

<sup>22</sup> Qurbāsh, Balqāsim, al-Asrā al-Ūrūbiyyūn bi-l-Jazā'ir khilāl 'Ahd al-Dāyāt (1671–1830), PhD dissertation in Modern and Contemporary History, supervised by Būghafāla Wadān, University of Mustafā Iṣṭambūlī – Ma'askar, 2015–2016, p. 204.

<sup>23</sup> Duḥa, 'Abd al-Qādir & Ṣaffāh, Bū'Alam, al-'Ā'idāt al-Māliyya li-Iftidā' al-Asrā al-Masīhiyyīn fī al-Jazā'ir khilāl al-'Ahd al-'Uthmānī, Majallat 'Uṣūr al-Jadīda, no. 2, Jumādā al-Ūlā 1442 / 2021, p. 344.

<sup>24</sup> Duḥa, 'Abd al-Qādir & Ṣaffāh, Bū'Alam, previous reference, pp. 341–342

## SECONDLY – THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THE MARITIME JIHAD MOVEMENT ON ALGERIA DURING THE 17TH CENTURY:

Maritime jihad activity had profound impacts and consequences on the social fabric of Algerian society, as the demographic structure of the population changed with the introduction of new European elements, divided into two main groups.

The first group consisted of free Europeans, which included diplomats, consuls and envoys, consular employees, clergymen, and merchants. The second group was composed of captives who were brought in through Algerian maritime jihad operations. Their numbers varied depending on naval activity as well as the nature of relations between Algiers and European states. For instance, following the Franco-Algerian crisis caused by the corsair “**Simon Danser**,” Algerian naval forces began targeting French ships, which led to an increase of French spoils in Algerian markets. This inflicted enormous losses on French trade, estimated at millions of francs.

We should also note the category of Renegades (‘*ilāj* / **Renegats**), who voluntarily converted to Islam and adopted Ottoman ways. They constituted an important group in Algerian society, many of whom reached key positions within the state and naval forces. They were particularly prominent in the corps of Reis al-Bahr (sea captains), with some attaining high-ranking leadership roles.

The Renegades were of two types: the first included those captured as children, sold, and raised by the Ottomans, eventually embracing Islam. The second group comprised those who converted to Islam as adults. Muslims referred to them as “the guided” (al-Muhtadūn), whereas Christians regarded them as apostates.

The number of Renegades was estimated at around 6,000 during the 10th century AH / 16th century CE; by the 17th century, their numbers had reached about 20,000, according to historical accounts<sup>25</sup>.

### 1/ The number of captives in Algeria during the 17th century, based on European sources for the period spanning from 1619 to 1698<sup>26</sup>.

YEAR	SOURCE	NUMBER
1619	Gramay	35000/ 32000
1625	G.B. salvago	25000
1634	Monk Dan	25000
1640	José de Tamayo / Emmanuel Daranda	40000/30000
1656	Sanson d'Abbeville	40000/3000
1660	Louis Du Mai / Rocoul Sdafini –	500 / 35,000
1662	Friar Frey	12000
1665	Duval	More than 40,000
1669	Mafricin	14,000–15,000 (including 100 women and 300–400 children)
1671	Father Lovache	14000
1678	De Fercourt	30000/20000
1687	Bombardier	10000

<sup>25</sup> Sa ‘idūnī, Nāṣir al-Dīn, al-Awḍā‘ al-Iqtisādiyya wa-l-Ijtimā‘iyya wa-l-Thaqāfiyya li-Wilāyat al-Maghrib al-‘Uthmānī (al-Jazā‘ir – Tūnis – Ṭarābulus al-Gharb) min al-qarn al-‘āshir ilā al-rābi‘ al-hijrī (min al-qarn al-sādis ‘ashar ḥattā al-tāsi‘ ‘ashar al-milādī), Ḥawliyat al-Adab wa-l-‘Ulūm al-Ijtimā‘iyya, no. 31, University of Kuwait, 1431/2010, p. 52; Dahhān, Sulaymān, previous reference, pp. 218–222.

<sup>26</sup> Miḥraz, Amīn, previous reference, p. 215; Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, p. 213; Qurbāsh, Balqāsim, previous reference, pp. 151–152

YEAR	SOURCE	NUMBER
1682	Barbarella	17000
1683	A.Manesso Mallet	40000/35000
1684	Pétris de croix	35000
1691	Plant	3600
1693	Lorance	4000
1696	Lorance	1600
1698	Lorance	2600

## 2/ The most significant captives, both men and women, during the 17th century:

The Algerian fleet had specific maritime objectives along the southwestern coasts of Europe, such as the coasts of **Livorno, Corsica, Sicily, Malta, Genoa, and Naples**. These objectives were reflected in the large number of captives of various nationalities<sup>27</sup>. During the 17th century, the number of captives in Algiers reached around 25,000, which represented about a quarter of the city's population, of whom nearly 8,000 converted to Islam<sup>28</sup>. They became known as "**al-'ulāj**" (the converts). **Father Dan**, however, stated that in 1630 between 1,000 and 1,200 converted to Islam<sup>29</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that redemption operations were carried out by several Christian organizations<sup>30</sup>. of a religious and social character, which took advantage of this situation to monitor and aid Christian captives in North Africa, particularly in Algiers.

### Famous Captives:

- **Emmanuel d'Arande de Bruges**: An Italian-born writer who was captured during his journey from France to Spain in **1640**.
- **Regnard**: A French poet, author of the famous story *La Belle Provençale* (The Beautiful Provençale), who was captured in **1678**.
- **Jan Vaillant**: A French scholar who was captured in **1674** during his study trip on coinage (numismatics), commissioned by **Louis XIV**.
- **René Des Bois**: A writer who was captured in **1642**<sup>31</sup>.

## 3/ The Most Famous Renegades:

The renegades (A'lāj) represented a significant pressure group during the period extending from **1535 to 1586**, when seven renegades reached power in Algiers<sup>32</sup>.

Among the most prominent who remained in Algeria and had an important role in the Regency, especially in the Algerian navy, were:

- **Sulayman Reis (Süleyman Reïs)**: of Dutch origin, who managed to reach the position of admiral of the fleet in the period between **1606 and 1620**<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Duḥa, 'Abd al-Qādir & Şaffāh, Bū'Alam, previous reference, p. 366

<sup>28</sup> Sa'idūnī, Nāşir al-Dīn, Waraqāt Jazā'iriyya: Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth fi Tārīkh al-Jazā'ir fi al-'Ahd al-'Uthmānī, previous reference, p. 137

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Dan : op.cit, p422.

<sup>30</sup> The principal ransom-redeeming organizations:

– **Order of the Trinitarians (al-Thālithūn al-Muqaddas / Trinitarian)**: founded in 1198 by the French priests Félix de Valois and Jean de Matha;

– **Order of Mercy (Manẓamat Sayyidat al-Raḥma / Mercédaires)**: founded in 1218 by Saint Raymon de Penyafort and Pierre Nolasque;

– **Order of the Lazarists (al-Lāzāriyya / Lazarists)**: founded in 1633 by the French saint Vincent de Paul;

– **Order of the Capuchins (al-Kābūshīn / Capuchins)**: founded in 1520 by Matteo da Bascio as a Catholic institution. For further details, see: Mashūsha, Samīr, previous reference, pp. 229–231.

<sup>31</sup> Sa'idūnī, Nāşir al-Dīn, Waraqāt Jazā'iriyya: Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth fi Tārīkh al-Jazā'ir fi al-'Ahd al-'Uthmānī, previous reference, pp. 138–139.

<sup>32</sup> Ghaṭṭās, 'A'isha, previous reference, p. 17.

- **Sha'bān Agha (1661–1664)**: he reached the position of governor of the Regency of Algiers in the year 1072 AH<sup>34</sup>. In 1625, as many as **55 commanders of Dutch origin** joined the Algerian navy, among them<sup>35</sup>:
- **Murād Reis (Jan Janszoon)**: of Dutch origin<sup>36</sup>, who held the position of deputy to Admiral Sulayman Bey<sup>37</sup>.

As for the female captives, they were often from aristocratic backgrounds and were taken with their servants. The ransom price for women was usually higher than for men. Famous examples include:

- **Elizabeth Alwin (Elizabeth ALWiN)**: of British origin (captured 1655), whose ransom was paid in double in 1646.
- **Elizabeth van Harglen**: ransomed for **900 pieces of eight** in 1683.

#### **From the foregoing, it can be said:**

This study has shown that the maritime jihad movement in Algeria during the seventeenth century was not merely a series of naval raids or a seasonal military activity, as some European sources have portrayed it, but rather a comprehensive system that combined defensive, political, economic, and social functions.

Economically, spoils, the trade of captives, and ransoms contributed to strengthening the finances of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers, providing it with substantial resources that enabled it to fund its military and administrative apparatus and to maintain a reasonable degree of autonomy from both the Sublime Porte and European dominance. At the same time, corsairing/maritime jihad energized local markets and connected Algiers to the broader networks of commercial exchange in the Mediterranean.

Socially, this movement brought about profound transformations in the demographic structure due to the influx of European captives, consuls, and foreign merchants, in addition to the emergence of renegades who converted to Islam and integrated into military and political institutions. This made Algerian society a rich and diverse mosaic. Such a gradual and at times forced openness to foreign elements granted Algerian society a special dynamism, enhancing its position within the complex Mediterranean milieu.

Accordingly, it can be said that maritime jihad constituted a sovereign, economic, and diplomatic instrument that helped Algeria assert itself in the Mediterranean basin as an influential power throughout the seventeenth century, while simultaneously provoking recurrent alliances among European powers against it.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The necessity of re-reading maritime jihad beyond the Eurocentric perspective that reduced it merely to "piracy," while recognizing its economic, social, and diplomatic dimensions.
2. Encouraging multidisciplinary studies (history – economics – sociology – international relations) to understand the phenomenon in its entirety.
3. Working on collecting and publishing the Ottoman Algerian maritime archives, including documents related to spoils, ransoms, and trade agreements with European powers.
4. Conducting a comparative approach between Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and Salé to understand the differences and interconnections among the centers of maritime jihad in the Maghreb region.

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<sup>33</sup> Marūsh, al-Manūr, previous reference, vol. 2, p. 282.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Ḥammādūsh, 'Abd al-Razzāq, al-Riḥla al-Musammā Lisan al-Maqāl fī al-Naba' 'an al-Nasab wa-l-Ḥasab wa-l-Ḥāl, ed. and annotated by Abū al-Qāsim Sa'd Allāh, Sh.W.N.T, Algiers, 1983, p. 226

<sup>35</sup> Qurbāsh, Balqāsim, previous reference, p. 248.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Lamborn Wilson :**Utopies pirates corsaires maures et renegados**, traduit de l'anglais por Hervé Denés et Julius Van Daal ,édition dagorno,1998,p67

<sup>37</sup> Marūsh, al-Manūr, Dirāsāt 'an al-Jazā'ir..., vol. 2, previous reference, p. 284.

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