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Algeria's Autonomy Under the Ottoman Rule

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the most valuable persons, for whom I am indebted and to whom I owe a great deal-"My dear parents"- though no dedication can express adequately the profound feelings of recognition and gratitude for their sacrifices.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my wife, who provided me with invaluable morale during my studies. I am also indebted to my Mother, whose legacy of spirit continues to inspire me.

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Abstract

Despite the fact that Algeria was nominally part of the Ottoman Empire for three centuries, it gradually evolved into a de facto independent nation with its own distinct political and administrative institutions. Drawing on the historical and analytical approaches, the present dissertation basically aims to explore the changing dynamics of the relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire, with particular focus on the predominant factors that contributed to Algeria's autonomy. From the establishment of a Turkish military oligarchy to economic activities rooted in Mediterranean trade and privateering, Algeria increasingly asserted its undeniable sovereignty in practical terms. The progressive decline of Ottoman central authority, combined with the emergence of influential local leadership, further reinforced this autonomy across various domains.

Key words: Algeria, the Ottoman Empire, autonomy, independence, Factors, leadership

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General Introduction

The relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire, spanning from the early 16th century to the French conquest in 1830, represents a compelling case study in political history and governance. It offers a research lens through which to explore the development of political dynamics besides practical limitations of imperial authority. Drawing on a historical analysis, the present study depicts the fact that Algeria, although formally a province of the Ottoman Empire, experienced a progressive and profound degree of autonomy. Through time, it transformed from a territory under nominal Ottoman control into a largely self-governing entity—frequently referred to as a “Regency” or, in many respects, a *de facto* independent state.

This autonomy was far from being static; rather, it was a dynamic and evolving process, influenced by a confluence of geographical, economic, political, and military factors. By employing a historical and analytical methodology, the research examines both primary and secondary sources to unveil the administrative structures, economic activities, diplomatic engagements, and internal power struggles that characterised this period. Such an approach allows for a deeper understanding of the relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire—one that goes beyond simplistic narratives of absolute imperial domination to reveal a complex balance of allegiance and autonomy.

In a rather deeper sense, the chosen methodology incorporates the analysis of archival materials, official records, treaties, diplomatic correspondences, and contemporary accounts. Such sources collectively contribute to a comprehensive picture of Algeria’s political status and autonomy during the Ottoman era. On this basis, the major objectives of this investigation are thus guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent did Algeria belong to the Ottoman Empire?
- What were the fundamental dimensions of Algeria’s power and autonomy under Ottoman rule?

Addressing these queries aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between Algeria’s internal sovereignty and its formal association with the Ottoman Empire. In so doing, the study promotes the historical understanding of Algeria’s political trajectory prior to the French colonial period.

The dissertation is structured into two main chapters. Chapter one provides a broad overview of the Ottoman Empire's expansion into North Africa and explores Algeria's strategic importance within the Mediterranean basin. It also discusses the establishment of Ottoman authority in Algeria, with particular attention to the creation of the Regency of Algiers, followed by an analysis of the key features that characterized the relationship between Algeria and the Empire.

The second chapter focuses on the most critical dimensions of Algeria's autonomy during the Ottoman period. It therefore examines specific historical episodes and institutional evolutions that reflect the country's capacity for self-governance. This envelops a detailed analysis of Algeria's autonomy across political, military, economic, cultural, and religious domains. The chapter equally addresses the internal and external challenges that shaped and occasionally tested this autonomy.

Through this investigation, the study seeks to contribute to a richer historical understanding of Algeria's unique position within the Ottoman empire-neither entirely subordinate nor wholly independent, but occupying a complex and strategically autonomous role in early modern Mediterranean geopolitics.

Chapter One

**Historical Context of Ottoman Rule in
Algeria**

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the historical context of Ottoman rule in Algeria. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Ottoman Empire's expansion into North Africa, Algeria's strategic significance in the Mediterranean Basin, the establishment of Ottoman authority in Algeria, the administrative structures implemented during this period, and the nature of the relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire, renowned for its huge territorial expansion, turned its attention to North Africa in the 16th century. Driven by the ambitions to control vital trade routes and secure a dominant position in the Mediterranean, the Ottomans launched several campaigns to extend their influence. Algeria, situated along the central Mediterranean coast, emerged as a region of immense strategic significance. Its geographic proximity to Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East made it a crucial hub for trade and naval operations. Recognizing its value, the Ottomans integrated Algeria into their imperial framework.

The expansion of Ottoman authority in Algeria culminated in the establishment of the Regency of Algiers, marking the beginning of a new political era. Under this arrangement, Algeria came under formal Ottoman protection, and Ottoman administrative institutions were introduced to reorganize and centralize governance.

The formation of the Regency facilitated the consolidation of Ottoman control in Algeria. High-ranking officials were appointed to administer the region, and new administrative structures were implemented to ensure efficient governance and the enforcement of imperial policies. The Ottoman rule in Algeria was characterized by a hierarchical administrative system, in which provincial governors (such as the Dey or Beylerbey) were tasked with overseeing local affairs and reporting directly to the imperial authorities in Istanbul.

Despite its distance from the imperial capital, Algeria maintained a strong and continuous relationship with the Ottoman center. Regular communication, diplomatic exchanges, and the payment of tribute reinforced this connection, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship. These interactions not only strengthened imperial ties but also ensured a degree of stability and cooperation between the Regency of Algiers and the broader Ottoman Empire.

1.2 Overview of the Ottoman Empire's expansion to North Africa

The Ottoman Empire, a global power that emerged in Anatolia (Asia Minor), flourished as one of the most dominant states of the 15th and 16th centuries. Founded by Turkish tribes, the empire endured for more than six centuries, ultimately dissolving in 1922. The Empire's expansion into North Africa marked a significant chapter in its history, reflecting its rise as a leading force in both the Mediterranean and Islamic worlds. This expansion unfolded gradually from the early 16th to the late 18th century and involved military conquests, political alliances, administrative integration, and ongoing competition with European powers, particularly Spain, Portugal, and later France. (Finkel, 2005)

At its zenith, the Ottoman Empire encompassed much of southeastern Europe—including present-day Hungary, the Balkans, Greece, and parts of Ukraine—alongside substantial territories in the Middle East (modern-day Iraq, Syria, Israel, and Egypt) and North Africa, extending as far west as Algeria and encompassing parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The Ottomans entered North Africa during the reign of Sultan Selim I (1512–1520), following their victory over the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517. This triumph granted the Ottomans nominal authority over Egypt and its dependencies, including portions of North Africa. Nonetheless, many of these regions remained under the influence of local dynasties or semi-autonomous rulers for decades.

The coastal regions of present-day Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria were governed by corsair states—such as Algiers—which functioned with significant autonomy. These states often sought Ottoman protection from European incursions, forging alliances with Istanbul. The Barbary corsairs played a pivotal role in drawing the Ottomans' attention to the western Mediterranean. Their naval campaigns disrupted European maritime activity, particularly that of Christian powers, thus aligning with Ottoman interests. Between 1516 and 1529, Ottoman influence in Algeria expanded significantly.

The Empire's direct involvement in Algeria began in response to increasing Spanish aggression, especially under Charles V. In 1516, Algiers formally requested Ottoman assistance. By 1519, the city had accepted Ottoman suzerainty, becoming a key naval base in the western Mediterranean. This development was closely linked to the efforts of the famed corsair brothers, Aruj and Khair-eddin Barbarossa. Khair-eddin, also known as Barbarossa, was appointed the first Ottoman governor of Algiers. He led successful campaigns against Spanish forces and was instrumental in solidifying Ottoman control. (Finkel, 2005).

Tunisia was of great strategic and agricultural value to the Ottomans. Initially ruled by the Hafsid dynasty, the region faced internal unrest and foreign pressures. In 1534, Khair-eddin Barbarossa captured Tunis, bringing it briefly under Ottoman control. However, Charles V recaptured it for Spain in 1535. Prolonged conflict ensued, culminating in the final Ottoman conquest of Tunisia in 1574. The Empire then established a Beylerbey (governor) in Tunis, integrating the territory into its administrative framework. Ottoman rule lasted until French colonization in 1881. (Abun-Nasr, 1987)

The easternmost region of Ottoman North Africa—modern-day Libya—came under Ottoman control in 1551. Ottoman forces led by Hussein Pasha expelled the Knights of St. John from Tripoli, who had occupied it since 1530. As in Algeria and Tunisia, Tripoli became a regency governed by an Ottoman-appointed pasha. Its geographic position made it a vital corridor between Egypt and the Empire's western provinces. Following the conquests, Ottoman rule in North Africa combined central imperial oversight with significant local autonomy. Each regency—Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli—was administered by officials (Beys, Deys, or Pashas) nominally appointed by the Sultan, but in practice, many of them exercised *de facto* sovereignty. The Barbary corsairs continued to play a central role, launching raids on European vessels. The profits from these activities bolstered the local economy and contributed to the imperial treasury. Throughout this period, the Ottomans faced fierce competition from European powers, especially Spain, France, and later Britain. Frequent treaties and truces reflected a constantly shifting balance of power in the Mediterranean.

By the 18th century, the Ottoman grip on North Africa began to weaken. Internal decline, rising local resistance, and expanding European imperialism eroded Ottoman authority. In Tunisia and Algeria, powerful local families such as the Husainids in Tunisia and the Aghas in Algeria asserted increasing control, further limiting Istanbul's influence. This era, often referred to as the period of the Ottoman Maghreb (1505–1830), was characterized by a blend of imperial affiliation and local sovereignty. Although the Ottomans introduced Sunni Islam as the dominant religious framework and promoted Turkish culture, indigenous customs and languages persisted. The Barbary corsairs remained a formidable naval force until the early 19th century when intensified European naval campaigns succeeded in curbing piracy. (Abun-Nasr, 1987)

The Regency of Algiers, established in the early 16th century, developed from a corsair base into a powerful political and military entity. Aruj and Khair-eddin Barbarossa are credited as its founders. Over time, the regency evolved into a semi-independent state, operating under nominal Ottoman suzerainty. While the Ottomans provided military and administrative support—occasionally appointing governors—the Regency developed distinct cultural and political characteristics. It was deeply

involved in Mediterranean affairs, engaging diplomatically and militarily with various European powers. The Regency's political structure was military in nature. Its rulers, often elected by the Janissary corps, reflected the influence of Ottoman military traditions. As Shaler (1826) observed, Janissaries in Algiers were drawn from diverse backgrounds—mainly from the Levant—and enlisted as ordinary soldiers upon arrival. Advancement depended on merit or favorable circumstances.

1.3 Algeria's Strategic Importance in the Mediterranean

Algeria's location along the southern Mediterranean coast gave it an immense strategic value. It served as a vital maritime link between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, placing it at the crossroads of regional politics and trade. (Spencer, 1976). During the Ottoman era, the Algerian navy emerged as a dominant force. Historians such as Haidou and William Spencer have noted how Algerian fleets sailed freely across the Mediterranean, maintaining a distinguished maritime superiority even during the winter and spring months, seasons typically unfavorable for naval activity. Spencer (1976) clearly described Algeria's maritime force during this period.

Throughout the Ottoman period, the Mediterranean became a theater of intense naval competition, and the Algerian fleet played a central role in shaping the region's power dynamics. Control over key sea routes enabled Algeria to assert itself as a formidable maritime force.

Algeria's extensive coastline and multiple natural resources further contributed to its military and economic strength. Its growing influence was also reflected in its diplomatic engagements. The country concluded bilateral agreements with many European powers, including France, Britain, the Netherlands, and even the United States. Notably, Algeria supplied wheat to revolutionary France—an act that demonstrated both its political autonomy and its economic relevance on the international stage.

Algeria's military reputation was equally significant. British Admiral Lord Exmouth, who led the 1816 naval campaign against Algiers, acknowledged the valor of the Algerian defenders, stating: "I have never witnessed enemies who demonstrate such faith and steadfastness." Relations with European powers were not always peaceful. Persistent conflict with Spain stemmed from earlier Spanish coastal occupations. France also launched a military campaign against Algeria in 1664, which ended in failure. These conflicts however showed Algeria's strategic importance and its ability to bravely resist foreign intervention. (Haidou, 2001)

In sum, Algeria's strategic value in the Mediterranean was rooted in its geographic location, naval dominance, economic resources, and capacity to maintain and sustain sovereignty in the face of expanding European imperialism.

1-4 The Establishment of Ottoman Rule in Algeria

The Ottoman Empire exerted a profound influence on the historical and cultural development of many regions, including North Africa. Among the territories that were most significantly affected was Algeria, where the establishment of Ottoman rule marked a notable moment in the country's political evolution. An attempt is made here to explore the remarkable events and the famous figures that contributed to the Ottoman presence in Algeria.

The Ottoman Empire's efforts to gain control over strategic trade routes in the Mediterranean region have long been a subject of scholarly interest. One of its primary objectives was to curb the territorial expansion of European powers, especially Spain, along the North African coast. In response to urgent appeals from local communities threatened by European incursions, the Ottomans introduced measures to provide military and political support (Smith, 1999).

During the early 16th century, the Ottoman Empire formed an alliance with the Berber tribes of Algeria as part of a broader strategy to expand its influence in North Africa. The Ottomans provided crucial military assistance to the Berbers in their resistance against Spanish and Portuguese colonization. This alliance allowed the Ottomans to gain a strategic foothold in Algeria, laying the groundwork for a formal rule.

The Spanish presence in Algeria played an important role in reshaping the region's political and cultural landscapes. In the early 1500s, Spain started establishing coastal strongholds along the North African littoral, threatening local rulers and disrupting vital maritime trade routes. The growing Spanish influence created a kind of power vacuum that demanded a stronger, more organized defense.

In response to this, the Ottomans launched a number of military campaigns to repel Spanish forces and assert their dominance in the region. Central to these efforts were the Barbarossa brothers, Aruj and Khair-eddin, two famed Ottoman corsairs who played a decisive role in establishing Ottoman authority in Algeria. Their military leadership and naval prowess allowed them to challenge Christian forces and solidify Ottoman control. (Smith, 1999).

Chapter One Historical context of Ottoman Rule in Algeria

According to Smith (1999), the turning point occurred in 1516, when the people of Algiers formally requested protection from Sultan Selim I of the Ottoman Empire. This appeal expressed both a plea for military aid and a declaration of loyalty to the Sultan. It marked the beginning of formal Ottoman-Algerian relations.

As De Grammont (1887) recounts, upon learning of his brother Aruj's death, Khair-eddin Barbarossa sent envoys to Constantinople, offering Sultan Selim I sovereignty over Algiers. In his letter, he requested Ottoman protection. The Sultan accepted the request, sending artillery, two thousand musketeers, and authorizing the deployment of additional volunteers with the same privileges as the Janissaries of the imperial court. The fame of Barbarossa and the prospect of wealth attracted over 4,000 Turkish soldiers to the Regency of Algiers.

The message from the people of Algiers to the Ottoman Sultan explicitly requested military protection in the face of the escalating Spanish threats. Beyond the practical request for aid, the letter conveyed political allegiance and an aspiration to be integrated into the Ottoman imperial framework.

This appeal was made during a period when the Ottoman Empire stood at the height of its power, while Algiers faced severe external pressure. The formal correspondence represents a moment of both desperation and diplomatic acumen from the local population, who understood the strategic value of aligning with the Ottoman Empire.

In response to the appeal, Sultan Selim I issued direct orders to Khair-eddin Barbarossa to proceed to Algiers and provide the necessary military assistance. Ottoman troops were dispatched to reinforce Algerian defenses, marking the beginning of sustained Ottoman involvement in the Maghreb.

The Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, particularly those held in the Topkapi Palace, contain valuable documents that shed light on this pivotal historical moment. The Tunisian historian Abdeljelil Temimi published a translation of the 1519 message in his study *The First Message from the People of the City of Algiers to Sultan Selim I*, highlighting the diplomatic and historical significance of the event.

The period of Ottoman rule left a lasting legacy in Algeria, shaping its cultural, political, and architectural landscapes. The Ottomans introduced a rich cultural heritage that influenced Algerian society in areas such as language, cuisine, architecture, and administration. Ottoman contributions remain visible today, especially in the design of some mosques, palaces, and culinary traditions that blend Turkish and Berber elements.

The Ottomans established a regency in Algiers, governed by pashas appointed by the Sultan. Over time, Algiers became a significant Ottoman naval base and a hub for corsair activity in the western Mediterranean. An administrative system was created to maintain imperial oversight while allowing a degree of local autonomy, thus ensuring the region's strategic and economic importance within the empire.

1-4-1. The Establishment of the Regency of Algiers

The establishment of the Regency of Algiers marked a pivotal moment in the historical trajectory of North Africa, with the Ottoman Empire playing a central role in its formation. A key factor in this development was the crucial support provided by the Barbarossa brothers, Aruj and Khair-eddin, whose corsair activities and military successes against Spanish forces laid the foundation for Ottoman influence in the region. The decision by Khair-eddin Barbarossa to seek Ottoman protection and pledge allegiance in the early 16th century constituted a major turning point in Algerian history. As McDougall (2017) recounts:

In the late autumn of 1519, the leading citizens of Algiers composed a letter from ‘the whole populace of the city’ to Sultan Selim I, ruler of the Ottoman Empire, who only two years earlier had swept from Anatolia through Syria and Egypt, conquering the historic heartlands of the Arab and Muslim worlds. ‘We had fallen’, they wrote, ‘in these troubled times from difficulty into difficulty, in an unhappy situation of weakness on the edge of misfortune,’ before the arrival of the man who was now at the head of their state, Khayr al-Din ‘Barbarossa’. He, along with the notables and populace of the city, now declared his devotion and faithfulness to the victorious Ottoman ruler; all placed themselves in his service. (p. 48)

Under Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire significantly expanded its territorial reach. The Mediterranean became a key zone of imperial interest during the 16th century, and establishing a presence in North Africa—particularly in the port city of Algiers—was considered essential to Ottoman strategic objectives.

The Ottoman navy, under the command of the Barbarossa brothers, achieved notable victories in the region. Recognizing Algiers' strategic importance in the western Mediterranean, the Ottoman state provided military support, including the deployment of Janissary troops. This assistance facilitated the consolidation of Ottoman power and the formal establishment of an administrative framework in Algeria. The region was organized as a semi-autonomous province under Ottoman suzerainty.

Originally privateers, the Barbarossa brothers were later appointed as rulers of Algiers by the Ottoman Sultan. Renowned for their naval and strategic prowess, they transformed Algiers into a dominant maritime base and regional trading hub.

The establishment of the Regency of Algiers ushered in a period of relative stability and prosperity, largely due to effective Ottoman governance and the promotion of trade and commerce. Algiers emerged as a major economic center in the Mediterranean, attracting merchants from across Europe and the Middle East. As De Grammont (1887,p.30) affirms: "Immediately after receiving the news of his brother's death, Khair-Eddine sent envoys to Constantinople, charged with offering Sultan Selim the sovereignty of the kingdom of Algiers." (researcher's own translation)

Over time, the Regency of Algiers developed into a formidable regional power and a rival to other Mediterranean states such as Spain and Venice. The city's noticeable strategic location and naval capacity enabled it to control important maritime trade routes and bolster its influence throughout the region. Despite periodic internal challenges and external threats from rival European powers, the Regency endured and flourished under Ottoman aegis for several centuries. Its role as a gateway to the western Mediterranean ensured its continued importance in regional politics and trade.

In conclusion, the establishment of the Regency of Algiers was made possible by the robust support of the Ottoman Empire and the strategic leadership of the Barbarossa brothers. Their efforts were instrumental in positioning Algiers as a significant political, economic, and military actor in the Mediterranean—a legacy that shaped the region's identity for generations. The Regency of Algiers also represented a unique manifestation of Ottoman governance, marked by a significant degree of local autonomy. Corsair activity was not only central to its economy but also played a critical role in shaping its international relations, particularly with European powers. The Regency maintained a dominant naval presence in the Mediterranean. As Tomlins (1851) notes: "The Regency possessed a formidable military strength, with its army and navy playing a significant role in its military might. The kingdom's strength is rooted in its military power, both on land and at sea." (p. 703)

The political system evolved over time, with shifts in the roles and influence of Pashas, Deys, and the Janissary corps. Despite being nominally under Ottoman sovereignty, the Regency of Algiers developed a distinctive political and administrative identity.

The economy was heavily reliant on corsair activity, which contributed both to the state's financial stability and to its continued autonomy from the central Ottoman administration. As time passed, the Regency grew increasingly self-governing, though it retained formal ties to the Ottoman Empire. The decisive role of the Ottoman Empire—particularly through the leadership of the Barbarossa brothers—in establishing the Regency of Algiers remains widely recognized. It represents a foundational moment in the modern history of North Africa and a defining chapter in Algeria's political and maritime legacy.

1-5 The Structure of Ottoman Rule in Algeria

The structure of Ottoman rule in Algeria, formally known as the Regency of Algiers, evolved over time and reflected a unique blend of imperial Ottoman governance and local adaptations. The system developed into a distinct political structure, characterized by both hierarchical military authority and regional autonomy. The following outlines the key components of this system:

✓ Structural Elements

• Pashas

Initially, the Ottoman Empire appointed Pashas to serve as governors of Algiers. These officials were tasked with representing the authority of the central Ottoman state. However, as the Regency matured, local power dynamics shifted, and the Regency gained significant autonomy from Istanbul. As Shaler (1826) notes: "Omar Pasha, who was then Aga, was the individual in question." (p. 162)

• The Janissary Corps

The Janissaries, an elite military force of the Ottoman Empire, played a central role in the administration and defense of the Regency. Composed of recruits from across the Ottoman world, these soldiers formed the backbone of Algiers' military and political structure. Shaler (1826) explains: "The corps of Turks, which comprises foreigners of all nations who come to Algiers as Janissaries, and from which officers are selected, is sustained by continual importations from the Levant. These individuals are typically of the lowest orders in those barbarous countries. Upon arriving in Algiers, they are conscripted into the armed forces as ordinary soldiers, with advancement contingent on their own merit or chance." (p. 140)

In a separate passage, Shaler adds: "The Janissaries are attached to the barracks, where they are originally incorporated upon arrival. In this location, they advance by seniority to the command of

detachments and corps. This is the sole authentic organization or system that has been identified among them.” (p. 36)

- **The Deys**

Over time, effective political power in the Regency shifted to the Deys, who were elected leaders chosen primarily from among the Janissary ranks. Shaler (1826) writes: “A Dey of Algiers asserts that a living monarch is the most despotic and implicitly obeyed figure of authority on earth.” (p. 18) .The deyship became a central institution in the political life of the Regency. According to Tomlins (1851): “The government of the Algerines consists of the Dey and a Douwan, or common council. The Dey is chosen from within the army; every rank, even the lowest, has an equal right to attain this dignity.” (p. 703). This system introduced a relatively decentralized model of governance, where power was shared between the Dey and the military elite, rather than strictly imposed by the central Ottoman government.

- ✓ **Local Administration**

The Regency maintained a modest but functional local administrative system. Officials were assigned to govern different regions of Algeria, but ultimate authority remained concentrated in Algiers.

- **Corsair Activity:**

Privateering was a fundamental economic and political institution within the Regency. Captains of corsair vessels, known as **Raïs**, held considerable power and contributed significantly to state revenue. Their actions influenced both internal politics and external diplomatic relations with European powers.

- **Social Structure:**

The social hierarchy was dominated by the Ottoman military elite, particularly the Janissaries, while the local Algerian population occupied a subordinate status. Tomlins (1851) notes: “In addition to the Janissaries, the Dey occasionally enlisted the Cologlies (or Coloulies), who were the sons of soldiers permitted to marry in Algiers. However, these individuals were considered dangerous and were generally excluded from positions of power, including the office of Dey.” (p.20)

The structure of the Algerian army included:

- Aga (general)

- 30 Chia-Bashas (colonels)
- 800 Bolluk-Bashas (captains)
- 400 Oldah-un-Bashas (lieutenants)

Advancement was based primarily on seniority, not wealth or political connections. Salaries were minimal; the youngest soldiers earned only 406 aspers every two months, while the most senior received a maximum of 5,800 aspers (with 696 aspers equal to one dollar). Some officers also received rations—such as eight loaves of bread per day—in place of substantial monetary compensation. (Tomlins, 1851, p. 703)

✓ **Key Characteristics of Ottoman Rule in Algiers** : the Characteristics of Ottoman Rule in Algiers include the following aspects.

- **Autonomy:**

The Regency of Algiers was marked by a high degree of autonomy, especially in its later stages. Although nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, it often acted independently in domestic and foreign affairs.

- **Military Dominance:**

The political system was dominated by the Janissary corps, whose control over both governance and the military apparatus allowed them to assert de facto independence from Istanbul.

- **Economic Reliance on Corsair Activity:**

Corsairing was not only an economic enterprise but also a mechanism for asserting influence and sustaining political independence. It generated significant revenue and served as a basis for the Regency's interactions—sometimes confrontational—with European states.

1-6. The Relationship with the Ottoman Empire

The relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire was intricate, evolving over the centuries and marked by both close cooperation and increasing autonomy.

Algeria, known as the Regency of Algiers, was nominally part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Sultan was formally recognized as the supreme ruler. However, in practice, especially in later centuries, the Regency operated with significant autonomy. The strong historical ties between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire can be traced to the early 16th century, when the Barbarossa brothers, Aruj and Khair-eddin, defended the Algerian coast against Spanish incursions.

Aruj was appointed Beylerbey of Algeria, and their alliance with the Ottomans significantly bolstered the Empire's military presence in the Mediterranean. One of the most notable moments in this cooperation was Algeria's contribution to the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

Over time, Algeria began to exercise greater independence while maintaining symbolic allegiance to the Ottoman Caliphate. This was evident in the continued exchange of gifts and mutual military support. Algeria also signed bilateral treaties with European powers such as France, Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States, highlighting its sovereign diplomatic engagements. The alliance with the Ottoman Empire was not merely political—it was also military. Algerian forces actively supported the Ottomans in several major conflicts, including four notable confrontations with the Russian Empire in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Greece, and the Mediterranean. According to *Russian Warships in the Age of Sail (1696–1860)* by John Tredrea and Eduard Sozaev, Admiral Sid Ali commanded the Algerian fleet in a key naval battle in 1791 off the Bulgarian coast, which resulted in a tactical defeat for the Russians (p. 144).

Corsair operations were central to the Algerian-Ottoman relationship. These state-sanctioned privateers raided European ships, generating immense wealth. While the Ottomans often turned a blind eye, they benefitted indirectly from the spoils, reinforcing Algeria's strategic importance. As Shaler (1826) notes, Janissaries in Algiers—often foreigners recruited from the Levant—formed a key part of this military structure, rising through ranks based on merit or fortune (p. 140). The governance of Algeria under Ottoman suzerainty gradually transformed. Initially overseen by Ottoman-appointed governors, power later shifted to locally elected Deys and the influential Janissary corps. This devolution created a semi-independent regime that managed its own affairs while maintaining symbolic ties to Istanbul.

The Ottoman influence left a lasting imprint on Algerian society, from architecture and cuisine to religious practice and administration. Even after the Ottoman Empire's dissolution in 1922, its legacy persisted in Algeria's institutions and national identity. De Grace (1759) referred to Algeria as a kingdom centered on its capital, Algiers, with a well-established maritime tradition. This illustrates that Algeria possessed a distinct identity even before the fall of Andalusia or the rise of Ottoman control. The continuity of its geographical and cultural characteristics affirms Algeria's longstanding historical prominence.

The relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire was multifaceted, encompassing military alliances, corsair activity, and administrative evolution. It was both strategic and ideological. Algeria leveraged its ties with the Ottomans to maintain autonomy and resist European colonial expansion. This alliance allowed it to flourish as a regional power and contributed to shaping its modern identity.

Understanding this dynamic offers valuable insights into the power structures and historical legacies that define North Africa and the Mediterranean to this day.

1-7 Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire, under the leadership of Sultan Selim I, began its territorial expansion into North Africa in the early 16th century. This expansion was motivated by a combination of factors, including the pursuit of territorial dominance, control of lucrative trade routes, and the propagation of Islam. Algeria's strategic location made it highly coveted by various empires throughout history. Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Algeria served as a vital nexus for commercial exchange, and its control conferred significant influence over regional trade networks.

The inception of Ottoman rule in Algeria commenced with the establishment of the Regency of Algiers in the early 16th century. This regency operated as a semi-autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire, governed by a local ruler known as the Dey. The Ottomans exercised their sovereignty through a system of appointed governors, military garrisons, and administrative frameworks. The creation of the Regency of Algiers marked the formal integration of Algeria into the Ottoman imperial system. This administrative entity became the center of Ottoman authority in North Africa, managing governance, trade, and military affairs.

The formation of Ottoman rule in Algeria constituted a significant turning point in the region's history. The alliance between the Ottomans and local Berber tribes, the growing threat of Spanish occupation, and the decisive actions of the Barbarossa brothers were all instrumental in cementing the Ottoman presence in Algeria. The Empire's rule left a lasting imprint on the cultural and historical trajectory of the region—an influence that persists to this day. This enduring legacy renders Algeria a compelling subject for historical and scholarly inquiry.

Ottoman governance in Algeria was characterized by a hierarchical structure that combined centralized imperial authority with localized autonomy. While the sultan appointed officials to oversee day-to-day administration, the regime maintained strategic partnerships with tribal leaders and influential local figures. This pragmatic system enabled the Ottomans to govern effectively while accommodating indigenous customs and power structures.

Chapter One Historical context of Ottoman Rule in Algeria

Algeria's relationship with the Ottoman Empire was complex and multifaceted. Though the Ottomans provided military protection, economic support, and political oversight, they also contended with resistance from indigenous tribes, European rivals, and internal dissent. This intricate relationship shaped the development of Algeria's political, social, and economic institutions throughout the centuries of Ottoman rule.

Understanding the historical context of Ottoman rule in Algeria offers valuable insight into the processes of imperial expansion, the interplay of regional politics, and the dynamics of cultural exchange in the early modern Mediterranean. Studying the key events and administrative structures of this era enhances our appreciation of North Africa's diverse and multilayered past.

The Ottoman expansion into North Africa and the establishment of the Regency of Algiers were instrumental in defining Algeria's political, social, and cultural landscape. As historical inquiry continues to delve into this pivotal chapter, it becomes evident that Ottoman influence left an indelible mark on Algeria. A nuanced understanding of the Empire's presence—its motivations, governance, and regional relationships—sheds light not only on Algeria's historical evolution but also on the broader forces that have shaped Mediterranean and Islamic history. Furthermore, the diplomatic lessons and strategic insights drawn from this era remain relevant for analyzing contemporary geopolitical dynamics in the region.

Chapter TWO

**Aspects of Algeria's Autonomy under the
Ottoman Rule**

2-1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore the remarkable degree of self-governance that Algeria managed to cultivate within the vast Ottoman Empire. It will be showed that Algeria carved out a unique space for itself, exhibiting significant autonomy across various spheres.

The endeavor will begin by examining political autonomy, revealing how Algeria, under the leadership of its Deys, established its own distinct political institutions and decision-making processes, often acting independently of the central Ottoman authority in Istanbul.

Next, we will explore economic autonomy, highlighting Algeria's control over its trade networks, revenue generation, and economic policies, which allowed her to flourish as a significant maritime power in the Mediterranean region.

The chapter will then turn to military autonomy, highlighting the formidable Algerian navy and its crucial role in regional power dynamics and the defense of its territories, often operating with considerable independence. Following this, we will delve into cultural and religious autonomy.

2-2 Political Autonomy

When examining Algeria's political autonomy under Ottoman rule, it's crucial to delve into scholarly works that provide nuanced perspectives. James McDougall's *A History of Algeria* (2017) provides a deep analysis of Algerian history, including the Ottoman period. It examines the complexities of the Regency of Algiers and its relationship with the Ottoman Empire. McDougall's work is valuable for understanding the interplay between central authority and local autonomy. This book provides an overview of Algerian history, and places the Ottoman era into a larger context, highlighting the intricate relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire.

Algeria was independent of the Ottoman rule in 1567, meaning that its succession to Istanbul lasted only 51 years. In "*Historical and Geographical Account of Algiers* (1797), James William Stevens (1797) says that, "In 1567,...Mahomet, who gained the love of the Algerines by several public spirited actions. He incorporated the Janissaries and Levantine Turks together, and by that means put an end to their dissensions, which laid the foundation of the Algerine independency on the Porte". (P.43). According to Stevens (1797) Mahomet who is the son of Khair-Eddin Barbaros called to Istanbul and his Caliph Muhammad who won the hearts of the Algerians with great reforms. This led to the establishment of the independent Algeria from the upper gate.

-In "*Encyclopedia Britannia Dictionary Arts, sciences.* (1778), Dobson Be Wirron states that, "in 1567 ... the Janissaries and Levantine Turks together, and by that means put an end to their dissensions, which laid the foundation of the Algerine independency on the Porte". (p.242)

- Looking at some of the international agreements, that the Algerians signed as a republic (An independent republic), we start from the year 1662. This is the peace treaty between Charles II, the King of Britain and The Dey of Algeria; it holds the date 23 April 1662.

The first article says "From now on and forever, there will be peace between the King of Britain this is on one side And Pasha and the court of the rulers of Algeria on the other side".

Charles II (1664) write that, "That from this day, and forever for-ward, there be a Good and Firme Peace between his Sacred Majesty the King of Great Britain, & and the Balla, Duan, and Governors of Algiers "(P. 03).

✓ **Political independent Flag**

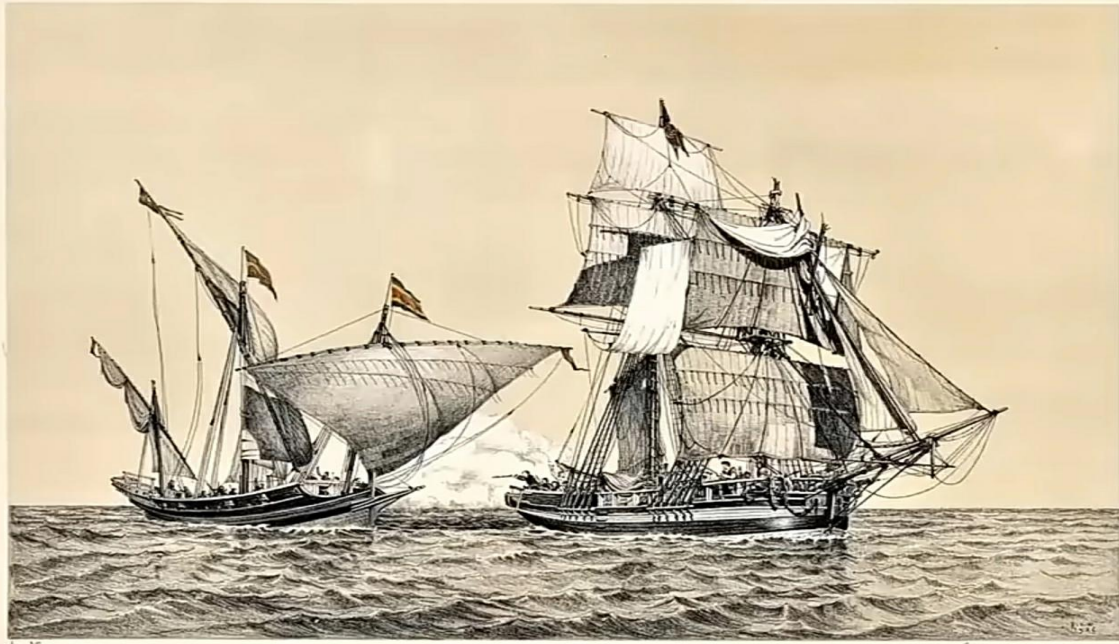
Obviously, an independent state must also have a flag. The Ottoman state used to have its flag. Algeria, on the other hand, had completely different flags.

Sample Algerian Flags



The Algerian flag is documented in many historical sources. The flags used in Algeria date from the period between 1500 and 1830. This era primarily covers the Regency of Algiers. It is important to note that the concept of a unified national flag, as we understand it today, was still developing during that time and that various banners and standards were probably in use.

The picture below shows the American ship Brigantine Polly of Newburyport captured by Algerine Pirates's ship carrying the local flag 1793.



AMERICAN SHIPS
VII
BRIGANTINE *Polly* OF NEWBURYPORT
CAPTURED BY ALGERINE PIRATES
1793



from [https // www.historicallythinking.org](https://www.historicallythinking.org)

During the Regency of Algiers (16th to 19th centuries), Algerian forces represented a significant maritime power in the Mediterranean. This period witnessed the signing of numerous treaties between the Regency of Algiers and various European and American nations. These treaties often entailed payments or tributes in exchange for safe maritime trade and protection from privateering activities conducted by Algerian corsairs.

Notable examples include agreements signed with France, Britain, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United States. The U.S., for instance, signed its first treaty with Algiers in 1795, agreeing to pay tribute to secure the safety of American merchant ships in the Mediterranean. Similarly, Spain signed a treaty in 1791 that included provisions favorable to Algiers.

It is important to note that such treaties did not necessarily reflect Algeria's overwhelming military strength but rather a pragmatic response by foreign powers to the threat posed by Algerian corsairs. For many European and American nations, these payments were seen as a necessary cost of conducting business in the Mediterranean Sea.

While Algiers exerted considerable influence, treaties signed during this period were often based on mutual interest rather than one-sided power. This era of relative autonomy declined in the early 19th century, culminating in the French invasion and colonization of Algeria in 1830.

Historical records offer compelling evidence of Algeria's diplomatic presence abroad. On January 8, 1562, for example, Mayali reported from Spain that an Algerian ambassador was expected to visit the Spanish king to renew diplomatic ties. Contrary to claims that Algerian diplomacy was inactive before the French occupation, numerous records—such as those found in Mayali's and others' writings—confirm the presence of Algerian envoys abroad. For instance, in 1581, Queen Elizabeth I appointed William Harborne as the first English ambassador to Algiers, marking the start of formal diplomatic relations. According to Lambert (1898), “the first charter was granted by Queen Elizabeth in 1581. The first ambassador was Hareborne, and in 1803 the government assumed such appointments for itself” (p. 36).

In 1664, despite efforts by the French consul in Algiers, Father Du Bourdieu, the Ottoman-Algerian divan refused to accept new French concessions, as recorded by Paul (1903). This reflects Algiers' assertion of autonomy even in the face of European pressure.

In 1684, Alhaj Jaafar Agha served as Algeria's ambassador to France, receiving royal honors at the French court following a peace agreement. He appears in the *Annuaire Historique pour l'année 1850*, which also mentions another Algerian envoy, Hadj Farouk, active in 1734.

René Lemaire served as French consul in Algiers from 1690 to 1693 (Du Rhone, 1904), and Bakir Reis represented Algeria in France during the reign of Louis XIV in 1711 (Plantet, 1889).

In England, Algerian ambassador Omar Reis was honored upon his return on April 20, 1762 (Redington, 1878). On May 20, 1775, M. de La Vallée, the French consul in Algiers, wrote a letter describing the political tensions of the period (Bouches-du-Rhône Collection, 1904).

By 1791, the U.S. was considering dispatching an envoy to Algiers to establish peace, a process that culminated in the 1795 treaty recognizing Algerian authority in maritime affairs (Matthew, 1833).

In 1801 and 1802, Dr. Benamer, the Algerian ambassador in London, hosted European guests, including the author of *Memoirs of a Gentleman*, who recorded his visit (Bull, 1815). British officials reportedly sought to influence the ambassador, as Britain aimed to secure naval passage through the Mediterranean (Worrall, 1815).

William A'Court was appointed as British ambassador to Algiers in 1813 (Lambert, 1898). In 1816, the Algerian consul in Gibraltar prohibited cattle exports to Algeria and Europe due to currency concerns (Balmaseda, 1819).

Ali Reis, another prominent Algerian diplomat, resided in London for over four years and was officially recognized as Algerian ambassador in 1823. Reports confirm his presence in London's elite social circles (Bolton, 1819).

Jean-Ciné's *Le Chevalier d'Arvieux* identifies a French ambassador to Algiers in 1690, and Charles (1913) records the appointment of Samson Napollon as French ambassador in 1628. The famous 1827 "fan incident," in which Dey Hussein struck the French consul, marked a turning point in Franco-Algerian relations (*Herodote.net*, 2025).

This overview demonstrates the extent and significance of Algerian diplomacy. Letters from Algerian rulers to European monarchs were often filled with praise and honorifics, including titles such as "Illustrious and Magnificent Lord," indicating mutual respect.

Moreover, Algeria's recognition of new political entities highlights its independent foreign policy. Algeria was among the first nations to acknowledge the independence of the United States (1783) and the French Republic (1792), despite opposition from other European powers. Algeria even extended loans and financial bonds to revolutionary France, disregarding diplomatic consequences.

These examples highlight the role Algeria played in shaping diplomatic relations and affirm its ability to operate as an autonomous political entity, even while being a nominal vassal of the Ottoman Empire.

2.3 Economic Autonomy

For the sake of comprehending Algeria's economic autonomy during the Ottoman period, it is necessary to examine the sources that explore trade, economic structures, and the role of corsair activity. The concept of economic autonomy is defined by the presence of specific areas characterized by a high degree of economic independence. The account below details the activity of the corsairs, which constituted a substantial economic catalyst, generating revenue and exerting influence on trade. Comprehensive research is, therefore, necessary to provide detailed insights into the historical and cultural significance of the corsairs and their impact. (Finkel, 2005).

In trade networks, Algeria maintained independent trade relationships that were not subject to the political dominance of the Ottoman Empire. The study of Mediterranean trade during this era is of significant value.

It is essential to understand the dynamics of agricultural production, the intricacies of local crafts, and the network of internal trade. As noted by Duyckinck in his book *A Short History of Algeiers (1805)* the soil yielded a remarkable abundance of exquisite fruits, rice, roots, and grains of diverse species, enabling the inhabitants to partake in two to three annual harvests. The Currency and Economic activities also reflected autonomy and independence.

Algeria experienced a period of self-rule within several kingdoms. This is discussed in *The Coin Collector's Journal* 1950. The author examines the currency following its unification under the Nomad system. After the fall of Andalusia, the Ottoman alliance arrived, and Algeria was reunited. A single currency bearing the name of Algeria dates to 1239 Hijri (1824), printed in Algeria with a stamp.



Earlier documents include a currency from 1219 Hijri (1804) and another from 1245 Hijri.



These are documented in archives of currencies (www.coinarchives.com).

The state had clearly defined borders, and the spirit of economic independence was substantiated by local income and currency bearing the name Algeria. Notably, Britain was a significant importer of Algerian goods during the Deys' era, purchasing 7,000 to 8,000 tons of wheat and barley annually, alongside leather, wool, silk, rugs, and clothing. As Tomlins (1841) asserts, "the Algerines were responsible for the shipment of between seven and eight thousand tons of wheat and barley on an annual basis. The aforementioned shipment also comprised wool, copper, rags, silk sashes, embroidered handkerchiefs, dates, and Christian slaves" (p. 704).

Algeria's imports primarily included gold and silver ornaments, damasks, cloths, spices, tin, iron-plated brass, lead, quicksilver, cordage, sail cloths, bullets, linen, cochineal, tartar, alum, rice, sugar, soap, and cotton. The populace engaged in agricultural practices, manufacturing, production,

and the export and import of goods. The government imposed taxation and exerted control over the Mediterranean Sea, maintaining complete independence in economic policies.

The origins of Algerian-American relations are deeply rooted in the complex history of North Africa during the late 18th century. Tensions escalated when the United States sought to avoid the annual tributes traditionally paid to the Regency of Algiers as part of peace treaties. In response, Algerian authorities issued stern warnings, including threats of expelling American ships and even declaring war. Notably, in 1796, diplomatic ties were broken, and Algeria emerged as a key player in maritime conflicts involving American vessels in the Mediterranean.

A rumor emerged among sea merchants who were unable to enter the Mountain of Tarek (Gibraltar). It was ascertained that a treaty of peace had been established between Algeria and the Americans, prompting merchants to embark on maritime expeditions to the Algerian coast to procure salted fish and wheat. An American ambassador in Spanish Alicante arrived on a substantial vessel and stated, "What is the purpose of your visit?" He replied, "Our purpose is to purchase wheat."

To discuss trade, it is necessary to equalize the country's debts. Understanding the implications of the Dey's financial obligations requires examining the actions of Donaldson, an American messenger who negotiated the settlement of these debts. Utilizing a circuitous route through Alicante, Lisbon, London, Livorno, Philadelphia, and Tripoli, Donaldson successfully negotiated a payment of \$200,000, resolving the outstanding debts. However, the debt indicated that the amount was incomplete, and an additional payment was issued. After a three-month period, he returned to Algeria with no interest, resulting in the cancellation of all American-Algerian contracts.

Subsequently, an Algerian Jew named Bekri assumed the financial obligation of \$18,000, extending the debt collection process for an additional three months. The American entity established a substantial branch in Algeria, comprising 36 funds. The delay in debt was compensated in accordance with the following stipulations. A gold coin valued at \$100,000 was extracted from Jewish banking institutions in London and dispatched to Algeria in June 1797.

The United States was eager to establish peace with Algeria. In their archives, an intriguing document stated that the Algerians would not accept any treaty with the United States, even if the latter were to offer a considerable sum. Irwin (1931) asserts, "He(The Dey) would not engage in negotiations with us, even if we were to offer a considerable sum" (p. 326).

Regarding the vessel itself, experts have posited that it is a remarkable accomplishment. Maclay (2008) asserts that the author is responsible for a series of American maritime histories, beginning with the sunrise on 25 January 1798. As Maclay (2008) notes, "On 20 January 1798, at approximately sunrise, a signal gun was discharged from the frigate *Crescent* to mark the commencement of departure from the harbour. At 10 a.m., the vessel successfully navigated the waters, propelled by a favourable leading breeze. Our best wishes are extended to Captain Newman, his officers, and men. It is to be hoped that they will arrive at their destination safely and present themselves before the Dey of Algiers" (p. 118).

The image of the *Crescent* ship, presented to the Dey of Algiers, can be found on the following website <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2020/august/seventh-frigate>

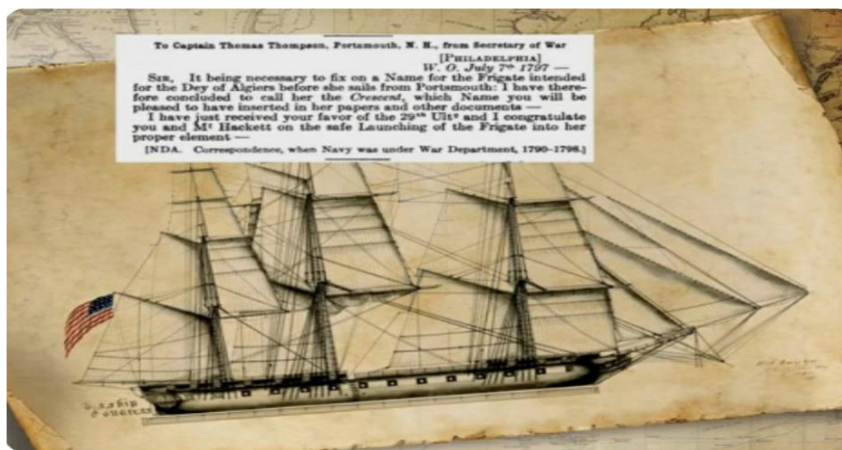
In recognition of this momentous event, a letter was composed by Josiah Fox, a Navy constructor, to government officials. The purpose of the letter was to officially assign the name "Crescent" to the American-built frigate intended as a diplomatic gift to the Dey of Algiers, in accordance with treaty obligations.

To Captain Thomas Thompson, Portsmouth, N. H., from Secretary of War [PHILADELPHIA

W. On July 7 1797

Sir, It being necessary to fix on a Name for the Frigate intended for the Dey of Algiers before she sails from Portsmouth I have therefore concluded to call her the Crescent, which Name you will be pleased to have inserted in her papers apers and other documents-I have just received your favor of the 29th Ult and I congratulate you and Me Hackett on the safe Launching of the Frigate into her proper element

[NDA. Correspondence, when Navy was under War Department, 1790-1798]



<https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2020/august/seventh-frigate>

2-4 Military Autonomy

To comprehend the military autonomy of Algeria during the Ottoman period, it is imperative to consider the distinctive characteristics of the Regency of Algiers. The Regency functioned in both military and political affairs with a degree of autonomy that was not directly under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. Its naval power, fueled by corsair activities, enabled it to project power and defend its interests independently. The following sections will address the subject of defense capabilities, the works of the Corsairs, and the establishment of an independent military force.

The Regency was responsible for the maintenance of its own fortifications and military infrastructure. This self-sufficiency in defense underscored its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. Milner (1851) asserts, "the strength of the kingdom in question derives from its military might on land and at sea" (p. 703). This statement highlights the significance of Algeria's military strength, which was not reliant on external support from Istanbul or other entities.

Literary works concentrating on the history of the Barbary corsairs offer significant insights into the Regency's naval strength and its capacity for autonomous action. The corsairs were instrumental in projecting Algerian power across the Mediterranean. For instance, Dan (1646) recounts an incident where Algerian corsairs seized an ambassador's ship en route to Istanbul, demonstrating their defiance of Ottoman authority. Dan writes, "Those who know even a little about the affairs of the Porte of the Emperor of the Turks are not unaware that the State of Venice is among those who have Ambassadors there." (p. 109).

The Algerian army, often referred to as the Independent Army, was not affiliated with any other state or alliance. This military entity was established to assert Algeria's sovereignty. Despite the prevalence of Ottoman military ranks in Turkish society, the Algerian army later adopted a more contemporary nomenclature. The rejection of an Ottoman messenger's request further exemplifies Algeria's absolute military autonomy. This rejection was a clear assertion of independence from the Ottoman influence.

Algeria's military autonomy is further evidenced by its actions during key historical events. For instance, during the French invasion of Egypt in 1799, Algeria declared war on France independently of the Ottoman Empire. The *Caledonia Mercury* reported on 9 January 1799 that "the French consul, Maltidou, and all the French residents of Algeria declared war on France" (*Caledonia Mercury*, 1799). This act of defiance was met with immediate revenge, as Algerian ships advanced towards the French coast. The leadership of Rais Hamidou in this naval war further solidified Algeria's reputation as a strong maritime power.

Similarly, during the Spanish attack on Algeria in 1775, there was no intervention by the Ottomans. Duyckink (1805) recounts, "on 23 June 1775, a fleet comprising six ships of the line, twelve frigates, and thirty-three other armed vessels set sail from Cartagena, in Spain, with the intention of attacking Algiers" (p. 64). Despite the Spanish forces' numerical advantage, the Algerians successfully repelled the attack, resulting in significant Spanish losses. This victory further highlights Algeria's military independence.

2-5 Cultural and Religious Autonomy

In order to comprehend the cultural and religious autonomy of Algeria during the Ottoman era, it is necessary to analyze the interaction between local traditions and religious practices, and the influences of the Ottomans. The following is a detailed list of the most important aspects and the most relevant resources.

Firstly, that Sufism and local religious brotherhoods were prevalent; secondly, that these operated independently of central Ottoman control. Below is a summary of an account on the role of Islamic scholars and religious institutions in the maintenance of local tradition

- ✓ The maintenance of indigenous linguistic and cultural practices, in conjunction with the integration of Ottoman cultural elements.
- ✓ The development of distinctive artistic and literary traditions has been observed.
- ✓ Education the functioning of religious schools and centres of learning facilitate the preservation of local knowledge.

The concept of religious autonomy is a significant topic in the study of religion and society. The Ottoman Empire was notable for its general tolerance of religious diversity, a policy that facilitated

the maintenance of local customs and practices. Local religious leaders and institutions have been shown to have played a significant role in the maintenance of cultural cohesion (Smith, 2019).

In *Historical and Geographical Account of Algiers (1797)* by James Wilson Stevens, as stated on page 411 of the treaty of peace between the Algerian and President George Washington was written in the official language used today's Algeria, i.e. the Arabic language.

The treaty was neither in Turkish nor in English, and was defined by the Hijri calendar. According to Stevens (1797) says that, "the United States of America and the Dey and Regency of Algiers signed a treaty written in the Arabic language on the twenty-first of Luna safer year of Hegira 1210" (P.411).

William Shaler (1826) described the Language of Algeria. He says that, "The languages spoken in Algiers are the Turkish, the Arabic, the Hebrew...though the Arabic is the predominant tongue; French is in general use in the society of the foreign agents residing here, and the Lingua Franca, which is a barbarous compound of Spanish, French, Italian, and Arabic, is the ordinary medium of communication between foreigners and natives". (P.13)

Shaler also spoke about Algeria's Cultural Anatomy. Shaler (1826) says that, "The Algerines are unacquainted with the art of pruning and grafting trees. Their gardens are not, walled, but fenced round with a peculiar species of fig trees" (P.18)

Shaler (1826) adds that, "would soon cease to be a distinct class in the Algerine population. They are strict Mussulmen, and their language is the political language of the government." (P. 84).

-The letter below was written by William Shaler to the Bay of Algeria. He said that, America sent her correspondences to Algeria translated into Arabic.

The undersigned believe it to be their duty to assure his Highness that the above conditions will not be departed from ; thus leaving to the Regency of Algiers the choice between peace and war. The United States, while anxious to maintain the former, are prepared to meet the latter. In order to facilitate to the government of Algiers the understanding of this note, the undersigned here with transmit to his Highness an informal translation of it into the Arabic language, and they expect that his Highness will cause a reply to be made to this communication in writing, in either the English, French, Spanish, or Italian language; or by a foreign Consul, authorized by him to vouch for the

same. And they avail themselves of this occasion to offer to his Highness the homage of their high consideration and profound respect.

(Signed.) W Staller

I. Chauncey.

U. S. Ship Washington, Bay of Algiers, 9th Dec. 1816.

(Adopted from Shaler, 1826.P.299)

-As Shaler (1826) says in his Book that, "Omar was a man of strong natural good sense, quick perception, and great dignity of character. When he projected writing a letter to the President, he enquired of me if the Turkish language was understood in America. I replied that it probably was not, but that there were persons there who understood the Arabic." (P. 142).

This constituted a new search of the Golden Age of Algeria. This is an example of early education prior to the French and Ottoman occupations, and it is important to note that the period under discussion here extends back 200-300 years. As Tassy (1725) says that, "the city contains ten large mosques and fifty smaller ones, three large public colleges or schools, and a large number of smaller schools for children "(p. 164).

Besides, the historical context of Yemen and Hijaz, particularly with regard to the period in which the Ottoman Empire exercised sovereignty over the region. It is evident that there was only one newspaper that published on a daily basis in Turkish within the Arabian lands. This fact serves to demonstrate the continuity of that architecture within the Ottoman Empire, in contrast to the situation that can be observed in Algeria. In fact, it should be noted that this was not applicable to Algeria.

Despite the shared religious affiliation of the Algerians and Turks, the historical and cultural influences that shaped their societies led to significant differences in their respective identities. It is important to note that the Algerians were Muslims in terms of their original religion, which differed from that of the Turks in terms of adaptations, tendencies and practices. Their objective was to achieve independence in the field of jurisprudence and interpretation.

Stevens (1797) states that, "the religious practices of the Algerines exhibit significant distinctions from those of the Turks, primarily in terms of the adoption of a more diverse array of superstitious beliefs. The practice of Islam is characterised by the acknowledgement of the Qur'an as the guiding scripture," (P.704).

In this regard, it is quite evident that the Ottoman Empire did not exercise direct control over the Algerians. Shaler (1826) says that, " would soon cease to be a distinct class in the Algerine population. They are strict Mussulmen "(P.84).

Tassy (1725) asserts that , "the city is home to ten large mosques and fifty small ones, three large colleges or public schools, and a plethora of small schools catering to children "(p. 164).

According to Tassy (1725),As stated in Al-Medina (which means Algeria, the capital), there are 10 large mosques and 50 small mosques, as well as three universities or large schools. Furthermore, it is important to note that there are also a number of schools for young children. The exclusion of these elements from the official record is indicative of a lack of concern on the part of the relevant authorities.

Another significant example of Algeria's religious autonomy is the fact that Algeria was the only Muslim country to compel the United States to adopt the Hijri calendar. This historic event occurred in July 1818, following a disagreement between Algeria and the United States over the number of days in a year. The dispute began when the Americans sent their annual bills to Algeria. The Dey of Algeria instructed the Americans to deliver the payment in the form of gunpowder. The American ship arrived loaded with gunpowder, but the crew disembarked empty-handed. When the minister presented the bill documents, it was valued at \$15,000. According to Elliot (1883), the minister would have accepted the payment had it been offered. However, the Algerian minister insisted on using the Islamic calendar, which has 354 days in a year, and claimed an outstanding balance of \$27,000.

Algeria's educational infrastructure characterised by a clear distinction between major universities, religious institutions such as mosques and institutes, and schools catering to children. A number of participants could not be excluded from the schools, which raises the question of where these participants were located.This suggests that the wealthy classes were motivated to ensure their children received an education.

Duyckink (1805) provides a detailed account of the city of Necanz, noting its notable mosque and its institution of religious studies. Furthermore, it is important to note the distinction made between the university and the mosque.

Shaler (1826) following his delineation of the schools of children, proceeded to offer a parallel analysis of the schools of girls. Shaler (1826) says that, "I am informed that similar schools are kept by women for the instruction of young girls" (P.58).

Then Shaler(1826) also says that," I think there can be no doubt that these people stand on the very brink of civilization, and might be easily led into it through a system of government less repugnant to improvement in its principles and practice, than that under which they live" (P.58).

He asserts that these individuals are at the threshold of civilisation, and that it is feasible to propel them towards this state by enhancing the system of governance, principles, and practices. In Reise Nach Algier in den Jahren 1831 und 1832 (1834) by the German William Schamper. It is stated that prior to the implementation of ink in France's educational system; the term 'ink' was employed to denote the substance rather than the method of marking. Schamper (1834) who visited Algeria before the French occupation asserts that he came across young Algerians who were proficient in Arabic as well as English, Spanish, French, Italian and Greek . He also noted that

“ when the French occupied Algeria, they found that almost all Algerians spoke French. The people of the occupation did not speak Arabic," (p.53). which he found shocking and strange. Surprisingly, Schamper added that ," in his deliberate searches, he did not encounter a single person who was illiterate. Otherwise, he found." (p.53).

Within the same vein of thought, Colburn (1836) says that," Algerians are more educated than expected." (p. 16) .He rightly adds that " all of them know how to read and write, and most of them know how to calculate".(p. 16). Another interesting fact was introduced by Colburn saying that the Algerian teachers are not harsh. They did not insult their students verbally as European used to do. Colburn considers the fact that, "The Algerine pedagogues are not cruel, and they abstain from one odious mode of flagellation, which still disgraces some of our schools but still the rod is the schoolmaster's scepter in Algiers, though he flourishes it over the shoulders of his pupils, instead of more exceptionable parts" (p.16).

The above facts highlight and clearly depict Algeria's cultural and religious autonomy during the Ottoman era. To understand this autonomy further, it is essential to analyze the interaction between local traditions, religious practices, and Ottoman influences. Sufism and local religious

brotherhoods were prevalent and operated independently of central Ottoman control. Islamic scholars and religious institutions played a crucial role in maintaining local traditions. Additionally, Algeria preserved its indigenous linguistic and cultural practices while integrating Ottoman cultural elements, leading to the development of distinctive artistic and literary traditions.

Religious schools and centers of learning facilitated the preservation of local knowledge. The Ottoman Empire's general tolerance of religious diversity allowed for the maintenance of local customs and practices. Local religious leaders and institutions were instrumental in maintaining cultural cohesion (Smith, 2019).

2-6 Challenges to Algeria's Autonomy under Ottoman Rule

Algeria's history of autonomy and independence is shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external challenges, reflecting its resilience in the face of adversity. Under the Ottoman Empire, the Algeria enjoyed a degree of autonomy, but this independence was constantly threatened by both internal struggles and external pressures.

European powers, particularly Spain and later France, posed significant external challenges. The Regency's maritime trade and coastal territories were frequently targeted, as European naval powers sought to suppress corsair activities, leading to military conflicts and undermining the region's stability. Economically, the reliance on corsair revenue made the Regency vulnerable to European efforts to curb piracy, while shifts in global trade routes and the expansion of European economic influence further strained its financial stability.

Internally, the Regency faced political instability due to power struggles, particularly the dominance of the Janissary corps and the contentious system of electing Deys. These conflicts weakened the Regency's ability to respond effectively to external threats. Additionally, despite its autonomy, the Ottoman Empire's influence remained a constant factor. During periods of strong central Ottoman rule, attempts to exert greater control over the Regency limited its independence and further complicated its political dynamics.

The 19th century marked a turning point as Algeria sought to break free from Ottoman rule, driven by a desire for full sovereignty. This struggle was marked by significant bloodshed and sacrifice, as the Algerian people fought to reclaim their autonomy. However, independence from the Ottomans was short-lived, as Algeria soon fell under French colonial rule. The colonial period was

characterized by harsh policies, economic exploitation, and widespread resistance. The Algerian people organized armed uprisings and political movements, culminating in a protracted and arduous struggle for independence, which was finally achieved in 1962.

More recently, Post-independence Algeria faced new challenges politically and economically. The process of building was complex, as the country sought to establish a stable and prosperous society while safeguarding its sovereignty. Regional and global influences have also played a significant role in shaping Algeria's autonomy. Navigating regional alliances, economic dependencies, and security concerns pose ongoing challenges to the country within a rapidly changing world. Throughout its history, Algeria's journey toward autonomy and independence has been defined by its determination to overcome obstacles and preserve its identity. From its struggles under Ottoman and colonial rule to its ongoing efforts to preserve sovereignty in a globalized world, Algeria's story is one of resilience, sacrifice, and commitment to self-determination.

2.7 Conclusion

Algeria's autonomy under Ottoman rule was a complex and evolving reality that went far beyond mere nominal allegiance. The Regency of Algiers navigated its relationship with the Ottoman Empire, leveraging its strategic importance and military strength to secure substantial independence. The rise of the Janissary corps and the authority of the Dey exemplified this autonomy, creating a power structure that was distinct from central Ottoman control.

Economic independence, driven by corsair activities, further solidified Algiers' self-sufficiency. The Regency's capacity to pursue its own foreign policy and engage in independent trade emphasized its *de facto* sovereignty. This period shaped Algeria's political landscape, fostering a sense of self-reliance and laying the groundwork for future resistance against external powers. Understanding this autonomy is vital to grasping Algeria's historical trajectory, as it highlights the country's capacity for self-determination and its enduring pursuit of independence.

Ultimately, the Regency's autonomy is a testament to the complex and nuanced nature of imperial relationships. Also Algeria's position in the modern era, as well as in its current borders, symbols, including its currency, and flag.

Though nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, the Regency of Algiers exhibited significant autonomy, which was a defining characteristic of its historical context. This autonomy was not static, but evolved gradually, driven by the Regency's strategic importance and its unique political

structure. Initially established as a defense against Spanish incursions, Algiers used its naval power and economic strength, largely derived from piracy, to assert its independence. While maintaining symbolic sovereignty, the Ottoman Empire often found it pragmatic to Algiers considerable latitude. The rise to power of the Janissary corps, which culminated in the election of the Deys, further decentralized authority by shifting power away from the centrally appointed Pashas. The Regency's capacity to pursue its own foreign policy, engage in independent trade and maintain a formidable military force emphasized its de facto autonomy. This autonomy permeated economic and social spheres, enabling Algiers to develop its own identity within the Ottoman world. This period of self-governance laid the foundation for Algeria's later struggles for independence, demonstrating its capacity for self-determination. While Algeria was initially under Ottoman rule at the beginning, the influence of the Ottomans gradually decreased until Algeria became completely independent in managing its internal affairs and establishing its external relations.

General Conclusion



The Algerian state during the Ottoman era was not subject to full sovereignty by the Ottoman Empire. While it maintained a relationship with the Ottomans, it was not under their direct control. The modern state of Algeria was established after gaining independence from French colonialism, which followed the Ottoman period. The relationship between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire was more akin to an alliance or a shared interest, similar to Algeria's membership in the Islamic world or the African Union today.

During this period, the Ottoman Empire was influential, and Algeria was associated with it, but this did not mean that Algeria was a part of the Ottoman kingdom. Even if the Ottomans had the power to exert control, historical evidence and documents demonstrate that Algeria maintained its independence. This does not imply that Algeria was entirely free of Ottoman influence, but it was not under Ottoman domination.

The Ottoman Empire played a significant role in protecting North Africa, including Algeria, from Catholic invasions after the fall of Andalusia. This contribution is a historical fact that cannot be denied.

Before concluding, I would like to emphasize the importance of encouraging young students, particularly those in secondary school, to explore this period of history. The standard curriculum often does not cover it in detail, yet it is crucial for understanding Algeria's past and its path to independence. Additionally, it is essential to study the causes and consequences of French colonialism, as well as to reflect on the future of the country. By examining its history, Algeria can honor its past and envision a brighter future.

Algeria has built its relations with European countries and the United States based on its strength and autonomy. However, as these nations grew militarily and Algeria faced internal challenges, its sovereignty was tested. Despite these pressures, Algeria has consistently demonstrated resilience and determination in safeguarding its independence and pursuing its own path.

General Conclusion

The country continues to strive for political stability, economic development, and social progress while protecting its sovereignty. By addressing internal issues, fostering regional cooperation, and engaging with the international community, Algeria can overcome its challenges and build a prosperous future for its people.

Throughout its history, Algeria's autonomy has been tested by various external and internal pressures. From its struggle for independence to the complexities of the post-colonial era, Algeria has remained steadfast in its commitment to self-determination and sovereignty. By addressing these challenges, the country can continue to uphold its independence and work toward progress and development for its citizens.

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Appendices



Rais Hamidou Who is Rais Hamidou? How did the whole world suffer from the Algerian Navy in his era?

Rais Hamidou (Hamidou ben Ali) was a prominent Algerian corsair during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Rais Hamidou considered one of the historical figures with a nationalist tendency, which known as a mixture of perseverance and struggle to reach the highest ranks of maritime leadership, at a time when Algerian personalities were under the shadow of Ottoman rule. Rais Hamidou has been able to live with the situation. With the strength of his personality and skills, he was able to reach the highest positions, and win many invasions and naval wars. Every historical research on these personalities is a prelude to everything that is to protect the national memory, and a definition of the entire revolutionary and struggle elements of the Algerian people of all its sects throughout history. (مجلة الدراسات التاريخية) **Volume 4, Numéro 1, Pages 54-63, 2022-02-21)**

Muhammad bin Ali was born, who would later be nicknamed Rais Hamidou in Algeria in the year one thousand seven hundred and Seventy millennia. His father was a tailor, so he started teaching him the Sewing profession at an early stage of his life to be his future profession. Hamidou did not disappoint his father's thoughts. He started learning to sew and perfecting it, but he was Taking advantage of his time, he went to the sewing workshop and ran to the port of Algeria to watch the main ships in the port and sit with the sailors and listen to their stories and their adventures. At the age of ten, Hamidou abandoned diving and began his new work in the sea with the Algerian sailors. For a short time, Hamidou perfected his maritime skills and impressed by the Algerian sailors for their sharp intelligence.

-European sources described him as a man of average stature, but he was strong, had white skin and blue eyes and fair hair. Hamidou proved himself among the sailors, he went from a sailor to an officer, then to a Rais of the navy, and he was at the age of Twenty-five.

Hamid's rise to the French Revolution and Napoleon's adoption of power to drown Europe at that time in a turbulent crisis. Hamidou took advantage of these circumstances to strengthen the Algerian fleet.

-America obeys Raise Hamidou's orders

The United States was the target of the Algerian maritime, so the American ambassador suggested to London at that time, John Adams, not to return to Algeria and seek peace with Algeria. But Thomas Jefferson, the American foreign minister, objected to this and demanded that The Algerian Ambassador will give the opportunity to return to Algeria.

During this period, America began its revolution against Britain, and Thomas Jefferson began leading a diplomatic campaign to wage a major war against Algerian maritime.

This is what led Algeria to declare war on America, and to block two American ships, this is what led America to the revolution and to the war.

The French and the British, in turn, came together to fight for a common legal compact.

With the French, after the French and the British and with the French, and after the French came together again to fight for the common law of the British and the French.

This was the first time in history that America reached a joint agreement between the two nations, and it based on a treaty. This is the first time in history that America reached a union agreement with Algeria.

The American navy, but Thomas Jefferson, who will become the next President of America, is still insistent on implementing his idea of constructing an American fleet.



George Washington Founding Father, U.S. president from (1789 to 1797)

George Washington was a Founding Father and the first president of the United States, serving from 1789 to 1797. As commander of the Continental Army, Washington led Patriot forces to victory in the American Revolutionary War against the British Empire. He was commonly known as the Father of the Nation for his role in bringing about American independence.

Born in the Colony of Virginia, Washington became the commander of the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War. He was later elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, and opposed the perceived oppression of the American colonists by the British Crown. When the American Revolutionary War against the British began in 1775, Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. He directed a poorly organized and equipped force against disciplined British troops. Washington and his army achieved an early victory at the Siege of Boston in March 1776 but were forced to retreat from New York City in November. Washington crossed the Delaware River and won the battles of Trenton in late 1776 and Princeton in early 1777, then lost the battles of Brandywine and Germantown later that year.