



A historical overview of the social and economic reality of the Christian community in the state of Algiers during the Ottoman era (1519-1830).

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Abstract:

This research paper examines a number of aspects related to the lives of European Christians in Ottoman Algeria during the Ottoman period and their role in shaping its general framework, particularly given that this element was instrumental in the dynamics of Ottoman Algerian reality. We were able to conduct this study by tracing and investigating a number of Arab and foreign sources, with the aim of removing the ambiguity or vagueness surrounding the social and economic lives of this group, on the one hand, and also enriching the historical record of Ottoman Algeria, on the other.

Keywords: *regence Alger; Ottoman authority; Christians, society, economy.*

Aperçu historique de la réalité sociale et économique de la communauté chrétienne dans l'État d'Alger pendant l'ère ottomane (1519-1830).

Résumé :

Cet article de recherche examine un certain nombre d'aspects liés à la vie des chrétiens européens en Algérie ottomane pendant la période ottomane et leur

rôle dans l'élaboration de son cadre général, d'autant plus que cet élément a joué un rôle déterminant dans la dynamique de la réalité algérienne ottomane. Nous avons pu mener cette étude en retraçant et en examinant un certain nombre de sources arabes et étrangères, dans le but, d'une part, de lever l'ambiguïté ou le flou entourant la vie sociale et économique de ce groupe et, d'autre part, d'enrichir les archives historiques de l'Algérie ottomane.

Mots clés : *régence d'Alger ; autorité ottomane ; chrétiens, société, économie.*



Introduction

Some aspects of modern Algerian history still require further study, particularly in terms of social aspects. The individual and society are considered the primary drivers of power and its surroundings, while simultaneously being the primary nucleus for the emergence of these political and military events. In light of this, the proverb goes, "Society is the foundation of the state and the maker of history."

In this study, we have selected a segment from the social aspect of Ottoman Algeria: ethnic groups that, through their presence, contributed to the mobilization of the general reality of Algeria during the modern period. They are called the Christian group. Their presence also emerged as a result of the state and local society's openness to this group, and their treatment in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law. Before delving into the heart of the subject, we must address the following problematic question: What was the role and contribution of the Christian community in mobilizing the socio-economic aspects of Ottoman Algeria?

Before delving into the heart of the subject, we must briefly address a partial definition of the categories of the Christian community that settled between the Algerians and the Ottoman authorities, bound together by social and economic ties, or administrative and political ties, etc., as follows:

1. Categories of the Christian Community in regence Algeria

Over the three centuries of Ottoman rule, the Christian group in regence Alger included many categories. Some were free: consuls, renegades (converts), ambassadors, agents, merchants, travelers or explorers (for scientific reasons), and spies. Others were bound: household servants and slaves. Each group received a different treatment depending on their status, role, or activity¹.

French writer Pierre Dan estimated in the 17th century that the number of Christian captives reached about 25,000; other sources gave 35,000. By the late 18th century the number fell to about 18,000 according to Sharif al-Zahar². Below we explain the main categories and their socioeconomic role in the 18th and 19th centuries.

1.1. Renegades (al-'aläj) and Consuls

1.1.1: Renegades (al-'alaj)

Renegades or converts were Christians who embraced Islam. Foreign sources sometimes call them 'renegades'³. Many of these renegades were captured by Algerian sea captains when they were boys or young men. Others came voluntarily from Europe, especially from Italian city-states, attracted by security or by work opportunities in the regence

¹)Ahmed Slimani, History of the City of Algiers, which deals with the past of Algiers from civilizational, social, political, and cultural aspects. Algiers: Diwan of University Publications, p. 38.

²)Mahfoud Radoum, Culture and Acculturation in Algerian Urban Society during the Ottoman Era 1519–1830: A Historical Anthropological Study. Master's thesis, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of History, Emir Abdelkader University, Constantine, 2012, p. 56.

³) Hanifi Helaili, Papers on the History of Algeria during the Ottoman Era. Dar al-Huda, Ain M'lila, 1st ed, 2008, p. 124.



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of Algiers. After settling, they became useful to state officials or the local bourgeoisie. They worked as translators for beys and deys, joined the naval crews (maritime warfare), practiced crafts and arts, or worked in medicine.

Some rose to high positions; for example Al-'alaj Ali reached a high rank in the early period of the province⁴.

Many converted to Islam to join maritime campaigns and gain booty rather than spend their lives as slaves. The Spanish monk Diego de Haedo estimated 20,000 captives in the 16th century⁵.

Renegades became an important element in military ranks and received privileges like other servants of the Ottoman authorities. They could be promoted to political, military, or administrative positions as part of an Ottoman policy of integration that increased their numbers over time⁶.

1.1..2: Consuls

Diplomatic relations between Ottoman Algeria and European powers required consuls to manage tensions and settle political, military, or economic disputes. In the early modern period diplomatic ties developed with European

⁴) Aïcha Ghattas, *Crafts and Craftsmen in the City of Algiers 1700–1830*. Doctoral dissertation in Modern History, Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, University of Algiers, 2000–2001, p. 17.

⁵) Diego de Haedo, *The Topography and History of the National Army*. In RA, no. 14, 1870, pp. 492, 285–286.

⁶) Dhouhiba Boucheiba, *Jews and Christians in Algeria during the Ottoman Era in Light of Ottoman Documents and Western Sources*. Doctoral dissertation in Modern and Contemporary History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, Djilali Liabes University, Sidi Bel Abbes, 2016, pp. 519–520.

states⁷. For example, commercial and navigation treaties existed between Algerian rulers and European polities, including France and Italian cities. The first French consulate in Algiers was established in 1564⁸.to know the names of French cosuls, see the book⁹.

Later Europe sent many consuls of different nationalities to Algiers. One notable consul was the American William Shaler, who served between 1816 and 1824 and left a report about Algerian society in that period¹⁰.

1.2. Doctors and Merchants

1.2.1: Doctors

Dr. Shaw noted that medical sciences in the regence of Algiers were almost absent because of intellectual stagnation in the wider Islamic world under Ottoman rule¹¹.

Local medicine often relied on simple traditional remedies (herbs, potions), practices such as recitation, charms, and visits to saints. European doctors helped fill this

⁷) Belil Rahmouna, *Consuls and Foreign Consulates in Ottoman Algeria 1564–1830*. Doctoral dissertation in Modern and Contemporary History, Faculty of Humanities and Islamic Civilization, Department of History and Archaeology, Ahmed Ben Bella University, Oran, 2010–2011, p. 294

⁸) Hafiza Khashmoun, *The Duties of Redeemers of Captives and Their Social Commitments in the City of Algiers during the Ottoman Period*. Master's thesis in Maghreb History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Mentouri University, Constantine, 2007, pp. 19–22.

⁹) Eugène Plantet, *Correspondance des Deys d'Alger avec la Cour de France 1579–1833*. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1889.

¹⁰) William Shaler, *Memoirs of William Shaler, American Consul in Algiers 1816–1824*. Edited and translated by Ismail al-Arabi. Algiers: National Company, 1982, p. 20.

¹¹) Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Cultural History of Algeria (1500–1800)*, vol. 2, 1st ed. Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1984, p. 401- 402.



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gap, especially in official places like the Bey s court, central authorities, and hospitals¹².

Table: Important European doctors present in Ottoman Algeria (18th-19th centuries)¹³

Name	Nationality	Years in Ottoman Algeria
Dr. Shaw	English	1720 - 1732
J. O. Habenstreit	German	1732
Albrecht von Schönberg	Danish	1830
Asensi	Spanish	Served Dey Hussein
Miaridi	Sardinia/Italy	Served Dey Hussein
Bohen	English	Physician of Dey Hussein
Heinrich von Maltzan	French	Physician of Emir Abdelkader al-Hashimi al-Husseini

1.2.2: Merchants

The Algerian economy attracted European merchants for investment and trade. Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, and English traders were active in Algeria. They

¹²) Fouzia Lazem, *Medicine and Physicians in the City of Algiers at the End of the Ottoman Era through the Book “Algerian Popular Medicine at the Beginning of the Occupation”* by Albrecht von Schönberg. *Al-Ma‘arif Journal of Historical Research and Studies*, no. 21, p. 106.

¹³) Fouzia Lazem, *ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

complemented local economic activities and production methods and helped move trade and industry in coastal cities¹⁴.

1.3. Captives and Spies

1.3.1: *Captives*

The captive Christian group in the regence included people from Spain, Portugal, Venice, France, England, the Netherlands, Greece, and Slavic lands. They appeared because of the Algerian naval campaigns led by sea captains such as the Barbarossa brothers, Rais Murad, and Hamidou. These captains captured ships, imposed tribute or ransom, and took prisoners¹⁵. Captives were sold in local markets or placed under the care of religious intermediaries and Jewish brokers¹⁶.

Estimates of captives in Algiers varied over time. The number grew at the end of the 16th century to about 25,000, then fell when naval activity declined in the early 18th century (to about 10,000). Numbers rose and fell again with changes in naval activity¹⁷. After Lord Exmouth's 1816 attack the Dey released all captives, who numbered 1,642. At the time of the French occupation in 1830, there remained only about twenty captives mostly Spanish soldiers¹⁸.

¹⁴)for more information, see: Abdelkader Jughlloul, *Modern History of Algeria: A Sociological Study*. Translated by Faisal Abbas. Beirut: Dar al-Hadatha, 1982, pp. 23–58. Nasreddine Saïdouni, *Algeria in History: The Ottoman Era*. Algiers: National Book Institution, 1984, p. 117.

¹⁵) Lucette Valensi, *The Maghreb before the French Occupation: 1790–1830*. Translated by Hammadi al-Sahli. Tunis: Seras Publishing, 1994, pp. 78–87.

¹⁶) Amine Mahrez, *Algeria during the Rule of the Aghas (1659–1671)*, Dar al-Basaer, Algiers, n.d., p. 161.

¹⁷) Nasreddine Saïdouni, *ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁸) Nasreddine Saïdouni *Algerian papers*, second edition, dar Al-Basaer, algier, 2008, p138.



Table: Estimated number of Christian captives in selected years (18th-early 19th centuries)

Year	Number
1719	4000
1721	Less than 5000
1729	Between 9000 and 10000
1734	More than 4000
1738	2000
1749	7000
1763	3000
1773	2000
1785	6000
1788	2000
1816	1642
1830	122

1.3.2: Spies

One of the major political issues the regence faced was European espionage, caused by Algerian naval campaigns and the collection of captives. France, in particular, sent explorers and agents to gather information on Algerian society and to prepare for eventual occupation¹⁹.

An example is the mission of spy Boutin in 1808, who traveled across Algeria and wrote a detailed report on the

¹⁹) Muhammad Khayr Faris, *Modern History of Algeria: From the Ottoman Conquest to the French Occupation*, 1st ed., Beirut: Dar al-Sharq al-Arabi, 1969, pp. 108–146.

society, political authorities, fortifications, and population density²⁰.

In conclusion, Nasser Al-Din Al-Sa'iduni says about these Christian groups that lived within the Algerian state: Consuls and foreign agents usually lived separately from local residents. They did not always follow local law and sometimes avoided local taxes and courts. They often lived in special hotels or in neighborhoods such as Bab El-Oued, outside Bab Azoun, or in high districts overlooking the city. Sometimes, when relations with their countries soured, they faced the wrath of local rulers²¹.

Table: European populations in Oran and Mostaganem (1839)

City	French	English	Spanish	Italian	German	Portuguese
Oran	1183	190	1555	747	105	25
Mostaganem	28	5	47	22	2	-

2. Socio-economic Aspects of the Christian Community in Ottoman Algeria (18th-19th centuries)

2.1 Social role (the captives as a model)

The Christian community contributed significantly to the social and economic life of the region. They passed through demographic stages: a rise at the end of the 16th century, decline in the early 18th century, and a later rise by the late

²⁰) Yahia Bouaziz, *Algeria's Foreign Relations with European States and Kingdoms 1500–1830, Followed by Algerian-Spanish Correspondence in the National History Archives of Madrid 1780–1798*, Algiers: Dar al-Basaer for Publishing and Distribution, 2009, p. 118.

²¹) Nasreddine Saïdouni, *ibid.*, p. 105.



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18th and early 19th centuries²². After Lord Exmouth's 1816 campaign, the Dey released all 1,642 captives; at the French occupation the number of captives had dropped to a very small number, mostly fleeing Spanish soldiers²³.

The captive Christians formed the majority of foreign elements. They lived mostly in coastal and nearby inland cities²⁴. However, their number in the state of Algiers is very small compared to the Jewish group, according to the demographic statistics conducted by Laugie de Tassy on this community²⁵. Father Dan reported that Algiers had the highest number of Christian captives in the first half of the 17th century and that they were often treated harshly in some reports²⁶.

However, some European travelers reported better conditions for Christian captives in Algeria than the conditions of Muslim captives in Europe. Travelers like laugier de tassy and Drafieu noted that the captive situation in Algeria was not as bad as some religious critics claimed (e.g..the Spanish monk Diego de Haedo, Father Dan²⁷, or the captive Thedinat), who portrayed the situation as violent and brutal. Those claims served, sometimes, to justify European attacks on Algiers. This propaganda started in the early 17th century²⁸.

²²) Manour Morouch, Studies on Algeria in the Ottoman Era: Piracy, Myths, Reality, Dar Al-Qasbah Publishing House, Algiers, 2009, pp. 15-16.

²³) Manour Morouch, *ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁴) Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *ibid.*, p. 150.

²⁵) laugie de tassy. history of the kingdom of Algiers. Henry du sauzet. Amsterdam .1725 p 86.

²⁶) Piere Pan. History of the barbarie, and its corsairs. rocolet. Paris. 1637. p40.

²⁷) Piere Dan, *ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

²⁸) Manour Morouch, *ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

A critical historical look at these fallacies and propaganda regarding the Ottoman authorities' mistreatment of Christian prisoners in the western province reveals that Christian prisoners subject to the province or the central authority performed various tasks, just like ordinary people.²⁹ But the first category They lacked certain freedoms and equality, but they worked in shipyards, in the palaces of Bey Mohammed the Great, in the weapons industry, in stone quarries, on farms, and in the homes of the wealthy, as well as in cafes and taverns. They received a small wage and occasional gifts on religious holidays³⁰. They also had hospitals run by monks for their care, as reported by John André Peyssonnel³¹.

According to De Gramont, the state also set up hospitals in prisons for Christian slaves to serve, each of which had a small chapel, and prayers were held there regularly³².

Dr. Shaw presented two examples of how authorities treated prisoners: some were subjected to injustice and oppression, while others were treated well. He explained the nature of the treatment based on the nature of the property owner or the official in the private institution or the government³³.

²⁹) Ahmida Amirawi, *Algeria in the Literature of Travelers and Captivity during the Ottoman Era (Memoirs of the Adventurer Thedinat)*, Dar Al-Hoda, Miliana, 2009, p. 100.

³⁰) Nasreddine Saïdouni, *ibid.*, p. 105.

³¹) Jean André Peyssonnel. *Voyage in the regions of Tunis and Algeria*. Read more. Paris. 1838. p p 457- 458.

³²) h-d. de Grammont. *history of Alger sous la domination turque (1515-1830)*. Ernest Leroux editor. France. 1887.P 134.

³³) Shaw (th). *Travels in the regency of Algiers; or description, Geography, physics, philology, etc. of this State*, Translated from English, with numerous additions, geographical and other notes by J. Mac Carthy, publisher MARLIN, Paris, 1830.p 112.



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This generosity is evident in Bey Mohammed the Great's cordial relationship with the Christian captives. This relationship was based on Islamic law, thanks to his culture and distinguished political standing. Among the manifestations of his generosity toward the captives were his generous gifts to those who converted to Islam, including housing, wives, and maids, with their status rising over time. The captive Thidinat mentions in his memoirs that he was accompanied by many Christians, slaves of Bey Mohammed the Great, like his Parisian colleague³⁴.

Despite being outsiders, the Christian group had a special social position. They interacted with local people, and there was social and economic cooperation based on religious tolerance and mutual respect. They took part in popular festivities, such as the Christian New Year, which Hassan al-Wazzan described in his travel accounts³⁵.

Another social aspect of Christian life in western Algeria during the Ottoman era was the preservation of their own social system, as well as their churches in Oran and other Algerian cities. They were concerned with preserving their customs and traditions, or what is known as their Christian popular culture. Their affairs and leadership were overseen by their leader, the "patriarch," who was elected by the senior Christian clergy. He not only enjoyed ecclesiastical authority but also exercised a kind of judicial authority over

³⁴) Ahmida Amirawi, *obid.*, p. 64.

³⁵) For more information, see: Abu al-Ra's al-Nasri, *Luqtat al-Ajlan fi al-Sharif al-Shaykh Abd al-Qadir ibn Zyan, wa man bi Banu Zyan, Kings of Tlemcen*, edited by: Hammadu ibn Umar, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, Algeria, 2011, pp. 39-41. Al-Hasan al-Wazzan, vol. 1, *Description of Africa*, vol. 2, translated by Muhammad Hajj Muhammad al-Akhdar, vol. 1, 2, second edition, Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Lebanon, 1983, p. 258.

them. They were subject to his decisions and treated him with respect, reverence, and veneration, even when their affairs sometimes related to legal, family, or social matters such as inheritance, marriage, and divorce. All of this treatment between the Christian community and the clergy was similar to the treatment of the local community with the city judges, the tribal sheikh, or the Sufi scholars and sheikhs³⁶.

However, the authorities and society viewed this group as dhimmis, with rights and duties recognized by Islamic law, especially since the Algerian scholars were not isolated from them. The status enjoyed by Sheikh Abu Ras al-Nasiri al-Maskari allowed this group to turn to him in times of crisis to resolve their social issues. They also turned to the "patriarch" to be their arbiter in social disputes that arose among them, such as legal matters, marriage, buying and selling, inheritance, etc. While this indicates that the Christian group consulted the scholars of Ottoman Algeria, it also demonstrates that the local community's elite were not marginal, intellectually rigid, prejudiced against another group, or introverted. Rather, they were distinguished by their intellectual and social openness to foreign elements, in accordance with Islamic teachings that stipulate respect for the rights and duties of elhimmis³⁷.

Among the social aspects of this group's life was the lack of attention paid to the clothing they wore during breastfeeding. They wore a loose or wide shirt, a jacket, and trousers, over which was a short, midriff-length caftan. They also wore special shoes called "babouche," which were

³⁶) Laila Abdel Latif Ahmed, *Egyptian Society in the Modern Era*, first edition, Dar Al-Kotob Al-Jami'a, Egypt, 1987, p. 56.

³⁷) Abu al-Ra's al-Nasri, *ibid*, p. 41.



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actually children's clothing, and which are still preserved for generations. Another description of them included a red cap, a shirt, a woolen waistcoat, Brazilian sarees above the knee, and cheap sandals. It also mentions a transparent leather sponge, light leather sheets, and light woolen blankets³⁸.

Their food consisted of a loaf of bread, olives, and vinegar. Each was given two small loaves, each weighing half a pound, and a little oil daily. The Gauls who worked daily transported the supplies to the slaves and delivered these crops to Bab el-Oued. The clothing and food provided to the Jewish prisoners were not satisfied with the excellent living conditions of their families. They also experienced the injustice, persecution, and marginalization they endured due to their fanaticism toward the Church and their hatred of Islam and Muslims

Our discussion of the social aspects of the Christian community in Western Algeria cannot be complete without mentioning the intermarriage ties between Christian female prisoners and the Turkish government personnel, especially since their wives were married to urban, Turkish, and Karagla tribesmen³⁹.

The nature of these relations between the two parties, and the Ottoman authorities' marginalization of Muslim women, had a profound impact on them. This was due to the fact that the political authority was a non-Arab authority, far removed from Arab popular culture and from association or

³⁸) Simone Pfeiffer, *Memoirs or a Historical Overview of Algeria*, edited by Abu al-Eid Doudou, National Publishing and Distribution Company, Algeria, 1974, p. 16.

³⁹) Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *ibic*, p. 336.

intermarriage with Muslim Algerian women, which they viewed as humiliating and degrading due to their Turkish ethnicity. If they cared about women, they were not concerned with their religion, language, education, or social status as much as they were concerned with Christian women, given that they saw their interests as primarily serving their own interests (related to their wealth and the status of the Turkish race).

The nature of these relations between the two parties, and the Ottoman authorities' marginalization of Muslim women, had a profound impact on them. Ottoman politics was non-Arab, far removed from Arab popular culture and from the mixing or marriage of Muslim Algerian women. They considered this humiliating and degrading, given their Turkish ethnicity. If they cared about her, they were not concerned with her religion, language, education, or social status as much as they were concerned with the Christian woman, as they recognized their own interests (related to her culture and the status of the Turkish race) ⁴⁰.

As a result of this historical reality in Ottoman Algeria, the government preferred to marry Asians over Muslim Algerian women (except rarely) and enslaved their children. At the same time, their children, who were Christian slaves and captives, were free to rule and inherit from their fathers. Other aspects of the social life of the new officials in western Algeria during the Ottoman era, especially the "typical free class," competed with other local communities in holding these celebrations, both social and religious⁴¹.

In other aspects of the social life of the Christian community in western Algeria during the Ottoman era,

⁴⁰) Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *ibid*, p. 336.

⁴¹) Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *ibid*, p. 336.



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especially the "free class," this class competed with other local social classes in holding these popular celebrations, whether social or religious, and this played a major role in stimulating Algerian popular culture. In this regard, Hassan al-Wazzan al-Fassi al-Gharnati pointed to a special type of celebration, the Roman New Year's Eve, saying: "On the night of Christ's birth, they eat a type of porridge made from various vegetables such as cabbage, turnips, carrots, and others. They cook various types of vegetables gathered without cutting, such as beans, chickpeas, and wheat grains, and eat this food on that night because it is a delicious dessert... On the first day of the year, children wear masks and go to notables, asking them for fruit while singing their children's songs... On Saint John's Day, straw fires are lit in abundance in all regions..."⁴².

In the same description, Al-Hassan Al-Wazzan referred to another type of celebration, which is a celebration of a child's first teething. Parents invite other children to a feast, and they call this celebration "dantessia," the same Latin name. There are also many other customs and traditions, such as divination methods, as is the case in Rome and other Italian cities⁴³.

2.2. The Economic Reality of the Christian Community

The Christian community both free and captive helped revive the economic life of Ottoman Algeria across three

⁴²) For more information, see: Al-Hassan Al-Wazzan, Vol. 1, previous source, p. 258. Karbajal Marmol, Africa, Vol. 2, trans. Muhammad Hajji, Muhammad Akhdar, Moroccan Association for Authorship, Translation and Publishing, Rabat, 1989, p. 259.

⁴³) Al-Hasan Al-Wazzan, Vol. 1, obid, p. 258.

centuries. They contributed to agriculture, industry, trade, and crafts like decoration and construction. They shared their experience and skills, and their presence attracted investment and trade⁴⁴. In this context, we can present to the reader a typical picture of the economic contribution of the free Christian merchant class over the three centuries, as follows:

2.3. Trade

A1) France

Algeria had strong economic ties with world trade during this period. It connected with various Western European countries and with the United States after 1776. France took a leading role in trade because of geographic closeness and political agreements. A treaty in 1535 between the Ottoman central government and France encouraged partnerships. French merchants established companies on the coasts of Qalaat and Annaba to exploit coral fishing⁴⁵.

B1) The Kingdom of England and Italy

Despite the strained relations between Ottoman Algeria and these two countries, due to the Crusades inherited from the Middle Ages, this situation did not hinder their economic relations. The economic situation prompted England and Italy to invest in Algerian lands to advance their economies, promote their products, and generate financial profits. This enabled many English and Italian

⁴⁴) Dahbibba Bousheeba, *ibid*, p. 544.

⁴⁵) For more information, see: Nasser Al-Din Sa'iduni, *Algeria in Ottoman History*, *ibid*, p. 81.



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merchants to establish themselves on the eastern coast of the province to invest in coral fishing⁴⁶.

In the same context, the Committee of Public Safety abolished the French company controlling coral fishing in 1794 as part of the liquidation of French overseas concessions, which were hostile to the French Revolution. After the severance of Algerian-French relations during the Napoleonic Wars, the British were able to obtain the same concessions as French merchants in 1807, in exchange for an annual fee of 297,500 francs. However, they were unable to achieve commercial profits and lacked the knowledge and experience in coral fishing methods and dealing with the local population. Therefore, they entrusted the task of coral fishing to the Italians, Catalans, and Maltese, and ceded their commercial concessions in the ports of Jijel and El Kala to the companies of Bakri and Bouchnak. Their concessions were subsequently revoked after Lord Exmouth's attack on the port of Algiers in 1816. This allowed the French to retain their old concessions in exchange for an annual tribute estimated at 200,000 francs in the March 1817 treaty. c) The Kingdom of Spain⁴⁷.

Political relations between the Algerian state and the Kingdom of Spain were characterized by hostility for three decades, compared to other European monarchies, as a result of Spain's occupation of the ports of Oran and Mers El Kébir for nearly three centuries (1505-1792 AD). However,

⁴⁶)Asmahan Laraibi, *Economic Life in the Eastern province during the Ottoman Era (1713-1792 AD)*, PhD thesis in Modern and Contemporary History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Djillali Liabes University, Sidi Bel Abbes, 2012-2013, pp. 249-252.

⁴⁷) Asmahan Laraibi, *ibid.* P. 76.

the liberation of Oran and Mers El Kébir by Bey Mohammed the Great in 1792 brought about a positive change in relations between the two parties. Relations became normalized, similar to those of other European monarchies, based on trade exchange and industrial expertise. Bey Muhammad al-Kabir is credited with strengthening relations between these two countries, thanks to his shrewd and intelligent management of the wheels of power, society, and diplomatic relations with the Islamic world and the Christian West. Amid the economic stagnation and inactivity that plagued the western beys for three decades, he sought to benefit from Spanish craftsmen after the liberation of Oran and Mers el-Kebir. At the same time, Bey Muhammad sought to leverage the expertise of these Spanish craftsmen to improve the economic situation of his province, eliminate the financial crises resulting from his long wars, and keep pace with the economies of Islamic countries in general. In another context, the concessions granted to the French and English in eastern Algeria were similar to those granted to the Spanish in the western beys after the liberation of Oran in 1792 by Bey Muhammad al-kabir. They monopolized the coral fishing off the coast of this region, extending to the coast of Morocco. They were also permitted to purchase 1,000 loads of grain annually. This enabled them to ship large quantities of grain from the port of Arzew, estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000 tons. Eastern and southern Spain were in dire need of this⁴⁸.

B) Industry and Crafts

The Christian community, particularly Christian captives, emerged as a major player in promoting craft activities by

⁴⁸) Asmahan Laraibi, *ibid.* P. 76.



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disseminating the professional and technical expertise they acquired in their homeland (Europe). This continent embraced the Renaissance and development of the fourteenth century and was also influenced by the Industrial Revolution that emerged in Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century. Among the many crafts and industries practiced by Christian captives in the state of Algiers, the most prominent of which were: shipbuilding, leather, brocade, weapons, and construction works such as pottery and tiling, in addition to the arts of medicine and healing, as well as hotels. They also excelled in the fields of saddlery, basketry, and pottery, in addition to the manufacture of⁴⁹.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in this topic, "A Historical Perspective on the Social and Economic Reality of the Christian Community in Algeria During the Ottoman Era, Through the Perspectives of Orientalists and Arabic Writings, 1519-1830 AD," we arrive at a set of historical conclusions related to this group, which was alien to the local community. These can be summarized in the following points:

- The role and contribution of the Christian community in enriching Algerian popular culture in Ottoman

⁴⁹) Mohamed Aisha, European Prisoners in Algeria and Their Role in Relations between Algeria and the Western Mediterranean Countries during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries AD, Master's Thesis in Modern History, Institute of Human and Social Sciences, Department of History, University of Ghardaia, 2011-2012, p. 46.

Algeria by introducing many of its customs and traditions.

- The role of this alien community in society was not without its contribution to strengthening economic aspects, such as agriculture, industry, and trade, through the exchange of imports and exports, or its numerous contributions to the management of economic institutions in coastal cities.
- The Christian community, whether prisoners or free, took the initiative to revive the historical legacy of Ottoman Algeria, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, documenting many historical facts related to authority and society, the surrounding geography, popular cultures, and more. This is what is called "Orientalism and Orientalists."
- Furthermore, the role of the Christian community did not differ from that of the Jewish community in the social milieu of Ottoman Algeria, particularly in terms of social and economic aspects. Anyone who follows local and foreign sources and references will generally recognize the true similarity between the two groups.
- It is worth noting that their activity in Ottoman Algeria did not differ from their activity in other Islamic countries, on the one hand, nor did the nature of their treatment by the authorities and society, on the other.
- The treatment this Christian community received was excellent, in accordance with Islamic teachings on this matter, similar to the treatment Muslims received as prisoners in Western Europe, a result of religious



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fanaticism and hatred of Islam and Muslims since the Middle Ages.

- In conclusion, we pose a question: What is the general Algerian view of these Christians, whether from the elite or the working class?

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