

## Some Notes on Life and Commerce in Algiers and Tunisia through the Unpublished Diary of Father Francisco Ximénez (18<sup>th</sup> century)

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ملخص:

بعض الملاحظات عن الحياة و التجارة في مدينة الجزائر و تونس من خلال اليوميات غير المنشورة للأب فرانسيسكو خيمينيز (القرن الثامن عشر)

من خلال اليوميات التي كتبها الراهب الثالثي فرانسيسكو خيمينيز دي سانتا كاتالينا خلال ثلاث سنوات في مدينة الجزائر (1718-1720)، و التي لا تزال غير منشورة، يمكننا تجربة شهادة قيمة للغاية عن حياة إيالة الجزائر، و خاصة في كل ما يتعلق بالقرصنة و حياة الأسرى. عمله كمدير مستشفى الثالثيين في مدينة الجزائر، جعله مشاهدا متميزاً للعلاقات الإجتماعية و الشخصية ليس فقط بين الأسرى و السلطات، و لكن أيضاً بين مختلف الفئات الإجتماعية في المجتمع الجزائري. إن اهتمامه بما كان يحدث من حوله يوفر لنا معلومات ثمينة و مفصلة للغاية عن الحياة اليومية في مدينة الجزائر، و لكن أيضاً عن التجارة و فداء العبيد و الحياة الإقتصادية للجزائر في القرن الثامن عشر بشكل عام.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

مدينة الجزائر؛ فرانسيسكو خيمينيز؛ القرصنة؛ الأسرى؛ الحياة الإقتصادية؛ التجارة.

### Abstract:

Through the diaries that the Trinitarian monk Francisco Ximénez de Santa Catalina wrote during three years in Algiers (1718-1720), which remain still unpublished, we can experience a very valuable testimony of the life of the Regency of Algiers,

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especially in everything related to privateering and the life of the captives. Director of the Hospital of the Trinitarians, his work in Algiers made of him a privileged spectator of social and personal relationships not only between captives and authorities, but also between different social groups in Algerian society. His attention to what was happening around provides us with precious, very detailed information about everyday life in Algiers, but also about trade, the redemption of slaves and in general the economic life of 18<sup>th</sup> century Algiers.

**Keywords:**

Algiers; Francisco Ximénez; Privateering; Captives; Economic life; Trade.

*To Chakib Benafri, Akdeniz'de iyi bir arkadař.*

**Introduction**

Generally speaking, Spain was not very productive in 18<sup>th</sup> century in terms of travelers, diplomats or orientalists who visited the territories in Maghreb where the expelled Moriscos from Spain in 1609-1614 had settled. The most substantial news about them and their descendants were offered by French travelers such as Jean-André Peyssonnel<sup>1</sup>, diplomats such as Joseph Morgan or Venture de Paradis<sup>2</sup>, or orientalists such as George Sale<sup>3</sup>.

The ironic side of the case is that both the consul Joseph

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<sup>1</sup>**PEYSSONNEL (J.-A.)** : *Voyage dans les régences de Tunis et d'Alger*, Paris, Gide et Pihan de La Forest, 1838. [Reed. Paris, 1987].

<sup>2</sup>**MORGAN (J.)** : *Mahometism Fully Explained: containing, I. The previous Disposition to, and the Method of the Creation ...The Prayers, Ceremonies, Fasts, festivals, and other Rites observed by the Mahometans. With a Remarkable Description of the Day of Judgement. Writen in Spanish and Arabic, in the Year M. DC. III. for the Instruction of the Moriscos in Spain. By Mahomet Rabadan, an Arragonian Moor. Translated from the Original Manuscript, and Illustrated with Large Explanatory Notes. By Mr. Morgan.*, London, W. Mears, 1723 ;

**VENTURE DE PARADIS (Jean-Michel)** : *Alger au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Alger, Adolphe Jourdan, 1898.

<sup>3</sup>**EPALZA (M. de)**: « Relaciones del Cónsul británico Morgan con descendientes de moriscos en el Mágreb (siglo XVIII) », *Estudios de Filología Inglesa. Homenaje al Doctor Pedro Jesús Marcos Pérez*, Alicante, Universidad de Alicante, 1990, p. 615-620.

Morgan (quoting him)<sup>4</sup>, and Jean-André Peyssonnel (without mentioning him)<sup>5</sup>, took as source in their writings a Spanish figure who is a very first-hand source about the Moriscos installed in Algeria and Tunisia. A figure, moreover, who wrote his experiences and impressions of a long stay in the Maghreb for more than twenty years. He was the Trinitarian friar Francisco Ximénez de Santa Catalina (Esquivias, 1685 - Dosbarrios, 1758), who lived in Algiers (1718-1720) and in Tunisia (1720-1735) as a missionary of his order. During his stay he wrote several voluminous Diaries<sup>6</sup>, encouraged by a desire to be a meticulous and interested observer and being favored on many occasions by the local authorities, making him a privileged narrator of this time<sup>7</sup>.

Francisco Ximénez joined the *Trinitarian* order in 1700. He studied logic and philosophy, and completed his education by studying theology at the University of Salamanca in 1704. He was ordained priest in 1709, and from Toledo he was made major preacher and vicar of the convent of Cuéllar, Segovia. In 1717, along with other members of his order, he was assigned to North Africa to establish a Christian hospital in Oran. He arrived there on 4 May 1718 but, being unable to accomplish his objective, he moved to Algiers on 21 May 1718. In Algiers, he cared for Christian captives as senior preacher of the Trinitarians' hospital.

He began to write a diary (later called *Diario de Argel*, 3 vols, now in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid) in which he related his experiences in the city, the religious practices of the

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<sup>4</sup>“I borrowed once a Manuscript in Barbary, of a Spaniard, but one of the most moderate Catholics of that Nation, I ever met with”, Morgan, *Mahometism Fully Explained*, vol. 2, p. 295.

<sup>5</sup>**ALVAREZ DOPICO (C. I.)** : « La *Colonia Trinitaria* de Francisco Ximénez: une source pour la Relation du médecin marseillais J.-A. Peyssonnel », in Sadok Boubaker y Clara Ilham Álvarez Dopico eds. *Empreintes espagnoles dans l'histoire tunisienne*, Gijón, Trea, 2011, p. 105-168.

<sup>6</sup>**DE BUNES (Miguel Ángel)** : « Una descripción de Túnez en el siglo XVIII : el diario de Francisco Ximénez », *Hesperia. Culturas del Mediterráneo*, 10, 2008, p. 85-96 ; **OULD CADI MONTEBOURG (Leila)** : *Alger, une cité turque au temps de l'esclavage, à travers le Journal d'Alger du père Ximénez (1718-1720)*, Montpellier, Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III, 2006.

<sup>7</sup>**BERNABÉ PONS (Luis F.)** : « Percepciones de las diferencias. Islam, moriscos y España en el siglo XVIII », *eHumanista*, 43, 2019, p. 17-29.

Muslims, the capital and its surroundings, etc<sup>8</sup>. In May 1720, he moved to Tunis with the intention of establishing there a hospital for Christian captives<sup>9</sup>. He met resistance though from both the Tunisian authorities and the Capuchins. Although the Capuchins were always supported in their pretensions by the French consul in the city, in 1722 Ximénez succeeded in founding the Hospital of San Juan de Mata, which remained active until 1817. He stayed in Tunis until 1735, travelling through the country to visit groups of Christian captives and accompanying the doctor and French epigraphist, Jean-André Peyssonnel. These travels allowed him to explore archaeological sites and tomb inscriptions. He collected all the information he gathered in four manuscript volumes of his *Diario de Túnez* (4 vols.) and in the eight volumes of his *Historia del Reyno de Túnez*<sup>10</sup>. He returned to Castile in 1735, where he carried out the office of retired *predicador general* and minister in the convent of Tejada in the town of Garaballa (Cuenca). He died in the convent of Dosbarrios (Toledo) probably between 1757 and 1760.

His diaries offer many of the most informative insights into the social, cultural, religious, archaeological and human features of Algiers and Tunis and their areas of influence. He was an exceptional witness of the daily life of the Ottoman Regencies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, both for his constancy in writing (there are almost no days in these 18 years without a few lines) and for having been

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<sup>8</sup>Prof. Malki Sofiane defended his doctoral thesis on Ximénez's Algerian diaries, offering, apart from an analysis of their contents, a critical edition of the text: "*Ottoman Algeria" on the threshold of the 18<sup>th</sup> century according to the Father's Diario de Algiers Francisco Ximénez: Historical study and critical analysis*, Doctoral thesis supervised by I. Terki-Hassaine and M.A. of Bunes Ibarra, University of Oran 2, 2018, 2 vols.

<sup>9</sup>**SEBAG (Paul)**: « L'hôpital des Trinitaires espagnols (1720-1818) », *Ibla*, 174, 1994, p. 203-218; **PORRES ALONSO (Bonifacio)**: « Los hospitales trinitarios de Argel y Túnez », *Hispania Sacra*, 48, n. 98,1996, p. 639-717; **ÁLVAREZ DOPICO (Clara Ilham)**: « The Catholic Consecration of an Islamic dār. The Saint John de Matha Trinitarian Hospital in Tunis », in Stephen M. Caffey et Mohammad Gharipour (dir.), *Non-Islamic Sacred Sites in Muslim Territories*, Leyden, Brill, 2013, p. 291-307.

<sup>10</sup>**GARCÍA-ARENAL (Mercedes)**: « Nota a las traducciones manuscritas de F. Ximenez en la Real Academia de la Historia », *Al-Qantara*, 6, 1, 1985, p. 525-534.

in direct contact both with the life of the captives and with the day-to-day life in Algiers and Tunis. The most interesting aspect of his works is probably his description of the customs and traditions of the cities in which he lived. In both Tunis and Algiers, he describes a multi-ethnic city mix of Christians and Muslims, Ottomans, local inhabitants and renegades.

### **1. Ximénez met the Moriscos in Algiers.**

When he arrived in Algiers, he is already a trained man. As a religious dedicated to the care of Christian captives, we can logically suppose that his thought was still in line with the general Catholic opinion on Islam and Muslim countries. However, it is convenient to bring up here a phrase from the English Consul Joseph Morgan regarding the Trinitarian friar, whom he knew personally: "I borrowed once a Manuscript in Barbary, of a Spaniard, but one of the most moderate Catholics of that Nation, I ever met with." Morgan's sentence about Ximénez fits quite well with the reading of his works, in which, unlike anti-Islamic apologists and polemicists, there does not seem to be a combative and aggressive tone against those of a different religion. Ximénez sees Islam as a false belief, of course, and it could not be otherwise. But there are no violent religious diatribes or theological refutations. He was not a polemicist nor a theologian attacking Islam, but rather a student of Algerian and Tunisian culture<sup>11</sup>.

Ximénez spent his time in the capital, Algiers, and in Tunis, as senior preacher at the Trinitarians' hospital. In the capitals of the Regencies, Father Ximénez began to display all his capacity to scrutinize the society that surrounds him, as well as to give an account of his activities in the hospital with the captives and before the Algerian authorities, especially before the Dey Muhammad ibn Hasan (1718-1724). In the society of Algiers and Tunisia Ximénez met with descendants of the expelled Moriscos, who occupied positions close to power, especially in the economic and social spheres and in fact he had close contacts with some of them. This would be the case of Achi (= Hajji) Muhammad Benamar,

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<sup>11</sup>**ÁLVAREZ DOPICO (Clara Ilham):** « Algunos aspectos del Islam en el Túnez otomano a los ojos del trinitario Francisco Ximénez », *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 51/3, 2015, p. 491-513.

descendant of one of the most famous Morisco families settled in Algeria. This family, documented since the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Algiers, was dedicated in the early days to crafts and petty trade, to later become integrated into larger businesses.

Mustafá Benamar was in Ximénez's time the most important slave owner in Algiers after the Algerian state itself, so his fortune must have been very considerable. His honorary title of Hajji or pilgrim to Mecca also indicated, along with his great economic capacity, the position of prestige he occupied within Algerian society. But in Ximénez's eyes, his fortune also came from a negative trait that the man from Toledo attributed to all "rich Moors":

Benamar, Tagarino Moor and descendant of those who were expelled from Spain came to visit the Father Administrator. This is one of the individuals who has the largest number of captives in Algiers and sells them at a very high price<sup>12</sup>.

When Achi Mostafa Benamar asked some Spanish captives what hacienda a great from Spain would have, they replied that about six or seven million. To this he said, 'well I could also be a great one from Spain, that my wealth is even more than that'. 'Yes, it is', the captives told him, 'but consider His Excellence that a noble has more spend in a day than His Excellence in a year, or in years', and he spoke no more words. This Tagarino is one of those who were expelled from Spain and prides himself on being related, according to what he says, to the most illustrious families of Spain. However, with having as much as has been said, he deals with much misery; and with having nearly a hundred captives, he barely spends four silver rials each day at his house and he maintains the captives starving, naked, and needy, so much so that charity leads many of us to keep them in the hospital to meet their needs, because it leaves them to support themselves, without giving them anything<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>*Diario de Argel*, 20 August 1719.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 1 de September 1719.

In Tunisia, the Trinitarian also located the descendants of the Moriscos who had settled in the Regency in the 17<sup>th</sup> century because he perceived that they could in some way help him in his mission to influence the authorities in favor of the Christian captives. Thus in 1722 he will meet Mahamut Çeriri, the Jaznadar or manager of the Treasury of the Bey Hussein ibn Ali, a character of enormous importance in Tunisian society:

"He is *Jasnadal*, a descendant of Andalusian Moors who were expelled from Spain, a great politician and statesman, by whose opinion Assein Bin Aly, Bey of Tunis, governs his actions, and nothing else is done without him. He is very rich. He has built at his own expense, near his house, a marabout, which is like a hermitage with its tower, dedicated to Mahuya, who the Moors consider to be a saint, and next to it he has built a school to teach reading and writing the boys, pointing out some work for this work. Because *Jasnadal* is so important to the Bey, we have used him for our claims..."<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Daily life at the Hospital.

As said, his diaries, especially those of Algiers, describe the daily life in the Trinitarian hospital: the cures of wounded and sick people and the spiritual aid given to the captives there<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, the extreme unctions and deaths that are taking place in Algiers are scrupulously noted. He is especially shocked by the very numerous arrivals of Christians who have been whipped on the soles of their feet or their buttocks, generally for being suspected of theft: sometimes Ximénez himself is shocked to see the wounds of captives who have been beaten with sticks. In the same way, Ximénez's diaries abound in lurid details about the execution and punishment of captives, curious details about the traffic of images and figures of saint and Virgins that are in the Christian baths or the underground struggle that he maintains with Lutherans and

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<sup>14</sup>*Diario de Túnez*, March 2, 1722.

<sup>15</sup>ÁLVAREZ DOPICO (Clara Ilham): «La religiosité au quotidien : la captivité à Tunis à travers les écrits de fray Francisco Ximénez (1720-1735) », *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 87, 2013, p. 319-334.

Orthodox captives, trying to convince each other to convert to the other Christian faith.

Voluntariness and non-forcing appear as norms of the legal and economic systems followed by the Ottomans. Ximénez, although he always points out that the Bey's will is almost sacred, he also strives to point out that the consuls or themselves as religious men can protest what they consider to be abuses. In February 1719, Ximénez pointed out the punishment given to four Turks who raped a Morisco woman, the wife of a *ra'is*; the guilty will be sentenced to a thousand blows with sticks. Equally interesting is the case in the following month: the guardian *Bassi* has beaten three Christians for sodomy with a boy, a Christian slave of the *Baylique*. Ximénez is clear when he says that the laws on this sin are applied differently according to the nationality of the accused: "... just because they were Christians, they were given this punishment; if they were Turks, they would not wear any, but they would show off as usual. Not to punish this vice is the cause of its popularity". However, many times is a person directly sent from Istanbul who takes care of both justice and tax collection,

An important Turk came with the dignity of *Caya* (= *kahiya*), as the Turks call him, or *Cadí*, as the Moors say, appointed by the Great Turk, the Emperor of Constantinople; and he was accompanied by four horsemen, and a *chauz* who entered walking close to him. The work of this *Caya* is to do justice, and he is the one who sentences all the civil lawsuits of the Kingdom; and sometimes the Great Lord sends him to collect the *garrama* or tribute that they pay to him. These [*caya*] are like the lawyers among the Christians, although they do not study any laws other than their Qur'an<sup>16</sup>.

The traditional Islam-Christianity antagonism is indeed always alive: the bey is wary, but he refers to Islam by calling him "el Enemigo", "the Enemy". This does not avoid him from not having too much prevention, even showing admiration facing a particular figure. Thus, meeting the *buluk bassi* governor of Blida,

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<sup>16</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1720, January 31.



he wrote: "He is a worthy Turk for whom all have great respect and who is loved by all for his kindness. He received us with much regale, saying that we were welcome, for whatever time suits us<sup>17</sup>."

The bitter reality of the country is met by him in the hospital. Europeans who live in Algiers, the religious men, the slaves of a lord who are at work, those who work or are cared for in the "infirmery", people who take care of captives, passing through redeemers and the apostolic vicar with whom the Trinitarians are sometimes in conflict. Also, non-religious people: Christian prisoners, slaves of the dey, consuls, more particularly the French consul, who is in charge of the protection of Christians, merchants and renegades. In Algiers, Ximénez lives in a European environment, although he has had contact with some Jews and some Muslims and he has met Turks and local notables in the city, but also in Blida and Boufarik.

### **3. Social differentiation.**

Other foreigners in the city were "attracted to Algiers by promises of wealth, or by the possibility of improving their social status: this was the case of the recruits who regularly came to fill the gaps in the ranks of the militia." Father Ximénez relates in fact in his diary that: "The Great Lord Emperor of Constantinople, by virtue of the authority he says he has over this kingdom, allows Algerians to often go and recruit soldiers on his lands. They leave with three or four ships, they land in the provinces which seem most appropriate to them, they call for enlistment, and to the poor, the scoundrels, and the lazy they say to come with them, because they will give them the pay of the soldier, they say that they will be rich and that they can become kings, that they are the masters of the fortunes of the Moors and the Jews, that they will have women, and young boys in abundance to satisfy their vices, and other similar things, and that way they come with them"<sup>18</sup>.

Nevertheless, the circumstances were not always pleasing. On September 27, 1719, a Turkish cook visited Ximénez in the hospital to offer his services and, when asked about his stay in

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<sup>17</sup>*Diario de Argel*, fol. 114-115, year 1719, May 6.

<sup>18</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1720, « Historic Notes on Hospitals in Algiers », (Noticias históricas de los hospitales de Argel), Capítulo 1, fol. 140.

Algiers, he pointed out that he was brought by the Turks from Istanbul thanks to a deception, as they promised him that in Algiers, he would not lack women and boys, eat, drinking, and money. He said that many, deceived that way, abandon the provinces, where in order to obtain these pleasures, they must work hard and compete with authorities and renegades.

The Turks also drew on, in the same circumstances, to the *Couloughlis*, because "if they are at war with the neighboring kings, they admit the *Couloughlis*, whom they need to pay. At this moment they are at war with the king of Meknes, and they only have four thousand men on the campaign, because it seems to them that for the moment that number is enough to resist". The *Couloughlis* were therefore received at the payroll of the soldier, something confirmed by Laugier de Tassy when he informs of the privileges of Christians converted to Islam: "Renegade Christians have the same privileges as Turks, and are reputed to be such. As soon as they have embraced the Mohammedan religion, they are received at the payroll and can reach all the dignities, even the *deylik*, as long as both do not marry Arab or Moorish women. In this case, they never reach great dignities, and the children who come from the marriage of a Turk and a Moorish woman are not considered Turks and are called *Coulolis*. They are received at the payroll of the soldiers, but they never reach the government charges". Ximenez completes: "These *Couloughlis* who are half-breed of Turks and Moorish have the same privileges as the Turks except that according to their law they cannot be governors, and it is for this reason that they are punished in secret in the house of the *agha*: all receive the payroll of the soldiers but their children are considered Moors<sup>19</sup>."

The government of Algiers therefore managed the strength of the army by its cost, since the *Zouaoua* soldiers received only half pay and only half of the soldiers (6.000) were received on payroll. This fact may also mean that the government's revenues were declining, since its big expense was the militia pay, financed by taxes. This provision was undoubtedly also a political act, which allowed the *dey* and its council to reduce the power of the militia, by introducing into the army native people who would not

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<sup>19</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, April 22.

necessarily have the same interests, nor the same behavior as the Turkish soldiers, of which they reduced the number and at the same time the force.

But not all Turks were militia soldiers. Civilians existed. The term “Turk” is also used in Algiers to refer to members of the army and civilians from the central regions of the Empire. Therefore, this is probably the term they themselves used as there were Turkish merchants from the Levant who lived in the fondouks.

Les marchands turcs du Levant, ou autres qui viennent avec des marchandises à Alger, vont loger dans ces *fundus*, où ils ont toutes les commodités pour leur commerce. Les soldats aussi, qui ne veulent pas loger dans les casernes, y prennent des chambres à leurs dépens<sup>20</sup>.

Father Ximénez also uses this term, when, about civilians, he writes: "Today we went to the governor's garden where there are as guardians a Turk who had been a slave in France and his Turkish wife also who had been a slave for seventeen years in Spain. She had been captured during the past wars of Hungary and she was taken to the port of Santa María where she remained until the English entered the city, then she fled and came here<sup>21</sup>."

Ximénez further defines the term: "As I said only can be soldiers the natural Turks, the renegades, the children of Turks and Turks, or children of Turks and renegades or renegades and Turkish women or renegade man and renegade woman; because all these have and are given the name of Turks<sup>22</sup>." Only these will be accepted as janissaries and will be able to enter the militia and in the ruling class. And "these Turks are of two kinds, Turks of origin or Turks of profession. Those of origin are those who come from Turkey, and their children. Those by profession are the renegades who, being children of Christian parents, become Muslims of their own free will, of which there have been and generally are from the

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<sup>20</sup>LAUGIER DE TASSY (Jacques Phillippe) : *Histoire du Royaume d'Alger*, Amsterdam : chez Henri du Sauzet, 1725, p. 105.

<sup>21</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, April 24.

<sup>22</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1720, « Noticias históricas de los hospitales de Argel », Chapter 1, fol. 142.

most distant regions of the world, as are the Abyssinians of the priest John. There must be two thousand of those in Algiers<sup>23</sup>." The militia, which numbered 12.000 men, would have had then in 1720, about 16,6% of professional Turks included in the six thousand (50%) received on payroll. There would therefore have been less than 4.000 Turks of origin, since the *Couloughlis* were also received on payroll.

The reality was more complex though. Not all renegades joined the militia and lived thanks to "their work or industry." For example, a renegade became a marabout: "There is in Algiers outside the city on an eminence towards the East a mosque where there is always a marabout. In the past years, a Mallorcan changed his faith and made himself a marabout, a sort of hermit of this mosque." The Christian slaves who lived inland, had little hope of being redeemed, except when amassing their ransom money themselves, because redemptions were made in the regencies in Algiers, in Tunis and Tripoli coastal towns. Moreover, converting to Islam did not necessarily give freedom, and it did not necessarily entail a change of status. Moreover, it was the merits of converted Christians that most often led them to social advance. Anyway, it was always a complicated affair because a conversion after the redeeming could affect both the price of the transaction and even the business itself:

"And in the case that any slave of any state or condition, after being rescued, becomes Moor, his master or masters are forced to return to the Father Redemptor all the amount they received for him without any difficulty<sup>24</sup>."

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, « Noticias históricas de los hospitales de Argel », Chapter 1, fol. 140.

<sup>24</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1720, March 4. Another case in: *Diario de Argel*, year 1720, March 8, «When the ransom amount of our order came from the Provinces of Castile and Andalusia, Francisco Rosique went with feigned tears to the redeemers so that they could rescue him, and moved with charity and compassion rescued him; but as soon as he saw himself free from slavery, he said that he wanted to be a Moor, and he renounced our holy faith, either at the request of the black woman with whom he was living, or because before he had this already planned with his boss, as many usually do, and give them part of what the redeemers gave...; after he was rescued, he renounced, they circumcised him as is customary and he later married the black woman and became a soldier; they sent him to Pisgra, and there he has died like a beast ».

#### 4. Privateering and Economic life.

Ximénez informs us about the importance of the privateering actions of Algiers in the Mediterranean, especially since privateering was the center of many economic activities that were carried out there, with the capture of boats with their loads, the spoils and especially the new captives. Thus, on May 26, 1718, he informed, "Yesterday and today the artillery and the troop fired a royal gun salute because, it is said, a considerable capture was brought. It has been learned that the Turks made twenty-seven Portuguese slaves on a caravel loaded with brandy, wine, sardines and other things, and among the captives there was a religious of the order of St. Francis and a clergyman, and it is a great pity, because there are already in this city more than twenty priests between those who are captives and those who are free".

Once the different enemy ships had been intercepted and their luggage and crew seized, the captives were taken directly to the Dey's house. Once in the house or palace of Dey in Algiers, the different consuls of the nations whose treaty and armistice of peace were still in force used to come to identify their captive compatriots. The Dey of Algiers used to take its eighth part of this prey, that is, out of every eight captives it chose one, and in general, it used to choose the most robust, the most important and those among them that had a profession, such as gunners, caulkers and others, which he put in the Baylique baths and the rest of the captives were sold in the Badistan by the different shipowners and individuals. The captives of the different baths of the Dey will be subjected to sale-purchase procedures at the Badistan, both by private individuals and also by different redeeming orders who used to go to the regency, once they had obtained a passport for such tasks,

"I went to the Baptistan, where the captives of the Privateering were, and they told me how fifteen had come, ten Valencians and five Catalans, who had gone out to fish in the sea, and the Turks caught them. They had them at the Baptistan, to sell them, and divide the price between shipowners and the baylique. The Baptistan is the place where not only the Christianos are sold, but also everything that they bring in the raids. They sell Christians as beasts, and loudly publishing the price they ask for them and saying

whoever gives more, they auction it off and when they reach the amount that they believe they worth, they auction it off, and pay the money, and they take the captive, they make him walk like the beasts, they say he is good looking, that they will have a lot of profit with him, that he is worth a lot of money and in short everything that a skilled merchant does in anything that sells<sup>25</sup>."

In the second half of the eighteenth century, some sources affirm that "it is very difficult discern exactly the trade which foreigners do in Algiers, being mainly based on the goods of the preys." However, it must be said that the way in which the preys were distributed and sold, first at the king's house, then, after various operations, in Badestan meant that the ports could not become a place of extremely active exchange, even if "the things that come by sea are sold to the navy<sup>26</sup>." As the privateering was a state affair, many transactions were carried out at the Djenina, the palace of the dey, then at the Badestan. At the very moment the prize is agreed, the dey sends on his behalf the controller of prize affairs, and also goes the secretary of the privateer ship on behalf of the crew. They unload the goods and put them into the store, in order to keep an exact account. After that, the controller seizes the eighth of the goods of the shipment for the dey, and places them in the deylik or state stores.

As soon as the controller has received on behalf of the dey the eighth of the goods belonging to the deylik, if those which remain are easy to share, such as sugar, tobacco and similar, they are divided half to the shipowners and the other half to the crew. There are no procedures, no fees, and the work is all done by the slaves. If the merchandise is not easy to share, or if there is some difficulty between those who are entitled to it, it is auctioned off, paid for in cash, and the proceeds are divided.

As for the hinterland, the Mitidja plain was flourishing. It produced in the first quarter of the eighteenth century two crops of grain per year, fruits, legumes, vegetables, and cattle. Rural markets

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<sup>25</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, March 28.

<sup>26</sup>**MEROUCHE (Lemnouar)** : *Recherches sur l'Algérie à l'époque ottomane. II. La course, mythes et réalité*, Paris, Bouchène, 2007, p. 67.

were also held there on certain days. Blida was then a prosperous city: its activity, based on agriculture, market gardening and silkworms, met the needs of Algiers<sup>27</sup>. There were many reasons for internal trade to take a growing place, especially when maritime trade stifled, lashed by the European powers, to the point that the government of Algiers decided to declare war on Holland in 1716 for be able to attack its ships. Laugier de Tassy relates this episode in these terms: "There was once the house of a consul of the General States of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, but he retired in 1716. As the corsairs of Algiers hardly made any more catch, the Militia made the Divan to assembly, and there they complaint that they no longer encountered any enemy vessels at sea; that generally they met French, English or Dutch ships (countries with a peace treaty with the Regency of Algiers); and that as the country could not support itself without taking a hold, it was necessary to declare war on one of the three nations by a votation. The result was The Netherlands. At the same time, a ship of this nation which was in the harbor was arrested, and the dey sent orders to all the ports of the kingdom to do the same. He gave the consul the time he wanted to settle his affairs, he consoled him and pity him. This consul was much loved by the dey, and had a well-established reputation among Christians, Turks and Moors<sup>28</sup>."

Ximénez comments on this breach of treaty in similar terms as to the facts, but with different intention. He relates on December 4, 1719 the events of the day, among others, the arrival of "the ambassador of the Great Turk", who came to obtain peace from the Algerians with the Netherlands: "But the corsairs rejected it because they say that what would they eat if peace is going to be made with the Dutch; they will have to keep the ships moored and that they will perish in the harbor. And they are partly right, because on no other nation do they take more hold than that one, nor more advantageous. During the three years of peace that they had with

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<sup>27</sup>**BERNABÉ PONS (Luis F.)** : « Los moriscos en Argelia », *Argelia y España. Puentes en la Historia*, Granada, OHL, 2016, p. 161-174.

<sup>28</sup>**LAUGIER DE TASSY (Jacques Phillippe)** : *Histoire du Royaume d'Alger*, Amsterdam : chez Henri du Sauzet, 1725, p. 288. On Laugier de Tassy see **THOMSON (Ann)** : « Jacques Philippe Laugier de Tassy », in *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500-1900*, General Editor David Thomas. Consulted online on 30 November 2022 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2451-9537\\_cmrii\\_COM\\_29743](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2451-9537_cmrii_COM_29743).

them these past years they died, as the Algerians said, of starving, and seeing that they had no profit with the other nations, they took the decision to engage the war, without any other reason and without informing Holland or telling something to the Dutch consul. Then they began to bring in ships and captives from this nation, and then they allowed the consul to leave. But it is well done for them, as they think that it is not right to make war against the Turks, and that to fight against them is to go against God who sees our iniquities towards them. This is the way of thinking of Luther and his followers and that's why he is condemned by Pope Leo X in proposition 34<sup>29</sup>.”

Then, Laugier de Tassy explains the decision-making of the Algerians, while Father Ximénez judges the Algerians' way of proceeding and the position of the Lutherans, opposing them that of the Roman Catholic Church. In short, he rejoices at the misfortune of the Dutch ships. The Spanish friar expresses his opinion in relation to the two protagonists he condemns, in accordance with the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Of course, it is no wonder that he always complains about the services that some European nations give to the Turk regarding Privateering affairs,

The French vessel has brought two guns for the vessels of the Turks, guns commissioned to a French merchant who is here called Monsieur Lup<sup>30</sup>, and the English have brought anchors, wood, and all the necessary to arm the ship or the Capitane ship of the Baylique, and in this way they armor all their ships to privateer and do harm to the Christians who have war with these Moors, who are assisted by England, Holland and France<sup>31</sup>.

The new ship of the Baylique, soon started its activity. According to Ximénez, its first trip was a real event in the city,

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<sup>29</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, December 4.

<sup>30</sup>Lazare Loup was at that moment the agent in Algiers of the Compagnie d'Afrique, a French company which was a concessionary of commercial establishments in eastern Algeria. This company was active from 1713 to 1719.

<sup>31</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, April 22.



Today the new Capitanes ship which has been finished for the Baylik has left the port, and it has fifty-six very good cannons, and eight hundred people, eighty Christian sailors, and the Turks, who are the best and more valiant soldiers than Algiers has; and as ra'is does Viquer; this is the first time that he goes out to privateer<sup>32</sup>.

Thus, the maritime activity was subordinated to privateering more than related to the ordinary commercial exchanges, although traces of this commerce can also be found in the *Diaries*: "A Mallorcan came to ask in this French boat a passport of the king of Algiers to do business in this city, and we were very happy about, because we will have frequent news from Spain." As the regency could not survive only by peaceful exchanges, with the breaking of the peace treaties, the exercise of privateering became a necessary way. Trade with the Levant and the Mediterranean basin including Spain, with England, ensured the wealth of Algiers in the 1580s. In the eighteenth century the merchants still came to Algiers, but the situation was just not the same. As Fernand Braudel showed, privateering and trade were inextricably linked. This was also clear for Father Ximenez:

The main purpose of the Privateering is not to bring captives, but to seize merchandise and other things of more value than the ransoms of Christians, and even if there were no redemptions but only Navies, they would leave the ports for the interest of these presses<sup>33</sup>.

## Conclusion

The Diaries of Francisco Ximénez are a very interesting source for analyzing Algerian society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Due to his position in the Hospital of his Order, Ximénez is close to what happens in the daily life of the Regency. In this way, he offers precious testimonies about commercial life in Algiers, especially in relation to merchants, privateering and captivity. But he also offers interesting data on the social composition of the city and its particular problems.

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<sup>32</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, June 15.

<sup>33</sup>*Diario de Argel*, year 1719, July 11.

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