



## Algeria's political relations with the Ottoman Empire between 1791 and 1830

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### Abstract:

This study aims to shed light on the origins of relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire, and to examine the manifestations of political subordination between the two parties, even after Algeria's near-complete separation. Through this study, we also seek to highlight the diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Algeria, which influenced the latter's foreign relations. We have concluded that Algeria acquired an important position in the western Mediterranean basin following the Ottoman Empire's assistance against Spanish occupation. This strengthened the bonds of solidarity and support between the two countries, whilst making Algeria a target for the ambitions of foreign powers—such as the United States, Portugal and France—which sought to further weaken it by instigating crises in order to gain control.

**Keywords:** diplomatic relations, political subordination, tension, peace.

### Introduction:

Algeria was linked to the Ottoman Empire from 1518 until 1830. This period saw a succession of different forms of government in Algeria and was characterised, at the outset, by an unstable relationship between the two states, as there was no distinct system of government ; but this separation soon took shape, although it was by no means absolute, as signs of alliance and cooperation between the two sides remained, particularly in their foreign relations, which encompassed various aspects, especially political ones. During the Ottoman period, Algeria was one of the strongest states in the Mediterranean, thanks to its maritime activity, which was the cornerstone that defined and subsequently influenced the nature of its relations with neighbouring states. Consequently, it enjoyed an international standing that was reflected in its relations and political stances.

Therefore, the subject of political relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire is an important one that must be studied in light of the events and developments that took place throughout the period spanning 1791 to 1830, a period that was by no means straightforward and cannot be overlooked. and thus the aim of this study is to clarify the political relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire during the period spanning 1791 to 1830.

In light of the above, we pose the following question:



What was the nature of the political relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire during the period spanning 1791 to 1830?

Methodology:

The historical method has been adopted in this study, as this approach facilitates the narration and analysis of historical events.

### 1. **The Beginnings of Relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire**

The treaty signed by the city of Algiers with Spain in 1510 amounted more to an unconditional surrender than a lasting peace, as it contained a number of conditions that turned Algeria into a vassal state required to pay tribute and serve the interests of the Spanish king; to this end, Algeria was forced to evacuate its defensive forts, provide supplies for the fortifications, establish friendly relations with Spain's allies, and close its ports to hostile nations. To cap this humiliating treaty, Spain occupied and fortified the island of El Bounoun, thereby gaining control of the entrance to the port of Algiers. The Spanish were able to easily control all maritime activities simply by blocking access to the port. The people of Algiers would not accept such a treaty; indeed, they viewed with resentment the subjugation and payment of tribute to a Christian power. Upon the death of King Ferdinand II in 1516, they considered the treaty no longer binding, fearing Spanish retaliation, they sought the protection of the Turks and sent a delegation to the Barbarossa brothers, asking for their help in ridding themselves of Spain, given their reputation as enemies of the Christians and their previous military success at Jijel. The Turks were welcomed to Algiers as saviours of their Muslim brethren, not as conquerors<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, the founding of Ottoman Algeria was closely linked to the two brothers known as the Barbarossa, who are considered the true founders of modern Algeria. Although Oruj was killed shortly after his arrival in Algeria, he had achieved much against the Spanish; his brother Khair al-Din then continued the unification efforts and established well-established institutions in Algeria. Despite the continued Spanish occupation of Algerian ports, which posed a serious threat to the nascent Kingdom of Algeria, Hayreddin resisted both Spanish and local forces, and even succeeded in defeating a Spanish fleet in 1519. Aware of the ongoing Christian attacks on Algeria, he sought the protection of the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Selim I declared Algeria part of his territories in 1519; in return, Khair al-Din recognised the Sultan's sovereignty and pledged his allegiance to him. This marked the beginning of Ottoman rule in Algeria. By 1525, Hayreddin had consolidated his control over Algiers and transformed it into a powerful

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<sup>1</sup> Maameri, Fatima, *Ottoman Algeria in Western Diplomatic History with Particular Emphasis on Relations with the United States of America, 1776-1816*, doctorat d'Etat, UNIVERSITE MENTOURI, CONSTANTINE, Faculty of Letters and Languages Department of Languages, 2008, p 38.



naval base, thereby strengthening the Ottoman presence in the western Mediterranean and turning this Ottoman province into a vital construction site along the coast.<sup>2</sup>

By 1538, the Ottoman Empire had complete control over the eastern Mediterranean, and the theatre of conflict between Muslims and Christians shifted to the west. From there, the Algerian fleet – which had become an integral part of the Ottoman fleet – to play a decisive role in the struggle for naval supremacy in the Mediterranean. The fleet was, in fact, the cornerstone that enabled Algeria to achieve naval supremacy, as Algeria became a force to be reckoned with in the Mediterranean. This power was demonstrated through its resistance to European aggression, including: the military campaigns launched by Denmark and Spain (1770–1784).<sup>3</sup>

Although Algeria remained part of the Ottoman Empire following its autonomy and some aspects of subordination to the Sublime Porte persisted, the latter no longer held effective influence there. The Dey was, in fact, an autocratic constitutional ruler, though his authority was constrained by the Diwan and the Taifa. and despite military coups and occasional mob rule, the day-to-day running of government was characterised by remarkable discipline. In accordance with the millet system applied throughout the Ottoman Empire, each ethnic group—Turks, Arabs, tribes, Berbers, Jews and Europeans—was represented by a guild that exercised judicial authority over its members.<sup>4</sup>

## **2 Political Subordination between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire**

In the early 18th century, Algeria's subordination to the Ottoman Empire became a nominal one, consisting of the authorities' ratification of the appointment of the new Dey. In return, the Caliphate ceded to the Turkish garrison in Algeria its right of appointment and granted it the right to elect the Dey, whilst also leaving it free to administer the country, Algeria thus enjoyed almost complete independence, whilst retaining the right to confirm the choice by presenting the caftan and sword to the new Dey, carried by the envoy of the Ottoman Caliphate, as a symbol of the conferral of authority upon him, The common ground between Algeria and the Sublime Porte was the Islamic faith, implying mutual submission and respect. On this basis, Algeria pledged allegiance, obedience and protection to the Caliphate, as it was the largest state in the Islamic world at the time in terms of area, population and power.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Op, Cit, ,p p 39 – 44.

<sup>3</sup> Op, Cit, ,p p 44- 46 .

<sup>4</sup> area handbook series, Algeria a country study, Library of Congress, December 1993,p 20 – 21.

<sup>5</sup> Mashatri, Abdelhafid, Ottoman Algeria (1800–1830): A Study of Its Political Developments and Foreign Relations, Master's thesis, University of 8 May 1945, Guelma, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History and Archaeology, 2015, pp. 108, 109.



## 2.1 The Flag:

The flag of Algeria in the sixteenth century, referred to in the text as the ‘sanjak’, was sent to the country from the seat of the Ottoman Empire. Its dispatch to Khair al-Din and the people of Algeria served as a symbol of allegiance and political alliance with the Ottoman Empire. It is also known that the Ottoman Sultan appointed the head of government for at least the following two centuries, The ties between the Deys of Algiers and the Ottoman Empire led to the fall of the city of Algiers to the French in 1830. To illustrate the importance of the flag in this political and religious relationship, we note that Omar Pasha raised the Ottoman flag upon his accession in 1814.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the Ottoman era, the Algerians used various flags, some of which they shared with the Ottomans by virtue of their membership of the Ottoman Empire, and others which were unique to them for reasons of their own, This was described by the American prisoner (Cathcart) in his memoirs in the late 18th century AD when he noted that the Algerians “raise the Turkish flag on the palace on feast days, and the Algerian flag on the fortifications”, He added elsewhere that “the palace is topped by a balcony with a railing of gilded bars, in the centre of which are flagpoles for the Algerian flag and the Pasha’s flag, whilst the Islamic flag is raised on Fridays and feast days”.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Currency:

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the currency in the Eyalet of Algiers was its round shape, in keeping with the style of Turkish<sup>8</sup> coins minted in Istanbul, the seat of the Sultanate; as such, these coins were imitations of Turkish currency. Throughout the Ottoman period, the large gold and silver coins minted in Algeria always bore the name of the Ottoman Sultan, engraved on the obverse of the coin after ‘Sultan of the Two Lands and the Two Seas’, and sometimes his father’s name was added along with the phrase ‘May God perpetuate his reign’ or ‘Glory to his victory’ and other such phrases. On the reverse of the coin was the inscription ‘Minted in Algeria’ along with the date of the Sultan’s accession, whereas smaller coins merely bore the sultan’s name and the date of his accession or the date of minting. Thus, the symbolic significance of this glorification of the sultanate over three centuries was not limited to establishing the

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<sup>6</sup> Habassi, Chaus. *The Modern Algerian National Flag: Its Evolution in Form and an Analysis of its Ideological and Political Content (1518–1945)*, Mofam Publishing, 1996, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Hamash, Khalifa Ibrahim, *Relations between the Eyalet of Algiers and the Sublime Porte from 1798 to 1830*, Master’s thesis, Department of History and Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria, 1988, p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> Saidouni, Nasir al-Din, *\*The Financial System of Algeria in the Late Ottoman Period (1792–1830)\**, followed by *\*The Law Governing the Markets of Algiers\**, Algiers, 3rd ed., Al-Basair for Publishing and Distribution, pp. 180–181.



concept of the political sovereignty of the Ottoman sultan, but rather pointed to the authority and identity of a sultanate governing a political and economic entity.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.3 Recruitment:

The Ottoman state's aim in permitting and supporting volunteers to go to Algeria was to keep the Eyalet of Algeria within the sphere of Ottoman influence, being aware of its geographical distance from the centre of the Ottoman state and fearing its secession, as well as to supply Algeria with new recruits from the Ottoman provinces, on the understanding that they would eventually come to rule in Algeria, having arrived there as defenders and remaining as its rulers, alongside the fundamental issue of the Ottoman Empire's defence of Algeria, which was constantly under threat from the Crusaders. Thus, conscription remained a fundamental element of Algerian-Ottoman relations for three centuries, though it was affected by the disputes that arose from time to time between the two sides, as the Ottoman sultans controlled the conscription mechanisms, given that they were carried out from the territories of the Ottoman Empire, over which the sultan exercised direct control.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Diplomatic relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire

Algeria witnessed a distinctive phase in the history of Algerian-Ottoman relations, during which the dispatch of pashas to the Eyalet from Istanbul ceased, and their appointment came to be made from among members of the Oujahs in the city of Algiers. This separation was reflected in the emergence of the Eyalet under the name of the Republic of Algiers, as evidenced by the treaties and correspondence between it and the European states, with which it dealt independently, as decisions to conclude peace and declare war were made in its own name without seeking the approval of the Sublime Porte in Istanbul, unlike the other Arab eyalets in Egypt and Iraq, which could not conclude any treaty without consulting the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Eyalet managed to free itself from the influence of the Ottoman Empire and gained the ability to manage its foreign affairs autonomously, which earned it a special status within the Ottoman Empire, transforming it from a vassal state into an ally. This alliance was sustained through the strengthening of political and diplomatic relations<sup>11</sup>, manifested in the following ways:

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<sup>9</sup> Marouch, Al-Manour, *Studies on Algeria during the Ottoman Period (Currency, Prices and Incomes)*, Vol. 1, Dar al-Qasbah Publishing, 2009, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Flouh, Abdelkader, *Algerian-Ottoman Relations during the Period 1233–1246 AH (corresponding to 1818–1830 AD) in the Light of Documents from the Algerian National Library*, Master's thesis, University of Algiers 2, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, 2010, pp. 51, 52.

<sup>11</sup> Aref Sakour, Sanaa, *Algeria's Foreign Relations during the Dey Era, 1671–1830*, Tishreen University Journal, Vol. 41, No. 5, 2019, p. 400.



### **3.1 Algeria's participation in the Sublime Porte's wars:**

Algerian-Ottoman relations underwent significant development, particularly during the reign of the Deys in Algeria. The assistance provided by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I to the Barbarossa brothers was the first seed of these relations, consisting of military equipment and thousands of soldiers, through which Algeria formed the initial core of the army. This assistance continued to be provided in return for the rulers of Algeria pledging loyalty and obedience to the Ottoman Sultan, and their recognition of subordination to the Ottoman Empire. Thanks to its fleet, Algeria was able to achieve numerous victories, with the Algerian navy contributing significantly to strengthening Algerian-Ottoman relations through the Algerian fleet's participation in many of the wars waged by the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the Algerian navy suffered several losses, including: the loss of some naval vessels; nevertheless, Algeria continued its military support for the Ottoman Empire until 1827 at the Battle of Navarino, where Algeria participated with six ships.<sup>12</sup>

From this, we conclude that the Algerian fleet played a major role in consolidating relations between Algeria and the Ottoman Empire, particularly in times of war.

### **3.2 The exchange of gifts:**

The exchange of gifts between the two countries formed the solid foundation upon which the political relations between them were built, relations which continued until the fall of Algiers to the French in 1830. The gift sent by the Pashas of Algiers, and later the Walis, upon their appointment to office to the Ottoman Sultan was among the most important gifts that the Eyalet sent to the Sublime Porte, which would respond with a gift of equal value, as a sign of loyalty to him, an acknowledgement of Algeria's subordination to the Ottoman Empire, and an expression of Algeria's desire to join under the banner of his state.<sup>13</sup>

The relations of cooperation and mutual support, which began with the symbolic assistance initially received by Aruj and his brothers, continued to be repeated on sporadic occasions, particularly in the form of equipment, soldiers and officers. The Algerian navy also contributed significantly to the rescue of the Ottoman navy in several wars between the Ottoman Caliphate and major European powers. It is worth noting that this support was evidence of an ongoing, automatic response driven by solidarity in jihad, as a united front against other blocs, namely European aggression.<sup>14</sup>

### **3.3 Diplomatic Communications:**

Diplomatic communications between Algeria and the Sublime Porte took place through various methods and messages, the most important of which were:

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Hamash, Khalifa Ibrahim, pp. 149, 150.

<sup>14</sup> Mashari, Abdul Hafiz, op. cit., pp. 110, 111.



### **A. The Sultan's Framins:**

These are known as the Hamayun Framins, originating directly from the Sultan. This type bears the seal of the reigning Sultan, inscribed in beautiful, intricate calligraphy, signifying the exalted status of the recipient of the message. This type of firman exerted political influence over the Dey and the Diwan in Algeria through the acceptance of its contents and obedience to the Sultan's commands; it was a sign of the Dey of Algeria's respect for the Ottoman Sultan, the spiritual leader of the Muslims. Furthermore, such firmans were issued only in extreme circumstances, to address a serious matter, or to formalise a new arrangement.

### **B. Ordinary Framins:**

These are of lesser importance than the first type and are issued by senior ministers, foremost among them the Grand Vizier or the Qubudān Pasha and the Arsenal Administrator. The most notable feature of this type is that its wording is closer in style to a request, indicating the sender's limited authority over the message's outcome. This type also contains certain issues and matters to which the Dey of Algiers and his court refuse to respond, as an expression of the Algerian government's commitment to the independence of its decisions.<sup>15</sup>

As for other significant methods of diplomatic communication between Algiers and the Sublime Porte, these involved the exchange of embassies and delegations comprising dignitaries and scholars to discuss various issues of mutual concern, namely political, military and economic matters.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, diplomatic contacts between the two sides during the period 1818–1830 were deeper and more extensive than is customary in diplomatic relations between states, particularly as they were subjected to external circumstances, military attacks and conspiracies, which compelled them to conduct their diplomatic relations within the framework of defending Muslim territories in the spirit of Islamic solidarity. Dey Hussein Pasha fully understood that Algeria's relationship with the Ottoman Empire was an alliance within an Islamic framework between the centre and the periphery, without relinquishing Algeria's autonomy of decision-making regarding certain issues related to Algerian interests. It is worth noting in this context that the frequent exchanges between Algeria and the Sublime Porte stemmed from Algeria's political standing with the Ottoman Empire; evidence of this is that Sultan Mahmud II was well aware of developments in Algeria, as confirmed by his numerous letters to Dai Hussein Pasha.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hamash, Khalifa Ibrahim, op. cit., pp. 187–188.

<sup>16</sup> Foulouh, Abd al-Qadir, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 49, 50.



#### **4. Algeria's foreign relations and their impact on its relations with the Ottoman Empire**

During the Ottoman era, Algeria was one of the most powerful states in the Mediterranean thanks to its maritime activity, which was considered the cornerstone of its foreign relations with other nations. It thus enjoyed an international standing that was reflected in its political relations and diplomatic stances, owing to its subordination to the Ottoman Empire, with which it remained linked by political ties that could not be ignored. For this reason, we shall examine some of Algeria's foreign relations, such as those with America, Portugal and France, during the Ottoman period.

##### **4.1 Foreign relations between the Eyalet of Algeria and America:**

The political relationship between the Eyalet of Algiers and America did not originate in the period under study between 1791 and 1830, but dates back to before 1776, given that American merchants were the first to enter the Mediterranean prior to independence. Relations between the two countries witnessed significant developments, beginning with tensions caused by Algerian piracy against American ships. but America subsequently realised the importance of establishing relations with Algeria to safeguard its trade in the Mediterranean. Given the time constraints of our study, we shall address the political relationship between the two countries from 1790 onwards, following the capture by Algerian pirates of two American merchant ships sailing in the western Mediterranean.

##### **A. The path to peace between Algeria and America in 1790:**

A petition was submitted to the House of Representatives calling for the release of American prisoners in Algeria, and the matter was referred to the Secretary of State for study and to submit a report on it. Accordingly, Jefferson submitted two reports to the President, one on the Algerian prisoners, and the other on Mediterranean trade. He suggested that it might be better to deter force with force and that American prisoners could be exchanged for pirates if American raids were launched against Algerian ships, claiming that Algeria rarely agreed to exchange Moors for white prisoners, and therefore an exchange might be possible. He then linked the issue of the prisoners to the expansion of American trade in the Mediterranean, and presented Congress with two options: war, or tribute. If war broke out, America would have to consider building a naval fleet and cooperating with other powers; if peace prevailed, it could purchase it as was customary with European nations. Nevertheless, he was confident in the first option.<sup>18</sup>

##### **B. Reconsideration of the peace negotiations in May 1792:**

Jefferson was determined to resolve the Algerian crisis either by force or through a negotiated treaty, so he instructed David Humphreys, the American ambassador to

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<sup>18</sup> Maameri, Fatima, Ottoman Algeria in Western Diplomatic History with Particular Emphasis on Relations with the United States of America, 1776-1816, Op, Cit, p 296 - 297.



Portugal, to commence negotiations. The instructions were essentially identical to those previously issued, with one change concerning payments for naval provisions. In late 1793, a new crisis between Algiers and America began to unfold once again, as the Americans abruptly halted the peace process they had initiated after it had been informally communicated to the Dey by American prisoners. When the Swedes presented their credentials to the Dey, he refused to receive them. According to Per Erik Sköldbrand (the Swedish consul's brother), the Dey declared that: "Peace will not be concluded with the Americans at any price", and that he was prepared to support the commitments made by his predecessor at half the price. El-Dai explained that circumstances did not allow him, in his own interest, to accept their offers. It is also likely that El-Dai Hassan Pasha, and despite his anger at the Americans' stance, attempted to revive negotiations with them, as a man named Basara contacted the American legation in Alicante and presented himself as the sole authorised negotiator for the Dey of Algiers, although the Dey did not believe that the American government had appointed two commissioners to deal with him, and they had died after their appointment, and therefore he accepted no other representative besides him. Given that no other source confirmed or refuted this information on the one hand, and the American government's untrustworthy behaviour both before and after on the other, the Dey ended up not trusting the Americans; he therefore decided to conduct the negotiations on his own without waiting for American envoys.<sup>19</sup>

### **C. Tension and the rift between Algeria and America from 1870 to 1814:**

This period was marked by two crises, namely:

- The crisis of 1807 between American intransigence and the Algerian offensive: The Algerian side was keen to maintain peaceful relations with America and was always understanding of American procrastination in paying its annual dues, whether due to the distance or financial circumstances. In contrast, American intentions since the 1795 treaty had shown that the country was committed to manipulation and deliberate procrastination. In October 1807, the Dey Ahmed Khoja demanded Algeria's dues from America through Consul Tobias Lear, after they had been delayed for two years and consisted of naval supplies; however, the consul failed to meet the Dey's expectations, prompting the latter to order the navy to seize any American ship they encountered at sea. Following this action, the United States complied with the Dey's demand and paid the dues in cash.<sup>20</sup>
- The Crisis of 1812 and the Beginning of the End between America and Algeria: On 17 July 1812, the ship *Algiers* arrived at the port of Algiers carrying the annual

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<sup>19</sup> Op, Cit, p p 299 – 301.

<sup>20</sup> Mohamed Amin Bouhaloufa, \*Ottoman Algeria and the Kingdom of England: A Study of Political, Economic and Social Relations from 1620 to 1827\*, PhD thesis, Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Oran 1, 2019, p. 75.



naval supplies. During unloading, Algerian naval officials discovered that much of the stock was missing, which angered the Dey, who refused to allow the cargo to be unloaded. The reason for the shortage of supplies was that America had not received a full shipment due to the War of 1812, which had led the US to reduce the quantity; they tried by various means to make the Algerians believe that the shipment was complete. As for Consul Lear, he was astonished and did not know how the information regarding the shortage in the shipment had reached the authorities in Algiers. However, it later became clear to the consul that the information had reached him through various channels. Consequently, the Dey, Hajj al-Khoja, considered this behaviour to be deception on the part of the United States and a violation of the 1795 treaty.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, the Dey ordered the American Consul General to leave Algeria in July 1812. The Dey also threatened to annul the treaty and declare war if America did not honour its obligations under the 1795 treaty within the timeframe specified therein. However, America ignored the warning, and two months later, Algerian pirates seized another American ship and took 11 prisoners, leading to the outbreak of hostilities with the United States. The latter—whose power had by then grown — to accept a challenge from a small state in the Mediterranean, and regarded Algeria's actions as a deliberate act of aggression against them. The prevailing circumstances at the time made a declaration of war on the United States necessary. According to diplomatic and naval practice, treaties were negotiated on the basis of tribute, and passports guaranteed safe passage through the Mediterranean for all belligerent nations. By declaring war, the Dey was merely adhering to the laws of the time, and he may also have hoped to pressure America into settling its outstanding debts.<sup>22</sup>

After 34 years of Algerian-American relations, two key features emerged: firstly, that Algeria treated this country in the same way as other European nations; and secondly, the Americans' refusal to accept the Berber country as a significant player in the Western Mediterranean, a stance confirmed by their desire to eliminate it by any means necessary whenever the opportunity arose.<sup>23</sup>

#### **4.2 Foreign relations between the Eyalet of Algiers and Portugal**

Portugal followed the Spanish approach, regarding itself as part of Spain, and was a party to the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 AD with Spain against the Islamic countries of North Africa. It provided strategic support for the expansion of the Crusader movement, particularly after coming under the banner of the Ottoman Caliphate, as in 1784 AD it took the initiative to persuade the European states that were at odds with Algeria, Political relations between the two countries were characterised by wars for

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 77.

<sup>22</sup> Maameri, Fatima, Algerian-American Relations Reconsidered, 1783-1816, *Revue Des Sciences Humaines*, Université Mentouri, Constantine, Algérie Volume 19, Numéro 1, 2008, p 43 -44.

<sup>23</sup> Mohamed Amin, Bouhaloufa, op. cit., p. 78.



most of the period<sup>24</sup>, such as the naval confrontations in the late 18th century, and the battles led by the Algerian admiral El-Reis Hamido against Portugal, which are regarded as among the greatest naval engagements in world history. However, these periods of war were interspersed with a series of truce treaties, as follows:

- A. The 1785 truce treaty between the Dey Muhammad Othman and Queen Maria I, brokered by Britain.
- B. The truce treaty of September 1793 between the Dey Hassan and Queen Maria I.
- C. The peace treaty of 28 September 1795 between the Dey Hassan and Queen Maria I.
- D. The peace treaty of 14 July 1812 between the Dey al-Hajj Ali and Queen Maria I.

### 4.3 Foreign relations between the Eyalet of Algiers and France

Relations between the two countries have experienced varying periods of tension, ever since France began to benefit from economic privileges in Algeria, and these relations became increasingly strained from the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715) onwards as a result of his hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims, until the signing of the peace treaty on 25 April 1684 in exchange for the cessation of maritime jihad in the Mediterranean; relations then became strained once again due to French espionage against the Algerian navy.<sup>26</sup>

Relations between the two countries remained strained until the outbreak of the French Revolution, as the circumstances of this revolution and the financial crisis affected several regions, forcing France to seek assistance from Algeria, which provided a financial loan. Despite attempts by England to persuade the Dey to prevent him from providing assistance to France, he refused and pledged to supply France with everything it needed from Algeria. The French government asked Dey Hassan to establish regular and permanent communication between the two countries.<sup>27</sup>

In 1797, France established modern colonies in North Africa; however, the French government was preoccupied with its campaign against Egypt and was keen to maintain good relations so as to keep it neutral in its conflict with Britain during the invasion of Egypt in 1798. This campaign is seen as confirmation of the decline of the Ottoman Empire's power, which worked in favour of the European states. It served as a test of the Sublime Porte's ability to impose its will on the Maghreb states, as the Sublime Porte recognised the important role Algeria could play in its war against France and

<sup>24</sup> Fatima Radai, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>25</sup> Abdelkader Fkair, 'Algerian-Portuguese Relations during the Ottoman Period', *Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 18, December 2016, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> Kantour, Rabah, 'Algerian Foreign Relations during the Deyate Era', *Journal of Historical Studies*, University of Algiers 2, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2014, pp. 156–157.

<sup>27</sup> Radhi, Fatima. *Algerian-French Relations (1789-1815)*, *Mediterranean Dialogue Journal*, Issue 3-4, 2012, p. 64.



asked Algeria to declare war; however, Algeria did not wish to sever ties. When the Bey of Constantine took measures against French interests in Annaba, the Dey intervened and annulled them. The Sultan then sent a firman of appointment and abdication to Algeria, which set conditions for declaring war on France. This is evident from the substantial military aid provided by the Ottoman Empire to Algeria. A decision was therefore issued to sever relations with France and declare war on it in accordance with the order of the Sublime Porte. Consequently, on 15 February 1799, the French government passed a resolution authorising French ships to attack any warships or merchant vessels flying the Algerian flag. However, Foreign Minister Talleyrand backtracked on his position, attempting to justify Algeria's stance on the grounds that it had not declared war on France merely because it had entered Egypt, but rather due to pressure from the army, as it wished to maintain peace with France.<sup>28</sup>

Tensions in relations persisted until Napoleon managed, in 1800, to conclude armistice agreements with the North African states. In early 1801, the Ottoman Empire exerted pressure on Algeria to declare war on France, due to the continued occupation of Egypt. Thus, relations between the two countries continued to fluctuate between peace and tension until a crisis arose between the two sides, which lasted from 1825 and ended with the occupation of Algeria in 1830.<sup>29</sup>

From the above, we can see the independence of Algerian decision-making and its freedom to act and conclude treaties and agreements with foreign states without consulting the Sublime Porte, unlike the Eastern states, which could not conclude any treaty without written permission from the Sublime Porte, and where the treaty was signed in the name of the Ottoman Caliph. Algeria, however, declared war, made peace, conducted negotiations and signed treaties in its own name, without permission from anyone, regardless of the interests of the Ottoman Empire, though it did take its interests into account. This was the case when Algeria refused to declare war on Napoleonic France, which had invaded Egypt in 1798, until after the Sublime Porte's insistence and threats to cut off aid, alongside other forms of pressure on Algeria, which some regarded as a manifestation of its subordination to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>30</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

From our study, we conclude the following:

As Spanish attacks on the Algerian coast intensified, the Barbarossa brothers emerged onto the scene, and they had a significant influence on the course of events in the western Mediterranean, after Khair al-Din sought their assistance to obtain the financial and military strength necessary to resist this devastating threat, particularly as Spain

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Kentour Rabah, previous reference, pp. 156–159.

<sup>30</sup> Nait Belkacem, Mouloud Kacem, *The International Personality and Global Prestige of Algeria Before 1830*, Vol. 1, 1st ed., Dar al-Baath, Constantine, Algeria, 2007, p. 82.



was the leader of the Christian world and was considered the dominant power in North Africa and Southern Europe.

Consequently, during the Ottoman era, the Algerian navy attained a distinguished international standing, which enabled it to dominate the Mediterranean, both during the period of subjugation and during the period of near-complete independence, as relations between the two countries remained close and united under diplomatic ties that were regarded as the force binding them politically.

As for Algeria's foreign relations with America, Portugal and France, they fluctuated between tension, war and peace, owing to these nations' desire to plunder Algeria's resources and wealth by virtue of its strategic location.

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