

The Mobility of Traders in the Mediterranean Sea
The Bouchara family itineraries between Algiers, Livorno and Marseille
حركة التجار في البحر الأبيض المتوسط: الرحلات التجارية لعائلة بوشارة بين الجزائر

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Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to track down the itineraries of the Bouchara family in the Mediterranean Sea. The main focus is on knowing the factors that facilitates these business trips that took place between Algiers, Livorno and Marseille. Drawing on archival sources such as consular correspondence and shipping records, this research presents and analyzes six business transactions in order to highlight the importance of having professional connections that paved the way for the family to practice their trading freely and effectively. By exploring their experience, this study provides a better understanding of the different dynamics that characterized the Mediterranean commerce, particularly the Bouchara business trips, between the 18th and 19th century.

Keywords: Mediterranean Sea, Bouchara Family, Dey, Traders, Mobility

ملخص باللغة العربية:

هذا البحث هو محاولة لرصد الرحلات التجارية لعائلة بوشارة في البحر الأبيض المتوسط. وينصب فيه التركيز على معرفة العوامل التي سهلت هذه الرحلات التجارية التي جرت بين الجزائر وليفورنو ومرسييا. وبالاعتماد على المصادر الأرشيفية مثل المراسلات القنصلية وسجلات الشحن، يقدم هذا البحث ست معاملات تجارية ويحللها من أجل تسليط الضوء على أهمية وجود علاقات مهنية مهدت الطريق للعائلة لممارسة تجارتها بحرية وفعالية. وعبر استكشاف تجربتهم، توفر هذه الدراسة فهماً أفضل للديناميكيات المختلفة التي ميزت التنقلات التجارية المتوسطية، وبالتحديد تنقلات عائلة بوشارة بين القرنين الثامن عشر والتاسع عشر.

كلمات مفتاحية: البحر المتوسط، عائلة بوشارة، الداى، التجار، إيالة الجزائر

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1. Introduction

This article is drawn from a longer oral presentation on "The Mediterranean as seen from North Africa", based on some of the itineraries of leading merchants who settled between Algiers, Livorno and Marseilles.

Starting from Algiers, as a point of departure, most of the major merchants whose trading houses had branches in Livorno and later in Marseilles were Frankish Jews, mainly from Livorno, who had come to settle in Algiers by the end of the 17th century. Jewish merchants were preferred to native North Africans because of their easy access to European ports, especially Livorno since the famous *Livournina*, a Tuscan edict of 1593 authorizing foreigners of all faiths and social backgrounds to settle in the port of Livorno to trade, provided they did not disrupt public order. The trajectories of Jewish merchants in Algiers were different and the most solid trading houses experienced turbulence, as the risks were high. Muslim merchants, whether indigenous, Maghrebi, Algerian or Ottoman Turkish, were adopting this international trade very timidly and would not be visible in Algiers until the early 19th century (Amine M. 2016, pp. 209-260).

The merchants travelled or were represented in the "warehouse" ports such as Marseilles and Livorno by their associates or relatives or through marriage. They needed permits, certificates of residence, passports and other documents because their lives are bound up with that.

Aron Levy Luizada, of Portuguese origin, founded a family trading company that operated in Algiers for 60 years, from 1686 to 1742. The Malco family, originally from Livorno, kept strong ties with this city through their company, which traded in the Mediterranean between 1686 and 1763. The houses of Isaac Baruch (+1718) and Jacob Macharo (+1717), descendants of wealthy Venetian families, imported goods from Livorno, Alexandria and England, and even from Martinique (Billami, 2018, pp. 231-232).

Essential is to note that the Jewish population in Algeria in the 18th century was made up of native Jews (known as Toshavim) and exiles from the Iberian Peninsula (known as Megorashim). They used to pass mostly through Italy and especially through Livorno. In Algiers, the former live in a district that is reserved for them and known as the "hara", and they used to wear a particular costume (Haim Zeev, H., 1981, pp. 21-22), "while the latter live where they want" (EISENBETH, M., 1952, pp.115-187 and 344-384). But for the richest people, they live in the upper city (SHUVAL, T., 2002, p.235). According to Andrea Addobbati (2007), in Algiers, Livornese Jews from a rich and influential minority lived in a clean neighborhood without getting mixed with "Morisco" or indigenous Jews. However, in Algiers (contrary to what happened in Tunis), the two groups merged into a single community, as Richard Ayoun (1992) and Maurice Eisenbeth (1954) explain. In 1788, there were 8,000 Jews in Algiers out of

a total population of 50,000 inhabitants (M. Eisenbeth, 1954). There are minor discrepancies between sources regarding the places where the Jews lived, as well as the estimate of their numbers, which seems exaggerated, but this is not our subject here.

However, in order to fit in with the space allotted to this article and to present a coherent contribution, I will focus on the activities of a single family only, the Bouchara, who for four generations maintained their position at the forefront not only of the commercial scene, but also on other fronts. As representatives, from father to son, of the Jewish community in Algiers from 1712 until after the French revolution, and as representatives of the Republic of Ragusa in 1768, the Boucharas were able to trade in their own name and on behalf of the Dey of Algiers and his senior administration, at least until 1782¹.

Nevertheless, the questions this article tries to answer are; how did the Bouchara family contribute to the development of trade networks between Algeria and Europe, what factors influenced their success? And how they influence the Algerian society?

2. One name and many transcriptions: from Busciarra to Bouchara

In an attempt to identify the origin of this Livornese Busciarra family, the main reference is the clues gleaned from the consular correspondence where the name of this family is spelled in different ways: **Bouchara**, **Buchara**, **Busciara** and most often **Busciarra**. Hirschberg (1981) points out that the spellings Bouchara or Buchara are rather Judeo-Arabic, and therefore they are Maghrebian. While Busciara or Busciarra are more like Italian names.

The first time one of the members of this family was mentioned is found to be in the letter of July 8, 1742 from François d'Evant to Maurepas or Count of Maurepas, Secretary of State for the Navy since November 13, 1723². The full name is Jacob-Raphael (RJB) and he is called "Jacob Buchara" perhaps because in the same document he is said to be a "Jewish merchant of this city of Algiers". But this explanation is not convincing because the French consular staff call the members of this family "Busciarra" most often. This is the case of the consuls who succeeded one another in Algiers, between 1756 and 1782, they were: Le Maire, Peru Consul of France in Algiers since November 1757, Groiselle or Vallière.

¹ Basically, there are three ways of citing archival sources and we chose to cite them using end notes, therefore all marginal notes mentioned herein are taken from Consular correspondence in Algiers (Centre des Archives Nationales à Paris). Registre B/1/133, F° 197-202.

² Registre B/1/125, document n°3, F°74-75.

According to RJB's declarations before the Chancellor of the Consulate, made and transcribed in 1742³ and 1756⁴, there was still a problem to decide among the two spellings. This is due to the frequent choices made by the chancellor of the Consulate (the real drafter of the act) which appear to be more than the choices made by the declarant. It is because in the first draft, he is called "Buchara", while in the second one he is called "Busciara", but it refers indeed to the same person.

Haddey (1871) documented that the presence of Abraham Bouchara, the father in Algiers is back to at least to 1712, when he carried on the trade there. His son Raphaël-Jacob, (RJB) is rather called "Jacob di Raphaël Bouchara". A name mixed between Italian and Judeo-Arabic (*ibid.* p52). It is likely that RJB first lived in Livorno and then, from at least 1735, he joined his father, Abraham, Rabbi and Moqadem, who was the representative of the Jewish Community in Algiers. In 1742, he succeeded his father in the latter position. This migration from one shore of the Mediterranean to the other followed by the integration of the family into the local community to represent it before the authorities of the Dey of Algiers would also explain the "mixed nature" of how this name is spelled.

In addition to that, it is attested that RJB's son, Abraham (the younger) lived in Livorno in 1756 (transaction of the first amount of wheat). Then, he appeared as a merchant in Algiers, in 1759, as evidenced by the attestation of February 1st of the same year⁵ which concerns RJB and Abraham "father and son, merchants established in this city (Algiers)". Abraham was still there in 1761, at the time of the "affair of the false gold and silver braids".⁶ He, like his father and grandfather whose first name he bears, migrated from Livorno to Algiers and he settled there as an adult.

Thus, such accounts make us claim that the Boucharas lived in Algiers in the middle of the 18th century and they left one of the members of the family in Livorno. One might presume that he was the youngest, considering the example of Abraham the younger (and his father) who lived in Livorno in order to spend his first years of commercial apprenticeship to acquire the techniques of accounting, transport, banking, customs, insurance and foreign exchange...etc. This presence in Livorno was also most certainly intended to maintain the family's useful contacts to practice activities and get information about the European economic fabric and political activities. The family was, thus, present in the two strongholds of their booming business. Nothing is revealed about the names and residences of the wives and young children. Only one merchant per generation appears in consular documents.

It is not known whether the family origins were really in Livorno because they had been there for several generations. However, a clue could incline us towards this opinion that is when the Dey, Ali

³ Registre B/1/125, document n°3, F°74-75,

⁴ Registre B/1/129, document n°11, F°284-285.

⁵ Registre B/1/130 document n° 2, F° 20-21.

⁶Registre B/1/130 document n°3, F°221.

Pasha, wrote to Moras (Marquis de Moras, Secretary of State and Minister of the Navy since February 1, 1757) on November 30th, 1757⁷ about the Bouchara. He described them as "Livornois". Some authors, such as Jacques Taïeb (2000) confirmed this and considered them as part of Livorno people. However, Livornese Jewish merchants (or "Frankish Jews") were considered in Algiers as Europeans who were under the protection of the French Consul (Haim Zeev, H., 1981; Maurice, E. 1954 and Richard, A. 1992). However, this special protection never appears with regard to the Bouchara in the examined consular writings.

This is why we assume that they are Sephardim i.e. Jews who left Spain after the Inquisition and who travelled through Livorno, but had settled (back and forth between the two ports) for so long in Algiers. They remained there until they were considered Algerians by the French consular authorities. Thus, four names over four generations are clearly attested. The father, Abraham, the son Raphael di Jacob and the grandson Abraham, junior. For Izaac Bouchara (so spelled) is the fourth name but its precise filiation is not mentioned. Busciarra seems to be the most used spelling in our documents, for the studied period, however, we adopt the simplest spelling and the closest to the Judeo-Arabic transcription.

To recap, it is known that **Abraham, the father** had been living in Algiers since at least 1712 and was at the same time a merchant, a rabbi and a representative "*Moqadem*" of the Jewish community (Haddey, 1871, p49). Actually, is not mutually exclusive in Judaism. We can assume that in 1712, he was about 25 years old, he would therefore have been born around 1687. We do not know the date of his death either, but it is only known that his son RJB was the representative of the Jewish community in 1742. The position which he had been previously appointed to. It is possible that he died on that date. It is likely that he died in Algiers with his son too.

In 1742, **Raphaël Jacob (the son)** inherited his father's position as the representative of the Jewish community in Algiers. He was probably born about thirty years earlier, around 1710. While his father Abraham was about 23 years old. Marriage was recommended for an observant young Jewish man and rabbi or future rabbi who, according to the traditions, had to start a family at an early age. He would have lived for about 60 years, which seems a plausible lifespan for the place and social environment considered. According to consular records, his death was reported in 1768⁸, probably, in Algiers.

In 1756, **Abraham (the grandson)** was a merchant in Livorno. He may have been in his twenties and therefore born around 1735 when his father was about 25 years old. In 1759 and 1761, his name

⁷ See above, Chapter I, Section 1, A, 4

⁸Registre B/I/129 document n°15, F°257-260.

circulated in commercial transactions in Algiers. In 1768 he took over his father's position as *Moqadem* of the Jewish community in Algiers.

For **Izaak**, we have only one piece of information: he was a merchant in Marseille in 1782. If at that time, he was 25 years old, he would have been born around 1757 and could, therefore, be the son of Abraham the younger. It would then be a family of four generations, which would have represented the Jews of Algiers at the highest level, and benefited from the confidence of the Dey to manage their trade interests in the Mediterranean Sea, as evidenced by the transactions we will discuss in this paper.

In consular correspondence, members of the Bouchara family appear. This is mainly thanks to their commercial activities in Algiers between 1742 and 1782. It is possible to identify six commercial or business transactions in which the Boucharas took part, and which the French consular authorities had to deal with through their control. In the first section, these transactions will be analyzed, then, in the second section, an attempt is made to reconnect the information networks from the studied groups and reconstruct them successively.

3. Typology of Bouchara Business Transactions

Six operations are discussed, in a more or less extensive way with reference to consular correspondence, certificates and other acts of the chancery. Each transaction is going to be examined in a chronological order to extract useful information about the nature of the transaction, its history, the dates, the places, the goods exchanged and their value. We will try to lay special emphasis on the family members involved and, if applicable, the risks encountered as well.

The first two transactions contain much more detail than the others.

- Transaction N°1, Maritime transport of wheat, wool and diamonds

a) This business affair dates back to the letter of December 19th, 1756⁹; a letter in the consular correspondence from André-Alexandre Le Maire, Consul of France in Algiers¹⁰ to Jean-Baptiste Machault, Lord of Arnouville, Secretary of State and for the Navy¹¹. It was a request of transporting wheat between Algiers and Livorno on a ship under the Tuscan flag and equipped, according to the supercargo (i.e. the shipowner's attorney) who held a passport of the Dey of Algiers. This letter was sent from the Lazaret of Marseilles and Le Maire referred to it in his journal of Algiers on November 30, 1756. For inexplicable reasons, Le Maire was arrested by the Dey on October 11, 1756 and then released. He was sent later by the King to Ragusa (in Sicily) to carry out new consular missions. He was therefore probably waiting for the new position in Marseilles in December 1756.

⁹ Registre B/1/129 document n°1, F°152-153.

¹⁰Since 1749

¹¹Since July 28, 1754.

More precisely, the cargo includes **3,500 measures of wheat**. This is according to the declaration of December 9, 1756¹² made by Raphaël Jacob Bouchara (RJB) at the Consulate of France in Algiers and "found" by Joseph Barthélémy Perou¹³, Consul of France in Algiers (from November 1757), more than fifteen months later on March 29, 1758, (without any explanation to these disappearances and reappearances which can be assumed to be linked to the hasty departure of Le Maire). In a more accurate way and according to the statement of sums¹⁴ issued by the Peruvian Consul annexed to the report of the nation Assembly of 17 June 1758¹⁵, it was 3,484 measures of "Tenès" (probably from the name of Cap Ténez, west of Algiers) or 4,535 measures of Algiers valued at 13,065 pataques. This was Algiers currency of which we only know that the "Barbary" sequin is worth about 8.5 pataques¹⁶.

It is not known where precisely this wheat was produced. Two elements lead us to assume that it comes from the region of Ténès, that is to say from the coastal plain west of Algiers, the Mitidja. It is either the wheat was loaded there, as RJB declared at the consulate on December 9, 1756, or the measurement of this region was used to measure the weight of the loads.

It is no wonder to find that this transport of wheat between Algiers and Livorno in the 18th century was coming from a region considered since the Roman antiquity as the "granary" of Europe. In addition, Algeria's cereal production was in surplus and was exported to France in times of crisis.

b) The vessel also transports, according to the declaration of December 9, 1756, around 64 bales of wool, or 245 measures of wool, according to the statement of sums¹⁷ established by Peru, which bears regarding this issue a value of 6,264 pataques including costs and duties. The report of the above-mentioned Assembly of the Nation gives an equivalent weight for wool of 282 quintals¹⁸.

This export of wool from North Africa to Europe illustrates the traditional activity of sheep farming in North Africa. Therefore, the production of raw wool that European industries need for manufacturing fabrics and clothing.

c) The ship also carried a diamond "that the Dey sent to Livorno to have it mounted as a ring", as Le Maire wrote on 15 June 1757¹⁹, always from Marseille to François Marie Peirenc, Marquis de Moras,

¹² Registre B/l/129 document n°11, F°284-285.

¹³ Previously known as the director of the Calle, headquarters of the Ancien Bastion de France, then of the Compagnie d'Afrique

¹⁴ Registre B/l/129 document n°14, F°316.

¹⁵ Registre B/l/129 document n°13, F°314-316.

¹⁶ Registre B/l/129 document n°14, F°316.

¹⁷ Registre B/l/129 document n°14, F°316.

¹⁸ Registre B/l/129 document n°13, F°314.

¹⁹ Registre B/l/129 document n°3, F°194-195.

Secretary of State and Secretary of the Navy²⁰. This stone is worth, according to the above-mentioned declaration of December 9, 1756, of "one hundred and eighty Barbary sequins". "Six (other) small **diamonds** of six sequins each" were also given to the "Jewish supercargo named Angelo Corlan, by order of the Dey." As regards, the value of diamonds, we found, in the statement of the Peru sums of 1758, are 1836 pataques, which corresponds well to the application of the conversion rate already encountered of one sequin equal 8.5 pataques.

The origin of these stones is probably not specified. Undoubtedly, they moved across the current Congo, via the caravan routes to Africa then to the Mediterranean coast since the Middle Ages. It is noticed here how Livorno became the recognized center of southern Europe for jewelry and precious stones that came from Africa or India precisely via Goa, as F. Trivellato (2007) has shown. It should be noted that the Dey did not rely on local craftsmen who traditionally work with silver and gold to make diamonds.

These exports of wheat, wool and diamonds show that the Bouchara family, in its commercial and shipping activity, participates either consciously or unconsciously in a kind of division of labor between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea. They initiated: in the North, the activities of luxury crafts and the production of clothing fabrics which were considered "secondary" or even "tertiary" activities (according to the current classification of economic activities). Whereas in the South, the "primary" activities were wheat and wool production, the case of crafting raw materials of lower value.

According to the above-mentioned declaration of 9 December 1756, the ship was "a Livornose polacre, named the Tuscany commanded by the captain called Jean Dieu Lazarini". The polacre is a commercial ship with square sails. We have a rather vague idea of its value in the statement of sums established by Peru. In fact, the total sum of *11,900 pataques* is entered in this account for the ship, its tackle, as well as for the salary of its crew and its ammunition. Which, moreover, teaches us that a merchant ship, at least this one, and at this time of war in the Mediterranean, is armed, without us knowing precisely how.

The cargo ship left Livorno to arrive in Algiers probably in August 1756, but it is not known whether, it was full or empty when leaving Livorno. In Algiers, during the war Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara (RJB) obtained a passport from the Dey for the ship that he would have sent to his son Abraham before the departure of that ship from Livorno. Let us remember, in fact, that the Seven Years' War between France and England in the Mediterranean, had begun a few months earlier. It was precisely on May 20, 1756 that the French annexed the Menorca which is in the Balearic Islands before it used to be for the English.

²⁰Since February 1, 1757

When he arrived in Algiers, RJB had no goods to load into the cargo ship, except for precious stones. He sent him to Cape Ténes, a coastal town west of Algiers where his commission agent would have embarked the cargo of wheat and wool bound for Livorno. It is surely a planned operation!

On the way back to Livorno, the cargo ship was chased by a French privateer, Captain Chastrier,²¹ who, on his way back to France, was shipwrecked in bad weather near Antibes. As a result of that all the loads were lost.

One of the arguments for legitimizing the capture is to claim that the ship was English or related in some way or another to England, and that it is therefore one of the enemy ships. In an attempt to give credit to this proposition, it has been reported, as found in the declaration of 9 December 1756, that a Greek passenger on the ship had owned a vessel sailing with a passport and an English flag, but had since been shipwrecked at Cap Ténez. It was apparently a sudden event that happened to the cargo ship. In any case, this is the opinion of Le Maire, for whom the capture was an act of "true piracy". He wrote, in the previously-mentioned letter of June 15, 1757 to Moras: The "ship was Livornese, and it had no connection with the English and no document that would authorize the Corsair to pirate it".

We can see here that maritime commercial activity in the 18th century was subject to not only natural hazards such as storms, but also to those caused by piracy of which both the Maghreb and European powers were responsible for. In the latter case was France²² which, as F. Trivellato (2009) writes, was the leading power in the Mediterranean Sea in the first half of the 18th century.

The complaint mentioned in the letter of December 19, 1756 was by Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara (RJB) against the owner of the privateer ship. Thus, RJB is presented in this document as the owner of the lost goods, he had already been known as a merchant in Algiers since 1742²³. However, according to a letter from Dey Ali Pasha, to Moras, dated November 30, 1757²⁴, the owner of the goods would be the Dey himself. In fact, the latter writes: "this cargo belongs to me. I hope that you will send me the value.... the wheat is mine, and the people of Livorno have nothing to claim it". This was confirmed specifically by the consul Peru, in his letter dated March 20, 1758²⁵ which he sent to Moras. He said: "the price of the goods that were taken from the Livorno ship are due to the Dey who had delivered them to RJB on credit ". Thus, it seems that the goods were bought on credit from the Dey by RJB who,

²¹ Registre B/1/129 document n°10, F°278-285.

²² In the same way, for example, the Knights of Malta whose racing activity has been described in particular by Molly Greene, 2010.

²³ Register B/1/125.

²⁴ Register B/1/129 document n°9, F°263-264, letter translated on 31 December 1757 by Denis Dominique Cardonne (1721-1783), orientalist, professor at the Collège Royal, translator of Turkish, Persian and Arabic, secretary interpreter to the King.

²⁵ Registre B/1/129 document n°10, F°278-285.

almost two years after the transportation, did not pay for them, and they consequently became the Dey's property. Another explanation could be that the export of wheat was an activity open to local merchants, especially Jews, but under the close control of the Algerian authorities. In addition, "grain exports were not a novelty in Ottoman Algeria. Considerable volumes of grain were exported at different times since ages" (Merouche, M., 2002, p177).

The vessel was shipped from Livorno by **Abraham** Bouchara junior, whom RJB has presented in the above-mentioned declaration, as his son established in Livorno as the owner of the vessel. This confirms the presence of members of this family in the two places. It was in fact, the Dey's tolerance that made them capable of promoting and maintaining the commercial links between Algiers and Livorno.

Transaction n°2: Maritime transport of wheat: The ship, its cargo and its capture.

A *senau*; an English ship named "the Amitié" commanded by Commander Trunioc carrying wheat which seems to belong to Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara, was taken by a French ship commanded by Captain Arnoux, whose owner was the Marquis de Roux.

It is not known exactly when this action took place because the first document from the Consulate to mention that is an undated assessment²⁶. But it was probably written between June and October 1757 since it appeared in a register between two letters from the Consul, a letter from Le Maire to Moras on 15 June²⁷ and a letter from Peru to Moras on 21 October 1757²⁸. But it is not known whether this transportation took place before or after the start of the Seven Years' War. One would be tempted to believe that it was earlier because the purpose of the assessment is to compensate for the taking in favor of the victim. However, during this war, a ship with the English flag was regarded an enemy ship, and should not normally be repaired in case of being captured. Unless they wish to treat the transport of wheat from Algiers with special care so as not to upset the Dey and ignore the flag of the ship that transporting it.

The exact direction of this transport is also unknown. We only know that RJB left Algiers without knowing his initial destination. However, it seems that this was Livorno, if we are to believe Pérou who, in a letter to Moras on 30 November 1757²⁹ related to this issue and in particular to the amount of reparation due, wrote incidentally that "the Jew forgetting that if his wheat had been sold in Livorno, he would have sold 30% more". The ship was captured in the Mediterranean by a French privateer and arrived with its cargo in Marseille.

²⁶ Registre B/1/129 document n° 4, F° 196.

²⁷ Registre B/1/129 document n° 3, F° 194-195.

²⁸ Registre B/1/129 document n° 5, F° 236-239.

²⁹ Registre B/1/129 document n° 8, F° 257-260.

In the above-mentioned assessment, the weight of wheat is given in Marseilles measures. It was (1400 loads) and in Algiers measures and its value was (5,000). Indeed, the wheat was sold in Marseilles by the Admiralty Court for a gross sum of £23,300 from which are deducted the costs estimated at £6,300 including the captain's "cape", that is to say, presumably, the remuneration to capture him by the French privateer estimated at 5%, the expenses of unloading and quarantine. In the end, the load was valued at the sum net of all costs of £17,000. The writer (presumably Le Maire or Pérou) of this assessment takes risks to show that this amount is close to the selling price in Algiers of this volume of wheat. In other words, it is a sum that allows for the fairest compensation of the damage involved. In the previously mentioned letter of October 21, 1757 from Peru to Moras, written in Marseille, when Peru had not yet taken up his duties as Consul in Algiers, the latter explains that the Chamber of Commerce of Marseille agrees to compensate for this capture with the abovementioned amount. Indeed, after much dispute, the compensation was £17,000³⁰.

This transaction on which the information collected in the documents examined is far from exhaustive. Moreover, once again, the Bouchara's activity of exporting wheat from Algeria and its risks informs about the way in which the French consular authorities repaired the detentions made by French privateers in the Mediterranean Sea.

Transaction n°3: Purchase of gold and silver fabrics

On October 14, 1761 a letter from Théodore de Groiselle³¹, Vicar Apostolic who was in charge as a Consul in Algiers, was sent to Nicolas-René Berryer "Secretary of State and Secretary of the Navy"³². It mentioned that Abraham Bouchara, son of Raphaël-Jacob, had bought from Captain Fayel (or Fayet) in Mahon (which was under French control), on the island of Menorca "several pieces of braid, as good gold and good silver, which have been found to be fake."³³. It can be assumed that they were made on site. We have no information on its value.

These gold and silver braids were purchased, certainly, to adorn the uniforms of the odjak of Algiers. According to Groiselle's letter of May 10, 1762³⁴ to Etienne François, Duke of Choiseul, Secretary of State and Secretary of the Navy, Abraham was presented as a Jewish merchant from Algiers and was fully compensated³⁵. Anyways, this was after the intervention of the Consul with the Governor of Menorca, which we will discuss later.

³⁰where he did not arrive until November 1757, see Register B/l/129 document n°7, F°243-248.

³¹ Registre B/l/130 document n°3, F°221.

³² Since November 1, 1758

³³ Registre B/l/130 document n°3, F°221.

³⁴ Registre B/l/130 document n°4, F°293-294.

³⁵ Since October 13, 1761

This operation shows that the Boucharas are involved, to varying degrees, in equipment contracts for the army of the regency of Algiers. This is what we would call today state contracts. Broadly speaking, this deal, or the interests of Abraham Bouchara, were of sufficient concern to the Algerian authorities to ask the Consul to intervene with the French Governor of Menorca.

Transaction n°4: The importation of "equipment" from Genoa for the Navy

Two letters from Groiselle to Choiseul, dated on May 24th, 1762³⁶ and July 16th, 1762³⁷ respectively, deal with a very contentious issue. "A ship arrived in Algiers from Genoa, under the imperial banner", with a cargo of "all kinds of equipment for the navy". In other words, equipment for the ships, worth 70,000 to 80,000 Genoa lire. It was "on behalf of M. Potro and Company, Genoese merchants", to pay the debts "of a Jew named Raphael", namely Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara (RJB). The expedition would have been made by Captain Bianchi "in partnership" with RJB and Joseph Caudière, merchant captain³⁸ in Marseille. It seems that the debts are common to RJB, Bianchi and Caudière. These debts would be equal to 8,000 sequins. The sales revenue of the equipment which was apparently carried out by the Consul, were used in order to pay the debts. Mr. Potro, a passenger on a French ship that arrived in Algiers had an objection about this issue. But it seems that RJB would have a claim on Caudière. In any case, for the Consul, Caudière had become unwelcomed in Algiers and would no longer have RJB protection in case he returned.

In this transaction, the Bouchara RJB family is mentioned, who is the only one involved in a contract to import equipment for Algerian ships from Genoa. They leave no traces to recognize what type of vessels were involved (commercial or warships)? And who were their owners (private or public)?

Transaction n°5: The redemption of captives from the Dey

On January 20th, 1782³⁹ Robert Louis Langoisseur de La Vallée, Consul of France in Algiers⁴⁰ sent a letter to Charles Eugène Gabriel de La Croix, Marquis de Castries, the Consul and the Secretary of State and Secretary of the Navy⁴¹, as a request to redeem two captives in Algiers. He asked his supervising minister to pay the sum of £9,077 1 sol and 3 deniers. It was actually Izaak Bouchara, a Jewish merchant from Marseilles "who has obliged himself to pay its value to the Dey" who did that.

The relationship between Izaak, Abraham junior and Raphaël-Jacob is not known. However, Izaak was based in Marseille, he was so close to the Dey and the French consular authorities that he could

³⁶ Registre B/1/130 document n°5, F°295-296.

³⁷ Registre B/1/130 document n°6, F°311.

³⁸ See letter of 24 February 1759 from Peru to Berryer: Register B/1/130 document n°1, F°10-17.

³⁹ Registers B/1/139, F°289.

⁴⁰ Since August 17, 1773.

⁴¹ Since June 7, 1780.

work as a financial intermediary between them regarding the Consul's (traditional) activity of buying captives. The confidence that Abraham junior had (in the question of diamonds to be put in rings) is leading more likely to believe that Izaac was a very close relative to assist him in Marseille.

Transaction n°6: Wine buyback, spoils of the race

In a letter dated November 22, 1782⁴² from Jean Baptiste Michel de Kerzy Guyot, Consul of France in Algiers⁴³ to de Castries, Jean mentions a case of the purchase of goods from "French prizes brought to Algiers". It was apparently wine taken by the French on English ships by "Sir Bouchara, Jew of Algiers" on behalf of David Montel of Livorno who was the Jewish correspondent in Algiers. The prizes were shipped to Livorno on two neutral ships, probably Dutch. Essential is to remember that the events took place during the American War of Independence by the time the Netherland and the Scandinavian countries created the "League of Armed Neutrality" against England. It was in order to continue to trade freely with the belligerent states, their merchant ships being escorted by warships.

We do not know which Bucharas it is. Perhaps this was Abraham junior, a Jewish merchant who had been living in Algiers since 1759, as evidenced by a certificate dated on February 01 of the same year⁴⁴. As for Izaac, he was based in Marseille.

The purchase of the captives in Algiers was, therefore, part of the activities of the Boucharas in Algiers. They acted, in this case, on behalf of a co-religionist in Livorno where these prizes were sold as goods and as humans, since there was slave trading there.

4. Trade networks and employment relationships

It should be noted that the Boucharas were involved in various import and export operations including the purchase of captives. A. Addobbati (2007) explains that there was no direct reference to any insurance they would have taken to guarantee the particularly risky maritime transport, but the practice was common in Italian cities in the 18th century. To carry out their business activities, the Boucharas work, of course, with not only members of their family who live in Europe, but also with many others as well.

For transactions between Algiers and Livorno, the Bouchara family acted out the family network. Indeed, wheat, wool and diamonds were sent by Raphael-Jacob, a merchant in Algiers, to his son, Abraham, a merchant in Livorno. But the Boucharas have many and varied partners and/or extra-family agents to whom they are linked in more or less equal relationships. The relations between the principals, who give orders and the agents, who execute these orders without much initiation are described as unequal. Equal relationships are said to be the relationships of partners who incur the

⁴² Registers B/1/140, F°93-95.

⁴³ Since March 1782

⁴⁴ Registre B/1/130, document n°2, F°20-21.

same opportunities and the same risks. This distinction is based solely on the consular documents analyzed, and also on the nature of these relations as they appear therein.

More often than not, the Busciarra/Bouchara seem to occupy the preeminent position vis-à-vis the agents in their service. But the relationship can be reversed in certain situations.

- In transaction No. 1, for example, a **commission agent** of Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara (RJB) intervened in "Ténez" loaded wheat and wool on a boat. He is an agent who works for RJB and according to his instructions. As his title suggests that he is paid on commission and thus receives a percentage of the value of the goods loaded.

- In the same case, a **prosecutor** appeared, that is to say a person in charge of representing the interests of Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara (RJB) before the Admiralty Court in Marseilles⁴⁵. According to a letter dated on April 11, 1757 from Father Bossu⁴⁶, that prosecutor claimed to obtain compensation for the seizure of his ship which was full of goods. It was Van den Leven who held this position. He was apparently a Dutch person as his name suggests. It is confirmed according to Peru's letter to Moras on October 21 already mentioned before that the guy head over to the Netherlands after he became bankrupt. Apparently, since he fled, the Boucharas made a bad choice because they entered into very bad deals.

- Also included in this same operation is a **supercargo**. An authorized representative responsible for representing the shipowner to manage the cargo, and thus relieve the ship's captain of this responsibility. In this case, the Dey's diamonds were particularly entrusted to him. The presence of the supercargo as an agent of RJB is mentioned by Le Maire, in his previously-mentioned letter of December 19th, 1756, to Machault who indicates that he is Jewish. It is confirmed by RJB in the previously-mentioned declaration of 1756 which specifies that his name is Angelo Corlan. According to M.J.M Haddy (1871), the supercargo would not be called Corlan but Gozlan, a name commonly given to by North African Jews.

- In transaction n°3, the purchase of gold and silver stripes that turned out to be fake. Abraham Bouchara had two agents in Mahon. Aggi Casain and Aggi Ahmet who worked for him, this is at least what Groiselle wrote to Berryer on October 14, 1761. He presented them as "mora merchants" acting under "proxy". Obviously, they were two Muslim traders, as evidenced by their first names and the description Hajji. They were

⁴⁵ Registre B/1/129 document n°1, F°152-153.

⁴⁶ Registre B/1/129 document n°2, F°161-166.

probably Algerian since, according to Groiselle, they were under the Dey's protection, and the Dey asked Abraham to intervene as their spokesman before the Count of Lanion, the (French) governor of Menorca.

- In transaction No. 6, According to what has been mentioned by Kerzy in de Castries' letter of November 22, 1782, a member of the family who was only known to be a merchant in Algiers, was the **correspondent** of a Jewish merchant from Livorno. He was known to be David Montel. He bought for himself spoils which he had shipped to himself on neutral ships.

- In case no. 3, concerning the purchase of "equipment for the navy", Groiselle, in his letters to Choiseul (dated May 24, 1762 and July 16, 1762), mentions that Raphaël-Jacob Bouchara (RJB), Captain Bianchi, Joseph Caudière, a merchant captain in Marseilles with M. Potro and Company, apparently Genoese merchants established a partnership. There would therefore be a commercial company which cannot be openly admitted, but it remains a form of solidarity between its members since the assets of the Genoese would have been used to pay a debt of RJB. It is probably a partnership of solidarity and not a capital company.

- The Boucharas, Jewish merchants of Algiers relied unquestionably on their family ties and religious connections in order to carry out their international maritime trade activities between the two shores of the Mediterranean, mainly between Algiers and Livorno. These links notably confirm the observation of Richard Ayoun. He claims (based on the studies of Jean Pierre Filippini or those of Sadok Boubaker) that:

"the Livornese correspondents of the Jewish trading houses of North Africa are almost exclusively Jewish merchants, acting either as commission agents or as 'postmen" (2000, p123).

However, significant is to note that the Jewish merchants also established trade links with Algerian Muslim merchants. This, in turn, proves their strong integration of the commercial fabric in Algiers as well as building mutual trust. In addition to working in Livorno, they also worked with two other main ports of the Mediterranean Sea namely Genoa and Marseilles through a Genoese trading house and Marseille merchant captains.

If we adopt the definition of Laurent Bourquin (2005) or Charles Carrière (1970), we could describe them as merchants or traders involved in the international trade of various goods. However, given the relatively small number of transaction tasks analysed (6) over an average period of 40 years, we will stick to the more neutral term

of merchants, even if El Hadi Ben Mansour (1998) writes, referring to the Jews in Algiers, that "the large-scale trade... its immense majority, was in their hands" (p112).

Over the period under scrutiny (1742-1782), there was a shift of places where their activities were carried out: First and throughout that period, they established a natural link between Algiers and Livorno. Then, probably due to the French conquest of Menorca, from which they clearly profited to build relations between Algiers and Mahon (1761), then build relations between Algiers Genoa (1762) and Marseilles. The latter ports competed with Livorno in the second half of the 18th century (A. Addobatti, 2007). This development tends to show that the Bouchara family has sufficient and reliable information on the economic activity in the two shores of the Mediterranean, thanks to their relatives and correspondents in Livorno. Finally, partnerships with French captains and merchants may have a very pragmatic objective that is to claim tax exemption through acting as either actual French citizens or just belonging to French population. Indeed, Maurice Eisenbeth (1952) explains that the Jewish merchants of Algiers sometimes held French names to escape the interrogation of the consulate, especially in the case of captives trading. This is may be the case for the Boucharas as well.

These operations can be analyzed from another angle, depending on how much each member of the Bouchara was close to the Dey of Algiers and to his direct services.

In transaction tasks (1, 3 and 4) the closeness even the relationship of the merchant seems to be intimate with the Dey. He entrusted the merchant, personally and privately, with diamonds to set one or more rings. In addition, in the same transactions, the merchant benefited from authorizations or even powers of attorney for the export of wheat and wool that were produced under the monopoly of the State or under its strict control at that time.

Another indication of closeness and confidence was the importation of equipment for the navy; gold and silver stripes for the Janissaries' uniforms.

In the fifth transaction, Izaak Bouchara was an official intermediary confirmed by the Consul to receive the sums due to the Dey for the redemption of the captives.

Thus, the commercial activities of the Bouchara provides an account on the markets of that time and what were the various risks and problems that could arise; such as sinking, hijacking the ships, the loss of cargoes or the non-compliant quality of goods and how refunds and other compensations were negotiated.

Like many merchants, the Jews number were in hundreds, the Boucharas profited from the resale of the captives, even if they were less important after the mid-18th century, than they were in "the piracy century", that is the 17th century.

5. Conclusion

The Bouchara house is a good example of a Livornese family well connected to Algiers in the 18th century. They kept strong ties in Livorno, a warehouse and hub for international trade, to defend the interests of their trade in the Mediterranean Sea. They maintain knowledge of new techniques and innovations in the field, while ensuring the resale network of goods obtained in Algiers. In this city, in each generation since 1712, the representative of the Jewish community at the highest level used to be "elected" among his sons. As such, he enjoyed the trust of the Dey for public transactions as well as for private missions.

With a dual residence, and a division of tasks between the members settled in Algiers and Livorno, then later in Marseille, the Boucharas also had a "dual nationality", or at least a well-assumed dual belonging. Frankish or declared as Livornese Jews by the Dey of Algiers were rather Jews from Algiers. They were "Algerians" for the Consulate of France, since they were not among its "protégés" and did not fall under its prerogatives. Until the end of the 18th century, the Bouchara remained predominant in Algiers as the Jewish community due to their trading activities and their closeness to the Dey as well as to the country's senior officials. That is what made Algeria a bit opened to the European trade at that time.

For the Bouchara family, despite the hazards and risks involved, the Mediterranean Sea seems to have been an easy to skip sea, linking Livorno to Algiers and vice versa, ensuring trade and high charges in a cyclical movement between the two cities. This was between 1712 and 1782 and almost without any competition. The French Revolution would bring certain imbalances in the Mediterranean Sea with a direct impact on the pre-eminence order of commercial houses in Algiers and elsewhere.

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