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The Algerian Xebec: An Integral Part of the Algerian Naval Strategy in the eighteenth century

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Abstract:

This paper delves into the historical evolution of the ship commonly known as the Algerian xebec during the eighteenth century. It sheds light on the strategic employment of the xebec by the Algerian navy and provides a comprehensive breakdown of its components, demonstrating how each one of them was purposefully designed to align with privateering tactics and their requirements. Additionally, the paper explores the diverse functions of the xebec, the procurement of naval stores crucial for its construction, and the development of various types of xebecs. Finally, it presents a brief historical overview of the construction methods commonly employed in the western Mediterranean for building xebecs.

Keywords: Maritime Irregular Warfare; Ottoman Algeria; Privateering; Strategy; Xebec (Chebec).

1. Introduction

The xebec, a type of sailing ship with distinctive features such as a slender hull and a combination of oars and sails for propulsion, played a crucial role in the naval strategy of the Regency of Algiers. The Algerian xebec was not only a formidable raider but also a versatile vessel used for trade and privateering in the Mediterranean Sea. In this article, we will delve into the historical significance of the Algerian xebec, exploring its construction methods and role within the context of naval strategy.

In light of the above, how did the Algerian xebec contribute to the naval strategy of the Regency in the 18th century?

In other words, what were the unique features of the Algerian xebec and how were they utilized in naval operations? what were the construction methods used in building Algerian xebecs and how did they impact the fleet's capabilities? did the xebec affect the *Eyalet* maritime power and influence in the Mediterranean?

In order to answer these questions, we will examine historical accounts, primary sources, and scholarly research on the xebec, including observations made by the Swedish naval engineer Fréderic-Henri de Chapman and French Lieutenant P.A. Hennique, as well as insights from naval historians such as Alfred T. Mahan and the duo Jean Boudriot and Hubert Berti. We will consider the geopolitical context of the time, including Algiers' relationship with Western powers and the embargo on strategic armaments and naval stores. We will also provide a comprehensive overview of the Algerian xebec's significance within the broader framework of Algerian naval strategy, shedding light on its construction methods, operational capabilities, and impact on the Regency's maritime power. By examining the historical context and unique features of the Algerian xebec, this article aims to deepen our understanding of the role of this iconic vessel in shaping the naval strategy of Algiers and its place in Mediterranean maritime history.

2. Historical context

The xebec (شباك in Arabic, *Jabeque* in Spanish, *Xabeco* in Portuguese, *chébec* or *chabek* in French, *Sciambecco* in Italian, *Schebeck* in Dutch, and *Schierbek* in Danish) belongs to the family of narrow ships. Given its specifications, Historians and naval experts suggest that it has evolved from the Mediterranean galley. The long and low-lying hull, lateen-rigged masts, shallow draft, and large number of rowers characterize the galley. These characteristics enabled it to perform well in shallow waters and to dispatch more soldiers to the battlefields faster than round ships. The narrow hull had specifically allowed swift movement and high maneuverability, rendering this type of ship a formidable weapon in early modern age naval warfare.[1] Other ships such as galliots and fustas were mere derivatives of the galley. Aside from their smaller size, armament, and carriage capacity, galliots and fustas were generally similar to galleys in terms of design and rigging. Along with the xebec, they all come under the umbrella of the long ships family.

The transformation from the galley to the xebec probably took place in 17th century North Africa. Arguably, it might even be the case that Algeria was the first place where a keel of a xebec was laid.[2] As for firepower, Xebecs carried from as few as four cannons to as many as 34 cannons, albeit of small caliber.[3] These characteristics bestowed agility of narrow ships and some sailing capabilities of sailing ships.

The earliest mention of the xebec in the Algerian navy dates back to 1730s. Albert Devoulx reported two xebecs in 1737: one armed with six cannons and 24 swivel guns, and another armed with four cannons and 14 swivel guns.[4] However, this does not imply that xebecs only began to appear in the Algerian Navy in 1737. Rather, it can be attributed to the fact that the registers of the French consulate in Algiers, from which Devoulx derived his article, started documenting the capabilities of the Algerian navy in 1737, and he did not have access to documents pertaining to the period before that date.[5]

Apparently, other names were used to describe the Algerian xebec. In the Ottoman domains, or at least in the region of Istanbul, the xebec was also called *şehtiye* or شهدية in Osmanlı (old Turkish).[6] We know this because the Ottoman documents qualified the Algerian ships in the formation of the Ottoman fleet in 1737 and 1791 as *şehtiye* (*saëtes*).[7] However, Devoulx's 'La marine de la régence d'Alger' indicates that in 1737, the Regency retained two xebecs armed with six and four cannons respectively, and in 1792 it had three xebecs: one armed with 32 cannons, one with 26, and one with 16. He also mentioned that in the same year (1792), a squadron of five ships was dispatched to reinforce the Ottoman fleet. No sign of the word şehtiye in the entirety of the 1730s and 1790s.[8] In view of this, one can presume that the word *şehtiye* might have been used in the ottoman context as a blanket term to describe large xebecs,[9] espectially if we take into account that both ships' built and characteristics are roughly similar. As a result, the presence of the xebec or şehtiye in the Algerian navy could be traced back to as early as 1674.[10]

An Ottoman illustration depicting an Algerian şehtiye (xebec) from the 1737 Ottoman-Russian war[11]

3. *La Guerre de course* as a Maritime Irregular Warfare

Centuries of naval warfare knowledge and traditions culminated in the 19th century in two opposing schools of naval warfare. The French theorists of *Jeune École* compartmentalized naval strategy into two categories: *guerre de course* or commerce raiding, and *guerre d'escadre*, which was a strategy of mustering squadrons of large warships with the aim of clashing with a similarly organized enemy. The ultimate aim of warfare, according to the proponents of *Jeune École*, was to inflict the most possible damage on the enemy and their commerce through *guerre de course.* In their views, the battle fleets were increasingly becoming obsolete.[12]

On the other hand, different western schools seemed to contest the ideas of *Jeune École*. Many Anglo-Saxon theorists of naval warfare did not only reject the French position on the purpose of naval warfare, but they also reaffirmed the everlasting importance of battle fleets in achieving the "command of the sea".[13] For Alfred Thayer Mahan, the navy is not best used to attack an enemy's supplies, but rather to find and destroy their fleet.[14]

Traditional French naval theorists might have been influenced by the centuries-old traditions of Mediterranean *guerre de course* or *Corso,* which was a European practice from classical times. The term per se was not coined until the middle ages. *Cursarius* (corsair) is a Latin noun coming from verbal expressions referring to maritime 'course' *(Cursum)* conducted by vessels in the Mediterranean.[15] In modern times, many European nations practiced *'Corso'* or *'Guerre de course'* against their enemies. England, the Netherlands, and France were the major naval powers that saw it beneficial to raid commercial assets of their foes through privateering. In fact, it was a practice well theorized among European pundits both in terms of its legality and military feasibility.[16] Consequently, it might be the case that the French adopted the doctrine of *'guerre de course'* after centuries of maritime competition with major European powers, especially Spain, the Netherlands, and England. The latter emerged in the 18th century as the dominant sea power and managed to secure hegemonic position in both maritime trade and naval warfare. To challenge this unfavorable reality, the French resorted many times to irregular operations such as *'guerre de course'* to harass English trade and cut off supplies from the British Isles.

The Regency of Algiers, unlike France, did not achieve the status of a maritime superpower during its existence. However, Algiers' strategy of commerce raiding appeared to align with that of France and other Mediterranean nations, and was influenced by various factors, both endogenous and exogenous. Being located at the edge of the Muslim world in a borderland, the newly founded *Eyalet of Algiers* found itself in a precarious position amidst the intense geopolitical rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. Repetitive naval campaigns from superior powers like Spain and its Christian allies, and Algiers' resistance against them, resulted in the city becoming a fortified stronghold defending the western flank of Islamdom. Additionally, Ottoman corsairs who saw themselves as *'sea ghazis'*,[17] along with their janissary counterparts who followed the military traditions of *'Frontier Ghazis'*,[18] played a significant role in shaping Algiers image as the nemesis of Christendom and influencing its foreign behavior for centuries to come.

However, due to its inability to match the growing naval capabilities of Christian powers, the Regency of Algiers resorted to maritime irregular warfare[19] in the form of *'guerre de course'* and *'guerre de razzia'*,[20] also known as *'Guerilla activities at sea'* as termed by Salvatore Bono.[21] This type of warfare was considered a suitable solution for weaker maritime states, allowing them to inflict maximum damage on the enemy's maritime trade while avoiding direct confrontation with their stronger regular battle fleets.

As an irregular form of maritime warfare, 'Guerre de course' primarily relies on hit-and-run tactics, involving raids on enemy coastal towns and commercial ships.[22] The The *'Raïs'* (ship captains) of Algiers take advantage of the shallow drafts of their vessels and conceal themselves in rocky shores located near strategic maritime routes, with the aim of ambushing the enemy. They seize opportunities swiftly to surprise their prey, and when approaching enemy ships, they utilize their numerical superiority to overwhelm and deter any potential resistance.

However, their narrow ships come with inherent limitations. The operational range is limited due to significant crew sizes and limited storage capacity. As a result, sailing close to the shores or continually resupplying from friendly harbors is imperative for their efficient operation.[23] Mahan underpins the centrality of 'refuges' to corsairing, albeit in a different context: *"such [commerce-raiding] ships, having little power to defend themselves, need a refuge or point of support near at hand; which will be found either in certain parts of the sea controlled by the fighting ships of their country, or in friendly harbors. The letter give the strongest support, because they are always in the same place, and the approaches to them are more familiar to the commerce-destroyer than to his enemy"*.[24]

In contrast to conventional naval formations that rely on the concentration of effort, commerce raiding, which was the essence of the Algerian navy's strategy, required the scattering of forces. The wider the area covered by commerce raiders, the higher the probability of locating and intercepting preys. This diffusion of effort also provided an advantage in terms of defense, as it made it more challenging for battle fleets to track and neutralize irregular forces. Additionally, the proximity to enemies facilitates commerce raiding,[25] as evident in the geographical location of Algiers. The relatively short distance between the Regency and its perceived foes contributed to the nurturing of *'guerre de razzia'* as a logical strategy for the Algerian navy.

4. xebec's functions in the Algerian navy

The xebec was a versatile vessel that was utilized by various Mediterranean powers, particularly Algiers. Alongside other narrow-bodied ships, the xebec served both commercial and military purposes, being armed as a corsair when needed.[26] As an excellent freighter and swift transport ship, the xebec had a role in enhancing the commerce mobility of Maghrebi states. For instance, historical reports indicate that between 1808 and 1810, the Algerian commercial fleet consisted of three xebecs, which suggests a relatively minor role in the external trade of Algiers compared to neighboring countries.[27] This also highlights that the xebec's commercial duties were disproportionate to its military potentials, which can be categorized into three main aspects:

4. 1. Privateering: The xebec proved to be a successful commerce-raiding asset, with several examples highlighting its effectiveness. In 1769, an Algerian square-rigged xebec, captured a Portuguese ship,[28] and another Algerian xebec seized a Danish ship off the coast of Portugal.[29] In 1798, a xebec equipped by an Algerian national named Ben Zerzou carried out four campaigns, with another campaign

conducted in 1799. In the same year, el-Hadj Ali prepared another xebec that conducted two sorties,[30] displaying the xebec's prowess in privateering or *la guerre de course*.

4. 2. Assisting the *Sublime Porte*: The xebec also played a significant role in assisting the Ottoman Empire, as indicated by Ottoman documents. In 1737 and 1791, Algerian xebecs *(şehdiye)* were in the service of the Ottoman imperial fleet.[31] Other documents mention instances where two Algerian xebecs armed with 36 and 20 guns pursued and engaged Russian ships into Modon. Around 1789, an Algerian naval detachment of four xebecs -destined to reinforce the Ottoman navy- escorted a Russian prize to the Dardanelles. It is noteworthy that references to the xebec in Ottoman sources are usually associated with the Algerian navy, according to Tuncay Zorlu.[32]

4. 3. Defending the Algerian coast: Defending the Algerian coast was another function of the xebec, as historical sources affirm. During the failed bombardment of Algiers by the Danes in 1770, xebecs demonstrated their impressive performance in defending the harbor and harassing Danish bomb ketches.[33] This prompted the Danes to consider using xebecs for their envisioned follow-up campaign in 1771.[34] Similarly, the Spanish, who were familiar with operating xebecs, had to contend with the agility of Algerian vessels during the bombardment of Algiers in 1775. The participation of the xebec in repelling the Spanish campaign was commemorated in an Algerian song that celebrated the victory of Islam over the infidels.

"…The fleet of the Infidels came, and appeared.
The soldiers of Islam all went out to the shore;
They got ready the shallops and prepared the xebecks,
They drew their swords for the holy religion…"[35]

Overall, the historical examples provide evidence of the diverse functions of the xebec, including privateering, assisting the Ottoman Empire, and defending the Algerian coast, demonstrating its versatility and military capabilities during the eighteenth century.

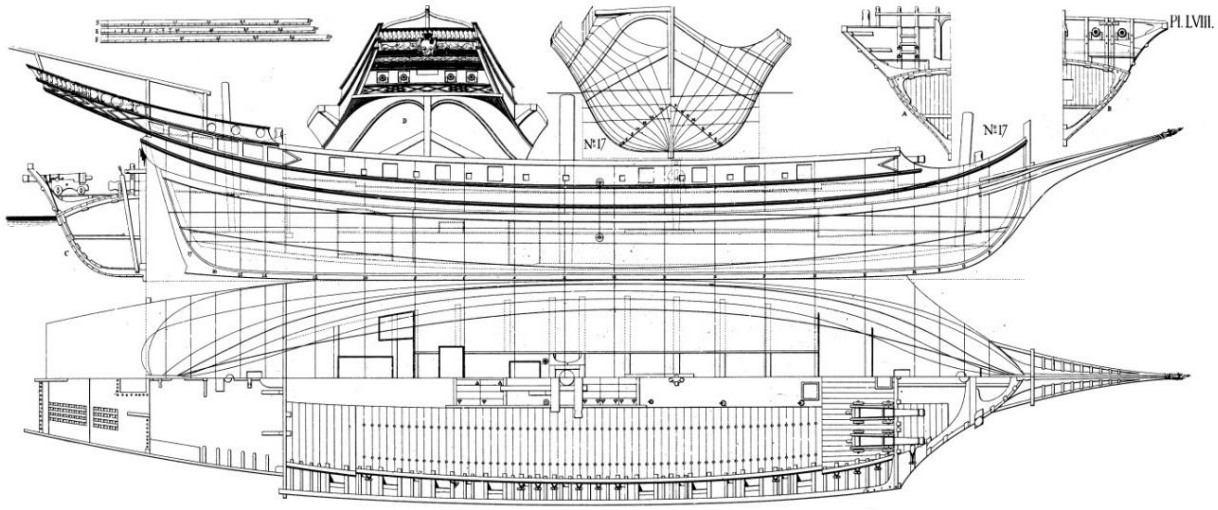
5. Xebec's characteristics and *la guerre de course*

The Algerian xebec's design was well-suited for privateering, which was a significant aspect of Algerian naval strategy during the Ottoman era. The characteristics of the Algerian xebec, as documented in Fréderic-Henri de Chapman's *'Architectura Navalis Mercatoria'* (1768), provide insights into her design and capabilities. De Chapman's drawings, based on a 28-gun Algerian xebec that he examined in Spain, are considered the most well-preserved known plan of the Algerian xebec.

According to De Chapman's drawings, it had a draught of 2.80 meters, a length of 38.70 meters, and a breadth of 7.68 meters. It was armed with 28 guns, in addition to 30 Musketoons (small firearms) and 18 oars.[36] The design of the xebec, with its relatively shallow draught and sleek dimensions, made it well fit for navigating

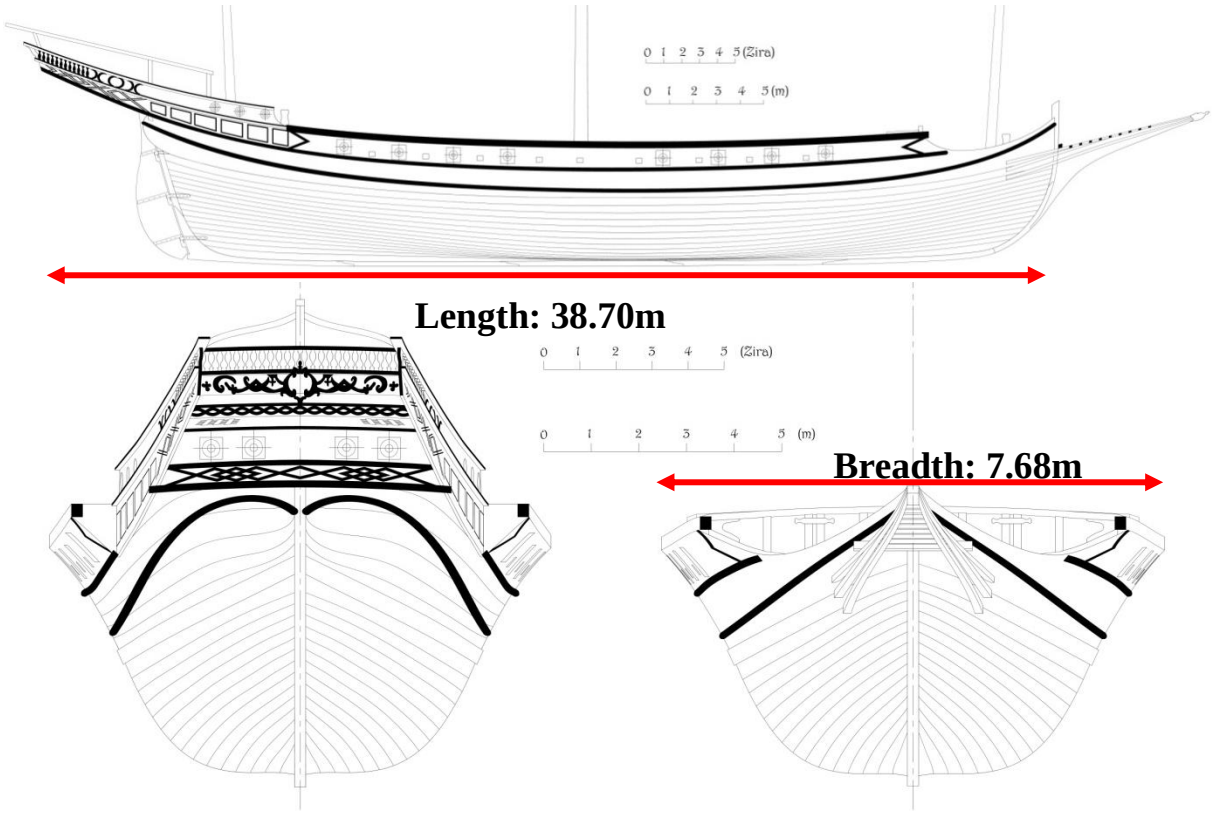
coastal waters and shallow harbors, which were common targets of corsairs. Amine Rahati has also authored an article detailing the reconstruction process, featuring new plans and 3D representations of the vessel.[37]

Overall, the characteristics of the Algerian xebec, as revealed through De Chapman's plans, highlight her suitability for privateering. In the following, a breakdown of a xebec will help us understand how each part of the ship was very much in line with the requirements of privateering.[38]



De Chapman's plans of the Algerian xebec.[39]

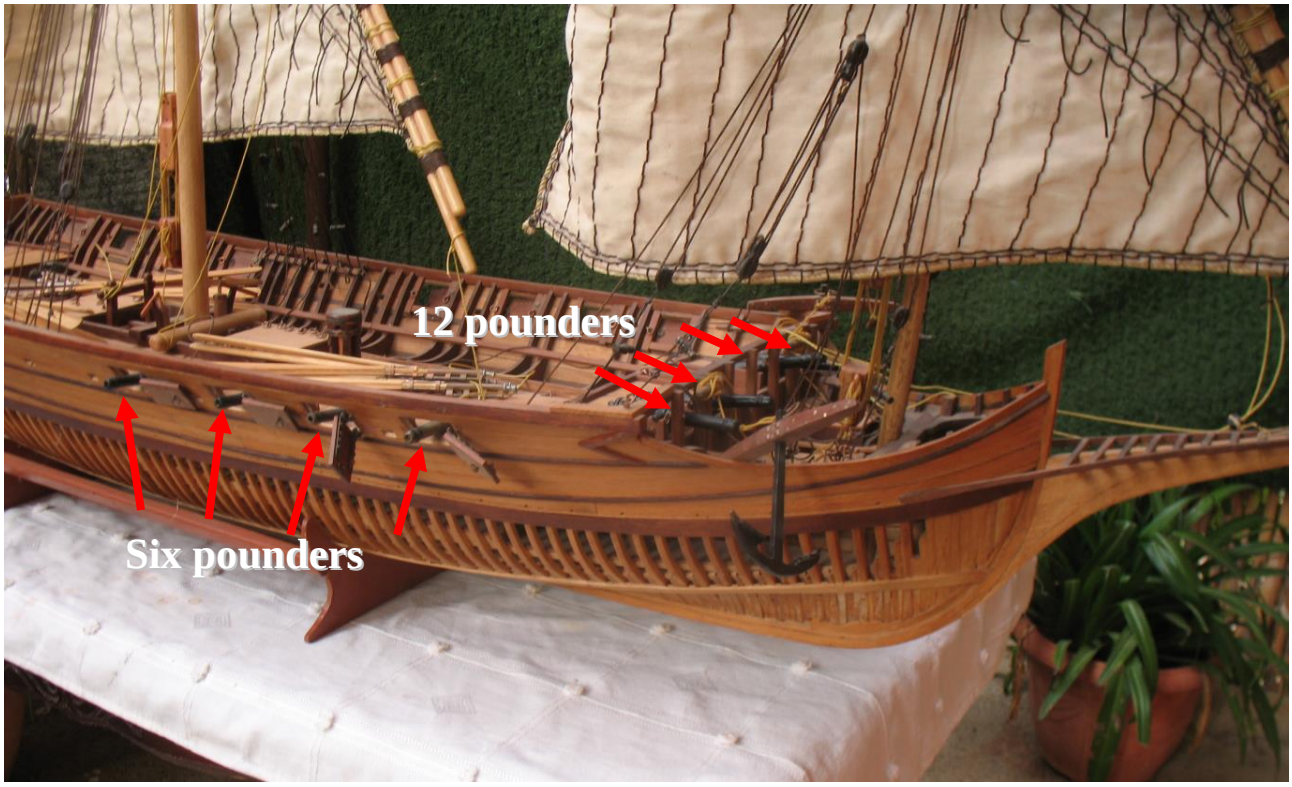
5. 1. Size and Dimensions



The Algerian xebec, as documented in De Chapman's work, had a length of 38.70 meters and a breadth of 7.68 meters. Its relatively compact size made it maneuverable

and agile, allowing it to navigate through coastal waters and shallow harbors with ease. This was crucial for privateering, as it enabled the xebec to chase down and capture merchant vessels, which were often smaller and faster than larger naval ships.

5. 2. Ordnance



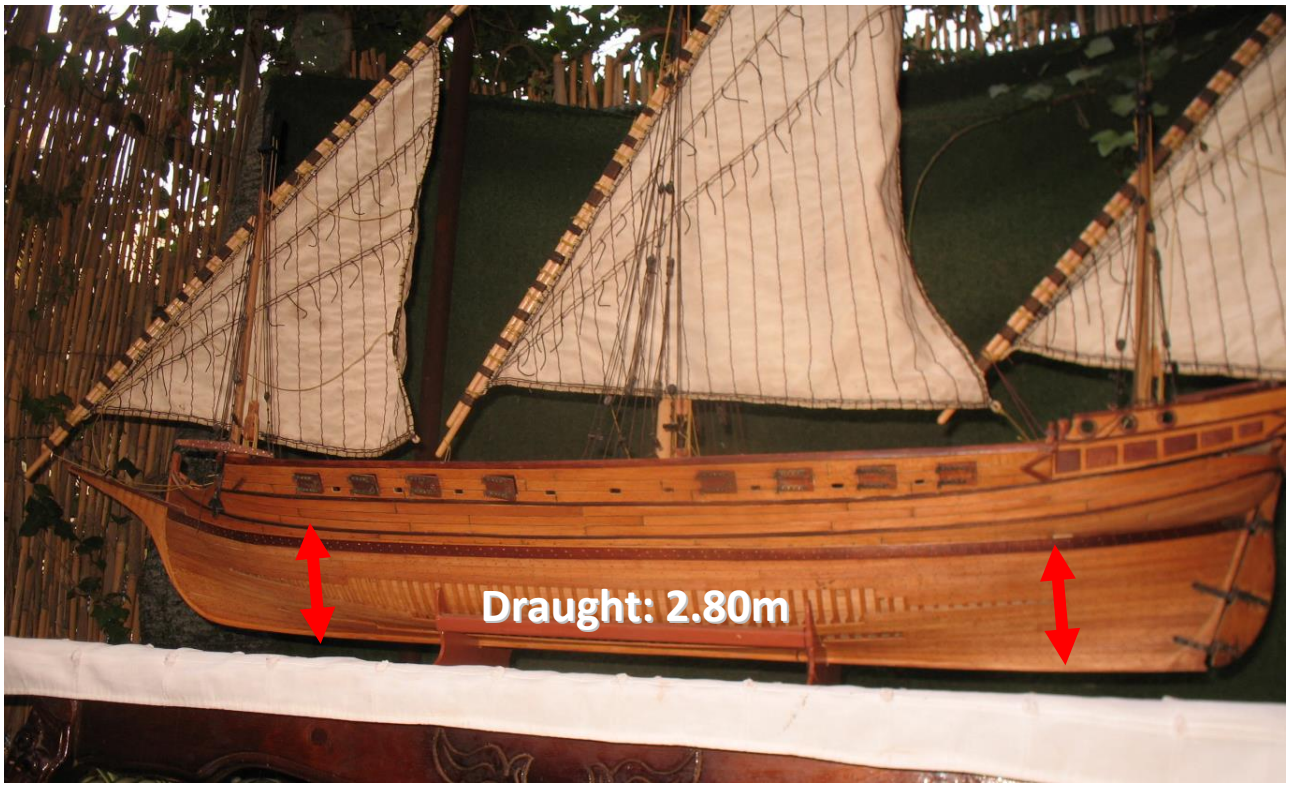
The Algerian xebec was designed with smaller caliber guns lest it keels over due to its narrow breadth, shallow draught, and relatively slender and lightly built body. The guns listed in De Chapman's Architectura Navalis Mercatoria, such as 16x6 pounders on deck, 4x12 pounders on the Forecastle, and 8x3 pounders on the Quarterdeck,[40] were ideal for engaging merchant ships rather than heavy warships. These guns, combined with the additional 30 Musketoons, provided the xebec with offensive capabilities to overpower merchantmen and neutralize their decks before boarding.

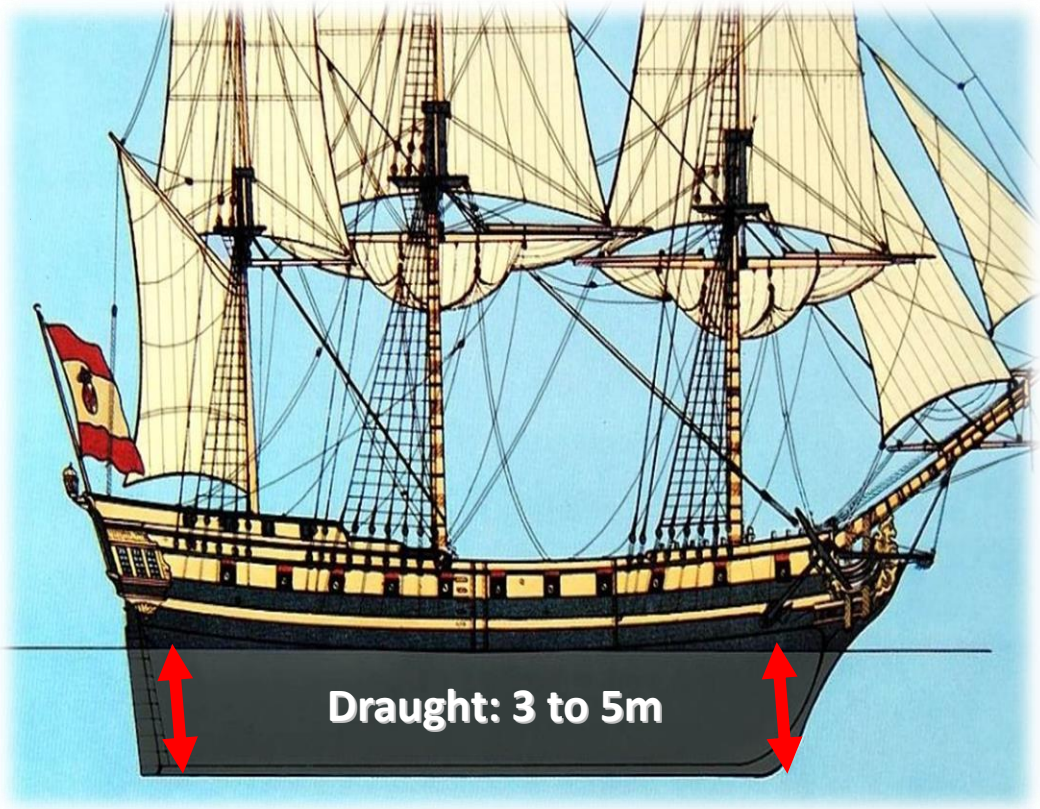
Historical accounts do indeed highlight that boarding and numerical superiority were the main weapons of Algerian corsairs.[41] The guns and handguns on the xebec were used to weaken the defenses of the prey before boarding and engaging in close-quarter combat. The xebec's capacity of around 250 tons and the ability to carry up to 450 sailors and soldiers, depending on its size, allowed for a larger boarding party, giving Algerian corsairs an advantage in terms of numerical superiority.

The xebec's smaller size, shallow draught, and maneuverability also made it well-suited for evading larger naval ships, especially in coastal waters and shallow harbors where larger ships couldn't venture. This allowed the Algerian corsairs to engage in hit-and-run tactics, capturing freighters quickly and efficiently before escaping from pursuing warships.

The firepower of Algerian xebecs increased over time as the corsairs sought to enhance their privateering capabilities. The number of cannons on xebecs grew from four in 1737 to twelve in 1741, 18 in 1742, 26 in 1752, and even reaching 32 cannons on a xebec built in Algiers in 1763. However, it is worth noting that these cannons were likely of smaller caliber due to the size and design of the xebec.[42]

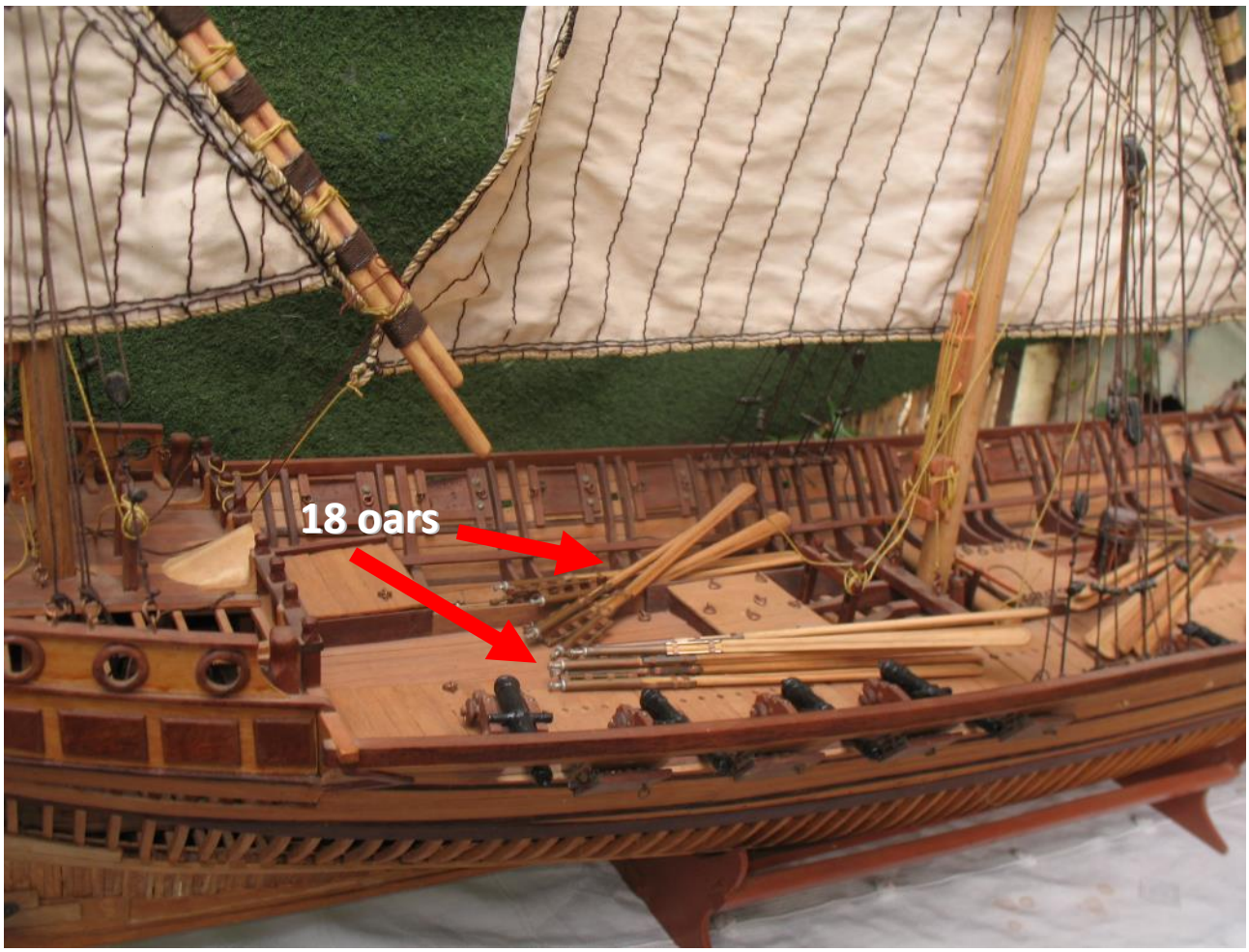
5. 3. The hull





The shallow draught of the xebec allowed the ability to navigate in shallow waters. It also enabled less drag, which meant more speed and maneuverability. However, the xebec's shallow draught and low freeboards do not sustain rough seas, thus limiting its navigation to only enclosed basins. The second picture represents an 18th century Spanish frigate roughly comparable in size and firepower to the Algerian xebec. Unlike the latter, the deep draught of the frigate bestowed ocean-sailing capabilities, albeit at the expense of speed and maneuverability.

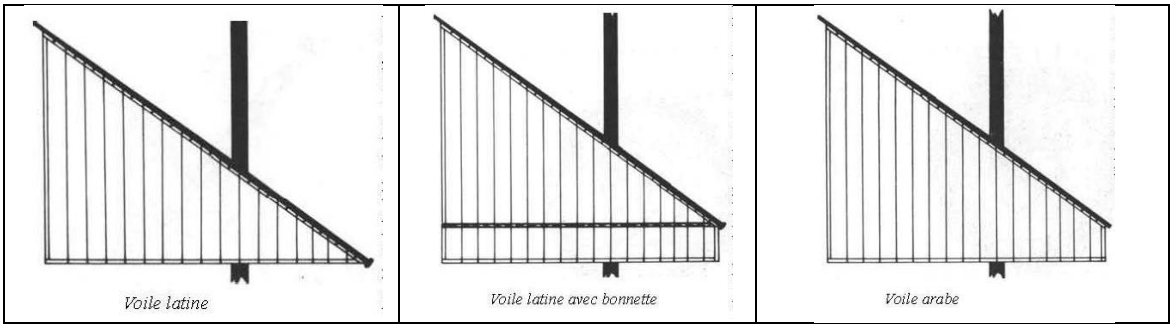
5. 4. Oars


18 oars

While it is true that larger xebecs became less practical to row due to their increased size and weight,[43] oars were still used on many xebecs for auxiliary power and maneuverability, especially in situations where the wind was not favorable, or when there was a need to catch up with a target or make a rapid escape.

According to De Chapman's drawings, the Algerian xebec he documented had 18 oars, nine on each side. These oars could be deployed through holes situated between the cannon ports, allowing the xebec to use them for additional propulsion and maneuverability when needed. This feature provided the xebec with flexibility in different sailing conditions, and the ability to rely on oars for auxiliary power in certain situations.

5. 5. Sails



Different types of lateen sails used on the xebec[44]

The lateen sails of the xebec were a distinct feature that provided significant advantages for privateering. The lateen sail is a triangular sail set on a long yard attached diagonally to the mast, creating a fore-and-aft rig. This unique sail configuration allowed the xebec to sail much closer to the wind compared to square-rigged ships, giving it greater speed, agility, and maneuverability.

The ability to sail closer to the wind was crucial for privateering, as it allowed the xebec to chase down and intercept enemy ships more effectively. The xebec could maneuver into favorable positions for attack, and quickly change directions to evade pursuit or escape from dangerous situations.

Moreover, the yards of the lateen sails could be dropped to create makeshift bridges for the boarding party during battles. This allowed the boarding party to quickly and easily access the deck of the enemy ship, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of boarding operations. This feature was specifically designed to aid in the privateering tactics of boarding and capturing enemy vessels, further demonstrating how the xebec was optimized for privateering efficiency.

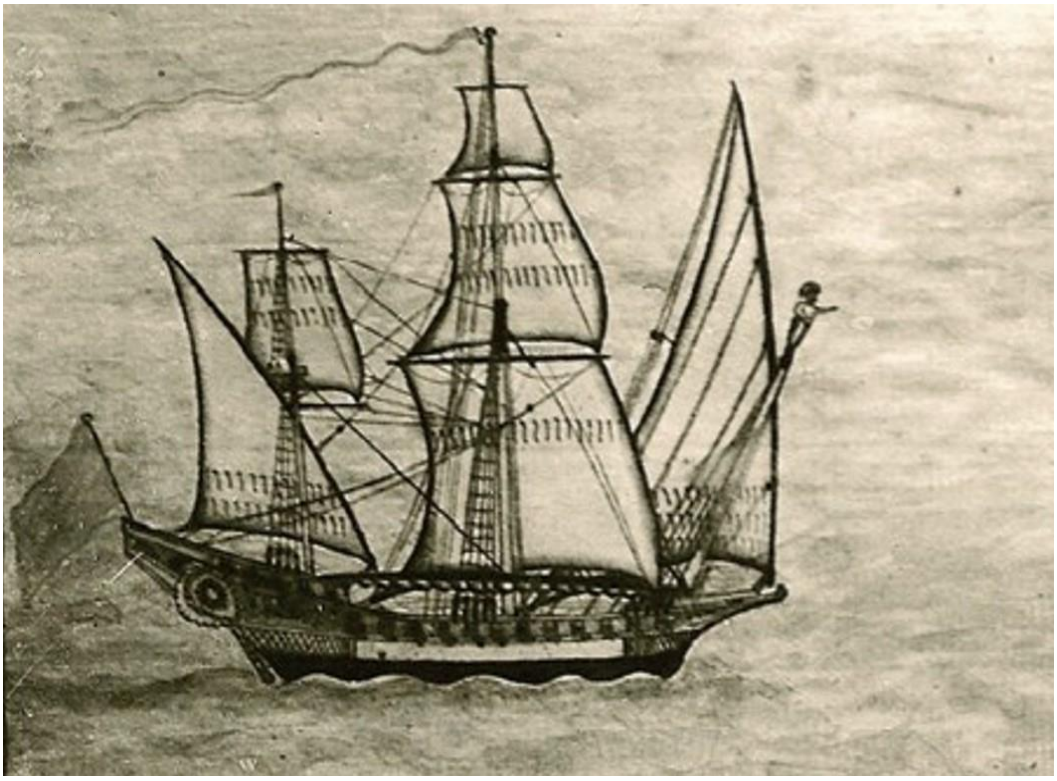
6. One Algerian xebec or two?

Algerians continued to adapt and develop their xebecs to suit their changing requirements. Early generations of xebecs were designed to operate primarily in specific seasons and in enclosed or semi-enclosed seas, with cruising typically done twice a year in April and October.[45] Panzac asserts that the xebec and other narrow-bodied ships operated by Algerians were *"certainly incapable of venturing into the Atlantic"*,[46] as they were not designed for the challenging weather conditions of the open ocean.

However, in the second half of the eighteenth century, ocean-going xebecs began to appear in the Algerian navy. Historical records indicate that in August 30, 1812, a square-rigged xebec, referred to as *'chebek maté-carré',* was among the ships intended for an Atlantic operation to hunt American, Danish, Swedish, and Dutch ships.[47] Similarly, in October 6, 1793, a detachment of the Algerian navy consisting of eight men-of-war, including three xebecs armed with 26, 24, and 20 guns, was spotted sailing out of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.[48] There are also accounts of an Algerian square-rigged xebec armed with 34 guns (**picture below**) capturing a Danish ship off the coast of Lisbon in October 4, 1769, and returning to Algiers in November 4.[49]

These ocean-going xebecs had different rigging configurations compared to the Mediterranean lateen-rigged xebecs. They were identified by either a full square sails rigging or a cross rigging configuration consisting of both lateen and square sails. These xebecs were referred to as *'jabeque Redondo'*[50] in Spain, *'chebec grée à la polacre'* in France,[51] and *'Briganti'* in Algeria.[52] The altered rigging configuration likely allowed for better handling and increased flexibility in different wind conditions, making them more suitable for sailing in the Atlantic during the months of October and November when weather conditions can be challenging.

It is worth noting that the terminology for ship types often varied and could be conflated during different periods, in different countries, and even within the same country.[53] Therefore, further research is needed to fully understand the distinctions between different types of xebecs and their rigging configurations used by Algerians during different periods. In summary, it appears that the Algerian navy had likely employed two distinct types of xebecs - the Mediterranean lateen-rigged xebecs and the ocean-going square-rigged *(briganti)* xebecs - each designed to fulfill specific operational requirements in different waters.



A rare contemporary drawing made by Christian Børs of a 34-gun Algerian xebec fully square rigged in the main mast and partially in the mizzen.[54]

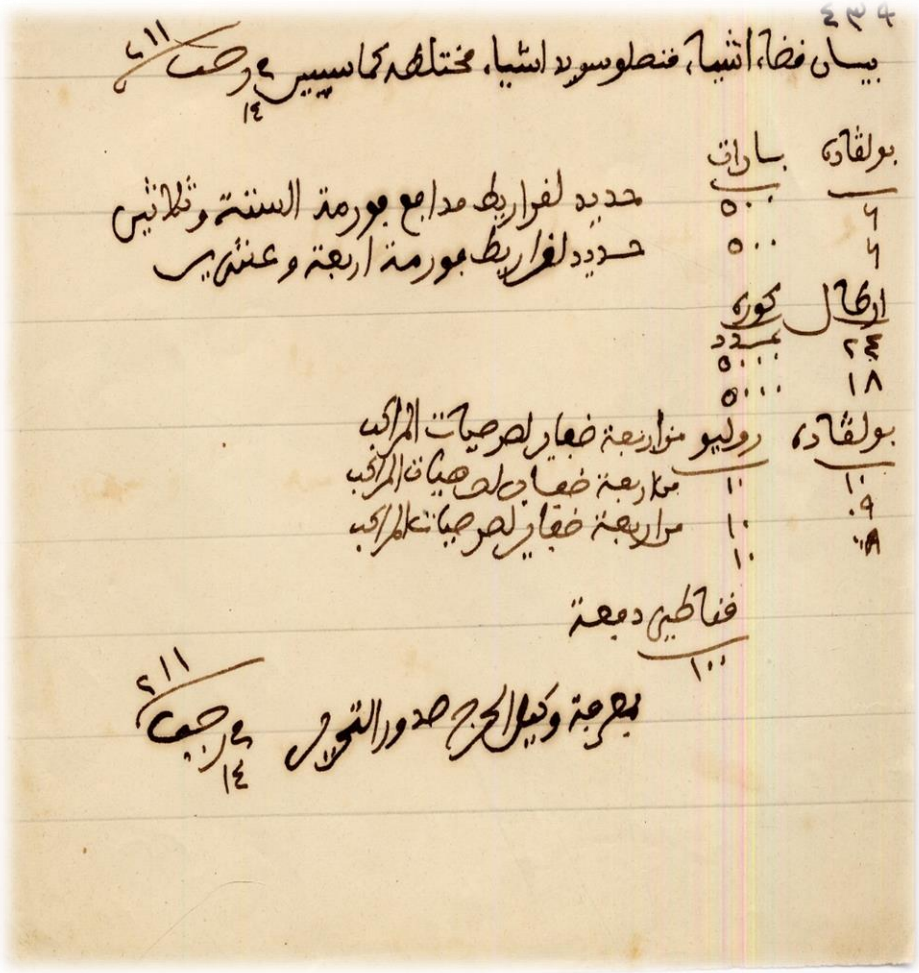
7. Shipbuilding materials

Despite facing challenges in terms of shipbuilding materials, Algerians were able to maintain a relatively large fleet for their navy in the 18th century. French diplomat Laugier De Tassy was amazed by their ability to do so with limited resources.[55] Algerians relied on timber from forests in Cherchell, and later on from Bejaia, Jijel, and Collo, for their domestic shipbuilding industry.[56] However, these local resources were often insufficient to meet the increasing demands of the regency's shipyards.

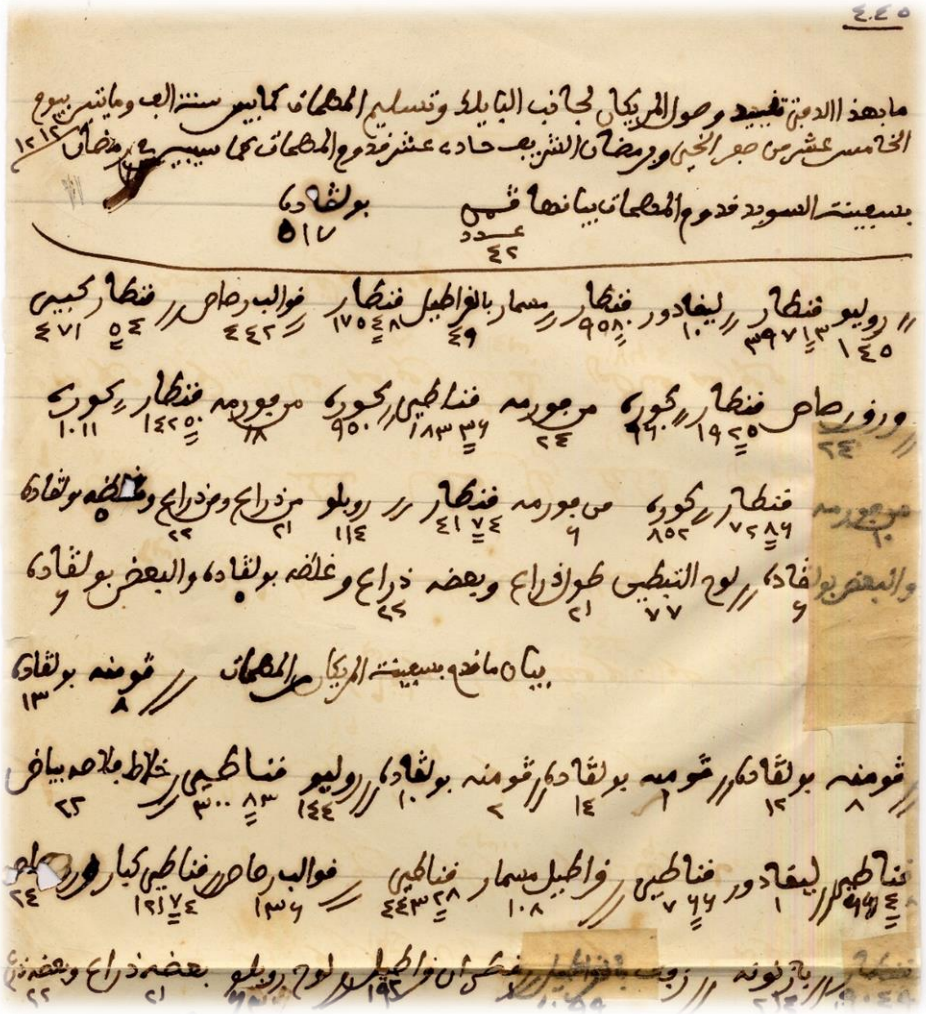
To overcome this challenge, Algerians sought aid from friendly powers and collected tributes from second-rate nations to obtain naval stores. Importing materials from nearby European neighbors was not an option due to embargoes imposed by Christian powers, which prohibited the export of strategic armaments and naval stores to the Maghrebi State.[57] Despite these limitations, Algerians were able to maintain their fleet through resourcefulness and support from various sources.

Examples of aid and tributes are abundant in historical records. For example, in 1784 a frigate purchased by the Ottoman vizier from an English merchant was loaded with approximately 400 iron cannons, 200 barrels of gunpowder, large cables, and cordage to be destined as a present to the *'Garp ocakları'*.[58] In 29 Shawal 1215 (1800), in the reign of Mustapha Pasha, it was reported that 50 Copper Cannons, 1000 xebec oars, 1000 planks, 40 rudders, 1000 big oars, 500 quintals of tar, and other equipment arrived from Istanbul as a gift.[59] As for tributes, suffice it to mention a few examples of due levies from some western powers in exchange for peace with the Regency. In 1797, Sweden sent cannons of 36 and 24 caliber, 5000 cannon balls of 24 and 18

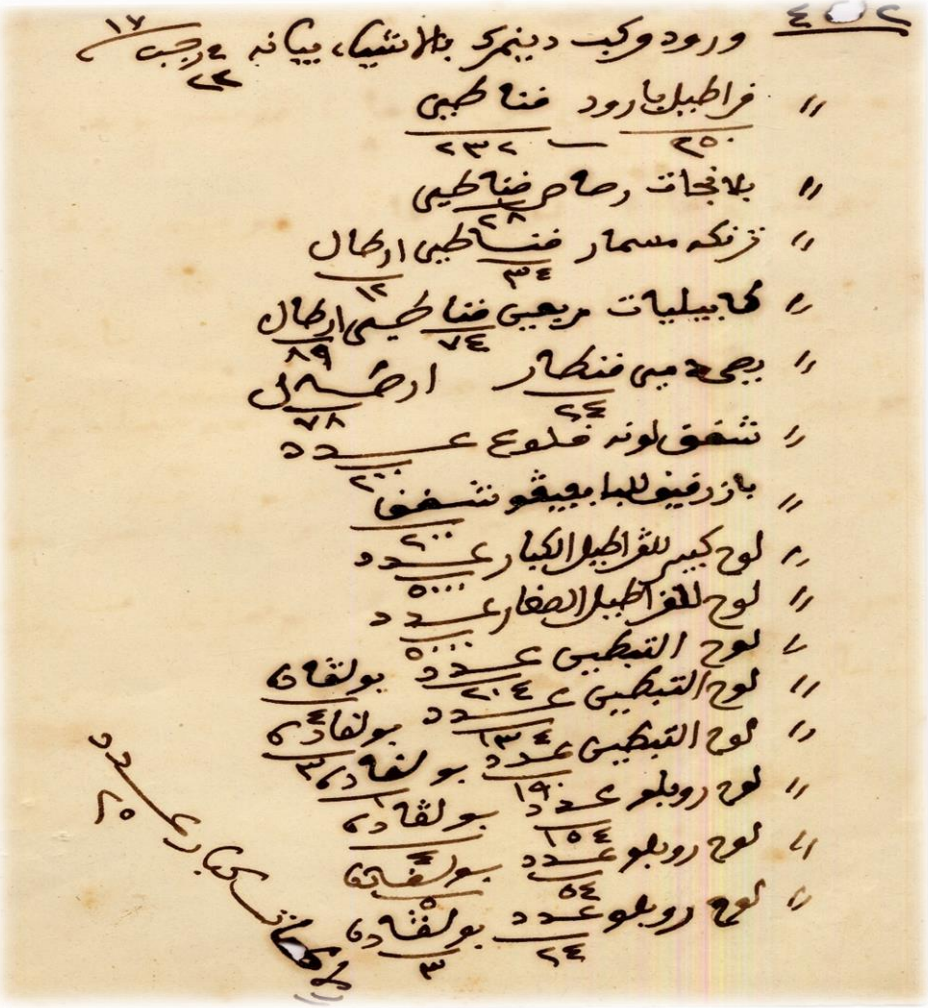
pound. A year later, the U.S delivered a big shipment containing lead, spikes, cannons, cannon shots, planks and other equipment. In 1802, a ship arrived from Denmark with 250 quintals of gunpowder, lead, 34 quintals of 12 pounder spicks, 74 quintals of cables, 5000 big planks, filling timber…etc. (**see below**).



Shipbuilding materials from Sweden (1211\1797) [60]



Tribute from the United States of America (1212\1798)



Tribute from Denmark (1217\1802)

8. How the xebec was built?

The technique of constructing xebecs in North Africa was meticulously documented by French Lieutenant P. A. Hennique in 1882. Hennique observed that local Arab shipwrights in the Tunisian isle of Djerbah relied on generations-old knowledge, employing a set of frame templates (jigs) for each type of ship instead of paper-drawn reduced designs. The process involved erecting the frame templates on the intended construction site, and then connecting them together with interior slats to form the structure, providing shape and rigidity to the overall structure. Pine planks were then nailed over the frames, and olivewood slats, often sourced from old dismantled barques or cut anew with the desired curvature, were used to complete the frame from within. The interior of the xebec was then finished, and the construction templates were removed towards the end of the process.[61] Interestingly, this construction method was not unique to North Africa, as Jean Boudriot and Hubert Berti suggest that Mallorcan constructors also used a similar approach when building xebecs for the French in the 1750s. They likely relied on jigs and figures, a result of extensive

experience, rather than plans. The authors further note that the construction of xebecs was a practical art.[62]

Given the lack of historical documentation regarding the construction of the xebec in Ottoman Algeria, it is reasonable to presume that the shipbuilding know-how used in the shipyards of the Regency were likely similar to those employed in the western Mediterranean basin, considering the geographical proximity, shared history, and cultural exchange in the region that facilitated the transfer of shipbuilding techniques.[63] This assumption is supported by records indicating that western shipwrights, including Spaniards, were known to have constructed ships for Algerians, as evidenced by the Regency's navy possession of a 30-gun xebec and a brig built by a Spanish constructor in Algiers' arsenal in 1794.[64] However, this does not necessarily imply that shipbuilders of foreign origin were the workhorse of Algerian arsenals. In contrast, local shipwrights were the main impetus behind the Regency's naval industry, as evidenced by Devoulx's findings.[65]

9. Conclusion

The xebec served as a valuable asset for the Algerian navy in early modern period, with its design reflecting the intentions of the Algerian admiralty for a fast and highly maneuverable vessel that could align with the irregular naval strategy of the regency. The xebec was entrusted with various responsibilities, including the harassment of enemy commercial ships in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean through capture or destruction, defense of the Algerian coast, and support of the Ottoman fleet. Additionally, the Algerian xebec had commercial duties, such as freighting and transporting Algerian pilgrims. This versatility made the xebec an indispensable instrument within the broader maritime strategy of Algiers in the eighteenth century.

Notes:

[1] Pierre Dan, Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires, Seconde Edition, 1646, Paris, p.106.

[2] https://www.modelships.de/Schebecke,_arabisch/Chebec_arabian.htm consulted: 14/10/2022

[3] In the early 19th century, Polaccas, schooners, brigantines and xebecs carried six- and eight-pound cannons. See: Daniel Panzac, Barbary Corsairs The End of a Legend 1800-1820, brill Leiden-Boston, 2005, p.47.

[4] Albert Devoulx, « La marine de la régence d'Alger », R.A. N77, 1869, p.396

[5] Ibid, pp.384-385.

[6] شطية In Arabic, *saëte* or *saëtia* in English, *la saëtte* or *saëttie* in French, *saettia* in Italian, *saetya* in Spanish. Used to be a small and light rowing vessel. In the 17th century, it had become a fairly large ship that seldom uses oars. Similarly to the xebec, setee's masts can accomodate a mixture of square and triangular sails. The largest saëttes had a lateen sail only at the mizzen mast; the smaller ones carried square sails only at the foremast. The archives of the French Consulate in Algiers invariably give the qualification of barques to these ships, some of which received up to 34 guns. Refer to: A. Devoulx, op. cit., pp.391-392. According to Tuncay Zorlu, the *şehtiye* was also known

as *şitye* or *çamlıca*. It came in two types: small ones of 23-27 zira, and larger ones of 29-35. They had generally two masts, but larger ones can accommodate three. However, he separates the *şehtiye* from the xebec, which he considers an independent ship often associated with Algeria. Refer to: Tuncay Zorlu, innovation and empire in turkey, Sultan Selim III and the Modernisation of the Ottoman Navy, Tauris Academic Studies, London • New York, 2008, pp.125, 130.

[7] İdris Bostan, kürekli ve yelkenli Osmanlı gemileri, Bilge yayın, yayın No: 2, Istanbul, 2005, pp.390-391.

[8] Devoulx, op.cit., pp.396, 411.

[9] Emir Yener advanced this notion in a Presentation entitled: 'Ottoman Sail Warships 1701-1786 A New Classification Attempt', that was given in the Third International Congress of Eurasian Maritime History - Istanbul, 10/05/2018. The presentation is accessible in: https://www.academia.edu/36609802/Ottoman_Warships_1701_1786_sunum_ppsx consulted: 12/01/2023

[10] Devoulx, op.cit., pp.391-392.

[11] Bostan, op. cit., p.391.

[12] Bradford, « John Paul Jones and Guerre de Razzia », in : The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord, XIIl, No. 4, October 2003, pp.1-2.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Alfred T. Mahan, The influence of sea power upon history 1660-1783, fifteenth edition, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1898, p.6; Benjamin Armstrong, Small boats and daring men: maritime raiding, irregular warfare, and the early American Navy, University of Oklahoma Press, 2019, p.5.

[15] Daniel Heller-Roazen, The enemy of all piracy and the law of nations, Zone Books, New York, 2009, p.79.

[16] See for example: Le Baron Lescallier, Bases de l'administration maritime, ou Projet pour l'amélioration de cette partie, Firmin Didiot, Paris, 1819, pp.81, 83-84; C. B. Norman, the corsairs of France, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivingtox, London, 1887; James R. Thursfield, Naval Warfare, University press of Cambridge, 1913, pp.93-99; L.-B. Hautefeuille, Histoire des origines, des progrès et des variations du droit maritime international, deuxième édition, paris, 1869; Jacques Bruneau, "La ruse dans la guerre sur mer'', thèse de doctorat en droit, Université de Paris - Faculté de droit, 1938; Fréderic-Henri de Chapman, Traité de la construction des vaisseaux, avec des eclaircissemens & démonstrations touchant l'ouvrage intitulé Architectura navalis mercatoria, traduit du Suédois par : M. Vial du Clairbois, Imprimerie R. Malassis, France, 1781, pp.83-84.

[17] Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Was there Room in Rum for Corsairs?: Who Was an Ottoman in the Naval Forces of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th and 16th Centuries?", in: Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies, XLIV, 2014.

[18] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume 3, The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.100.

[19] Sam J. Tangredi, "Sea power: Theory and Practice", in: Strategy in the Contemporary World, edited by: John Baylis et all, Oxford University Press, 2002, p.118; Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, "Guerres irrégulières : de quoi parle-t-on ?'', in: Stratégique, N° 93-94-95-96, 2009/1, p.20; Ajey Lele, « Asymmetric Warfare: A State vs Non-State Conflict », in: oasis, N° 20, july-december, 2014, p.98; Lescallier, op.cit., 1819, p.81; Mahan, op. cit., pp.30-31.

[20] *Guerre de razzia* simply means war of raiding. Unlike guerre de course, it had been conducted through coastal raids with the aim of destroying enemy assets and force him to disperse his forces. Refer to: Bradford, op.cit., p.2.

[21] Salvatore Bono, les corsaires en Méditerranée, Edition la porte, Rabat, 1998, p.49.

[22] According to Benjamin Armstrong's own classification, naval irregular warfare encompasses maritime raiding operations outside conventional ship-on-ship, squadron-on-squadron, or fleet-on-

fleet engagements. He excludes privateering because, in his views, it was part of the classically defined *guerre de course*; refer to: Benjamin Armstrong, Small boats and daring men: maritime raiding, irregular warfare, and the early American Navy, University of Oklahoma Press, 2019, p.6; This paper, however, adopts the classic Mediterranean definition of naval irregular warfare that includes privateering because it appropriately serves our purpose here.

[23] Panzac, op. cit., pp.82-85

[24] Mahan, op. cit., p.31.

[25] Ibid, p.30.

[26] Ibid, p.47.

[27] Ibid, p.194.

[28] Albert Devoulx, Tachrifat. Recueil de notes historiques sur l'administration de l'ancienne régence d'Alger, Impr. du gouvernement, Alger, 1852, p.137.

[29] عبد الهادي رجائي سالمي، " حرب 1769-1772م بين الجزائر ومملكة الدانمارك-النرويج من خلال مصدرين: نيلس موص وابن رقية التلمساني"، في: مجلة الدراسات التاريخية العسكرية، المجلد 3/العدد 2، جويلية 2021، ص ص. 54-55.

[30] Panzac, op. cit., p.57.

[31] Bostan, op. Cit., pp.390-391.

[32] Zorlu, op. cit., p.130

[33] سالمي، مرجع سابق، ص. 57.

[34] Jens Auer, Fregat and Snau Small Cruisers in the Danish Navy 1650-1750, Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern Denmark, May 2008, p.263.

[35] Panzac, op. cit., p.282.

[36] https://www.finemodelships.com/ship-plans/Chapman_Architectura_eng.htm consulted on: 26/10/2022

[37] Amine Rahati, “Reconstitution d’un *chebec* de 30 conons”, IKOSIM, N04. 2015, pp.158-187.

[38] I am indebted to Amine Rahati for generously providing the pictures of the Algerian xebec used in this section.

[39] Rahati, op. cit., pp.158-187.

[40] https://www.finemodelships.com/ship-plans/Chapman_Architectura_eng.htm. Consulted: 28/ 08/2022.

[41] Panzac, op. cit., p.71.

[42] Ibid, op. cit., p.49.

[43] Id.

[44] Rahati, op. cit., p.164.

[45] Venture de Paradis, Alger au XIII^{e} siècle, Typographie Adolf Jourdon, Alger, 1898, p.47.

[46] Panzac, op. cit., p.42.

[47] Devoulx, op. cit., pp.40-41.

[48] United States Government Printing Office, Naval Documents related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers, Volume I: Naval Operations including diplomatic background from 1785 through 1801, Washington, 1939, (Electronically published by American Naval Records Society, Bolton Landing, New York 2011), pp.46-47.

[49] Torbjorn Odegaard, Une paix et amitié perpétuelle, SINAS, Fredrikstad, 2013, p.87; Erik Gobel, "The Danish Algerian sea passes 1747-1838", in: Historical Social Research, N° 134, Vol 35, 2010, p.168.

[50] https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-116000/NH-116105.html consulted: 13/04/2023

[51] https://www.geocities.ws/xebecinc/info2.html consulted: 13/04/2023

[52] Devoulx, Tachrifat, op. cit., p.40.

[53] Björn Landström, The royal warship Vasa, interpublishing, Stockholm, 1988, p.9.

[54] T. Odegaard, op.cit, p.87. Gobel, op.cit. , p.168

[55] De Tassy, op. cit., p.261

[56] Belhamissi op. cit., p.65.
[57] Ibid, p.67.
[58] Zorlu, op.cit., p.154.
[59] Devoulx, Tachrifat, op. cit., p.61
[60] These documents were obtained from the National Library of Algeria.
[61] Privat Agathon Benjamin Arthur Hennique, Caboteurs et pêcheurs de la côte de Tunisie en 1882, Berger-Levrault et C[ie], Paris, 1882, p.7; For more insight on how Algerians built their ships, refer to:

- سليم سرحان، "تطور صناعة السفن الحربية بالجزائر على عهد العثمانيين (920-1246هـ) (1514-1830م) من خلال المصادر التاريخية والأثرية"، ماجستير في الآثار، جامعة الجزائر 2، قسم الآثار، 2007-2008، ص ص 75-86.

[62] Jean Boudriot et Hubert Berti, Chébecs et Bâtiments Méditerranéens Le Requin 1750, collection archéologie navale Française, Paris, 1987, pp.68-69.
[63] Rahati seems to agree with this notion; refer to: Rahati, op. cit., p.165.
[64] United States Government Printing Office, op. cit., p.59.
[65] Devoulx, « La marine… », op. cit., p.388.