



universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

„The Role of Corsairs in the Mediterranean in the Early
Modern Period “

verfasst von / submitted by

Martin Richter

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2017 / Vienna, 2017

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 190 344 313

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch, UF Geschichte, Sozialkunde
Politische Bildung UniStG

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ. Doz. Dr. Gottfried Liedl

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Methodology/State of Research	2
2. What are "Early Modern" Pirates and/or Corsairs	3
2.1 Political Players in the Early Modern Period and the Position of Pirates/Corsairs.....	5
2.2 Defining the Terminology with the case example of Mediterranean/Atlantic Piracy	12
2.2.1 Pirates	13
2.2.2 Corsairs.....	18
2.3 The Islam Corsairs in Confrontation with Christian Corsairs in the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic	20
2.3.1 Politics	21
2.3.2 Economics	25
2.3.3 Social/Cultural Aspects.....	29
3. The role of the so-called corsair republics as islamic frontier organizations	31
3.1 Berber, Turks, and Arabs	32
3.2 Triploi, Tunis, Algiers	38
3.3 Rabat-Salé.....	45
3.4 Entangled History?	46
4. Renegades	47
4.1 Religious Fanaticism	50
4.2 Renegades- Asecular or religious profit?.....	59
5. Conclusion	62
Bibliography	65
Attachments.....	69

1. Introduction

During my studies, I have produced two papers on the topic of pirates in the early modern period. The fascination of piracy has not failed to reach me. One of the most important aspects of dealing with histories is to question their factuality. Most historic events have been skewed and adapted to fit modern interests. As an upcoming teacher, it is out of the question that one needs to be able to see beyond these fabricated images. Pirates are seen as criminals who rob and kill in order to drink and live dangerously. As scientists, we move beyond these stereotypes and try to capture the essence behind these images. After having conducted research, there has, however, been a lack of a definitive terminology in this matter. What is the difference between a pirate, a buccaneer and a corsair for instance? Thus, it became clear that a scientific nomenclature needs to be in place. The scientific value of such an attempt is offered through the main thesis of this paper: The role of the corsairs in the Mediterranean. By analyzing the part that corsairs played in the political playing field of the Mediterranean in the early modern period, the importance of a nomenclature of pirates justifies itself through the broad field of influence that the corsairs had. Considering contemporary issues, regarding Islam and Europe, this topic also focusses on establishing a new viewpoint on the long history of Islamic-Christian frontiers between Europe and the Ottoman Empire and North Africa.

Thus, the following paper offers a detailed analysis of the corsairs in the Mediterranean in the early modern period. To achieve this, an introductory chapter, which covers the development of piracy is needed to establish adequate context of this topic. The first chapter will include four main aspects. Firstly, the question of what pirates are will be discussed. Secondly, the political framework that these pirates were subject to will be analyzed. Thirdly, a nomenclature will be established in order to introduce the tools for an in-depth analysis of the corsairs. Finally, the question will be posed whether Muslim and Christian corsairs could be seen as similar factions in the Mediterranean.

The second chapter includes an analysis of the Maghreb region, where the Muslim corsairs had most of their strongholds. The histories of the North African coast, as well as the North-Western coast will function as the framework for this section. If the corsairs had influence in these regions the politics of the Maghreb would be guided by them as well. Therefore, the four cities of Tripoli, Algiers, Tunis, and Rabat-Salé will be used to verify whether the corsairs were in actual positions of power or not. Furthermore, the question arises why the Maghreb facilitated the corsair business in the early modern period. Another important mention will go to the role of religion and in how far the Maghreb can be viewed as an Islamic frontier organization. Moreover, one should question the view of a divide in general as an unbreachable border between Muslim North Africa/ the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe. To examine this proposition, the aspects of entangled history will be introduced.

In the final chapter, a possible answer for the above-mentioned statement will be given in the form of the renegade phenomenon. As with the nomenclature of pirates, the renegades will be given a terminology that can be used to discern the various realizations of this typology. In order to cover this topic, individual histories of renegades will be identified. The benefits for the individual and the religion that they converted to will also lead to a better understanding of these characters. While there were both Christian and Muslim renegades, this paper will focus on the latter.

1.1 Methodology/ State of Research

The following paper offers various views by contemporary scientists to put the assumptions that will be made into perspective. Moreover, the theories laid out will be strengthened and/or supported by other literary works to achieve a new angle on a topic that has been investigated by many theorists. However, this paper will define one nomenclature that tries to identify scientifically valuable terminologies. While most scientific works have introduced definitions for pirates/buccaneers/ corsairs etc., there exists a lack of a common ground among these definitions.

This paper centers around secondary literature and covers the theories that have been established through these works. Terminologies will be established through the

literature analysis. These terminologies aim to hold scientific value. While the historic terms will be covered, the method of establishing a nomenclature for pirates, corsairs, and renegades is not done to cover all terms that were used by contemporaries in the early modern period.

The theory of entangled history shall function as an example of the complicated relations between Europe and North Africa. The renegades will hereby function as the connective feature. The trans-imperial subject and the Renaissance human will also find mention in this paper as closely connected examples of the corsair/renegade nomenclature. Translated sources will also be covered in this paper.

2. What are „Early Modern“ Pirates and/or Corsairs?

Piracy has been the subject of various popular romanticized history representations. Cordingly affirms that “the picture which most of us have turns out to be a blend of historical facts overlaid with three centuries of ballads, melodramas, epic poems [...], and films”.¹ Not only does this question the impression of pirates in general but also offers room to think about the representation of piracy in various literary works. The main question here arises if pirates can be summed up in one category. In reality, there have been various manifestations of piracy and it is essential to be distinctive when discussing the topic of naval raiders. Therefore, this chapter will outline the different forms piracy has displayed over the centuries with a focus on the early modern period and the golden age of piracy, which roughly “began in the 1650’s and was brought to an abrupt end around 1725”.² The focus will specifically lie in the terms that were used to categorize pirates and a discussion of classifying pirates as outlaws will be opened up.

The name of this naval phenomenon stems from the Greek word “Peirates” and indicates that piracy was already present in Antiquity. Evidence for robbers on the sea

¹ David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag. The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates* (San Diego 1997) XIV.

² Cordingly, *Black Flag*, XVI.

can be traced back to Herodotus's history works. Furthermore, Plutarch and Appian offer descriptions of the pirate plague.³ From 500-30 BC

“a broad consensus emerged in the Graeco-Roman world regarding the category of formally declared, or ‘legitimate’ warfare, which was war between political entities whose leaders justified the conflict with reference to injuries or slights suffered at the hands of their opponents. [orig. emph.]”⁴

However, this type of conflict could not be applied correspondingly to the maritime raids. Thus, piracy was labelled a condemned activity. Nevertheless, this manifestation of piracy remained subjective. While in conflict, both sides interpreted the enemies' warfare according to their views.⁵ This attitude will persist throughout the centuries and will reoccur in the early modern period as well.

In the Middle Ages, piracy showed no sign of depleting. For example, the Likedeelers were a notorious group that roamed the Baltic Sea in the last quarter of the 14th century.⁶ Due to political conflict, Queen Margrethe as well as the Mecklenburgers initiated letters of marque⁷ to validate sea robbery for ship owners.⁸ Thus, political forces were using the power of maritime ‘mercenaries’ to weaken their enemies in the Middle Ages. This form of piracy was legitimized by the letters, leading to the question in how far piracy could be considered the work of outlaws in the Middle Ages. Legitimacy evolved into an international problem in the early modern period and many new terminologies came into existence. This development, at the turning point of the 15th century, calls for an analysis of the situations that unfolded and subsequently led to a global rise in pirate activities.

³ Robert Bohn, *Die Piraten* (München 2003), 10.

⁴ Philip de Souza, *Piracy in Classical Antiquity. The Origins and Evolution of the Concept*. In: Stefan Amirell, Leos Müller (Hg.), *Persistent Piracy. Maritime Violence and State Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (Hampshire 2014) 17.

⁵ Souza, *Piracy*, 17.

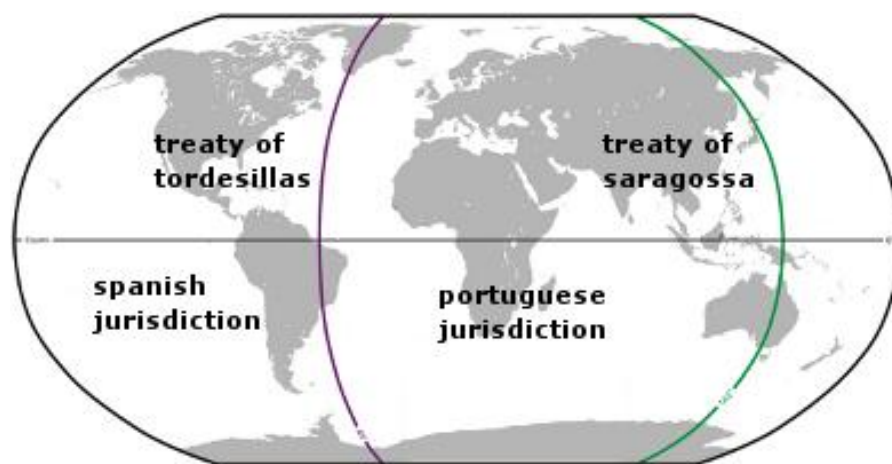
⁶ Bohn, *Piraten*, 11.

⁷ Term coined later in French to describe the letters given to French corsairs, Ludwig Bühnau, *Piraten und Korsaren der Weltgeschichte* (Würzburg 1963) 232.

⁸ Nina Nustede, *Mythos Störtebeker. Handel und Piraterie des späten Mittelalters und die Interpretationen in der Neuzeit. Klaus Störtebeker in Geschichte und Sage. ‘Edler’ Räuber oder ‘gemeiner’ Verbrecher?* (Hannover 2008) 7.

2.1 Political Players in the Early Modern Period and the position of Pirates/Corsairs

Portugal, at the end of the 15th century, can be seen as the first country to successfully crown itself as a global player with its own “worldwide trade imperium”. Their connections to Malaysia, China, and Japan secured the Portuguese a seemingly uncontested position among the other European powers. However, due to the rise of Spain after the discoveries by Columbus, Portugal’s neighbor became a global player itself. Subsequently, the revolving conflict needed to be resolved.⁹



<http://www.essential-humanities.net/img/history/his109.png>

Thus, at the turning point of the 15th century territorial rights, including the oceans, were handed out by the pope. This status was justified by claiming that the pope had received all ownership of non-believers when Christ ascended to heaven since the pope was “universal potestas”, the representative of Christ. Thus, in the “aeterni regis”, all regions south of the Canaries were integrated into Portuguese rule. Shortly after, the contract of Tordesillas was initiated. This contract was issued 1494 and established the dividing line on the 46th longitude, 270 sea miles west of the Cape Verde islands.¹⁰ However, there was still no divide on the eastern side and after the ventures of Magellan another divide was issued in the Saragossa contract.¹¹ This divide

⁹ David J. Krieger, *The New Universalism. Foundations for a Global Theology* (Eugene 2006) 29.

¹⁰ Gottfried Seebaß, *Geschichte des Christentums III. Spätmittelalter- Reformation-Konfessionalisierung* (Stuttgart 2006) 325.

¹¹ Harald Kleinschmidt, *Menschen in Bewegung. Inhalte und Ziele historischer Migrationsforschung* (Göttingen 2002) 98.

ran east of the Philippines from North to South Pole.¹² A divide between Spain and Portugal had been issued and everything beyond the lines belonged to them, “even lands that were still to be discovered”.¹³ Consequently, other European powers which wanted to claim colonies in America or trade with the existing colonies of Spain had no legal basis in the eyes of the Spanish. It should be noted that neither Portugal nor Spain were in ‘full’ control of these zones as no power had the means to secure such a large area.

The other European powers did not approve of letting Portugal and Spain seize global control of trade and land. England, France, and the Netherlands began to establish their own colonies in order to participate in the global playing field, now with the goal of having permanent colonies. “It was no longer merely a question of trading with the East or the newly discovered peoples of Africa and America, but of taking possession of the land and producing what one needed”.¹⁴ Consequently, England, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain were all fighting over the global playing field. Many inner conflicts in Europe itself¹⁵ and the fight for supremacy within many countries who wanted to partake in the global fight for power had to find a solution for their dilemma.

In England, the answer was found by employing additional men who could fight. The market solution for Britain when confronted with the Spanish Armada was privateering.¹⁶ Thus, the mercenaries who were employed to fight against the Spanish/Portuguese power¹⁷ and were later coined as Elizabethan Sea Dogs led to England being infamously called the pirate nation.¹⁸ However, this strategic move by England, employing additional men who could be considered ‘mercenaries’, was not without consequence. While these Sea Dogs sailed under the English Crown, they

¹² Seebaß, Geschichte, 325.

¹³ Angus Konstam, Piracy. The Complete History (Oxford 2008) 38.

¹⁴ Krieger, The New Universalism, 29.

¹⁵ e.g. War of Spanish Sucession, Netherland’s fight for independence, England’s rose wars; see Michael Erbe, Die frühe Neuzeit (Stuttgart 2007).

¹⁶ Nicholas Kyriazis, Theofore Metaxxas, Emmanouil M. L. Economou, War for Profit. English Corsairs, Institutions and Decentralised Strategy. In: Defence and Peace Economics (25. Nov 2015) 1-17, 6.

¹⁷ vgl. William Wood, Elizabethan Sea Dogs (E-Book 2004).

¹⁸ Michael Kempe, Fluch der Weltmeere. Piraterie, Völkerrecht und internationale Beziehungen 1500-1900 (Frankfurt/New York 2010) 68.

quickly became an eye sore for most travelers in these waters and some Sea Dogs even attacked English ships.¹⁹

For this strategy to have worked in the first place there was need for forerunners who could work as an example. England sprouted plenty such individuals since men like John Hawkins, Martin Frobisher, and Francis Drake were traders before they became corsairs. Their career paths also did not stagnate there and some “were knighted and served as captains in the war against Spain in 1588 and after”.²⁰ While the English were not completely able to have its pirates on a leash, the success against the Spanish can be attributed to the Crown’s tactic of employing them.

In France, the employment of corsairs was also common. While the French corsairs became renowned later than the English, the French corsairs were pictured as patriotic and comparable to officers, loyal to the French crown. While these cases remained scarce since there were still many French corsairs who acted according to their own benefit, the accounts on men like Surcouf or Thurot should be regarded as distinctly different to the naval robbers who exploited their right they received with their letters of marques. These documents were officially handed out by King Ludwig XIV, who was advised by Colbert in this matter, and included various details about the procedure that the ship owners had to go through. For example, the owner had to deposit an immense amount of money with which damage should be compensated that the ship might cause. The geographical focus of the corsairs was the English Channel and the main base of operations was considered Saint-Malo.²¹ However, the big expeditions for riches began with the Ango family of Dieppe. The French corsairs then also travelled overseas and sometimes tried to conquer land in the New World as well. Especially Jean Ango and his son gained a reputation that exceeded most expectations. An account describes that after one of their ships had been seized by the Portuguese and their crew had been hanged, both gathered their fleet and raided Portugal and not even the French ambassador was able to help the Portuguese since he stated that

¹⁹ vgl. *Wood*, Elizabethan Sea Dogs.

²⁰ *Kyriazis*, War, 8.

²¹ *Bühnau*, Piraten, 231ff.

Ango had more ships and money than he could muster. Consequently, Ango and his son were paid by the Portuguese to stop the raiding.²²

Other famous French corsairs who should be mentioned here would be Fleury who stole the treasures of Montezuma from Fernando Cortez's raids, which were delivered back to Europe on a ship.²³ The other famous corsair who made a name for himself was Jean Bart. His success led him into "the French navy and [he] was ennobled by King Louis XIV in 1694".²⁴ French pirates were highly influential both within France and in battles against other powers. In comparison to the Sea Dogs, however, the benefit for the state was not as big as for the English.

The Netherlands also started a similar campaign to disrupt Spanish influence. The so-called Seabeggars were considered freedom fighters in the fight against Spanish dominance overseas and in Europe. For the Spanish, they were simply pirates.²⁵ In 1630 these pirates managed to conquer the North East of Brazil as well as Portuguese bases in Africa.²⁶ Their influence reached as far as the Indian Ocean and the use of private fighters was continuously extended.²⁷ Thus, the Netherlands also understood the power of semi-independent fighters who were able to fight what could be called a guerilla-war at sea.

In the South East, another major player sought to make use of mercenaries as well- the Ottoman Empire. It is notable that the Ottoman Porte possessed a substantial navy at the beginning of the early modern period.²⁸ This development was possible since the Sublime Porte had a geographical and material advantage for building galleys. Wood and metal were acquired from the Baltic region.²⁹ Nevertheless, the Ottoman regime needed allies in their fight against Spain on the North African front. In 1516, Süleymân was able to integrate the ports of Algiers and Tunis into Ottoman provincial administration. Subsequently, Algiers grew into one of the most important marine

²² *Bühnau*, Piraten, 238.

²³ *Bühnau*, Piraten, 239.

²⁴ *Cordingly*, Black Flag, XVI.

²⁵ *Kempe*, Fluch der Weltmeere, 89.

²⁶ Bernd *Hausberger*, Die Verknüpfung der Welt. Geschichte der frühen Globalisierung vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert (Wien 2015) 51.

²⁷ *Kempe*, Fluch der Weltmeere, 90.

²⁸ *Erbe*, Die frühe Neuzeit, 78.

²⁹ Roland *Stocker*, Die Seemacht der Osmanen und Korsaren. In: Gottfried *Liedl* (Hg.), Der Zorn des Achill, Europas militärische Kultur-Konfrontation und Austausch (Wien 2004) 121-139, 135.

bases for the Ottomans.³⁰ A secured position within the Barbary states of North Africa was established by appointing rulers in the cities who formally were subordinate to the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the region became a valuable ally in the fight against Spain.³¹ As the North African coast had been famous for piracy³², the Ottoman Empire saw an opportunity in using these fighters against its enemies. In 1571, their fleet reached numbers of 500-600 galleys with 150,000 men on board. In this context, it is important to mention that the Sublime Porte partook in informal naval warfare not only through the use of the Barbary corsairs but the North African corsairs distinguished themselves through their high degree of specialization in this business.³³ As with the before mentioned pirate groups, the Barbary corsairs were operating under a state's permission.

On the other side of the Empire, the Sublime Porte fought for supremacy in the Indian Ocean with the Portuguese. After many struggles, it became evident that the Portuguese could not be removed from the Indian Ocean, while the Ottomans had a firm grasp on the Red Sea. Subsequently, the two powers approached each other in trade negotiations.³⁴

Even the Habsburg Empire with only little access to open waters understood the value that the use of private mariners had. The Uskoks of Senj became renowned as a bulwark against the Islam threat by the Sublime Porte.³⁵ The Habsburg Empire used them as border troops against the Ottomans and to strengthen its position against Venice in the three-way struggle for power in the region of contemporary Croatia.³⁶

The above-mentioned examples showcase that many powers used pirates as a means of securing their power. Another impact that pirates had was the influence on trading.

³⁰ Klaus *Kreiser*, *Der Osmanische Staat 1300-1922*. In: Jochen Bleicken, Lothar Gall, Hermann Jakobs (Hg.), *Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte* 30 (München 2001) 27.

³¹ *Bono*, *Piraten*, 33,38.

³² Salvatore *Bono*, *Piraten, Piraten und Korsaren im Mittelmeer. Seekrieg, Handel und Sklaverei vom 16. Bis 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart 2009) 31.

³³ *Kreiser*, *Der Osmanische Staat*, 62f.

³⁴ Alfred *Schlicht*, *Die Araber und Europa: 2000 Jahre gemeinsamer Geschichte* (Stuttgart 2008) 86f.

³⁵ Wolfgang *Gruber*, *Die Lebenswelt der Uskokten von Senj. Eine unbequeme Gemeinschaft im Adriaum der Frühen Neuzeit*. In: Andreas *Obenaus*, Eugen *Pfister*, Birgit *Tremml* (Hg.), *Schrecken der Händler und Herrscher. Piratengemeinschaften in der Geschichte* (Globalhistorische Skizzen 21, Wien 2012) 79- 100, 79.

³⁶ Catherine Wendy *Bracewell*, *The Uskoks of Senj. Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca 1992) 3.

While global players like England, the Netherlands, Spain, France, and Portugal “derived only about two percent of their Gross Domestic Product [...] from overseas trade”, “a number of European states and merchants grew incredibly wealthy from commerce in the Atlantic”.³⁷ Furthermore, trade had much bigger implications since the „imperial regimes sought to influence the conditions of trade for their benefit“. ³⁸ To understand the scale of this commerce, one only needs to look at the Portuguese and Spanish ships which were transporting over seventy tons of silver per year to Asia.³⁹ Within this trade network, pirates could be used to strengthen one’s own position on the global market. Especially merchant corporations saw the value of employing pirates to avoid restrictive trade policies.⁴⁰ As merchants allied themselves with governments⁴¹, the use of pirates was beneficial for both traders and rivaling powers.

One prime example for the employment of pirates for trade purposes was the Caribbean with its famous Buccaneers. The Buccaneers had their roots in France. After the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, many Huguenots escaped to the Antilles. They tried to establish a livelihood by selling meat that they got from wild pets that were left by Europeans. The technique to preserve the meat was passed on by the local indigenous people and was called “Barbecu”, which later became the basis of the pirate groups’ name, “Boucaniers”. At the end of the 16th century many rogues, slaves, and individuals in need of money came to Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, or Puerto Rico which led the Buccaneers to become a mixed group, no longer only consisting of French people.⁴² These people, called “Engagés”, could be considered thralls. They were put under contract to work for a captain on his ship and it is mentioned that they had it worse than black slaves who belonged to their owner. Engagés, however, were only serving their captain for three years. Therefore, the captain tried to make as much profit with his labor force as possible.⁴³ A reason for the step into the piracy business

³⁷ Charles H. *Parker*, *Global Interactions in the Early Modern Age 1400-1800* (New York 2010) 69.

³⁸ *Parker*, *Global Interactions*, 70.

³⁹ *Parker*, *Global Interactions*, 90.

⁴⁰ *Bohn*, *Piraten*, 91.

⁴¹ *Parker*, *Global Interactions*, 85.

⁴² *Bohn*, *Piraten*, 40.

⁴³ Janusz *Piekalkiewicz*, *Freibeuter. Das bunte wilde Leben der Buccaneers in der Karibischen See* (München 1973) 64.

was taken due to the monopolization of trade in the region⁴⁴ and the rising interest of governors in pirate groups who wanted allies in their personal endeavors.

The interaction between pirates and merchants was also evident in the Indian Ocean.⁴⁵ However, it was not without risk and other powers used the reliance on pirates by their rivals to destabilize their position. For example, after the plundering of an Indian ship by English pirates and the subsequent protest by the Great Mogul, the Dutch VOC (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) used this opportunity to spread rumors that all pirates in the Indian Ocean sailed under the English flag.⁴⁶

In the Mediterranean, the disruption and influence on trade can be showcased by the Uskoks. The plundering of Ottoman merchant ships was seen as an act of fighting against the Islamic invasion. However, Venice had an interest in sustaining good relations with the Sublime Porte, as safe trade with the Sublime Porte was promised in two treaties by Venice.⁴⁷ This also led to tensions with the Habsburg Empire, which supported the Uskoks of Senj in their endeavor.⁴⁸ On the North African side, the Berber corsairs succeeded in controlling most of the trade in the Mediterranean at the end of the 16th century.⁴⁹

Thus, it becomes evident that pirates were used to assert power claims all over the global playing field. European governments and the Ottoman Porte understood the value of these naval raiders and were able to disrupt their rivals. Pirates influenced the trade by plundering trade ships and smuggling goods to evade governments' trade restrictions. Nonetheless, it remains questionable in how far pirate activities can be seen as controlled and legitimized. To shed light on this issue, the various terms that were used for pirates might give an indication for these issues.

⁴⁴ Hausberger, *Die Verknüpfung der Welt*, 107.

⁴⁵ Bohn, *Piraten*, 92.

⁴⁶ Bohn, *Piraten*, 77.

⁴⁷ Bracewell, *The Uskoks*, 4.

⁴⁸ Gruber, *Lebenswelt der Uskoken*, 80.

⁴⁹ Bono, *Piraten*, 37.

2.2 Defining the Terminology with the case example of Mediterranean/Atlantic Piracy

Buccaneers, corsairs, freebooters, adventurers, privateers, and maritime outlaws⁵⁰ are all terminologies that fall under the umbrella term pirate in the early modern period. To distinguish these terminologies adequately, one should move beyond the generalized pirate stereotype and examine the circumstances these groups were subject to. According to Bohn, the definition of piracy is dependent on the degree of support that was received by political/economic groups.⁵¹ While authors like Hartl neglect the importance of distinguishing terms like Buccaneers, pirates, sea robbers, and freebooters⁵², there needs to be clarification if one wants to analyze this phenomenon thoroughly.

When analyzing the terms used for pirates, there needs to be consideration for the different languages that were used to define them. Generally, English, Spanish, French, Italian and the Dutch language influenced the use of certain terms in other languages. In turn, some words can be used synonymously, without the danger of generalization. According to Bohn, adventurer was a term used in English synonymously with freebooters.⁵³ As freebooter is used as the usual remark, adventurer will not be considered a constituting term in the nomenclature. The word 'filibuster' was French and described the Buccaneers, roaming in the Caribbean. It "derived in turn from the English 'freebooter', meaning a soldier who served for booty rather than regular pay; the Dutch term was *vrijbuiters* [orig.emph.]".⁵⁴ Konstam argues that filibuster was "the name given exclusively to French buccaneers, and came from the small '*flibotes*' (fly boats) [orig.emph.]".⁵⁵ Therefore, filibusters will not be considered a category either. Moreover, all pirates, in general, were not payed but relied on their booty. Buccaneer will function as the established term. Another synonym that appears in conjunction with piracy is the swashbuckler. Konstam affirms that "a swashbuckler is a Hollywood epithet, but one based on historical roots" as the term points towards the equipment

⁵⁰ Bohn, Piraten, 16f.

⁵¹ Bohn, Piraten, 17.

⁵² Florian Hartl, Seeräuberalltag in der Karibik. Über das Leben in frühneuzeitlichen Freibeuterkommunen. Diplomarbeit Universität Wien (Wien 2008) 8.

⁵³ Bohn, Piraten, 16.

⁵⁴ John Latimer, Buccaneers of the Caribbean. How Pirates Forged an Empire (Massachusetts 2009) 4.

⁵⁵ Angus Konstam, Pirates 1660-1730 (Oxford 1998) 5.

that was used- “sword and buckler” and described “a weapon-armed thug”.⁵⁶ Due to its general attribution, swashbuckler will also not be included in the following categories.

Subsequently, the nomenclature of piracy will be analyzed and categorized as legal or regional terminologies. The legal categorization is defined as the permission to rightfully act under an institution or governing entity. This definition is essential as piracy has been viewed subjectively since its early days. A regional categorization can only be fulfilled if the realization of the term cannot be applied globally. Furthermore, there are terminologies which fulfill the requirements for both categories in which case there will be a focus on the primary constituting factor in each case. It is notable that this method operates along a continuum.

A legal definition can only be justifiable if the pirate party was legalized by either side in a conflict situation as both conflicting sides rarely agreed on this issue. Otherwise the act would be illegal. To showcase the complexity of this legal issue, one can take the law that was passed by King Henry VIII into account. On the one hand “felonies, robberies, and murders committed in any haven, river, creek, or place where the Lord High Admiral had jurisdiction” were considered piracy.⁵⁷ On the other hand, jurisdiction was not absolute at sea which led to many grey areas in this regard and the example of King Henry’s law displays this dilemma.

2.2.1 Pirates

The term pirate is a juridical definition despite the fact that piracy is arguably subject to the angle it is seen from. While mainly used in the course of the 18th century, the term maritime outlaw might best describe this proposition.

In the beginning of the 18th century, piracy became a difficult profession since the seas were more frequently controlled by national fleets. Additionally, letters of marque were no longer distributed. Generally, pirating evolved into an even more dangerous form of income than before and only little pirate nests remained. This consequently

⁵⁶ Konstam, *Pirates*, 5.

⁵⁷ *Cordingly*, *Black Flag*, XVII.

led to indiscriminate raiding and no ship, Spanish, French, English, or privately operating was safe from them.⁵⁸ A prime example for this phenomenon in the 18th century would be Captain Roberts. While he was more successful than most of his contemporaries, his case is evidence that piracy became a different business in the 18th century. His pillages through the Middle Atlantic showed that pirates had no national protection anymore. After having looted and taken a French warship he was killed in a sea battle with the Royal Navy in 1722. Through executive and legislative improvements piracy was pushed into a corner and while there were still individuals who successfully partook in piracy, it became too dangerous for most people.⁵⁹

Piracy in its legal definition before the 18th century can be described similarly as there was no entity that backed the ship or crew in its endeavor and there was no particular preference of enemies. Therefore, this juridical term can be used to verify if a naval raider sailed and robbed illegally. While the prosecution of pirates was difficult before the executive and legislative improvements, it should be seen as a definition rather than a contemporary label of the early modern period. As this act of illegal plundering is a global phenomenon, a regional definition would not be appropriate.

On the other end of the spectrum, two terms that are also used to falsely substitute the term pirate need to be closely inspected. The terms privateers and freebooters can be found to be synonyms in literature.⁶⁰ However, there is an important distinction to make when discussing freebooters and privateers. Privateering should be used to describe ship owners/captains who fought in wartime in accordance with a contract given out by countries.⁶¹ This form of privateering originated from a license which “was granted by the sovereign to enable a merchant whose ship or cargo had been stolen or destroyed to seek reprisal by attacking the enemy and recouping his losses”. However, various nations realized that this contract could be used “as a cheap way of attacking enemy shipping in time of war”.⁶² While there was no order to loot one specific ship, the contracts made clear that the privateer was only allowed to attack enemy ships. Additionally, every privateer had to have semiregular contact with some

⁵⁸ Bohn, Piraten, 96.

⁵⁹ Bohn, Piraten, 98ff.

⁶⁰ vgl. Alex, *Ritsema*, Pirates and Privateers from the Low Countries. C.1500- C.1810 (Deventer 2008) 4.

⁶¹ Bohn, Piraten, 15.

⁶² *Cordingly*, Black Flag, XVII.

administrative authority to continue his status as a privateer. Depending on the size of the crew and ship, the privateer had to offer a part of the loot that he gathered to the contract giver and after assessing the treasure and verifying if the loot was 'legally' acquired, the captain was allowed to divide it among himself and the crew. In turn, ship owners under such contracts could trade their booty and use harbors that were under the nation's control.⁶³ Theoretically, "an authorized privateer was recognized by international law and could not be prosecuted for piracy". Nonetheless, "the system was wide open to abuse and privateers were often no more than licensed pirates".⁶⁴ This is the major contrast that can be drawn between freebooters and privateers. The definition of privateers, however, does not exclude individuals to drift into an existence as pirates. Subsequently, privateers should not be considered a regional phenomenon. Every naval raider could be a privateer if they were under contract and acted according to the rules they were handed out. However, if these contracts were broken, another definition came into being.

Freebooters were ship owners who acted under "state acquiescence".⁶⁵ Ships of freebooters and privateers were designed to plunder at sea and were used as "private warships".⁶⁶ However, there is discordancy among various authors concerning this term. While Bohn states that freebooters were all pirates who operated without contract but were not directly prosecuted⁶⁷, Konstam argues that freebooter refers only to the French Buccaneers in the Caribbean.⁶⁸ Moreover, Piekalkiewicz states in the title of his work that the Buccaneers were freebooters.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, these different interpretations do not exclude each other. I argue that Buccaneers can be freebooters but freebooters do not need to be Buccaneers. It is a juridical term which defines the legal situation the men were subject to. As there were no overarching juridical norms and laws that could be applied to justify piracy as a real criminal act⁷⁰, freebooters are situated right in the grey zone that existed until the end of the 17th

⁶³ Frank *Bardelle*, *Freibeuter in der Karibischen See. Zur Entstehung und gesellschaftlichen Transformation einer historischen „Randbewegung“* (Münster 1986) 39f.

⁶⁴ *Cordingly*, *Black Flag*, XVIIIf.

⁶⁵ *Bohn*, *Piraten*, 16.

⁶⁶ *Kempe*, *Fluch der Weltmeere*, 66.

⁶⁷ *Bohn*, *Piraten*, 16.

⁶⁸ *Konstam*, *Pirates*, 5.

⁶⁹ vgl. *Piekalkiewicz*, *Freibeuter*.

⁷⁰ *Bardelle*, *Freibeuter*, 44.

century. The line between freebooter and privateer is blurry and a captain who was a freebooter might come into contract, while others like Morgan broke theirs⁷¹, in turn, changing their legal status. Thus, freebooting should not be considered a regional phenomenon but as the term that best describes piracy that was under the least control of a state.

Thus, there are three significant legal terms to describe this naval phenomenon. Pirates were prosecuted and their actions were deemed illegal. Privateers were officially under contract and allowed to act according to it. Additionally, privateers had privileges like a warrant to trade in the contract givers haven. Freebooters should be considered as a terminology for the middle ground. On the one hand, they were not prosecuted. On the other hand, they did not have the rights that were handed out to privateers. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the victims of privateers and freebooters often labeled both groups as pirates besides their legal situation. The debate about defining illegal naval activities has been in discussion ever since and the question of who should be regarded as a pirate has not been fully grasped up until now. Kempe affirms that the definition of piracy in international law has reached only a broad definition of piracy as illicit acts of violence, deprivation of liberty, or plundering. However, states like Britain have also argued that the use of submarines in WW1 should be defined as piracy. Additionally, the capture of a cruise by Palestinian terrorists in 1985 leaves the question of defining piracy and terrorism at sea.⁷² Therefore, the juridical distinctions that have been made for this work should be regarded as guideposts to better orientate oneself amid the legal confusion that persisted unto this day. The term piracy will, subsequently, be used as an umbrella term for stylistic purposes.

To shed light on the issue of a regional identification, one can take a look at the Buccaneers and Uskoks. Bohn asserts that “nowadays the term [Bucaneer] is used very loosely to include lawless adventurers who preyed on any ships which fell into their hands, as well as men like Henry Morgan who made war on the Spanish with a commission from the English Governor of Jamaica”.⁷³ However, it becomes apparent

⁷¹ *Konstam*, *Pirates*, 5.

⁷² *Kempe*, *Fluch der Weltmeere*, 364f.

⁷³ *Cordingly*, *Black Flag*, XVIII.

that the term Buccaneer should be seen as a regional identification for pirates as their main operations were all realized in the Caribbean and their main bases can also be situated in the Caribbean Sea.

They received Port Royal from the English Crown, which they transformed into their base with Captain Morgan as its governing entity.⁷⁴ Another base of operations was Tortuga which was situated near their original encampments on Hispaniola.⁷⁵ In 1630 this hideout was established and they directed their raids from there. Tortuga offered water, food, and a nearly impenetrable coast that was only easily accessible in the south.⁷⁶ The fort that was built on Tortuga, called “Taubenschlag” and built by Le Vasseur, proved to be a great defense against the Spanish.

Moreover, the Buccaneers were a prime example of an organized pirate group. In 1640, they established a bond called “les frères de la côte” in order to recognize rules that every Buccaneer should abide by. If a captain decided to raid, a messenger was sent out and a meeting place was arranged. Then, small groups of Buccaneers met at the designated place and discussed the plans for the raid.⁷⁷ Normally, a contract called “Chasse-Partie” was also signed in which there were specifications for the bounty collection for the participants.⁷⁸ As the Buccaneers had land that they could call ‘home’, possessed representing figures like Captain Morgan, and abided by laws, one could speak of a proto statehood that was established by the Buccaneers in the Caribbean.

If one wants to define this group on a juridical basis, Buccaneers were a regional group that fell under the legal category of privateer. However, individuals crossed that line and became freebooters and/or pirates. Subsequently, a sole juridical definition of the term Buccaneer would not be appropriate. Similarly, the Uskoks of Senj, as their name suggests, operated around the area of Senj and lived there. They also had a codex comparable to the Buccaneer’s and focused their raids along the coast of their

⁷⁴ Robert *Bohn*, Durch Seeraub zu Seemacht. In: Martin Hofbauer(Hg.), Martin Hofbauer, Teresa Modler, Gorch Pieken, Martin Rink, Piraterie in der Geschichte (Potsdam 2013) 27-39, 38.

⁷⁵ *Piekalkiewicz*, Freibeuter, 61.

⁷⁶ *Bohn*, Piraten, 41.

⁷⁷ *Bohn*, Piraten, 42f.

⁷⁸ *Piekalkiewicz*, Freibeuter, 90.

hometown.⁷⁹ Additionally, the Uskoks of Senj were legitimized by the Habsburg Empire and the pope.⁸⁰ Thus, Uskoks were a regional phenomenon. The definition for corsair, however, is not as clear cut as the previously mentioned terms might suggest and needs a more in-depth analysis.

2.2.2 Corsairs

Deriving from French, the term corsair was used in conjunction with the meaning of freebooters and described the Arabic pirates of the Mediterranean.⁸¹ However, this simple translation would not suffice to discuss the issue of corsairs in general. The word can also be used to describe European freebooters who were also present in the Caribbean, according to French sources.⁸²

Therefore, a closer look at the different realizations of the corsairs needs to be in place first. When taking a glance at this topic it might seem that corsair is a legal term because there are many references to this term for different nationalities that operated in various areas on the globe. The most famous corsairs, the Berber corsairs and Christian order corsairs, roamed the Mediterranean, yet there are accounts on French and English 'corsairs' as well. In the following, I will argue why the term corsair befits a regional definition and why the English and French should not be termed corsairs.

While the French corsairs did not only operate in the Northern Sea, its roots can be traced back to it and since the south coast of France was not in need of its own pirates as they mainly collaborated with the corsairs of the North African pirate nests.⁸³ French corsair could, thus, be considered a regional example. However, this would indicate that the term corsair alone does not suffice for a regional categorization but must be defined with its respective nationality in mind. This argument is underlined by

⁷⁹ Gruber, *Lebenswelt der Uskoken*, 79, 91f.

⁸⁰ Gruber, *Lebenswelt der Uskoken*, 82.

⁸¹ Bohn, *Piraten*, 16.

⁸² Eugen Pfister, *Kulturtransfer und Piraterie. Die Karibik in der frühen Neuzeit 1493 – 1713*. Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien, (Wien 2006) 12.

⁸³ Bühnau, *Piraten*, 226

the fact that for the French “corsair” was synonymous with ‘privateer’; the word derived from the French term *la course*, which in nautical terms meant a cruise”.⁸⁴

Therefore, it could be assumed that the French endeavors and its pirates should be considered freebooters and/or privateers rather than pinpointing them to the regional subsection of the nomenclature. This hypothesis is underlined by Thomson who affirms that “the golden age of French privateering occurred after Colbert became secretary of state”⁸⁵, stressing that most French sailors were privateers before anything else.

It is debatable, whether the English sea robbers should be considered corsairs as well because there is an argument to define English pirates as Elizabethan Sea Dogs. This definition would suit the English pirates since some of the most famous representatives, like Francis Drake, were given the title the Queen’s pirate. Furthermore, England was called the pirate nation in the 16th century.⁸⁶ This indicates that the English Crown embraced the mercenaries that were deployed to disrupt the Spanish.

Thomson asserts that “Sea Dogs as Drake, Cavendish, Clifford (the third earl of Cumberland), and Raleigh engaged in what might be termed state-sponsored terrorism”. Destroying three cities and receiving ransom for not continuing his streak in the Spanish colonies is only one act committed by Drake that could underline this hypothesis.⁸⁷ Subsequently, the term corsair would open a new sub section that falls in line with terroristic acts. Conversely, Bühnau states that the term corsair became synonymous with the English pirates through famous captains like Drake, Raleigh, or Cavendish. Additionally, it became custom to distinguish between pirates and corsairs. The distinction here lied in the control the state had over the sailors.⁸⁸

To clarify this issue, it should be argued that the English seamen were privateers due to their contracts with England. As the contracts and the national loyalty were more

⁸⁴ Konstam, Piracy, 44.

⁸⁵ Janice E. Thomson, Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns. State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe (Princeton 1994) 24.

⁸⁶ Kempe, Fluch der Weltmeere, 67.

⁸⁷ Thomson, Mercenaries, 23.

⁸⁸ Bühnau, Piraten, 155f.

important than a regional focus, it could be legitimate to group the English seamen as somewhat 'patriotic' privateers. To consider a new category that would define corsairs as terrorists is not farfetched but the issue arises if one tries to define terrorism. While there are ten characteristics that most definitions of terrorism have in common, a closer look demonstrates that corsairs would then be nearly synonymous with privateers. The use of violence, intimidation and coercion, the predominantly political character, and "the fact that it is a method, tactic or strategy of conflict waging"⁸⁹ should exemplify how close privateers and corsairs would be if terrorism was the main defining characteristic for a corsair term. In practice, this would not only lead to confusion with the word, which this section tries to clear, but also negates the importance the term corsair holds. Therefore, privateering would be the best choice for categorizing English and French sea raiders. Furthermore, it could be suggested that both English and French piracy are not to be seen as corsair traditions since they scarcely operated in the region that corsairs became most notably famous in- the Mediterranean. Moreover, Bono affirms that the term corsair is used synonymously with the North African corsairs in most sources and literary works.⁹⁰ Thus, corsair is a regional identification that does not exclude a further distinction into freebooter/privateer/pirate.

2.3 The Islam Corsairs in Confrontation with Christian Corsairs in the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic

From the 8th century until the French Revolution the history of the Méditerranée was characterized by galley slaves and robbed merchants⁹¹, both representing the omnipresent threat of piracy. Generally, the age of corsairs in the Mediterranean reflects the struggle between Christianity and Islam. However, while religious differences characterized the playing field in this region, research has shown that the

⁸⁹ Erkan Sezgin, Formation of the Concept of Terrorism. In: Suleyman Ozeren, Ismail Dincer Gunes, Diab M. Al-Badayneh (Hg.), Understanding Terrorism. Analysis of Sociological and Psychological Aspects (Human and Societal Dynamics 22, Amsterdam 2007) 17-27, 20f.

⁹⁰ Bono, Piraten, 21.

⁹¹ Bühnau, Piraten, 96.

daily situations on both sides of the Mediterranean were not as different as might be assumed.⁹²

On the Christian side, there were two major orders who participated in all skirmishes with the Barbary corsairs. The Order of the Knights of Malta and the Order of St. Stephan can both be considered corsair orders that fought against their North African counterparts in running battles throughout the Mediterranean.⁹³ On the North African coast, the cities of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli became renowned pirate nests, sprouting many famous figures that fought against the Christian orders. In this conflict, the Christian corsairs saw themselves as religious warriors. The Berber corsairs called themselves *gâzîs*, which translates into fighters of jihad.⁹⁴

Another branch of the corsair tradition can also be found on the Atlantic coast of North Africa. After the expulsion of the moors in 1609 by King Philipp III, the former Spanish inhabitants fled to Salé, where they transformed the landscape of the city into an aggressive, open-minded region.⁹⁵ In this environment corsairs were able to develop into a driving force on the Atlantic coast.

In the following chapter, these corsairs will be analyzed and the impact that corsairs had in this region will be highlighted to emphasize the role that these 'pirates' had for the developments in the Méditerranée. Therefore, an examination of politics, economics, and culture will be conducted.

2.3.1 Politics

During the 15th/16th century, the power relations in Europe began to shift. The biggest oppositions, Sultan Süleyman and Emperor Charles V, clashed in a conflict that could be considered a Cold War. Consequently, this environment lent itself to piracy or 'guerilla warfare'. Both sides embraced the use of corsairs for their own benefit to such

⁹² Bono, Piraten, 24.

⁹³ Bono, Piraten, 67.

⁹⁴ Kempe, Fluch der Weltmeere, 248.

⁹⁵ Gottfried Liedl, Islamische Korsaren im Mittelmeer und im Atlantik. In: Andreas Obenaus, Eugen Pfister, Birgit Tremml (Hg.), Schrecken der Händler und Herrscher. Piratengemeinschaften in der Geschichte (Wien 2012) 100-122, 107.

a degree that the Mediterranean soon became a pool of pirate nests, galley slaves, and islands that were under full control of corsairs.⁹⁶

When considering the situation at sea in that time, there needs to be adequate consideration for the politics on land as well since both fronts were strategically manipulated to give the rivaling powers an edge in their fight. For example, the Ottoman conquest of Belgrade in 1521 was pushed concurrently with the successful annexation of Rhodes in 1522. In 1529, Vienna was besieged and, simultaneously, an aggressive campaign against Sicily and Southern Italy was led by the corsair Khair ad-Dîn.⁹⁷ Thus, Europe was threatened on two sides by the Sublime Porte.

Unsuccessful attempts by the Emperor to weaken the Sultan by allying himself with the Persian Shah, the conquest of Algiers by Barbarossa in 1529, and the constant threat for Vienna lead to a push by the European powers against the Sublime Pore. The Knights of St. John established a base in Tripoli and the Spanish attacked Algiers in an attempt to force a peace treaty for Hungary. However, the corsair Barbarossa seized Tunis in 1534 and subsequently secured the Ottoman Empire a position close to the Sicilian. The Sicilian Channel was in Muslim hands and secured the Sublime Porte a strong position in the Mediterranean. Moreover, the conflict was seen as an opportunity for the French King Franz I who wanted to assert his own power claims and allied himself in secret with the Sultan.⁹⁸ In this alliance, Barbarossa functioned as the facilitator between the two powers.⁹⁹ This highlights the political importance that corsairs had in the political playing field.

The next interest for both France and the Sublime Porte was to integrate Venice into their pact. However, Venice declined and after Barbarossa defeated the Holy Alliance under the command of Andrea Doria (95 ships, 2500 cannons, and 60000 men) and the resolution of the Holy Alliance, Venice had to pay reparations and lost its remaining Greek territory to the Turks.¹⁰⁰ However, this was not the end of the role that Venice

⁹⁶ *Bühnau*, Piraten, 119f.

⁹⁷ Franco *Cardini*, Europa und der Islam. Geschichte eines Mißverständnisses (Bek'sche Reihe/ Europa bauen 1589/ München 2000) 204.

⁹⁸ *Cardini*, Europa, 205f.

⁹⁹ Claudio Lo *Jacono*, Piraten und Korsaren im Mittelmeer. In: Francesco *Gabrieli* (Hg.), Mohammed in Europa. 1300 Jahre Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur (München 1982) 193-209, 198.

¹⁰⁰ *Cardini*, Europa, 207f.

played. In 1570, the Ottoman Porte demanded control of Cyprus from Venice. The Serenissima was pushed into a corner and, although, Venice did not want to get involved in the conflict on the North African coast, they formed an alliance with Spain. The Spanish, who were pressured by the riots of the moors and the corsair threat in Andalusia, gladly agreed. In 1571, the formed alliance succeeded in defeating the enemy fleet at the battle of Lepanto.¹⁰¹ This loss left the Ottoman fleet in shambles and one reason that prevented the full breakdown of the Ottoman power was the expertise of Uluk Ali, a Berber corsair, who rebuilt the fleet “into a fighting force”.¹⁰² The success on the European side did, however, not yield the results that might have been expected. Emperor Maximilian II did not participate in the battle since the threat for his empire was too great to risk the wrath of the Sublime Porte. Moreover, the Serenissima was displeased that Cyprus was not reconquered after the alliance’s victory and the Holy Alliance fell apart again. Consequently, the Ottoman Porte was able to focus on North Africa and the Spanish.¹⁰³

All in all, the corsairs influenced the success of the Ottoman campaign in Europe on a large scale and were a valuable asset in the political playing field. Moreover, “by the early 16th century many of the Barbary beys were elected from the ranks of the corsairs themselves, which meant that privateering became an integral part of the political and economic framework of the Barbary coast”.¹⁰⁴ On the other side of the Mediterranean, the Christian corsairs were also a strong ally for the European powers themselves.

The Order of St. John had a long history, reaching back to the end of the 11th century, where they were mainly focused on nursing care. In the course of time, the order evolved into an active order that participated in the Crusade as well. In Limassol, it was decided that the ships used to clear the Holy Land should be rebuilt into war ships. Then, it was decided that Rhodes should be cleared off the Greek rebels and Muslim corsairs that controlled it.¹⁰⁵ In 1309, Rhodes was established as their base of operations. From there, they disrupted Turkish sea routes. After the annexation of

¹⁰¹ *Cardini*, Europa, 210f.

¹⁰² *Konstam*, Piracy, 89.

¹⁰³ *Cardini*, Europa, 211f.

¹⁰⁴ *Konstam*, Piracy, 76.

¹⁰⁵ *Jacono*, Piraten, 206.

Rhodes by Barbarossa, the Knights of St. John had to flee. Eight years after the loss of Rhodes, the order received Malta from Emperor Charles V. From this time onwards, the order was also called the Order of Malta.¹⁰⁶

The second influential order that participated in the fight against Islam was the Order of St. Stephan. In comparison to the Order of the Knights of St. John, this order was founded much later due to the rising Muslim threat. In 1562, the Grand Duke Cosimo I. de' Medici announced the foundation of the Order of St. Stephan in the Pisa dome. He also functioned as the Grand Master of this new order. Besides their different origins, the two orders were structured similarly and followed the same goal.¹⁰⁷ This push towards maritime supremacy against the North African corsairs showcases the political importance of the Berbers of North Africa and the value that was attributed to having a similar force on the European side. Moreover, Bühnau affirms that during the 15th to 17th century, the difference between Christian and Muslim corsairs in the Mediterranean was negligible.¹⁰⁸

In the 16th century, there were numerous battles where the two forces clashed. In 1535, the Order of Malta participated in the conquest of Tripoli by Charles V, as well as in the failed attempt to seize Algiers in 1541. In 1550, Fra'Claude de la Sengle, a commander of the Order of Malta, fought in the conquest of Forte Monastir and Mahdia, where the corsair Dragut had his headquarters. The Knights of St. Stephan first entered the battlefield in 1564 at the assault on Penon de Vélez. In 1565, the siege on Malta by the Turks was pushed back by a Christian force, including ten galleys of the Order of St. Stephan.¹⁰⁹ These battles exemplify that the Christian orders could be considered a support unit for the European powers whenever they were in need of additional manpower. It should also be noted that the use of private corsairs was in most cases the more cost efficient option for the parties involved.¹¹⁰

Like the Christian Orders, the Berbers supported the Ottoman fleet and like the Berbers, the Order of Malta and the Order of St. Stephan sailed operations that could

¹⁰⁶ *Bono*, Piraten, 67ff.

¹⁰⁷ *Bono*, Piraten, 71.

¹⁰⁸ *Bühnau*, Piraten, 121.

¹⁰⁹ *Bono*, Piraten, 73f.

¹¹⁰ *Liedl*, Islamische Korsaren, 111.

be compared to large scale plunder raids.¹¹¹ For instance, the Order of Malta plundered two ships from Tripoli, which were carrying a substantial number of weapons, food, and slaves. Between 1580 and 1610, Christian orders landed on the coast of Maghreb to plunder and enslave people¹¹² like the Berber corsairs did on the European coasts. In Salé, the political environment facilitated the influence of corsairs as well. The corsair captain Jan Janssen became one of the most influential figures in the city. His expeditions brought him to Island in 1627 and the coast of Ireland in 1631.¹¹³

2.3.2 Economics

The thesis that a rise in pirate activities co-occurs with a rise in sea trade is a common theory¹¹⁴ when analyzing piracy as a phenomenon. This is a logical approach since it would not be beneficial to plunder if there is no one to rob in the first place. While this holds true for common piracy, I argue that while the rise of corsairs in the Mediterranean was governed by a rise of sea trade, it did not sustain its important position because of it. The reason lies behind the fact that the active slave economy in the Mediterranean was influenced in two ways. The corsairs created a need for galley slaves while selling slaves themselves.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the corsair business sustained itself to some extent and was not solely reliant on other forms of sea commerce for their endeavors to be profitable. Another aspect that needs to be considered is that the rise of pirating is closely connected to the influence on trade routes. After the battle of Lepanto, the Turks lost their dominant position over the trade routes in the Mediterranean.¹¹⁶ This loss of influence on trade was far reaching since the Sultan functioned as the feudal lord for the Berber corsairs and they “had to abide by the terms of treaties arranged between the Ottoman sultan and the rulers of Christian states”.¹¹⁷ After this loss of influence on the trade routes, the Berber corsairs started to

¹¹¹ *Bono*, Piraten, 75.

¹¹² *Bono*, Piraten, 202f.

¹¹³ *Liedl*, Islamische Korsaren, 108.

¹¹⁴ *Jacono*, Piraten 195.

¹¹⁵ *Bono*, Piraten 235.

¹¹⁶ *Bühnau*, Piraten, 133.

¹¹⁷ *Konstam*, Piracy, 77.

have less regard for pacts and alliances that the Sublime Porte had with the Europeans and piracy was on a rise.¹¹⁸ Thus, the control over trade is a major factor in the Mediterranean. The less controlled and secured the trade routes were, the more susceptible the ships were to piracy.

After this brief analysis of the connection of economics and piracy, it is essential to take a look at the benefactors and profiteers of the corsair business. The crew and captain were not the only ones who profited from their loot. Many rulers understood that the impact of privateering was beneficial for them as well. "Consequently during the late 15th and early 16th centuries these local rulers encouraged corsairs to use their ports as havens. In return, these rulers expected a percentage of the profits".¹¹⁹ For example, in Algiers the Ottoman dominion introduced a twelve percent tax on the pinch that was brought back by the corsairs. Additionally, there was a one percent groundage and a one percent fee for the maintenance of the mosques.¹²⁰ Jacono states that even a ten percent tribute was still double the amount that the Koran dictates to be offered in the Holy War.¹²¹ This indicates that the Muslim rulers did not see the corsairs simply as a tool to fight Christianity. Before the crew got their hands on the loot, the goods had to be weighed, evaluated, and the cost for unloading, storage, and auction had to be calculated. In general, the owner of the ship received 50 percent of the revenue and the rest was distributed among the crew.¹²² On the West African side, the corsairs of Salé managed to be more autonomous. The republic Rabat-Salé did not even pay the common tenth of the pinch. They just offered a symbolic tribute to the Sultan of Morocco.¹²³

One source from the 18th century allows for an insight into the economic status of this business. In Algiers, 670,000 piasters were registered as fixed or variable income. From this sum, 100,000 piasters came from the corsairs and another 50,000 from the ransom of Christian slaves. Thus, the corsairs contributed about ¼ of the state

¹¹⁸ Bono, Piraten, 188.

¹¹⁹ Konstam, Piracy, 75.

¹²⁰ Liedl, Islamische Korsaren, 109.

¹²¹ Jacono, Piraten, 197f.

¹²² Desanka Schwara, Fakt und Fiktion: Die Piraterie als politisch-wirtschaftlicher Faktor und als Projektionsfläche rund um die Maltesischen Inseln. In: Desanka Schwara, Kaufleute, Seefahrer und Piraten im Mittelmeerraum der Neuzeit (München 2011) 391-479, 423.

¹²³ Liedl, Islamische Korsaren, 109.

revenue. In light of the fame and importance the corsairs received in historic remarks, this number does not seem to reflect on the actual benefit the corsairs had for the region.¹²⁴ However, the corsairs created a big business since the havens and cities, where the Berbers brought their goods, “became bustling markets for the sale of slaves and plunder”.¹²⁵ While the monetary income through taxes was not of such impact as might be expected, the rise of commercial activity¹²⁶ should not be underestimated. The commercial activities benefited foreign cities like Marseilles as well. The goods were sold by the corsairs and, in turn, they bought equipment from them.¹²⁷

There are also calculations on the economic revenue that the Christian corsairs were able to accumulate. This data is taken from the 18th century but is, for that reason, comparable to the Berber sources. The private raids that were conducted by Christian corsairs were lucrative. However, while officially sailing under the Order of Malta a huge deficit can be deduced. In general, the Order of the Knights of Malta had a fixed distribution system. Ten percent of the loot was given to the Grand Master or the order, depending under which flag the ship was sailing, five percent were handed to the five lances, and one percent was donated to the nuns of Sant’ Orsola in La Valetta as well as the aguzzino, who was in charge of the Muslim galley slaves. The judges of the corsair’s respective tribunal received three percent and eleven percent was distributed among captain, officers, and the helmsman.¹²⁸

Taking the underlying fluctuations into consideration, the average pinch was 12,000 scudis. The maintenance of the fleet, on the other hand, was 135,000 scudis. Thus, the Order of Malta was only able to finance its war with the income from the orders’ other branches across Europe. From the income of the other branches the Order of Malta had an income of 700,000 to 750,000 scudis per year. The raiding under the order’s flag had, primarily, a justifying reason for drawing money out of the other European possessions. Lo Jacono mentions that the Order of Malta succeeded in expanding their fleet at the start of the 18th century and when the fleet had to be handed to the

¹²⁴ *Bono*, Piraten, 235f.

¹²⁵ *Konstam*, Piracy, 75.

¹²⁶ *Jacono*, Piraten, 199.

¹²⁷ *Jacono*, Piraten, 204.

¹²⁸ *Schwara*, Fakt und Fiktion, 423.

French, they found 1500 artillery guns, 35000 rifles, 1200 powder kegs, riches in gold and silver, and 2000 Berber slaves. At this point however, the Order of Malta had lost its significance.¹²⁹ While these findings suggest that the Order of Malta was in possession of many goods, it still holds true that the official Christian corsair expeditions were a losing bargain. For both the Berber corsairs and the Christian corsairs, the revenue fluctuated greatly, especially during the 17th and 18th century, where Berbers would have pinches ranging from 12 to 83 and the Order of Malta would have pinches ranging from 2 to 204.¹³⁰ As with the Berber corsairs, the Christian Orders transformed their home havens, like Rhodes before it was lost, into centers of commerce.¹³¹

While trading goods was certainly a profitable business for the corsairs and their benefactors, one of the most impactful economic developments was the slave trade and their redemption that was generated by the activities of the corsairs. According to various sources the number of slaves in Algiers in the 16th century was estimated from 20,000 up to 50,000.¹³² Sicily, with 12,000 slaves, equaling one percent of the population, was the region with the most slaves measured against the general population. In Spain, the number of slaves was around 100,000 at the end of the 16th century.¹³³ On the Christian side, institutions that reached back to the 11th to 13th century, dedicated themselves to the redemption of Christian slaves. To be able to buy the Christian slaves from the Muslim corsairs, the institutions needed money. Therefore, priests collected donations. This business was highly lucrative for the Muslim corsairs since the ransom was often higher than the amount that the corsairs would have gotten on the market.¹³⁴ The scale on which this business was conducted was enormous. Two prominent institutions, the Redemptionists and the Lazarists, ransomed around 15,500 Christian slaves between 1575 and 1769.¹³⁵ The importance of Christian slave ransom and exchange can further be exemplified by one case in North Africa. The Order of St. Stephan conquered Bône (Annaba) in 1607 and took

¹²⁹ *Jacono*, Piraten, 207.

¹³⁰ *Schwara*, Fakt und Fiktion, 423.

¹³¹ *Jacono*, Piraten, 206.

¹³² *Bono*, Piraten, 251.

¹³³ *Bono*, Piraten, 253f.

¹³⁴ *Bono*, Piraten, 266ff.

¹³⁵ *Konstam*, Piracy, 92.

1,500 inhabitants as hostages who were exchanged for Christian slaves.¹³⁶ Thus, it seems to have been imperative for the Christian side to free as many Christian slaves as possible.

In conclusion, it can be said that the economic value of corsairs was evident. In Maghreb, the contribution by the corsairs influenced the development of markets and aided the city with monetary tributes. Additionally, the slave trade became a bustling business that impacted the economic environment. The Christian corsairs were also able to obtain riches but according to the sources from the 18th century, they were not able to finance their official endeavors. Generally, the corsairs were an asset for the economic development. The issue of the raiding was, however, an uncertainty. It varied, depending on how many pinches the corsairs were able to obtain.

2.3.3 Cultural /Social Aspects

If one wants to analyze the cultural and social circumstances of corsairs in the Mediterranean, there needs to be adequate consideration for the Renaissance as well. Liedl confirms that the human stands in the center of the new world view. Synonymously, the sea faring individual stands in the center of the newly developed cartography. The mobility that accompanies this age, allows for a new typology of the Early Modern individual. This includes the faring corsairs in the Mediterranean. While in the political context, the clash of Christianity and Islam were foregrounded, religion and cultural identity are subordinate for the new individuals of this era, for the “Community of seafarers”. Especially, the common aversion from Europe by individuals who seek out the life as corsairs on the North African coast marks a change of mind. The new individual is self-determining and self-conscious.¹³⁷ Therefore, religion should not be seen as the main criteria for the identification of the people in the Mediterranean in particular. This development did not halt before the corsairs and the most notable realization of this trend were the renegades.

¹³⁶ *Jacono*, Piraten, 206.

¹³⁷ *Liedl*, Islamische Korsaren, 101f.

The influence on culture by the seafarers manifested itself all across Europe. Although, the conflict between Muslims and Christians was raging in the forefront, the influence the 'East' and 'West' had on each other culturally should not be neglected. For example, "Venice's close contact with the Islamic eastern Mediterranean led to some architectural forms from the Middle East becoming a mainstay of Venetian visual culture, and the luxury trade with Islamic world made a significant impression on artistic taste".¹³⁸ This cultural and knowledge exchange can also be found in the Maghreb region. Europeans left their home behind and migrated to the North African coast to 'sell' their knowledge for a chance to climb the social ladder.¹³⁹ Therefore, both sides benefited from each other despite the open conflict that was waged between them. This emphasizes the self-determination that became custom in the early modern Mediterranean.

The example of the Uskoks of Senj should serve as another example of the attitude that was common for the North African corsairs as well. The question of national or ethnic origin was, in the context of the early modern period, not imperative. While the Uskoks, as freedom fighters against Islam, were not religiously tolerant, professionalism¹⁴⁰ can be considered the main factor for the acceptance in a Berber corsair group in the Mediterranean as well.

Conversely, the Order of the Knights of Malta and the Order of St. Stephan had a different acquisition method. The dated class mentality dictated that only aristocratic men were allowed to join the order. Nevertheless, this was an opportunity for many second-born sons to join an adequate profession that functioned as a form of provision. However, to join the order, they had to take a vow of chastity, poverty, and obedience.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, a Christian corsair had a respectable social status.

Therefore, both the Christian and Maghreb corsairs allowed individuals to have a secured social status and in the Maghreb region it was not uncommon for a corsair to rise within the ranks. For certain individuals, like Andre Doria or Juan d'Austria on the

¹³⁸ Stephen *Ortega*, *Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Ottoman-Venetian Encounters* (Farnham 2014) 4f.

¹³⁹ *Jacono*, *Piraten*, 200.

¹⁴⁰ *Gruber*, *Lebenswelt der Uskoken*, 82.

¹⁴¹ *Bono*, *Piraten*, 69, 71f.

Christian side, their partaking in the corsair conflicts exalted them to heroes. In the Maghreb region, Barbarossa became renowned and celebrated as the protector of the Muslim belief.¹⁴²

The landscape of the Mediterranean was also indirectly shaped by the corsairs. Fortified towers still remind the population of the coasts today that the threat of corsairs has not been taken lightly by the European countries. Many cities built fortifications or planned to build a defensive line against the threat of corsairs.¹⁴³

3. The role of the so-called corsair republics as Islamic frontier organizations

Probably the most important region, from where the Barbary corsairs departed and returned, was the coast of North Africa. Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis were the most prominent cities situated on the coast of Maghreb. The continuous rise of the corsairs in this specific region may have been constituted by four factors. Firstly, the geographical circumstances in conjunction with the rise of sea trade can be connected to the rising numbers of corsairs. Secondly, the conflict between Islam and Christianity contributed to an increasing number of corsairs. Thirdly, the Reconquista and subsequent expulsion of the Moors can be regarded as a factor that favored the golden age of piracy along the Maghreb coast. Finally, the influence by the Ottoman Empire led to an upsurge of the Barbary seamen. In the following, these statements will be investigated through a regional analysis. The historical developments of the region will be a focus to put the hypotheses that led to an influx of corsairs into perspective. It should be noted that these hypotheses do not try to pinpoint the start of the corsair business in the region but aim to explain why the corsair activities reached a peak in the early modern period in Maghreb in particular.

¹⁴² *Bühnau*, Piraten, 121.

¹⁴³ *Bono*, Piraten 214f.

3.1 Berbers, Turks, and Arabs

For an analysis of the Maghreb, its history in the early modern period needs to be put into perspective. It can be divided into three phases:

- The integration of North Africa into Ottoman supreme rule.
- From the battle of Lepanto and the Osmanization of Tunis until the beginning of the 18th century
- From 1705/1711 up to the colonization of Algiers by the French in 1830¹⁴⁴

For this work, there will be a focus on the first phase in particular. Nevertheless, to understand the integration of North Africa by the Sublime Porte, the events leading up to this period classification need to be considered as well.

Before the Ottoman sultan laid his eyes upon North Africa, the Berber dynasties of the Almohaden, Hafsiden, and Zayyaniden ruled in the region. At the end of the 15th century in Maghreb, due to the decay of public regimes, conquerors and foes laid their eyes upon the region.¹⁴⁵ After the conquest of Granada in 1492 by the Spaniards, the Spanish nobility wanted to extend their crusade into North Africa.¹⁴⁶ The subsequent influx of Islam Moors since 1492 into the Maghreb from the Iberian can be considered to be a trigger for the growth of the corsair havens along the shoreline.¹⁴⁷ With this new manpower flooding the coast of North Africa, huge amounts of knowledge were exported into the region. Moreover, these emigrants were suitable fighters against the Spanish, due to their lust for vengeance after the expulsion by the Spaniards from their home.¹⁴⁸ Julien affirms as well that the moors “expanded [piracy] formidably”.¹⁴⁹ In the accounts by Ibn Abi Dinar from the late 17th century, it also becomes clear that the influx of Moors benefitted the Muslims:

The Andalusians arrived from the lands of the Christians after the keeper of Spain had expelled them. Their numbers were high, but ‘Uthman Dey welcomed them in

¹⁴⁴ Zwiernle Cornél, Entangled History, Vermischungen? Europäische Blicke auf Tunis und Algier in der Frühen Neuzeit. In: Historische Zeitschrift 297(3) (2013) 621-656, 623f, 626.

¹⁴⁵ Burchard Brentjes, Die Mauren. Der Islam in Nordafrika und Spanien (642-1800) (Leipzig 1989) 275.

¹⁴⁶ Cornél, Entangled History, 623.

¹⁴⁷ Bono, Piraten, 31.

¹⁴⁸ Gottfried Liedl, Manfred Pittioni, Thomas Kolnberger, Im Zeichen der Kanone. Islamisch-christlicher Kulturtransfer am Beginn der Neuzeit (Wien 2002) 137.

¹⁴⁹ Charles-André Julien, History of North Africa. Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco (London 1970) 274.

*the country and sent the destitute among them to be helped by the people. He granted them permission to settle wherever they want, so they bought lands and built on them, and spread themselves into various regions, as a result of which the whole country prospered.*¹⁵⁰

Thus, the Reconquista and subsequent expulsion of the Moors created the circumstances that lead to a migration wave that facilitated an increase in manpower, which, in turn, contributed to more potential corsairs and a rise in prosperity in the power-struggle for North Africa.

Spain and Portugal both had an interest in the northern part of the continent. Consequently, Maghreb fell under the control of Spain and Portugal at around 1500. The goal of the Spaniards was to exterminate the corsairs¹⁵¹ because, although, the beginning of the early modern period marked the pinnacle of corsair activities in the Mediterranean, it was not the starting point for this phenomenon. Piracy had been a common business in Maghreb and all over North Africa, reaching back to the fall of the Western Roman Empire.¹⁵² Conversely, the Portuguese wanted to seize control over the Moroccan blanket trade, which promised a lot of revenue.¹⁵³

The goal of conquering the Maghreb by the Spanish was realized by establishing bases, called presidios, and extending their reach into the region step by step. The most important of these bases, at first, was Oran.¹⁵⁴ When the Spanish attention shifted to Italy and the Pyrenees, the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic became “content with the system of limited occupation. They transformed the conquered ports into strongpoints with formidable walls and occupied by garrisons”.¹⁵⁵ In light of this development, the old Berber dynasties were faced with another issue. Their loss was inevitable due to the disparity of military technology. Against the Spanish, with their heavily armed troops, the Berbers were defenseless as they lacked cannons or muskets. Therefore, the Spanish, at first, continuously advanced through North Africa.

¹⁵⁰ Nabil *Matar*, *Europe through Arab Eyes* (E-Book, New York 2009) 219.

¹⁵¹ Michael *Brett*, Elizabeth *Fentress*, *The Berbers* (Oxford 1997) 156.

¹⁵² *Bono*, *Piraten*, 25.

¹⁵³ *Brett*, *The Berbers*, 156.

¹⁵⁴ *Cornel*, *Entangled History*, 623.

¹⁵⁵ *Julien*, *North Africa*, 276.

In this struggle against the Spaniards on the North African coast, the Barbary corsairs' battle against them was considered a proto holy war against the Christian infidels by many Turks. Subsequently, many eastern Mediterranean Turk corsairs joined the fight for the Maghreb.¹⁵⁶ The decisive turning point, then, came with the Turks who held the Spanish in check and Julien affirms that "it was an initiative originating in Algiers that changed the course of African history".¹⁵⁷

Accordingly, in the 16th century two prominent figures made a name for themselves in this holy war. The brothers Uruj and Khayr-al-Din Barbarossa participated as central combatants for the Maghreb. Originally, the two brothers were Greeks from Lesbos/Mytilene and were deployed by the still reigning Berber dynasties to aid them against the Spaniards. In a time span of about two decades, the North African cities were occupied by the Spanish or by the corsairs.¹⁵⁸

The two corsair brothers continuously fought against the Spaniards and the still reigning emir of Algiers was content with this development as he did not aid the corsairs nor strengthen his own stronghold. However, in 1516 the populous rose against their passive ruler. During this uprising, Uruj saw his opportunity and overthrew the bey of Algiers. After killing him, he crowned himself as the new leader of Algiers. To further strengthen his position, Uruj plead the sultan in supporting his fight against the Spaniards and was officially made the new bey of Algiers as well as beylerbey of the western Mediterranean. Thus, Uruj was the highest ruling entity in Maghreb.¹⁵⁹ During this conflict between Emperor Charles V and the Sultan, "the enfeebled dynasties of the medieval Maghreb were swept aside". While on the surface, the war was waged between the Spanish and the Turks, there was also opposition by the tribal groups who had lost most of their power. Nevertheless, Algiers was in control of a tribal leader for a brief period during the war. However, the alliance of janissaries and corsairs under the command of Khair al-Din reigned victorious.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, "by their spectacular intervention in the affairs of the Maghrib, the Turks had effectively captured the enthusiasm for the holy war upon the Spaniards".

¹⁵⁶ Brett, *The Berbers*, 156.

¹⁵⁷ Julien, *North Africa*, 277.

¹⁵⁸ Cornel, *Entangled History*, 623.

¹⁵⁹ Konstam, *Piracy*, 82f.

¹⁶⁰ Brett, *The Berbers*, 157f.

Therefore, the fear of a local uprising by the former tribes was extremely low. Consequently, the tribes and the Turks managed to sustain peaceful relations.¹⁶¹ Turks, Berbers, and Spaniards were all trying to gain territory in Maghreb and the fronts were not as clear cut as it may seem. While the Berbers understood that they needed the help of ‘foreigners’, they were not always contempt with the influence that was gained by the Turks in the region. Amidst that power-struggle, the corsairs played an important role in establishing and sustaining power for the Sublime Porte.

In 1518, during the siege of Algiers by the Spanish, Uruj was killed. However, his brother “would eventually prove an even greater threat to the Spanish than his elder brother”. He was appointed the new beylerbey and recaptured Algiers.¹⁶² The sultan supported this endeavor by sending 2,000 janissaries and artillery.¹⁶³ The younger brother soon “became known simply as ‘Barbarossa’”.¹⁶⁴ The position of Khair al-Din, the younger brother, as the “real holder of Ottoman naval power in the Mediterranean” achieved him the recognition of Charles V. The Emperor tried to ally himself with the corsair captain in order to sabotage the alliance of Francis I and the Ottoman sultan. However, the Treaty of Crespy in 1544 ended the negotiations between them.¹⁶⁵



<https://qph.ec.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-963b577a90e2f60af22aad5b6c31a81a-c>, 19.7.2019

After many consecutive conquests by either side, the Ottomans were able to completely occupy Tripoli in 1551 and Tunis in 1574. This marks the end of the first phase of the early modern period, where North Africa was put under the supreme rule

¹⁶¹ Brett, *The Berbers*, 159f.

¹⁶² Konstam, *Piracy*, 83.

¹⁶³ Cornel, *Entangled History*, 623.

¹⁶⁴ Konstam, *Piracy*, 84.

¹⁶⁵ Jamil M. Abun-Nasar, *A History of Maghrib* (Cambridge 1975) 165.

of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁶ The Maghreb was now a “series of Ottoman provinces corresponding to the modern states of Libya, Tunisia and Algeria, which confined Morocco north of the Sahara more or less within its present boundaries”. Tripoli became the capital of the area including Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and later Fezzan. Algiers became the capital of a “union between Numidia and Mauretiana, between Bijaya and Constantine on the one hand and Tlemcen on the other”.¹⁶⁷ By putting the Maghreb under the protection of the Ottoman Empire, corsairs were able to attain significant positions in the region, further strengthening the corsair business. In contrast to modern states, these ‘states’ should not be seen as unanimous. The upstate and the coastal regions differed greatly, and sovereignty in the cities did not equal power assertion for the upstate.

This first phase exemplifies that the political and economic power of Tunis, Algiers, Tripolis and other cities on the North African coastline could not have been sustained without the support from the Ottoman Empire. The corsairs joined the sultan’s efforts in various battles in the 16th century. It should, nonetheless, be noted that “for the most part they operated independently of both the Turks and each other, and limited their activities to the western and central Mediterranean.” Various cities on the Maghreb coast saw a rise of corsairs as beys in the course of the 16th century, integrating the corsair business further into the region.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, the religious conflict on the surface contributed to the fact that various corsairs from other regions joined the efforts against the Spanish in Maghreb. Taking this into account, the corsairs in the 16th century operated as privateers and only abided by the sultan in time of need.

At the beginning of the second phase, between 1574 and 1645, there was peace between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire at sea but the Berber states remained an aid flotilla in the western Mediterranean for the Sublime Porte.¹⁶⁹ After the failed attempts to conquer Vienna and the peace of Carlowitz in 1683, as well as the war phases between Venice, Habsburg, and the Ottoman Porte from 1645-1669

¹⁶⁶ *Cornel*, *Entangled History*, 623.

¹⁶⁷ *Brett*, *the Berbers*, 157.

¹⁶⁸ *Konstam*, *Piracy*, 75f.

¹⁶⁹ *Cornel*, *Entangled History*, 623f.

and 1684-1699, the power of the Empire from the East was depleted. The Berber states saw an opportunity in this weakness to gain more autonomy. With the shifting focus of the Ottoman Empire to the Black Sea and the Russians, the North African coast gradually distanced itself from Istanbul.¹⁷⁰ During that time, the cities of Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis were no longer “ruled by governors sent out from Istanbul, though they remained within the Ottoman empire”.¹⁷¹

Konstam affirms that the emergence of “European maritime commerce in the late 15th century” led to a rise in piratical activities and “the ports of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, plus a score of smaller coastal towns, were ideally located to serve as privateering bases”.¹⁷² This rise in sea trade was due to the preferred method of transporting goods. While it carried many risks, the shipping of commodities was easier than travelling on land.¹⁷³ Therefore, the rise of the number of ships equaled the number of potential targets for pirates. The geographical circumstances of Maghreb, with the Sahara in its back, also lead many people to flee to the sea in search for wealth.¹⁷⁴ This was also true for many other coastal regions where the landscape of their respective upstate facilitated the rise of piracy as a way of survival. Moreover, the many bays and islands in the Mediterranean offered pirate groups ideal ambush and hiding spots.¹⁷⁵ Thus, it can be argued that the rise in sea trade and the geographical circumstances did, in fact, contribute to an increasing number of corsairs. The geographical layout of the Maghreb coast facilitated the corsair business as well. Thus, the framework to enable the corsair business was ideal on the North African coast.

The turning point of the 17th century also marked the beginning of the third phase which lasted until the conquest of Algiers in 1830 by the French. The question remains, in how far the corsairs held ‘real’ power in the cities they were found in. Hence, it will be analyzed to what extent the corsairs were a driving force within the big cities of Maghreb.

¹⁷⁰ *Cornel*, *Entangled History*, 624.

¹⁷¹ *Brett*, *The Berbers*, 161.

¹⁷² *Konstam*, *Piracy*, 75.

¹⁷³ *Bono*, *Piraten*, 25.

¹⁷⁴ *Konstam*, *Piracy*, 75.

¹⁷⁵ *Bono*, *Piraten*, 24f.

3.2 Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers

Generally, the Ottomans had a tight grasp on the regencies in Maghreb. The formerly powerful Arabs and Berbers had lost their supremacy. Having control with the army and occupying almost all seats in the government, the Ottomans did also not, “like the Arabs of the original conquest [...] assimilate”, meaning that they refrained from integrating the native population into their own. The main source of new recruits and manpower came from Anatolia.¹⁷⁶ Going beyond this general investigation, Julien states that “as a result of increasing anarchy the eastern and central Maghrib became a political mosaic, the extraordinary diversity of which we can glimpse though we cannot achieve accuracy of detail”.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the following elaboration will function to strengthen the hypothesis that corsairs were politically active and had a seat of power in the region while giving a basic outline of the events that occurred in the cities.

Generally, the political structure within the cities was similar to Istanbul. The most important positions in this regional policy were the “Pashas, Aghas, Beys and Deys, with specific appointments such as treasurer and chief of police” and, within this system, the corsairs influenced the daily political business.¹⁷⁸ The position of beylerbey entailed the governance of Algiers and its territories as well as the authority of an upper-sovereign over Tunis and Tripoli. The ta’ifa was the community of seamen.¹⁷⁹ Generally, these positions were initiated in all three cities but not at the same time and not with the same degree of power that the positions entailed. The first example, Algiers, will function as an illustration for the power-shifts and evolution of the policies within the cities.

After Barbarossa had secured his spot in Algiers, the city was transformed into the center of the North African corsairs. In 1558, the fleet of Algiers consisted of 35 galleys, 25 frigates and brigantines, and armed sailing boats. Additionally, the city had a wall that was about 12-13 meters high. During the second half of the 16th century, the political agenda in Algiers was the conquest of Tunis. In 1569, the Algerians succeeded but in 1573 Tunis fell in the hands of the Spaniards again. After Philipp II stopped his

¹⁷⁶ Brett, *The Berbers*, 161.

¹⁷⁷ Julien, *North Africa*, 273.

¹⁷⁸ Brett, *The Berbers*, 161.

¹⁷⁹ Abun-Nasar, *Maghrib*, 166.

costly battle against the Ottomans in 1581, the Maghreb was split in a tripartite¹⁸⁰ and after the death of the last beylerbey Ochiali¹⁸¹, the Ottoman government administered changes for the political situation in Algiers. Thus, the seat of an Ottoman pasha was introduced. However, the paschas “had to rely for authority on the prestige of their office and their personal skill” as the Sublime Porte did not aid the paschas materially. Due to this policy, at the beginning of the 17th century, the corsair captains started to act more independently. Moreover, the janissaries expanded their authority as well.¹⁸²

In Algiers, the sultan appointed the pascha for three years. He was the head of the city. In the first years, Algiers flourished and counted around 100,000 inhabitants in the 17th century. A successful cultivation of the backland supported this growth.¹⁸³ However, the janissaries’ council, the divan, was able to extend its power within the city continuously. In this political sphere, the corsairs, together with other representatives (e.g. shipbuilders), were also influencing the politics of Algiers with their own council- the ta’ifa. The assertions for power led to tensions between the janissaries and the corsairs.¹⁸⁴ Nonetheless, besides their internal feud, in wartime, the two factions excelled through “their cooperation and high discipline as soldiers and seamen”. Estimates of the fighting power of Algiers in 1540 set the total manpower of Algiers at around 800 janissary troops, 1,400 renegades, “besides a much larger number of tribal auxiliary warriors”.¹⁸⁵

In 1659, a quarrel between the pascha and the corsair leader was seen as the opportunity for the divan to claim additional rights.¹⁸⁶ Thus, the scepter fell into the hand of the highest-ranking commander of the janissaries- the agha. Soon, the pascha was only left with his honorific title and the “executive power would be wielded by the agha with the assistance of the divan”.¹⁸⁷ However, this commander was re-elected every two months which lead to a high instability in their reign. In 1671, during another crisis within the janissaries’ ranks, the corsair captains seized the opportunity

¹⁸⁰ *Brentjes*, Die Mauren, 277.

¹⁸¹ European name; his other name is Uluj Ali but will not be used to avoid confusion.

¹⁸² *Abun-Nasar*, Maghrib, 173f.

¹⁸³ *Brentjes*, Die Mauren, 277f.

¹⁸⁴ *Bono*, Piraten, 41.

¹⁸⁵ *Abun-Nasar*, Maghrib, 167.

¹⁸⁶ *Bono*, Piraten, 42.

¹⁸⁷ *Julien*, History of North Africa, 303.

and put their own leader in charge of the state, entitling him with the position of dey. However, from 1689 until the end of the Barbary rule of Algiers, the position of dey fell in the hands of the janissaries. The conflict between the two groups calmed down continuously and Algiers leading figures found a compromise. The corsairs were allowed to focus on their raids without any disruptions by the janissaries' military and were allowed to focus on the trade of goods. The janissaries profited from this income as they took their payment directly out of the treasury.¹⁸⁸

Between 1615 and 1616, "the value of booty exceeded two and three million livres. The entire population grew rich on trade in merchandise and the slave traffic".¹⁸⁹ On an economic scale, Algiers was never able to compete commercially with the ports of the Levant. Algiers' "state of war, piracy, the weakness of internal trade and the competition of Oran, Bône and the Bastion of France all hampered the growth of commercial exchanges".¹⁹⁰ The competition was harsh and Algiers sought to compensate their standing by piracy. The policy of negotiation with one side, while attacking the other, led to treaties with the competing powers France, England, and Holland and Julien states that "this realistic policy accepted the coexistence of piracy and trade".¹⁹¹ This underlines the initial hypothesis that trade and piracy are closely connected.

Because of the policies of Algiers, the corsairs could secure an imperative position in its society and were powerful enough to partake in the political decision-making of the state. Moreover, with the help of the corsairs, the Turks were able to build Algiers "from a small and relatively unimportant port into a capital town".¹⁹² With the shift to more independence, the declining influence of the Turks did not hinder the success and growth of the corsair business. The decline of Algiers followed in the 18th century. In light of their treaties and "the growing scarcity of good corsair crews", Algiers was in its downfall. Consequently, at the end of the 18th century, the booty in the last quarter

¹⁸⁸ *Bono*, Piraten, 42f.

¹⁸⁹ *Julien*, History of North Africa, 306.

¹⁹⁰ *Julien*, History of North Africa, 310f.

¹⁹¹ *Julien*, History of North Africa, 315.

¹⁹² *Abun-Nasar*, Maghrib, 167.

of this era was only 100,000 francs. This loss of revenue in conjunction with a diminishing population¹⁹³ led to an end of the corsair state in its former glory.

Tripoli experienced a slightly different history. In 1551, the Order of the Knights of Malta were expelled from Tripoli and handed to the corsair Dragut by the sultan.¹⁹⁴ In 1556, Dragut became pasha but died soon afterwards in a siege on Malta.¹⁹⁵ Tripoli, which was established as Barbary regency by Murat Aga and Dragut, was never able to compete with the other two corsair states.¹⁹⁶ This fact relates to the various battles for Tripoli. In 1560, the Spaniards tried to attack Tripoli unsuccessfully. In 1588, insurgents took control of the city until the revolt was quelled by the army.¹⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the political sphere of Tripoli was comparable to Algiers and Tunis. In Tripoli, the leader of the janissaries and the divan were integrated in the state affairs from 1595 onwards. Five years later, the janissary Safar managed to obtain the title of dey. The pascha had lost his influence, like in Algiers, and, subsequently, functioned only as a representative. The citizens of Tripoli were not fond of their new despot Safar and demanded the sultan to intervene. Consequently, the sultan sent a fleet to Tripoli and Safar was executed. Following his death, the pasha reclaimed his former rights. However, this only lasted temporarily. With the renegades Mohammed and Osman (1633-1672), two corsairs managed to secure successful regency. Accounts on the policy in Tripoli by the Franciscan Francesco da Capranica from 1648 describe Tripoli as an instable city whose leaders change according to the population's whims.¹⁹⁸ This, in conjunction with the many battles, explains the secondary role that Tripoli had in comparison to Algiers and Tunis.

In the second half of the 17th century many maritime battles occurred around Tripoli and the Berbers were in an uprising as well. Consequently, the Karamanlis were able to seize control of Tripoli. Finally, in 1728, an attack by the French laid the city to waste and the corsairs were left with two frigates and galleys, marking the end of the

¹⁹³ *Julien*, History of North Africa, 320.

¹⁹⁴ *Cardini*, Europa und der Islam, 209.

¹⁹⁵ *Konstam*, Piracy, 87.

¹⁹⁶ *Bono*, Piraten, 43

¹⁹⁷ *Bentjes*, Die Mauren, 280.

¹⁹⁸ *Bono*, Piraten, 43f.

corsairs' glory days in Tripolis.¹⁹⁹ The city was never able to develop itself into an equally dominant corsair stronghold as its contemporary corsair nests. Nonetheless, the influence of the corsairs was evident in Tripolis as well.

In Tunisia, the Husainids were a long-standing dynasty who had ruled in that region. During the double bind between Spain and the Ottoman Empire, the Husainids "were able to be little more than helpless spectators". In 1574, Sinan Pasha conquered Tunis and the current ruler Muhammed was dethroned and deported to Istanbul.²⁰⁰ Sinan employed a militia of 5,000 soldiers, who were split into 200 *oldaks* with 25 men and one commander. Additionally, Sinan Bascha initiated the *divan*. Sinan represented the sultan in the council. The conduct was represented by the *aga*, 8 juridical officials, 2 scribes, and 24 additional representatives. He realized that such a diverse city needed a firm hand to control it. Another political actor who came into being was the *bey*. He was the tax collector and his seat was handed to the best bidder. However, as with the other cities, a power-shift gradually took form.²⁰¹ In 1590, after a rebellion of 4000 *janissaries*, who killed 40 of their commanders, Osman, elected from their ranks, rose to power and became *dey*. Subsequently, the scepter was now in the hands of the *dey* who had the support of the *janissaries'* *divan*.²⁰²

Under the rule of Yusuf Dey (1610-1637), the corsairs of Tunis "became an important source of revenue for the state, and the Tunisian fleet is said to have consisted at this time of seventeen ships and several brigantines".²⁰³ With the rise to power of the renegade Murat, however, the *beys* became the bearers of the sovereign puissance in Tunis.²⁰⁴ Under Murat, the seat of *bey* became hereditary and stayed in the hands of the renegades.²⁰⁵ From 1670 onwards, the *dey* position was strongly contested between *divan* and *bey*. The *pascha* in Tunis was only left with a representative role. The remaining responsibility that the *pascha* fulfilled was the acceptance for the yearly tribute for the sultan. The *pascha's* acts were restricted to the degree where he was

¹⁹⁹ *Bentjes*, Die Mauren, 280f.

²⁰⁰ *Abun-Nasar*, Maghrib, 177.

²⁰¹ *Cornell*, Entangled History, 638f.

²⁰² *Bono*, Piraten, 40.

²⁰³ *Abun-Nasar*, Maghrib, 177f.

²⁰⁴ *Cornell*, Entangled History, 639.

²⁰⁵ *Bono*, Piraten, 41.

not allowed to leave his house without the dey's permission.²⁰⁶ The success in Tunis can be attributed to the fact that over 80,000 moors are estimated to have "sought refuge within its walls". The immigrants, who had found a new home, "contributed an improved technique in commerce-raiding, the profits from which made possible the embellishment of the town".²⁰⁷

Following the initial power struggles, a dynasty of beys emerged in Tunisia. Successively, the power relations shifted again. The dey, henceforth, was the ruler of the city of Tunis. The bey, conversely, became the ruler of the "interior of Tunisian dynasty". At the start of the 18th century, the two seats were combined by Ibrahim al-Sharif. During a conflict with the dey of Algiers, the new ruler was defeated and the Husainids regained control by defeating the Algerian invaders.²⁰⁸ Tunis fell under the control of the janissary Hussin who became bey and effectively integrated the corsair state into his family possession. Besides the fact that the Husainids were in a long-standing alliance with the Ottoman sultan, they were in no dependent relationship. Tunis was too far west to be strongly influenced by the Sublime Porte.²⁰⁹ Finally, the reach of the corsairs subsided as the Husainids administered Tunisia as an agricultural state and stopped to invest into sea expeditions.²¹⁰ While the corsair business contributed to the evolution of Tunis, "it never acquired such exclusive importance as at Algiers. Indeed the requirements of trade and of international relations ultimately obliged the government to limit its scope".²¹¹

While Algiers heavily relied on the endeavors of the corsairs, Tunis' trade allowed them to use the corsairs as additional income. Tripoli also developed a privateering business, but was never able to compete against the other two, due to many internal conflicts.

All in all, the corsairs were, to some extent, in control of all three cities on the North African coast. However, their influence was strongly contested by the janissaries. The constant shift of power in conjunction with the rulers' economic and social interests in

²⁰⁶ *Cornell*, *Entangled History*, 639.

²⁰⁷ *Julien*, *History of North Africa*, 307.

²⁰⁸ *Abun-Nasar*, *Maghrib*, 179f.

²⁰⁹ *Bono*, *Piraten*, 44f.

²¹⁰ *Bentjes*, *Die Mauren*, 279.

²¹¹ *Julien*, *History of North Africa*, 308.

all three Barbary cities were comparable but took different forms in every city.²¹² Nevertheless, the corsairs could secure authority in Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis until the late 17th century. Especially, during the reign of the beylerbeys, the corsairs were rulers of the whole Maghreb. Bentjes asserts that with the implementation of the deys, the corsairs lost their supreme status²¹³ but I argue that the corsair captains had simply moved into the background of the city politics while remaining influential. Their end as a part of the political mosaic should rather be pinpointed at the beginning of the 18th century when the Husainids stopped their maritime activities, Tripoli fell under the French, and Algiers experienced a full decline in professional corsairs.

The history of these three cities shows that the influence and power of the corsairs was never absolute but could be described as a fluctuating continuum that reached far beyond the glorious times of corsairs like Barbarossa and Murat Rais. This analysis also affirms the statement that the Mediterranean could be seen as the perpetual apple of discord.²¹⁴ The old dynastic strength of the Ottoman Empire was in decline and the rise of new players like the devshirme, “the levy of an elite cadre of slaves from the non-Muslim population” in the center of the Ottoman Empire²¹⁵ showcases that the Sublime Porte experienced a decline comparable to the European powers. Hence, the struggle between the old and new powers²¹⁶ is also adequately represented in the Maghreb.

It should be noted that the justification for the intervention by the eastern Mediterranean Muslims by validation of an Islamic holy war may only seem to be overtly relevant. Firstly, the Ottoman Empire’s population was to a substantial degree Christian until the early 16th century and only with the conquests in the Arabian World did the Sublime Porte gain a stronger Islamic character.²¹⁷ Secondly, “spasmodic holy war could continue on sections of the frontiers of Christendom and Islam for very long periods. It was an essential factor on the big political scene, that no ruler could afford

²¹² Bono, Piraten, 40.

²¹³ Bentjes, Die Mauren, 279.

²¹⁴ Gottfried Liedl, Vernunft und Utopie. Die Méditerrané (1350-1650). In: Peter Feldbauer, Jean-Paul Lehnert (Hg.), Die Welt im 16. Jahrhundert (Wien 2008) 116-152, 121.

²¹⁵ Stephen F. Dale, The Islamic World in the Age of European Expansion 1500-1800. In: Francis Robinson (Hg.), The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World (London 1996) 62-90, 68.

²¹⁶ Liedl, Vernunft und Utopie, 121.

²¹⁷ Gudrun Krämer, Der Vordere Orient und Nordafrika ab 1500 (Frankfurt 2016) 209.

to disregard". However, "in general the holy war was a phenomenon of enthusiasm and emergency: it did not characterize the everyday lives of the many thousands of traders and venturers". Many inhabitants of North Africa, especially traders, were not fond of the holy war since they wanted to profit from the trade with Christians. Conversely, there were those who earned a living with the loot that was taken in the holy war. Partner affirms that "the holy war engendered conflicts of economic interest".²¹⁸ Therefore, the holy war on the North African front should not be regarded as a united push against Christianity by the Islam population. Moreover, religion in North Africa's Islamic societies was not a determinant. Rather, it was woven into various spheres of life and Islam was not the same in every region. Traditions and rites were intertwined with Islam as well.²¹⁹ In contrast to the European principle of "cuius regio eius religio", the Ottoman sultans never forced their religion upon the inhabitants of the Empire and there are only few instances of forced conversion as the Koran forbade them.²²⁰ Religion did not seem to be a cornerstone in the daily lives along the Barbary coast. It was a tool with which the sovereignty could justify an intervention against the Spaniards to increase their influence.

3.3 Rabat-Salé

Rabat-Salé, a prime model for the role of corsairs on the Atlantic coast of North Africa should not be neglected as it illustrates how corsairs not only influenced cities but were part of first-hand state-building as well.

The exiled moors who had fled from Spain did not only settle on the Mediterranean side of North Africa. They established their own twin city around the old fort at Bou Regreg. They specialized in piracy right from the start and when the other power in the region (Sa'ids) fell, they could flourish. Consequently, the moors declared their independence as an oligarchical city republic (1627-1637). In 1637, the moors were attacked by their former sovereign, who they had pledged allegiance to, because the city was in negotiations with Spain and England. However, Al-Achayi fell in battle

²¹⁸ Peter Partner, *God of Battles. Holy Wars of Christianity and Islam* (London 1997) 133f.

²¹⁹ Krämer, *Der Vordere Orient*, 176.

²²⁰ Krämer, *Der Vordere Orient*, 182f.

against the moors due to the intervention of the Marabuts of Dila who aided the moors. In the midst of the battles in a crumbling empire, Moulay Mohammed and his successor Moulay Raschid paved the way for the sultanate. The most prominent figure in the region, Moulay Ismail, who succeeded Raschid, ruled for 55 years (1672-1727) and part of his success was due to his slave army from Sudan and Christian and Andalusian renegades. Under his rule, Morocco experienced an influx of British, French, Holland, and Spanish ships that traded in the ports on the coast. With the death of Moulay Ismail, the stable circumstances began to crumble again.²²¹ This short extract of the history of the Moroccan coastline underlines the hypothesis that the moors were a major component in the realization of the corsair states and the peak development of the corsairs in general.

3.4 Entangled History?

Cornel asks the question, whether North Africa was part of the Mediterranean space due to the frequent exchange of goods and people or not. Moreover, should it be assumed that North Africa was part of the European sphere? Contrariwise, should the North African coast be considered non-European?²²² The answer to this question, as in many other cases, is not absolute. Viewing North Africa as part of the Mediterranean and Europe in an entanglement or not depends on the point of view it is seen from. In the daily exchange of trade, slave exchanges, and piracy there was a close connection. However, on the level of non-specialized journalism and scholar discourse, one can see a disconnection due to the stereotypical mentions of despotism and barbarity. Through the close analysis of travel logs and other histories, a middle ground of specialized examination can be discerned as well. Unfortunately, these sources only reveal methodological issues since the texts are not translations of Arabic historical works but rather were processed through oral questionings and transcripts from already existing texts.²²³

²²¹ *Brentjes*, Die Mauren, 273f.

²²² *Cornel*, Entangled History, 621.

²²³ *Cornel*, Entangled History, 655.

This analysis supports the position that the North African coast and the Ottoman Empire should at least be seen from two angles. While the overt conflict between the Ottoman Porte and Christian Europe could be viewed as a propagated discourse, it should be asserted that the daily exchange between the Muslim North African coast and the European coast in the Mediterranean paints a rough picture of entanglement. Dale states that “the Islamic-Christian frontiers could be permeable when it came to exchanging certain types of knowledge”. However, “in the Ottoman case this allowed the diffusion of cartography and medicine, but not printing and astronomy”.²²⁴ Additionally, it has already been mentioned that the religious conflict should not be declared as the dividing factor that it may portray at first glance.

To analyze these statements, a close look at the entanglement of these two sides of the same coin could be conducted. However, while entanglement describes the overlapping of cultures, the term hybridity is also used in the same contexts. It implies that a hybrid originates from a ‘pure’ culture. Both terms, according to Cornel, should not be the center of attention when analyzing this region but rather an analysis of the connexion.²²⁵ This paper will focus on the practical example that shows that the front between Europe and the Ottoman Empire was not as hardened as it may seem. To underline this hypothesis, the next chapter will be devoted to an aforementioned phenomenon that exemplifies that there existed cultural/knowledge exchange in this era.

4. Renegades

While it has been established that the term renegade translates into a person who converts to a different religion, this phenomenon should not be viewed as a clear classification for a change of religious belief in the early modern period. The motivation for this step was manifold and renegades were perceived differently, depending on their allegiances.

Overtly, it may seem that religion was the main reason that led many people to abandon their previous lives. However, the change of religion more often than not had

²²⁴ Dale, *The Islamic World*, 70.

²²⁵ Cornel, *Entangled History*, 628f.

pragmatic reasons for individuals like, for example, Uluc Ali.²²⁶ Religion was not a metaphorical permit to allow people to join the corsairs but many captives converted to escape their faith as slaves and became corsairs themselves. Additionally, countless adventurers came to the Barbary coast to join the Ottoman Empire or the Berber states. Gelder affirms that

conversion by pronouncing the shahada (declaration of faith), and usually circumcision if the convert was male, was often followed by taking a new name, gifts of clothing and money, marriage to a Muslim spouse, and integration into local patronage networks. Changing faith was not just a religious but also a social and political practice during which converts constructed ties with their new religious community.²²⁷

Therefore, the term renegade is not a simple attribution of someone's change of religion. It was an integrative process and lucrative prospect for the converts of the early modern period. For example, many sailors and seamen who had participated in the war between England, Spain, and Holland found themselves unemployed in the beginning of the 17th century. Many of these men were in search for labor. The Barbary coast offered those professionals work and a future.²²⁸

A second aspect that should be foregrounded is the self-determination that became increasingly important during that time. Individualism was being a renegade. You were not converted, you converted and took that step yourself. The freedom of choosing one's culture and religion implies that the person becomes areligious.²²⁹ It is important to emphasize that this newfound subjectivity was not present in previous eras. Additionally, this apostasy reflects upon the bridge that was formed over the Mediterranean. The conversion was a cultural process rather than a religious one. It was an exchange and not an aversion.²³⁰ These characteristics underline the secondary position that religion had for the renegades. Moreover, it sheds new light on the renegades as forerunners of individualism in general.

²²⁶ Andreas *Rieger*, Die Seeaktivitäten der muslimischen Beutefahrer als Bestandteil der staatlichen Flotte während der osmanischen Expansion im Mittelmeer im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. In: *Islamkundliche Untersuchungen* 174 (Berlin 1994) 175.

²²⁷ Maartje van Gelder, The Republic's Renegades: Dutch Converts to Islam in Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic Relations with North Africa. In: *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015) 181.

²²⁸ *Konstam*, Piracy, 91.

²²⁹ *Liedl*, Islamische Korsaren, 102.

²³⁰ Gottfried *Liedl*, Seefahrt im islamischen Westen. In: Alexander *Marboe*, Andreas *Obenhaus* (Hg.), Seefahrt und die frühe euopäische Expansion (Expansion Interaktion Akkulturation 15, Wien 2009) 61-93, 89.

There were also much simpler reasons to convert to Islam. A Venetian merchant, for instance, “converted to avoid paying debts and returning goods that he owed to several important merchants in Venice”. Another merchant, named Niccolò Algarotti, hoped to be favored at the Ottoman court by converting.²³¹ It was as simple as trying “to escape complications in the Christian world”²³² further emphasizing that religious belief was only an overtly visible motivation to step into a life as a renegade. The examples of the two merchants from Venice also stress that being a renegade did not equal the participation in raids and corsair activities.

Consequently, a renegade was not by definition a corsair or a religious fanatic. In most cases, they simply aspired to better their conditions through conversion, often accompanied by migrating to Muslim territory.

To explain the importance of converting for the renegades, Konrad argues that one needs to take social conversion into consideration. To achieve this perspective, there must be a focus on the social circumstances. Being a Muslim meant having a social identity, from which an individual was able to climb the social ladder. Muslims enjoyed better juridical and fiscal circumstances than Christians and Jews. Additionally, the status as slave was not a permanent brand mark in the Ottoman Empire. The determinant was that social status was adjustable.²³³

The implications for the Mediterranean, regardless of the converts’ motives, which can be considered to peak over hundreds of thousands in the 16th century²³⁴, were extensive. The renegades were a bridge connecting the two seemingly hardened fronts of Europe and North Africa, not an additional wall. To underline these hypotheses there needs to be extensive consideration for the various renegades that were known of at the start of the early modern period.

²³¹ Eric *Dursteler*, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore 2006) 114.

²³² *Dursteler*, *Venetians*, 113.

²³³ Felix *Konrad*, *Soziale Mobilität europäischer Renegaten im frühneuzeitlichen Osmanischen Reich*. In: Henning P. *Jürgens*, Thomas *Weller* (Hg.), *Religion und Mobilität. ZUm Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Göttingen 2011) 213-235, 228f.

²³⁴ *Dursteler*, *Venetians*, 113.

4.1 Religious Fanaticism?

As with all individual histories one can hardly grasp the bigger picture by analyzing them. Nevertheless, such a view on history can reveal new perspectives on this chapter of the early modern period. The goal of this analysis is not to generalize all renegades through these individual histories but to show that the motivation of renegades was not founded on religious belief only.

Two of the most famous corsairs that lived in the Mediterranean at the start of the early modern period were the Barbarossa brothers. It is generally agreed upon that the two Greeks were in the privateering business before they became infamous. Both brothers realized the potential on the North African coast and grasped their chance by sailing under “the banner of Islam against the Spaniards”. Subsequently, the Ottomans supported their endeavors. Under their rule of Algiers, numerous renegades joined the North African coast and the city turned into a stronghold of Islam.²³⁵ However, both brothers were brought up as Muslims and partook in piracy very early.²³⁶ According to the Cambridge dictionary a renegade is “a person who has changed their feelings of support and duty from one political, religious, national, etc. group to a new one”.²³⁷ The brothers relocated their activities to a new region and sailed under the banner of the Ottomans. It is debatable, however, whether this marks a clear shift to a new power as they were already under Ottoman supremacy in Greece. Cornel argues that the Barbarossa brothers were renegades but affirms that they were Turks from Greece.²³⁸ Their father seemed to have been a Turkish renegade and their mother was Christian²³⁹ but it remains questionable whether these two famous figures should be categorized as renegades since they did not undergo a religious conversion.

Taking the Cambridge Dictionary definition into account, it could only be argued that the Barbarossa brothers had no loyal obligation towards the Sublime Porte before they ventured to North Africa and understood the value of sailing for the Empire, thus, marking a change of support.

²³⁵ María Antonia *Garcés*, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive's Tale* (Nashville 2002) 21f.

²³⁶ *Stocker*, *Die Seemacht*, 128.

²³⁷ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/renegeade>, 3.10.2017.

²³⁸ *Cornel*, *Entangled History*, 623.

²³⁹ Philip *Gosse*, *The Pirates' Who's Who. Giving Particulars Of The Lives and Deaths Of The Pirates And Buccaneers* (E Book 2006/ New York 1924) 46.

If conversion is the constituting factor, the name of the convert could be investigated to verify if the suspect proclaimed the shahada, due to the fact that renegades had two names. They had their birth name and the given name after their change of faith. Examples would be John Ward, an Englishman, later called Yusuf Reis and Jan Janszoon, from Harleem, who was named Murat Reis after his conversion. The Barbarossa brothers were given their signature name by their contemporaries. They did not receive an Islamic name since they already had their birth names. Therefore, the Barbarossa brothers underwent the vice versa process, having a Muslim name and acquiring a 'European' nickname.

The case of John Ward is special since the geographical distance suggests that the English and the Ottoman Empire did not have extensive contact. However, "there had been English traders and seamen in the Mediterranean some of whom fell into Muslim hands and converted to Islam". Moreover, at the beginning of the 17th century, hundreds of English ships fell captive to Muslim corsairs and the English Crown was exhausting resources to free English captives.²⁴⁰ In this context, John Ward 'abandoned' his former country and became a renegade. In England, he became a notoriously famous figure. The English playwright Robert Daborne experienced Ward's fame as too untainted in light of his conversion and wrote the drama *A Christian Turn'd Turke* to show his contemporaries how defected Ward really was. The reason behind Daborne's motivation originated primarily from the stories that were told about the renegade. While his prosperity in his new-found home was constantly foregrounded, Ward's apostasy from Christianity was not emphasized enough for Daborne.²⁴¹ The drama needed to show the English public that there were severe consequences for conversion. Moreover, it should depict the "divine retribution for rejecting Christianity".²⁴²

Ward's story offers essential insight into the renegades and sea raiders in general. For many contemporaries, the conversion of John Ward was subsidiary to his achievements as a corsair. Graf affirms that the label renegade "was invariably applied

²⁴⁰ Nabil Matar, *Islam and Britain. 1558-1658* (Cambridge 1998) 5f.

²⁴¹ Tobias P. Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades. Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford 2017) 36.

²⁴² Matar, *Islam and Britain*, 58.

by members of the community which the renegade was accused of having left". Furthermore, Graf states that "the term tells us more about the expectations of the people who used it than about the individuals whom it supposedly described".²⁴³ In Ward's case, the image had to be tainted to stop others from following in his footsteps since Ward was known as powerful man who had attained wealth as a Muslim.²⁴⁴

Despite Daborne's intentions of defaming Ward, it accurately described the process of conversion in detail. There was a difference in the process as it was dependent on the situation of the individual. If people converted to save their lives or be freed from a debt, they were not celebrated in the same way Muslims celebrated Christians who joined Islam without any ulterior motives. If a Christian converted to escape punishment from killing a Muslim, there were not honorary gifts or processions.²⁴⁵ Therefore, the prospects of becoming a renegade were not similar among converts. Konrad affirms that in the early modern period, most renegades underwent conversion as slaves, hostages, or war prisoners. Under these circumstances social pressure and in some cases coercion was an effective tool to force prisoners into conversion. For many captives, the prospects of returning home to their old religious community were only possible if they pronounced the shahada.²⁴⁶

While the prospects of re-conversion were existent in the eyes of the renegades, various Christian preachers condemned the step that the captives had taken. Although, captives would see apostasy as means to escape imprisonment, neither captivity nor suffering "should be used to justify compromise on matters that pertained to eternal life". This harsh stance by the Church led many renegades to proclaim that they "had not converted to Islam in their hearts but only with their tongues".²⁴⁷ Renegades, who feared that they could be captured by the Europeans and expected punishment, carried documents with them to verify their belief in Christianity. In Cervante's works there is also evidence of other means by which renegades tried to save themselves from the wrath of the church. Some renegades, if they wanted to reconvert to Christianity, had certificates from Christian prisoners with

²⁴³ Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*, 37.

²⁴⁴ Matar, *Islam and Britain*, 57.

²⁴⁵ Matar, *Islam and Britain*, 56.

²⁴⁶ Konrad, *Soziale Mobilität*, 218f.

²⁴⁷ Matar, *Islam and Britain*, 67.

them. In those papers, it was ensured that the renegade was a brave man who had always cared for his Christian brothers and was ready to flee from the Turks if a favorable opportunity presented itself.²⁴⁸

While Daborne was harsh in his judgment of apostasy, Bak mentions that his play minimized Ward's crimes since he made "the pirate seem human". Consequently, Daborne was criticized as the criminal should only be seen as "an inveterate villain", according to the nobles who felt that the play did not depict Ward accurately.²⁴⁹

Daborne's play was, however, not the only work published in order to depict the consequences and hardships of converting to Islam. Philipp Massinger was another author who integrated the renegade theme into his work. However, he took a different route and created a happy ending for his renegade protagonist who, in the end, finds his way back to Christianity.²⁵⁰ In Massinger's play, the focus lies on the supremacy of Christianity over Islam. In reality, such cases of re-conversion were dangerous since the penalty for apostasy in Islam was death.²⁵¹ Two showcases of this danger are the examples of a Frenchman who was captured after his reconversion in France. He travelled back to sea and was captured by corsairs who remembered him. In 1634, he was executed in Salé. Another case of reconversion of a man named Domingo is also documented. He was sentenced to death thrice. The execution was carried out by strangling, lapidating, and burning him at the same time.²⁵²

In England, it can be argued that there was a divided opinion of renegades. On the one hand, the achievements of renegades like Ward were publically known. On the other hand, Ward was also perceived as a heretic who would receive his punishment in due time.

In reality, Ward only converted to Islam after he had already acquired a fleet of 15 ships and 1,500 men at his disposal in 1610.²⁵³ His conversion coincides with a change of John Ward's situation in 1610. He had been in negotiations with King James to be

²⁴⁸ Rieger, *Die Seeaktivitäten*, 343f.

²⁴⁹ Greg Bak, *Barbary Pirate. The Life and Crimes of John Ward-The Most Infamous Privateer of his Time* (Sutton 2006) 184.

²⁵⁰ Matar, *Islam and Britain*, 58f.

²⁵¹ Matar, *Islam and Britain*, 60f.

²⁵² Rieger, *Die Seeaktivitäten*, 34f.

²⁵³ Alan G. Jamieson, *Lords of the Sea. A History of the Barbary Corsairs* (London 2012) 90.

pardoned for his crimes. King James announced during a dinner “that one pirate had offered him 40,000 pounds sterling, equal to 160,000 crowns, to recover his favour, but he would not even consider the proposal”. According to Bak, the person in question was John Ward and due to the king’s refusal of considering a pardon, Ward turned to the warlord of Tunis.²⁵⁴ Unknowingly, Daborne had written a play that reminded the king that he had pushed Ward into a corner, which explains why Daborne’s career came to a sudden end after his play was released and shut down soon afterwards.²⁵⁵ Ward continued to live in his own palace in Tunis and married Jessimina, who was also a renegade. He supposedly died during a plague outbreak in 1623.²⁵⁶

Considering Ward’s career and life, Bak argues that “it is difficult not to perceive his conversion as opportunistic”, although Ward was a serious believer.²⁵⁷ Whether Ward’s conversion was out of conviction or not, his story shows nonetheless that renegades received a fabricated image that did not match the reality of the renegades’ life and that conversion was not solely based on belief, considering the time of his change of faith.

If John Ward is to be considered a special case, the career of Jan Janszoon (Murad Reis) from the Netherlands offers a more generic view on the renegades. He started a career as a privateer. Due to a lack of income, however, he decided to raid ships on his own accord. Jan was captured by corsairs from Algiers in 1618 and decided to pronounce the shahada, receiving the name Murad Reis. His captain was also a Dutch renegade named Suleiman Reis (Ivan De Veenboer). After his captain’s death, Murad left Algiers and became one of the leading figures of the corsairs of Salé.²⁵⁸

Janszoon was not the only Dutch privateer who experienced a monetary dilemma at the start of the seventeenth century. The Twelve Years’ Truce that had been signed by Spain and the Netherlands also halted the income of the Dutch privateering business. Joining the navy or boarding a mercantile ship was not appealing for most of these

²⁵⁴ *Bak*, *Barbary Pirate*, 170.

²⁵⁵ *Bak*, *Barbary Pirate*, 184.

²⁵⁶ *Jamieson*, *Lords of the Sea*, 90.

²⁵⁷ *Bak*, *Barbary Pirate*, 186.

²⁵⁸ *Jamieson*, *Lords of the Sea*, 75f.

privateers. Thus, many sailors decided to leave their home behind and migrate to the Maghreb. This led to an influx of Dutch renegades into the region and at around 1625 eight of the fifty Algerian captains were from Dutch origin. Among them were “Seffer Rais alias Thomas the Pickpocket, from Harlingen, Regeb Rais from The Hague, and Seliman Buffoen alias Jacob the Brothelkeeper, from Rotterdam”.²⁵⁹

One reason for the non-ending line of Dutch renegades can also be explained by the process of recruitment for these men. Most Dutchman wanted to have other Dutch to join them which is why Simon de Danse, De Veenboer, and Jan Janszoon belong to one line of renegades who succeeded one another.²⁶⁰ Janszoon’s career path follows the hypothesis that individuals became renegades in order to better their conditions and to seek the chance to climb up the social ladder in their new world.

As with England, the Netherlands perceived the growing rate of Dutch renegades ambiguously. The State General accepted that the pronouncement of shahada was inevitable for most renegades while the Church continued to have a harsh stance towards converts. Nevertheless, the general acceptance of conversion by the Dutch can also be seen in the capitulations from 1612 between the Sublime Porte and the Netherlands. It was specified that “a dragoman²⁶¹ employed by the Dutch ambassador had to be present to verify the voluntary nature” of a conversion.²⁶² It is also evident that the “Dutch converted corsairs in Algiers and Tunis matter-of-factly invoked their own “Turkishness” while offering their services to their acknowledged patria, the Dutch Republic”. Furthermore, “they constructed consensus around the political cause of mutual benefit to both negotiating parties”.²⁶³ Said benefits included that the Dutch renegades were not attacked when they roamed the Republic and upheld their family bonds in their former homes. Additionally, they had ties to “fellow maritime professionals, former townsmen, and the highest political circles”. As Gelder mentions, the overt policies and the “Realpolitik” were not similar. Contrary, the benefits of not cutting ties with the renegades seemed more profitable for the political interactions

²⁵⁹ Gelder, *The Republic’s Renegades*, 186.

²⁶⁰ Gelder, *The Republic’s Renegades*, 187.

²⁶¹ an interpreter, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dragoman>, 4.10.2017.

²⁶² Gelder, *The Republic’s Renegades*, 187.

²⁶³ Maartje van Gelder, Tijana Krstić, Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean. In: *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015) 93-105, 98.

with North Africa.²⁶⁴ Therefore, it could be argued that the political and public acceptance of renegades was higher in the Netherlands than in England. Furthermore, this implies that the perception of renegades in Europe was not generally the same.

Another region that sprouted many famous renegades was Italy. One example would be the Venetian Gazanfer Aga who was imprisoned as a boy and sold into the household of prince Selim, who later became Sultan Selim II. Gazanfer was castrated and became highest ranking white eunuch in the Sultan's palace and Master of Household. He stayed in his position for three regencies of Sultans (Selim II.- Mehmed III.) and was able to extend his influence. Despite his position he remained strong ties with Venice and his family and continuously expanded his network with other Italian renegades. One of them was Yusuf Sinan Pascha alias Scipione Cicala who had been taken prisoner by corsairs from Tripoli. He was brought to the Sultan's palace and converted to Islam. His career path led him to become the commander of the janissaries and fleet of the Ottoman Empire and managed to obtain the title of Grand Vizier.²⁶⁵ In these cases of Italian renegades, it is evident that the conversions proceeded not out of conviction. However, the examples show that through conversion, these renegades received the chance to obtain higher ranks than they could have arguably achieved in their old lives. Furthermore, these individual histories imply that renegades did not only live to become corsair captains but were active in other sectors of the Ottoman Empire as well.

Another famous renegade that needs to be mentioned is Ali Basha (Occhiali). Born in Calabria, there is no record of his parents or birth. Moreover, he "does not appear even to have possessed a Christian name, although born in a Christian land".²⁶⁶ While in Ali's case, it is not possible to verify his change of faith due to a given name after conversion, it is safe to assume that he converted due to what historians know of his life. Ali was taken prisoner on the galley of Ali Ahamed, the Admiral of Algiers, and was condemned to rowing as a galley slave. Taking his origins into account, Ali seemed not to have ties to his former home and after a few years behind the bench, he joined the

²⁶⁴ Gelder, *The Republic's Renegades*, 197.

²⁶⁵ Konrad, *Soziale Mobilität*, 219ff.

²⁶⁶ Hamilton E. Currey, *Sea Wolves of the Mediterranean. The grand period of Muslim corsairs* (E Book 2017/ London 1910) 346.

Islamic faith. Through his dedication as a capable sailor, he soon earned the position of manhood chief boatswain. After his conversion, Ali experienced a rapid climb up the social ladder within this new system. Soon he became known as “one of the boldest corsairs on the Barbary coast”. He was taken under the wings of Dragut and after Dragut’s death he became Master of Treasure and Slaves in Tripoli and was appointed governor of Algiers where he had started out as a slave.²⁶⁷ The case of Ali Basha who was called Occhiali by European contemporaries, underlines the possibilities that were given to individuals if they would convert. While declaring shahada was not a guarantee for success, hard work and professionalism allowed renegades to reach from the bottom to the top of the Muslim hierarchy. In Ali Basha’s case: “He brought the development of organized piracy to its greatest perfection”.²⁶⁸

The cases that were analyzed in this section underline the hypothesis that religious faith was not the determining factor that led many people to a life as a renegade. One could speak of a prototypical career path that was established. Most renegades started out as slaves, either rowing on a galley, or serving as house slaves. After passing over to Islamic faith, these renegades experienced the relatively open possibilities that were laid out for them. Muslim society was not frowning upon these converts, although, they were still seen as hybrids, as in Gazanfer’s case as a Venetian and Turk.²⁶⁹ While re-conversion was not impossible, renegades originating from slavery, realized their possibilities in the new society and were, in the above-mentioned cases, able to succeed.

The danger of analyzing individuals’ lives to assert claims is that it clouds a broader perspective. The cases that were discussed show only one way that converts lived out their lives. It was not only common for underclass people to change their situation through conversion. Noblemen also realized that they could offer the Sublime Porte services to obtain more power.²⁷⁰ Moreover, conversion was sometimes simply a way to escape debts or receives favors in court.

²⁶⁷ Currey, *Sea Wolves*, 346f.

²⁶⁸ Gosse, *The Pirates' Who's Who*, 28.

²⁶⁹ Konrad, *Soziale Mobilität*, 220.

²⁷⁰ Konrad, *Soziale Mobilität*, 216.

Liedl mentions that the second pillar of the Muslim corsairs were the European renegades. However, he includes in his description the refugees that fled from Spain as well²⁷¹, who were Muslims, too. The discussion of whether the renegades should even receive a religious label is put into question by Sir Walter Rayleigh. He describes renegades as neither Christian nor Turk, which aligns with the view that a renegade was a *Uomo nuovo*- a Renaissance man.²⁷² It has been covered that the Christians who took their chance and pronounced the shahada saw an opportunity of bettering their circumstances. Is religion, therefore, even a necessary label? If not religion, emigration would be the best indicator for categorizing someone as a renegade. Then, however, the Barbarossa brothers need to be classified as renegades, too. Moving beyond simple labels, it would seem fit to see renegades as self-determining humans who understood that they were forging their own destiny and that religion was just a border for some of them that had to be crossed to succeed. According to Konrad, the term renegade was not used by Ottoman contemporaries. Instead they were called Franks, aligning with the term used for Latin Christians.²⁷³ Nonetheless, renegade has been an established term and I would argue that at least one out of two factors need to apply to categorize a person as renegade. Firstly, the individual in question needs to have undergone a conversion. Secondly, the person has decided to support the Maghreb or the Sublime Porte and migrated into the region. This classification would support the Cambridge Dictionary definition of a renegade. Its negative connotation could be neglected in light of the fact that the term was used by the Europeans who were left by the converts and not by the Muslims that they joined.

Moreover, renegades could generally be grouped into three categories. The ones who were taken away from their homes as kids from the European coast would be the first category. This group was often condemned as low servants if they did not appeal through their beauty or valor. The second category would be adult captives who converted. The third group would fall under the definition voluntary conversion.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Liedl, *Seefahrt im islamischen Westen*, 87.

²⁷² Liedl, *Seefahrt*, 88.

²⁷³ Konrad, *Soziale Mobilität*, 213.

²⁷⁴ Rieger, *Die Seeaktivitäten*, 348f.

The question remains whether the Muslims saw an opportunity in the conversion as well besides the fact that they won over another sharer of their belief. In the following, the impacts of the renegades for the regions will be in question.

4.2 Renegades- A secular or religious profit?

It is indisputable, that many renegades made a name for themselves among the Muslim population and especially at the North African coast. This section will focus on the ways in which the North African coast and the Sublime Porte benefitted from the influx of renegades not only as a human resource but also as keepers of knowledge, which had not been exposed to them yet.

John Ward serves as one example of a renegade who could offer Tunis and the North African coast knowledge and tactics. Firstly, he was well versed in the tactics of the Royal Navy and “early histories depict Ward as a scoundrel who deserted his nation and betrayed her greatest naval secrets to the North African Moors”. Ward guided the Muslims with instructions in “sailing, gunning and fighting from square-rigged round ships, thus allowing them to prey upon the shipping of north-western Europe”.²⁷⁵ It were renegades like Ward and Danziker who allowed the Muslims to innovate their sailing ranks. Various histories from Baker, Smith, and Pere Pierre Dan emphasize that without Ward and Danziker, the North African corsairs would not have been able to man and sail square rigged ships.²⁷⁶ The transfer of knowledge and subsequent advantages that were brought by the renegades can be considered a great advantage for the North African region. However, these early histories treat the Muslims as incapable of achieving this feats without the help of the renegades. While this is true to a certain extent, it portrays a bias view of the capabilities of the Muslims. Liedl affirms that the question of whether the western Muslims were isolated from the innovations of seafaring or whether they could compete with them needs to be asked. While it may seem that the Muslims adapted some knowledge of ship types from the Christians, it is also evident that the Muslims innovated the second pillar of seafaring-

²⁷⁵ *Bak*, *Barbary Pirate*, 190.

²⁷⁶ *Bak*, *Barbary Pirate*, 191.

cartography. It was a combination of the compass, portolan culture, and Islamic cartography that paved the way for the newly achieved freedom at sea.²⁷⁷ Consequently, it can be stated that the Muslims were also contributing to the innovations at sea but the renegades offered them the knowledge to further refine their ship technology. It could be called hybrid technology, stemming from exchange. The Atlantic ships were adapted to suit the Mediterranean Sea and weather. Conversely, the Europeans adapted this new ship, the *Sciabeco*, from the Mediterranean corsairs.²⁷⁸ This digression should only stress that the Muslims were not blind to innovation and ship technology. It does not deny the fact that renegades brought the knowledge with which the region experienced technological change. Rieger affirms that the renegades were guides in the Christian's coastal waters, revealed weak points in their defenses, offered advice on where their compatriots were most vulnerable, aided in the capture of thousands of former fellow believers and had an important role in the Muslim armament industry. Even in the 18th century an Irish renegade was head of the only cannon production site in Marocco. The only ignition powder production of Algiers was also under the administration of a Swede at that time.²⁷⁹

Another aspect that should be foregrounded is the value of inside knowledge that was brought to the Sultan's court by renegades such as Gercek Davud Aga or Pasa Bonneval who were able to offer their specialized knowledge to appeal to the Sultan's court, thus, enabling their advance through the ranks. For renegades who were not living under Ottoman authority for most of their lives, like Ali Basha, it was possible to climb the ranks through their knowledge in military tactics, politics, diplomacy, and medicine. Moreover, renegades, due to their European roots, could offer their social capital to their new religious community.²⁸⁰ Through the transition of knowledge, said knowledge became a valuable resource for its bearers. It allowed people to break out of the strict feudal system²⁸¹ and offered the possibility to realize their potential, which had little value in their old community. This correlates with Rothman's term of the

²⁷⁷ Liedl, *Seefahrt im islamischen Westen*, 82ff.

²⁷⁸ Liedl, *Seefahrt im islamischen Westen*, 19.

²⁷⁹ Rieger, *Die Seeaktivitäten*, 360f.

²⁸⁰ Konrad, *Soziale Mobilität*, 233f.

²⁸¹ Liedl, *Weg der Kanone*, 140.

trans-imperial subjects, which are defined as people who “regularly mobilized their roots ‘elsewhere’ to foreground specific knowledge, privileges, or commitments to further their current interests”.²⁸² Consequently, these subjects fall in line with people who underwent conversion.²⁸³ It is an example of the ever-famous quote: Knowledge is power. Ács, furthermore, affirms that “living human beings were possibly the most valuable commodities in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century”.²⁸⁴

For instance, renegades were often used by the Sultans as dragomans. Not only did these interpreters enjoy a high rank within the Ottoman society. They also were an important aspect for the Ottoman diplomacy. Working for the Sultan’s intelligence network, these renegades were “acting nearly always as double agents”. Examples for such cases would be Tarjuman Mahmud, formerly Sebold von Pibrach and Dragoman Murad, formerly Balázs Somlyai. Both renegades worked as diplomatic interpreters for the Sublime court after they had been taken captive.²⁸⁵ Mahmud and Murad could be considered as borderline figures who mediated between the two worlds of Islam and Christianity. They were “men going between peoples, languages and religions”.²⁸⁶

Thus, the renegades that were analyzed in this chapter shows that both they and the Sublime Porte profited from their step into Muslim territory. While many renegades came out of captivity, they managed to better their conditions through conversion. Others underwent the shahada because they saw an opportunity for themselves. The Ottoman Empire welcomed these converts not only out of religious gain but because they offered them knowledge and expertise. Various famous renegades became corsairs along the Mediterranean. However, it should be foregrounded that this was not the only available career path for them.

Though it has been discovered that renegades were not solely driven by religious motives, there should be a case for why this bloated factor remains a defining characteristic for this phenomenon. It is evident that there was a public and private

²⁸² Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul* (E-Book, Ithaca 2012) 11f.

²⁸³ Gelder, *Introduction: Cross-Confessional*, 99.

²⁸⁴ Pál Ács, *Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad. Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan’s Interpreters*. In: Bodo Guthmüller (Hg.) et al., *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance* (Frühe Neuzeit 52, Tübingen 2000) 307-317, 307.

²⁸⁵ Ács, *Tarjumans*, 308.

²⁸⁶ Ács, *Tarjumans*, 316.

stance on renegades and Muslims in general. In Europe, Muslims were seen as the Other and while Europe took a harsh attitude towards Islam, starting with the Reconquista, the “Western Muslims may well have believed that some kind of *modus vivendi* would prevail in the Mediterranean between them and the Euro-Christians”.²⁸⁷

This development would not cease and at the beginning of the 18th century, Western Europe “forcibly de-islamicized their lands”.²⁸⁸ This implies that the bridge which was formed over the Mediterranean was bound to crumble due to the overt stance of Europe towards their southern counterparts. This supports the hypothesis that there was a gap to be bridged in the first place, although, one needs to be aware that such a divide would not have come into existence at the beginning of the 18th century unless there had been a bridge in the first place. While this connection seemed to have been going into the south, concerning religion, as there was higher acceptance of converts, there were also cases of Muslims who converted to Christendom in the early modern period. For example, a family of Muslim women converted to Christendom and married into Venice households.²⁸⁹ Similarly, it can be said that “while postulating the existence of connections, mediated by go-betweens among Muslim and Christian polities, it also confirms the belief that there is a cultural gap to be bridged”.²⁹⁰

In conclusion, the renegades formed a bridge, connecting the two worlds of Europe/Christendom and North Africa/Sublime Porte/Islam. While this bridge started to crumble at the beginning of the 18th century, it does not diminish the importance that the renegades played in the interaction between these fronts. The converts paved the way for cooperation in the early modern period and could successfully influence the economy, politics, and diplomacy in the Mediterranean.

5. Conclusion

This paper has shown in its analysis that there is a broad spectrum that needs to be covered in order to grasp the issue surrounding pirates, corsairs, and renegades. It has

²⁸⁷ *Matar*, Europe through Arab Eyes, 134.

²⁸⁸ *Matar*, Europe, 135.

²⁸⁹ Eric *Dursteler*, Muslim renegade women conversion and agency in the early modern Mediterranean. In: *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 16 (January 2006) 106f.

²⁹⁰ *Gelder*, Introduction: Cross-Confessional, 97.

been established that pirates could be called many names. For the various terms that have been used for pirates like corsair, privateers, freebooters etc. can be categorized as regional and/or juridical terms in order to clarify their meaning in the scientific community. Through this nomenclature, it becomes evident that various names like French corsairs and English corsairs might transport a skewed image if one wants to analysis these phenomena on a scientific basis. While the terms were used by contemporaries, the term corsair might not fit the English and French pirate activities. The term pirate has been marked as a legal definition of a sea raider. This paper, furthermore, argues that the term corsair should be viewed as a regional identification for the Mediterranean. Thus, there were both Christian and Muslim corsairs roaming this sea and after a detailed comparison, which included politics, economics, and social aspects into account, the differences between the two parties can be regarded as neglectable. Regarding the North African coast, the hypothesis that the region saw a rise in corsair activities in the early modern period is underlined by the four factors of geographical circumstances and sea trade, the Islamic and Christian conflict, the Reconquista and subsequent expulsion of the Moors, and the influence of the Ottoman Empire. The cities of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and Rabat-Salé functioned as examples of corsair nests in which the corsair captains were in positions of power. Examples like the corsair Barbarossa show that this influence extended as far as Europe and that European monarchs understood the influence that these captains had. The entangled history theory offers a biased view on the Muslim Christian interaction and this paper has underlined the theory that while there was a fabricated discourse present, especially in Europe, when observing the Muslims, it becomes evident that there was a close connection between these big players as well. This hypothesis is strengthened by the renegade phenomenon which shows that there were a multitude of go-betweens and converts who often built a bridge between the seeming gap that existed. Renegades were pioneer Renaissance humans as they were self-determining and the examples offer evidence that religion was not the driving factor that led many to become converts. Pragmatic reasons were more pressing. Captives often converted to escape their captivity, optionless individuals left Europe for a better life, and some people just wanted to be favored in court. The term itself describes three sub-categories. Renegades who were captured as children and brought

up in the Muslim society, adults who were captured, and individuals who searched for a better life. Not all renegades were corsairs since there were a multitude of options to climb the social ladder in Muslim society. There were dragoman, diplomats, eunuchs, and Sultan advisors who were renegades from Europe.

Corsairs and renegades shaped the history of the early modern period in the Mediterranean on a large scale and the importance of establishing a nomenclature for a phenomenon of this scale has been highlighted.

Bibliography

- Jamil M. *Abun-Nasar*, A History of Maghrib (Cambridge 1975).
- Pál Ács, Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad. Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan's Interpreters. In: Bodo *Guthmüller* (Hg.) et al., Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance (Frühe Neuzeit 52, Tübingen 2000) 307-317.
- Greg *Bak*, Barbary Pirate. The Life and Crimes of John Ward-The Most Infamous Privateer of his Time (Sutton 2006).
- Frank *Bardelle*, Freibeuter in der Karibischen See. Zur Entstehung und gesellschaftlichen Transformation einer historischen „Randbewegung“ (Münster 1986).
- Robert *Bohn*, Die Piraten (München 2003).
- Robert *Bohn*, Durch Seeraub zu Seemacht. In: Martin Hofbauer(Hg.), Martin Hofbauer, Teresa Modler, Gorch Pieken, Martin Rink, Piraterie in der Geschichte (Potsdam 2013) 27-39.
- Catherine Wendy *Bracewell*, The Uskoks of Senj. Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic (Ithaca 1992).
- Burchard *Brentjes*, Die Mauren. Der Islam in Nordafrika und Spanien (642-1800) (Leipzig 1989).
- Michael *Brett*, Elizabeth *Fentress*, The Berbers (Oxford 1997).
- Ludwig *Bühnau*, Piraten und Korsaren der Weltgeschichte (Würzburg 1963).
- David *Cordingly*, Under the Black Flag. The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates (San Diego/New York/ London 1997).
- Zwierlein *Cornel*, Entangled History, Vermischungen? Europäische Blicke auf Tunis und Algier in der Frühen Neuzeit. In: Historische Zeitschrift 297(3) (2013) 621-656.
- Stephen F. *Dale*, The Islamic World in the Age of European Expansion 1500-1800. In: Francis *Robinson* (Hg.), The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World (London 1996) 62-90.
- Eric *Dursteler*, Muslim renegade women conversion and agency in the early modern Mediterranean. In: Journal of Mediterranean Studies 16 (January 2006).
- Eric *Dursteler*, Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean (Baltimore 2006).
- Michael *Erbe*, Die frühe Neuzeit (Stuttgart 2007).
- María Antonia *Garcés*, Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive's Tale (Nashville 2002).
- Maartje van *Gelder*, Tijana *Krstić*, Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean. In: Journal of Early Modern History 19 (2015) 93-105.
- Maartje van *Gelder*, The Republic's Renegades: Dutch Converts to Islam in Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic Relations with North Africa. In: Journal of Early Modern History 19 (2015).
- Philip *Gosse*, The Pirates' Who's Who. Giving Particulars Of The Lives and Deaths Of The Pirates And Buccaneers (E-Book 2006/ New York 1924).

Tobias P. *Graf*, *The Sultan's Renegades. Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610* (Oxford 2017).

Wolfgang *Gruber*, *Die Lebenswelt der Uskokken von Senj. Eine unbequeme Gemeinschaft im Adriaraum der Frühen Neuzeit*. In: Andreas Obenaus, Eugen Pfister, Birgit Tremml (Hg.), *Schrecken der Händler und Herrscher. Piratengemeinschaften in der Geschichte* (Globalhistorische Skizzen 21, Wien 2012) 79- 100.

Currey E. *Hamilton*, *Sea Wolves of the Mediterranean. The grand period of Muslim corsairs* (E-Book 2017/ London 1910).

Florian *Hartl*, *Seeräuberalltag in der Karibik. Über das Leben in frühneuzeitlichen Freibeuterkommunen*. Diplomarbeit Universität Wien (Wien 2008).

Bernd *Hausberger*, *Die Verknüpfung der Welt. Geschichte der frühen Globalisierung vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Wien 2015).

Claudio Lo *Jacono*, *Piraten und Korsaren im Mittelmeer*. In: Francesco *Gabrieli* (Hg.), *Mohammed in Europa. 1300 Jahre Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (München 1982) 193-209.

Alan G. *Jamieson*, *Lords of the Sea. A History of the Barbary Corsairs* (London 2012).

Charles-André *Julien*, *History of North Africa. Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco* (London 1970).

Michael *Kempe*, *Fluch der Weltmeere. Piraterie, Völkerrecht und internationale Beziehungen 1500-1900* (Frankfurt/New York 2010).

Harald *Kleinschmidt*, *Menschen in Bewegung. Inhalte und Ziele historischer Migrationsforschung* (Göttingen 2002).

Felix *Konrad*, *Soziale Mobilität europäischer Renegaten im frühneuzeitlichen Osmanischen Reich*. In: Henning P. *Jürgens*, Thomas *Weller* (Hg.), *Religion und Mobilität. Zum Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Göttingen 2011) 213-235.

Angus *Konstan*, *Piracy. The Complete History* (Oxford 2008).

Angus *Konstan*, *Pirates 1660-1730* (Oxford 1998).

Gudrun *Krämer*, *Der Vordere Orient und Nordafrika ab 1500* (Frankfurt 2016).

Klaus *Kreiser*, *Der Osmanische Staat 1300-1922*. In: Jochen *Bleicken*, Lothar *Gall*, Hermann *Jakobs* (Hg.), *Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte* 30 (München 2001).

David J. *Krieger*, *The New Universalism. Foundations for a Global Theology* (Eugene 2006).

Nicholas *Kyriazis*, Theofore *Metaxas*, Emmanouil M. L. *Economou*, *War for Profit. English Corsairs, Institutions and Decentralised Strategy*. In: *Defence and Peace Economics* (25. Nov 2015) 1-17.

John *Latimer*, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean. How Pirates Forged an Empire* (Massachusetts 2009).

Gottfried *Liedl*, *Islamische Korsaren im Mittelmeer und im Atlantik*. In: Andreas *Obenaus*, Eugen *Pfister*, Birgit *Tremml* (Hg.), *Schrecken der Händler und Herrscher. Piratengemeinschaften in der Geschichte* (Wien 2012) 100-122, 107.

- Gottfried *Liedl*, Seefahrt im islamischen Westen. In: Alexander *Marboe*, Andreas *Obenhaus* (Hg.), Seefahrt und die frühe euopäische Expansion (Expansion Interaktion Akkulturation 15, Wien 2009) 61-93.
- Gottfried *Liedl*, Vernunft und Utopie. Die Méditerrané (1350-1650). In: Peter Feldbauer, Jean-Paul Lehnert (Hg.), Die Welt im 16. Jahrhundert (Wien 2008) 116-152.
- Nabil *Matar*, Europe through Arab Eyes. 1587-1727 (E-Book, New York 2009).
- Nabil *Matar*, Islam and Britain. 1558-1658 (Cambridge 1998).
- Nina *Nustede*, Mythos Störtebeker. Handel und Piraterie des späten Mittelalters und die Interpretationen in der Neuzeit. Klaus Störtebeker in Geschichte und Sage. 'Edler' Räuber oder 'gemeiner' Verbrecher? (Hannover 2008).
- Stephen *Ortega*, Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Ottoman-Venetian Encounters (Farnham 2014).
- Charles H. *Parker*, Global Interactions in the Early Modern Age 1400-1800 (New York 2010).
- Peter *Partner*, God of Battles. Holy Wars of Christianity and Islam (London 1997).
- Eugen *Pfister*, Kulturtransfer und Piraterie. Die Karibik in der frühen Neuzeit 1493 – 1713. Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien, (Wien 2006).
- Janusz *Piekalkiewicz*, Freibeuter. Das bunte wilde Leben der Buccaneers in der Karibischen See (München 1973).
- Andreas *Rieger*, Die Seeaktivitäten der muslimischen Beutefahrer als Bestandteil der staatlichen Flotte während der osmanischen Expansion im Mittelmeer im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. In: Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 174 (Berlin 1994).
- Alex *Ritsema*, Pirates and Privateers from the Low Countries. C.1500- C.1810 (Deventer 2008).
- Natalie *Rothman*, Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul (E-Book, Ithaca 2012).
- Gottfried *Seebaß*, Geschichte des Christentums III. Spätmittelalter- Reformation- Konfessionalisierung (Stuttgart 2006).
- Alfred *Schlicht*, Die Araber und Europa: 2000 Jahre gemeinsamer Geschichte (Stuttgart 2008).
- Desanka *Schwara*, Fakt und Fiktion: Die Piraterie als politisch-wirtschaftlicher Faktor und als Projektionsfläche rund um die Maltesischen Inseln. In: Desanka *Schwara*, Kaufleute, Seefahrer und Piraten im Mittelmeerraum der Neuzeit (München 2011) 391-479.
- Erkan *Sezgin*, Formation of the Concept of Terrorism. In: Suleyman *Ozeren*, Ismail Dincer *Gunes*, Diab M. *Al-Badayneh* (Hg.), Understanding Terrorism. Analysis of Sociological and Psychological Aspects (Human and Societal Dynamics 22, Amsterdam 2007) 17-27.
- Philip de *Souza*, Piracy in Classical Antiquity. The Origins and Evolution of the Concept. In: Stefan *Amirell*, Leos *Müller* (Hg.), Persistent Piracy. Maritime Violence and State Formation in Global Historical Perspective (Hampshire/New York 2014).
- Roland *Stocker*, Die Seemacht der Osmanen und Korsaren. In: Gottfried *Liedl* (Hg.), Der Zorn des Achill, Europas militärische Kultur-Konfrontation und Austausch (Wien 2004) 121-139.
- Janice E. *Thomson*, Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns. State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe (Princeton 1994).

William Wood, Ellen Johnson (Ed.), Elizabethan Sea Dogs (E-Book, 2004).

Online sources:

<http://www.essential-humanities.net/img/history/his109.png>, 4.07.2017.

<https://qph.ec.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-963b577a90e2f60af22aad5b6c31a81a-c>, 19.7.2017.

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/renegade>, 3.10.2017.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dragoman>, 4.10.2017.

Attachments

Zusammenfassung

In der vorliegenden Arbeit wird auf die Rolle der Korsaren im Mittelmeer in der Frühen Neuzeit eingegangen. Dabei wird eingehend die Frage behandelt inwiefern der Begriff Korsar und die Begriffe Pirat, Bukanier, Kaperfahrer etc. zu definieren sind, da sich im wissenschaftlichen Kontext größtenteils kein Konsens über diese Begriffe erfassen lässt. Deshalb wird eine Einteilung in legale und regionale Terminologien vorgenommen. Um zu untermalen, wie wichtig eine Nomenklatur in Zusammenhang mit Piraterie ist, wird das Beispiel der Korsaren verwendet, um zu zeigen welchen Einflussbereich diese hatten und in wie weit sie das Bild des Mittelmeers prägten. Diese Hypothese wird durch den Einflussbereich der Korsaren vor allem an der Nordafrikaküste beispielhaft gezeigt. Die christlichen Korsaren werden ebenfalls den muslimischen gegenübergestellt, um zu zeigen, dass sich diese beiden Gruppen nur wenig voneinander unterschieden. Hierbei wird auch begründet, warum es gerade im Maghreb zu einem starken Anstieg an Korsaren gekommen ist. Dabei wird die Hypothese untersucht, dass der Anstieg mit den geographischen Gegebenheiten, dem Seehandel, dem islamisch/ christlichen Konflikt, der Reconquista und der Vertreibung der Mauren, sowie der Einfluss der Hohen Pforte zusammenhängt. Dabei werden die Städte Algier, Tunis, Tripoli und Rabat-Salé als Beispiele für Korsaren Nester herangezogen. In weiterer Folge wird der Einflussbereich der Korsaren in diesen Städten untersucht. Die Frage nach einer frontera, beziehungsweise einer Mauer, die zwischen Europa und Nordafrika und dem Osmanischen Reich keinen Durchlass zuließ wird ebenfalls eingegangen. In diesem Zusammenhang wird der Begriff Renegat behandelt und aufgezeigt, dass es in der Realität sehr viel Austausch zwischen Europa und seinem Kontrahenten gab und Renegaten eine Brücke zwischen den beiden Kontrahenten schufen. Außerdem wird die Annahme belegt, dass Religion im Zusammenhang mit der Konvertierung der Renegaten nur eine untergeordnete Rolle spielte und dass diese als selbstbestimmende Individuen auftraten, die sich in vielen Fällen daran versuchten durch die Konvertierung eine Besserung ihrer Situation zu verschaffen.

