

Notes on Algiers in the 17th century through the memoirs of the knight Laurent d'Arvieux (1635-1702)

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Abstract:

During the Ottoman period, many Europeans of different professions visited Algiers. Among them were diplomats and consuls sent by their governments to negotiate peace treaties with Algiers and to look after the interests of their citizens. There were also doctors, members of exploratory missions, merchants - especially those based in French trading centres - clerics tasked with ransoming captives and returning them to their homelands, and senior officers. Many of these individuals were themselves captives, often from the groups mentioned above. All of them left behind memoirs and writings that included observations about Algiers and life there. Some of these accounts were fair in their descriptions, while others were biased, influenced by preconceived notions about Algiers and its people. Among them was the French diplomat Knight Laurent d'Arvieux, who spent several months in Algiers and provided us with some observations in his memoirs.

Keywords: Travel, French diplomats, Eyalet of Algiers, France, diplomatic relations, treaties, commercial centres.

Introduction:

Algerian-French relations during the Ottoman period are among the most significant and complex, given their profound impact on Algeria in particular. These relations often tended towards conflict, as evidenced by the regular French naval attacks on Algiers. At other times, the relationship moved towards peace through treaties and diplomatic missions, with the French authorities sending envoys and consuls to settle disputes and resolve outstanding issues between the two parties. The knight Laurent d'Arvieux was one of the consuls sent to Algeria to resolve various problems between the two governments. Before being sent to Algeria, d'Arvieux was appointed consul in several eastern countries, which probably contributed to France's decision to choose him

because of his familiarity with the Orient and several eastern languages. This leads to the following questions Who is Sir Laurent d'Arvieux? What were the reasons for his appointment as consul in Algeria? What were the circumstances that preceded his arrival? What observations did he make about Algiers during his stay? What key insights can be gained from reading his memoirs? The writing of this essay aims to achieve several objectives, including introducing the character of the knight Laurent d'Arvieux, exploring his memoirs and examining his notes on Algiers and public life there. In order to answer the questions posed and to achieve the objectives of this research paper, we have outlined the following elements:

Introduction

- Definition of the Knight Laurent d'Arvieux
- Definition of his memoirs
- Reasons for Laurent d'Arvieux's arrival in Algeria and the circumstances leading up to it
- Description of the city of Algiers and its facilities
- Inhabitants of the city
- Conditions of Christian prisoners
- Status of the Jewish community
- Language of the inhabitants
- Suburbs and rural areas
- Conclusion
- Conclusion
- Sources and references

Definition of the Knight Laurent d'Arvieux:

He was a famous French diplomat, traveller and merchant, born in 1635 in the countryside of Marseilles to a noble family of Italian descent from Lombardy¹. His long sojourns in the East had made him fluent in several Eastern languages, including Arabic, Turkish, Syriac and Hebrew². This knowledge brought him closer to King Louis XIV³ and his minister Colbert⁴, which led to his appointment as a diplomat in the Orient⁵.

In 1653, d'Arvieux set out on a journey to acquire knowledge of trade in order to restore his family's wealth. He was 18 years old at the time. His first stop was the city of Izmir, from where he visited major cities in Egypt, the Levant, Jerusalem and Tunisia⁶. After twelve years in France, he returned to the court of King Louis XIV, who sent him on his first diplomatic mission in 1666 as an envoy to Tunisia⁷ to sign a treaty granting the French commercial rights in Cape Negro (northern Tunisia) and Tabarka (northern Tunisia). As a result, he was able to free three hundred and sixty (360) French prisoners in 1668⁸.

On his return to Paris, d'Arvieux was appointed official translator for the Turkish language in the famous Ottoman embassy that arrived in Paris in 1669, headed by Suleiman Agha, the envoy of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV⁹ to France. Following this embassy, he undertook another mission to Istanbul, where he was appointed extraordinary ambassador by the king¹⁰.

In 1672, d'Arvieux attended the signing of a treaty in Istanbul between the French ambassador and Sultan Mehmed IV. He saw to it that he wrote a report and submitted it to his government. In 1673, he compiled an Ottoman-Latin dictionary. On 23 April of the same year, he was appointed a Knight of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and of the Lazarists¹¹ in the city of Jerusalem, at the same time as these orders were founded by the king¹².

He was then appointed consul in Algeria, where he arrived on 10 September 1674. In 1675, several problems forced him to return to Paris in April 1675, about eight months after his arrival¹³. There, Colbert asked him to prepare a report on the status of the French consulates in the East and the state of the French commercial centres there¹⁴.

Finally, in 1679, d'Arvieux was appointed consul in Aleppo, where he remained until 1686, the year in which he returned to Paris and began to study the Bible and write his memoirs. This phase of his life ended with his death in 1702¹⁵.

Definition of his memoirs:

The memoirs of the Knight d'Arvieux are divided into six volumes, entitled:

“Mémoires du Chevalier D'Arvieux envoyé extraordinaire du roi à la Porte, consul d'Alep, d'Alger, de Tripoli, et autres échelles du levant”.

This translates into Arabic as: “مذكرات الفارس دارفيو مبعوث الملك للباب العالي، قنصل حلب، الجزائر، طرابلس، وموانئ الشرق الأخرى”.

These memoirs were first published in 1717 and later reissued in 1735 after being revised by Father Jean Baptiste Labat¹⁶. There is also an incomplete and inauthentic manuscript preserved in the public library of Marseille¹⁷.

Knight d'Arvieux's memories are considered to be one of the most important historical sources because of the precise information they contain as a result of his extensive commercial and diplomatic travels. This experience gave him a thorough understanding of the conditions in the countries he visited, as did his knowledge of Eastern languages, particularly Ottoman Turkish.

The memoirs are divided into six volumes: the first three contain a collection of his travels to Egypt, Izmir, Mount Lebanon and Carmel¹⁸, together with information on their economic conditions. The fourth volume covers his travels to Tunisia, Constantinople and Edirne.

The fifth volume deals with his return from Constantinople, the foundation of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and of Saint Lazarus in Jerusalem, and his appointment as consul in Algeria. In this volume he gives a description of the city, some aspects of social life, its defensive structures, its political system, its army, the methods by which its pirates set out to sea, their acquisition of spoils, how these were distributed and the punishments applied in the country. He also describes the city of Béjaïa, its defences and the relationship between its inhabitants and the janissaries. Finally, he describes his departure from Algeria and his return to Paris.

In the sixth volume, he talks about Aleppo, where he lived, and provides extensive information that introduces the reader to Damascus, its topography and climate. He gives a detailed picture of its neighbourhoods and houses, as well as of the city's water supply. This volume also contains a census of the Damascenes of different religions, with a focus on the conditions of Christians. He reviews the situation of the Jewish community and their places of worship. Finally, he describes the Umayyad mosque, its construction and condition¹⁹.

4- Reasons for Laurent d'Arvieux's arrival in Algeria and the circumstances leading up to it:

From 1672, after a long period of calm following the signing of the treaty of 1666, tensions began to emerge in Algerian-French relations. This unrest coincided with the war that Algeria was waging against both the Netherlands and England, which were aligned with France's interests. The main cause of

these tensions was France's strong desire to exploit the bastion²⁰ for its commercial interests. There were frequent disputes between French merchants over the right to use the bastion. These conflicts led to delays in the payment of debts by the merchants to the Algerian treasury, which relied on part of these revenues to pay the salaries of the military units. It is well known that delays in paying their salaries led to protests and increased tension²¹.

Earlier, in 1670, the French merchant Arnaud had obtained the privilege of exploiting the bastion and had undertaken to pay all the Centre's debts. However, following a lawsuit brought against him by his partners, who demanded that he return to France to present the accounts for his period of management, the French government appointed another manager for the bastion, named Turban. This new manager caused concern to Dey Haji Mohammad²² because he arrived with two merchants who had previously conspired against Haji Mohammad in collusion with the Bey of Constantine to assassinate him and interfere in domestic affairs. As a result, the two merchants withdrew and Turban promised to pay all their debts, but he was reluctant to fulfil his promise²³.

In addition to these disturbances, other problems arose, in particular the reception by French ships of European prisoners who had fled Algiers and their subsequent removal from the city. The captains of these ships took advantage of the freedom of movement they enjoyed during the day. They also took advantage of the friendly relations with Algeria, which granted them various privileges, as set out in the fourth clause of the 1666 peace treaty. Initially, the Algerian authorities were unaware of these violations, but as the incidents continued, the Dey complained to the French king. However, the King deliberately ignored the issue and failed to respond. He also ignored another important matter concerning the exchange of a number of Algerian prisoners who served as oarsmen on French ships for an equal number of Frenchmen held by enemy ships²⁴.

Faced with these complex circumstances, d'Arvieux was appointed consul in Algeria to succeed the consul, Patriarch Jean Le Vacher, during whose term of office the French consulate experienced disturbances and disruptions in its operations. He arrived in Algiers on 10 September 1674, as mentioned above, having been appointed by Colbert²⁵. A letter from the Dey Haji Mohammad to King Louis XIV, noted by Eugene Plantet, states that d'Arvieux had arrived in the city and was very happy about it, and that he would receive a warm welcome

and great esteem from the Dey, as the ruling authorities in Algeria were very pleased with him²⁶.

However, d'Arvieux wrote in his memoirs that shortly after his ship had docked in the port of Algiers, the Dey, accompanied by two men, passed him in a small boat. At that moment, Patriarch Le Vacher, together with the Turkish interpreter Sidi Ali, some janissaries and a French translator, came to greet him and convey the Dey's greetings. As the Dey was at sea, it was Baba Hasan, the Dey's son-in-law, who received d'Arvieux on the divan. He was a very unpleasant, rude and harsh man who did not allow d'Arvieux the time to express a polite greeting; instead he vented his anger on the interpreter, Sidi Ali, for not informing Consul d'Arvieux that he was to meet the Dey before disembarking.

Baba Hasan also suspected that d'Arvieux had come to encourage the Bastion to continue its nefarious plans against Arnaud, who was a friend of the authorities, and to replace him with the aforementioned De La Tour, who had previously conspired against the Dey and his son-in-law. The next day, both Sidi Ali and Consul Le Vacher went to the Dey to inform him of d'Arvieux's strong dissatisfaction with the way he had been received by Baba Hasan. The Dey, however, explained to them the reason for his son-in-law's anger and asked them to inform d'Arvieux of his great pleasure in meeting him. This was indeed done, for the Dey warmly welcomed d'Arvieux, acknowledged him as the Consul of France, and informed him that he would receive the respect and recognition due to his position, in honour of the King of France²⁷.

His appointment as consul in Algeria was aimed at settling the debts of the French centres and the French king²⁸, which had led to disputes between the two governments. In particular, the Marseille merchants living in Algeria were involved in the conflict, supporting the opponents of the merchant Arnaud and trying to tarnish his image before the Algerian authorities. This illustrates the seriousness of the struggle between these merchants and the Bastion authorities.

In the meantime, the merchant Arnaud died, bringing an end to the conflict. As a result, d'Arvieux began negotiations with the Algerian government to appoint De Lafont as governor of the bastion²⁹. Despite the challenges, d'Arvieux managed to partially resolve the issue of the bastion, while maintaining the terms of the peace treaty signed between France and Algiers in 1666³⁰. He also successfully concluded a deal for the release of twenty-two (22) Algerians in exchange for twenty-two (22) French prisoners in Algeria. The city of Marseille would arrange the transport of the Algerian prisoners to their homeland, in the

hope that Algeria would take similar steps to return the French prisoners to their country³¹.

5- Description of the city of Algiers and its facilities:

The city of Algiers is neither perfectly triangular nor square. Because all the houses are white and rise almost like a theatre, from a distance it looks like a ship with sails. At the top of the city we find the Kasbah, and then the buildings begin to slope down towards the sea. The city is surrounded by simple walls, without any major defences, except for a few towers and arrow holes. Nevertheless, the walls are remarkable for their thickness, due to the quality of the stones used in their construction³².

1- The gates of the city and what lies beyond them:

Algiers has several gates, but d'Arvieux chose to discuss only six because of their importance. The first gate, called Bab Azoun, is located in the middle of the ramparts and opens onto a long street resembling a neighbourhood where meat and foodstuffs brought in from the countryside are sold. It is worth noting that the merchants who sell their goods in this street live in the same neighbourhood. It was here that the Mauritanian prince Azoun³³ fortified the city, and the gate was named Bab Azoun. Below it are large metal hooks used for the punishment of criminals and traitors³⁴.

Not far from this gate, there is a Muslim cemetery where the graves are arranged as follows: wealthy family members are buried in special sections surrounded by low walls. The graves of important figures in the state (such as rulers and others) take the form of small square buildings, resembling a chapel, topped with domes³⁵. The graves of the common people, on the other hand, are scattered haphazardly throughout the area. This is not the only cemetery; there are also cemeteries outside each gate. In addition, there are several ovens for baking bricks, built in a round and elevated manner, similar to the windmills found in European countries.

Outside the gates, there are always small minarets where the religious scholars reside, resembling the dervishes of Constantinople. D'Arvieux noted that they showed greater piety and devotion than others³⁶.

The second gate is called Bab el-Jadid and leads to the Emperor's Fortress³⁷; however, this gate does not have much significance. The third gate is known as Bab el-Kasbah because of its proximity to the fortress, which houses the armoury and the treasury³⁸. Not far away, there is a square that used to be used

to execute Christians who broke the laws of the land. The last person to be punished here was an Italian who was condemned to be burnt alive for not paying his debts³⁹.

The fourth gate is known as Bab al-Wad, which means “Gate of the River”, because this gate, located in the north-west of the city, is fed by a river⁴⁰ or stream formed by the run-off of water from the mountains after heavy rains. Outside this gate is also a large square where Christians were burned alive for breaking the law. This probably explains the large quantities of firewood sold there. Not far from this square is a cemetery for Christians⁴¹.

The fifth gate is called Bab al-Bahr⁴² because it is the exit for those who want to walk along the seafront. The seafront consists of a stone structure that forms a large semicircle with a width of four to five cubits⁴³, a length of more than one hundred and fifty (150) cubits and a height of one and a half cubits. This promenade serves as a harbour and protects the ships from the northern winds that hinder navigation in all seasons.

Finally, the sixth gate, known as Bab al-Masmaka⁴⁴, is named after the fishing boats that line an old, partially buried basin near this gate. It is connected by two high and very wide arches that appear to have been built in ancient times. Ships (galleys and other small vessels) are also built in this area, as it is very easy to get out to sea from here.

These gates are always guarded by Janissary soldiers and are closed shortly after sunset and remain closed throughout the night. Anyone who arrives in the city late is forced to spend the night outside⁴⁵.

2- Fortifications of the city:

There are many fortifications designed to protect the city, well armed with artillery; however, d’Arvieux observed that these defences did not provide sufficient protection and were not well organised⁴⁶.

The main fortress is built on a hill and has a wide moat that ends at the edge of the slope. In the past, it was the headquarters of the Divan, which met there four days a week. These meetings are now held in the Dey’s residence (Dar al-Sultan) as it is more comfortable for the Dey and his entourage. The Dey only visits the fortress on the two Bayram holidays⁴⁷ or when he has an important matter to discuss. It is forbidden for Christians to enter⁴⁸, and even Turks do not visit it because of the difficulty of access.

Inside this fortress are cannons, as well as some torture devices on display to the public, which are sometimes used to crush men alive. Behind this fortress is a steep slope where the air is very cold, making an attack on the city from this direction difficult. Not far away are two outposts with fortifications to prevent the enemy from capturing the city; one of them has a seven-pointed star base, but it is not large enough to provide the necessary protection.

The other fortress is called the Emperor's Fortress and is characterised by its large size and square shape. Each of its four corners has small round towers, with a main square tower in the centre, although it lacks substantial defences. The fourth fortress, known as the Bab al-Wad Fortress, is about three hundred steps away and is essentially just a large round tower with a few cannons.

There is also a fifth fortress outside Bab Azoun, which is octagonal and has no distinctive features. Neither this nor the previous tower had any significant defensive importance. The sixth fortress, built near the sea, plays no role at all.

The seventh fortress, built on a rock at the southernmost point of the seafront, is also octagonal and its walls are filled with large cannons to protect the entrance to the harbour. Finally, the eighth fort is built on the northern side of the seafront and is equipped with artillery facing the sea⁴⁹.

Each of these fortresses has well-equipped garrisons with cannons and ammunition to bravely defend the city against attack. Their construction did not require much effort, as they were built by prisoners, and even Jews and peasants were involved in this work. Despite all these defences and fortifications, d'Arvieux states that Algiers cannot be considered a great city with strong fortifications, because if we (meaning the French) were to go down to the coast, entrench ourselves and bombard all these small towers, they would easily collapse by themselves and the city would be on the verge of destruction⁵⁰.

3- Water sources:

The city has one hundred and twenty-five springs, but the water is drawn from only two places, reaching the houses through very old canals. Nevertheless, the water is very good and essential in such a hot city⁵¹.

4_ Streets and houses of the city:

D'Arvieux described the streets of Algiers as dark, making movement difficult and uncomfortable. This is due to the covered balconies that extend from the houses into the street. However, the widest and largest street connects Bab al-

Wad and Bab Azoun, in the most luxurious and beautiful part of the city. It is flanked by narrow alleyways lined with shops, which, despite their width, are uncomfortable and do not provide a sense of ease due to the large number of people and animals that fill them⁵².

D'Arvieux estimated the number of houses in Algiers at around fifteen thousand (15,000). Although he noted that this was a large number, he justified it by saying that it was rare for more than one family to live in a single house. All the houses are built of brick and adobe, using mortar⁵³ made from simple earth, and are whitewashed inside and out with lime, indicating the inhabitants' strong emphasis on cleanliness. This also gives the houses a beauty that makes them particularly striking, especially from the outside⁵⁴.

The houses have two floors: the ground floor and the first floor. On the ground floor (especially in the larger and more beautiful houses) there is a square courtyard surrounded by large and long rooms that form the main part of the house, with corridors that d'Arvieux compared to those found in monasteries. The first floor consists of a corridor with windows and doors leading to the rooms.

Access between the two floors is provided by very comfortable staircases, made of stone or brick in the larger houses, and of wood in others. The corridors are decorated with stone or brick columns, and in some palace-like houses, marble columns. Finally, all the houses have roofs with well-paved floors made of tiles, and their walls are very high, protecting the homeowners from falling and preventing easy passage through them. This design also keeps the women on the roofs out of sight, as jealousy is very strong in these regions.

Returning to the rooms, the doors have two wings and are as high as the walls, which measure six feet and are decorated with zellij, which d'Arvieux compared to European marble and which gives the house beauty, freshness and cleanliness⁵⁵.

D'Arvieux noted that the houses had no openings to the street other than the door, which meant that they had no windows. At most, there are narrow, covered openings, which d'Arvieux attributed to the strong jealousy in the community, allowing curious women to observe what goes on in the street without being seen⁵⁶.

In an effort to provide comfort for the women, many residents build what are known as kiosks, small stalls that extend into the street. However, these kiosks

clutter and narrow the streets, preventing air circulation during the day. They are all built in the same way⁵⁷.

If you take an evening stroll, you can enjoy the refreshing air and the view of the sea. Because the city is built like an amphitheatre and the houses are similar, they do not block each other's air or view⁵⁸.

It is also necessary to talk about the King's House (Dar al-Sultan), where the Dey resides and the Divan meetings are held. This house is very large and beautifully designed, with a very spacious courtyard leading to a hall supported by columns. Vines of esparto grass climb up its walls to a height of six feet⁵⁹, bordered by a collection of hanging weapons, along with several large clubs and wooden staffs. Directly above the hall is the roof that forms part of the Dey's residence. One of the pillars supporting the roof is hollow and conceals a pump that brings water to the bath, which is equipped with fountains.

Another part of the house is the divan hall, where the members of the military gather during meetings, sitting on a stone platform built into the hall. This is about all that can be said; all these buildings are somewhat similar, making it difficult to describe them in a way that does them justice. Moreover, access to most of the rooms in these houses is forbidden⁶⁰.

5- Mosques of the city:

There are many beautiful mosques in the city, topped by magnificent minarets from which the muezzins call the people to prayer. A white flag is raised at the top of the minaret every day of the week, except on Friday when a blue or green flag is flown. This flag remains raised throughout the call to prayer, a practice that d'Arvieux notes is unique compared to other Ottoman provinces. It is known that Christians are not allowed to enter the mosques, except for those assigned to carry out repairs⁶¹. However, Christians are not prevented from looking inside the mosques as they pass by⁶².

6- Barracks for soldiers:

These are vast and large buildings designed to house soldiers, which d'Arvieux compared to monasteries. They have a very large central courtyard with numerous fountains and basins for daily use, such as ablutions. This courtyard is surrounded by rooms, each housing eight men. In spite of the large number of men in the rooms, they were kept clean at all times by the prisoners, who paid a tax to the divan in exchange for living in these barracks and for selling wine, tobacco and cooked meat to the soldiers⁶³.

7- Accommodation for foreigners:

The hotels are very large and square buildings in which foreign merchants reside. D'Arvieux expressed his complete discomfort with the abundance of hotels, attributing it to the large number of people staying there and the vast quantities of goods that are constantly stored in them. The French Consulate is one of the largest buildings in the city, with a chapel where Christians can practise their religious rituals with the same freedom they enjoy in their own countries⁶⁴.

8- The inhabitants of the city:

D'Arvieux estimated the population of the city to be over one hundred thousand, a figure supported by the number of people he encountered in the streets. Because the streets are narrow, they emphasise the large population more than wide streets would. The population of Algiers is made up of a mixture of peoples, starting with the Turks, who make up the army and who also appoint the members of the Divan, who govern the country and change the government officials. Then there are the "A'lj", who come from various Christian nations. There are also the Kouloughlis, the children of Turkish soldiers and Algerian women. The indigenous population is large, but it is not represented in the political life of the country.

Among the city's inhabitants were the Moors expelled from Spain and Portugal, known as Andalusians or Thaghris⁶⁵, whom d'Arvieux called Granadans because the first to leave their homeland came from the kingdom of Granada⁶⁶. In addition, there were various Jewish ethnicities⁶⁷, estimated at around ten thousand (10,000) or eleven thousand (11,000), which is roughly the same number that d'Arvieux estimated for the Christian prisoners in the city⁶⁸.

7- Conditions of the Christian prisoners:

The baths were intended for the prisoners to sleep in. D'Arvieux described them as terrible prisons where the poor prisoners were piled on top of each other. He noted that these places were horrible, filled with the steam from the nearby kitchens, along with the noise, shouting and commotion that pervaded the area. Nevertheless, there is a chapel and a room where the priest holds mass for the prisoners before sunrise, which they can attend before going to work.

A Turk, known as the Guardian Pasha⁶⁹, is in charge of guarding these prisons, assisted by several aides who help him collect considerable fees in exchange for granting licences to the prisoners to run taverns and sell boiled meat, tobacco

and other items. These places are frequented by soldiers, sailors and common people who come to drink, eat, smoke and spend the whole day there⁷⁰.

One of the activities carried out by the prisoners is to steal from shops at night. It is known that these shops are securely locked and never opened once they are closed. These precautions are essential to prevent theft, which can easily occur if the doors are not properly secured. In this regard, d'Arvieux noted that the Christian prisoners were imitating the Algerians, whom he described as natural thieves. The Christian prisoners believe that they can outdo the Algerians in stealing, so they go out at night, because they do not sleep in the baths, but in the houses of their owners, who allow them to go out at night. They gather in groups and drill holes in the walls of the shops, and within an hour they can empty the most well-stocked shops of their goods.

What makes their theft easier is that shopkeepers and craftsmen never spend the night in their shops. The only people they fear are the night watchmen. When a patrol of these watchmen passes by, the thieves have enough time to carry out their thefts. If they are caught, they receive only a few lashes. The prisoners resort to theft out of necessity, following the example of the local population. This theft can also be seen as a reaction to their imprisonment by the Turks⁷¹.

8- The situation of the Jewish community:

D'Arvieux notes that despite the large number of Jews in the city, they have very few synagogues (places of worship for Jews). The Turks, who hate them deeply, do not allow them access to their meeting places and impose heavy fines on them⁷².

9- Language of the inhabitants:

It is well known that Algiers is home to many Christian nations, whose members come to the city daily under the guise of captivity. As a result, a language gradually emerged which was used by everyone, especially the owners of the prisoners, to communicate with their captives. This language was a mixture of Spanish, Italian, Provençal and other languages spoken by the Provençals, known as the lingua franca. Meanwhile, the indigenous people of the country speak no language among themselves other than Arabic, which is very different from the Arabic spoken in the eastern regions.

As for the soldiers, they communicate exclusively in Turkish (Ottoman), which they use in the divan and in meetings with the elite. This is the same language used by the rulers and members of the divan. When it came to communicating

the decisions of the divan to the local population, an interpreter was responsible for translating and informing them, as they did not understand Turkish, which was considered a great honour by the Turkish soldiers. D'Arvieux notes that the gulf between the Turks and the local population is very wide, as the latter consider the Turks to be usurpers of their land⁷³.

10- Suburbs and countryside:

The suburbs of the city consist of a series of hills that are close in height and similar in appearance, creating a picturesque landscape. From the top they gradually descend to the coast. Their beauty and charm have been enhanced by the efforts of the prisoners, who have planted gardens, cultivated roofs, vineyards and nurseries for fruit trees. All these areas are irrigated by a single water source, represented by wells scattered here and there⁷⁴.

In the suburbs, there are more than eighteen thousand houses that resemble the rural houses of Marseille and make a similarly positive impression.

As for the more distant countryside, its inhabitants cultivate their land and live in tents, which they move from place to place according to the availability of water and pasture for their livestock. They call the tent "dar" and the plural "douar". Thus, a douar is a collection of many tents that form a portable and mobile village⁷⁵.

11- Conclusions:

The author made a historical error regarding the reason for naming Bab Azoun as such, which indicates his limited knowledge of the history of the region.

The author's superficial description of Algiers, its houses, streets and inhabitants, as well as the lack of depth in his observations, may be attributed to the short duration of his stay in the city.

The author focused more on the fortifications, castles and garrisons of Algiers than on other aspects he observed, suggesting a desire on the part of the French to conquer the city. This is supported by some of the sentences he included at the end of his remarks on the city's fortifications.

The author diminished the importance of the fortifications of Algiers, describing them as not offering any substantial protection to the city, which is a considerable injustice to these structures that have always defended the city against European invasions.

The author's portrayal of Algerians as natural thieves and his failure to mention their positive qualities reflect his disdain and contempt for them, especially in the broader context of French attitudes towards Algerians. However, it cannot be denied that he was somewhat fair in describing the city as clean, noting that the Algerians were scrupulous about cleanliness, whitewashing their houses, which made them impressive.

The author expressed considerable discomfort with the city's streets, hotels and houses that block the light from the streets, despite his admiration for the city's coastal views that can be enjoyed in the evening.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that the knight Laurent d'Arvieux did not fully succeed in solving the problems he came to the city to solve. He claimed to have been treated with considerable rudeness by Baba Hassan, the son-in-law of Dey Hajj Muhammad. As for the observations he left in his memoirs, they were somewhat superficial and did not cover everything that any visitor to the city would notice, in particular his considerable discomfort with Algiers because of its narrow, dark alleys, the large number of people and the lack of light.

Although he expressed admiration for the cleanliness of the outside of the houses because of their whitewashing, and for the walks at night near the sea to enjoy the gentle breeze, he did not mention any positive qualities of the inhabitants of Algiers, describing them only as natural thieves, which led the Christian prisoners to imitate them. He was also unjust in describing the defensive fortifications of Algiers as insufficient to protect the city from attack.

He also raised an important point about the relationship between the Ottoman Turks and the Algerians, stating that the distance between the two parties was very great because the Algerians considered the Ottoman Turks to be usurpers of their land. He also spoke of the contempt with which the Algerian people and authorities regarded the Jews, noting that they were not allowed to practise their religious rituals freely. Nevertheless, the observations contained in his memoirs remain a source for the history of the Ottoman period in Algeria.

Footnotes:

¹- Vanezia Parlea:Un Franc parmi les Arabes, Parcours oriental et découverte de l'Autre chez le chevalier d'Arvieux, UGA Éditions, Grenoble, France, 2015, p. 19.

²- Nassereddine Saïdouni, and Maouia Saïdouni:Mémoire de la ville d'Alger à travers les textes historiques, two volumes, Al-Basa'ir Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2016, vol. 1, p. 192.

³- Louis XIV, also known as “Louis the Great” and “the Sun King”, was born in Saint-Germain in 1638 and died in Versailles in 1715. He ruled France from 1643 to 1715. He was from the Bourbon dynasty, the son of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria, who became his regent along with Mazarin after his father’s death when Louis was five years old. Colbert then helped him develop the state and consolidate administrative centralisation. On the religious front, Louis XIV came into conflict with Pope Innocent XI and also with the Protestants, fighting ruthlessly against the followers of the Jansenist doctrine. For more information, see *Collectif Larousse: Le petit Larousse illustré,* ed. Larousse, Paris, 2007, p. 1524.

⁴- His full name was Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a French politician who was born in 1619 in Reims and died in 1683 in Paris. Proposed by Mazarin as a minister to Louis XIV, he became close to him and gained his trust. He helped to overthrow the minister Nicolas Fouquet and took his place. He held various positions, including superintendent of public works in 1664, financial superintendent in 1665, then minister of foreign affairs in 1668 and minister of the navy in 1669. Based on mercantilist theories, Colbert developed industry and trade, bringing in craftsmen from abroad who multiplied the number of factories in France. He also reorganised the finances, the judiciary and the navy. He set up a registration system for maritime activities, a fund for the disabled, several trading companies (East and West Indies in 1664, East Indies in 1670, Senegal in 1673) and the Academy of Sciences. He printed a series of notebooks aimed at standardising legislation on the basis of royal centralisation. Finally, Colbert sought to rationalise royal expenditure and curb extravagance. His brilliance did not last long, however, and he was replaced by the minister François Michel Le Tellier. See: Collectif Larousse: *ibid*, p. 1284.

⁵- Vanezia Parlea, « Images de soi et de l’autre en artiste à la croisée des regards dans les mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux », in *Viatica* [en ligne], vol. 2, publié le 18/02/2015, <http://Viatica.univ-bpclermont.fr>, p. 1. 15.

⁶- Eugène Plantet : *Les consuls de France à Alger avant la conquête (1579-1830)*, Alem El Afkar, Alger, 2014, p.

⁷- Vanezia Parlea : *Images de soi et de l’autre...*, *op. cit*

⁸- Nassereddine Saïdouni et Maouia Saïdouni : *Références précédentes*.

⁹- He was the nineteenth Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and the son of Sultan Ibrahim I. Born in 1051 AH / 1642 CE, he ascended the throne in 1058 AH / 1649 CE at the age of seven. His grandmother, Mahbube Khatun, known as Sultan Kosem, ruled the country according to her whims. Some of the Sultan’s advisors suggested that she be assassinated, which she was. As a result of these circumstances, the country fell into great chaos, as evidenced by the corruption of the military, their excesses and the rebellions of both soldiers and civilians. There were frequent removals and appointments of Grand Viziers and the state was on the verge of collapse had it not been for the wisdom of Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, who took office in 1067 AH / 1656 CE. He worked to stabilise the situation, reform the country, replenish the empty treasury, strengthen the military and combat external threats. However, he died five years after his appointment.

In 1084 AH / 1674 CE, the Ottoman Empire captured several fortresses in south-eastern Europe, while a number of European states declared war on the empire. Towards the end of this Sultan’s reign, a famine devastated the population and a fire broke out in Istanbul while the Sultan indulged in hunting and pleasure. This led the Janissaries to revolt against him, resulting in his deposition in 1099 AH / 1687 CE, after which they installed his brother, Sultan Suleiman II, in his place. He died in 1104 AH / 1692 CE and was buried in his mother’s tomb. For more see: Yusuf Bey Asaf: **History of the Sultans of the Ottoman Dynasty from their Beginning to the Present**, ed. Muhammad Zainhum Mohammad Azab, 1st edition, Maktabat Madhubuli, Cairo, 1415 AH / 1995 CE, pp. 89, 93; and Muhammad Fared Bey, lawyer: *History of the Sublime Ottoman State*.ed. İhsan Haki, 12th edition, Dar Al-Nafaes, Beirut, 1433 AH / 2012 CE, pp. 289, 304.

¹⁰- Vanezia Parlea : *images de soi et de l’autre...*, *Op.cit*.

¹¹- They are attributed to Saint Lazarus and belong to the Congregation of the Missions, founded by Saint Vincent de Paul in 1625. For more information, see: Collectif Larousse: *Op. cit.*, p. 626.

¹²- Vanezia Parlea: *Un Franc parmi les Arabes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹³- Yahia Bouaziz: *Algeria’s External Relations with European States and Kingdoms 1500-1830*, special edition, Dar Al-Basa’ir for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2009, p. 83.

¹⁴- Nassereddine Saïdouni and Maouia Saïdouni: *Référence précédente*.

¹⁵- *Ibid*.

¹⁶- A Dominican friar and missionary, he was born in Paris in 1663 and died in 1738. He took part in the conquest of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean. In addition to revising the memoirs of Knight Laurent d’Arvieux, he left several works: a French translation of Father Caffarelli’s book entitled *Historical Memoir on Western Ethiopia*, which he supplemented with several Portuguese memoirs by prominent writers, along with various notes, illustrations and maps; a book entitled *A New Journey to the American Islands*; and *Memoirs of Father Jean-Baptiste Labat*, envoy to the French Islands in America. For more, see: *Académie Royale Des Sciences Coloniales:Biographie Coloniale Belge*, Brussels, 1958, p. 557.

Marcel Chatillon: "Le Père Labat à travers ses manuscrits", in Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire de la Guadeloupe, nos. 40-41-42, 2nd quarter-3rd quarter-4th quarter 1979, pp. 13-14.

¹⁷- Vanezia Parlea : images de soi et de l'autre..., Op.cit.

¹⁸- A mountain in Palestine, 546 metres high, overlooking the Marj Ibn Amer plain to the west. It begins behind the Bay of Acre and extends south-eastwards, then extends into the sea to form Cape Carmel, which has made the Bay of Acre a sheltered area from the southern winds, facilitating the establishment of the port of Haifa. For more, see: Bahri Ahmad Al-Katari: Geography of Palestine: A Natural, Geomorphological, Human, Economic, and Political Study*, 1st edition, Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 1435 AH / 2014 CE, p. 48.

¹⁹- Mohannad Salem Ahmad Al-Mubaidin: The People of the Pen and Their Role in the Cultural Life of Damascus during the Period (1161-1172 AH / 1708-1758 CE), p. 105.

²⁰- It is a commercial agency in Marseilles founded in 1524 AD by the merchants "Thomas Lench" and "Carlin Didier", east of the city of Annaba, after receiving the approval of the Ottoman Turks and Algerians. At first they called it "Bastidoun" (Bastidoun Lou), meaning "the little fortress", and later it became known as the "Privileges of Africa". Its activities were based on the trade of wheat, silk, leather and wax. Thomas Lench's main aim in creating the agency was to monopolise the production of Algerian resources, which led to the destruction of the bastion by Saleh Reis in 1551 AD. This bastion was not only a commercial agency; its role extended to the pursuit of larger objectives, as it contained several warehouses, a church, a cemetery, a hospital for the treatment of officers and patients living in the fortress, a fortress equipped with medium cannons, officers' quarters and soldiers' rooms. For more information, see Joudi Zakaria: "The Role of the Bastion in Military Conflicts between Algeria and France in the 17th Century", in Journal of Military Historical Studies, January 2022, vol. 04, no. 01, pp. 40-41.

²¹- Jamal Qanan: Treaties of Algeria with France 1619-1830 CE, special edition, M.W.N.E., Algeria, 2007, pp. 82-83.

²²- He ascended the throne in 1671 O.C. and thus opened a new phase of the Deylik. He was one of the old sea captains and he restored the status of the sea captains, leading them to break the Algerian-French treaty, which led to the resumption of hostilities between the two states. The Spanish also tried to occupy Tlemcen, but failed. During this period, the Moroccan Sultan Moulay Ismail attempted to take several towns in western Algeria, but was unsuccessful and forced to recognise the previous treaty. Suffering from old age, the Dey abdicated in 1682 AD in favour of his son-in-law Baba Hassan and settled in Tripoli. For more information see: Ahmed Toufik El-Madani: Mohamed Othman Pasha Dey of Algeria 1766-1791 AD: His Biography, Wars, Achievements, State System and Public Life during His Reign, W.W.K, Algeria, 1986, p. 42.

²³- Jamal Qanan: Previous Reference, p. 84.

²⁴- Ibid., pp. 84-85.

²⁵- Yahia Bouaziz: Algeria's External Relations with European States and Kingdoms 1500-1830 CE*, Dar Al-Basa'ir for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2009, p. 83.

²⁶- Eugène Plantet: Previous source

²⁷- Laurent d'Arvieux: Mémoires du Chevalier D'Arvieux, published by Jean-Baptiste Labat and Charles-Jean-Baptiste Delespine Le Fils, Libraire, Paris, 1735, vol. 5, pp. 80, 86.

²⁸- Eugène Plantet: op. cit., p. 16.

²⁹- Paul Masson: Histoire des établissements et du commerce français dans l'Afrique barbaresque (1560-1793) (Algérie, Tunisie, Tripolitaine, Maroc), librairie Hachette et Cie, Paris, 1903, p. 132.

³⁰- Vanezia Parlea: Un Franc parmi les Arabes..., op. cit., p. 35.

³¹- Eugène Plantet: Previous source, vol. 1, pp. 283-284.

³²- Laurent d'Arvieux: op. cit., p. 219.

³³- it seems that d'Arvieux made a mistake in this interpretation; Ali Abdelkader Halimi, in his book *La Ville d'Alger: Naissance et Développement*, states that Azoun was a man from the city who rebelled against Ottoman rule and besieged Algiers, but his rebellion was unsuccessful as he was defeated. For more information, see La Ville d'Alger: Naissance et Développement avant 1830, 1st edition, Arabic Printing House for Islamic Thought, Algeria, 1972, p. 129.

³⁴- Laurent d'Arvieux: op. cit.

³⁵- These tombs were modelled on the tombs of the Ottoman sultans in Bursa. For more see: William Spencer: Algeria under the Sea Captains, ed. Abdul Qader Zabadia, Dar Al-Qasaba for Publishing, Algeria, 2007, p. 63.

³⁶- Laurent d'Arvieux: op. cit., p. 220.

³⁷- It is also known as the Tower of Moulay Hassan, commemorating its builder, Hasan Agha, who constructed it in 1545 CE at the location known as Kadiyat Al-Sabun, following Charles V's expedition against the city in

1545 CE. The name “Fort of the Emperor” refers to Charles V’s concentration of his armies at the site where the tower was later built. However, Europeans disagreed about the identity of the emperor; the Germans believed it referred to their Kaiser, while the Spaniards insisted it referred to Don Philip, who was preparing to confront the Portuguese in 1580 CE. The Algerians thought the campaign was directed at their country, prompting Hasan Fenzyano to strengthen the defenses of this fort. The Ottoman Turks also referred to it as Sultan’s Castle, or “Castle of the Sultan.” It was later named the Peacock Tower due to its large area. For more, see: Ali Khalasi: Ottoman Military Buildings in the City of Algiers, a study presented for the diploma of advanced studies, supervised by Dr. Rashid Bourouiba, Department of History, University of Algiers, 1985 CE, pp. 273-274.

³⁸- This fort is considered one of the important landmarks in the city and is located in the Kasbah neighborhood, also known as the “protected Kasbah.” It was built in 1000 AH / 1591 CE by Khidr Pasha. In 1232 AH / 1816 CE, the Kasbah fortress became the residence of the Dey after having been in Dar Al-Jinina. In this context, Ali Pasha increased its fortifications and strengthened its defensive system. For more, see: Latifa Bouraba: “The First Fortifications in Ottoman Algiers: A Model Study,” in Journal of Heritage Studies, 2014 CE, vol. 08, no. 1, pp. 282-285.

³⁹- Laurent d’Arvieux:Op. cit., p. 221.

⁴⁰- The Valley of Al-Azhar is known at its upper sources as the Ruwaybi Ibn Atiyah, then referred to as the Valley of Al-Maghasil in its middle course, and it carries the name “the valley” at its mouth into the sea to the west of the old city, from which the name of the Bab El-Oued neighborhood is derived. Its length does not exceed six kilometers. Its waters dry up in the summer, but during floods, it poses serious dangers to the buildings of the city. Additionally, the residents do not benefit from it for irrigation or drinking water. For more, see: Ali Abdelkader Halimi: Previous Reference, p. 129.

⁴¹- Laurent d’Arvieux:Op. cit., p. 221.

⁴²- It is also called Bab Al-Jazira and Bab Al-Jihad, because this gate was used by mujahideen or pirates to go to sea. The people of the city called it Bab Al-Jazira because it leads to the four ancient islands near the port of Algiers. For more, see: Ali Halimi Abdelkader: Previous Reference, p. 233.

⁴³- The “qama” is a unit of measurement equal to six feet (about 1.8288 metres), commonly used to measure depth at sea. See: Arabic Language Academy: *Al-Mu’jam Al-Wasiti*, Al-Shorouk International Library, Cairo, 1425 AH / 2008 CE, p. 768.

⁴⁴- D’Arvieux called it Bab Al-Masmakah, although it is also called Bab Al-Sardine or Bab Al-Diwana. This gate was intended for maritime trade. In addition, the resources from the sea after fishing entered the city through this gate. For more information, see Ali Hilmi Abdelkader: Previous reference, p. 234.

⁴⁵- Laurent d’Arvieux: op. cit., pp. 221-222.

⁴⁶- Laurent d’Arvieux: op. cit., pp. 231-232.

⁴⁷- The term “Bayram” is a Turkish word meaning “holiday”. There are two holidays: one is called “Qurban Bayram”, meaning “Festival of Sacrifice”, which corresponds to Eid al-Adha. The other is “Shukr Bayram”, which means “the feast of sweetness” and corresponds to Eid al-Fitr.

⁴⁸- Europeans were strictly forbidden to enter the fortress; however, Boutan managed to infiltrate the upper part through Bab Al-Jadid by trickery. See: Latifa Bouraba: Previous Reference, p. 286.

⁴⁹- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp231-232.

⁵⁰- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp233-234.

⁵¹- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp222-223.

⁵²- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,p223.

⁵³- The clay used to coat the wall, or the clay placed between every two bricks or tiles in construction. See: Arabic Language Academy: Previous Reference, p. 885.

⁵⁴- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit.

⁵⁵- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp226,228.

⁵⁶- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp225,226.

⁵⁷- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp227.

⁵⁸- Op.cit.

⁵⁹- A plant with many prickly branches from the Asclepiadaceae family that grows in water and damp soil and is used to make mats and ropes. See: Arabic Language Academy: Previous Reference, p. 18.

⁶⁰- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,p228.

⁶¹- This refers to the Christian prisoners who are assigned to construction work and the maintenance of buildings.

⁶²- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,p231.

⁶³- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp229,230.

⁶⁴- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,p230.

⁶⁵- These immigrants came to Algeria from the cities of Catalonia, Aragon and Valencia after the mass expulsion of 1609 AD. For more, see: Nassereddine Saïdouni: *Andalusian Studies: Aspects of Iberian Influence and Andalusian Presence in Algeria*, 1st edition, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut, 1424 AH / 2003 CE, p. 28.

⁶⁶- European writers referred to the Andalusians by many names; in addition to the “thoughur” (borderlands), they were sometimes called “mudéjares” and sometimes “Moriscos”. We also find names such as “Granadans” and “Valencians”. For more information, see Nassereddine Saïdouni, same reference, p. 46.

⁶⁷- There were Jewish groups, not ethnic groups, in Algeria during the Ottoman period, divided into: local Jews or “Toshabim”, who are the oldest group and probably arrived in the Maghreb with the Phoenicians who founded the city of Carthage. Their migrations continued during the Roman, Vandal, Byzantine and Islamic periods. As time passed, they interacted with the customs and traditions of the society, but kept their religion and rituals. The second group is known as the “Migourashim”, meaning “the fugitive” or “the persecuted”, who migrated from Andalusia with the Muslims in the fifteenth century, including a large number of scholars and intellectuals. Finally, there were the “adventurous” Jews, who arrived from Europe, particularly from Livorno, in the seventeenth century and whose numbers increased in the eighteenth century. These individuals were known for their skills in trade and their knowledge of foreign languages, which probably led them to a prominent position in Algerian trade. Notably, they refused to mix with the local Jews. For more information, see Amal Maouchi: “

⁶⁸- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp222,224.

⁶⁹- He is originally the “Wirdiyan Pasha”. This title was used in the Ottoman Empire to denote the commander of the naval battalion, who was assisted in his duties by a group that included: “Oda Pasha” and “Ashji Pasha”. For more information see: Hassan Hallak and Abbas Al-Sabbagh: *Comprehensive Dictionary of Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman Terms of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Origin*, 1st edition, Dar Al-Ilm Lil Malayin, Beirut, 1999 CE, p. 158.

⁷⁰- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp228,229.

⁷¹- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp223,225.

⁷²- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,p230.

⁷³- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp235.

⁷⁴- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,p234.

⁷⁵- Laurent d’Arvieux :Op.cit,pp234-235.