

**Early Modern Spain and the Creation of the Mediterranean:
Captivity, Commerce, and Knowledge**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History)
in The University of Michigan
2011**

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For my beloved parents, Fanny and Joseph Hershenzon

Acknowledgements

One way of conceiving a dissertation project is thinking about it as an intellectual and emotional debt producing machine. This dissertation has been extremely efficient in this regard and I cannot begin to summarize my gratitude to all who have made this dissertation possible. I thank Diane Owen Hughes, my advisor, for her incredible support, encouragement, intellectual openness and freedom throughout the process. I could not have asked for a better mentor. The same is true for my other committee members. I thank Jonathan Sheehan for always pushing me ahead with sharp and direct criticism (not to mention helping tying a knot properly at critical moments). I thank Ryan Szpiech, who formally joined the committee only four months ago but practically formed part of the project in the last two years, for stimulating questions and thoughtful critiques. I owe a debt of gratitude to Paul Johnson for generous intellectual feedback and help with institutional mess and for Enrique García Santo-Tomás for constant support and pragmatic advice. Claire Zimmerman, Val Kivelson and Helmut Puff in Ann Arbor, Gadi Algazi and Miri Eliav-Felodn in Tel Aviv, Barbara Fuchs at UCLA, James Amelang in Madrid, and Jocelyne Dakhlia in Paris have guided me through and helped with insightful comments on early chapters' drafts. So did Antonio Feros who generously supported the project from the moment we met, a year ago, and Francesca Trivellato who read and commented on the dissertation draft. I am extremely grateful to Mercedes García Arenal for unlimited support, criticism, and encouragement. I owe a special thanks to Isabel Aguirre Landa who initiated me to the captivating secrets of Simancas.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the generous support of various institutions: the Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship, The Council for European Studies at Columbia University Andrew W. Mellon Pre-Dissertation Award, the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and US' Universities Research Grant and the Newberry Library at Chicago Short-Term Residential Fellowship. At the University of Michigan, the Department of History, the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program, the Center

for European Studies, the International Institute, and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies have supported my Research. I had the privilege of a one year fellowship at the Institute of the Humanities at the University of Michigan during which I have not only advanced the writing of the dissertation but also have learned what true interdisciplinary is. The History Department has provided me with another generous year of funding to bring this project to a completion. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has also been supportive with paleographic preparation provided by Karla Rhan Philips without whom I would not have been able to start reading my documents.

Various parts of the dissertation were presented at the Seminar of the Instituto de Lenguas y Culturas del Mediterraneo y Oriente Próximo at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid (2008), the Institució Milà i Fontanals at the CSIC in Barcelona (2008), the L'étranger Invisible Seminar in Rome organized by the EHESS and the CSIC (2009), the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan (2009/2010) the Columbia University Council for European Studies Biannual Conference (2010), the La Construction de l'espace Méditerranéen seminar organized by the École Française de Rome and Casa de Velásquez (2010), and the Mediterranean, Criss-Crossed and Constructed at Harvard University. I am grateful to my co-organizers, panelists, chairs and commentators Amalia Zomeño, Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, Vanessa de Cruz Medina, Roser Salicrú Lluch, Iván Armenteros Martínez, Daniel Vitkus, Wolfgang Kaiser, Jocelyna Dakhliya, Natividad Planas, Val Kivelson, Danny Herwitz, Jean Hebrard, Guillaume Calafat, Jean-François Chauvard, Stéphane Michonneau, Eduardo González Calleja, Naor Ben-Yehoyada, Micheal Herzfeld, William Granara and Cemal Kafadar, Dan Smail, Andrew Shryock, Nathalie Rothman, Peregrine Horden, Irad Malkin and Molly Greene.

I would also like to thank the many friends who have read and commented on chapters and papers, particularly Danna Agmon, Alexander Angelov, Tal Assif, Elizabeth Barrios, Chandra Bhimull, Julia Carlson, Javier Castro-Ibaseta, Nafisa Essop Sheik, Ari Friedlander, Federico Helgott, Alexandra Hoffman, Yanay Israeli, Ariel Krill, Marco Legnani, Manuel Lomas, Oana Mateescu, Ilana Neshet, Oded Rabinovitch, Esteban Roza Pabon, Alexandra Sloan, Stephen Sparks. I'm particularly indebted to Guillermo Salas, Topher Davis and Sri Nair for years of conversation, drinks, and laughs which not only

forced me to rethink various aspects of the dissertation but also made its writing much more pleasant. I owe an enormous thanks to Naor Ben Yehoyada who investigates similar questions in a different time period between Sicily and Tunisia. I also thank María Arquero de Alarcón for helping to map the Mediterranean and for supporting and por soportarme during the last months.

Finally I wish to thank my parents, Fanny and Joseph Hershenzon, my sister in law, Abigail Saggi, and my brother, Martin Hershenzon. This dissertation would not have been written without their encouragement and support.

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List of Abbreviations

ACA	Archivo de la Corona de Aragón
ADMS	Archivo Ducal de Medina Sidona
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
AHMC	Archivo Histórico Museo Canario
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España
CODOIN	Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España
Fol	Folio
Leg	Legao
Lib	Libro

Chapter 1:

Introduction

1. The Making and Re-making of the Mediterranean

In their acclaimed *The Corrupting Sea*, Peregrine Horden and Nicolas Purcell argue that the Mediterranean survived until the late nineteenth century, after which the advent of motorized sailing destroyed the sea's integrity.¹ Historians of the early modern period, however, believe that the sea died much earlier – around the turn of the seventeenth century – as is reflected by the near absence of studies of the seventeenth-century Mediterranean.² The commercial waning of the Mediterranean at the turn of the seventeenth century, the increasing volume of captives, and the violence associated with captivity serve as signs for these scholars that the sea had lost its earlier characteristic unity, and subsequently began a long decline.

Rather than a postmortem on the early modern Mediterranean, this project argues that the rumors about the sea's death may be premature. I argue here that in the century and a half between the Battle of Lepanto (1571) and the fall of Oran (1708), the Mediterranean continued to play an influential role in the histories of Spain and the Maghrib by providing charged zones of contact. I demonstrate how the "Mediterranean" was created and recreated throughout the long seventeenth century through the interaction between cross-boundary maritime practices and a process of region formation

¹ Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, Blackwell Publishing, 2000, pp. 3, 34.

² Maria Fusaro, "After Braudel: A Reassessment of Mediterranean History between the Northern Invasion and the *Caravane Maritime*," in Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood and Mohamed-Salah Omro, Eds., *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean, Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, London, New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2010, pp. 1-22, esp. 1-5.

through which the contact zone between the Maghrib and the Habsburg Empire was shaped. I examine how Christian and Muslim captives engaged with social practices that included the spread of rumors and news, the writing of letters of recommendation, the compiling of intelligence reports, and the sending of complaints and requests to their respective sovereigns. I argue that the circulation of captives as well as exchanges by captives of different forms of information in a variety of textual genres across the sea, and the interactions of captives with institutions such as the family, the Inquisition, and Maghribi and Spanish political bureaucracies, brought the two Mediterranean coasts into creative contact.. Yet, as I show, the bottom-up manner through which the sea was formed by captives was intertwined with competing region-making projects launched by Algerian, Moroccan, and Spanish sovereigns. I explore the charged relations between these sovereigns, by reconstructing in the process the shifting ways in which the sovereigns influenced the shaping of the sea. The Mediterranean, however, was not a space dominated exclusively by political actors. I highlight the role of the networks of ransom, trust, and credit of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian intermediaries, networks that the sovereigns had to negotiate carefully as they in turn tried to impose their vision of political interaction and exchange in the Mediterranean.

By examining the ways in which the sea was created through interaction between an ensemble of individuals and institutions, practices, textual genres, and representational artifacts, this dissertation contributes to the literature on the western Mediterranean and challenges historiographic accounts haunted by the specter of Samuel Huntington and his idea of the *Clash of Civilizations*, which is projected backwards in a search of both origin and justification. A historically grounded understanding of region formation requires that we attend not only to often conflicting attempts of political actors seeking to shape the region but also to the host of social actors who engaged with, opposed, or promoted such attempts. To this end, the dissertation consists of two thematic parts: the first examines the role of Christian and Muslim captives as mediators who circulated information between institutions in Spain, Algiers, and Morocco and the ways in which captives employed such information to negotiate their captivity; the second (1) explores the small-scale networks of ransom, credit, and trust that facilitated the return of captives and how the intermediaries who formed these networks interacted with ecclesiastical-royal ransom

institutions, and (2) historicizes the ways in which political authorities – Maghribi and Spanish – tried to regulate the working of such networks, even as these authorities were often forced to follow the rhythms and models of exchange and interaction initiated and driven by those networks. Throughout the dissertation, I shift between various analytic scales – local and trans-Mediterranean – and political perspectives – Spanish, Ottoman, Algerian and Moroccan. I reconstruct and analyze how captives employed resources from their communities of origin to improve their living conditions, while I explore how such processes transformed the Mediterranean into a space of contiguities in which Spanish institutions had dense links to the Maghrib and Maghribi institutions to the Habsburg Empire.

2. *The Mediterranean in the Historiography*

Although Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* established the Mediterranean as a field of study,³ as Horden and Purcell note, Braudel's work, "can also be seen as bringing to summation and close an entire epoch in Mediterranean scholarship."⁴ Since the second edition of *The Mediterranean* in 1966 until two decades ago, only a few studies focusing on the Mediterranean region, either as a whole or about certain aspects of it, have been published.⁵ While historians gave up on the endeavor in the late 1960's, social anthropologists continued to examine the sea, searching for shared social and cultural values that united the peoples of the Mediterranean.⁶ Since the early eighties, however, with the deconstruction of Mediterranean anthropology launched by Michael Herzfeld, even anthropologists have turned their backs on the sea.⁷ Spain, the Maghrib, and the

³ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Vols. 1 & 2. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

⁴ Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, p. 39.

⁵ Ibid. More specifically on the reception of Braudel in the US, see: Anthony Molho, "Like Ships Passing in the Dark: Reflections on the Reception of *La Méditerranée* in the U.S." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 24 (2001): 139-62.

⁶ While very few historians were writing on the Mediterranean during these years, a few continued to produce *longue durée*, situated studies of social institutions employing a comparative Mediterranean framework, see: Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe." *Journal of the History of the Family* 3 (1978): 262-96.

⁷ For Herzfeld's critique, responses and counter responses see: Michael Herzfeld, "The Horns of the Mediterraneanist Dilemma." *American Ethnologist* 11 (1984): 439-54; Anthony Galt, "Does the Mediterraneanist Dilemma Have Straw Horns?" *American Ethnologist* 12 (1985): 369-71; and Michael

seventeenth century have especially suffered from these trends, partly because of the way Braudel represented the seventeenth century both in *The Mediterranean* and in other previous works. For example, in a famous article in the *Revue Africaine*, Braudel explained that in 1577, Philip II had given up on any North African imperialist policy.⁸ In his later *magnum opus*, he demonstrated that the Spanish monarch, seeking to become the ruler of the Atlantic, reoriented Spanish politics northwards and westwards.⁹ According to Braudel, the “shared common destiny” on the one hand, and the religious divide and imperialism expressed in “the Hispanic and the Ottoman bloc” on the other, which characterized the sea in the sixteenth century, withered away, to be replaced by an internationalized sea created by the “northern invasion,” namely by the Dutch and English merchants and corsairs which flooded the Mediterranean.¹⁰ As if this eulogy were not enough, in *The Forgotten Frontier*, Ottomanist Andrew Hess claimed that Mediterranean unity, at least as far as it concerned the western side of the sea between the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, had shrunk much earlier.¹¹ Ironically, then, Braudel’s *Mediterranean* on the one hand, and critics of Mediterraneanism on the other, reoriented scholars away from the sea, leading them to focus on apparently more ‘real’ objects of study like nations and states. Faruk Tabak, the author of *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1870, a Geohistorical Approach*, a rare, recent study of early modern Mediterranean history, has succinctly summarized it thus: “in historical studies that investigate the waning of the Mediterranean, the ecumenical setting of the golden age

Herzfeld, “Of Horns and History: The Mediterraneanist Dilemma Again.” *American Ethnologist* 12 (1985): 778-80.

⁸ Fernand Braudel, “Les Espagnols et l’Afrique du Nord, 1492-1577,” *Revue Africaine*, LXIX (1928): 184-233, 351-428, especially p. 192.

⁹ Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, Vol. II, p. 1187

¹⁰ Braudel has famously and poetically claimed that in the sixteenth century, “the Turkish Mediterranean lived and breathed with the same rhythms as the Christian, that the whole sea shared a common destiny...” Ibid, p. 14. Scholars who make reference to his work tended to stress “unity” and ignore how Braudel has perceived the sea as comprised of two religious imperial blocs. On the “northern invasion,” Ibid, pp. 615-42, on smaller states, Ibid. pp. 701-703. It is important to stress that Braudel has never claimed that the sea ceased to exist in the seventeenth century. The waning of the sea, Braudel has acknowledged, was accompanied by a cultural revival but “events of world-wide importance,” of the kind the archival sources report of, took place elsewhere, Ibid, pp. 14, 1186.

¹¹ Andrew Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth Century Ibero-African Frontier*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

of the basin fades into the background, only to be supplanted by differential and singular settings from the seventeenth century.”¹²

In the last two decades, however, the Mediterranean has been experiencing a renaissance,¹³ for which Horden and Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea* is largely responsible.¹⁴ Shifting the Braudelian paradigm of unity in favor of one that stresses difference, and justifying Mediterraneanism against Herzfeld’s critique, Horden and Purcell have characterized the Mediterranean as a place characterized by a combination of extreme environmental fragmentation, instability, and risk managed by diversification, storage, and redistribution, which are all enabled by extreme connectivity.¹⁵ Against histories *in* the region, which can only contingently be termed Mediterranean, the authors of *The Corrupting Sea* call for the writing of histories *of* the sea that focus on the whole sea or an aspect of it to which the whole is crucial.¹⁶ Ian Morris, one of the participants in the debate that followed the publication of the book, claimed that the model should be further historicized by shifting the terms of the discussion from Mediterraneanism to *Mediterraneanization*.¹⁷ Stressing process, Morris’ suggestion points out how seas, or spaces in general, do not simply exist or cease to exist, but are rather made and unmade by an ensemble of individuals, institutions, practices, and representations. When the interactions between these instances changed, becoming more or less intensive, as was the case in 1581 when the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires signed a peace treaty, then the sea was “mediterraneanized” or “de-mediterraneanized.”¹⁸ By focusing on the process,

¹² Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1870, a Geohistorical Approach*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, p. 8.

¹³ Susan E. Alcock, “Alphabet Soup in the Mediterranean Basin: The Emergence of the Mediterranean Serial,” in William V. Harris, Ed. *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2005, pp. 314-336.

¹⁴ To claim, however, that Horden and Purcell, or for the sake of the matter, any other scholar is responsible for rebranding of the sea is to attribute too much power to intellectual projects while ignoring social, economic and political ones. Doubtlessly, clandestine migrants who risk their lives on the way to Europe, the European Union attempts to curb arms smuggling into zones of conflict in the region or European and North African governments’ initiative to promote new Mediterranean economic agendas have an important role in the rising academic prestige of the study of the sea.

¹⁵ The work has sparked a debate about the Mediterranean, see: William V. Harris, Ed. *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2005; *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 18 (2003); Gadi Algazi, “Diversity Rules.” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 20 (2005): 227-45.

¹⁶ Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, p. 2.

¹⁷ Ian Morris, “Mediterraneanization,” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 18 (2003): 30-55.

¹⁸ See for example a new study of Mediterraneanization between Tunisia and Sicily, Naor Ben-Yehoyada, “Mediterranean, Becoming and Unbecoming: Fishing, Smuggling, and Region Formation between Sicily and Tunisia since WWII,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2011.

then, and demonstrating how specific places in the Mediterranean became more or less mediterraneanized, one can bridge the distinction made by Horden and Purcell between histories *in* and histories *of*. This project combines these two histories: by focusing on relations that captives maintained with their home communities and on how these relations helped them to negotiate their captivity, I demonstrate the ways in which captives wove Mediterranean webs of connectivity; similarly, through the reconstruction of the political negotiations over ransoms procedures of captives in the Maghrib, I show how political actors struggled to shape the western Mediterranean.

3. *Studies of Captivity*

Studies of early modern captivity in the Mediterranean, a theme that has recently drawn much scholarly attention, to some extent follow general trends in Mediterranean historiography. These studies demonstrate some of the problems in writing a history *in* the region that does not account for the way the local operates on a regional or Mediterranean scale. Literary critics and historians have examined captivity narratives, focusing on their reception and audiences, and the ways in which such narratives constituted national identity and advanced or subverted imperial projects.¹⁹ Many of these scholars have focused on the figure of the renegade, a Christian who converted to Islam during his captivity, as a way to write early modern transnational history.²⁰ Other

¹⁹ Early studies conducted by literary scholars focused on the structure and the textual conventions of captivity narratives and have traced the formation of a new, more realist treatment of captivity in literature and in captivity narratives, see: George Camamis, *Estudios Sobre el Cautiverio en el Siglo de Oro*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977; Margarita Levisi, *Autobiografías del Siglo de Oro: Jerónimo de Pasamonte, Alonso de Contreras, Miguel de Castro*, Sociedad General Española de Librería, 1984. See also an older work by a French scholar: Albert Mas, *Les turcs dans la littérature espagnole du Siècle d'Or, recherches sur l'évolution d'un thème littéraire*. Paris: Centre de recherches hispaniques, 1967. Scholars who picked up the theme of captivity in the nineties have analyzed captivity narratives in terms of the audiences their authors addressed and the literary strategies their authors employed for purposes of identity construction. Barbara Fuchs has argued that the figure of the renegade, on the one hand, and the staging of faked captivity performances on the other, worked against the project of constituting a unified Catholic Spanish identity. See: Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: the New World, Islam, and European Identities*. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001. In contrast, Nabil Matar and Linda Colley have claimed that narratives of captivity and conversion which former captives often employed to show gratitude to the Queen and others who ransomed them were crucial in the formation of British imperial identity. See: Nabil I. Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005 and Idem, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (2001): 553-572; Linda Colley, *Captives, Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2002.

²⁰ For an overview of this trend, see: Gordon M. Sayre, "Renegades from Barbary: The Transnational Turn in Captivity Studies," *American Literary History*, 22 (2010): 347-359.

critics have revealed the constructedness of categories such as ‘captives’ and ‘renegades’ articulated in narratives and plays and how such categories subverted ideas of national or catholic identity. These studies, however, have taken for granted, at least implicitly, a monolithic preexisting official point of view against which cultural representations operated. However, in the early modern period, contrasting articulations of what captives and renegades were circulated constantly within and among institutions and textual genres. Moreover, such studies, in their stress on religious boundary transgressions, as demonstrated by the mass conversion of Christian captives to Islam, focused exclusively on a single early modern religious discourse, one out of a few competing discourses relating to renegades, thus de-socializing conversion and the history of captivity.²¹

Until a decade ago, surprisingly few works focused on ransom procedures and on the system of enslavement that managed the lives and labors of early modern captives.²²

²¹ Moreover, what may seem like religious boundary crossing can function at the same time as boundary making, or be predicated upon clear and safe religious boundaries. See for example the case of medieval Muslim knights who fought for the Aragonese kings or Jewish trading communities whose commerce with Muslims and Hindus was partly facilitated by the establishment of clear religious boundaries: Hussein Anwar Fancy, “Mercenary logic: Muslim soldiers in the service of the Crown of Aragon, 1265—1309,” Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Princeton University, 2008; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, Yale University Press, 2009.

²² Surprisingly Ottoman historians did not engage with the topic of captivity of Christians in the Maghrib despite the fact that many of the captives were held in Tunis and Algiers, Ottoman semi-independent regencies. For a long time this was part of a larger neglect of the theme of slavery referred to as “conspiracy of silence,” see: Gordon Murray. *Slavery in the Arab World*. New York: New Amsterdam, 1989, p. x. In the last two decades, the silence has been broken and scholars have developed elaborated models for examining Ottoman slavery. This is reflected in Ehud Toledano’s recent call to understand Ottoman Slavery “as a *social relationship*, that is the dynamic take-and-give between owner and slave in a variety of changing situations,” see: Ehud Toledano, “The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies: Dichotomy or Continuum?,” in Miura Toru and John Edward Philips (eds), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, London and NY: Kegan Paul International, 2000, pp. 159-176. Most scholarship, however, has focused on the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century, see: W. G. Clarence-Smith *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; Erdem Y. Hakan. *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909*, St. Antony's series. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996; Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998. The few works that do examine an earlier period tend to focus on the more structured forms of slavery such as the *devşirme* system, the *mukātaba* system, and the agricultural system, to the exclusion of enslaved Christian captives and the Maghrib, see: Jan S. Hogendorn, “The Location of the ‘Manufacture’ of Eunuchs.” In *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa - a Comparative Study*, edited by Miura Toru and John Edward Philip, 248. London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000, pp. 41-68; Halil İnalçik, “Servile labor in the Ottoman Empire,” in Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, and Béla K. Király, Eds. *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: the East European Pattern*, New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979, pp. 25-52; İ Metin Kunt, “Transformation of Zimmi into Askerî,” in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, Eds. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the Functioning of a Plural Society*, New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982, pp. 55-67; Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: an Historical Enquiry*. New York: Oxford

The earliest among these are studies of *Annales* historians who approached Christian slavery in North Africa from an economic angle, examining the traffic of people across the Mediterranean by looking at slave prices and markets, and examining the profitability of the trade, as well as its role in the economy of the Maghrib.²³ More recently, Ellen Friedman, Maximiliano Barrio Gozalo and José Antonio Martínez Torres have analyzed the redemptive labor of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians, religious orders charged with liberating captives from the Maghrib, from an institutional perspective while adding to our knowledge of the life of captives.²⁴ Such studies have shed light on the fund-raising procedures of Trinitarians and Mercedarians and on aspects of the mechanics that characterized the ransom expeditions these Orders sent to the Maghrib. The richest and most comprehensive account, especially as far as the life of enslaved captives is concerned, is Robert Davis' *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean*. Davis has studied almost every aspect of the life and employment of Christian slaves in the Maghrib. Moreover, he has taken upon himself the task of quantifying the presence of Christian slaves, claiming that between 1500 and 1800 more than a million Christians were imprisoned in the Maghrib, arguing that thus, "Mediterranean slaving out-produced the trans-Atlantic trade during the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century."²⁵

At the same time, however, such studies imply that the captivity of Christians in the Maghrib and the enslavement of Muslims in the south of Europe are distinct and

University Press, 1990; Yvonne Seng, "A Liminal State: Slavery in Sixteenth-Century Istanbul." In Shaun Elizabeth Marmon, Ed. *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, Princeton: M. Wiener, 1999, pp. 25-42. An exceptional example, as the author herself indicates, is Suraiya Faroqhi's study of war captivity, examining Christian and Ottoman war captives during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the world around it*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

²³ Jean Mathiex, "Trafic et Prix de l'Homme en Méditerranée aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles." *Annales. E.S.C.* 9 (1954): 157-64 and Lucette Valensi, "Esclaves Chrétiens et Esclaves Noirs à Tunis au XVII^e Siècle." *Annales. E.S.C.* (1967): 1267-88. For a recent analysis of ransom prices of captives in the early modern Mediterranean. See: Attila Ambrus and Eric Chaney, "Pirates of the Mediterranean: An Empirical Investigation of Bargaining with Transaction Costs, 9.14.2010," <http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/chaney/files/barbary.pdf>, accessed on July 10th 2011.

²⁴ Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983; Maximiliano Barrio Gozalo, *Esclavos y cautivos: Conflicto entre la cristiandad y el islam en el siglo XVIII*, Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2006; José Antonio Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles: vida y rescate de los cautivos cristianos en el Mediterráneo musulmán (siglos XVI-XVII)*, Colección Alborán Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2004.

²⁵ Robert Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. xxvi.

disconnected phenomena. Moreover, rather than thinking about these phenomena as interconnected they implicitly take a comparative point of view, explaining that the living conditions of the slaves in Spain were either better or worse than that of slaves in the Maghrib. In doing so, such studies reproduce the dichotomy of Islamophobia/Islamophilia.²⁶ In some cases, the engagement with Islamophobia is explicit, for instance, when writers attribute the practice of captive-taking to a trans-historical Jihad, or employ the metaphor of a concentration camp to describe the life of captives in the Maghrib.²⁷ In other cases, Islamophilia is implicit when, for example, scholars criticize Islamophobic positions, claiming that the treatment of Muslim slaves in Europe was equal to that of Europeans in North Africa, or that Muslim slave owners were more benevolent masters.²⁸ In either case, these studies disconnect what I will show are two interrelated phenomena in constant making and unmaking. They do so by examining captivity of Muslims and of Christians as independent of each other, and thereby reify them as self-contained phenomena rather than elements forming a process. This enables moral judgments upon what are seen as independent systems. My work brackets such judgments, highlighting instead the formation of links, which connected slavery in the Maghrib and that in Europe, and demonstrating the mutual constitution of these systems rather than reiterating their portrayal as self-contained.

Less than a decade ago, scholars began to examine captivity and ransom from the fresh perspective of ransom networks and the intermediaries that formed them. In a series of articles, Wolfgang Kaiser redefined the redemption of captives as part of an “economy of ransom” created by piracy, *corso*, and the traffic of people.²⁹ The actors, practices, and

²⁶ On Islamophobia and Islamophilia in scholarly production and ways of breaking with that dichotomy, see: Jocelyne Dakhlia *Islamicités*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2005 and Andrew Shryock, “Introduction: Islam as an Object of Fear and Affection,” in Ed. Andrew Shryock, *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010, pp. 1-28.

²⁷ Davis’ double characterization of captivity in North Africa as a trans-historical Jihad and at the same time as a concentration camp is somewhat contradictory. The first adjective evokes irrationality while the second instrumental rationality, see: Robert Davis, *Holy war and Human Bondage: Tales of Christian-Muslim Slavery in the Early-modern Mediterranean*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 2009 and Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, p. xxv.

²⁸ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 59-60; Godfrey, Fisher, *Barbary Legend; War, Trade, and Piracy in North Africa, 1415-1830*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957, p. 8.

²⁹ Wolfgang Kaiser, “La excepción permanente. Actores, visibilidad y asimetrías en los intercambios comerciales entre los países europeos y el Magreb (siglos XVI-XVII),” in José Antonio Martínez Torres (Ed.) *Circulación de personas e intercambios en el Mediterráneo y en el Atlántico (siglos XVI, XVII,*

norms that formed this ransom economy, Kaiser has argued, regulated religious violence and rationalized commerce with Muslims as a means for redemption of captives. The merit of this approach is in that it avoids a reading of captivity or ransom in oppositional terms while bringing into relief webs of connectivities that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. A few of the contributions to a volume on the economy of ransom that Kaiser has edited have demonstrated the results of this approach in the Spanish context.³⁰ Their corrective emphasis on intermediaries, at the expense of the well-studied Orders of Redemption, however, risks divorcing two kinds of actors who either worked together or competed with each other. Moreover, while the term “the economy of ransom” does not necessarily reduce the field to economics, some of the scholars who focused on that economy were not always sensitive enough to the role of politics, religion and society in the shaping of that economy.³¹ This project builds on Kaiser’s new formulation of captivity and ransom, but insists, on the one hand, on the need to account for non-economic factors whose de-contextualized product might give the mistaken impression of impersonal market forces, and, on the other, on accounting for the ways in which the work of ransom networks and intermediaries was intertwined with that of institutional actors.

4. Context

What kind of a political arena was the seventeenth century Mediterranean? Throughout the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century, in the continuation of the Crusade, the Spaniards tried to execute the crusaders’ ideal or fantasy of conquering,

XVIII), CSIC, 2008, pp. 171-189. Wolfgang Kaiser, “L’économie de la rançon en Méditerranée occidentale (XVIe-XVIIe siècle),” in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, Ed., *Ricchezza dal mare, secc. XIII-XVIII*, Florence, 2006, vol. 2, p. 689-701.

³⁰ For the first half of the sixteenth century, see: Juan Francisco Pardo Molero, “Mercaderes, frailes, corsarios y cautivos: intercambios entre el reino de Valencia y el norte de Africa en la primera mitad del siglo XVI,” in Wolfgang Kaiser, Ed. *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l’échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*, École française de Rome: Rome, 2008, pp. 165-192. For the second half of the century, see: Francisco Andújar Castillo, “Los rescates de cautivos en las dos orillas del Mediterráneo y en el mar (alafías) en el siglo XVI,” in *ibid*, pp. 135-164. For the seventeenth century, see: Natividad Planas, “Acteurs et mécanismes du rachat d’esclaves dans l’archipel Baléare au XVIIe siècle,” in *ibid*, pp. 65-81.

³¹ According to Bunes Ibarra, for example, “money is the reason that explains whole of this system of living [i.e. captivity],” Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes y del norte de África en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII: los caracteres de una hostilidad*, Madrid: CSIC, 1989, p. 142.

colonizing, and Christianizing North Africa.³² As the century advanced, however, the project lost steam, and the Spaniards acknowledged their inability to continue the crusade. Instead, according to Braudel, in 1577, Philip II gave up on a North African colonial policy, and in 1581, the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires signed a peace agreement, both of which collectively transformed the nature of Mediterranean warfare. Following the agreement, piracy, which had been endemic for centuries in the Mediterranean, came to dominate maritime wartime practices.³³ The signing of the agreement coincided with the transformation of Algiers, an Ottoman regency in the Maghrib, to what Braudel called its “second brilliant age” (1580-1620). Together with La Valetta (Malta), the city became one of the central capitals of Mediterranean corsairs..³⁴

After Philip II’s death, however, his son, Philip III (1598-1621) exhibited a renewed interest in the region. He signed the twelve years’ truce with the Dutch rebels,”” but at the same time also executed the order that expelled Moriscos from Spain (1609-1614). The idea of the expulsion had circulated for decades in Spanish political corridors, but its simultaneous execution with the signing of the truce compensated for Spain’s loss of prestige in the Dutch republic.³⁵ Many of the expelled Moriscos arrived in Salé and Tétouan, and the cities were also transformed into important centers of *corso*. The corsairs were aided by English and Dutch corsairs, the newcomers in the Mediterranean, whose arrival is often referred to as the “Northern Invasion.”³⁶ In addition to the expulsion of the Moriscos, and partly in response to the increase of *corso* activity created by the expulsion throughout his reign, Phillip III made several other attempts, some more successful than others, to occupy Algiers and ,El Araich (Larache), and Mehadía (La

³² Braudel “Les Espagnols et l’Afrique du Nord, 1492-1577.”

³³ John H Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War-Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 153.

³⁴ On “the second brilliant age of Algiers,” see: Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, pp. 882-886. For an overview of the rise of Algiers during the sixteenth century into a Mediterranean power, see: María Antonia Garcés, *Cervantes en Argel*, Gredos: Madrid, 2005. On Maltese *corso*, especially in relation to its Greek victims, see: Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010.

³⁵ For a discussion of these debates and the ways in which the expulsion strengthened Spain’s image as the defender of Catholicism, see Antonio Feros, *El Duque de Lerma, Realeza y Privanza en la España de Felipe III*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2002, pp. 353-372.

³⁶ For Braudel, the “Northern Invasion,” the arrival of the Dutch, English and French, led to the internationalization of the Mediterranean and as part of larger processes which eliminated the importance of religion. On the “Northern Invasion” and a powerful critique of the argument, see: Molly Greene, “Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the 17th Century.” *Past and Present* 174 (2002): 42-71.

Mamora) in Atlantic Morocco and to attack Tunis and even Alexandria in Egypt.³⁷ Algiers was never conquered, but Spain managed to take over El Araich and Mehadía, and dominated them for a century, after which it lost them.

And yet, excluding the decades of Philip III's reign, the overall trend during the seventeenth century was a Spanish shift toward defensive politics.³⁸ The large Mediterranean fleet consequently shrank: from seventy-five vessels in 1619, to forty-two in 1634, and, finally, to twenty-six in 1649.³⁹ In 1640, Portugal, which had formed part of the Habsburg Empire since 1580, rebelled and opened a war against Spain that ended in 1668 with Spanish recognition of Portugal's independence. During that war, Spain's major Mediterranean naval concern was to maintain control over the straits of Gibraltar. The other interested parties were the English and the Dutch, who sought a way to secure their share of the Mediterranean trade. Three cities which Spain dominated were crucial for control over the straits: Gibraltar, Tangiers or Ceuta. The last two were originally Portuguese colonies that the Spaniards had dominated since the annexation of Portugal.

³⁷ On the attacks and plans to attack Algiers in the early seventeenth century, see: I. A. A. Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain, 1560-1620*, London: the Athlone Press, 1976, pp. 36-37 and Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, "Felipe III y la defensa del Mediterráneo: la conquista de Argél," in *Guerra y sociedad en la monarquía hispánica: política, estrategia y cultura en la Europa moderna (1500-1700)*, Eds. Enrique García Hernán and Davide Maffi, Vol. I, Ediciones del Laberinto: Fundación Mapfre: CSIC: 2006, pp. 921-946. On Spanish seventeenth century political conduct in relation to Atlantic Morocco, see: Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra and José Antonio Martínez Torres, "La república de Salé y el duque de Medina Sidonia: notas sobre la política Atlántica en el siglo XVII," in *IV Centenario del ataque de Van der Does a las Palmas de Gran Canaria (1999): Coloquio Internacional "Canarias y el Atlántico, 1580-1648,"* Ed. Antonio de Bethencourt Massieu, Cabildo de Gran Canaria: Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2001 pp. 187-206 and Luis Salas Almela, *Colaboración y conflicto: la Capitanía General del Mar Océano y Costas de Andalucía, 1588-1660*, Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2002. On the plans to conquer Alexandria, see the document titled "A Plan for the Conquest of Alexandria," was issued in Naples in February 1605, quoted by Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, "Avis du Levant: le réseau d'espionnage espagnol dans l'empire ottoman à partir du sud de l'Italie, à la charnière des XVIe et XVIIe siècles," in: Ed. Béatrice Perez, *Ambassadeurs, apprentis espions et maîtres comploteurs - Les systèmes de renseignement en Espagne à l'époque moderne*, PUPS: Paris, 2010, p. 217. On its other territorial fronts, the Spanish Empire consolidated its power through peaceful means, see: William Sachs Goldman, "The political culture of empire: The Spanish Council of State and foreign policy under Philip III, 1598-1621," "Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2009.

³⁸ José Contreras Gay, "La defensa de la frontera marítima," Francisco Andújar Castillo, Ed. *Historia del reino de Granada*, Vol. III, Universidad de Granada: Fundación El Legado Andalusi, 2000, pp. 145-178.

³⁹ I. A. A. Thompson, "Aspectos de la organización naval y militar durante el ministerio de Olivares," in Ángel García Sanz and John H. Elliott, Eds. *La España del Conde Duque de Olivares: Encuentro Internacional sobre la España del Conde Duque de Olivares celebrado en Toro los días 15-18 de septiembre de 1989*, Universidad de Valladolid: Servicio de Publicaciones, 1990, pp. 249-274, esp. 253.



Map 1: The Mediterranean

The Portuguese rebellion threatened Spanish control over them.⁴⁰ Eventually, Portuguese independence resulted in the loss of Tangiers for Spain in 1640, but Spain succeeded in securing control over Ceuta.⁴¹ Soon after, in 1661, the English won Tangiers through a dynastic union with Portugal.⁴² During the last third of the seventeenth century, Spain was hesitant to send forces to North Africa, even when the governors of Oran, Spain's most important stronghold in the Maghreb, claimed that the city was in danger. Eventually in 1708, Spain lost the city to Ottoman Algiers.⁴³

Several recent studies have demonstrated that the loss of political interest did not entail Spanish economic withdrawal from the Mediterranean. In his *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, Faruk Tabak has delineated the shifting economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, and the Habsburg Empire and Genoa, and how each of these was influenced by long-term environmental trends throughout the early modern period.⁴⁴ More specifically, Eloy Martín Corrales has demonstrated how the volume of direct and indirect Catalan commerce with the Maghrib grew between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, suggesting that Castile experienced similar growth.⁴⁵ Natividad Planas, in a focused study of Majorca and its relations with the government in Castile, and with the Maghrib, has studied the system of trade permits with the Maghrib that was developed in order to detour official discourses that prohibited commerce with Muslims.⁴⁶ Further research is necessary to establish the precise nature of the commercial ties between Spain and the Maghrib and the ways these shifted in the early modern

⁴⁰ Rafael Valladares Ramírez, "Inglaterra, Tánger y el 'estrecho compartido.' Los inicios del asentamiento inglés en el Mediterráneo occidental durante la guerra Hispano-Portuguesa (1614-1661)," *Hispania*, 51:179 (1991): 965-991.

⁴¹ Santiago de Luxán Meléndez, "Política Ceutí de Felipe IV (1641-1644)," *Hispania*, 36 (1976): 175-182 and idem, "Contribución al estudio de los presidios españoles del norte de África. Las dificultades de la plaza de Ceuta para abastecerse de trigo (1640-1668)" *Hispania*, 35 (1975): 320-342.

⁴² Linda Colley, *Captives*, pp.23-41.

⁴³ Often, the governors of Oran demanded more troops to protect the garrison from the Council of War. in the 1660's, these calls for help were motivated by the fear that the fort would suffer from the military tensions between the Ottoman Algiers and Morocco, see: Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Les Juifs du roy d'Espagne, 1509-1669*, Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1999, pp. 161-172.

⁴⁴ Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1870*.

⁴⁵ Martín Corrales Eloy, *Comercio de Cataluña con el Mediterráneo musulmán (siglos XVI-XVIII): El Comercio con los 'enemigos de la fe'*," Ediciones Bellaterra, Barcelona, 2001.

⁴⁶ Natividad Planas, "La frontière franchissable: normes et pratiques dans les échanges entre le royaume de Majorque et les terres d'Islam au XVIIIe siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 48-2 (2001): 123-147.

period. Existing scholarship, however, certainly demonstrates that commerce continued to thrive for centuries after the sixteenth century.

However, the ties between the Maghrib and Spain that made the Mediterranean an important space for the people who populated its shores were not produced exclusively through commerce. Despite Spain's loss of imperial interest in the Mediterranean, the sea did not cease to exist; it continued to be produced and reproduced as a social space for centuries after its alleged 'death.' In fact, the processes of Mediterraneanization on which this dissertation focuses were, to a large degree, the result of the 1581 Ottoman-Habsburg Peace treaty. As mentioned earlier, the treaty transformed the nature of warfare in the Mediterranean, effectively making piracy and *corso* more important than ever. In earlier periods, spectacular maritime battles like Lepanto (1571) saw thousands of captives lose their liberty, and others regain it, often within the course of a few short hours. In Lepanto, the Holy League captured over three thousand Muslims, while fifteen thousand Christian slaves were rescued; in Alcazarquivir, or the Battle of the Three Kings (1578), fourteen thousand Portuguese – among them almost the entire Portuguese nobility – were taken captive by Ahmed Al-Mansur; and the Ottomans captured thousands of imperial soldiers when they re-conquered Tunis from the Spaniards.⁴⁷ It is worth putting these numbers in context: estimates of the number of Christians held captive at Algiers, the city that boasted the largest numbers in captivity, varied greatly between five thousand and thirty thousand. The numbers of prisoners taken in these famous battles, then, were significant in measure. Many captives would change hands again in the ceasefire, and peace treaties that followed such large-scale and violent encounters.

The shift to piracy, or maritime guerilla tactics, increased the absolute number of Christian and Muslim captives while radically transforming the pace and annual distribution of captives. Corsairs took captives before 1581, especially from 1560 to 1565, but “by 1574, the age of war by armada, expeditionary force and heavy siege was practically over.”⁴⁸ This meant that from 1581 on, with the beginning of the “second

⁴⁷ On Lepanto, see: Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *La batalla de Lepanto: cruzada, guerra santa e identidad confesional*, Silex: Madrid, 2008, p. 366. On Alcazarquivir, see: Mercedes García-Arenal, *Ahmad al-Mansur, The Beginning of Modern Morocco*, One World: Oxford, 2009, p. 7.; cf.: Lucette Valensi, *Fables de la mémoire: La glorieuse bataille des Trois Rois (El-Ksar el-kébir, 1578)*, Éditions Chandeigne: Paris, 1992, p. 141; On Tunis and la Goleta, see: Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, p. xiv.

⁴⁸ Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 865.

brilliant age of Algiers,” corsairs captured more captives than imperial armadas did, and among the captives there were more civilians than soldiers.⁴⁹ Mercedarian records of ransom attest to this shift. These sources, which refer only to those captives that the order had rescued, suggest that seventy percent of the captives taken between 1572 and 1574 were captured in 1574 in Tunis. The majority of these were most likely soldiers. Only eighteen percent were captured at sea and only five percent along the Spanish littoral. From then on, the number of soldiers among the rescued captives drops. Among the captives that the Mercedarians rescued and who had been captured between 1575 and 1581, only a little more than thirty percent were taken captive in North Africa and the majority of those individuals had lost their liberty in the Battle of the Three Kings. The rest were captured at sea or along the Spanish coasts.⁵⁰ After the peace agreement of 1581, seldom did more than a few hundred soldiers lose or regain their liberty within such short intervals. Instead, corsairs might often capture a small numbers of civilians: a few fishermen, or a few peasants; a few travelers, or some sailors on ships. Small numbers of captives thus circulated widely in the Maghrib, and their distribution approached geographic equilibrium in the years immediately following the peace accord. In other words, piracy produced a more long-lasting and stable population of captives and of patterns of circulation of captives across the imperial map than had been the situation before 1581. The shift in the distribution of captives and the declining number of soldiers among them enhanced the importance of small-scale *longue durée* networks of ransom, credit, and trust, as well as the institutionalization of the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians, the two religious orders charged with liberating Christians from the Maghrib. The fact that on a daily or weekly basis Christian captives arrived in Algiers as did Muslims in Majorca revolutionized the production and transmission of strategic knowledge in the Mediterranean, transformed the ways in which the Mediterranean connected the Maghrib and the Habsburg Empire, and the manner in which it was imagined by the people populating the lands that bordered the sea.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 882

⁵⁰ Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa*, pp. 6-7

5. Sources and Methodology

Based on twenty four months of archival research in Spain and in manuscript collections in the US and in Jerusalem, the project draws an eclectic body of sources composed by Christians, Jews, and Muslims consisting of ego documents, various forms of letters that captives, former captives, and captives kin had written, literary works, intelligence reports, inquisitorial documents, and religious and popular images. In my analysis of the sources and in the reconstruction of the dynamics examined, I take into account that “silences... enter the process of historical production at ... the moment of fact making (the making of the *sources*).”⁵¹ Therefore, I neither went ‘shopping’ in the archives without accounting for the conditions of the production of the documents nor do I assume that the records were written and archived for the historian. All the chapters, thus, are attuned not only to the history represented by the sources analyzed but also to the institutional contexts in which the sources were written, their related genres, and the goals their authors sought to achieve. Recent scholarship that examines captivity narratives and captives’ autobiographies has analyzed them, for example, as elements in processes of identification in which former captives reasserted a religious identity they were suspected of abandoning in captivity.⁵² Similarly, in a recent important work on Spanish, Portuguese, and English captivity narratives, Lisa Voigt has argued that captives’ textual production was important in the construction of Empire, a fact that transformed captives into crucial sources of information about the Other while making the documents they produced a source of power for the captives.⁵³ In both cases, the textual production of former captives was examined was part of their authors’ attempts to reinsert themselves into their home communities or seek favors and not merely as a

⁵¹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995. See also the work of Ann Stoler and her elaboration of the problems created by the fact that archives are not merely “sites of knowledge retrieval but [also] of knowledge production,” Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance.” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1-2 (2002): 87-109. See also Terry Cook, “Remembering the Future: Appraisal of Records and the Role of Archives in Constructing Social Memory,” in Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg, *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, University of Michigan Press: 2007, pp. 169-181.

⁵² For example, Colley, *Captives*, and Matar, “English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625.” On identification, see: Frederic Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, “Identity,” in Frederic Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, pp. 59-90.

⁵³ Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

representation of the reality of life in captivity. Administrative sources of the kind that this dissertation is focused on should receive similar treatment. Namely, they should be read not only for the information they purport to provide about the Mediterranean and the relations between Spain, Morocco and Algiers, but also as constitutive of both the Mediterranean and the relations between these three polities. The second and third chapters in particular, examine the contrasting institutional and group interests and differing logics and goals embedded in various genres of archival sources.⁵⁴ This is not merely a methodological principle. Writing is acting and the texts that captives produced formed part of repertoires of actions which constituted the experience of captivity while also shaping the Mediterranean. Only by reading sources both for the dynamics to which they referred and for the ways in which they formed elements in the very same dynamics that their authors sought to influence, can we understand captivity and the role of captives in Mediterranean history.

6. Structure

The first three chapters after the introduction focus on captivity, and reconstruct and analyze the structures of mobility created by the increasing volume of captives, and the shape that their circulation took. The second chapter builds upon the work of captivity studies in examining how Christians and Muslims lost their liberty and were subsequently enslaved in the Mediterranean. The focus, however, is on Christian captives in the Maghrib. I examine slaves' occupations and the informal economies in which they were involved, as well as the forms of ownerships over slaves. In contrast to previous scholarship, however, I argue that dynamism rather than stasis was a central feature of captivity in North Africa. By reconstructing the professional trajectories of slaves, understood as the movement of captives between masters and occupations through various forms of exchange, temporary and permanent, I demonstrate how such trajectories characterized the life of many enslaved captives. Further, I show that occupational mobility entailed spatial mobility throughout the Mediterranean and within Mediterranean cities, resulting in multiple social networks. Mobility and such networks

⁵⁴ The model example of such reading is Natalie Davis Zemon. *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*, The Harry Camp lectures at Stanford University. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987.

made captives into substantial actors in the production and transmission of knowledge and information.

The following two chapters venture into hitherto uncharted scholarly territories on the life of both Muslim and Christian captives and of Mediterranean history. For centuries, piracy and captivity were endemic in the Mediterranean. However, the equilibrium that the circulation of captives reached after the signing of the Ottoman-Habsburg peace treaty in 1581 made the circulation of captives an important factor in the production and reproduction of webs of connectivity between the Maghrib and the Habsburg Empire. The third chapter follows the circulations of three kinds of information that traversed the sea: (1) rumors and news about the identity of Christian captives and renegades (Christians who converted to Islam) that were spread by Muslim and Christian captives; (2) letters of recommendation that captives wrote on behalf of renegades who wanted to return to Spain, but were afraid of the Inquisition's punishment; and, (3) requests for help that Muslims enslaved in Spain sent to their kin in the Maghrib whenever they felt that they were being mistreated by their owners. Each of these traveling pieces of news operated simultaneously on two interrelated levels: at the local one, and the trans-Mediterranean one. Locally, spreading rumors, sending recommendations, and submitting requests formed social practices that captives employed in order to improve their living conditions by using resources that might be tapped within their home communities. The writing and circulation of these textual artifacts suggests that captives thought of the sea as a space across which information traveled with relative ease; the information they circulated, however, greased the wheels of mobility that facilitated circulation and exchange which captives have taken as given. In the process, captives extended the reach of the Inquisition, and of the family beyond territorial boundaries and initiated diplomatic interactions between enemy sovereigns from below.

The massive presence of captives in the sea and the shape that their circulation took, then, placed captives in a somewhat contradictory position. On the one hand, the fact that so many Christians were living among Muslims and that a large number of them converted to Islam made captives an object of fear and threatened the unity of the Christian community. On the other hand, captives were in a privileged position and in the

right location to produce and transmit information about other captives as well as about the Maghrib and the military plans of the Muslims. Captives, in other words, facilitated not only the political management of the Mediterranean as a belligerent arena, but also, via their communication with their kin and with the Inquisition and by delineating the boundaries between those who left the community and those that remained within its limits, of the threat posed by captivity and conversion. In that sense captives not only played a part in the shaping of communities in Spain but also of the image of Islam and of the Mediterranean.

While the third chapter focuses on information about individuals, the fourth examines in detail how, traversing the sea, captives – Muslim and Christian; captured, ransomed, or runaways – played an instrumental role in the production and circulation of strategic information and knowledge (applicable to questions of military defense, offense or conquest). They did so in five forms: (1) a few ex-captives wrote and published systematic treatises on the Maghrib; (2) captives warned their kin of corsairs' attacks in the letters they sent home; (3) upon arrival at ports, captives were questioned about enemies' plans and maritime strategic movements; (4) former captives compiled detailed, topographic urban narratives of Maghribi cities, which, often accompanied by plans and maps, pretended to point out the cities' "Achilles' heels" – the key to conquests; and, (5) captives wrote long, detailed urban diaries during their captivity, chronicling the main political – local and international – events they had experienced. Ironically, while the information that the chapter is focused on, and the flow of its transmission, attested to the links that the sea had enabled, the information articulated the sea as a political-belligerent space fought over by self-contained entities. These two chapters shift between exploring the importance of writing, textuality, and knowledge in the life of captives on the one hand, and how the circulation of news created and recreated the Mediterranean as a social and political space on the other. Despite the fact that the noun 'Mediterranean' was hardly ever employed in the texts I analyze, the production, manipulation, employment, and circulation of different forms of knowledge both rested on assumptions and expectations regarding what the stretch of sea between the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghrib was, and, at the same time, continuing to (re)create it.

Captives, however, were operating within a space, which formed the object of competing region-making projects launched by Algerian, Moroccan, and Spanish sovereigns, as well as by a host of ransom intermediaries and merchants. The last three chapters focus on ransom networks, the ransom expeditions of the Orders of Redemption, and the attempts of Mediterranean sovereigns to regulate ransom. The fifth chapter traces forgotten networks of credit, ransom, and trust that Muslim and Christian captives and their kin employed to obtain ransom. I analyze the mechanics of these networks, the modalities of exchanges they facilitated, how captives obtained credit, and what happened when one of the parties to ransom agreement tried to avoid fulfilling his or her obligations. I demonstrate that by acknowledging the validity of ransom agreement that Christian captives cut with ransom intermediaries, the Spanish Crown implicitly became a party to negotiations with Jews and Moriscos, social groups that it had expelled from the Peninsula in 1492, and 1609-1614 respectively.

The sixth chapter charts the history of the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians, church Orders that specialized in the redemption of Christians from the Maghrib, from their formation in the Middle Ages to the early modern period when the Spanish Crown began inspecting their work and regulating many of its aspects. It focuses on the struggle between the Orders over the monopoly over ransom, and on the coalitions they formed whenever critics claimed their redemptive labor was inefficient, and that their funds should be employed differently. As part of these struggles, the Orders launched propaganda campaigns that stressed their success and importance in the redemption of Christian souls. I demonstrate how these campaigns also shaped an image of the Mediterranean as a religious and environmental space dominated by God and by nature. The image, I claim, corresponded to the sea the way it emerged from their ransom procedures and the rhythms and number of ransom expeditions Trinitarians and Mercedarians sent to the Maghrib.

The small-scale ransom networks and the Orders of Redemption formed part of the same history, operating within the same space, which was also populated by Spanish and Maghribi sovereigns. That space, the western Mediterranean, cannot be understood, however, in isolation from these political actors that operated within it and tried to articulate it according to competing agenda. Chapter seven reconstructs the shifting

relations between the Spanish Crown, Algerians, and Moroccan governors, the Ottoman Sultan, the Orders, and the ransom networks. I demonstrate that the monopolization of the Orders by the Crown did not bring an end to the latter's collaboration with Jewish and Muslim ransom intermediaries or lead to the elimination of the ransom networks formed by the intermediaries. Rather, the collaboration between the Crown and the intermediaries was formalized, and thus legitimated, in the second decade of the seventeenth century. In the process, Phillip III transformed Jews and Muslims into royal agents in North, and Algerian and Moroccan governors, seeking a cartel over the selling of captives, did all they could to oppose that. The struggle between these actors was one of negotiating competing region-making projects, which sought to shape the Mediterranean in oppositional ways. While Algerians and Moroccans sought direct interaction and exchange with the Spanish Crown, the Crown preferred a pluralized sea, in which neither polity held a monopoly over exchange and mediation.

Chapter 2:

The Social Life of Enslaved Captives

1. Introduction

After being employed for a few years, during the 1590's, as a slave in the household of the Pasha of Algiers, Diego Galán, accused of attempting flight, was sentenced by his master to be whipped. Minutes before the execution of punishment, Mamí Napolitano, a renegade who was negotiating a debt with the Pasha, offered to take Galán instead. After the exchange had taken place, the grateful slave kissed the hands of his new master, who responded with these words – “but be good and loyal, and I will treat you well!”⁵⁵ This anecdote which recounts a moment of simultaneous hardship and relative good fortune, illuminates the relational aspects of slavery as well as the potential for professional mobility available to enslaved captives in the Ottoman Empire. Mamí promises comfortable employment and good treatment, but conditions it upon industriousness and loyalty. Galán, quick to learn languages, to make friends, to ingratiate himself with authorities, and to mobilize these resources to his advantage, played the game well. A highly skilled consumer of cultural and social resources, he managed to transform himself in a few years from a marginal figure in his master's household into a near member of its kinship structure.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Diego Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán, Natural de la Villa de Consuegra y Vecino de la Ciudad de Toledo*, Bunes, Miguel Ángel de and Matías Barchino, Toledo: Diputación Provincial de Toledo, 2001, p. 79.

⁵⁶ Galán wrote his *Relación* in the third decade of the seventeenth century and the fifth of his life, about thirty years after his return to Spain. A decade later, he wrote a second longer and more 'literary' version titled *Cautiverio y Trabajos de Diego Galán*: Diego Galán, *Edición Crítica de Cautiverio y Trabajos de*

Galán, who eventually took advantage of the circumstances, escaped, and returned home after a decade in captivity, was one of more than a million Christians enslaved in the Maghrib in the early modern period.⁵⁷ This chapter presents the state of our knowledge of the life of captives and of captivity as a system of enslavement. Rather than reproducing the excellent work others have already conducted, I limit myself only to those aspects of captivity that will serve the rest of the project's chapters. I build upon previous studies in examining the contexts in which captives lost their liberty in analyzing how they were sold in a spectacular and traumatic sale at the slave market and in exploring what occupations they filled. The reconstruction and analysis I offer, however, differ from other studies in the sources that I am employing and in my emphasis. The vast majority of the captivity scholarship produced by literary critiques and historians relies almost exclusively on captivity narratives, namely autobiographies written by former captives and captivity plays.⁵⁸ While I too make ample use of autobiographies, comedies, and other works written by former-captives, I read them along with inquisitorial sources, petitions, and other archival documents, many of which were compiled by captives during their captivity. This eclectic corpus enables me to avoid the reconstruction of captivity as a static system that an analysis that relies exclusively on narrative sources tends to produce. Rather than stasis, I stress dynamism. I demonstrate how captives moved between masters and occupations through multiple forms of exchange – temporary and final. I reconstruct professional trajectories that channeled the life of enslaved captives and their involvement in informal economies. While captives usually had little power to influence such trajectories, conversion and the

Diego Galán, Matías Barchino, Ed. Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2001. Neither account was published during his lifetime. The later account was published in 1913 (Diego Galán, Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles., and Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Cautiverio y trabajos de Diego Galán, natural de Consuegra y vecino de Toledo 1589 a 1600* (Madrid: ["Imprenta Ibérica"], 1913), and it was not until almost a century later that scholars found the first account, identified it as an earlier version, and published it. Since the book was not published in his lifetime, and since there is no explicit indication of the years in which it was written, an exact date cannot be established. On the basis of references to political events of the period, it is obvious that Galán wrote the first version of his captivity at least twenty years after the events. For a literary analysis of the second version, the literary influences on Galán, and the use of difference language registers, see: Levisi, "Las Aventuras de Diego Galán." On the place of the work vis-à-vis Cervantes and Haedo's *Topografía e historia general de Argel*, see: Camamis, *Estudios Sobre el Cautiverio en el Siglo de Oro*, pp. 202-28.

⁵⁷Robert C. Davis, "Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast," *Past and Present*, no. 172 (2001): 87-124.

⁵⁸ Among these, historians who have focused on captivity and ransom also use the important corpus of records produced by the Trinitarian and Mercedarian Orders.

establishment of trust-based-relations were ways in which they could manipulate them. Occupational and spatial mobility, I argue, formed central features of captivity in the Maghrib. Mobility was important as it enabled captives to establish social networks with other captives, their overseers, masters, and free Christians not only within urban centers in the Maghrib and the rest of the Ottoman Empire but also between these cities across the Mediterranean.

1. 'Captives' or 'Slaves'? A Misplaced Question

Two key terms in the study of enslaved captives in North African are 'captives' and 'slaves.' Were Europeans held prisoners in the Maghrib captives or slaves? And what is the difference? Some claim that they were slaves while others insist that they were captives. The disagreement is based on an analytic, exclusionary use of the terms 'captive' and 'slave.' Christians imprisoned in the Maghrib, Robert Davis has argued, were slaves and should be studied as such. Atlantic slavery, he has added, was "above all a matter of business," slavery in the Maghrib of "passion... almost of *jihād*."⁵⁹ In contrast, Fontenay has insisted that in the study of Mediterranean slavery, one needs to distinguish between 'slaves' and 'captives.' Captives had an exchange value, while slaves had a use value; the majority of the captives were purchased by business-oriented traders who bought them as a shrewd investment, slaves were bought by slave owners who solely sought to benefit from the fruits of their slaves' labor. Christians in the Maghrib, Fontenay has explained, were captured, but eventually retrieved their freedom; in contrast black slaves lived and died as slaves.⁶⁰ With a small variation, Davis has reproduced a long-criticized dichotomy in studies of slavery according to which slavery in America was economic, while in Africa it was social.⁶¹ Fontenay, on the other hand, has reduced the religious aspects of captive-taking to logic of market economy disregarding the fact that the majority of captives were not ransomed and died as slaves. The insistence on the exclusionary nature of the terms, however, not only masks the

⁵⁹ Davis, *Christian slaves, Muslim Masters* pp. xxv.

⁶⁰ Micheal, Fontenay, "Esclaves et/ou captifs : préciser les concepts," in Ed. Wolfgang, Kaiser, *Le commerce des captifs : les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*, École française de Rome: Rome, 2008, pp. 15-24.

⁶¹ On the dichotomy between the alleged economic nature of slavery in the Atlantic and the social nature of slavery in Africa, see: Frederic Cooper, "The Problem of Slavery in African Studies," *Journal of African History in Africa* 20 (1979) 103-125

complexity of the social trajectories that managed the life of enslaved captives in North Africa but also creates the appearance of two separate classes of bondage and of masters.

The statuses of slave and captive, I argue, coexisted potentially in the same persons, i.e. those marked as ‘for ransom’ were put to work with others, and some of those ‘enslaved’ managed to ransom themselves even after years of slavery.⁶² Part of the analytic confusion stems from the fact that these were also categories of practice: contemporaries used both, and references to ‘captives’ (*cautivo*, ‘*captif*’) and ‘slaves’ (*esclavo*, *esclave*) abound in the sources.⁶³ Early modern authors like Antonio de Sosa and Gabriel de Losada who dedicated many pages to historical-juridical discussions of the bondage of Christians in the Maghrib used the term ‘slavery’ but in the same breath, in other sections of their work, termed Christians enslaved in the Maghrib ‘captives.’⁶⁴ For example, in his authoritative *Topography and General History of Algiers*, Antonio de Sosa wrote that “although there is an infinite number of them [Christians] of every stripe and nation, because they ordinarily arrive here as captives and slaves” thereby collapsing the distinction between the terms.⁶⁵ Thus, in this project, I employ the terms ‘captive,’ ‘slave,’ or ‘enslaved captives’ interchangeably with a preference for the term ‘captive’ when discussing ransom and ‘slave’ when discussing labor.

⁶² Salvatore Bono has rightly pointed out that it was possible to distinguish a captive from a slave only in regard to those slaves who were ransomed and returned home; i.e. the distinction could be made only after the fact of ransom, see: Salvatore, Bono, “Slave Histories and Memoirs in the Mediterranean World: A Study of the Sources (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries, in María Fusaro, Colin Heywood and Mohamed-Salah Omro, Eds., *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean, Braudel’s Maritime Legacy*, London, New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2010, p. 100. On the distinction in Roman, Christian and Judeo traditions, see: Díaz Borrás, Andrés, *El miedo al Mediterráneo: La caridad popular valenciana y la redención de cautivos bajo poder musulmán 1323-1539*, Barcelona: CSIC, 2001, pp. 5-18; on the distinction in Muslim sources, see: Matar, Nabil., *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.

⁶³ Throughout the seventeenth century, in common use of French, the terms ‘*captif*’ and ‘*esclave*’ were also used interchangeably, see: Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs, France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Stanford: Stanford University press, 2011, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁴ Gabriel de Losada, *Escuela de trabajos, en quatro libros dividada: Primero del cautiverio más cruel, y tirano: Segundo, noticias, y gobierno de Argel: Tercero, necesidad, y conveniencia de la redención de cautivos christianos: Quatro, el mejor cautivo rescatado*, Madrid: Iulian de Paredes, 1670.

⁶⁵ Antonio de Sosa, *Topography and History of Algiers in An Early Modern Dialouge with Islam: Antonio de Sosa’s Topography of Algiers (1612)*, María Antonia Garcés, Ed. University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, 2011, p. 119.

2. *Captivity and Enslavement*

For most slaves, captivity began in a violent maritime clash in the high seas. As the ship on which the soon-to-be-captives sailed across the waters of the Mediterranean a hostile sail was seen at the horizon. Once the suspicions were verified and the strangers identified as corsairs, fear took over the passengers who populated the decks. In his autobiography, *An Account of the Captivity and Liberty of Diego Galán*, the author, a Toledan boy captured in 1589 and held captive for eleven years in the Ottoman Empire, captured the moment:

Finally, after more than twenty days of embarkation we left the port of Malaga with favorable wind and [after] two days of navigation to Oran, facing Barbary, close to the three gallows' cape, the wind calmed. [And] eight large slave galleys of Turks from Algiers captained by Arnaut Mami, an Albanese renegade left [the cape]. And as the patron of our ship discovered the rowboats, he said – 'we are lost.'⁶⁶

While there are hardly any first-voice accounts of Muslim captives, Christian sources suggest that Muslims lost their liberty in the exact same way. Alonso de Contreras, the Spanish knight of Malta and corsair, described how around 1600, he chased a Turkish merchant ship (*caramuzal*), forced its crew to harbor in Lampedusa seeking refuge on the island. Then, Contreras and other knights hunted and enslaved them.⁶⁷

Hoping to escape the corsairs, the captain and his crew did all they could to increase speed and escape. Meanwhile, the passengers began hiding their precious belongings and getting rid of marks which identified them as rich and hence raised their future ransom price.⁶⁸ This moment of capture features in numerous autobiographies ex-captives wrote

⁶⁶ "Al fin, al cabo de más de veinte días de embarcación partimos del puerto de Málaga con viento favorable, y dos días de navegación para Orán calmó el viento a vista de Berbería, cerca del cabo de tres forcas, de donde salieron ocho galeotas grandes de turcos de Argel, cuyo capitán era Arnaut Mamí, renegado albanés. Y como el patrón de nuestro navío descubrió bajeles de remo, dijo: Perdimos somos..." Galán, *Relación del cautiverio y libertad de Diego Galán*. Galán wrote his *Relación* in the third decade of the seventeenth century and the fifth of his life, about thirty years after his return to Spain. A decade later he wrote a second longer and more 'literary' version named *Cautiverio y Trabajos de Diego Galán* (Galán, *Edición Crítica de Cautiverio y Trabajos de Diego Galán*).

⁶⁷ Alonso de Contreras, *Discurso de mi vida*, Madrid: Armas Tomar Ediciones, 2005, pp. 21-23. A century later, Antonio Marín, a Valencian corsair, left the port of Alicante with his frigate, chased a frigate of "Turks" that was sailing near the Valencian coasts, and captured "seventeen living Moors and two renegades" ("diez y siete moros vivos y dos renegades"), see: Vicente, Graullera Sanz, *La esclavitud en Valencia en los siglos XVI y XVII*, Valencia: CSIC, 1978, p. 236.

⁶⁸ João de Carvalho Mascarenhas, *Esclave a alger. récit de captivité de João Mascarenhas (1621-1626)*, Teyssier Paul, Translator, Paris: Editions Chandeigne, 1993, pp. 50-51.

after their return home. Such descriptions, though, were not limited to elaborated published captivity accounts. They also appear in short ‘bureaucratic autobiographies’ that captives, former captives and their kin drafted and submitted to the crown in hope of receiving some compensation.⁶⁹ A key element in these autobiographical petitions is the depiction of the moment of capture. Petitioners always recounted how they had been captured. In most cases, this radical interruption of the normal course of life leading to captivity began as a disruption of a movement across maritime space, usually during a journey on a ship. Sergeant Domingo Álvarez, for example, described in the petition he submitted to the crown how “crossing [the Mediterranean] to Oran with [the company] in the year 1611 he was captured by the Turks of Algiers.”⁷⁰ This was not only a soldiers’ fate. Maria Hernández, Maria Alfonso, and Gregorio de Olveyra y Alonso Núñez, all from Galicia, described in their petition to the Council of Castile (*Consejo de Castilla*) how their husbands and sons were captured while out fishing at sea.⁷¹

For others, however, the moment of capture was even more disruptive. The mere fact of boarding a ship and sailing embodied the risk of an encounter with corsairs and thus passengers should have been, perhaps, better prepared for such a tragedy. The corsairs, however, did not limit their playground to the high seas and often attacked and pillaged villages along the Mediterranean littoral. Peasants and fishermen, men and women living along the shores of Andalusia, the Balearics, the Canary Islands, Tunis, Algiers or Morocco were a potential prey for Muslim or Christian corsairs. Portuguese, Sicilians, Sardinians, Neapolitans and other Italians suffered the same fate. Muslim corsairs reached as far as Galicia, Cantabria, the Basque Country, and the British shores in their attacks. In 1631 they attacked Baltimore in West Cork, Ireland; four years earlier, in 1627, they raided Iceland!⁷² Christian corsairs raided Greek Ottomans in the

⁶⁹ On the notion of bureaucratic autobiography, see: James, Amelang, “L’autobiografia popolare nella Spagna moderna: Osservazioni generali e particolari,” in *Memoria, famiglia, identità tra Italia ed Europa nell’età moderna*, Ed. Giovanni Ciappelli, Bologna: Il mulino, 2009, pp. 113-130, esp. pp.115-116 and Gregori Roig, R. M., “Representación pública del individuo: Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios en el Archivo General de Indias, siglos XVII-XVIII,” in A. Castillo Gómez and V. Sierra Blas (eds), *El legado de Mnemosyne: Las escrituras del yo a través del tiempo*, Gijón 2007, pp. 355-379.

⁷⁰ “El sargento Domingo Álvarez esclavo en Argel dize que depuse haver servido a v.m. muchos años en la harmada rreal... y pasando á Oran con ella [la compañía] el año de 611 fue captivo de los turcos de Argel,” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 811, 5.16.1616.

⁷¹ AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 6902, 6.16.1673.

⁷² Gillian, Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, p. 17.

eastern Mediterranean and others near the Maghribi coasts.⁷³ Christians were also taken captive in the Maghrib. Soldiers who manned the Spanish *presidios* – literally garrison but also a penitentiary institution or a prison – in the Maghrib risked their liberty in military encounters with Janissaries. A few of these soldiers, however, did not lose their liberty in the battlefield but rather defected.⁷⁴ Life in the *presidio* was hard, and food shortages were common.⁷⁵ The desperate soldiers and residents that defected hoped for better life in Algiers. Some planned to convert to Islam and settle down in Algiers, others to escape from there to Spain. Those who “made it” and arrived in Algiers discovered that the Pasha was not interested in them as Muslims preferring to sell them as Christian captives.⁷⁶

According to Robert Davis more than a million Christians lost their liberty at sea or in land and were enslaved in the Ottoman Maghrib and in Morocco between 1530 and 1780.⁷⁷ The calculation excludes Christians enslaved in Istanbul or other regions of the Ottoman Empire, a population which would have raised these figures. This may be a large number but if we compare it to the number of slaves held in the Iberian Peninsula in these years, it no longer seems inflated. Alessandro Stella estimated that between 1450 and 1750 around 700,000 or 800,000 black slaves passed through the Portugal and Spain. To this figure, he added 300,000 to 400,000 Ottoman and Moroccan slaves. When adding the slaves born on Iberian soil, the Balearics, and the Canary Islands, the number

⁷³ Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants*.

⁷⁴ In a letter that the Duke of Maqueda, governor of Oran (1616-1625), wrote Philip III on September 30th 1619, he claimed that during the term of his predecessor, the Count Aguilar, one hundred sixty one soldiers defected. During his own term as a governor, the Duke added, fifty two soldiers defected. The Duke attached to his letter a long list of names divided in three: soldiers who defected to Muslims settlements; missing soldiers suspected in defecting to Muslim settlements; and missing soldiers, who might have defected on the ships that transferred to North Africa the Moriscos that were expelled from Spain, see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 495, 28.9.1619 and 9.30.1619. Oran was not the only garrison from which soldiers and civilians escaped to Muslims neighboring towns. The Morisco Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim Al-Ḥajarī who escaped from Mazghan (El Jadida), a Spanish garrison in Morocco to Azammūr met on his way the Muslim governor of Azammūr. The governor explained that when he heard the cannons of the Spanish soldiers of Mazghan firing in order to announce Ibn Qāsim’s escape, he assumed that it were Christians who had escaped and left the city to find them, see: Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim Al-Ḥajarī, *The Supporter of Religion against the Infidel*, P S. Van Koningsveld, Q. al-Samarrai, and G. A. Wiegers, Translation and edition, Madrid, CSIC, 1997, pp. 92-100.

⁷⁵ On the Spanish movement of colonization which led to the establishment of the North African garrisons and the portrayal of these garrison as miserable deserted places, see: Braudel, Fernand, “Les Espagnols et l’Afrique du Nord de 1492 a 1577.” For a recent critique of the portrayal of the garrisons as penal colonies, see: Schaub, *Les Juifs du roi d’Espagne*.

⁷⁶ AGS, *Estado*, Leg 198.

⁷⁷ Davis, “Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast.”

jumps to 2,000,000.⁷⁸ Bono has conjectured that during the early modern period, at least two million Muslims from the Mediterranean were enslaved in Christian territories.⁷⁹ Despite the fact that more Christians were ransomed than Muslims, the majority of the slaves had not been ransomed; they had become an integral part of the society that captured them.⁸⁰

Christians who lost their liberty to corsairs in the high seas or in attacks on their village belonged to the *reis* (*arraez* in Spanish), the corsairs' captain, and to those who funded the raid.⁸¹ Upon their return to the home port, the corsairs had to submit to the governor the list of the booty that the ship's scribe prepared. The governor was eligible for a share, slightly different in size in Algiers, Tunis, La Valette (Malta) or Majorca, but nearly ten percent of the total.⁸² In contrast, soldiers-turned-prisoners-of-war became the property of the governor or of others who funded the attack.⁸³ The rest of the captives were sold in a public bid in the slave market. This was a spectacular moment and became a commonplace in captivity narratives: slaves were made to march like cattle under the trained gaze of potential buyers who examined their bodies and teeth while the voices of criers who announced their age, profession, community of origin and price roared. Emanuel d'Aranda described his own sale in the slave market in Algiers in 1640 in the following words:

A half dead old person, a stick in his hand, took my arm and walked me several times around the market; those who were interested in buying me questioned for my origin, my name and profession... they touched my hands to see [if the skin] was hard and callous due to work. Other than that they made me open my mouth to examine my teeth, to see if they could chew the biscuit provided on the galleys.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Alessandro, Stella, *Histoires d'Esclaves dans la Péninsule Ibérique*, Paris: Éditions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2000, pp. 78-79.

⁷⁹ Bono, "Slave Histories and Memoirs," p. 105.

⁸⁰ Davis estimated that between 2 to 4 percent of all Christian slaves in North Africa were rescued and returned home, see: Davis, *Christian slaves, Muslim Masters*, pp. 19-21.

⁸¹ Sosa, *Topography*, p. 157

⁸² Salvatore Bono, *Les corsaires en Méditerranée*, Paris: Éditions Paris-Méditerranée, 1998, pp. 193-201. According to Sosa, in the last decades of the sixteenth century, the pasha or the governor of whichever city who armed and provisioned the expedition was free to choose one seventh of all the captives and the goods taken, see: Sosa, *Topography*, p. 158. A century later, Laugier de Tassy, chancellor of the French consulate in Algiers, claimed that the dey received one eighth of the booty, see: Laugier de Tassy, *Histoire du royaume d'Alger, un diplomate français à Alger en 1724*, Éditions Loysel : Paris, 1992, p. 164.

⁸³ Sosa, *Topography*, p. 144.

⁸⁴ "Un vieillard fort caduc, un bâton à la main, me prit par le bras et me mena à diverses reprises autour de ce marché; et ceux qui avaient envie de m'acheter demandoient de quel pays j'étais, mon nom, et ma

James Amelang has noted the great attention paid to social classes in Spanish captivity literature.⁸⁵ The fact that so many former captives narrated in detail their first sale reflects his claim. In the slave market, as former captive João Mascarenhas recounted, nobles and priests found themselves treated as African slaves were in the Iberian Peninsula – “like new blacks (*nègres*) made to march from the ship to the customs house.”⁸⁶ Pedro, one of the three protagonists in *A Journey to Turkey* (1557), put it in different words when he described the captives’ clothes: “the dress of the slaves is the same for good and for bad [people], like the monks’.”⁸⁷ In other words, enslavement, to some extent, effaced previous social differences. The moment of the first sale, however, might have been exceptional in the degree to which it was ritualized and staged and in the extent to which it was stylized by redeemed captives; nonetheless, scholars have ignored the fact that it was part of a process and for most slaves only the first of several exchanges. In that sense, Christian captives in the Maghrib constantly moved between what Igor Kopytoff has termed commoditization and singularization. In the moment of their sale, slaves were transformed into a commodity, but soon they were inserted into a household or some kind of a host group where they were partly re-socialized and re-humanized until the next time they changed hands.⁸⁸

profession... Ils me touchaient les mains, si elles étaient dures et calleuses à force de travailler; outre cela, ils me faisaient ouvrir la bouche pour voir mes dents, si elles étaient capables de manger du biscuit sur les galères.” Aranda, Emanuel de, *Les captifs d'Alger: Relation de la captivité du sieur Emanuel d'Aranda* Latifa Z'rari Latifa, Ed., Paris: J.-P. Rocher, 1997, p. 34. Diego Galán, recounted his experience in similar words: “They took us to the market to sell us... In the first day a young crier took my arm and shouting and walking in circles in the market, walked me for more than fifteen minutes; and some [buyers] came to look [at me] and asked if I had any defects and they made me walk to see if I was lame or mutilated, as if I were a mount, examining my arms and looking at my teeth.” (“...[N]os llebaron al zoco... Al primer día me asió un mozo pregonero de la mano, y dando pregones y vueltas en el zoco, me trujo más de un cuarto de hora, y algunos me llevaban a mirar y preguntaban si tenía algunos achaques, y me hacían andar para ver si era cojo o manco, como si fuera cabalgadura, tentándome los brazos y mirando la dentadura.” Galán, *Relación*, p. 52.

⁸⁵ Amelang, “L’ autobiografia popolare nella Spagna moderna,” pp. 113-130.

⁸⁶ “[C]omme des nègres nouveaux qu’on mène du navire à la douane.” Mascarenhas, *Esclave à Alger*, p. 55. And in another place, Mascarenhas characterized the situation of captivity as the effacement of all social marks – “sans qu’il y eût aucune difference entre les nègres et leurs maîtres,” p. 47.

⁸⁷ “El ávito de los esclabos todo es uno de malos y buneos, como de fraires,” *Viaje de Turquía*, Fernando García Salinero, Ed. Madrid: Catedra, 2000, p. 139.

⁸⁸ Kopytoff, Igor, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Arjun Appadurai, Ed. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 64-94.

Mercedarian and Trinitarian records, literary accounts, and Sosa's *Topography* distinguish between three kinds of slaves owners on the basis of the prospects their slaves had to be ransomed. One of the first, and certainly the most famous, to make that distinction was Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, whose narrator in the three chapters from *Don Quixote* forming the unit known as the 'Captive's Tale,' described his days in the bagnio in Algiers:

Those [slaves] that belong to the King as well as some [slaves] that belong to private individuals, and the ones they call 'stockpiled,' which is like saying 'public prisoners,' who serve the city in public works and in other employment for the general good.⁸⁹

Cervantes described three classes of slave owners – [1] governors; [2] the aristocracy, including the nobility, wealthy corsairs, renegades and small proprietors; and [3] the common-wealth – and associated each to slaves' prospects of regaining their liberty. While many captives of the governor and of other individuals were eventually ransomed, "These captives [the 'stock piled'] find it very difficult to obtain their freedom, because they have no individual master, and there is no one with whom to negotiate their ransom even if ransom is available."⁹⁰ The records of the Orders of Redemption reiterate the link between owners' identity and captives' prospects of ransom. These documents distinguished between the Pasha or Dey, other individual slave owners, and the Divan and also linked each of these classes with captives' chances of ransom.⁹¹ The ransom expeditions the Orders sent to the Maghrib, however, were dependent on the cooperation of Ottoman pashas or Moroccan governors. The latter issued passports that protected the friars on their way to Africa and during their stay there, and in return, Maghribi officials imposed their ransom agenda upon the Orders. That meant that the Maghribi pashas and governors forced the friars to buy their own captives and those of their confidants first and only then captives of others in the city. The Orders' depiction of a tripartite division of slave owners, therefore, reflects their positionality in the "economy of ransom," an economy stimulated by violence, piracy, selling of booty and ransom, which I analyze in

⁸⁹ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Edith Grossman, Trans., New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, Vol. I, p. 343.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 63-64 and 98.

the last two chapters.⁹² This tripartite division of ownership will be further complicated but I first examine how slaves were employed, the professional stratification among them, and their involvement in an array of informal economies.

3. Captivity and “Social Death”

One of the main features of slavery, it has been argued, was the condition of foreignness. The slave,” Finley has argued, “was also a deracinated outsider – an outsider first in the sense that he originated from outside the society into which he was introduced as a slave, second in the sense that he was denied the most elementary of social bonds, kinship.”⁹³ Orlando Patterson has put it in somewhat different words claiming that the slave, by definition was “a socially dead person... he was truly a genealogical isolate.”⁹⁴ Do these features characterize slavery of Christians in the Maghrib or even of Muslims in the Habsburg Empire?

Captives must have experienced their captivity differently according to where they came from. The captivity experience of a resident of Majorca, coastal Andalusia, or Mazara del Vallo in Sicily must have been very different from that of a Castilian from Valladolid or Salamanca. Islanders and residents of Andalusia, which housed a large population of Muslim slaves, must have been used to interact with Muslims and hear Arabic. Many islanders had extended commercial relations with the Maghrib and sailed back and forth between Spain and North Africa trading, ransoming Christians, and enslaving Muslims. For some Majorcans, Canarians and Andalusians, the positions of pirate, ransomer, or captive meant different stages in complex professional trajectories often linked with commerce. More than one Majorcan was taken captive two or even three times.⁹⁵ “The risk of captivity,” as Fontenay has argued, “[was] normalized by the mentality of the period [and perceived] as an inevitable misfortune in the order of

⁹² On the economy of ransom, see: Wolfgang, Kaiser, “La excepción permanente” and idem, “L’économie de la rançon en Méditerranée occidentale.”

⁹³ M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, New York: The Viking Press, 1980, p. 75.

⁹⁴ Orlando, Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 5.

⁹⁵ Pedro de Sedeño, for example, a soldier in the garrison of Melilla was taken captive and ransomed twice in the 1590’s, see: AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 477, fol. 273. Similarly, Cristóbal Benítez from the city of Gibraltar, whose case I analyze in the next section, was held captive in Morocco ransomed, and taken captive and enslaved again, this time in Algiers, see: AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro 863, fol. 61, 9.16.1611.

things.”⁹⁶ For such figures, the reality of life in the Maghrib in general and of the life of captives in particular was not unknown. In contrast, for a bourgeois from Madrid, or even a Galician fisherman, life in Algiers as a slave must have come as a total shock.

And yet, even *Madrileño* captives were not denied claims on living kin across the sea. On the contrary, as long as their masters believed they could sell them for profit, they encouraged their captives to contact their friends and relatives and arrange for ransom. As chapters two and three make clear, even slaves who, due to their poverty, had no prospects of paying ransom or Muslims enslaved in Spain, who were ransomed in smaller numbers than Christians held captive in the Maghrib, could maintain contact with home by sending letters. Even if slaves had no relatives, they were not alone. Within prisons captives were grouped together into *nationes* (Spaniards with Spaniards, Italians with Italians and so on) like medieval university students or imperial soldiers. Beyond the relative similarity of Romance languages, the Lingua Franca, the language slave owners often used to communicate with their slaves, served captives to bridge linguistic differences and form social ties. Religious services were legal, and a variety of churches existed in the slaves’ prisons. At any given moment one could find priests or friars from any possible religious order or creed in the slaves’ prisons. Moreover, from the second decade of the seventeenth century, a Trinitarian hospital operating in Algiers provided captives with basic medical care. French, English and Dutch consuls established consulates in the Maghrib throughout the seventeenth century, complementing the presence of the Trinitarians. This by no means denies that the trial of captivity was among the worst experiences early modern Christians could suffer. Numerous texts recount the hellish living conditions captivity suffered by their authors. And yet, “natal alienation” does not capture the experience of captivity in the Maghrib. Not only did many captives maintain kinship relations but ironically captivity enabled the formation of new social ties in the Maghrib and across the Mediterranean.

4. *Slave Labor and Informal Economies*

Slaves in North Africa and in the Ottoman metropolis were employed in a variety of labors depending on their skills, their ability to pay ransom, public and private need, and

⁹⁶ Fontenay, “Esclaves et/ou captifs : préciser les concepts,”p. 23.

the season. Slaves trained in ship building professions – oar and sail makers, carpenters, and others – were employed in shipyards.⁹⁷ Others, such as barbers, tailors, or shoemakers were employed in artisans’ workshops. Unskilled slaves rowed in the galleys, chopped wood, and performed other kinds of manual labor. Emanuel d’Aranda who was held captive in Algiers in the 1640’s, recounted in his autobiography how he pretended to be a poor soldier in order to avoid paying a large sum for his ransom. That, however, marked him as unprofessional manpower and he was sent to work first in making ropes and later pounding wheat in a stone mortar.⁹⁸ Others slaves toiled in the fields of their owners away from the bustle of the city and its port.

In all of these jobs, slaves were inserted into new social hierarchies. Even rowing in the galleys, a hard labor that “came to epitomize slavery for white Europeans in Barbary for Christians,” was professionally stratified, carried varying privileges and obligations, and placed its holders, the captives, in complicated hierarchies of power.⁹⁹ Robert Davis has pointed out two privileged positions on the galleys that slaves coveted – the *scrivani*, or slave secretary, who was responsible for keeping the ship log, and the *vogavan* (lingua franca) or *bogavante* (Spanish), the oar pace-setters.¹⁰⁰ The pace-setters established and coordinated the rhythm of rowing, and acted as the leaders of their bench. But social and professional stratification was much more complex. Even among slaves who pulled the same oar there were better and worse positions. This is suggested in Galán’s description of the circumstances in which he befriended Augustín, another captive, who later helped him:

He [Agustin] was a very good friend of mine because since we left Algiers, the Pasha ordered me to pull the back oar, [the same] as Augustín’s, doing me a favor, because [normally] it was the veterans and the most spirited guys who pulled that oar. And this position is free from punishments and repeated castigations that are common on the galleys when bad things are done, [when] the [Muslims] give so many blows to everyone except those who pull the back oar,

⁹⁷ Galán, *Relación*, p. 87.

⁹⁸ Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger*, p. 38

⁹⁹ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁰ *Vogavan* was the word in the lingua franca, and it originated from the French *vogue-avant*, see: Davis, 80-81. The *Bogavante* sat, by the aisle on the bench, and next to him sat the second, third, and fourth rowers, see: Augustin, Jal, *Glossaire Nautique* (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1848). More on the work of Galley slaves in the Mediterranean see: Michel, Fontenay, "L’esclave galérien dans la Méditerranée des Temps Modernes." In *Figures de l’esclave au Moyen-Age et dans le monde moderne: actes de la table ronde*, edited by Henri Bresc, 115-42. Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1996.

who sit in the first bench near the stern, that forms the back of the galley; and for that, they call the rower of that bench the stern rower (*espalder*). And *bogavante* means ‘rows ahead,’ because he pulls the oar before the four or five or more who sit behind the [same] oar; and they call the first *bogavante*, the second outrigger, the third *tercerol* and the fourth *cuarterol*. And I, they bestowed me with the dignity of the fourth, because I was a boy, [and] because the fourth works less than the rest...¹⁰¹

The appearance of professional sameness in references to work on the galleys conceals the differentiation revealed by Galán’s thick description of the four or five slaves that pulled each of the galley’s oars. First, oarsmen pulling the last oar were exempted of the regular punishments to which others were subject. Second, even among the oarsmen of the same bench there was a complex division of labor. The pace-setter worked harder than the rest, had a greater responsibility, and received more privileges. Others, like the fourth rower, had the benefits of a lighter workload. Despite the fact that the pace-setter enjoyed more privileges than the fourth rower, from Galán’s point of view his position was better since it fitted his young age and physical shape at the time and saved him from beatings endured by other slaves. If, as Galán shows, galley slaves perceived and experienced such close positions in the galleys as radically different, social stratification must have characterized other labors.

Slaves also engaged in an array of informal economies producing goods and services, stealing, giving charity, and more. Entrepreneurs could earn additional sums of money by opening small businesses such as producing brandy. Galán recounted how “the slaves who were most esteemed by the masters, like the galley’s stern rower, the barber and others... with some money that they obtain, make brandy and from that they make profit.”¹⁰² Pasamonte also mentioned a Christian captive who distilled brandy in a castle

¹⁰¹ “Este se llamaba Augustín y era muy grande amigo mío, porque desde que partimos de Argel me pusieron a mí a remar en su remo de la espalda, haciéndome favor el bajá, porque el remo de la espalda siempre le ocupan los guzmanes y más animosos y es reservado de muchas faenas y de eszurribandas que suele haber en galeras cuando hacen alguna cosa culpable, que dan tantos azotes a cada uno sin reservar más que el remo de la espalda, que es el primero banco de junto a la popa, que viene a ser la espalda de la galera, y por esto se llaman *espalder* al *bogavante* de aquel remo. Y *bogavante* quiere decir ‘boga adelante’, porque boga adelante de los cuatro o cinco o más que están el remo, y al primero llaman *bogavante*, y al segundo llaman *postizo* y al tercero *tercerol* y al cuarto *cuarterol* [Y] a mí me pusieron en esta dignidad de *cuarterol*, por ser muchacho, porque trabaja menos el *cuarterol* que los demás,” Galán, *Relación*, p. 76.

¹⁰² “Algunos cautivos de los más estimados de amo, tal como el *espalder* de la galera y el *barbero* y otros, se están en casa y con algún caudal que alcanzan hacen aguardiente, en que tienen granjería.” Galán, *Relación*, p. 88.

near Biserta.¹⁰³ The Englishman Hugo Ferez was captured on a ship that left Málaga for Alicante, and was taken to Algiers. During the two years he was held captive, he saved money selling “wine, beer, cheese and other things,” and eventually ransomed himself. He saved so much that after paying his ransom, he still had at least “a thousand and two hundred *reales* in cash, and a quantity of cheese, clothes, and other goods in the value of a thousand *reales*.”¹⁰⁴ Edward Webbe, who lost his liberty to the “Turks” in 1573, mentioned in his captivity account that he used his skills as an expert gunner to work in a fireworks display in the princely circumcision festivities of 1582. Michael Heberer, a German from Heidelberg held captive by the Ottomans in the 1580’s, gained money during the winter by composing congratulatory poems for European dignitaries visiting the Ottoman capital.¹⁰⁵ Others sewed and mended underpants or socks. D’Aranda described how he sewed himself a shirt, but he was clueless about sewing underpants from the remnants. “Seeing that, a Portuguese knight, also a slave, told [d’Aranda]: ‘my friend, I see clearly that you are not a tailor by profession.’ As he was saying that, he gave three or four *aspers* (a coin of little value of that country) to another slave who cut and made my underpants.”¹⁰⁶ Captives later sold the clothes and little things they made investing the profits in social alliances and in improving their living conditions.¹⁰⁷ Jerónimo de Pasamonte, an Aragonese of the lower gentry’s ranks taken captive in 1574, recounted in his autobiography how captives in his company decided to send a letter to their owner complaining about Chafer Arráiz, their overseer, blaming him for stealing from the owner and from the Sultan. Why did the captives care about the theft and how did they know about it? According to Pasamonte, who objected to sending the letter, Chafer Arráiz “prevented the captives from practicing their petty theft and dirty tricks.”¹⁰⁸ The captives

¹⁰³ Jerónimo de Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra and José María de Cossío, Eds. Sevilla: Espuela de Palata, 2006, p. 41

¹⁰⁴ “...[M]ill y duzientos rreales que tenía en dinero, y una cantidad de quesso y ropa y otras mercaderias de valor de mil rreales que es lo que el dicho Hugo ferez había ganado el tiempo que estubo cautivo en Argel,” Archivo Ducal de Medina Sidonia, Leg. 4407, 11.2.1619.

¹⁰⁵ Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the world around it*, 131.

¹⁰⁶ Ce que voyant, un cavalier portugais aussi esclave me dit: ‘Mon ami, je vois bien que vous n’êtes pas tailleur de votre métier.’ En disant cela, il donna trois ou quatre aspres (petite monnaie de ce pays-la) à un autre esclave qui coupa et fit mon caleçon,” Aranda, de, *Les captifs d’Alger*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Pedro, one of the protagonists of *Journey to Turkey*, described how captives in the galleys produced socks and other items. Later, upon arrival in a port, he added, they sold everything and with the money “ate better than the captains,” (“come mejor que los capitanes”), see: *Viaje de Turquía*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁸ “no les daba comodidad para sus ladronicios y bellaquerías,” Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, p. 49.

must have known that Chafer Arraíz stole from their master because of their involvement in the theft. Pasamonte said little about the relations between the captives and Chafer Arraíz but mentioned that they used to bribe him in return for greater freedom of movement and the right to move unchained.¹⁰⁹ Chafer Arraíz then cooperated with the captives until they felt that he had become a menace and consequently decided to try to eliminate him by contacting their owner directly. Captivity accounts are replete with similar stories.¹¹⁰ The basic food portions were not always enough to live on, and slaves had to steal in order to complement their diet, a practice overlooked by their owners.¹¹¹ Stealing and smuggling were not the only exchanges in which captives participated. Captives and renegades paid the priests who provided captives with religious services. Captives in Algiers gave charity to the Trinitarian hospital in the city.¹¹² Christian captives also ransomed religious images that they later carried with them to Spain. The former-captive Pedro Munjo de Nobero, for example, in testimony submitted in the inquisitorial tribunal of Majorca, complained that a local Majorcan thug stole from him “an altarpiece of our Lady which six years ago he had ransomed for six *reales* of eight in Algiers” and which he carried with him from North Africa planning to donate it to the shrine of the Lady of Aránzazu.¹¹³ Stealing, smuggling, and giving gifts were some of the informal economic practices in which captives were involved. Often, these were survival strategies, ways of complementing food rations, arranging for protection, or gaining their liberty.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

¹¹⁰ Stories about captives who stole appear in various captives autobiographies. Galán, for example, describes a friend as – “a gypsy, famous thief, who was a great help at the coast because [his thefts] sufficed to let [us] eat all things” (“y el otro Gitano, famoso ladrón, que era muy grande ayuda de costa, porque bastaba para todos cosas de comer”), see: Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, p. 79. D’Aranda also referred to this practice: “as our patron did not provide his slaves with food, most of them live of what they steal and during all the evenings they sell they booty of the day.” (“comme notre patron ne donne pas à manger à ses esclaves, la plus grande part d’entre eux vivent de ce qu’ils dérobent, et tous les soirs on vend le butin de ce jour-là”), Aranda, de, *Les captifs d’Alger*, p. 37.

¹¹¹ Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, pp. 87-88. Slave owners ignoring their slaves’ theft were probably walking on a tight rope because some authorities punished slaves’ owners who let their slaves steal or work as prostitutes, see: Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909*, pp. 20, 33.

¹¹² Jerónimo Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra and Beatriz Alonso Acero, Eds. Ediciones espuela de plata, 2006, pp. 74-5.

¹¹³ “...[Q]uejándose, como un rretablo de nuestra señora que avia seis años, que la avía rescatado por seis rrelaes de a ocho en Argel...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1712/2, testimony given on Febuary 2nd 1634.

5. *Professional Mobility*

5.1 Multiple Sales

Occupational mobility does not only characterize the career of free individuals but also of enslaved captives. In section three, I focused on two elements of captivity transformed into commonplaces in captivity narratives: (1) the stress on the initial sale in the slave market at the expense of later exchanges, and (2) the tripartite division of slaves based on who their owners and what their chances to retrieve their liberty were. While that description is not completely incorrect, it suggests a static system that did not allow much room for mobility. Yet dynamism rather than stasis characterized slaves' life and labor. The first sale did not determine slaves' position for the rest of their bondage, and it was not the only modality of exchange through which slaves moved between owners and occupations. Usually, slaves had little influence on the way they changed hands but in some cases, as we will see, they were in a position to affect their future.¹¹⁴

The first master of Jerónimo de Pasamonte was a captain of a galley who bought him badly wounded, along with other captives at death's door, as a second rate commodity for the ridiculously low price of 15 ducats. He took him to Istanbul where Pasamonte recovered from his wounds and worked in his master's garden hoeing the earth. According to Pasamonte, he enjoyed freedom of movement in the city, but this was not enough for him. After talking with captives who worked in the dockyards, he became convinced that as a galley slave he would have greater chances of running away and returning to his land. Taking advantage of his master's intention to sell two of his slaves, Pasamonte convinced his owner to sell him to Rechepe Baja, who had been recently nominated next Pasha of Tunis.¹¹⁵ He travelled with his new master for more than fifteen years to Tunis, Biserta, back to Istanbul, Alexandria, Istanbul again, the west of the Peloponnesus, Istanbul, Algiers, and Rhodes. Then, Pasamonte switched hands and became property of Hasan Aga. The latter married his daughter to Rechepe Baja's son. When Hasan Aga died, only two years after he came to own Pasamonte, Rechepe Baja's son inherited all his property, including

¹¹⁴ See the discussion in chapter four about the ability of slaves to manipulate their ransom price and Blumenthal, Debra, *Enemies and Familiars, Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-Century Valencia*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009.

¹¹⁵ Pasamonte, *Autobiografía* p. 39.

Pasamonte.¹¹⁶ The reconstruction of Pasamonte's chain of masters suggests that he had five masters if we include the person who first sold him after his capture. It serves as a reminder how the stress of former captives in their autobiographies on their first sale, and the following scholarly stress on this first instance of enslavement, risks ignoring the dynamic processes of sales and re-sales which entailed transformations in the social status of captives.

Inquisition records suggest that Pasamonte's story was typical. Cristóbal Benítez, for example, was twice held captive in the Maghrib: first, for ten years in Morocco and later in Algiers. While practically nothing is known about his first captivity, he described the second in detail to the Majorcan inquisitors, after his escape from Algiers and return to Spain. This second captivity began in 1608, when, at the age of thirty-eight, Benítez was seized on his way from Cartagena, his home town, to Oran. He does not indicate where but he was sold into slavery for twenty-five pieces of eight (*reales de a ocho*). In circumstances that remain unclear, Benítez took advantage of the Arabic he had acquired during the years he spent in Morocco, stole clothes from a Muslim, and fled to Algiers where he lived as an Arab for a year as he sought an opportunity to escape to Oran. At some point, he decided to execute his plan and left Algiers heading west. Less than fifty miles from Oran, near Mostaganem, a Morisco from Lorca (Spain) recognized, captured, and handed him over to Turks, who returned him to Algiers. There he became the Pasha's property, but the latter soon sold him to a Morisco from Valencia. A little later he converted to Islam and escaped to Majorca with other captives.¹¹⁷ Not counting the number of times Benítez must have been sold and resold during his first captivity, he changed at least four hands during his second. Jacobo de Maqueda, a peasant from a little village near Calais, presented the inquisitors of Majorca with a similar trajectory. In 1620, as a child, he was taken captive by Saletan corsairs. They sold him into slavery, and within a year his master sold him to a Morisco merchant from Algiers. The latter soon sold him again to another Morisco from Tunis whose fields Maqueda worked for twelve years.¹¹⁸ Years later, in 1689, the confession that the Castilian Bartholomé Martín de Castro gave in the same inquisitorial tribunal echoed a similar trajectory and long chain of masters. Castro

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 73-74.

¹¹⁷ AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro 863, fol. 61, 9.16.1611.

¹¹⁸ AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro 862, fols. 81L-83, 5.4.1634.

was taken captive at the age of twelve and sold in Algiers to a Turk who held him for eight months. Then, his master sold him to his brother whom Castro served for a year. Around that time Castro failed to arrange his ransom and his master forced him to convert. Conversion did not bring an end to his bondage but led to another sale. Castro's new owner was a barber and a tailor and after only seven years he freed Castro, probably in a *mukātaba* agreement.¹¹⁹ Slaves' careers then did not end once they were sold at the slave market. Instead, they barely began there. Through sales and re-sales slaves positions' were worsened or improved as their status shifted. Only by accounting for these multiple shifts can we understand the operation of this system of slavery as well as its meaning for slaves.

5.2 Exchanging Captives: between Commodities and Gifts

The previous examples demonstrate how slaves' professional trajectories continued to develop between the moment of their initial sell and their ransom. But the examples also indicate that sale was not the only mode through which slaves circulated. One of Pasamonte's owners inherited him. Other slaves also found themselves forming part of an inheritance. Giovanni-Battista Castellano, a Sicilian mariner and later a Christian corsair taken captive in the last years of the sixteenth century, was enslaved by Solimán, a Sardinian renegade, whom he served for twenty years. When his master died, Castellano, with the rest of Solimán's household, became the property of one of the Solimán's sons.¹²⁰ Cristóbal Benítez was handed over to the Turks by Moriscos interested in the prize that they received for capturing a runaway slave. Commoditization means the transformation of humans into commodity. In the process, however, slaves also turned into a currency, and masters used them to pay debts or buy other things. Diego Galán's owner passed him on to Mamí Napolitano instead of a payment of a debt. From Galán's point of view, as he indicated in his autobiography, his life improved under the new master who provided him with more freedom, responsibility and power. But masters who passed their slaves on to others knew that this could mean a demotion for their slaves. This is illustrated by the case of the Portuguese mulatto slave, Simón Gonzalves. In 1548 or 1549, as Gozalves

¹¹⁹ Industrial slaves working in the *mukātaba* system were often manumitted but on the basis of agreements that they made with their masters after seven years of labor. Alternatively, masters and slaves could decide that the manumission would take place after a fixed payment, see: Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909*, 15, İnalcik, "Servile labor in the Ottoman Empire," p. 28.

¹²⁰ *Los Cristianos de Alá*, pp. 133-134.

recounted to his Portuguese inquisitors, his owner, the corsair Caralym, threatened that if Gozalves did not convert, Caralym would give him to the corsair Arguiti as a payment for a debt Caralym owed Arguiti.¹²¹ The fact that the exchange was framed as a threat suggests that both master and slave knew the latter would suffer from the shift of owners. In other cases, slaves were exchanged for goods or services. Guillermo Roger, as the records call this Englishman, testified in his trial at the Inquisition how the Turk who bought him in 1633 in Sale held him for six months and then bartered him (“le troc6”) with a Morisco from Algiers.¹²² Often, masters gave slaves as gifts or bequeathed them. Gozalves eventually succumbed to his master’s pleadings and threats and converted to Islam. Immediately afterwards, Caralym, his owner, gave him two Christian slaves as a gift. In this case, as is apparent from Gozalves’ depositions, the gift formed part of a larger cycle of reciprocity that had begun with the conversion of Gozalves, and continued with the mentioned gift of the slaves and his inclusion in Caralym’s clientele.¹²³ A later but not ultimate step in this reciprocal exchange was Gozalves’ later manumission.¹²⁴ The sources also mention cases of Muslims who bought captives with the hope of convincing them to convert and then adopting them. In a letter that the Jesuit Blas Vayllo wrote from Algiers in 1609, he mentioned how an Algerian captain purchased his fellow Jesuit intending to convert and adopt him. Vayllo frames this vignette within the context of Christian fear of forced conversions imposed by Muslim masters. However, read along with Caralym and Gonzalves’ story, it seems like a part of an interactive dynamic of adoption and inclusion within a clan or a household.

These dynamics complicate a binary perception of exchange in this system according to which slaves were sold and bought only for profit from their ransom or for their labor force. They also demonstrate some of the reasons for which masters bought slaves. While the prospects of profit and labor motivated many slave owners, others had

¹²¹ Bartolomé y Lucile Bennassar, *Los Cristianos de Ala: La Fascinante aventura de los renegados*, Madrid: Nerea, 1989, p. 55.

¹²² AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro 862, fol. 368, 1642.

¹²³ Gozalves was not the only slave to inherit part of his master’s property and conversion to Islam by no means was a condition for such transfer of goods. The National Algerian Archives contain cases of masters who left property to their slaves. In 1636, for example, the late admiral Mohammad b. ‘Abdullâh bequeathed to seven of his former slaves (six men and at least one Christian woman) that were freed with his death a large house with six rooms near the vegetable market, see: Loualich, “In the Regency of Algiers,” pp. 80-81.

¹²⁴ *Los Cristianos de Alá*, p. 57.

different agendas in mind. As we have seen, slave owners bought slaves as an investment attempting to accumulate property which later they could pass on to their heirs; as a way of extending their households or networks of clients; or as markers of one's power and wealth.¹²⁵ Sale, the exchange of captives for money, cannot sum up the multiplicity of ways in which slaves changed hands nor the ways in which such changes affected their status, privileges and obligations.

5.3 Short- and Mid-Term Exchanges

The exchanges I have examined so far were final or long-term ones. Slaves, however, also changed hands in cyclical, temporary exchanges. Such shifts were seasonal or daily. In his *Topography and General History of Algiers*, Sosa described corsairs who did not own enough slaves to man their vessels and therefore hired others from merchants:

The captain who does not own a quantity of Christians, enough to arm the vessel... can rent Christians from merchants who have them especially for hire. And from one merchant, he may rent two, four, six and eight and from another ten, twelve, twenty, thirty or however many he wants from among those who most please him and seem to be the most robust.¹²⁶

According to the description of Laugier de Tassy this was still a common practice in the early eighteenth century. In the account this chancellor of the French consulate composed in 1724, he wrote that “masters who have many slaves rent them to the *reis* for work in the arsenals or for sailing.”¹²⁷ Renters, he added, confiscated part of the plunder their slaves received instead of charging daily rent from the corsairs who hired them.¹²⁸ The dey, for example, took two-thirds of the salary gained by the slaves he rented out.¹²⁹ Slave owners “also rent them [their slaves] to foreigners established in the towns in order that the slaves would serve as servants in their houses.”¹³⁰ Tassy referred to Christian consuls and merchants who provided the slaves with meals and paid their owners a piaster per month.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Tassy, *Histoire du royaume d'Alger*, p. 166.

¹²⁶ Sosa, *Topography*, p. 153.

¹²⁷ “Les maîtres qui ont beaucoup d’esclaves les louent aux armateurs des corsaires pour travailler aux armements ou pour aller en mer.” Tassy, *Histoire du royaume d'Alger*, pp. 61-62.

¹²⁸ “Chaque particulier a encore la liberté d’envoyer ses esclaves en mer, et profite des parts que leur reviennent des prise.” Ibid, p. 166.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 165.

¹³⁰ “Ils les louent aussi aux étrangers qui sont établis dans les villes, pour s’en servir dans leurs maisons comme des domestiques.” Ibid, p. 62.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 166.

Artisans and owners of small workshops also hired slaves. The Venetian Antonio Chillier taken captive in 1638 was sold in Tunis to the son of a Corsican renegade who leased Villier to a tailor's workshop. Villier who probably passed on to his owner at least part of his salary, worked eight years with one artisan, another year with a second, and three more with a Majorcan tailor.¹³²

Seasonal cycles also played an important role in structuring slaves' life and professional and geographical mobility. This is most noticeable in the work of galley slaves as demonstrated in the following quote from Sosa's *Topography*:

It is true that certain corsairs sometimes have their own particular captives, masters of shipbuilding, and they use them at sea to arrange certain things. But once they are back in Algiers, these captives serve for nothing more than to help the foremen of the commonwealth, and they are charged with building and provisioning all the ships.¹³³

This quote reflects the dynamic nature of slaves' labor. Oarsmen pulled the oar and were placed within the social hierarchies that characterized work in the galleys during the summer season. In the winter, they were reinserted into new social milieus and worked in shipbuilding in the public arsenals. In his *Account of Captivity and Liberty*, Diego Galán made the same point explaining that summer and winter tasks, pulling an oar on the one hand, and serving food and cleaning on the other, were not exclusive, but rather complementary. Many slaves were well acquainted with maritime and urban labor, only in different periods of the year. Galán, for example, was in charge of his second master's household in Istanbul but however well based and comfortable his position seemed to be, it was not fixed, and it experienced regular fluctuations with the change of seasons.¹³⁴ Leaving North Africa for Istanbul, Galán was placed at the benches with the rest of the oarsmen and he occasionally referred to his workload.¹³⁵ While all the captives could

¹³² AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro 863, fols. 294-295v, 1652.

¹³³ Sosa, *Topography*, pp. 151-152.

¹³⁴ "They charged me in the house of my new owner with washing the clothes, setting and clearing the table according to their satisfaction, [and] sweeping the halls and the rest of the things they demanded, and writing the accounts of the house expenses" ("Luego me impusieron en casa de mi Nuevo amo a lavar la ropa y poner y quitar las mesas a su usanza, y barrer las salas y demás cosas que se ofrecían, y en escribir el gasto de la casa"), see: Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, p. 80.

¹³⁵ "It was more labor for me than for the rest of my master's captives, because as I was the launderer of my master's clothes, even when, torn to pieces from rowing, we reached harbor, while the others rested, I had to do the washing, and the callus on my hands got softened by the soap, and later I suffered again the pain when new hardened skin was created [on my hands]..." ("[E]ra para mí de más trabajo que era para otros

rest upon reaching the harbor, Galán had to take care of his master's needs, and thus the summer season meant more work for him. Galán was not the only one to live this double life, and he dedicated a full chapter titled "On what the Captives Do during the Winter Time" ("De lo que hacen los cautivos en tiempo de invierno") to this unique division of labor.

At the same time, however, Sosa complicates the account of Cervantes and of the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians about ownership-based division of slaves. In the beginning of this chapter, we have seen how Cervantes and the Orders delineated three groups of slaves according to their prospects for liberty: (1) slaves of the King or the Pasha, (2) of individuals, and (3) of the common wealth (public slaves). While the first two categories of slaves had good prospects of being ransomed, slaves pertaining to the third often rotted in captivity until they died. According to the above quote from Sosa's *Topography*, however, membership in the second and third groups was at least partly seasonal and cyclical, namely slaves became "public" in the winter and "private" in the summer. Seasonal displacement then entailed new kinds of labor, but perhaps more importantly, a shift in ownership. Cervantes explained that public slaves were never ransomed because they had no owners with whom to negotiate their ransom. The quote from Sosa, however, suggests that this was only true for the summer time and that at least some public slaves became slaves of individuals and as such could be ransomed. While this quote shows the flexibility of the system it also points out the limited extent to which slaves could influence their living and working conditions, a theme examined in the next subsection.

5.4 Forming Trust-Based Relationships

To what degree could slaves influence their own movements between masters and positions? And to what degree could they shape their working and living conditions? In their autobiographies, Galán, Pasamonte, Mascarenhas and others recounted instances in which they influenced their masters to sell them or others to buy them. As mentioned in the introduction, Galán's service under his second owner, Mamí Napolitano, had begun

cautivos del amo, porque como yo era lavandero de la ropa de mi amo, aunque llegase a un Puerto hecho pedazos de remar, mientras los otros descansaban iba yo a lavar, y con el jabón se me ablandaban los callos de las manos y luego volvía a hacer callos nuevos renovándose los dolores..." Ibid, p. 103.

badly, when Galán's credibility was at its lowest state. And yet, according to Galán, the first words Mamí uttered to Galán after he had concluded the deal with the Pasha were: "be good and loyal, and I will treat you well!"¹³⁶ Being aware of the potential benefits and advantages his new position promised, Galán dedicated himself to his job and tried to perform his duties as best as he could. He testified: "I was trying to do it with much diligence."¹³⁷ He also learned to master Turkish, a skill that should have advanced his socialization. His efforts were fruitful insofar as his owner and his sons came to like him a great deal: "and for that the owner, his sons and the rest of the staff paid me back with so much affection."¹³⁸ The affection Galán was awarded had concrete, material manifestations. He had as much food as he wanted and after securing his own position in the household, he could create his own social network of dependents, friends and allies by distributing abundant food leftovers:

And as far as it concerned the food, there was always plenty of it for me from the leftovers of their table, and [enough] to help some Spanish friends that were in the house, and particularly one from San Martín de Valdeiglesias, for being closer to Toledo than the rest...¹³⁹

A short while before Galán fled, slaves of Mamí's household planning to flee invited him to join them, an invitation that might reflect the power Galán had gained in the house. In addition, as guardian of his owner's sons, Galán was free to move throughout the city: "I even got the liberty of leaving the house whenever I wanted to, and [I went] to wash the house clothing without chains or a guard guarding me until I return home."¹⁴⁰ Earlier, I mentioned that Galán complained about the extra chores that were his due in the summer.

¹³⁶ "Sed vos bueno y fiel, que yo os trataré bien" Galán, *Relación*, p. 79.

¹³⁷ "Procuraba hacerlo con mucha diligencia..." Ibid., 80.

¹³⁸ Ibid. His young age, not more than fifteen at the time, was also a key to trust. Older captives were not trusted because it was assumed they were too old to change their world view, see: Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909*, 30.

¹³⁹ "Y en cuanto la comida siempre tuve abundancia de lo que sobraba de sus mesas para mí y para socorrer algunos amigos españoles que había en casa, y en particular a uno de San Martín de Valdeiglesias, por ser de más cerca de Toledo de los demás" Galán, *Relación del cautiverio y libertad de Diego Galán*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁰ "Vine a tener tanta libertad que iba fuera de casa a donde quería, y a lavar la ropa de casa sin grillo y sin guardián que le va guardando hasta volverle a casa" Ibid. The *laissez passer* his master's sons provided enabled him also to watch the new Sultan's celebrated entry in the city, while the rest of the enslaved captives were locked in the prisons: "And so my master ordered that his [slaves] stay locked under guards, and that I and another Genoese, who was the steward, will go and take his sons so that they would see the reception. I took the younger son in my arms as I did many times, and the Genoese took the older one..." ("Y así mi amo dio orden para que los suyos quedasen encerrados con guardas y que yo y otro ginovés, que era el despensero, fuésemos a llevar a sus dos hijos, porque viesen el recibimiento. Yo llevué el hijo más pequeño en brazos como otras veces y el ginovés llevé el mayor..."), Ibid, 116.

However, it should be noted that the chores were also a reflection of exceptional trust and liberty. Galán was allowed to disembark for his tasks with hardly any watch. Later, he took advantage of this privilege and escaped. On other expeditions, Mamí would go down with him to the shore and show him unique views and sights, as if he were his tour guide.

The relationship between Galán, Mamí and his family was not fixed but rather developed over time as Galán's status shifted and he earned more and more privileges. This development was not prescribed, but rather the result of the way he played his role as a household slave and wisely calculated his steps. Galán gives the impression that Mamí and his sons came to depend upon him: "[a]ll the times that my owner's sons went to certain celebrations or country parties with lunches they took me with them to serve them..." an impression that is intensified in the second version of the account.¹⁴¹ Galán's status in the household challenges the popular image of slavery and slaves, as he seems more like a relative of his master rather than a slave. It was a reciprocal process – Galán adopted Turkish language and probably Turkish manners, and in return Mamí and his family adopted him. This relationship recalls Kopytoff and Miers' portrayal of West-African slavery in which the realm of kinship was intertwined with that of slavery. "This chattel like position" of the slaves, they have argued "nevertheless lay on a continuum of marginality whose progressive reduction led in the direction of quasi kinship, and finally kinship."¹⁴² While Galán's trajectory is similar, it differs in the radical transformations of status Galán experienced each season. From the status of a distant, but beloved relative, he was exiled to the oarsmen's benches as if he had never been part of the family.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ "Todas las veces que los hijos de mi amo iban a algunas fiestas o holguras con meriendas me llevaban consigo a servirles..."Ibid. In the second version of his account, he portrays this dependency in much clearer terms: "[a]nd I made a good impression on everybody, that I came to be so likened by my owner and his sons that in all the times when they went to idle in their estates and gardens in the country they were not satisfied if I did not go with them to serve them..." ("y a todo hacía buen rostro, con que llegué a ser tan querido del amo y hijos que todas las veces que iban a holgarse a sus quintas y huertos no se hallaban si yo no iba a servirles"), Galán, *Edición Crítica de Cautiverio y Trabajos de Diego Galán*, p. 196.

¹⁴² Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, "Introduction," in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, Eds., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977, p. 24. Erdem, who does not write on war captives but on the more structured systems of Ottoman slavery characterizes Ottoman slavery as an open slave system in which slaves are finally incorporated in society, see: Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909*, 20. For a critique of Kopytoff and Miers' 'absorptionist' model, see: Cooper, "The Problem of Slavery in African Studies," pp. 104, 121-124.

¹⁴³ Was manumission the end stage of this continuum? Different forms of manumission characterized the Ottoman systems of slavery. A slave owner manumitting his slave followed the Koran's recommendations,

5.5 Conversion

In his *Topography and General History of Algiers*, Antonio de Sosa opens his discussion of renegades, Christians who ‘turned Turk’ in Algiers in the following words:

‘Turks by profession’ are all those renegades of Christians blood and parentage who have turned Turk of their own free will... there is no Christian nation on earth that has not produced renegades in this city... Muscovites, Russians, Ukrainians, Valacos, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, Bohemians, Germans, Danish and Norwegians, Scotsmen, Englishmen, Irishmen, Flemish, Burgundians, Frenchmen, Navarrese, Basques, Castilians, Galicians, Portuguese, Andalusians, Valencians, Aragonese, Catalanias, Majorcans, Sardinians, Corsicans, Sicilian, Calabrese, Napolitans, Romans, Tuscans, Genoese, Savoyans, Piedmontese, Lombards, Ventians, Slavs, Albanians, Armenians, Greeks, Cretans, Cypriots, Syrians, Egyptians, and even Abyssinians of Prester John as well as Indians from the Portuguese Indies, from Brazil, and from New Spain.¹⁴⁴

Conversion to Islam was a common professional strategy among Christian slaves in the Ottoman Maghrib and in Morocco. Slaves converted to improve the conditions of their enslavement, to be manumitted or socially incorporate themselves, to develop professional careers, to gain more freedom of movement in order simply to escape to Christendom or because they saw the light in Islam. In calling conversion a strategy, I do not mean to imply that no slaves converted because they believed in Islam or that none of the converts saw the light after practicing their new religion for a while. Rather I bracket the question of belief and focus on the way in which renegades and others talked about conversion and used it as well as on its social and professional implications.¹⁴⁵

see: Lewis, 6. However, manumission was also based on an economic rationale – a slave who knew he will be manumitted had an incentive to work better, see: İnalçik, "Servile labor in the Ottoman Empire," 28. In the *devşirme* system, for example, boys levied from Balkan Christians worked in hard public works for seven or eight years after which they were no longer considered slaves and became janissaries or served in the royal administration, see: Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909*, 8 and İnalçik, "Servile labor in the Ottoman Empire," 25-26. Such agreements existed also in the case of private slaves like Galán. By reaching a *mukātaba* agreement, masters were hoping to prevent their slaves from escaping. See: Erdem, *Ibid*, 15, İnalçik, *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Sosa, *Topography*, pp. 125. Despite the absence of reliable numbers, the sources agree that there were many and that they originated from every known place. According to Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar who analyzed 1,550 Inquisition cases of renegades, Italians formed the majority, than Spaniards and Portuguese, see: Bennassar, *Los Cristianos de Alá*. On the trope of diversity in descriptions of the Mediterranean, See: Natalie Rothman, "Conceptualizing ‘the Mediterranean’" *Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Early Modern Imperial Governmentality*, A Conference Paper presented at the Mediterranean Criss-Crossed and Constructed Conference, The Weatherhead Center, Harvard University, 4.29-31.2011.

¹⁴⁵ On the epistemological difficulties that conversion narratives pose, see: Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Composing Authority in Medieval Polemic*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012 (Forthcomign).

Renegades loom large in captives' autobiographies, religious propaganda, and Inquisition cases.¹⁴⁶ In each genre they filled a different function and were represented differently. In the autobiographies written by Spanish captives after their rescue and return, renegades were converted into a common place that enabled the authors of the autobiography to confront the threat associated with North African captivity and convince their readership that they had withstood the trial, remaining faithful to Christianity.¹⁴⁷ In texts written by the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians, the discussion of

¹⁴⁶ Miguel Angel de Bunes Ibarra, *La Imagen de los Musulmanes y del Norte de Africa en la España de los Siglos XVI y XVII: los Caracteres de una Hostilidad*, Madrid: CSIC, 1989, pp. 185-90. As Christian captives 'turned' into martyrs, the renegades were seen as the devil's agents. The fact that many of the galley officers were renegades must have helped in forging the captive-renegade opposition. For an analysis of the renegade as the slave who became an oppressor, see: Emilio Temprano, *El Mar Maldito: Cautivos y Corsarios en el Siglo de Oro*, Madrid: Mondadori, 1989, pp. 115-21. Another example of this image of the renegade can be found in Cervantes' *Los Baños de Argel*. The renegade Yzuf leads the corsairs into the Spanish lands that he knows so well and help the Muslim to capture the beautiful Constanza and other Christians, see: Cervantes, Miguel de, *The Bagnios of Algiers and The Great Sultana, Two Plays of Captivity*, Eds. Barbara Fuchs and Aaron J. Ilika, University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2010. However, renegades were also represented in an opposite way. In some texts they merely waited for the right moment to manifest their Christian self by helping captives. An example of this can be found in the fourth chapter of Galán's account, in which he tells the story of two ships leaving Istanbul for Algiers analyzed in the chapter's last section. The renegades on the ships liberated the captives, took over the ships, and navigated them to Spain, see: Galán and Barchino, 56-57. Similar stories appeared in popular literature and pamphlets that circulated in Spain in the same years as Galán planned to write his account, see: *Relacion muy verdadera, de un felice sucesso nuevamente acontecido, de mucho contento y regocijo para los fieles christianos, y en particular para los navegantes por la mar, de cómo veinte y ocho renegados se han alcado con el grande galeón, llamado el gran capitán de Argel*, Barcelona: Estevan Liberos, 1627. The fact that conversion of renegades was understood instrumental and false may be the reason for the ambiguity of that figure. The prevalence, fear, and fascination of renegades were not unique to Spanish texts of the period. They were also central in British representations of Barbary. What worried English writers was the fact that British converts, were not punished by God, and prospered after converting, see: Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth-Century Imagination." Early-modern North African historians rarely discuss or relate to renegades. One who did was Abderrahman Ben Abdallah Ben 'Imran Ben 'Amir Es-Sa'di, the Sudanese chronicle, who in his *History of the Sudan* (1655) focused mostly on the Moroccan occupation of the Empire of Songhay. He mentioned the importance of renegades I the occupation and in the armies of Ahmed al Mansur, see: Abderrahman Ben Abdallah Ben 'Imran Ben 'Amir Es-Sa'di, *Tarikh Es-Soudan*, H. Houdas, Ed. And Trans. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1900.

¹⁴⁷ Diego Galán, for example, introduces a long episode in which his captors and some renegades try to persuade him to convert. First, the pasha tried to convince him to convert but Galán refused on the basis of his Christian parentage. Upon leaving the pasha's court, some newly converted and older renegades again tried to persuade Galán to convert. Finally, the pasha tried again to convert him. The renegades, according to Galán, argued that resisting conversion is useless; and despite Galán's resistance, the Muslim will circumcise him by force. On the other hand, if he does convert, his captivity will be easier, and he will have the chance to get back to Spain and Christianity: "in another day, with the liberty renegades have when they get to raid lands of Christians, they can easily stay there and ask mercy from the señores inquisitors, like some have done" ("...otro día, con la libertad que gozan los renegados cuando llegan a robar a tierra de cristianos, con facilidad se pueden quedar en tierra a pedir misericordia de los señores inquisidores, como algunos lo han hecho..."), see: Galán, *Relación*, p. 53. The pasha emphasizes the hardships of not converting: "the pasha returned and sprinkled me again with flattery, telling me that if I did not turn Moor, I would be sorry for the bad life I would have to live, rowing in the galleys, being beaten with clubs,

renegades and their conversion was employed to stress the horrors of captivity, the risk Christian souls faced in captivity, and the need to give charity to the Orders to save as many souls as possible.¹⁴⁸ A third corpus replete with accounts of renegades is formed by Inquisition documents recording the trials of renegades. Renegades who escaped to Spain or were captured by Spanish forces had to be examined at the nearest inquisitorial tribunal. The inquisitors who investigated them were intent to examine both their words and their deeds asking them: what was said during their conversion, and when? what did they wear and eat after the conversion? how many times did they pray? One of the goals of these trials was to reduce the complex process of conversion into a dogmatic scheme that enabled punishment or social reintegration into a Christian community. The script recounted by most renegades followed a similar model. It opened with the convert's initial objection to conversion, continued with the physical pressure exerted upon him and the punishments he suffered before succumbing to the pressures, the recitation of the Muslim profession of faith – the *shahāda* – and wearing a Turk's attire.¹⁴⁹ The inquisitors, however, were also interested in other Christians who converted in North Africa, and renegades, together with former captives that testify in these trials, become the ears and eyes of the inquisitors in North Africa.

wearing poor clothes and eating poorly, and many other hardships, but turning Moor, I would not have to work, I would be dressed well and would eat well” (“después... volvió el bajá a darme otra rociada con género de halagos, diciéndome que si no me volvía moro, me tenía lástima de la mala vida que había de pasar, remando en las galeras, dándome de palos, y mal vestir y mal comer, y otros muchos trabajos, y que volviéndome moro no trabajaría, y andaría bien vestido y comería bien”), see: *Ibid.*, 53-54.

¹⁴⁸ A pamphlet from 1627, for example, recounted the martyrdom of the Capuchin Geronymo Baldo whom the pasha of Tunis ordered to execute because of his refusal to convert to Islam, see: *Relación de la Presa y martirio del R. padre fr. Geronymo Baldo del orden de los padres capuchinos del seráfico P. San Francisco. El qual fue martirizado por mandamiento del rey de Túnez por no aver querido renegar la fe de Christo nuestro señor*, Barcelona: Casa de Sebastián Iáyme, 1627, apud Gabriel Ignacio Bauer Landauer, Ed. *Papeles de mi archivo, Relaciones de África (Argel, Túnez, Trípoli)*, Vol. III, Biblioteca Ibero-Africano-Americana: Madrid, 1922/3, pp. 311-314. In a similar manner, the former captive Jerónimo Gracián describes in his *Treaty on the Redemption of Captives* (published in 1609), how “when the Turks are drunk, they laid their hands on the little boys and force[d] circumcision on them as much as they shout and cry” (“...Cuando los turcos están embriagados, echan mano de sus garzones y los circuncidan por fuerza, por más que griten y lloren...”), see: Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*. p. 44-45. This text reflects the difficulty of distinguishing between genres among captivity narratives. On the one hand it is an autobiographic account of Gracián's captivity, on the other, it reproduces elements of propagandistic discourse meant to move to believers to give alms to the Orders of Redemption.

¹⁴⁹ Fernando Mediano R., “Les conversions de Sebastião Pes de Vega, un Portugais au Maroc sa'dien,” in Mercedes García-Arenal (éd.), *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen. Islamic Conversions. Religious Identities in Mediterranean Islam*, Maisonnneuve et Larose: ESF, 2001, pp. 173-192.

One feature shared by these three corpora is the idea that Muslims forced their slaves to convert or exerted pressure on them to do so. Accounts written by European consuls in the Maghrib, however, challenge this image by framing captivity in economic terms. The Knight d'Arviex, for example, who in 1666 negotiated the ransom of French captives in Tunis on behalf of the French King, wrote in his description of his diplomatic mission there that "as for what they say that the Muslims force the captives by tortures to become Mahommedans, that happens only rarely and it can be said to be extremely exceptional." Only the zealously devout, he added, want that and even they never force anyone to convert. More commonly, he claimed, women try to convince captives to convert and then marry them.¹⁵⁰ Tassy actually asserted that Muslims objected to the conversion of Christians:

Many people believe that they [the Muslim] force the Christian slaves to become Mohammedan...but the error is great. Rather than working to seduce them [to convert], their masters would be very angry if their slaves become Mohammedan despite the fact that they do not become free following their conversion.¹⁵¹

This is reiterated in Spanish intelligence reports recording the arrival in Algiers of soldiers defecting from Oran. To the request of the soldiers to convert, the Pasha of Algiers replied that "he had enough Turks and he enslaved [the soldiers]."¹⁵² Masters, then, did object to conversion not because it entailed immediate freedom, but rather because, from a Christian point of view, it devalued captives. In other words, once captives converted to Islam, they were not ransomable anymore as Christians would have paid for the freedom of Muslims. For this reason, French consuls and others shared the opinion that Muslim masters deemed their captives too precious as commodities and excluding specific political circumstances that I analyze in chapter four, refused to allow them to convert.

¹⁵⁰ Laurent d'Arviex, *Mémoires du chevalier d'Arviex: voyage à Tunis*. Jacques de MauSSION de Favières, Ed., Paris: Editions Kimé, 1994. pp. 44-45.

¹⁵¹ "Bien des gens croient qu'on force les esclaves chrétiens à se faire mahométans... mais l'erreur est très grande. Bien loin de travailler à les séduire, les maîtres seraient fâchés que leurs esclaves se fissent mahométans, quoi qu'ils ne soient pas libres en changeant de religion." Tassy, *Histoire du Royaume d'Alger*, p. 62.

¹⁵² "...[R]espondió el baxa que no quiere tanto turco y los hizo esclavos..." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 210, 2.10.1608. See also: Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age*, pp. 88-90.

Conversion was not only and not always a change in one's religious beliefs, practices or community of believers. It had social effects that went beyond the realm of the religious. The Knight d'Arvieux confirmed what we have seen earlier in the chapter, namely that conversion did not entail immediate manumission but rather a transformation in the status of the converted captive vis-à-vis his master. D'Arvieux explained that after converting, the slaves can pay their owners a monthly fixed fee determined by the Divan and wander around freely, but they still belong to their masters and it was up to the latter to decide whether they want to grant their slaves manumission.¹⁵³ Not only were renegades not immediately freed but also their conversion entailed the formation of new social bonds as the converts were gradually inserted into their masters' families.¹⁵⁴ Often, masters married their daughters or sisters to their former slaves.¹⁵⁵ This was the case of Juan de Payba, an Augustinian monk from the Canary Islands taken captive on a journey he made to Spain in order to be ordained as a deacon. He was taken to Algiers and enslaved there but was quickly ransomed by the friars of the Order of our Lady of the Mercy in 1668. However, during his stay in Algiers or perhaps even after his ransom, Payba and his former master planned a surprising future for the young Augustinian. A year after his ransom, Payba voluntarily returned to Algiers with another Augustinian, publicly converted to Islam, and married the sister of his former master.¹⁵⁶ We do not have enough information about people who voluntarily crossed the sea to convert and start new life in Muslim cities but we can assume that their numbers were not high. And yet, the case of Payba demonstrates how conversion to Islam was linked with the formation of new family ties. Becoming part of a new conjugal unit or a member of an extended household were not the only ways in which renegades formed new families.

¹⁵³ D'Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d'Arvieux*, p. 39.

¹⁵⁴ Dakhliya, Jocelyne, "'Turcs de profession'? Réinscriptions lignagères et redéfinitions sexuelles des convertis dans les cours maghrébines (XVIe-XIXe siècles)" in Mercedes García-Arenal (éd.), *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen. Islamic Conversions. Religious Identities in Mediterranean Islam*, Maisonneuve et Larose: ESF, 2001, pp. 151-171.

¹⁵⁵ Some renegades married other renegades or Christian captives. The Murcian Francisco Romero Galbez taken captive and converted to Islam in Algiers, joined the captives in the galley on which he was employed, helped them to take over it, and sailed with them to San Lucar de Barrameda. In return, he asked the Spanish King for a position in Spain, Sicily or Naples, in order to sustain his wife and children whom he eventually hoped to bring from Algiers back to Christendom "because she is French and Christian and his son is baptized" ("porque ella es francesa y cristiana y su hijo esta bautizado," AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 808, 5.8.1616).

¹⁵⁶ Archivo del Museo Canario, *Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Santa Inquisición de Canarias*, Leg. CXIX-21, 1667-1671.

Many converts to Islam became Janissaries, soldiers of the Ottoman militia. Soldiering did not entail marriage for them but formed part of a kind of adoption. The new converts moved into the soldiers' barracks and became members of a male fraternity; they even referred to their fellow Janissaries as brothers.¹⁵⁷ At least in the short run, conversion did not result in more freedom but in new social ties.

What about the converts' former families? Did renegades give up on them? Did conversion necessarily result in a rupture with the social past? Dakhliya has suggested that in converting, renegades did not give up their former families and in some cases they brought their wives, children, or brothers to the Maghrib to live with them.¹⁵⁸ There is only scant evidence for that claim, yet there are many more archival traces of renegades who maintained their family ties in Christendom. Renegades maintained such ties through letter exchange, sending money, and occasionally meeting their kin. Francisco Verdera, a Majorcan taken captive at the turn of the century and converted to Islam in Algiers, wrote to his aunt at least one letter after his conversion in 1606.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the Catalan Francisco Girbau continued to write to his father after he converted in Algiers.¹⁶⁰ In the next chapter, I analyze these and other letters that renegades wrote in detail. In this chapter, it is sufficient to point out that the medium of letter-exchange, as interrupted as its flow may have been, enabled renegades to maintain blood ties and friendships across the sea.

Renegades who did well in their new life often sent money or supported their families. A renegade whose name the sources do not disclose mediated the ransom of a certain Bautista Fernandez in 1589. The latter was ordered by the renegade to pay his debt to the renegade's mother, to whom Bautista's relative gave guarantees.¹⁶¹ Perhaps more surprising were the visits Christians paid to their converted kin who settled down in the Maghrib. Simón Pérez, for example, a Genoese who married an Andalusian and lived in Cadiz was the nephew of Mami Genoese, a rich Algerian renegade. Pérez frequently visited his uncle in Algiers staying there each time a few weeks. In early January 1619 or late December 1618, he went to meet Mamí but stayed only for seventeen days "because

¹⁵⁷ Dakhliya, "Turcs de profession," p. 157.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1711/1/6, 6.10.1634.

¹⁶⁰ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1711/1/8, 11.28.1689.

¹⁶¹ AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7050, 9.22.1589.

he did not find [his uncle] who had left for the Levant... and as his [uncle's] wife died at that time and [Pérez] did not know the other woman with whom [Mamí] was married.”¹⁶² Their kin relation may have been imbricated by commercial exchange. Pérez may have bought *galima*, the moveable booty Mamí looted of Christians, redistributing it in Spain. Whatever the exact nature of the relations, Pérez' visit shows that the relations between renegades and their Christian relatives were not limited to letter exchange; they often met in person. The deposition that the Andalusian Lorenzo Jiménez submitted in the inquisitorial trial of a merchant accused of selling materials of war to the Algiers, is somewhat ambiguous and yet it points out how affective relations between Muslims and renegades on the one hand, and Christians on the other, continued despite the religious and geographical divide. Jiménez, who at the time of the trial was forty years old, testified that two years earlier, in 1665, he returned to Algiers where he had been held captive in the past. He explained that he went to give a gift to his former owner and his wife, Catalina Bruna, a Christian converted to Islam, who had treated him very well during his captivity. His relations with his former master and his wife were mediated by the obligations procured by gift exchange. As often is the case with gifts, however, it seems that Jiménez denied their reciprocal nature and experienced his ties to his former owners as affective and based on the sentiment of gratitude. Jiménez added, perhaps due to the fact that he was testifying in an Inquisition trial and did not want to become a suspect himself, that the wife was secretly Christian, and that he hoped to return to Spain with her.¹⁶³

Conversion then had deep social implications; it resulted in the formation of new social ties, yet it did not necessarily imply a social rupture as converts often continued to maintain old ties across the Mediterranean. While some renegades returned to Christendom independently or were captured, the majority, even if they continued to be in touch with their relatives, never returned and eventually became part of the social tissue of the Muslim Maghrib. In that sense, conversion could function for captives as a strategy to improve their living conditions, but eventually, it removed them from the system of slavery into which captivity initiated them.

¹⁶² “...[Y] ser muerta la muger que tenía en aquel tiempo, y no conoçer lo la con quien está casado...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1950, 1.14.1619.

¹⁶³ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1714, 1668-1670.

6. *Spatial Mobility and Social Networks: within the City and across the Sea*

Professional mobility, as we have seen, was a central feature of slavery of Christians in the Ottoman Maghrib and in Morocco. This is best encapsulated in the work of galley slaves who shifted between pulling the oar and working in the docks – being the property of individuals and belonging to the commonwealth depending on the season of the year. While we should not confuse professional mobility with agency, slaves could at certain points direct their professional careers either by conversion to Islam or by forming trust-based relations. An important feature of professional mobility that I have not yet discussed is the spatial mobility it entailed, as well as the *ipso facto* establishment of widespread and diverse social networks. Slaves moved across the Mediterranean from one port city to another and within the cities in which they labored throughout the year. In each of the places they stopped, they met new people, visited old acquaintances, and exchanged information and goods.

In his autobiography, Jerónimo de Pasamonte provides a glimpse into the range of these networks. During his stay in Alexandria, for example, Pasamonte formed relations with Franciscans and Dominicans that stretched all the way to Jerusalem. At least part of the time, he was free to walk around in the city. This mobility allowed him to meet Franciscan friars, from whom, in the Italian *fundago*, he bought arms for one of the failing rebellion attempts in which he was involved.¹⁶⁴ During the eighteen years he spent in captivity, Pasamonte sailed throughout the eastern Mediterranean meeting and communicating with various Orthodox Christians from the Greek Islands. As we have already seen, when the time was ripe, he decided to turn his back on his fellow captives and join forces with the renegade Chafer Arráiz, his overseer, who later helped him take advantage of his social network in the Greek Islands and arrange his ransom.

Archival records provide further evidence as to how slaves established Mediterranean social networks. Damian Montenegro from Ragusa, for example, was one of a few that organized a spectacular slave rebellion in two galleys in 1589. Four hundred and twenty captives were set free within the course of a few hours while three hundred “Turks” were killed.¹⁶⁵ At least one printed pamphlet, *A True Account of the Victory and Freedom that*

¹⁶⁴ Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, pp. 41-42

¹⁶⁵ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 316, fol. 209.

Four-Hundred Slaves Achieved, circulated in Barcelona, the port to which the captives navigated after taking over the galleys, celebrating the success.¹⁶⁶ These captives worked months planning and preparing the rebellion and they risked their lives by buying arms in various ports over a long period of time. The part of Montenegro's testimony in which he describes that process is worth quoting in full:

Damián Montenegro, Ragusan, says that having been in Constantinople in the bagnio of the General Pasha of the Sea, he began negotiating that business [the rebellion] with Oraçio Agobiba Romano; and departing from Constantinople and arriving in Tripoli of Barbary, he continued to plan [it] with Oraçio Agbiba Romano and with Nicolo Riço, a Genoese renegade and servant of the Bey; and the latter gave me [sic] two swords for my ship; and departing from there we arrived in Bizerte where I returned to deal with the same two and with one-eyed Pedro Napolitano; and [there] Oraçio Agbiba gave me a faked eye-bolt in order that in accordance with that one, I'll prepare more; and departing from there we arrived in Algiers where he organized ten faked eye-bolts from the blacksmith of Morato Arraez and bought five swords for my ship.¹⁶⁷

In his prison cell in Istanbul, Damián Montengro, a subject of the thriving Ragusan Republic in the Adriatic Sea whose native tongue was probably some form of a Croatian language, negotiated with a Roman, whose mother tongue was probably the Roman dialect, a plan to flee captivity.¹⁶⁸ The fact that they made the plans in prison suggests that it was the wintertime, yet they knew that once spring loomed they would be placed in the galleys pulling a heavy oar chained to their bench.

At the same time and independently from their plot, other slaves of Hasan Pasha, were making similar plans. In Tripoli, Montengro, who later took command of the galley once the captives assumed control, met Riço, a Genoese renegade who led the rebellion

¹⁶⁶ Miquel Llot de Ribera, *Verdadera relación de la vitoria y libertad que alcançaron quatrocientos christianos captivos de Hazan Baxá, almirante y capitán general del mar del gran turco, con dos galeras suyas que levantaron* Perpinyà: Samsó Arbús, 1591?, Universidad de Barcelona, biblioteca General.

¹⁶⁷ “Dize Damián Montenegro Regueçe que siendo en Constantinopla en el baño del baxa general de la mar començo a tratar este negoçio con Oraçio Agobiba Romano, y partiendo de Constantinopla y llegando en Tripol de Bervería bolbió a tratar con dicho Oraçio Agobiba y Nicolo Riço ginobes, rrenegado y criado del bey, los quales me dieron en dicho Tripol para mi baxel dos espadas, y partiendo de allí llegamos en Biserta a donde bolbí a tratar con los mismos y con Pedro Napolitano el Tuerto adonde me dio Oraçio Agorilla un perno falso para que conforme aquel hiziese hazer otros, y partiendo de allí llegamos en Argel adonde hize hazer diez pernos falsos a un herrero de Morat Arraez y comprar çinco espadas para mi baxel...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 315, fol. 150.

¹⁶⁸ On the Lingua Franca and the multiplicity of languages and dialects available for captives, overseers and masters in the Maghrib, see: Jocelyna Dakhliá, *Lingua franca: Histoire d'une langue métisse en Méditerranée*, Actes Sud: 2008.

on the second galley and who provided him with two swords. According to Alonso de Peña, another accomplice, the swords were hidden in the galley – “he had two swords hidden underneath his bench with great risk.”¹⁶⁹ Montenegro and Riço met again in Bizerte the next port in which the galleys of Hasan Pasha harbored, nearly a six hundred miles away from Tripoli. There, Riço and Montengro shared their plans with others and arranged false eye-bolts similar to the ones with which the Muslims cuffed the slaves. The arms and equipment were bought with money the captives had collected, probably through petty commerce of the kind discussed above. On the due date, the plot’s leaders signaled the signs agreed in advance, started attacking their guards, took over the galleys and sailed to Barcelona. According to Miquel Llot de Ribera who compiled and published the above-mentioned pamphlet, the captives had been planning the rebellion for two or three years waiting for the right moment. Even if he was merely trying to aggrandize the victory with that detail, planning and preparing the rebellion must have taken weeks, probably months; it also required enacting a wide-spread social network formed by renegades and captives and others which captives were able to establish thanks to their mobility.

7. Conclusion

Captivity, then, was a system in which slaves constantly moved: between masters and occupations and in space – across the region and in the city. Examining the life of captives from the prism of the narratives a few captives penned after they were liberated and returned home, risks occluding these forms of circulation and exchange. Moreover, the stress of such narratives – as well as of records produced by the Orders of Redemption – on the moment of capture, on the first sale in the slave market, and on retrieving liberty via ransom, reifies captivity and portrays it as a world separated from that from which the captives arrived. In the world such narrative construct, upon their capture and enslavement, captives lose all contact with their home communities. Captivity, however, neither necessarily entailed the severing of connections with captives’ home communities, nor prevented the establishment of new ties between

¹⁶⁹ “...[T]uvo escondidas dos espadas en su banco con muy grande peligro...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 315, fol. 109.

captives and institutions at their communities of origin. The next two chapters complicate the history of captivity by focusing on the ways in which captives employed links with home to negotiate their captivity while in the process reinforcing and shaping such links.

Chapter 3:

Spread Rumor, Recommend, Complain and Threaten

1. Introduction

In chapter two, I examined the ways in which Maghribis captured, enslaved, and employed Christians, arguing that slaves' professional and spatial mobility was a salient feature of the system of Christian captivity in the Maghrib. In this chapter as well as in the next, I turn to examine trans-Mediterranean social practices employed by Muslims enslaved in Spain and Christians in the Maghrib, practices that provided links between North Africa and the Habsburg Empire. In this chapter, I examine the dissemination of rumors, the construction of letters of recommendation, and the culture of complaint and threat in order to compare the ways in which these were understood and deployed among, first, Muslim and Christian captives, second, renegades, third, the political authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean, fourth, the Spanish Inquisition, and, finally, the kinsmen of Christian and Muslim captives.

Within this divided and complex Mediterranean world in which seizure and enslavement were commonplace, rumor served as a form of transmission of knowledge about identity. Both Muslims and Christians spread rumors about the identity of Christian captives and of renegades, that is, Christians who converted to Islam during captivity in the Maghrib. Recommendations also served as a means of knowledge transmission: throughout the period, Christian captives wrote letters of recommendation for the Inquisition on behalf of renegades who expressed a desire to return to Christendom but feared punishment for their apostasy at the hands of the Inquisitors. Both Muslim and Christian captives felt free to send their sovereigns complaints when they believed the

latter to have sabotaged their chances of being freed, or when they needed help. Often, the latter kind of complaints resulted in threats, sometimes executed, that Algerian and Muslim authorities made to worsen the living conditions of Christian captives or to kill them in order to improve the conditions of Muslims enslaved in Spain. Throughout this analysis, I move back and forth between two scales: I examine how writing and textuality served captives locally – in a Maghribi city or Spanish island or region –but I constantly tie this to how they functioned on a Mediterranean level. In so doing, I demonstrate some of the ways in which the captivity and slavery of Muslims in Europe and of Christians within the Ottoman Empire and Morocco were tightly interrelated and interdependent. The lives of captives on one side of the sea were influenced by the actions of their counterparts on the opposite shore. Thus, in order to better understand the captivity of Christians in North Africa, on the one hand, and seventeenth century Mediterranean history, on the other, these histories are best approached from a perspective of “connected” history.¹⁷⁰

Whether spreading rumors, complaining or writing letters of recommendation, captives engaged in textual and discursive practices which transcend a merely representative function and act by influencing the captives themselves, the objects of writing, and the addressees. For instance, when captives wrote a letter of recommendation for a Christian who converted to Islam, their words – should the Inquisition accept them as true – had the potential effect of constituting the renegade as a Christian, by redefining the object’s religious identity. Thus, these letters prompted and pronounced a social transformation. The words that constitute such letters have no power in themselves. The letters become effective or “felicitous” only when, on the one hand, those desiring them, and on the other, their addressees recognize them as efficacious and those who wrote or uttered them as authorized to do so.¹⁷¹ But such letters had multiple effects. They also formed objects within a reciprocal exchange system – whose nature as such was denied – involving captives and renegades. Focusing on recommendations,

¹⁷⁰ Sanjay Subramanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” in Victor Lieberman, Ed. *Beyond Binary Histories, Re-Imagining Euroasia to c. 1830*, The University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1999, pp. 289-316.

¹⁷¹ “Felicitous” is the term Austin has used in his discussion of the conditions that make a performative speech act effective, see: John L. Austin, *How to do things with Words*, Oxford, 1962. For a re-socialization of Austin’s theory of speech acts, see: Pierre Bourdieu, “Le langage autorisé. Note sur les conditions sociales de l’efficacité du discours rituel,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 5-6 (1975) : 183-190.

complaints and threats effectively reveals the social structure and dynamics in which they were employed.

A focus on these practices and dynamics can make explicit the ways in which captives – by engaging multiple forms of writing – were able to weave webs of personal and political ties across sea. In the next chapter, I focus on various textual media (intelligence reports, urban topographies, and chronicles but also visual material such as maps and plans) that captives employed to transmit strategic information, and in the fourth, I analyze petitions for economic help captives sent to the crown, of which thousands survived and are archived in Spanish archives and libraries. Captives, however, also participated in larger cultural processes, such as those undertaken to promote saintly canonization advanced by the papacy. These they supported by transmitting testimonies on candidates for sainthood who had died as martyrs in North Africa.¹⁷² Their engagement in research and scholarship is attested by de Sosa's work, *Topography and History of Algiers*, whose compiling I analyze closely in the next chapter.¹⁷³ They undoubtedly used language, writing, and texts in a variety of other forms that did not leave archival traces. The examples examined here suggest that any captive who could write, sign his name, or ask others to write for him, employed writing. When captives turned to writing, they did so less to represent the system that deprived them of their liberty than merely to survive. Writing for them was almost a matter of routine, as is attested by the mass volume of petitions for help archived in Spanish state archives. In this sense, writing recommendations, spreading rumors, and complaining to their sovereign were all strategies of survival.

Despite the documented importance of engaging in multiple forms of writing in captivity, most studies of captivity rely almost exclusively on printed works: captivity narratives – mostly autobiographical literature but also plays, literary works and pamphlets.¹⁷⁴ These narratives, written only by ransomed captives, were composed

¹⁷² Giovanna, Fiume, “‘Illuminare gli infedeli, soccorrere l’afflitti christinai priggioni’ Il martirio di Juan Prado (Marrakech 1631),” *Quaderni Storici*, 126 (2007) : 773-818.

¹⁷³ Garcés, *Cervantes en Argel*, pp. 164

¹⁷⁴ Colley, *Captives*; Viogt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic*; Davis, *Christian slaves, Muslim masters*; Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. Two other documental corpora scholars employ for the study of captivity are plays and literary works and Trinitarian and Mercedarian records documenting their ransom missions in the Maghrib. Garcés's study of Cervantes

months, even years, after their authors had returned home, at the moment when their agenda was to convince their readers they had remained faithful to their creed. Their works form an excellent corpus for the study of the ways in which captives employed 'ego writing' as a means to ensure a Christian identity that had been threatened by their captivity in the Muslim Maghrib. While I make ample use of such sources, I want to insist on the importance of other sources captives composed. Captivity narratives pose two problems. First, only a minority of captives, among those who were eventually ransomed, wrote elaborated autobiographies that were published.¹⁷⁵ By focusing exclusively on this genre, or mode of representation, rather than on an array of other forms of writing with which captives engaged, these narratives stop being truly representative of captives' writing. Second, by exclusively relying on such narratives, scholars privileged formed literary narratives over fragmentary archival sources. These narratives, however, provide performed histories thus robbing the historian of his craft. Not only they are limited in what they reveal about captivity in the Maghrib but they also overshadow other forms of writing which, as I demonstrate, formed a common practice among captives.

There are no libraries or special collections that systematically archive rumors. Rumors must thus be caught in the margins of things: autobiographies, petitions for help, investigations in the Inquisition, and in other documents.¹⁷⁶ Rumors remain elusive, and have left only a few concrete traces in diverse places because they did not neatly fit into any logic classifiable in archival/bureaucratic terms. And yet, references to them abound in the sources, which usually fail to provide information sufficient to allow the reconstruction of the context of their appearance or how they functioned. Yet the prevalence of the traces suggests their ghostly power. Recommendations, complaints,

captivity is an example of study that employs captivity narratives as well as plays and more literary production, see: Garcés. *Cervantes en Argel*.

¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, thousands of captives wrote and submitted to the crown in search for economic help. Such petitions, which I analyze in the fourth chapter, formed what historian James Amelang called "bureaucratic autobiographies" and differed from the elaborate, long autobiographies in that the latter, beyond making claims about their authors' identity, were meant to amuse vast audiences. On 'bureaucratic autobiographies,' see: Amelang, "L'autobiografia popolare nella Spagna moderna," pp.115-116.

¹⁷⁶ Historical studies of gossip rumors must compile an eclectic body of sources that varies from learned treatise to inquisitorial records or court cases. For example: Elizabeth Horodowich, "The Gossiping Tongue: Oral Networks, public Life and Political Culture in Early Modern Venice," *Renaissance Studies*, 19 (2005): 22-45 and Chris Wickham, "Gossip and Resistance among the Medieval Peasantry," *Past and Present*, 100 (1978): 3-24.

and threats pose similar difficulties. No registers of letters of recommendations or complaints that captives wrote exist; nor do bundles of threats made by Algerian governors rest in an organized and neatly catalogued manner on shelves in state archives. Such documents or references to them appear irregularly in bundles of petitions, investigations and intelligence reports. Thus, while I do not make claims about the volume of such textual practices, I argue that there are enough of them to justify their examination. An analysis of the ways in which these practices operated offers a new way of understanding captivity, the diversity of strategies that captives employed for their survival, and the ways in which they linked North Africa and the Spanish Empire.

2. Writing Letters

It is worth preceding the analysis of specific kinds of texts that captives wrote and sent across the sea with a more general discussion about the importance of letter writing for captives. Captives wrote and sent many letters to their families. The practice was so common that a captive's wife whose husband did not write had reason to complain, as did Franca Puda in February 1676 in a letter to her captive husband – “all [the wives] received greetings and letters from their husbands and I have received no letter nor greeting with which to console myself...”¹⁷⁷ We can enumerate a few reasons for the remarkable epistolary activity of Christian captives. First, the failure of delivery encouraged multiple letters. Captives constantly complained about letters they sent which were never delivered. For example, in a letter sent from Algiers in 1679 by Domingo de la Luz to his friend Juan de Herrera in the Canary Islands, De la Luz wrote that “...I wrote six letters to his Honor for which I have not received any response...”¹⁷⁸ Francisco Veredera, also captive in Algiers, expressed similar worries in a letter to his aunt in Majorca in 1606 – “I am horrified [by the fact that] out of so many letters I wrote, I never received a response to any of them.”¹⁷⁹ By writing more than a single copy, captives

¹⁷⁷ “[T]odas han recibido de sus maridos saludos y cartas y por mí no hay ni carta ni saludo...” AHN, *Estado*, Leg. 4907, 2.5.1676, Apud, López Nadal Gonçal Artur, *El Corsarisme mallorquí a la Mediterrània occidental, 1652-1698: un comerç forçat*, Palma de Mallorca: Direcció General de Cultura, D.L. 1986, pp. 533-534.

¹⁷⁸ “[C]ómo tengo escritos a v.m. seis cartas lo qual no ten bisto rrespuesta de,” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824/2, fol. 15.

¹⁷⁹ “[Q]ue estoy muy espantado que de tantas cartas que he embiado nunca aya venido rrespuesta de ninguna,” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1711-1-6, fol. 14

tried to overcome the risk of lost letters and to ensure their arrival. Like other letter writers in the early modern period, captives occasionally began their letters with a listing of the last letter sent, as if trying to keep track of the flow of communication. Diego de Tarfán de los Godos, another captive in Algiers, wrote his wife in October 1655, notifying her that he had already sent two letters replying to her last letter.¹⁸⁰ To further facilitate the tracking of letters, writers also referred – to the degree they had the information – to the routes over which letters were being sent. Thus, an unsigned letter addressed to Señor Manuel Jorge, and carried to Spain by the renegade Jusepe Brexa, mentioned how a previous letter the author had written was sent via Ceuta – “through Ceuta I wrote his honor giving him account of the state of the business of his son.”¹⁸¹ These detailed, careful references reflect the large volume of letters written and sent, and also the difficulty of following them and verifying that they had reached their destination. Beyond the fact that writing was an efficient way of seeking funds for ransom, many letters traversed the long sea route because their captive authors never gave up the habit of communicating with their loved ones even after they had lost any hope of returning home.¹⁸²

Understanding that their best chance of securing funds was by writing home, everyone, including the illiterate, found ways to put their thoughts onto to paper. When Juan de Hererra was asked if the handwriting and signature in the letter he received belonged to the captive Domingo de la Luz, he replied that “the said Domingo de la Luz, a friend... does not know how to write nor how to sign and thus the signature and the handwriting necessarily belong to a foreign hand just as those who do not know how to write are used to do when they want to write letters.”¹⁸³ Illiterate captives were assisted by others in writing. In a letter to his mother from Tunis in June 1594, Jerónimo Gracián claimed that he spent so much time in captivity because “God wants me to stay more time for the help I give here to those Christians taking care of their souls and businesses,

¹⁸⁰ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 933-2.

¹⁸¹ “Por la vía de Zeuta escribí a v.md dándole cuenta del estado del negocio de su hijo,” Ibid.

¹⁸² “Diego López de Acosta, for example, kept writing home looking for ways to retrieve his liberty after spending six years in captivity,” Ibid.

¹⁸³ “[Q]ue el dicho Domingo de la Luz compañero deste testigo no sabe escribir in firmar y así la firma y letra de dicha carta es forcosso que sea de mano agena como se suela valer los que no saben escribir quando quieren escribir algunas cartas...,” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824-2.

writing their letters and dealing with their ransom” (emphasis added).¹⁸⁴ The testimony of Ynés Hernández Sardiña in the Inquisitorial tribunal of the Gran Canaria, quoted in the previous chapter, reflects how such letters were often composed on behalf of illiterate captives writing to their illiterate kin, and thus had to be read in public by a third party. Being illiterate like her husband, Hernández Sardiña had to ask a friend to read for her the letter her husband sent her. The fact that illiterate wrote to illiterate, by necessity, enlarged the circulation of the information reported. Both the scribe and the person deciphering the letter for the addressee, as well as additional audience as in the above vignette, shared with the sender the information he sought to convey.

Merchants, consuls, ransomed captives, Trinitarians and Mercedarians, and renegades all served as mailmen. Diego Galán, for example, asked some Trinitarians that he had met in Algiers in June 1592 to deliver a letter to his parents.¹⁸⁵ Usually, these mailmen carried more than one letter with them. Jusepe Brexa, a renegade who escaped from Algiers in 1655, provided similar services to captives with whom he had contacts.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, Gaspar de los Reyes, another captive in Algiers, saved up money to pay his own ransom and then returned to Spain. He later returned to Algiers independently in order to ransom other captives. Before returning to the land of his captivity, various persons gave him letters to deliver to their enslaved relatives.¹⁸⁷ Dom Patricio, a Portuguese captive in Algiers in the third decade of the seventeenth century, mentioned in the autobiography of the former captive João Mascarenhas, gave a renegade who left to Iberia “a bundle of letters” he wrote to his parents.¹⁸⁸

Muslim captives in the Habsburg Empire enjoyed similar, and partly parallel, mailing networks. Juan Bautista, registered in the Inquisition record as a Polish sailor, served as mailman to Muslims enslaved in Mallorca in 1635. Captured by agents of the Inquisitorial court, he failed to deliver the letters to their relatives in Bona and Tunis.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ “...Dios quiera que assista más tiempo a algún provecho que aquí se haze en estos christianos acudiéndoles a sus almas y negocios, escribiendo sus cartas y tratando de sus rescates,” Gracián, *Cartas, A D^a Juana Dantiscu, su madre – Túnez*, 11.6.1594. Gracián was not the only one to provide such services. Emmanuel d’Aranda mentions a captive from Brabant, François l’Étudiant, who in the 1640’s provided scribal services for Dunkirkian captives, see: d’Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger*, p. 45.

¹⁸⁵ Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, pp. 95-6.

¹⁸⁶ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 933-2.

¹⁸⁷ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824-2.

¹⁸⁸ “...[U]n paquet...” Mascarenhas, *Esclave à Alger*, p. 110.

¹⁸⁹ AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro. 862, Fols. 189-195.

The French consul in Algiers, who was accustomed to travelling to Mallorca so as to ransom Algerian captives there, must also have delivered news on behalf of the Muslim who remained in captivity. Even for captives, then, there was always someone who would carry a letter home and many captives took advantage of that technology of communication. Captives, however, as I now turn to demonstrate, did a lot more with letters than merely inform their kin about their health or to urge them to find money for their ransom.

3. Rumors

Miguel de Pando began negotiating his ransom soon after his capture by Algerian corsairs. But reaching an agreement proved difficult because “they [his captors] asked an excessive price from him,” the reason being that a Muslim enslaved in Spain, who eventually returned to Algiers, claimed de Pando belonged to a rich family:

Because it was said in Algiers that he [de Pando] was the brother of the Inspector General (*veedor*) in the Armada of the Oceanic Sea, which office was mentioned because at the time, his brother, Antonio de Pando, was in Lisbon filling that office . . . because of the absence of [the office’ original] proprietor. And it was a Turkish slave of the general lieutenant of the artillery of the armada who spread that piece of news.¹⁹⁰

De Pando’s brother did temporarily occupy the royal position of which the slave spoke, but the position did not belong to him. And yet, this was enough to mark de Pando as a man of wealthy stock and to demand excessive ransoms for his rescue. This case demonstrates the ease and rapidity with which hearsay and news could cross the sea, here carried by a ransomed Muslim captive to information-hungry slave owners. Eventually, de Pando retrieved his liberty but the price he had to pay was far beyond his means.

¹⁹⁰ “le pedían egesibo preçio a causa de averse dicho en Argel [que] hera hermano del veedor general de la armada del mar oceano, y pasó este nonbre porque a la saçon Antonio de Pando su hermano estava en Lisboa haçiendo oficio de veedor general della por ausencia del propietario, de que dio notticia particular un turco esclabo del teniente general de la hartillería de la armada,” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 833, 1.19.1618.

Enslaved captives – both Muslims and Christians – and others spread rumors across the Mediterranean about the wealth, status, or religious creed of other captives.¹⁹¹ Rumors whose objects were Christian captives claimed that the captives were rich or important and should hence be ransomed for a hefty sum. Christian captives themselves, however, also spread rumors as when, in their letters home, they reported the conversion of their neighbors, kin, and friends who were held captive with them. Such rumors were embedded in various textual genres and traces of them appear in the margins of petitions for economic help, inquisitorial records, autobiographies and other texts. In some cases, they were written, in others, writers describe the effects of rumors spread orally.

It might be useful though to clarify what I mean by ‘rumor’ and how it differs from ‘gossip,’ for example. Chris Wickham has recently offered a short definition of gossip that implies a give-and-take of information between those gossiping. “Gossip,” Wickham has argued, “is, simply, talking about other people behind their backs.”¹⁹² Likewise, anthropologists Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart claim that gossip “takes place mutually among people in networks and groups.”¹⁹³ A distinction between ‘gossip’ and ‘rumor’ Stewart and Strathern have made, which derives from their definition, is that gossip circulates in smaller networks or groups than rumors. The information I examine in this section, however, either did not form part of larger cycles of give-and-take of information (but it was certainly exchanged as I will demonstrate) or such cycles remain invisible to the contemporary historian. The definition Wickham offered and the distinction made by Stewart and Strathern, however, are helpful in distinguishing the two kinds of rumors I examine. Rumors that circulated to influence others’ ransom price usually served to forward the interests of the person circulating them; when Christian captives, however, reported about conversion of fellow captives to their kin, they were

¹⁹¹ In this section I focus mostly on rumors whose objects were Christians or Christians who converted to Islam. Doubtless, rumors about Muslims slaves in Spain and elsewhere in Europe widely circulated and affected their objects in similar ways. One context in which this must have happened was in the trials of renegades in the Inquisition, when inquisitors were looking for witnesses to verify the identity of the culprit.

¹⁹² Wickham, “Gossip and Resistance,” p. 11.

¹⁹³ See the useful overview of the anthropological literature on rumors and gossip and the multivalence of these practices. Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 38-39. For an analysis of gossip that stresses its role in the production of secrets as prestigious, see: Paul C. Johnson, *Secretes, Gossip, and Gods: the Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé*, Oxford University Press, 2005.

delineating and recreating the boundaries of the groups to which they pertained – for example: Christian or Majorcan – thus maintaining the group’s unity.

Rumors have the form of truth-value propositions, namely, they are either true or false. However, in this discussion, I bracket the epistemological status or facticity of the information I refer to as rumor and understand as rumor any information, regardless of its truth value, that the people who reported on it considered as untrue, inexact or partial. The story of de Pando demonstrates how inexact information could have grave results – hindering the ransom of a captive in this case – regardless of its veracity. Often, information turned into a rumor only after it became public. It might have disseminated before among small groups forming what Wickham, Stewart and Strathern would have called gossip, but it reached the archive in its later form as rumor widely circulating. Then it became a force influencing its object. However, in contrast to its public nature, in many cases, the identity of the person spreading the rumor was unknown and the people reporting about it used the passive voice or unattributed indirect speech. Another property of rumors is their performativity, i.e. their power to affect not only their objects but also the people spreading them. Rumors place those spreading them in a position of a knower. When they are taken as true, those spreading them present and communicate incorrect information as though it reflected the true state of affairs.¹⁹⁴

Word about recent events spread like wildfire in Algiers and other coastal cities, a theme I further analyze in the next chapter. For example, Hugo Ferez, the name Spanish sources attributed to a former English captive, testified in Cadiz in 1619 that a few years earlier, while being held in Algiers, he heard about a failed escape attempt by several Portuguese and Scottish captives. The scribe who took his testimony copied into the file Ferez’s explanation of his source of information “and the next day, the said Hugo Ferez heard about that from the Scots and it *became public* all over Algiers” [emphasis added].¹⁹⁵ Various sources attest to the speed at which rumors spread in the city. A year after he was ransomed from Algiers, the Augustinian Juan de Payba returned to Algiers, converted to Islam and married the sister of his former master. Almost immediately, all

¹⁹⁴ As such, Strathern and Stewart claim, they resemble acts of witchcraft and sorcery, Ibid, p. 55.

¹⁹⁵ My italics “Lo qual supo el día siguiente el dicho Hugo Ferez, de los escoçeses, y fue publico por todo Argel...” ADMS, Leg. 4407, 2.11.1619.

the Christians in Algiers knew about it.¹⁹⁶ Francisco de Morales, who was held captive in Algiers at the time, testified in 1677 in front of the inquisitorial tribunal of the Canary Islands that he heard this news, “because *it was publicly known* among the Christians that were captured there.”¹⁹⁷

Rumors also affected the lives of individuals. The case of the Carmelite priest Jerónimo Gracián, confessor of Saint Teresa, held captive for two years in Tunis, is instructive in this regard. Gracián was captured in October, 1592 on his way to Rome. At first, as he recounts, things did not seem too complicated. In his *Treaty of the Redemption of Captives*, he describes how his first owner was willing to set him free for “a reasonable price.”¹⁹⁸ However, having heard of his capture, some Christian captives lied to the Pasha of Tunis. They alleged that Gracián was not a simple priest, but rather an archbishop on his way to Rome for elevation to the cardinalate. The motivation of these Christians remains unclear. They may have been rewarded for providing information valuable to Gracián’s master in negotiation over Gracián’s ransom price. According to Gracián they had “maliciously lied about him.”¹⁹⁹ The honor these unidentified Christians falsely conferred on him became a burden. Captives always attempted to appear poorer and of lower status in order to avoid a high ransom price.²⁰⁰ This “newly respected status” put an end to Gracián’s hopes of returning home quickly. Based on this disinformation, the Pasha demanded thirty thousand golden escudos for Gracián’s freedom.²⁰¹

This, however, was not the only rumor circulating in Tunis that attributed to Gracián a status he did not actually have or wealth that he never possessed. At a later date, another anonymous party spread a rumor among the Janissaries that Gracián was an inquisitor who had burned some of the militia’s soldiers at the stake. He almost lost his

¹⁹⁶ AMC, *Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Santa Inquisición de Canarias*, Leg. CXIX-21, 1667-1671.

¹⁹⁷ My italics. “...[Y] esta noticia la tubo en Argel por ser publica voz entre los cristianos que allí avía cautibos...” AMC, *Inquisición*, Leg. CXIX-21, 9.9.1671.

¹⁹⁸ “razonable precio,” see: Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁹ “lo que me levantaron de que era arçobispo que yva a Roma a ser cardenal,” Letter from Tunis to Juana Dantisco, his mother, 6.7.1594, Gracián, Jerónimo, *Cartas, Monumenta historica Carmeli Teresiani*, Juan Luis Astigarraga, Ed. Roma: Teresianum, 1989, p. 169.

²⁰⁰ Jocelyne Dakhlia, “Ligne de fuite. Impostures et reconstructions identitaires en Méditerranée musulmane à l’époque moderne,” in *Gens de passage en Méditerranée de l’Antiquité à l’époque moderne. Procédures de contrôle et d’identification. L’Atelier Méditerranéen*, Wolfgang Kaiser and Claudia Moatti, eds. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2007, pp. 427-458.

²⁰¹ Gracián, *Ibid.*

life because of this hearsay. Later, a corsair told the Pasha he “knew” who Gracián was, and advised the Pasha to exchange Gracián for Materráez, a corsair held captive in Naples: “if [Gracián] could not get Materráez who is [held] in Naples,” the corsair claimed, “no one could.”²⁰² Finally, in what Gracián later insisted was a nationalistic retaliation for the Spanish occupation of Sicily, a Sicilian merchant “insinuated in the town square” that Gracián was a rich person – “they would pay at least six thousands escudos for him.”²⁰³ Eventually Gracián was ransomed, but the circulation of these rumors delayed his return home. The number of rumors spread about Gracián borders on the absurd, as he ironically recognized:

If in Christian land, I was so criticized and passed over that I was not even worthy of being the cook of any religion in the world, in the land of Moors, I was promoted to be a great archbishop on his way to Rome to become cardinal and in a few days to become the *gran papaz*, which is what [the Moors] call the pope.”²⁰⁴

What his case demonstrates is how, despite their weak epistemological status, rumors regarding captives’ identities could have an immense influence on captives’ ability to negotiate a reasonable ransom agreement.

Unlike this case, in which the sources reveal only the after-effects of rumors, other examples provide information about their overseas origins. In the following case, hearsay successfully sabotaged ransom agreements. Taken captive by Algerian corsairs, Bartholomé Martín de Castro was sold three times before a Trinitarian friar negotiated with his third master an exchange in return for ‘a Turk,’ who was a slave of the Count of Monterrey from Galicia in the north of Spain. According to Castro’s account, when the ‘Turk’ heard of the deal, he sent a word to Castro’s master telling him that “the father of... [Castro] was rich and that the Moors should try and get an elevated ransom for him.”²⁰⁵ As a result Castro’s master raised his demands and locked Castro in a little cell.

²⁰² “...[Y] que si yo no sacava, a Materráez que está en Nápoles, ninguno le sacaría...” Gracián, *Cartas*, A letter to Andreas de Cordoba, 6.7.1594, pp. 166-167.

²⁰³ “...[S]e dejo decir en la plaza: ‘por lo menos podía dar luego seis mil escudos...’,” see: Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, p. 117.

²⁰⁴ “y si en tierra de cristianos me habían afrentado, abatiéndome tanto que llegue a no merecer ser cocinero de ninguna religión del mundo, en tierra de moros me levantaron que era un gran arzobispo que iba a Roma a ser cardenal y dentro de pocos días había de ser el gran papaz, que así llaman ellos al papa.” Gracián, *Tratado de la Redención de Cautivos*, p. 95.

²⁰⁵ “que el padre de este reo era rico, y que assí procurasen los moros que baliessse bien su rescate...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1706/2, 12.1689.

Eventually Castro who gave up on the hope of being ransomed converted to Islam hoping to improve his living conditions. He told this story during his investigation before the Inquisitorial tribunal of Majorca in 1689 after his return to Spain.²⁰⁶ As in the previous cases, the identity of the rumor monger ‘Turk’ slave is unknown, but Castro knows who his master was and can locate the origin of the information. Such rumors circulated across the sea with ease becoming available for masters and others. Epistemologically, as the cases show, their status was unstable and unfounded, and yet that did not make them less valuable, desirable or effective.

Rumors could also lead to the captivity of those who believed they were immune from capture. A Valencian who arrived in 1694 in Algiers on an English ship, Carlos Vidal felt he had no reason to be worried upon his arrival in the city that the Spaniards call the “den of Christendom's thieves” (*Ladronera de la Cristianidad*). To the best of his knowledge, he had done nothing that would have made the visit unsafe. More importantly, he possessed a valid safe pass that was supposed to protect him. And yet, upon arrival in the Algiers he was detained. A letter issued in the Majorcan viceroyalty reports the affair. The writer described how “it was easy to find someone who” had falsely whispered into the ear of the city’s governor “that he [Vidal] was the cousin of Cristóval Matheu.”²⁰⁷ Matheu had been held captive in Algiers a few years earlier and was set free after giving his word that he would take care of the ransom of Hasan, a Muslim enslaved in the Spanish royal squadron of Sardinia. Once he left Algiers and set foot in Valencia, however, he either forgot his promise or was unable to execute it. Since the Algerians believed Vidal was Matheu’s cousin, “although [Carlos Vidal] was

²⁰⁶ It is quite possible that during these long, stressful hours facing his inquisitors, Castro was more interested in inventing a convincing story about his conversion, one that would lead to his absolution, rather than unfolding the events the way they truly happened. This might explain in part why the ‘Turk’ in his story acted in a way that not only delayed Castro’s release and return home but also his own liberty and return. And yet, the fact that Castro chose to outline the story of his conversion in this manner suggests that it was an at least partially reasonable account, one which his inquisitors were likely to believe. If so, we may briefly bracket the veracity of the details and proceed to analyze them. The narrative that Castro weaves during his Inquisition frames the years prior to his capture as the typical trajectory of a *pícaro* or a rogue. Having run away from home after getting involved in a fight, he wandered southward from one city to another, and eventually embarked on a ship that headed to Oran with the hope of becoming a soldier in the Spanish fort. This movement suggests that he did not come from a rich family and thus marks the information sent by the ‘Turk’ as unfounded.

²⁰⁷ “[N]o faltó quien dijo al gobernador, aunque con falsedad, que esta era primo hermano de Christóval Matheu...” ACA, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 993, fol. 69.

protected by the safe pass of the embarkation, they [the Algerians] put him in chains.”²⁰⁸ While webs of social ties linking the two shores of the Mediterranean allowed for sophisticated diplomatic instruments such as safe passes, connectivity had its limits. Notwithstanding the smooth flow of information, there was never enough of it and much of the information that circulated was incorrect. Yet, the need for data led to the acceptance of rumors, information whose veracity was dubious.

The chain of rumors of which Gracián suffered suggests that rumors represent opposition both between and inside various groups – an anonymous Christian captive (Gracián was a cardinal), a Sicilian merchant (Gracián was a rich person), the Janissaries (an inquisitor), corsairs (an important ecclesiastic), and Muslim captives (de Pando’s brother was important and rich). Spreading rumors, then, was an activity that potentially included everyone. People did it as a religious or national revenge, in an attempt to ransom relatives or to make personal profit. Some disseminated rumors through face-to-face interactions; others sent word across the sea. Those spreading the rumors, targeted slave owners who used the information to ask more money for the ransom of their slaves. What does the willingness of masters to trust this kind of knowledge, which in many cases was soon exposed as false, suggest? Some captives claimed that slave owners made use of whatever information they could get their hands on when negotiating their slaves’ value and ransom price vis-à-vis their identity. The Flemish Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, held captive in Algiers between 1619 and 1625, made this clear in his diary. He noted that the Algerians “carefully search for and occasionally produce faked testimonies, make of you someone whom you are not: from a priest they make you a bishop; from a gentleman, a duke; from a soldier, a captain; from a mercenary, a merchant...”²⁰⁹ Regardless of whether there was any truth behind this observation, or if it was merely Christian propaganda, Gramaye’s words imply that Muslim slave owners were aware that – at best – they had only an impressionistic sense of who their captives were.

²⁰⁸ “[A]unque iba con el seguro de la embarcación, le pusieron encadena...” Ibid. For the letter that the English consul in Algiers sent the viceroy of Majorca on behalf of the pasha of Algiers in order to facilitate the ransom of the parties involved, see: Juan, Vernét Gines, *El rescate del araez argeli Bibi, prisionero en Mallorca*, Tetuán: Instituto Muley el Hasan, 1952.

²⁰⁹ “[E]n cherchant bien et en produisant souvent de faux témoins, ils vous font autre que vous n’êtes : de clerc, ils vous font évêque ; de gentilhomme, duc ; de soldat, capitaine ; de mercenaire, marchand...” Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, *Journal des faits survenus à Alger à dater de l’an 1619*, Abd El Hadi Ben Mansour, trans. Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris: 1998, p. 309.

That Christians – both captives and merchants – spread rumors about other Christian captives was common knowledge among captives.²¹⁰ Emanuel d’Aranda, held captive in Tunis in 1640, mentioned a merchant who, taking advantage of the mail services he provided, read captives’ letters to get information about their value.²¹¹ For this reason, d’Aranda wrote, “it was necessary for a new captive to dissimulate for a while until he would be well informed who was a liar and who was sincere.”²¹² He was thinking of slaves who served their masters as informers, befriending new captives and attempting to extract information about their value.²¹³ With that knowledge, slave owners went shopping in the slave market and later negotiated profitable ransom deals. D’Aranda’s warning and the rumors suggest that nationalistic pride (the Sicilian merchant in Gracián’s case) or military *esprit de corps* (the Janissaries and Gracián) were not the only reasons for which hearsay circulated. Rumors, so it seems, became a currency in some Maghribi cities and those spreading them were trading in them in a market of information. While there is no direct evidence for the ways in which information was traded, thinking about rumors as a currency may explain some of the motivations of Christian and Muslim slaves to spread rumors. They could either profit from that or improve their living conditions. Such rumors were what anthropologist Robert Paine has called “a device intended to forward and protect individual interests.”²¹⁴ Unlike among the Makah Indians whom Paine has studied, however, rumors spread in the Maghrib did not only serve the strong, slave owners seeking to increase their profits. For captives, in some cases, disseminating such rumors were strategies of survival, ways to obtain a little money, arrange more privileges or more liberty.

Christian captives were not the only ones to suffer from rumors, and in some cases they themselves circulated rumors about renegades, that is, Christians who had converted to Islam. Captives did so in the letters they send home to their kin. Beyond writing about

²¹⁰ Common knowledge, “*publica fama*,” what everybody knew is, according to Wickham, the product of gossip, see: Wickham, “Gossip and resistance,” p. 5.

²¹¹ d’Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger*, p. 132

²¹² “...il est nécessaire qu’il dissimule pour quelque temps jusqu’à ce qu’il soit suffisamment informé qui sont les trompeurs et qui sont les sincères,” see: *Ibid.*, p. 132.

²¹³ This was not the only kind of information masters got from their slaves. The knight from Arvieux quoted Mehmed Beig from Tunis, who told him he heard about the tension between the knight and the French consul before the knight mentioned the tension from his slaves; see: d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, p. 38.

²¹⁴ Quoted at Stewart and Strathern, *Witchcraft. Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip*, p. 35.

their health and complaining about the hardships of life,²¹⁵ captives updated their dear ones about friends, kin, and neighbors who had converted. In the letter, delivered by Francisco Marques to Ynés Hernández Sardiña, the author recounted the conversion of the former captive Gaspar de los Reyes. In her testimony in the inquisitorial tribunal of the Canary Islands, Sardiña recalled how she received the letter and what the response of the people present was when they heard the news:

Ynés Hernández Sardiña...[said] that after Francisco Marquez arrived from his captivity to locality of the Puerto de la Cruz... he went to see her since he was an acquaintance and nephew of her husband.... And he took out a linen bag in which there were many other letters and gave this witness the letter directed to her husband... and then she opened the letter in the presence of everyone who was there and gave it to one of the women, called María Fonte, present at the visit so she might read it; and among the news it contained, one bit was that Gaspar de los Reyes had turned Moor... And all the people who were present stood amazed by the news they heard read aloud in the said letter.²¹⁶

The testimony captures the shock effect that such news had on a local audience. Renegades who were denounced in captives' letters risked the loss of continued relations with their kin networks.

Letters renegades wrote to their relatives in Spain reveal just such fears. On September 2, 1606, for example, Francisco Verdera who had converted to Islam in Algiers during his captivity wrote a letter to his aunt. He opened the letter with a question – “Aunt Berdera [sic]... I’m terribly horrified because I have received no response to the many letters I have sent. I don’t know what the reason is for that. I don’t know if it is because I turned Moor. *The whole world knows that I was forced to do so...*” [emphasis

²¹⁵ Domingo de la Luz, for example, updated his friend, Juan de Herrera about his health and described the harsh conditions of his captivity – “...presently... I still enjoy it [complete health] even if with much labor... from the break of dawn to the nightfall getting exhausted in the harbor or in the garden and without eating but a little slice of bread and nothing more and on the top of that I am an old man for whom it is already difficult to stand the labors,” (“yo al presente quedo con ella... aunque con muchos trabajos en esta tierra... desde que amaneçe hasta que anocheçe rebentando en la marina o en el jardín o a pagar la luna y sin comer sino un pedeaço de pan sin otra cossa y más siendo yo un hombre mayor que ya no puedo resistir con los trabajos”), AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824-2.

²¹⁶ Ynés Hernández Sardiña ... que luego que llego Francisco marquez de cautiverio a el lugar del Puerto de la Cruz “[donde esté testigo es veçina] y le fue a ver por ser conoçido y sobrino de su marido... y saco una talega de lienço en qual venían otras muchas cartas y entrego a este testigo la carta que venía para su marido... y le abrió luego en presencia de todas las personas que allí estaban y la dio a leer a una muger que estaba en la visita llamada María Fonte y entre las razones que contenía era una de ellas que Gaspar de los Reyes se avía vuelto moro... y todas las personas que estaban presentes quedaron admiradas de las razones referidas que oyeron leer a dicha carta... AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824-2

added].²¹⁷ Verdera stresses how he was forced to convert in the same breath that he acknowledges his conversion, thus arguing that the distinction between forced and voluntary conversions was important. He was afraid that someone had sent the word about his conversion without fairly representing the conditions under which he converted. He asked his aunt to ask his friend about it, one on whose testimony he knew he could count – “now you can find out [about it] from the patron Juan Maltes who was here when I was forced into it [into conversion].”²¹⁸ Other renegades expressed similar fears. Eighty years later, in July 1689, Francisco Girbau, a renegade from Blanas, a village north of Barcelona, wrote a letter to his father from Algiers. He too complained about not receiving any letters from his family and also expressed his worry that this might be attributed to his conversion to Islam. He asked his relatives “not to believe news from anyone else, [since] all are lies.”²¹⁹ Knowing how important the relations with their relatives were for some renegades, captives could employ this information in two ways. They could promise the renegades to keep their conversion in secret in return for favors. And they could punish renegades by informing the latter’s relatives about them, thereby delineating the boundaries of their religious community. Spreading these rumors should not be seen only as part of a relationship between captives and renegades. Once in Spain, such information worked in two ways: through webs of kinships and friendship which following the admission of news could serve to exclude the renegade, and through the Inquisition. For the Inquisition, an institution with strong long-term memory, such information was always relevant. The letter of Verdera, for example, found its way to the inquisitorial record almost forty years after it was written and sent and years after its author’s death. The Inquisition, which sentenced Verdera *post mortem*, summoned Juana Benonada, the nephew of Verdera’s aunt, who had kept Verdera’s letter for decades.²²⁰

While I have focused on two kinds of rumors (about captives’ economic value and about shifts in captives’ creed), doubtless other kinds of rumors involving captives circulated across the sea. Unfortunately, as wide as their circulation might have been they

²¹⁷ “Tía Berdera... estoy muy espantado que de tantas cartas que he embiado nunca aya venido rrespuesta de ninguna no sé yo que es la causa si ha sido porque he buelto moro no se...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1711/1/6, 2.5.1644.

²¹⁸ “[Y]a os podeys ynformar con el patrón Juan Maltes que el estava aquí como me forçaron...” *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ “...[N]o creáis nuevas de otra gente que todos son embustes...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1711/1/8, 11.28.1689.

²²⁰ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1711/1/6, 2.5.1644.

have left little or no archival traces. The rumors analyzed here share similar properties: they could serve as the weapon of the weak against former kin and friends who converted, other captives with more power, or as a source of income and privilege with which to improve the living conditions. At the same time, these two classes of rumors radically differed: information about captives' value served individuals who sought to advance their own interests, but news about renegades served to unite group members by delineating and recreating the group's boundaries while excluding members who converted.²²¹ The former originated in the Maghrib or immigrated southward from Christendom; the latter was produced in North Africa and was sent up north. The importance attributed to such rumors demonstrates the contradictory nature of Mediterranean webs of connectivity. The production, circulation and consumption of such rumors assume, on the one hand, that news traveled fast across the sea and on the other, that information was always scarce and that there was always need of more of it. Rumors allowed the Inquisition a foothold in the Maghrib; to slave owners rumors offered a look into slave's past identities across the sea.

4. Recommendations

In the first chapter I have analyzed some of the relations captives formed with masters and overseers. Captives, however, also established friendships and alliances and became involved in conflicts with other Christian captives and renegades. In many cases, relations between captives and renegades were mediated by the ties – real or imagined – that captives maintained at home and by the extent to which captives succeeded in making such ties visible. Interactions between captives and renegades could place captives in surprising positions of power, especially when the renegades sought legitimacy and absolution for their conversion from the captives. In so doing, renegades might have been motivated by an authentic sense of guilt prompted by the despising gaze of their co-religionists who had remained faithful to their creed. But they were also driven by the desire to return to home and by the painful awareness that should they successfully execute their plans, they would face the authorities – secular and

²²¹ That is the function Gluckman has assigned to gossip, see: Max, Gluckman, "Gossip and Scandal," *Current Anthropology*, IV (1963): 307-316.

ecclesiastical – as well as their families, neighbors, and friends, and be required to account for their conversion.

Keeping conversion a secret was practically impossible, and both captives and renegades knew that. In the previous section, I discussed how, in their letters home, captives informed their kin about those who had converted, as did other returning ransomed captives and merchants. In his captivity narrative, Diego Galán described the way in which a number of renegades and the Pasha of Algiers attempted to convert him to Islam. His description illustrates vividly the rapid circulation of this type of information across the sea and the serious consequences that its travel could unleash. Addressing his reader, Galán explained how he resisted the temptation to convert. According to his narrative, rather than turning to theological reasoning, the angel that helped Galán stay firm in his belief reminded him of his family's honor:

[T]he angel confronted me with my parents' honor and [with the fact] that there are no secrets in this world and that as soon as I arrived back in my place and in Toledo, someone who knew me in Algiers and in Constantinople would appear, and that would be shameful...²²²

Galán's comments suggest that, even if he could leverage his conversion to Islam and the freedom of movement it would have afforded him in order to escape, upon returning home, everybody would know of his conversion.

For Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian renegades, the return home also meant that the Inquisition would investigate and potentially punish them. In fact, in the same scene, the renegades who were asking Galán to convert said "...one day, with the liberty renegades have, when they rove lands of Christians, they can easily stay there and ask mercy from the *señores* inquisitors, as some have done."²²³ The fear of the Inquisition was a mainstay among renegades, so whether they desired to return or were afraid of being caught and brought to trial, they turned to Christian captives asking for letters of recommendation with hopes that these letters might protect them when confronting their inquisitors. Captives could write letters of recommendation on behalf of these renegades, attesting to their 'true' Christian nature by providing mitigating circumstances for their conversion or

²²² "...el ángel me ponía por delante de mis padres y que no habia cosa secreta en este mundo, y apenas hube llegado a mi lugar y a Toledo, quando hallé quien me había conocido en Argel y en Constantinopla, y hubiera quedado muy feo..." Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, p. 54.

²²³ See footnote 145 in page 45.

explaining how, despite their conversion, they kept helping Christians in need. These letters were meant to serve as insurance policies for renegades who wished to leave the Maghrib. Gracián described the practice in his *Pilgrimage of Anastasio*:

There are many renegades whose heart is touched by God and who wish to escape to a Christian land to save their soul; and the only reason for which they stay is out of fear of the Inquisition saying that it would punish them unless they carry some testimony of a man of credit and renown who would testify that they had left for Christian land out of their free will and desire for catholic belief.²²⁴

Gracián says little about the exchange involved and portrays the concession of such documents as disinterested: renegades sincerely avow their former creed and would ask Christian captives to provide a testimony to the inner change that they had experienced; the latter, in their testimony, tended to merely describe the reconversion of the renegade. The concession of these certificates is not characterized by the reciprocal nature of gift exchange, but forms a single transaction: the giving of testimony.

In his *Treaty of the Redemption of Captives*, which also details Gracián's experience as a captive, the meaning and function of such letters is more ambiguous. In this work, Gracián describes how he had himself written a certificate on behalf of a French renegade – “I have seen [them] bringing to Tunis and Binsart a large number of French boys... [T]hey [the Muslims] circumcise them by force... I gave a certificate for one of them for the Inquisition with which he escaped and arrived in Cagliari.”²²⁵ As in the previous quotation, Gracián does not explicitly link the issuing and concession of the document to an economy of gifts or even favors. He allegedly initiated the writing and giving of the certificate only because of the injustice involved in the forced circumcision. But the lines immediately following imply a more complicated connection – “I and other Christians convinced another (renegade) to get a boat of his master so that twenty out of

²²⁴ “Hay muchos renegados a quien Dios toca el corazón y se desean huir a tierra de cristianos por salvar el alma, y solamente se detienen por miedo de la inquisición diciendo que les castigaran, si no llevan algún testimonio de persona de crédito y conocido que testifique haberse ido de su voluntad y con deseo de la fe católica a tierra de cristianos,” *Peregrinación de Anastasio*, in *Obras del P. Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios*, Vol. III, p. 130.

²²⁵ “He visto traer a Túnez y a Bicerta abundancia de muchachos franceses, y porque no pueden ser esclavos por la liga que hay entre los turcos y Francia, antes que el Cónsul de su nación los pida, los circuncidan por fuerza. A uno de éstos di una patente para la Inquisición con que se huyó y vino a Cagliari.” (45)

the Pasha's captives, who were in Binsart could escape..."²²⁶ Gracián does not make the link explicit but this juxtaposition connects the help that renegades provided to the escaping captives with the certificates they received from them.

Literary sources make references to this same practice, shedding further light on the power dynamics involved. In his comedy *The Bagnios of Algiers* (1615), Cervantes describes Hazén, a renegade, entering the scene where Lope and Vivanco, two captives, stand talking.²²⁷ Upon seeing Hazén, Lope asks Vivanco to lower his voice so that the renegade – a potential traitor and an enemy – will not hear their conversation. But Hazén surprises them by a request that marks him as a repentant Christian:

With just your two signatures I'll happily set foot on Spanish shores; I'll have a favorable wind, a calm sea with smooth waves. I want to return to Spain, and to one to whom I must confess my childish and ancient error... [*He gives them a handwritten note.*] It states here that it is true that I have treated Christians very affably, without Turkish cruelty in word or deed; that I have aided many; that as a child I was compelled to turn Turk; that, though I go roving, I'm a good Christian underneath. Perhaps I'll have a chance to remain in what for me is the Promised Land.²²⁸

Cervantes explicates what Gracián left implied. Hazén does not humbly ask for a letter but rather demands that Lope and Vivanco confirm what he already had put in writing. For the sake of the play's spectators, who cannot read his note, Hazén explains what he has written. On the one hand, he employs the same trope as Gracián, pronouncing claims about his interiority to explain that, although he roves foreign lands, he is "a good Christian underneath." On the other hand, he frames his transformation from a Muslim self, formed in and through conversion to Islam, and his present Christianity in pragmatic terms, pleading them to vouch for his claims. The signs for his reconversion are embedded in practices, behaviors, and favors – he has "treated Christians very affably, without Turkish cruelty in word or deed... [and has] aided many." Hazén makes an explicit reference to an exchange system between renegades and Christian captives – renegades, who keep the option of returning to Christianity open, help captives in goods

²²⁶ "A otro teníamos persuadido otros cristianos y yo que trajera una barca de su patrón para huirse veintitrés cautivos de los del Baja, que estaban en Bicerta..." Ibid.

²²⁷ For an analysis that examines the relations between the characters in the comedy and actual persons that Cervantes met during his captivity in Algiers, see: Jaime, Oliver Asín, "La Hija de Agü Morato en la obra de Cervantes," *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 27 (1947-8): 245-339.

²²⁸ Cervantes, *The Bagnios of Algiers and The Great Sultana*, p. 14.

and services in return for absolution in the form of a certificate for the Inquisition. The captives' response reaffirms the reciprocal nature of this exchange. Hazén's words immediately quell Lope and Vivanco's suspicions and Lope, happy to assist Hazén, tells him – "When the sinner mends his ways, he pays an advance on his salvation. We'll happily provide the signatures you ask of us, for we have witnessed that all you say is true, Hazén, and that you are honest. May heaven grant that your course be as smooth as you desire."²²⁹ The reference to a down payment becomes even clearer in Hazén's following words: "I will try to raise a mutiny on my galliot;" or, in other words, that he will organize a slave rebellion in the sea and help the captives enslaved on the galliot to take it over and escape to Spain.

Recommendations form an element in an exchange between the author of a letter and the object of the letter, the person on whose behalf the letter was written. Letters of recommendation make a unique source. Unlike other sources, such as chronicles or autobiographies, letters of recommendation for returning renegades are both account and artifact: a tool with social relevance. First, these letters testify to Christian identity and the subjectivity of Christians who had converted to Islam: they change, or have the potential to change, a state of affairs by making a Christian out of a Muslim. But beyond that, the letter, as a material artifact, formed an object in an interaction of exchange. The letter itself – due to the qualities associated with it – was exchanged for other goods and/or services.

References to this practice were not merely a literary trope. Similar references abound in trial documents and trial summaries (*relaciones de causa*) of renegades and others who were investigated and sentenced by the Inquisition.²³⁰ The Maltese Marcos de Bono, for example, captured at the age of nineteen, was sold into slavery in Cyprus and later taken to Istanbul. During his deposition before the Inquisition in 1634, he explained how he had taken advantage of the fact that he "knew how to speak the Morisco [by which he probably meant the dialect of Arabic spoken by Moriscos] language from

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ On the *Relaciones de causa*, see: Jean-Pierre, Dedieu, "The Archives of the Holy Office of Toledo as a Source for Historical Anthropology." In *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods*, edited by Gustav Henningsen, John A. Tedeschi and Charles Amiel. Dekalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986, pp. 158-189.

having spoken it often in his land” – and pretended to be a Muslim.²³¹ He used his linguistic skills to avoid slavery, and, without ever converting to Islam, joined the forces of the janissary and was eventually positioned in Tunis. There he became acquainted with Christian captives to whom he recounted his adventures, explaining that, despite his position, he had never converted to Islam. His coreligionists took him to the church of San Antonio and introduced him to the local chaplain who provided captives with religious services. De Bono, who was plotting his return to Christendom, asked the chaplain to write a letter of recommendation on his behalf attesting to the veracity of his story. He received “a certificate written and signed by [the chaplain’s] hand dated September 6th 1633, Tunis... [telling how] the said Marcos was a good Christian.”²³² Later, he managed to escape, arrived in Majorca, and after presenting the document to the island’s inquisitors was absolved with only a light punishment. Jacobo de Maqueda, a Frenchman from a village near Calais, was captured by Algerian corsairs and was forced to convert when the French signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans.²³³ Later, during his inquisitorial investigation in 1634, he described how he got a letter of recommendation through a similar course of action:

With hopes of leaving his captivity, and returning to profess the holy catholic faith in a land of Christians... before leaving [Tunis] to [rove] the high seas he arranged a testimony... given by the Christian captives who were in Tunis at the time... [which] he presented in the said hearing [the testimony was written] by three Carmelite priests and a redeemer of captives from the order of the preachers from the kingdom of Sicily.²³⁴

Such letters were occasionally copied into Inquisition registers which thus provide more detail than literary sources about the exchange and its effects. Joseph Brexa, a Neapolitan captured as a cabin boy by corsairs and converted to Islam in Algiers,

²³¹ “y sabía hablar Morisco por hablarse de su tierra comúnmente,” AHN, *Inquisición*, Libro 862, fols. 83v-84v, April, 1634.

²³² “[U]na fee escripta y firmada de su mano fecha en Túnez a los 6 de septiembre de 1633 de lo susodicho referido, y de cómo era buen christiano dicho Marcos...” Ibid.

²³³ Whenever peace treaties were signed, masters had to release subject slaves of the polity with which the agreement was reached. One way of avoiding that and the lose of the intital investment in the slave, was to convert the slave to Islam. I discuss this theme in chapter five.

²³⁴ “[C]on esperanzas de salir de su cautivero, y venir a profesar la santa fee cathólica a tierra de christianos, y del año de 1631 en esta parte que andava por la mar antes de salir tomo testimonio de todo lo susodicho que le dieron los rreligiosos cautibos que estaban en Túnez... como en efecto presento en la dicha audiencia de tres religiosos carmelitas y del rredemptor de cautivos del reyno de Sicilia de la orden de predicadores...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 862, 4.5.1634.

managed to escape after spending seven years in North Africa and to reach the Spanish Peninsula in the autumn of 1655. Fortunately for the historian, Brexa submitted himself to the Inquisition's *familares* in a small village in Valencia and eventually found himself before the region's Inquisitorial tribunal. Because the inquisitors copied them into his trial record, we have full transcriptions of the nine letters he carried with him. In seven of them, the authors asked the addressees to assist Brexa. For example, in a letter to his wife, Diego Antonio de Tarfan held captive in Algiers asked her:

What I beg you for the love of God is to host the carrier of this [letter] in your house and do what you could for him as if he were me because he is a man to whom I am heavily obliged and many times he saved me from hunger, and if it were not for him, I would have been lost, because he did for me what you would have done...²³⁵

In another letter, de Tarfan addressed an acquaintance about the same matter:

Because here [in Algiers], being a young boy, his owner turned him Moor by force, [and] his intentions [were] always to go to a land of Christians. And so if he should fall in the hands of the inquisitorial tribunal your honor would always serve as a mediator, and if by any chance he would be in need of money to buy clothes, your honor would do it as if it were me, and if it would be necessary during the time when he would not have a shelter to protect him, and during the days he may like to stay in that city, your honor would provide him with accommodation in your house, and if it would be necessary by any chance that he would like to go elsewhere. Your honor would help him with that.²³⁶

These passages articulate the exchange in clear terms and illustrate its scope beyond merely providing character evidence. Brexa's Christianity is mentioned, but the help asked on his behalf is justified by his actions – saving the author from hunger and helping him in many ways. The alleged inner transformation of Brexa was a condition for the exchange, but Brexa's declarations on the matter were not enough and he had to express his religiosity through deeds and gifts. The fact that the behavior Brexa was expected to

²³⁵ “Lo que te suplico es por amor de **Dios** que al portador desta lo aloxas en casa y agas lo que pudieres con él como si fuera mi persona propia porque es un hombre a quien yo le devo muchas obligaciones y muchas veces me ha matado el hambre, y sino hubiera sido por el hubiera perdido, porque ha hecho quanto puedes tu hazer por mí...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 933/2, 10.28.1655.

²³⁶ “Porque aquí siendo muchacho su amo le bolvió moro por fuerza, siempre sus intentos de yr a tierra de cristianos, y assi si fuere cosa que cayga en el tribunal de la inquisición siempre servirá v.md de buen tercero, y si acaso fuere menester algún dinero, para ayuda bestirse hágalo v.md como si fuere para mi persona propia, y si fuere menester el tiempo que estuviere desacomodado de ampararlo, y los días que quisiere estar en essa ciudad lo hospedara v.md en su casa, y si fuere menester que si acaso quisiere yr alguna parte lo acomodara v.md” Ibid.

perform matched the basic idea of charity and good works helped the participants deny the reciprocal nature of the exchange.

Of course, not all letters had equal value. The higher a captured ecclesiastic's rank, the more valuable were the letters of recommendation and certificates that he issued. In "The Captive's Tale," an independent unit formed of three chapters of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes implies that some letters were more valuable than others – "because some renegades used to bring with them certain signatures of principal captives when they have the intention of returning to a Christian land."²³⁷ Gracián makes the same point. He complains about the rumors that attributed to him, first, the rank of a cardinal and later of an important inquisitor. These rumors meant that the Pasha of Tunis, his owner, overestimated Gracián's ransom value and refused to let him go for a price Gracián could afford. But a side effect of this inflated appraisal was that the certificates he issued were considered more valuable than those of other captives:

And with that opinion according to which I was a great ecclesiastical prince, many renegades came to me asking me to give them letters for the Inquisition testifying they were returning to Christian land of their own will [and] because of the fear of the Inquisition many give up on returning....²³⁸

Due to the intensity of the circulation of news, renegades and captives could not falsify such documents without risking punishment. In some cases, the Inquisition contacted the recommending captive to make sure the certificate was true. The French renegade who arrived in Sardinia with Gracián's letter, for example, was first detained by the Inquisition, which wrote to Gracián to verify the veracity of the certificate.²³⁹

This implies that social distinctions among captives and the means through which such distinctions were performed were partly mediated by the practice of writing letters of recommendation. Captives who successfully claimed distinction – based on rank, title, or wealth – could employ it in their favor regardless of its real value. But successful letters

²³⁷ "Porque suelen algunos renegados, cuando tienen intención de volverse a tierra de cristianos, traer consigo algunas firmas de cautivos principales." Miguel de Cervantes, *Obras Completas*, Aguilar: Madrid, 1962, p. 1213.

²³⁸ "y con opinión de ser un gran príncipe eclesiástico, venían a mí muchos renegados que les diera cartas para la Inquisición, testificando que se iban de su voluntad a tierra de cristianos, que por el temor de ella se dejan muchos de venir." Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, pp. 71-72.

²³⁹ Andrés del Mármol, *Excelencias, vida y trabajos del Padre Gerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios Carmelita*, Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Cordoua, 1619, cap. IX.

could enhance one's status. That the Inquisition occasionally authenticated a letter's author reinforced hierarchies within communities of captives as well as the value of the certificates that ranked individuals could provide.

Not only priests or nobles participated in such exchanges, however. Juan de Nicolao from Ragusa, for example, was taken captive with the rest of the passengers and crew of a Neapolitan ship, enslaved in Algiers, and from a certain point in time, lived there as a Muslim. In 1563, he escaped from an Algerian corsair ship and arrived in Almería in Andalusia. There, he was interrogated by the mayor, who suspected that he was a renegade because of his clothes. In his defense, Juan presented a letter of recommendation written by three or four captives who rowed on the same galley on which he had sailed along Christian coasts. None of the captives was identified as a person of status. Unlike previously quoted letters, which were tailored to a particular addressee, this letter was addressed 'to whom it may concern.' The relative anonymity of its authors – they signed their names but they were not famous men – the fact they did not name the person on whose behalf the letter was written and only identified him as a foreigner – Nicolao was from Ragusa (Dubrovnik) – and that the letter was addressed to everyone required the deployment of textual strategies to bestow authority on its authors. The authors first testify to Nicolao's Christianity – understood both in terms of belief and behavior:

Sirs, (may) our grace favor and help, in all that would be possible, this youth who is carrying the present (letter), because he is a good Christian and always behaved well to Christians, and although he said, on the foist [a light ship], that he wanted to become a Moor, he isn't actually a Moor, nor does he behave like one.

Then, the authors ask the impersonal addressee to provide Juan with a job and help him economically until he gained independence. Their tone is assertive, and they attempt to create a presence and eminence that the letter otherwise lacks due to its impersonal nature:

Therefore, Your honor, as I have it said, help him, and this (Nicolao's Christianity) you can take as truth, because here we are, Bartolomé delBaeça (sic) and Gavriel de Espinosa and Juan de Gibraltar, by faith and testimony of truth, because should things be different than what is hereby written, we will pay with our lives. And there is no more to add other than that you should help him with all the alms that you can, because he deserves it and because he is a foreigner, so

that he could live until he finds work. I am entrusting myself to Your Mercifulness, Bartolomé delBaeça and Gavriel de Espinosa and Juan de Alcántara Miguel de Limán.²⁴⁰

Again and again the writers claim presence – “because here we are,” “I am entrusting myself to your mercifulness.” But ironically, perhaps, the more frequently they iterate these assertions, the less convincing they sound. Either because of the letter’s impersonal character or because of its excessive rhetoric, the mayor who investigated Nicolao was not impressed. The letter was copied into the file, but Nicolao was released from his prison cell only after several witnesses who had known him in Algiers testified on his behalf.

The letter’s failure – its rhetoric of compensation representing the weaknesses it sought to overcome – brings into relief both some of the performative aspects of such documents and some of the properties of the Mediterranean’s connectivity. Through the use of such letters of recommendation, captives came to occupy two positions. Whether the letters worked or not, by employing a witness’ voice, testifying to the religious nature of the subject, captives – usually thought of as commodities – enacted a legal persona of which, surprisingly, captivity had not deprived them. This point further demonstrates how Patterson’s idea of natal alienation, of a person deprived of all ties to his home community, is irrelevant in the context of slavery of Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean. Christian and Muslim captives kept the statuses they possessed in their home communities, including the legal privileges these statuses entailed, and often took advantage of them. In so doing, they placed themselves in a position of power. First, they signaled themselves as having the power to determine the religious identity of another. Their words within these specific institutional contexts and situational features could

²⁴⁰ “Señores, este mancebo que lleba la presente nuestras mercedes lo faborezcan e ayuden en todo lo que fuere posible, porque es buen xristiano e gazía todo bien a xristianos, e aunque él dezía en la fusta que quería ser moro, no lo hes en verdad, ni tiene hobras de ello. Por tanto vuestras mercedes, como tengo dicho, le ayuden y esto pueden aver por verdad, porque aquí estamos Bartolomé delBaeça y Graviel de Espinosa e Juan de Gibraltar para en fee e testimonio de verdad, porque quando otra cosa fuera de lo escrito, lo pagaremos con nuestras personas. Y no ay más que escrevir sino que le ayueden con toda la limosna que se pudiere, porque la meresce y porque es hombre forastero, para que pase su vida hasta que halle en qué trabaxar. Me encomiendo a vuestras mercedes, Bartolomé de Baeça y Grabiell de Espinosa e Juan de Alcántara Miguel de Liman.” Archivo de la Alhambra, Leg. 122-12, apud Juan Martínez Ruiz, “Cautivos precervantinos. Cara y cruz del cautiverio.” *Revista de filología española* 50 (1967): 203-256, 239.

make a Christian of a Muslim. The structures of mobility and the complicated webs of connectivity linking the Maghrib and Christendom facilitated rapid exchange; but the fact remained that people in Spain, France, and Italy knew less about what was going on in North Africa than those present there. Such letters shaped strategies that – far beyond serving the needs of renegades – enabled inquisitors and others to negotiate the fragmentary knowledge that they had of the Maghrib and of the life of the Christians who lived there. And yet, being aware of the epistemological limitations of the genre, inquisitors and others encouraged further strategies to qualify and verify the knowledge embedded in such letters. The preference of renegades for letters from priests was one such strategy. It suggests that the Inquisition also preferred such letters. As Gracián mentioned, however, his was not always enough, and inquisitors did attempt to contact the authors of such letters and ensure their authenticity and truthfulness. Second, at least in letters of the personal kind, captives maintained and acted upon social and familial ties in Christendom which had persisted despite the distance and disconnection imposed by the experience of captivity. Moreover, Christian captives managed to make these networks visible and to convince renegades of their effectiveness so that the latter could, in turn, aid the Christian captive in escape and in survival. Writing letters of recommendation, however, was not the only practices captives employed to enact social and political ties across the sea and to improve their situation as captives. Complaints and requests were two other forms that the next section analyzes.

5. Complaints, Requests and Threats

Less surprising than letters of recommendation were the complaints that captives submitted to the Spanish crown. There are a few indications that Christian captives also took advantage of the Muslim legal and administrative authorities, occasionally bringing charges against their masters; but overall the evidence for this dynamic is scant.²⁴¹ More

²⁴¹ For example, ACA, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 993, 4.28.1692; Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, pp. 75-76. See also his description of these events in his *Peregrinación de Anastasio*, in *Ibid.* pp. 120-121. See also: d'Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d'Arvieux*, p. 45. On the history and function of this position of the kadi, see: E. Tyan and Gy. Káldy-Nagy, *Ḳādī* (Brill, 2008); available from the following website: http://www.encylam.brill.nl.proxy.lib.umich.edu/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0410. On the increase in the power of the kadi in the Ottoman legal system during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: Haim, Gerber, *State, Society, and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994, pp. 66-71.

evidence reveals that Christian captives complained to the Spanish crown both about its policies, which they saw as damaging, and about the unjust behavior of Christian merchants active in the Maghrib. Like rumors and recommendations, embedded in such complaints is the assumption that their authors, the plaintiffs, knew more than their recipient – the monarch – even though the complaint concerns the recipient’s actions. Yet the performativity of complaints catalyzes much more potent reactions than do rumors or recommendations. In submitting their complaints, captives demanded that the crown act in a way that went beyond simply establishing the Christian identity of a former convert or the wealth of a captive’s kin.

Let us start by examining two cases of complaints Christian captives sent to the crown. In 1579, several Spanish soldiers held captive in Istanbul convened in their prison cell to write a *carta de poder* to the Spanish crown. The captives, the majority of whom had been captured in Tunis and La Goleta in 1574 and eventually taken to the Ottoman capital, addressed the behavior of Giovanni Margliani, a Milanese operating in Istanbul as an ambassador for the Spaniards on whose behalf he negotiated a peace treaty with the Ottomans.²⁴² The captives claimed that Margliani misused the money he received from the crown for their ransom. Instead of spending it on their rescue he had used it to ransom Milanese captives. The captives went on to discuss the inefficient assistance that the Crown’s representatives offered them within the Habsburg’s Italian territories. They focused on the viceroys of Sicily and Naples, and their administrations. Spanish captives ransomed traveled west in order to return home. On their journey they usually stopped in the Habsburg Italian territories, Naples or Sicily. Those among them who were former soldiers, upon arrival in these viceroalties, expected the authorities to provide them with economic support to pay their debt to the intermediaries who ransomed them. The prisoners called on the king to order his viceroys to serve the captives more efficiently:

[His majesty] would be served by ordering the viceroys of Sicily and Naples that whenever a slave is liberated . . . [the viceroys], without delays and excuses, find out the debt [the crown] owes such a man... [and] order to pay him so that he could pay his creditor, because it happens that it takes six months and sometimes even a year to verify the said sum [the captive owes] . . .²⁴³

²⁴² On Margliani and his mission in Istanbul, see: Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, pp.1152-1165.

²⁴³ “...Será servido de mandar que los virreyes de Sicilia y Nápoles siempre que algún esclavo fuere en libertad... sin poner dilaciones ni excusas averigüen la cuenta de los pagos que a de aver el tal hombre... se

The authors wrote on behalf of captured soldiers to whom the crown owed salaries for their years of service prior to their captivity. Those among them who managed to pay their own ransom did so by borrowing large sums of money from intermediaries, a theme examined in chapter four. When captives were unable to pay their debt, debtors could order their imprisonment, this time in a Christian land.

In the absence of additional records, it is impossible to determine how effective this specific letter of complaint was. However, as with the accounts submitted in the Inquisition, the fact that plaintiffs complained, suggests that they believed in the potential power of their claim to change a situation and thus regardless of the success the complaint achieved, it is worth proceeding to analyze it. Like the authors of recommendations and those who spread rumors, the complainants claim that their knowledge about the issue at hand is superior to that of the recipient of their message. In so doing, they not only claim specific knowledge about persons and events but they also place themselves within the position of authority on such knowledge. But unlike rumors and recommendations, the authority of knowledge that the captives stake out regards the recipient's action, i.e., the policies of their king and their execution. They were not directly criticizing the monarch *per se*, but rather accusing his representatives. And yet, by complaining about the royal elite, and by claiming to know better how Spanish officials truly behave, the captives place themselves in a surprisingly powerful position. They are able to do so because their claims concerned events in territories distant from the royal court, stretching deep into Spain's principal enemy's capital. Moreover, the actions over which they complained touched them as the unlucky 'beneficiaries' of the king's actions. Yet, at the same time, they are aware that their claims might be weak due to their position as imprisoned captives with almost no access to the political corridors where the actions they refer to took place. Their use of the notarial genre of *carta de poder* is an acknowledgement of that and an attempt to validate their claims.

Ten years later, in 1589, Spaniards held captive in Algiers sent a complaint to the crown regarding the King's approval of several ransom deals, which included the

le mande luego pagar para que pueda pagar a su acreedor porque subcede pasarse seis meses y aún un año que no se acaba de averiguar la dicha quenta..." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 491, 11.1579.

exchange of Christians enslaved in the Maghrib in return for Muslims enslaved in Spain. The captives did not challenge the idea of an exchange of Muslims for Christians, but they expressed fury over the rates of exchange on which the deals were based. In the complaint they sent to the Council of War (*Consejo de Guerra*), they argued that the crown freed rich Muslims in return for poor Christians, in other words, that the king paid too much and got too little. In so doing, the crown inflated ransom rates and sabotaged their chances of returning home:

In Barbary, they have been making profit by giving a poor Christian for a wealthy Moor from your Majesty's slaves [,] and even if it is true that one engages in good works when a captive leaves [captivity] in return for a Moor, one causes damage to the rest of the captives because following that the [Moors] raise the ransom [prices] saying that if such a poor Christian won them a Moor that was worth that much... and as a result ransoms cost a lot.²⁴⁴

The crown's actions, the captives argued, signaled to Muslim slave owners that they could and should ask for more in return for their Christian slaves. Unlike the letter from the captives in Istanbul, the captives in Algiers did not employ a legal form to strengthen their claim. But in this case, we have a record of the monarch's response. The king ordered a halt to such exchanges for the reasons listed in the captives' complaint. I do not want to overestimate the success of their letter here, for the crown's policy remained indecisive on this subject throughout the seventeenth century. While orders against such exchanges were regularly issued, captives' kin continued to petition the crown for his slaves, and royal officers continued to provide them with slaves to ransom back their relative held captive in the Maghrib. Despite this continued back and forth, the complaint did wring a temporary halt of ransom deals, demonstrating its inherent potential to provoke action. Through the medium of the complaint, then, addressed in this case to the sovereign in respect to his actions perceived as damaging to his subjects, captives helped link together the Maghrib and Spain. The king's actions had an immediate effect on the slave market in Algiers and thereby on slaves' lives. But captives were not completely powerless and could take measures designed to return the market to its previous state.

²⁴⁴ "...[Y] aunque es verdad que se haze buena obra al cautibo que sale por el moro, hazese mala a todos los cautivos porque con esto les suben los rescates diziendo que tal christiano pobre le dio un moro que valfan tanto y quieren al respecto que cada uno vaya subiendo y con esto cuestan muchos los rescates..." AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 268, Fol. 200, 1.3.1589.

Complaints of this kind – captives writing to their sovereign complaining about the sovereign – seem to have been the exception. More common were complaints that Muslim captives sent to the sovereign about their living conditions or injustices they suffered. Such complaints often encouraged sovereigns to issue threats intended to protect their subjects. On December 13th 1603, for instance, “a Turk entered the Divan [in the city of Algiers] with a letter in his hand asking revenge for his brother who was burned in the galleys of Spain; he (the burned brother) was a reis and his name was Caravali.”²⁴⁵ Everyone present became agitated and a consensus was formed – four priests should be burned as revenge for the Turk’s death. The next day, a larger Divan meeting convened. The corsairs, however, forming one of the parties represented at the Divan, unanimously objected to the revenge saying “if they would burn Christian [captives] every day, what would be of the [corsairs] roving the seas and often falling in the enemy’s hand.”²⁴⁶ The parties did not reach an agreement and left the matter unresolved. This incident succinctly captures the dynamics of complaints and religious violence across the sea. An unidentified Muslim slave – “a Turk” – was executed in the royal galley on which he was probably pulling an oar. His mates to the oar sent the word home. Immediately upon hearing the news, his brother went to the governing Council waving the letter he received with the news and asked for vengeance. The Corsairs, however, fearing to become the next victim in a blood feud, objected and nothing happened. In some instances, however, revenge was taken and captives were mistreated or even executed.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Christian sources – Trinitarian and Mercedarian propaganda and literary works – reported how, on several occasions, Algerian, Moroccan and other Maghribi authorities radically altered the lives of captives for the worse.²⁴⁷ At times, it was claimed, the Maghribi authorities restricted the religious

²⁴⁵ “Entro en la aduana un turco con una carta en la mano pidiendo venganza de que habían quemado un hermano suyo en las galeras de España el qual hera arráez cuyo nombre hera Caravali....” AGS, *Estado Leg.* 198, 12.13.1603.

²⁴⁶ “...[S]i cada dia quemaran cristianos que que sería dellos andando en corso y viéndose cada día en manos de sus enemigos...” Ibid.

²⁴⁷ The most paradigmatic example is Sosa’s *Diálogo de los mártires de Argel* which offered its reader a catalogue of atrocities Christian suffered in Algiers before they were finally killed, Antonio de Sosa, *Diálogo de los mártires de Argel*, Emilio Sol, Ed., Madrid: Ediciones Hiperion, 1990. Most captives’ autobiographies include similar descriptions, see: Mascarenhas, *Esclave à Alger*, p. 119. At other points of

liberties that captives had previously experienced, preventing them from practicing their Christianity. At other times, they allegedly executed Christians without reason.²⁴⁸ These sources also claimed that the Algerians and other Maghribis constantly broke their word and violated ransom agreements by refusing to let the captives who had paid to go free. On the basis of such claims, Christian propaganda argued that Maghribi cities were lawless spaces in which captives' lives were dominated by capricious Muslims irrationally acting upon their feelings and arbitrarily punishing their slaves in cruel ways. In the rest of this section, I examine such instances by focusing on the threats that North African authorities made on the lives of their captives, and, on instances in which they did, in fact, execute captives.²⁴⁹ I demonstrate that the dramatic worsening of captives' living conditions, in most of the cases I was able to document, came as a response to complaints from Muslims, enslaved in Spain, to their Maghribi sovereign. Muslim slaves complained that they were forced to convert to Christianity and were being deprived of their religious freedom. On the basis of documents composed by Trinitarians and Mercedarians, who could not be suspected in a desire to portray the Muslims as just, I argue that North African authorities warned their Christian counterparts before executing such violent measures. Often, these threats contain references to preceding complaints and hence reflect larger social dynamics and point out not only Mediterranean networks of connectivity but also the effectiveness of complaints and their importance as captives' weapons against their masters.

Such moments of violation of standards resulting in violence were not exceptional. Christians and Muslims enjoyed different religious privileges, but these privileges and the norms guiding them were acknowledged on both sides of the sea. These norms were

his autobiography, however, Mascarenhas also capture the reciprocal nature of such violent moments, see: *Ibid*, pp. 113-116.

²⁴⁸ Such killings occasionally occurred but they should be examined within a longer dynamic which, while not justifying the killings, present them as a response to earlier deeds. On Saint Thomas day (December 21) of 1594, the Morisco Monfadal, a royal official in Tétouan, killed twelve captives as a punishment for an attempt to escape. The surviving captives wrote home and protested. On January 16th, the Corregidor of Gibraltar wrote the King expressing his difficulties in preventing the relatives of the killed captives to revenge and kill Muslim slaves from Tétouan as revenge. He urged the King to contact the Moroccan Sultan and demand that Monfadal liberate other captives as compensation or be punished, see: AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 423, fol. 71.

²⁴⁹ On the behavior of threats, see: William Ian Miller, "Threat," in Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado, Eds. *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White*, Ashgate, 2010, pp. 9-27, esp. 9-14.

never codified, indeed the records hardly ever refer to them, and they manifested themselves only when violated. Whenever the daily routine was broken by stricter curfew limitations, religious repression, or worse, slaves' executions, enslaved captives noted such violations in the accounts they left. Vicente Colom, a Catalan enslaved in Algiers in the first decade of the seventeenth century, who operated as a spy for the Spanish Crown and documented the main events in the city, meticulously related such moments in his diary. On August 19, 1602, for example, he wrote about how "the [Algerians] decreed curfew laws [imposing] chains and handcuffs and [declared] death penalty for any Christian walking around day or night."²⁵⁰ It is unclear when the curfew was cancelled and the regular routine reestablished, but four and a half months later, on January 8, 1603, Colom mentioned the imposition of other harsh laws:

They issued a cruel edict [ordering] the destruction of all the churches, forbidding masses to be offered under a death penalty, and they ordered that the... legal authorities in this land pay a visit to all the prisons and break and destroy all the [religious] images they could find ...²⁵¹

A Valencian priest caught saying mass a few weeks later, on January 25, was severely punished by one hundred blows, "only for saying the mass and the [Algerians] were on the verge of burning him."²⁵² This curfew lasted for such a long time that the chronicler commented on its duration: "and although they say that in the past the (Muslims) imposed curfews, none was maintained for so long and none lasted so much time as this one does."²⁵³ Colom never explains what he means by a long time. But an entry in his diary from May referring to recently published and implemented curfew laws suggests that the January restrictions were annulled less than four months after their imposition. The new laws ordered "all the Christians to be chained and every two [captives] to walk

²⁵⁰ "A 19 hecharon bandos de cadenas y manillas y que ningún christiano caminasse de noche ni muy de mañana si pena de la vida," AGS, *Estado*, Leg.198, 8.19.1602.

²⁵¹ "se hecho un vando riguroso que se desiziessen todas las yglesias y no se dixese missa pena de la vida y mandaron que... la justicia visitasse todos los baños y que rompiesen y quebrasen todas las ymages que hallassen ..." Ibid, 8.1.1603.

²⁵² "... [A] mismo día dieron cien palos de muerte a un sacerdote clérigo valenciano llamado Mossen Navarro solo porque había dicho missa aun estuvieron a pique de qumallo de que hubo sospecha en el baño de su patrón Morato *Arráez*." Ibid, 25.1.1603

²⁵³ "...que aunque en los tiempos pasados se dize sean hechado otros bandos ninguno se aguardado ni durado tanto como este..." Ibid.

in pairs chained one to the other and that they shave their beards and hair and that they don't wander around very early, late or on Friday the prayer day, but rather be locked.”²⁵⁴

The careful recording of such shifts marks them as exceptions to a rule whose form the documents loosely delineate. Routinely, Christian captives in the Maghrib – at least the majority of them – were allowed to wander around day and night, and over the weekdays, unchained. They could openly practice their religion in one of the few churches operating in Algiers. Colom's diary does not provide enough detail, but it does imply that when Muslim authorities wanted to change this routine and violate the daily order they had to follow legal-administrative procedures. The Divan, the governing council, had to convene, and the issue was debated between the Janissaries, the corsairs, and the governor before a decision was made. It is true that such procedures do not exclude violations of religious freedom or cruel behavior of individual slave owners. Trinitarians and Mercedarians did not always exaggerate and even the Knight d'Arvieux, who criticized their propaganda as “pious lies” and claimed that the treatment of Christian captives in Tunis was fair, acknowledged that “there are bad-tempered slave owners, hard, nervous and even cruel.”²⁵⁵ The point is that, as a rule, there were norms regarding the treatment of slaves and their violation had to follow institutional procedures. D'Arvieux explained that slaves were well treated because they were a precious commodity – “the Turks have an interest to be careful with theirs [their slaves]: among them [the Turks], these [slaves] are commodities, they buy them in the best deal they can, and sell them at the most expensive price they can. They would risk losing their money if they were to treat their slaves so badly as to make them ill and even cause their death.”²⁵⁶ D'Arvieux economic reductionism, however, cannot explain the cases I analyze here in which Maghribi governors preferred to protect their subjects even if that entailed destroying their goods, namely their slaves, and diminishing their future profits.

²⁵⁴ “... que todos los cristianos truxessen cadena y andubiese de dos en dos con una cadena y se repassen la barba y cabello y que no anduviessen muy de mañana ni tarde ni el viernes que es el día de su çala no saliessen en todo el día sino que estuviesen cerrados....” AGS, *Estado*, Leg.198

²⁵⁵ “Il est vrai qu'il y a des patrons de mauvaise humeur, durs, fâcheux et même cruels,” d'Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d'Arvieux*, p. 44.

²⁵⁶ “Les Turcs ont intérêt de ménager les leurs: c'est une marchandise chez eux, ils les achètent au meilleur marché qu'ils peuvent, et les vendent le plus cher qu'il leur est possible; ils s'exposeraient à perdre leur argent s'ils maltraitaient leurs esclaves au point de les rendre malades et de les faire mourir.” Ibid.

Colom rarely offers causal explanations on these bursts of aggression, but he juxtaposes them with events that the Algerians understood to be strategic threats and which might necessitate stricter security in the city and allows his readers to fill in the gaps.²⁵⁷ Letters sent by Algerian and Moroccan governors to Spanish authorities shed more light on the circumstances in which violence erupted and further restrictions were imposed. In 1589 for example, unidentified Muslims in Tétouan threatened to burn three Christian captives from the city of Gibraltar and to do the same with all captives from Gibraltar that might be captured in the future. Two friars, Trinitarians or Mercedarians, in Tétouan on a ransom mission, served as couriers for the Muslims and sent the news, through Ceuta, to Gibraltar.²⁵⁸ According to the message, the Muslims were reacting to news that they had received about the intentions of the Inquisition and the governor of Gibraltar to burn Ameto Melexi, an enslaved Morisco originally from a village near Marbella in Andalusia. Melexi was a corsair whom the Spaniards captured and enslaved numerous times, but who constantly fled back to North Africa.²⁵⁹ According to the Inquisition Melexi not only reconverted to Islam in North Africa and hence was considered a renegade but also was guilty of capturing and enslaving many Christians.

It is unclear how the affair ended, but it was not an isolated event. In May 1603, a few Muslim slaves escaped from the Habsburg's Sicilian galleys, which, at the time, were anchored in Cartagena, in the south of Spain. The runaway arrived in Algiers and reported that the Spaniards captured the galley of French Morato (Morato Frances), a Maghribi corsair, and that in Murcia, six renegades of Morato's crew were burned at the stake. The renegades in Algiers were enraged and, at the next meeting of the Divan, demanded that six captive priests be burned in revenge.²⁶⁰ The threat was not executed, and unfortunately, Colom, who reported the event in his diary, does not provide additional details. About a decade later, in 1615, the Majorcan Hyeronimo Contesti, a

²⁵⁷ In the two and a half weeks preceding the curfew of January 19th 1602, rumors about Spanish agents sent to the Kingdom of Cuco – Algiers' near enemy – roared the city and terrified the population – “caused great commotion,” (“...causo grande alboroto en la tierra...”), AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198 1.8.1602. In the third, seventh, and eighteenth, Colom reported how the agents were heading to Algiers and communicating with captives and renegades in it. The curfew seems like a response to the situation. The curfew in May was imposed immediately after the army left the city for its triennial power demonstration and tax farming in the towns, villages, and encampments that surrounded Algiers.

²⁵⁸ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 247, Fol. 141, 10.4.1589.

²⁵⁹ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 247, Fol. 142, 10.4.1589.

²⁶⁰ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198.

former captive in Algiers, returned to Majorca, now as a renegade, submitted himself to the inquisitorial tribunal in the island, and unfolded his story. He had been taken captive a year earlier and sold into slavery in Algiers. He managed to negotiate a ransom deal which he nearly finalized. But, while he was already on a boat that was about to set sail and return him to his island, the Divan ordered his arrest. The Divan was reacting to news from Majorca, Contesti recounted, that Majorcan owners of three Moriscos slaves from Andalusia threaten to burn them if they would not convert to Christianity. Contesti was detained together with another Majorcan captive, Bartolomé Vidal, and the two were forced to convert to Islam as revenge.²⁶¹

These early documents allow the formulation of a few hypotheses about religious violence within the context of Mediterranean captivity. Eruptions of violence in Algiers and other Maghribi cities seem to have been dominated by the logic of challenge and riposte.²⁶² One of the parties, be it of Spaniards or Maghribis, behaved in a way that the other would perceive as a violation of the conditions that captured subjects deserved. A riposte followed, sometimes elevating the price – for a burned Muslim, three burned Christians and so on. Majorcan captives paid for violations of religious freedom in Majorca, and residents of Gibraltar, paid for actions taken against Muslims in Gibraltar. Moriscos demanded revenge for violence exerted on Moriscos, renegades for violence exerted on renegades. This is only the outline of a model, and doubtlessly, in practice things must have been messier and in some cases bloodier. Surprisingly, the ‘go-between’ that mediated these violent exchanges between Maghribi and Spanish authorities were Trinitarians, Mercedarians, Franciscans, and other friars. Surprisingly, because these friars were responsible for the production of pamphlets and images portraying one dimensional violence against Christians.

Later documents provide more detail about these interactions. In January 1663, for example, Alonso de Jesus, a Franciscan friar posted in Algiers, sent an urgent letter to the Council of Aragon. He reported that the Divan ordered “to burn all the priests and

²⁶¹ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 861. Fols. 142-143V 9.4.1617.

²⁶² On the logic of challenge and riposte, see: Pierre, Bourdieu, “The Sentiment of Honor in Kabyle Society.” In J.G. Peristiany (ed.) *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. pp. 191-241. Transl. P. Sherrard. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965. A similar logic governed blood feuds in Iceland, see: William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 182-187,

images, destroy the churches, and that the redemption [a short name for members of the orders of redemption] be enslaved.”²⁶³ Was the Franciscan surprised by the atrocious measures? Did he demand that the crown retaliate? On the contrary. He explained that the governor of Algiers was reacting to letters Muslims enslaved in Andalusia had sent to him. The slaves claimed that six other Muslim slaves from the Port of Santa María near Cadiz, six from Sardinia (then under Spanish rule), and one from the Andalusian town of Alcalá de los Gazules were arrested shortly after paying the ransom fee that their masters demanded. In addition, the slaves reported that Christians were desecrating bodies of Muslim slaves in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Alonso Jesús acknowledged the injustice of the actions and asked that the Spanish governors immediately amend the situation allowing the Muslim slaves in their jurisdiction to bury their dead according to their custom “because what they ask is just.” The Council acted rapidly and ordered that such actions be stopped and that manumitted slaves would not be arrested.

While participating in and enhancing a cycle of violence, the Algerian retaliation was also a communicative action, a warning that order in Algiers be reestablished by maintaining an acknowledged standard of living – some religious freedom and fair execution of ransom deals – which Muslim slaves in the Habsburg Empire deserved. The records suggest that these incidents were not isolated but rather reoccurring chronicles of violence foretold. A few documents from 1644 shed light on the early stages of these chronicles. Yusuf of Tlemsen (a city to the west of Algiers), a slave of a Sevillian noble, was arrested and put to work as a galley slave almost immediately after his manumission, without having committed any crime, and in spite of carrying manumission records that proved he was a free man on his way back to the Maghrib. In the complaint he submitted to the Spanish Council of War on March 9, 1644, he demanded his immediate release, adding that

In Barbary, they never detain Christians who paid their ransom;, and by detaining in Spain the Moors who had paid their ransom, [the Spaniards] create a situation in which in Barbary they would do the same with the Christians, a thing that would result in notable damage to many Christians because there are much more Christians than Moors who are ransomed.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ “[Q]uemar los sacerdotes y las imágenes, destruir los templos, y que quedase esclava la redempción...” ACA, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 607, Fol. 33, January 1663.

²⁶⁴ “Pues en la Verbería a ningún christiano se le detiene después de haver pagado su rescate, y deteniendo en España a los moros después de haverse serrescatado sera dar ocasión a que aque en la Verbería hagan

Yusuf's complaint suggests that Muslim slaves were able to master the Spanish legal and administrative repertoires and employ them in moments of acute need. More importantly, it points to the connectedness of Mediterranean slavery and the relational nature of the violent reprisals that followed violations of enslavement and ransom standards. Likewise, it demonstrates the role that Muslim slaves played in making visible for the Spaniards the interactive nature of such violations. By referring to how Maghribi authorities allow freed Christian slaves to return to Christendom – "in Barbary, they never detain Christians who paid their ransom" – Yusuf implicitly expressed his expectations that the Spaniards would let him go. But he does more than merely voice his private anger with and hope that the individual magistrate reading his petition would be kind enough to let him go. His words echo institutional norms and regularities that go beyond the kindness of individuals and expectations inherent in trans-Mediterranean slavery, taking for granted that his Spanish interlocutors share his assumptions. Yet, facing the violation of these norms, he added an implicit threat, reminding the magistrates of the Council of War how such incidents end. Was Yusuf, out of desperation, giving empty threats? The fact that the Council of War ordered his immediate release suggests that this was not the case. The Spaniards understood that Yusuf's next step would be to write home to ask for help, an action that might lead to threats against Christians and potential killing.

The incident was resolved before Yusuf asked redress from the Algerian governor, but his complaint and the Council's reaction shed further light on the stages that preceded Maghribi threats. First, communication between the Maghrib and Spain flowed continuously and Muslim slaves, just as Christians, could easily send messages to their kin updating them about their situation. Second, once the right people in Algiers heard of Yusuf's troubles, they would immediately take action and create obstacles to the ransom of a Christian captive there. Third, Mediterranean slavery was a system characterized by reciprocity but not by symmetry, namely it offered Muslims and Christians uneven chances of retrieving their liberty. Christians were ransomed in greater numbers than Muslims and thus Christians would suffer more from violations of ransom procedures.

otro tanto con los christianos de que resultara notable perjuicio a muchos cristianos pues ellos son muchos los que por su rescate salen del cautiverio y muy pocos los moros," AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 1541, 3.9.1644.

However, Muslim slaves were not completely helpless and could also make use of resources in their home community to arrange issues related with their captivity, slavery or ransom.

The next case provides information on the missing link between the requests that Muslim slaves sent their sovereigns calling for help and the threats that Algerian governors made to Spain. In April 1692, a Muslim slave held in Majorca, Bive Maamet Rex, as he was called in the Spanish sources, sent a letter to his relatives in Algiers in which he complained about his miserable living conditions and the bad treatment he was receiving from his mistress, the wife of a fisherman “who does not allow him to live according to his religion, who does not give him food, and who ties him with chains to his neck during the night, and who also badly treats the other captives.”²⁶⁵ Maamet knew what he was doing. His relatives addressed the governor of Algiers asking him to intervene. In response, the Algerians “closed all the churches and chained all the captives from the island of Majorca.”²⁶⁶ The Trinitarians were asked to write to Spain and make sure Maamet received fair treatment. In their letter, they described the fair conditions that Christians and Trinitarians received from the Algerians and how the letter of Maamet changed this status quo:

We [the Trinitarians] have recently arrived [in Algiers] and in the last short days we have enjoyed many favors of the gentleman governor [of Algiers] and of all of these [Algerian] gentlemen . . . they [the Algerians] allow the slaves to attend the churches, to frequent the saintly sacraments and in holy days the owners send them to carry out the obligation of Christians, they do not force anyone to leave the Christian religion, they treat them uniformly well, and if one of them complains to the governor about his owner mistreating him, they punish him and make him [the owner] sell him [the slave] to another . . .²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ “[Q]ue no le deja vivir en su ley, que no le da de comer, que de noche le tiene con cadenas a el pescuezo, que fasse también del mal trato de los demás esclavos...” ACA, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 993, fol. 30, 4.28.1692. For more related documents and analysis of other aspects of this affair, see: Vernét Gines, *El rescate del arraez argelí Bibi*.

²⁶⁶ “[N]os an zerrado todas las iglesias, y pusto en cadenas a todos los esclavos de la ysla de Mallorca...” Ibid.

²⁶⁷ “Somos recién llegados y en estos brebes días havemos experimentado muchos favores del señor gobernador y de todos estos señores... permiten a los esclavos que bengan a las iglesias, que frecuenten los santos sacramentos y en los días de fiesta sus mismos patronos los enbían a que cumplen con la obligación de cristianos, no fuerzan a nadie a que deje la religión cristiana, los tratan uniformemente bien, y si alguno se queja ante el governador de que su dueño le mal trata, le castigan y se le hazen bender a otro...” Ibid.

The Trinitarians explained that by mistreating Muslims in Spain, depriving them of their religious rights and trying to force them to convert, the Spaniards were “giving an excuse to these *señores* [the Algerians] to do the same with these [Christian] poor slaves and with us.”²⁶⁸ The Trinitarians sealed their letter with an excited appeal to the viceroy of Majorca: “discover who that woman is, and who own slaves [in Majorca], and order them to treat their slaves with love and charity in order that they [the Algerians] treat the Christians in this city [in Algiers] in the same way.”²⁶⁹ Following unfair treatment, Muslims addressed their sovereigns directly or through their families in the form of a request. The slaves asked the Algerian governor to assist them and correct the injustice incurred on them. There are only fragmentary traces of such actions, but in contrast to the complaints of Christian captives, we get a good sense of the efficacy of such complaints. The letter Maamet wrote was extremely effective. The viceroy of Majorca moved Maamet to the vice royal prison and forced his former owners to pay him a *real* per day. In return, the Muslim had to write a letter recounting how fairly he was now being treated.²⁷⁰

This case, like the previous, demonstrates how in contrast to the image of Algiers embedded in the propaganda of the Orders of redemption, and which the Trinitarians and the Mercerdarians have left with us, representatives of the orders actually worked in tandem with the Algerian authorities. While there is no doubt that the lives of captives were miserable, the descriptions provided by the Trinitarians, who passed on the threats of the Algerians to the Spaniards, provide a more balanced picture of captivity. In their comments on the messages of the Algerians, the Trinitarians insisted that the Algerians treated the Christians – captives and ransoms – fairly. The Trinitarians understood that threats to the status quo conditions that the Algerians occasionally imposed made sense within the context of Mediterranean slavery.

This was not the last seventeenth century incident of this kind. Four years later, the Dey of Algiers, Hadji Ahmed ben al-Hadji, again used the Trinitarians to convey a

²⁶⁸ “se da ocasión a estos señores a que hagan lo mismo con estos pobres esclavos y con nosotros...” *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ “[S]epa quien es esa muger y quien son los que tienen esclavos y les mande los traten con amor y caridad para que en esta ciudad allemos los cristianos la misma correspondencia...” *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Maamet’s second letter, in Arabic, survived. It is an exceptional document and I know of no other documents written in Arabic by Muslim captives which survived, ACA, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 993, fol. 37, 7.26.1692.

similar message. Algerians enslaved in Spain appealed for his help, making similar complaints about the treatment they received from the Spaniards. In this case, the actual words of the Dey have survived, for the Trinitarians passed on a verbatim translation of his letter. The Dey addressed the Spanish Council of the State (*Consejo de Estado*) listing the injustices his subjects suffered:

On top of the immense labors [of the Muslim captives], the popish religious priests upset and disturb our captives who are under your dominion, and when they [the captives] are sick, the said religious [priests] make them prevaricate their religion by force and they make our Mohammedan captives knights turn Christian.... And [we heard] that [the Spanish priests] take our captives by night, at the time of their death, [and] throw them of the castles, and others they tie to a stone in order to throw them in the sea and others they leave in the most filthy streets, and we address you [asking:] why are you doing this when that is how one treats a dog?...²⁷¹

He compared the treatment that Muslim slaves received to that of the Christians in Algiers: “we treat your captives in these parts like our vassals without preventing them from going to their churches, and see their priests, and when they are sick, the priests attend them at the hospital.” The Dey demanded that the priests responsible for the Muslims’ travails be punished and warned the Council that if in three months the situation will not be changed, the Christians in Algiers would pay for that:

... and therefore we address you as a friend in order that later you will not say that you did not receive a warning before and after; because we will impose the same extortions and travails on the religious priests and all the captives which are in our kingdoms... and we will shut down the hospitals and force... the Christian captives to turn Moor...²⁷²

The same violent eruptions that Trinitarians and Mercedarians represented in their propaganda campaigns as the result of irrational Algerians and other Maghribis acting upon their feelings followed the logic of challenge and riposte. Before imposing stricter

²⁷¹ “[Q]ue los capitvos nuestros que están vajo de vuestros dominios, les suelen molestar y inquietar los rreligiosos papzes (además de sus inmensos trabajos), estando enfermos haziéndoles prevaricar de su ley por fuerça dichos religioso y los hazen volver cristianos a nuestros captivos cavalleros mahometanos... y que a nuestros captivos al tiempo que mueren los llevan de noche para arrojarlos de los castillos, y á otros atarlos de una piedra para heçarlos al mar y algunos a dejarlos en las calles más asquerosas, y os dezimos por que hazen esto quando con los perros se haze tal?” AHN, *Estado*, Leg. 670, 5.1696.

²⁷² “[Y] por esso os avisamos como amigo para después no se diga que no os ha dado noticia antes y después; y por qué haremos con los rreligiosos y todos los captivos que están en nuestros rreynos las mismas extorsiones y trabajos (como se habrá) y les quitaremos los hospitales y forçaremos vuestros captivos cristianos a que se buelban moros...” Ibid.

curfews and executing captives, North African authorities issued warnings about their intentions and tied them to injuries Muslims slaves suffered from their Spanish masters. In making such threats Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians referred to what they understood as acknowledged standards that Muslim and Christian slaves deserved. Such threats constituted moves in communicative interactions and they meant that those who made them refused to accept the violation of slaves' living standards. As these threats explicitly referred to the complaints that preceded them they emphasize the efficacy of complaints made by captives and point out the importance of engagement with textuality and writing – of complaints in this case – in the life of captives, both Muslim and Christians.

At the same time, the dynamics of captives asking their sovereigns to use their power to protect them reflects the state of diplomatic relations between the North African Ottoman regencies and Morocco, on the one hand, and the Habsburg Empire, on the other, and underscores the importance of violence as a mediating force between these polities. Peace agreements between these powers were signed only during the eighteenth century, and before that they interacted with each other by means of violence. Yet, without ever signing agreements, these powers shared understandings and expectations about the treatment of captives. Often, these were violated, usually by small and mid-level political or religious actors, ranging from slave-owners to local governors and priests. Such moments brought into relief the doxa that managed the life of slaves in the Mediterranean and the implicit rules that the involved parties believed should be mutually respected. In what might be termed, following the work of Renaud Morieux, 'diplomacy from below,' captives took the initiative, demanded that their sovereigns take a decision and act.²⁷³ In doing so, they activated diplomatic interactions in which Trinitarians and the Mercedarians played a major role between Algerian Pasha or Moroccan Sultan and the Spanish crown.

²⁷³ On 'diplomacy from below' between other powers separated by a body of water, see: Renaud, Morieux, "Diplomacy from Below and Belonging: Fishermen and Cross-Channel Relations in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, 202 (2009): 83-125. Morieux examined neutrality agreements between the French and the English, different from the understandings the interactions analyzed here implied. He claims that the "originality" of the agreements he has studied lies in the fact that they survived throughout the century, but the agreements examined here survived at least throughout the seventeenth century and perhaps a good few decades into the eighteenth.

6. Conclusion

Sorting through thousands of bundled archival documents has revealed that the few autobiographies that a minority of former captives wrote and published formed only the tip of a large iceberg of textual production in which captives engaged. Unsurprisingly, requests for economic help to execute ransom, examined in chapter four, formed the majority of such texts.²⁷⁴ Captives, however, also spread rumors, wrote letters of recommendation, and filed complaints; they compiled chronicles that recorded the main contemporary political events and intelligence reports – analyzed in the next chapter – engaged in intellectual production, and even submitted testimonies needed for processes of canonization of saints who died in the Maghrib. An intellectual scholarly bias expressed in exclusive reliance on mostly elite, printed sources has silenced the importance of diverse forms of writing and textuality in the life of captives. Writing, for most captives, was not an intellectual exercise, a moment of self-reflection, or an attempt to work through the trauma caused by captivity.²⁷⁵ Rather, testifying, snitching, complaining, recommending and doing other things with words, were strategies of survival, part of a larger repertoire of actions that, in their entirety, constituted captivity. Writing was a means to improve one's life or an attempt to restore order and return deteriorating living conditions to a mutually acknowledged bare minimum that Muslims and Christians in the Mediterranean expected their captors to provide them with.

The scholarly focus on captivity narratives has not only overshadowed the importance of the exercise of writing but has also silenced how writing and its traveling products – rumors, recommendations, complaints and more – created and recreated the Mediterranean as a social space. Each of the genres analyzed in the chapter served captives locally but at the same time operated on a Mediterranean scale. Writing and the spatial transmission of written texts across the sea implied a few assumptions about the structures of mobility that connected the Maghrib and the Habsburg Empire shared by writers and addressees. When writing to their kin, the Inquisition or political

²⁷⁴ On such documents, see: Bono, "Slave Histories and Memoirs in the Mediterranean World," pp. 106-114.

²⁷⁵ María Antonia Garcés has read the works of the Cervantine corpus which treat captivity as a long term intent to work the trauma Cervantes experienced in Algiers through writing, see: Garcés, *Cervantes en Argel*.

bureaucracies, captives assumed that their messages had a good chance of reaching their destinations and indeed many did. At the same time, the distance separating the Maghrib from the Habsburg Empire meant that people living in south western Europe knew a lot less about the Maghrib than the captives imprisoned there and vice-versa. The massive presence of Christians in the Maghrib and of Muslims in Europe made captives into a principal source of information. In informing their kin about the conversion of friends or attesting to renegades' true Christianity, captives served as ambassadors of the Inquisition in the Maghrib and perhaps helped overcome the anxiety provoked by the conversion of Christians and the threat – real or imagined – it posed for Christian communities. When requesting aid from a sovereign via family members, captives both strengthened kinship ties and engaged in “diplomacy from below,” by the drawing and redrawing of understandings regarding Mediterranean structures of mobility and the traffic of man that as a matter of routine remained implicit. In that sense, captivity, or at least its aspects on which I have focused in this chapter, was a way reshaping spatial boundaries or reconfiguring the near and the far and of extending the power of political, religious, and social institutions – the crown, the church and the family – across the sea into a hostile land.

Chapter 4:

Moving Captives, Moving Knowledge

1. Introduction

This chapter links two seemingly unrelated topics: captive-taking and ransom on the one hand and the production and circulation of strategic information and knowledge in the Mediterranean on the other. As we have seen in the previous chapter, captives often managed parallel channels of communication with their home land sending information and transmitting knowledge of various kinds. Thus far I have focused on knowledge regarding captives and renegades' identity or on information concerning the living conditions of slaves. More than other forms of knowledge and information, however, captives played a central role in the production and transmission of strategic information and knowledge. Captives sent home information about enemy corsairs, movements of hostile fleets and plans of their captors to attack their homes; they also produced knowledge: maps, topographic accounts and detailed programs explicitly geared towards conquest and defense. In occupying this role, captives were instrumental to the shaping and maintenance of the Habsburg imperial boundaries in the Mediterranean.²⁷⁶ The chapter offers new ways of thinking about captivity and views captives – Muslim and

²⁷⁶ In her recent book, Lisa Voigt has explored the role captives – Portuguese, Spanish, and English – played in knowledge production and the ways in which they were crucial imperial expansion. This important argument, however, is applied mostly to captivity in the Americas and is based almost exclusively on elaborated, published captivity narratives, see: Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic*. Such narratives, however, were exceptional in the sense that they were produced by a minority of literate captives. In contrast, in the Mediterranean, captives daily or weekly produced and circulated knowledge and information. In that sense, there was nothing spectacular about former captives arriving with news.

Christian, and captured, ransomed, and runaways – at times active producers of knowledge of the enemy, and yet also passive bodies inscribed with useful information.

Scholars have argued that Habsburg rulers lost all interest in the Mediterranean following the battle of Lepanto in 1571 and the negotiation of the peace treaty with the Ottomans a decade later.²⁷⁷ A reorientation of Habsburg focus towards continental Europe and the New World was reflected, it is claimed, in a decline in both the quantity and quality of published treatises on the Maghrib.²⁷⁸ In support of that argument, scholars refer to the fact that the three important published treatises on North Africa – Mármol's *Descripción General de África*, de Torres' *Relación del origen y suceso*, and de Sosa's *Topografía* – were all composed before 1581. These works, written by individuals who suffered years as captives in North Africa, provided elaborated discussions of the history, geography, and ethnography of Morocco, in the case of the first two, and Algiers in the case of the third. The fact that Mármol, de Torres, and Sosa all encountered difficulties when attempting to publish and distribute their works resonates with the impression of a declining interest in North Africa and the Mediterranean. Indeed, for a long time after the publication of these works, no large systematic treatises on the Maghrib were printed within the Habsburg Empire.

Despite this apparent trend, I will argue, to the contrary, that the production and circulation of strategic knowledge about the Maghrib did not cease; it merely changed form. The fact that on a daily or weekly basis Christian captives arrived in Algiers as did Muslims in Majorca meant that through them an exchange of information could occur in more-or-less real time. Captives participated in the production of strategic information and knowledge in five ways that include: (1) during the sixteenth century, a few ex-captives wrote and published systematic treatises on the Maghrib; (2) many captives warned their kin of corsairs' attacks in the letters they sent them; (3) many captives –

²⁷⁷ In his famous article in the *Revue Africaine*, Braudel was probably one of the first to make the claim that in 1577, Phillip II abandoned “any imperial politics in North Africa,” see: Braudel “Les Espagnols et l’Afrique du Nord, 1492-1577,” p. 192.

²⁷⁸ Mercedes, García Arenal, “Introducción,” in: Torres, Diego de, *Relación del origen de los xarifes y del estado de los reinos de Marruecos, Fez, y Tarudante*. Mercedes García Arenal, Ed. Siglo Veintiuno Editores: Madrid, 1980, p. 2; Mercedes, García Arenal, “Spanish Literature on North Africa in the XVI Century: Diego de Torres,” *The Maghreb Review*, VIII, 1-2: 1983: 53-59; Mar, Martínez-Góngora, “El discurso africanista del renacimiento en la primera parte de la descripción general de África del Máemol Carvajal,” *Hispanic Review* 77 (2009): 175-7, and Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes y del norte de África en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII*, pp. 3-6.

Muslims caught by Christians and Christians by Muslims – were questioned upon their arrival in a port about the enemies’ plans and their maritime strategic movements; (4) in the first decades of the seventeenth century, ex-captives often compiled detailed, topographic urban narratives of Maghribi cities, which were often accompanied by plans and maps. In the narratives, the authors pretended to point out the cities’ “Achilles’ heel,” the key to their conquest; and (5) a few captives wrote urban diaries during their captivity chronicling the main political – local and international – events they had experienced.

These were not the only forms of knowledge captives developed and circulated.. They were also involved in the production of religious, social and political knowledge of the Maghrib and North African Islam. In their investigations in the Inquisition, renegades provided ethnographic accounts of religious conversion. In personal letter exchange, captives wrote about their life in North Africa, and in the few autobiographies written – only in some cases published – by ex-captives, they revealed fascinating social histories of captivity. In this chapter, I limit myself to the production and circulation of strategic information and knowledge. The distinction between ‘information’ and ‘knowledge’ is not easy to draw. I call ‘knowledge,’ what experts, professionals, and charlatans (claiming expertise) produced; ‘information’ was produced by laymen, captives who were not professional spies and did not claim expertise on the Maghrib. Thus, when captives informed their kin in the letters they sent them about near corsairs’ attacks, they provided them with information. When the governor confiscated such letters, the information turned into knowledge he was about to apply in the service of the protection of a city or island. The chapter is structured around the five forms of knowledge mentioned above. Each of these five genres of writing provides abundant information or knowledge, not all of which could be reduced to the strategic and the political; yet, all of these genres were employed, albeit in different contexts, for strategic and political goals. I thus examine the context and conditions of knowledge production, the identity and backgrounds of those producing it, and the effects that its circulation had on the societies that consumed it. I also place these different forms of knowledge production within the larger historical dynamic that characterized the Mediterranean.

I illustrate this argument with examples taken from Morocco, the Ottoman Maghrib, and Istanbul, but for a number of reasons, I focus most closely on the city of Algiers and

the island of Majorca. Early modern Spanish authors referred to Algiers as the “den of Christendom's thieves” and, later it came to be known among Europeans as the “Scourge of Christianity.”²⁷⁹ Studies of the history of Christian captives in Algiers and the Maghrib have largely examined captivity as a system of domination, ignoring the way it enhanced exchange and the production and circulation of knowledge and thus supporting the incomplete early modern image of Algiers. Studies of information and knowledge production within the context of Islam, of the kind examined in this chapter, also fail to link it to captives. On the one hand, there are scholars who study early modern geographical and historical works on the Maghrib, such as those of Al-Wazzan, Mármol, de Torres, and de Sosa.²⁸⁰ Since these works are divorced from the massive textual production I examine, the fact that the authors of these learned, published treatises on the Maghrib were captives is ignored. On the other hand, scholars who focus on reports of ambassadors and professional spies also fail to recognize the importance of captives in networks of espionage. The fact that the majority of researchers studying spies within the context of Islam focus on the Habsburg Italian territories, Venice, or Istanbul partly explains this.²⁸¹ Venice, the first city-state to have a fixed embassy in Istanbul and current commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire, had institutional and formal channels for acquiring information about the Sublime Porte.²⁸² Similarly, the fact that the Habsburgs and the Ottomans were formally at peace beginning in 1581 may have meant that it was

²⁷⁹ Garcés, María Antonia, “An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam: Antonio de Sosa’s Topography of Algiers (1612),” in Antonio de Sosa, *General Topography and History of Algiers*, María Antonia, Garcés, Ed., Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011..

²⁸⁰ For example, Garcés, María Antonia, “An Early Modern Dialogue.”

García Arenal, “Introducción,” pp. 1-23; Martínez-Góngora, “El discurso africanista,” pp. 171-195.

²⁸¹ For example, the section titled “De l’Angleterre à l’empire Turc” in a collection of articles about espionage in early modern Spain edited by Béatrice Perez and published in 2010, focuses on the Habsburg’s Italian territories and Istanbul. There are no articles dealing with intelligence in North Africa, see: Béatrice, Perez, Ed. *Ambassadeurs, apprentis espions et maitres comploteurs - Les systèmes de renseignement en Espagne à l’époque moderne*, PUPS: Paris, 2010. Similarly, the index that focuses on espionage in Spain published in 2007 dedicates 22 pages for works on spies and intelligence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It lists only two books and seven articles that include North Africa in their discussion, all but one focusing on the second half of the sixteenth century, see: Juan R., Goberna Falque, *Inteligencia, espionaje y servicios secretos en España*, Ministerio de defense: 2007, pp. 65-87. One of the exceptions is Juan Francisco Pardo Molero study of the 1530’s which focus on information provided by captives from Algiers, see: Juan Francisco, Pardo Molero, “Imágenes indirectas. La cristianidad y el islam en los interrogatorios a cautivos,” *Saitabi: revista de la Facultat de Geografia i Història*, 55 (2005): 45-58.

²⁸² Carrasco, Raphael, “L’espionnage espagnol du levant au XVIe siècle d’après la correspondance des agents espagnols en poste à Venise,” in: Béatrice Perez, Ed., *Ambassadeurs, apprentis espions et maitres comploteurs*, pp. 202-223, esp. pp. 204, 209.

easier for professional spies to penetrate Ottoman imperial secret corridors and captives thus become less important secret agents. The advantage of focusing on the relationship between captivity and knowledge production in Algiers lies in the absence of institutional channels for communications between the Habsburgs and the governor of the city. As an 'extreme case,' – both in the sense of the apparent absence of diplomatic relations and in light of its image as the scourge of Christianity – the conclusions we can draw from the case of Algiers about captives and knowledge will probably be valid for other cities in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire.

These scholarly trends – studying captives in Algiers while neglecting the links between captives and knowledge production on the one hand, and studying knowledge producers in Italy and Istanbul while ignoring the role of captives among them on the other – have divorced two quintessential Mediterranean phenomena, that is, captivity and its instrumental role in the production and circulation of knowledge. Captivity was one of the few early-modern maritime practices that produced a tissue of connectivities by facilitating the traffic of people, goods, and ideas across the Mediterranean. Ironically, the increasing volume of captives at the turn of the seventeenth century and the violence related to captivity were both understood by scholars as a sign that the sea had lost its earlier characteristic unity. Scholars were not wrong in claiming that captivity had divisive effects on the Mediterranean; but it was not only because of the pain and violence that the capture and enslavement of people created. Captivity was more than merely a violent system of domination separating peoples, or even just a practice that enhanced maritime connections. Captivity also aided in the process of the unmaking of the Mediterranean by portraying it as a divided space separating self-contained political entities – the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires as well as the Moroccan Sultanate. In other words, while the traffic in peoples – as well as the circulation of knowledge that they produced – made the sea a space characterized by an extreme degree of connectivity, captives also participated in producing and transmitting divisive discourses that shaped the region as religiously torn and divided. Understanding the role of captives in the production of knowledge and in its transmission across the sea is crucial for an understanding of how the 'Mediterranean' was created and recreated in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

2. Printed Works

Three out of the four most important sixteenth-century studies of Morocco and Algiers were written by former Spanish captives. None of three, however, won a success similar to that of the Andalusian-Moroccan-Roman former-captive Leo Africanus' *Description of Africa*. In this section, I examine Mármol's *General Description of Africa* (1573, 1599), de Torres' *An Account of the Origins and History of the Shereefs* (1586), and de Sosa's *Topography of Algiers* (1612), focusing on their authors' identity and agendas and on their publication and reception histories. These printed works are extremely important for our understanding of the early modern Maghrib and the way it was perceived by Spaniards. Because no similar studies were written and brought to light for a long time after Mármol, Torres and de Sosa died, scholars assumed that Spaniards lost interest in North Africa and that the production of knowledge of the Maghrib ceased during these years.²⁸³ In making these authors into exceptions that marked the end of the period, however, scholars have de-contextualized them and read them in ways which masked the historical trend of which they formed a part. The section seeks to provide a context for the oral and manuscript forms of knowledge of the Maghrib examined in the rest of the chapter, and to place these printed texts within a larger historical trajectory of knowledge production and circulation carried out by captives. Rather than rupture there was continuity between these published texts on the one hand, and, on the other, forms of knowledge production which did not make their way to the printing press. The histories and geographies that Mármol, Torres, and Sosa wrote formed part of the larger corpus of writing in the Maghrib formed by intelligence reports and chronicles written by captives in the early modern period which are examined in this chapter.

One of the most celebrated figures in the history of the Mediterranean, al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi, also known as Leo Africanus, was a captive and the author of the most famous text on Africa in the early modern period. An Andalusian who moved across the Mediterranean to Morocco soon after his birth, al-Wazzan was later

²⁸³ In the last decade, however, Mercedes Garía Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano have conducted two large research projects focusing on scholarly and religious interest in Islam and oriental studies in Spain in the early modern period, see: Manuel, Barrios Aguilera and Mercedes, García-Arenal, Eds., *Los Plomos del Sacromonte. Invención y Tesoro*, Valencia: Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, 2006 and the recent Mercedes, García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *Un oriente español: los Moriscos y el sacromonte en tiempos de contrarreforma*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2010.

captured by Sicilian corsairs, who offered him as a gift to the pope in Rome. There, after converting to Christianity and then operating within a society of humanistically-shaped papal curia, he wrote several works which suited the desires of his time and place. The most famous and significant was the *Description of Africa* (1526). First published (in Italian) in 1550 in Ramusio's collection of "discoveries," it quickly became an authoritative European source of information about Africa, first in a series of editions and then in translations into French (1556), Latin (1556), English (1600), and Dutch (1665).²⁸⁴ Al-Wazzan, however, was never published in Spanish. In Spain, at the heart of the Habsburg Empire – a state that invested in the Maghrib more than any other contemporary monarchy or empire – the reception of Al-Wazzan's work was mediated by Spanish authors who had focused on the Maghrib in works published between 1573 and 1612.²⁸⁵ Like Al-Wazzan, the authors of these principal published treaties on North Africa in Spanish also experienced long periods of captivity. Luis de Mármol Carvajal, whose *General Description of Africa* two volumes were published in 1573 and 1599, arrived in North Africa in 1535 as a soldier. Having lost his liberty at an unknown date, he spent almost eight years as a prisoner.²⁸⁶ Diego de Torres, who published his *Account of the Origins and History of the Shereefs and of the State of the Kingdoms of Morocco, Fez and Taroudannt* in 1586, was also briefly held captive in Morocco, but had begun his North African career rescuing Christian captives. In 1546, he left Spain for Morocco in order to join his friend's relative, Fernán Gómez de Almodóvar, "who served in those kingdoms in the office of ransom for the serene king, Don Juan."²⁸⁷ After four years on the job, he decided to return to Spain, but was detained for debts of his predecessor. He

²⁸⁴ In 1805, it was also translated to German. On the history and politics of the publication of Al-Wazzan's *Description of Africa*, see: Zhiri, Oumelbanine, "Leo Africanus, Translated and Betrayed," in *The Politics of Translation in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Luise von Flotow, and Daniel Russell, Eds. *The Politics of Translation in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, University of Ottawa Press, 2001, pp. 161-174.

²⁸⁵ On Mármol's use of Al-Wazzan and on the differences between the works, see: Martínez-Góngora, "El discurso africanista," pp. 171-195. On how de Torres used Mármol and others, see: García Arenal, "Introducción," pp. 11-14. There were other Portuguese authors writing on the Maghrib, especially on the defeat in the Battle of the Three Kings. Here I am unable to include them in my discussion. See, García Arenal, *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Luis del Mármol Carvajal, *Descripción general de África*, tomo I, Madrid, Instituto de Estudios Africanos del Patronato Diego Saavedra Fajardo del CSIC, 1953. On the life of Mármol, see: Agustín, G. de Amezúa, "Prologo," in Luis del Mármol Carvajal, *Descripción general de África*.

²⁸⁷ "...[Q]ue servía en aquellos Reinos en officio de rescatador al serenísimo Rei Iuan..." Torres, Diego de, *Relación del origen y suceso de los xarifes*, p. 150.

spent more than a year and a half captive and waited another year after his ransom before returning to Spain in 1554. Unlike Carvajal and de Torres, the Portuguese de Sosa was a doctor in canon and civil law and in theology and had appointments of Vicar General of the bishoprics of Siracusa and Catania in Sicily.²⁸⁸ His North African account, *Topography of Algiers*, was published later in 1612 and was based solely on his stay there as a captive between 1571 and 1581.²⁸⁹

The experience of captivity was central in the life of Mármol, Torres, and Sosa, and at the very least provided them with access – in the form of direct experience and knowledge of the required languages – to the subject about which they wrote. De Amezua, the modern editor of Mármol, had no doubt about the answer to this question. He claimed that Mármol’s imprisonment was “a providential captivity since it formed the future author of the *General Description of Africa*.” He was right in the sense that Mármol learned to master Arabic and the ‘African’ language during his captivity, and that his travels with his master in North Africa provided him with direct experience with the regions about which he wrote, from Morocco to Egypt.²⁹⁰ Captivity, then, was instrumental in enabling Mármol to study the languages which provided him with access to the issues he explored in his work. In the case of Torres, it is a little harder to answer the question. Almost nothing is known about Torres except for the little he provides in chapter LIV of his work. His captivity and stay in Morocco were shorter than those of de Sosa and Mármol. However, the fact that he spent a quarter of his time in the Maghrib as a captive suggests that captivity must have at least partly shaped his understanding of the land, language, and people, providing him with access to knowledge which later served him in his work. The experience of captivity was undoubtedly essential to de Sosa’s composition of the *Topography*.²⁹¹ He began writing as a captive, and captivity conditioned his access to books and to interlocutors. The parts of his work completed in Algiers were based on the few works to which he had access, as he mentions in the text, such as Leo Africanus’ *Description of Africa*, which a certain Morisco from Fez loaned

²⁸⁸ María Antonia, Garcés, “Introduction,” 58-59

²⁸⁹ Haedo, Diego de, *Topografía e historia general de Argel, repartida en cinco tratados do se verán cosas extraños, muertes espantosas y tormentos exquisitos que conviene se entiendan en la cristianidad*, Valladolid: Diego Fernández de Córdoba y Oviedo, 1612.

²⁹⁰ G. de Amezúa, “Prologo,” pp. 13-14.

²⁹¹ María Antonia Garcés in her *Cervantes en Argel* have discussed the way in which writing their captivity was for Cervantes and Sosa a process of healing their trauma, see: Garcés, *Cervantes en Argel*.

him, and a biography of Saint Paulinus, bishop of Nola.²⁹² The conversations he had with other captives, renegades, and Muslims were also vital sources, as they provided him with information about Algiers. The importance of his captivity to his work is also reflected in the fact that many pages of his book are dedicated to historical, theological and legal discussions of captivity.

Unlike autobiographies written by former captives, which began to be issued in the 1580's, these works purported to present systematic knowledge of the societies they discussed and provide support for Spanish colonial conquest.²⁹³ The titles suggest different focuses – geographic, historic and ethnographic – but they each provide a little of all three. Mármol and de Torres, and de Sosa to a lesser degree,²⁹⁴ shared a similar point of view seeking to achieve imperial goals. Mármol expresses this in the dedication to the king, explaining that he hopes for his work to be “not less pleasant than beneficial for the conquest of the barbarous African people, our neighbors as they are our cruel enemies.”²⁹⁵ De Torres, in his original dedication to Don Sebastian King of Portugal, expressed similar wishes.²⁹⁶ Conquest for these authors did not merely serve religious goals, but also economic ones and both stressed the wealth of the country and the potential utility of its resources for colonial Spain and Portugal. An imperialist agenda likewise reverberates through De Sosa's work, but it is less pronounced.²⁹⁷ His volume is much harder to classify, as it fuses various genres. He opens with an ethnographic

²⁹² Garcés, “An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam,” pp. 55-56.

²⁹³ Spaniards were the first to write captivity accounts describing their experience in the Maghrib and Istanbul. Both Diego Galán and Jerónimo de Pasamonte, whom I mention in previous chapters, wrote autobiographies (Galán wrote two versions) recounting their captivities. Their works were not published until the twentieth century. Another account – *Tratado de la redención de cautivos* by Jerónimo Gracián (1609) – only partly autobiographical was published before the twentieth century. On the difference between the ways in which the theme of captivity was treated in the earlier Byzantine novels and the above mentioned ones, including the works of Sosa and of Cervantes, see: Camamis, *Estudios sobre el cautiverio en siglo de oro*.

²⁹⁴ Arenal, “Introducción,” p. 18.

²⁹⁵ “[S]erá menos agradable que provechosa, para la conquista del los pueblos bárbaros Africanos, tan vecinos como crueles enemigos nuestros...” Mármol, *Descripción general de África*. For more on the way Mármol frames his work within an imperialist context, see: Martínez Góngora, pp. 171-178.

²⁹⁶ Following the death of King Don Sebastian, de Torres' widow replaced the original dedication with a dedication to Philip II. Arenal, “Introducción,” pp. 16-21. On de Torres' colonial agenda, see: Rica, Amiran, “Ceuta en la Relación de Diego de Torres,” in Pierre Civil, Françoise Crémoux, Jacobo Sanz, Eds., *España y el mundo Mediterráneo a través de las relaciones de sucesos (1500-1750)*, *Actas del IV coloquio internacional sobre Relaciones de Sucesos (París, 23-25 de septiembre de 2004)*, Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2010.

²⁹⁷ Garcés, María Antonia, “An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam,” pp. 40-41.

description of Algiers and a history of its governors. But he also adds three dialogues. The first is a historical juridico-theological discussion of captivity; the second, a martirology, a kind of writing which had gained renewed popularity among Christian writers – both Protestant and Catholic – since the Reformation;²⁹⁸ and the third, a discussion of Islam meant to prove its inferiority to Christianity.

Bringing their work to fruition, however, was not an easy task for these writers; each, or their kin and acquaintances, faced various difficulties in this mission. Even after their works were published, these scholarly volumes were poorly received and it seems that they did not circulate widely. In that sense, the publication histories of these works have more in common than their ostensible agendas might suggest. All were printed long after they were written, and their publications encountered similar obstacles. Mármol wrote and submitted the first volume of *General Description of Africa* in 1573, seventeen years after his return to Spain. More than a decade later, he applied for another royal publishing privilege in 1584, with the intentions of both reprinting the first volume and publishing the second for the first time. He received the privilege but even though the first volume “was well received in these kingdoms and outside of them,”²⁹⁹ he could not find a publisher “because the book is long and very expensive.”³⁰⁰ In 1599, about four years after his royal privilege had expired, he applied for its renewal. Acknowledging his failure to find a publisher, he invested the little funds he had, and published the second volume at his own expense.³⁰¹ De Torres, on the other hand, never lived to see his work in print. He began writing his *An Account of the Origins and History* after his return to Spain in 1554, and finished it sometime before 1575. But there is no archival indication that he ever applied for a printing privilege or that he took any steps to secure the publication of his work. It was not until several years after his death that his widow, in dire need, petitioned the king and managed to publish his work.³⁰² Finally, de Sosa’s

²⁹⁸ José María, Parreño, “Experiencia y literatura en la obra de Antonio de Sosa,” in *Diálogo de los mártires de Argel*, Ed. Emilio Sola and ídem, Madrid: Hiperión, 1990, pp. 13-15 and Emilio, Sola, “Renacimiento, contrareforma y problema Morisco en la obra de Antonio Sosa,” in *Ibid.* pp. 29-31.

²⁹⁹ “...[H]a sido muy bien recebida en estos Reynos y fuera dellos,” A report Mármol submitted to Philip II in which he asks several favors, AGS, *Consejo de la Cámara*, Leg. 440, Fol. 184, apud. Mármol Carvajal, *Descripción general de África*, p. 37.

³⁰⁰ “Por ser libro grande y muy costoso,” G. de Amezúa, “Prologo,” p. 22.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² García Arenal, “Spanish Literature,” pp. 53-59.

Topography of Algiers was also printed posthumously, in 1612, about thirty years after its completion. Until the 1970's, authorship was attributed to his editor, Diego de Haedo, who published it under his name.³⁰³ De Haedo was the nephew of a bishop in Sicily with the same name, who either received the manuscript from de Sosa, or had gotten his hands on it in some other way, a little after de Sosa's arrival in 1581 on the island from Algiers.³⁰⁴ De Haedo must have received the manuscript from his uncle, but he did not race to publish it as is testified by documents that precede the actual text: a permission for publication from October 1604, a dedication to his uncle signed December 1605, an endorsement dated October 1608, and a printing license from the Royal Council dated February 1610.³⁰⁵

Beyond such delays, none of these books was reprinted in Spain before the twentieth century, a fact that strengthens the assumption about limited circulation. There are twenty-six known extant copies of De Torres' work in libraries and archives in the world, but the book was translated to French in 1636, and reprinted in 1667 as the third volume of the French translation of Mármol.³⁰⁶ Mármol's writing garnered greater successes, and we even know that included among those who owned a copy of his book were nobles, royal functionaries, and artisans.³⁰⁷ His work was translated into French in 1667, and there are a handful of works that refer to it. A few English authors also acknowledged their debts to both Mármol and Sosa, on whom they relied for their later works on North Africa. Sosa was much more influential, but among whom? And which parts of his work were more popular and had more effects? Central authors of the Spanish Golden Age, such as Lope de Vega, or Gonzalo Céspedes y Meneses, referred to the

³⁰³ On the history of the scholarly debate regarding the identity of the author of the *Topografía*, see: Garcés, María Antonia, "An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam," pp. 65-66.

³⁰⁴ Garcés, *Cervantes en Argel*, pp. 139-140.

³⁰⁵ Haedo, *Topografía e historia general de Argel*.

³⁰⁶ Alexander S., Wilkinson, *Iberian Books, Books Published in Spanish or Portuguese or on the Iberian Peninsula before 1601*, Brill: Leiden, 2010, p. 724. A search on Google Books, which may not be exhaustive but is indicative, does not change this picture. I could not find a single early modern work in Spanish referring to Torres.

³⁰⁷ For example, one of the king's secretaries, an accountant, a general, a knight in the Order of Santiago, a knight in the Order of Calatrava, and the queen's glove maker all were among those owning a copy of the book, see: José Manuel, Prieto Barnabé, *Lectura y lectores, la lectura del impreso en el Madrid del siglo de oro (1550-1650)*, Junta de Extremadura: Mérida, 2004, Vol. II, pp. 41, 62, 80, 195, 202, and 419. There are forty-three extant copies of the first part of the book published in 1573 and nineteen of the second part published in 1599, see: Wilkinson, *Iberian Books*, p. 488.

Topography and appropriated sections of it.³⁰⁸ Similarly, Diego Galán, who penned two versions of the same captivity account wherein he recounted his own experience as a captive in the Ottoman world, directly reproduced full sections of Sosa's *Topography*.³⁰⁹ Additional research points out other, lesser known, seventeenth-century Spanish authors who refer to the *Topography of Algiers*; but more than half of these writers were interested primarily in the dialogues, which offer a radically different view from that of the *An Account of the Origins and History* and the *General Description of Africa*. In other words, it seems that in Spain, the *Topography* was read less for its geographic, historic and ethnographic content than for its theological discussions or as a source for historians of the Trinitarian order.

Not only, then, were none of these works as extensively translated as Al-Wazzan's *Description of Africa*, but their reception and circulation in Spain was scant. Why is this so? Do the obstacles to publication, the fact that only one edition of each work saw the light of day, or even the lack of Spanish readership, suggest that there was little Spanish interest in North Africa at the time? How are the dynamics of publication and reception linked to a larger framework of Mediterranean history? As I have noted, historians have asserted that the 1570's marked a turning point in the history of the Mediterranean. On October 7th, 1571, the Habsburg Empire defeated its Ottoman rival in the battle of Lepanto, the largest battle fought at sea. The Ottomans and Habsburg kept testing the power balance between them for another decade (the battle of Lepanto, 1571; the conquest and reconquest of Tunis, 1569-74; and the battle of the Three Kings, 1578). Until the peace treaty was signed in 1581 between the two Empires, the Ottomans continued to strengthen their sway in the western Mediterranean.³¹⁰ Scholars tend to agree on a sense of decline in the quantity and quality of works on the Maghrib after

³⁰⁸ Parreño, Jesús María, "Experiencia y literatura en la obra de Antonio de Sosa," pp. 20-21. While the book was not translated to other languages in the seventeenth century, the British historian Joseph Morgan had reproduced entire sections of de Sosa in his history of the Maghrib, see: Joseph, Morgan, *A Compleat history of the Present State of War in Africa, between the Spaniards and Algerines*, London: W. Mears, 1632.

³⁰⁹ Matías, Borchino, "Introducción" in ídem, Ed. *Edición crítica de Cautiverio y trabajos de Diego Galán*, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla la Mancha: Cuenca, 2001, p. 29.

³¹⁰ Andrew Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History," *Past and Present*, 57 (1972): 53-73.

1581.³¹¹ By then, they have claimed, the Spaniards lost not only their fear of the Ottomans, but also their interest in the Islamic world. Decreasing textual production about that world, we are told, is a product of that loss of fear and interest.³¹² It was at this historical juncture that a different kind of writing about the Maghrib began to gain popularity – captivity narratives, the Cervantine corpus of captivity tales, and the religious quest for redemption of captives.³¹³ The fate of the three works I have been discussing is certainly, then, part of this turn in the history of knowledge production, of the pacification and withering away of the Mediterranean as object of inquiry.

De Torres' *An Account of the Origins and History*, which called for the conquest and economic exploitation of Morocco, became obsolete after the Portuguese defeat in Alcazarquivir,³¹⁴ and the fact that his widow managed to find a publisher is actually surprising. Mármol, as we have seen, claimed that his book's length and price were the cause of his failure to find a publisher. But surely, large books were published in Spain at the time, and studies of the Spanish printing market suggest that excluding the years 1582, 1593 and 1594, the number of books published in the last two decades of the waning sixteenth century were constantly increasing.³¹⁵ Rather than the book's price, it was a shift of atmosphere that may have been the real cause. This transition is the result both of the desire of the Spaniards to sign a peace treaty with the Ottomans, and a response to their defeat in the Battle of the Three Kings – a strategic enterprise to which Phillip II was opposed. Mármol's relative success, then, is tied to the fact that he published another book, this one telling the tale of the rebellion of the Moriscos in the Alpujaras, in whose suppression he participated, and which was well received.

While scholars were right in pointing at Spanish political trends as an explanation of the fact that no similar works were written and published at the time, they did not fully

³¹¹ García Arenal, "Introducción," p. 2; Arenal, "Spanish Literature," p. 53; Martínez-Góngora, "El discurso africanista," pp. 175-7, and; Bunes Ibarra, *La Imagen de los Musulmanes y del Norte de Africa en la España de los Siglos XVI y XVII*, pp. 3-6. However, recent studies have stressed the growing interest of erudite scholars in Islam and oriental studies in Spain at the turn of the century, see footnote 17.

³¹² For example, Martínez-Góngora, "El discurso africanista," pp. 177.

³¹³ See for example: Levisi, Margarita, *Autobiografías del siglo de oro*. Alberto, Prieto Calixto, *Encuentros ambiguos: el cautiverio indígena y musulmán en las letras hispánicas, 1551-1616*. An unpublished PhD Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1999. In fact, according to Camamis, de Sosa's *Topography*, together with part of the Cervantine corpus marked that shift, see: Camamis, *Estudios Sobre el Cautiverio en el Siglo de Oro*.

³¹⁴ García Arnal, "Introducción," pp. 3-4, 9.

³¹⁵ Wilkinson, *Iberian Books*, p. xiv.

account for the implications of these political trends. In the introduction, I have mentioned that Spain's turn away from the Mediterranean also signaled the beginning of what Braudel has called Algiers's "second brilliant age." With that, Braudel was referring to a military shift that resulted from the political reorientation. Piracy and *corso* came to dominate warfare in the Mediterranean. In its turn, that transformation changed the distribution of captives over time and across space. While the number of captives did not decline it became more balanced. From the 1570's, rarely did masses of captives lose their liberty in spectacular battles. Instead, small numbers of captives arrived in most Mediterranean cities on a daily or weekly basis. As the rest of this chapter demonstrates, that entailed a constant flow of information that obviated the need in further systematic treaties that explored the topography of Maghrib cities and their military might. The production of knowledge about the Maghrib never stopped; nor did its quality deteriorate. Rather, it merely changed forms.

The accessibility of the expansive works from these celebrated authors, and the fact that they circulated in print, make them important to both studies on North Africa and the life of captives in the Maghrib. But by dissociating these key sources from the wider context of captivity and the production and circulation of strategic knowledge about the Maghrib, their authors are depicted as exceptional individuals, each engaged in a unique project. But rather than an enterprise carried on the shoulders of a few giants, the recovery and transmission of knowledge about the Maghrib should instead be seen as a task that almost every captive in the Mediterranean was constantly engaged in.

3. Strategic Information in Personal Letters

The negotiation of peace with the Ottomans brought an end to regular war in the Mediterranean. However, as Braudel notes, "the living materials of that war, the men who could no longer be kept in the war fleets by what had become inadequate rewards and wages were driven to a life of roving by the liquidation of international war."³¹⁶ This military shift transformed the circulation of captives, and *ipso facto* the production and distribution of knowledge in the Mediterranean. Recently arrived captives interviewed immediately upon their arrival in the port provided the Algerian governor, or the

³¹⁶ Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 890.

Majorcan viceroy, with information about when the enemy's fleet had left its port and the direction in which it was headed. But strategic political information was not transmitted exclusively in face-to-face interviews. Beyond the strategic reports, city maps, and political chronicles that captives composed, ever more personal media, such as letters between family members, became the vehicles through which captives circulated strategic information.

A central concern captives shared with their kin in the letters they sent them regarded other captives who had converted. In the previous chapter, I have claimed that this was part of a process of social boundary making. This, however, was not the only reason for which captives informed their kin about conversion of relatives and friends. Letter writers warned their kin, asking them to watch out and to be careful of attacks from corsairs. Converts like these individuals, who mastered the maritime entries and exits of their native land and could still pass as community members, became extremely dangerous after their conversion, often joining with the corsairs. In the letter quoted above, delivered by Francisco Marques to Ynés Hernández Sardiña, the author recounted the conversion of Gaspar de los Reyes, warning his addressees that the latter had become a corsair and that, as a result, "they [the addressees] should not trust any sail [on the horizon]."³¹⁷ Occasionally, captives ordered their kin to go and inform the magistrates of their warning so that timely measures might be taken. In a report dated October 13th, 1617, the viceroy of Majorca wrote the king about Algiers. He had received news, he explained, from two islanders who were held in captivity there, and who had written their wives and mothers to warn them of a corsair's raid. The viceroy explained to the king that the captives urged their kin to let the magistrates know about this situation:

In letters to their wives and mothers written in Algiers the 7th of this month, Juan Maltes and Estevan Gia, Majorcan slaves, told them to inform the magistrates of this city that they might have certain knowledge of a renegade who is prepared to come and attack one of the villages with fifty high deck ships and they should be alert because there are renegades who speak the language.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ ... [Y] que ya avía otro cossario mas y que no se fiensse de vela de alguna..." Ibid.

³¹⁸ ... [C]on cartas escritas en Argel a 7 deste de Juan Maltes y Estevan Gia esclavos Mallorquines a sus madres y mujeres les dizen que avisen los jurados desta ciudad que saben por muy cierta de un renegado que se es tan aprestado mas de cincuenta vaxeles de alto bordo para venir a dar a una de las villas deste reyno y que estén con grande vigilancia porque hay renegados que hablan la lengua." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198.

The captives' kin did not always follow the instructions sent by captives. Knowing that, and the potential strategic value of such letters, the viceroys of Majorca often collected for inspection all the letters that islanders received from Algiers, whether from a known captive or not. A reference to this practice is echoed in a letter accompanying the long report on Algiers that the viceroy sent to the king on June 26, 1603: "And [I also decided] to collect all the letters sent from Algiers by Christian captives to individuals from here of which I am aware of and to send them to your majesty so that your majesty would better understand what is being reported there."³¹⁹ Once the information contained in such letters was in the viceroy's hands, he could apply it to better protect its subjects, or alternatively, advise the King as to the best way to attack the enemy.

In the above discussion, I have attempted to show how even personal letter exchange served as a means of transmitting strategic information. The evidence shows that becoming a captive did not necessarily mean losing touch with home. The participation in letter exchange, a practice probably more common among residents of the Balearics or the Canaries due to the short distance of the islands from North Africa, also meant the tightening of ties across the Mediterranean. Through many other means, individuals held in captivity played a vital role in the production and dissemination of knowledge which informed military strategies and espionage. Before I turn to examine other genres through which information and knowledge were transmitted, I examine the effects that information of the kind discussed here – about hostile armadas or corsairs' raids – had on its addressees.

4. Questioning Captives

4.1 The Circulation of News in Algiers and its Effects

Scholars have noted that the first thing that corsairs did when they took over a ship was to search their victims and to interrogate them about their status and fiscal standing. Emmanuel d'Aranada, for example, recounts that after his ship was overtaken by corsairs, "an Englishman by nation, but a renegade.... asked me of which nation I was

³¹⁹ "Ha me parecido... recoger todas las cartas de que he tenido noticia hauían venido de cautiuos cristianos de Argel para particulares de aquí, y imbiárselas a su magestad con el mismo cautiuo cristiano para que entienda más en particular lo que de allí se avisa," AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 192, 26.6.1603, apud. Joulia Saint-Cyr, Carlos Rodríguez, *Felipe III y El rey de Cuco*, CSIC: Madrid, 1953, p. 83.

and whether I was a merchant....”³²⁰ Similar references to this type of questioning abound in captivity narratives. The captives’ confusion and fear amidst the noise and clamor of the capture gave their conquerors a reliable advantage in discovering the captives’ real worth. Beyond this searching and questioning, another investigation awaited captives, one perhaps more important. This was the interrogation that each captive was destined to endure upon his arrival in a port – either as a fresh captive or as a recently freed captive returning home – about the ongoing events from their place of departure. Not only did politicians and generals seek such information from new captives, but also old captives were also hungry for information about their homeland. Captives’ arrival in the port provided a moment of linkage to the other shore of the sea.³²¹ When Algerian corsairs returned to Algiers with Christian captives, or Majorcans to Majorca with Muslims, those previously captured as well as renegades were waiting to hear from the new ones any recent news from home.³²² The newly captured reported the latest movements of the Spanish armada, visits of the King in the viceroyalties, and other such major events.

The Algerian chronicles compiled by Spanish captives-turned-spies during the first two decades of the seventeenth century reflect the kind of information that Algerians desired. Vicente Colom, for example, who chronicled Algiers for the viceroys of Majorca from (at least) 1602 until his death five years later, thus described the arrival in port of thirteen captives on May 9, 1603: “A privateers’ frigate arrived [in the port] with thirteen captives from Barcelona and Valencia and other parts and they brought no important

³²⁰ “Il était anglais de nation mais renégat, et comme j’étais pour lors sur le tillac, il me demanda de quelle nation j’étais, et si j’étais marchand...” d’Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger*, pp. 31-32.

³²¹ Captives who followed their masters between different cities in the Maghrib also served as carriers of information. The Knight D’Arvieux describes how the slaves whom he met at Porto Farine, the main Tunisian arsenal, reported of his arrival to the captives in Tunis before he actually arrived in the city, see: d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, p. 25.

³²² Captives played a role similar to that of black workers who traversed imperial boundaries in eighteenth century colonial Caribbean, carrying news among and across local communities, see: Julius, Scott S., “Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century,” Ed. Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1996, pp. 129-143. Mascarenhas described how renegades “are accustomed to approach [new captives] and ask them where were they from in order to ask for news from home” (“Et comme les renégats ont pour coutume, dès qu’ils ont pris des chrétiens, de s’approcher d’eux pour savoir d’où ils sont et pour leur demander des nouvelles du pays,” see: Mascarenhas, *Esclave à Alger*, p. 113).

news.”³²³ Obviously, the ‘newcomers’ had much to say about events in Christendom, but the information Colom considered worthy of chronicling, and that the Algerians were seeking, was more specific; namely, the information of interest pertained to the movements of the Spanish armada and Spanish military plans. On the last day of the same month, Colom chronicled a similar event – the arrival of a frigate with new captives – disclosing his addressees and his chronicler’s interests:

A frigate entered [the port] with nine Christian captives who said they have been captured in the field of Tarragona and having been questioned they said that they knew nothing about an armada...³²⁴

Colom wrote with the viceroy of Mallorca and those responsible for the imperial navy in mind. What they were mostly interested in was what the Algerians knew about the plans of the Spaniards. In other words, Colom was describing for them the state of Algerian tactical knowledge about Spain’s strategic plans. While Algerian corsairs regularly raided the coasts of the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic islands, the Spaniards continued during the first two decades of the seventeenth century to lay plans to take over the city.³²⁵ The Algerians were aware of these Spanish plots, and thus the obsessive desire to obtain information about Spanish military intentions was well-founded. If Spanish sources depict a regime of fear that dominated the life of Habsburg subjects living along the coasts,³²⁶ similar fears are attested in Algiers. Depending on the level of anxiety, certain news could inflame the city in seconds and cause great turmoil. Rumors could lead to hysteria. This was the case in August 24th, 1603, upon the arrival of new captives in the city:

The day of Saint Bartolommeo, Morato Arraez returned from course [*corso*] with his nine ships. They were afraid when they arrived because they had seen many large ships in Ibiza, and this was the reason they had returned earlier. And they brought with them two hundred Christian captives some of whom they had taken in Torre de Cope; and in another ship they captured seventy-two persons among whom were two Augustinian brothers, two Franciscans, two Trinitarians, one Carmelite, of whom three were priests who traveled from Mallorca to Barcelona;

³²³ “Vino una fragata de corso con treze cristianos de Cataluña Valencia y otras partes que no truxeron nueva alguna de importancia,” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198.

³²⁴ “Entro una fragata con nueve cristianos cautibos que dixeron haver cautibado en el campo de Tarragona los quales tomando lengua dellos dixeron como no sabían nada de armada...” Ibid.

³²⁵ Bunes Ibarra, “Felipe III y la defensa del Mediterráneo: la conquista de Argél,” p. 31.

³²⁶ See for example: Bruce, Taylor, “The Enemy within and without: an Anatomy of Fear on the Spanish Mediterranean littoral,” in William G. Naphy, Penny Roberts, *Fear in Early Modern Society*, Eds. Manchester university Press: Manchester, 1997, pp. 78-99.

and [they also captured] a theater group whose director was Juan Ramírez and his wife Ana Manrique; and the rest [of the captives], up to the mentioned number, [were caught] in different parts of the coasts of Spain *and even though none of them confirmed for certain anything about the armada, [in light of what Morato Arraez reported from] Ibiza... it caused great fear* (emphasis added).³²⁷

This entry is relatively lengthy in comparison with others due to the exceptionally large number of captives, and more specifically, churchmen, who were captured. Colom's portrayal of Morato Arraez betrays the reputation of great ferocity that the Spaniards had bestowed upon the latter, and points at once to the complexity and balance of these chronicles. In contrast to literary and religious constructions of Algiers, in which the city functioned as the "den of Christendom's thieves" and a military power ravaging helpless Christians, these chronicles render Algiers as a city whose residents suffer hunger and live in constant fear of Spanish attack. In fact, the image these chronicles portray is almost an inverse mirror image of how religious propaganda and literary authors of the period described Spain in relation to Algiers. But perhaps more interestingly, Colom's report shows the dependence of the city of Algiers upon the news brought to it by captives and pirates. As uncertain as their truth-value may have been, good or bad news, even no news at all, had the potential to stir both Christians and Muslims.³²⁸ Likewise, the quote indicates how widely and quickly information delivered by captives could be distributed.

³²⁷ "A día de San Bartholome volvió de corso Moratorraez con sus nueve bajeles vinieron muy atemorizados de haver visto muchas naves muy gruesas en Yvisa y esto fue ocasión que bolberon más presto y truxeron ducientos christianos cuativos algunos de los quales tomaron en la Torre de Cope y en una nave tomaron setenta y dos personas en las quales tomaron siete flayres dos Agustinos dos Franciscos dos Trinitarios y un Carmelita y los tres dellos sacerdotes que yvan de Mallorca a Barcelona y una compañía de representantes cuyo autor era Juan Ramírez y su mujer Ana Manrique y los demás hasta el dicho numero en diversas partes de la osta de España y aunque ninguno afirmava cossa cierta de la armada con todo lo de Yviza y mucho lo del Cuco los causava **grandísimo** temor," AGS, *Consejo de Estado*, Leg. 298, 4.9.1604. Emphasis added.

³²⁸ News and rumors about the Spanish armada could also have a tremendous effect on the large number of Christian captives in the city, who were undoubtedly hoping for Spanish occupation and liberation of the city. On April 13th, 1604, Colom described the effects of the arrival of a Slovenian merchant, who was accustomed to Algiers and who had friendly relations with many captives. At first, the Algerians thought that Juan Tasco, the merchant, had come as a spy for the Spaniards. But once these fears dissolved, public opinion radically changed: "And with that the Turks were extremely pleased and the Christians greatly upset as their great hopes fell apart and after they have experienced so many travails for that reason and seen so many dead. And it was such that the Levantine captives and renegades who had their own hopes spoke badly about his majesty and his royal council and they did not forgive all of Spain saying that those who used to be lions turned into sheep and that after the death of the glorious Charles V Spanish swords lost their sharpness" ("Con esto fue grande el contento de los turcos y mayor el disgusto de los cristianos de

Colom and the others who chronicled life in Algiers and who formed part of the Spanish net of intelligence point to the importance of captives for the circulation of news, and illustrate the Algerian dependence on such news. Such accounts say less about the mechanics of interviewing, evaluating information and informers, or the circulation of the information. To learn about these, we need to turn to the exchange of letters between the viceroys of the imperial territories in the Mediterranean and the Councils of State and of War.

4.2 Valuable Informers and Reliable News

Viceroy and captives sought fresh information produced by experts and carried by reliable transmitters.³²⁹ This section examines the ways in which information and knowledge were evaluated arguing that expertise and experience, freshness and knowledge of the informer, and his national identity were the criteria that mattered most. Rather than focusing on textual genre, I reconstruct and analyze the criteria employed to assess the quality of information and knowledge on the basis of reports, interviews and letters.

On the evening of March 13th, 1612, the duke of Medina Sidonia wrote a report to the Council of War assessing naval strength at the port of Algiers:

50 ships, 40 of which are large, the largest is of 300 barrels, and there were 10 fishing settees, and all have captains of all the nations, and the governor obliges to

verse caydos de tan grande esperança después de haver pasado tantos trabajos a esta causa y haver visto tantas muertes. Y fue de manera que los cautivos levantiscos y renegados que estavan con las propias esperanças ponían lengua en su magestad y su real consejo y no perdonaban a toda España diciendo que los que solían ser leones se habían buuelto obejas y que después de la muerte del glorioso Carlos quinto no cortavan las españolas espadas.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198. More than a decade later, Monroy, whose story I examine in chapter seven, reported how rumors about Spanish plans to attack Algiers and Bougie carried by sailors from Marseille stirred Algiers, see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1952, Fol. 271, 11.6.1618. Like the Algerians, Habsburg subjects sought news about their enemies and were relatively well informed about them. The Catalan chronicler Jeroni Pujades captured the mutual anxieties and the flow of information between the two banks of the sea. In August 1601, he documented the arrival in Barcelona of a Majorcan ship patron who just returned from Algiers from which he ransomed captives. The patron assured the Catalans that “in Algiers no one talked about nor knew anything about the [Spanish] armada.” “[Y] deia que al Alger no’s parlava ni se sabia cosa de la armada.” Jeroni Pujades, *Dietari de Jeroni Pujades*, Josep M.a Casas Homs, Ed., Fundació Salvador Vives Casajuana: Barcelona, 1975, vol. I, 31.8.1601.

³²⁹ Lisa Voigt had argued that the way Portuguese employed captives for imperial expansion and the importance they assigned to experience-based knowledge captives produced and delivered in the mid sixteenth century predated epistemologies associated with the scientific revolution, see, Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic*, p. 1.

take with them Turkish infantries helped by salaried slaves, munitions, supplies, and bronze artillery....³³⁰

The account is longer, and goes into greater detail in its review of the city's military might. The duke acknowledges that little has changed since his earlier report. As before, his informers were soldiers captured and taken to Algiers, where they had spent three years before escaping. That the duke had to rely on captives' testimonials in order to gain strategic information about Spain's imperial nemesis was by no means exceptional. The viceroy of Majorca, Prince Filiberto de Savoy, admiral and later viceroy of Sicily, and other governors and magnates along the Habsburg's littoral, similarly depended on the thriving networks of spies and information based, to a large extent, on Christian captives. Not only did captives chronicle Algiers and other cities through written reports sent back to Spain, but they also provided information upon their return during their interviews with Spanish governors. On the basis of these 'oral reports' (*relaciones de palabra*), the governors composed accounts that they then sent on to the councils of War and of State.

While the duke of Medina Sidonia received daily updates about the situation in Atlantic Morocco, knowledge about Algiers more commonly first arrived in Majorca.³³¹ There, alongside Christian and Muslim captives, the viceroy interviewed consuls, merchants, ship captains and their crews, mostly but not exclusively foreign. A report (probably from 1604) sent from Majorca to the Council of the State, for example, synthesizes information received from the Majorcan captain Juan Maltes, who undertook a voyage to Algiers in order to smuggle Christian captives back to the island, and from Muslim captives that Maltes had captured in Delis, sixty miles west of Algiers. Those captives reported that "they have seen the army that left Algiers in order to go to the mountain of Cuco... and that Janissaries and Moors from Delis and Tamagot left to join

³³⁰ "...50 baxeles los 40 grandes el mayor de 300 toneles, y había 10 saetías pescadoras que en todos eran capitanes de todas naciones y el gobernador les obliga llevar infantería de turcos ayudándoles con esclavos al sueldo..." 13.3.1612, AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg 774.

³³¹ On the one hand, only 202 miles separated Algiers from Majorca and there were long-term commercial exchange between the cities. On the other hand, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, on Spain's Atlantic coast, was the home of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Captain General of the Oceanic Sea and Coasts of Andalusia (*Capitán General del mar océano y costas de Andalucía*, 1588-1641) who thus had easy communication with Atlantic Morocco, see: Luis, Salas Almela, "Un puerto de invierno para la armada del mar océano: La perspectiva sensorial de los duques de Medina Sidonia (1600-1640)," *Huelva en su Historia*, 13 (2010), 135-148.

the said force which should include, Janissaries and Moors, around 1,500 men.”³³² Muslim captives, then, also served as sources for the transmission of strategic information to the Christian power. Yet when compared to interviews with Christians, Muslim accounts remained secondary. The advantage of interviewing Christian captives was reliability and common allegiance: the majority of were Majorcans, Habsburg subjects, or French married to Majorcans and thus connected to home.

Information had value as long as it was fresh and its carriers seemed trustworthy. Details of the movement of those carrying news was thus extremely important, just as in the case of the letters sent from captives to their kin. There is little certainty in whether the practice of listing the geographic channels that information passed through originated in oral or textual practices; regardless, it functioned as a litmus test for assessing the relevance and utility of the information presented. On October 5th, 1604, the viceroy of Majorca sent the Council of War updates about Algiers that he had received from Charles Cochon, a French ship patron recently arrived from Algiers. The letter opens by mentioning Cochon’s arrival date in Majorca, and when he left Algiers: “Last night a French settee (*saetia*) entered [the port]. It [arrived] from Algiers which it left five days ago.”³³³ Cochon reported that a new Governor, Cader Pasha, had arrived in Algiers, that the Algerians were suffering hunger, and that the new Pasha was seeking peace with the Kingdom of Cuco. Cochon had received that information from three Majorcan ransomed captives who had all left Algiers at the same time as he, but on a different settee. Usually, the viceroy would have interviewed the captives, synthesized the information that they provided with that given by Cochon, and then sent it on to the peninsula. But as the ship with the captives was running late, and fearing that the news might turn into no news, the viceroy delivered to the king Cochon’s insights and only later sent an update based on the information the captives provided.³³⁴

Freshness alone, however, was not sufficient. In order for fresh news to be transformed into valuable information, the status of the messenger had to be ascertained.

³³² “...[Q]ue ellos an visto el campo que salió de Argel para yr al pie de las montañas del Cuco... y que de Iedelis y Tamagot avian ydo algunos genízaros y moros al dicho campo que será de 1500 hombres entre genízaros y moros.” Undated, AGS, *Estado*, Leg.198.

³³³ “Anoche entro una saetía francesa de Argel de donde ha que falta sinco días...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, 5.10.1604

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

Who was trusted, and how were reliability and accessibility to inside knowledge assessed? On July 12th, 1596, the new viceroy of Majorca, Fernando Zanoguera, wrote the king telling him about Miguel Rovira's success; his letter provides some insight to these questions. A couple of weeks earlier, Rovira, with a license from the viceroy, had left Majorca for Algiers on a mission to ransom his brother, father, and other Majorcans. He succeeded not only in this goal, but also managed to smuggle aboard a large number of Majorcans, Sicilians, Genovese, and Nicean captives. Zanoguera interviewed them all, but he found the testimonies of some more valuable than others for the report he was compiling for the king. He was especially fond of the testimony of Antonio de Villafranca de Nice, who had served as head shipwright (*el maestro Daxa mayor*) to the governor of Algiers. This position, which the latter had probably secured as a result of professional skills acquired in the shipyards of Nice, meant that the Nicean was mobile – mobility was part of the privileges that came with the office – worked in tandem with corsairs, might have had amicable relations with the Pasha, and thus could gather knowledge to which other captives had no access. He was precisely the kind of captive that the viceroy sought for composing such accounts: individuals who had either held positions of relative power in Algiers, or who had spent many years in captivity and, by learning Arabic or Turkish, had gained access to secret information. In the report quoted above, Antonio de Villafranca proved the most apt informer, but was by no means the only one. As a way of authenticating his account, the viceroy indicated that in addition to the testimony of the Nicean, the report drew from the testimonies of “the more intelligent among the others.”³³⁵

Francisco Juan de Torres who became viceroy of the islands in 1618 wrote the Council of the State on October 9th of that same year, informing its members that there were only a few Algerian ships at sea at the time, but that soon, once Ramadan, “the Muslims' lent,” was over, thirty ships would leave Algiers and head to Spain. Torres' informer added that “the [Algerians] frequently discussed the armada the Spanish gathered to attack them and [the Algerians] say it is like a dog whose bark was worse

³³⁵ “y los otros más inteligentes”, AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 457, Fol. 187.

than his bite.”³³⁶ However, the informer, who perhaps was trying to incite the Spaniards into action, added that since the Algerians took no defensive measures, the conquest of Algiers would be an easy task. The viceroy did not fail to indicate how novel this news was, nor how reliable his informer proved to be – “a native of this kingdom who arrived last night, and has been out of Algiers since the first [days] of the last [month]... enslaved there for seven or eight years, and is a man of good judgment.”³³⁷ The phrase catches all the evaluative parameters: the informer’s nativity as an islander and, as such, his trustworthiness; his knowledge of the city, as he had spent seven or eight years there; that the news was not superbly fresh but that the production date is provided; and, finally, that the informer is ‘de buena razón,’ i.e. one can trust his judgment.

Trusted captives were also important for their ability to validate the truthfulness of information provided by others. When in March 22nd, 1604, the French consul in Algiers was sent to Majorca to negotiate the ransom of several Muslim captives, probably on behalf of the Algerian Pasha, he was himself suspect to allegations of espionage. The doubt was cleared on the basis “of the good [things] about [the consul] the redemptors and others in Algiers wrote to the viceroy and what other ransomed captives who arrived from there declared [about him].”³³⁸ Thus, captives did more than simply to produce and circulate information. Thanks to their knowledge of the field, they secured the veracity of claims made by royal officials, indeed some of which regarding the latter’s own identity, status, and intentions. For example, when the Marquis of Villamizar, the viceroy of Valencia, seized a letter from the Pasha of Algiers, on September 4th, 1604 – possibly the letter that the Pasha had sent to the viceroy of Majorca in April of the same year – the viceroy turned to captives in order to verify that the letter was indeed written by the Pasha: “[N]ot being fully convinced the letter was the Pasha’s and having invested effort in ascertaining it for myself, I have found many captives who affirm it was indeed the said Pasha’s, and the same was confirmed by the Mercederian brother who had just arrive

³³⁶ “...[Q]ue se hablava mucho en el armada que se juntava para hir sobre ellos y que dezían, que era como los perros que ladran mucho y muerden poco...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. E1950, 9.10.1618

³³⁷ “...[U]n natural deste rreyno, que llego anoche, falta de halla desde los primeros del pasado donde a sido esclavo siete u ocho años y es hombre de buena razón...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg 1950, 9.10.1618

³³⁸ “...[P]or lo bien que escriven del los religiosos que están en Argel y otras personas, y an referido de palabra otros rescatados que an venido de allá...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg 198, 22.3.1604.

from there.”³³⁹ Likewise, as I illustrated in the discussion of captives as letter-bearers, we have seen a number of instances in which captives functioned as the verifiers of knowledge originating in the Maghrib. And in the previous chapter, in the discussion of letters of recommendations, we have seen how captives wrote to the Inquisition on behalf of renegades who returned to Spain, vouching for the religious identity of the letter’s object and for his behavior towards Christians in the Maghrib. In the last few examples, captives fulfill their role as verifier of questionable information in the service of Spanish officials, information which often originated from Muslims or other suspected of cooperating with Muslims (like the French consul in Algiers). That detainees were recruited to play this part suggests that even during their captivity, while serving as slaves, captives maintain a legal subjectivity, acknowledged in Spain, which could be employed to vouch for different kinds of claims, in various administrative and legal contexts.

5. *Chronicling Algiers*

In the letter that the Marquis of Villamizar sent to the Council of State on September 4th, 1604, the Marquis mentions one of his informers in Algiers:

A person held captive there [in Algeirs] who meticulously provides me with extremely detailed reports of everything that happens there; and in order for your majesty to see it, I send his majesty the very precise accounts I have from that person. That person wishes to leave the position he holds and it seems to me so useful to have him there.³⁴⁰

Three weeks later, in a separate letter to the Council, dated September 24th, 1604, the viceroy of Majorca notes that one of the two attached reports was written “by a friend in Algiers.”³⁴¹ Various viceroys and Generals captaining the Habsburg’s Mediterranean territories had similar contacts and ‘friends.’ Who were these ‘friends’? Did the viceroys nominate and fire them, as suggested by the letter the Marquis of Villamizar? Or did

³³⁹ “...[P]or no tener entera satisfacción de que fuese suya y habiendo hecho diligencia para asegurarme de esto he allado muchos cautivos que afirman ser del dicho vaxa y assi mismo lo dize el fraile redemptor de la Merced que ahora vino de allá.” Valencia, AGS, *Estado*, Leg 198, 9.4.1604.

³⁴⁰ “...[U]na perssona que esta cautivo allá el qual poner gran cuidado en darne avisos de todo lo que passa muy particularmente y para que v.m. lo vea rremito las relaciones que e tenido suyas que son muy puntuales. Dessea mucho salir del trabajo en que está y pareziendome quan combeniente es tenerle allá.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, Valencia, 4.9.1604

³⁴¹ “...[U]n amigo de Argel...” Ibid.

well-connected captives establish networks of spies and informants from below, leaving their superiors with little power in this regard?

In the previous section, I used what I called the ‘chronicles of Algiers’ to illuminate how Algerians depended on the circulation of captives for knowledge of the Spanish armada. These chronicles were lengthy reports written by captives in Algiers from at least 1602 up to 1614, which were later sent to Majorca as well as other Iberian cities. Undoubtedly, somewhere in the General Archive of Simancas, various other reports – from Algiers and other Maghribi cities – still lie buried, awaiting discovery. The reports discussed in this section, in addition to their exceptional richness, give voice to captives during their captivity. In these documents, the captive/author’s subject position is not that of a humble supplicant begging his king for help, as is the case in the majority of the extant texts written by captives. These are authoritative, and are probably among the best sources for the history of Algiers during the period. This makes their neglect by scholars particularly surprising.³⁴²

There is very little information available about the authors of these documents or about the conditions of their writing and their circulation.³⁴³ Sosa, for example, the author of the *Topography*, formed part of small intellectual community in Algiers whose members had access to books. He claimed that in his company were sixty-two learned captives in Algiers, among them ecclesiastics, jurists, lawyers, doctors and others. Members of this community included captives whom the Algerians assumed could be ransomed for a hefty price; however, Sosa also refers to discussions shared with learned Muslims and renegades. Like this subterranean and diverse intelligentsia, the authors of the chronicles that I investigate in this section formed a parallel but distinct writing community. Its members were neither scholars nor priests but rather soldiers spying for their king. Like Sosa’s circle, this group too had varied contacts with Muslims and renegades, but the discussions they shared were not about faith, such as in the case of

³⁴² Moreover, the few scholars who have utilized these documents read them with the grain so as to reconstruct the events that they depict. See: Bunes, “Felipe III y la defensa del Mediterráneo;” Carlos Rodríguez, Joulia Saint-Cyr, *Felipe III y El rey de Cuco*; Henry, Lapeyre, *Du Nouveau sur Simon Danzer*, in *Miscellanea offerts à aangeboden aan Charles Verlinden*, Institut Historique Belge de Rome: Bruxelles-Rome, 1974, pp. 335-340.

³⁴³ Garcés, *Cervantes en Argel*, pp. 164-172, “Introducción”, pp. 57-58.

Sosa, but rather about the city topography, its military might, and the political situation in Algiers and in the Mediterranean world.

I have examined reports written by four captives who served as Spanish imperial agents. The earliest was Vicente Colom – probably a Catalan as his name suggests – who documented the events in Algiers from August 1602, and probably much earlier, until near his death on September 22nd, 1607. Juan Ramírez, a playwright and theater director who was captured along with his wife and company on August 24th, 1602, also authored a number of reports until 1604. Colom’s successor, Juan Baptista Soriano, a second lieutenant, offers the names of several other captives who worked to assist him in his task. It is unclear when Baptista Soriano stopped documenting the city, but the next extant report was penned by an anonymous captive from the Valencian city of Denia, who covered the main events in Algiers from the beginning of September 1613 until March 1614. Each of the chroniclers has a unique tone and emphasis, yet all were extremely disciplined in their writing, sometimes documenting even quotidian happenings. The second lieutenant Baptista Soriano, like the anonymous chronicler from Denia, hardly missed a day; his account spans from September 19th, 1607, to October 11th, 1608. Some entries are extremely short. Often, he laconically reports “Monday, 1st of the said [month], offered nothing.”³⁴⁴ But other entries, especially in earlier reports written by Ramírez and by Vincente Colom, are longer, filling a page or more.

A few themes were common to all: (1) Spain’s strategic plans and the knowledge that Algerians had thereof; (2) the return of Algerian corsairs to the port, and their prizes; (3) the public mood in the city; (4) power struggles between the Pasha, the corsairs, the Janissaries, and the Sultan; and (5) the condition of captives. The negotiations between the Habsburgs and the ‘King of Cuco’ occupied a central place among the reports of the captive-spies. At the turn of the century, Spain had negotiated the possibility of allying with the Berber ‘kingdom’ in order to launch a joint attack on Algiers.³⁴⁵ As a result, Spanish agents spent long periods of time in the court of the King of Cuco while his royal emissaries traveled constantly to the Spanish court, often staying for extended periods.

³⁴⁴ “Lunes primero del dicho no se offresció cosas alguna [sic.]”, AGS, *Consejo de Estado*, Leg. 210, 24.10.1608.

³⁴⁵ On the negotiations between Spain and Cuco, see: Carlos Rodríguez, *Felipe III y El rey de Cuco* and Pierre, Boyer, “Espagne et Kouko. Les négociations de 1598 et 1610,” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 8 (1970): 25-40.

Moreover, it was not uncommon for Christians who had escaped from Algiers to visit Cuco before continuing their journey back into Christendom. The chroniclers thus documented the escape of captives and their journeys to Cuco and their seizure by the Algerians as well as quotidian military encounters between Algiers and Cuco, the arrival of Spanish spies to Cuco, and the arrival of spies from Cuco to Algiers.

When the chronicles reported on political events related to Algerian policy vis-à-vis Cuco, their discussions highlighted the power dynamics that animated the relationships between political actors in Algiers, Tunis and the Ottoman Sultan.³⁴⁶ At other times, the chronicles reported on debates about captivity. Whenever French were imprisoned – usually for the rescue or aid of other captives – the French consul demanded their release according to the terms of the peace treaty already established between the Ottomans and the French monarchy. It was usually the Janissaries who did not respect these treaties, whereas the Pasha tended to represent Ottoman interests and demanded the release of the captives. In other instances, the Janissaries found themselves opposed to both the Pasha and the corsairs, as was the case when the Janissaries forbade the redemption or ransom of captives directly from the city. In response, the Pasha, whom the corsairs supported in his objection to this prohibition, namely, because of its potential negative economic impact, refused to pay the Janissaries. Another recurring theme in these Algerian chronicles is the maritime arrival of corsairs laden with captives. The authors are not systematic in this regard and do not record all the prizes. The focus was on Spaniards and imperial subjects. For example, the unknown chronicler from Denia noted in September, 1613, how on “Friday the 13th, captain Deli Mami arrived [in Algiers and] brought twenty Spanish and Italian Christians.”³⁴⁷ The chronicles were sure to report on the capture of priests, monks, women, children, or families, and, on occasion, they also referred to the capture of other nationals.

The chroniclers, then, from their perch of captivity in Algiers recorded and commented on a large swath of the relevant political and economic dynamics and events

³⁴⁶ While the chroniclers do not dedicate a lot of attention to the relations between Tunis and Algiers, they shed light on the hitherto little known tensions. Eighteenth-century Tunisian historians provide us with copies of peace agreements between these Ottoman regencies, but the records they copied cover the period between 1614 and 1628, see: Henia, “Archives ottomans en Tunisie et histoire régionale.” The chroniclers, then, shed light on struggles which later resulted in these treaties.

³⁴⁷ “Biernes a 13 allego el capitán Deli Mami traxo beinte cristianos españoles y italianos,” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 255, 21.4.1604

– both local and international. Some of the information touched on real political and strategic maneuvers of the Spaniards. But how important were these records for the Spaniards? To what degree did they serve them? As mentioned in the last section, Colom was especially alert to the arrival of news about the movements of the Spanish armada, and meticulously noted the state of knowledge that Algerians had about Spanish imperial plans. His operator, namely the viceroy of Majorca, was obviously uninterested in such information in and of itself, but rather for its effect on the population and, most importantly, the Algiers' governing elites. For the Spaniards, Colom's records were significant for their illumination of Algerian interests and anxieties as well as their degree of preparedness for a potential Spanish attack. The idea of attacking Algiers, as mentioned, was popular among the ruling members of the Spanish crown during the first two decades of the seventeenth century; yet these plans were never secret, and rumors regarding them circulated regularly across the sea. The fear of their execution was constant in Algiers. And the Spaniards, for their part, had a near-obsessive interest in Algerian intelligence. Knowledge of what the Algerians knew about Spanish strategizing, and how alert or complacent they were, was as important for the execution of a successful attack as having exact information about Algerian military strength. In that sense, what the Algerians knew about 'la armada secreta' conditioned not only the public sentiment in Algiers and its preparedness, but also the feasibility of such an attack.

Part of the information that the chroniclers registered, then, held strategic value. It is difficult to gauge this value because the frequency with which the chroniclers sent their reports is unclear. The surviving chronicles written by Baptista Soriano, which cover more than a single year, form a single narrative. Thus, its information likely lost some of its potency by the time it reached the author's operators in Majorca. The last chronicle authored by the anonymous captive from Denia – which covered more than six months – was sent to Majorca, according to the viceroy, in but a few short pieces. Its cramped handwriting and unusual spelling, uncharacteristic of documents issued in the viceroy's palace, do suggest that it was penned by a single author, the anonymous from Denia, and sent in one piece to Majorca. When captives felt they had news they had to send immediately, they ransomed a reliable fellow captive and sent the message with him. On June 26th, 1603, a ransomed captive from Nice arrived in Majorca on a French ship. The

viceroy's letter to the king describes his arrival by stating that "the others in Algiers have ransomed that captive in order to send with him to His Majesty the attached letter, and to provide an oral report about the things that happened between the Algerians and the king of Cuco."³⁴⁸ It is likely, then, that pieces of information gathered in the chronicles were sent with ransomed captives while longer reports that covered a full year or more reiterated its details and rendered longer term trends.

While little is known about the mechanics of the distribution of these diaries, even less is known about the way in which captives turned into secret agents. Testimonies submitted to the viceroys of Sicily and Naples from ex-captives who served as imperial secret agents in Istanbul spoke to the professional formation of captive-spies and the activities that such positions entailed.³⁴⁹ The Sicilian Juan Leonardo Saya, for example, was captured in 1589 while sailing from Palermo to Trapani under the order of the duke of Alba, then the viceroy of Sicily. Taken to Algiers, where he became the slave of Ali Pasha, he quickly moved with the latter to Istanbul.³⁵⁰ There, "as a slave he did certain services, helping to ransom slaves with his own industry." After finally ransoming himself, his master sent him to take care of his garden and summer house. He took advantage of these responsibilities, and, as he explained in April, 1604, to the viceroy of Naples, the count of Benavente, became an agent in the Spanish imperial network of intelligence in Istanbul. In his master's garden, he states:

He hid all those coming from Naples to seek secret information, and those who served in Istanbul met in the same garden – as it was a secret place – to write to the viceroys of the kingdom [of Naples] and to those of Sicily, and specifically [when] Juan Policroci, who arrived from Naples by order of Francisco de Castro to get information, was caught by the Turks, and since it was made known [among the members of the intelligence network] that the Turks wanted to [question and] torment Policroci all those who served his majesty in Istanbul hid in this garden until the fury will calm down for fear of being discovered. And

³⁴⁸ "...[Q]ue los otros de Argel habían rescatado a respeto de inbiar con él a su magestad la inclusa carta y de palabra hacerle relación de las cosas que pasan entre los de Argel y el rey Cuco." Majorca 26.6.1603, AGS, Estado, Leg. 192. Apud Carlos Rodríguez, *Felipe III y El rey de Cuco*, p. 84.

³⁴⁹ While Bruxelles became the center of imperial intelligence within the European territories during Philip II's final years as well as the early portion of his son's reign, Naples was the epicenter of information in the Habsburg's Mediterranean, see: Bély, Lucien, "Espions et ambassadeurs à l'époque moderne," in: Ed. Béatrice Perez, *Ambassadeurs, apprentis espions et maitres comploteurs*, pp. 21-30 and Bunes Ibarra, "Avis du Levant."

³⁵⁰ AGS, *Consejo de Estado*, Leg. 1102, Fol. 88, 28.4.1605.

because of the ease Saya had of hiding slaves in the garden, he gave shelter to many Christians until they got the chance to escape...³⁵¹

Saya was not the only captive-spy in Istanbul. An earlier petition submitted by Juan Domínguez from Cáceres in Extremadura in April, 1595, further illustrates how captives rose to positions of relative or informal power, which thus enabled them to help others and serve the Crown. Domínguez, captured in Tunis in 1574, struck an agreement with his master, married a Christian slave whom he had ransomed, was eventually liberated, and was then put in charge of his master's house. Like Saya, Domínguez took advantage of the opportunity, and "in that house he hid all the spies of His Majesty sent by the viceroy of Naples." He lost the position he had gained, and the trust he had established with his master, when the latter caught him – "his master tore apart the letter of manumission he had, and put him in his galley which left for the island of Chios."³⁵²

Ex-captives like Saya and Dominguez took advantage of the years they had spent as slaves, acquiring fluency in the enemy's tongue and transforming this into an asset, and came to master the secrets of the city in which they were held captive. The same Domínguez, for example, claimed that he "understands well all the languages" and "he knew everything in the city."³⁵³ During and following their captivity, such entrepreneurial captives also established valuable social connections. Hernán Pérez, who had spent 35 years as a captive in Istanbul, managing finally to return to Christendom in 1613, attached to his petition for help numerous letters of recommendation, all signed by important individuals whom he had connected with during his tenure of captivity: the patriarch, the English and French ambassadors in Istanbul, various Spanish spies posted there as well as captains and soldiers whom he had rescued from their captivity.³⁵⁴ While

³⁵¹ "...[E]n el qual recogía todos los que ivan de aquí a tomar lengua, y los que allí servían se recogían al mismo jardín por ser lugar secreto para escrivir á los virreyes d'este rreyno y de Sicilia, y en particular haviendo ido de aquí por orden de don Francisco de Castro, Juan Policroci á tomar lengua fué preso de turcos , y por haverse publicado, que le querían dar tormento, todos los que allí servían a v.m. en cosas secretas se escondieron en el dicho jardín por temor de no ser descubiertos, hasta que passó aquella furia, y por la comodidad que tenia de esconder esclavos en el jardín recogía muchos cristianos hasta que les ofrecía ocasión para huirse..." AGS, *Consejo de Estado*, Leg. 1103, Fol. 115, 22.6.1605.

³⁵² "...[E]n aquella casa tenía y escondía todas las espías de s.m. que mandaba el bisorey de Nápoles" ; "...[D]onde su amo le rronpio la carta que le tenía heha de libertad y lo metió en su galera que yba aquel año por baide la isla de Sio," AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 443, Fol. 89, 10.4.1595.

³⁵³ "Y ansí el sobredicho lo hacía porque era platico en la ciudad y entiende bien todas las lenguas," Ibid.

³⁵⁴ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 782, 6.21.1613.

from 1581, the Spaniards and the Ottomans were officially at peace, making the establishment of such connections less difficult, the numbers of spies and the multiplicity and depth of their connections was exceptional and even in Algiers effective networks of intelligence were established.

Unlike Pérez, Domínguez, and Saya, at least one of the chroniclers of Algiers, Vincente Colom, died in the course of his duty as a captive-spy. Following their release – if indeed they ever were released – there are no extant documents regarding the fate of Colom’s fellow authors-in-captivity. But the report of Juan Baptista Soriano and the letter of Juan de Vilaragut, who was the viceroy of Majorca between 1606 and 1610, clarify the circumstances under which agents were formally installed following the capture or outing of their predecessors. The following events were reported in the account Baptista Soriano sent in 1608. In the summer of 1607, the viceroy of Majorca sent a Muslim, who had served him and whom he trusted, with a letter to Colom, the captive who had preceded Baptista Soriano in the position. The Muslim’s cover story was that he had managed to ransom himself from slavery in Majorca and had returned to the Maghrib. The Algerians, however, suspected him and then tortured him until he admitted that he was carrying a letter to Colom. Colom claimed that the letter was from a friend, and that he had torn it up after reading it. In response, he was questioned under torture – “they began to cruelly torment him.... so that he would confess what the letter contained and who had sent it to him, and who his comrades were along with whom he gave accounts of everything that happened in this city to His Majesty.” Colom died without disclosing who the other members of the network were, and Baptista Soriano took his place.

It is unclear whether the viceroy was able to directly nominate a specific candidate or if the next connected member stepped into the vacant position. In the letter from the viceroy to the king, he recounted these events and depicted Bautista Soriano’s nomination as the result of the viceroy’s own careful selection. He describes the measures he took upon hearing about Colom’s death:

I tried to inquire about the persons that have remained there and who could do what Colom did and enlighten us about what happens there, and a few Christian captives who arrived in the port told me that no one fitted better the job than the second lieutenant Juan Baptista Soriano... and so I wrote to him about that matter

assuring him on behalf of your majesty that he would be generously compensated...³⁵⁵

The quote reflects the striking degree of connectivity that captivity created between the two cities. News constantly circulated, and the story about this agent's death immediately reached the viceroy. The viceroy easily inquired about the proper replacement and sent a letter to the candidate asking whether the latter might be interested in the position. The letter listed the benefits the position offered, and the viceroy received the candidate's approval of his offer. This intensive and fluent exchange took place between two cities that imagined each other as a source of constant fear and threat. At the same time, it echoes the viceroy's attempts to demonstrate to the king the effectiveness of his ties in Algiers. But did the viceroy really have a choice in the matter? The viceroy had more than one contact in the city, and other documents reflect his ability to plant new agents in the city when the need arose. But in this case, the viceroy may have had less flexibility. The captives that he had asked told him that Baptista Soriano was the appropriate and worthy candidate because "he had many friends in the Council of the State (*duana*), the same that Colom had and for having helped the latter in this service for a long time."³⁵⁶ In a way then, Baptista Soriano was the only candidate, and had initiated himself into office long before Colom died.

Baptista Soriano's connections were the main reason for the viceroy's *de facto* approval. Agents like Soriano had social networks formed through relationships with free Christians in the cities in which they were imprisoned – like the ones Hernán Pérez developed in Istanbul – with other captives, and perhaps most importantly, with powerful renegades and Muslims. Several entries in Colom's diary offer a glimpse of both the volume of these networks and their fragility. On August 26th, Colom recorded the arrival of a certain renegade sent to Algiers from Cuco. The Algerians, who suspected the renegade, tortured him, and he admitted that he was sent to meet a Portuguese captive

³⁵⁵ "...[P]rocuré infórmame de las personas que allá que quedavan que pudiesen hazer lo que el hazía y dar nos luz de lo que por allá passava, y algunos cautivos christianos que aquí aportaron, me dixerón que ninguna era más apropósito para ello que el alférez Juan Baptista Soriano...", AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 210

³⁵⁶ "...[P]or tener en duana muchos amigos que son los mesmos que avise a v.m. tenía Vicente Colom, y aver ayudadole al dicho en este ministerio mucho tiempo...", *Ibid.*

employed as a gardener.³⁵⁷ By torturing the Portuguese, they extracted the identity of another of the group members, a Genovese called Pablo. The Portuguese also mentioned the name of a Portuguese priest called Salvador de la Cruz. Continuing their investigation, the Algerians caught another Genovese and another Portuguese, all of whom they killed by flaying.³⁵⁸ Developing these social chains and establishing valuable ties with powerful Muslims and renegades in the city required long years in captivity, and the gaining of a certain standing. And, like any social network, the maintenance of these spy networks required the exchange of gifts. Hence, the first thing Baptista Soriano asked of the viceroy was, “two dozen colored Toledo hats made of fine woolen cloth in order to give out to the friends who tell him everything that happens, one dozen of the best brand and another, of a lesser one.” The viceroy, in a manner that further demonstrates the exceptional degree of connectivity between Algiers and Majorca, wrote to the king and asked him “to order the hats, [because] once they arrive, I will send them.”³⁵⁹ The viceroy’s letter also illustrates the relational aspects of the positions that these captive-spies occupied were – that is, how interdependent the position of Soriano at the vice royal court in Majorca was upon the connections he had in Algiers; but at the same time, his connections in Algiers were at least in part dependent upon the power he had at the viceroy’s court. Moreover, his ability to maintain the position depended on his ability to make visible his value to each side. We have very little information about such maneuvering. But it is likely that the individuals who recommended him to the viceroy were his own dependents and, in that sense, his ability to display his connections to the viceroy was a result of his own efforts. Yet – again, displaying the circularity and fragility of his connections – he managed to maintain his Algerian connections only insofar as he was able to deliver the promised gifts; that his request for colored hats was fulfilled immediately thus confirmed the connections that got him ‘officially’ nominated to the position.

³⁵⁷ Gardens play a pivotal role in almost all textual genres involving captives. Many captives and ex-captives in Istanbul, as we have seen, had to take care of their owners’ gardens and summerhouses, a position that many captives abused.

³⁵⁸ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198.

³⁵⁹ “Pídeme en su carta dos docenas de bonetes de Toledo de grana colorados para repartir entre los amigos que le avisan de lo que se passa, la una docena de marca mayor y la otra de los más baxoas.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 210.

Regardless of the how late such chronicles arrived in Majorca, they reflect the degree to which Spanish officials penetrated the Algerian administration and how captives could establish valuable ties that provided them with access to spaces and knowledge most captives, and perhaps most Algerians, were excluded from. Unlike information sent in letters and extracted in interviews, the chronicles analyzed in this section were produced by experts remunerated when possible by Spanish official to whom they reported. Textually, they differed from interviews and letters in that they unfolded in time. As chroniclers the authors mainly listed events which did not build up into narratives. However, these lists and details, often unrelated one to the other, ended up forming a narrative whose protagonist was the city of Algiers, its rhythms, and the fears, happiness and expectations some of its populations experienced – all transmitted from the perspective of Spanish captives and spies. While captives-cum-spies of the kind examined above produced narratives and chronicles, during the first two decades of the seventeenth century, various captives, self-designated experts on the Maghrib, produced spatial accounts, visual and textual, on which the next section focuses

6. Mapping Algiers in Word and Image

In the first decades of the seventeenth century, a number of ex-captives, renegades, and other ‘people of the frontier’ produced a large number of what may be called urban topographic narratives, mainly about Algiers and its surroundings.³⁶⁰ Unlike knowledge producers and carriers discussed above, some of these authors had independently initiated contact with government officials. They convinced the latter of their expertise, provided them with plans which the authors promised, pointed out the cities’ Achilles’ heel, and expected to be remunerated. These texts usually provided more or less detailed descriptions of the spatial organization of the city and its military might; and they were occasionally accompanied by visual aids, maps, or plans. For example, an early report from 1563, compiled by a few ex-captives, lists only the city’s corsairs, the ships, and their manpower. It is short, covering no more than a folio size sheet, but its authors had

³⁶⁰ Topographic narratives were not the only kind of descriptions of North Africa that captives have compiled. For example, in 1592, Francisco de Narváez authored a long text recounting the history of the kingdom of Cuco and its relations with its neighbors and the Spanish Empire, AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 364, Fol. 405.

drawn a map of the city on the back of the sheet. Sometimes, the captives or renegades who composed these topographic narratives were obeying the orders of military bureaucrats. At other times, the authors of these accounts initiated the writing and submission of such texts upon identifying a royal demand and were hoping to gain some form of economic compensation for their efforts. Other reports were produced by individuals who were commissioned specifically to verify data from other captives. From all the media examined in the last sections, these topographic reports are the closest to works such as de Sosa's *Topography*. This is the case in the description of the city gates, moat and other architectural elements. It is hard to determine whether the authors consulted de Sosa's work or were simply employing a similar descriptive model. One thing is clear. The authors always add to the data de Sosa provided, whether in reference to the number of Janissaries posted in the city or in their descriptions of the way space was inhabited. These reports circulated among the nobles and viceroys who ruled the Mediterranean frontier of the Habsburg Empire. They were copied and circulated in limited circles. A report arriving in Sanlúcar could have been copied and travel across the Spanish littoral as far as Valencia. Likewise, reports from Majorca circulated and were sent to Barcelona, Valencia, and Madrid.

In some cases, the textual panorama is so descriptively rich that one could draw a visual map on its basis. A good example is the report detailed compiled in 1618 by Rodrigo Pardo that spreads over twelve one-sided folios. Pardo's story of capture is especially stirring. As a child, he left Balmaceda, a small village about nineteen miles west of Bilbao, and enlisted in the imperial army. In 1610, at the age of fourteen, he was sent by his superiors to the tiny island of Santa Pola, near Alicante. The goal of his mission did not hinge upon the security of the Empire. Rather, he was sent to find a hound dog that the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the Marquis of VillaFranca, and other nobles lost on the island in their hunting trip. It was then that the Algerian corsairs took Pardo captive. His master, a Sicilian renegade, did all he could to force Pardo to convert, but the latter withstood the trial. Only when the renegade captor threatened to take Pardo to Istanbul, a city notorious among captives for offering little opportunity for ransom, did Pardo surrender, fearing that he would never return home. After his conversion, at about

the age of sixteen, Pardo was enlisted again, this time joining the militia of the Janissaries, in which he served for three to four years before escaping back to Spain.

Pardo's experience of Algiers was short in comparison to the captivity periods of others, who produced similar texts, but the fact that he converted and served as a Janissary offered him an insider's look; this partly explains the degree of detail he provides. Beyond his privileged position, Pardo must have had a talent for spatial perception, and an extraordinary ability to translate it into writing. Urban topography was a driving factor in his documentation, and he does not fail to outline how space is inhabited and functions socially. Here is a part of his description of the city gates, and the distances separating them:

The city has five gates... That one is followed by the New Gate which is near the Kasbah, and from this to the other there is a seven-hundred feet distance and from this gate, underneath the ground, the water runs inside the town through domestic caves all the way to the barracks, the king's house, and city, and without it, no water mill could function and it could be easily disconnected, and the city [could be easily] put under siege as it has no other [source of water] but that one. And in addition, the water they have is little and brackish and not good to drink. And because the Turks and the salaried men are the first to benefit from the water, sometimes when there is a shortage of water and they drank of the little that is available, they became sick... and the rest of the city gets its drinking water from a few wells outside the city...³⁶¹

Additional points of reference – such as the city towers, the Kasbah, the main streets crossing the city, and the forts outside it – are provided with the same minute detail. Pardo lists their respective distances as well as their locations vis-à-vis one another so as to enhance the potential usefulness of his detailed information.

Other reports were not so detailed as Pardo's but their authors compensated for that by attaching plans. For instance, the report that Símon Catena sent to the Spanish crown artfully combined text and image, narrative and plans, which complemented each other. Catena, a Sicilian, was taken captive in 1596 and spent eighteen years as a slave in Algiers; eventually, in December 1614, he engineered his escape to Spain. Shortly after

³⁶¹ “La ciudad tiene cinco puertas... A esta sigue la puerta nueva que esta junto a la alcaçaba y desta de la otra setecientos pies y por esta puerta y debaxo del tierra entra el agua en caña de cueba a las encaxerías, casa del rrey, y ciudad que con toda ella no puede moler un molino y con facilidad se puede cortar y poner de todo punto en aprieto a la ciudad porque no tiene otro respecto de que él además que ay es de pocos y estos salobres y no buena para beber. Y porque los turcos y gente de paga son los primeros que goçan de el agua algunas vezes que les ha faltado y an bebido de los pocos an enfermado... y toda la demás gente de la ciudad beben de algunas fuentes que están afuera della.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1950.

that, he joined a certain Pablo Pedro Floriano, an engineer, and compiled a report on the city, indicating how the Spaniards might overtake it. The plans he devised and attached to his report, probably drawn up by his engineer friend, described in detail various elements of the landscape. Assigning an index of letters to the forts and gates he lists, the reader is able to quickly move back and forth between the written text and visual aids – “Which are in the fort marked B in the plan which accompanies this report... many could go with explosives to the gate marked C and the gate ‘of Babazon’ marked D.”³⁶²

The intent behind these reports was always strategic. In contrast to the imperial desires expressed in the works of de Torres, Mármol, and De Sosa, the goal here is narrower – the conquest of Algiers. Thus, whether the authors of the topographic narratives wrote in response to direct request or as an entrepreneurial act, they all pointed out what they claimed was the city’s Achilles’ heel, meaning the easiest, cheapest, and safest way to conquer it. Catena, for example, claimed the key for an easy conquest was a tunnel that ran underneath the city, in which he had hidden for three days prior to his escape:

A cave which is near the port and it goes underneath the grand mosque... and it runs a large distance in the city... it is about eighteen feet high and fourteen wide and in the middle there is a man-made channel that becomes the aqueduct through which the waste and sewer liquids of the city are washed out.³⁶³

He suggested that the crown send fifteen or twenty galleys with eight thousand men. Based on his experience, he explained, upon the sight of arriving galleys, especially Spanish and Italian, everybody in the city would run to the mosque, as it provided the best panorama of the coast – “and the people who go there, go so quickly, that it is certified that the city (*lugar*) [immediately] depopulates, and the first who go are the soldiers.”³⁶⁴ The arrival of the galleys, he urged, should be carefully orchestrated with the explosion of mines installed beforehand in the cave. As everybody filed into the mosque, the explosives would kill many, break the walls, and leave the rest of the

³⁶² “...[Q]ue están en el fuerte señalado B en la planta que va con este memorial... podrá también acudir alguna gente con petardos a la puerta señalada C y la de Babazon señalada D.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1952.

³⁶³ “...[U]na gruta que está cerca del puerto y passa debaxo la mosquea grande que es como decir la iglesia mayor y va adentro gran trecho de la ciudad... tendrá diez y ocho pies de alto y catorce de ancho y por medio ay un canal hecho a posta que viene a ser el aquaducto por donde salen las vertientes y inmundicias del lugar...” Ibid.

³⁶⁴ “...[L]a gente que acude es con tanto extremo que puede certificar se despuebla todo el lugar y los primeros que acuden es la gente de guerra.” Ibid.

survivors “atemoriçado[s]” and unable to protect themselves. His plan, then, was based on his direct experience in the city and an understanding of its rhythms, fleshed out with in-depth knowledge of explosives substantiated by the evocation of his engineer friend.

Others boosted their authority as experts by making references to connections with insiders who promised to hand the city over to the Spaniards. Mathias Murillo, a Catalan, was captured in 1612 by Algerian corsairs on his way back home from Flanders, where he had fought for fifteen years. Under unknown circumstances, he arrived back home in Barcelona after only a few months. Three years passed before he came to reflect on the painful experience of captivity, compiling a long report about Algiers. Murillo claimed that he had befriended a Catalan renegade, Haçan Masul, a Janissary division captain, in the prison’s tavern, a space which invited less violent interactions among renegades, Turks, and Christians. Haçan Masul missed his mother and brothers and was disenchanted with the life of a Muslim. He promised to take advantage of his position and “help to hand over” Algiers to the Spaniards. According to Murillo, the Spaniards should arrive with thirty galleys and four thousand men to Algiers, march to the New Gate, break in with explosives, and proceed to the Kasbah. The attack would not end there, but the key to success, according to Murillo, was taking over the Kasbah. Murillo goes on to explain that four thousand soldiers – a small number in comparison to the military manpower in the city – might easily succeed in the takeover since many Janissaries were either too young or too unfit to fight.

In this as in other cases, the Crown wanted to verify the facts before risking a fortune in the execution of the plan. The authors of these texts were usually exact in the topographies they laid out, but their plans turned out to be unfounded or the connections they laid claim to retracted. In the case of Catena, the Crown decided to accept his advice and send the engineer Pedro Pablo Floriano to investigate and verify the feasibility of the plan. Floriano’s report claimed Catena’s plan was unfounded but he presented an alternative.³⁶⁵ In the case of Murillo, Prince Filiberto sent a second lieutenant – disguised as a merchant – to Algiers to see whether Haçan Masul was still inclined to help the

³⁶⁵ 6.1.1615, Ibid

Spaniards to take over.³⁶⁶ Masul was reluctant to speak with Filiberto's messenger about anything other than business.

Pardo, Catena, and Murillo employed different strategies to authorize their plans. We have seen how Catena enhanced the authority of this plan by providing, on the one hand, a graphic representation of the narrative, and, on the other, by evoking his friend's professional background as an engineer and as the son of the major engineer of the state of Milan. Such details were meant to compensate for the relative dullness of the reports, and perhaps for other weak points. The fact that his plan relied heavily on the presumed terror that would paralyze the residents of Algiers and prevent them from responding to the attack is not terribly convincing. This reliance on fear, functioning as it was as a strategic fulcrum, was echoed in his preference of the subjunctive over the indicative mode, a grammatical mode reflecting feelings rather than facts, and his use of qualifying expressions such as 'it is hard to believe.' Taken together, these spurious rhetorical tactics de-authorized his ambitious plans – “and it is hard to believe they would or could resist, as they find themselves so terrorized with so many dead and *improviso* attacked.”³⁶⁷ Catena was aware of this. He also claimed that further investigation was needed – “first, there is a need to go back [to Algiers] to better know the cave”³⁶⁸ – volunteering to return to Algiers for that purpose with his friend Floriano. The security arrangements at night at the port, he explains, were sloppy – “there are no guards, but one Moor, who, upon seeing an arriving ship, asks, ‘who is there?’” He goes on to add that with his knowledge of Arabic, “[a] language in which he is very skilled,” he could easily sneak in.³⁶⁹ The fact that the Spaniards followed Catena's plan and sent someone to examine its feasibility reflects the crown's need for such initiatives; further, the need must have been common knowledge among people like Catena who marketed such adventure's designs. The crown accepted Catena and Floriano's offer to return to the city “dressed like a merchant,” to understand how much gunpowder would be required, and what the chances were that the plan would work. Perhaps the fact that the two promised

³⁶⁶ 5.8.1615, AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1948, fol. 230.

³⁶⁷ “Pues hallándose el pueblo tan atemorizado con tantas muertes y asaltado al *improvisso* no es de creer que hagan ni puedan hazer resisetncia...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1952.

³⁶⁸ “Lo primero ha de volver a reconoçer la dicha gruta...” Ibid.

³⁶⁹ “...[N]o ay ningunas guardas más de tan solamente un moro que viendo llegar algún navío pregunta quién es y para respondelle posee la lengua de que es muy plático...” Ibid.

that “everything they offer would cost nothing to his majesty nor risk anyone beyond their own lives” helped.³⁷⁰ This promise, however, did not prevent them from asking later for a compensation for their troubles and expenses.

Pardo’s authorial personality is different. His status as a Janissary provided him with a privileged perspective on the city when compared to that of the average captive. He had been captured at a young age and became a professional soldier early. He undoubtedly mastered Turkish and probably knew at least some Arabic. This must have marked him, from a Spanish point of view, as an authority on military information about Algiers. But the same features that made him a valuable insider also related to his conversion to Islam, and hence cast a shade of doubt on his moral persona, his intentions, and the reliability of the information he was producing. In his account, he had to negotiate the tensions created by his boundary-crossing position. At stake was more than convincing his interlocutors of the veracity of the topographic and military details he provided; as a convert, he was forced to convince them of his sincerity as a royal subject. The majority of renegades who ended up in the Holy Office were pardoned with relatively light punishments, but a few were burnt at the stake. Thus, theoretically, his conversion to Islam brought him great risk beyond the danger of being caught while providing false information about the ramparts of Algiers.

In light of this potentially dangerous situation, Pardo employed a few strategies in constructing his narrative. The first concerned his conversion and return to Spain. He stressed the mitigating circumstances of his conversion, recounting how he had been captured as a boy during military service forced to convert under violent circumstances. The context of his return was also favorable to him. Unlike other converts who were caught by the Spanish armada, Pardo risked his life in order to return. His account emphasizes his escape with three other renegades, after they took over the Muslim crew of a settee, and returned to Alicante. But beyond that, he also constructed a careful and balanced description of the city identifying himself as a credible witness. As we have seen, his narrative is exceptionally detailed, yet he explicitly acknowledged the limits of his knowledge and distinguished between what he saw himself and what he had heard from others. Thus, depicting the casbah, he reported:

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

And as there is no entry to it and only those he [Pardo] mentioned above.... are allowed in, he [Pardo] does not know in detail the defenses and fortifications it has. But he [Pardo] heard from people who were in that..."³⁷¹

Finally, even as Pardo measures and quantifies, his narrative goes beyond the mere formal description of a grid and portrays a living social space, the kind of detail that reflected his intimate knowledge of it. His description of the casbah's moat, for example, first provides strategic information: "The casbah and the city have a moat that should be more or less twenty feet wide in some parts and about twelve in others."³⁷² But then the text unfolds in other directions. As a defensive structure, he adds, the moat no longer functions:

It is weak and has little defensive importance... and it is in the process of turning into a place in which the children play and where the households placed against the wall throw their waste and in some parts [of it] there are orange [trees] and other trees."³⁷³

This addition signals Pardo as a keen observer, sensitive to the social pulse of the urban topography and the sense of place attached to the space.³⁷⁴ It also marks a major difference between the reports he and others examined in this section produced and de Sosa's *Topography*. While the latter has repeatedly claimed that he "knew everything that occurs in Algiers," he also described in detail the horrors of his captivity "locked in a dungeon, covered with chains, and shackled to a stone."³⁷⁵ His knowledge of the city then was mediated, always transmitted to him by others with whom he had the chance to communicate – Muslims, Jews, renegades, and captives. In contrast, the reports of Pardo, Catena and Murillo were based on experience which enabled them to claim expertise. The numerous reports of this kind produced in the first two decades, then, reflect a continuity between the printed elaborated books written by de Sosa, de Torres, and Mármol.

³⁷¹ "y por no haber entrada en ella ni permitirse sino solo a los que arriba se ha dicho... no sabe particular la defensa que tiene ni que fortificación. Pero sabe de personas que entran allí que..." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1950.

³⁷² "Esta alcaçaba y ciudad tiene foso que será de ancho veinte pies por algunas partes y cosa de doçe por otras poco más o menos"

³⁷³ "...[El] qual es baxo y de poca consideración y defensa... y viene a ser sitio donde los muchachos juegan y se hechan las ymundicias de las casas que están arrimadas a los muros y en algunas partes ay naranxos y otros árboles."

³⁷⁴ Here, he adds information on what was already written by Sosa, years before, See, De Sosa, chap VIII

³⁷⁵ Garcés, "An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam," p. 45.

7. Conclusion

Captives played an instrumental role in the production and circulation of knowledge about Morocco, the Ottoman Maghrib as well as the rest of the Ottoman Empire. The works of Mármol, Torres and Sosa, published at the turn of the century, are indicative of this fact, but so too were a mass of reports, chronicles, letters, interviews and rumors. Placing the published, well-known works within the same historical trajectory of other modes of knowledge transmission and circulation suggests continuity, rather than rupture, in the West's objectification of the Maghrib before and after the signing of a peace treaty between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in 1581. These forms of knowledge were produced in different contexts and were unequally distributed and received. In some cases, information carried across the sea by captives could disseminate quickly in a large city and cause public hysteria within the course of a few hours. Other kinds of knowledge, more elaborated, such as the chronicles compiled by the captives-spies may have, at least in some instances, reached their destination too late, only to become irrelevant.

Linking the violent practice of captive-taking with the production and circulation of strategic knowledge on the Maghrib illuminates some of the ways in which the 'Mediterranean' was created and recreated as a product of discourse in the early modern period. In previous chapters, we have seen how captivity, while disrupting the lives of those who had been taken captive and of their kin, enhanced connectivities across the sea and shaped it as a social space. I demonstrated how captives and renegades were subjects that an institution like the Inquisition suspected, on the one hand, while, on the other, they were the only one who could provide information that would refute such suspicions. In this chapter, I have also shown how the traffic in persons across the Mediterranean turned captives into knowledge producers and transmitters, participating in a discursive articulation of the sea. In this context, as before, captives occupied this dual position: that of valuable but suspicious informers. And yet, it was only captives who could put an end to such suspicions. The knowledge that captives produced and circulated was strategic in nature, and targeted questions of military offence and defense, thus, portraying the sea as a vast and conflicted space wherein self-contained political entities found themselves in violent struggle. The divisive discourses that these captives produced and spread,

however, were blind to their own role as a form of connectivity, furthering links and ties between the Maghrib and the Habsburg Empire.

Chapter 5:

Trusting Masters, Faithful Captives: Small Scale Networks of Ransom, Credit and Trust

“Privateering was an ancient form of piracy . . . with its own familiar customs, agreements and negotiation. While robbers and robbed were not actually accomplices before the event, like the popular figures of the *Commedia dell’Arte*, they were well used to methods of bargaining and reaching terms, hence the many networks of intermediaries.”

Fernand Braudel

1. *Introduction*

In this chapter, I examine small-scale networks of credit, ransom and trust and the intermediaries that formed them. I posit that these networks thrived throughout the early modern period facilitating the ransom of captives independently of the missions of the Orders of Redemption. I demonstrate this by reconstructing and analyzing the mechanics that characterized these networks in the seventeenth century, the modalities of ransom they facilitated, and the strategies that captives employed to obtain ransom through the networks. The focus, then, is on the function of the networks and on moments of friction and I examine numerous interactions, conflicts and agreements evolving around ransom and involving captives, their kin, and “go-betweens”. Captives could ask their relatives to

send money to the Maghrib, arrange credit via “go-betweens,” negotiate their exchange for a Muslim enslaved in the Hapsburg Empire, or leave a family member as a hostage in captivity and return to Spain to raise the ransom money. These networks, which facilitated a wide array of exchanges, posed serious problems for captives, captors, and intermediaries. Contrary to usual commercial practice, ransom was a hostile and fleeting business: the parties to ransom agreements were not relatives or colleagues, but rather potential enemies; yet they bound themselves in a single business deal, knowing they would never be involved in future transactions.³⁷⁶ Trust based on long-term shared experience could not be established under these circumstances. Many deals were completed only after captives crossed geographical and imperial boundaries into territories that supposedly protected them from their debtors; thus, the task of raising cash or getting credit became even harder. In light of the physical violence and religious hatred involved in the situation of captivity, how could trust be established? What mechanisms enabled such deals and enforced their realization? My analysis stresses the surprising role that socialized trust played at different stages of the process and the way some modalities of ransom placed captives in positions of power over their captors and mediators. Rather than an unconditional trust between Muslim captors, Jewish “go-betweens,” and Christian captives, the sentiment of trust in this system was a social relation grounded in and guaranteed by an array of royal bureaucracies and legal agents.

Iberian ransom operations began to leave archival traces as early as the twelfth century. They were conducted by individual intermediaries, called *alfaqueque* (from the Arabic *al-fakkak*) in Castile and *exea* in Aragon, who ransomed captives across the Muslim-Christian and the Castilian-Aragonese frontiers. They were usually active only within the vicinity of a single municipal center. The office was codified in the *Siete Partidas* but only in 1410 did the crown nominate a royal *alfaqueque*, who partly coordinated the operations of municipal *alfaqueques*. The latter, however, maintained

³⁷⁶ Early-modern Mediterranean merchants found different solutions to these problems. The Venetians employed family members and could count on their republic and its banks; see Frederic C. Lane, "Family Partnerships and Joint Ventures in the Venetian Republic," *The Journal of Economic History* 4 (1944) 178-196. The Genoese developed shared property rights that bound even unknown parties together; see Ricardo Court, "'Januensis ergo mercator': Trust and Enforcement in the Business Correspondence of the Brignole Family," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35 (2004) 987-1003. In contrast to these commercial contexts, the commodities in ransom agreements were parties to the deals; once a deal was initiated, the commodity disappeared as captives gained their liberty.

independence while the royal office was annulled in the fifteenth century.³⁷⁷ Until the fourteenth century, Jews usually occupied this position but then Christians and Muslims came to outnumber them.³⁷⁸ The governors and residents of Grenada and Valencia also employed *al fakkakīn* who were sent to Aragon or Castile to ransom Muslims.³⁷⁹ At least from the fourteenth century, merchants joined *alfaqueques* and *exeas* helping captives retrieve their liberty.³⁸⁰ While *Afaqueques* benefitted from diplomatic immunity, merchants took advantage of their commercial contacts across the borders. In that they offered their clients similar advantages: they knew the territory better than anyone else, acted on the spot and did not wait to collect large sums of money for the ransom of many captives as the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians did. Captives' kin knew that turning to *alfaqueques* or merchants increased the chances they would quickly unite with their beloved ones. On the other hand, ransom via *alfaqueques* was expensive enterprise and did not suit everyone..³⁸¹

Until recently, scholars have assumed that in the sixteenth century, when the Spanish crown began inspecting and regulating the work of the Orders of Redemption, a theme I examine in the next chapter, these “go-betweens” were marginalized and eventually disappeared. A couple of recent articles have challenged this periodization and pointed out the persistence of small scale ransom networks throughout the sixteenth

³⁷⁷ Andrés, Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, p. 65.

³⁷⁸ Jarbal, Rodríguez, *Captives and their Saviors in the Medieval Crown of Aragon*, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 120.

³⁷⁹ On the ransom of Muslim captives in medieval Valencia, see the appendix in Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, pp. 287-368. On the ways in which Muslim captives are envisioned in Andalusian fatwas, see: Francisco, Vidal Castro, “El cautivo en el mundo islámico: cisi3n y vivencia desde el otro lado de la frontera andalusi,” in *II Estudios de la frontera. Actividad y vida en la Frontera*, Congreso celebrado en Alcalá la Real, 19-22 de noviembre de 1997. Jaén, 1998, pp. 771-800. On Muslim and Jewish captives in Malaga, see: Raúl, González Arévalo, “Cautivos moros y judíos en Málaga en tiempo de los reyes católicos,” *Baetica*, 27 (2005), pp. 345-361. Often, scholars working with Andalusian and Maghribi sources have employed them to shed light on the ransom of Christians, see: Milouda Hasnaoui, “Lay ley Islámica y el rescate de los cautivos según las fetwas de al-Wanšarīsī e Ibn Tarkā,” in Giulio, Cipollone, Ed., *La liberazione dei “captive” tra cristianità e Islam. Oltre la crociata el il ġihās: tolleranza e servizio umanitario*, Ciudad del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2000, pp. 549-558.

³⁸⁰ María Teresa, Ferrer i Mallol, “La redempció de captius a la corona catalano-aragonesa (segle XIV),” *Anuario de estudios medievales*, 15 (1985): 237-297, esp. p. 267.

³⁸¹ These intermediaries charged ten percent of the ransom as their fee or a golden coin when Muslim captives were exchanged for Christians. In addition, the relatives of the captives had to pay their travel expenses, See: Ferrer i Mallol, “La redempció de captius a la corona catalano-aragonesa (segle XIV),” p. 262

century.³⁸² Such studies do not radically challenge the assumption about the withering away of non-institutional networks as part of state-formation, bureaucratization and centralization in the early modern period but rather debate the periodization, claiming these shifts took place only during the seventeenth century.³⁸³ The regulation the Spanish crown imposed on the redemptive labor of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians in the late sixteenth century multiplied their documental production and it enabled the future historical study of their activity; however, it failed to eliminate ransom practices of low-key players that had developed over a *longue durée*.

2. *Negotiating Liberty*

Captives in the Maghrib, as we saw in the first chapter, were positioned as parties in different kinds of exchanges. They were given as gifts, rented on a daily basis, borrowed on a seasonal basis, given in return for debts, exchanged for other goods, and in some cases, were bought in order to be converted and adopted. These temporary and permanent changes were moments of redefinition of captives' status, privileges, and living conditions, but did not bring the desired liberty.³⁸⁴ To achieve that, captives had to negotiate other kinds of exchanges. Via relatives or friends, they could contact the Trinitarians or the Mercedarians, orders charged with liberating captives from the Maghrib, and asked to be ransomed by the orders. The crown often ransomed its soldiers employing the Orders of Redemption or European consuls in the Maghrib for this purpose. Captives could also pay for their liberty or arrange an exchange for a Muslim enslaved in Christendom. Many ransom deals involved a combination of payment and

³⁸² For the first half of the sixteenth century, see: Pardo Molero, "Mercaderes, frailes, corsarios y cautivos." For the second half, see: Andújar Castillo, "Los rescates de cautivos;" Florenci Sastre I Portella, "Joan Seguí, un ciutadellenc rescatador de captius i espia al servei de Felip II," *Publicacions des Born*, 4 (1998): 9-26. While these articles focus exclusively on "go-betweens" that dealt with ransom in the sixteenth century, similar intermediaries fill in the margins of various studies dedicated to other sixteenth century themes, see for example, Nicloas Cabrillana, *Marbella en el siglo de oro*, Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1989, pp. 83-88. Among other cases, Cabrillana examines an intermediary who employed his Italian networks to ransom Spaniards from Istanbul.

³⁸³ Natividad Planas forms the exception among scholars of Maghribi-Spanish relations in the early modern period. In various studies she has focused on the Kingdom of Majorca and its relations with the Maghrib establishing a multiplicity of political, economic and social links (see the various articles referred to in this chapter and in the next one). Another article that analyzes seventeenth century ransom orations mediated by non-institutional "go-betweens" is Rafael Benítez, "La tramitación del pago de rescates," in Kaiser, Ed. *Le commerce des captifs*, pp. 193-217.

³⁸⁴ Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," p. 65.

exchange, as well as different ransom agents. Each of these ransom agents and modalities of rescue presented masters and slaves with distinct problems. Rescue via the orders may have been safer and more certain but also much slower. Paying ransom required borrowing or arranging for money to be sent from home; in some cases, captives could arrange for credit or leave a hostage until they paid their debt, a modality that I soon discuss. Exchange of slaves, on the other hand, required captives to participate in tracing a Muslim slave in Spain in whom their masters were interested, and negotiating the Muslim's release.

Some slave owners were reluctant to set their enslaved captives free, and most European captives were not ransomed, remaining in North Africa, and becoming an integral part of Muslim society.³⁸⁵ When Jerónimo de Pasamonte, who served as a galley's pace-setter, first solicited his ransom, his master refused, saying that he needed him in his galleys.³⁸⁶ Diego Galán did not receive an explanation; his master just yelled at him, saying that "even if they offer me a thousand ducats, I won't sell you. . . ."³⁸⁷ For the lucky minority who had owners interested in a deal, the first stage was setting up a ransom price. Over the century that this chapter treats, ransom prices ran roughly between 150 and 300 escudos, almost a thousand escudos less than what Gracián ended up paying.³⁸⁸ Scholars have also pointed out that captives' values were determined by variables such as age, sex, status, wealth, and professional skills.³⁸⁹ But rarely is value an

³⁸⁵ Robert Davis estimates that no more than 2% of the captives enslaved in the Maghrib were ransomed, see: Davis, "Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast," pp. 113-115.

³⁸⁶ "...que le diesen mil ducados no me podía dar...e íbamos en corso y que yo era bogavante...," see: Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, p. 73.

³⁸⁷ "...si me dan mil ducados, no te daré..." See: Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, p. 95.

³⁸⁸ This price is based on all the petitions captives and their relatives submitted to the crown between 1576 and 1699 and that are archived in the *Consejos* section of the AHN. These are the prices poor people paid, those who upon their return to the peninsula applied for a begging license to beg alms and collect the money required to pay the debts into which captivity led them.

³⁸⁹ Robert Davis has claimed that status was crucial in determining value; see: Davis, p. 147. Martínez Torres has argued that high prices were requested for women, children, officers, and bureaucrats. At the same time he says that the prices of artisans, peasants or fishermen were lower, and varied according to supply and demand. See: Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 144-145. Weiss, who focuses on French captives, claimed that professional skills and wealth were the main determinants of captives' values; see: Weiss, Gillian Lee, "Back from Barbary: Captivity, Redemption and French Identity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century Mediterranean," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 103-104.

inherent quality of commodities, especially in the case of captives, who form a unique commodity being at once object and subject.

During the negotiations over price, captives intended to manipulate the qualities imagined as bestowing them with value, pretending to be poor or rich, healthy or sick, possessing or lacking professional skills. Both parties acted coolly, demonstrating reluctance to reach a deal. The first advice Jerónimo Gracián, confessor of Saint Teresa, received from a fellow captive in his prison cell in Tunis was, “even if the Pasha talks about it, don’t think for a second about dealing with the ransom or talking [about it]. Rather, answer that you’re ready to die here and that there is nobody in a Christian land who remembers you, because there is no other way of winning back your liberty.”³⁹⁰ By feigning detachment, captives tried to convince their masters that they would not be able to afford a fat ransom price. Only when the masters’ suspicions were transformed into belief (mixed with disappointment) could the parties reach feasible agreements.³⁹¹

But if time was the only resource available to captives, how did they win this passive interaction? Supposedly, their time was much more precious than that of their masters, who had nothing to lose in comparison with the hardships captives suffered. Captives, it is true, suffered more, but slave owners occasionally needed cash. Captives knew, or thought they knew, when masters were prone to break down and reach an accord. In his autobiography, written after the fact, Gracián neatly ties the Pasha’s willingness to sell him for a fair price to the Pasha’s acute need of money. But the letters he wrote from Tunis show he was wrong more than once about the Pasha’s intentions and priorities. In June 1594, he excitedly wrote to his mother that the best circumstances for an agreement were when the Pasha ended his triennial term. He should approach the

³⁹⁰ “Padre, no le pase por el pensamiento tratar de rescate ni hablar de ello, aunque se lo digan, sino responde que acá ha de morir y no tiene de él quien se acuerde en tierra de cristianos, porque no tiene otro camino de su libertad.” Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, pp. 98. See also the diplomatic report written by the Chevalier d’Arvieux, d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, p. 41

³⁹¹ Laurent d’Arvieux sent by the French King to Tunis to negotiate the ransom of French claimed the Spaniards, due to their arrogance refused to play this game and pretend they were poor – “But the Spaniards who would not let go their solemnity, prefer to stay slaves for long time periods and even die there than to lower themselves. They loudly say they are gentlemen, rich and that their parents who are great lords will not stand their being slaves and that soon they would send considerable sums of money for their ransom” (“mais les espagnols que ne veulent pas démordre de luer gravité, aiment mieux demeurer plus long-tems esclaves, & meme y mourir, que de s’abaisser un peu. Ils dissent hautement qu’ils sont gentilshommes, qu’ils sont riches, & que leurs parens qui sont grands seigneurs ne souffriront pas qu’ils soient esclaves, & qu’ils envoyeront au plutôt des sommes considerables pour les racheter”), Arvieux, Laurent d’, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, Vol. V, Charles Jean Baptiste: Paris, 1735, pp. 267-268).

Pasha then, telling him, “you see that much [money, it’s yours] if you want [it], if not, stay with me as your captive.”³⁹² A month later, he wrote to Andreas de Córdoba, an auditor in the Roman Curia, telling him that when Ottoman office holders end their terms, “they have appetite for money and they take anything.”³⁹³ However, it took more than another year until a deal was signed and he was set free. Notwithstanding his erroneous predictions, captives had assumptions about the “right moment,” and they constantly tried to manipulate the circumstances in their favor. João Mascarenhas, captive in the Maghrib between 1621 and 1626, took advantage of his poor health to buy his liberty for a low price. As he was recovering, possibly during one of the plagues that occasionally devastated the Maghrib, he went to a Morisco doctor and persuaded him to tell his master he was about to die.³⁹⁴ His owner, fearing he would earn nothing on his slave, agreed to the price Mascarenhas offered.³⁹⁵ Mascarenhas was taking a chance. Plagues could lead to a sharp rise in ransom prices, as happened in Algiers in 1691, when the average price was doubled from 500 to 1000 ducats.³⁹⁶ But by hoping to make great gains on their captives, slave owners risked losing it all, and Mascarenhas, who must have known his master better than the latter knew him, was successful in his bet. He succeeded in his plot only because of the plague that devastated the city. His case serves as an example of the ways in which variables such as age, sex, health and wealth become meaningful and determinant only within concrete contexts.

In the second chapter we have seen how rumors regarding the value of captives circulated in the Maghrib. Masters were on the search for such information which they perceive as means of gaining information about their captives. Emanuel d’Aranda, held captive in Tunis in 1640, mentions a merchant who, taking advantage of the mail services he provided, read captives’ letters to get information about their value.³⁹⁷ For this reason he wrote, “it was necessary for a new captive to dissimulate for a while until he would be

³⁹² “...[V]es aquí tanto si quieres, si no, tente tu captivo,” Gracián *Cartas*, 11.6.1594.

³⁹³ “...[V]ienen con hambre de dineros y toman cualquiera cosa...” Gracián, *Cartas*, 6.7.1594.

³⁹⁴ For an early-modern chronology of plagues in Tunis and the rest of the Maghrib, see: Bloch, Édouard, *La peste en Tunisie (aperçu historique et épidémiologique)*, Tunis: J. Aloccio, 1929, pp. 3-11.

³⁹⁵ Mascarenhas, *Esclave a alger*, p. 160.

³⁹⁶ Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” p. 104.

³⁹⁷ d’Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger*, p. 132

well informed who was a liar and who was sincere.”³⁹⁸ He was thinking of slaves who served their masters as informers, befriending new captives and attempting to extract information about their value.³⁹⁹ With that knowledge, slave owners went shopping in the slave market and later negotiated profitable ransom deals. Aranda’s words point out the difficulty of establishing trust and striking deals under these circumstances. Beyond the preliminary suspicion that must have dictated the relations between Muslim captors and Christian captives, Aranda discovered that dissimulation was the norm, and that captives could not even trust members of their own confession. In negotiating their identity, captives discovered that things could easily get out of control as in cases of ill-intended or sincere misidentification, and in the spread of rumors. Information and disinformation mostly carried by captives across the sea constantly circulated between the Maghrib and the Habsburg Empire. But misidentification and rumors were not the only reasons for complications in the process of fixing a ransom price, as the case of Gaspar Biancalli demonstrates. This Italian chaplain from Modena had been captured on his way to Rome with the luggage of his abbot and held captive in Tunis for at least fifteen years. Inspecting the baggage he carried with him, his captors decided he must have been a cardinal. While he never admitted to being one, he told his owner he was a *gentilhomme*, a tactical mistake which cost him his liberty. From that point on, his owner refused to ransom him for less than two thousand crown.⁴⁰⁰

Employing a network of informers and reading captives’ letters were probably the masters’ secondary recourses. For many, it was enough to examine their slaves’ *hexis*, or bodily dispositions.⁴⁰¹ The slave owners’ trained gaze easily read through captives’ bodies, which often betrayed the latter’s performance of poverty. When Aranda tried to convince his owner’s wife he was a simple soldier, she replied, “[S]ay whatever you’d like; nevertheless you’re not like Grégoire.” Commenting for his readers on her

³⁹⁸ “...il est nécessaire qu’il dissimule pour quelque temps jusqu’a ce qu’il soit suffisamment informé qui sont les trompeurs et qui sont les sincères,” see: *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³⁹⁹ This was not the only kind of information masters got from their slaves. The knight from Arvieux quoted Mehmed Beig from Tunis, who told him he heard about the tension between the knight and the French consul from his slaves; see: d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, p. 38.

⁴⁰⁰ d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, p. 40.

⁴⁰¹ On Bourdieu’s notion of *hexis* and the manner in which social structures are inculcated and written onto bodies, see: Pierre Bourdieu, *The logic of practice* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990, pp. 66-79.

response, Aranda explains that Grégoire was her Galician gardener who was a fisherman in his village—“this slave had the right body for work.”⁴⁰² In like manner, in a scene depicted by many captives, slave masters inspected captives’ bodies and teeth in the slave market, estimating and calculating their potential exchange and labor value.⁴⁰³

Captives then could manipulate both the willingness of their owners to sell them but also the desire of potential buyers for them. And as surprising as it may sound, they often collaborated with their masters and together manipulated a go-between. This happened when masters who sought to convince Trinitarians or Mercedarians that their slaves were badly ill or expressed their will to convert to Islam and thus had to be immediately ransomed, promised their slaves a share of what the Orders would pay them.⁴⁰⁴

Political circumstances could also radically alter the value of captives. The peace agreements negotiated between France, and later the Dutch Republic, and the Ottoman Empire and its North African regencies meant that Algerians, Tunisians, and others were obliged to set free all French and Dutch captives they owned.⁴⁰⁵ While this affected only French captives and not Habsburg subjects, it sheds light on larger dynamics that structured the market. The fact that such agreements were negotiated meant that the price of French captives was cheaper than that of others. Laurent d’Arvieux had already noticed that phenomenon: “[M]asters always fear that the King would take [their slaves] because of whatever treaty and that they would be obliged to give up [their slaves] for the price they [originally] paid for them.”⁴⁰⁶ It is clear that once peace negotiations began, the price of French subjects decreased. Guillermo – or Morat, the name he received after his conversion – was captured together with other French subjects and, as he later (in 1634) recounted to his inquisitors, “was sold [in a] very cheap [price] because peace was

⁴⁰² “Vous direz ce qu’il vous plaira, néanmoins vous n’êtes pas comme Grégoire”; “Cet esclave avait le corps propre au travail,” Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger*, pp. 52-53. For further analysis of the interaction, see: Jocelyne Dakhli, “Ligne de fuite. Impostures et reconstructions identitaires en Méditerranée musulmane à l’époque moderne.”

⁴⁰³ Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio*, p. 52.

⁴⁰⁴ Tassy, *Histoire du Royaume d’Alger*, p. 169.

⁴⁰⁵ On peace agreements between the French and the Ottomans during the seventeenth century, see: Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” pp. 123-171. About the relations France and other Christian powers had with the Maghribi polities, see: Bono, Salvatore, *Les Corsaires en Méditerranée*, pp. 32-40.

⁴⁰⁶ “[L]es patrons craignent toujours que le roi ne les retire par quelque traité, & qu’ils ne soient obligez de les rendre pour le prix de l’achat,” d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, Vol. V, p. 267.

negotiated between the King of France and the Moors.”⁴⁰⁷ Buyers were willing to pay less in such moments as they knew that they were risking their money; and sellers fearing they would lose all their money, consented to reduced prices. Political, non-economic events such as these radically stirred the market, lowering the prices of captives as their future status became unclear.

Peace agreements had further implications. Slave owners possessing French slaves refused to give them up without a struggle. One way of avoiding the concession of captives to the French consul was to convert them. Conversion of slaves immediately devaluated them from a Christian perspective. The fact that the market of ransom was not the only one in which captives functioned as commodities was important. Captives had an exchange value, but always also a use-value, and the two worked together influencing each other in various ways. While captives lost exchange value as Muslim, they maintained their use-value and could still serve their masters as manpower. Thus, following the signing of such truces, and towards the actual execution of the articles in the signed agreements that related to captives, owners did what they could to convert their captives.

As argued in the first chapter, only rarely masters pushed their slaves to convert. In contrast to early modern Christian propaganda, Muslims did not try to convert their captives – excluding children, whom they converted when they could. Masters were reluctant to convert their slaves for reasons mentioned above. Once converted, slaves lost their exchange value, while the masters lost their revenues.⁴⁰⁸ Once Muslims, they could not be sold as captives. In fact, as demonstrated in chapter one, there is plenty of evidence of Muslim masters objecting to Christians’ requests to convert to Islam. Moreover, in contrast to how Christians imagined conversion within this context, it did not imply automatic liberty. Nevertheless, converted captives gained more freedom of movement and over time manumission. The signing of peace agreements, though, formed exceptional moments during which masters did what they could to convert their slaves. Several French renegades who voluntarily returned to Spain or were brought back

⁴⁰⁷ “...[P]or muy barato porque se tratava paçes entre los moros y el rey de Francia...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 862, fol. 92V.

⁴⁰⁸ Tassy, *Histoire du Royaume d’Alger*, p. 62. Mascarenhas made the same point a century earlier, see: Mascarenhas, *Esclave à Alger*, p. 109.

there by Spanish forces attested to how their masters, fearing losing their investment in their captives, forced them to convert. The same Guillermo whose case I just mentioned recalled how the Muslim infantry captain who bought him “treated him badly saying that he should not lose his money because the French ambassador would go and get him free, and this way he was forced to convert.”⁴⁰⁹ A similar story was told by Abrahán Clemente or Suliman: “As then the Algerians negotiated peace with the Dutch in the same way they did with the French these years, out of fear that he would be liberated, his owners treated him badly and forced him to convert.”⁴¹⁰ Conversion then was employed by Muslim masters to manipulate their slaves’ confession and hence to devalue them in the market of ransom while preserving their value as manpower.⁴¹¹

Conversion, however, could be used to manipulate value in other contexts, for example, vis-à-vis the Mercedarians and Trinitarians. Mercedarians in a ransom expedition in Algiers, in September 1661, described how one day four Catalan boys appeared in the house where they lodged, threatening them that if the Mercedarians “would not ransom them they would immediately convert in their presence.” As mentioned, Muslims rarely accepted conversion of Christians to Islam, but the fact that the Catalans were boys makes the story plausible. In threatening the Mercedarians with conversion and forcing the friars to rescue them, the Catalans revealed the religious ideology behind the Orders ransom expeditions. What was important for the Mercedarians and Trinitarians was not the termination of the institution of slavery but rather the salvation of Christian souls.⁴¹² Since the redemptionists had already spent all

⁴⁰⁹ “...[Y] le mal trato diziendo que él no avia de perder su dinero porque yria el embaxador de Francia y le sacaría libre, y así se avia hecho renegar...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 862, fol. 92V.

⁴¹⁰ “...[Y] como entonces tratavan hazer paçes con los holandeses los de Argel de la manera que esos años se han tratados con los françeses, por miedo que no les librarán, los maltrataron y hizieron renegar por fuerça...” Ibid. 29.10.1634.

⁴¹¹ One’s religion was not the only thing the parties tried to manipulate in such moments. The Knight d’Arvieux, who was sent to Tunis to make sure all the French captives there were ransomed according to a peace agreement, describes in his diary negotiations concerning captives’ nationalities, and whether they were or were not subjects of the French King. In this sense, such moments allowed articulation of sovereignty and national identity, therefore being constitutive of them, see: d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*.

⁴¹² For analysis of that aspect in the work of the Orders, See: Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, p. 45.

the money they brought for ransom, one of them remained in Algiers as a hostage, allowing the Catalans to return home with the rest of the rescued.⁴¹³

3. Raising Cash

Once a ransom price was set, captives had to find cash or arrange for credit in order to execute the deal. In the first chapter, we have seen some of the ways in which captives earned money. Some used their savings and sold their belongings; others received money their relatives sent them, or took loans from intermediaries. Collecting the money independently without the help of local intermediaries was a task that could last years and the majority of the captives could not save enough money for such an expensive operation.

A common solution to the problem of money was begging. The abundance of petitions for begging permits that were submitted by captives' kin to the Council of Castile testifies to this. The basic story in these petitions was the captive's. Whether captives wrote their kin or addressed the bureaucracy directly, they always recounted how they were captured. There is little if any information about life in captivity. Where this is represented, two opposing and complementing tropes are used – misery and heroism. Miguel de la Varrera, who was captured with his pregnant wife and taken to Algiers, left her behind as a hostage and returned to Spain to find money for her ransom. In his petition, he asked for a begging permit “in light of the heavy troubles and labors they suffered.”⁴¹⁴ Often, the danger of forced conversion to Islam is evoked. Its mention could have reflected masters' attempts to scare the captives into urging kin to send them money. But equally, this could have been the attempts of captives' kin to convince the magistrates of the merit and the pressing necessity of their petitions.

Some captives, albeit not necessarily soldiers, rendered a variety of services to the Crown. These services were later described at length in the requests written during their time in captivity. For instance, Simón Méndez recounted in his petition how:

[he] was held captive thirty-two years in Barbary in the hands of King Muley Xequé. He received many favors from the said king and gained many temporal

⁴¹³ *Relación verdadera embiada de la ciudad de Argel dando cuenta de los alborotos, y ruidos, que aquellos barbaros tienen entre sí*, BNE, VE 57-17.

⁴¹⁴ “[P]or ser grandes los trabajos que padecian en dicho cautiverio...” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 6902, 5.25.1672.

goods, which he spent on ransoming captives and helping their needs and in accompanying them on their way out of captivity, and he provided the agents of your majesty with many reports about matters concerning the service of your majesty...⁴¹⁵

Mendez added that he “mastered the Arabic language” and “was experienced in the entries and exits of all Barbary.”⁴¹⁶ He was not alone in “ransoming captives” and acting as a spy during his captivity. Bautista Fernández asked a begging permit to pay the debts caused by the payment of his ransom claiming that he remained in Istanbul for a while after his ransom “providing many services such as giving reports to spies and [helping] Christian captives to retrieve their liberty.”⁴¹⁷ While they fashioning themselves as what we may call experts on practical knowledge of the Orient, Méndez, Fernández, and others were hinting, often in explicit words, that the debt they were hoping to pay with the king’s help was the result of their services to the king. When such claims were supported with the right evidence they usually achieved the desired outcome. In addition to spying and helping other captives, the promise of future service was a third motif appearing in many soldiers’ petitions. In the case of captives captured during their military service, this promise sealed the story-line that framed their petition.

Like other bureaucratic autobiographies,⁴¹⁸ the petitions formed polyphonic artifacts coauthored over time and by various authors.⁴¹⁹ Masters were also parties in the letters’ writing process. The traces of the negotiation and information that only masters could provide are clear in many petitions. First, the masters were partly responsible for the agreed ransom price. Second, when a Muslim enslaved in Spain was demanded in return for a Christian, the master dictated to his captives the name, description, and place of enslavement of the Muslim they hoped to ransom. Diego Lopez de Acosta, for instance, wrote a letter to Tomas Velásquez de Oliver explaining that his master would exchange him for a Muslim slave. He directed Velásquez de Oliver to buy “in Sanlucar

⁴¹⁵ “Simón Méndez, soldado vezino de Algarbe, a estado cautibo treynta y dos años en Bervería en poder del rrey Muley Xequé; Con el dicho rey tuvo mucho favor y alcanzo del muchos vienes temporales los quales gasto en rrescatar cautibos y favorezellos en sus necesidades y en encaminillos para que saliesen del cautiverio y dando avisos a los gente de vuestra majestad de cossas tocante al servicio de vuestra majestad...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 768, fol. 3, 10.12.1612.

⁴¹⁶ “[P]or ser persona platica en las entradas y salidas de toda Bervería y ser muy diestro en la lengua aráviga...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 768, 10.12.1612.

⁴¹⁷ “[H]izo mucho servicios en dar abisos a espías y a cristianos cautibos para que se pudiesen en libertad...” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7050, 9.22.1589.

⁴¹⁸ Amelang, “L’autobiografia popolare nella Spagna moderna,” pp.115-116.

⁴¹⁹ Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*.

[de Barrameda in western Adalusia] a Turk that lives in the street of the Bretons, and his owner is called Nicolás Rubin” information doubtlessly dictated to him by his master, who must have received it from the ‘Turk.’⁴²⁰

Military service, sufferings or heroic actions, promises of future service, fear of forced conversion, and abject poverty were the elements forming the petitions. These elements made for pathetic or exciting stories; surely these were true for the captives and their families. However, they were not enough to convince the addressed magistrates of the narratives’ truthfulness; the captives were aware of this fact. These bureaucrats were the addressees of the petitions but also their coaxers. I am referring to them as coaxers not in the sense that they solicited the petitions,⁴²¹ but rather that the petitions were formulated and supported according to a logic emanating from the bureaucracy in question. This logic was known to all the involved authors, and thus must have circulated as far as the Maghrib.

Bureaucrats framed the standards for writing petitions by making the submission of supporting documents almost mandatory. Official guidelines regarding the records that made a petition meritorious were never issued. And yet petitioners seem to have known what these were. They knew they had to support their case with evidence in the form of documentation – letters, testimonies, accounts – and the more, the better. Despite the fact that these rules were only implied, many of the surviving records make explicit references to the originary instance that led to the petition’s inception. The comments on supporting records as well as their tone attest to the records’ importance, and reflect how captives and their families tried to accommodate the logic of the bureaucracy. The minutes from May 18, 1590, for example, summarized on behalf of the Dominican Lucas Sardo and the Franciscan Viçincio Alcamo, refer to the letter the two sent from Algiers– “by a letter that they sent his majesty from Algiers in that year...”⁴²² And in the petition of Catalina Gutierrez regarding her son’s captivity in Istanbul, the magistrates indicated that Gutierrez “presented a summarized interrogation of witnesses (*información*) and a

⁴²⁰ “...[E]n San Lucar mercarme un turco que vive en la calle de los Bretones, y se llama su amo Nicolás Rubin...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 933/2, 11.13.1655.

⁴²¹ On coaxers as provoking autobiographical writing, see: Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, pp. 63-102.

⁴²² “[P]or una carta que escriben a su majestad de Argel diste año,” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7051, 5.18.1590.

letter which she says are from the said captive.”⁴²³ The magistrates of the Council of Castile and of the Council of War almost always commented in their minutes on the submitted evidence – “[P]resents an interrogation of witnesses (*información*) by which what he claims in his petition is proved.”⁴²⁴ When dealing with poorly supported petitions, the magistrates expressed their doubts emphasizing the petition’s weakness. In the case of the Franciscan, Antonio Castro, the bureaucrats commented that Castro submitted nothing but the *memorial* unfolding his story and the help he requested.⁴²⁵ The importance of the captive’s original letter, as evidence authenticating claims about past captivity, also stands out in Mencia Alonso’s petition. Alonso, whose son was captured during his military service, somehow lost the letter he sent her. But being aware of the importance of documentary evidence, she presented a record in which the village priest attested to seeing her son’s letter. Her record reads, “[Alonso] presents a certificate from the priest of the said village in which the latter says that he saw a letter written by the said captive [informing] how he is doing.”⁴²⁶

The petitions’ goal was to find the money with which to execute the ransom. Captives caught during their military service sent their kin to the Council of War. So did those who had to exchange for their liberty Muslims enslaved in the Spanish royal fleet. Families of captives with no military record and no money of their own applied for a begging permit from the Council of Castile. Hardly ever did captives expect the king to fully fund their rescue and return home. Their requests were usually much more modest. Many simply asked for a one- or two-year begging license. Soldiers asked for the salaries the Crown owed them for the years they served before falling prey to North African corsairs. The begging permits were usually conceded for one year and were limited to certain defined regions. Sometimes captives asked their kin to sell their property.

⁴²³ “...[P]resenta una ynformacion sumaria y carta que dize son del cautibo.” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7045, 7.29.1580.

⁴²⁴ “[P]resenta ynformacion por lo qual se prueba lo que dize en la petición,” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7045, 6.5.1580.

⁴²⁵ “...[N]o presenta más que un memorial.” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7048, 12.4.1587.

⁴²⁶ “[P]resenta certificación del cura de la dicha villa en que dice ha visto carta escripta por el dicho cautivo de cómo lo está,” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 6901, 20.6.1625. The fact it was the parish priest who testified to the existence of such a letter points out an imagined hierarchy according to which priests, in addition to their power to transform the host into the body of Christ, could serve as a substitute to an original document.

Money loans were not available for all captives and some captive had no relatives upon whom they could rely. Captives who were captured with other family members often collected money together, ransomed one of their group who had promised to leave for Spain and either return with money or with smugglers to smuggle the rest who remained in captivity. In Miguel de Cervantes' "Captive's Tale," the narrator, a captive, describes how he, along with his fellow captives, arranged the money to ransom one of them. They all volunteered to return to Spain promising to rescue the rest but a renegade in the narrator's group objected the arrangement saying:

Under no circumstances would he consent to one man escaping to freedom until all of us could escape together, for experience had taught him how badly free men kept the promises made in captivity... [Because] the freedom they obtained and the fear of losing it again erased from their memories every obligation they had in the world.⁴²⁷

Credit could be produced in alternative ways in which trust played an even larger role. Confiding in their captors, captives who were enslaved with family members negotiated their ransom price and then left their dear ones behind as they went to search for money to buy their liberty. This was the case of María de Mendoça, a pregnant woman who was captured with her husband and their sons by the Ottomans in 1574. Her captors killed her husband and took her to Istanbul, where she gave birth to a daughter. Thirteen years later, she finally reached an agreement with her captors according to which she and her children would be freed at the bargain price of 600 ducats. Leaving behind her sons as hostages, she returned to Spain with her daughter, applied for a begging license, and begged alms in hopes of gathering enough money to ransom them.⁴²⁸ Bárbara Truiol, from the island of Minorca, described in a petition sent to the Council of Aragon how, together with her husband and children, she was captured by corsairs and taken to Tunis. Truiol and her husband negotiated an agreement according to which her husband and three-year-old baby stayed as hostages, while she and the rest of their children returned home.⁴²⁹ These alternative forms of producing credit reflect the active role women often

⁴²⁷ Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, p. 350.

⁴²⁸ AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7048, 21.8.1587.

⁴²⁹ Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 993, fol. 8, 12.27.1665.

occupied in ransom agreements, a point to which we will return in the next section. At the same time, they left us with some of the earliest testimonies of female captives.⁴³⁰

Usually, however, it was the husbands who left their wives behind as hostages while they crossed the Mediterranean back to the Peninsula and tried to collect money. Salvador Losacato, resident of Trapani, served in the Spanish forces in the fort of la Goleta near Tunis. When the Turks occupied Tunis and the fort in 1574, he was taken captive with his wife and children and taken to Istanbul. More than a decade later he negotiated an agreement with his captors—“he left [his wife and children] cut in 700 ducats.” He had a year and a half to execute the agreement and he petitioned the king for the salaries owed him for his service. The crown’s debt, however, was less than a hundred ducats. Nevertheless, the Council of War recommended helping him, as he fell captive during his service, and ransoming his wife and children was considered good Christian works.⁴³¹ Others had to ask for a permit to beg alms. Miguel de la Varrera, resident of Seville, was captured with his pregnant wife, María Fernández, and twenty other passengers of a sailing boat. They were taken to Algiers where Abrahán Colirio, a slave trader, bought them. De la Varrera had to leave his wife and the baby she gave birth to, return to Spain, and beg alms to collect the money to ransom her.⁴³²

The element of mutual trust in these exchange deals should not be underestimated. The images of the cruelty of captivity in Muslim hands must have made it hard for mothers, husbands, or brothers to leave their relatives alone with their captors. Jerónimo Gracián, for example, wrote that whenever the Turks celebrated and got drunk, they “laid their hands on the little boys and force[d] circumcision on them.”⁴³³ Similar images of abuse circulated in the Iberian Peninsula. Consequently, María de Mendoça and others must have developed a sense of trust in their captors. And to some extent, the establishment of trust must have been mutual. As unlikely as it may sound, Muslim captors had to believe their captives’ promises to return to ransom their relatives when

⁴³⁰ Cf.: Dakhliya, Jocelyne, “Défenses et stratégies d’une captive hollandaise au Maroc: un témoignage transgressif ?” in N. Planas (Ed.), *Le lien social revisité, Etudes et Travaux de l’Ecole doctorale de Toulouse-Le Mirail*, 8 (2006) : 19-26.

⁴³¹ “...[S]u muger e hijos de do salió él dexandolos conçertados en 700 ducados...”AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 262, fol. 140, 4.17.1589.

⁴³² AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 6902, fol. 2

⁴³³ “...Cuando los turcos están embriagados, echan mano de sus garzones y los circuncidan por fuerza...” Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, pp. 44-45.

they issued them safe passes without being paid. This was especially true in the case of weaker family ties and friendships.

4. “...[P]ara que me saque cabeza por cabeza...”: Exchanging Slaves

Captivity and slavery of Muslims and Christians suggest striking similarities. Despite the parallels, such narratives do not form part of the same historiography. The underlying scholarly assumptions are that, despite the structural similarities and the systematic connections between the two cases, we are dealing with two distinct historical phenomena: enslavement of Muslims in the south of Europe, and captivity of Christians in the Maghrib. Yet, the captivity trajectories of many captives do intersect just before the moment of their ransom when they were exchanged, one for the other. Let us examine the stories of Babaçain and Domingo Alvarez.

In the winter of 1613, Babaçain left the port of Algiers captaining a *saetia*, one of the ships with Latin sails used by North African corsairs, and headed north to the Spanish coast in the hope of capturing Christians to sell back at home. At the time, Babaçain was seventy years old and probably already had plans to retire. This could have been his last embarkation. Sadly, two leagues—around five miles—away from Cartagena, the Algerian ships ran into a Spanish royal squadron. After a brief battle, the Algerians had to acknowledge defeat. Babaçain was taken captive by the captain of the *Patrona Real*, the galley leading the squadron. He and his crew members were interrogated, enslaved, and put to work as oarsmen in the royal fleet.

Two years earlier, in 1611, Sergeant Domingo Alvarez, a Spaniard serving Philip III, was posted with his company—a body of close to 150 soldiers—in Oran, the largest Spanish fort-city in North Africa. Unfortunately, *en route*, his ship ran into Algerian corsairs. After a brief battle, the Spaniards had to acknowledge defeat, and Alvarez and his comrades were taken captive and enslaved as rowers on the galleys of the Algerians' corsairs, possibly of the kind that Babaçain had captained.

In the years following his capture, Babaçain never lost hope, and kept writing letters and sending messages through a network of merchants, soldiers, and ransomed captives—both Christians and Muslims—that crisscrossed the Mediterranean. Providing

his wife with the name of the galley on which he was enslaved was only the first step towards retrieving his liberty. However, from that point on, she had to take the lead in arranging his release. The chance of the king's slaves – such as Babaçain – buying their liberty was even smaller than that of urban household slaves. Rather than independently negotiating it, they had to find a Christian proxy who would do it on their behalf. Some of the intermediaries who ransomed Christian captives also ransomed Muslims, but the Muslims they ransomed were not galley slaves.⁴³⁴ The surest way of finding a Christian agent who would free her husband, a galley slave, was to force someone to do it.

Yet how might an old Algerian woman force a Spaniard to act on her behalf, and safely return her husband home? Purchasing a Christian captive, preferably a soldier, was her best shot. Indeed, that's exactly what Babaçain's wife did. She bought Domingo Alvarez from his owner, neither to have him as a servant in her household, nor to profit from his ransom, but to use him to get her husband back. Her selection was not arbitrary; she must have first asked around, ascertaining that he would fulfill her needs. Alvarez belonged to the massive class of poor captives who rarely had the means to ransom themselves. Given this, his price would not have been too high and, if he wanted to return home, he would have to obey her demands. But there was another reason for which she preferred him over other captives: he was a soldier with many years of service behind him. As such, he was in a better position than "civil" captives to ask favors from the king. And that is exactly what he was expected to do: write to the king and ask to be exchanged in return for her husband. Poor Alvarez was happy to cooperate. In the petition he sent the Council of War in April 1616, he wrote that "after serving his majesty for many years in the royal navy . . . he was captured by the Turks of Algiers,"⁴³⁵ thus stressing his history of service. He added, likely at the urging of Babaçain's wife, that "he has no possessions with which to ransom himself, and the said moor, his mistress, was determined that no sum could convince her to give him his freedom other than her own husband's liberty."⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Planas, "Acteurs et mécanismes du rachat d'esclaves."

⁴³⁵ "... después haver servido a vuestra majestad muchos años en la harmada rreal... y el año de 611 fue captivo de los turcos de Argel..." AGS, GA, Leg. 811, 16.5.1611.

⁴³⁶ "...no tiene con que se poder rrescatar y la dicha mora, su ama, está determinada de no le dar por quanto tesoro hubiere en el mundo menos de por el rrescate de su marido..." Ibid.

The crown was reluctant to accept this kind of deal and the archive of the Council of War preserves many orders the king issued to the royal fleet throughout the seventeenth century, prohibiting the concession of galley slaves to individuals.⁴³⁷ The crown resisted such exchanges for three reasons. First, the royal fleet was in constant shortage of slaves; second, Spanish bureaucrats feared that Muslim ship captains would revert to their earlier practice of preying on Spanish ships and coasts and capturing Spaniards; third, although the crown prohibited handing over enslaved Muslim corsairs to Christian petitioners hoping to save their dear ones, it was occasionally involved in and even initiated such exchanges when the captives were influential powerful nobles or officers.

The somewhat confusing classification system of Muslim slaves developed by the bureaucrats of the Spanish fleet reflects these reasons. The fleet officers distinguished between “corsairs” or “captains of Arab ships” (*arraezes*) on the one hand and “Moors of ransom” (*moros de rescate*) and “important Moors” (*moros de consideración*) on the other. Somewhat ironically, these petitioners were granted the slave they asked for only if he was not classified as “a Moor of ransom,” in which case the crown kept him for future exchange of rich or important figures. Petitioners, familiar with this system, employed the fleet’s classifications when applying to the crown. María de Puçuela, hoping to exchange her husband captured in Tétouan, petitioned the crown in 1587 for the brother-in-law of her husband’s master. In her petition, she wrote that the requested slave is “neither an *arraez* nor (a Moor) of importance.”⁴³⁸ Similarly, in 1616, Juan López Malvada stated in his petition that Ahmed, the slave he asked for “was not an *arraez* or (a Moor) of ransom.”⁴³⁹

The abundance of archival documentation reflecting the objection of the crown to such exchanges attests to the persistence of this practice. The petitions Spaniards submitted to the crown placed in motion investigations regarding the status of the requested slave. The story of Elvira García, a widow from the city of the Port of Santa

⁴³⁷ In April 17th 1616, for example, Prince Filiberto of Savoy, the Captain General of the Spanish Mediterranean Fleet between 1612 and 1624, issued an order to the generals of the squadrons. He referred to his early permission for such exchanges which was annulled by the King’s order, AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 812, 4.17.1616.

⁴³⁸ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 213, Fol. 546. “y no es *arraez* ny de consideración.”

⁴³⁹ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 810, 24.9.1616, “que no es *arraez* ni de rescate.”

Maria, near Cadiz, illustrates the bureaucratic trajectories of these petitions. Elvira's story is more typical, as it generally fell to women on both sides of the sea to negotiate such exchanges on behalf of husbands, brothers, or sons. García's only son, Diego, enlisted as a cabin boy on a ship that, in 1593, was captured by the galleys of the Sultan of Morocco. The eighteen-year-old youth was enslaved with the rest of the sailors. Despite her poverty, García did all she could to ransom Diego, but without success. Two years later, a Moroccan widow whose son Ahmed was enslaved on the Spanish royal galley *La Granada* contacted García. The Moroccan wrote to her, saying, "she will ask the king (of Morocco) to give her as alms the other Christian (García's son) so [that in exchange for him] they will give her back her son."⁴⁴⁰ García immediately addressed the king through his Council of War, recounting the sufferings of her child and the offer made to her by Ahmed's mother. She asked that, "in light of that the king will give her as a favor the . . . Moor in order to complete the exchange with her son."⁴⁴¹

As in the case of Alvarez and Babaçain, the Council of War deferred to the king for instructions and was ordered to contact the *contador* of the royal galleys, the person in charge of the books listing the slaves working in the galleys, and to ascertain Ahmed's status. In this way, the Council would determine the Muslim slave's role on the ship on which he was held, the circumstances of his capture, and his current age. If the fleet officers decided that the slave in question was not "a Moor of ransom" and thus, ironically, exchangeable, they would send their decision to the Council, which would in turn pass it on to the king. This was the case of the petition of Jerónimo de Arambuza, a Christian who dealt in ransom and occasionally worked with the crown as ransom agent. In response to his petition in which he requested a Muslim enslaved in a Spanish galley, the fleet officers wrote the crown that "[we] examined the entry [this slave] has in the books of our offices, and it does not seem [that he] is either an *arraez* or [a moor] of ransom."⁴⁴²

Problems arose when the petitioners and the *contador* or other fleet officers disagreed about a slave's status. Such disagreements resulted from incorrect or debated

⁴⁴⁰ "pedirá al rrey le de de limosna el otro cristiano porque le dan su hijo."

⁴⁴¹ "que atento a esto le aga merced del otro moro para hazer el truque y rescate de su hijo."

⁴⁴² AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 833, 26.2.1618, "...mirado el asiento que tiene en los libros de nuestros ofiçios, no pareze por ellos que es *arraez* ni de rescate..."

enlistment of Muslim slaves at the time of their capture, or when they were delivered to the fleet officers. Sometimes, captains who caught Muslims falsely claimed they were corsairs, in order to get a greater bonus. Juana de los Santos argued in her petition that the captain who caught Hamete Muxi lied when he listed him as an *arraez* – “and the captain who captured him, in order to increase his benefits, despite the fact he [the Muslim] was someone else, handed him to them [galleys’ officers] as an *arraez*.”⁴⁴³ When petitioners’ requests were refused due to the status the crown attributed to the slave in question, they tried to trace Christian captives that had been previously held on the Muslim ship where the slave they wanted was captured. They took the testimonies of these ex-captives, hoping to convince the fleet officers of the petition’s merit. Juana de los Santos acted differently: she provided the testimony of Luis de Guerra, a Portuguese Trinitarian who was held hostage in Tétouan for many years, who swore that Hamete Muxi, the Muslim slave de los Santos requested from the crown, was “of no importance (*baxo*).”

Juana de los Santos soon discovered that even this was not enough—the *adelantado* denied her the slave she needed for the ransom of her husband. In her petition to the crown, she complained that the *adelantado* was “always looking for excuses and not feeling the sufferings of the Christian captives.”⁴⁴⁴ The *adelantado* stood in the way of others as well. Ysabel Hernández, Antón Rodríguez’s wife, claimed “that even though she went to the *adelantado* with the two said writs (*cedula*), he refused to give her the said Turk whom she demanded.”⁴⁴⁵ In other words, getting royal writs ordering the fleet officers to hand over slaves to petitioners was not always sufficient evidence, and different officers along the chain of command could prevent the execution of such exchanges.

Barring objections from the fleet officers, the petitioners could advance to the next step. These deals involved a twofold exchange. When and if the crown finally agreed to concede its galley slaves, it demanded alternative ones in return. While the slaves petitioners sought were usually old, weak, and sick—or at least that was how petitioners portrayed them in their requests—the ones that the crown demanded in their place had to

⁴⁴³ “Y el capitán que le captivo por llevar mayor ynteres sea el ya otro los dio por *arraez*,” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 274, fol. 116, 9.20.1589.

⁴⁴⁴ “buscando siempre excusas y doliéndose poco de los captivos cristianos,” 274/116.

⁴⁴⁵ “...[Y] que aunque a acudido y rrequerido con las dichas dos cedulas al adelantado no le a querido dar el dicho turco,” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 272, fol. 56.

be young, healthy and strong. Thus, before the petitioners got the slave they needed, they had to obtain another with whom they would pay the crown. This point is important, as it suggests that not all captives in the Mediterranean were purchased either for profit from ransom or for their enslavement. At least some North Africans bought Christian slaves in order to exchange them for their dear ones enslaved in Spain; at least some Christians bought Muslim slaves in order to exchange them for another Muslim slave, by which they may obtain the release of their relatives. Thus, enslavement of Christians and Muslims was, in some cases, interdependent. That Spaniards who formed parties in such ransom coalitions had to provide the crown with alternative slaves further complicates this interdependence, and points out the self-perpetuating nature of these violent practices and exchanges.

5. Providing Credit, Intermediating Ransom

Captives who sought ransom could commission one of many intermediaries who provided such services as well as occasionally the much needed credit. Jews played a central role in the economy of ransom both independently of the Orders of Redemption and in collaboration with them. In contrast to Christian merchants, following their expulsion, Jews needed a special permit, from the Inquisition, the governors of the Spanish garrisons in the Maghrib, or a royal Council in order to enter the peninsula to take care of their ransom business. This was true both for Jews living under Spanish rule in the North African *presidios* and for Ottoman or Moroccan subjects. The better studied case of the Jewish community of Oran, the largest and most important Spanish fort-town in the Maghrib, demonstrates that.⁴⁴⁶ The leading families of the community, the Çaportas and the Cansino families, participated directly and indirectly in ransom operations. They donated large sums of money for ransom deals that individuals negotiated and to the Mercedarian convent in Oran. In fact, the Mercedarians in Oran felt

⁴⁴⁶ The most complete study on this community is Schaub, *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne*. For a general survey of the Jewish population inhabiting the Spanish forts in North Africa, see: Israel, Jonathan, "The Jews of Spanish North Africa, 1600-1669," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, XXVI, 1979, pp. 71-86. For a general study of Oran in this period, see: Alonso Acero, *Orán-Mazalquivir, 1589-1639: una sociedad española en la frontera de Berbería*, CSIC: Madrid, 2000.

so indebted to members of the Çaportas family that in 1653 Diego de Majares and Juan Trevinos, brothers in the Mercedarian convent in town, faked municipal documents in an attempt to help the family in its struggles against the Governor General, probably as a sign of gratitude for the favors granted by family members to Christian captives.⁴⁴⁷ But Jews also actively rescued Christians, taking advantage of their social networks that stretched across the Maghrib. There was a rough geographic division of labor between the families. The Çaportas had better links in Fez and Marakesh, the Cansino in Tlemecen and even in Algiers.⁴⁴⁸ In 1613, for example, in one of the failing attempts to ransom the Trinitarian Bernardo Monroy from Algiers, the Çaportas family agreed to donate ten thousand ducats for his rescue.⁴⁴⁹ The power and contacts of these families were known among Spaniards who served in the Maghrib. Pedro de Bricuela, a captain in the *Armada del mar Oceano*, captured in 1614 and taken to Algiers sent a petition to the Council of War. Bricuela pleaded the members of the Council to ask Yaho Çaportas, via the governor of Oran, to assist with his ransom.⁴⁵⁰ The Çaportas and Cansino facilitated the ransom of Christian captives until their expulsion from the city in 1669.⁴⁵¹

Moroccan Jews also cooperated with the Orders on many levels. In the next chapter, I examine in detail Jewish “go-betweens” that worked with the Orders in Tétouan, a central destination of the Orders. Here, it is enough to mention one Jewish merchant from the community. Jacob Crudo had commercial links in Algiers and even as far as Annaba and the ransom deals he cut may have stretched east across the sea to Livorno.⁴⁵² Crudo worked with the Mercedarians renting them his house in Tétouan when they came to buy captives in 1590 and 1596 and negotiated on their behalf better prices and deals. In establishing these contacts, Crudo hoped to facilitate his immigration to Spain.⁴⁵³ Indeed, in 1596, he moved to Seville but was arrested for wondering its streets “dressed in a Christian habit and dealing and trading out in the open thus causing a great

⁴⁴⁷ Schaub, *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne*, pp. 94-5

⁴⁴⁸ Schaub, *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne*, pp. 55, 78, and 89.

⁴⁴⁹ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1950, 16.10.1621

⁴⁵⁰ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 811, 15.1.1616

⁴⁵¹ Comment on how one of the was a major supplier of slaves to the Spaniards

⁴⁵² Crudo had commercial relations with Sima di Giuseppe Levi, a Jewish merchant active in Algiers and Livorno at the turn of the century, whom he met in Annaba, see: Vittorio Salvadorini, “Traffici e schiavi fra Livorno e Algeria nella prima decade del ‘600,” *Bollettino Storico Pisano*, 51(1982): 67-104, esp. p. 88.

⁴⁵³ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 487, fols. 213-215, 15.7.1597.

scandal.”⁴⁵⁴ To his inquisitors, Crudo presented warm letters of recommendation from the governor of Ceuta, the duke of Medina-Sidonia and two Mercedarian brothers to whom he helped in Tétouan but the letters did not help, and by the end of the year he was back in Tétouan dealing again with the Mercedarians. The situation was similar in the rest of the Maghrib. Large cities like Algiers and Tunis often had two Jewish communities: a local one and the Livornese. European authors described the first as poor and despised by the Muslims while the latter benefitted from the same privileges as Christian merchants and were extremely involved in the ransom market. Tassy claimed the Livornese controlled the commerce in goods, slaves and captives in all the towns of Algiers.⁴⁵⁵ Jerónimo Gracián held captive in Tunis between 1592 and 1594 was ransomed by Simon Askenazi, a member of the Jewish community of Tunis, who kept ransoming captives at least until 1617.⁴⁵⁶ Askenzi, one of these merchants whose business stretched across the Mediterranean to Italy, agreed to help Gracián in exchange for the recovery of his goods confiscated in Naples. Salomon Pariente and Abraham Ben Waish, both active in the first decades of the seventeenth century, were other Moroccan Jews who often dealt with ransom of captives. The first traded political secrets, and was involved in the negotiations between the Moroccan Sultan and the Spanish Monarch over Larache (El Araich);⁴⁵⁷ the second served as a commercial and diplomatic agent of Mawlay Zidan at least from 1608.⁴⁵⁸

The fact that the economy of ransom was never fully monopolized by these ecclesiastical and royal institutions was clear to the small-scale ransom agents. Indeed some of them manifested a clear sense of their own position within this economy, envisioned themselves as more than simple intermediaries, and tried to reshape the boundaries of the market and monopolize it. One of these was Judas Malaqui, a Jewish merchant from Tétouan who was one of the suppliers of the Peñón de Vélez, a Spanish fort in Morocco. Like other Jewish merchants, Malaqui combined ransom with other

⁴⁵⁴ “...[Y] vuelto en esta ciudad anda en habito de cristiano y trata y contrata en ella con mucha publicidad de que ha dado mucho escándalo...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 2952, 5.8.1597.

⁴⁵⁵ Tassy, *Histoire du Royaume d’Alger*, p. 56.

⁴⁵⁶ Gourdin, *Tabarka*, pp. 538-543.

⁴⁵⁷ AGS, Guerra Antigua, Leg. 817, 3.18.1617.

⁴⁵⁸ Mercedes, García-Arenal, Fernando, Rodríguez Mediano, and Rachid, El Hour, *Cartas marruecas: documentos de Marruecos en archivos españoles (siglos XVI-XVII)*, *Estudios árabes e islámicos; Monografías; 3*; (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002), p. 222-223.

commercial activities. Due to his ambition, he had left us with a relatively long trail of archival traces scattered in various archives. His career illuminates how ransom for these merchants formed one of a few commercial activities and how they employed ransom to legitimize their position as suppliers of provisions for the Spaniards. Moreover, it reflects how Jews and Muslims formed commercial companies together and were partner in ransom deals.

Malaqui appears in the sources for the first time in 1585 when he was detained upon arrival in Málaga. He was eventually released, as he carried a safe pass issued by Diego de Vera, the commander of the Peñón de Vélez that allowed him to go to Spain. The purpose of Malaqui's visit was to collect money owed him on account of a few boys and girls whom he had already rescued and who were held in custody in Tétouan.

Four years later, in 1589, he appears again in the archives. This time Malaqui made an offer to the Spanish crown, hoping to become its exclusive ransom agent in the Maghrib and promising to

Get all the Christian captives from all of Barbary and Algiers... [and] I offer to bring them to whatever part your highness asks me; in two thirds of the price it would cost anyone else ransoming them, be they [from] the Holy Trinity or from our Lady of Mercy.⁴⁵⁹

Malaqui was confident about his skills and contacts and apparently could ransom more captives than the Orders of Redemption, in relation to whom he repeatedly positioned himself:

In the journey I have just executed, I brought nineteen captives, among them five women and four babies, two of whom are nursing at the breast, and these women and children I got out of the house of the king of Fez; and not one of those who ransom [captives] could ransom them for any price; and together with these I brought ten men with the intention that they will pay me from the alms of the redemption of captives of the [Holy] Trinity and the [Holy] Mercy.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁹ "...[T]raer a todos los cristianos captivos que de toda la Berbería y Argel se me pidieren de cualquier estado... los quales ofrezco a poner en la parte donde vuestra majestad me señalare la terçia parte menos que los que otro ninguno rescatare aunque sean de la Sanctísima Trinidad y Merced," AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 271, fol. 304, 1589.

⁴⁶⁰ "En este biaxe que al presente he hecho, he traído diez y nueve captivos en ellos cinco mugeres y quatro niños dos al pecho de sus madres y dos de siete años y estas mugeres y niños saqué de cassa del rrey de Fez y ninguno de los que van a rescatar por ningún preçio los pudieron rescatar y con estos truxe diez hombres con yntençión que se me pagarían de las limosnas de rredempçión de captivos de la Trinidad o de la Merced." *Ibid.*

His success in rescuing women, babies, and young children was exceptional. Many narrative sources, histories and pamphlets published by Mercedarians or Trinitarians and literary works, attest to the reluctance of Muslim captors to let Christian women and children free. Philip II accepted Malaqui's offer and he became a professional ransom agent of the crown, a position he occupied until at least the end of 1595. The contract he negotiated with the crown obliged him to send hostages to Málaga. Two Spaniards were to be held hostages in Fez or Tétouan.⁴⁶¹ As hostages, Malaqui sent two Muslim business associates; one of them, the merchant Hamete Madan from Fez, stayed there until at least 1595.⁴⁶² At the same time, Malaqui also invested in the mining business in Spain, and the hostages he provided, who were experts on mining—"two Moors of Barbary which understand a lot [in mining]"—worked for him in this field.⁴⁶³ Beyond the fulfillment of the formal requirement of the contract, and probably in order to solidify his connections in the peninsula, one of Malaqui's sons was sent to Málaga, where he converted to Christianity and was baptized as Juan Bautista de Padilla.⁴⁶⁴

Ransom was just one of the commercial activities in which Malaqui dealt. When he was arrested in Málaga in 1588, he claimed he was "well-known" in the Peñón de Vélez and had:

Many friendship[s] and business and that he provided there many services to his majesty provisioning the residents with many kinds of food supplies and gifts for the sick in time of hunger and need [and] providing many important reports risking his life and ransoming captives with his efforts in very moderate prices.⁴⁶⁵

The spectrum of his activities reflects the density of the net of relations he established in the garrison. He provide its residents with "olives, meat, clothes, and footwear" and was also involved in the local Christian economy of salvation giving alms to the sick and

⁴⁶¹ AGS, Guerra Antigua, Leg. 291, fol. 260, 12.29.1590.

⁴⁶² AGS, Guerra Antigua, Leg. 448, fol. 206, 23.10.1595.

⁴⁶³ AGS, Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda, Leg. 366, fol. 4, apud.: Sánchez Gómez, Julio, *De minería, metalúrgica y comercio de metales*, Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1989, Vol. II, p. 640.

⁴⁶⁴ AGS, Guerra Antigua, Leg. 316, fol. 426. This strategy was not exceptional. In his *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne*, Schaub discusses the case of Felipe Moscoso, the son of Jacob Sasportas, one of the leaders of the Jewish community in Oran. Moscoso, who converted to Christianity, lived in Madrid and served his family's interests in the court there; see: Schaub, *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne*, pp. 98-100.

⁴⁶⁵ "[Y] que en aquella fuerça es muy conosciado donde tiene mucha amistad y trato y en ella hecho mucho servicios a su majestad ha ydo socorrido la gente con muchas cosas de comer y regalaos para enfermos en tiempo que estaban con mucha hambre y necesidad y dado avisos muy ymportantes con mucho riesgo de su vida y rescatado cautivos con su yndustria en muy moderados precios..." AGS, Guerra Antigua, Leg. 181, fol. 19, 1585.

needy, and ransoming Christian children, saving their souls from conversion to Islam. Ransom served the rest of his business and never became his main trade. That is why he demanded to be paid with “woolen cloth, hats, and silk” rather than with money.⁴⁶⁶ His ties in Fez and Tétouan provided him access to information valuable for the Christians—“very beneficial to the service of his majesty”⁴⁶⁷—which he submitted in the form of reports of espionage. The fact that he represented the Muslim and Jewish merchants in legal debates against the Christian authorities of the fort marked him as possessing important social capital,⁴⁶⁸ and probably bestowed further credibility regarding his access to information sensitive for the Christians. His links, influence, and position among Jews, and more importantly Muslims, were just as important in boosting his power among the Spaniards. But the economy of reputation and influence worked both ways and Malaqui’s regular travels to Spain must have strengthened his position among the Muslims and Jews. There are no traces about Malaqui and his involvement in the market of ransom after 1595, but the mention of his name in an Inquisition case in 1600 suggests that, at some point, he converted to Christianity and moved his base to the Peninsula, perhaps in order to enhance his influence in the Peñón de Vélez and other Spanish posts in North Africa.⁴⁶⁹

Jews, however, were not alone in the trade. Despite the fact that fewer sources mention Arabs, Moriscos, and renegades dealing with ransom, these groups also mediated between masters and enslaved captives. Often, Renegades could employ their relatives in the Habsburg Empire for the execution of ransom deals they negotiated. One Bautista Fernandez, who had been ransomed by a renegade in Istanbul, applied for a begging license in 1589 in order to raise money and pay his debt to the mother of the renegade, to whom his relatives had given guaranties.⁴⁷⁰ Similarly, Muslims and Moriscos dealt with captives and acted as intermediaries for the Orders of Redemption. In

⁴⁶⁶ “[N]o quiero sacar el dinero de los rescates sino en mercaderias de paños y bonetes y sedas...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 271, fol. 304.

⁴⁶⁷ “[C]on llevar açeites, carnes, lienços, calçados, y en particular los avissos que he dado que han sido muy provechosos a v. rreal servyçio...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 271, fol. 304.

⁴⁶⁸ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 506, fol. 233, 7.12.1597.

⁴⁶⁹ Cirac Estopañán, Sebastián, *Los procesos de hechicerías en la Inquisición de Castilla la Nueva*, CSIC: Madrid, 1942, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁷⁰ AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7050, 9.22.1589.

1588, one Agi Mami, “a native of Africa,”⁴⁷¹ ransomed eighteen soldiers captured in La Goleta and Tunis. Upon their arrival in Naples, they escaped without paying their debts. Mami asked the crown to pay him from the salaries it owed the soldiers. Until 1588, the Canary Moriscos used to ransom Christian islanders captured and enslaved in the Maghrib. But then, the tribunal of the Inquisition in the Canary Islands wrote the Council of the State, demanding it to prohibit the islanders from commissioning Moriscos for this task. After their final expulsion from Spain, between 1609 and 1614, the Moriscos kept playing a central role in the economy of ransom both as slave owners and as intermediaries participating in the ransom of Christians and of Muslims. In 1613, for example, a few recently expelled Moriscos from Algiers, whose names the sources do not disclose, offered the crown to ransom up to fifty Christian captives in return for permission to go back to Spain.⁴⁷² Their offer represents another non-commercial use of ransom – an attempt of nostalgic exiles to return to the land from which they were expelled – and amplify the continuum of contexts in which ‘go-betweens’ rescued captives. But more often, Moriscos, like others, did so for the sake of profit or as charity to their co-religionists. The archive of the French consulate in Tunis is replete with documents recording Morisco “go-betweens” buying and selling Christians especially in the years following the expulsion and until 1650, when the community’s power dwindled.⁴⁷³ Muslims obviously traded Christian captives. Malaqui worked with Muslim partners, and, as we have seen, the hostages he provided as guarantees were Muslim merchants. Some Muslims specialized in the ransom and rescue of Muslims from Christian lands. In 1571, a Muslim slave in Naples, who had converted to Christianity years earlier and was baptized as Aniello Tarantino, was accused by the Inquisition of blasphemy. During his trial, the inquisitors discovered that he took advantage of the liberty that conversion to Christianity provided him, and arranged for North African slaves to escape back to the Maghrib for costly prices.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷¹ “[N]atural de África,” AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 7049, 1.29.1588.

⁴⁷² AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 2643, 8.31.1613. For more about the involvement of Moriscos in ransom operations in Morocco in the seventeenth century, see: Gozalbes Busto, Guillermo, *Los Moriscos en Marruecos*, Granada: T.G. Arte, 1992, p. 102.

⁴⁷³ Epalza, Miguel de, “Moriscos y Andalusíes en Túnez durante el siglo XVII,” *Al-Andalus*, 34:2 (1969): 247-327, esp. pp. 262-269.

⁴⁷⁴ Mazur, Peter A., “Combating ‘Mohammedan Indecency’: The Baptism of Muslim Slaves in Spanish Naples, 1563-1667,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, 13 (2009): 25-48, esp. pp. 32-33.

Although many captives earned money for their work, only a few managed to transform it into capital they could reinvest. Nevertheless, we know of captives in Tunis who during the seventeenth century invested their savings in the commercial activities of European merchants.⁴⁷⁵ Their final goal was to use their profits to ransom themselves. Gracián was one of these. During his captivity, with the money he borrowed from captives and the alms he received from renegades, he managed to ransom at least twelve Christians.⁴⁷⁶ Gaspar de los Reyes, captured and taken to Tunis in 1658, used the money he earned working in a tavern in Algiers to help captives in need, occasionally lending them money for their ransom. In 1670, when he used his savings to ransom himself, he continued with the ransom business and struck an agreement with two captives he knew—“and for being his friends . . . he gave them his word he would get the money sent to them from these islands [the Canary Islands] which was in the hands of Don Pedro de la Fuente, a resident of the city of the Port of Santa María.” The two captives, originally from the Canary Islands, “provided him with letters so that he [Don Pedro de la Fuente] would hand him the said ransom [money]”.⁴⁷⁷ De Los Reyes left for the peninsula, where he collected the money the captives’ relatives had sent them. In addition, he bought two “Turkish” slaves who were to be exchanged as part of the deal. But De Los Reyes was ambitious, and he negotiated new deals with others in Málaga promising to ransom their loved ones captured in Algiers. He took back to Algiers eighteen “Turkish” slaves he had purchased in Spain in order to exchange them for Christians held captive. Even if we do not exclude the possibility that friendship may have played a role in directing his activities, it is clear that De Los Reyes had other motives as well. After having worked for five years in a tavern in Algiers, he believed he knew all the secrets of the Algerian liquor market. Before leaving Spain for Algiers, he invested the money he received from the captives’ relatives in Málaga’s famous sweet wine, hoping to sell it at great profit. Unfortunately, upon arrival in Algiers, he discovered that seven French ships

⁴⁷⁵ Boubaker, Sadok, “Réseaux et techniques de rachat des captifs de la course à Tunis au XVII^e siècle,” in *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*, Wolfgang Kaiser, Ed. École française de Rome: Rome, 2008, pp. 25-46.

⁴⁷⁶ Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, pp. 74-75.

⁴⁷⁷ “y por ser amigos... les dio palabra de cobrarles su rrescate que les avían rremitado destas yslas y estaba en poder de don Pedro de la Fuente vecino de la ciudad del Puerto de Santa María para quien los... dos cautivos de Canaria le dieron cartas para que les entregara dicho rrescate.”

were unloading their wine cargo. As wine prices collapsed, De Los Reyes lost a lot of money, and could not execute the agreements for which he had been paid.⁴⁷⁸

For the intermediaries that formed the networks that facilitated the movement of captives, the positions of pirate, ransomer, or captive meant different stages in complex professional trajectories. This is demonstrated by ex-captives turned into ransomers who offered the perfect skills required for captive-redeeming. The time they spent in captivity prepared them for the trade and some developed a reputation as experts. Not only did they learn Arabic and Turkish during the years they spent as captives, but they also knew the procedures, had connections, and mastered the entries and exits of Maghribi ports. Mario Cortoño, a native of Sicily, was taken captive at the age of fourteen near the turn of the seventeenth century. He was sold in Algiers to a Turk and served him twelve years until he managed to escape from the corsairs' ship, in which he probably rowed. Returning to his land, he was commissioned to go to Tunis and ransom captives:

[A]s he knew the Morisco language, a treasurer, who had his brother captive in Tunis, armed a little boat for him with which Cortoño left to the kingdom of Tunis, and he entered the city and communicated with the said Christian captive, and going to inform the others [who came] in the boat, he could not find it where he left it, and having waited for four days he was discovered and imprisoned.⁴⁷⁹

Cortoño's task was to smuggle the treasurer's brother back to Sicily. He failed in his mission; but the reasons for which he was commissioned to execute such a risky enterprise were the skills he acquired during his captivity: mastering the "Morisco" language and knowing the small ports near the main Maghribi cities.⁴⁸⁰

European merchants, both Spaniards and merchants from communities of other origin, were interested in ransom for a diversity of reasons. The case of the Majorcan skipper Già is a good example, as it shows the unexpected uses of ransom. In 1668, on behalf of a mercantile company from the island, Già exported tar to Algiers. Obtaining a license to trade with Muslims in the Maghrib was an easy task. Spanish official discourses, it is true, echoed religious rhetoric that prohibited the trade with the infidel

⁴⁷⁸ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824/2, carpeta 14.

⁴⁷⁹ "...[Y] como sabía la lengua morisca, un tesorero que tenía un hermano suyo cautivo en Túnez le armo una maluca con la qual fue al rreyno de Túnez, y entro en la ciudad y trato con el dicho cautivo cristiano y yendo avisar a los de la maluca, no la hallo en donde la había dexado, y aviéndola aguardado quatro días fue descubierto y preso..." AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 861, fol. 144, 7.7.1617.

⁴⁸⁰ For similar cases involving Majorcan ex-captives, see: Planas, "Acteurs et mécanismes du rachat d'esclaves."

but in practice, trade with North Africa became a normal practice in seventeenth century Spain. It functioned under the system of ‘permanent exception[s]’ and the special licenses the crown issued over and over again for merchants trading with the Maghrib turned in fact into a form of tax.⁴⁸¹ Unlike other commodities, however, tar was deemed a material of war, and its sale to Muslims was absolutely prohibited. Già was arrested by the Inquisitorial tribunal of Majorca in 1669.⁴⁸² In his defense, he claimed that he used his profits to ransom captives. Sadly, since the majority of the captives that left Algiers with him claimed they paid for their liberty with their own money, the argument did not serve him.⁴⁸³

We see then, the difficulty of generalizing about the intermediaries’ motives. Anyone who was on the spot might and often did engage in the ransoming process. Gracián, for example, ransomed Christians out of compassion to his coreligionists. Others rescued their friends, kin, or fellow countrymen. Profit was central for many ransomers, but it would be wrong to reduce participation in the trade to simple economic motives. Jews, residents of the Spanish garrisons and of Moroccan and Algerians settlements, employed the ransom to facilitate the commercial contacts with Spain and enable their entry to the Empire that had expelled them. Già ransomed captives to whitewash his illegal arms export, in other words, for a goal opposite to that of the Jews. Christian merchants ransomed co-religionists to lubricate commerce with the infidel.

6. Breaking Agreements

The fact that ransom was usually practiced in the service of other goals may explain the fact that so many of these intermediaries had bad reputations among captives.

⁴⁸¹ On the “permanent exception,” see: Kaiser, “La excepción permanente,” pp. 171-189. For a brilliant analysis of the negotiations between the Majorcan administration and the Spanish crown regarding the right to trade with Muslims, see: Planas, “La frontière franchissable.” For a thorough analysis of the commerce between Spain and more specifically Cataluña and the Maghrib during the early modern period, see: Martín Corrales, *Comercio de Cataluña con el Mediterráneo musulmán*.

⁴⁸² The Inquisition based its right to interfere on matters of commerce with Muslims on a papal bull prohibiting it. But Già’s attorney claimed the bull was annulled by the bishop and that hence it was in the Episcopal rather than inquisitorial jurisdiction. We do not know what was the bishop’s response, but the claim of the attorney points to how interactions with Maghribi fell under a multiplicity of competing jurisdictions, a situation which the parties involved employed to their favor, see: Natividad, Planas, “Conflicts of competence aux frontières. Le contrôle de la circulation des hommes et des marchandises dans le royaume de Majorque au XVIIe siècle,” *Cromohs*, 8 (2003), pp. 1-14.

⁴⁸³ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1714, carpeta 7.

Gracián, for example, suspected the merchants who ransomed captives, despite the fact that he himself had been ransomed by one. In a letter dated July 1594, he warned his friends against dealing with such merchants lest “they [his friends] lose the money they gave to the merchants, in addition to the interest they would pay.”⁴⁸⁴ And in a later letter sent the same year, he added, “based on my experience I know there is no greater damage to captives than giving money to merchants, and only because of that there are innumerable captives who will never leave their captivity.”⁴⁸⁵ Gracián’s suspicions were well-founded, because in some cases merchants tried to take advantage of the captives’ relative helplessness. The Spaniard Jerónimo de Pasamonte, held captive in Istanbul in the same years as Gracián, had to threaten with a knife a merchant who had access to his money and refused to pay him.⁴⁸⁶ The same is true for Gaspar de los Reyes, who invested the money he received from the captives and their relatives in the liquor market, and did not pay them back after he lost it all with the collapse of the market. The presence of many charlatans claiming to have contacts and the skills required to ransom captives, while only interested in the money of the captives’ kin, was another reason for the distrust towards ransomers. Diego de Pacheco, the bastard son of the Marquis de Villena, was taken captive around 1608.⁴⁸⁷ He spent various years in Algiers and later in Istanbul, was the object of a few failed attempts of ransom for money and exchange for Muslim slaves, and eventually converted to Islam. But before that, in October 1614, a certain Pedro Muñoz Montefrío, a vetrean, who convinced the Marquis of Villena he could ransom Pacheco for a hefty sum of money, was accused by the duke of Osuna of fraud and of trying to rob the marquis de Villena, playing on his desire to ransom his son.⁴⁸⁸

Captives had means of avoiding some of these problems and of solving them once they occurred. One way to avoid a scam was to provide merchants with letters of credit instead of cash, as Gracián’s relatives did. Merchants were not able to cash these letters until the captives had been ransomed. The system was facilitated by various Christian

⁴⁸⁴ “...Que de otra manera piérdense los dineros que se dan a mercaderes demás de los intereses que por ellos llevan...,” Gracián, *Cartas*, 6.7.1594.

⁴⁸⁵ “Y por experiencia sé que ningún daño mayor ay para los cautiverios que dar dineros a mercantes, que por el mesmo caso ay innumerables captivos que nunca salen de cautiverio,” *Ibid.*, 25.11.1594.

⁴⁸⁶ Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, p. 80

⁴⁸⁷ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1889, fol. 26, 10.4.1608.

⁴⁸⁸ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, fol. 56, 10.22.1614.

enclaves spread over the Ottoman Empire, and within a few Italian cities. Tabarka, an island near Tunis, leased from the Spaniards by the Genoese Lomellini who dealt in the coral fished there,⁴⁸⁹ was such a haven. The same functions were also fulfilled by the Venetian embassies and *fundagos* in Istanbul, Cairo, and elsewhere,⁴⁹⁰ as well as by Spanish fort towns in North Africa.⁴⁹¹ In addition to banking services, these institutions also provided legal services in cases of conflicts between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. When the merchant who held Jerónimo de Pasamonte's money refused to hand it over to him, Pasamonte went to the Venetian *Bailo*, or embassy, in Istanbul where "they provide justice."⁴⁹² He turned to more violent, though efficient, means only after he was not allowed in because of political tensions between Spain and Venice.

But these spaces did not exclusively protect the captives; in some cases they served the needs of slave owners and go-betweens. The case of Livorno, although somewhat exceptional because of its location on the Italian peninsula, serves as a good example. According to Emanuel d'Aranda, the grand duke of Tuscany had made an agreement with Algerian authorities according to which he would imprison ransomed captives who had recently arrived from Algiers until they collected enough money to pay the debts they owed their captors.⁴⁹³ Although a formal agreement may have been exceptional, the practice was quite common. Merchants who ransomed captives could order their imprisonment upon arrival in a Christian settlement until they paid their debt. The authorities usually cooperated. Pedro Brea, who ransomed a few captives from Tunis in 1595, left two in the castle's prison in Trapani, in the west coast of Sicily, because "they owed him 175 ounces [a coin worth 329 reales]."⁴⁹⁴ While he was away, the Count of Olivares, viceroy of Sicily at the time, visited Trapani and released one of Brea's prisoners, who promised he would immediately pay his debt. When Brea returned, the

⁴⁸⁹ For example, the lease from 1615, see: AGS, *Estado*, Negociaciones de Sicilia, Leg. 1169, fols. 18-20.

⁴⁹⁰ When the conditions of their employment allow it, captives could go in and out of the *fundagos*. It was through the connections he made in the Venetian *fundago* in Cairo that Jerónimo de Pasamonte arranged knives for a failed mutiny; see: Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, pp. 58-60. On the transformations of the medieval institution of the *fundago* in the early-modern period, see: Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 355-361.

⁴⁹¹ Acero, Alonso, *Orán-Mazalquivir*, pp. 432-438.

⁴⁹² "...que se hace la justicia..." see: Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, p. 80.

⁴⁹³ Aranda, *Les captifs d'Alger*, p. 44.

⁴⁹⁴ "le devian 175 onças," AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1094, fol. 239, 1595.

Count was gone and the ex-captive, now a released prisoner, disappeared. Brea wrote the Council of War and asked it to provide him help.⁴⁹⁵ Gaspar Discle, a squire from Oran, who was captured by the Algerians in 1593, recounted a similar story in his petition for help, only from the captive's perspective. In 1596, with money his wife sent after selling their property and a loan he took from Valencian merchants, he believed he had bought his freedom. But soon after his return to Oran, the merchants demanded his imprisonment because he could not pay them his debt.⁴⁹⁶ This practice further explains captives' distrust towards the intermediaries who ransomed them. While captives needed the go-betweens, they knew they might be turned into prisoners again, this time by those who ransomed them.⁴⁹⁷ While merchants could count on such cooperation, the imprisoned captives expected the authorities to examine their petitions for help with an attentive ear to the post-captivity imprisonment. Pedro de Prado, from Ibiza, was captured by corsairs during his military service, but managed to borrow money and return home. Unable to pay his debt, he was imprisoned. In the petition he sent the crown in 1590, he asked:

In consideration that he was captured while in the service of his majesty, he petitions that for the love of God, [his majesty] help him with alms to help and pay his ransom, [and] in consideration that he is a very poor soldier and in charge of children and the authorities imprison him in order to force him to pay the said ransom and he does not have anyone to support him . . .⁴⁹⁸

The trading zones that facilitated ransom, located in the Ottoman Empire or the Spanish and Portuguese forts of the Maghrib and the Atlantic coast of Morocco, varied in their degree of autonomy and sovereignty, in the forms of social and ethnic life they generated, and in the kind of transactions they enabled. Tabarka, as portrayed by

⁴⁹⁵ It is unclear if Pedro Brea is the same figure Braudel mentions in *The Mediterranean* as a Jew who in 1580 worked in the Turkish chancellery in Istanbul. If it is the same person, he may have established the contacts that later helped him to ransom captives back then. See: Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 1159.

⁴⁹⁶ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 478, fol. 268, 17.12.1596.

⁴⁹⁷ Captives who were ransomed by the Orders of Redemption had to promise to perform their past captivity in processions after their return to the Peninsula. Early in the sixteenth century, they had to play that role for a full year before they could return to their previous life. If they refused to cooperate, the Orders could bring to their arrest. In June 9, 1519, the Trinitarian Diego de Gayangos received a letter from the king that ordered the arrest of some of the captives Gayangos ransomed the previous year. Gayangos complained that the captives refused to follow him and participate in processions as they promised before their ransom. The king's orders the arrest of the captives, see: Biblioteca Universitaria Valencia, MS. 581, fols. 157-159, apud: Porres Alonso, Bonifacio, *Libertad a los cautivos*, Córdoba – Salamanca: Secretario Trinitario, 1998, pp. 249-250.

⁴⁹⁸ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 305, fol. 31, 7.17.1590.

Gracián, provided a safe exchange space that guaranteed the captives that they would not be sold back to slavery immediately upon paying the “go-between,” while assuring the latter that he would be compensated upon releasing the captives he ransomed. The location of the island—only 80 miles away from Tunis, 216 miles from Mazara del Vallo (located at the eastern tip of Sicily), and 317 miles away from Algiers – and the fact that the Algerian and Tunisian authorities respected its autonomy while benefiting from the functions it fulfilled, made it a perfect space for exchanges of Muslim and Christian captives.⁴⁹⁹ In fact, this specific value of the island was acknowledged in two reports the Spanish ambassadors in Genoa submitted to the Council of the State in 1582, and again in 1603. Pedro de Mendoza, the ambassador, wrote that “the only benefit of that place is the ransom of Christians, [since] the corsairs of Bizerte, Annaba, and all the coast of Barbary go there, and [we also receive] a few reports from the Levant, and [I] fear that [once the island is] deserted, the French neighbors would take over and become lords of the entire coast . . . ”⁵⁰⁰

While Tabarka served parties to ransom agreements at the east of the Maghrib, Ceuta, only fourteen miles from Algeciras in Spain, and Tétouan, a city heavily populated with Moriscos since 1609 located only twenty eight miles from the Spanish garrison of Ceuta, filled similar functions for the western tip of North Africa. In 1646, for example, Algerians who hoped to ransom their kin enslaved in Spain bought Diego Hernández, a Christian captive, for that purpose. They hired one Sid Ahmed [Zigamete], an Algerian residing in Tétouan, and ordered him to take Hernández to Ceuta to meet Domingo Alvales, a Christian intermediary representing Hernández’s wife, Juana Ramirez. Alvales had to hand over to Sid Ahmed the relative of the Algerians whom he received from Ramirez, and in return receive Diego Hernández.⁵⁰¹ A decade later, Diego López de Acosta, held captive in Algiers, was trying to engineer his exchange for a Muslim enslaved in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. He sent instructions to doctor Tomas Velásquez de Oliver, asking him to buy the Muslim slave: “[S]end him to Ceuta with heavy guard, and

⁴⁹⁹ Gourdin, *Tabarka*, pp. 245-269.

⁵⁰⁰ ...[C]omodidad solo ay en aquel lugar de rescatar cristianos acudiendo allí los corsarios de Viserta, Bona, y toda la costa de Berbería, y algunos avisos de Levante, y temer que desmantelada se metiesen allí los franceses vezinos con que darían señores de toda aquella costa... AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1416, fol. 138/1-2.

⁵⁰¹ AHP, Huelva, 158, número 152, apud. Díaz Hierro, Diego, *Historia de la Merced de Huelva: hoy catedral de su diócesis*, Huelva, 1975.

make him write [to me telling me] to leave [Algiers] to Tétouan in order that the exchange will be executed there *as is the custom* (emphasis added).”⁵⁰² Beyond stressing the importance of Ceuta and Tétouan as spaces of exchange, De Acosta’s words demonstrate how ransom procedures followed rules and created expectation among the parties they involved.

The Venetian *fundagos* located in the urban Muslim centers, in addition to providing storage services and serving as inns hosting pilgrims and European merchants, offered spaces to negotiate all kinds of deals. Their location, embedded within Muslim territory, offered them less autonomy than places like Tabarka, however, and the local authorities, upon suspicion of crime, could search the rooms and the goods of the guests. Pasamonte, who organized a few failing revolts during his long captivity, mentions this when discussing his last attempt to mutiny in Alexandria. He describes how, when the authorities discovered that he and his friends had obtained weapons from the *fundago*, they broke in and arrested the monk who provided the weapons.⁵⁰³ Another institution filling similar functions was the European consulates in the Maghrib and in the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁰⁴

We owe much of what we know about ransom in Tunis to the documents archived by the French consul there and the notarial services he provided.⁵⁰⁵ Captives, intermediaries, and sellers took advantage of these services to validate and later debate, upon need, the terms of the deals they negotiated. French consuls elsewhere in the Maghrib provided similar services and more. Gracián, for example, stayed in the house of the consul in Tunis a month after the payment of his ransom until Askenazi, the merchant

⁵⁰² “...[M]andarle a Seuta con buena custodia, y hacerle escribir que baje yo a Tetuán para que allí se aga como es costumbre el trueque...” AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 933/2, 11.13.1655.

⁵⁰³ Pasamonte, *Autobiografía*, pp. 63-66.

⁵⁰⁴ Steensgaard, Niels, “Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15:1 (1967), 13-55. On the history of the French consuls and *fundagos* in Tunis, see: Revault, Jacques, *Le foundouk des Français et les consuls de France à Tunis (1660-1680)*, Éditions recherche sur les civilisations: Paris, 1984. On the nomination of the consuls in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, see: Patrick, Boulanger, “Les appointements des consuls de France à Alger au XVIIIe siècle,” in Jörg Ulbert and Gérard le Bouëdec, *La fonction consulaire à l’époque moderne : L’affirmation d’une institution économique et politique (1500-1700)*, PUR : Rennes, 2006, pp. 123-146.

⁵⁰⁵ For an eyewitness testimony about the involvement of the consul in the business of ransom, see: d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*. For statistics of ransom and its procedures in Tunis, see: Boubaker, “Réseaux et techniques de rachat.”

who ransomed him, took him to Tabarka.⁵⁰⁶ The French consul in Tétouan lodged the Trinitarians in their expedition in 1661. In some cases, intermediaries misused the services these consuls provided. The Majorcan Già, who exported war materials to Algiers, claimed, in his defense, that he used his profits to ransom Christian captives, thus saving souls from potential conversion to Islam. The truth was that Già rescued the captives in an attempt to legitimate the illegal tar deal. He went as far as issuing a *certificatoria* at the French consul, testifying he bought the captives from his gains on the tar. The document, of which there are no traces in the inquisitorial folder, did not help him, because most of the captives he ransomed claimed they were ransomed with money sent by their relatives from Majorca.⁵⁰⁷

The Spanish fort towns presented other kinds of anomalies. As Jean-Frédéric Schaub has recently argued, the continuation of the movement of the *reconquista* into North Africa in the first few decades of the sixteenth century, ironically, reproduced the Spain of the three cultures in the Spanish *presidios* established in the North African littoral.⁵⁰⁸ Jews reestablished themselves in these colonies of a monarchy that pretended to have cleansed its territories of Jews, by making themselves invaluable for the Spaniards. The official justification for the presence of the Jews was the translation and interpretation services they provided; however, the leaders of these communities also lent money, provided grains, traded in strategic information, trafficked slaves, and often facilitated the ransom of Christian captives or their exchange for Muslims.

In addition to the European institutions, captives and intermediaries also benefited from Maghribi legal institutions. The case of Gracián reflects one of these mechanisms. Late in the summer of 1594, Gracián's Italian relatives intervened to help Simon Askenazi, a Jewish merchant from Tunis whose goods had been confiscated in Italy, and perhaps he himself was arrested.⁵⁰⁹ In return, they asked Askenazi for aid in securing Gracián's ransom. Askenazi was provided with a letter of credit in the sum of 600 golden

⁵⁰⁶ Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, p. 122.

⁵⁰⁷ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1714, carpeta 7. Cf.: Planas "Acteurs et mécanisme du rachat," pp. 65-81, esp. 76-80.

⁵⁰⁸ Schaub, *Les juifs du roi d'Espagne*, p. 12.

⁵⁰⁹ It is unclear whether only Ashkenazi's goods were confiscated; and it is possible that he himself was detained. On deals of ransom involving Ashkenazi in the seventeenth century, see: Philippe, Gourdin, *Tabarka (15.-18. siècle): histoire et archéologie d'un préside espagnol et d'un comptoir génois en terre africaine*, École française de Rome, Rome: 2008, pp. 538-543.

escudos which he was to cash at the governor's office in Tabarka, once Gracián had been ransomed.⁵¹⁰ The Pasha who by then had given up the hope for a large sum of money for Gracián was willing to accept Askenazi's offer, and sold Gracián to him for 1,300 golden escudos. Gracián and Askenazi, who had only 600 escudos in cash, borrowed another 700 escudos, paid the Pasha, and received from him a letter of manumission. Immediately after paying them, however, the Pasha accused Gracián and Askenazi, the merchant who ransomed him, of cheating him. His intent to break his word and misuse his power was in vain, and Askenazi and Gracián won the trial after presenting the kadi with a letter of manumission. This letter, issued by the Pasha on 11 April 1595, was not ratified by a Christian notary. For the kadi that did not matter, and even though it was a Pasha who had accused Gracián in a fraud, he affirmed the validity of the ransom and Gracián remained free.⁵¹¹ The case of Gaspar de los Reyes shows other political-legal institutions in Maghribi cities that defended, at least in some cases, the fair executions of ransom agreements, even when none of the parties was Muslim. This former captive, who had lost his fortune in the Algerian liquor market and could not repay the captives who had given him money to ransom them, took a drastic measure when the captives became more vehement in their demands: he decided to convert to Islam—"and because they asked him to pay them, he went to the hall of the Divan where Haziali governed . . . and he told him he wanted to renounce the law of god and turn moor, and the said Haziali responded that first he should pay to whom he owed [money] and then he could turn moor."⁵¹² Muslim institutions, then, often intervened or acted as courts of appeal in cases of dispute around ransom related issues among Christians and between Christians and Muslims.

While some intermediaries took advantage of captives who sought their ransom, most captives seemed to be content with the services these mediators provided.

⁵¹⁰ For the history of Tabarka, its relation to the Habsburg Empire, Genoa, Tunis, and Algiers, see: Gourdin, *Tabarka*.

⁵¹¹ Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, pp. 75-76. See also his description of these events in his *Peregrinación de Anastasio*, in *Ibid.* pp. 120-121. On the history and function of this position, see: Tyan and Káldy-Nagy, *Ḳādī*. On the increase in the power of the kadi in the Ottoman legal system during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: Gerber, *State, Society, and Law in Islam*, pp. 66-71.

⁵¹² "y porque le pedían les pagase, se fue a cassa de la duana donde gobierna Haziali... y le dijo que quería renegar de la ley de dios y volverse moro, y el dicho Haziali le respondió que pagara primero a quien devía y que luego se volviera moro..." AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824/2, carpeta 14.

Moreover, many captives could not arrange for cash to be sent, and thus negotiated ransom agreements according to which they promised to pay only upon returning home.⁵¹³ Emanuel d'Aranda's owner agreed to set free some of his slaves "on condition that they would board a ship that was just about to set sail to Livorno in Italy, and that there, they would reside in prison until their ransom would be paid."⁵¹⁴ Because of the risk involved, and the chance that captives would flee, the price in such agreements was significantly higher than when captives paid immediately. The first offer d'Aranda's owner made him was "two thousand patagons in Livorno or fifteen hundred in cash."⁵¹⁵ But as a rule, in such agreements, it was the merchants' turn to hope their clients would pay them back. After all, once free in their homeland, what prevented these redeemed captives from disappearing?

Thus, looking at the full duration of these exchange processes, the power relations between captives, captors, and "go-betweens" were more balanced than it first seems. Again, trust had to play a major role, and despite the temptation to vanish, many captives did their best to pay back their debts. And the price was high—not only the amount of money, but also the time it took to get it, hardly ever shorter than a year. Spanish captives usually applied to the crown for a one-year license to beg for alms in order to pay their debts, which, given the ransom prices, meant they had already paid part of it. For example, the Franciscan Antonio Castaño applied for such a license immediately upon his return to Spain. Expressing in his petition his unease at not paying his debtors on time, he claimed that if he were not to raise the money "he would be forced to return to captivity . . ."⁵¹⁶

⁵¹³ In some cases, Christian captors also set free their Muslim captives, taking their word to pay the ransom later. Diego Suárez Montañés describes in his history of Oran a Turkish military officer caught by the Spanish soldiers of the town. A few days later, Martin de Córdoba, the governor, "let him go taking his word [he will fulfill] the agreement and ransom price they reached" ("dio libertad fiando de su palabra el concierto y corte del rescate en que se concertaron"), Diego Suárez, *Historia del Maestre último que fue de Montesa y de su hermano Don Felipe de Borja: la manera como gobernaron las memorables plazas de Orán y Mazalquivir, Reinos de Tremecén y Ténez, en África*, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra and Beatriz Alonso Acero, Eds. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2005, p. 173.

⁵¹⁴ "...à condition qu'ils seraient dans un navire qui était au port prêt a faire voile pour Livourne en Italie, et qu'ils demeureraient là dans la prison jusqu'a ce que leur rançon fût payée," Aranda, *Les captifs d'Alger*, p. 44.

⁵¹⁵ "Donnez deux mille patagons à Livourne ou quinze cents ici," *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁶ "... será forzoso volver al cautiverio....," AHN, *Consejos*, Leg. 6900, 25.1.1591.

Did he feel threatened by the moneylenders and the ill reputation suffered by that class? Or was he behaving according to the famous Spanish code of honor easily triggered by matters involving debt and credit?⁵¹⁷ It is unclear who or what could have made Castaño return to captivity. Apparently, it could not have been the Spanish authorities. Whatever Castaño had in his mind when he submitted his request, the near absence of formal regulating and enforcing mechanisms did not often lead to breaches of trust, and the parties tended to fulfill their obligations. This point needs to be further elaborated. The history of the early-modern political geography of the Mediterranean developed in such a way that after their expulsion in 1492 and 1609, Jews and Muslims were, at least theoretically, not permitted on Spanish soil. Vanishing in Spain should not have been too difficult for captives who wished to avoid paying debts to Muslim and Jewish “go-betweens.”

That said, even Jewish and Muslim middlemen were not totally helpless in such cases. Just as a set of Christian enclaves in the Ottoman Empire protected captives from crooked merchants who tried to abscond with their money, did so Christian and Muslim authorities protect these merchants from being cheated by ex-captives. In September 1608, for example, Muley Zidán, the Sultan of Morocco, directed a letter to Phillip III through the Duke of Medina Sidonia, asking the Spanish monarch to help a Jewish merchant called Abraham Ben Waish. The latter had lent ransom money to Spanish hidalgos captured in Morocco but they never repaid him.⁵¹⁸ We do not know whether Zidán's request for help was attended to, but exactly one year earlier, the Inquisition had responded positively to a similar request from Abraham de Loya and David Hocico, Moroccan Jewish merchants. The two asked for passports to enter Spain in order to sue Portuguese nobles held captive in Morocco to whom they had lent ransom money they

⁵¹⁷ Scott Taylor has recently pointed out the important role credit and debt played in issues regarding honor in the early-modern Castilian society. See: Scott Taylor, "Credit, Debt, and Honor in Castile, 1600-1650," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7 (2003):8-27. His article revises previous scholarship, influenced by models developed from the sixties onwards by anthropologists and later borrowed by historians, according to which the Spanish code of honor revolved around matters related with sex; see, for example: Teofilo F. Ruiz, *Spanish Society, 1400-1600, Social History of Europe* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2001), pp. 239-243.

⁵¹⁸ García-Arenal et al, *Cartas marruecas*, p. 222-223.

never redeemed. The Inquisition acknowledged their legal rights in the matter and issued two passports for them.⁵¹⁹

Zidán cared less about the human traffic and more about the commerce between Morocco and European polities. The letter he sent to Phillip III reflects the friendly policy towards merchants enacted by his father, Ahmad Al Mansur, soon after he won the sultanate in 1578.⁵²⁰ Zidán asked that his subjects, whether Jews or Muslim, be treated in Christian lands just as Christian merchants were treated in Morocco—“the merchants of the Christian congregation . . . wherever in these provinces of ours . . . they come with the protection of custody and guard . . . and with this they and their goods are safe, surrounded by our help . . . and they, in all our kingdoms, travel safe from troubles and dangers.”⁵²¹ Abraham Ben Waish, the Jew for whom Zidán asked a safe pass, did more than just pursue the nobles he rescued: later he negotiated Morocco’s relations with Spain on Zidán’s behalf.⁵²² But similar requests and letters of recommendation for “go-betweens” were also issued by less important figures. Judas Malaqui, arriving in Málaga to deal with matters regarding ransoms he was negotiating, presented the governor with a letter of recommendation issued by Diego de Vera, the commander of the Spanish fort called Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera.⁵²³ And, in at least one case, Moriscos Muslims converted to Christianity who had been expelled from Spain between 1609 and 1614, were promised permission to return to live in the peninsula in return for ransoming fifty Christian captives.⁵²⁴

⁵¹⁹ AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1592, 25.7.1607. Cf. Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, p. 120,

⁵²⁰ In his *Crónica de Almançor*, the Portuguese António de Saldaña describes how Al-Mansur asked the European merchants in his realm to write home, telling “how well he treated them” (“o bom trato lhes fazia”). This policy “provoked the arrival in Marrakech of many Italians, Spaniards, French, English and Flemish that filled those kingdoms with such a quantity of commodities . . .” (“que foi ocasito de se irem pera Marrocos muitos italianos, espanhois, franceses, ingleses e framengos que encheram aqueles reinos de todas as mercadorias em tanta cantidade”), António de Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor, Sultão de Marrocos (1578-1603)*, António Dias Farinha, Ed. Lisboa: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1997, p. 31. On the measures Al-Mansur took to attract merchants to Morocco, see also García-Arenal, *Ahmad Al-mansur*, pp 111-115.

⁵²¹ “Los mercaderes de la congregación cristiana todos en general... en estas nuestras provincias, vienen con amparo de custodia y guarda... y con esto ellos y sus bienes están seguros, rodeados de nuestra ayuda... y ellos en nuestros reynos andan seguros de molestias y abatimientos,” García-Arenal et al, *Cartas marruecas*, *Ibid*.

⁵²² AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 210, letter to the duke of Medina Sidonia, 6.9.1608.

⁵²³ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 181, fol. 19, 1585.

⁵²⁴ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 2643, consulta del consejo de Estado, 13.8.1613.

7. Conclusion

In contrast to the bitter accord that almost ended Gracián's ransom, he chose to close his tale of captivity with a vignette stressing how ransom agreements were respected, even by the most untrustworthy Muslim corsairs. In his autobiography, he recounts that in the summer of 1595 he boarded a ship in Tabarka, and was ready to leave for Genoa. At the time, a galley of Morat Arraez, a famous North African corsair, harbored in the port. Its sailors, who noticed Gracián, informed their captain that Gracián was about to depart, and urged him to order them to capture him again. According to Gracián, the corsair replied, "[W]hat do you want of the poor little guy? Didn't he pay his ransom? Let him go free!"⁵²⁵ Gracián seals the paragraph with the words, "and these goods works I owe Mataarraez," misspelling the latter's name. This conclusion, which we might interpret as merely stylistic, nevertheless reflects a decision to represent the system of ransom I have discussed in a particular way—denying its institutional aspects and suggesting it was based on the good works of exceptional personalities. However, the documents relating to Gracián in the Historical National Archive in Madrid reveal that Morat Arraez did not allow Gracián to continue on his way because of a pure sentiment of friendly trust, but rather because of the legal instruments I have described. Arraez detained Gracián and demanded the safe pass issued to him in Tunis. Only after affirming its validity did he sign it, allowing Gracián to continue on his passage home.⁵²⁶

Gracián's description of his ransom offers an example of how an individual author contributed to the overshadowing of the networks that facilitated his own rescue and return home. The silencing of these networks, however, was an institutional phenomenon and cannot be explained by the analysis of a single text. These networks of captive-redeeming hardly left any archival traces. Only a few of the ransom deals channeled by them are represented textually. As I demonstrated, that does not mean they were marginal or escaped interaction with church and royal bureaucracies. Records testifying to the mechanics of the networks can be found in the Council of War, the Council of the State, the Royal council, the Inquisition and other archival repositories. But even when they are represented, the traces they left are sparse. In fact, the few traces they left in the archives

⁵²⁵ "¿Qué le quieres al mezquino? ¿ya no ha pagado su rescate?, déjale ir en libertad," Ibid., p. 76

⁵²⁶ AHN, *Clero*, Leg. 3821, Book VI.

reflect moments in which the system failed. For example, when intermediaries who ransomed Christians complained the latter escaped without paying their debt or when ex-captives petitioned the crown to help them pay their debt they could not cover. Ironically then, the more efficient this system was, the less it left traces. The more it formed a socially linked Mediterranean, the less it was represented and registered in the archives. As the work of the Orders grew larger, to some extent with the help of the other networks – as I show in the next chapter, the networks became less visible. Thus, ironically, again, it is the success, rather than failure and withering away, of the redeeming of captives by such networks, which allows the Crown's Mediterranean (via the Orders) to dominate and de-socialize the social space the sea was.

In light of the archival representation of these networks, the reconstruction of their mechanics and of the regularities that governed them had to be based on moments of friction and conflict. In other words I had to reconstruct the norm on the basis of its exceptions. The analysis pointed out how the relationships formed between captives, captors, and middlemen were expressed, in some cases, in unusual trust and *ad hoc* alliances grounded in legal agreements, which enabled captives' ransoms. Merchants transferring money that relatives sent across the Mediterranean, middlemen providing credit, exchange of Muslim slaves for Christians, and captives leaving their beloved as temporary hostages were the modalities that characterized the early-modern Mediterranean network of ransom. Despite political violence, religious hatred, and suspicion involved in the situation of captivity, trust among captives, captors, and middlemen of different faiths was crucial to the success of such agreements. Trust took various forms, and was developed over time in trajectories of captivity and ransom. Trust had first to be established in order for masters to accept their captives' claims regarding their identity, and hence, the value of their liberty; it was subsequently required in order for captives to get credit, or alternatively when they left their kin behind as hostages. Masters and intermediaries had to trust the captives to whom they provided credit. But trust here, as we have seen, was by no means an unconditioned empathy to the religious other. Rather, it was a socially grounded and institutionally guaranteed sentiment which implied certain rules of conduct.

At least in the Spanish context, this network of ransom with its unique procedures had implications for the Habsburg desire for a religious, cultural, and legal cleansing of the peninsula. Lauren Benton, who developed the term “legal regimes,” homologous legal spaces, implicitly assumes in her discussion of Spain that with the expulsion of the Jews and the Muslims, Spain lost some of the legal pluralism by which it had previously been characterized. But when Spanish captives, Maghribi captors, and Jewish, Muslim, and converted Christian “go-betweens” negotiated ransom deals, they bound themselves to mutual legal agreements, and thereby subverted the desired political boundedness of their legal regimes. At the same time, as I have stressed, trust in this system was not established across lines of faith solely by the subjective wills of the individuals involved. This network of ransom was supported by an institutional umbrella, in the form of embassies and port cities on the one hand, and the intervention of royal, religious, and legal bureaucracies on the other, which guaranteed the flow of transactions. Christian posts in the Maghrib and the rest of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Venetian and French embassies and *fundagos*, and the Muslim legal system, provided legal spaces to debate disagreements. Islands such as Tabarka, owned by powerful merchant families, and the Spanish forts and towns in North Africa, provided safe spaces for intermediaries to exchange the captives they ransomed. Spanish bureaucracies cooperated with the network and acknowledged the legal validity of the agreements reached through it, both implicitly—by conceding begging licenses—and explicitly, by facilitating entry to Spain for those who had been exiled from it many years earlier. Spanish royal bureaucracies, by accommodating the needs of released captives and injured intermediaries, acknowledged the validity of such agreements, and *ipso facto*, the fluidity of their legal regimes.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ See: Lauren A. Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*, *Studies in Comparative World History*, Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002. As I have attempted to show, the legal systems on both sides of the Mediterranean continued to respect and guarantee ransom agreements between interconfessional subjects, thereby maintaining their plural nature.

Chapter 6:

The Trinitarians and Mercedarians: the Orders of Redemption

1. Introduction

After exploring the ways in which ransom networks continued to thrive throughout the seventeenth century, it is now time to examine the better-studied history of the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians, religious Orders charged with liberating captives from the Maghrib. In recent years, a few solid studies of the medieval history of the Orders and of their early modern institutional history have been written. The chapter builds upon these studies in charting the Orders' history from their establishment in the Middle Ages to the slow process through which the Spanish Crown appropriated their redemptive labor during the sixteenth century. It briefly explores shifts in their sources of funding, the result of the sixteen century royal take-over and discusses the procedures that governed the ransom expeditions they sent to the Maghrib. The chapter differs from previous studies of the Orders in the way it emphasizes tensions and disagreements between the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians and between the Orders and other ransom agents, on the one hand, and various critics who opposed their redemptive labor, on the other. Tensions and discord characterized the relations between the Trinitarians and Mercedarians: throughout their history, the Orders struggled against each other over the monopoly over ransom. While we have less evidence of it, the Orders also targeted individual ransom agents as competitors. Such struggles entailed constant litigation over begging zones, which were important for the Orders as sources of funding, and the

publication and circulation of propaganda that praised the success of each Order in the redemption of Christian souls. The propaganda campaigns functioned both as part of the competition between the Orders and also as an on-going justification of their redemptive labor against critiques launched from the seventeenth century onwards by politicians, merchants and *arbitristas*. The latter claimed that the money that the Orders spent on imperial aims achieved the negative goal of funding arms for the Empire's enemies. Instead, the critics argued, the money should be spent on a squadron which will protect the Spanish littoral. Understanding these tensions as well as the image of the sea that the Orders shaped in their propaganda and through their expeditions to the Maghrib is important both in order to understand the shifting contour lines of the Mediterranean economy of ransom, examined in the next chapter, and as preliminary explanations for the manner in which the contemporary historiography has constructed the history of the Orders.

2. *The Orders of Redemption: Formation and Early History*

This section presents the history of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians from their inception until 1574. It surveys their sources of funding and reconstructs the power struggles between Trinitarians and Mercedarians as well as between the Orders and other ransom agents over these sources. It ends by examining the attempts of the Crown to regulate the work of the Orders and how historians of the Orders framed this royal intervention. Even before the Orders were established at the turn of the thirteenth century, ransom agents, ecclesiastical and private were active in Iberia. *Alfaqueques*, *exeas* and ransoming merchants, whose history I discussed in the previous chapter, enjoyed a monopoly over ransom in the twelfth century. And yet, already then, religious institutions, such as the Order of St. James of the Sword (*La Orden de Santiago da Espada*) and the Dominican Order ransomed Christians.⁵²⁸ Around the turn of the century, the Order of the Holy Trinity and the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, the main religious orders to specialize in captive-redeeming, were founded. The older of the two is

⁵²⁸ On the early rescue missions of the Order of St. James and of the Dominican Order in the twelfth century, see Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, p. 35, and Rodríguez, *Captives and their Saviors*, p. 141. On the Congregation of the Holy Christ of Burgos in the seventeenth century and the Third Order of San Francisco in the eighteenth century and their involvement in the ransom of captives, see: Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age*, p. 107.

the Order of the Holy Trinity whose first house was formed by the Provençal Juan Mata in 1198 in Cerfroid near Paris. While it is likely that the order was founded in response to the crusaders' defeat in the battle of Hattin outside of Jerusalem in 1187, its orientation was soon directed south to the Muslim-Christian frontier and, in 1202, Mata established a second house in Marseille.⁵²⁹ From there, Trinitarian houses spread throughout France, Austria, the Crown of Aragon, Castile and Portugal. At the Crown of Aragon, however, the Trinitarians encountered obstacles. The fact that they were supported by the French monarchy, the great feudal lords in France, and Pope Innocent III, placed them in opposition to the Crown of Aragon, an ally of the Albigensians, who objected to French policies in Languedoc.⁵³⁰ Eventually, the Trinitarians struck roots in the Aragonese kingdoms, but their status there was always weaker both in comparison to the power they came to have in Castile or in France and in comparison with that of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy in Aragon. The latter was established in 1218 by Pere Nolasc and Ramon de Penyafort under the patronage of the city of Barcelona and of James the Conqueror. Its first houses were established in the Crown of Aragon and in the second half of the thirteenth century. With the support of the Castilian crown, the order began establishing houses in Castile.⁵³¹

Unlike, merchants or royal ransom agents who worked for the crown, for whom ransom was either business or a royal office respectively, the Orders' mission was spiritual. They did not seek to terminate the institution of slavery, and even ending the captivity of individuals was secondary to the redemption of Christian souls in the risk of conversion.⁵³² This spiritual mission necessitated money and the Orders funded their costly ransom operations by employing public and private sources. Revenues from private property played a major role. During the Middle Ages, the Portuguese, Castilian and Aragonese kings conquered increasingly numerous Muslim territories which they granted to soldiers and settlers but also to various religious orders. Over the years, the Orders of Redemption had accumulated many property grants, acquired land

⁵²⁹ Yvonne, Friedman, *Encounter between Enemies: Captivity and Ransom in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002, p. 87.

⁵³⁰ Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, pp. 39-41.

⁵³¹ On the Medieval history of the Order and more particularly on the establishment of the first houses, see: James William, Broadman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain, the Order of Merced on the Christian-Islamic Frontier*, University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1986, pp. 15- 26.

⁵³² Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, p. 45.

independently and received land grants from individual patrons. These assets were leased out, but the income they yielded would not have been enough to fund the rescue operations.⁵³³ Testators also bequeathed their estates to the Orders and the friars used begging bowls to collect money in churches and other places.⁵³⁴ To excite and compel the believers to donate, the orders staged processions in which former captives were forced to accompany the orders and perform their past captivity for six months to a year following their ransom.⁵³⁵

While the foundation of the Orders and the distribution of their sister houses across the peninsula might have reflected political tensions between Aragonese and French kings, the Pope, and French magnates, the competition could not be fully reduced to royal politics. The Orders fiercely competed over the monopoly over ransom and begging zones and even refused to admit their adversaries into their ranks. The Mercedarians, for example, accepted former members of other orders upon the approval of the chapter general.⁵³⁶ But their constitutions stipulated that under no circumstances could Trinitarians join it – “*Who ought not to be admitted as brothers: No brother of the Holy Trinity is to be admitted to our Order. And if any [brother] from our Order goes to theirs, let him never be readmitted to this, our habit.*”⁵³⁷ From 1366, the competition manifested itself in disputes over licensed areas for begging. Pre-modern kings attempted to regulate begging by conditioning it upon the granting royal permits. Such licenses were usually valid for a year or two and limited to one or a few dioceses. In 1363, the Trinitarians asked Pedro the Ceremonious (1319-1387) for a license to put begging bowls in churches in the Crown of Aragon. Once the king granted the Trinitarians the coveted license, the

⁵³³ On land gifts and acquisition by the Mercedarians and on the leasing of land in the thirteenth century, see: Broadman, *Ransoming Captives*, pp. 78-94. On the property of the Mercedarians in Valencia during the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, see: Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, pp. 49-51.

⁵³⁴ Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, p. 51; Rodríguez, *Captives and their Saviors*, pp. 162-4, 170-1.

⁵³⁵ Rodríguez, *Captives and their Saviors*, pp. 182-3. In that sense, and as Rodríguez has noted, ransom did not mean immediate freedom. While the Orders fed and gave new clothes to these captives, their return home was postponed. Those who tried to break the promise they gave and return home immediately, discovered they were now captives of the Orders. On June 9th 1519, for example, Queen Juana and King Carlos responded to the complaint of the Trinitarian Diego de Gaygangos. The latter claimed that the captives he had ransomed *had run away* breaking the word they gave him in the Maghrib. The Kings ordered municipal officers to arrest the escaping captives and force them to pay the cost of their ransom, see: Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*, p. 251.

⁵³⁶ Broadman, *Ransoming Captives*, p. 66.

⁵³⁷ Constitutions of the Ancient Fathers of the Order of the Virgin Mary of the Ransom of Captives That Were Enacted in the Year 1272, article 25, Broadman, *Ransoming Captives*, p. 135.

Mercedarians demanded its annulment. The Trinitarians protested but to no avail. Only in 1384, did the Trinitarians manage to win back the privilege but by then they had lost the battle against the Mercedarians in the Crown of Aragon. In 1388, Juan I issued a royal provision that granted the Mercedarians a monopoly over begging in the Crown.⁵³⁸ While the Trinitarians had a few victories, progressively the Mercedarians secured their monopoly, and by 1477 the Trinitarians ended their activity in the Crown of Aragon altogether.⁵³⁹ The zeal with which the Orders fought over their begging privileges was also directed against individuals they perceived as unlicensed intruders. In 1306, the Mercedarians complained about charlatans who had obtained a royal begging permit under the pretext of former captivity.⁵⁴⁰ The complaint could be read as intent to protect the believers from tricksters, but the friars also tried to prevent real captives from begging.⁵⁴¹ This was the case of Nicolás Gil and Juan of Seville, for example, whose only

⁵³⁸ Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, pp. 51-52.

⁵³⁹ Rodríguez, *Captives and their Saviors*, p. 144.

⁵⁴⁰ Ferrer i Mallol, “La redempció de captius a la corona catalano-aragonesa (segle XIV),” p. 271.

⁵⁴¹ Faked performances of captivity became common at the turn of the seventeenth century. Cervantes, for example In *The Adventures of Persiles and Sigismunda*, which he completed only days before his death in 1616, described Periander arriving at the town square of an unnamed place: “...[A]nd in the midst of the town square, through which they had to pass, they saw a lot of people assembled, all attentively watching and listening to two young men who, dressed in the clothes of recently ransomed captives, were presenting figures drawn on a painted canvas they’d spread out on the ground. It seems as if they had apparently relieved themselves of the weight of two heavy chains they had next to them, which were like badges and marks testifying to their past misfortunes. One of them... began his impassionate speech saying: ‘this, Señores, which you see painted here is the city of Algiers... the universal port of corsairs and a shelter and refuge of thieves’” (“...[E]n mitad de la plaza dél, por quien forzosamente habían de pasar, vieron mucha gente junta, todos atentos mirando y escuchando a dos mancebos que, en traje de recién rescatados de cautivos, estaban declarando las figuras de un pintado lienzo que tenían tendido en el suelo. Parecía que habían descargado de dos pesadas cadenas que tenían junto a sí, insignias y relatores de su pasada desventura; y uno dellos..... comenzó su arenga... diciendo: Esta, señores, que aquí veis pintada, es la ciudad de Argel... puerto universal de corsarios y amparo y refugio de ladrones...” Cervantes de Saavedra, Miguel de, *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, Cátedra: 2004, pp.527-8. My translation). The scene ends in a surprising way. The narrator describes how the mayor of the city, a former captive, who had spent five years in Algiers, joins the spectators. Having been held captive at the same time and place as the performers, he suspects them, interrogates them about their captivity and exposes them as charlatans. Charlatans also faked captivity within the corridors of the Spanish bureaucracy. In the petition for help that the former captive Juan de Olmedo submitted to the Council of War in 1589, he suggested that documents cannot fully prove one’s past: “Many men pretending to be captives ask your highness for many things including gratuities (*ayuda de costa*) and other things and some among them were never held captives and they come with false accounts (*relaciones*) [in order to get] a compensation for their labors,” (“[Q]ue muchos hombres so color de cautivos piden a v.m. muchas cosas donde son ayuda de costa y otras cosas y ay algunos que no an estado cautivos y vienen con relaciones falsas en recompensa de su travaxo.” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 275, fol. 248, 10.3.1589). Within the context of applying for royal favors, the word *relación* refers to the written documents captives submitted which mediated the interactions between them and the bureaucrats they addressed. De Olmedo, then, links the faking of captivity to the forgery of documents and claims that documentary evidence easily lends itself to falsification and thus should not be

vice was to obtain their liberty by means other than the help of the Mercedarians. Nicolás Gil and Juan of Seville petitioned Pedro the Ceremonious in 1374 for begging permits that not only authorized them to collect alms but also explicitly stipulated that the Mercedarians had no right to prevent them from doing so.⁵⁴² This episode echoes tensions which go beyond the struggles between the Orders. It shows how indirectly, on the back of ransomed captives, the Orders also struggled with *alfaqueques* and *exeas*. The Orders continued to quarrel about begging zones at least until the mid-seventeenth century and probably later.⁵⁴³ But they never succeeded in preventing individual captives or their kin from begging, as is attested by the hundreds of approved petitions from the seventeenth century archived in the National Historical Archive in Madrid.

3. The Trinitarian and Mercedarian Orders in the Early Modern Period

In the early modern period, it was the new royal governing Councils which filled the Orders' money boxes. The most important were the grants of the Council of the Cruzada (*Consejo de Cruzada*). Most of the money it redistributed to the Orders was

trusted alone. He contrasts the reproducibility of documents with the authenticity of mastery of languages and the ability to perform it orally. In the rest of his petition, he implies that captivity created a certain persona, a captive persona, expressed by oral-linguistic skills that could only be acquired during captivity in the Ottoman Empire or Morocco. Only captives had that persona, were able to perform it, and thus only they could expose charlatans as such. Preparing the grounds for his request, he advised the king to hire a ransomed captive who not only submitted documentary proof but also spoke Arabic and Turkish – “it is advisable that he who were captive submitting an account and speaking the Arabic and Turkish languages be ratified in a manner that would serve the king.” (“Es bueno quel que fuere cautivo dando relación y hablando la lengua Aráviga y Turquesa sea ratificado conforme v.m. fuere servido,” Ibid.) Having himself this knowledge, de Olmedo proceeded and promised the king that should he get the position, by examining petitioners who claimed captivity and exposing tricksters among them, he would save money to the royal treasury: “And since the said Juan de Olmedo speaks Turkish and Arabic, he petitions your majesty to kindly [order to] give [him] a maintenance in order to sustain [himself] in this court. And when the captives come before your majesty asking for gratuities and other benefits, I will examine [them] and this way [your majesty] will get rid of many vagabonds and it will be known who was captive and from that your majesty would obtain much profit” (“Y como el dicho Juan de Olmedo sabe hablar Turquesco y Arávigo A v.m. supplica sea servido de mandarle dar un entretenimiento para poder sustentarse en esta corte y para quando los cautivos que vienen a v.m. pidiendo ayudas de costas y otras ventaxas los exsamine de lo qual se quitaran muchos vagamundos y se sabrá quien a sido cautivo y dello se seguirá a v.m. mucho provecho.” Ibid).

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ The Trinitarian Alonso de San Antonio compiled some of the records which supported the Trinitarian case, see: Alonso de San Antonio, *Primacia de redentorade cavtibus de la sagrada Orden de la SSma Trinidad, en las coronas de Castilla, Aragón y Nauarra, contra la illvstre Orden de Nuestra Sa. de la Merced*. Madrid, 1651-2.

given by captives' kin who restricted the money they donated to the ransom of their relatives. In addition, the Council had its own ransoming priorities and demanded that the Orders spent the bulk of the grants on ransom of officers, soldiers and sailors.⁵⁴⁴ The Council of Castile and the Council of Military Orders (*Consejo de los Órdenes*) also funded the Orders and had their own ransom agenda. The former sought the ransom of imperial soldiers – Spaniards, Italians and Portuguese;⁵⁴⁵ the latter of captives from villages and towns under the jurisdiction of the military Orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara.⁵⁴⁶ The Council of the Indies (*Consejo de Indias*) redistributed alms collected in the New World and forced the orders to liberate captives from the Indies and those taken captive in the *carrera*.⁵⁴⁷ In addition, royal family members regularly donated money for ransom.⁵⁴⁸ An important non royal source of funding were the *adjutorios*, money given to the Orders by captives' kin or friends,⁵⁴⁹ which the orders could use only for the person the donors designated. On the other hand, alms that the brothers collected independently could be used for the ransom of any captive.

Once the Orders collected enough money, the Trinitarian or Mercedarian General asked the Council of Castile to authorize a rescue expedition. Upon announcing an expedition, the Council granted a license to the Orders stipulating the names of the redemptors, the expedition's route, and its final destination. It also issued a passport valid in Spanish jurisdiction stating that the friars were permitted to travel to North Africa and requesting Spanish officials to provide the friars with all the help they needed. One of the officials in the Spanish garrisons in the Maghrib or a friar sent for that purpose from Spain travelled to the city in which the Orders planned to ransom captives and obtained a passport from its governor. This document was supposed to protect the Orders on their way to the Maghrib and during their stay there. It also stipulated the number of slaves that the Orders committed to buy from the governor and his men thus partially imposing on the Orders a Maghribi ransoming agenda.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁴ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 94-96, Friedman 111-112.

⁵⁴⁵ Once Portugal won independence, the crown commanded the Orders to stop ransoming Portuguese.

⁵⁴⁶ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 94, 96-7

⁵⁴⁷ Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, pp. 114-115.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 116-117.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 111.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 107-108 and 129-130.

The procedures that governed the expeditions the Orders sent from the late sixteenth century onward were the result of a decision of Philip II, who, from 1575 through his Royal Council, began regulating and inspecting the Orders' finances.⁵⁵¹ The monarch also demanded that a scribe accompany the expeditions and record the negotiations with Maghribi authorities, the identity of the rescued captives, the price paid for them, and the sources of funding employed. The scribe was required to make three copies of his books:

One of which will stay with you [and] the other will stay and be in the custody the General-Minister of the Order of our Lady of the Mercy. And the other [book] will be submitted to the person that the Council will nominate in order that he will know and understand [how many] *maravedis* you had in your hands and will be used for the said redemption.⁵⁵²

The quote is taken from records documenting a Mercedarian expedition that was sent to Tétouan in 1645. The friar leading the expedition was to keep one book; a second copy had to be deposited at the Orders' archive; and the third had to be submitted for royal inspection. The first time the King issued these instructions was in 1575, but in the following years he issued and reissued them, a fact that suggests that they were not followed in a way that satisfied the crown. Despite the king's dissatisfaction with the way in which his orders were followed, the instructions led to the creation of thirty-nine books (probably more but this is the number of the books that historians have recovered thus far) detailing fund raising procedures, the expeditions, and the Orders' expenses. It was during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, then, that the Orders were transformed into a royal arm. This, however, did not happen overnight and not even over a century as the repeating attempts to impose ordered book keeping suggests. Nor did it mean, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, that the King gave up or wished to eliminate individual ransom agents.

⁵⁵¹ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 85, Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, pp. 107-110, Barrio Gozalo, *Esclavos y cautivos: Conflicto entre la cristiandad y el islam en el siglo XVIII*, p. 231.

⁵⁵² "El uno de los cuales llevéis vosotros y el otro quede y esté en poder del ministro general de la orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced. Y el otro se entregara a la persona que el consejo nombrare, para que se sepa y entienda los maravedís que así hubiera en vuestro poder y entran para la dicha redención..." BNE, Mss. 4365, apud Gozalbes Busto, *Los Moriscos en Marruecos*, p. 283.

4. *Propaganda*

Despite the absence of reliable data for the medieval period, the extant evidence suggests that the crown's monopolization of the Orders' activity did lead to a sharp rise in the number of expeditions. This reflected the rising number of captives and their shifting distribution that followed the end of the age of large spectacular maritime battles between Mediterranean empires. As more expeditions were sent, more funds had to be collected. Competition for funds forced each order to invest time and money in wide propaganda campaigns and the Orders circulated printed pamphlets and images. These detailed the dangers implicit in their operations, stressed the importance of the Orders' apostolic mission, and enumerated the miseries of those reduced to captivity: compelled to hand over their fortunes, captives were sold into slavery, beaten, forcibly converted, and worked to death. Their only chance of escape was through the ransoming expeditions of the Orders of Redemption. While stressing the importance of the Orders for the redemption of Christian souls, the Orders also articulated an image of the Mediterranean and a model of communication and exchange in their propaganda.⁵⁵³ According to that model, the sea was a boundary set by God and nature which separated the Maghrib from Christian Spain. While the sea was constructed in religious and environmental terms in the propaganda, it corresponded to the Mediterranean articulated through the rhythms of the redemption expeditions. The number of expeditions that the Orders sent and the complicated diplomatic procedures that preceded them, portrayed the sea as a political boundary, one that was rarely crossed.

A relief carved by Pedro de la Cuadra in 1599, which formed part of the altarpiece of the Mercedarian convent of Valladolid in Castile, perfectly expresses in a ransoming scene – which may have taken place in Algiers, Tunis, or Fez – the self-image the Orders sought to construct.⁵⁵⁴ On the left side, sitting on a cushion, is a Muslim captor or a “Turk,” accompanied by his black slave. They are counting the golden coins on the table

⁵⁵³ For further analysis of this propaganda, which stresses the ways in which the images and pamphlets the Trinitarians produced and circulated de-socialized captivity, see: Jean-Claude Laborie, “Les orders rédempteurs et l’instrumentalisation du récit de captivité: l’exemple des trinitaire, entre 1630 et 1650,” in François Moureau, Ed. *Captifs en Méditerranée (XVI-XVIII siècles): histoires, récits et légendes*, Paris: PUPS, 2008, pp. 93-102.

⁵⁵⁴ The relief is currently presented in the National museum of Sculpture in Valladolid, Spain, see: Pedro de la Cuadra, *La redención de cautivos*, 1599, Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid.

before them. On the right side are two Mercedarian brothers who have arrived from Spain on a mission of redemption. Four captives stand behind, the heavy chains around their necks marking their captive status. Their placement behind the “Turks” reinforces both their identities as captives and that of the “Turks” as their owners. Negotiations over the price to be paid have already taken place, but the greedy “Turks” are unsatisfied, and the Mercedarians are adding money to the pile. The captives are portrayed as mute objects in, or even worse, “dead bodies,” as the Portuguese Antonio de Sosa described them in his famous *Topography and History of Algiers* published in 1612.⁵⁵⁵ Commoditized first when sold in the slave market after their capture, they are now experiencing a second commoditization. They have no agency and are deprived of any legal persona; they cannot take care of themselves and are, therefore, grateful for the Mercedarians’ help. This image, like textual descriptions of the ransom expeditions, places the friars at its center and excludes the intermediaries and the networks of credit, ransom, and trust – discussed in the next chapter – that captives employed to ransom themselves independently of the Orders.

Their propaganda, however, did not only celebrate the Orders success in redeeming Catholics and forcefully shape their religious role as saviors of Christian souls. It also created an image of the Maghrib and even of the Mediterranean, despite the fact the sea was never at the center of their propaganda. In fact, the adjective ‘Mediterranean’ hardly ever appears in any of the documents I have examined. And yet, both the sea and the Maghrib as the arenas in which captive-redeeming took place are carefully constructed by the orders. The framing of the rescue expeditions began before the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians embarked on the ships that took them to North Africa and continued after their return to Spain. Their voyage began when they left Madrid, marching south to one of the ports from which they left Spain. It ended after their return, with orchestrated processions in which rescued captives, dressed in the rags of their captivity and displaying their chains, enacted their captivity. . The processions framed the ransom expeditions, the Mediterranean, and the Maghrib as a liminal space, ritually separated from the regular order of things. They pointed to the crossing of the sea as a complicated

⁵⁵⁵ Haedo, *Topografía e historia general de Argel*, p. 100. On Sosa, Haedo, and the true identity of the author of that text, see: Camamis, *Estudios Sobre el Cautiverio en el Siglo de Oro* and Garcés, “An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam.”

and dangerous enterprise that required religious ceremonies for its success. The pamphlets that described the expeditions, however, always dedicated at least one paragraph, usually more, to descriptions of the sea voyage, of its hardships, and of the miraculous intervention would bring it to a successful end. The sea emerges as a space in which nature and God struggle against one another. This is how the voyage was described in a late Mercedarian expedition to Tunis in 1725:

...[O]n the fourth of March, the [fathers-redemptors] set sail at the bay of Alicante, directing the bow to Barbary [and] navigating with fair weather, until they could see Ibiza and Majorca; but arriving at half the latitude between that island and Sardinia, such a furious storm erupted that they were happy to find refuge in the sandy banks of Tortosa. Desiring to see the end of their journey, they tried the inconstancy of the restless waves, but the waves embarrassed them with their relentless brutality, locking them in the port of Barcelona. They set sail again, and among the rolling, frights, and fears that only those who frequented the sea can testify to, pushed by the opposing winds, they anchored at the port of Cagliari on April 2nd.... and on the seventh day of that month, they directed the bow to La Goleta which appeared within [the distance] of a rifle shot; but lacking onshore wind, they were vehemently forced to turn back, so that within a short time they returned to the port which they had left.⁵⁵⁶

Wild waves may have been, and still are, a constant feature of the Mediterranean. But at the same time they served as a trope in a discourse developed and employed by the Orders of Redemption. The Orders' propaganda portrayed the western Mediterranean as an environmentally erratic, unexpected space, which did not submit to human wills, expectations, and plans. The sea is represented as playing with the ships that tried to cross it, sending them back and forth and not letting them reach their destinations. The capricious sea always turns against the voyagers, leaving them defenseless.

⁵⁵⁶ “[Y] á quatro de Março se hizieron á la vela en la Bahía de Alicante, enderezando la proa á la Berbería, navegaron con bonança, hasta dar vista á Ibiza, y Mallorca; pero al llegar a la altura que media entre esta isla, y la de Çerdeña, se levanto tan furiosa borrasca, que tuvieron por gran felicidad el refugio de los alfaques d Tortosa. Con el deseo de vér el fin de su jornada, tentaron la inconstancia de las alteradas olas, y los azoró con implacable saña, hasta encerrarlos en el Puerto de Barcelona. Bolvieron ahizar de vela, y entre los baybenes, sustos, y temores, que solo saben contar bien los que han frequentado el Mar, impelidos de contrarios vientos, dieron fondo en el Puerto de Caller á los dos de Abril. Allí encomendaron su viage á María Santísima, venerándola en fu prodigiosa Imagen, llamada de Buen-Ayre... y el día siete de de dicho mes enderezaron la proa á la Goleta, que se dexó ver á tiro de fufil; pero faltando el viento de tierra, los hizo retroceder tan precipitadamente, que en brevissimo tiempo los bolvió al Puerto, que avian dexado,” *Relación de la redempción de cautivos, que por las dos Provincias de Castilla, y Andalucía, del Real, y Militar Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced, fe ha executado en la Ciudad de Túnez en esse presente año de 1726*, in Ignacio Bauer Landauer, Papeles de mi archivo, Relaciones de África (Argel – Túnez – Trípoli), Editorial Ibero-Africano-Americana, Madrid: 1922, vol. III, pp. 341-346.

Defenseless? Almost. The fathers had God on their side. The travails they suffered – in the above quote – ended with a miracle: the conversion to Christianity of a Muslim who was onboard the ship with them. The conversion functioned as an omen that signals the end of the trial of crossing the sea. Immediately afterwards, the quote continues – “They left the port of Cagliari on April 29th and on May 1st at noon they happily anchored in La Goleta, a Tunisian port, two leagues away from the city.”⁵⁵⁷ While the Mercedarians spent almost six weeks trying unsuccessfully to cross the sea, following the conversion of the Muslim, they reached their destination in less than three days. The Mediterranean as the orders represented it was characterized both environmentally and religiously. Setting sail meant entering a space dominated by unruly forces of nature which only the miraculous or Godly intervention can defeat.

How does this image of the sea correspond to the Mediterranean formed by the expeditions themselves? The number of expeditions that Mercedarians and Trinitarians sent to the Maghrib and their rhythm over time formed regularities which shaped maritime movement through the sea. Between 1595 and 1692 only sixty-one expeditions were sent to Algiers and Morocco by the two Orders. On average, only once in every three years did the Orders arrive in Algiers, and only once in every three and a half years did they arrive in Fez, Morocco, or Tétouan.⁵⁵⁸ Not only were the operations rare, but also the rescue operations were complicated. The friars had to lay careful plans in advance of their voyage. They had to interact with Spanish government organs and arrange for two kinds of passports (Spanish and Maghribi). A scribe had to accompany them and record everything that happened, and interpreters had to be hired. From an organizational point of view these were bureaucratically complex. The sea never seemed so complicated to cross. The Mediterranean that these rescue missions articulated was an imperial space dominated by self-contained political entities – the Habsburg Empire, Morocco, and the Maghribi Ottoman regencies. These institutional, political actors interacted with each other employing diplomatic mechanisms. And the movement of Christians across the sea was highly regulated and bound to bureaucratic supervision. Despite the fact, then, that the propaganda constructed the sea as a space dominated by

⁵⁵⁷ [S]alieron del Puerto de Caller á veinte y nueve de Abril, y á primero de Mayo, á la hora del medio día anchoraron felizmente en la Goleta, Puerto que tiene Túnez, á dos leguas de distancia,” Ibid, p. 344.

⁵⁵⁸ See the table by the end of chapter seven.

God and nature and their actual ransom rhythms articulated a political space, the sea that emerges was similar: it was a space that separated polities and people, not only environmentally distanced but also politically so.

5. Public Debates about Ecclesiastical Ransom

Trinitarians and Mercedarians engaged throughout the centuries in law suits against each other, expending considerable funds in such competitive litigation. However, they immediately united when the idea of ecclesiastical redemption, under royal protection, was challenged. This happened several time throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On May 31st 1612, for example, the Duke of Osuna, viceroy of Sicily, wrote a letter to the King listing the reasons for which he believed the redemptive labor of the Trinitarians and Mercedarians should be stopped. The Orders, he argued, emptied the Empire of its money, ransomed only the old and the sick, and funded Spain's enemies. If no rescue expeditions were sent to the Maghrib, he continued, the Muslims would themselves set free the old and the sick in order to avoid their maintenance expenses. The Council of State received the Duke's letter, thanked him but prohibited him from taking any measures on the matter unless otherwise ordered by the King.⁵⁵⁹ The Duke was not the only to criticize the Orders. In 1626, in the *cortes* of Monzón in Valencia, Guillermo Garrett, a captain and an *arbitrista*, claimed that a better use of the money that the Orders spent on ransom would be what he called "a preventive redemption," i.e. the establishment of a squadron to defend the Spanish coasts and capture Muslims.⁵⁶⁰ Like Osuna, Garrett accused the Orders of spending too much money, funding the crown's enemies, and ransoming only the old and weak. The squadron, Garrett added, would prevent Spaniards from falling prey to Muslim corsairs and even help to capture and

⁵⁵⁹ "Copia de una carta original del Duque de Osuna á S.M. fecha en Palermo á 31 de mayo de 1612," *CODOIN*, Vol. 44, p. 285.

⁵⁶⁰ The arguments of Garrett are summarized together with the response of the General of the barefoot Trinitarians in a pamphlet published by the Trinitarians in 1632, see: *Memorial del General de la orden descalços de la Santísima Trinidad, redención de cautivos, contra el arbitrio dado por el capitán Guillermo Garret, sobre la erección de una escuadra de seis navíos, que guarden las costas que miran a Berbería, y preserven estos reinos y sus habitantes, del cautiverio de los moros, convirtiendo en el apresto y sustento desta escuadra, lo que se gasta en redención de cautivos, por medio de las ordenes de la Trinidad, y Merced, y diversas dotaciones*, in Ignacio Bauer Landauer, Ed. *Papeles de mi archivo, Relaciones de África (Marruecos)*, Vol. II, Biblioteca Ibero-Africano-Americana: Madrid, 1922/3, pp. 53-86.

enslave enemy corsairs. The General of the Mercedarian Order, present in the *cortes*, responded rather woodenly, expounding on the importance of the Orders and calling the critics “unauthorized men, merchants by profession and especially idiots.”⁵⁶¹ A little later, another response to Garrett’s *arbitrio* was published by the Provincial of Castile.⁵⁶² The attacks, however, continued. In 1629, it was the turn of the Count-Duke Olivares to attack the costs of ecclesiastical redemption. Again, the Trinitarian Provincial of Castile vehemently responded and silenced the Count-Duke.⁵⁶³ The end of the century did not bring an end to the objections to ecclesiastical ransom and the polemics continued in the following century.⁵⁶⁴

In all of these instances, the critics did not distinguish between Trinitarians and Mercedarians, attacking them indifferently; in a similar vein, in their responses, Trinitarians or Mercedarians stood together. In this context, the Orders discovered that the books Philip II made them keep could serve them in unexpected ways. In imposing book-keeping on the Orders, the monarch had sought to strengthen his control over the use of ransom funds. When Guillermo Garrett claimed that during their expeditions Trinitarians and Mercedarians spent too much money on travel, food, and accommodation, the friars referred him to their books arguing that “the books of the accounts of the redemptions, which the redeemers have given to the Royal Council, respond to this charge; in these [books], made by a notary, it is stated that the [expenses] are not even a tenth of what the captain [Garrett] claims.”⁵⁶⁵ Osuna, Garrett, and Olivares may have failed in their attempts to eliminate the institution of ecclesiastical ransom but in drawing the Orders into the debate, these critics forced the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians to represent their redemptive labor in terms of economic efficiency, namely

⁵⁶¹ Tirso de Molina, the dramatist, poet and member in the Mercedarian Order, described this dynamic in his History of the Mercedarians, see: Tirso de Molina, *Historia general de la orden de nuestra señora de las mercedes, (1568-1639), Vol. II*, Manuel Penedo Rey, Ed. Provincia de la Merced de Castilla: Madrid, 1974, pp. 493-494.

⁵⁶² The Provincial’s response is discussed in Anita Gonzales-Raymond, “Le rachat des chrétiens en terres d’Islam : de la charité chrétienne à la raison d’état. Les éléments d’une controverse autour des années 1620,” in Bartolomé Bennassar and Robert Sauzet, Eds. *Chrétiens et musulmans à la Renaissance, Actes du 37^e colloque international de CESR, 1995*, Paris: H. Champion, 1998, pp. 371-389.

⁵⁶³ Tirso de Molina, *Historia general de la orden de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes*, pp. 551-552.

⁵⁶⁴ On the debate’s incarnation in the eighteenth century, see: Barrio Gozalo, *Esclavos y cautivos*, pp. 232-233.

⁵⁶⁵ “A este cargo respondan los libros de cuentas de las redenciones que los redentores han dado al consejo real; pro los cuales con fe de escribano constará, que no es, ni aunla decima parte de lo que el capitán dize,” see: Bauer Landauer, Ed. *Papeles de mi archivo*, p. 84.

in a language foreign to the way in which the Orders officially presented themselves. If originally, the Trinitarians and Mercedarians objected to the book-keeping procedures that the King imposed, as suggested by the fact the King had to issue and reissue his orders on the matter, ironically, they now discovered that these books could serve them as a point of reference to justify their work in the terms their opponents imposed.

The debate between the Orders and their critics was not a passing episode but rather formed a discourse with a long life.⁵⁶⁶ The fact that ransom, as is articulated in this debate, is a political question, and even more so an economic one, to be discussed in terms of efficiency, had a few effects on the historiography of the Orders. First, scholars have tended to read the critics' arguments as justified and take them as a sign of the Order's economic inefficiency.⁵⁶⁷ In that sense, the language of efficiency might be responsible for studies that have reduced ransom to economics and impersonal market forces. Second, and along the same lines, the debate must be at least partly responsible for the historiographic depiction of the Orders as sharing a monopoly over the economy of ransom. Indeed, Osuna, Garret, and Olivares directed their critiques only at the Orders and never mentioned small-scale ransom agents.⁵⁶⁸ The reason was that the latter were never directly funded by the Crown and as such had no responsibility for emptying – if indeed the Orders emptied – the royal fisc. No matter what the reason, the documents

⁵⁶⁶ In addition to the pamphlets published immediately in response to the critics a host of authors mentioned the polemics. The historian Antonio de León Pinelo mentioned it in his *Anales* (Martorell Téllez-Girón, Ricardo, Ed. *Anales de Madrid de León Pinelo, Reinado de Felipe III, Años 1598 a 1621: Edición y estudio crítico del manuscrito número 1.255 de la Biblioteca Nacional*. Madrid: Estanislao Maestre, 1931. Ed. facs. Valladolid: Editorial Maxtor, 2003. P. 366) and so did later historians of the Orders.

⁵⁶⁷ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, p. 86, Barrio Gozalo, *Escalvos y cautivos*, pp. 231-232.

⁵⁶⁸ Merchants that dealt with ransom received critiques of other kind. Often, they were accused of buying not only captives but also other goods which the corsairs stole from the captives they had captured. Complaints were made about how the merchants bought stolen goods for a cheap price in Algiers and put them back in circulation in Spain making great profit. This is reflected in the message spread in 1588 in Valencia by the crier of the viceroy: “[I received information] that it has been a while since a few merchants from this city and kingdom have in Algiers agents and correspondents for the purpose of buying there goods and other things that the corsairs, enemies of our saintly catholic faith, take and robe from ships of Christians, which they capture in these seas; what these [merchants] buy in the best conditions and in a price lower than the just one, they later send back to this kingdom and other parts of the coasts of Spain in order to resell it in great profit and much gain,” (“certa noticia de que algún temps ençà alguns mercaders deste ciutat y regne tendrien en Alger factors y corresponents a efecte de comprar alla les mercaderies y alters coses que les corsaris, enemichs de nostra santa fe católica, preñen y roben dels vexells de christians, que cautiven per estos mars, lo que compren ab molta comoditat y menys del just preu y apres ho remetén ad aquest regne y alters parts en la costa de Spanya per a revendré ab molt guany y grageria”) in Martín Corrales, *Comercio de Cataluña con el Mediterráneo musulmán*, p. 71.

which record the debate contributed to the silencing of the networks I examined in chapter four.

6. *The Orders of Redemption and Contemporary Historiography*

Scholars who have studied the process through which the Spanish King came to regularize the redemptive labor of the Orders assumed that the regulation marginalized and eventually eliminated those small-scale ransom agents discussed in the last chapter.⁵⁶⁹ In this process, scholars have argued, the Orders finally came to share a monopoly over ransom and were transformed into two efficient arms of a bureaucratic, centralized crown. José Antonio Martínez Torres, for example, has argued that the decision of the King to transform the Orders into a royal apparatus was part of a process of state formation, bureaucratization, and rationalization. Facing an increasing debt, a growing number of his subjects taken captives and a need to protect dynastic interests in Europe, Martínez Torres has explained, Philip II compared the performance of competing actors in the economy of ransom from the twelfth century onwards and reached the conclusion that the Trinitarians and Mercedarians delivered the best results – quantitatively and economically. According to this analysis, the monarch deliberately decided to make the orders into a royal arm executing a monarchical agenda.⁵⁷⁰

The process that Martínez Torres has described resulted among other things in the production of an important documentary corpus that provides a rich source for the study of the ransom and fundraising procedures of the orders. The merit of the documents lies in the fact that they form a serial corpus, which enables the reconstruction of institutional regularities transcending the history of individual captives or redeemtors. These records made the work of the orders extremely visible at the time, and, just as importantly,

⁵⁶⁹ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, pp. 24, 77, Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, Barrio Gozalo, *Esclavos y cautivos*.

⁵⁷⁰ Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles*, *ibid*. A few facts challenge this explanation. The absence of records for the earlier period made the comparison of the work of the Orders with that of other ransomers impossible. Even if the Orders had kept their books in order, there was no way of measuring and quantifying the performance of others involved in ransom. Thus, the royal decision to impose book keeping practices on the Trinitarians and Mercedarian could not have been the result of calculated deliberation about the efficiency of competing ransom agents. If anything, the fact that the royal instructions were issued and reissued throughout the seventeenth century points out how difficult it was to impose order on the Orders. The royal decision, then, does not necessarily reflect efficiency but rather an attempt to create it.

provided scholars of captivity with an extremely accessible, perhaps too accessible, body of documents for the study of the ransoming process.⁵⁷¹ The histories produced on the basis of an exclusive reliance on the records that the Orders had left us with offer a version of a narrative of state-formation and of centralization. The novelty these histories of the Orders offer in respect to state-formation narratives is that a monopoly over “humanitarian action” substitutes the traditional monopoly over the means of violence.⁵⁷² The previous and the next chapters challenge this history by showing how the regulation the King imposed on the redemptive labor of the Orders neither eliminated the ransom networks nor intended to eliminate the collaboration with go-betweens. Moreover, in 1612, the King formalized cooperation with Jewish and Muslim intermediaries who provided the Orders with services of outsourcing of ransom.

7. Conclusion

The regulation the King imposed on the Orders facilitated their study and is to a large extent responsible for their constructed historical image. As I have demonstrated, however, the Orders were active molders of their own image. In wide propaganda campaigns that included the production and circulation of images and pamphlets the Orders shaped an image of the Mediterranean, the space that separated the Habsburg Empire from the North Africa. This image worked in tandem with the Mediterranean that emerged from the actual procedures that governed their ransom expeditions and their rhythms. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the crossing of the sea was a routine practice and corsairs, captives, merchants and ransom agents constantly criss-crossed the sea. Both the historiography and the propaganda of the Orders pointed to them as exclusive actors in the field of ransom. I have already demonstrated the importance of dense networks of ransom, credit, and trust active alongside the redemptive labor of the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians. Now it is time to see how the work of the Orders was intertwined with that of small-scale ransom agents.

⁵⁷¹ Recently, Francisco Andújar Castillo has made a similar critique claiming that an exclusive reliance on Mercedarian and Trinitarian sources created a bias in the research and led to the reproduction of “an image of near monopoly over mediation of the ransom of captives these orders had,” see: Andújar Castillo, “Los rescates de cautivos,” pp. 135-136.

⁵⁷² For an historical narrative that stress the role of violence, see: Janice E. Thompson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Chapter 7:

The Political Economy of Ransom, 1575-1627

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the political economy of ransom – a political economy stimulated by violence, piracy, selling of booty and ransom – between 1575 and 1627 and on the chief actors who formed it: political, religious, and economic actors as well as captives and their kin.⁵⁷³ I argue that the redemptive labor of the Trinitarian and Mercedarian Orders was inextricably intertwined with that of local Maghribi intermediaries upon whom the Orders relied. The Orders and the intermediaries competed with each other, as demonstrated in chapter four, but more often worked in tandem. The surprising alliance between the Orders of Redemption (members of the Catholic Church and subjects of the Habsburg Empire) and Jewish and Muslim intermediaries (whose predecessors were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula) began in the Middle Ages. But in 1613, in response to the Phillip III's decision to forbid the Orders of Redemption from ransoming Spanish captives directly from Algiers, Mercedarians, and later Trinitarians, petitioned the King to allow them to outsource the ransom of Spaniards from Algiers; namely, to commission middlemen to do the job on their behalf. In consenting, Philip III

⁵⁷³ These included the Ottoman Sultan, the Spanish Monarch, Spanish grandees, the Algerian pasha and the Algerian Governing Council, Governors of Tétouan, Trinitarians and the Mercedarians, captives and their kin, and Jewish, Muslim, and Christian intermediaries. On the term 'economy of ransom' see: Kaiser, "La excepción permanente" and idem, "L'économie de la rançon en Méditerranée occidentale."

legitimized and formalized the long-term collaboration between the Orders and Jewish and Muslims intermediaries.

Trinitarians and Mercedarians and their Jewish and Muslim partners were not the only actors in this political economy. They also interacted with the pashas of Ottoman Algiers and its Divan, the governing council, on the one hand, and the governors of Moroccan Tétouan on the other, themselves parties in another informal coalition. Indeed, the members of this second alliance did not know they formed a coalition, never negotiated its terms or intentionally agreed to collaborate. If anything, after years of political struggles and Ottoman attempts to conquer Morocco, they must have perceived themselves as rivals. Beyond the political tensions that characterized the relations between Algiers and Morocco, however, both parties sold the same commodity – captives – and competed against each other over the same buyers – the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians. And yet, as part of the competition, Algerians and Moroccans were in effect seeking to form a cartel by preventing the practice of outsourcing of ransom. Diametrically opposed in their goal, they shared the same interest: the control over go-betweens and direct commerce in captives with the Orders of Redemption. They targeted the go-betweens and the outsourcing of rescue because they felt that these came at the expense of their shrinking revenues. Spanish, Algerian, and Moroccan ransom policies and the intermediaries' ransom procedures shaped the political economy and geography of ransom, as this chapter will explain. In reconstructing and analyzing ransom policies and the shifting and loose coalitions between Mediterranean powers, the chapter not only explains the making and unmaking of the political economy of ransom, but also of the geography of ransom, namely the geographical distribution of the ransom expeditions that the Trinitarians and Mercedarians sent to the Maghrib.

The chapter moves back and forth in time and in space. I open by describing the tragic history of the 1609 Trinitarian ransom expedition to Algiers which brutally ended when the Algerians arrested the Trinitarians and the captives they had ransomed mere hours before they would have set sail for Spain. In the fourth section, I analyze four failed attempts to ransom the Trinitarians, while shifting between Spanish, Ottoman and Algerian points of view. I show how the rescue of Bernardo Monroy, the Trinitarian who headed the 1609 expedition, required complicated negotiations between a multiplicity of

actors and numerous ransom plans, the majority of which were never executed. While the attempts to save the Trinitarians failed, they served as indices of the state of political power relations in Spain, in Algiers, between Algiers and Spain and between Algiers and Istanbul. The detainment of the Trinitarians resulted in a royal prohibition against direct ransom from Algiers and hence in the formalization of the outsourcing of ransom, a phenomenon I examine in the last section. By placing the outsourcing of ransom within a broader time span than the Monroy affair, however, I show how outsourcing constituted a common practice prior to the arrest of the Trinitarians and, thus, that the affair only served to legitimate and enhance such longstanding practice.

In the end of the last chapter, I showed how recent studies of the Orders of Redemption have framed their history within the narrative of the emergence of the modern state through the monopolization of “humanitarian action” (instead of the means of violence, as in the traditional history). By analyzing unstudied archival sources, this chapter complicates the history of ransom and of the Mediterranean, showing the ways in which the labor of the Orders was intertwined with that of small-scale actors who continued to thrive throughout the seventeenth century, and how the crown decentralized its power by outsourcing the rescue of its subjects. At the same time, I account for the shifting positions of the Muslim actors: I reconstruct and analyze political tensions in Algiers, between Algiers and Morocco and between Algiers and the Ottoman Sultan, all of which influenced the political economy of ransom. In doing so, I bring into the account central actors thus far excluded from the historiography. This chapter thus also complicates homogenous portrayals of early modern North African Islam.

2. The Monroy Affair

Between 1595 and 1627, the Spanish branches of the Order of the Holy Trinity and of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy sent ten ransom expeditions to Algiers.⁵⁷⁴ During that time, the Orders also sent fifteen expeditions to Tétouan and other Moroccan cities. In

⁵⁷⁴ Trinitarian expeditions arrived in Algiers in 1595, 1599, 1609, 1618, and 1627; Mercedarian in 1596, 1597, 1604, 1620, 1627. These do not exclude rescue by branches other than the Spanish or Aragonese. During that time, the Portuguese Trinitarians arrived twice in Algiers, once in 1617/8 and then in 1620/21, Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos* & José Antonio, Gari y Siu mell, *La orden redentora de la Merced ó sea historia de las redenciones de cautivos cristianos realizadas por los hijos de la orden de la Merced*, Imprenta de los herederos de la viuda Pla: Barcelona, 1873.

other words, for every three expeditions sent to Morocco, only two were sent to Algiers. If we focus on the shorter period between 1609 and 1627, we see that for every two expeditions sent to Morocco, only one was sent to Algiers. On the other hand, in the following third of the century (1628-1661), the numbers were almost even – eleven expeditions arrived in Algiers and twelve in Tétouan.⁵⁷⁵ How can we explain this shift? Does the distribution of rescue operations reflect the geography of piracy? Namely, were Moroccan corsairs much more active than their fellow Algerians during these decades, causing more expeditions to be sent to Morocco? Or was it that Algerians specialized in French, Italian, and other captives but less so in Spaniards who were the preferred prey of Moroccan corsairs? Such assumptions stand in contrast to everything we know about early modern Algiers. In his discussion of piracy in the Mediterranean, Braudel has named these years (1580-1620) as “the second brilliant age of Algiers” during which Algiers became the corsair capital of the Mediterranean.⁵⁷⁶ During that time, Algerians captured more Christian captives than anyone else in the Maghrib and Spaniards formed the majority of those captives, a fact of common knowledge within Spain. Rather than reflecting the geography of piracy, then, the distribution of redemption missions camouflages a dynamic political economy of ransom.

Scholars, who refer to the small number of ecclesiastical ransom expeditions to Algiers during the first decades of the seventeenth century, explain it by the fate of the Trinitarian expedition sent to Algiers in 1609. This expedition was led by three Trinitarians: Bernardo de Monroy, Juan del Aguila, and Juan de Palacios. The last two were experienced at redeeming captives in Algiers. Del Aguila had spent seven years in Algiers, between 1595 and 1602, and de Palacios had been sent there twice to ransom captives (in 1591-2 and then 1595). The three left the Valencian port of Denia on March 9th and arrived in Algiers on April 1st. Overall, the expedition progressed smoothly as planned. Soon after their arrival, the friars began selling the goods they brought with them and used the money to buy captives. By mid-May, they had ransomed one hundred and thirty captives and were ready to return to Spain. As was customary, our three Trinitarians had obtained passports from the governor of Algiers prior to their arrival in

⁵⁷⁵ See the table by the end of chapter seven.

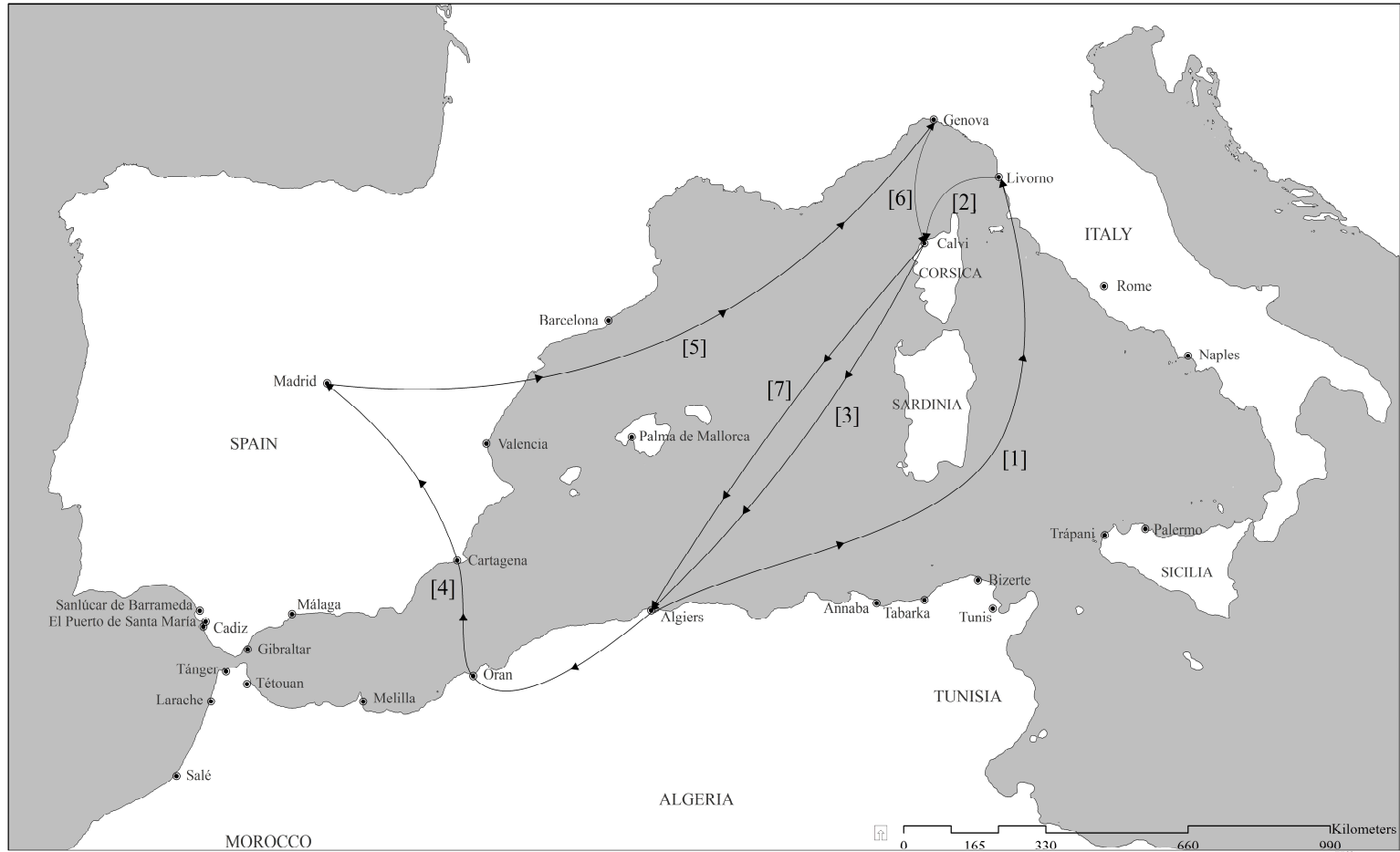
⁵⁷⁶ On “the second brilliant age of Algiers,” see: Braudel, pp. 882-886.

the city. And yet, despite having the required documents and having followed the procedures, on May 13th before the Trinitarians and the captives they had ransomed embarked on the ships that would have taken them to Spain, the Divan ordered their arrest.⁵⁷⁷ The reason bore no direct relation to the Trinitarians or to the captives. The Christians were paying for the injustice suffered by Mamet Axá, a powerful Algerian “Turk.” Weeks earlier, the latter had commissioned Manfredino de Manfredini, a Corsican merchant who traded with Algiers on a regular basis, to ransom his daughter, Fatima, held captive in Livorno (Map 2, [1]). Fatima embarked on a ship that was about to return her to her family in Algiers.⁵⁷⁸ The ship left the port of Livorno, and then stopped at Calvi, a port town in Northwest Corsica (then under the dominion of the Republic of Genoa). There, ten-year-old Fatima was forced to convert to Christianity, was baptized by the bishop of Saona, and received the name Madalena (Map 2, [2]).⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁷ The Passports protected the Trinitarians on their way to Algiers. They ran into corsairs a few days after they left the port of Denia, but the corsairs allowed them to go free once the Trinitarians presented their safe-passes, see: Porres Alonso, *Libertad a los cautivos*, p. 341.

⁵⁷⁸ Francisco de la Vega y Toraya, *Crónica de la provincia de Castilla, León y Navarra del Orden de la Santísima Trinidad*, Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1729, p. 66. Manfredino had two brothers one of which was a renegade living in Algiers, Ibid. He traded various goods and often ransomed captives, Muslims and Christians. In October 1609, for example, he arrived in Livorno after having ransomed in Algiers three Christian captives, see: Salvadorini, “Traffici e schiavi fra Livorno e Algeria,” p. 72.

⁵⁷⁹ AGS, Estado, Leg. 1882, Fol. 273



Map 2: Negotiations over Fatima-Madalena's Ransom

Christian law now forbade the converted Madalena to return to her family in Algiers. After seeing that the bishop would not let him take Madalena to Algiers, De Manfredini left Calvi for Algiers to deliver the bad news (Map 2, [3]). Furious, Axá went to the Algerian Divan and demanded redress. In response the Trinitarians were detained.⁵⁸⁰

In 1609, none of the persons involved in the attempts to solve the diplomatic predicament imagined it would last for more than a decade. After a while, the Trinitarians convinced the Divan to allow the scribe of the expedition to leave Algiers and report the news in Madrid (Map 2, [4]). When Philip III received the report in October 1609, he wrote to his ambassador in Genoa ordering him to urge the Genoese to discover what exactly happened in Corsica and whether Madalena had been converted by force (Map 2, [5]). The Genoese sent an emissary to Calvi and arranged for testimonies of Muslims enslaved in Corsica who questioned Madalena about her conversion and compiled a report in Arabic in which they indicated that Madalena converted out of her free will and wished to keep on living among Christians (Map 2, [6]). The report was sent to Algiers, but when Monroy presented it to the Divan, no one believed the testimonies, claiming that slaves would write what they masters oblige them to write (Map 2, [7]).⁵⁸¹ At that date (October 1609), the Spaniards still believed the event would develop in a familiar manner. As we have seen in chapter two, whenever Christian or Muslim slaves felt that the few privileges they had were violated, they wrote home pleading for help. Soon, their sovereigns intervened. When Algerians enslaved in Spain asked their governor for help, the governor would threaten to worsen the living conditions of Christian slaves who came from the cities or regions in which the complaining Muslims were held. Usually this was enough to ease the situation. Thus, in October 1609, at the same time that the King communicated with Genoa on the matter, the viceroy of Valencia, in response to a

⁵⁸⁰ Like conspiracy theories nowadays ‘explaining’ the September 11 attacks or other disasters, different stories and explanations about the reasons behind the arrest of the Trinitarians circulated throughout the Mediterranean, years after the event. Two Englishman arriving in Malaga from Algiers, for example, carried “certified news” (“nueva por muy sierta”) with them. They explained that the Trinitarians were detained following the request of the “Moors” (referring to the Moriscos) as revenge for their expulsion from Spain. Juan Titón de Cervantes, the person who sent the news to the Council of the State ended his report by saying that “these English publicized it as a fact” (“lo publican estos ingleses ser sierto”), see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 246, 2.1.1612. The background which may have made such a theory attractive was the expulsion of the Moriscos during those years (1609-1614).

⁵⁸¹ Vega y Toraya, *Crónica de la provincia de Castilla*, pp. 87, 91.

memorandum authored by Monroy detailing the circumstances of his arrest and the captives' travails, was sent to Philip III and raised the option of severely punishing "some captives present here (i.e. in Spain) from there (i.e. from Algiers)."⁵⁸² We do not know if the monarch took his advice seriously, as there is no further reference to it. But even if the Spaniards pursued this line of action, the following years proved that Mamet Axá was powerful enough to convince the Divan to leave Monroy in prison despite such counter-measures. During the following thirteen years until the end of the Monroy Affair, Axá never retreated from the conditions he set in 1609 – the return of his daughter in exchange for the Trinitarians and the captives they had ransomed.

3. Attempts to Ransom Monroy

In the following years, the Spaniards and the Algerians made several failed attempts to bring the affair to an end. These attempts involved the Pasha of Algiers, aristocrats of the Spanish Empire (the Dukes of Lerma, Osuna, and Escalona, the Marquis of Caracena, and the Count of Aguilar), Jewish and Muslims intermediaries, Monroy, other captives and their kin, and even the Ottoman Sultan. Out of probably a much larger number of plans which never even made their way into the archives, I focus in this section on four, none of which ever materialized. These failed dynamics demonstrate the political, social and religious aspects of this decentralized economy of ransom. The ransom attempts involved several actors dispersed across the Mediterranean, not just in two nodes. Moreover, the plans to ransom Monroy demonstrate how for every ransom deal that was executed several others were negotiated or imagined, but never realized. For the captives involved, as well as for their kinsmen, these deals may have been unfortunate failures. Such deals also functioned, however, as representations of the state of power relations in Spanish and Maghribi political hubs.

3.1 Ransom Attempts: the Spanish Perspective

The documents constantly report the insistence of the Algerians to set Monroy free only in exchange for the release of Madalena. The Spaniards never openly renounced this

⁵⁸² "...[U]sar de rrigores y prisiones con algunos captivos que aquí se allan de allá..." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 217, 15.10.1609.

option, but, at the same time, they never seriously considered it. From a Spanish point of view, Madalena's Christianity obviated that option.⁵⁸³ As early as 1612, the Count of Aguilar, then governor of Oran, negotiated Monroy's release with the Ottoman Sultan. In a letter Aguilar sent to the Council of War on November 11th 1612, the only document to refer to this negotiation, he reported of his efforts and explained that he arranged for letters from Ahmed I, the Ottoman Sultan, ordering Monroy's release. Axá, Madalena's father, however, used all his political weight and disobeyed the Sultan's orders. According to Aguilar, the Divan ordered Axá to travel to Istanbul, the Ottoman imperial capital, and account for his disobedience, but Axá refused.⁵⁸⁴ That the Algerians disobeyed the Sultan's orders was not surprising. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Sultan officially acknowledged his lack of control over the Ottoman Maghrib. When Henry IV, the French monarch, demanded from the Sultan that the bilateral agreements France signed with Algiers and Tunis be respected, the Sultan advised him to negotiate directly with the regencies.⁵⁸⁵ The same dynamic repeated itself in the following years. In a report dated August 1617 submitted by three former captives who arrived in Majorca from Algiers, the captives indicated that the renegade Soliman from Catania sent from Istanbul to be "King of Algiers" brought new orders from the Sultan to release Monroy, but the Divan again disobeyed.⁵⁸⁶ The surprising point in the letter of Aguilar to the Council of War was not the disobedience to imperial orders but rather that the Divan did not side with Axá and that the Pasha and the Divan were portrayed as not having enough power to impose their will on him. In contrast to this letter, later documents suggest that the Divan supported Axá throughout the affair. It is probable that, Aguilar's informers had misled him. In any case, one of the two rulers of the inner sea – the Ottoman Sultan – emerged as a weak actor as far as the Maghrib was concerned. That is, when it came to power dynamics in Algiers, local actors disregarded the Sultan's orders and had the power to serve their own interests.

⁵⁸³ According to the Duke of Maqueda, who succeeded Aguilar as the governor of Oran, at some stage, the Spaniards addressed the pope in the matter but even he could not do much as the girl was Christian, see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1950, 7.17.1621.

⁵⁸⁴ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg 772, 11.21.1612.

⁵⁸⁵ Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, p. 13. Weiss demonstrates how violations of these agreements were common and mutual.

⁵⁸⁶ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 263, 10.13.1617.

What exactly did the Algerians expect? Did they think that the Christians would hand them a Christian girl? In October 1617, Monroy wrote the Marquis of Caracena, the viceroy of Valencia, that the Algerians wanted Madalena transferred to Tabarka, an island located near Tunis a few hundred miles east of Algiers, which the Genoese leased from the Spaniards. An earlier letter from Monroy, from August 1st 1617, sheds more light on what the Algerians expected. According to Monroy, what Axá required was to meet Madalena in Tabarka and to see for himself whether she was a Christian or a Muslim – “if she was a Christian he would leave her, and if a Moor he would take her with him.”⁵⁸⁷ Even if in the early stages of the affair the idea of returning Madalena to Axá made sense, as time passed, however, this solution became less and less feasible. By 1618, Madalena was already married in Corsica, a fact that made her return to Algiers even less likely.⁵⁸⁸

Behind closed doors, the Spaniards acknowledged that Madalena may have been forced to convert. Pedro de Bricuela, a captain in the Spanish Atlantic fleet (*Armada del mar oceano*) held captive in Algiers since 1614, mentioned Monroy in a letter he sent the Council of the State in August 1617. In the letter, Bricuela complained about what he perceived as the Algerians’ unfair conduct:

Even if the girl was Christianized by force, as they claim, they could consider [the fact] that it happened in a different region; that those [Trinitarian] fathers came [to Algiers] with an Algerian safe pass; and moreover... that among them [the Muslims] it is customary to turn young children into Moor by force. But their arrogance cannot acknowledge equality nor can [they] keep their word...⁵⁸⁹

In this unusual text, a Spanish official, though off the record, speaks in a voice opposed to formal discourses and acknowledges the mutual nature of Mediterranean religious violence. Bricuela did not think the problem was in forcing a conversion on a ten-year-old girl. Rather, he argued, the problem was that the Algerians refused to acknowledge that both parties practiced forced conversions and that Madalena’s conversion – whether

⁵⁸⁷ “Si fuere christiana la dexa y si mora la lleve consigo,” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1882, Fol. 245, 8.1.1617.

⁵⁸⁸ The viceroy of Valencia indicated her marital status in a letter to the Council of the State from October 29th 1618, AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1882, Fol. 266, 10.29.1618.

⁵⁸⁹ “Pues aun quando fuera la muchacha cristiana por fuerça, como ellos dizen, podrían considerar que suzedió en diferente parte, que estos padres binieron con su salvo, y que lo más... que entre ellos se acostumbra en hazer moro por fuerça la gente moça, pero su sobervia no llega a conocer igualdad ni guardar palabra...” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1882, Fol. 273, 8.14.1617.

forced or voluntary – was a *fait accompli*. Moreover, that it was not the Spanish who converted Madalena but rather the Genoese meant that it was with them that the Algerians should take issue. Bricuela’s frustration apparently stemmed from his feeling that the Algerians decided to change the rules of the game without informing the Spaniards. At the same time, like most parties on the Spanish side, he acknowledged that without the return of Madalena to her family, Monroy would not be freed, even though that option was not feasible from his perspective.

The Spanish grandees were looking for a host of alternative solutions. The Count of Aguilar, whose attempt to work out a solution with the Sultan I discussed above, kept looking for a way to rescue Monroy. As the governor of Oran, he was the most suitable man for the task: he maintained regular correspondence with Monroy, had numerous spies in Algiers, and was regularly updated about the events there. His second plan was to smuggle (*hurtar*, literally steal) Monroy from Algiers.⁵⁹⁰ On April 19th 1613, he informed the King that the moment was not ripe yet for action. The Algerians were on guard, the Count explained, because a few days earlier Moriscos from Algiers helped captives to escape from Algiers to Oran and other captives, with the help of Majorcan smugglers, had escaped by sea. And yet, Aguilar sounded confident in his power and explained that he had a Morisco who spied for him in Algiers and who could engineer an escape. The best way to execute it, he added, was by sea; walking from Algiers to Oran was too dangerous.⁵⁹¹

These plans never materialized. But a year later, in March 1614, merchants, or perhaps ransomed Muslim captives, brought exciting news from Sicily to Algiers. In the previous summer, so the rumor went, the Sicilian squadron had captured Muslim captives among whom “a few [were] important and relatives of the [Grand] Turk.”⁵⁹² At that point, Monroy did not know that Mahamete, the Bey of Alexandria, was among the captives.⁵⁹³ Nevertheless, as a professional redeemer he understood that one of the

⁵⁹⁰ Attempts to escape were very common among captives. Cervantes failed to flee Algiers three times and the autobiography of Pasamonte is replete with attempts to escape captivity. Often, attempts to escape involved free Christians or Muslims who helped the captives. In such cases, the sources refer to ‘stealing captives’ see: Andújar Castillo, “Los rescates de cautivos,” pp. 141-143.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² “...[A]lgunos personas de consideración y parientes del turco...”, AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 495, 6.5.1614.

⁵⁹³ The Duke of Osuna, viceroy of Sicily, who held the captured Bey notified the Council of the State about the arrest on October 4th 1613. Six weeks later, the Council convened to discuss the matter for the first

Ottoman prisoners could be the key to his release. In a letter the imprisoned Trinitarian rushed to the Duke of Lerma via the viceroy of Valencia on March, 21st 1614, he presented him with a plan. Mahamete Bey, Monroy explained, would write to the Ottoman Sultan asking him to send a *cavus* (messenger) to Algiers. The *cavus* would negotiate the exchange of the Bey for Monroy and the rest of the detained Christians, and ask the Sultan to order the Pasha and the Divan to approve the exchange.⁵⁹⁴ But first, Mornoy insisted, Lerma had to write to the viceroy of Sicily, the Duke of Osuna, and order him to keep Mahamete Bey for Monroy. Monroy probably guessed that he was not the only party on the Spanish side pulling strings in an attempt to secure the Bey for an exchange. The Bey himself, immediately following his capture, offered Osuna twenty thousand ducats for his own release.⁵⁹⁵ Somewhat surprisingly, three out of the six members of the Council of the State initially thought the Bey should be set free. They justified their stand in that the Bey had already been taken captive in the past and had been liberated by the King's order. Moreover, they added, he was old and on his way to receive medical treatment, was not a corsair, and never attacked Christians. In letting him go, they claimed, the King would demonstrate royal benevolence.⁵⁹⁶ But other members of the council were looking forward to using the Bey for their own interests. In October 1614 and probably earlier, a certain Pedro Muñoz Montefrío arrived in Sicily from Istanbul and informed the viceroy that the Sultan was negotiating the Bey's exchange for Hungarian knights held captive in Istanbul and for money.⁵⁹⁷ But there was another contender – the Marquis de Villena. The Marquis was using all his influence in Madrid in order to arrange the exchange of the Bey for his bastard son, Diego Pacheco, captured

time. For the Council's *consulta* summarizing the opinions of the members, see: *CODOIN*, Vol. 44, pp. 547-552. The naval battle in which the Bey was captured was commemorated in a pamphlet which celebrated the success of the Duke. See: *Relación de las dos entradas que en los meses de Julio y Agosto deste año de 1613 han hecho en Berbería y Levante las galeras de la escuadra de Sicilia que salieron a ella por mandado del Excmo. Sr. D. Pedro Girón, duque de Osuna y conde de Ureña, caballero de la insigne orden del tuyson, virey y capitán general del reino de Sicilia, llevándolas a su cargo D. Otavio de Aragon, teniente general de aquella escuadra, sacada de las cartas y relaciones que el dicho duque envióa S.M. de 4 de Octubre* in Cesreo Fernández Duro, Ed. *El gran duque de Osuna y su marina; jornadas contra turcos y venecianos, 1602-1624*, Impreso de la real casa, Madrid, 1885, pp. 282-293.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, 7.25.1614.

⁵⁹⁶ The Marquis of Villafranca, Don Agustín Mexía and the Marquis of Laguna thought the Bey should be set free. The Marquis of Castel Rodrigo, the Cardinal of Toledo, and the Duke of the Infantado argued the Duke of Osuna should discover what the Bey's value was and exchange him, see: *CODOIN*, Vol. 44, pp. 549-552.

⁵⁹⁷ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, 10.22.1614.

near the Balearics in 1609 by the notorious Dutch corsair Simon Dança, and taken to Algiers and from there to Istanbul.⁵⁹⁸ Pedro Muñoz Montefrío was soon exposed by the Duke of Osuna as a charlatan whose only intentions were to blackmail the Marquis de Villena.⁵⁹⁹ With one contender down, Monroy was still competing against the Marquis de Villena. The Marquis and Monroy attempted to recruit everyone to advocate their case. A letter Monroy sent to Spain in 1612, in which he described the miseries and travails the captives suffered (as well as the religious services he and the other Trinitarians provided the captives with), was printed and reprinted, circulating across Spain and beyond and thus contributing to his case.⁶⁰⁰ The viceroys of Valencia and of Majorca advocated for helping him, and on July 19th 1614 the Council of the State decided to support Monroy. The conditions of this decision were that Mahamete Bey would be set free only after the Algerians liberated Monroy and the other captives.⁶⁰¹

There was not much time. Monroy and Pacheco suffered in their captivity and the Bey was dying. This worried the Duke of Osuna who was probably counting on a respectable commission for the Bey's ransom. Osuna urged the King to make up his mind because the Bey was "not healthy and [that] he was getting worse in such a way that the [Duke] did not dare to [try] and cure him" and the Bey was "old and getting sicker and sicker over time."⁶⁰² Monroy, who perhaps knew that, did not wait for the Council's decision and worked in parallel channels to advance an exchange. The evidence does not

⁵⁹⁸ For a testimony on the capture of Diego de Pacheco, see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1949, Fol. 133 and 136, 3.24.1613. on Escalona's attempts to exchange him for the Bey, see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, Fol. 171, 12.14.1613 and fol. 206, 10.5.1614.

⁵⁹⁹ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, Fol. 56, 10.22.1614.

⁶⁰⁰ *Relación del carta que el padre fray Bernardo de Monroy, administrador general de la redención de cautivos de la orden de la Santissima Trinidad de la provincia de Castilla, embió de Argel al padre provincial de su provincia*, Gabriel Guasp: Mallorca, 1612 (AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 255). The same letter was reprinted in 1613 in Barcelona at the Casa de la viuda Dotil (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Res. 254, Fols. 23-24). This letter was clearly directed to more than one audience. While it may have served Monroy's interest at the Council of the State, it was also part of Trinitarian propaganda meant to excite the believers and compel them to donate money for the ransom of captives. As such, the letter enjoyed further incarnations, even in other languages. The French Trinitarian Dominique Gaspard, for example, published a French translation of the letter in a short book he published in 1613, see: Gaspard Dominique, *Histoire veritable de ce qui s'est passé en turquie, pour la deliverance et redemption des Chrestiens Captifs, depuis l'année 1609*, Paris: François du Carroy, 1613, apud H. Ternaux-Compans, *Archives des voyages ou collection d'anciennes relations*, Vol II, Paris : A Bertrand, 1841, pp. 242-464.

⁶⁰¹ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 295, 7.19.1614.

⁶⁰² "...[Y] su falta de salud que despues ha ydo empeorando de manera que no se havía atrevido a hacerle curar..."; "...[E]sta viejo y más enfermo cada día," AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, Fol. 206 (10.5.1614) and 57 (10.22.1614).

allow the reconstruction of the maneuvers of all the parties involved, and yet it is clear that on July 9th, 1614, Morato Aga arrived in Algiers to negotiate the deal.⁶⁰³ Six weeks later, on August 25th, in the bagnio of Algiers in the presence of three captives who served as witnesses, Monroy and Morato Aga signed an agreement ratified by the Trinitarian notary arrested with Monroy. According to the agreement, the Duke of Osuna had to transfer Mahamete Bey and his wife to the custody of the Genoese governor of Tabarka. In the meantime, Morato Aga had to arrange for a letter from the Sultan ordering the Pasha to release the Trinitarians and the captives they had ransomed. Once the latter were free, the governor of Tabarka was to free the Bey and his wife and provide them with safe passes. In October, the viceroy of Majorca, to whom Monroy sent the agreement, shipped a copy to the Council of the State asking for its approval. The viceroy urged the members of the Council to make a quick decision before the Algerians withdrew their consent to the exchange.⁶⁰⁴ The exchange of Monroy for the Bey was never realized. The struggle continued at least until October 1615, when Diego de Pacheco died. The negotiation over Monroy's exchange for the Bey continued until the latter's death, probably in February 1616.⁶⁰⁵

The Spaniards, however, made yet another attempt to ransom Monroy in 1621. Again, it was the Governor of Oran, by now the Duke of Maqueda, who orchestrated this last failure. A certain Juan Alaba de Luna was sent to Algiers to negotiate the ransom. De Luna spent eleven months in Algiers and believed that he had reached an agreement according to which, as he later recounted to Maqueda, Monroy would be set free for ten thousand ducats. The search for the money began. The natural candidate, Simón Rojas, the Provincial of the Trinitarians in Castile, refused to help; he claimed that his Order was

⁶⁰³ Morato Aga or Diego Urrea was an Italian taken captive by Muslim corsairs in his youth. He studied in the madrasah of Tlemcen in Northwestern Algeria and became an Ottoman secretary working in Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis and Istanbul. In 1589, Morato Aga was captured by Christians, reconverted to Christianity and adopted the name of Diego de Urrea. He became a professor of Arabic at the University of Alcalá and was involved in the translation of *Los Plomos*. Urrea moved to Naples around the time that the Duke of Lemos was nominated its viceroy. Lemos, an important patron of the arts who established a literary academy in Naples in 1611, made Naples a center of writers, artists and translators. While Urrea was a scholar, diplomacy was not foreign to him. In addition to his past as an Ottoman emissary, he worked for the viceroy of Sicily and served as a translator and intermediary for the Spanish crown in the negotiations over El Araich, the Moroccan port city, with Muley Muhammad al-Şayj al-Ma'mūn, the Moroccan Sultan, see: Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, "Diego de Urrea en Italia," *Al-Qantara*, XXV (2004), pp. 183-201 and idem, "Fragmentos de orientalismo español del siglo XVII," *Hispania*, LXVI (2006), pp. 243-276.

⁶⁰⁴ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 259, 20.11.1614.

⁶⁰⁵ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1170, Fol. 22, 3.9.1616.

too poor. Maqueda found another donor – a member of the Çaportas family, one of the leading Jewish families of Oran – who would pay for the ransom.⁶⁰⁶ Antonio de la Cruz, a Portuguese Trinitarian sent to Algiers by Philip III to negotiate the ransom of Jorge Mascarenhas, the governor of Mazagán (Al Jadida), was to be the guarantor of the transaction.

Beyond the fact that they all failed, the above rescue attempts share similar qualities. They all formed kaleidoscopic coalitions consisting of anomalous Jewish intermediaries living under Spanish dominion, the Spanish monarch and the Crown's grandees, the Algerian Pasha and Divan, the Ottoman Sultan, and Spanish and Portuguese Trinitarians. Curiously enough, it was the Spanish Trinitarians who, for economic reasons, refused to participate in the efforts.⁶⁰⁷ The failure, though, seems typical in that it produced numerous competing attempts to use a prisoner for the rescue of other prisoners. The case of Ali Arraez or Francesco Guicciardo from Ferrara that evolved over the third and fourth decades of the century demonstrates that. Guicciardo who was taken captive in his youth and converted to Islam, gained a reputation as a Tunisian corsair, but was captured in 1624 by Alvarao Baçan, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, and then submitted to the Sicilian Tribunal of the Inquisition.⁶⁰⁸ Despite being identified by more than a dozen witnesses, he refused to confess to being a renegade and insisted that he was born Muslim. As with the Monroy affair, once news about his arrest arrived in Tunis, a ransom already concluded was halted and almost all the redeemed captives detained. In 1628, six Carmelite priests, captives in Tunis, petitioned the Inquisition to permit their exchange in return for Ali Arraez, explaining that otherwise, the Pasha refused to set them free. The inquisitors refused.⁶⁰⁹ Eleven years later, the archbishop of Palermo, Cardinal Doria, made a similar petition. He asked the inquisitors to exchange

⁶⁰⁶ On the involvement of Jews in ransom, see the discussion in chapter four.

⁶⁰⁷ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1950, 7.17.1621 and 10.16.1621.

⁶⁰⁸ *Copia de una carta que de la ciudad de Palermo embió el capitán Francisco Ruiz Díaz de Villegas... en que se haze relación de la gran vitoria que Don Alvaro Baçan, Marqués de Santa Cruz, general de las galeras de Sicilia, tuvo con quatro navíos de guerra de enemigos... con el cosario Sanson, por otro nombre llamado Ali Arraez... de Palermo, 1. Julio de 1624*, in Ignacio Bauer Landauer, Ed. *Papeles de mi archivo, Los turcos en el Mediterráneo (relaciones)*, Vol. V, Biblioteca Ibero-Africano-Americana: Madrid, 1922/3, pp. 141-147. For a description and analysis of the Inquisition trial, see: Bennassar, *Los cristianos de Alá*, pp. 89-124.

⁶⁰⁹ AHN, *Inquisición*, Lib. 1252, fol. 129V-130, 7.3.1642.

their prisoner for Vincencio Tarsono Corandero, a vicar from Palermo held captive in Tunis, but again, the Inquisitors refused.⁶¹⁰

These cases were not exceptional. Most likely, for every deal executed, a few more others were planned but never realized. While the actors did not achieve the desired end – freeing a captive – the negotiation provided them with an opportunity to demonstrate, evaluate and improve their political power. This was the case in the competition between the grandees of the Empire in the hubs of Spanish administration over Monroy and the Bey and in the power struggles over Monroy within Algiers and between Algiers and Istanbul. Failures, then, should be reevaluated as they shed light on exchange, the construction of value and ransom of captives. If in the previous chapter we have seen how by pretending to be poor or rich, healthy or sick, captives could manipulate the qualities that were imagined as bestowing them with economic value, in the form of a ransom price, now, we have also seen how religious, social, and political variables intervened in shaping value. Christian and Muslim captives moved in and out of different regimes of value which transformed them from objects to be exchanged or sold to community members to be protected.⁶¹¹ That was the case of Fatima twice de-commoditized: once upon her conversion and then after she had married. By converting or being converted Fatima-Madalena entered a religious value regime, from which her father, despite his political power, could not redeem her. In marrying a Christian she establish new social ties, which beyond her conversion put obstacles on the possibility of her return to Algiers. In this instance of the Monroy affair, religion and social factors were stronger than politics and value was predicated upon them rather than upon economic factors. If we look at the struggle over the Bey, value emerges as a by-product of political struggles. At the same time, struggles over captives, exchange and value, embodied different models of what the Mediterranean was – a religious, economic, or political space.

⁶¹⁰ For Doria's request, see: AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 3482, fol. 148, 28.29.1639. For the arguments raised by the parties, inquisitors and others, see: AHN, *Inquisición*, Lib. 897, fol. 166, AHN, *Inquisición*, Lib. 1252, 7.3.1642, and AHN, *Estado*, Lib. 454D, fol. 1.

⁶¹¹ On 'regimes of value' see, Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in Idem, Ed. *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 3-63.

3.2 Ransom Attempts: the Algerian Perspective

Lack of decisiveness or agreement in the Spanish Council of the State was one of the reasons that Monroy did not retrieve his liberty. In the attempts to exchange Monroy for the Bey, for example, opposing memos supporting Monroy and Escalona were issued until the death of the Duke's son and of the Bey.⁶¹² Had the members of the Councils of the State of War been more efficient and determined perhaps two of the three – Monroy, Pacheco and the Bey – would have gained their liberty. But were the Spaniards solely responsible for this state of affairs? Ending the story at this point entails the exclusion of major actors – the Algerians. What was their role in the affair? The Spanish grandees who informed the King about Monroy rarely made distinctions between different political actors in Algiers. Obviously, people like Aguilar and the viceroys of Majorca and Valencia were well-informed about political events and the power relations which divided the Algiers, but even they did not always voice this complexity in their administrative exchange. The image that emerges from the state documents I have analyzed thus far is of an Algerian, or Muslim, united front with regards to the Monroy affair. Could an insider's perspective complicate the picture? Unfortunately, we have no minutes of the Divan meetings and, in general, Ottoman Algerian archives store very few documents for that period.⁶¹³ However the report of an anonymous spy cum captive from Denia (in the Crown of Valencia), sent to the viceroy of Majorca, provides unusual and precious information. Unlike the reports composed by Juan Bautista Soriano, Vincente Colom, and Juan Ramírez, which we have examined in chapter three, the anonymous captive recorded mostly the arrival of prizes in the Algerian port ships, with their captives and goods, as well as each of the bimonthly meetings of the Divan. The details the anonymous Valencian provided about the meetings suggest that he was either present in person or had a valuable informer. His account covers almost every day between September 1613 and March 1614, that is, a period during which the fate of Monroy was intensively discussed in bureaucracies across the Mediterranean.

⁶¹² *CODOIN*, Vol. 44, pp. 547-552, AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 1168, fol. 171, 187, 206 and 215; Leg. 1889, fol. 26; Leg. 1887, fol. 92.

⁶¹³ Fatiha, "In the Regency of Algiers," pp. 69-96, especially the overview of archival sources in Algiers, pp. 93-96.

Regardless of his source, his account sheds exceptional light on the disagreements between the Pasha and the Aga, the head of the janissary militia, who administered the meetings of the Divan. Since 1587, Algerian pashas were nominated by the Sultan for renewable triennial mandates. Nominees perceived this North African ‘exile’ as an opportunity to make a fortune, allowing them to return rich to Istanbul.⁶¹⁴ In contrast, the office of the Aga, the head of the Janissaries who presided over the meetings of the Divan, was elective, and in the seventeenth century each Aga held the office for two lunar months.⁶¹⁵ The Pasha and the Aga negotiated and decided the regency’s political issues at the Divan in meetings that brought together, in addition to these two figures, senior officers of the Janissaries, the corsairs represented via the *tā’ifat al-ru’asā’*, their corporation, the mufti, *cadi*, and secretaries. The main contenders for power, however, were not the Janissaries and the Pasha but rather the Janissaries and the *tā’ifat al-ru’asā’*. The role of the pashas who had relatively little authority was limited to mitigating the tensions between the corsairs and the Janissaries.⁶¹⁶ In 1659, the Janissaries usurped the powers of the Pasha, the Ottoman representative, claiming he was corrupt.⁶¹⁷ Khirai has noted that signs of the dynamic that led to the usurpation had become visible earlier. The Monroy affair, however, suggests that the tensions between the Pasha and the Janissaries erupted even as early as the Monroy affair, during a period (1570/80-1625/30) which Khiari characterizes as stable, one during which Ottoman power, embodied in the figure of the Pasha, strengthened.⁶¹⁸

Like the Spanish aristocracy, the Pasha and the Aga constantly disagreed about the way to bring the Monroy affair to an end. In Algiers, as in Spain, the Trinitarians’ fate was also determined by a political logic external to the affair. The source of debate between these office holders was the salaries of the Janissaries, the soldiers that formed

⁶¹⁴ John B. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast, Algiers under the Turks 1500 to 1830*, Norton & Company: New York, 1979, p. 82.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 76, and Farid Khiari, *Vivre et mourir en Alger, L’Algérie Ottomane aux XVIe-XVIIe siècles: un destin confisqué*, L’Harmattan : Paris, 2002, pp. 199-200.

⁶¹⁶ R. Mantran, “North Africa in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis, Eds. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2A, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 254-255.

⁶¹⁷ Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*, Cambridge University Press: New York, 1987, pp. 158-159.

⁶¹⁸ Farid Khiari, *Vivre et mourir en Alger*, pp. 199, 204. The negotiation between the King of France, the Ottoman Sultan and the governors of the Ottoman regencies in the Maghrib suggests the same, see: Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, p. 13.

the Ottoman militia of Algiers. The Pasha had to pay the Janissaries their salaries every two lunar months but Algerian pashas often had difficulties in finding the required money. On September 14th 1613, for example, in response to the Janissaries' complaint about a delay in the payment of their wages, the Pasha explained that he could not pay until the Janissaries allowed free commerce in captives and free the detained Trinitarians. According to the Pasha, the Janissaries prohibited merchants from trading in captives, a prohibition that economically burdened the Pasha. The soldiers agreed to consider free commerce but refused to set the Trinitarians free. Moreover, they forbade the Pasha from negotiating Monroy's liberty – "[the Pasha] cannot talk or negotiate in any manner [the ransom of] those [captives] of the [Trinitarian] redemption and the [Trinitarian] fathers that are held here."⁶¹⁹ The next day, the Janissaries decided to allow commerce in captives between Tétouan and Algiers but insisted that Monroy and the rest stay in prison. The permit probably benefitted individual merchants who could export captives to Tétouan and elsewhere while damaging the Pasha who wanted to sell captives directly and exclusively to the Orders of Redemption.

The anonymous captive chronicled several similar instances. On January 5th 1614, in the meeting of the Divan, the Aga warned the Pasha that unless he paid the soldiers by the next day, the Aga would confiscate the Pasha's slaves, sell them in the slave market, and use the profit to pay the soldiers. The Pasha insisted on cutting a deal with the Trinitarians without which, he repeated, he could not pay the Janissaries. It seems, however, that the soldiers were also divided in regard to a proper solution to the affair. Probably for that reason, in the meeting the next day, the Aga forbade the Janissaries from discussing the matter with the Pasha. Disobedience, he warned, would result in removal from the payroll list. But the Pasha was not lying. He did not have the money and needed a profitable deal with Monroy. A few days later, the Janissaries broke into the private prison of the Pasha, took his captives and sold them in the slave market.⁶²⁰ This

⁶¹⁹ "Solo a los de la limosna y a los padres que acá tienen no puede abblar ni tratar dello de ninguna manera..." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 255, 9.14.1613. The word 'limosna' means, literally, 'alms'. In the context of captivity in the Maghrib it came to refer to the organized ransom expeditions conducted by the Orders of Redemption. Thus, in the following quotes, according to the context, I will translate it as 'redemption,' 'ransom expedition,' or 'Trinitarian ransom expedition' and so on.

⁶²⁰ De Sosa, in his discussion of the Janissaries, provides an early sixteenth century example of similar dynamic: "The janissaries never lack for this basic food for two reasons. The first is because even though the whole world may fall asunder, they are well paid every two moons. And, similarly, if famine should

radical act, however, brought only temporary relief and in the next months the parties faced the same situation again and again. When the soldiers demanded money to fund military expeditions, the Pasha explained that he could not afford it unless the Janissaries would “give him a permit that would allow him to send off the fathers of the [Trinitarian] redemption and unless they allow the commerce.”⁶²¹ A week later, on February 7th, what had become a repeated ritual occurred again; only this time, when asked for money, the Pasha responded by saying that “he had already dealt and cut [an agreement] with the [Trinitarian] fathers allowing them to leave; and in order to finalize it, he wants [the Janissaries] to give him their word that they will not hinder [the deal] but would rather let the fathers and the Christian [captives they had ransomed] go free...”⁶²² The Aga refused but the Pasha kept insisting on the matter and for a brief moment seemed to succeed. On March 3rd, the Janissaries agreed to meet the Pasha and discuss the matter but the heated meeting became a fiasco. One of the Janissaries, a French renegade, requested that the Trinitarians should stay in prison until Madalena returned to her family. As turmoil ensued, the Janissaries shouted vehemently, knives were unsheathed, and some soldiers threatened to slash the Pasha’s throat.⁶²³ Unfortunately, this was one of the last entries in the report of the Valencian chronicler and we have no further evidence from within Algiers about the Monroy affair.

In contrast to the rest of the documents that I examined, the anonymous Valencian delineates a structural tension and political discord between the Pasha, the Sultan’s man, and the Janissaries who had the *de facto* power in Algiers. The last entry from the chronicle demonstrates that the Janissaries acted like a guild protecting one of its members – Axá – in their refusal to allow the Pasha to release the Trinitarians. Their position on the matter, however, was not motivated exclusively by loyalty to a group

strike and everyone, including the king himself, should die of hunger, they would not lack for wheat and provisions, because they would not only sack any home having wheat and provisions (as they did the winter of 1579 when there was great hunger in Algiers) as they sacked the homes of the wealthiest mayors, but they would also break into the house of the king himself, smash the doors of his warehouses, take whatever provisions they find, even those belonging to him, and then sack the rest of his home.... as they wanted to do to Asan the Venetian, the renegade of Ochali, who was the king of Algiers,” See: Sosa, *Topography*, pp. 147-148.

⁶²¹ “[D]en lisenia que él pueda despedir a los padres de la limosna y que abran el trato a los mercaderes...” Ibid, 2.1.1614.

⁶²² “[É]l tiene ya tratado y consertado con los padres de dexarlos ir y paracabar de conserlarlo quiere que le den la palabra de no enpedirselo sino que los dexen ir libres a ellos y a los cristianos...” Ibid, 2.7.1614.

⁶²³ Ibid.

member. It also reflected tensions within the political structure of the city. At the same time, while the Janissaries formally objected to release Monroy without receiving Madalena in return, the chronicler provides some evidence that their stance was not unanimous. The political economy of ransom, then, created ad-hoc coalitions that crossed religious boundaries – Spaniards relied on Jews for ransom operations and negotiated with the Sultan while the Algerian Pasha attempted to reach an agreement with Monroy. It also created surprising refusals to collaborate – as when the Trinitarian Provincial refused to participate in Monroy’s rescue efforts. In any case, religion, as we have seen, did not lose importance in the seventeenth century Mediterranean and had the power to transform commodities into non-commodities, thus removing them from the political economy of ransom.⁶²⁴

Was the agreement the Pasha mentioned, according to the anonymous captive, one of the plans I have examined in the previous section? What exactly was concluded and with whom? Was it the deal arranged by the Count of Aguilar? Or rather the earlier stages of the negotiation about an exchange for Mahamete Bey? The Pasha may have referred to an earlier deal he had cut with Monroy, which, as it never materialized, either did not leave traces in the archive or the records that documented it still await historiographic redemption. For a decade and a half a multiplicity of actors cooked up competing deals, none of which ever materialized. It seems as if the attempt of 1621, examined earlier in the section, was the last one. Even if there were additional initiatives, they did not succeed, and on July 31st 1622, Monroy died in his prison cell and was buried in Algiers.

4. Outsourcing Ransom

Mercedarians and Trinitarians did not always buy captives directly from Algerian or Moroccan authorities. Often, Jewish and Muslim intermediaries bought captives in one Maghribi city and sold them to the Trinitarians or Mercedarians in another. The arrangement was common and probably reflected medieval practice. In the remainder of this chapter, I turn to examine (1) the relations between the Orders of Redemption and Jewish and Muslim intermediaries, and (2) how Spanish, Algerian, and Moroccan

⁶²⁴ On the continuous importance of religion in the century, see Greene, “The Northern Invasion.”

sovereigns in seeking to shape these relations were often responding to the pressures and initiative of ransom go-betweens. The Algerians always opposed the practice but probably because its volume was limited prior the Monroy affair, their attempts to regulate it were limited. The Spanish crown on the other hand knew that the Orders of Redemption, its ransom agents, employed intermediaries in the Maghrib and accepted it as a given without decreeing royal guidelines on the matter. Following the arrest of the Trinitarians, however, Philip III put a halt on direct missions to Algiers, a step that led to the formalization and legitimation of the outsourcing. In formally approving collaboration, the Crown established an uneasy alliance between the Trinitarians and Mercedarians and those it had recently expelled – its Jews and the descendants of the Muslims.⁶²⁵ The result was that go-betweens gained much more importance in the political economy of ransom a fact to which the Algerians and the Moroccans objected. By the second decade of the seventeenth century, the Moroccan Sultan and Ottoman Algiers shared nearly a century of hostile political relationships. Not only were they political enemies but also they were both sellers of the same commodity – captives – that competed against each other over the same buyers (the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians). And yet, now they found themselves on the same side of the barricade.⁶²⁶ Despite having diametrically opposed goals on each given case, they shared an identical interest overall and did all they could to regulate the commercial activity of the intermediaries in order to attract the Orders of Redemption and make them spend their funds in Algiers or Tétouan.

4.1 Outsourcing of Ransom Prior to the Monroy Affair

Jewish and Muslim intermediaries had always played an important role in the Mediterranean political economy of ransom. In the western part of the sea they acted as

⁶²⁵ The Orders also employed intermediaries in Spain, even before they left to the Maghrib. For a study of these go-betweens, see: Bernard Vincent, “Procédés et réseaux de rachats de captifs dans l’Espagne des XVIe-XVIIe siècles,” Wolfgang Kaiser, Ed.: *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l’échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*. École française de Rome: Rome, 2008, pp.123-134.

⁶²⁶ Abderrahmane el Moudden is one of the few who have studied the relations between the Ottomans and the Moroccan throughout the early modern period. Unfortunately, the half century following Ahmed al-Mansur’s death (1603) is hardly covered, see: Abderrahmane el Moudde, “Sharifs and Padishas: Moroccan-Ottoman Relations from the end of the 16th through the 18th Centuries,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1992, esp. pp. 149-150.

intermediaries between the Orders and Algiers and Morocco. The fact that Jews resided in the Spanish and Portuguese garrison in the Maghrib must have lubricated this cooperation. The services Jews provided the Orders with were varied: they served as interpreters and innkeepers; they bought the goods the friars exported from Spain thus providing them with the funds required to pay for captives. They also sold slaves to the Spaniards – both their own and slaves of Muslims. In chapter four, for example, we have seen Jacob Crudo, a Jewish merchant from Tétouan, who worked with the Mercedarians between 1579 and 1596. In 1579, Crudo and two other Jewish merchants sold twenty-five percent of the captives the Orders of Redemption ransomed in Tétouan.⁶²⁷ He was not alone. In 1597, Rodrigo de Arce and Luis Matienzo, Mercedarians in Tétouan, obtained the cash they needed for ransom by selling many of the commodities they carried with them from Spain to Jacob Chicotillo, the *Nagid* – “jeque de los judíos” – of the Jewish community in Fez. Other Jews from Fez, Meknes, and Salé sold the Mercedarians captives for goods and for cash. The Mercedarians stayed at Abraham Tubi’s house, a Jew from Tétouan.⁶²⁸ Later, in a 1607 rescue operation, Joseph Mexía served as a translator for the Mercedarians while José Gibre rented them a room.⁶²⁹ Other members of the Mexia family in Tétouan regularly traded slaves and sold their own and others’ captives to the Orders of Redemption. In 1614, Mosen and Braen Mexia sold their own slaves and slaves of the *almocadén*, the Muslim Infantry Captain of Tétouan to the barefoot Trinitarians (*Trinitarios descalzos*).⁶³⁰ Members of the Mexia family continued to work with Trinitarians and Mercedarians at least until the 1670’s.⁶³¹ Jews must have played a central role in the Mediterranean political economy of ransom at least until their expulsion of from Oran, the largest Spanish *presidio* in North Africa, in 1669.

⁶²⁷ José Antonio, Martínez Torres, “Curso turco-berberisco y redenciones de cautivos en el Mediterráneo Occidental (siglos XVI-XVII) in Wolfgang Kaiser, Ed.: *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l’échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*. École française de Rome: Rome, 2008, pp. 85-107, esp. P. 104.

⁶²⁸ The involvement of Jews in the economy of ransom was not limited to Tétouan. Abraham, an Algerian Jew, rented rooms to the Trinitarians Juan de Águila and Juan Sánchez, who stayed in Algiers for various years providing religious services to Spanish captives and serving as representatives of the orders in the city. Galán, *Relación del cautiverio y libertad de Diego Galán*, pp. 95-6; Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99-100.

⁶³⁰ Trinitarios calzados. Libro de la redención de cautivos de Tetuán, Fez y Marruecos. Resultado de las comisiones de fray Jerónimo Fernández y fray Antonio de Madrid. Año 1614, AHN, *Códices*, book 124.

⁶³¹ Gozalbes Busto, *Los Moriscos en Marruecos*, pp. 137-143.

While our knowledge of the services that Jews provided the Orders in Morocco is relatively rich, we know a lot less about their role in the overall Maghribi geography of ransom. In other words, we do not know how they connected Algiers, Morocco and Spain via ransom operations. Intelligence reports compiled by captives-cum-spies who had connections in Algiers and access to spaces of decision-making, like the one that the anonymous spy from Denia, shed light on the question and suggest that a main service that the intermediaries provided the Orders with was outsourcing of ransom. The intermediaries would buy captives in Algiers, for example, travel with them to Tétouan, and sell them to the friars there.

The report compiled by Vincente Colom, another captive who spied for the Spaniards between 1602 and 1607 is especially revealing in this regard. According to Colom, early in 1604, Algerians arrested a group of recently ransomed Majorcan captives in Dalis, a settlement around fifty miles east of Algiers. Eventually, the viceroy of Majorca and the French consul in Algiers who represented Soliman Pasha, the governor of Algiers, negotiated the ransom of the Majorcans in exchange for Muslims held captive in Majorca who returned to Algiers with the French consul.⁶³² In light of this charged exchange and the fact that by 1604 five years had passed since an ecclesiastical ransom operation had been executed in Algiers, Soliman Pasha was delighted when the corsair Morato Arraez informed him, in May 9th 1604, that the Mercedarians were about to depart from Valencia to Algiers. According to the information Morato had, the ransom budget stood at thirty-thousand escudos, a nice sum that poverty-stricken Algiers badly needed at the time.⁶³³ The Pasha did not waste time and hurried a letter to the viceroy of Mallorca. His tone in the opening lines of the letter demonstrates familiarity and suggests continuous correspondence between him and the viceroy:

We received the letter of your *signoria* that was delivered to us at the arrival of the *signor* [French] consul, together with the fruit and the Valencia oranges which you were pleased to send me [and] for which I thank you a great deal, and we have gladly accepted it that you have deigned to send it.⁶³⁴

⁶³² AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, 3.22.1604.

⁶³³ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, 9.4.1604.

⁶³⁴ “La carta de v.sa a la vinutta del señor consulo ch’ fu abon portu havemo ricevutta, insieme la fruta et valencia lei piacuto mandarme diech’i la ringatio molto et le havemo accettato con la bona volunta ch’ se dignata mandarnela.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, 5.17.1604.

Despite the appearance of an exchange between old friends, this is an exceptional document. While the viceroys of Sicily and Naples constantly reported on the direct exchange of information they had with Tunisian and Algerian pashas, I have found only one additional reference to a similar letter addressing the Majorcan viceroy, possibly the same letter. And yet, at the same time, the epistle nicely captures the relations between the two politicians. Each party knew what was going on within his adversary's dominion, thanks to indirect channels of communication sustained by the constant circulation of merchants, captives, consuls and ransomers. In the typical broken Italian that characterized much of the correspondence between North Africa and the Christian world, the Pasha mentioned the problem in Dalis, which since then had been resolved, and added:⁶³⁵

Now the friars and other Christians who have been ransomed were set free. And be sure that from now on no nuisances or troubles will be given to any redemption or others who would like to trade, and commerce would be free and fair (*libero et franco*).⁶³⁶

The commerce in captives, the Pasha implies, is a branch of general commerce, and merchants should freely practice their trade. As a token of his good intentions – but also out of his fear that non-Algerians pirates would capture the expedition and its treasure – the Pasha added a friendly warning:

And because here it is understood that the redemption or other ship from Valencia is about to arrive, should it stop in Majorca, your *signoria* should warn it to be careful of English corsairs. And they could take with them a tartan so that if they see any corsair, they could put the money in the tartan and escape with greater ease than with a larger ship because it is faster than the sail, and they should not worry about the [additional] expense of some hundred escudos so as to not make a nasty end, and with this God kindly give happiness and felicity⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ Italian or some degraded form of it served as the lingua franca in official correspondence between Maghribi and Christian governors as well as in North African notarial records, see: J. Cremona, “‘Acciocché ognuno le possa intedere’ The Use of Italian as a Lingua Franca on the Barbary Coast of the Seventeenth Century. Evidence from the English,” *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies*, 5 (1997): 52-69. On the Mediterranean Lingua Franca after which all later linguas francas are called, see: “The Lingua Franca,” in Glenn G. Gilbert, Ed. *Pidgin and Creole Languages, Selected Essays by Hugo Schuchardt*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 65-88. For a recent and first treatment of the Lingua Franca by a historian, see: Jocelyna Dakhliya, *Lingua franca: Histoire d'une langue métisse en Méditerranée*, Actes Sud: 2008.

⁶³⁶ “Ancora se mandano liberi li frati et altri cristiani, che se anno rescatati et sirte sicuro ch’ de qua in anti non se dara piu fastidij ne disturbo alcuna sia limosina, o, altri che' vollano il trafico e comercio sia libero e franco.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, 5.17.1604.

⁶³⁷ “E perque qua se intende che’ la limosina, o, saetia de Valencia sia per venire, se tochassero in Mallorcha v.sa li avise si guardino de li inglesì corsarij et potriano menar con loro una tartana acio che’

That the Pasha should warn the Spanish of English pirates was surprising. A few months after the pasha sent his letter, James I, King of England, signed a peace treaty with the Spaniards, an act which made English ships legitimate prey from an Algerian perspective.⁶³⁸ Before the signing of the agreement, however, the English, as the Spaniards' enemy, were allies of the Algerians. His good will as well as the information he rushed to convey to the viceroy of Majorca, and by extension to the Mercedarians, echoes the acute need for money felt in Algiers. At the same time, the form and the contents of the letter embody the preferred mode of interaction with the Spaniards the Pasha envisioned – direct interaction. He allows for emissaries, probably the French consul in this case, but the relations the letter assumes and seeks to maintain are unmediated: it is the Pasha directly, almost intimately, conversing with the viceroy of Majorca. It is in this light that we should understand his words about free commerce: “*libero et franco*” as far as it concerned the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians, namely official ransom agents of the Crown. Small scale ransom actors were not part of this free trade zone the Pasha had envisioned.

Vicente Colom reported in his chronicle that two weeks later, on May 15th or 20th 1604, the Pasha and the Janissaries made a public announcement:

The Pasha and the Janissaries have publicly given permission to ransom captives and let them go free... with no impediments and [allowed] the merchants to come and go and to deal and negotiate as it pleases them. They allow all that because the expedition of the redeemers [*limosna*] is about to arrive and according to the rumors it will bring more than one-hundred-thousand ducats and the [Algerians] are thirsty for money.⁶³⁹

The quote provides evidence as to how rumors that crossed the sea were quickly transformed while they spread throughout the city, but more importantly, it points at an earlier prohibition the Pasha and the Divan had imposed on dealing with captives, which

havesseri vista de alcuno corsario potriano meter la moneta in la tartana, e escampassero piu facilmente che' non in vaxele grande per essere piu veloce de la vela e che' non mireno a la espesa di qualibe centenario de scudi per non capitar male, et con questo si prigano da y dio contento,” Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Wolf, *The Barbary Coast*, pp. 183-184.

⁶³⁹ “An dado publico licencia el baxa y jenizaros a que se puedan rescatar cristianos y andarse en libertad libremente sin ser impedidos y que vengan y vayan mercantes tratando y negociando su placer todo. Lo qual hazen porque venga la limosna de la qual tienen mucha anbre principalmente porque dizen que es de más de cien mil ducados.” AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 198, 15 o 20.5.1604

was valid until the moment of the Pasha's declaration. The interest of the Algerian authorities, especially of the Pasha, was to have the Orders regularly arrive in Algiers. In that way the Pasha could easily impose on the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians his own ransom agenda, namely to sell first his own captives, then those of his people, and finally those of Algerian small slave-holders and merchants.⁶⁴⁰ Merchants from other cities, particularly those from Tétouan, we may assume, came last on his list. The passage, then, demonstrates the attempts of the Pasha and Divan to regulate the market and sell captives directly to the Mercedarians and Trinitarians in Algiers, thereby avoiding the intervention of local or foreign go-betweens whose profits came at his expense. As long as the Orders did not arrive in Algiers, others, the Pasha believed, should not fill in this vacuum.

Seeking to deal directly with the Orders of Redemption, the Pasha tried to prevent go-betweens from installing themselves between the Algerians and the Spaniards. How successful were these attempts? Did the Pasha manage to regulate the market as he fancied, namely to make sure that there would not be any market? Colom does not provide enough data on the question, but the captive who replaced him scattered a few hints in his notes. The second lieutenant Juan Bautista Soriano, who began his Algerian chronicle in September 1607, noted how on December 12th 1607 "an English ship arriving from Tétouan entered [the port and] it brought Turkish and Moorish and a few Jewish merchants. These [merchants] come to take captives for the [Mercedarian] Order's expedition at Tétouan."⁶⁴¹ Three and a half months later, Soriano made another reference to the merchants – "Tuesday, 25th of the said [month of March 1608], the ship to which I referred before left with some Christian [captives] the merchants have bought in order to hand them in to the said ecclesiastical ransom expedition in Tétouan."⁶⁴² A later entry in Soriano's chronicle provides further evidence that this practice was common and suggests that the Pasha and the Divan had little control over the merchants who trafficked in captives. On Tuesday, September 2nd 1608, Soriano wrote:

⁶⁴⁰ In June 2nd, the Mercedarians arrive in Algiers where they stayed for two months ransoming hundred and four captives, see: 6.2.1604 and the 7.14.1604, *Ibid* and Gari y Siumell, *La orden redentora de la Merced*, pp. 277-278.

⁶⁴¹ "Sábado 14 del dicho, entro una nave inglesa que venía de Tetuán trae mercaderes turcos y moros y algunos judíos, los quales mercaderes vienen a llevar cristianos para la limosna de Tetuán." AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 210, 12.14.1607.

⁶⁴² "Martes 25 del dicho, se partió la dicha nave que tengo referida lleva algunos cristianos que han comprado los mercaderes para en Tetuán darlos a la dicha limosna." *Ibid*, 3.25.1608.

The galiot of Jafer the French, I mean of Marjamami, left to Tétouan. Its captain is Jafer the French. The Divan ordered him not to take Christian [captives] from the ones brought by the merchants or owned by Algerians to Tétouan under any circumstances, and under the threat of death punishment. Because they [the merchants] are the reason that the Spanish Trinitarians and Mercedarians do not arrive in this city [Algiers] and the Pasha is losing his fees...⁶⁴³

The chronicler places the Divan in the same position the Pasha occupied before, that of a regulator of trade, who seeks to prevent commerce in captives between Algiers and Teoutan. Elsewhere, Soriano mentioned sharp tensions and disagreements between the Pasha and the Divan, but, unlike the clashes that erupted around the arrest of Monroy, in 1607 the Pasha and the Divan were united on this front.

According to Soriano, the practice of outsourcing of ransom was extremely pervasive. First, the way in which he describes the Divan's warning echoes earlier, lighter ones. Second, unlike the first reference to the practice, in this entry the ship that left for Tétouan was Algerian and not English, and owned by Marjamami, an important Algerian corsair and probably a member in the Taifa, whom Soriano mentions various times in his account. Not only merchants, then, but also corsairs participated in indirect redistribution of captives across the Maghrib, despite the fact that as Taifa members these corsairs were represented by the Divan. Moreover, according to the chronicler, the Divan pointed an accusatory finger at the "go-betweens," explicitly linking their trade with Tétouan with the loss of revenues that the Algerian authorities suffered. The fact that this was not the first time Soriano and others described Algerian attempts to regulate the market suggests that, overall, the Pasha and the Divan failed in their attempts at monopolizing it.

The sparse evidence prior to 1607 does not allow us to spell out the exact dynamics that characterized the exchange at this early stage but it is sufficient to determine that outsourcing of ransom was practiced for a long time.⁶⁴⁴ Most likely, merchants from Tétouan, like their Algerian counterparts, traveled to Algiers when the

⁶⁴³ "Martes 2 del dicho se partió la galeota de Jafer Francés, digo de Marjamami para Tetuán. Va por arraez della Jafer Francés. A le mandado la aduana que de ninguna manera lleve cristianos a Tetuán de los que han comprado los mercantes ni tampoco de los que tienen en Argel sus patronos, so pena de la vida, porque ellos son causa que las dichas limosnas dEspaña no vengan a esta ciudad y que el baxa pierde sus derechos..." Ibid, 9.2.1608.

⁶⁴⁴ An even earlier reference to this practice is found in the autobiography of Gracián. He mentioned a renegade who, in 1595, bought a Franciscan captured in Tunis and took him to Algiers, whereupon he sold him to the Trinitarians, see: Gracián, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos*, p. 64.

Orders were there to sell them captives from Tétouan. The Orders never asked the Spanish King for permission to employ intermediaries. It might be that the intermediaries first sold the captives from Algiers to merchants in Tétouan who then sold them to the friars, thus camouflaging the mediation. It is possible, but unlikely. The King knew the importance of Jewish intermediaries in the Maghrib, especially for the Spanish garrisons scattered there, and must have known about the working relations the Orders established with them.⁶⁴⁵ The fact that he did not try to prevent or limit it suggests that the volume of ransom of captives that go-betweens controlled was limited, and the King was satisfied with the practice. The discord hides competing models of Mediterranean interaction and exchange. Working with intermediaries, rather than negotiating directly with the Algerians, seemed like an efficient communicative and commercial model for the Spanish crown at that time. As far as the evidence allows, it seems that this was not the model Algerians sought to establish. Theirs was one based on face-to-face or direct as possible interaction and exchange. Despite that fact, and perhaps because the volume of captives exchange via outsourcing was limited, their attempts to regulate the market were less pronounced and they came to accept and share the market with intermediaries.

4.2 Outsourcing after the Arrest of Monroy

As early as 1612, and probably earlier, the Spanish monarch prohibited the Orders from executing ransom operations in Algiers unless the Trinitarians and the captives they had redeemed were freed. Since the prohibition did not prevent Algerian corsairs from capturing Spaniards, the Orders began searching for ways around the prohibition. As we have seen, go-betweens had been buying captives in Algiers and selling them to the Orders for years. The Orders could keep on working with intermediaries, but now they had to rely solely on their work, make them into the exclusive agents of ransom of Spaniards from Algiers. The regulations the crown imposed on the Orders in the 1570's, however, prohibited them from deviating from the royal instructions regarding the way they employed ransom funds. Commissioning Jewish or Muslim merchants to ransom all the Spanish captives in Algiers went beyond what the crown allowed for an expedition to

⁶⁴⁵ Schaub, *Les Juifs du roi d'Espagne*.

Morocco and hence was necessary. The shifts in the working relations between the Orders and the intermediaries restructured the political economy of ransom.

The shift required a royal permission. On March 3rd, 1612, Pedro de Medina, who headed a Mercedarian expedition to Tétouan, petitioned the Council of War for a permission to redeem captives from Algiers.⁶⁴⁶ He was expressing an authentic need: the Orders had not directly ransomed captives from Algiers since 1604 (excluding Monroy's failed attempt). Spaniards held captive in Algiers had to rely exclusively on go-betweens. These facilitated the ransom of many and provided faster relief than the Orders, but were more expensive and thus did not suit all. Medina claimed that "many important people from this court have asked him to ransom captives who at present are in Algiers and offered [him] alms and *adjutorios* for that matter."⁶⁴⁷ He requested from the crown a license to commission a captain in Ceuta, a Spanish garrison,⁶⁴⁸ or in Gibraltar, to sail to Algiers with Jewish or Muslims merchants who had commercial contacts in Algiers. The merchants, he explained, would ransom the captives, return them to Ceuta, and hand them over to the Mercedarians. This way, Mercedarians would not risk arrest in Algiers and the Spanish captives would obtain their liberty.

Six weeks later, the Council of War recommended that the King consent to Medina's request.⁶⁴⁹ In the following years, similar petitions were resubmitted and permits reissued. Two years later, in 1614, the Trinitarians applied for a similar license before they left for Tétouan. The license they received, just like that of the Mercedarians, allowed "[that] a captain from Gibraltar, Ceuta or Tangiers could go with his ship to Algiers, taking with him a few Jewish or Muslims merchants who have contacts among the Muslim merchants of Algiers, to execute the said ransom."⁶⁵⁰ Indeed many of the

⁶⁴⁶ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 767, 3.9.1612.

⁶⁴⁷ "...[P]orque muchas personas graves de esta corte le an pedido rescatare algunos cautivos que el pressente están en Argel y ofrecieron limosnas y adjutorios para ello..." Ibid. The second lieutenant Domingo Pérez, petitioned the Council of War to help him ransom his nephew from Algiers, see: AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 768, 11.9.1612. María de Hierro, possibly following instructions from Medina, specifically petitioned the Council to allow Medina to execute his plans. She was hoping to ransom her husband who was held captive in Algiers, see: AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 767, 4.2.1612.

⁶⁴⁸ Ceuta was a Portuguese garrison which became Spanish during the sixty years of union between the kingdoms.

⁶⁴⁹ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 764, 4.16.1612.

⁶⁵⁰ "...[P]ara que un raez de Gibraltar, Ceuta o Tánger pueda ir con su navío a Argel, llevando consigo algunos moros o judíos mercaderes que tiene su correspondencia con los dichos moros mercaderes de Argel para que haga la dicha redención." Apud Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*, p 345.

captives they ransomed in this expedition were brought to Tétouan from Algiers.⁶⁵¹ Likewise, in 1617, Mercedarians in Marrakesh who redeemed Christians were formerly held captive in Algiers via Muslim and Jewish merchants probably on the basis of a royal permit.⁶⁵²

At the same time, the Mercedarians were seeking other solutions. In 1613, the Mercedarians examined the possibility of using Oran as a base to ransom a large number of captives from Aragon held in Algiers. In February, the General of the Order of our Lady of the Mercy asked the Count of Aguilar, the governor of Oran, to see if Monroy, with whom the Count frequently exchanged letters, could buy captives for the Mercedarians and arrange their transfer to Oran. On February 28th, the Count reported to the Council of War that Monroy was convinced that the Pasha and Divan would approve of the plan.⁶⁵³ Aguilar intended to employ Çaporta, member of one of the leading families in Oran, to fund the operation. The Count hoped that the Algerians would deliver the captives to Mostaganem, a city located fifty miles east of Oran. Four months later (on June 25th), he reported to the Council the latest disappointing news from Monroy. Echoing the internal political tensions in Algiers I discussed in the previous section, Monroy informed him that “under no circumstances, the Pasha and the Divan are willing to allow ransom by the Orders of redemption unless it takes place there [in Algiers].”⁶⁵⁴ The Mercedarians’ plan never took off, but Monroy believed he had an alternative. He suggested that he would buy the Aragonese captives, one by one, by employing funds from Oran, without letting the Algerians know he was acting on behalf of the Mercedarians. He would send the captives, he added, with French merchant ships to Barcelona and Valencia. There is ample evidence that Monroy ransomed captives throughout his arrest but it is unclear whether he ended up ransoming the Aragonese. These attempts demonstrate the general importance of intermediaries in ecclesiastical-royal rescue operations – the governor of Oran relied on a Jewish intermediary and Monroy, a ransomer-turned-captive intervened for the Mercedarians. Monroy’s behavior,

⁶⁵¹ *Trinitarios calzados. Libro de la redención de cautivos de Tetuan, Fez y Marruecos. Resultado de las comisiones de fray Jerónimo Fernández y fray Antonio de Madrid. Año 1614 AHN, Códices, Libro 124.*

⁶⁵² Gari y Siumell, *La orden redentora de la Merced*, pp. 280-286

⁶⁵³ AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 785, 2.28.1613.

⁶⁵⁴ “...[Q]ue de ninguna manera quiere el duan ni birey se aga rescate de la limosna si no es allí...” AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 786, 6.25.1613.

however, also suggests that the power struggles between the Orders that I examined in the last chapter were limited to Spanish soil. In the Maghrib, the religious agenda of the redemption of captives mattered more than the competition and economic efficiency.

The granting of these licenses had somewhat contradictory effects on the crown, the Orders, and the intermediaries. In commissioning non-Habsburg subjects to execute the work of the Orders, the Crown killed two birds with one stone: it obviated the risk inherent in sending the Orders to Algiers and yet ransomed its own subjects. In making the Orders apply for a license for a procedure that deviated from the crown's instructions, the King also affirmed his control over the Orders and strengthened it. At the same time, in repeatedly guaranteeing such permits, the crown was legitimating the outsourcing of ransom of captives from Algiers. The King came to rely more and more on Christian, Jewish, and Muslims merchants for protecting his subjects. In the process, the King strengthened the position of these merchants in the Maghrib, while imposing on them his own ransom agenda. Finally, in doing so, the Crown was not only subverting royal ideologies but ironically decentralizing its own power.

Once go-betweens were formally charged with the task of negotiating and executing ransom in Algiers on behalf of Trinitarians and Mercedarians, they came to control a greater portion of ransom deals. The Orders recommenced sending expeditions to Algiers on a regular basis only in 1627. Until then, they were completely dependent on go-betweens for. Members of the Orders knew they could do little without the help of intermediaries and often expressed their discomfort about it. Referring to the Jewish merchants' offer to bring captives from Tétouan to Ceuta, where the friars resided and kept their money, the Mercedarian Pedro Ortiz de Loyando wrote: "It does not seem advisable, nor will it ever be, that the redemptions would be executed by intermediaries, especially not by Jews."⁶⁵⁵ Similarly, the pamphlets that the Orders printed and circulated, which praised their redemptive work, also diminished and indeed silenced the degree to which they were dependent upon local intermediation. Ortiz de Loyando, however, knew that he and his fellow Mercedarians were incapable of ransoming captives independently of these go-betweens.

⁶⁵⁵ "No Pareció inconveniente, ni lo serán jamás, que las redenciones se hagan por personas interpuestas, y mucho menos por judíos." Gari y Siumell, *La orden redentora de la Merced*, pp. 287-288.

A third experiment the crown made in outsourcing occurred in 1618 when Philip III surprisingly ordered a Trinitarian expedition to change its plans and sail to Algiers. The friars were terrified. Their initial plan was to cross the straits and ransom captives in Morocco but they did not even make it to Andalusia. On August 18th, in Toledo, they received an urgent order to return to Madrid. There, they were informed that instead of proceeding with their original plan, they had to turn to Valencia and from there to Algiers. The reason was that a little earlier, Algerian corsairs had taken over a royal galley carrying infantry soldiers. The monarch, who hoped to rescue as many soldiers as he could, commissioned the Trinitarians for the task.⁶⁵⁶ For the ransom of his imperial soldiers, the King was willing to risk the life and liberty of the Trinitarians, despite the prohibition he issued a few years earlier. The decision may have been influenced by the additional time that outsourcing through Tétouan may have required or, more likely, by the Algerian refusal to allow intermediaries to interfere between them and the Spaniards. At any rate, in light of the history of Trinitarians in Algiers, the monarch allowed them to execute the ransom, if necessary, “by means of merchants.” The Trinitarians signed an agreement with Antoine Masued (or Masuer or Massuer), a French merchant based in Valencia who bought and sold goods in Andalucía, the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon, and North Africa,⁶⁵⁷ and had experience with ransom of Christians from Algiers.⁶⁵⁸ In return for eighteen percent of the total cost of the ransom, Masued’s agent in Algiers had to ransom the captives that appeared on the list the Trinitarians prepared. From Valencia, the Trinitarians named two captives, Blas Gonçalez and Sancho de Hurdaniçia, who had to be present during the negotiation and inspect the work of Masued’s agent.⁶⁵⁹

The Algerians refused to negotiate with intermediaries and demanded to work directly with the Trinitarians. At first, they even refused to allow the Trinitarian Andrés

⁶⁵⁶ AHN, *Códices*, Lib. 125, Fol. 7R (first foliation).

⁶⁵⁷ On Masued’s commercial activities, see: Alvaro, Castillo Pintado, *Tráfico marítimo y comercio de importación en Valencia a comienzos del siglo XVII*, Madrid, Seminario de Historia Social y Económica de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Madrid, 1967, pp. 85 and 99.

⁶⁵⁸ On Masuer as a ransomer prior to the 1618 Trinitarian expedition, see: Benítez, “La tramitación del pago de rescates,” pp. 201, 203 and 215.

⁶⁵⁹ One of the two captives, Sancho de Hurdaniçia (or Urdambia), described Masued’s agent in a petition for help he later submitted to the crown as “a man of little importance and credit,” see: AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 833, 10.18.1618.

Mancera, who insisted on employing go-betweens, to participate in the expedition. The provincial of Castile replaced Mancera with Lope González de Frías but the latter, it was claimed, “was not fit to cross to the said city of Algiers because of illnesses and his disinclinations.”⁶⁶⁰ Eventually, Mancera and Castillo, the Trinitarians originally assigned to the mission in Morocco, left for Algiers. The reputation of the Order was damaged, at least according to the Trinitarian and royal preacher Hortensio Félix Paravicino y Arteaga.⁶⁶¹ While the Trinitarians were forced to appear in Algiers in person, Masued joined and helped to negotiate the ransom.⁶⁶² On July 10th, the Trinitarians had exhausted their funding and were ready to leave, but by then their worst fears had been realized. The Algerians refused to issue a departure permit and the Trinitarians were forced to stay in the port until September 2nd. The Algerians also forced the friars to buy more captives. Since by then they had exhausted their funds, the son of the Secretary of the Spanish Royal Chamber held captive in Algiers arranged a loan for the friars from a French merchant and from the English Consul.⁶⁶³ Like the failed attempt to use Oran as a ransom base, this attempt was exceptional. Ransom via Tétouan remained the preferred solution until 1627.

Earlier, I quoted the Mercedarian Pedro Ortiz de Loyando who complained about Jewish go-betweens and declared the Mercedarians should avoid their help. He and his colleagues, however, were not the only ones dissatisfied with the growing power of intermediaries and the pervasiveness of the outsourcing of ransom. The intermediaries partially resolved Spanish problems with captives in Algiers, but the authorities in Tétouan were unhappy with it. They felt that the arrangement came at the expense of their profit from selling captives to the Mercedarians. From their perspective, the Algerians and the go-betweens were taking over their share of the ransom. The records that document expeditions sent to Tétouan reflect the ways in which disagreements between the friars and the Moroccans developed gradually. When the Mercedarian expedition led by Medina, which had received a royal permit to hire intermediaries, arrived in Ceuta in December 1614, the first thing it did was to nominate a French captain

⁶⁶⁰ “[E]l qual estaba yn podido para poder passar a la dicha ciudad de Argel por enfermedades y yn dispusiciones que etnia...” AHN, *Códices*, Lib. 125, Fol. 56V (second foliation).

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 58 (second foliation).

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, fol. 22-27V (First foliation).

⁶⁶³ Benítez, “La tramitación del pago de rescates,” p. 207.

to sail to Algiers with intermediaries from Tétouan. Then the Mercedarians headed to Tétouan, where they agreed with the merchant Hamete Bordan that he would finance the ransom journey to Algiers and employ his contacts with Ali Pichilin, a powerful slave owner from Algiers. Moises Mexia, a Jew from Ceuta, agreed to be the guarantor of the transaction. On January 18th, the Mercedarians met Amu Ben Amar, the governor (*alcaide mayor*) of Tétouan, presented him with their ransom agenda and apologized for ransoming first captives from Algiers. At first the governor did not object and promised to help the friars. They reiterated their plans to the Infantry Captain, and added “that the best of that redemption was to be used [for ransom] in Algiers and this was the most important and most necessary.”⁶⁶⁴ The Infantry Captain echoed the governor’s consent but asked the Mercedarians to leave securities that they would spend sixteen-thousand ducats on ransom in Tétouan upon the completion of the Algerian part of the operation. The Mercedarians agreed, but a little later, the Captain informed them that the governor had changed his mind and now refused to help unless they first spent their money in Tétouan. The governor’s people, he explained, were unsatisfied with the plan, and the governor feared a rebellion. In this case, the Spanish ransom agenda faced obstacles that originated in the limits of power the Moroccan governor felt he could exert on his people.

Disappointed, the Mercedarians returned to Ceuta where the Marquis de Villarreal, the governor of the garrison, encouraged them to proceed with their plan without the help of the Moroccans with the ties he had in Algiers. The Mercedarians obeyed and the French captain they commissioned left for Algiers on February 10th 1615. He returned empty-handed in less than two months and explained that Ali Pichilin, the Marquis of Villarreal’s contact in Algiers, claimed that the Marquis owed him large sums of money for the captives Pichilin had provided him on credit. Pichilin insisted that until the Marquis pay his debt, he would not cooperate with him. The contours of the Moroccan policy on outsourcing of ransom continued to develop in encounters between the Orders and Tetouanite officials. Two years later, in 1617, a similar disagreement erupted. The Infantry Captain of Tétouan forbade the Mercedarians from contacting foreign merchants before they bought the captives of the governor of Tétouan, of his men, and of Tetouanite

⁶⁶⁴ “...[L]o mejor de su redención se había de emplear en Argel, y que esto era lo principal y lo forzoso.” Mss 3,870, BNE, Apud Gozalbes Busto, *Los Moriscos en Marruecos*, p. 278.

merchants. At first, Pedro Ortiz de Loyando and Juan de Santiago, the Mercedarians, agreed, but as soon as they discovered that many of the captives that the Tetouanite had to offer were French and English (and worst of all Protestants), they refused to proceed and prepared to return to Spain. The Jewish merchants convinced the Mercedarians to stay in Tétouan, telling them that if they would buy a few of the governor's slaves, they could proceed with their own ransom agenda. De Loyando, who a year later expressed his unease with his dependence upon Jewish intermediation, wrote that "this wasn't bad advice."⁶⁶⁵ After buying forty captives in Tétouan, the Mercedarians proceeded to negotiate ransom according to their own priorities.

What were the Algerian policies toward go-betweens after the arrest of Monroy? Again, there are no extant Algerian sources which can help us to answer this question, but as before, the reports of Spanish spies shed some light on the question. In September 1614, Yxo de Bovdoba, as the anonymous spy from Denia spelled the name of that 'Moor,' left Algiers with a frigate and thirty three Christians whom he intended to sell in Tétouan. The chronicler does not indicate if the Christians were Spanish or from another nation, with which the Algerians dealt through go-betweens. About a league away from Algiers, however, Yxo dropped anchor and embarked three Christians, who had previously been ransomed by Monroy and arrested with the Trinitarians and the rest of the captives they had ransomed in 1609. Yxo and the Christians must have planned that in advance and doubtlessly he had charged them an extra for the service knowing the risk he was taking. The Algerians found out about the plan and on September 20th stopped Yxo's frigate and strangled him to death in the exact same spot in which he picked up the three captives. It is hard to generalize on the basis of this scant trace, and yet, in comparison to the measures taken before the arrest of Monroy, it seems as if now the Algerians were much more reluctant to allow intermediaries to operate against their prohibitions.⁶⁶⁶

The arrest of Monroy was a blow to the continuation of direct ecclesiastical ransom operations in Algiers. The practice of outsourcing ransom, however, preceded the

⁶⁶⁵ "No fué mal consejo," Gari y Siumell, *La orden redentora de la Merced*, p. 283. Bordan, the same merchant who was commissioned to deliver captives from Algiers in 1615, was still involved in this cross-regional slave trade. Now however, he tried to condition the ransom of a captive from Tétouan in whom the Mercedarians were interested in buying of twelve other captives from Algiers. Ibid, 284.

⁶⁶⁶ AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 255, 20.9.1614.

affair by decades and was probably practiced for decades after the death of Monroy.⁶⁶⁷ The affair, however, created a new articulation of the political economy and geography of ransom. In the sixteenth century and during the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Algerians objected intermediation pushing towards direct interaction and exchange. In contrast, the Spanish King was satisfied with tacit collaboration with Jewish and Muslim go-betweens who intermediated part of the ransom of Spaniards from Algiers. The differing positions of the Spanish King and the Algerian Pasha embodied opposed models of interaction, communication, and exchange in the Mediterranean. The Algerians and later evidence demonstrates that the Moroccans as well, perceived the sea as a space in which political powers negotiate directly with each other. That of course did not necessarily entail peaceful relations or a frictionless interaction. In addition, the Algerians sought a cartel or a monopoly shared with the Moroccans which would have allowed them to be the exclusive sellers of captives to Trinitarians and Mercedarians. The Spaniards, on the other hand, felt comfortable with intermediation, and in that sense, preferred a market of ransom, one in which governments do not exclusively negotiate with each other and allow go-betweens to intermediate between them. As much as these models differed, the division of labor between go-betweens and the Orders of Redemption was such that none of the parties felt an acute need to take radical measures and impose its preferred model. Intermediaries, on the one hand, and the Trinitarian and Mercedarians on the other, were not perceived to be mutually exclusive options but rather as complementary ones. The affair, however, changed the situation. Now the Spanish crown prohibited the Orders from sailing to Algiers and formally commissioned intermediaries to execute ransom that the Orders would have previously executed. Intermediaries gained power, became more important, and *de-facto* monopolized the ransom of captives from Algiers. The Monroy affair then re-signified the relations between go-betweens and the Orders of Redemption.⁶⁶⁸ Now, ransom via the Orders and

⁶⁶⁷ It is probable that during the decade between 1664 and 1674 and between 1674 and early in the eighteenth century (see the table by the end of the chapter), years during which the Orders did not arrive in Morocco, similar outsourcing arrangements were functioning. In chapter two, for example, we have seen that in 1692 and 1694, the Trinitarians had excellent working relations with Algerian governor.

⁶⁶⁸ We should not forget larger dynamics within Spain which may have contributed to the King's willingness to formalize the working relations with Jewish and Muslim merchants. Between 1609 and 1614, Spain expelled its Moriscos. The idea of expulsion was not new but the decision was executed only in 1609 exactly the same time when Philip III signed the 'Twelve Years' truce with the Dutch rebels.

ransom via intermediaries were perceived as two alternatives, a fact leading to further tensions vis-à-vis both the Algerians and the Moroccans.

5. Conclusion

The decision of Philip II in 1575 to inspect and regulate the work of the Orders did not entail the elimination of the long collaboration between Trinitarians and Mercedarians and North African Jewish and Muslim intermediaries. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Orders and the go-betweens continued to work together ransoming Christians from the Maghrib. Intermediaries competed against the Orders, as we have seen in the previous chapter, but more often provided them with accommodation, food, and services of translation and ransomed Christians on their behalf from cities to which the Orders could not travel. In chapter four, we have seen how the Spanish crown implicitly acknowledged the validity of ransom agreements between Jews, Muslims, and Christians, providing the latter with aid, when necessary, to pay their debt to the go-betweens that rescued them. The Monroy affair rearticulated these working relations. Following the arrest of Monroy, Philip III explicitly allowed the Orders of Redemption to delegate royal powers to Jews and Muslims who turned into Spanish ransom agents. In doing so, he was formalizing long-term outsourcing arrangements between intermediaries and ecclesiastical ransom institutions. This decision strengthened the intermediaries by bestowing them with the lion share of ransom of Spanish captives. Not only did the Orders become less involved in ransom, but also Algerians and Moroccans felt that the change was at their expense, and that the Crown was trying to impose a conception of the Mediterranean which was different from theirs. Ironically, then, the same process that enhanced the alliance between Jewish and Muslim intermediaries and the Spanish crown, made two other political enemies, Algiers and Morocco, share the same interest – the regulation of intermediaries and direct commercial

Scholars have suggested that the proximity between these operations was not accidental. By expelling the Moriscos the Crown sought to recuperate the prestige it felt it had lost in signing the cease fire agreement, see: Feros, *El Duque de Lerma*, pp. 353-372. While there is no direct evidence for that, the cleansing the crown of the Moriscos was an action that could have legitimated the formalization of working arrangements with Jews and Muslims.

relationship with the Spanish crown via its official ecclesiastical agents, the Trinitarians and Mercedarians.

The study of the traffic in humans engendered by piracy and corsairs, a phenomenon that ranged from the trivially small – as we have seen in the previous chapter – to the spectacularly large, requires a shifting analytical frame which combines various geo-political scales.⁶⁶⁹ A trans-Mediterranean scale that includes political actors such as the Ottoman and Moroccan Sultans and the Spanish King and their relations with imperial peripheries (Algiers, Sicily and Naples); An institutional scale that is focused on the Orders of Redemption and their movements between Spain and the Maghrib; A Maghribi scale that includes Jewish and Muslim “go-betweens” and their interactions with the Orders and with Algerian pashas and Moroccan governors; and a smaller single polity scale focused, for example, on Algiers or Spain and their internal strife. Only a perspective that combines these scales allows the reconstruction and analysis of the political economy and geography of ransom in all its complexity. The problem, however, is not only one of scale but also of accounting for the complex and shifting relations between economy, politics, society and religion. The political economy of ransom, then, was not as part of an autonomous economic sphere but rather as an activity determined by political, religious and social power dynamics. A captive’s value in the political economy of ransom was determined by his or her religious identity, wealth and skills, but also political power struggles represented in the various scales.

⁶⁶⁹ See the recent article of Schayegh that focuses on narcotic trafficking in the Middle East from a transnational perspective, see: Cyrus, Schayegh, “The Many Worlds of ‘Abud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East Can Tell Us about Territorialization,” *American historical Review* 116 (2011), pp. 273-306.

Table 1: Trinitarian and Mercedarian Ransom Expeditions to the Maghrib, 1595-1692⁶⁷⁰

	Algiers	Tétouan		Algiers	Tétouan
1595	Trinitarians (225)	Mercedarians (and in Fez and Marrakesh [208])	1645		Mercedarians (212)
1596	Mercedarians (100)		1646	Mercedarians (293)	Trinitarians (124) Mercedarians (325)
1597	Mercedarians (279)		1647	Mercedarians (115)	
1599	Trinitarians (250)		1648		Mercedarians (225)
1601		Mercedarians (and in Fez and Marrakesh [166])	1650	Mercedarians (230)	
1604	Mercedarians (104)	Mercedarians (and in Fez and Marrakesh [154])	1651	Mercedarians (241)	
1605		Trinitarians (119)	1652	Trinitarians (136)	
1607		Mercedarians (and in Fez and Marrakesh [196])	1654	Mercedarians (82)	
1609	Trinitarians (130, failed)	Mercedarians (132)	1655	Mercedarians (302)	
1612		Mercedarians (and in Fez and Marrakesh [141])	1656		Trinitarians (320)
1614		Trinitarians (125)	1660	Mercedarians (406)	
1615		Mercedarians (and in Fez and Marrakesh [258])	1661		Trinitarians (136 also from Arzila)
1617		Mercedarians (152)	1664	Mercedarians (261)	Trinitarians (79 also from Arzila)
1618	Trinitarians (208)	Mercedarians (140)	1667	Mercedarians (211)	
1620	Mercedarians (121)	Trinitarians (36 also from Fez)	1668	Mercedarians (122)	
1624		Trinitarians (109) Mercedarians (and in Ksar el-Kebir and Sale [115])	1669	Mercedarians (200)	
1627	Mercedarians (383) Trinitarians (162)		1670	Trinitarians (212)	
1630		Trinitarians (85)	1674		Mercedarians (and in Fez and Sale [56])
1633	Mercedarians (100)	Trinitarians (72)	1675	Mercedarians (519)	
1635		Mercedarians (93)	1677		
1636		Trinitarians (93)	1678	Mercedarians (450)	
1639	Mercedarians (114)	Trinitarians (111)	1679	Trinitarians (163)	
1640			1681	Mercedarians (153)	
1642		Trinitarians (118)	1682	Mercedarians (446)	
1644	Mercedarians (152)		1692	Trinitarians (156) Mercedarians (642)	
Captives ransomed by Mercedarians: 10,526					
Captives ransomed by Trinitarians: 4,240					

⁶⁷⁰ This table is based on data extracted from Gari y Siumell, *La orden redentora de la Merced and Porres, Libertad a los cautivos*. The numbers of expeditions and of ransomed captives the table include are bigger than the numbers offered by José Antonio Martínez Torres. The reason is that Martínez Torres included only expeditions of which he found the account books in the archives. Martínez Torres is careful with histories such as Porres and Gari y Siumell as their authors are members of the Orders on which they write and hence might aggrandize uncritically the results of the redemptive labor. I chose a more liberal, however, because I found supporting evidence for expeditions Porres and Gari y Siumell mentioned for which Martínez Torres did not find the account books. If indeed the numbers of captives ransomed and expeditions sent is smaller than what Porres and Gari y Siumell offered that might be an index for the even larger importance of the networks discussed in chapter four.

Chapter 8:

Conclusion

The end of the age of spectacular naval battles between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires in the Mediterranean, reflected in the peace treaty the empires had signed in 1581, transformed the structures of mobility in the western Mediterranean. The peace agreement enabled corsairs to take over the sea, and increased the total volume of captives while spreading out their distribution over time and across space making it more balanced. The frequent movement of captives, escaping, and ransomed Christians and Muslims across the Mediterranean, intensified the webs of connectivity between the Maghrib and Spain by allowing the circulation of various kinds of information, of which captives were producers and carriers. Ironically, then, despite the fact that Spain turned its attention northward and westward, away from the Mediterranean, the sea continued to flourish, with reshaped boundaries and a host of new links that connected the Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Algiers and Morocco. Corsairs played an important role in the process, but so did ransom networks and the intermediaries that formed them. Jewish, Muslim and Christian go-betweens came to mediate the relations between the Spanish monarch, Algerian pashas and Moroccan governors who sought to impose competing ideals of the Mediterranean.

I have suggested that we should examine the formation of regions as a process of interaction between cross-boundary practices (such as captive-taking, ransom, conversion and more) and competing region making projects, understood as political attempts to reshape the religious and social boundaries of the sea via the imposition of agendas of exchange and interaction. I have focused on one instance of such a process that took

place in the western Mediterranean, in the stretch of the sea between Spain and the Maghrib and demonstrated that, rather than a religious space dominated by the spirit of a trans-historical Jihad, or a space quartered into national units and governed by the spirit of capitalism,⁶⁷¹ the sea was made and remade throughout the seventeenth century by the constant constitution and unraveling of social and political ties. Captivity and ransom were a vantage point for the study of the sea's transformations. The information the captives produced and exchanged served them in negotiating their captivity and improving their living conditions, while also providing institutions of their home communities with news about renegades, strategic information, and a foothold on the opposite coast of the sea. Similarly, the interactions between captives, ecclesiastical ransom institutions and small-scale ransom agents, on the one hand, and between ransom intermediaries and institutions and Spanish, Algerians and Moroccan political authorities, on the other, formed another arena of Mediterraneanization. Despite the large corpus of studies that focus on the themes of captivity and ransom the majority of scholars conceive of captivity as a self-contained experience and a period during which captives had lost all contact with their home communities. For this reason, the manner in which the circulation of captives and the interactions it generated continued to make and remake the Mediterranean through linking the people populating it has gone unnoticed. It is this gap that the dissertation sought to fill.

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This study contributes in several ways to our understanding of the seventeenth century Mediterranean, the relation between the Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Algiers, and Morocco, and captivity and ransom. It adds an important level of empirical data, revealing details about the life of captives and the links between ransom institutions and intermediaries and Mediterranean sovereigns. In methodological terms, the dissertation stressed two issues: writing as social action and the importance of failures both in shaping the archive and in pointing out the ways in which value was determined by non-economic forces such as politics, society and religion. Several chapters stressed the importance and

⁶⁷¹ Davis, Huntington, Dakhliia

usefulness of analyzing writing and textual artifices not only in terms of representation or authorial intent but also as unique forms of social action. By thinking about archival documents as traces of actions, rather than only as representations of captivity, the dissertation sheds new light both on repertoires of actions available to captives and on the ways in which the institution of slavery facilitated the relations on all levels between Spain, Algiers and Morocco. In so doing, the dissertation emphasized the importance of expanding the documentary basis of research on captives and on the Mediterranean beyond captivity narratives – which, while exceptionally rich, were written by a minority of captives always after the trial of captivity had ended – to small, everyday textual artifacts captives had produced.

Focusing on failures was fruitful in two ways. First, while there are references to ransom deals executed by small-scale ransom intermediaries, such deals, when efficient, tended not to leave archival traces. In contrast, the records of institutional ransom, carefully archived and organized in neat documentary series, created the illusion of a Spanish bureaucratic state forming itself through the monopolization of “humanitarian action” at the expense of non-institutional actors. It is only by a search for failed cases scattered across numerous bundles of records in various sections of the archive that I was able to reconstruct the system analyzed in chapter five and reconstruct the complex ways in which political centralization was intertwined with processes of de-centralization. It was the failures, then, that facilitated the reconstruction of the norms, practices and procedures which governed the work of small-scale *longue durée* networks of ransom. Second, focusing exclusively on the few ransom deals which were executed successfully risks their reduction to mere economic transactions, thus de-historicizing the ways in which value was created and negotiated. In examining a multiplicity of deals negotiated but never executed, deals that failed from the perspective of a captive seeking his or her liberty, I was able to show how internal and international political power struggles, social institutions like marriage, and religion – factors allegedly external to the agreements negotiated – were crucial in shaping value and the market.

I have reconstructed a process of Mediterraneanization from the perspective of the Habsburg Empire. To some extent, the richness of Spanish archives allowed me to account for the manner in which the process was perceived, experienced, and negotiated

from Algiers and Morocco. Further research in Algerian and Tunisian Ottoman archives is needed before its results can be synthesized into a study of this kind. Doubtlessly, such findings would help recalibrate the history I have charted. Nevertheless, I hope to have demonstrated the value of focusing on captivity and ransom, not only in order to study captivity and ransom as such, but also as phenomena which shed light on some of the larger processes through which the western Mediterranean was shaped throughout the seventeenth century. It is only by further exploring the interactions between maritime movements, connections, and articulations that we can understand the process of Mediterraneanization.

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