Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series

18

eds. Janico Albrecht, Jeannine Bischoff, Sarah Dusend

Nabil Matar

Arabic Accounts of Mediterranean Captivity, 1517–1798

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ebv BERLIN

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Bibliographic information published by
the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de

Gefördert durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) im Rahmen der Exzellenzstrategie des Bundes und der Länder – Exzellenzcluster Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Projektnummer: 390683433

Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – Cluster of Excellence Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Project No.: 390683433

This book is available for free download in the Open Access section of the publishers' website. (https://doi.org/10.53179/9783868934588).

A print version is available for a fee from the publisher.
The page numbers in the print and in the online version are identical.

Coverdesign: © Rainer Kuhl, Berlin

ISBN 978-3-86893-449-6 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-86893-458-8 (Open Access)
DOI 10.53179/9783868934588

For David,
and fifty years since the halcyon days of Cambridge.

The people of the island cannot sleep and never desire food or drink for fear of the attacks of the infidels and evil ones […] Last year, the Christians attacked them with 36 ships, teeming with soldiers. They assaulted them at dawn and seized women and children, looted property and money, and killed men and women. In that bitter assault, they took captive 260 souls that witnessed there is no god but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet [i.e., Muslims].

Muḥammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qudsī (c. 1605), *Asfār al-asfār wa abkār al-afkār*, ed. AlMahdi AlRawadieh (Amman, 2021): 212.

Captain Delgarno struck so great a Terror in them by constantly appearing in sight of their Ports, and by the Success he had in taking some and running others ashore, that, as I have been credibly informed, the very Women of Sallee and Mamora used to frightern their Children, when untoward, by telling them Delgarno was coming for them.

Captain Braithwaite, *The History of the Revolutions in the Empire of Morocco* (London, 1729): 344.

1 Introduction[1]

The early modern Mediterranean was frequently a sea of plunder and piracy, of captivity, enslavement, and ransom. All the peoples around its shores and beyond, extending to England, were active on its waves. Sailors and priests, brigands and imams, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, Arabs and Turks, Protestants and Catholics: all were active and all were victims. As Salvatore Bono wrote, captivity and slavery were *una storia mediterranea*.[2]

In the European history of the Mediterranean, stories of violence committed against Christian captives by Muslim captors have been in print and on stage from the earliest English accounts in the second half of the sixteenth century to dozens of publications in French, German, and Spanish – from the plays of Cervantes and Lope de Vega, all the way to Mozart's *Abduction from the Sergalio* (1782), Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* (1813), Verdi's *The Corsair* (1848), and continuing into twentieth-century films, novels, and theatrical performances.[3] But as Suraiya Faroqhi observed, the European/Christian corsairs "outnumbered" the Muslim corsairs,[4] resulting in very high amounts of Muslim captives. From the depredations of Alonso de Contreras, which he

1 I wish to thank the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, University of Bonn, for the invitation to deliver the lecture on "Arabic Accounts of Mediterranean Captivity, 1517–1798." I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Alex Baramki and Ms. Amy Wegner for their assistance, and to Dr. AlMahdi AlRawadieh (University of Jordan) for furnishing me with his publications. And of course, thanks are always due to Amy Frankfurt.

2 Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi. Una storia mediterranea (XVI–XIX secolo)* (Bologna: Società Editrice il Mulino, 2016).

3 Khalid Bekkaoui, *White Women Captives in North Africa: Narratives of Enslavement, 1735–1830* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 42–45. In particular, see films made with major actors: *Angélique et le Sultan* (1968) [Mulay Ismāʿīl of Morocco, reg. 1672–1727], starring Robert Hossein and Michèle Mercier, and *Harem* (1986), starring Omar Sharif and Ava Gardner. For a list of English captivity accounts, see appendix 3 in my *Britain and Barbary: 1589–1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005). For Cervantes and captivity, see Maria Antonia Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive's Tale* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002).

4 Suraiya Faroqhi, "Part II Crisis and Change, 1590–1699," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Halil Inalcik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 724.

proudly described in his autobiography,[5] to the English co-operation with North African pirates during the Jacobean period in Morea, which, as a Venetian observer noted, became "worse than Barbary,"[6] to the 1660s, when "European piracy entered its so-called 'Golden Age'"[7] – sea and land attacks on North Africans were relentless.

Multitudinous as the Muslim captives were, they have largely been forgotten in Western scholarship on early modern captivity. The profusion of manuscripts and published accounts by Europeans about captivity in the "Barbary Coast," along with the vast archival collections about maritime activities, has framed the history of captivity in the Mediterranean as the story of Muslim masters and Christian slaves. In *Mediterranean Captivity through Arab Eyes, 1517–1798* (Brill, 2021), I began the project of exploring the Arabic archives in search of Arab-Muslim accounts of captivity as they appeared in Arabic sources and not ventriloquized through European languages. My goal was to draw attention to the Arabic 'other shore' of Mediterranean history (per Ferdinand Braudel), and to demonstrate that Arabic sources have much to report on the violence of European captors. In this presentation, I furnish further *qiṣṣas*/stories/accounts of captivity as told by members of the various religious communities in the Islamic shores: Christians, Jews, and Muslims.[8] To ignore the Arabic archives and their *qiṣṣas* is to exclude a major part of Mediterranean history and favor the European-Christian narrative about the violence of North Africans over the narratives composed

5 Alonso de Contreras, *The Adventures of Captain Alonso de Contreras: A Seventeenth Century Journey*, trans. Philip Dallas (St. Paul: Paragon House Publishers, 1989).

6 Horatio F. Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts … in the Archives and Collections of Venice, 1607–1610*, vol. 11 (London, 1904): 136 (27 May 1608).

7 Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seamen 1650–1775* (London: Methuen, 1998): 118.

8 For studies of captivity that have included Arabic, see the excellent work by Dionisius A. Agius, ed., *Georgio Scala and the Moorish Slaves: The Inquisition – Malta 1598* (Malta: Midsea Books, 2013). See also Lamjed Bouzid, "Maghrebi Captives in Europe 1772–1775: From the Tunisian National Archives," *Ostour* 6 (2007), https://ostour.dohainstitute.org/ar/issue06/Pages/Ostour06_2017_04_Bouzid.pdf [accessed 17.06.2022] and Moulay Belhamissi, *Les captifs algériens et l'Europe chrétienne: 1518–1831* (Algiers: Entreprise nationale du livre, 1988), although the author relied exclusively on French sources. For other references, see my bibliography in *Mediterranean Captivity through Arab Eyes, 1517–1798* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), especially the study by Ariel Salzmann ("Migrants in Chains") and the many works by Salvatore Bono.

in Arabic. But in Salé, where Captain Delgarno terrorized the harbor women and children, as well as in Iskenderun, and from Algeria to Egypt to Palestine, the language of chronicle, hagiography, and inter-communal commerce and exchange in the early modern period was Arabic.[9] Even though the Arab peoples were under Ottoman rule, Arabic culture remained different from its Turkish counterpart, with its own distinctive jurisprudence, literature, language, diet, and attitude to captivity. Arabic culture did not become Ottoman culture.

2 Sources, Methodology, and Challenges

Accounts of captivity in Arabic are by far fewer than accounts that have been written, translated, pirated, published, and republished in Europe.[10] This absence of book-length writings and/or tracts chiefly stemmed from the unwillingness of returning captives to view their experience as one that was outside God's will: for them, to write about sufferings they endured might smack of discontent and a questioning of the divine order. It was more wholesome to write in praise of God and in gratitude for His gifts,[11] which is why from the ninth century onward, there were hundreds of pilgrimage accounts and travelogues in Arabic reporting on sacred sites (Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina) or the wonders of God's creation. And there were the biographical dictionaries – unique to the Arabic tradition – celebrating the histories and achievements of men

9 In this study, I use "Arab" as a geographical term to refer to the peoples of the Mediterranean regions where Arabic was spoken.

10 For a selection, see Daniel J. Vitkus, ed., *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, introd. Nabil Matar (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), and Mario Klarer, ed., *Barbary Captives: An Anthology of Early Modern Slave Memoirs by Europeans in North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022).

11 Arab writers were brief in describing the personal – unless it could be seen as locating them in "their appropriate channels of transmission": Dwight F. Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001): 241–44. For a detailed discussion of why Arabs did not write about captivity, see my "Two Arabic Accounts of Captivity in Malta: Texts and Contexts," in *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean*, ed. Mario Klarer (London: Routledge, 2019): 258–76.

and women in their cities (Damascus, Baghdad) and professions (medicine, jurisprudence).[12] Much as there were records about the sea, even a jurisprudence specific to it,[13] writing was carried out in the service of God (or the prince), and captivity, with its abject humiliation, did not serve either.

Meanwhile, Christian Europeans wrote endlessly about their captivity experiences. Not coincidentally, their writings accompanied the European explorations and conquests around the world, from Brazil to Florida to North Africa. In fact, the earliest printed captivity narratives were the sixteenth-century accounts by Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, who wrote about the first Spanish penetration of North America (1528–38), and by Hans Staden, who wrote of his captivity in Brazil (captured 1547–1555). In North Africa, and from 1415 onward, the Portuguese, the Spanish, the French, and the English established presidios and colonies: Ceuta, 1415; Tangier, 1465; Asila, 1471; Melilla, 1497; Aghadir, 1505; Asfi, 1506; Azzamour, 1508; Tripoli, 1510; Mahdiyya, 1515; and Tunis, 1534. And while many of these sites were later reclaimed, European incursions and attacks continued in the seventeenth century, with the heaviest bombardments having been carried out by the British and French fleets against Tripoli and Algiers between the 1660s and the 1680s. North African pirates seized European captives wherever they found them, even as far as Ireland and Iceland, but the majority of the captives were seized in the waters between "South Barbary" and Tunis – where Iberian invaders had settled or attacked, and which Britons later colonized.[14] Seizing captives was one of the "little wars" (per Fernand Braudel) which the North Africans waged.

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12 See Wadad al-Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance," in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N. Atiyeh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995): 93–122.

13 Moulay Belhamissi, *Al-Baḥr wa-al-'Arab fī al-tārīkh wa-al-adab* (Algiers: Manshūrāt ANEP, 2005).

14 See Robert Burton, *The English Acquisitions in Guinea and East-India. Containing, First, The Several Forts and Castles of the Royal African Company from Sally in South Barbary* (London: A. Bettesworth and J. Batley, 1728).

European captivity accounts furnished logistical and cultural information about hitherto "unexplored" regions to traders, colonists, priests, naval commanders, and others just as they entertained leisurely readers, perhaps giving rise to the novel.[15] Once texts were printed and sold, they generated income, which motivated other captives (or ghostwriters) to compose their own accounts, adding fabrications about exotic worlds, heroic Europeans, and adventurous romances. European captives were the first "travelers," in chains to reach the "Barbary" lands, and in writing about their experiences, many put to practice the advice of Sir Francis Bacon – even if they had not known of his essay "Of Travel" (1625). Bacon urged travelers to examine foreign "shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure […] armories, arsenals; magazines; exchanges; burses; warehouses; exercises of horsemanship; fencing; training of soldiers; and the like."[16] The captive-as-traveler collected and recorded empirical data that could be of use to his countrymen: The French captive, Germain Moüette, for instance, writing in 1683 about his captivity in Morocco, furnished information about diplomacy and trade, ending with a glossary of Arabic terms to facilitate communication.[17] Additionally, captivity accounts consolidated European religio-national and racial identities: At a time when the Spanish Habsburgs were forcefully expelling or converting the Muslim population in their territories, the "Turks" and "Moors" of North Africa embodied the otherness that they were trying to eradicate. Across Europe, captivity accounts served multiple ideological goals.

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15 G.A. Starr, "Escape from Barbary: A Seventeenth-Century Genre," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 29 (1965): 35–52. See also the discussion of "caractéristiques des récits de captivité dans le roman-mémoires" by Dominique Orsini, "Récits de captivité fictifs: Imaginaire barbaresque et esthétique Romanesque dans le roman-mémoires du premier XVIIe siècle," in *Récits d'Orient dans les littératures d'Europe (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)*, ed. Anne Duprat and Émilie Picherot (Paris: PU Paris-Sorbonne, 2008): 321–40.

16 Hugh G. Dick, ed., *Selected Writings of Francis Bacon* (New York: Modern Library, 1955): 48.

17 Germain Moüette, *Relation de la captivité du Sr Moüette dans les royaumes de Fez et de Maroc, où il a demeuré pendant onze ans … Avec un traité du commerce, & de la maniere que les negotians s'y doivent comporter* (Paris: Chez Jean Cochart, 1683).

Meanwhile, the Arab peoples of the Mediterranean did not (and could not) pursue conquests on European soil or build threatening presidios. They did not have the naval capabilities, ocean-worthy vessels, and joint-stock companies to establish networks of trade or commercial outposts in lands beyond their immediate reach.[18] As a result, they did not develop the kind of master narrative of captivity that largely underpinned the European accounts, which presented innocent Christians falling prey to Muslim captors, followed by their defiant but pious endurance, and then their miraculous escape with the help of the Virgin (in Catholic accounts), or their ransom by their monarchs (in early English Protestant accounts).[19] Full-fledged narratives of captivity did not become relevant in the Arabic imaginary, even though long before any European had written about captivity, Arab poets had already described their experiences.[20] No captivity "industry" developed in the Arabic-speaking world, even though captured men and women, after returning to their communities, told their stories. All their anecdotes, allusions to, and recollections of their Mediterranean ordeals, however, were left unrecorded.

It is these allusions and references that have to be studied for the Arabic *storia* of captivity. In such a study, there are various challenges.

Captivity references and narratives are widely dispersed in the sources because there were no genre divisions in Arabic. References appear in theological debates, moral treatises, chronicles, travelogues,

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18 In fact, the Ottomans, who ruled the Regencies at that time, even if loosely, were already on the decline in their naval and military capabilities: see chapter 2 in Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns, Sails and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion 1400–1700* (New York: Minerva Press, 1965). See also the comparison of the size of the Ottoman, Venetian, French, British, and Spanish navies between 1735 and 1740, where the Ottoman navy was smaller than all except the Venetian: Daniel Panzac, "Armed Peace in the Mediterranean 1736–1739: A Comparative Survey of the Navies," *The Mariner's Mirror* 84 (1998): 41–55, 42.

19 See my "English Captivity Accounts in North Africa and the Middle East, 1577–1625," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 553–73.

20 Perhaps the earliest Arabic references to captives in verse appear in a poem by Marwān ibn Suleymān ibn abī Ḥafṣa (d. 798): *Shi'r Marwān ibn abī Ḥafṣa*, ed. Ḥussain 'Aṭwān, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1982): 61. See also the poems of Abū Firās al-Hamdānī (d. 968), who was a captive of the Byzantines, in Nizar Hermes, *The European Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2012). See my discussion of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qaysī in *Mediterranean Captivity*: 44–50.

legal judgments/fatawa, commonplace books, biographies, and other texts. In Muslim and Christian Arabic writings, a hagiography or a travelogue or a chronicle often included long praise of holy men and hosts, lengthy quotations from scriptures, eulogies and elegies, exegetical digressions, devotions, and descriptions of events at sea and on land. The numerous references to captivity that appear in the study of *Qarāṣinat Gharb al-Baḥr al-Mutawassiṭ* by Maḥmūd Aḥmad ʻAlī Hādya demonstrate the diversity of medieval sources in which captives, ransoms, and "Christian" attacks are mentioned by authors ranging from the geographer al-Idrīssī (d. 1166) to the traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1368) to the historiographer Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), among others.[21] The accounts about and by captives in Arabic were always brief and part of a larger text: the longest, continuous Arabic captivity account (which I have found) was no more than a few pages.[22] Some Arabic accounts can be stitched together to form a narrative: references to the 1586–87 captivity of Ibn al-Qāḍī were dispersed in various sources, but cumulatively, they told of captivity, endurance, and most elaborately, of ransom at the hands of the glorious and divinely empowered ruler Ahmad al-Mansur (d. 1603).[23] There was nothing written in Arabic that was similar to the Ottoman Turkish accounts: Turks wrote expansively about their captivity experiences, which reflected a powerful imperial culture and society.[24]

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21 Maḥmūd Aḥmad ʻAlī Hādya, *Qarāṣinat Gharb al-Baḥr al-Mutawassit min al-qarn 6H/12M ḥattā al-qarn 9H/15M,* [The Pirates of the Western Mediterranean from the Sixth to the Ninth Centuries after the Hijra] (Dubai: Markiz Jumʻa al-Mājid, 2017). I am grateful to Professor Mohammad Shaheen of the University of Jordan for furnishing me with a copy of this book.

22 See my *Mediterranean Captivity*: 72–81.

23 See my *Mediterranean Captivity*: 50–59.

24 For one of the most detailed accounts, see F. Hitzel's study, "Osmân Aĝa, Captif ottoman dans l'Empire des Habsbourg à la fin du XVIIe siècle," *Turcica* 33 (2001): 191–212; and the English translation of the account by Giancarlo Cassale, *Prisoner of the Infidels: The Memoirs of an Ottoman Muslim in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021). See also Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Literature," *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989): 121–50, 132: "memoirs of captivity pose potential risks as examples of personal literature, for they may be reflections of a literary device rather than actual lived experiences"; and for "romantic" accounts, see Marinos Sariyannis, "Images of Piracy in Ottoman Literature, 1550–1750," in *Corsairs and Pirates in*

Another difficulty in the Arabic sources is the use of verse. From the first experiences of captivity and ransom in the eighth century onward, Arab poets described their own captivity as well as that of others. But in verse, they emphasized emotions over information, rhyme over empirical detail – much like the prison poetry of early modern Europe.[25] Captives composed poems about their ordeals because they were easy to remember; and it was unlikely they had any paper on which to write. At the same time, poems allowed for personal reflections, while prose was largely associated with the religious sciences and epistolary exchanges. Poetry was also the "higher" form of writing, suitable for addressing rulers, who had the financial resources to buy back captives: praising and imploring the ruler was more resonant in rhyme and meter than in prose. Arab writers used poetry to record history and describe attacks by European pirates and armies on the coastal towns in which captives were seized. In such poems, the authors tried to mobilize rulers and princes to re-conquer the devastated Muslim cities: the captives were both the cities and their inhabitants, and the poems were a call for action and a lament for the plight of fellow coreligionists. In 1471, the Portuguese conquered Asila on the western coast of Morocco and took more than 5,000 of its inhabitants into slavery. Ibn Yajbish al-Tāzī (d. 1514) described the plight of the captives, giving special attention to the women. But the poem evoked more pity than it furnished information.[26] Two centuries later, and calling for the liberation of Ceuta from the Spaniards, 'Abd al-Salām Jāssūs wrote to Mulay Ismā'īl (reg. 1672–1727): "Shame on you, […] that she [Ceuta] is a slave/*asīra* near you; / You should avenge her, for only you can untie the ropes of her captivity."[27] Other poems lamented the defeat of Muslims: "Valiant men cry out in captivity, but no one cares. / Yesterday they were kings in their land, and now they

the Eastern Mediterranean: Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries, ed. Gelina Harlaftis, Dimitris Dimitropoulos and David J. Starkey (Athens: AdVenture, 2016): 129–40.

25 Ruth Ahnert, *The Rise of Prison Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

26 See the poem in Abu Bakr al-Bū-khusaybī, *Aḍwā' ' alā Ibn Yajbish al-Tāzī* [Some Lights on Ibn Yajbish al-Tāzī] (1972): 146.

27 Quoted in Muḥmmad Ibn Tāwīt, *Tārīkh Sabta* [The History of Ceuta] (Al-Dar al-Bayda': Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1982): 195–96.

are captives in the chains of infidelity," wrote Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Khafajī (d. 1659) in *Rayḥānat al-'alibbā'*, describing the fall of Al-Andalus two centuries earlier.[28] In these and other poems, there were some references to the gender and age of the captives, to the time and place of the attacks, but the emphasis was on the sense of humiliation and defeat experienced by fellow Muslims. In a predominantly oral culture, verse was part of the public expression of anger, of fear and grief, which claimed large audiences in courts, mosques, and marketplaces.

Unlike Europeans or Ottoman Turks, the captives in the Arabic tradition did not concoct stories about romance or mysterious and exotic worlds – factors that turned captivity publications in the European, and later American, traditions into bestsellers. In the North African context, there could be no fictionalization of the captivity experience since Portuguese, Spanish, and British presidios were constantly sending out soldiers to seize captives, while their fleets devastated ports and fishing villages from Salé to Tripoli. Captivity was an unrelenting threat because the presidios, which were within sight of the local inhabitants, projected an image of violent and fanatically Christian Europeans. These military outposts were heavily walled and contained, as one illustration shows, a domed chapel, a cruciform church, and two steeples – the forceful bluntness of Christian colonization.[29] From such outposts, soldiers, mercenaries, and convicts attacked nearby communities and sometimes ventured into the hinterland in search of human booty. The memory of their depredations never died. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the historian Moḥammad al-Ḥalfāwī recorded accounts he had heard from

[28] See also the poems in Al-Mahdī al-Bū-'Abdalī, *Dalīl al-ḥayrān wa anīs al-sahrān fī akhbār madīnat Wahrān* [Guide to the Perplexed about the News of the City of Oran] (Algiers, 1978): 156–57. One poet angrily blamed the Turkish ruler for failing to defend the city of Oran: "How could you tolerate the enslavement of virgins, daughters of dignitaries!" In another poem, he called for war on infidelity: "How many male and female captives have been seized?" See also another group of poems about Oran and the plight of captives in Tawfīq al-Madanī, *Ḥarb al-thalāth-mi'at 'ām bayna al-Jazā'ir wa Isbāniā, 1492–1792* [The Three-Hundred-Year War between Algeria and Spain] (Algiers: al-Mu'assasa al-Waṭaniyya, 1984): 438–43.

[29] See illustration 4 in Ibrāhīm Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ghānim, *Kitāb al'izz wa-l-manāfi' li-l-mujuahidīn fī sabīl il-Lāh bi-l-madāfi'* [Book of Glory and Benefits for the Fighters With Cannons in the Cause of God], Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: MS 4107 (Brockelmann 2:466). The manuscript was copied by the grandson of the author in 1651.

local Algerians, who told of captivities and abductions by Spaniards from Oran over two centuries earlier.[30] He reported a story, repeated for generations, of how one Algerian used to hide with his community on top of the mountain for fear of attack, and how he had nightmares about the infidels, waking up at night and screaming in fright.[31] The constancy of danger militated against fictionalization. It is important to recall that in this period under study, there were no North African military outposts on European soil.

Finally, there is the difficulty of dealing with exaggeration. All writers – Arab, European, and American scholars of today and in the past – have overblown the number of captives. Examples of such exaggeration are numerous, as for instance, in the methodologically flawed claim about a million Christian captives in Muslim hands between 1530 and 1780.[32] Similar flawed numbers appear in Arabic sources, too: In the conflicts between the Arabs and the Byzantines in AD 855, some Arab historians mentioned tens of thousands of Muslim captives, but when ransom negotiations were conducted a few years later, only 2,367 captives were ransomed.[33] Another was the reference to 24,077 Christian captives brought by Usṭā Murād to Tunis in the early seventeenth century,[34] or the reference to 48,000 Muslim captives ransomed by the

30 Before it was conquered by Alī Bektāsh in 1708 (but re-conquered by Spain in 1732).

31 See "Poésie sur la prise d'Oran par Mohammad ibn 'Ali Bektash dey d'Alger, Le texte est accompagné d'un commentaire par Mohammad ibn Ahmad al-Halfawi," BnF: MS 5113, 31r. The same report appeared in Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Zayyānī, *Dalīl al-ḥayrān wa anīs al-sahrān fī akhbār madinat Wahrān* [Guide to the Perplexed and Companion to the Late at Night about the News of the City of Wahran], ed. AlMahdī al-Bu'abdalī (Algiers, 1978): 163.

32 See Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slaves in the Mediterranean* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), and my criticism of the careless use of sources in the introduction to my *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic* (Brill: Leiden, 2014). Davis's mantra has "stuck" and is repeated most recently in the introduction to Mario Klarer, *Barbary Captives: An Anthology of Early Modern Slave Memoirs by Europeans in North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022).

33 Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* [History of the Messengers and the Kings], ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, vol. 9 (Cairo, 1976): 219–20.

34 Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Andalusī al-Wazīr al-Sarrāj, *al-Ḥullal al-sundusiyya fī al-akhbār al-Tūnisiyya*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīla, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1984): 379. I will also refer to the 1970 edition of this work, published in Tunis by the same editor. I will indicate the specific edition from which I take the reference.

Moroccan ruler Muḥammad ibn ʻAbdallāh in 1786.[35] Exaggeration by modern scholars is inexcusable, not only because it shows scholarly ineptitude, but also because it provokes religious bigotry. By contrast, in the early modern Arabic sources, exaggeration served to swell the vanity of the ruler: the higher the number of (supposed) ransomed subjects, the greater the service rendered to Islam and to God. Two words in the Qur'an – *fakku raqbatin*/to free a slave (Qur'an 90:13) – led to a whole set of Hadith ascribed to the Prophet, which praised those who ransomed captives. And there was the other Quranic verse: "And such of your slaves as seek a writing of emancipation, write it for them, if you are aware of aught of good in them, and bestow upon them of the wealth of God which He hath bestowed upon you" (24:33). From its Medinan context, the verse was applied to the Mediterranean.

The study of the number of captives will always pose challenges, but one way to resolve the issue as closely as possible is to focus on their names, difficult as that may be, or on the payment vouchers, since monetary expenses were always scrutinized – as in the reference to the precise amount of money in the letter by Sīdī Muḥammad ibn ʻAbdallāh to King Carlos III in April 1783: "271,358 dinero." In the letter, the Moroccan ruler asked for the captives' names and demanded that the captives sign the ransom documents.[36] While such information will not furnish the total number of early modern captives, it will furnish the minimum from

35 ʻAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Zaydān, *Itḥāf aʻlām al-nās* [Celebrating Important People], vol. 3 (Rabat, 1931): 326. See also the references to 24,000 Christian captives "mentioned in the records," *Mudhakarāt al-Ḥajj Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Zahhār, 1754–1830*, ed. Aḥmad Tawfīq al-Madanī (Algiers, 1974): 25.

36 Mariano Arribas Palau, "Rescate de cautivos en Malta por Muhammad ibn Uthman," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 10 (1969): 317–18 in 273–339. The sum was for the ransoming of 512 captives. See idem, "Un rescate de 600 Musulmanes cautivos en Malta (1788–89)," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 35 (1987): 33–89. For other studies on Muslim captives, see Aḥmad Bū Sharab, *Maghāriba fī-l-Burtughāl khilāl al-qarn al-sādis ʿashar: Dirāsa al-thaqāfa wa-l-dhihnīyāt bi-l-Maghrib min khilāl maḥāḍir maḥākim al-taftīsh al-dīnīyya al-Burtughālīyya* [Moroccans in Portugal Through the Documents of the Portuguese Inquisition] (Rabaṭ: Kullīyat al-Ādāb wa-al-ʻUlūm al-Insānīyah bi-l-Rabāṭ, 1996). See also Salvatore Bono, "Esclaves musulmans en Italie," in *La Méditerranée au XVIIIe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 1987): 189–216; Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 2011), and "Ransoming 'Turks' from France's Royal Galleys," *African Economic History* 42 (2014): 37–57.

which extrapolations can be made.[37] Still, many numbers can never be scrutinized because of authors' generalizations. On 26 June 1625, for instance, a sea battle took place between Tunisian and Maltese ships, which resulted in the liberation of "about 500" Muslim captives.[38] What does *naḥū*/about indicate precisely? Nevertheless, the search for numbers should be pursued in order to present a correct picture of captivity in the early modern Mediterranean.

Focus on the Arabic archives should not be to the exclusion of archives in European languages. For instance, the account about the king of Morocco's daughter, who was captured and taken to Wiltshire, England, c. 1600, survives only in the British archives.[39] Even American captivity sources tell a few stories by and about Muslim captives.[40] That is why we should place the Arabic accounts of captivity in conversation with the other accounts of Mediterranean captivity. Such conversation would show how the Arabic stories, brief as they are, sometimes challenge western captivity narratives: they describe situations that are distinctly a product of the Arab/ic environment and reflect a different socio-historical context from what appears repeatedly in the European and American accounts.[41] Further, instead of presenting Arab and Muslim pirates as the victimizers of European captives, the Arabic

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37 In *British Captives from the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, 1563–1760*, I counted every name I could find in British and North African sources. Imtiaz Habib listed references to Black men and women in England in his exhaustive study, *Black Lives in the English Archive, 1500–1677* (London: Routledge, 2008).

38 Ibrāhīm Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ghānim, *Kitāb al'izz wa-l-manāfi' li-l-mujuahidīn fī sabīl il-Lāh bi-l-madāfi'* [Book of Glory and Benefits for the Fighters With Cannons in the Cause of God], Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: MS 4107 (Brockelmann 2:466): 4v–9r.

39 Graham Bathe, Ian Purvis, Robin Holley, Nicola Johnson and Ian Johnson, "The King of Morocco's Daughter Living in Wiltshire, c. 1600," *Wiltshire Archeological and Natural History Magazine* 114 (2021): 169–82.

40 See the descriptions in *Selim, the Algerian in Virginia (1735–1805)*, collected from American records by Ali Tablit (NP: Thala Editions, 2009). Unfortunately, the text was not proofread carefully. See also the account by an enslaved Muslim, Omar ibn Said, as presented in the recent opera, *Omar*, composed and written by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels, and described by Edward Ball in his article "'Tell Your Story, Omar'," *The New York Review of Books*, 25.05.2023: 39–41.

41 For American captivity accounts in North Africa, see the collection in Paul Baepler, ed., *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

accounts show how Arab and Muslim captives were victimized by European pirates. Such "native" captivity accounts present the experience in the words and expressions that the captive himself (and herself) used,[42] at the same time that they show how much captivity was part of early modern trauma, from the coasts of Palestine to the Atlantic shores of Morocco. The considerable extent of the European captivity of Arabs might help explain why Arabic writers did not come to see the Mediterranean as a sea of connectivity, but rather as a hoped-for barrier/protection from the rising threat of European navies and their powerful and unmatched technologies of war.

Below, I present *qiṣṣas*/accounts by the "other" captives in the Mediterranean: Christians, Jews, and Muslims, writing in Arabic.

2.1 Christians

Christian Arab captives were seized by both Christian European and Muslim North African pirates. From the sixteenth century onward, European pirates attacked the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, extending from Egypt to Palestine to Mount Lebanon, where the Christian Arab subjects of the Ottoman sultans largely lived. As the French Chevalier d'Arvieux commented during his travels (1653–1697), the European Christian pirates were cruel, even crueler than their North African counterparts.[43] Also cruel was the fact that the Church in Rome sometimes condoned the abduction by Catholic pirates of the Christian subjects of the sultan.

These abducted Christians were Orthodox/*Orthodoxiyyūn*, belonging to the patriarchates of Antioch or Constantinople or Jerusalem, and in the eyes of their Catholic captors, they were schismatic. Although European pirates did not need excuses to seize captives, religious and denominational differences were good enough reasons – even in the case of fellow

[42] See the account – the only one I know of in Arabic by a female captive – in my *Mediterranean Captivity*: 81–87.

[43] Warren Hamilton Lewis, *Levantine Adventurer: The Travels and Missions of the Chevalier d'Arvieux, 1653–1697* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963): 53.

Christians, as was the case of "Andrāwus ibn Faraḥ from Bayt al-Maqdis {Jerusalem}, of the Melkite denomination [Eastern Orthodox]." He had been taken by French pirates and held as a *yasīr*/captive [sic]. Having used all his money to ransom himself and therefore in need of financial help, he turned to the orientalist Edward Pococke, "Doctor Boqoq rāyis al-madrasa al-Masīḥ" [sic]/Doctor Pococke, who was a canon of Christ Church College in Oxford. How he had learned about Pococke is not stated, but Pococke had lived in both Aleppo and Izmir in the 1630s.[44] Over a hundred years later, in 1756, the Aleppan priest Mīkhā'īl Brayk reported that Pope Benedict XIV (reg. 1740–1758) had excommunicated Cyril, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and to punish the patriarch's congregation, he encouraged Catholic "pirates to capture the Orthodox [Christians] when they found them at sea."[45] The pirates were happy to comply. Two years earlier, in 1754, the "pirates/*qurṣān* seized a boat that belonged to the people of Beirut, whereupon the Islam [sic] in Beirut grew angry and attacked the monastery of the *badriyya*/ padres, seized the monks, burnt and looted."[46] Brayk added how sea pirates/*qurṣān al-baḥr* attacked the Palestinian port of Jaffa and committed many deeds/*'amilū a'mālan,* including the seizure of two small ships. Brayk continued: "Later, pirates landed in Tyre, and pillaged and looted, and took men and women captives."[47] The attacks led the regional ruler Dhāhir al-'Umar to build watchtowers in Haifa and in other coastal cities in Palestine.[48]

The most active captors were the Maltese, with their terrifying Hospitaller Knights, often supported by the Venetians.[49] Repeatedly, they

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44 Bodleian Library, MS Pococke 432, 10r.

45 Mīkhā'īl Brayk, *Tarīkh al-Shām* [History of Syria], ed. Aḥmad Ghassān Sibānū (Damascus, 1982): 55.

46 *Al-jiz' al-thanī min tārīkh al-musamā ghurar al-ḥisān fi akhbār abnā' al-zamān*, BnF: MS Arabe 5835, 35. The manuscript was published as *Lubnān fī 'ahd al-umarā' al-Shihābīyīn* [Lebanon under the Shihabi Princes], attributed to al-Amīr Ḥaydar Aḥmad al-Shihābī (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Kāthūlīkīyya, 1933).

47 Mīkhā'īl Brayk, *Wathā'iq tārīkhiyya li-l-Kursī al-Anṭākī* [Historical Documents of the Antiochian Patriarchate], ed. Qusṭanṭīn Bāshā (Ḥarissa, 1930): 35.

48 Niqūlā al-Sabbāgh (al-'Akkāwī), *al-Shaykh Dhāhir 'Umar* (Ḥarissa, 1935): 45.

49 The supreme work on captivity and slavery in Malta remains Geoffrey Wettinger's *Slavery in the Islands of Malta and Gozo: ca. 1000–1812* (Malta: Malta Publishers Enterprises Group, 2002). See, for a specific reference to Maltese pirates in the eastern

refused to negotiate the liberation of captives, even when they knew that the captives belonged to the Latin or Maronite rites. They simply did not want to return the booty they had seized or the captives, whom they needed as free labor. Ilyās (ibn) Fakhr, an erstwhile ardent Catholic from Tripoli, Lebanon, who later settled in Aleppo, wrote to Pope Benedict in April 1725:

> The Maltese pirates rob and kidnap Christians, claiming they are seizing non-Christians and their property, while in truth they are seizing Christian property and money. They do not make any distinction. Furthermore, if a sea merchant sends an emissary to Malta as his representative, accompanied by legal documents, the Maltese find many excuses to prevent him from arguing his case. They nullify his rights, and he returns empty-handed. Even if a representative of a Christian arrives to claim the booty and other stolen goods, and even if he is holding a papal letter in support, they turn him back, arguing that the owner of the booty should come in person. They actually claim that turning back the emissaries is by order of the pope. These Maltese actions alienate the Christians from the Roman Church and its Holy See, because the Church does not prohibit the Maltese from attacking and robbing Christians. And now, the schismatics [the Orthodox], learning of the license/*rukhṣa*, which the Holy See has granted the Maltese, have increased their attacks on the Roman Seat, arguing that the robbers are being encouraged in their thievery [by the Church].[50]

Ibn Fakhr used the misdeeds of the Maltese to alert the pope to their impact on the Catholic flock in the region. A year earlier, in 1724, Catholic missionary activity in the region had led to the establishment of a Greek Catholic congregation in union with Rome – sliced away from the Antiochean Orthodox community. With financial support from France

Mediterranean, Joan Abela, "'Per omnes partes barbarie orientis': Maltese Corsairing in the Levant during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Corsairs and Pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean: Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Gelina Harlaftis, Dimitris Dimitropoulos and David J. Starkey (Athens: AdVenture, 2016): 109–28.

50 Qusṭanṭīn Bāshā, *Tārīkh ṭā'ifat al-Rūm al-Malakiyya wa-l Rahbāniyya al-Mukhallisiyya* [History of the Melkite Denomination) (Sidon: al-Maṭba'a al-Mukhalisiyya, 1939), 2: 145–46.

and ecclesiastical oversight from Rome, a new denomination emerged, which kept its Eastern rite but submitted to Rome. The rivalry and hostility between the Orthodox congregation and the new congregation, whose followers were often denigrated as Franks/*Ifranj*/Westerners, resulted in a total break, so much so that members of one communion were prohibited from participating in church liturgies with the others.

Ibn Fakhr explained how the papacy-supported Maltese pirates were harming this new denomination of Greek Catholics. The pirates were not only robbing and pillaging, they were also undermining the stability of the "New Catholics" in the Arab East. He continued in his letter:

> Last year, the pirates seized a ship sailing from Damietta to Antioch and took it to Cyprus. My brother Ḥannā, who lives in Damietta, had merchandise on that ship worth 5000 piasters. When he learned of the piratical attack, he sent an emissary by the name of Jibrā'īl, son of Jirjis al-Sakākīnī, with legal documents notarized by the French consul in Egypt to claim back the merchandise [which had been sent to] Malta. He returned empty handed. Oh the shame and humiliation that we felt in front of the schismatics who, understandably, mocked and denigrated us, saying, 'Here is the Roman Church which you defend and which you prefer to the Eastern Churches: it has legalized the robbery of Christian possessions by the Maltese. They have stolen your possessions and have not bothered to listen to your suits and complaints.' And we had nothing to say to them.[51]

Such admonitions, however, were not effective, and European pirates continued to pillage the eastern Mediterranean.

Over a decade earlier, in May 1714, the Maronite Metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon, Ephthīmus wrote to thank members of the *Propaganda Fide* (a Catholic institution established in 1622 to propagate Catholicism worldwide) for their help. He added a curious comment: one about his sadness when he saw a "Christian Catholic" return to his old infidelity/*kufruhu al-qadīm* after pirates had robbed and seized him. As he

[51] Bāshā, *Tārīkh*, 2: 146.

explained, "I had spent life and money to bring him back to the path of the true faith [Catholicism]." Were captives renouncing Catholicism because the pirates were Christians from Livorno or from among the Knights of Malta and had seized them, "even though they were Christian," but not Christians like them?[52] In February 1719, Christian pirates attacked Tripoli (Lebanon),[53] and a few months later, in July 1719, the priest Ghifrā'īl Fīnān wrote to the Secretary of the *Propaganda Fide* to remind him of the ongoing danger of the European pirates/*qurṣān* to Christian travelers from the Arab East.[54] Three years later, in July 1722, Ephthīmus wrote to Cardinal Sacripenti (d. 1727), Prefect of the *Propaganda Fide*, noting that the bearer of the letter was a relative whose ship had been seized by the pirates. He asked the cardinal to help retrieve the ship, which would make "the Catholics in the East rejoice."[55]

Christian Arabs also fell victim to North African pirates.[56] In May 1701, Ephthīmus wrote a letter to the French Secretary of State and Chancelier, Pontchartrain, in which he praised him for his support of the Maronite Church. He promised, in return, that he and all his fellow priests would "pray every day in the church for the life of our [king] Louis XIV/*effendī, Lodovīkus*."[57] He then explained that his patriarchate (based in Aleppo) included many Syrians and other Christians, and he pleaded with him to provide help against the people of the Algerian Sea/*awlād baḥr al-Jazā'ir*. There are numerous other references to captivities of Christian Arabs. On 5 May 1717, the secretary of the bishopric of Ladhikiyya on the Syrian coast, the priest Antoniyos, wrote a letter to Pope Clement XI in which he reported that he had received a letter from

52 Bāshā, *Tārīkh*, 1: 287 no. 1. See also Makāriyos Jabbour and Ziyād Tawfīq al-Khoury, *Wathā'iq hāmma fī khidmat kanīsatinā al-Anṭākiyya: Man ṣan'a al-infiṣāl sanat 1724?* [Important Documents in the Service of our Antiochian Church: Who created the Schism in 1724?] (Beirut: Manshūrāat al-Nūr, 2000): 56.

53 François Charles-Roux, *Les Échelles de Syrie at de Palestine au Dix-Huitiéme Siècle* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1907): 55 n. 1.

54 Bāshā, *Tārīkh*, 1: 399.

55 Jabbour and al-Khoury, *Wathā'iq hāmma*: 72.

56 Like the Greeks, they were targets of Maltese pirates; Earle, *Corsairs*: 119. See also the extensive study of Greek captives and merchants in the Mediterranean, Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

57 Bāshā, *Tārīkh*, 1: 172.

his brother, Niqūlā, a student at the Maronite College in Rome. The letter informed him that the latter had been captured by "Muslim pirates" and subsequently sold in Algiers. In the letter, Antoniyos pleaded for help from all people, which is why "I am turning to your Holiness for help, you being the good shepherd."[58] At the same time, in May 1717, a certain Ibn Jubayr al-Ḥalabī sent a letter from Malta to the cardinals of the *Propaganda Fide* describing his tribulations for upholding the Catholic faith in Beirut. He had been forced to flee the city, he wrote in his short memoir, but as he sailed away, he was captured by pirates near the Strait of Damietta. He was robbed, and one of the pirates slashed his woolen garments with his sword. When he finally reached Damietta – he did not explain how – the local Christian community welcomed him because they did not have an Arab priest/*kāhin ibn 'Arab* to serve them. He started spreading the faith of the Holy (i.e., Catholic) Church, but when the

> Warden/*wakīl* in the city saw how the community was leaning to the true faith, he was moved by Satan to instruct his Cypriot students to kneel before me, just like the Latins/*Latīn* do. He wanted to scandalize me in front of the Turks as an *Ifranjī* so they would kill me, because the Muslims of Damietta hate the *Ifranj* very much. No single *Ifranjī* man or missionary has ever entered Damietta […] But the Muslims honored me and brought me their sick children to pray over them.

The description of the encounter with the Muslim pirates was brief, and the rest of the account described his tribulations at the hands of the hostile local Orthodox community.[59] And unless he was exaggerating as he had sought financial assistance from the *Propaganda Fide*, the Christians had in fact been more cruel to him than the pirates.

A rare account by bishop Buṭrus (ibn) Ḍūmiṭ Makhlūf (d. 1707) has survived, which he wrote to describe his captivity in Tripoli, Libya. Intended for his patriarch and therefore written in Qarshuni (Arabic

58 Bāshā, *Tārīkh*, 2: 31–32.
59 Jabbour and al-Khoury, *Wathā'iq hāmma*: 80–81.

written in Syriac letters), it is unique in presenting a picture of the ordeal in the words of the captive himself.[60] Born in the village of Ghosta in northern Lebanon in 1639, Makhlūf was sent to the Maronite College in Rome at the age of eleven. In 1651, he returned to Lebanon and joined the Monastery of Mar Challiṭā, where he was ordained, and in 1668, the Maronite patriarch, Jirjis al-Bisbiʿlī, sent him to congratulate Pope Clement IX on his accession to the throne of St. Peter. He stayed for two years in Rome, and in 1672, he was ordained bishop of Cyprus in the presence of the French Consul in Istanbul, Marquis de Nointel.[61] In 1679, the new Maronite patriarch, Isṭfān al-Duwayhī, sent him to Rome to oversee the printing of a book about the ordination of priests and bishops. Four students accompanied him: Mīkhā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm from Mṭūshī in Cyprus, a village with a thriving Maronite community; Mīkhā'īl ibn Niʿmeh from the "village of Ihdin" (d. 1698); Tūmā al-Qudsī from the "village of al-Quds al-Sharīf"/Jerusalem; and Naṣrallāh from "the city of Sidon."

They left Sidon in September 1679 on board a French ship, stopped in Cyprus, and continued to Malta. News reached them that the French king had sent four galleons to make peace with the Tripolitanians, whose ships were in Crete. Assured by the news of safety, they sailed on, but after they crossed the coast of Tunis, on the morning of 20 October, they were captured by Tripolitanian pirates. In the first week of November, they were brought to Tripoli, whereupon the bishop and the monks were taken to the prison of "Saint Anthony" (the Christian names of the bagn-

60 All the subsequent information was derived from Buṭrus Ghālib, "Nawābigh al-Madrasa al-Mārūniyya al-ūlā: al-Muṭrān Buṭrus Dūmiṭ Maklhūf" [The Geniuses of the First Maronite school], *al-Machriq* 22 (1924): 17–30, 100–114; Louis Cheikho, "Athar jalīl li-l-baṭrīrak Isṭfānus al-Duwayhī" [An Important Document by Patriarch Isṭfān Duwayhī], *al-Machriq* 21 (1922): 209–16; Buṭrus Dīb, "Asr al-Muṭrān Buṭrus Maklhūf wa-l-talātha al-ladhīn kanū maʿahu" [The Captivity of Bishop Mukhluf and Three Who Were With Him], *al-Manara* 4 (1933): 696–702; Buṭrus Ḍaww, *Tārīkh al-Mawārina al-dīnī wa-l-siyāsī wa-l-ḥaḍārī* [Religious, Political, and Civilizational History of the Maronites], vol. 4 (Junieh: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Būlusiyya, 1977): 421–23; Joseph Moukarzel, "Buṭrus Ḍūmiṭ Makhlūf," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 12: Asia, Africa and the Americas (1700–1800)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 47–55.

61 For the Maronite community in Cyprus, see Ronald C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571–1640* (New York: New York University Press, 1993): 148–49.

ios were used in European reports by priests of the Redemptionist Order, whose mission was to ransom captives); the students were sent with the sailors to the citadel. In the bagnio, they met with monks whose leader/*rayyes* was Yūḥannā from Randazzo, a town near Messina in Sicily. The new arrivals received kindly treatment from the monks, who gave them blankets. Makhlūf was particularly cared for by Yūḥannā, who introduced him to a Messinan, Leonardo Grosso.

In his report, written after his release and return to Mount Lebanon, Makhlūf found it necessary to respond to criticism leveled against him: that he and the others had been captured because they "did not know how to talk and defend themselves." So, in the account, he explained that as soon as they were in the citadel, he went before the pasha (the governing appointee from Istanbul) and informed him that they were subjects of the Ottoman sultan in the province/*iyāla* of Tripoli in Syria. Evidently, Ottoman captives could always plead with captors on such grounds. But the pasha sent him away, and so Makhlūf went to the warden or chief officer/*kākhiya*, who said that he could free them if they paid 2,000 piasters. The bishop went back to the pasha, who told him, "Go away, you miserable man. You were seized by Crimeans/*Qirm,*" with the clear implication that the pasha had no authority over them. And so Makhlūf turned to the English consul, whose house/consulate was within walking distance from the Dey's palace, and asked him to plead with the pasha on the ground that they were Maronites and subjects of the sultan and should not, therefore, be taken captive. The consul was Nathanial Lodington, who had been in Tripoli since 1686 (and stayed until 1693).[62] He promised to help since relations between Tripoli and London had been stable since 1679. He went with him and Grosso to the pasha, who said: "My friend, that you are subjects of the sultan means nothing. The Crimeans have orders to seize all Christians when they catch them with

[62] A detailed account of life in Libyan Tripoli was written by Lodington's predecessor, Thomas Baker. See the edition by C.R. Pennell, ed., *Piracy and Diplomacy in Seventeenth-Century North Africa. The Journal of Thomas Baker, English Consul in Tripoli, 1677–1685* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989).

the *Ifranj*, even though they are subjects of the sultan, unless they are sailing in the Archipelago."[63]

Makhlūf's story fits the standard narrative structure that appears in European captivity accounts. It starts with the sea voyage, then the capture, the challenges encountered during captivity, and finally, the release/redemption. But, as a report to his superior, it could not include the exaggerations that often appear in European accounts: the other captives with him had also been released and, on their return, would have given their own accounts of the ordeal. There is no mention of torture, which invariably appears in illustrations and frontispieces of European captivity accounts. Makhlūf was not chained, but was free to wander around the small port city; he did not make any reference to hunger or thirst or hard labor, nor did he to chains and putrid bagnios, to sadistic guards or rape/sodomy. Perhaps Makhlūf was being discreet, but there was a difference between the captors' treatment of Arabic and non-Arabic speakers. Makhlūf was able to meet with the pasha, the *kākhiya*, and the English consul, and to converse with them. Like other students of the Maronite College, he was multi-lingual: he knew Arabic and Syriac, his native languages, and a smattering of Turkish – and so he was able to communicate with the local Tripolitanians. He also knew Italian and Latin, which he may have used with the English consul. There was an unwritten agreement among rulers on the two sides of the Mediterranean that members of the clergy from among Muslims and Christians would not be maltreated. A century later, Sīdī Muḥammad ibn ʻAbdallāh reminded King Carlos III of Spain of this age-old practice: "When God wills that any of your friars/*farāyila* is captured, we do not put him to labor – so respect the spiritual leaders of [our] captives and do not lay on them what they cannot endure."[64]

Makhlūf explained how he and his company escaped from being sold. When they were taken to the market, Leonardo Grosso bribed a Muslim with a gratuity/*bakhshīsh* of twenty piasters and then added extra money so that he could outbid all offers. "We stood in the mar-

63 Dīb, "Asr al-Muṭrān Buṭrus Maklhūf": 699.
64 Ibn Zaydān, *Itḥāf aʻlām al-nās*, 3: 308.

ketplace. Our heads were bare, and bent over, with our arms crossed on our chests," he wrote, "but we escaped from the hands of the snakes […] [Afterwards], we left safe and sound: they did not hurt us either physically or spiritually. Even though they offered us Islam and promised us money, clothes, horses, and possessions, we remained pure and steadfast."[65] Interestingly, the crossing of the arms on the chest has also appeared in depictions of Muslim captives by Christian Europeans – as the four captives in Palermo show (Fig. 1).[66]

Fig. 1: Palermo. Photograph: Nabil Matar.

65 Dīb, "Asr al-Muṭrān Buṭrus Makhlūf": 698.

66 Emperor Charles V conquered Tunis in 1535. When he returned to Palermo, he entered the city through the main gate, after which the Senate decreed its rebuilding in celebration of his victory. The gate was completed in 1584, destroyed in 1667, and rebuilt in 1669.

The only one to suffer among the captives was Tūmā. As Makhlūf wrote, Tūmā was whipped several times in order to force him to convert to Islam, but he resisted. Decades later, when Patriarch Duwayhī reported this episode in his *History*, he mentioned that Tūmā had been offered women to seduce him to convert.[67] In both renditions, the Christian defied and endured. Finally, in March 1681, with his ransom paid by Grosso, Makhlūf was released, and he sailed to Rome.[68] After arriving there in April 1681, he prayed for Leonardo in gratitude. "O Jesus," he wrote in another text, "I ask you in the name of the love between you and your mother that you ransom him from the captivity to sin as you ransomed the thief to your right, and the woman who was a sinner, and that you house him with them in heaven. Amen."[69] He spent two years in the holy city, after which he returned to Mount Lebanon on 10 May 1682 to become the assistant to Patriarch Duwayhī.

What impact the experience of captivity had on Makhlūf is difficult to gauge. But interestingly, it did not turn him into a bitter man, one to blame Islam for the violence of Muslims – even though Patriarch Duwayhī constantly wrote to Rome about the miserable plight of Christians under "*al-Islām*."[70] After his return to Mount Lebanon, Makhlūf entered into a disputation with a Muslim jurist. It is likely that during his captivity, he held religious discussions with his captors. A few Muslim captives in Christendom left records of their disputations, which always ended with their Islamic victory;[71] their accounts showed them to be in full knowledge of the Quran, and sometimes of Christian scriptures. Makhlūf was no different in his mastery of the Bible, but what was certain to have surprised his captors would have been his knowledge of the Quran and his references to it in his responses to the questions presented to him by a Muslim. (There were copies of the Quran in the Maronite

67 Buṭrus Shiblī, *Ḥayāt al-Baṭrīrak Istfān al-Duwayhī* [Life of Patriarch Istfān al-Duwayhī] (Beirut, 1970): 108.
68 Cheikho, "Athar jalīl li-l-Batrīrak Isṭfānus al-Duwayhī": 272.
69 Ghālib, "Nawābigh al-Madrasa al-Mārūniyya": 103.
70 Ibid.: 108–9.
71 See my *Mediterranean Captivity*: 67–81.

College Library in Rome, where he had studied.)[72] And, living in the Ottoman East, between Cyprus and Mount Lebanon, he interacted with Muslims regularly.

His disputation begins with a few lines of verse in which the Muslim, in the polite formality of poetry, asks a question about Christian doctrine. Makhlūf responds with seven verses, but then continues in five prose sections with a detailed theological explanation. He repeats a standard practice among Christian apologists, that of appealing to the Quran to refute the accusation that the Christian scriptures have been falsified.[73] "The New Testament is confirmed by Muslims, the people of the Quran, and by the witness of Muḥammad"; he then repeats how the *Basmallah* (In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate) demonstrates Islamic belief in the Trinity. His tone is respectful, addressing his interlocutor, Shams al-Dīn al-Bakrī, as a fellow countryman close to our people/*ibn bilādinā al-qarīb min ummatinā*. There are no ad hominem attacks on the Prophet or denigrations of the Quran: rather, Makhlūf presents an erudite exposition of the doctrines of the Christian faith and never uses the offensive "*Muḥammadiyyūn*." He uses "*Muslimūn*" instead. Perhaps captivity enriched Makhlūf.[74]

The more the Christian Arabic archives are examined, the more possible it will be to find accounts and references that complicate religious boundaries in the Mediterranean basin. While captivity was largely predicated on having the wrong religion in the wrong place, captivity discussions appeared in the *fatawa* of jurists and in the instructions of priests: both Muslims and Christians faced dilemmas that required jurisprudential/canonical resolutions. In a collection of questions and answers addressed to a priest, the following queries were raised:

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72 Nasser Gemayel, *Les echanges culturels entre les Maronites et l'Europe* (Beirut: Imprimerie Y. & Ph. Gemayel, 1984): 172.

73 *Jidāl fī ṣiḥḥat al-dīn al-Masīḥī*, Beirut, University of St. Joseph: HMML USJ MS 682, 8v. See another copy BnF: MS Arabe 228 (1707). HMML stands for Hill Museum and Manuscript Library at St. Johns University, Minnesota.

74 The exchange was important enough to be copied, as late as 1924, from an eighteenth-century manuscript, Saint-Joseph University, Beirut: HMML USJ MS 682. Another rendition of this dialogue in the nineteenth century only has the verse parts, between "Shaykh al-Islām" and "the Patriarch": "*Majmū'*," Tripoli, Lebanon, Dayr Sayidat al-Balamand: HMML BALA MS 126, 131v–132r.

> Question: Tell me about a *Naṣrānī* who buys a boy/*ghulām*, owns him, and then sells him. Is that a sin?
> Answer: Every *Naṣrānī* who buys a boy and owns him and then sells him is not committing what is *ḥalāl*.
> Question: Tell me – can a priest baptize a slave/*'abd* without the consent of the owner, even if the owner is a Christian?
> Answer: The priest does not have the authority to baptize a slave without the consent of his owner. He should also guarantee that the boy would not be sold, but should be manumitted, lest he be sold to the Muslims/*Ḥunafā'* after baptism, since he could then renounce his baptism.[75]

The manuscript, copied in 1773, shows that the church in the Arab East had no problem with slavery, that Christians, living among Muslims, owned slaves of indeterminate religion, that they baptized them when they could, and that sometimes, they sold the slaves to Muslims, after which the slaves would renounce Christianity.

All around the Mediterranean, "Muslim" and "Christian" were sometimes fluid designations, given the frequency of conversion and reconversion among sailors, cabin boys, pirates, merchants, and captives. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a European woman (no nationality was mentioned) was captured while on her way to be married. In captivity, an Algerian by the name of Ḥussain married her, and she bore him a son, Ramaḍān. The latter eventually fled Algiers, taking his mother with him, and he settled in Tunis, where he acquired wealth and power. And so his mother, who had never converted to Islam, asked him to send her back to the land of the Christians. Upon arrival there, she found the man she was supposed to have wed, and they then got married. When the husband died, she returned to her son in Tunis, where she stayed until she died. She was buried in a church/mausoleum outside Carthage, which her son built for his once-captive mother.[76] Perhaps the most striking example of this Christian-Islamic propinquity appeared in the prayers that a Muslim captive from West Africa wrote in 1831, dec-

[75] Untitled, Beirut, University of Saint-Joseph: HMML USJ MS 1417, 15–16.
[76] Al-Wazīr al-Sarrāj, *al-Ḥullal al-Sundusiyya*, vol. 2 (1984 edition): 355–56.

ades after he had been seized and brought to America. He began his fifteen-page memoir with the Islamic *fatiha* but, having been converted to Christianity, he continued with the Lord's Prayer, *qawl rabbinā Yasū' al-Masīḥ*/The saying of our Lord Jesus Christ.[77] For this captive/slave, Islam and Christianity were on the same page.

2.2 Jews

In 1756, Dawūd Mūsā Munsiyus, a Hebrew/*'Ibrānī* from Izmir (as he wrote in his short memoir in Arabic) was traveling on board a ship from Sidon when Sardinian pirates carried off the passengers as captives to their island – the place where he was converted to Christianity and given the name of Būlus. Conversion after captivity was quite common in the Mediterranean, but his story is intriguing because he wrote (or dictated) it in Arabic. The account has survived in both the Catholic and the Protestant archives in Lebanon, where he had sought Christian guidance. Evidently, nineteenth-century copyists from both denominations had been eager to report about the conversion of a Jew.

In his account, Būlus describes his journey of conversion, both spiritually and geographically; it starts at Izmir, and it goes on to Mount Lebanon and to Rome via Sardinia. He opens with *al-fātiha*, curiously evoking the Quranic "Opening."[78] *Al-Rasā'il al-mu'allafa min Būluṣ al-turjumān al-Yahūdī al-Izmīrī ilā ahlihi wa aqāribihi al-Yahūd*/The letters written by Paul the translator, the Jew, the Izmiri to his Jewish family and relatives, had originally been written in Hebrew, he tells us, then it was translated into Ottoman Turkish, and then into Arabic. After his release from captivity and his conversion to Catholicism, Būlus turned to preaching to his community, using all three of their languages in the Ottoman world. This trajectory is a standard one in Catholic and Protestant accounts of the conversion of Muslim captives, where the captive is converted and then

[77] "The Life of Omar ibn Said, Written by Himself," in Ala Alrayyes, *A Muslim American Slave: The Life of Omar ibn Said* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

[78] All references are to Beirut, University of Saint-Joseph: HMML USJ MS 551.

sent as a missionary to his people – either in person or through writings to describe his spiritual journey/transformation.[79]

Būlus began his account by stating his name: he was Būluṣ Dawūd Mūsā Munsiyus,[80] from Izmir, Hebrew/*ʻIbrānī* by origin, and Christian by religion.[81] His name is a curious combination: the first, Būlus, is his baptismal name, while Dāwūd and Mūsā are biblical names, perhaps Dāwūd ibn Mūsā, and Munsiyus suggests Portuguese lineage (there had been a Portuguese synagogue in Izmir since 1722). He continued with a *muqadimma*/foreword, addressing his "family and relatives, people and kin," followed by twelve chapters of theological discussion. In the foreword, Būlus explained that he would first write about himself, and in the next chapters, present his "point of view":

> Foreword
> In the Christian year 1757, I was 34 years old and I left my father's house seeking the Christ, son of David, who had been promised to my people. I reached Mount Lebanon and settled among the Marian Greek Catholic monks of St. John [the Baptist] of Shwayr. During the eight months I stayed with them, I visited all their monasteries and I received instructions in Arabic, which I cherished in my heart, always listening intently to their words. From the moment I entered the monastery until I left it, I observed the [monks'] good deeds and laudable lives and affability, and so I grew to admire them and wanted to emulate their good deeds. I attended their homilies about the truths of the spirit and the improvement of morals, and I asked for proofs of those truths in the Holy Bible – which they explained to me.

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79 See my "Two Muslim Converts to Catholicism in Arabic Sources, 1656–1667," *The Seventeenth Century* 36 (2021): 253–59.

80 In a nineteenth-century copy, the name is "Būlus Dawūd ibn Mūsā Funsīniyus al-Izmirlī al-ʻIbrānī nasaban wa-l-Masīḥī madhhaban mukhāṭiban ahlahu wa aqribāʾahu ws shaʻbahu," Beirut, Lebanon, Near East School of Theology: HMML NEST MS AU 25.

81 After the expulsion of the Jews from Iberia, many settled in the Ottoman Empire. For the Jews of Izmir, see Daniel Goffman in Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 97–102. See also Suraiya Faroqhi, "Part II Crisis and Change, 1590–1699": 519.

In 1742, a massive fire devastated Munsiyus's native city of Izmir,[82] but the city recovered and soon after, it attracted European traders and their clergy, with the French forming the largest foreign community. Munsiyus was very likely working with the French/Catholics, who told him about the Lebanese monastery. Dayr Yūḥannā al-Shwayr was founded by monks who had left the Balamand Monastery in northern Lebanon, intent on following the rule of St. Basil.[83] By 1720, the monastery included twenty-five to thirty monks and priests; as of 1727, there was a printing press, which had been established by the Maronite writer, the Romanophile 'Abdallāh Zākher (1684–1748).[84] Within years, the monks were able to form an intellectual and theological group, and although their influence, as Carsten-Michael Walbiner stated, "remained mainly restricted to its own community," the fact that Munsiyus sought it out suggests that its reputation had been spreading.[85] Further, Zākher had written *Fawā'id al-'uqūd wa khulāṣat al-nuqūd bi-l radd 'alā al-Yahūd* – a refutation of Jewish claims that the Messiah had not yet appeared,[86] which may well have drawn Munsiyus to the monastery. Perhaps Munsiyus had been a member of the Donmé community, who continued to revere the memory of Sabbatai Zevi, but had changed his views after his interaction with the Catholic residents in Izmir.

82 See Eldem, Goffman and Masters, *The Ottoman City*: 116–19 in 80–135.

83 Germānos Farhāt and Suleymān al-Rāhib, sometime after 1697.

84 For an exhaustive study of the activities of the monks at Dhour al-Shwayr, see Timothée Jock, *Jésuites et Chouéirites* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1936). By 1732, the press was operating fully, with some assistance from the Jesuits. It was the first printing press with movable type in the Arab East.

85 "Monastic Reading and Learning in Eighteenth-Century Bilād al-Ṣām: Some Evidence from the Monastery of al-Ṣhuwayr (Mount Lebanon)," *Arabica* 14 (2004): 462–77. Many Aleppan youths had already been drawn to it; see Timūthāwus Joqq, "al-Rahbāniyya al-Bāsīliyya al-qanūniyya al-Ḥalabiyya al-Shuwayriyya, 1696–1906," *al-Machriq* 9 (1906): 891–99, 892.

86 For a biography and a survey of Zākher's work, see Joseph Elie Kahale, *Abdallah Zakher, philosophe, théologien et fondateur de l'imprimerie arabe en Orient* (Paris: DANAIR, 2000). See also Joseph Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Eglise Melchite du Ve au XXe siècle:Période ottomane*, vol. 4, part 2 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989): 111–14.

He continued:

After the above-mentioned time [in the monastery], I went to Acre to the house of Consul Signor Azkāt[87] and stayed there for nine months.[88] I used to ask the apostolic fathers about the real coming of Christ and they would answer with evidence from the Holy Bible, proving that he had already come. God Almighty strengthened me with His grace, and so I started thinking of going to the city of Rome. I took some letters from the Abbot of the Marian monks of St. John of Shwayr, and from others who had come to like me, and I boarded a ship [from Acre]. A few days later, we were attacked by pirates belonging to the Prusyān [Prussians?] who seized the ship and all in it and took us to the island of Sardinia, to the city of Calibri.[89] There I accepted holy baptism at the hands of the archbishop, the metropolitan [sic] of the aforementioned city on 26 December 1758. I was given the name Būluṣ ʻAbd Yasūʻ al-Masīḥ [Paul servant of Jesus Christ.]

That he went to Acre fits with the geography of the Greek/Catholic presence in Palestine: the port city had a sizeable congregation of Catholics who had migrated from the interior of Bilād al-Shām and had become active in trade.[90] After Ḍhāhir al-ʻOmar became governor of Acre, the Uniate Catholic congregation grew in number because his chief assistant, Ibrāhīm Sabbāgh, who later wrote his biography, was a Uniate.[91] Not having their own church, they prayed in the little chapel that belonged

87 In Beirut, Near East School of Theology: HMML NEST MS AU 25, the name is Azkāth.

88 There were 23 Frenchmen in Acre at the time, among whom were three vice-consuls: François Charles-Roux, *Les échelles de Syrie et de Palestine au dix-huitième siècle*: 76.

89 An account by a Chaldean priest in 1725 described similar encounters with pirates near "Tunis of the West," but because Khiḍr al-Kildānī was traveling on a French ship, neither he nor his ship was seized. He wrote: "They saw us, but they did not harm us, because they sighted a Moroccan/*Maghāriba* ship, which they attacked. They fought with it and killed forty men, and then looted it. Twelve of their men were killed," Louis Cheikho, "Riḥlat al-qiss Khiḍr al-Kildānī min al-Mūsil ilā Rūmiya" [Journey of the Chaldean Priest from Musil to Rome], *al-Machriq* 13 (1910): 581–92, 590.

90 Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730–1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 177. See also Daniel Crecelius, "Damiette and Syrian Egyptian Trade in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule*, ed. Peter Sluglett and Stefan Weber (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 155–59 in 150–75.

91 Rabei G. Khamisy, "The ʻAssāf Family of Miʻilya: An Example of a Greek Catholic Fam-

to the Latins,[92] located inside the khan of the *Ifranj*. It was served by Franciscan monks and protected by the French consul. Most of the cotton grown in the region was exported from Acre, which explains why the English were there, too. Like the Catholics, they were intent on works of conversion.[93]

> Munsiyus continued:
> After accepting the sacrament of baptism, I was moved by divine desire and by the saying of the Savior: "None lights a lantern and puts it under a bushel but on a high place so that all may see its light" [a slight variation on Matthew 5:15]. Also his saying: "Proclaim what you have heard with your ears from the rooftops" [Matthew 10:27]. And so, I thought to myself and said: "O Būluṣ, the Holy Spirit has enlightened you, so go and enlighten your brethren." So I started writing this epistle, basing it on the scriptures of the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ, on the sayings of the *hakhāms* and rabbis of the Jews, and on the evidence of reason and the exact time that God had appointed for his coming. I dedicated it to all those who want to know the truth so they can understand and believe. And I called it *Nūr al-albāb al-mahdī ilā al-ṣawāb/*The light that guides to the truth, in order to enlighten the sons of Israel, for it is widely known that in regard to the coming of Christ, not all the sayings of the prophets were recorded, nor all the views of the rabbis.

Munsiyus's subsequent captivity by pirates in the Mediterranean shows that he had been traveling on a non-French/Catholic ship, which was exposed to attacks by Catholic pirates. By 1756, war had broken out between Britain and France (the Seven Years' War), and the sea became an open theater for pirates of all nationalities. Munsyius's ship was taken to Calibri in Sardinia, an outpost used by the Knights Hospitallers, where the captives would be sold into slavery. Munsiyus did not mention any-

ily in the Western Upper Galilee, Eighteenth–Twenty-First Centuries," *Middle Eastern Studies* 54 (2018): 917–35.

92 Bāshā, *Tārīkh*, 1: 380–81, letter by Ephthīmus, bishop of Sidon and Tyre, "son of the Roman Church," 20 May 1722.

93 In 1755, the British consul converted a Jewish woman to Protestantism. Brayk, *Tarīkh al-Shām*, ed. Sībānū: 47.

thing about slavery or sale, but non-Catholic captives (Eastern Christians, Jews, and European Protestants) were pressured to convert even though converting to Roman Catholicism did not necessarily free them. It is noteworthy that Munsiyus did not mention if the local Jewish community tried to ransom him – as, for instance, had happened two decades earlier to the Algerian Meir Crescas (b. 1694), who was captured by Spanish pirates but was ransomed by the community (no mention of the exact location), and who subsequently wrote about his ordeal in Hebrew.[94] It may well be that there were no coreligionists in Calibri, leading Munsiyus to accept conversion and thereby attain his freedom.[95]

2.3 Muslims

There are records about Muslim captives during the Abbasid caliphate, from the days of Hārūn al-Rashīd to al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil (roughly in the ninth century AD). Arab armies clashed with the Byzantines, after which Muslim (and sometimes Christian) soldiers and villagers, men and women, ended up as captives of the *Rūm*. In the records about these captives, there is mention of numbers and sums of money; there is even a unique account by a Muslim captive describing his ordeal.[96] Centuries later, in Christian Orthodox liturgies and books of saints' miracles, Christian captives are mentioned: *ma'sūrīn* by *awlād Hājir*/seized by the sons of Hagar/Muslims during the reign of King Theophilus.[97]

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94 See the introduction to *Sefer Hatashbes* (Amsterdam: Naftali Herz Levi Rofe, 1739). I am grateful to Dr. Noam Sienna, University of Minnesota, for this reference.

95 For a more detailed study of this episode, see my discussion in *Reshaping the Ottoman East: Lutheranism, Calvinism, and the Papacy through Arab Eyes, 1516–1798* (forthcoming, 2024).

96 See AlMahdi AlRawadieh, "al-Fidā' bayna al-Muslimīn wa-l-Bīzantiyyīn fī al-'aṣr al-'Abbāsī" [Ransom between Muslims and Byzantines in the Abbasid Period], in *Buḥūth wa dirāsāt muhdā ilā Muḥammad 'Adnān al-Bakhīt*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd-al-Qādir Khreysāt (Amman: University of Jordan, 2013): 83–103; idem, *Jund Qansarīn*, vol. 1 (Damascus: Nour Houran, 2021): 467–74.

97 Untitled, Ḥarissa, Lebanon, Societé des Missionaires de Saint Paul: HMML SPFH MS 71, 75 (liturgy for 6 March).

By the early modern period, attacks by European pirates and navies were already terrorizing Muslims in coastal zones and near European presidios. With the growing power of European fleets and their advanced war technologies, large numbers of Muslim men, women, and children were taken captive. As a seventeenth-century Algerian wrote in the margin of Ibn Khaldūn's history:

> I was told that in 1063 AH [1652–53], there were 400 Muslims in Malta […]. In Malta, Valencia, France, and most of the lands of the Christians, there are Muslim captives. Many of them have remained Muslim, others have died, large numbers have turned Christian.[98]

Muslims were beginning to lose their fighting edge, and by the end of the seventeenth century, beleaguered Muslim rulers in North Africa were seeking military help from European potentates, who arrived with armies that "killed Muslims and enslaved their women and children […]. The Christians then sent galleys to attack the lands of the monotheist believers [Muslims], and seized ships by force, killing and enslaving and looting and robbing Muslims." Thus was the description by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Andalusī al-Wazīr al-Sarrāj (d. 1731) of the plight of Tunis during the Hafsid reign in the mid-sixteenth century. In a later report about the Ottoman victory over Candia in Crete in 1669, al-Sarrāj mentioned that the number "of Muslims who were freed from captivity" was 1,880.[99] He did not mention their names or places of origin or ethnicity, but a list of captives in Tangier when it was under British control (1661–1684) gives various kinds of details.[100] Another list from 5 June 1696 shows the intermixing of captives from the Islamic basin of the Mediterranean. The captives came from Istanbul, Alexandria, Aleppo, Cairo, Egypt, Cyprus, Tripoli, Libya, Rhodes, Bosnia, Tunis, Crete,

98 The margin, p. 18 r, vol. 7, MS 868, *Tarīkh Ibn Khadūn*., Damat Ibrahim Pasha library, Istanbul. I owe this reference to AlMahdi AlRawadieh.

99 Al-Wazīr al-Sarrāj, *al-Ḥullal al-sundusiyya*, vol. 2, part 1 (1973 edition): 127, 156. The list includes numerous other figures, showing that the author had very precise information: 1,895 spies from among the infidels; 3,219 mines of the infidels; 1,822 escapees from the infidels to Islam, and others.

100 See the reproduction of a list in my *Britain and Barbary 1589–1689*: 128–29.

Algiers, and other locations; all together, there were 260 captives.[101] Curiously, there was one "Ismāʿīl Khūja Islamabūlī, kāfir," a Christian who was to be ransomed because he was a subject of the sultan.

Frequently, in Arabic/Muslim accounts, there is reference to the intervention of a holy man (or of a woman, but rarely) who helped captives during their tribulation or was instrumental in their liberation. In Catholic accounts, there is always the intervention of Mary or Jesus; in Protestant accounts, there is personal faith and initiative. The Muslim references frequently show the holy man's "miraculous" intervention – even to the extent of calling on jinn for help in collecting money to ransom captives.[102] Such stories of miracles confirm the sense of defeat and vulnerability that inhabitants of Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan coastal villages felt as they faced European fleets and their devastating attacks: they could not fight back and had to turn to divine assistance. During the reign of Aḥmad Khūja, the Bey of Tunis, for instance, the English fleet was reported to have fired "15,000 bombs at the city, turning night into day."[103] None of the North African fleets could inflict anything remotely close to this destruction, and so when Muslim captives were seized, they and their kin turned to God and to holy men. With little money at his disposal, the Algerian ruler in 1695 sent fifteen horses to the French king, in the hope – albeit unfulfilled – of receiving in return 250 "slaves out of the gelleys [*sic*]."[104]

Many of the holy men/*marabouts* lived near the sea, from where they could help captives. Thus, for instance, was the case of ʿAbd al-Salām al-Qādirī (d. 1698). There was a villager who had been captive for twelve years in the "land of the Christians, may God destroy them." After

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[101] Paris, National Archives, Marin E/B/7/220, 55–65. See also the names in BnF, Fonds Français, MS 8032, fo. 333, "Les noms des Turcs"; and Fonds Français, 10780, fo. 24 v, "letter Écritte en langue Turque pare les [44] Escalves Mahomettan qui sont á Toulous."

[102] See, for instance, the reference to al-Shaykh al-Qashshāsh (d. 1623) in Tunis at the beginning of the seventeenth century in ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Fakkūn (d. 1662), *Manshūr al-hidāya fī kashf ḥāl man idda'ā al-'ilm wa-l-wilāya* [Proclamation of Guidance for Those Who Claim Knowledge and Governance], ed. Abū al-Qāsim Saʿdallāh (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1987): 200.

[103] Al-Wazīr al-Sarrāj, *al-Ḥullal al-sundusiyya*, vol. 2, part 1 (1973 edition): 223.

[104] The National Archives, London, TNA, SP 71/3/657 (12 December 1695).

the family pleaded with al-Qādirī, he asked for a coin/*mawzūna* from the family, which they gave to him. A month or so later, a messenger arrived from Tetouan and reported finding a ship full of escaped captives, including the villager.[105] The hagiography of Aḥmad ibn ʻĀshir, a man of miracles/*barakāt*, was written by a descendant, Aḥmad ibn ʻĀshir al-Ḥāfī (d. 1750), who might have been a holy man, given his discalced epithet (al-Ḥāfī means barefoot). The latter recalled hearing from someone who had reported about the *barakāt*: a Muslim captive had once come to Ibn ʻĀshir to ask for help. Ibn ʻĀshir "looked at him and gave him a knife, and I heard that the captive sold it to the highest bidder in the marketplace, for seventeen gold dinars." It is unclear why the knife should have fetched such a sum, unless it was sold as the knife of Ibn ʻĀshir, who was held in veneration by the community. Interestingly, the reporter continued to describe how Ibn ʻĀshir responded to a question posed to him by "a Christian dressed as a Muslim." In what city or region such a situation could have occurred is not clear – a Muslim captive standing near a Christian dressed as a Muslim, who, as the account further detailed, was still wearing the belt/*zunnār* that had distinguished Christians in some Muslim societies since the Abbasid period. The Christian then discarded his belt and convertd/*aslam* to Islam.[106] Like in Jewish and Christian accounts, captivity and conversion were interlocked.

The conversion of the Christian captor may well have been the reason why one Muslim captive told the story to his friends. In another account, there is an unusual conclusion: the captor becomes captive, is subsequently freed, and converts to Islam. The anonymous captive, like the vast majority of Muslim captives, narrated rather than wrote his account, leaving it for others to record it. In this case, the account appears in a commonplace book by Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Nahrawālī (d. 1582).[107] As in other references to captivity, it appears all of a sudden, in the middle of pages of poetry and five travelogues

[105] *Kitāb al-maqṣad al-aḥmad* [Book of the Noblest Destination] (Fez, 1932): 8.

[106] Aḥmad Ibn ʻĀshir al-Ḥāfī, *Tuḥfat al-Zā'ir bi-manāqib al-Ḥājj Aḥmad bin ʻĀshir* [The Bounty of the Visitor About the Miracles of al-Ḥājj Aḥmad bin ʻĀshir], ed. Muṣṭafā Bushaʻrā' (Salė, 1988): 50.

[107] His important work is about the Ottoman conquest of Yemen along with the history of the Hijaz in western Saudi Arabia.

between Mecca, Medina, and Istanbul. In this instance, the captivity narrative is an occasion to celebrate piety and the conversion of a Christian:

> One of my companions told me this *qiṣṣa*. He said:
> I had a friend from Alexandria who traded at sea. He told me that he had made a big fortune through his travels and so grew greedy. He took all his money to the *Rūm* [the Ottomans], hoping to increase his profit. On the way, he was attacked by the *Ifranj*, who took the ship with all in it, enslaved all on board, and divided the booty and men.
> The trader continued: They took me along with the others, chained me and sat me at an oar to row for them. I then remembered my family and children, and how prosperous I had been, and I pondered my present condition. I saw how they divided all my possessions and I started crying, my tears not stopping, and my sorrow increasing. A young man from among the Christians saw me and felt pity for me and asked me why I was crying. I told him about my children and my plight, whereupon he took his hat and threw it up in the air and caught it when it fell down, and said: Did you see how the hat went up and down? I said yes. He said: So is God able to turn things upside down, for God sends His mercy when you least expect it. So restrain yourself and do not cry and lament – neither joy nor sorrow will last.
> I was surprised at the words of this Christian, and God cleared my heart of sorrow and despair, and I began waiting for God Almighty's *faraj*/ solace. Suddenly, a ship of Muslims appeared at sea and took over our ship without struggle. They towed our ship to the harbor, unloaded all of us and all the money and slaves. They released all the Muslims and put the *Ifranj* in chains and said: Whoever of the Muslims had money on this ship, let him take what is his. I regained all my money, without losing anything, after which they led me to the Muslim in authority to whom I reported how the *Ifranj* had captured me and taken my money. He ascertained that I had all that was mine and then asked me: Are you going to Alexandria or to the *Rūm*? I said: To the *Rūm* so I can sell my merchandise, buy new merchandise, and return to Alexandria.
> He set me in a galleon with all my belongings along with a guide to take me to the land of the *Rūm*. Then they started auctioning the captured

> *Ifranj* whereupon I saw the *Ifranjī* who had given me advice, and so I bargained for him and bought him. When I went to pay for him, the Muslim in authority beckoned me over, saying: We are surprised that you are buying this Christian. I said: O prince, my relationship with him is most strange. He said: How? So I told him what the Christian had said to me. He marveled and said: He is a gift from us to you. So I took him and freed him.
>
> I then sailed to the *Rūm*, sold what I had with profit, and returned to Alexandria. That Christian started coming with other *musta'minīn* to Alexandria to trade, and so our friendship grew. I started sending my money with him to the land of the *Ifranj*, with which he traded, bringing me back a large income. As our friendship deepened, one day I offered him Islam. He said: How much I have waited for you to mention this, for I turned Muslim the day you bought and freed me.[108]

For the narrator of the episode, the importance was not in the experience of captivity and its impact, but in the victory of Islam and the conversion of the Christian. Captivity had resulted in celebrating Allah.

A curious account about a Muslim captive survives in a Christian text, particularly because the captive attained high religious status. In a book of hagiography, most certainly translated from Italian into Arabic in the eighteenth century, there is an account about Antoniyos al-Aswad/Anthony the Black:

> He was born in Burka in the West and was a Muslim by religion. One day, Sicilian ships captured ships of Morocco and took money and captives. He was one of those captives and was taken to the said Island. He was sold to a Christian whose name was Yūḥannā, who put him to herding his sheep. Now this blessed man/*tūbāwī* was handsome, gentle, well-mannered, and honest. He practiced his religion, celebrating mass/*missa* five times in accordance with the religion of the Muslim/Hanafite.

[108] *Al-Fawā'id al-saniyya fī al-riḥla al-Madaniyya wa-l-Rūmiyya* [The Great Benefits of the Journey to Medina and to the *Rūm*/Turks], ed. AlMahdi AlRawadieh (Beirut: German Institute, 2022): 83–85.

His owner, noticing his pious qualities, trusted him with his wealth but was ever sad for him. Night and day he prayed to God to enlighten him and lead him to the Christian faith. He preached to him, showing him the path of salvation, and so God unblinded him: he believed, and was baptized.[109] (The association with Sicily suggests a parallel/identification with St. Benedict of Palermo (1524–1589), the first African to be canonized in the period under study.[110])

Not all Muslim captives, however, had happy stories to tell. In the Italian port of Livorno in the second decade of the seventeenth century, the Lebanese prince, Fakhr al-Dīn, saw Muslim captives. His scribe wrote an account of the prince's five-year exile in Italy (1613–1618), which included a visit to the bagnio:

> In Livorno, there are prisons[111] for captives consisting of four stone-built vaults. There is an open space in the middle with a pillar, to which a captive/*asīr* is tied if he errs and is beaten. Above, there is a room for the guards, who have their own entrance. There are windows in the floor so they can see the captives beneath if they move. The door is bolted from the outside to prevent the captives from escaping […] They mentioned that the captives were [a mixture of] Muslims and Christian criminals. They are over 3000. There are six ships, which are rowed by the captives when they [the Livornians] go out to sea. All the men in the prison defecate in barrels with covers, which the captives haul and empty outside the wall.[112]

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[109] *Al-mukhtaṣar al-Fransiskānī* [The Franciscan Summary], Beirut: HMML USJ MS 609, 90r-91v.

[110] I have found nothing about a saint Anthony the Black. But "Saint Benedict the Moor" was the son of North African captives, canonized in 1807. For a detailed study of Black figures in early modern European painting, see Carmen Fracchia, *'Black but Human': Slavery and Visual Art in Hapsburg Spain, 1480–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); for a reproduction of the saint in the first part of the eighteenth century, see plate 3.3.

[111] The author, Fakhr al-Dīn's scribe, did not have an Arabic word for the kind of vaults/bagnios he saw. He used a Persian word: *Zandān*.

[112] *Riḥlat al-Amīr Fakhr al-Dīn ilā Iṭāliyā (1613–1618)* [Journey of Prince Fakhr al-Din to Italy], ed. Qāsim Wahab (Abu Dhabi: Dār al-Suwaydī, 2007): 74. See also T.J. Gorton, *Renaissance Emir* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2014): 102–4.

The writer expressed no compassion even though most of the captives were his coreligionists. As evidenced by a Livorno register of freed captives from the period of 1579–1580, the captives came from all over the Islamic world, from Persia to Morocco, which might explain why Fakhr al-Dīn and his scribe showed no reaction. The prince and his entourage were in Livorno before the installation of the sculpture of the *Quattro Mori* in 1617: how they would have reacted to the white marble figure of Ferdinand I standing above the four chained and naked black Moors (Fig. 2) can only be left to speculation.

Fig. 2: Livorno. Photograph: Nabil Matar.

Stories about and by Muslim captives circulated all around the Mediterranean, recounted orally by pilgrims, merchants, and traveling scholars. In his memoir, *Nāṣir al-dīn ʻalā al-qawm al-kafirīn*, Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim told a story about a Muslim captive, which was told to the jurist ʻAli ibn

Muḥammad al-Burjī, who told it to his friends in Marrakesh. The story traveled from the Atlantic seaside to the Moroccan metropolis, becoming a national narrative.[113] Sometimes, rulers asked returning captives about their conditions and commiserated by offering them gifts.[114] They also questioned them about the regions where they had been: just before the attack by Charles V on Algiers in 1541, for instance, a Moroccan captive stood before Ḥasan Aghā, the Turkish representative of the High Porte, who asked him for news of the lands of the Christians/*akhbār bilād al-Naṣārā*.[115] Some captives were sent back to their homelands to collect ransom money, and to do so, they told their stories, hoping to evoke the pity of the listeners/donors. Fāṭima bint (daughter of) Muḥammad found nobody to fend for her, and proving undesirable to her captor, a member of the Order of St. John of Malta, she sought permission on 26 August 1605 to go and raise the money needed to ransom herself and her daughter in "Barberia e in detta Mahometta, sua patria."[116] It is not clear how she managed to raise the ransom sum, but drawing a parallel with male actions, she would have gone into women's quarters, harems, and baths to tell her story and plead for help. Hajj Musṭafā Lāz was a captive, and as was the case numerous times in the early modern period, his European captors allowed him to return to his country in order to raise his ransom money; his wife and children most certainly remained in captivity as a guarantee. Laz returned to Tunis, where he went around the houses of the rich to collect the ransom money. He entered the house of Yunis Dey, who welcomed him to his table and then asked him about his captivity and about the land of the Christians/*barr al-Naṣārā*.[117] Sometimes, captivity created long-lasting friendships

[113] Aḥmad ibn Qāsim al-Ḥajarī, *Kitāb nāṣir al-dīn 'alā 'l-qawm al-kāfirīn*, ed. and trans. P.S. van Koningsveld, Q. al-Samarrai and G.A. Wiegers (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2015): 147.

[114] See my *An Arab Ambassador in the Mediterranean World (1779–1787): The Travels of Muhammad ibn 'Uthmān al-Miknāsī, 1779–1788* (London: Routledge, 2015): 135–37.

[115] René Basset, *Documents musulmans sur le siège d'Alger en 1541* (Paris: Ebnest Leroux, 1890): 13.

[116] "[P]er negotiare et raccogliere tanto suo riscatto come quello di sua figlia," quoted in J. Pignon, "Aperçu sur les relations entre Malte et la côte orientale de la Tunisie au début du XVII siècle," *Cahiers de Tunisie* 47–48 (1964): 59–87, 71.

[117] Al-Wazīr al-Sarrāj, *al-Ḥullal al-sundusiyya*, vol. 2 (1984 edition): 413.

across the Mediterranean religious divide. After Khalīl Bey of Tripoli was ransomed from France, he returned home and told his kinsmen about a French woman in Marseilles whom he called his "mother" and who had treated him kindly. Whenever Libyan traders went there, he asked them to convey to her his *salām*/greeting.[118] The captives' *qiṣṣas* were remembered and recounted far and wide: there was no shortage of information about captivity by European pirates and privateers.

Some of the rare written sources that tell of how Muslim captives coped with their ordeals include letters written by captives to their captors. A letter from 1727 survived only in its English version and described in some detail the plight of an Egyptian, "Soliman Abdalah of Grand Cairo," who served on the British fleet for seven years. He wrote to demand his salary, which had been paid to the English ambassador in Algiers; the ambassador, however, had kept the money to himself. Soliman had been "Render'd" very poor and was unable to leave England and return to his "Native Country." He felt he was a prisoner and pleaded with his Grace (the Duke of Newcastle) to help him, for which he would pray "to God and Mahomed" for his Grace's "long life and happynesse here and hereafter."[119] Another letter is by a Moroccan captive who also ended up in England. Although he was technically free, he was still a captive as he was unable to leave the island, and so he turned for help to none other than the king himself:

> To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty: The Petition of Aly, ben Moosa Zefzef. Humbly sheweth
>
> That in the year 1720 of the Christian Era your Petitionr was a Collonell of Horse under the Command of His Excly The Bahsa,& cheif comander Ahmed ben Aly, Basha, Generall, and Commander in Chief of all His Imperiall Majesty. The Emperor Of Moroco's & Fess's Forces against The Spaniards at the Siege of Ceuta, where your Petitioner was shot

[118] Abū 'Abdallāh Moḥammad ibn Khalīl al-Ṭarābulusī, *Tārīkh Ṭarābulus al-Gharb* [History of Tripoli of the West], ed. al-Ṭāhir Aḥmad al-Zāwī (Cairo, 1349 A.H.): 144–45; and 'Imād al-Dīn Ghānem, "Taqrīr 'an Lībyā" [Report about Libya], *Majallat al-buḥūth al-tārīkhiyya* 1 (1982): 106.

[119] London, The National Archives, TNA, State Papers 71/23/143.

and then taken & carried Prisoner in the first Battle with the Marquis de Lira and remained in slavery, under Lieutenant Generall Chaves, Formerly Governor of Majorca, whose affairs calling him to the court of Madrid where your Pettr attended on him as a Menial Servant, Through Devine Providence found means & Opportunity from thence, to make his Escape to Porto in Portugal, and from thence, in a British vessel, To Bristol, and so to This Most Happy & Magnificent Court, ever Blessed with your Majesty, whom God Long Preserve, with your Royall Consort and Family. Wherefore your Pettr to Compleat his happiness Prostrate himself at your Royall Feet, Humbly Praying that your Majesty will Graciously Extend your Bounty to your Petitioner to assist him in his further Progress That he may arrive safely To his own Country where He will acknowledge the Goodness Your Majesty abounds in, and Ever think it his Duty to Improve the Harmonious Interest of your Majesty together with that of His Masters.

And in Duty & Submission shall Pray.

I doe hereby certify That the Petitioner, Aly ben Moosa Zefzef, is a Native and Subject of the Emperor of Moroco, and that whilst I was in Barbary, I was well acquainted with the Petitioners Father Moosa Zefzef, who was a Favorite of the Alcaides, the present Basha Ahamed ben Alys Father, and an intimate Freind of his. Jezreel Jones.[120]

The letter was dated 24 November 1727 – and it was written by Jezreel Jones (d. 1731),[121] a man who had spent years in Morocco; in London, he often served as a liaison between North Africans and his countrymen.

Other letters were written by merchants who had been captured on the high seas and had lost their possessions. After their release, they tried, rather courageously but also desperately, to retrieve their stolen goods by traveling to the country/countries whose pirates or privateers had attacked them. The letters show how the merchants/captives had limited financial resources: they were not part of trading companies with shareholders, as in England, nor were they merchants supported by the

[120] London, The National Archives, TNA: State Papers 71/21/23–24.
[121] See the article about him in *ODNB* by Elizabeth Baigent.

monarchy, as in France. Rather, they were individuals who carried out business on their own and with their own meager capital. They wrote the letters in colloquial Arabic, having no idea about the culture with which they were dealing, which is why their letters were full of the honorifics that were customary in Arabic epistolary writing – a laughable matter for the English or French recipients. The letters furnished exact information about the goods that had been seized from them. In May 1733, an "Envoy from Tunis," Muḥammad ibn Musṭafā, presented a letter to the Sultan of England/*Sultān al-Inglīz,* "may God lengthen his days," explaining that some Tunisians had been robbed at sea. He mentioned that a few of those Tunisians had come to London; in fact, one had already been there for a year and a half, while he himself had been in the city for six months. The letter is in very poor Arabic – the author was barely literate – but interestingly, he used the Arabized form of the word European/*urubbī* – quite rare in Arabic writings.[122] He ended with a list of his possessions that had been seized: there were eight pieces of leather; two sacks of coffee; one sack of cotton; some *mistaka*/mastic for tooth aches; a few carpets; a little quantity of raisins; twelve barrels of dates; a barrel of *'araq*/alcoholic drink; and some *baṭārikh*/dried, salted fish. He added at the end that the other passengers had chests with their clothes and personal necessities.[123] His experience was not any different from that of many like him who sought restitution from the piratical attacks of the infidels.[124] While many similar letters and appeals have survived in European depositories, no letters by European captives to North African captors have survived. It is likely that the captives realized there was more hope in writing letters to those who could pay their ransoms – their families or their monarchs – than in composing pleas to their captors. There were numerous letters from European captives to their families: North African captors encouraged the captives to write to their homelands in order to speed up the ransom payments. Even though

[122] For the use of the term "Europe" in early modern Arabic, see my "*Urubba* in Early Modern Arabic Sources," in *Early Modern Constructions of Europe*, ed. Florian Lager and Gerd Bayer (London: Routledge, 2016): 41–56.

[123] London, The National Archives, TNA: State Papers 71/28/345.

[124] For more letters by Muslim petitioners, see my "The Last Moors: Maghariba in Britain, 1700–1750," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14 (2003): 37–58.

paper sheets were expensive, captors dispensed them to the captives: they wanted money more than bodies and were eager for ransoms to be expedited.

While records of captives in the Arabic archives are few, the memory of captivity ensured continuity at the same time that it reflected a growing sense of defeat and fear, which haunted Arab memory for generations. In 1779, the Algerian jurist Moḥammad ibn Moḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jīlānī al-Tlemsānī recalled the attacks by the British and French fleets, which had been carried out a century earlier in conflicts over captives. Although memory changed defeat into pompous victory, the writer showed that he had not forgotten the attacks of the British and the French, nor the destruction of the North African commercial fleet. The account shows how much local writers were able to find records of the past and re-write them for their contemporaries. The fact that the author frequently referred to the number 23 – the number of ships that had attacked the harbor – indicates how much he sought authenticity, possibly, however, at the price of historical accuracy. Still, he presented precise numbers relating to bombs and casualties, showing that such information was still circulating, either orally or in writing. The description of the conflicts with the cursed ones/*malāʻīn* is detailed, with the last part focusing on the negotiations conducted by the Ottoman governor (a convert to Islam of Spanish origin), Hussain Mezzomorto (d. 1701), to ransom Muslim captives held in France:[125]

> In the year 1095, and in the month of Rabīʻ I [March 1684], some of their big ships returned and sued for peace. But Mezzomorto ignored them completely. The infidels continued suing for three months and a half, but Mezzomorto refused to negotiate. The infidels then started giving gifts to the members of the court after which the latter started appealing to Mezzomorto to cooperate in regard to peace. Finally, he said [to the French]: "If you return the Muslim captives in your posses-

[125] "Al-Zahra al-Na'ira: What Transpired When the Infidel Soldiers Raided Algiers" in *Revue d'Histoire et de Civilisation du Maghreb* 3 (1967): 19–23. A French translation of the whole text was made by Alphonse Rousseau, *Chroniques de la Régence d'Alger* (Alger, 1841).

sion, Turks and others, all above 400 in number, we will have peace with you. Otherwise, no." The cursed one agreed.

At the beginning of Jamādī I [April 1684], Mezzomorto reached an agreement with the infidels based on this provision. He sent three men over to the infidels to bring back every Muslim captive they found. The three men were Ḥajj Ja'far, Muṣṭafā Pasha, and Shāṭir Pasha. When they reached France, the Christians allowed them to search for Muslim captives in the country. The number was 412. When they returned with them to Algiers, Mezzomorto said to the cursed ones: "These Muslim captives make up for the Christian captives that you retrieved [from Bābā Ḥasan] by treachery and deceit. I agreed to a peace treaty only on the condition that you bring me 400 Muslim captives from among the infidels. Only if you bring them will there be peace between us. And you can do what you want."

The cursed one grew angry and said: "This is perfidy not befitting sultans." So Mezzomorto answered: "You committed perfidy first. I did not. I only wanted to get what was rightful to me. Which I did." The cursed one wanted to break the peace treaty but was unable to do so. In the end, he conceded to freeing 400 Muslim captives. And the peace agreement was sealed.

The three men sailed again to France and returned with 400 Muslim captives.

You who are reading these words, reflect on the shrewdness and courage of Mezzomorto, God have mercy on his soul.

For 'Abd al-Raḥmān, conflict, battles, and captivity were at the heart of the encounter with the growing power of the Europeans. As far as he was concerned, it would be to the benefit of later generations not to forget "these words" – bombastic as they were.

Captives and captivity were not forgotten in the Arabic archives and popular memory. Nor were the captives forgotten in Europe. One of the striking paradoxes about Muslim captives is that while there is little description of them in Arabic sources, they are immortalized in European sculpture and painting. There are paintings that portray captured

Muslim boys, as in the 1688 work "Mustapha, Turkish Child Prisoner."[126] Stylized as it is, showing the boy in elaborate attire and with a playful dog, the portrait may well have captured the actual face of one of the thousands of such boys and youths who were seized in battle. It is not known what happened to this particular Mustapha, but during the reign of King George I (reg. 1714–1727), there were two Muslim captives at the court. One was called Mustapha, and the other, Mahomet.[127] The latter wrote/dictated an account of his life: *Memoirs of the life of Lewis Maximilian Mahomet, gent. late servant to his majesty*, which was published in London after his death in 1727. He reported how he had been captured during the siege of Vienna 1683, after which he converted to Anglicanism, got married, and settled in England. Did Mustapha also convert, marry, and live to a ripe old age?

Along with paintings, the captives appeared on armillary spheres,[128] on church candle sticks, on flags (the Sardinian flag), and on church windows; meanwhile, sculptures were chiseled and carved, from Spain to Malta to Hungary – in fact, in all the countries around the Mediterranean basin that had been active in trade and/or piracy with Muslims. These sculptures still stand inside churches, cathedrals, and salons, in parks and at city gates, on funerary mementos, and on tapestries and altarpieces and victory markers, from Berlin (see Fig. 3) to Vienna to Palermo, and from Livorno to the Chicago Institute of Art.[129]

126 Circle of Sir Godfrey Kneller, Ringling Museum, Florida.

127 See Khaled Aljenfawi, "Mahomet and Mustapha: George I's Turkish servants as surrogate targets," *EnterText* 5 (2006): 35–54.

128 See the armillary sphere by Philippe Danfrie, c. 1570, at the History of Science Museum, Oxford.

129 And across the Atlantic to Annapolis. See the pictures in the Wikipedia article about the Tripoli Monument (1808): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripoli_Monument_(sculpture).

Fig. 3: St. Mary Church, Berlin. Photograph: Nabil Matar.

In such depictions, Europeans preserved a prototype of the captives' faces and bodies. The rhetoric in these sculptures should not be underestimated: the sculptures contributed to the religious, political, and visual culture of Europeans. With little, if any, representational diversity, the sculptures expressed in stone the prejudices, assumptions, and stereotypes about the Muslim Other. Like their Christian counterparts, Muslim captives prayed to God for liberation and sought the help of holy men, whom they had venerated in their hometowns in North Africa or the Ottoman East. And they wept and pleaded, just as their Christian counterparts did: captivity, after all, was the same for all in its violence. But in western depictions, the unconverted Muslim captives were never

shown in postures that evoked pity. Rather, the captive was grim and fearsome, often, but not always, Black – so as to distance him from the white European viewer. He was sculpted in positions of defeat – as if not only he was defeated, but his whole religion and culture and polity, too. Captives were the embodiments of otherness – confirming the Orientalism that Edward Said had analyzed. Not only was Orientalism "a system of citing works and authors," as he observed, but also a "style of thought" that ossified Muslim captives into specimens of physical strength and muscularity, fit to endure brute labor, with the male captives invariably "othered" by their "Turkish" moustache (see Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Church of St. Agnes, Catania, Sicily. Photograph: Nabil Matar.

Like the popular European captivity accounts, sculptures heightened the sense of ethnic, cultural, and physical difference with the Muslims. Often, the captives were depicted as muscular men made for galley work, or they were manacled, sometimes crushed under the weight of Christian rulers and bishops or the hooves of horses. As for women: the Marino sculpture in Italy (Fig. 5) is the only sculpture (that I have seen) which includes women captives. One would have expected the representation to show humiliated and abject women, praying to God to spare them – just like Christian captives. But the European imagination did not highlight religiosity or despair. In their nakedness, the women were sexualized into the prostitutes they would become in captivity.

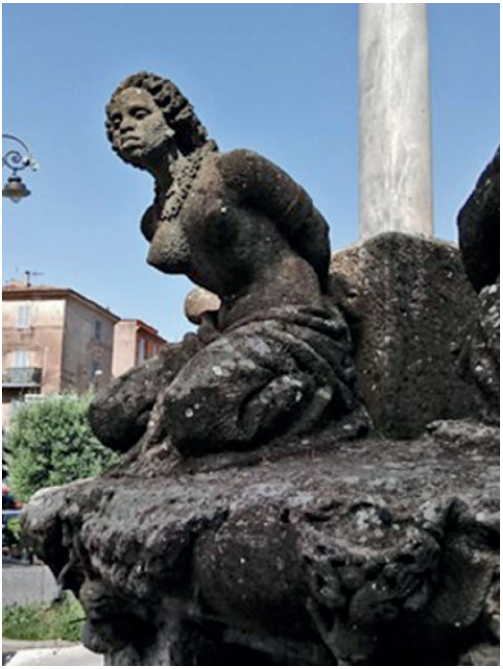

Fig. 5: Marino, Italy. Photograph: Nabil Matar.

3 Conclusion

Much has been written about the suffering of Christian captives in North African bagnios, the prisons in which European captives were kept. The titles of scholarly monographs refer to "the Barbary terror," or to "white slaves, African masters," or to "the scourge of Christendom," and other such titles.[130] But terror and fear and slavery were also part of the Arab experience. There was no monopoly on suffering: all captives endured deprivation, humiliation, and violence.

In this context, the Arabic archives present the opportunity to read how non-European writers from the Mediterranean described their experiences of captivity. In European historiography, the captives of North Africans have largely been treated as innocent merchants, sailors, or travelers who suffered at the hands of vicious captors with anti-Christian hostility. But as Linda Colley explained, they were, in fact, the "underbelly" of empire[131] – the price of European military and commercial expansion, as the British and the French, as earlier the Spaniards and the Portuguese, systematically colonized North African ports. Differently, the captives from "the other shore," to recall Braudel's phrase, were victims of the naval defeats of their countries. Pirates or fishermen, corsairs or pilgrims or traders – they were not seized while serving the expansionist military or commercial goals of their rulers or trading companies, nor were they the collateral damage of colonization. Rather, they were the fodder in the ongoing confrontations between the two shores of the Mediterranean. There was no "national" or religious gain in their suffering since thousands upon thousands of Muslim captives were the losers in an unwinnable battle against the ever-growing might of Europe.

In Arabic sources, there is no evidence that Muslim captives played any role in what some historians describe as transculturation across the religious and geographical boundaries of the Mediterranean. Many

[130] Frederick Leiner, *The End of Barbary Terror: America's 1815 War against the Pirates of North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); R. Lambert Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom* (England, 1884).

[131] Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002).

European captives in North Africa conveyed technological and maritime skills to their captors – from ship-building to house-building to artillery to ship captaincy. In 1588, for instance, from among the captains of thirty-five galleys in the Algerian fleet, twenty were converts to Islam, and two were sons of such converts. They came from all around the Mediterranean: Genoa, Greece, Sicily, Corsica, Calibri, France, Spain, Venice, and other places, and they played an important role in the improvement of navigational skills among North African captains, thereby enabling sea-borne attacks on distant destinations.[132]

There was no similar exchange of men or skills on the Muslim side. Muslim captives in France, for instance, had menial jobs, ranging from burying the dead during times of plague to serving in naval bases to undertaking domestic labor; in 1766 in Spain, captives worked in the arsenals and in road and street construction.[133] No captive is known to have risen to status, aside from rare exceptions like Leo Africanus, or Shakespeare's fictional Othello, or Velázquez' manumitted slave, Juan de Pareja (d. 1670). The vast majority of the captured men and women and children remained unknown, unless their names were recorded in ransom negotiations. Coming from underdeveloped regions, Muslim captives had nothing to contribute to a Western Christendom that was modernizing rapidly. By the eighteenth century, the institutional and infrastructural differences between Europe and North Africa were vast: Moroccan ambassadors and other emissaries grudgingly noted those differences in their travelogues/reports to their masters. Their repeated expression of wonder – *min 'ajīb mā ra'ayt*/one of the wonders I saw – betrayed their admiration for opera houses and banks, palaces and

132 See Father Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie* (Paris, 1637): 270–71.

133 See the description of galley slaves in France in Jocelyne Dakhlia, "Musulmans en France et en Grande-Bretagne à l'époque moderne," in *Les Musulmans dans l'Histoire de l'Europe*, ed. Jocelyne Dahklia and Bernard Vincent (Paris: Albin Michel, 2011): 282–90; the section on "Utilité économique" in Maximiliano Barrio Gozalo, "Esclaves musulmans en Espagne au XVIIIe siècle," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 87 (2013): 33–48. As he adds, there were around 10,000 captive Moors and Turks in Spain in the eighteenth century.

aqueducts and piazzas, but also their fear of their incommensurability with the Europeans.[134]

For Arab writers, the Mediterranean was not a sea of exchange and intermediation, as many western scholars since Braudel have claimed. In Arabic sources, which Braudel admitted he had not consulted, and for the victims of European expansion and domination, the "Green Sea," as Arabs called the Mediterranean, was not a contact zone, but a war zone – one in which the Europeans were victorious.[135] The emphasis in Western scholarship that the Mediterranean was a sea of "connectivity" or a "Sea of Faith" ignores the fact that for the Arab peoples, stretching from Agadir to Alexandretta, there was no conceptualization of the Mediterranean as such a space of exchange with the Europeans. Of course, trade, smuggling, and collusion were always there, but no Arab writer had ever described the Mediterranean as a sea of cultural and civilizational "interconnectedness," an avenue for the negotiation of ideas with the *Naṣārā*. The numerous references, recollections, and *qiṣṣas* of captivity attest to danger, fear, and suffering, so much so that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Moroccan Abū al-Qāsim ibn Aḥmad al-Zayyānī (d. 1833) hoped that the Mediterranean Sea would always serve as a barrier/*ḥājiz* that protected Muslims from Christian captivity and violence.[136]

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134 See my discussion of this subject and the translation of selections in *An Arab Ambassador in the Mediterranean World (1779–1787): The Travels of Muhammad ibn 'Uthmān al-Miknāsī, 1779–1788* (London: Routledge, 2015).

135 See my "From 'Rumi' to 'White In-Between' Sea: The 'Mediterranean' through Arab Eyes in the Early Modern Period," in *The Making of the Mediterranean*, ed. Judith Tucker (Berkeley: California University Press, 2019): 16–35.

136 Abū al-Qāsim Al-Zayyānī, *Al-Tarjumānah al-kubrā* [The Great Biography], ed. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Filālī (Rabat: Dār al-nashr, 1991): 71.

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The history of captivity in the early modern Mediterranean has been studied exclusively through European and Ottoman/Turkish sources. But from Aghadir to Alexandretta, the language of piety, travel, religious disputation, and chronicle was Arabic (sometimes written as Garshuni). An extensive archive has survived in Arabic describing the experiences of Muslims, Eastern Christians, and Jews in European captivity. After all, from the middle of the seventeenth century on, British and French fleets, with their advanced naval capabilities, seized large numbers of captives from the 'other shore' (to cite Braudel) – captives who have been ignored in scholarship but survive in numerous sculptures from Spain and Germany to Malta and Hungary.

This study continues the research into the Arabic archive by introducing further accounts about captivity by European pirates and privateers, showing how the Mediterranean became the scene of Christian masters and Arabic-speaking slaves. Not surprising, by the nineteenth century, a Moroccan traveler prayed that the Mediterranean become a barrier/*hājiz* against European depredations.

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