

Captive Objects

Catholic Artifacts across the Early Modern Western Mediterranean

Daniel Hershenzon

On April 26, 1681, the Moroccan army of the ‘Alawī sultan Mawlāy Ismā‘īl (r. 1672–1727) occupied Spanish La Mamora, known in Arabic as al-Mahdiyā. They took 250 soldiers and forty-five women and children captive and looted the local church, seizing seventeen religious images. Among them was a life-size statue of Christ known as the Christ of Medinaceli, today the most venerated religious object in Madrid.¹ Soon after the Spanish king Carlos II (r. 1665–1700) heard the news, he ordered the Trinitarian friars, who ministered to Christian captives overseas,

This article was first published in French as “Objets captifs. Les artefacts catholiques en Méditerranée au début de l’époque moderne,” *Annales HSS* 76, no. 2 (2021): 269–99.

* For their feedback I am deeply grateful to Naor Ben-Yehoyada, Larissa Brewer-García, Claire Gilbert, Yonatan Glazer-Eytan, Thomas Glesener, Yanay Israeli, Jessica Marglin, Miguel Martínez, J. Michelle Molina, Fabien Montcher, Luis Salas Almela, Francesca Trivellato, the anonymous peer reviewers, and the participants in the lecture series “Bonded” at the Silsila Center for Material Histories, New York University, and the early modern seminar at the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at Princeton. I would also like to thank the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica for funding the 2019–2020 John Elliott Membership at the IAS, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) for the 2020–2021 Frederick Burkhardt Fellowship which allowed me to revise this article for publication, and the Heyman Center for the Humanities at Columbia University for providing a work space.

1. Early modern Spanish authors used the word “image” to refer to depictions of a religious figure or scene, whether as a three-dimensional sculpture or a two-dimensional painted or printed representation. See Françoise Crémoux, “Las imágenes de devoción y sus usos. El culto a la Virgen de Guadalupe (1500–1750),” in *La imagen religiosa*

to embark on a redemption mission and ensure the release of all captured humans and objects, most of which were soon brought back to Spain.² Eight years later, on November 1, 1689, the sultan conquered the much larger fort town of Larache after a long siege. Here, 1,722 Spaniards and many religious objects were captured. Owing to the large number of prisoners, it took the Franciscan friars in charge of the operation almost a decade to redeem them all. Many of the devotional and liturgical objects, however, were returned to Spain in the first months of 1692.³

Catholic artifacts—pictures and sculptures of the Virgin Mary and the saints, missals, rosaries, and crucifixes—circulated in their thousands throughout the early modern western Mediterranean, crisscrossing the boundaries between Muslim and Christian communities. This mobility was largely an indirect byproduct of *corso* (the Mediterranean term for privateering) and the trafficking of two to three million persons from all sides between 1500 and 1800, binding together Spain's Mediterranean territories, Morocco, and the Ottoman provinces of Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis.⁴ Maritime war not only led to the migration of sacred artifacts, but also created the conditions under which some of these objects were seized, desecrated, and redeemed—effectively paralleling the experience of human captives.

This article explores these forms of mobility and their unintended consequences between the Spanish-Ottoman truce of 1581 and the first Algerian conquest of Spanish Oran in 1708, to present a case for an early modern history of Catholic objects and material culture in the western Mediterranean. Moving between local, regional, communal, and political scales, it argues that Catholic artifacts played significant and unexpected roles in the captivity of Catholics in the Islamic Maghrib, and in the political economy of ransom that facilitated the rescue of captives of both confessions. More specifically, the article contends that such artifacts, against the design of their initial distributors, provided unanticipated affordances to Catholic captives, their Muslim masters, and converts to Islam, creating new entanglements between members of these groups and what might be called Catholic materiality.⁵ It develops this argument in three steps. First, it claims

en la Monarquía hispánica. Usos y espacios, ed. María Cruz de Carlos Varona et al. (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 2008), 61–82, in particular p. 73.

2. María Cruz de Carlos Varona, “‘Imágenes rescatadas’ en la Europa moderna: el caso de Jesús de Medinaceli,” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 12, no. 3 (2011): 327–54.

3. Tomás García Figueras and Carlos Rodríguez Joulia Saint-Cyr, *Larache: Datos para su historia en el siglo XVII* (Madrid: CSIC, 1973).

4. Even if the actual number was half of this estimate, there were still about a million and a half victims of privateering. For figures, see Salvatore Bono, “La schiavitù nel mediterraneo moderno. Storia di una storia,” *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 65 (2002): 1–16; Bono, “Slave Histories and Memoirs in the Mediterranean World: A Study of the Sources (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries),” in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy*, ed. Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood, and Mohamed-Salah Omri (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 97–115, here p. 105; Robert C. Davis, “Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast,” *Past & Present* 172, no. 1 (2001): 87–124.

5. Following the lead of Ian Hodder and Igor Kopytoff, I seek to reconstruct and analyze the social biography of a class of objects, with a particular focus on the increasing mutual dependencies between humans and things. Ian Hodder, “The Entanglements

that the surge in the number of captives, both Catholic and Muslim, following the 1581 Spanish-Ottoman truce led to an increase in the number of Catholic artifacts circulating across the Muslim-Christian Mediterranean frontier. Most of these objects began their journey when they were sent from Spain to the Maghrib to help Spanish settlers and captives cling to their faith, maintain the ill-defined boundary between the religions, and minimize religious mixing. Second, the article asserts that many of these objects failed to accomplish their stated mission and contributed to the blurring of the boundary they were explicitly sent to uphold. This happened when “renegades” (as Christians who had converted to Islam were known) used rosaries or crucifixes to claim a Catholic identity while outwardly living as Muslims. It also happened because these artifacts were often plundered by Algerians and Moroccans (just as Christians plundered Islamic manuscripts), meaning that they then needed assistance in the form of ransom.⁶ Such instances generated negotiations and exchange between Maghribis, the Spanish Crown, and Catholic captives, to whom objects were sent as a form of spiritual assistance. Third, the article contends that the plunder and repurposing of these objects were productive instances for all parties involved. Plundered objects afforded captives the power to redeem an emblem of their God and, in so doing, engage in a radical form of *imitatio Christi*. Trinitarian and Mercedarian friars seized opportunities to ransom these objects and win fame back home. Muslim rulers, on the other hand, broke or threatened to break objects as a means of securing religious privileges for their subjects enslaved in Spain; in this way, the objects afforded these rulers an opportunity to care for their subjects and to claim spiritual guardianship and political sovereignty over them.

Although rosaries, statues, and ciboria, to name but a few of the objects the article follows, all maintained a relation to sacredness or the potential for such a relation, they did not form a homogeneous group for early modern Catholics, just as they do not form one for scholars today. The disruptive moment of captivity nevertheless set these disparate objects on common trajectories that justify treating them as a category. Objects that would not otherwise have left a mark in the Mediterranean archive were transformed into symbolically precious and inalienable possessions for Christians, symbols of their home communities whose prestige was based on these narratives of captivity and redemption.⁷ The article thus explores “captive artifacts” as a category of objects that did not correspond to one another in terms of form, matter, origin, or function, but rather as a consequence of their violent circulation. By following the objects in this category, it shows how these

of Humans and Things: A Long-Term View,” *New Literary History* 45 (2014): 19–36, here pp. 30–31; Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91.

6. See, for example, Daniel Hershenzon, “Traveling Libraries: The Arabic Manuscripts of Muley Zidan and the Escorial Library,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 18 (2014): 535–58.

7. Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

transfers between Spain, Algiers, and Morocco led to unexpected reappropriations, introduced new affordances, and resulted in transformations of value and status. It also demonstrates how Catholics, Muslims, and converts to Islam engaged with Catholic materiality in a whole host of ways.

Only a handful of captive objects have survived,⁸ with the majority known to us only through textual sources. The scarcity of even these traces explains the article's rather broad temporal scope, stretching from roughly the last quarter of the sixteenth century to the first quarter of the eighteenth. Such an expansive temporal framework risks undermining contextual differences and creating continuities where none exist. For example, students of the early modern French Mediterranean might claim that the plunder economy was transformed in the last decades of the seventeenth century, when the ransoming of captives "changed from an expression of Christian charity to a method of state building."⁹ To counterbalance this risk, the space examined is carefully delimited. The article focuses on the western, Hispano-Maghribi Mediterranean, including Atlantic Morocco, the Balearics, Sardinia, Sicily, Naples, and a string of Spanish garrisons or presidios in North Africa. Across that space and throughout the period, captivity and redemption continued to be the main interface linking Spain, Ottoman Algiers, and Morocco, and their religious dimension remained central.

This broad temporal scope makes it possible to draw on a rich archive that includes widely circulated propaganda authored by Trinitarians and Mercedarians, records of Inquisitorial trials of renegades, treatises on North African cities, captivity narratives and plays, Franciscan correspondence, letters between the apostolic vicar of Algiers and the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (the *Propaganda Fide*), reports by Spanish spies, fatwas, and missives sent by the Algerian authorities to the Spanish governing councils. While captive objects themselves remain elusive, references to them can be found in a wide range of sources that vary in terms of genre, goals, and audience and thus suggest that the movements they depict were concrete as well as symbolic or textual tropes. Moreover, though smaller in number, Maghribi sources corroborate information drawn from Spanish documents. The testimonies of renegades brought before the Inquisitorial courts are echoed not only in reports by missionaries but also in fatwa compendia. Similarly, missives sent by Algerian high officials (or the summaries of these documents that have survived) confirm information drawn from Iberian scholarly texts and military reports. Though specific examples of the payment of ransom to recover objects from Muslims are documented only in Catholic sources, the evidence is varied enough

8. In addition to the well-known Christ of Medinaceli in Madrid, I have tracked the following captive objects: the Infant Christ of Meknes and a painting of Saint James the Great at the Hospital of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Madrid, a statue of Our Lady of Algiers at the Trinitarian residency in Madrid, another statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception at the Convent of las Descalzas Reales in Madrid, and the Holy Captive Child at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City.

9. Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 2.

to establish the practice and to suggest what it meant for the Christians involved. Accounts of the rescue of several larger devotional objects likewise reveal more about competing Christian interpretations than they do about Muslim perspectives. Nevertheless, sufficient archival traces remain to justify the examination of these captive objects as a category, to discern meaningful patterns in their movement, and to explore the affordances such objects provided to the different individuals and groups that engaged with them.

Over the past two decades, our understanding of the early modern Mediterranean has been significantly revised. Earlier historiographical narratives that suggested the disintegration of the region have been superseded by accounts highlighting relations and connections.¹⁰ In the context of privateering and captivity, the work of Wolfgang Kaiser on the “economy of ransom” is especially pertinent. Kaiser and others have reconstructed a maritime universe populated by ransom intermediaries, pointing to their royal permits to trade with the Maghrib, exports of goods and bullion to North African cities, credit mechanisms, and maritime insurance that facilitated the ransom of captives.¹¹ The region, as it emerges from this scholarship, was a space inhabited by both empires and local actors, in which religious violence and market mechanisms continued to be inextricably entwined.¹²

Catholic artifacts occupied a preeminent place in the experience of captivity and in the ransom economy. However, while the framework of the “economy of ransom” has helped transform our understanding of the history of human trafficking, Catholic objects have slipped through the cracks. This is less surprising given that most scholars of visual and material culture still largely disregard the early modern Middle Sea, or, as Elisabeth Fraser has succinctly put it, “The history

10. For the classical accounts, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* [1949], 2 vols., trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, 1972–1976); Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

11. Wolfgang Kaiser, ed., *Le commerce des captifs. Les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, xv^e–xviii^e siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2008); Wolfgang Kaiser and Guillaume Calafat, “The Economy of Ransoming in the Early Modern Mediterranean: A Form of Cross-Cultural Trade between Southern Europe and the Maghreb (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries),” in *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000–1900*, ed. Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi, and Catia Antunes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 108–30.

12. In this regard, the work of economic historians—who have significantly increased our knowledge of the expansion of early modern commerce between Spain, Morocco, and Algiers—is also crucial. See Eloy Martín Corrales, *Comercio de Cataluña con el Mediterráneo musulmán (siglos XVI–XVIII). El Comercio con los “enemigos de la fe”* (Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra, 2001); Roberto Blanes Andrés, *Valencia y el Magreb. Las Relaciones Comerciales Marítimas (1600–1703)* (Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra, 2010); Roberto Blanes Andrés and Vicente Montojo Montojo, “El comercio del Mediterráneo español a mediados del siglo XVII,” in *La corte de Felipe IV (1621–1665). Reconfiguración de la Monarquía católica*, vol. 2, *El sistema de corte. Consejos y hacienda*, ed. José Martínez Millán and Manuel Rodríguez Rivero (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2017), 1331–70.

of early modern art still awaits its Mediterranean moment.”¹³ While there are a few notable exceptions,¹⁴ existing research tends either to elide the objects’ actual crossings or to frame them as anomalies with no wider import. Studies of the Mediterranean biographies of religious objects have focused mostly on the Middle Ages and the uses of Muslim objects—from manuscripts and flags to tents and arms—by Christians in Europe, potentially implying that Muslims did not, in turn, use and misuse Christian artifacts.¹⁵ Despite the scholarship’s emphasis on global circulation, the paths of Muslim objects purchased or captured by Europeans were nearly always exceptional and unidirectional, from the Muslim to the Christian world. In contrast, the Catholic religious objects that moved across warzones sometimes completed a full cycle, returning to or near their point of departure, and their trajectories were institutionalized and composed of various segments—from Iberia or Italy to the Maghrib, within the Maghrib, and back to Europe. By positioning these Catholic artifacts center stage, this essay stresses the degree to which they continued to articulate and mediate social, political, and economic relations between Muslims and Christians over the long seventeenth century in the western Mediterranean.

In the first section of the article I outline the political context of the free and bonded communities of Christians that formed in the early modern Maghrib, focusing on the nonviolent circulation of religious artifacts from Spain to North Africa. The second section examines interactions on a more intimate scale between Catholic captives and renegades, exploring how devotional artifacts afforded the latter a basis to claim ongoing membership of the community of Catholics. In the third section, I look at how devotional images were inserted into the plunder

13. Elisabeth A. Fraser, introduction to *The Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Art of Travel*, ed. Elisabeth A. Fraser (New York: Routledge, 2020), 1–8, here p. 2. We know more about the circulation of devotional objects in the eastern half of the Mediterranean: Yuliana Boycheva, ed., *Routes of Russian Icons in the Balkans (16th–Early 20th Centuries)* (Seysssel: La pomme d’or, 2016); Felicita Tramontana, “Per ornamento e servizio di questi Santi Luoghi’. L’arrivo des objets de dévotion dans les sanctuaires de Terre Sainte (xvii^e siècle),” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 183, no. 3 (2018): 227–45.

14. One such exception is María Cruz de Carlos Varona’s illuminating analysis of the Christ of Medinaceli: Cruz de Carlos Varona, “‘Imágenes rescatadas’ en la Europa moderna.” Another is Catherine V. Infante’s work on the representations of captive objects: Infante, *The Arts of Encounter: Christians, Muslims, and the Power of Images in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022). Finally, see Giovanna Fiume’s study of the canonization of a Franciscan missionary martyred in Morocco and the veneration of his relics: Fiume, *Schiavitù mediterranea. Corsari, rinnegati e santi di età moderna* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2009), 263–66 and 281–323.

15. See Cecily J. Hilsdale, “Visual Cultures of the Medieval Mediterranean,” in *A Companion to Mediterranean History*, ed. Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 296–313; Eva R. Hoffman “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth through the Twelfth Century,” *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17–50; Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli and Gerhard Wolf, eds., *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer* (Venice: Marsilio, 2011).

economy and the attempts of individual captives to redeem them. The two final sections return to the presidios of Larache and La Mamora to examine negotiations over Catholic objects between Spain and Morocco. These sections reconstruct and analyze the value hierarchies objects were imagined to occupy, the political economy of the ransom of religious artifacts, and the movement of those objects from an exchange economy to a gift economy.

Religious Artifacts in the Service of Christian Captives

The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492 ushered in a new imperial rivalry in the Mediterranean. During much of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Monarchy intensively engaged in belligerent Mediterranean politics, conquering (but also losing) a number of cities in the Maghrib in coordinated attacks. In 1581, however, the two empires signed a truce, allowing the Ottomans to turn their military attention east, toward Safavid Persia, and the Spaniards west, toward the Atlantic world.¹⁶ As the imperial frontier became a defensive rather than an offensive one, corsairs stepped in to fill the vacuum left by imperial fleets and the number of captives taken on both sides increased. Christian and Muslim merchants, missionaries, converts, and redeemers continued to cross religious and imperial boundaries, but captives and slaves formed the bulk of this human circulation. People purchased captives for a variety of reasons, but the profit derived from ransom was a powerful engine of the Mediterranean system of bondage—even if the majority of these captives were never ransomed and became part of the social tissue of the societies that enslaved them.

As a result of *corso* and slave raids, Muslim cities in the Maghrib came to have bustling populations of free and bonded Christians. The enslaved Christians enjoyed limited access to Catholic forms of worship, permitted mostly in the prisons in which they were held. In the 1570s, several churches were already functioning within captives' quarters in Algiers, and we know of at least four such churches active in the first half of the seventeenth century, along with a chapel at the residence of the French consul and several others in neighboring towns.¹⁷ Portuguese

16. Economically, however, the Mediterranean continued to be an important arena for both empires. See Corrales, *Comercio de Cataluña*; Blanes Andrés, *Valencia y el Maghreb*; Blanes Andrés and Montojo Montojo, "El comercio del Mediterráneo español"; Molly Greene, "The Ottomans in the Mediterranean," in *The Early Modern Ottoman Empire: A Reinterpretation*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 104–16.

17. Antonio de Sosa, *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam: Antonio de Sosa's Topography of Algiers (1612)*, ed. María Antonia Garcés, trans. Diana de Armas Wilson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 257–59; Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, *Alger, XVII^e–XVIII^e siècle. Journal de Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, "évêque d'Afrique"* [1622], trans. Abd el Hadi ben Mansour (Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1998), 335–37; *Relación verdadera en que se da cuenta muy por estenso del modo que tienen de vivir assi Moros, Iudios de la ciudad de Argel* (Madrid, 1639), Biblioteca Nacional de España (hereafter "BNE"), VE 185/74.

captives in Marrakech had a church of their own by the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁸ The Franciscans, who slowly established themselves in Morocco during the seventeenth century, ran churches and convents in prisons populated by captives in Fez, Marrakesh, and Meknes.¹⁹ In 1733, there were four churches in the captives' prisons in Tunis and an oratory in the French *Funduk*, or trading post.²⁰ The Trinitarians established several religious hospitals in Algiers in 1612 and another in Tunis in 1720.²¹ A few of the clergy who served in these establishments were captives from the same community, while in other instances worshippers pooled money to bring in a captive priest from a neighboring city to celebrate the sacraments. This was the case in Marrakesh, for example, where prisoners paid for the services of a captive priest from Salé or Tétouan.²²

Christian captives were not considered *dhimmīs*—free to practice their faith and own property in return for paying a certain tax and obeying a Muslim sovereign—but rather *ḥarbīs*, belonging to the *dār al-ḥarb* or “House of War” and thus enslaveable.²³ The religious privilege they enjoyed was primarily due to practical expediency rather than theological doctrine: Muslims did not want Christian captives to convert to Islam. Conversion removed captives from networks of exchange and eliminated them as a source of potential profit. Moreover, Muslim rulers expected Christian rulers to provide enslaved Muslims with similar religious privileges²⁴; allowing Christians to practice their religion was also a way to secure comparable conditions for Muslim slave communities in Christendom. The captivity of Christians thus resulted in the formation of Christian communities in North Africa, centuries after that religion had seemingly disappeared from the region.

This reality, and fear of the religious cross-pollination it threatened to generate, formed the context for massive shipments of religious artifacts from the Spanish Mediterranean to North Africa. Friars (Capuchins, Franciscans, Trinitarians, Mercedarians, and Maturines), high-ranking ecclesiastics, and, from 1622, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, but also

18. António de Saldanha, *Crónica de Almançor, sultão de Marrocos (1578–1603)*, ed. António Dias Farinha (Lisbon: Instituto De Investigação Científica Tropical, 1997), 203.

19. Pascual Saura Lahoz, “Los Franciscanos en Marruecos. Relación inédita de 1685,” *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 17 (1921): 79–100, especially pp. 95–96.

20. Francisco Ximénez, *Colonia trinitaria de Túnez*, ed. Ignacio Bauer (Tétouan: Tip. Gomariz, 1934), 28.

21. Ellen G. Friedman, “Trinitarian Hospitals in Algiers: An Early Example of Health Care for Prisoners of War,” *Catholic Historical Review* 66 (1980): 551–64; Bonifacio Porres Alonso, “Los hospitales trinitarios de Argel y Túnez,” *Hispania sacra* 48 (1996): 639–717.

22. On the religious services provided for captives, see the report that the Franciscan Luis de San Agustín sent to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1685: Saura Lahoz, “Los Franciscanos en Marruecos,” 95–96.

23. On the institution of the *dhimma*, see Mark R. Cohen, “What Was the Pact of ‘Umar? A Literary-Historical Study,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 100–57.

24. Daniel Hershenzon, “Plaintes et menaces réciproques: captivité et violence religieuses dans la Méditerranée du xvii^e siècle,” in *Les musulmans dans l’histoire de l’Europe*, vol. 2, *Passages et contacts en Méditerranée*, ed. Jocelyne Dakhliya and Wolfgang Kaiser (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013), 441–60.

governors-general and Spanish nobles, sent liturgical and devotional objects from Spain and Rome to settlers in Spanish presidios and communities of Christian captives in Muslim cities. The aim was to mitigate the harsh living conditions at the frontier or the trials of captivity, and to help them cling to their religion despite the ambient temptation to convert to Islam. The movement of these artifacts rarely registered in the Spanish and Roman archives, but the few traces it has left make clear that such shipments were regularized and that ecclesiastics were the main agents. The Trinitarian Bernardo de Monroy, held captive in Algiers in the 1610s, ordered and received from Spain chalices, patens, altars, missals, cases of rosaries, medals and prints of the Virgin Mary, Bibles, and booklets of saints' lives.²⁵ In 1655, Baltasar Moscoso y Sandoval, the cardinal and archbishop of Toledo, shipped missals, chalices, and liturgical ornaments to Algiers, along with images, medals, rosaries with indulgences, and devotional texts.²⁶ The same year, Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, the Patriarch of the Indies, also sent items to Algiers, including liturgical vestments (specifically chasubles and albs) and altar cloths or frontals in all colors.²⁷ In a letter dated June 8, 1680, the apostolic vicar in Algiers thanked the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith for the medals and crosses they had sent from Rome, which he had dispensed to the captives in the hope that they would help preserve their faith.²⁸ These consignments continued into the eighteenth century. In 1718, days before the Trinitarian Francisco Ximénez left Spain for Algiers, the bishop of Murcia provided him with devotional texts and rosaries destined for captives, as well as money to buy more, while the bishop of Cartagena sent devotional medals.²⁹ The Catholic Church's belief in the power of images to prevent the conversion of Christian captives to Islam evidently remained unchanged at the turn of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the decision of Clement XI (r. 1700–1721), the first pope of the new century, to concede a plenary indulgence to any Christian dying in front of a cross in the land of the infidel, implies that he for one feared images alone were not enough to maintain believers' faith in the message of the Church.³⁰

25. Bonifacio Porres Alonso, *Testigos de Cristo en Argel: Juan del Águila, Juan de Palacios, y Bernardo de Monroy, Trinitarios* (Córdoba: Secretariado Trinitario, 1994), 112.

26. Bonifacio Porres Alonso, *Libertad a los cautivos actividad redentora de la orden trinitarian*, 3 vols. (Córdoba: Secretariado Trinitario, 1997–1998), 1:371.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Rome, Archivio storico di Propaganda Fide, *Barberia*, bundle 1, fol. 467r, June 8, 1680, "Letter from the apostolic vicar of Algiers to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith."

29. Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia (hereafter "RAH"), MS 9-27-7-E-193, fols. 22r, 24r, and 28r, "Viaje de Argel de Fr. Francisco Ximénez de la ínclita y celestial religión de la SS. Trinidad Redempción de cautivos christianise."

30. The bishop of Murcia, who gave Ximénez rosaries and medals, also granted forty days of indulgences to all captives who would either recite one Our Father or a Hail Mary or perform an act of contrition in front of a crucifix owned by Ximénez: RAH, MS 9-27-7-E-193, fol. 67r, "Viaje de Argel de Fr. Francisco Ximénez de la ínclita y celestial religión de la SS. Trinidad Redempción de cautivos christianise."

While smaller, cheaper objects served individuals, monumental objects ended up adorning the walls of local churches, providing captives with additional comfort. In his treatise on Tunis and the Trinitarian hospital he established there, Ximénez has left us a detailed description of the images owned by that institution, just a few steps from one of the prisons where captives were held. Of the three altars, the main one had an image of the Infant Christ wearing a crown of gilded silver, while another had a crucifix carved from stone. There was a statue of the Virgin of the Remedies and another of the Virgin of the Purification, the latter clad in a rich tapestry dress from Spain. There were also portraits of Saint John of Matha and Saint Felix of Valois (co-founders of the Trinitarian order), the Virgin of the Trinity, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as well as alabaster and marble effigies of Saint Sebastian and Saint Rosalia and relics of saints.³¹ Ximénez indicates the provenance of most of these objects: the Duchess of Osuna had sent the dress for the Virgin of the Purification from Spain, while Trinitarians had brought a few of the statues from Sicily and ransomed other objects from the corsairs who had seized them.³² The provenance of these objects and the identity of some of the donors bestowed prestige on the hospital, while highlighting the devoutness of those purchasing and donating them.

These shipments of modest devotional objects—and lavish expensive ones—to the Maghrib for missionary purposes were common to all frontiers of Catholic Christianity. Geospatial and political circumstances, however, distinguished the western Mediterranean from Catholicism's other interfaith border zones such as Japan, Spanish America, or Palestine.³³ In spatial terms, the North African frontier resembled that between Catholics and Protestants in Europe more than the borderlands between Catholics and other religions elsewhere. The minimal distances separating Spanish Sicily from Ottoman Tunis (about 180 km), Ottoman Algiers from the Spanish Levant (about 321 km), or southern Andalusia from Morocco (less than 15 km) allowed for particularly intensive circulation. The North African frontier also differed in political terms. Although Spain had seeded a number of colonies in North Africa, it did not play the imperial role there that it did in Spanish America. On the other hand, the Maghribi-Iberian encounter was neither as imbalanced nor as new as that between the Jesuits and the Japanese. The situation also differed

31. Ximénez, *Colonia Trinitaria de Túnez*, 188–90. On the circulation and commerce of relics across the Mediterranean, see Fiume, *Schiavitù mediterranea*, 263–66 and 281–323; A. Katie Harris, “Gift, Sale, and Theft: Juan de Ribera and the Sacred Economy of Relics in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 18, no. 3 (2014): 193–226; Katrina B. Olds, “The Ambiguities of the Holy: Authenticating Relics in Seventeenth-Century Spain,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2012): 135–84.

32. Ximénez, *Colonia Trinitaria de Túnez*, 188–90.

33. Hélène Vu Thanh, “L'économie des objets de dévotion en terres de mission: l'exemple du Japon (1549–1614),” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 183 (2018): 207–25; Tramontana, “Per ornamento e servizio di questi Santi Luoghi”; Gabriela Ramos, “Living with the Virgin in the Colonial Andes: Images and Personal Devotion,” in *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World*, ed. Suzanna Ivanič, Mary Laven, and Andrew Morrall (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 137–50.

from that in Palestine. In the Maghrib, the bulk of Catholics were enslaved captives, *ḥarbīs* not *dhimmīs*, and a political economy of ransom served as the main mode of interaction between Catholics and Muslims.

Converts to Islam and Catholic Artifacts

Captives were the main beneficiaries of exported devotional objects. But rosaries, scapulars, crucifixes, and other objects also circulated among renegades—Christians who had converted to Islam in the context of their captivity. In contrast to “mamluk,” the Arabic term that stressed their servitude in powerful local households, the Christian term “renegade” highlighted the converts’ betrayal of their coreligionists.³⁴ From this perspective, renegades could deploy Catholic images to shape their present and reduce the risks the future might hold. By possessing devotional objects and presenting them to Catholic captives, priests, and friars, those who did not wish to wholly sever their relations with Christians could claim continuous membership of the religious community they had allegedly left when they converted. The number of renegades who joined crews on corsairs’ ships was high. These converts knew that, should they be captured by Catholic fleets at sea, they would face an Inquisitorial trial and might be sentenced to years as galley slaves. Even renegades who did not serve as corsairs but simply dreamt of returning to their home communities knew that they would have to account for their conversion and convince the Inquisitors of their Christianity. By demonstrating devotion to religious artifacts in front of captives and ecclesiastics, renegades were thus positioning members of these groups as future character witnesses in an Inquisitorial trial. Continued devotion to these objects offered legally mitigating circumstances and hard evidence that they “had converted in word but not in heart.”³⁵ This formulaic confession was common in the Inquisitorial trials of renegades, and was essential for anyone hoping to escape with a relatively light punishment.³⁶ Of course, this does not mean that renegades were using devotional objects only or always strategically and instrumentally. Converts who secretly owned these images may have truly believed that they had the power to intercede on their owners’ behalf, both in their daily interactions with Christians in North Africa and in the future back in their homeland. In any case, for the

34. On these terms and related practices, see Guillaume Calafat, “Jurisdictional Pluralism in a Litigious Sea (1590–1630): Hard Cases, Multi-Sited Trials and Legal Enforcement between North Africa and Italy,” in “Global History and Microhistory,” ed. John-Paul A. Ghobrial, *Past & Present* 242, supplement 14 (2019): 142–78, here pp. 169–74; M’hamed Oualdi, *Esclaves et Maîtres. Les Mamelouks des Beys de Tunis du XVII^e siècle aux années 1880* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011), 23–61.

35. See, for example, the case summary of the Majorcan tribunal: Onofre Vaquer Bannasar, *Captius i renegats al segle XVII. Mallorquins captius entre musulmans. Renegats davant la Inquisició de Mallorca* (Majorca: El Tall, 2014), 123–236.

36. Giovanna Fiume, “Rinnegati: le imbricazioni delle relazioni mediterranee,” in *Identidades cuestionadas. Coexistencia y conflictos interreligiosos en el Mediterráneo (ss. XIV–XVIII)*, ed. Borja Franco Llopis et al. (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2016), 39–62, here p. 43.

devotional “performance” to be felicitous, it had to convince its audience. This is why, in analyzing renegades’ use of Catholic material culture, I set aside issues of faith or sincerity of belief to focus instead on the social effects of owning, making, presenting, or mentioning Catholic devotional objects.³⁷

Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, disapproved of forced conversions.³⁸ Independently of doctrinal objections, the owners of captives opposed the conversion of their slaves because such an action stripped them of their value as ransom commodities. Yet despite this resistance and the attempts of different churches to prevent it, conversion to Islam was common among Christian captives in the Maghrib.³⁹ Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar have documented 1,550 renegades sentenced by Inquisitorial tribunals between 1550 and 1700, 459 of whom were Spanish, 402 Italian, and 93 Portuguese.⁴⁰ Given that only a small number of renegades likely ended up before the Inquisitors, they estimate that the overall number of Christians who converted to Islam in captivity exceeded 300,000.⁴¹ Renegades justified their conversion in any number of ways: a desire to improve their living conditions, the fear that their families had given up on them, to avoid paying a debt to another Christian captive, as a form of revenge against a Muslim who had mistreated them, to avoid physical punishment, or simply being convinced by the message of Islam.⁴² Formally, all that was required was the recitation of the *shahāda*, the Muslim profession of faith, and the wearing of a turban, but beyond these external emblems conversion was a prolonged process whose social, political, and legal implications were often more significant than its religious ones.⁴³ Yet even these, though profound, did not result in total social rupture.⁴⁴ Because of the gap between the formal requirements of conversion and its lasting effects, renegades

37. On the risk of anachronism when applying the cultural category of “sincerity” to non-Protestant contexts, see Talal Asad, “Comments on Conversion,” in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter Van der Veer (New York: Routledge, 1996), 263–73; Webb Keane, “From Fetishism to Sincerity: On Agency, the Speaking Subject, and their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 4 (1997): 674–93.

38. Though the three religions developed arguments meant to justify forced conversions, as a recent volume on the topic demonstrates: Mercedes García-Arenal and Yonatan Glazer-Eytan, eds., *Forced Conversion in Christianity, Judaism and Islam: Coercion and Faith in Premodern Iberia and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

39. For a recent review of the literature, see Robert John Clines, “The Converting Sea: Religious Change and Cross-Cultural Interaction in the Early Modern Mediterranean,” *History Compass* 17, no. 1 (2019): 1–15.

40. Bartolomé Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, *Les chrétiens d’Allah. L’histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 1989). For the tribunals not covered in this study, see Anita Gonzales-Raymond, *Inquisition et société en Espagne. Les relations des causes du Tribunal de Valence (1566–1700)* (Paris: Annales littéraires de l’université de Franche-Comté, 1996).

41. Bennassar and Bennassar, *Les chrétiens d’Allah*, 168.

42. Fiume, “Rinnegati,” 48–52.

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

44. Fiume, “Rinnegati,” 41.

could claim to their former coreligionists that they had remained loyal members of the Catholic community. At the same time, renegades might be treated with suspicion by Muslims, who controlled their freedom of movement and kept a close eye on their interactions with Christians. By reconstructing renegades' claims of belonging, we can establish the polyvalent roles and distorting effects of Catholic material culture on the boundary between the two religions.

Spanish and Maghribi sources alike attest to the continued importance of Catholic material culture in converts' lives, and to the role such objects played in Christian and Muslim attempts to read into the identity and affiliation of renegades. In reports sent to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, missionaries posted across the Islamic Mediterranean repeatedly noted the phenomenon of renegades owning devotional objects and clandestinely practicing Catholic Christianity.⁴⁵ These converts explained that they did not wish to return openly to Christianity because of conjugal, social, and professional ties they had established after their conversion. A number of fatwas included in early modern collections capture Muslim anxiety about converts who continued to identify with their previous faith communities despite living outwardly as Muslims.⁴⁶ At least one fatwa cited by Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Wansharīṣī in his *Clear Standard*, the most important fatwa compendium of the early modern Islamic west, explicitly linked renegades with Catholic devotional objects such as an alcove chapel (*ḥaniyya*), candles, texts with Latin characters, a cross, and hosts.⁴⁷ Taken together, these inherently variegated sources imply that early modern Islamic jurists and Catholic missionaries alike associated renegades with Catholic artifacts and used them to determine converts' claims to communal belonging.

45. Valentina Oldrati, "El difícil mantenimiento de la fe cristiana en tierras islámicas. Entre nicodemismo y otras estrategias de supervivencia (s. XVII)," in Llopis et al., *Identidades cuestionadas*, 63–78, here pp. 72–77.

46. See the two fatwas issued by Alī al-Maṭṭaḥarī al-Fāsī (d. 1545) and Muḥammad al-Nālī (d. 1521–1522) and included in 'Abd al-'Azīz b. al-Ḥasan al-Zayyātī's popular mid-seventeenth-century fatwa collection *Al-Jawāhir al-mukhtāra fī-mā waqaftu 'alayhi min al-nawāzil bi-Jibāl Ghumāra* (*Selected Jewels*). Both concerned Muslim women who had married converts suspected of continuing to practice Christianity. I thank Jocelyn Hendrickson for sharing chapters and the appendix of her *Leaving Iberia: Islamic Law and Christian Conquest in North West Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021).

47. Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Wansharīṣī, *Archives Marocaines. La pierre de touche des fétwas de Ahmad al-Wansharīṣī*, vol. 12, trans. Émil Amar (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1908–1909), 323–25. For a summary of the fatwa, see Vincent Lagardère, *Histoire et société en Occident musulman au Moyen Âge. Analyse du Mi'yar d'al-Wansharīṣī* (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 1995), 65. Its inclusion in the *Clear Standard* suggests that legal scholars, rulers, and ordinary people deemed this fatwa relevant to the circumstances of their time, and that it was or was about to become a legal precedent. On issuing fatwas in the early modern Islamic west, see David S. Powers, *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20–22. On issuing and compiling fatwas in the Ottoman Empire, and on their status as historical sources, see Joshua M. White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 183–87.

The kind of devotional objects renegades possessed could be a reflection of their availability, the traditions associated with converts' communities of origin, or individual pragmatism and adaptation in response to specific local conditions. The summaries of trials (*relaciones de causa*) from the Majorcan tribunal of the Inquisition shed light on this issue.⁴⁸ Nine out of 225 renegades sentenced between 1603 and 1694 reported owning at least one Catholic devotional object: two had scapulars of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, seven owned rosaries (one of whom also possessed two small prints or *cédulas* of Saint Peter of Verona and Saint Agatha of Sicily), one had an image of the Virgin of the Rosary (as did a renegade sentenced at the Canarian Inquisitorial tribunal), and one had an unspecified image of the Virgin.⁴⁹ The sample is modest in size, and yet, as we have seen, the phenomenon it captures is corroborated in other sources. To some degree, the list is indicative of the objects owned by the larger population of Christian captives. Some of the items ended up in their owners' hands simply because they were available at a particular moment, and do not necessarily reflect personal or collective preferences. The renegade who mentioned the two small prints was from Saint-Pierre in France, but it is hard to imagine that he would have chosen a print of Saint Agatha of Sicily, patron saint of rape victims, breast cancer patients, wet-nurses, Malta, and a number of cities in Spain and Italy. Indeed, the defendant stated that he had received them "from a priest residing in Algiers."⁵⁰ Possession of this particular image thus seems to be the result of its availability, and perhaps the absence of more tailored intercessors. On the other hand, the relative popularity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel recalls the Virgin's fame among seamen. Our Lady of Mount Carmel was Mary's title as patron of the Carmelite order, and her devotion was focused on the scapular—two small rectangular pieces of cloth or wood joined by bands or strings. In this guise she was the patron saint of fishermen from several Spanish coastal communities and of the city of La Valette in Malta (and is still the patron of the Spanish Armada). Since most renegades hailed from communities along the Iberian shore, it is likely that those who owned these scapulars had a long-term devotional relation to the Virgin.

At first glance, the ubiquity of the rosary also seems to reflect this object's appeal across the social classes in early modern Europe.⁵¹ A key moment in the rise of its popularity was the Christian victory over the Ottoman fleet in Lepanto in 1571. The following year, to commemorate the victory, Pious V (r. 1566–1572) promised indulgences to members of confraternities of the rosary, and in 1573

48. For full transcriptions of the summaries of renegades' trials conducted at the Majorcan Inquisitorial tribunal between 1603 and 1694, see Vaquer Bannasar, *Captius i renegats al segle XVII*.

49. *Ibid.*, 143, 168, 175, 201, 203, 215, 218, 221, and 234.

50. *Ibid.*, 215. There are a number of settlements called "Saint-Pierre" in France, and it has not been possible to identify which one this French renegade was from.

51. Irene Galandra Cooper and Mary Laven, "The Material Culture of Piety in the Italian Renaissance: Re-touching the Rosary," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling, and David Gaimster (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 338–53.

his successor, Gregory XIII (r. 1572–1585), established a feast of the Virgin of the Rosary as a homage to the Christian triumph.⁵² As a result, fraternities of the rosary mushroomed across the Catholic world. The Virgin of the Rosary even had a chapel in one of the churches of Algiers, and one of the fraternities of captives in Marrakesh was also dedicated to her.⁵³ An emblem of the victory over Islam, the rosary and images associated with it provided specific support not only for captives but also for renegades who either wished to return home or did not want to sever relations with their former confessional community.

A closer look at conversion to Islam in the Maghrib reveals particularities in renegades' use of the rosary. Renegades who openly owned devotional objects or communicated with the captive priests who dispensed them assumed grave risks, for such items could incriminate them and confirm their guilt in stubbornly clinging to their former religion. Muslim owners of converts who had not yet been manumitted warned them not to keep crosses, rosaries, or other devotional objects.⁵⁴ Renegades therefore had to conceal their images or privilege items that were not immediately identifiable as Catholic objects.⁵⁵ In this context, the allusions to prayer beads by Miguel de Cervantes, who spent five years as a captive in Algiers (1575–1580), are illuminating. In his play *The Bagnios of Algiers*, Francisco, a child recently forced to convert to Islam, recounts that his captors returned his prayer beads after removing the crucifix attached to them.⁵⁶ Cervantes implies that by cleansing the beads of the crucifix, Francisco's captors had converted his rosary into a *misbaḥa*. In a later scene, Halima, the wife of a fierce corsair, notices that Zara, a Muslim secretly raised as a Christian by her captive wet-nurse, has a crucifix on her prayer beads—presumably a *misbaḥa* to which she has affixed the image.⁵⁷ By suggesting that the essential difference between the rosary and the *misbaḥa* is simply the crucifix attached to the former, Cervantes offers an explanation for the popularity of rosaries among renegades. While it was impossible to justify to other Muslims the possession of crucifixes, scapulars, or images of the saints, the likelihood of having to explain possession of a rosary detached from its crucifix was negligible, as it could easily pass as a *misbaḥa*.

Were rosaries really so similar to *misbaḥas*? Most *misbaḥas* had ninety-nine beads, forty more than the average rosary, but some had only thirty-three, and

52. Carlos José Romero Mensaque, "La universalización de la devoción del rosario y sus cofradías en España. De Trento a Lepanto," *Angelicum* 90, no. 1 (2013): 217–46.

53. Carlos José Romero Mensaque, "La devoción al rosario en la ciudad de Zaragoza durante la modernidad (siglos xv al xviii)," *Archivo Dominicano: Anuario* 36 (2015): 137–64, here p. 146; Ginés de Ocaña, *Epitome del viage que hizo a Marruecos el padre Fr. Francisco de la Concepción* [1646] (Seville: Ian Cabeças, 1975), fol. 18v.

54. Vaquer Bannasar, *Captius i renegats al segle xvii*, 221.

55. *Ibid.*, 168.

56. Miguel de Cervantes, *The Bagnios of Algiers* [1615], in "*The Bagnios of Algiers*" and "*The Great Sultana*": *Two Plays of Captivity*, ed. and trans. Barbara Fuchs and Aaron J. Ilika (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), act 2, p. 45.

57. *Ibid.*, act 3, p. 91.

rosaries with more than fifty-nine beads were not uncommon.⁵⁸ Both served to count prayers or, for *misbahas*, the names of Allah, recited silently or aloud, and were associated with specific gestures of the fingers. Yet the testimonies of two renegades before the Inquisition's tribunals challenge the idea that Islamic beads could pass for Christian ones and vice versa by emphasizing the importance of concealing their rosaries. Both witnesses claimed that to prevent their masters knowing they possessed such items, they crafted their own. Facing the Inquisitors after his return to Spain, Juan Pérez, who had converted to Islam after being sold as a slave in Algiers in 1635, commended himself to God and the Virgin of the Rosary, recalling making a version by tying knots in a rope "so that the Moors would not identify it."⁵⁹ Similarly, Salvador Martínez Menargas, who converted to Islam in Algiers in 1656, reported carefully manufacturing "a rosary from a palm-tree thread with a cross of the same thread."⁶⁰ Like other late medieval and early modern objects, these rosaries employed what Caroline Walker Bynum has described as a "complex play of subject and material."⁶¹ Their crudeness simultaneously alluded to local materials—rope or the thread of a palm leaf—and a confessional form. The objects renegades crafted had to be somewhat abstract so that their Muslim masters could not readily identify them as overtly Christian symbols and punish their owner or creator; but they could not be *too* abstract, as other Christians needed to be able to identify them as Christian artifacts.⁶² Handmade rosaries satisfied these contrasting requirements of recognition and subterfuge, but were nevertheless identifiable enough that carrying them entailed a risk.

Other cases in which prayer beads stood at the heart of struggles between religious groups suggest that even a single bead of difference was evident to both insiders and outsiders, but also that performance was key in signifying form and matter.⁶³ In other words, while it is unlikely that Muslims or Christians confused

58. Arent J. Wensinck, "Subḥa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition (1913–1936)*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ci1_SIM_5480.

59. Vaquer Bannasar, *Captius i renegats al segle XVII*, 175.

60. *Ibid.*, 221.

61. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 82.

62. Bruno Pomara Saverino describes prayer beads as "ambiguous objects," which might explain their relative popularity among Moriscos (Spanish Muslims obliged to convert to Christianity and their descendants) sentenced at the Sicilian Inquisitorial tribunal: Pomara Saverino, "Quand les objets de la foi fondent la réputation. Les morisques entre Espagne et Italie," in *Matière à discorde. Les objets chrétiens dans les conflits modernes*, ed. Marie Lezowski and Yann Lignereux (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2021), 173–86.

63. A dispute in the 1920s over the number of times "The Pearl of Perfection" (a Sufi prayer) should be recited—eleven or the widely accepted twelve—split the Tijāniyya order in the French colony of Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) into two factions: the Ḥamawiyya or eleven-bead Tijānīs and the 'Umarians, or twelve-bead Tijānīs. In 1933, the French tried to convince Shaykh Sawadogo, who introduced the Tijāniyya order to the colony, to join the 'Umarians, who were supported by the colonizers. Sawadogo pretended to consent, and even ordered his followers to add an extra, twelfth bead to their *misbahā*, but he maintained his loyalty to the Ḥamawiyya, whose liturgy he and his followers continued to practice. To their satisfaction, French colonial administrators

rosaries for *misbahas* or vice versa, renegades could use *misbahas* to recite Hail Marys. The key to their success in convincing Catholic captives of their continuous belonging to the Christian community lay not so much in the materiality of the object or its form—rosary or *misbaha*—but rather in the overall performance of attachment, loyalty, and devotion expressed in praying and making the right physical gestures. Prayer beads thus played a key role in the management of relations between renegades and captives. Those objects served renegades as props in the performance of their claims to continued membership of the Christian community. At the same time, they offered Catholic captives and later Inquisitors a hermeneutic medium for deciphering the claims made by renegades.

Cervantes illustrates this particularly well in “The Captive’s Tale,” three chapters of *Don Quixote* that form an independent unit focusing on captivity in Algiers.⁶⁴ In the tale, Zoraida, the daughter of a rich Algerian Moor raised as a Christian by her slave nursemaid, seeks to escape to Spain and live openly as a Christian. To this end she sends notes detailing her plan to the Spanish captive Ruy Pérez de Viedma. Since he cannot read Arabic, Viedma turns to a renegade friend who is fluent in the language. Though they trust him enough to share the letter, Viedma and his fellow captives keep Zoraida’s identity a secret. But as soon as the renegade translates the note, her plan to flee Algiers becomes clear. In this instant, he realizes that despite the friendship he has cultivated with the captives, they do not entirely trust him. In response, “he pulled out from under his shirt a metal crucifix, and with many tears he swore by the God that the image represented, and in whom he, though a sinner, believed completely and faithfully, that he would be loyal to [them] and keep secret anything [they] wished to tell him.”⁶⁵ By showing his little audience his crucifix and uttering these words, the renegade claims membership in the community of the Christian faithful. This membership references two overlapping sets of relations—among members of that community and between worshippers and God. With his gesture, the renegade indirectly stresses that the Church is a community of believers, and that membership entails both social and religious bonds. In this charged moment, the crucifix becomes a sign, as Catherine Infante has argued. However, it also functions as definitive evidence in support of the claims the renegade is making.⁶⁶ It charges his words with truth not only because the image is a representation of God, as the Cervantine narrator reminds his readers, but also and in particular because it denotes the risk its owner has taken by carrying it concealed beneath his shirt.

reported Sawadogo’s “conversion” authentic. See Ousman Murzik Kobo, “Five *Tasbih* in West African Islamic History: Spirituality, Aesthetic, Politics, and Identity,” in *Islam Through Objects*, ed. Anna Bigelow (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 81–94.

64. Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote* [1605–1615], trans. Edith Grossman and Harold Bloom (New York: Ecco, 2005), part 1.4, chapters 39–41, pp. 334–67.

65. *Ibid.*, part 1.4, chapter 40, p. 347. A similar scene, in which the renegade pulls out a rosary, is recounted in Emanuel d’Aranda, *Les captifs d’Alger. Relation de la captivité du sieur Emanuel d’Aranda, où sont descrites les misères, les ruses et les finesses des esclaves et des corsaires d’Alger* [1657], ed. Latifa Z’Rari (Paris: J. P. Rocher, 1998), 174.

66. Infante, *The Arts of Encounter*.

In Catholic eyes, the return of renegades to the fold offered a living example of Christianity's superiority over Islam. Yet a side effect of this victory was the presence of converts who claimed to be Catholic while behaving like Muslims, thereby blurring the boundary between the religions. The ambiguity generated by renegades' possession and presentation of devotional objects was only eliminated at the outcome of an Inquisitorial trial. Before that moment, renegades were in effect members of two confessional communities, Islam and Catholic Christianity. Catholic materiality did not create the phenomenon of renegades and the ambiguity their existence implied, but it did play a key role in generating and prolonging this ambiguity in face-to-face interactions that enacted and reenacted links between the local and the regional and between the Maghrib and Iberia. The risk renegades assumed in Algiers by possessing rosaries or crucifixes and performing Christian devoutness yielded benefits in Majorca or elsewhere in Spain. These performances highlight the contingent nature of the circulation of images and the challenge they posed to those who tried to regulate it. Images crossed the boundaries they were meant to circumscribe and served purposes in opposition to those for which they were originally intended.

The Plunder of Religious Artifacts

The traffic in humans generated conditions for the mostly nonviolent circulation of religious artifacts, but also for their plunder and redemption. An unknown number of items, generally smaller in scale but also much larger objects such as life-size statues, were diverted from their intended trajectories by the plunder economy. For example, Antonio de Sosa, held captive in Algiers in the 1570s and the author of the most famous early modern treatise on that city, mentions an image of John the Baptist taken from a Maltese galley in 1570, another of Saint Paul also taken from a Maltese galley in 1577, and a statue of a "saintly angel" taken from a Sicilian galley. All three were hung upside down on one of the city gates to humiliate Christians before being broken up and burned.⁶⁷ Other captives documented attacks on the images adorning their churches. Although Catholics were permitted to practice their religion in local churches, on occasion Moroccans, Algerians, or Tunisians broke into those buildings to seize or damage crosses, chalices, and images—or at least threatened to do so. The Spanish spy Vicente Colom reported on January 8, 1603, that the Algerians had "issued a cruel edict [ordering] the destruction of all the churches [and] forbidding [priests to say] Mass on pain of death; they ordered broken and destroyed all the [religious] images they could find."⁶⁸

Seventeenth-century diplomatic correspondence—missives from Algerian authorities and the Divan (governing council), as well as their translations and summaries—confirms that Algerians threatened to attack Catholic churches and their

67. De Sosa, *Topography and History of Algiers*, 223–24.

68. Archivo General de Simancas (hereafter "AGS"), *Estado*, Leg. 198, August 1, 1603.

images, and often executed such threats. It also provides information on the circumstances under which such attacks were carried out. The sources suggest that these violent eruptions occurred in response to news from Spain about the forced baptism of Muslim slaves and the desecration of their corpses. For example, on October 30, 1629, Francisco de Andía Irarrazábal y Zárate, the viscount of Santa Clara and Spanish governor of Oran, reported the gist of his conference with the Algerian envoy Mūrād Agha to the Council of War. One of the points concerned a recent Algerian attack on Catholic churches, during which devotional objects had been broken and burned. The Algerian envoy justified these events as a reaction to the desecration of the bodies of dead Algerian slaves in Spain.⁶⁹ In 1658, Ibrāhīm Pasha, governor of Algiers, and Hussein Agha, commander of the Algerian Janissary corps, sent grievances to the Spanish Council of State concerning forced conversions and the desecration of Muslim corpses. If Spain did not rectify the situation immediately, these high officials warned, Algiers would impose punitive measures, including shutting down churches.⁷⁰ Five years later, the governor of Algiers dispatched Alonso de Jesús, a Franciscan friar posted in Algiers, to Spain as the city's envoy. The Franciscan reported that following news of the desecration of Muslim slaves' bodies and the violation of ransom agreements, the Divan was issuing an order "to burn all the priests and images [and] destroy the churches." De Jesús acknowledged that the Algerian response was just and urged the Spanish authorities to punish the perpetrators.⁷¹ These sources corroborate Spanish claims about attacks on Catholic churches and their devotional objects—or threats to carry out such attacks—and frame them as part of larger cycles of reciprocal violence on a Mediterranean scale. As long as damaging it or threatening to do so achieved the desired goal, Algiers did not care much about the identity of the Catholic artifact in question. For Algerian rulers, the actual or implied destruction of religious artifacts was a means of ensuring religious privileges for Muslims enslaved in Spain, and thereby of claiming Islamic guardianship over the western Mediterranean.

69. AGS, *Guerra Antigua*, Leg. 992, October 30, 1629.

70. For the original letters and their translation, see AGS, *Consejo de Estado*, Leg. 2675, September 23, 1658.

71. Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, *Consejo de Aragón*, Leg. 607, January 24, 1663, and AGS, *Estado*, Leg. 2679, October 3, 1663. Similar challenges and ripostes continued into the eighteenth century. In the second half of the 1730s, the administrator of the Trinitarian hospital in Algiers reported that news of an attack by local citizens on the mosque of the Muslim galley slaves in Cartagena had reached Algiers. Dey Ibrāhīm ibn Ramaḍān had summoned the Trinitarian administrator and ordered him to send a warning to Spain: if the Muslim slaves in Cartagena were not to be permitted to use their mosque, the Algerian authorities would close the churches in Algiers and burn their images. See Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter "AHN"), *Inquisición* Leg. 3733, fol. 301r. The record is undated but the mosque in question was established in 1734 and the Trinitarian administrator died in 1739. Thus, the grievance must have been sent in the second half of the 1730s. For a detailed analysis of this mosque, see Thomas Glesener and Daniel Hershenson, "The Maghrib in Europe: Royal Slaves and Islamic Institutions in Eighteenth Century Spain," *Past & Present* 259 (2023): 77–116.

On occasion, Maghribis snatched Catholic artifacts found either on ships they had raided or in the captives' churches. This must have been how Catholic artifacts fell into the hands of individual Maghribis, who later sold them on to captives and ecclesiastics keen to redeem such objects. A number of sources record these transactions, especially in cases of small and inexpensive items. For example, the Basque captive Pedro Munjo de Nobero ransomed a painting of Our Lady of Saint Joseph for six pieces of eight in 1628, his eighth year of captivity. He carefully preserved the image for six more years, until he himself was ransomed. The case left a trace in the archive because when Munjo de Nobero arrived in Majorca, the viceroy's chamberlain confiscated the painting together with other items found on board, thereby bypassing the Inquisition's prerogative of "visiting" ships recently arrived from the Maghrib. With the assistance of the bishop and the Inquisitors, Munjo de Nobero retrieved the twice-captured picture, which, upon returning to his native land, he donated to the Franciscan sanctuary of Our Lady of Aránzazu in the Basque village of Oñati, along with his chains as a symbol of his bondage.⁷²

Franciscan administrative correspondence shows that individual captives were also involved in the rescue of images from Larache mentioned in my opening paragraph. In 1690, Francisco Romano, a Spanish captive sent to Spain by Mawlāy Ismā'īl as an interpreter for the Moroccan ambassador, carried with him a painting of the Apostle James (now in the Franciscan hospital in Madrid), the remains of the desecrated statues of Saint Francis and Saint Antony of Padua, a chrismatory, a ciborium, and other vessels. In 1694, María de la Concepción, another captive, ransomed the statue of the Divine Infant (also preserved at the Franciscan hospital in Madrid) that the Moroccans had found on the Spanish flagship moored in the harbor; that same year, another captive named María ransomed a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary that had likewise been taken during the conquest of the port.⁷³ As described above, the Trinitarian friar Ximénez was an acute observer who ran the Trinitarian hospital in Algiers and chronicled daily life in the city for a number of years. In 1718 alone, he documented at least ten instances in which he or the hospital staff bought or received devotional objects from Muslims, renegades, and Jews.⁷⁴ If the churches in the captives' prisons operated as extraterritorial spaces, in which Catholic devotional objects were in principle protected from the authorities' oversight, according to Ximénez the Trinitarian hospital became a place where non-Catholics occasionally stopped by to sell such objects that had fallen into their possession. That these documents had a limited circulation confined to administrative channels (Ximénez's chronicle remains unpublished to this day) suggests that the practice was a real one rather than a reflection of religious propaganda. Moreover, some of the objects

72. AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1712/2, carpeta 20 and *Inquisición*, lib. 862.

73. Archivo de la Venerable Orden Tercera de Madrid (hereafter "AVOTM"), Leg. 732, letters from Meknes, April 15, 20, and 30, and September 1, 1694.

74. RAH, MS 9-27-7-E-193, fols. 16v, 17r, 22v, 30v, 34v–35r, and 62v, "Viaje de Argel de Fr. Francisco Ximénez de la ínclita y celestial religión de la SS. Trinidad Redempción de cautivos christianise."

concerned survived their early modern travails and can today be found in churches, convents, hospitals, and other religious sites.⁷⁵

The capture of religious images might have marked the failure of their intended mission, but it was also a productive moment in which objects, as a result of their repurposing, afforded new opportunities to those whose paths they crossed. More specifically, Christian images in the Muslim Maghrib helped captives cling to their faith even when, or rather because, the images were captured and desecrated. When individual captives redeemed images of Christ and Mary, crosses, or crucifixes, the traditional division of labor between God and believers was transformed—the slaves were able to free an emblem of their God. In this regard, the presence of images provided captives with opportunities to engage in a form of *imitatio Christi*, a fundamental goal of Christian life.⁷⁶ Instead of Christ redeeming Christians, it was the faithful who redeemed objects that offered a channel to their God. This act of redemption, at once private and public, connected believers to their God while publicly affirming the Christian identity of the captives, who were therefore less likely to break down and convert to Islam. Whereas early modern Iberian theologians cited passages from Roman law that defined captives as “dead things,” and Protestant reformers claimed that images brought death to those who worshipped them, in the Maghrib religious objects afforded captives the power to negotiate with their masters and to purchase and own property, and thus expanded the freedoms available to them.⁷⁷

Redeeming Captive Objects

For the first three-quarters of the seventeenth century, most of the captive objects recorded in the archives were located in Algiers and the majority were small-scale artifacts. While the circulation of such objects persisted into the eighteenth century, the establishment of the ‘Alawī dynasty in Morocco, especially under sultan Mawlāy Ismā‘īl, introduced new forms of circulation, artifacts, and actors. The Moroccan conquest of a number of Spanish Atlantic garrisons meant that larger and more expensive Catholic items became captive objects; their exchange involved political actors as well as the friars, especially Trinitarians, Franciscans, and Mercedarians, who played a major role in negotiating their ransom and documenting their rescue. Friars were in charge of shipping objects to the Maghrib but were also active in

75. See note 8 above.

76. On *imitatio Christi*, see Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 143–248.

77. On slaves as “dead things,” see Diego de Haedo, *Topografía e historia general de Argel* (Valladolid: Diego Fernandez de Cordoua y Oviedo, 1612), 100. Writing about iconoclasm, the Protestant theologian Andreas Karlstadt described images as “deceitful,” claiming they “bring death to those who worship and praise them”: Karlstadt, “On the Removal of Images” [1522], in *A Reformation Debate: Karlstadt, Emser, and Eck on Sacred Images; Three Treatises in Translation*, trans. Bryan D. Mangrum and Giuseppe Scavizzi (Toronto: Center for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 1998), 21–22.

redeeming, mending, and restoring them, distributing them as gifts, and penning narratives about them. The case of the Trinitarian Diego de Pacheco perfectly encapsulates the extent to which this class of objects depended upon the friars. Pacheco arrived in Algiers in 1651 with cases filled with images, rosaries, medals, devotional texts, and indulgences, as well as altar vestments, missals, and liturgical vessels. During the five years he spent in North Africa, he ransomed 411 captives, a statue of the Divine Infant, and a panel painting of the Virgin. In October 1655, after Pacheco's return to Spain, the Trinitarians published a broadside that celebrated his and his order's success in redeeming both humans and objects. The sources are not entirely clear, but it seems that the Trinitarians also designed and published prints that commemorated the rescue of the panel painting.⁷⁸

The Trinitarians presided over the negotiations after the Spanish surrender of La Mamora on April 26, 1681, an event recorded mostly in sources produced by the order itself. The importance placed on images is particularly evident in these texts, and the friars' own account even reveals that they chose to prioritize the redemption of objects over that of humans.⁷⁹ On receiving word of the desecration of images captured in La Mamora, Diego de los Angeles, a Trinitarian posted in Meknes, rushed to Fez to beg the sultan to stop the mistreatment of devotional objects. The two sides opened negotiations and soon agreed to exchange seven images for seven Muslim slaves.⁸⁰ This is interesting for two reasons. It shows that the political economy of ransom allowed for Christian devotional objects and Muslims enslaved in Spain to be exchanged directly, as if in a like-for-like substitution. At the same time, it provides an excellent example of what these devotional artifacts afforded Muslim rulers—an opportunity to intercede on behalf of their enslaved subjects and project their religious and political power. In November 1681, Carlos II ordered the Trinitarians to complete the transaction.⁸¹ The friars traveled from Seville to Ceuta, held by the Spanish since 1640, and from there to Fez, where they began negotiating the redemption of the rest of the objects and the human captives.⁸² Soon an agreement was reached and the friars returned to Ceuta in late December, where they waited for the Moroccans to deliver the ransomed soldiers and civilians. Matters were complicated when the governor of Tétouan convinced the sultan that he had sold the images for too little, prompting Mawlāy Ismā'īl to demand

78. Porres Alonso, *Libertad a los cautivos*, 371–72.

79. “Relación primera verdadera, en que se da cuenta de los singulares sucesos, que han tenido los muy Reverendos Padres Redemptores del Orden de Descalços de la Santissima Trinidad ...” [place of publication, publisher, and year of publication not indicated], in *Papeles de mi archivo. Relaciones de África (Marruecos)*, ed. Ignacio Bauer Landauer, 6 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Ibero-Africano-Americana, 1922–1923), 2:103–15, here p. 109.

80. This is reported in a published letter written by one of the soldiers of the conquered garrison: Francisco Sandoval y Roxas, “Aviso verdadero y lamentable relación, que hace el capitán don Francisco de Sandoval y Roxas, Cautivo en Fez, al exelentissimo señor don Pedro Antonio de Aragón ...” [Madrid, 1681], in Bauer Landauer, *Papeles de mi archivo*, 2:93–97.

81. “Relación primera verdadera,” 104.

82. *Ibid.*, 108–11.

additional Muslim slaves in exchange. According to the Trinitarian account of these events, the sultan took advantage of the importance Spain afforded such images to get the friars to pay more.⁸³ The problem is that the same Trinitarian source informs its readers that by that point the images were already safe in Ceuta. On the other hand, since not all the captives had been released, the friars were obliged to accept this new demand. The Moroccans, then, were taking advantage of the fact that they had not yet delivered all of the captives to demand a higher price for the images (though not for the remaining prisoners). The Trinitarians purchased six Muslim slaves in Ceuta and fourteen in Malaga, and only after they had been tendered did the remaining Spanish captives arrive in Ceuta.⁸⁴ In the value hierarchy implicit in these sources, devotional objects are thus both more valuable than Christian human captives and commensurable with enslaved Muslims.

This hierarchy of value is spelled out in the broadsides the order produced to advertise the redeeming friars' success.⁸⁵ The titles of these texts announced the ransom expedition, its location in the Maghrib, the date on which it occurred, and the number of objects and captives redeemed. A list of these rescued items, divided into four distinct categories and arranged according to their respective importance, occupied the rest of the space. The first category, placed high on the broadside's upper left column, was dedicated to the redeemed religious artifacts. Then came priests and friars, women and children, and finally men. We have no evidence of the reception of such texts, which were a form of propaganda in the competition between the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians for royal ransom funds and a monopoly in the ransom market. Yet it is clear that in the friars' eyes, and in those of their imagined audience at least, the redemption of religious artifacts conferred more prestige than that of human captives.

Diplomatic correspondence generated during the negotiations by the Franciscan order to rescue captives—humans and objects—after the fall of Larache in 1689 reveals a different value hierarchy. The first part of the negotiation concerned the release of a hundred Spanish officers. On July 7, 1690, the king pleaded with the sultan: “we hope that you will send us the [officers] freely, [as well as] the friars, their servants, [and the] images, silver, and the rest belonging [to the friars].”⁸⁶

83. “Segunda relación verdadera en que se prosiguen los singulares casos, que han sucedido en la Redención que han hecho este presente año de 1682 los muy Reverendos Padres Redemptores de la Sagrada y Esclarecida Orden de Descalços de la Santissima Trinidad ...” [place of publication, publisher, and year of publication not indicated], in Bauer Landauer, *Papeles de mi archivo*, 2:115–26, here p. 120.

84. Porres Alonso, *Libertad a los cautivos*, 511–13.

85. AHN, *Nobleza, Frías*, CP. 532, doc. 12, “Memorial de los cristianos cautivos que en la ciudad Argel rescatron los padres Fr. Francisco de la Cruz, y Fr. Gaspar de los Reyes ... por el mes de Setiembre de 1642,” or AHN, *Nobleza, Frías*, CP. 90, doc. 61–67, “Memorias de los cautivos que este año de 1674, en el mes de marzo, de dicho año han traído rescatados de los reinos, y ciudades de Fez, Tetvan, y Zale.”

86. Mariano Arribas Palau, “De nuevo sobre la embajada de al-Ghassānī (1690–1691),” *Al-Qantara* 6, no. 1/2 (1985): 199–289, here p. 215. There are two earlier extant drafts of this letter, one from May 1690 (*ibid.*, 206) and another from April 1690: Arribas Palau, “A propósito de una carta de Carlos II a Mawlay Ismail,” *Al-Qantara* 10, no. 2 (1989): 565–69.

The list is instructive not only in terms of the items it includes and excludes, but also in terms of its internal organization. The mention of “silver,” here functioning as a synecdoche for liturgical vessels, ironically stresses their symbolic value and highlights what is absent from the list—cash or silver bullion, which Spain had no hopes of recovering. The Crown expected to redeem these objects because of their liturgical significance rather than their monetary value. But the structure of the list is also interesting. On the one hand, it groups together humans and objects in the same category, establishing a matrix of similarity and continuity between them. On the other, by arranging these items in a certain order, it sets out a clear hierarchy according to which devotional objects such as images are more valuable than liturgical ones, humans are more valuable than objects, and some humans—namely military officers—are more valuable than others such as friars and their servants. Evidently, the importance of redeeming religious objects along with human captives was widely acknowledged by the king, the friars, and state bureaucrats. However, it was only the Trinitarians who implied that the redemption of images was more urgent than that of humans.

The inter- and intrareligious exchange of devotional objects differed depending on the attitude the transacting parties adopted toward the object. The problem was not that objects changed hands, but rather that they passed into the hands of Muslims, considered Spain’s worst enemies. After all, most of the items concerned had likely had a number of owners before being appropriated by Muslims. Catholics exchanged all sorts of religious objects in a wide range of transactions. They circulated as objects of commercial exchange among manufacturers, dealers, confraternities, and the faithful; both expensive and low-value objects were bartered or even pawned and later redeemed⁸⁷; relics could be targeted in *furta sacra*, or holy theft.⁸⁸ Though the position of the object itself in each of these transactions varied greatly, the participants all shared attitudes—in terms of both perceptions and physical responses—toward the items that were circulating. In particular, they all perceived the relationship between objects and the divine in similar ways and, perhaps for this reason, saw no contradiction when they bartered or pawned objects on the basis of their material value. In exchanges among members of the Christian community, none of the parties believed it was deeply wrong for the other to possess that object, and it was this difference that made the redemption of Christian religious objects from Muslims a matter of paramount urgency.⁸⁹

87. Alessia Meneghin, “The Economy of Sacred Objects,” in *Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven (Cambridge: Philip Wilson Publishers/Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017), 82–87.

88. Harris, “Gift, Sale, and Theft”; Olds, “The Ambiguities of the Holy.”

89. Medieval members of the clergy did on occasion pawn religious texts and liturgical objects to Jewish pawnbrokers, but in doing so they were violating the prohibitions of the papal and ecclesiastical councils. See Joseph Shatzmiller, *Cultural Exchange: Jews, Christians, and Art in the Medieval Market Place* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 7–44. Similarly, in seventeenth-century Prague Jewish artisans produced sacred images from rosaries to crosses. See Nicolas Richard, “Un Nouveau marché. Diffusion des objets de dévotion et sanctuaires de pèlerinage dans le Bohême de la

Muslims' and Christians' conflicting ideas about Catholic religious objects also meant that these artifacts offered each group unique affordances. Even sources as different as the Trinitarian propagandistic account of the ransom operation at La Mamora and the diplomatic correspondence after the fall of Larache converged on this point, recognizing that the objects' exchange value in these fraught negotiations was the product of contrasting perceptions and affordances.⁹⁰ For Catholics, these sacred artifacts were a crucial part of their individual and collective identity, and therefore had to be redeemed at all costs regardless of the price demanded by the seller or the object's material value. The absence of money or silver bullion from the list of things the Spanish king asked Mawlāy Ismā'īl to return in 1692, and his description of the religious objects in terms other than their metallic weight (ounces of silver and gold) makes this point clear. The sultan also considered these devotional objects in terms of affordances rather than their monetary value. This is why he preferred to exchange liturgical vessels in their initial state rather than, for example, melting them down or repurposing the gold elements of the paintings, frames, and sculptures.

A variety of Spanish sources suggest that such devotional objects permitted Maghribi rulers to symbolically assert Islam's power over Christianity. As described above, Algerian pashas, and perhaps Moroccan rulers too, did on occasion threaten to break into captives' churches and burn any images they might find, unless the Spaniards ceased to baptize Muslim slaves by force and agreed to punish those who desecrated their cadavers. In this regard, Christian devotional objects afforded Maghribi rulers a means to efficiently assist their subjects enslaved across the sea, and in this way claim spiritual guardianship and political sovereignty over them.

Thus, even if money did change hands when Catholics redeemed devotional objects from Muslims, both parties saw these transactions as more than mere commercial exchanges. Friars and captives conceived of their "purchase" of looted religious objects as "redemption" and consequently played down their monetary value. Muslims, of course, did not share this view, but acknowledged the status of those objects as inalienable possessions for Christians. Indeed, their skillful management of such exchanges was based on this recognition. Far from reducing the value of the objects they sold to their metallic value, they too exchanged them for social, political, and religious advantages rather than solely economic ones.

contre-réforme (fin xvi^e–début xviii^e siècle),” in “Façonner l’objet de dévotion chrétien. Fabrication, commerce et circulations xvi^e–xix^e siècles,” ed. Marie Lezowski and Laurent Tătarenko, special issue, *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 183 (2018): 31–49. On local permissions granted to Jews to deal with second-hand disassembled silverware, including liturgical objects, see Marie Lezowski, “Vol sacrilège et règlement de comptes entre voisins. Sienna, 1730,” in Lezowski and Lignereux, *Matière à discorde*, 71–85.

90. “Relación primera verdadera”; “Segunda relación verdadera”; Arribas Palau, “De nuevo sobre la embajada”; Arribas Palau, “A propósito de una carta.”

From Plunder Economy to Gift Economy

Preoccupation with the desecration of plundered objects was a commonplace of Trinitarian and Mercedarian accounts. Both the administrative and propagandistic texts related to the fall of La Mamora and Larache highlight this theme. The chapbooks and paintings that celebrated the redemption organized by the Trinitarians in La Mamora in 1682 portrayed in vivid words and colors the beating, stabbing, and dishonor to which the Christ of Medinaceli was subjected.⁹¹ According to the correspondence between Franciscans posted in Morocco and Cardinal Luis Manuel Fernández de Portocarrero, in charge of the rescue efforts after the loss of Larache, most of the objects redeemed from that garrison in 1692 had experienced a similar fate: a leader of the Jewish community had desecrated the ciborium by drinking from it, while one of the sultan's sons had used the chrismatory as a tobacco box and the others had damaged a statue of the Divine Infant.⁹² Worse still, a statue of Saint Francis and another of Saint Anthony of Padua had been scorched and severely damaged.⁹³ The figures were so "injured" that the Franciscans who received them in Ceuta after their redemption decided to burn those parts they deemed irreparable.⁹⁴ The texts are not clear as to whether the ashes were also sent to Spain, retained, or buried in North Africa, but the decision to burn the parts that could not be saved suggests that a protocol was in place. Beyond their physical repair, Christian devotional objects might also be the subjects of rituals of redress (*desagravio*). These private and public rites were intended to make amends for the affronts that the objects had borne. Such rituals were more often performed for images profaned by Protestants, but the Christ of Medinaceli is also known to have benefited from them.⁹⁵

Stories of desecration shed light on the relationship between devotional objects' vulnerability and their symbolic value. The desecration of objects during their captivity manifested their vulnerability but simultaneously led to their informal consecration, an increase in their value, and their eventual transformation into inalienable possessions. In other words, plunder and desecration could paradoxically increase the spiritual charge of a devotional object. Consecration in these narratives did not involve a legal ritual conducted by a priest, uncommon for images in Latin Christianity, or even a blessing (a simpler way of investing an object with spiritual

91. Cruz de Carlos Varona, "Imágenes rescatadas' en la Europa moderna."

92. AVOTM, Leg. 404/430, Cardinal Portocarrero to the king, Madrid, July 6, 1692.

93. Anastase Goudal, *Histoire de la mission franciscaine à Meknès et origines du culte de la Vierge* (Issoudun: Imprimerie Laboureur, 1955), 36.

94. BNE, *Varios Especiales*, 128, fol. 240v, "Noticia de la forma en que el día 5 de agosto de este año de 1692 se llevaron ... a los christianos, que estaban captivos del Rey de Mequínez, a quienes rescato la Venerable Orden Tercera de N. P. San Francisco."

95. Yonatan Glazer-Eytan, "Transgressing the Sacred: The Crime and Cult of Sacrilege in the Spanish Catholic Monarchy, 1558–1632" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2020), 191–97.

power). Instead, it was signaled by an object's first performance of a miracle.⁹⁶ Most commonly, the miracles attributed to these objects alluded to the Passion narrative by having them set their own price at thirty units of the local currency (in some cases three or thirty-three, or fifteen for statues of the Virgin⁹⁷); in other miracles, people were unable to physically move the object, or items appeared intact and more beautiful the day after their desecration.⁹⁸ To become effective, that is, imbued with a power that distinguished them from similar statues or crucifixes, these objects first had to be desecrated. Walker Bynum has drawn attention to the complexity of the relationship between consecration and the manifestation of the divine.⁹⁹ In the context examined here, not only was no priest involved in endowing the objects with miraculous power, but the de facto agent of transformation was often either a Muslim desecrator or a renegade, figures to whom these miracle narratives also assigned the position of awestruck witness.

Kings, ambassadors, and friars could enhance their own authority by controlling the circulation of these artifacts and using them to boost their prestige. The renown that such objects acquired was attractive to those who rescued them, as well as to the patrons who subsequently came to own them and the communities in which they resided. The process by which that prestige was created and enhanced was reciprocal. For example, entrepreneurial ecclesiastics carefully shaped objects' histories by composing and circulating pamphlets and broadsides, engraving prints of redeemed objects, commissioning painters to depict the suffering and redemption of devotional images, and establishing confraternities dedicated to particular artifacts. These impresarios could then share in the prestige conferred by the objects they had helped to promote. When this exchange was productive, the prestigious object could become a gift to a powerful patron, further enhancing the reputation of object, giver, and receiver. The objects redeemed from La Mamora were distributed among members of the royal family and the higher nobility, and copies of the Christ of Medinaceli were sent to Trinitarian convents in Spain and abroad. Cardinal

96. David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 89–91; Marie Lezowski, introduction to "Tours et détours des objets de dévotion catholiques (xvi^e–xxi^e siècles)," thematic dossier, *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome—Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 126, no. 2 (2014): 341–51, here p. 344.

97. For instance, in 1618, a "turk" who owned a small statue of Our Lady of Ransom reportedly agreed to sell it to a Trinitarian friar for its weight in silver coins. He set up a scale, placed the statue in one pan and filled the other with coins. But to balance the scale he had to remove so many coins that eventually only fifteen remained, "which was half of what his son had been sold for": Christoval Granados de los Rios, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios de la Fuensanta* (Madrid, 1648), 63–64.

98. *Ibid.*; BNE, *Varios Especiales*, 60–43, "Respuesta que embió el padre difinidor, y redentor Fr. Ioseph del Espíritu Santo, del orden de descalços de nuestra señora de la merced, redención de cautivos, a una carta ... este ano de 1648"; Josep Antoni Garí y Siuñell, *La Órden redentora de la Merced* (Barcelona: Imprenta de los herederos de la viuda Pla, 1873), 346–47.

99. Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Sacrality of Things: An Inquiry into Divine Materiality in the Christian Middle Ages," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 78 (2013): 3–18.

Portocarrero first offered the artifacts ransomed from Larache to the king, before gifting them to the hospital of the Franciscan Order in Madrid where they remain today. The friars thus played a host of roles in the remarkable transformations of the once-captive objects with which they were associated.

The Hispano-Maghribi Mediterranean offers a productive perspective from which to reconstruct the significant but little-known circulation of a wide variety of captive Catholic objects, trajectories that are difficult to follow at the level of a single empire or confession. Focusing on their circulation throughout this space draws attention to a feature particular to the region and the period studied here, as opposed to other parts of the early modern Mediterranean: Catholic artifacts played a specific role in the ransom economy, in Christians' experience of captivity and exile, and in renegades' management of contact with the Catholic community they had left at the moment of their conversion. In this regard, captive objects can help establish spatial and chronological distinctions on local and regional scales. One example is the particular regimes of mobility to which these objects were bound in different spaces within the city of Algiers. Whereas the Trinitarian hospital located just outside the captives' prison fostered the exchange of Catholic devotional objects between Catholics, Muslims, renegades, and Jews, the churches that operated within the prisons themselves resembled extraterritorial spaces, at least most of the time, in the protection they afforded Catholic artifacts. In chronological terms, the establishment of the new and powerful 'Alawī dynasty in Morocco brought a heightened visibility to the phenomenon of captive objects. The Moroccan conquest of Spain's North African presidios in the last quarter of the seventeenth century placed large and expensive Catholic artifacts that had previously adorned the local churches at the center of lengthy negotiations between Morocco and Spain.

Despite their differences in form, matter, and function, captive objects constitute a coherent category because they followed similar trajectories, elicited similar responses and expectations, and intensified interactions and links between confessional communities. The "captivity" of these objects allowed human captives to assert a certain agency by redeeming them, and imbued the artifacts themselves with the power to perform miracles. Objects might also be exchanged for captives, and captives who died as martyrs might themselves be transformed into religious objects when other captives venerated their relics.¹⁰⁰ Conceptually, captive objects and human captives emerge as similar and related—they both had potential agency, one could become the other, and they were commensurable and therefore exchangeable.

The artifacts, mobilities, and exchanges traced in this article are by no means exhaustive. To the contrary, they point to future avenues for research, including the circulation of relics—the body parts of Christian captives who died as martyrs in

100. Daniel Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 114–16.

the Maghrib—and the struggle over how to interpret them, or attempts to convert churches and convents into mosques after the Maghribi occupation of Spanish presidios.¹⁰¹ Charting these movements and approaching the history of the western Mediterranean from the perspective of Catholic materiality will shed new light on the relations between the actors that populated the region and on the densification of links between Iberia and the Maghrib over the long seventeenth century.

Daniel Hershenzon
University of Connecticut
daniel.hershenzon@uconn.edu



101. Such struggles could also ensue from the finding of miraculous images on the high seas. See Guillaume Calafat, “Mercanti, corsari e investimenti devozionali in una città nuova. L’altare dei Corsi’ a Livorno nel Seicento,” *Quaderni storici* 3 (2018): 739–72.