CONFESSIONAL FRONTIERS:

CONVERSION AND CAPTIVITY IN THE EARLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN

by

AMRISH RAGHU NAIR

(Under the Direction of Benjamin G. Ehlers)

ABSTRACT

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Muslim corsairs carried out near-constant raids of Spain's coast and returned to North Africa with captured Spaniards to either ransom or sell as slaves. However, Muslim corsairs and slave-masters also frequently offered their captives a chance to convert to Islam in exchange for their freedom. Meanwhile, Spanish theologians, religious scholars, the Crown, and Inquisition, hotly debated the nature of conversion as it related to the kingdom's Morisco and Converso population. By analyzing captivity chronicles, Inquisition records, and letters written by captives to their families in Spain, this thesis examines how Spanish captives in North Africa depicted their offers of conversion and how they articulated their own faith and religious identities. Ultimately, because they believed that internal faith – the supposed authentic religious beliefs of an individual – could not be altered through the practice of religious customs for even Spanish Christians who converted to Islam, the confessional experiences of Spanish captives captures the futility of Morisco evangelization.

INDEX WORDS: Early Modern Spain, Early Modern Mediterranean, Race and Slavery, Religion, Social History

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and family – past, present, and far away – whose sacrifices and love have given me all that I have in this world. I will never squander it.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In 1589, Muslim corsairs brought the newly captured Diego Galán before the Pasha of Algiers. As with many captives brought to North Africa, the Pasha offered Galán an opportunity to convert to Islam in exchange for his freedom. In the first edition of his autobiography, written for a Spanish audience, Galán wrote that he rejected this offer and instead defiantly told the Pasha that he could not convert to Islam because his "father was a Christian and his mother was a Christian and [he was] not to be a moor."[1] In other words, Galán believed that he could not convert because he inherited his faith from his parents therefore making his religious identity internal. In a second, longer edition of his autobiography, Galán slightly altered his response to the Pasha's offer. He wrote that "my parents were Christian, and there have been no Moors in my lineage, and I do not have to tarnish their blood with such a stain."[2] In this second retelling of the Pasha's offer, Galán more explicitly conceptualized his faith as a part of his genealogy and asserted that he was a committed Catholic because his blood was free of a non-Catholic heritage. By looking to his blood and familial lineage to affirm his Catholic faith, Galán looked to early modern racial rhetoric to further define his Catholic identity.

This thesis examines how both Catholic captives and renegades in North Africa, in response to the circumstances of western-Mediterranean corsair activity, reacted to and conceptualized the confessional boundaries between Islam and Christianity. At the time, corsair activity in the Mediterranean Basin consumed the lives of millions of Christians and Muslims alike. However, unlike their Muslim counterparts from North Africa that Catholic corsairs had captured and enslaved in Spain, North African

[1] Original: "Mi padre era cristiano y mi madre cristiana y que yo no había de ser moro." Diego Galán and Miguel Á. de Bunes and M. Barchino, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán* (Spain: Espuela de Plata, 2011), 35.
[2] Original: "Mis padres son cirstianos, y en mi linaje no ha habido moro alguno y no yengo de deslustar su sangre con tal manca." Diego Galán and Manuel Serrano Sanz, *Cautiverio y Trabajos de Diego Galán, Natural De Consuegra Y Vecino De Toledo, 1589 a 1600: Los Publica La Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles* (Madrid: Impr. Ibérica, 1913), 13 – 4.

Muslim slave-owners would in many cases offer Catholic captives a chance to convert to Islam. This offer, and sometimes threat, of conversion confronted captives in North Africa with two options. They could convert, thereby becoming a renegade, and obtain freedom, increased social and economic privileges, or even a chance to escape through their newfound status. Or, captives could remain steadfast in their faith and hope for a ransom or to escape.

For those who claimed to have remained steadfast in their faith and found their way back to Spain, the experience of captivity provoked some of them to produce a chronicle of their captivity. Much like in the case of Galán, these captivity chronicles would recount either the author's personal opportunity to convert or another captive's conversion. Consistent through this segment of the literature is their claim that the Islamic world never seduced them into converting. Furthermore, in their chronicles, steadfast Catholic captives provided judgments on the renegades they encountered. Conversely, because they had converted, renegades who returned to Spain had risked excommunication from their community and Spanish Catholic society all together. To be reintegrated back into Spain and their communities, renegades had to both invalidate their conversion and affirm their true Christian piety before the Inquisition. The ways in which steadfast Catholic captives and renegades both retold the circumstances of their offer to convert and conceptualized their Catholic faith emerged from a larger debate over conversion that took place in Spain. Ultimately, their defense of their Catholic faith reveals the belief that religious identities were defined by internal belief – the supposed authentic faith of an individual – and could not be altered through the external performance of another faith.

In other words, the confessional experiences of captives and renegades cast into relief a discourse on conversion in Spain which sought to invalidate migration between religious identities. From the end of the Reconquista through the seventeenth century, the conversion of individuals *away* from Christianity was not the focus of members of Spain's theological landscape. Instead, the Crown, Spanish ecclesiastics, and the Inquisition squarely placed their attention on the baptisms and assimilation of its newly conquered Muslim population, later known as Moriscos once Spanish Catholics baptized them. Anxieties over the

conversion of Moriscos and their loyalty to Spain, coupled with tensions between Spain and the Ottoman Empire, culminated in Philip III's Expulsion of the Moriscos decree in 1609. The expulsion of the Moriscos, though, was not inevitable. Rather, Philip III's infamous decree was the end-result of a century long period of intense and complicated scholarly debates seeking to identify Catholic orthodoxy, what it meant to be a loyal subject to the Spanish Crown, and ultimately the nature of conversion

Dating back to the fifteenth century, anxieties over the social and economic place of Spain's newly conquered Jewish and Muslim populations consumed the Crown and Spanish Inquisition. Regarding the Iberian Peninsula's Jewish population, by 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella instituted an edict which expelled practicing Jews out of Spain unless they converted.[3] And although the Spanish Crown initially allowed Mudéjares, Muslims living in Iberian-Christian territory, to practice their faith freely after the Fall of Granada, Spanish ecclesiastics and the Inquisition quickly began to view the continued practice of Islam as a threat to Catholic orthodoxy in Spain. For instance, in the *Repertorium Inquisitorium*, a dictionary meant to aid Inquisitors, the Inquisition began to define Mudéjares as not only "infidels," but also as apostates who directly contradicted Christian universalism.[4] Moreover, the presence of Mudéjares limited the authority of the Inquisition because it only officially had jurisdiction over baptized Christians.

As a result of these anxieties, by the tail-end of the fifteenth century, Catholic ecclesiastics came into conflict over how to evangelize Spain's Muslim population. This tension developed clearly in Granada. After the Fall of Granada in 1492, the region's new Archbishop, Hernando de Talavera, believed that Catholic ecclesiastics should carry out the baptisms of Mudéjares slowly and by speaking to them in Arabic so that they would sincerely embrace the Christian faith. However, Talavera's successor contradicted his efforts to persuade the individual souls of Mudéjares into adopting the Christian faith.

[3] For a discussion on the conversion and expulsion of Jews, see Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).
[4] Deborah Root, "Speaking Christian: Orthodoxy and Difference in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Representations*, no. 23 (1988): 120.

Backed by Ferdinand and Isabella, Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros carried out mass conversions of Granada's Muslim population through quick and coercive methods, going as far as to burn Arabic texts and throw holy water onto a mass of gathered Muslims.[5] Unlike Talavera, Cisneros' use of intimidation to convert Mudéjares sought to redefine their legal status, not the faith they followed in their intimate settings.[6] And although Cisneros' pedagogical technique won out in the end, these two figures represent two factions of a discourse on conversion that persisted throughout the sixteenth century – one of coercion and the other of sincere faith. The forced baptisms imposed by Cisneros eventually led to a Muslim revolt against the Spanish Crown for violating the Treaty of Granada in the region of Alpujarras, otherwise known as the First Rebellion of Alpujarras (1499 – 1501).

Coupled with the reality of the rebellion in Alpujarras and the Inquisition's anxieties surrounding the presence of Mudéjares and Germanías, by 1525, Charles V instituted forced baptisms of Muslims across Spain, thereby transforming the remaining Muslims into Moriscos.[7] The implementation of the forced baptisms, along with Spain's encounter with indigenous populations in the New World, invited intense scholarly debates over the nature of religious compulsion which almost monopolized religious discourses throughout the sixteenth century. These debates echoed Talavera and Cisneros's disputes over external versus internal faith. Like Cisneros, Francisco de Vitoria believed that internal faith was not necessary for religious salvation, a view also held by Bartolomé de Las Casas in the New World. While at first a critic of Muhammed's use of violence to convert individuals to Islam, Las Casas eventually argued that the practice of external faith and religious customs would resolve the use coercive baptisms.[8] Likewise, the Augustinian Tomás de Villanueva, Archbishop of Valencia from 1554 – 1555, prioritized

[5] Seth Kimmel, *Parables of Coercion: Conversion and Knowledge at the end of Islamic Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 18 - 9.
[6] Ibid., 19.
[7] It is important to note that the forced baptisms of Moriscos took multiple steps during the early sixteenth century. In 1502, Queen Isabella first implemented an edict of forced conversions in Castile, which was eventually extended to Navarre when the Spanish Crown annexed the kingdom in 1515. It was not until 1524 that Pope Clement VII officially sanctioned Charles V's decision to carry out conversions of Muslims throughout Castile and Aragon.
[8] Kimmel. *Parables of Coercion*, 48 - 61

the Morisco population's practice of Christian rituals over their internal belief.[9] Overall, while these figures maintained the distinction between internal faith and external practice, they ranked the latter over the former. Individuals like the Jesuit missionary José de Acosta, though, disagreed with his ecclesiastical counterparts by arguing that internal faith and individual agency during conversion *was* necessary for salvation.[10] Because of these competing ideologies, during the sixteenth century, a contentious and murky discourse developed among ecclesiastics and theologians who debated the importance of external religious customs versus internal belief.

While Spanish ecclesiastics and religious scholars debated the nature of conversion, anxieties surrounding the growing tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Spanish Crown fanned the flames of Morisco persecution. Out of fears that Moriscos would form a 'fifth-column' and ally themselves with Ottoman forces, Philip II banned Moriscos from owning weapons and seized their arms in 1563. Furthermore, backed by the Spanish Crown, the Inquisition codified heretical deviances in Edicts of Faith, which banned books in Arabic, Moorish clothing, Arabic names, forbade Moriscos from speaking Arabic, and prohibited a host of other marks of Islamic tradition.[11] The persecution of Islamic cultural practices, then, reflected both the military anxieties of the Spanish Crown and ecclesiastical fears surrounding Christian heterodoxy. By arguing that the expression of Arabic culture seemingly marked the heresy of Moriscos, these laws and religious codes supported an ecclesiastical faction which asserted that external religious customs defined faith. As if a self-fulfilling prophecy, though, the Spanish Crown's attempts to stifle Islamic cultural practices provoked a second violent rebellion in Alpujarras (1568 – 1571).

By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries, the rhetoric used to marginalize Morisco communities shifted away from external cultural markers to internal ones. Most notably, after attempting

[9] Benjamin Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 19.
[10] Kimmel, *Parables of Coercion*, 62.
[11] Root, "Speaking Christian", 126.

to teach his Morisco flock Christian orthodoxy, the Archbishop Juan de Ribera, among other critics of Morisco assimilation, began to argue that Moriscos could not truly be Catholic because their blood had been "tainted" by their Islamic ancestry. Based on this rhetoric, the Spanish Crown and Inquisition began to exclude Moriscos from participating in religious, civic, or educational institutions.[12] By looking to blood, Juan de Ribera permanently marked Moriscos as heretics and asserted that they could never truly assimilate into Spanish Catholic society. This migration toward genealogy was the conclusion of ecclesiastical and Inquisitorial debates which sought to anticipate any deviation from Christian orthodoxy.

Reinforced by the second Revolt of Alpujarras, this conceptualization of religious identity played a decisive role in Philip III's justification for the Expulsion of the Moriscos decree in 1609, which began a five-year long mass exodus of Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula to the Maghreb.[13] In the decree, Philip III declared that after many efforts to evangelize the Moriscos, scholars and ecclesiastics advised him that Moriscos "were persisting in their apostasy and perdition and were seeking to harm and subvert people of our kingdoms through their envoys and other ways…"[14] Meaning, because Philip III believed that Moriscos were crypto-Muslims, they threatened both the integrity of Spain's Christian identity and safety of Spain's Catholic population. The decree marked the culmination of a growing belief in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that Moriscos would always be loyal to Islam because of their lineage.

In sum, during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Spanish ecclesiastics, theologians, and scholars feverishly debated the nature of conversion. These debates focused on the conflict between internal belief and the external practice of faith and centered on the newly converted Moriscos. However, external conflicts, such as the two rebellions in Alpujarras, rivalries with the Ottoman Empire, and

[12] For instance, the Colegio Ribera in Valencia had only twenty-one seats which were reserved for students "who must be old Christians unstained by Moorish and Jewish blood through either parent." Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos*, 21.
[13] See, for instance, Mercedes Garcia-Arenal and Gerard Albert Wiegers, *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: A Mediterranean Diaspora*, trans. Consuelo Lopez-Morillas and Martin Beagle (Boston: Leiden, 2014).
[14] "Decree of Expulsion of the Moriscos, 1609," in *Early Modern Spain: A Documentary History*, ed. Jon Cowans (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 146.

Spain's expansion into the New World, did not allow these debates to develop on their own. Rather, as tensions grew between the Islamic world and Spain, and consequently between Moriscos and Old Catholics, the Spanish Crown and Inquisition began to assert that while Moriscos presented as Christians because of their look and religious customs, they could never truly abandon their internal religious heritage. This view of Moriscos implicitly reveals the dominantly held belief that the moment of baptismal coercion could not be overcome through Christian practice.

While debates over the convertibility of Muslims to Christianity were taking place in Spain, ultimately delegitimizing their migration between religious identities, the opportunity for conversion offered by Muslim slave owners to Catholic captives threatened hardening notions of faith and religious identity. The experience of captivity facilitated an encounter with the Islamic world that confronted Spanish Catholics with a choice to either commit to their faith and Catholic identities or abandon them and "turn Turk." And because of these individuals' heritage, debates over conversion had already shaped their worldviews. For those that wrote a chronicle of their captivity and claimed they remained steadfast in their faith, they described both the nature of their faith and why they were committed to it. For those that chose to convert and returned, they had to defend their decision before the Spanish Inquisition and even their communities. Through their depiction of the moment of conversion, both steadfast Catholic captives and renegades maintained that internal faith, not the expression of religious customs, defined religious identities. By exploiting the same logic used by the likes of Juan de Ribera and other critics of Morisco assimilation, the rhetoric used by these captives and renegades reinforced the futility of Morisco evangelization.

Chapter II

Rethinking the Early Modern Mediterranean: A Literature Review

Although scholars have yet to place the confessional experiences of Spanish captives in North Africa within Spain's larger debates over conversion, they have only recently begun to reconstruct the system of Mediterranean corsair activity. Through these studies, scholars have emphasized the significance and large-scale nature of corsair activity, which, as they argue, bound the early modern Mediterranean Sea together throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This trend in the field asserts that during this period, corsair activity integrated the economic, political, and religious spheres of the Mediterranean Basin while also fostering constant interactions between both state institutions and local actors in the Islamic and Christian worlds. This scholarship has also reshaped previous depictions of the early modern Mediterranean, primarily defined by Fernand Braudel and Andrew Hess, which overlooked the impact of corsair activity and instead almost exclusively focused on the large-scale institutional conflicts that segregated the sixteenth century sea between state polities.[15]

[15] Traditionally, scholars were split between Fernand Braudel and Andrew Hess' depiction of the seventeenth century Mediterranean Sea. On the one hand, Braudel focuses on how larger, more sweeping and invisible, environmental, economic, social and political forces defined the Mediterranean Sea. In other words, Braudel was interested in how outside forces acted upon the sea. Through this, he rejected previous scholarship which provided "one-dimensional" narratives that focused entirely on microscopic individual actors and events. In response to Braudel, Andrew Hess, took an institutional approach to studying the early-modern Mediterranean Sea. In this narrative, Hess divides the history of the Mediterranean between the Christian and Islamic worlds. He focuses on how the actions of formal states in the sixteenth century defined the Mediterranean Sea, wherein institutions of Latin Christendom and the Muslim world vied for power. This approach creates a neatly divided image of the Mediterranean Sea, split between Christian and Islamic states. However, while Braudel and Hess seem diametrically opposed, both of their narratives culminated in a Mediterranean Sea divided amongst homogenous states. Braudel argues that events such as the Conquest of Granada and the Battle of Lepanto allowed state institutions to replace individual actors and local authority in the sea. This culminated into the "Northern Invasion" wherein British, French, and Dutch merchants penetrated and fragmented the sea, replacing the religious enmity that dominated the sea in the sixteenth century with impersonal economic and political systems. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (London: Collins, 1972) and Andrew Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

Even though Braudel and Hess' depiction of the early-modern Mediterranean is incomplete, it does hold some truth regarding the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century. Before the Ottoman-Spanish Truce of 1581, the practice of captivity and ransom was almost entirely intertwined with the imperial and political ambitions of the Spanish and the Ottoman Empires. Luis de Mármol Carvajal is an exemplary case in which a captive's experience empowered Philip II's imperial ambitions. In 1535, Mármol went to North Africa as a soldier but ended up spending eight years as a captive in Algiers. After he returned, he published two volumes that detailed his captivity experience in 1573 and 1599, collectively known as *The General Description of Africa.* In it, Luis de Mármol provided a geographic and ethnographic study of North Africa and its people. In fact, in his prologue, Mármol wrote that his study "will be useful for the conquest of the villages of the African barbarian people…"[16] The case of Luis de Mármol Carvajal elucidates that the lived experiences of captives themselves provided an understanding, although an essentialized one, of Africa and the Islamic world that contributed to Philip II's project for empire-building.[17] This is likewise true for the process of ransoming lost Catholic souls.

During the reign of Philip II, redemption orders like the Mercedarians and Trinitarians lost their complete autonomy and became an imperially sponsored enterprise.[18] Before the sixteenth century, private sources of income and begging bowls in Churches across Spain funded Catholic-Iberia's redemption orders. When Philip II assumed the Spanish throne in 1556, he began a project to centralize political authority within the Iberian Peninsula and to protect the integrity of Catholicism in the face of the Protestant Reformation. Consequently, Philip II decided to fund and oversee redemption missions carried out by the Mercedarian and Trinitarian Orders, the largest redemption orders of their time. For Philip, sponsoring the redemption of captives proved to be a useful instrument in carrying out his

[16] Mar Martínez-Góngora, "El Discurso Africanista Del Renacimiento En *La Primera Parte De La Descripción General De África* De Luis Del Mármol Carvajal," *Hispanic Review* 77, no. 2 (2009): 171,
[17] Ibid., 173.
[18] Daniel Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early-Modern Spain and the Mediterranean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 49.

religious and imperial agendas. On the one hand, redeeming lost Catholic souls from the clutches of enslavement empowered his own Catholic image and reinforced his commitment to combating Protestant critiques of Catholicism. Moreover, sponsoring missions to ransom and save captives helped Philip II centralize authority over the Mercedarians and Trinitarians redemption orders.

Thus, before 1581, the economy of captivity and ransom was a by-product of the political, military, and religious ambitions of Spain and Philip II. Corsair activity was a secondary enterprise to the imperial interests of Spain, the large-scale battles that defined the sea, like the Battle of Lepanto (1571), and the larger institutional rivalries between the Ottoman and Spanish worlds. While battles like Lepanto resulted in thousands of individuals lost to the Ottoman Empire as captives, many regained their freedom relatively quickly, often within the same day.[19] As a result, historians tend to agree that larger and more dramatic maritime battles between states overshadowed corsair activity in the Mediterranean Sea. However, this quickly changed after the Ottoman-Spanish truce in 1581, which effectively ended the large-scale violence that the region had long been accustomed to.[20]

This truce, though, did not mean the end of religious and political enmity in the Mediterranean Sea. Previously, scholars following the logic of Braudel argued that after the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires signed the truce, the political, military, and economic activity in the Mediterranean Basin dwindled as Spain's interests shifted toward the New World and the Ottoman Empire focused on internal conflicts. However, privateering and corsair activity transformed with the end of large-scale battles and assumed the empty space that had been previously occupied by imperial forces.[21] After 1581, both Christian and Maghrebi fleets, corsairs, and soldiers increased the number of raids they carried out on European and North African coasts. And as corsair activity increased towards the end of the sixteenth

[19] Ibid., 9.
[20] For a history of this treaty, visit Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, part III, Chapter V, "Turco Spanish Peace Treaties: 1577 – 1584"
[21] Ellen Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), xvii.

century, the number of captives increased. This is because the pattern and methods of corsair activity changed – instead of a large mass of captives taken as prisoners of war, Christian and Muslim corsairs made their raids more often and took fewer captives at a time.[22] Still active, though, were state institutions, like Christian redemption orders, who now interacted almost entirely with local actors and privateers. As a result, the economy of captivity and ransom sustained the political and religious enmity of the sixteenth century that had previously been tied to maritime violence.

Over the past twenty years, scholars have increasingly begun to emphasize the significance of corsair activity in shaping the Mediterranean Basin during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[23] This is the case with Robert Davis' *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean*, which provides an in-depth study of the lives of Christian slaves from the moment of their capture to the social and economic roles they assumed as slaves. Additionally, Davis has done a great service to scholars by both cataloguing various corsair missions in the western Mediterranean and by quantifying the number of Christian slaves along the 'Barbary Coast.' According to his estimates, Davis writes that "Mediterranean slaving out-produced the trans-Atlantic slave trade during the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century."[24] In addition to Davis, a little less than a decade ago, Wolfgang Kaiser energized the study of corsair activity in the early modern Mediterranean by analyzing it as an "economy of ransom" that catalyzed trade between Islamic and Christian polities.[25] And although Kaiser overlooks the political and religious implications of this "economy of ransom," by framing corsair activity as a commercial network instead of as isolated incidents of piracy, he created a foundation for scholars to further investigate the significance of captivity and ransom.

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[22] Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 185.
[23] While research into corsair activity has increased this century, it is important to point out that Ellen G. Friedman's *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* is perhaps the earliest comprehensive examination of the circumstances and social lives of Spanish captives.
[24] Robert Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xxvi.
[25] Wolfgang Kaiser and Guillaume Calafat, "The Economy of Ransoming in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Religion and Trade*, 2014.

Following the precedent established by Kaiser, Daniel Hershenzon, the most recent and ground-breaking scholar on the subject, does not view captivity experiences as isolated incidents of piracy either. Unlike Kaiser, though, Hershenzon emphasizes the relevancy of religious and political institutions in shaping Kaiser's "economy of ransom." Hershenzon terms western-Mediterranean corsair activity during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the "political-economy of ransom" because it inadvertently constructed a network of state institutions and local actors that bound the Mediterranean Sea together and fostered constant economic, political, and violent interactions between Muslims and Christians. Involved in these interactions, as well, were Catholic and Islamic captives, their respective families and communities, corsairs, and ransom intermediaries. It is in his study of these interpersonal networks that Hershenzon provides a particularly novel contribution to this history of captivity and ransom. By tracing how corsair activity cultivated relationships among state institutions and local actors, Hershenzon asserts that the political-economy of ransom allowed for the diffusion of knowledge across the Mediterranean Sea. This aspect of the slave trade is made ever more unique considering that slave masters in North Africa actually encouraged their Catholic captives to send letters back to their families, usually as a way of inspiring captives' families to petition for a ransom.

Within the interpersonal webs of corsair activity, then, families in Spain could receive information about their captured kin from escaped captives, Spanish corsairs, or members of monastic ransom orders. In this way, the "political-economy of ransom" functioned as a network of information that could potentially shape how captives, and even corsairs, behaved while in Islamic North Africa. Hershenzon points out that "captives knew, for example, who among their fellow captives had converted to Islam, or had been and martyred, and how."[26] As a result, captives and corsairs alike faced anxieties that if they succumbed to Islamic culture or "turned Turk," their families, communities, and the Inquisition would certainly find out. Consequently, had a captive converted and returned to Spain, they

[26] Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea: Slavery*, 93.

risked losing their citizenship.[27] The presence of this fear motivated both Catholic captives and renegades to shape the narratives of this captivity, whether in their own captivity memoirs, to their families, or before the Inquisition, to defend the immutability of their Catholic faith.

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However, individual steadfast Catholics captives and renegades looked to different forms of rhetoric to affirm their commitment to the Catholic faith. Apparent through several of their chronicles, steadfast Catholics inscribed religious faith onto their bodies, and onto the bodies of renegades, as a way of asserting the immutability of religious identities. This form of rhetoric echoes a segment of confessional debates in Spain that viewed Islam and Christianity as two races apart from one another. On the other hand, renegades who returned to Spain or kept in contact with their families and communities, did not explicitly use racial rhetoric to defend their faith. Instead, they argued before the Inquisition and to their families that their captors had coerced them into converting and that their hearts never truly abandoned the Catholic faith. While renegades and steadfast Catholic captives defended their Catholic faith through different rhetorical strategies, they all argued that faith was internally fixed – and that this internal faith, not external practice, defined religious identities. This sentiment echoes the ecclesiastical and royal treatment toward Moriscos, which ignored Moriscos' external expression of the Catholic faith and instead believed that their internal faith was committed to Islam. Because this thesis compares how different captives and renegades conceptualized the confessional boundaries between Islam and Christianity, it reads captivity chronicles along with Inquisition records and letters written by renegades.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, captives produced some of the most important literature on Islamic North Africa. Most famous of all these captives was Miguel de Cervantes whose literary canon was deeply influenced by his captivity experience. In 1575, four years after he served Spain in the Battle of Lepanto, Cervantes set sail back to his home. Attached to him were two letters of

[27] Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early-Modern Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 64 - 93.

recommendation written by Don Juan of Austria and the Duke of Sessa for his service in the battle. On his voyage, a storm cast Cervantes off his ship and into the hands of Maghrebi corsairs who brought him to Algiers. Because of the letters attached to him, the corsairs that captured Cervantes mistakenly believed he came from a wealthy family. Consequently, they considered him to be a *cautivo de rescate* (ransomable captive). Because of his perceived status, Cervantes spent the next five years in a royal bagnio until some visiting Trinitarians mustered up a ransom for him.[28] Cervantes captured his captivity experience in *Don Quixote* and some of his most celebrated plays – *The Bagnios of Algiers* and *The Great Sultana.*

Scholars have studied what the literary representations of captivity might say about the confessional experiences of captives. Most notable among these scholars is Barbara Fuchs who analyzed how Golden Age authors such as Cervantes and Lope de Vega represented captivity as a means of defining Spanish identity in the seventeenth century. Fuchs notes that a consistent theme throughout captivity literature is how the circumstances of captivity threatened a captive's Christian identity. Through an examination of this conflict, Fuchs argues that the Spanish literary canon on captivity served to consolidate a national Catholic identity.[29] While Fuchs' argument is convincing, her scope is limited. Because she solely analyzes fictional works of captivity, Fuchs is not able to fully articulate how the lived experiences of captivity shaped the identities of individual captives.

This thesis examines a larger canon of captivity literature, including both the fictional works of Cervantes and captivity chronicles that detail the lived experiences of their authors. More specifically, it investigates how offers of conversion forced steadfast Catholic captives to reexamine their own identities. Captives who were confronted with a chance to convert, and interacted with other captives who did convert, often times relied on racial rhetoric to define their own identities and those they encountered.

[28] See María Antonia Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive's Tale* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 2002)
[29] Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 140.

Through their depictions of both the Islamic World and the moment of conversion, the literature produced by Spanish Catholics involved in the practice of captivity and ransom both projects and reinforces a discourse in early-modern Spain which racialized religious differences.

Three former captives and one Spanish corsair authored the following constellation of sources at the focus of this study. Of the former, Spanish ecclesiastics wrote two of the following works. However, these captivity chronicles do not recount their respective authors' day-to-day life in captivity but are instead topographical, historical, and cultural descriptions of Islamic North Africa. Born in Portugal, but a Spanish citizen by 1576, Antonio de Sosa was a well-respected ecclesiastic in both Spain and Italy. While aboard the San Pablo in 1577, set for the city Valletta on the island of Malta, Berber corsairs captured and then brought Antonio de Sosa to Algiers where he was sold to Ka'id Muhammed, a Jewish renegade who himself heavily invested in corsair activity.[30] De Sosa spent the next four years as a prisoner in Muhammed's home until he escaped in 1581. While there, he closely inspected and recorded the city of Algiers' topography, socioeconomic life, and religious community. On October 19th, 1612, the Spanish Crown posthumously published his study under the name of the author's nephew and editor, Diego de Haedo.[31]

Likewise, Jerónimo Gracián was a Carmelite priest. Born in Valladolid on June 6th, 1547, both of Gracián's parents worked in the imperial court. In 1593, Muslim corsairs captured Gracián and sold him in Tunis where spent the subsequent eighteen months as a captive.[32] In 1609, about fifteen years after he returned from his captivity, he finished his *Treaty on the Redemption of Captives*. While Gracián's personal experiences appears in the chronicle, the work primarily functions as a type or propaganda, calling his fellow Catholics to action in redeeming lost captive souls.

[30]Antonio de Sosa, *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam: Antonio de Sosas' Topography of Algiers (1612)*, ed. Garcés María Antonia., trans. Diana de Armas Wilson (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 41.
[31] Ibid., 3.
[32] Jerónimo Gracián and Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra and Beatriz Alonso Acerco, *Tratado de la redención de cautivos* (Spain: Espuela de Plata, 2006)

A Spanish layman who began his captivity as a boy wrote the remaining chronicle of captivity, of which he wrote two editions. Both editions of his memoir are similar and described his own personal experiences in captivity. At the age of fourteen, Diego Galán left Consuegra, a village in the province of Toledo, to travel to the city of Oran, which the Castilians had conquered eighty years earlier, in hopes of becoming soldier. However, Galán never made it there. While sailing to the Spanish territory, the Albanian renegade Arnaut Mamí attacked the ship Galán was aboard, captured him, and brought him to Algiers to be sold as a slave.[33] There, Galán was sold into slavery where he spent the subsequent eleven years traveling across the Ottoman Empire until he escaped in 1600.

Regarding the Spanish corsair included in this study, Alonso de Contreras was born on January 6th, 1582 in Madrid. By the age of fifteen, Contreras had left his home in Madrid and joined an army leaving the city. By 1600, he was already a professional soldier and have been a part of several skirmishes within the Ottoman Empire. In 1611, Contreras became a member of the Knights of Malta, which, among its various activities, functioned as the Spanish equivalent to Algerian corsairs. At fifty years of age, Contreras began to write his autobiography.[34] In it, he recounts his various adventures across the Mediterranean. While Contreras never experienced being a captive, corsair activity drew him further into Mediterranean activity and catalyzed his often-violent interactions with Muslims and the Ottoman Empire.

What most clearly binds these works together is that the experiences with corsair activity defined the lives of Antonio de Sosa, Jerónimo Gracián, Diego Galán, and Alonso de Contreras. All four authors became victim to, or benefited from, the political-economy of ransom during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. While these figures experienced the world of corsair activity, in Spain, racial distinctions between Muslims and Catholics were calcifying and becoming increasingly contentious.

[33] Galán, *Relación del Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán*, 31.
[34] Philip Dallas, introduction to *The Adventures of Captain Alonso de Contreras: A 17th Century Journey*, by Alonso de Contreras (New York: Paragon House, 1989), xxii.

Furthermore, it is important to note that Galán and Contreras were not able to publish their autobiographies during their lifetimes. Instead, their manuscripts were left in the archives until scholars published them in the twentieth century. While these manuscripts might have circulated around the author' immediate interpersonal networks, it is impossible to know how far reaching their works were.

In addition to the sources left behind by captives who claimed to have remained steadfast during their captivity, this thesis also examines the archival remains of renegades. Because the political-economy of ransom provided early modern individuals an opportunity to send letters and information across the Mediterranean Sea, renegades, along with captives, often maintained contact with their families back in Spain. These letters provide an intimate glance into how renegades themselves defended their conversion and how their kin and community members reacted to their conversion. Furthermore, renegades appear frequently in Inquisition cases. Although a minority of cases, renegades sometimes exploited their status in the Islamic world to escape back to Spain. Once they reached Spanish soil, either patrolling Spanish soldiers found them and brought them before the Inquisition or the renegades submitted themselves before a tribunal. In these cases, renegades retold the circumstances of their conversion, their religious experiences as renegades, and information on the Islamic world, all in an effort to defend their internal Christian faith. In sum, what appears through these sources are the risks of conversion, its consequences, and how renegades understood the nature of faith and religious identities.

These captivity chronicles, Inquisition cases, and letters reveal how the experience of captivity shaped Spaniards. Moreover, they reveal how their worldview shaped their perception of the Islamic world. In this way, I treat these sources as both the lived experiences of captives and renegades and as vehicles which project how early modern Spaniards understood conversion and religious identity. However, to be clear, these are not mutually exclusive entry points to analyze these sources. Fundamental to my argument is that these narratives are only able to intersect with an Iberian discourse on religious identity and faith because of the encounter with both conversion and the Islamic world provided by western-Mediterranean corsair activity.

Chapter III

A Captive's Tale: Captives, Corsairs, and Race

In North Africa, captives negotiated their identities between the circumstances of their captivity, their social place in Spain, and the larger system of corsair activity that surrounded them. While caught between these spheres of influences and in the face of what Spanish people perceived to be the corrupting influence of the Islamic world, some captives turned to racial rhetoric as a way of affirming their commitment to the Catholic faith. The primary catalyst that provoked captives to look to racial language was the opportunity for conversion that they encountered in Islamic North Africa. But because Islamic slave-owners and corsairs allowed captives to keep in contact with their families back in Spain, usually as a way of encouraging families to petition for a ransom, captives confronted with a chance to convert had to consider their circumstances with the potential consequences that could face them if they ever returned home. This is because, in addition to their own lives, captives transmitted information on other captives they encountered. As a result, an escaped captive could alert his/her communities in Spain that another captured kin or neighbor had died, been sold into slavery, or even converted to Islam.

This is clear in the case of Gaspar de los Reyes, a captive turned renegade originally from city of La Orotava, located on the island of Tenerife.[35] Twice a captive in Algiers, de los Reyes ransomed himself to freedom only for Muslim corsairs to capture him once again in 1670. During his second stint as a captive, Reyes succumbed to conversion. What is noteworthy about Reyes' conversion was its reception back in his community in Spain. Soon after Reyes converted to Islam, a fellow captive, Francisco Marquez, escaped his captivity. Attached to him was a letter for Ynés Hernández Sardiña which included news on Reyes' conversion. When Marquez gave Sardiña the letter, she subsequently gave it to nearby

[35] AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 1824-2.

women for it to be read aloud in front of the community. The Inquisition recorded that when the letter was read, "all of the people stood amazed by the news they heard…".[36] The news of Reyes' conversion came as a shock to his community because one of its members had abandoned the necessary qualification to be a member of that community. The case of Reyes' conversion and his community's astonishment at this news illustrates that by converting, captives risked social isolation and communal excommunication. Because of this effect, the network of information cultivated by the political-economy of ransom had the potential to discipline captives' from afar.

And because there was a lag on the movement of information, with information sometimes arriving decades after a captive converted or escaped,[37] this network also shaped how escaped captives relayed the narratives of their captivity. In other words, because captives were aware of the social consequences that came with conversion and any religious deviances they committed during their captivity, former captives, and even Alonso de Contreras, double-downed on the immutability of their faith. As a way of assuaging any suspicion that they had converted or been corrupted by the Islamic world, former captives relied on racial rhetoric to assert their commitment to the Catholic faith. Furthermore, Antonio de Sosa and Alonso de Contreras projected the racialization of faith onto their depictions of renegades as well. Altogether, this rhetoric echoes the same discourse in Spain which racialized religious identities as a way of invalidating the conversion of Moriscos.

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Before proceeding, it is important to define race as it pertains to the early modern world. Because this thesis seeks to place the experiences of Catholic captives in North Africa within the context of Iberian-race formation, it integrates a blossoming historiography of Mediterranean captivity and ransom

[36] Original: "Y todas las personas que estaban presentes quedaron admiradas de las razones referidas que oyeron leer a dicha carta" Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 94.
[37] In the case of the renegade Francisco Verdera, which will be analyzed in the next chapter, a family-member brought his letters to the Inquisition years after Verdera died. These letters were used in Verdera's post-mortem Inquisitorial trial.

with an older and more contentious historiography on race and conversion in early-modern Spain. Within this literature, historians have debated whether conceptions of race were present in early-modern Spain. Much of this debate has centered around the convertibility of Muslims and Jews to Catholicism. This thesis accepts that the Old Catholics in Spain inscribed religious beliefs onto the bodies of early modern individuals as a way of constructing boundaries between New and Old Christians. This is not to say, however, that early modern individuals conceptualized race and genetics as scientists and scholars came to understand it in the nineteenth century. Rather, as a way of constructing a social hierarchy predicated on Catholic orthodoxy, Old Catholics looked to fixed aspects of an individual, such as blood and lineage, to locate faith and define an individual's religious identity.[38]

However, not all scholars agree that the marginalization of Moriscos was indeed a racial practice. For instance, in *Speaking of Spain*, Antonio Feros investigates the development and construction of Spanish national identity from the fifteenth century onward and its relationship with evolving notions of race. While the scope of his work examines the entire Spanish Empire for a period of over three hundred years, he does pay special attention to the experiences of Moriscos and Conversos in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Feros argues, though, that while anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim prejudices motivated the discrimination of Moriscos and Conversos, this discrimination was "not so much "racial" as national."[39] Furthermore, Feros writes that this discrimination "does not connote the invention of scientific racism."[40] Feros points out that distinctions based on lineage were not wholly accepted in Spain and that during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, "Spaniards did not possess a clear and coherent vision of humanity as divided into radically different races."[41] Instead, Feros links developing notions of nation and race to the construction of empire during the eighteenth century, which shaped perceptions of

[38] See, for instance, Cedric D. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000) or Geraldine Heng. *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
[39] Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain: The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 77.
[40] Ibid., 77.
[41] Ibid., 113.

"Spanish-ness" and the "other" based on encounters with those at the margins of the Spanish Empire in the New World. Although Feros deemphasizes the use of blood-purity rhetoric in dividing the New Christians from Old Christians, other scholars emphasized how Old Catholic Spaniards used these rhetorical devices in ordering early-modern Spanish society.

Deborah Root summarized the lead-up to this moment. In her article, "Speaking Christian: Orthodoxy and Difference in Sixteenth-Century Spain," Root argues that the marginalization of Mudéjares, and then Moriscos, took three distinct steps from the fall of Granada in 1492 to Philip III's Expulsion Decree. She points out that during this period, Old Catholics considered Mudéjares to be infidels not only because of their faith but also because of the cultural customs tied to Islam. Root argues that as a result, once the Spanish Crown instituted forced baptisms of Mudéjares, the Inquisition was able to persecute Moriscos for continuing Islamic social and cultural practices.[42] Root notes that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the "continuing existence and seeming proliferation of (unmarked) private codes became an index of Morisco *impenitence*."[43] Eventually, Old Catholics and ecclesiastics turned to the familial lineages of Moriscos to assert their inherent heresy. However, while Root emphasizes the use of genealogy as a means of constructing a social hierarchy, even she does not explicitly label these social distinctions as racial ones.

While Root does not articulate the rhetoric used to marginalize Moriscos as a racializing practice, scholars since the publication of her article have argued in favor of the presence of racial hierarchies in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain. These scholars, such as Walter D. Mignolo, more explicitly argue that religious differences formed the foundations of racial divisions in Spain. In a series of ground-breaking articles on race in early modern Spain, Mignolo writes that "theology served as the conceptual framework to argue "racial differences."[44] Moreover, scholars such as James H. Sweet and George

[42] Root, "Speaking Christian", 130.
[43] Ibid., 136.
[44] Margaret Rich. Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empire,* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008), 312-13.

Mariscal argue that pseudo-scientific rhetoric is also present within this discourse of race and religion in early modern Spain. Mariscal writes that "biological or pseudo-biological considerations were always already at the heart of religious justifications that were taking shape at the level of ideology. Old Christians and the Inquisition delineated contaminated groups based on their religious beliefs, but these religious beliefs were inheritable."[45] In sum, these scholars argued that during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Old Catholics believed they inherited their faith from their parents, thereby making their religious identities immutable.[46] To articulate the genealogy of faith, before the advent of nineteenth and twentieth century pseudo-Darwinian conceptions of genetics, early modern Spanish Catholics relied on blood-purity language to further inscribe religious identities onto the bodies of early modern individuals.

This scholarship has permeated into more traditional histories of early-modern Spain as well. For example, in *Between Christians and Moriscos*, Benjamin Ehlers examines Christian-Morisco relations in Valencia from the perspective of the city's Archbishop, Juan de Ribera. While celebrated by his Christian followers, Juan de Ribera proved to be instrumental in Philip III's decision to expel the Moriscos in 1609. As a way of criticizing the religious heterodoxy committed by Moriscos, Ribera depicted Muslims as a distinct race apart from Old Catholics because of their religious lineage, which he did not trust in light of

[45] It is important to note that I am not arguing that Spain was in any way the front runner of racism and the construction of race. To do so, I risk reinforcing 'black legend' stereotypes about the atrocities committed by the Castilian, and later, Habsburg Empires. Rather, scholars have noted that while racial logic was used to distinguish Old Christians from New Christians in the Iberian Peninsula, Spain itself was essentialized and was the subject of racial prejudices from its European neighbors. Most notably, through the construction of the Black Legend, England and France saw Spain as a race apart from themselves. As Mignolo writes, "England distinguished themselves from the Spaniards, who, the English said, had Moorish blood and acted as barbarians in the New World." In this way, I am not arguing that Old Catholics constructed a unique conception of race, but because of the intermingling of Moriscos, Conversos, and Catholics, the Iberian environment fostered a contentious space which allowed conceptions of race to take political effect. Ibid., 314.

[46] Here, the transfer of biological racism through blood shaped gender norms as well. For instance, Mary Elizabeth Perry notes that Old Catholics obsessed over maintaining the purity of their blood and consequently sought to heavily monitor female chastity. Perry argues that Old Catholics believed that the burden of maintaining a lineage's pure blood rested on the mother's womb and required religious doctrine, such as the Tridentine Enclosure, to extend beyond the convent and onto laywomen. Mary E. Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 6.

Spain's ongoing conflicts with the Ottoman Empire. Ribera's views on the racial divide between Moriscos and Old Catholics is further exposed in the aftermath of the Expulsion Decree. After the mass migration of Moriscos to the Maghreb, Ribera encouraged Philip III to sell the remaining Morisco children into slavery out of fear that their presence in Spain would continue to threaten and contaminate the purity of Catholic blood. Ehlers writes, "in his letter, the final written word on the subject, Ribera encapsulated his vision of the Moriscos as a race apart, embodying a heresy passed down through the generations."[47] In this way, Ehlers highlights the political significance of racial rhetoric in constructing social hierarchies within the Christian Iberian Peninsula.

Therein lies the limit on this historiographic trend, though. These scholars primarily rely on legal sources and religious codes produced by prominent ecclesiastics. This prevents them from investigating how deeply rooted developing ideologies of race religious difference were among Old Catholic Spaniards. Islamic corsairs captured Spaniards regardless of their political or economic standing in Spain, and in the following unique case, a low-class Spanish Catholic rose the ranks to become a renowned corsair. Essentially, the indiscriminate violence of the political-economy of ransom had the potential to provoke Spanish Catholics on the margins of Old Catholic society to produce literature that not only described their experiences, but also how their worldviews shaped their experiences.[48] As a result, by looking at the literature produced by captives and corsairs, this thesis does not exclusively examine Spanish Catholics who were ecclesiastics. Thus, this research supports and supplements a historiographic trend which argues that early modern forms of race, justified through religious difference, did exist in Spain.

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For Diego Galán, his depiction of the conversion scene in the market functions as the moment in which his anxieties and values converged, culminating in his refusal to convert because he believed he

[47] Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos*, 148.
[48] Daniel Hershenzon points out, as well, that even illiterate captives could dictate their letters to be recorded and sent to their families and communities back home. Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 94-5.

was immutably Catholic. Otherwise known as a souk in Arabic, the zoco was a marketplace where, among many things, corsairs sold their recently stolen captives and goods. Antonio de Sosa wrote that "Christians are sold by proclamation and auction in the Souk, a street that contains the most important shops of merchandise."[49] Here, de Sosa signaled to the reader how commercially vital corsair activity was to the city of Algiers, which was the largest corsair city in the western Mediterranean Basin at the time. Furthermore, beyond its commercial activity, de Sosa portrayed the zoco as a space bustling with people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, all of whom came from across Europe and the Maghreb.[50] Daniel Hershenzon argues that the marketplace blurred social, racial, and ethnic identities.[51] This is perhaps true for Algerian slave masters who did not purchase captives based on ethnic or racial lines, but it is not entirely true for captives being sold. For, as in the case with Diego Galán, the market had the potential to serve as a place to reinforce racial identities.

Three days after arriving in Algiers, the renegade Arnaut Mamí, a famed corsair who also captured Antonio de Sosa, brought Galán to the zoco to be sold. There, Galán went through a physical examination, a process he compared to a donkey being sold in Spain, to assess how much he was worth.[52] Although Galán's description of the physical inspection echoes a similar process Muslim slaves underwent in Spain, it captures the embarrassing and dehumanizing experiences Catholic captives underwent, and invited sympathy from his early modern readers for the dishonor that captivity brought upon their Catholic brethren. After three days in the market, a renegade from Toledo, Galán's hometown, bought him for one hundred-fifty ducats. As was customary, though, his potential new master brought Galán before the Pasha of Algiers before he was formally sold. There, the Pasha could have decided between essentially three options: enslave Galán for himself, let the renegade who bought him keep him, or offer Galán a chance to convert to Islam.

[49] De Sosa, *Topography of Algiers*, 164.
[50] Ibid., 165.
[51] Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 23.
[52] Galán, *Relación de Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán,* 33.

Not all captives had the opportunity to convert, though. In fact, slave masters kept certain captives in prison because they could fetch a high ransom. During their captivity, both Antonio de Sosa and Miguel de Cervantes found themselves in the same bagnio, an Algerian prison, because the former was a high-ranking ecclesiastic and the latter seemed to be a renowned soldier from a noble background. In this way, the offer of conversion marked the value of a captive and his potential to help the interests of the Ottoman Empire. At the time of his capture, the Pasha offered the fourteen-year Galán a chance to convert in exchange for his freedom. The Pasha did so either because he viewed Galán as a potential corsair or simply because he didn't believe Galán would fetch a high ransom. Most likely, though, as with many adolescent boys, the Pasha offered Galán a chance to convert because he believed the Toledan boy would enter the ranks of the Janissaries.[53] Essentially, the chance for Galán's return to Spain was dim and he only stood to benefit from his conversion.

Nevertheless, even with the chance to become a renegade in exchange for his freedom, Galán asserted that he could not convert to Islam because his Catholic faith was a product of his lineage and, therefore, a part of his blood. Again, in reference to the introduction of this article, Galán provided two accounts of this moment of conversion. In his first captivity chronicle, written some thirty years after he returned to Spain, Galán did not explicitly rely on "blood-purity" rhetoric to defend his steadfast faith. About a decade later, in a second version of his captivity chronicle, Galán consciously inscribed his Catholic faith on his blood. This use of "blood-purity" rhetoric echoed critics of Morisco assimilation, like Juan de Ribera. The difference, however, is that in Spain, Ribera and Old Catholics marshaled "blood-purity" rhetoric as a way of arguing that Moriscos could not escape their own Islamic heritage. In a mirrored way, Galán believed that his own religious identity was not a product of external practice, but of body and lineage. In this way, Galán's captivity chronicle supplements this discourse by *explicitly* stating he could not escape his own Catholic heritage because it was an inalienable part of his being.

[53] AHN, *Inquisición* Libro 862, fol. 2

Moreover, by explicitly using "blood-purity" rhetoric to argue that he could not escape his Catholic identity, Galán anticipated any doubt of his commitment to the faith.

In fact, in his depiction of this offer for conversion, Galán made note of the anxiety he felt over the notion that if he converted, his parents in Toledo would find out. After the Pasha and other renegades repeatedly tried to persuade Galán to convert, the Toledan native wrote that the "angel put before me the honor of my parents and that there was no secret in this world and that when I arrived in my place and in Toledo, someone that knew me in Algiers and Constantinople would appear, and that would be shameful."[54] Galán understood the repercussions of converting to Islam – in a way that mirrored the surveillance of Moriscos during the sixteenth century, which was that he could not convert and practice Islam without his parents in Toledo finding out. And with these potential consequences in mind, Galán remained steadfast in his faith. But, by relying on "blood-purity" rhetoric earlier in his memoir, he asserted his Old Catholic status as a way of affirming his commitment to the faith. Galán's anxieties that his community might believe his encounter with the Islamic world corrupted him is present in Alonso de Contreras' autobiography as well.

Contreras recounted a story from early in his career when he came to Stampalia, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, and saved a priest from a Christian pirate. The story certainly painted Contreras as a defender of the faith. Because of this, once he saved the priest, the village offered Contreras a Christian wife. Contreras denied their offer though, and told the village that "it was impossible, because besides having to return to Malta to complete what I had been entrusted with, it would be a shame on my name because they would not say that I had married on Christian land and with a Christian, but in Turkey, and that I renounced my faith that is so dear to me."[55] Here, Contreras emphasized his commitment to the

[54] Original: "El ángel me ponía por delante la honra de mis padres y que no había cosa secreata en este mundo, y apenas hube llegado a mi lugar y a Toledo, cuando hallé quien me había conocido en Argel y en Constantinopla, y hubiera quedado muy feo…" Diego Galán, *Relacion de Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán,* 36.
[55] Original: "Era imposible hacer lo que me pedía, porque además de tener que tornar a Malta a dar cuenta de lo que se me había encomendado, era dar nota de de mi persona y no dirian que quedaba casado en tierra de cristianos y con cristiana, sino en Turquia,y renegando la fe que tanto estimo" Alonso de Contreras, 'Vida Del Capitan Alonso

Catholic faith – that he would not compromise his faith for any personal glory or benefits. Moreover, his anecdote comments on the anxieties that Catholics, like Galán and Contreras, faced when interacting with the Islamic world. Contreras' anxieties stem from a possible accusation that his faith might have been in some way corrupted by simply being near Ottoman territory. Contreras alleviates these fears, though, by racializing religious differences and affirming his Old Catholic heritage.

In fact, like Galán, Contreras also looked to his lineage to assert that his Catholic identity was internally fixed. Contreras opened up his autobiography by giving a brief history of his name and writing that "my parents were Old Christians without Jewish or Muslim race in them; and they never had to repent for heresy in front of the Spanish Inquisition."[56] Here, it is important to stress that Contreras employed the word "Raza" in regards to his parent's heritage.[57] Of course, *raza* translates to "race" in English, but it does require some analysis regarding its relevance in early modern Spain. The most contemporaneous definition of *raza* to Contreras was in Sebastian de Covarrubias Orozco's *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellano o Española,* which he published in 1611. Orozco's definition harkened back to older notions of *raza* that were tied to the breed of thoroughbred horses. He added to this definition, though, that "…Race in [human] lineages is understood pejoratively, as having some Moorish or Jewish race."[58] In this way, Contreras conceived of his Catholic faith as a product of his genealogy, and following this logic, viewed Jews and Muslims as a race apart from himself. Through this worldview, Contreras, along

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de Contreras,' in *Autobiografias de Soldados: Siglo XVII*, ed. Jose M. De Cossio (Madrid: De La Real Academia Espanola, 1956), 91.

[56] "Original: "Fueron mis padres cristianos viejos, sin raze de moros ni judiós, no penitenciados por el Santo Oficio…" Contreras, 'Vida Del Capitan Alonso de Contreras,' 77.

[57] This rhetoric returns later in Contreras' autobiography when, in 1608, the Spanish secular court tried him for conspiring with a community of Moriscos in Hornachos. At the time, a year before the expulsion, rumors flooded Spain that the Moriscos were going to once again start a rebellion. Because the Spanish Crown did not allow Moriscos to own any weapons, the secular court accused Contreras of encouraging a Morisco rebellion because he allegedly did not report a bundle of muskets that was found in a Morisco home in Hornachos. In truth, it was Contreras' captain did not report the muskets and tried shuffle the blame onto Contreras. Nevertheless, authorities arrested Contreras and brought him to court to testify his innocence. However, the magistrate in charge of the case examined the familial history of Contreras and declared him innocent because he did not find any Jewish or Islamic blood in his lineage. Contreras' depiction of the outcome of this case suggests that his familial lineage was sufficient evidence to assuage any accusations that he had been in league with the Moriscos.

[58] Greer, Mignolo, and Quillgan, *Rereading the Black Legend,* 12.

with Galán, believed that religious identities were fixed onto the physical bodies of the individual. By mentioning his heritage, Contreras defended the honor of his family while also endorsing the purity of his lineage, thereby affirming to the reader his internal Catholic faith.

Alonso de Contreras inscribed the Christian heritage of renegades onto their bodies in the same vain, even though he did not solely rely on blood-purity language. In his autobiography, Alonso narrates a skirmish he got into with a Turkish ship early in his career as privateer and corsair. After defeating the ship and capturing the surviving Muslims aboard, he made note of a Moor lying dead in the water. He wrote that, "among the dead moors there was on that was lying on its back, which was contrary to Moors and Turks, that when their dead are in the sea, their body is face down."[59] Confused by this, Contreras looked to his Muslim captives and asked why this particular Muslim was not floating on his chest – face front into the water. Contreras wrote that the captives "had always suspected he was a Christian, he was a renegade, when he abandoned his faith he was a Frenchman."[60] Here, Contreras claimed that true religious faith was written on the physical bodies of both Muslims and Christians even if they seemingly participated in the rituals of conversion and abandoned their original identities. Contreras, then, perceived the external markers of faith, such as Turkish garb, to be distinct from the religious lineage and origins of the individual. Antonio de Sosa echoed this sentiment in his depiction of renegades as well.

In his *Topography of Algiers,* Antonio de Sosa provided a detailed description of renegades. He called these renegades "Turks by profession" and provided a list of all the various nations and ethnicities renegades might be from, writing that "there is no Christian nation on earth that has not produced renegades in [Algiers]."[61] Even though renegades elected to convert to Islam, Antonio de Sosa maintained that they nevertheless had "Christian blood."[62] In calling them "Turks by profession" and maintaining that

[59] Original: "Entre los muchos Muertos que se echaron a la mar hubo uno que quedo uno boca arriba, cosa muy contraria a los moros y tucos, que en echandolos muertos a la mar, al punto vuelven la cara y cuerpo hacia abajo" Contreras, 'Vida Del Capitan Alonso de Contreras,' 88.
[60] Original: "Siempre lo habían tenido es sospecha de cristiano, que era renegado bautizo, y cuando renégo era ya hombre de la nación fracesca" Ibid., 88.
[61] De Sosa, *Topography of Algiers,* 125.
[62] Ibid., 125.

their blood was Christian, de Sosa asserted that renegades converted in name only and solely for the economic and social benefits of being a Muslim. This notion, then, delegitimized their commitment to the Islamic faith. In fact, de Sosa explicitly stated, "what moves some of these men to forsake the true path of God, at such great peril to their souls, is nothing more than the fainthearted refusal to take on the work of slavery".[63] Furthermore, by maintaining the "Christian blood" of renegades, de Sosa implied that while renegades were apostates, they were not a race apart. He asserted that their conversion was merely superficial and that their Catholic identity is inescapable.

Antonio de Sosa's racial logic went beyond his description of born-Christians and use of blood-purity rhetoric. In his *Topography,* he constructed a taxonomy of the inhabitants of Algiers which also doubled as a scathing critique of the native Muslims in the city. Antonio de Sosa identified these native Muslims as "Turks by nature" because they were individuals that either came from Turkey themselves or were children of people who did. Essentially, they were born-Muslims. "Turks by nature" were distinct, then, from "Turks by Profession" who simply assumed an Islamic exterior. While de Sosa considered the latter to be enemies of the faith, he viewed them as Christians despite this exterior. Conversely, de Sosa depicts born-Muslims as brute animals and writes that they were the "vilest of people, stupid and villainous." However, de Sosa made sure to distinguish between the two halves of the Ottoman Empire, the eastern Anatolian ones and the European Romanian ones. He then privileged the Romanian Ottomans over their Anatolian counterparts, observing that that they were "more lively and talented as well as whiter." Conversely, Antonio de Sosa noted that the people of Anatolia were "grosser and more simple-minded. Somewhat more dark skinned, and of a less attractive figure and proportion."[64] Through these depictions, De Sosa related his cultural prejudice against Romanian and Anatolian Ottomans with their skin tones. While not related to conversion, this example nevertheless captures an effort by Spanish Catholics to categorize people based on fixed physical markers. In the same way, to make absolute

[63] Ibid., 125.
[64] Ibid., 120.

distinctions between Christians and Moriscos, whose physical appearance might be indistinguishable, he looked to internal faith to define religious identities.

By racializing both their own religious identities and those of renegades, Contreras, Galán, and de Sosa reinforced the impregnable divide between Christianity and Islam. On the one hand, Galán and Contreras asserted the immutability of their Catholic identity by affirming the purity of their Christian genealogy, untainted by Islamic or Jewish heritage. In this way, Galán and Contreras viewed internal faith as a product of the body. This view remains consistent in Contreras and de Sosa's depiction of renegades. By inscribing renegades' Christian heritage onto their bodies, they implicitly invalidated their conversion. In other words, they distinguished between the external practice of faith and the internal body – the latter of which truly carried an individual's faith and religious identity. Their use of genealogical and "blood-purity" rhetoric reflects the same debates over the nature of religious identities and faith in Spain. Like the figures presented above, critics of assimilation like Juan de Ribera believed that religious faith was a manifestation of lineage, something internal. Because of this logic, these figures considered external religious identities to be immutable because true faith could never be altered through conversion. And while the figures above relied on racial rhetoric to inscribe religious identities on to early modern individuals, this is not wholly consistent among steadfast captives and renegades themselves.

Chapter IV

Coerced Hearts: Renegades and Inquisitorial Response

As Catholic converts who could prove to be dangerous corsairs because of their intimate knowledge of Iberian topography, renegades posed as a direct threat to the safety of Spain's people and coasts. However, renegades not only constituted a physical threat to Spain, but a spiritual one as well. As Antonio de Sosa put it, renegades were the "principal enemies of the faith."[65] In a way, then, renegades functioned as the mirror images of Moriscos in Spain. They had abandoned the faith during a moment where Spain was seeking to construct a national identity rooted in Christian orthodoxy by calcifying the borders between Christianity and Islam. Similar to the beliefs Old Catholics held about Moriscos in Spain, as discussed, some steadfast captives turned to racial rhetoric to assert that while renegades had abandoned the faith, they were Christians internally and physiologically. This rhetoric, though, was not consistent throughout depictions of renegades in captivity chronicles. Nevertheless, even if steadfast captives did not racialize the religious identities of renegades, they still maintained their intrinsic Christian identities.

Even Diego Galán, who viewed his own Catholic identity as a part of his blood, did not explicitly rely on racial rhetoric to articulate the religious identities of renegades. And yet, Galán's captivity chronicle reinforced the notion that renegades were merely imposters of Islam. For instance, while Galán himself wrestled with the nature of conversion because of the Pasha's offer, he noted that even if he did, he would only be feigning his faith in Islam.[66] While Galán denied the Pasha's offer for conversion, he mentioned two figures that did elect to covert, a captain by the name of Fuencarral and Luis de Granada. After he denied this chance, Galán made note that sometime after they converted, both Fuencarral and

[65] Sosa, *Topography of Algiers*, 124.
[66] Galán, *Relación de Cautiverio y Libertad de Diego Galán,* 33.

Luis came to him and said that they were Christians inside and that they only hoped to return to Spain because it was the land of Christians.[67] The absence of racial rhetoric in defining renegades, though, does not invalidate the claim that concepts of race existed in Spain. In spirit, Galán's motivation behind using blood-purity language in affirming his own Catholic faith is rhetorically similar to his depiction of renegades. Meaning, while renegades were certainly apostates, Galán emphasized their intrinsic and inalienable Christian nature.

This depiction is likewise present in the works of Jerónimo Gracián and Miguel de Cervantes who both also maintained that while renegades converted to Islam, they were Christian by heart. For instance, inspired by his own time spent in captivity, Cervantes' *The Bagnios of Algiers,* features a storyline in which a renegade, known as Hazén, becomes a hero of the play by sacrificing his life to defend the Christian faith. After completing a raid on Spain's coast, Hazén tells the freshly kidnapped Christian captives that "I was compelled to turn Turk; I am a good Christian underneath."[68] Here, Cervantes did not let Hazén rely on racial or physiological rhetoric to assert his true Christian piety. Instead, Hazén asserts that his Muslim captors had coerced him into converting to Islam and that he had maintained his intrinsic Christian faith since that moment. However, Cervantes is careful with the fate of this character. Hazén never makes it back to Spain and eventually dies a martyr while killing another renegade who had carried out several corsair missions against Spain. Although he never returned to Spain, it was his martyrdom that solidified his true Christian faith in the eyes of the play's audience. The intrinsic Christian faith of renegades appears throughout captivity memoirs, such as the case with Jerónimo Gracián's depiction of renegades.

It is important to note that Gracián's depiction of renegades falls within a larger narrative that demonized the Islamic world. In his *Treaty on the Redemption of Captives*, Gracián provides a scathing

[67] Ibid., 34.
[68] Miguel de Cervantes, *The Bagnios of Algiers and The Great Sultana, Two Plays of Captivity*, eds. Barbara Fuchs and Aaron J. Ilika, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2010)

critique of the Islamic world and its treatment of captives. He writes, "the hunger, thirst, nudity, jail, banishment, illness, and lack of burial for suffering Christians cannot even be compared to the suffering of the poor in the land of Catholics."[69] Beyond the harsh conditions imposed upon captives, Gracián depicted Islamic North Africa as a corrupting force that attempted to pervert Christian doctrine and the Christian faith of the captives themselves. For instance, Gracián noted that Catholic Churches in North Africa did not "force [Christian captives] to abstain from eating meat on prohibited days."[70] In this way, Gracián depicted corsair activity as a spiritual threat to Spain's citizens and Christian orthodoxy. This image of the experience of captivity points to Gracián's mission to rally financial support for redemption orders. Moreover, Gracián tied the supposedly degenerate nature of the Islamic World directly to the conversion of renegades.

Most notably, Gracián believed that the perceived culture of sexual deviancy which plagued the Islamic world had seduced renegades into converting. Depictions of Islam's sexual culture appear throughout captivity chronicles. For example, in a chapter devoted to recounting what he believed to be the vices of Algiers and the larger Islamic world, Antonio de Sosa critically wrote that Islamic culture considered sodomy to be an honorable act. Furthermore, de Sosa accused Islamic women for their perceived promiscuity, which he believed corrupted Christians who came to the Islamic world. Gracián echoed this depiction of North Africa. In writing about why renegades converted, Gracián wrote that "The Moors take great honor to have a Christian renegade and marry their daughter."[71] Furthermore, Gracián recounted a story in which a Catholic priest succumbed to conversion because a Moor offered his daughter of fifteen years old as a bride. Through this depiction of the experiences of renegades, Gracián asserted that the apostasy of renegades was not their spiritual disillusionment but rather the corrupting

[69] Gracián, *Tratado de la Redención de Cautivos*, 30.
[70] Original: "Dicen que no les oblige la Iglesia a absetenerse de comer carne en días prohibidos…" SIbid., 32.
[71] Original: "Tienen los moros por gran honra hacer renegar un cristiano y casarle con su hija, aunque sea muy rica y hermosa." Ibid., 33,

social influences of the Islamic World. This is further reinforced in how Gracián defended the faith of renegades.

Because renegades converted in response to the perceived degeneracy of North Africa, Gracián asserted that Spanish Catholics needed to save renegades because they were Christian in their hearts. In fact, much of his captivity chronicle is a form of propaganda meant to help save renegades and Christian captives. On renegades, he wrote that "they say you can save the renegade who has Christ in his heart, even if on the exterior they are circumcised and dress and live according to the sect of Islam."[72] Like his Spanish ecclesiastic predecessors during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Gracián maintained the distinction between the external practice of faith versus internal belief. Renegades who were internally committed to their Christian faith could receive salvation because their conversion was only written superficially on their external bodies. In doing so, Gracián's persistent belief in renegades' Christian hearts mirrored late sixteenth century beliefs that the coercive baptisms of Moriscos did not make them sincere Catholics, even if they acted and presented as Christians. This claim, though, was not entirely consistent with arguments carried out by the likes of Cisneros and Las Casas who supported the forced baptisms of Mudéjares. Instead, by asserting the internal Christian nature of renegades, Gracián invalidated coercive conversions by maintaining the argument that external expressions of faith did not necessarily override internal belief.

By emphasizing the internal Christian faith and heritage of renegades, steadfast Catholic captives sought to reconcile the religious subversion committed by renegades with the construction of an immutable Catholic identity in Spain. Renegades had abandoned the Catholic faith while Old Spanish Catholics were fortifying the boundaries of Christianity. Nevertheless, discourses over conversion had shaped how these captives understood those boundaries. In an effort to preserve the nature of Spanish Catholic identity, they exploited socially and politically significant rhetoric to retain the Christian heritage

[72] Original: "Dicen que se puede salvar el renegado que en el corazón tiene a Cristo, aunque en lo exterior esté circuncidado y vista y viva según la secta de Mahoma." Ibid., 32.

of renegades. And while they were critical of their conversion, these captives attested to the Christian hearts of renegades and asserted that their religious transgression was a result of Islam's seductive and corrupting influence. In other words, while renegades converted for the advantages of being a Muslim, their faith was always in Catholicism. By framing their conversion in this way, a renegade's transgression was one of sin, not of spiritual disillusionment. This sentiment echoed how renegades themselves defended their conversion before their families and the Inquisition.

As already mentioned, renegades who converted to Islam found themselves in entirely different social circumstances relative to their steadfast counterparts. While renegades were often offered their freedom, in theory, they had also risked their social ties to their families and communities back in Spain. Not to mention, by converting, renegades had forfeited their citizenship in Spanish Catholic society altogether. However, renegades often maintained contact with their families back home, or at least attempted to in the following case, through letters. Moreover, renegades did not always remain in North Africa, rather, in some cases, they would exploit their newfound status to return home. For these renegades, they often found themselves before the Inquisition, either through their own volition or because Spanish soldiers had forced them to do so, where they defended their Christian faith. Consistent with how steadfast captives who affirmed their own faith and sought to retain renegades within the Catholic fold, renegades themselves emphasized their internal Christian faith over Islamic exterior. Most often, renegades argued that they had always kept their Christian faith in their *Coraçon*.

This is the case with the renegade Rodrigo Pardo. As a child, Pardo left the town of Balmaceda to eventually join the Spanish Crown's imperial army. In 1610, he went on a mission to the island of Sancta Pola. There, Algerian corsairs captured him and sold him to Ferrato Cayo, a Sicilian Renegade. After refusing to convert multiple times, Pardo succumbed to conversion when his master threatened to send him to Constantinople.[73] Pardo, like other young captives who "renegaded", eventually became a

[73] AGS, *Estado*, Leg 1950

Janissary and carried out some corsair missions along the Iberian coast. Eventually, Pardo escaped and returned to Spain. A report produced by Pardo on his time spent in captivity provided close and intimate details on the topography of Algiers, including where and how many gates were in the city, good siege points, and the military demographics.

And while this information served the imperial interests of Spain, what is noteworthy about this report is his depiction of the circumstances of his conversion. The report mentions that Pardo claimed he denied his master's offer to convert for two years until his master threatened to him to Constantinople if he did not do so. Eventually Pardo succumbed to his master's threat and converted, but the report mentions that he did not join the Islamic faith "from the heart."[74] Even though his report detailed his compliance and participation with attacks against Spaniards, upon his return to Spain, Pardo avoided Inquisitorial persecution because of how he depicted his conversion. First, Pardo depicted himself as a committed Christian who tried to stave off his master's attempts to convert. Even though he did convert, he maintained that his master threatened him to do so and that he had always kept his Christian faith internally. Of course, the detailed information Pardo provided on the topography of Algiers also helped persuade authorities that his interests were the same as Catholic Spain. But by mentioning that his master threatened to send him Constantinople if he did not convert, a city which was notorious for offering captives little to no hope for a ransom, Pardo argued that his master had pressured him into converting.[75] And finally, to bolster his defense, by emphasizing that he was only a child when he was allegedly forced to convert, Pardo suggested his lack of agency in the ritual. In all, Pardo made sure to defend his conversion by highlighting, or even fabricating, its coercive circumstances.

In correspondences with their families, other renegades also stressed that Muslim corsairs and slave-owners had coerced them into converting. This is true in the case of Francisco Verdera, a Majorcan

[74] Original: "Aunque no de coraçon," Ibid.
[75] Daniel Hershenzon, "Early Modern Spain and the Creation of the Mediterranean: Captivity, Commerce, and Knowledge," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2011), 139.

who was captured and taken to Algiers sometime within the first decade of the seventeenth century, Verdera converted to Islam during his captivity. Like other renegades, Verdera attempted to maintain written contact with his family back home in Spain. However, a letter sent to his aunt on 1606 reveals the social consequences of conversion. Verdera writes, "Aunt Verdera, I am very scared of the many letters I have sent they have never been answered and I do not know what caused this or if it is because I turned Moor. Everyone knows that it was by force…"[76] Verdera's letter shows how conversion could cost a renegade their primary familial networks. But, within this intimate setting, Verdera asserted that he was forced to convert, and even tells his aunt to find a friend and former captive who witnessed the circumstances of his conversion. In other words, as a way of protecting his social values, Verdera returned to present rhetoric that coercive conversions did not produce faith. Even if Verdera did not understand the weight of this argument, his case shows how a discourse over conversion had shaped his worldview. Verdera eventually died in North Africa, but another nephew of his aunt brought the letters to Verdera's post-mortem Inquisition trial in 1643.[77]

Renegades who came directly before the Inquisition often echoed Rodrigo Pardo and Francisco Verdera's rhetoric by emphasizing both the coercive nature of their conversion and their true Christian hearts. Often times, renegades employed other captives or friends to defend their Christian faith by asking for letters of recommendation. This appears in the case of the Neapolitan renegade Jusepe Brexa. Sometime in 1655, Brexa escaped Algiers and came to Spain where he submitted himself before the Inquisition in Valencia. Attached to him were nine letters written by other captives that mentioned the aid he gave to them and other captives while in Algiers. Implicitly, the Inquisition's decision not to punish Brexa was a combination of the fact that he was only a child when he converted and that the letters attached to him depicted him as a good-natured Christian in spite of his status; the former of which

[76] Original: "Tia Verdera, por cierto que estoy muy espantado que de tantos cartas que he embiado nuncan aya venido respueta de ninguna no se yo que es la causa si ha sido por que he vuelto moro. que todo el mundo lo sabe que ha sido por fuerza" AHN, Inquisición, Leg. 1711
[77] Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 107.

reinforced the coercive circumstances of his conversion while the latter attested to his loyalty to his Christian brethren. Consequently, the official rhetoric emphasized in the summary of his case focused on the difference between Brexa's external practice and internal faith. On his conversion, the Inquisition emphasized that he was "living on the outside like a moor, but in his heart, he was always a Christian."[78] In other words, the Inquisition believed that even though he appeared to be Muslim on the exterior, his look was simply performative and that his actions reflected his true faith which had yet to be corrupted. The fact that this language served as the primary line of defense for Brexa reflects how the Inquisition articulated true religious faith and identity.

Other renegades who did not have the benefit of letters of recommendation needed to emphasize, and perhaps exaggerate, the more violent circumstances of their conversion. Bartholomé Darder and Miguel Doran were both renegades who submitted themselves before the Inquisition during the seventeenth century. In the summaries of the cases, the Inquisition absolved all three of them, along with a majority of the cases I encountered in the archive. Because they are summaries, these sources reveal what evidence the Inquisition believed was important to their final judgement. The most apparent theme between these cases is the relationship between violence and conversion. Darder and Doran all described the torture they endured while refusing to convert. Darder, for instance, notes that in the company of other Muslims, he was hit one hundred times on his feet.[79] Similarly, Doran, a renegade from Barcelona, recounted that his Muslim captors continuously beat him until he agreed to convert.[80] Moreover, the fact that these renegades endured torture before succumbing to conversion helped reinforce their commitment to the faith, even if they did not become martyrs in the true sense of the word. Thus, by emphasizing the violence they endured for refusing to convert, these renegades attempted to absolve themselves by depicting themselves as something just short of Christian martyrs.

[78] AHN, *Inquisición*, Leg. 933-2
[79] AHN, *Inquisición*, Lib. 862 Fol. 4.
[80] AHN, *Inquisición*, Lib. 862 Fols. 4 -5

Nevertheless, Darder and Doran did ultimately convert to Islam. In fact, their circumcision wrote their conversion on their external bodies. In the face of this external marker and their admission that they had taken the Islamic prayers of conversion, they had to affirm that they remained committed to the faith throughout their time spent in North Africa. To do so, they portrayed themselves as passive bodies that did not participate in the customs of Islam and that their Muslim captors had thrust the Islamic faith upon them. Darder, for example, emphasized that after he converted, he did not utter another Muslim prayer, nor did he enter a Mosque. In doing so, Darder made clear that he was a Muslim in name only and that his conversion did corrupt his internal faith. Furthermore, both Darder and Doran argued before the Inquisition that they always wished to return to the land of the Christians, much like the renegades Diego Galán encountered. Their defense of their faith though, points to the murky and complicated boundaries between internal faith and external practice. Meaning, these renegades not only needed to defend that they held their Catholic faith in their hearts, but they also had to emphasize that they did not practice the Islamic faith. However, they argued the latter to further reinforce their internal faith. They understood that they could exploit the violent circumstances of their conversion to assert that it was superficial and only skin-deep. Then, by arguing that they did not actively participate in Islamic religious customs, including their circumcision, they declared that their encounter with Islam and North Africa did not disillusion their Christian faith.

Some renegades also explicitly asserted their Old Christian status to argue that their conversion was a result of coercion and the circumstances of captivity, not their cynicism toward Christianity. When Muslim corsairs captured Francisco Contesti, a Greek Catholic from Mytilene, and brought him to Constantinople around 1615, they allegedly forced him to convert. Contesti argued that he was only about eight years old at time when he was circumcised and took the prayers of conversion. Sometime around the age of twenty–five, Contesti came down with an illness that he argued made him want to return to Christianity. Like the renegades discussed previously, Contesti argued before the Inquisition that he was always a Catholic in his heart. As evidence of this, he told the Inquisition that both of his parents, Nicolas

Maltes and Maria Barbara, were Old Christians. The Inquisition absolved Contesti because of the combination of his heritage, a Franciscan Friar's defense of his faith, and his youth when he converted. Thus, despite the fact that Contesti lived most of his life as a Muslim, he was able to defend his faith by arguing that he was a Christian by lineage and that this inherited faith was not corrupted by his participation in Islam and North African culture. In doing so, Contesti, like the others, argued that his conversion to Islam did not mark his true faith, rather, it reflected the circumstances of captivity.[81]

In this way, renegades conceptualized the boundaries of religious conversion in a similar way to steadfast captives. Even though they did not resort to racial rhetoric to inscribe their Christian faith onto their bodies, they argued that their conversion did not corrupt their internal belief. Renegades defended themselves by argued that their faith was within their heart and their conversion was invalid because their captors had violently coerced them into accepting Islam. Perhaps without fully realizing it, these renegades employed rhetoric produced by a discourse which sought to invalidate the conversion and assimilation of Moriscos into Spanish Catholic society. Their rhetoric mirrors anxieties that even if Moriscos carried out Christian rituals and cultural norms, their internal Islamic faith was immutable. Moreover, the evidence emphasized by these renegades and the Inquisition's decision to absolve these figures reveals both the rhetorical acrobatics Catholics underwent to maintain their status and the complex perceptions of what defined religious belief.

[81] Ibid., Fols. 2 -3

Chapter V

Conclusion: Reflections of Spain

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, members of Spain's religious, political, and legal landscape debated the nature of conversion. Various circumstances of the expanding Spanish Empire shaped this debate. Across the Atlantic, Spain's encounter with the New World and its indigenous population influenced Spanish ecclesiastics like Bartolomé de las Casas who supported baptismal coercion. Meanwhile, from the end of the Reconquista and into the seventeenth century, Spanish ecclesiastics and the Spanish Crown hotly debated the conversion of the Iberian Peninsula's Mudéjar, and later Morisco, population. These debates produced a discourse in Spain that distinguished between external practice, the customs tied to religious belief, and internal faith. For some, conversions did not require faith at the moment of the baptism. Instead, proponents of this faction argued that the external practice of faith validated the moment of baptismal coercion. Conversely, some ecclesiastics and scholars prioritized internal faith over the practice of religious customs. As the sixteenth century winded down and tensions with the Ottoman Empire provoked the Spanish Crown to ban Islamic cultural practices, critics of assimilation turned to the lineage of Moriscos to assert their inherent heresy. In this view, faith was transmitted from parent to child and therefore internally fixed.

The confessional experiences of Catholic captives and renegades in Islamic North Africa cast this discourse over conversion into relief. The moment of conversion offered to Catholic captives in North Africa provoked them to reexamine their own identities in tandem with the worldview constructed by their Spanish Catholic heritage. As result, archival evidence of how both steadfast Catholic captives and renegades conceptualized the boundaries between Christianity and Islam appears across Inquisition documents, letters, and printed captivity chronicles. Throughout these sources, steadfast Catholic captives and renegades relied on different forms of rhetoric to defend their Catholic faith. On the one hand, some captives racialized religious identities by asserting that faith was a matter of lineage and of body. On the

other, other captives and renegades argued that the conversion of renegades reflected the coercive and corrupting influences of the Islamic world, not the convert's disillusionment. They argued that renegades, while Islamic on the exterior, retained their "Christian hearts." Even though this rhetoric is not explicitly racial, in spirit, it echoes the same sentiments. Meaning, by emphasizing renegades' inner Christian faith over their Islamic exterior, they upheld the notion that religious identities should be defined by internal belief, not simply the expression of religious customs.

By making this argument, both steadfast Catholic captives and renegades discursively upheld the notion that Moriscos were simply imposters of Christianity. The testimonies, narratives, and language present in these sources are products of a moment wherein Spain was calcifying Christian orthodoxy in its attempts to construct a Catholic national identity. As Spain is doing so, corsair activity threatened the faith of many Catholic captives. Nevertheless, captives and renegades maintained that religious identities were internally fixed, and that even if a Catholic did convert, it was because of the circumstances of Islamic world, not the convert's disillusionment with Catholicism. In doing so, they mirrored critics of Morisco assimilation, who asserted that true faith was internal and that Moriscos could not be trusted to have abandoned their internal commitment to Islam, further invalidating immigration between religious boundaries. As a result, the confessional experiences of captives and renegades reinforces the claim that the evangelization of Moriscos was doomed to fail.

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