Homeward Bound:

British Captivity and Diplomacy in Algiers, 1625-1660.

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Introduction

"Liberty is a good word, but a man cannot buy a meal's meat with a good word. And Slavery is a hard word, but it breaks no man's back. Thousands are more at liberty than myself, who have the free rake[1] and range of the whole world."[2]

William Okeley was taken captive by Algerian Corsairs in 1639, and was held as a captive in Algiers for five years before escaping and returning to England. Upon his return, he published a captivity narrative. While Okeley was lucky not to be working of the Bey's building projects or on the Galley ships, his experience was typical of the remaining captive population. He was a trader, and paid his master a set fee each month out of his profits.[3] Things did not start out well for him though. Okeley's relationship with his master began poorly when Okeley insulted the prophet Muhammed, saying that he was just a cobbler[4]. The master beat him, according to Okeley because he was Christian, but stopped because if Okeley died, his "present money and future profit" would be lost.[5] Throughout his narrative, Okeley pits the Algerian cunning and duplicity against English resourcefulness, and his rhetoric is filled with and influenced by old stereotypes about Muslims. Like other narratives published after 1640, Okeley paints himself as a hero and morally pure, which characteristics affirm "Anglo-Protestant values, virtues, and attitudes."[6]

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[1] *rake:* course
[2] William Okeley, *Eben-ezer or, A Small Monument of Great Mercy Appearing in the Miraculous Deliverance of William Okeley, William Adams, John Anthony, John Jephs, John Carpenter from the Miserable Slavery of Algiers* (London: Nat. Ponder, 1676), reprinted with modernized spelling in Vitkus (2001), 170.
[3] Okeley, *Eben-ezer*, 155.
[4] Okeley, *Eben-ezer*, 153.
[5] Okeley, *Eben-ezer*, 153.
[6] Gerald MacLean and Nail Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 1558-1713, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 131.

Published in 1704, Joseph Pitts' *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mahommetans, with an Account of the Author's Being Taken Captive*, shows Algerian captivity in a different light. Pitts converted to Islam during his captivity and thus tried to show in his narrative more comprehensive picture of Algiers so his audience might understand his actions. Many things were the same, such as the limited freedoms allowed of the captives, and the complex relations between native Algerians and the captives. Experience varied depending upon the master as well as the type of work, but overall the slaves were treated decently and this instilled them with to a semi-acceptance of their fate as captives in Algiers.

One difference between the captivity experience in Algiers before and after the English Civil wars in the 1640s was the increase in redemption efforts and the increase in diplomatic negotiations revolving around the captives. Many of the English captives in Algiers were sailors on merchant ships, and this situation hit the English trading companies, like the East India Company and the Levant Company, and the sailors' families harder than most other people. For example, the wives of sailors were constantly petitioning Parliament for action on behalf of their husbands.[7]

It is important to understand the political and diplomatic context of seventeenth century England within which the narratives were written and how the audience affected the portrayal of the captive experience. By examining this context, we can understand the motivations for writing about the captivity experience and why it became such a popular literature genre. Further, the broader context explains the use of stereotypes as well as anti-Islamic rhetoric; it illustrates how the government encouraged this type of literature and its uses as Christian propaganda. By exemplifying Christian perseverance and morality in the face of "the Islamic threat" as well as

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[7] Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689*, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), 78.

underscoring nationalistic values, the captivity genre could reach a broad audience in its propaganda role, especially as it gained popularity in the eighteenth century. The most important political context is that of the continuous rise in tensions between Parliament and King Charles I in the late 1620s and the 1630s, which led to the civil wars of the 1640s.

The period between 1625 and 1660 was an intense time for England. Filled with uncertainty and fear about what the future would bring, the English people across the globe were impacted by the unfolding of the events centered on the English Civil Wars. From Elizabeth I, the Stuart monarchs inherited a religiously diverse population under the ambiguous umbrella of the English Church. Divided theologically and regionally, the people had traded religious identity for political identity. Both James I and Charles I mistook this religious diversity at the local level for uniformity and cohesion. Their ecclesiastical policies focused on enforcement of further reforms and increasing uniformity led to a galvanization of the religious factions. Puritans, Protestants, and Catholics all longed-for toleration reminiscent of the Elizabethan period to enable them to not only worship as they pleased but endeavor to sway the entire English Church in their direction.

Each denomination had within it a spectrum of belief. Under the Puritan umbrella alone were the many distinct and influential groups during the English Civil Wars (1642-1649) and the interregnum (1649-1660). Other dissenting factions included the Muggletonians, the Diggers, the Ranters, the Levellers, the Brownists, the Familists, the Grindletonians, and others. This period is one of great religious and political complexity. It is in this tumultuous setting that we find the English Civil Wars, in which the Parliament fought against King Charles I on the battlefields of England, which led to his trial and execution in 1649. The period after his execution is known as the Interregnum, and started with Parliamentary control enforced by the power of the New

Model Army. Purged of the remaining royalist supporters, the Rump Parliament (1649-1653) grew ever more fragmented over what to do and how to govern in a functional manner. Leading members of the Fifth Monarchists, like Major General Thomas Harrison advocated for an appointed Parliament of the Saints, also called Barebones Parliament. As a Puritan and a Fifth Monarchist, Harrison believed that it was time for the Godly to lead the English People into the Millennium of Godly rule in anticipation of Christ's return.

In the period before and after the civil wars, Parliaments used the plight of English captives on North Africa's Barbary Coast to gain more supporters for their cause against Charles I and the Royalists. Many members of the merchant class had been taken captive while on trading voyages and so their families at home, and others who relied on their services for their financial well-being in England were constantly petitioning the King to ransom their brethren from Barbary. Redemption funds were collected around the country to free them, but the money was continuously diverted for Charles's military efforts. When Parliament passed the Bill of Algiers in 1642, it showed the people that it was Parliament, not the King that had their interests at heart. For many it was enough to push them into the conflict on the side of Parliament against the King.

It is because of this incredible complexity and the ways that it affected the captives in North Africa in terms of the probability and possibility of ransom, that I have chosen this topic. To understand this complex relationship, the reality of captivity and the diplomatic practices of the Consuls and Parliaments must first be understood. In turn, these will help the reader understand the motives behind writing and publishing captivity narratives, why they became so popular a genre, and why they may not be reliable sources of information. The period from 1625-1660 is important because it was not only the height of the captivity trade in Algiers and corsair

raids in England, but it was also a time of changing dynamics that affected English men and women all over the globe.

The Barbary Coast, which consisted of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, was under the umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, except for Morocco. These areas held a large degree of autonomy and each had their own rulers and power structures in place. Algiers held the largest number of European captives during the early and mid-seventeenth century, and the number peaked in 1637 at 60,000. There was a significant dip during the early 1650s, but it rose again until the mid 1660s, when the Restoration Monarchy under Charles II began peace negotiations resulting in a treaty in 1662.[8] This paper examines the captivity experience and its relation to British politics from the Caroline period until the Restoration.

Charles II signed a peace treaty with Algiers in 1662.[9] While their relationship was still tenuous and this and subsequent treaties were often broken, the impact of the captives was significant. After the signing of the 1662 treaty, the number of European captives in Algiers dropped from 40,000 to 15,000 in 1669.[10] Only once in the next hundred and fifty years did the number of European captives rise above 10,000.[11] Overall, the treaty of 1662 was not only a significant turning point in Anglo-Algerian relations, but it also came directly from the redemption policies pursued by parliament in the 1640s and 1650s such as secular redemption expeditions. Further, its impact demonstrated the paradigm shift that occurred in England. Due to maritime innovations, the British Navy was steadily gaining in strength and was finally able to

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[8] Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 181-182.
[9] Treaty of Peace between England and Algiers, 10 November 1662.
[10] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 183.
[11] 30-40,000. 1683. Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 183.

protect both its coastlines and its merchant ships well enough to prevent the large-scale corsair raids that were prevalent in the 1630s.

The biggest impact that British politics and diplomacy had upon the captives and their experiences, was that of the possibility and probability of ransom. When Parliament found it politically beneficial to increase redemption efforts for captives in Algiers, it passed many acts and ordinances to do so. Consuls, in their role as intermediaries, helped the captives as much as they could by drafting petitions or writing down dictated petitions to Parliament on behalf of the captives. This process became a *cause célèbre*, which also significantly contributed to the success of the ransoming efforts by Parliament.

Historiography

Several different approaches have been taken to both the English Civil War and with the experience of captivity on the Barbary Coast. Further research has been done on the impacts of captivity on European politics and Identity as well as the relationship between various European powers and their Barbary counterparts. However, very little has been done concerning the English Civil War and its impacts upon Captivity experience in Algiers.

The closest study was completed by the preeminent scholar on British and Barbary relations, Nabil Matar, in which he focuses on the Parliamentary proceedings and the policies of Charles I in relation to the English captives.[12] However, he does not examine the role of the consuls or the impact of negotiation, or lack thereof, upon the captives themselves. Further, Matar does not consider the complex religious and political environment in England in which the

[12] Nabil Matar, "The Barbary Corsairs, King Charles I and the Civil War", *Seventeenth Century*, 16, no. 2 (September 2011), 239.

captive negotiations took place. This study aims to expand Matar's work to include these factors. Nabil Matar has also written many books about Britain and the Barbary States, which largely focus on the way contact with Barbary and the experience of captivity impacted the formation of English national identity.[13]

Another important approach that has been taken is examining the captivity and redemption narratives themselves, such as Robert Davis and Steven Clissold do.[14] While they both examine captivity narratives, neither examine them in the wider European context in which these narratives are found. Both do an excellent job of analyzing the sources and drawing from them a wider narrative, but neither consider either their own prejudice or the prejudice of the original author and thus both of their analyses are skewed. Following the trend of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, both Davis and Clissold paint the North Africans as the "others", and are ready to believe the worst parts of the captivity narratives and use them to color the entire population of the Barbary Coast. As in any society, North Africa had its range of good and bad people. The North Africans were certainly different to the Europeans but they were certainly not less civilized. The prejudices found in the narratives that exude Christian superiority and Muslim inferiority seep into both Clissold's and Davis's studies.

Notable historians on the period, such as Gillian Weiss and Ellen Friedman have written more balanced interpretations of captivity experience and European diplomacy.[15] Both acknowledge the prejudices that original authors had and the purposes for which their narratives were written and take these characteristics into account when analyzing their contents. Further,

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[13] Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World* and Matar, *Britain and Barbary 1589-1689.*
[14] Steven Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: Paul Elek, 1977); Robert Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2003).
[15] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*; Ellen Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Ann Arbor: U Microfilms International, 1987).

both historians also examine the internal and external European political factors that directly and indirectly affected captivity. One of the most important observations made by both authors concerns the political implications of ransom, and how ransoming captives was used for political gains on the European Stage. Rarely was the ransoming of captives ever about the captives themselves; in fact, it was more about the image the individual providing the ransom was trying to build for himself.

In this study, I have endeavored to pull from the narrative the reality of captivity, examine the diplomatic polity and consequences of English politics on the ransom process, and examine the nature of the narrative's audience. By doing this, I hope to give the reader a more comprehensive picture of British captivity in the mid-seventeenth century and its perception in British society. I have tried to pull together the approaches of Matar, Weiss, and Friedman in my examination of the narratives and the intersection of British and Algerian politics.

Chapter 1: The Reality of Captivity

Life in Algiers

"The condition of the slaves is more or less tolerable, according to the temper and humor of their patrons. But of all, a Galley-slave leads the most sad and miserable life: when they are abroad at sea, perpetually laboring at the oar, and chained to their seats."[16] The captives in Algiers permeated throughout every corner of society, because they were owned by such a variety of people. Therefore, to understand what captive's lives were like, it is necessary to first understand the political and social structures of Algerian society.

One of the most important distinctions in the definitions of captivity and slavery in Arabic is the use of the word "*asr*" for captivity, which meant that "slavery could be prevented or determined by mutual agreement" and was and "exchange and commodification of soldiers and sailors, traders and travelers, men, women and children for the purposes of gaining ransom payments, exchanging them with captive coreligionists, or utilizing their skills." In comparison, the word "*'ubūdiyyah*" is used for slavery, which meant the captives here were slaves for life and with no possible alternative. Most Christians in North Africa lived under the conditions of *asr*, even if it was for life.[17] Further, captivity was not a new concept in North Africa during the early modern period. In fact, it been used since the middle ages, although starting in the sixteenth century it had gained an ever-increasing role in the Algerian economy.[18]

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[16] Thomas Smith, *Remarks Upon the Manners, Religion and Government of the Turks Together with A Survey of the Seven Churches of Asia, as they now lye in their Ruines: and A Brief Description of Constantinople* (London: Moses Pitt, 1678), 155.

[17] Paul Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam, Jospeh Pitts: An English Slave is 17th century Algiers and Mecca* (London, Arabian Publishing, 2012), 33-34.

[18] Ellen Friedman, "Christian Captives at 'Hard Labor' in Algiers, 16th -18th centuries" *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 13, no. 4 (1980), 617.

Another important distinction is the use of the words 'pirate' and 'corsair' in relation to the Barbary naval forces. As Colley explains, they are more accurately referred to as corsairs or privateers because they "were not independent agents operating outside of their communities' laws, so much as a vital and officially recognized part of their revenue raising machinery."[19] However, the type of activity the corsairs were involved in was a political grey area, and operated both independently as well as cooperatively in the form of a corsair fleet. As was the case with the Janissaries, the corsairs were sanctioned by the state but rather as integral part of it.

Seventeenth-century Algiers was an international city by the very nature of its economy and was ruled largely by the Janissaries. The Janissaries were the Turkish military force, generally made up of a special category of Christian slaves that were trained from a young age in the Muslim and military traditions.[20] They controlled the *divan*, the ruling council of Algiers which was similar to a representative body but made up of elite Janissary leaders, the head of which was called the Bey.[21] By this point, the Pashas, who had been installed in a governor-like position in Algiers by the Ottomans lacked any ability to check the power of the Janissaries.[22] The seventeenth-century was also a time of economic and population growth in Algiers. Auchterlonie estimates the population was between 100,000 and 125,000 with approximately a quarter being captives.[23] These captives permeated every aspect of Algerian society largely due to being owned by all manners of people, including the military. The captives that followed the army during their expeditions to collect "tribute" from surrounding localities dominated by the Ottomans, like Thomas Smith, were typically owned by a commander or an officer.[24]

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[19] Linda Colley, *Captives* (New York: Anchor, 2004), 45.
[20] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 11.
[21] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 10.
[22] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 10.
[23] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 15.
[24] T.S. *The Adventures of a Mr. T.S., and English Merchant taken Prisoner by the Turks of Algiers and Carried into the Inland Countries of Africa, with a Description of the Kingdom of Algiers* (London: Moses Pitt, 1670), 63.

Even though the Janissaries controlled the local government, other ethnicities and groups controlled other parts of the city. For example, the religious and legal system was controlled by the Arabs. They also served as *muftis*, who controlled the justice system[25]. Another powerful demographic in Algiers were the Moriscos.[26] After their expulsion from Spain in 1609, they brought their skills, knowledge of Spain, and desire for revenge to Algiers. Like the Moors or ethnic Arabs, as well as the Berbers and Kebyles (native Algerians), they were excluded from public office, lived mostly outside the city walls, and made up the free urban workforce.[27] Jews were also an integral part of the Algerian community; they dominated overseas trade with Europe and were often used as mediators for ransom arrangements.[28] While the Algerian economy included agriculture and trade, its main source of revenue was associated with privateering and ransom.[29]

Experience as Captives

Life as a captive in Algiers began immediately after capture. The new captives that were captured on a galley-style ship were often used as rowers until the ship returned to its home port.[30] Once in Algiers, the captives would be sold in the slave market after the ruler claimed his *pencik* or eighth share, which as Auchterlonie explained, could mean "twelve and a half percent of all captives, or just several captives of rank, who could be expected to bring in high ransoms."[31] For example, William Okeley wrote of how he and the other captives freshly arrived

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[25] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 14.
[26] Moriscos were converted christians of Muslim or Moorish descent living in Spain.
[27] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 14.
[28] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 14.
[29] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 17.
[30] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 34.
[31] Aucherlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 34.

in Algiers were driven like cattle to the Pasha's palace, so he could take his portion of the slaves.[32] Thomas Smith had a similar experience, but unlike Okeley, Smith was chosen by the Pasha and insinuates that the Pasha also chose a young poor boy because the Pasha was a "greater lover of pleasures than of money" and thought the boy "might procure him some (pleasure) in his old age." Smith then paints all the "southern people" with the same brush, writing that "they burn with an unnatural fire, which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah."[33] After being sold, the captives would be divided again by their new master, between those who the master could expect quick ransom payments, and those who would work. It is estimated that three quarters of all slaves between 1500 and 1700 were meant for work and were only ransomed after "charitable ransoming expeditions" became popular in the late 1600s. The first of these from England was the expedition headed by Edmund Casson, who was sent as an Agent for Parliament, and would later become Consul in Algiers. Because of the success of this expedition, they became used more and more often. However, the trade of all captives became seen as profitable after 1650 and so became investing ventures.

The demand for captive workers resulted from a depleted native workforce due to recurring plague epidemics.[34] The type of work a captive could expect to do and the amount of hardship that could be expected changed after the galleys were replaced with broad-sail ships. While they were no longer needed for intense rowing on the galleys, many captives still worked on the ships, and while in port, they worked as laborers for other projects around the city. Laborers were needed for various building and agricultural projects, but were also "set to hailing the cart in lew [*sic*] of horses."[35] Captives who worked in agriculture, worked on either vineyards

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[32] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 150.
[33] T.S., *Adventures,* 28-29.
[34] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 35-36.
[35] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 37; Colley, *Captives,* 61.

or farms. However, if a captive was skilled in a trade that was useful to the community, he could escape hard labor, especially if the skill was related to ship building, gunnery, or carpentry. Of course, quality of treatment for the skilled captives were depended entirely upon the master, even though they were more valuable commodities.[36] Further, captives were also used as laborers in moving materials where carts or animals could not and in mines and quarries. These types of captives usually worked in chain gangs.[37]

Life was not as hard as described above for all captives. Some were lucky enough to work within the household, which provided the male slave with a great deal of freedom in personal activities and pursuits.[38] For example, Joseph Pitts, a slave in Algiers, was often allowed to visit the English consul in Tunis and describes his life as a captive serving in the household as similar to the way servants were treated in Britain.[39] He wrote that should the Algerians ever need a servant they would buy a slave instead and "bring them up to their Houshold [*sic*] Work, as our servant-maids are here in England; who, as soon as they have done up all their work in the house, are usually allow'd [*sic*] the liberty to go abroad and visit their country-men (other captives)."[40] Auchterlonie stipulates that "although many slaves suffered terrible hardships from their masters, from working in the galleys, or in the mines, or at other forms of hard labor, the situation seems to have improved gradually from the middle of the 17th century, brought about mainly by the numerous missions of the Redemptionist fathers and by the peace treaties signed by the regencies with European nations."[41]

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[36] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*, 40.
[37] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 39-40.
[38] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 41.
[39] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*, 46.
[40] Joseph Pitts, *A Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mahometans."* (London, 1731). Reprinted in Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 157.
[41] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 48.

Life as a captive in Algiers was not all together terrible. For example, captives were permitted to practice their faith if they were respectful to their masters and to Islam.[42] Captives were also allowed to set up businesses. Those captives who did this were called *ma'dhūn* and gave a percentage of the profits to their owners.[43] Indeed, an anonymous ex-captive in 1675 said that Algerian captives were "for the most part are better treated than any slave in all the grand Signors dominions, having all the benefit to keep shopps [*sic*], taverns, to work upon their hand craft trade… many thousand captives obtayned [*sic*] thier liberty by their own industry."[44] Many captives lived in the *baños* or *bagni*, which were social centers for all captives, and included hospitals, churches, and taverns.[45]

This does not mean that beatings and cruel treatment did not occur. William Okeley describes his punishments for going too far beyond the city, and another captive's punishment for drawing a blade at his master.[46] Okeley describes one of the punishments, the baton, as follows: "they have a strong staff, about six feet long, in the middle whereof are bored two holes. Into these holes a cord is put, and the ends to the cord fastened on the one side of the staff with knots so that it makes a loop on the other sides. Into this loop of the cord both feet of the person condemned to this punishment are put. Then two lusty fellows, one at each end of the staff, lifts it up in their arms, and twisting the staff about till the soles upwards, well nigh as high as their shoulders, and in this posture, hold them, the poor man the meanwhile resting only with his neck and shoulders on the ground. Then comes another sturdy knave behind him and with a tough short truncheon give him as many violent blows on the soles of his feet as the council shall

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[42] Nabil Matar, "Introduction," in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 19.
[43] Colley, *Captives* 59.
[44] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*, 45.
[45] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*, 46.
[46] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*, 40.

order."[47] Beyond the occasional exceptionally cruel master, and the nature of labor, punishments were aimed at maintaining the social order: captives knowing and staying in their place and following the rules. Some captives even developed close personal relationships with their masters.[48] For example, William Okeley writes that he "found not only pity and compassion but love and friendship from my new patron. Had I been his son, I could not have met with more respect nor been treated with more tenderness."[49] Similarly, Smith writes, "I thought myself happy to be a slave to so excellent and kind a Lady; I never dreamt of a change whilst I belonged unto her: I had no reason; for nothing was wanting unto me useful to the life of man. I only wore a chain out of formality, because otherwise my good fortune might have been suspected."[50] In Smith's case, his master was none other than one of the wives of the Pasha with whom he was sleeping and was likely in love. She died about two years later and he was sold elsewhere.[51]

There did not seem to be a high degree of national or ethnic bonds at play between captives in Algiers. The differing ethnic groups did not seem to discriminate based upon nationality. Auchterlonie argues that "there are numerous examples in the captivity narrative of how Englishmen could be just as nasty to their fellows as to any other ethnic group."[52] For example, William Okeley relates, "I could relate a passage during our captivity in Algiers that had more bitterness in it than all our slavery, and yet they were Christians, not Algerines [*sic*], Protestants not Papists, Englishmen, not strangers were the cause of it."[53] Furthermore, while there was pressure to convert to Islam, there were also significant advantages in it for captives.

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[47] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 165.
[48] Aucherlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 47.
[49] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 168.
[50] T.S., *Adventures,* 40.
[51] T.S., *Adventures,* 57-58. Interestingly, she had a daughter by Smith, but could pass it off as the Pasha's. Smith says that she was poisoned by one of the other wives who was jealous of the Pasha's love for her.
[52] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 41.
[53] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 41.

Weiss explains, "through conversion they (captives) sometimes escaped debt, criminal prosecution, and religious harassment."[54] Additionally, to others, it was a means of self-preservation and thought of as possibly leading to better treatment.[55] For example, Smith says that he was "often importuned by my master, and invited with the promise of my liberty, in case I would renounce Christianity; but I could never consent to so much weakness, nor to act against so much light God had discovered to me in his Truth."[56]

While we know of female captives, we do not have any accounts from this period because they were rarely ransomed. For an English woman, ransom and conditions of life after captivity depended upon her and her family's religious and political affiliation. Indeed, the closer to the monarch and the more Protestant she was, the more likely she was to be able to return home.[57] Matar explains, "women who were rich were protected and 'well entertained' and quickly ransomed by their countrymen, but those who were poor and unransomable were sold by the pirates to individual masters, where their 'virtue (was) seldom a Defense against the Stratagems' of their owners."[58] However, this did not necessarily always mean rape between master and slave, because inter-religious marriage was frequent.[59] There are a few stories even, of a Christian woman having a happy and loving marriage with her Muslim husband, like in Cervantes. However, it is unclear if these accounts are accurate because so much of his tale is highly romanticized.

An important factor in this shift of treatment stems from the drop in the numbers of total captives after 1660. By having a significantly smaller population of a captive laborers, the

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[54] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs* 24.
[55] Colley, *Captives,* 62.
[56] T.S., *Adventures*, 204.
[57] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 105
[58] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 98.
[59] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 105.

captives became more valuable commodities. The people who still held captives tried to ensure they lived if possible because the replacements were fewer in number and were more expensive. Captives were not cheap to begin with but prices rose with the diminished supply. Also, more people were being ransomed this contributed to an increase in captivity narratives, European awareness, and interest. These factors contributed to the rise in popularity of the captivity narrative as a genre, which will be discussed in Chapter three. However, it remains clear that the largest impact on the captivity experience and the spread of their stories was the possibility and probability of being ransomed. The fears of Pitts' and many other European captives, initially arose from the spread of cultural stereotypes revolving around the Barbary states and their Muslim inhabitants.[60]

[60] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 48.

Chapter 2: The British Solution

The Business of Ransom

For many captives, the possibility and probability of ransom was an in integral part of the experience of captivity. The captives would work with the consuls, who acted as an intermediary between the captive or group of captives and the Parliament, the King, or the Privy Council. However, captives also explored other means of being ransomed, such as sending letters to friends and relatives pleading with them to raise money to pay his or her ransom. As many of the captives were sailor or merchants, they often would also send letters to the company they had worked for prior to capture, usually the East India Company or the Levant Company. However, chances of redemption were slim prior to 1645 and did not vastly improve until after 1660.

It is important to note the while usually interchangeable, the terms "ransom" and "redemption" are different and have different connotations. On the one hand, "ransom" indicates the sum of money or goods used to pay for the release of a captive. However, "redemption" usually refers to being ransomed *and* returning home. The term "redemption" also had religious connotations associated was usually thought of as salvation being for the mind and redemption is for the body.

Ransom worked differently for each nation. Many Catholic countries used religious orders, like the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians to collect money and conduct the ransom negotiations. These religious houses also received royal support, especially in France and

Spain.[61] However, in England, it was the Parliament that became the main source of redemption efforts in the 1640s and 1650s. The internal and external politics in Europe affected the likelihood of redemption from captivity, and had the greatest impact upon the captives' lives. Hope of returning home is powerful.

As in other business endeavors, each party involved in ransom tried to increase their benefits received from the trade. The religious orders were concerned with increasing their order's prestige, which was accomplished by redeeming as many captives as they could who were consistent with the order in religion, politics, and location.[62] On the other hand, the merchants involved in ransoming captives were mainly concerned with profits and used the ransoming of captives as a way to grease the wheels of economic exchange with the North African states.[63] Likewise, the pasha was concerned with forcing the European ransomers to work solely with him, instead of local merchants in order to further his own agenda. This way, the pasha could force the buyers to pay the ransom of his captives before any others. In turn, this helped the pasha "validate his claims for political authority, increase his income and strengthen his network of clients."[64] Another factor in the ransom business was the value of an individual captive. This was based on age, status, gender, profession, and the estimated ability of the captive or his or her community to pay the ransom. However, like other commodities, prices were vulnerable to price manipulation.[65]

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[61] Aucherlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 31.
[62] Daniel Hershenzon, "The Political Economy of Ransom in the Early Modern Mediterranean" *Past and Present* (2016), 72.
[63] Hershenzon, "The Political Economy of Ransom", 73.
[64] Hershenzon, "The Political Economy of Ransom", 74.
[65] Hershenzon, "The Political Economy of Ransom", 84.

Formation of the English Consulship and the Role of Consul

The consuls played a key role in the ransom negotiation because they were a mediator between the captives, the English government, and the Algerian government. However, the consuls were not sent to North Africa to deal with problems concerning captives. The consulship started as a corporate position to forward the interests of their company with the foreign governments. However, as the consulship's role evolved over the early and mid-seventeenth century, it became integral to captivity and diplomacy. To understand this evolution, the formation and reasons for its creation must first be examined.

The Levant Company was formed in 1592 by the merger of the Turkey Company and the Venice Company and held a charter from the Elizabethan government which allowed them a monopoly on the trade of currants. Currants are a raisin-like dried fruit, made from the Zante grape, and were popular in England as a sweetener because sugar was an expensive luxury. As part of the Turkey company's original charter, they were required to maintain an agent, or Consul, in Constantinople.[66] This consulship quickly took on the form and responsibilities of an official ambassador but without the official financial support of the government.

While the role of consul was not new, a consulship in Algiers was not set up until after a treaty was struck between Algiers and England in 1622. This treaty provided incentives for the Algerians to pursue profit and enterprise not centered around piracy and captive-taking. In order to ensure the treaty was followed, an English Consul was installed in Algiers.[67] Nicholas Leate (or Leatt) was a merchant who worked for the Levant Company, he was named consul as a result

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[66] Martin Devecka "The Levant Company Between Trade and Politics: or, the Colony that Wasn't" https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/eac/intranet/yalemay2013/devecka_memo_with_edits.pdf

[67] R.L. Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom: Annals of British Relations with Algiers prior to the French Conquest*, (London: Smith, Elder & CO., 1884), 46.

of the 1622 treaty, but often he sent his agent, James Frizzel, to Algiers in his place because of Frizzel's ability to speak Arabic.[68] The Algerians wanted their captives to be ransomed as much as their Europeans.[69] However, they also were not willing to let them go for less than what they thought they were worth.

According to contemporary diplomatic practices, it was customary for ambassadors or consuls to give gifts to the ruler or entity with which they were trying to establish a deal with. Because of this practice, Frizzel made large presents to the Divan to increase the favorability of the negotiations. Unfortunately for Frizzel and the other Consuls, the English crown and the Levant Company were very bad at providing the necessary funds, leaving the Consul liable to cover the rest out of his own pocket. Shortly after the treaty was signed the Levant Company suspended its business with the Barbary states and the consul was essentially stranded in Algiers without support from either the Levant Company or the English crown. However, with Leate in London, the pair was able to successfully submit petitions to the King urging him to take action against the Algerians or collect money for ransom negotiations.[70] However, while the petitions were submitted, and some individuals, like Sir Kenelm Digby ransomed a few captives out of his own pockets, the type of large scale actions were not taken until Parliament sent Edmund Casson in 1645.[71] Clearly, this practice was unsustainable, and all parties knew that if good relations and trade were to continue, the consuls needed to be maintained.[72] After 30 years, the position of consul in Algiers was so integral to diplomatic relations between the two states that after Consul Edmund Casson died in 1653, the Bey was anxious that another be sent to "preserve the peace

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[68] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,* 40.
[69] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,* 48.
[70] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,* 46-47.
[71] SP.71.1.100.
[72] M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company,* (London: Routledge, 1908), 57.

with England."[73] The Levant Company was a natural fit to start the consulship practice in Algiers. They had representatives in similar roles almost everywhere they had business dealings including Constantinople.[74] Further, the Levant Company had experience in dealing with the ransom business since 1605.[75]

The Levant Company leadership created consulships to "safeguard the interests of members of the company and maintaining their sole rights in the Levant trade."[76] Like the other merchants, they were often targets of the Corsairs. Even though the consuls in Algiers were supposed to be maintained by the Levant Company, they were answerable to the Secretary of State. However, neither party exercised tremendous scrutiny or control over the consuls.[77] This meant that while the consuls in North Africa were eager to pursue business opportunities, they spent most of their time and resources negotiating for the redemption of their countrymen.[78]

Charles I, unlike his father James I, heavily interfered with the business of the Levant. These interferences included forced loans and appointment of officers including consuls even before the position was vacant.[79] While it made sense for the crown or even Parliament to be involved in quasi-official positions operating in the name of the Crown on foreign soil, the Levant Company leaders saw it as the King overreaching and illegally influencing their business affairs. Also, concerned with other monarchical overreaches during the period of personal rule (1629-1640), this added yet another concern to the pile stacking up against Charles I. Charles I

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[73] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*,70-71.
[74] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, 72.
[75] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, 55.
[76] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, 141.
[77] MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic world*, 84.
[78] MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 85.
[79] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company*, 89,93.

even took money from the Levant Company that was meant for the maintenance for the consuls.[80]

Actions of both the King and of the Levant Company leadership resulted the consuls not being paid for years at a time. For example, James Frizzel sent a petition to the Privy Council in 1631, claiming that he had not been paid "one penny of my salary" for eight years. He goes on, prompting them to "commiserate his miserable estate and with our poor distressed captives in this place and cause the Turquey [*sic*] Company to paye [*sic*] him his salary" and to redeem the "340 poore [*sic*] English captives."[81] Frizell sent other such petitions asking for redemption of captives, and to be replaced as Consul in Algiers. He said that he was "threatened on one hand by the Turks, and abused on the other by the British captives" and that "the business was too weighty for him and other might be repaid the heavy outlay they had incurred; that the merchants should be refunded the £6,000 taken from them; and lastly, he begs that his long service and many sufferings might be taken into account, and the money spent by him refunded, for he had never received a penny as renumeration, but had subsisted himself on his own means, and by the tread of Mr. Leatt, his master."[82] However, his requests to be replaced were not granted, and he stayed as consul in Algiers until he died in 1643.

While some, like Frizzel advocated for economic sanctions in response to the Corsairs raids until the captives were released, others were quick to point out that if trade with Algiers and other Ottoman states were cut off, it would be the English who would suffer most. People like Richard Stapler, who was one of the oldest Levant Company merchants, argued that not only would attacks on English ships and towns increase if trade were cut off, but the King's income

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[80] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company,* 91-92.
[81] SP.71.1.99
[82] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,*48-49.

from customs duties would be lost and it was possible that trade would not be able to be resumed. Further, if the English angered the Ottoman Sultan too much, he might ally himself with the Spanish against the English.[83]

By 1645, with the appointment of Edmund Casson, the Consulship not only shifted in role but to whom it answered to. After 1645, the Parliament, and after the Restoration in 1660, the King would be the one to appoint consuls and they cease to serve mainly for the interests of the Levant Company. Instead, the consuls would focus on English diplomacy, general trade, and the redemption of captives. They served in a mainly ambassadorial role without the perks associated with the official role of ambassador, such as being paid by the government.

Consuls and Diplomacy

Privateering in Algiers started because the Algerians were unable to convert their fleet from war to commercial purposes, and thus their ships were not welcome in European ports and were harassed by European ships.[84] This was largely because the Algerians had neither the materials nor the expertise to make this transition. However, this was why captives who knew the trades of carpentry, shipbuilding, and gunnery were so valuable. Further, they often traded requested tribute or ransom payments in the form of the materials they needed for new ships or improvements to the old ones. While the Algerian ships were faster than the European ships, by the end of the seventeenth century, the European ships had been improved to the point that they were no longer easy targets for the corsairs.[85] This improvement contributed to the decline in the

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[83] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company,* 55-56. and SP 71.1.130.
[84] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 17-18.
[85] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 23.

number of captives after 1660, as well as the shift in diplomatic strategies. The Algerians, like many other states, played the European powers off one another, because they could be neither at peace with all of them, nor at war with all of them. Both options were bad for the Algerians because war would literally destroy them, and peace would incapacitate the income from privateering, on which the Algerian economy depended.[86]

The ransom business was a "legalistic no-man's land," which meant that it was up to the individuals to pursue their freedom through consuls, letters back home, and/or independent purchase of their freedom.[87] This is represented in the way the European states treated the corsair raids. Instead of retaliation, a strong show of military force, or even following through with effective diplomacy, individual European states tried to eliminate the Barbary states as a naval power.[88] However, because the corsairs were useful in checking the power of other European states, the Europeans did not try as hard as they could have to incapacitate them until after the 1660s. Even then, the Europeans found that negotiation and diplomacy was a better tactic than militaristic brute force when used effectively. By the eighteenth century, it was simply easier to buy the individual Barbary States off with "tributes" in return for the corsairs leaving their ships alone. Often, the initial treaty breakers were the English, not the Algerians. For example, in 1625 the English seized Algerian ships and sold the crew into slavery, thus negating the 1622 treaty. As a result, the Pasha imprisoned the Consul and other English subjects living in Algiers.[89]

The relationships between the Pasha and the Divan, the Consul, and the English ruler, all affected the English subjects in captivity. For example, in 1658, Casson wrote to The Lord

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[86] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 24.
[87] Magnus Ressel, "Conflicts between Early Modern European States about Rescuing Their Own Subjects from Barbary Captivity" *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 36, no. 1 (February 2011), 5.
[88] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 26.
[89] Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company,* 62.

Protector Oliver Cromwell that "they (the Algerians) appear very earnest to have justice done to them, but care for doing none themselves; witness their unjust detention of all Englishmen, passengers in foreign ships, to the number of six, and six more cast away on the island of Corsica."[90] Casson petitioned the Divan for their release, but was met with hard resistance because the English had sold Turks to the Venetians and they would not release any English until those Turks were returned. Casson was later confined and reported to Cromwell that "Englishmen are not able to pass the streets without being affronted, nor our servants go about their necessary affairs without being abused, and they stick not to tell us to our faces that Englishmen are not as they were, and this is not from the meanest sort neither."[91] In the same letter, Casson writes that "British ships had actually delivered up Turks to foreign powers to be enslaved. From time to time the Pasha had demanded explanation of the him; sometimes he was told that he knew nothing about it, and at others that he would write and inform the government."[92]

Captivity and the English Civil Wars

Captivity and corsair raids affected the British people in more ways than just those held captive in towns like Algiers on North Africa's Barbary coast. Indeed, the captivity dilemma permeated through English society as much as it did Algerian society due to the very nature of the way the corsairs captured their captives. English merchants, sailors, and fishermen all felt their vulnerability and their related industries felt the loss of the skilled workers upon capture.

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[90] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 76.
[91] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 76.
[92] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 76-77.

Businesses, communities, family members, and friends petitioned the King and Parliament when it was in session to do something, anything to help the captives and return them. Some advised for military interference, withdrawing of trade, or simply paying the ransom.[93]

Starting in the 1620s, corsair ships ventured outside of the Mediterranean. They raided the Irish coastal town of Baltimore in 1631; here they took more than a hundred captives and decimating the once thriving port town.[94] Although the most famous of Corsair raids on British soil, it was hardly the only one. For example, Edmund Rossingham writes in 1640 about "those roguish pirates which lie upon the western coasts have taken from the shore about Penzance, near St. Michael's Mount, sixty men, women, and children. This was in the night for in the day these rogues keep out of sight for fear of the King's ships."[95] Also in 1640, Plymouth's mayor reported that "three Turks men-of-war had been encountered near the Lizard, who boarded that *Elizabeth*, killed some of her crew, and fired upon the ship. Many small vessels had also been pillaged by them."[96] Further, the Deputy-Lieutenant of Cornwall stated that "there were at least sixty pirate vessels on the coast, and the fisherman were afraid to put to sea."[97] The West Country was an important area for the Parliamentarians to gain support for their cause against King Charles I. Many of the middling sort of this area were upset with the King due to his inaction on behalf of their captive brethren. Parliament's actions in this matter were much more than simply a humanitarian effort, but rather a political device to gain supporters for their cause by showing the people of the West Country that Parliament, not the King cared about them and were willing to help them in their troubles.

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[93] SP.71.1.130.
[94] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*, 21.
[95] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 54.
[96] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 54.
[97] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 54.

The attack on Baltimore was so significant because the corsairs so thoroughly devastated the town. For example, the Pilchard Fishery alone brought £20,000 per year to the town and never recovered.[98] Another account, says that the corsairs captured 237 people, even children in the cradle. Upon entering Algiers, the captives were separated and sold. Père Dan tells of how "it was pitiable to see them exposed for sale; for then they separated wives from their husbands, and infants from their fathers. They sold the husband to one and the wife to another, tearing the daughter from her arms, without any hope of ever seeing her again."[99]

Corsair ships were often seen off the coasts of England and continental Europe. Historians estimate that between 1616 and 1642, 400 English ships were taken or sunk and 8,000 English subjects were taken into captivity. The raids' largest impact was on the merchant communities in London and ports of the South-West of England, with a fiscal impact of at least a million pounds. As a result, regular petitions were sent from these impacted communities to Parliament and the Crown that requested aid in ransoming the captives and in supporting the wives and children left behind. However, the Crown had financial troubles of its own and was unable to help.[100] Merchant and shipping companies also sent petitions that stated that the "pirates had become so numerous and terrible in their ships, and so well piloted into the Channel by English and Irish captives, that they dared not send their vessels to sea, seamen refused to go, and fishermen refrained from taking fish."[101]

One of the most significant impacts of captivity on English society was that for the first time, women were forced by necessity to acquire the agency necessary to the conduct of their

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[98] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,* 53.
[99] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,*52-53.
[100] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 22.
[101] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,*54-55.

affairs.[102] These women petitioned collaboratively on behalf of their husbands, sons, and friends to secure ransoms that they could not afford.[103] Beyond this, everyone in England could feel the impact of captivity. Evidence of this is found in the numerous mentions in sermons, homilies, and collection activities.[104] However, as much attention as the captives were getting and as much money was being collected for the redemption of captives, the money was often appropriated by the Crown and used for military purposes during the civil wars of the 1640s.[105] In contrast the Parliament frequently passed acts and ordinances to raise money for the redemption of captives.[106] Parliament's attention to captives was much more than simply helping their suffering countrymen, it was in fact a calculated move to gain the support of the merchant class, sailors, and members of the West country who were directly or indirectly affected by the captivity of their brethren. For example, on January 15, 1642 Parliament passed the Bill of Algiers, which gave Parliament the power to act in securing the release of thousands of English captives being held in Barbary, something the king had been unwilling or unable to do. More than anything else,

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[102] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 76.

[103] "Ordinance for Collection to be made for relief of captives in Algiers" April 25, 1643. C.H. Firth and Robert S. Rait, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, Volume I,*(London: H.M.S.O., 1911)134-135. See also, SP.71.1.130 and Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom,* 55.

[104] Matar, "Introduction", 5.

[105] Matar, "Introduction", 28.

[106] "The Ordinance of Parliament, concerning the Subsidy of Tonnage and Poundage" (August 1, 1642), Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. I*, 16-19; "Ordinance for Collections to be made for relief of Captives in Algiers" (April 25, 1643) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. I*, 134-135; "An Ordinance for the upholding the Government and Fellowship of Merchants of England, Trading in the Levant Seas, for the maintenance of Clothing and Woolen Manufacturers, the venting of Lead, Tin, and sundry other Commodities of this Kingdom." (March 7, 1643/4) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. I,* 395-396; "Ordinance for Redemption of the Captives at Algiers" (October 24, 1644) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol.I*, 553- 554; "An Ordinance for the raising of Moneys for Redemption of distressed Captives" (January 28, 1644/5) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. I*, 609-611); "An Ordinance for continuance of a former Ordinance for relief of Distressed Captives" (July 7, 1645), Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. I*, 731-732; "An Ordinance for the raising and collection of Ten thousand pounds, for and towards the Redemption of distressed Captives" (July 9, 1645) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. I*, 732-734; "An Act for the Redemption of Captives" (March 26, 1650) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol.II,* 367-368; "An Act for laying an Imposition upon Coals, Towards the Building and Maintaining Ships for Guarding the Seas" (March 28, 1651) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. II*, 505- 506; "An Ordinance for Continuation of one Act of Parliament Entitled *An Act for Redemption of Captives*" (December 24, 1653) Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances vol. II,* 824).

this bill showed the English people that the Parliament was looking out for them more than the king.[107]

In 1645, Parliament had finally raised enough supplies and money to send Edmund Casson to Algiers as their agent. He would later become Consul and served there until his death in 1654. Casson's journey to Algiers did not start off well because his ship was attacked by Spanish pirates. Casson could save some of the money meant for redeeming captives and loaded it onto another ship, which sunk near Cadiz. Fortunately, Parliament sent another ship and both it and Casson arrived safely in Algiers.[108] Casson had hoped that he would be able to redeem "the better sort of persons" first and then return for the rest later, but he could not. He was forced to first ransom those he could, and then wait until more money could be sent from Parliament. In writing to Parliament about this, Casson wrote that he was anxious to return home in the summer because "for I do assure you their clothes be thin."[109]

For its part, Parliament did pass many acts to raise the necessary funds, but either it was diverted, not collected efficiently, or was simply not enough because many captives complained that they were left "remediless and without any hope of succor." Further, merchants and consuls had advanced money and needed to be repaid by the Parliament. Both groups petitioned parliament about their grievances.[110] For example, in many of Frizell's letters to the Privy Council and to Parliament, he describes how he had not been paid his salary nor been reimbursed for the expenditure of redeeming captives.[111]

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[107] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 68, 74.
[108] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 63.
[109] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 64.
[110] Playfair, *The Scourge of Christendom*, 69.
[111] SP71.1.99; SP71.1.130.

Regardless of how effective these first ransoming expeditions were, they set a precedent that would be followed through the eighteenth century. Because of this practice, poor and middling people could reasonably expect to not have to spend the remainder of their life as a captive. They had hope of returning to their home and their families. That kind of hope is a powerful emotion. This rise in redemption efforts also led to an increase in former captives returning home and writing about their experiences in captivity narratives. As more and more captives returned, the narrative established itself as a literary genre, like the travel narratives that were popular later in the 18th century.

Chapter 3: The Narrative Genre

Paradox of Numbers

After 1660, the number of captives in Algiers significantly decreased from an average of between 30,000- 40,000 to 15,000, and while it fluctuated for the rest of the seventeenth-century, the mean stayed under 5,000.[112] Due to frequent, large scale redemption efforts, while this captive population was smaller than before, but it was by no means static. However, we have relatively few narratives from the period before 1660. Most of the narratives that we do have come from the eighteenth century when there were far fewer Europeans experiencing captivity, and the number of captives was usually below 1000. This phenomenon, which I call the paradox of numbers can be explained by the changing political relationship between the European and North African states, as well as by the increase of public interest generated by the *Pères Rédempteurs* and the gaining popularity of the captivity narrative genre. Further, an increase in ransom meant that there was an increase in captives returning home to share their stories.

In Britain the political, military, and social changes that occurred because of the civil wars from 1642-1649 resulted in the transition of England from a trading nation to an imperial power. The increase in the size and capability of the British fleet provided more protection for their merchants and for coastlines.[113] Additionally, merchant companies, both domestic and

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[112] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 179-195.
[113] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 167.

international were developing insurance systems against captivity, where sailors purchased membership and the guarantors promised ransom within fifteen days and passage home.[114]

Through a combination of redemption efforts and insurance as well as increasing naval effectiveness of European powers, while privateering and ransom continued to be an integral part of the Algerian economy, captivity was decreasing in importance. The changing nature of naval strategies also influenced the numbers of captives. After the battle at Lepanto in 1571, the Ottomans knew they were not able to defeat the Europeans in a traditional style naval battle. Thus, the corsairs targeted individual ships or undefended coastal towns. Throughout the early seventeenth century, the height of North African captivity, the North African ships were faster than the European ships and could easily overpower them. However, by the mid-seventeenth-century, we start to see naval innovations in Europe that enabled the European ships to better defend themselves against the corsair ships. Further, the European ships sailed together in larger groups in a type of convoy for protection as well to better patrol European waters.

Political changes in Europe were exemplified by the changes in political culture and governmental administration. Different countries tried different tactics, but the greatest example is the difference in practice in England and France. Important to understand the way that Britain's geographical size affected the psyche of the imperial agenda, in that vulnerability was compensated with aggressiveness.[115] England's acquisition of the colony of Tangier in 1662 provided a foothold in North Africa and as well as potential to dominate Mediterranean trade

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[114] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 30. For more information see Magnus Ressel, "Conflicts between Early Modern European States about Rescuing Their Own Subjects from Barbary Captivity" *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 36, no. 1 (February 2011), 5.
[115] Colley, *Captives,* 5-9, 11.

because of its proximity to the strait of Gibraltar.[116] Because of the British aggressiveness in foreign policy, most of the English redemption efforts revolved around military expeditions.

On the contrary, the actions taken in recovering and redeeming French and Spanish captives relied on diplomacy and paying for ransom. The French and Spanish rulers then used the return of captives in large processions as both propaganda for their reign and for the redemptionist priests to raise more money for the continuation of redemption efforts.[117] Ever concerned with the royal image, Louis XIV associated French freedom with political and religious loyalty.[118] Weiss argues that Louis XIV also shared the "local anxiety about their (the captives) exposure to North African 'Contagions,' notably plague, sodomy, and Islam."[119] Similar to England, France used captivity and ransom to their own advantage. The actively only ransomed coreligionists and political allies. Dissenters were left in captivity intentionally.[120]

Ever concerned with the royal image, Louis XIV attacked Algiers in June 1683 to build up his reputation as a religious warrior, but also to draw attention away from his alliance with the Turks as they were advancing on Vienna.[121] Further like England, the French put concerns about corsairs and captivity after more pressing domestic concerns.[122] This illustrates how European powers took an interest in North Africa and their captive countrymen only when it was politically expedient and prudent to do so. In another example, when women were seeking redemption of their husbands the French church sanctioned their actions and actively sought for the return of the men and aiding the family until their return. Weiss says "by sanctioning females to act without male protectors, France's legal system actually encouraged the salvation of men- and in

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[116] Colley, *Captives,* 25.
[117] Matar, "Introduction", 29.
[118] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 91.
[119] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 2.
[120] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 2.
[121] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 73.
[122] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 29.

turn repaired the fractured hierarchical family unit at the basis of French society."[123] Alternatively, in England, there were no such safeguards for wives whose husbands were taken captive. Because of the predicament, they were forced by necessity to find their agency and many petitioned parliament for the redemption of their husbands.[124]

Narrative Reliability Issues

Due to the increase in visibility of the captivity phenomenon in countries such as England, the captives were being redeemed more frequently. These redeemed captives wrote and published their stories in the form of captivity narratives. Initially, the authors wanted simply to prove that they had not been 'corrupted' during their captivity and gain entrance back into society. As the narratives grew more popular and into its own genre, there became a pattern to the narratives and tropes that were common threads. These patterns the readers expected and the authors lovingly obliged. It is because of this reciprocal nature of these narratives and the relationship between the author and the audience that the narratives are neither true nor accurate accounts of captivity. The authors manipulate the story to fit their needs, and pulling fact from fiction is difficult and often an uncertain process. While there are fewer narratives in the early and mid-seventeenth century than the late seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, there are more than the ones I talk about here.[125] I have chosen these specific narratives because they provide ample evidence for captivity experience, perception and the importance of the audience. The audience was the English communities in which the former captives lived. They were

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[123] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 33.
[124] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 78.
[125] Vitkus gives a complete bibliography of Barbary captivity narratives from the early sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries in his book, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*.

typically Protestant or some variant of Protestant and were staunchly suspicious of immorality and corruption of the spirit. However, they were also members of a society which valued drama and excitement. During the eighteenth century especially, the captivity narratives gained popularity because they had captured the imaginations of the English people, and indeed all of Europe, because of the foreignness of the tales, the dramatization of the experiences, and the ways which they played into the pre-existing stereotypes.

Thomas Smith describes Islam to his readers as a religion "which is made up of folly and imposture and gross absurdities, which abstracting from the common and fundamental principles and notices of Natural Religion, had nothing in it to recommend itself to the choice and acceptance of any sober wise man."[126] It is prejudices such as this and the many, many others found throughout most of the captivity narratives, that skew the perspective of the narratives to allow prejudices and stereotypes to override the reality of the experiences. Smith goes on to explain the Turks' hatred for Christians writing, "this hatred they are very careful to instill into their Children from their very infancy, as a most necessary part of their education, next to the belief of one God, and of Mahomed his Apostle and messenger."[127] Further, Smith says that "this contempt and disesteem of all others is the natural result of the over-weening conceit and false valuation they have of themselves."[128]

Even though captivity narratives are not reliable sources for the nature of captivity and the extent of the cruelty or power dynamics because of their internal prejudices, as Matar points out, they do show how Christian Europeans interacted with non-Christians and non-Europeans. Most importantly is that it must be considered that much of this was constructed specifically for

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[126] Smith, *Remarks*, 27
[127] Smith, *Remarks*, 4.
[128] T.S., *Adventures*, 23.

the audience. Many authors like Smith and Okeley play upon the inherent, anti-Muslim stereotypes extensively. Indeed, they show the nature of the relationships between the Christians and Muslims, in both professional and personal contexts, as well as trade, piracy, and the cultural climate in the Barbary States.[129] For example, William Okeley opened a merchant shop and his master helped him start financially. He had another Englishman captive as a partner and they did well for themselves. They each had to pay their masters a portion of the profits as well.[130]

It is important to understand early modern Algiers in terms of a borderland. The intermixing of cultures from Christian Europe and all the regional cultures within, the Islamic culture of the Turks, the Jewish culture, and the native Kebyles combined to form the Algerian culture. The captivity experiences in Algiers were directly affected by this cultural dynamic and influenced the captives' perception of their reality. The captives' experience depended upon their master, upon the type of work they were purchased for, and upon the likelihood or possibility of redemption. Additionally, the captivity narrative is generally not a reliable piece of evidence for understanding the culture and dynamics at play in early modern Algiers. The captivity narratives were slanted because of the nature of the publication. The narratives were only written and published after redemption and back in the author's home country. The importance of this context for publication cannot be overestimated. Their audience was their fellow countrymen, and the writers were trying to prove they were not 'corrupted' by Islam.[131] In this type of collective memory sharing, the captivity narrative as a genre is shaped by the bias of the community. The narratives started out as curiosity stories told in taverns after the former captives returned home, and were later pushed to publish the narratives. The narratives were exciting,

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[129] Matar, "Introduction", 6.
[130] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 156.
[131] Matar, "Introduction", 29.

exotic, and entirely foreign in nature to the native Europeans, many of whom would never leave the shores of their own country. However, Nabil Matar asserts that while they were certainly prejudiced, the captivity writers experienced the captivity phenomenon better than anyone else.[132]

Even though their perception was influenced by the anti-Islamic prejudices found in Christian European culture, the captives' perception of events comes across very clearly in the narratives. For example, Francis Knight referred to Algiers as "that citie fatall [*sic*] to all Christians, and the butchery of mankind."[133] Indeed, even though they may have placed emphasis on certain events or exaggerated others, their perception of their experience is quite possibly almost entirely genuine, in that they were not aware of their inherent biases. Matar also stresses the importance of these narratives because they show their "political and commercial dealings with North African Muslims, traders, government officials, sailors, and others relied on the depositions and stories of the thousands of now forgotten Britons whose names have not even survived in ransom lists."[134] Ann Thomson also remarks about the "underlying current of hostility" appearing in European texts about Islamic societies, even when the author attempts to avoid using the contemporary stereotypes.[135]

The sources that fueled these stereotypes included the "writings of religious redemptionists" active across Europe who actively exaggerated Muslim cruelty to gain sympathy for captives and supporters for their causes. Because of these stereotypes, the Europeans believed that to be a captive of in a Muslim land meant certain hardship and cruelty as well as pressure to

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[132] Matar, "Introduction", 4
[133] Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under The Turkes of Argeire, suffered by an English Captive Merchant.*(London: 1640), 1.
[134] Matar, "Introduction", 4-5
[135] Ann Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment: European Attitudes towards the Maghreb in the 18th Century*, (New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 32

convert, and sexual abuse for women and children.[136] For example, Smith wrote that "the law confines them to a set number of wives; but for Women slaves they are left to their own choice and liberty. They may heap up as many as their lust and their estate will and can give way to… over them they have a full power, and can dispose of them according to their humor and pleasure; and send them to the Market, when they are weary of them; it being no unusual thing for a poor miserable Christian woman to be sold five or six times."[137] It is interesting to note that Smith himself was sold six times before gaining his freedom, but he does not make this connection.

From the narratives, we can see that captive populations were by no means static. The captives were constantly being sold to one master or another, escaping, or being ransomed. However, the emphasis that Smith puts on the women and how many times they were sold echoes Christian ideas of piety and purity expected of Christian women who were expected to have sexual contact only with their husbands, and would only have multiple partners if they had more than one husband over their lifetime. Christian preoccupation with women's sexuality is well documented. This characterization of the Muslims as sexual deviants caused the early modern Europeans to fear North Africans, Islam, and captivity as much as they feared the plague or natural disasters.[138]

While captivity was certainly cruel and hard, the experience generally was not as bad as those unfortunate enough to be slaves in the Plantation model of slavery. Ellen Friedman argues that the treatment of Christians in Algiers was "consistent with the standards of the age," which meant that the captives were generally cared for and not considered expendable and was

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[136] Friedman, "Christians at 'Hard Labor'", 617
[137] Smith, *Remarks*, 148-149.
[138] Lotfi Ben Rejeb, "'The General Belief of the world': Barbary as a Genre and discourse in Mediterranean History." *European Review of History: Revue European D'histoire* 19, no. 1 (2012), 19.

comparable to the old model of Slavery. For example, William Okeley wrote about a time when his master made him go onto a ship that was going raiding. Okeley professed he did not wish to go as it went against all he believed. However, he was not given a choice and the master's "commands were backed with compulsion, and whatever his authority was, he had more power than I had courage to deny or strength to resist, and go I did." Nevertheless, the master spoke with the captain and crew to treat Okeley civilly, gave him money, bought him clothes, and provisions for the journey[139]

The business of captivity and ransom had more to do with international politics than individual experience, however, the effects of this political power dynamic upon the individual are important as well. How British politics and foreign policy affected its subjects is just as important to study as the actions of political leaders. As Linda Colley aptly argued "virtually all British captives… were compelled by the nature of their predicament to re-examine - and often question for the first time - conventional wisdoms about nationality, race, religion, allegiance, appropriate modes of behavior, and the locations of power."[140] For example, Reverend Devereux Spratt questioned his religion and his entire life's work upon becoming a captive. He wrote in his Autobiography that being taken captive was "soe greivious [*sic*] that I began to question Providence and accused Him (God) of injustice in His dealeings [*sic*] with me"[141]

Contrary to Europeans' fears and stereotypes about the Muslims, Matar stipulates that the North Africans "took care of their captives to use them for work or to collect their ransom."[142] This is not because they were 'better' people or more humane than their Christian counterparts,

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[139] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 154-155.
[140] Colley, *Captives,* 16.
[141] Devereux Spratt, *Autobiography of the Rev. Devereux Spratt who died at Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, 1688,* (London: 1886) 11.
[142] Matar, "Introduction", 17

but rather, this practice was more economically beneficial to them. Indeed, most captives were obscure individuals[143]. Further, captors exercised restraint if it meant higher ransom prices[144]. This did not happen all the time, however, because if the captors felt that ransom negotiations were proceeding too slowly, they might try to hasten the process by 'breaking' the captives for the captive to write home about the ordeals.[145]

Because of this dynamic, the most important impact of captivity was the likelihood and possibility of being ransomed. For example, Thomas Smith wrote of how privately owned captives "are redeemable at a good price; but then there must be artifice used in buying of them. The more forward the Western Christians are to redeem their countrey-men [*sic*], the greater then price their covetous masters set upon their heads; a seeming indifference whether they are redeemed or no, does very much beat down the ransome [*sic*]."[146] This passage is especially interesting because Smith himself was not successful in negotiating for his ransom and was only freed after his last master said he had earned his freedom and allowed him to return home to England. However, his narrative is published only under his initials, "T.S.," and his *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government of the Turks* is under his full name. For his contemporaries who had either not read his narrative or had read it and not fitted the two together, this piece of advice could have potentially damaged redemption efforts for private individuals because the very tactic he puts forth for negotiating ransom is an utter failure when he tries to employ it. Additionally, in many of the letters from the consuls in Algiers to the English government, they relayed that they believed that the cities of Algiers and Tunis would "hold no fayth [*sic*]" in promises and treaties because the North Africans were duplicitous and

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[143] Colley, *Captives,* 16
[144] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 98.
[145] Matar, "Introduction", 16.
[146] Smith, *Remarks,* 161-162.

could not be trusted.[147] They would and could easily raise the price of ransom if they believed they could get more money for their stock of captives.

While this may be true, the impact of these negotiations by the actions of the Europeans cannot be understated. Because they were often trying to negotiate for the lowest price possible for the captives, the North Africans often held firm or raised their prices to make the most profit. From a purely economic standpoint, the North African's strategy is sound; however, because of a lack of trust and communication between the two parties, the system was entirely dysfunctional.

General Characteristics of the Captivity Genre

"Fetters of gold do not lose their nature; they are fetters still."[148] As seen in many captivity narratives such as those written by William Okeley and Thomas Smith, treatment as a captive in North Africa varied greatly from master to master. Both men had masters who were good to them and treated them as fairly as a captive could expect, and masters who were cruel.

Captivity narratives as a genre started at the end of the sixteenth-century, but didn't gain in popularity until early in the eighteenth-century. The early narratives, those published before 1640 concerned "personal ordeals, their faith and commitment to their religious and national identity."[149] These narratives served to prove that the author had not been 'tainted' by captivity in North Africa and provided very little narrative detail. For example, in John Rawlins's narrative, he used the term "For God and King James and Saint George for England" as a "watchword" in

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[147] SP 71.1.106
[148] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 168
[149] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 3-4.

his escape attempt with a few compatriots.[150] Regardless of the validity of this tale, because it is in the published narrative, it was used to demonstrate his English identity as well as his unwavering allegiance to England. Narratives published after 1640, were not only longer, but also provided "narrative detail, local color, and informative excurses."[151] For example, William Okeley describes Algiers as "a city very pleasantly situated on the side of the hills overlooking the Mediterranean, which lies north of it, and it lifts up its proud head so imperiously, as if it challenged sovereignty over those seas and expected tribute from all that shall look within the straits."[152] Additionally, Thomas Smith describes marriage customs, the role of Muslim women, and the way the Turkish army operated as well as the setup of the Divan.

As much as these narratives do tell the reader, they were more often highly romanticized, and are therefore of little use for true critical analysis. For examples, the tales spread by the religious orders, or *Pères Rédempteurs* were dramatized, emphasizing the worst aspects of captivity to elicit sympathy and money for ransoming the captives.[153] However, even these religious orders had other motivations; their prestige as an order often depended upon how many of their "flock" were redeemed compared to how many still languished in captivity at the time.

In addition to the romanticization of the genre, they also played into cultural stereotypes. Matar describes how the "Britons drew the line of separation between themselves as Christians and civilized, and the Moors/Africans as Muslims and uncivilized. In Islam they locked the absolute difference between themselves and the Moors."[154]Indeed, Thomas Smith wrote that the Muslims' "strength lies more in attacking other Religions, than establishing their own."[155]

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[150] John Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol, Called the* Exchange, *from the Turkish Pirates of Argier*, (1622), Reprinted in Vitkus, 110-115.
[151] Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam,* 4.
[152] Okeley, *Eben-ezer,* 149.
[153] Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment,* 6.
[154] Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 165.
[155] Smith, *Remarks*, 27.

Indeed, by the time of the French colonization of Algiers in 1830, the Africans were viewed as simplistic savages waiting to be "awakened" by the white Christians.[156] Even the name "Barbary" was used as both a toponym and a trope to describe the region and was invented by the Europeans in the sixteenth century.[157] For example, Smith remarks "the Turks are justly branded with the Character of a barbarous Nation; which censure does not relate either to the cruelty and severity of their punishments." Both of Smith's published work, his narrative as well as his *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion, and Government of the Turks* focus thematically on the differences between the Muslim and European culture. Contributing[158] to the rise in popularity of the genre was the political usefulness of the narratives. They were not only exciting and exotic, they were also emotionally evocative. Political and religious leaders drew upon them, as Gillian Weiss describes, "first to foster sovereign allegiance and then to defend territorial expansion."[159]

The most important aspect of the captivity genre was the audience. People who had escaped from North Africa or had been ransomed and returned to their home in Europe or England wrote and published the narratives. The narrative's audience, then were their fellow countrymen or other Europeans many of whom had no direct knowledge of the Barbary states, Islam, or the Ottomans. Further, if the author lied or misinterpreted something in his or her narrative, there wasn't anyone that would have been able to point it out.

While there are themes common among the narratives, such as punishments for wrongdoing, good and bad masters, and an emphasis on the complete foreignness of the North African people, but there are rarely corroborating witnesses to validate the author's claims.

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[156] Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment,* 143.
[157] Rejeb, "The General Belief of the World", 16.
[158] Smith, *Remarks*, 1.
[159] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs,* 170.

Indeed, because their audience was their fellow countrymen, members of a society which the former captives wished to be a part of, they would often portray themselves as stalwart Christians against a never-ending assault by Muslims. For example, Thomas Smith wrote about the multitudes of married Muslim women who were pursuing him were trying to get him to sleep with them, but he could not because he suspected that their only motivation was to get him to "turn Turk". He also tells of a rich widow who wanted him to marry her and give him everything she had if he would become a Muslim. He says that "my first resolution was o despise all these offers, and to prefer the life of a slave with honor, and my Religion before the greatest riches and the most pleasant life."[160] While I question the validity of this story, the intent of the message is clear: that even with the greatest temptations, Smith did not turn his back on his faith. However, with the number of pages and multiple times and ways this message is portrayed in his narrative, it does suggest that he may have been trying to cover up something that would have made his life in England more difficult. While this is the norm in the genre, it is not as prevalent in other narratives as it is in his. Many English people, especially Puritans believed in millenarianism and that the 1640s and 1650s were a time of apocalyptical struggle which would end in a thousand-year reign of godly rule. To them, the Muslims like the Catholics, were agents of the anti-Christ trying to get them to turn against their faith. For example, a preacher named Henry Byam gave a sermon in 1627 in which he praised the martyrs who resisted "instead of yielding to fear and apostatizing despite horrible cruelty by the Turks and others." [161]

Since the captivity narratives are not reliable sources for critical analysis for the political structures and forces that contributed to the experience of captivity then historians must look at

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[160] T.S., *Adventures*, 213-216.

[161] Henry Byam, *A Returne from Argier. A Sermon Preached at Minhead in... Somerset the 16. Of March, 1627. At the re-admission of a relapsed Christian into our Church,* (London, 1628), 1.

diplomatic records, treatises, and petitions to gain understanding. These documents are better sources of understanding because they were not published like the narratives and therefore have no ulterior purpose in evocative nature to garner public support. However, even these sources have problems, such as personal motivations, and persuading the court, parliament, or king to do as the author wanted. Even so, they provide a clearer understanding of life in Algiers and the possibility of ransom and the return home.

Conclusion

The peace treaty between England and Algiers in 1662, it was the final piece in a long series of structural shifts that altered the nature of the relationship between the two states. Anglo-Algerian relations would never be the same because of the maritime advances the English had made during the 1640s and 1650s. Since captivity had been such a dividing force in the 1640s, upon his ascension at the Restoration of 1660, Charles II made peace with Algiers and the Barbary States a priority. He desired peace and stability for his reign and did everything he could to ensure that he would get it so that he could enjoy the pleasures of being king. Charles II and the other European powers quickly found that with the shifted power dynamic in the Mediterranean, it was then easier to pay off the Barbary States before hand in a form of tribute to leave their ships alone during their voyages rather than ransoming captives afterwards. By the mid- eighteenth century, the average number of captives within Algiers was consistently below a thousand.

Through travel and captivity narratives, the Europeans learned a lot about the Muslim world, but without first-hand experience, this new knowledge often played into the same stereotypes and tropes. As Ann Thomson argues, the more that was known of Islam in the eighteenth century only contributed to the strengthening of the most anti-Islamic stereotypes, largely because of the European's general ignorance and unwillingness to understand and any attempts to do so were abandoned by the turn of the nineteenth century.[162]

The captivity experience was extremely varied, but generally tolerable. The most important impact of external politics was that of the possibility and probability of ransom.

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[162] Thomson, 31.

Indeed, between 1625 and 1660 there were gradual but significant shifts in the power dynamics that culminated with the Anglo-Algerian treaty in 1662 that dramatically altered the captivity experience in Algiers. Once redemption was a real possibility for most captives, more and more narratives were produced and their popularity skyrocketed during the early eighteenth century, although they never could break through the anti-Muslim cultural stereotypes.

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