Renegades, Slaves, and Pirates: the Representation of Mediterranean Corsair Wars and Barbary in early modern Western Literature and Culture

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
Romance Studies in the Graduate School
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2020

<u>ABSTRACT</u>

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Abstract

The interdependent phenomena of piracy, privateering, and slave trading have been endemic to the Mediterranean since antiquity. However, from the mid-sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth-century, these phenomena – known at the time as corso – grew exponentially, both in volume and impact. For more than a century, corso played a significant role in influencing the commercial and social exchanges in the Western Mediterranean, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals from all over Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Although both Europe and North Africa were deeply involved in corso, its image in early modern European culture became almost exclusively associated with the Muslim World and the North African region – known at the time as "Barbary" – giving shape to one of the "Great Fears" of pre-modern Europe. However, besides the anxiety, misapprehensions, and prejudice, corso's geographical and cultural proximity also sparked significant intercultural and interreligious interactions. My primary corpus examines a collection of non-fictional and fictional texts, including captivity and redemption narratives, pamphlets, and news reports, as well as Romance epics, Baroque novels, novellas, dramas, and comedies. Through this study, I show how corso's discursive representation ended up playing a crucial role in shaping European understanding of the Western Mediterranean at the time. My study contributes to enriching the predominant Euro-Ottoman orientation of early modern Mediterranean and Orientalist studies by considering the plurality of early modern Orientalisms.

Dedication

For Christina, Theo, and Alex.

Acknowledgements

My research would not have been possible without the intellectual guidance, enduring support, encouragement, and friendship of Professor Michèle Longino at Duke University. Her work on early modern Orientalism has influenced and inspired since the beginning my research project. It was in one of her graduate seminars on early modern French travelers to the Ottoman Empire that I was lastingly marked by reading a Barbary captivity narrative, which would later inspire the subject of this study. Likewise, Professor Valeria Finucci's seminar on the early modern Mediterranean was crucial in introducing me to the interdisciplinary breadth of the field, strengthening my desire and guiding my curiosity to work on this timeless topic. I am also grateful to Professor Ellen Welch at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for her insightful intellectual guidance. I am thankful for the uninterrupted support of Duke University's Graduate School, and the outstanding faculty and staff of the Romance Studies Department which helped make this dissertation possible.

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Introduction

Throughout pre-modern history, the Mediterranean Sea has always acted as a bridge and a barrier for connecting or opposing the regions and cultures that bordered it, creating the complex dialectic of confrontation and complementarity that Ferdinand Braudel famously labeled the "Mediterranean world." In this border zone, the interdependent phenomena of piracy, privateering, and slave trading have been endemic, as ancient as the Mediterranean civilizations themselves. However, from the mid-sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth-century, these phenomena – known at the time as *la guerre de course*, *andar di corsa* or *il* corso – grew exponentially, both in volume and impact.

For more than a century, corso played a significant role in influencing the commercial and social exchanges in the Western Mediterranean, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals from all over Europe, Africa, and the Middle East by preying on, enslaving, and assimilating many. The reasons for this sharp increase in both piracy and slavery are multiple and complex. However, there is a consensus among historians (including Braudel and the generation of Mediterranean historians that followed him) in pointing out that the Ottoman-Hapsburg rivalry for supremacy in the Mediterranean and its aftermath was one of the major factors that led to this increase in piracy activity.[1] For much of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire on one side and

[1] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et Le Monde Méditeranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 2e édition revue et augmentée. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), 190–212.

the Hapsburg empire and their allies on the other – the two major Mediterranean powers of the time – had waged a harsh war on each other on land and by sea.

For both empires, the control of the Western Mediterranean and the North African coasts was one of the key issues of contention. It was strategic in that it granted de facto oversight of the vital maritime commercial routes of the region and could be easily used as a base for conducting naval raids from the Atlantic to the Middle East. For much of the sixteenth century, both empires had regularly encouraged and sponsored the practice of privateering as an "ancillary" form of war – to use Braudel's definition[2]. Both used the granting of letters patent to skillful captains, especially during periods of halts to their direct military conflict in order to keep their enemy fleet at bay.[3]

This situation rapidly changed, however, during the 1580s when, after the famous Ottoman defeat at Lepanto in 1571, both empires were forced by different circumstances to retreat from their positions and halt their Mediterranean confrontation. The Ottomans had to quickly turn their attention and their forces toward the threat coming from the Persians – their longtime enemy –, who were menacing their borders on the west. The Hapsburgs, after a century of intense conflicts on many fronts, were financially and militarily exhausted and did not have the means to support further maritime expeditions.[4]

The end of the great Hapsburg-Ottoman conflict and the retreat of the imperial fleets created a power vacuum in the Mediterranean, which allowed the rise of new

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[2] Ibid., 190.
[3] Ibid., 190–212.
[4] Salvatore Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo: cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio* (Milano: A. Mondadori, 1993), 16–21.

actors. Many ports of the region that had previously practiced privateering under either the Ottoman or Hapsburg protection acquired a high degree of independence. Moreover, by the 1580s, piracy had lost a large part of the military and strategic value it had for the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans, and by the end of the sixteenth century started to transform more and more into an industry driven by independent economic interests. Cities such as Valletta, Livorno (and to a lesser extent Genoa, Marseille or Nice) on the Christian side, and the North African trio of Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis – together with Sale in Morocco later – on the Muslim side, became all intensely engaged in officially or unofficially sponsored forms of piracy, as well as in the taking of captives that this practice usually legitimized.[5]

The practice of piracy and privateering and the concurrent habit of taking captives at sea or on land for ransoming or enslavement that became such an essential aspect of Mediterranean life from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century (with its peak between the 1580s to the 1720s) played a prominent role in early modern history, especially for its significant impact onto Mediterranean commerce.

Corso

The French historian Michel Fontenay has proposed to use the term "corso" (from the early modern Italian expression "*andar di* corso") to succinctly designate this whole set of historical phenomena.[6] In Fontenay's conception, corso should be used to refer to

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[5] Braudel, *La Méditerranée et Le Monde Méditeranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 190–212.
[6] Michel Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant: Navigation, commerce, course et piraterie* (Paris: Editions Classiques Garnier, 2010), 11.

the specific maritime and land plundering activity (which also involved the taking of captives for ransoming or enslavement) that appear in the western Mediterranean region between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. The use of this term seeks to distinguish it from other forms of piracy that were practiced at the time, or that had been practiced in the pre-modern Mediterranean world. In this way, corso for Fontenay can be more easily distinguished from low-scale piracy on the one hand, but also from other state-sponsored forms of privateering.

While small-scale piracy has always been practiced in the Mediterranean (by any fisherman or merchants occasionally-turned pirates), this was an unstructured form of marauding that shared many parallels with on-land banditry, in that it was often regionally confined and had no overt political or ideological goal, except to provide a supplemental income for many local communities. This kind of piracy was, for example, currently practiced around the southern Italian shores or in the Peloponnese at the time. At the other extreme of the spectrum was the system of state-sponsored privateering, a form of military or commercial conflict which was supplemental to direct maritime war. Single captains, private or state-owned companies – and often even national navies – were granted authority to conduct privateering activities through a letter of "reprisal" (or letters patent) by governments against their rivals. This state-sponsored privateering activity often complemented direct naval military confrontation between states, either by targeting their rival commerce or by assaulting their navy.[7]

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[7] Ibid., 212–214.

In Fontenay's conception, corso lies somewhat in the middle of this spectrum. It was not an occasional enterprise (like small-scale piracy), but it was also different from state-sponsored privateering, in that its motivations were economic rather than political. Fernand Braudel had already noted that: "there is no corso without a prize."[8] In other words, to exist, corso had to be first of all a profitable business. While corso was undoubtedly driven in part by ideological and political motives, such as the Christian-Muslim inter-religious confrontation, Fontenay (following Braudel), emphasizes that in the case of corso*,* these components (although important) were after all subordinated to the broader economic interest at hand. Therefore, the sudden expansion that corso had experienced during the early modern period has to be understood first and foremost in the context of the growth of Mediterranean trade at the time. [9]

Fontenay's use of the term "corso" has been questioned by other experts such as by the Italian historian Salvatore Bono. Bono has argued that the distinctions that Fontenay tries to make by employing this term are ultimately tenuous because small-scale piracy and large-scale professional privateering often overlapped and coexisted. The term Corso cannot, therefore, efficiently describe what was, in fact, a very complex and nuanced series of practices that changed significantly depending on the geographical and social contexts in which they where practiced.[10] However, Fontenay's term "corso" can still be useful for promptly labeling and encompassing the peculiar configuration of

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[8] Braudel, *La Méditerranée et Le Monde Méditeranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 195.
[9] Ibid., 191–193; Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant*, 259.
[10] Salvatore Bono, *I Corsari Barbareschi* (Turin, Italy: Edizion RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1964), 15.

piracy, privateering, captivity, and slavery that existed in many areas of the Mediterranean world between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century. It is in this sense that it will be employed here.

Since early modern times, corso has left a profound cultural imprint in all Mediterranean cultures. Although both Europe and North Africa were deeply involved in corso, its image in early modern European culture became almost exclusively associated with the Muslim World and the North African region.

Although the Maghreb region certainly played an essential role in the spectacular rising of corso during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, historians have long since debunked this enduring and one-sided myth of the Barbary states as a Muslim pirate cove. With the help of his innovative holistic historical approach to the Mediterranean world, Fernand Braudel was one of the first to point out the incongruencies of this myth, shedding new light on the phenomena of early modern corso. [11] Braudel's research has helped overcome – beyond any reasonable doubt – the idea that corso had been confined only to the southern shores of the western Mediterranean. However, even more importantly, Braudel has demonstrated that corso represented not merely a peripheral element in the complex system of maritime exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean but rather an omnipresent counterpart to any trade, travel, warfare, or pilgrimage. Braudel's research was also a direct challenge to the then prominent thesis of Henri Pirenne who (in his classic 1937 book *Mohammed and Charlemagne*) forcefully argued

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[11] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949).

in favor of a "clash of civilization" between Muslims and Christians as one of the defining moments in pre-modern European history.[12]

Despite the complex and nuanced realities of early modern Mediterranean political, social and commercial life, in the European imagination of the time, the North African coasts gradually became associated with piracy and slavery, giving birth to the myth of the so-called "Barbary States" (a term which approximately designates the actual Maghreb region, with particular reference to the cities of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, as well as Sale in Morocco). This myth was founded on Christian Europe's perception of a menace coming from the southern shores of the Mediterranean, home of dangerous Muslim corsairs raiding, and enslaving Christian subjects. In many European cultures, this lasting image of a Maghreb region hostile to Europe and its civilization eventually coalesced into the myth of the Barbary pirate, fueling the formation of a mental map of a Mediterranean sharply divided between civilization and barbarism, Good and Evil, and even more significantly divided between religious lines separating Christians and Muslims. While the vast majority of early modern Europeans had little understanding of remote regions of the world, such as the New World or the Far East, corso's geographical and cultural proximity made it all the more familiar to them. Not surprisingly, the French historian Jean Delumeau rightly defines the Barbary myth as one of the great Western fears in the pre-modern world.[13]

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[12] Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris: Alcan, 1937); John A. Marino, *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2002), 391.
[13] Jean Delumeau, *La Peur En Occident, XIVe-XVIIIe Siècles: Une Cité Assiégée* (Paris: Fayard, 1978), 262–272.

Barbary corso in Mediterranean Studies

In the past half-century the work of three generations of historians – many of whom had worked in Fernand Braudel's footsteps – has considerably expanded our understanding of the early modern Mediterranean and the phenomena of corso and early modern Mediterranean slavery. It is upon these studies that my analysis of the early modern Mediterranean, corso, and slavery rests. In particular, upon the work of the first generation of English historians such as Godfrey Fisher, Italians such as Salvatore Bono and Alberto Tenenti, and French such as Alain Blondy and Michèle Fontenay, and the work of Predrag Matvejević on the shared cultural background of the Mediterranean.[14]

Thanks to their pioneering research, new perspectives on the early modern Mediterranean have opened. I owe the development of my research also to the new generation of historians, such as Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, who have infused new life into to Braudel's ideas on connectivity between microregions,[15] and David Abulafia, who has re-examined the Mediterranean in a "longue durée" perspective.[16]

Also, I was inspired by Linda Colley's substantial comparative study of the captivity experiences of Britons in the Mediterranean, India, and North America, which

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[14] Godfrey Fisher, *Barbary Legend: War, Trade, and Piracy in North Africa, 1415-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Bono, *I Corsari Barbareschi*; Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*; Alberto Tenenti, *Venezia e i corsari, 1580-1615* (Laterza, 1961); Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant*; Predrag Matvejević, *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[15] Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

[16] David Abulafia, *The Mediterranean in History* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003).

has shed new light on early modern captivity narratives;[17] and by Robert Davis, who has offered us an engaging survey of the phenomena of slavery in the early modern Mediterranean, sparking an essential debate on the size of this phenomenon.[18]

Other significant sources of information and inspiration for my study were also Gillian Weiss' captivating study of France's relationship with North Africa and its attitude toward Mediterranean slavery;[19] and the works of Géraud Poumarède, Paul Masson, Gaston Rambert, and Lemnouar Merouche.[20]

My research on the representation of Barbary in French literature builds first upon the seminal bibliographical research initiated more than forty years ago by the French literary scholar Guy Turbet-Delof. Turbet-Delof, which was first published as his thesis *L'Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* in 1971. His wide-ranging work remains to these days the most important reference on this topic for all those who followed.[21] As a companion to this seminal monographic work on the representation of Barbary in early modern French literature, Turbet-Delof also published

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[17] Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002).
[18] Robert C. (Robert Charles) Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[19] Gillian Lee Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[20] Géraud Poumarède, "La France et Les Barbaresques: Police Des Mers et Relations Internationales En Méditerranée (XVIe-XVIIe Siècles)," *Revue d'histoire marittime* 4 (2005): 117–146; Paul Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette & cie, 1896); Gaston Rambert, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille* (Paris: Plon, 1949); Lemnouar Merouche, *La course: mythes et réalité*, vol. 2, Recherches sur l'Algérie à l'époque ottomane (Saint-Denis: Ed. Bouchène, 2007).
[21] Guy Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')* (Librairie Droz, 1971).

a few years later the most extensive bibliographic research on the subject to these days, the *Bibliographie critique du Maghreb dans la litterature Française, 1532-1715*.[22]

The vitality of research in early modern Mediterranean historical studies has considerably enriched and helped move forward the research on this subject in recent years, sparking a new wave of interest in Turbet-Delof's work. From 2005 to 2012, Anne Duprat has directed the research group "Orient/Occident" at the center for comparative literature of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris-IV). The group, gathering together a cohort of interdisciplinary and multilingual experts, has done outstanding work in analyzing the formation and circulation or literary themes connected to the Mediterranean in the early modern European literary canon, producing a broad set of innovative publications.[23] Equally crucial for all those scholars working on the image of Barbary and corso are the contributions that appeared under the supervision of Sylvie Requemora-Gros.[24]

More recently, Mario Klarer has coordinated an interdisciplinary study exploring the early modern genre of European Barbary captivity narratives from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.[25]

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[22] Guy Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532-1715*, Bibliographies et Catalogues 2 (Alger: S.N.E.D., 1976).

[23] Anne Duprat and Hédia Khadhar, eds., *Orient baroque, Orient classique: variations du motif oriental dans les littératures d'Europe, XVIe-XVIIe siècle* (Editions Bouchène, 2010); Anne Duprat, ed., *Légendes Barbaresques: Le Récit de Captivité : Codes, Stratégies, Détournements, XVIe-XVIIe Siècles* (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2016); Anne Duprat, ed., *La Guerre de Course En Récits (XVIe-XVIIIe Siècles). Terrains, Corpus, Series* (Paris, 2010); Anne Duprat and Émilie Picherot, eds., *Récits d'orient dans les littératures d'Europe: XVIe-XVIIe siècles* (Presses Paris Sorbonne, 2008).

[24] Loïc Guyon and Sylvie Requemora-Gros, *Voyage et Théâtre* (Paris: Pups - Pu Paris Sorbonne, 2011); Sophie Linon-Chipon and Sylvie Requemora-Gros, eds., *Les Tyrans de La Mer: Pirates, Corsaires et Flibustiers* (Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2002); Sylvie Requemora-Gros, *Voguer Vers La Modernité : Le Voyage à Travers Les Genres Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012).

[25] Mario Klarer, ed., *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean, 1550-1810*, Routledge Research in Early Modern History (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2019., 2019); Mario Klarer, *Mediterranean Slavery and World Literature: Captivity Genres from Cervantes to Rousseau* (Routledge, 2019).

While my dissertation has mostly focused on the representation of corso and Barbary in French literature and culture, this is a theme that transcends linguistic and national canons. Corso affected all the regions and individuals living in the early modern Western Mediterranean, regardless of their language or place of origin. Not surprisingly, representation of corso exists in all European literary canons, a demonstration of the profoundly intercultural nature of this phenomenon.

Many representations of Barbary and corso exist for instance in the early modern Spanish literature (the Hapsburg Empire was one of the European actors mostly involved and affected by corso), and significant studies have been published on this topic, such as the research of scholars such as Barbara Fuchs and Ana Rodriguèz-Rodriguèz.[26]

Outstanding contributions also exist in the English canon. Nabil Matar has examined, for instance, a large body of accounts produced by English captives in Muslim lands between 1577 and 1625, situating these texts in the broader political, economic, and religious context of the time.[27] Daniel Vitkus has also worked on some of the most significant English narratives of captives and slaves on the early modern Barbary coast.[28]

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[26] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Bagnios of Algiers and, The Great Sultana : Two Plays of Captivity*, ed. Barbara Fuchs and Aaron Ilika (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Ana Ma Rodríguez-Rodríguez, *Letras Liberadas : Cautiverio, Escritura y Subjetividad En El Mediterráneo de La Época Imperial Española*, Biblioteca filológica hispana ; 142 (Madrid : Visor Libros, 2013., 2013).
[27] N. I. (Nabil I.) Matar, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
[28] Daniel J. Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

The representation of Barbary corso in early modern literature

My dissertation builds on all these contributions to investigate the relationship between the history of confrontation, exchange, and assimilation in the early modern Western Mediterranean and its discursive representation in contemporary European literature and culture. My interdisciplinary research connects and situates within their historical context the constellation of unique and distinct tropes produced by the representations of Barbary corso in early modern culture. Through this study, I show how this often-overlooked aspect of early modern European cultural history ended up playing a crucial role in shaping the contemporary perception of North Africa.

The multifaceted and often ambiguous frontier that is the early modern Mediterranean produced an equally ambivalent representation in the European imagination. Topos connected to Barbary and corso appear everywhere in early modern European culture, both in fictional and non-fictional texts. They abound, for instance, in romance epics, Baroque novels, novellas, dramas, and comedies. They are often present in pamphlets, travel accounts, and news reports. However, they are paramount in redemption and captivity narratives.

The omnipresence of representations of Barbary corso in European culture happens at a crucial historical moment, precisely when, from around the end of the sixteenth century to the third quarter of the seventeenth century, corso and Mediterranean slavery were at their height, and all European nations were deeply affected by them. The widespread presence of Barbary and corso topoi in the contemporary European culture and literature appears to be, therefore, far from a coincidence.

The image of Barbary and corso that surface from this wide array of sources is far from univocal. Along with the widespread contempt that transpires across almost all of these early modern texts, there coexist other impulses, and xenophobic tendencies can paradoxically overlap with xenophilic ones, anxiety with admiration. In between these extremes, the image of Barbary and corso that surface from the fictional and non-fictional canon also encompassed a wide array of attitudes: in some texts, we see the prevalence of pragmatic interests, the will to gather information on those perceived as enemies. In others, we see, at times, a sincere desire to acquire knowledge on a little-known geographical region and the culture of its inhabitants. Other times, the image of Barbary and corso was evoked only to satisfy the reader's curiosity and provided the pleasures associated with the strange and the foreign. The rift that divided East and West in the ideological realm, however, was not always matched by rivalry in the realm of culture.

At the same time, one of the aspects associated with Barbary and corso that in these texts is associated with Barbary and corso is the phenomenon of slavery. This tells us that the perception of slavery certainly played a prominent role in the profound revulsion that the image of Barbary evoked in European culture. This is clear, for instance, in many of the European captivity narratives published at the time, which describe in detail the pain provoked by slavery, the feeling of impotence, inferiority, and subalternity, it inspired to many. Yet, in a cathartic process, the fear and pain appear sometimes sublimated into a religious or philosophical perspective.

Yet, besides the anxiety, misapprehensions, and prejudice about the foreign, by playing on the intermingling categories of otherness and familiarity, of sameness and

difference, the image of Barbary corso paradoxically also aroused interest and fascination in the consciousness of many early modern Europeans. The echoes of the Barbary trope cast a long shadow in the history of Western intercultural and interreligious relationships and continue to influence our understanding of the Mediterranean world today.

The constellation of topoi forming the representation of Barbary and corso in early modern European culture is highly intertextual and circulates among genres, styles, and literary forms. We can find them both in the fictional production of the time, such as in novels and in the theatrical production. Moreover, we can also find them in nascent early modern documentary genres, such as travel accounts or news reports.

The protean nature of the topoi that form the early modern discourse on Barbary corso demonstrate its ability to recuperate old Western stereotypes - such as the diffused pre-modern anti-Muslim sentiments –, and old forms – the romance – and adapt them to new forms and new aesthetics. Corso topoi can circulate, for instance, from novels to contemporary Barbary travelogues and captivity narratives and vice-versa.

In his groundbreaking work, Edward Said was the first to suggest the idea that Western orientalist discourses existed already in the pre-modern era. Several scholars have, however, warned us since then that Said's paradigm can become problematic when applied to the early modern historical periods. Bart Moore-Gilbert has underlined, for instance, how in the pre-modern period "it is ambivalence rather than a simply

dichotomizing and essentializing attitude which more accurately characterizes the western vision of the East."[29]

The complex social, political, cultural, and economic dynamics at play in the early modern Mediterranean seem to escape any reductionist binarity such as “us and them,” “East and West,” “Muslims and Christians.” In pre-modern Europe, the concept of the Orient itself was a vague and fluid one. The word itself was polysemous: geographically, it could be applied to describe any place from Morocco to Persia and beyond. The same polysemy that existed for words such as “Turks” and “Moors,” which were often used in an interchangeable way to designate any “oriental” individual, from Maghrebian to Ottoman subjects.

In going beyond the worn East-West binarity, my project aims at considering the plurality of early modern Orientalisms instead. Investigating the nuances of the early modern Barbary tropes helps us reevaluate the predominant Euro-Ottoman orientation of early modern Mediterranean and Orientalist studies.

Reflecting on how early modern European culture understood and created the images of Barbary and corso is essential today because the echo of the Barbary myth had a prolonged aftermath.[30] The cultural memory of the Barbary myth also had significant political consequences, for example, when it was reactivated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to justify the European colonization of North Africa.[31] Mobilized in

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[29] Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*, First Edition. (London: Verso, 1997).
[30] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 287.
[31] see Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800-1820* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005).

the ideological justification of the European colonization of North Africa in modern times, the image of corso still reverberates in today's European debate around the perceived Mediterranean migration "crisis."

The first chapter of my dissertation focuses on the representations of Barbary corso in the French fictional corpus of the seventeenth century. I start by highlighting the widespread presence of a number of Mediterranean maritime and adventurous tropes (shipwreck, corsairs, captivity) that appear in several different literary genres, and in particular, in the novels labeled as "roman héroïques."

So far, the presence of these Mediterranean tropes has been regarded as a reference and an homage to the classic romance tradition. Against this formalist and genealogical reading, I consider the presence of these tropes in connection with the contemporary French political and mercantile engagement in the Western Mediterranean instead. The wave of Mediterranean tropes in French Baroque literary production unmistakably coincides with the rise of corsair conflict between the North African Regencies and France, and this leads me to suggest the opposite of a classical model in search of literary legitimacy. Instead, I argue that these maritime tropes reflect and sublimate French anxieties vis-à-vis the Mediterranean situation.

My second chapter focuses on the corpus of so-called "Barbary" captivity narratives published in French during the first half of the seventeenth century. These texts were first-person, documentary accounts of Christian Europeans enslaved in Muslim North Africa. I start by considering the hybrid form of these accounts, a mix of crusading rhetoric, martyrologic chronicle, picaresque novel, travel narrative, orientalist tale, proto-

anthropological study. I then investigate how these highly rhetorically constructed texts borrowed a series of themes and adapted stylistic elements from the contemporary production of so-called “redemption narratives,” accounts of missionary expeditions made by redemptive Catholic orders in North Africa to free captives.

My third chapter focus on the evolution of the French Barbary captivity narratives during the second part of the seventeenth century. Deeply influenced at first by the example offered by the redemption narratives, the French captivity narratives evolved rapidly during the second half of the century. These texts quickly emancipate themselves from their previous models, acquiring an even higher intertextual dimension, and absorbed many elements from the contemporary fictional literary production, moving in this way closer to literary texts such as the novels. Captivity narratives became at the same time also less militant, and the image of Barbary they project more complex and ambiguous. I argue that the resulting amalgam of fact and fiction coalesced fear and teased fascination for the exotic for their armchair-travelers’ audience, playing a significant role in shaping early modern French perception of North Africa. I finally consider the instrumental role that these texts played under Louis XIV’s reign by supporting the crown’s coordinated political efforts to transmit a negative image of Barbary against an edulcorated representation of Ottoman power. This “good-Turk versus bad-Turk” rhetoric advanced France’s mercantilist objectives in the Mediterranean by deflecting public attention away from its “unholy” Franco-Ottoman alliance.

1. The representation of Barbary corso in early modern French fictional literature

1.1 Introduction

In 1623, Charles Sorel published the first version of a collection of short stories titled *Les Nouvelles françaises.*[1] The five novellas included in this collection clearly show the influence of Boccaccio's Decameron and the Italian novelistic tradition, as well as Miguel de Cervantes*' Novelas ejemplares* of 1613, in both their form and content. In avoiding the extraordinary and unrealistic elements present in much of the previous French fictional short narrative format, and in choosing a verisimilar and present-day setting for his plots, Sorel's novels set an influential model for similar works that will be published throughout the 17th century.[2]

The first novel of the collection, titled *Le Pauvre généreux*, tells the story of two lovers: Florian (a young man of humble origin) who is in love with Elidore (a noble young girl from Languedoc). Elidore's brother Sainct-Amour, however, has decided that his sister should marry the Baron of Artigues, and he opposes her relationship with Florian, imprisoning him in the cave of an abandoned castle. Florian nevertheless manages to escape and ends up wounding the Baron of Artigues in a duel. Believing the baron dead, Florian resorts to fleeing and embarking on a ship to reach Malta, where he intends to join the knights' service. However, on his way to the island, Florian's ship is

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[1] Charles Sorel, *Les Nouvelles françaises où se trouvent divers effets de l'amour et de la fortune* (Paris: Pierre Billaine, 1623).
[2] J. D. Hubert, "Les Nouvelles françaises de Sorel et de Segrais," *Cahiers de l'AIEF* 18, no. 1 (1966): 31–40.

attacked by "Turk" pirates. Florian's unmatched bravery in fighting the corsairs impresses their captain, a « *généreux* » Raïs (a Muslim pirate captain), prompting him to ask Florian on the spot to join him and his crew and assist him in his corsair enterprises. Florian, sensing an offer he cannot refuse, decides to hide his true feelings and agrees to join the Raïs' crew: « *La nécessité contraignit Florian de faire paraître qu'il se trouvait bien en sa compagnie en attendant qu'il trouvait moyen de le quitter* ».[3] But in an unforeseen turn of events, the corsair ship sinks in a storm. Florian luckily survives and escapes, taking the Raïs' gold with him. A happy ending ensues, in which a now wealthy Florian comes back to France and finally marries Elidore.

Sorel's short story *Le Pauvre généreux* displays a number of narrative and thematic conventions typical of a sizable portion of the French fictional literary production of the first half of the 17th century. The whole plot of this short story revolves for example around a well-established romanesque scheme: two young and gracious lovers who, at the beginning of the plot, are hindered in their passion by their social status and milieu and, consequently, are separated and forced to endure a reversal of fortunes and a series of adventures to prove their bond until their love finally triumphs.

Although predictable, the denouement of this story arrives through a minor but significant turn of events: During Florian's travels in the Mediterranean, he is met by Barbary pirates after a maritime pursuit, a confrontation ensues, and the main character is taken captive. Only a fortunate shipwreck finally turns his reluctant involvement with

[3] Charles Sorel, *Les Nouvelles Françaises Où Se Trouvent Divers Effets de l'amour et de La Fortune*, 1623, 110.

privateering into an extremely lucrative opportunity. Although the details of Florian's maritime and Barbary adventures seem like minor incidents, they end up playing a significant role in the denouement of Sorel's short story.

Far from being an isolated example, early modern French fictional production relied quite often on similar topoi and episodes, ones that could be defined as "maritime" (or "thalassic"), like the one we see in Sorel's *Le Pauvre généreux*. These maritime themes appear quite often across entire early modern French fictional production between the end of the 16th and the end of the 17th century, crossing genres and surfacing anywhere from the dramatic to the narrative one, and often also in poetry and epic texts.

Many examples exist: in Desfontaines' tragicomedy *Eurimedon ou l'illustre pirate* of 1637, for instance, the main character of the play (the Eurimedon of the title) is a young French noble who was raised by the "pirates" who rescued (or perhaps abducted) him as an infant and raised him as one of their own. In the long heroic novel *Le Cloriarque d'Ilis*[4] (published in 1633) by Ganimède de Claros, much of the plot of the intricate love story between the two main characters (the shepherd Ilis and her lover, Cloriaque of the title) revolves around Cloriaque's long sea voyage that led him to the « *île du Silence* » first, then to Marseille, Rome, and Naples, before he was captured on the sea by a raïs (a corsair captain) from Bizerte and held slave there for a while. In Jean-Pierre Camus' *Agathonphile*, another heroic novel published in 1621,[5] plot portrays the

[4] Ganimède de Claros, *Le Cloriarque d'Ilis* (Paris, Thomas de La Ruelle, 1633).
[5] Jean-Pierre Camus, *Agathonphile, ou les martyrs siciliens, Agathon, Philargiryppe, Tryphine et leurs Associez* (Paris: Claude Chappelet, 1621).

shipwreck and enslavement of three Christians in Sicily, following their suffering until their final martyrdom. Further examples can be found in many other texts, even in comedies such as *Le Fils supposé* by Georges de Scudéry (1636), in which one of the main characters, Almédor, gives a lengthy account of his twenty years of enslavement in Algiers.[6]

In summary, it appears that maritime topoi and themes are a structural component of all the fictional genres in vogue in France throughout the 17th century. This is especially true for one narrative genre, one that encountered great editorial success from the end of the 16th century until the mid-17th century, and which is commonly known as the *roman héroïque*[7] ("heroic novel" or "heroic romance").[8] However, they also frequently appear in in the dramatic plays known as *tragicomédies*.[9]

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[6] Georges de Scudéry, *Le Fils supposé* (Paris : A. Courbé, 1636), act I, scene 3.
[7] A term coined by Charles Sorel in the 1660s, as cited in Ellen R. Welch, *A Taste for the Foreign: Worldly Knowledge and Literary Pleasure in Early Modern French Fiction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 27 note 1. See in particular the extensive bibliography in Requemora-Gros, *Voguer Vers La Modernité*, 833–851.
[8] Examples of maritime themes can be found in Jean-Pierre Camus' *Agathonphile* (1621) and the *Tapisseries historiques* (1644); André Mareschal's *La Chrysolite* (1627); Abraham Ravaud's (aka, sieur de Rémy) *Les Amours d'Angélique* (1627); Jean Baudoin's *Histoire Negre-Pontique* (1631); Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin's *L'Arlane* (1632); Marin Le Roy de Gomberville's *Polexandre* (1619, 1629, and 1637); the *Histoires Africaines* (1627) and the *Histoires Asiatiques* (1634) by Gerzan; many of the works of the Scudéry brothers, including *Ibrahim ou l'illustre Bassa* (1641), *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* (1649–1653), and *Almahide, ou l'esclave reine* (1660); La Calprenède's *La Cléopâtre* (1646–1658); and Jean-François Regnard's *La Provençale* (published only posthumously in 1731). To this long list of texts that became well known at the time, we can also add less recognized works such as the *L'histoire véritable, ou Le voyage des princes fortunes* by François Béroalde de Verville (1610), the *Histoire indienne, d'Anaxandre et d'Orazie* (1629) by François Le Métel de Boisrobert, the *Histoire negre-pontique* by Jean Baudoin (1631), *Le Pelerin étranger* by Bréthencourt (1634), *Les Aventures de la cour de Perse* by the Princess of Conti (1629), *Les fortunes d'Alminte* (1623) and *Les Traversez Hazards de Clidion et Armirie* (1612) by des Escuteaux, and *Le roman d'Albanie et de Sicille* (1626) and *Le sentier d'Amour* (1622) by du Bail.
[9] Among the tragicomedies containing maritime themes, we could include Nicolas-Marc Desfontaines' *Eurimedon ou l'illustre pirate* (1637), Mairet's *L'Illustre Corsaire* (1640), Georges de Scudéry's *Axiane* (1644), Scarron's *Le Prince corsaire* (1663), and Jean Rotrou's *La Belle Alphrède* (1639); Guérin de Bouscal's *L'Amant liberal* (1638), L'Estoille's *La Belle ésclave* (1642), Rotrou's *La Belle Alphrède* (1639), Scudéry's *L'Amant liberal* (1638), Nicolas-Marc Desfontaines' *Eurimedon ou l'illustre pirate* (1637), Mairet's *L'Illustre Corsaire* (1640), Georges de Scudéry's *Axiane* (1644), Scarron's *Le Prince corsaire* (1663), *La Belle Alphrède* (1639) by Jean Rotrou, and even in Molière's work, such as in *L'Avare* (1669) and *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (1671).

It is interesting to notice how, implicitly or explicitly, these maritime themes seem to be closely tied to a specific geographical region, the Maghreb as well as to the contemporary Mediterranean phenomenon of corso.

The widespread presence of maritime topoi in early modern French fictional literary production raises a series of important questions. First, why did Mediterranean Barbary and corso topoi start to reappear so frequently in French literature at the time? Is there a relationship between fictional representations of corso and Barbary in fictional literary production and the contemporary political situation in the Western Mediterranean? In what ways did these fictional representations of corso and Barbary influence the French audience's perception of these phenomena, and what kind of image did they convey of North Africa and the Muslim world?

This chapter seeks to investigate these questions prompted by the widespread presence of the fictional image of Barbary and corso that appears in early modern French fictional literature. Often, the presence of such Mediterranean tropes has been regarded either as a reference and an homage to the classic romance tradition, as an influence of the Greek and Roman classical novels, or as part of a more general infatuation with exotic or oriental settings that appears in French culture of the time. However, besides these formalist, genealogical, or aesthetic readings, it is worth noting that the wave of Mediterranean tropes in the French literary production of the time unmistakably coincides with the rise of the corsair conflict between the North African Regencies and France. This seems to strongly suggest that the presence of these maritime tropes was far

from ingenuous and that it reflected and sublimated many of the French attitudes vis-à-vis the contemporary Mediterranean situation.

This chapter will focus therefore on considering the presence of these Mediterranean and Barbary tropes in relation to French contemporary political and mercantile engagement in the Western Mediterranean, focusing on their presence in one early modern genre in particular, the heroic novel, through an analysis of one of its most prominent examples, Marin le Roy de Gomberville's novel *L'Exil de Polexandre* of 1629.

1.2 Maritime tropes in the early modern French fictional literature

The range and diversity of topoi and themes connected to the maritime world that we find in French fictional production of the seventeenth century is large and varied. These interconnected maritime topoi form a sort of constellation which encompass anything from the presence of peculiar stocks of characters inspired by the sea laborers (such as sailors, merchants, and pirates); to clichéd seaborne scenes and situations inspired by navigation (sea voyages and commerce, maritime warfare and pursuits, shipwrecks); to the more general presence of the sea as a space in which the main and minor characters move. Often these tropes revolve around peculiar aspects of Mediterranean corso, including the representation of the Muslim world, the depiction of renegades, as well as the presence of Christians enslaved in North Africa.

In many of these works, characters find themselves captive or enslaved, usually as the result of a naval encounter with pirates or privateers, and these slavery episodes play an essential role in the construction of the plot, as in the few examples cited above. These

situations give rise to connected tropes that focus on aspects such as the social mobility of the Mediterranean world, the formation of the characters' religious and national identities, the necessity of disguising one's identity.

In any case, this fictional maritime space becomes a disruptive element, an untamed area dominated by the aleatory laws of chance, which plays a major role in the plot by providing the intricate series of adventurous encounters, and either delaying or granting a denouement after a long "there-and-back."

Finally, all these maritime topoi have in common a specific structural and thematic function in the new fictional genres that emerged in France at the beginning of the 17th century. If the sea functions as a fictional space for the generation of narratives, it does so by emphasizing the movement through space (the maritime voyage itself). But it also introduces an element of exoticism to the texts, bringing the characters in contact with foreign lands, unfamiliar cultures and religions, and faraway settings. This element of alterity entails in turn some forms of intercultural encounter, with its corollaries of confrontation, mediation, or exchange.

Not always (but quite often), the fictional maritime space represented in these fictional literary works is (or appears to be) the Mediterranean Sea. This is either because the sea is named directly (or referenced through the places that border it) or because the voyages described in these texts match the characteristics of the kind of maritime travel unique to the Mediterranean basin (e.g., the cultures and landscapes, or close-coastal sailing, one of the paramount characteristics of Mediterranean navigation, especially when done with certain kinds of vessels, such as galleys).

1.3 The classical romanesque influence

Although quite common and widespread, these maritime Mediterranean topoi cannot be considered a unique feature of French literary fiction production of the 16th and 17th centuries. As the literary scholar Barbara Fuchs has recently elegantly demonstrated, many of these maritime literary topoi have a long genealogy, one that can be easily traced back to antiquity, which makes them an integral part of the Western literary tradition from Homer onward. In her book *Romance*, Fuchs explains that such maritime themes appear in almost all European literary canons, part of what she calls a "romance" tradition that first appeared in the classic Greek and Roman culture, which endured until early modernity. Fuchs understands romance not quite as a genre but rather as a set of narrative devices that were used to create a mode of suspense in the plot by continuously delaying its denouement, as is the case for the early modern French fictional literary production discussed above. The literary strategies and topoi—such as maritime traveling, unexpected adventures, separated lovers, and captivity—are all essential components of her definition of the romance strategies.[10]

This classical romance tradition had considerable influence on the French writers from the mid-16th century onwards. Studies such as those of Laurence Plazenet and Georges Molinié among others, have recently helped to outline the filiation that existed between the classical Greek and Roman canon and early modern French literature.[11] This

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[10] Barbara Fuchs, *Romance* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2004).

[11] Laurence Plazenet, *L'ébahissement et La Délectation: Réception Comparée et Poétiques Du Roman Grec En France et En Angleterre Aux XVIe et XVIIe Siècles*, Lumière classique, 1250–6060 ; 15 (Paris: H. Champion, 1997., 1997); Georges Molinié, *Du Roman Grec Au Roman Baroque*, 2e ed. (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1995).

filiation is due in large part to a series of new French translations of Greek and Roman classic novels that had started to appear by the mid-16th century, such as Homer's *Odyssey* and – even more importantly – Heliodorus's *Ethiopica*. Jacques Amyot in particular made a famous translation of Heliodorus's work in 1547, *Les Éthiopiques: ou Histoire de Théagène et Chariclée*, a publication largely responsible for sparking a renewal of interest in the classical Greek and Roman romanesque models, since it quickly become a major inspiration for many of the French authors of the first half of the 17th century.[12]

The formal and structural similarities between the Greek and Roman romance traditions and the new fictional narrative genres that began to appear in France at the beginning of the 17th century, such as the heroic novels, are undoubtedly striking. For instance, as in the classic models, the action in the French heroic novels usually starts *in medias res*. Moreover, their plot is also generally fragmented into a multitude of subplots which are presented in an overlapping and discontinuous way, determining a proliferation of interlaced adventures. This contributes to the peculiar narrative structure that earned the heroic novels their label of *roman à tiroirs* ("novels made of drawers," a narrative composed of overlapping and coexisting sub-plots).[13]

However, despite this evident filiation, the influence of classical Greek and Roman romances on French 17th-century literary production cannot be reduced to a mere

[12] Plazenet, *L'ébahissement et La Délectation*.
[13] Maria Eduarda Keating, "'Romans à tiroirs' d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: parodie et expérimentation romanesque," *Caietele Echinox*, no. 16 (2009): 156–165.

imitation. Although between the 1620s and the 1630s many French authors of heroic novels invoked the Greek and Roman romanesque models as precursors to their works (among them were François de Gerzan, François Boisrobert, and Pierre-Daniel Huet),[14] despite the evident formal and thematic similarities, as literary critic Thomas DiPiero explains:

> *[…] authors were providing aesthetic rules for a budding genre that had recently formed out of an aristocratic popular tradition—a tradition, that is, whose parameters developed nearly exclusively in response to readers' tastes and desires, and which included little if any theoretical underpinning. Authors naturalized this tradition and began to furnish it with a theoretical apparatus that would give the incipient and marginal literary form an aesthetic legitimacy.*[15]

DiPiero notices that, for the French 17th-century authors, invoking the authority of the classical Greek and Roman model was first and foremost a strategy to defend their work against a wide array of critiques that had been leveled against their texts. The new and experimental literary forms that appeared at the time—such as the heroic novels and the tragicomedies—lacked in fact an established literary tradition that would validate their status. As a result, these texts were often perceived as aesthetically inferior in comparison to established genres such as history or poetry, as well as morally dubious. Critiques of these new literary genres claimed that, because of their fictional invention, these texts were in general useless, if not utterly dangerous. At best, they would excite their reader's emotions, but they were devoid of morally instructive content.[16]

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[14] Welch, *A Taste for the Foreign*, 2–11; Thomas DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions: The Evolution of the French Novel, 1569-1791* (Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1992., 1992), 75–82.
[15] DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions*, 71.
[16] Maurice Lever, *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1981), 23–30.

1.4 The genre of heroic novels

At the beginning of the 17th century, there appeared in France a new fictional narrative genre known as the "heroic novel". This new genre swiftly gained wide circulation, unseating in just a few years the primacy of the pastoral novel genre, the other fictional narrative genre that had been in vogue in the kingdom since the last decades of the 16th century. Pastoral novels—such as Honoré d'Hurfé's *L'Astrée* of 1607 (one of the most read texts of its generation)—had till then enjoyed consistent good fortune, especially among the French nobility. By the 1620s, however, the bucolic setting they had regularly employed seems to have suddenly lost its appeal for many of its readers. The reasons that are generally invoked to explain this fading of interest include the success of a series of popular parodies that appeared at the beginning of the 17th century by authors such as Sorel (*Berger extravagant*) or Jean de Lannel (*Romant Satyrique*), as well as caricatures by comic and burlesque authors such as Francion and Mareschal, which all brought much ridicule to the entire pastoral genre.[17] However, the lampooning endured by the pastoral novels does not seem to alone explain its sudden decline. It seems rather the French readers of the beginning of the seventeenth century came to demand more plausibility in the narratives they read, while they also showed an increased curiosity for everything foreign and exotic.[18]

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[17] Maurice Lever, *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1981); Henry Coulet, *Le Roman Jusqu'à La Révolution*, Collection U. Série Lettres françaises (Paris, A. Colin, 1967–68, 1968); Jean Sgard, *Le Roman Français à l'âge Classique, 1600–1800* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 2000).

[18] See in particular Thomas DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions: The Evolution of the French Novel, 1569–1791* (Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1992, 1992).

Both structurally and thematically, the heroic novels that started to appear at the turn of the century remain remarkably close to the pastoral ones. The former absorbed many of the features of their predecessors: both genres are based, for instance, on a similar (and quasi-stereotypical) plot structure, in which the main characters are often a pair of lovers who need to prove their bond and fidelity despite being separated by a long list of unforeseen adventures. [19]

However, heroic novels show a significant difference from the pastoral genre in the different kind of setting. Heroic novels substituted for the vague pastoral setting one that incorporated precise historical references with a wide geographical mobility, portraying famous or verisimilar characters traveling to faraway lands. It is fair to say that the authors of heroic novels followed in many ways their readers' evolving tastes.

The literary critic Laurence Plazenet, who has extensively studied the corpus of French heroic novels, marks the inception of the French heroic novel as a genre in 1593, when the first imitation of a classical Greek novel was published. Heroic novels then encountered a peak in publication between 1619 and 1636 (an interval in which around sixty percent of the total corpus was published), whereas the genre had almost entirely waned by the mid-1650s.[20] When we put these dates in context, it is particularly striking to note from the outset how the wave of popularity of the heroic novels coincides almost exactly with Richelieu's ministry (1624–1642). This same observation leads Plazenet to

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[19] Maurice Lever, *Romanciers du Grand Siècle*, (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 49–54.
[20] Laurence Plazenet, *L'ébahissement et La Délectation: Réception Comparée et Poétiques Du Roman Grec En France et En Angleterre Aux XVIe et XVIIe Siècles*, Lumière classique, 1250–6060; 15 (Paris: H. Champion, 1997, 1997), 165–166.

suggest: « *Les plus belles années de l'imitation des romans grecs vont de pair avec le ministère de Richelieu* ». And she concludes: « *Il existe un rapport profond entre les enjeux politiques et culturels de cette période et le phénomène littéraire qu'on étudie* ».[21] Plazenet arrives at this conclusion by noticing through her work on the corpus that the authors of heroic novels belonged in general to a small, well-defined, and well-connected social group. More than eighty percent of these authors were professional writers, with about fifty percent of them belonging to the gentry.

Moreover, eight out of ten of the heroic novel authors enjoyed some form of patronage at the French court, and even more strikingly, Richelieu himself was a direct patron to two-thirds of them. In light of this evidence, it is easy to deduce why the publication of heroic novels remains a phenomenon so closely linked to Richelieu's ministry, why it declined so abruptly after his death in 1642, and why the genre was essentially extinguished by the Fronde of 1648–1653.[22]

Following a somewhat similar line of reasoning, the literary scholar Thomas DiPiero has also argued that we should not consider the heroic novels only as a form of entertainment; instead, we should read these texts also as one of the most influential cultural media of the time, one that was used to shape French public opinion. In fact, DiPiero explains that the heroic novels were an integral part of the communication strategy used by French royal power (and Richelieu in particular) in the literary sphere, one employed to subtly propagate and circulate its values and ideology. Hence, when

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[21] Ibid., 167.
[22] Ibid., 223.

approaching this corpus, it is crucial to keep in mind how these literary texts were often used to build social consensus around the court's social and political agenda.[23]

We previously noted how the representation of maritime, corsair, and Barbary topoi and themes started to feature regularly in French fictional production right at the beginning of the 17th century, and particularly in the emerging genres just discussed, such as the heroic novels (yet the same would remain valid for other genres, such as tragicomedies). It is striking to note at this point how the phase of the popularity of these new genres (especially in the case of the heroic novel) also coincides almost precisely with the height of corso activity in the Western Mediterranean, and particularly with the peak of corsair warfare between France and Algiers (which took place precisely from the early to the mid-17th century).

1.5 Franco-Maghrebian relations at the turn of the 17th century

If we map the fictional representation of Barbary and corso that we see in the fictional literary production of the time in relation onto the current political context, we see a distinct pattern emerge.

The French kingdom developed a privileged diplomatic relationship with the Ottoman Empire from the beginning in the 16th century. The year 1535 marks the official starting point of the Franco-Ottoman alliance, when the envoy of the French King François I— Sir Saint-Jean Jean de la Forêt—signed a treaty known as the "Capitulations" with the Sultan Soliman II. The nineteen articles of the Capitulations

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[23] DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions*, chap. 2.

were significant because they established a strategic political alliance between the two nations, as well as an important commercial one. The Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry undoubtedly played the most significant role in shaping this Franco-Ottoman alliance because both François I and Soliman II were in urgent need of allies to counter the all-powerful Habsburg Emperor Charles V.[24]

The Capitulations also granted considerable commercial privileges to French merchants. For instance, it gave them access to the Ottoman ports, a crucial opportunity that had been issued before only to the Venetians. It is largely thanks to the Capitulations that French merchants were able to enter into early modern European-Levantine trade.[25]

Yet, from their inception, the Capitulations were harshly criticized both domestically and internationally. Many in the West accused the French King François I of siding with the Muslim enemy, betraying the unity of Christendom. Nevertheless, the advantages that this alliance offered for both actors were far too valuable, and the general framework put in place by the treaty stood the test of time and survived in one form or another until the 19th century.[26]

Although the political scenario that had determined the Franco-Ottoman alliance changed significantly after Henry II brokered the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis with Spain, France continued to maintain its rights at the Ottoman court for the rest of the 16th and 17th centuries.

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[24] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xii.
[25] Ibid., xii–xiii.
[26] Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 193–196.

It is important to remember that, even before the signing of the Capitulations, France had already developed a significant diplomatic and economic relationship with North Africa beginning in the 16th century. In fact, the privateer Khayr al-Dîn Barbarossa had close diplomatic relationships with François I, to the point that Barbarossa's ships conducted several joint anti-Habsburg maritime expeditions in collaboration with the French navy during the first half of the 16th century.[27] Between 1535 and 1559, France solicited the help of the Sublime Porte eight times, asking for help conducting joint naval raids against the Habsburgs and their allies, such as in Tuscany, in the south of Italy, or against Genoa and Corsica.[28] These diplomatic, military, and commercial contacts between France and North Africa facilitated the work of the French ambassador, Jean de la Forêt, in his mission to Istanbul in 1535, which led to the signing of the Capitulations in the same year. In fact, on his way to Istanbul, Sir Jean de la Forêt stopped in Algiers to consult with Barbarossa before speaking with Suleiman the Magnificent.[29]

Thanks to France's special relationship with the Porte, by the end of the 16th century—in the aftermath of the Fourth Ottoman–Venetian War (1570–1573) and the battle of Lepanto—the commercial port of Marseilles had found a stable foothold in the lucrative Levantine trade at the expense of the Venetians.[30] The Ottoman–Venetian War had strained the Venetians' commercial relationship with Istanbul, and French merchants

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[27] Jensen De Lamar, "The Ottoman Turks in Sixteenth Century French Diplomacy," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16, no. 4 (1985): 455.
[28] Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).
[29] Mohammed Arkoun, *Histoire de l'islam et Des Musulmans En France Du Moyen Âge à Nos Jours* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2006), 325, 363–364.
[30] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xv.

were among the few Europeans who were able to continue their trade with the Ottoman Empire. According to the Capitulations, any European nation wishing to trade with the Ottomans had to use the French diplomatic and trading network.

Consequently, for the entire 16th century, the French monarchy strenuously defended its commercial advantages and strongly opposed the granting of any such benefits to other European nations that had petitioned the sultan for similar rights, notably the English and the Dutch.[31]

Nevertheless, in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, a series of large-scale domestic problems profoundly affected the French kingdom's ability to benefit from its privileged links with the Ottomans. The so-called Wars of Religion of 1562–1598 and the civil war that followed the dying out of the royal house of Valois severely impacted the French economy. Lyon for example, which had been since the Middle Ages one of the most flourishing economic hubs of the French kingdom and a leading financial center, experienced a sharp economic decline which, in turn, affected all of French commercial life in the south of the kingdom and the Mediterranean.[32] Marseilles, together with Toulon, sided with the League during the wars and fought strenuously against King Henry IV until both cities were defeated in 1597.[33] In addition to the internal strife, France signed the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, ending its sixty-five-year conflict

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[31] Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant*, 159.
[32] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xvii.
[33] Ibid., xvi; Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 11.

with Spain for the control of Italy, and this event suddenly reduced the strategic need and diplomatic appeal of a Franco-Ottoman alliance.

Yet, despite the challenging domestic situation, the Capitulations stood. However, France's relationship with the Sublime Porte had undoubtedly weakened by the end of the 16th century.[34] A clear sign of the degradation is the fact that in the 1590s, many French nobles joined Hungary in its fight against the Ottomans, their supposed allies, under the lead of the Duke of Mercœur.

Other European nations, such as England and the Netherlands, swiftly took advantage of the strategic opportunity offered by France's difficulties in the Mediterranean. During the second half of the 16th century, the English, who had already tried numerous times to supplant the leading French diplomatic and economic position in the Levant, signed their Capitulations with the Sultan in 1579. Elizabeth I was still at war with Spain, making England a natural ally for the sultan. As a result, the British were able to finally gain direct access to the ports of the Middle East, while British pirates and privateers became a severe threat for French merchants in the Mediterranean basin.[35]

1.5.1 Henry IV

The arrival of Henri IV and the new Bourbon dynasty on the French throne in 1589 marked a brief period of commercial revival for the kingdom of France in the Mediterranean. The priorities of Henry IV's Mediterranean politics became the

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[34] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xvii.
[35] Ibid., xxvi.

maintaining and strengthening of the Capitulations while countering the British and Barbary piracy and privateering threat.[36]

In 1591, Henry IV sent a new envoy to Istanbul, the skilled Savary de Brèves, who remained ambassador in Istanbul until 1605 and was able to sign a renewal of the Capitulations with the Sultan Ahmet I, while also obtaining his promise to curtail the Barbary pirates and punish the beys who let the maritime raids happen.[37] With this new agreement, it was now officially forbidden for the North African Regencies to take any French subject found on any ships as a captive, to capture any French boats even if they had fallen prey to an enemy, or to seize any of their goods.[38]

Thanks to Henry IV's renewal of the Capitulations and the relative domestic peace that France enjoyed at this time, Marseilles' economic trade with the Ottoman Empire slowly rebounded. The city saw an increase in its commerce with the Levant by launching a new lucrative trade of imported silk from Persia.[39] In 1599, Marseilles also founded its own chamber of commerce.[40] However, despite the benefits offered by the Franco-Ottoman ties in the 16th century, French commercial ships passing through the Western Mediterranean were often the targets of Maghrebian pirates and privateers. The merchants of Marseilles regularly complained to the French monarch about what they perceived as a serious threat to their trade coming from North Africa, claiming that these attacks were not only damaging for commerce but also violated the protection provided

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[36] Ibid., xxiii.
[37] Ibid., xviii–xix.
[38] Ibid., xx.
[39] Rambert, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille*, 5.
[40] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 13.

by the Capitulations. The Provençal ports went as far as forming a league in 1585 to join forces to self-defend against the corso threat.[41]

Although Henry IV (like Charles IX before him) had repeatedly tried to remedy the threat of corso by appealing directly to the Sublime Porte through their ambassador in Istanbul, none of his diplomatic efforts were very successful in the end. France quickly realized that—despite Ottoman reassurances—the Sultan had little control over his Maghrebian protectorates.[42] The first decade of the 17th century brought a crucial diplomatic development: official acknowledgment by the new sultan, Ahmed I, that he could not stop North African sea robbery, and explicit permission for Henry IV to engage the Western Ottoman Regencies directly.[43]

Yet, Henry IV's diplomatic efforts were still partially successful in that, by limiting the activities of Barbary pirates on the French coasts of Provence, they diverted the corso raids toward the Iberian Peninsula.[44]

Despite the corso menace, the Maghreb region was also a valuable commercial partner for Marseilles in the 16th century. From the 1550s to the beginning of the 17th century, the Lence—a family of merchants from Marseilles—had established a flourishing trade outpost on the North African coast. This trading post—located near Bône, between Algiers and Tunis, and known as the Bastion de France—was a leading producer of coral harvested on the North African shores. Merchants from the Provence

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[41] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xviii.
[42] Ibid., 17.
[43] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 13.
[44] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532-1715*, 126.

region had also set up a minor trade exchange with North Africa by exporting draperies, wool clothes, and sometimes cereal.[45]

It is not surprising, therefore, that France was one of the first European kingdoms to establish consulates in the region, opening one in the city of Algiers in 1564 and others in the cities of Tunis and Fez in 1577.[46] In his *Mémoires* published in 1609, the Knight of Malta Guillaume Foucques (who was also captured and enslaved in Barbary for a time), denounced, for instance, that the Marseille merchants entertained close trade relationships with the Barbary privateers, providing them with tools and weapons to arm their ships, and that this commerce was made possible also by the presence of many Marseille renegades in ports such as Algiers.[47]

It was only in 1604, when the Algerian corsairs conquered the French outpost on the Maghrebian coast of Bastion de France, that Henry IV finally decided to intervene militarily and sent a small squadron of galleys in 1608 against the Tunisian fleet under the command of Captain Philippe de Beaulieu-Persac.[48]

Despite these small improvements in the Franco-Ottoman relationships, at the beginning of the 17th century, many issues remained open. Among them, there was the strong internal opposition to the Capitulations in large parts of the French kingdom itself, including at court. France was also experiencing a widespread renewal of religious fervor, to the point that some even contemplated the dream of a new crusade against the

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[45] Paul Masson, *Histoire Des Établissements et Du Commerce Français Dans l'Afrique Barbaresque (1560-1793) (Algérie, Tunisie, Tripolitaine, Maroc)* (Paris: Hachette & cie, 1903), 7–11.
[46] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 78 note 2.
[47] Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')*, 74.
[48] Arkoun, *Histoire de l'islam et Des Musulmans En France Du Moyen Âge à Nos Jours*, 366.

Ottomans. The Duc of Sully attests, for instance, that even Henry IV, despite his official politics, had started to formulate a *Grand Dessein*, a plan for reconciling Christianity to wage war and defeat the Ottomans.[49] Although Henry IV's project of a Christian league against the Ottomans never moved forward, it is a testimony to the widespread views vis-à-vis the "Turks" in the European culture of the time. Similar crusading fantasies were commonly discussed in contemporary texts, and they were in line with the broader European religious sentiment that spread after the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.[50]

In addition to the threat coming from North Africa, in these same years, French commerce with the Levant was severely challenged by the arrival of Dutch and British merchants, which, during the first decade of the 17th century, had become more and more active in the Mediterranean region. By the 1620s, the English and the Dutch had quickly gained a quasi-monopoly on the European-Levant trade.[51]

At the beginning of the 17th century, a new phenomenon also started to emerge: the so-called "Anglo-Turkish" piracy. It is at this time that English and Dutch subjects started to practice piracy, attacking French ships in the area. In 1607, the French court complained about the situation to the Ottoman Sultan, claiming that the Dutch and

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[49] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xxii.
[50] Gustave Fagniez, *Le Père Joseph Et Richelieu: Le Projet de Croisade 1616-1625* (Paris: Hachette Livre - BNF, 2018).
[51] Rambert, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille*, 6.

English were using North African ports as the bases for their raids that targeted French ships.[52]

One of the most notorious cases involves the Dutch Simon Danser (aka Simon Danseker, Captain Diable, or Deli-Raïs), who first left Marseilles for Algiers in 1606 to engage in the ship-building trade and later became one of the city's leading raïs (corsair captain), eventually converting to Islam. He is thought to have introduced the use of European round ships with sails to the corsairs. Thanks to the mediation of a group of Jesuits he abducted off the coast of Valencia, Simon Danser was able to contact Henri IV and broker his return to France. In 1609, Simon Danser stole two brass guns belonging to the fort of Algiers, returned to Marseilles with his ship and crew, and converted back to Christianity. In Marseilles, he handed the two cannons to the Duc de Guise, who ruled the province. The rulers of Algiers immediately demanded the cannons back and expressed shock at Danser's treason. The Duc de Guise refused, and the cannons became a major *casus belli* between Algiers and France. A year later, in 1610 (the same year of Henry IV's assassination), Danser offered his services to Marseilles for a full-fledged French expedition against Algiers, but he was killed in the attempt.[53]

The affair of Simon Danser's stolen cannons became the pretext to start an all-out war between Algiers and the French kingdom, which lasted for about two decades, until 1628.[54] The impact of this conflict became considerable: Between 1613 and 1622,

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[52] Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2008), 87.
[53] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 16.
[54] Arkoun, *Histoire de l'islam et Des Musulmans En France Du Moyen Âge à Nos Jours*, 366–368.

Algiers captured 936 ships, 253 of which were French. The knight of Malta Isaac de Razilly later affirmed that there were more than 8,000 French slaves between Algiers and Tunis in 1626.[55] This Franco-Maghrebian conflict at the beginning of the 16th century also coincides with a period of prolonged internal strife in France, which ended only after the end of the Fronde of 1653 and the arrival of Louis XIV to power. The conflict with Algiers that started under Henry IV continued under the reign of Louis XIII, lasted through Marie de Medici's regency, and continued under Richelieu. Although several attempts were made throughout this period to broker a peace, they were all unsuccessful.

During Marie de Medici's regency, the French kingdom assumed a more aggressive political stance toward the Islamic world in general, complicating the French relationship with the Sublime Porte and escalating the situation in the Western Mediterranean. Marie de Medici was herself close to the *Dévot* party (a pro-Catholic faction that was very influential at court), and her court was, in general, hostile to the Capitulations. In 1613, she suspended French commerce with the Barbary Regencies and ordered the construction of galleys that could be used to patrol and defend the French Mediterranean coasts.[56] During the years of conflict with Algiers, the French kingdom also enlisted privateers to act as an anti-piracy deterrent.[57] Marseilles, for instance, armed a small galley fleet commanded by de Mantin and the Knight of Malta Jacques de Vincheguerre to conduct raids in the Western Mediterranean.[58]

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[55] Cited in ibid., 364–365.
[56] Alain Blondy, "La Course En Méditerranée," in *Les Tyrans de La Mer: Pirates, Corsaires et Flibustiers*, ed. Sophie Linon-Chipon and Sylvie Requemora-Gros (Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2002), 47.
[57] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, xxiii.
[58] Arkoun, *Histoire de l'islam et Des Musulmans En France Du Moyen Âge à Nos Jours*, 366.

Attempting to protect their commerce, in 1610, the Marseilles merchants also tried to impose a new rule that stated that every French ship traveling to the Levant had to do so only in groups accompanied by an armed squadron. However, jealously guarding their commercial advantage, the Marseilles merchants never complied with this rule.[59]

A Franco-Tunisian peace truce was negotiated in 1612, but it only resulted in a partial exchange of slaves.[60] A fragile peace treaty with Algiers was brokered in 1616 but was soon abandoned.[61]

1.5.2 Richelieu

The situation improved only slightly with the rise to power of Cardinal Richelieu at the end of the 1620s. Richelieu had a more pragmatic approach than Marie de Medici vis-à-vis Mediterranean diplomacy. Yet, he also had limited means: the French kingdom was involved in anti-Huguenot warfare at home and anti-Habsburg war abroad and had very limited resources to devote to combatting the threat of corso. In general, France lacked above all the naval power to effectively counter any severe threat coming from Mediterranean corso or to enforce any of its treaties with the Barbary Regencies.

Moreover, at court, the *Conseil* was still much divided between resuming war or trying to settle a new peace with the Regencies, and the *Devot* party was still very influential at court. [62] Even under Richelieu, many in the nobility and religious orders

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[59] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 27.
[60] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 15.
[61] Gérard Tongas, *Les relations de la France avec l'Empire ottoman durant la première moitié du xviie siècle et l'ambassade à Constantinople de Philippe de Harlay, comte de Césy, 1619-1640.* (Toulouse: F. Boisseau, 1942), 161.
[62] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 4, 7–8.

were still fantasizing about new crusades against the infidels, including one of Richelieu's closest advisors, Père Joseph.[63] In other words, the anti-Ottoman sentiment was still active, and the result was that at Richelieu's rise to power, French relations with the Ottoman Empire were at one of their poorest levels in history, thanks also to the incompetence of the French ambassadors to Istanbul.

Richelieu tried to improve this situation, at first through diplomatic negotiations. In March of 1619, France was able to sign an agreement with Algiers reaffirming each party's intention to comply with the Capitulations. Yet this truce was again very short. The two Algerian ambassadors who were sent to Marseilles that year to discuss the peace agreement were lynched by an angry mob after inflated news of a French crew massacred by Algerian pirates started circulating in the city.[64] The killing of the two Algerian ambassadors reignited the war with Algiers and brought the conflict to its apex.

The consequences of this situation in the Western Mediterranean during the first half of the 17th century were serious for French commerce. From 1613 to 1621, the Algerian corsairs had brought 936 ships to the port of Algiers (and that number does not even include the vessels that were sunk).[65] The trinitarian missionary Père Dan calculates that between 1629 and 1634, the French merchants lost 80 ships and 1,331 passengers in the region due to corso.[66] It is not surprising that in a report to the king written in 1623,

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[63] Benoist Pierre, "Le père Joseph, l'empire Ottoman et la Méditerranée au début du XVIIe siècle," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, no. 71 (December 1, 2005): 3.
[64] Rambert, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille*, 8.
[65] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 33.
[66] Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsaires, Des Royaumes, et Des Villes d'Alger, de Tunis, de Salé & de Tripoly. Divisée En Dix Livres Ou Il Est Traitté de Leur Gouvernement, de Leurs Moeurs, de Leurs Cruautez, de Leurs Brigandages, de Leurs Sortileges, & de Plusieurs Autres Particularitez Remarquables. Ensemble Des Grandes Misères et Des Cruels Tourmens Qu'endurent Les Chrestiens Captifs Parmy Ces Infideles* (Paris: Pierre Rocolet, 1637).

the Marseille city council explains that Barbary corso was one of the leading causes of the decline in the city's commerce.[67] Small decreases in the Franco-Algerian conflicts happened only in 1621 (when the English fleet attacked Algiers) and in 1623 (when Algiers suffered a devastating plague that killed 60,000 people, including the French consul, who was not replaced until 1630).[68]

It was only after the successful siege of La Rochelle (1627–1628) that the French kingdom finally acquired the political and economic stability to start tackling the Mediterranean situation. To compete in the international scenario, Richelieu realized the importance of equipping the French kingdom with a modern fleet, both on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean sides. To this end, the cardinal started to reorganize the French Mediterranean fleet, entrusting the archbishop of Bordeaux (the Admiral Sourdis) with the task of establishing a permanent maritime patrol off the Maghrebian coasts. However, this move only further raised the tension with the Barbary Regencies, leading to more abductions and more enslavement.[69] In 1627, Louis XIII had to direct all communities "whence slaves in Algiers were native" (mostly the Provençe region) to contribute 200 Livres each to help establish a fund to free their citizens.[70]

A temporary peace treaty was concluded only in 1628 by the Marseillian envoy Sanson Napollon, which led to the release of many French captives. Sanson Napollon was a Corsican and an experienced merchant-envoy who had already conducted a series

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[67] cited in Rambert, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille*, 22.
[68] Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime*, 88–89.
[69] Blondy, "La Course En Méditerranée," 51.
[70] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 35.

of missions to free French slaves on his own in 1624 and 1626.[71] Yet, the settlement proved once more to be very fragile, and the regencies soon started to target French ships in the Western Mediterranean again.[72] Faced with this next rebuff, between 1635 and 1641, Richelieu resorted to a strategy of mere containment by sending the French navy to patrol the Mediterranean in an attempt to discourage corso.[73] It is only thanks to the Venetian intervention against the Barbary Regencies and the Ottoman fleet in the 1630s—which inflicted a severe blow to Algiers—that France had another brief respite from the corso menace.

By the late 1630s, when France was officially entering the Thirty Years' War, Richelieu returned to the diplomatic route and increased France's efforts to solve the situation in the Western Mediterranean. He appointed first his secretary of state, Bouthillier, to deal with the Ottoman diplomacy at first, and later his son Chavigny. He also sent skilled ambassadors to Istanbul, including the Count of Césy Philippe de Harley and Jean de la Haye Ventelay, in an attempt to strengthen France's relationship with the Ottoman Empire.

In parallel, Richelieu also tried to broker a more stable peace with Algiers, and he sent one of his best ambassadors, Sanson Lepage, to Algiers in 1634 and 1637 to try to sign a new peace treaty and to free French captives, without much success.[74] With the

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 32.
[73] Ibid., 33.
[74] Ibid., 34–35.

death of Richelieu in 1642, Lepage's efforts were abandoned, and even the French naval patrolling in the Western Mediterranean ceased.[75]

That same year, a second and even more devastating plague hit Algiers, draining much of the city's resources. The city was at the time already under severe pressure because of the economic crisis in the Habsburg Empire, one of the main targets for its privateering. As a consequence, the Algerian corsairs, in search of new sources of income, increased their attacks against French ships even further.[76] Fortunately for French merchants, the diplomatic relationships with Tunis remained stable throughout the period, and Tripoli was never as aggressive as Algiers toward the French nation.[77]

In short, despite all the attempts to sign new peace treaties between the French and the Regencies during the first half of the 17th century, the underlying reality was that the French kingdom—like the other European nations—did not have the military or diplomatic means to stop North African corso. The European nations could at best try to contain this phenomenon, in general with poor results. By the middle of the 17th century, after several unsuccessful attempts to try to stop corso from North Africa, France had resorted to a double strategy: a mix of direct diplomatic relations and military raids. More often, however, the only effective countermeasure for reducing North African corso was to pay a high tribute to Algiers, Tripoli, or Sale in exchange for a brief truce.

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[75] Ibid., 34.
[76] Bernard Bachelot, *Louis XIV En Algérie, Gigeri, 1664* (L'Harmattan, 2011), 33.
[77] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 35.

Only with the end of the Thirty Years' War with Spain (1648) was France able to free essential resources, allowing the kingdom to focus more of its energies on the Mediterranean region. In 1658, Mazarin finally had the military means to engage Algiers directly and gave the order to Louis Nicolas de Clerville (a French military engineer) to organize a reconnaissance mission to North Africa.[78]

1.6 Gomberville's L'Exil de Polexandre (1629)

In light of the French contemporary engagement in the Western Mediterranean, such an abundant presence of Barbary themes in the French fictional literary production does not seem like a mere coincidence. While the French audience was reading – in the novels – and watching – on stage – characters abducted by corsair raids, enslaved, subjugated by gallant renegades, and learned about their suffering in the dungeon of Algiers; all this was happening to many of their fellow countryman in the Western Mediterranean. In other words, the literary dimension appears to have been deeply marked by these events, while the fictional image of Barbary it constructed seem to have had an important role in shaping the French audience's perception of the contemporary Mediterranean situation.

To attempt to elucidate these points, we will look at one heroic novel in particular: Marin Le Roy de Gomberville's *L'Exil de Polexandre*, published in 1629. This novel can be considered in many regards one of the best examples for investigating these questions for several reasons: first, Gomberville's text was one of the most popular heroic

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[78] Ibid., 34.

novels of his time, a vast editorial success, and it remains one of the most read French heroic novels to this day. Second, *Polexandre* can be considered as one of the most representative models for the whole heroic novel. Stylistically and thematically it well embodies the features distinctive of the entire corpus.

Third, Gomberville was a close acquaintance of Richelieu's circles and a protégé of the cardinal himself.[79] Marin Le Roy de Gomberville (1600?–1674) was also one of the first and most active members of the Académie Française. This close proximity to the circles of French political power is a factor that seems to have played an important role in the writing of *Polexandre*, as Thomas DiPiero explains in detail.[80]

Yet, the fourth reason—and probably the most important—for why *Polexandre* represents an interesting case study for considering the representation of corso and Barbary in early modern French literature is because of the novel's maritime setting itself. Philip Wadsworth, one of the first scholars to dedicate a monographic study to this novel, was the first to note how Gomberville "displayed a real interest in the sea," noticing how the *Polexandre*'s background contains a very significant number of thalassic themes and scenes, including "sea journeys, tempests shipwrecks and encounters with pirates."[81] Wadsworth was undoubtedly right, since all of the different versions of this novel are set in a maritime world, one inhabited by privateers, sailors, slaves, and adventurers.

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[79] Philip A. Wadsworth, *The Novels of Gomberville, a Critical Study of Polexandre and Cythérée*, Yale Romanic studies ; XXI (New Haven, Yale University Press; London, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1942, 1942), 1–8.
[80] DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions*, chap. 3.
[81] Wadsworth, *The Novels of Gomberville, a Critical Study of Polexandre and Cythérée*, 65.

Gomberville published five different versions of *Polexandre* between 1619 and 1638. The first edition, titled *L'Exil de Polexandre et d'Eridée*, was published in one volume in 1619.[82] A second wholly reworked and augmented version appeared in 1629 with the title *L'Exil de Polexandre*.[83] This version was then reprinted with relatively minor but significant variations to the plot and characters in 1632.[84] Finally, a fourth much lengthier and again transformed version of the novel appeared in five volumes in 1637 as *Polexandre*, and was reprinted with some additional material in 1638.[85]

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[82] The plot of the 1619 edition of *Polexandre* revolves around two main characters: Aligénor, a French nobleman who goes to the Kingdom of Naples to seek fortune, and his sister Euridice, who is traveling across the Mediterranean shores to find her lover, Séphize. In Malta, Euridice learns that Séphize is in Algiers and goes there, only to be arrested upon her arrival and brought to the Viceroy Hama Chety. The viceroy offers Euridice to one of his favorite subjects, Mustapha Chenik, a very well-mannered person, and a "courteous" Muslim. One of Mustapha Chenik's servants, a fellow Frenchman, confides to Euridice that his master is in reality a French nobleman in disguise, and that Mustapha Chenik had to flee France after a duel, and ended up being enslaved in Constantinople but was able to make a fortune there. Euridice learns that Mustapha Chenik has a great reputation and has built a good position in Algiers, and she begins to suspect that he is in reality her lover, Séphize. However, after a series of adventures, coups de scene, pursuits, and disguises, she is finally able to escape, and she returns to Naples with Mustapha, only to find there that he is in reality only the brother of her lover, Séphize. In Naples, Euridice meets a mysterious pilgrim, who turns out to be a woman in disguise named Ericlée, who has been separated from her lover, Polexandre, during a bandits' ambush. In Naples, Euridice and Ericlée rescue a wounded and unconscious man, and from a book in his possession, we learn that he is also a French nobleman who had to flee his country because of a duel. His name is Polexandre, and he is Ericlée's lover who was captured and enslaved in Algiers for a while. After another series of intricate adventures, both Euridice and Ericlée are finally reunited with their corresponding lovers.

[83] The 1629 version's opening scene takes place at the naval battle of Lepanto. A French vessel is trying to reach the Christian fleet there, when the crew notice a man who has jumped from a cliff into the sea and rescue him. The mysterious man is a mute and holds a mysterious picture of a beautiful girl. After that, the French vessel is able to join the rest of the Christians, commanded by Charles V son's « *Dom Jean d' Austrie* », and takes part in the battle routing the Ottoman fleet. However, after the battle, the mute man suddenly leaps into the water again, and he is rescued this time by an Ottoman ship under the command of Bajazet, the admiral of all the corsairs. Joining the corsair crew, the mute meets a mysterious young man presented as « *le jeune Turc* ». Onboard Bajazet's ship, the mute witnesses many corsairing raids, including one in which the captain rescues Zelmatide, the prince of Perou, from Spanish pirates (whose story is told at length). After a series of maritime adventures, Bajazet reveals that, although he is the leader of the corsair republic, he is in reality a Frenchman, still a Christian, who has lost his lover. We also discover that « *le jeune Turc* » is also a Frenchman of royal blood whose real name is Polexandre and was too separated from his lover. However, in the end, thanks to a fortunate turn of events, all the separated lovers are reunited and return to France.

[84] The plot of the 1632 version is in many ways very similar to that of the 1629 version. However, significant differences exist. For example, the latter novel is set during the Middle Ages instead of the 16th century, at the time of Charles Martel. Consequently, Gomberville drops the American background from his book, which would have become too anachronistic. The character of Zelmatide, the prince of Perou in the 1629 version, becomes a Persian prince in the 1632 version, and the author introduces a long section describing a fictionalized version of the history of the kingdom of Persia, moving in this way a large section of the novel's background from the American colonies to the Middle East.

[85] The 1637 version of *Polexandre* is much more substantial than any of the previous ones, spanning into five long volumes. As a consequence, the intertwining of main plots and sub-plots becomes much more intricate than that in any of the previous iterations of the novel. As in previous versions, the story begins with a familiar scene in which two men

The boundaries of *Polexandre*'s maritime setting shifted with each version of the novel. For instance, in the 1619 version, the bulk of the action takes place in and around the Mediterranean, mostly between Naples and Algiers. One of the main characters of the novel, the French noblewoman Euridice, travels to Algiers in search of her lover, Séphize, whom she heard was held as a captive there. In Algiers, she is enslaved by the viceroy of the city, Hama Chety, who gifts her to one of his beloved subjects, a man named Mustapha Chenik. Later in the novel, we learn that Mustapha Chenik is, in reality, not a Muslim subject, but a French nobleman, the brother of Euridice's lover, Séphize, who had to flee from France and who was enslaved in Istanbul. Although secretly still a Christian, Mustapha Chenik was able to make a fortune in the Ottoman Empire as a renegade, and in Algiers, he rose to become a highly respected public figure of the privateer's republic.

In the 1629 version, the Mediterranean is still the main setting of the novel's plot. However, Gomberville moves the scene from Algiers to an imaginary island, a « *république* » of corsairs, which is supposedly located on the North African coast, not far from Algiers: « *isle qui servait comme de republique à tous les corsaires* » (526). This imaginary corsair republic is described as a blessed place, rich in natural resources and

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fall from a cliff off one of the Canary Islands and are rescued by a "handsome Turk." This young Turk in charge of the privateer ship proves later to be Iphidamante, Polexandre's brother. One of the two men who were saved is a mute in possession of a picture of the beautiful girl, which in this version turns out to be Polexandre's loved one, Alcidiane. The character of Bajazet present in the 1629 version appears here again with a different name, becoming here Almazor. He is no longer a noblemen of French origin and Muslim renegade in disguise, but a prince of Senegalese origin (although the text mentions that he is "fair" for his race, thanks to his mother who was "blanche"). Almazor is a convinced Muslim believer, yet he marries a French Christian woman, Cydarie, and his own lieutenant and best friend, Iphidamante, is also French and Christian. The corsair Almazor brings Polexandre and Iphidamante with him and his Turkish fleet and through his many adventures, and together they visit his island stronghold in the ocean.

beauties, a true *locus amoenus*. Its geography « *rendait cette place la plus forte du monde* ». (570). However, the Muslim inhabitants of this corsair republic – and the many renegades who have joined them – are brutal and perverted people, inclined to crime and sodomy. Only their captain, a man named Bajazet, can keep them at bay, the only one capable of « *adoucir toute la barbarie de ces pirates* » (31). However, later in the story we discover that Bajazet is in reality a French nobleman who had to escape his country and became a renegade. He made his life in Barbary but, despite his role, never truly converted to Islam, and remained a crypto-Christian.

In the 1637 and 1638 versions of Gomberville's novel, the setting changes again, and the corsair republic moves from the little island in the Mediterranean to another imaginary island, set this time in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, the so-called realm of Alcidiane. Many of the same characters reappear under different names, whereas the imaginary maritime and corsair republic remains much the same, as do the qualities of its inhabitants.

In sum, the corsair republic and the adventures of its inhabitants remain the main fulcrum of all the different versions of the novel's plot. This maritime world—with its corsairs, slaves, and renegades — plays the leading role in determining the fate of the adventures of all the rest of the characters, and consequently the plots of all the different versions. It is interesting to notice also how the same Mediterranean setting returns in Gomberville's subsequent novel, published twenty years after *Polexandre*, and titled *La Jeune Alcidiane* (Paris, Augustin Courbé, 1651), which is set in large part in Tunis and Morocco.

In addition to this geographical mobility, the different versions of *Polexandre* also shift through historical epochs, with each version of the story set in different periods of French history. The 1619 version takes place, for instance, during the first half of the 16th century, at the time of Henri II's regency. The 1629 version moves its setting a little bit forward to the second half of the 16th century, and in this version, Gomberville makes ample reference to a series of historical events, such as the death of Henri II and the Wars of Religion (the lengthy opening scene is set at the Battle of Lepanto). The 1632 version of the novel transports instead the plot all the way back to the Middle ages, to the 7th century, at the time of Charles Martel. Finally, the 1637 and 1638 versions shift the plot again forward to the beginning of the 16th century (although there are many fewer references to historical events or characters in these two last versions than in the previous ones).

How should we interpret the many geographical and historical references present in Gomberville's novel? Is the maritime world that appears in *Polexandre* merely a background meant to create an atmosphere of exoticism in the novel or a narrative trope used to multiply the characters' movements and hence the complexity of the plot? Is it a prop used by the author to give a veneer of realism to his work (a sort of "reality effect," to paraphrase Roland Barthes)? Or should we interpret these references as representations meant to evoke real places and events?

1.7 The heroic novels and travel literature

Since before the Renaissance, French fictional authors had often drawn inspiration for their plot settings and characters from well-known historical figures and

situations or faraway places. Whether those inspirations came from antiquity or from more contemporary events, they were often dramatized to provide models of exemplarity or to appeal to the erudition of their readers. The wave of exotic themes and locations that appears in the French fictional literature of the time has often been read as an extension of this humanistic tradition, as a way to provide a chance to instruct the readers through noble examples while also educating them on the current events of the world.

In many ways, the Mediterranean maritime themes that appear with increased frequency in the French fictional literature of the first half of the 17th century are part of a larger infatuation of the French at the time with exotic themes. This surge in references to the world beyond Europe is certainly not accidental. Almost all literary critics since Paul Hazard agree in linking this fascination with the exoticism that took early 17th century French culture by storm to the Western early modern "age of exploration."[86] By making exchanges across geographical and cultural distances more common, the European opening to the world also brought the cultures and places beyond Europe to the attention of the French audience of the time.[87]

An ever-growing production of travel accounts—in the form of *narrations*, *descriptions*, *rapports*, and *mélanges curieux*, along with more long-established histories and geographies of humanistic tradition—were published in increasing numbers, and this

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[86] Paul Hazard, *La crise de la conscience europeenne* (Paris: Boivin, 1935).
[87] Serge Gruzinski, *Les Quatre Parties Du Monde: Histoire d'une Mondialisation* (Paris: Éditions de la Martinière, 2004); For a historical perspective on the forging of a French colonial empire, see Philippe Haudrère, *L'empire Des Rois: 1500–1789* (Paris: Denoel, 1997); Glenn J. Ames, *Colbert, Mercantilism and the French Quest for the Asian Trade* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996); Gilbert Chinard, *L'exotisme Américain Dans La Littérature Française Au XVI' Siecle* (Paris: Hachette, 1911).

made the French audience more and more aware of the distant regions of the globe.[88] The Jesuit rapports from North America were, for example, instrumental in instructing French readers about France's remote colonies.[89] Henri IV and Richelieu were the first to support state-sponsored attempts to establish a French presence in the Far East, and directly sponsored travel reports such as the one produced by François Couch, Étienne de Flacourt, Charles Gabriel Dellon, Crapeau de Saussay, and Robert Challe, which helped spread new knowledge on the *Indes Orientales*.[90] By the mid-17th century, travel literature had quickly become one of the most published and read genres in the kingdom, contributing to the diffusion of a new geographical awareness.[91]

In the case of the Maghreb region in particular, by the beginning of the 17th century, we see the appearance of new publications, the so-called "redemption" narratives (accounts of expeditions to free Christian slaves written and edited by religious missionary orders such as the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians) and the "Barbary captivity" accounts (reports of the experience of enslavement of European Christians in Muslim North Africa), which constituted the primary source of information alongside the

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[88] Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1660-1800.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); Joan Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Michael Harrigan, *Veiled Encounters: Representing the Orient in 17th-Century French Travel Literature* (Kenilworth: Rodopi, 2008); Michèle Longino, *French Travel Writing in the Ottoman Empire: Marseilles to Constantinople, 1650-1700* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Friedrich Wolfzettel, *Le discours du voyageur: pour une histoire littéraire du récit de voyage en France, du Moyen Age au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996).
[89] Micah True, *Masters and Students: Jesuit Mission Ethnography in Seventeenth-Century New France* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).
[90] Sophie Linon-Chipon, *Gallia Orientalis: Voyages Aux Indes Orientales, 1529-1722: Poétique et Imaginaire d'un Genre Littéraire En Formation* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003).
[91] Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVIIe siècle 1598–1701*, 1:208–12. Cited in Welch, *A Taste for the Foreign*, 30.

histories and geographies of humanistic tradition that had been published since the Renaissance. Both the redemption narratives and the captivity narratives had significant circulation in the French kingdom at the time, spreading information for French readers about this previously little-known region of North Africa.[92]

Fictional genres, such as the heroic novel, and documentary ones, such as travel and captivity narratives, mutually influenced each other on a formal, stylistic, and thematic level throughout the seventeenth century in France.[93] It is not surprising, therefore, that a novel such as *Polexandre* displays a series of noteworthy similarities with contemporary documentary genres, often borrowing features proper to travelogues or captivity narratives.

At the beginning of the 1619 version of *Polexandre*, for instance, Séphize—Euridice's missing lover—explains that the reason he first underwent his voyage that separated him from Euridice was for « *un désir de voir le monde* ». After having traveled through Europe, Asia and the Indies, he ended up in the Middle East because he wanted to visit the Arabia Felix region, and declares:

> *[…] Je voulus voir très exactement cette aimable contrée qu'on appelle l'Arabie heureuse non seulement à cause des parfums et des richesses dont ce pays est incomparablement pourvu, ni pour la rareté de voir la Forest parfumée ou le Phenix se retire, mais pour reconnaitre la splendeur du Prince qui la gouverne, et les magnificences des grands de la Cour.*[94]

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[92] Cf. Chapter II
[93] Welch, *A Taste for the Foreign*, chap. 2.
[94] M. de Gomberville, *L'Exil de Polexandre et d'Ériclée*, Paris, 1619, Ch. 4, p. 330.

Séphize's statement seems remarkable in that it is strikingly similar to those we usually find in the many contemporary travel accounts. Although his traveling was inspired in part by curiosity, Séphize also hints at his motivation for acquiring education and moral edification. He expresses, in other words, the same curiosity to study the anthropological aspects of a foreign country as a traveler, such as politics («*la splendeur du Prince*») or culture («*les magnificences des grands de la Cour*»).

It is interesting to notice how Gomberville—through Séphize's words—mixes real elements (such as the geographical places he mentions) with imaginary ones (the Phenix). At the same time, there is here also an allusion to the exorbitant and exotic wealth of Oriental kingdoms, one of the long-circulated early modern Western orientalist stereotypes. In summary, this short passage reveals the high degree of intertextuality among heroic novels such as *Polexandre*, and it shows how thematically they appear to have absorbed elements from a variety of sources in constructing their fictional worlds.

However, many of the similarities that *Polexandre* shares with documentary texts—such as the travel and captivity narratives—are formal. If we consider, for instance, the narrative structure of this novel, we notice how it manifests significant parallels with the structures of travel and captivity narratives. This is because the two genres share similar diegetic patterns (that is, the series of elements that compose their plot, their diegesis). We notice how *Polexandre*'s plot contains an almost identical storyline—the same diegetic parable of conflict, climax, and resolution—as that found in captivity narratives. Like the narrators and main characters of the captivity narratives, most of the main characters in *Polexandre* begin their journey after an event or incident

that forces them to leave their country. They must then begin a journey, usually in a foreign land and most often by sea. During their journey, they are either rescued or captured (often by pirates) and end up either in slavery or as “guests” of the crew that rescued them. This situation puts them in contact with a foreign culture, in which they end up (forcefully or voluntarily) living for a prolonged time. However, thanks to their proactive attitude or innate strength of character, they are generally able to endure or adapt and learn to navigate the challenges of their condition until a favorable denouement, which usually involves the return to their homeland (followed or preceded by the finding of their beloved one, in the case of the novels).

This plot is noticeable, for instance, in the 1619 version of *Polexandre*, in which one of the main characters, the young French noblewomen Euridice, begins her journey to find her lover Séphize. The diegetic scheme of the novel follows Euridice’s travels across the Mediterranean, where she is captured and enslaved in Algiers. However, she is able to turn the situation in her favor; she escapes and reunites with Séphize in Naples.

The same diegetic pattern also exists for the other characters in the novel, such as for the French nobleman turned renegade (named Mustapha in the 1619 version and Bajazet in the 1629 version). In both versions, Mustapha/Bajazet has to flee the French Kingdom after a duel, travels by sea, and ends up enslaved in the Ottoman Empire. Here, he converts to Islam and rises to become the chief of the Barbary corsairs, a position that he holds for a while before he is finally able to flee back to Europe at the end of the novel.

These patterns that we see in *Polexandre*'s diegesis are remarkably similar to those we find in many of the captivity narratives that were published all over Europe at the time, such as in *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille* (the first surviving example of a published North African captivity narrative written in French by Henry du Lisdam and published in 1608), [95] or in *L'Odyssée ou diversité d'aventures, rencontres et voyages en Europe, Asie et Afrique, Par le sieur Du Chastelet Des Boys*, (a travel and captivity narrative published in 1665 by René du Chastelet des Boys).[96] In both cases, we see the same "there-and-back" diegetic progression, marked by the same milestones: the sea traveling, the maritime encounter and fight, the capturing, the enslavement or the forced living in a foreign culture, the ability to adapt to the new situation, and the final return to the homeland.

Nonetheless, despite the similarities between the two genres' "proairetic codes" (that is, the anticipation of an action's resolution, to borrow Roland Barthes' famous definition in S/Z)[97], heroic novels and captivity narratives also display clear differences in their "hermeneutic codes" (that is, the sequence of actions that creates suspense and delay, leading to the narrative's resolution,). This is particularly evident when we look at

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[95] René Chastelet des Boys, *L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique* (La Flèche, Grevais Laboe, 1665).
[96] Henry du Lisdam, *"L'esclavage du brave chevalier François de Vintimille, des comtes de Marseille & Olieule, à presant commandeur du Planté & Cadillan: où l'on peut voir plusieurs rencontres de guerre dignes de remarque* (Claude Morillon, 1608); reprinted in Henry Du Lisdam and Réné Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608); Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, ed. Christian Zonza, Collection Mediterranea (Bouchène, 2012).
[97] Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

the differences in their fabula—that is, the sequence in which the diegetic elements are presented.

Like the contemporary travel literature genre that was flourishing in France and Europe, the fabulae of most captivity narratives follow, in general, a linear order, focusing on the narrator's vicissitudes, which are presented in a straightforward chronological progression. This is the case for both du Lisdam's and Chastelet des Boys' accounts (which I discuss in the next chapter), in which the fabulae follow a particularly linear progression.

Nevertheless, there are also significant exceptions to the linearity of the captivity narratives' fabulae. In many of these texts, we see the use of metadiegetic short narratives (aka "frame narratives," i.e., stories within a story). Many of the early modern captivity narratives used these metadiegetic short narratives to expand their plot by relaying episodes or anecdotes, which were typically only marginally connected to the author's captivity story. Many of these frame narratives work as standalone episodes—telling the story of a person or circumstance that the author witnessed or heard about during his enslavement—whereas others simply expand on the author's own account. Examples of the use of such metadiegetic narratives in the captivity narratives can be found, for instance, in Emanuel d'Aranda's *Relation de captivité*, in which we have a series of short stories that becomes an integral part of the text.[98] The last section of d'Aranda's *Relation de Captivité* introduces a collection of short accounts labeled

[98] The *Relation de captivité* relates the story of Emanuel d'Aranda's captivity in Algiers from 1640–1642. The first part of the book, Captured out of the coasts of Brittany, with two fellow travelers, Reynier Saldens and Jean-Baptiste

« *relations particulières* » (thirty-seven in the first edition that will grow up to fifty in the later editions).

On the contrary, heroic novels such as *Polexandre* tend to rely heavily on a nonlinear fabula, one that introduces the action in medias res and is often intertwined with a plethora of sub-plots, generally introduced through frame narratives. This entails a much higher degree of complexity in these novels' fabulae, one that seems to increase the narrative suspense and surprise. *Polexandre*'s fabula itself is a complex and intricate web of plots and sub-plots, in which the main narrative sets the stage for a plethora of shorter ones, often introduced as accounts related orally by one of the novel's characters to another.

Gomberville, like many early modern French heroic novel' authors, made ample use of oral accounts in the construction of *Polexandre*'s narrative. In long digressions, the characters tell their stories of travel and adventures to each other, and these long relationships end up playing a significant role in the creation of the novel's diegesis.

In the 1629 version of Gomberville's novel titled *L'Exil de Polexandre*, we can see the complexity of the fabula from the start: in the opening scene, a "young Turc" jumps from a cliff and is saved by the corsair admiral Bajazet, right before his ship joins the battle of Lepanto. Yet, his identity remains mysterious for much of the novel; only

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Caloen. In his years of captivity, Emmanuel d'Aranda is owned by several masters, including by the Jewish shipowner Ciscas, by Agha Saban Gallan, by Governor Alli Pegelin, and by two janissary Cataborne individuals, Mostafa and Mahomet Celibi Oiga. He describes in detail his life in the Algier's bagnio, offering a lively sketch of the everyday life of a slave in Algiers, with its multicultural background. After a complex negotiation (40–51), he is freed in exchange for the release of a group of Algerian citizens who were held captive in the Low Countries. The second part of the texts is an anthology of thirty-seven short stories that Aranda witnessed while captive, ranging from the history of the city of Algiers, anecdotes of escaped slaves, cultural observations (e.g., funerals), and comedic and tragic stories.

much later do we discover his real name and the true identity of Polexandre—the eponymous character —and this only after he finally recounts his adventures to the rest of the leading characters in a long monologue.

This is also the case for most of the other characters in the novel, and we discover their identities and whereabouts via similar imbricated accounts. For instance, shortly after the first scene of the novel set at the battle of Lepanto, we are introduced to the character Zelmatide, who we learn is, in reality, the king of Peru, only after he shares his long account to Bajazet and Polexandre. Another example is the corsair captain named Bajazet, who also only reveals his real identity and his story in the middle of the plot. Through his long speech, we learn that he is actually a French nobleman, and we discover the adventures that brought him to become the leader of the North African corsairs.

All these examples demonstrate the prominence of the oral dimension as a preferred mode for narrativization in heroic novels such as *Polexandre*. In fact, the novel demonstrates a propensity for using oral accounts to advance its plot, which can take many forms, from conversations, to reported speeches, to monologues.

The prominence of the oral dimension as a mode of narrativization is one of the features that literary critics usually associate with early modern French heroic novels. Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain why we see such ample use of metadiegetic and oral narratives in this canon. Marie-Gabrielle Lallemand underlines, for instance, how this focus on orality was a way for the early modern authors to display their rhetorical abilities. Following the classical rhetorical tradition, eloquence was a highly praised skill for all writers at the time. By inserting long speeches in their novels,

these authors could display their oratory skills to their audience.[99] Lallemand even suggests the use of the expression of "Roman discourant" to describe the heroic novel genre (borrowing the expression from Marie de Gournay, one of the first heroic novel authors).[100]

Maurice Lever also suggests that the use of oral accounts served as a ploy to preserve the aesthetic conventions dictated by the Aristotelian unities of space, time, and action in these long novels. In fact, the reported speeches allowed the authors of heroic novels to construct longer and more complex narratives without formally transgressing the three unities by allowing their characters to freely move "in speech" through space and time.[101]

In any case, it is interesting to note how the ample use of oral accounts is a further element linking the heroic novel genre to the travel and captivity narratives. This is because the widespread use of metadiegetic oral accounts ends up putting a particular emphasis on the act of witnessing and testimony in these novels, an essential feature of documentary texts such as the travel and captivity narratives. In *Polexandre*, characters usually frame the stories they tell each other as if they were the testimony of their firsthand lived experience. This means that, although fictional, their metadiegetic oral accounts appear as testimony of their firsthand lived experience, and not mere fabulation. In this way, the heroic novels tend to mimic the same discursive mode that we find in

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[99] Marie-Gabrielle Lallemand, *Les Longs Romans Du XVIIe Siècle: Urfé, Desmarets, Gomberville, La Calprenède, Scudéry*, Lire le XVIIe siècle ; 21. Série Romans, contes et nouvelles; 2 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013, 2013), 213.
[100] Cited by ibid.
[101] Lever, *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle*.

documentary texts such as the travel accounts and captivity narratives, which also pose their content as a factual narration. As Andrea Frish observes in her *The Invention of the Eyewitness*, the use of truth-claiming testimonies based on witnessing can be considered a major hallmark of the modern travel literature genre.[102] In their frequent use of oral testimonies, the heroic novels skillfully adopted a structure similar to such an "epistemic" model, although translated into the novel's fictional context.

1.8 Orientalism themes in Polexandre

A further element linking heroic novels such as *Polexandre* to documentary texts such as the contemporary body of travel and captivity narratives is the widespread presence of sections containing observations on foreign cultural and social aspects, or what could be defined as "proto-ethnographic" or "proto-anthropological" descriptions. These kinds of ethnographic observations were a staple of the early modern travel accounts, in which they had a dual function: on the one hand, they served a didactic purpose, providing their readers with details on faraway places and customs. On the other hand, they satisfied the reader's curiosity and interest in all things exotic.[103]

Inevitably, this interest in learning about the world transferred into the literary dimension. A prominent example of this fascination with foreign cultures and settings is the well-known infatuation for "oriental" themes that regularly features in the early modern French fictional literary production beginning in the mid-16th century—that is

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[102] Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Distributed by University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
[103] Wolfzettel, *Le discours du voyageur*.

themes that reference (more or less directly) the history, geography, or culture of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. [104] For instance, several plays had brought to the stage plots inspired by recent episodes of Turkish history, especially those drawn from the chronicles of the reign of Suliman I (aka, Suliman the Magnificent, 1494–1566). In 1561, Gabriel Bounin wrote *La Soltane*, one of the first plays to bring an oriental background to the French stage, opening the way to a long series of similar works that continued to play an essential role in the drama production of the 17th century.[105] Similar themes inspired by Ottoman history also often appear in the French fictional narrative production from the mid-16th century onward, for example in the short narrative form that became famous by the turn of the century, called *histoires tragiques* (and which were directly inspired by the Italian novellas).[106] Many of these oriental themes were inspired by Italian and Spanish works that had abundantly included such examples since the beginning of the 16th century.[107]

Similar kinds of passages can be found in all versions of *Polexandre*. In the 1629 version, Gomberville inserts, for instance, a lengthy description of a funeral procession of

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[104] Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime*; Longino, *French Travel Writing in the Ottoman Empire*; Nicholas Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Lucien Bély, *Turcs et turqueries, XVI-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009); Harrigan, *Veiled Encounters*.
[105] Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660).* (Paris: Boivin, 1941), pt. IV; Michèle Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[106] Sharon Kinoshita, "Ports of Call: Boccaccio's Alatiel in the Medieval Mediterranean," ed. Jason Jacobs, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 163–195; Oumelbanine Zhiri, "Turcs et Mores: Monarques Musulmans Dans Les Histoires Tragiques de Boaistuau et Belleforest," *L'Esprit Créateur* 53, no. 4 (December 27, 2013): 34–46.
[107] Albert Mas, *Les Turcs Dans La Littérature Espagnole Du Siècle d'or, Recherches Sur l'évolution d'un Thème Littéraire.* (Paris: Centre de recherches hispaniques, Institut d'études hispaniques, n.d.); José-Manuel Losada-Goya, *Bibliographie critique de la littérature espagnole en France au XVIIe siècle: présence et influence* (Librairie Droz, 1999).

one of the North African corsairs, a man named Achain, the righthand man of the renegade captain Bajazet who died in combat. Gomberville describes the funeral procession that takes place on the imaginary corsair island off the North African coast in great detail. In a section of this long description, Gomberville notes:

> *La costume de tout le Mahométan est de porter les morts en terre la tête la première, aussi Achain fut traité de cette sorte. Et l'on voyait sur le bout de devant de sa bière l'habillement de tète dont il avait accoutumé de se servir dans les combats, environné de chandelles allumées* (480).

This short passage is interesting because it seems to contain precise details about Muslim burial practices. Gomberville notes, for instance, the position of Achim's body, a piece of information that appears to allude to a real practice common in Islamic cultures, which prescribe burial of the body facing toward Mecca, with the arms, legs, and hands stretched out in the same direction.

Although it is not clear whether Gomberville had this custom in mind when writing this scene, it is interesting to note that a similar passage exists in one of the most authoritative European texts concerning the North African coast that was available in France at the time, Diego de Haëdo's *Topographie et Histoire générale d'Alger* (translated and published in French in 1612). In chapter thirty-eight, Haëdo describes the rituals of Islamic burial in Algiers in great detail and reports: « *Aussitôt, on lui place la tête du côté du Levant comme quand on fait la prière quand il a rendu le dernier soupir [...]* ».[108]

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[108] Diego de Haëdo and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Topographie et histoire générale d'Alger: où l'on verra des cas étranges, des morts effrayantes et des tourments exquis d'après le manuscrit original attribué à Cervantès, publié*

We know that Gomberville never traveled abroad, yet he was an avid reader of the kind of travel narratives and geographies that were becoming increasingly popular in Europe at the time, and it seems that he found much of the inspiration for his fictional material in these sources.[109] It is therefore possible, and even likely, that Gomberville took inspiration from the work of authors such as Haëdo in writing the different sections in his novel that describe the customs of North Africa.

As a result, many of the passages containing ethnographic and cultural descriptions in *Polexandre* end up being somehow accurate, even when only partially true, suggesting that Gomberville had researched his topic thoroughly using the literature he had at his disposal. For instance, in another section of the novel—one in which Gomberville describes two crews of corsairs meeting at sea after having fought at the battle of Lepanto—Gomberville notices that they were able to communicate thanks to « *ce langage composé de plusieurs autres, qui est commun par toutes les cotes d'Afrique* ».[110] Again, we have an apparent reference to a fact of the early modern Mediterranean world: the widespread use of the so-called Lingua Franca or "Sabir," a pidgin idiom commonly used among sailors in the region at the time. Not surprisingly, Haëdo often mentions the Lingua Franca in his work.

At the same time, the information Gomberville presents often comes in the form of free adaptations of those found in documentary texts such as Haëdo's *Topographie*,

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en 1612 à Valladolid, Espagne, sous le nom de Diego de Haëdo, ed. Fred Romano, 1 vols. (Carnac: les Éditions du Menhir, 2015).

[109] by Philip A. Wadsworth, *The Novels of Gomberville, a Critical Study of Polexandre and Cythérée*, Yale Romanic studies ; XXI (New Haven, Yale University Press; London, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1942, 1942).

[110] Marin Le Roy de Gomberville, *L'exil de Polexandre*, 1629, 40.

freely transposed to fit the fictional setting of his heroic novel. This is because—although the works of Gomberville often imitated the style, form, and content of the proto-ethnographic observations found in the contemporary geographies and travel literature texts—the information he provided on North Africa ended up being either distorted, inaccurate, or oversimplified. Gomberville describes, for instance, the imaginary corsair island that supposedly exists near Algiers, and he offers a detailed description of the place:

> *Dans le milieu de cette ile on voyait une grande place que la nature avait cachée comme dans les bras de quatre grands rochers. Du côté d'Orient, le rocher s'étendait jusqu'à mer par des précipices et des regorgissements d'eau douce, rendant cette place la plus forte du monde. Vers le Midi, le rocher par sa hauteur égalant la longueur de l'autre, avait été taillée au ciseau, et percée en forme de cloitre. Du côté qu'elle ne regardait point la place, elle était pleine de petits logements, où les femmes des pirates, demeuraient pour garder leurs enfants, et leurs biens. A l'endroit où ces deux rochers aboutissaient presque l'un à l'autre, ils laissaient une ouverture de trente ou quarante toises. Sur ce passage il y avait une grande arcade qui autrefois avait été bâtie parles Arabes, lesquels voulant le rendre immortel par l'entreprise et la durée d'un si merveilleux ouvrage, avait gravé dessus des pierres de marbre noir le nom et le pais de ceux qui en étaient les auteurs* (569–571).

Some of the elements presented in this description seem to match, in part, the real topography of the harbor of Algiers, which at the time was a bay surrounded by rocky hills, and it is possible that Gomberville took inspiration from it to create his imaginary corsair island. Yet, in the novel, the harbor is also clearly a fairytale-like place, full of splendors and wonders. The imaginary island's description skillfully mixes the descriptive documentary style to mix realistic details with imaginary elements, blurring the distinction between fact and fiction.

However, in describing this imaginary island, Gomberville closely follows the format of a classical urban topography, one of the well-known "city views" that were abundant in many of the Renaissance geographies.[111] This scene shows the same pattern in the way it reconstructs a view of the place through a movement in space, one that invites the readers to explore and discover the city with the author.

Besides, the passage above also contains widespread orientalist topoi, one that had been long circulating in European culture, such as the representation of the Maghreb region as a beautiful, fertile, and productive place (the "locus amoenus" already described by Leo Africanus).[112] However, further on, we learn that this beautiful island is inhabited by depraved people, by « *Maures* » and « *Turcs* » who are « *bêtes farouches* ». Their depravity is described as ingrained in their nature, and it manifests in their penchant for violence: « *des gens qui ne connaissent que le sang et la violence; et qui ne sont pouffez à toutes leurs actions que par le profit ou par la vengeance* » (578).

Further allusions to the corrupt nature of the corsair inhabitants of the Maghrebian island are scattered throughout the rest of the novel. In another passage, Gomberville describes, for instance, an opulent and debauched feast the corsairs organize to celebrate their latest successful maritime raid:

> *Il fut bu et mangé aux excès. Mais la dépense parut particulièrement aux montagnes de Tabac, par maniéré de dire, qui y furent consommées. Cinquante esclaves Mores qui servaient ordinairement Bajazet, apportèrent cette herbe qu'on peut injustement appeler sorcière, dans cinquante grands bassins de*

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[111] María Antonia Garcés, "Introduction," in *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam: Antonio de Sosa's Topography of Algiers (1612)* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 11–17.
[112] Oumelbanine Zhiri, *L'Afrique Au Miroir de l'Europe: Fortunes de Jean Léon l'Africain à La Renaissance* (Genève: Droz, 1991).

> *vermeil doré, et ne cessèrent durant que chacun prenait de verser du vin dans des vases d'or à demi pleins de sucre, et les présentèrent aux uns et aux autres* (512–513).

Gomberville describes the abundance of exotic goods consumed by the corsairs and the squandering of tobacco, alluding again to the widespread stereotype of the lavish and dissipate customs of Oriental cultures.

Beliefs in the inherent violence of Oriental people, their penchant for cruelty and violence, and the debauched nature of their customs were all staples of the long-seated Orientalist prejudice that existed in European culture since the Middle Ages and circulated widely in French culture at the time.[113] Passages such as those above, abundant in *Polexandre*, illustrate how Gomberville artfully mixed the style of realistic descriptions of North Africa with widespread fantasies, a duality often exploited by orientalist discourses in the West.[114]

Of course, similar representations of orientalist stereotypes were not unique to novels such as *Polexandre*; they could be found across almost all genres at the time, from the geographies, to the travel literature, to the captivity narratives. Their widespread presence in *Polexandre* provides further evidence about the intertextual nature of the heroic novel genre.[115]

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[113] Dominique Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle: La Ville Des Tentations* (Paris ; Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998).
[114] Said, *Orientalism*.
[115] Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle*.

1.8.1 Polexandre's anti-Muslim stereotypes

The set of orientalist stereotypes that we see in *Polexandre* becomes even more apparent in the way Gomberville represents the Muslim religion. References to Islam surface in many sections of the 1629 novel, particularly in a series of long dialogues featuring the corsair captain Bajazet.[116]

Since the beginning of the novel, the character of Bajazet appears as an exceptional individual, a person with noble charisma, superior in all aspects to his corsair subjects. In the opening scene of *Polexandre*, we learn that he is the admiral of the Ottoman fleet leading the navy at the Battle of Lepanto (a reference that seems to suggest that Gomberville modeled his fictional character after the historical figure of the famous Khayr al-Dīn, aka Barbarossa [?–1546], the real-life Barbary corsair who commanded the Ottoman fleet at the battle).

In one of the first conversations that Bajazet has with Polexandre (who at this point is still pretending to be a "Turk"), he explains that the corsair of his republic acts according to the Muslim religion:

> *Vous vous trompez, répondit Bajazet, la Zuna de Mahomet nous donne les privilèges de faire la guerre aux ennemis de sa loi, et de tenir pour bien, légitimement acquis ce que nous pouvons prendre sur eux de vive force, ou autrement. […] Apres cet éclaircissement, répondit le jeune Turc, je n'ay plus rien à vous demander, et trouve que Mahomet a été fort prévoyant d'avoir accordé les mystères de sa religion avec les humeurs de ceux qui la doivent embrasser; et trompa tellement toutes choses, que suivant ses accommodations,*

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[116] Bajazet is a character who appears in all versions of the novel, although in different forms and with different names. In the first edition, his name was Mustapha, and he was presented as a Frenchman who had become a Muslim renegade. In the 1629 version, Mustapha becomes Bajazet, still a Frenchmen, but this time a crypto-convert to the Muslim religion. Finally, in the 1637 version, the character becomes Almanzor, a Senegalese Muslim king who marries a Christian woman and has close Christian friends.

on peut être grand meurtrier, et grand voleur, et tout ensemble grand homme de bien (492–493).

From the beginning of the novel, the character of Bajazet plays on a double registry, fueling a certain ambiguity. While he acts and speaks as the chief of his Muslim corsairs, we often sense in his words and actions a certain degree of irony. In this short passage, for instance, although Bajazet seems to be defending the practice of corso, he also does not disavows Polexandre's claims that the Muslim religion is only a front for the corsairs, serving to justify their immoral practices.

This impression of an ambiguous attitude grows stronger as the plot progresses. In subsequent dialogues, Bajazet keeps defending the practice of corso on a religious basis, without really defending the Islamic religion. In another section, he explains, for instance, that corso came to be as a consequence of the Ottoman defeat at Lepanto, which gave rise to the Muslim corsair raids as a form of reprisal against Christianity.

[…] ayant reçu commandement du Grand Seigneur de se retirer dans des ports assurés; tous les corsaires qui l'avaient servi en cette guerre, se séparèrent avec résolution de faire pire que jamais contre les Chrétiens et persécuter par leurs continuelles courses ceux qu'ils n'avaient pu surmonter de bonne guerre (30).

Bajazet keeps defending the legitimacy of the corso in further passages, such as when he affirms: « *les Mahométans ne volent pas, ils se contentent d'enlever aux ennemis de leur loi les moyens de leur nuire* » (493).

However, in a subsequent conversation with Zelamtide (the king of Perou) and Polexandre, Bajazet comments on the nature of the Muslim religion as follows:

Bajazet ayant ainsi fait entendre à ses deux amis, les secrets d'une religion si extravagante les étonna; mais Zelmatide beaucoup moins que le jeune Turc. Aussi le Prince se tournant vers lui « ils semble à vous voir » lui dit-il « que vous n'ayez

pas eu grand soin de votre salut, puisque votre étonnement m'est une preuve bien certaine, que vous estes fort peu savant aux principaux mystères de votre religion. Le jeune Turc sourit d'entendre ainsi parler Zelmatide, et lui fit cette réponse. Vous avez grand sujet de vous scandaliser de mon ignorance; mais j'ai cette excuse commune à tous les hommes, qu'il faut du temps pour s'instruire et il y en a si peu que j'ai pris le Turban, que tout ce que j'ai pu faire jusqu'ici, ça a été de me reconnaitre sous cet habillement étranger. Bajazet se mit à rire comme son compagnon et continuant son discours dit à Zelmatide, que la religion de Mahomet n'était pas aisée à persuader; qu'il fallait avoir un grand zèle pour s'y soumettre, et que son compagnon n'étant pas né avec cette créance, il y avait grande apparence que si Mahomet ne descendit lui-même du Ciel en terre, pour le convaincre par ses miracles, il ne deviendrait jamais bon Musulman (490–491).

Polexandre and Bajazet's answers reinforce the impression that their words contain sharp sarcasm and thinly veiled ambiguity vis-à-vis Islam. Both describe Islam, not as a religion, but as a form of obedience to a set of rituals. Their words seem to indicate that acting and dressing like a Muslim are all it takes to become one.

Their attitude appears to reflect a long-standing Western prejudice toward Islam, one that viewed it not as a religion but as a set of superstitions, a posture that had no real beliefs behind it. According to this widespread sophistry that had been circulating in Europe since the Middle Ages, Muslims were followers of empty rituals, hypocrites who did not act by faith but by constraint.[117]

However, by the middle of the novel, in a dramatic turn of events, Polexandre confesses that although he had posed as a Muslim until then, he is, in reality, a Frenchman and a Christian in disguise. In hearing his words, Bajazet responds:

Je suis Chrétien Polexandre, j'en fais entre vos mains la profession […] je me suis rendu chef des plus grands voleurs qui soient parmi les Turcs, et passe

[117] Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle.*

> *encore aujourd'hui pour ennemi juré des Chrétiens. Mais si vous étés de ceux auxquels il faut autre chose que les apparences pour les faire résoudre à condamner un homme, vous ne me trouverez pas si criminel que je parais (631–632).*

After this first confession, Bajazet's account continues, and he explains that he had to flee his country after a duel, ending up enslaved in Istanbul. In the Ottoman Empire's capital, he was, however, able to turn his fortune, converting to Islam and rising to the post of admiral of the Barbary corsairs. Bajazet admits faking his conversion to Islam for very pragmatic reasons. Finding himself among the dangerous infidels, he was forced by circumstances to take on the persona of a renegade in order to save his life and better his situation:

> *Le naturel des pirates, qui ne connaissent autre plaisir que l'interdit et la proie, obligea Bajazet de retrancher ce qui lui plaisait le plus pour faire ce qui était le plus sur (561).*

Bajazet's disguise allows him to integrate the Ottoman and Maghrebian cultures and to transform his condition of subaltern into that of a leader. As Gomberville underlines in several passages, Bajazet can do so because he possesses an inherent superiority vis-à-vis the Maghrebian inhabitants: as a noble Frenchman, his high-born condition grants him a natural preeminence, the source of his mastery over the Barbary subjects. Even his appearance set him apart from his corsair crew: « *On eut dit que sa mine tout autre que celle de ses compagnons, aurait eté capable d'adoucir toute la barbarie de ces pirates* » (31).

Still, it is Bajazet's ability to hide his beliefs and camouflage his identity that allows him to keep his faith in Christianity and the allegiance to his country intact. Like a

character on the stage of a Baroque theatre play, acting like a Muslim is enough to make him one.

It is interesting to note how Gomberville, through the character of Bajazet, combines several of the widespread Western stereotypes toward the Mediterranean corso and the European perception of renegades. First, in Bajazet, we see a reference to the idea—widespread in early modern European culture—that the only possible reasons for a renegade to commit apostasy were coercion and self-interest (i.e., to gain material advantages and wealth) and never to follow their will, faith, or personal choice.[118]

The way Bajazet explains his choice to apostasize is also remarkable because it follows closely the way that real-life former renegades made their defense when they decided to return (or were forced to return) to Christianity. As Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar have shown in their detailed study of the inquisition archives, Christians who converted to Islam in the early modern Mediterranean and who ended up returning to Christendom were usually questioned for their actions, which at the time were considered a high crime. Like Bajazet, most of these former renegades declared in their defense that their conversion was never real and that, forced by the circumstances, they had only assumed the outer semblance of a Muslim believer without ever really embracing Islam in their heart.[119]

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[118] Matar, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*.
[119] Bartolomé Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah: L'histoire Extraordinaire Des Renégats, XVIe et XVIIe Siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 2006).

One further stereotype surfacing in Gomberville's depiction of Bajazet concerns the widespread contemporary fantasy that becoming a renegade, even just outwardly, could lead to enormous fortunes for Christians in the early modern Mediterranean world. In European culture, at the time, the figure of the renegade inspired a high level of distrust and anxiety, combined with a prevalent belief that becoming one could lead to significant material advantages, especially in Barbary. In many captivity narratives, we have examples of individuals who, beginning as simple peasants in Europe, rose to the highest rank of society in North Africa after converting to Islam.[120] In taking on the persona of a renegade, Bajazet shows himself to be a shrewd individual, one who can adapt to the corsairs' unrestrained customs and quickly turn them to his advantage. He does so by mastering the logic behind the corsairs' society and by learning to exploit it. When asked by Polexandre about the brutality of the Maghrebian corsair society, Bajazet explains:

> *Pour moi, lui dit Polexandre, je m'en étonne d'autant plus, qu'après avoir presque été par tous les états du monde, je n'ai rien connu qui approche de ceci. […] ici on trouve une nouveauté qui sans mentir est digne d'étonnement. Car qui pourra voir sans admiration que parmi des gens qui ne connaissent que le sang et la violence, et qui ne font poussez à toutes leurs actions que par le profit ou par la vengeance, il se rencontre je-ne-sais quelle image de justice; et comme les premiers fondements d'un état bien policé. Bajazet l'interrompant à ce mot : je voie bien, lui-dit-il, que vous avez la même opinion de ces gens-ci que j'avais auparavant que je les connais; mais si vous les hantez autant que j'ai fait; vous saurez que l'on pratique ici tout le contraire de ce qui se fait ordinairement dans les Royaumes et dans les Républiques. En la plupart des états du monde, il y a beaucoup de vertus qui dégénèrent en vices, et en celui-ci j'ai remarqué qu'il y a beaucoup de vices, qui sont fort approchants des vertus. J'avoue que parmi ces gens-ci, l'honneur et la probité sont des ennemis avec lesquels on ne fait jamais*

[120] See Chapter 3.

> *de trêves, ni de paix. Je sais que la conscience est la première chose dont se dépouillent ceux qui veulent être faits citoyens de cette République. Je n'ignore pas que la justice ne peut être reçue parmi des personnes qui ne sont riches que des pertes d'autrui; et qui se glorifient de n'avoir rien qui soit légitimement acquis. En un mot je confesse, qu'ici toutes les vertus morales font condamnées comme toutes les poisons le font ailleurs; mais sachez que dans un état bien réglé, fait le respect qu'on porte aux bonnes lois; ici l'absolu pouvoir de celui qui est le maitre retient chacun dans son devoir. Ici l'intérêt est au lieu de la justice, et bien qu'il n'y ait ni récompense ni gloire pour ceux qui font bien; au moins il y a une si générale crainte des supplices ordonnez pour les moindres fautes, qu'elle empêche que tous les jours, il ne se commet quelque massacre, ou ne se fasse quelque trahison. Vous verrez bien-tout un nombre infini de tètes non seulement de simples soldats, mais aussi de ceux qui ont été en la place ou je suis; dont la justice, ou pour mieux dire la défiance de ces corsaires, a fait de sanglants et épouvantables exemples (577–580).*

Many of the Western early modern anti-Muslim tropes surface in this short passage. First, it reiterates the idea (already expressed in other sections of the novel) that all Muslims are inherently violent. Moreover, Bajazet's worlds also explicitly allude to a further age-old Western misconception that viewed Islamic society as a "world upside down," the specular opposite of Christian Europe, where all laws and social hierarchies are inverted.[121] In this kind of aberrant society justice can be established only through the sheer brutality of a cruel master.

However, Bajazet explains further that if dominated, even Barbary society can yield a sort of stability and bring material gains. Thanks to his superior disposition, Bajazet is able to make « *d'une société de voleurs une légitime république* » (III, 583–586). Bajazet is also able to bring order to the chaos of the Barbary corsairs' society not

[121] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 296.

by relying on ideals—such as honor or justice—but by relying on a much more pragmatic approach: the drive for profit:

> *Nous ne combattons point ici pour la grandeur d'un Prince a qui notre vie et notre mort sont indifférentes, pourvue qu'il demeure le maitre. Si nous vainquons, les fruits de notre victoire ne feront pas pour celui qui n'aura point combattu (550–551).*

In this society driven only by profit and pragmatism, a renegade such as Bajazet can use his Machiavellian *raison d'état* to create a Republic of corsairs in which there is even a form of twisted egalitarianism, a perverted meritocracy:

> *Rien ne sera partagé par autorité, ni par faveur. Le mérite fera la feule mesure avec laquelle notre proie sera divisée (585).*

As a crypto-convert, Bajazet turns his condition to his advantage, acquiring significant economic and political status. Bajazet can serve his king and his kingdom even better as a fifth column, infiltrating the highest rank of the Barbary corsair society as a renegade from the inside. The moral lesson Gomberville seems to suggest is that there are significant advantages for the Frenchman cunning enough to learn to manipulate the Barbary corsairs for political gain:

> *La nécessité m'a jeté parmi ces Barbares, et j'ose croire que ce n'est pas la fortune toute seule qui m'a fait trouver l'occasion de commander en un lieu où mes semblables ont toujours trouvé la mort, ou là servitude. J'ai été si heureux que j'ai mis à la raison ces bêtes farouches et j'ai fait tourner leur rage, ou contre ceux de leur créance même, ou contre les ennemis de ma patrie. L'Espagne et l'Italie ont été seules exposées en proie à la violence de ces gens ci; et lors que mon Roi ne devait rien attendre de mon crédit que des entreprises contraires à son service, je puis dire que je l'ai plus utilement servi que ceux auxquels ses libéralités et ses bonnes grâces en avaient donné plus de sujet qu'a moi (632–633).*

This last passage inserts a political dimension in Gomberville's novel. This is because, although highly fictional, the scene makes a direct and explicit reference to the contemporary situation in the Mediterranean, alluding to the crucial role that Barbary corso had at the time in containing the Spanish hegemony in the region.

1.9 Beyond ornamental

Until recently, much of the modern literary critical commentary on early modern French literature has tended to discount the widespread presence of exotic themes and topoi—including the Mediterranean maritime ones—that appear in the French fictional literature of the time as either purely decorative or as strategies for the French authors of the time to add a didactic element or a taste of realism to their work.

Considering the exotic topoi that appear in many heroic novels of the time, Marie-Gabrielle Lallemand comments, for instance: «*Plusieurs romans héroïques, à la suite des romans grecs, font voyager leurs lecteurs dans le bassin méditerranéen et transmettent un peu de la culture antique, que l'on enseignait alors dans les collèges* ». She continues: *« …transmettre des savoirs factuels tout en racontant des histoires d'amour, telle est le double visé du roman* ».[122]

Similarly, Sylvie Requemora-Gros explains:

> *Des étapes obligées existent dans les romans […]: le rituel du départ, avec ses préparatifs, celui de la séparation, de la disparition, de l'altération et de la réparation, le rituel de la tempête en mer, et enfin, le rituel du retour. […] hormis le cas du voyage ornemental « gratuit » qui ne fait qu'apporter une couleur*

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[122] Marie-Gabrielle Lallemand, *Les Longs Romans Du XVIIe Siècle: Urfé, Desmarets, Gomberville, La Calprenède, Scudéry*, Lire le XVIIe siècle; 21. Série Romans, contes et nouvelles ; 2 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013., 2013), 164; 166.

> *exotique dont le but s'arrête à la voluptas, l'accent est en revanche souvent mis sur le voyage lui-même, en tant que procédé littéraire à but narratif.* [123]

Few are the scholars who have instead tried to consider the presence of these exotic themes in the early modern French literary canon in relation to the current political context. Analyzing the presence of Oriental history and subjects in the French classical dramatic production, Michèle Longino has shown, for instance, how their function was far from merely decorative. While featuring Oriental characters certainly satisfied the readers' avid interest in Oriental topics, it also shaped their perception and understanding of the Ottoman world, which in turn contributed to shaping France's emerging collective identity. Longino has also shown that this fictional representation was not mere coincidence; it aligned with many of the French political and commercial interests at the time.[124]

Rosa Galli Pellegrini has proposed more recently a similar reading of one of the most well-known heroic novels of its time, *Ibrahim ou l'Illustre Bassa* (published in 1641, the joint work of Georges and Madeleine de Scudéry). Pellegrini argues that the novel's Ottoman setting had a prominent political and ideological dimension. Political in the sense that the story contained a series of implicit and explicit references to contemporary political events, while also aligning itself with the broader ideological objectives of Richelieu's politics. Ideological in the sense that this novel, as a new form of widespread popular media, was able to shape not only the reader's tastes but also their

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[123] Sylvie Requemora-Gros, *Voguer Vers La Modernité: Le Voyage à Travers Les Genres Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012), 89.
[124] Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama*.

perception of the Ottoman world and the French political stance toward it. Pellegrini notes that, although fictionalized, the references to the historical and geographical Oriental elements had a concrete effect on their readers, and she concludes:

> *[Le roman est] une création polysémique qui reflète les indications données par les doctrines de la pensée étatiste et qui lance des signaux précis aux lecteurs, c'est-à-dire à ce que l'on pourrait appeler l'opinion publique de l'époque.*[125]

More recently, Ellen Welch has also shown the extent to which the aesthetic category of "foreignness" came to play a significant role in the French literature and culture of the time. Welch notes how the notion of foreignness was consciously manufactured by the French authors of the 17th century—on the one hand to appeal and satisfy their audience's taste, curiosity, and expectations—but also the evolution of this notion into a poetry of foreignness crucial to the development of the new narrative genres of the time (especially with regard to heroic novels).[126]

All these critical contributions raise questions about the relationship between the fictional dimension of these literary texts and the real events they seek to represent, as well as the effects that these representations had on shaping a collective understanding of the actual phenomenon they portrayed. It is important to remember in this regard how the French early modern culture tended often to overlap the fiction and factual dimensions. Real places, events, individuals and their fictional representations could therefore quite easily coexist in the process of writing. Moreover, the French audience had in general a

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[125] Rosa Gall Pellegrini, "Politique et Écriture Romanesque Dans Ibrahim," in *Les Trois Scudéry: Actes Du Colloque Du Havre (1–5 Octobre 1991)*, 1993.
[126] Welch, *A Taste for the Foreign*.

limited knowledge and understanding of geography and history, especially in terms that had not been mediated and influenced by the classical and humanistic tradition. As François Moureau succinctly emphasizes, for early modern French culture, foreign places were a literary and aesthetic notion as much as a geographical reality.[127]

Yet, many of the French authors of the beginning of the 17th century started to devote substantial effort to researching and recreating foreign settings in their fictional works. Furthermore, the historical elements that began to appear in the new genres such as the heroic novel were no longer inspired exclusively from antiquity; fictional production also started to feature situations inspired by more recent or contemporary historical events. Sylvie Requemora-Gros explains, for instance:

> *En fait tous ces écrivains essaient à cette période de se libérer des intrigues empruntées pour écrite des histoires «véritables» ou «arrivées de notre temps», des histoires conçues à la façon des anciens romans, mais situées dans des lieux connus et agrémentées de ce qui devenait de plus en plus le goût de la noblesse à mesure que s'opérait la pacification de la France.*[128]

In other words, heroic novel production of the beginning of the 17th century shows a new interest in verisimilar settings and situations. This tendency to « *faire vrai* » (to cite the literary critic Jacques Chupeau) that the heroic novels display, for instance, shows their concern for subjects and characters inspired by recent historical events, as does their featuring of locations that are inspired by actual geographical spaces.[129]

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[127] François Moureau, *Le Théâtre Des Voyages: Une Scénographie de l'âge Classique* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 58.
[128] Requemora-Gros, *Voguer Vers La Modernité*, 89.
[129] Jacques Chupeau, "Les Récits de Voyage Aux Lisières Du Roman," *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* (mai aout 1977): 536–553.

1.9.1 Vraisemblance

We previously mentioned that the new fictional narrative genres that appeared in France at the beginning of the 17th century started to increasingly included more and more references to actual (or at least plausible) events and locations, while discounting much of the purely imaginary elements that were still regularly featured in a large portion of the 16th-century narrative tradition. If we look at old romances (such as the Du Verdier's well-known novel *Le Roman des romans* of 1626), they still featured magicians, enchanted knights, and giants. It is hard to find these imaginary elements in a heroic novel such as *Polexandre*. At the same time, even when highly fictionalized, the settings and events that featured in the new heroic novels were often directly inspired by real events and places: unlike in Du Verdier's works, events and places had – or pretended to have – a referent in reality.

French authors of heroic novels often took inspiration for creating these references from the documentary genres that had started to appear in France at the time and circulated widely, especially from the humanistic tradition of histories and geographies, as well as the emerging early modern travel literature genre. Gomberville seems to have liberally used many such elements to create his fictional world, borrowing them from the histories and the accounts of travel circulating in France at the time. According to Guy Turbet Delof, Gomberville probably read, for instance, Belleforest's *Histoire Universelle* (1570) for his descriptions of Africa, and the *Memoires* of Brantôme

(1595) for the historical references to Lepanto, and he seems to have used them as sources of inspiration for his novel.[130]

This is not surprising, considering that many literary critics have already underlined the close relationship that existed between the new early modern fictional narrative forms, such as the heroic novels, and the travel literature canon. It is well attested how the two genres have mutually influenced each other's development.[131] Sylvie Requemora-Gros, commenting on these strong relationships of reciprocity between these two corpuses, comments for instance:

> *Des liens existent entre roman et relation de voyage, et ces liens sont réciproques: le roman sourd parfois des récits véritables et le récit présente des nouveaux horizons au roman.*[132]

Other literary critics, such as Jean-Michel Racault, have gone so far as to suggest that in many cases, it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between the fictional and factual in early modern fictional narrative production, and that we should rather speak in terms of a « *hybridation du fictif et du vrai* ».[133]

At the same time, it is clear that the Algiers described by Gomberville in his 1619 version of *Polexandre* is more a product of the author's imagination than the description of a real place. On this point, both Wadsworth and Turbet-Delof agree that Gomberville's

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[130] Guy Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–715*, Bibliographies et Catalogues 2 (Alger: S.N.E.D., 1976), 110.
[131] See most notably Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).
[132] Sylvie Requemora-Gros, *Voguer Vers La Modernité: Le Voyage à Travers Les Genres Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012), 167.
[133] Jean-Michel Racault, "Les Jeux de La Vérité et Du Mensonge Dans Les Préfaces Des Récits de Voyages Imaginaires (1676–1726)," in *Métamorphoses Du Récit de Voyage. Actes Du Colloque de La Sorbonne et Du Sénat (2 Mars 1985)*, ed. François Moureau (Champion-Slatkine, 1986), 91–109.

historical or geographical elements remain, in large part, inaccurate, if not entirely fabricated.

One important aspect we should consider is that it would be anachronistic to try to evaluate Gomberville's work in terms of "realism" and accuracy. Instead, we should take into account the role played by the early modern French aesthetic category of *vraisemblance*, or the verisimilar, in his work. *Vraisemblance* was a notion developed by the French fictional authors of the beginning of the 17th century, and it was directly inspired by the classical aesthetic theories and the writings of Plato and Aristotle in particular.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle had drawn a distinction between mere "factual" truths on the one hand—those existing in the sphere of mundane and contingent actualities (for instance in historical facts or in our day to day life, which the early modern French authors labeled the *véritable*)—and a "general" type of truth, which represented not actual events but rather a set of ontological possibilities of existence, especially those that align with a higher ethical order. Following Aristotle's ideas—since the Renaissance, the humanistic aesthetic theories had developed a distinction between history on the one hand, which was viewed as the discipline which expresses the particular (or that which has happened), and poetry on the other, which expressed instead the general (i.e., the verisimilar)—one is able to show the underlining moral relationships among facts.[134]

[134] Jean-Marie Schaeffer, "Fictional vs. Factual Narration," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn et al. (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2009).

At the beginning of the 17th century, French authors of fictional narratives began to invoke the notion of vraisemblance to justify the ample degree of invention they took in their use of historical events, famous characters, and real places as inspiration for the representations they created in their narratives. Vraisemblance granted them the poetical license to change these references and reinterpret them so that they would better align with their aesthetic, narrative, or ideological goals. In their defense, these authors generally maintained that their verisimilar version of history (or geography) was also morally superior to the situations or places from which they took inspiration, since the fictional dimension had the ability to better align the facts they represented to higher moral truths, those more in conformity with their society's ethical concerns and expectations. In many ways, the notion of vraisemblance is also closely linked to the classical humanistic model of exemplarity.[135]

This conception of verisimilitude did not apply to narrative genres alone, but more generally to the entire French literary fictional production of the time. Jean Mairet summarized well, for instance, this conception of vraisemblance in his preface to his tragicomedy *L'Illustre Corsaire* of 1640:

> *Comme ça a toujours été mon opinion en suite de celle du Philosophe, que l'Invention est la plus noble et la plus excellente qualité du vraie Poète, je me suis pour le moins efforcé de m'en servir utilement en toutes les Pieces que j'ay données au Théâtre. De là vient que je ne ferai jamais difficulté de changer ni de multiplier les plus notables incidents d'un sujet connu, pourvue que cette ingénieuse liberté ne serve pas seulement beaucoup à l'embellissement ou à la*

[135] Marc Fumaroli, *L'âge de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et "Res Literaria" de La Renaissance Au Seuil de l'époque Classique*, [2ème éd.]., Bibliothèque de L'évolution de l'humanité, 0755–1770; 4 (Paris: A. Michel, 1994, 1994); Francis Mathieu, *L'art d'esthétiser le précepte: l'exemplarité rhétorique dans le roman d'Ancien Régime* (Tübingen: Narr, 2012).

> *merveille, mais encore à la vraie-semblance du poème, à laquelle je fais profession de m'attacher sur toutes choses, et plutôt même qu'à la vérité; estimant après le premier Maistre de l'Art, que le vraie-semblable appartient proprement au Poète, et le véritable à l'Historien.*[136]

Relegating the *véritable* to historians, Mairet claims the *ingénieuse liberté* of the verisimilar for fictional writers like himself. At the same time, he also underlines how, through verisimilitude, his work was able to reach a higher truth than the work of historians, since the latter explicitly lacks "invention", the faculty granting poets their artistic freedom.

Thomas DiPiero resumes well this argument that vraisemblance makes fiction superior to history, the one proposed by early modern French writers such as Mairet, in the following way:

> *A good novel is better than history not only because novelists strive to imbue their works with a formal perfection the historian can never achieve, but also because fiction is abstract and can consequently represent archetypical virtues as ideal forms.*[137]

The emphasis that the French authors of the time placed on vraisemblance can be explained in part by the fact that the new and experimental genres that they created had, almost from the start, been the target of a series of attacks coming from different directions. This is because these new genres lacked the kind of social recognition granted to other established genres, such as history, since they could not point to a precursor in the classical literary tradition that would work as their model, validating in any way their

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[136]Jean Mairet *L'Illustre Corsaire*, 1640 Paris Augustin Courbé
[137] DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions*, 69.

status. In stressing the importance of vraisemblance, Mairet was also trying to build legitimacy for his work.

On the other hand, the critics of these new fictional genres argued that these works were too frivolous. The widespread view at the time was that a good literary text had to follow a double standard. It was supposed first and foremost to entertain its audience (by soliciting an emotional response from the situations it portrayed), but it also had to educate them (these two elements are well summarized with the well-known Latin formula of *placere et docere*). Many believed that the new literary fictional genres that emerged in France at the time lacked, at best, any educational value (since they offered only a dull form of entertainment) and, at worst, they were a dangerous form of escapism (since they were capable of exciting the reader's emotions, but they could not provide moral edification).[138] A good novel, in other words, had to instruct its readers, either by providing them with useful knowledge or by offering morally edifying examples. Therefore, works such as heroic novels were viewed with suspicion by some, since they were often criticized for presenting improbable and fantastic situations to the detriment of instructing or edifying their readers.

By mobilizing the classical Aristotelian notions of mimesis and fictionality, early modern French authors tried, through vraisemblance, to construct a coherent aesthetic principle. This with the intent of upholding the educational value of their work. If, as they claimed, at the base of their fictional albeit verisimilar representation there is a real

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[138] Requemora-Gros, *Voguer Vers La Modernité*, 192.

referent (the *véritable* of the historians, that is an event, place, or character inspired by reality), then in reading about verisimilar facts and situations their readers would still have had the chance to educate themselves and learn about something that at its core was factual. If the facts represented through their fictional vraisemblance diverged from the contingent facts it was only so that they could better conform to a higher truth and, therefore, better instruct and edify the readers.

Nevertheless, despite regularly invoking it in defense of their works, vraisemblance remains a fluid notion. This is because the verisimilar was not a prescriptive formula; instead, it was a protean one, open to a wide array of possible uses and interpretations. First, because vraisemblance was open to the discretional use of the authors, which claimed the freedom to apply it according to their inspiration. Second, it was also fluid from a reader's perspective, in the sense that the accuracy and efficacy of vraisemblance remained deeply dependent on socially accepted cultural standards. Vraisemblance was valid only as long as the authors of fictional narratives rearranged the facts in a way that did not contradict established common knowledge and as long as, in their representations, they remained within the realm of the possible as it was accepted by their readers. For these reasons, more than an aesthetic standard, vraisemblance can tell us about the imaginary held by the French public opinion of the time, since it embodies in many ways their collective tastes and beliefs.

It is also important to remember—as Thomas DiPiero has convincingly argued—that the debate surrounding vraisemblance was not a merely literary one. It also had significant political and social repercussions. This is because, as DiPiero explains, the

debate around vraisemblance that emerged at the time was political in nature. It suffices to remember how it arrived to the forefront of the public debate after the Académie Française published in 1638 its *Sentiments de l'Académie sur le Cid*. Following the controversy on the *Cid*, the Académie Française was granted the power to decide what exactly counted as verisimilar in a work of fiction, giving it the ability to set the aesthetic standards for works of art. And because the Académie Française was so closely attached to the French crown, this transformed an aesthetic debate into an instrument for controlling a large part of the cultural production of the time, especially with regards to the production of heroic novels.[139] In other words, the French political establishment used the debate around vraisemblance to influence public opinion and advance its own political goals.

It is interesting to notice how the same notion of vraisemblance appears in Gomberville's preface to the 1637 version of *Polexandre*:

> *Les rigoureuses lois de l'ouvrage héroïque ne réduisent point les artisans à rendre raison des merveilles qu'ils inventent pour l'étonnement de leurs lecteurs, et principalement quand ils les font arriver en des temps si éloignez du leur, ou en des pays si inconnus, qu'il est impossible de les contredire. Toutefois je veux […] montrer la vérité d' une chose que je n'avais dessin que de rendre vraie-semblable.*[140]

As Gomberville himself seems to point out in his preface, real events, characters, and places are the inspiration for the one represented in his work. However, the author is also quick to mention that these references should not be considered documentary; rather,

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[139] DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths & Criminal Passions*, chap. 2.
[140] *Polexandre*, Advertissement.

they are facts modified through the aesthetic lens of vraisemblance. Notice also how Gomberville indicates that one of the main goals of his work was to entertain his readers by provoking their emotional response, their *étonnement* (a reference to the idea mentioned above that a novel should *placere*). However, Gomberville seems at the same time to mount a defense (as he says: « *je rends raison* ») against any possible accusation that his *ouvrage héroïque* is a purely imaginary invention (since « *il est impossible de les contredire* »). For this reason, Gomberville put forward the *vérité* of his work, yet he refers, of course, to the one proper to poets and fictional writers and not the *véritable* of historians. In summary, Gomberville seems to argue that it is precisely thanks to the *vraie-semblable* that the facts presented in his work, despite their fictional reinvention, should be seen as not merely a décor for the novel.

Conclusion

Barbary and corso topoi became ubiquitous and pervasive in the early modern French fictional literature. They started to appear in greater and greater numbers precisely at the moment when corso became a significant concern for French subjects, a consequence of the increased threat that corso had started to pose to the nation's political and commercial interest in the Western Mediterranean.

Barbary and corso topoi can be found across all fictional genres, old and new, from poetry to epics, from novellas to Histoires Tragiques. However, they are mainly present in two of the new experimental genres that started to develop at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the tragicomedies, and heroic novels.

Heroic novels were an experimental new genre, absorbing elements from traditional narrative models – such as the Romance tradition –, and merged them with new and emerging narrative styles – such as the documentary genres of travel and captivity narratives. Heroic novels such as Gomberville's *Polexandre* demonstrate in this way their highly intertextual nature, integrating, transforming, and adapting material from fictional and documentary genres. As a result, the Barbary and corso topoi that are present in this canon move between the factual and the imaginary.

The image of Barbary and corso that appears in French fictional early modern literary production played upon this ambivalence. The fictionality of these texts allowed them to escape the generally negative attitudes toward Barbary and corso that were prevalent in much of the rest of the early modern French culture. Authors of heroic novels such as Gomberville played on this ambivalence to sublimate French real fears and anxieties vis-à-vis Barbary corso, resolving them in an imaginary fictional dimension.

At the same time, the French 16th and 17th-centuries culture did not make a clear distinction between historical accounts and their fictional use. Thanks to the contemporary aesthetic category of "vraisemblance," French authors such as Gomberville grant themselves the ability to sublimate such distinction in their works, fusing the factual and the fictional. However, vraisemblance was more than a mere aesthetic category, since it was equally influenced by social and political considerations. As politics and literature came closely together under Richelieu's cultural policies and patronage, the fictional representation of real events we see in literary works of the time became more than mere

décor. The image of Barbary and corso that appears in heroic novels played a role in forming the early modern collective imagination concerning the Maghreb region. The discourses on Barbary that fictional works such as heroic novels helped to form influenced the cultural sphere and helped shape the collective debate, influencing French society's perceptions. This imaginary became the ground for taking real actions.

2. The French Barbary captivity narratives of the early seventeenth century

2.1 Introduction

In 1608, Henry du Lisdam published a short text titled *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille*, the first surviving example of a published North African captivity narrative written in French. The author was a minor French literary figure of the beginning of the seventeenth century, a novelist, and pamphleteer known mainly for his *dévot* production (i.e., "devotee," a term used to designate all fervent Catholic, Counter-Reformation, and anti-Protestant supporters at the time). [1] *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille*, a short account of the captivity of the Knight of Malta François de Vintimille, appears thematically close to the rest of du Lisdam's *dévot* works.

The text recounts how Vintimille joined a Spanish raiding expedition to Porto Farina (today Ghar El-Melh, near Bizerte in Tunisia) in 1606. Stopped by a storm, Vintimille's expedition is forced to turn to Hammamet and attacks the city. However, the Spanish forces lose the battle, and Vintimille, wounded, is persuaded to surrender by Murat, a French renegade from Brittany and the commander of the local militia. Enslaved and put in the city's *bagnio*, in the following days, Vintimille is first tortured and then exposed in a public procession. Vintimille is then brought to Tunis, where he becomes

[1] Henry du Lisdam, *"L'esclavage du brave chevalier François de Vintimille, des comtes de Marseille & Olieule, à presant commandeur du Planté & Cadillan: où l'on peut voir plusieurs rencontres de guerre dignes de remarque* (Claude Morillon, 1608); reprinted in Henry Du Lisdam and Réné Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608); Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, ed. Christian Zonza, Collection Mediterranea (Bouchène, 2012).

the property of the Governor Moustapha Pacha, a Sicilian renegade from Trapani. François Savary, Comte de Brèves (1560–1628) and French ambassador to Constantinople, tries to secure his release him while visiting the city in 1605 but fails due to the exorbitant sum demanded by Moustapha Pacha. Under the servitude of Moustapha Pacha, Vintimille undergoes many trials: He is put in chains, tortured, forced to work, and urged to apostatize. He is almost killed in retaliation for a raid perpetrated shortly after by the Knights of Malta, but he endures until he is sent to row on the galleys in Bizerte. When Moustapha Pacha leaves power, Vintimille is sent to Constantinople, only to end up back in Tunis.

Here, he first refuses to be freed in exchange for gun powder, a deal proposed by three Marseilles merchants that would have allowed him to pay for his ransom, fearing that it will be used in corsair activities or against Malta's subjects, but he finally accepts a loan from a Genovese renegade named Estasan, which pays for his ransom, and he eventually returns to France.

Du Lisdam presents Vintimille's captivity as a trial of honor and faith, portraying it unequivocally as the direct consequence of the Christian–Muslim confrontation in the Western Mediterranean at the time. The stoic resistance of Vintimille, backed by his strong faith, is represented as a paradigm of virtue that will eventually be rewarded by the highest powers. In du Lisdam's account, Malta becomes a «colonne de l'État ecclésiastique, île consacrée à Mars […]», and:

> *Le rendez-vous de tant de braves, qui n'ayant que l'extérieur du mondain, ont l'âme si relevée, qu'elle n'est en repos qu'alors qu'elle porte le corps aux combats contre le Turc.*[2]

Du Lisdam's work introduces to the French Kingdom the genre of the so-called "Barbary" captivity narratives, first-person accounts documenting Christian enslavement in North Africa. The Barbary captivity narratives were far from an exclusively French phenomenon; this genre had already started to appear in Spain in the sixteenth century, at the height of the Habsburg–Ottoman confrontation in the Western Mediterranean. The first surviving example is in fact thought to be the *Viaje de Turquía* by Cristóbal de Villalón of 1557.[3]

The early modern French Barbary captivity narratives were part of a much broader European trend that would have remarkable success and fortune until the end of the eighteenth century. Most recently, the literary scholar Mario Klarer has catalogued more than 100 of such texts published in the early modern European canon in almost all languages.[4]

Although the corpus of seventeenth-century French Barbary captivity narratives is relatively small—especially when compared with the much larger body of contemporary French travel literature[5]—with just about a dozen of such texts published throughout the

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[2] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 23.

[3] Ana Ma Rodríguez-Rodríguez, *Letras Liberadas: Cautiverio, Escritura y Subjetividad En El Mediterráneo de La Época Imperial Española*, Biblioteca filológica hispana; 142 (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2013, 2013).

[4] Mario Klarer, ed., *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean, 1550–1810*, Routledge Research in Early Modern History (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019, 2019), 6.

[5] According to Pierre Richelet's *Dictionnaire françois* (Geneva: Jean Herman Widerhold, 1680, II, p. 287) more than 1,300 *relations de voyages* had been printed in France at this time. Similarly, Antoine Furetière in his *Dictionnaire*

century, their impact was nevertheless significant. Their educational intent familiarized the French audience with North African culture and religion while offering them a thrill and a flair of exoticism. The French Barbary captivity narratives became therefore a powerful tool for shaping French public opinion concerning the contemporary situation in the Western Mediterranean and North Africa, and it is in part thanks to these texts that in the French kingdom the image of "Barbary" became a trope regularly associated with piracy and slavery.

By the end of the seventeenth century, this image had become so commonplace in France that Antoine Furetière, in his 1690 *Dictionnaire*, lists under the entry "Piraterie": "Les Algériens et les Barbares vivent de pirateries." Similarly, Furetière writes in the entry "Esclave": "Captif qui est réduit sous la puissance d'un maitre, soit par sa naissance, soit par fortune de guerre. Les esclaves d'Alger sont des captifs pris par des Corsaires."[6]

The emergence and growth in the number of published Barbary captivity narratives in France is a phenomenon that can be fully grasped only when viewed within the broader political and economic context of the French engagement in the Western Mediterranean at the time.[7] From the mid-sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth

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(Rotterdam: Chez Arnout et Reinier Leers, 1690, III, entry *Voyage*), indicates 1,100 for the number of *relations de voyages*.

[6] Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire*, Rotterdam, Arnout et Reinier Leers, 1690, entry *Pirate* and *Captif*, my translation.

[7] For an account of French relationships in the Mediterranean during the seventeenth century, I have considered the following sources: Gillian Lee Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); Alain Blondy, "La Course En Méditerranée," in *Les Tyrans de La Mer: Pirates, Corsaires et Flibustiers*, ed. Sophie Linon-Chipon and Sylvie Requemora-Gros (Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2002), 43–57; Alain Blondy, "The Barbary Regencies and Corsair Activity in the Mediterranean from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century: From the Community of Origin to Evolutionary Divergence," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies: History, Culture and Society in the Mediterranean World* 12, no. 2 (2002): 241–248; Salvatore

century, piracy, privateering, and slavery—what is known in short as corso[8]—grew to such an extent in the region, both in volume and in impact, that they became a central element in determining the economic, military, and cultural life of the Mediterranean world, explaining why the seventeenth century is often labeled the "age of piracy."[9] As Ferdinand Braudel masterfully describes, other than generating a permanent state of conflict inside the Mediterranean, corso also intensified the flow of persons—as well as the linguistic, cultural, and commercial exchanges—in the region.[10]

Whereas French ships had enjoyed relative safety in this region for most of the sixteenth century—thanks in part to the protection provided by the odd Franco–Ottoman alliance granted by the *capitulations* of the sixteenth century—by the beginning of the seventeenth century the situation had changed noticeably. The shifting trends in Mediterranean commerce had brought new trading opportunities for French merchants in the Mediterranean basin, especially for the Provence region, attracting also British and

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Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo: cristiani e musulmani fra guerra, schiavitù e commercio* (Milano: A. Mondadori, 1993); Salvatore Bono, *I Corsari Barbareschi* (Turin, Italy: Edizion RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1964); Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant*; Bernard Bachelot, *Louis XIV En Algérie, Gigeri, 1664* (L'Harmattan, 2011); R. Capot-Rey, "La Politique Française et Le Maghreb Méditerranéen (1643–1685)," *Revue africaine* 75 (1934): 47–61, 175–217, 426–490; Pierre Boyer, "Marseille et Alger Au XVII Siècle," *Méditerranée, mer ouverte* 1 (1998): 73–84; Paul Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette & cie, 1896); Gaston Rambert, *Histoire Du Commerce de Marseille* (Paris: Plon, 1949).

[8] French historian Michel Fontenay has proposed the use of the term corso (from the Early Modern Italian expression andar di corso) to designate this entire set of historical phenomena succinctly. See Fontenay, *La Méditerranée entre la Croix et le Croissant*, 11. Although Fontenay's use of the term corso has been questioned by other historians (including Italian historian Salvatore Bono) it is still useful for concisely labeling and encompassing the peculiar configuration of piracy, privateering, captivity, and slavery that existed in the Western Mediterranean between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century, and it is in this sense that it will be employed here.

[9] Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 78.

[10] Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, vol. 1, 2 vols. (London: Collins, 1972).

Dutch merchants. However, they had also triggered a parallel rise in the linked phenomena of piracy and privateering—their specular counterparts.

The intense conflict that broke out between the French kingdom and Algiers during the 1620s, which lasted on and off until the 1680s, generated a spike in the numbers of French-held captives in the Maghreb region and inevitably brought greater visibility to the phenomenon of Mediterranean slavery in France. It is estimated that in the decade between 1660 and 1670, at the time when Louis XIV was transforming Marseilles into France's Mediterranean bastion, there were about 20,000 to 40,000 Christian slaves in the various cities of North Africa, and about 2,000 of them were French.[11] Slaves made up a quarter of the population of Algiers in the seventeenth century and around 10 to 20 percent of the population of Tunis and Tripoli.[12] Although the majority of them came from the lands of the Hapsburg empire (particularly from Spain and Italy), as well as from Sub-Saharan Africa, captives also arrived there from all around the world; for example, there are mentions of Icelandic and Native American slaves.[13]

The French confrontation with the so-called Barbary states lasted until the 1690s, when an Algerian embassy was finally received in Versailles, followed by a peace treaty with Tripoli signed in 1693.[14] These two episodes inaugurated a time of relative peace between France and the North African regencies that would last for the next 20 years.

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[11] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, Appendix 1.
[12] Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 103.
[13] Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*.
[14] Ibid., 33.

Corso has left a profound cultural imprint in many Mediterranean cultures. Despite the complex and nuanced realities of early modern Mediterranean political, social, and commercial life, in the European imagination of the time, the North African coasts gradually became associated with piracy and slavery, giving birth to the myth of the so-called "Barbary States" (a term which approximately designated the actual Maghreb region, with particular reference to the cities of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, as well as Sale in Morocco). This myth was founded on Christian Europe's perception of a threat coming from the southern shores of the Mediterranean, the home of dangerous Muslim corsairs who raided and enslaved Christian subjects. In many European cultures, this lasting image of a Maghreb region hostile to Europe and its civilization eventually coalesced into the myth of the Barbary pirate and fueled the formation of a mental map of a Mediterranean sharply divided between civilization and barbarism, good and evil, and—even more significantly—between Christians and Muslims. According to historian Jean Delumeau, the Barbary myth became one of Europe's great fears in the pre-modern world;[15] this fear echoed throughout history, and many Western cultural attitudes toward North Africa bear a mark of its legacy still today.[16] The cultural memory of the Barbary myth also had important political consequences. An important example is its reactivation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to justify the European colonization of North Africa.[17]

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[15] Delumeau, *La Peur En Occident, XIVe-XVIIIe Siècles*, 262–272.
[16] Said, *Orientalism*, 287.
[17] See Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800-1820* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005).

Although all sides of the Mediterranean shores were deeply involved in corso, its image in France's early modern culture became almost exclusively associated with the North African region, known at the time as Barbary, transforming the toponym into one of the most pervasive tropes of the Eurocentric imagination. The widespread presence of the early modern imagery associated with Barbary is well attested across all French media of the time. [18] Many histories and geographies of humanistic tradition were printed and re-printed in France on this subject between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Among the most popular and widely circulating examples were the translations of Leo Africanus' *Description of Africa* of 1550 and Antonio de Sosa's *Topography of Algiers* of 1612, both of which contained extensive and detailed descriptions of both the history and the topography of North Africa. [19]

Representations of Barbary and corso were also often featured in articles that appeared in the nascent news press, including in the *Gazette de France* and the *Mercure Galant*,[20] as well as in the so-called "littérature de colportage," the anonymous and easily accessible pamphlets that circulated widely in the French kingdom. [21] Many of these pamphlets were products of two of the major Catholic redemptive orders that were active in the French kingdom: the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians. Since the Middle Ages,

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[18] Guy Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, Bibliographies et Catalogues 2 (Alger: S.N.E.D., 1976); Guy Turbet-Delof, *La presse périodique française et l'Afrique barbaresque au 17e siècle (1611–1715).* (Droz, 1973). Guy Turbet-Delof's outstanding bibliographical research has uncovered more than 300 publications concerning the Maghreb region written in French between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as hundreds of references in the press of the time.

[19] See Oumelbanine Zhiri, *L'Afrique Au Miroir de l'Europe : Fortunes de Jean Léon l'Africain à La Renaissance* (Genève: Droz, 1991); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

[20] Turbet-Delof, *La presse périodique française et l'Afrique barbaresque au 17e siècle (1611-1715).*

[21] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532-1715*.

both orders had as their primary mission the manumission of Christian slaves in Muslim lands. Driven in part by the surge of corso and in part by the religious enthusiasm that spread across France in the wake of the Counter-Reformation, both the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians became particularly active during the first half of the seventeenth century and engaged in large-scale redemption missions in North Africa, as well as in propaganda campaigns for the promotion of their own order's image and the soliciting of donations. These propaganda and fundraising efforts included preaching and the organization of elaborate and choreographed public processions of freed slaves throughout the French kingdom. [22] The two orders also started publishing lengthy accounts of their missionary efforts in North Africa to free Christian slaves, known as "redemption" accounts or redemptive narratives.[23] Thanks to these propaganda efforts, the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians brought the Mediterranean situation closer and closer to the everyday life of many communities in France and Europe, and they were in this sense particularly instrumental in spreading a general image of Barbary in public opinion.[24]

In the preface of a captivity narrative published in 1690 titled *L'esclave religieux et ses aventures*[25] (an account of the captivity in Tripoli from 1660 to 1668 of a Frenchman named Antoine Quartier) the author extols, for instance:

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[22] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 29.
[23] Jean-Claude Laborie, "Les Récits de Rédemption: Identité En Question Dans Les Documents Des Trinitaires," in *Légendes Barbaresques: Le Récit de Captivité : Codes, Stratégies, Détournements, XVIe-XVIIe Siècles*, ed. Anne Duprat (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2016), 23–34.
[24] see Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, chap. 3.
[25] *L'Esclave religieux et ses avantures* was published anonymously in Paris by Daniel Hortemels in 1690. Guy Turbet-Delof attributed the text to Antoine Quartier (1632? to 1702), a Frenchmen from Chablis who was held captive in Tripoli for eight years, from 1660 to 1668. Quartier's story starts in July 1660, when he boards a Dutch cruiser in

> *Toute l'Europe Chrétienne est instruite de ce qui se passe dans la Turquie, dans les Royaumes de Tripoli, de Tunis, d'Alger, de Maroc & de Fez, sur les côtes de la Méditerranée, et particulièrement la France en a su le détail des RR. PP. de la Mercy, qui ont fait plusieurs rédemptions célèbres depuis peu d'années, de sorte qu'on peut dire qu'elle entend la voix et les gémissements de ces infortunés.*[26]

Although Quartier's statement was certainly partisan (the author decided to become a Mercedarian father after his return to France from his years in captivity), it is not an overstatement, especially considering the diffusion that the redemptive texts enjoyed.[27]

At the same time, the representation of Barbary and corso created a series of tropes that frequently appeared throughout the European fictional works of the fifteenth century. Themes related to c*orso* had already been featured in Boccaccio's novellas and in several plays of the Commedia dell'Arte.[28] The Spanish Barbary literary tradition is even more substantial, and many corso related themes can be found in almost all genres from the beginning of the sixteenth century onward. These texts include many *romances nuevos* centered on recounting the suffering of Christian slaves and captives in North Africa, often featured in the picaresque genre and the nascent novel, appearing, for example, in many of Cervantes' works (Cervantes was himself a captive in Algiers).[29]

Venice to visit Constantinople. His ship is attacked by four North African corsairs captained by European renegades. He is sold at the local slave market, and as a slave, he serves as a construction worker in the countryside and in the city of Tripoli in the construction of a *bagnio*. He contracts the plague and almost dies, but he recovers with the help of a fellow French captive and surgeon. He is eventually rescued by an Italian captain and brought back to France, where he enters the Mercedarian order.

[26] Antoine Quartier, *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* (A Paris, chez Daniel Hortemels, ruë S. Jacques, au Mécénas. M. DC. XC., 1690), accessed November 9, 2016, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k104958t.

[27] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532-1715*, Apendix IX, 283; Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 55–56.

[28] Kinoshita, "Ports of Call."

[29] Mas, *Les Turcs Dans La Littérature Espagnole Du Siècle d'or, Recherches Sur l'évolution d'un Thème Littéraire.*; Barbara Fuchs, *Passing for Spain : Cervantes and the Fictions of Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

Although the Barbary themes had lost much of their popularity in Spain by the end of the sixteenth century (in parallel with the winding down of the Ottoman–Hapsburg confrontation that had dominated the century),[30] they reached their apex in France, appearing often in literary works throughout the entire seventeenth century, especially in the Baroque *roman héroïques* and on the stage in many Baroque *tragi-comédies*.

Amidst the vast early modern French cultural production that pertains to Barbary, one particular group of texts stands out: the Barbary captivity narratives. The body of published seventeenth-century French Barbary captivity narratives is far from homogenous, presenting itself as a collection of disparate texts. It includes everything from short and plain reports lacking any literary pretension (as in *Histoire d'un esclave* of 1679 by Gallonyé, who was an illiterate sailor recounting his story under the guidance of the Trinitarian fathers who ransomed him), to elaborate and rhetorically complex texts (as those of Henry du Lisdam, who was already an established novelist before writing his version of the captivity of the Knight of Malta de Vintimille in *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille*, 1608), to pure fictional inventions full of exotic stereotypes (as in *L'heureux esclave* of 1674 by Pierre Martin de la Martinière, which appears to be a wholly fabricated account of an imaginary Barbary captivity). This diversity reflects the peculiar, idiosyncratic nature of the Barbary captivity narratives, each the testimony of a captivity experience that follows its narrative purpose. At the same time, the variety in the corpus of published French Barbary captivity narratives also testifies to their rapid

[30] Rodríguez-Rodríguez, *Letras Liberadas*, 39–41.

evolution throughout the seventeenth century as they found their form and adapted to the changing literary tastes and new political contexts in which they were produced.

This diversity poses from the outset the problem of whether the French Barbary captivity narratives can even be considered a distinct genre in their own right, or whether they share enough commonalities to allow for a collective analysis of this corpus. In examining the contemporary body of English captivity narratives, Linda Colley has recently suggested that we should consider these early modern texts "a mode of writing rather than a genre,"[31] in the sense that their similarities lie more within the unity of the kind of experiences they convey rather than within their form.

The diversity of early modern French Barbary captivity narratives appears to validate Colley's insight because it would be difficult to define this corpus as a genre in its own right. However, a series of particular formal, aesthetic, stylistic, and thematic features tends to frequently reappear throughout almost all early modern French Barbary captivity narratives and, by delimiting the variability of the corpus, allow at least a comparative analysis.

The first part of this chapter will focus on a morphological analysis of the corpus of early modern French Barbary captivity narratives. This study will help contextualize these works in the broader French literary panorama of the time while highlighting the similarities that these texts share with other French fictional productions. From their first appearance, the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives were experimental and

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[31] Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850*, 27.

intertextual in nature. They were experimental in that they shared many structural similarities with contemporary emerging literary genres, such as travel literature and the novel. They were intertextual in that they borrowed from a wide range of contemporary literary genres, including from the narrative structure of the Baroque *romans héroïques* and the *tragi-comédies*.

2.2 The influence of travel literature

All published French Barbary captivity narratives share a set of distinctive morphological features with the rising contemporary genre of early modern travel literature. In a way, all Barbary narratives can be said to have absorbed much of the early modern travelogue form and style. The captivity narratives are in fact some version of a description of a journey (although an unwilling or forced one), an account of an exotic place and culture, a report of a confrontation or negotiation with an alterity (in this case the encounter with North African society and the Muslim world), and a return home that often poses challenges of reintegration.

Morphologically, the Barbary captivity narratives are structured very similarly to the contemporary travelogues in that they use the same first-person narratives and are generally organized in the same linear, chronological order. Moreover, the captivity narratives incorporated, at least to some degree, an autobiographical and documentary mode of writing, positing themselves as accounts of lived experiences. Almost every example of this corpus claims to be the report of actual events and the testimony of an eye-witness author and narrator, all major hallmarks of the emerging travel literature

genre.[32] Consequently, the captivity narratives based much of their ethos on the same "autopic" principle: the idea of seeing for oneself, or what Andrea Frisch has called "a monologic discourse of first-person experiential knowledge."[33]

Even when these texts describe events that are manifestly not based on facts, the way in which they present them shows at least a respect for plausibility, avoiding the improbable or impossible elements that still existed in the accounts of travel up to the Renaissance. The French scholar Jacques Chupeau explains that at the base of this aesthetic posture that the Barbary captivity narratives share with the travelogues lies an underlining profession and affirmation of amateurism; the writer and narrator claims to be not an author but a mere witness, an ordinary individual offering his testimony. Chupeau effectively summarized this attitude with the formula "faire voir, faire vivre, faire vrai" (make see, make live, make real).[34] Consequently, the text's style tends to reflect a direct and unassuming tone, avoiding as much as possible rhetorical elaborations. It is not surprising to note that (with few exceptions, such as in the case of Cervantes) none of the authors of early modern European captivity narratives were or became established writers.

This attempt to create a naïve style is also a gesture toward the readers (what Michael Harrigan calls the worldly (*mondain*) public to distinguish them from the erudite readers of the humanistic tradition),[35] a gesture toward their *honnêtes hommes* audience

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[32] Wolfzettel, *Le discours du voyageur*.
[33] Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Distributed by University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 12.
[34] Chupeau, "Les Récits de Voyage Aux Lisières Du Roman."
[35] Harrigan, *Veiled Encounters*, 13.

of the seventeenth century that served to facilitate their identification with the author's experience and his story in search of a more effective cathartic response.

One of the most representative examples of the overlapping stylistic and formal background shared among the captivity narratives and the contemporary travel literature can be considered the *Relation de la captivité, et de la liberté du sieur Emanuel de Aranda mené esclave à Alger en l'an 1640 et mis en liberté l'an 1642*.[36] As the title states, this text is the work of Emanuel d'Aranda, a Flanders merchant of Iberian origin who was held captive for a year and a half in Algiers during the early 1640s. Although a Dutch native speaker, d'Aranda first published the account of his ordeal in French with the Brussels printer Jean Mommart in 1656 (about two decades after his enslavement).

From its first edition, the *Relation de la captivité* enjoyed an ample editorial fortune both in France and across Europe, attested by its numerous reprints and translations (including in Dutch, English, Latin, and Spanish), and each subsequent edition added new original material to the text.[37] The editorial success of the *Relation de la captivité* is also confirmed by the fact that the book remained in print for almost three decades.[38]

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[36] Emanuel d'Aranda, *Relation de la captivité, et liberté du sieur Emanuel de Aranda, mené esclave à Alger en l'an 1640 et mis en liberté l'an 1642* (Brussels: Jean Mommart, 1656).

[37] Gillian Weiss, "Relation de La Captivité, et Liberté Du Sieur Emanuel de Aranda," *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500 - 1900* (n.d.).

[38] D'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité* was published first in French in Brussels (1656), then in Paris (1657), followed by an augmented edition in La Haye (1662). A new revised edition was published in Paris in 1665, and this version was also translated into Dutch and English (1666). A new French edition appeared in Leyde in 1671, and it included more anecdotes not even related to Algiers. The text was published again in 1683 in Dutch in Bruges (d'Aranda's native city), with new additions of episodes from his young life and his life back in Europe.

In the first section of the *Relation de la captivité*, d'Aranda gives a detailed autobiographical and chronological account of his captivity experience from the moment of his capture on the sea to the description of his enslavement in Algiers, and it ends with a description of the protracted negotiations for his liberation and his return to Europe. D'Aranda was captured by Algerian corsairs aboard an English merchant vessel on his way to Spain in 1640. In Algiers, he was brought at the slave market by the Venetian renegade Ali Pegelin (aka Piccinino), an eminent shipowner and a major slaveholder in Algiers at the time. D'Aranda spent most of his captivity in Ali Pegelin's *bagnio* and worked many jobs for his master, including in construction, as a farm laborer, and as a household helper. Thanks to the intervention of his family back in Bruges, who organized an exchange of captives with a group of Algerian galley slaves who were held in Flanders, d'Aranda eventually managed to regain his freedom after more than a year and a half in captivity and was finally able to return home via Tetuan in Morocco.

Significantly, the very first opening line of d'Aranda's text states:

> *Ami lecteur, je vous présente ici une œuvre qui ne mérite pas le nom d'histoire, ni de roman, mais seulement de simple, naïve, nue et véritable narration ou récit des étranges et divers événements et rencontres, bonheurs et malheurs qui me sont arrivés au temps de mon voyage [...].*[39]

In an effort to define the scope of his text, d'Aranda interestingly pitches his «nue et véritable narration» in direct contrast to both the contemporary historical and novelistic tradition, meaning that he will not offer in his text a chronicle or a fiction, but only his

[39] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 23.

particular and factual experience. It is also interesting that d'Aranda emphasizes the realistic side of his account by using a long string of adjectives («simple, naïve, nue et veritable») in an enumeration that seems to hide a fear of not being believed by one's readers.

A very similar kind of assertion of veracity appears in most of the Barbary captivity corpus, such as in the captivity narrative titled *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* published in 1690 by Antoine Quartier, in which the author declares: «Je n'ay rien ajouté du mien, et j'ay omis express bien des choses qui auraient pu embellir mon ouvrage.»[40] Even in the texts that were not written by the captive himself but by another person, we have similar claims, such as in the case of the *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille* (written by Henry Du Lisdam and based on the testimony of the knight of Malta Vintimille):

> *Et parce que j'avais tant ouï parler de son voyage en la Barbarie, et comme il avait été longtemps prisonnier, la curiosité voulut que je le susse de sa bouche […]. Pour contenter mes désirs, il me montra un discours, écrit de sa main, qu'il avait fait, tant pour relever son souvenir, que pour faire plaisir à ses amis, et ce discours était comme le corps de l'histoire.*[41]

Such rhetorical and aesthetic appeal to factuality and plausibility can be interpreted as a way for the authors to validate their testimony, posing these texts as a sort of transcript of unfiltered events. This plea in favor of an adherence to actual events

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[40] Quartier, *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures*.
[41] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 26.

serves in turn to provide a rhetorical proof of the unfiltered nature of the testimony, an appeal to the narrative's immediacy.

2.3 The problem of reliability

Historians studying the early modern Mediterranean and the North African region have often used early modern Barbary captivity narratives as a source of documentation. Among the many examples, Robert Davis has recently used many of these texts to acquire data on the early modern slave population of places such as Algiers and Tunis.[42] Similarly, Salvatore Bono has used *L'Esclave Religieux* by Antoine Quartier to investigate the situation of early modern Tripoli.[43] However, despite the plea that most of the authors of these texts made to adhere to the factual, taking the facts and events reported in the Barbary captivity accounts at their face value comes with the risk of overlooking their idiosyncratic nature.

The early modern Barbary captivity narratives, like the early modern travel book, are at their core literary works. It is needless to say that they are and remain an act of writing in which the events narrated – even when they remain as close as possible to the factual – were nevertheless filtered by the consciousness, worldview, beliefs, and prejudices of their author. In other words, the Barbary captivity narratives, like the travel

[42] Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*.
[43] Ibid.; Salvatore Bono, "L'Escalve Religieux Di Antoine Quartier (Tripoli, 1660-1668), Come Fonte Storica," *Mediterranea*, no. 45 (2019): 155–166.

literature they often mimic, are what Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan call 'fictions of factual representation.'[44]

For this reason, even in the case of those texts that openly claim to be no more than the account of lived events, and even when their plot remains close to the best of likelihood and plausibility, the Barbary captivity narratives end up suffering from the same "epistemological anxiety" – to use Carl Thompson's expression – that we find in the early modern travel literature genre.[45] That is to say that their frequent affirmation of truthfulness seems to be there precisely to compensate for the fact that it is complicated, if not utterly impossible, for their reader to distinguish if the authors are reporting facts or fiction.

Several literary scholars, including more recently Daniel J. Vitkus and Sylvie Requemora-Gros, have already warned us about the negligence of considering the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives as straightforward chronicles and ignoring their literary nature.[46] The autobiographical and often self-conscious nature of these texts entails that they are inevitably bound to their author's perspective and set of beliefs, with the result that it is often impossible to separate their literary dimension from the set of historical events recounted.

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[44] Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 10.
[45] Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 1 edition. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 88.
[46] See in particular Daniel J. Vitkus, "Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England: Truth Claims and the (Re)Construction of Authority," *La guerre de course en récits (XVIe–XVIIIes)*, Terrains, corpus, séries, dossier en ligne du Projet CORSO (November 2010), accessed October 23, 2017, http://www.oroc-crlc.parissorbonne.fr/index.php/visiteur/Projet-CORSO/Ressources/La-guerre-de-course-en-recits; Sylvie Requemora-Gros, "Le Voyageur Mystificateur Ou Les Ruses de l'écriture Viatique Dans La Seconde Moitié Du XVIIe Siècle: Le Cas de l'Odyssée de René Chastelet Des Boys," in *Ecriture de La Ruse*, ed. Elzbieta Grodek (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 163–186.

The problem does not concern solely the purely fictional examples, but more in general the entire Barbary captivity production. For example, although most of the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives describe events and circumstances that are in general plausible, we can notice in several instances distinct fictional elements appearing in otherwise seemingly “realist” accounts. If we look at Du Lisdam’s text, for instance, his narration completely departs in a few passages from any plausibility to introduce a series of imaginary, if not entirely allegorical elements charged with a clear symbolic value. An example is a passage in which, while captive in Hammamet, Ventimille is brought by his guards to a local marabout. The marabout, enraged at the view of a knight of Malta, offers to buy him from the soldiers so that he can immediately dispose of his life. However, suddenly two mysterious knights providentially appear from nowhere along the road and magically strike unconscious the two guards and the marabout. Before eventually disappearing, the two knights address Ventimille in Italian, declaring themselves Catholic and prophesizing to Ventimille that his perseverance in his Catholic faith will set him free:

> *Lors avec une voix animée d'une affection chrétienne, parlant en langage italien, il lui dit : « Chevalier, ta considération te doit apprendre que tu es le plus fortuné homme du monde, ayant reçu de la main de Dieu l'honneur d'une telle faveur, que ces barbares en te prenant, ont eu la patience de laisser ton âme avec ton corps, et maintenant qu'ils te voulaient vendre à ce perfi de marabout, qui t'eût mis en mille pièces, et exercé sur toi tout ce que les mégères auraient pu inventer dans son imagination : tu as vu le bonheur qui nous a amené ici, comme une volonté, qui commande à toutes choses, nous a fait arriver sur l'heure que la mort s'était armée pour te venir attaquer. Ainsi Dieu montre son amour au besoin, ainsi sa clémence coupe les pieds des rigueurs qui s'attaquent à ses amis, ainsi doivent reconnaître les braves que Dieu est toujours auprès de leurs désirs. Ne sont-ce pas des marques admirables de l'amour que Dieu te porte ? Si sa bienveillance reluit dans les dangers qui se sont élevés contre toi, c'est pour établir ton*

assurance en sa douceur, et arracher ton coeur de la terre, pour le loger au ciel ? [...][47]

How do we explain such an incongruency and a clear departure from any plausibility in the middle of du Lisdam's account?

To start with, we have to recognize that it would be anachronistic to attempt to impose our modern conception of factuality on such early modern texts. It is useful to remember that this mix of realism and literariness was not contrary to the contemporary French aesthetic principles of the time, especially if we consider them through the contemporary category of *vraisemblance* (verisimilitude). Verisimilitude was an early modern epistemological and aesthetic principle that had been adapted from the Italian sixteenth-century theories of fictionality. Using these models, the historians and literary critics of the early French seventeenth century distinguished between two kinds of *vrai* (true): a *vrai historique* (historical truth, or what we could call factual) and a *vrai general* (general truth, especially with a moral connotation, that is true in that it conforms to ethical values). Whereas the former was considered unreliable (because it is subject to human laws and is therefore by nature contingent and imperfect), the latter was an ideal of virtue or moral perfection (an idea especially tied to religious worldviews). The category of *vraisemblable* allowed therefore the writers of the time the freedom to "correct" in their works any *vrai historique* (any historical truth or fact), in order to bring it closer to the morally superior model of *vrai general* — even if this implied interpreting

[47] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 37.

or altering the facts narrated —with the intent of assuring a morally edifying example for the readers.[48]

From this perspective, the unlikely episodes narrated by Du Lisdam no longer seem misplaced. His contemporary audience would have probably understood them as edifying examples, more worthy of note in the retelling of the story than the simple truth alone. If this is the case, the use of vraisemblance in the captivity narratives was seldom gratuitous; instead, it served as an edifying principle, another element in service of the Counter-Reformation pedagogical tendency that is clearly at work in the rest of du Lisdam's text.

The principle of verisimilitude cannot explain however the many instances in which, especially toward the end of the seventeenth century, the fictional dimension takes front stage in a Barbary captivity narrative and, although the text still claims to be the report of factual elements, the lines between fact and fiction become increasingly blurred if not wholly reversed.

One such example is *L'Heureux esclave ou Relation des aventures du sieur de La Martinière*. This text is a captivity narrative published in Paris by Olivier de Varennes in 1674. The text narrates the complex vicissitudes and whereabouts of the narrator, the self-proclaimed *sieur de La Martinière* mentioned in the title, who was supposedly taken captive as a young orphan and held as a slave for five years in several cities of the

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[48] Aron Kibèdi Varga, "La Vraisemblance - Problèmes de Terminologie, Problèmes de Poetique," in *Critique et Création Littéraires En France Au XVIIe Siècle*, ed. Marc Fumaroli, vol. 557, Colloques internationaux du CNRS, 1977, 325–332.

Barbary Coast. This text has long been ascribed to Pierre-Martin La Martinière, a French physician and surgeon (1634-76?), author of several medical treatises on blood circulation.[49]

However, in reading the text, it is clear that much of its content is a work of fiction. Although *L'Heureux esclave* tries its best to adroitly maintain a sense of realism, especially through a skillful mix of fictitious elements with a whole range of plausible and genuine information, many of the episodes it recounts appear at least largely misrepresented, if not wholly fabricated. For instance, one entire chapter of the *Heureux esclave* is devoted to the description of an imaginary and mythological bestiary of African reptiles, such as Basilisks and Hydras.[50] In another episode of the book, the narrator describes how, when captive in Algiers, the author served a Jewish alchemist. While trying unsuccessfully to transmute lead into gold, his master was directing a lucrative side-business counterfeiting and selling so-called "Egyptian" mummies, made in reality from chopped and dried slaves' corpses parts. La Martinière recounts how his alchemist master then sold these artifacts to the local European merchants so that they could sell them in Europe, where they were highly sought for their supposed prodigious medical qualities.

Such unlikely episodes populate the entirety of la Martinière's text. Guy Turbet-Delof, was the first to suggest the fictional nature of this account, noticing that *L'Heureux*

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[49] For a complete biography of the real French surgeon Pierre-Martin de la Martinière (1634-76?) see Karamanou, Maria; Androutsos, Georges (2012). "*La syphilis dans l'œuvre du médecin et voyageur Pierre-Martin de La Martinière (1634-1676?)*" Histoire des Sciences médicales. 46: 303

[50] This kind of bestiary was not uncommon in the early modern western canon, and L'Heureux esclave follows here a long lineage of Western stereotypes on North Africa. See Zhiri, *L'Afrique Au Miroir de l'Europe*.

esclave bluntly plagiarized historical and geographical information from several contemporary sources on North Africa, including the captivity narrative of Emanuel d' Aranda, the writing of Friar Dan, and the accounts of Vincent Le Blanc, a French explorer in order to offer the appearance of truthfulness.[51]

2.4 Crise de la fiction

Texts such as *L'Heureux esclave* prompt us to pose the problem of the reliability and alleged realism of the Barbary captivity accounts. They also raise the question regarding how these texts were received and perceived by their contemporary readership. In other words, why and how did French readers of the time read a text such as la Martinière's *L'Heureux esclave*, and in which way did the text shaped their perception of the Western Mediterranean corso and North Africa?

Sylvie Requemora-Gros has recently argued that the early modern French captivity narratives employed a series of narrative strategies in order to be perceived as substantially authentic with their French audiences (although it is clear to us that in many cases, they were a work of fiction). They did so by borrowing the first-person narrative form of the travelogue and its focus on testimony while also using a series of meta-textual references to places and events to anchor their plot to a precise context, in order to increase their "effect of reality" – to paraphrase Roland Barthes famous definition. Requemora-Gros claims that in this way that texts such as *L'Heureux esclave* were able to

[51] Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')*, 253 note 15.

convince their audience of their authenticity by appealing to the reading expectations they had already developed within the genre of travel literature.[52]

The narrative form of *L'Heureux esclave* closely mimics the travelogue form, giving the impression to its reader that this text is an informative and instructive report, and therefore, much in line with the principle of *docere* that had been one of the major hallmarks of the travel literature genre since its origin with the erudite texts of the Renaissance. However, the episodes narrated in the text signal an attempt to satisfy the reader's curiosity and his desire to linger in a fantasized exotic alterity, injecting a second critical element borrowed from the early modern travelogues, that is to satisfy the readers' curiosity, the *placere*.

The French travelogues of the seventeenth century had already tried to balance these two tendencies by aiming at educating their readers while also entertaining them. In his treaty *De l'Utilité des Voyages* of 1686, Charles César Baudelot de Dairval affirms that the travelogue must join "*l'utile*" and "*l'agréable*" (the useful and the pleasant), explaining that the two must go hand in hand since erudition (*étude*) is a form of entertainment (*divertissement*).[53]

An almost identical plea for including an element of entertainment is manifest in many Barbary captivity narratives texts. Gallonyé writes for instance in his preface to his *Histoire d'une Esclave* of 1676:

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[52] Requemora-Gros, "Le Voyageur Mystificateur Ou Les Ruses de l'écriture Viatique Dans La Seconde Moitié Du XVIIe Siècle: Le Cas de l'Odyssée de René Chastelet Des Boys."
[53] Charles César Baudelot de Dairval, *De l'Utilité des Voyages* (Paris: Pierre Auboüin & Pierre Emery, 1686), I, Preface.

Il y aurait sans doute beaucoup de gens assez peu charitables pour trouver mauvais que je donnasse au public une histoire nue et simple des peines et des misères que j'ai souffert pendant mon esclavage ; ce qui m'oblige d'y rapporter plusieurs choses fort remarquables et extraordinaires pour satisfaire leur curiosité.[54]

Similarly, Antoine Quartier, referring to the episodes he recounts in his text, writes in the preface of his *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* of 1690 :

Le Lecteur ne doit point s'étonner s'il en trouve qui approchent du Roman; le pais des corsaires est le théâtre de toutes sortes d'évènements et de nouveautés […][55]

How do we explain this plea for including a component of entertainment in texts which at the base had to narrate a story of suffering and struggle?

It is essential to keep in mind that the relationship between the fictional and factual changed rapidly in the narrative production of the seventeenth century in French culture. According to literary critic Jacques Chupeau, it is precisely around the mid-century that we witness what he calls a « crise de la fiction» in France.[56] Following Marc Fumaroli, Chupeau designates with this formula the sharp decline in public interest for many old fictional narrative forms inspired by old literary models such as the epic genre (especially in its incarnation in the long and intricated Baroque novels known as *Romans Héroïques*), and the parallel rise in public interest for new narrative forms based primarily on a new principle of factuality – or at least an impression of realism –, such as the memoir, the historical novel, and the epistolary form. According to Chupeau's

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[54] Jean Gallonyé, *Histoire d'une Esclave Qui a Été Quatre Années Dans Les Prisons de Sallé En Afrique: Avec Un Abbregé de La Vie Du Roy Taffilette* (Lyon: Rolin Glaize, 1679), 6.
[55] Quartier, *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures*, Avertissement VIII.
[56] Chupeau, "Les Récits de Voyage Aux Lisières Du Roman"; Marc Fumaroli, "Les Mémoires au carrefour des genres en prose," in *La diplomatie de l'esprit de Montaigne à La Fontaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 209–239.

explanation, a new generation of readers emerged in France during the second half of the seventeenth century, which started to demand more simplicity and a connection to their context to the narratives they were reading, while also expecting them to remain enjoyable and entertaining.[57]

The result is that, by the mid-seventeenth century, the old fictional literary models start to move toward non-fictional genres, novels stars to resemble descriptive genres such as the travelogue, and vice-versa the travelogues start to resemble literary genres such as the novel.

The literary critic Percy Adams in his *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* also notes a similar tendency. According to Adams it is at this time that fictional and non-fictional genres started to profoundly influence each other, to the point that the lines separating the emerging novel and early modern travel literature at the time were extremely thin.[58] This proximity between the novel and verisimilar genres such as the travel narratives is due also to the fact that neither the novel nor the travelogue had a recognized status amidst the literary panorama of the time, and were instead extremely experimental and open in their form, displaying a broad thematic and stylistic variability. Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, comment for example on how the early modern travelogue could absorb a wide variety of disparate influences, 'from picaresque adventure to philosophical treatise, political commentary, ecological parable, and spiritual quest,' while simultaneously 'borrow[ing] freely from history, geography,

[57] Harrigan, *Veiled Encounters*; Wolfzettel, *Le discours du voyageur*.
[58] Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*.

anthropology, and social science.' The result, they suggest, is a 'hybrid genre that straddles categories and disciplines.'[59] Up until the eighteenth century, when travel literature assumes more and more its modern proto-ethnographic form, these texts were still in large part a genre in becoming, and the borders that separated them from other genres extremely porous and fluid.

Percy Adams warns us also about the difficulty to classify texts which are manifestly fictional at their core, while still pretending to be realist writing:

> *Closest of course to the novel is the story put together by a real traveler, or by a fireside traveler, who employs accounts already published and creates a narrative partly or wholly fake but at the same time so realistic, so much like other books, that he is able to deceive readers for a few years, perhaps for a century, perhaps forever.60*

This seems to be the case for *L'Heureux esclave*, a combination of reporting and fabrication that inverts the balance between novel and report. Yet, although texts such as *L'Heureux esclave* represent an extreme example by pushing the lines between report and fictionality to their limit, similar dynamics are at work in much of the rest of the Barbary captivity narratives of the time, making it even more complicated to distinguish what pertains to the literary nature of a work versus its value as a testimony. A clear example of this issue is *L'Odyssée ou diversité d'aventures, rencontres et voyages en Europe, Asie et Afrique, Par le sieur Du Chastelet Des Boys*, a travel and captivity narrative published in La Flèche by Gervais Laboé in1665.[61] The author of the text, as the title indicates, is

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[59] Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*, 8–9.
[60] Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, 73.
[61] Chastelet des Boys, *L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique*.

René du Chastelet des Boys (1619-?), a French nobleman from La Flèche who was held captive in Algiers from 1641 to 1643.[62]

Du Chastelet remained captive in Algiers for over two years, during which time he was in the possession of four successive masters. Soon after his arrival in the city, he was first purchased at the *badestan* (the local slave market) by Khodja Ali (a.k.a Oge Ali, meaning "Ali the Scrivener," because he was the secretary of the Divan). For Khodja Ali, du Chastelet served first as a water carrier and then as a farm laborer. Incapable of bearing either of the duties, he was sent to Khodja Ali's black harem with the task of making his master's black slaves pregnant, so that they would give him Mulattos he could sell in Constantinople and Alexandria. In order to get away from his duties and from his master, du Chastelet feigned an illness, which convinced Khodja Ali to get rid of him. Du Chastelet went back to the slave market, where he was bought by the family of the widow of a Flemish renegade named Fatima. For his second master, du Chastelet served as a childcare worker and household helper, commenting that it was an easy job for him and that he had a good relationship with his new master. Nevertheless, soon after, Fatima's family convinced her that du Chastelet was not a productive slave, and he was sold for the third time at the slave market.

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[62] Besides what du Chastelet report in his text, few information exist on his life, except for a reference to his name which appears on a list of French redemptive captives that the Trinitarian father Lucien Hérault brought back from Algiers to Marseille in 1643, which by itself however strongly corroborate the author's account. From his writings, we learn that du Chastelet had an adventurous and dissolute life during his youth: he studied law first in Paris and then in Orleans, where he frequented a libertine and neo-stoic circle known as the "sectaires de Pétrone". His indigent condition forced him to enlist in the French army and he ended up fighting at the siege of Arras (1640). Discharged, he returned to his native La Flèche, but soon got into troubles by running a local young noble lady's reputation. At this point, his father ordered Du Chastelet to leave once and for all his native La Flèche and, seeking fortune, he decided to travel to Portugal. However, on his way there his ship was captured by the Algerian corsair under the command of captain Braham-Effendi not far from Lisbon, and du Chastelet ended up enslaved in Algiers.

This time du Chastelet was purchased by a Turkish corporal of the local Janissary militia (an *odobashi*), named Beran. Du Chastelet followed his new master in several military expeditions, both on sea – as far afield as the Azores and the Cape Verde islands – and on land – up to the inland region of the Atlas Mountains. Du Chastelet developed a good relationship with his master Beran, and after several months of good service, he was able to convince him to sell him to a local slave trader, Car-Ibrahim (Ibrahim the black), with the hope that he could in this way find an easier way to arrange his ransoming. Although du Chastelet passed into Car-Ibrahim's possession, he was not able to come up with his ransom, and his plan failed. Fortunately for the author, a Trinitarian redemptive mission arrived shortly after in Algiers, and du Chastelet was freed by the French trinitarian father Lucien Hérault, who brought him back to Marseille together with several other French slaves.

L'Odyssée was initially supposed to include four books, of which however only the first two were published. The first book describes du Chastelet's libertine youth in France, while the second book contains his account of his captivity in Algiers. The two subsequent volumes – the ones that were never published – were supposed to contain the description of the author's voyages around Europe, all the way north to Lapland.

Amid the corpus of early modern French captivity narratives, *L'Odyssée* stands out noticeably for both its original style and for its less ideologically biased outlook on slavery, corso, North Africa, and Islam. Stylistically, du Chastelet's text displays a particularly elaborated prose, one that makes ample use of images, metaphors, and neologisms, and closely mirrors in many ways the convoluted Baroque style that had

been in vogue in France during the first half of the seventeenth century. In addition to the sophisticated prose, *L'Odyssée* is also imbued with a trove of literary references, starting from the title of the work itself, which is a direct reference to Homer's Odyssey. In his text du Chastelet mentions many well-known works of fiction of his time, such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, as well as the works of several contemporary French novelists such as Gomberville and Guez de Balzac. *L'Odyssée* also contains numerous references to Héliodore's *Éthiopiques*, a novel that had been recently re-translated by Trichard as *Les Amours de Théagènes et Chariclée* (1633). Héliodore's work had encountered great editorial success in France at the time, and its mentioning in *L'Odyssée*, together with the rest of the contemporary Baroque novels, clearly demonstrate du Chastelet's familiarity with the major literary tendencies of his time.

Yet, the many references that *L'Odyssée* contains to the Baroque heroic novel tradition also suggest a clear link and an affinity between *L'Odyssée* and the early modern French fictional canon. Although still closer to the realism of the travel literature genre, *L'Odyssée* borrowed several rhetorical and narrative elements from the heroic novel canon, evident especially in his intricated and adventurous plot.

Du Chastelet was certainly a well-educated and well-read read person, versed in the classical and humanistic tradition. Although he was not a prolific writer, in the introduction of his work he mentions that in his youth he wrote a short treaties on servitude of classical Stoic inspiration, which demonstrates his early interest in writing in the style of Montaigne.

L'Odyssée pretends to be the account of a lived experience. To do so it uses the narrative codes and the aesthetic of the travel genre. *L'Odyssée* follows the same structure that characterizes almost all the published French Barbary captivity narratives since the early seventeenth century. Like the other examples, *L'Odyssée* borrows from the travel literature and memoir genres of the time, such as an emphasis on eye-witnessing, the reliance on a first-person narrative, and an empiricist outlook. However, although *L'Odyssée* is probably in large part factual, many improbable episodes question the realism of specific passages. While these episodes remain within a range of verisimilar, several aspects appear to have been fictionalized – if not wholly invented – by the author.

An example of the literary nature of *L'Odyssée* can be found in the many ambiguously lascivious passages it contained, which seems the fruit of the author's invention and appear to have been included in the narrative in order first and foremost to satisfy his reader's licentious curiosity. For instance, while serving for the widow of a Dutch renegade named Fatima, Du Chastelet comments on the use of the baths in Algiers:

> *Les bains sont fort communs et commodes en Alger, tant à cause de la grande chaleur du pays, que de la disette du linge, qui nécessite les hommes et les femmes de les fréquenter; ceux-ci le matin, et les autres l'après-midi. Ces lieux nécessaires et agréables étaient la retraite et prétexte du libertinage, où elles ne sont point observées comme ailleurs, mais y passent le temps avec leurs amies ou amis travestis en voisines.*[63]

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[63] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 122.

Du Chastelet remarks that the baths offered a place of libertinage for the women of Algiers since, according to his description, they were free to meet their lovers there, as his mistress Fatima regularly seems to do. This observation, although still in the range of plausible, is nevertheless suspicious, signaling more likely how Du Chastelet readapted an old anti-Muslim Western stereotype that perceived the Muslim world as a place of libertinage. Very similar remarks also resurface when du Chastelet describes his master Khodja Ali's harem and explains how he was forced to impregnate the black slaves held there:

> *[…] la destination que l'on faisait de moi à la conduite des négrines, que le patron n'entretenait au nombre de quinze à seize à la Macerie, et qu'il retirait au même temps qu'il les savait grosses, que pour en avoir des mulâtres : ce sont enfants de blancs et de noirs. Il envoyait de temps en temps des esclaves les plus blancs et plus vigoureux qu'il pouvait choisir, et il exerçait ce commerce par le moyen de ses correspondants en Alexandrie et Constantinople, et en faisait son principal revenu.*[64]

Du Chastelet recounts how he was locked in the harem, naked, for six days with a bottle of brandy and four women, surveilled by a black eunuch, and coerced to have sex with his master's black slaves. The eunuch who was keeping watch played a drum serenade whenever sexual activity flagged. Du Chastelet also comments on the fact that mulatto slaves were particularly sought commodities in the Ottoman Empire.

Although the context of the scene is still plausible (Islam allowed for the passing of enslaved status to a slave's offspring), many of its details appear very unlikely. The tone of the episode is overall very ambiguous, poising the author as a victim who is

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[64] Ibid., 95.

forced to unwillingly commit immoral acts by his master. More than describing events, the details provided in the scene by du Chastelet seem to have been included to arouse the reader's curiosity by offering a depiction of sexual libertinism, much in line with the well-established Orientalist sexual fantasies mentioned above.

In sum, *L'Odyssée* offered to the European "armchair travelers" the impression of acquiring knowledge about Barbary, and yet much of its focus remains in inciting the readers' emotions and satiating their curiosity for exotic alterity. Even in the case of seemingly more reliable examples, no early modern Barbary captivity narrative appears to be able to escape this conundrum.

2.5 The influence of the redemptive narratives

Although there are significant similarities between the two corpora, the French Barbary captivity narratives that began appearing at the beginning of the seventeenth century cannot be reduced to a mere sub-genre of the contemporary travel literature that was sweeping through European culture at the time.

This is primarily because, whereas the travelogues tend to emphasize the description of a movement in space, the collection of new knowledge, and the experiencing of a foreign culture—often highlighting exotic cultural differences—the captivity narratives are first and foremost meant to describe a traumatic experience: slavery itself. Whether real or imagined, all captivity narratives relate the story of an individual who was coerced and confined, who endured bodily or psychological pain, who withstood some form of violence, and who eventually achieved redemption or liberation.

Thus, in general, the captivity narratives tend to stress the representation of violence and suffering, an aspect that becomes one of the main distinctive features of the entire corpus, reappearing regularly in one form or another in all texts. This particular emphasis on the representation of violence tends to leave in the background the descriptive and informative component proper to the travel literature genre, placing the captivity narratives closer instead to Christian moralistic genres, such as the martyrologies. Similar to this devotional literature, the captivity narratives sought to elicit an affective response from their readers by asking them to witness and empathize with the narrator's pain.

In the preface of the *Relation de captivité*[65] published in 1683, the author Germain Moüette (a Frenchman who was enslaved in the kingdom of Morocco between 1670 and 1681) writes:

> *[…] tout le contenu de ce livre fait assez connaitre la misère des pauvres Esclaves d'Afrique, et le danger où ils sont tous les jours exposés ou de renoncer à leur foie ou de périr par la cruauté de leurs Maîtres et de leurs Gardiens. Certainement on ne peut rien s'imaginer de plus funeste, que l'état où ils sont réduits. Ce qu'on fait souffrir en France aux plus criminels à peine a-t 'il rien d'égal aux tourments qu'on fait endurer à ces innocentes victimes. Nos Galériens sont moins malheureux que ceux qui travaillent aux Châteaux de Miquénes. Les*

[65] Captured by Algerian corsairs as a young man while sailing from Dieppe for the West Indies with his cousin Claude Loyer la Garde, he remained captive for 11 years first in Salé, and then in Fes and Meknes. He was eventually freed by the Mercedarians and finally returned to France.
As a slave in Morocco, Moüette changed masters multiple times and had many jobs, including baker, stable hand, and mason. For example, in Meknes, Moüette worked on large building projects for the Sultan of Morocco, Moulay Ismael (Ismail Ibn Sharif), and as a sewer cleaner in Ksar el Kebir. One of his last masters, a Muslim doctor of the law he called Bougiman (Abü J mii'a), was a painter and sculptor with whom Moüette eventually became friends. While working in Bougiman's atelier, Moüette learned Arab and Spanish, as well as most of the information he relates in his work concerning the history and customs of Morocco.
After his return to France in 1683, Moüette published two texts: a political and military chronicle of Morocco titled *Histoire des conquestes de Mouley Archy*, and the account of his captivity in the *Relation de la captivité du Sr Moüette*. His *Relation de la captivité* also includes a section dedicated to the situation and best practices for trading with the kingdom of Morocco.

Matamores de Salé, d'Alcassar et de Toutouan surpassent les plus obscures et les plus sales prisons. Et les supplices dont on punit en France les meurtriers et les assassins ne font pas comparables à ceux qu'inventent les Maures, soit pour faire renier la foie Chrétienne aux Captifs, soit pour assouvir leur seule fureur.[66]

Very similar statements emphasizing the violence suffered by the author appear in almost all captivity narratives, such as in the *Histoire d'un esclave* by Jean Gallonyé[67] (published in Lyon by Rolin Glaize and in Paris by Estienne Michallet in 1679).[68] Like Moüette, Gallonyé also declares in his text:

Ce que je vais rapporter en détail des choses que j'ai vues pendant ma détention fera facilement juger à un chacun que les peines et misères que les esclaves souffrent dans la ville de Salé que dans les villes voisines, comme Maroc, Fez, Tetouan, et le Kafal, qui appartiennent a un même Roy, sont beaucoup plus grandes que celles qu'on souffre ailleurs.[69]

The emphasis that the captivity narratives place on representing suffering is a clear mark of the deep influence that these texts received from the Trinitarian and Mercedarian redemption narratives. As mentioned, the redemptive narratives were usually written by members of Catholic redemptive religious orders—that is, orders

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[66] Germain Moüette, *Relation de la captivité du S. Moüette dans les royaumes de Fez et de Maroc...*, 1683.
[67] Gallonyé was held captive in Salé in Morocco for five years, from 1670 to 1675, when he was finally liberated by the French Mercedarians. Not surprisingly, Gallonyé dedicates his text to the order, who very likely also helped write it and sponsored its publication. Also not surprisingly, Gallonyé states in his preface that he published his story in order to provide a positive image of the Mercedarian order and encourage donations. Gallonyé was taken captive by Salé's privateers while sailing for the Americas, together with 26 other men and four women, on board a frigate named La Royale. Among the passengers was also Germain Moüette, author of another *Rélation de la captivité* published just few years later (1683). In Salé, Gallonyé was sold as a slave to a group of seven masters (five Moriscos and two Jews) for a relatively high price (1,000 livres, which was a price 10 times higher than the average) in the hopes that he was a noble person and could lead to a high ransom. Gallonyé recounts how he was sent from one master to the next, and how each of them, in the hope of getting information from him, put him under all sorts of physical and psychological pressure, including through the use of subterfuge, deception, torture, and segregation. However, Gallonyé is able to resist giving in to his masters pressure for several months, not revealing any significant information, and in the end, he is sent to detention in the city's *bagnios* (what he calls the *mattamore*), where he serves as a construction worker.
[68] Gallonyé, *Histoire d'une Esclave Qui a Été Quatre Années Dans Les Prisons de Sallé En Afrique: Avec Un Abbregé de La Vie Du Roy Taffilette*.
[69] Ibid., 164–165; Guy Turbet-Delof Gallonyé's text was reprinted several times (1684, 1707) and also translated into Dutch. See Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532-1715*.

dedicated to the freeing of enslaved Christians. During the seventeenth century, the two most prominent and most active redemptive orders in the French kingdom were the French *Péres de la Seinte Trinité et des captifs* (known for short as Trinitarians)[70] and the *Ordre de Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci* (known as Mercedarians), to which we must add the *Œuvre des esclaves* founded by Vincent de Paul in the 1640s and run by the *Congregation of the Mission* (aka Lazarists).[71] The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French redemption narratives were accounts that described their redemptive mission, usually to free Christian slaves and generally in North Africa. Redemptive narratives had circulated in France since the mid-sixteenth century, often in the form of so-called *plaquettes de propagande* (propaganda leaflets). The first published account of a redemption mission in French is, for example, an anonymous Trinitarian text published in France in 1582 and titled the *Discours du rachat de cent quatre-vingt-six tant chrétiens que chrétiennes captifs entre les mains des Turcs et Barbares […]*, followed years later by Father Gaspard's *Histoire véritable de ce qui s'est passé en Turquie, pour la délivrance et rédemption des chrétiens captifs depuis l'année 1609*.[72]

The redemptive pamphlets advertised the redemptive orders' recent ransoming missions, with the clear intent of serving as a propaganda tool for the order and for soliciting donations. The French redemptive accounts were in part inspired by contemporary Spanish productions, such as by the work of Father Geronymo Garcian,

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[70] The *Trinitaires* were also known as *Mathurins* because they were based in the church of Saint-Mathurin in Paris from 1228 onwards and as "donkey brothers" because they rode asses as a sign of humility.
[71] Bachelot, *Louis XIV En Algérie, Gigeri, 1664*, 31.
[72] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, 51.

Tractado de la redempcion de captiva, of 1597 (which in some regards inaugurated the genre of the captivity narrative),[73] and Diego de Torrès' *Relation de l'origine et succès des chérifs et de l'état des royaumes de Marroc, Fez et Tarudant* (translated into French in 1636 which relays the author's mission for the King of Portugal to free captives in Morocco in the mid-sixteenth century).[74]

Together with the redemption narratives, another important reference is Jean-Baptiste Gramaye's *Les Cruautés exercées sur les chrétiens en la ville d'Alger*, published in Paris by Feugé in 1620. Gramaye was a historian, diplomat, and geographer from the Low Countries who was captured and held captive in Algiers for five months in 1619. Gramaye published the account of his captivity, taking inspiration from Spanish authors such as Marmol and Haedo, popularizing these sources in the French kingdom.[75]

These redemptive narratives testify to the broader rise in religious sentiment and the new push for missionary impetus that occurred in France around the 1620s under Louis XIII and Richelieu in the context of the Counter Reformation fervor.[76]

Among the corpus of redemption narratives, one text stands out in particular: the *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses corsaires, des Royaumes et des villes d'Alger, Tunis, Salé*

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[73] Ibid., 61.; Father Gaspard, *Histoire véritable de ce qui s'est passé en Turquie, pour la délivrance et rédemption des chrétiens captifs depuis l'année 1609 et les sécheresses extraordinaires advenues en Alger l'an passé, pendant lesquelles arriva une pluie miraculeuse par l'intercession de trois religieux de l'ordre de la Sainte Trinité de la rédemption des captifs*. Paris, F. du Carroy, 1613.
[74] C. Marinescu, ed., *Medieval Iberian Peninsula (MIP) Texts and Studies*, vol. III (Brill, 1970), 18.
[75] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532-1715*, 94–95; Ben Mansour and Abd El Hadi, "L'heureuse «captivité » d'un protonotaire apostolique, Jean-Baptiste Gramaye à Alger (1619)," *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* 1995, no. 1 (1997): 55–69; Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, *Alger, XVIe-XVIIe siècle: Journal de Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, évêque d'Afrique*, trans. Ben Mansour Abd el-Hadi (Paris: Cerf, 1998).
[76] Guillaume de Vaumas, *L'éveil missionnaire de la France au XVIIe siècle* (Bloud & Gay, 1959).

et Tripoli [...], written by the Trinitarian Friar Pierre Dan and published in Paris in 1637. The *Histoire de Barbarie* can be considered one of the most significant redemptive narratives of early modern times and one of the most influential texts in shaping the early modern French and European perception of North Africa.[77] Dan's text provided a model not only for all subsequent redemption narratives but also for all the published French Barbary captivity narratives that appeared from the 1640s onward.[78]

Since its first publication, the *Histoire de Barbarie* had a significant impact not only in France but also throughout Europe, continuing to be cited as a reference by authors across the continent until the nineteenth century. The historian Gillian Weiss defines the text as a "paragon of redemptive literature," whereas the historian Dominique Carnoy cites it as one of the three most influential texts in shaping the French understanding of Islam in early modern times (along with Michel Baudier's 1625 *Histoire générale de la religion des Turcs* and *L'Alcoran de Mahomet, translaté d'arabe en français* by Du Ryer, Sieur de la Garde Malezair of 1647).[79] As the French literary critic Guy Turbet-Delof has pointed out, the *Histoire de Barbarie*'s influence on the early modern French perception of the Muslim world can also be seen in the way it has set the

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[77] Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsaires, Des Royaumes, et Des Villes d'Alger, de Tunis, de Salé & de Tripoly. Divisée En Dix Livres Ou Il Est Traitté de Leur Gouvernement, de Leurs Moeurs, de Leurs Cruautez, de Leurs Brigandages, de Leurs Sortileges, & de Plusieurs Autres Particularitez Remarquables. Ensemble Des Grandes Misères et Des Cruels Tourmens Qu'endurent Les Chrestiens Captifs Parmy Ces Infideles* (Paris: Pierre Rocolet, 1637), accessed October 1, 2015, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k104099s; Dominique Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle : La Ville Des Tentations* (Paris ; Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998), 27; Gillian Weiss, "Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsairses," *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History* (Brill, 2017), 427; Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, 124.

[78] Jean-Claude Laborie, "Les Récits de Rédemption: Identité En Question Dans Les Documents Des Trinitaires," in *Légendes Barbaresques: Le Récit de Captivité: Codes, Stratégies, Détournements, XVIe–XVIIe Siècles*, ed. Anne Duprat (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2016), 23–34.

[79] Dominique Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle: La Ville Des Tentations* (Paris; Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998), ch.1; Weiss, "Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsairses."

modern French orthography of many Arabic toponyms and transliterations, such as "Rabat," "couscous," and even the word "Arab" itself.[80] Friar Dan's text was particularly instrumental in building the myth of the Barbary coast and its inhabitants as a source of relentless hostility toward Christianity.[81]

The publication of Friar Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie* occurred amid a rivalry for public prestige and a competition for the collection of donations between the two most prominent redemptive orders active in France at the time: the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians.[82] Since the Middle Ages, the Trinitarians had established deep roots in the French kingdom; the order was founded by two Frenchmen, Jean de Matha, and Félix de Valois, and it had traditionally been very active in France by establishing many of its convents there. [83] The Mercedarians, on the other hand, founded by the Spaniard Peter Nolasco, had most of their convents in the Iberian Peninsula and all across the Habsburg colonies overseas. In France, they were generally perceived as being traditionally closer to Habsburg's Spain, to the point that they acquired a negative reputation of Hispanophilia.[84]

Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the prestige of the Trinitarians in France had been somehow obfuscated by the missionary successes of the Mercedarians, who had conducted several large-scale redemptive missions to North Africa beginning at

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[80] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, 125.
[81] Guy Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, Bibliographies et Catalogues 2 (Alger: S.N.E.D., 1976), 125; Gillian Weiss, "Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsairses," *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History* (Brill, 2017).
[82] Erwan Le Fur, "La renaissance d'un apostolat : l'Ordre de la Trinité et la rédemption des captifs dans les années 1630," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, no. 66 (June 15, 2003): 3.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 37.

the end of the sixteenth century. Although the French Trinitarian order was by then still committed to its primary mission of ransoming Christian slaves, it had not conducted any large-scale redemptive missions in centuries, in any case not since Medieval times. The only Trinitarian convent that was still directing some redemptive activities in France was the one in Marseilles, and only on a small scale, limiting itself to the collection of donations without sending missionaries into the field.[85]

This situation ignited a sort of race in redemptive efforts between the two orders, and between the 1620s and the 1630s, when – in parallel with the rise of corso in the western Mediterranean – both the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians engaged in a series of large-scale redemptive missions, coinciding unsurprisingly with a parallel upsurge in propaganda efforts by both orders to bolster their public images. It is mainly thanks to these efforts that the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians started to bring the Mediterranean situation closer and closer to the everyday life of many communities in Europe, and they were in this sense particularly instrumental in spreading a general image of Barbary in public opinion.

The two orders did this in several ways, first by engaging in large-scale campaigning for the promotion of their own order's image. These propaganda efforts included preaching, the organization of elaborate and choreographed public processions of freed slaves throughout the French kingdom, and solicitation of donations. [86] However,

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[85] Ibid., 28.
[86] Ibid., 29.

the two redemptive orders also became particularly active in publishing and editing short pamphlets and many lengthy redemption accounts.

Amidst Trinitarian redemptive efforts Friar Dan published his *Histoire de Barbarie*, the account of the first large-scale mission organized by the order in modern times and one officially backed and sponsored by the crown itself. Friar Dan's mission was organized in response to the crisis provoked by the surge of North African privateering that, by the 1620s, had brought an estimated more than 40,000 Christian slaves to Algiers, many of whom were French.[87] Having acquired de-facto independence from the Sultan in Istanbul, the Algerian corsair captains had taken the bold step of indiscriminately attacking and seizing many French merchant ships. Neither the city of Marseille nor King Louis XIII had the military means to stop these raids, and the French diplomats had also realized that soliciting the Sultan's intervention could do little to solve this problem. Under pressure from the merchant community of Provence, the French crown decided to hold direct negotiations with the Algerian regency, which led to the brokering of a Franco–Algerian peace treaty in 1628.[88]

Following this success, in 1631, King Louis XIII planned to send Samson Napollon (then governor of Bastion de France, the French trading outpost in North Africa) on a diplomatic mission to Algiers to try to strengthen and improve the terms of the 1628 truce with Algiers. The crown had also directly solicited the intervention of the Trinitarian order to negotiate the release of French captives held in the city, and Friar

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[87] Boyer, "Marseille et Alger Au XVII Siècle."
[88] Ibid., 78–79.

Pierre Dan was chosen by his order to conduct this redemptive expedition, receiving a passport and a "considerable" donation from the king.[89] However, Napollon's death in Tabarque in 1631 delayed the project, which was resumed only a few years later.[90]

In 1634, Friar Dan was finally able to travel to Algiers with a fellow Trinitarian, Jean Escoffié, under the lead of the royal diplomat Sanson la Page. The expedition stayed in Algiers from July 15 to September 21, 1634, then continued to a tour of the North African coast, stopping in Bône and Bastion de France and finally leaving for France on October 3rd of the same year.[91] Friar Dan was ordered to attempt to free as many French captives as possible, exchanging them for money and "Turkish corsairs" (i.e., the galley slaves who were held captive in Marseille at the time).[92] In Algiers, the French diplomatic delegation was received by the Pascha and the Divan, and once there, they demanded the application of the Franco–Algerian Peace Treaty of 1628, which envisioned the return of all French slaves, ships, and goods held in Algiers and proposed in exchange the return to Algiers of 68 Muslim galley slaves held in Marseille.[93] The mission was a partial success, and the Trinitarians were able to free 42 French subjects.

Upon his return to France, Friar Dan was appointed father superior of the Trinitarians, and two years later, Pierre Rocolet published in Paris his *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses corsairs [...]* (containing engravings by Gilles Rousselet). [94] Friar

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[89] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 40.
[90] Ibid., 41.
[91] Ibid., 48–50.
[92] Ibid., 40.
[93] Ibid., 45.
[94] Weiss, "Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsairses," 427; Anna Baldinetti, "L'Islam et Les Mussulmans Dans l'oeuvre Du Pére Dan," *Actes du 37e colloque international du CESR (1994)*, no. Chrétiens et musulmans à la Renaissance (1998): 47.

Dan's text was published twice in France (in 1637 and 1649, with the second edition also including an update on the most significant events that had occurred since the first publication), and it was translated into Dutch in 1684 (the Dutch edition, also containing 25 original plates designed by Jan Luyken, circulated widely in Europe and was reprinted in Hamburg and Stockholm).[95]

The publication of the *Histoire de Barbarie* opened the way for the emergence of a whole new sub-genre: the French trinitarian redemptive narratives. These texts would become relatively widespread in France during the seventeenth century and would have many emulators until the eighteenth century. [96] By the end of the seventeenth century, the number of publications of the redemptive mission account had reached a couple dozen for the Trinitarians, and there were similar numbers for the Mercedarians.

The 1649 edition of the *Histoire de Barbarie* is 555 pages long, divided into six books, and includes more than 70 chapters. This lengthy text is a blend of several different subjects; it starts by relating the details and circumstances of the author's redemptive mission to Algiers and continues with the description of the history and geography of the North African region, as well as its cultural, social, and political situation. The text then continues to include several sections or "books," each devoted to

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[95] Weiss, "Histoire de Barbarie et de Ses Corsairses," 433.
[96] Jean-Claude Laborie, "Les Récits de Rédemption: Identité En Question Dans Les Documents Des Trinitaires," in *Légendes Barbaresques: Le Récit de Captivité : Codes, Stratégies, Détournements, XVIe–XVIIe Siècles*, ed. Anne Duprat (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2016), 24. See in particular the Trinitarian redemption narratives of Father Lucien Hérault, *Les larmes et clameurs des chrétiens français de nation, captifs en la ville d 'Alger en Barbarie* (1643), Father Lucien Hérault *Les victoires de la Charité ou la relation des voyages de Barbarie* (…), (1646) ; Anroux F. Nazarre, and Héron F. Jean, L*a miraculeuse rédemption des captift*, (1654) ; Father Edmond Égreville, *La Vive fois et le récit de ce qui s'est passé dans le voyage de la rédemption des captifs français faite en Alger par les pères de l'ordre de Notre-Dame de la Merci* (1645).

a specific subject. Book three focuses on corsairs, book four on renegades, and book five on the life and trials of Christian captives. The text ends with a long section retracing the history of the Trinitarian order since its founding.[97] This last section is a long panegyric in favor of the author's order, in which the tone becomes unsurprisingly apologetic, and in which friar Dan glorifies the redemptive expeditions of the past, expressing a certain nostalgia for the time of the Crusades, and explicitly solicits donations.

In addition to the list of topics mentioned above, each book also contains a wide range of disparate material, including copies of official documents (such as letters from the king, a list of rescued captives and their attestations of freedom, etc.), engravings depicting the tortures endured by captives, and even lengthy theological discussions on the moral implications of enslavement. The text is also filled with a long list of erudite quotations and references taken from both the scriptures and classical tradition, a clear testimony to Friar Dan's broad erudition.

This diversity of subjects and registers makes the *Histoire de Barbarie* an undoubtedly heterogenic and complex text. Particularly striking is Friar Dan's ability to assume distinct styles and different voices throughout his work, while never losing sight of his mission or failing to display his background as a redemptive Catholic priest. At

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[97] The first book of the *Histoire de Barbarie* serves as a general introduction, offering an overview of the history of the Maghreb region from antiquity to the author's present time. The book then continues with a history of old and modern famous corsairs, followed by a theological explanation—or theodicy—for the existence of Islam and slavery, and it concludes with a detailed description of the author's voyage to Algiers and other parts of North Africa. Each of the following five books focuses on a specific topic. The second book describes the geography and condition of several North African cities, starting with Algiers and then Tunis, Salé, Fez, Tripoli, and finally Tétouan. The third book contains a description of the practice of piracy and corsair activity in the North African region. The fourth book discusses the presence of renegades. The fifth books relate the situation of Christian slaves in the Maghreb region. The sixth and last book is a comprehensive history of the Trinitarian missionary order from its founding to the author's present time.

times, Friar Dan convincingly speaks as a geographer, at others as a historian or as a proto-anthropologist, and at still others as a diplomat, even providing military, political, and trading insights.[98] This diversity comes from the fact that, as Friar Dan declares at the beginning of his work, he sought to write an "*histoire*" (history) of Barbary—that is, a comprehensive compendium of all the contemporary knowledge that he could gather on the North African region and its inhabitants, instead of a chronicle. It is manifest that in the *Histoire de Barbarie*, he tries to offer his readers a relatively faithful account of his expedition and of what he observed concerning the Maghreb region and its inhabitants at the time. For example, in several passages, Dan affirms that he is reporting only what he saw with his own eyes or what he learned firsthand from the French diplomats and merchants living in the region, as well as from the European slaves and renegades he interviewed.[99] Friar Dan also mentions that most of the information he relates in the text concerning the Islamic religion and its traditions came directly from a local source: a Muslim villager from the "Arab" quarters adjacent to the French outpost of Bastion de France.[100] This little detail reveals that Friar Dan did not shy from direct contact with the local Muslim population, and his interviews can be seen as a sign of the multicultural environment of the region at the time.

These details show how the *Histoire de Barbarie* followed in many ways the same model offered by the contemporary travel literature genre by emphasizing the act of

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[98] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 74.
[99] Ibid., II, IV.
[100] Ibid., 55.

eye-witnessing, of seeing for oneself and recounting facts. Dan underlines this in his dedication to the king at the beginning of the text, when he declares that what he writes "cannot be questioned since I learned it by seeing it myself."[101] This concern for straightforwardness even pushes Friar Dan to praise certain aspects of the Barbary region, such as when he comments on the beauty of the city of Algiers, with its white and clean households.[102]

The *Histoire de Barbarie* also clearly shows a pedagogical intention in that it offers an ample discussion of the history, geography, and culture of the North African region. In attempting to write the most exhaustive compendium to date on the current social and political situation in the Maghreb region, Friar Dan also consulted, assembled, and drew material from a wide range of diverse sources. In this sense, the *Histoire de Barbarie* follows in the wake of the long-established erudite tradition of Renaissance histories and geographies. Friar Dan's quest to provide accurate information on North African history, geography, society, and culture was undoubtedly successful in that the *Histoire de Barbarie* was quickly recognized by his contemporaries as the primary reference for all knowledge pertaining to Barbary. Thus, the text became particularly instrumental in setting the discursive framework through which the entire Maghreb region became known in France and Europe in the seventeenth century; its authority remained unchallenged until modern times. Guy Turbet-Delof contends that many of the Barbary topoi found in Friar Dan's work were already in these sources (elements such as

[101] Ibid., III.
[102] Ibid., 88–89.

the *lingua franca*, the widespread presence of Moriscos, and the myth of Barbary as a *locus amoenus*).[103]

The *Histoire de Barbarie* also became a model for the majority of the captivity narratives published during the seventeenth century because almost all of these texts started to include one or more sections relating historical, geographical, and cultural information, much in line with the erudite tradition set by Dan's text and often in reference to this model.

However, the professed objectivity and accuracy of the *Histoire de Barbarie* cannot conceal the fact that this work remains an overtly militant text written to serve first and foremost as Trinitarian propaganda.[104] The *Histoire de Barbarie* has at its core a starkly confrontational and Manichean view of Christianity and Islam. Throughout the text, the Muslim religion is regularly presented in the most negative light, and this religious enmity is the foundation upon which Friar Dan builds a broader condemnation of the Islamic culture as a whole, and by extension the entire Barbary region and all its inhabitants. This ideological bias is reflected in the text's preaching tone and its hyperbolic rhetoric, which surface on almost every page.

In his condemnation of Islam, Friar Dan revives and mobilizes the panoply of anti-Muslim stereotypes that had been widely circulating in Europe since the Middle

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[103] See Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, 75–76 According to Guy Turbet-Delof, Haëdo's work was never translated into French because of the anti-French views it contained.
[104] Christian Zonza, "Des Ecus et Des Mots: Valeurs de l'échange Dans Les Récits de Rédémption," in *Légendes Barbaresques: Le Récit de Captivité : Codes, Stratégies, Détournements, XVIe–XVIIe Siècles*, ed. Anne Duprat (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2016), 45–46.

Ages.[105] For example, at the beginning of his text, Friar Dan iterates the deep-seated superstition that considered Islam to be born out of Christian heresy. According to this prejudice—which dates back to the eleventh century—at the origin of Islam, there was an apostate monk called Sergius (aka Bahira), a Nestorian who corrupted the young prophet Mahomet by inspiring in him the false beliefs that would later give birth to Islam. Sergius allegedly did this to punish the Catholic church, which had persecuted him.[106]

Similar deep-seated misconceptions appear again and again throughout the *Histoire de Barbarie*, as for example in Chapter IV of Book I when, while describing the roles of pirates in Barbary history, Friar Dan makes ample reference to the old anti-Muslim stereotype of the "tyrannical" Oriental prince, depicting the Barbary pirates as cruel, power crazy, and lusty individuals.[107] Similarly, in other passages, the *Histoire de Barbarie* blames the Barbary inhabitants for practicing magic and sorcery, following another of the many stereotypes frequently attributed to Islamic civilization. Dan arrives at the point of claiming that the real cause of Charles V's failed attempt to invade the Maghreb region in the sixteenth century was the powerful sorcery of a rumored "witch."[108] In other passages of his text, Dan often references the Marabouts—i.e., the holy men of the traditional North and West African cultures—and he never forgets to portray these men as "hypocrites" and "sorcerers."[109]

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[105] Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle*; John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York : Columbia University Press, c2002., 2002).
[106] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 26.
[107] Ibid., 391.
[108] Ibid., 106.
[109] Ibid., 107–108.

Friar Dan adds to this strong condemnation of Islam an equal debasement of the image of Barbary itself. For instance, at the beginning of Book II, Dan depicts the inhabitants of the Barbary Coast as idle and vain people, loafers who cannot carry out respectable activities or earn an honest living and thus have a natural tendency to piracy, explaining why they hold it in such high esteem.[110] Dan accuses the inhabitants of the Maghreb region of "all sort of vices,"[111] to the point of calling the Barbary pirates the "beasts of the apocalypse."[112] However, the image that seems to best capture Friar Dan's overall attitude—one that also builds on an old Medieval anti-Muslim trope—is the description of Barbary as the "world upside down," suggesting that this region represents the specular opposite of Christian Europe, where all social hierarchies are subverted and the natural order of things is inverted.[113]

It is essential to keep in mind that the animosity against the Muslim religion and the North African region that consistently emerge throughout Friar Dan's text do not spring from mere religious dogmatism; in many passages, a series of mundane and concrete motivations seem to have played a role. In constructing a particularly negative image of Barbary, one built on exaggeration and prejudice, the *Histoire the Barbary* aims to instill fear and indignation in its readers, with the very pragmatic goal of soliciting donations to finance the Trinitarian order's redemptive missions.

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[110] Ibid., 72.
[111] Ibid., 321.
[112] Ibid., 72–73.
[113] Ibid., 296.

Therefore, from the outset, the *Histoire de Barbarie* presents a paradox, presenting a sort of dual nature to its readers. On the one hand, this text is an accurate work of erudition and scholarly divulgation that quickly became an authoritative source during its time. On the other hand, the *Histoire de Barbarie* is a blatantly biased text and an unapologetic instrument of propaganda. In a way, Friar Dan's text synthesizes two tendencies that seem at odds with each other, moving among erudition, curiosity, and condemnation.

The result is that, although the text remains particularly reliable in most of its historical and geographical information when it comes to portraying early modern privateering, slavery, and captivity in the Mediterranean, the *Histoire de Barbarie* flattens out most of the complexities of the phenomenon, reducing corso to a mere clash of civilizations. Friar Dan seems to deliberately ignore the reality that piracy and privateering were at the time first and foremost commercial enterprises, in which religious affiliation played only a minor role. Moreover, Friar Dan completely omits the fact that privateering, piracy, and slavery were widespread practices involving almost all kingdoms facing the Mediterranean at the time, without much difference existing between Muslims and Christians.

For example, the *Histoire de Barbarie* refers only once, and very indirectly, to the fact that there were several thousand Muslim slaves in France at the time, who were held captive in Marseille and served as galley rowers. Even more perplexing is Dan's moral condemnation of slavery in other parts of the text because it is a practice "against God's

will," while casting Christians as the sole victims of this phenomenon, again wholly ignoring the contemporary situation in the French kingdom, as well as in its colonies.[114]

However, even an overtly militant text such as Friar Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie* cannot but show at times evident discrepancies between its ideological positions and the complexity of the lived experiences it aims to describe. These discrepancies tend to implicitly question the simplistic distinctions between East and West that the text was set to pose. Despite its ideological biases, even one of the most partial French texts on Barbary of the time remains a testimony to the high degree of interconnectivity that existed between the different shores of the Mediterranean. This, in turn, cast doubt on the effectiveness of the ideological position that the *Histoire de Barbarie* championed, so that the question remains: To what degree and in which ways did these texts contribute to shaping the image of corso in Europe?

2.5.1 The role of the representation of violence

One of the most significant influences that the *Histoire de Barbarie* came to have on the subsequent corpus of French Barbary captivity narratives of the seventeenth century lies in the way Friar Dan's work provided a theological explanation and justification for the existence of the phenomena of early modern slavery and captivity in the Mediterranean.

As mentioned above, Friar Dan frames the Christian–Muslim relationships mostly in terms of a religious confrontation, in which Christians are the victims and Muslims are

[114] Ibid., 391; for an account of French transatlantic slavery, see Madeleine Dobie, *Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century French Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

inevitably the perpetrators. In fact, in several passages, the *Histoire de Barbarie* offers a vivid depiction of the cruelties perpetrated against the Christian slaves, describing the unbearable sufferings that captives endure. Book five details for example the "torments" that slaves endure in Barbary by presenting several scenes in which the brutality of captivity is described in vivid and ghastly detail. The text enumerates all the tortures Christian slaves undergo and the labors they endure, whether they serve on a galley, in a household, or by performing the humblest tasks. Dan provides several short episodes from the lives of Christian slaves in Barbary, among which there is the story of a certain Jean Fonter, a slave from Marseille living in Tunis, who was executed for having defended the Christian faith during a public festivity. Dan describes in detail how Jean was lynched by the local crowd, who beat him up, broke all his bones, and cut his tongue before burning him alive.[115] Analogous descriptions, containing similar gory details reoccur throughout the rest of the chapter as well as in several other parts of Friar Dan's text. Although the level of violence depicted in many of these scenes might appear excessive, Friar Dan justifies its use by saying that they represent "[…] un spectacle le plus digne de compassion qu'on ait jamais imaginé."[116]

Observations such as this are significant because they tell us that, beyond the melodramatic tone and a certain overemphasis on brutality, the depiction of violence in Friar Dan's text is not as gratuitous as it might at first appear, nor does it signal a particular fixation on the macabre. Rather, this insistence on the depiction of violence in

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[115] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 442–444.
[116] Ibid., 386.

the *Histoire de Barbarie* signals that it has a very precise theological function. Friar Dan set the representation of suffering that Christian slaves endure in Barbary captivity as part of a divine plan. As he explains at the beginning of his text:

> *Dieu envoie des afflictions aux âmes des justes pour les exercer par ce moyen et mettre leur patience à l'épreuve : Car comme l'orfèvre juge de la bonté de l'or en le jetant dans le feu où il se raffine ; Dieu tout de même éprouve les siens dans la fournaise des afflictions.*[117]

In other terms, Friar Dan seems to indicate that God permits the suffering of Christians to test their faith. Even when it appears excessive or utterly illogical, the representation of violence in the *Histoire de Barbarie* is there, therefore, to teach a moral lesson to the individuals who endure it, while serving as an example to all others. In a way, the *Histoire de Barbarie* rearticulates, in a nutshell, the emblematic Baroque paradox of discovering "eternity through our temporal and bodily captivity."[118] Dan explicitly states this idea in his text, arguing that captivity teaches to the enslaved individual that:

> *[…] il faut que leurs actions soient toutes pures, s'ils en veulent espérer la récompense qui est due aux justes, et que par leur patience exercée dans les travaux que ces Barbares leur font souffrir ici-bas, ils gagneront la Couronne Céleste.*[119]

Friar Dan adapts the contemporary Mediterranean situation in the context of a broader theodicy (i.e., the defense of divine goodness given the existence of evil). In the *Histoire de Barbarie*, Dan claims that Islam is a necessary evil sent by God to test the

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[117] Ibid., 34.
[118] Giancarlo Maiorino, *The Cornucopian Mind and the Baroque Unity of the Arts* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990).
[119] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 37.

true believer's faith. Moved by a natural hatred toward Christians, the Barbary Muslim pirates thrive in making Christians suffer, but this persecution offers Christians an opportunity to redeem themselves and prove their faith by resisting the hardships of captivity. Thus, Dan implicitly recognizes a positive side to captivity: it is an ordeal that ultimately proves the goodness of God, teaches a moral lesson to its victims, and offers an example to any witnesses of the captives' suffering, encouraging them to see past the violence and contemplate its significance in the broader divine scheme of things.

Friar Dan lays out the proof of this theodicy in book four, which is a catalog enumerating what he saw as all the possible subterfuges used by Muslims to deceive or force Christian captives to apostasy. The result is a sharply Manichean viewpoint in which Muslims attempt to force Christian captives to convert with the goal of damning their souls and corrupting their bodies, whereas those Christian captives who end up converting do so because they cannot bear their suffering any longer and have lost all hope of being rescued. In other terms, there is a greater risk for Christians captives held prisoner in Barbary than their physical suffering or death, and that is the risk of losing their souls. This reasoning leads to the expected conclusion that the missionary redemptive missions are all the more important, since what is at stake is not merely the saving of an individual's body, but the saving of a Christian soul. This is indeed the argument that Friar Dan makes over and over in his text, with the clear goal of underlining the need for action and soliciting donations from his readers. In the preface of his text, Dan writes for instance:

> *Donnant au public cette Histoire, si l'on me demande quel en est le motif, je répondrai […] qu'il se trouvera des personnes qui lisant ici les cruautés et les barbaries que souffrent les esclaves Chrétiens sous la tyrannie des Mahométans, ennemis mortels de notre Foie, en seront touchés de pitié, et se porteront volontiers à secourir de leur charité ces pauvres Captifs, pour en moyenner la délivrance.*[120]

The Muslim Barbary corsairs play a crucial role in Friar Dan's narrative by assuming the role of the villains. Similar to the evil characters of the contemporary morally edifying counter-reformation literary genres, the Barbary pirates in the *Histoire de Barbarie* become the grotesque purveyors of a necessary and extreme cathartic violence. Dan describes Muslims as having an inborn hatred toward Christianity and a "natural" inclination to violence, and he contends that the source of their hatred comes from their religion, which, as previously mentioned, is according to Friar Dan a pernicious heresy inspired by the Devil. In book one, chapter five, Dan states:

> *[…] peut-on bien dire qu'il n'y eut jamais de persécution contre l'Eglise, ni plus dangereuse, ni plus cruelle que celle-ci [celle des Musulmans], puis qu'il y a mille ans qu'elle dure. Aussi s'est-elle tournée contre ces Chrétiens en une haine irréconciliable et mortelle. Et cette haine ne procède d'autre source que de l'impiété de ces Barbares, qui ont abandonné le culte du vrai Dieu, pour se rendre supports et Ministres de Satan. Et d'autant que leur persécution n'a pour objet que la ruine des Fidèles, c'est pour satisfaire à leur damnable dessein, qu'ils ne cessent de les opprimer par l'injustice de leurs armes.*[121]

According to Dan, the Muslim heresy inspires in its believers a natural hatred for Christianity, the true religion, and prompts all sorts of evil acts. This conception is, of course, neither original nor new; it is based on a long and well-established anti-Muslim prejudice deeply seated in the Christian theological tradition since the Middle Ages. It is

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[120] Ibid., IV.
[121] Ibid., 25–32.

a stereotypical view of Islam that has its roots in the eleventh century, during Urbain II's papacy, and which was upheld by all subsequent Catholic theologians. It was at this time that the Catholic church developed an entire body of theological reasoning according to which God has allowed the existence of the Muslim heresy in order to punish Christians for their sins.[122] This view of Islam was also often used in pre-modern Europe to explain the expansion of Muslim civilization through political and military victories by claiming that Islam achieved these conquests only with the help of the Devil.[123] In light of these judgments, it is not surprising that in some parts of the text, Dan openly sponsors the idea of a new crusade against the Barbary pirates, arguing that, since the Ottoman sultan has lost all his powers in the region, only the unity of Christian princes can effectively destroy this threat.[124]

2.5.2 The emphasis on exemplarity

This insistence that the *Histoire de Barbarie* places upon the morally edifying value of the depiction of violence and suffering is not unique; rather, it is a position that rests on views developed by the Scholastic tradition and absorbed in the broader Counter-Reformation conception of exemplarity popular at the time.[125] As Richard Viladesau explains, this conception relied on the idea that an emotional response would affect an individual's will, a faculty directly involved in faith and love. This conception of

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[122] Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam Dans La France Du XVIIe Siècle*, 30.
[123] Tolan, *Saracens*.
[124] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 74.
[125] Richard Viladesau, *The Triumph of the Cross : The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts, from the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2008., 2008), chap. 3.

exemplarity emphasized the power of strong and poignant images to touch the faithful's emotions with the goal of eventually impacting his or her will. This focusing on the value of emotions for moving the audience is clearly present in several parts of the text, and Dan himself declares for instance that: "il est vrai que les bons exemples sont plus puissants à persuader que les raisons mêmes."[126]

Not surprisingly, it is easy to find an emotive and ethical core at the center of Friar Dan's work, in the sense that the representation of violence is closely connected to the arousing of an emotional response in the reader, and this with the purpose of moving to piety. If we look for example at the almost lyrical remarks Friar Dan makes at the end of his fifth book, the connections to the emotional response are obvious:

> *Mais il faut que j'ajoute qu'en décrivant ces misères, la plume me tombe de la main ; et que les ayant vues, il n'est pas possible, si je ne m'impose silence, que leur souvenir ne renouvelle en moi les larmes que de si sensibles disgrâces m'ont autrefois fait répandre, quand je les ay bien considérées.*[127]

A similar emphasis on the cathartic and edifying role of violence reappears throughout the corpus of French Barbary captivity narratives published during the seventeenth century. If we consider for instance the first published French Barbary captivity narrative, *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille*, the connection between captivity narrative and exemplarity is clearly stated.[128] This text appears in 1608, in the

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[126] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 37.
[127] Ibid., 400.
[128] *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille* recounts the story of a minor French noble person, the knight of Malta François de Vintimille, who in 1606 joined a Spanish raiding expedition to Porto Farina (today Ghar El-Melh, near Bizerte in Tunisia). Stopped by a storm, Ventimille's expedition turn to Hammamet, attacking the city. However, the Spanish forces lose the battle, and Vintimille, wounded, is persuaded to surrender by Murat, a French renegade from Brittany and the commander of the local militia. Put in the city's bagno, in the following days, Vintimille is first tortured and then exposed in a public procession. A few days later, he is brought to a local marabout who tries to buy

midst of the Counter-Reformation fervor, which had placed a particular stress on exemplarity. In the preface of the text, du Lisdam – the author – mentions that his account is designed to convey an *image parlante* (talking image) of the Kinght of Malta Vintimille's captivity. This wording is a direct reference to a theological view that had widely circulated in France at the time. For example, in the *Trois discours pour la religion catholique* published in 1598, the Jesuit Louis Richeome had used this same expression to describe any representation that had a didactical and pedagogical effect on the audience.[129] This idea of the *image parlante* was in line with the Council of Trent's decree on art and post-Tridentine treatises, which placed particular importance on touching the audience's emotions through visually striking representations and had a morally edifying effect.[130] Both the term *image parlante* and the similar term *tableau* had a wide usage at the time, to the point that Antoine Furetière in his *Dictionnaire Universel* cites among the definitions of the word *image* : « se dit figurément en Morale. »; and similarly of the word *tableau*: « se dit figurément […] des descriptions et représentations

him so that he can take his life, when two mysterious knights appear suddenly and, speaking in Italian, prophesize to Ventimille that his Catholic faith will set him free before disappearing. Ventimille is then brought to Tunis, where he becomes property of the Governor Moustapha Pacha, a Sicilian renegade from Trapani. François Savary, comte de Brèves (1560–1628), French ambassador in Constantinople, tries to rescue him while visiting the city in 1605 but fails due to the exorbitant sum demanded by Moustapha Pacha. Under the servitude of Moustapha Pacha, Ventimille undergoes many trials: he is put in chains, tortured, forced to work, and solicited to apostatize. He is almost killed in retaliation for the Knights of Malta's attacks, but he endures in his faith until he is sent to row on the galleys in Bizerte. When Moustapha Pacha leaves power, Ventimille is sent to Constantinople, only to end up back in Tunis. Here, he first refuses the lending of gun powder from three Marseilles merchants that would had allowed him to pay for his ransom, fearing that the powder will be used in corsair activities or against Malta's subjects, but finally he accepts a loan from a Genoise renegade named Estasan, who pays for his freedom. Ventimille eventually returns to France.

[129] Louis Richeome, *Trois discours pour la religion catholique, les miracles, les saints, les images* (Bordeaux, 1598)

[130] Viladesau, *The Triumph of the Cross*, 208.

qui se font, soit de vive voix, soit par écrit, soit par des livres exprès, tant des choses naturelles que morales.»[131]

This stress on exemplarity and immediacy through the power of an evocative representation is a feature that constantly reappears in all the subsequent captivity narratives throughout the century. This is true even in the case of texts that were published much later, long after the wave of Counter Reformation fervor. For example, in the preface of the *Relation de Captivité* by Germain Moüette published in 1683—almost eighty years after Du Lisdam's text—a similar reference to Baroque exemplarity returns. Moüette declares that the readers "vont voir comme dans un Tableau les cruautés des peuples parmi lesquels j'ai été captif pour presque onze ans."[132]

And an almost identical wording appears also in Antoine Quartier's *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* of 1690:

> *Je n'aie point d'autre dessin que d'exciter les Chrétiens au soulagement des Captifs, en exposant à leurs yeux le fidèle Tableau de leurs misères.*[133]

The insistence on exemplarity returns throughout the corpus, showing a clear continuity. The captivity narratives appear therefore to share the same emphasis on moral edification and exemplarity as the contemporary counter reformation redemption accounts.

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[131] Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel, Contenant Generalement Tous Les Mots François* (The Hague, Rotterdam: Arnoud et Reinier Leers, 1690). Furetière cites among the definitions of « Tableau »: « se dit figurément en Morale, des descriptions & representations qui se font, soit de vive voix, soit par escrit, soit par des livres exprés, tant des choses naturelles que morales. »

[132] Germain Moüette, *Relation de la captivité du S. Moüette dans les royaumes de Fez et de Maroc...*, 1683, II. « On y verra comme dans un Tableau, les cruautés des Peuples parmi lesquels j'ay demeuré Captif près d'onze ans.» My translation

[133] Quartier, *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures*, 6.

Conclusion

Captivity narratives started to appear in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century, coinciding with the rise of corso in the Western Mediterranean and its effects on Europe and France commerce and interests.

From the beginning, these texts were deeply influenced by the redemption narratives that started to appear at about the same time. The redemption narratives reflected, in many instances, the ideological prejudice that the Catholic redemption orders that wrote them had against the Muslim Maghrebian society. As a result, in texts such as Friar Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie*, the historical phenomenon of corso appears as filtered through an eschatological perspective, with the result of creating a negative and distorted image of Barbary.

Although substantial, the influence of the contemporary redemption narratives on the early modern French captivity narratives was not, however, exclusive. Equally important were the influences of the contemporary emerging documentary genres, such as the travel literature canon, as well as the fictional literary production of the time.

The early modern French captivity narratives shared with the documentary genres, such as the travel narratives much of their narrative structure as well as the "epistemic" mode based on the report of first-person experiential witnessing. With French fictional literary texts, many captivity narratives shared the same constellation of pre-modern orientalist tropes, as well as a similar imaginary.

All these influences demonstrate how the corpus of early modern French captivity narratives was experimental and intertextual in nature, and how it evolved in close

dialogue with a wide array of contemporary fictional and non-fictional genres, in what appears a form of exchange that went in both directions.

At the same time, the early modern French captivity narratives are fundamentally distinct from all the rest of the cultural production of their times. Their uniqueness comes from their subject, the experience of enslavement. The uniqueness of each individual experience of enslavement, as well as the trauma it engendered, determines the singularity of each captivity narrative. This singularity creates a high degree of idiosyncrasy in each text, each different from another, despite the shared narrative of thematic similarities. This is also the reason it would be improper to define the body of early modern French captivity narratives as a genre. They are instead, as Linda Colley elegantly put it, "a mode of writing."[134]

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[134] Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850*.

3. The French Barbary captivities of the second half of the seventeenth century

Introduction

The corpus of the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives was far from static, evolving throughout the century and adapting to the changing political, economic, and military situation in the Western Mediterranean, as well as to the shifting French aesthetic taste. Although the few captivity narratives that appeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century bear the mark of the Counter-Reformation ideology and the Baroque aesthetic in which they were produced, as the context changed and French tastes evolved, the texts that began to appear around the second half of the century departed significantly from the rigid ideological commendation of corso and Barbary that was paramount in the early examples. The result is that—although even the latter Barbary captivity narratives never lost sight of the vocation to educate and edify that was predominant in the corpus during the first half of the century—they started to put more and more emphasis on entertainment and move toward satisfying a new taste for exoticism and the new wave of Orientalism that had spread widely through France by the end of the century.[1]

Following this formal analysis, in the second part of this chapter, I will discuss how the French Barbary captivity narratives evolved throughout the seventeenth century, adapting to the changing political, economic, military, and contemporary social circumstances, and particularly in relation to the shifting French engagement in the

[1] Ellen R. Welch, *A Taste for the Foreign: Worldly Knowledge and Literary Pleasure in Early Modern French Fiction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).

Western Mediterranean. Although the few captivity narratives that appeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century still bear the mark of the Counter-Reformation ideology and aesthetic in which they were produced, as the context changes and French literary tastes evolve, the genre gradually adds and incorporates an increasing number of fictional elements. Thus, although the Barbary captivity narratives never lose sight of their original moralizing, edifying, and fundraising mission, the entertainment elements that are added seem to move toward satisfying a new taste for exoticism and the new wave of Orientalism that had widely spread throughout France by the end of the century. I argue that the resulting amalgam of fact and fiction coalesced the fears and teased the fascination for the exotic of the armchair-traveler audience, playing a significant role in shaping the early modern French perception of North Africa.

I will then consider the instrumental role that these texts played under Louis XIV's reign by supporting the crown's concomitant political efforts to transmit a negative image of Barbary against an edulcorated representation of Ottoman power. This "good Turk versus bad Turk" rhetoric advanced France's mercantilist objectives in the Mediterranean by deflecting public attention away from its "unholy" Franco-Ottoman alliance.

3.1 Emanuel d'Aranda's Relation de la captivité

A text that clearly exemplifies this shift, and which came to profoundly influence all the following Barbary captivity narratives published during the second half of the

seventeenth century, is Emanuel d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité*.[2] D'Aranda's text stands apart stylistically and thematically from all preceding published French Barbary captivity narratives. Stylistically, it does so by incorporating a series of narrative models borrowed from the contemporary European fictional literary canon, an element that gives a remarkable literary quality to the *Relation de la captivité* that was not present in much of the preceding Barbary captivity narrative corpus. This is an aspect that was noted by Guy Turbet-Delof, who was the first to suggest that d'Aranda's work had «l'honneur d'avoir hissé le récit d'esclavage au rang de genre littéraire autonome.»[3] However, the *Relation de la captivité* also stands out in the panorama of Barbary literature for the different perspective it offers on the author's captivity experience, the North African region, its inhabitants, and the Islamic religion. D'Aranda departs significantly from the Manichean and militant positions that dominated most of the earlier Barbary literature, and he offers a more nuanced view of corso. The *Relation de la captivité* quickly became a model that was followed closely by most of the authors writing on Barbary captivity.[4]

One aspect that noticeably distinguishes d'Aranda's text from its predecessors lies in the way the *Relation de la captivité* portrays violence. If we compare d'Aranda's book to previous examples, such as Friar Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie*, significant differences appear. As mentioned previously, Friar Dan chooses to emphasize the representation of

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[2] Emanuel d'Aranda, *Relation de la captivité, et liberté du sieur Emanuel de Aranda, mené esclave à Alger en l'an 1640 et mis en liberté l'an 1642* (Brussels: Jean Mommart, 1656).
[3] Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')*, 256.
[4] Works such as the *Odyssée* by René du Chastelet des Boy (1665), the *Heureux esclave* by Pierre-Martin de la Martinière (1674), Gallonyé's *Histoire d'une esclave* (1679), Germain Moüette's *Relation* (1683), Quartier's *L'esclave religieux, et ses aventures* (1690), and *Histoire de l'esclavage d'un marchand de la ville de Cassis, à Tunis* by Antoine Galland (1709) clearly show d'Aranda's influence, both stylistically and thematically.

violence to an almost paroxysmal degree by placing its display at the very core of his narrative. The emphasis that the *Histoire de Barbarie* puts on violence had a double function: on the one hand, it served to dehumanize the Barbary Other, clearly setting a line of demarcation that separates what Friar Dan designated as evil Muslim perpetrators from the suffering Christian slaves. Moreover, representing violence also served to validate Friar Dan's theological perspective in that it had a specific cathartic function as the necessary precondition to test the Christian slaves' faith, ensuring that its display would serve as an instrument of moral edification by moving the reader's emotions. Through this depiction of violence, the entire Mediterranean and North African regions become in Friar Dan's writings the stage for a divine inter-religious conflict, the symbol of a hostile environment, unstable and dangerous, in which one's identity is revealed or forged through suffering and endurance in the face of an evil incarnated by the infidels.

D'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité* displays violence in an entirely different way. D'Aranda does not try to hide or downplay the suffering he and his fellow slaves endured, but neither does he place this element at the center stage of his narrative as Friar Dan does. The violence depicted by d'Aranda is undoubtedly part of the slave's everyday life, but its presence plays a much smaller role in the social interactions the author experienced in Algiers. Instead d'Aranda represents violence as part of the nature of human interactions of the time that are not exclusive to one specific group. D'Aranda recognizes, for example, that the Muslim and the renegade inhabitants of Barbary were not the sole purveyors of violence, implicitly discrediting the idea that they were cruel individuals with a penchant for sadism and an inherently evil nature, as described by

Friar Dan. In d'Aranda's account, violent interactions exist everywhere, including among fellow slaves. For instance, in a passage of his *Relation de la captivité*, d'Aranda reports a brawl he witnessed in Ali Pegelin's *bagnios* between a group of Catholic Spanish and Italians on the one side and Orthodox Eastern Europeans on the other:

> *Je me promenais par hasard sur la terrasse du Bain, et aussitôt que la porte fut fermée, ces Espagnols et Italiens se rassemblèrent place marchande, et l'un d'eux alla à la retraite ou chambrette des Russes et Moscovites, les saluant avec cette harangue: «Chiens, hérétiques, sauvages, ennemis de Dieu; le Bain est à cette heure fermée, et le gardien envoie dire si vous avez le courage de combattre, sortez de votre trou, et nous verrons au jeu qui aura belle amie.» A peine avait-il achevé sa harangue que les seize Russes et Moscovites se mirent en place commençant aussitôt la mêlée, et les Espagnols et Italiens reçurent réponse de leur ambassade à coups de baton […]. Ce combat (principalement du soir) causa un si terrible bruit et tintamarre que vous eussiez proprement dit que c'étaient deux armées qui combattaient dans une campagne large et ouverte.*[5]

The presence of so many diverse communities in the *bagnios* of Algiers led to tensions among the various ethnical and religious factions, and in this context, the slaves held there could also exercise violence against their comrades.

In summary, although violence is present and highlighted in d'Aranda's account, it never acquires the extreme and sadistic quality found in Friar Dan's work. In the *Histoire de Barbarie*, the Muslim believer is no longer wholly an Other—a cruel and bloodthirsty antagonist—instead, he retains his humanity. In several passages, d'Aranda acknowledges the fact that the inhabitants of Algiers did not have as their sole goal to torture Christian slaves and damn their souls. From d'Aranda's perspective, the slave owner is an oppressor but not necessarily an enemy, and even though captivity creates a

[5] Emanuel d'Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, ed. Latifa Z'rari (Paris: Jean-Paul Rocher, 1997), 43.

striking imbalance of power between masters and slaves, interfaith and interpersonal dialogue remain possible. For example, in describing his relationship with his own master, d'Aranda recognizes that Ali Pegelin gave relative freedom to his slaves in Algiers, including freedom of worship (pointing out the fact that in the *bagnios* Christian priests were allowed to celebrate mass) and freedom to conduct their own commerce (they owned taverns where they were able to sell wine to fellow slaves and the local population). D'Aranda recounts that in the *bagnio* of his master (the renegade corsair captain Ali Pegelin):

> *[…] il y avait aussi des tavernes et une église de chrétiens capable de contenir trois cents personnes pour entendre la messe.*[6]

In *relation* XLVII, d'Aranda even recalls how slaves were allowed to organize theater representations in the *bagnios* and how they performed a Spanish comedy: «assez bien faite sur l'histoire de Bélisaire.» He also recounts how the captives attending the plays enjoyed themselves and spent their time smoking and drinking, commenting:

> *Il arrive quelquefois que certains chrétiens qui sont en la puissance des Turcs soient moins esclaves de leurs maîtres que les hommes de leurs passions.*[7]

For example, in the *relation* XIX titled «*Les Turcs tiennent leur parole*», d'Aranda relates the critical role that his master Ali Pégelin had in negotiating his liberation and praises him explicitly for his integrity and for keeping his word.

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[6] Ibid., 36.
[7] Ibid., 237.

Rather than complaining about the violence he experienced, d'Aranda prefers, in general, to focus on a broader description of the lives of slaves in Algiers, detailing, for instance, his everyday struggles in the *bagnios* or his interactions with fellow slaves and the inhabitants of Algiers. Faced with violence, d'Aranda seems to prefer to focus on reflecting on his self-reliance and the ability to endure it. For d'Aranda, violence is more a test of the captive's character than an ordeal for his faith or soul.

When comparing d'Aranda's text with the Counter-Reformation era Barbary captivity examples or with the corpus of the Trinitarian and Mercedarian redemptive literature, it is clear that the *Relation de la captivité* departs significantly from the kind of stark Manichean views that characterized most of its predecessors. The different way d'Aranda depicts violence also entails a critical change in perspective with regard to the way the author perceives and describes the Muslim world in which he lived. Although the *Relation de la captivité* still portrays the Mediterranean and the North African regions as a locus of danger and instability, their images are no longer cast in a religious binary opposition, as in Friar Dan's writings. Instead, d'Aranda's narrative provides a much more nuanced image of the Islamic religion and its believers, avoiding generalizations as much as possible. D'Aranda never condemns Islam openly or directly in his text, preferring instead to denounce the specific cases of impiety or misbehavior of some of the individuals he encountered. In many passages of the *Relation de la captivité*, d'Aranda even goes as far as to recognize that there are pious followers of Islam and men of virtue among the Muslims living in Algiers, just as there are impious men among the Christian slaves.

Similarly, in another passage, d'Aranda describes a Turkish soldier named Cataborne Mostafa, who owned him while waiting for his liberation, and he paints a somehow tolerant and true-to-life picture of the man:

> *Et encore qu'il ne fît qu'un pauvre soldat, j'avais du bon temps avec lui, car il me disait souvent: «Emanuel, ne soyez pas mélancolique, pensez en vous-même que vous êtes mon patron et moi votre esclave.» Je mangeais avec lui et du même plat, étant assis à ses côtés les jambes croisées à la mode turquesque. Il aimait à faire bonne chère, et me disait souvent: «Emanuel, n'ai-je pas raison de faire bonne chère, car je n'ai ni femme ni enfant, et quand je viendrai à mourir, le pacha sera mon héritier, suivant la coutume de ce pays?» Je lui disais: «Oui, vous faites comme un sage homme doit faire, et vous avez raison de vivre à votre aise», car je ne pouvais parler autrement, à cause que je buvais et mangeais avec lui.*[8]

In other sections of the *Relation de la captivité*, d'Aranda even manifests what seems a genuine curiosity for the Islamic religion, to the point that he describes many of the Muslim religious practices in a lenient way, often making a direct comparison to comparable Christian practices. In one section of his book, the author defines Friday as "the Sunday of the Turks,"[9] and in another, he describes a muezzin call to prayer as a correlative of the "church bells."[10] Likewise, at the end of the first section of his *Relation*, d'Aranda gives a lengthy description of Ramadan by comparing it to the Christian Easter, and he notes how everyone, even Christian slaves, could have a place in the celebrations:

> *D'autre part j'étais fort aise de voir les solennités que les Turcs font quand ils célèbrent leurs Pâques, qu'ils appellent Pâque de Ramadan, car ils ont différentes Pâques. […] Cette fête dure huit jours. Elle est célébrée avec grande pompe et réjouissance. Hors de la ville on fait tous les jours des cavalcades et des jeux à cheval, que l' on appelle en espagnol juego de canas. […] Cette Pâques est aussi fort agréable aux chrétiens, car comme l'on donne en Flandre le jour du nouvel an une étrenne ou quelque chose aux serviteurs et aux servantes, de même les*

[8] Ibid., 51.
[9] Ibid., 16.
[10] Ibid., 110.

> *Turcs donnent le jour de Pâques de Ramadan quelque gratuité; les trois ou quatre premiers jours on ne fait travailler aucun esclave.*[11]

One aspect that particularly highlights the differences in perspective presented by d'Aranda versus the preceding redemptive and captivity accounts concerns the way in which the *Relation de la captivité* portrays renegades, the sizeable Christian apostate population who converted to Islam and made up a significant percentage of the population of Algiers at the time. Friar Dan, in his *Histoire de Barbarie*, expresses a blunt condemnation of apostasy, affirming that renegades existed in North Africa only because Christians slaves had either abjured their faith under the threat of violence or because they had given up hope of ever being redeemed. According to Dan, an individual can apostatize only because they already have an inborn penchant for evil. Dan explains that renegades have:

> *[…] une damnable inclination qui les rend si ennemis du nom Chrétiens, qu'ils surpassent en cruauté les Turcs naturels, tant ils ont de zèle pour cette maudite secte.*[12]

Friar Dan prefers to gloss over the reality that at the time, many Christians embraced Islam voluntarily, often doing so in search of a better life.

In d'Aranda's account, on the other hand, we find a depiction of apostasy that is almost at the antipodes of those that can be found in the Counter-Reformation redemptive Trinitarian or Mercedarian writings on Barbary. For example, in many passages of the *Relation de la captivité*, d'Aranda praises the honesty and virtue of some of the converted

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[11] Ibid., 60–61.
[12] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 337.

Christian renegades living in Algiers. While captive in the governor's palace, d'Aranda reports how he enjoyed the much-welcome help of a French renegade who was serving there.[13] In another passage, d'Aranda goes as far as to pay homage to another renegade living in the city—a captain of the local militia of Spanish origin named Saban Galan Agha, who had helped the author in the negotiations for his liberation—for his virtue and trustworthiness:

> *[…] nous trouvâmes bon de demander conseil à un renégat, maître de camp réformé, appelé Saban Galan Agha, estimé entre les Turcs et les chrétiens pour homme de bien, juste et sage, et aussi pour dire la vérité.*[14]

D'Aranda even dedicates an entire *relation particulière*, XIV titled «*Deux exemples de libéralité et de reconnaissance*», to singing the praises of Saban Galan Agha for helping a fellow Christian who was captured twice by privateers to regain his freedom both times.

However, although d'Aranda's account seems to put less emphasis on the element of inter-religious confrontation than many of its predecessors, it is far from unbiased. The *Relation de la captivité* still gives us a gruesome account of enslavement and the inhumanity of the captivity conditions, and this negative view is often paired with a generally negative depiction of Islam. D'Aranda also clearly displays many of the anti-Islamic stereotypes that permeated much of European culture at the time. For example, like many other early modern accounts of the Muslim World, d'Aranda often restates the old trope of an allegedly widespread practice of sodomy in North Africa, and he

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[13] D'Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 48.
[14] Ibid., 56.

highlights the risk of Christians being perverted while captive in Muslim lands.[15] D'Aranda also explicitly denounces the promiscuity of the living conditions of different Christian slaves and the local Muslim population in Algiers and condemns the negative influence that this intermixing of so many different cultures, religions, and languages had on the captives. For example, in describing life in Ali Pégelin's *bagnios*, d'Aranda mentions that Christian slaves had set up taverns there (one of the few activities that were formally forbidden to the Muslim population of the city but allowed for Christian slaves in the *bagnios*), and he notes the hypocrisy of many Muslims, especially the members of the Turkish Janissaries militia, who attended these taverns regularly to drink and "commit abominable sins."[16]

Of course, this difference in perspectives and attitudes toward corso, North Africa, and Islam was based in large part on the different life paths and backgrounds that separated d'Aranda from many of the authors of captivity and redemptive narratives who preceded him. As a bourgeois merchant, d'Aranda seemed to be writing not to promote a religious or political cause but for an audience that resembled him. Although a Catholic believer himself, d'Aranda was not directly affiliated with the Christian church or any of its religious orders and did not, of course, aim to solicit the donations of his fellow believers. Whereas in much of the preceding Barbary literature the experience of captivity had been depicted solely in the most negative way—with the evident intent of attaching an edifying religious value to the portrayal—in d'Aranda, there is a shift toward

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[15] Ibid., 61, 114.
[16] Ibid., 18.

what could be described as a non-religious edification, in which an interest in satisfying the curiosity of his bourgeois audience appears. This does not mean that the problem of interreligious confrontation is absent from d'Aranda's narrative; rather, the religious edification no longer takes center stage in his text. In this sense, the *Relation de la captivité* appears to propose a more secular perspective than any of the Barbary literature that precedes it.

Most recently, the Dutch historian Lisa Kattenberg suggested that *Relation de la captivité* can be read in light of the long-established Renaissance morally edifying neo-Stoic humanistic tradition (a tradition that was in vogue in the Low Countries at the time). Kattenberg argues, therefore, that we should consider the *Relation de la captivité* an example of "neo-Stoic moral prose."[17]

This neo-Stoic influence becomes especially evident if we compare d'Aranda's text with previous examples, such as the Trinitarian redemptive literature. In his preface to the reader, d'Aranda states, for instance, that he had provided:

> *[…] le récit des étranges et divers événements et rencontres, bonheurs et malheurs qui me sont arrivés au temps de mon voyage, ou que j'ai vu arriver à d'autres, desquels je confesserai ingénument avoir tiré autant ou peut-être plus de profit en peu de temps que de mes études de plusieurs années.*[18]

This passage is significant because it expresses the idea that all kinds of experiences, both positive and negative, can have an edifying value. This remains true even for an utterly negative experience, such as being enslaved, which, according to the

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[17] Lisa Kattenberg, "Moslims, 'Morale Deuchden' En Commercieel Succes Het Slavernijverslag van Emanuel d'Aranda, 1640–1682," *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 28, no. 1 (2012): 21–39.
[18] D'Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 23.

author, can retrospectively acquire an educational value. This is an entirely new perspective for a Barbary captivity narrative because it refuses to assign from the outset a moral condemnation of captivity, especially from a theological perspective.

As mentioned, d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité* of 1662 became a seminal text and a model, both morphologically and thematically, for most of the Barbary captivity narratives that followed it. A clear example of this influence can be seen in du Chastelet's *L'Odyssée*. Unlike its predecessors, *L'Odyssée* also abandons almost completely the anti-Muslim rhetoric that had been rampant in the Barbary captivity genre—the ideological approach that is evident, for example, in the work of du Lisdam or Friar Dan—and that had generally contributed to conferring a particularly dramatic tone to most of the captivity narratives of the first half of the seventeenth century. Du Chastelet chooses instead to offer a much more realistic representation of corso, Islam, and North Africa in his text by no longer representing the experience of slavery as part of a holy war, instead portraying it as an economic system, albeit still a brutal one.

For example, at the very beginning of his account, when he describes his first encounter with the Muslim corsairs, du Chastelet comments:

> *Les Turcs, mais surtout les corsaires d'Alger, de Tunis, Tripoli et autres côtes de Barbarie, font plutôt la guerre par intérêt, que par gloire: et à moins de faire rencontre d'un navire marchand, ils ont grande répugnance au hasard de l'abordage, réservant, ordinairement, la poudre et le boulet à faire des constitutions, et en tirer profit. L'expérience en est journalière, étant à remarquer, que les Anglais et Hollandais ne leur donnant autrefois point de quartier, ceux-ci, sans ressentiment de vengeance et représailles de cruauté, leur ont toujours laissé la vie, plutôt par espoir d'en tirer de l'argent en les revendant, que par pitié qu'ils*

n'aient jamais eue d'ôter ce qui ne se peut plus racheter, et qui n'en vaut pas les frais sans la liberté.[19]

This first scene is indicative of the tone that du Chastelet will set throughout the rest of his text: He recognizes here first of all how the Western Mediterranean corso was fueled primarily by economic interests, rather than by religious considerations. Du Chastelet also implicitly acknowledges the fact that corso was not only practiced in North Africa but involved all the Mediterranean and European nations, pointing to the fact that acts of violence were practiced by all sides.

A similar political realism appears in the preface of the text, which du Chastelet dedicates to M. de la Vrillière (then-secretary of state) and to Colbert. In the dedication, du Chastelet exhorts both to intervene in the Western Mediterranean and to obtain the release of all the French slaves. Although similar calls for intervention were not uncommon in previous captivity narratives, unlike his predecessors, du Chastelet glosses over any reference to religious opposition and instead pledges French intervention for the very pragmatic reason that corso was harmful to French commerce in the region.[20]

In general, like d'Aranda, du Chastelet offers a much more complex and less binary understanding of the multifaceted relationship between Muslim masters and Christian slaves. For instance, contrary to the idea expressed by Friar Dan that Muslim masters enjoyed inflicting pain on their slaves, du Chastelet notes that this was rarely the case. Instead, the Muslim masters cared in general for the well-being of their slaves, if

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[19] Du Lisdam and du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608); Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 59.

[20] Ibid., 73.

only for the very pragmatic reason that they represented a significant economic investment for them. Du Chastelet remembers having witnessed a Muslim master taking outstanding care of his sick British slave until he died.[21]

Unlike Friar Dan, du Chastelet no longer depicts slaves as merely passive victims but as individuals who – although under particularly difficult circumstances – were still able to retain some degree of agency and they used it to try to influence their situation. For example, when the author of *L'Odyssée* was at the service of the *odobashi* Beran, he recalls how he would frequently solicit his master to reveal the price that he would ask for his ransom, a piece of information that eventually helped du Chastelet in negotiating his auction to the slave trader Car-Ibrahim.[22]

A further factor that links du Chastelet's account to d'Aranda's—and one of the most significant ones—can be found in the analogous way in which both texts offer a nuanced portrayal of Muslim believers and the Muslim religion in general. As noted, the image of Muslims that had existed in the French Barbary captivity literature before d'Aranda had been, with very few exceptions, extremely negative. Muslim characters who appeared in these texts had been constantly represented as a dangerous enemy, a diabolical foe moved by a deep religious animosity toward Christians.

Du Chastelet, like d'Aranda, moves significantly away from this dehumanizing and flat representation. Although in both *L'Odyssée* and the *Relation de la captivité* the

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[21] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608); Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 138.
[22] Ibid., 125.

Muslim Other is still generally despised and feared, the reasons for this hostility are concrete and pragmatic. Like d'Aranda, du Chastelet even offers praise for some of the Muslims he encounters. For example, in several passages, he describes his master, the *odobashi* Beran, as a «brave homme», «doux», «facile», and « désintéressé».[23] Similar remarks also appear throughout the rest of the book from other European slaves, such as when in one instance one of du Chastelet's fellow prisoners describes one of the Janissary captains (a *Boulouk-bachi*) as a « très galant homme.»[24]

This pragmatism vis-à-vis corso and slavery is combined in *L'Odyssée* with thinly veiled critiques of the contemporary French political engagement in the Mediterranean, as well as with numerous irreverent remarks against Catholic bigotry and many licentious passages. All these elements together must have genuinely shocked the sensibility of a good part of the French audience at the time, since *L'Odyssée* seems to have been censured shortly after its first publication.[25]

Double-edged observations—containing praise for the Muslim world on the one hand and a thinly veiled critique of the European worldview on the other—are not uncommon in *L'Odyssée*. A striking example is a passage in which du Chastelet arrives at the point of openly discussing the practice of slavery in France, mentioning that it existed there in the past, while at the same time suggesting that the simple fact that there are no more slaves does not automatically mean that no other forms of servitude exist:

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[23] Ibid., 104.
[24] Ibid., 99.
[25] Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')*, 103.

[Ils ne sont] pas à croire, quand ils déclament, que pour appuyer seulement une étymologie bizarre, et immortaliser le nom français, nous avons voulu obstinément que tous tant naturels qu'étrangers, demeurant chez nous, fussent francs et libres; l'esclavage étant assez conforme aux lois civiles de la société, quand il est adouci par le Christianisme, et ayant été longtemps en usage et pratiquée. La servitude ne laissait pas de produire quelque bien politique; parce qu'il n'y avait point de personne si malheureuse, qui ne fût vendiquée par quelque patron qui en avait soin, et semblait être le seul remède, quoiqu'apparemment cruel, que pussent avoir ces misérables et désespérés. Mais soit que nous soyons plus ou moins humains ou plus chrétiens, nous n'avons en France que des ombres de servitudes, qui sont plutôt réelles que personnelles, et qui se discernent seulement dans la possession des héritages chargés de rentes et de devoirs.[26]

These words sound like an act of accusation against the social order in the French kingdom at the time, and if so, they were particularly audacious. It is, in any case, one of the very few sections in any of the early modern French Barbary literature that openly mentions the subject of slavery from a European perspective, and it remains particularly striking coming from an individual who experienced slavery himself.

Passages such as the ones just mentioned seem to signal that *L'Odyssée*, like d'Aranda's work, demonstrates a certain level of religious tolerance. Such observations have also prompted Guy Turbet-Delof to say that *L'Odyssée* displays overall a "progressive Catholic" outlook, which is certainly true if we compare du Chastelet's work to much of the preceding Barbary literature. [27] However, despite the merit of having contributed to complicating the unidimensional stereotype that was rampant in the previous Barbary corpus vis-à-vis the Islamic world, *L'Odyssée*, like d'Aranda's text, never arrives at the point of advocating for tolerance toward the Muslim believers and

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[26] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 65.
[27] Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')*, 236.

their religion. Instead, *L'Odyssée* also includes many of the same Orientalist stereotypes discussed above, which circulated widely in European culture at the time.

The clear mark of anti-Muslim prejudice can be easily noted in several passages of the book, such as in a section in which the author describes a scene of Muslim ablutions and prayer after a privateer crew returned from their raiding:

> *Ce ne furent peu après que remerciements à Dieu et à leurs prophètes de l'heureux retour, et qu'ablutions mutuelles faites, par les uns et les autres depuis le sommet de la tête jusqu'aux talons; les zélés en cette religion se mettant nus, en conviant les camarades de les ondoyer de quantité d'eau salée, qu'ils regardent avec autant de patience que de satisfaction, et encore, avec plus de créance de purification de l'âme et du corps. Les renégats portugais, anglais, espagnols et français n'en tirent pas moins, autant par hypocrisie et politique, que par attache et ferveur; la plupart n'étant pas trop assidus aux cérémonies ottomanes, s'ils ne sont observés ou si dès la tendre jeunesse, ou incapacité de discernement, ils n'ont laissé le christianisme que les Turcs méprisent davantage qu'ils ne haïssent, l'alcoran n'étant qu'un mélange de maximes confuses du Christianisme et du Judaïsme, dans lequel ils surannent aussi bien que nous la doctrine de Moïse, ne la faisant passer dans chacun des Azoares que comme un coup d'essai, une pure cérémonie, ou comme un ébauchement mystérieux, et non comme un achèvement de religion, ou réalité de créance, et sincérité de profession: à l'égard de la nôtre, ils la révèrent bien plus dans sa naissance que dans son progrès, se persuadant qu'elle s'est altérée et ses sectaires corrompus.*[28]

This section is full of stereotypes on Islam—especially the idea that Islam is a heresy based on pretense, a hypocrisy that has no true believers at its core—as well as a classic stereotype against renegades, who were viewed as having converted to Islam to have an easier life in North Africa. Similar remarks reappear frequently throughout the rest of the text, such as when du Chastelet describes the many superstitious practices of

[28] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 67–68.

Muslim pirates, who conducted sea sacrifices—or what he viewed as pagan rituals—to propitiate their fortune.[29] In summary, *L'Odyssée* plays with the entire panoply of orientalist stereotypes, helping in many ways to spread and perpetuate them.

3.2 The evolution of the captivity narratives

The rapid expansion of the Ottoman influence in the Mediterranean during the sixteenth century—combined with the new economic, political, and social dynamics brought on by corso in the Western Mediterranean starting at the end of the sixteenth century—had deeply affected the European perception of the region. The French Barbary captivity and redemption narratives of the beginning of the seventeenth century reflect in many ways the concerns and fears that had spread through Europe vis-à-vis what was perceived as a growing menace from corso. This anxiety surfaces in the early examples of Barbary captivity narratives, which cast corso as part of a larger interreligious animosity between Christians and Muslims, offering a very straightforward Manichean moral choice to their readers between tormentors and victims. These texts also tended to underline a radical cultural distance separating their authors' worldviews from the customs and religious traditions of the Muslim world, spreading a negative image of Barbary and its inhabitants in a declared militant effort.

This attitude toward corso was also reinforced in large part by the fact that the captivity narratives offered their readers an image of inferiority; they present the viewpoint of someone who was enslaved, which by definition puts their authors in an

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[29] Ibid., 106.

uncomfortable position of dependence vis-à-vis their Muslim masters. This perspective reappears throughout the canon until the very end of the century. In his introduction to *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* published in 1690, Antoine Quartier still writes, for instance:

> *On peut dire que ces tourments ne sont pas moins cruels que ceux des premiers martyrs, il est vrai que les Esclaves peuvent finir leurs souffrances lors qu'ils ont de quoi se racheter, mais ils ne font pas moins Martyrs que ceux de la primitive Eglise, puisqu'ils souffrent pour la foi de Jésus Christ.*[30]

Most of the French Barbary captivity narratives were published during the second half of the seventeenth century. Before the mid-century, only Henry du Lisdam's *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille* of 1609 and the translation of Portuguese author Joâo Mascarenhas' *Esclave à Alger, Récit de captivité de Joâo Mascaren* (1621–1626) had appeared. Starting with the *Relation de captivité* by Emanuel d' Aranda of 1662, we have then *L'Odyssée* by René du Chastelet des Boy (1665), *L'Heureux esclave* by Pierre-Martin de la Martinière (1674), Gallonyé's *Histoire d'un esclave* (1679), Germain Moüette's *Relation* (1683), Quartier's *L'esclave religieux, et ses avantures* (1690), and *Histoire de l'esclavage d'un marchand de la ville de Cassis, à Tunis* by Antoine Galland (1709).

Thematically, the texts published in French during the second half of the seventeenth century stand out in comparison to the early examples because they appear to

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[30] Antoine (1632?–1702) Quartier, *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* (Paris, Daniel Hortemels, 1690), accessed November 9, 2016, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k104958t.

depart significantly from the religious fanaticism that prevailed in most of the preceding literature, offering instead a more complex portrayal of Islam, corso, and North Africa. As already noted above, the publication of Emanuel d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité* in the 1660s marks in many ways a turning point for the genre; this text is the first that seems to subvert the rigid religious and ideological condemnation that dominated in the previous examples. After d'Aranda, the captivity narratives rapidly evolved. They did so, as suggested earlier, by making more and more room for an element of entertainment in their content, much in line with the general aesthetic and narrative tendencies mentioned earlier in this chapter and summarized by Jacques Chupeau with his formula of «*crise de la fiction*».

In his introduction to the *Relation de la captivité* of 1662, d'Aranda himself recognized that satisfying the reader's curiosity was one of the primary goals of his text:

> *Comme un matelot parle entre ses amis de tempêtes et de naufrages, un soldat de batailles et de plaies, un berger fait mention du loup dans son troupeau, du même style je commencerai à vous entretenir […].*[31]

This observation is interesting because it also suggests the idea that portraying the experience of captivity could have educational and entertaining value that is not merely exemplary. This is an original concept, quite alien to the Barbary captivity narratives published before, especially if we compare it with the counter-Reformation era texts, such as those of du Lisdam and the Trinitarian and Mercedarian redemptive literature.

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[31] D'Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 24.

However, how did the shift toward satisfying the reader's curiosity occur in the latter Barbary captivity narratives? Furthermore, which narrative and thematic forms did authors such as d'Aranda use to achieve this? To answer this question, we must first consider that the French Barbary captivity narratives of the seventeenth century had to invent themselves morphologically. Unlike other contemporary literary genres, such as poetry or theater, the captivity narratives lacked any recognized status and did not have a precise model their authors could follow—especially not one from the classical tradition. Therefore, the Barbary captivity narratives had to borrow from the narrative and rhetorical formats that were available, those that were already familiar to their audience, as well as socially accepted and sanctioned. Thus, it is not surprising that these texts looked to the literary codes in their contemporary cultural environment to translate a singular traumatic experience—captivity or enslavement—into a form that could be collectively recognized and understood by their audience. The consequence of this experimental alloy is that the Barbary captivity narratives began to resemble in many ways the models they imitated. At the same time, these models partly shaped the form and the content of the captivity narratives, predetermining what the author could say about his captivity experience. In other words, their editorial success largely depended on their ability to mobilize their readers' foreknowledge and to apply available cultural codes to better connect and communicate with their audience. They employed easily accessible literary forms and cultural codes to better appeal to their readers' expectations.

3.3 The Influence of fictional literary models on the Barbary captivity narratives

Stylistically, the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives absorbed elements from a wide range of non-fictional and fictional texts. For example, one of the most apparent and prominent influences on the Barbary captivity narrative corpus comes from the Renaissance geographical and historiographical erudite tradition.[32] Several texts can be considered precursors and significant sources of inspiration in this sense, starting with Leo Africanus' *Description of Africa*, which was first published in Italian in Venice in 1550 by Giovanni Battista Ramusio. The *Description of Africa* contains ample passages describing several regions of the Maghreb and their history, as well as information regarding the fauna and flora of North Africa. Several works written by Spanish historians also enjoyed ample diffusion, including those of the chronicler Luis del Marmol y Carvajal (author of the *Descripción general de África* in 1573, a work that was itself based on Leo Africanus' text),[33] and the *Topographia e historia general de Argel* of 1612 by Diego de Haëdo.[34] Although Haëdo's text was never translated into French, it was a widely circulated source in Europe concerning North Africa, second in prestige only to Leo Africanus' text.

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[32] Antonio de Sosa, "Introduction," in *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam: Antonio de Sosa's Topography of Algiers (1612)*, ed. María Antonia Garcés (University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 1–78.
[33] Luis del Marmol y Carvajal, *Descripción general de África, sus guerras y vicisitudes, desde la fundación del mahometismo hasta el año 1571*. (Granada, 1573)
[34] Some critics question the notion that Diego de Haëdo is the author of this text, and some have even suggested that its real author is Miguel de Cervantes; see Diego de Haëdo and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Topographie et histoire générale d'Alger: où l'on verra des cas étranges, des morts effrayantes et des tourments exquis d'après le manuscrit original attribué à Cervantès, publié en 1612 à Valladolid, Espagne, sous le nom de Diego de Haëdo*, ed. Fred Romano, 1 vols. (Carnac: les Éditions du Menhir, 2015).

In his *Histoire de Barbarie* of 1637, Friar Dan devotes the entire second book to a detailed description of the history and geography of the North African region, as well as its cultural, social, and political situation. Friar Dan includes information on the places he visited—especially with regard to Algiers—but also on the regions that he never saw, including detailed accounts of Tunis, Salé, Fez, Tripoli, and Tetuan.[35]

A similar geo-historical section is also present in d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité* of 1662. In the second section of the book, titled «*sommaire de l'antiquité de la ville d'Alger*», d'Aranda briefly retraces the history of Algiers from antiquity to the present and includes a cursory description of the city's topography and its political and social organization. D'Aranda explicitly recognized the influence of the erudite Renaissance models at the end of his second section, in which he states:

> *J'espère que le lecteur aura la bonté de m'excuser si j'ai abusé de sa patience au récit de l'antiquité et assiette d'Alger, croyant y être obligé par la faute de quelques chroniqueurs, qui confondent les années, les noms et les nations, prenant les Turcs pour les Mores. Touchant la description plus ample de la ville et de ses forteresses, les mœurs des habitants, des corsaires, des marchands, des métiers, de leurs habillements, des marabouts ou santons, des cérémonies, des exercices de femmes, des fêtes de Pâques, des vices et des vertus et ce qui s'est fait au siècle passé dans cette ville, je l'ai estimé superflu, comme étant choses vulgaires, rapporté par quantité d'historiens, qui parlent des Turcs en général.*[36]

Before publishing his *Relation de la captivité du Sr Moüette* in 1683, Germain Moüette had already published a substantial geographical and historical chronicle of Morocco titled *Histoire des conquestes de Mouley Archy*, in which he closely follows the

[35] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*.
[36] Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 106.

same Renaissance model and describes the history and geography of the kingdom of Morocco.

However, French seventeenth-century Barbary captivity narratives also borrowed from purely fictional models. The texts that began appearing at the beginning of the century evolved in a literary landscape that was rapidly changing and experimenting with a wide range of new narrative formats, such as the novella, the novel (with all its variants), the autobiography, and large theatrical productions.

Born amid the French Baroque period, the early captivity narratives bore substantial marks of the literary tropes of this time, including the widespread use of short narrative episodic structures. The primary influence in this sense comes from the Italian novella's tradition, transmitted to the Barbary captivity narratives through its French proto-gothic Baroque heir, the *histoires tragiques*.

The *histoires tragiques* ("tragic stories") were a peculiar French short fictional genre that peaked between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was a short narrative form stemming as far back as Boccaccio's short stories within the Italian novelistic tradition. In fact, the origin of this literary trend is the French translation of Matteo Bandello's *Novelle*—which were published in French by Pierre Boaistuau with the title *Histoires tragiques* in 1559—and which became a popular literary success at the time, directly influencing the emergence of an entire genre (hence the name).[37] Although they employ the same episodic format as the novella, the French

[37] The *histoires tragiques* were a very popular genre at the time, and many versions circulated imitating Bandello's original, including by François de Belleforest (new edition of the *Histoires Tragiques*, 1570), Jacques Yver (*Le*

Baroque *histoires tragiques* differ from the Italian model in that they deliberately choose to portray dark and gory subjects, often indulging in depictions of violence and cruelty. All the *histoires tragiques* show a morbid interest in vividly representing pain and suffering and the darkest side of human nature, or what the literary critic Nicolas Cremona labels «*le pathétique et l'horreur*».[38] These short *histoires tragiques* were generally inspired by current events, particularly by the most vicious news and events that caught the imagination of their contemporary French audience. This reference to real events provides the *histoires tragiques* with at least a pretension of realism. These texts are also among the earliest examples of literary production in France that display the so-called "Turkish" and "Moorish" themes; they often feature a broad array of the widely circulating contemporary anti-Muslim stereotypes and tropes, from tyrannical Sultans to depraved oriental sexuality.[39]

All the elements that appear in the *histoires tragiques* also resurface in several ways in all captivity narratives of the seventeenth century. Thematically, both genres share a penchant for the vivid depiction of pain, and both employ particularly gory descriptions of suffering and torture. Both genres also claim some form of realism and a connection to recent and real events. Likewise, neither genre hesitates to cross into pure

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Printemps d'Yver, 1572), Vérité Habanc (*Nouvelles Histoires tant tragiques que comiques*, 1585), Bénigne Poissenot (*Nouvelles Histoires Tragiques*, 1586), Alexandre Sylvain (*Epitomes de cent histoires tragicques*, 1581), Bruneau de Rivedoux (*Histoire véritable de certains voyages périlleux et hasardeux sur la mer*, 1599), and Jean-Pierre Camus. See Lever, *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle*, chap. IV.

[38] Nicolas Cremona, *Poétique Des Histoires Tragiques (1559–1644) : "Pleines de Chair et de Sang,"* Bibliothèque de la Renaissance, 2108–5471; 78 (Paris : Classiques Garnier, 2019., 2019).

[39] Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520–1660).* (Paris: Boivin, 1941), 522–527.

fictional invention when they deem it appropriate or to draw from the same pool of anti-Muslim tropes.

However, even more remarkably, the captivity narratives often use the same short, self-contained episodic format of the novella and the *histoires tragiques*. Almost all the Barbary captivity narratives published during the second half of the seventeenth century open with the author relating the conditions of his or her captivity. This part is generally followed by a long series of short stories or episodes (generally labeled *histoires* or *relations*),[40] short, self-contained episodes, each forming a sub-plot to the main narrative while also expanding it in some form. These short *relations* relate in general episodes that the author either witnessed directly or affirms having heard about during his captivity. The *relation* can also focus on the vicissitudes of a specific character, on the description of a historical or cultural aspect of the local North African culture, or on a remarkable event. Most of these short episodes are thematically close to the *histoires tragiques* in that they often focus on crude, grotesque, or bizarre topics.

This episodic structure is already at work in Friar Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie* of 1637, in which a series of short episodes have this format precisely. For instance, Friar Dan uses this narrative form in several sections of his fifth book titled *Du martyre de quelque esclave Chrétiens pour la défense de leur fois*. Here we find several short, self-contained episodes recounting the vicissitudes of a Christian slave or group of slaves and

[40] In his dictionary, Furetière defines «*relation*» as: «*se dit plus particulierement des adventures des Voyageurs, des observations qu'ils font dans leurs voyages*». Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel, Contenant Generalement Tous Les Mots François*.

their suffering in resisting the abuses of captivity. For example, in one such episode, Friar Dan describes the execution of a Spanish nobleman named Dom Pedro de Carvajal for having resisted abjuring his faith while held slave in Algiers.[41] The influence of the hagiographic and martyrologic tradition is again quite evident in these passages, as is the preeminence of the religious moralizing and edifying intent that characterizes the rest of Dan's work.

However, it is mainly thanks to Emanuel d'Aranda's *Relation de captivité* that these short stories became an integral part of every subsequent Barbary captivity narrative.[42] The last section of d'Aranda's *Relation de Captivité*—and the longest one by far—introduces a collection of short accounts labeled «*relations particulières*» (thirty-seven in the first edition that will grow up to fifty in the later editions). These *relations* are concise narratives—generally no longer than a page or two—each relating a different episode or anecdote that concerns either d'Aranda's captivity itself or a person or circumstance that the author witnessed or heard about during his time in captivity. Whereas some of the *relations* directly expand d'Aranda's main narrative presented in the first part of his book, most of them function as stand-alone episodes.

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[41] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 444–446.

[42] The *Relation de captivité* relates the story of Emanuel d'Aranda's captivity in Algiers from 1640–1642. The first part of the book, Captured out of the coasts of Brittany, with two fellow travelers, Reynier Saldens and Jean-Baptiste Caloen. In his years of captivity, Emmanuel d'Aranda is owned by several masters, including by the Jewish shipowner Ciscas, by Agha Saban Gallan, by Governor Alli Pegelin, and by two janissary Cataborne individuals, Mostafa and Mahomet Celibi Oiga. He describes in detail his life in the Algier's bagnio, offering a lively sketch of the everyday life of a slave in Algiers, with its multicultural background. After a complex negotiation (40–51), he is freed in exchange for the release of a group of Algerian citizens who were held captive in the Low Countries. The second part of the texts is an anthology of thirty-seven short stories that Aranda witnessed while captive, ranging from the history of the city of Algiers, anecdotes of escaped slaves, cultural observations (e.g., funerals), and comedic and tragic stories.

The subjects of these *relations* vary greatly. They include everything from descriptions of events the author witnessed while staying at the *bagnios* of his master, Ali Pegelin (IV «*Les ignorants s'imaginent d'étranges choses*» or XXX «*Querelles d'esclaves espagnols et portugai*»), to the description of the way a Jewish master spied on his newly-bought slaves (IX «*Un nouvel esclave doit se méfier de tout le monde*»), to the reporting of a conversation the author says he overheard between two renegades concerning their plan to use poison (XVIII «*L'usage du poison commun en Afrique*»). Others describe aspects of the North African and Islamic local practices, customs, and traditions. Some of the *relations* provide proto-ethnographical or cultural observations. Some are moralizing or edifying in tone—not far from the examples found in the Trinitarian and Mercedarian redemptive literature (XI «*Trait d'ingratitude*», XXXVI «*Trait de générosité*», XXXVII «*Évasion manquée*», XLI «*Renégat repenti*», L «*Évasion de deux Marseillais*», III «*Nouvelle Madeleine*»). Other *relations particulières* simply recount the life and adventures on the Mediterranean sea (II «*Bravoure d'un capitaine hollandais*», V «*Hardie évasion de cinq Turcs*», XXI «*La vérole guérie à force de rames*», XXIV «*Fortune et sagesse d'un rais*», XXVI «*Niaiserie d'un marinier dunkerquois*»). Some of the *relations particulières* expand on the author's experiences in the *bagnios* or during his captivity (IV and XXX), whereas others concern individuals that the author encountered in Algiers, such as fellow Christian captives (XXXIII, XXXIX), or Muslim inhabitants of Algiers (XIV, XXXIV, XII, XXIX).

Although the previously mentioned practice of interpolating short, self-contained episodes within an overarching plot is not a wholly new feature of the Barbary captivity

and redemptive narratives, the way d'Aranda uses this short narrative form in the last section of his book introduces a significant innovation—both stylistically and thematically—to the previous corpus. As mentioned previously, Friar Dan had already used a somewhat similar structure in his *Histoire de Barbarie*. However, the use of such self-contained episodes was still very limited in the rest of Friar Dan's work, and this is also the case for most of the preceding Barbary captivity and redemption narratives published before the middle of the seventeenth century, including in the writings of du Lisdam. Friar Dan also used these short episodes to strengthen the impact of the main narrative by providing concrete examples.

In d'Aranda's *Relation de captivité*, the *relations particulières* are used instead to stress the diversity of experiences that the author encountered, with the result of offering the reader a multifaced and at times contradictory image of North Africa. For example in *Relation* III, titled «*Constance d'une esclave chrétienne à persévérer dans sa foi*», d'Aranda tells the story of a young Spanish girl captured at sea who had become the slave of the Pasha's wife and was coerced into converting to Islam but remained faithful to Christianity. This story is very similar to others found in many other captivity narratives, and it is also very close to what Friar Dan observes in his *Histoire de Barbarie* regarding enslaved young Christian women who, according to him, were almost always compelled to apostatize.[43] However, in *Relation* XXII, titled «*D'un Français qui voulait se faire turc et demeura chrétien malgré lui*», d'Aranda reports another story of a French slave named

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[43] Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie*, 407.

Jean—also at the service of the renegade Ali Pégelin, d'Aranda's master—who one day decided to convert to Islam to avoid serving in the galleys. One day, Jean went to his master dressed in Turkish fashion, asking "to be called Mostapha." Upon hearing this, Ali Pégelin immediately ordered his servants to beat up Jean until the poor slave cried out:

> *Je m'appelle Jean et non pas Mostafa. Je suis chrétien et non pas turc, et je remettrai mes habits chrétiens.» Ce qu'il fit si bien que Pégelin pouvait dire avoir remis un chrétien dans le christianisme à grands coups de bâton.*[44]

We can see how these two stories offer quite opposite perspectives on the same subject. On the one hand, d'Aranda acknowledges that some Christian slaves were under some degree of pressure to apostasize in Algiers, but he also implicitly recognizes that forced conversions were far from being the norm, clearly contradicting other authors, such as Friar Dan.

The use of the *relations particulières* has a significant impact on d'Aranda's narrative structure. First, these short episodes break the linearity of the author's main narrative by introducing a cacophony of situations and perspectives, adding a layer of complexity to the account. However, the *relations particulières* also allow d'Aranda's book to expand the temporal and spatial linearity of his main captivity narrative by including episodes that are not necessarily directly related to it.

Most recently, Dutch historian Lisa Kattenberg had the opportunity to study d'Aranda's original Dutch manuscript, the one that served as the source for all the printed

[44] D'Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 165.

versions of the *Relation de la captivité*, including the first one published in French in 1662. In comparing the two versions, Kattenberg notes that the stories that compose the *relations particulières* were not present in the original manuscript version and were, therefore, a later addition to the printed ones.[45] Unfortunately, lacking more evidence, Kattenberg was not able to determine whether the choice of adding the *relations particulières* to the printed text was made by d'Aranda himself, by the Brussels printer Jean Mommartif, or by both. Regardless, the decision to include the *relations particulières* in the printed version signals a clear editorial choice.

In any case, the inclusion of the *relations particulières* disrupts the conventional structure of the first part of the *Relation de la captivité*, the one corresponding with the manuscript version, by increasing the complexity of the main narrative, thus also augmenting the entertaining quality of d'Aranda's text.

The same short narrative form can also be observed in du Chastelet's *Odyssée*. Several short episodes are intertwined in this text, such as the one the author presents in chapter thirteen. In this short section, du Chastelet reports the story of a Spanish Augustinian father, Père Dominique, who was captured on board a ship by North African privateers. Du Chastelet describes how, as a slave, Père Dominique lived a debauched life in Algiers until, fearing redemption by his order and a return to Spain, he decided to abjure his faith and convert to Islam. However, a few months later, Père Dominique,

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[45] Lisa Kattenberg, "The free slave. Morality, neostoicism and publishing strategy in Emanuel d'Aranda's Algiers and its slavery, 1640–1682", in M. Klarer (ed.), *Piracy in the Mediterranean. Early modern Barbary narratives*, London, 2019.

disturbed by the consequences of his actions, decided to repent and convert back to Christianity, only to be immediately sentenced to death and burned at the stake by the local authorities. Du Chastelet affirms that he witnessed the execution, and he relates the entire scene in gruesome detail, with a level of violence that resembles the pathetic tone of many *histoires tragiques*.[46]

A similar grotesque depiction reappears in the many *histoires* found in Moüette's *Relation de Captivité* (1683). In one episode, the author narrates the story of two young Spanish subjects he met who, having been sent to Peñón de Vélez for their crimes, decided to flee and seek refuge from the governor of Tétouan.[47] During a cross-examination upon their arrival, one declared that he wished to become a Muslim and "to renounce his country, family, friends, and God." The governor, enraged at the suggestion that the Moslems were a godless people, promptly had him executed. His companion, who gave the more prudent explanation that he had tired of living under the "false law of the Christians," was accepted, turned corsair, and later died at the stake in Seville after attempting to force his parents into Moroccan slavery to satisfy a whim of his Muslim mistress.

It is interesting to note that these short grotesque episodes appear with even higher frequency in the more fictional examples, such as in *L'Heureux esclave* by Pierre-Martin de la Martinière (1674). As mentioned above, *L'Heureux esclave* is the supposed

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[46] Henry Du Lisdam and Réné Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608); Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, ed. Christian Zonza, Collection Mediterranea (Bouchène, 2012), 113–116.
[47] Germain Moüette, *Relation de la captivité du S. Moüette dans les royaumes de Fez et de Maroc...*, 1683.

autobiographical account of the complex vicissitudes and travels of the narrator and author, Pierre-Martin la Martinière, and his five years of captivity in several cities of the Barbary Coast.[48] The account, however—as suggested by Guy Turbet Delof—is mostly fabricated. It is an imaginary account that takes free inspiration and material from other Barbary captivity narratives, even plagiarizing entire sections.[49] In his text, la Martinière inserts several episodes that directly evoke the style and themes of the *histoires tragiques*. For example, he describes in vivid detail the *falaque* (the traditional early modern method of torturing by whipping the bare feet) inflicted on a fellow Spanish Christian slave accused of stealing his master's cap, the impaling of a thief and smuggler of slaves in Salé, the author's heroic fight with a giant snake that attacked one of the Tétouan's guards, the history of a Muslim convict in Algiers who was condemned to be strangled by a Christian as a degrading punishment, an inhabitant of Algiers who was impaled for having stabbed a janissary of the Ottoman guard, and the punishment of a Muslim slave owner for having fornicated with his Christian slave. This list should suffice to show how *L'Heureux esclave* chooses to indulge in particularly gruesome subjects and amply exploit the panoply of contemporary negative anti-Muslim stereotypes, which are pushed to a paroxysm.

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[48] La Martinière's story begins when, as a young orphan, he is captured on a boat to the West Indies and brought as a captive to Morocco by Salé's pirates. Here, he is forced to serve as a surgeon on their galleys in raids against Christian ships. After a shipwreck in Malaga and a brief moment of freedom while attempting to return to France, La Martinière is captured again by Tétouan's pirates. Back in Morocco, the author serves the Sultan of Tétouan until he is sent as a gift to the kingdom of Kuku (near Algiers) as part of an embassy. Then, in a conflict between the Kuku kingdom and the city of Algiers, the narrator is taken as a war prisoner and ends up in the service of several masters of Algiers before being forced to serve again as a surgeon on Algerian pirates' galleys. He is finally rescued by the knights of Malta and happily returned to France.

[49] Turbet-Delof, *Bibliographie Critique Du Maghreb Dans La Litterature Française, 1532–1715*, 205.

It is interesting to note that the quasi-gothic taste for the overt depiction of violence in *L'Heureux esclave* appears to have a quite different function than it had in the early Barbary captivity and redemptive literature. As with in the quasi-martyrologic imagery of the texts of authors such as du Lisdam and Friar Dan, the representation of violence is also paramount in la Martinière's text. However, whereas in the previous examples it served the precise function explained earlier (as a basis to promote the virtues of resistance in the logic of exemplarity that dominates in these texts), there is a shift in the way it is used by la Martinière: The violence no longer has any moral connotation; instead, it serves to lure the reader's interest and satisfy his or her morbid curiosity.

Short stories like those found in the works of Friar Dan, d'Aranda, du Chastelet, and Moüette clearly display the stylistic and thematic influence of the *histoires tragiques*. Even when these episodes leave some ground for plausibility, their exaggerated—if not entirely fabricated—nature seems to tease the reader's curiosity with macabre details while recirculating old anti-Muslim stereotypes. Similar short episodes are abundant in most captivity narratives, such as in *Histoire d'un esclave* by Gallonyé (1679) and in Quartier's *L'esclave religieux, et ses aventures* (1690).

Of course, the novella and the *histoires tragiques* are not the sole influences for the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives. For instance, the narrative structure of many Barbary captivity narratives is, in many ways, morphologically similar to the form of the *roman à tiroir*. Often, these sub-plots are introduced by one of the characters in the text as an oral narration, functioning as a sort of *mise en abyme*, a tale within a tale. This narrative structure was widely used in the French Baroque literary canon by the

romans heroïques, a Baroque genre that was particularly popular in France during the first half of the seventeenth century.[50] This genre favored long, intricate narrative structures, which resulted in extremely articulated plots and were usually set in exotic locations inspired by faraway historical and geographical scenes. Examples include novels such as *Ibrahim ou l'illustre bassa* (published in four volumes in 1641) by Madeleine de Scudéry (aka, Mademoiselle de Scudéry) and her brother Georges, who were prevalent authors at this time.[51]

Examples of the use of a similar format, *à tiroir*, can be found in many of the seventeenth-century French captivity narratives. The whole *Histoire de l'esclavage d'un marchand de la ville de Cassis, à Tunis* by Antoine Galland (1709) is, for instance, a long narrative *à tiroir* itself.[52] In this text, the French traveler and author Antoine Galland recounts—as in a story within a story—the adventures of a fellow citizen, Jean Bonnet, and his Tunisian captivity. Similarly, Germain Moüette, in his *Relation* (1683), uses this narrative device several times, such as when he narrates the (probably fictional) episode of Pedro le Gascon, a runaway French slave who escaped captivity by disguising himself as a Marabout.[53]

Barbary captivity authors used this form of *à tiroir* literary device to enlarge the spectrum of the material covered in their accounts by including third-person narratives.

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[50] Lever, *Le Roman Français Au XVIIe Siècle*.
[51] René Godenne, *Les Romans de Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, Publications romanes et françaises 164 (Genève: Droz, 1983).
[52] Antoine Galland, *Histoire de l'esclavage d'un marchand de la ville de Cassis, à Tunis* (Paris: Editions La Bibliothèque, 1993).
[53] Moüette, *Relation de la captivité du S. Moüette dans les royaumes de Fez et de Maroc...*, 161.

Inserting these reported stories in the author's main narrative—as if they were the testimonies of someone else—granted greater freedom of invention to the author, who in this way was no longer bound solely by his or her own experience and testimony. It is not surprising that many other French captivity narratives have used this narrative device or that similar "stories within a story" can be found in every one of these texts with very few exceptions, including in d'Aranda's *relations particulières* mentioned above.

Besides specific narrative structures, such as the forms of short episodic structures just discussed, the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives also appear to have absorbed a wide variety of literary narrative strategies proper to the romance tradition. The term "romance" has been proposed recently by the literary critic Barbara Fuchs to suggest that, instead of merely considering romance as a genre, we should also examine it from a narratological viewpoint, as a collection of literary strategies. In this way, romance transcends its traditional definition (usually understood in opposition to the epic or the novel) and becomes a "concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi" that is characteristic of a long tradition present in the Western canon, dating back to antiquity.[54] Fuchs sees a ubiquitous presence of this romance as strategy at work in many early modern texts, including many that are not necessarily directly associated with the romance genre itself as we currently understand it. The narrative strategies described by Barbara Fuchs generally serve to postpone the denouement of a plot, intending to create narrative suspense, and this in opposition to the epic mode of writing, in which the

[54] Fuchs, *Romance*.

fulfillment of the quest is paramount. Fuchs explains: "…the narrative thrust of romance is constantly undone by narrative suspension, yet the latter sustains the story even as it postpones resolution."[55] In other words, whereas in a genre such as the epic the plot generally revolves around the fulfillment of a quest, the collection of literary strategies within romance instead works by postponing this fulfillment to augment a narrative's suspense and appeal. Fuchs writes: "We might thus think of romance as composed of the tension between these two movements: the quest, and the constant delays or detours from that quest. The narrative thrust of romance is constantly undone by narrative suspension, yet the latter sustains the story even as it postpones resolution."[56]

This connection with the romance narrative structure suggested by Barbara Fuchs is evident, for example, in the narrative format of the *romans héroïques* of the time. It is useful to remember that there is a direct link between the classical romance novel and the French seventeenth-century literary canon that seems in this case to amply justify and validate Fuchs' insight: a translation of the ancient Greek novel *Aethiopica* by Heliodorus of Emesa was translated into French in 1633 by Trichard with the title *Les Amours de Théagènes et Chariclée*. This text enjoyed great editorial success and a wide circulation, opening a wave of interest and emulation for similar stories. In general, the period between 1593 and 1640 is considered the apex of the Greek Romanesque fashion in French literature.

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[55] Ibid., 19.
[56] Ibid.

Many of the French Barbary captivity narratives (especially those published during the second half of the seventeenth century) seem to rely heavily on the romance strategies identified by Fuchs. First, all the published early modern French Barbary captivity narratives follow an exact two-fold model, in the sense that their chronicle can be divided into two types or sections.

The first section, which usually represents the first part of the captivity narrative, follows a precise linear and chronological structure, punctuated by what can be considered "cliché" episodes. They are clichés in that the same episodes reappear throughout the whole corpus, forming in this sense a recognizable narrative path.

Most of the captivity narratives start, for example, with the description of the maritime pursuit and the capturing of the author at sea, then with a second scene describing the author and the ship's crew attempting to hide or disguise their real identity from the raiding corsairs. This first maritime section is followed in most Barbary captivity narratives by the arrival of the captives in North Africa, the anxious waiting for the selling of the author at the local slave market, his auctioning, and the description of the author's new master and the way in which the author has adapted to his new condition of slavery.

However, after this standard narrative sequence and set of clichéd episodes, which compose in general all the first sections of the Barbary captivity narratives, the second part of all the accounts generally describes a whole series of relatively unlinked episodes, which are sometimes presented in chronological order but are more commonly assembled

randomly, often through the use of the short episodic form described above, through the *relations* or *histoires particulières*.

This second section in most captivity narratives includes episodes presenting in vivid detail the Christian slaves' toil and suffering, focusing frequently on their condition of imprisonment (usually with a commentary on the hardships of their lives in the *bagnios*), but also narrating a wide range of noteworthy episodes that the author lived, witnessed, or heard about. A clear example of this narrative pattern can be found in d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité* discussed above. In the first section of his text, d'Aranda uses the established pattern by depicting his capture at sea, his auction at the slave market, his new master, his life as a slave, and so forth.

However, in the second part of his account, we have a large body of unlinked episodes through the short *relations*, giving voice to a whole range of characters and adventures. This same structure can also be found in several other texts, from Herny du Lisdam's *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille* (1609) to later examples, such as Quartier's *L'esclave religieux et ses avantures* (1690). This is an aspect that points from the outset to the fact that d'Aranda, like most of the Barbary captivity narrative authors, must have been at least familiar with the basic tenets of the Barbary captivity canon, and he seems to have intentionally chosen to follow the same narrative prompt.

The second part of d'Aranda's *relation* appears to match Fuchs's description of romance as strategy; the plot of the book becomes a piling up of seemingly random episodes (or what Fuchs, following Northrop Frye, defines as a "and then" narrative structure, in contrast to the more sophisticated "hence" narrative; that is, a causal relationship among

events).[57] Thanks to this random episodic structure, in d'Aranda's *Relation de captivité*, we have the same dialectical tension between a quest and its constant delays or detours (as described by Fuchs following Patricia Parker).[58] All the episodes forming the short *relations*, which are added up to the standard narration sequence—sea-raiding, capturing, auctioning, and so forth—in d'Aranda have the effect of delaying the denouement of his story, which in this case is the moment of the author's liberation. Similar to d'Aranda's example, the plots of many Barbary captivity narratives pile up the same array of relatively unlinked episodes, therefore creating the same dialectical tension just described.

It is thematically, however, that the early modern French Barbary captivity narratives come closer to their contemporary literary models. This is especially evident if we consider one particular aspect: the role and voice of the author/narrator in these narratives. Unlike the narrators of the travelogues, the authors of the Barbary captivity narratives were not just passing through a foreign land but were forced to live in it. The enslaved individuals therefore had to adapt and learn new cultural codes and often a new language, learn to make sense of a foreign culture, negotiate their new social and economic status, and find ways to mitigate their oppressive condition by proactively brokering their position among all the different groups and individuals that made up the Mediterranean society of the time. Moreover, upon their return, the captives had to find ways to reintegrate into the society from which they came, and they had to prove in many cases that the experience of captivity had not changed their fundamental beliefs and right to belong in their original

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[57] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[58] Patricia A. Parker, *Inescapable Romance : Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979).

community, all while also trying to convey their overwhelming experience to their readers.

All this entails that, in addition to a challenge to the slave's fiscal integrity, slavery is represented in most of the captivity narratives as a threat to the slave's identity, honor, and religion. As discussed already, in early examples, such as Henry du Lisdam's *L'Esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille*, published in 1608, the captivity of the main character was portrayed as a trial of honor. The Knight of Malta Vintimille cast his enslavement as a spiritual battle, describing it as a challenge to his Catholic faith. Vintimille resisted all pressure to assimilate into the North African community in which he lived, heroically reaffirming his beliefs and his faith on every page. In the end, Vintimille prevailed; he was rescued from his captivity with his honor intact. While captive, Vintimille never renounced his religious principles, firmly refusing to come to terms with his masters or any aspect of the Muslim world. In the end, the trial of honor presented in du Lisdam's text provides an exemplary model for the reader, who is encouraged to contemplate a heroic protagonist who never changes, remaining attached to his values until the end. This early example offered by Du Lisdam gives us a rather classical type of protagonist who, like the protagonist of a traditional epic narrative, never diverges from his worldviews and is relatively unaffected by the experiences he undergoes, in the sense that he does not evolve psychologically throughout the story, maintaining his stable original identity despite the vicissitudes he endures.

Nevertheless, as the Barbary captivity narratives evolve and change throughout the century, this early model present in du Lisdam's writing gives way to a new sort of

protagonist. In the following examples, especially after d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité*, a new model of protagonist appears. In these texts, slavery becomes a transformative transcultural and interreligious experience that involves to some degree a crisis of the captive's subjectivity.

If we consider d'Aranda's text once again, we can see how he describes his captivity first and foremost as a crisis; a violent and forceful displacement of individuals that deprives them of their freedom, entailing servitude and humiliation. However, captivity also forces the author, like his fellow slaves, to find inner resources and adapt to an unfamiliar environment. In other words, d'Aranda describes how he had to interpret and understand the foreign, multifaceted reality around him, looking for ways to survive his miserable condition.

The European slaves of Algiers portrayed by d'Aranda demonstrate remarkable resilience and an ability to adapt to their captivity, often by learning to negotiate with others. For example, in *Relation* XXVII, d'Aranda tells the story of two sailors from the Basque Country named Turineo and Juan, who were taken captive while traveling on board the same ship as the author, brought as captives to Algiers, and ended up with him in Ali Pegelin's *bagnio*. In the *relation,* d'Aranda recalls how the two sailors were able to make friends in the *bagnios* with a renegade, also from the Basque Country, and with his help, they started a small wine trading commerce. In just three months, Turineo and Juan

became co-owners of one of the *bagnio*'s taverns, and in the end, they enjoyed relative ease in their captivity.[59]

Similarly, in *Relation* XLVII, titled *L'esclavage imaginaire*, d'Aranda tells the story of a captive from Majorca who was on good terms with his master and quickly obtained several advantages, including the right to keep two Christian slaves as his servants. Thanks to his knowledge of Majorcan society, the slave ended up helping his master purchase newly arrived European captives in Algiers by guessing their social status. Through their ability to find ways to adapt and change, the slaves depicted by d'Aranda are, therefore, not merely passive victims but acquire a certain degree of agency.

D'Aranda's accounts reflect the reality that, from the moment of their capture, the individuals who were seized in the early modern Mediterranean corso had to quickly learn to negotiate cultural, religious, and social differences. By becoming a slave, the individual entered an economic network of exchanges and acquired a monetary value, becoming a sort of commodity. However, throughout this process, the slave also retained some degree of agency because part of his value also depended on the ability to work out the details of his condition, for example by withholding labor or information whenever possible. Besides, the captive could also influence his faith by negotiating his ransom with his new masters or by soliciting the help of his family or his community of origin, in general with the result of influencing his price. For example, we can see all these power

[59] Emmanuel d'Aranda, *Relation de la captivité et liberté du sieur Emanuel d'Aranda, jadis esclave à Alger où se trouvent plusieurs particularités de l'Affrique...*(Jean Mommaert, 1662).

dynamics at work in d'Aranda's description of his own auctioning at the slave market of Algiers:

> *Ce fut justement le douzième de septembre que les esclaves […] étant vendus, on nous mena au marché, où l'on est accoutumé de vendre les' chrétiens. Un vieillard fort caduc, un bâton à la main, me prit par le bras et me mena à diverses reprises autour de ce marché; et ceux qui avaient envie de m'acheter demandaient de quel pays j'étais, mon nom, et ma profession. Sur lesquelles demandes je répondais avec des mensonges que j'étais natif du pays de Dunkerque (au lieu de dire de Flandre), de la ville de Damme, et soldat de profession. Ils me touchaient les mains, si elles étaient dures et calleuses à force de travailler ; outre cela, ils me faisaient ouvrir la bouche pour voir mes dents, si elles étaient capables de manger du biscuit sur les galères.*[60]

In this short passage, the author introduces one of the tropes of the Barbary captivity narratives: the slave market auctioning—the same trope that, as already noted, appears the most often in all of the other texts. In this scene, d'Aranda first recalls his shock in experiencing his newly imposed slave condition and the humiliation of being treated like chattel. However, the scene is significant in that the author also underlines the importance of hiding one's identity, a theme connected with the necessity to make the best use of information in negotiating one's position in the Barbary social hierarchy, as a way to influence one's social and economic value. Historians have well demonstrated that in the economic logic of corso, young, healthy individuals able to work were particularly prized as slaves in the early modern Mediterranean.[61] In addition, noble

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[60] Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 34.
[61] Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*.

individuals and in general wealthy bourgeois or merchants (such as d'Aranda) were valuable commodities because their masters could expect a ransom from their families.

This theme linking identity and value reappears in many other passages of the *Relation de la captivité*, such as episodes in which d'Aranda reports his lengthy negotiations with his master, Ali Pegelin, for brokering his freedom.[62]

The slaves in Algiers had to learn to navigate their social positions. In the unfamiliar Barbary setting, they had to negotiate their identities by becoming familiar with the cultural differences within the local Muslim population and among the different slave groups themselves. The newly enslaved individuals had to quickly come to terms with the alterity of all these foreign customs, and this inevitably involved a change in the slave's outlook and behavior. Whereas in many cases this compelled the European slaves to adjust, in others, it also gave them grounds for questioning their cultures and identities of origin. This is why, in considering a similar corpus of British early modern Mediterranean captivity narratives, Linda Colley has observed that virtually all 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 location of power."[63] This is also the case for d'Aranda because the *Relation de la captivité* reflects on this long and painful experience of learning to deal with the heterogeneity and instability that characterized many cross-

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[62] d'Aranda, *Relation de la captivité et liberté du sieur Emanuel d'Aranda, jadis esclave à Alger où se trouvent plusieurs particularités de l'Affrique...*
[63] Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850*, 30.

cultural interactions in the early modern Mediterranean region. In his text, d'Aranda notes how the slaves in the *bagnios* were left with few options for sustaining themselves and had to resort to all kinds of ruses and even committing crimes in order to survive their fate:

> *Il y en avait d'autres qui laçaient des bas, d'autres gagnaient leur vie à tricoter. Mais le larcin était le métier le plus exercé. Tous les soirs on vendait publiquement ce qui avait été dérobé le jour [...]. Les prêtres vivaient des aumônes des esclaves chrétiens. Bref chacun de quelque nation qu'il fût trouvait moyen de vivre,*[64]

However, even when d'Aranda deplores the hardships of captivity, he is frank in recognizing that the picture was not always desperate or hopeless and that positive elements could still be found even in such a terrible situation. For example, d'Aranda recalls an episode in which, while working at his master's mill, a fellow captive came to his rescue in a moment of need, showing that strong solidarity could still exist among slaves:

> *Dieu connaît les forces des hommes, il permit que mon compagnon Rénier Saldens, qui était beaucoup plus fort et plus robuste que moi, ayant déchargé son sac et descendant les degrés me trouva au pied de la montée dans un pauvre équipage, à savoir à terre, plein de sang, plein de sueur et de poussière, et finalement presque mort ; et le gardien qui me menaçait fort et ferme. Ce Rénier Saldens, homme résolu au possible, dit au gardien : ne voyez-vous pas que cet esclave est malade? Et après cela il prit mon sac et le porta en haut. On peut juger aisément combien cette œuvre d'amitié et de miséricorde me fut agréable.*[65]

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[64] Aranda, *Les Captifs d'Alger*, 151.
[65] Ibid., 38–39.

Passages such as the one above show that d'Aranda chose not to hide the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of his lived experience in Barbary.

In d'Aranda's narrative, the entire North African region is presented as an exotic space marked by unclear borders, where identities become unstable and need to be continuously renegotiated, disguised, or reclaimed. The fluidity of Mediterranean interpersonal and intercultural relations is highlighted in the *Relation de la captivité* through frequent references to the multicultural nature of early modern North African environment and Algerian society. D'Aranda introduces this element of instability at the very beginning of his account, in which he describes his first encounter with the Barbary corsairs that boarded his ship:

> *Alors les soldats désireux de piller et de faire du butin vinrent avec un esquif dix ou douze à notre bord, sous la conduite d'un capitaine qui fut le premier qui entra dans notre. Il était anglais de nation mais renégat, et comme j'étais pour lors sur le tillac, il me demanda de quelle nation j'étais, et si j'étais marchand ; je répondis: « Je suis dunkerquois et soldat de ma profession. » Sur quoi il répliqua en flamand : « Patience, frère, c'est la fortune de guerre, aujourd'hui pour vous, et demain pour moi. » Je lui donnai l'argent que j'avais sur moi, et en même temps un autre Turc mit sa main dans ma poche, prenant mon étui, mon mouchoir, mon chapelet et mes heures, lesquelles il me rendit avec le mouchoir, mais il retint le rosaire avec l'étui, à cause de quoi il disait que j'étais chirurgien.*[66]

The figure of the British renegade incarnates here, in a sort of ironic inversion, the aleatory nature of the Mediterranean space itself, where allegiances and fortunes can quickly change. The Renegade's remark sets the tone of this scene, suggesting that at sea nothing is sacred—not the destinies or lives of individuals, nor their possessions. In

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[66] Ibid., 31–32.

addition, because corso follows its economic logic of plundering, not even the religious distinctions seem to matter much in the end. The fellow travelers and the crew of the British ship who were traveling along with the author must quickly learn to conceal their true identities in a sort of risky game of mutual trickery with the Muslim corsairs. D'Aranda seems able to seize a critical lesson on the spot and immediately tries to disguise himself as a poor soldier of fortune, masking his actual social status and potential value as a captive.

This theme of the volatility of the North African environment returns often throughout the rest of the text, such as when d'Aranda recalls his impressions of the destabilizing intermixing of languages, religions, and places of origin of the individuals around him, as well as the challenging cultural negotiations that this situation demanded when he first arrived at the *bagnio*. In describing his life in Algiers, d'Aranda often stresses the fact that individuals from all origins and all walks of life were forced to coexist and struggle to survive together. This diversity poses from the outset a series of cohabitation problems, starting from finding ways of effectively communicating among so many different languages. In *Relation* XVI, d'Aranda explains, for example, the role of the lingua franca (or what d'Aranda calls "franco") as the only means for both slaves and locals to understand each other:

> *Le franco c'est le langage commun entre les esclaves et les Turcs, et aussi entre les esclaves d'une nation à autre, c'est un langage mêlé d'italien, d'espagnol, de français et de portugais; autrement il serait impossible de commander leurs*

esclaves, car en notre Bain entre cinq cent cinquante esclaves on parlait vingt-deux langages[67]

Throughout the *Relation de la captivité*, the *bagnio* becomes a sort of symbol of the composite and multicultural Algerian society.

In stressing the complexity of the early modern Mediterranean encounters, d'Aranda's narrative departs in many ways from the simplistic binary religious opposition between Muslims and Christians that prevailed in most of the preceding Barbary literature of the first half of the century, from du Lisdam to Friar Dan. Rather than a frontier on which each religious group fights a harsh inter-religious confrontation, the Mediterranean becomes instead in d'Aranda's writings the symbol of the aleatory, precarious nature of the human condition. Thus, the stoking of the fears that prevailed in most of the previous Barbary literature yields to a new outlook on North Africa as a whole.

We have already discussed the influence of a neo-stoic outlook underlined by Lisa Kattenberg in d'Aranda's narrative, an attitude that seems to inform the author's description of his slavery. In addition, d'Aranda's writings seem to reflect an influence from the Baroque picaresque tradition in the sense that d'Aranda's character parallels the subaltern and aleatory condition of the protagonist of this model.[68]

Like the traditional protagonists of the romance tradition from Odysseus onward, the narrator in many of these later Barbary captivity narrative texts is a self-sustaining individual,

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[67] Ibid., 37.
[68] Didier Souiller, *Le Roman picaresque* (P.U.F., Paris, 1980)

a common man who finds himself in an unusual and exotic setting. Although his captivity reduces him to a servile condition that epitomizes social passivity and submission, he is still successful in fulfilling his liberation (i.e., his quest) thanks to a mix of chance and skillful adaptation. In other words, we have a new sort of protagonist in the texts that appear after d'Aranda, who is no longer the passive and suffering narrator of previous examples but an astute, adaptable individual who proactively seeks redemption rather than merely waiting and expecting an outside intercession, whether divine or human.

Some of these later protagonists are shrewd characters who learn to navigate the risks and assets of their condition; to disguise themselves when the situation requires it; to use trickery and cross-dressing to overcome bodily, religious, and political threats; and to adapt to and manipulate the customs of the Barbary land and their Muslim masters to turn them to their advantage whenever possible.

A further example in this sense comes from du Chastelet's *L'Odyssée*, which—as mentioned already—shares many structural and thematic similarities with d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité*. Du Chastelet's narrative certainly reflects in many ways his education and his upbringing as a habitué of the free-thinking and neo-Stoic circles of Paris he frequented in his youth, which seems to have left a lasting influence on his worldview and his text. Not surprisingly, the Mediterranean space described by du Chastelet—similar to that described by d'Aranda—becomes a world in constant mutability. Although the tragic tone that dominated the zealous and antagonistic works of du Lisdam and Friar Dan is still there, in du Chastelet, it coexists with a much lighter and almost comic one that appears in several other sections. This comic tone often

underscores the absurdities of slavery and questions the author's preconceptions and beliefs. *L'Odyssée* mixes these tragic and comic tones in the same way the picaresque tradition mentioned above did. Tragedy and irony are there to underline—in a very Baroque fashion—the aleatory nature of life itself. This idea is well summarized in the conclusion of du Chastelet's captivity narrative, in which the author describes his feelings while on his way back to France after his liberation:

> *Je souhaitais avec ferveur l'éloignement de l'Afrique, sans beaucoup désirer les approches de la France ; et ne pouvant, ainsi qu'il me semblait, vivre en Barbarie, je ne voulais pas m'en retourner mourir en Anjou. En un mot Alger et la Flèche étaient deux extrémités également fâcheuses. La mémoire des déplaisirs passés m'ayant laissé un dégoût de la dernière de ces deux villes, que la diversité des aventures n'avait pas jusques à l'heure présente entièrement pu diminuer, je ne trouvai pas de plus grand charme contre le chagrin, ni de plus divertissante satisfaction à ma curiosité, que la recherche des cérémonies, usages et formalités du pays, extraordinaires, différentes, et quelquefois contraires aux nôtres.*[69]

Although du Chastelet is relieved to leave Algiers, the remark he makes concerning his return to France is interesting. This kind of ambiguity, which seems to still praise the Barbary alterity despite the harsh experience of captivity, contains an implicit, thinly veiled critique of the European lifestyle and worldview.

This kind of tragic-ironic attitude is not uncommon in du Chastelet's text. The author often compared and relativized the social codes he witnessed around him in Muslim society with his Christian cultural background, often to satirize both. For instance, du Chastelet uses this device in chapter five of his text, in which he relates a

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[69] Du Lisdam and Du Chastelet des Boys, *L'esclavage Du Brave Chevalier de Vintimille / Par Henry Du Lisdam (1608) ; Suivi de L'odyssée, Ou, Diversité d'aventures, Rencontres et Voyages En Europe, Asie et Afrique / Par René Du Chastelet Des Boys (1665)*, 138.

long theological conversation he allegedly had in Algiers with a Jew named Aron and a Muslim named Ascem. This alleged three-way dialogue is very improbable; it is probably a fictive rhetorical stratagem inspired by the humanistic dialogical tradition rather than an encounter du Chastelet had in real life. In any case, du Chastelet uses this dialogue to first describe the main theological differences among the three monotheistic religions and then to offer a comparative reading of their fundamental theological precepts. Throughout the dialogue, du Chastelet rebuts several of the widely-circulating contemporary European stereotypes about both Islam and Judaism (such as the idea that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus). Du Chastelet ends the conversation, recognizing that there are valid theological arguments among the Jews and the Muslims (an audacity that likely contributed to the censorship of his book).

One last example that highlights the shifting role of the protagonist's ethos in the latter Barbary captivity narratives is in la Martinière's *L'Heureux esclave* of 1674. In this fictional example of a captivity narrative, the author presents himself as a picaresque character; la Martinière begins his narrative when, orphaned and homeless at a young age, he is recruited by the French army to serve in the Spanish wars. Captured by the Spanish army, he is freed by a Spanish nobleman, but on his way back home, he is captured at sea by Algerian corsairs. From there, la Martinière becomes the protagonist of countless adventures. As a slave, he serves six different masters. Among his many duties, he becomes a surgeon for the Algerian militia, and he participates in many combats both on the sea and on land, which take him all the way to the Sahara Desert and back. And all

this wandering happens without much effort or toil, despite the author's young age, hence the title of this narrative: *L'Heureux Esclave*.

The highly improbable and utterly intricate plot of la Martinière's text puts his work very close to many of the fictional genres discussed above, including the baroque novel, the picaresque tradition, the *histoires tragiques*, and the many narrative devices used in Fuchs' descriptions of romance as strategy.

However, when comparing la Martinière's text with the Barbary captivity accounts of the early seventeenth century, the most striking aspect is the fact that the inter-religious theme is almost entirely absent in la Martinière's narrative, replaced by a rather secular outlook. For example, in the introduction of his text, la Martinière mentions that North African corso ensues solely from the greed of the corsairs:

> *Ils ecument les Mers […] comme font aujourd'hui les habitants de Salé, Tétouan, Tunis, Alger, Tripoli, de Barbarie et autres ennemis du genre humain, qui sans aucune raison que la volonté d'assouvir leur insatiable avarice, non content de ravir les biens de ceux qu'ils prennent, leur ôtent la liberté, les chargeant de fer, et faisant esclave pour les vendre, comme on fait en France avec les chevaux.*[70]

In la Martinière the experience of captivity loses the religious dimension that it had in the previous Barbary captivity literature to become a broader symbol of the aleatory nature of human existence. The image of the tragic experience of captivity is produced rather by the aleatory nature of the Mediterranean Sea, an unstable and uncertain space where identities and fortunes can shift unpredictably.

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[70] Pierre-Martin de (1634-1676?) Auteur du texte La Martinière, *L'Heureux esclave, ou Relation des aventures du sieur de La Martinière comme il fut pris par les corsaires de Barbarie et délivré...* (Paris: O. de Varennes, 1674).

Such hoaxes gave the French armchair readers the thrilling experience of adventuring without the risk of being enslaved that accompanied all Mediterranean travels. Yet, la Martinière's text also offered the fulfillment of its readers wildest voyeuristic and exotic fantasies while soothing worries about physical and spiritual corruption in Muslim lands, since the *heureux* guaranteed a happy conclusion and a liberation inscribed within the plot.

The relief of the reader's anxiety vis-à-vis corso's perceived threat reached a paroxysmal level in la Martinière's text, for instance when, in an involuntarily comic scene, the author attempts to sell himself at the slave market auction:

> *Venant à mon tour, pour éviter pareil traitement, le Maquignon me voulant prendre, je me levais si diligemment, et me promenant dans la place, criant, Arrache Arrache, qui veut dire à combien, à combien, ou à qui en offrira le plus.*[71]

3.4 The role of the Barbary captivity narratives under Louis XIV

As mentioned, most of the French Barbary captivity narratives published during the seventeenth century appeared during the second half of the century, particularly after the 1660s. A concurrence of factors seems to explain this growth in the number of publications: first of all, a general expansion of the number of publications in France during the second half of the century, due in large part to the diffusion of the press and its audience.[72] It is also likely that this rise in the number of published captivity narratives is

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[71] Ibid., 18.
[72] Eltjo Buringh and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, "Charting the 'Rise of the West': Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, a Long-Term Perspective from the Sixth through Eighteenth Centuries," *The Journal of Economic History* 69, no. 2 (2009): 409–445.

related to a broader surge of public interest for the travel literature genre that swept over France (and all over Europe) precisely at this time. The spike in the number of Barbary captivity narratives published in France after the 1660s matches, in fact, a similarly sharp rise in the publication of travelogues. [73]

However, one of the factors that seem to have most influenced the sharp increase in published captivity narratives in France during the second half of the century is the shifting context in the Western Mediterranean at the time, which seems to have prompted a renewal of interest in this matter in France after the 1660s.

The beginning of Louis XIV's personal reign in 1661 opens a new phase in the French-Mediterranean engagement. The new monarch inaugurated a new proactive and interventionist approach in the region, giving a new direction to France's diplomatic strategy vis-à-vis North Africa. One of the primary objectives of Louis XIV's Mediterranean strategy was to regain leadership in Mediterranean trading, and to do this it had to provide the French kingdom with a Mediterranean port that could compete with the then established English and Dutch trading networks. At the beginning of his personal reign, one of the king's first acts was, therefore, to take full control over the city of Marseilles, transforming in less than a decade a once rebellious and would be autonomous government into the epicenter of France's new commercial and colonial maritime expansion in the Mediterranean.[74]

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[73] Harrigan, *Veiled Encounters*, 12–13.
[74] Jean Peter, *Les barbaresques sous Louis XIV: Le duel entre Alger et la Marine du Roi* (Paris: Economica, 1997), ch 3.

Under the lead of Colbert's new *dirigiste* and mercantilist strategies, the economy and topography of the city were drastically reshaped to match its new role. This led to the construction of a new arsenal for harboring royal galleys (with the duty to defend French shores from pirates and corsairs), the construction of a modern quarantine house (for limiting the spread of plagues), and the settling of several flourishing state-sponsored and trade-oriented industries (such as soap, tanning, textile, coral and sugar).[75]

Yet, it is estimated that in the decade between 1660 and 1670, at the time when Louis XIV was transforming Marseilles into France's Mediterranean bastion, there were about 20,000 to 40,000 Christian slaves at a time in the various cities of North Africa, and about 2,000 of them were French.[76] From a pragmatic point of view, the impact of Western Mediterranean corso had the immediate effect of damaging commerce and reducing the number of valuable and skilled sailors and craftsmen available for navigation and commerce. In other words, the effects of c*orso* severely undermined Louis XIV's new political and commercial Mediterranean strategy.

On the diplomatic front, France was also in a weak position vis-à-vis the Barbary regencies. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Lazarists order (who had also served as a galley chaplain in his youth) in the 1640s, had created the *Œuvre des Esclaves*, a Catholic religious order devoted to the redemption of captives. From the beginning, the *Œuvre des Esclaves* order became very active in the redemption of French subjects in North Africa, to the point that the Pascha of Algiers himself requested in 1646 the French crown to let

[75] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 52–54.
[76] Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, Appendix 1.

the Lazarists take charge of the local French consulate. In the hope of facilitating commercial and diplomatic relationships with the Algerian regency, the French kingdom named, therefore, père Barreau, a Lazarist, as French consul of Algiers, a position he held until 1659. While his service enabled the release of a substantial number of French captives, the unintended consequence was that his actions proved to the local guild of privateers the value of such a commodity, increasing the pressure on sea raids against French vessels and leading to the capture of even more slaves.[77]

Corso was such a pressing matter to Louis the XIV that one of the first major decisions of his personal regency was to organize a large-scale joint maritime-and-land military raid on the North African coast, which has become known as the "Djidjelli expedition." The stated goal of this operation was to occupy an outpost on the North African coast through which the French navy would be able to counter North African privateering. In 1664 the small sea-side village of Djidjelli was chosen as the objective of this mission, and the French kingdom mobilized the majority of its fleet (under the command of the admiral François de Vendôme, Duke of Beaufort) as well as an army of 4000 men, supported by a contingent of 1200 soldiers provided by the Knights of Malta (all under the command of Charles-Félix de Galéan, Comte de Gadagne).[78]

The expedition at first appeared successful, and the French troops were able to disembark and take control of the city of Djidjelli. However, a series of problems (including ineffectual military organization, lack of knowledge of the local situation, and

[77] Bachelot, *Louis XIV En Algérie, Gigeri, 1664*, 31–32.
[78] Bachelot, *Louis XIV En Algérie, Gigeri, 1664*.

a plague outbreak among the French troops) together with the harsh resistance of the local Ottoman regiments quickly fated the situation, and the French troops were forced to abandon the position only a few months later in a catastrophic withdrawal.

This embarrassing defeat was a harsh blow to Louis XIV's Mediterranean plans, and the crown's humiliation was so poignant that the whole operation became heavily censored in French public opinion at the time. It is only thanks to a successful naval expedition the following year against the Barbary corsairs that the Duke of Beaufort was able to sign a peace treaty with Algiers and Tunis in 1665, and Louis XIV claimed some sort of victory and saved face.[79]

Despite all the attempts to contain North African corso, the underlying reality was that the French kingdom – like the rest of the other European nations at this time – did not have the military or diplomatic means to stop it effectively. The European nations could – at best – try to contain this phenomenon, and in general with weak results.[80] In 1670 a small fleet under the command of de Martel attacked, for instance, the city of Algiers, stopping the raids against French ships, but only for a few months. After several unsuccessful attempts to try to stop corso from North Africa, by the 1670's France had resorted to a double strategy: a mix of direct diplomatic negotiations and small-scale military raids. More often, however, the only effective countermeasure for reducing the impact of North African corso on French commerce was to pay a high tribute to Algiers, Tripoli, or Sale in exchange for brief truces.

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Masson, *Histoire Du Commerce Français Dans Le Levant Au XVIIe Siècle*, 35.

The situation changed only after the 1680s: faced with a new surge of corso activity, Louis XIV decided this time to engage the Regencies more decisively on a military level. The situation was favorable to France because the kingdom had just ended its war effort in the Low Countries, and the king disposed of more resources to conduct a military campaign in the Mediterranean.[81] In 1680 Louis XIV charged the admiral Dusquene to take care of the situation, starting with Tripoli: after a pursuit started in front of the port, the French fleet cornered the Tripolitans off of Chios (recently passed under Ottoman control), in the Aegean sea; where the French bombarded and destroyed the entire Tripolitan fleet. This event made great clamor, especially at the Sultan's court, and put a significant strain on Franco-Ottoman relations.[82]

In 1681, at the end of the truce with Algiers, the French crown decided to embark on a full-fledged war against the city. Algiers was heavily bombarded by Duquesne's ships in 1682 and again in 1683 until the Regency finally conceded, and a peace agreement was signed in 1684. Nevertheless, this episode did not dissuade the Maghrebian corsairs from their raids, and a new war broke out between 1688-89, followed by another peace treaty.[83] Tripoli was also attacked again by the French navy in 1685, under the command of the admiral d'Estrées, and the heavy bombardment forced the city to accept a stringent peace agreement, which included the freeing of all its French slaves.[84]

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[81] Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 32.
[82] Peter, *Les barbaresques sous Louis XIV*, 133.
[83] Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 32.
[84] Ibid.

These attacks toward the Regencies, however, were not a simple demonstration of newly acquired French naval supremacy. They were also an important diplomatic tool for Louis XIV to put pressure on the Sublime Porte, with the objective of gaining strategic advantages from the Sultan.[85]

The French confrontation with the so-called Barbary states lasted until the 1690s, when an Algerian embassy was finally received in Versailles, followed by a peace treaty with Tripoli, which was signed in 1693.[86] These two episodes inaugurated a time of relative peace between France and the Regencies that would last for the next twenty years.

At the court, Louis XIV and his government were under considerable political pressure to act vis-à-vis the Mediterranean situation. Since Cardinal Richelieu, there were influential factions inside the French court that had long lobbied for an overt confrontational stance against the Ottoman Empire and had openly critiqued the French-Ottoman alliance, mostly on religious grounds. It is well known that the French Capuchin friar Père Joseph (the influential confidant and agent of Cardinal Richelieu) had for a long time fantasized of putting together a new crusade against the Sultan.[87] At the time of Louis XIV's reign, the fervent Catholic party of devotees still had a significant influence at the court and was still strongly opposed to the Capitulations. The devotees' party

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[85] Peter, *Les barbaresques sous Louis XIV*, 134.
[86] Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo*, 33.
[87] Fagniez, *Le Père Joseph Et Richelieu*.

backed, in particular, the line of the Papacy, which had tried for a long time to re-ignite crusading sentiments across Europe, often to pursue its political interests.[88]

These efforts (backed in France among others by order of Friars Minor Capuchin, the Jesuits, and Knights of Malta) were - up to a point - successful, since in the 1680's Louis XIV even seriously considered the project to attack Egypt and Istanbul. In 1685 the king sent, in fact, a "grand commis," Étienne Gravier, officially to conduct business but, in reality, operating as a spy, to gather information on site for a possible military invasion.[89]

However, despite these somehow whimsical projects of conquest, the reality was that the Ottoman alliance – especially against the ever present Habsburgs – was too important to risk for the French kingdom, and any diplomatic or military move that could harm the Sultan was carefully evaluated and pondered. The French political line (from Cardinal Mazarin to Fouquet and Colbert) was particularly pragmatic and in general extremely reluctant to take any damaging step that would have undermined this crucial commercial, political and military treaty; and this despite any public statements saying otherwise, as well as well-mounted propaganda efforts undertaken by the monarchy to portray Louis XIV as "the most Catholic king" and at war with Islam.[90]

The travelogues played a significant role in this sense. These kinds of publications were, in fact encouraged by the new royal power of Louis XIV. Colbert considered, for

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[88] Capot-Rey, "La Politique Française et Le Maghreb Méditerranéen (1643-1685)," 432–435.
[89] Faruk Bilici, *Louis XIV et Son Projet de Conquête d'Istanbul* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004).
[90] Capot-Rey, "La Politique Française et Le Maghreb Méditerranéen (1643-1685)."

instance, the travel reports useful for disseminating mercantilist ideas and forming French public opinion on international affairs and foreign trade.[91]

It is interesting to notice that many of the publications of the time closely aligned with the image that Louis XIV wanted to give of himself as an antagonist to the Sultan. The historian Robert Capot-Rey, in his *La Politique Française et Le Maghreb Méditerranéen (1643-1685),* cleverly notices in this regard:

> *Si ces livres ont été approuvés et imprimés, ce n'est pas seulement parce que les préfaces les plus hardis étaient de ton très modéré et louaient le roi de vertus qu'il n'avait guère, c'est qu'elles servaient à faire croire au zele de la France pour les intérêts de la Chrétienté: en ce sens, elles entraient dans les dessins du gouvernement. L'Europe attentive aux faits et gestes de Louis prenait aisément pour les désirs du roi de France, les vœux qui lui étaient adressés. Et cette heureuse confusion, préparée el favorisée par des déclarations solennelles, contribuait à laisser à Louis le prestige de Roi Très Chrétien.*[92]

Western Mediterranean corso seems to have played an essential role in the construction of the king's public image as a defender of the Christian faith against the Infidels. Louis XIV's active military and diplomatic engagement against the Barbary Regencies since the very beginning of his personal reign in the 1660s had first and foremost an economic objective: to help increase France's Mediterranean commerce and reduce the losses from corsair activities. The king, however, used this low-scale war also politically to create an image of himself as a champion of the faith by casting this fight in a religious framework, and in doing so, helping to deflect the numerous critiques he had received for his alliance with the Sultan. Reading the Barbary captivity narratives in this context appears to shed

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[91] Chupeau, "Les Récits de Voyage Aux Lisières Du Roman."
[92] Capot-Rey, "La Politique Française et Le Maghreb Méditerranéen (1643-1685)," 433.

more light on why we have such a sharp increase in the number of published examples starting precisely in the 1660s. Their publication, allowed by the royal powers, certainly helped to build awareness of corso. The Barbary captivity offered an interesting perspective on the subject: while many followed the early Trinitarian and Mercedarian examples, depicting corso as a religious confrontation, others – especially after the example set by d'Aranda – concentrated more on the adventurous nature of the Mediterranean world.

Conclusion

The corpus of published early modern French captivity narratives evolved rapidly throughout the 17th century. While the influence of the Catholic redemption narratives is evident in many of the captivity narratives published during the first half of the seventeenth century, it is less the case for those texts that appear during the second half of the century. As a result, the captivity narratives that were published in the latter part of the century appear less militant in their negative depiction of Barbary and the Muslim world, as well as less ideologically biased.

At the same time, captivity narratives published throughout the second half of the century began to move closer and closer to the style and themes found in literary texts such as novels and novellas, as well as to documentary ones such as the travel narratives.

The image of Barbary and corso that appears in these later captivity narratives is also less unambiguous. In Emanuel d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité*, it is more difficult to find the same reproachful tone vis-à-vis corso than one finds in earlier texts such as Henry du Lisdam's *L'esclavage du brave chevalier de Vintimille*. In d'Aranda, as

with similar authors that published their accounts after him, the representation of the Maghreb and his experience of slavery is not as Manichean as in the redemption narratives.

These later captivity narratives were published at a time when Barbary was changing in Europe and France. After having endured stinging defeats during his early reign during the Djidjelli expedition of 1664 military, Louis XIV's relentless strategy to contain and restrain Barbary corso finally paid off. By the end of the century, thanks to a newly-found maritime superiority, the European nations started to assert greater and greater control over Barbary states. Nevertheless, the image of Barbary the seventeenth-century captivity narratives helped create in Europe will have a lasting effect.

Conclusion

Guy Turbet-Delof opens the second part of his seminal 1971 study *L'Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* – the one devoted to the image of Barbary in early modern French literature – with a chapter titled « *Un grand thème littéraire mort-né: Alger dans le théâtre et le roman Français de l'âge Baroque* .» In this chapter, Turbet-Delof begins by outlining the widespread presence of representations of Algiers – and North Africa more broadly – in the French fictional canon of the early seventeenth century. Turbet-Delof then continues by noticing how these themes tend to fade during the second part of the century and suggests that the reason for this disappearance is linked in large part to the arrival to power of Louis XIV. He then concludes that, although Barbary themes were much present in early modern French fictional literature, they remained too sparse to coalesce into what could be classified as a "Barbary" or "Algerian" literary genre in its own right:

> *Ainsi, après une entrée en littérature que j'oserai qualifier de triomphale, Alger - à deux exceptions près [...] - dut faire demi-tour; et avec elle toute la Barbarie. En tant que grand thème littéraire, s'entend. Car elles se maintiendront solidement parmi les thèmes mineurs.*[1]

Fifty years later, the bulk of Guy Turbet-Delof's work and analysis still stands. Turbet-Delof was one of the first scholars to notice and study the widespread presence of Algiers and Barbary themes in the early modern French and European literary

[1] Turbet-Delof, *Afrique barbaresque dans la littérature française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles (l')*, 212–213.

production, as well as the first to show how these themes tend to shift through the seventeenth-century literary canon.

Nevertheless, Turbet-Delof's arguments seem to show today the limits of the kind of taxonomic literary analysis so dear to his generation. This is especially evident in his attempt to reduce the themes he saw were related to the Mediterranean maritime world and corso in the early modern French literary canon to a homogeneous and coherent collection of texts, trying to establish the boundaries of a supposed "Algerian" or "Barbary" literary genre. While Turbet-Delof was certainly right in concluding that there is no such thing as an "Algerian" (or Barbary) genre in French early modern fictional literary production, the reason is not – as he argued – because of the lack of a large enough body of texts that would have fit in this category. Instead, it is because the maritime and corso themes that appear in European early modern culture are far from forming a coherent set in the first place.

As I tried to demonstrate in this study, the Barbary and corso topoi that were widespread in early modern European culture appear and move across all kind of texts: echoes of corso tropes can be found for instance in fictional works such the heroic novels (as is the case of Gomberville's *Polexandre*). The same one returns, in an almost identical form, years later in documentary texts such as the Barbary captivity narratives (as is the case in d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité*). Along the way, these topoi change and adapt to better fit the genre in which they resurface. At the same time, their protean nature also played a significant role in the development of many of the emerging early modern

fictional and non-fictional genres to which they belong (as it is the case notably for the early modern French heroic novels or the Barbary captivity narratives).

Because of their shifting nature, representations of corso and Barbary in early modern European culture were not static but evolved through time. In French culture, for instance, corso and Barbary themes started to feature regularly early in the seventeenth century in Christian militant texts such as the Trinitarian and Mercedarian redemption narratives. In these often ideologically bent texts, Islam is conjured up as the usefully defining Other. Yet, even in some of the most militant of these texts – such as in Friar Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie* – the ideological biases can coexist with a genuine – although often self-serving and partial – interest in understanding the contemporary Western Mediterranean world. The corso and Barbary tropes we find in these redemption narratives resurface years later in many fictional literary texts: in Gomberville's *Polexandre* the image of corso adapts to fit the novel's adventurous narrative ploy. Here even a renegade corsair, while still nominally an enemy, can reveal himself to be a gallant man and a potential ally.

In sum, the most significant traits of the Barbary and corso tropes that are present in early modern European culture seem to be their omnipresence, their intertextual nature, and their ability to change and adapt. These topoi and tropes were not the prerogative of any single literary genre or canon – whether fictional or not – but circulated among almost all the ones that existed in the European cultural production of the time. For this reason, we should not look at Barbary themes as a genre, but rather as a complex web of

interconnected topoi and tropes which, when brought together, combine into what could be considered a multifaced constellation.

Yet, the corso and Barbary topoi present in the early modern European culture resist the kind of classification attempted by Guy Turbet-Delof for one further reason: they are the signifiers and the testimony of corso, a historical phenomenon which remained in large part associated in early modern European culture and imagination with negative connotations. For most early modern Europeans, the image of Barbary and cosro often conjured up deep-seated fears such as being captured by pirates, fears of "turning Turk," or fears of being enslaved. Corso, in other words, evoked a trauma, both on an ideological and on a physical level, spurring a sense of danger for the body and the soul. In analyzing the British early modern captivity narratives, Linda Colley rightly noticed for instance how these texts are filled with a sentiment of vulnerability.[2]

Since the Barbary and corso topoi appearing in early modern European culture are often the testimony of this traumatic experience, they often remain elusive. This is because there is a difficulty intrinsic in their subject which causes these tropes to resist in a sense any straightforward approach. They contain to some degree a willingness to forget the humiliation and pain that are often associated with corso. In other words, these topoi seem to possess a ghostly side, one that would explain why Mediterranean corso remained for centuries a difficult topic to discuss.

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[2] Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850*, 88.

We notice this ghostliness at work, for instance, in many of the Barbary captivity narratives that were published at the time. In these texts, we can see a tension in the author's attempt to translate the idiosyncratic nature of his distressing captivity experience in forms that were comprehensible and acceptable for their contemporary audience. The authors and narrators of these captivity narratives often, understandably, manifest a sentiment of resentfulness for having been forced to cross into trauma and difference. As a result, in the captivity narratives, there is often a tendency to corroborate the pre-existing and dismissive European viewpoints about Mediterranean corso, the Maghrebian cultures, and Islam. Their fear became an ideology.

Yet, that was not always the case. Some captives chose (or were compelled) to adapt to their new condition, and some learned from their painful experiences. In some cases, their fear abated, and in their writing the humiliation and resentment gave way to a desire to understand the peculiar transformative experience of captivity. In some cases, as in d'Aranda's *Relation de la captivité*, the experience of forceful submission gave way to curiosity, and we notice an urge to leave a testimony of his threshold experience.

As in an anamorphism, to make sense and fully grasp the way corso and Barbary were represented in early modern European culture, it is crucial that we observe the constellation of topoi and tropes they gave shape to from a decentered perspective. If we try to approach them directly, as Guy Turbet-Delof attempted to do, the early modern representations of Barbary and corso evade any classification and become difficult to grasp. Instead, looking at them as the protean and intertextual constellations they are, it is

possible to notice how they give shape to one of the most prominent early modern Western collective imaginaries.

Finally, as Fernand Braudel cautioned us years ago, there is always a distance between imagination and reality. His *longue dureé* perspective attuned us to the complexity of everyday interactions that common people faced in the early modern Mediterranean frontier. Because of its proximity and its strategic and economic importance, North Africa was remarkably close to European interests. However, Braudel was right in warning us that the Mediterranean was never just about trade. Together with geopolitical and economic considerations, the Mediterranean was also a crucial space that brought people and cultures together or turned them against each other, forming, paradoxically, both identitarian rifts and connections. Because of this complexity, we shall recognize, as Braudel did, how much we still might not understand it about it:

> The actors on this stage speak many tongues and do not always understand each other; nor do we, the audience, always realize what is really going on, for the plots and story-lines are complex and not always what they seem.[3]

[3] Russell King et al. (eds), *The Mediterranean: Environment and Society* (London: Routledge, 1997), 10.

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