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The Lonely Girl. External Factors in the Conversion and Failed Ransom of the Turkish–Algerian Fatima (1608–1622)

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Abstract: Research into various aspects of slavery and the related conversions has multiplied in recent years. This contribution investigates the case of Fatima, a young woman belonging to the Turkish–Algerian elite, who was captured in 1608 by the Tuscan Knights of Saint Stephen. Rescued by her parents and entrusted to some Corsican merchants for her safe return home, she remained in Calvi (Corsica) because she embraced Christianity. Thus, the local bishop pretended to keep her under his protection. Because of her conversion, her homecoming became considerably more complicated until it was decreed impracticable. The intervention of Fatima's parents led to the opening of protracted negotiations between the political (Algerian, Ottoman, Spanish, Genoese) and ecclesiastical (Papal, Episcopal, Trinitarian) authorities. In dissatisfaction, the Algerian governors lashed out at one hundred and thirty Christian captives in Algiers whose rescue operation by Trinitarian redeemers was suddenly halted. Historiography, to narrate this case study, has paid attention predominantly to Spanish records and explained the political and economic mechanisms of the rescue machine with all its complications. Through other unpublished Spanish, Vatican and Genoese sources, this article focuses with a micro-*glocal* lens on the many psychological pressures used by political and religious agencies that accompanied such a young person by leveraging the decisive role of the Ecclesiastical authorities.



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“Compelle [eos] intrare ut impleatur domus mea”

Luke 14, 23

1. Over the last decades, the issue of conversions in the context of Mediterranean slavery of the Early Modern era has been approached from multiple perspectives (among many, [Fiume 2007](#); [Tollet 2005](#)). To summarise, there have been numerous studies on apostasy from Christianity to Islam (e.g., [Bennassar and Bennassar 1989](#); [Krstić 2011](#)). Even so, the lack of documents and their quality make research on conversions from Islam to Catholicism less substantial (for the Italian case, [Boccadamo 2010](#); [Rothman 2011](#), pp. 87–162; [Pomara Saverino \[2017\] 2022](#), pp. 206–12, 224–28; [Bennassar 1996](#)). Often, this is a return of renegades to their religion of origin (e.g., [Scaraffia 1993](#)), in which the Spanish *Moriscos* can also be technically included ([Poutrin 2012](#); [Kimmel 2015](#)). For years, one of the approaches to apostasy has been to examine the sincerity or simulation of conversions, whether convinced or opportunist ([Allegra 1991](#); [Asad 1996](#); [Keane 1997](#); [Dakhli 2001](#); [Rothman 2006](#)). Somehow, conversions have been linked to the possibilities they open to freedom or to the cancellation of a painful and challenging past, with the hopes and prospects of improving living conditions. In any case, they are elements quite unattainable from primary sources ([Malena 2007](#), p. 6) and to be revisited because conversions are frequently syncretic or undefined.

Early Modern historians have dealt with male conversions because these have left more documentary evidence. However, in recent decades, some scholars have focused on

female conversions from a gender perspective (among them, [Dakhli 2007](#); [Dursteler 2011](#)). Although some research has advanced the hypothesis that women have a widespread tendency to keep their religion alive inside the household ([Foa and Scaraffia 1996](#); [Perry 2005](#)) and that they are stronger than men in resisting apostasy, it has also been shown that the open-mindedness of female characters to religious change is recurrent. Determined to remain faithful to their choice and to defend the new creed vigorously, these women are perceived by religious authorities (Christian or Muslim) as irrational and vulnerable, letting themselves go by the impetus of conversion. For this reason, they are unreliable subjects ([Dursteler 2017](#), pp. 26–28).

2. Nevertheless, historiography cannot allude to innate religious sensitivities nor generalise behaviour based on sex. As the psychology of religions explained, even if the decision of conversion ultimately belongs to the subject, the complex conversion process is subordinated to clashes and interactions between environmental, ideological, family, social, institutional, economic, and political circumstances ([Rambo 1995](#)), as well as to the convert's character, personal background, and internal processes of the psyche.

In 1924, Sante De Sanctis considered the existence of external and internal factors in conversion. Suggestion (preaching, missions, readings), the example of others (testimonies of confessors and martyrs), extraordinary situations and facts (prophecies, miracles), social and political propaganda, aesthetic excitement, cosmic and social calamities, illnesses, misfortune, the gradual performance of worship rituals and practices (masses, prayers, sacraments) are external factors that can form the initial stimulus of the conversion process. On the other hand, internal factors lead to the radical transformation of the individual through painful and distressing experiences: wars, mutilations, imprisonments, famines, family misfortunes, moral turmoil, and fear of death, of not being saved or the afterlife. The internal ones are decisive causes in the process but not sufficient in themselves ([De Sanctis \[1924\] 2015](#), pp. 55–61).

While the conversion narratives of the neophytes themselves often describe a sudden illumination of the soul, approaching a new faith is made up of a personal path marked by certainties, uncertainties, second thoughts and unease. Although Pauline or abrupt conversions are contemplated (the grace of God appears suddenly, without considering time or place) in the Early Modern age, they are illusory and improbable, according to contemporary psychology. They hide a hasty outcome of a latent or unclear internal conflict; they also manifest the reaction of a narcissistic tendency to put the subject in question at the forefront ([Aletti 2015](#), pp. 71–75). Egocentric or not, the convert presents a total distortion of conscience ([De Sanctis \[1924\] 2015](#), p. 103). It determines a radical restructuring of personality as a sign of dropping the past: death of the old self now reincarnated in a new being who pledges allegiance to a new covenant with God ([Vergote 1966](#)). The convert then knows and feels that he or she has become different, experiencing a sense of total renewal ([De Sanctis \[1924\] 2015](#), p. 112; Darby [Nock 1933](#), p. 7).

In an old article, James H. Leuba proposed a standardisation of the candidate's feelings for conversion. As a psychologist, he raised the existence of two conflicting phases. In the first one, states of mind such as guilt, self-surrender, impotence, dependence, and absolute misery stand out. The second one is seen in moments such as self-improvement in religious commitment thanks to the crucial mediation of a spiritual guide; hope; trust; the self-awareness of salvation in the new faith; the pleasure of novelty; the emotions of joy and peace or seeing the light at the end of a tunnel; and the will ([Leuba 1896](#), pp. 322–44).

In line with a view suggested by American psychology at the end of the nineteenth century (starting with [Starbuck 1899](#)), and still shared today, conversion is a recurrent and universal phenomenon in puberty and early adolescence. Far from being just a spiritual phenomenon, conversion goes hand in hand with physiological, body and character changes that lead the neophyte to manifest new psychic attitudes and to shape personality. In a finding generally accepted by specialists, women tend to convert a few years earlier than men, between 10 and 13 years of age and rarely beyond 20 years.

3. When studying processes of rescue or acts of conversion, it would be convenient to at least envisage the emotional storm suffered by these people, even if it cannot be supported with documentary evidence, as occurs in the case examined in this paper. In the field of captivity, the emotional stability of the subjects to be rescued, as traumatised people who harbour wounds and hopes, is put to the test through extraordinary psychological pressure. This strain comes from family members, religious authorities, and civil institutions, both from their homeland and from the destination they reach. Sometimes, the captives remain firm in their creed. Other times, they hesitate and relish the temptation of converting to the new faith, seduced by agents, religious or not, who offer them the advantages of conversion and brainwash them into accepting the superiority of their true faith. As has been argued, the individual's psychological change, whether sudden or gradual, is overpowered by the supra-individual pressure of social forces ([García-Arenal and Glazer-Eytan 2020](#), p. 14). In addition, it should be considered that “behind every conversion lies a degree of violence” and that “Christian doctrine [. . .] has been anything but accommodating” ([Lavenia et al. 2018](#), p. 11).

By revisiting the story of Mary Magdalene, also known by her Arab name, Fatima, scholars should remember the elements mentioned earlier in order to visualise a possible scenario the sources did not tell. In 1608, this 11-year-old Turkish–Algerian girl was kidnapped from her house in Bona—the current Algerian port city of Annaba—by the Tuscan Knights of Saint Stephen and brought to Leghorn. With the ransom paid by her parents,¹ Fatima should have returned home. However, the vessel she travelled on with four other free Muslim captives stopped in Calvi, a town in North-West Corsica. Fatima remained there and converted to Catholicism. This fact caused a commotion in Algiers since it involved three Trinitarian redeemers who, on a mission there, had just completed rescue operations for one hundred and thirty Christian captives. The reasons will be seen later, even if it can be anticipated that we are facing two indissolubly intertwined events.

The case of Fatima is moderately known by historiography, and even unpretentious history-fiction novelists have come to collect and imagine the ups and downs of this young woman from Bona in her early years in Corsica ([Donati and Montali 2011](#)). Hagiographic studies of members of the Trinitarian order neglect it to raise awareness of the three mentioned redeemers as candidates for sainthood after being martyred ([Vega y Toraya 1729](#), pp. 66–117; [Porres Alonso 1994](#), pp. 73–98). For her part, Ellen [Friedman \(1983](#), pp. 136–37) refers to it as an example of fallible negotiation in the redemption of captives. Finally, [Hershenzon \(2016, 2018\)](#), who has devoted more attention to the whole case from a global perspective, underestimates the crucial role of the Holy See and the Republic of Genoa. As a result of the primary sources he used, essentially from the Archivo General de Simancas, his analysis remains within the negotiating strategies of Spanish high politics intending to unblock this international affair.

For the reconstruction of this case study, I have focused through a micro and *glocal* lens on the numerous political and religious pressures with psychological consequences that affect such a young, alone, helpless, and therefore incredibly fragile person to convert or to rethink her faith. Alongside the Simancas records (some of them edited, others unknown), I have resorted to the Corsican sources found in the Archivio di Stato di Genova that collect native protagonists' voices who witnessed the conversion, and to the Roman Holy Office minutes that reveal the decisive role of the Holy See before such sensitive religious issues. This is a complicated puzzle made up of scattered documents to be pieced together that allow us to understand the tremendous diplomatic implications, the variety of social actors involved, and the unthinkable backstories that hint at the internal factors of the conversion and reveal the external ones. In this paper, I will pay attention to the latter. In this overlapping story, I will show how the religious and affective dimensions' prevalence is critical. It is not a matter of using outdated approaches to clashes of civilizations or religious blocs ([Braudel \[1949\] 1972](#); [Huntington 1997](#)), and it goes far beyond the preponderance of economic causes ([Kaiser 2007](#)) or political–institutional–economic reasons ([Hershenzon 2016, 2018](#), pp. 6–7), rejected by the parties in dispute.

On the other hand, as historians, it makes little sense to investigate the sincerity and the willingness of a conversion. Firstly, because they cannot be fully grasped through the sources; secondly, they are concepts conditioned by contemporary categories such as intentionality, inwardness, and authenticity; and thirdly, as we have already mentioned, all conversions are somehow forced (see also [Jacoby 2016](#)). Even more so that of a child such as Fatima. For these reasons, rather than speculating on whether the conversion was convenient, forced, strategic, simulated, or incomplete, Fatima's story suggests that we should reflect on what internal and external elements led to the conversion and what enabled the neophyte to hold fast to the new faith. All factors are to be examined from time to time within specific social, political, cultural, and religious contexts.

4. Fatima's case aroused a huge international clamour that, for fourteen years (from 1609 to 1622), kept busy King Philip III himself—even during the difficult years of the expulsion of the *Moriscos* (1609–1614)—Pope Paul V, some cardinals, various doges of Genoa and governors of Corsica, the Bishop of Sagone, the divan, the Bey of Algiers and other Roman, Corsican, Spanish, Venetian, Neapolitan, Sicilian, Algerian and Ottoman civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The amount of institutional and informal actors in the framework of international relations between opposite Mediterranean shores is dense, contradictory, and fascinating. Furthermore, all this occurs without Fatima's voice: no judicial interrogation record or personal memoir exists.

In April 1609, the friars Bernardo de Monroy, Juan de Águila and Juan de Palacios arrived in Algiers to redeem Christian private slaves or captives in the city dungeons (the "bath"). They had collected alms for the rescue, and the Pasha of Algiers had just granted them the safe-conduct to carry out the mission. In a few months, the three of them were allowed to free one hundred and thirty-six Christians, in a feat that was to have become an astonishing propaganda success favouring the Spanish Monarchy.

On the verge of returning to Spain, the Algerian authorities stopped the convoy of Trinitarians and recently manumitted people. The reason was the absence of the Turkish–Algerian girl who was supposed to be on a Corsican ship recently anchored in the port, along with other redeemed Muslims in Leghorn. The Moors had come back, but the girl had not. This situation unleashed her parents' anger: they were waiting for her, as they had sent the money for her redemption on time. The ministers of the North African regency demanded explanations from the Corsican navigators. These blamed the "*papaces*"² of Calvi, the Corsican citadel in whose port Fatima made a stopover with the rest of the crew before setting sail again to Algiers. As a result, the people in Algiers were in an uproar while directing their rage against the Trinitarians. The pasha's fury also turned against them, "saying that—in the words of Father Monroy—we were *papazes*, and *papazes* had taken her over; so, as *papazes*, we should bring her back".³

Monroy showed the safe-conduct granted for redemption. As he stated, he and his two companions were not responsible for the offence. They would not know how to intervene since Corsica did not belong to the Crown of Spain—as, indeed, the three Trinitarians—but it was under the rule of the Republic of Genoa.⁴ If anything, the Corsican merchants should have provided more explanation. Furthermore—the friar warned—if the girl had already been baptised, it would not be possible to bring her back. In this sense, canonists had always been very explicit: baptism is an irreversible sacrament, unlike other sacraments (sacred orders or marriage) whose invalidation is at the discretion of each ecclesiastical court ([Poutrin 2020](#)). The pasha, shouting, did not want to listen to excuses: the Trinitarians were imprisoned and locked up, with shackles and handcuffs, in the dungeons of Algiers, along with the one hundred and thirty-six Christians who had just gained freedom. Following the decision of the Ottoman minister, the prisoners would not be released until the girl's homecoming. Moreover, if Fatima did not finally return, all the prisoners would become private slaves.⁵

Having received the news, Philip III got down to work, feeling called to consolidate and defend the fundamentalist and devout image of the Spanish Crown. He pursued diplomatic channels; thus, the King of France and the Doge of Venice,⁶ through their

ambassadors in Istanbul, explained the situation to the vizier to convince his subordinate Algerian ministers to release the imprisoned Christians (Porres Alonso 1994, pp. 82, 89, 98; Hershenzon 2018, p. 166). Perhaps following Monroy's advice, the Spanish king also addressed his ambassador in Genoa to pressure the Republic authorities to investigate the girl's true faith. If she was a Moor in her heart, she should have been back in Algiers as soon as possible; on the contrary, if she had declared her Christianity, a few written testimonies would be enough. As a faithful vassal of Spain, the obedient Republic of Genoa set in motion its institutional apparatus.⁷ The search for a tutor to take care of Fatima—who also aroused concern for her health—and some Moors to corroborate her version was the upcoming task, so that “those poor priests and the already rescued Christians be set free”.⁸

Would the girl have expressed a public desire to become a Christian? If so, how sincere would that conversion have been? Benedictine Pietro Lomellini, Bishop of Sagone between 1606 and 1625, a representative of the Genoese high nobility, declared that he collected the girl's first impressions while looking after her since disembarking in Corsica. The prelate claimed moral and religious interests for Fatima to stay in Calvi. According to Lomellini, the girl would have expressed her desire for conversion during a brief captivity in Pisa, in the house of a tailor. There, she learnt Christian doctrine, which won her over.⁹ She had not previously expressed this wish since she was sorry about her father losing the ransom money.¹⁰ In addition, she feared the reaction of Cosimo II de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany—who benefited from the rights of releasing captives—and of the merchants who carried out her rescue.¹¹

5. Thus, apparently, the girl chose her new path.¹² In spite of the threatening looks of the other manumitted Muslims, Fatima decided to abandon the ship following a proposal of baptism offered by the high prelate of Sagone.¹³ Given the commotion produced in Algiers as a result of the alleged forced conversion of the young Muslim woman¹⁴—and the worrying news reaching Philipp III and Paul V about the mistreatment suffered by the three Trinitarian redeemers and the rest of the rescued Christians—the bishop made a point: Fatima did not oppose any refusal and she expressed her free will; all things considered, the baptism was not coercive; therefore, it was valid.¹⁵

A few residents from Calvi confirmed this version of events. Lomellini boarded the ship anchored in the port after a Dominican friar—who had heard the rumours in the public domain from the girl herself—told him about Fatima's will.¹⁶ The bishop used the occasion to convince the girl to assert her “free will” and lose her fear: “Before you were a slave. Here you will be free”,¹⁷ or “If your father does not want to save himself, try to save yourself”.¹⁸ Thus, he invited her to go down with him, despite the fleeting protest of the ship's master and the Turks, all silenced by the menacing presence of the secular arm representatives that supported the Monsignor's decision.¹⁹ After speaking with some prominent locals, Fatima finally landed accompanied by a Turkish woman holding her hand.

The Christian witnesses agreed on the joy and good mood of that Algerian girl who walked the city under the curious gaze of the native people.²⁰ At least, that is what it seemed because—according to a witness—nobody knew what she kept deep down inside “her heart”. However, it was clear no one was forcing her.²¹ While the ship remained moored in the port for a few days in case Fatima reconsidered her decision, she stayed at the bishop's house for a month until the day of the solemn baptism came with unanimous popular participation.²² Antonio Guidi, a nobleman from Calvi, endorsed that “no one forced her to be baptised, but rather she eagerly asked for it: so she received it”.²³ No irregularity was visible: according to the Christian doctrine, the sacrament was valid for all purposes if there was no coercion at the baptismal font. In addition, everything indicates that the young woman agreed, was enthusiastic and was convinced to embrace Christianity. For the Corsican villagers, there were no impediments to Fatima becoming Mary Magdalene.

Testimonies could also be arranged in such a small town: the witnesses, almost all noblemen, used similar sentences, and the Genoese authorities knew that this could alert the Turkish–Algerian authorities. To avoid the inconvenience, four copies of some Moors'

statements were sent to the doge, the pope, the King of Spain and the pasha to reassure those ecclesiastical and political authorities on the two opposite shores of the Mediterranean. They were waiting for news about the spontaneity of Fatima's conversion.²⁴ Found and brought on purpose from the galleys of the Republic, five Muslims were interrogated: three Turks and two Moors, a notary—Mohamed Charif al-Bouni—and four slaves, former merchants. They knew how to read and write in Arabic and Turkish, although they formulated a “messy and confused” document as “made by barbarians”. It was better that way because the testimony, seeming so natural, should not be suspicious of being false in Algiers.²⁵

The Muslim slaves raised questions—probably suggested by the Genoese authorities—to Fatima. After providing personal data,²⁶ the young woman declared that “no one had forced her”. She “had become a Christian by herself”, and she wanted to live and die as such. Christianity had intrigued her while observing some French people in Bona; therefore, her heart had long since turned to conversion. She was free and not a slave thanks to the manumission granted by “the lords of Genoa”, and she was not under the influence of “papazes”.²⁷ Despite many inquiries, the pasha did not lower his demands and continued to claim the young woman, threatening the friars and the Christians imprisoned in the dungeons of Algiers with the worst fate.

6. The girl's father had a leading voice within the Berber Regency. However, the sources do not agree on his professional role: Mehmet Agha is described by the documents sometimes as a simple Turkish nobleman from Anatolia;²⁸ other times as the warden (*alcaide*) of Algiers, that is, the agha, chief of the janissaries;²⁹ others as a captain and member of the government of Algiers (Porres Alonso 1994, p. 73n) or, even, as the very same viceroy and pasha.³⁰ In any case, from the point of view of the Christian authorities, he was an undoubtedly influential person who, due to his inflexible attitude, made it challenging to release the more than one hundred and thirty captives held in the city. Before the divan, he expressed his sorrow and desperation for not being able to hug his daughter again, “taking off his turban and showing how badly he wanted to throw it away to express his grief. He pulled his beard and scratched his face, like someone who has gone mad; he shed many tears and did other actions that explained his sorrow” (Vega y Toraya 1729, p. 69). With no options left, the Christians had to pursue the return of Fatima to Algiers at all costs. Her detention in Corsica had “subverted” the entire city, causing severe damage to the captains of the Christian ships, the manumitted Christians, and the imprisoned Trinitarians, who sent “letters that cry out to heaven” to Philip III and Paul V.³¹

The main obstacle to an acceptable solution—bartering Christian captives for Fatima—was the Bishop of Sagone. He kept coming up with one excuse after another for not letting the young woman go. Fatima's poor health was the most common pretext, maybe because she suffered from oedema.³² The high prelate thus denounced the inconveniences she could have experienced during the trip.³³ Moreover, he tried to psychologically blackmail his interlocutors, telling how the little girl cried when they recalled she could be repatriated.³⁴ According to his version, she wept even more when she found out that the orders for her return to Algiers may have come from the pontiff: “The Pope should especially keep in mind I am a Christian”, the girl protested.³⁵ She called the bishop “father”, and Monsignor himself took care of her as if she were his own daughter.³⁶ Apparently, she did not want to know anything about her biological father. She used to say, referring to him and everything that belonged to her past: “There, in Bona”.³⁷ Finally, the bishop added, she had forgotten her language (Arabic), speaking now with Pisan expressions and making rapid progress in her knowledge of the doctrine.³⁸

Faced with these biased stories that exposed religious and affective interests, the Corsican governor considered the evidence the high prelate of Sagone alluded to as “frivolous inventions”.³⁹ Until an official reprimand arrived from Rome, the Genoese ministers tried to reassure Bishop Lomellini. They encouraged him for the work carried out until then and, at the same time, graciously demanded the return of Fatima. They had commissioned “a

discreet and trustworthy person" to pick up the girl, still sick with fever and "fluids", and to watch over her with great care in a house or to take her to a sisters' convent in Bastia, on the north-east coast of the island.⁴⁰ Lomellini was reluctant to hand over the young woman to the authorities, whereby a long institutional struggle began. There was no way to convince him, despite the requests of the Senate and the guarantees of the doge, the king, and the pope to please him.⁴¹ Hence, the Governor of Corsica, Giovanni Pietro Serra, addressed the bishop: "In good and holy actions, the devil often uses his arts to show the evil he usually causes to the world. The act of redemption of that girl who [...] stayed there to become a Christian seemed praiseworthy, but later it has been so harmful to the poor Christians in Algiers, whose voices and cries have reached His Holiness the Pope and the Catholic King".⁴² The high ecclesiastical official answered, seeking the justification of his good faith and action in the very words of his interlocutor: "Therefore, it is possible to draw a universal proposition: when actions are significantly difficult, they are good actions".⁴³ Regardless of the ambiguous attitude of the bishop, the secular authorities continued negotiations with him thanks to the initial support gained by the Holy See. They tried to reassure Lomellini that he could remain "still and convinced" since the girl would end up in the agreed convent where "she will be cared for and provided with everything [...] and preserved among virgins".⁴⁴ However, the bishop persisted in getting his way: the soldiers picking Mary Magdalene up from his house returned to the starting point since Lomellini still refused to let her go.⁴⁵ He argued: "I have baptised and confirmed this daughter, which has given me more obligations than educating her in the faith. Therefore, I cannot stop caring about her".⁴⁶

7. The position of the bishop would open the way to an inevitable clash between religious and secular authorities. Despite her baptism, Fatima's conversion must have seemed a reversible act to the Spanish civil authorities that lobbied to repatriate her. The expulsion of the *Moriscos* from Spain, carried out simultaneously with Fatima's experience in Corsica, showed how even hundreds of thousands of Spanish Muslim descendants, considered mostly apostates (but many of them recognized as good Christians), could be sent *in terra infidelium*.

Yet, beyond the Spanish Crown's political pressures, the Holy See tipped the balance in this international diplomatic crisis. In confidence and with honest words addressed to Cardinal Pinelli, the highest reference of the Republic in the Curia and protector of the Genoese nation in Rome,⁴⁷ the Doge of Genoa undoubtedly highlighted its role: "We truly feel the tribulation and anguish of many Christians, but we cannot say anything else that, being the girl in the hands of the Bishop of Sagone, only His Holiness can give the command".⁴⁸ In fact, Pope Paul V granted a safe-conduct to Fatima's parents for their trip to Corsica,⁴⁹ to "explore her will and intention".⁵⁰ Indeed, the grand Genoese island was not a usual place for exchanging slaves in the western Mediterranean.

Subsequently, the pope proposed a rendezvous on the neutral island of Tabarca to satisfy the wishes and demands of the North African ministers. Located off the Algerian–Tunisian waters, a Spanish possession since 1535 via a treaty signed with the Hafsid dynasty of Tunis that made it its tributary, Tabarca was leased to the Lomellinis—the same Genoese aristocratic family of the Bishop of Sagone—to manage the lucrative coral trade since the mid-1540s.⁵¹ It was also a critical enclave where exchanges of Christian–Muslim captives took place.⁵² The election of the island was intended to be strategic and set an agreement between all parties involved.

Meanwhile, Fatima's state of mind was "explored" on several occasions before a possible family meeting:⁵³ Lest the girl changed her mind overnight, the Bishop of Sagone had to make sure that Mary Magdalene remained in her faith. This way, he could have brought her firmly and without hesitation to the agreed appointment.⁵⁴ Therefore, the negotiations to arrange the meeting between parents and daughter continued simultaneously with the consolidation of her life as a convert. To get her out of the troublesome personality of the bishop, Pope Paul V proposed her entry into a convent in Bastia, as he attempted too clear

the air for a while.⁵⁵ In 1612, the Tabarca option was temporarily discarded when the Holy Office decided not to send the girl there and not to let her leave Calvi.⁵⁶ In August of the same year, a potential mother sent from Algiers to Pisa appeared, requesting a meeting with Fatima to unblock the situation.⁵⁷ Two years later, the Bishop of Sagone swore to the Pope that he would not reveal any secrets about the Fatima–Mary Magdalene affair.⁵⁸ Although the case spread many doubts among the ecclesiastical authorities, the secrets they were referring to remained unknown to the researchers. With these and other unclear aspects of the events, due to documentary gaps, silences or half-truths of the actors, and the absence of the protagonist’s voice, the reading of the historians becomes increasingly complex.

Mary Magdalene’s stay in the convent near Bastia was more stable and lasted a long time. As any other nun, the Turkish–Algerian girl needed a dowry to cover her maintenance, managed by Bishop Lomellini.⁵⁹ The Roman Holy Office also addressed the issue several times. It commissioned raising the necessary money through “pecuniary fines” levied on the condemned of the diocese of Sagone and others.⁶⁰ At this point, the reins of the destiny of Mary Magdalene were clearly in the hands of the Curia.

In 1616, the Holy Father demanded that the now-adolescent—in theory, she was about 17 years old at that time—be given in marriage to an “honest man”, a search carried out by the Corsican bishop.⁶¹ Could marriage be an enticement for the young woman? It is very plausible. We are facing here a clear strategy to forge an indissoluble bond between a neophyte and Catholicism. Mary Magdalene was baptised, had been educated in the Christian faith, had entered a convent, made confession and taken the Eucharist, and was now united in marriage: sending Fatima to Algiers under these circumstances would have meant legitimising a scandalous apostasy. Could Philip III force his hand against the wavering stance expressed by the Holy See? Perhaps not, in light of the recent tensions that arose on the deportation of the *Moriscos* to North Africa. On that occasion, the king had not heard the pontiff’s opinion. Paul V was irritated at not being consulted on such an important matter. He was angered because that decision involved thousands of baptised minors (Pomara Saverino [2017] 2022, pp. 56–62), blameless little lambs just as Fatima. Perhaps for the Pope, it was the occasion to take an act of small but significant revenge, which allowed a bishop from such a remote area to take action. Returning the girl to Bona would have been akin to agreeing with the Spanish monarch and his decrees on the *Moriscos’* children that the Pope did not allow. Fatima–Mary Magdalene paid the price for all this, whether or not she was aware of her recent conversion and whether or not she was pleased with it.

8. In the meantime, the Trinitarians did not stop asking for help, informing their superiors, the Spanish Crown and the Holy See, about the conditions of suffering and torment they had had to endure in the *bath* of the capital city of the Berber Regency. In the summer of 1617, Friar Bernardo de Monroy wrote to the Council of State that, after eight years and two months of captivity, two of the three redeeming friars had already died along with forty-six slaves, and another fifteen had dropped their faith.⁶² Monroy was not yet wholly hopeless. He also contemplated bartering in Tabarca the Christian prisoners on stand-by in the Algerian dungeons for Fatima–Mary Magdalene. However, he knew well that “until the girl gets on the boat, Christians would not leave Algiers”.⁶³ The Trinitarian begged directly to the King of Spain to have the girl sent to Tabarca: Fatima’s father already had the safe-conduct granted by the Republic of Genoa. The only thing missing was the girl’s departure. The Duke of Osuna, then Viceroy of Naples (1616–1620), had suggested Messina, Naples, or any other part of Italy, to facilitate the meeting, offering the Turkish notable a period of a week, or even a month, if he needed it, to talk to his daughter. If Fatima had expressed her sincere Muslim faith during this time, her father would have taken her with him. Otherwise, she would have stayed in Christian land.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the father did not give in, only showing availability to meet his daughter in Tabarca without conditions to find out her creed.⁶⁵ The hypothesis that Fatima’s natural father was the pasha was considered⁶⁶ since the Algerian authorities made it known

through the Trinitarian friar that the Christians imprisoned in Algiers cannot be exchanged for other Turks or Moors nor money—only for Fatima. “The girl —explained the friar— would have come with a safe-conduct from the Grand Duke [of Tuscany] freely and frankly, and the Bishop of Sagone in Calvi took her off the vessel at gunpoint and by force”.⁶⁷ Monroy must have imagined that either the Holy See or the Corsican high prelate opposed the plan. For this reason, he compelled Philip III not to interfere, noting that, in the interim, Fatima “is already twenty years old and, if she is a Christian at heart, she will not deny it in Tabarca more than in Palermo or Genoa”.⁶⁸

9. Philip III tried to follow different paths. First, in 1614, he was intransigent by suspending the liberation of Muslim captives in his territories until the surviving prisoners in Algiers were freed.⁶⁹ It was not a trivial decision because, in 1613, the Sicilian galleys had captured a person as important as the Bey of Alexandria with his family and entourage (CODOIN 1864, p. 548; Hershenzon 2018, pp. 167–68).

The Viceroy of Naples, Duke of Osuna, valued for his skills in espionage between the Christian and Muslim borders, was also engaged in negotiations. In them, the redemption of the Bey of Alexandria was disclosed in an attempt to get the pasha to abandon his pretensions and accept other solutions that would no longer involve the return of Fatima.⁷⁰ This operation anticipated the release of Monroy and the rest of the Christians from the Algerian dungeons and a contribution of 20,000 ducats by the Marquis of Villena, the former Viceroy of Sicily, to free his son Diego Pacheco, taken captive years ago, a renegade in Istanbul to the great displeasure of his father.⁷¹ “With necessary messages from Constantinople”, which supported a positive conclusion of the issue, in 1619, Osuna would send two intermediaries, a chiaus and a capuchin, to Algiers.⁷² As the Marquis of Caracena, adviser to the Council of State and War, wrote, there was already “another path beyond the first one followed by the married woman in Corsica, significantly less difficult and scrupulous”.⁷³ Thus, Fatima stayed out of the exchanges between noblemen of opposite religious confessions, but not the convoy of Christians locked up in the Algerian dungeons. There, the discomfort of the Christian prisoners was evident because they knew that, without Fatima, the Algerian authorities would not be pleased. The captives expressed it this way:

It would be convenient to break down the negotiations in Corsica on the woman’s return, the cause of the ravages of this redemption in Tabarca. We can only wait for her answer to end the problem: Is she a Christian or a Moor? Therefore, Your Majesty should ignore the flimsy excuses given there [in Calvi], because they are so weak compared to the damage received here.⁷⁴

However, in 1619, Philip III accepted that Fatima’s return was impracticable “because she was a Christian”.⁷⁵ The king had to respect what the Holy See had finally decided. In short, Fatima’s trip to Tabarca depended exclusively on the ecclesiastical authorities, while the political ones (Spanish and Genoese) had a minor role. Fatima barely had a voice. We have never known about it, nor will we ever know what she would have really wanted.

10. During Early Modern history, the Catholic Church awarded much publicity to the conversions of royalty, high dignitaries, and their sons and daughters. That type of successful literary product, “profitable in the expansion of Catholicism”, was a boomerang that “risked weakening the Church”: in fact, it would have offered pretexts for “accusations of coercion and oppression aimed at the Roman clergy” from the most critical observers (Petrilini et al. 2022, p. XLIV). The Fatima–Mary Magdalene conversion represented the typical case with such controversial aspects that it was better not to give it any resonance.

The validity of Fatima’s baptism was formally unquestionable after an initial shallow investigation. Nevertheless, it is surprising that, for some years, with the collaboration of the Genoese government, the Holy See insisted on making her loved ones, the Trinitarians, and the Spanish and Algerian rulers believe that Fatima had complete freedom in deciding her future, even at the cost of cancelling her baptism and returning to Bona. In other moments, the Roman Inquisition seemed to delegate the latest decision of whether Fatima

could go to see her family in Tabarca or not to such a cumbersome personality as the Bishop of Sagone.⁷⁶ The hesitation of the ecclesiastical authorities in organising the meeting between Fatima and her parents might prove that, over the years, Lomellini had a decisive influence on the course of the case, forcing the members of the Roman Holy Office to communicate the constraints placed by the bishop to the redeemer Monroy.⁷⁷ Is it credible that her fate was held hostage by a peripheral and insignificant diocese bishop?

Fatima's conversion was challenging to recount convincingly in the face of the dramatic story of the martyred fathers and the suffering of the one hundred and thirty captives who were ransomed but stuck in the prisons of Algiers. Frustrated expectations and unhappiness were the widespread feelings among most of the protagonists. In 1622, Bernardo de Monroy died a martyr in jail, and his redemptive order would not set foot in Algiers again until 1650 (Hershenzon 2016, p. 93). Not even his pitiful memoirs moved the Holy See more than necessary. On the other hand, we have little information on Mary Magdalene. Raw data reveal that on 19 March 1637, she died in Bastia, where she had moved with her husband, Geronimo (Porres Alonso 1994, pp. 73n–74n). Nearly two decades later, everyone had forgotten about her.

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Abbreviations

ACDF	Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (Rome)
ASGe	Archivio di Stato di Genova (Genoa)
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid)
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
ASVe	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (Vatican City)

Notes

- ¹ The amount agreed upon between Fatima's parents and the Corsican merchant Manfredi Manfredini would reach 400 escudos, increased to 500, "if necessary, not being able to redeem her at a lower price" (Vega y Toraya 1729, p. 66).
- ² The word "papaz" (plural "papaces", or "papazes" in the sources) was used among North African Moors to name the Christian ministers, both secular and regular, generically.
- ³ ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Algiers, 17 September 1609. *Relación del suceso y caso lastimoso de los padres que la Orden de la Santissima Trinidad embió a la ciudad de Argel a rescatar cautivos Christianos*.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ ASVe, *Collegio, Exposizioni principi*, reg. 23, cc. 27^v–28^r. The Ambassador of Spain before the Doge and Senate of Venice. Venice, 8 June 1611.
- ⁷ ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, filza 2425, n.n. Madrid, 24 October 1609. Letter from the Ambassador in Madrid Ambrosio Spinola to the Doge of Genoa; ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fol. 153^r. Letter from the Doge and governors of Genoa to Philip II. Genoa, 19 November 1609. See also AGS, *Est.*, leg. 1434, fol. 238.
- ⁸ ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fol. 152^{r-v}. Letter from the Doge and governors of Genoa to Ambrosio Spinola, ambassador in Madrid. Genoa, 18 November 1609.
- ⁹ ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 39^r–40^f. Letter from the doge to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 19 November 1609.

- 10 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Antonio Guidi Simone, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 22 December 1609.
- 11 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 39^r–40^r. Letter from the doge to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 19 November 1609.
- 12 She confirmed it to the preacher's father on the boat a day before meeting the bishop. Ibid.
- 13 During the interview with the bishop on the same boat, witness Giovanni Fratte corroborates that the girl confirmed that she "would willingly become a Christian, even if those Turks looked at her with adverse eyes". ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Calvi, 24 December 1609.
- 14 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Governor of Corsica, Giovanni Pietro Serra, to the Commissioner of Calvi, Giovanni Tomaso Rovereto. Bastia, 16 December 1609.
- 15 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Calvi, 19 December 1609. Letter from the Bishop of Sagone to Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra.
- 16 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Antonio Guidi Simone, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 22 December 1609.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Giovanni Fratte, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 24 December 1609.
- 19 "I was not scared by the protests of the ship's master, much less by the protests and threats of one of those Turks". ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Bishop of Sagone to Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra. Calvi, 19 December 1609. "Those on the ship did not want me to go down to the mainland; the bishop got the secular arm [to intervene]". ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Simon Moreno, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 29 December 1609.
- 20 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Antonio Guidi Simone, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 22 December 1609.
- 21 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Simon Moreno, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 29 December 1609.
- 22 Ibid. Her godparents were Commissioner Camillo Salvago and Captain Roberto Cavanna's wife, Corsican notables.
- 23 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Calvi, 22 December 1609.
- 24 For this reason, the Doge of Genoa demanded: "to examine [...] Moors or Turks [...] through public, authentic and legal testimonies and, if possible, statements written by their own hands [...] that they will prepare in that [Arabic] language and with those characters, nuances and signs that those nations usually use". ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fol. 40^{r-v}. The doge to Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra. Genoa, 19 November 1609. However, there was a previous attempt to seize Muslims residing in Calvi, which were not found, according to an investigation carried out by the chancellor of the court in Calvi, Giovanni Pietro Orego: ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Calvi, 19 December 1609.
- 25 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Carlo Centurione, General of the Gallies of the Republic of Genoa, to the doge and governors. Calvi, 29 April 1610.
- 26 She was the daughter of Mehmet Agha and Aixa and had a brother. She considered being between 11 and 12 years of age.
- 27 The letter's content in Italian can be consulted at the ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Calvi, 28 April 1610. The authentic copy in Tunisian–Algerian dialect, *ibid.* The author thanks Houssein Eddine Chachia for the translation of that letter. Thus, it was possible to verify that the content coincides with the Italian version. See also ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 61^{r-v}. Letters from the doge, and Secretary Ottaviano, to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 5 May 1610. Vega y Toraya (1729, p. 87) also reports on these statements.
- 28 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 39^r–40^r. Letter from the doge to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 19 November 1609.
- 29 AHN, EESS, leg. 142, fol. 253. Letter from Philip II to the Spanish ambassador to the Holy See, Francisco de Castro. Guadarrama, 24 February 1610. It should be noted that the agha was a 2-month position.
- 30 BAV, *Barb. Lat.*, vol. 6345, c. 11^r. Notice published in Rome, 15 January 1611: we know that is false because no Mehmet was a pasha in that decade. A much later document clarifies that Mary Magdalene, also known as Fatima, would be the "*praetensam filiam proregis Algerii*", suggesting an illegitimate filiation that the pasha had to defend. ACDF, *Decreta 1619–20*, c. 433^v. Report of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in response to a letter from Friar Bernardo de Monroy. Rome, 26 November 1620.
- 31 ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Governor of Corsica, Giovanni Pietro Serra, to Commissioner Rovereto. Bastia, 16 December 1609.
- 32 According to Bishop Lomellini, "in addition to having a swollen belly, she suffered so much pain that it would degenerate into actual oedema". ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Bishop of Sagone to the doge. Calvi, no date (ca. late December 1609). The doge wrote to his ambassador to Spain, Ambrosio Spinola, that the bishop was hosting Mary Magdalene in his house and "has not wanted to send her to Bastia for various reasons, including her illness". ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fol. 155^r. Genoa, 5 January 1610. See also *ibid.*, fols. 47^v and 48^r (same dates). Letters from the doge to Cardinal Pinelli and the Governor of Corsica.
- 33 Governor Serra had sent one of his trusted men, Lieutenant Giovan Battista Cepolina, to find out personally the Algerian woman's state of health and, if necessary, collect her "intact and unharmed". The bishop stalled before handing her over to embark on a

journey: “Given the girl’s fragile health, she would have suffered”. ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra to the doge. Bastia, 31 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 39^r–40^r. Letter from the Doge of Genoa to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 19 November 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Bishop of Sagone to Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra. Calvi, 19 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Interrogation of Antonio Guidi Simone, a nobleman from Calvi. Calvi, 22 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 39^r–40^r. Letter from the Doge of Genoa to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 19 November 1609.

Ibid.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Governor of Corsica to the Commissioner of Calvi, Camillo Salvago. Bastia, 21 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 39^r–40^r. Letter from the Doge of Genoa to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 19 November 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Bastia, 21 December 1609. Letter from Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra to the Bishop of Sagone: “Once again, I ask you to please the Senate and not worry about this situation anymore because the members of the Signoria of Venice are so prudent that –taking into consideration the Pope and the Catholic King– they have been asked to govern in such a way that neither she nor her father [...] remained aggrieved”.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra to the Bishop of Sagone. Bastia, 16 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Calvi, 19 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from Governor Giovanni Pietro Serra to the Bishop of Sagone. Bastia, 27 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Bastia, 27 December 1609.

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Letter from the Bishop of Sagone to the doge. Calvi, no date (ca. late December 1609).

In addition to being prefect of the Congregation of Rites, Cardinal Domenico Pinelli (1541–1611) was a permanent member of the Roman Holy Office (Ceccarelli 2015).

ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fols. 73^{r-v}. Letter from the doge to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 18 August 1610.

ACDF, *Decreta 1610-11*, cc. 154^v (Rome, 26 August 1610) and 194^r (28 October 1610). The entourage that could travel with the parents and benefit from the safe-conduct could not be more than ten people: ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881. Genoa, 6 October 1610.

ACDF, *Decreta 1610-11*, c. 240^r and *Decreta 1611*, c. 23. Rome, 12 January 1611; ASGe, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, vol. 1881, fol. 84^v. Letter from the doge to Cardinal Pinelli. Genoa, 12 January 1611. Required by the Roman Holy Office, Cardinal Bandini’s mediation was essential. Bandini was the protector of the Order of the Redemption of Captives, a member of the Holy Office, a future promoter and a member of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Merola 1963). Fatima’s parents would have been able to reach her daughter at least two or three times, in the presence of the bishop and a noble matron: ACDF, *Decreta 1610-11*, c. 293^r and *Decreta 1611*, c. 18. Rome, 6 January 1611.

ACDF, *Decreta 1610-11*, c. 292^r and *Decreta 1611*, c. 148. Rome, 7 April 1611. Tabarca as a solution was also the hope for the Trinitarians: ACDF, *Decreta 1612*, cc. 80–81. Rome, 16 February 1612. About Tabarca at that time, (cf. Gourdin 2008, pp. 161–243; Pulido Bueno 2016).

“Depuis 1574, Tabarka était surtout une plaque tournante du rachat des captifs de la guerre de course entre l’Europe et la Régence de Tunis mais aussi de celle d’Alger. Vue de Gênes, l’île jouait le rôle d’un avant-post. [...] Vue du Maghreb, Tabarka était une sorte d’antichambre de l’Europe et un lieu refuge entre Alger et Tunis” (Kaiser 2013, pp. 261–62).

See, e.g., ACDF, *Decreta 1610-11*, c. 203^{r-v}. Rome, 17 November 1610.

ACDF, *Decreta 1612*, c. 91. Rome, 23 February 1612.

The bishop handed over Mary Magdalene to the Commissioner of Calvi, “protesting, however, to the Most Reverend Monsignor who gives the daughter with the condition that she stays in the convent of Bastia in the name and disposition of the Holiness of Our Father [the pope] and the Most Reverend Signoria [the Doge of Genoa], and not of others”. ASGe, *Archivio Segretum, Litterarum*, vol. 1980, n.n. Attestation of the public notary and chancellor of Calvi, Giovanni Maria Orengo. Calvi, n.d.

ACDF, *Decreta 1612*, c. 204. Rome, 17 May 1612. Still, in July 1613, the General Father of the Trinitarians wrote to Monroy that the consultation about the girl was already in Rome, and “His Holiness has decided that the father should go to where the girl is, not the girl to Tabarca” (Porres Alonso 1994, pp. 87–88).

ACDF, *Decreta 1612*, c. 400. Rome, 29 August 1612. The news taken from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith report is very brief, and a torn page makes it impossible to read the whole document.

ACDF, *Decreta 1614*, c. 453. Rome, 18 September 1614.

Ibid., c. 255. Rome, 22 May 1614.

Ibid., cc. 350 (Rome, 17 July 1614), 501 and 504 (16 October 1614); *Decreta 1615*, c. 60 (29 January 1615).

- 61 ACDF, *Decreta* 1616, c. 312. Rome, 28 July 1616.
- 62 AGS, *Est.*, leg. 1882, exp. 275. Letter from Friar Bernardo de Monroy to Antonio Aroztegui, member of the Council of State. Algiers, 1 August 1617.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid. See also *ibid.*, exp. 271. Letter from Friar Bernardo de Monroy to Antonio Aroztegui, member of the Council of State. Algiers, 17 August 1617.
- 66 Cfr. note n. 30.
- 67 Ibid., exp. 276. Letter from Friar Bernardo de Monroy to Philip III. Algiers, 30 August 1617.
- 68 Ibid., exp. 275.
- 69 Ibid., exp. 270. San Lorenzo, 6 August 1614. Letter from Philip III to the Duke of Osuna, Viceroy of Sicily (1611–1616): “You already know how long it has been since the fathers of the Redemption of the Holy Trinity, Friar Bernardo de Monroy and others, have been detained and imprisoned in Algiers –because of the girl who became a Christian in Tabarca. They are in great danger with more than 200 rescued Christians that will not be freed, given the stubborn insistence on the girl to return. It seems to be an excellent time to draw attention to the issue; hence I order and command you, as I do, not to release any of the slaves captured with my galleys by last year. In this regard, it is clear that they will not be given freedom in any way if the Fathers of Redemption and the other rescued Christians do not have it first. Therefore, you will comply and notify me of the effect it causes and also if you can provide another means to be assessed to achieve the attempt”.
- 70 In 1615, Philip III had already resolved that this “would be done for the [rescue] of Father Master Friar Bernardo de Monroy and the other Trinitarian friars and people detained with him in Algiers: either barter or whatever the Bey asked for those religious to be released from captivity” (Porres Alonso 1994, p. 83).
- 71 AGS, *Est.*, leg. 1882, exp. 277. Letter from Philip III to the Duke of Osuna. Burgos, 29 September 1618.
- 72 Ibid., exp. 268. Letter from Philip III to the Duke of Osuna. Madrid, 4 February 1619.
- 73 Ibid., exp. 266. Letter from the Marquis of Caracena to Philip III. Madrid, 29 October 1618. In 1609, when he was still Viceroy of Valencia, Caracena had already approached the case of the three redeeming friars and the Christians to be rescued (Hershenzon 2018, p. 166).
- 74 Ibid., exp. 273. Account of Commissioner Bricuela, captive, addressed to Philip III. Algiers, 17 August 1617.
- 75 Ibid., exp. 268. Letter from Philip III to the Duke of Osuna. Madrid, 4 February 1619. Something he would talk about again, commenting on a letter from the Marquis of Caracena: Ibid., exp. 279. Madrid, 14 May 1620.
- 76 ACDF, *Decreta* 1621–22, c. 50 and *Decreta* 1621, c. 135. Rome, 6 May 1621. At first, the bishop had to share the decision with the inquisitor of Genoa. Regardless, in the case of sending her to Tabarca, Lomellini would verify her perseverance in practising the Catholic faith without forgetting that she would have to be accompanied by her husband on this trip.
- 77 ACDF, *Decreta* 1621–22, c. 136r. Rome, 24 November 1621.

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