

# AMERICAN SLAVES and AFRICAN MASTERS

ALGIERS AND THE WESTERN SAHARA,  
1776-1820



*Christians in Slavery*

CHRISTINE E. SEARS



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CHRISTINE E. SEARS

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To EBB, who makes things work

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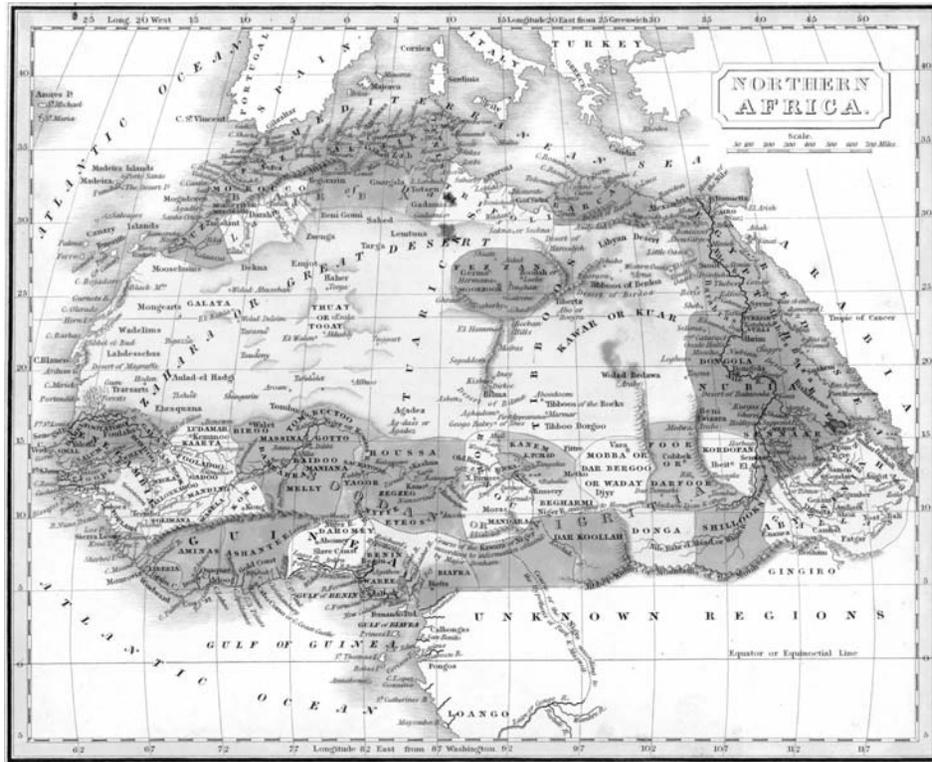
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# Introduction

## Remembering the “Horror of Mahometan Vassalage”

In 1793, sailor John Foss shipped aboard the *Polly* heading from Baltimore to Cadiz. Like other US vessels at the time, the *Polly* carried flour to war-torn Europe, where higher grain prices spurred a burgeoning US trade despite the twin difficulties of remaining neutral in a hostile world and avoiding corsairs.<sup>1</sup> Near Cape St. Vincent, the crew sighted a ship flying English colors, which they quickly realized was not English. Perhaps, they speculated, it was a French privateer flying a Union Jack to deceive them. As the ship closed in, a lone man “dressed as a Christian” hailed them in English. Before the American crew could respond, men flowed out of the ship’s hold and leapt onto the *Polly*. Their attackers’ “dress and long beards” marked them not as Europeans, but as “Moors, or Algerines.” Armed with “Scymitres and Pistols,” the “Ravenous wolves” corralled the American crew using signs while threatening in several languages to kill uncooperative captives. Algerians plundered the ship and stripped the crew before moving them to the Algerian ship. Here, the *rais*, or captain, informed Foss and his crewmates that they would “experience the most abject slavery” in Algiers.<sup>2</sup>

Foss, his eight crewmates, and three Dutchmen taken on another American ship watched in horror and “dreadful apprehensions” as Ottoman Algiers—and their enslavement—drew closer and closer. When they landed, a celebratory crowd surrounded them and pushed them through the city toward the Dey’s, or ruler’s, palace. For the next three years, Foss suffered the “galling chains of Slavery” in Algiers until he and other Americans—a few of whom had been enslaved for eleven years—were redeemed by the United States. In 1798, Foss wrote about his experiences as an Algerian slave. In this narrative, he implored his countrymen not to forget “the hardships—the sufferings—the agonizing tortures, which our fellow-citizens had to endure while groaning under all



**Figure 0.1** Northern Africa, Finley, 1829.

*Source:* Anthony Finley, *Map of Africa. A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, Representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe*, Philadelphia, PA: A. Finley, 1829. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Historical Maps, Halls, Tennessee.

the horror of Mahometan vassalage.” He endured this state along with approximately 140 other American men and was one of about the seven hundred Americans who suffered captivity in Morocco and the Barbary States of Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers, between 1776 and 1830.<sup>3</sup>

In the long history of Mediterranean slave-making, Americans made up only a small percentage of Barbary and West African slaves. One scholar estimated that 1 million Europeans languished in North African *bagnios*, or prisons, between 1530 and 1780, for example.<sup>4</sup> For hundreds of years prior to New World settlement, Europeans and Ottomans engaged in commerce, conflict, and mutual enslavement across the Mediterranean. Though a handful of British North American colonists were snapped up by corsairs, Britons, including colonists, were protected by treaties with North African powers. Until the American Revolution, that is. Once they declared independence, Americans lost their buffer against the corsairs. Corsairs moved swiftly to detain this new prey. Algerians captured two American vessels in 1785 and 13, including Foss’s, in 1793.

If Americans were seized in smaller numbers and at a later time, their enslavement occurred during a crucial period and was therefore more significant than mere numbers indicate. Foss’s “Mahometan vassalage” coincided with changing political structures, trade patterns and practices, and slave systems. Historians have explained how Americans’ enslavement in Africa spurred the birth of an American diplomatic corps, creation of the navy, and development of American identity.<sup>5</sup> Other scholars have recalled European slaves’ experiences and shown how their plight affected European culture.<sup>6</sup> But all of these works skirt the issue Foss so desperately wanted front and center: his enslavement.

In these pages, I focus on Foss’s and his fellows’ African “tortures,” considering them in their context and highlighting how these slaveries balance against other slave systems. Other scholars have addressed these issues, but they have done so very broadly. For example, Stephen Clissold’s 1970s work examined slaves in all the Barbary states from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. He thus presented Foss’s eighteenth-century Algerian captivity as if it were the same as Cervantes’s sixteenth-century enslavement. He also meshed the Barbary states together with only a few nods to particularities of place. In Clissold’s and other scholars’ work, Foss’s urban Algerian slavery appeared largely parallel to Archibald Robbins’s rural Saharan slavery in western Africa.<sup>7</sup>

Yet the nearly seven hundred Americans encountered varied conditions while enslaved in Africa. Just as scholarship on American slavery since the 1960s revealed that the institution was far more varied than popular understanding admitted, the history of North African slavery differed depending on enslaved population, change over time, and regional differences.

In Africa, American and European slaves' experiences depended on when they were captured, how and by whom they were taken, where they were held, and what they did while enslaved. Most Americans were seized at sea by corsairs, but a smaller number shipwrecked on the West African coast. Shipwrecked sailors were held in rural settings whereas those captured at sea were held in urban settings. Stranded men were owned privately, while corsair-captured mariners were state owned. Rural captives were detained singly or with one or two fellows; urban captives joined hundreds of other slaves, most European.

In this book, I both narrow and widen the field opened by past scholars. I narrow the focus in terms of time and place. Instead of conflating the experiences of those held in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and Morocco from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, I look exclusively first at Ottoman Algiers and then at the western Sahara from 1776 to 1830. This focus allows an in-depth, careful look at the enslavement of Europeans and Americans in a small window of time, which will, I hope, invite further work contrasting slaveries during this era to slaveries in these regions during earlier periods. Meanwhile, I widen our view by considering Foss's "Mahometan vassalage" a part of Mediterranean and Ottoman traditions of slavery. Historically, Algiers was so tied to the Ottoman Empire that many scholars refer to it as Ottoman Algiers, a form that I will follow. Algerian and western African systems of slavery were informed by Mediterranean and African forms.<sup>8</sup>

In trying to pinpoint the particularities of these slaveries, I have been inspired by Ehud R. Toledano's call to "strive to understand what slavery . . . meant in given historical, social environments, regardless of whether it meant something different in other societies and at other times."<sup>9</sup> Pairing focused historical excavation with a comparative methodology sheds light on how North and West African slave systems differed from and related to other slaveries. I thus employ comparisons to Mediterranean, US, and Ottoman Empire slaveries throughout this book. These comparisons illuminate the specific components of Ottoman Algerian and western Saharan enslavement of Europeans and Americans in their context, as part of a long tradition of capture, enslavement, and possible redemption.<sup>10</sup> My work thus permits me to identify universalities and peculiarities of these slaveries.

As is the nature of historical sources, none of the many that I consulted are without flaws. When taken together, the government documents, commercial records, and former slaves' writings counterbalance and corroborate—and sometimes contradict—one another, thus providing as rich and detailed a picture as possible. Sadly few Ottoman Algerian or western Saharan documents are available, and those few that are available have been used by Daniel Panzac and Richard B. Parker. I have, therefore, leaned

considerably on their studies. Consular correspondence and instructions, reports to government officials such as the president and Congress, and treasury records have been rich sources of information, providing insight into slaves' treatment, support, and ransom. This includes British consuls' correspondence and dispatches, or instructions, from the Public Records Office in England. These US and British documents constituted an important balance to slaves' narratives and letters.

Documents penned by the slaves themselves have been simultaneously most helpful and most frustrating. A few enslaved Americans kept journals and several wrote letters, some of which were published in newspapers. Other personal writings exist in private papers, and a handful of former slaves published narratives after they were redeemed. These narratives were tailored to sell to the public, and contain many personal and cultural biases. Still, they cannot be dismissed. As Linda Colley so perfectly put it, they are not only one-sided accounts, but "legitimate, if tricky, sources of information."<sup>11</sup> Using these sources alongside many other primary and secondary works helps correct and deepen our understanding of how these systems of slavery operated.

This book is divided into two parts, both covering the years of the early American republic. After an introductory chapter on the context of Mediterranean and Ottoman slavery and Barbary pirates, the first section explores American and European slavery in Ottoman Algiers, and the second, Western slavery in the western Sahara. In the first section, I investigate how the probability of a temporary slavery and the Ottoman Algerian system affected slaves' reliance on family and religion. I then look at how *bagnio* slaves interacted with one another and the extent to which they formed a community or acted in concert. I also explore the role that elite slaves played in this slave system. Ottoman Algerians assigned slaves to administrative posts and for a monthly fee released these slaves, called *papalunas*, from work and the *bagnios*. Thus, the system permitted slaves a limited social mobility, but at a cost for bondsmen. Slaves' elite positions complicated their relations with fellow slaves. Lastly, I investigate slaves' relatively free access to money and markets, and the implications of that access for slaves.

In section two, I shift to examine those Westerners who were shipwrecked and enslaved in northwest Africa, modern-day western Sahara. I begin by analyzing the conditions under which these men were enslaved and redeemed while in northwest Africa. In this section, I also explore the relationships between masters and slaves. The last chapter considers slaves' desert labor and resistance to it. Taken together, these chapters provide context and details about the enslavement of Westerners in north and northwest Africa between 1776 and 1830, and explore what was "peculiar" to this type of slavery in this location at this time.

My findings indicate that John W. Blassingame and subsequent authors have overemphasized the “cultural homogeneity” of Algerians and western Saharan Muslims. Neither Islamic culture nor slavery in Muslim societies was as monolithic or unchanging as portrayed by Blassingame and others. I hope this work will also contribute to the growing literature illustrating how varied slaveries could be, and how different forms might exist side by side. Ottoman Algerians, for example, enslaved Americans and Europeans and black Africans, though the two practices clearly differed.<sup>12</sup> In addition, this work demonstrates the flexibility of slavery as an institution, which should help to “facilitate . . . generalizations about slavery as a whole.”<sup>13</sup> Along the way, we also learn about Americans and Europeans under duress and how they negotiated nationality, rank, and class under the pressures that they faced while held in African societies.

# Chapter 1

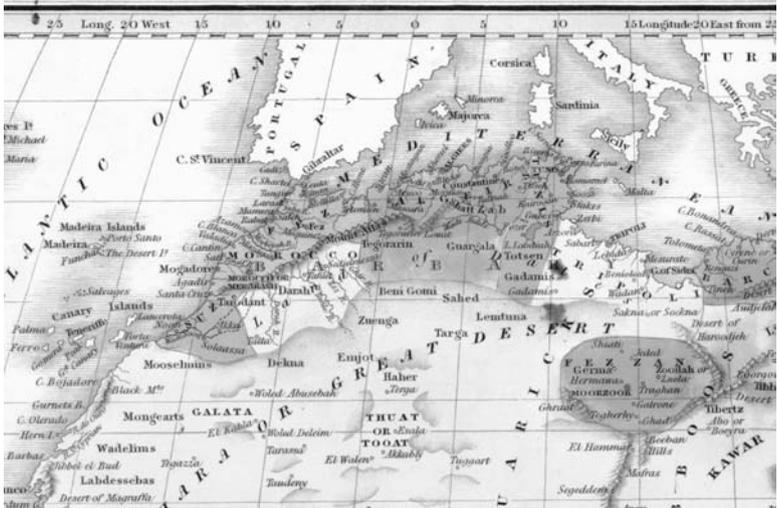
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## “This World Is Full of Vicissitudes”\*

Martha W. Routh and her fellow passengers felt sick every time another vessel approached the one carrying her from England to Boston in 1794. Their anxiety soared when the crew spotted a French man-of-war, and she recalled how many English ships the French had recently taken. She uneasily contemplated being captured by the French. French privateers would undoubtedly reroute them to France or French-held territory and possibly claim her personal belongings.

Algerian corsairs were a different matter altogether. Routh’s friend, William Rotch, felt an all-encompassing terror when he thought of Algerians bearing down on their ship. Corsairs commandeered ship, property, and persons, all to be auctioned off in Algiers or another neutral port. Though they took fewer ships, corsairs threatened their victims’ “lives and liberties” in a way that the French did not. French privateers confiscated property alone while corsairs spirited their captives to North Africa, forcing them to work until they were redeemed or died. Even worse, Routh and her friend—incorrectly—understood that Algerians never ransomed “women at any price whatever.” Filippo Pananti likened Algerian corsairs to Medusa: both froze those who gazed on them with horror.<sup>1</sup>

Routh’s corsair dread was based on more than contemporary accounts or events. Hundreds of years’ worth of stories fed a European “corsair hysteria,” a “general panic fueled by a combination of fear and fantasy.” Barbary corsairs long terrorized Europeans, swooping down on their ships and coastal towns, enslaving those that they captured. Her alarm raises questions about the context, contemporary practices, and perceptions of Mediterranean slavery. For generations, Muslims and Christians enslaved those seized at sea, but the development of New World plantation slavery



**Figure 1.1** North African and the Mediterranean, Finley, 1829.

*Note:* The Portuguese bottled Algerians corsairs in the Mediterranean by blocking the Straits of Gibraltar until 1785.

*Source:* *A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, Representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe*, 1829. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Halls, Tennessee.

and new ideas about freedom changed how contemporaries assessed this custom.<sup>2</sup> Considering the religious and national politics underlying the Old World tradition of Mediterranean enslavement of captives, or what scholars increasingly call “ransom slavery,” allows us to assess this practice in its historical context, and thus to understand it more fully.<sup>3</sup>

Routh’s fear in 1794 was fed by recent political realignments. After signing a 1785 treaty with Algiers, the Portuguese no longer kept corsairs bottled in the Mediterranean (see [Figure 1.1](#)). Corsairs ranged into the Atlantic where they threatened European and American shipping. Yet her fears were out of proportion to the threat. North African Muslims did not prey upon all Christian ships indiscriminately. Instead, they judged political, military, and commercial considerations when determining whom to attack. British treaties with Algiers discouraged corsairs’ attention. The comparatively large English navy further emphasized that British merchant ships were off limits. As a result, Algerians seized few Britons in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries.

Routh's heightened terror was further stirred by reports of corsairs' increased depredations. In May 1790, several newspapers declared that Algerians had stepped up their prize taking. Their activities increased again between 1793 and 1802. Algerian corsairs seized 67 ships from 1783 to 1792, but more than doubled the number of vessels taken between 1793 and 1802 to 172 ships. They were not alone in redoubling their privateering efforts. Privateering grew generally, spurred by an increase in maritime trade, leaving any Mediterranean traveler at risk.<sup>4</sup> Even Routh, who traveled on an English ship ostensibly protected by treaties, might have been caught up. North African corsairs occasionally snatched off-limits ships and retained the prize after excusing their seizure with pretexts. She was far more likely, however, to fall prey to the host of human predators patrolling the Atlantic from places such as Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Russia, and France.<sup>5</sup>

Despite these other threats, Routh feared North Africans the most, and she was not alone in that feeling. Some of her contemporaries presented Muslim corsairs as the primary danger at sea because Muslims enslaved their Christian captives. European and American government officials, pamphleteers, novelists, and newspaper writers often portrayed the Mediterranean as a battlefield on which Muslims were locked in a death match against Christians. American author James Wilson Stevens articulated a widely held opinion when he reported that "such is the virulence of Mahometan antipathy to everything that bears the name of Christian that their contiguity to Europe has perhaps tended to render them even more ferocious."<sup>6</sup> Stevens thus pitted violent Muslims against all Christians.

But the economic and religious politics underlying Mediterranean slavery, both Christian and Muslim, were far more complex than this binary interpretation allowed. Never "two mutually hostile religious blocs," Muslims and Christians had long traded, treated, and clashed among themselves as they sorted out political and commercial realities.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the people of the Mediterranean found boundaries between religions and nationalities, and even between slavery and freedom, permeable.

While Routh's fears had some basis in fact, then, the religious and political landscape of the Mediterranean was far more complex than she perhaps realized. From a Christian point of view, Muslims hunted Christians relentlessly. In reality, the sea was a site of tensions among Muslims and Christians as much as between them. For many reasons, categorizing people and vessels was not a clear-cut process in the Mediterranean world. Perhaps because of this, individuals moved between politics and faiths just as they shifted between slavery and freedom.

## Permeable Frontiers

When Algerian corsairs snagged their first American ship in 1785, the Algerian *rais*, or captain, offered comforting words to the newly enslaved: "This world," he remarked, "is full of vicissitudes."<sup>8</sup> His words alerted the *Maria's* crew to key features of the Mediterranean slave system in which they were now enmeshed. Mediterranean enslavement was determined not by race, but by religious and national affiliation, and thus, a matter of bad luck, of changing vicissitudes. He also pointed to what even Routh knew: Algerian enslavement might be temporary. Though the crew had exchanged freedom for slavery, they might as swiftly and unexpectedly move from slavery to freedom. In many ways, the *rais* illuminated the particular nature of Mediterranean slavery that the *Maria's* crew now experienced first hand.

As *Maria* crewman James Cathcart learned, this particular *rais* had firsthand experience with the Mediterranean world's vicissitudes. He had been enslaved twice, first in Spain and later in Genoa. In both cases, he suffered years of ill treatment, but was eventually ransomed and returned to Algiers.<sup>9</sup> Thousands of individuals, both Muslims and Christians, endured this fate over hundreds of years, though the number of those enslaved varied considerably over time. Over 5,500 Muslims languished in seventeenth-century Venice and Malta, and later in the seventeenth century, thousands of Ottoman subjects powered French galleys. Meanwhile, four thousand French subjects toiled in North Africa. The Spanish redeemed about fifteen thousand countrymen from seventeenth-century North Africa, while the Maltese held almost ten thousand Muslim slaves in 1720. In 1788, the Knights of Malta captured 78 North African ships and in 1795, the papal navy seized 88.<sup>10</sup>

The *rais'* story reinforced how fortunes swiftly shifted in the Mediterranean, and taught Cathcart and his crewmates, if they did not already know, that "captive-taking and slave-making" were "emphatically Mediterranean phenomenon," but "never exclusively a Muslim one."<sup>11</sup> Several Christian or European powers actively enslaved Muslims and even Protestants. Muslims dreaded Christian pirates as much as Routh did corsairs. The aggressive Maltese, for instance, "continued to haunt the popular imagination of eighteenth-century Ottomans."<sup>12</sup>

The ransomed *rais'* stories no doubt contributed to that popular haunting. His abuse at the hands of Christian masters loomed large in his memory. Yet he assured the *Maria's* crew that they would be treated better in Algiers than he had been in Malta or Genoa. Not all former slaves released their tortured memories so easily. In Algiers, Cathcart met Ibram Rais, an

Algerian recently released from 14 years of Maltese enslavement. Now old and sickly, perhaps due to brutal Maltese treatment, he viciously exploited the European and American slaves that he commanded and was thus known as the most “unrelenting guardian that had ever been in Algiers.” He continued his retaliatory abuse even after Cathcart first patiently, and then desperately, explained that unlike the Maltese, Americans did not hate Muslims and had nothing to do with his enslavement.<sup>13</sup>

As these two *rais* attested, Mediterranean enslavement might be temporary for both Muslims and Christians. Yet freedom never came for some. Governments and families might take years, even decades, to arrange redemption or be unable to do so. According to one scholar’s estimates, Europeans had a 50–50 chance of returning from North African slavery. Ottoman subjects and North Africans were ransomed less frequently. After the thirteenth century, no Islamic religious group redeemed Muslims like Mercedarian and Trinitarian orders did for Christians in Muslim lands. Muslim governments assisted the well connected, though they occasionally freed others through diplomatic agreements. Ottomans and North Africans relied on friends and family to free them, but few could bear the required ransom costs. Even so, ransom and release was possible, a fact that distinguished Mediterranean slavery from the lifelong, hereditary slavery of the United States.<sup>14</sup>

Above all, the two Algerian captains illuminated the fluidity of the Mediterranean system in which one’s status could, and often did, change abruptly and radically. One might go from sailor to slave in a moment, and in the next assume command of a ship or oversee slaves oneself, as in Ibram’s case. Boundaries between political and religious categories were as “flexible and porous” as those dividing slavery and freedom. The Mediterranean was not ringed by forces that always opposed one another, but presented a “permeable frontier” for a mobile, diverse population that crossed and recrossed the Mediterranean. For example, Algerian *rais* Hamida worked voluntarily on a Portuguese ship while young. He visited a plethora of European ports and learned French and Italian. Because of his multicultural experiences, he was appointed Algerian secretary of the marine when he returned years later.<sup>15</sup>

Europeans also crossed and recrossed the permeable Mediterranean boundaries of religion and nationality. As historian Nabil Matar explained, more seventeenth-century Britons resided in North Africa than in North America. Many Britons went “voluntarily, looking for a new life and taking up a new religion.” Others started as slaves, but converted and remained in North Africa. Indeed, Europeans “turned Turk,” converted to Islam, far more often than Muslims became Christians. More Europeans “turned Turk” before the eighteenth century, but a trickle of converts followed in

later years. Early in the eighteenth century, a Maltese renegade famously operated as an Algerian *rais*. Like him, other renegades, as European apostates were known, often lived quite well in Muslim states.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, some renegades enjoyed stunning careers that would not have been possible in their native countries. In 1559, Muslim corsairs took a boy later known as Gazanfer. Though they released his mother, who returned to her native Venice, they dispatched the boy to Hungary. He was trained, assigned administrative tasks, caught Sultan Selim III's attention, and lived contentedly as a member of the Ottoman ruling elite. Taken by Algerians in 1724, 15-year-old Hark Olufs was sold to an Ottoman Algerian provincial leader, the Bey of Constantine. Oluf's family tried to ransom him, but failed probably because he proved an able pupil and rapidly ascended as a leader in Constantine, though he remained a slave. Gazanfer's and Oluf's youth marked them as likely recruits, relatively easy to train, like the boys taken in the Ottoman Empire's *devshirme*. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, Ottoman officials levied Christian boys from the Balkans, a process known as the *devshirme*. They trained the boys in warfare and administration, and then assigned them to bureaucratic or military posts in the empire. After achieving success in Constantine, Olufs fled to his homeland when the Bey lay dying in 1735, thus escaping his servitude, elite as it was, in a way *devshirme* slaves could not.<sup>17</sup>

As the examples of Gazanfer and Olufs show, intertwined political and religious identities could be remolded throughout one's lifetime. Gazanfer and Olufs transformed from European Christians to Ottoman or North African Muslims, albeit initially involuntarily and possibly only nominally. Neither chose to leave his home or sought a new creed, but over the course of their captivity, they ostensibly adopted both. When Olufs rejoined European Christian culture, he hinted that he had only outwardly adopted Islam. Or he refashioned his religious identities to align with the current cultural and political norms, whatever those were. Intriguingly, neither of the two Algerian captains converted to Christianity or remained in European territory. Either they lacked this option or they rejected it.

If individuals could discard religious and national identities to adopt new ones, the identities that they presented mattered in the Mediterranean world. Neither Gazanfer nor Olufs would have been dragged across cultural borders if they did not adhere to a religion that differed from that of their captors. Similarly, the *rais* were enslaved by Christians because they differed in religious and political allegiance. Both Christian and Muslim law forbid practitioners from enslaving coreligionists. Thus, in Islamic states, Muslims legally owned Christians while in Christian polities, Christians purchased Muslims.

But rhetorical dichotomies pitting Muslim against Christian and vice versa hide extensive gray area. All Muslims did not oppose all Christians; rather, Muslims might fight bitterly with other Muslims over sectarian differences, just as Christians did among themselves. The terms "Christian" and "Muslim" encompassed varying beliefs and practices. A Christian might follow Greek Orthodoxy, Catholicism, or any number of Protestant groups, while Muslims chose Sunni or Shi'ite teachings. Sunnis and Shi'ites could be further subdivided, with Sunnis choosing from among four schools of jurisprudence. Ottoman Muslims followed the Hanafi school while Algerians and Moroccans adhered to the Maliki school. Historically, Algerian courts applied Maliki law to indigenous residents, but Hanafi interpretations on resident Turks.<sup>18</sup>

Further, religion alone did not dictate one's group affiliation or status in the Mediterranean. National connections influenced one's treatment, as well. At the same time, religion and nationality were interwoven. The Protestant Dutch thus hunted French and Spanish Catholic prey between 1570 and 1640 due to differing politics and religion. During the chaotic War of Spanish Succession, the Dutch seized French Catholic and Muslim North African ships.<sup>19</sup> Some states were not dedicated to one religion. Greek Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire muddied these seemingly clear-cut divisions, for example. Clearly Christians, they were nevertheless pursued by the Knights of St. John, who classified these Greek Orthodox Ottomans as Ottoman subjects, not coreligionists, despite a papal decree stating that they were not legitimate targets for Catholics.<sup>20</sup>

Neither Muslims nor Christians formed cohesive, unified blocks. Though Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers were Ottoman provinces, by the late eighteenth century, they operated largely as autonomous states. As of 1729, Algerians appointed their own leader, a dey, instead of accepting a pasha sent from Istanbul to rule them. All three maintained close ties to the Ottoman Porte, yet they disregarded some of the Ottoman sultan's *fir-mans*, or orders. For example, Tunisians persisted in taking Venetian ships after the sultan banned doing so, and Algerians frequently pursued who they pleased regardless of imperial decrees.<sup>21</sup>

If Muslims and Muslim polities fought amongst themselves, they sometimes found the rhetorical idea of a holy war compelling. Islamic law dictated that infidels or non-Muslims were enslavable, but Muslims were ostensibly off limits. As historian John Hunwick explained, infidels could be enslaved only after they had been "defeated in lawfully constituted *jihad*." Holy war or jihad provided an expedient "fiction" that "helped rationalize the Mediterranean traffic in slaves," as Gillian Weiss has pointed out, and, according to David Starkey, let corsairs claim being the "naval arm of Islam engaged in an Eternal War with Christendom." But

not all Muslims followed jihad procedures. For example, the caliph must lead a jihad or "his duly appointed regional governor," and its purpose had to be the "elevation of the word of God" or expansion of the Muslim government. Barbary corsairs technically did not meet these requirements.<sup>22</sup> Encouraged by this jihadist rhetoric, North Africans referred to their slaves as "Christians" regardless of their religious beliefs. The label posited two dissimilar and opposing groups, Muslim and Christian, against the other, as captor and captive and then as master and slave.

Europeans and Americans, enslaved or not, adopted the term "Christian" to describe victims in North Africa. Their adoption of this term highlights how pervasively it was used. Captured on October 23, 1793, Captain William Furnace told his ship's owner on November 4, that he and his crew, "Christians, as they call us" worked like murderers in Algiers.<sup>23</sup> While the label did not necessarily denote religious beliefs, it reminded Europeans that they, as Christians, were connected by a civilizing religion while their Ottoman Algerian and African masters were mired in an outmoded, superstitious religion that encouraged their savage ways. For Archibald Robbins, an American enslaved in the western Sahara, Christianity promoted peace and taught men to "check" their "passions, and depraved nature." Conversely, Islam "promise[d] the full gratification of every propensity."<sup>24</sup> American diplomat Mordecai Noah believed that Islam consisted of "ceremonies and superstitious rites" that were "founded on tyranny, an indulgence in sensualities, a sickening despotism." Therefore, he reasoned, Muslims gave "full reign to passion, to revenge and intolerance."<sup>25</sup>

If they spouted holy war rhetoric, North African corsairs actually targeted ships of countries with which they had no treaties. Christianity predominated in those countries, but attacking based on treaties and tribute arrangements indicated a "territorial, rather than a religious" justification for war and enslavement. Because corsairs detained prisoners of war and did so with a state license, they were technically privateers rather than pirates. Pirates operated "beyond the law," without the "authority of any recognized state," whereas privateers were "restricted to specific targets and subject to the due process of law." Privateers used privately owned ships that were authorized, often with a letter of marquee, to attack enemy ships. Their seizures were governed by international agreements and customs that dictated legitimate prizes and conditions under which they could be taken. Because those customs might be interpreted differently, each country established courts to adjudicate prize taking.<sup>26</sup>

Discerning exactly to which country the ships belonged could be surprisingly difficult. One had to determine who owned a ship, who owned most of the ship's cargo, and the nationality of crewmembers, yet these

things were seldom clear. Ships sailing under one nation's flag often contained goods belonging to a subject of another nation. Because Ottoman ships were forbidden in some European ports, European and North African ships ferried Ottoman goods to these locations. By the eighteenth century, French ships moved most Ottoman goods to European ports.<sup>27</sup> These French-owned ships manned by primarily French crewmen could be considered Ottoman ships if measured by the goods in their holds. Even the owners of the goods and the ship might be multiethnic and multinational, just as the crews consisted of a mix of men. English ships "employed Spanish sailors" while "Italian and French ships used Genoese crews." When Barbary captains took French ships on which no crew member spoke French, they understandably questioned whether the ship was in fact French.<sup>28</sup>

To further exacerbate the situation, many seamen laid claim to whatever nationality they thought most expedient in a given moment. When confronted by Algerian corsairs, Captain McComb of the Massachusetts *Rambler* successfully passed himself, his crew, and his ship off as British, all hailing from Cork, Ireland. Even American officials had trouble identifying their own citizens. Consul Mordecai Noah redeemed the crew of the American ship *Edwin*, including four men who claimed US citizenship. The four spoke little English, but conversed fluently in French. Mordecai conceded that they might be French or from Louisiana. In 1796, Congress passed the Act for the Relief and Protection of American Seamen, a law intended to make this process easier. Under this act, sailors who proved that they were US citizens could purchase a Seaman's Protection Certificate, which registered them with the government as US citizens. Apparently few seamen did so.<sup>29</sup>

Because defining national membership could be so difficult, Franco-Algerian treaties signed in 1619 and 1828 specified who was and was not a French subject. French residency implied French nationality, but under these treaties, Frenchmen living in enemy territory were unprotected. If captured on an enemy ship, a Frenchman might be a legitimate part of the prize.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, Christian and Muslim privateers ignored or misapplied national categories when convenient. Though the Dutch and Ottomans agreed not to apprehend each other's ships, the Dutch took Ottoman ships and claimed they were North African. So intently did one Dutch captain wish to prove an Ottoman ship North African that he tortured the Ottoman captain until he confessed that the ship was North African. Able to "prove" his prize valid, he sent the Ottoman captain and his crew to the "*bagno* of Livorno." Captains or ship's owners could require adjudication, but this process was long, costly, and there was no guarantee that the ship

would be released. Cases such as these support Fernand Braudel's claim that for Mediterranean corsairs "privateering often had little to do with either country or faith, but was merely a means of making a living."<sup>31</sup>

In the "messy reality of the market place," identifying "anything as clear-cut as a 'Muslim' or 'French' or 'Christian' trade" could prove impossible, as could confidently detecting an American or French citizen or individual of any nationality.<sup>32</sup> Yet in the dangerous world of the late eighteenth century, an official's ability to detect a citizen could be crucial for the individual. Had Routh been seized by a corsair, she would have depended on the English consul to claim her as a Briton. Once he did so, she would be freed. Otherwise, she would have been consigned to slavery until ransomed. This outcome was unlikely, given England's powerful diplomatic presence and strong navy. Nevertheless, this possibility existed in the shifting vicissitudes of the Mediterranean world.

### "The Most Abject Slavery"<sup>33</sup>

The *Maria's* crew found the *rais'* words true in many ways. Though they waited a long time for shifting vagaries that would free them, five of the six crewmen had returned to the US within eleven years of their capture. During those 11 years, several benefitted from the Ottoman Algerian system in which some slaves paid not to work and others amassed property. Those who earned coveted slave posts were released long before their peers. American sailor George Smith secured a palace position, which catapulted him to freedom three years before his crewmates. Because it was often temporary and offered some slaves elite standing and wealth, contemporaries, especially those familiar with New World slavery, were confused by the Ottoman Algerian system. These puzzling differences continue to draw scholarly attention and disputation. Then, as now, the victims' status is far from clear. Intriguingly, the modern debate mirrors eighteenth-century discussions about the status of Barbary victims. Were the men slaves or captives?

William Shaler's changing perceptions offer one telling example of the eighteenth-century debates over the status of Barbary victims, and demonstrates how tricky defining their status could and continues to be. When first appointed US consul to Algiers in 1815, Shaler decried the "preposterous" practice of making "slaves of the subjects of all governments which do not pay them tribute or otherwise propitiate them." In his eyes, Barbary corsairs infringed upon individual Americans' freedom and the US sovereignty. The Ottoman Algerian system was both "degrading... to the

civilized world" and the stories of the "wretched victims" would "wring your heart." In 1815, he viewed the "horrors of the black slave trade" as "tender mercies" when compared to the Ottoman Algerian enslavement of Europeans and Americans.<sup>34</sup>

By 1826, Shaler had changed his assessment. He saw not "wretched victims," but men "not generally worse" off than "prisoners of war in many civilized Christian countries." The captured men's labor was "not excessive" and their treatment was mild. In his 1826 view, victims faced little hardship or mistreatment, particularly those who "were industriously disposed." Hardworking slaves "easily found the means" to profit from their Algerian captivity, he thought. Such men earned many rewards: cash, positions, no work, and release. "In short," he concluded, "there was [*sic*] always slaves who left Algiers with regret."<sup>35</sup>

Though Shaler still referred to the men as slaves in 1826, his way of understanding and explaining their status had changed. His changing perceptions reflect the divide between modern scholars, some of whom see the victims as slaves, as Shaler did in 1815, and others who label them captives, as he did in 1826. In 1815, Shaler judged the victims "slaves" because they lacked freedom of choice and were, in his mind, ill treated. By 1826, he deemed them prisoners of war, neither ill treated nor enslaved. His reassessment rested largely on two criteria: treatment and elite status. In 1826 as in 1815, the men were forced to work, but in 1826, he judged that their work was light and their treatment was far from abusive.

Further, some self-made slaves turned their victimization into a positive good instead of a negative life disruption. Here, Shaler no doubt thought primarily of sailor-turned-slave-turned-diplomat Cathcart, who emerged from Algiers both wealthier and better situated than he had been before. Captured when a twenty-something mariner, Cathcart emerged as the owner of a ship and was appointed to a US consular post to which few sailors might aspire. Shaler's changing views related to historical shifts as well. Because maritime violence subsided dramatically between 1815 and 1826, corsairs and privateers captured far fewer people and released those few taken quickly, which no doubt contributed to their captivity seeming less dire.

In 1826, Shaler believed that the victims were treated well and hard-working slaves achieved wealth and ease. These observations were enough to rule that the Barbary experience was not slavery, to his mind. The victims, however, discounted these criteria as legitimate measures of their condition and unambiguously pronounced themselves slaves. Of course, the men aimed not to define their condition or analyze its precise meaning, but to egg their readers into redeeming them. Taken in 1793, American Captain William Penrose goaded his ship's owners into action

by describing himself and his crew as the “most abject slavery ever people were in the world.” Captain Isaac Stephens pathetically contrasted the 30 years he lived as a freeman with his life since the Algerians ripped him off a ship and enslaved him in 1785. At that point, he informed the Continental Congress that he was viewed “the Same . . . as one of your horses.” Captain Richard O’Brien painted a visceral image for his American readers: he and his crew were regarded like “gueny [Guinea] negroes” while in Algiers.<sup>36</sup> For many Americans, Guinea negroes conjured up images of slaves, subject to forced physical labor day in and day out and regular physical abuse by a tyrannical master.

Corsair victims presented themselves as needing immediate rescue, and they used persuasive and vivid images in their letters home to achieve this goal. But rhetoric aside, these were real people caught in a very real predicament. As Captain Stephens put it, they were “to all appearances doomed to slavery.” They were forcibly detained and subject to the will of Algerians, and few enjoyed elite standing. For every Cathcart, hundreds of others toiled all day at brutally hard labor with little to eat or drink and little hope of manumission. For every George Smith, who worked a less physically demanding job and was manumitted earlier than his American peers, tens, if not hundreds, of slaves died in Algiers. This lived experience had more salience than their contemporaries’ attempts to describe their experience or current scholars’ need to categorize it.<sup>37</sup>

Much like Shaler’s 1815 and 1826 perceptions and those of his contemporaries, modern scholars are divided over how to label Barbary victims’ experiences. In scholarly work, Barbary victims seemingly hang between slave and captive. As a result, authors have often used the terms “slave” and “captive” interchangeably without clearly defining either. In his 1931 diplomatic history, Ray W. Irwin substituted one term for the other, as does H. G. Barnby in his 1966 account of the Algerian-American War. Stephen Clissold followed suit in 1977, but went further to define Algerian *bagnios* as “slave-prisons” to simultaneously invoke slaves and prisoners of war. 1980s scholars continued in this pattern. As Ellen Friedman examined early modern Spaniards’ Barbary experiences, she sometimes used “slave” and “captive” in a single sentence. For example, she concluded that “almost all captives were regarded as slaves and required to work.”<sup>38</sup> This instance highlights the schizophrenia of the approach. Barbary victims are captives unless engaged in “slave-like things,” that is, things comparable to the lives of US slaves like being forced to work or abused by a master.<sup>39</sup>

Recent American-authored works considered how Barbary relations affected the United States and its citizens, leaving the question of slavery or captivity in many ways peripheral to their analysis. As they probed US-Barbary interactions, they favored “captive” and “prisoner” over “slave.”

For Robert J. Allison, Barbary victims were "political hostages"; in his thoughtful diplomatic history, Richard B. Parker concurred. Despite their explicit choice of terms, their works showed how blurry the lines between slavery and captivity were and are. Allison pointed out that Americans knew little about African slavery, but did not explain how African slavery differed from what they knew, and if, or how, those differences mattered. He acknowledged the variety of slaveries and hinted that corsair victims might meet African definitions, without making clear distinctions between whether victims were slaves or captives. Next he argued that while men in Algiers were political captives, those shipwrecked on Africa's western coast were "actual slaves" to the "desert tribes" who claimed them. Why the latter was "actual slavery," but not the former is not explained.<sup>40</sup>

If American scholars prefer "captive," those writing from a North African or Mediterranean perspective frequently choose "slave." Offered as a corrective to one-sided studies of North African privateers, Daniel Panzac's *Barbary Corsairs* situated Ottoman Algerian slave-taking as part of a larger Mediterranean practice. As he was primarily concerned with the economic and cultural history of corsairing, he offered no definition of slavery. Robert C. Davis, however, aimed to put "this... form of slavery" in a world-historical context. Drawing extensively on slave studies ancient and more recent, he concluded that "enslavement, whatever its mitigating circumstances or literary possibilities, still means the loss of freedom of action, the denial of personhood, and at some level, a constant climate of coercive violence."<sup>41</sup> In his view, corsair victims met these criteria and warranted the use of "slave."

Modern scholars have reached an impasse. Americanists label Barbary victims "captives" while scholars of Mediterranean, Ottoman, or North African history favor "slaves." That is, historians familiar with US history use US slavery as a benchmark against which to determine if a system is slavery or not. Those steeped in early Mediterranean or Ottoman systems perceive a broader range of slaveries, and thus dubbed the victims "slaves." Clearly, the key is the criteria used to define slavery. Yet slavery, as an institution embedded in particular cultures, is a notoriously tricky term to pin down, particularly in a way that covers all slaveries in all places at all times.

Considering how scholars have defined slavery can further illuminate how difficult a task this is. Most Africanists agreed that social marginality rather than ownership of persons made slaves. Sociologist Orlando Patterson offered a universal, if not hotly contested, description of slavery along similar lines. For him, slavery consisted of "the permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonored persons."<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, students of US and New World systems identify slavery as a

system of extracting labor or a proprietary relationship in which one person legally possessed the other. Others conceived of slavery as a relationship in which an owner controlled his or her property through violence, coercion, and continual negotiations.<sup>43</sup> Though each of these definitions fit a particular slavery, none satisfactorily cover all slaveries that have existed. Looking more closely at Barbary victims' experiences and how they both differed from and paralleled other slaveries yields a clearer understanding of slavery as a cultural institution. To this end, I compare Barbary slavery of Europeans and Americans with the closely related slaveries of the Ottoman and Mediterranean worlds in addition to the seemingly completely different US variant.

Some scholars hesitate to label Barbary's holding of men as "slavery" because of the way the men were enslaved and the fact that they could be redeemed. This view mirrored Shaler's 1826 opinion that the corsairs operated an economic "racket" in which captives were benignly treated until their freedom was purchased. Instead of suffering the Middle Passage, these victims were ostensibly taken as war captives either at sea or after a wreck. They were not natively alienated, or cut off from family or one another; rather, they maintained contact with those back home and with one another. Further, many did not endure lifelong slavery. These characteristics distinguish Barbary enslavement of Europeans and Americans from US slavery; however, they parallel Mediterranean and Ottoman practice.<sup>44</sup>

Barbary corsairs claimed that they seized their European and American slaves at war. In doing so, they engaged in a long-standing practice. Historically, warfare made slaves. From the Crusades on, medieval Europeans and Middle Easterners enslaved many war captives rather than slaughtering all those defeated. Both sides allowed redemption, but invariably many remained slaves for their lifetime. The French used Spanish and Portuguese prisoners of war as galley slaves, a fate from which they theoretically could be released, but rarely were. In the seventeenth century, Europeans sold non-Europeans seized at sea in Maltese and Livornese slave markets. A few North American Wampanoag Indians taken as prisoners in King Philip's war were sold into slavery; some ended up in Tangier.<sup>45</sup> In fact, most Africans sold as New World slaves started as African war captives. If they had remained in Africa, they might have been redeemed instead of serving a life sentence in slavery. As one scholar observed, the sale of prisoners of war into "institutionalized slavery" was a "long-standing military practice." Though this scholar referred only to the Barbary corsairs' practices, his statement certainly applies more generally to the historical practice of war and slave-taking.<sup>46</sup>

Muslims especially depended on warfare for their slaves, since they could only legally enslave infidels against whom jihad had been declared. Islamic law formally recognized as slaves those born into it or taken in war. As the Ottoman Empire swelled between 1300 and 1600, war captives provided a steady stream of slaves. Ottoman soldiers gathered slaves in Bulgaria and Thrace, some of whom they sold to Venetians and Genoese for resale in European markets. Lest this appear straightforward, not all prisoners of war became permanent slaves. Those with money or wealthy families or those who were lucky enough to be exchanged for other prisoners avoided lifelong slavery. Captives who were not so lucky were relegated to slavery.<sup>47</sup>

In practice, the line between prisoner of war and slave could be fuzzy. Muslims applied terms such as *asir* or *fidye* to prisoners of war. Ottoman Algerians called the people they seized at sea *tutsaklar* or *kullar* rather than *esir*, which was used to describe black African slaves. Prisoners of war, posited one scholar, “lived as slaves while in captivity,” but could hope for freedom. But did the “possibility of ransom” truly separate slave from captives? Most captives or prisoners of war were not ransomed and in fact lived their lives out as slaves. While one scholar found this “irrelevant,” it’s likely that the 75,000 Europeans taken by Ottomans in 1683 Vienna would disagree. Most were not redeemed, and those not freed finished their lives as slaves. Even captives immediately sold to private owners, who were then designated as *mire esir*, or slaves, could be redeemed at the discretion of their master. That is to say that in Muslim societies, a slave could always hope for redemption regardless of how unlikely it was that he would attain that status. No matter how they were categorized, those seized in war might slip easily into lifelong enslavement.<sup>48</sup>

If Shaler and some modern scholars quibbled over calling those taken in war with a chance of redemption “slaves,” they also disputed the presence of elite slaves in a “real” slave system. But elite slaves had a long history in the Middle East, particularly the Ottoman Empire, and, as part of the empire from the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, Ottoman Algiers was influenced by Ottoman *kul* slavery. In their *kul* system, Ottomans levied Christian boys between the ages of 7 and 15, a gathering referred to as the *devshirme*. The boys were nominally converted, trained, and assigned posts throughout the Empire. Those showing higher aptitudes became bureaucrats while others became Janissaries, cooks, gardeners, or maritime workers. Some reached the very highest posts of Ottoman government. Between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, 34 grand viziers arose from the *kul* system; only four were Turkic and free. Though slaves, they owned property and “fully engage[d] in the political, economic, and cultural life

of Ottoman society.” Because they joined the Ottoman elite, slave origins became a “badge of distinction” rather than a stigma.<sup>49</sup>

Like the status of Barbary victims, scholars debate the status of *kul* men in Ottoman culture. Daniel Pipes considered them slaves only in origin, but not slaves in Ottoman society. He insisted that “real” slaves lacked personal freedom and followed another’s orders, while *kul* men exercised considerable autonomy. Here, Pipes illuminates another sticking point as scholars struggle to define slavery and freedom. If slaves lack self-determination, then what of the many free people who were, and are, prevented from charting their own destinies? If nonslaves must have complete freedom of choice, then late eighteenth-century US apprentices and indentured servants were not truly free. Their labor belonged to their master, whose orders they were to follow. Even in colonial US culture, slaves represented only one group of unfree people. In fact, “in Ottoman society, as in the West and elsewhere, freedom and unfreedom, captive labor and volitional work, physical autonomy and chatteldom, dependence and independence were not rigid dichotomies.” Instead of hard and fast distinctions between “free” and “slave,” then, we need to place *kul* slaves, as Ehud Toledano has, and Barbary victims on a continuum between slavery and freedom.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, terms such as “slavery” and “freedom” are inherently difficult to pin down particularly as their definitions change over time and place. Shaler’s view of slavery mutated between 1815 and 1826 because US slavery, its practice and perception, changed. Historian Gillian Weiss tracked how French conceptions of slavery and freedom also shifted over time. She found that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, slaves were those who were unlucky enough to be seized by corsairs. By the late eighteenth century, Frenchness was equated with freedom; thus, if one were French, one should be free. By then, slaves were black Africans laboring in New World holdings.<sup>51</sup>

Slavery, then, is culturally specific, and what slavery is depends on where and when it was practiced. Because of this, it is virtually impossible to “distill” a “universal meaning” for the term. For Shaler and many of his contemporaries, the victims of North and West Africans occupied a blurry, amorphous state that some categorized as slavery while others insisted it was not. As scholars try to define precisely this experience that was fuzzy even for those who lived closest to it, the exercise, though intellectually interesting, becomes anachronistic. Thus, scholars have generated quite a bit of heat as they attempt to delineate whether the victims were slaves or captives, but less light. Perhaps it is time to admit, as Peter Kolchin suggested, that it is the “utility rather than the ‘correctness’ of the term” that is important. Kolchin was not advocating a retreat from definitions,

but pointed out that seeking a universal definition might prevent us from understanding practices and experiences in particular spaces and times.<sup>52</sup>

Shaler set up a false dichotomy in which US slavery stood for "real slavery" and Barbary victims' experiences looked like something completely different. Certainly, North and West African slaveries cannot be equated with the "institutionalized chattel slavery" that existed in the antebellum United States. The American system was largely "self-reproductive, racial, mainly agricultural, and non-elite in character."<sup>53</sup> None of these describe the North or West African tradition of enslaving Americans and Europeans. Europeans and Americans held in Africa had few opportunities to procreate; thus, their status was rarely passed to offspring. Religion and national affiliation, not race, determined who would be enslaved. Few Europeans or Americans in Africa worked in agricultural settings. Though most worked, laboring to produce a commodity was not the defining characteristic of their enslavement.<sup>54</sup> A few operated as elite slaves in North Africa, accumulating wealth and power, an idea that US slaveholders believed threatened their social order. In Ottoman Algeria, even nonelite slaves enjoyed "considerable freedom of movement," used money, and owned property.

Where does that leave us as we attempt to understand the plight of those captured by corsairs or claimed by Saharan masters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? With a need to examine the system in its historical context, as much as possible, given the lack of North African sources. Ultimately, the terms used to define the Barbary and Western African practices of capturing Europeans and Americans—whether slavery or captivity—is less useful than carefully examining the particular practices in their historical and cultural context. Nevertheless, I find that slaveries and slaves fit best in these historical settings, and thus I use those terms throughout this book. I situate the North and West African systems in a Mediterranean and Ottoman context while calling in African and New World comparisons to highlight how these slaveries function. These comparisons give a stronger sense of the particular nature of the victims' experiences and the historical context for them. While the comparisons point out how very different these slaveries were, they also reveal surprising similarities.

Part 1

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Algiers

## Chapter 2

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### “Far Distant from Our Country, Families, Friends, and Connections”\* American Slaves in Ottoman Algiers

The merchant ship *Polly* lacked the military might to stave off Algerian corsairs. Thus, the corsairs who attacked them on their 1793 journey from Baltimore to Cadiz defeated and enslaved them in short order. When hauled into Algiers in 1793 (see [Figure 2.1](#)), John Foss and his crewmates were greeted by the “the shouts and huzzas of thousands of malicious barbarians.” Their ears were “stunned with shouts, clapping... and other acclamations of joy” as they were thrust through the city to the dey’s palace.<sup>1</sup> The dey selected four younger crewmen for palace work, and sent the rest to the Bagnio Beylic, the largest of the city’s *bagnios*, or prisons. They entered an oblong, hollow, three-story building, roughly 120 feet long and 60 feet wide. On the lower floor were taverns. In the upper galleries were very small, boxlike rooms that could be rented from the Algerians. Most slaves could not afford those private accommodations, so they slept in long, narrow, open galleries with beds “hung in square frames one over another four tier deep.” During the day, slaves were driven out of the prisons to work, and each night they returned to be locked up again.<sup>2</sup>

Foss and his fellows learned that they could send and receive news and letters and could practice their religion freely in Ottoman Algiers. In fact, unlike most US slave owners, Ottoman Algerians interfered little with their American and European slaves’ daily or religious lives. This had historically been the case in Ottoman Algiers, even in the seventeenth century when families were often seized together and housed in quarters set aside for families. In those earlier years, Catholic services and festivals were



**Figure 2.1** Algerian Harbor, Braun and Hogenberg, 1574.

*Note:* The mole extends from the city gates into the harbor.

*Source:* *Algerrii Saracenorum Urbis Fortissimae*, Cologne, 1574. Image provided by Antiquariaat Sanderus, Belgium, [www.sanderusmaps.com](http://www.sanderusmaps.com).

regularly observed by slaves, the majority of whom were Catholic.<sup>3</sup> Because they were afforded these freedoms and much autonomy, European and American slaves in Algiers did not have to fight to create separate space or establish an identity away from a master who sought to control their family relations and religious beliefs.

Their Ottoman Algerian experiences contrasted with that of slaves in the United States, who looked to their families and religion to provide a measure of autonomy, comfort, and respite from their master's invasive control. Particularly in the nineteenth century, the US masters intruded in matters of slave family life, religion, and economic decisions. But historians of US slavery have described how familial connections and relationships among bondspeople, away from their masters' gaze, could offset the trauma of enslavement and a master's controlling tendencies. Slaves' associations to family, friends, and coreligionists thus gave them an important "measure of latitude to shape their own lives" away from their masters' intervention. For this reason, they often greatly valued their social and religious ties to others.<sup>4</sup>

Eighteenth-century enslaved Americans used family and religion in different ways than slaves in the United States did. Because they hoped

for a temporary enslavement, they focused their energy on surviving and being ransomed, rather than building and maintaining families or religious connections. In this chapter, we look first at what drew Americans into Ottoman Algerians' reach and then, once captured, with whom enslaved Americans chose to make connections and why. Enslaved Americans not only maintained ties with American families, but also worked to create and sustain other, nonfamilial contacts outside—and sometimes inside—of Algiers. Lastly, we explore the seemingly limited role religion played in their lives and community-building endeavors. Unlike slaves in the United States, enslaved Americans in Ottoman Algiers could not rely on a physically present family and chose not to look to religion for succor.

## Enter Americans

US ships and their crews sailed within corsairs' grasp for many reasons. Most pressingly, US citizens needed trade outlets and though Atlantic trade flourished, the Mediterranean continued to be an active and profitable commercial sphere in the eighteenth century. Even at the eighteenth century's end, the British operated as many ships in the Mediterranean as they did in the Atlantic. Indeed, the Mediterranean “retained its strategic importance” in the “broader context of world trade and international rivalries.”<sup>5</sup> Those rivalries were played out violently in both the Mediterranean and Atlantic, and the increased maritime violence corresponded with bigger ships and navies. In 1790, the French navy was 60 percent larger than it had been in 1775; the British navy was 40 percent larger, and the Spanish 30 percent larger. European maritime powers aggressively plied the seas, often attacking rivals' ships and even those, such as the United States, who attempted to remain neutral. Not to be left behind, the North African Barbary states also fortified their fleets in the 1780s and 1790s.<sup>6</sup>

Because they had few outlets for their postrevolutionary goods, Americans had little choice but to enter the Mediterranean fray. As English subjects, Americans had been protected by the Anglo-Algerian treaty of 1682, which permitted English ships to ply the Mediterranean without interference. Once they won independence, however, Americans were fair game for North African corsairs, who wasted little time in capturing American ships and enslaving their crews. Americans, who had just fought a war to throw off the yoke of British “slavery,” found this practice abhorrent. Unlike the Spanish, French, and Italians, who had long “reciprocated in kind and enslaved Muslims whenever they captured them,” Americans

had little history with North Africans and certainly did not capture or enslave North Africans.<sup>7</sup>

English colonists wanted to trade freely, unhampered by such inconveniences as the Navigation Acts, but, once free, they found an often hostile economic environment in which European governments defended mercantilist practices against the newcomers. Both France and England restricted US trade with their colonial holdings in the 1780s and 1790s. In 1784, the British barred Americans from trading in the West Indies and Canada, while the French permitted only limited access to their Caribbean colonies. Both French and English ships rejected claims of American neutrality in the early 1790s, and insisted on seizing American ships trading with their respective enemy.<sup>8</sup> With other trading avenues closed to them, Americans conducted a “brisk commerce” in the Mediterranean consisting of roughly one-sixth of Americans’ total flour and wheat exports, one-fourth of the dried and pickled fish, and one-fourth of rice exports. When France or England threatened US trade, they might still send ships to Spain and Portugal, if, that is, they could avoid Barbary corsairs, who, unfortunately for Americans, also increased their activity during this period.

Harassed by the French, English, and North Africans, American commerce suffered severely in the 1780s. “Trade” was indeed, as reported by a Philadelphian in 1785, “very dull here and daily decreasing.” Between “speculative bankrupts in every place of America, [and] the Algerines at sea,” he complained, “our trade is at present in a miserable situation.” According to a Boston newspaper, insurance rates on American ships were rising in response to Ottoman Algerian ships outfitting at Gibraltar before they cruised for American ships. Americans were incensed that the British allowed Algerian corsairs to outfit at Gibraltar. In doing so, the British conferred their blessing on Algerian “depredations upon our Commerce,” as far as Americans were concerned.<sup>9</sup>

The world appeared to conspire against American trade. Certainly, Americans believed that Barbary’s seizure of their vessels was a threat to their just-won ability to control their own country’s economic destiny. Indeed, by “closing the Mediterranean to the people’s entrepreneurial spirit,” the Barbary states “imposed a barrier” that limited Americans as effectively as the British Navigation Acts had. Over the centuries, Europeans and North Africans hammered out a negotiation system to ransom captured countrymen or to prevent that through paying tribute. But paying tribute to Barbary powers smacked too much of subjugation for American comfort. They had fought one war to remove imposed shackles.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, Americans could do little against this seeming economic conspiracy because they were relatively powerless in the 1780s and 1790s. New to the Mediterranean diplomatic game after declaring independence,

Americans had not the means—or perhaps the desire—to pay tribute or ransom for their men. The United States, “weak and poor”<sup>11</sup> after independence, possessed neither the navy nor the means to build one under the Articles of Confederation, and ratification of the Constitution did little to alter the shortage of funds in the new nation. Problems closer to home proved far more pressing than the more distant threat of Barbary corsairs, which, after all, affected primarily New Englanders and sailors. Americans struggled to keep their government functioning, pay off crippling war debts, and deal with domestic insurrections such as Shays’ Rebellion. If they wanted to protect Mediterranean commercial interests, they had little choice but to submit to North African demands for tribute.

In addition, Americans were highly interested in Mediterranean trade, particularly in the mid to late 1790s. After 1793, European wars “provided Americans with enormous opportunities” for maritime commerce. Americans exported wheat and flour to Europe, especially Iberian ports.<sup>12</sup> (See [Figure 2.2](#)) European demand for US grain increased and prices rose, making this a virtually perfect situation from Americans’ point of view.



**Figure 2.2** Algers and the Mediterranean, Finley, 1829.

Source: Northern Africa, Anthony Finley from *A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, Representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe*, 1829. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Hall, TN, Historical Maps UA.

There was one glitch: war meant a resurgence of privateering. Hundreds of American ships were impounded by the French and Spanish, neither of whom recognized Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality. Privateering was so pervasive that Philadelphia merchants "accepted piracy and privateering as inherent risks of transatlantic shipping" as long they were still making money overall.<sup>13</sup> Still, the costs were high, particularly for those seized by North African privateers, or corsairs.

### "Remember Me"<sup>14</sup>: Enslaved Americans, Family, and Other Connections

When Foss was seized in 1793, Americans and most European slaves in Ottoman Algiers were enslaved singly rather than as families. In earlier periods, Ottoman Algerian corsairs preyed on coastal Europe, enslaving families and even entire villages.<sup>15</sup> Most American victims served in the merchant marine, and they seldom served with family members if one judges by the men captured by Ottoman Algerians. Out of the 130 taken, only Captain William Furnace and his cabin boy, Thomas Furnace, may have been related. Though sailor James Cathcart labeled them brothers, neither Furnace claimed such a relationship in surviving documents.<sup>16</sup> Even if the Furnaces are a possible exception, it seems safe to say that most, if not all, lacked family members' physical presence while in Algiers.

Had enslaved Americans or Europeans wished to create families in Algiers, the Ottoman Algerian system allowed them no opportunity to do so. Because very few women were captured, they had no potential mates. When European women were seized, which was a very rare occurrence in the late eighteenth century, they were immediately separated from the men. Thus Foss and his fellows rarely saw women as they moved from all-male *bagnios* to all-male work sites and back. Few mentioned seeing women, even in the Algerian marketplaces that they frequented. Foss observed few "white" women in the streets, but he literally saw little of those that he passed because women wore veils unless they were prostitutes or "far advanced in years." Even elite slaves, who did not reside in the prisons, lived with fellow former officers or consuls who were all male. They also interacted little with women except the wives of consuls or merchants.<sup>17</sup>

Nor did American and European slaves have access to indigenous women. According to Foss and Filippo Pananti, an Italian captured in 1813, Algerians beheaded slaves found with a "Mahometan" woman. The offending woman was tied in a sack and tossed into the sea. In 1790, a Genoan slave "caught [*sic*] with a Moorish woman" was stripped, received

two hundred *bastinadoes* (stuck on the sole of his feet), and relieved of his money. Though he was not executed, his punishment likely served as an object lesson to other slaves and deterred many repeat offenses. A slave might marry a Muslim woman if he converted to Islam and remained in Algiers or in a Muslim polity. Only a handful chose this route, and those who did had little chance of redemption. One Spanish slave "turned Moor" in the 1790s and married his master's "Negro wench." No American did so.<sup>18</sup>

Foss and other enslaved Americans left families in the United States, and they looked forward to rejoining their mothers and fathers, siblings and grandparents, wives and children, after a temporary enslavement. Until that time, they corresponded with their families, an activity the Ottoman Algerian government not only permitted, but also encouraged because the Algerian Regency hoped that slaves' letters might speed their redemption. Several enslaved Americans wrote and received letters while in Algiers. Fortunately, American mariners tended to be literate, but slaves who could not read or write epistles enlisted the help of fellows who could.<sup>19</sup>

Surviving letters show that enslaved Americans made no mention of wives or children, with the exception of Captain Isaac Stephens and Captain Samuel Calder. This may reflect how unlikely personal letters to families are to survive. On the other hand, most enslaved Americans were unmarried when enslaved. As a group, they were quite young. On average, mariners were 26 when captured, mates 25, and captains 30. Many, like Cathcart, were barely into their 20s when they found themselves in Algiers. Ten of the 69 sailors ransomed in 1796 were under 20 when seized by Algerians, though the mariners ranged from 15 to 50, with 28 over 25 years old and 15 over 30. At 50, Captain Isaac Stephens was the oldest freed in 1796, and according to him, he alone left a wife and children in the United States. Thirty-nine when captured, he was older than most of his fellows, even the captains who averaged thirty years of age. Only Stephens's wife petitioned Congress for support and aid for her husband.<sup>20</sup>

If they wrote to family, then, American slaves communicated not with wives, but with other family members. Both Foss and Captain Richard O'Brien sent letters to their mothers, and O'Brien's "aged mother" returned at least one epistle. Isaac Stephens dispatched one *communiqué* to a brother and accepted three from his Boston family. Exactly which family member or members wrote to him is unknown, though it seems likely that his wife, Hannah, sent at least one letter. First mate Alexander Forsyth collected one letter apiece from an aunt and uncle, as he reported in a note to Peter Bright, whom he referred to as a distant relative. Whether wives, parents or siblings, aunts or uncles sent letters, they could provide only intermittent

emotional support. These far-distant families could not furnish a daily buffer for their kin's enslavement.<sup>21</sup>

Still, enslaved Americans' rare mentions of family members strengthened their calls for help. When O'Brien informed Thomas Jefferson that Captain Stevens and Coffin had families who "at present" were not "provided for," he clearly meant to spur Jefferson into rescuing the breadwinners for the Stevens and Coffin families. O'Brien also made it clear that his "aged" mother, brother, and sisters depended solely on him, and that his capture left them with no support whatsoever. This winning strategy had been used by European slaves in earlier periods. French prisoners referred to their impaired breadwinning capacity as a point of leverage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, implying that without their support, their families would rely on government handouts. The Italian Filippo Pananti's first thought when he was captured was avowedly of the poor sailors, "all fathers of families" who needed their fathers for "support and consolation."<sup>22</sup> The strategy still carried weight, at least in captives' minds, when American John Foss wrote an open letter to his mother in the 1790s that was published in six newspapers. Foss hoped that "the cries of the widow, and the mothers deprived of their children, will have some effect on Congress to cause them to take us away from this place." If these cries had no affect on Congressmen, Foss trusted that some readers would be moved, and might lobby those Congressmen on his behalf.<sup>23</sup>

Enslaved Americans turned more frequently to government officials and business connections for monetary aid. In a typical and widely published letter, Captains Isaac Stephens, Zachariah Coffin, and O'Brien urged their readers to "write to Congress and to all the States, that they may have full information" about their Algerian enslavement. Readers should encourage British consul Charles Logie to supply "us sufferers, on account of Congress, with a little Cash." Their immediate need for pecuniary support and ransoming might be why they penned more letters to officials than to family members, though it is also possible that family correspondence has not survived. Generally, consuls, merchants, and businessmen were more likely sources of cash and government lobbying than their families, so it makes sense that the men concentrated on communicating with them. Cash and redemption, not emotional support, were paramount for enslaved Americans.<sup>24</sup>

Regardless of their audience, enslaved Americans used letters for multiple purposes. Their letters were often published in US newspapers, and thus reached many people at once. Michael Smith's epistle to his brother-in-law, printed in four papers, notified officials, the public, and his family that he and other American slaves were "consined to hard labor," bastinadoed, and cut off from American friends and family. He requested that his

brother-in-law "spare no pains to inform" him of his family, but, in the same sentence, he addressed a perhaps more immediate need. He wanted his brother-in-law's "candid opinion of" his chances for redemption.<sup>25</sup> Because his letter was widely circulated, he communicated not only with family members, but also with news-savvy Americans and American officials who read papers.

Like Smith, other enslaved Americans tacked family greetings on to letters addressed to owners, business connections, or government officials. In this way, they sent word to family and stirred many readers' sentiments, encouraging them to send help or pressure the government to ransom them. William Furnace closed his publicly printed letter to his ship's owner with a request that he be remembered to "my parents and all enquiring friends." This was no doubt a heartfelt request, and one likely calculated to draw sentimental action from all readers. In a much published letter to his mother, Foss passed on a plea from fellow slave Samuel Bayley. Through Foss, Bayley asked for someone to "give his hello" to his parents as his master did not allow him to write. Thus Bayley communicated with his parents and stirred his readers' sympathy for the slave not able to greet directly his parents. Such communications served twin purposes, acting as pleas for help and reaching out to friends and family.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike slaves in the United States, enslaved Americans in Ottoman Algiers could conceivably look forward to returning to their families once redeemed. They could not, and were not required to, rely on their families to buffer them from an invasive master while enslaved. Men such as Foss and O'Brien asked not only for concrete aid more than emotional support, but they also craved news of home and family. If they referred to distant families as a rhetorical devise to elicit aid, they also used all letters both to garner money and to communicate to loved ones.

## "Christian Slaves of All Denominations"<sup>27</sup>: Slaves and Religion

In the nineteenth century, North American African American slaves rallied around family and religion, but enslaved Americans in Ottoman Algiers did not. Until the nineteenth century, North American masters did not interfere in their slaves' religious practices or beliefs. As a result, many retained African religious beliefs and the "great majority of slaves remained untouched by Christianity." But North American slaves embraced evangelical Christianity in the Second Great Awakening, and, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, many masters got involved in creating Christian

slaves. In the United States, "Protestant Christianity lay at the heart of the slave community" by the antebellum period.<sup>28</sup>

Religion did not lie at the heart of the late-eighteenth-century Algerian slave community. Their capture did predate the greatest fervor of the Second Great Awakening, which might account for their relative religious silence. Most were nominally Christian, but they, like slaves in eighteenth-century America, had diverse beliefs. They followed Protestant sects, Roman Catholicism, or Greek Orthodoxy. Despite this variety, they adopted their captors' practice of referring to all Europeans and Americans, whether they were in or outsider of Algiers, as Christians. Referring to all Westerners as Christians created a rhetorical community of all Christians standing together against all Muslims, but such a unified community did not form among Algerian slaves. Rhetoric aside, slaves' actual adherence to different denominations may have prevented Christianity from becoming a communal focal point among them.

Ottoman Algerians allowed their slaves religious freedom for several reasons. First, Muslims have been generally tolerant of other monotheistic faiths, particularly those practiced by slaves. Second, Ottoman Algerians believed that the most submissive slaves were devout and spiritually contented. Lastly, Algerians rarely attempted to convert American or European slaves at this time. Because Algerians owned fewer European and American slaves than they had in earlier periods, they were loathe to give up ransom money that would be lost if a slave "turned Turk." For these reasons, slaves might have openly united around religious practices and identities in Algiers.<sup>29</sup>

Eighteenth-century Americans reported little religiously based conflict, but neither do they describe Christianity as an underlying group identity. In fact, they discussed religion little and their own beliefs and practices less. A few, such as Foss and Cathcart, point to fellow slaves who were Catholic or Greek Orthodox, and note the grave error of "turning Turk," or converting to Islam. Foss knew of one Frenchman, a free man on a merchant ship, who converted to the "benighted superstition." Realizing his mistake, he planned an escape from the "weighty remorse . . . preying upon his mind." He was caught swimming to a European ship in the harbor, and the dey had him beheaded for the attempt. Foss's story pointed out the many dangers of conversion, or of exchanging the "true religion for Mahometanism."<sup>30</sup> Otherwise, slaves were largely mute on the subject of religious observance.

Their religious muteness contrasted sharply with earlier descriptions of Algerian captivity, American prison of war narratives, and later narratives of American shipwrecks. In those cases, captured individuals granted religion and faith in God a central role in their stories. They referred directly and often to their belief in God, individual prayers, and communal practices.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spaniards discussed the availability of religious services and observances. A group of colonial Americans freed from Algiers in 1681 told Cotton Mather that they "formed a society" to pray together on Sunday nights, and their prayer fortified their spirits against their difficult captivity and apostasy. The society also established a code of conduct to "prevent and suppress disorders among them."<sup>31</sup> Late-eighteenth-century American slaves did not record similar gatherings or arrangements among coreligionists.

In the case reported to Cotton Mather, the captives came from seventeenth-century New England. Their commitment to religious expression could be ascribed to that time and place. However, Americans made similar mentions of God and personal religious practices later. During the War of 1812, some American prisoners of war regularly attended worship services performed by fellow captive preachers. Americans enslaved after wrecking on Africa's west coast laced their narratives with prayers in the early nineteenth century. This resurgence of religious expression may be related to the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> This religious movement affected how Americans thought about their religious lives, influencing prisoners of war and Saharan captives to discuss openly and habitually their religious thoughts.

Religious practices and communities may have played a lesser role by the late eighteenth century than they had in earlier periods when nationality and religion were more likely conflated. Algerian slaves from Catholic Spain or France perceived themselves as completely different from and locked in a struggle against Protestant England and Holland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This intertwining of religion and nationality sometimes erupted into slave-on-slave violence as in the seventeenth century, when Emanuel D'Aranda witnessed religious taunting that led to blows between Russian Orthodox and Spanish and Italian Catholics in the Algerian *bagnios*.<sup>33</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, religious-national conflicts occurred infrequently, if at all, or were not reported by American sources. They noted religious differences, but perhaps reacted to them less strongly. In 1796, Foss observed how the American redemption left "chiefly" Roman Catholic slaves in Algiers. According to Foss, this exasperated the Catholic slaves who had been taught that they were the only "true Christians." As true Christians, they believed that they should be redeemed, but they watched as Protestants—not true Christians—were released. No brawl resulted from this incident, but it hinted at lingering religious and national conflicts that divided slaves.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, slaves recognized different religious points of view even if they apparently fought less violently about it. In 1792, however, violence erupted

between countrymen divided both by politics and religion. French slaves attacked a French Catholic priest preaching against the French Assembly in a prison. As Cathcart reported it, this priest's *bagnio* service inspired a murderous rage in French slaves, especially those from Marseilles. Their anger likely reflected allegiance to revolutionary ideas, including reactions against the Catholic Church, and revolutionary leaders, who were now their ticket out of slavery. Perhaps this motivated them to demonstrate their loyalty overtly. In the 1790s, most French slaves were taken under foreign flags. Algerians did not identify them as Frenchmen, making them fair targets for enslavement, while service aboard other ships made the French government reluctant to redeem them. The dey intervened between the Frenchmen and additional violence by threatening to behead any Christian slave insulting a priest.<sup>35</sup>

Like the captives to whom Mather spoke, enslaved eighteenth-century Americans could practice their religions freely in Algiers. But because eighteenth-century enslaved Americans did not discuss religion, their religious practices are unknown. We can speculate that as Protestants, they had limited access to ministers and religious services. Catholic priests and services were readily available because Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese Catholics had long suffered Algerian enslavement and Catholics were consistently a majority of the enslaved. Some priests were themselves enslaved, and, as slaves, served their fellows in the *bagnios*. Catholic countries and orders sent priests to minister to the enslaved, especially from the Trinitarian and Mercedarian orders, both of which were created to aid Barbary captives.<sup>36</sup>

Enslaved Catholics had many options if they wished for religious support or fellowship. They might attend services or visit a slave hospital's Catholic chapels. In the sixteenth century, each prison boasted a Catholic chapel, but by the late eighteenth century, only the hospital's chapel remained. Catholic priests, mostly Spanish, staffed the hospital and the attached chapel, where they conducted daily services for hospitalized or unassigned slaves, such as the *papalunas*. Priests freely entered the prisons during the day, and performed religious services or privately met with slaves before the nightly lock down. By the late eighteenth century, these visits served fewer European slaves if only because none occupied the prisons during the day. At this point, priests met with slaves when they returned from their daily labor and before the *bagnios* were locked for the night.<sup>37</sup>

Even if they lacked formal structures or leadership, Protestant slaves had the freedom to make religion a central component of their experience. However, no enslaved Americans recounted attending Catholic services, just as they did not detail attending Protestant services, meetings with ministers or with fellow believers of any denominations. If any Protestant

ministers were among the enslaved, Americans did not mention it, nor did they say if fellow slaves preached to them or if they prayed together. If they lacked religious leadership, they might have attended services or prayed in Christian consuls' or merchants' chapels. In 1791, for example, Greeks in Algiers, who lacked a specific church building, gathered for Christmas prayers in a private home. Yet Americans depict no similar meetings in consular or private homes.<sup>38</sup>

Enslaved Americans' silence about religious matters did not necessarily mean that they were not religious or did not hold informal religious meetings. However, they also did not decry the absence of religious services, nor did they petition any governments or consular agents for permission to attend services or receive a minister's attentions. As seamen, they may have become accustomed to sporadic access to ministers and formal religious observations. At sea, shipboard services, if held at all, were often performed by the captain. Perhaps they found sufficient comfort in sporadic personal prayer, and this served their religious needs in Algiers as it did when they were at sea. Indeed, Marcus Rediker found that sailors appreciated prayer as a form of self-help, but were not particularly interested in organized religion. Still, American slaves did not appear to use religion or Protestantism as a basis for community while in Algiers, nor did they express concern over individual religious practices while enslaved.<sup>39</sup>

If religion did not form a basis for slave unity or community building, all slaves appreciated the important functions that the Catholic priests fulfilled for all slaves, regardless of their religious convictions. Priests arranged redemptions and provided physical care for the enslaved. Catholic orders redeemed thousands of Catholic slaves over hundreds of years. While Catholic orders generally were supported by specific countries and concentrated on redeeming conationalists, they did not limit their activism to coreligionists or countrymen. Thomas Jefferson initially worked through Mathurins in an attempt to free Americans. Ultimately, this failed for several reasons, the most glaring being the dissolution of the order during the French Revolution. Nevertheless, Catholic orders' humanitarian missions aided all slaves.<sup>40</sup>

All European and American slaves esteemed Catholic priests as caretakers of the sick and needy, more than providers of religious comfort. A French priest supplied Foss with the only food he got his first day of slavery, a service priests often performed for new slaves. Catholic priests treated all slaves. Though always helpful, their work was particularly appreciated during plague outbreaks. Sick slaves might rest and be treated in the hospital, and, as Foss explained, the priests and "Doctors" protected, or tried to protect, slaves from taskmasters eager to make them return to work. Some priests let slaves rest in the hospital and avoid work. If slaves

could “find the means” to be admitted to the hospital, to convince their master or taskmaster that they were ill, the priests allowed them eight to ten days of rest.<sup>41</sup>

If religion did not bind them, American and European slaves were unified in the belief that the Catholic priests in Algiers should assist them. They expected charitable care from Catholic priests. When priests failed to provide it, the enslaved commented upon the fact. When one insane slave, chained in a dungeon with little clothing or food, died, O’Brien noted that no clergy had visited him during his ordeal, not “at all.” Absolutely “no relief whatsoever” had been provided to the wretched slave by any Catholic fathers in Algiers. O’Brien did not identify the slave by name, country, or religion. Regardless of these facts, O’Brien thought that the Catholic clergy should have attended to the man’s needs. O’Brien bitterly wrote that he could “add Much on this subject,” but chose to refrain for a “Moor favourable time of Liberty.”<sup>42</sup> Bad mouthing Catholic priests while in Algiers and still in need was bad policy.

Given the help that Catholic priests and orders provided and the fact that most slaves were Catholic, it is intriguing that some Americans did not convert. Had they converted, they would have been better placed in a Catholic community of slaves. But nothing indicated that Americans converted to Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, or Islam. Few American slaves discussed religion in their writing, making it difficult to judge whether or not priests proselytized. The Ottoman Algerian government permitted Christians to proselytize as long as other Christians were their targets rather than Muslims or Christian renegades. No American slave claimed that a Catholic priest tried to convince him to convert. Only Cathcart reported Spanish and Portuguese efforts to “restore” him to the “other church” while he was in the hospital, but the men egging him on were fellow slaves.<sup>43</sup>

Filippo Pananti, an Italian-born British resident and briefly an Algerian slave, believed that slaves abandoned religion because it ceased “to afford consolation.” Certainly, enslaved Americans did not petition officials about religious services or lacking a minister’s attention. Yet their silence about religious matters did not mean that they were not religious. As seamen, they were accustomed to sporadic access to formal religious observations. If held at all, services aboard a ship were performed by the captain. Records do not indicate if they found sufficient comfort in personal prayer or if they gathered and prayed and simply did not record it.<sup>44</sup> Only a handful of those enslaved wrote about their experiences, so it is difficult to pinpoint religious practices.

Based on the available documents, religion played a secondary role at best among American slaves, and perhaps even European slaves, in

late-eighteenth-century Algiers. While their shared Christianity differentiated them from their Muslim masters, it did not unify them. Nor did their religious differences pose a significant source of tension among late-eighteenth-century slaves.

## Conclusion

When seized in 1793, Foss and his shipmates swiftly learned that their Ottoman Algerian enslavement would differ from the slavery that they might have seen in the United States. They could contact people outside of Algiers, and, if they lived long enough, they might reasonably hope to see those individuals again. Even if their Muslim masters were "taught by their religion to treat the Christian captives with unexampled cruelty," they let slaves practice whatever religion they wanted. What did they do with their freedom of correspondence and spirit? They agitated for redemption and release.

In their letters, whether to family or officials, enslaved Americans employed rhetorical strategies to incite readers' action. They piteously described their condition, reminded readers they were far from home and family, trumpeted past service to country, and prompted their fellow Americans to save their suffering countrymen. Their rare mentions of family, like their infrequent letters to them, strengthened their calls for help. They knew that their families advocated for them, and, like Foss, anticipated that the "cries of the widow, and the mothers deprived of their children" would have "some effect on Congress." Their families lacked the wherewithal or the power to free them, but their "cries" could encourage the government to act on their behalf. Family played a rhetorical role in their bid for assistance and freedom, but most communicated more often with government and business connections outside of the city for the support that they desired most: monetary aid and ransoming.<sup>45</sup>

Just as they used family as rhetorical prods, enslaved Americans' mention of religion did not report their practices or personal beliefs, but were issued as calls to action. Foss humbly asserted that "God alone" knew what would happen if they were not redeemed. As he listed the men who recently died of the plague, he noted, "by his hand we were brought here, and by his hand we can be taken away." If he and his countrymen were not redeemed soon, he implied, they would most certainly be taken by the hand of God and the plague. In consigning himself to God's hands, he also wanted readers to remove him and the others from harm's way before they succumbed to disease or bad treatment. Meanwhile, Foss likely

agreed with Captain Penrose, who wondered, "What in the name of God can our countrymen be about?"<sup>46</sup>

Outside of these rhetorical uses of family and religion, enslaved Americans mentioned them rarely. Yet we cannot conclude that they did not long for their families or that they did not practice personal religious devotions. We can infer that they depended less on family and religion as buffers against their condition than did slaves in the United States. If they did not organize themselves around family or religion, they might have coalesced around shared nationality, shared merchant marine experience, or even a common condition. As we shall see, many factors and concerns shaped their ability and willingness to work together in Algiers. Though not always the basis of cooperation and community autonomy, their relationships with fellow slaves served other functions. Conflict and violence among them emphasized solidarity among some while demarcating others as outside the group. The shifting boundaries and ties that the slaves developed inside of Algiers are explored in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

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### “Once a Citizen of the United States of America, But at Present the Most Miserable Slave”\* Americans and Slave Community

After the dey claimed his share of the slaves, John Foss and his companions were dispatched to a *bagnio*. The men wandered around the temporarily empty prison. At five o'clock, six hundred men, just released from their daily labor and all “appearing . . . more miserable than ourselves,” entered the *bagnio*. What crime had these miserable-looking men committed, wondered Foss? They were all “Christian dogs,” an Algerian keeper informed him. Foss would spend the next three years with these “Christian dogs,” eating, working, sleeping, and recreating with them.<sup>1</sup>

If the experiences of other communities under duress are a guide, we might expect Foss and his fellow American and European slaves to coalesce or unite to some extent. Many American prisoners of war in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, and African and African-American slaves polarized based on constant contact, shared religion, similar backgrounds, and national or ethnic identity. Building on those similarities and frequent interactions, they acted, often together, to alleviate their situation, organized to support and govern each other, or rebelled against their confinement. During the American Revolution and War of 1812, American prisoners of war built on a developing sense of Americanness, demonstrated by independence and self-governance, to regulate themselves under mutually agreed upon articles and bylaws. Their “heightened sense of national

identity,” limited as it often was to American-born whites, provided a basis for group identity and collaborative action.<sup>2</sup>

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ottoman and Hungarian ransom slaves similarly underwent a “process of communal” development. These ransom slaves shared nationality and religious beliefs, which facilitated some community building. Both sides wanted redemption money for their captives and found that letting prisoners unite and work together aided that endeavor. Slaves chose a spokesperson, a prison-steward, who represented the enslaved men’s concerns to their masters. In contrast, late-eighteenth-century American and European slaves in Algiers bonded little, acted collectively less, and organized to govern themselves not at all during their Algerian enslavement, neither as a larger, international group nor in smaller, national groups.<sup>3</sup>

African and African American slaves in the United States created and maintained ties with those with whom they “worked, traded, formed families, worshipped, and socialized.” As many scholars have argued, these relationships and bonds gave them a measure of autonomy and a basis for personal and communal identity. Yet slaves did not always create cohesive communities; rather, those living and working closely might develop close bonds while viewing slaves beyond their neighborhood with “suspicion or indifference.” Further, slaves’ close bonds might be accompanied by deep antipathies and violent policing of communally imposed values and behaviors.<sup>4</sup>

Americans and Europeans enslaved in Ottoman Algiers similarly formed overlapping and shifting bonds as they defined and redefined their personal interests and changing circumstances. In some cases, they identified with one another on the basis of shared slavery, religion, or nationality. In others, their previous status or slave status separated them. And communal identity did not guarantee collaboration or cooperation, as antipathies were likely to emerge among those constantly together. Slaves in Algiers cooperated at times, but at others they wrangled with, stole from, and murdered each other. In this, they mirrored other groups of slaves and captives who cultivated “solidarity in ways that created not one community but many.”<sup>5</sup>

Here, we consider those many communities first by looking at how American and European slaves interacted and then how Americans viewed one another compared to European slaves. Though class and position divided them, enslaved Americans articulated an American identity in opposition to a Muslim or European one. At the same time, they used identity and nationality flexibly to suit their purposes at any given time. In looking at slave interactions, we see how the Ottoman Algerian slave system affected slaves’ relationships, their overlapping bonds, and the conflicts that often split them.

## “Friendship Heighten’d by Adversity”: International Slave Relations

Foss and other Americans confronted hundreds of European slaves in Algiers. These slaves spoke many languages, claimed varying national affiliations, and belonged to diverse Christian denominations. Yet they shared broadly similar backgrounds. Most served as merchant mariners, and had, like Foss, been seized at sea. According to Marcus Rediker, seafaring gave sailors a shared identity that transcended national, ethnic, and religious boundaries. Whether sailors or soldiers, they had moved about the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds, sold their labor in an international market, and came from countries with Christian traditions. In Algiers, most worked together constantly and were crammed into *bagnios* together at night. The majority was owned by the same master, the Algerian government, and the few privately owned individuals lived with and worked beside government-owned slaves. They suffered, then, together as slaves. If, as American seaman James L. Cathcart claimed, “Friendship [was] heighten’d by shared Adversity,” they were indeed good friends.<sup>6</sup>

If broadly similar cultural backgrounds, religion, a common enslavement, and close proximity bred community among slaves in other locales, it seems logical that American and European slaves might develop communal ties in Algiers. Africans shipped to North America also hailed from different regions, belonged to different ethnicities, and spoke diverse languages, but they, like the men in Algiers possessed “cultural commonalities” that might outweigh “local differences.” At the same time, “competition, as well as cooperation” informed slaves’ interactions with one another. Like Africans enslaved in the United States, those in Algiers cooperated and competed, supported, and fought one another.<sup>7</sup> Sailors’ behavior in Algiers shows that they did not conceive of themselves as a monolithic group, though their commonalities sometimes provided a basis for connecting across social class, position, or nationality.<sup>8</sup>

In some ways, American and European slaves relied on one another from the time they were enslaved. When first seized, Foss and his crewmates feared being punished for inadvertently performing their work incorrectly. Fortunately, Foss located a French-speaking “Turk.” Since Foss knew French, he learned what was expected of the new slaves. Foss’s recognition and language skills relieved his crewmates, mostly Americans, and the three just-captured Dutchmen with them.<sup>9</sup> These “Dutchmen” may have been New Yorkers. They belonged to the American ship *Hope*, bound from Amsterdam to Malaga when captured near Gibraltar. In his

journal Foss labeled them “Dutchmen,” but when listing redeemed sailors, Foss registered all *Hope* crewmen as New Yorkers. Foss and his crewmates embraced the three men as “fellow sufferers” regardless of if they were Dutch New Yorkers or Dutchmen. Whether this was because they were fellow Americans, because they served on an American ship, or because they were fellow prisoners being carried into slavery is not clear.<sup>10</sup>

Other Americans’ experiences suggest more about slaves’ opportunities and attempts to build connections with fellow slaves, especially non-American slaves. When taken in 1785, the all-American crew of the *Maria* joined 36 Portuguese men and one Spanish woman, the previous take of an Algerian cruiser. The 42 men and one woman underwent the trauma of capture and initial period of adjustment to slavery together. Nineteen-year-old American seaman James L. Cathcart reported little about the Portuguese men individually, but he took an instant dislike to the Spanish woman. Cathcart resented that this “facetious slut” was “perfectly reconciled” to her enslavement and tried to “reconcile everyone else to theirs.”<sup>11</sup> Young Cathcart wanted nothing to do with any slave who accepted his or her new status. From the start, Cathcart angled to surround himself with active men, not complacent slaves.

In Algiers, the 42 men were housed in one large room for several days. Slaves “of all denominations” visited the newcomers, bearing “fruits of the season,” wine, bread, and “every thing they had.” The slaves welcomed new comrades by sharing food. They knew from experience that new slaves received food unfit to eat, unfamiliar to them, and inadequate for their numbers. So they spent their money supporting those who had joined their ranks and used a rare day off for Ramadan to do so.<sup>12</sup> Beyond the concern for fellow human beings, the food offerings may have been calculated to trigger gratitude and build familiarity, ensuring that some of the newcomers would view the philanthropic slaves as compatriots.

Cathcart appreciated the contributed victuals, though he nowhere mentioned any of these slaves by name, indicating that the sentiments and food mattered, but not necessarily the individuals who provided them. Of course, he may not have noticed individual slaves rendering this service if suffering shock from his capture. Or he may have left out their names to keep his readers’ focus on him. At any rate, he also left unnoted these slaves’ freedom of mobility, access to food, and the ability to dispose of their property as they chose. Yet he may have been comforted to know that Christian slaves had property and money to use at their own discretion and found solace in the fact that some shared these resources with fellows.

If these helpful slaves meant to initiate the new arrivals into a community of slaves, they achieved mixed results. None of the Americans mentioned

wanting to or actually returning the favor to those slaves or other newly enslaved men. Cathcart, who kept an extant diary, did not describe any action to repay their kindness, though he selectively helped newcomers: Americans newcomers. Intriguingly, Cathcart repaid the Algerians ship's steward, who taught Cathcart to smoke when he was captured, though it took him more than two years to do so.<sup>13</sup> Cathcart frequently aided newly enslaved men, as long as they were Americans. Still, the slaves who delivered victuals to Cathcart and his fellow slaves provided a precedent for those newly enslaved, one of slave helping slave.

The crew of the *Maria* and their Portuguese companions were separated after three days together, giving them little time to establish strong relationships with one another. Four or five old men were "sold at vendue" and the dey chose five of the *Maria*'s crew and eight of the Portuguese for palace service. The rest were purchased by the Algerian Regency, or the government, and sent to one of the *bagnios*.<sup>14</sup> Their forced separation circumscribed their contact, but palace slaves were not cut off from those in the *bagnios*. Most palace slaves reported nightly to a *bagnio*, giving them an opportunity to interact with their fellows. Even Captain Richard O'Brien, who lived in a consul's house, maintained contact with *bagnio* and palace slaves. But neither Cathcart nor other *Maria* crewmen mentioned any affinity for or connection to the Portuguese men with whom they were initially captured.

Cathcart did not linger on his separation from the Portuguese men, but dwelt on the last night that the *Maria*'s crew spent together. That they shared this last night with the Portuguese men made little impression on him.<sup>15</sup> Cathcart and his crewmates may not have perceived themselves as close prior to capture, but they clung to each other in this unfamiliar setting and shifting status. Young Cathcart was reluctant to be torn from those he knew, both as crewmates and as fellow Americans. Most troubling, the crew's division signaled the start of their slavery in truth, a beginning none welcomed.

Like those who brought Cathcart's first night's repast, some European and American slaves provided information and support for their newest fellow sufferers. Christian slaves showed Cathcart and his comrades the hot baths, which anybody could use for a small fee. When a second American crew was captured in August, Cathcart and his crewmates filled them in on what to expect in Algiers. The newcomers were most relieved to learn that they were not fated for galleys. Instead, the officers would work in the sail loft, the mariners in the marine.<sup>16</sup>

Slaves assigned to *bagnios* usually found old-timers willing to help initially in most cases. A "ragged, lank, and haggard" group greeted Italian slave Filippo Pananti "without the slightest manifestation of that sympathy"

one expects when seeing a suffering fellow. Exhausted by their own “melancholy fate,” they viewed the newly enslaved with “stupid indifference.”<sup>17</sup> Foss was welcomed quite differently by his *bagnio* mates. Overwhelmed by the six hundred noisy men with whom he would live and work for the next three years, Foss appreciated his fellow slaves’ directions, which prevented him and his crewmates from offending their captors.

Some *bagnio* slaves interpreted for Foss and his crewmates, when, on their first night, they heard a man shouting “in a most terrible manner.” Their inability to understand his language “made it sound more terrible” to the discombobulated men. More-experienced inmates informed them that the shouting directed them to report to the third gallery. They made “all haste” to reach the waiting taskmaster, a Turk holding a stick standing next to a Christian slave. The Turk passed each a blanket and bundle of clothing while the slave clerk recorded their names. The translating slaves could have been Americans as ten American ships preceded the *Polly* into Algiers and Americans were housed largely in the same *bagnio*.<sup>18</sup>

Housing practices forced all slaves, even those in elite positions, to interact with fellow slaves—or gave them the opportunity to do so—because regardless of where slaves labored, most slaves reported nightly to a *bagnio*. The only exceptions were the palace cooks and two Christian slaves, the *captains a proa*. Even the Christian secretary to the dey, the highest post available to Christian slaves, had a room in the Bagnio Gallera. Only *papalunas*, who paid monthly fees to be released from work and were a minority of those enslaved, secured their own housing and therefore slept in another location. Overall, over three-quarters of enslaved Westerners called a *bagnio* home.<sup>19</sup>

Slightly over half of the 43 Americans and Portuguese brought in with the *Maria* were sent to *bagnios*. This included ten of the fifteen men captured on the *Dauphin*. The five exceptions were officers, who were granted *papaluna* status. When captured in 1793, the crew of the *Polly* experienced a similar division: the dey chose four boys for palace work and sent the rest to a prison.<sup>20</sup> Most Americans ended up in *bagnios*, where they lived and worked with a multinational, polyglot group of European slaves. The *Maria’s* crew, seized in 1785, was an aberration. Five of the six men on board initially toiled in the palace. Even so, three of the six crewmen landed in a prison eventually.

Their close contact inspired some *bagnio* slaves to assist one another regardless of national affiliations. For example, a few slaves rented private rooms, but occasionally could not pay the monthly rental. A nonpaying slave was chained nightly to a pillar until he paid. Foss testified that these nightly sessions in irons touched their mates to the point that the

"miserable objects" were "commonly relieved by the rest of their fellow sufferers."<sup>21</sup> However, this tantalizing picture of *bagnio* slaves assisting each other raises more questions than it answers. Foss never mentioned which slaves relieved their fellow sufferers. Were they countrymen or an international mix of slaves? Did one slave pay, or, as Foss hinted, did slaves band together to free the unfortunate slave? Why would slaves with money contribute to a fellow slave's rent rather than chartering a private room himself?

Most *bagnio* slaves "were obliged" to sleep on cold stones "with nothing but the heavens to cover them" because they lacked funds to rent a room. Did slaves who could not afford a room themselves pool money to free those chained to pillars? Did they resent footing the bill for another's special privilege? It seems unlikely that a slave would be repeatedly bailed out of this predicament. Unfortunately, neither Foss nor others clearly elucidate this topic, which leaves an incomplete picture of slaves' interactions with one another.<sup>22</sup>

Another clue about slaves' relationships emerges from escapes and attempted escapes. Flight, long or short term, by slaves or prisoners in other locations and time periods required assistance from outsiders and insiders. In 1817, Italian slave Filippo Pananti decried the lack of cooperation among slaves, and, as he pointed out, without cooperation, slaves could not escape. Slaves' inability to identify a common interest convinced Pananti of the "extreme inutility of expecting much union amidst individuals of different nations."<sup>23</sup> As Pananti no doubt observed, few Europeans and no American slaves endeavored to flee Algiers, though whether this can be attributed to slaves' failure to cooperate is debatable.

Even with cooperation among slaves, escape from Algiers presented many challenges. Algerians cut off most avenues of escape, making flight all but impossible. Slaves might swim into the harbor and clamber aboard a European ship, but most countries signed treaties requiring them to surrender escapees. Even so, Algerians watched their slaves closely and fitted them with chains when European ships anchored. In addition, two boats guarded the harbor's mouth, always watching for those on the run. Alternatively, slaves might flee into the interior. But men who did so faced "certain destruction" from lack of food or water. If they lived, they were reenslaved by native inhabitants. The futility of flight, more than an inability to cooperate, may have prevented large-scale or frequent escape attempts.<sup>24</sup>

Some slaves did collaborate to break free from their Algerian enslavement. They ran in singly or in pairs rather than in groups. Those who tried together usually shared nationality or work assignments. One important exception involved 14 slaves of varying nations who commandeered a boat



**Figure 3.1** Oran and North Africa, Finley, 1829.

*Note:* Christian slaves fleeing Algiers or Oran had few options and were likely to be reenslaved.

*Source:* Northern Africa, Anthony Finley from *A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, Representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe*, 1829. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Hall, TN, Historical Maps UA.

in which to escape. Cooperation did not pay off for this group: they were recaptured and punished soon after they attempted their escape.<sup>25</sup>

Slaves who fled tended to be privileged or desperate. The two Oraners who went missing in January fled out of desperation. Oraners had served in the Spanish garrison of Oran, a town some two hundred fifty miles west of Algiers (see [Figure 3.1](#)). Most were Spanish, though some called other countries home. Regardless of where they came from, they were unlikely to be redeemed. The fear of lifelong enslavement drove some to take extreme risks, including attempted escape. Their extreme risks rarely ended well, including this ill-fated escape attempt.<sup>26</sup>

Slaves' attempts were largely unsuccessful, though this did not deter others from trying. A single slave ran, but was swiftly secured and chained, on September 5, 1790. A second slave followed on September 18, and was also immediately recaptured. In December, two slaves owned by the secretary of the marine tried to break free. They left from the consular gardens, located slightly outside of the city. As elite slaves, they had Fridays off and could go to those gardens. Their privileges availed them little, as

their freedom lasted only a few days, and they each suffered two thousand bastinadoes as punishment.<sup>27</sup>

Conflict abounded among *bagnio* slaves, but, like cooperation, it seemed particularly prone to erupt between countrymen and coworkers. In 1790, a group of Spanish slaves were flogged “for some frivolous Disputes,” apparently among themselves. On the same day, another three Spanish slaves were flogged for “wrangling in the Banio [*sic*] Gallera.” One of the fighting “catamites” was “Miss Golinda,” a male slave mentioned in more than one tavern altercation. This last example hints at a rarely discussed phenomenon over which slaves fought: sexual services and tensions. Slaves’ infighting with conationalists implies that they spent much of their free time socializing, and thus clashing, with countrymen rather than with an international mixture of slaves. Or merely that Spanish slaves, most of whom were Oraners, kept to themselves.<sup>28</sup>

The American slaves whose writings exist rarely recorded the nationality of those who quarreled. Unless contentious slaves were Spanish Oraners



**Figure 3.2** Algiers, Braun and Hogenberg, 1574.

*Note:* Number 31, to the far left, marked the *bagnio* with the slave hospital. Number 33, to the right and just above the tower, denotes the Bagnio Beylic, which housed the dey’s animals. Q is the Great Mosque.

*Source:* Algiers by Braun and Hogenberg, *Algerrii Saracenorum Urbis Fortissimae*, Cologne, 1574. Image provided by Antiquariaat Sanderus, Belgium, [www.sanderusmaps.com](http://www.sanderusmaps.com).

or Americans, the nationality might not be mentioned. Despite American attempts to blame Oraners for all strife, other slaves fought among themselves. One unidentified *bagnio* slave received 450 bastinado strokes “for an information being made against him.” A fellow Bagnio “Belique [*sic*]” resident reported that the first slave “Defrauded the Lyons of their Grub.”<sup>29</sup> This petty slave, nationality unspecified, tattled on a comrade for stealing food from the dey’s lions, surely a move that earned the ire of his *bagnio* mates.

Tensions likely surrounded the Algerian-appointed Christian corporals, American or European slaves who kept overnight order in the *bagnios* (see Figure 3.2). Corporals both helped and hurt their fellows, depending on what was in it for them. Cathcart bribed corporals to let him live in the Bagnio Galleria, for example. With an appropriate bribe, corporals interceded with Turkish guardians to get a slave out of a few days’ work. Corporals fenced stolen goods for slaves, though this was dangerous because corporals sometimes appropriated the stolen goods and shared the proceeds with the Turkish guardians, denying the thieving slave his share. Even worse, corporals blamed thefts on innocent slaves against whom they had a grudge. Christian corporals were as likely to collaborate with Algerians against fellow slaves as they were to help fellow slaves, depending on what might serve their own personal interests.<sup>30</sup>

In some cases, slaves preyed on their fellows. When this happened, uninvolved slaves did little to help those being abused. Antonio Villarexo, a Spanish deserter from Oran, used fellow slaves so cruelly that redeemed Spaniards publicized his horrendous acts in Spain. According to Cathcart, Villarexo kept a “seraglio of abandoned wretches,” slaves seemingly without ties to other slaves, Turks, or countrymen, and so left to their torture. No one interfered with Villarexo’s activities, not other slaves or Algerian guards or officials. This hands-off approach contrasts with official reactions against an abusive gang in Dartmoor during the War of 1812. Faced with a plundering, disorderly gang, prisoners enlisted British authorities, who punished and removed the ring leader. Of course, the gang was counterfeiting local money, which no doubt encouraged British officials to intervene. In Algiers, no such intercession occurred. From an Algerian point of view, as long as no slaves were killed, the abuse of some slaves by one of their number mattered little.<sup>31</sup>

For African and African American slaves in the United States, shared ethnicity and the experiences of capture and enslavement drew slaves together initially, but slaves aided those with whom they continued to have contact. Though contact did not itself guarantee cooperation, bonds were most likely to grow among slaves in close proximity.<sup>32</sup> In Algiers, enslaved Europeans and Americans were regularly in close proximity, at work and

play, and often unsupervised. This daily contact could have facilitated the formation and maintenance of bonds among slaves individually, and collaborative actions geared toward aiding fellow slaves or facilitating their escape from slavery. Instead, European and American slaves discovered that friendship was heightened by adversity, when interest and occasion warranted it. Slaves worked together, or against one another, when it suited their purposes. For slaves in Algiers, close proximity was as likely to foster conflict as it was to foster community. The same could be said of shared nationality, though American slaves exerted themselves more on behalf of their countrymen than for other slaves.

### “Unfortunate Fellow Citizens”<sup>33</sup>: An Enslaved American Community?

In the United States, a common national or group identity often “drew [African] slaves together” even “across plantation boundaries.” That is, slaves preserved links across neighborhoods, broadly defined, rather than only with their bunk and work mates. Americans felt a similar pull and push toward their countrymen in Algiers. As a distinct minority, they may have felt an intensified pull toward one another. American slaves were outnumbered by Europeans from the 1785 capture of the *Maria* and *Dauphin*. Until 1793, 21 American slaves joined a slave population of about 1,800 European slaves, making Americans just over 1 percent of the overall slave population.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the Ottoman Algerian practice of redeeming countrymen in groups encouraged them to work together, at least on their redemption. They also found that shared nationality, like shared slave status, had its limits and might lead to mutual assistance or discord.

Algerians carefully assigned their slaves a nationality because they customarily redeemed their European and American slaves in national groupings. When a country made peace with Algiers, their slaves were released, as would be the case for Americans in 1796. Yet giving each slave a nationality could be tricky. Generally, Algerians designated a slave as originating from the same country as the ship on which he was captured. Thus, all individuals aboard an American-owned ship were identified as Americans.<sup>35</sup>

This straightforward approach did not account for multinational trading and labor markets. Ships and their cargoes were frequently jointly owned, and the owners might represent several nationalities. Crews were similarly ethnically and nationally mixed. Foss, for example, had

three Dutch crewmates on his American-owned ship. Algerians labeled them, and seven other Dutchmen seized by that ship, as Americans. As previously mentioned, they may have been Dutch New Yorkers; that is, Americans. All ten Dutchmen were freed in the 1796 American general redemption. Unlike the Dutchmen, two Genoese sailors captured on the American *Hope* were not included in the American redemption. Nor was one Portuguese man, who was freed in an Algerian-Portuguese peace. Perhaps the Ottoman Algerian government made exceptions, probably with an eye to securing ransom.<sup>36</sup>

The Ottoman Algerian slave system encouraged slaves to work with countrymen for group redemption. The tendency to redeem men with their conationals pushed countrymen toward one another. American captain O'Brien preferred associating with men of rank, but he depended on Algerian insider information provided by former sailors, now slaves in the dey's palace, for information on potential ransom arrangements. He maintained contact with palace slaves such as Philip Sloan, O'Brien's former second mate; Andrew Montgomery, his first mate; George Smith, one of the *Maria's* seamen; and Cathcart, also a seaman from the *Maria*. The men exchanged frequent letters and arranged regular meetings to discuss redemption strategies. Occasionally, O'Brien even socialized with these lower-ranked men. On Christmas Day 1790, for example, he dined with Cathcart, Montgomery, Sloan, and "Mr. Billings," another of the *Maria's* seamen who was mentioned in the other men's letters to one another.<sup>37</sup>

Enslaved Americans depicted slaves self-organizing into groups populated with their countrymen. But even those smaller factions of conationals rarely acted in concert. When they did, they acted not as a unified body, but formed smaller coalitions with those who shared their immediate concerns. American mariners and mates, for instance, welcomed 1796 by besieging the American consul in Algiers. Technically, enslaved Americans had been freed by a treaty arranged by Consul Joseph Donaldson, Jr. Once he concluded the treaty, Donaldson secured a house for the American masters but left mariners in the *bagnios* and at work in the marine. Subsequently, he was "besieged by several mates and mariners" demanding release from hard labor. The mariners averred that they had "as much right to walking about town as the Masters" and refused to work in the Algerian marine.

Donaldson refused to aid the men. Instead, he bid them await their shipment out of Algiers patiently while continuing to work and live in the *bagnios*. When Donaldson tried to make them leave the consular house, the mariners declared that they "had as much right to stay" as Donaldson, since the house was "public property" belonging to all Americans. They flatly refused to work, even when Phillip Sloan, one of their own who was

recently freed and now serving as Donaldson’s interpreter, tried to convince them to do so. Unable to convince the men, Donaldson summoned the Turkish guardians, who beat the American mariners all the way to the marine.<sup>38</sup>

In this case rank, which was closely related to class, trumped common nationality. The American consul attended to the captains, but had the mates and mariners flogged into submission. The captains and mates, who did not work daily or live in the *bagnios*, did not storm the consular house with their seamen. The mariners acted in unison when they perceived an immediate, mutual need. They agreed that as free men they should no longer suffer hard labor, but resume their status as American citizens. Until unified by an issue of mutual concern, American seamen did not act collectively. Individual enslaved Americans helped fellow Americans, but all the Americans did not unite to protect or sustain others. Nationality, then, did not assure bonds between slaves or concerted action because conation-*alists* perceived different personal interests.

Not all those captured under the US flag embraced American identity because not all were Americans, which may have hampered them from making common cause. Most of the 13 American ships seized by Algerian corsairs listed one or more foreign crewmen. The *Maria*, with its all-American crew, appeared the exception. Of the sixty-two sailors redeemed in 1796, ten were designated Dutch, two Irish, two Genoese, one Leghornese, one Dane, and one English. Approximately 27 percent of those ransomed were non-Americans.<sup>39</sup>

Others who identified as American may have been foreign born or claimed to be when the need arose. Charles Colville of the *Dauphin* was a “British Born Subject but unfortunately captured under American colours.” Indeed, this was a misfortune as British sailors on British ships were exempt from Algerian enslavement. O’Brien, the *Dauphin*’s captain, claimed Colville as an American, presumably to ensure that he received the US government’s allowance. Yet O’Brien empathized with the fact that Colville, finding “no Great prospects in America . . . applied” to his Scottish friends for help. A friend enlisted a member of Parliament, who worked with Charles Logie, the British consul in Algiers, to arrange Colville ransom. Colville bore responsibility for the cost, though eventually the US government reimbursed him. For Colville, claiming British citizenship meant being redeemed in 1790, a full six years before most Americans were released. Others tried asserting British citizenship in hopes of early redemption, though none as successfully. Four seamen, but no officers, of the *Maria*, and one-half of the *Dauphin*’s crew petitioned George III in 1786 claiming to be British citizens. None were claimed by the British or released.<sup>40</sup>

The *Dauphin* also carried a French passenger, Jacob Tessanaer. The Algerian government cleared the French consul to buy his freedom, but the price was more than the consul was authorized to pay. Meanwhile, Americans discussed whether or not Tessanaer should be included in a general American redemption. Andrew Montgomery, first mate of the *Dauphin*, argued that Tessanaer should be included as it “would Reflect no honour on the Americans to Leave him here let him cost what he will.” In this case, Montgomery and others claimed the French passenger as protected by American honor because he had been captured on an American ship. Tessanaer died of the plague in 1793, rendering all such debates moot.<sup>41</sup>

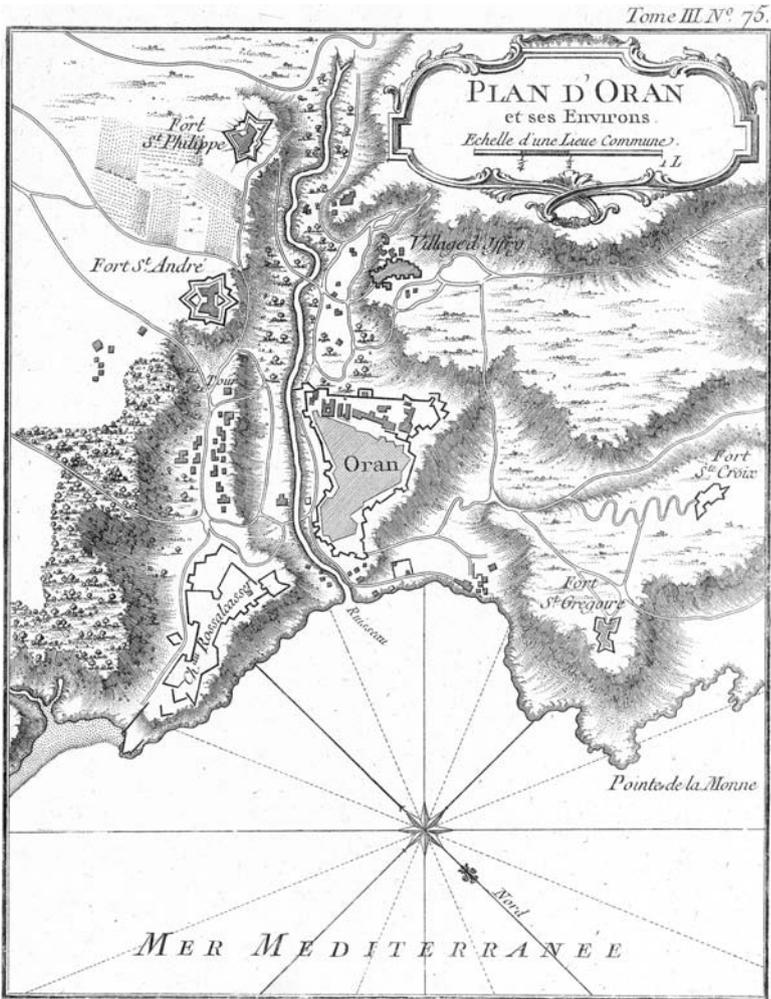
Even those considered American citizens could be suspect. Some were American born while others were naturalized. O’Brien was born in Ireland, which seemingly made no difference during most of his Algerian years. But when he was released from slavery early to deliver dispatches to the United States from Algiers, the masters did a “great deal of murmuring,” as all felt themselves more entitled to this job and early redemption. After all, O’Brien was “an Alien and of course ought not be preferred before them.”<sup>42</sup>

For African-American slaves in the United States, the “solidarity of slaves grew within narrow limits,”<sup>43</sup> and the same held true for Americans enslaved in Algiers. In Algiers, even those who worked and lived together expressed a limited commitment to each other. In fact, their forced intermingling and freedom undercut their unification. Forced to be in close proximity, but free of their master’s gaze much of the time, *bagnio* slaves let national and religious divisions persist among them. They allied themselves with other slaves when they perceived a common interest or threat. Their allies generally included those who shared their nationality, indicating that threats to one’s group were perceived as most troublesome. Even relationships among countrymen, however, were riddled with conflict and concord, both sporadic and fleeting.

## Whipping Boys from the “Damned and Impolitic Garrison of Oran”<sup>44</sup>

In the United States, African American slaves frequently developed attachments to those they saw regularly, viewing others as “outsiders.” Slaves’ designation of some slaves as outsiders reflected their own sense of community and the boundaries of that community. In similar fashion, European and American slaves in Algiers viewed some slaves as insiders and some as outsiders in their ever-shifting communities. To a large extent, European

and American slaves adhered to preexisting divisions based on nationality and class and resisted identification with those they perceived or defined as inherently different from themselves. Though enslaved Americans joined an ethnically and nationally mixed population, their writings rarely



**Figure 3.3** Plan D'Oran et de ses Environs, Jacques Nicolas Bellin, 1764.

Source: Image reproduced with permission of the Afriterra Foundation. [www.afriterra.org](http://www.afriterra.org).

reflected their fellow slaves' diversity. If they did not necessarily coalesce as a group, however, they did articulate an American identity that they constructed in comparison to European slaves, particularly those from Spain's garrison in Oran.<sup>45</sup> (See [Figure 3.3](#))

Enslaved Americans found a convenient whipping boy against which to contrast their own behavior: Oraners. Oraners were largely Spanish men assigned to Spain's North African garrison of Oran. In enslaved Americans' writings, non-American slaves, but especially Spanish or Oraners, fought with and tattled on one another, stole from and sexually exploited each other, betrayed their fellows, "turned Turk," and generally acted like the slaves they were. Enslaved Americans were not alone in negatively assessing Oraners, but the Americans' negative portrayal allows a glimpse of slaves' contentious relations. These ne'er-do-well slaves and their reported behavior suggest deep divisions among *bagnio* slaves, a division especially marked by differing nationalities as well as the problem of intragroup conflict among those in the *bagnios*.<sup>46</sup>

Enslaved Americans pointed to an important difference between themselves and Oraners. According to Americans, they belonged to and identified with a country, but Oraners did not. Oraners were disloyal citizens—turncoats—whereas Americans, they argued, were loyal to country and fellow citizens. Oraners guarded the Spanish-held fort at Oran, about two hundred fifty miles west of Algiers (see [Figure 3.1](#)). This hotly disputed port changed hands several times in the eighteenth century until Algiers took firm possession in 1792. Most soldiers sent to Oran were Spanish, though others who enlisted in the Spanish army ended up there. A few Irishmen served there in the mid-eighteenth century, and some Frenchmen, "lured by promises of lucrative postings in Mexico and Peru," signed up, only to find themselves poorly paid, badly treated, and "confined to the dismal" presidio of Oran. In 1791, between six hundred and eight hundred French Oraners suffered slavery in Algiers, all listed as Spanish.<sup>47</sup>

According to enslaved Americans, Spanish soldiers were consigned to Oran as punishment "either for murder or theft." Once there, they were paid little and irregularly, fed less, and worked hard. Some unhappy "recruits" fled, hoping to find freedom. Instead, they ran right into Algerian arms and slavery. Cathcart worked under a slave carpenter who suffered exactly this fate. Sentenced to Oran due to some "irregularity," he deserted his post, he told Cathcart, but was promptly captured by Arabs who sold him to the Bey of Mascara. The bey gave him to the Dey of Algiers. Because they were enslaved in this way, Americans viewed Oraners as doubly dishonorable: criminals who deserted their post to embrace enslavement. When not trying to identify as British, enslaved Americans claimed that their service in the US merchant marine, or some in the Revolutionary War, and their

resistance to Algerian capture, made them particularly honorable and loyal citizens.<sup>48</sup>

Oran, this "Great Nursery for Slaves," provided many Algerian slaves during the eighteenth-century tug-of-war over the port. In 1791, two-thirds of the seven hundred European and American slaves in Algiers were Oraners.<sup>49</sup> They occupied a unique position in the Ottoman Algerian slave system. Their desertion alienated them from their country of origin, and therefore, from hopes of redemption. Because they deserted from the Spanish military, Spain felt less obliged to ransom or support them. Indeed, when Spain and Algiers signed a peace accord in 1785, Oraners were not among the four hundred Spanish redeemed. As Foss observed, "The King of Spain it cannot be reasonably expected, will pay a sum of money to ransom people who deserted from his service, and by that means involved themselves in this predicament, therefore they have no hopes of relief till death." For Europeans who left their own country for the Spanish army and then deserted from Oran, the situation was even worse. They alienated their native country and Spain. Oraners were long-term slaves, and in this respect, they differed drastically from other slaves in Algiers.<sup>50</sup>

According to Cathcart, Algerians reviled Oraners as disloyal deserters also. Algerians, he reported, labeled Oraners *carneros*, or sheep, because they seemingly volunteered for slavery. For sedately offering to become slaves, Oraners earned the scorn of Algerians and Americans alike, and perhaps of others. A French consul concurred with American and Algerian opinions. In a 1776 letter to the French government, this consul labeled Oraners "thieves . . . capable of the most hideous crime . . . schemers . . . and very menacing." Cathcart reported that the Algerians believed that Oraners were "capable of anything." In fact, "Oraners' iniquity . . . made it a proverbial saying among the Mahometans that any bad person has acted like a *carnero* from Oran."<sup>51</sup>

Oraners, then, were long-term slaves who got little, if any, money or support from any country and had small hope of release. As reported by Americans, their actions reflected their desperation. Or maybe Americans simply assigned violence to Oraners more often than to themselves or other slaves. Regardless, Oraners made a convenient foil against which Americans constructed their own character. Oraners behaved like depraved slaves and Algerians distrusted them, which made them handy American scapegoats.

As Cathcart saw it, "few crimes" were committed by sailors taken at sea, or non-Oraners. When a murder, theft, or other transgression transpired, "mistrust" fell on Oraners. For this reason, Algerians avoided giving Oraners responsibility. That is, until the reoccurring plague and several general redemptions thinned their slave populations in the 1780s and 1790s. Then,

Algerians had little choice but to promote slaves normally overlooked. By the time Americans arrived, some Oraners acted as Christian corporals, who were charged with keeping *bagnio* order overnight. Both Cathcart and Foss suggested that Oraner corporals abused their power by chaining fellow slaves to pillars all night, ostensibly for disruptive behavior and accusing innocent slaves of theft. If one did not want to be punished overnight, it was “prudent” to occasionally bribe a corporal.<sup>52</sup>

Driven by hopelessness, Oraners committed hostile acts usually against one another. Slave-on-slave violence was rarely mentioned by Americans, but when it was, a Spanish or Oraner slave was most certainly involved. When Captain Richard O’Brien reported that a tavern fight between two Oraners sent one to the hospital with his belly slit wide open, the event was both shocking and routine. Shocking because slaves infrequently attacked fellow slaves so violently, but routine because Oraners were the perpetrators.<sup>53</sup>

Oraner altercations often occurred in *bagnio* taverns, where inebriation no doubt fueled fights. Oraners did not frequent these taverns alone, but alongside other European and American slaves, Algerians, Jews, and others. Even in this mixed company, Oraners injured each other more often than they hurt other slaves, Algerians, or others. This suggests that Oraners either self-segregated or were set apart by other slaves. Oraners may have self-segregated because of the negative stereotype applied to them, or they may have chosen to socialize with their countrymen to use their native language and talk of home, a choice other slaves often made. If Oraners were set apart, fellow Oraners may have simply been close, convenient targets.<sup>54</sup>

A virtual blood bath occurred in 1796 when Domingo Gomez, an Oraner, stabbed fellow Oraner Pedro Delgado five times. What started as a dispute between Oraners spun out of control when two Christian corporals, both European slaves, tried to arrest Gomez. He stabbed one to death before facing an armed Turkish soldier, who failed to faze him. An impressed Cathcart recorded that Gomez not only refused to give up his knife, but he also dared “any among them valiant enough to take his knife from him to come and do it.” A slave tried to do just that, but Gomez killed him while Turkish soldiers looked on. He held everyone off for three hours, but the stand-off ended when a “rascal of a Spaniard his own townsman treacherously came behind him and knock’d him down with a large club.” At this point, the “cowardly” Turks disarmed him, and he was summarily beheaded while the Ramadan-celebrating crowd cheered “one more Christian sent to Hell.”<sup>55</sup>

Other Oraners suffered most from Gomez’s drunken rage, though he fought off any who opposed him, slave or not. Americans recount no incident like this one involving non-Oraner slaves. Only Oraners brutally

assaulted each other, perhaps because they faced lifelong enslavement. Intriguingly, Cathcart expressed little empathy for the Christian corporals trying to keep order, nor did he care that the “treacherous” Oraner probably feared for his own life. By clubbing Gomez, he protected himself and others from Gomez’s murderous rage. Instead, what most struck Cathcart was Gomez’s valiant self-defense against cowardly Turkish guards and Christian corporals—possibly Oraners—and the fact that a townsman’s betrayal brought Gomez down.

Oraners occasionally targeted others, especially when their hopes of redemption were dashed. In 1796, an Oraner heard that a Spanish priest had money to ransom them. When he visited the priest, he found that no such plan or money existed. The desolate Oraner stabbed the priest 14 times, from which the priest miraculously recovered. Still infuriated, the slave stormed to the Spanish consul’s house. When the consul was absent, he sought out and killed a European slave with whom he had a prior dispute. Unfortunately, neither the nationality of this slave nor the nature of the quarrel was recorded. Satisfied by his murderous rampage, he threw down his knife, was taken into custody, and beheaded the next morning.<sup>56</sup>

Driven by a possibly never-ending enslavement, Oraners had an affinity for vicious backstabbing, which, fortunately for other slaves, they turned on each other. This propensity resulted in the beheading of Don Antonio Melians, “a fine lad of 16 years old and of a good family in Spain” in 1792. Two Spaniards, presumably Oraners, who worked with Melians, caused his tragic end. The two men stole money from their master, the Algerian prime minister, and persuaded the “innocent kid” to take a share. He hid his portion under his pillow, where the thieves easily filched it. The boy confronted them, but they threatened to blame the original theft on him if he took any action. Once the prime minister discovered that he had been robbed, he questioned Melians, who confessed everything and all three Oraners were imprisoned. The two older men, no doubt knowing that scaling the palace walls was “Death by law,” convinced Melians to escape by climbing those walls. He was executed, not for theft, but for that climb.<sup>57</sup>

Melians fell victim to the machinations of his money-grubbing countrymen who tried to fund their own comfort or perhaps their redemption at his expense. Initially, the older slaves wanted simply to pin the robbery on the boy. Once they were implicated, they tormented the boy by urging him to scale the walls. Though an Oraner, the poor, deceived boy was “greatly lamented” by all the slaves, who regretted his senseless death at the hands of callous countrymen.<sup>58</sup> While other slaves took advantage of their fellows, and theft was commonplace in the *bagnios*, slave treachery did not usually end in a fellow slave’s death, unless an Oraner was involved.

Not only were Oraners violent, disloyal, and treacherous, they were also sexually immoral. The three Spanish slaves, very likely Oraners, flogged for “wrangling in the Bagnio Gallera,” appeared to be wrangling over sexual matters. Captain O’Brien labeled all three “catamites,” especially a “Miss Golinda,” an apparently male slave who participated in more than one tavern altercation. O’Brien likely meant that the three were involved in sexual negotiations or relations with each other, although he additionally implied that some were indeed “catamites,” or older men using younger ones for sex. Enslaved Americans used “sodomite” and “catamite” several times when referring to Oraners’ sexual arrangements, but it is hard to tell if they used the terms to denote different behaviors or not.<sup>59</sup>

O’Brien’s entry and others like it indicated not only that tensions between slaves could be sexual, which is not surprising given that all *bagnio* slaves were male, but it also shows a seeming Spanish predilection for sexual transgressions. Or, more to the point, the willingness for enslaved Americans to ascribe such misbehaviors to Spanish Oraner slaves. Since all slaves were male, it seems likely that some had sex with one another, though prostitutes may have been available to slaves with money. Two Turks, for example, fought over “common women” in the *bagnio* tavern, a sign that prostitutes were present.<sup>60</sup> Though enslaved Americans were young men, they said little about meeting their sexual needs while enslaved. Instead, they implicated Oraners for sexual misdeeds that they likely engaged in themselves.

According to Cathcart, an Oraner infamously visited the worst treatment upon his fellow slaves. Longtime slave Antonio Villarexo earned the reputation of being the “most complicated villain in the Regency,” an evaluation agreed upon by Turks, Jews, and Christians. According to Cathcart, Villarexo kept a “seraglio of abandoned wretches.” Exactly what he used the slaves for is hard to ascertain since Cathcart’s daughter scribbled out the relevant diary section when editing Cathcart’s papers in 1899. Enough of the entry remains to implicate Villarexo in sexual misuse of fellow slaves. The extent of that misuse and the victims of his abuse remain obscure.<sup>61</sup>

Villarexo preyed on fellow slaves without interference from other slaves, Christian corporals, or Algerian authorities. Slaves may not have interfered with his activities for several reasons, not the least of which was that he served a long time as “Cabode Carvanna,” a term not clearly defined, but a role that gave him power over other slaves. Slaves may have been powerless to end his abuse or feared that they would become victims themselves if they intervened. Likely, he exploited slaves who had no connections, money, protections, or choice. Maybe other slaves viewed Villarexo’s

victims as unworthy outsiders and felt no compulsion to save them from torment.

Neither the names nor nationalities of Villarexo's victims were chronicled, but Spanish slaves exposed his behavior indicating that some victims were Spanish. When Spanish slaves were redeemed in 1785, a redemption that did not include Oraners, the released slaves displayed Villarexo's picture and details about his Algerian crimes in Madrid. The fact that Spanish slaves needed public vindication may indicate that Villarexo earmarked Spanish slaves or that abused Spaniards were angriest about his exploitation. Though his crimes were broadcast in Spain, Villarexo continued abusing slaves in Algiers and did so until 1792 when, after 24 years of slavery, he redeemed himself.<sup>62</sup>

Slave-on-slave violence occurred in all slave systems. In the United States, for instance, slaves "fought often enough to cause concern among their masters . . . and occasionally killed each other." Americans in Algiers, however, wrote as if violence and mistreatment of fellow slaves was the exclusive domain of Oraners even though other slaves surely squabbled with their countrymen and with other *bagnio* slaves. By depicting Oraners as sexually depraved, treacherous, disloyal, and out of control, Americans distanced themselves from "bad" slaves, or those who had been degraded by their enslavement. In this sense, Oraners' behavior provided a foil for American slaves' much better behavior, showing Americans as better people—and better slaves.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

Though Foss shared many experiences with other Algerian slaves, they were loath to develop cross-national ties or at least to report them. Instead of drawing connections between themselves and other slaves, they drew distinctions. Both American and European slaves partitioned themselves into national enclaves. Many preferred the company of their countrymen, those who shared their language, religions, and ethnicity, as well as a common stake in their group redemption.

Xenophobia alone does not completely account for slaves' exclusivity. The Algerian system of slavery ingeniously divided and controlled their slaves. The autonomy granted slaves in Algiers contributed to the slave community's fragmentation. Without an invasive master trying to control all aspects of their lives, slaves had few shared complaints, and therefore, few reasons to act communally. The Algerian system supplied comfort for purchase for those with money or previous rank, which encouraged each

slave to make his own situation more palatable. The divide and conquer strategy of the Algerians separated conationalists from one another, as well. Few issues affected all slaves, even those with shared nationality—outside of redemption—so even countrymen rarely united.

Though slaves sometimes bonded over national identity and their status and treatment as slaves, they simultaneously found their enslavement and national identity fertile grounds for conflict. In other words, community mattered, but it could be abandoned under certain circumstances. Countrymen were inhibited from uniting because some could successfully manipulate the Algerian system for their own advantage. The ability of these successful, elite slaves to manage their own lives is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

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### “American Livestock, Now Slaves in Algiers”\*

#### Elite Slaves in Ottoman Algiers

When James L. Cathcart referred to himself and his fellow enslaved Americans as “American Livestock” in 1794, he evoked an undifferentiated group of men, all equally suffering Algerian slavery. In practice, the Ottoman Algerian slave system recognized and reinforced divisions among slaves. Building on Ottoman and North African models of social inclusiveness and mobility, Ottoman Algerians used some as administrative slaves. American and European slaves fell into a socioeconomic structure with elite slaves at the top and menial laborers at the bottom. The disparate slave positions and situations undercut the formation of a Western slave community and gave the Ottoman Algerians an urban system of slavery that largely prevented slave rebellions despite the presence of skilled and unskilled slaves who “grasped the power of cash.”<sup>1</sup>

Ottoman Algerians’ use of elite slaves differed significantly from American slaveholders’ practices. In the United States, a few elite slaves might hold specialized positions, but they did not “necessarily receive better treatment than their brothers and sisters in the field.” Some house servants and slave artisans received better and more abundant material goods, but slaves were largely “undifferentiated in terms of economic and social status.” Several factors limited stratification among slaves. As a rule, American masters owned few slaves, and slaves on small holdings rarely performed specialized labor or held elite positions. On larger plantations, a few skilled slaves held posts, but often only temporarily. Three-fourths of African-American slaves toiled in the fields while only one-fourth served as house

slaves or slave artisans. The few elite slaves rarely accumulated property or wealth enough to separate them materially from their fellows.<sup>2</sup>

As in the United States, most Algerian slaves worked together in common conditions. More than three-fourths resided in the *bagnios* and worked daily, but the remaining one-fourth enjoyed superior material conditions and did little work. The elite minority consisted of *papalunas* and administrative slaves. *Papalunas* held rank or social standing prior to capture whereas administrative slaves achieved position within the Ottoman Algerian slave system. Thus, the Ottoman Algerians allowed former officers *papaluna* status, but not mariners; any slave might compete to be a scribe, *bagnio* guardian, or Christian secretary to the dey.<sup>3</sup>

In Ottoman Algiers, barriers between *bagnio* and elite slaves were not ameliorated by family ties or common religious practices as they were in the United States. If slaves in Algiers had been connected by the “universal brotherhood of the sea,” this failed to unite the 13 American crews in Algiers. Of course, seven crews originated in New England, three from Philadelphia, two from New York, and one from Virginia. Sailors’ potential “universal brotherhood” was fractured by region and by rank. Officers and seamen constantly negotiated work assignments, punishments, and what was adequate provisioning, a process that facilitated the “emergence of discrete communities,” one of officers and the other of mariners. Just as some American masters encouraged “caste pretensions” among their slaves, Ottoman Algerians treated officers preferentially and housed them away from mariners, further reinforcing their separation. Some mariners gained elite status in Ottoman Algiers and thus gained many of the same privileges as their officers, though they worked and lived separately from those officers. Because they faced different slaveries, slaves in Algiers shared few reasons to act communally.<sup>4</sup>

### Papalunas: “Slaves Freely Attending Their Own Business”<sup>5</sup>

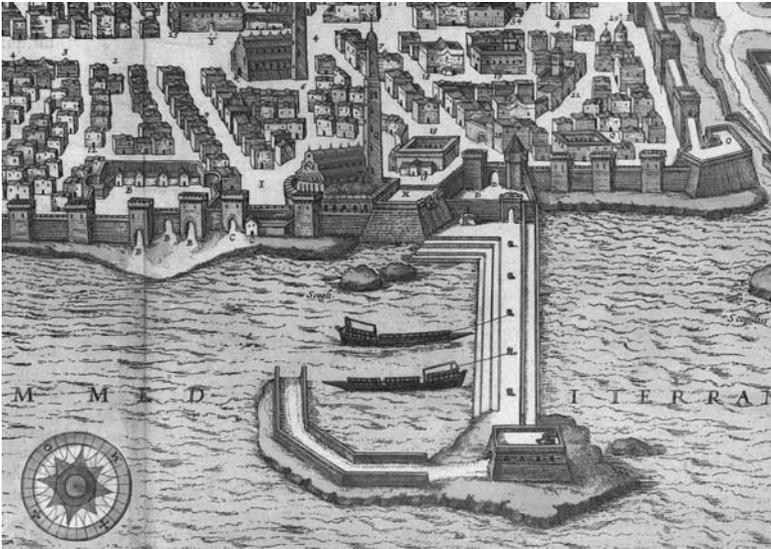
While US masters paid little attention to their slaves’ prior rank, Ottoman Algerians carefully recorded their slaves’ previous status. Their prior status mattered for two reasons. First, officers commanded higher ransom prices than seamen. Typically, captains fetched 4,000 sequins while mariners went for 2,000 sequins or less in the late eighteenth century. In the 1790s, Algerians initially demanded 4,000 sequins for each American captain, 3,000 for each mate, and 1,500 for each mariner.<sup>6</sup>

Second, Ottoman Algerians granted slaves who had been officers or well-born privileges and protections. When captured in 1785, for example, Captain Richard O’Brien of the *Dauphin* was not placed in a *bagnio*, but instead lived with Charles Logie, the English consul. Captains Isaac Stephens of the *Maria* and Zaccheus Coffin, a passenger on the *Dauphin*, were similarly housed. In fact, captains were rarely sent to *bagnios*. Instead, Algerians notified European consuls when new captures were hauled in and allowed consuls to claim fellow citizens and arrange housing and aid for enslaved officers.

In addition, Ottoman Algerians earmarked officers as *papalunas*, a term possibly derived from *pagar lunar*, meaning “to pay by month.” Indeed, *papalunas* paid a monthly fee for a host of concessions. They were released from *bagnio* living, moved freely in Algiers, did little work, and were largely without Algerian supervision. When called to work, their tasks were less physically demanding than those allotted to *bagnio* slaves. For these concessions, *papalunas* swore not to escape, but, for added security, the Algerian Regency required a European consul or merchant to back each *papaluna* by promising to reimburse the Algerian Regency’s loss if a particular *papaluna* escaped.<sup>7</sup>

In theory, any slave who paid a monthly fee could be a *papaluna*. Prior to the late eighteenth century, slaves attained this status “through the influence of slaves in the palace or Grandee’s house,” that is, elite slaves might finagle *papaluna* status for their fellows. By the late eighteenth century, the Algerian Regency restricted *papalunas* to those slaves with rank or social position. Thus, Captains O’Brien, Stephens, and Coffin, as officers, attained *papaluna* protections, but only after the British consul Logie, and later the Spanish consul Miguel D’Expilly, guaranteed their good behavior. Between 1785 and 1796, approximately one-third of enslaved Americans paid this fee, or the US government did for them. Neither Algerians nor European consuls gave mariners, the remaining three-fourths, this option. Certainly, European consuls no longer guaranteed seamen’s behavior because “so many misbehaved” when they did. But officers could be counted on to toe the line.<sup>8</sup>

Ottoman Algerians also restricted *papaluna* status because their slave population dwindled. In the 1780s and 1790s, slave redemptions and the plague cut the number of slaves, leaving too few for marine work. Consequently, Algerians limited the number of nonworking slaves. By this time, only officers, such as O’Brien, could buy these exempt positions, and even then they were summoned “to labours for a few days at a time.” They did not quarry or cart rocks to the mole, an artificial barrier or breakwater protecting the Algerian harbor, however (see [Figure 4.1](#)). Instead, officers reported to the sail loft, where they repaired and made sails for Algerian ships.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 4.1** Algier and the Mole, Braun and Hogenberg, 1574.

*Note:* Most *bagnio* slaves worked collecting stones to reinforce the mole or placing those stones at the mole. The mole extends from the city, protecting ships from storms.

*Source:* Algerii Saracenorum Urbis Fortissimae...” George Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, II, Cologne: 1574. Provided by Sandersun Antiquariaat, Ghent, Belgium. <http://www.sanderusmaps.com>.

Captain O’Brien and other *papalunas*’ situation resembled that of African American slaves allowed to hire themselves out. In the United States, self-hired slaves often had a say in their work. Generally, self-hired slaves paid their master a set sum and used the rest to pay for room and board, as they might well live apart from both owner and hirer. If they had any money left, they could spend it as they wished. Though they arranged their quarters and work placements, self-hired slaves’ comfort and self-determination was constrained by pay so low that they could not buy enough food or pay for adequate shelter. Like them, *papalunas* constantly worked to ensure a steady cash flow. Both self-hired slaves and *papalunas* scrambled to support themselves and retain their privileged positions.<sup>10</sup>

While both self-hiring slaves and *papalunas* paid for their own maintenance and enjoyed much personal liberty, they differed considerably. European and American slaves in Algiers purchased the right not to work, while self-hired African American slaves in the United States chose only

for whom they worked. US masters rarely allowed slaves not to work no matter what the slave paid. Conversely, North Africans had long allowed slaves to buy their own time and other benefits. For decades, if not centuries, slaves with rank who paid a monthly fee were left alone to “freely attend” their “own business” while enslaved in Algiers.<sup>11</sup>

## The “Humiliating Dependence”<sup>12</sup> of *Papalunas*

*Papalunas* such as O’Brien freely attended their business only as long as they shelled out that monthly fee. While self-hired slaves relied on wages for their upkeep, *papalunas* earned none. Instead, *papalunas* depended on outside support and sources of money to keep them free of the *bagnios* and manual labor. Officers drew resources beyond most mariners’ reach, making them surer bets as *papalunas*. Captains held higher social class than most sailors and they were older than the average mariner, which meant they had time to build wealth and connections. They might have savings, a home, or other assets against which they could borrow in their time of need. By the late eighteenth century, officers formed societies to help themselves and their families if they were incapacitated or lost at sea.<sup>13 14</sup>

More importantly, officers called on social and business networks to secure funds. Ships’ masters achieved their post “through reputation,” which they built through careful management of owner’s resources and shrewd market dealings. European consuls and merchants took responsibility for officers’ precisely because they were officers, who, it was assumed, knew how to conduct themselves properly. English consul Logie claimed Captains O’Brien, Stephens, and Coffin based solely on their rank. Logie rented them from the Algerian Regency, housed them, and put them to work on his consular estate. Though the three captains dug holes, planted and mulched trees and fed the English consul’s pigs and poultry, they were not subjected to the *bagnios* or work in the quarry or marine, as were nine American mariners captured with them.<sup>15</sup>

Consuls rarely chose mariners for these assignments. When arranging the US-Algerian treaty in 1796, Joseph Donaldson, Jr., chose American mariners to serve in the American consular house. Perhaps Donaldson felt that choosing “common men” better represented American republicanism, but European consuls overwhelmingly chose officers rather than mariners. Of course, Donaldson may not have wanted men who were his social peers—captains and mates—serving him.<sup>16</sup>

Though their rank initially secured *papaluna* status, captains’ continued comfort depended on favors. They needed to make and maintain connections with people who could support them, usually their ship’s owners,

business connections, and American and European consuls. For this reason, O'Brien wrote to the *Dauphin's* owners, Philadelphians Matthew and Thomas Irwin, "by Every Convenient opportunity" while in Algiers. Matthew Irwin confirmed that Logie's trust in O'Brien had been well placed. As Irwin informed George Washington, O'Brien was a "Man of strictest veracity and honor." Irwin learned this over years of working with O'Brien. O'Brien captained another Irwin ship in the 1780s, with which he seized a British ship. Irwin felt "indebted" to O'Brien's "Intrepidity and good conduct," not to mention his ability to bring in privateering monies.<sup>17</sup>

Other American captains corresponded with their ship's owners, business contacts, and American officials to garner support. When seized in 1785, Captain Stephens notified his Boston-based owners that their ship was lost, that Logie had intervened to assist the officers, and that they needed additional backing. The captains had not only requested money, clothing, and supplies from the American consul at Cadiz, Richard Harrison, but they also urged that Logie be instructed to give them "a little cash . . . on account of Congress." Not one to rely on chance, O'Brien also drew on his owners for 15–20 pounds sterling.<sup>18</sup>

If American *papalunas* were lucky, they received enough money or support to better their already superior conditions. Captains O'Brien, Stephens, and Coffin, for example, started as domestics for Consul Logie, which freed them from the *bagnio* masses and manual labor in the marine. Though they gratefully thanked Logie for this favor, the captains still bemoaned the inescapable fact that they were slaves to an Englishman—a fellow Christian and English-speaker, no less. Cathcart concurred, but, when he observed their labors, went a step further. For Cathcart, the captains suffered "every indignity that inhumanity could devise to render their situation humiliating in the extreme." Cathcart, himself assigned to the dey's palace, had not yet experienced *bagnio* living and hard labor, so had yet to learn how much worse Algerian slavery could be.<sup>19</sup>

The captains' letter-writing campaigns spurred American officials into action on their behalf. Not long after they were enslaved, William Carmichael, the American *chargé d'affaires* in Madrid, rescued the captains from Logie. Carmichael rented a small house for the American captains and mates where they lived "very comfortably for some time" because of the "supplies furnished them by Mr. Carmichael" and "their friends in the palace," their fellow slaves. Carmichael funneled US money to the men, but they needed additional support from men such as mariner Cathcart, who achieved an administrative status in the Algerian slave system. Thus shielded from the *bagnios* and labor, the officers did little to assist their former crewmen, even when they depended on some of them for their own sustenance.<sup>20</sup>

The US government paid for more than house rental for officers. Like the Algerian Regency, the US government invested in Americans with rank more than those without it. The US government facilitated officers' privileges and separation from their crews in two ways. First, the government paid an allowance to all enslaved Americans for a time. Officers received a larger allowance than mariners. Greater pay meant that officers could purchase food and clothing; that is, they could afford *papaluna* status. Second, the government rented a house for officers, a service they did not provide for mariners. Officers' special and separate treatment was government subsidized.<sup>21</sup>

With his US subsidy and the help of European consuls, O'Brien maneuvered a living situation distinct even from other American *papalunas*. As he put it, he initially “fell in with” Logie, who “kept” him until he met a “more friendly Allie [*sic*],” the Spanish consul. O'Brien did not join the American officers in their rented house. Instead, he resided in the Spanish consul's house, a solution he brokered directly with the consul, Miguel D'Expilly. Why he chose to reside with D'Expilly rather than with American officers, he did not say. Perhaps private quarters were alluring, though direct access to the consul, who, he hoped, might speed ransom for him or all Americans, may have influenced his decision. Regardless, O'Brien seemingly had some choice when arranging his living quarters.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, O'Brien's decision to live with D'Expilly made him the consul's dependent, a position he did not relish. O'Brien had limited options in 1790, when D'Expilly asked him to move out to accommodate consular visitors. O'Brien felt that he was being treated with a “Great Deal of Indifference [*sic*]” because “Every Servant both free and Slave is allotted a better Room in Every Respect” than the one into which he was moved. O'Brien's temporary digs had dirty walls and eight small windows, which, to his disgust, had no glass over them. His complaints notwithstanding, O'Brien did in fact have a private room with windows—the envy of virtually all other Western slaves. In addition, he had enough clothing to cover all eight of those windows. His inconvenience was also short-lived: he was back in his old room after only 30 days.<sup>23</sup>

Officers' rank garnered them superior governmental aid, from both Algiers and the United States. Because they could marshal resources through networks established before their capture, they were good candidates for *papalunas*, who above all had to have an ever-ready line of money. Still, officers depended on many others to maintain *papaluna* status. When push came to shove, then, they had limited options. They lived as *papalunas* at the whim of the Algerian Regency, which might revoke their status or put them to work; at the whim of the American government,

which might stop sending money; and at the whim of their protector, if they had one.

### “Without the Least Distinction”<sup>24</sup>: Dividing to Control

Instead of mixing with their countrymen, American officers created a small, select enclave, one that included mostly other US officers and others who helped them maximize their own comfort while awaiting redemption or who could speed that redemption. *Papalunas* depended on consuls inside and outside of Algiers. In Algiers, consuls Logie, D’Expilly, and the Swedish consul, Mattias Skjöldebrand, housed officers, gave them money, funneled US money to them, and discussed terms of American redemption on their behalf. American officials outside Algiers worked for American redemption, sent money, and agitated for monetary support from the US government. In his journal, O’Brien mentioned consuls more than any other individuals and he directed his correspondence largely to consuls or US officials. He most frequently wrote to William Short, the American *chargé d’affaires* in Paris; to William Carmichael, the US consul in Spain; to Congress; and even to “General George Washington.”<sup>25</sup>

O’Brien maintained close contact with fellow officers, particularly Captains Stephens and Coffin. Between 1785 and 1793, they were the only American captains in Algiers. Captain Coffin succumbed to consumption in 1787, but Stephens prospered in the Ottoman Algerian system. By 1790, he worked in the dey’s palace where he served as an important conduit of information for O’Brien and other *papalunas* about palace comings and goings, particularly those related to American redemption.

O’Brien interacted more selectively with mates and seamen. He kept some connection with his first and second mates, Andrew Montgomery and Philip Sloan. His bond with Montgomery perhaps owed more to proximity than propinquity. Montgomery worked in the sail loft, as O’Brien occasionally did. Sloan proved more useful. As a *captain a proa* or palace sweeper, Sloan occupied an important administrative slave position and daily spoke to the dey. O’Brien took some pains to communicate with Sloan, who provided him with insider information, whereas he wrote little to or about Montgomery.<sup>26</sup>

O’Brien communicated with mariners who represented special cases. He wrote to Charles Colville and mentioned John Robertson, both sailors from the *Dauphin* who were redeemed by friends long before the 1796 general American redemption. He mentioned only two of the *Maria’s*

crew: mariners George Smith and James L. Cathcart, both of whom worked in the dey's palace. Like Colville and Robertson, Smith was redeemed by friends prior to 1796. Cathcart occupied Algerian administrative posts until 1796, which permitted him to convey insider details and to influence directly other slaves' living conditions. In other words, O'Brien mingled only with mariners who proved useful to him. In his defense, *bagnio* slaves toiled all day and were locked away nightly, making them inaccessible to *papalunas* most of the time while palace and administrative slave could meet during the day.<sup>27</sup>

Officers desired separateness from their crews, and the Ottoman Algerian *papaluna* status permitted just that. War of 1812 officers proved equally averse to living with mariners. American officers self-segregated themselves in British prisons and then used their superior resources to both live and eat better and more comfortably than enlisted seamen.<sup>28</sup> Based on shipboard hierarchies that divided them at sea, mariners expected little fraternization with officers, but officers adamantly demanded physical division from seamen. The Algerian Regency happily obliged them—for a monthly fee. The Algerian *papalunas* policy removed officers, potentially disaffected and rabble rousing instigators if placed with seamen, from the *bagnios*, and simultaneously brought in revenue.

In 1793, Algerians captured ten American ships, dramatically increasing the number of enslaved Americans. In 1785, twenty-one Americans suffered in Algiers, though only ten remained by 1793. Approximately half of those ten were officers: Captains Stephens and O'Brien, first mates Andrew Montgomery and Alexander Forsythe, and second mate Philip Sloan. With the 1793 captures, Americans numbered about 120 men and the demographics shifted. Instead of roughly equal numbers of officers and mariners, 32, or 27 percent, were officers while 88, or 73 percent were mariners.<sup>29</sup>

The new arrivals neither coalesced as a group nor bonded with Americans taken earlier. In fact, their US allowance distanced them from Americans captured earlier. Though all Americans received an allowance starting in 1793, those taken in 1785 had been without funds for several years. They resented the swift response to these new captures, noting that their immediately instituted stipend spared them from experiencing the “hardships that we did,” as the envious Cathcart put it. The newcomers procured clothing, bread, and better sleeping quarters from the beginning. They bribed the “Guardians or slave drivers which always procured them rest from labour.” In comparison with those enslaved in 1785, these new slaves enjoyed a “superfluity of every thing.”<sup>30</sup>

Like those captured in 1785, the new slaves wanted to secure their own comfort or redemption, and officers did so most successfully. The

US government distributed their allowance in a way that hindered a sense of cooperation, and privileged rank with captains receiving eight Spanish dollars, mates six, and mariners three. Officers halfheartedly included mariners when they petitioned the House and Senate to rent a house for masters, mates, and “if possible, the mariners.” The officers needed the house, they explained, because they were “confined during the night time, in slave prisons, with six hundred captives of other nations” and this overcrowding exposed them to the plague. As soon as funds arrived, captains rented a house, leaving mariners in pest-ridden *bagnios* and at hard labor. Officers held fast to privileges that separated them from mariners and made their own lives more comfortable.<sup>31</sup>

This status-based division rankled Cathcart, who had been an ordinary seaman. He was delighted to see enslaved Americans initially “all at work together” with “no distinctions between officers and seamen.” He reveled in the democratizing effects of Algerian slavery, celebrating that they were “now all slaves alike.” But Cathcart observed six hundred slaves, including “merchants, Doctors, priests, and play actors . . . blowing the bellows together and bewailing their misfortunes in concert” not as a fellow laborer, but as a slave supervisor. By 1793, Cathcart served as both clerk for the Bagnio Gallera and clerk of the marine, which gave him a considerable influence and a regular income. He lauded the leveling effects of slavery even as he, an elite slave, enjoyed his private room, strong cash flow, ownership of property, and release from marine labor. As a mariner, Cathcart lacked status in the United States and he thus had a personal stake in the leveling effects of slavery. The Ottoman Algerian system also allowed for social mobility, a fact not lost on Cathcart. He could not be a *papaluna*, but he could climb the administrative slave ranks until he equaled, or even surpassed, US captains in the Algerian slave system.<sup>32</sup>

Officers desired special treatment based on their status. When Captain Samuel Calder noted the initial lack of distinctions between slaves in 1793, he did not celebrate their equality. All were, he wrote, at first put in chains “without the least distinction and put to hard labor.”<sup>33</sup> For Calder, men of rank were due special treatment, and he was not happy until the officers were separated from their mariners and given protected status. Fortunately, he did not have to wait long. *Papalunas* such as O’Brien and administrative slaves such as Cathcart relished their separation from most slaves, who lived in a *bagnio* and did hard, physical labor daily.

*Papalunas* were securely held by the Algerians, yet cost the Algerian Regency nothing. In fact, the Algerian Regency made money from them: from their monthly payments and redemption fees. By letting officers buy their ease away from the *bagnios* and the mariners there, the Algerian Regency perpetuated and reinforced preexisting socioeconomic divisions

among enslaved Westerners. Had they been put in *bagnios*, the officers might have agitated and even united to escape the conditions those slaves endured. Worse, they might have made common cause with mariners, and revolted, escaped, or plotted to do so. *Papaluna* status kept officers under Algerian control with a minimum of expense or effort and distracted officers from making common cause with their “Brother Sufferers.”

### “Obliged to Work Although in a Different Line as . . . Themselves”<sup>34</sup>: Administrative Slaves

The Ottoman Algerian slave system offered ways for ambitious sailors to get ahead: administrative slave positions. Unlike *papaluna* status, any European or American slave could compete for these slots. American mariner James L. Cathcart moved steadily up in the slave bureaucracy, picking up money and privileges with each new title. In 1794, he went from the “lowest pitch of degradation to the highest post that a Christian can acquire” when he was appointed Christian secretary to the dey. The Christian secretary acted as the dey’s personal assistant in matters related to the Western powers, which included keeping records related to Western slaves. The position included a *bagnio* tavern, better quarters, cash tips, and more control over his time.<sup>35</sup>

Because Cathcart was an administrator with some power and wealth, he fits uneasily with pervasive ideas about slaves as powerless, lowly individuals. In the Muslim world, where elite slaves were “ubiquitous,” a slave might “rise to the most powerful positions in a kingdom, command vast armies and powerful ministries.” Between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Ottoman officials selected Christian boys, technically slaves, to fill both military and administrative posts. Usually chosen from Christian Balkans subjects, boys chosen for the *devshirme* represented the best physically and mentally. The boys were educated rigorously before being placed in the highest military and administrative posts in the empire. Though slaves themselves, they could own property, including slaves, “hold state offices, and fully engage in the political, economic, and cultural life of Ottoman society.”<sup>36</sup>

Though the *devshirme* system did not exist in North Africa, the Ottoman Algerian system of enslaving Europeans bore similarities to it. Enslaved Europeans or Americans in Algiers filled elite government positions and amassed wealth. Unlike *devshirme* men, enslaved Europeans and Americans did not convert to Islam and filled only positions reserved for Christian slaves. A *kul* slave enslaved via the *devshirme*, could—and

did—become the grand vizier in the Ottoman Empire, but a Christian slave in Algiers would not be granted an equivalent position. In addition, those in Algiers expected eventual redemption and release from their slave status whereas *kul* slaves were enslaved for life.<sup>37</sup>

Like the Ottomans, North African polities encouraged an inclusive system that allowed, and even encouraged, outsiders to join their respective societies. In fact, Cathcart followed a long tradition of European men on the make in North Africa. In the early seventeenth century, British men traveled to the Barbary states seeking work, and they did so in larger numbers than those who went to North America. Like these men, Cathcart pursued material and social advancement in North Africa because American society offered few prospects for a young, uneducated, unconnected mariner. The Algerian slave system presented several opportunities for slaves who were, like Cathcart, willing, hard working, and a bit lucky.<sup>38</sup>

Many Europeans who converted and stayed in North Africa were initially captives. Eleven years old when enslaved in 1715, Englishman Thomas Pellow converted, learned Arabic, and eventually led Moroccan emperor Mawlay Isma'il's renegade army. In 1724, Hark Olufs was 15 when seized by Algerian corsairs. Sold to the Bey of Constantine, he learned the lingua franca, Turkish, and Arabic, and commanded the bey's cavalry before returning home a wealthy man. As these examples indicate, renegades were often young. Bartolomé and Lucille Bennasser found that over half of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century renegades were under 15 and 78 percent were under 20.<sup>39</sup>

Cathcart, who was in his 20s, was older than *devshirme* boys, but within the age range of most renegades. He did not convert nor did he intend to stay in Algiers. He worked the system to his advantage without becoming a renegade, a path other slaves followed. Taken as a boy from a Neapolitan fishing boat, Angiolo Ferraro started as an Algerian palace slave. He learned to read and write, filled several elite slave positions, and became indispensable to the Algerian leader. When that dey died, the new dey freed him without redemption fees and "made him a handsome present" as well. "In short," wrote the observant Cathcart, "he has made his fortune." Cathcart preferred rewards from the US government, which, he hoped, would be "as grateful and generous" to him and other freed Americans as the Algerians were to Ferraro.<sup>40</sup>

Like Olufs and Ferraro, Cathcart completed an informal apprenticeship of sorts in lower administrative posts before being appointed chief Christian secretary to the dey. On his way up, young mariner Cathcart, who had few, if any connections of note when captured, built a network of fellow elite slaves and Algerians. He consciously and carefully sought to make his fortune while enslaved, gambling that success in Algiers might lead to a US consular post once he was free. His upward push included

pitching even conceivably negative events as indicative of his superior abilities.

When captured in 1785, Cathcart was fortuitously selected as a laborer in the dey's palace garden, a tip-earning position in which he met other palace slaves. Here he worked with 12 other slaves under a Maltese head gardener, also a slave, but Cathcart rarely mentioned his workmates. Instead, he described his antagonistic relationship with the two chamberlains, who oversaw all palace slaves. Cathcart used the chamberlains' purported capricious cruelty and apostasy as a counterpoint to his own reasoned, loyal, and patriotic behavior. As Cathcart pitched events, he manipulated the system without being subsumed by it, a feat the chamberlains had not managed.<sup>41</sup>

Cathcart did not attempt to curry the chamberlains' favor, but they nevertheless, as he explained, recognized and respected his intelligence. One chamberlain, Ciddi Mahomet, tried to enlist Cathcart's aid with his pet hobby, alchemy. But Cathcart spurned the man despite the fact that working with him might have "converted this alchymist from being my inveterate enemy to my temporary friend." Cathcart refused to switch sides as the apostate Mahomet had, even if doing so might benefit him. Any advantage gained, he reasoned, would be temporary because the fickle man changed his mind constantly. Both chamberlains converted from Greek Orthodoxy to Islam, a move that signaled their "ignorance," and acceptance of Algerian ways. Cathcart himself was too intelligent and loyal to God and country to buy into the Algerian system. His refusal to make common cause with the overseers indicated his upstanding moral character, at least as he told the story.<sup>42</sup>

Cathcart's unwillingness to ingratiate himself with the chamberlains cost him. Months after he arrived, the chamberlains forbade him to read, write, or speak to his countrymen. He believed that they isolated him because he refused to help them with alchemy but instead taught fellow slaves practical navigation. Though Cathcart avowedly served his fellows, some soon joined the chamberlains in ridiculing him. Not long after the chamberlains dubbed him "false priest" for borrowing books, "lower class" slaves began using this moniker "to ingratiate themselves with their superiors." Here, Cathcart distinguished himself both from "lower class" slaves who stupidly, even slavishly, tried to manipulate the Algerian system. Cathcart suggested that he would be a different type of elite slave: one who intelligently used the system only for his fellows' advantage.<sup>43</sup>

Yet Cathcart spent little time with the fellow sufferers that he purportedly served. He angled for better things. When transferred out of the palace almost a year later, he used tips earned in the dey's garden to bribe his way into the Bagnio Gallera, where the "most respectable slaves" were housed. Though officers did not sleep here, administrative slaves were granted

private rooms in this *bagnio*. Cathcart also claimed that most American mariners resided here, so he may have wished to join them as much as bunk with “respectable” slaves. Clearly a man on the make, Cathcart more likely bought his way into this *bagnio* to rub elbows with “better” slaves.<sup>44</sup>

In the Bagnio Galleria, Cathcart forged a transnational coterie of comrades to assist him in his upward climb within the Algerian bureaucracy. Unlike O’Brien’s contacts, most of Cathcart’s were located in Algiers. O’Brien pointedly looked for mobility in the United States while the younger and poorer Cathcart, hoping also for American recognition, clambered up any ladder open to him. Cathcart particularly cultivated two Leghornese (modern-day Livorno) men, both of whom he knew prior to capture and both of whom were Algerian slave-bureaucrats: Angiolo D’Andreis and Giovanni de la Cruz. D’Andreis, whom Cathcart pegged as at “least half an American” because of his Bostonian wife, was captured in 1786 while the supercargo of a Tuscan ship. De la Cruz was chief mate of a Leghornese ship anchored in Boston as Cathcart embarked on the *Maria*. As Cathcart pointed out, their previous acquaintance explained their “greater intimacy” in Algiers. Whatever explained it, their coincidental overlap with Cathcart’s tenure as a slave proved providential.<sup>45</sup>

In 1787, Giovanni de la Cruz acted as the clerk of the marine. This administrative job came with a free private Bagnio Galleria room. De la Cruz shared the room gratis with Cathcart, saving Cathcart from bedding in an open *bagnio* gallery. Probably at de la Cruz’s recommendation, he was appointed *cofeegi*, or coffee server, to the *Vicklehadge*, or secretary of the marine, in 1787. The *cofeegi* poured coffee for the secretary and his guests. By custom, each guest filled his empty cup with coins for the *cofeegi*, enabling him to accrue a store of funds. In addition to “some emolument,” he had Fridays off, ate well, and responded only to the secretary’s orders. This slave also “superintended other slaves,” probably the secretary’s six or eight other European and American slaves.<sup>46</sup>

Knowing de la Cruz brought Cathcart to the attention of the Algerian bureaucrats and gave him a foothold in the Algerian administrative slave ladder. His acquaintance gave him several subsequent boosts up that ladder. When de la Cruz became ill, Cathcart took over the clerk’s books, and, in 1788, when de la Cruz died, Cathcart was installed as clerk of the marine. In 1788, he became clerk of the Bagnio Galleria, a position that he occupied until 1791. In this station, he mustered slaves nightly in the *bagnio*; doled out their bread and oil; reported sick, dead, or missing slaves; and was “obliged to report” badly behaving slaves, duties that he appeared not to find onerous.<sup>47</sup>

Cathcart’s friendship with D’Andreis also served him well. For years, D’Andreis held the highest Algerian post open to a Christian slave, the

chief Christian secretary to the dey. Cathcart obtained intelligence from D’Andreis, which he passed on to O’Brien and other Americans. When D’Andreis was freed by a 1794 Dutch-Algerian peace treaty, Cathcart was selected to take over his job. Cathcart asserted that knowing D’Andreis did not help him. Rather, the dey recognized his acumen. This may have been partly true. The new dey was the secretary of the marine under whom Cathcart worked as *cofeegi* and clerk of the marine. Cathcart had evidently established a good working relationship with the current dey, but he landed both the *cofeegi* and clerk jobs because of de la Cruz and D’Andreis.<sup>48</sup>

Cathcart’s Algerian connections proved crucial in all stages of his climb. To occupy the coveted post of chief Christian secretary, he called in favors from several well-placed supporters. Because the chief Christian secretary was freed when Algiers arranged a treaty, the slave chosen for the job had to pay an upfront fee to offset the cost of eventual manumission. The dey himself loaned Cathcart part of the fee and the Swedish consul and his brother supplied the rest.<sup>49</sup> The dey self-servingly provided money to a slave whom he had worked with and who was willing to be chief secretary. Unlike Cathcart, not all Christian slaves were eager to become Algerian bureaucrats.

Luck and determination both played a role in Cathcart’s ascent. Chosen for the dey’s palace when captured, he earned tips, made connections, and picked up insider information. He positioned himself for advancement and made connections with powerful people. Recurring redemptions and plague, which thinned the slave population in the 1780s and 1790s, also aided Cathcart. A general Neapolitan redemption made de la Cruz the clerk of the marine, and Cathcart became clerk of the Bagnio Gallera only after three clerks succumbed to the plague within two months. Cathcart’s exertion and good fortune paid off in several ways. He spent only a few days toiling in the marine during his ten years as a slave. Most of his ten years were spent in relative comfort as an administrative slave, and one who squirreled away enough money to purchase a 200-ton double-deck ship in 1795.<sup>50</sup>

“Pleased God to Have Placed Me in a  
Situation to Have Assisted Them”<sup>51</sup>

Cathcart wanted administrative posts, but the Algerian networks that made his success possible were potentially dangerous in an American context. He feared that fellow slaves and countrymen might resent him working for and so closely with Algerians. Other elite slaves shared this

anxiety. Italian Filippo Pananti worried that his “temporary elevation” as a *rais*’ translator looked treasonous or overly friendly, although he argued that he accepted the post for all captives’ good. Like Pananti and O’Brien, Cathcart anticipated eventual freedom and hoped that his Algerian experience would win him a US government post. To land such a post, he needed to quash any hint that his Algerian service made him a traitor.<sup>52</sup>

Cathcart carefully presented his employment to avoid the appearance of Algerian complicity or individualistic pursuit of personal comfort. Like Pananti, he pitched his work as a selfless search for Algerian influence that he could use to aid fellow slaves. He maneuvered his way up in the Algerian system, and then disavowed any plotting. Instead, he insisted that God placed him in these positions to assist his countrymen. As he wrote again and again, he desired only to alleviate “the sufferings of my unfortunate fellow citizens.” In fact, if his enslavement permitted him to serve his country, he would “scorn Liberty and glory in the Chains.”<sup>53</sup>

As chief Christian secretary to the dey, Cathcart had the “power to protect” his countrymen in several ways. He guarded them from “false information often threatened by the slave drivers in order to extort [*sic*] money from them,” gave some room and board, and requested special status for others. According to Cathcart, fellow American slaves realized the importance of an American Christian secretary. Philip Sloan was overjoyed at Cathcart’s appointment because of the influence that the chief secretary wielded. Sloan may also have believed, inaccurately, that an American chief secretary would speed American redemption. If he could not speed their release, however, Cathcart could and did assist his fellows in other ways.<sup>54</sup>

When Algerians captured 11 American ships in 1793, Chief Christian Secretary Cathcart immediately offered assistance to the newly enslaved officers. He persuaded the dey to transfer officers from the Bagnio Beylic to the Bagnio Gallera, where the “best” slaves resided. Ten of the American masters bunked in Cathcart’s own ample apartment where he provided them with “every necessary gratis for a considerable time.” Some officers lived in his taverns while others were “well enough off for some of them had saved some money.” He also advocated for officers desiring *papaluna* status. Timothy Newman, master of the *Thomas*, asked Cathcart to “use [his] Interest to Endeavour to get me leave from the Marine.” Should Cathcart act on his behalf, Newman would “ever feel myself under the greatest Obligations” to him. No doubt Cathcart was gratified that officers solicited his aid and promised future support in return. He saved Newman’s note and meticulously recorded his actions on the reverse. He had “Immediately applied to the Dey,” and obtained *papaluna* status for Newman, “that is to go where he pleased in the town and pay half a sequin each lunar month.”<sup>55</sup>

Cathcart retained other officers' letters as evidence that he helped “unfortunate fellow citizens.” Letters and notes from mariners are notably absent from his papers, however. Several American mariners lived in the *Bagnio Gallera*, as did Cathcart. Perhaps they spoke directly to him rather than writing to him, leaving him no notes to keep. Or sailors avoided such requests as they realized that similar arrangements would not be granted to them. He may simply not have bothered saving mariners' letters. Or maybe this upwardly mobile former seaman truly catered to officers. He did aid some sailors, though his aid was materially different than what he provided for officers. He gave some meals prepared in one of his four taverns; paid to bury American plague victims; and furnished room, board, and clothing for American sailor James Harmett, who went mad.<sup>56</sup>

Cathcart delegated the running of his taverns to other slaves, but he did not record which slaves he entrusted with his establishments. Whether officers or mariners, they benefitted from this charge. Cathcart professed that his tavern managers made “a great deal more money” than he did from the taverns. His managers could likely afford better food and private *bagnio* rooms. If Americans were designated his managers, he surely would have bragged about bestowing such a favor upon countrymen. Yet he did not record names or nationalities of any managers.<sup>57</sup>

Through appreciative word-of-mouth and self-promotion, Cathcart's reputation as a philanthropic slave made its way to US officials. Robert Montgomery, the US consul in Spain, heard how “friendly to the American cause” Cathcart was and how helpful he was to his fellow slaves. Montgomery found Cathcart's “goodness of heart and humane disposition” all “the more commendable” because it was “uncommon to find it so conspicuous in the generality of mankind who might from the caprice of fortune escape from a wretched state of slavery to become the favorite and useful secretary of a Prince.” He expected that a man living under a capricious system might selfishly reap the benefits of his ascent rather than helping his fellows. Cathcart bucked his expectations by serving his fellow slaves in a seemingly selfless manner. Montgomery heartily thanked Cathcart for his “good services and friendship to our fellow Citizens.”<sup>58</sup>

O'Brien grudgingly acknowledged Cathcart's attentiveness in a note carefully preserved by Cathcart. O'Brien briefly thanked Cathcart for his attention to the “Remains of our two Deceased brothers.” As a former captain, O'Brien may have disliked that Cathcart, a seaman, outranked him in Algiers. Certainly Cathcart could support fellow sufferers in ways that O'Brien could not. O'Brien relied on income from the US government for his Algerian comfort, which allowed him to remain aloof from the Algerian slave bureaucracy rather than embrace it as a way of helping his fellow slaves.<sup>59</sup>

Cathcart depended on his slave-bureaucrat jobs, and this made him vulnerable to Algerian leaders, who could dismiss him on a whim. More troubling, not all Americans viewed his trajectory as favorably as Montgomery did. His money, possessions, perks, and supervision of slaves caused fellow slaves to view him uneasily and even covetously. Slaves competed for administrative positions. For example, slaves considered the post of *cofeegi* a superior position, and “a great deal of interest” was “made to get there.”<sup>60</sup> Cathcart responded to these concerns in a public relations campaign in which he argued that he worked only to aid his countrymen.

But some of Cathcart’s journal entries indicate that he was oblivious to his fellow slaves’ daily lives and problems. He had privileges and freedoms other slaves could not experience. After spending an entire day in his private, rent-free *bagnio* apartments, which included “two handsome rooms and a kitchen,” four large windows for ventilation, and a door to the terrace, Cathcart wandered down to one of the taverns that he owned, the Madhouse Tavern, at three in the afternoon. He planned to eat dinner and provide brother sufferers with a meal to follow their long day of work. He hinted that this was his routine practice. Undoubtedly, any slaves that he fed appreciated the victuals. Most were underfed and had little or no money with which to supplement their rations. They probably had difficulty accepting Cathcart’s attitude of self-congratulatory benevolence. They arrived in his tavern sweaty and starving, having labored since sunup. Cathcart met them well rested and fresh as he had been in his private suite all day.

In his bid to get ahead, Cathcart did not always benevolently support his fellow slaves, a fact they undoubtedly noticed. Not loath to make a buck, even at the expense of a fellow slave, Cathcart rented out his *bagnio* room—for which he paid nothing—during the six months that he kept Dr. Werner’s accounts, the British surgeon in Algiers. During that time, he lived free of charge with Dr. Werner. Still, he charged rent on his rooms while he boasted that he had “enough money to serve all his wants” and to be independent of Werner. Few slaves had such wealth and his “fellow sufferers” must have been aware of the great disparity between themselves and Cathcart. Yet Cathcart complained that even if he were better off than “many of my fellow prisoners,” the guards, knowing he had cash, constantly and irksomely required him, but not his fellow slaves, to pay bribes.<sup>61</sup>

Wisely, Cathcart did not publicize charging a fellow slave rent, though he did write extensively about any help that he lent fellow slaves. His self-aggrandizement and money-grubbing demeanor probably caused other slaves to view him with suspicion and even rancor. This might explain Captain Isaac Stephens’s duplicitous behavior. The “perfidious Stephens”

reported all of Cathcart's negative comments about Dr. Werner and his wife directly to the Werners. Naturally, hearing Cathcart's true and rather ugly feelings put his residence with and connection to the Werners in jeopardy.

What ostensibly bothered Cathcart about Stephens's behavior was that Stephens, in Cathcart's opinion, betrayed a fellow American. Cathcart, "being naturally unsuspecting," never "Suspected that Stephens could be such a Villian incarnate [*sic*] as to betray a brother sufferer." Worse, Stephens betrayed "one who has never offended him, but on the contrary, tried to serve him on every occasion that lay in his power." Cathcart's response suggests that he at least imagined a community of enslaved Americans, a community that his elite positions and privileges challenged. Despite his unique position, he expected fellow Americans' support and loyalty. At the same time, he appeared blind to the differences between him and his "fellow sufferers."<sup>62</sup>

Captain Stephens failed to measure up to Cathcart's expectations in other ways. In contrast to Cathcart's own benevolence, Stephens refused to help fellow slaves. Even when Stephens drew funds from the "Credit of Congress" after the US allowance was halted, Stephens "was never so generous as to assist his Poor distressed Countrymen that's [*sic*] at work in the Marine with one asper." Instead, Stephens begged "money and cloaths from some of the Oran Englishmen that belongs to Particular Houses." Without the allowance, Stephens may have struggled to pay the monthly *papaluna* fee and to eat. Of the Americans captured in 1785, he alone left a wife and children in the United States. His family had little to send him. In fact, his wife Hannah petitioned Congress for support for herself and their children. The single, young, and privileged Cathcart did not take this into account when he damned Stephens's "*mean dirty Spirit* [*sic*]."<sup>63</sup>

Cathcart wanted American officers to accept him as an equal, but they drew a boundary between themselves and mariners, even elite ones such as Cathcart. Captain Stephens blocked Cathcart's bid to live in the American officers' country house, even when the plague plowed through the *bagnios*. In a note written from "Death's Door," Cathcart ostentatiously forgave Stephens for "hindering" him from "being accommodated out of the reach of the plague." Cathcart ascribed Stephens's attitude to their different ranks. Believing his death imminent, Cathcart warned that Stephens would one day answer to a "just God who makes no difference between the captains and the sailors."<sup>64</sup>

Cathcart wanted the officers to see him as their equal, but he set himself apart from ordinary seamen. In his mind, he possessed intelligence and ability that they did not, making him worthy of promotion. He compared himself to a shipmate who failed to perform as highly as he

did. This ordinary seaman and Cathcart were assigned to the palace garden, the Spanish carpenter, and the clerk of the marine together. When Cathcart became *cofeegi*, the boy was sent to the marine where he apparently remained. Though the young man was placed in several posts with him, Cathcart believed that this "very simple and ignorant lad... could not learn the duty" expected of him under the secretary. The intelligent Cathcart prospered under the secretary, but the simple mariner's limitations sent him to the marine.<sup>65</sup>

O'Brien also wished to be recognized as accomplished. He therefore maintained a high profile with prolific letter writing. O'Brien wrote endlessly to Congress, the president, American consuls and ministers, and his business acquaintances. Using information gleaned from Cathcart, he liberally advised American officials on how to negotiate for their release and who to entrust with this mission. His letter campaign paid off, if not in terms of speeding the Americans' redemption, at least in terms of public acclaim. By 1792, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson recommended him to John Paul Jones's "particular notice." Jefferson portrayed O'Brien as the Algerian insider and expert, noting that Jones would "find him intimately acquainted with the manner in which and characters with whom our business is to be done there." O'Brien did know the European consuls residing in Algiers, but he did not personally know any of the main Algerian players. Those were Cathcart's connections. O'Brien was never an Algerian insider like Cathcart; none of the American captains were. O'Brien forwarded information delivered to him by Americans serving in the palace: George Smith, Philip Sloan, and Cathcart. O'Brien rarely mentioned how he obtained the information that he fed to the American government; he simply delivered the news as if it originated with him.<sup>66</sup>

O'Brien and Cathcart both drew attention to their solicitous care of fellow sufferers, though both were equally removed from mariners' realities. O'Brien and other officers expected better treatment than mariners, but used the mariners' plight to pad their petitions for aid. In an early letter to Consul William Carmichael, O'Brien deftly listed the ten officers, who were comfortably housed and moved quickly to the eleven seamen in the marine, where, as he explained, "the poor men endured the severities of slavery." The men did such laborious work that O'Brien feared that they would die or catch the "pest." Four years later, he reminded Carmichael "with the most Poignant Grief" of the "Situation of My Brother Sufferers in the Marine." While he himself lived in the Spanish consul's house and worked an occasional Friday in the sail loft, his fellow Americans, "one half Starved and two thirds naked," toiled under the lash of overseers who paid "no Respect... to persons." Thus mistreated and far from friends, family, and country, they worked with "A Bitter Tier [*sic*] Rolling from

their Eyes.” Similarly separated from their friends, families, and country, administrative slaves’ and *papalunas*’ tears, ameliorated by their purchased privileges, were perhaps less bitter.<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusion

As Peter Kolchin noted, “slave community” encompassed two interrelated components. First, slave community depended on the “degree to which the slaves were able to secure control of their lives.” Second, slave community indicated the “degree to which, in doing so, they acted on the basis of mutuality and collective interests.”<sup>68</sup> The Algerian system of enslaving Westerners encouraged the first while discouraging the second. The existence of slave elites discouraged European and American slaves from seeing themselves as sharing a condition, and largely prevented them from making common cause with one another. Administrative slaves and *papalunas* controlled their own lives to a high degree, though within parameters established by the Algerian Regency. This, along with the probability of redemption, prevented slaves from seeing mutual and collective interests.

O’Brien and Cathcart used different strategies to secure their ease and called on different social networks in doing so, but neither attempted to forge close bonds with *bagnio* slaves or slaves in general. They did not aim to act mutually or collectively. *Papalunas* retained their status as long as they paid their monthly fee, which they did with the support of their country, friends, family, and business connections. They formed bonds of expediency with consuls and businessmen who helped them survive, but avoided most mariners of any nationality. Slave administrators earned tips and perks from their positions, which gave them a vested interest in the Ottoman Algerian slave system. They formed relations with countrymen, particularly those with rank, but included other elite slaves and even Algerians in their networks.

Both Cathcart and O’Brien engaged with the Ottoman Algerian slave system, but in different ways. O’Brien and other officers paid to be comfortable, relatively free from Algerian control and supervision, and separated from their underlings, the mariners. Cathcart and others worked as administrative slaves, often amassing status and wealth denied most mariners in the United States. In other words, the Ottoman Algerian system prevented slaves from making common cause by using preexisting rank and class against those captured. Officers secured comforts denied their underlings because European consuls and the US government placed a high value on their rank. The Algerian Regency obligingly allowed

officers to purchase *papaluna* status, which relieved them from manual labor and from bunking with mariners but required them to pledge good behavior and promise not to escape. Since officers were unlikely to accept either hard labor or close proximity to seamen, the Algerian government's *papaluna* system prevented officers from fomenting rebellion or other acts of resistance, which they may well have done had they been housed with the majority of the slaves.

The Ottoman Algerian system also provided outlets for slaves such as Cathcart, those without rank who desired social mobility. Cathcart worked hard, not on forging bonds with fellow slaves and leading uprisings, but in helping to run the Ottoman Algerian slave system. In both instances, the Algerian system identified possible leaders and trouble makers and diverted their attention and energy away from defeating the slave system. Meanwhile, the Algerian government collected monthly payments from some slaves and a few years' worth of work out of others before allowing their redemption.

The Ottoman Algerian system provided elite slave status for only a few slaves. Officers were a minority of those enslaved and only so many administrative slave posts existed for slaves such as Cathcart to fight over. Cathcart was doubly unusual as a highly ranked slave-administrator. D'Andreis, the chief Christian secretary prior to Cathcart, had been a supercargo, and de la Cruz, clerk of the marine, a first mate. Algerians not only recognized slave elites, but they also held out the very real promise of redemption. This shifted slave attention to their own comfort, security, and redemption, and away from the state of fellow sufferers. The Algerian system thus encouraged divisions among slaves, and this ultimately served the Algerians rather than the slaves. Slave elites, *papalunas* and administrators, had good reason to cooperate with their Algerian masters while enslaved, and their cooperation contributed to the smoother operation of this urban form of slavery.

## Chapter 5

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### “We Set No Great Value upon Money”\* A Slave Economy

Ottoman Algerians offered few elite slave posts, but permitted all enslaved Europeans and Americans, regardless of rank or post, access to money and markets. Any slave with funds might patronize a tavern and drink until he became a “Little fuddleheaded,” as Richard O’Brien did in January of 1790. Most slaves lacked the purchasing power of the well-supported *papaluna* O’Brien or the self-made slave James Cathcart, but Ottoman Algerians interfered very little with any slave’s assets.<sup>1</sup>

Ottoman Algerians were not the only masters who allowed slaves to get and spend. Slaves in most times and places laid claim to some property, by custom if not legally. In most locales, legal or social sanctions and owner’s preferences curbed slaves’ ability to accumulate property. In the United States, African American bondsmen frequently owned property with their masters’ tacit acceptance. Yet American masters feared that slaves’ market participation led to “self-reliance and defiant resourcefulness,” and thus periodically tightened legal and customary practices governing slave property. Had O’Brien been American-owned, his master might have curtailed his ability to acquire goods. But Ottoman Algerian owners exhibited little angst about the “liberating power of cash.” The Algerian Regency claimed deceased slaves’ property, confiscating even a dead slave’s “tattered garments and Blankets.” Otherwise, they imposed virtually no restrictions on how European and American slaves amassed or disposed of property. Instead, they allowed, and even required, their slaves to participate directly in Algeria’s economic life.<sup>2</sup>

On the surface, slaves' access to money and markets offered an extraordinary amount of self-determination. If the slaves' economy is considered in "conjunction with the masters' need to subsist their slaves," however, we find that making consumption choices involved a trade-off. Because Ottoman Algerians provided little for them, slaves needed to obtain food, clothing, and blankets. The Algerian Regency also sold or allowed to be sold private rooms, alcohol, or virtually any other item or benefit that slaves wished to purchase. Slaves with cash survived far more comfortably than those without it. Contrary to Cathcart's claim that they "set no great value upon money," then, currency was of great importance to European and American slaves.<sup>3</sup>

Like African American slaves in the United States, Algerian slaves strove for both "subsistence and independence," but found that while they might feed and clothe themselves, they did not achieve independence by doing so. If we examine why Algerian slaves needed money and their different strategies to obtain it, we see that they depended on others to support them, and this dependence precluded autonomy. And their need to sustain themselves kept each slave focused on his own rather than their shared condition. The slave system thus created slave dependence and fed divisions among slaves that undermined the "larger solidarities necessary to resistance and revolt."<sup>4</sup>

### "Pressed by Necessity"

The Ottoman Algerian Regency expended little on slaves' provisions; instead, they required slaves to sustain themselves. Slaves' ability to do so depended on their position and rank for two reasons. First, the Algerian Regency bestowed different quality and quantities of support on slaves. Second, slaves' rank determined how easily they could obtain money. The Ottoman Algerian slave system intensified preexisting distinctions among slaves and created new divisions by permitting some slaves to improve their conditions. This differed from African American slaves' situation in the United States. In America, slaves also experienced the "divisive effects of independent economic production" in their communities, but "social divisions among slaves . . . remained limited."<sup>5</sup>

*Papalunas*, such as O'Brien, arranged their own living quarters, food, and clothing in Algiers just as self-hired slaves did in the United States. While this conferred choice and autonomy, it also saddled slaves completely with their own upkeep. *Papalunas* had to find and finance their housing, food, and attire. If the Algerian Regency summoned them to labor often,

they were issued a suit of clothing. O'Brien deemed the "Capute and shirt and waistcoat and trousers and pair of slippers" lacking in ease of use and comfort. He and most *papalunas* could choose not to wear, or even keep, the Algerian-issued outfit because they either owned more than one suit or could buy their own clothing. In fact, O'Brien sold his instead of donning it.<sup>6</sup>

*Bagnio* slaves were not only underprovisioned in every category, but also had little recourse to outside aid. The Algerian Regency supplied them with three daily loaves of bread, one suit and blanket yearly, and a prison niche. As American Thomas Manning disclosed, the bread was "as black as one's hat," the clothing "scarcely... sufficient to cover our nakedness," and some had to "lie on cold stones" without a roof covering them.<sup>7</sup> Their cheap costume, on which the Algerian Regency expended less than "a dollar and a half," barely lasted six weeks of slaves' quarry digging, stone carrying, and mole rebuilding. They could hardly be expected to complete that back-wrenching labor on three loaves a day. Clearly, the Algerian Regency expected *bagnio* slaves to supplement the inadequate handouts that they were given. This proved difficult for them. They had no provision grounds, no tips, and few chances to bring in money.<sup>8</sup>

Like some US house slaves and drivers, administrative and palace slaves collected better clothing, food, and perks than other slaves, and they thus lived markedly better than their brethren. Their upkeep varied by position, but all received better food and clothing than *bagnio* slaves. For example, they virtually feasted on a "small plate of meat," another of rice, and a basin of "sour milk" twice a day along with in-season fruit, oil, vinegar, and black bread. Despite their superior rations and less onerous work, some found their rations insufficient, and they also "suffer[ed] frequently from hunger."<sup>9</sup>

A few administrative slaves lived extremely well. Once placed under the *Vikilbadge*, or secretary of the marine, Cathcart no longer complained of hunger, inferior food, cramped quarters, or insufficient clothing. He also had Fridays off, got cash tips, and did not answer to Turkish guardians or the "orders of anyone else." After this, Cathcart acted as the dey's *cofeegi*, which entailed serving coffee to the dey and his guests and digging out the coins left in each cup. *Coffeegis*, he wrote, lived "better than they would in their own country," because they kept any cash that they received and were "maintained by the Dey's own table." In other words, *coffeegis* received superior rations and extra income that they did not have to spend on food.<sup>10</sup>

The Algerian Regency varied administrative slaves' garments, just as they modified their victuals. Slaves' costumes reflected their rank within the Algerian Regency's slave hierarchy. Men assigned to the palace's upper

apartments were furnished with two suits of “elegant clothes trimmed with gold”; palace garden slaves accepted the same with less gold; and palace cooks wore “somewhat inferior suits.” While attending the *Vikilhadge*, Cathcart was supplied with two pieces of cotton, “each sufficient to make two jackets and two pair of trowsers,” along with “sufficient money to pay for making them.”<sup>11</sup> If additional livery was needed, slaves footed the bill themselves. Fortunately, most earned tips, but they were compelled to use some of that money to keep themselves appropriately attired.

Because they were undersupplied, slaves employed several strategies to feed and clothe themselves and to acquire nonnecessities. Ottoman Algerians allowed slaves to “trade and engage in business” when not working for the Algerian Regency. Before 1770, European slaves who could afford the dollar-a-day fee were exempt from labor; they stayed in a prison making items to sell. The Algerian Regency no longer granted this privilege after the 1770s, largely due to a shrinking slave population. According to Cathcart and John Foss, some slaves practiced a trade after a day’s work. Neither revealed which slave or how many exerted this effort, but Cathcart observed shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, sawyers, and hucksters working nightly in the *bagnios*.<sup>12</sup>

Many slaves utilized another survival strategy: theft. Emmanueld’Aranda, a Flemish slave in the 1640s, blamed Ottoman Algerian underprovisioning for thievery being the “profession most used among slaves.” But not all thefts staved off hunger. Slaves sometimes snatched the shoes that praying Muslims left at the mosque’s door, an antic inspired more by “motives of villainy” than necessity. An amused Cathcart watched “true believers” forced to walk home barefoot after slaves filched 30 to 40 pairs.<sup>13</sup>

Slaves stole foodstuffs when they could. Palace slaves pilfered at-hand edibles that were out of the *bagnio* slaves’ reach. Slaves assigned to the dey’s garden made a “kind of salad” with vines and committed “depredations . . . on the Dey[’]s pigeon house” to “stay [their] craving appetites.” Those in the kitchen pinched food as they prepared and served it. Several shared this bounty with fellow slaves. Since kitchen slaves worked long hours and got few tips, they could rarely buy victuals. They depended on snagging scraps to supplement their diets.<sup>14</sup>

Without garden or kitchen at hand, hungry *bagnio* slaves had less palatable options. Those who could caught and consumed rats. Because the dey’s lions and tigers were housed there, residents of the Bagnio Gallera had a rat-catching advantage. The lions’ and tigers’ offal supported a colony of rats, the “largest” of which “frequently serve[d] to satisfy the craving appetite of some of the poor slaves.” The rats attracted another source of food: cats. Cathcart watched a French slave skin and devour a cat. “Well,” explained the Frenchman, “one must eat.” At least one slave gorged on

food meant for the dey's pets. This dangerous meal earned him 450 bastinado strokes after a fellow inmate pointed out that "he Defrauded the Lyons of their Grub."<sup>15</sup>

*Bagnio* slaves scraped together whatever they could, and they were not averse to doing so "by hook or crook." They were driven out of the city each morning, past an "influx of camels, mules, asses, and laborers" loaded with provisions. As they passed, they grabbed anything they could lay hands on. When assigned to marine work, some stole naval stores, though this dangerous endeavor required a guard's connivance. Ottoman Algerian guards searched each slave nightly as they passed from work into the city. A friendly guard might overlook pilfered goods or even fence the goods for the slave for a cut of the profits. Unfortunately, slaves described almost nothing about this process or how frequently it occurred.<sup>16</sup>

Slaves surely stole from one another, though this is also poorly documented in American sources. Only a few enslaved guardians monitored the prisons overnight, but most slaves were "too poor" to enjoy the taverns let alone stash much cash. Those with money lived outside of the prisons. *Papalunas* rented rooms or houses in the city, and administrative slaves purchased or were granted private rooms.<sup>17</sup>

A few *bagnio* slaves presented attractive targets. When moved from the dey's garden to a prison, Cathcart possessed "four dollar gold coins and two sequin in gold" in tips. He worried about pilfering roommates and protected himself by tucking his possessions under his head. Others had far more than Cathcart's \$8. One of the *Vikilhadge's* slaves sat on 700 sequins, or roughly \$1260, which he likely earned in tips. A slave did steal 400 sequins, about \$720, from a Genoan slave. Perhaps this man filled a high administrative post, and thus expected his missing money to be recovered, making reporting its absence worthwhile.<sup>18</sup>

Because the Algerian Regency occasionally rented out slaves, a few worked for private masters. These slaves invariably retired nightly to the *bagnios*, some with tempting goods they had lifted. In 1791, two Spanish slaves were flogged for plundering "some Jews." Less than two months later, two slaves were discovered stealing wine. Perhaps needing clothes or planning to sell them, a Portuguese slave at the "French Garden" confessed that he "Stole Cloaths out of a Moorish house." Though they pilfered worthwhile items, they found it harder to form partnerships with other slaves or Turkish accomplices as they did not work with Turk overseers or fellow slaves. Like the Portuguese slave who "Rob[b]ed his Master" in 1791 but was swiftly apprehended with the stolen goods, without collusion, slaves had trouble unloading stolen goods.<sup>19</sup>

Some slaves pursued a surer strategy for getting better food, clothing, and housing: they competed for prized administrative placements that

came with perks. Any palace job would do. Even the palace's head scavenger, who cleaned up after the dey's horses and mules, sold manure in town as "one of his prerequisites of office." Each of Cathcart's positions came with a slew of benefits. Most involved tips and some private rooms. The clerk of the Bagnio Gallera rented a tavern at half the rate usually paid to the Algerian Regency. Because of this discount and the tips he collected, he purchased yet another tavern, the Mad House Tavern. By 1794, he added a fourth tavern to his collection. This one accompanied the post of chief Christian secretary to the dey and was located not in a *bagnio*, but in Algiers.<sup>20</sup>

Cathcart's successive positions and the perks that came with them gave him an edge over other "self-made taverners" such as fellow American William Patterson. Because he paid only half rent as the clerk, Cathcart operated with less overhead. As the Christian secretary, he paid even less rent and purchased alcohol at a lower price than other bar owners. He also accrued far greater income, as the Christian secretary was awarded \$3 for every redeemed slave.<sup>21</sup>

In North America, slaves' businesses and ability to earn money was good for the slave and his or her family, but might also serve the master's purposes. In a similar fashion, Cathcart and other self-made tavern keepers lived comfortably and aided "brother sufferers," but the Algerian Regency also profited. The Algerian Regency required tavern keepers to purchase licenses, pay rents and duties, support the dey's animals, and pay fines for various infractions. Tavern owners kept money flowing into the Ottoman Algerian economy as they procured alcohol, food, and utensils for their taverns.<sup>22</sup>

Whether in Ottoman Algiers or North America, the positions of "slave entrepreneurs" came at a cost. As "partial insiders," their standing and fortunes were linked to their masters.<sup>23</sup> A master's arbitrary decision might instantaneously injure or destroy their successes. In Algiers, tavern keepers suffered when the dey demolished the Bagnio Siddi Hamuda to build a mosque in its place. Cathcart lost the 475 sequins (\$855) that he paid for just the "bare walls" of his tavern, one of this *bagnio*'s seven taverns, and, of course, lost income that he would have earned from the property.

Unfortunately, the dey simultaneously fined tavern keepers collectively 2,000 sequins (\$3600). He held all tavern owners accountable for the two slaves killed in a barroom brawl. The dey reasoned that these slaves died because "intoxicating liquors" instigated murderous behavior. More to the point, tavern owners made convenient scapegoats because they were among the only slaves with significant amounts of money. The dey threatened to confiscate all tavern owners' property and put them to hard labor if they failed to ante up, a threat that inspired them to reach an agreement.

Each paid 80 sequins (\$144) at the rate of 5 sequins (\$9) per month. Cathcart, who owned more than one tavern, reported a loss of 715 sequins (\$1287) in a “twelve-month” period bitterly noting that this was his “recompense . . . for Eleven years of captivity and servitude.”<sup>24</sup>

Like US–African American house servants, administrative slaves such as Cathcart lived materially better than their fellows and performed less-onerous manual labor. However, they also worked long hours close to their masters, which made them convenient targets for abuse. For example, Cathcart fell victim to the dey’s impatient fury while they awaited American funds to cement the US–Algerian treaty. The dey had “no one to spit his Venom at” other than the ever-present Cathcart, whom he “call’d his American Spiteometer.”<sup>25</sup>

Some slaves preferred working in the marine if it meant avoiding the “Dey[']s abominable conduct.” The dey chose four boys to wait on him, and though they lived well, the dey often beat them with, from their point of view, little or no provocation. Other slaves insinuated that the dey’s “abominable” behavior included sexual use of the boys, rendering this elite position “by no means enviable, their fine clothes, money and good living not excepted.”<sup>26</sup>

Slaves competed for posts that also extended perks. Indeed, *bagnio* slaves had few other options if they wanted some ease without the danger of stealing. In the United States, masters “shored up plantation labor hierarchy” by selectively awarding benefits and better jobs to slaves willing to work within the slave system. The Algerian Regency also influenced and controlled slaves by letting them compete for the few positions that best enhanced their living conditions. Any slave could transform his condition in the Ottoman Algerian system, but those who worked for the Algerian government could do so far more easily than other slaves.<sup>27</sup>

### “Miserable Pittance”<sup>28</sup>

Governments, families, friends, religious orders, and charitable institutions, all subsidized slaves’ purchase of food, clothing, luxuries, and privileges while in Algiers. Ottoman Algerians embraced outsiders who wished to maintain their workforce and infuse money into their economy. American slave owners would not have tolerated outside support for their slaves, as this clashed with their conception of their slaves’ dependence and their paternalistic pretensions.

Historically, European diplomats financed slaves, particularly their own countrymen. By custom, however, consuls partially funded the slaves’

hospital. Each consul donated one *mason* or a *mazuna* (about two and one-half cents) weekly for each patient. On Easter and Christmas, they bestowed three *mazunas*, or about seven and a half cents, on patients.<sup>29</sup> Whether Europeans or Ottoman Algerians started this tradition, it provided healthcare for all slaves, regardless of their nationality.

Slaves commonly received a stipend from their country. The US government supplied their enslaved compatriots with an allowance between 1785 and 1789 and from 1793 to 1796. American diplomat Paul Randall claimed this was the “Same allowance . . . as Spanish slaves received.” But in 1790, a French Trinitarian suggested cutting Americans’ “liberal allowance” lest Algerians conclude that the United States possessed endless public monies from which to pay high ransoms. The smaller payments his “own countrymen” were given supported their “physical needs” without arousing Algerians’ greed.<sup>30</sup>

Between 1789 and 1793, the United States cut off this stipend, leaving enslaved Americans in a difficult and unusual situation. Captain Isaac Stephens recounted how refusal to fund their countrymen made the US “Table talk among the consuls” in Algiers, which suggests how uncommon cutting off slaves’ allowance was. Certainly, slaves found the gap unwelcome. While other nations “have yet some provisions to alleviate the miseries of this place,” complained Captain James Taylor, the “Americans are destitute.” For Stephens and others, the US government’s failure to sustain them hurt “the character of the United States.”<sup>31</sup>

When corsairs seized Americans in 1785, the United States had no diplomatic presence in North Africa. The US government relied on a common European practice: having another country’s diplomat work on their behalf. In Algiers, first an English, then a Spanish, and later a Swedish diplomat and his brother took up the Americans’ cause and worked with the president and Congress to assist enslaved Americans. The Spanish consul, D’Expilly, was therefore surprised in 1789 when William Carmichael, an American diplomat in Spain, informed him that he would not be compensated for supporting enslaved Americans in the future—or the previous two years.

Over those two years, D’Expilly had meted out \$1600 to captive Americans. Without the guarantee of reimbursement, he cut off payments to American slaves, who then endured more than four years without an allowance. Consular “Table talk” erupted when D’Expilly learned that US payments would not be forthcoming, likely because the US government bucked the accepted system when they refused to—or could not—repay D’Expilly.<sup>32</sup>

As Thomas Jefferson explained in 1791, the United States wore “the appearance of neglecting” their men so that they could redeem them. French

Trinitarians advised Jefferson to adopt this strategy to convince Ottoman Algerians that they could not afford exorbitant ransoms. Thus, late in 1789, the government slowed correspondence with enslaved Americans and informed D’Expilly that advances to slaves would not be repaid. By 1792, however, this policy had clearly failed. As a result, Jefferson authorized Colonel David Humphreys to settle past accounts with D’Expilly and provide for the men’s “future comfortable subsistence.”<sup>33</sup>

All enslaved Americans benefited from governmental support, but the US government allowed more for officers than mariners. Further, the US government and European consuls more willingly footed living costs for officers than for seamen. British consul Charles Logie housed the three American captains captured in 1785. He paid a fee to the Algerian Regency to remove them from the *bagnios*. Much to the captains’ chagrin, Logie kept them “as his slaves,” meaning that he expected them to work for their room and board. Soon after their capture, Logie arranged for a US-financed house for American mates and captains. The officers were thus “well Provided for” by the English, and later the Spanish, consul.<sup>34</sup>

Fortuitously for them, the dey claimed seven seamen, including Cathcart, for palace work. Palace slaves did not “want for Victles, Drink or Clothes,” as Captain Stephens explained. While these seven may have disagreed with Stephens, they lived better than slaves sent to “that Dreadful Place Called the Banyo,” a fate the remaining nine seamen suffered. The inmates’ situations improved dramatically, when, in the second month of enslavement, D’Expilly “Delivered Dayley” four pence to each man. All enslaved Americans received an allowance at that time, but the monetary infusion meant different things to each of the men. For *bagnio* slaves, money staved off starvation and “alleviate[d] in some degree the rigor of our Captivity.” The officers freed themselves from Logie’s work regime and rented an Algerian house where they “lived comfortably” for years.<sup>35</sup>

Mariners in the *bagnios* were “reduced to the Utmost distress” when funding was discontinued in 1789.<sup>36</sup> That distress intensified until 1792, they were “destitute almost of all the necessaries of life,” as they explained to Congress. Yet they resisted “any temptation to Enter” into the Algerian Regency’s service. If a slave “turned Turk,” or converted to Islam and pledged loyalty to the Algerian Regency, he was manumitted and though he was required to reside in Muslim lands, he could work in Algiers. As they explained, American slaves delayed apostasy in 1792 because, as they pointedly wrote, they trusted in the “Justice and Humanity of Congress” to redeem them. That is, American mariners implicitly threatened to “turn Turk,” which indicated both their deep despair and an attempt to manipulate public support.<sup>37</sup>

But by 1793, the “8th [year] of captivity” their situation had declined. Plague returned to Algiers with a vengeance. In previous outbreaks, five of their “brother sufferers . . . entered the Bills of Mortality.” Filled with dread, the remaining 12 men—of 21—watched as a sixth, Jacobus Tessianer, sickened and died. O’Brien worried that the remaining 12 might really “turn Turk” if only because they thirsted “for revenge against the U.S. who occasioned their miseries.”<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, if the US administration pretended disinterest, they worked behind the scenes to aid their captive countrymen. As early as 1789, Congress secured a Dutch loan and set aside funds for their enslaved men. In 1792, Congress appropriated funds for the men, a fact Consul Carmichael relayed to O’Brien before November of that year. After this promising news, however, O’Brien heard nothing. In 1793, Colonel Humphreys at last authorized O’Brien to draw directly upon Lisbon’s Bulkeley and Son for provisions and debts related to the enslaved men’s subsistence.<sup>39</sup>

Funds were made available just in time. In October of 1793, Algerian corsairs ensnared 11 American ships, increasing the number of enslaved Americans to about 130. Fortunately for them, the American government was poised to offer immediate aid. The United States dispatched “a comfortable suit of Cloathing” for each man, which newly captured mariner John Foss judged “decent and comfortable.” Swedish consul Matthias Skjöldebrand advanced them money to “relieve their present necessities,” which was approved by the United States and continued as a regular allowance until their 1796 redemption.<sup>40</sup>

Their government-supported allowance was distributed based on rank: captains received \$8 a month, mates six, and mariners the considerable upgrade of “twelve Cents p[er] day,” which amounted to about \$3.60 a month. After a short time, mariners were upgraded to three-quarters of a dollar more, for a grand total of \$4.35 a month. Foss bragged that the US generosity set “an example of humanity to all the governments in the world,” and caused even the Algerians to view the “American character . . . in the most exalted light.” Perhaps the Algerians simply knew a good deal with they saw it. US backing kept American slaves alive so that they could work and bring money into the Algerian economy.<sup>41</sup>

### “Based on His Own Personal Merit”

Like slaves elsewhere, enslaved Europeans and Americans drew upon social networks, and created communities both inside and outside of Algiers,

to sustain themselves.<sup>42</sup> Tracing the networks that individual slaves drew upon highlights the ways in which class played a more important role than nationality for these men.<sup>43</sup> The officers, all *papalunas*, maintained ties with business connections and government officials, while administrative slaves emphasized their national ties and played up how they cared for their *bagnio*-consigned countrymen. Meanwhile, *bagnio* slaves evoked shared nationality or condition as reasons that slaves should be aided.

Sailors tended to come from the poorer classes; thus, their families had little to send them. In many cases, they were their family's main source of income. Officers were frequently older than mariners and hence more established and could draw on commercial associates that the younger and poorer mariners could not. Mariners Charles Colville and John Robertson were exceptions. Both were redeemed by family members and friends, and later reimbursed by the US government.<sup>44</sup>

Officers were often connected to an international commercial community, directly or indirectly. Captain John McShane knew John Bulkeley of the Lisbon banking house before his capture. When seized in 1793, McShane sent an epistle to Bulkeley and his ship's owner, Thomas Bell of Philadelphia, asking for swift monetary relief and redemption. Bulkeley wrote Bell, in case McShane's letters went awry, and confirmed his intent to help remedy McShane's "unfortunate situation."<sup>45</sup> Knowing such influential men allayed others' concerns about McShane's character and therefore his ability to pay back loans, which may have helped him secure additional funds.

Captain Zacchias Coffin counted bankers among his contacts, and these connections served him well when he was captured in 1785 while a passenger on the *Dauphin*. In December 1785, he thanked London financiers Thomas Wagstaff, William Delwyn, and John Bland for their "extraordinary friendship" and help. Among other things, they directed Consul Logie to advance Coffin ten guineas on their behalf. Though Logie did not personally know Coffin before, he willingly aided him based on Coffin's "own personal merit" and in "return for the civility" that he received from another Nantucket native previously. Unfortunately, Coffin's supporters were unable to prevent him dying of consumption in July 1787.<sup>46</sup>

Captains asked bankers whom they did not know for help, often successfully. Several solicited aid from the House of Dominick Terry and Company in Cadiz. Captain Samuel Calder, for example, begged Terry for \$100. He sent bills that could be drawn on Mr. David Pearce, his ship's owner, or "my wife in America" in return for this loan. Captain Moses Morse also requested money from Dominick Terry and Company, guaranteeing that a Haverhill friend would cover any drafts while he was "a distressed slave in this Place."<sup>47</sup>

Captain John Burnham supplied a powerful example of how commercial networks helped slaves. When captured in October 1793, Burnham informed John H. Thompson of New York, his ship's owner. At the same time, he asked James Duff, a British merchant and English consul in Cadiz who had been assisting needy American sailors there, for aid. Duff urged John Gavino, the American consul in Carthage, to send \$100–\$150 for Burnham's immediate relief. By February 1794, Duff arranged for Henry Thompson of London to extend Burnham credit through Jewish bankers in Algiers. And by spring 1794, Duff and Logie ransomed Burnham for \$4000. Burnham arrived a free man in Cadiz on May 24, 1794, about eight months after his enslavement. His crew remained slaves two years longer.<sup>48</sup>

A slave's class and status helped them borrow money from within Algiers, also. O'Brien was in "Debt to Mons Flour" for "15 manbucs and 18 Maysoons" (roughly \$20) and "under Many Obligations to him for favours rendered me." Flaure, a European merchant living in Algiers, assisted Captain O'Brien, but he did not loan money to mariners. D'Expilly also lent O'Brien money, though no seamen reported such largesse extended to them. Seamen's failure to report such loans may be due to scarcity of mariner-originated material. However, extant materials such as Foss' journal and letters printed in newspapers do not mention credit advanced to sailors.<sup>49</sup>

Mariners had fewer helpful contacts, but national origin helped four sailors. British subjects were not enslaved by Algerians as they were protected by an Anglo-Algerian treaty, though Britons working on American ships relinquished their right to British protections. In 1793, Charles Colville, a "British Born Subject," was "unfortunately captured under American Colours" as a member of the *Dauphin's* crew. Colville applied to friends in Scotland for aid. His friends and family raised some money and then convinced Parliamentarian George Dempsey to negotiate Colville's release. Logie arranged his freedom in February 1790 after five years of Algerian slavery. Two of Colville's crewmates and countrymen coordinated their discharge, also: John Robertson in 1791 and William Patterson in 1794.<sup>50</sup>

Scotsmen other than Colville, Robertson, and Patterson managed to broker an early release. In fact, sailors who emphasized Scottish connections were redeemed early from Algiers at an unusually high rate. In 1793, another Scot from the *Maria's* crew, George Smith, was redeemed. In this case, his nationality was not a factor. The Swedish consul liberated him in a "very singular manner." Smith worked in the dey's palace long enough that Cathcart felt he should have known the "Deys Humor." Yet Smith deeply offended the dey. In June 1792, Smith visited the *Vikilhadge's* garden with Cidi Mahomet, an Ottoman Algerian bureaucrat whom the dey disliked,

but under whom Smith was briefly employed. Shortly after this trip, the dey relieved Smith of his palace position and transferred him to a *bagnio* and marine work. Observers feared that the dey was so angry that Smith might “dye an American victim” to his rage. The Swedish consul thus ransomed him primarily for humanitarian, not nationalistic, reasons.<sup>51</sup>

Other American slaves claimed British citizenship because they hoped that they would be freed. In December 1785, 11 mariners petitioned King George III for their release. Each man listed a British place of birth and several declared that they fought on English ships during the American Revolution. They asserted that only bad luck put them on American ships. Philip Sloan told a typical tale. According to the petition, he shipped from England to Philadelphia on a British ship but fell ill in Philadelphia and was left in a hospital. When he recovered, he found he had no money to get home. Hoping to end up at home, he signed on to an American ship, the ill-fated *Dauphin*.<sup>52</sup> George III was not swayed by their tales, and none of the 11 were recognized as British.

Slaves’ nationality exerted a less certain influence than did their class or status. Only Colville, Robertson, Patterson, and Smith were freed early. Three were technically redeemed by friends, not by British citizenship, and the fourth was saved as a protective measure. Interestingly, the US government later reimbursed Colville, Robertson, and Smith for their ransoms though their redemption was arranged by Britons. Meanwhile, Logie paid to remove Scot John Farland from daily labor after he was seized on an American ship in 1793. Logie’s attention suggests that he recognized Farland as a Briton. However, Logie’s treatment might have stemmed from Farland’s status. Farland was second mate on the Philadelphia *Minerva*, and thus was classed as an officer.<sup>53</sup>

French passenger Jacobus Tessanaer found little consolation in his French connection. In 1789, the French government granted its consul permission to redeem the boy if the cost did not exceed 1,000 sequins. The dey set a higher ransom, so the “Boy” remained in the “miserable state of Captivity” until 1793, when he died of the plague. Of course, Tessanaer’s capture coincided with the French Revolution, the worst possible time for a French man to suffer this fate. The revolutionary government disbanded the Catholic order that had redeemed Frenchmen for centuries. The new consuls operated at a disadvantage, with both less knowledge and funds than the Trinitarians had brought to bear.<sup>54</sup>

Social networks within Ottoman Algiers proved particularly helpful to mariners, and especially for Cathcart. Cathcart advanced because he knew slave-administrators, Giovanni de la Cruz and Angiolo D’Andreis. Because of them and his own ambition, Cathcart worked for the *Vikilhadge* of the Marine, who later became the dey. In 1794, this dey offered Cathcart the

position of chief Christian secretary to the dey. The promotion came with a price of 1,000 sequins (\$1800) plus 383 sequins (\$690) in fees to various officials. Cathcart borrowed 500 sequins (\$900) from the dey himself and an additional 500 sequins from the Swedish consul and his brother. He secured loans from “other friends turks [*sic*] as well as Christians” to buy a prize ship loaded with alcohol and utensils that would outfit his new tavern, a perk that came with his new post.<sup>55</sup>

*Bagnio* slaves no doubt created helpful bonds with fellow slaves. Since they possessed less disposable income and left few records, only hints at their connections remain. According to Cathcart, slaves were “generally liberal to each other” for two reasons. First, the Algerian Regency claimed all of a dead slave’s property. Second, the plague could take a slave at any moment, so hoarding wealth seemed pointless. For these reasons, he argued, slaves “set no great value upon money.”<sup>56</sup> Cathcart’s lofty sentiments notwithstanding, slaves placed a high premium upon wealth and the benefits that it brought.

Cathcart and O’Brien, one of whom had greater access to cash and the other great need for it, mentioned borrowing money more frequently than mariners did in their extant writing. O’Brien’s short, cryptic note to Cathcart suggested that elite slaves moved money among themselves. O’Brien wrote, “This evening from Mr. Patterson George Smith [*sic*] account the sum 80 sequins.” George Smith and William Patterson, both in the dey’s palace, advanced about \$85 to O’Brien. In 1793, O’Brien thanked Cathcart for an unspecified sum, and hinted at other loans or favors that Cathcart had provided for him. Elite slaves had the cash that their *papaluna* and *bagnio* slave fellows needed, and fortunately, they sometimes shared that wealth with their countrymen.<sup>57</sup>

Cathcart had money enough to spare for his brother sufferers, and he claimed loudly and often that he expended it for his countrymen’s benefit. When first captured, Cathcart visited Captains O’Brien, Coffin, and Stephens in Logie’s garden both to visit his countrymen and to share with them tips he that had earned. When O’Brien was briefly assigned to clean mold off harbor pontoons, Cathcart provided him nightly with dinner and a bottle of wine. Cathcart even sent wine to O’Brien’s Turkish overseer, who had “no objection to a glass of wine,” and subsequently, O’Brien was treated “very kindly, and only made to work under the eyes of the *Vikilhadge*.” In other words, Cathcart bribed O’Brien’s overseer and henceforth O’Brien worked only when the *Vikilhadge* dropped in on the work site.<sup>58</sup>

Cathcart funded American *bagnio* slaves as well as *papalunas*. He maintained mariner and shipmate, James Harnet, for four years when Harnet was chained in a “mad house” cell. Cathcart fed and clothed him,

and buried him when he died in 1793. He administered to the sick and “decently” interred the dead, “many of them at his own expense.”<sup>59</sup> After their 1796 redemption, some seamen declared publically that Cathcart had gone to “considerable expense in relieving the necessity’s [*sic*] of his Brother sufferers of 1785.” Doubtless his countrymen appreciated his help, but perhaps they noticed that Cathcart spent the bulk of his economic support on officers rather than on the seamen he so piteously portrayed in his letters and journal.

In 1793, Cathcart applied his influence and wealth to support the newly enslaved Americans. He ensured that the mariners were assigned the Bagnio Gallera, but left them to claim their own sleeping spot there. He exercised more care on the officers’ behalf. He situated ten officers in his own suite and provided them with “every necessary gratis for a considerable time.” Considering that Cathcart’s “2 handsome rooms and a kitchen” came free with his post, housing the officers cost him nothing save the loss of some privacy. When Captain Timothy Newman asked Cathcart to “get him leave from the Marine,” Cathcart immediately “applied to the Dey” and secured *papaluna* status for him. Cathcart logged his actions on the reverse side of Newman’s note. Newman noted that he felt “under the greatest obligation” for this service, which perhaps explains why Cathcart more readily serviced officers than mariners: officers had more social and economic influence in America. They could, he hoped, use their influence on Cathcart’s behalf once they were redeemed.<sup>60</sup>

### “To Serve you and all the Rest of Our Brother Sufferers”

Both Cathcart and O’Brien benefitted from money and positions available within the Ottoman Algerian system: Cathcart as an elite slave and O’Brien as an ex-officer and *papaluna*. But both declaimed that their actions were for the greater good of their countrymen. O’Brien appealed to Congress and others not for his own benefit, but for his brother sufferers’. Cathcart laid himself “under a Greater Obligation to serve” his “brother Sufferers.”<sup>61</sup> Neither trumpeted personal enrichment at the expense of “brother Sufferers,” yet both clearly did so during their 11-year enslavement.

Cathcart rented his suite—for which he paid nothing—to a fellow slave while he worked for Dr. Werner, a British surgeon living in Algiers. Werner provided Cathcart with room and board, although, as Cathcart pointed out, he had “enough money to serve all [his] wants” without Werner’s help.

Clearly, he did not require the rent that he collected from a fellow slave. So why did he charge a fellow sufferer for these rooms? Ever the businessman and a self-made slave, Cathcart perhaps rented the rooms because he could. All private rooms came at a cost; he simply followed the established Ottoman Algerian system. He may have charged merely a nominal fee, but no records disclose his charges or the renter's name or nationality.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, O'Brien sold his Algerian-issued outfit instead of donating it to a needy American *bagnio* slave, some of whom had been his ship's crew. He possessed more than one outfit, but he felt no compunction about selling the suit for "46 missoons," or about 90 cents. In 1793, the American government entrusted O'Brien with \$200 for the enslaved Americans. O'Brien gave half to "the new naked captives," but did not account for the other half.<sup>63</sup> Did he dispense it to those captured in 1785? Use it to pay for officers' house and board? Appropriate the other half for himself? Although O'Brien usually detailed his charity, we simply do not know what transpired with these funds.

Other Americans looked after only themselves while enslaved. To Cathcart's astonishment, Captain Stephens borrowed 52 sequins from Congress while their allowance was halted, but he used none of that money to assist "his Poor distressed Countrymen." In fact, he begged money and clothing from "Oran Englishmen" who were cared for by European consuls. Stephens's actions indicate that *papalunas* scrounged for their upkeep. Further, his actions suggest that slaves from different nationalities might aid one another, although Stephens and the "Oran Englishmen" may have viewed one another as fellow Englishmen or as fellow *papalunas*.<sup>64</sup>

When Stephens failed to share his borrowed largesse, Cathcart, who needed charity least, damned Stephens's "*mean dirty Spirit [sic]*." Cathcart self-consciously explained why he had and how he distributed his disposable income. His taverns, for example, accounted "for my having money at my command when my fellow sufferers had none." He might have had a difficult time convincing other Americans that he used his money and connections solely for his fellows' betterment. As a slave entrepreneur and administrator, he had a vested interest in his master's goodwill and financial success. Thus, his brethren viewed him and others like him with suspicion, sometimes suspecting them of allying themselves with their owners. After all, "successful" slaves seemingly bought literally into their master's system as their wealth and status depended upon their master and upon the slave system. No doubt this accounted for Cathcart's frequent and anxious disclaimers.<sup>65</sup>

Intensely proud of his success and determined to appear self-sufficient, Cathcart bragged about his wealth and vociferously proclaimed his independence. Again and again he reiterated that he left Algiers in "my own

vessel navigated by myself." Though a slave, he asserted, he retained his independence. Therefore, Cathcart held a grudge against Dr. Werner for painting his hiring as needy and as happily enslaved. For six months, Werner hired Cathcart to "make out" his "accompts." During this time, Cathcart lived at the Werner's. Werner agreed to maintain him during this time, but became snippy about this and tried to curtail Cathcart's movements.<sup>66</sup>

Worse, Werner dubbed Cathcart a true slave with a truly slavish character. As proof, Werner noted that Cathcart preferred the company of slaves to that of free men. However, Werner had forced his hired slave to dine with other slaves. Werner stopped providing Cathcart's breakfast, which meant that Cathcart grabbed food in one of his *bagnio* taverns. Because he "kept company with slaves," Cathcart was "not Company" for men such as Werner. Most cuttingly, Werner's wife observed "how happy some people were that they were slaves, that they were better off than in their own country." Cathcart carefully recorded his self-sufficiency. He had never depended on Werner; rather, the doctor relied on his financial acumen. Cathcart even lent Werner money to pay off a business partner, a claim Werner denied. He haughtily demanded that Werner present him with a bill for his room and board, though to his chagrin, Werner refused this attempt to reclaim his self-reliance.<sup>67</sup>

Cathcart forcefully and publically declined charity, as well. He refused Englishman John Horne Tooke's offer for assistance but "strongly recommended" his brother sufferers avail themselves of this aid. Cathcart, however, would never "degrade" himself or his family "so much as to become the object of public charity," especially "after plunging myself into slavery in the service of America." The offending money would be raised in England, and Cathcart, so he wrote, was "firmly resolved to wait with fortitude becoming a Christian and an American" until "honorable redemption."<sup>68</sup> Since he had achieved independence in Algiers, Cathcart would hold out for an American-supported redemption.

As in the United States, money and market access did not necessarily lay the basis for "larger and more politicized forms of resistance" in Algiers.<sup>69</sup> Rather, a few European and American slaves achieved some independence in Algiers. Whether administrative slave or *papaluna*, their success required outside assistance. *Papalunas* received and kept their status because Algerians, Americans, and Europeans, government and private individuals, privileged their officer status. Elite slaves integrated into the Ottoman Algerian system and depended on it.

Still, some maintained the fiction that any hardworking, sensible slave might live quite comfortably in Algerian enslavement. Paul Randall, who came to Algiers with John Lamb, argued that "only the common men"

had hard labor “imposed” on them. He informed John Jay that if any of the “common Sailors” was in “any degree superior to them, he would at *least* have met with the same indulgence as the Mates.” He heard nothing of superior seamen, so did “not believe there was” any such young men. In Randall’s mind, mariners remained in the *bagnios* and at daily labor because they were inherently inferior to the officers. This opinion, which was forwarded to Jefferson, blithely disregards the fact that the US government paid for officers’ house rental and provided them a higher monthly allowance.<sup>70</sup>

Randall’s report also ignored mariner Cathcart, who rose so far in the Ottoman Algerian hierarchy. Randall wrote in 1789, before Cathcart landed his most significant posts, though he may have interpreted Cathcart’s success either as slavish or as pulling one’s self up by one’s bootstraps. Interestingly, the Ottoman Algerian system encouraged slaves, regardless of their previous status, to join their administrative hierarchy. In doing so, the Ottoman Algerians provided more social mobility for mariners than the United States did. Mariner Cathcart climbed to heights reached by few, and he did build on that Algerian success when free and in the United States again. In 1799, he was appointed the first American consul to Tripoli, not a post generally assigned to former mariners.

## Conclusion

American and European slaves could not buy their own freedom, but they were encouraged to get and spend in other ways from the time they were captured. Unlike masters in other places, many of whom “assumed the right to direct and control their slave property,” Algerian masters impinged little on their Western slaves’ economic lives. US laws and customs aimed to curb slaves’ economic independence because American masters feared that market participation gave slaves room to “pursue their own social and economic interests, and, in the process, challenge those of their masters.”<sup>71</sup> Ottoman Algerian masters did not worry that market interactions would make their Western slaves “independent and ungovernable.” Instead, they built into their system ways for slaves to get money and use it freely. Ottoman Algerians pushed, and even forced, slaves to engage in market exchanges.

The Ottoman Algerian system seemed rigged to extract the most money possible from their American and European slaves. Algerians extracted labor from many while they required all slaves to provide much of their own provender and clothing. If they could afford it, slaves paid

for privileges and service like private rooms or time off of work. If they lived through plague outbreaks, they would be redeemed by their country, an act that also filled Algerian coffers. Whether slaves were redeemed immediately or not, the system set up a win-win situation for the Algerian Regency.

Slaves struggled, particularly *bagnio* slaves. Each evening they freely roamed the city markets to purchase food and goods. Foss took advantage of this, and was thus intimately acquainted with food prices. He knew a dozen eggs usually sold for a "mazoone and half," and he proudly recorded a particular bargain in his journal. He bought a "quarter of Beef" weighing 70 pounds for "three *Arabia booches*," but the common price is about 5." Fellow *bagnio* slave John Robertson also found Algerian victuals "remarkably cheap." A "fine loaf" cost only a "halfpenny." Though a *papaluna* himself, Captain Stephens noticed that with the allowance D'Expilly offered, slaves could buy "good bread and vegetables" and "live very well for slaves." With such cheap provisions, even *bagnio* slaves might get enough nourishment—if they had some source of funds. With a bit more income, a slave could purchase prepared meals from a tavern.<sup>72</sup>

As in America, requiring slaves to provide much of their own provender and clothing was a "profitable way to defray expenses." The practice also strengthened "the owners' hand," as the "burden of subsistence" was shifted to their laborers. As much as the slaves' economy served the master, it also helped the slaves. The ability to participate in economic life made a distinct difference in Western slaves' experience, and, for this reason, they attached great value to money. In America, "no matter how hard" a slave "labored, participation in the slaves' economy did not guarantee a better life." Money in Algiers, on the other hand, consistently allowed a slave to live more comfortably. They might purchase food, time off work, better quarters, alcohol, and other commodities and privileges.<sup>73</sup>

Some Western slaves, however, lived more comfortably than others. For every Cathcart, who climbed the slave ladder of success, there were hundreds of *bagnio* slaves laboring in the marine, short of rations and without funds to purchase food let alone any of the privileges available to some slaves. As it did in America, varying access to the market created and reinforced divisions "within slave society." In Algiers, palace or elite slaves had the steadiest and surest money flow. Unlike O'Brien, whose cash flow could be cut off any time by the US government or his European patrons, elite slaves earned cash tips that ensured a more or less continual flow of funds.<sup>74</sup>

Cathcart's move up in Algiers likely caused some rancor from his fellow slaves despite aid that he tossed their way from time to time. His climb was not due simply to a "caprice of fortune," as he claimed, but also to his drive,

maneuvering, and determination. The ultimate self-made slave, Cathcart was justifiably proud of his accomplishments in Algiers. Certainly, his Algerian experience paid off after he was redeemed. It is hard to imagine this ordinary seaman serving as an American diplomat, but his Algerian positions and ability to negotiate for the Americans' release made this a reality.<sup>75</sup>

Money and property held out the promise, and even the reality, of a better material life for Western slaves, but, in the end, this system served the master better than the slave. Many American masters permitted slave provision grounds or other ways for their slaves to raise food or earn money, and this practice freed them from providing everything for their slaves. In Algiers, the Algerian Regency minimally supported their Western slaves, leaving them largely to fend for themselves as best they could. The Algerian Regency not only spent little on these slaves, but it also profited from them—from rents on rooms, payments from *papalunas*, and fees collected from tavern keepers.<sup>76</sup> In short, while in the southern United States, the slave economy was typically associated with greater slave autonomy and independence, in Algiers, where Western slaves had to beg, borrow, and steal to secure money for their survival, it was an earmark of slave dependence.

## Part II

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### Western Sahara

## Chapter 6

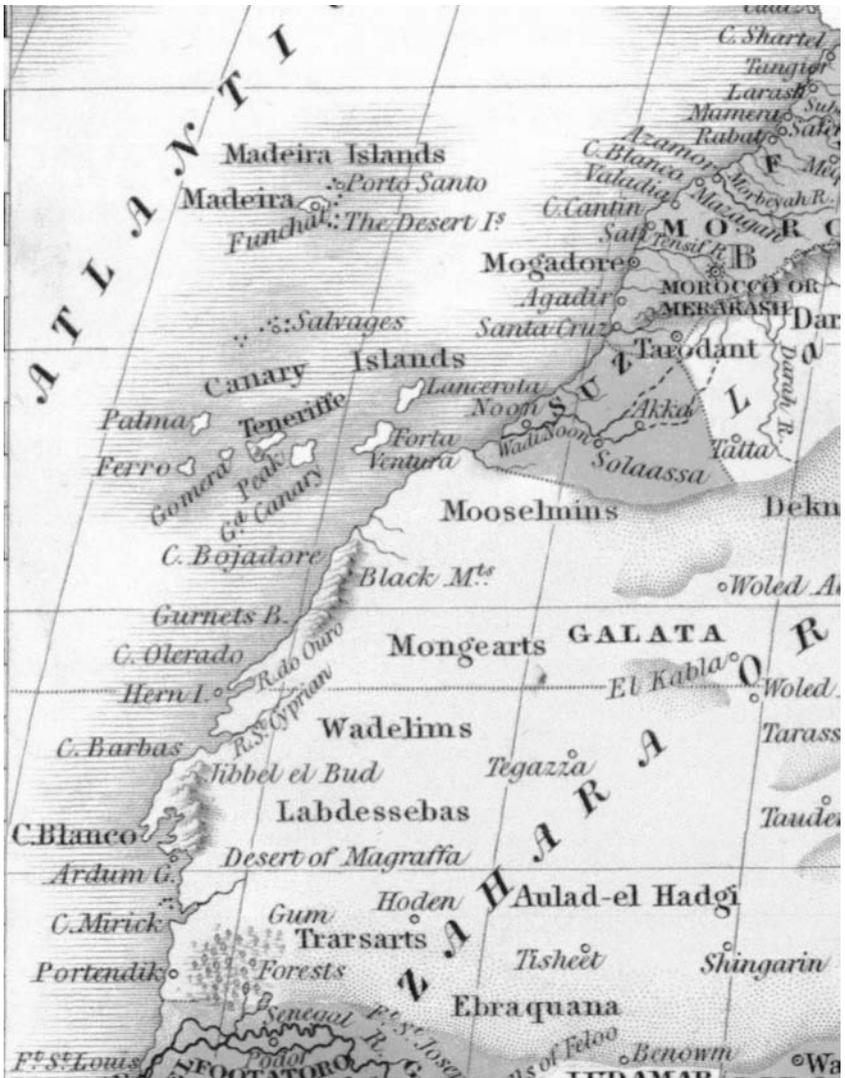
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### “Sons of Sorrow”<sup>\*</sup> American Slaves in the Western Sahara

On his first three stints as a sailor, Archibald Robbins learned the “fascinating charm of the ocean, and the pleasing diversity of a sailor’s life.” His fourth voyage was less charming. He embarked from New York City in February 1813, heading for the neutral port of St. Bartholomew’s. A British ship seized and impounded the ship as they neared the island. Released swiftly, Robbins returned to New York only to leave immediately on his fifth voyage, also to St. Bartholomew’s. This time, the British did not release him, but exiled him to Halifax, where he remained until the Treaty of Ghent was signed.<sup>1</sup>

Robbins’s sixth voyage started auspiciously. In May of 1815, he joined the *Commerce’s* crew as an able seaman on a run from Hartford, Connecticut, to New Orleans, then on to Gibraltar, Cape Verde and back. This stout brig was Hartford-built and owned by respected area merchants. Her captain, James Riley, had a good reputation after many years of navigating the Atlantic. The ship had a crew of ten, including Robbins; George Williams, first mate; Aaron Savage, second mate; Thomas Burns, William Porter, and James Clarke, seamen; James Hogan and James Barrett, seamen who came aboard in New Orleans; Richard Delisle, the black cook; Horace Savage, cabin boy; and Antonio Michel, picked up at Gibraltar.

The *Commerce’s* cruise went smoothly until they left Gibraltar. At this point, Captain Riley eschewed the usual route in favor of a more expeditious passage between the Canary Islands and the African coast. They never saw the Canaries. Thick, foggy weather enveloped the brig, leaving the crew blind. About ten o’clock, August 18, their “fine brig ran ashore



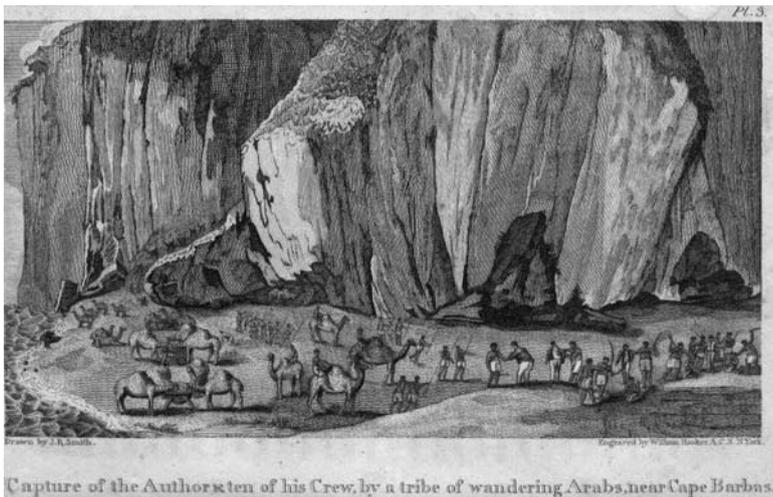
**Figure 6.1** West Africa, Finley, 1829.

Source: Northern Africa, Anthony Finley from *A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, Representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe*, 1829. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Hall, TN, Historical Maps UA.

with such violence” that they were thrown flat, clutching for hand holds as waves crashed over the ship (see [Figure 6.1](#)). They grabbed what provisions they could and headed for shore. By morning, the crew stood on shore observing their cargo strewn for a mile along the sand.<sup>2</sup>

When they spotted an approaching native, they hopped back into their leaky small boat and fled into the surf. After a miserable week at sea, they desperately and unanimously decided to return to shore even if it meant being enslaved. They had drifted up the African coast, and now confronted not a flat, sandy beach, but immense cliffs (see [Figure 6.2](#)). Praying to find sustenance at the summit, they dragged their dehydrated bodies up and up, only to face a “barren heath, a boundless plain made up of burning sand and flinty stones.” At this point, they realized that they must either be enslaved or perish. When they sighted a distant fire, they felt both trepidation and hope. The natives Africans delivered, in fact, both water and enslavement. Riley and three others spent two months as slaves, but Robbins and other crewmen endured nineteenth months of slavery.<sup>3</sup>

In many ways, Robbins’s and Riley’s northwest African slavery mirrored what John Foss, James Cathcart, Richard O’Brien, and others suffered in Ottoman Algiers. Long-standing systems existed to facilitate redemption in both locales. They thus shared the possibility of a short-term slavery. In both markets, officers fetched high prices. As a result, masters in Algiers



**Figure 6.2** Capture of the Author and His Crew, Riley, 1817.

Source: James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Brig Commerce*, New York: T & W Mercein, 1817, 67.

and northwest Africa awarded officers some privileges. Like their Algerian counterparts, these shipwrecked slaves represented primarily income, rather than labor, to their masters.

Their experience differed in several key ways. Slaves in Algiers entered the familiar setting of a port city while those in northwest Africa faced an unknown and hostile environment. Desert-held slaves depended on their masters, who were familiar with the area, to keep them alive. Held singly or in small groups, northwest African slaves interacted more frequently and closely with their masters. Those in Algiers lived, worked, and socialized with enslaved comrades and spent comparatively little time with masters or overseers.

Algiers offered an urban, seaport environment with a post system and consular presence through which some slaves procured funds. Slaves here visited city markets to purchase food and goods to support themselves. Shipwreck victims landed in a rural, desert environment with few ways to get funds and few markets in which to spend them. Because both master and slave struggled merely to survive their journey toward redemption, rural slaves performed little labor.

Like slaves in Algiers, those in northwest Africa meant profit more than labor to their masters, though their masters often put them to work while they owned these slaves. The strong probability of redemption, hostile environment, and pattern of holding shaped Americans' slavery and master-slave relations in northwest Africa. Their need for food and water, and inadequate access to both, defined their experience. They struggled for survival in northwest Africa, sometimes alongside their also struggling masters. American and European slaves relied on their masters for survival and redemption in northwest Africa. Slaves minimized conflicts with their masters while seeking ways to manipulate the system. Their dependence on their African captors gave them little room to maneuver; nevertheless, they found strategies that yielded some successful results.

### “Cast a Christian Ship on Shore”<sup>4</sup>

Cape Bojador took its name from the Arabic *abu khatar* or *bou khatar*, “father of danger.” (See [Figure 6.1](#)) Known for frequent fogs, relentless winds, and shallow, reef-ridden waters, Cape Bojador was subject to “dangerous currents” that inexorably pulled ships toward shore, a fact that “every experienced captain” knew. Seafaring men also knew that natives, “Bendetti” as Consul James Simpson termed them, frequented the coast, watching for stranded ships, and enslaving the victims. Despite this reputation, captains continued to choose this route when loading Madeira wine

and Cape Verde salt. So many ships wrecked here and so many crews had to be redeemed, that in 1792, the British consul in Morocco suggested adding a clause to pass bonds preventing masters from "passing between the Canaries and the Main."<sup>5</sup>

Shipwrecked men knew that they would survive the brutal environmental conditions only with aid. Sadly, assistance came in the form of enslavement. An African master provided minimal food and water, which he knew how and where to procure. Africans knew the area and the direction of Mogador, where slaves could be ransomed. Robbins, Riley, and other wrecked men knew that they could have fended off their would-be enslavers, but they also realized that they had "no possible means of escaping by land or water." Only thirst and starvation awaited those who dodged African slavery.<sup>6</sup>

The enslaving "Bendetti" were Arabized Berbers who thinly populated the coast and western Sahara. Under no state's control, they were predominately Sunni Muslim, Arabic-speaking pastoralists. Americans and Europeans labeled them "wild" or "wandering Arabs," to distinguish them from "trading Arabs," whom Westerners considered more advanced because of their settled lifestyle and capitalistic pursuits. These European-imposed distinctions of "wild" and "trading" Arabs did not accurately describe the population, but Americans and Europeans consistently applied these categories to those whom they saw in northwest Africa.<sup>7</sup>

African masters spoke Arabic, a language American sailors seldom understood or spoke. Though European seamen might have traded in Middle Eastern ports, they claimed no prior proficiency in Arabic. Thus, master and slave found communication challenging. Like Riley, slaves signaled their initial submission by bowing "to the ground... with signs" that implored the Africans' compassion. Robbins's first master used signs and gestures to direct Robbins's work. Frenchman Charles Cochelet and *Sophia* crewmates developed a "singular language" in which they bellowed like an ox or grunted like a pig when they were hungry.<sup>8</sup>

But many slaves claimed that they quickly learned enough Arabic to understand their masters. Sailors were frequently exposed to foreign languages and many asserted that they knew more than one language prior to their African travesty. Captured by a French privateer earlier in his career, Captain Riley learned to read, write, and speak French and Spanish. He argued that knowing these languages helped him pick up Arabic faster than his crewmen. Even if slaves did not, as Riley alleged, become somewhat proficient in Arabic, they probably did pick up words repeated by their masters.<sup>9</sup>

Because of an active Spanish presence in the Canaries, Arabized Berbers often knew Spanish, which no doubt helped master and slave communicate. In 1814, Africans enslaved a Spanish crew of 17 and held them in

their town. As a result, many Africans acquired Spanish words. Of course, some of the townsmen spoke only “coarse and most vulgar words” uttered by the unfortunate Spanish slaves. But one woman spoke Spanish well enough that she and Riley conversed in a mix of broken Arabic and equally broken Spanish. English made a few inroads, as well. One “old Moor” used his fragmented English to translate for a British crew enslaved nearby.<sup>10</sup>

Slaves felt more pressure to understand and negotiate with their masters than vice versa. As Captain Paddock pointed out, “almost every thing respecting his welfare” depended on him grasping instructions. He therefore picked up words “astonishingly fast.” The young Englishman Alexander Scott knew Arabic “tolerably well” by the time he was manumitted. After almost four years in the western Sahara, Robert Adams used the “Moorish tongue” exclusively, even speaking a mix of Arabic and English when ransomed and with Englishmen. After speaking Arabic for almost two years, Robbins was “mortified . . . [to] find [he] conversed so imperfectly in the English language” when redeemed.<sup>11</sup>

Interpreters also played an important role between master and slave. A Jewish man helped Captain Paddock converse with his former master in Mogador. Long-term slaves often translated between newer slaves and African masters. A Spanish boy enslaved for five years translated, or mistranslated according to the Englishmen, for an English crew in Wadinoon. After several years of enslavement, two of the four British boys from the *Martin Hall* spoke perfect Arabic, and they interpreted for their master and Paddock. One of the boys, Jack, used his knowledge of Arabic to inform Paddock and other Western slaves of their master’s plans.<sup>12</sup>

Men who wrecked around Cape Bojador submitted to African masters because they felt they had no other choice. They hoped that their master might keep them alive and redeem them from slavery. While enslaved, they communicated via charades and signs until they picked up some of their master’s vocabulary. They preferred clinging to their native language, particularly as they connected English and European languages with home, country, and civilization. Yet many found themselves the only English-speaker among Arabic-speakers. If enslaved for a long period of time, they started to forget their native tongue and, they implied, their civility with it. They rejoiced when enslaved alongside or passing countrymen because they could speak their native tongue and recall home with them.

### “Made Me . . . Forget My Misery”<sup>13</sup>

Like those in Algiers, American and European slaves in northwest Africa referred to one another as “fellow sufferers” despite their different

nationalities, ethnicities, and social standings. Because they were not contained in claustrophobic *bagnios*, but kept alone or with a few others, they clung to one another and dreaded being left alone with their African masters. They wished to "forge bonds of sympathy and cooperation" with their fellows, and did when they could, but they confronted many barriers to prevent them from maintaining such bonds with fellow slaves.<sup>14</sup>

Shipwrecked men often promised to stick together. When they crashed into shore, the *Commerce's* crew swore to stay close together so that they could "render each other every kind of office in our power." Their African masters planned otherwise. They "unfeelingly" divided their slaves, assigning one to three slaves per African owner. To Robbins's horror, the "Arabs" fought over their division of booty. Several African men wrenched Robbins's arms and legs, pulling so vigorously that Robbins feared that they intended to make "an equal distribution of my body among them." Six to eight Africans surrounded Captain Riley, each yanking him from side to side while they thrust knives at one another, often drawing one another's blood. When the dust settled, Dick and Hogan belonged to one man; Williams and Barrett another; and Robbins to Ganus. Riley, Savage, Clark, and Horace traveled with one group of Africans, but Robbins did not know precisely who owned them.<sup>15</sup>

Americans and European slaves feared being torn from fellow slaves. As their African masters scattered in different directions, Robbins lamented that he was "left alone; no human creature to associate with; no bosom into which I could pour my own sorrow." Other slaves yearned for a familiar face or recognizable language. When in close proximity, their masters allowed them to communicate freely with one another. Their African masters knew that attempted escapes or revolts would likely lead to nothing. Their slaves depended on them in the unfamiliar desert environment and they seldom outnumbered the surrounding Africans.<sup>16</sup>

African masters arranged for slaves to interact when possible. Robbins and Porter often visited one another when their masters were camped in close proximity. One of Robbins's masters even brought Savage to his tent after he had called on Savage's owner. While the two Americans caught up, Robbins's mistress prepared rice and pork for them. Robbins felt a "glow of gratitude" to his master and mistress for letting him see his mate and feeding both men. When African masters dropped in on one another, they took their slaves with them. Robbins's master's sister conducted him to see Williams and Barrett while she visited with their owners and others in that encampment. Robbins first master, Ganus, walked five miles with Robbins in tow, to see the owner of Riley, Clark, and Burns. These masters, like those in Algiers, facilitated slaves' meetings as they had little to lose by doing so.<sup>17</sup>

African masters no doubt had self-serving objectives when they brought slaves together. When Ganus asked Robbins if he wanted to see Savage,

Robbins was ecstatic. Master and slave embarked on a daylong trip that ended in a crowd of Africans. Robbins interpreted this as a market for the “sale of the sons of sorrow”; that is, himself and other European and American slaves. Ganus decided to sell Robbins and he ensured Robbins’s cooperation by telling him only that he would see a crewmate. Had he known the truth, Robbins might have been recalcitrant rather than cooperative. Ganus owned him only 18 days, but Robbins dreaded the “risque of exchanging” his master for “any other descendant of Ishmael that I had not yet seen.” Despite his impending sale, Robbins was overjoyed to see his “beloved shipmates,” Riley, Clark, Burns, and Savage. His delight faded as he learned that a “trading Arab” had purchased the other Americans and promised to guide them to Mogador where they would be redeemed. The trader could not or would not purchase Robbins, a fact that caused the normally stoic sailor to “burst into tears.”<sup>18</sup>

In rare instances, masters prevented slaves from mingling. Horace’s first master refused to let Captain Riley interact with Horace. Every time Riley drew near to Horace, Horace’s master chased him with a stick. The reasons for this are unclear. This particular master may have opposed slave mingling. Or he may have planned to convert the young Horace to Islam, and therefore shielded him from Christian influences. The separation proved painful for Riley, who felt a special need to protect the boy. Riley had long been friends with Horace’s father and had promised Horace’s widowed mother to care for Horace as if he were his own son.<sup>19</sup>

Sixteen-year-old Alexander Scott and his Portuguese crewmate were stranded when the English ship *Montezuma* crashed ashore in 1810. Their masters traveled side by side, allowing the two boys to plot an escape. They were apprehended easily, but their masters would brook no reoccurrence. Both were beaten and, according to Scott, “immediately separated.”<sup>20</sup> Their division may have simply coincided with their masters’ different travel plans. One headed southeast, while the other moved due south. The environment made escape virtually impossible, though fleeing slaves might, as Robert Adams had, be captured and claimed by another African, thus causing the original owner to lose income. These examples notwithstanding, when masters gathered or traveled together, their slaves usually enjoyed the company of fellow slaves.

Because they were often isolated from their fellows, American slaves attached great importance to crossing paths with them. Both Adams and Robbins endured solitary stretches while enslaved, and they piteously remarked on such periods. An aggrieved Robbins regularly noted he had been long bereft of “any other unfortunate slave.” Hungry for the sight of a Westerner, Adams even looked forward to meeting a Frenchman turned “Mohammedan” who lived near Wadinoon, though he was eventually disappointed in this wish.<sup>21</sup>

A familiar face and language eased slaves' minds, and they celebrated such meetings. Robbins momentarily "forg[ot] his . . . misery" when awakened by the "cheering accent" of Savage. Likewise, Hector and William Black, victims of an 1815 English wreck, were consoled when they were "informed . . . that we were to travel in company." When they were together, slaves comforted one another with talk of home, belief in their ascendant civilization, and a Christian God. Williams regaled Robbins with family stories until "overwhelming grief forbade" further remembrances. Savage and Robbins cursed the "inhuman wretches who" starved them and "bemoaned their hard fate." After reminding each other that they "had a Father in heaven" who would aid them, they prayed together.<sup>22</sup>

Other Americans and Europeans reminded slaves that if they were temporarily slaves, they were nevertheless culturally superior to their masters. For Robbins, Savage's "mild, and cheering accents" contrasted with the "hoarse and menacing voice of a barbarian" that he heard daily. Thus the two men recalled their common cultural heritage and measured that against what they adjudged lacking in their African hosts. In this context, a handshake represented national solidarity and supremacy to the American slaves. Africans greeted each other by "placing the inside of their open hands together, then bringing it to the lips, touching the face, and dropping the hands." But when Robbins met Barrett and Williams, he took solace in "clasping and squeezing the hand of a friend whom I love." Though the Africans laughed and sneered at them, Robbins preferred this "mode" of greeting "handed down to us from our brave Saxon ancestors."<sup>23</sup>

Slaves connected their ability to survive with their emotional and mental states, so they encouraged those who had given up and were heartened by those sure of their eventual redemption. The desolate Robbins found his interview with Savage "double consolatory" because Savage was "not wholly destitute of resolution." He recalled "with anguish" his last "interview" with Williams, who had "lost his fortitude by his misery; and despaired of life." However, Porter sustained Robbins by pointing out that it was the "will of our Maker that we must suffer," so they "ought to make the best we could of our situation." Robbins "fully believe[d] that it was from this sentiment, that my own life was preserved."<sup>24</sup>

They worried about each others' condition and assisted each other when they could. When in Glimi, Saugnier "had food indeed in abundance," so he split his daily meal "either with a sailor of Provence . . . or with M Lanaspeze, our mate and son of the owner." Riley contributed food to Savage when their master refused to feed Savage. He also commanded the sick man to rest while Riley completed the task that he had been assigned, gathering wood for the fire. Riley intervened several times to protect Savage. Once he grabbed an African with a scimitar poised to

kill his second mate, threw the African off Savage, and cradled the sailor in his arms to shield him from injury.<sup>25</sup>

These vignettes present a unified, caring community of slaves, but if together for any length of time, slaves fought among themselves just as those in Algiers did. Paddock's master owned several of the captain's crew and four English boys. Though the men cooperated to steal and avoid work, they clashed with one another as well. The boy Laura, who was "more of an Arab than a Christian," provoked particular contention among them. The other slaves guarded their words about him because they labeled him a "little treacherous lying Rascal." To make matters worse, "since the Arabs take his part, he is very saucy." Riley cared for the four crewmembers enslaved with him, but because they were "smarting under the lash, and suffering incredibly from their sores, fatigues, and privations [they] became as cross and as brutal as wild bears." In fact, one man hurled curses at Riley as Riley helped him.<sup>26</sup>

They nevertheless aided each other when they could, though this impulse was often stymied by their solitary enslavement. Still, they kept tabs on their fellows' whereabouts and conditions because they were concerned and so they could pass information to consuls trying to locate and ransom the men. Consul William Willshire dispatched agents to the fishing village where Robbins had last seen Barrett and Williams in an attempt to free them, for example. Each man wanted out of Africa—with or without his fellows. But since they did not compete for redemption or food and water, and since so little of the latter were available, they could afford to help one another toward this final and mutual goal.<sup>27</sup>

### “Crawling . . . and Feeding on Half Grown Grain by the Side of a Camel”<sup>28</sup>

Their first masters claimed shipwrecked sailors as flotsam abandoned on their coast. They gained slaves with no capital outlay, but they certainly expected to profit from their slaves. Here, no paternalistic gloss covered capitalistic concerns. African masters prioritized the well-being of their family or group, herd, and selves over their slaves. Due to the harsh environment, masters and therefore their slaves frequently lacked food and water. American and European slaves blamed harsh, unfeeling masters for their deprivation, but survival dictated their masters' behavior.

Enslaved Westerners vacillated between castigating their monstrous masters for not feeding them and pitying them for having no food or water. Either judgment ignored the brutal realities of northwest African

life. Robbins claimed, for instance, that he could not "by the most humble and urgent entreaties, move the obdurate heart of my master to afford me a drop," but his master probably had little or no water and may have been rationing what he did have. Paddock bitterly complained that the "inhuman monsters" refused him water even after a fellow slave advised him that it had not rained in two months.<sup>29</sup>

Enslaved Americans reasoned that if their African masters were not cold-hearted or wretchedly unable to provide for themselves, maybe they simply did not feel hunger or thirst. As Paddock explained, the "Arabs, from habit, could go a long time without water, and did not appear to suffer at all in comparison with the sufferings we endured." Similarly, a British slave observed that the Arabs thought "nothing of" hunger, "being accustomed to this kind of life." This reasoning contained a partial truth. African owners knew when they might reach the next watering hole or village, and knowing that they would eventually find food or water may have helped them deal with devouring hunger and thirst. However, their masters gave every indication of suffering the same hunger and thirst as their slaves. After digging for and finally exposing water, the *Sophia's* crew and their masters drank eagerly and deeply. Riley's and Dick's master forced them to kneel "like camels," but then joined them to imbibe the black, disgusting water they had found.<sup>30</sup>

Most African masters supplied their slaves with what they themselves ate and drank, though maybe in smaller quantities. If the "Arabs fared very scantily," their slaves did "still worse." Masters and slaves suffered badly when traveling. Water was perpetually in short supply and Africans rarely consumed their livestock, though they slaughtered sick or injured animals. Their animals provided milk for sustenance; if the milk dried up, master and slave either found alternative fluid sources or suffered greatly. Paddock's seemingly fierce master offered potatoes and onions salvaged from Paddock's ship, then animal guts, all of which imparted some moisture and caloric intake. When, after days without water, they finally reached a watering hole, the Africans drank deeply of the putrid water before passing drinking bowls to their slaves.<sup>31</sup>

More commonly, masters and slaves mixed camel urine with some water to stretch their supply. Once water was completely gone, they imbibed "a little camels [*sic*] water," which Riley noted, "we preferred to our own." Eventually, men and animals stopped urinating "for the want of moisture." At this point, their situation was grim indeed. When they found water, Riley's master's first priority was his livestock. Animals were watered first if any water was found. Second, the master and his group drank. Lastly, his slaves were permitted to drink their fill.<sup>32</sup>

When in dire straits, masters fed enslaved Westerners only when they sensed their merchandise might die without sustenance. Paddock's master

“dealt out about a pint of milk” when “afraid of losing his property by our death, and anxious that we should live.” Paddock had gone three days without any nourishment at all. Paddock took his feeding as a sign that he would be sold. His master wanted him to look lively to fetch a decent price. Paddock pragmatically assessed his master’s actions, but some American slaves assigned paternalistic pretensions to their owners. When Robbins fell ill, he believed that his master cared so for him that he cooked him a “small piece of camel’s hide” and gave him some milk, which restored Robbins to health. Like Paddock’s master, Robbins’s probably had no food to give his slave and desperately fed him boiled hide to protect his property until he collected profit.<sup>33</sup>

European and American slaves had few options if their master lacked provisions. The environment yielded little even to those long familiar with it. If possible, they supplemented camel’s milk with food salvaged from their wreck. Hector Black smuggled a piece of cheese from the *Surprise*, and munched it when no other food was dispensed to him. Western ships were often packed with pork and wine, both off limits to Muslims. Masters usually consigned these items to their slaves or rationed them out for them. Sole dibs on pork was the “only benefit” Robbins felt he “derived from the faith of a mussalman [*sic*].” Captain Scheult of the *Sophia* cleverly benefitted from this fact. He poured water in empty wine bottles, but left enough wine “for color.” His master left the “wine” to Scheult and his men. To Robbins’s annoyance, his master meted out his pork a little at a time instead of handing it over to Robbins. These rescued supplies lasted only a finite period of time after which the slave relied on his master for provender.<sup>34</sup>

Slaves stole when they could, using theft as a way of negotiating their condition without openly confronting their owners. Dick slept in his master’s tent and “as he was a domestic slave,” he managed to steal water and milk. When Paddock and his men parched and ground barley in a village, they appointed one man to “pilfer a little of it” as they worked. For a short time, Adams watched goats and sheep outside of Woled D’leim, and he periodically killed one of his charges, cooked it in a cave, and ate it. When put in charge of his master’s tobacco pouch, Paddock lifted tobacco from it until he was caught. At this point, he merely got sneakier. When his master fell asleep, he carried the pouch outside, took as much as he “durst,” replaced the telltale sticks laid across the tobacco, and returned the pouch. Desert slaves stole on the job, just as their Algerian counterparts did. But unlike the city slaves, these men often traveled with their masters and found that those around them had nothing at all.<sup>35</sup>

Unlike those enslaved in Algiers, these men had few opportunities to purchase provisions even if they had the means to do so. Towns, villages,

and cities contained markets with varied goods, but they lacked funds to buy these goods. According to Adams, anything could be bought at Wadinoon's Sunday markets, including oils, honey, meats, breads, and "sometimes cooked locusts." In the smaller Woled D'leim, Adams feasted on camel's and goat's milk and an occasional bunch of dates that his master gave him or he stole. In Santa Cruz (Agadir) Paddock's master purchased "coscoosoo" for his slaves. Both Riley and Adams claimed that they reached Timbuktu, which Riley described as "a very large city, five times as great as Swearah [Mogador]." The variety of foodstuffs on sale did slaves, none of whom had money, little good unless they swiped goods or their masters furnished them with the market's bounty.<sup>36</sup>

Slaves found begging a useful strategy for procuring food in towns and villages. While running errands, two English boys begged for milk and food. Pat, Paddock's Irish cook, sang and danced while onlookers threw food to him in one town. Captain Paddock joined in and was also rewarded for his capering. The British crew of the *Surprise* supplemented their twice-a-day corn ration by begging in a village near Wadinoon. "Children and negro slaves" gave them carrots and a few dates. Jews in a small village called "Elinegh," roughly a mile from Wadinoon, gave them food to eat and sometimes "a cup of mahia (spirits distilled from figs)."<sup>37</sup>

If settled long enough in a town, slaves exchanged goods or earned money to buy food. The *Surprise's* crew sold their "buttons for dates" and the sailors made wooden spoons and ladles. They exchanged the woodenware with Jews in Elinegh in return for *mahia*, food, and tobacco. "Black Jack," the ship's cook, bought a goat, various fowl, and eggs with money that he "got from the Moors, in payment for medicine and advice." He pretended to be a doctor, and, to the disbelief of his crewmates, "the credulous fools believed him." Only William Black of the *Surprise* mentioned getting a cash tip from his master. He bought half a bushel of dates and twelve cakes of barley bread in the local market with the two drachms (or about three pence) given him by his master.<sup>38</sup>

Outside of towns and villages, slaves foraged for extra rations. Generally, their scavenger hunts yielded little, but so great was their need that even a small addition made a difference. On the coast, they gathered mussels. Cochelet claimed that he and his crewmates ate only the shellfish that they found while their master completed his morning prayers. They collected snails and roots when they saw them. Foraging kept slaves and sometimes masters alive. Robbins shared the snails that he found with his master's wife and children. When they were starving, Ahamed, his master at this time, and his troupe gathered and ate barley in a field that they passed. They paused only long enough to show their slaves how to partake in this much-needed meal.<sup>39</sup>

Because slaves knew little about this landscape and were ravenous, foraging could be dangerous especially if they ate whatever they found without identifying it first. Savage consumed a honey-tasting weed that Riley refused to touch until their master verified that the plant was safe. The starving Savage gorged on the plant until he started violently vomiting. He survived, but his experiment and illness highlight how little Americans knew the flora and fauna in Africa. Other slaves watched their master or sought their advice before ingesting native flora. Paddock chewed bits of a dwarf thorn bush for moisture, but he had almost certainly either been advised to do so or copied the Africans around him.<sup>40</sup>

Desert slaves had few alternatives to augment their rations, especially when on the move. Riley and his four crewmen trekked almost constantly from Cape Barbas to Mogador. Fed only the snails that they discovered, Riley and his men became so emaciated that they could barely stand. Driven beyond their limit, the four sailors recklessly acted to feed themselves. They drew a four-year-old African boy away from camp, laid him down, and raised a rock to bash in his head. According to Riley, they intended to eat the boy, but were stopped at the last possible moment by Riley, who convinced them that this was unseemly behavior for American, Christian men. Their master assigned them no work, which was presumably the best he could do. He had no food, but he could minimize their physical exertion while underfed and watered.<sup>41</sup> African masters supplied their slaves with what they could without jeopardizing their own, their families', or their livestock's survival. They justified this not with paternalistic care, but with a desire for profit. If they ushered their slaves to Mogador, they recovered the costs of supplying their temporary slaves and more.

### “The Irksome Duties of a Slave”<sup>42</sup>

In America, “work necessarily engaged most slaves, most of the time,” and “when, where, and especially how” slaves worked “determined, in large measure, the course of their lives.” Americans enslaved in northwest Africa performed little labor; thus, labor did not define their slave experiences. They never worked on public projects as those in Algiers did, and only rarely tended crops as African Americans in the United States did. Rather, a master assigned them work that his other dependents would have done if he did not own a slave. The work that Western slaves did was useful, then, but not central to their masters' livelihood.<sup>43</sup>

Initially, American and Europeans did little. Like Adams, they were “greatly fatigued” from struggling in surf and storm. Some were injured.

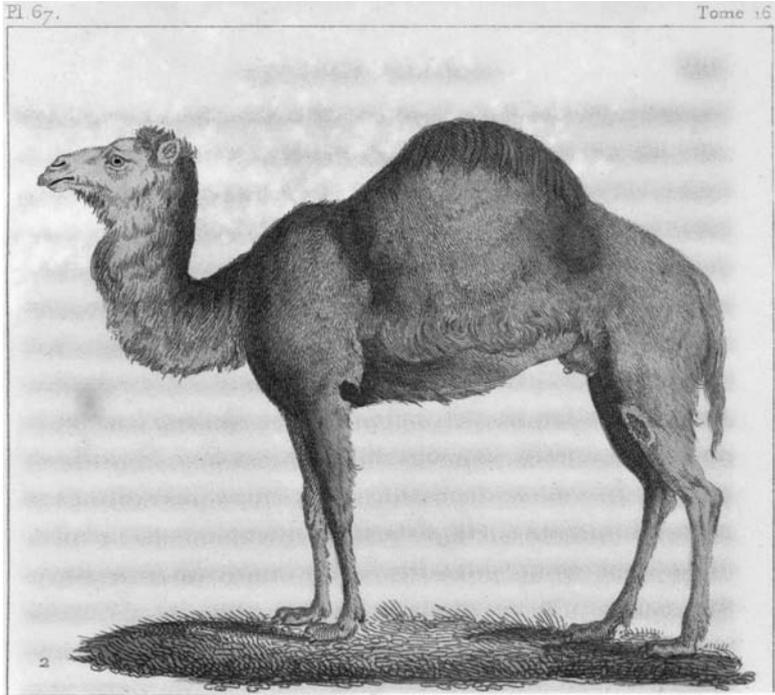
After the *Sophia* ran ashore in 1819, one crewmember found that he had a "severe contusion on his leg."<sup>44</sup> African masters seemingly allowed their tired, dislocated slaves time to recover before putting them to work. They extended the nicety of an initial adjustment period not extended to those in Algiers, who worked from the time they disembarked.

Movement, more than labor, defined American and European slaves' northwest African time. Their first masters roamed the coasts, monitoring the area for wrecks. Others were traders, pastoralists, or escorted slaves to Mogador. Slaves were tasked with keeping up, a harder job than one might imagine, given the sandy terrain and lack of food and water. For some time, Paddock's master drove the crew with shouts of "bomar" accompanied by a "blow, and a push forward," but he assigned them no other work.<sup>45</sup>

Their first African masters expected their slaves to unload their ship and hide the resulting plunder, if this were an option. Several crews walked down the coast and were captured far from their original landing site, which saved them the burdensome work of unloading their own ship for their master's profit. This hot, hard work might require braving the surf to swim to and from the ship. Cochelet and the *Sophia's* crew spent two days passing goods from their hold up to Africans on the deck. Then they dug holes deep enough to cover more than 20 barrels of flour. Lastly, they were "obliged to roll" the barrels, which took "incredible exertion," into the storage holes.<sup>46</sup>

Newly enslaved men usually did less onerous tasks. One *Sophia* crewmember dug deep enough that water seeped through and provided master and slaves with drink. While Cochelet and a shipmate excavated storage pits, other sailors prepared the Africans' food, a painful task as no food made it to the starving French slaves' mouths. Saugnier, victim of a 1783 French wreck, made butter by shaking goat's milk in leather bags. Englishman Alexander Scott, wrecked in 1810, ground barley between two flat stones.<sup>47</sup> These food-related tasks were necessary, relatively easy, generally familiar jobs that anyone could do, making it perfect work for slaves.

African masters allotted slaves jobs so easy that they were "generally entrusted to children," such as gathering fuel and guarding grazing sheep and goats. Slaves collected fuel for fires, set up and took down tents, unloaded camels, and prepared food, if any was on hand. Perhaps because shepherding consisted largely of shouting if a rare predator appeared, slaves watched grazing animals while stationary, but rarely drove animals while on the move. Two of Riley's men drove their master's goats, but the goats were tied together to prevent them from straying. Africans may have perceived American and European slaves as incompetent, and therefore assigned them only simple tasks. Or, they noticed how unfit their hungry, ill slaves were for serious labor.<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 6.3** Dromedary, Cuvier, 1831.

Source: M. F. Cuvier, *Supplément a L'Histoire Naturelle Générale et Particulière De Buffon*. Paris: F. D. Pilot, 1831.

Africans almost never entrusted American and European slaves with their camels, and observed them carefully when they worked near the animals. Of course, camels were their most valuable possessions and crucial for their survival (see [Figure 6.3](#)). Americans believed that they calculated their wealth in camels. Robbins's first master, for example, owned about 20, which made him a middling sort, according to Robbins. This man also owned two tents and at least two wives. One of Riley's owners was a wealthy man; he held sixty to seventy camels and two black slaves. Since Americans knew little about the beasts, and perhaps cared little, putting the animals in their hands was potentially dangerous.<sup>49</sup>

When stationary in a village, town, or *douar*, a group of tents, enslaved Americans were given more onerous, physical tasks. They might languish awhile in towns near Mogador while waiting for their redemption to be arranged. The crew of the British ship *Solicitor General*, lost in August

1795, worked "all day in the sun" while in Passereet, a town five days from Santa Cruz. Africans told Riley that a Spanish crew built houses and worked in fields near Wadinoon. While in that town, Adams built walls, cut down shrubs, made fences, harvested tobacco, and plowed. Naturally, he resented this "extremely severe" labor and far preferred watching goats.<sup>50</sup>

Though they were most likely to do physical labor in towns, not all Americans and Europeans did. Hector and William Black, English merchants who took passage on the *Surprise*, did not move and store plundered goods in Wadinoon, though the *Surprise's* crew did. A Spanish boy convinced the Black's master that they could "pay a large ransom," and he then exempted them from labor. As agents of the House of James Black and Company of Glasgow, the Blacks commanded more funds than the typical sailor. And they gathered those funds quickly. The *Surprise* wrecked December 28, 1815. By May 23, 1816, the Blacks learned that funds for their release were lodged with Messrs. Renshaw and Company of London. In addition to their ransom, they presented their master with a "handsome fowling piece," tea, and sugar.<sup>51</sup>

Promises of great payment or rank did not guarantee freedom from toil, however. Captains Riley and Paddock promised high redemption fees and gifts to their masters, yet both were ordered to work. Paddock and his men were commanded to harvest grain while in their master's village, though they refused to do so. Riley cared for his master's animals and fire while they traveled, but was permitted to rest when waiting for their ransom. Perhaps Riley, like the Blacks, benefitted from a combination of factors, not simply their ability to marshal cash. The Blacks were held with 15 of the *Surprise's* crew, all of whom worked, rendering the Blacks's labor superfluous.<sup>52</sup>

In the United States and Algiers, slaves who executed skilled labor received privileges including cash rewards and the right to work independently. Slaves in northwest Africa were asked to do little specialized labor. Some completed unique tasks, but these rarely required expert knowledge or skills and accomplishing the task seldom garnered special treatment. For example, Robbins protected his master's garden from thieves. This unusual job conferred responsibility but required no distinct skill and conferred no elite status.

Africans expected Western crews to include a doctor and seemingly demanded that they fulfill this duty. Cochelet's captors surrounded the crew, clamoring, "tabib, tabib, doctor, doctor," and insisted that they treat their cuts. Fortunately, the Africans possessed as little medical knowledge as the Frenchmen and were not alarmed when they prescribed lavender water for all ills. Paddock's master relentlessly inquired which man was

the ship's doctor. Finally, a previously captured English boy explained that not all crews had doctors, but that in some cases, the captain functioned as the surgeon. Marked as a medical man, Paddock had little choice but to play "the quack" to his master's wife. Riley similarly played the doctor for Africans who "consulted me where I came." None of these men reported gathering money or privileges for their medical services.<sup>53</sup>

Only the *Surprise's* cook, Black Jack, voluntarily pretended medical knowledge. In Wadinoon, he received and visited patients with an old Moor who "spoke a little broken English" and thus served as interpreter. Black Jack had little overhead as he prescribed predominately salt water though he paid his interpreter a fee. He earned a goat, some fowl, eggs, and some coins, some of which he shared with his crewmates. His crewmates enjoyed the shared spoils and admired his "ingenious plan" for hoodwinking the "credulous fools" who sought cures from him, but they had no interest in adopting his ploy. They made buttons that they exchanged for provisions or cash instead.<sup>54</sup>

Black Jack and his crewmates interpreted his doctoring as "hoodwinking" Africans, but did not construe it as resistance. Like Cathcart in Algiers, rather than fight the slave system, Black Jack played the quack to improve his quality of life while trapped in a village until ransomed. He provided services to an eager population. Since his work kept him from running away or scheming revolt, his master probably encouraged his employment.

American and European slaves concluded that Africans who clamored for medical treatment from untrained men were simply ignorant. They depict Africans as bereft of scientific knowledge and therefore unable to discern between medicine and superstition. Stories of slave doctors permitted all rational, enlightened Americans and Europeans to revel in their superiority over Africans who paid for salt and lavender water.

### "In Vain to Resist the Power of the Unfeeling Wretches"<sup>55</sup>

Enslaved Americans and Europeans mounted no revolts in early nineteenth-century northwest Africa. Of course, barriers preventing rebellion were formidable. Slaves were held in small numbers, spread out, ill fed, and unfamiliar with their surroundings. The biggest incentive against rebellion was the very real possibility of redemption. To be redeemed, however, slaves depended on their masters to keep them alive and guide them to a European agent. They focused their energies on achieving redemption for

themselves and their shipmates, not on fighting the system of Western enslavement. Like slaves in the United States, these slaves engaged in small-scale resistance designed to improve their conditions while enslaved, instead of fomenting open revolt. Since African master and Western slave worked toward a common goal—redemption—they sought to negotiate “periodic conflict” to prevent violent confrontation.<sup>56</sup>

Master and slave could not avoid all conflict, however. Slaves resisted their masters if their redemption process was halted or stopped, when assigned onerous physical labor, and if they feared that their actions might lead to permanent enslavement. American and European slaves worried that if they excelled at any task, their masters might choose not to release them. They supposed that a hardworking or skilled slave would be worth more to their African masters, and thus kept in Africa. Riley ordered his crew against revealing any mechanical skills lest they be “sold at high prices, and soon carried away beyond the possibility of redemption.”<sup>57</sup>

No evidence indicates that African masters retained skilled or hardworking slaves, yet Americans and Europeans widely held this belief. Several slaves recounted the story of Absalom, a French slave turned Turk, as an object lesson. Adams heard that this French slave had, after 12 years of slavery, “turned Mohammedan,” changed his name to Absalom, married and settled down in Africa. He lived in his former master’s house, but owned three slaves and “gained a good living by the manufacture of gunpowder.” Though Adams thought that Absalom was not ransomed because he made gunpowder, neither Adams nor other slaves indicate if the Frenchman converted or made gunpowder first. He was a long-term slave and may have given up on redemption. Perhaps he converted early on. He was captured at 14, after all. He was over 30 when Cochelet learned of him in 1819. His tender age probably precluded much gunpowder-making training, which belies the object lesson Adams and others wished to convey.<sup>58</sup>

American and European slaves had little leverage; still, they engaged in day-to-day resistance, which got better results from masters than outright rebellion. They expressed resistance in limited ways. Their masters gave them little access to equipment to sabotage, and mistreating camels meant death for their masters and themselves. When faced with labor-intensive work, they favored dissembling. When charged with harvesting grain, Riley “cut at random,” hoping his masters would think him incapable of the work. His men followed his lead to great effect. They were “soon relieved from all further” grain harvesting work.<sup>59</sup>

Paddock and his men also played dumb to avoid harvesting. Some of his men could “handle a sickle as well as themselves,” but Paddock ordered

them to pretend ignorance of the tool. He instructed one crewman to chop off his own finger “accidentally,” which Paddock thought might underscore their incompetence. His ploy paid off. They were chased from the fields and relegated to village women. Here they parched and ground barley, and did other small tasks.<sup>60</sup> Paddock, however, claimed that apathy not pretended ignorance got them out of harvesting. They were “reduced to mere skeletons” and tired of living.

Paddock and his men probably succeeded, not due to apathy or stupidity, but because their owner, Ahamed, was absent. When the Americans refused to work, their guardians were stuck. They could not kill or severely beat the slaves without facing Ahamed’s wrath. Ahamed did not put them to work when he returned perhaps because the grain was virtually gathered. Or perhaps he evaded direct confrontation with his slaves. Open conflict served little purpose when they were so close to redemption and thus so close to Ahamed collecting ransom money.<sup>61</sup>

Robbins also played dumb, which did not get him what he wanted though it prompted a change in his condition. Robbins resisted any work that “might raise [his] value in” his master’s “estimation,” as “this would probably lengthen [his] slavery.” Robbins “shewed as much ignorance and obstinacy” as possible when ordered to reap barley. Robbins hid in a field, but his master found and soundly beat him. After the beating, Robbins admitted that “resistance was in vain,” and “submitted to performing easy tasks.” Robbins concluded that his master had the upper hand while Robbins and other slaves had far more to lose by pushing things too far. Like Cochelet, he discovered that “it was necessary to submit with resignation to the services which were required of us,” particularly given the “extremity to which we were reduced.”<sup>62</sup>

Still, Robbins’s strategy won him easier work. He therefore dissembled when he wished to negotiate what type and how much work he did. To dodge becoming a “slavish fisherman,” he affected “ignorance” of the job until the “natives found that the small benefit they derived from my labour cost more than it would fetch.” His master obligingly reassigned him to camel tending. But tired of Robbins’s defiance, this master sold his intractable slave to a “trading Arab” who wished to redeem Robbins rather than put him to work. Robbins failed to evade work completely but won easier tasks, and by encouraging his stationary master to sell him to a “trading Arab,” he moved closer to getting out of Africa.<sup>63</sup>

Though they secured some concessions by feigning ignorance, openly defiant slaves rarely elicited favorable results. Adams refused to plow on the “Moorish Sabbath,” a day on which slaves were customarily free from labor. Adams “knocked” his master “down with his fist” to challenge this breach of customary rights. This tactical error further entrenched his

master and involved other "Moors," who rallied round his master. They beat Adams with sticks "in so violent a manner that the blood came out of his mouth" and two of his teeth were knocked out. They thrashed him until the *sheik's* son "reproached them for their cruelty" and for making Adams work on the Sabbath.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the reproach, Adam's owner put Adams in irons, fed him little, and told him that he would never see a Christian country until he obeyed his master. For three weeks, master and recalcitrant slave were locked in a stalemate. Adams was reduced to "a skeleton" and other Africans advised his master to sell him instead of writing him off as a "total loss." Fortunately for Adams, the English consul opened redemption negotiations at this time.<sup>65</sup>

Captains Riley and Paddock achieved better results with dithering and evading work than did Robbins and Adams. Riley and Paddock got off without any work while Adams and Robbins were given easier jobs or sold, but rarely without deprivation or violence. Robbins and Adams endured slavery much longer than the captains: Robbins for nineteen months and Adams four years to Riley's almost three months and Paddock's ten months. The two seamen interacted with many masters, but Riley and Paddock were immediately purchased by Africans who took them to Mogador. Riley and Paddock traveled steadily toward Mogador, seldom pausing long enough to be given tasks. Robbins and Adams bore several stationary periods during which they were designated for physical work. Men enslaved for longer periods resisted more frequently and stridently than those who were redeemed swiftly. The long-term slaves chafed at their masters' "capricious whim[s]" and fought back even when they knew that this might elicit poor treatment.<sup>66</sup>

American and European slaves did not oppose their masters at every turn, but chose when to negotiate. When assigned labor that was not too taxing, gave them a measure of freedom, and did not interfere with redemption, they were more accommodating. Robbins, "knowing the service" that he would "be compelled to perform," voluntarily started setting up camp as soon as one master stopped for the night. Instead of defying his master, he "endeavored to conciliate" his "favor, by performing with apparent cheerfulness, all the irksome duties of a slave." Riley used this conciliatory strategy when sold to an African whose "features showed every sign of the deepest rooted malignity." Riley tried hard to win this master over. He was "extremely anxious to please him, if such a thing was possible." This old man, "nearly as black as a negro," could not be pleased.<sup>67</sup>

As US slaves did, those in Africa decided "whether, where, and how to resist," employing different strategies depending on the situation and

their master. Sometimes, they engaged the hardworking acquiescent slave personality. Robbins cooperated when appointed “El Rais, or Capt” of his master’s garden. This chore kept him away from his master and granted him some responsibility and authority. Like other slaves, Robbins expressed pride when praised by his master. Robbins’s master asked him to shoot, and when he excelled, complimented him. He patted Robbins’s shoulder and “thought he had done well in purchasing me.” Robbins articulated satisfaction that his skill had been recognized and wryly poked fun at himself for this feeling. Perhaps Robbins’s and other slaves were gratified with an Africans’ acknowledgment of their superior work because they had represented their “race” well or because a satisfied master treated them better.<sup>68</sup>

### “Made Up His Mind Either to Obtain His Liberty Or Death”<sup>69</sup>

Though US slave owners “confronted a serious runaway problem,” American and European slaves rarely tried to escape. Most Western slaves in northwest Africa expected redemption, and thus had fewer reasons to flee. Further, they had little hope that they would escape slavery if they did so. They needed to reach Santa Cruz (Agadir) or Mogador to escape their bonds. But these routes were fairly well traveled and settled, making reenslavement likely. They usually had little information about their location or the direction to or distance from Mogador. In fact, Paddock’s master was “careful to keep” his American slaves “ignorant of the geography of their country” for this very reason. Even if they knew the route and avoided recapture, they had no way to store provisions and knew little about living off this land. Western slaves seldom attempted to escape as long as they hoped for redemption.<sup>70</sup>

If American and European slaves could not elude slavery completely, they might do so temporarily. Like African-American slaves in the United States, Western slaves fled “short distances... for a short period of time with a... limited objective.” Those in northwest Africa and in the United States exercised flight as a negotiating tool to avoid strenuous work, punishment, being moved or sold, or to visit a loved one. Robbins absconded when a master thrashed him for not finding fire fuel, but he stayed close by and even found a few sticks to present to his master when he slunk into camp later that evening. In Hilla Gibla, Adams fled from a dangerously irate master who had discovered Adams in his wife’s tent—for the second time. Fortunately, Adams was aided by his “friend,” Boerick, a “trading Arab” who hid Adams, purchased him during the ensuing uproar, and set out for Mogador with him the next day.<sup>71</sup>

The English boy Jack from London's *Martin Hall*, which wrecked in 1799, relied on running away to change the conditions of his enslavement. Paddock and his men observed Jack spending nights in Ahamed's tent and how Ahamed's mood was considerably improved the morning after such over nights. Paddock conjectured that Jack had done "*what decency forbids me to mention.*" As Paddock hinted, Ahamed may have required sexual services of the lad, and Jack fled as a way of evading this particular task. Ahamed's search party discovered Jack among reapers in a town that they had just passed. Jack offered himself as a voluntary slave to the reapers, who obligingly took him in. Ahamed paid a fee to regain his property.<sup>72</sup>

If masters held onto slaves for long or refused to redeem them, slaves might attempt escapes. Like slaves in the United States, northwest African slaves tried fleeing when near a border area, which in northwest Africa meant that when slaves were near Santa Cruz or Mogador. After two years as a slave, John Hill of Paddock's *Oswego* fled to Santa Cruz, a city in the Emperor of Morocco's territory. Expecting to be released, Hill turned himself into the governor of the city. Instead of manumitting Hill, as the emperor had ordered be done with such captives, the Governor of Santa Cruz turned him over to the Governor of Tarudaunt. Again, Hill expected to be redeemed. Again he was disappointed. This governor sold Hill to a Jew who lived outside of the emperor's bounds. Hill's escape helped him little even though he reached supposedly free territory.<sup>73</sup>

Eventually, Hill escaped from his Jewish master. The American consul in Morocco, James Simpson, agitated for Hill's release, but Hill's master insisted that \$160 be delivered to him in Ilsa before he released Hill. Simpson knew the money could not arrive safely to the distant town, so he enlisted the aid of the Governor of Tarudaunt, who was willing to make money both selling Hill and rescuing him. Meanwhile, Hill took matters into his own hands. He broke away from his master and made it to Tarudaunt, where he was redeemed and sent home.<sup>74</sup>

Few runaways won freedom, but many gained a new master with this strategy. In Wadinoon, Robbins knew a Spaniard who, after seven years of slavery, stole a camel and ran into the desert. For 30 days, he did without water though he managed to kill and eat a fox before being captured by a new group of Africans. His first master tracked him, but the new owner refused to return or pay for him. From his former master's point of view, this was disastrous. The Spaniard likely judged it a failure, also. He remained a slave for years after this attempt and was still enslaved when Robbins was manumitted.<sup>75</sup>

The despairing Adams seized a camel and headed, he hoped, toward Wadinoon when his owner declared that he would not go to Mogador. His master overtook him the next day, but only after Adams reached the small town of Hilla Gibla where he poured out his story to the empathetic

governor. As Adams explained to the man, he “had made up his mind to obtain his liberty or die,” and would not willingly return to his owner. Fortunately for Adams, the governor knew a money-making proposition when he saw one. He conferred a bushel of dates and a camel on Adams’s unwilling former owner, and thus gained possession of a new slave.<sup>76</sup>

The governor was not altruistically motivated. Rather, he understood “the value of a Christian slave, as an object of ransom,” of which Adams’s former master “seemed to be wholly ignorant.” Adams gambled that if he fled, he would either stumble upon a new master who would escort him to freedom or stumble upon Wadinoon by himself. He won a new master and initially this worked in his favor. However, this master made no move to redeem Adams, either. Next the trading Arab, Boerick, purchased Adams and then slowly wove his way toward Wadinoon. Weary of waiting for liberty, Adams ran once again. A relieved Boerick discovered him the next morning. Boerick feared that someone wanting to collect Adams’s ransom had “persuaded him to leave,” and was therefore happy to find him “on foot and alone.” Boerick feared that another African might profit from Adams, more than he worried that Adams would travel to Mogador alone.<sup>77</sup>

Captain Benjamin Seavers of Philadelphia’s *Indefatigable* fled his master because he anticipated that American officials would not parley for his release. Since Seavers navigated the *Indefatigable* in 1806 without proper permissions and paperwork, the United States was not obligated to redeem him or his crew. Consul Simpson acknowledged that their “situation” was “so distressing” that “they would be justified in laying hold of any means within their power for getting free.” Indeed, Seavers tried anything and everything to escape enslavement.<sup>78</sup>

Seavers made his first attempt after a thrashing that he received for striking an African. His owner found and recaptured him swiftly and had him bastinadoed and put in irons. Later, he ran with a Spaniard slave, but a “Family of Arabs” detained them halfway between Wadinoon and Santa Cruz. Simpson correctly guessed that Seavers’s master was “a little provoked” by his recalcitrant slave; in fact, his rebelliousness precipitated harsher treatment. By 1807, the flabbergasted Simpson found it “astounding” that Seavers had “not Lost his Life” due to his repeated attempts. Every time Seavers was apprehended before he “could gain any part of the Emperour[']s dominion,” but he would not stay put. His master had, “in revenge,” demanded \$1500 for his redemption.<sup>79</sup>

Clearly escape was a risky strategy and one that American and European slaves used strategically and less often than other tools of negotiation. Desperate slaves, convinced that they would not be redeemed, absconded. Few reaped much benefit with this approach. Seavers, who desired freedom, induced only violence with his repeated attempts. Only the long-enslaved

Adams's flights yielded benefits, but he also fell short of his goal, which was also freedom.

## Conclusion

African owners gained cash and goods from selling American and European slaves. For these masters, slaves' labor was a secondary consideration at best. Though slaves often worked, their labor was not central to their masters' economic well-being. Like Robbins's first owner and his family, many "manifested a kind of pleasure in having a slave in the family, to serve them," but they did not rely on the slave's work for their livelihood. Their pleasure stemmed more from the fact that "they hoped to make a sum by the sale of me," than from the help collecting sticks and unloading camels.<sup>80</sup>

Held singly or in small groups, slaves in the western Sahara interacted more closely and constantly with their masters than did slaves in Algiers. Master and slave were interdependent in the harsh environment: masters needed slaves to survive so that they might collect money by selling them and slaves needed a locally savvy master to live. Thus, master-slave relations were marked by accommodation and compromise, in which conflict was minimized and contained. As in the United States, the master-slave relationship in northwest Africa was a "reciprocal, if unbalanced, structure that confined and channeled the behavior of slave and owner."<sup>81</sup> American and European slaves used thievery, dissembling, and escape to avoid work, harsh treatment, or long-term slavery. Slaves resisted to change their immediate conditions, not to dismantle the African system of Western enslavement.

If Westerners were redeemed, they were inclined to be well disposed to the masters who redeemed them or treated them well. Hamet wanted cash in exchange for Riley, and sustained Riley only as much as he had to in order to keep the man alive. From Riley's point of view, he had been kept alive, regardless of why, and had been freed. He could, therefore, honestly leave Hamet with "feelings of regret, and shedding tears."<sup>82</sup>

## Chapter 7

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# “Clear the Country of All You Christian Dogs”\*

## The Business of Redemption

Like Captain James Riley, other Americans and Europeans reported feeling indebted to their former African masters for sustaining and redeeming them. Riley parted from Hamet, his former master, with “feelings of regret, and shedding tears,” for his master “had been a kind master, and to him I owed, under God my life and deliverance from slavery.” Riley’s feelings of gratitude paled in comparison to Hamet’s, who saw Riley as an instrument of divine intervention. Hamet told Riley that he had behaved immorally and cruelly before he encountered Riley in the desert. When he saw Riley “naked and as a slave” and learned Riley had a family, “God softened” his heart. After this, he “did all” that he could “to lighten the burden of [his] afflictions.” Hamet fought to protect Riley and “endured hunger, thirst, and fatigues” for Riley. Seeing Riley free gave him “the high pleasure of knowing I have done some good in the world.” As Riley portrayed things, his master cared deeply about him personally, perhaps because he had succumbed to the civilizing influence of Riley. Hamet was so reformed that he shook hands with Riley when they parted.<sup>1</sup>

Like Riley, other slaves described their masters’ solicitous concern for their well-being, but from their masters’ point of view, money and personal survival probably mattered more than humanitarian concerns. African masters, even Hamet, sustained their slaves for the sake of the profit that they gained when their ransom was paid. Some slaves realized this. William Black of the English ship *Surprise* knew that his master looked at their Christian captives “as so many cattle carrying to market.”

In fact, “were it not in expectation of getting money, they . . . would have killed us.” Captain Juddah Paddock concurred, noting that “avarice was the ruling passion of our owners,” and if they could have “obtained as much money by putting us to death as by selling us,” they would have killed them immediately.<sup>2</sup>

Riley’s regretful tears indicated the disjuncture between how slaves saw—or presented—their masters’ actions and their masters’ actual motivations, which were likely more mercenary than they believed. His tears were an emotional response to the conflict and contradictions inherent in the relationship between slave and master in this desert environment.

### “Safe in the Hands of the Master”<sup>3</sup>: The Route to Redemption

African masters cleared a tidy sum when they sold and redeemed their slaves. They might have also benefited from their slaves’ labor. In return, they provided minimal food and water. Some ferried slaves to freedom. The voyage from the Atlantic coast to the city of Mogador was difficult, and therefore not all Africans undertook it. A master needed to protect his slave property, purchase adequate supplies, know the route, and accept the risk of losing his slaves to bandits or the emperor, who officially laid claim to all shipwrecked victims. From a slave’s point of view, a particular type of master was required to escort them to freedom. As in Algiers, a system was in place to help facilitate freeing European and American slaves, but the desert setting and geographical distances presented challenges for master and slave.

European and American slaves relied on Africans to take them to Mogador, modern-day Essaouira, or its close vicinity, so that they could be freed (see [Figure 7.1](#)). In 1764, Moroccan emperor Sidi Muhammad bin Abdallah built Mogador, also called “Swearah,” in a push to encourage and control trade between Moroccans and Europeans. By the late eighteenth century, the city served as the “main entrepôt for the trans-Saharan trade.” African merchants and traders brought goods here from interior cities and towns, making this an important regional redistribution center. In fact, many sub-Saharan caravans terminated here. Trade circulated internally more than externally, so that the Moroccan government gained more income from taxing the domestic movement of goods than from collecting custom duties or fees at Mogador.<sup>4</sup>

Moroccan emperors limited foreign influence in the Moroccan economy. In the late eighteenth century, emperors forbid foreigners from



**Figure 7.1** View of Mogador, Payne, ca. 1840.

*Source:* Engraved by A. H. Payne, drawn by C. Graham, London: Brain and Payne, ca. 1840.

participating in interior markets. They also decreed that Europeans in southern Morocco could only reside in and trade from Mogador. European merchants thus depended on indigenous agents and traders to facilitate their business. An occasional European set up shop in Santa Cruz (Agadir), about one hundred miles south of Mogador. Few found this worth the risk, as the emperor eventually got wind of the maverick and dispatched representatives or troops to dislodge the unwelcome presence. As a regional center of trade, Mogador attracted peddlers and “riding merchants” transporting goods on mules and camels between the city and its hinterlands, making this an advantageous location for Europeans to trade. According to William Lempriere, a French surgeon who traveled in Morocco, dozens of mercantile houses operated out of Mogador, including several Jewish and a handful of European businesses.<sup>5</sup>

Not all Africans undertook the risk of transporting European or American slaves to Mogador. In fact, the first masters that a slave encountered rarely did so. Most Westerners wrecked near Cape Bojador, which Riley thought put them five hundred and fifty miles from the port, but modern calculations put at a little over seven hundred miles away. Riley and his crew floated even further south in their longboat, ending up near Cape Barbas, which Riley figured at two hundred miles south. They were,

however, almost four hundred miles away from their first landing. Riley and his crew would have to trudge through nine hundred miles of inhospitable terrain to be redeemed. Africans who salvaged wreck victims rarely embraced the danger and uncertainty of such a long journey. Instead, they sold the slaves as soon as they could, turning a quick profit on a commodity that they acquired without any capital outlay.

Africans near the coast knew that Western slaves were valuable commodities but may not have known the full “value of a Christian slave, as an object of ransom.” Robert Adams, an American enslaved after the *Charles’s* 1810 wreck, found one master “wholly ignorant” of his worth. Seaman Adams perhaps had an inflated view of his value or misunderstood how his value increased the closer he got to Mogador and the market for ransoming Christian slaves.<sup>6</sup> Wrecked and enslaved in 1783, M. Saugnier was sold several times. Early on, he was purchased for two young camels, but a later owner sold him for cash, though Saugnier never knew how much. This master sold him in the trading town of Glimi (Guelmine), located two hundred and thirty miles south of Mogador for \$150. His last master, Bentahar, acquired him for \$180 also in Glimi. As an agent for English merchants in Mogador, Bentahar was relatively sure that he would be reimbursed for this expenditure and for the lesser amounts that he paid for five of Saugnier’s fellow slaves.<sup>7</sup>

As Saugnier’s example shows, some slaves changed hands often while others suffered only a few owners. Jack, a 13- or 14-year-old boy enslaved out of the *Martin Hall’s* 1799 wreckage, informed Paddock in 1800 that he and other crewmembers had often been bought and sold among the Africans. During three months of slavery, Riley was claimed by three owners, while Archibald Robbins served five masters over the course of nineteen months. Two masters possessed Paddock over four months, while Adams had only three masters in more than three years of African slavery. One of Paddock’s *Oswego* crew, John Hill, was “sold very often, carried from place to place, and used very cruelly” over a period of two years.<sup>8</sup>

Only two men held Captain Paddock, the coastal African who first claimed him and Ahamed, a seemingly well-off chief. Ahamed returned from Mogador, presumably on a trading trip, to find Paddock and other European slaves held by what he called “hunting Arabs,” that is, the Africans who found and first claimed the Western slaves. Ahamed was termed by Europeans and Americans a “trading Arab,” or a wealthier Berber or African merchant (see [Figure 7.2](#)). Because they moved goods between village and city markets, trading Arabs were more likely than other Africans to take slaves, just another commodity, to Mogador.

Trading Arabs either acquired more than one slave or traveled in concert with other Africans who purchased Western slaves, thereby maximizing



**Figure 7.2** Arabe Bedouine, Choubard, c. 1820.

Source: Choubard after L. Massard, John Lewis Burckhard, *Voyages en Asie*, French, n.d., c. 1820, p. 147.

possible profit and minimizing the risk of a trip to Mogador. Bentahar gathered Saugnier and five other captives while Hamet bought Riley and four of the *Commerce's* crew. Paddock was both lucky and persistent. He luckily encountered a merchant, Ahamed, early in his captivity and he persisted in his efforts to convince him to purchase several of his crew.

Ahamed claimed that he bought Christian slaves in bulk so that he could rid “the country of all you Christian dogs at once.” But his interest, like other African masters’, was the money to be made by ransoming multiple men. Paddock worked hard to entice Ahamed to buy himself and his men. He promised the African \$40 and several items for his two wives as well as all the tobacco that he could smoke on his way home from Mogador if he would purchase and transport them to the port city and freedom.<sup>9</sup>

Those familiar with regional trading patterns, with European merchants, and with the system of redemption, were often serial owners of European and American slaves. Robbins believed that his master Bel Cossim’s wealth derived from buying slaves at low prices and ransoming them high. Bel Cossim had purchased many Western slaves over time, and for this reason, European consuls employed him as an agent to seek out European slaves and convey them to the port. Robbins’s Shilluh master moved carefully between Wadinoon and Santa Cruz because the local leader, Sidi Hesham, was a “great bandit” who wanted to capture and cash in on all European slaves.<sup>10</sup>

Africans with European and American slaves chose their routes carefully. Trading Arabs used the trek to Mogador as a moneymaking endeavor in more than one way. Many bought and sold commodities as they passed through territory, though some could not, having spent their available capital on their slaves. One of Adams’s masters moved in what Adams perceived as a slow and roundabout path to Mogador. His owner stopped to trade at every small town and village they passed.<sup>11</sup>

Because their journey required facing normal desert dangers and the added threat of attackers bent on stealing their slaves, traders carefully skirted people and areas associated with bandits. They picked out less-traveled routes to avoid theft. As they avoided good paths for more treacherous passages, they “rendered” their slaves’ “journey so much the more uncomfortable.” In his determination to avoid crooks, Hector Black’s owner guided his slaves over “merely tracts” as they neared Wadinoon. Less-traveled courses meant fewer places to get water or provisions, which meant master and slave might have to do without either.<sup>12</sup>

African masters guarded against theft at every stage of their trip. Alexander Scott’s owner, for example, never pitched his tents close to passing groups. Scott thought that his master not only feared theft, but also hoarded his food and water rather than sharing it with passing travelers. Africans remained cautious because they had learned through experience that any group might threaten their merchandise. Riley’s master and his entourage were warmly welcomed in a village, where the residents slaughtered and shared a camel with them. That night, a man warned them of impending attack geared at seizing the slaves. Riley’s master immediately

moved his group, and subsequently avoided watering holes and other places that people congregated. The cost of this decision was high. Without water, his camels sickened and even died on their march toward Mogador.<sup>13</sup>

Wadinoon proved a popular stop for Africans wishing to redeem slaves. From their perspective, this town had several advantages over Mogador as a site of negotiation. For one thing, Wadinoon (Oued Noun) took a little more than a week’s journey covering about two hundred miles to reach Mogador. The town served as a marketplace for trade crisscrossing northwest Africa and was therefore a natural stopping point for traders. American sailor Robbins reported that the town’s 150 families could purchase virtually anything from the regular Sunday markets or from one of the several markets that were held near the town.<sup>14</sup>

Several Africans had business and family ties in the town, which was another reason that they paused here. Charles Cochelet’s master lived in the town and Bel Cossim, the wealthy owner of Adams and Robbins, farmed there. Hamet, who owned Riley and later Robbins, had a wife and family in Wadinoon, though this inspired him to avoid the town. He feared that his father-in-law, the town’s governor, would force him to sell the slaves to pay off a debt that Hamet owed him.<sup>15</sup>

Lastly, Wadinoon lay just outside the Moroccan government’s jurisdiction, which ended around Santa Cruz (Agadir). Because people here did not recognize his sovereignty, Emperor Muwlay Sulayman could not collect taxes south of Santa Cruz (see [Figure 7.3](#)). Tribal chieftains and religious leaders acted with “unlimited power” in whatever area they could control, and were often fomenting unrest in attempts to bring larger areas under their influence. When Adams complained of inhumane treatment in Wadinoon, the Governor of Santa Cruz told him that the inhabitants “were savages, and not subjects of the Emperor.”<sup>16</sup>

Wadinoon, then, was as close as one could get to Mogador while avoiding Morocco’s legal authority. Any closer and the emperor might lay claim to Western slaves, requiring an owner to hand them over with no guaranteed reimbursement. Since the emperor did not control Wadinoon, his agents could merely negotiate for Westerners’ release there, not dictate their release. Since the Moroccan government had treaties with several Western countries that promised safe passage for those countries’ citizens, the emperor employed agents in the south to retrieve enslaved Westerners. The emperor’s agents parleyed for the *Association’s* crew when the ship wrecked near Cape Blanc in 1806, and again in 1808 for some of the *Indefatigable’s* crew.<sup>17</sup>

From a master’s point of view, the downside was that Wadinoon was close enough to Mogador that slaves sometimes escaped and attempted the journey on their own. Though an American and Englishman successfully



**Figure 7.3** West Africa, Finley, 1829.

Source: Northern Africa, Anthony Finley from *A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, Representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe*, 1829. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Hall, TN, Historical Maps UA.

made the trek in 1814, it was an uncommon feat. Slaves knew little about this environment and the Atlas Mountains stood in the way. Riley, Robbins, and Lempriere, who all journeyed with Africans, detailed the difficult passage that taxed animals and natives. Lest they be reenslaved, they

had to avoid local traffic on the normal paths and several towns between Wadinoon and Mogador.<sup>18</sup>

As they drew close to Wadinoon, Santa Cruz, and Mogador, owners watched their slaves carefully to prevent them from bolting or being stolen. Robbins’s master, anxious that his slave might be swiped, forced a fast march around Wadinoon and set a regular watch on Robbins. Riley and his four crewmen were closely guarded night and day. Paddock confessed that he and his men wanted to run to Santa Cruz, but were observed too closely to escape. When Adams, frustrated with his master’s meandering pace, set out on his own, his master dreaded that he had been enslaved by a new man. He was pleased to find him the next day “on foot and alone,” not in the hands of another African hoping to make a profit in Mogador.<sup>19</sup>

Most European and American slaves passed time in Wadinoon or in its vicinity while their masters made contact with European consuls or their agents. Those “in the Country,” or too far from Wadinoon, like Adams was for four years, were too far for Europeans to aid them. For that reason, Consul James Simpson considered it “fortunate” that Paddock and his four crewmen “so speedily” ended up in Wadinoon. Those in the interior were impossible to locate or ransom, and they lived in conditions “shocking beyond description.”<sup>20</sup>

## “I Was Shipwrecked . . . Intercede for Me”<sup>21</sup>: Making Contact

Like Ottoman Algerian masters, northwest Africans wanted their slaves to communicate with Europeans, and they facilitated this process when they could. Masters encouraged their slaves to write letters to men who might purchase their freedom. Wadinoon and Santa Cruz proved convenient locations through which consuls, slaves, and their owners communicated through agents usually hired by European consuls or the Moroccan Emperor. Paddock’s master ordered him to write the English consul from Santa Cruz. Paddock complied, using the only paper available: manifests from the wrecked Spanish schooner, the *Maria*. Riley, Robbins, and Hector Black eagerly acted on similar orders from their masters. Likewise, Captain Seavers of the *Indefatigable* penned a nearly eight-page letter from Wadinoon begging assistance from the English consul. These letters opened redemption negotiations and were thus seen as crucial for all interested parties.<sup>22</sup>

A letter needed only to reach any European consul or merchant, as most helped European or American victims. Because the English paid to redeem

their countrymen for decades, however, Africans trusted that English citizens could be ransomed fairly easily and swiftly. The Portuguese and Spanish maintained little consular activity in early-nineteenth-century Morocco, and their men suffered longer periods of enslavement because of this. Wreck victims knew an English consul resided in Mogador, but they and their masters were less confident of an American presence. To encourage their captors to take them to Mogador, many enslaved men claimed that they were English whether they were or not. Paddock, the first American to wreck on this coast, knew of no American agents in Morocco, though he knew British agents lived in Mogador. He instructed his crew to claim British citizenship to convince their masters that redeeming them would pay off. Frenchman Cochelet, also unsure of other Europeans' presence on the coast, addressed his letter to an English consul.<sup>23</sup>

Unsure of who might receive their letters, some men left their letters open-ended. Sailor Thomas Davis sent a general plea stating that he was a shipwrecked American and begging that the reader "intercede for" him "as soon as possible, for I am in a very bad state." Captain Riley's first letter covered all bases; he addressed it to any English, French, Spanish, or American consuls or merchants in Mogador. He purposefully left out his own nationality lest no American agent resided there and in hopes that other Europeans would come to his aid regardless of his country of origin.<sup>24</sup>

Stuck in Mogador by imperial decree yet charged with rescuing their countrymen, European consuls employed native agents to comb the country for enslaved men and then bargain for their release. British consuls, who were often employed by the United States as well, constantly shelled out money to hire agents that might carry letters and information, conduct slaves to the port, and carry material goods to slaves in Wadinoon.<sup>25</sup> The activities of these agents suggest a dense network linking towns and cities in Africa and a desire to ransom slaves promptly.

Neither Adams nor his master was surprised when an agent delivered a letter informing Adams of his impending ransom. Adams's master, Abdallah Houssa, advised that the British consul usually freed slaves in Wadinoon this way. Robbins also received a consular letter while in Wadinoon. This epistle was addressed to any European slave, not specifically to Robbins himself, a commonly used strategy to locate slaves.<sup>26</sup>

Some owners contacted consuls themselves rather than waiting for a consular agent. A Moor holding Saugnier and his five companions arranged for their letter to be delivered to Mogador. The "proprietor" of three sailors from the *Charles* personally journeyed to Mogador to arrange their redemption. Hamet, Riley's owner, carried a letter from Riley to English consul William Willshire in Mogador himself as a way of speeding the redemption process. These masters may have desired face-to-face haggling

to cut out the consular middleman and so they could drive a harder bargain for their slaves.<sup>27</sup>

Agents carried correspondence and information, and they provided much-needed supplies for the enslaved. Like Ottoman Algerian owners, these Africans happily accepted donations sent to their slaves. They sometimes appropriated such items for their own use. English consul James Matra's 1791 gift of ink and paper, sent to the *Prosperous's* crew in Wadinoon, was welcomed by the seamen's owner, who appreciated the opportunity to have his slaves hurry the redemption process along.<sup>28</sup>

When initially captured, slaves were stripped of their clothing. Their captors used or sold their garments, leaving their bondsmen covered with leftover bits of material. Robbins observed how a shipmate's African mistress fashioned a shirt out of the ship's flag, which, Robbins confessed, "made me smile." Meanwhile, Robbins's owners confiscated his trousers and then handed him an 18-inch-wide strips of blanket and thorns with which to cover himself. When the British consul located survivors of the *Betsey* in 1773, he immediately sent an agent with clothing and other "necessaries" for them. Similarly, once Cochelet made contact with the French vice consul in Mogador, the French official dispatched a Jewish agent with a letter and shoes.<sup>29</sup>

Consul Willshire supplied Riley and his men with cloaks, new shoes, boiled tongue, rum, tea, sugar, a teapot, cups, and saucers. The Africans doled out shoes, cloaks, rum, and tongue, but partook of the tea and sugar before sharing it with the Americans. Sadly, the food and liquor caused the men "violent griping pains in our stomachs and intestines" so bad that they had trouble not "screaming out with agony."<sup>30</sup>

In addition to humanitarian concerns, European consuls clothed slaves properly lest they "turn Turk." Consuls feared that if slaves became accustomed to African ways or desperately suffered for want of food or adequate clothing, they might embrace Islam and remain in Africa. Europeans and Americans believed that Western clothing and one's native tongue helped slaves retain their identities and resist African culture and Islam. For this reason, Consul Matra complained when nothing but "Moorish tunicks" were available to send to six English slaves in Santa Cruz. Matra worried that tunics left Britons improperly clothed and that their African masters would seize the outfits to use themselves or sell. He insisted that proper trousers and shirts be ordered and sent as soon as possible.<sup>31</sup>

Consuls granted their agents wide latitude when it came to tracking down and redeeming Europeans. James Simpson sent a "Moor" to "pursue his inquiries . . . as far as the country of the Wadelim" in looking for the last missing men from Riley's crew. So no time would be wasted, the Moor was empowered to "establish their Redemption" if possible. A man escorting

Adams from Wadinoon to Mogador diverted to a nearby town when he heard a slave was held there. Unfortunately, he could not convince Martin Clark's owner to part with him. Clark, a black crewmate of Adams's, was eventually redeemed in 1814. When French and English merchants heard that Saugnier was enslaved from "different brokers that commerce obliged them to disperse around the country," they dispatched an agent charged with purchasing Saugnier and anyone with him and carrying them to Mogador.<sup>32</sup>

Consuls hired and rehired the same indigenous agents. Willshire often employed Bel Cossim, who, according to Riley, had visited Europe several times as the captain of a grain-carrying ship. These experiences acquainted him with European trading practices, languages, and European contacts who vouched for him. Willshire relied on his service time and time again, and assured Riley that the man could be trusted. Bel Cossim's repeated service also hints that the role was lucrative, or at least worthwhile, for him.<sup>33</sup>

Agents could certainly make money carrying goods, letters, and Western slaves to and fro in northwest Africa. In 1792, English consul James Matra compensated "Hazan Massoud for his trouble" for purchasing Captain Driver of the *Prosperous* and for expenses incurred while maintaining the English crew during their "stay" at Wadinoon. Massoud earned a total of £2700 (approximately \$616.44 in 1792 and \$12987 in 2005) for his exertions. Because the enslaved captain had promised money, Matra paid the "Moorish Sidi Bellel" £1500 (or about \$342.46 in 1792 and \$7205 in 2005) for "good treatment" of four Englishmen during nineteen months that he held them. Matra paid a Moor to conduct the men from Wadinoon to Santa Cruz, and to hire a mule from Santa Cruz to Mogador. In addition, he laid out £680 (\$155.25) for "sundries" and clothing for the men, £105.2 (\$24) as a present to the Governor of Wadinoon, and £1120 (\$255.70) cash to Mogador's officials for leave for the men to disembark. These fees were in addition to the actual ransom price. Matra figured the grand total for redeeming and maintaining nine men at £25,940 (\$5922.37).<sup>34</sup>

In 1799, British consul Peter Gwyn spent similar funds to redeem the *Martin Hall's* crew. He covered redemption and traveling costs, including mules for transporting provisions. He even remunerated the governor's men who retrieved two sailors, seaman Michael Hamilton and mate William Kerr, who "endeavored to escape." The English government paid £150 (about \$34.25) to catch the two Englishmen and return them to slavery so that they could be ransomed.<sup>35</sup>

The American government was not so generous. In 1812, Africans delivered three of the *Charles's* crew to Mogador as commanded by the Moroccan Emperor. The emperor arranged for their ransom, but the Africans complained that he paid too little to cover what they paid to

buy the men, let alone their lost time and expenses in bringing them to Mogador. To mollify them, James Renshaw, who took over as English consul from Willshire in Mogador, paid each a gratuity of \$8 on behalf of the United States. Renshaw hoped that this might encourage them and other Africans to bring wrecked Americans directly to Mogador. Because the tip was so low compared to what other countries paid, it may not have had the desired effect.<sup>36</sup>

Renshaw’s underpayment may explain why Stephen Dolbins’s master demanded \$200 to be paid at Wadinoon before he would release Dolbins, the former first mate of the *Charles*. After three years of slavery, Dolbins died in Wadinoon awaiting this payment. At least Simpson did not leave Joseph Lee, the *Indefatigable*’s mate, to languish in slavery for much more than one year. Simpson paid \$450 for the ransom fee, with an overall disbursement of \$560.25 for his 1807 redemption.<sup>37</sup>

In 1819, Lemuel Gifford’s master asked for \$300 plus expenses for Gifford’s release. Simpson refused because he thought that the high price might push others to demand higher prices for enslaved Americans. Simpson also balked because of Gifford’s rank. As an ordinary seaman, Gifford commanded a lower price than officers in the redemption market. Officers such as Dolbins and Lee may have been able to raise money for their redemption charges. Indeed, Lee’s brother offered \$400 for his release. But ordinary seamen and their families were unlikely to possess such sums. Fortunately for Gifford, his master lowered the price, and he, unlike Dolbins, lived to be ransomed. Simpson redeemed him “at last” for \$190, with an overall disbursement of \$238.95.<sup>38</sup>

### “Large Premiums Being Paid for Christians”<sup>39</sup>: Redemption Payments

Consuls were in a precarious situation with regard to redemptions. Since they drew small salaries, they required compensation for expenditures made on behalf of those in need. They were careful about whom they ransomed and how much they paid to increase their chances of being compensated. They might, for instance, carefully ascertain the nationality of a distressed seaman before they aided him. The consul was officially responsible for, and reimbursed only for, citizens of the country for whom he served as consul.

Seamen claimed that they came from whatever country that they thought might best serve their interests, so identifying a seaman’s nationality could be a tricky task. Sometimes consuls detected a sailor’s nationality

with ease, as was the case with American captain Paddock and his crew. Paddock asserted British citizenship, a safe bet because the English had aggressively retrieved their men since the 1760s. African masters trusted that they would be reimbursed well and promptly for British bondsmen. Once in Mogador, an Englishman at the British consulate immediately pegged him as an American. British consul Gwyn still received them cordially. After all, as he told Paddock, "you are Christian, and that is enough." He would, he told Paddock, "do every thing in" his power to help them, but he was "poor" and could not "advance money" for their ransom. Other Europeans in the city might lend the Americans money, but they would ultimately need to work through American consul Simpson in Tangiers to arrange redemption.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, Willshire told Englishman Hector Black of the *Surprise* that he could not advance money on "faith." After all, they were "entire strangers for him," and he "looked only for reimbursement." Simpson and other consuls constantly complained that they were not paid enough to cover their expenditures. When Simpson died in 1819, his son petitioned for redress because his father, "after nearly 26 years" of service, "spent in a most barbarous country," had died "leaving his family in poverty." He was poor because he had to maintain, for the sake of the country that he served, a lifestyle equal to his dignity and that of the United States. He left a young son and daughter "without so much as even one Cent for their support."<sup>41</sup>

In other cases, consuls had to scrutinize sailors closely to identify their nationality. Consul William Jarvis made it a "rule to examine the Seamen closely," but even so, true nationality might be hard to determine. American consular agents considered Thomas Williams an American and redeemed him for \$175. As soon as he was free, he declared residence in Bristol and claimed British protection. Consul Simpson then had to finagle money from the British for Williams's redemption.<sup>42</sup>

Two of Williams's crewmates further confused the issue of national identity. They were Swedes, but had "for some time navigated in Merchant vessels of the United States," and should therefore be redeemed by the American government with the rest of the ship's crew. Since Sweden did little for their shipwrecked men, they had little recourse but to depend on the American government. They got lucky. Because the Moroccan Emperor considered the entire crew American, he retrieved the two Swedes along with one other crewmate. Happily, the US government paid a nominal fee of \$172.92 for the redemption of all three seamen.<sup>43</sup>

Even an American ship navigated by a largely American crew could pose problems, which was the case of the *Indefatigable*. Captain Benjamin Franklin Seavers purchased the ship in Gibraltar where it had been condemned as a prize to a privateer. He then headed for Cape Verde to pick up

salt before returning to America. Before he left Gibraltar, Seavers failed to meet the conditions "usually deemed necessary" before "hoisting American colours"; therefore, the American consul in Gibraltar, John Gavino, refused to issue a certificate of bond to Seavers. Seavers left port anyway, navigating the ship without the papers that would "justify agreeable to Law his Navigating her" under the American flag. In other words, the *Indefatigable* lacked certification that legally marked her and her crew as American.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, the *Indefatigable* wrecked on the African coast during this uncertified trip. After getting a letter of "8 folio pages" from the enslaved Captain Seavers, Simpson begged the secretary of state for "precise instructions" as to whether or not he should "obtain the release" of the men on the "Public charge." If the men were to be redeemed by the United States, the American government would have to recognize them as citizens with all the "benefits arriving" from that status. Captain Seavers, who admitted to sailing without proper paperwork, recognized his tenuous situation, but thought "it hard . . . that any deviation from a navigation act should occasion him and his fellow Sufferers being left in their present miserable situation."<sup>45</sup>

The "partly foreign crew," while not uncommon on ships of this period, further complicated the situation. Though nine out of thirteen, or roughly 70 percent of the crew, were Americans, one crewmember came from Ragusa, one from England, and one from France. The only passenger, Jean Baptiste Barrett, claimed New Orleans as his home in one letter and Newfoundland in another, both written in French. Simpson and Gavino doubted his claims, which caused Simpson to drag his feet when it came to redeeming the man. By 1811, ten of the crew had been freed, two died in Africa, and only Barrett was missing.

By this time, Simpson believed that Barrett had been "an Officer" in the "early Service" of Haiti, which implied that Barrett was an African or mulatto. This made it easier to relegate him to the category with African American wreck victims. Many Americans supposed that African Americans wrecking in Africa chose to stay there. Simpson, for example, was "assured" that the *Oswego's* two African American crew members had "turned Moors, and married in the country," an event he had "always dreaded would be their fate." Similarly, Simpson heard that Barrett "embraced the Mohamedan Religion . . . some months ago," and thereby chose to remain in Africa. Simpson and others believed that Africans priced African Americans high so that they could keep them or that African Americans chose to stay in Africa. "By every account" that Simpson heard, for example, Paddock's two free African American crewmen "voluntarily remained with the Arabs and got married."<sup>46</sup>

Simpson and other Westerners flinched at the thought of leaving their own white countrymen enslaved in Africa. Consuls also perceived several

disadvantages to leaving (white) Westerners in these straits. Simpson worried that leaving the unfortunate Seavers and his crew in bondage might “endanger the lives and liberty of other persons who have a perfect claim up on the national protections.” According to Simpson, paying ransom fees, though expensive, was necessary to encourage “the Arabs to bring” stranded Westerners out of the desert, and “to prevent them” from “destroying or keeping in perpetual Slavery” wreck victims. In fact, one African master conveyed his English slave boy to Mogador in 1816 because he had heard reports of “large premiums being paid for Christians” there. The boy turned out to be the only person not yet accounted for from an 1810 English wreck.<sup>47</sup>

Consuls encouraged Africans to ransom Europeans and Americans but tried to avoid paying exorbitant fees for their redemption. They feared that if word got out that Americans were not purchased or redeemed at low prices then Africans might keep them as slaves. For this reason, Simpson sent \$1600 to his agent in Mogador for the relief of the *Indefatigable’s* crew as soon as he heard that the ship had foundered in 1806. Without official word, Simpson also paid the Emperor of Morocco the nominal, yet required, fee for freeing five *Indefatigable* crewmembers in 1808. He paid the price for this generous action. The US government did not repay him the \$424.15 he was owed until 1816.<sup>48</sup>

Simpson and other European consuls tried to keep costs down, but many factors worked against them. When consuls failed to redeem stranded men immediately, the sailors arranged their own ransoms at unusually high rates. This might push redemption prices so high that no one could afford to free captives. When Captain Seavers handed over \$1300 to free himself and a crewmate, a rate that far exceeded the average \$200 ransom fee, Simpson fretted that other masters’ greediness would be increased, making it harder to get others out. Seavers footed his own bill with the help of a Boston merchant who loaned him \$500 and the master of a New Haven ship who left \$350 for him.<sup>49</sup>

Other countries cut deals that drove prices higher. In 1789, Captain James Irving reported that the French shelled out \$1600 for six Frenchmen, or about \$266.66 per person. Though not much higher than the \$200 average for redemption fees, it caused Irving’s master to reject the English consul’s more modest offer for Irving. By 1799, high prices made it “very tedious and expensive” for the English and Spanish to redeem crews, and many had “actually perished in the Country” before they could be ransomed.<sup>50</sup>

Western consuls found rising prices “so serious” that they contemplated setting fixed fees for redemptions. They anticipated that a guaranteed fee would induce Arabs to conduct wreck victims immediately to Mogador.

Consuls, however, disagreed on the more reasonable price. Some expected \$100 per sailor to suffice, but Simpson thought \$200 more likely to do the job. The consuls and countries that they represented could not agree on a rate, so continued to pay on a case by case basis. Two hundred dollars emerged as the going rate, though this fluctuated depending on the victim's rank, master's preferences, and other extenuating circumstances. Seavers and his crewmate, for example, repeatedly attempted to escape, a maneuver that angered their master enough that he demanded an exceptionally high price for his trouble.<sup>51</sup>

Slaves rarely considered that they might be driving up prices; they cared only that they be released from slavery. In northwest Africa, as in America, "freedom rarely arrived without slaves' taking the initiative."<sup>52</sup> European and American slaves pursued redemption any way that they could in Africa. Though the enslaved ultimately had little say in when they were sold or to whom, they manipulated what they could to speed their freedom. For example, Riley and Paddock convinced trading Africans to purchase them and some of their men by promising presents and fees when they arrived in Mogador.

Enslaved Westerners pledged monetary rewards, presents, and covered expenses if their owners delivered them to Mogador. Riley begged Hamet, a trading Arab with laden camels, to buy him and his crew. He aroused Hamet's interest with "large offers of money," finally offering \$100 a man and \$200 for himself. After Riley pleaded with Hamet "on my knees every time I had an opportunity" and promised to pay for their provisions, Hamet purchased five of the *Commerce's* crew.<sup>53</sup>

Saugnier assured his master \$180 for his ransom, which seemingly persuaded the man to purchase Saugnier and five of his crewmates. He offered different rates for the men, which reflected how rank affected the price of slaves. The Moor acquired an officer for \$250, the mate for \$95, and two seamen "for only" \$85 each. Captain Paddock of the *Osuego* promised \$400 per man and \$40 more for himself. This did not have the desired effect, so he threw in their travel expenses and gifts for his master's wife. Ahamed did purchase Paddock and seven of his crew, perhaps due to Paddock's bribery. However, Ahamed already owned three English boys from the *Martin Hall*. He may have had experience ransoming Western slaves and wanted to buy more before traveling to Wadinoon.<sup>54</sup>

Paddock's deal guaranteed more than the American consul could or would afford. Simpson consented to pay only \$40 for Paddock, \$20 per seaman, a gratuity to the Governor of Mogador, and upkeep for the men while in Mogador. Simpson estimated this at \$1200, or \$150 per person, a sum lower than most ransoms. He did not want to bear the costs out of pocket while Paddock feared for his life and would have promised virtually

anything for his freedom. Paddock's alarm grew as they traveled toward Mogador and passersby informed Ahamed, his owner, that European consuls could not afford to buy slaves, that Jews in Elic paid better, and that plague, rampaging at the time, would kill his slaves before they reached Mogador.<sup>55</sup>

### “As So Many Cattle Carrying to Market”<sup>56</sup>: Of Profit and Paternalism

Western slaves' machinations sometimes helped them get to Mogador, but could not guarantee them good treatment on the way. African masters treated their slaves relatively well, though this depended on the individual owner's predilections and resources. When push came to shove, African masters expended their resources on themselves, their livestock, and families rather than on their Western slaves. American masters likely did so, also, though they were more likely to describe caring for their slaves, or “people,” as they would for members of their family, and they interfered in their slaves' lives as part of that care. According to Westerners, African masters did not see themselves as paternalistic masters. They made little effort to regulate the lives of their Western slaves, but viewed them primarily as sources of income.<sup>57</sup>

If African masters did not identify as paternalists, slaves sometimes ascribed paternalistic intentions to them. Wreck victims enslaved in the desert were more likely than slaves in Algiers to do this, for many reasons. Most Algerian slaves rarely interacted with their owner. They worked in gangs supervised by overseers largely unconcerned with their well-being. Masters in northwest Africa owned only one to six slaves at a time, and often interacted on a daily, intimate basis with them. They frequently ate and drank the same things that they fed their slaves. In Algiers, slaves could purchase provender, but in northwest Africa, masters proffered the only source of sustenance for their slaves. Perhaps desert slaves wanted a paternalistic relationship that bound them to their masters because they depended more completely on them whereas those in Algiers had access to alternative sources of food and support. Wreck victims published narratives slightly later in date and far more frequently than Algerian slaves, and they may have pitched their masters as paternalistic for their reading public.

African masters, whether in north or northwest Africa, saw their slaves differently than most Southern owners perceived theirs. Temporary slavery and serial ownership created a distance between African owner and slave

whereas US owners might own generations of a slave family. African owners were keen to make money from the sale of their slaves, and they did not disguise this fact with veneers like paternalism. Like slave traders or masters who hired out their slaves, African masters saw their slaves more as "pieces of property" who would help them turn a profit.<sup>58</sup>

Enslaved Americans and Europeans blamed poor treatment on their masters' desire for financial gain, a desire not reined in by Christianity, but given license by what Westerners perceived as a corrupt, and corrupting, religion—Islam. Since Christianity did not guide their behavior, their passions ruled supreme, and "avarice was" their "ruling passion." They were so greedy that if they "could have obtained as much money" for their slaves by "putting us to death as by selling us[,] . . . they would not have hesitated to kill us on the spot." Unconstrained by Christian feelings, they had "no pity or consideration for Christian captives, upon whom they looked as infidels, and as so many cattle carrying to market."<sup>59</sup>

To many Europeans and Americans, Africans' lack of compassion, hatred of Christianity, and barbarism stemmed from Islam. The "cruel Turk" was barbaric because "Islam established a tyranny over the minds of men." This tyranny created political despotism, superstition, and ruthless treatment of others. As sailor Archibald Robbins explained, Christianity urged compassion, good treatment of others, and purity of character. "The imposter Mahommed," however, taught "full gratification of each propensity." Christianity instructed followers to clothe the naked and feed the hungry while Islam tutored its adherents "to tear from the unfortunate being in their power, the last piece of raiment that guards him from the inclemency of the seasons, and to see, with perfect indifference, the famished slave die at their feet, when they become unfit for market."<sup>60</sup>

Despite the stereotype of cruel, greedy barbarians, enslaved Westerners sometimes assigned paternalistic intentions to some of their masters' behaviors. They simultaneously observed their masters' cravings for profit and kinder behavior toward them. If mutual obligations and a mandate to guide and care for one's slaves linked master and slave, then masters might curb their passionate avarice enough to tend for their slaves as people, not as commodities. If paternalism described a particular type of master-slave relationship in which the master protected, guided, and cared for his slaves and slaves worked hard, were obedient, and loyal, enslaved Americans may have wanted their African masters to be paternalistic. Master-slave relationships were not, in Algiers or northwest Africa, governed by reciprocity or bounded by "mutual obligations—duties, responsibilities," or by an invasive master seeking to interfere in the slaves' lives.<sup>61</sup>

African masters' everyday lives set the parameters of master-slave interactions in northwest Africa. Northwest African masters were pastoralist-

traders who moved based on the needs of their herds or the goods that they carried. They moved frequently with a small entourage, returning periodically to a home base where their families resided either permanently or for the season. Some of these masters owned black African slaves in addition to Western slaves, though few owned many of either. Robbins's master Mahomet Mearrah had a large family, a tutor for his children, sixty-eight camels, and five black slaves. Robbins's next master, Hamet Webber, a "trading Arab," had only one black slave. Webber may have had family elsewhere and more black slaves, but he traveled with only one slave. Wadinoon's governor, a very wealthy man, owned 20 black slaves.<sup>62</sup>

Westerners enslaved in northwest Africa were held singly, in pairs, or in very small groups. When initially captured, Westerners were divided among their captors, who sometimes contended "for their right to us as slaves." One master laid claim to Robbins, one to Clark, one to Horace, and another to Dick and Riley. Paddock and another crewmember were initially claimed by one master. Saugnier and those on the *Sophia* were "unfeelingly" separated, three going to one Arab, two to another, and only one to a third.<sup>63</sup>

If a master was wealthy enough, he might buy several Westerners to ransom in Mogador. Hamet purchased Riley and four of his men while Ahamed owned Paddock, seven of his crew, and three boys from the English ship *Martin Hall*. Saugnier and five other men from the *Sophia* were purchased by a "Moor" after Saugnier promised him that the French consul would redeem them at his purchasing price. His profit would come in gratuities and fees tacked onto the actual ransom fee. More often, Westerners were brought to Mogador in dribs and drabs, one at a time.<sup>64</sup> Unless their masters owned other Western slaves or traveled near the owner of other Western slaves, these men had limited contact with each other. Algerian *bagnio* slaves socialized every night with hundreds of their fellows, but desert-held slaves uncomfortably rubbed shoulders with their masters night and day. Algerians and northwest African masters shared the desire to sell their slaves for a tidy profit.

One measure that Western slaves used to determine if they were well treated or not was whether they were permitted to sleep in their master's tent or provided covers to stave off the cold desert nights. Robbins bunked in a corner of one generous master's tent. Paddock slept so close to his master that he pulled a shared blanket off him. Of course, "it was a long time" before Paddock "got clear of the pain" from the blow that he received for this attempt. Others depicted the contention caused by their closeness to their master and his family. Hamet's wife and children "would not suffer" Riley to "approach them," let alone permit him a corner in their tent. Riley

begged until Hamet relented, but Hamet's acquiescence did not prevent his wife from awakening Riley with blows until he was forced out of the tent.<sup>65</sup>

Adams was unusually entwined with one owner's family. His master, Mahomet, assigned Adams the task of tending his elder wife's goats. Mahomet's younger wife, Aisha, asked Adams to add her goats to his charges. Since she proffered payment and he watched goats regardless, he agreed. Next, Aisha asked Adams to sleep in her tent on nights Mahomet slept with his other wife. When Mahomet's young son discovered Adams in her tent, she denied any knowledge of his presence and cried bitterly until Mahomet forgave her. When the episode seemed forgotten, Aisha reiterated her invitation and Adams resumed sleeping in her tent. This time the suspicious elder wife turned up a corner of the tent, exposing the pair sleeping together. Adams was forced to feel his master's wrath.<sup>66</sup>

Though masters in northwest Africa lived in close proximity to the few Western slaves that they owned, they did not appear to subscribe to a paternalistic ideology. They, like their Western slaves, hoped for redemption. As long as Western slaves were not a problem, African masters basically left them alone. They did not seek to convert their slaves or integrate them into their family or community. Meanwhile, they kept their slaves alive as long as they had the resources to do so and so long as that treatment did not interfere with a profit margin. Where good treatment "collided with self-interest and commercial advantage, the slave invariably lost."<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite complaints of cruelty, enslaved Americans and Europeans occasionally credited their masters with doing the best that they could. Riley was sure that his owner regretted having no food to give him. Saugnier "had no complaints to make of my conductors; they treated me with humanity, and as far as lay in their power, procured me whatever seemed to please me the most." Robbins "suffered all but death" while owned by Ganus, but "from his situation I know not how he could have helped it. He was a grave, thoughtful man . . . and often bestowed favors upon me, which notwithstanding my distress when with him, I remember with gratitude." Former slaves voiced gratitude to those who kept them alive in desperate conditions, though they did so from the safety of freedom and after the fact. Having survived the journey, they reflected that their masters, though portrayed at the time to be diabolical, profit-driven Turks, had done the best that they could for them.<sup>68</sup> In their grateful reflections, the former

slaves simultaneously recognized their masters' pragmatism in keeping them alive in a harsh environment and insisted on reading paternalism into their master-slave relations. Though Riley, Saugnier, and Robbins knew that their masters sustained them to make a profit, each injected a tone of paternalistic concern into their masters' intentions. Riley saw pity and sorrow; Saugnier detected a desire to please a slave; and Robbins believed that his master "bestowed favors" upon him. Yet African masters took a calculated risk when transporting Western slaves to Mogador or Wadinoon. Masters had to feed extra mouths, avoid watering holes, and take more difficult paths to avoid bandits when traveling with Western slaves. Their risk was calculated to bring profit.<sup>69</sup>

The short-term nature of their enslavement, the overwhelmingly male composition of the slaves, the profit-minded goal of their masters, and the masters' general contempt for Christians all acted to undercut the development of paternalistic feelings in the African masters toward their Western slaves. Their concern for enslaved Westerners was likely somewhere between self-serving care for a valuable commodity and care for an item that was both property and person. When forced to make the choice, masters chose self-preservation over caring for an outsider whom they would own for a short period of time.

## Epilogue: A Different Kind of Slavery

At 4 p.m. on September 13, 1796, John Foss and 90 Americans, to their “great joy and satisfaction . . . lost sight of the Barbary shores.” They left behind years of slavery and hardship that Foss felt should be remembered.<sup>1</sup> Like Foss, most enslaved Americans did leave Algiers and the western Sahara. Approximately 139 American were enslaved in Algiers. Thirty-one died in the city, but ninety-nine left. That is, 76 percent were redeemed. In northwest Africa, 66 shipwrecked men were recorded. Forty-seven were redeemed, eight died, and eleven disappeared. Thus, 71 percent made it home, 12 percent died, and 17 percent were lost. Most Americans enslaved in Africa were eventually freed.<sup>2</sup>

Their short-term experiences seemingly set these slaveries apart from what many consider “real slavery.” The victims disagreed. Archibald Robbins dated his “slavery” from the moment he and his crewmates fell into the “possession of barbarian masters.” Charles Cochelet also felt “reduced to a slavish existence.” In Ottoman Algiers, Richard O’Brien felt that their masters looked at them in the same way as the American owners look at “gueney negroes,” while Isaac Stephens believed that the Christian slaves were the “same to the Dey of Algiers as one of your horses.”<sup>3</sup>

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, American and European slaves in Algiers and the western Sahara enjoyed greater access to freedom than African American slaves in the United States. Rates of manumission in Africa changed over time. One scholar estimated that European slaves in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman Algiers had a 50 percent chance of returning home. By the mid- to late-eighteenth century, Europeans and Americans enslaved in either location could expect that if they lived long enough, they would be redeemed.<sup>4</sup>

The short-term nature of Ottoman Algerian and western Saharan enslavement of Westerners affected many aspects of their enslavement. In Ottoman Algiers, temporary enslavement and an availability of funds and

privileges meant that slaves concentrated on their individual comfort more than they worked cooperatively or communally to improve the lot of all slaves. Some men, like James L. Cathcart, worked the Ottoman Algerian slave hierarchy to their particular benefit, and thus left Algiers better off, materially, than when they arrived. In the western Sahara, this system of ransom slavery put slave and master on the same side, both striving for sustenance in a hostile environment. Serial slave ownership and determination to redeem Americans and Europeans predisposed African masters to view their Western slaves as commodities rather than as family members or dependents that they must guard and guide.

The short-term slaveries practiced in Ottoman Algiers and the western Sahara resembled slaveries in other times and places. In fact, “manumission coexisted with perpetual bondage” in other slave systems. Islamic law encouraged freeing slaves and suggested several ways to effect this, including self-purchase. Ottoman masters could offer their slaves a contract, called a *mükatebe*, that allowed the slave to purchase his freedom after a specified period of time or completion of a set amount of work. Owners extended this option primarily to slaves working in the commercial sector, but especially in textile production, as an incentive encouraging hard work from their slaves.<sup>5</sup>

In Muslim West Africa, slaves purchased their own and their kin’s freedom via the *murgu*. An owner initiated the *murgu*, and a slave then paid a regular fee to his owner while working on his own until an agreed upon period of time had passed or amount of money had been paid. According to Paul E. Lovejoy, self-purchase and ransom were so common in West Africa that any Muslim slave in that region “could hope for, and often expect, to be ransomed” if their relatives knew where they were.<sup>6</sup>

Slaves in other locales also purchased their freedom, often through legally binding contracts witnessed and signed by notaries or other officials. Masters in Spanish-held colonies might extend the right of self-purchase, or *coartación*, to their slaves. As in the *murgu*, this involved master and slave arranging a set price and period over which it would be paid. Normally, slaves worked three to five years to buy their freedom under the *coartación*. Redemption, or *rachat*, was permitted in the French Caribbean, though the number of slaves who did was “statistically small.”<sup>7</sup>

In most of these societies, few slaves had access to these avenues of freedom. This was true in the United States, where a small number served as “term slaves.” Particularly prevalent in late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Baltimore, term slavery set a limited term of enslavement

for the bondsperson. Master and slave might sign a deed of manumission that outlined a period of time during which a slave would work. After that term, the slave was free. Between 1789 and 1814, approximately half of the one thousand manumissions in Baltimore County involved term slaves. This system encouraged slaves to accept their servile condition just as the possibility of ransom in Africa alleviated Americans' need to resist their African owners during the relatively short time they were enslaved.<sup>8</sup>

In the United States, self-hired and artisan slaves occasionally purchased their liberty. Self-hired slaves arranged their own living situations and labor conditions. Like *papalunas* in Algiers, self-hired slaves were seen as having a "quasi free" status. Such slaves avoided the constant eye of an overseer or owner and might even be paid for overwork. However, a master might demand most of a slave's pay, making it virtually impossible for him to support and feed himself. These slaves sometimes worked harder and longer, doing more dangerous work, for pay that they turned over to their master and therefore could not use to buy their freedom.<sup>9</sup>

Short term or not, slavery marked those who experienced it and regardless of how mildly they were treated or if they profited while enslaved, slaves such as Foss eagerly anticipated freedom. Once free, even the self-made, elite slave Cathcart crowed he was "once more on [his] own," in his own ship, with his own crew, headed in a direction he chose. Captain James Riley adjusted more slowly. After he was redeemed, Riley spent three days in delirium. When his "reason returned," he discovered that for those three days he had been "continually bathed in tears," shuddered at the "approach of any human being," and had "slunk into the darkest corner" of his room.<sup>10</sup>

Observers often described slaves released in the western Sahara as having their "spirits broken, and their faculties sunk in a species of stupor" or as having "lost reason and feeling." After months, sometimes years, of hardship and suffering, they were "habituated like the meanest Arabs of the Desert." Some survivors appeared "degraded even below the Negro slave" and arrived at Mogador "abject, servile, and brutified." They had survived the "caprice and tyranny of their purchasers" without recourse to a "protecting law" and this had destroyed "every spring of exertion or hope in their minds."<sup>11</sup> After getting a shave and hair cut, donning proper Western dress, and speaking one's native tongue again, these slaves started to become civilized once more. For many, this took longer than Riley's three days.

Despite their firsthand knowledge of slavery, freed Americans rarely emerged with antislavery feelings. Those in Algiers resented the fact that

their countrymen lived freely, protected by the Constitution that had been conceived and ratified while they were Algerian slaves. While Cathcart and other white Americans wasted away in Algiers, even “the Negroes” had a share in the “humane deliberations and have reaped the benefit arriving from your wise and wholesome laws and regulations.” Meanwhile, “we, the very men who have assisted you in all your laudable enterprises and are cast off because we have been unfortunate are denied the rights of our common country.” In the late 1790s, Cathcart described himself and his fellows as the only “victims of American Independence.” By 1803, freedman Cathcart wished himself the owner of a Louisiana plantation, cleared of this “damn’d Barbary business.” His Barbary experience seemingly left him pining for slaves of his own.<sup>12</sup>

Other Americans emerged from slavery feeling that the barbarians they observed in Africa deserved enslavement. Robbins found it “singular that the negroes, although Africans like the Arabs, should be even by their own countrymen, although of a different tribe, be used with such barbarity.” In the western Sahara, he learned that Africans “take delight in enslaving each other.” If Africans embraced the institution wholeheartedly, one could hardly expect that “an American, who has for months and years been enslaved by them, can feel much compassion towards a slave *here* as those do, who have always enjoyed the blessings of humanity and liberty.”<sup>13</sup>

Captain Judah Paddock, whose narrative Riley published, shamefacedly reported that his master, Ahamed, berated him for the US practice of enslaving Africans. After Ahamed could not or would not buy the two black men from Paddock’s crew, he launched into a diatribe against the “Christian dogs” who took black men from “Guinea country, a climate that suits them best,” to the United States. In Ahamed’s view, Westerners were too lazy to work themselves, which is why they consigned Africans in perpetual bondage. Ahamed accused Paddock of being a slave trader who looked for “Guinea-negroes” on the African coast. For Ahamed, Christians were “worse than the Arabs, who enslaved you only when it is God’s will to send you to our coast.” Paddock felt the sting from these accusations “in a manner that I can never forget.”<sup>14</sup>

Only Riley thought it strange that “my proud spirited and free countrymen still hold a million of the human species in the cruel bonds of slavery.” He had learned to “look with compassion on my enslaved and oppressed fellow creatures.” Though his African slavery differed in many ways from US enslavement of African Americans, Riley recognized the universality of his former condition. He thus pledged that his “future life... shall be devoted to their cause.”<sup>15</sup>

Riley grasped what his compatriots and later students of slavery did not: that in the working and living conditions, the perceptions of enslavers toward the enslaved, and even the opportunities for release from slavery, slavery in Algiers and the western Sahara differed only in degree from slavery in the United States. If African enslavement of Westerners was a “different kind of slavery,” it was a difference in degree, not kind.

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

1. "American Vessels Captured by the Corsairs of Algiers, in October 1793," *Diary or London's Register* 1, no. 119, New York (March 15, 1794) : 2; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 214–215; Brooke Hunter, "Wheat, War and the American Economy during the Age of Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2005): 505–506.
2. John Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 60–61. Captured in 1814, the Dutch Captain Gerrit Metzton described a similar experience. Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800–1820*, trans. by Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 98–99.
3. Foss, *Journal*, Preface, 147–160.
4. Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 23; Robert C. Davis, "Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast," *Past & Present* no. 172 (2001): 87–124.
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6. Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Gillian Weiss, "Imagining

- Europe through Barbary Captivity,” *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 1 (2007): 49–67; Gillian Weiss, “Barbary Captivity and the French Idea of Freedom,” *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 231–264; Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); N. I. Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York: Random House, 2002).
7. Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: Elek Books, 1977). Davis similarly conflates time periods in his work. Davis, *Christian Slaves*. For a cogent critique of Davis’ work, see Ehud R. Toledano, “European Slaves in the Ottoman Empire,” review of *Christian Slaves*, by Robert C. Davis, *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (March 2006): 140–142.
  8. Tal Shual, “The Ottoman Algerian Elite and Its Ideology,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 32 (2000): 323–344; Toledano, “European Slaves,” 140–142.
  9. Ehud Toledano, “The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies: Dichotomy or Continuum,” in Miura Toru and John Edwards Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 17, n. 20.
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  12. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 65.
  13. Peter Kolchin, “Some Recent Works on Slavery Outside the United States: An American Perspective. A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 4 (October 1986): 777.

## I “THIS WORLD IS FULL OF VICISSITUDES”

\*James L. Cathcart, “Account of Captivity, 1785,” The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 8; James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (La Porte, IN: J. B. Newkirk, [1899]), 6.

1. Martha Winter Routh, *Journal*, 1794, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York: Random House, 2002), 47–48; Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 32. Corsairs captured fewer women, but they did allow females to be ransomed. Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 36, 170.
2. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 5; Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 2–5, 10, 12–13.
3. For more on ransom slavery, see Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 10–12; Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (eds.), *Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders (Early Fifteenth–Early Eighteenth Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Yvonne P. Hajda, “Slavery in the Greater Lower Columbia Region,” *Ethnohistory* 52, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 565–588; Magnus Ressel, “Conflicts between Early Modern European States about Rescuing Their Own Subjects from Barbary Captivity,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36, no. 1 (2011): 1–22.
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8. Cathcart, *Captives*, 6; Cathcart, “Account,” 8.
9. Cathcart, *Captives*, 6; Cathcart, “Account,” 8; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 39.
10. Gillian Weiss, “Barbary Captivity and the French Idea of Freedom,” *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 233; Colley, *Captives*, 172; Linda Colley, “Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations, and Empire,” *Past & Present* 168, no. 1 (2000): 45; Molly Greene, “Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century,” *Past & Present* 174, no. 1

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11. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 23, xxviii. Other works on European privateering against Muslims include the following: Carla Rahn Phillips, "Navies and the Mediterranean," in John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Frank Cass, 2000) and Greene, "Beyond the Northern Invasion," 52; Abdallah Laroui, *A History of the Maghreb: An Interpretive Essay*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 244; Salvatore Bono, "Naval Exploits and Privateering," in Victor Mallia-Milanese (ed.), *Hospitaller Malta 1530–1798: Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem* (Msida, Malta: Mireva Publications Ltd., 1993), 356; Robert Davis, "The Geography of Slaving in the Early Modern Mediterranean, 1500–1800," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 61; N. I. Matar, "The Last Moors: Maghāriba in Early Eighteenth Century Britain," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2003): 37–58.
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  13. Only two Maltese seemed to be enslaved in Algiers at this point, both captured under a Portuguese flag. Cathcart, *Captives*, 45–48.
  14. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 170–173; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 23–25; (quotation) Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption," 143; Pál Fodor, "Piracy, Ransom Slavery and Trade: French Participation in the Liberation of Ottoman Slaves from Malta during the 1620s," *Turcica* 33 (2001): 125–126; Frans Ciappara, "Christendom and Islam: A Fluid Frontier," *Mediterranean Studies* 13 (2004): 178.
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  16. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 2; N. I. Matar, "'Turning Turk': Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought," *Durham University Journal* 86, no. 1

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  21. Tal Shuval, “The Ottoman Algerian Elite and Its Ideology,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 334; Spencer, *Algiers*, 118–122; Colley, *Captives*, 35; Matar, “Introduction,” 7.
  22. “Philadelphia, March 1,” *American Minerva* 11, no. 12, New York (March 18, 1794): 2; John Hunwick, “Islamic Law and Polemics Over Race and Slavery,” in Shaun E. Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: M. Wiener, 1999), 44–45; Weiss, “French Freedom,” 233; David J. Starkey, “Pirates and Markets” in Lewis R. Fisher (ed.), *Market for Seamen in the Age of Sail* (St. John’s, NL: IMEHA 1994), 62; John Hunwick, “The Same But Different,” in John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell (eds.), *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2002), 15, 18; Colley, *Captives*, 58–59; John Ronald Segal, *Islam’s*

- Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), 163–173; Greene, *Catholic Pirates*, 59–67.
23. “Philadelphia, March. Melancholy News,” *Oracle of the Day* 11, no. 30, Portsmouth, New Hampshire (March 15, 1794): 2; John Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to An Act of Congress, n.d.), 51.
  24. Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut . . .* 3rd ed. (Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus, 1818), 82.
  25. Mordecai Noah, *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States in the Years 1813, 1814, and 1815* (New York: Kirk and Mercein, 1819), 296–297.
  26. David J. Starkey, “Introduction,” in Starkey, Van Hselinga, and De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 1; Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, 22, 44–45, (quotation) Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 6; Colley, *Captives*, 44–45; Snezhka Panova, “The Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers during the Eighteenth Century,” *Archiv Orientalná, Quarterly Journal of Asian and African Studies* 69, no. 2, Praha, Czech Republic (2001): 267; Robert C. Ritchie, “Government Measures against Piracy and Privateering in the Atlantic Area, 1750–1850,” in Starkey, Van Hselinga, and De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 21. Molly Greene discusses *corsos* and the definition of that term at some length in *Catholic Pirates*, 53. For more on prize law and due process of law for privateers, see Faye Kert, “Cruising in Colonial Waters: The Organization of North American Privateering in the War of 1812,” in Starkey, Van Hselinga, and De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 145–146; and Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 6–8.
  27. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, 113; Daniel Panzac, “International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 2 (May 1992): 193, 197; Michel Fontenay, “The Mediterranean 1500–1800,” in Mallia-Milanese (ed.), *Hospitaller Malta 1530–1798* (Usida, Malta: Mireva Publications, 1993), 100; Greene, “Beyond the Northern Invasion,” 70.
  28. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, 111; Jan van Zijverden, “The Risky Alternative: Dutch Privateering during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, 1780–1783,” in Starkey, Van Hselinga, and De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 194.
  29. Lawrence A. Peskin, “The Lessons of Independence: How the Algerian Crisis Shaped Early American Identity,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 3 (2004): 297; Kelly S. Drake, “The Seaman’s Protection Certificate as Proof of American Citizenship for Black Sailors,” *The Log of Mystic Seaport* 50, no. 1 (1998): 11; Noah, *Travels*, 159.
  30. Van den Boogert, “Redress for Ottoman Victims,” 92; Greene, “Beyond Northern Invasion,” 62, 43; Matar, “Turning Turk,” 36; Ellen G. Friedman, “The Exercise of Religion by Spanish Captives in North Africa,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 6, no. 1 (April 1975): 32.
  31. Van der Boogert, “Redress for Ottoman Victims,” 94, 104–105; Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: P. Elek, 1977), 19; Paul Walden

- Bamford, "The Procurement of Oarsmen for French Galleys, 1660–1748," *American Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (October 1959): 33.
32. Quoted in John L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," in Pennell (ed.), *Bandits at Sea*, 90; Van den Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman Victims," 92; Greene, "Beyond Northern Invasion," 62, 43; Matar, "Turning Turk," 36; Friedman, "Exercise of Religion," 32.
  33. "Extract of a Letter, 27 September 1794, Captain William Penrose, Late Master of the *President* to the Owners of that Ship," *Salem Gazette*, February 17, 1795.
  34. William Shaler to Jonathon Russell, US Consul to Stockholm, Algiers, September 26, 1815, Folder Correspondence 1815–1818, Shaler Family Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
  35. William Shaler, *Sketches of Algiers, Political, Historical and Civil* (Boston, MA: Cummings, Hilliard, and Co., 1826), 76.
  36. "Extract of a Letter, 27 September 1794, Captain William Penrose, Late Master of the *President* to the Owners of that Ship," *Salem Gazette*, February 17, 1795; Isaac Stephens to the US Congress, February 9, 1788, Misc. Papers 1770–1789, vol. 2, roll 72, 321, The Correspondence, Journals, Committee Reports, and Records of the Continental Congress, (1774–1789), Papers of the Continental Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Richard O'Bryen to Matthew Irwin, October 19, 1785, Misc. Letters Addressed to Congress, 1775–1789, vol. 17, 377–379, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. For a discussion of revolutionary rhetorical uses of slavery, see Peter A. Dorsey, "To 'Corroborate Our Own Claims': Public Positioning and the Slavery Metaphor in Revolutionary America," *American Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (September 2003): 353–386 and F. Nwabueze Okoye, "Chattel Slavery as the Nightmare of the American Revolutionaries," *William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (January 1980): 3–28.
  37. Isaac Stephens to the Continental Congress, December 20, 1788, vol. 3, 187, Misc. Papers, 1770–1789, NARA, Washington, DC; Robert Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776–1815* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 110–112; Rodriguez, *Captives and Their Saviors*, 40.
  38. Allison, *Crescent Obscured*, 110; Rodriguez, *Captors and Saviors* 38, fn. 1; Friedman, "Exercise of Religion," 21; Colley, *Captives*, 46–47, 53; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 21–23. See also Robert C. Doyle, *Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American Prisoner of War Narrative* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994), xi.
  39. Ray W. Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776–1816* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1931, 1967); H. G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War, 1785–1797* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 4–5; Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives*

- in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).
40. Allison, *Crescent Obscured*, 110–111; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, xiii. After pointedly designating the men captives, Larry Peskin equivocates, saying “all the captives were held as ‘slaves’ in Algiers.” He does not explain why slaves appears in quotes nor how being treated like a slave differed from being a slave. Lawrence A. Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen: Barbary Slavery and the American Public, 1785–1816* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 1.
  41. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, xxvii.
  42. Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, “African ‘Slavery’ as an Institution of Marginality,” in Miers and Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Martin A. Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 3–36; Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 13, 17.
  43. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998), 2–5; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 4–5; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 83. The following authors discuss slavery and its definition, as well: Gwyn Campbell, “Introduction: Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World,” in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (Portland, ME: Frank Cass, 2004), xi; Suzanne Miers, “Slavery: A Question of Definition,” in Campbell, *Structure of Slavery*; Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, “Introduction,” in Robertson and Klein (eds.), *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 304; Youval Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. by Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 5–24.
  44. Frederick C. Leiner, *The End of Barbary Terror: America’s 1815 War against the Pirates of North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13–16; Paul Baeplar, “White Slaves, African Masters,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (July 2003): 93–94.
  45. Doyle, *Voices from Captivity*, 26; Blackburn, *New World Slavery*, 10; Keith Bradley, *Slavery and Rebellion in the Roman World, 140 B.C. to 80 B.C.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 20–22; Baeplar, “White Slaves, African Masters,” 93–94; G. E. Aylmer, “Slavery under Charles II: The Mediterranean and Tangier,” *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 456 (April 1999): 384; Bamford, “Procurement of Oarsmen,” 40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9. Alan Fisher pointed out the difficulties of determining whether men were slaves

- or war captives while they awaited ransom. Alan W. Fisher, "Chattel Slavery in the Ottoman Empire," *Slavery and Abolition* 1, no. 1 (1980): 18, 33–36. For more on Islamic jurisprudence on slavery, see Sikainga, "Slavery and Muslim Jurisprudence," 61 and Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989), 13–14, 24. Frey and Buhofer trace the European shift from enslaving and ransoming prisoners of war to prisoner exchanges. For them, the shift was tied to larger armies and increasing war brutality with a corresponding decrease in the individual soldier's value. Bruno S. Frey and Heinz Buhofer, "Prisoners and Property Rights," *Journal of Law and Economics* 31 (April 1988): 19–20, 27, 34. See also Patrick Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade: Privateering 1793–1815* (Brookfield, VT: Scholar, 1989), 173–175.
46. Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 10; Weiss, "French Freedom," 234–235; Doyle, *Voices from Captivity*, xi.
47. Halil Inalcik, "Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire," in Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halsi-Kun, and Bela K. Kiraly (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The Eastern European Pattern* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 25, 34–36; Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 27, 36; Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 5, 8, 29; Dror Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord: Slavery, Family, and State in the Islamic Middle East," in Miura Tora and John Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 2; Dror Ze'evi, "Kul' and Getting Cooler: The Dissolution of Elite Collective Identity and the Formation of Official Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 11, no. 2 (1996): 190, 193; Yvonne Seng, "Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, no. 2 (May 1996): 39, 146; Yvonne Seng, "A Liminal State: Slavery in the Sixteenth-Century Istanbul," in Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, 28; Y. Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and Its Demise, 1800–1909* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1996), 30, 32, 44; Maryna Kravetz, "In Their Own Words: East European Slaves' Experiences in the 17th-Century Crimean Khanate," unpublished paper delivered at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, 2006, Boston, MA; Mikhail B. Kizilov, "The Black Sea and the Slave Trade: The Role of Crimean Maritime Towns in the Trade in Slaves and Captives in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," *International Journal of Maritime History* 17, no. 1 (2005): 223–232, 234; Olivia Remie Constable, "Muslim Spain and Mediterranean Slavery: The Medieval Slave Trade as an Aspect of Muslim-Christian Relations," in Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (eds.), *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 100–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 272.
48. Ottomans "employed numerous nomenclatures for the legally unfree," including 'abd for slave, *abd mamluk* for male slaves, *jariya* for concubines while *mamlük* meant owned and *ghulam* youth in military service. Nasser Rabbat, "The Changing Concept of *Mamlük* in the Mamluk Sultanate in

- Egypt and Syria,” in Miura Tora and Edward Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 2, 81; Rodriguez, *Captives and Saviors*, 38–40; Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums,” 146–147; Madeleine Zilfi, “Thoughts on Women and Slavery in the Ottoman Era and Historical Sources,” in Amira El Azhary Sonbol (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women’s Histories in Islamic Society* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 133; Spencer, *Algiers*, 113; Mohammed Ennaji, *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in Nineteenth Century Morocco*, trans. by Seth Graebner (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 94; Pál Fodor, “Introduction,” in Géza and Fodor (eds.), *Ransom Slavery*, xiv; Shaun E. Marmon, “Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire: A Preliminary Sketch,” in Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, 4, 7.
49. Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 4–5; Spencer, *Algiers*, 24–25, 40–42; Godfrey Godwin, *The Janissaries* (London: Safi Books, 1994), 33–35; Ehud Toledano, “Ottoman Concepts of Slavery in the Period of Reform, 1830s–1880s,” in Martin A. Klein (ed.) *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 170–171; Fisher, “Chattel Slavery,” 34; Evgenij Radusev, “Ottoman Ruling Nomenclature in the 16th and 17th Centuries (Monopoly of the ‘Devşirme’—First and Second Stages),” *Bulgarian Historical Review* 26, no. 3–4 (1998): 48; Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler,” 187–189; Ze’evi, “My Slave,” 74; Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1998), 21, 31; Ehud Toledano, “Representing the Slave’s Body in Ottoman Society,” *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 2 (August 2002): 58; Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 10.
  50. Gwyn Campbell and Edward A. Alpers, “Introduction: Forced Labour and Resistance in the Indian Ocean,” *Slavery and Abolition* 25, no. 2 (2004): ix–xxii, 9; Toledano, “Concepts of Slavery,” 172; Zilfi, “Thoughts on Women and Slavery,” 134. See Rotman for more on the unclear division between slave and free in the premodern world. Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery*, 18.
  51. Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 10; Weiss, “French Freedom,” 234–235.
  52. Peter Kolchin, “Some Recent Works on Slavery Outside the United States: An American Perspective,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 4 (1986): 772; Ehud R. Toledano, *As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 33; Campbell and Alpers, “Introduction,” x; J. Alexander, “Islam, Archaeology, and Slavery in Africa,” *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (June 2001): 44. See also Joseph E. Inikori, “Slaves or Serfs? A Comparative Study of Slavery and Serfdom in Europe and Africa,” in Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali A. Mazrui (eds.), *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 50–51, 55–56.
  53. Paul Baeplar, “White Slaves, African Masters,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (July 2003): 93–94; Toledano, “Concepts of Slavery,” 161–163.

54. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 15; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 4–6, 14–16; Campbell, “Introduction,” viii; Peter Kolchin, “The Big Picture: A Comment on David Brion Davis’s ‘Looking at Slavery from the Broader Perspective,’” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (April 2000): 3; Stanley L. Engerman, “Slavery at Different Times and Places,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (April 2000): 482–483; Toledano, “Concepts of Slavery,” 172, n. 22; Weiss, “French Freedom,” 235; Friedman, “Exercise of Religion,” 21.

## 2 “FAR DISTANT FROM OUR COUNTRY, FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND CONNECTIONS”

\*Petition Of *Maria* and *Dauphin* Crews, December 20, 1788, Enclosure in Matthew Irwin to George Washington, 9 July 1789, in Dorothy Twohig (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, Vol. 1, [http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/pirate/documents/irwin\\_enc.html](http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/pirate/documents/irwin_enc.html).

1. John Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 60–61. Captured in 1814, the Dutch Captain Gerrit Metzton described a similar experience. Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800–1820*, trans. by Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 98–99.
2. Foss, *Journal*, 17, 28–29; James L. Cathcart, “Account of Captivity, 1785,” *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817*, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 64–65; James L. Cathcart, *The Captives* (La Porte, IN: J. B. Newkirk, [1899]), 544; “Inhuman Treatment of Prisoners in Algiers,” *Worcester Intelligencer* 1, no. 7, Brookfield, MA, (October 18, 1794); Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 11; Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 60–61; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 117.
3. Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 62.
4. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 108. For more on paternalism and the wedge that it gave masters into slaves’ lives, see Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 111–113, 138–139; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Williamsburg, VA, and Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press), 284–286; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 3–7; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, VA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 269, 316; Larry E. Hudson, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia

- Press, 1979), xiv–xvi, 20; Enrico Del Lago and Constantina Katsari (eds.), *Slave Systems: Ancient and Modern* (Cambridge: New York, 2008), 208–209.
5. Carla Rahn Phillips, “Navies and the Mediterranean,” in John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Frank Cass, 2000), 3, 6, 8; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York: Random House, 2002), 34–35.
  6. Russia also developed a naval force in the 1780s as a challenge to Ottoman power in the Levant and Black Sea. In 1790, their navy was 130 percent larger than it had been in 1773. Ottoman reforms in the 1790s fostered the navy, and theirs was the fourth largest in the early-nineteenth-century world. Jeremy Black, *War in the World: Military Power and the Fate of Continents, 1450–2000* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 148; Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, “Seapower in the Mediterranean,” in Hattendorf (ed.), *Naval Policy*, 33–34; Jan Glete, “Warfare at Sea 1450–1815,” in Jeremy Black (ed.), *War in the Early Modern World, 1450–1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 47; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 50, 52.
  7. Parker, *Uncle Sam*, xiv.
  8. Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1980), 88–92; Michelle Craig McDonald, “The Chances of the Moment: Coffee and the New West Indies Commodities Trade,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 2005): 453, 458, 462.
  9. “Boston, April 25, 1785,” and “Extract from a Letter Philadelphia, April 15, 1785,” *Independent Ledger and American Advertiser*, Boston, MA, April 25, 1785. According to Glenn Tucker, insurance rates rose from about 10 percent to nearly 30 percent in 1793 because Algerians were outfitting to take American ships, and maritime violence was increasing in general. Glenn Tucker, *Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the U.S. Navy* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, [1963]), 72.
  10. Christine Sears, “Submit Like a Man: Self-Representation of Masculinity in Barbary Narratives” (Master’s thesis, University of Delaware, 2000), 4–5; Ray W. Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1931, 1967), 18; Michael L. S. Kitzen, *Tripoli and the United States at War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1993), 10, 25; Osman Benchérif, *The Image of Algeria in Anglo-American Writings, 1785–1962* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 9; Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 27.
  11. Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 16.
  12. Michael A. Palmer, *Stoddert’s War: Naval Operations during the Quasi-War with France, 1798–1801*, Studies in Maritime History (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 3–6. For more on the 1790s trade resurgence especially in wheat and flour, which continued into the early 1800s, see Brooke Hunter, “Wheat, War, and the American Economy during the Age of Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 2005): 516–518.

13. A. Glenn Crothers, "Managing Risk on the High Seas: Virginia Merchants and the Incorporation of Marine Insurance, 1760–1815," Unpublished paper delivered at "Risk and Reputation: Insecurity in the Early Republic" Conference at the Library Company of Philadelphia, PA, October 4, 2002; Roger Morriss, "Experience or Yarn? The Journal of William Davidson and the Propaganda War against the Barbary States of North Africa," *Archives* 23, no. 98 (1998): 30, 37, 47; Gelete, "Warfare at Sea," 25–52; Patricia Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade: Privateering, 1793–1815* (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Co., 1989), 13–16; McDonald, "The Chances of the Moment," 471; Cathy Matson, "The Atlantic Economy in an Era of Revolutions: An Introduction," *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 2005): 363.
14. "Extract of Letter from Captain William Furnass to Late Owner Col. Jonathan Hamilton, Algiers March 26, 1794," *Daily Advertiser* X, no. 2963, supplement [1], New York (August 14, 1794).
15. Corsairs seized families most often in coastal raids. According to Friedman, between 1750 and 1769, 63 percent of Spanish slaves were taken in coastal raids. Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 28–31, 58; Gillian Lee Weiss, "Back from Barbary: Captivity, Redemption, and French Identity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Mediterranean," (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2003), 41–42.
16. When relating the deaths of both Thomas and his mate, Richard Wood, in a 1794 letter to his ship's owner, Captain Furnace did not refer to Thomas as a brother or a relative of any sort. He begged his readers to "remember me" to his parents, but did not include Thomas in that gesture, nor did he ask that his parents be told that Thomas had died. Thomas died of smallpox in 1794, while William died just prior to redemption in a drunken brawl. Alternatively spelled Furnace or Furnass. "Extract of Letter from Furnass to Hamilton."
17. Few British or Irish women were captured in general. Colley, *Captives*, 59. In 1786, Paul Randall noted some women among those enslaved, but neither supplied a quantity or places of origin. Paul R. Randall, Extracted from a Letter, April 2, 1786, Paul R. Randall to His Father, April 2, 1786, Letters Received from Thomas Jefferson, 1785–1789, Papers of the Continental Congress, NARA, M247; Foss, *Journal*, 58; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 146–147; Weiss, "Back from Barbary," 42. American slave Richard O'Brien mentioned one slave with a family in Algiers, an "old Nicola," who had been enslaved for 50 years. September 10, 1790, Richard O'Brien, "Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789–1791," Philadelphia Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.
18. Foss, *Journal*, 32, 36–38; Frans Ciappara, "Christendom and Islam: A Fluid Frontier," *Mediterranean Studies* 13 (2004), 183; Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 321. According to O'Brien, the slave was reputed to have 750 sequins. March 29, 1790, O'Brien, "Remarks." Cathcart described bastinadoing. Cathcart, "Account," 82.
19. February 28, 1791, O'Brien, "Remarks"; Daniel Vitkus and N. I. Matar (eds.), *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 4, 21; Weiss, "Back from Barbary," 271–272; Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead*:

- Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 5, 28–29; Robin F. A. Fabel, “Self-Help in Dartmoor: Black and White Prisoners in the War of 1812,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 9, no. 2 (1989): 184.
20. The ages are based on my calculations using contemporary newspaper accounts. “[American Prisoners],” *Political Gazette* 2, no. 29, Newburyport, MA, (October 11, 1796): 115; *Centinel of Freedom*, Newark, NJ, 16; Samuel Calder to the House of Dominick Terry and Company, November 3, 1793, in Dudley W. Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents Related to the United States War with the Barbary Powers* 1 (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Records, 1939), 54. Sailors married slightly later than their contemporaries, with their weddings often occurring when they were promoted to captain. Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh, “Young Men and the Sea: The Sociology of Seafaring in Eighteenth-Century Salem, Massachusetts,” *Social History* 24, no. 1 (2008): 311; Daniel Vickers, “An Honest Tar: Ashley Bowen of Marblehead,” *The New England Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (1996): fn. 14, 543; Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 27.
  21. June 21, 1790, O’Brien, “Remarks”; “Extract of a Letter from Mr. Alexander Forsyth, Mate of the Schooner Hope,” *Vermont Gazette* 14, no. 7, Bennington, VT (July 8, 1796): 2; Lawrence A. Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen: Barbary Slavery and the American Public, 1785–1816* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 32.
  22. Richard O’Brien to Thomas Jefferson, Algiers, June 8, 1786, in Knox, (ed.), *Naval Documents* 1, 6; Gillian Weiss, “Barbary Captives and the French Idea of Freedom,” *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 245; Pananti, *Narrative*, 36; Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 292.
  23. Michael Smith’s letter appeared in the following papers: *American Minerva* 1, no. 207, New York (August 7, 1794): 3; *The Herald* 1, no. 20, New York (August 11, 1794): 1; *The Albany Gazette* 11, no. 811, Albany, NY (September 1, 1794): 3; *United States Chronicle* 11, no. 542, Providence, RI (May 29, 1794): 3; *Impartial Herald* 2, no. 95, Newburyport, MA (January 23, 1795): 2; *Finley’s American Naval and Commercial Register* 1, no. 12, Philadelphia, PA (January 13, 1796): 3; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* 14, no. 2549, Charleston, SC (January 22, 1796): 2. John Foss’s in the following: *Salem Gazette* 19, no. 461, Salem, MA (August 11, 1795): 4; *Political Gazette* 1, no. 14, Newburyport, MA (June 30, 1795): 55; *Connecticut Journal*, no. 1449, New Haven, CT, (August 5, 1795): 2; *Aurora General Advertiser*, no. 1455, Philadelphia, PA (August 8, 1795): 2; *Amberst Journal* 1, no. 31, Mount Pleasant, NJ (August 14, 1795): 3. Peskin quoted O’Brien’s letter to Matthew Irwin in which O’Brien requested that their letters be published. Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, 34.
  24. “The Following Letters Have Been Handed to the Printer, by a Very Respectable Character in This City,” *Charleston Evening Gazette* 2, no. 195, Charleston, SC (February 17, 1786): 2. Though several officers’ letters are extant, mariners’ correspondence is a rare survival. See Linda Colley for a

- mid-eighteenth-century example of a nonelite correspondence originating in North Africa. Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007), 53.
25. "Norfolk, February 19," *American Minerva* 1, no. 73, New York (March 1, 1794): 3; "Extract of a Letter, from Captain Michael Smith, A Prisoner at Algiers, Dated in December Last," *Albany Gazette* 11, no. 811, Albany, NY (September 18, 1794): 3.
  26. "Extract of a Letter from Captain William Furnass," *Daily Advertiser*; "Extract of a Letter from Algiers from Mr. John Foss," *Salem Gazette* 9, no. 461, Salem, MA (August 11, 1795). Also printed in the following: *Political Gazette* 1, no. 14, Newburyport, MA (July 30, 1795): 55; *Connecticut Journal*, no. 1449, New Haven, CT (August 5, 1795): 2; *Aurora General Advertiser*, no. 1455, Philadelphia, PA, (August 8, 1795): 2; *Jersey Chronicle* 1, no. 17, Mt. Pleasant, NJ (August 22, 1795) 142.
  27. Cathcart, *Captives*, 9.
  28. Quotes from Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 42, 54–55, 116; Foss, *Journal*, 66; Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2008), 44–45; Sylvia R. Frey, "The Visible Church: Historiography of African American Religion since Raboteau," *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 1 (2008): 95; Kenneth E. Marshall, "Powerful and Righteous: The Transatlantic Survival and Cultural Resistance of an Enslaved African Family in Eighteenth-Century New Jersey," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 23, no. 2 (2004): 24–26; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 88–89, 172, 272–273; Enrico Del Lago and Constantina Katsari, "Ideal Models of Slave Management in the Roman World and in the Ante-Bellum South," in Enrico Del Lago and Constantina Katsari (eds.), *Slave Systems Ancient and Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 210. On the Ottoman Empire and North African "pluralistic and multiethnic identity," see the following: Giancarlo Casale, "The Ethnic Composition of Ottoman Ship Crews and the Rumi Challenge to Portuguese Identity," *Medieval Encounters* 13, no. 1 (2007): 123, 128–189; Ciappara, "Chistendom and Islam," 169.
  29. Ellen G. Friedman, "The Exercise of Religion by Spanish Captives in North Africa," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 6, no. 1 (1975): 32–33; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 80–81; Casale, "Ethnic Composition of Ottoman Ship Crews," 123, 128–129.
  30. Foss, *Journal*, 40–41.
  31. Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 80–81. Joshua Gee described at length how his faith enabled him to survive his seventeenth-century Algerian slavery. Giles Milton, *White Gold: The Extraordinary Story of Thomas Pellow and Islam's One Million White Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 134–135.
  32. Fabel, "Self-Help in Dartmoor," 193–194; Nathan O. Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 7–10, 141–143.

33. Colley found that British “intense Protestantism” lead Britons to discriminate against non-Protestants as much as they did against Muslims. Colley, *Captives*, 104–106; Thomas S. Kidd, “‘Let Hell and Rome Do Their Worst’: World News, Anti-Catholicism, and International Protestantism in Early Eighteenth-Century Boston,” *New England Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2003): 112–113.
34. Cathcart, “Account,” 33; Foss, *Journal*, 144–145. For early centuries, Davis found that religion caused most *bagnio* conflict. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 112. In 1641, a mix of English, German, Flemish Protestant, and French Catholic slaves successfully mutinied on a corsair ship. Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 70.
35. March 8, 1792, James L. Cathcart, “Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792,” Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; James L. Cathcart, “Extracts from my Journal,” Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 123. Clay points to factional fighting and murders, riots, and massacres that occurred in Marseilles and the Midi region of France. Stephen Clay, “Vengeance, Justice, and the Reactions in the Revolutionary Midi,” *French History* 23 no. 1 (2009): 25. In 1781, enslaved Frenchmen in Algiers attacked a vicar. Weiss, “French Freedom,” 244–245, 257.
36. Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 3, 80–81; Friedman, “Exercise of Religion,” 32–33; Ciappara, “Christendom and Islam,” 169; Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 40, 299; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 89, 111–112.
37. Ellen G. Friedman, “Trinitarian Hospitals in Algiers: An Early Example of Health Care for Prisoners of War,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 66, no. 4 (1980): 551; Ellen G. Friedman, “Christian Captives at ‘Hard Labor’ in Algiers, 16th–18th Centuries,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13, no. 4 (1980): 625; Friedman, “Exercise of Religion,” 23–25; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 111–112; Cathcart, “Extracts,” 123; John Eustace to John Jay, Bourdeaux, July 15, 1789, Corresponding Incoming 1789, Papers of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Historic Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
38. January 5, 1791, O’Bryen, “Remarks”; Colley, *Captives*, 114; Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: P. Elek, 1977), 124. An 1816 US-Algerian treaty article allowing Christian slaves to worship at the consul’s house was expunged before being ratified. Stephen Decatur to Secretary of State James Monroe, June 29, 1816, RC 59, Despatches from Algiers, June 29, 1815–January 1, 1817, NARA, Washington DC.
39. Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 168–179. Some sailors had religious tattoos, which led Simon Newman to conclude that sailors did share Christian faith with their land lubber countrymen. Simon P. Newman, “Reading the Bodies of Early American Seafarers,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (January 1998): 74–76.
40. Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 80–83, 94–95; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 177–178; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 66–67; Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 107–111.

41. Foss, *Journal*, 51–53; Cathcart, “Account,” 124; Cathcart, “Extracts,” 123.
42. February 11, 1791, O’Byren, “Remarks.”
43. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 112; Cathcart, “Extracts,” 123–125; Cathcart, “Account,” 33; Cathcart, *Captives*, 25–26.
44. Pananti, *Narrative*, 94.
45. “Letter from Algiers,” *Eagle or Dartmouth Centinel* III, no. V, Hanover, NH (March 22, 1794): 2.
46. “Extract of a Letter from Algiers from Mr. John Foss,” *Salem Gazette* IX, no. 461, Salem, MA (August 11, 1795); “Extract of a Letter from William Penrose,” *Federal Intelligencer* III, no. 394, Baltimore, MD (February 5, 1795): 3.

### 3 “ONCE A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BUT AT PRESENT THE MOST MISERABLE SLAVE”

\* February 19, 1790, Richard O’Byren, “Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789–1791,” Historical Society of Pennsylvania, PA.

1. John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner in Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 17–19.
2. Paul A. Gilje, “Loyalty and Liberty: The Ambiguous Patriotism of Jack Tar in the American Revolution,” *Pennsylvania History* 67, no. 2 (2000): 180–181; Robin F. A. Fabel, “Self-Help in Dartmoor: Black and White Prisoners in the War of 1812,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 9, no. 2 (1989): 177; Francis D. Cogliano, “We Fled from the Valley of Destruction: American Escapes from Mill and Forton Prisons, 1777–1782,” *American Neptune* 58, no. 2 (2000): 37, 40, 137; Francis D. Cogliano, “‘We All Hoisted an American Flag’: National Identity among American Prisoners in Britain during the American Revolution,” *Journal of American Studies* 32, no. 1 (1998): 25–28; Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, and the Atlantic Working Class in the Eighteenth Century* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1991), 23.
3. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (eds.), *Ransom Slavery Along the Ottoman Borders (Early Fifteenth–Early Eighteenth Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 68–70.
4. Anthony E. Kaye, “Neighbourhoods and Solidarity in the Natchez District of Mississippi: Rethinking the Antebellum Slave Community,” *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 1 (2002): 2–3, 12; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1976), 625; Jeff Forret, “Conflict and the ‘Slave Community’: Violence among Slaves in Upcountry South Carolina,” *Journal of Southern History* 74, no. 3 (2008): 555, 587–588.
5. John Burnham, “Curses of Slavery,” *The Rural Magazine or Vermont Repository* 1, no. 1 (January 1795): 121; James L. Cathcart, “Account of Captivity,

- 1785,” *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817*, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 65; Brenda E. Stevenson, “The Question of the Slave Female Community and Culture in the American South: Methodological and Ideological Approaches,” *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 1 (2007): 77; Quote from Kaye, “Neighbourhoods and Solidarity,” 2.
6. “The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788–1796,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 64, no. 2 (October 1954): 426.
  7. Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 7–8, 118; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 42; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 103–105; Forret, “Conflict and the ‘Slave Community,’” 554–555, 586–588; Peter Kolchin, “Reevaluating the Antebellum Slave Community: A Comparative Perspective,” *The Journal of American History* 70, no. 3 (2983): 584–587.
  8. O’Brien heard 32 languages spoken in Algiers. “Extract of a Letter from Richard O’Byran, A Prisoner at Algiers, Dated December,” *New-York Daily Gazette*, no. 1432, New York (July 26, 1793): 2; Isaac Stephens to the US Congress, February 9, 1788, Misc. Papers, 1779–1789, Papers of the Continental Congress, vol. 2, roll 72, 321, NARA, Washington, DC; Marcus Buford Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
  9. Foss, *Journal*, 12–15.
  10. Most of the *Polly*’s crew hailed from Newburyport and Hartford while the *Hope*’s crew came primarily from New York. Cathcart listed no place of origin for his crewmates, except for the two that he designated as Genoan: Bartolomeo Gason and Pietro Favietto. Foss and Cathcart cataloged the following Dutch men taken on American ships (Cathcart’s spellings appear within parentheses): Cornelius Tondroton (Fandiorum); Martin Duast (Denvartz); Cornelius Westerdunk (Werterdunk); Peter Vantron (Gandertorum); and Jacob Skookaer (Shoemaker). A 1796 redemption listed all from Holland, and added Harmon Olitick, John Peterson, John Ricard, Peter Bryer, and James Rickaway. Foss, *Journal*, 13, 160; List of those Captured in 1793, James L. Cathcart, “Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792,” *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817*, Library of Congress, Washington DC; “American Prisoners,” *Political Gazette* 2, no. 29, Newburyport, MA (October 11, 1796): 115; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 212.
  11. Cathcart, “Account,” 8.
  12. Cathcart, “Account,” 8, 12–15; James L. Cathcart, *The Captives* (La Porte, IN: J. B. Newkirk, [1899]), 4, 12.
  13. Cathcart, “Account,” 8.
  14. Slaves communicated among themselves and with Algerians using common languages such as Spanish or French or the Mediterranean lingua franca.

- Cathcart, for example, spoke Spanish with his captors and Foss French. Cathcart, "Account," 11, 15; Cathcart, *Captives*, 12, 61; Foss, *Journal*, 14–15; Perrin De T'gnal to Thomas Jefferson, August 19, 1789, Letters from Thomas Jefferson, Papers of the Continental Congress, vol. 2, roll 115, 613, NARA, Washington, DC; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 113–115; Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: P. Elek, 1977), 55; William Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 70.
15. Cathcart, *Captives*, 12.
  16. Cathcart, "Account," 15, 22; Cathcart, *Captives*, 12, 17.
  17. Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 68–69.
  18. Foss, *Journal*, 18–20; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 115.
  19. The cooks and two *captains a proa* were housed in the cooks galley "closely but comfortably." *Captain a proa* cleaned the palace and provided the day light in the morning. Philip Sloan occupied that position for some time. Cathcart, "Account," 20–22, 114, 55; Cathcart, *Captives*, 54–55; Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 42; Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 68–70; "Extract of a Letter from Captain Richard O'Bryan, a Prisoner at Algiers, Dated December 29th, 1792," *Herald of the United States* 2, no. 31, Warren, RI: 329.
  20. Foss listed the four boys as Benjamin Church, Benjamin Ober, Charles Smith, and John Ramsay. H. G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War 1785–1797* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 44; Cathcart, "Account," 15; Foss, *Journal*, 17.
  21. Algerians released these slaves for daily labor. Foss, *Journal*, 28.
  22. Foss, *Journal*, 28–29.
  23. Pananti, *Narrative*, 356–357; Francis D. Cogliano, *American Maritime Prisoners in the Revolutionary War: The Captivity of William Russell* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 106–107; Gillian Lee Weiss also found that most escape attempts in Barbary failed. Gillian Lee Weiss, "Back from Barbary: Captivity, Redemption, and French Identity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Mediterranean," (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2003), 70; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9–11.
  24. Cathcart, "Account," 91; Pananti, *Narrative*, 356–357; Algerians patrolled their harbor to prevent runaways, and treaties, such as the US treaty with Algiers, required the return of fugitive slaves. Seventy-four slaves made it out of Algiers to Barcelona in 1774, and in 1776, 46 overpowered their guards to flee Algiers. Gary Edward Wilson, "American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations, 1784–1816," (PhD dissertation, North Texas State University, 1987), 14; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 19.
  25. In 1796, some of these slaves were still dragging chains and wooden blocks attached to them as punishment. Foss, *Journal*, 31–32. Slaves in the Ottoman

- Empire fled alone more often than in groups. Yvonne J. Seng, "Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, part 2 (May 1996): 169.
26. After one of these attempts, the Algerian government ordered "all Slaves to Shave their Beards so that they could not pass for Moors by their Looks." September 5, 1790, December 5, 1790, and January 10, 1791, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  27. Cathcart, "Account," 132; September 5, 1790, and December 5, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  28. September 25, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks." Miss Golinda appeared to be enslaved and seemed to be a male. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 127; Spencer, *Algiers*, 9; Pananti, *Narrative*, 303. Generally, Christians and Christian slaves were forbidden to visit Algerian brothels. When an Irish renegade escorted an English captain "to a Moorish whorehouse that was kept" by another Irish renegade named Diggins, the men enjoyed themselves immensely until guards raided the brothel. The Irish renegade was imprisoned and the English captain escorted to his ship. Cathcart, n.d., #27, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785–1794, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library, New York.
  29. The dey kept lions and tigers in one of the *bagnios*, where they created "an insufferable stench." However, their offal drew rats, which starving slaves could eat. On the downside, Cathcart claimed that the animals "frequently" got loose and killed slaves. Foss, *Journal*, 29; Cathcart, "Account," 68–69; May 14, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  30. Cathcart, "Account," 127; Cathcart, *Captives*, 51; Pananti, *Narrative*, 355.
  31. February 20, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792"; Fabel, "Self-Help in Dartmoor," 180–181.
  32. Kaye, "Neighbourhoods and Solidarity in the Natchez District of Mississippi," 2; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 624; J. David Knottnerus, "Status Structures and Ritual Relations in the Slave Plantation System," in Thomas J. Durant, Jr. and J. David Knottnerus (eds.), *Plantation Society and Race Relations: The Origins of Inequality* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 199), 137–139; Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 88.
  33. Cathcart, "Account," 55.
  34. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 104, 70–71; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 20–22, 40–42. By my calculations, Americans made up about 9 percent of the Algerian slave population on average, depending on the exact year for which one calculates. According to Cathcart, Algerians owned about one hundred Western slaves in May 1794, 67 of whom were Americans, making them a majority. Since Cathcart's May list did not include Oraners, the number may not be accurate. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, xix, 18; Month of May 1794, James L. Cathcart, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785–1794, Cathcart Family Papers, 1785–1817, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New York; Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800–1820*

- trans. Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 3–4, 114.
35. A Dutch captain taken in 1814 reported similar immediate interest in his crews' nationality. Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 23, 99, 111.
  36. Cathcart, "Diplomatic Letter Book," 357; Americans Captured in 1793, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792."
  37. July 7 and 9, 1790, and December 25, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  38. In 1794, Sloan was freed by a Dutch-Algerian treaty because he served in one of these palace positions. Cathcart, "Extracts from my Journal," Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 55; "A List of American Vessels and Their Crews Captured by the Algerine Corsairs in July 1785," *United States Chronicle* 11, no. 566, Providence, RI (November 13, 1794): 2.
  39. Born in Ireland, Cathcart immigrated to America prior to the Revolutionary War. Paul Randall, in Algiers with the Lamb delegation, reported that O'Brien claimed that all his crew was foreign born. These mixed crews fit with other data on early Republic crews. Wilson, "American Prisoners in Barbary Nations," 42; John Jay to George Washington, November 16, 1789, The John Jay Papers, Jay ID 2390, Columbia University Libraries Digital Project; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 22, 208, 221–222; "American Prisoners," *Political Gazette* II, no. 29, Newburyport, MA (November 11, 1796): 115; Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 25–26; "American Prisoners," *Political Gazette*, 115.
  40. O'Brien "Bid adieu" to his "Old Ship Mate and Brother Sufferer" as Colville boarded a Dutch frigate in 1790. February 24, 1790, July 2, 1790, and July 4, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  41. July 7, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks"; Secretary of State to John Paul Jones, June 1, 1792, Dudley Knox (ed.) *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers* 1, (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Records, 1939), 39; March 11, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing 1 January 1792"; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 208–209.
  42. O'Brien may have been born in Ireland, though at least one scholar recorded his birthplace as Maine. Cathcart swore an affidavit in Algiers in which he claimed to have served on a British warship during the American Revolution. Later, he insisted in his journal that he fought for the Americans during the war. Cathcart, "Diplomatic Letter Book," 343; Foss, *Journal*, 52–53; Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers*, 88, 133–134; Wilson, "American Prisoners in Barbary Nations," 42. Cogliano found similar divisions among American prisoners in England during the Revolutionary War. Cogliano, "We All Hoisted the American Flag," 24–25. See also Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 166–167, 170–182.
  43. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 624–625; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 104–105.
  44. February 19, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."

45. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 624–625; Kaye, “Neighbourhoods and Solidarity,” 3; Knottnerus, “Status Structures and Ritual Relations,” 137; Forret, “Conflict and the ‘Slave Community,’” 555, 587–588.
46. Gillian Weiss, “Barbary Captivity and the French Idea of Freedom,” *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 256; Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 295–296; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 46–47; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York: Random House, 2002), 121–122.
47. Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 21; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 40; Spencer, *Algiers*, 101; January 3, 1792, Cathcart, “Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792”; Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers*, 47–48; Colley, *Captives*, 121–122; Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 58 fn. 94, 59, 254–255.
48. Cathcart, *Captives*, 50, 60; February 19, 1790, and October 17, 1790, O’Bryen, “Remarks”; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 44–47.
49. Spain heavily fortified the city in 1509, and then held it for almost a century. Oraners replenished a dwindling Algerian slave population, shrinking due to disease and redemptions in the 1780s and 1790s. Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 21, 53; Spencer, *Algiers*, 101; Matthew Carey, *A Short History of Algiers*, 3rd ed. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1805), 6; January 3, 1792, Cathcart, “Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792”; March 28, 1790, O’Bryen, “Remarks”; Richard O’Brien to Congress, April 28, 1791, in Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 29; Foss, *Journal*, 86, 160–161; Richard O’Brien to William Carmichael, Algiers July 24, 1790, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations* vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832), 119.
50. In the mid-eighteenth century, Mercedarians rescued 40 slaves who they returned to Oran to face desertion trials. In 1792, two Oraners purchased their freedom: a slave for 27 years redeemed himself for 300 sequins; the other a slave for 15.5 years, for 500 sequins. March 17, 1792, and January 1, 1792, Cathcart, “Journal Commencing on January 1st 1792”; Cathcart, *Captives*, 118–119; Foss, *Journal*, 863; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 47–48; Weiss, “French Freedom,” 256–257; Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 104.
51. According to Friedman, seventeenth-century European deserters in Morocco were referred to as *bienvenidos*, which might mean “welcome friends” or “they are welcome.” Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 46. Two Oran-deserters in Mascara tried to escape to Oran, but were recaptured and tried by the Bey of Mascara as spies. February 7, 1791, February 10, 1790, October 30, 1790, O’Bryen, “Remarks”; O’Brien to Congress, April 28, 1791, in Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 29–30; Cathcart, “Account,” 63; Weiss, “Back from Barbary,” 205; Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 104.
52. Cathcart, *Captives*, 50–51; Foss, *Journal*, 28. Italian slave Filippo Pananti concurred that it paid to get on the good side of slave-administrators. Pananti, *Narrative*, 355.
53. May 17, 1790, O’Bryen, “Remarks.”
54. In 1790, a tavern fight between two Oraners sent one to the hospital with his belly slit open. May 17, 1790, O’Bryen, “Remarks”; Foss, *Journal*, 60, 99, 124;

- Cathcart, *Captives*, 50; Pananti, *Narrative*, 114, 218, 350; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 60.
55. Cathcart, "Account," 161–162.
  56. Foss, *Journal*, 24–25.
  57. June 26, 1792, July 3, 1792, James L. Cathcart, "A Journal of Remarkable Events in the Regency of Algiers," *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. According to Friedman, Spaniards perceived Oraners in a similar way. Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 47.
  58. June 26, 1792, July 3, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792"; Foss, *Journal*, 29, 14; May 14, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  59. January 9, 1791, O'Bryen, "Remarks"; June 20, 1792, Cathcart, "Remarkable Events"; Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 43–46; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 125–127; Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, 22.
  60. Cathcart, "Account," 138–139.
  61. January 1, 1792, February 20, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792."
  62. The defaced section starts, "when he was here he used to keep a seraglio of abandoned wretches." February 20, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792."
  63. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 630; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 104; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1247, 1251; Claire Norton, "Lust, Greed, Torture, and Identity: Narrations of Conversion and the Creation of the Early Modern Renegade," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 65, no. 1 (2009): 259–267; Robert J. Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 118–120.

#### 4 "AMERICAN LIVESTOCK, NOW SLAVES IN ALGIERS"

\* James L. Cathcart, "A List of Beyliques American Livestock, Now Slaves in Algiers," July 1, 1794, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785–1794, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New York.

1. Douglas R. Egerton, "Slaves to the Marketplace: Economic Liberty and Black Rebelliousness in the Atlantic World," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26, no. 4 (2006): 623.
2. Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 52, 107–111; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York: Random House, 2002), 60; Brian W. Thomas, "Power and Community: The Archaeology of Slavery at the Hermitage

- Plantation," *American Antiquity* 63, no. 4 (1998): 535, 541; Lawrence T. McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master: Market Relations and the American Slave Community," in B. Winfred Moore, Jr, Joseph F. Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler, Jr. (eds.), *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 33; Larry E. Hudson, Jr., "'All That Cash': Work and Status in the Slave Quarters," in Larry E. Hudson, Jr. (ed.), *Working toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994), 83–84.
3. These figures are my own calculations based on Cathcart's, Foss's, Davis's, and Parker's lists. Cathcart, Month of May, 1794, box 1, Correspondence Folder 1785–1794, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library; John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 160–162; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast and Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xix, 18, 134; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 10, 208–211.
  4. Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 69–71, 25–26, 80–81, 86–88; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 209–213; Marcus Buford Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American World, 1700–1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 208, 155; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 624; Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Past and Present*, no. 148 (1995): 159.
  5. Giovanni Battista Salvago quoted Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 88.
  6. See the list of Portuguese captives in Cathcart's papers, "The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788–1796," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 64, no. 2 (1955): 357; Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800–1820*, trans. Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 118–120; Matthew Carey, *A Short Account of Algiers, Containing a Description of the Climate of that Country, of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, and of their Several Wars against Spain* (Philadelphia, PA: Printed by J. Parker for M. Carey), 40.
  7. Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 10; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 106; James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (La Porte, IN: J. B. Newkirk, [1899]), 54; Dr. Warner from Algiers, January 1788, The Thomas Jefferson Papers, series 1, General Correspondence, 1651–1827, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib002444>.
  8. Forty or 41 of the 130 Americans were *papalunas* if calculated based on lists from Cathcart's correspondence and from Parker's research. Six officers (captains and mates), including the passenger Captain Zaccheus Coffin, and 11 seamen were seized in 1785. In 1793, 27 officers and 82 mariners were captured. Cathcart, *Captives*, 54; Cathcart, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785–1794, New York Public Library; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 10. O'Brien, Enclosure Richard O'Brien

- to Matthew and Thomas Irwin, December 20, 1788, in Dorothy Twohig (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 1, [http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/pirate/documents/irwin\\_enc.html](http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/pirate/documents/irwin_enc.html).
9. Cathcart, *Captives*, 54; James L. Cathcart, "Account of Captivity, 1785," *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817*, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 138; Colley, *Captives*, 24; James Wilson Stevens, *An Historical and Geographical Account of Algiers; Comprehending a Novel and Interesting Detail of Events Relative to the American Captives* (Philadelphia, PA: Hogan and M'Elroy, 1797), 201–207.
  10. Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 161, 38, 8; Christopher Philips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 25; Midori Takagi, *Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction: Slavery in Richmond Virginia, 1782–1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 23, 41–42, 97–101.
  11. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 88, 90–91.
  12. July 4, 1790, Richard O'Bryen, "Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789–1791," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, PA.
  13. Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh, "Young Men and the Sea: The Sociology of Seafaring in Eighteenth-Century Salem, Massachusetts," *Social History* 24, no. 1 (1999): 176, 17; Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 14, 24, 57; Rediker, *Devil and Deep Blue Sea*, 12–13.
  14. Ages are based on contemporary newspapers. "American Prisoners," *Political Gazette*, Newburyport, MA (November 11, 1796).
  15. Cathcart, *Captives*, 18, 23–24; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 46; "To Captain Richard O'Brien, Algiers," *Charleston Evening Gazette*, Charleston, NC (February 17, 1786); "Extract of a Letter from Capt Isaac Stevens, Lately Captured by the Algerines. Dated August 30, 1785," *American Herald*, Worcester, MA (January 2, 1786).
  16. Donaldson rented John Foss, Abiel Willis, and Thomas Billings from the Regency. Foss, *Journal*, 136–137.
  17. Matthew Irwin to George Washington, July 9, 1788, in Dorothy Twohig (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 1.
  18. "The Following Letters Have been Handed to the Printer, by a Very Respectable Character in the City," *Charleston Evening Gazette*, February 17, 1786.
  19. Cathcart, *Captives*, 17, 24.
  20. Cathcart, *Captives*, 17–18, 23; February 26, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  21. Cathcart, "Diplomatic Letter Book," 357; Captain John M'Shane to William Bell, Algiers, November 13, 1793, quoted in Matthew Carey, *A Short History of Algiers*, 3rd ed. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1805), 83; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 216.
  22. February 26, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  23. December 10, 1790, December 20, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  24. Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., Algiers, December 4, 1793, in Dudley W. Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents Related to The United States War with the*

- Barbary Powers*, vol. 1 (Office of Naval Records: Washington Printing Office, 1959), 57.
25. March 13, 1791, January 18, 1791, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  26. April 23, 1790, July 7, 1790, November 25, 1790, December 1, 1790, December 25, 1790, January 18, 1791, O'Bryen, "Remarks"; Cathcart, "Account," 155.
  27. O'Brien's crew had unusually good luck in getting out of Algiers before the 1796 general redemption. Five of the fifteen on the *Dauphin* were released early but eight died in Algiers. Cathcart, *Captives*, 14.
  28. Francis D. Cogliano, *American Maritime Prisoners in the Revolutionary War: The Captivity of William Russell* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 161–162.
  29. Percentages are my calculations. Captain William Penrose to his Philadelphia owner, Algiers, November 4, 1793, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia, PA (March 5, 1794); John McShane to his owners, dated Algiers, November 2, 3, 5, and 13, 1793, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 5, 1794.
  30. James L. Cathcart, "Extracts from my Journal," Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 152–153; Foss, *Journal*, 122–123; Robert Montgomery to David Humphreys, December 1, 1793, Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, vol. 56.
  31. The petition of December 29, 1793, was signed by Richard O'Brian, Isaac Stephens, James Taylor, William Wallace, Samuel Calder, William Penrose, Timothy Newman, Moses Morse, Joseph Ingraham, Michael Smith, William Furnass, John Burnham, and John McShane—all of whom were captains. Carey, *Short History*, 41–42, 87; Cathcart, *Captives*, 18; "Instructions to Robert Montgomery," *American State Papers: Foreign Relations*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Gale and Seaton, 1832–1860), 419.
  32. Cathcart, "Account," 134, 17–18, 36, 86–87, 152; Cathcart, *Captives*, 123.
  33. Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 57.
  34. Cathcart, "Account," 166.
  35. Cathcart, "Extracts," 138–139; Cathcart, "Account," 136.
  36. Ehud R. Toledano, "Representing the Slave's Body in Ottoman Society," *Slavery & Abolition* 23, no. 2 (2002): 51; Sato Tsugitaka, "Slave Elites in Islamic History," in Miura Tora and John Edward Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), ix; Dror Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord: Slavery, Family, and State in the Islamic Middle East" in Tora and Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites*, 71; Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and Its Demise, 1800–1900* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 2–9; Ehud Toledano, "Late Ottoman Concepts of Slavery (1830s to 1880s)," *Poetics Today* 14, no. 3 (1993): 480.
  37. Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle, WA: Washington Press, 1998), 4; Metin Ibrahim Kunt, "Ethnic-Regional(Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 3 (1974): 233.
  38. Giancarlo Casale, "The Ethnic Composition of Ottoman Ship Crews and the 'Rumi Challenge' To Portuguese Identity," *Medieval Encounters* 13, no. 1

- (2007): 122–144; N. I. Matar, “Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity,” in Daniel Vitkus (ed.), *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 2; N. I. Matar, “‘Turning Turk’: Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought,” *Durham University Journal* 86, no. 2 (1994): 37; Linda Colley, “Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire,” *Past & Present* 168, no. 1 (2000): 184; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 93.
39. Colley, “Going Native,” 170; Giles Milton, *White Gold: The Extraordinary Story of Thomas Pellow and Islam’s One Million White Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 9–10, 81–86; Martin Rheinheimer, “From Amrum to Algiers and Back: The Reintegration of a Renegade in the Eighteenth Century,” *Central European History* 36, no. 2 (2003): 11–12, 103.
  40. June 20, 1792, Cathcart, “Journal Commencing 1792.”
  41. Two of Cathcart’s *Maria* crewmates were “upper servants” in the palace and one was in the dey’s kitchen. Cathcart, *Captives*, 12; Cathcart, “Account,” 29–30.
  42. Cathcart, *Captives*, 21–22, 29.
  43. Cathcart, *Captives*, 14, 22; Cathcart, “Account,” 29–30, 33.
  44. Cathcart, “Extracts,” 127; Cathcart, *Captives*, 31, 115.
  45. Cathcart, “Extracts,” 156; Cathcart, “Account,” 132; “Boston, June 30,” July 4, 1791, *Connecticut Courant* XXI, no. 1380, Hartford, CT: 3; October 8, 1790, O’Byren, “Remarks.”
  46. Cathcart, “Account,” 132–134; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 90.
  47. Cathcart, “Extracts,” 132, 134, 155–156; Cathcart, *Captives*, 118–121.
  48. D’Andreis married Sarah Moody, whom he met at Thomas Russell’s house in Boston. Russell owned the ship that D’Andreis captained when captured. Cathcart, *Captives*, 53, 120–121, 52; Cathcart, “Diplomatic Letter Book,” 327. James Simpson worked via correspondence with the dey when he was the *Vikilhadge*, as had Robert Montgomery, who reported that the dey knew Spanish well. James Simpson, Simpson to the Secretary of State, Gibraltar, May 13, 1795, Letterbook of James Simpson, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 172. Robert Montgomery to the Secretary of State, Alicant, July 26, 1791, Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 32–33.
  49. George Smith and Philip Sloan did serve in elite, though less august posts. Cathcart, *Captives*, 157; Richard O’Brien to Thomas Jefferson, June 24, 1790, The Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606–1827, General Correspondence, #571 Library of Congress, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:6:/temp/~ammem\\_6vS8::@@@mdb=mtj](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:6:/temp/~ammem_6vS8::@@@mdb=mtj) (accessed January 14, 2011), 570.
  50. Cathcart, “Account,” 134; Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., quoted in H. G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War 1785–1797* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 108; Calder to Pearce, in Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 57; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 305–306, 309; Cathcart, “Diplomatic Letter Book,” 363.
  51. Cathcart, “Account,” 137.
  52. Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 52.

53. Cathcart, "Extracts," 55; Cathcart, "Account," 156; Cathcart quoted in Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers*, 229.
54. Cathcart, "Account," 157; Cathcart, "Extracts," 137, 152, 157; unsigned subscribers note in Cathcart's papers detailing the care that he took of fellow Americans, Cathcart Papers, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1798–1799, New York Public Library.
55. *Papalunas* paid a half a sequin a month, which Cathcart figured equaled about 90 cents. Note addressed to Cathcart in "Bagnio Galereo Saturday evening," Cathcart Family Papers, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1795, New York Public Library.
56. For literacy among sailors, see Hester Blum, "Pirated Tars, Piratical Texts: Barbary Captivity and American Sea Narratives," *Early American Studies* (Fall 2003): 142–143.
57. Cathcart, *Captives*, 138; Cathcart, "Account," 121–122, 36–37.
58. As Cathcart told his story, unlike Oraner Villarexo, he was not corrupted by his enslavement and had not exploited his fellows when given power over them. Cathcart Family Papers, Robert Montgomery US Consul to James Leander Cathcart, Alicante, April 16, 1795, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1795, New York Public Library.
59. O'Brien to Cathcart, July 16, 1793, Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1785–1794, box 1, New York Public Library.
60. Cathcart, *Captives*, 117–118.
61. July 8, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st 1792"; Cathcart, *Captives*, 123, 59, 55. Cathcart, "Extracts," 138, 144.
62. Cathcart, "Diplomatic Letter Book," 326.
63. Based on my calculations using "American Prisoners" list in the *General Advertiser* 328, Philadelphia, PA (October 18, 1791): 3; January 1, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st."
64. This note is dated "Death's Door Algiers," March 2, 1793. Cathcart, *Captives*, 154.
65. Cathcart, "Extracts," 133.
66. John Paul Jones was initially charged with Algerian negotiations but died before he left for Algiers. Secretary of State to John Paul Jones, Philadelphia, PA, June 1, 1792, Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 40.
67. O'Brien to Carmichael, February 19, 1790, O'Brien, "Remarks"; O'Brien to William Carmichael, September 13, 1786, and O'Brien to an unspecified recipient, April 28, 1781, in Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 14–15.
68. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 149.

## 5 "WE SET NO GREAT VALUE UPON MONEY"

\* Cathcart, "Account of Captivity 1785," The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 8.

1. January 17, 1790, Richard O'Bryen, "Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789–1791," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, PA.
2. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 84–84, 182; James L. Cathcart, "Extracts from My Journal," The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 137; John Campbell, "A Kind of Freeman? Slaves' Market-Related Activities in the South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860," *Slavery and Abolition* 12, no. 1 (1991): 131, 53–55; Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5, 172; Larry E. Hudson, Jr., "All That Cash': Working and Status in the Slave Quarters," in Larry E. Hudson, Jr. (ed.) *Working toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994), 80–82; Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790–1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 34–35; Loren Schweninger, "The Underside of Slavery: The Internal Economy, Self-Hire, and Quasi-Freedom in Virginia, 1780–1865," *Slavery and Abolition* 12, no. 1 (1991): 1.
3. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, "Introduction," in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (eds.) *The Slave's Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1991), 3, 12–15; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 358–359; Cathcart, "Account," 8; John T. Schlotterbeck, "The Internal Economy of Slavery in Rural Piedmont," in Berlin and Morgan (eds.), *The Slave's Economy*, 171.
4. T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 13; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 59; Schweninger, *Black Property Owners*, 59; Douglas R. Egerton, "Slaves to the Marketplace: Economic Liberty and Black Rebelliousness in the Atlantic World," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26, no. 4 (2006): 631.
5. Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 108–109. See also Hudson, "All That Cash," 83–84; McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master," 8; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 365.
6. Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 46; Paul R. Randall to His Father, Extracted and Annotated by William Short, from a Letter, April 2, 1786, Letters Received from Thomas Jefferson, 1785–1789, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789, vol. 1, 404, <http://www.fold3.com/image/#257743>.
7. "Extract of a Letter from Thomas Manning, of the Schooner *Jay*, of Gloucester, to His Parents at Ipswich, Dated Algiers, 9th December, 1793," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, no. 3326, Philadelphia, PA (April 6, 1794). According to Foss, each loaf weighed 11 ounces. As a comparison, provisions on regency cruisers consisted of biscuits, oil, vinegar, olives, *burgul*, and some butter. John Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several*

- Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 27; Cathcart, "Account," 92; Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: P. Elek, 1977), 60; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 107.
8. According to Davis, the regency issued *bagnio* slaves full outfits starting only in the 1720. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 105–107; O'Brien to Cathcart, May 31, n.d., Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1785–1791, box 1, Manuscript and Archive Section, New York Public Library, New York.
  9. Cathcart, "Account," 20.
  10. The Algerian *Vikilhadge*, or *wakil al-kharj*, oversaw the fleet and relations with European nations. Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800–1820*, trans. Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 14; William Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 52; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 19; Cathcart, "Account," 56–57, 129; James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (La Porte, IN: J. B. NewKirk, [1899]), 14–15.
  11. Cathcart, "Account," 56; Cathcart, "Extracts," 129–130; Cathcart, *Captives*, 18, 12; O'Brien, December 10, 1790, "Remarks"; "From the New-York *Minerva*," *Edward's Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, vol. III, no. 713, Baltimore, MD (November 1, 1794): 3.
  12. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 358, 364–365; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 136–137; Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 50–62; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 182; Foss, *Journal*, 28; Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 85, 246–247; Cathcart, *Captives*, 54; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 117.
  13. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 99–101; Cathcart, "Extracts," 117.
  14. Cathcart, "Account," 19, 29.
  15. The Frenchman replied, "*ma foi il faut manger [sic]*." Translated by Eric Boyce Brittingham. The dey kept as many as 27 lions and tigers in the Bagnio Gallera. O'Brien, May 17, 1790, "Remarks"; Cathcart, "Account," 68–69. Jamaican slaves also caught rats, which they not only ate but also sold to their masters who were concerned with rats infesting their sugar fields. McDonald, *Economy and Material Culture*, 46.
  16. Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 60; Foss, *Journal*, 25, 28; Schlotterbeck, "Internal Economy," 175; Cathcart, *Captives*, 58–59.
  17. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 124.
  18. Cathcart had "four dollar gold coins and two sequins in gold." Cathcart, "Extracts," 127; Cathcart, "Account," 55; Cathcart, *Captives*, 115; O'Brien, March 2, 1790, February 8, 1791, "Remarks"; James Cathcart, "The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788–1796," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 64, no. 2 (1954): 435–436.
  19. O'Brien, March 2, 1790, February 8, 1791, "Remarks"; Cathcart, *Captives*, 103; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 370.

20. Cathcart, "Account," 21.
21. Cathcart, "Account," 58, 137; Cathcart, *Captives*, 116–117, 16; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 99; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 365.
22. Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 123, 98–99; Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 60, 85; Ellen G. Friedman, "Christian Captives At 'Hard Labor' in Algiers, 16th–18th Centuries," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13, no. 4 (1980): 622; Cathcart, "Diplomatic Journal," 376.
23. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 344–345; Schweninger, *Black Property Owners*, 51; Max S. Edelson, "Affiliation without Affinity: Skilled Slaves in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina," in Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 218, 240.
24. Cathcart, "Account," 162–164; Cathcart, "Diplomatic Journal," 376.
25. Cathcart, *Captives*, 21. On house servants and their often uncomfortable proximity to their masters, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 331–333; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 108.
26. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 334; Cathcart, "Account," 26.
27. Edelson, "Affiliation," 232, 68; Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 60.
28. "Petition of American Captives in Algiers," *Independent Gazetteer and Agricultural Repository*, December 21, 1793, Philadelphia, PA; Cathcart, Cathcart Family Papers, box 1, Correspondence 1785–1794, Manuscripts and Archives Section, New York Public Library, New York.
29. European merchants and consuls also supported the slave hospital. Cathcart, "Extracts," 123; Cathcart, Cathcart Family Papers, box 1, Correspondence 1789–1799, June 1798. See also Tobias Lear's accounts for support of slaves and the slave hospital by consuls. US Department of the Treasury, Office of First Auditor, 1795–1817, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.
30. Richard O'Brien to the Irwins, October 19, 1785, Miscellaneous Letters Addressed to Congress, 1775–1789, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1775–1789, vol. 17, 378, <http://www.fold3.com/image/#250563>; Randall, April 2, 1786, 420; Thomas Jefferson to Secretary of State in Message from the President of the United States to Congress Relative to American Prisoners at Algiers, December 20, 1790, Report from the Secretary of State, *State Papers and Publick Documents of the United States from the Accession of George Washington to the Presidency* 1, 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Thomas B. Wait, 1819), 58. French revolutionaries suspended the Trinitarian order. Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 12.
31. James Taylor, *New-York Daily Gazette*, no. 1632, New York (March 22, 1794): 2; Isaac Stevens, "Letters from Algiers," *Independent Chronicle*, vol. XXII, no. 1107, Boston, MA (January 14, 1790): 3; O'Brien to William Short, Algiers, January 3, 1790, Papers of William Short 1772–1847, reel 3, container 6,

- Manuscript and Rare Books Department, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
32. Isaac Stephens to the Continental Congress, February 9, 1788, Misc. Letters Addressed to Congress, 1775–1789, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789, vol. 2, 321; Message from the President of the United States to Congress, Communicating a Report of the Secretary of State, in Relation to American Prisoners at Algiers, December 30, 1790, American Foreign Relations, vol. 1, *American State Papers, Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, from the First Session of the First to the Second Session of the Twenty-Second Congress*, 100–101; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 67; O'Bryen, n.d., back cover, "Remarks."
  33. Message from the President, 101; Thomas Jefferson to David Humphreys, July 13, 1791, Message from the President of the United States to Congress, Relative to Morocco and Algiers, December 16, 1793, Report from the Secretary of State, *State Papers and Publick Documents*, 260; David Humphreys to Thomas Jefferson, January 7, 1793, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 23 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950–), 29; William Carmichael to Thomas Jefferson, "Disimbursements of the American Masters and Mariners, Slaves in Algiers, Being Supplied by the Spanish Consul," August 13, 1789, in Frank Roberts Donovan (ed.), *The Thomas Jefferson Papers*, General Correspondence, 1651–1827 (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1963), 795, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>.
  34. Randall, April 2, 1786, 403–404; Cathcart, *Captives*, 18, 23–24; Stephens to Carmichael, October 15, 1785, *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, series 1, General Correspondence, 1651–1827, 559.
  35. Stephens to Carmichael, October 15, 1785, *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, General Correspondence 1651–1827, 55; O'Brien to Irwins, October 19, 1785, 377–378; Carmichael to Jefferson, August 13, 1789, 795; Cathcart, *Captives*, 22.
  36. Mariners received about \$2.10 a month. Cathcart, *Captives*, 18; Cathcart, May 31, [n.d.], Family Papers, box 1, Correspondence 1785–1794, New York Public Library; "Petition of Prisoners at Algiers," March 29, 1792, in Dudley Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers* 1 (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Records, 1929), 35, 39; "Petition of American Captives in Algiers," *Independent Gazetteer and Agricultural Repository*, no. 1476, Philadelphia, PA, December 21, 1793: 2; Thomas Barclay to Thomas Jefferson, July 31, 1792, *Thomas Jefferson Papers* 24, 312–313.
  37. "Petition of Prisoners at Algiers," March 29, 1792, in Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 35; James Taylor, "Algiers November 3, 1793," *American Minerva* 1, no. 91, New York (March 22, 1794): 3; Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 146; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 22. See also N. I. Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth-Century Imagination," *Studies in English Literature* 33, no. 3 (1993): 489–505; N. I. Matar, "'Turning Turk': Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought," *Durham University Journal* 86, no. 1 (1994): 33–41.

38. The petitioners asked that their letter be put on public view. Richard O'Brien to Unknown, March 21, 1793, Papers of George Washington, 1741–1799, series 4, General Correspondence 1697–1799, Library of Congress, 413–414; David Humphreys to Robert Montgomery, December 1, 1793, Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 56–57.
39. Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, May 9, 1789, *Thomas Jefferson Papers* 15, 112; Thomas Jefferson to Willink, Van Staphorst, and Hubbard, July 13, 1791, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 20, 626; Jefferson to Humphreys, July 13, 1791, *State Papers and Publick Documents* 1, 3rd ed., 295–260; Richard O'Brien to George Washington, January 8, 1792, George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, 566, <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/pirate/documents/obryen1.html>; Extract of Letter from O'Brien to Bulkeley and Son November 2, 1792, Thomas Jefferson Papers, vol. 25, 623.
40. David Humphreys to Robert Montgomery, December 1, 1793, Knox (ed.) *Naval Documents*, 56–57; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, fn. 24; Richard O'Brien to George Washington, November 5, 1793, Enclosed to House of Representatives, March 3, 1794, *The Papers of George Washington* 15, May 1–September 20, 1794 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, Dorothy Twohig Ed) DNA, TG 46, entry 33. O'Brien to George Washington, November 5, 1793, *State Papers and Publick Documents*, 325; Instructions to Robert Montgomery, Consul of the United States of America at Alicant from David Humphreys, Lowrie and St. Clair (eds.), *American State Papers: Foreign Relations, Documents Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States* 1, 419.
41. Foss, *Journal*, 122–124; “Extract from Letter from John Foss to His Mother in Newburyport, Algiers, 12 April 1795,” *Salem Gazette*, vol. IX, no. 461, Salem, AL (August 11, 1795).
42. Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 80–82, 85; McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 26.
43. Penningroth, *Claims of Kinfolk*, 80–82, 85; Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 26; Walter Johnson, “Clerks All! Or, Slaves with Cash,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 26, no. 4 (2006): 648.
44. Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 106–115; “Prisoners at Algiers,” Report of a Committee to the Senate, February 22, 1792, *American State Papers: Foreign Relations*, vol. 1, 2nd Congress, 1st Session, US Congress, Senate (Washington, DC), 133.
45. McShane died in June 1794 of the plague. John McShane to his Owner, “Algiers 3d Nov. 1794,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia, PA (March 5, 1794); “Lisbon, December 17, 1793,” *Weekly Register* 3, no. 17, Norwich, CT (March 18, 1794) :2; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 210.
46. “Algiers, “Algiers, 27th Jan., 1786, Charles Logie to Messrs. Thomas Wagstaff, William Delwyn and John Bland,” *Daily Advertiser*, vol. II, no. 1388, Boston,

- MA (May 25, 1786): 2; Zaukaus Coffin, "Algiers 27 December 1785," *Daily Advertiser*, vol. II, no. 288, Boston, MA (May 25, 1786): 2.
47. Letter from William Penrose to his Owners, November 4, 1793, [Matthew Carey], *A Short History of Algiers*, 3rd ed. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1805), 79; Samuel Calder to the House of Dominick and Terry Co., November 3, 1793, Knox (ed.) *Naval Documents*, 54; Moses Morse to the House of Dominick Terry and Co., December 1, 1794, Knox (ed.) *Naval Documents*, 87.
  48. The *Hope's* Captain Burnham was redeemed by Duff in 1794. James Duff to John Burnham, Cadiz, October 6, 1793, and Otto Franc to John Burnham, Leghorn, February 1, 1794, Folder Burnham, John 1793–1796, Papers Relating to the Pension of Captain Burnham, an Algerian Prisoner, GLC7939, Gilder Lehrman Collection, New York; Bill for Relief of J. Burnham, US Congress, House of Representatives (Washington, DC: s.n., 1811); [Arrived Cadiz,] *General Advertiser*, no. 1135, Philadelphia, PA (July 28, 1794): 3.
  49. O'Brien to Cathcart, Algiers, March 6, n.d., Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1798–1799, New York Public Library; August 15, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks."
  50. February 24, May 27, and July 2, 1790, O'Bryen, "Remarks"; Cathcart, "Diplomatic Journal," 320–322; James Simpson, Letterbook of James Simpson, 1793–1797, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 64, 77–78; O'Brien, March 6, n.d., Cathcart Papers, box 1, Correspondence 1798–99, Cathcart Papers, New York Public Library; Senate Resolution to Ransom Prisoners at Algiers, Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents*, 34–35; "Edinburgh, Sept. 30," *Pennsylvania Mercury*, no. 655, Philadelphia, PA (January 20, 1791): 3; "A List of American Vessels and Their Crews Captured by Algerine Corsairs in July 1785," *United States Chronicle* 11, no. 566, Providence, RI (November 13, 1794): 2; Randall, April 2, 1786, 404.
  51. O'Brien to David Humphreys, Enclosed in Letter to Thomas Jefferson, April 29, 1793, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 25, 623; June 10, 1792, July 5, 1702, James L. Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792," Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; O'Brien to Unknown, March 26, 1793, George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741–1799, Series 4, General Correspondence, 1697–1799, 410–411.
  52. Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 91, 220–222.
  53. Colville was granted \$2269.53, Smith \$874, and Robertson \$2271. Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 222; "Extracts from Captain John M'Shane's Letters to his Owners Philadelphia Nov 2, 3, 5, 13, 1793," *Independent Gazetteer and Agricultural Repository*, no. 1494, Philadelphia, PA (March 5, 1794): 3.
  54. March 11, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1, 1792"; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 209.
  55. Cathcart, "Account," 160.
  56. Cathcart, "Extracts," 137–138.
  57. George Smith (*Maria*) was redeemed in 1793 and William Patterson (*Dauphin*) in 1794, both by friends. O'Bryen, December 21, 1790, "Remarks"; Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1795–1794, New York Public Library.

58. O'Brien was sent to the Pantón Grande to "cleanse the mold" and was kept there for several weeks. Cathcart, *Captives*, 120; Cathcart, "Extracts," 136.
59. The British consul's garden was about three miles outside of town. Cathcart, *Captives*, 23–24; O'Brien, back of letter March 9, 1794, Correspondence 1789–1799, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library.
60. Cathcart, Correspondence 1798–1799, New York Public Library; Cathcart, *Captives*, 55–56, 137; Letter to James Cathcart, Bagnio Galareo, Saturday Evening, n.d., Cathcart, Family Papers, Correspondence 1795, New York Public Library.
61. O'Brien to Cathcart, Saturday at "noon full" March 3 [n.d.], Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1785–1794, New York Public Library.
62. Cathcart worked for Dr. Werner, the surgeon at the British factory in Algiers, for six months, some time between 1788 and 1791. Cathcart, *Captives*, 137.
63. December 10, 1790, O'Brien, "Remarks"; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 198; O'Brien to unknown, March 26, 1793, Washington Papers, Library of Congress, 413; O'Brien to Humphreys, November 6, 1793, *State Papers and Public Documents*, 330.
64. January 1, 1792, Cathcart, "Journal Commencing January 1, 1792."
65. Enslaved in the 1640s, Alferéz of Majorica owned three taverns and touted his generous assistance to countrymen. Cathcart, "Extracts," 117; Davis, *Christian Slaves*, 99; Schweninger, *Black Property Owners*, 41–51; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 169.
66. Cathcart, *Captives*, 152, 154, 157.
67. Cathcart, "Diplomatic Journal," 324–325; Cathcart, "Extracts," 135–137; Parker, *Uncle Sam*, 45.
68. Cathcart, Extract of a letter to Philip Wermer [sic], Algiers, May 20, 1791, quoted in *The Captives*, 152–154.
69. Johnson, "Clerks All!" 634.
70. Randall, April 2, 1786, 404.
71. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 118; Campbell, "A Kind of Freeman," 138.
72. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 137; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 373–374; Foss, *Journal*, 70, 123; Stephens to Carmichael, October 15, 1785, *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, series 1, General Correspondence 1651–1827; Quoted in Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers*, 43; "From the (New-York) *Minerva*," *Edward's Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, 3.
73. Schweninger, *Black Property*, 53; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 33, 203; Hudson, "All That Cash," 80; Berlin and Morgan, "Introduction," *The Slaves' Economy*, 18.
74. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 365; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 138; Berlin and Morgan, "Introduction," *The Slaves' Economy*, 17; Pananti, *Narrative*, 85. See also the notation in the Treasury Papers for January 2, 1796, when "Michael Clerk of Marine" was paid for "a list of our Captives in the Marine and other services." Michael was paid a fee of \$2, a necessary expenditure, since the list that he compiled officially named all those who would be redeemed. US Department of the Treasury, Office of the First Auditor, Records 1795–1817, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

75. Robert Montgomery to Cathcart, Alicant, April 16, 1795, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library; Frederick C. Leiner, *The End of Barbary Terror: America's 1815 War against the Pirates of North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15; O'Bryen, November 14, 1790, "Remarks."
76. Campbell, "A Kind of Freeman," 154–155.

## 6 "SONS OF SORROW"

\*Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut*, 3rd ed. (Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus, 1818), 107.

1. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 16–17.
2. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 24–25, 34.
3. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 55–57; James Simpson to the Secretary of State, January 22, 1816, Despatches from the US Consul in Tangier, 1797–1906, roll 4, vol. 4, February 8, 1819–July 20, 1830 (Washington, DC: General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, 1959–1962), College Park, MD.
4. Judah Paddock, *A Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Ship Oswego on the Coast of South Barbary* (New York: J. Seymour, 1818), 136.
5. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 32, 49; John Mercer, *Spanish Sahara* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1976), 77; Dean King, *Skeletons on the Sahara: A True Story of Survival* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004), 40–42; William Lempriere, *A Tour from Gibraltar to Tangier, Sallee, Mogadore, Santa Cruz and Tarudant*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: T. Dobson, 1794), 190; James Matra to Dundass, April 15, 1792, Public Record Office, General Correspondence before 1906, 1761–1906 Morocco, FO 52/10 CUST, 217; James Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, March 27, 1806, June 7, 1800, July 14, 1800, Despatches from Tangier.
6. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 7, 18.
7. Historian John Mercer believed that Captain Riley accurately described the Saharawi, who lived in the western Sahara. Moroccans recognized the Maliki school of jurisprudence, but customary law prevailed among Berber groups. Jews made up a small minority of the population. Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 75, 78, 99, 127–128; Mohammed El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawlay Sulayman* (Cambridgeshire: Middle Eastern and North African Studies Press Ltd., 1990), 4–6; Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, "Slavery and Muslim Jurisprudence in Morocco," in Suzanne Miers and Martin A. Klein (eds.), *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1999), 62; Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress, *The Berbers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 203, 223; Daniel J. Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Urban Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 85–91. For references to "wild Arabs," see Matra

- to Portland, Tangier, October 13, 1795, FO 52/11 CUST, PRO Morocco, 48; Judah Paddock to William Shaler, September 16, 1819, Shaler Family Papers, 1797–1903, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1819, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 96.
8. James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Brig Commerce* (New York: T. & W. Mercein, 1817), 65; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 69; Charles Cochelet, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Sophia, on the 30 of May 1819, on the Western Coast of Africa* (London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1822), 23.
  9. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 89; James Riley, "Riley's Narrative: Manuscript [1817]," Manuscript Collection, New-York Historical Society, New York, 30–31; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 17, 30, 79, 103; James L. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity 1785*, The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 30; Robert Adams, *The Narratives of Robert Adams, an American Sailor: Who Was Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1810* (Boston, MA: Wells and Lilly, 1817), 35; Charles Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 32; King, *Skeletons*, 110; Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 125, 136–138. John Brodie and Samuel Shore of the *Betsey* had a similar experience. "Salem May 24, Interesting Narrative," *Alexandria Advertiser*, vol. III, no. 763 (June 1, 1803): 2; "Extract of Letter from James Simpson to the Secretary of State, 21 March," *Mercantile Advertiser*, no. 2264, New York (May 31, 1803): 2.
  10. Later, Riley met a young Arab who knew a "considerable list of curses." Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 102; Riley, MSS, 51, 70; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 314; *Narrative of the Shipwreck "Surprise" of Glasgow, John William Ross, Master, On the Coast of Barbary, on the 28th of December 1815 and the Subsequent Captivity of the Passengers and Crew by the Arabs until Ransomed by the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers* (London: Printed by the order of the court for the use of the livery of the company, by Gye and Balne, 1817), 39. According to James Simpson, Riley's crew was captured by Wadelim Arabs. Simpson to Secretary of State, January 22, 1816, Despatches from Tangier.
  11. Adams' ghost writer reported that Adams spoke the "Negro language," which he learned, according to the ghostwriter, from the African slaves with whom he spent his time. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 292; Thomas Stewart Traill and William Lawson, "Account of the Captivity of Alexander Scott..." *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 4, no. 7 (January, 1821): 46; Adams, *Narrative*, 36, 119; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 349, 240; Tangier, October 28, 1806, Despatches from Tangier.
  12. The *Martin Hall* wrecked in 1799. *Narrative of Surprise*, 30, 33; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 292–293, 14, 111, 220, 247, 249–250. For more on child slaves see Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, "Children in European Systems of Slavery: Introduction," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 2 (August 2006): 163–182.
  13. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 88–90.
  14. Quoted in Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 623.

15. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 51, 59–60–3; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 59, 62–65; Riley, *Loss of Commerce* 65; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 79; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 24. Africans captured together formed bonds of camaraderie and cooperation, also. Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake* (Williamsburg, VA, and Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American Culture and History by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 446–447, 448, 451; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 115.
16. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 51, 59–65. Peter Hinks explains why slaves in America rarely mounted large-scale resistance. Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), xv.
17. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 88–90, 102, 106–109, 113.
18. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 106–108; Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 140.
19. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 55, 86.
20. Traill and Lawson, “Account of Scott,” 40; James Green to Earl of Liverpool, Tangier, February 16, 1811 and March 27, 1811, Despatches from Tangiers Reel 7, FO 52/15, 74, 78.
21. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 96; Adams, *Narrative*, 73–74; *Narrative of Surprise*, 23.
22. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 76, 93, 96.
23. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 70, 182; Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 89, 96–97; James Simpson to the Secretary of State, May 10, 1816, Despatches from Tangier, reel 3; Adams, *Narrative*, 73–74; *Narrative of Surprise*, 23.
24. Williams did not make it out of Africa, or had not by the time Robbins’ *Journal* was published in 1817. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 95–96, 88–89; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 127.
25. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 63; Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 212; M. Saugnier, *Voyages to the Coast of Africa by Messrs. Saugnier and Brisson* (London: G. G. J and J. Robinson, 1792), 41; Riley, MSS, 50; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1851, 92; Adams, *Narrative*, 73.
26. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 107; Riley, MSS, 45.
27. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 44; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 180. Small holdings and dispersion were the largest obstacles to slave community in some US locales. See the following: Jean Butenhoff Lee, “The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (July 1986): 348–349, 361; J. Elliott Russo, “Fifty-Four Days Work of Two Negroes’: Enslaved Labor in Colonial Somerset County, Maryland,” *Agricultural History* 78, no. 4 (2004); Virginia Bernhard, “Bids for Freedom: Slave Resistance and Rebellion Plots in Bermuda, 1656–1761,” *Slavery and Abolition* 17, no. 3 (1996).
28. Paddock evocatively described this event: “Reader, pause a minute, and figure to yourself the appearance of ten of your poor unfortunate fellow-mortals, crawling over the face of the earth, feeding on half grown grain, by the side of a camel, and intermixed with eight wild Arabs, who, in all appearance, were

- dragging them into perpetual bondage, never to hear of, nor see any more, their dear friends and most beloved relations!" Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 95–96.
29. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 94; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 117–119.
  30. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 90, 101, 119; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 33, 36; *Narrative of Surprise*, 26; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 19.
  31. Riley, MSS, 39; Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 70; Traill and Lawson, "Account of Scott," 47; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 80, 84–92.
  32. Riley, MSS, 28, 35; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33.
  33. Robbins *Journal*, 3rd ed., 69, 81, 90, 127; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 101.
  34. Pigs were ship staples as they will eat anything and can be slaughtered as needed. Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 91; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 81; *Narrative of Surprise*, 23; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 23.
  35. Riley, MSS, 24; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 158, 168–170; Adams, *Narrative*, 63; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 44. The following authors discuss African American slaves' theft: Sophie White, "'Wearing Three or Four Handkerchiefs around his Collar, and Elsewhere about Him': Slaves' Constructions of Masculinity and Ethnicity in French Colonial New Orleans," *Gender and History* [Great Britain] 15, no. 3 (2003); Alex Lichtenstein, "'That Disposition to Theft, with Which They Have Been Branded': Moral Economy, Slave Management, and the Law," *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 3 (1988).
  36. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 45, 49–50; Riley, MSS, 62–63; *Narrative of Surprise*, 25; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 225; Adams, *Narrative*, 63.
  37. *Narrative of Surprise*, 34.
  38. *Narrative of Surprise*, 30, 32, 37–39; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 63; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 161, 243.
  39. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 102, 104, 95–96; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 24, 37–38; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 95, 70; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 22, 52; Riley, MSS, 40.
  40. Riley's master thought that Savage ate Indian tobacco while Riley probably chewed the leaves of an argan tree. Riley, MSS, 49–50; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 91, 93.
  41. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1851, 58; Riley, MSS, 28–29.
  42. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 83.
  43. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, "Introduction," in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, (eds.), *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 1; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 5.
  44. Adams, *Narrative*, 15.
  45. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 75, 133. See for instance Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 70; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 32–33; Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 162–166.
  46. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 133–134; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 13–17, 22; Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 229.
  47. Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 13, 52; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 34, 36; Traill and Lawson, "Account of the Scott," 47.

48. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 68–69, 81; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33, 35, 37; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 46, 94; Riley, MSS, 25–26; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 134; Traill and Lawson, “Account of Scott,” 47; Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 37; Adams, *Narrative*, 35–36, 63–66.
49. Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 166–167; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1851, 57; Riley, MSS, 29; Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 197.
50. The *Solicitor General* wrecked on a slaving expedition from Liverpool to Guinea. James Matra to the Duke of Portland, Tangier, November 18, 1795, Public Record Office, General Correspondence before 1906, 1761–1906 Morocco, FO 52/11 CUST, 51; Riley, MSS, 70; Adams, *Narrative*, 66, 74–75.
51. *Narrative of Surprise*, 17, 28, 30, 40, 43, 52.
52. *Narrative of Surprise* 31, 28; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 149–154; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 207.
53. In Mogador, Riley was treated by a Jewish doctor who had studied in Moscow. Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 25–26, 63–64; Andrew J. Larner and Humphrey J. Fisher, “Dr. Gustav Nachtigal (1834–1885): A Contribution to the History of Medicine in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Africa,” *Journal of Medical Biography* 8, no. 1 (2000): 45–46; Riley, MSS, 58, 98; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 191; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 117–119.
54. *Narrative of Surprise*, 36–39.
55. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 82.
56. Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 156. See Bernard Moitt, “Slave Resistance in Guadeloupe and Martinique, 1791–1848,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 25, no. 1–2 (1991); David Barry Gaspar, “Working the System: Antigua Slaves and Their Struggle to Live,” *Slavery and Abolition* 13, no. 3 (1992); Christopher Morris, “The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered,” *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (1998): 1003; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 598; Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740–1790* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Press, 1998), 197; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 74; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 2–3; S. Max Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity: Skilled Slaves in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina,” in Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 247.
57. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 208; Riley, MSS, 70.
58. Adams, *Narrative*, 73; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 78–79.
59. Riley, MSS, 68–69.
60. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 147–154.
61. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 149–150; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 207.
62. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 168; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 13.
63. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 168, 158–160, 202–203.
64. Adams, *Narrative*, 74–75, 78.

65. Adams, *Narrative*, 74–75, 78. Some US slaves refused to submit to work and punishments. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 619; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schwenger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6–7; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 159–160.
66. Adams, *Narrative*, 74; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 163.
67. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 82–83; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 87–88.
68. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 205, 184–187; Betty Wood, “Some Aspects of Female Resistance to Chattel Slavery in Low Country Georgia, 1767–1815,” *The Historical Journal* 30, no. 3 (September 1987): 61.
69. Adams, *Narrative*, 66.
70. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 653, 649; Franklin and Schwenger, *Runaway Slaves*, 234–235, 241; Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989), 63; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 125; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 139. For Africans escaping Moroccan slavery, see Mohammed Ennaji, trans. by Seth Graebner, *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in Nineteenth-Century Morocco* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 43–49.
71. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 282; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 348–349, 351, 522, 526–528; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 649–650; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 158–159; Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, 195; Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 177; Adams, *Narrative*, 66–69.
72. Islamic law gave owners control of their slaves’ sexuality. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 205–207, 166, 301–302; Gordon Murray, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: Amsterdam Books, 1989), 79–80; Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 4; Madeline Zilfi, “Thoughts on Women and Slavery in the Ottoman Era and Historical Sources,” in Amira El-Azhazr Sonbol (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women’s Histories in Islamic Societies* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Press, 2005), 132; Ehud Toledano, “Ottoman Concepts of Slavery in the Period of Reform, 1830s to 1880s,” in Martin A. Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 134.
73. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 332–332; James Simpson to Mohammed Ben Absalem Selwy, the emperor’s minister at Fez, Tangier, September 3, 1802, Despatches from Tangier; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, September 2, 1802, Despatches from Tangier; Franklin and Schwenger, *Runaway Slaves*, 26–27; Sean Kelley, “‘Mexico in His Head’: Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810–1860,” *Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 3 (2004): 712, 715–717. Slaves in other locations behaved similarly. For example, see Yvonne J. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 39, no. 2 (May 1996): 152–153, 159.
74. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, appendix; Simpson to Secretary of State, August 15, 1800, in Dudley Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers 1* (Washington, DC: Office of Naval

- Records, 1929), 368–369; Simpson to Secretary of State, September 3, 1802, Despatches from Tangier.
75. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 139–140; Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 139.
76. Adams, *Narrative*, 64–66.
77. Adams, *Narrative*, 68–71, 73.
78. The Secretary of State to Simpson, Tangier, May 7, 1806, Despatches; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, July 7, 1806, September 16, 1806, Despatches; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 282.
79. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, August 22, 1806, October 28, 1806, Despatches; Seavers to James Renshaw, Ajarar, December 25, 1806, enclosed in letter, Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, July 14, 1806, Despatches; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, March 6, 1807, June 3, 1807, July 14, 1807, Despatches.
80. Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 68.
81. Morris, “Articulation,” 985, 987.
82. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 352.

## 7 “CLEAR THE COUNTRY OF ALL YOU CHRISTIAN DOGS”

\*Judah Paddock, *A Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Ship Oswego, on the Coast of South Barbary* (New York: Capt. James Riley, 1818), 133.

1. James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Brig Commerce* (New York: T. & W. Mercein, 1817), 351–352. If slaves in America accepted paternalism, they acknowledged a “radically different interpretation” than did their masters. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1976), 5.
2. *Narrative of the Shipwreck “Surprise” of Glasgow, John William Ross, Master, On the Coast of Barbary, on the 28th of December 1815 and the Subsequent Captivity of the Passengers and Crew by the Arabs until Ransomed by the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers* (London: Printed by the order of the court for the use of the livery of the company, by Gye and Balne, 1817), 26; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 187.
3. Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut*, 3rd ed. (Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus, 1818), 44.
4. Mohammed El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawlay Sulayman* (Cambridgeshire: Middle Eastern and North African Studies Press Ltd., 1990), 10, 4, 58–59, 61; Daniel J. Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Urban Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xi, 2–7; Daniel Schroeter, “The Town of Mogador (Essaouira) and Aspects of Change in Pre-Colonial Morocco: A Bibliographic Essay,” *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 6, no. 1 (1979): 24.

5. According to Riley, "Swearah" meant "beautiful picture" in Arabic. William Lempriere, *A Tour from Gibraltar to Tangier, Sallee, Mogodore, Santa Cruz and Tarudant*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: T. Dobson, 1794), 60, 104, 115; El Mansour, *Morocco*, 44; Schroeter, *Merchants*, 2–7, 19, 24, 73, 86–93. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 216–217, 235–236, 244; M Saugnier, *Voyages to the Coast of Africa by Messrs. Saugnier and Brisson* (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1792), 52; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 332, 420–423, 425–427.
6. Robert Adams, *The Narratives of Robert Adams, an American Sailor: Who Was Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1810* (Boston, MA: Wells and Lilly, 1817), 66.
7. Saugnier, *Voyages* 28, 41, 49.
8. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 221, 98, 134; James Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, September 3, 1802, June 7, 1800, Despatches from the US Consul in Tangier, 1797–1906, roll 4, vol. 4, February 8, 1819–July 20, 1830 (Washington, DC: General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, 1959–1962).
9. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 133; James Riley, "Riley's Narrative: Manuscript [1817]" Manuscript Collection, New-York Historical Society, New York, 31–32; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 181–183.
10. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 232–233.
11. Adams, *Narrative*, 69; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 113, 116–117, 123; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 103, 108, 115; Thomas Stewart Traill and William Lawson, "Account of the Captivity of Alexander Scott . . ." *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 4, no. 7 (January 1821): 39.
12. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 194; *Narrative of Surprise*, 31; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 289; Schroeter, *Merchants*, 85, 89.
13. Traill and Lawson, "Account of Scott," 44; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 62.
14. Robbins also counted one hundred black slaves in Mogador. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 199, 217, 223.
15. Riley, MSS, 83; Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 199, 223; Simpson to the Secretary of State, February 8, 1819, Despatches from Tangier. Cochelet rendered the name in French as "Oudnoun," and noted that it was located on the River Noun. Charles Cochelet, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Sophia, on the 30 of May 1819, on the Western Coast of Africa* (London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1822), 62, 65–66, 58; Schroeter, *Merchants*, xvii.
16. Muwlay Sulayman ruled Morocco from 1766–1822. El Mansour, *Morocco*, 18; Dean King, *Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004), 220–221; Schroeter, *Merchants*, 161; Adams quoted in Paul Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 23; James Matra to Lord Sydney, Tangier, March 28, 1789, PRO Morocco FO 52/8, 45; *Narrative of Surprise*, 36.
17. The *Association* was a British ship and the *Indefatigable* an American vessel. James Green to William Windham, Tangier, October 20, 1806, PRO Morocco FO 52/13, 66.
18. Adams, *Narrative*, 133; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 216, 243–245; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 220; Lempriere, *Tour from Gibraltar*, 119.

19. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 232; Riley, MSS, 68–69, 73; Adams, *Narrative*, 1817, 69–70; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 221.
20. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, June 7, 1800, Despatches from Tangier.
21. Excerpt of letter from Thomas Davies in letter from William Willshire, quoted in Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, August 10, 1816, Despatches from Tangier.
22. Seavers's letter was dated Wadinoon, March 19, 1806. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, May 7, 1806, Despatches from Tangier; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 236; Riley, MSS, 68; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 309–310, 254–257; *Narrative of Surprise*, 31.
23. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 49; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 66.
24. Davis, of the Baltimore privateer *Romp*, wrecked in May 1816 on a Spanish ship the *Romp* had captured. Willshire redeemed him four days before Robbins. Excerpt of letter from Thomas Davies to William Willshire, quoted in Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, August 10, 1816, Despatches from Tangier; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 212–213; Riley, MSS, 69.
25. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, April 14, 1808, Despatches from Tangier. See, for example, monies required for redemption of *Prosperous's* crew. Matra to Dundass, Tangier, July 2, 1791, PRO Morocco, FO52/10, 112; Matra to Dundass, Gibraltar, April 15, 1792, PRO Morocco, FO52/10, 217; "Presents to Governor of Wedinoon" and "Accounts for Redeeming the Brig *Prosperous*," James Matra to Dundass, Tangier, October 5, 1792, PRO Morocco, FO 52/10, 233–242.
26. Adams, *Narrative*, 69; Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 230.
27. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, May 25, 1812, Despatches from Tangier; Adams, *Narrative*, 88.
28. Matra to Dundass, Tangier, July 2, 1791, PRO Morocco FO 52/10, 112; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 247.
29. The *Betsey* wrecked in 1773 going from "Santa Croos bound to Cape Devardo." Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 66; Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 122–123; Charles Logie to the Emperor of Morocco, August 15, 1773, PRO Morocco FO 52/3, 82; Logie to the Earl of Rockford, Gibraltar, September 6, 1773, PRO Morocco FO 52/3, 78, 86; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 70, 78–79, 83, 94; Schroeter, *Merchants*, xv, 15, 18–19, 34, 56–57; El Mansour, *Morocco*, 14–15, 44.
30. Riley, *Loss of Commerce* 248–249.
31. In 1792, Consul Matra sent clothing and shoes worth £680 to the *Prosperous's* crew in Wadinoon. Matra to Portland, Tangier, December 20, 1795, PRO Morocco, FO 52/11, 54; Matra to Dundass, Tangier, October 5, 1792, PRO Morocco 52/10, 235.
32. James Simpson to William Shaler, Tangier, February 28, 1817, box 1, Folder Correspondence 1817, William Shaler Papers, 1797–1903, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Adams, *Narrative*, 13, 141; Matra to Portland, Tangier, March 24, 1796, PRO Morocco, FO 52/11 54; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 294; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43.

33. Riley, MSS, 73, 81.
34. This sum is high—\$658 per person rather than \$300–\$400—compared to other redemptions. His figures included a 3 percent premium charged by Gibraltar merchants for advancing silver, which might have been standard but was not recorded in other cases. Accounts for Redemption of Brig *Prosperous*, Matra to Dundass, Tangier, October 5, 1792, PRO Morocco, FO 52/10, 233–235. Between 1791 and 1815, \$4.38 equaled, on an average, one British pound. James Green to William Windham, Tangier, October 20, 1806, PRO Morocco FO 52/13, 66.
35. *Martin Hall's* crew was redeemed for a grand total of £14,795 (or \$3377.85). Peter Gwyn, Mogador, December 31, 1800, PRO Morocco FO 52/11, 285.
36. Simpson paid \$566.25 to free the *Indefatigable's* mate, Joseph Lee, though exactly who paid this sum, the government or Lee's relatives, is not clear. King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 262; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, September 29, 1812, April 3, 1813, Despatches from Tangier; Adams, *Narrative*, 129–130; James Simpson, "Names and Fates of the Crew Charles of New York," January 18, 1814, Despatches from Tangier; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, June 3, 1807, June 12, 1807, March 6, 1807, Despatches from Tangier.
37. King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 262; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, September 29, 1812, April 3, 1813, Despatches from Tangier; Adams, *Narrative*, 129–130; James Simpson, "Names and Fates of the Crew Charles of New York," January 18, 1814, Despatches from Tangier; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, June 3, 1807, June 12, 1807, March 6, 1807, Despatches from Tangier.
38. Simpson to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, May 18, 1819, Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, September 19, 1819, Despatches from Tangier.
39. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, September 24, 1816, Despatches from Tangier.
40. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 272–274; *Narrative of Surprise*, 35.
41. John S. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, June 30, 1819, July 20, 1821, Despatches from Tangier.
42. William Jarvis to James Madison, Miscellaneous Despatches, 1792–1849, Despatches from Diplomatic Officers, Diplomatic Correspondence 1785–1906, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.
43. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, November 26, 1814, Despatches from Tangier; James Simpson to US Treasury Department, "Letter from the Secretary Transmitting a Statement in Obedience to 'An Act Fixing the Compensation of Public Ministers,'" March 4, 1814 (Washington, DC: A. & G. Ways, 1814); Simpson to the Secretary of State, Gibraltar, April 3, 1794, Simpson to Colonel Humphreys, Gibraltar, June 19, 1794, Letterbook, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 72, 82.
44. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, May 7, 1806, Despatches from Tangier.

45. Seavers listed his crew and their origins in the letter that ended up in British consul Gwyn's hands. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, May 7, 1806, September 16, 1806, March 6, 1807, April 14, 1808, Despatches from Tangier.
46. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, March 27, 1806, January 8, 1802, September 3, 1802, May 7, 1806, April 14, 1808, February 21, 1811, Despatches from Tangier.
47. Shaler to James Monroe, Secretary of State, US Ship *Washington* Bay of Gibraltar, November 13, 1816, Diplomatic Correspondence 1785–1906, Records of Special Agents, Missions, and Commissions, Correspondence and Reports of the Diplomatic Commissions, Despatches of the US Commissioners to Algiers, General Records of the Department of State, June 29, 1815–January 1, 1817, vol. 1, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, March 28, 1803, September 24, 1816, Despatches from Tangier.
48. Along with five from the *Indefatigable*, the emperor redeemed four Spanish and four Hamburgers who had sailed on other ships. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, April 14, 1808, March 28, 1803, February 21, 1811, Despatches from Tangier.
49. James M. Matra to Lord William Grenville, Tangier, September 24, 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 142; James Matray to William Grenville, Tangier, July 21, 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 105; Matra to Grenville, Tangier, December 19, 1798, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 178; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tariffa Island, August 17, 1799, Despatches from Tangier.
50. Matra to Grenville Tangier, September 12, 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 130. In May 1789, Irving and eleven crewmen, three of whom were "Portuguese Blacks," wrecked in the *Anna* of Liverpool. James M. Matra to Lord William Grenville, Tangier, September 24, 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 142; James Matray to William Grenville, Tangier, July 21, 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 105; Matra to Grenville, Tangier, December 19, 1798, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 178; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tariffa Island, August 17, 1799, Despatches from Tangier.
51. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, May 26, 1806, March 6, 1807, October 2, 1806, July 7, 1806, November 30, 1815, May 18, 1819, Despatches from Tangier.
52. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 222.
53. Bostonian Horatio Sprague, a merchant operating out of Gibraltar, advanced Riley \$1200. Riley petitioned the US government to cover his redemption, and was granted \$1852. Riley, MSS NY 34, 36, 99, 101–103, 105; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 148, 37, 307.
54. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 106, 110, 170, 266, 292, 14, 111.
55. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, July 14, 1800, August 15, 1800, March 2, 1804, Despatches from Tangier; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 248, 172–173, 132–133, 14, 111.

56. *Narrative of Surprise*, 26.
57. For more on US paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003) 60–61; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake* (Williamsburg, VA, and Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 284–286, 294; Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll*, 5–6; Jan Ellen Lewis, “Slavery and the Market,” *Reviews in American History* 28, no. 4 (2000): 544; Lacy Ford, “Reconsidering the Internal Slave Trade: Paternalism, Markets, and the Character of the Old South,” in Walter Johnson (ed.), *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 149.
58. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 111; Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 19, 66, 102–104; Sarah S. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782 to 1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1978): 261, 283, 285; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 136–142; Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 48–49; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 18, 24; T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 13–14; Keith C. Barton, “Good Cooks and Washers’: Slave Hiring, Domestic Labor, and the Market in Bourbon County, Kentucky,” *The Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (September 1997): 439, 444.
59. Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 187; *Narrative of Surprise*, 26; Edward E. Baptist, “‘Cuffy,’ ‘Fancy Maids,’ and ‘One-Eyed Men’: Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States,” in Walter Johnson (ed.), *The Chattel Principle*, 163, 165, 170–171; Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670–1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 14–20, 111.
60. Ann Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment: European Attitudes towards the Maghreb in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1987), 16–17, 29, 48–49. See also, Robert J. Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 35–59; Robbins, *Journal*, 5th ed., 81–82, “To the Public.”
61. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 284; Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 113; Hughes, “Slaves for Hire,” 285.
62. Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 164–165, 199.

63. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 61–62; Riley, MSS, 19, 22; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 79; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 24.
64. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, June 7, 1800, August 15, 1800, Despatches from Tangier; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43.
65. Robbins, *Journal*, 13th ed., 95; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 71; Paddock, *Narrative Oswego*, 86; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 84, 89–91; John Mercer, *Spanish Sahara* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1976), 161–612.
66. Adams, *Narrative*, 66–68.
67. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 295, 294.
68. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 19; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33; Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 120.
69. Robbins, *Journal*, 3rd ed., 120.

## EPILOGUE

1. John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport, MA: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 144. Foss's suffering continued after his redemption. His journey home took seven months and involved at least nine stops by French, Spanish, and English privateers. His crewmate, George Tilley, was worse off. After three years of Algerian slavery, Tilley was impressed by a British privateer. Foss, *Journal*, 147–159.
2. The numbers and percentages are my calculations based on lists made by James L. Cathcart in Algiers, John Foss, and historians Richard B. Parker and Gary Edward Wilson. James L. Cathcart, "Americans Captured in 1793," Extracts from my journal, *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785–1817*, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, DC, 187; Foss, *Journal*, 160–161; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 209–215; Gary Edward Wilson, "American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations, 1784–1816" (PhD dissertation, North Texas State University, 1979), 320–322.
3. O'Brien to Matthew Irwin, October 19, 1785, Misc. Letters, 1779–1789, Papers of the Continental Congress, vol. 17, roll 72, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 377; Isaac Stephens to Congress, Algiers, February 9, 1788, Papers of the Continental Congress, Misc. Papers 1770–1789, vol. 2, roll 72, 321; Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut*, 3rd ed. (Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus, 1818), 63.
4. Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 172–173.
5. Stephen Whitman, "Diverse Good Causes: Manumission and the Transformation of Urban Slavery," *Social Science History* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 333; Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New

- Amsterdam Books, 1989), 39–41; Halil Inalcik, “Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire,” in Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, and Bela K. Király, (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The Eastern European Pattern* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 27–30; Yvonne J. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, no. 2 (May 1996): 140–142; Shaun E. Marmon, “Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire: A Preliminary Sketch,” in Shaun E. Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1999), 7, 13.
6. Paul E. Lovejoy, “Muslim Freedom in the Atlantic World: Images of Manumission and Self-Redemption,” in Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), *Slaves on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2004), 243–244, 246; Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (eds.), *The End of Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 394; Paul E. Lovejoy, “*Murgu*: The Wages of Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate,” *Slavery and Abolition* 24, no. 1 (1992): 168–185.
  7. Donald Ramos, “Community, Control, and Acculturation: A Case Study in Eighteenth Century Brazil,” *The Americas* 42, no. 4 (April 1985): 425–426, 430–431; Shawn Cole, “Capitalism and Freedom: Manumissions and the Slave Market in Louisiana, 1725–1820,” *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 4 (2005): 1013–1014; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 332–333; Bernard Moitt, “Slave Resistance in Guadeloupe and Martinique, 1791–1848,” *Journal of Caribbean History* [Barbados] 25, no. 1–2 (1991): 148.
  8. Whitman, “Diverse Good Causes,” 337; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 278. Scholars have argued that self-purchase, term slavery, and hiring out were all management techniques used to “ensure the good behavior” of slaves. Midori Takagi, *Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction: Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782–1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 38–39; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 43–44, 47; Cole, “Capitalism and Freedom,” 1018.
  9. Like term slavery, self-hire limited escape attempts by slaves. Schweninger, “The Underside of Slavery,” 12; Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 173–174.
  10. James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Brig Commerce* (New York: T. & W. Mercein, 1817), 301.
  11. Robert Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, an American Sailor: Who Was Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1810* (Boston, MA: Wells and Lilly, 1817), 130; [Jared Sparks], “Interior of Africa,” *The American Review* (May 1817): 11–13.
  12. Cathcart, “Extracts,” 142–143; Cathcart to Captain Campbell, Leghorn, June 27, 1803, box 2, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New York.

13. Robbins, *Journal*, 119.
14. Paddock's master accused Westerners of exchanging "useless trinkets" for "ship-loads" of slaves that were taken to the West "from which never one returns." Judah Paddock, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Ship Oswego* (New York: Captain James Riley, 1818), 110, 171.
15. Riley argued that African Americans should not "be emancipated all at once" as the loss would be too great for property owners. Further, immediate emancipation would "turn loose upon the face of a free and happy country a race of men incapable of" providing themselves "an honest and comfortable subsistence." James Riley, "Riley's Narrative: Manuscript," [1817] New-York Historical Society, Special Collections, New York, 159.

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*Daily Advertiser*  
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*Impartial Herald*  
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