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Review of Daniel Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean*

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process, from the commission of the alleged crime to the gathering of circumstantial information and witnesses, though the actual, documented cases speak of a less than effective system tarnished by monetary interests, hard-to-prove events, and overall subjectivity leading to a “guilty until proven innocent” standard.

Margarita Torremocha Hernández takes a solely theoretical approach in her study of Meléndez Valdés’ *Informe jurídico* (1796). One of the most prominent thinkers of his time, Meléndez Valdés advanced such detailed reflections on *stuprum* as to propose its very suppression, pointing to the lack of innocence of women who act as instigators, female accomplices, and the exploitation of a seemingly weak position in order to force advantageous marriages that would have never taken place but through litigation (one cannot but help thinking about Francisco de Goya’s engravings on the subject). Beyond a purely theoretical exercise, the *Informe* led to a more lenient consideration of those awaiting trial, as well as a heightened awareness of the many ways the law could seamlessly be abused for personal gain. The so-called “matrimonial market” is further studied by José Pablo Blanco Carrasco, whose contribution focuses on the duplicity of *stuprum* as crime and breach of contract entailing wide repercussions beyond the individual sphere, as it affected a family’s social position and economic possibilities, allowing for uneven marriages against the will and plans of one of the parties.

The unique subject matter of this crime, its combination with other transgressions, diachronic recurrence and spilling into other legal, social and economic codes makes it very prone to speculation and digression. The purely historical approach of this book and its archival nature remains within the letter, explaining the difficulties and technicalities of regulating through general laws where a set of circumstances must be particularly considered, and does not renounce the exposition of lawsuits long recorded, allowing for a stronger consideration of widely defined honor matters.

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Hershenson, Daniel. *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. 289 pp. + 1 fig. + 1 map.

The notion that a once-unified Mediterranean world disintegrated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been influential since Braudel articulated it in 1949. In essence, this narrative suggests first that imperial struggles and later disengagement divided the region into separate, hostile Christian and Muslim

camps during the sixteenth century and then, beginning in the early seventeenth century, the so-called “northern invasion” replaced Christian-Muslim antipathy with economic and national competition. The result was a divided region in which earlier common rhythms and shared destinies were no longer relevant. Human trafficking was central to these developments and the explosion in the number of corsairs and captives, particularly after the Spanish and Ottomans declared a truce in 1581, has been seen as evidence of both the depth of confessional hostility and the radical fracturing of the region. But this approach has been challenged by scholars who instead emphasize diplomacy, the trans-Mediterranean commercial ties fostered by ransoming practices, and the persistence of religious enmities.

Daniel Hershenzon, in *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean*, takes those arguments a step further by suggesting that the proliferation of captive-taking in the seventeenth century had the effect of intensifying connections across religious, political, and geographical boundaries between Southern Europe and North Africa. Close attention to the various forms of contact engendered by captivity and to the ways in which rulers attempted to control mobility, he argues, makes visible “not only social relations otherwise unnoticed but also a transimperial process of region formation” (6-7). The result was Mediterranean unity despite political and religious rivalries.

Hershenzon makes no claim to encompass the entire Mediterranean or all captives. Geographically, he focuses on the western Mediterranean, identifying three “corridors” for the movement of people, information, and goods: Tunis-Malta-Sicily to the east, Algiers-Oran-Balearics-Catalonia in the center, and Morocco-Andalusia in a western corridor that extended also to Atlantic Spain. For sources, he relies on material from the Mercedarian and Trinitarian orders, Inquisitorial records, and a variety of other documents. He particularly focuses on the writings of captives: captivity narratives, of course, but also and especially letters, petitions, and even intelligence reports. Among Hershenzon’s central contentions are that writing served to define the experience of captivity for many and that the production and circulation of these texts reshaped and entangled societies on both shores of the Mediterranean. At the time same, he freely admits that the extant source base privileges male Christian perceptions. Not only do North African archives lack comparable materials on captivity and ransom—there were no institutions analogous to the Christian redemptive orders—but women’s voices appear only rarely. To address this imbalance, Hershenzon makes the most of the material he has, emphasizing those moments when Muslim, Jewish, or female perspectives are visible and highlighting that the male Christian experience was not universal.

Both the possibilities and limitations of the sources are apparent in the set of intertwined captivity stories with which Hershenzon frames the book. These

stories, through his deft analysis, both illustrate the main points of the argument and showcase his ability to write with empathy about an often-tragic topic. A central figure in these events was Fatima, a teenage girl from Algiers whose ransom was cancelled when she was baptized (perhaps forcibly) in 1608 and renamed Madalena. In response, the governor of Algiers ordered the detention of three Trinitarian friars and some recently-redeemed captives. The affair eventually impacted attempts to ransom Diego de Pacheco, son of the Marquis de Villena, and Muhammad Bey, an Ottoman official. Ultimately, none of them ever returned home.

Hershenzon, however, shows how Bernardo de Monroy, one of the friars, became a “hub of information” (171), writing hundreds of letters, acting on behalf of other captives, commissioning Jews, Muslims, and Moriscos as ransom agents, negotiating with Algerian authorities, and so on. In doing so, he forged links with members of multiple political and religious communities in Spain and in Algiers. Hershenzon contrasts Monroy’s agency, and his prominent mark on the archives, with that of Fatima, whose consent in her own baptism is unknown, whose story was always told by men (including her father, officials, friars, authors of popular pamphlets, and other captives), and who disappeared from the archive after her marriage in 1616 (174).

Captivity was not a static experience. Enslaved people might be sold, rented, or exchanged, and such mobility allowed many to develop widespread social networks. Nevertheless, most hoped for ransom. For many Christians, the redemptive orders offered the best chance and Hershenzon describes the systems through which a captive might be redeemed and how these encouraged economic and political engagement. Yet the large-scale ransoming of prisoners—with the concomitant transfer of bullion and goods to an enemy—was controversial, and many in Spain advocated war rather than redemption. Captives, though, did not passively await redemption. While acknowledging the trauma of captivity and the fact that the vast majority of trafficked people were unable to obtain ransom, Hershenzon emphasizes the agency of captives. They wrote to relatives, provided information, contracted middlemen, and negotiated with their owners. Furthermore, letter-writing meant that, though physically absent, captives maintained a place in their home communities. The continuity of obligations and the regularity of contact “extended communal boundaries across the sea” (93). Some captives also played political roles in their home country, contributing to Spain’s fund of knowledge about North African conditions by gathering, writing, and sending intelligence.

Despite contact and some level of trust, captivity was inherently violent and Hershenzon recounts multiple instances in which captives were punished for deeds committed across the Mediterranean. Yet, he argues, these disruptive and destructive incidents generated communication and helped to encourage shared norms about what constituted unjust violence. Similarly, the suspension of

institutional redemption from Algiers following the Fatima-Monroy case meant that Spanish ransomers had to rely on Jewish and Morisco intermediaries, undermining royal ideologies while establishing new connections with those Spain had expelled.

The breadth and depth of research, the insight with which Hershenson draws out the significance of the sources, and the clarity of his writing all make this an impressive and convincing book. Because it engages with so many themes, it is of relevance to all scholars of the early modern western Mediterranean. And, though Hershenson focuses on the Mediterranean, his argument raises a broader question: might similar patterns of region formation also have been at play elsewhere, such as in the Caribbean?

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Fox, Dian. *Hercules and the King of Portugal: Icons of Masculinity and Nation in Calderón's Spain*. New Hispanisms. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. xxx + 303 pp. + 5 ill.

The interplay between changing notions of masculinity and nation-ness is an important, yet insufficiently examined subject in early modern studies, particularly in the Iberian context. Dian Fox underscores the importance of this fruitful *line of inquiry* in her innovative study on Pedro Calderón de la Barca's dramatic portrayal of two discomfiting early modern icons of elite masculinity: the mythological figure of Hercules, so inextricably interrelated to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain and its monarchy, and King Sebastian of Portugal, who reigned from 1557 to 1578 and whose untimely death after injudiciously invading Morocco led to the Portuguese *succession* crisis of 1580 in which Portugal lost its sovereignty to Spain for sixty years. Fox's perceptive analysis of the complex cultural appropriation and manipulation of both flawed masculine figures for political, nationalist and imperialist ends astutely uncovers anxieties in ideological conceptions of manhood and nationhood in *Habsburg Spain*.

Hercules and the King of Portugal: Icons of Masculinity and Nation in Calderón's Spain is a compelling, thoroughly researched and theoretically informed monograph that skillfully covers substantial ground with regard to sources (which go way beyond Calderón de la Barca's plays), approaches, theories, and interpretations. Fox situates her work within the expanding scholarship on masculinities in early modern Spain while acknowledging a specific debt to Golden Age scholars whose research relies on this vibrant and growing field. The book's division into two main parts, each consisting of three chapters, allows the author to