

Captives or Slaves and Masters in Eivissa (Ibiza), 1235–1600

Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza

Research Group in Agricultural Archaeology of the Middle Ages (ARAEM),
Department of Antiquity and Middle Ages Studies, Universitat Autònoma de
Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona), Spain

antoni.ferrer@uab.cat

Abstract

This article concerns captivity or slavery on the island of Eivissa (Ibiza) from the time of its conquest by Christians until the end of the sixteenth century. Captives were used to cultivate and harvest vineyards and to labor on public building works in accordance to the strict calendar for agricultural and salt production. The sources have been examined for quantitative data and for the identity of their masters. They contain valuable information on the characteristics of these captives (sex, origins) and on their mode of arrival to the island. Slave masters have also been evaluated in search of common features, such as economic position, political offices held, and properties owned. These data have been used to test Claude Meillassoux's (1986) definition of slavery. Simultaneously, Charles Verlinden's work has also been analyzed, with special regard to the motivation behind his turning of what the medieval sources referred to as "captives" into "slaves."

Keywords

Balearic Islands – corsairs – Christian conquests – Crown of Aragon – Kingdom of Mallorca – medieval captivity – medieval slavery – Ramon Muntaner

Introduction

In his main work, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, Charles Verlinden referred to a document, written at the court of the king of Mallorca in Perpignan in April 1335, in which the island of Eivissa (Ibiza) is mentioned. The document

is dated approximately one hundred years after the Christian conquest of the island.¹ At the time, the royal lieutenant on Eivissa was the well-known chronicler Ramon Muntaner (born in 1265), who remained in this position until his death in 1336.² The document reports the king's positive response to a request posed by the island's most prominent figures, the *probi homines*, in Latin, or *prohoms*, in Catalan. By accepting this request, the king overruled Muntaner's previous instructions and authorized a foreign corsair to operate from the island.

The relevance of the document lies in the reasons behind the petition: the *prohoms* needed captives to carry out agricultural work due to a shortage of free farm hands for hire. In their words, "all the agricultural tasks on the island are carried out by captives because it is not possible to find free hands to do the work."³ The record offers abundant proof of the use of captives in agriculture, especially in vineyards, but also in the extraction of salt, the island's key commodity during this period.

The text includes an interesting description of the role played by corsairs in the supply of captives. According to this document, the corsairs went "taking captives in the land of Moors who were not at peace" and also "to take up arms and sail against Moors who were not at peace or truce with us [i.e., the king]." Thus the document claims that the corsairs' actions involved "taking captives"—*cativar* in the original text—in Muslim nations that were at war with the king of Mallorca.⁴ *Cativar* is the medieval form of the current Catalan

1 Charles Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale. Tome premier. Péninsule Ibérique, France* (Bruges: Rijksuniversiteit te Gent, De Tempel, 1955), 511. There is a second volume: Charles Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale, Tome deux: Italie, Colonies italiennes du Levant, Levant latin, Empire Byzantin* (Ghent: Rijksuniversiteit te Gent, 1977).

2 Eivissa, Historical Archive of Eivissa (hereafter "AHE"), *Llibre de la cadena*, fol. 29r. Charles Verlinden, *L'esclavage*, 1:511; Charles Verlinden, "La esclavitud en la economía medieval de las Baleares, principalmente en Mallorca," *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 67–68 (1982): 123–164, especially 132. Ramon Muntaner is the author of one of the so-called "four major chronicles," the better-known edition of which is Ferran Soldevila's, *Les quatre grans cròniques* (Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1971).

3 It seems likely that the document was originally written in Latin at the king's court in Perpignan. The preserved copy is a Catalan translation that was incorporated into the book of privileges and franchises granted to the island's council and now kept at the AHE.

4 For the relationship between Muslim states and the Kingdom of Mallorca, see Charles-Emmanuelle Dufourcq, *L'Espagne catalane et le Maghrib aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles: de la bataille de Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) à l'avènement du sultan mérinide Abou-l-Hasan (1331)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); María Dolores López Pérez, *La Corona de Aragón y el Magreb en el siglo XIV (1331–1410)* (Barcelona: CSIC-Institució Milà i Fontanals, 1995); Dominique Valérian, *Bougie, port maghrébin, 1067–1510*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises

word *captivar*, clearly derived from the late Latin *captivare*, “to capture,” “to kidnap.” Therefore, the letter gives a neat definition of captives: they were persons captured by corsairs to be purchased by prominent figures as agricultural hands or for other labor. It is clear that beneath the relationship between captives and corsairs, as established in the document, lies a set of processes organized cyclically, a pattern of capture and sale of human beings. The money paid for the captives stimulated the activity of corsairs; that is, the capture of Moors or Saracens inhabiting Barbary, to use the document’s phrasing.

Naturally, this paper does not claim that the definition of captivity can be based solely on a single document. The totality of the written records referring to captivity in Eivissa together with the specialized literature form a much more solid base to support this definition. Regarding the literature, Charles Verlinden’s books and papers are a key reference, and are accordingly quoted in all works on medieval slavery—in fact, it is a field of study inaugurated by him. Despite this, it can be said that these volumes are rarely read with full consideration of their author’s work, as we shall explain below. In sharp contrast with Verlinden’s work, Claude Meillassoux’s *The Anthropology of Slavery. The Womb of Iron and Gold*, has generally been ignored by historians, despite being absolutely essential for a full understanding of slavery.⁵ The French anthropologist established a precise definition of captivity or slavery based on the way it reproduced: captives or slaves were a human contingent forcibly introduced in a society or nation different than their own; the reproduction of this captive group depended on a reiterated cycle of capture, transport, and sale of new individuals rather than biological reproduction.⁶ Taking captives saved the captor society the costs and the risks of biological reproduction, while the victim society lost not only the captives themselves, but also the effort invested

d’Athènes et de Rome, 128 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2006); and Henri Bresc and Yūsuf Rāḡib, *Le sultan mérinide Abu L-Hassan Ali et Jacques III de Majorque. Du traité de paix au pacte secret*, “Cahier des Annales islamologiques,” 32 (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 2011).

5 Claude Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l’esclavage. Le ventre de fer et d’argent* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986). English translation: Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery. The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1991). See also the interesting debate between Joseph C. Miller and Paul E. Lovejoy: Miller, “The World According to Meillassoux: A Challenging but Limited Vision,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22.3 (1989): 473–495; Lovejoy, “Miller’s Vision of Meillassoux,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24.1 (1991): 133–145.

6 Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l’esclavage*, 11.

in their upbringing, maintenance, and training.⁷ At the same time, capture implied the calculation of the captive's value in cash on the basis of the cost of the expedition. As the reproduction of the contingent materialized in the marketplace, Meillassoux establishes that the jobs they were used for must also have been necessarily exchangeable for money. The work of the captives was therefore a source of wealth for their masters, ensuring the repetition of the expeditions. This is the dynamic behind captivity that facilitated the perpetuation of the system over a long period of time. Certainly some slaves or captives were born to this status and others managed to escape from it, while some others either fell into captivity owing to debts, or were rescued or ran away. Nevertheless, all of these exceptions, and others as well, were but side effects of the main mechanism of capture and sale.

Eivissa is a good case study for this phenomenon in the Mediterranean: it has defined limits—567 km²—and a rich written record. The evidence, moreover, is perfectly congruent with the conceptual frame provided by Meillassoux concerning masters, captives, wages, production, corsair activity, and trade. Accordingly, the presence of captives or slaves necessarily implies masters, captors, money, and interchangeable goods, as well as the captives' generation of revenue through their work. Such revenue in turn, paid for the maintenance of the captive population and ensured its reproduction by permitting new captures and sales.

Salt and, to a lesser extent, wine were the main commodities produced by captives or slaves in Eivissa. Masters greatly benefited from the captives' exertions digging, carrying, and loading thousands of tons of salt every summer. Merchants from all over the Mediterranean, but especially from Genoa, came to the island in order to purchase its salt,⁸ in a cycle that lasted until the eighteenth century.

7 Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l'esclavage*, 285. This book points the reader towards Magnus Mörner's "Buy or Breed? Alternative Sources of Slave Supply in the Plantation Societies of the New World," *Memoria* 23 (Stockholm: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1980). It also briefly alludes to failed attempts at breeding slaves in the New World. Slavery in the North American South was, to some extent, an exception, but one that still needed an active internal slave trade to survive. Steven Deyle, "The Domestic Slave Trade in America: The Lifeblood of the Southern Slave System," in *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, ed. Walter Johnson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 91–116.

8 To date, no comprehensive study on the medieval and modern salt industry of Eivissa has been published, and we still rely on Jean Claude Hocquet, "Ibiza carrefour du commerce maritime et témoin d'une conjoncture méditerranéenne (1250–1650 env.)," *Studia in memoria di Federico Melis* 1 (Naples: Gianini, 1978), 491–526.

Captives or Slaves

The distinction between captive and slaves has received some historiographical attention, and sometimes they have been treated as different subjects.⁹ On the one hand, the word “slave” should, according to some views, be used to refer the individuals belonging to peoples captured, sold, and put to work.¹⁰ On the other, “captive” can allude to a prisoner in a war between peoples of equal status, especially between European powers,¹¹ to a Christian taken by the Muslims, who are rarely referred to as slaves;¹² and, finally, Muslims taken by Christians or Jews and kept for a ransom to be paid by relatives, friends, or institutions. Those among the captives who were not ransomed were sold,

9 Among others: Michel Fontenay, “Esclaves et/ou captifs. Préciser les concepts,” in *Le commerce des captifs. Les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XV^e–XVIII^e siècle*, ed. Wolfgang Kaiser (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2008), 15–24; Youval Rotman, “Captif ou esclave? Entre marché d'esclaves et marché de captifs en Méditerranée médiévale” in *Les esclavages en Méditerranée. Espaces et dynamiques économiques*, ed. Fabienne P. Guillén and Salah Trabelsi (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2012), 25–46. C. Meillassoux (*Anthropologie de l'esclavage*, 325) defined the difference thus: “captif: celui qui, ayant été capturé, n'a pas encore été acquis par un maître. Le captif est une marchandise, l'esclave un moyen de production; le captif consomme, l'esclave produit.” See also Claude Meillassoux, “Esclaves, vénacles, captifs et serfs,” in *Esclavage et dépendances serviles. Histoire comparée*, ed. M. Cottias, A. Stella, and B. Vicent (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), 367–373. Aurelia Martín Casares, in her noteworthy contribution, follows the French anthropologist in this regard. See “Repensar la esclavitud en el mundo hispano: reflexiones y propuestas metodológicas desde la antropología histórica,” in *Esclavitudes hispánicas (siglos XV al XXI): horizontes socioculturales*, ed. A. Martín Casares (Granada: Ediciones de la Universidad de Granada, 2014), 11–38, especially 23–24. Concerning the geographical and political context under consideration here, see Ricard Soto, “La situació dels andalusins (musulmans i batejats) a Mallorca després de la conquesta catalana de 1230,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 30 (1994): 167–206; Josep Torró, “De bona guerra. El ambiguo estatuto del cautivo musulmán en los países de la Corona de Aragón (siglos XII–XIII),” in *El cuerpo derrotado: cómo trataban musulmanes y cristianos a los enemigos vencidos (Península Ibérica, ss. VIII–XIII)*, ed. by M. Fierro and F. García Fitz (Madrid: CSIC, 2008), 435–483.

10 As described in a fifteenth-century document: “Peoples whose members are susceptible to being captured.” Debra Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars. Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-Century Valencia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 119, n. 167.

11 About prisoners of war, see Jean Dunbain, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000–1300* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

12 There are some exceptions, for instance: Robert C. Davis, *Christians Slaves, Muslim Masters. White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

and only from that point is it acceptable to refer to them as slaves. This is a tenuous, and in our opinion artificial, distinction, and the basis of a historiographical problem. It is often held that the distinction is based on the sources. Many authors, even after recognizing that the sources are far from clear in this regard, insist on maintaining this distinction and on stretching the evidence beyond reason for support.¹³ Our own detailed analysis of a specific context provides plentiful evidence that the solution is not quite so straightforward and that, in fact, the distinction between slaves and captives is only a historiographical construct. This is what makes the examination of terminology absolutely necessary for further research. It is important to stress that we believe that the word “slave” is a synonym—albeit an etymologically complex one that was only adopted at a late date—of “captive” in the sense of a person captured, sold, and forced to work.

The differentiation between slaves and captives is the cause of considerable problems in the interpretation of the sources, at least concerning the medieval period. One of the clearest symptoms is the overuse of the word “slave,” which is often used to substitute the more diverse lexicon found in the sources. This is not merely a matter of terminology, but also affects the definition of the concept. We must keep in mind that the word *sclavus* is the product of a linguistic phenomenon, a synecdoche, of the complete Latin expression *captivus sclavus*, which later became simply *sclavus*. A similar thing happened with Saracen, Moor, Greek, Tartar, Sardinian, Negro and others, when these words were used in the records as synonymous of captive, as was common. This linguistic process with *captivus sclavus* began taking place in the tenth century but its effects became especially notable later, in the twelve and early thirteenth centuries.¹⁴

13 For instance we find this confusion in a number of otherwise very valuable contributions, such as Raúl González Arévalo, “Cautivos moros y judíos en Málaga en tiempo de los Reyes Católicos,” *Baetica. Estudios de Arte, Geografía e Historia* 27 (2005): 345–361, especially 346. This author wrote about “the sometimes difficult distinction between a Moorish captive and a slave of identical origin” (our translation). Jarbel Rodríguez, *Captives and their Saviors in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 38: “This question is partly demanded by the sources themselves, which do not use the words *captive* (*cautivo*, *captivi*, *cativ*) and *slave* (*esclavo*, *servus*, *esclau*) interchangeably. The two terms meant different things, even if the difference was a subtle one.”

14 Charles Verlinden, “L’origine de *sclavus*—*esclave*,” *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi* 17 (1942): 97–128. Verlinden, *L’esclavage*, 2:999–1010. Henry and Renée Kahane, “Notes on the Linguistic History of *Sclavus*,” in *Studi in onore di Ettore Lo Gatto e Giovanni Mayer* (Rome: Sansoni Editore, 1962), 345–360. Didier Bondue, *De servus à sclavus. La fin de l’esclavage antique* (371–918) (Paris: Presses de la Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2011), 475. For the

Studies that focus on the Middle Ages, generally follow Verlinden's works and use the words "slave" and "slavery," although in the medieval sources, especially those written in Catalan, the archaic form *catiu* (*captiu* in modern Catalan, meaning captive), derived from the Latin *captivus*, is much more common. From the fourteenth century onwards, the expression "servus et captivus" becomes most common in public notary records (in Latin) in Barcelona.¹⁵ Table 1 shows the frequency and the proportion of each designation in the records of the island of Eivissa.

Table 1 illustrates that, from approximately 1500 onwards, the term *esclau* (slave) indeed became increasingly common, but it was always less frequent than *captiu* (captive). The earliest occurrence of the Catalan term *esclau* dates to the thirteenth century, and becomes increasingly common in its second half.¹⁶ A well-known author of this period, Ramon Llull (1232–1315), who wrote in Catalan, knew the term, and used it alongside *servu* (from the Latin *servus*) and *catiu*.¹⁷ The aforementioned Ramon Muntaner also knew the word *esclau*, but he used it, and only in its feminine form, on no more than three occasions in his chronicle. For the remainder of his long text, he always used Catalan derivatives of the Latin *captivus* and *captivare*, and different forms of the Catalan verb *prendre* (to catch); there are also mentions of *sarraïns* (Saracens) and *moros* (Moors), with the assumption that they were captives.¹⁸ This use of

transformation of Slav into Sclav, see Adam Lukaszewicz, "De Sclavinis et sclavis" *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 24.2 (1998): 129–135.

- 15 Josep Hernando, *Els esclaus islàmics a Barcelona: blancs, negres, llors i turcs. De l'esclavitud a la llibertat* (s. XIV) (Barcelona: CSIC-Institució Milà i Fontanals, 2003). This work analyses the records concerning Muslim captives between 1295 and 1400; 56% used the expression "servus et captivus"; 14.3% "servus"; 4.5% "sarracenus"; 2.3% "captivus," and only 14% included the word slave, on its own or in combination with a synonymous word ("sclavus, servus et captivus," "sclavus et captivus" and "servus et sclavus").
- 16 H. and R. Kahane ("Notes on the Linguistic History of Sclavus," 358) found the first use in French in the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, written in 1196.
- 17 Ramon Llull, *Obres doctrinals del il·luminat doctor mestre Ramon Llull. Libre de contemplació en Déu, escrit a Mallorca i transladat d'aràbic en romanç vulgar devers l'any MCCLXXII. Transcripció directa ab fasímils i variants dels més vells manuscrits*, ed. Mateu Obrador Bennàssar (Palma: Comissió Editora Lul·liana, 1906), chapter 25, p. 287; 63:29; 66:45; 86:146; 94:191.
- 18 Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, chapter 69, p. 813 and 203, p. 849. Also, Muntaner used the word with the sense of footprint left by a horse in the ground. For this meaning see Antoni Alcover and Francesc de Borja Moll, *Diccionari català-valencià-balear* (Palma: Editorial Moll, 1988), v, 257. Joan Coromines, *Diccionari etimològic i complementari de la llengua catalana*, 10 vols. (Barcelona: Curial Edicions Catalanes, 1995), 3:522–3. Muntaner used derivatives of *captivus* or *captivare* on twenty-one occasions (chapters 10, 13, 15, 19,

TABLE 1 *Frequency of the use of the words to name captives in the written record (1248–1600)*

	<i>Captiu</i>	<i>Esclau</i>	<i>Sarraí</i>	<i>Moro</i>	<i>Servus</i>	<i>Home-</i>	<i>Bord-a</i>	<i>Batejat</i>	<i>Grec</i>	<i>Sard-a</i>	<i>Turc-a</i>	<i>Rus-sa</i>	<i>Tàrtar</i>	<i>Negre</i>	<i>Setmaner</i>	<i>Libert</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>-iva</i>	<i>-ava</i>	<i>-ina</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>fembra</i>	(bastard)	<i>-ada</i>	<i>-ga</i>	(Sardinian)	(Turkish)	(Russian)	<i>-a</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-a</i>		
	(captive)	(slave)	(Saracen)	(Moor)		(male- female)		(bap- tized)	(Greek)				(Tartar)	(Black)	(wage slaves)	(Freed- man)		
1248–1349	19	4	52	24	1		1	3	14							2	9	129
1350–1399	27	3	31	1	1	17	5	1	1		1				13		18	119
1400–1449	166	7	11	38	10	6	5			3	10				4	1	85	346
1450–1499	241	6		9	2	10					2	4	1	1	1		46	323
1500–1549	67	96	1	10			16	2	2		6			5		4	34	243
1550–1600	206	216		9	4	4	12		4		3			12		33	43	542
Total	726	332	95	91	14	37	39	6	21	3	22	4	1	18	18	40	235	1702
%	43	20	5	5	1	2	2	0.3	1	0.3	1	0.2	0	1	1	2	14	100

SOURCE: A. FERRER, *CAPTIVUS I SENYORS DE CAPTIUS A EIVISSA*, 42.

“Saracen” and “Moor” can be found in King James I’s chronicle, entitled *Llibre dels Feits*, which was written in Catalan in the final quarter of the thirteenth century. This text does not use the word “slave” at all,¹⁹ nor does the legal compilation known as *Costums de Tortosa* (1272), in which the words “captive” and “Saracen” are used instead. Another key example is the legal code entitled *Furs de València*, which was written in the thirteenth century; significantly, the only uses of the word “slave” appear in parts of the document added in the fifteenth century.²⁰

According to Verlinden, in Catalan the term *esclau* (slave) became generalized in the fourteenth century, but Table 1 shows that this is not the case at all.²¹ In Eivissa, “slave” only became as popular as “captive” in the sixteenth century. Regarding this, the earliest uses of the Spanish word *esclavo* (slave) are dated to the fourteenth century, and the term did not become frequent in place of *cautivo* (or its pre-normative forms *cativo*, *caitivo*, or *catibo*), until the fifteenth century.²² To use a well-known example, the text of the *Siete Partidas* (the Castilian law code, compiled around 1265) uses the word *cativo* and also

44, 103, 105, 247, 253, and 255), and different forms of the verb *prendre* (to catch), like *pres* (caught) thirty-two times (in chapters 13, 26, 70, 113, 123, 155, 159, 172, 192, 207, 220, 223, 226, 234, 238, 243, 243, 252, 254, 260, and 289).

19 Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 3–190.

20 Jesús Massip i Fonollosa, *Costums de Tortosa* (Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 1996). For the treatment of slavery in the *Furs de València*, see Rafael Cariñena i Balaguer, and Andrés Díaz Borrás, “Serfs, esclaus i captius als *Furs de València*,” *Estudis de llengua i literatura catalanes. Miscel·lània Germà Colón* 34 (1997): 5–36, particularly 7: “sometimes slave, captive and serf seem to be synonymous.”

21 Charles Verlinden, “Esclavage médiéval en Europe et esclavage colonial en Amérique,” *Cahiers de l’Institut des Hautes Etudes de l’Amérique Latine* 6 (1961): 29–45; with English translation: “Medieval Slavery in Europe and Colonial Slavery in America,” *The Beginnings of Modern Colonisation. Eleven Essays with an Introduction*, ed. Charles Verlinden (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 33–51, especially 36.

22 Coromines, *Diccionari etimològic*, 3:521–522. Some authors who have stressed the late introduction of the word “slave,” among others: Vicenta Cortés, “Los pasajes de esclavos en Valencia en tiempo de Alfonso V,” *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 10 (1980): 791–819. Francisco Javier Marzal Palacios, *La esclavitud en Valencia durante la baja edad media (1375–1425)*, 2006 on line edition of Publicacions de la Universitat de València (<http://www.tesisenxarxa.net/TDX-1221107-103509>), p. 101. Juan Sáez Durán, “Un arabismo en castellano pre-alfonsí (çiclaves = ‘esclavos’) con unas notas de medicina y de fisiognómica etnográfica,” in *Estudios de la Universidad de Cádiz ofrecidos a la memoria del profesor Braulio Justel Calabozo*, ed. Javier Martín, Fernando Velázquez, and Joaquín Bustamante (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 1998), 621–631, especially 636.

provides an exact description of the category.²³ There are no “slaves” in the *Siete Partidas* because the word was unknown in Castile when it was written. In conclusion, the progressive dissemination and popularization of the word *sclavus* and its derivatives is merely a linguistic phenomenon, and it is not a written reflection of any changes in the process of capturing and selling human beings.²⁴

Verlinden knew the Catalan sources well and worked with them intensely, especially those referring to Mallorca: for example, he discussed a source concerning a tax imposed in 1428 on male captives in the island’s countryside.²⁵ The record basically consists of a list of masters of captives and the number of men they possessed at the time. The words used in the list, as synonyms, were *captiu*—as Verlinden himself noted—and less often *esclau*. Verlinden’s preference for the use of the words “slave” and “slavery” in his work seems to respond to his research agenda. Since he began studying slavery, he always showed great interest in the birth and evolution of the word *sclavus*.²⁶ Indeed, slave was his word of choice in substitution for Classical Latin terms, especially *captivus* and *servus*. The use of the word “slave” (*esclave* in the French editions) was justified in the wide expansion of the derivatives of *sclavus* throughout the Latin and Germanic languages during the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, and in its eventual consolidation, this use was proportional to the enormous growth of the phenomenon to which it referred. Verlinden explained its complex etymology: the word was introduced by Italian merchants late in the twelfth and especially in the early thirteenth century.²⁷ The terms used in mercantile contracts were *schiauo* and *sclavus*. In the meantime, the Latin word *captivus* evolved into the Italian *cattivo*, which was progressively limited to the meaning of “bad, detestable,” the secondary meaning of the Latin word. In the Italian languages, the adoption of *schiauo* (slave) to express the meaning of *captivus* was the first step towards the generalization

23 Robert I. Burns, ed. and Samuel Parsons Scott, trans., *Las Siete Partidas. Volume Two. Medieval Government: The World of Kings and Warriors* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 517, Part. II, Tit. XXIX.

24 It is possible to sustain this proposal despite the hypothesis of H. and R. Kahane, “Notes on the Linguistic History of *Sclavus*,” 360, that sustains a diffusion of the word *sclavus*, and its derivatives in other languages, through the spoken level from which it would have reached, some time later, the written register.

25 Charles Verlinden, “Une taxation d’esclaves à Majorque en 1428 et la traite italienne,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 42 (1972): 141–187.

26 Verlinden, “L’origine de *sclavus*–esclave,” 97–128. Verlinden, *L’esclavage*, 2:999–1010. It was reedited in *Bulletin du Cange* 17 (1943): 7–128.

27 Verlinden, *L’esclavage*, 2:1004–1005.

of the term. The second was the well-known activity of Italian merchants—also studied by Verlinden²⁸—and, with them, the expansion of *sclavus* and their translations and adaptations into other languages: in Catalan first, followed by Castilian in the fourteenth century and Portuguese in the following century.

Thus, *sclavus*, which originally was an adjective attached to *captivus* to refer to prisoners of Slav origin, was in the end used to refer the very different Africans taken to the Caribbean and the American continent. This evolution notwithstanding, the Latin derivatives of *captivus* did by no means disappear. Often, allusions to race or ethnic origins also carried the assumption of captivity: Saracen and Moor, but also Tartar, Greek, Sardinian, Turkish, etc. In the case of the Africans, again eliding the noun and giving its function to the adjective, the terms Negro or Guinean also became synonymous with captive.

Ultimately, Verlinden's work came to determine the terminology used by later historians. His choice of the derivatives of *sclavus* was, as we have already said, deliberate. In a dramatically short summary, we may say that his research goal was to prove that the use made of captive peoples in the Caribbean after 1492 was the continuation of the practices of what he calls medieval slavery, eventually adapted to the new circumstances into a form of colonial slavery.²⁹ In this regard, the use of a single word and its derivatives—"slave" to name the person and "slavery" to indicate the institution—to refer to captives on both sides of the Atlantic was most favorable to his thesis. His choice has since been maintained by later historians, but without the justification and the intentionality shown by Verlinden.

In hindsight, the use of the word "slave" to refer to what medieval sources generally refer to as a "captive" has positive and negative consequences. The main one among the former, as pointed out by Verlinden himself, stresses that

28 Charles Verlinden, "Les influences italiennes dans l'économie et dans la colonisation espagnoles à l'époque de Ferdinand le Catholique," in *Fernando el Católico e Italia, V Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón, Estudios III* (Zaragoza: Institución "Fernando el Católico," 1954), 269–283. Charles Verlinden, "Gli italiani nell'economia delle Canarie all'inizio della colonizzazione spagnola," *Economia e storia* 7 (1960): 149–172. In English in *The Beginnings*: 113–131, 132–157.

29 Verlinden, "Medieval Slavery in Europe and Colonial Slavery in America": 34; Charles Verlinden, *Précédents médiévaux de la colonie en Amérique. Période coloniale* (Mexico: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1954). The great Belgian historian describes medieval slavery as a "preparatory phenomenon" to colonial slavery. This idea has been criticized by M. Fontenay, "Pour une géographie de l'esclavage méditerranéen aux temps modernes," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée, L'esclavage en Méditerranée à l'époque moderne* 65 (2002): 17–52.

Atlantic colonial slavery was the continuation of the captivity practices of the Middle Ages and their adaptation to new circumstances. Therefore, regardless of considerable differences in magnitude and geography, both mechanisms respond to identical dynamics, as Verlinden already noted. Regarding the negative aspects of the use of the same word to designate both phenomena, the most significant ones directly concern the historiography of the issue. The scale of Atlantic slavery was so atrociously enormous that, by using the same terminology, it has unduly dwarfed the importance of medieval captivity; anything but slavery *par excellence*—the Atlantic one—is thus treated as a reduced version of it, when it is treated at all. This misapprehension leads to the emergence of historiographical proposals based, sometimes involuntarily, on the comparison between Atlantic slavery and other slaveries, for example in the Mediterranean. These include the notion that the Middle Ages merely witnessed “domestic slavery,” in contrast with the “agricultural slavery” of American colonies.³⁰ This also applies to the idea that medieval slaves were better treated than the black Africans and, before them, the Indians in the Caribbean and Americas.³¹ In fact, Meillassoux’s conceptual clarifications and the figures concerning medieval captivity hardly agree with the idea of a merely “domestic slavery”: reproduction by purchase forced the masters of captives to use them in the production of marketable goods. Eivissa’s case fully supports this idea, especially concerning the wine- and salt-production sectors.

Another considerable problem that has emerged from the reactions brought about by Verlinden’s semantic alchemy concerning the terms “slave” and “slavery.” Marc Bloch’s posthumous work, *Apologie pour l’histoire ou métier*

30 The coining of the notion of domestic slavery is attributed to Jacques Heers, *Esclaves et domestiques au moyen-âge dans le monde méditerranéen* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1981), ch. 5, but the fact is that this author went beyond such a simplistic argument, and noted the presence of captives working in the fields and mines in different Mediterranean regions such as Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Corsica, Cyprus, and the Levant, among others. He established a relationship between labor shortages that occurred in the aftermath of conquests and colonization processes, as well as with the expansions of market crops such as the grape. Heer’s work points towards the existence of different types of slaveries and sets out to identify and study them. See also Stephen P. Bench, “From Prizes of War to Domestic Merchandise: the Changing Face of Slavery in Catalonia and Aragon, 1000–1300,” *Viator* 25 (1994): 63–93.

31 Antoni Furió, “Una introducció,” *Recerques. Història, Economia, Cultura* 52/53 (2006), 7–18. Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars*, 267, has criticized this idea, which in her opinion reflects a paternalistic line of thinking.

d'historien,³² paid attention to the issue of nomenclature, and used the word slave (*esclave*, in the French text) as an example of the historiographical preference for a word that differed from those actually used in the historical sources. The masterful French historian was referring to the Early Middle Ages, when the semantic change around the word *servus*, from “captive” or “slave” to “serf,” was taking place. Bloch justified the use of “slave” for a certain period when the meaning of *servus*—which was at the time in the process of shifting between “captive” and “serf”—was hard to spot. Still, he warns that the term was “if not actually invented then at least polished and displaced” (“si non propement inventée, du moins remaniée et décalée”), because it did not actually exist in that period. Consequently, the use of “slave” conveyed the personal status wanted by the historian while avoiding the ambiguities incurred by the historical sources themselves. Bloch insists, however, that using a “polished and displaced” word is an artifice, and asks himself when such artifice must be given up in order to return to the nomenclature of the sources once the original ambiguity has disappeared.

Thus, although with qualifications, Bloch approved the anachronistic use of “slave.” However, Bloch never considered the word *captivus*, which never changed meaning and, consequently, could have been used to resolve the problem of early medieval *servus*; he used it but once and only in order to avoid repetition. In any case, the issue is highly relevant to Bloch’s question: What happens if the “if not invented than polished and displaced” term does not disappear before the one most often used in the sources? Verlinden’s artifice with the words “slave” and “slavery” is of a sort that requires discipline and a constant awareness of the intention behind the operation, or there is a severe risk of creating fictional categories and concepts through the use of different words in the historiography and the sources. Indeed, the idea that slaves and captives were two differentiated categories in the medieval Mediterranean is widespread, proving that Verlinden’s choice and purpose have not been fully understood by later historians.

Following this it is often asserted that captured peoples could receive the status of captive or that of slave depending on whether they were interchangeable for a ransom or simply put to work.³³ It is assumed that this distinction

32 Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*, Cahier des Annales, 3 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1952), 81.

33 Steven A. Epstein, *Speaking of Slavery. Color, Ethnicity, and Human Bondage in Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 18–24, offers an interesting contribution which, however, does not analyze the word “captive.” See Rotman, “Captif ou esclave?”

existed clearly in the heads of the captors who, therefore, would divide their booty into captives and slaves. Consistently with this, captives would have had so-called “exchange value” and slaves, a “use value”; similarly, it follows that captives were “provisional slaves, waiting to be ransomed,” whereas slavery was a final status. Thus, M. Fontenay sustains that African people taken to American plantations were genuine slaves because they could not hope to be ransomed; applying this classificatory logic M. Fontenay goes further and questions the suitability of the word, and the attached concept of slave, when speaking about the Mediterranean.³⁴

In conclusion, the definition of medieval slaves and the distinction drawn between them and captives is crafted by extrapolating this feature of black slaves brought to America back to the Middle Ages; subsequently, attempts are made to adapt this artificial distinction—slaves are put to work and captives remain, working or idle, awaiting their ransom—to the sources. But things are never quite that easy: Catalanian and Castilian texts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—a key stage for the adoption of the new term, “slave,” and the partial substitution for the old one, “captive”³⁵—do not support this hypothesis, which thus remains provisional. However that might be, the distinction between the different categories of prisoners, captives, and slaves is now widespread, despite having resulted from a historiographical fabrication based on a merely linguistic phenomena.³⁶

In contrast with this, the evidence from Eivissa transparently and abundantly shows a clear-cut division between two categories of captives. Furthermore, this division was to remain valid for several centuries: Muslim captives and

34 See Fontenay, “Esclaves et/ou captifs. Préciser les concepts,” 15–24, especially 22: “Si ces considérations on quelque valeur, elles devraient aussi nous amener, en tant qu'historiens ‘modernistes,’ à reconsidérer l'emploi du mot et du concept d'esclavage à propos de la Méditerranée.”

35 Vicenta Cortés, “Los pasajes de esclavos en Valencia en tiempo de Alfonso V,” *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 10 (1980): 791–819. Vicente Graullera Sanz, *La esclavitud en Valencia en los siglos XVI i XVII* (Valencia: Instituto Valenciano de Estudios Históricos-Institución Alfonso el Magnánimo-CSIC, 1978), 30–3. José Luis Cortés López, *La esclavitud negra en la España peninsular del siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1989), 16–17. Marzal Palacios, *La esclavitud en Valencia*.

36 See Rotman, “Captif ou esclave?” This work has the merit of showing that, in the eastern Mediterranean, between the ninth and eleventh centuries, ransoms were but a secondary objective for the expeditions launched to maintain the market supply of working slaves.

those of other religious or ethnic background in the hands of Christian masters, and Christian captives owned by others, mostly Muslim, masters. The latter category is referred to in the sources as “captives in Barbary” or “captives in Moorish lands.” The way Christian, Muslim and also Jewish masters exploited their captives has not been fully clarified to date.³⁷

The Captive Suppliers

Ramon Muntaner was already experienced and advanced in years when he was appointed as the lieutenant in Eivissa of the king of Mallorca. He was aware of the problems that corsair action could cause at the time, when the kingdom was at war with Genova, and the corsairs could attack the king's allies, France and Pisa.³⁸ In fact this question was one cause of concern at the king's court, and on 11 March 1335 the king commanded his general representative in the Kingdom of Mallorca to supervise the armament of corsairs, and to prevent their action from causing diplomatic conflicts and reprisals.³⁹

The council sent two syndics before the king to request the corsair license that Muntaner had denied them. They were members of captive-owning families, or “masters of captives,” which is how they are generally referred to in the sources. Up to forty of these have been recorded in Eivissa in the first half of the fourteenth century. There may have been more, but in no case were there more than fifty or sixty. The number of people who owned captives on the island progressively increased thereafter, as did the total population, but never rose above ten percent of the total resident population estimated for

37 An interesting approach can be found in Claude Larquié, “Captifs chrétiens et esclaves maghrébins au XVIII^e siècle,” in *Captius i esclaus a l'antiguitat i al món modern*, ed. Maria Luisa Sánchez León and Gonçal López Nadal (Naples: Jovene Editore, 1996), 347–364; and especially Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 80–102.

38 Bresc and Râgib, *Le sultan mérinide Abu l-Hassan Ali*, 20–21. For the war with Genoa: see Josefina Mutgé Vives, “La guerra contra Gènova de 1330–1335: documentació barcelonina,” *Miscel·lània de Textos Medievals* 6 (1992), 47–100. Antonio Ortega Villoslada, *El reino de Mallorca y el mundo atlántico (1230–1349). Evolución político-mercantil* (La Coruña: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2008), 78–86.

39 Pere Antoni Sanxo, “Antichs privilegis y franqueses del Regne. Regnat de Jaume III (majoria d'edat),” *Boletín de la Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana* 2 (1905): 73–81, especially 76.

each period (between about two and five thousand at the end of our period).⁴⁰ Table 2 shows the number of captive masters and mistresses between 1300 and 1600, the total number of captives, and the average number of captives under each owner.

These figures illustrate how important the activity of a single corsair could be. The number of captives needed to cover empty positions and satisfy the demand posed by the islanders could easily be supplied by a low number of corsairs. A single corsair was, therefore, important to the masters of captives, which explains the pains taken in 1335 in order to send syndics to see the king and thus secure a fluid supply of captives. Of course, we have to take into account the captives purchased by merchants, also recorded in the sources, although these captives must have been caught somewhere before they could be traded. The first evidence of a direct relationship between masters of captives and corsairs, as demand and supply factors is dated to the second half of thirteenth century, when two future “honorable men” became themselves corsairs.⁴¹

As previously noted, the 1335 document can be regarded as an admission by the elite that their lucrative activities depended on captives. Fifteen years later, the severe effects of the Black Death led the Aragonese king Peter III to explicitly authorize the ruling men from Eivissa to arm corsair ships to attack the Saracens then at war with Aragon and to return to the island with captives and other booty. It must be stressed that the document enumerates the content of the booty, and that captives are listed in first place.⁴² In 1372, the

40 Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza, *Captius i senyors de captius a Eivissa. Una contribució al debat sobre l'esclavitud medieval (segles XIII–XVI)*. (Valencia, Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2015), 250–277.

41 Bernat Albert and Guillem Castelló, were involved in raiding expeditions into Valencia (1277) and North Africa (1282) respectively. Albert and Castelló feature in a list of local honorable men dated to 1285. For these two individuals see: Barcelona, Archive of the Crown of Aragón (hereafter “ACA”), Cancelleria, register 39, fols. 207v–208r. ACA, Reg. 55, f. 7v, 8v, 9v i 10r. For the list: Archive National de Paris, JJ–270 “Trésor des Chartes. Published several times, see Estanislau Aguiló, “Actes de la elecció dels síndichs de la ciutat y de les parròquies foranes per fer sacrament y homenatge a n'Alfons de Aragó com a rey de Mallorca. 1385,” *Boletín de la Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana* (August 1901): 119–121.

42 Amada López de Meneses, *Documentos acerca de la peste negra en los dominios de la Corona de Aragón*, Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón 6 (Zaragoza: Heraldo de Aragón, 1956), 345, doc. 64: “recedendo a dicta insula et in eadem reddire seu tornare cum captivis et aliis rebus et mercibus per eosdem acquisitis.” The increase in the demand of captives after the Black Death has been noticed by different authors. See William D. Phillips Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia, PA: University of

TABLE 2 *Number of masters and mistresses between 1300 and 1600*

	Masters of captives	Mistresses of captives	Total	Male captives	Female captives	Total	Average
1300–1350	36	4	40	61	13	74	1.8
1351–1400	55	2	57	94	16	110	1.9
1401–1450	42	3	45	67	16	83	1.8
1451–1500	59	4	63	83	28	111	1.7
1501–1550	95	7	102	94	80	174	1.7
1551–1600	156	15	171	337	94	431	2.5

Given are the total number of masters and mistresses, total number of captives, and average number of captives per master.

SOURCE: A. FERRER, *CAPTIUS I SENYORS DE CAPTIUS A EIVISSA*, 251.

same king had ordered his governor in Eivissa to allow the corsairs from the island to arm their vessels freely; naturally, the authorization carried the obligation not to attack sultanates with which peace treaties existed and also to hand out the corresponding securities.⁴³ During the two following years, an accounts book from the council mentions sixty-three captives in the island in that time. In 1400, the agent of the company of the Datini stationed in Eivissa bought nine Turkish captives from a group of Venetians and, according to one of his letters, planned to sell them “on Sunday, when people will have come back from the salt works.”⁴⁴ It was the first day of September, and he was referring to the Sunday mass celebrated after the return of the salt-labourers from the summer campaign. The *Llibre del mostassaf d'Eivissa*, a collection of local regulations under the authority of the *mostassaf* (the late medieval

Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 60. On this question in our specific context, see Antoni Furió, “Esclaus i assalariats. La funció econòmica de l'esclavitud en la Península Ibèrica a la Baixa Edat Mitjana,” in *De l'esclavitud a la llibertat. Esclaus i lliberts a l'edat mitjana*, ed. M. T. Ferrer and J. Mutgé (Barcelona: CSIC, Institució Milà i Fontanals, 2000), 19–38. Roser Salicrú i Lluch, “Slaves in the Professional and Family Life of Craftsmen in the Late Middle Ages,” in *La famiglia nell'economia europea secoli XIII–XVIII / The Economic Role of the Family in the European Economy from the 13th to the 18th Centuries*, ed. by S. Cavaciocchi (Florence: University Press, 2009), 325–342.

43 AHE, *Llibre de la cadena*, fol. 48r–v, translation in Isidoro Macabich, *Historia de Ibiza*, 4 vols. (Palma: Daedalus, 1967), 3:96.

44 Ridolfo Livi, *La Schiavitù domestica nei tempo di Mezzo e nei Moderni. Ricerche Storiche di un antropologo* (Padova: Casa Editrice Dott. Antonio Milani, 1928), 273.

Christian version of the Islamic *muhtasib*), governed the auctions of captives and included an express regulation against the over-inflation of prices by the corsairs titled *De vendre catius en públich* (“on the public sale of captives”). This rule determined that during a public sale nobody, including corsairs, could bid or make someone else bid to fraudulently favor the sellers.⁴⁵ At this time (the mid-fourteenth century) the municipal government of Eivissa was offering grants for the construction and arming of galiots, the type of vessel most commonly used by the corsairs.⁴⁶ Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario*, published in 1528, recounts that the tasks involved in salt production were in Eivissa carried out by captives, and that for this reason corsairs brought many captives (he wrote *schiaivi*) to the island.⁴⁷ The captives, therefore, were captured and later sold. This explains the close relationship drawn between masters and corsairs in the 1335 document: they depended on one another. Verlinden highlights the role played by those in charge of maintaining a constant supply of captives: “c'est plutôt parmi les marins adonnés à la guerre de course qu'il faut chercher les négriers du temps.”⁴⁸

The maintenance on the island between 1300 and 1500 of a contingent of between fifty and one hundred and fifty captives, belonging to between fifty and a hundred masters, was achieved through the replacement of losses caused by death, by manumission—much less frequent—and by rare instances of exchange, ransom, or escape. This method of maintaining the number of captives means that the composition of the captive contingent was the result of a selection process; this explains the fact that most captives were men. In Eivissa and in Mallorca the masters preferred male captives.

The Captive's Lot: Salt, Vineyards, Fields, and Building Yards

According to Hocquet, a total of 111 vessels arrived at Eivissa to be loaded with salt between 1336 and 1343. A document from the late thirteenth century

45 Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza, *El Llibre del mostassaf d'Eivissa. La vila d'Eivissa a la baixa edat mitjana* (Eivissa: Consell Insular d'Eivissa, 2002), 273.

46 AHE, *Llibre de determinacions de 1456–1457*, fol. 50r.

47 Benedetto Bordone, *Libro de Benedetto Bordone nel qual si ragiona de tutte l'isole del mondo con li lor nomi antichi et moderni, historie, favole et modi del loro vivere et in qual parte del mare stanno et in qual parallelo et clima giacciono*, ed. G. B. de Cesare (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1988, first edition, 1528), XIX–XXI.

48 Verlinden, *L'esclavage*, 1335, 376.

mentions that Eivissa's salt "crop" could be of the order of fifteen thousand *modins* (plural of *modí*), and as many tons, if the equivalences suggested by Hocquet himself and M. del Treppo for this old salt-measuring unit are accepted.⁴⁹ However, this estimation is too high, as the known figures for salt export are much lower: 4200 *modins* in 1373, 7100 in 1417, and 9900 in 1469.⁵⁰ As shown by Hocquet, salt was an important business; the most important, in fact, for Eivissa's social elite. In any case, producing and shifting several thousand tons of salt every year was not an easy task with the means available at the time.

Producing salt for the market involved two main tasks: digging and piling, and carrying. Both were heavy, physically demanding jobs that needed to be executed in late summer, when the heat and the sun were still strong. After the evaporation of the water filling the saltpans, salt would remain, forming a white and hard crust, whence it had to be dug, piled, and extracted. The tools used for digging the salt were the same as those used in agriculture: adzes, straw mats, palm zambils, etc. The salt-filled baskets would be carried on the head—it was to be done that way until the 1960s—and later loaded onto pack animals (asses, mules, and oxen) to be carried to the *Carregador de la Sal* (the salt wharf): a quay only suitable for salt barges and other ships with little draft. These small craft would shuttle the salt cargo towards the large ships outside the bay or in the city harbor. As one might easily imagine, this operation could only be carried out by making full use of the strength and the resistance of many men.

49 Hocquet calculates the capacity of the Eivissan *modí* in 520 litres; the weight of salt is of 1.2 kg per litre, and therefore the *modí* would weigh around 625 kg; Hocquet, "Métrologie du sel et histoire comparée en Méditerranée," *Annales. Économies. Sociétés. Civilisations* 29 (March–April 1974), 393–424. Mario Del Treppo equates the *modí* to a current ton in *Els mercaders catalans i l'expansió de la corona catalano-aragonesa* (Barcelona: Curial Edicions, 1976), 191.

50 These figures are based on the *millarès*, a tax on the commercialisation of salt. The annual tax collection is indicative of the number of *modins* sold during the corresponding fiscal year. The tax records are known as *clavari*, the ledgers of the municipal accounting official, which are kept at the AHE. A new ledger was started with the beginning of every year from, at least, the early 14th century, but most of these books are missing and only four can now be consulted: AHE, *Llibre de clavaria de 1373–74, 1417–18, 1483–84 and 1493–94*. The accounting books of the salt administration, called *Llibre del guardià de la sal* (Book of the wardens of the salt), is another important source of information, but only one of them (1467–1468) has been preserved for the Middle Ages. See Ferrer, *Captius i senyors de captius a Eivissa*, 267.

Every year most of the population of the island, including men and women, congregated around the saltpans. The remainder stayed in the town, while the women and children from the countryside would shelter in fortified houses or churches to await the return of their men. In the saltpans, the salt laborers would be organized into gangs and camp for nearly a month, working from dawn to dusk. In general, vigilance was reinforced all around the island in order to ensure the detection of enemy sails, and measures were put into place to prevent any evils that undetected enemies could cause. These precautions notwithstanding, in August 1383 two Moorish galleys and a large lembus disembarked in Portmany, far away from the saltpans, and took nineteen captives, probably women and children congregated in a house during the salt season.⁵¹ An even graver incident took place in 1423, when a corsair from Granada disembarked with several ships and took one hundred and fifty Moors working in the saltpans and thirty or forty citizens from the island.⁵² In order to avoid these situations, new security measures were enacted in 1505 for implementation during the salt season. Among them was the obligation to make the captives sleep in towers, strong houses or cisterns or to bring them inside the town overnight.⁵³ Mateo Bandello's (1485–1561) *Novelle* also refers to the use of captives in Eivissa's salt works; he says that the Genoese did not hesitate to send any misbehaving captive to Eivissa's saltpans for punishment.⁵⁴ The aforementioned *Isolario*, written by B. Bordone in 1528, gives yet more evidence for the exploitation of captives in salt-related tasks.⁵⁵ Two years earlier, the Turkish admiral Piri Reis wrote in his *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, or handbook for sailors, that many Turkish and Arab captives were made to work at the saltpans in Eivissa; so many, in fact, that it was hard to count them all.⁵⁶ By the fifteenth century the *Llibre del mostassaf d'Eivissa* also proves the use of captives in the salt works, specifically carrying salt from the pond to the salt wharf.⁵⁷

51 Enrique Fajarnés Tur, "Una irrupción de moros en Portmany en 1383," *Ibiza* 12 (1945): 189–194.

52 Agustín Rubio Vela, *Epistolari de la València medieval*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia i Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1998), 2:276–278.

53 AHE, *Llibre de deteminacions de 1505–06*, fol. 17r.

54 Matteo Bandello, "Novela XXI: Uno schiavo battuto dal padrone ammazza la padrona con i figliuoli e poi se stesso precipita da un'alta torre," *Quattro libri delle novelle* (Lucca, 1554).

55 Bordone, *Libro de Benedetto Bordone*, xixv–xxi.

56 Piri Reis, *Kitab-ı Bahriye. Libro para navegantes*, ed. José Enrique Lechuga de Serantes (Madrid: Ministerio de Fomento, 2007).

57 Ferrer, *El Llibre del mostassaf*, 272.

Thanks to these testimonies, we know—as could have been predicted, given de presence of both captives and salt production in the island—that masters used to send their captives, men and women, to the salt works every year for the salt season. There are no other sources concerning the tasks of the captives in the salt works, or, indeed, concerning their number; extraction works were organized by the main local institution, the *Universitat*, but were carried out privately by every citizen of the island with rights to the salt. This originated in the purchase of salt-exploitation rights from the feudal lords of the island, Guillem de Montgrí and Prince James, the son of James I the Conqueror, in 1261 and 1267.⁵⁸ No detailed records or accounts exist about the cost of extraction, only about the commercialization of the salt, which was under the control of the local council of the *Universitat*. In conclusion, only the text dated to 1423 offers an absolute figure regarding the number of captives working at the saltpans and wharf: 150. Although, surely, this only an approximation, it is in agreement with the estimates made on the basis of other documents. It is, moreover, coherent with the number of forty-five masters recorded for the first half of fifteenth century.

The earliest preserved accounts for salt distribution and trade are not dated, however, until 1468.⁵⁹ In this year the number of measures or *modins* allocated to each of the 334 heads of household with the right to collect them oscillated between four and forty-eight. The distribution was proportional to the estimated wealth of each family; this allocation system is attested as early as the late thirteenth century.⁶⁰ The total of salt delivered that year was 6896 measures. This considerable amount of salt had to be carried from the saltpans to the bay, a distance between two and four kilometers. If each man worked with two mules, and each mule could be loaded with 120 kilograms, doing six round trips per day, a hundred captives could transport around 140 tons every day; this means that the 1468 production could have been moved in fifty days. These calculations do not take into account the labor involved in digging up the salt, loading it onto the animals, unloading it, measuring it, and loading it onto the ships, but they do give some idea of the amount of effort demanded from the captives.

The proportionality in the salt distribution made the richer families even wealthier, but also forced them to invest more in salt extraction tasks. We

58 Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza, “‘Los catius y mules ab los quals se fa lo axercici de traure sal.’ Les Salines d’Eivissa, des de 1235 fins a la pesta negra,” *Randa* 71 (2013): 21–45.

59 AHE, *Llibre de l’escrivà de la sal de 1467–68*.

60 Isidoro Macabich, *Historia de Ibiza*, 4 vols. (Palma de Mallorca: Ediciones Daedalus, 1967), 1:182.

know how much salt corresponded to each of the forty-eight masters of captives—known through other sources—around 1468, and this is a safe indication of their general level of wealth: thirty-eight received between sixteen and forty-eight *modins*. We must take into account that this amount corresponds to the initial distribution, made before the extraction of the salt. This is relevant, because transactions involving salt were conducted before its extraction. An example of this is shown in the same 1468 accounts book, where a Jordi Moner is recorded buying a female captive from the widow of Toni Joan, an important citizen, using part of his salt rights as payment. Notary documents dated prior to 1600 are not preserved in Eivissa, limiting our knowledge about other transactions involving the transference of these salt rights.

The rest of the year, once the salt-related tasks were over, the captives were kept active according to a very precise calendar. Working in vineyards was one of their most common occupations, along with plowing, sowing, and cropping cereals. In the intervals between these agricultural tasks the captives carried out all manner of domestic jobs for their masters, and could even be hired out to other individuals or to the municipalities for the execution of public works—this is well attested in the account books. The aforementioned book of the *mostassaf* shows that captives were used to transport firewood, water, and other goods.

Along with salt, wine production was a lucrative business in Eivissa. In 1248, Guillem de Montpalau, born in Vic and living in Eivissa probably since the conquest, produced wine from his lands on the island. Montpalau owned six captives, one of whom, the aforementioned Jafira, was beyond doubt in Eivissa. Several documents dated after the conquest mention the existence of vineyards, and thirteenth-century *Capbreus* (a type of document describing properties and rents) mention several wineries in the town. By the time of his death in 1318, Andreu Serra had a farmstead, which included a winery, and a house in the town where an inventory mentions several vats for wine storage. Serra and his wife Brunisenda were also masters of four captives: Muhammad, Said, and two women whose names are unknown, who carried out the agricultural jobs and all kinds of tasks in their master's houses. After Serra's death and for several years, his property was managed by his executors. His own captives, along with those owned by his executors and some hired from other masters, are recorded carrying out tasks such as digging the vineyard, pruning the trees, plowing the fields, and transporting grain to the town to sell; a Saracen also shepherded Serra's sheep and goats.⁶¹

61 Palma, Archive of the Kingdom of Mallorca (hereafter "ARM"), *Suplicacions* 5, fols. 61r–103v.

The analysis of the properties owned by masters of captives shows that most of them were residents of the town—the few that were not were rich landowners: ten out of eighty-nine in 1568, the date of a tax register which mentions the place of residence of all the inhabitants of the island.⁶² Older sources, the *capbreus* or land registries carried out at the end of fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries, show that the properties of the owners of captives were never more than eight kilometers away from the town, the only urban nucleus on the island. The salt pans where the captives worked were also within this distance. Captives were mostly employed in these fields, planted with vines and cereal crops. Wine exports are recorded from at least 1300. In that year, the island's notables successfully complained against the prohibition on exporting wine unless its destination was Mallorca. Thus we know that from 1300 at the latest that some of the wine produced was sold abroad along with the salt. Both products were available for market because of the labor input provided by captives. Agreeing well with Meillassoux's theoretical interpretation, the profits gained with this trade allowed the island's notables to buy new captives from the corsairs and merchants, keeping the circle of captivity in motion.

These allusions to the labor of the captives in the salt pans, the vineyards, and the fields are proof enough of their participation in these activities and show the strategies followed by their masters, but are not sufficient for quantitative evaluations. They are not specific examples in which individual captives are named, and therefore made countable, but are instead general allusions from which more specific inferences cannot be easily drawn. The work of captives in their masters' salt works, fields, and vineyards generated no documents. Only when they were hired to a public institution with the need to render accounts were their jobs and their persons to some degree described and recorded. This is, for example, the case of the construction log books of the *Universitat*, the ruling body in the municipality. These records, concerning several construction or repair works in buildings and infrastructures starting in 1373 and finishing in the sixteenth century, have shown the differences in the labor conditions, and the qualitative distinctions of their work, of captives and free men and the composition of work gangs.⁶³ Such accounts have also

62 AHE, *Llibre d'estims de 1568*.

63 AHE, *Llibre de clavaría de 1373–74, 1417–18, and 1493–94*; AHE, *Llibre de l'obrer de 1483–84, 1489–90, 1493–94, and 1550–51*; AHE, *Llibre de salaris de la fortificació de 1561*; ARM, *Reial Patrimoni* 2474 (1590). ACA, *Mestre Racional* 2422 (1475–92), and ARM, *Reial Patrimoni* 304 (1496–1502), both edited in *Estudi històric i arqueològic del castell d'Eivissa. II. Documents escrits*, ed. Carlolina Tur Serra and Antoni Ferrer Abárzuza (Eivissa: Consell Insular d'Eivissa i Formentera, 2003), 18–50.

shown the importance of certain institutions, such as the *setmaners* or *tallats*, captives subject to contracts of *alforria*, which enabled them to pay their own ransom with their weekly wages.

Fifty entries from different sources concerning construction works have been analyzed. With the exception of the Renaissance-style fortification initiated in 1554, most of them concern small works: the reconstruction of towers in the medieval wall, repairs to public buildings, the refurbishment of streets, roads and water channels in the salt pans, etc. The work gangs employed a maximum of twenty men, most of whom were captives and *setmaners*. The free members always included the foreman and one or two apprentices. The captives were mostly employed in carrying construction material such as stone, earth, lime, tiles, water and timber, among others. In fact, the task of carrying material seems to have been exclusive to them, often with the aid of asses or mules. As with the carrying tasks they undertook in the salt works, the amounts that the captives had to shift were not small; the accounts contemplate the amount of lime brought to the construction yards, and this proves that several tons of it that had to be carried into every project of a certain size (forty-five tons in a project carried out in 1489, eighty in another in 1493, and more than 600 in the construction of the city wall during 1590 alone).⁶⁴ This must be added to other tasks such as carrying soil, stone, wood, and other materials, so the physical exertions suffered by the captives must have been enormous.

In most construction projects the larger part of the labor entries (consigned daily as men/days) point towards captives' labor, and the significant role played by the *setmaners* is also made clear. The latter group is recorded as working more than twice as many men/days as ordinary captives. The *setmaners* needed to earn their keep and also to satisfy the weekly installments established in their contract of *alforria*, hence the name *setmaner*, from *setmana* (week); this was a group that was always willing to do more work. They were not very numerous because only some captives were ever given the chance to buy their freedom. In 1373, twelve *setmaners* are found working together in a construction project, and a hundred years later, another group of eight is recorded as similarly employed. As with captives, *setmaners* are rarely mentioned by name, so their number can only be known if the source gives a figure. With these and other data, we may infer that the *setmaners* were never more than fifteen at any given time.

These accounts also show that there was no market of free wage earners. If there had been, the composition of gangs could not have been so consistently homogeneous (foreman and apprentices, and captives and *setmaners*),

64 Ferrer, *Captius i senyors de captius a Eivissa*, 283–454.

and the group of unqualified laborers would have shown a richer mix of free and captive hands. However, no such market appears to have existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This is in agreement with the reason given by the island's notables in 1335 for their request for a corsair license: they needed their captives because there were no free men to undertake certain tasks. This same argument resurfaced every time the free ownership of captives came under threat. For example, a royal order issued in 1580 and aimed at limiting the number of captives was contested with the argument that they were needed to work the fields, plant vines, carry salt, and work on the fortification, because there were no free men available to do so.⁶⁵ As late as 1623 the argument was brandished once more: the island lacked wage earners, because peasants preferred to tend their own land.⁶⁶ Finally, in 1654, a document states that the captives were necessary to do all kind of tasks because free people didn't want to work for a daily wage.⁶⁷

The statement made in the 1623 document that "peasants stay at home" seems to lend credibility to the 1335 petition and to the argument that all agricultural tasks to be carried out in the fields of the notables had to be undertaken by captives because there were indeed no free hands available. This shortage of labor, however, affected their lands alone; it seems clear that the peasants installed during the arduous colonization process initiated after the conquest in 1235 reproduced themselves but did not generate a group of urban wage-earners at the service of the notables. In fact, even the lands owned by free peasants and those in the hands of the wealthy elite were located in different areas of the island.

The Masters of Captives

The two syndics mentioned in the 1335 document were appointed by the *Jurats* and other members of the elite to act in their name before the king and ensure the supply of captives. Despite the fact that the owners of captives were a minority, they didn't hesitate to act through the city council and to use public money to fund the syndics' trip to the king's court at Perpignan. This means that the privileged minority used public resources to ensure the continuation of the mechanisms of captivity from which they profited. These notables were not only the wealthiest men in town, but also controlled the island's main

65 AHE, *Llibre de la cadena*, fol. 136r.

66 AHE, *Registre de lletres*, fol. 81r–v.

67 Macabich, *Historia de Ibiza*, 1:446–447.

institutions, and included the representatives of the king and the other overlords (the archbishop and the archdeacon of Tarragona), and the municipal institutions. This control facilitated the issuance of several privileges making the possession of captives less costly. One such privilege gave them the right to receive compensation in case one of their captives died violently or was executed, although the local laws were full of dispositions that made local officials responsible for the actions of captives. The fines applied to captives were stipulated in money, but if they could not pay they had to atone for their faults with their bodies.

In the mid-fifteenth century there is evidence of the use of captives in confrontations between rival factions, while the first signs of tension between those citizens who possessed captives and those who did not can also be detected.⁶⁸ These tensions are again often and clearly alluded to in documents dating to the second half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. A resource often used by the masters of captives, and with which they took clear advantage of the public legal system, was the contract of *alforria*. Through this contract the master bestowed the captive, previously considered in all legal matters as an inanimate object, with legal personality. The captive's access to this new status (*statu libero* or *statu libertatis*) was formalized through a contract signed in the presence of the notary-public.⁶⁹ The contract included the stipulation that the captive must pay the master weekly installments until a certain sum was reached. Once this occurred, the captive became a freedman or *alforre*. The system was devised to benefit the masters, and it was invoked at their convenience, such as, for example, when the captives reached a certain age and their ability to work diminished. With these contracts the masters of captives avoided having to maintain ageing, ill, or even injured captives while ensuring a periodic income with the safeguard that, in case of default, the court system would revert the situation in their favor. Local government made frequent use of these *setmaners*, as proven by their constant mention in the accounts concerning public works. In fact, sometime in the fifteenth century a tax was created for those freedmen who wished to abandon the island. The amount to be paid, thirty *librae*, was considerable. The purpose of the tax was

68 An edict published in 1454 (AHE, *Llibre de la cadena*, fol. 101r.) tried to control acts of vengeance between sides and the use of captives in this kind of fights. Ferrer, *Captius i senyors de captius a Eivissa*, 283–454.

69 All notarial documents produced in Eivissa prior to 1600 are, however, missing. For this contracts in Barcelona see Hernando, *Els esclaus islàmics a Barcelona*, 203–231.

to ensure the presence of freedmen for even longer, and thus secure the availability of hands willing to work. Additionally, the proceedings of the exit tax collected from *catius enfranquits* (freed captives) was used for the rescue of captive citizens of the island.⁷⁰

The earliest tensions between those citizens who possessed captives and those who did not arose around the compensation due to masters whose captives had suffered a violent death or execution. A small number of known cases have been documented prior to 1456. Although one such compensation was conceded in this year, it was also decreed that in order not to go against the entire population, the sum must be raised among the masters of captives.⁷¹ Additionally, it was determined that thenceforth the masters had to report and hand in their own offending captives if they wanted to claim compensation for their loss. These compensations were eventually abolished entirely in 1527, with a new rule establishing the masters' full responsibility for the actions of their captives.⁷² The new regulations passed in 1456 and 1527 were approved by the general council, but not with unanimity. The analysis of the composition of these council meetings raises an interesting point. The new election system enacted in 1454, by virtue of which the council members were selected by lot, opened council membership to larger sectors of the population, effectively putting the masters of captives in the minority. This permitted the limitation of the compensation mechanism and, later, its suppression.

Orders to limit the number of captives issued at the royal court in 1580, 1623, 1654, and 1673 originated in reports that associated this group with public insecurity.⁷³ Inhabitants of the island are behind these reports, which are clearly connected with the tensions between those who possessed captives and those who did not. In 1689 the island's farmers addressed the king with a memorandum denouncing the wrongs suffered at the hands of the *Jurats* "and others in the government." Among other things, they declared the many captives to be troublemakers: "the Moorish slaves in the village are plentiful, and they indulge in not a few liberties and acts of insolence, day and night, posing a danger to the neighbors." In consequence, they requested the number of

70 Ferrer, *Captius i senyors de captius a Eivissa*, 217–235.

71 AHE, *Llibre de determinacions de 1456–57*, fol. 23r and 50r.

72 AHE, *Llibre de determinacions de 1527–28*, fol. 9r.

73 In chronological order: AHE, *Llibre de la cadena*, f. 136r; AHE, *Registre de lletres*, 1623–25, f. 81r–v; I. Macabich, *Historia de Ibiza*, 1:446–447; and Antonio Espino, *Los gobernadores de Ibiza en el siglo XVII. Política y guerra en un enclave del Mediterráneo*, (Eivissa: Consell Insular d'Eivissa, 2006), 180, in ACA, Consell d'Aragó, llig 1044.

captives on the island be reduced to a maximum of only three.⁷⁴ Some years later, in 1703, the boat owners were accused by the masters of captives of not chaining their ships, steering wheels, and sails properly, and thus making it easier for the captives to escape. The ship masters, for their part, replied that since it was the captives who sought out the ships, and not the other way around, it was the captives who should be put in chains: “the captives seek the boats and not the boats the captives, so if you put them in jail every night the danger for all will cease.”⁷⁵ At that time the population of the island had grown considerably and wage earners, who saw the captives as competitors, could now be found. New tensions appeared that are more visible in the record than the older ones, of which few traces exist.

Conclusions

Our survey of the evidence from Eivissa has yielded a number of significant documents. The reduction of data regarding number, gender, age, and provenance of captives to manageable dimensions has made possible a more precise appraisal of the magnitude of the phenomenon of captivity: between 1248 and 1600 1702 captives are recorded (Table 2). The low number of captives whose age is known is due to the almost total lack of notarial evidence, although the data seem at least to be consistent with other studies, suggesting that the most common age bracket was that of twenty to thirty years old. Regarding provenance, most known cases are North African, the “Saracens” and “Moors” mentioned in the sources.

The evidence from Eivissa clearly shows that the sources of the captives were the incursions carried out by corsairs and, to a lesser degree, the work of traders. Other sources (fundamentally, birth) are clearly very minor, and at any rate much less significant than capture and trade. Meillassoux established that this reproduction through capture compelled the masters of captives to resort to the market for their acquisition, and that the money with which they were purchased came from the conversion of the marketable output of the captives into currency. The sort of labour for which they were employed is fully coherent with the proposals set forth by the French anthropologist. Indeed, the work

74 Macabich, *Historia de Ibiza*, 1:433. Specifically they demanded that only the governor, his legal advisor, and the archdeacon have one slave each. Had this been accepted, it would have meant the abolition of slavery on the island.

75 AHE, *Cúria*, 2, n. 145.

carried out in the salt fields, the vineyards, the cereal harvest, and the public works either yielded marketable products or could be converted into cash.

Due to the nature of the evidence a quantitative assessment of the proportion of captive and free labour is only possible with regard to public works. Between seventy and eighty percent of wages were drawn by captives. Free men held qualified posts (foremen and apprentices) while captives were left to do the heavy jobs. The role played by the *setmaners* in these sorts of labors was very significant.

The analysis of the types of jobs imposed on the captives has led to the scrutiny of the masters or owners, an issue that has received little historiographical attention to date despite its enormous significance. The most relevant figures have already been presented: there were between fifty and one hundred masters of captives on the island, approximately five to ten percent of the population. In most cases they lived in the *Vila d'Eivissa* (Town of Eivissa), the only urban nucleus on the island. Often, they also held positions in the local government and represented the island's overlords. The strategies followed for the reproduction, preservation, and increase of their wealth were conducive to the perpetuation of a small number of families at the social zenith of the island for over a century. Members of the Francolí family appear as masters of captives throughout almost the whole period under study; the Balansat, among whom there were some corsairs, from the second half of the fourteenth century to the late sixteenth century; the Nicolau were a prolific lineage, including several masters of captives from 1400 onwards; the Cucarella, Sunyer, Arabí, and up to thirty more families owned captives for over a hundred years.

The question of the vocabulary used to describe captives is far from a minor one. No difference can be inferred in the status of the individuals termed as "captives" and those referred to as "slaves" from the second half of the sixteenth century. Other denominations are also frequent, as explained above: "Moor," "Saracen," "Greek," "Tartar," "Negro," etc. The progressive introduction of "slave" is no more than a linguistic process with the successful adoption of a barbarism, and not the terminological reflection of the existence of two different statuses (captives and slaves) among the prisoners.

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