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***Persisting Mediterranean Captivity: Captives’ cases in Naples and Rome in the first half of the 19th Century***

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that captives’ cases persisted in Naples and Rome until the first half of the 19th Century. The route of the captives must be placed not only in the broader context of the Mediterranean slavery but also of the Atlantic slavery. Captives arrived in Naples also from the Atlantic and they were often converted but the process of conversion was not always forced.

Slaves wanted sometimes convert themselves in order to obtain a free condition of life. The baptism was not a guarantee of freedom, at least not immediately. Baptism was an instrument: on the one hand, it was a demonstration of the slave’s agency and on the other hand, of the policy of assimilation by the community that captured the slave. The change of the name and the new identity was a very special creation to demonstrate the free and unfree interactions between master, state and captives. For example, masters or nobles families but also cardinals gave to the slave their own name during the celebration of the baptism.

The particularity of captivity in Naples is the captives’ cases from the Atlantic; in Baptism Books it is possible to find interesting descriptions of slaves’ biographies. In Rome, captives were first deployed in papal galleys in Civitavecchia and after, if they wanted to convert themselves, they were brought in the Pia Casa dei Catecumeni (House of Catechumens) and finally they were employed in Castel Sant’Angelo (Saint Angelo Castle) as soldiers or after the baptism with employments of responsibility.