

Cabibbo Sara e Lupi Maria (ed.), *Relazioni religiose nel Mediterraneo. Schiavi, redentori, mediatori* (secc. XVI-XIX), Viella, Roma 2012, 263 pp.

di **Celeste Intartaglia**

This volume is published within the framework of a larger research project called *Il Mediterraneo delle tre religioni* (The Mediterranean of the Three Religions) in collaboration with many scholars from the universities of La Sapienza in Rome, and those of Macerata, Palermo, Perugia and Roma Tre. This last mentioned university has given its attention to a type of documentation, until now hardly studied, in the context of an historical inquiry concerning relations between the various religions - especially Catholicism and Islam - present in the Mediterranean area between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth centuries. Specific attention is given to two lines of analysis: the first focuses on examining various aspects connected to the religious dimension of slavery, with the help of documents from the archives of the Orders active in redeeming prisoners and catholic slaves in North Africa, without however forgetting the New World (XVI-XVIII centuries); the second concentrates on examining political and religious relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean (XVIII and XIX centuries).

A brief Introduction (pp. 7-10), written by the two editors of the Volume, Sara Cabibbo and Maria Lupi gives a synthesis of the genesis of the Volume and of its composition.

The first part, I. *Tra Mediterraneo e Nuovo Mondo: la dimensione religiosa della schiavitù* (Between the Mediterranean and the New World: the religious dimension of slavery) includes six contributions. The first four dwell on the redemptive activities of the Mercedarian Order (Orden de la Merced de Guadalajara), who together with the Order of the Holy Trinity (Orden de la Santísima Trinidad) after the statements of the Council of Trent was involved in the reform work of Philip II (1575-1598) and was asked to engage in the redemption of catholic prisoners (*captivi*) in Mediterranean Muslim territories, a work which continues until the end of the eighteenth century.

Enrique Mora Gonzáles, “La redención de cautivos entre lo carismático y lo institucional en la España de Felipe II. Aproximación a los libros de las cuentas de la redención de 1575, 1579 y 1583” (“Redeeming captives between charism and institution in Spain under Philip II. An approach to the Books of Accounts of the Redemption of 1575, 1579 and 1583”) (pp. 13-35) presents three years (1575, 1579, 1583) of the *Libro de las cuentas de la redención* (Books of Accounts of the Redemption), a Register which by royal decree made it possible to the State to supervise charities destined to the work of redemption. This Register however is not just a simple notary document containing statements of expenses and costs needed for the redemption and movements of

capital; it also reflects the symbiosis of charism and institution, “an act of charity”, in which no questions are asked about the causes of the problem, but only about the modalities of any possible redemption. The Historical Institute of the Mercedarian Order is preparing a critical edition of this kind of sources present in its general archives. The project is presented by its director in the second contribution: Stefano Defraia, “Redemptionum ordinis de Mercedes opera omnia: riflessione e percorsi” (“Complete works of the Mercedarian Order: reflexions and trajectories”) (pp. 37-64).

Next, for the first time published here, a historical and philological investigation of the work of two Mercedarian Fathers, which from different points of view try to reconstruct the activities of the Order and its self-representation during the reigns of Philip II and Carlo II: Sara Cabibbo, Maria Lupi, “Tra autorappresentazione, cronaca e negozio spirituale. Il trattato del mercedario Ignacio Vidondo e la redenzione di Algeri del 1654” (“Between self-representation, chronicle and spiritual interchange. The treatise of the Mercedarian Ignacio Vidondo and the redemption of Algeri of 1654”) (pp. 67-100), and María Berta Pallares Garzón “A la sombra de un redentor: el Padre Fray Gabriel Gómez de Losada, mercenario y su Escuela de trabajos” (“In the shadow of a redeemer: Father Gabriel Gómez de Losada, mercedarian and his School of trades”) (pp. 101-133).

The next two contributions are concerned with slavery in Christian territory. Francesco Russo, “Schiavitù e conversioni a Malta in età moderna: nuove fonti e percorsi di ricerca” (“Slavery and conversions in Malta in modern age: new sources and research trajectories”) (pp. 135-158) analyzes a documentation never studied before, based on the registers of the oldest parishes of the island, kept in the Notarial Archives of La Valetta, focusing on baptisms of Muslim slaves and analyzing its consequences from a social point of view. Celia L. Cussen, “Cofradías y evangelización de negros en Lima, Perú y Santiago de Chile, siglo XVII” (“Confraternities and evangelizing Black people in Lima, Peru and Santiago de Chile, seventeenth century”) (pp. 159-174) examines African slavery in Perú and in Chile by various types of religious associations, particularly those confraternities gathering African converts.

The second part, II. *Tra Europa e Africa: convivenze religiose e mediazioni politiche* (Between Europe and Africa: religious coexistence and political mediation), includes three contributions, studying some aspects of relations between the three religions of the Mediterranean basin presenting themselves in North Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, connected to European colonialism and its pro-

tagonists: diplomats, religious orders, representatives of civil and religious institutions. Documents of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, kept in the State Archives of Naples, are examined by Francesco Correale, "Le relazioni 'garbate' fra il Sultanato del Marocco e il regno di Napoli. Diplomazia, religione e rappresentazione nella missione marocchina del 1782" ("The 'courteous' relations between the Sultanate of Morocco and the Reign of Naples. Diplomacy, religion and representation in the Moroccan mission of 1782") (pp. 177-200). From these documents, particularly from those of the "bundled collections of the Foreign Affairs Archives, where are kept two diplomatic speeches of the mission by the emissary of the Sultan of Morocco, emerge a substantial and reciprocal ignorance of the political and cultural characteristics of the two nations" (p. 179) in spite of the successive signing of various treaties between the two states.

Aspects of European religious politics in a colonial perspective, specifically relations between Christian missions and diplomacy in Egypt under Muḥammad 'Alī, are examined by Anthony Santilli, "La questione della protezione dei cattolici d'Egitto. Il caso delle Suore del Buon Pastore, missionarie francesi sotto la tutela del Regno di Sardegna (1820-1850)" ("The question of the protection of Catholics of Egypt. The case of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, French missionaries under the protection of the Reign of Sardinia (1820-1850)") (pp. 201-217). The Sisters who came to Egypt in 1845 and the following year founded the first school for girls, were at the center of the activities of the newly established Apostolic Delegation, who repeatedly tried to exploit the rivalry between the Catholic powers, here France and the Reign of Sardinia, in order to obtain greater freedom of action.

In the end, Giuseppe Continiello, Stefano Minetti, "Il Faro di Tunisi. Musulmani, ebrei e cristiani alla scuola delle élites" ("The Lighthouse of Tunis. Muslims, Hebrews and Christians at the school of the elites") (pp. 219-238) examine the case of Tunis in the nineteenth century, where those belonging to the three Mediterranean religions were able to establish a special fabric of social life making it possible to promote commercial activities and to strengthen the state. Hebrews and Christians were able to profoundly influence the fabric of Tunisian and Muslim social life; the authors dwell in particular on the activities of the Freemasonry and of the newspaper *al-Mustaḳill* who played an important role in transmitting the values of the Risorgimento and contributing to give new life to values like freedom and independence.

The volume concludes with an Index of names and places (pp. 239-258). In short, a volume containing essays of different character and dimension, deriving from various degrees of involvement and interest of the authors, sharing however the intention to study the various modalities in which Christianity relates itself to the political, diplomatic and polemic balance existing between the two shores, African and European, of the Mediterranean, in its western part, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. It is important that this kind of works are published in the area of relations between different cultures and religions, having the merit to attract the attention of the readers both to the existence of this as yet little studied documentation and the manifold categories of actors in the field. A greater attention to the typographical expression and transliteration of Arabic terms (e.g. *ma'rifat* and not *ma'ritat*) would have made the reading more comfortable.

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