



Soundscapes and Brotherhood in the Processions of the Redemption of Captives. The Case of Early-Modern Valencia

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Article abstract

Processions for the redemption of Christian captives held for ransom in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa were of great importance for the outward expression of Christian faith during the early modern period. The city of Valencia, as a major maritime centre in the Mediterranean, mounted many of these highly symbolic processions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Two main religious orders were dedicated to freeing captives: the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians. This article considers the soundscape of this type of procession in Valencia at that time, and, in particular, analyzes the major role of confraternities based in the churches of the two orders in the realization of processions. Extant documentation of these two religious houses affords insight into the urban ceremonies occasioned by the redemption processions and offers detailed descriptions of the soundscape they created with the singing of psalms, motets, and the *Te Deum laudamus*. It also provides an interesting account of the dispute between Trinitarians and Mercedarians over control of ceremonial space in the urban complex—both physical and sonic—occasioned by the processions they organized.

Soundscapes and Brotherhood in the Processions of the Redemption of Captives. The Case of Early-Modern Valencia*

Ferran Escrivà-Llorca¹

Summary: Processions for the redemption of Christian captives held for ransom in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa were of great importance for the outward expression of Christian faith during the early modern period. The city of Valencia, as a major maritime centre in the Mediterranean, mounted many of these highly symbolic processions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Two main religious orders were dedicated to freeing captives: the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians. This article considers the soundscape of this type of procession in Valencia at that time, and, in particular, analyzes the major role of confraternities based in the churches of the two orders in the realization of processions. Extant documentation of these two religious houses affords insight into the urban ceremonies occasioned by the redemption processions and offers detailed descriptions of the soundscape they created with the singing of psalms, motets, and the *Te Deum laudamus*. It also provides an interesting account of the dispute between Trinitarians and Mercedarians over control of ceremonial space in the urban complex—both physical and sonic—occasioned by the processions they organized.

Introduction: The Redemption of Captives and Processions

The redemption of Christian captives began to take root towards the end of the thirteenth century, following the retaking of lands from the Islamic territories that had expanded throughout almost the entire Iberian peninsula from the eighth century onwards. The Christian Reconquest, as it pushed south, brought with it increased activity in the taking prisoner of Christians who were then held for ransom. Although the Iberian peninsula formed the centre of this activity, it subsequently became common in French and Italian territories as well. The driving-force behind the redemption of Christian captives was to rescue them from the Muslim “Infidel”, in order, above all, to prevent the risk of apostasy.² For this reason, they are referred to as the redeemed, since they were saved from potential conversion to

¹ I would like to thank Rubén González Cuerva, Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, Miguel Soto Garrido and Tess Knighton for their comments.

² See the seminal study in this field of research by Friedman, *Spanish captives in North Africa*.

Islam, and those who organized the ransom and release of captives, as redeemers. The act of redemption thus held a double meaning, reinforcing the image of the redeemers as both liberators of Christian captives and faithful disciples of the basic tenet of the Christian faith: the redemption of Jesus Christ.³ A good example of the contemporary mentality as regards this somewhat complex situation is found in the Fifth Treatise (*Tratado Quinto*) of what is generally considered to represent the earliest example of the picaresque novel of the Spanish Golden Age, *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), in a short speech given by the blind master (*amo*):

My brothers, take, take of the grace of God being sent into your houses. Don't grieve for it is such pious work, the redemption of the Christian captives that are in Moorish lands, lest they renounce our holy faith and descend to the pain of Hell. At least aid them with your alms and five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys that they may be released from captivity. And, as you will see in this holy bull, your fathers and brothers and relatives held in Purgatory even profit from these.⁴

Despite the prevailing irony of the picaresque tale of *Lazarillo*, the author paints a realistic picture of many of the social realities of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, including, as here, the taking of Christian captives to Islamic territory and the need for their ransom and redemption. Two religious orders, both founded at the time of the recapture of territories from the Muslims, assumed responsibility for the redemption of Christian captives; with increased piracy in the Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries their activities—charitable and devotional—reached their height. The earliest of these orders was that of the Trinitarians (*Orden de la Trinidad*), founded in 1193 in French Provence, while the Mercedarian Order (*Orden de la Merced*) was instituted in

³ O'Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer*, 4.

⁴ This passage is included in the edition printed in Alcalá de Henares in 1554 by the local bookseller Atanasio Salcedo, fols. XL^v-XLIII^v; modern edition in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, 73-74. On the interpolations included in the Alcalá de Henares edition, see Weiner, "Las interpolaciones." The English translation is taken from the bilingual edition by George Staley, *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes / The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes*, 80: "Hermanos míos, tomad, tomad de las gracias que Dios os envía hasta vuestras casas, y no os duela, pues es obra tan pía la redención de los captivos cristianos que están en tierra de moros. Porque no renieguen nuestra santa fe y vayan a las penas del infierno, siquiera ayudadles con vuestra limosna y con cinco paternosters y cinco avemarías, para que salgan de cautiverio. Y aun también aprovechan para los padres y hermanos y deudos que tenéis en el Purgatorio, como lo veréis en esta santa bula."

Barcelona in 1218; both used the subtitle of “Redemption of Captives” (*redención de cautivos*).⁵

The ransom of captives held in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa involved a substantial economic cost as well as considerable personal and physical demands: the journey was long and the purchase price of prisoners was high.⁶ Thus it was necessary to seek donations, and the Trinitarians and Mercedarians undertook to preach through towns and villages about the importance of this virtuous act and the benefits it would bring society; they also increased alms-giving potential by offering papal indulgences. As this process became established, and the purpose of their activities began to be more widely acknowledged, they realized that the best form of propaganda was through the processions they organized and held with the participation of redeemed captives. Moreover, these ceremonies—and in particular some of the sounds that came to be associated with them—became the object of dispute and rivalry in cities such as Valencia and Barcelona.⁷

In addition to the religious orders, confraternities need to be studied for their key role in how the process of redeeming captives functioned. The earliest documents relating to the involvement of confraternities based in coastal or border areas in dedicating resources to help members being held captive date from as early as the twelfth century.⁸ From the end of that century, the military orders, such as that of Santiago in Castile, also began to found confraternities to bring in economic resources for their hospitals.⁹ The Trinitarian Order created a general confraternity dedicated specifically to the redemption of captives, since the income from the *tertia pars* was not sufficient to meet costs of ransom and rescue.¹⁰ In Valencia, both the fishermen’s Confraternity of San Andreu—severely affected by piracy in the Mediterranean—and that of the boat-repairers (*calafatadors*) of San Guillem based their headquarters in the Trinitarian friary at the beginning

⁵ On the Mercedarian and Trinitarian orders, see: Taylor, *Structures of Reform*; Blair, *The Order of the Holy Trinity*; Flannery, *The Trinitarian Order*.

⁶ Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes*, 143–144; Anaya Hernández, *Las polémicas redenciones*, 435–436.

⁷ For an overview of the redemption of captives and related ceremonies in the Spanish monarchy’s territories, see: Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*; and Martínez Torres, *Prisionero de los infieles*. On the redemption process and processions on the French Mediterranean coast, see Weiss, *From Barbary to France*. For Mercedarian processions in the south of France (for example, Marseille), see: van Orden, Music, Discipline, and Arms.

⁸ Flynn, *Sacred Charity*, 62–64.

⁹ Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*, 111.

¹⁰ The rule by which the Trinitarians were regulated, instituted by St. John of Matha (1160–1213), established that all possessions were to be divided into three parts, with a third of these goods dedicated to the redemption of captives; see Flannery, *The Trinitarian Order*.

of the fourteenth century. Records for this kind of confraternity—many more being founded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—is scarce until the seventeenth century. From that time on, there is a wealth of documentation, very possibly boosted by increased record keeping following the guidelines for Christian charity issued by the Council of Trent.¹¹

In the case of the major Mediterranean port of Valencia, the redemption of captives was organized by the city itself from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹² From that time onwards, the religious orders and, especially, the confraternities, began to monopolize the collection of charitable alms in order to be able to pay the heavy ransoms demanded for freeing the captives. The Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity was one of the most important.¹³ In order to understand these confraternities as a social phenomenon, they need to be contextualized as a means of elite representation.¹⁴ Even though confraternity members came from different social strata, citizens strove to become members and contribute donations in order to associate with the urban elite, whatever their own social standing might be. Perhaps the most striking example is that of Algiers, where the captives themselves belonged to the Trinitarian confraternity, even though membership did not guarantee them priority in being ransomed.¹⁵ In order to maximize donations, redemption confraternities tapped into urban ceremonial and display, organizing major processions that went through the streets of the city to gather alms.

Processions for the Redemption of Captives in Valencia

The different occasions for processions that fell outside the established liturgical year (Easter, Corpus Christi, Ascension Day, etc.) can be divided into four main groups:

1. feast days marking decisions taken by the Catholic Church as regards canonizations, papal bulls, jubilees and indulgences;
2. local feast days involving the foundation of a religious institution, the transfer of male or female convents, the translation of relics, anniversaries, etc.;

¹¹ Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*, 139.

¹² Díaz Borrás, *El miedo al Mediterráneo*, 243–247.

¹³ Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*, 141.

¹⁴ For a good historiographical summary of the social evolution of confraternities in early Modern Spain, see Arias de Saavedra and López-Guadalupe, “Las cofradías españolas en la Edad Moderna.”

¹⁵ Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*, 323–324. Madrid, AHN, Codices, L.123, *Libro Mayor de la Cofradía y Hermandad de la Santísima Trinidad* [Algiers], 1594–1595.

3. votive feasts, election of the head of an order, or a solemn offering;
4. public displays of the defence of the faith, including inquisitorial *autos de fé* and processions for the redemption of captives.

The processions held by confraternities for the redemption of captives were considered to have been an integral aspect of the defence of the faith. At the same time, as in the case of any procession, they formed prestigious public acts in which both promoters and participants were represented.¹⁶ The documentation and information as regards Valencia demonstrates that the city's three main authorities—royal, civic, and ecclesiastical—were well represented. Usually, permission to hold a procession was sought from the overall authority—in the case of Valencia, the viceroy—the city council, and the archbishop. In Castile, especially after the establishment of the polysynodial system under King Philip II (r. 1556–1598), processions of captives were highly symbolic, presenting the king as redeemer, undoubtedly to compensate for the pitiful contribution made by the Commission of Crusades (*comisaría de cruzadas*) to the redemption of captives, and to divert criticism from the king.¹⁷

In addition, processions promoted the visibility of the religious orders themselves. It should be emphasized that although most ransoms for captives were paid by the Trinitarian and Mercedarian Orders, they were not alone. For the redeemed captives who disembarked in Malaga, there is a considerable amount of information regarding the involvement of the Jesuits and Franciscans, of the Dominican Order in Rome, and of the Augustinians and Tertiaries in a major procession held in Madrid in 1692.¹⁸ The constant confrontations and disputes that arose between the two main orders—the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians—seeking to promote processional events have been well studied.¹⁹ This dissention stemmed largely from the privilege (*privativa*) granted to the Mercedarian Order for the redemption of captives in the region under the control of the Council of Aragón (*Consejo de Aragón*) to the exclusion of all other religious orders. Mercedarian processions endowed with this prestige were more successful in enticing the inhabitants of the city to give alms and, in this context, the role of sound—and of music in particular—became fundamental and provided another element for dispute, precisely because

¹⁶ Weiss, *From barbarity to France*, 805.

¹⁷ Barrios, *La Gobernación de la Monarquía de España*, chapters V and VI.

¹⁸ Quiles Faz, *Las Hermandades de los Negros y del Pecado Mortal*, 330–331. For the procession in Madrid, see the contemporary printed account, Madrid, BNE, VE/128/1, *Noticia de la forma*.

¹⁹ Taylor, *Structures of Reform*, 292–295; Porres, *Libertad a Los Cautivos*, 25.

of the Mercedarians' privileged status as regards this kind of procession.²⁰ Major processions held for the redemption of captives in Valencia, and the nearby town of Denia, are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. The main processions for the redemption of captives in Valencia documented for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Location	Order / Community involved	Date
Valencia	Mercedarians	1527
Valencia	Mercedarians	1537
Valencia Cristo del rescate	Civic authorities	May 1539
Valencia	Mercedarians	July 1545
Valencia	Trinitarians	1580
Denia + Valencia	Trinitarians	October 1580
Valencia	Trinitarians	February 1588
Valencia	Trinitarians	August 1588
Valencia	Mercedarians	1616
Valencia	Mercedarians	January 1621

Other processions for the redemption of captives who reached the Valencian coast are known to have taken place; Table 1 shows only those that can be documented with precision and prove useful for configuring the processional soundscape. The limited number of processions between the 1540s and the 1580s is striking, but this hiatus may be more apparent than real because it may simply reflect the absence of chronicles and general lack of documentation for this period.

The Soundscape of the Processions of the Redemption of Captives in Valencia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

It is possible to identify some of the characteristic features of the soundscape of processions for the Redemption of Captives. Contemporary descriptions tend to be less detailed in terms of these organized festivities than, for example, for the annual Corpus Christi procession or royal entry. The processional route was different from that of these major civic processions, and usually ended at the friary of the religious order responsible for organizing the procession and collecting alms. The musical element

²⁰ Taylor, *Structures of Reform*, 295, 359.

most commonly mentioned in contemporary descriptions—though not in every case—was the singing of the thanksgiving hymn *Te Deum laudamus*, presumably on most occasions in plainchant, but possibly at times in polyphony, depending on how we read the chroniclers' accounts. For example, Andreu de San José's *Historia milagrosa* of the 1631 procession for the captives from Algiers suggests that polyphony may have been sung on this occasion: "And so arriving at the convent of the nuns of my namesake St. Joseph, the music chapel of the cathedral (*iglesia mayor*) sang the *Te Deum laudamus* with great harmony, softness, and music."²¹ In general, the principal civic authorities—the viceroy and city council—called for these events to be celebrated with a "solemn and most devout procession, [and] with as much solemnity as possible."²²

The processional soundscape of these processions will now be analysed in four clearly delineated sections: 1) the cry or announcement of the procession (*crides*); 2) references to the participation of confraternities in the procession; 3) musical descriptions; and 4) the contestation of physical and acoustic space.

Crides

Town cries, or spoken edicts (*bandos*), were ordered by the city council to ensure adequate preparation for the procession. The cry to announce the procession held in Valencia in 1545 for the redemption of captives in Algiers affords a typical example of the formula usually adopted:

Now, hear ye, hear ye, by order of the magnificent city councillors and magistrates of the illustrious city of Valencia: that since the redeemers of the Order of the Most Holy Virgin of Mercy have brought many Christian captives whom, a short time ago, they redeemed from the infidels of the city of Algiers, and because this represents such a holy and beneficial contribution by this holy order [*religio*] of the Virgin of Mercy on behalf of the Christian faithful, let it be known and made public that it is decreed that a solemn procession should be held in which all the recently redeemed Christian captives should participate. To this end, the Most Reverend Chapter of the

²¹ Andreu de San José, *Historia milagrosa del rescate que se hizo en Argel*, 258: "Y llegando de esta manera al convento de las monjas de mi padre S. Joseph, canto la capilla de la Iglesia Mayor, con grande armonía, suavidad, y musica, el *Te Deum laudamus*." The use of the word 'musica' in this context may also indicate the presence of wind or other instruments.

²² Valencia. Arxiu Municipal de València [AMV]. *Quern de Provisions*, B-30, unfoliated [21 July 1545]: "solempne devotissima professio, ab tota la solmepnitat que posible sera." Use of the word "solemne" in this kind of context generally denoted that the full available resources, including music, were used in the ceremony.

Seu [cathedral] of the present city of Valencia has determined that the aforementioned solemn and most devout procession should be held this day with as much ceremony as possible.

[The procession] will depart at two o'clock in the afternoon and will enter through the Sea Gate (*Portal de la Mar*), and turn right along the street of La Mar, to Santa Tecla, and by way of Corregeria Street²³ will enter the Seu, through the door of the bell tower, and will leave through the door of the Apostles to the cathedral square, along Cavallers Street to the Bosseria,²⁴ the market, and, turning to the right, will enter the church of the Virgin of Mercy. And so that all these things may be made known and public to everyone, we order this public announcement to be made.

On 21 July 1545, by Joan Balaguer, trumpeter, in fulfilment of the office of public trumpeter of the city, together with the other Valencia city trumpeters, in the aforementioned places [the streets through which the procession would pass].²⁵

These public cries were intoned (rather than spoken) in a manner that is still found in many small towns and villages. It is significant that these sound signals, although based on a more or less familiar formula, may have identified sonically the confraternity in question: the city council—and by

²³ This was the street where belts, straps and other artisanal leather goods were made and sold.

²⁴ The street where bags (*bosses*) of various kinds were made and sold.

²⁵ Valencia. AMV. *Quern de Provisions*, B-30, unfoliated, dated: 21 July 1545; separate sheet: "Ara hoiats que.ns fan saber de part dels magnífichs Justicia e Jurats de la insigne ciutat de Valencia.

Que per quant els redemptors del orde de la Sanctissima Verge Maria de la Merce han portat molts catius crestians los quals, poch dies ha, han redimit de poder de infels, en la ciutat de Argel.

E per que una obra tant sancta y tant benefica, per als feels cristians, com es la que aquesta sancta religio, de la Verge Maria de la Merce, fa, sia notoria e publica se es ordenat sia feta una solemne professo en la qual sien portats tots los catius cristians, que ara novament se son redimits. Per ço, se es delliberat ab lo Reverent Capítol de la Seu, de la present ciutat de Valencia, que en lo present dia de huy se faça la dita solemne devotissima professo, ab tota la solemnitat que posible sera.

La qual partira a les dos hores, apres dinar e entrara per lo portal de la mar a dreta via, per lo carrer de la mar, fins a Sancta Tecla, e per la Corregeria entrara en la Seu, per la porta del Campanar e exira per la porta dels Apostols a la plaça de la Seu, per lo carrer Cavallers a la Bosseria, al Mercat e, dreta via, entrara en la Esglesia de la Verge Maria de la Merce. E perque totes les dites coses a tothom sien publiques e notories, manarem fer la present publica crida. Die XXI iulli anno MDXXXXV. Per Joan Balaguer, trompeta, fehent lo ofici de trompeta public de la dita ciutat ell ab los altres trompetes de la dita ciutat de Valencia, per los lochs sobredits."

extension the city trumpeter—modified the text according to which confraternity it was to address. Many of these texts, with their varied forms of address, are preserved in the official council's minute-books (*manuals de consells*), but unfortunately it is not known how the intonation used for each designated text differed. It seems likely that this was the case since otherwise it would have been almost impossible to identify the confraternal addressee of each cry and distinguish it from the general hubbub of the street or square. The adaptation of the cry for each confraternity followed a similar pattern (Table 2):²⁶

Table 2. The cries addressed to the different confraternities of the city of Valencia calling them to attend the procession to be held the following morning. Valencia. Arxiu Històric Municipal. *Quèrn de Provisions*, B-30, unfoliated.

Confraternity	Original text	English translation
Sanct Jaume ²⁷ (St James)	Confreres y confrereses de Nostre Señor deu, de Nostra Señora Sancta Maria y del Benaventurat mossenyer Sanct Jaume, sian per matí [...]	Brothers and sisters of Our Lord God, of Our Lady St Mary and of the Blessed Lord St James, should be present in the morning [...]
Verge Maria ²⁸ (Virgin Mary)	Confreres y confrereses de Nostre señor deu y de la sagrada verge Maria, sian demà per lo matí [...]	Brother and sisters of Our Lord God and the Sacred Virgin Mary, should be present tomorrow morning [...]

²⁶ The reason behind these textual adaptations is not clear; they may well have been an indication of the age and prestige of the confraternity in question. The intonation would thus have served as a way of conveying prestige sonically.

²⁷ Founded by James I (reconqueror of Valencia) in November 1246. It was the earliest confraternity in Valencia and had three branches (ecclesiastical, military, and royal). For long periods in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was the only confraternity allowed, and it gathered members from the urban élite. See Martínez Vinat, *Estructura social*.

²⁸ The Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seo and hospital for poor sick priests (also known as the Confraternity of Miracles) was founded on 30 April 1356 by several diocesan priests and authorized by Bishop Hug de Fenollet. It had its headquarters in the cathedral and was open to anyone of any social status as long as they gave alms to the poor sick chaplains (*Constituciones de la Real Cofradía*, 4–5).

Sanct [N] Arcís ²⁹ (St Narcissus)	Confreres y confrasses del gloriós martir sant [N] arçis, siau per matí [...]	Brothers and sisters of the glorious martyr St [N] Arcissus should be present in the morning [...]
Sanct Jordi ³⁰ (St George)	Mossenyer y vos madona. / Siau demà per lo matí [...]	My lord and my lady: be present in the morning [...]
Betlem ³¹ (Bethlehem)	Vos mossenyer y vos madona. / Siau dema per matí [...]	My lord and my lady: be present in the morning [...]
Verge Maria dels Innocents i Desemparats ³² (Virgin Mary of children and the vulnerable)	Vos mossenyer y vos madona. / Siau dema per matí [...]	My lord and my lady: be present in the morning [...]
Sanch de Jesucrist ³³ (Blood of Jesus Christ)	Vos mossenyer y vos madona. / Siau dema per matí [...]	My lord and my lady: be present in the morning [...]

²⁹ The Confraternity of Geronese merchants resident in Valencia was founded in the fourteenth century; it was the earliest brotherhood of foreigners in the city. See Martínez Vinat, *Comerciantes gerundenses en Valencia*.

³⁰ The membership of this brotherhood was principally made up of members of the *Centenar de la Ploma*, an institution created by Pere IV the Ceremonious in 1356, with the original title of *Centenar del Gloriós Sant Jordi* (Glorious St George Hundred) The main function of this Valencian urban militia of a hundred crossbowmen was to escort and protect the city's standard.

³¹ Little is known about this confraternity which comprised several painters during the sixteenth century who gathered to join the Germanía, the brotherhood revolts, mainly by artisans, against Charles V's government. See Pérez García, *La doble Germanía*, 507; Montcher, *Politics and Government in the Spanish Empire*.

³² This confraternity was created together with the hospital of the same name around 1414. Disputes between the two institutions, with their different functions, persisted over centuries. It was one of the most populous brotherhoods in Valencia. See Simbor, *L'Hospital d'Innocents*.

³³ This Eucharistic confraternity was one of many widely established in the cities of the Crown of Aragon from the fourteenth century onwards; they were the earliest Passiontide and Holy Week confraternities established in Spain.

Altíssim nom de Jesuchrist [IHS] ³⁴ (Most high name of Jesus)	Vos mossenyer y vos madona. / Siau dema per matí [...]	My lord and my lady: be present in the morning [...]
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The Participation of Confraternities in the Procession

The standard accounts of festive processions very often describe the order followed in processions for the redemption of captives. They departed from the Trinitarian and Mercedarian friaries and followed a route leading to the cathedral precinct. Inside the cathedral, they celebrated a solemn Mass and sang the *Te Deum laudamus*, after which they returned to the friary. The guild confraternities participated with their music and dances at the head of the procession establishing, as in other major processions such as that of Corpus Christi, its celebratory mood through sound and movement.³⁵ They were followed by the standard of the redeemed captives of the Mercy, carried among the friars who sang hymns, antiphons, and other pieces, most often in plainchant. Music thus drew attention to the presence of the standard—and its significance—in sound. It was followed by the confraternity of the order responsible for the organization of the procession, and the confraternity was in turn followed by other participating clergy, and the group (*comitiva*) representing the cathedral: beneficeholders, singers, *domeros*,³⁶ rectors, *pavordes*,³⁷ canons and dignitaries. After this group, came the archbishop, followed by the viceroy, the city councillors, and the most important citizens of the city. Finally, the procession was brought to a close with the participation of the ordinary inhabitants of Valencia.

The 1588 statutes of the confraternity of Mercy in Valencia clearly outline the duties and obligations of its members, including both its

³⁴ Fray Diego de Vitoria founded the confraternity in the Dominican monastery in Valencia in 1430. Confraternities of the Name of Jesus, with their aim to counter blasphemy, were widespread in Spain and were ratified by Pius IV's bull in 1564.

³⁵ *Constituciones de la Cofradía de la Merced*: "Los oficiales de los officios mecanicos con sus pendones y música, como suelen, yvan delante." The outline of events presented here follows the Mercedarian tradition. While earlier and later manuals for the ceremonial of this Order have been consulted, the eighteenth-century printed source is the most accessible.

³⁶ The *domero*—commonly found in cathedrals in the Crown of Aragon—was responsible for church maintenance, ministering the sacrament and keeping documents.

³⁷ The *pavorde*—usually a professor of theology, canon or civil law—held an honorary title that entitled him to wear canonical robes and sit in the cathedral choir behind the canons.

officials and those with particular responsibility for redeemed captives.³⁸ When captives had been ransomed, “each Christian captive [...] [was] required to go to one of the general processions with a white scapular of the Blessed Virgin of Mercy, with the royal arms of the confraternity—that is, those that King James [I] gave to the Order of the Redemption of Christian Captives.”³⁹ The scapular worn by the redeemed captives would have clearly identified the order. Similarly, “All the aforementioned captives are required to follow the procession among the officials [...] and then to attend the collection of alms that will be held in Valencia by the prior, treasurer (*clavari*) and officials.”⁴⁰ The following clauses specify how the solemn processions of the confraternity—held once a month in addition to those for redeemed captives—should be organized. It is consistently ordained that these processions should be celebrated with as much ceremonial (*solemnita*) as possible, including “the canopy, candles, [and] music in the best possible manner for the honour and glory of the most sacred Virgin of Mercy.”⁴¹ For such ceremonial events, it was customary for confraternities to hire the services of musicians from the music chapels and the various wind-bands (*cobles*) in the city. As is generally the case, the confraternity statutes do not refer to the specific music to be performed, nor to whether the brotherhood had its own music chapel. Nevertheless, contemporary accounts often describe how the members of the confraternity, both men and women, joined in the processions with their candles, saying the Lord’s Prayer (*Pater noster*) and singing litanies.

Indications of Singing

Research on the soundscape of this type of procession is generally limited because of the lack of music sources, but at least the texts to be sung by the friars are known, or can be extrapolated from the manuals and ceremonials of the Mercedarian and Trinitarian orders. Even though the surviving copies of these types of liturgical books date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is possible to extrapolate backwards from them to

³⁸ Madrid, AHN, Codices, L.942. *Constituciones de la Cofradía de la Merced* de Valencia, aprobadas por Agustín Frexa, vicario general de Valencia, 1588.

³⁹ *Constituciones de la Cofradía de la Merced*, clause 31, fol. 8^v: “cada catiu christia [...] estiga obligat a anar a una de les professons generals ab un scapulari blanch de la Sacratissima mare de Deu de la Merse ab les armes reals de la confraria que son les que lo Rey don Jaume a donat a la orde de Redempcio de catius christians.”

⁴⁰ *Constituciones de la Cofradía de la Merced* clause 32, fols. 8^v–9^r: “estiguen obligats tots los dits catius a anar darrere la profesó entre los oficiales [...] y anar després al acapte ques farà per Valencia per lo prior clavari y mayorals.”

⁴¹ *Constituciones de la Cofradía de la Merced*, clause 35, fols. 9^v–10^r: “la enpalaiada, lluminaria, música qui millor podra per honrra y gloria de la sacratissima mare de Deu de la Merce.”

understand earlier practices. The 1701 *Ritual of the Mercedarian Order for the Redemption of Captives* (*Ritvale sacri et regalis Ordinis B. V. Mariae de Mercede, Redemptionis Captivorum*) (fig. 1),⁴² clearly describes how processions for the redemption of captives should proceed and what should be sung. At the beginning of the celebration, the priest was to chant the antiphon *Vivit Dominus* and the singers to begin the singing of psalm 125 (*In convertendo Dominus*) in *alternatim*, that is, with two groups of singers alternating verses.⁴³ The antiphon was to be repeated at the end of the psalm. The *Ritual* indicates that the procession continued with some prayers of blessing, after which the singers were to chant the hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*, and the procession was to proceed, with the cross, to the cathedral altar or an altar at a station near the cathedral. After the hymn of thanksgiving, its antiphon, *In mari via tuae*, was to be repeated, and the procession returned to the friary in all its solemnity, with the image of the Virgin of Mercy carried by the friars singing the psalms most appropriate to the occasion: *In convertendo Dominus captivitatem Sion* (psalm 126) and *In exitu Israel de Egipto* (psalm 113). At the church door, from which the procession had started, the hymn *Dei Mater Virgo* was to be sung by the singers. The manual clearly indicates how to proceed if the procession was to be held in the morning: a solemn mass to the Virgin of Mercy was to be sung with *Gloria* and *Credo* before the procession. In the afternoon, all the clergy and participants were to gather together and indulgences were to be bestowed on the redeemed captives, with special attention being given to children and young people. After the Mass, a procession was held in the cloister, once again with the singing of the *Te Deum laudamus* “to the [chant] melody of our order and church.”⁴⁴

While the performative indications found in the manual of the Mercedarian order are consistent with contemporary descriptions, those of the later eighteenth-century Trinitarian ritual do not always coincide.⁴⁵ Both these differences and the emphasis on the need for a certain degree of ceremony in street processions are worth noting; it is also striking that the Trinitarian books do not mention the singing of the *Te Deum laudamus* in their processions. Chapter VI of the *Manual Trinitario* is subtitled “The way in which the fathers of the Redeemers receive those who have been

⁴² Madrid, BNE, M/148, *Ritvale sacri et regalis Ordinis B. V. Mariae de Mercede*. This copy was donated to the BNE from the personal collection of the composer and musicologist Francisco Asenjo Barbieri.

⁴³ If wind-players were involved in the procession, the alternation of verses might also take place between singers and a group of instrumentalists.

⁴⁴ *Ritvale sacri*, 179: “modulatione ad domum, & Ecclesiam nostram.”

⁴⁵ *Manual Trinitario ó Tomo Tercero Del Ceremonial de Los Religiosos Descalzos Del Orden de La Santísima Trinidad Redencion de Cautivos*. Madrid: Blas Román, 1779.

redeemed, and in which thanksgiving is made to the Most Holy Trinity.”⁴⁶ A little further on, the manual indicates: “[...] if in the port where the Redeemers disembark with the captives there is a friary belonging to our order, or at the first [Trinitarian] friary in Spain reached, they will be received in procession.”⁴⁷ Then a brief description of how to celebrate the procession follows:

And when the captives arrive, they will join the community among the friars and the redeemers in their respective order. Then the priest shall commence the singing of the antiphon *Gratias tibi deus*, and all [present] will continue it, and when it is finished, the cantor of the right-hand choir will intone the psalm, *In convertendo Dominus*, and the choirs on both sides will continue. After that, they will repeat the antiphon *Gratias tibi Deus* as before.⁴⁸

The *Manual Trinitario* indicates that, if suitable, a procession should be held through the streets, that the confraternity—if there was one—should participate, and that they should be accompanied, if possible, by trumpets and drums (p. 120). It also specifies where each of the participating groups should be placed in the procession: trumpets and drums at the beginning, then the confraternity, and then the redeemed captives. During the procession there was to be singing *in alternatim* (*a coros*) of the psalms *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*, *Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo*, and *In convertendo Dominus captivitatem Sion*, among others. Once inside the church the antiphon *Gratias tibi Deus* was to be sung followed by verses and prayers in accordance with the instructions in the *Manual* (p. 120).

Contestation of Physical and Acoustic Space

The most celebrated example of a procession of redeemed captives in Valencia is the one held by the Trinitarians in October 1580 in which Miguel de Cervantes participated, having been ransomed through the

⁴⁶ *Manual Trinitario*, chapter VI, 117, item § II: “Del modo de recibir a los P.P. Redentores quando vuelven de la Redencion, y de dar gracias por ella a la Santissima Trinidad.”

⁴⁷ *Manual Trinitario*, 119: “Pero si en el Puerto donde desembarcaren los Redentores con los cautivos huviere Convento nuestro, o llegaren con ellos al primer convento de España, se recibiran procesionalmente.”

⁴⁸ *Manual Trinitari*, 119: “Y en llegando los cautivos, se incorporarán con la Comunidad entre los Religiosos, y los Redentores en sus lugares. Luego el Preste iniciara cantada la *Antifona Gratias tibi deus*, y la proseguirán todos, y acabada, el Cantor del coro derecho entonará el Salmo, *In convertendo Dominus* &. y le proseguirán todos a coros: y después de el repetiran la *Antifona Gratias tibi Deus* &. como arriba.”

activities of the Order.⁴⁹ The procession was held according to custom, with permission being sought from the city councillors and the viceroy, Francisco de Moncada y Folch de Cardona, Marquis of Aytona. Its path followed the usual route, departing from and returning to the Trinitarian friary (known as the “Convento del Remedio”); its destination was the cathedral, where a solemn Mass was held and the *Te Deum laudamus* was sung (fig. 2). Trumpets and drums sounded the procession. A contemporary account of another procession of redeemed captives held in August of the same year describes how the captives participated dressed in the processional robes specific to their status, and with crosses and scapulars of the Trinitarian Order as a sign of its role in their redeemed state.

These processions thus displayed the identity of the Order and served as propaganda for its good works. In August 1588, the Trinitarians, even while they were in a major legal dispute with the Mercedarians, managed on several occasions to disembark redeemed captives in Valencia and Barcelona.⁵⁰ Control of physical and acoustic space stimulated longstanding rivalries between the two orders because of the implications as regards the collection of alms. Indeed, in that year, the lawsuit brought before the royal court (*real audiencia*) in Valencia reveals how the privilege (*privatía*) enjoyed by the Mercedarian Order in the Crown of Aragon went as far as to involve the use of sound.⁵¹ On 19 February 1588, the Trinitarians organized a procession of redeemed captives who had reached the city at that time. This quickly resulted in a case brought before the royal court a few days later (on 24 February) by the Mercedarians who claimed that “they [the Trinitarians] had acted in contravention of the royal privileges and charters granted to them [the Mercedarians] with the entry into the city of the Trinitarian friars in the form of a procession heralded by trumpets and drums (“con trompetas y atabales”), and, when they came [to Valencia] from Castile for the redemption of the captives they brought from Algiers, by seeking alms (“pidiendo limosnas”) from both lay and religious people.”⁵² It is significant that the reference to trumpets and drums is juxtaposed with the notion of seeking alms: one role of processional sound was to attract more alms-giving. If it is generally claimed that what is not seen did not happen, it could be said that what was not heard attracted

⁴⁹ Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 244–246.

⁵⁰ Madrid, BNE, BU/7363, *Memorial informe historico-juridico*.

⁵¹ Valencia. Arxiu del Regne de Valencia [ARV]. Real Audiencia, Procesos, parte 1ª, letra S, núm. 875, año 1588.

⁵² ARV. Real Audiencia. Procesos, parte 1ª, letra S, núm. 875, año 1588, unfoliated: “[...] sobre haber estos contravenido a los privilegios y cartas reales concedidas a la Merced, entrando con trompetas y atabales en forma de procesion los religiosos de la Trinidad que fueron a la redención por Castilla con los cautivos que traían de Argel, pidiendo algunos seglares y los mismos religiosos limosnas.”

little attention, fewer people attended, and the collection of alms was much reduced. The *crides*, trumpets, and drums employed by the organizers of the procession signalled its happening and, by extension, the collection of alms that was its primary aim. The royal court's sentence—undoubtedly reached under considerable pressure from the Mercedarians—is revealing: “when the Trinitarians [come] from Castile for the redemption of captives, they should not pass through Valencia with cries, and trumpets and drums.”⁵³ In other words, the court did not ban the Castilian Trinitarians from seeking alms when they mounted redemption processions, but only from using sound to draw attention to their presence as they passed through the city of Valencia.

Conclusions

Processions of redeemed captives fell into the category of “extraordinary” celebrations, yet they became a well established feature of urban ceremony and are described in some detail in the ritual manuals of the Mercedarian and Trinitarian Orders from at least the mid-seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the general populace's experience of them would have been relatively unusual, as would their particular sonic configuration. Various kinds of descriptions, as well as normative regulations, make it possible to gain a general idea of the soundscape of these events as regards the role of the confraternities and other participants in the processions, the music and sung texts that were usually performed, and how—not altogether unexpectedly—the chanting of the hymn *Te Deum laudamus* was the sound most often heard in the context of these ceremonies of thanksgiving that both reaffirmed the Christian faith and lent prestige to the religious order involved. Confraternities played a central role in these processions for the redemption of captives: first, in their involvement in the collection of alms for the redemption of captives; second, through their support for the religious orders responsible for the redemption of captives; and, lastly, as an integral part of the processional soundscape. The Confraternity of Mercy (la Merced) made a particularly important contribution in Valencia.

Further research on the involvement of the Mercedarian and Trinitarian confraternities is still needed. It would be particularly useful to compare their processional activities in different cities and towns throughout the Iberian peninsula. Studies of the theatrical *mise-en-scène* and pomp of Mercedarian processions held in France demonstrate that it would be worthwhile to go beyond the political and representational aspects to analyze how distinctive elements, such as the Islamic and Turkish

⁵³ ARV. Real Audiencia. Procesos, parte 1ª, letra S, núm. 875, año 1588, unfoliated: “cuando los trinitarios de Castilla hagan alguna redención, no pasen los cautivos por Valencia con atabales, trompetas y pregones.”

Other, were portrayed, as well as their characteristic sound worlds.⁵⁴ This is particularly relevant for the Hispanic context, in which the image of Turks and Moors, seen as the Infidel, was represented in a variety of ways in festive ceremonies and processions. Similarly it would be useful to explore further the use of different formulae—possibly including musical formulae—in the trumpet-accompanied cries addressed to the different confraternities and their sonic hierarchy in sixteenth-century Valencia. Finally, more research is needed into the lawsuits between the Mercedarian and Trinitarian orders in the Aragonese territories during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for their potential insight into the importance of sound as a part of the ceremonial, in other words, how these disputes over the securing of alms were reflected in the contest over physical and acoustic space. Although there were several rulings on this issue, far from being resolved—as suggested by the *Memorial informe historico-juridico*—the problem persisted, with varying degrees of success on either side, until well into the eighteenth century, despite Pope Benedict XIV's unsuccessful attempts at mediation.⁵⁵

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⁵⁴ Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 125–185.

⁵⁵ Porres, *Libertad a los cautivos*.

Patronato, como lo ha executado en el Diciembre proxímè pasado de 1727. por su pretension de privativa en Redimir, y recoger limosnas en toda la Corona de Aragon. 1727.

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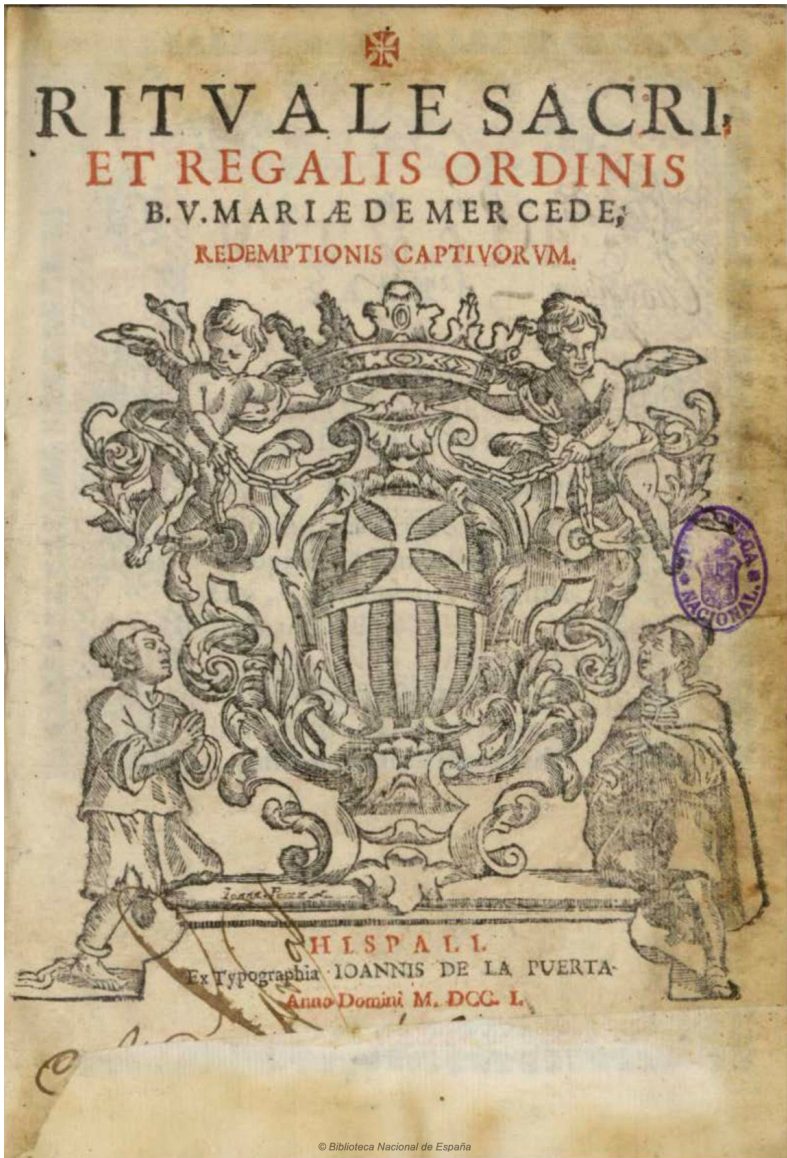


Fig. 4.1. Title-page of the *Ritvale Sacri et Regalis Ordinis B.V. Mariae de Mercede, Redemptionis Captivorum* (Hispani, Ioannis de la Puerta, 1701). Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), M/148.

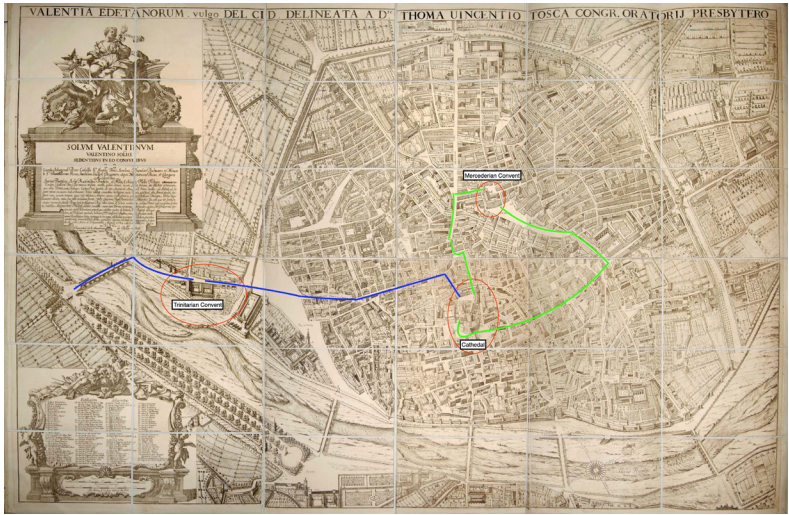


Fig. 4.2. Itineraries of the processions held for the redemption of captives in Valencia, using the map by Padre Tosca (1704). Blue line: Trinitarians; green line: Mercedarians.