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5 April 2013
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Encounters at the Seams

English "Self Fashioning" in the Ottoman World, 1563-1718

Acknowledgments

I thank Professor William Leach for his encouragement and help throughout this process. His thesis seminar was a place in which students could freely discuss their papers and give advice to their peers. Moreover, I thank Professor Leach for reminding us that history is as much about the story we are telling as it is about whom we are as individuals.

I also thank my second reader, Professor Christopher Brown, whose course "England and the Wider World" inspired me to major in history. He has always been patient and supportive, and I cannot thank him enough for all his advice relating to reading, analyzing, and writing history.

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Introduction

An Eastern Door Opens

In 1575, six years before Queen Elizabeth I signed the Levant Company charter, English merchants ventured to Constantinople to renew an Eastern trade that had been dormant for nearly twenty years. According to Richard Hakluyt, who compiled *The Principal Navigations*, a multi-volume collection detailing late sixteenth century English explorations and trades, merchants John Wight and Joseph Clements remained in Constantinople for “18 monethes to procure a safe conduct from the grand Signior” for Master William Harborne (1542-1617) of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. In 1578, Harborne journeyed to Poland, and after “apparelling himselfe, his guide, and his servant after the Turkish fashion,” he continued his journey into the Levant. There, he met with Sultan Murat III, conducted himself “wisely and discretely,” and received permission for England to trade in Ottoman ports.¹ He was subsequently named the Levant Company’s first Ambassador to Constantinople.²

Harborne’s decision to dress in the “Turkish fashion” signaled his respect for the Sultan, just as today a business executive might take part in a foreign or religious ritual to earn the trust and respect of the person with whom he or she is conducting business. But Hakluyt’s description indicated that Harborne and his entourage wore their Turkish dress throughout their entire time in the Levant. There must have been other reasons why they remained appareled in this way.

¹ [Richard Hakluyt], “The renewing and increasing of an ancient and commodious trade...,” in Richard Hakluyt *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589), Perseus Digital Library. The *capitulations* Harborne secured would then need to be renewed whenever a new Sultan came to power.

² Its full name is the Company of Merchants of England trading to the Seas of the Levant.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire controlled a wide expanse of land. The Empire encompassed northern Africa, the Levant, Greece, and much of the Balkans, effectively controlling about three-quarters of the Mediterranean basin. Of the four Barbary states – Tunis, Algiers, Tripoli, and Morocco – only Morocco did not submit to Turkish rule, yet it shared in Ottoman culture. Istanbul (Constantinople) was the Empire's center, and the city, along with other major ports such as Aleppo and Smyrna, were bustling hubs for lucrative trade.³ Islam was the dominant religion, but the Ottoman Empire was also home to numerous religious and ethnic groups. As traveler Henry Blount put it: "all *Turky* is but a *miscellany* of people."⁴ Levant Company merchant Peter Mundy (1596-1667?) of Cornwall was struck by Constantinople's religious diversity. In addition to "two thousand Mosques or turkish Churches," he noted that the "Greek Christians have forty Churches; the Jewes thirty eight sinagogues. The francks or Italians have two Churches on the other side in Gallata. It hath seven hundred and forty publick fountaines. The Armenians have four Churches."⁵

English merchants and travelers were minor players in a massive cosmopolitan region unlike anything they had before encountered, and as European Christian outsiders, they were socially and religiously vulnerable. Corsairs operating in the Barbary region of the Mediterranean thwarted English trade – both before and after the establishment of the Levant Company. Many men were taken captive and sold in the white slave trade. It was smart, then, for

³ Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 48-9. The Ottoman ports made up the Western bookend to the Silk Road. They were receptacles for African imports, making them magnets for English traders looking to buy spices, silks, gold, salt, and ivory. For seventeenth century maps of Constantinople, see fig. 1-2 in the appendix.

⁴ Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant*, 3rd edition (London, 1638), 93.

⁵ Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy, In Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, in *Travels in Europe, 1608-1628*, vol. 1, ed. Lt.-Col. Sir Richard Carnac Temple (Cambridge, 1907), 25.

merchants like Harborne to dress in Eastern clothing and quietly blend in to their new surroundings.

Recent historiography of the Levant Company and early English voyages to the Mediterranean examine the ways in which Turkish dress functioned as disguise and as an aid for the development of trade between the two cultures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Historian Alison Games notes that the successful merchant had to acknowledge his “cultural ignorance” and remain acutely aware of both “political and commercial conventions.” Travelers and traders wore Ottoman robes and turbans and even grew their mustaches out in the customary style to both “enhance their comfort and their safety.”⁶ But Turkish dress also had the capacity to arouse anxiety in Englishmen both at home and abroad. During a period in which many English traders and travelers were taken captive in the Mediterranean seas and forced to convert to Islam (“turn Turk”), the turban came to be the most “feared” and “awe-inspiring symbol of Islam in Renaissance England,” according to historian Nabil Matar.⁷ Muslim dress symbolized a culture at odds with Christianity, a military threat to Western Europe, and a vast Islamic terrain, threatening and transformative.⁸

To capture the impact of the region, Gerald MacLean has recently proposed the concept of “performing East,” observing that Englishmen in the Ottoman world quickly realized that their successes and failures overseas heavily relied on the way in which they presented themselves and were perceived by others. MacLean argues that Englishmen abroad were often found “acting in

⁶ Alison Games, *The Web of Empire*, 51-4, 87.

⁷ Nabil Matar, “Renaissance England and the Turban,” in *Images of the Other: Europe and the Muslim World Before 1700*, edited by David R. Blanks (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1997), 44-5.

⁸ Following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman Empire captured Rhodes (1522), attempted the first siege of Vienna (1529), took Tunis (1570), and Cyprus (1571), and it was continually looking to capture other major ports and cities in the region. See Mehrdad Kia, *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2011), xviii-xix.

ways unimaginable, unavailable and unnecessary at home;" "performing East," he writes, is about "forging a national identity, but doing it somewhere else." They were "*doing-being* English" – these men understood self-fashioning as a dramatic political stratagem.⁹ But not all Englishmen abroad were trying to retain a sense of Englishness. MacLean's argument rejects the possibility that renegades and captives alike embraced Islam without any consideration of its socio-political benefits. What might seemingly appear to have been a performative action could have actually been an assertion of identity, a new Muslim identity.

What is known of the many captives and traders in the Ottoman world is preserved in the small number of published texts, printed and dispersed for a reading public, captivated with stories of an unknown religion and culture. It is difficult to determine the motives and reasons behind Englishmen's adoptions of Turkish dress or conversions to Islam just as it is to differentiate those who were "performing East" from those who were "becoming East." The degree of certainty to which captives and travelers were "performing" or embracing a new lifestyle can only be ascertained if these narratives are considered case by case, something which recent scholarship has not done.

If dress is a vehicle for identity, it must be kept in mind that dress – fashion – is a social construction much in the same way that identity is. Social contexts affect the way people present themselves aesthetically and behaviorally. At the same time, practices are often informed by how someone understands one's individual identity. People's positions within a specific social construct – say, a religion or nationality – in turn becomes a part of their being, or their identity.

⁹ Gerald MacLean, "Performing East and Captive Agency," chap. 3 in *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire Before 1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007) 97-119. MacLean works within Stephen Greenblatt's self-fashioning thesis, indicating that Englishmen abroad fashioned themselves as certain types of people for personal gain. See also Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).

This identity, an internal alignment, is then conveyed to the outside world by way of language, deportment, and dress. This essay examines what happens when this internal alignment is challenged during encounters with a radically different culture. The essay focuses on dress, which perhaps more than any visual symbology, has the power to disturb both the wearer and observer. Dress is both utilitarian and performative. Clothes cover someone or keep a person warm, but clothes are also tools of self-expression. And it is the way in which dress is perceived – by both the wearer and the observer – that gives it its deeper meaning. Indeed, if dress is a vehicle for identity, were the turbans and robes Englishmen wore indicative of newly adopted identities?

This thesis draws on MacLean's concept of performative actions to explore the significance of the clothing Englishmen wore abroad. His idea of "performing East" is persuasive but not specific enough. It applies to some cases but not all. Englishmen were "performing East," but to what extent? To best understand the various ways in which Englishmen conceived of their identities when abroad, their narratives must be read with careful attention to both their individual experiences and the generic conventions in which they were written. The Englishmen considered in this essay are divided into three "characterological" types: traders and travelers, captives, and renegades.¹⁰ Each chapter is devoted to one type in order to analyze the particular motives, goals, and reasons they had when dressing in the Turkish way.

¹⁰ Colin Campbell, "Understanding traditional and modern patterns of consumption in eighteenth-century England: a character-action approach," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, edited by John Brewer and Roy Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 40-57. Though his essay is an analysis of eighteenth-century English goods and dress, Campbell's argument for a "characterological" approach to understanding meanings, motives, and intentions behind specific choices – such as what fashions to follow – provides a useful frame for a study of Turkish dress. For a similar discussion of the disassociation of meanings and functions, see his essay, "The Meaning of Objects and the Meaning of Actions: A Critical Note on the Sociology

When their narratives are considered alongside of popular literature of the period a much larger picture emerges, one that reveals how the Ottoman Empire captivated the minds of Englishmen both at home and abroad. Not only was the Empire a place of intrigue, but it was the region in which Englishmen learned how to present themselves on an international stage.¹¹ Analysis of how Englishmen reacted to Islamic culture and Turkish dress over time indicates that the original wariness people felt upon entering new cultural spaces continued into the beginning of the eighteenth century, a time when the English were established colonists in other regions.

Chapter one examines the lives of traders and travelers who had few qualms about wearing Turkish dress. When they reflected on what they wore, travelers and traders referenced unspoken codes of conduct to which they were to adhere. However, there were moments in which these men assured the reader of their allegiance to the Christian faith and the English nation so as to quell any fears that their time spent in the Ottoman world reshaped their identity. Moments of vulnerability indicated that these men were apprehensive of what could happen if they did not comply with sartorial customs, yet often they took pride in the dress they wore as they fashioned themselves as actors on the Levant stage.

This second chapter examines the lives of captives. Particularly, this chapter considers the image of seized and stripped Englishmen who were forced to wear Muslim dress and often used it as a means of disguise to escape their captivity. This chapter also looks at the lives of "performative converts," men who surrendered and converted in captivity but who were not renegades. Their stories unveil an experience of vulnerability that differs from those of the

of Consumption and Theories of Clothing," *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. I, 93 (1996): 93-105.

¹¹ Alison Games considers the English experience in the Mediterranean to be the seed of the British Empire. See Games, *The Web of Empire*, especially chapter two, "The Mediterranean Origins of the British Empire."

traders and travelers. Dress was something captives had to wear as converted Englishmen, and it was a daily reminder of a humiliating physical change in their identities.

The final chapter considers the English renegade, the man who ventured to the Mediterranean in search of a new life. Such self-fashioning men are known through other Englishmen's diaries and narratives. Combined with the appeal of captivity stories, the tale of the English renegade – especially of renegade pirates – is one that excited what Nabil Matar calls the "Seventeenth-Century Imagination." The idea of the renegade, as evident in published literature, was very often at odds with the actual renegades Englishmen encountered while abroad, and it is within an analysis of this incongruity that larger English anxieties about the impact of Turkish manners and customs had on English identity can be more solidly understood.

This thesis seeks to understand the nuanced ways different kinds of Englishmen handled questions of identity in unfamiliar territories. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire was a military and trading power, filled with a multitude of strange peoples and threatening corsairs, generating a context in which something seemingly as trivial as clothing might cause fear and unease. It was a time when the English nation was entering an era of expansion, moving out to the peripheries, and many English were compelled to adopt new ways of presentation. Dress signaled their compliance, submission, or assimilation into this larger power and communicated that they, in addition to other European nations, were ready to expose themselves in new and "unimaginable" ways on an international stage, a stage that called into question what it meant to be an Englishman when clothed as someone entirely non-English.

Chapter I

Traders and Travelers on the Ottoman Stage

An Appetite for Knowledge

On May 7, 1634, Sir Henry Blount (1602-1682) of Tittenhanger, Hertfordshire, sailed from Venice down the Adriatic coast toward Constantinople. Blount traveled on a Venetian galley with a "*caravan of Turks*" in an effort to deflect any hostile remarks directed toward him as a Christian outsider. The only Christian on the ship, he had the "freedom of complying" with any of their questions and could craft an identity that was neither alienating nor foreign. He reflected: "I became all things to all men, which let me into the breasts of many." Blount was on a quest for knowledge, specifically to see if "the *Turkish* way appear absolutely barbarous, as we are given to understand, or rather another kind of civility, different from ours, but no less pretending."¹² He thought the best way for him to test these questions was to travel there on his own, immerse himself in the culture, tour, and experience a religious and cultural space vastly different from England.

According to historian Alison Games, Queen Elizabeth's excommunication from the Catholic Church in 1570 intensified English desires for trade and travel in the Eastern Mediterranean. The religious break with both the papacy, and Western Europe more generally, "liberated Protestant English merchants from Catholic prohibitions on trade with Muslims" and whetted an appetite for knowledge. With relative safety, Englishmen could visit the historical and biblical sites in the region, and traders and travelers alike devoted considerable amounts of

¹² Henry Blount, *A Voyage*, 2, 5.

time to travel, often for years at a time.¹³ Many travelers and traders kept diaries and travelogues, and these texts were often published and dispersed once the explorer returned home.

Indeed, the early seventeenth century bore witness to the circulation of many travel narratives written by people from the British Isles, specifically Scotland and England. Within the British Isles there was not an overarching sense of national or religious unity, but what bound these diverse men together was the general region from which they came and their Protestant faith (even if of varying sects). This religious unity stood in contrast to what Nabil Matar labels the "islamocentrism" of the East. Turks and Moors belonged to the "international community of trade, diplomacy, and military rivalry" that impacted England's age of discovery. Because of their "geopolitical locus," the Ottoman Turks were the biggest threat to Western Christendom.¹⁴ Islam was feared as an attractive religion to which many Christian converted and also as a religion representative of a mighty Imperial power. The fear of Islam operated nationally and individually. At sea, the English were always on the lookout for "Turks:" corsairs – primarily men from the Barbary Coast – looking to prey on English merchant ships.¹⁵ On shore, traders and travelers were careful of the ways in which they presented themselves and acted within the Ottoman Empire.

The merchants of the Levant Company would do all that was necessary to form healthy relationships with those whom they were conducting business. Their cultural immersion had one end goal: to trade. Unlike travelers who wished to go on extensive tours and experience as much

¹³ Alison Games, *The Web of Empire*, 50-1.

¹⁴ Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 19, 42.

¹⁵ For example, Levant Company merchant Peter Mundy recorded in his diary that when his ship the *Aleppo Merchant* neared Cape St. Vincent, they saw "Turkish Pyratts" on the horizon. The pirates ships they saw were really French merchant ships, and Mundy candidly expressed his relief that his crew avoided what could have been a "terrible broyle." See *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, 16.

of the cultural richness as possible, the traders sought a degree of cultural separation between themselves and their Turkish hosts. Not all traders were travelers, and not all travelers were traders, but the distinctions between the "types" tend to break down when examining what and how they wrote. The literary form many of these diaries and narratives took – whether published or not – became a genre unto itself. Standard components included descriptions of Eastern customs, dress, religion, governance, and architecture, with the author's own commentary and reactions to such cultural differences. In descriptions of other practices and beliefs, these men often uncovered things about themselves. At the beginning of his narrative, Scottish traveler William Lithgow (1582-1645) declared that travel is a most admirable pursuit, for experiencing and understanding other cultures is central to one's understanding of one's place in the larger world:

[T]he nature of man, by an inward inclination, is alwaies inquisitive of forraine newes; yea, and much more affecteth the sight and knowledge of strange, and unfrequented kingdomes, such is the instinct of his naturall affection. Navigation hath often united the bodies of Realmes together, but travell hath done much more; for first to the Actor it giveth the impression of understanding, experience, patience, and an infinite treasure, of unexprimable vertues: secondly, it unfoldeth to the world, the government of States, the authority and disposition of Kings and Princes; the secrets, manners, customes, and Religions of all Nations and People.¹⁶

The traveler Fynes Moryson (1565?-1630?) of Lincolnshire affirmed what Lithgow said, noting that his "understanding" of the world could "not be done so wel by contemplation as by experience."¹⁷ The open East sparked a desire for travel, for a grand tour of Europe, Africa, and

¹⁶ William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of The Rare Adventures & Painefull Peregrinations...* (London, 1632), reprinted with an introduction by James MacLehose (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 8.

¹⁷ Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary: Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell Through the Twelve Dominions...*, (London, 1617), 197-8.

Asia or for the establishment of trade with ports toward the end of the Silk Road.¹⁸ Though, as Alison Games suggests, the English could roam with relative freedom within the Mediterranean, they remained cultural outsiders in a predominantly Islamic context.¹⁹ Traders and travelers often acted in accordance with unwritten customs whilst simultaneously dressing in such a way so as to move inconspicuously from one place to another or achieve a specific business goal. Their experiences straddled that of cultural rejection and a desire for total immersion, but neither the traders nor the travelers ever came so far as to consider "becoming East" and converting to Islam.

Ottoman Dress as a Business Tool

On May 19, 1675, nearly a century after Harborne appeared himself in the "Turkish fashion" and negotiated trade agreements with Sultan Murat III, Dr. John Covel (1638-1722) of Suffolk accompanied Sir John Finch and other Levant Company merchants at the Constantinople Seraglio to witness the renewal of the capitulations.²⁰ The men were seated on sofas in a spacious parlor with "very rich" carpets, quilts, and bolsters all "cover'd with cloth of gold." There they were entertained until the Grand Vizier, Achmet Kiuprili, made his appearance. The men then ceremoniously exchanged gifts. The Vizier received gold and silver garments made of

¹⁸ Alfred C. Wood traces the renewed English interest in the Mediterranean to the mid-fifteenth century when the English began to establish trading ports in Venice and slowly pushed further East to establish direct trade with the Levant. Travelers and pilgrims frequently accompanied traders on the early ventures, and this practice continued into the seventeenth century. See Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1964), 1-3. (Wood's text was first published in 1935.)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16. The capitulations certainly accommodated the English foreigners, but as Wood writes: "It was one thing to secure capitulations from the grand signior; it was another and more difficult one to see that the rights so granted were always respected." Outside of Constantinople, (Istanbul to the Turks), local pashas would demand arbitrary and illegal extortions called *avantias*. It was imperative for Levant Company merchants to continually renew the *capitulations* as necessary not only for trade but to ensure that leaders in the outskirts of the Empire would respect travelers and traders.

²⁰ The Seraglio was the primary residence for Turkish Sultans during the early modern era.

silk, cloth, velvet, and in return, Covell and Finch were given a "peculiar sort of garment" only Turkish "maisters of state" wore on reserved occasions. The men presently put on their vests. In his diary, Covell wrote that the "peculiar" garments

are made like our sophisters' gown, without a cape. The stuff is of white silk, flower'd with great branches, sometimes half moones (and the like), yellow or tawny, all with very great weales; and, according to the dignity of the persons, they are of cloth, of silver, or gold, or with more or less gold and silver wrought in the silk. There were give 16 amongst us. I sold mine for 6 1/2 dollrs. My Ld.'s was worth 25 or 30; all the rest like mine, except the Treasurer's, Secretary's, and chief Dragoman's, which were worth about 8 dollars a piece. I am confident this was a very ancient custome...The Cancellier to the Company, and one or two of the merchants, viz., Mr. Cook and Mr. Salter, were not vested, which you may imagine was taken amisse.²¹

Covell and the other men were not affected by the gifts given to them. The vests were reserved for high state officials, but such importance was lost on the Englishmen. Once they were outside of the Seraglio, the vests had only financial worth. They were significant so long as they helped the businessmen respectfully negotiate trade agreements with the Vizier, who Covell offhandedly remarked had "state enough" in his face.²² Covell was little impressed. Moreover, it is unclear what, exactly, Covell meant by something "amisse." Could it have been that Cook and Salter refused to wear their vests and in so doing, were disrespectful of the Vizier? Or, did the Vizier not bestow any gifts on the two lower merchants, and did this oversight in some way indicate that the negotiations would not go as planned? Covell does not elaborate on his thought, but it is plain that Cook and Salter would have sold their vests, like the other merchants, upon leaving the Seraglio. The capitulations were renewed. Aside from a keepsake of sorts, for what other reason would Covell, Finch, and the other merchants have had for holding onto vests, which for them served only one purpose? Lithgow wrote that the experiences travel afforded him

²¹ "Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covell, 1670-1679," in *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, edited by J. Theodore Bent (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 194-6.

²² *Ibid.*

rounded out his character. Though Covel was not so explicit, his encounter with the Vizier solidified his sense of self. He was, clearly, a Protestant Englishman who had little need for a token of his time spent amongst peoples of another religion.

Alfred Wood, an early historian of the Levant Company, writes that merchants wore Turkish dress to "minimize the chances of insult which strange and conspicuous clothing would have produced among a semi-barbarous people."²³ Written in the early twentieth century, Wood's claim reflects the prejudice of his day, but there is an element of truth to his statement. Games expands on Wood's comment, noting that merchants who adopted the garb of the place could avoid "offending people" and "blend in to their surroundings."²⁴ Dress signaled to those in the Islamic World that they were willing to comply with local customs and standards related to self-presentation. This does not mean that all Englishmen abroad were "self-fashioning" themselves as the cultural other, a term Stephen Greenblatt's uses to refer to the way in which Renaissance nobles presented and carried themselves in an "artful process" of identity formation.²⁵ In Covel's case, dressing in the Turkish way had no affect on him. There was no indication that Covel ever lost sight of who he was as an English Protestant minister.²⁶ Though he complied with royal customs and wore his gifted vest in front of the Vizier, this decision was not motivated by a desire to fashion himself as one of the "maisters of state." His acceptance of the garment was a

²³ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 240.

²⁴ Games, *The Web of Empire*, 75.

²⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 2-9.

²⁶ For another example: Covel wrote that when on the way to the Levant, the ship took harbor in southern Spain, and he and a few others went to see the Málaga Cathedral. Covel intended to go inside the (Catholic) house of worship, and when someone asked him if he was wary of going in side for fear that it could change him, Covel boldly stated: "God, the searcher of hearts, knowes that I do not do it [enter] to joyne in their way of worship." See "Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel," 107-8.

sign of respect. Outside of the Seraglio, Covell had no vested interest in the vest – it meant nothing to him as a person.

Unwritten Customs

Merchants and especially travelers, complied with local customs of dress and presentation without prompting, but Alison Games's assertion that Englishmen abroad found safety in disguise is misleading, for clothing did not always disguise their foreign origins. The color of one's turban identified one's religious affiliation. Englishmen's motives for wearing Turkish dress were not always for the sake of disguise, but often for the fear of what would happen to them if they did not comply with regional customs, in the interest of self-presentation.

Travel narratives included lengthy descriptions of Turkish manners, policies, and religious practices, many of which were devoted to dress and the sorts of garments people of varying classes were expected to wear. Traveler George Sandys (1578-1644) of York noted that in general, the Turks were "well complectioned, of good statures, and full bodies," who shaved their heads, leaving only a tuft of hair at the top of the scalp. They grew their mustaches and beards and "[scoffed] at such Christians" who did not. White turbans and waist sashes were reserved for Muslims, and these were often decorated with small caps of "green, or red velvet, being only worn by persons of rank." The type of turban could determine one's social rank and occupation, and Christians could be identified by their blue or blue and white striped turbans. However, Englishmen often found that they had to comply with other, more problematic, requests. Sandys wrote that it was an "especiall favour to the *Turk*" to force high-ranking Christians to wear white turbans when in the "City" (Constantinople) – "what better then an

Apostaticall insinuation?" he questioned.²⁷ It would have seemed heretical for a Christian to wear a white turban, a color customarily worn only by Muslims, but such peculiar situations occurred.²⁸ Sandys's descriptions continued, indicating that though people might have been of different social ranks, the clothes they wore were similar: "They never alter their fashions: not greatly differing in the great and vulgar more then in the richness." High-ranking officials and wealthy men could be found wearing gold, velvet, and satin cloths. Their robes were often lined with tufts of furs with decorative precious stones sewn into the material. English traders and travelers could be expected to wear similar garments – though perhaps not quite so rich – during their time in the Ottoman Empire. A violet robe was the "common wear" of the region.

Sandys's comments were primarily about Constantinople, but these customs extended outward into the Empire's periphery. In his captivity narrative, John Whitehead recorded the types of clothes eunuchs, Christian slaves, and other commoners wore. Whitehead's descriptions are useful in terms of gaining a sense for the common clothing of the Barbary region. "Men that are of Ability" wore a "compleat suit of Apparel," which included long linen pants, a linen shirt that hung down to their knees and had wide sleeves, a colored waistcoat, and small red caps. Over these garments they wore a garment called a "Haig," which was wrapped about the shoulders and draped over the body so that it nearly touched their shoes. Over this, they wore a larger coat with a hole for the neck and head. Whitehead further described the differences between the higher ranking black slaves and lower ranking white Christians who were given a

²⁷ Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey begun An: Dom: 1610...*, 2nd edition (London, 1621), 63.

²⁸ Strange as it may be, Sandys's observation is not unfounded. When Thomas Dallam, an organ maker from Lancashire, was invited to join a Levant Company expedition to Constantinople and present an organ of his own making to the Grand Signior, he and the other merchants wore "vestes of clothe of goulde." The other merchants wore "blew gounes made after the Turkie fation" and Dallam's own overcoat was green – a color any ordinary trader or traveler would be specifically prohibited to wear. See "The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600" in *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, ed. J. Theodore Bent (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 66-7.

coat of the "coursest sort" to wear for one year. Of significance is the fact that this coat was tailored in the same manner as the longer coat which local men wore over their haig and other garments.²⁹

Whitehead's descriptions of Moroccan clothing were more or less analogous to the descriptions Lancashire organ maker Thomas Dallam (1575-1630?) made of the peoples he encountered in areas further east. When he presented an organ to the Grand Signior, Dallam noted a number of young pages clothed in gold cloaks and gold caps with sashes tied around their wastes. These were Christian-born men, who were taken into the Signior's hand. Dallam also accidentally chanced upon the Signior's concubines who wore many jewels and revealing clothing – "for I could desarne the skin of their thies throughe it [their breeches]," Dallam unabashedly writes.³⁰ Sometimes these exotic clothes were shocking – such as when Dallam could not take his eyes off of the concubines – but the types of clothing worn were relatively the same throughout the region. English traders and travelers would be expected to wear clothes appropriate to their position and religion.³¹

More crucially, however, the English had to avoid the color green. Green was religiously significant, for only the supposed kindred of the Prophet Mahomet were allowed to wear it. A

²⁹ See "The Captivity Narrative of John Whitehead," appendix 2 in Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 177-89. The captive Sieur Mouëtte affirmed Whitehead's note about the simple dress given to the captives in Morocco. He wrote: "Our Habit, was a woollen Sack, with a hood to it, and Sleeves like an Anchorites Habit and this serv'd us for a Cap, Shirt, Coat and Breeches, with four Pair of wretched Pumps, which in eight Days working among Lime and Mortar, were worn and burnt away." See *A View of the Universe, Or, a New Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London: 1710), 44.

³⁰ Dallam, "The Diary," 69-75.

³¹ Matar, "Renaissance England and the Turban," 44-5.

Christian traveler would be a fool to think himself above the law.³² Sandys, reflecting on his travels throughout the Levant, wrote:

The Clergie go much in greene, it being *Mahomets* colour; and his kinsmen in greene shashes, who are called *Emers*, which is Lords: the women also weare something of greene on their heads, to be knowne...But if a Christian out of ignorance weare *greene*, he shall have his clothes torne off from his backe, and perhaps be well beaten.³³

Sandys's description was a cautionary remark intended for men wanting to venture in the region.

Anyone who dared wear green would face physical consequences or the apprehensive eye of an Englishman afraid that his colleague had turned. Avoidance of the color green was paramount.

Levant Company chaplain William Biddulph remarked that Christians "not acquainted with the customes of the countrey" could expect harsh treatment from those of the Islamic faith for any disregard of the sartorial law, even for wearing something so unassuming as green shoelaces, according to Moryson.³⁴ Fear of offending their hosts – and enduring subsequent assaults – prompted travelers and traders to conform to customs and mannerisms in the region, but this did not mean they were disguising themselves. Disguise implies that one is subverting his or her identity for a particular reason, but compliance with another culture's modes of presentation is a different act entirely. Traders and travelers were not entirely comfortable abroad. Their frequent descriptions of imperative sartorial customs indicate that they were wary of what would happen if they did not comply.

³² Qur'ān: 76:5-22. Said of the "pious:" "The clothes they wear will be of green silk and brocade, and they are adorned with bracelets of silver; and their Lord gives them a pure draught to drink. 'This is a reward for you, and your striving is thanked.'" See Alan Jones, trans., *The Qur'ān* (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2007), 548-9.

³³ George Sandys, *A Relation*, 64.

³⁴ William Biddulph, *The Traveles of Certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bythinia, Thracia, and to the Black Sea...* (London, 1609); Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 210. Moryson notes that when he was in Constantinople, a "poore Christian" was beaten with cudgels because "ignorantly he wore a paire of greene shoestrings."

Henry Blount expounded upon the instructive passages of self-conduct found in the narratives of Sandys, Biddulph, and Moryson, and determined that the reason why the Englishmen were expected to dress themselves in the Turkish fashion was rooted in religious prejudice and understood in terms of cross-cultural respect. Islam, he wrote, ensures that all followers bear "malice" toward Christians, a disposition which

makes the fashions of other *Countreys* rather despised, then *imitated*, so that in all the land of *Turky*, where *Christian* Merchants use not, if I appeared in the least part clothed like a *Christian*, I was tufted like an Owle among other birds: at first I imputed it to *Barbarisme*; but afterward lamenting thereof to one of the better sort, to note how they understand it; he told me, they would have no *novelties*, and therefore would disgrace all new *examples*; then I perceived it to be a piece rather of *Institution*, then *Incivility*; for they desiring perpetual *hostility* with the *Christians*, must estrange the People from their *customs* as utterly as may bee; Now there is no innovation draws in foreign Manners faster, then that of *Apparel*...³⁵

Blount traveled to the Ottoman Empire to determine whether or not the "*Turkish way*" was barbaric or civil, and in the above passage, he concluded that they were hostile only if the English trader or traveler did not present himself in the appropriate way. Englishmen could expect to have unpleasant experiences and encounters, but the only sure way to save oneself from being identified and shamed as an "Owle among other birds" was to wear non-Western dress. Blount's entire discussion of apparel followed a passage relating a time when a caravan of Turks came across him "clad in *Turkish* manner" but identifiable as a Christian because of the turban he wore.³⁶ The dress did not disguise his Christian identity, but it did demonstrate to the caravan that he was not to be approached with hatred, for he was acting as he should have been.

The passage also called attention to the differences between traders and travelers. As a traveler outside of cosmopolitan trading centers, Blount was acutely aware of how he presented himself lest he offend people unused to seeing or interacting with Christian foreigners. It must be

³⁵ Blount, *A Voyage*, 99.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

remembered, however, that the yearning for "experience" encouraged men like Blount, Lithgow, and Moryson to travel. Their analogous opinions about experience and cultural immersion suggest that even if they did not have to adhere to unwritten customs, they would have dressed in the Turkish manner, anyway. The travelers were proponents of cultural immersion. Experiences in foreign lands enriched their lives. Adherence to sartorial customs allowed them to safely travel in unknown territories and expand their knowledge of another culture. Travelers "self-fashioned" only insofar as was necessary to enjoy their extended ventures.

Moments of Vulnerability, Moments of Pride

In 1595, Fynes Moryson set out on a grand tour of Europe with his brother, Henry. Having already explored the Netherlands and Germany, the Moryson brothers made their way to Venice, Italy, where they purchased Ottoman robes for their journey into the Levant. Moryson wrote that the two followed all of the customs necessary to ensure safe travel. They left their "swords, daggers, and European garments" with a Venetian merchant, to be kept safe until their return.³⁷ But Fynes Moryson made one serious misstep, which could have cost him dearly. The cloak he wore everyday was lined in green taffeta. Though it does not seem that something so inconspicuous as green lining could pose a problem, it must be remembered that Englishmen sometimes were beaten for wearing green shoe laces. The taffeta, as Moryson related, could

³⁷ Moryson wrote that he and his brother purchased Ottoman robes, knowing that other fashions, especially short cloaks like those the English wore during the seventeenth century, "are most offensive to them [the Turks], so as the wearer provoketh them thereby to doe him injuries." See Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 200-10. Travelers were not allowed to wear weapons, either. Moryson left his swords with the Venetian, and Blount was once asked to remove the dagger he wore so as to comply with what the "Countrey permitted." See Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 208; Blount, *A Voyage*, 99.

certainly have brought him "great danger." Fortunately, he was never discovered, but Moryson's case is rather curious.

A well-traveled man, Moryson wrote a three-volume travel narrative, containing a two-hundred paged section listing all of the ways travelers should expect to act and dress throughout Europe and Asia. As such, it was odd that he should claim ignorance of the Ottoman Empire's most important sartorial law until a Levant Company ambassador to Constantinople informed him. Yet, after hearing about what danger he unwittingly placed himself in, Moryson refused to "cast off" his doublet, choosing instead to be more aware of how noticeable the lining was as he moved about the region.³⁸ His decision made it seem as though he thought himself above the law; was his ignorance feigned? Certainly, as Games comically points out, his doublet would have acquired quite a stench from its daily use, but so too would the color have faded over time. Regardless, he defied a law he should have already known of and one that expected his adherence.³⁹ Could it be that he refused to discard his green taffeta-lined coat because he intended to fashion himself as one of Mahomet's kinsmen or a high-ranking official? This seems impossible. Moryson considered himself an authority on international travel. He played a risky game in the Levant, testing the limits of Turkish and English expectations of how men were to present themselves while abroad.

There were times, however, when Englishmen could wear different sorts of clothes as they moved in and out of various social contexts. Blount frequently specified when he was in

³⁸ Moryson reflected: "Neither did I understand by any Christian, no not by our English Merchants at *Haleppo*, in what danger I was for the same, till I came to *Constantinople*, where our English Ambassadour told mee of the strict Law forbidding the use of this colour...Whereupon I was yet in feare when all danger was almost past, yet would I not cast off my doublet, but onely more warily kept the lining from sight, till I entred the Greeke ship wherein I passed thence to *Venice*, and so was free from all danger." See Moryson, *An Itinerary*, 209-10.

³⁹ Games, *Web of Empire*, 75.

either his "Christian" or "Turkish" habit.⁴⁰ It is an indication that even in the early seventeenth century, travelers did have leeway when it came to choosing their daily garb. Turkish fashion was not always necessary. As such, the decision to wear Turkish clothes was quite often performative, and we need only look at Lithgow's effigie as an example. It is cartoonish, but Lithgow stands proudly as he grips his pilgrim's staff with images of ancient ruins behind him. He wears an oversized turban, a long robe lined with a different colored fabric, a sumptuous sash, and Turkish garments with indication of an elaborate design, and he has even grown a mustache after the Turkish fashion. Below the image, are the words:

*Loe here's mine Effigie, and Turkish suit;
My Staffe, my Shasse, as I did Asia foote.*⁴¹

Lithgow unabashedly let his readers know that he dressed in the customary way throughout his time in the Levant and Barbary Coast. He performed and behaved in another country's manner and returned to share his experiences with the reading public. From such an image and passage alone, Lithgow would have quelled any reader's fear that the turban and what it stood for had in someway realigned his core identity.

In spite of their general compliance with sartorial regulation, traders and travelers did, at times, express feelings of vulnerability. Biddulph's travel narrative was the combination of a series of letters he wrote to his son. "I am weary of this uncomfortable Country," he wrote from Aleppo, acknowledging his loneliness. What is most "comfortable to me in this strange

⁴⁰ When in Constantinople, Blount stayed with a Turkish merchant but shifted into his "Christian habit" to meet with a Levant Company ambassador, presumably in one of the factories; it could have been the case that Hane of Mehemot Basha, the man with whom Blount stayed, knew that Blount had European clothes with him. Similarly, he mentioned being "clad in *Turkish* manner" when traveling outside of Constantinople. Blount, *A Voyage*, 26, 98.

⁴¹ Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse*. See Fig. 6 in the appendix.

country," he continued, was to hear from his friends – and often.⁴² Separated from his family in a foreign territory, clothed in Turkish dress, subject to another power's customs, and without quick means of communication, Biddulph began to wonder how he might be perceived. Self-consciously he told his son:

I am bold to write unto you in absence as pleasantly as I was wont to speake unto you in presence, whereby you may perceive I am still the same man, and of the same minde, and as merry out of England as ever I was in England.⁴³

The above sentiment followed only a few pages after Biddulph had expressed his lonesomeness. Biddulph did not struggle with his identity but with the way in which his extended time in the Levant possibly reshaped peoples' perceptions of him as a Christian man. Unlike Covell, who was so secure in himself that he did not once waver, Biddulph felt vulnerable; he needed to let others know that the Levant had not changed him, and he publically did so.

There was something threatening about immersion in another culture. Could extended time spent in the Ottoman Empire in some way change a person's identity? At what point did the accumulation of knowledge of another translate into a want to "become" another? Traders and travelers were not the only ones immersed in Turkish culture; captives were, too, and they resided there against their will. Captives, according to sixteenth century French traveler Sieur Mouëtte, had a more intimate experience of life in the East; captivity, he wrote

is a means to lead them to the Knowledge of many Particulars, from which those who only Travel for their Pleasure or Business are wholly excluded, the Captives being admitted into the Houses and Palaces, and even among the Women, which is never allow'd to Strangers.⁴⁴

⁴² Biddulph, *Traveles*, 32-3. Traders and travelers relied on infrequent merchant ships for letters and news from home. According to Alfred Wood, during the seventeenth century, it could take up to five months for a ship to arrive at the Constantinople embassy, provided it was not sabotaged by pirates along the way. See Wood, "The English Embassy at Constantinople, 1660-1762," *The New English Historical Review* 40 (October 1925): 536.

⁴³ Biddulph, *Traveles*, 44.

⁴⁴ Sieur Mouëtte, *A View of the Universe*, A1.

Captives were often forced to convert to Islam, and as will be further explored in the third chapter, there were real fears of people who "turned Turk" and embraced the religion. Traders and travelers feared the consequences of sartorial non-compliance and dressed as they were required. Yet full immersion in another culture demanded explanation. Traders and travelers felt the need to clarify to the reading public the social context, promising that immersion did not cause a change in their identity.⁴⁵ Even those who were mentally strong and adventurous enough to travel to new lands occupied a rather precarious position, for though they might have known themselves, their retrospective narratives reveal that they had apprehensions about their time abroad.

For traders and travelers, Turkish dress was not as fear inducing as it was for the captives, for they had voluntarily immersed themselves in the culture. They ventured to new lands, knowing they would have to comply with different modes of conduct. Wearing Turkish dress was something one did to safely travel, conduct business, or explore. No matter how secure they felt, however, there was always a fragment of self-consciousness attached to their decisions to live in the Levant for extended periods of time, and those moments of vulnerability, when the Englishmen felt small or as though they were changing in some way (at least in terms of how they were perceived by those reading their travel narrative retrospectively), can be attributed to the horrific and emotionally damaging experiences captives had.

⁴⁵ Thomas Dallam related one peculiar anecdote in which he was asked to return to the Constantinople Seraglio to dine with the court "which no Christian ever did in there memorie that wente away a Christian." Travelers were conscious of any situations that might call into question their identity. Dallam assured his readers that dining with the court did not affect him in the way it had others. See Dallam, "The Diary," 64.

Chapter II

Englishmen in Captivity: How they coped and how they escaped

Telling their Tale

In 1582, Richard Hasleton (1577-1595?) of Essex returned to England on the *Mary Marten* after a successful month of trading in Petrarch, Greece, which was then under Ottoman rule.⁴⁶ As the ship sailed by Cabo de Gata near Spain, the merchants spotted two Turkish galleys in the waters. "Having a very small wind," the merchants could not sail at full speed; they were trapped. When the Turks opened fire on the *Mary Marten*, some of the merchants jumped overboard, while the lucky ones readied a skiff and rowed away. Hasleton, to his greater misfortune, was one of the last men on the vessel. Realizing that the *Mary Marten* was sinking, Hasleton dove off of the ship and swam toward the only boat that could possibly afford him his life: one of the Turkish galleys. "When I was aboard," he wrote, "I was stripped of my clothes;" and when he refused to admit to the captain of the ship that he was an English merchant, he received "fifteen strokes with a cudgel" and was then left to suffer, with little sustenance, in the bowels of the galley.⁴⁷

Now one of the many Europeans in an extensive white slave trade, Hasleton was brought to Algiers and sold in the market.⁴⁸ His captivity narrative, *Strange and Wonderful Things*

⁴⁶ Daniel J. Vitkus clarifies that Petrarch is Patras in Southwestern Greece. See *Strange and Wonderful Things Happened to Richard Hasleton...in His Ten Years' Travails in Many Foreign Countries* (London, 1595), reprinted in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern Europe*, edited by Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia UP, 2001), 74, note: 6.

⁴⁷ Richard Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 73-95.

⁴⁸ Robert C. Davis estimates that by 1640 Algiers alone held about 3,000 English slaves and between 1672 and 1682 captured about 290-430 new slaves a year. Between 1580 and 1680, he estimates that there were roughly 35,000 European Christians held in captivity but that arriving

Happened to Richard Hasleton, published in London in 1595, is one of the earliest records of English captivity in the Ottoman world. As English merchants and travelers ventured into new territories around the world and encountered peoples they had never before seen, both captivity and travel narratives became increasingly popular. For the men and women at home, these stories painted portraits of exotic lands and peoples that, otherwise, existed only in their imaginations.

The Barbary captivity narratives followed on the heels of earlier descriptions of the East. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, returning pilgrims who journeyed to eastern lands shared their stories of the Muslim and Turkish other – the "pernicious force dedicated to the destruction of Christendom" – with friends and family at home. According to historian Robert Schwoebel, these "travelers' tales," often hyperbolic and untrue, contributed to the "common stock of Europe's knowledge of the East." The Turks were the "sworn enemies of all Christians" and threatening raiders with whom merchants would have to contend in the Mediterranean seas.⁴⁹ Late sixteenth through early eighteenth century Barbary captivity narratives maintained such unfavorable images. The idea that an Englishman could be taken into the hands of non-Christian "infidels," and even forced to become a religious convert, was something shocking. Traders and travelers alike feared the possibility of captivity. The Barbary captivity stories illuminated the Protestant Englishmen's religious and social vulnerability in a larger cosmopolitan world and entrenched the image of the Barbaric Turk into the minds of the larger English reading public.

at an accurate number remains a difficult task because of a lack of census data and records. Though many men were taken into palaces, others still were under private masters and thus unaccounted for. See Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 1-15.

⁴⁹ Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1967), 176-201.

Seized, Stripped, and Vulnerable

When Hasleton came aboard the Turkish galley, he was immediately stripped of his clothing. The image of the humiliated and stripped English captive would have been familiar. In 1563, John Fox of Suffolk, a gunner on a merchant ship, was near the Straits of Gibraltar when he encountered eight Turkish galleys. Trusting his faith in God, Fox stated that he and the other men would fight their foes and "winne praise by death, rather than to live captives in misery and shame." Unfortunately for Fox, this plan proved futile. The corsairs were too powerful, and Fox and his compatriots were, indeed, miserably shamed in captivity. He recalled that "the Christians must needs to the gallies, to serve in new offices: and they were no sooner in them, but their garments were pulled over their eares, and torne from their backes, and they set to the oares."⁵⁰ Fox's new social position as a slave required that all physical and aesthetic remnants of his English Christian identity be removed. His nakedness was a source of "misery and shame" for the sheer fact that he was physically vulnerable and because the objects which were defining of his identity were taken from him.

In one passage, Fox alluded to physical "miseries" the Englishmen suffered which were separate from the stripes they incurred from endless whippings. These unmentionable miseries were most likely circumcisions. Nothing was quite as debasing as the forced conversion, or frequent pressure to "turn Turk." Captives were often converted on the decks of merchant ships or Turkish galleys. One can only imagine how terrifying a moment it would have been – how helpless one must have felt – to be seized and mutilated in front of an audience of unknown men and fellow Englishmen. Forced conversions were emasculating and religiously troublesome, for

⁵⁰ [John Fox], *The Woorthy Enterprise of John Foxe* in Richard Hakluyt *The Principal Navigations*.

they took away a Christian's foreskin, the only physical identifier of his faith. Passages discussing conversion were risqué. The sensationalism of captivity narratives stemmed from the reflections captives had of their forced, or reluctantly accepted, religious conversions. Indeed, the moment in a captivity narrative in which an Englishman first confronted issues of self-identity was almost always related to being stripped, circumcised, and made to wear Eastern clothes.

Consider Thomas Sanders's account of Richard Burges. At sea in 1583, a Turkish galley interceded the *Jesus*, the merchant ship on which Sanders and Burges sailed. Burges was taken aside, and as had similarly happened to Hasleton and Fox, he was violently seized, stripped, and searched. Burges was then taken to the coast, and now under the local ruler's hands, he was taunted and "violently shaved" to wear his hair in the Muslim fashion. Sanders stated that Burges resisted, crying: "a Christian I am, and so I will remaine." His defiance only quickened the pace at which he was "made Turke," that is, circumcised and put into Muslim clothing. Yet throughout this demeaning assault, Burges echoed his original words: "A Christian I was borne, and so I will remaine, though you force me to doe otherwise."⁵¹

Men who were stripped and brutally converted at sea, like Burges, adamantly professed their English and Christian identities even as they wore foreign clothes and had a physical trait in common with their captors. Circumcision was far more terrifying a prospect than that of wearing non-Western clothes. If an Englishman was circumcised and made to convert he would indeed be forced to wear Turkish clothes, too. In captivity, Turkish dress functioned differently than it did for traders and travelers. It was humiliating garb that hid a physical source of shame.

⁵¹ [Thomas Sanders], *The Voyage made to Tripolis in Barbarie, in the yeere 1583* in Richard Hakluyt *The Principal Navigations*.

The Great Escape

Though peculiar for the fact that he was captive of both Muslims and Catholics during his time in the Mediterranean, Hasleton's narrative is rather conventional in that its trajectory was characteristic of a typical captivity story. He was taken at sea, stripped, pressured to "turn Turk," but saved by the grace of a benevolent Christian God. Unique to his narrative, however, was his method of escape: disguise.

Once sold, Hasleton found himself as a slave to the "King of Abbese," the leader of a local community.⁵² Slaves in the Barbary region were not always shackled manual-laborers; often, they could work their way up through a number of positions.⁵³ Hasleton shared his knowledge of carpentry with his captors and was granted additional freedoms. Hasleton wrote that "they took off my irons and let me walk abroad with a keeper" in search of timber. One day when he was outside of the King's domain and separate from his overseer, Hasleton encountered a group of local artisans who inquired after the design and construction of English tools. Requesting in turn a small fee, he taught them all that he knew. Hasleton continued this trade for a short while, and when he had earned a sufficient amount of money, he "bestowed [the money] upon apparel and caused it to be made like to theirs," that is, he had clothes made in the local fashion. He also purchased a lance and sword. He hid everything in a cave until he could make his escape. Once out of his chains and dressed "like a Moor," Hasleton, physically identifiable neither as a slave nor as a European trader, escaped.

Disguise gave Hasleton a means by which he could escape from captivity and evade further injustices and assaults. He was not the only one who realized that Ottoman dress could

⁵² Vitkus believes the "King of Abbese" was the leader of the Beni-Abbas tribe in Algeria. See Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 90, note: 46.

⁵³ Nabil Matar, Introduction to *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*.

work in his favor. Nearly a century later, on November 10, 1669, Portsmouth merchant Gilbert Young was sailing near the Barbary coast when he was taken into captivity by a group of "Turkes and Moors." Young was quickly sold into slavery and forced to march from his place of enslavement to Tétouan in Morocco. At some point during his captivity, Young purchased a "Hague a Cap and a Moorish Shirt" and soon "took leave of his Consorts before day and marched towards the seaside" where he found refuge with another English merchant vessel. The account ends there.⁵⁴ Young took note of those around him and fashioned himself as a local; the clothes he purchased call to mind the same ensemble of which John Whitehead took note. The dress allowed Young to assume a specific identity and escape.

Though their respective narratives do not offer any glimpse into the internal dialogue they may or may not have had when appearing dressed as a Muslim, what can be inferred from their narratives is that their motives for wearing local garb silenced any concerns or anxieties about what it meant symbolically. Rather than a reminder of conversion, the dress was a ticket to freedom. Hasleton described his decision to disguise himself in a very matter of fact way. It was a strategic decision, which allowed him to outwardly define himself as a Muslim and dexterously hide his Christian faith. The way in which Hasleton and Young manipulated Ottoman dress to their advantage affirmed the idea that dress is conversational. To an observer, dress says something about the wearer's (supposed) identity. As noted, Hasleton's and Young's escapes were recorded nearly a century apart, suggesting that it was conventional for captives to escape incognito. Disguise can be included as one of the "unimaginable" ways Englishmen had to present themselves in the Ottoman world.

⁵⁴ *Account of the escape of Gilbert Young of Portsmouth, who was taken 10 Nov., 1669, and sold to the Turks, who set the Christians on shore, fired their vessels and them marched them....* [London, 1671?], SP 29/441, State Papers Online.

Performative Conversion

Another way Englishmen had to present themselves was something more scandalous and psychologically disturbing than wearing Turkish dress alone. Captives would often convert to Islam, hoping that it would ease their suffering. It was a method of self-preservation.

On July 10, 1738, Thomas Pellow (b. 1703/4) of Cornwall escaped captivity, and after fashioning himself as an apothecary, he met with a group of European merchants and sailed with them to Gibraltar. When they arrived at the port, Pellow met with an English sailor who promised to secure safe passage to England for him. Pellow had spent twenty-three years in captivity and was at the time clothed in local fashion. When he was presented to local authorities he was dismissed because he did not appear as a European Christian. Pellow reflected:

they would not suffer any *Moor* to land: *Moor!* said I, you are very much mistaken in that, for I am as good a *Christian* (though I am dressed in the *Moorish* Garb) as any of you all.

Eventually, he convinced the authorities of his "Christian" identity and returned home three months later on October 15.⁵⁵ Pellow was considered a "Moor" because of the clothes he wore and perhaps also because the merchants with whom he had first sought refuge told the English guards Pellow's history as a child captive. The guards would have known that English children taken into captivity were raised as Muslims. In 1585, Nicholas de Nicholay's travel narrative (1555?) was translated out of French and into English. In it, he related a "most cruell & lamentable" Turkish practice of child enslavement. "These most deare infants & bodies," he wrote, were taken from

⁵⁵ *The History of the Long Captivity and Adventures of Thomas Pellow in South-Barbary*, 2nd. ed. (London, 1751?), 371-88.

their fathers & mothers, into a servitude of enmity more then bestiall, from baptisme to circumcision, from the companie of the christian faith, to servitude & Barbarous infidelity, from childly & fatherly kindness to mortal enmity towards their own blood.⁵⁶

Nicolay commented on the practice when he was in Constantinople, but child slavery was rampant throughout the Ottoman Empire for several centuries. Indeed, Pellow's nearly thwarted re-entry into English territory occurred roughly two hundred years following Nicolay's original French publication, so the merchants' skepticism of Pellow's Englishness was justified. If anything, his own tale strongly worked against him.

Pellow, according to his narrative, performed his conversion. Englishmen who performatively converted did so while in captivity, and they differ from the renegades who willingly converted outside of captivity. This is not to say that the conversion was staged. These men did actually convert, but in their narratives they professed their innocence.⁵⁷ Captives surrendered to their captors' constant pressures to "turn," hopeful that conversion would ease their sufferings as slaves. Aesthetically and physically, they appeared as Muslims. At heart, they were Christians. Even today it is difficult to determine whether Pellow had or had not turned "Moor," but when considered as a "performative conversion," his experience is better understood.

Pellow was eleven years old in 1715 when he and his uncle, John Pellow, were on the *Francis*, a merchant ship en route to Genoa from Falmouth. They were off of Cape Finisterre, Spain, when two "*Sallee Rovers*" from Morocco spotted the *Francis* and pursued it. What immediately followed differed little from Hasleton and Fox's experiences. The pirates came onboard and violently took the English into their possession. Pellow was separated from his

⁵⁶ Nicholas Nicholay, *The Navigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie* (London, 1585), 69.

⁵⁷ In another sense, men such as Hasleton and Young, who used Turkish dress as a disguise, staged their conversion.

uncle and taken to Salé where he was presented to the Emperor's son, Muley Spha, as a gift. Muley Spha took pleasure in making fun of the young Englishman and frequently pressured him to "turn *Moor*," promising him a horse and entry into his circle of "esteemed friends." Pellow refused to resign his Christian faith no matter the consequences, but he was only resolute for so long. "I was at last constrained to submit," he reluctantly told the reader, but "I never gave the Consent of the Heart, though I seemingly yielded." Pellow did not mention circumcision, but it was most likely to the sharp blade of the knife – the object that would ensure his physical submission to Islam – that he yielded.⁵⁸ His captivity narrative was emblematic of the common features of the genre and detailed dire situations, in which captives felt they had no option but to submit.

Now a convert of "*Mahometism*," as the English frequently called it, Pellow refused to wear his "*Moorish Habit*," but was soon forced to embrace the clothing having been ensured by Muley Spha that his "foolish obstinacy" would only bring him further torment. Now scarred, both emotionally and physically, Pellow acknowledged that adoption of the dress was "a Thing indifferent in its own Nature," for he only appeared "like a *Mahometan*."⁵⁹ The dress outwardly defined him as a Muslim, but according to how he presented himself in his narrative, Pellow never lost sight of his Christian faith no matter the clothes he was made to wear, physical mutilations he had to endure, schools to which he was sent, or time spent in the Moroccan army. His conversion was a performative conversion. It never meant anything, at least not as he presented his case in his narrative.

Perhaps Pellow did embrace the faith, but that is unknown. Yet, there are moments in his narrative in which he spoke directly to the reader, informing him or her of his honesty. Following

⁵⁸ Pellow, *Long Captivity*, 5-16.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

the story of his conversion, Pellow remarked that if anyone else had been in his situation they would "maintain their Christian Faith no worse than I did mine."⁶⁰ His narrative served as a public re-possession of his Christian and English identity, for the way in which he saw himself – throughout the entire captivity – differed from how other Europeans viewed him.

The lives of performative converts are questionable. Linda Colley, who has written extensively on British captives held in different regions, notes that captivity narratives were often distorted. First, captives did not have access to pen and paper and typically wrote their stories upon their return, leaving room for historical error. Second, many captives were illiterate merchants and relied on the help of other writers, which gave a degree of artistic liberty to those actually writing the stories. Third, the Ottoman Empire was a distant place, and most readers had no way of accessing what life must have been like overseas aside travel and captivity narratives.⁶¹ People were wary of the men who were converted while in captivity, so narratives such as Joseph Pitts's, were most often written for their "restitution and reparation" of supposedly involuntary religious transgressions. The captivity narrative, as a literary style, could be captivating, confessional, and defensive at any one point.

Joseph Pitts (1663-1739) of Exeter was taken captive at age fifteen. His captivity narrative brought to light the Islamic world in which he lived for over a decade, including an account of his religious Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. His time in captivity afforded him an insider's knowledge of a religious and national world foreign to his English audience. Yet his narrative also apologized for his conversion and time spent on a corsair ship and defended his English and Christian identity. When he gave into his master's pressure for him to "turn," Pitts

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), 91.

was shaved, instructed to recite the “Witness,” and given new clothes to wear. “Although he [his master] changed my habit,” he stated, “he could never change my heart.”⁶² Publication of a captivity narrative was a method by which Englishmen could atone for their actions and bring them financial profit. These men had suffered, and they wanted to clear their records.

Captivity was psychologically damaging, and the experience haunted the Englishmen wherever they went. Knowing that captivity often demanded a captive’s religious conversion, English men in Muslim dress were often eyed suspiciously in the way Thomas Pellow was in Gibraltar. Richard Burges found himself in a similar situation. Thomas Sanders reflected that after the company had freed themselves of the Turks and were continuing their voyage toward Constantinople, they met with a Venetian galley “who would have killed the two Englishmen [Burges and James Smith] because they were circumcised, and become Turkes, had not the other Christian captives excused them.”⁶³ There was no way of knowing whether a captive had been converted unless he shamelessly showed people where he had been cut – or was once again publically humiliated.

Captivity was a reality Englishman faced. Slavery itself is an injurious assault of one’s identity, and the psychological damage was compounded by the fact that many Englishmen were forced to convert. Muslim clothes were symbols of a captive’s conversion. In captivity, the robes were constant reminders of their subordination and shame, but they were tools by which one could escape captivity. Their clothes related a specific message: they were not Christian. It was

⁶² Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account*, reprinted in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001) 221, 311. The “Witness,” or *shahada*, is a phrase uttered by someone converting to Islam. It is an affirmation of God and Muhammad as God’s prophet.

⁶³ Sanders, *The Voyage*.

why Young and Hasleton could escape incognito and why Pellow was called a "moor" when he tried to re-enter English domains.

Chapter III

Renegades at Sea, on Land, and on the Stage

A Place of Intrigue

The English renegades are the most unique "characters" considered in this essay, for they were the men who either ventured to the Mediterranean with the intention of creating a new life – a new identity for themselves – or who, once abroad as traders or travelers, were lured in some capacity to adopt a new lifestyle. Herein lies the difficulty in telling their stories. Available today are the few captivity narratives of those who seemingly performed their conversions, preserved a sense of Englishness, and returned to tell the tale, but it is much more difficult to access the stories of those who completely renounced either their national or religious affiliation, or both.⁶⁴ Popular seventeenth-century fiction (plays and ballads) shed light on the lives of renegade pirates but such sources are decisively problematic. Like the captivity narratives that portrayed Turks as barbaric menaces who preyed upon innocent Christians, plays such as *The Renegade* and *A Christian Turn'd Turk* propagated images of the heartless apostate: a Faustian figure who captured the seventeenth century imagination, according to Nabil Matar. As a consequence, it is easier to know what contemporaries made of renegades than how they understood themselves. The renegade, as depicted onstage, was more accurately a "dramatic type" than a historical figure.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Linda Colley indicates that there are only fifteen published captivity narratives in existence, aside from stories included in newspapers or magazines. See *Captives*, 88-9.

⁶⁵ Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth-Century Imagination," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33 (Summer 1993): 489-505. The Faustian claim is not unfounded; the character John Ward, frustrated that his love interest has betrayed him, exclaims: "I loved that face so well, / To purchase it I exchanged my heaven with hell." See Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke* (London 1612), XVI, 263-4.

Traders and travelers frequently encountered renegades from a variety of European nations but sometimes their descriptions of the renegades denied or rather, ignored, the fact that these men had renounced their former identities. Their descriptions were often at odds with the way in which renegades were portrayed in fictional literary sources. Traders and travelers were fascinated with the Ottoman Empire's splendor, and they went to great lengths to describe the architecture, decor, dress, ceremonies, and elite customs they had the privilege of viewing. Extended ventures in these Eastern lands were necessary for both trade and business, but the persuasive power – the cultural intrigue – of these new geographic spaces was not enough for majority of the English traders and travelers to forsake their religion and "turn Turk." Yet many did.⁶⁶

In his narrative, Thomas Sanders told the story of the *Greene Dragon*, a ship under the command of Master Blonket. A "mighty storme" destroyed parts of the crew's ship, and the crew had no choice but to stay just north of the Barbary coast in Tripolis. After three weeks, the ship began to run out of food and other necessities, forcing several men of the company to go ashore. The Moors, apparently, anticipated the Englishmen's move, and "pursued the Christians" and took several into captivity. They then went after the remainder of the men on the ship. Also on board was Master Blonket's son, who after all the company had gone through, was "a very unhappy boy." The local Pasha bribed the young boy telling him: "whosoever would turne Turke

⁶⁶ Just as it was with the captives, it is not clear how many people converted and became renegades. Citing a variety of European travel and captivity narratives, historian Stephen Clissold determined that there were anywhere between several hundred to several thousand at any one time in the Barbary Coast during the seventeenth century. Clissold is careful to emphasize that even with these numbers, it is not clear who of these renegades did so willingly but not for performative effect. See Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: Paul Elek, 1977), 86-88.

should be well entertained of the kings sonne." The young boy happily complied, and "voluntarily turned Turke."⁶⁷

Blonket "voluntarily turned Turke" before he could be taken into captivity. It is a hard line to draw between performative converts (who perhaps saw no other way around the brutality of captivity than to convert) and renegades who willingly converted out of desire. The young Pellow faced a decision similar to that of Blonket. Here were two young boys in unfamiliar situations, with foreign people promising them great lives and riches if they only "turned." Both were impressionable children, one exhausted of life at sea and the other humiliated and overwhelmed at the prospect of being someone's slave. Yet Pellow was alone; he had been separated from his uncle (who later died) and perhaps saw no other choice than to accept his fate. Blonket, according to Sanders, was still on the same ship as his father. His decision to quickly "runne a shoare" and become a renegade spoke to the appeal of the mesmerizing East.⁶⁸

Englishmen did not need to be bribed by local rulers to "Turn;" the cultural environment of the Ottoman Empire, according to Matar, made conversion both "desirable and likely," especially when traders and travelers spent such long periods of time abroad.⁶⁹ Matar's suggestion explains why travelers such as William Biddulph felt the need to remind his readers that his years in the Levant had not changed his Christian and English identity. The renegade was viewed as a "heinous apostate from religion: he was the living embodiment of Islam's triumph." The fear of Ottoman dress of any sort – and why the English were so conscious of what they

⁶⁷ Sanders, *The Voyage*.

⁶⁸ Ibid.; Historian Daniel Goffman asserts that the Levant "charmed" and "mesmerized" its visitors." See *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 24-5.

⁶⁹ Matar notes that Englishmen often converted after spending many years in the Ottoman Empire. Their adopted habits became "second nature," and they were "accustomed to the values and behavior of Muslims." See "'Turning Turk': Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought," *Durham University Journal* 55 (1994): 35.

wore and what it meant – arose from the fact that many European Christians converted to Islam at a time when the Ottoman Turks continually attempted further Westward expansion. If anything, the fact that Englishmen did become renegades was an uncomfortable reminder that identity was not something fixed; Englishmen did become "Mahometans." And, if literature is any example, the Englishmen continually fought such a reality.

The Seventeenth-Century Imagination

England's growing commercial enterprise in the Mediterranean introduced men to corsairs and renegades determined to prey on English vessels. The Turk and the English renegade, a product of "Islamic power," provided the foundations for a popular "anxious interest" in peoples from the Islamic world and a wish to regard them off and onstage. The Muslim, as portrayed onstage, was not an "imaginary bogey" but a representation of what Englishmen perceived as a real threat, who captured what Matar calls the "seventeenth-century imagination."⁷⁰ Yet imagination can differ from reality. Consider the image of Assan Aga in *The Traveller's Picture Book of Istanbul* (1588).⁷¹ An alabaster-skinned Aga with rouged cheeks and dark, wide eyes gracefully sits on an ornate chair, looking away from the viewer. His robe is of a dark crimson and lined in royal blue. His arms are delicately positioned on the armrests, and the fingers on his right hand rest in an affected manner. Two small gold slippers are seen beneath a flowing under-robe of an intricate gray and red pattern; this particular garment is fastened with a large gold belt, and the painter has gathered the fabric in such a way so as to call attention to the fact that Aga is now a eunuch. The large turban on top of his head is of a white that matches the

⁷⁰ Daniel J. Vitkus, introduction to *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3; Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth-Century Imagination."

⁷¹ See Fig. 7 in the appendix.

color of his skin. Conversion has deprived him of his manhood and the clothes he now wears identify him as a Muslim. He has "turned."⁷²

The depiction of Aga is unfavorable insofar as it perhaps misrepresents him. The English frequently confused circumcision as a barbaric act of castration.⁷³ It is fair to say that some captives were castrated, for travel narratives indicated that pashas and viziers had eunuchs in their possession. The depiction suggests that Englishmen considered the conversion to Islam an emasculating process, one that stripped and cut away at one's identity. The image draws our attention to Aga's groin; we know exactly who he is underneath, even if it is dramatized.

Is the image of Aga an unfavorable one? Quite possibly, but such dramatizations were not unusual. In the play *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, based on two circulating pamphlets about the Pirate John Ward, the character John Ward is circumcised during an onstage "dumb show." Later in the play, when Ward's love interest betrays him, another character snidely blames it on Ward's inability to perform sexually, as if he had been horribly mutilated.⁷⁴ These images of converts suggest that "becoming East" in the English imagination was not only an assertion of a new identity but a confirmation of Islam's effeminate weaknesses in comparison to Christianity.

In addition to this scathing depiction of a weak renegade, Daborne included a striking extended stage direction for the dumb show:

Enter two bearing half-moons, one with a Mahomet's head following. After them, the Mufti, or chief priest, two meaner priests bearing his train. The Mufti seated, a confused

⁷² "Hasan Aga (Samson Rowlie)," *The Traveller's Picture Book of Istanbul* (England: 1588), MS Bodley Or. 430: fol. 47r, Bodleian Library. ArtStor.

⁷³ Vitkus, introduction to *Three Turk Plays*, 5.

⁷⁴ A "dumb show" is a scene that is done in silence. Ward's circumcision was something too shocking to stage with words, so it was done silently. See Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke* (London: 1612), VIII, XIII, 52-54. In Scene XIII, Ward is called an "Italian Captain" as though he had been a passive participant of anal sex having been unable to consummate his marriage and looking elsewhere for sexual gratification. See Vitkus's note in his reprinted edition: *Three Turk Plays*, 238.

*noise of music, with a show. Enter two Turks, one bearing a turban with a half-moon in it, the other a robe, a sword: a third with a globe in one hand, an arrow in the other. Two knights follow. After them, Ward on an ass, **in his Christian habit, bare-headed**. The two knights, with low reverence, ascend, whisper the Mufti in the ear, draw their swords, and pull him off the ass. He [is] laid on his belly, the tables (by two inferior priests) offered him, he lifts his hands up, subscribes, is brought to his seat by the Mufti, **who puts on his turban and robe, girds his sword**, then swears him on the Mahomet's head, ungirds his sword, offers him a cup of wine by the hands of a Christian. He spurns at him and throws away the cup, is mounted on the ass, who is richly clad, and with a shout, they exit.⁷⁵*

Rather than attempting to stage a circumcision, Daborne presented Ward's conversion as a shift in attire. The turban, robe, and sword marked him as a Muslim. His attire was the focal point of the scene, showing in a sensible way what the English saw as a heinous crime. The clothes outwardly defined the character, demanding no explanation. The conversion was visually symbolic.

Further adding to the play's appeal was that, at the time of the play's publication, Ward was a pirate, not a renegade-pirate.⁷⁶ In the prologue, the Chorus declares: "What heretofore set others' pens awork, / Was Ward turned pirate; ours is Ward turned Turk."⁷⁷ Ward's onstage conversion was fictional yet sensational. In contrast, popular ballads ("others' pens awork"), recorded in 1609, highlighted Ward's valor and strength, noting that he preyed on ships of any nation but without confirming he swore allegiance to any place but the sea.⁷⁸ Never referred to as the convert he became, Ward was celebrated for his might.

⁷⁵ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, VIII. Bold lines are my emphasis. Ward's onstage conversion is relatively close to that of a formal conversion excepting of the fact that his head was not shaved. A detail such as this could have been portrayed with the addition of a wig, but this oversight speaks well to the fact that it was the turban, sword, and robes alone that identified the convert, at least in the public imagination.

⁷⁶ Vitkus traces Ward's conversion to sometime after the plays publication and before Lithgow stayed with him as a guest in 1616. See the introduction to *Three Turk Plays*, 27.

⁷⁷ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, Prologue 7-12.

⁷⁸ In one ballad, Ward is described as having a conversation with some of the King's men who attempted to put an end to Ward's piracy. The fictional Ward says if the king rein "all the land, I will reign king at sea." See "The Famous Sea-Fight between Captain Ward and the Rainbow," in

Ward "commits suicide" at the end of the play, but as far as is known, he was alive and well in Tunis until at least 1623.⁷⁹ Onstage, the sinner is forced to accept his fate – to acknowledge the dangers of power and grandeur. Ward damned the Turks ("May all your seed be damned!") in the monologue he gave immediately before his suicide, and wailed: "Lastly, O may I be the last of my country / That trust unto your [the Ottoman Empire's] treacheries, seducing treacheries."⁸⁰ With his final words, Ward confirmed what the English wanted to be true, that the Islamic East did indeed seduce its visitors with its promises of grandeur only to ruin them financially, socially, and religiously. Onstage, the "sworn enemies of the Christians" could be defeated. Ward's suicide is the triumph of Christianity.

Daborne's play was loosely based on two pamphlets printed in London in 1609. The first, entitled *News from Sea*, attributed to Anthony Nixon, described Ward as a selfish pirate who made "prey of all" and lived a life of grandeur in his Tunisian palace. Once a fisherman from Kent with low parentage, Ward discovered that the life of piracy afforded him a manner of living he could never have dreamed of or attained at home. Yet Nixon's account provides only two passages suggestive of Ward's conversion, possibly the ones Daborne used as the premise for his play. At one point, Ward is referred to as the "Devoll in the habbit of a Turke," as evidence for his religious and national affiliation. As exemplified by the traders and travelers, wearing the Turkish "habbit" did not necessarily mean that the wearer was in some way reshaping his identity. But Ward was, apparently, a ruthless pirate who preyed upon his own (former) countrymen and as such, his description as a devil would seem to be an indication that the

Naval Songs and Ballads, ed. C.H. Firth (Navy Records Society: 1908) 30-1. According to Firth, the "Famous Sea-Fight" was published following Ward's death, and it looked unfavorably upon his exploits but made no mention of his conversion.

⁷⁹ Vitkus proposes that Ward died during an outbreak of the plague that year.

⁸⁰ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, XVI 304, 315-6.

renegade had in fact converted. Moreover, in the prefatory matter of the pamphlet, Nixon indicated that he did not care who read the pamphlet so long "he be not a Turke," and continued:

thou hast heard much talke of one captain *Ward*, and I know thou desirest to understand **what he is**: then not to bely him (since tis a sin to bely the devil) he is a notable theefe, he has undone many of your country men, by which he gives you warning to have care of your selves: he has made slaves of many poore Christians, and I hold him no good Christian, that wil blesse him for it...⁸¹

"What he is" was what the public wanted to know. Who were these people compelled to leave their homes to prowl the Mediterranean Sea or work within another nation's government? Who were they, struck by the vast riches of the Islamic World, who "turned" and adopted a new identity? The public turned to popular entertainment to provide the answers. *Newes from Sea* and the other 1609 pamphlet, *A True and Certaine Report*, both claimed to be accurate descriptions of Ward, but they were products of seventeenth century print culture, during which time pamphlets and polemic were produced and dispersed at a rapid pace and were not only sources of news but of entertainment. The dramatic "type" depicted onstage was a pastiche of the variety of "true" reports of Ward's character.

Andrew Barker, the author of *A True and Certaine Report* and the "Master of a Ship," who was several times taken by the Turks, observed that he was surprised so many shipmates and governors (masters) of Turkish ships were Englishmen such as Ward, "our apostate countrimen," Barker lamented. Barker later reported that Ward lives in a "most princely and magnificent state" in Tunis and wears "apparell both curious and costly."⁸² Similar to what Nixon concluded, Barker assumed Ward had "become East:" he wore "curious" clothes,

⁸¹ [Anthony Nixon?], *Newes from Sea: of two notorious Pyrates Ward the English and Danseker the Dutchman* (London, 1609). Bold lines are my emphasis.

⁸² Andrew Barker, *A True and Certaine Report of the Beginning, Proceedings, Overthrowes, and now present Estate of Captaine Ward and Danseker, the two late famous Pirates* (London, 1609).

ruthlessly preyed upon any merchant ship in his path, and fashioned himself as some sort of Tunisian prince. Whether or not the descriptions of Ward as an apostate or Godless "Devill" were accurate, it is clear that, at the very least, Ward turned his back on England and the fisherman's life he once led. The varied portrayals of Ward in these several literary forms – narratives, plays, ballads – speaks to the overwhelming inability to define the renegade identity. There was no consensus as to what, specifically, characterized an apostate besides a general agreement that all were outfitted with robes, turbans, and swords and were most likely also circumcised (or castrated) and ruthless pirates.

Becoming East

On May 27, 1675, Dr. John Covel witnessed the grand celebration of Prince Mustapha's circumcision, a rite of passage shared by many.⁸³ Covel wrote that "many accompany" the prince on the day of his circumcision, and he estimated that one thousand circumcisions alone were performed on the first night of feasting and festivity.⁸⁴ Over the course of the week-long celebration, there were roughly two thousand publically-performed circumcisions; of these, about two hundred Christian renegades "turn'd Turks." Covel recounted a startling moment:

⁸³ Prince Mustapha was the son of Sultan Mehmed IV. He came to the throne in 1695 and ruled until he was deposed in 1703. See "Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel," 198, Bent's first footnote. Circumcision in Islam (*Khitān*) is performed before the child is of ten years of age; the rite of passage is relatively analogous to the Jewish custom of *brit milah*.

⁸⁴ Covel, "Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel," 198-210. Covel described the lengthy procession held prior to the Prince's circumcision. Janissaries (members of the Turkish military) and other attendants and slaves walked next to Prince Mustapha and the Grand Vizier who rode atop richly clad horses. They were outfitted in fur vests and long cloaks of "silk, satin, [and] velvet" though it was a hot summer's day. The Prince wore a white turban "like a common Turk" with a small black feather and what Covel estimated to be a 40 carat diamond. The parade finished, Covel waited another thirteen days before the actual circumcision, for numerous people – other young boys and renegades – were first cut in honor of the Prince.

The common way there of turning was (as I saw severall) to go before the G. Sr. and Vizier, and throw down their cap, or hold up their right hand or forefinger; then they were immediately led away by an officer (who stands by on purpose), and cut with the rest...One night we met a young lad, who askt us the way to the Vizier. Being a country boy, we askt him what he would with him, He told us his brother turn'd Turk, and he would goe find him, and be cut, too; and two dayes after he was as good as his word. It is very dangerous meddling in these cases here...It is our shame, for I believe all Europe have not gained so many Turkes to us these 200 yeares.⁸⁵

It was Christendom's "shame" that the Ottoman Turks had taken over the heart of Christian Europe (Constantinople) and successfully converted many people to Islam. For a Protestant chaplain such as Covell, this fact was particularly horrifying and most likely embarrassing, too. Not too long after the formation of the Levant Company, chaplains were sent along on expeditions to oversee unruly and curious merchants.⁸⁶ Covell never mentioned whether there was anyone in his company willing to convert though there were two accounts (the above being one of them) in which he encountered Christians in line to do so. Covell must have been acutely aware of the possibility that someone under his charge could run away and "turn."

Anecdotes such as Covell's can be found in a number of travel and captivity narratives, for it was not unusual for Englishmen to come across renegades from different nations. The most common interaction with renegades was at sea when Englishmen often discovered that their menacing captors were apostates.⁸⁷ Often, these men were people such as Thomas Pellow and Joseph Pitts, enlisted in local ruler's armies or corsair vessels. Many could have been "performative converts" rather than sinners who had abandoned their country and faith.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 209-10.

⁸⁶ Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*, 222-3.

⁸⁷ At the end of his narrative, Thomas Sanders placed "renegade Christians" he met at sea on the same moral level as "infidels, blasphemers, [and] whoremasters." See Sanders, *The Voyage*.

Englishmen met with renegades both at sea and on land. Samson Rowlie worked his way up the Algerian political hierarchy.⁸⁸ Not much is known of Rowlie, but Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* has preserved a letter Harborne wrote to Assan Aga, the name Rowlie took for himself upon his conversion. Though Aga was possibly a captive before he converted, the fact that he never did escape from captivity, as Pellow and Pitts ultimately did, indicated he had renounced his past. Two other men, Francis Verney and John Ward, were famous pirates the traveler William Lithgow met with during his own travels. What is peculiar in the way Harborne and Lithgow interacted with these renegades was that they did not damn them as vile apostates.

Once a nobleman, the "(sometimes) great English Gallant" Francis Verney (1584-1615) lay dying in an Italian hospital when William Lithgow met with him for a second time.⁸⁹ Verney had a turbulent life. Orphaned and unhappily married, the reckless Verney ran up considerable debts, and when a claim to his father's inheritance was denied, he sold what he had and hastened toward the Barbary Coast.⁹⁰ Not much is known of his exploits, but Lithgow reported that after "abandoning his Countrey, and turning Turk in Tunneis," Verney was ultimately "taken at Sea by the Sicilian gallies" and put to work as a slave. An English Jesuit released Verney from captivity in exchange for his conversion to Catholicism (an opportunistic decision he seized upon). Not too soon after, he fell ill. Verney was in the Ottoman Empire only seven short years before he died on September 6, 1615, under the care of Italian nurses and the merry traveler. Lithgow

⁸⁸ Maclean, *Looking East*, 104.

⁸⁹ Lithgow stated he was first introduced to the pirate in Palermo six weeks prior; see *The Total Discourse*, 348.

⁹⁰ Sir Harry Verney, *The Verneys of Claydon: A Seventeenth-Century English Family* (London: Robert Maxwell, 1968), 7-8.

"charitably interred" Verney's body "in the best manner," and throughout the simple burial he provided, lamented how "Fortune" could bring a man of such honorable birth so low.⁹¹

Claydon House, the Verney family estate, has in its collection a luxurious ensemble of a purple robe and hat with red slippers; while the hat has since been dated to the Victorian era, the robe goes back to the early seventeenth century, and is said to have been owned by Sir Francis Verney. Of purple Italian silk velvet, the robe is lined with fur from the shoulder down to the toes. The hat is of the same color, and it has gold embroidered stripes that run latitudinally. The shoes are of red silk.⁹² Whether or not these are the clothes Verney actually owned, they are representative of the sort of sumptuous materials a pirate of his wealth and stature would have been able to purchase, the sort of "curious" apparel Ward would have acquired and as sumptuous as a Turkish man of high status would have been able to wear.⁹³ The clothing was indicative of the new life of fortune Verney crafted for himself.

Verney's story speaks to the idea that the Ottoman Empire was a place where people could renounce their past and fashion for themselves a life of daring adventure. For his part, Lithgow envisioned himself as an actor on an international stage, but he went abroad to learn and experience, not to "become East." Yet traders and travelers did spend years abroad immersing themselves in the Ottoman Empire's rich culture. Englishmen at home would have had a hard time drawing the line between those who were living in the East and those embracing both its culture and religion. Traders and travelers abroad were rather isolated in a cosmopolitan world, with infrequent letters from home, and their interactions with renegades remain relative

⁹¹ Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse*, 348-9.

⁹² A full image of the robe can be found in Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2012), 235.

⁹³ Recall that when Covell witnessed Prince Mustapha's circumcision, he noted that all wore fur – a display of their wealth and status – though it was a hot day.

mysteries. It is perhaps because of this mystery that Lithgow "charitably" buried Verney in spite of his disgust. What Verney chose to do was his own decision, and who was Lithgow to judge anyway, especially when he of all people knew that men had to rethink the ways in which they presented and conducted themselves while abroad? He may have looked unfavorably upon some of Verney's life choices, but that did not prevent him from taking care of a fellow Englishman in time of need, even if that Englishman had renounced both his faith and country. Lithgow's compassionate concern for Verney transcended national and religious bounds and appears to have been attempt to bring the renegade home. The renegade was not some fear-inducing menace but a troubled person in need of company and aid.

The image of the renegade as a misunderstood person differs from the way in which renegades such as John Ward (1553-1623?) were portrayed onstage. Ward hosted Lithgow at his palace in Tunis.⁹⁴ But unlike the ruthless character seen onstage, the renegade with whom Lithgow spent five weeks was a most gracious host, it is to "Generous Waird, and his froward Runagates" Lithgow saluted when he sailed away.⁹⁵ Lithgow's descriptions of Ward strikingly differ from those found in the ballads and pamphlets; in Lithgow's account, Ward is a hospitable and welcoming friend and not a tyrannical menace. Lithgow was aware of Ward's escapades, yet he chose to stay with him nonetheless.

A similar sort of sensitivity to a renegade is revealed in the interaction between William Harborne and Assan Aga. Harborne, the man who negotiated the trade agreements between the Ottoman Empire and Elizabeth's England, penned a letter on June 28, 1586 to one Assan Aga, a

⁹⁴ One popular ballad goes so far to describe Ward's palace as such: "At Tunis in Barbary / Now he buildeth stately / A gallant palace and a royal place, / Decked with delights most trim, / Fitter for a prince than him, / the which at last will prove to his disgrace." See "Captain Ward" in *Naval Songs and Balads*, 25-7.

⁹⁵ Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse*, 333-5.

"Eunuch & Treasurer to Hassan Bassa," the Pasha of Algiers. According to the title Richard Hakluyt used to label the letter, Samson Rowlie was the son of "Fran. Rowlie of Bristow" and "taken" while on the *Swallow*, a merchant ship. However, the idea that Aga was "taken" is an editorial imposition, for it is unknown if Aga ran ashore as Master Blonket's son did or if he, like Pellow, served in the army and then worked his way up the ranks. What is known, however, is that Aga held a position of power, and as MacLean suggests, such a rank – with all of its political, social, and financial glory, would have been an impossibility at home for the young Bristol merchant.

But who is to say that Aga did not embrace Islam itself? Harborne confirmed what the traveler's diary has already visually expressed: Aga was a eunuch. But both accounts could have been sensationalized considering the fact that (circumcised) converts were often depicted as eunuchs. A fascinating feature of Harborne's letter to Aga is his submissiveness. In his request to release Englishmen held in Algerian captivity, Harborne appealed to Aga's "true christian mind & English heart," pleading for his "faithful obedience like a true subject to her Majestie" and his love for his "countrey & countreyemen."⁹⁶ Fully aware of the fact that Rowlie had renounced both his country and faith, taken a new name, and converted, Harborne warily addressed the renegade. Aga was the renegade the English feared: the man who joined, in Schwoebel's terms, the "sworn enemies of all Christians."⁹⁷ In the same way that he had to apparel himself in the "Turkish fashion," Harborne had no choice but to be courteous and humble in his letter to Aga. He chose to address Aga as both a renegade and a Englishman, as though his identity was indeterminate,

⁹⁶ Harborne, "To Assan Aga, Eunuch & Treasurer to Hassan Bassa king of Alger...", in Richard Hakluyt *The Principal Navigations*.

⁹⁷ Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, 187.

ambiguous, and perhaps malleable. Similar to Lithgow, Harborne may have been subtly trying to remind the traitor of his original self and bring him home to England.

The renegade was a "dramatic type," but he was a historical figure, too. The renegades Englishmen encountered were either anonymous men working on corsair ships or men whose names were known throughout the region, political figures such as Aga and pirates such as Ward and Verney. Yet for as much as popular accounts dismissed these renegades as vile apostates and criminals, they were among the many new types of people Englishmen met with on their journeys throughout the Ottoman Empire. And contrary to the popular seventeenth-century imagination, these renegades were often quite helpful. Toward the end of his travel narrative, Blount directly told the reader:

as hee who in any *Christian* warre upon the *Turke*, should expect the least good wish from the *Christians* in those parts, would finde himselfe utterly deceived: I often was helpt by *Turkes*, and *Renegadoes*, against the malice of their *Christians*.⁹⁸

Blount conversed with them, and though he referred to them as "Atheists," he did all in his power to understand their motives for turning Turk: Blount never does tell us why the renegades he met turned.⁹⁹ Their motives and desires are seemingly lost to history, to a time when the Eastern Mediterranean had opened its doors to new adventures and pursuits.

So then what do the conflicted portraits of the renegade have to do with the fears of Turkish clothes and English identity? Beyond the Turkish dress lay the possibility of national and religious conversion, but if an experienced traveler such as Fynes Moryson did not know all of the sartorial regulations of the Islamic world, then it would be impractical to expect that of the

⁹⁸ Blount, *A Voyage*, 109. Islamic converts were often misrepresented as atheists. The term "atheist," according to Daniel Vitkus, was someone "who did not conform to orthodox religious practice," or who was guilty of "treasonous, criminal behavior." Treason, in this era, could often mean political treason but also religious heresy, for religious and national identities in England at this time were intertwined. See Vitkus, introduction to *Three Turk Plays*, 5.

⁹⁹ Blount, *A Voyage*, 112.

larger English public, the very public in need of persuasion that travel in the Islamic East did not re-orient the traveler's identity and that renegades and Turks were not always the devils and menaces of lore. The fear of Turkish dress came from a fear of another culture. Bawdy entertainment such as Daborne's play only propagated such misconceptions and anxieties and fed into the fear of the turban and the robes as symbols for Christendom's nemesis. If the English traders and travelers learned anything, it was that there were other cultures and religions in existence, and these were cultures to be respected, even joined. At times, travel narratives and popular literature understated the larger geopolitical and religious threat of the Ottoman Empire. Ward, Verney, and Aga found the region to be one of intrigue and adventure, and they sought out these new opportunities, doing all they needed to do to fully fashion a new life for themselves: "become East."

Conclusion

Changing Landscapes

Following the pamphlets of 1609, there were no further publications written about the infamous John Ward, and Robert Daborne's play was only published once. Little is known of the play's performance history, and Daniel Vitkus suggests that Daborne's preface, in which the playwright referred to the play as an "*oppressed and much martird Tragedy*," is an indication that the play itself was not well-received before its publication, either for its lewd content (the circumcision) or because the actual idea of conversion was offensive.¹⁰⁰ It does not seem fitting that this play should have been so ill-received when it was a part of a larger print culture dedicated to the publication of English experiences in the Ottoman world. Perhaps, as Vitkus suggests, it was the visual representation of a renegade that was so provoking, more so than the idea of a renegade described in a printed text. Undoubtedly, there were people who found the dramatization of Ward's story compelling, thus meriting its formal publication following the initial performance. The play had a broader audience. *A Christian Turn'd Turk* was printed during the era which bore witness to an increased number of travel and captivity narratives and when Englishmen at home had little knowledge of Islamic culture outside of these published texts. The play, along with the ballads and printed pamphlets, are products of a specific period, when the Ottoman Empire was still a distant place in the public imagination.

MacLean and Matar suggest that the image of the turban as a material indication of internal identity began to subside by the middle to late seventeenth century, due in part, to coffee

¹⁰⁰ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, preface; See Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, 232 note 2.

culture.¹⁰¹ Levant Company and East India Company merchants were slow at first to realize the "economic potential" of the bitter commodity, but by 1650, England's first coffeehouse was established. According to Brian Cowan who has extensively researched the origins of British coffee culture, early coffeehouse owners "did not try to hide their oriental origins" but downplayed negative images of the "heathen Turk" by emphasizing the innocent pleasure of the "coffeehouse experience." Owners of coffeehouses wore turbans as a way to attract customers, and signs with images of turbans often identified coffeehouses on the streets.¹⁰² The turban's exoticism – its intrigue – began to outweigh its religious and national significance, as the English at home grew more accustomed to it. Further, MacLean and Matar argue that following the 1683 Battle of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire was no longer perceived as the mighty power it once was; the defeat "irreversibly transformed British attitudes towards Islam and the turban."¹⁰³ The exoticism of the Islamic East – the same place of intrigue that drew in travelers such as Blount and renegades such as Verney – slowly captured the imaginations of those at home. The turban was no longer associated with the "sworn enemies of all Christendom" but the purveyors of a delicious and desirous commodity and a culture with a fashion deserving of imitation.

While this may have been true at home in the British Isles, captivity narratives from the early eighteenth century – such as Pellow's and Pitts's – in addition to travel narratives such as *Sieur Mouëtte's* (translated from French and published in London in 1710) reiterated the idea of the cruel and barbaric Turk who forced European Christians to "turn," and undergo a major operation and change their manner of dress. These narratives are seemingly at odds with the

¹⁰¹ Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 221-2.

¹⁰² Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 55, 90, 115.

¹⁰³ MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 221-2.

burgeoning coffee culture within the British Isles. This is not to say that the English experience within the Ottoman Empire did not change at all between the date of William Harborne's establishment of the Anglo-Turkish trade and the early eighteenth century. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters from Turkey indicate that the experience Englishmen had in the Ottoman Empire had evolved into one not quite so precarious and daunting, at least for the well-off upper class.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the Montagu of name who introduced Britain to the practice of inoculation, spent several years abroad with her husband, Edward, who was the Ambassador to the Grand Signior in Constantinople. Her letters from Turkey, written between 1717 and 1718, shed light on a woman of social standing who took pleasure in dressing in the Turkish way and had no qualms about immersing herself in the culture.¹⁰⁴ Unlike men such as Harborne and even Dr. John Covel (who was in the region not even forty years prior to Montagu's arrival), Montagu felt free to roam about the region in whatever she chose. When she did not want to be identified as the Ambassador's wife, she always went "incognita" in her Turkish chaise, preferably in her caftan and veil, for they were "admirably becoming" and "disguise sufficient." Indeed, her normal "travelling habit, which is a riding dress" was something "very extraordinary to them [the Turks]," she wrote. She even had the great fortune of enjoying the Turkish baths; ironically enough, when she arrived, the women looked at her with curious eyes, for she appeared "locked up in that machine [her corset]" – in this instance, European dress and not Turkish dress was equally alarming and peculiar.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ See Fig. 8 in the appendix.

¹⁰⁵ *The Travel Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. A.W. Lawrence (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), 126-241.

As a woman of status, Montagu's diary is evidence of a changing Mediterranean experience. Indeed, it cannot be forgotten that Montagu's diary was written at the same time the young Pellow was forced to convert. For those English of high ranks, the Mediterranean experience was changing; for others, however, it was not. And at home in the British Isles, it is clear that though coffee culture had in some way eased some of the earlier fears concerning the correlation between dress and identity, but these changing perceptions stood in obvious contrast to what was actually still happening in the Mediterranean. The image of a menacing Turk – with his troop of renegades – was still something with which late seventeenth and early eighteenth century merchants and travelers had to contend.

Alison Games asserts that the British Empire was built on the Mediterranean experience. One need only look to the many traders, travelers, captives, and renegades who were positioned within this foreign realm to understand just how vulnerable the English nation was prior to its worldwide expansion. Between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries the English were often unsure of their identities and were skeptical of those who ventured into new lands as though their experiences might radically reshape their identity. In the case of Ottoman ventures, these fears were especially pronounced given the fact that many had trouble distinguishing between men "performing East" and those "becoming East." And a times, their narratives and similar literature, quietly catered to public misgivings, insisting that the Islamic world had not transformed their English identities.

Could the Ottoman Empire have changed an Englishman's identity? Yes. Could customary dress have changed an Englishman's identity? No, though it was sometimes indicative of an internal re-alignment, it most often represented an Englishman's desire to blend in to an unfamiliar environment as best he could for certain personal gain or his wish to achieve some

sort of business deal. Turkish dress could be religiously significant but only insofar as the wearer considered it to be of significance, for the robes and turbans Henry Blount and William Lithgow wore throughout the Levant were significant, albeit not in a religious sense. The clothes indicated to others within the region that the travelers were acting according to custom. For someone such as Aga, a white turban was a visual representation of his newly adopted religion and culture. The dress outwardly redefined who he was. It was an assertion of identity. Unless Englishmen at home happened to read the captivity and travel narratives dispersed throughout the seventeenth century, differentiation between all of these experiences would not have been possible. In the "seventeenth-century imagination" the turban – and its accompanying dress – was symbolic of a cultural and religious threat, and it was not until the early eighteenth century, at the very earliest, that such fears truly began to subside.

The vulnerability, pride, and fear of the early voyagers reveal what it must have been like to be culturally and religiously insignificant on a much larger international stage. Travel and captivity narratives found a home in a larger public, indicating that the Ottoman Empire affected a larger English overseas narrative. The Empire was a region in which English individuals could fashion their lives in ways "unimaginable" at home, at least until their return to the British Isles. Until then, the turbans and robes they wore while overseas were tools that helped shape their experiences as they either submerged their identities, acted a part, or became someone they had not initially been.

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