

CATHOLIC PROPHYLACTICS AND ISLAM'S SEXUAL THREAT:

Preventing and Undoing Sexual Defilement in *The Renegado*

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ABSTRACT

Despite the continuing reverberations of the Protestant Reformation, Philip Massinger's The Renegado (1624) endorses surprisingly Catholic practices as necessary measures for resisting and reversing Islamic conversion. I seek to explain the play's Catholic content by focusing on how the emerging racialization of Islam may have pressured a renegotiation of Protestant-Catholic disagreements over effective means of Christian resistance and redemption. In considering the question of whether conversion to Islam is reversible for Christian men and women, I identify a tension in the play between spiritual redemption and embodied resistance that divides along the lines of gender. Whereas the Christian protagonist's sexual transgression with a Muslim woman is redeemable through spiritual repentance, the Christian heroine's chastity is vigilantly protected with the aid of a holy relic, revealing her greater vulnerability to racial reinscription. I argue that the play's selective supplementation of Christian faith with Catholic materials and rituals speaks not only to the political benefits of merging Catholic and Protestant interests against the Muslim enemy, but more specifically to the ways in which the embodied and sexualized threat of Islamic conversion necessitated physical or tangible forms of resistance.



Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) stages a confrontation between Christians and Muslims in the cross-cultural North African port city of Tunis. The plot revolves around two potential interfaith unions and the recuperation of a renegade pirate who has previously denounced Christianity and now seeks repentance. Although the play attempts to establish a clear opposition between "Christian" and "Turk," its dramatic action arises from

the ultimately porous boundary that divides them—a boundary mediated by sexual seduction and religious conversion. Two central Christian characters, a brother and sister, both risk sexual defilement and subsequent conversion as the result of potential unions with Muslim characters. The renegade pirate similarly calls attention to the permeable boundary between “Christian” and “Turk” through his denunciation of the Christian faith and his adoption of a life of piracy. While conversion to Islam is mediated across a slippery threshold, both physical and spiritual, it implies a transgression from which there seems to be no return. And yet, despite the tragic repercussions linked with Islamic conversion—its association with permanent and irreversible consequences—*The Renegado* produces a comic ending for each of its Christian protagonists. These comic resolutions, however, turn out to be contingent upon the efficacy of a surprising model of Christian faith and resistance, and reveal a logic of redemption that differs for men and women.

Although *The Renegado* overtly posits the triumph of Christian spirituality over Islamic carnality, it anchors Christian resistance in Catholic objects, ceremonies, and bodily practices, and repeatedly marks spiritual redemption in outward, visible, and material ways. For example, a “relic” purported to have magical qualities successfully protects the Christian heroine’s virginity from her Turkish captor’s carnal designs (1.1.147).¹ Similarly, the renegade pirate assures his readmission to the church by making his confession to a Jesuit priest—a most unlikely hero on the English Renaissance stage—who is dressed “in a cope, like a bishop” (4.1.72).² Enacting the ritual stages of confession and penance, the renegade reverses his former act of apostasy, which was carried out through his disruption of a Catholic mass and desecration of the Eucharistic host. And the play extends Christian conversion to the Muslim princess by requiring her participation in an elaborate baptism ceremony that is performed by a layman, her husband-to-be.

These details position the play explicitly against the practices and beliefs of English Protestantism, and yet the play was given official license for public performance and appears to have been popular and uncontroversial in its time. I want to suggest that *The Renegado*’s depiction of Christian triumph over Muslim conversion involves a complex negotiation of spiritual and material, inward and outward, and Protestant and Catholic models of faith. In turn, these tensions between spirituality and materiality reveal the ways in which Islam’s threat to early modern Christians was perceived to be not just “religious” in nature, but bodily as well. More specifically, the play’s recourse to material, Catholic practices to resist or undo Islamic conversion reveals how Islam was perceived to be a sexual threat, how it was understood

to involve a bodily conversion, and how this conversion carried potential racial consequences. It is partly because of Islam's perceived sexual and bodily threat to Christians, I argue, that the stage resurrected older, Catholic models of Christian resistance, which, unlike the more spiritualized and disembodied notions of Protestant faith, were tangible and embodied.

As part of the recent wave of interest in early modern encounters with Ottoman "Turks" and the religion of Islam, *The Renegado* has attracted a burst of critical attention. Following the publication of Daniel Vitkus's modern edition (2000), critics including Bindu Malieckal, Barbara Fuchs, Jonathan Gil Harris, Jonathan Burton, Valerie Forman, and Vitkus himself have explored the play's dramatization of contemporary anxieties about Mediterranean commerce and English contact with the Ottoman Empire.³ Earlier critical interest in the play was sparse and tended to address the Catholic elements of the play, generally understood to be a function of Massinger's (possible) crypto-Catholicism or, at least, his religious tolerance.⁴ Although this former interest in the play's Catholic leanings may seem worlds apart from the present critical interest in "Turk" plays, my intention here is to show how the subjects of these two disparate critical approaches are in fact directly interrelated.

Given the April 1624 licensing of *The Renegado* in the wake of a fierce resurgence of anti-Catholic polemic prompted by royal negotiations for a Spanish match the previous year, and just four months prior to Thomas Middleton's blatantly anti-Catholic *A Game at Chess*, it is certainly remarkable that *The Renegado* should not only escape censure but should enjoy considerable popularity and success. It is just this degree of unlikelihood that I want to capture and emphasize, however. *The Renegado* continued to be performed throughout the 1620s until its publication in 1630, and its debut at the Cockpit associated it with one of the most prestigious and lucrative playhouses in London. Such popular success suggests a softening of Protestant attitudes toward Catholicism that has not typically been associated with the early-to-mid 1620s. Critics dating back to William Gifford in 1805 have attempted to explain the play's Catholic elements by speculating that Massinger was himself a crypto-Catholic or by attributing them to Spanish sources (Gifford 1: xlv).⁵ Rather, I suggest that what appear to us as the play's clear Catholic affinities point to a broader, popular sensibility that still relied on Catholic models for conceiving of resistance to religious persecution.⁶ Moreover, *The Renegado* reveals ways in which popular English attitudes toward Catholic and Protestant religious practices were influenced by the seemingly unrelated activity of commercial intercourse with the Ottoman Empire. By adopting Catholic models to

confront the threat of Islamic conversion, Massinger resignifies these models as acceptable forms of Christian resistance in a culture transformed not only by the Reformation but by increased commercial contact with Muslims.

The real and imagined fear of “turning Turk” may not only have pressured a return to Catholic models, but also helped to lay the cultural groundwork for the Church of England’s gradual shift away from Calvinism in favor of the more sensuous, ceremonial forms of worship associated with William Laud and Arminianism. In carrying out the conversion of the Muslim princess and the redemption of the renegade pirate, *The Renegado* exaggerates the ceremonial elements involved in the sacraments of baptism and reconciliation. As Michael Neill has recently argued, these doctrinal shifts associated with the Arminian ascendancy lent themselves to the “conventional ‘turn and counterturn’ of tragicomic design” (174).⁷ In this way, he links *The Renegado*’s doctrinal stance to the rise of the tragicomic form. By contrast, Benedict Robinson has sought to explain the play’s Arminian sympathies by privileging its publication date of 1630 over its earlier performance date of 1624 and placing it in the context of Laudian politics and Caroline drama.⁸ I share Neill’s sense that the redemptive arc of the play relies on a doctrinal logic that seems sympathetic to both Catholicism and Arminianism, and I am in accord with Robinson’s impulse to consider the play’s Christian-Muslim opposition in relation to domestic religious factions. In contrast to these critics, however, I link the play’s Catholic (and early Arminian) tendencies in 1624 to the embodied and sexualized threat of “turning Turk.” Because this threat of conversion exceeded the realm of spiritual faith, it demanded physical and material countermeasures in order to believably enact its resistance or reversal. In crucial ways, both the embodied emphasis of Islam and its tangible Christian countermeasures are encouraged by the visual and theatrical orientation of the public stage.

Importantly, in mounting a Christian defense against “turning Turk,” *The Renegado* does not merely replace Protestantism’s emphasis on spiritual inwardness with that of Catholic materiality, but rather presents an active tension between the two that is mediated through gender. More specifically, while spiritual fortitude might be enough to ward off the conversion of the Christian hero of the play, the Christian heroine relies for her protection on the outward, material aid of a relic, which in turn safeguards her bodily chastity from the sexual persecutions of a lustful Turk. And while the sexual seduction of the Christian hero by a Turkish woman is reversible, the same is not true for the Christian heroine. Her spiritual status, unlike the Christian hero’s, is indivisible from that of her body, and the threatened destruction of her chastity by the Turkish viceroy suggests a permanent and complete

undoing of her Christian identity. Thus, the play's insistence upon the need for outward objects and bodily practices to supplement inner faith is partly dependent upon the reinforcement of certain gender stereotypes. What is more, these gendered distinctions are bound up with anxieties about racial contamination. Fair skin underscores the Christian heroine's vulnerability to Islamic conversion, as well as the Muslim heroine's eligibility for Christianity. As Mary Janell Metzger observed of the distinctions between Jessica and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, the intersecting logics of gender, religious difference, and whiteness help dictate the terms of conversion.⁹ Furthermore, the stage's propensity to represent the threat of Islam as a threat of conversion facilitated through sexual intercourse suggests its translation of the religious, commercial, and imperial threat of the Ottoman Empire into a personal, bodily threat that is distinctly racialized.¹⁰ Within this framework, the Christian heroine's pronounced vulnerability to irrevocable sexual contamination demonstrates a collusion of racial and patriarchal logic in which the female body is susceptible to racial reinscription in ways that the male body is not.

The Renegado's hypothesis that a male Christian might be able to reverse the contaminating effects of sexual intercourse with a Muslim woman through spiritual fortitude marks a sharp departure from previous dramas in which any contact with a Turk was potentially a prelude to permanent conversion. *The Renegado* is one of numerous plays performed in London between 1580 and 1630 that stage cross-cultural encounters between Christians and Muslims set in the unstable trading territories of the southeastern Mediterranean. As Jean Howard has noted, these adventure dramas typically feature swashbuckling Christian heroes who, through contact with foreign cultures and people, undergo an "actual or threatened transformation . . . into something alien" (349). Most notably, Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turke* (c. 1610) provides an important precedent for Massinger's play: the sexual seduction of a Christian hero by a Muslim woman leads to immediate Islamic conversion and irrevocable damnation.¹¹ Daborne's particular yoking of conversion and sexual seduction implied a transformation that was generated through the body and permanent. Further, in interpreting the hero's sexual transgression and subsequent conversion as signs of his unalterable path to damnation, the play follows a tragic arc that is consistent with Calvinist predestination.¹² It is this precedent that *The Renegado* clearly sets out to revise. As Vitkus points out, *The Renegado* seems to "consciously" rewrite the plot of *A Christian Turned Turke*, transforming a tragic ending into a comic one (*Three Turk Plays* 41–42).¹³ More specifically, whereas *A Christian Turned Turke* cannot imagine a way to resolve Ward's sexual defilement other

than through permanent conversion and damnation, *The Renegado* disrupts the immediate equation by positing that the sins of the body do not necessarily have to damn the soul. Thus, if in Daborne's play the sexual union between Christian protagonist and Muslim woman leads inevitably to the Christian man's religious conversion, suicide, and damnation, in *The Renegado* the Christian-Muslim union can lead to repentance, baptism, and marriage. The earlier play's representation of its Christian hero's irreversible conversion helps us to appreciate the stakes of the intervention that *The Renegado* seeks to make and why it must rely on visual, material indexes of faith in order to mark Christian redemption.

COMMERCE, SEX, AND FUNGABILITY

It is fitting that the Christian hero's seduction by the Muslim princess begins in the Tunisian marketplace, where the purchase and sale of commodities constitutes an analogy for religious and bodily conversion. The play's alignment of commodity exchange and religious conversion emphasizes both the fungibility of human bodies and souls and their potential resistance to fungible or anonymous exchange. As Nabil Matar and others have shown, the historical conditions of Mediterranean trade provided an important context for early seventeenth-century dramas of cross-cultural contact and conversion.¹⁴ The Ottoman empire's control over the majority of southeastern Mediterranean ports and trade routes meant that the English were completely at its mercy for obtaining the luxury goods that they increasingly depended upon. While piracy and the captivity of English seamen had also been problems during Queen Elizabeth's reign, they became especially pressing concerns under King James.¹⁵ English seamen operating in the Mediterranean were constantly vulnerable to piracy, enslavement, and religious conversion, especially along the Barbary Coast, where privateers of many different nationalities competed for commodities—both non-human and human. Like Daborne's play before it, *The Renegado* translates this real-life threat of captivity and conversion into a drama of sexual seduction.

Disguised as a merchant, Vitelli, a Venetian gentleman, has set up shop in the Tunisian marketplace in order to attempt to rescue his sister, Paulina, who has been sold into Turkish captivity by the "renegade" pirate, Grimaldi. While Paulina is imprisoned in the Ottoman palace and struggles daily to protect her virtue from the Turkish viceroy, Vitelli is diverted by his own seduction by the Turkish princess Donusa. When, in the third scene of the play, Donusa pays a visit to Vitelli's shop in the market, she peruses his wares as he in turn examines her. Though she poses as a buyer and he as a

seller, it is not at all clear what or who is being bought or sold. When Donusa asks to be shown “the chiefest of [Vitelli’s] wares” (1.3.105), Vitelli hands her a looking glass “steeled so exactly, neither taking from / Nor flattering the object it returns / To the beholder, that Narcissus might / . . . view his fair feature in it” (1.3.109–13). In this way, Vitelli succeeds in “steeling” Donusa’s reflection, converting her image into a saleable commodity in his possession. One might note that the opening scene has previously established Vitelli’s large stock of portraits of European princesses, which were actually modeled by “bawds and common courtesans in Venice” (1.1.13). The image of Donusa’s face in Vitelli’s mirror thus aligns her with these “bawds” and “courtesans” and their commodified sexuality. But Donusa destabilizes Vitelli’s implied mastery over his wares and her sexuality when she suddenly “unveils herself” and seizes him with “wonder” (1.3.140–41). Donusa then purposely breaks some of his glass wares; no longer a captive image in his mirror, she takes control of the transaction by bidding him to “bring his bill / Tomorrow to the palace and enquire / For one ‘Donusa’. . . / Say there he shall receive / Full satisfaction” (1.3.156–60). Donusa thus succeeds in turning the tables on Vitelli, for in transposing the payment of the debt to her turf, she shifts the power dynamic between buyer and seller, and makes the Christian gentleman’s chastity, rather than her own, the one at risk.

The relocation from the marketplace to Donusa’s chambers removes the transaction from the site of commercial exchange to a private space, making clear that what is at stake is Vitelli’s bodily virtue and not his damaged “wares” (1.3.105). When she returns to the palace, Donusa is teased for her interest in Vitelli by her castrated serving man, Carazie, and her female servant, Manto. The eunuch’s astonishment at Donusa’s susceptibility to such a meager “haberdasher of small wares” (2.3.4) and Manto’s mocking reminder that Carazie himself “hast none” (2.3.5) drive home the message of what Vitelli stands to lose in the transaction. That Carazie, the only English character in the play, is a Muslim convert and a castrated servant in the Ottoman palace makes anxious humor of the common conflation of conversion with circumcision and castration.¹⁶ When Vitelli arrives at the heavily protected palace, he slowly penetrates its outer layers to reach Donusa’s inner private chamber. Donusa offers him compensation for the “poor petty trifles” (2.4.81) she has “injured” (2.4.80) in the form of “bags stuffed full of our imperial coin” (2.4.83), “gems for which the slavish Indian dives” (2.4.85), and finally sexual intercourse, which she describes as “the tender of / Myself” (2.4.101–02). Both the overpayment of her debt and the uneasy slippage between objects of exchange and her selfhood (or sexuality) reflect a crisis of value that lies at the heart of the play. While, on one hand,

the play asserts that human souls and bodies are as fungible as commodities, it simultaneously resists this analogy through its emphasis on the deep and permanent effects of bodily transgressions and their potential to outweigh the power of the spirit.

Although Donusa's trading of "the tender of [her]self" in exchange for "poor petty trifles" implies that she is the loser in the bargain, Vitelli's acceptance of the offer seems to threaten a loss that is even greater. His capitulation to Donusa signals the overpowering of his Christian soul by his bodily desires, a defeat that in turn presumes potential spiritual consequences. Vitelli resists Donusa's offers of money and gems, but finds himself powerless against her sexual charms:

How I shake
 In my constant resolution! And my flesh,
 Rebellious to my better part, now tells me
 (As if it were a strong defense of frailty)
 A hermit in a desert trenched with prayers
 Could not resist this battery. (2.4.108–13)

Vitelli's sense of his "flesh" outmatching the "constant resolution" of his "better part" illustrates the serious infraction of having with sex with a Muslim woman and how it was imagined to conflate a bodily transgression with a spiritual one. Vitelli's sexual union with Donusa results in a superficial transformation of his appearance, including a new set of fine clothing, but it also suggests the potential for deeper and more permanent effects. Led by Donusa to the innermost chamber of the palace, "some private room the sunbeams never enter" (2.4.130), Vitelli agrees to relinquish his virginity, exclaiming, "Though the Devil / Stood by and roared, I follow!" (2.4.134–35). His equation of a Muslim woman with "the Devil" suggests a union that will lead him down the path to conversion and thus eternal damnation, setting him up for a fate matching that of the protagonist from Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turke*.

In drawing a causal link between sexual intercourse between a Christian and a Turk and conversion to Islam, plays such as *The Renegado* and *A Christian Turned Turke* suggest an essential, embodied difference between "Christian" and "Turk" that did not apply in the same way to Catholics and Protestants. While Protestant polemic linked Catholicism to the biblical Whore of Babylon in order to denigrate the practice of idolatry, this sexual allusion was primarily understood as allegorical in nature.¹⁷ By contrast, Muslims were associated with a literal threat of sexual and bodily

contamination. John Stradling marks this distinction between Catholics and Muslims in his 1623 poem *Beati Pacifici*. Anticipating an objection to his advocacy of a Protestant-Catholic alliance against the Turk, he imagines that someone will hold up the example of Phineas, who fervently slaughtered an Israelite man and Moabite woman as they engaged in sexual intercourse. Rejecting the possible analogy between Catholic and Moabite, Stradling offered the simple response, “Here be no Moabites”(18). In other words, he implies that whereas Catholics were not comparable to the essential difference of the Moabite woman, the Turks were.

JESUITICAL INTERCESSION

Indeed, Vitelli’s de-virgination by Donusa seems at first to consign him to the same damning fate as Daborne’s hero. Wearing a new set of “fine clothes” offered by Donusa, he is met on the street by Francisco, a Jesuit priest who seems to be stationed in Tunis to provide counsel to the Christians, and by Vitelli’s servant, Gazet.¹⁸ Francisco alludes to Vitelli’s new clothes by remarking that he is “strangely metamorphosed” (2.6.20), and adds, “You have made, sir, / A prosperous voyage. Heaven grant it be honest: / I shall rejoice it then, too” (2.6.20–22). Vitelli makes overtures toward sharing his gold and attempts to justify his new wealth by suggesting that it can be used to redeem Christian captives from Turkish galleys. But Francisco asserts that the sinful source of Vitelli’s wealth invalidates the good it can do and suggests that it may have implications for his soul that exceed the outer transformation of his appearance. He exclaims, “They steer not the right course, nor traffic well, / That seek a passage to reach heaven through hell” (2.6.45–46). Thus, he implies that in accepting Donusa’s gifts, Vitelli has chosen a sensuous course that cannot lead to salvation.

Importantly, however, *The Renegado* allows for Vitelli to redeem himself and stave off damnation through Francisco’s intercession. That Massinger not only portrays this Jesuit priest in a positive light but credits him with the salvation of the Christian characters, their escape from Tunis, and the happy outcome of the play is remarkable given the usual vilification of Jesuits in Protestant England. In fact, an outpouring of anti-Jesuit tracts emerged the year after *The Renegado*’s initial performance, associating Jesuit priests with conniving methods of infiltration and conversion, assassination plans, and covert Catholic rebellions.¹⁹ By contrast, *The Renegado* marks Francisco as a hero for advocating equivocation as a means for subverting the Turks (5.2.35–37), and for masterminding a covert plan at the end of the play to facilitate the escape of the Christian characters. The play’s happy

conclusion depends upon the priest's crafty intercession. In other words, whereas Jesuitical practices were never condoned by the English when used against Protestants, they are condoned in the play for use against Muslims. In addition, the play relies on the Jesuit to counsel and redeem its errant Christian characters, and to lend authority and validation to their inward contrition. After exiting the stage to converse privately with Francisco, Vitelli returns convinced of the error of his ways and resolute in his conviction to redeem himself through future acts.

Notably, Vitelli's sexual transgression has not, as in the case of Daborne's protagonist, occasioned a circumcision. Despite Gazet and Carazie's jokes to this effect, Vitelli emerges from the palace with his foreskin and his testicles intact, and perhaps this helps to account for why his redemption is more easily posited than Ward's. Although the threat of circumcision, and by extension castration, hovers around the edges of this play, its disconnection from the act of sexual intercourse enables Vitelli to emerge from sex unscathed in a way that his sister Paulina might not. Certainly, what Burton characterizes as the play's comedic disavowal of circumcision and castration mask genuine anxieties about these interrelated threats. Their significance in relation to the play's mercantile context has attracted numerous critics. As Fuchs, Harris, and most recently, Forman have observed, *The Renegado's* portrayal of Carazie and the threat of castration express fears of English emasculation in the face of Mediterranean piracy, economic loss, and the disruption of trade.²⁰ In my own reading, the dramatized threats of circumcision and castration function not as allegories for economic anxieties, but as examples of how "turning Turk" assumed an embodied significance in the early modern imagination (though economic and bodily anxieties may also be interrelated). As an indelible mark upon the body, circumcision suggested a physical sign of the irreversibility of conversion as well as the convert's relegation to a racialized category that distinguished both Muslims and Jews from Christians. On the stage its humorous association with the more drastic cut of castration conflated the ritualized practice of circumcision with the castrated eunuchs associated with the sultan's seraglio. This conflation also projected the threat of circumcision into more extreme and drastic bodily consequences. In Daborne's play, circumcision is closely linked to the sexual transgression that prompts the protagonist's conversion in that it immediately follows his sexual interlude with a Turkish woman. Thus, the fact that Vitelli eludes circumcision is all the more significant. Precisely by avoiding this consequence, the play acknowledges the power of circumcision to render conversion permanent. By disrupting the association between sexual transgression and circumcision, *The Renegado* sustains the possibility

that Vitelli's sexual transgression has not yet converted his body and thus can be reversed through spiritual cleansing.

MALE SPIRITUAL REDEMPTION
AND FEMALE BODILY RESISTANCE

Vitelli's return to the palace affords a palimpsestic rewriting of his previous bodily transgression as a triumph of spiritual resistance. After seeking counsel from Francisco, Vitelli returns to announce his repudiation of Islam and to bear the trial of Donusa's repeated attempts to seduce and convert him. At first he refuses even to look at Donusa because he fears he will be unable to resist her embraces, even if "iron grates were interposed between [them]" (3.5.10). His worry that his "human frailty" (3.5.12) might "betray" (3.5.16) him "in scorn of reason, and what's more, religion" (3.5.15) and his allusion to the "overvalue" at which he has "purchased" (3.5.41) Donusa's body suggest a close correspondence between sexual transgression and religious consequences. In fact, Vitelli ultimately decides to look upon Donusa, convinced that "The trial, else, is nothing; nor the conquest . . . / Worthy to be remembered" (3.5.35, 37). Crying, "Up, my virtue! / And holy thoughts and resolutions arm me / Against this fierce temptation!" (3.5.37-39), he enlists his spiritual "resolutions" against Donusa's physical temptations. After avowing his firm allegiance to Christianity, he returns the "casket of jewels" (3.5.48) and "cloak and doublet" (3.5.50) she has given him. In shedding his rich "livery" (3.5.50), Vitelli draws attention to a distinction between the ease of shedding the external trappings of his corporeal sin and the difficulty of redeeming his inward "innocence" (3.5.45):

That I could with that ease
Redeem my forfeit innocence or cast up
The poison I received into my entrails
From the alluring cup of your enticements
As now I do deliver back the price *Returns the casket of jewels*
And salary of your lust! Or thus unclothe me
Of sin's gay trappings, the proud livery *Throws off his cloak and doublet*
Of wicked pleasure. (3.5.44-51)

Vitelli's manner of comparing the spiritual redemption he desires to "cast[ing] up / The poison I received into my entrails / From the alluring cup of your enticements" seems to reflect a struggle to characterize inner redemption in terms that differ from the outward casting off of Donusa's

“livery.” Both dialogue and stage directions capture a tension between outward bodily action (the sexual double entendre of Donusa’s “alluring cup”; Vitelli’s “throwing off his cloak and doublet” and “returning the casket of jewels”) and the attainment of inner purification. Although the play resorts to a bodily metaphor, it suggests in the end that Vitelli’s desire to “redeem [his] forfeit innocence” has little to do with the body at all, and everything to do with transcendent spiritual redemption.

But if inner contrition can save Vitelli, the same latitude is not extended to his sister, the Christian heroine. Instead, the play vigilantly protects her bodily integrity. Although Paulina is fiercely pursued by the viceroy of Tunis, who holds her captive in the same palace where Vitelli succumbs to Donusa, the play simply will not allow a sexual union to take place between the Christian heroine and a Turkish man. That Paulina’s spiritual constancy must be supplemented by her physical virginity reflects the limit of the play’s own faith in the efficacy of inner faith as a countermeasure to Islamic conversion. Despite Protestant England’s repudiation of vowed female celibacy, it is here construed as a necessary corollary to inner constancy. In this way, the chaste and miraculously inviolable Paulina evokes the virgin martyrs of medieval Catholic saints’ tales, which were largely suppressed by the English Reformation.

PAULINA’S HOLY RELIC

What is more, the play externalizes Paulina’s virginity by means of a holy relic that she wears upon her breast, thereby employing a Catholic idol—one of the chief targets of Protestant iconoclasm—as a viable and necessary protector of the Christian faith.²¹ Francisco reassures Vitelli that his sister’s chastity is protected:

I oft have told you
Of a relic that I gave her which has power,
If we may credit holy men’s traditions,
To keep the owner free from violence.
This on her breast she wears and does preserve
The virtue of it by her daily prayers. (1.1.146–51)

Francisco’s testimony to the relic’s protective “power” is reaffirmed by its effects on the Turkish viceroy. When confronted with it, Asambeg’s predatory lust turns to softness and restraint: “Ravish her, I dare not,” he says, “The magic that she wears about her neck, / I think, defends her”

(2.5.161–63). Part of the irony of Asambeg’s validation of the relic’s talismanic qualities lies in the fact that Islam condemned the practice of idolatry just as vehemently as Protestantism did. Although some English Protestants were beginning to re-embrace sacramental and sensuous worship as early as the 1620s, relics were still considered far beyond the pale. Furthermore, the play’s association of the relic with a virtuous Catholic virgin goes directly against Protestants’ traditional association of idolatry with Catholic whoredom. As Frances Dolan has argued, the tendency for Catholic women to worship false idols, or to assign talismanic powers to “trinkets and toys,” was understood to derive from their ignorance, vanity, and superstition (27). Thus, the play purposefully interferes with Protestant assumptions about women’s abuse of relics in order to associate a Catholic woman’s use of a relic with the integrity of her virtue.

On some level, the sacred relic that protects Paulina’s chastity functions as an outward manifestation of her virginal hymen. Accordingly, it reflects the play’s conflation of religious protection against conversion with a sexual chastity that is literally figured through the body. In addition to externalizing religious resistance, its promise of inviolability assuages anxieties about the inherent intangibility of the hymen, which despite its material tangibility is located on the inside of the body and is thus impossible to see from the outside. In fact, as medical discourses from the period point out, verification of the hymen’s status is complicated by the fact that intactness can only be verified through penetration.²² This problem of verification is directly alluded to in a conversation between the Muslim princess and her servant Manto, when Donusa worries that her loss of virginity to Vitelli might be visible from the outside. After learning that Manto is also no longer a virgin, Donusa asks her, “Could thy friends / Read in thy face, thy maidenhead gone, that thou / Hadst parted with it?” (3.1.12–14). Her use of the term “maidenhead” itself captures a certain slippage between abstraction and materiality, in that the term referred interchangeably in the early seventeenth century to “the state or condition of virginity” as well as the physical “hymen” (def. n¹ 1a). And indeed, Manto replies that she successfully “passed / For current many years after” without the truth being discovered (3.1.14–15).²³

The utility of the relic as physical evidence of Paulina’s virginity reflects the play’s urgency to ensure her intact hymen. Of course, the use of a relic as sexual prophylactic may not have offered complete reassurance. For one thing, English audiences in 1624 could not have viewed the portrayal of an efficacious relic without also remaining aware of Protestant reformers’ rejection of the notion that mere objects might possess sacred powers. As critics such as Harris (“Shakespeare’s Hair”) and Arjun Appadurai remind

us, material objects cannot be divorced from the meanings they accrue through their social histories and their circulation within systems of economic exchange. Relics represent a particularly interesting kind of materiality in that their value lies in their perceived singularity and sacred presence, and yet they were imminently subject to commodification and forged reproduction. Given their status in post-Reformation culture as fakes and commodities, such relics may seem to resemble the unverifiable nature of the hymen and the potential commodification of female sexuality. In that it is nominally sealed off from circulation, Paulina's amulet is at once expressly distinct from the fungible goods of the market scene, as well as the despotic economy of the seraglio, and also suggestive of the potential for commodification. At the same time, I would locate the relic's utility not merely in its "materiality," whose meaning could not be separated from its social history, but in its concrete physicality, which served to anchor Paulina's uncompromised virginity and to reinforce the audience's faith in its protection. Quite crudely, Paulina's confrontation with a threat of conversion that is specifically sexualized and embodied in nature calls for a physical defense system.

BAPTISM AS SPIRITUAL RE-VIRGINATION

Whereas Paulina's virginity is construed to be completely inflexible and, if compromised, irreparable, the Turkish Donusa's loss of virginity is rendered distinct from her potential to possess inner virtue—a virtue that is instead dependent upon her conversion to Christianity. Clearly, the political advantages of Donusa's marriage to Vitelli play a role in this. At the same time, the play's eagerness to produce some outward assurance of Donusa's Christian conversion, as well as of her repaired virtue, is not without anxiety. Just as Paulina relies on a relic to stabilize her virginity and by extension her Christian identity, Donusa requests an outward assurance of her faith and redemption that will spiritually re-seal her hymen and mark her Christian conversion. When asked whether she is "confirmed" (4.3.154) in her Christian faith, she responds, "I would be—but the means / That may assure me?" (4.3.154–55). This prompts Vitelli to seek from the Jesuit priest

The holy badge that should proclaim her fit
 For these celestial nuptials. Willing she is,
 I know, to wear it as the choicest jewel
 On her fair forehead. (5.1.23–26)

In this way, both Donusa's religious conversion and her spiritual re-virgination are externalized in the form of a "holy badge" worn upon the "forehead." Like Paulina's relic, Donusa's "holy badge" functions on some level as an outer corollary to her hymen—rendering evidence of its spiritual reconstitution. Yet this object also resists materialization in that it does not constitute an actual badge, but is an imagined "jewel," worn as a sign of her mind's purification. And unlike Paulina, Donusa is not an actual virgin, but rather a spiritually born-again virgin. Given the play's unyielding commitment to maintaining Paulina's unbreakable chastity, its willingness to Christianize and render marriageable a de-virginated Muslim woman is certainly remarkable. This willingness seems to suggest that the political incentive to convert a Muslim princess and fold her under the power of her husband was strong enough to overcome her religious and racial differences as well as her compromised chastity.²⁴ The marriage also serves the purpose of rescuing her from a match with Mustapha, the Muslim basha of Aleppo, who has come to Tunis to woo her—signaling a victory for Christian masculinity.²⁵

But in order to carry out the miraculous conversion of Donusa, to redeem her from her sexual transgression and render her marriageable to a Christian man, *The Renegado* must invest tremendous authority in the saving powers of baptism. The "holy badge" that Vitelli requests refers most directly to the sacrament of baptism, a sacrament that was a source of intense debate in post-Reformation England. Whereas most Calvinists held baptism to be a symbolic act that could not override predestination, Catholics and later followers of Laud and Jacobus Arminius put real stock in the magic of the ceremony.²⁶ Vitelli's request to perform a lay baptism of Donusa would have been perceived as validation of baptism's mystical powers and its necessity for salvation—an interpretation that was distinctly anti-Calvinist. Vitelli says of the water he throws on her face, "It hath power / To purge those spots that cleave upon the mind" (5.3.114–15). Similarly, Donusa's reaction to the baptism affirms its transformative powers. After Vitelli "throws water on her face" (5.3.116), she responds,

I am another woman—til this minute
 I never lived, nor durst think how to die.
 How long have I been blind! Yet on the sudden
 By this blest means I feel the films of error
 Ta'en from my soul's eyes. (5.3.121–25)

Donusa's baptism marks a triumph of spirit over body, for the symbolic cleansing of the "spots that cleave upon [her] mind" seems to render the

physical defilement of her body inconsequential. Her spontaneous announcement upon having water thrown on her face (“I am another woman”), followed by her Pauline reference to gaining the miracle of sight, characterize her conversion as instantaneous, complete, and miraculous.²⁷

In addition to depicting Donusa’s baptism as a magical transformation, *The Renegado* explicitly cites a contemporary debate about lay baptism. Reasoning that it would not be possible for Francisco to gain access to the palace prison in order to perform Donusa’s baptism, Vitelli asks, “Whether, in me, a layman, without orders, / It may not be religious and lawful, / As we go to our deaths, to do that office?” (5.1.30–32). Beginning in the later sixteenth century, Presbyterian reformers such as Thomas Cartwright made clear their position that lay baptism was an unequivocally Catholic practice that needed to be abolished.²⁸ Francisco’s reply authorizes Vitelli to perform Donusa’s baptism by citing the authority granted to midwives to perform emergency baptisms on dying newborns, as well as that granted to Christian soldiers in the Crusades who performed baptisms on the battlefield:

A question in itself with much ease answered:
Midwives, upon necessity, perform it;
And knights that in the Holy Land fought for
The freedom of Jerusalem, when full
Of sweat and enemies’ blood, have made their helmets
The fount out of which with their holy hands
They drew that heavenly liquor. ’Twas approved then
By the holy church, nor must I think it now,
In you, a work less pious. (5.1.33–41)

Francisco’s appeal to both “midwives” and crusading “knights” evokes Catholic precedent to justify the performance of lay baptism. While the established church did not forbid midwives from baptizing newborns, radical reformers tended to object to female participation in church rites because they viewed it as a Catholic holdover.²⁹ In addition, Francisco’s allusion to the “knights that in the Holy Land fought for / The freedom of Jerusalem” draws attention to the common Christian history shared by Protestants and Catholics alike—a time in the past when the “holy church” denoted a single, unified entity. Drawn from Torquato Tasso’s *Jerusalem Delivered* (1581), Francisco’s reference to “sweat” and “blood”-filled “helmets” used as baptismal “founts” links Vitelli’s baptism of Donusa to Tancredi’s baptism of Clorinda, and to a previous Christian collaboration prompted by the religious and imperial threat of Islam.³⁰ Specifically, he alludes to the Holy

Crusades in which the nations of Western Europe united to wrest the Holy Land from Muslim control.

Historically, the English fully supported the religious and military crusade that was exemplified by the pan-European Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem, later called the Knights of Malta, a religious order under the jurisdiction of the pope. In 1540, however, Henry VIII dissolved the English langue of the Knights of Malta by parliamentary statute, causing many Knights to be executed or forced into exile.³¹ *The Renegado's* valorization of the Knights reinvoles the Christian crusades to draw an analogy to the current necessity of converting the Muslim princess. The unlikely reappearance of the Knights of Malta on the post-Reformation stage in such plays as Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, Fletcher's *The Knight of Malta*, Massinger's *The Maid of Honor*, and Webster's *The Devil's Law-Case*—all of which feature or allude to Christian-Muslim confrontations—similarly illustrates the renewed relevance of medieval Catholic models that could help to frame a current conflict.

ECUMENICAL POLITICS AND THE ROLE OF THE POPULAR STAGE

Indeed, the appeal of a pan-Christian alliance against the Ottoman Empire may provide a partial explanation for the apparent Catholic sympathies of Massinger's play because it offers a political context for religious concessions toward Catholicism. At the same time that Ottoman piracy posed an increasing threat to Christian seamen operating in the Mediterranean, England's attitude toward its traditional Catholic archenemy, Spain, was in a state of transition. England's relationships to Catholic Spain and the Ottoman Empire were in fact directly interrelated in the period. King James's negotiations for a Spanish match were ostensibly aimed at securing Spanish assistance in returning the Palatinate to his son-in-law, Frederick V, but he also hoped that the match would facilitate general Christian pacification and a league against the Turk. For example, in 1620 James organized an Anglo-Spanish attack on Algiers, the capital of North Africa's Ottoman regencies, which, as Malieckal has suggested, may have provided the historical impetus for Massinger's play (25–26).³² Thus, "Protestant," "Catholic," and "Turk" were linked together in a triangular relationship in which two sides were allied against the third.

King James's endorsement of a pan-Christian alliance was shared by a number of English clergy who operated under his patronage and espoused the rhetoric of Christian unity against the Turk. For example, Richard

Montagu characterized the Turks as “the grand professed enemies of Christians, Christianity, CHRIST, qua tales,” who, for all their differences, together constitute the universal Christian Church (152).³³ Montagu’s publication of two pamphlets in 1622 and 1623, titled *A Gagg for the New Gospell? No a Gagg for the Old Goose* and *Apello Caesarem*, provoked controversy for venturing to narrow the doctrinal differences between the English and Roman churches and for accusing the Puritans of threatening the *via media* that James favored. James’s support of pan-Christian unity also paved the way for the rise of Laud, who began to gain royal favor in the 1620s and would attempt to carry out the displacement of English Calvinism by Arminianism.³⁴ Laud and other members of the Durham House group began publicizing their views in the 1620s through sermons that countered the central Calvinist doctrine of predestination. His program amounted to a turning away from the iconoclasm and inwardness of the Reformed tradition to a renewed emphasis on ceremonial, sacramental, and sensuous worship. It is important to acknowledge, however, that Laud did not become archbishop of Canterbury until 1633 and his full impact was not felt until Charles’s reign.

I want to suggest that *The Renegado* reveals a breakdown of the Calvinist consensus prior to and separate from the ecclesiastical ramifications of Laud and the Durham House group. First, the play precedes the formal dissolution of the Calvinist consensus, which Nicholas Tyacke, in his book on the rise of English Arminianism, has influentially argued was accomplished mainly through Bishop Neile and the high-church clerical cabal. Second, the play illustrates how challenges to Calvinism may have emerged from the popular domain, anticipating rather than reflecting later ecclesiastical reforms.³⁵ It thus points to a shift that did not emanate exclusively from high culture, but was generated through popular media like drama.³⁶ Moreover, the stage shows us that this shift was not just coincident with the competing threat of Islamic conversion, but was also powerfully informed by this threat. Specifically, the stage turned to the material trappings of Catholicism, including the miracle of a sacred relic, the bodily practice of chastity, the outward ceremony of the sacraments, and the performance of good works, in order to provide objective correlatives for Christian resistance, conversion, and redemption in relation to the embodied threat of Islam. Thus, *The Renegado* does not merely reflect evidence of lingering Catholic sympathies or early Laudian influences, but demonstrates how, within a secular domain wholly separate from the English Church, the imagined threat of Islam generated certain kinds of responses that resembled and anticipated later ecclesiastical reforms.

CATHOLIC PROPHYLACTICS AND
THE REGULATION OF REPRODUCTION

In addition, the stage reveals that the forging of a pan-Christian alliance was not just politically strategic and advantageous, but also spoke to a threat of conversion that operated on the level of the body. If the material and ritualistic elements of Catholicism offered a form of resistance to “turning Turk” that inner faith alone could not provide, then *The Renegado’s* reliance on Catholic models also provides insight into how the threat of the Turk was imaginatively construed as a sexual threat with potentially reproductive consequences. In demonstrating the need to fortify Protestant models of spiritual resistance with outward, Catholic prophylactics, the stage conveyed the importance of regulating and controlling racial purity through sexual intervention.

It is no accident that the only characters in the play who are not candidates for Christian conversion or redemption are the Muslim men. In contrast to the Muslim princess, the play renders Asambeg, would-be suitor to the Christian virgin, inherently unconvertible and ineligible for marriage to a Christian. Deceived and abandoned by the Christians as well as the newly Christianized Donusa at the end of the play, he determines to “hide / This head among the deserts, or some cave / Filled with my shame and me, where I alone / May die without a partner in my moan” (5.8.36–39). That these lines of Asambeg’s are also the closing lines of the play signals that his solitary abandonment, stripping him of any sexual partner, is the ultimate factor in *The Renegado’s* comic denouement. In this way, the play renders Asambeg completely impotent and construes his religious difference to be permanent and immutable. From the printed text of the play, it is impossible to ascertain whether Asambeg’s religious difference was accompanied by specific somatic differences indicated by cosmetics, costume, or other physical markers in the performance. More helpfully, the other male Turkish character in the play, Mustapha, is explicitly mocked for his dark skin. Donusa rejects Mustapha’s advances toward her:

I have considered you from head to foot,
And can find nothing in that wainscot face
That can teach me to dote; nor am I taken
With your grim aspect or tadpole-like complexion. (3.1.47–50)

Her references to his “wainscot face” (i.e. with hardened and tanned skin, resembling dark oak paneling) and “tadpole-like [black] complexion” are further reinforced by her subsequent suggestion that Mustapha should “let

[his] barber wash [his] face” since it “look[s] yet like a bugbear to fright children” (3.1.59–60). Quite likely, Mustapha was blacked up by burnt cork or oil, a common theatrical practice by the 1620s.³⁷ While we cannot know for certain, Asambeg’s affiliation with the more overtly darkened Mustapha suggests that he too may have been played in blackface; the play refers to both characters as “Turks” and does not distinguish between them in any categorical manner. At the very least, Mustapha’s blackness suggests that some “Turks” on the early modern stage were given dark complexions. In addition, the play’s anxious avoidance of a sexual union between Asambeg and Paulina suggests that the conversion triggered by such an act would bear not just religious or spiritual consequences, but bodily ones as well. That the miscegenated product of such a union would physically replicate the father reinforces what Lynda Boose has described as “the deepest patriarchal fantasy of male parthenogenesis” in which the woman’s body serves solely as the receptacle for male seed (45). The perceived genetic dominance of the male partner meant that the Christian female was vulnerable to racial contamination in a way that the Christian male was not. *The Renegado* precludes a conversion of this nature by vigilantly sustaining the Christian heroine’s physical virginity.

RITUALIZING GRIMALDI’S TRANSGRESSION AND REDEMPTION

Finally, *The Renegado* posits the redemption of its title character, the renegade pirate Grimaldi, by translating both his denunciation of Christianity as well as his ultimate return to the Christian fold into visible, material terms. In order to externalize Grimaldi’s conversion and re-conversion, the play invests great authority in certain elements of Catholic ritual, including the sacramental use of bread and wine, as well as the holy intervention of the priest. We learn from a fellow seaman of Grimaldi’s that his initial turn from Christianity was evidenced by his disruption of a Catholic mass held in St. Mark’s Church. As the captain narrates, Grimaldi seemed to be struck with a “wanton, irreligious madness” (4.1.29) when he suddenly

ran to the holy man
As he was doing the work of grace,
And, snatching from his hands the sanctified means,
Dashed it upon the pavement. (4.1.30–33)

Thus, the play externalizes Grimaldi's spiritual transgression through his physical desecration of the bread and wine of communion. The particular moment in the mass that Grimaldi chooses to disrupt is the very moment of incarnation, when God is embodied and body and soul are joined. In construing his disruption of transubstantiation as the ultimate form of sacrilege, the play validates the material sanctity of "the work of grace," or the Catholic belief in transubstantiation. This specific validation of the Catholic eucharistic ceremony and its investment in the sacred powers of the bread and wine purposefully roots Grimaldi's sin against Christianity in a visible and material act of sacrilege. His outward transgression is necessitated by the larger context of Christian-Muslim conversion that is itself material and bodily.

Similarly, Grimaldi's redemption requires a visual and ceremonial supplement to make the miracle of his Christian regeneration believable. Although his repentance is sincere, he fears that his act of desecration was so egregious as to bar him from receiving absolution:

... I look on
 A deed of mine so fiend-like that repentance,
 Though with my tears I taught the sea new tides,
 Can never wash off. All my thefts, my rapes,
 Are venial trespasses compared to what
 I offered to that shape, and in a place, too,
 Where I stood bound to kneel to't. (4.1.74–80)

Like the renegade hero of *A Christian Turned Turke*, he presumes that his repudiation of Christianity is irreversible and that his consignment to eternal damnation is irredeemable. But *The Renegado* affords Grimaldi a second chance to save himself, and as with Vitelli, this second chance depends upon the intercession of the Jesuit priest. Francisco enters the stage dressed "in a cope, like a bishop" (4.1.72) to hear Grimaldi's confession, thus enabling Grimaldi to recognize the very priest whom he previously offended at St. Mark's Church. The visual materiality of the cope endows Francisco with the authority to perform such a powerful absolution and enhances the ritualized and ceremonial aspect of the sacrament. The exchange between Francisco and Grimaldi that follows Grimaldi's confession further emphasizes the magical nature of his redemption:

FRANCISCO. 'Tis Forgiven!
 I with his tongue (whom in these sacred vestments

With impure hands thou didst offend) pronounce it.
 I bring peace to thee: see that thou deserve it
 In thy fair life hereafter
 GRIMALDI. Can it be?
 Dare I believe this vision? Or hope
 A pardon e'er may find me?
 FRANCISCO. Purchase it
 By zealous undertakings, and no more
 'Twill it be remembered.
 GRIMALDI. What celestial balm
 I feel now poured into my wounded conscience! (4.1.80–89)

In instructing Grimaldi that he may “purchase” a pardon for his sins through “zealous undertakings,” Francisco invokes a Catholic practice that was condemned by Protestants for its emphasis on outward actions that could be easily simulated without sincere inner contrition. Grimaldi alludes to this controversial debate again when he asks, “Can good deeds redeem me?” (4.1.96). Whereas Calvinists emphasized the notion that faith must precede good works, Catholics believed that faith alone was insufficient to achieve grace. In suggesting that Grimaldi could earn back his place in heaven by performing good works, *The Renegado* again demonstrates how outward acts can anchor and enforce inward convictions, effecting a reversal for the Christian “turned Turk,” and achieving what faith alone cannot.

In the years between the earliest performance of *The Renegado* and its publication in 1630, the English government and church parishes confronted the problem of what to do with real-life renegades who needed to be reincorporated back into English society. By the 1630s Laud’s influence was clearly evident in ceremonies for the reconversion of English seamen who had converted to Islam and undergone circumcision. An official “Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate from the Christian Religion to Turkism,” commissioned by Laud in 1637, outlines a series of steps that a penitent could perform over a period of several weeks in order to obtain clemency (*Vitkus, Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, appendix 5). Among other things, these steps involved dressing in a white sheet and appearing on the church porch with a white wand. A decade earlier, two sermons preached at Minehead in Somerset on March 16, 1627, by Edward Kellet and Henry Byam (published together under the title *A Returne from Argier*) exemplified a similar reliance on tangible steps for reincorporating converts to Islam. The convert in question is said to have been “bound for the streights” when he was “taken by Turkish Pyrats, and made a slaue at Argier [Algiers], and

living there in slaverie, by frailty and weaknesse, forsooke the Christian Religion and turned Turke” (Kellet and Byam, opposite title page). Kellet’s and Byam’s sermons may be seen to contradict explicitly the tenets of Calvinist predestination in suggesting that through sincere repentance and good works, the convert could redeem himself and reverse his path to hell.

Both of the sermons preached by Kellet and Byam on the occasion of the convert’s “readmission” to the Church of England follow a similar pattern for justifying the convert’s regeneration. For example, the various actions that Kellet holds up as countermeasures to the convert’s sins emphasize the utility of certain outward and material actions to redeem one from hell. He advocates martyrdom and baptism as effective ways of achieving grace, thereby challenging Calvinism’s emphasis on the unalterable will of God. Rather than emphasize God’s judgment, Kellet emphasizes God’s mercy. Above all, he holds up the power of repentance, betokened by such outward expressions as “tears,” the changing of “Habit and Vestmentes,” and the performance of good works, to “openeth the Gate of heauen” (44). His insistence that a man’s repentance has the power to halt God’s punishment and “purchaseth Grace” (42) offers a pointed revision of Calvinist predestination. Moreover, the sermon shows that without such an allowance for free will and repentance, the reconciliation of fallen renegades would not have been possible.

Although *The Renegado* anticipates Laud’s theological leanings in many ways, it predates the beginning of his rise to power in the second half of the 1620s. It would be a stretch to argue for the direct influence of Laud’s Catholic-leaning practices in 1624, when Massinger’s *The Renegado* was first performed on the public stage. The play is therefore striking for its positive portrayal of a Jesuit priest, its investment in a sacred relic and the sacramental powers of the Eucharist, penance, and baptism, and its valorization of female chastity. While as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, critics began accusing Massinger of Catholic loyalties, I suggest that such an explanation oversimplifies the theological valences of *The Renegado*. The point is not so much that Massinger was a crypto-Catholic as that England itself was crypto-Catholic, though not just in the sense that Stephen Greenblatt or Eamon Duffy have influentially argued. Rather, factors outside of the Catholic-Protestant conflict compelled a fusing of interests that suggested a return to Catholic models and anticipated a later high church theology. While I am not claiming a direct causality between Christian engagement with Islam and England’s reintegration of Catholic practices or its adoption of Arminianism, I suggest that the stage itself played a role in showing how various sacramental, ceremonial, and material Christian models might offer

protection against the threat of Islam and help redeem those who had fallen under its sway. In particular, *The Renegado* gives insight into how Islam's conception as both a religious and an embodied threat of conversion pressured Protestant-Catholic differences to collapse so as to enable more tangible forms of resistance and redemption.

NOTES

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1. All citations of the play are from Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*. This edition is based on the first edition of the play, published in 1630.

2. While Francisco's wearing of the cope fell within the mandates of the established Church, the prop also cited a history of controversy over vestments and represented a Protestant concession to an older Catholic tradition. Debate over vestments emerged during Queen Elizabeth's reign, with one side arguing for uniformity in the wearing of Eucharistic vestments and the other side objecting to them because of their association with "popish" ceremonies. For an overview of the controversy, see Collinson, "That Comical Dress" and "The People and the Pope's Attire." James's injunction of 1604 concerning the use of the cope reveals the enduring Catholic stigma that made some clergy reluctant to conform in the wearing of vestments. See Canon 24, *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall, Treated vpon by the Bishop of London* (London, 1604).

3. See Malieckal 25–26; Fuchs, ch. 5; Harris, *Sick Economies*, ch. 6; Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, chs. 2 and 3; Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, ch. 5; and Forman, ch. 5.

4. Critics who focus on the Catholic elements of *The Renegado* and/or argue for Massinger's Catholicism include Gifford, Boas (308), Chelli (328), Cruickshank (3), and Dunn (191). For a succinct overview of these findings, concluding that Massinger's use of religion simulates the serious tone of Fletcherian tragicomedy, see Mullany. For a reading that argues in opposition that the play is anti-Catholic, presenting the Muslim characters as stand-ins for demonized Catholics, see Jowitt, esp. 175–84.

5. For a useful overview of Massinger's Spanish sources, see Rice. *The Renegado* is loosely based on Cervantes's "Story of the Captive" in *Don Quixote* (1605), Part I, Book IV, chs. 12–14, and on his play *Los Baños de Argel* (1615).

6. For broader discussions of how the Jacobean stage reflected popular attitudes toward Catholicism, see O'Connell.

7. Many thanks to Michael Neill for sharing his then-unpublished essay, "Turn and Counterturn," as I was completing final revisions of this essay.

8. See Robinson, "'The Turks,' Caroline Politics, and Philip Massinger's *The Renegado*." A revised version of his essay appears in *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton*, ch. 4.

9. Metzger's discussion of Jessica's conversion to Christianity in *The Merchant of Venice* offers interesting anticipations of the gender dynamics that I observe in *The Renegado*. Although I resist any direct equation between Jewish-Christian conversion and Muslim-Christian conversion, I perceive strong parallels between the two plays in their representations of the colluding logics of gender, religious difference, and race that influence the terms of conversion. Drawing upon earlier work by Hall and Boose, Metzger argues that Jessica is crucially distinguished from Shylock as a candidate for conversion, particularly by her whiteness and femaleness, which "make possible her reproduction as a Christian" through Lorenzo's choice to marry her (57). For a subsequent discussion of the play that expands upon Metzger's argument and also departs from it by emphasizing the limitations of Jessica's conversion, see Adelman.

10. In numerous plays the threat of Islamic conversion is associated with sexual seduction and penetration of the female body, including Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turke* (1609–12); Fletcher, Field, and Massinger's *The Knight of Malta* (1616–19); Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* (1589–92); Mason's *The Turk* (1607–08); and Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* (1600).

11. The plays have other similarities as well: both are set in the city of Tunis, and both include a priestly counselor named Francisco.

12. This doctrine held that all souls were pre-divided between election to heaven and reprobation to hell, and that both fates were completely reliant on the will of God, impervious to good works or individual will. The doctrine of predestination was first outlined by the English Church in Article XVII of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563). It was then more explicitly defined in the Lambeth Articles, devised by Archbishop John Whitgift in 1596. For historical discussions of Calvinist predestination and the Church of England, see Kendall; Porter; White, *Predestination*; and Lake, *Moderate Puritans*.

13. For a related discussion of how *The Renegado* "rewrites/erights" *A Christian Turned Turke*, see Parker 21–27.

14. See especially Matar; Vitkus, *Turning Turk*; and Fuchs.

15. Whereas Elizabeth implicitly sanctioned English privateering and the plundering of Spanish galleys on the Barbary coast, James proclaimed an official suspension of English privateering in June of 1603. See "A Proclamation Against Pirates," issued 8 January 1609. For historical accounts of James's attempt to combat Barbary piracy, see Hebb and Fisher.

16. Burton ("English Anxiety") suggests that early modern plays represented castration in comedic ways in order to assuage English anxieties about the emasculation of English men and the serious threat posed by Christian conversion to Islam.

17. This is not to suggest that Protestants never translated the threat of Catholicism into sexual and embodied terms; indeed, the metaphor of the Whore of Babylon did powerful work in associating Catholics with pathologies such as syphilis, also known as the "Romish sickness" or the "French pox." Nonetheless, the Whore of

Babylon, and Catholics more generally, were not typically associated with entrapping potential converts through sexual seduction, as were Muslim Turks. Two prominent dramatic examples in which Catholics are allegorically identified with the Whore of Babylon are Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* (1606) and Middleton's *A Game at Chess* (1624). In both cases, the Catholic Whore of Babylon is a figurative rather than a literal "whore."

18. Francisco is identified as "a Jesuite" under the *Dramatis Personae* in the earliest edition of the play (1630). Although he is portrayed in a positive light, his character also invokes certain anxieties about Jesuits, as when he advocates equivocation for religious purposes. See, for example, Francisco's instruction to Grimaldi to "Borrow your late distracted looks and gesture: / The more dejected you appear, the less / The viceroy must suspect you (5.2.35–37).

19. See, for example, Gee's *The Foot Out of the Snare*, which vehemently argued for the banning of Jesuits from England. In response to the controversy, King James issued a royal proclamation banning Jesuits on May 6, 1624 (Larkin and Hughes 1: 591–93). For an overview of the events associated with the royal proclamation, see Cogswell, esp. 288–89. See also Shell, esp. 113–18.

20. Drawing upon Grosrichard's discussion of the "absurd economy" of non-convertible commodities in early modern European fantasies of the Orient (68), Harris links Carazie's impotence with the pathological hoarding of treasure that disrupts the healthy circulation of trade (*Sick Economies* 156–61). Forman similarly focuses on the economic dimensions of *The Renegado's* threat of castration, arguing that the eunuch is a figure for the complete obstruction of trade, which the play resolves through its redemptive embrace of a restrained and ethical form of circulation. I thank Valerie Forman for sharing her manuscript with me while I was completing the final version of this essay.

21. Catholic relics (as well as icons and images) and their denunciation in post-Reformation England are the subjects of an extensive critical discourse. See for example Aston; Belting; Phillips; and Whiting.

22. See, for example, Vesalius, whose anatomical illustrations informed a number of subsequent medical texts published in England, including Thomas Geminus's *Compendiosa totius anatomiae delineatio* (1545) and Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (1615). For a discussion of anxieties surrounding the existence and function of the hymen in these and other texts, see Loughlin, esp. 27–52.

23. As Vitkus glosses, Manto's reference to passing as "current" draws an analogy between passing for a virgin and passing for a "genuine coin" (a., def. 5).

24. As Loomba has argued in both "Delicious Traffick" and "'Break her will,'" the stage's propensity to Christianize Muslim women and marry them to Christian men is fostered by England's political interests in mastery and colonialism.

25. For a related argument that *The Renegado* uses the rescue of a Muslim princess to help assuage domestic anxieties about threatened masculinity in the early modern period, see Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, chs. 2 and 3. Burton contends that Islam and women produced parallel anxieties for English men in the period.

26. For a detailed overview of post-Reformation debates about baptism in England, see Cressy.

27. For a reading that relates this scene to the topos of washing the Ethiopian white, see Bosman 147. See also St. Paul's conversion to Christianity, Acts 9:18: "... something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized." While one might question whether the scene should not be read as a comic mockery of the baptism ceremony, the play's pervasive investment in the theme of Christian redemption and its repeated valorization of Catholic practices suggests that this was unlikely.

28. See Whitgift. For a summary of reformers' objections to lay baptism argued at the Hampton Court Conference, see Barlow, esp. 14–20. King James adopted a middle position that condoned baptisms outside of the church in cases of dire necessity, but restricted the performance of baptisms to lawful ministers (Barlow 8). For an overview of the debate, see Cressy 117–23.

29. At the Hampton Court Conference, several bishops argued that "the administration of baptism, by women, and lay-persons, was not allowed in the practice of the Church" because it suggested a popish practice (Barlow 14). For earlier debate on the subject, see Whitgift 29, 504, 509, 516, 793. I am grateful to Joseph Black for drawing my attention to these passages in Whitgift's polemical exchange with Thomas Cartwright. For a critical discussion of the cultural role of the midwife in performing baptisms and other duties, see Bicks, esp. 127–60.

30. Robinson was the first to identify the allusion to Tasso ("The "Turks" 229).

31. *Statutes of the Realm*, ch. 24, 778.

32. Intended to redeem thousands of Christian captives who had been captured and enslaved by Barbary corsairs, the attack was thwarted by bad weather and a second attempt was supported by Ottoman forces. For a historical account of the attack, see Fisher 114. For a contemporary report of the mission, led by Sir Robert Mansell, see Button.

33. Even earlier, there is evidence of theologians advocating a *via media* between Puritanism and Catholicism. Hooker pushed for acknowledging the legitimate status of the Catholic church, arguing that by drawing near to Islam "we should be spreaders of a worse infection . . . than any we are likely to draw from papists by our conformity with them in ceremonies" (1: 297).

34. On James's support of Laud's early career, see Carlton, esp. 27. On the history of the rise of Arminianism (the religious doctrine of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius) in England, see Tyacke; Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*; White, "The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered"; and Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church."

35. In a similar vein, Croft argues that the breakdown of Calvinism was not just accomplished through the high-church clerical cabal, but was also carried out by laymen such as Robert Cecil, first earl of Salisbury.

36. For this line of thinking I am indebted to Debora Shuger's thoughtful response to a panel I organized along with Elizabeth Williamson for the Modern Language Association conference in 2003. The panel was titled "Contested Objects: Religious Upheaval, Catholic Idols, and Body Parts on the Renaissance Stage."

37. For a historical study of the use of blackface on English stages between 1500 and 1800, see Vaughan.

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