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Degenhardt, Jane Hwang.

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## CATHOLIC MARTYRDOM IN DEKKER AND MASSINGER'S *THE VIRGIN MARTIR* AND THE EARLY MODERN THREAT OF "TURNING TURK"

BY JANE HWANG DEGENHARDT

While largely neglected by modern critics, Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger's 1620 tragedy *The Virgin Martir* enjoyed considerable popular success in its time.<sup>1</sup> It was performed at the Red Bull Theater, where according to the first quarto's title page, it was "divers times publickely Acted with great Applause, By the seruants of his Maiesties Reuels," and underwent four printings in the seventeenth century as well as a stage revival in 1660.<sup>2</sup> What is striking about the play's popularity is its seemingly controversial adaptation of a medieval virgin martyr legend, a genre that was largely suppressed by the English Reformation. Following attempts in the 1570s by religious authorities to ban the cycles of mystery plays in English towns and cities, most if not all remnants of hagiographical drama had disappeared from the stage.<sup>3</sup> The record of a fee of forty shillings paid to the Master of the Revels on 6 October 1620, for a "new reforming" of the play, seems to suggest both its potentially controversial content and the formal scrutiny that forced London playwrights to comply with official Church doctrine.<sup>4</sup>

The small body of critics who have addressed the play over the past fifty years either focus, like Louise Clubb (1964), on the striking anomaly of its apparent Catholic content or else attempt, like Larry Champion (1984) and Jose M. Ruano de la Haza (1991), to explain away this content by emphasizing the play's iconoclastic elements or arguing that its religious categories are mere "pretext" to "a simple and clear struggle between good and evil."<sup>5</sup> But despite these scattered attempts to raise or refute the question of *The Virgin Martir*'s Catholic affinities, the question remains largely unanswered: what accounts for the dramatic appeal in 1620 of an early Christian saint who is martyred in Catholic fashion? Or more specifically, what is appealing at this time about a martyr whose religious constancy is signified through her bodily resistance to torture and, above all, through the preservation of her virginity? Leaving aside the obvious,

though admittedly complex, explanation of persisting Catholic sympathies in Reformation England, I attempt to account for the significance of *The Virgin Martir*'s particular representation of martyrdom by taking a broader global view of the political and religious threats that surrounded its production.

I begin with the premise that the appeal of Catholic martyrdom and its emphasis upon physical inviolability can be better appreciated in light of England's increased commercial engagement with the Ottoman empire during the early seventeenth century and the particular anxieties that the English stage began to attach to the threat of Islamic conversion. As an emerging body of critical work in the field of literary studies has observed, the commercial and colonial threat that the Ottoman empire posed by virtue of its incredible size, wealth, and military capacity was acutely felt by the English during a period when they began to rely increasingly on eastern Mediterranean trade and to imagine themselves as a tiny player in an international arena of commerce and power. Popular English discourses represented the Turkish threat as one of conversion or of "turning Turk"—a phenomenon that constituted both a genuine predicament for Christian seamen who were captured by Turks and an imaginative theme or trope on the London stage. *The Virgin Martir* is roughly contemporary with a number of plays that overtly thematize Christian resistance to "turning Turk," including Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turke* (1609–1612); John Fletcher, Nathan Field, and Philip Massinger's *The Knight of Malta* (1616–1619); and Massinger's *The Renegado* (1623–1624). In each of these plays, Islamic conversion is figured as the direct result of sexual intercourse between a Christian man and a Muslim woman. Conversely, Christian resistance is exemplified through the chastity of the Christian woman, a figure whose virtue remains constant though she is constantly pursued by lustful Turks and constantly doubted by her Christian brothers. These plays' mediation of conversion through a register of sexuality reflects a nexus of cultural and bodily transformation that was invested in the threat of "turning Turk." That the English often associated Turks and other Muslims with distinct physical differences is clear from the many pictorial and narrative representations that survive from the early modern period.<sup>6</sup> I am also suggesting that in positing a direct relationship between sexual intercourse and "turning Turk," the Renaissance stage reflected an awareness of how this type of conversion entailed a threat of

reproductive contamination, or the process we now refer to as racial miscegenation.<sup>7</sup>

Just as the stage's overdetermination of sexual contact as the conduit for Islamic conversion suggests a convergence of cultural and bodily or religious and racial differences that distinguished "turning Turk" from other threats of religious conversion, the manner in which the stage represented the Christian-Turk opposition reflected both its reliance on prior templates for Christian resistance to persecution, as well as a refiguring of these templates to characterize what was perceived to be a new threat. While *The Virgin Martir* does not overtly feature Turks or Islamic conversion, its particular representation of Christian resistance in the form of bodily inviolability assumes a new currency in the face of the Ottoman threat and reveals an implicit correspondence between the practice of medieval virginity and contemporary strategies for imagining resistance to "turning Turk." In effect, *The Virgin Martir's* idealization of its heroine's physical integrity makes visible the medieval Catholic models that inform contemporary dramatizations of resistance to Islam. I argue that *The Virgin Martir's* particular characterization of Christian resistance in the form of bodily inviolability can best be understood by taking account of the sexual, bodily, and racial valences associated with the Ottoman threat, and reflects an emerging model of Christian faith that is defined not solely by inner (Protestant) spirituality but also by outward physical and sexual resilience. In other words, the particular exigencies of the contemporary Turkish threat compel a revival of the supposedly defunct template of Catholic martyrdom that helps account for the cultural currency of Dekker and Massinger's play in the early seventeenth century. I will demonstrate how *The Virgin Martir* imports this template from the medieval tradition through a dynamic process of appropriation and refiguration of prior conventions for resisting conversion.

As I will explore more thoroughly below, the site of the heroine Dorothea's martyrdom, in Caesarea, Cappadocia, placed it in the heart of what was at the time of the play's production the territory of the Ottoman empire (central Turkey, north and slightly east of Cyprus). Of the hundreds of saints' tales that Dekker and Massinger could have chosen to adapt, the majority are set not in the East but in Rome, the imperial capital of the Roman empire.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Dekker and Massinger's choice of setting draws attention to a possible correspondence between the persecution of early Christians in the Roman empire and the contemporary persecution of Christians in the

Ottoman empire. But if in the play early Christian persecution serves as an implicit foil for the more immediate threat of Turkish or Islamic conversion, it constitutes not a mere act of displacement but rather a pointed reminder of a long history of Christian resistance based on martyrdom. Just as John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* uses the larger context of church history to situate sixteenth-century Protestant martyrdom, *The Virgin Martir* appropriates and refigures the history of early Christian persecution in order to construct a viable model of resistance to the contemporary Turkish threat. In addition, the play demonstrates through gender differences how this contemporary model of resistance is both physically and culturally constituted, in that female virginity also serves in the play as a model for the cultivation of voluntary male chastity and civility. After observing Dorothea's example, her pagan suitor, Antoninus, converts to Christianity and is properly armed to resist the forces of pagan persecution in a Christian manner. In contrasting Antoninus's acquired Christian civility and self-restraint to the ruthless and lustful manners of the pagans, the play draws a distinction between Christian and pagan identity that I will argue is directly relevant to contemporary English efforts to construct a self-identity in opposition to the "Turk."

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Dekker and Massinger's popular play was based on the medieval legend of St. Dorothy, which originated around the late seventh century.<sup>9</sup> Although Dorothy was believed to have suffered martyrdom during the Diocletian persecutions on 6 February 304, her legend, like that of many other virgin martyrs of the third and early fourth centuries, did not emerge until the Middle Ages. By far the most significant source of the legend's dissemination was the Dominican friar Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, which appeared in more than 150 editions between 1470 and 1500. Dorothy's legend was not included in Jacobus's original *Legenda aurea*, compiled between 1252 and 1260, but was added by a later author or authors and extensively reproduced in many vernacular renderings. As Karen Winstead has shown, the virgin martyr legend was an enormously popular genre whose readership extended from clerics and anchoresses to lay provincial audiences over the course of the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup> Dekker and Massinger's familiarity with Dorothy's story was most likely reliant upon three prominent English translations which continued to enjoy a limited circulation in the early modern period.<sup>11</sup>

These included Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, written in 1447; William Caxton's *The Golden Legend*, published in 1483, 1503, and 1527; and Alfonso Villegas's popular *Flos Sanctorvm* (known in England as *The Lives of Saints*), which was anonymously translated into English and printed at Douai in 1609.

Several defining details continue to be attached to Dorothy's story as it was passed through the late Middle Ages. She is born and secretly baptized in Caesarea, Cappadocia, after her parents fled from Rome and the brutal persecution of Christians under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian. As a young woman her exceptional beauty inflames the love of the prefect of Caesarea, but she staunchly refuses him and publicly maintains that she is the bride of Christ. She spurns the pagan gods and refuses to convert from Christianity. In return she is repeatedly tortured by hot oil, starvation, iron hooks, beatings, and the merciless burning of her breasts. After emerging from all of these tortures unharmed Dorothy is sentenced to death by decapitation. Her two sisters, now apostates from Christianity, are sent to plead with her, but she instead reconverts them, and they are ruthlessly executed by the prefect. On the way to her own execution Dorothy's unwavering faith is mocked by a scribe named Theophilus, who asks her to send some roses and apples from the garden of her spouse, Christ. Shortly after Dorothy's execution, Theophilus is visited by a fair, curly haired child dressed in a purple garment, from whom he receives the very basket of roses and apples that he had requested. Theophilus is immediately converted to Christianity and goes on to help convert most of the city before he too is martyred under the pagan prefect.

As I have begun to suggest, Dekker and Massinger's dramatic adaptation of this Catholic legend in post-Reformation England is itself a unique and remarkable development. Although hundreds of hagiographical plays were performed on the Spanish stage between 1580 and 1680, *The Virgin Martir* was perhaps the only such play performed in England during this period.<sup>12</sup> The play's faithfulness to many of the elements of the medieval legend of St. Dorothy, including her inviolable virginity, the manner of her torture and execution, and the basket of fruit containing a cross of flowers at the bottom that she sends to Theophilus, indicate that the play is not wholly evacuated of its original (Catholic) content. Its valorization of female virginity is all the more striking given the strong cultural mandates against vowed celibacy in Protestant England.<sup>13</sup> Despite the cultural valorization of premarital chastity in early modern

England, lifelong celibacy (particularly against the pressure to marry) carried negative associations with Catholic religious orders.

The more likely explanation for *The Virgin Martir*'s popular success is not a sudden, renewed interest in the forced conversion and martyrdom of early virgin saints, but the play's resonance with contemporary concerns about religious conversion in the same geographical territory.<sup>14</sup> As Robert Brenner has argued, English commerce underwent a shift in emphasis from cloth exports to luxury imports in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries due to a new and growing demand for silks, spices, and currants obtained from Mediterranean seaports.<sup>15</sup> While developments such as the collapse of the Antwerp and Iberian *entrepôts* opened up English access to the eastern and southern markets, English traders confronted numerous dangers and uncertainties in the largely unpoliced waters of the Mediterranean and its religiously and ethnically mixed trading ports, many of which were under the control of the Ottoman empire. Multiple entries in the *Calendar of Domestic State Papers* under James's reign suggest that acts of piracy committed by Turks and the related capture and conversion of English seamen were of particular and grave concern to the British government around the time of *The Virgin Martir*'s performance.<sup>16</sup> An entry on 15 May 1622 describes a request made by "Merchants of the several trading companies" in consideration of recent propositions made by Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to Turkey, for the suppression of pirates: "Think the captives taken lately should be redeemed by treaty, but owing to the decay of trade, it is impossible to raise another contribution for suppressing pirates. Think the trade may be better secured if the ships going southward sailed together in fleets."<sup>17</sup> Numerous similar entries attest to the need to negotiate the dual and often conflicting imperatives of maintaining access to the southeastern markets and combating Turkish capture. One merchant's notebook, kept by Robert Williams between 1631 and 1654, alludes to the necessity of protecting one's own body from the very system of exchange that one participates in for one's livelihood; tellingly, Williams lists "Christn Captives of all kindes" among the commodities available for trade in Tunis.<sup>18</sup>

The threat of conversion confronted by thousands of English merchants and seamen in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries also constituted a complexly imagined theme on the Renaissance stage. In *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630*, Daniel Vitkus analyzes



some of the ways in which anxieties associated with England's expanding Mediterranean commerce informed theatrical representations of Christian adventurers and their particular vulnerabilities to conversion.<sup>19</sup> These dramatic representations emerged, according to Jean Howard, within the context of a new genre of "adventure dramas" featuring the travails of European pirates and privateers in southern and eastern Mediterranean port cities like Tunis, Fez, and Antioch.<sup>20</sup> Plays such as *The Famous History of Sir Thomas Stukeley* (1596), *The Fair Maid of the West I* (1600–1601), *Fortune By Land and Sea* (1607–1609), and *A Christian Turned Turk* (1609–1612) celebrate the exploits of swashbuckling renegade heroes, while also setting them in implicit opposition to a recuperative model of gentility, distinguished not by money or land but by English civility and self-control. While the renegade hero manifested the excitement of English privateering and imperial fantasies, he also evoked anxieties about cross-cultural commerce and the unstable identity of the English privateer. For example, as Barbara Fuchs has argued, the stage's renegade hero revealed the fuzzy distinction between "categories of licit and illicit commerce" through his resemblance to Turkish and Spanish pirates.<sup>21</sup> Plays like John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins's *The Travails of the Three English Brothers* (1607) offer a corrective alternative to the swashbuckling renegade by characterizing the Shirley brothers as gentleman adventurers—perfect English models of moral and physical restraint.<sup>22</sup> The female protagonist of Thomas Heywood's earlier *The Fair Maid of the West I* (1600–1601) suggests a way in which the English adventure hero might be cultivated according to a model of feminine virtue and chastity.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in various ways the early seventeenth-century adventure drama forged a recuperative link between English gentility and physical self-control that protected the adventuring hero against moral deterioration and conversion. This link between cultural and bodily control prefigures the sexual terms through which conversion is conceived in later tragicomedies of the 1610s and 1620s, such as *The Knight of Malta* and *The Renegado*, in which sexual and spiritual transgressions are explicitly conflated. Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martir* resonates with this evolving generic tradition and demonstrates through Dorothea's chastity, both spiritual and bodily, an empowering model of resistance to the contemporary Ottoman threat.

While foregrounding an earlier history of religious persecution enacted upon the territory of the Roman empire, *The Virgin Martir*



exhibits numerous trappings of the adventure drama. Whereas, for example, the Cappadocian geography of Dorothy's legend is located inland from the Mediterranean Sea by about 150 miles and is completely landlocked, it is represented in the play as an active port city.<sup>24</sup> The Caesarian governor invokes the vulnerability of port cities to invasion or escape when he rallies his captain of the guards in anticipation of the Roman emperor Dioclesian's visit: "Keep the ports close, and let the guards be doubl'd, / Disarme the Christians, call it death in any / To weare a sword, or in his house to haue one" (1.1.75–77). In this way, the play characterizes Caesarea in ways that liken it to the Mediterranean port cities of Tunis and Algiers that dominated the adventure drama and functioned as centers of intercultural trade between Christians and Turks (as well as Jews and Moors). These port cities along the Barbary coast were liminal and unstable places where Christian capture and enslavement were always possibilities. The plight of early modern Christians captured by Turks became known to the English not only through popular drama but also through the many captivity narratives that circulated in the period, as well as through prayers and collections that were directed towards the rescue of enslaved Christians.<sup>25</sup>

In *The Virgin Martir*, the slave from Brittain who is summoned from a ship in the port to rape Dorothea resonates with the contemporary captivity of British subjects in the Ottoman empire while simultaneously invoking Britain's past colonization by ancient Rome. The chief pagan persecutor's later instructions to release his Christian prisoners invokes the "trauaile" associated with contemporary travel and captivity in the Barbary coast:

Haste then to the port,  
 You shall there finde two tall ships ready rig'd,  
 In which embarke the poore distressed soules  
 And beare them from the reach of tyranny,  
 Enquire not whither you are bound, the deitie  
 That they adore will giue you prosperous winds,  
 And make your voyage such, and largely pay for  
 Your hazard, and your trauaile.

(5.2.74–81)

Theophilus's direct reference to "the port" and "two tall ships" again suggests Caesarea's conflation with the port cities popularized through the adventure drama. The Christian prisoners' escape from "the reach of tyranny" also invokes the contemporary plight of Christian

captives enslaved by the tyrannical Turk. And Theophilus's reference to "hazard" and "trauaile" in the last line employs terminology commonly used to describe the danger and toil associated with sailing and piracy in the Mediterranean. According to the *OED*, the early modern interchangeability of "trauaile" (carrying the sense of "toil or labor") and "travel" (referring to "journeying or a journey") reflects the labor and toil associated with journeying by sea or "the straining movement of a vessel in rough seas."<sup>26</sup> It may also reflect the personal dangers that early modern English seamen confronted in the inter-cultural spaces of the Mediterranean.

At times *The Virgin Martir*'s subtle conflation of pagan conversion and the contemporary threat of "turning Turk" virtually effaces the specificity of the ancient context. For example, Hircius and Spungius, Dorothea's two disloyal servants, are referred to as "renegades" and display a propensity for turning that is motivated not by faith or persecution but by money and carnal appetites. These two clownish characters, who are not present in any of the play's medieval sources, invert the notion of spiritual and bodily chastity in that they are debased in spirit and body. Their embodiment of lust and lack of restraint is advertised through their very names: Hircius is a "whoremaster" and Spungius a "drunkard." While obedience to parents and the law are offered as the chief motivations for pagan conversion in the tradition of the virgin martyr legend, carnal temptations and material incentives prompt the conversion of early modern "renegades" in the adventure drama. Spungius reveals his shallow allegiances when he says, "I am resolved to haue an Infidels heart, / though in shew I carry a Christians face" (2.1.47–48). This disjunction between inner faith and outer show reappears as a persistent theme and source of anxiety in plays about Christians "turning Turk."

We encounter another temporal slippage in *The Virgin Martir*'s frequent allusions to circumcision and castration in relation to conversion—an association that is absent in medieval representations of pagan conversion but that is often played to comic effect in the "turning Turk" dramas.<sup>27</sup> That "turning Turk" was inextricably linked with the permanent mark of circumcision in the English imagination underscores its conception as a bodily conversion. In *The Virgin Martir*, Spungius and Hircius's dialogue is peppered with references to the status of the foreskin as an indicator of religious faith, such as the one contained in Spungius's oath: "As I am a Pagan, from my codpeece downward" (2.1.75). The following exchange in which Spungius and Hircius are first introduced to the audience bears no affinity to

the medieval virgin martyr legend but could easily be lifted from a play set in the contemporary East:

- SPUNG. Turne Christian, wud he that first tempted mee  
to haue my shooes walk vpon Christian  
soles, had turn'd me into a Capon, for I am sure now the  
stones of all my pleasure in the fleshly life are cut off.  
HIRC. So then, if any Coxecombe has a galloping de-  
sire to ride, heres a Gelding, if he can but sit him.

(2.1.1–6)

Spungius and Hircius' frequent allusions to circumcision and castration in *The Virgin Martir* frame the story of Dorothy's martyrdom—or her refusal to convert—with the contemporary threat of conversion that is associated with Turks and Jews. The theater's comical collapsing of the distinction between circumcision and castration with respect to Islamic conversion seems to reflect another conflation between religious circumcision and the eunuchs who were known to serve in Turkish palaces. It offered a way of emasculating non-Christian men as well as the Christian renegades who converted to Islam. *The Renegado's* Carazie, for instance, is revealed to be a former Englishman who was captured by the Turks and castrated in order to serve in the royal palace. Similarly, the clownish Clem of Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West I* and John Ward of *A Christian Turned Turke* are two additional English characters who convert and undergo circumcision or castration at the hands of Turks. In *The Virgin Martir*, references to castration are relegated purely to the realm of humorous nonsense, far removed from the ancient significance of circumcision associated with Christianized Jews and Gentiles.<sup>28</sup> But in other ways, the play confuses its contexts. Spungius's comparison of being “turn'd into a Capon” and “walk[ing] vpon Christian soles” seems to associate circumcision with Christianity, which in the context of first-century Christianized Jews (predating the fourth-century setting of the play) might have made sense; yet, the fact that such a prospect represents something highly unappealing to Spungius aligns it with the contemporary threat of “turning Turk” and the compulsory circumcision/castration undergone by English characters in other Mediterranean adventure plays.<sup>29</sup>

The geographical location of Cappadocia also had a biblical association with circumcision because of its proximity to Galatia, where Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians. In this letter, Paul chastises the Galatians for their strict adherence to Jewish laws and in

particular for their undue emphasis on circumcision, arguing that these outward rituals create a false distinction between Jewish followers of Christ and converted Gentiles who were not circumcised. Alternately, the possibility that Dekker and Massinger were confusing Caesarea, Cappadocia, where Dorothy's medieval legend is set, with another Caesarea—on the coast of Palestine—links it to another Biblical site where circumcision was fiercely debated. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, Peter's conversion of a Roman centurion named Cornelius invokes a heated controversy about the eligibility of uncircumcised Gentiles for Christian conversion (chapters 10–11). Whether consciously enacted or not, Dekker and Massinger's possible conflation of the two Caesareas in *The Virgin Martir* reinforces the Biblical significance of the setting as a place where questions about the nature of faith, bodily difference, and conversion were of particular concern.

Given the complex geographical and religious context I have been discussing for *The Virgin Martir*, critical interpretations that stress only its relationship to England's Catholic-Protestant controversy seem inadequate. And yet it is important to recognize the extent to which the play also engages Reformation politics by refiguring its Catholic source materials to ally Dorothea with Protestantism and her pagan persecutors with Catholicism. Throughout the play, the pagans are associated with worshipping images and statues of false gods, whereas Dorothea consistently repudiates this practice like a good Protestant iconoclast. A particularly transparent example of how the Christian-pagan opposition maps onto the debate around idolatry occurs when Caliste and Christeta, two pagan maidens, are sent to sway Dorothea from her Christian faith. In response to Caliste and Christeta's testimony to the "pleasure" and "prosperity" promised by their pagan gods, whom they "worship . . . in their images," Dorothea offers a parable that exposes the folly of identifying material forms or substance with godly powers (3.1.91, 99, 162). She proceeds to narrate a trajectory by which the "richest Iewels and purest gold" taken from matrons' necks are re-formed into a religious "Idoll" and then into a "basing" for washing a concubine's feet before being transformed again into the form of the god (3.1.167–82). Thus, in demonstrating the absolute fungibility of materials used to make religious idols, she seeks to expose the folly of equating material substances with anything bearing godly powers.

*The Virgin Martir* evokes an additional Protestant valence through its immediate resonance with the powerful tradition of representing

martyrdom established through Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. First published in 1563 and available in six editions by 1610, Foxe's compilation provided a contextual framework for reading Christian martyrdom in Reformation terms. Significantly, the first book of the *Book of Martyrs*, entitled in the 1570 edition "The state of the primitive church compared with this latter church of Rome," is devoted to the ten persecutions of the "primitive" church including the final persecution of Christians under Diocletian and Maximian.<sup>30</sup> Towards the end of this section, Dorothy's name is briefly included in a long list of other martyrs; she appears in the same manner in all editions of Foxe and this is the extent of her inclusion in the text. As Foxe explains, the abbreviated treatment of Dorothy and other early Christian martyrs (who were so celebrated by the medieval virgin martyr legends) reflects his disdain for the supposed "fabulous inventions" and "superstitious deuotion" of Catholic saints' lives.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, in presenting "the state of the primitive church" as a precursor or model for understanding the subsequent persecutions enacted by the "latter church of Rome," Foxe exemplifies the same pattern of linking early Christian persecution and the Catholic persecution of Protestants that is implicitly suggested in *The Virgin Martir*. In other words, the pattern of revisiting a scene of early Christian persecution in order to establish a model for framing contemporary religious threats was already extremely familiar to early modern audiences through the wide circulation of the *Book of Martyrs*.<sup>32</sup>

But if *The Virgin Martir*'s Protestant coherences help to mollify anxieties associated with the post-Reformation dramatization of a Catholic saint's legend, they do not fully characterize the play's content. Rather, Dekker and Massinger's adaptation of Dorothy's martyrdom insists upon retaining the bodily emphasis of its medieval sources—exemplified through Dorothea's physical virginity and her miraculous imperviousness to torture—suggesting that her Protestant disdain for material forms and matters of the flesh may be literally less than skin deep. The play's insistence on Dorothea's inviolable body, I argue, prevails in the face of the spiritualizing, or dematerializing, influences of Protestant reform and constitutes a form of resistance warranted by the bodily threat of conversion associated with "turning Turk." By identifying *The Virgin Martir*'s complex negotiation of both Catholic and Protestant templates, one can discern the significance of its distinct strategy of bodily resistance. Huston Diehl has called attention to the fact that narratives of Protestant martyrdom themselves do not emerge in a vacuum but are

self-consciously linked to the earlier genre of the medieval saint's tale.<sup>33</sup> She argues that Foxe "appropriates the images and forms of the medieval past only to subvert and reinterpret them" and suggests that his strategy of differentiating Protestantism from Catholicism is dialectic rather than oppositional.<sup>34</sup> This process of appropriation and refiguration, which I am attempting to uncover in the early seventeenth-century invention of a sexually chaste and physically inviolable heroine, is useful for understanding how the relationship between constancy of spirit and physical torture in Foxe differs from its representation in the medieval Catholic tradition.

In Foxe, the martyr's resistance to torture is meant to show precisely that the physical and spiritual are not linked: the inner, spiritual self remains untouched regardless of what happens to the body. For example, after Anne Askew is tortured on the rack, she describes herself as "nigh dead" and must be "laid in a bed with as weary and painfull bones as ever had pacient Job"; but despite her physical suffering and the threat of being sent to Newgate, she tells the Lord Chancellor, "I wold rather die, than to breake my faith."<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Foxe's martyrs, the medieval virgin's resistance to physical torture conveys the inviolable nature of her body itself. The miraculous restoration of her physical perfection, rather than the endurance of a separate spiritual self, is the point. In other words, the physical constitutes the sign of constancy rather than being used to show that spiritual constancy endures even when the physical is violated.<sup>36</sup> John Bale's introduction to his edition of *The first examinacyon of Anne Askew* (1546) exemplifies this distinction by paralleling Askew's constancy with a "lyke faythfull" woman named Blandina, who was martyred at Lyons in 177 AD.<sup>37</sup> The comparison is intended to illuminate Askew's ties to an older tradition of martyrdom; however, the subtle differences between Askew and Blandina are just as revealing. In response to torture from their persecutors, "Blandina never fainted in torment. No more ded Anne Askewe in sprete."<sup>38</sup> Whereas Blandina exemplifies her faith and virtue through bodily resilience, Askew does so through strength of spirit.

A striking difference exists between the primary methods of torture depicted in Foxe and in the virgin martyr legends. Above all, the most common method of torture and execution pictured in the *Book of Martyrs* is burning, a distinctly spiritual disposing of the body. As exemplified by the 1570 frontispiece "The Burning of William Sawter," numerous woodcuts in Foxe feature martyred bodies engulfed in flames but rarely the penetration of their flesh. As

James Knapp has argued, the iconic repetition in Foxe of the immolation of martyred bodies pointedly diverges from the “universal or typological illustrations” associated with Catholic martyrdom and emphasizes “not their suffering” or the distinct manner of their deaths, but the Protestant martyrs’ “commitment to Christian practice.”<sup>39</sup> According to the *OED*, “martyr” became specifically associated with “death by fire” only after the Reformation (and probably as a consequence of Foxe).<sup>40</sup> By contrast, the bodies of Catholic virgin martyrs are rarely ignited by fire but frequently pierced, penetrated, and dismembered, as well as threatened with rape. The executions of martyrs such as St. Lucy from Jacobus’s *Legenda aurea* (see figure 1) depict the saint being penetrated through the midsection by a long sword. Similarly, Antonio Gallonio’s *Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio*, published in Rome for a Continental audience in 1591, features forty engravings of Catholic martyrs being penetrated by sharp instruments, beaten with cudgels, subjected to the amputation of tongues, breasts, and limbs, stripped and affixed to crosses and wheels, and dragged through the streets by horses (see figure 2).<sup>41</sup> Though the martyrs’ bodies are pierced, penetrated, dismembered, strung up, beaten, broiled, stretched, and dragged, their faces betray a peaceful countenance. In the Catholic tradition, the only thing that bears a permanent physical effect on the Catholic martyrs is the final death blow, and even in the moment of death, their bodies often remain unscarred.

Within the context of medieval Catholic torture, the threat of rape plays a distinct and crucial role. Unlike other forms of torture, the implied irreversibility of rape suggests that it eradicates the very thing constitutive of female sainthood. Caroline Walker Bynum writes of *The Golden Legend*, “[T]he major achievement of holy women is dying in defense of their virginity.”<sup>42</sup> In effect, the saint’s final martyrdom is necessary in order to ensure the perpetual preservation of her virginity. In contrast to medieval martyrs, Foxe’s Protestant martyrs are not virgins, though they may well be models of Christian virtue. Whereas it is absolutely crucial that the virgin martyr remain a virgin in order to prove her innate virtue, the sexual status of Foxe’s martyrs is perhaps irrelevant, in keeping with the deemphasis of their physical status. Similarly, early modern dramas that invoke Foxe through their provenance, such as Heywood’s *If You Know Not Me, You know Nobody, Part I* (1605) and Dekker’s *Whore of Babylon* (1607), do not feature a sexual threat to their heroines even though their heroines are virginal and they allegorically employ





Figure 1. "Torture of St. Lucy," Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, MS HM 3027, fol. 4v. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

tropes of whoredom and chastity.<sup>43</sup> Whereas the spiritual endurance of the Protestant martyr is meant to deemphasize his or her physical body, the Catholic tradition of martyrdom revolves around the resilient physicality of the virgin's body—its deliberate gendering, its intactness, its oneness with the soul, and its materialization of sexual and spiritual chastity.

Revealing her ties to the Catholic tradition, Dorothea in *The Virgin Martir* is constantly threatened with physical torture, as well as dragged by her hair, tied to a pillar and beaten, and finally beheaded. A distinctive element of this violence is its enactment upon a body that is completely inert, vulnerable, often restrained by cords or other contraptions, and yet of a materiality and integrity that persists beyond all efforts to undo it. Despite their increasing exertions, Dorothea's persecutors find that torture has no effect on her body. They marvel that with every blow, "her face / Has more bewitching beauty than before" (4.2.94–95), and question whether the "bridge of her nose" is "full of iron worke" (4.2.98) or the cudgels being used against her are "counterfeit" (4.2.99). Rather than beg for mercy, Dorothea patiently endures and even welcomes the torture inflicted upon her. After receiving a sentence of death, she remarks,



Figure 2. Tortures of Catholic martyrs, featuring martyrs bound, pierced, and beaten with cudgels. Antonio Gallonio, *Trattato de gli instrumenti de martirio*, Rome 1591. Reproduced by permission of the Henry Charles Lea Library, University of Pennsylvania.

The visage of a hangman frights not me;  
 The sight of whips, rackes, gibbets, axes, fires  
 Are scaffoldings, by which my soule climbs vp  
 To an Eternall habitation.

(2.3.166–69)

The metaphor of her soul climbing up to heaven via “scaffoldings” composed of torture devices figures the soul as a bodily entity

engaged in the physical act of climbing (as if climbing a ladder) and reinforces an affinity between body and spirit. The significance of “scaffoldings” as a physical structure on the stage also reinforces this affinity in that, quite possibly, the ladder used for Dorothea’s physical execution was also used to represent her spiritual ascension into heaven. Thus, *The Virgin Martir* sets up an understanding of spiritual faith and salvation that is inseparable from the physical: the soul depends on the physical violence inflicted on the body in order to make its way to heaven. Even the word “habitation,” used to describe the soul’s final destination, suggests a physical space.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the various torture devices that Dorothea references—“whips, racks, gibbets, axes, fires”—conjure images of violence that have a strong visceral connotation, recalling the Catholic instruments of the passion. In this way, they are quite unlike the almost exclusive use of fire that merely obliterates Protestant bodies in *Foxe*. The play references such instruments of torture a second time when, following Theolophilus’s conversion, he requests that the “thousand engines of studied crueltie,” which he has been storing in his own house, be seized and used against him (5.2.182). He even begs to be allowed to “feelee / As the Sicilian did his brazen bull,” invoking one of the same cruel devices pictured in Gallonio’s Counter-Reformation martyrology (5.2.184–185).<sup>45</sup>

The bodily emphasis of Catholic martyrdom resonates with the performance of Christ’s passion in the medieval mystery plays and with narratives of host desecration.<sup>46</sup> The inviolable virgin’s body, the crucifixion of Christ, and the bleeding host are deeply powerful precisely because they epitomize presence and wholeness—a melding of body and spirit that bespeaks holiness—while perhaps simultaneously concealing an anxiety about physical absence or lack. The broader Catholic resonance of Dorothea’s torture is reinforced in *The Virgin Martir* by the fact that it is carried out by her former servants, Hircius and Spungius, who have turned apostate against her. Upon being confronted with her tormenters, Dorothea exclaims,

You two! whom I like foster children fed,  
 And lengthen’d out your starued life with bread:  
 You be my hangmen! whom when vp the ladder  
 Death hald you to be strangled, I fetcht downe,  
 Clothd you, and warned you, you two my tormenters.

(4.2.79–83)

Just as the conventional stripping and torturing of the virgin martyr recalls the mutilation of Christ’s naked body, this scene clearly

invokes Christ's crucifixion wherein Christ sacrifices his flesh in order to save the souls of those who have sinned against him. Dorothea's identification of her crucifiers as "foster children" suggests a number of possible connotations, including Christ's betrayal by Judas and by Peter, his betrayal by the Jews and converted Gentiles of Israel, and, perhaps most tantalizingly, the Christian view of Islam as an illegitimate offspring of Christianity. The comedic status of Dorothea's tormenters complicates these connotations but in other ways effects an equivocation that is reflective of the dual anxieties of presence and absence associated with Christ's flesh and the bread of communion.<sup>47</sup> While on one hand the potential comedy of the scene mitigates the violence done to Dorothea's body, it also underscores the play's investment in her embodied virtue by refusing to subject her to more efficacious blows.<sup>48</sup> Though the precise physical ramifications of the torture inflicted by Spungius and Hircius remain ambiguous, the scene nonetheless produces a spectacle of Dorothea's body being tied to a pillar and beaten by two men.

As Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* seems to bear out for modern audiences, this spectacle of violence was potentially erotic and thrilling in the way that pornography might be. Importantly for the stage, what signifies as martyrdom in one register signifies as visual sadism in another.<sup>49</sup> In addition to its reputation for old-fashioned plays, the Red Bull Theater, where *The Virgin Martir* was performed, had a particular penchant for drawing large crowds to witness shocking scenes and violence.<sup>50</sup> One might explain *The Virgin Martir*'s predilection for Catholic torture by the likelihood that it could be simulated more easily and more convincingly than the Protestant igniting of bodies. But I would suggest that the specific spectacle of sadistic torture inflicted upon an inviolable body held a particular appeal of its own in the early seventeenth century. It was this particular aspect of Catholic martyrdom that resurfaced in plays dramatizing the threat of Islam to contemporary Christendom. The thrusting of Oriana's virginal body onto the scaffolding in *The Knight of Malta* (1616–1619), the binding of Vitelli "in heavy chains / That eat into his flesh" in *The Renegado* (1624), and the hoisting of Sir Thomas Sherley's body onto the rack in *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* (1607) attested to the physical pressures of religious conversion in places like Malta, Tunis, and Kea.<sup>51</sup> The threat of sadistic Turkish violence against Christians was enhanced by its correlation to a real-life danger (Christians were being captured and tortured in the Ottoman empire), and in this sense its resonance with

a history of Catholic torture and martyrdom offered a particularly empowering model of resistance. Early seventeenth-century sermons preached by Edward Kellet, Henry Byam, and William Gouge for the Christian recovery of Islamic converts emphasize the superiority of choosing martyrdom over conversion; Byam specifically holds up the example of early Christian “Women-Martyrs . . . Witnesse S. Agnes 12. yeeres old; Cecilia, Agatha, & a world besides.”<sup>52</sup> As I will continue to argue, the mercilessly penetrated but ultimately impermeable Catholic body retained an appeal in the face of Islam that superseded both the material and commercial concerns of the stage as well as the spiritualizing influence of the Reformation.

One can perceive a clear correlation between the tradition of Catholic martyrdom and seventeenth-century visual representations of Christian torture at the hands of Turks. A pamphlet printed at Oxford in 1617, entitled *Christopher Angell, A Grecian, Who Tasted of Many Stripes Inflicted by the Turkes*, features a crude woodcut of two Turks beating a martyr whose arms and legs are bound to a rectangular frame (see figure 3).<sup>53</sup> In his narrative, Angell explains that he was “bound hand and foot in maner of a crosse vpon the earth” while “two men dipping their rods in salt water began to scourge me, and when the one was lifting vp his hand, the other was ready to strike, so that I could take no rest, and my paine was most grievous: and so they continued beating me, saying, turne Turke, and we will free thee.”<sup>54</sup> Angell endures this painful torment by meditating on Christ’s passion and especially on the torture of former Christian martyrs, who “were fleshly men, and sinners, yet by the grace of God were strengthened to die.”<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, he is able to withstand the physical pressure to convert and even attests to a miraculous revival after being beaten to death: “I was perfectly dead, and so remained for the space of an houre, and againe after an houre, by the grace of God I revived.”<sup>56</sup> In emphasizing tremendous physical resistance and the miraculous revival of his dead body by God, Angell’s narrative resonates with a template of Catholic martyrdom.

Similarly, Francis Knight’s *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant*, printed at London in 1640, draws an implicit parallel between Catholic martyrdom and Turkish persecution by detailing tortures similar to those depicted in Counter-Reformation martyrologies like that of Antonio Gallonio.<sup>57</sup> This pamphlet contains another woodcut of a Christian being scourged by a Turk (see figure 4) and painstakingly describes the sadistic tortures that the author witnessed against



for himselfe, but others. But then I reasoned againe, Christ was both God and man, therefore hee could withstand the terrors of death: but I am a fleshly man, and perchance I cannot vndergoe the cruell pangs of death: but my conscience solved all this doubt, in that the Martyrs were fleshly men, and sinners, yet by the grace of God were strengthened to die, therefore by the same grace shall I be sustained. And in this cogitation I was much comforted, and prevailed in spirit, & wholly gaue my selfe over to suffer death: and they lead me streight waies to the place of execution, and bound me hand, and foot in maner of a crosse vpon the earth, as appeareth by this figure.



Figure 3. Woodcut of two Turks beating a Christian martyr. From *Christopher Angell, A Grecian, Who Tasted of Many Stripes Inflicted by the Turkes*, Oxford, 1617. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Christians in Algiers: “Some were crucified, others having their bones broken, were drawled along the streets at horse tails, others had their shoulders stab’d with knives, and burning Torches set in them dropping downe into their wounds; the Turkes biting of their flesh alive, so dyed, and foure of them being walled in were starved to death.”<sup>55</sup> In a similar manner, the frontispiece to *William Okeley, Ebenezzer; or, A Small Monument of Great Mercy, Appearing in the Miraculous Deliverance of William Okeley* (see figure 5) depicts

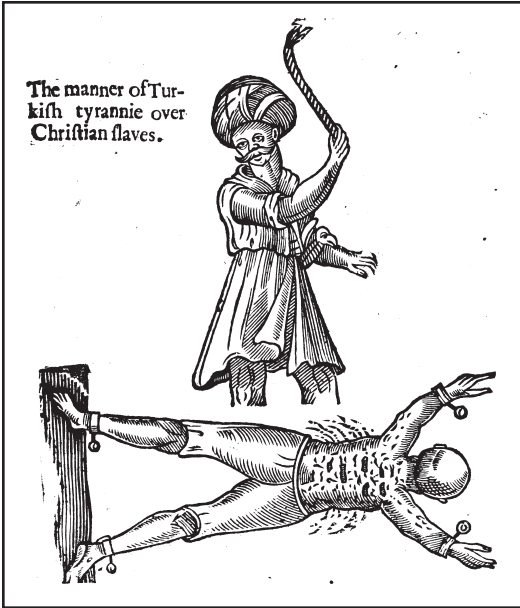


Figure 4. Woodcut of a Turk torturing a Christian martyr. From *Francis Knight, A Relation of Seven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant*, London, 1640. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.



Figure 5. Frontispiece, *William Okeley, Ebenezer; or, A Small Monument of Great Mercy, Appearing in the Miraculous Deliverance of William Okeley*, London, 1684. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.



images of a Christian strung upside down by his feet to a rod and beaten with a baton; a Christian being dragged across the ground by a horse while another Christian has his hair set on fire; and a Christian affixed to a wheel and being beaten with a sharp instrument.<sup>59</sup> Like the visual tradition of Catholic martyrdom, all of these images of Turkish persecution share an emphasis on gruesome and painful bodily torment as well as on the merciless sadism of the torturers.<sup>60</sup> In Okeley's case, the visual correspondence between the two traditions is particularly ironic given that Okeley was a strict Calvinist whose narrative frequently interweaves tirades against the Turks with a militant Protestant and anti-Catholic rhetoric.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, the threat of rape and its evasion—a threat that is distinctly absent from the tradition of Protestant martyrdom—unites both the tradition of Catholic martyrdom and the construction of Christian vulnerability to Islam on the dramatic stage. Dekker and Massinger's representation of Dorothea's threatened rape is particularly striking in that its emphasis in the play far exceeds the role it played in medieval versions of her legend. This shift seems to betray a deepening investment in the significance of sexual penetration with respect to religious conversion and resistance. In contrast to the minimal and largely symbolic threat of rape in her virgin martyr legend, the threat made against Dorothea in the play constitutes a direct command, which in turn presumes some kind of immediate action or response. Sapritius, the governor of Caesarea, orders his son to

Breake that enchanted Caue, enter, and rifle  
 The spoyles thy lust hunts after; I descend  
 To a base office, and become thy Pandar  
 In bringing thee this proud Thing, make her thy Whore,  
 Thy health lies here, if she deny to giue it,  
 Force it, imagine thy assault a towne,  
 Weake wall, too't, tis thine owne, beat but this downe.

(4.1.72–78)

The violence conveyed through Sapritius's instructions to "breake," "enter," "rifle," "force," "assault," and "beat downe" Dorothea's chastity is striking in its bluntness. By comparison, the threat of rape is never overt in the popular versions of Dorothy's legend by Bokenham, Caxton, and Villegas; instead, Dorothy's devotion to her virginity is expressed only through her initial rejection of the prefect's suit.<sup>62</sup> In addition, whereas medieval persecutors tend to respond to the virgin's sexual rejection with other forms of torture or a sentence

of death, Sapritius's threats to Dorothea's sexuality are pointed and persistent. When Antoninus fails to execute his father's command, Sapritius demands that the "slave from Brittain" be fetched from the galleys to carry out the deed. He then orders that slave to "drag that Thing [Dorothea] aside / And rauish her" (4.1.129, 149-50). When the slave refuses, Sapritius bellows, "Call in ten slaues, let euey one discouer / What lust desires, and surfet here his fill, / Call in ten slaues" (4.1.167-68).

While it would be inaccurate to say that the medieval martyr's physical virginity was less essential or central than it is in Dekker and Massinger's play, the elaborate threat of rape in the play calls more direct attention to its literal, or bodily, implications. Whereas the virginity of the medieval martyr was at least partly symbolic, sexual chastity assumed an immediate, bodily significance in the context of contemporary Christian-Muslim relations. The rape of a Christian virgin by a Turk would not only physically sever her maidenhead but also contaminate her bloodline if she should become impregnated. As I have suggested above, while the boundary of difference between "Christian" and "Turk" was ostensibly figured through religion, the conflation of sexual intercourse and conversion on the stage demonstrates how the categories of religion and race were complexly intertwined under the threat of "turning Turk." As Ania Loomba points out, "[A]nalogies between race and gender had already become important ways of defining each of these concepts . . . Sexuality is central to the idea of 'race' understood as lineage, or as bloodline, because the idea of racial purity depends upon the strict control of lineage."<sup>63</sup> Both Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Nauigations* (1589, 1598, 1600) attest to the particular vulnerability of Christian women to Turkish abduction, conversion, and sexual enslavement in Islamic harems. The integration of captured Christian women into royal Turkish families (like Safiye, concubine and Sultana Valide of Murad III, and mother of Mehmed III) demonstrated Christian women's direct, reproductive roles in the perpetuation of Turkish dynasties. The pervasive threat of rape in the "turning Turk" dramas and its consistent, miraculous evasion speak to the racial threat bound up in this notion of conversion.

However, unlike accounts of real life Turkish concubines, the dramatic stage never represented the successful sexual violation of a Christian woman by a Turk. Whereas Christian men frequently conquered the bodies of native eastern women on the stage, reinforcing what Lynda Boose has called a "fantasy of male parthenogenesis,"

which posited the unequivocal genetic dominance of the male's racial features, Christian women were never conquered by Turkish men.<sup>64</sup> But just as the absence of such a union preserved the fantasy that race could be controlled through a logic of male dominance, it also betrayed the anxious knowledge that the physical traits of the Turk would be passed to the offspring regardless of who the father was. While Protestant emphasis on spiritual interiority and universal Christian faith suggested that religious affiliation was in itself intangible, religious difference became distinctly embodied in conjunction with the figure of the Turk. Though in *The Virgin Martir* the pagans are not explicitly associated with racialized features, the overdetermined threat of rape in this play is inflected by anxieties about the forced sexual conversion of Christians by Turks, a resonance that could not have eluded its seventeenth-century audiences.

The specific manner in which Dorothea's rape by Antoninus is diverted has particular implications for male as well as female sexuality and offers a prescription for sexual chastity that is both physically and culturally constituted. The scene opens with the stage direction, "A bed thrust out, Antonius vpon it sicke, with Physitions about him, Sapritius and Macrinus, guards" (4.1). As Antoninus's attendants discuss his condition, which apparently stems from a broken heart, his friend Macrinus announces that "a Midwife" is needed to "deliuer him" from his ailment (4.1.20): "[He] will I feare lose life if by a woman / He is not brought to bed" (4.1.22–23). Macrinus continues, "stand by his Pillow / Some little while, and in his broken slumbers / Him shall you heare cry out on Dorothea" (4.1.24–26). In this way the stage is (literally) set for a recuperative sexual union to take place between Dorothea and Antoninus. However, the nature of such a union is distinctly perverted by the fact that the lovesick Antoninus is physically incapacitated and completely unmanned by his unrequited love; any consummation would require Dorothea to assume the dominant sexual role. When Antoninus's father commands him to take Dorothea by "force," Antoninus assures her,

I would not wound thine honour, pleasure forc'd  
 Are vnripe Apples, sowre, not worth the plucking,  
 Yet let me tell you, tis my father's will  
 That I should seize vpon you as my prey.  
 Which I abhorre as much as the blackest sinne  
 The villany of man did euer act.

(4.1.103–108)

Antoninus's aversion to seeking "pleasure forc'd" stands in stark contrast to the characterization of Dorothy's suitor in the play's medieval source materials. The three most prominent English translations of her legend represent her suitor to be the prefect himself, rather than his son. In these sources, Dorothy's rejection of the prefect's marriage proposal fuels his anger to begin with and prompts him to command that she be tortured and ultimately killed. The play's innovation in making Dorothea's chief persecutor the father of her suitor, rather than the suitor himself, produces a tension between persecutor and suitor whereby the suitor's restraint actually facilitates Dorothea's evasion of rape. In direct opposition to the mounting fury of the suitor of the medieval legend, the play's suitor restrains his desires and redirects them toward a different course. In effect, the refusal of Antoninus to rape Dorothea displaces the role of divine intervention in the virgin martyr legend. Thus, Antoninus demonstrates a new model of male heroism that is not present in the virgin martyr legends.<sup>65</sup> Cultivated by the female virgin's example of sexual virtue and resistance, Antoninus is an empathetic character who, while distinguished in battle, learns to restrain his sexuality and ultimately channels his bodily desires into a love for Christ. His affinities to the chivalric medieval knight may help to illuminate the medieval underpinnings of Christian brotherhood in seventeenth-century plays like *The Travails of the Three English Brothers* and *The Knight of Malta*, which dramatize pan-Christian oppositions to the contemporary Ottoman empire. *The Virgin Martir* brings into view the often indiscernible or otherwise inexplicable ways in which the Renaissance stage imports and juxtaposes medieval models (such as knighthood and virgin martyrdom) in order to imagine a resistance to the contemporary Ottoman empire.

Dorothea fosters Antoninus's gradual conversion over the course of the play through her own example of spiritual virtue and physical virginity. Addressing Antoninus from the place of her execution, she instructs him to "trace my steps" (4.3.94). His religious conversion from paganism to Christianity is manifested through his gradual departure from an economy of heterosexual desire and acceptance of a life of celibacy. The terms of this conversion may be understood through the contrasting agendas of Dorothea and Artemia, the marriageable daughter of Dioclesian. Whereas Dorothea persuades Antoninus to eschew marriage and bodily pleasures in exchange for heavenly bliss, Artemia attempts to win him over to the role of husband and, eventually, leader of Rome. Dorothea's conversion of

Antoninus from dynastic marriage partner to celibate martyr is paralleled by a conversion of Antoninus's attitude towards death. Both of these conversions may also be witnessed as conversions of genre, in that the play initially sets up the expectations of domestic tragedy and then subverts these expectations by interpreting the potentially tragic deaths of Dorothea and Antoninus as blissful triumphs.

Prior to his conversion Antoninus views Dorothea's impending execution as an irrevocable tragedy and begs Artemia to allow him to be killed in her place: "Preserue this temple (builded faire as yours is) / And Caesar neuer went in greater triumph / Than I shall to the scaffold" (2.3.157–59). By contrast, death is not tragic at all for Dorothea; rather, it represents a hastening to her reward in heaven, the longed-after union with her true bridegroom, and a means to the eternal preservation of her perfect chastity. She counsels Antoninus that his fear of death is misguided: "you onely dread / The Stroke, and not what followes when you are dead" (2.3.130–31). Thus, Dorothea's faith in the eternal bliss that follows death complicates and confounds the play's classification as a "tragedy" on its first-edition title page (1622), transforming it into a comedy of salvation. The play offers an empowering model for reconceptualizing one's options even in the face of overwhelming persecution. In other words, it is far better to martyr one's self than to capitulate to the pressures of conversion. Martyrdom resignifies tragedy as tragicomedy.

The role of the male British slave who also refuses to rape Dorothea reinforces the play's characterization of sexual chastity as a physical and cultural prophylactic against conversion. This character's insistence—that in refusing to carry out such an order he is merely "halfe a slaue" rather than "a damned whole one, a blacke vgly slaue" (4.1.154–55)—suggests a way of retaining some power and integrity even under the conditions of enslavement, just as his reminder of Britain's history of colonial subjugation under Rome offers a way of perceiving England's smallness in relation to the Ottoman empire as somehow noble or empowering. In contrast to the frequent gendering of virginity as female in the Middle Ages, the importance of male sexual restraint in *The Virgin Martir* demonstrates an emerging fluidity between "natural" and "cultural" constructions of racial difference—a connection that becomes solidified by the eighteenth century. While on the one hand, the preservation of Dorothea's female chastity guards against the literal contamination of her bloodline through sexual generation, on the other, the exercise of male sexual restraint suggests a social or behavioral component to

racial identity. Thus, racial identity is conceived both as a product of sexual generation and as something that can be controlled through cultural behavior—defined through sexual restraint, self-discipline, and civility. This model of resistance would have been particularly appealing to early modern audiences, given their association of Christian vulnerability to conversion with the male traders and adventurers who were conducting trade in the Mediterranean.

At the same time, the play evinces a certain degree of anxiety about the intangibility of faith and the efficacy of spiritual resolve alone as a countermeasure to conversion. Ultimately, it betrays a marked tension between investing authority in the notion of spiritual consent and insisting that faith must manifest itself in the physical realm. The necessity of a supplement, or prophylactic, to counteract conversion assumes particular significance in the context of early seventeenth-century English contact with the Ottoman empire and the racial anxieties it produced. As *The Virgin Martir* bears out, the preservation of Christianity relies not only on the Christian woman's chastity but also on that of the Christian male who more frequently found himself venturing into foreign territories and confronting persecution or temptation. Antoninus seems to allude to this contemporary context when he describes wearing Dorothea's "figure" into battle as a source of protection:

To Dorothea, tell her I haue worn,  
In all the battailes I haue fought her figure,  
Her figure in my heart, which like a deity  
Hath still protected me

(1.1.461–64)

Reminiscent of the female images imprinted on the insides of medieval shields, the figure of Dorothea that Antoninus wears into battle emblemizes an emerging model of male heroism that, like medieval knighthood, is cultivated through the example of female chastity. Though immaterial in nature, this "figure," which Antoninus describes as "like a deity," bears a striking resemblance to the "holy relic" worn by the Christian heroine in Massinger's *The Renegado* as a shield against Turkish lust. In *The Renegado*, the Christian virgin has been taken prisoner by a Turkish *basha* in Tunis and receives the relic from a Jesuit priest. Wearing it, she is protected from the Turk's predatory desire which threatens every moment to destroy her chastity and convert her. Like the virgin's intact maidenhead, it offers a physical manifestation of her virtue—her inconvertible Christian

essence. The Christian heroine's need for a physical prophylactic is revealing of the deep anxieties surrounding her sexual contamination and its potential to undo the categorical differences between "Christian" and "Turk." Identifying the resonance between *The Virgin Martir* and contemporary plays like *The Renegado* affords not only a broader interpretation of the former play but also a recognition of the medieval models that inform Christian resistance to Islam in the latter. In order to contain the contemporary threat associated with "turning Turk" and its racial valences, the dramatic stage must reach back into the Catholic past for a template of chastity that is both spiritually and physically constituted.

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

#### NOTES

This article is dedicated to Elizabeth Williamson for sharing her love of Renaissance drama with me. Earlier versions of this article were presented at the Shakespeare Association of America conference, the Medieval-Renaissance Seminar at the University of Pennsylvania, and the "Researching the Archive" Seminar at the Folger Institute. I am indebted to the members of these groups for their helpful suggestions, especially Jean Howard, Ania Loomba, David Wallace, Margreta de Grazia, Peter Stallybrass, Barbara Fuchs, Linda Peck, David Kastan, Clare Costley, Jessica Rosenfeld, Michelle Karnes, and Marissa Greenberg. I am also enormously grateful to John Pollack, Dan Traister, and Lynne Farrington of the Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Pennsylvania for their unfailing expertise and generosity.

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Bentley identifies 1620 as the earliest performance date with some degree of certainty, based upon a sizable licensing fee paid to Sir George Buc, Master of the Revels, on 6 October 1620. See Bentley's *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 4:754. In this, Bentley refutes F. G. Fleay's speculation that Dekker first wrote the play in 1612 and that it appears in Henslowe's records as the lost *Dioclesian*, later to be revised by Massinger and retitled *The Virgin Martir*. For this view, see Fleay's *A Biographical Chronology of the English Drama, 1559–1642* (London, 1891), 212–13.

<sup>2</sup> All quotations from the play are based on Phillip Massinger and Thomas Dekker, *The Virgin Martir, A Tragedie*, London, 1622 (STC 17644). Line numbers correspond to Fredson Bowers's critical edition of the play in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966). Hereafter cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line.

<sup>3</sup> On the suppression of religious drama and the secularization of the theater in post-Reformation England, see Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000); Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Lawrence Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001); Paul White, *Theatre and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993); Harold



Gardiner, *Mysteries' End* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1946); and Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300–1660* (London: Routledge, 1980). Recent studies like Clopper's seek to complicate the view that biblical drama was unilaterally suppressed in England, especially prior to the 1570s, and offer evidence of the ways in which it persisted.

<sup>4</sup> The record of the fee is made in Sir Henry Herbert's office-book, which contains some extracts from the otherwise scant records of George Buc, Herbert's predecessor as Master of the Revels. As Bentley notes, the specific amount of the fee indicates that it was paid for the licensing of a new play which required revision, probably due to "censorable matter" (3:265–66). Presumably, the play's alignment of the martyred heroine with certain Protestant sensibilities and her pagan enemies with Marian persecutors constituted enough of a concession to get the play past the censors.

<sup>5</sup> Jose M. Ruano de la Haza, "Unparalleled Lives: Hagiographical Drama in Seventeenth-Century England and Spain," in *Parallel Lives: Spanish and English National Drama 1580–1680*, ed. Louise and Peter Fothergill-Payne (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1991), 257. De la Haza concludes that in general the play's religious content is superficial. Louise Clubb argues that the play bears an essential affinity to the Italian genre of *tragedia sacra*, a product of the Continental Counter-Reformation, and suggests that it appealed to Roman Catholics in England who could identify with the persecuted Roman heroine ("The Virgin Martyr and the Tragedia Sacra," *Renaissance Drama* 7 [1964]: 103–26). Other critics who align the play with the Counter-Reformation include Uve Christian Fischer, "Un drama martirologico barocco: *The Virgin Martyr* di Philip Massinger," *Sicilorum Gymnasium* 16 (1963): 1–19; Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, notes, and commentaries to texts in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980–1983), 3:181–88; and Walter Cohen, *Drama of a Nation: Public Theater in Renaissance England and Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), 375. By contrast, Julia Gasper reads the play as Protestant propaganda; see "The Virgin Martyr and the War in Germany," in her *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). Larry Champion also refutes Clubb's reading of the play as Catholic; see "Disaster With My So Many Joys: Structure and Perspective in Massinger and Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984): 200. Others who argue that the play's religious content is superficial include George Price, *Thomas Dekker* (New York: Twayne, 1969), 95–96; and Peter Mullany, "Religion in Massinger's and Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr*," *Komos* 2 (1970): 89–97.

<sup>6</sup> The issue of whether Turks were racialized is a controversial one for modern scholars, complicated by the inconsistent ways in which "Turk" was delimited in the early modern period, as well as the thorny question of whether racial difference necessarily involves skin color or applies to other differences as well. While "Turks" from Turkey were not generally associated with dark skin, they were frequently depicted with distinctive noses and bone structures—features exaggerated in popular caricatures of Turks' heads that appeared on English signs and in the centers of archery targets. Often the term "Turk" extended beyond the geographical boundary of Turkey to designate all Muslims or all subjects of the Ottoman empire and its tributary states. Thus, "Turk" often encompassed or was even interchangeable with the North African "Moor," who was almost always associated with dark skin.

<sup>7</sup> When I refer to "race" in the early modern period, I am referring to an extremely complex and slippery notion of difference that is sometimes distinguished by skin

color or other somatic differences, sometimes by humoral compositions dictated by geography and climate, sometimes by the effects of diet, exercise, or cosmetics, sometimes by physical marks like circumcision, and sometimes by a certain relationship between internal temperament and external complexion. For a useful discussion of how religious and bodily differences were complexly interrelated in the early modern period, see Ania Loomba, "Religion, Colour, and Racial Difference," in her *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), esp. 37–39.

<sup>8</sup> See *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas Noble and Thomas Head (University Park: Penn State Univ. Press, 1995), xxi.

<sup>9</sup> See Kirsten Wolf, "The Legend of Saint Dorothy: Medieval Vernacular Renderings and their Latin Sources," *Analecta Bollandiana* 114 (1996): 41–72; and Gasper, "The Sources of *The Virgin Martyr*," *Review of English Studies* 42.165 (1991): 17–31.

<sup>10</sup> See Karen Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> For more detailed discussion of Dorothy's legend in each of these sources, see Wolf and Gasper.

<sup>12</sup> As far as I have been able to determine, *The Virgin Martir* is the only known early modern play that overtly dramatizes the martyrdom of a Catholic saint. Henry Shirley's *The Martyr'd Souldier* dramatizes the Vandal persecutions of the African Catholics under Hunneric (477–484 AD) but does not center on the martyrdom of any single Catholic saint. *The Martyr'd Souldier* was first published in 1638, and Bentley speculates that it was first performed no later than 1619, possibly also at the Red Bull (5:1060–62). As opposed to the absence of plays about Catholic saints, at least a handful of Jacobean dramas honored Protestant saints. These include the anonymous *Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), Cyril Tourneur's *Atheist's Tragedy* (1609), John Marston's *Sophonisba* (1605), and Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle's *Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* (1598). On Protestant saints plays, see Anne Lancashire, "The Second Maiden's Tragedy: A Jacobean Saint's Life," *Review of English Studies* 25 (1974): 267–79.

<sup>13</sup> See Theodora Jankowski's *Pure Resistance: Queer Virginity in Early Modern English Drama* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) on the subversive (or "queer") signification of virginity in the early modern period. Jankowski draws a clear distinction between premarital virginity in a Protestant context and the Catholic validation of vowed virginity. Reading *The Virgin Martir* in the former context, she argues that the Protestant mandate against celibacy and the early modern valorization of the patriarchal family rendered virginity a highly subversive choice in the early modern period.

<sup>14</sup> Reflecting a similar method of analysis, Linda McJannet has suggested that the classical settings of Shakespeare's *Pericles* and *The Comedy of Errors* are partly informed by their contemporary resonance with the Ottoman empire, which occupies the same geographical territory ("Genre and Geography: The Eastern Mediterranean in *Pericles* and *The Comedy of Errors*," in *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan [London: Associated Univ. Press, 1998], 86–106). A similar recognition of how the Old World is partially reinscribed by the contemporary significance of its Mediterranean geography is reflected in recent discussions of *The Tempest* and its setting. See, for example, Jerry Brotton, "This Tunis, sir, was Carthage": Contesting

Colonialism in *The Tempest*,” in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), 23–42.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Brenner’s *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London’s Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993) offers a detailed history of the factors that enabled England’s penetration of the eastern markets and the rise of the joint-stock companies.

<sup>16</sup> The volume of the *Calendar* covering the years 1611 to 1618 lists 54 discrete entries under Turkish “Piracies” or “Pirates” (680). That number jumps to 96 entries in the next volume covering the years 1619 to 1623, including substantial increases under the categories of “contributions for the suppression of pirates” and “expeditions against pirates” (695). See indexes of *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I, 1611–1618* and *1619–1623*, first published by Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, London, 1858; repr., ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (Kraus Reprint Ltd., Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967).

<sup>17</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, 1619–1623*:393.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Williams, *Notes Concerning Trade Collected by Robr Williams, 1631–1654* (Univ. of Pennsylvania, MS Codex 207).

<sup>19</sup> See Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), esp. 107–62. See also Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies* (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), for an analysis of how the rapid rise of global trade fostered English anxieties about foreign agents that were manifested in discourses of bodily disease.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Howard, “Gender on the Periphery,” in *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Valencia, 2001*, ed. Tom Clayton, Susan Brock, and Vicente Forés (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2004), 344–62.

<sup>21</sup> Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 125.

<sup>22</sup> Shifting royal policies toward piracy and trade mirrored the stage’s increasing tendency to tame the renegade hero. While Queen Elizabeth implicitly sanctioned acts of English piracy committed against Spanish and Barbary corsairs, King James attempted to impose tighter regulations on English privateering and adopted a more cautious policy toward trade with the Ottoman empire.

<sup>23</sup> For a related argument, see Howard, “An English Lass Amid the Moors: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and National Identity in Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West*,” in *Women, “Race,” and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 101–17.

<sup>24</sup> Indeed, because of its inaccessibility by water, the specific geographical region of Cappadocia bore little if any contemporary relevance to the English. In fact, Cappadocia is separated from the Mediterranean Sea by the nearly impenetrable Toros mountain range, which is part of the Himalayan mountain belt that stretches across all of Asia. Cappadocia’s distinctive limestone cliffs and underground caves were instrumental in sheltering Christians from Arabs during the invasions of the seventh century, but this particular history of Christian persecution in which the landscape played such a crucial role does not seem to signify in the play.

<sup>25</sup> See *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captive Narratives from Early Modern England*, ed. Vitkus (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2001); and Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999).

<sup>26</sup> *OED*, s.v. “travail,” esp. definitions 1.1–6, and s.v. “travel,” esp. definitions 1 and 2.

<sup>27</sup> The conflation between castration and the cut of circumcision associated with Muslims and Jews is a running joke on the early modern stage. Jonathan Burton has argued that circumcision/castration and conversion in the drama are almost always displaced onto clown figures as a way to disavow the true allure and power of Islam, which he argues receives more accurate representation in non-dramatic texts of the period (“English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on ‘Turning Turk’ in Early Modern Texts,” *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2 [2002]: 35–67). Burton extends this argument in *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2005) to suggest that “turning Turk” is presented on the stage as “a feigned and empty simulacrum,” which in fact operates as a foil for domestic anxieties about English masculinity (93). In *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), James Shapiro offers an historical analysis of the common conflation of circumcision and castration in early modern representations of Jews and Jewish conversion; see esp. 114–17. For an insightful discussion of the typological links between Jews and Muslims, see Julia Reinhard Lupton, “*Othello* Circumcised: Shakespeare and the Pauline Discourse of Nations,” *Representations* 57 (1997): 73–89.

<sup>28</sup> Ironically, in the ancient Christian context, it was the lack of circumcision, rather than its occurrence, that was stigmatized by early Christians. Christianized Jews viewed circumcision as a mark of their superiority over Gentile and pagan converts, who were uncircumcised.

<sup>29</sup> That Spungius’s line might also suggest “walking on Christian souls,” as opposed to walking in the shoes of Christians, captures the instability of his identity as one who alternately persecutes Christians and reconverts to Christianity.

<sup>30</sup> Foxe identifies his source for the primitive church as Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*. He overtly rejects the Catholic sources, such as Jacobus de Voragine’s *Legenda aurea*, through which stories of early Christian martyrs had been widely disseminated in the Middle Ages.

<sup>31</sup> John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 3 vols. (London, 1570 ed.), 1:273.

<sup>32</sup> John R. Knott offers a detailed analysis of Foxe’s use of the persecution of the primitive church as a precedent for contemporary narratives of martyrdom (“Heroic Suffering,” in his *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993], 33–83). James Knapp has also discussed Foxe’s reliance on historical precedent and specifically the chronicles of Eusebius to provide an “analogue to the current strife in the Christian world” (“Stories and Icons: Reorienting the Visual in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*,” in his *Illustrating the Past in Early Modern England: The Representation of History in Printed Books* [London: Ashgate, 2003], 131).

<sup>33</sup> See Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1997). Diehl’s argument on this point may be seen to concur with Eamon Duffy’s influential claim (*The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992]) that English Protestantism was largely derived through Catholic forms and that more continuities exist between Catholicism and Protestantism than we typically acknowledge.

<sup>34</sup> Diehl, 45.

<sup>35</sup> Foxe, 3:1418–19.

<sup>36</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum has written of the bodily emphasis of medieval spirituality: the saint was defined not by overcoming but by harnessing her body—by enduring illness, by self-flagellation, by fasting (“The Female Body and Religious Practice in Later Middle Ages,” in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body I*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi [New York: Zone, 1989], 161–219). See also Bynum’s discussion of the late medieval “heightened concern with matter, with corporeality, with sensuality” and the accompanying emphasis on the Eucharist as suffering and bleeding flesh, and on the “bodiliness of Christ’s humanity” in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987), 252.

<sup>37</sup> John Bale’s introductory remark is reprinted in *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, ed. Elaine V. Beilin (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 10. Despite the overall congruity between Bale’s (1546, 1547) and Foxe’s editions, Bale’s introduction was omitted from all editions of *Actes and Monuments*. For a detailed analysis of the editorial differences between Bale’s and Foxe’s treatment of Askew, see Thomas Freeman and Sarah Wall, “Racking the Body, Shaping the Text: The Account of Anne Askew in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 1165–96.

<sup>38</sup> *Anne Askew*, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Knapp, 134, 160.

<sup>40</sup> *OED*, s.v. “martyr,” 1.2.a.

<sup>41</sup> Antonio Gallonio, *Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio, e delle carie maniere di martoriare usata da’ gentili contro christiani, descritte et intagliate in rame* (Rome, 1591). The original copper plates for these images featured the designs of Giovanni de Guerra, painter to Pope Sixtus V, and were engraved by Antonio Tempesta. Following the original Italian edition, a Latin edition of Gallonio’s text was printed in Rome in 1594 and in Antwerp in 1600. The first English translation was prepared by A. R. Allison under the title *Tortures and Torments of the Christian Martyrs* (Paris: Fortune Press, 1903; New York: Walden Publications, 1939). More recently, an edition based on Allison’s translation but with new illustrations was published by the alternative Feral Press and marketed as erotica (*Tortures and Torments of the Christian Martyrs: The Classic Martyrology*, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> Bynum, “The Female Body,” 175.

<sup>43</sup> In these plays, the heroines’ virginity also clearly invokes the virginal Queen Elizabeth, on whom the characters are based and in whose memory the plays were nostalgically written. The allegorical tropes of whoredom and chastity that Protestant discourses frequently appropriate to demonize Catholics are derived from the biblical Whore of Babylon in *Revelations*. Vitkus has drawn attention to how both Catholic and Islamic conversion are associated with sexual transgression in the early modern period (“Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 [1997]: 145–76). But I would nuance Vitkus’s attempt to parallel Catholic and Islamic conversion by suggesting that the sexual troping of Catholic conversion is distinctly allegorical in nature, whereas the link between sexual intercourse and “turning Turk” in the early modern drama is unequivocally literal.

<sup>44</sup> “Habitation” derives from the Latin verb “habitare,” meaning to have possession of, to inhabit, or to dwell (*OED*). A “habitat” refers to a physical shelter or abode and the related “habit,” denoting clothing, suggests material worn on the outside of the body that both defines and conforms to its external contours. For a discussion of clothing and its construction of early modern subjecthood, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> As described in Allison's English translation of Gallonio, the brazen bull was "a most exceeding cruel sort of punishment in use among the Ancients, into which . . . anyone that was to be tortured was cast by an opening or door that was in its side. Then the door being shut to again, a fire was lighted about the bull, causing those imprisoned therein to suffer unexampled agonies, and by their lamentations and cries to imitate the bellowing of a bull" (123).

<sup>46</sup> Claire Sponsler also links these acts of violence in discussing the medieval spectacle of violated bodies and how it opened a space of resistance to contemporary ideologies of social wholeness ("Violated Bodies: The Spectacle of Suffering in Corpus Christi Pageants," in her *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods, and Theatricality in Late Medieval England* [Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997], 136–60).

<sup>47</sup> On the trope of ineffective or clownish torturers in the medieval Corpus Christi pageants, see V. A. Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996), 175–205.

<sup>48</sup> Offering another view on Dorothea's evasion of physical harm, Nova Myhill argues that theatrical representation "undercuts" the miracle of martyrdom, creating a spectacle that is "simultaneously authentic and counterfeit" ("Making Death a Miracle: Audience and the Genes of Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*," *Early Theatre* 7.2 [2004]: 9).

<sup>49</sup> See Karen Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000) for a reading of *The Virgin Martir* as "sodomasochistic pornography" (53). Other critics have discussed the erotic appeal of medieval virgin martyr legends and mystery passion plays, also comparing them to pornography. See for example, Winstead, *Chaste Passions: Medieval English Virgin Martyr Legends* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2000), 3. Sheila Delany seeks to complicate the association of medieval martyrology with pornography or "masculinist voyeuristic sadism" in "Last Things and Afterlives," in her *Impolitic Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), 186.

<sup>50</sup> See Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), for a discussion of how the large, open amphitheatre of the Red Bull lent itself to "lavishly staged plays" and battle scenes in the vein of *Tamburlaine* (14). See also Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987) on the Red Bull's reputation for low theatrical standards, its less than respectable location, and its appeal to "Citizens, and the meaner sort of people" (185).

<sup>51</sup> Massinger, *The Renegado*, in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, ed. Vitkus (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2000), 4.2.49–50.

<sup>52</sup> Henry Byam, "A Retvrne from Argier," in Edward Kellet and Byam's *A Retvrne from Argier: A Semon Preached at Minhead in the County of Somerset the 16 of March, 1627 at the re-admission of a relapsed Christian into our Church* (London, 1628), 76; and William Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy. Set out in A Sermon Preached in Stepny Church neere London at the receiving of a Penitent Renegado into the Church, Oct. 21, 1638* (London, 1639).

<sup>53</sup> Christopher Angelos, *Christopher Angell, A Grecian, Who Tasted of Many Stripes Inflicted by the Turkes* (Oxford, 1617), A4v.

<sup>54</sup> Angelos, A4r.

<sup>55</sup> Angelos, A4v.

<sup>56</sup> Angelos, A4r.



<sup>57</sup> See Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant* (London, 1640).

<sup>58</sup> Knight, 6.

<sup>59</sup> William Okeley, *William Okeley, Ebenezer; or, A Small Monument of Great Mercy, Appearing in the Miraculous Deliverance of William Okeley* (London, 1675).

<sup>60</sup> Similar accounts of torture inflicted by Turks include those of John Rawlins in *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol* (London, 1622; repr. in Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, esp. 102–3); and Sir Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant* (London, 1636), esp. 52.

<sup>61</sup> See Vitkus's preface to Okeley's narrative in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 124–26. As Vitkus notes, when Okeley was captured in Algiers he was in fact on a mission to help found a new colony in the West Indies where Protestant worship could be exercised free of Laudian influences. Vitkus suggests that the fact that Okeley's narrative was published thirty-two years after he returned to England from captivity reflects a revival of anti-royalist Protestantism in England following the Popish Plot of 1678.

<sup>62</sup> A large body of criticism explores the importance and function of virginity in the Middle Ages. These studies have uncovered the ways in which virgin martyr legends provided moral guidance for both anchoresses and lay readers and how celibacy offered medieval women a means of autonomy and self-fashioning that was at once empowering and disabling. See, for example, Katherine Lewis, "Model Girls? Virgin-Martyrs and the Training of Young Women in Late Medieval England," in *Young Medieval Women*, ed. Lewis, Noel James Menuge, and Kim M. Phillips (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 25–46; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "The Virgin's Tale," in *Feminist Reading in Middle English Literature*, ed. Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London: Routledge, 1994), 165–94; Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001); Julie Hassel, *Choosing Not to Marry: Women and Autonomy in the Katherine Group* (London: Routledge, 2002); and Ruth Evans, "Virginites," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 21–39.

<sup>63</sup> Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, 32.

<sup>64</sup> Lynda Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race': Racial discourse in early modern England and the unrepresentable black woman," in *Women, "Race," and Writing*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> For a broader discussion of male heroism and how it was redefined during the seventeenth century in ways that privileged endurance over action, see Mary Beth Rose, *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002).