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ENGLISH IDENTITY AND MUSLIM CAPTIVITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1580-1640

A Dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Arch Dalrymple III Department of History
The University of Mississippi

by

JOEL M. GILLASPIE
August 2015

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the emergence of English identity that captivity and Muslims challenged from 1580-1640 as expressed captivity narratives. The narratives provide numerous insights into the emerging English identity as Englishmen explored and became captives in the Mediterranean in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart period. The captivity narratives are unique in that they portray Englishmen at their weakest and in the most helpless situations as England attempted to spread its trade relations throughout the Mediterranean. Few other genres of literature provide such insight into English identity through the particular experience as captivity. Overall, this can provide one more step along the path of understanding what it meant to be English in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England.

For Laurie

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INTRODUCTION

In 1563, English seaman John Fox (not the author of *Acts and Monuments*) sailed from England aboard *The Three Half Moons* on a trade expedition to Spanish territories in the Mediterranean. As his ship passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, eight Turkish galleys overwhelmed his ship and forced all those who surrendered into captivity. Fox spent the next thirteen years in Alexandria working as a captive barber. After thirteen years of captivity, in the winter of 1577, Fox and seven other captives had grown tired of their imprisonment and decided to escape. The men began to stockpile what weapons they could find and worked to free themselves from their shackles. With plans made, chains removed, and weapons in hand, the group enacted their escape plan one night in January 1577. They anxiously waited for their keeper to arrive and once he did, John Fox viciously killed him with a rusty sword. With the keeper dispatched, the captives traveled down the road to the jail. Fighting their way into the jail, Fox and his men slew the jailer and freed as many captives as they could: approximately two hundred and sixty. The newly freed men sneaked into the Alexandrian port and hijacked a Turkish galley ship. According to Fox, the escape did not go unnoticed and other Turkish galleys began firing on the captives. Fox and his fellow Christians escaped the Turks' cannons and made their way to Crete; once there, the men sold the stolen Turkish galley ship and parted ways. According to Fox, they succeeded in the escape because, "their God behaved himselfe, our

God shewed himselfe a God indeed, and that he was the onely living God.”¹ After a brief trip through Italy, John Fox landed safely on the shores of England in 1579.

The story of Fox’s valiant escape from Alexandria was one of a dozen captivity narratives published by Englishmen, who began to seek wealth and adventure in the Mediterranean in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Captivity was a common occurrence for Englishmen who explored the Americas and fought wars with various European nations, especially the Spanish. However, North African states and the Ottoman Empire proved, in many ways, to be a larger threat to English mariners than the Americas and Europe. Tens of thousands of Englishmen became captives in Morocco, Algiers, and the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and her early Stuart successors as England expanded its trade relations in the Mediterranean.²

Complicating the relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire, Morocco, and other Barbary States was Islam. Since the Crusades, Christian Europe had a contentious relationship with many Islamic states. After the crusades, England, however, had only limited contact with Islamic peoples and nations due to its geographic location. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth, when England began to trade and explore globally, that Englishmen began to encounter Muslims in North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal Empire, and briefly in the Safavid Empire. As contact with Muslims and Muslim nations heavily increased, claims of religious and cultural superiority began to appear in English literature, often in an attempt to mask the fear and uncertainty Englishmen experienced regarding the Islamic religion. The Englishmen’s feelings were compounded by the fact that during the sixteenth and early

¹ John Fox, “the woorthie enterprise of John Foxe, in delivering 266. Christians out of captivitie of Turkes at Alexandria,” in Richard Haklyut, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1927), 3:38-50.

² Robert C. Davis, *White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 3-14.

seventeenth centuries the Ottoman Empire was at the height of its power and along with North African corsairs, such as those encountered by Fox, dominated the Mediterranean.³ As a result, Islam in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire played a pivotal role in shaping the English-Christian identity through contact and especially captivity, from the earliest mentioned captives in the 1570s to the English Civil war in the 1640s.

This dissertation examines the emergence of English identity that captivity and Muslims in the Mediterranean challenged from 1580-1640 as expressed in English captivity narratives. Identity provides groups of people with a notion of who they are as a group and as individuals. This process of self-definition is an evolutionary process that does not happen in a vacuum. As Richard Helgerson has noted, “Self-definition comes from the not-self, from the alien other.”⁴ For many Englishmen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the “alien other” was Muslims.

The 1580-1640 date range is important for two reasons. First, it represents an era in which England was still in its infancy on the world stage. As stated previously, the Ottoman Empire and the Moroccan Kingdom were economically and militarily more powerful than England, which meant that England was not in a power position in its relationship with these Islamic nations. Many historians have wanted to apply Said’s Orientalist paradigm to England during this period.

According to Edward Said, beginning in the late seventeenth century and remaining through modern day, England, France, and later America, which Said labels the “Occident,” developed an imperialist relationship between themselves and the Orient, especially Egypt. For Said, the “Occident” created the “Orient” through imperialistic relations, also known as “Orientalism.” According to Said, one of his many definitions for “Orientalism” was “the

³ Nabil Matar and Gerald Maclean, *Britain & the Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12-20.

⁴ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”⁵ One of the key criteria for Orientalism is power, and during this period, as far as its relations with the Islamic Ottoman Empire and England were concerned, England had little power or influence. While it is true that much of the foundation for later English imperialism had its roots during this period, as Daniel Goffman and other scholars have noted, England was an insignificant island nation with a minimal navy and no colonial holdings in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England.⁶

As the much of the recent historiography has demonstrated, it is important to note that at this time in England, its history focused on what it meant to be English and not British.⁷ David Armitage has noted that while the foundations of the imperial British identity existed in the sixteenth century, it was a long drawn out process for the British identity to replace the English identity of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁸ Similarly, Linda Colley has argued a British identity did not exist until unification in 1707.⁹ Moreover, many scholars of the early Stuarts have noted that, despite their Scottish heritage and the joint monarchical control of the Scottish and English throne under, James I and Charles I, Anglo-Scottish identities did not cross-pollinate with the English, which would cause Charles serious problems in the latter half of

⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. 25th Anniversary ed. (Vintage Books: New York, 1994), 3.

⁶ Daniel Goffman, *Britian and the Ottoman Empire: 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 3-12.

⁷ Hilary Larkin, *The Making of Englishmen: Debates on National Identity 1550-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 6.

⁸ David Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7.

⁹ Linda Colley, *Britains: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), 53.

his reign.¹⁰ Consequently, this study will explore English identity and not the later imperial British identity.

The debate about what it meant to be English in the early modern era has been centered around arguments of national identity. Many scholars, especially Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Ernest Gellner, have argued that national identities did not exist in the early modern period, and it was not until the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the rise of nationalism, that any Europeans had a clear concept of national identity.¹¹ In addition to arguments about a general concept of national identity, scholars like G.R. Elton, Liah Greenfield, and Linda Colley have focused their efforts on the emergence of national identities in specific countries such as England.

The development of an English national identity has been a hotly contested subject among historians. Sociologist Liah Greenfield has posited that a collective understanding of Englishness developed in the sixteenth century due to the rise in social mobility during the Tudor period. For Greenfield, economically mobile commoners, mostly from the merchant classes, reached the upper echelons of society and revolutionized what it meant to be a member of the English nation. Prior to the creation of the new elite, the definition of the term “nation,” according to Greenfield, included only the social and cultural elites in England and not society as a whole. With the inclusion of new individuals in the aristocracy, the definition of nation began to shift to the English “people,” which included all orders of society.¹²

¹⁰ For a descriptions of the relationship between Charles I, Scotland, and England before and during the English Civil War see: Conrad Russell, *Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1972); Anne Hughes, *Causes of the English Civil War* (London: Palgrave, 1991); David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution 1640-42* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

¹² Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Some scholars such as David Armitage, Tony Claydon, and Ian McBride place the origins of English identity in the rise of the Protestant identity after the Elizabethan Settlement.¹³ Sociologist Krishnan Kumar pushes the emergence of an English national identity even further into the eighteenth century. For Kumar, geography or ethnicity did not provide a shared English national identity, but rather imperialism provided a common bond, cultural legacy, and ideological claim of English uniqueness in the late eighteenth century.

One scholar to study primarily English identity in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England is Richard Helgerson. In his monograph *Forms of Nationhood*, he argues that it is during the Elizabethan period that England began to create its own national identity. He demonstrates this through many different authors and different genres of writing that transpired during this time. He uses Spencer's *Faerie Queen*, Coke's *Institutes of the Law of England*, Camden's *Britannia*, Speed's *Theater of the Empire of Great Britain*, Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations of the English Nation*, Shakespeare's history plays, and Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. For Helgerson, the focus on identity began during the Elizabethan settlement as people fought against the reconciliation with Rome during the reign of Mary, who had attempted to re-establish English monarchical structures prior to the 1535 Act of Supremacy. After 1535, the State became superior to the Church and no duality of rule existed. Elizabeth I re-established the Church of England and royal authority within the Church soon after ascending the throne and, according to Helgerson, this caused many individuals to want to define themselves as unique and as great as the ancient empires.¹⁴

¹³ David Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 1-4.

A key text in the emergence of this identity was Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* as it helped define the English nation compared to other European nations and against old feudal systems. For Helgerson, the writings of Hakluyt started to emphasize the importance of merchants in the social hierarchy of England because Hakluyt stressed trade and commerce, and not nobility and aristocracy. The Spanish, according to Hakluyt, represented all things wrong with imperialism and colonization, whereas Hakluyt believed England was a nation of merchants. Hakluyt also de-emphasized the roles of nobility since many nobles still maintained the old feudal ideas that commerce and trade were only for lower classes. For Hakluyt, merchants became important figures in defining England as a nation, especially when juxtaposed with other European nations such as Spain and Portugal.

Helgerson concentrates primarily on English writers and their focus on England.¹⁵ He does not address the ways in which English authors placed themselves in the larger world context. This exclusion allows this study to add to Helgerson's arguments regarding the formations of English identity in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England by analyzing captivity narratives that center on the English as they attempted to define themselves and their experiences encountering Muslims in foreign world of the Mediterranean.

In her book *The Genius of the English Nation*, historian Anna Suranyi augments the understanding of English identity by studying travel writers' language as they described the world they encountered. Her work is important because it provides one of the best lenses for understanding the development of English identity as discovered and explored by early modern travel writers, especially those who traveled throughout the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire. For Suranyi, travel writers distinguished themselves against the "alien other" in the Mediterranean and provided a clearer definition of what it meant to be English in the late

¹⁵ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 149-187.

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For example, she argues that Englishmen particularly liked Constantinople and many of the cities in the Ottoman Empire for their cleanliness and disparaged the Irish for their filthy cities.¹⁶ While a definition of English identity had not coalesced, as Suranyi's work demonstrates, examples of it can be viewed in travel narratives. The same is applicable to captivity narratives, and often more acutely so, because in many of the captivity narratives the authors were writing to an English audience to prove that despite their captivity and the temptation to convert to Islam, they remained steadfast and were "good" Englishmen.

Historian Hilary Larkin, in her book *The Making of Englishness*, argues that the period 1550-1650 was an integral period in the shaping of what it meant to be English. It was not a period that provided a true sense of Englishness, as Suranyi has also argued, but it provided much of the framework that later English peoples would use in order to create and define what it meant to be English. Larkin contends this was a prolific period in English literature as it was a time when English authors began to explore the religious repercussions of the Reformation and what it meant to be English and Protestant. It was also a period in English history that Englishmen became insecure in their understanding of themselves as they started to interact with the outside world more than any previous period. This global interaction and this insecurity caused many Englishmen to express ideas of what it meant to be English. As Larkin notes, there are few instances in any literature of the period in which Englishmen explicitly defined what it meant to be English. As Paul Langford has explained, in fact, the term Englishness did not even appear in print until 1804.¹⁷ Despite the lack of explicit definitions of English identity in

¹⁶ Anna Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation: Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 15-37.

¹⁷ Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: manners and character 1650-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

Elizabethan and early Stuart literature, ideas of what individuals thought English identity was can be extracted from these varying sources. To reconstruct some notions of what it meant to be English, Larkin studied Elizabethan sources that linked Englishness to ideas of plainness and simplicity based on reactions to the pomp and grandeur of Catholicism. As mentioned above, Larkin also examines the writing of several English Catholics who tried to assert their Englishness, while concurrently claiming to be Catholic. Through these writings, the English Catholics tried to disassociate themselves from the actions of the Jesuits, especially those in national plots against the monarchy. The final set of sources explored were English assertions of liberty, freedom, and the language of political polemics that defined what it meant to be English.¹⁸ These ideals, along with the history of captivity, added to the understanding of English identity.

Much of the historiography of captivity in the Mediterranean discusses the European experience in general, especially captivity of Italians and Spaniards, because they represented the largest numbers of Christian captives.¹⁹ Fernand Braudel, in his massive and masterful studies of the Mediterranean world, mentions English captives only briefly.²⁰ Other historians, like Robert Davis, include England in their monographs about Mediterranean captivity but do not primarily examine on England. In *White Slaves, Muslim Masters*, Davis works to understand the scale of European Christian captivity in North Africa by estimating the rough number of those taken captive between 1500-1800. In addition to calculating the number of captives, he also spends several chapters discussing the life of a slave in captivity in the Barbary States. He integrates

¹⁸ Hilary Larkin, *The Making of Englishness: Debates on National Identity 1550-1650* (Leiden, Brill, 2014), 1-20.

¹⁹ Robert C. Davis, *White Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 14-15.

²⁰ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 2:628-29.

English captives into his calculation but, like Braudel, does not specifically study English captivity.²¹

While captivity is rarely the focal point, it is often included in studies regarding England's involvement in the Mediterranean. David Dellison Hebb's book *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642* examines the early Stuart reactions to piracy in the Mediterranean. Although mostly about piracy, the work studies the life of English captives, the effect captivity had on the government, and the numbers of Englishmen taken captive in the thirty-year period, as piracy in the Mediterranean was closely linked to captivity. Hebb argues that due to the Stuarts' ineffective policies and general unwillingness to act directly in the Mediterranean, the plight of English captives increased to a fever pitch and forced Charles I finally to take action and send a naval expedition to the Moroccan port of Salé. Except for one unsuccessful naval expedition to Algiers, James acted infrequently, ineffectively, and through only marginally successful diplomatic channels to help English captives. According to Hebb, when it came to pirates and captives, the biggest issue that faced the early Stuarts was the financial means and bureaucratic incompetency, which reached the highest levels of the monarchy and administration. Hebb concludes that, despite these issues, as the seventeenth century wore on, a slow evolutionary change occurred that helped England succeed where the early Stuarts failed against the pirates.²²

One of the first books to focus on English captivity is *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption* edited by Daniel Vitkus. This book contains a sampling of English captivity narratives published between 1580 and 1700. The book's goal is to allow readers to gain a better understanding of captives through their experiences and writings as they evolved from the late sixteenth century

²¹ Davis, *White Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 3-26.

²² David Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642* (Scolar Press: Hants, 1994), 1-4.

through the seventeenth century. Included in the appendices of this book are other documents relating to English captivity including letters requesting support for captives, depositions of captives, and some reactions by the crown to captives. This volume, however, provides little analysis of the actual narratives and supplementary sources. Nabil Matar, who has written quite prolifically on English captivity, wrote the introductory essay to the *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption* collection. In the essay, Matar argues, “the importance of the writings of the captives cannot be underestimated: in their political and commercial dealings with North African Muslims, traders, government officials, sailors, and others relied on the depositions and stories.”²³ The rest of the introduction is devoted to explaining and contextualizing English captivity in the Mediterranean and the captivity narratives themselves. In analyzing the narratives, Matar argues that they can be categorized into two distinct periods: 1580-1640 and 1640 into the eighteenth century. For Matar, the early period of captivity narratives provided scarce descriptions of Islam, Muslim captors, or life in captivity. Instead, they described the captives’ miserable experiences, unwavering faith in the Christian God, and the successful escapes from captivity. It was not until the 1640, according to Matar, when Francis Knight published his captivity narrative that the topics and descriptions became much more about the life, culture, land, and Muslim people in North Africa.²⁴ Despite lack of information about Islam, the people, or cultures of their captors, many of the early captives’ narratives provide valuable insight into the Englishmen authors.

In his article “Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625,” Matar explicitly examines captivity narratives between 1577 and 1625. In the article, he

²³ Nabil Matar, “Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity 1577-1704.” in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives From Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 4.

²⁴ Daniel Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 32-40; For a similar description of the narratives see Nabil Matar and Gerald Maclean, *Britain and the Islamic World*.

illustrates how they reflected the political situation in England. During the reign of Elizabeth, many of the narratives praised the monarchy for its efforts to redeem captives. According to Matar, certain aspects of the narratives changed once James ascended the throne in 1603. James had little interest in using royal funds or effort to try to secure the release of Englishmen in North Africa. He assisted in trying to rescue captives through diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Sultan and one unsuccessful raid attempt on Algiers. As a result of his minimal efforts, few captives gained their freedom and larger numbers were captured as the North African pirates gained strength. The narratives reflect the desperation and dissatisfaction both sailors and captives had with the Monarch and his council.²⁵

In addition to studying the captivity narratives specifically, Nabil Matar has written prolifically about the English captivity experience. In multiple monographs and articles, he explores the different effects that captivity, Muslims, and Islam had on England as English involvement in the Mediterranean increased from 1580-1640. In his most recent work, *British Captives in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic: 1563-1760*, he describes the many differences captives in the Atlantic and Mediterranean encountered, especially focusing on the impact of Muslims. The main purpose of the book is to try and provide a much clearer estimate of the number of Englishmen who were captured in the Mediterranean. He argues that while Davis made a valiant effort at estimating this number, his calculations are much higher than could reasonably be accurate, based on historical records. Matar estimates that the numbers are much lower for England and as a result, used his calculations to create a more precise total for England. Additionally, he found and printed as many of the names of English men and women who were held captive in the Mediterranean between 1563-1760 as possible. *British Captives* is

²⁵ Nabil Matar, "Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, (2001): 553-572.

Matar's only book that exclusively studies English captivity, but he has written quite prolifically about the English in the Mediterranean. In many of the volumes, he includes sections on English captives.²⁶ For Matar, while the number of captives he found were lower than that of Davis, he still argues that captivity was a significant problem for the English.

Identity is one of the few issues related to captivity that Matar only briefly discusses. He argues that "captivity was destabilizing the emergent national identity: whatever 'ancient reputation' had existed among Britons and whatever new ideals of valor were being proclaimed, both were being undermined by the indignities that Muslims privateers, among others, were inflicting."²⁷ Beyond his statement that captivity altered the emerging national identity because of Muslim power, Matar does not provide a deeper analysis. For Matar, much of this new identity was not readily visible until the 1630s as England established permanent colonial settlements and began "dominating and oppressing natives, conquering adversaries, and designating themselves as God's standard bearers."²⁸ At the same time, this identity applied more to the English in the Americas than in the Mediterranean.

Unlike Vitkus's edited volume, Linda Colley's book *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* examines captivity's evolution as England became a more powerful nation and began to build its empire throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Colley does not spend a great deal of time discussing captives and their narratives during the early modern era because one criterion for a narrative to be included in her discussion is verifiability (i.e, the author must have existed and the account must be valid and not

²⁶ Nabil Matar, *British Captives in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic: 1563-1760* (Brill: Leiden, 2014). Also see his works *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

²⁷ Matar, "Introduction" in Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 36.

²⁸ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 35.

propagandized). As a result, none of the narratives published between 1600 and 1639 are included in her examination of captives and captivity. Colley is more interested in English captives post-Restoration and the rise of the British Empire than with captivity prior to the English Civil War and, as a result, her study does not focus on the early emergence of England identity.²⁹

One of the greatest challenges to early English identity, especially during captivity, according to travel writers, captivity narratives, sermons, and other printed material, was the fear of conversion to Islam. Some Englishmen remained resilient against attempts at conversion, while others succumbed. Few historians have analyzed the effects, potential and realized, of conversion on early English identity. Most analysis of conversion effects in England have been discussed by literary scholars such as Daniel Vitkus, Barbara Fuchs, Jonathan Burton, and Roslyn Knutson in their respective works. These authors describe the portrayal of captives and conversion in English theater.³⁰ Both Fuchs and Vitkus argue that several plays such as *A Christian Turned Turke* and *The Renegado* demonstrate the insecurity that many English felt regarding the privateers, who other English people may have considered heroes. These “heroes” faced potential cross-cultural contamination, especially conversion to Islam, as they marauded in the Mediterranean. As Vitkus notes, stories like the English pirate John Ward’s create problems and confusion about the anti-Islamic literature. The plays, on one hand, portray Ward as someone who turned against his country when he converted to Islam. Conversely, Ward still appeared in many instances as a celebrated English pirate, despite his conversion. This

²⁹ Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World 1600-1815* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002).

³⁰ Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (Palgrave: New York, 2003); Roslyn Knutson, "Elizabethan Documents, Captivity Narratives, and the Market for Foreign History Plays," *English Literary Renaissance* 26.1 (1996): 75-110; Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press); Also, see Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays From Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

dichotomy shows that identity in late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods was multi-faceted. It was a time in which the cross-cultural exchanges and interaction in the Mediterranean caused confusion and fear among that English as the perceived weak English Christians encountered the power of the Islamic Ottoman Empire and North African states.

The confusion and fear the Englishmen expressed in captives' narratives provide further insight into the emerging English identity of late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Few historians have studied early captivity narratives and their expressions of different aspects of English identity. This study will add to the overall understandings of early modern English identity by exploring the captives' narratives, which provide insight into the complicated relationship between the English and the Muslims in the Mediterranean.

The nature and importance of the captivity narratives should be discussed as well as the content. Between 1580 and 1640, twelve captivity narratives were published. Some individuals, such as Hakluyt and Purchas, published narratives in their collections of works, while others appeared as individual pamphlets.³¹ The narratives themselves describe the varied experiences of Englishmen who became captives at the hands of Muslim pirates in North Africa and the Levant. The first narrative published by an Englishmen about Muslim captivity appeared in the Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*. It described the captivity of John Fox, as mentioned at the beginning of this introduction. Fox remained a captive for fourteen years, and as will be discussed at length in chapter two, the narrative claimed that it was through God's superiority and providence that he escaped his Muslim captivity. As Nabil Matar and others detailed in their works, the primary purpose of many of the narratives was to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity to Islam.³²

³¹ Matar, "Introduction" in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 32-38.

³² MacLean and Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 133.

According to Matar, individuals published captivity narratives for a variety of reasons: some published narratives as an example and warning to other Englishmen about the dangers Islam posed to one's Christian faith; others used their captivity and escape as a way to demonstrate to the reader about the power of God and his divine will; and some were published as stories that proved they were good Christian Englishmen. One of the biggest challenges Englishmen faced, according to many sixteenth-and seventeenth-century sources, was conversion to Islam, either willingly or unwillingly. Publishing an account of one's escape from captivity and successful steadfastness against conversion provided the Englishmen a way to fortify their English identity and assuage fears of Islamic infection.

Another important aspect of the captivity narratives is that most of them describe English captivity in North Africa, in places like Sale, Tunis, Algiers, and Tripoli. Only two accounts describe captivity actually under the Ottoman Empire: the narratives of Edward Webbe and Thomas Sherley. Despite the different geographic locations, their narratives express many of the same themes as most of the other narratives.

One of the inherent issues with using sources like the captives' narratives is that often it is quite hard to establish the veracity of their accounts and, in many cases, the authors probably fabricated some or all of their stories. Also, because of many of the authors' social status and lack of records, it often is difficult to prove that the author actually existed. In 1608, one of the more prolific authors and playwrights of the Elizabethan and early Stuart era, Anthony Munday published the account of John Reynard and his escape from captivity. This narrative is an adaptation of John Fox's narrative. When compared to Fox's, it becomes clear that Munday edited names, dates, and the emphasis of Fox's story but otherwise plagiarized it. No other narrative provides as direct evidence for its fabrication, and as a result, it often becomes quite

difficult to verify the author's existence or his story. However, the authorship of the narratives matters less than the content. If the authors actually experienced the events described in the narratives, the accounts provide an invaluable insight into the understandings and expressions of the English identity, religion, and relationship with Islam and captivity. On the other hand, if the authorship and the stories were fabricated, they illuminate the ideas, tropes, and fears of Englishmen who had not experienced captivity and may have not even left England.

Chapter One provides a general narrative of England's involvement in the Mediterranean and the reasons why so many Englishmen ended up in captivity in North Africa. In 1580, Queen Elizabeth established diplomatic and trade relations with the Ottoman Empire, partly to open up new markets of trade and partly to create an ally that would help in the conflicts with Spain. She also established relations with the Bey of Morocco because of the numerous economic and military advantages an alliance with a country so geographically close to Spain provided. With the death of Queen Elizabeth, Ottoman relations deteriorated in part because of James's rabid dislike of Islam and Charles's preoccupation with maintaining England's finances during his personal rule. As a result, during the early Stuarts, trade and protection of trade in the Mediterranean shifted to the trading companies or Trinity House. Consequently, due to England's lack of a strong navy and the existence of several Muslim corsairs operating out of ports in North Africa, many Englishmen fell victim to the Muslim pirates and became captives. The English Levant Company became responsible for maintaining ambassadors and consuls in places like Constantinople, Aleppo, and Smyrna and for the redemption of captives, with the Crown occasionally assisting. English captives narratives in the Mediterranean provide context in demonstrating the emergence of an English national identity as often when one begins to

define oneself, it is usually in juxtaposition to something different or “the other,” and Muslims provided the “other” for many Englishmen.

Chapters Two and Three explore the ways in which the captives’ Protestantism manifested itself in the narratives and what it demonstrated about popular Protestantism in late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. Englishmen often tried to express their superiority over Islam and Muslims through proclamations about their redemption from captivity through God’s providence. Many of the authors also wrote to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith and sometimes to issue a warning to those individuals who might be captured and have their faith tested by Muslims. The language of providence expressed in the captivity narratives was one aspect of the emerging English national identity. Many historians have written about the place of providence in early modern England, especially with the rise of Puritanism, but their studies do not focus on literature like captive or travel narratives.³³ Often the captivity narratives used providential language as a weapon against both Islam and Catholicism. Further insight in the emerging national identity is visible and concurrently places the evolution of that identity in a global context. Islam and Muslims in the Mediterranean played a significant role in shaping early English national identity.

Chapters Two and Three also investigate the sense of weakness and helplessness captives expressed in their narratives as few gained freedom through the actions of monarchy. It will illustrate that, despite the language of superiority expressed toward Islam and Muslims that permeated much of the English literature and even many of the captivity narratives themselves, England was weak on the international stage and the captivity narratives are a good lens to view that weakness. As Vitkus notes, during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “England’s

³³ Alexandra Walshman, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribners’ Sons, 1971).

‘colonial’ discourse was merely the premature articulation of a third-rank power.”³⁴ Many of the narratives and other literature circulating in England had strong anti-Islamic sentiment. The authors often proclaimed the greatness of English Protestantism against the evils of Islam. The issue with this discourse is that in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England much of literature was written as a way to mollify many of the fears of Islam. The Muslim pirates and Ottoman Empire were two global forces that England could not contend with militarily or culturally. Many travel writers and captives described numerous instances of Englishmen succumbing and converting to Islam, both willingly and unwillingly. There was little the English government could do to protect its subjects. Conversion often happened, according to varying narratives, as a result of captivity. The English government, during Elizabeth’s reign and the early Stuarts’s reign, had little power to assist in the rescue and redemption of the captured Englishmen except through diplomatic channels, which only had limited success.

Chapter Four shifts the focus away from the Protestant aspect of English identity and examines English conversion to Islam and the English “Turk,” or English Muslims who appeared in both captivity and travel narratives. In his captivity narrative, John Rawlins states “... so many, even for fear of torment and death, make their tongues betray their hearts to most fearful wickedness and so are circumcised with new names and brought to confess a new religion.”³⁵ When a person “turned Turk,” he became an apostate or renegade because not every Englishman could remain steadfast in his faith and succumbed to torture or temptation to convert. While many Englishmen chose Islam only under unbearable duress, others willingly chose to abandon Christianity for what they saw as a better life as a Muslim living in the Ottoman Empire or one

³⁴ Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 3. Also see Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 3-12; Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, & Englishmen*, 8-11.

³⁵ John Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol, Called the Exchange from the Turkish Pirates of Argier* (London, 1622), B2.

of the North Africa states. John Rawlins wrote, “others again, I must confess, who never knew any god but their own sensual lusts and pleasures, thought that any religion would serve their turns and so for preferment or wealth very voluntarily renounced their faith and became renegadoes.”³⁶ In both the captivity and travel narratives renegadoes were identified both as Englishmen and as Muslims, which complicates the notion of what it meant to be English in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. An Englishman named Thomas Dallam traveled to Istanbul in the early seventeenth century to deliver an organ to the Sultan as a gift from the English Crown. He mentioned that several of his translators were men from Cornwall and Lancashire but claimed a Muslim identity. While it is unclear if these individuals willingly converted to Islam, they clearly chose to maintain their new Muslim identity even in the presence of an Englishman.³⁷ Many examples exist of different travel writers encountering Englishmen who either willingly or unwillingly converted to Islam and maintained their identity as a Muslim instead of an Englishman, demonstrating an emergence of an English national identity based not always based on one’s religious affiliation.

Many scholars have written extensively on the subject of early modern English identity, and this is further examined in upcoming chapters in the hope of adding to that historiography through examining several different aspects of late Elizabethan and early Stuart national identity as expressed through captivity narratives. The narratives provide numerous insights in the emerging English identity as Englishmen explored and became captives in the Mediterranean. While English travelers in the Mediterranean often experienced some similar circumstances, the captives’ narratives are unique in that they portray Englishmen at their weakest and in the most helpless situations. Few other genres of literature provide such insight into English identity

³⁶ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol*, B2.

³⁷ Gerald Maclean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 11.

through the particular experience as captivity. Overall, this can provide one more step along the path of understanding what it meant to be English in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England..

CHAPTER 1

ENGLAND, THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND CAPTIVITY: A BACKGROUND FROM 1580-1640

In 1632, English captives in Morocco sent a petition to Charles I begging for his assistance in their redemption. They described themselves as, “Your Majesty’s poor subjects, slaves under the king of Morocus, who have lived here some twenty years, some sixteen, some twelve, and he that hath been least, seven years in most miserable bondage, without any succor from friends or country.”¹ As the petitioners claimed, many of the individuals had been captured during the reign of James and had not been redeemed. Their petition and the long captivity were not uncommon as England established trade in Mediterranean with the Ottoman Empire and other North African cities. Before English identity expressed by captives can be further explored, it is important to understand captivity during the reign of Elizabeth I and the early Stuarts.

Unlike many of the Italian city-states and France, until the late 1570s, England had little contact with the Ottoman Empire, which was partly due to geographic distance and England’s late entrance into global exploration. This changed in 1575, however, when English merchants Sir Edward Osborne and Richard Staper initiated contact by sending John Wight and Joseph

¹ Le Comte Henry de Castries, ed. *Les Sources Inédites de l’Histoire du Maroc-Archives et Bibliothèques d’Angleterre*, première série-dynasty Sa’dienne, vol. 3 (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1936), 179-81.

Clements to Constantinople to secure safe passage for William Harborne, the soon-to-be Turkey Company's ambassador. Clements returned to England in 1578, having secured Harborne's safety and established initial trade arrangements with the Ottoman Empire. Soon after Clements's return with favorable news, Harborne departed for Constantinople to solidify the agreements made with the Ottoman Sultan.²

In October 1578, William Harborne arrived in Constantinople and secured trade rights on behalf of Queen Elizabeth and the Turkey Company with the Ottoman Sultan, Murad III. The Turkey Company received considerable backing from the monarchy because, as Susan Skilliter has shown, trade within the Levant would provide considerable economic benefits for the crown as well as a political and military ally against Spain.³ By 1580, Elizabeth had few European allies and faced potential military threats from Catholic Spain and France as tensions mounted between the countries. Elizabeth's relations with France became rocky when she turned down the Duke of Anjou's marriage proposal, which was one of the reasons France re-established cordial relations with Spain. England's relations with Spain also began to sour dramatically in 1580. Don Antonio declared himself King of Portugal in August 1580, and in September, Philip II, King of Spain, annexed Portugal, forcing Don Antonio to flee. Antonio sought support from Elizabeth and fled to England.⁴ Interactions with Spain had also deteriorated due to Elizabeth's support, though she claimed to remain neutral, of Protestants in the Spanish Netherland who had attempted a revolt against Spanish control in the late 1570s. Philip refused to believe Elizabeth was a neutral party, claiming that she instead supported the Protestant uprising. By 1580, it was

² "The renewing and increasing of an ancient and commodious trade unto divers places in the Levant seas, and to the chieftest partes of all the great Turkes dominions, by the meanes of the Right worsh. Citizens Sir Edward Osburne Alderman, and M. Richard Staper marchant of London" in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1927), 3:50-51.

³ S.A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 23-77.

⁴ Nabil, Matar, "Elizabeth through Moroccan Eyes" *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 2011), 147-149.

clear that once Philip had secured the Netherlands he would focus on attacking England.⁵

Consequently, Elizabeth had few options for alliances within Europe, and the Ottoman Empire and Morocco provided such opportunities for alliances.

In 1581, Elizabeth issued letters patent that established the Turkey Company, giving it exclusive rights to trade in the Levant. Between 1582 and 1587, it is estimated that the Turkey Company made approximately thirty voyages to the Levant and gained roughly £500,000 in profit, around £12,000 of which it paid to the crown in customs and duties.⁶ In 1588, the Turkey Company's patent expired, but before it renewed its charter, the company wanted to expand the scope of its trade to include Zante and Cephalonia, which would give it control of the lucrative currant trade. The main issue faced with expanding this trade was the English Venice Company which held the monopoly on trade with those islands and the currant trade. After four years of negotiations between the Venice Company, the Turkey Company, and the Crown, Elizabeth issued letters patent for the creation of the England Levant Company in 1592, making it England's most lucrative trade company.⁷ By 1595, the Levant Company had fifteen ships and 790 seamen, and according to Braudel, by 1600 it had tripled the number of ships and seamen.⁸

In addition to fostering a relationship with the Ottomans, Elizabeth I also established peace and trade relations with the Moroccan King, Mulay Ahmad al-Mansur. In June 1580, Elizabeth received a letter from al-Mansur that argued a friendship between England and Morocco would be mutually beneficial. The impetus for the Moroccan King's letter came from his desire to have an ally against Spain, something which England also needed. Throughout the

⁵ Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy, 1558-1603* (London: Routledge, 2000), 36-40.

⁶ Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 62; also see M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: George Rutledge and Sons Limited, 1908), 19.

⁷ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 64-65.

⁸ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2:626.

early 1580s, Elizabeth remained hesitant to establish formal relations with Morocco, but King al-Mansur remained insistent.⁹ In his letters, he promised help to English merchants because “you are doing the best to facilitate our affairs there [in England].”¹⁰ By 1583, with no formal relations yet established, al-Mansur proposed diplomatic cooperation and expanded trade. In 1585, as tensions increased with Spain, Elizabeth knew it was essential to have an ally against Spain and, as a result, she granted the letters patent to establish the Barbary Company in 1585.¹¹ Elizabeth maintained peaceable, though sometimes complicated, relations with the Ottomans and Moroccans throughout the remainder of her reign.

The establishment of trade with the Ottoman Empire and Morocco did not spark English captivity, but it drastically increased its frequency. Prior to 1579, Englishmen had become captives in the Levant and North Africa. As early as 1480, money had been raised to ransom captives and to fight the Turks. Throughout the early and mid-sixteenth century, instances of small fishing ships falling victim to North Africa and Continental pirates occurred but not with high frequency.¹² Nearly all the names of these early captives are lost to time except the accounts of John Fox, who became a captive in 1566 and mentioned 266 other captive Christians in his narrative, some of whom were Englishmen. Elizabeth probably knew of the existence of these or other English captives; in her negotiations with the Sultan in 1579, she attempted to secure the safety of English captives and any future captives. She requested:

Use of mediation on the behalf of certaine of our subjects, who are deteined as slaves and captives in your Gallies, for whom we crave, that forasmuch as they are fallen into misery, not by any offence of theirs, by bearing of armes against your highnesse, or in

⁹ Nabil Matar, “Elizabeth through Moroccan Eyes,” *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 2011), 147-149.

¹⁰ The National Archives SP 102/4/20. From here forward The National Archives will be abbreviated TNA.

¹¹ MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 2.

¹² Nabil Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1563-1760* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 71-72.

behaving of themselves contrary to honestie, and to the law of nations, they may be delivered from their bondage, and restored to libertie.¹³

Using diplomatic relations was the one tool Elizabeth had to aid in the redemption of captives. Elizabeth revealed her concern for the captives and her desire to secure their release and protection by including stipulations for the release of captives in official negotiations with the Sultan.

In 1581, as part of the official trade agreement between England and the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan granted his cooperation and an assurance that all Englishman detained in the Ottoman Empire and North Africa would be released. As part of the agreement, the Sultan conceded “if any slave shall be found to be an Englishman, and their Consull or governour shall sue for his libertie, let the same slave be diligently examined, and if hee be found in deed to be English, let him be discharged and restored to the Englishmen.”¹⁴ The charter also stated that

if after the time and date of this privilege, any pirats or other free governours of ships trading the Sea shall take any Englishman, and shall make sale of him, either beyonde the Sea, or on this side of the Sea, the matter shall be examined according to justice, and if the partie shalbe found to be English...let him be restored to the Englishmen, and the buyers shall demaund their money againe of them who solde the man.”¹⁵

The Sultan, however, provided one caveat: “[should Muslims capture and sell a slave] if the partie shalbe found to be English, and shall receive the holy religion, then let me freely be discharged, but if he will still remain a Christian, let him then be restored to the Englishmen.”¹⁶

The stipulations requested by Elizabeth indicated that captivity and slavery for Englishmen in the

¹³ “The answere of her Majestie to the aforesaid Letters of the Great Turke, sent the 25 of October 1579, in the Prudence of London by Master Richard Stanley.” Printed in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3:60.

¹⁴ “The charter of the privileges granted to the English, & the league of the great Turke with the Queenes Majestie in respect to traffique, dated in June 1580.” Printed in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3:56.

¹⁵ “The charter of the privileges granted to the English” Printed in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3:61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:61.

Mediterranean were already issues and that at least on the surface, the Ottoman Sultan was willing to make concessions to try to aid Queen Elizabeth and England in the fight against pirates and captivity.

During the reign of Elizabeth, relations between England and the Ottoman Sultan remained amiable, but English sailors and pirates complicated diplomacy and official support from the Ottomans and Moroccans in the redemption of captives. In 1600, the Algerian Dey wrote Elizabeth and complained that John Audellay, “who says he is your Majesty’s Consul here,” had attacked a Venetian ship, which he claimed was Spanish. He set fire to the Venetian ship, and the Dey and his people of Algiers thought it a scandal since Audellay burned the Venetian ship near many of the Algerian galleys, which could have potentially caused great damage to their ships and the port. In other instances in the Mediterranean, Englishmen continued to capture Ottoman and North African ships, take their cargo, and enslave or sell the crews.¹⁷ This caused Elizabeth issues diplomatically and domestically during her reign. In a retrospective assessment of piracy during the reign of Elizabeth, Sir Edward Coke noted “Piracy, or robbery on the high seas was no felony, whereof the common law took any knowledge, for that it could not be tried.”¹⁸ As a result, as long as Englishmen continued to commit acts of piracy, North Africans and Ottomans would do the same, creating a cycle that perpetuated many Englishmen becoming captives and slaves.¹⁹ Despite all the issues, Elizabeth worked hard through her diplomats in Constantinople to secure the release of as many English captives as possible.

¹⁷ Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic*, 75.

¹⁸ Sir Edward Coke, *The Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England; Concerning High Treason, and Other Pleas of the Crown and Criminal Causes* (London, 1644), 112.

¹⁹ Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic*, 75.

Captivity During the Reign of James I

The death of Queen Elizabeth changed the relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary States. James I wanted little to do with a relationship between the Muslim ‘Turks’ and Christian England. It was clear as early as 1585 that James cared nothing for the Ottoman Empire or Islam and saw them only as the enemy of Christianity. After the battle of Lepanto, he wrote the poem *Lepanto*, in which he described the battle as one “betwixt the baptiz’d race, / And circumcised Turband Turkes.”²⁰ In 1604, shortly after ascending the throne, James signed a peace treaty with Spain. The treaty united England and Spain against the Ottoman Empire, the common enemy of Christendom. Because of the treaty, James only signed formal letters to promote trade with Islamic nations in the Mediterranean but refused to engage in any formal negotiations with any Islamic power except the official court and Ottoman Sultan or Moroccan heads of state. Due to James’s lack of official diplomacy, the majority of diplomatic engagements fell to trade companies and the diplomats, consuls, and factors they employed. This became problematic for James and most English captives in places like Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli because, while officially the Ottoman Sultan controlled these areas, practically speaking, the Sultan had little power or influence in these provinces. James also refused to sign official agreements with the leaders of Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers because he considered it dishonorable to deal with Muslim governors who were technically under the control of Constantinople and especially Muslim governors who condoned and supported the piracy of English ships.²¹ This attitude resulted in limited success for the release of captives in the Barbary cities. He encouraged English mariners to seize Muslim ships and passengers, but he

²⁰ Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, 143.

²¹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 181-187.

officially refused to involve the English Navy in any Mediterranean matters or in the protection of the merchants as they traded in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.²² This created a dangerous and nearly untenable situation for English mariners and merchants in the Mediterranean.

On ascending the throne, James refused to allow any English mariners the right of return if they had a reputation for illegal activities. He feared that mariners who served on pirate or foreign ships could have potentially converted to Islam. To make an example, he had several returning sailors hanged from the docks at Wapping for piracy.²³ This action, however, created several problems for James. First, it made a folk hero out of pirates such as Captain John Ward. Ward, an English pirate, gained a reputation as a great pirate who roamed the Mediterranean because he could not return home. The stories claimed he was one of the most successful and feared pirates in the Mediterranean. William Lithgow, a Scottish travel writer, claimed that Ward lived a lavish life in Tunis with a great marble palace and that he had converted to Islam, which was one of the side effects of James's policy against the right of return. Second, partly due to his policy, many English sailors like John Ward began to convert to Islam and either engage in piracy themselves against Christian nations, often England, or they helped crew pirate ships captained by Muslims.²⁴ Because of James's stances regarding pirates and Islam, the likelihood of captivity increased quite drastically in the Barbary States and the Ottoman Empire. In a 1618 letter to Sir Thomas Roe, Lord Carew, a member of the Privy Council, commented that "Turkish pirates do great harm to our ships in the Mediterranean; if they are not destroyed, the Levant trade will be at an end; they also damage the coast of Spain much."²⁵

²² Matar, *Britain and Barbary: 1589-1689*, 46.

²³ "A Proclamation to repress all Piracies and Depredations upon the Sea," in *Stuart Royal Proclamations, King James, 1603-1625*, ed. James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1:53-56.

²⁴ MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 43.

²⁵ George Lord Carew, *Letters from George Lord Carew to Sir Thomas Roe*. ed. John MacLean (London: Camden Society 1860), 51.

The Stuarts inherited some financial woes from the Tudors, but they also made many of their own, which caused problems with the maintenance and administration of their navy. The responsibility of protecting the merchants, fishers, and other seafarers fell on the shoulders of the navy, creating a large financial burden for the crown.²⁶ The problem was then a matter of how the crown was going to pay for all its maritime obligations.

James neglected the navy that resulted in a disregard for the seamen and navy-related maintenance crews remained generally underpaid for their work. As a result, fewer people wanted to join the navy.²⁷ In 1537, a farmer made 8 shillings a month, while a sailor earned only 6 shillings for far more dangerous work; since that time, sailors in the English navy had received only small raises by the time James became king. In addition to the low pay, rampant disease was also a critical issue for the recruitment of new sailors. England lost more sailors immediately after the Spanish Armada due to disease than they did during the battle, and circumstances had not drastically improve by the time of the Stuarts.²⁸ Consequently, even if James had wanted to protect his merchant vessels or to rescue English captives in the Mediterranean, the state of the English navy would have prevented him from being effective. According to Lord Carew, in 1616, a “Turkish pirat” sailed up the Thames to Leigh in Essex, just a few miles above Southland.²⁹ Often, during the reign of James, the English navy could not even protect English fishing or merchant ships around the coast of England itself.

Although James often failed his Navy, in 1619, the English naval fleet attempted to free captives in Algiers, but the operation was unsuccessful. James had negotiated with Spain to assist in the raid, and while England provided eighteen ships, only six of which were royal

²⁶ David Loades, *England's Maritime Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 148-151.

²⁷ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain: 660-1649* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company 1997), 364-378.

²⁸ Ian Friel, *Maritime History of Britain and Ireland c.400-2001* (London: The British Museum Press 2003), 98-101.

²⁹ Carew, *Letters from George Lord Carew to Sir Thomas Roe*, 51.

warships, Spain provided mostly supplies at Alicante and Cadiz and three ships. It soon became apparent to Robert Mansell, the leader of the expedition, that his fleet stood little chance of breaching the heavily fortified and protected port of Algiers. Mansell's first action after setting anchor outside of Algiers was to send two representatives to the city's royal representative, the Pasha, to present a letter from King James, and attempt to secure the release of English captives. After the initial contact, the Pasha agreed to meet with the English in the city's Doana, or assembly. During the meeting between the English and the Pasha and the Doana, the English representative presented the letter from King James and demanded that the Pasha return 150 ships to the English and release all the captured crewmen. The Pasha claimed that it would be impossible to do so because many of the ships had been sold or destroyed and many of the sailors had been sold or died. The Pasha also claimed that English pirates had assaulted Algerian ships and sailors and caused much hardship and damage. The English representative dismissed these claims, but eventually, after additional negotiations, the English and the Pasha agreed that hostilities between both sides cancelled much of the debt each owed the other and that any current English ships, goods, or captives in Algiers would be released. The agreement resulted in the release of eighteen Englishmen. After their minimal success, Mansell and the fleet sailed to Majorca to resupply and wait for re-enforcements from England.³⁰

After five months, they returned to Algiers with the purpose of trying to blockade Algiers because their first attempt had little positive results. Unfortunately for Mansell and the English fleet, it contained only large warships or merchant vessels and not small galleys. This became problematic for the fleet because without small galleys, small pirate corsairs and galleys could easily evade the large and lumbering English warships. As a result, the blockade had little effect and despite their best efforts, the blockade and one assault on Algiers had little effect, except the

³⁰ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 86-94.

deaths of around a dozen English sailors. With little success, the fleet returned to Spain, and after it became evident that James refused to send supplies, Mansell returned to England.³¹

Under James, the power of the English fleet slowly stagnated while the power of the Barbary and Ottoman corsairs grew. This apathy provided little comfort or support for those of captives left to languish in miserable conditions in North Africa as their numbers increased year by year.

Captivity During the Reign of Charles I

In 1625, Charles I ascended the throne and was soon confronted by the consequences of the Muslim corsair threat. Due to particularly favorable weather, the Ottoman and Barbary corsairs had been quite active in the Atlantic and the English Channel. They posed a significant threat to English merchants and fishing vessels. In August 1625, the House of Commons debated who was to blame for the corsair attacks on English subjects and what to do about it. One of the members stated “that the Kinge’s shippes doe nothings, goeing up and downe feasting in every good porte.” Another complained that “there was a barge taken in sight of Sir Francis Steward, and the Kinge’s shippes, which they let alone, saying they had no instructions to goe upon the coast of Fraunce.” A final member argued, “The tunnage and pownnage is graunted to the Kinge in consideration of his gardinge the sea....There beinge like graunte, the merchants, beinge robd, desyered they might receive the mony, and they would secure themselves.”³² In 1628, the House of Commons refused to grant Charles a loan to send his fleet to La Rochelle. Many of the leading opponents denying Charles his loan were members of the Levant and East India Companies. The merchants refused to pay any more customs than had

³¹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 94-100.

³² “11 August 1625” *Debates in the House of Commons in 1625*, ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (London: Camden Society, 1873), 117-118.

previously been sanctioned by Parliament. Despite the King's best efforts to try and force them to pay tonnage and poundage, many of the Levant Company merchants either allowed their ships to sit unclaimed in the harbor or went as far as to break into their warehouses and steal their own goods in order to avoid paying customs. Throughout 1628 and 1629, the King fought with Parliament, the Levant Company, and other powerful merchants in London. While the issues primarily centered on the right and power of the King to collect taxes not clearly levied by Parliament, an ancillary issue for the House of Commons, probably like many other Englishmen, was frustration with the Crown's inability to protect its subjects from the Muslim pirates.³³

The threat of Englishmen being taken captive by Ottoman or Barbary corsairs persisted throughout Charles's reign. In 1625, he tried to make a treaty with the Moroccan ruler, Mulay Zaidan. After Charles I returned eight Moroccans to Zaidan, Morocco and England created an initial peace treaty; however, the peace relations would not last. James's policy of piracy constrained much of Charles's ability to establish a lasting peace with the Moroccans or Ottomans. Despite his best efforts, many English mariners refused to follow his command to stop hostile actions in the Mediterranean. As a result, the continued hostilities by unsanctioned Englishmen undercut most efforts Charles made at maintaining peace and freeing captives.

Additionally, Charles also continued his father's practice of selective ransoming, which resulted in most of the ransom money going to well-connected and higher value captives, leaving little money left over for the common captive sailor. Costly wars by Charles and the Duke of Buckingham also drained large portions of the royal coffers that could have funded the navy or paid ransoms.³⁴ Francis Knight, in his captivity account, argued that both sides, Muslim and

³³ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 231-236.

³⁴ Matar, *Britain and Barbary: 1589-1689*, 58.

English, continually breeched the tenuous peace and that only if the King actually intervened could a lasting peace be achieved. Knight argued,

I am certaine that the last peace was broken by the English, by whom those of Argere received many injuries and long suffered them before they sought the least revenge....I am confident that if his Majestie should send for those his poor, most loyal subjects, that the Turks would give them upon honorable terms, and have a just propention to a good firme and constant peace.³⁵

Without the lasting peace, according to Knight, many Englishmen would remain captives.

Unfortunately for English captives, Charles I chose not to establish formal relations and not to secure a lasting peace for his people.

Another major issue that affected the increase in English captives during Charles's reign was the surge of English pirates in the Mediterranean. In October 1627, the Pasha of Algiers wrote Charles complaining of the continual English pirate raids against Algerian ships. The letter noted that the King could not know about his subjects' actions, but the Pasha would still take action against these individuals. A year later, the Pasha wrote a similar letter outlining all the damages and good stolen by English pirates.³⁶

In addition to dealing with diplomatic issues in Algiers, Charles decided to raise increased revenues for the protection of English shipping in the Channel and domestic ports. In October 1634, Charles I decided to require that all of England pay Ship Money instead of just the sea towns. He announced that the new Ship Money would be used for fighting "certain thieves, pirates, and robbers of the sea, as well Turks, enemies of the Christian name, as others, being gathered together, wickedly taking force and spoiling the ships, and goods, and

³⁵ Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares of Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, suffered by an English Captive Merchant* (London, 1640), 52.

³⁶ TNA SP 102/vol. 1, part 1, 18 (16 April 1628).

merchandises...delivering the men in the same into miserable captivity.”³⁷ This decree continued the downward spiral of Charles I’s reputation as people soon realized the new “tax” produced little results.³⁸ On June 20, 1636, Richard Plummer, master of a barge of Plymouth reported the following:

On Wednesday night last he sailed, in the said barge, out of Plymouth, with three others to St. Keverne, Cornwall, and arrived there on Thursday morning, where he heard it credibly reported, with sorrowful complaint, and lamentable tears of women and children, that on the 15th instant three fisher-boats belonging to St. Keverne, three others of Helston, and one more of Mollan [Mullion] and about 50 men in them, being on the coast fishing near Black Head, between Falmouth and the Lizard, not three leagues off the shore, were taken by the Turks, who carried both men and boats³⁹

As pressure continued to mount, Charles I decided his best plan of action was to stage an assault and rescue attempt on Salé, one of the main Moroccan ports and one of the primary locations of English captives.

In 1637, Charles I launched a naval expedition against Salé. During the seventeenth century, Salé, on the Moroccan Coast, had remained only nominally under the control of the Moroccan King. Because of Salé’s relative independence and its geographic location to the Atlantic, Straits of Gibraltar, the Mediterranean, it had attracted many North African pirates and had become a pirate base of operations. As with Algiers, Tunis, and other North African pirate havens, Salé also contained many English and European captives. By 1637, Salé became the object of a potential naval expedition because multiple reports had been sent to the Charles

³⁷ *Stuart Royal Proclamations*. 2:418-419.

³⁸ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 291-92; Also see. Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic*, 94; Kenneth R. Andrews, *Ships, Money, and Politics: Seafaring and Naval Enterprise in the Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 567-598; Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, Chapter 10.

³⁹ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1625-49*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton and Sophie Crawford Lomas (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1897), 10: 4.

reporting that Salé pirates had been operating near the Isle of Lundy in the Bristol Channel.⁴⁰

Reports had also been sent from the west country of pirate sightings. As a result of multiple recommendations from several advisors, including Archbishop William Laud, Charles began to make preparations to send a naval expedition to Salé.⁴¹

With preparations taking several months and after some delays, an English fleet led by William Rainsborough left England and arrived at Salé in March 1637 with one of its primary directives being to “repair in a straight course to Sallee, & there to employ yourself with industry & courage principally for suppressing of Turkish pirates, & redeeming of his Majesty’s subjects, whom they have taken.”⁴² The fleet spent most of its initial months blockading the port and attempting to capture or destroy pirates and the ships that tried to escape. Like the Algerian expedition ten years prior, the blockade had some success but did little actually to destroy ships in the harbor; and because of the fortifications, the English ships could not safely sail within cannon range.⁴³

After the first month of the blockade, factions within the city of Salé began to assist Rainsborough in his attempt to free English captives. The port of Salé consisted of two towns divided by the Bou Regreg River. The old town sat on the south banks of the river and had traditionally maintained good relations with the English, whereas the new town, situated on the north side of the river, had a reputation of supporting pirates and assaults against Christian ships and trading. The older town also maintained little obedience to the Moroccan King. When the English fleet arrived in Salé, both towns had been engaged in a conflict. Rainsborough quickly realized that the conflict might provide an opportunity for the English. After several

⁴⁰ TNA SP 16/316/52.

⁴¹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 235.

⁴² TNA SP 16/347/32.

⁴³ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 248-49.

reconnaissance missions and negotiations with a representative from the old city, Rainsborough sent cannons and sailors ashore to assist with building fortifications and reinforcing the old city. The result proved fruitful for the English. With the ability to fire on the pirate ships from the old city, they destroyed thirteen pirate ships. The fleet was also able to destroy four pirate ships and capture two others throughout June and July. In late July, resistance to the bombardment from the old city and the English blockade waned, and the new city finally surrendered.⁴⁴

The English Navy succeeded and William Brissenden reported, “all the English captives in Sallee (being about 400) were sent on board our ships. [*Margin: ‘About 700 were sent to Algiers before our ships' coming to Sallee.’*] With Sallee there is peace contracted. Tuesday, the 8th August, the Antelope, the Hercules, the Expedition, and our ship set sail for Cadiz to water.”⁴⁵ When the captives returned, the Crown celebrated their release with a parade, and the freed captives marched through London. This was Charles I’s last victory when it came to English captives.⁴⁶

After the successful expedition, and partly because he knew it would gain him popularity, Charles attempted to help more captives. Charles issued a proclamation in 1638 “providing for the relief of maimed, shipwreckt, and other distressed Sea-men, their Widows, and Children” that requested money be collected from masters, owners, and every man who worked on a ship trading in the Thames for the relief of captives. Trinity House would collect and distribute the money to the women and children of sailors who were captives or lost.⁴⁷ It made Charles look sympathetic and, at the same time, it meant no money would leave the royal coffers.

⁴⁴ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 250-53.

⁴⁵ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*, 1637, 430. From here on *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* will be abbreviated *CPSD*.

⁴⁶ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, 253-255.

⁴⁷ Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic*, 95.

Charles I and the Parliament tried to reach terms in order to help English captives, but throughout the last years of the 1630s and into the 1640s, they agreed on little as England slid into Civil War. During the Civil War, Charles I faced larger, more pressing, issues and paid little attention to the plight of English captives.⁴⁸

Captives/Captivity

While the creation of two trading companies, particularly the English Levant Company, brought new wealth and goods to England, trade in the Mediterranean also had dangerous side effects for many merchants and mariners. Captivity, slavery, and the potential for conversion to Islam became unforeseen consequences of the economic and military benefits that relations with the Ottoman Empire and Morocco provided. Captivity, however, did not just affect the English. It was a phenomenon that most Italian city-states, France, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands faced. Exact numbers of European captives taken and held in the North Africa have been difficult for scholars to establish because of the lack of records. Robert C. Davis recently argued that between 1530 and 1780, Muslims of the Barbary Coast enslaved roughly one and a quarter million European Christians, with the majority of the captives coming from the Italian city-states, Spain, and France.⁴⁹ While English captives represented only a small percentage of overall numbers, captivity still created many problems for English families, maritime trade, and the Monarchy.

⁴⁸ Matar, *Britain and Barbary: 1589-1689*, 58-75.

⁴⁹ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 21-22. Davis's study focuses primarily on Italian sources, however; when he does discuss English sources as part of his estimated captives he relies primarily on narratives and diplomatic correspondences, which list numbers of captives in particular cities.

According to other rough estimates, between 1580 and 1640, over 400 ships and five to ten thousand or more Englishmen became captives or slaves in North Africa. According to another estimate, the direct costs of the ships, goods, and captives lost to the pirates totaled over £1,000,000. Unfortunately, more concrete numbers remain elusive because of the lack of records. In Algiers, the captivity numbers are based on the records and reports of the English consul in Algiers or Trinity House officers more than any transactional records of the captors or pirates themselves. For example, Hebb based his calculations on several documents that list the number of ships taken into port at Algiers. Some of the reports of ships taken into port list the number of captives taken and some do not. If they did not list the number of captives taken, Hebb estimates the number of captives taken based on average crew size per ship. Thus, it is possible to get a rough estimate of the number of captives taken to Algiers during the reign of the early Stuarts.⁵⁰

Algiers was likely the port with the most captives, it is also unfortunately the only port in North Africa for which records of ships and captives exist. Pirates and corsairs also used the ports of Tunis, Salé, Tripoli, and Safi as bases, and the English did not have consuls or factors in these ports. It is possible to piece together some numbers based on letters and other reports of captives in places like Salé or Tunis. For example, in 1632, thirty-eight English captives in Salé petitioned Charles I to aid in their redemption, but their letter provides no other information except that “the names of the English captives under the king of Morocus, besides what are in

⁵⁰ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 137-140; Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1563-1760* (Boston: Brill, 2014), 21-40. David Hebb, in his study, estimates that between eight to ten thousand Englishmen were captives in North Africa during the period of this study. Matar, however, argues that the numbers should be considerably lower because, while many of the ambassadors and captives report large numbers of captives, there are discrepancies in the documents. One example is that the known number of ships that were captured by pirates does not match up to the crew per ship ratio. The number of captives is much larger than that of the ships captured.

Salley some seven or eight and in other places we know not how many.”⁵¹ Therefore, while probably more than thirty-eight captives lived in Salé in 1632, only the numbers listed on the document can be confirmed. In John Fox’s 1589 captivity narrative, he wrote that “[in Alexandria] two hundred, three score, and eight Christians prisoners had been taken by Turks’ force and were of sixteen sundry nations. Among which there were three Englishmen, whereof one was named John Fox of Woodbridge in Suffolk; the other, William Wickney of Portsmouth, in the county of Southampton; and third, Robert Moore of Harwich, in the county of Essex.”⁵² Fox’s account provides some data about the number of captives in Alexandria in the 1570s and 1580s, but it is still unclear if his numbers reflect the total captivity count or just a count of the captives he knew.

Other sources demonstrate that captivity was a nation-wide problem and not isolated to specific towns. John Dunton published a list of 339 captives ransomed from Salé with their geographical origins. According to Dunton, most captives came from the southern coastal areas, specifically 37 from Plymouth, 26 from Dongervin, 23 from Dartmouth, 22 from London, and 18 from Apson, but other captives came from northern coastal areas like Hull, Ipswich, Liverpool, and Cardiff.⁵³ This list provides concrete numbers of captives and, at the same time, illustrates that captivity was a plague for most of England. As demonstrated, it is nearly impossible for historians to calculate an accurate number of English captives in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As Nabil Matar has pointed out, in many cases, there were individuals who did not appear in the records. He argues, “the names and information that have survived cover only one third of the all the Britons who were held or enslaved. No information has

⁵¹ *Les Sources Inédites de l’Histoire du Maroc-Archives et Bibliothèques d’Angleterre*, 179-181.

⁵² “The worthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishman in delivering 266. Christians out of the captivity of the Turkes at Alexandria, the 3. of Januarie 1577.” Printed in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3:41.

⁵³ John Dunton, *A True Journal of the Sally Fleet with the Proceedings of the Voyage* (London, 1637).

survived about the others.”⁵⁴ Unfortunately, many of these individuals are lost to history. However, their lives as captives probably in many ways resembled those portrayed in the captivity narratives.

Most captives’ lives began once their ship had been captured and pillaged. The pirates took all the ship’s goods, chained the crew, and headed for port, usually in places such as Tunis, Salé, or Algiers. Once in port, they publicly displayed their captives for all potential buyers, and many times the local ruler chose the best slaves for himself. The pirates then marched the captives to the local bagnios, or centralized jails or storehouses, until they could be properly auctioned.

The bagnios provided the best place to hold captives because of their ample space and ease of guarding. Often the bagnios served as long-term storage for many captives like John Fox, who described living in one in his narrative account. Each night after a day of work, he and his fellow captives returned to the bagnios where they were fed and chained until work the following morning. Fox also notes that “there is a prison [bagnios] wherein the captives and such prisoners as serve in the galleys are put for all that time [winter] until the seas be calm and passable for the galleys, every prisoner being most grievously laden with irons on their legs, to their great pain and sore disabling of them to any labor taking.”⁵⁵ They became the central holding house for captives in North African cities until they were sold, relocated, escaped, redeemed, or died.

Life as a captive could vary depending on location and duties. Many captives found themselves as slaves on galleys and spent most of their days rowing. The average galley was roughly 180 feet long and 16 feet wide. The main deck had 18 to 24 benches for the oarsmen,

⁵⁴ Matar, “Introduction” printed in Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 16.

⁵⁵ John Fox, “the woorthie enterprise of John Foxe,” in Richard Haklyut, *The Principal Navigations*, 3: 40-41.

who remained chained to the benches. A raised gangway ran down the center of the benches for the boatswain or overseer to walk between, allowing them access to whip the slaves or enact other punishments. It was unacceptable for oarsmen to row with anything but maximum effort at all times. Four to five men manned one fifteen-foot oar and, while rowing, they were not seated but stood, often using their whole bodies to drive the oar with each stroke. The captain sometimes forced the oarsmen to row in such a manner for ten- to twenty-hour stretches depending on what the situation demanded.⁵⁶ The slaves received minimal food and water, only enough to keep them alive. Edward Webb, one such captive, described his experience aboard a galley soon after his capture:

They took prisoners and presently stripped us naked, & gave us 100 blowes a peece with a (dr pizel), for presuming to fight against them. Then were we sent to Constantinople, and then committed to the Gallies... First we were shaven head to face, and then a shirt of Cotton and Breeches of the same put upon us, and our legs and feet left naked, and by one of the feet is each slave chained with a great chaine to the Gallie, and our hands fastened, with a payre of manacles. The food which I and other did eat, was very blacke... and our drinke was stinking water.⁵⁷

Webbe's experience was similar to many other individuals. The narratives of Thomas Sanders, Richard Haelston, John Rawlins, Robert Ellyat, and Francis Knight all reflected similar sufferings to those of Edward Webbe.

While life was rarely pleasant as a captive, some captives had less miserable experiences than those aboard galleys. When Edward Webb was captured, it was found out that he was trained as a gunner, a profession that was highly sought after by pirates. As a result, he spent much of his time in the Ottoman army fighting the Safavids or in Ethiopia. Others with military

⁵⁶ Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary States* (London, Elek Books Limited 1977), 31.

⁵⁷ Edward Webbe, *The Rare and most wonderful things which Edward Webbe an Englishman borne, hath seen and passed in his troublesome travailes* (London, 1590), 7.

expertise were conscripted in various North African armies.⁵⁸ Other captives became domestic slaves, working as cooks, gardeners, farmers, or builders for wealthy individuals. One captive named T.S. recounted that because of his ability to cook his master made him his head chef when the old chef died. Unfortunately for T.S., during a great feast, he accidentally included fish liver, something with which he was unfamiliar, into the meal and greatly upset his master. Apparently, the meal tasted quite horrible and his master was so infuriated that he had him removed from the kitchen and sold.⁵⁹

Another consequence of trade in the Mediterranean was the conversion of many Englishmen, willingly and unwillingly to Islam. This phenomenon was also known as turning “Turk” or becoming a Renegado. In some instances, individuals who were not captives voluntarily rejected Christianity for Islam. Captive Thomas Sanders, in his narrative *The Voyage made to Tripolis in Barbarie, in the yeere 1583*, stated that a Renegado was a person who “first was a Christian and then afterward becommeth a Turk.”⁶⁰ When an individual “turned Turk” he (women were rarely mentioned) renounced his Christianity. George Wilkins, in his 1609 travel narrative, *Three Miseries of Barbary: Plague, Famine, and Ciuill warre*, warned his countrymen about the dangers of forsaking one’s religion. Wilkins cited an example of an Englishman who been beaten by his master. According to Wilkins, the Englishman “desperately resolved (whilest the fire was in his bloud) to revenge those blowes on his body, buy giving wounds to his own soul; and thereupon he presently went and denyed his religion forsooke Christ to follow *Mahomet*; and from a Christian turned Moore.”⁶¹ The individual abandoned his Christian convictions and salvations for that of Islam. Captivity narrative author Francis Knight observed,

⁵⁸Matar, *Turk, Moor, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, 77.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶⁰ Thomas Sanders, *A true Discription and breefe Discourse, Of a most lamentable Voiage, made latelie to Tripolie in Barbarie, in a Ship named Jesus* (London: Richard Jones, 1587), Biii.

⁶¹ George Wilkins, *Three Miseries of Barbary: Plague, Famine, and Ciuill Warre* (1609), B2r.

“having been resident in those parts, what their sufferings are, as scoffes, threats, blowes, chains, hunger, nakedness, with innumerable others, and which is most deplorable, their danger of falling from the Christian and most holy faith.”⁶² Captivity narratives were not alone in their accounts of tortured conversion.

Thomas Dallam described Renegados as his ship made a stop in Algiers en route to Constantinople:

Thar be a greate number of Turks that be but Reneid(renegade) cristians of all nations. Som, but moste are Spanyardes, Italians, and other Ilands adjoining, who, when they be taken, are compelled so to doo, or els to live in moche more slaverie and myserie. But, in process of time, these Renied(renegade) Christians do become more berberus and villanus, taking pleasure in all sinful actions; but that which is worste of all they take most delite in, and that is Theyre prowle aboute the coastes of other countries, with all the skill and pollacie thei can, to betraye cristians, which they sell unto the Moors and other marchants of Barbarie for slaves.⁶³

As Thomas Dallam noted, many European Christians, Englishmen included, became pirates and patrolled the water of Mediterranean. One of the worst offenses these renegadoes committed, according to Dallam, was capturing and selling other Christians into captivity. Scotsman William Lithgow in his travels to Tunnis described meeting the English pirate John Ward, who though not a captive, willing converted to Islam:

met with our English Captaine, generall *Ward*, once a great Pyrat, and Commander at Seas; who in despite of his denied acceptance in *England* had turned *Turke*, and built there a faire Palace, beautified with rich Marble and Alabaster stones: With whom I found Domestick some fiftene circumcised English Runnagats, whose lives and

⁶² Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares of Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire*, 4.

⁶³ Thomas Dallam, “The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600” in *Early Voyages and Travels in The Levant* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1893), 14-15.

Countenances were both alike even as desperate as disdainfull. Yet old *Ward* their Master was placable, and joynd me safely with a passing Land conduct to *Algieri*.⁶⁴

Lithgow's description illustrated that many Englishmen became pirates willingly and in some cases, like Ward, profited quite well. As Lithgow noted, Ward had been denied a return to England because he had been a pirate; he in turn converted to Islam and became a wealthy and successful Muslim pirate.

As these authors have pointed out, captivity created several problems, not only for the captives but for England in general. Conversion to Islam remained a constant option, and it provided a way through which captives could improve the circumstances of their captivity. Often if captives converted to Islam, the hardship of their slavery eased. Though, as Nabil Matar argues, despite their conversion, many captives remained slaves until they or somebody else paid their ransom. Many captors and slave owners had money invested in the captive and often wanted to make a profit or at least to break even.⁶⁵ For some, it meant they no longer had to row themselves to death in the galleys of ships or engage in the hardest manual labor and building projects. For others, it meant a better life with potential freedom and a new existence in North Africa. For those captives who did not convert to Islam or who converted but still wanted to return to England, a variety of options existed for potential redemption.

The least expensive form of redemption was escape; however, few captives ever accomplished this feat. In many of the captivity narratives from this period, the largest number of individuals who escaped at a single time were the 266 with John Fox in the 1580s. The majority of the narratives tell tales of small numbers, usually fewer than ten or twenty

⁶⁴ William Lithgow, *A Most Delectable and True Discourse, of an admired and painefull peregrination from Scotland to the most famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia, and Affrike* (London, 1614), 358.

⁶⁵ Nabil Matar, "Introduction" in *Vitkus Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 25-30.

individuals, escaping captivity, and most often, it was only one individual, the protagonist of the captivity narrative, who successfully escaped.

If a captive could not successfully manage an escape, then the next option for his or her redemption involved a ransom, which involved the captive, the captive's family, or some benefactor paying for the captive's release. The average cost for a captive's redemption was around £40-50, though prices could vary drastically. For wealthy individuals who found themselves captives, redemption often occurred quickly. Many wealthy individuals could raise the money in a short amount of time, be free of their captivity, and return to England. John Fox's narrative notes that the ship's master and its owner who were captured along with their crew paid their ransom but left the rest of the crew, including John Fox, in captivity. In 1633, Captain William Hawkerbridge paid for his own redemption with private funds but allowed his thirty-three men to remain unredeemed.⁶⁶

A variety of ways existed for captives or brokers for the captive to procure the money needed for redemption. Trinity House, established by Henry VIII to help sailors, travelers, and explorers, redeemed 16 captives for around £9 a person on one occasion; however, there were instances of individuals claiming the price for redemption was £112 or as much as £562.⁶⁷ As Ian Friel has noted, the average salary for a sailor during the Elizabethan and early Stuart era averaged 12 shillings a month (it took 20 shillings to equal a pound).⁶⁸ Trinity House rarely directly engaged in money-lending for redemption. More often, it tracked the location of captives and provided as much information to the families as possible. Trinity House then issued certificates, which vouched for the good conduct of the captive, specifically making it clear that the captive had not engaged in piracy, to "collectors" who traveled throughout England

⁶⁶ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 27-28.

⁶⁷ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 152-153.

⁶⁸ Friel, *Maritime History of Britain and Ireland c.400-2001*, 98-101.

attempting to raise money to redeem the captives. The major issue with this method of raising funds for captives was that it required extensive travel. Many parishes donated only small amounts of money, often no more than a pound or two if they were lucky, which was insufficient to meet the average ransom of approximately £40.⁶⁹ As a result, the individual had to travel to many parishes or villages to receive enough money actually to ransom one or more captives.

In addition to having collectors travel to various parishes, captives could petition their friends and family to raise the required funds to secure their release. On occasion, captives could leave collateral, often a relative, with his or her captors, while the captive returned to England to raise the necessary funds for redemption. In a memo in 1632, Robert Blake noted that he paid 30 ducats (roughly £14) “for the delivering of a boy that remained engaged for his father who went for England for his owne and his sonnes ransome.”⁷⁰

In many cases, the funds required for redemption were not the only expenses. It took effort to track down captives, especially if they had been sold, manned a galley, or were in the possession of an individual who did not to like to release his prize captives. In the same memo mentioned above, Robert Blake paid 200 ducats (approximately £95) “to the officers who took pains to find out the number and whereabouts of the captives.” He also had to pay an extra 400 ducats (£190) to a favorite of the king because he refused to release his captives at the king’s orders.⁷¹

Some individuals established private charities for ransoming captives. Sir James Campbell, who died in 1642, left £1000 in his will for ransoming of captives who have been taken by North African or other Mediterranean pirates.⁷² In several instances, Parliament

⁶⁹ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 25.

⁷⁰ TNA SP 71/1/f.84.

⁷¹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 162; TNA SP 71/1/f.84.

⁷² Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 157.

authorized a national collection of money for the ransoming of captives. In 1624, a national collection raised £2,848 for the redemption of captives. In other instances, local civic and county officials raised funds. For example, in 1622, people in Bristol and the surrounding area raised £160 and brought about the redemption of 40 individuals.⁷³ Some merchants advanced money to captives, which the captive would repay after returning to England, often taking bonds from friends and relatives to guarantee payment. This option was, at times, problematic for redeemed captives because it potentially left them owing more money than they could ever hope to repay.⁷⁴

The Anglican Church provided another option for families to collect enough money to ransom. Priests gave sermons and took up a collection for the captives' redemption. Much of the money collected in parishes went to a larger fund administered by the representative of the monarch, usually the archbishop of Canterbury, who then held the money and sought advice from the Privy Council. The Archbishop, on the recommendations and authority of the Privy Council and King, authorized the payments to ransom specific captives. Men with connections to the Privy Council, King, or Archbishop usually got priority on the ransom money. Thus, the money provided by friends and family of a particular captive sometimes did not go to freeing the desired captive, which caused individuals to complain about the practice.⁷⁵

One such complaint was from Sir Thomas Roe, the English Ambassador to Istanbul, who wrote a letter to the King in 1622, begging him to pay the ransom for some English captives:⁷⁶

are diuers poore men your Majesties subiects in captiuitie to the Grand Signor, and to other men, which might be redeemed for money...I have obserued in England many collections made for particular men in churches, by license of grace from your Majestie, which I feare, haue bene abused; therefore if your Majestie were pleased to speake with

⁷³TNA SP 16/354/179.

⁷⁴Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 162.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 157-159.

⁷⁶Matar, *Britain and Barbary: 1589-1689*, 48.

my lord keeper therein that no priuate letters patents might be granted; but that your Majestie would vouchsafe to take order with him, that a warrant under the great seale might be giuen to some honest and elect men of the Spanish and Turkish companies, as tresures of the poore captiues, to make a monethly collection in the parishes of London and Middlesex, to receiue the charity of compassionat and well affected men.⁷⁷

In 1632 the English Consul at Algiers complained, “To this day, not one penny of any collected money gathered in England or Ireland appears; by which the King’s Majesty and State are much abused as also they captives kept in thralldom by the collectors sinister means that detaineth the said money to contrary use.”⁷⁸ Unfortunately for captives and their families, despite money being available for redemption, it often was not funneled into locations that provided any benefit.

Compounding the problem, in addition to the Crown’s lackluster efforts, much of the ransoming fell to the companies and their consuls or factors spread throughout the Mediterranean. The primary English diplomat in the Mediterranean was based in Constantinople because he had the most power and connections throughout the Mediterranean due to his central location and the essential role he played in maintaining favorable economic and trade relations with the Ottoman Empire. Consuls and agents in North Africa did not always possess the same power and resources as those of the ambassador in Constantinople. Often the Consuls and Agents in North Africa, in places such as Morocco, Tunis, and Algiers had much more autonomy but often lacked the resources, or in the case of Algiers, the Consul in Algiers remained vacant for long periods of times. In 1622, an anonymous correspondent from Algiers created a list of reasons why Algiers should have a consul: “To hinder the reprisal of ships, and making our menn slave; To hinder the retreat of piratts, who would leave their Kings service and betake themselves to robbing every body; To have a free port for our shipp to retire to in the strayghts,

⁷⁷ Sir Thomas Roe, *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621 to 1628 Inclusive* (London, 1740), 32.

⁷⁸ TNA SP 71/1/f.119.

where they may be secured, furnisht, and refresht.”⁷⁹ If a consul engaged in the redemption of captives, he often requested compensation. Philip Rycault, the consul at Algier, demanded that it was “reasonable, that he should reape some benefit from thence; as that he who serves at the Altar should live by the Altar.”⁸⁰ During reigns of James and Charles, the “going rate” for redeeming a captive was often two percent of ransom paid. Another issue that faced those who required the services of consuls or factors abroad for redemption was the fact that the consul was often not an honest individual. Without the watchful eye of the government and relative autonomy, embezzlement, corruption, and fraud became problems.⁸¹ In 1618, the Privy Council received an accusation of embezzlement against Edward Eastman, who had been misusing the money “intended for the redemption of certaine Christian captives taken by Turkish pirates.”⁸² In other instances, England or the trade companies had no official representation in places like Algiers or Tunis, and the redemption of captives was left to unofficial representatives, which often was not ideal.

This lack of official representation created problems because the majority of the English captives held in the Mediterranean lived in cities like Salé, Tunis, and Algiers. In November 1628, Nicholas Leate wrote a memo to the King that outlined the proceeding in Algiers for the preceding ten years. He pointed out that many of the English captives, and the grievances of the Algerians, revolved around English pirates attacking and taking Algerian ships. Leate argued that providing a consul in Algiers would be beneficial to resolving many of the captive issues

⁷⁹ TNA SP 71/1/104.

⁸⁰ TNA SP 71/2/376.

⁸¹ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 27.

⁸² 'Pages 126-151,' in *Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 36, 1618-1619*, ed. J V Lyle (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929), 146, accessed June 10, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol36/pp126-150>.

because the Consul could address Algerian grievances while at the same time protecting English merchants.⁸³

In some cases, despite not having an official consul or factor in places like Algiers or Tunis, individuals who had no official appointment by the Crown or Levant company would present themselves as the official English representative to that specific city. Sometimes they provided beneficial services to Englishmen in those cities, and sometimes their actions became detrimental to English relations in the foreign ports. In 1600, John Audellay, as mentioned in the introduction, claimed to be Elizabeth I's representative in Algiers, attacked a Venetian vessel and set fire to it, claiming that it was Spanish. This infuriated the Bey of Algiers because Audellay attacked the ship, "when we Muslims were in the mosques at prayer...at midday with the great danger of setting fire to our galleys...causing much scandal and indignation among the people of this city at the sight of such a criminal deed."⁸⁴ Problematic consuls who instigated diplomatic issues were not necessarily the norm.

Throughout the remainder of the 1620s and into the 1630s, the situation continued to worsen. In 1632, James Frizzell petitioned the King and his Privy Council for help. According to the petition, Frizzell had been acting as consul in Algiers for at least a decade, though probably in an unofficial capacity. In his petition, Frizzell stated that 340 Englishmen remained captive in Algiers, at least 86 of them being women and children. He claimed he was unable to help them because "all things here which since is gone to decay by the [English Levant] company neglecting of me this eight years, who hath not paid me one penny of my salary....I lye here a prisoner and engaged, not being able to help my self, nor any of his majesty's subjects, as I did for 6 years together, that my means lasted, and not one of them during the said time were

⁸³ TNA SP 71/1/96.

⁸⁴ TNA FO 113/1/f.20, Printed in MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 83.

made slaves.”⁸⁵ According to Frizzell, he had redeemed captives using his own money for nearly 6 years, but once his funds ran out and the Levant company continued withholding pay to him, someone in Algiers took him prisoner, which forced him, like many other captives, to petition the King for help. Unlike most petitioners, Frizzell petitioned the King and the Privy Council to force the Levant company, or as he called them the “Turquey company,” to pay him the salary he thought he was due. Frizzell and Audellay represented two ends of the consular spectrum; however, they also represented many of the significant issues that went along with redemption of English captives. The Crown and the trade company could not be counted on to assist in the redemption of Englishmen in North Africa. Despite the outcries, as mentioned previously, James I provided little remedy to the situation, and Charles I tried to redeem captives but often with little success, except for the Sale expedition. Charles, like his father, wanted the financial responsibility of ransoming the captives to fall to the merchant companies that employed them and not on the royal treasure.⁸⁶ Often little hope for salvation existed for the common English sailor who was unlucky enough to be captured by the North African pirates.

Captivity created many problems for England and its populace, especially for those with connections to the Mediterranean. The lack of a government with a strong navy or a desire to assist captives only compounded the problem. Despite the efforts of family, friends, charities, and diplomats, the captivity of the English was not resolved throughout the reigns of the early Stuarts, rather the problem only escalated. It is this context in which the captives narratives should be understood. The experience of captivity and redemption shaped the language many of the authors used to describe themselves as Englishmen. With the constant uncertainty and fear, both physical and religious, that permeated the captivity experience, Englishmen often made a

⁸⁵ TNA SP 71/1/95.

⁸⁶ Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic*, 101.

point of expressing their Englishness to English audiences through their captivity narratives. It is these expressions of English identity that will be examined in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 2

PROVIDENCE, MISERY, AND IDENTITY: ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

In 1582, Richard Hasleton, aboard the merchant vessel *Mary Marten* sailed from London to the Ottoman controlled Patras, Greece. Hasleton and the ship passed through the Mediterranean and made it to Patras without encountering pirates or any sailing accidents; however, he and the crew were not so lucky on the return trip. North African pirates sailed close and killed the *Mary Marten*'s gunners, boarded the ship, and took Hasleton and the crew captive. Five years into his servitude aboard a Turkish galley, the ship encountered a violent storm and almost the entire crew and slaves drowned except for Hasleton and fifteen individuals. After the shipwreck, he became a captive of the Spanish Inquisition. The inquisitors proceeded to inquire as to his Christian theological understandings and tortured him when his beliefs did not line up with their Roman Catholicism. Eventually he escaped the Spanish Inquisition; unfortunately for him, it was back to Algiers, where he was re-captured and enslaved by his former master. Eventually, he gained his freedom when a London merchant paid for his release and travel back to England. Hasleton concluded his narrative by stating, "Thus have you heard how it hath pleased the Almighty God (after many a great miseries) to bring me to a port which I longed greatly to see."¹ For the English, God's power and divine will sustained them during captivity

¹ Richard Halseton, *Strange and Wonderful Things Happened to Richard Hasleton, borne in Braintree in Essex, In his ten yeares trauailles in many forraine countries* (London: A.I. for William Barley, 1595), 34.

and guided them during escape. Most of the individuals who escaped gave God all the glory for their release; this is a recurring theme in many of the captivity narratives published between 1580 and 1640. The idea that these English claim that the only means of their salvation came via God's intervention can be interpreted in several different ways. It can be seen as a way for the Englishmen to express their identity as elect English Protestants, who were the true believers and God's favored.

Another way to interpret the heavy emphasis on God's providence in the captivity narratives is that they express a sense of personal weakness and little to no faith in the English Levant Company, its consul and ambassadors, English merchants, and the Monarchy itself. These narratives illustrated the trauma of captivity and helplessness the captives experienced, and the only way they could find strength in their victimhood was to claim the Christian God was superior to that of Islam. The monarchy, aristocracy, and merchant companies were conspicuously absent from many of the narratives. In fact, in several of the narratives, the authors remarked upon the lack of assistance received from any of the earthly entities that, in theory, should have been assisting with the redemption from captivity. Often, the lack of aid or the inaction by the Monarchy was due to a combination of unwillingness and inability, as noted in Chapter One. In other cases, the monarchs assisted in the redemption of captives, but attaining the freedom of a captive took painstaking effort by the monarch's agents and was not always successful. While groups like the English Levant Company and other private merchants assisted in redemptions, usually only those who were well connected or long-suffering received assistance; even the aristocrat Thomas Sherley expressed his extreme despair because the English ambassador in Constantinople refused to help him gain freedom.

In sixteenth-and seventeenth-century England, Englishmen feared Muslims in the Mediterranean and Ottoman Empire. Much of this fear came from the power of the Ottoman Empire and the real threat it posed to Europeans and, specifically, the English. Fear of captivity and conversion by Muslims loomed large in the minds and imaginations of Englishmen, especially sailors and merchants. The fear and perceived threat Muslims posed to Englishmen manifested itself in different ways, but collectively, the idea that was perpetuated about Muslims, especially in the Mediterranean, was that they were a powerful and impending threat to the bodies and souls of Christians and it was necessary to combat them.² As discussed in Chapter One, England lacked the naval or military capabilities to confront the Ottoman and corsair Islamic threat in the Mediterranean and, as a result, attacked Islam and Muslims through literature, plays, sermons, and other propaganda at home. As Nabil Matar argues:

Islam and Muslims were viewed through the prism of the powerful-expansionist-empire of the Ottomans, and the North African pirates and privateers who threatened British shores and navigation. As a result, Islam became inextricably associated with war and its threat, and Britons constructed an imaginary sense that Muslims were a tribe of warring anti-Christians intent on establishing the universal monarchy of their long-dead leader known as ‘Mahomet.’³

Because of this sense of weakness or inferiority, one of the only weapons Englishmen, and especially captives, had to fight against the power Muslims was their writing.

Few historians have focused explicitly on the sense of weakness demonstrated by the captives through their writings. Linda Colley in her monograph *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World 1600-1850*, examines the ways in which captives expressed themselves in relation to their captivity and Islam. She argues that the English sense of uniqueness in their Protestantism

² MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 26-31.

³ *Ibid.*, 26.

provided them with a sense of superiority, but at the same time it continually reminded them of their weakness and vulnerability. Colley, however, spends the majority of her work focusing on England in the late seventeenth and into the eighteenth century as it built its empire. Despite her title, she spends little time discussing captives or narratives prior to 1650, with the narrative of Francis Knight being the exception.⁴ Also, as the title of her monograph suggests, she does not address any of the Elizabethan captivity narratives.

Another historian, Julia Schleck, directly addressed the feeling of weakness many captives experienced through the two narratives of Thomas Sherley and Thomas Saunders. Schleck argues that, especially in the case of Saunders, despite the efforts of Queen Elizabeth and her agents to free captives, the Crown had to appeal the Ottoman Sultan for assistance, thus emphasizing the weakness of the English Monarchy compared to the North African states.⁵

In his article “Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East, 1577-1625,” Nabil Matar surveys the captivity narratives published during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. He illustrates the varying motivations that prompted the English captives to write their narratives. For Matar, during the reign of Elizabeth, most of the captives demonstrated some form of appreciation towards Elizabeth and other individuals who assisted in their redemption. It is only during the reign of James that a greater outcry from the captives appeared in the narratives due to James’s lack of assistance and support.⁶ Matar is correct that the tone of the early narratives is much more appreciative than those written during the reign of James, but the same sense of despair and weakness appears in both the Elizabethan and early Stuart narratives.

⁴ Colley, *Captives*, 73-134.

⁵ Julia Schleck, *Telling Tales of Islamic Lands, 1575-1630* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), Chapters 2 and 4.

⁶ Nabil Matar, “Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East, 1577-1625” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (Summer 2001): 553-572.

In most cases, the only solace and salvation the captives find is in God and not the benevolent monarchy during captivity.

In one of his earlier works, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, Nabil Matar spends several chapters discussing the language Englishmen used to assert their superiority. Matar argues that one of the critiques and ways to disparage Muslims was through associating them with sodomy. According to Matar, European Christians, which included the English, often used sodomy as a way to discredit Muslims and to show England's moral superiority to Muslims.⁷ He also spends a chapter focusing on the language Englishmen used to express the potential for a holy war against Muslims, which they used to proclaim a sense of superiority despite the English weakness.⁸ Matar and Gerald Maclean add to this discussion in their book *Britain the Islamic World, 1558-1713*, in which they focus on Islam and Muslims in English thought. They discuss the larger discourse in England and much of the superiority that English authors articulated through images, plays, pamphlets, sermons, and other print media.⁹ As a result, this chapter adds to the historiography because it reverses the focus of much of the historiographical writing by examining the sense of weakness, helplessness, and inferiority that permeated the captives' narratives between 1580-1640.

Providence

Due to this feeling of inferiority when faced with Muslim captors, many of the English captivity narratives place a heavy emphasis on God's providence. As Linda Colley argues, the nature of English Protestantism gave the English a sense of superiority and election based on

⁷ Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, 109-127.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 139-167.

⁹ MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, Chapter 1.

God's favor. At the same time, the special sense of election reinforced the idea of England's "own smallness and vulnerability."¹⁰ For the English, as Colley argues, claiming Godly election and virtue over that of Islam became "as much a defense mechanism as an expression of a serene superiority."¹¹ Many English captives required such a defense mechanism to survive the trials and tribulations of captivity to powerful Muslim states.

Providence should not be considered just a small part of English Protestants' belief system; it was integral. While it was used by captives to aid in their expression of fearfulness and helplessness during captivity, it also provided them a way to articulate their English Protestant identity. It is also important to take the theme of providence and connect it further to the larger Elizabeth and early Stuart understandings and writings about God's providence. It can be seen as an important part of the developing English identity developing in Elizabethan and Stuart England. While ideas of providence were not singular to English Protestantism, their integration into the emerging nature of English Protestantism allow it to be identified as particularly English when discussed by English authors, especially authors who in their narratives were clearly trying to define themselves as English Protestants.

A fully-fledged national identity had not yet developed but vivid signs existed that demonstrated change was occurring. One of those signs was the language of providence. Many authors including Anna Suranyi, Richard Helgerson, Alexandra Walsham, and David Cressy have argued for the emerging national identity but none has included the captivity narratives as viable window to view the developing identity. Nabil Matar and Daniel Viktus only make fleeting references to the authors of the narratives trying to define themselves as English. Consequently, the captivity narratives and their use of the language of providence are significant

¹⁰ Colley, *Captives*, 105.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

because they demonstrate that some English captives tried to define themselves as English to an English audience, which provides a glimpse into what Englishmen thought it meant to be English in Elizabethan and early Stuart England.

It is important to discuss the theology of providence itself before discussing providence in English Protestantism. Providence is the belief that a divine being created, ordered, and played an integral in the interworking of the earth and its occupants. As Michael Langford and other have documented, it had been a central part of Judeo-Christian systems for several millennia.¹² The integration and emphasis on God's providence in Protestant theology predominately began during the Reformation with John Calvin. Protestants, especially Calvinists, as Alexandra Walsham explained, placed special emphasis on providence in their theology because with much of Catholic intermediaries, clergy, saints, and the Roman Catholic Church structure removed, the primary focus becomes humankind's "utter impotence and depravity and complete dependence upon the mercy of its Maker and Redeemer."¹³ With such heavy emphasis placed both on God's power and majesty and the utter inadequacy of humans, God's divine grace, not works, became the sole emphasis and criterion for salvation.¹⁴

According to Walsham, providence has a two-fold definition. First, it is God's knowledge and wisdom. He, in his omniscience, knows past, present, and future. He has knowledge of all things to have passed and all things that will come. According to the rector of Rotherhithe in 1627, Dr. Thomas Gataker, God was like "one standing aloft on a sentinel, thus seeth all both before and behind under one view at one instant."¹⁵ The second part of the

¹² Michael J. Langford, *Providence* (London: SCM Press, 1981), chapter 2; Also see T.J. Gorrige, *God's Theater: A Theology of Providence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 8-11; Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 8-9.

¹³ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵ Thomas Gataker, *A iust defence of certaine passages in a former treatise concerning the nature and vse of lots* (London, 1627), 44.

definition of providence is God acting and shaping the world based on his divine knowledge.

For Calvin and others, it was unacceptable to think of God as a passive, watchmaker deity. God played a constant and direct role in shaping the grandest events to the most miniscule.¹⁶ Calvin made this clear in his *Institutes*:

For in conducting the affairs of men, he so arranges the course of his providence, Whether in protecting them when they stray in deserts, and at length leading them back into the right path, or supplying them with food when famishing from want, or delivering them when captivity from iron fetters and foul dungeons, or conducting them safe into harbour after shipwreck, or bringing them back from the gates of death by curing their diseases, or after burning up the fields with heat and drought, fertilizing them with the river of his grace, or exalting the meanest of the people, and casting down the might from their lofty seats ...not a drop of rain falls but at the express command of God.¹⁷

For Calvin, God played a role in all actions, no matter the significance, that occurred on Earth because they were part of his divine plan. Providence emphasized the power of God because salvation emanated from Him, while at the same time demonstrating that no matter the action of humans God still controlled the outcome as part of his divine plan.

Before the place of providence in English Protestant theology can properly be assessed, it is important to discuss the nature of religion during the late Elizabethan and early Stuarts. By 1580, England was a Protestant nation. Many historians have debated the nature of religion in England after Henry VIII's break from the Roman Catholic Church. The arguments began with A.G. Dickens's thesis that Henry's decision to break from the Rome, though primarily about his desire for a son, fit with the groundswell among the many English commoner's desire to become Protestant. For Dickens, England remained a Protestant nation after 1535, despite the hiccup that

¹⁶ Gataker, *A iust defence of certaine passages*, 10.

¹⁷ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 1:55-57; Calvin, *Institutes*, 1: Chp 16. Stanza 5.

was the reign of Catholic Mary I.¹⁸ Historians Eamon Duffy and Christopher Haigh in multiple monographs and articles have challenged Dickens's argument. They have both contended, especially Duffy, that medieval Catholicism was an essential and vibrant part of England's religious landscape before and after Henry's decision to break with the Roman Catholic Church. It also remained a large part of England's religious orientation throughout the reign of Henry VIII, diminishing somewhat during the reign of Edward VI, and having a modest re-vitalization during the reign of Mary I. For Duffy, it was not until a decade into the reign of Elizabeth that a generation emerged who knew little of the Catholic ways and only saw Catholics and Catholic practices as popish, superstitious, and foreign.¹⁹ Other historians, like Norman Jones, have made similar arguments but placed the generational change far earlier during the reign of Edward VI.²⁰ After the revisionist assault on Dickens, it has been demonstrated that religious change in England was far more complex and varied throughout the country. A new focus had also taken shape, which examined the complex nature of English religion instead of the timelines and process by which England became Protestant. Historians like Alexandra Walsham, Peter Lake, Margaret Spufford, and Patrick Collinson have led the charge to examine the complex nature of Tudor and Stuart religious change. Much of Collinson's work has focused on the nature of puritans in Elizabethan England. He has argued that the difference between puritan beliefs about divine activity and those of their neighbors and peers was essentially one of temperature rather than substance.²¹ Thus for Collinson, a large portion of the English nation was Protestant during the reign of Elizabeth with just varying degrees of exuberance. Much of Collinson's thesis has

¹⁸ A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1989).

¹⁹ Eamon Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 593; Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁰ Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002).

²¹ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

been corroborated by Peter Lake in his study of puritans.²² Lake argues that even the most radical puritans, despite some of their separatist language, wanted to work within the Church of England to bring about change. Collinson's and Lake's theses are important to this study because the theology of providence in the Church of England derived from Calvinists, who were also known as puritans in England. As a result, when the term English Protestant is used in the rest of this chapter it should include all non-radical England Protestants, no matter their temperature.

In addition to Collinson's and Lake's studies on puritans, other historians like Christopher Hill and Lawrence Stone have demonstrated the population of puritans began to grow in Elizabethan England as more of the merchant classes gained wealth and education. Their growth as Hill and Stone, among other historians of early Stuart England, have demonstrated continued to increase throughout the reigns of James I and Charles I.²³ With this growth, their particular brand of Calvinist theology also ingrained itself deeper culturally within England. In 1600, Dr. George Abbot explained his understanding of providence, "But who is he that will earnestly enter into himselfe, and call his wits to remembrance, who may not see that from his cradle vnto this day, many things according to his proportion haue bene bestowed vpon him: which came wholly by Gods prouidence, and quite without his trauell,"²⁴ The great Elizabethan Protestant martyrologist John Foxe, though not a puritan, wrote, "there is no difference of persons with the Lord, so many times his provident and merciful help is no less upon the poor and simple, as upon other worthier and greater personages...Such is the secret and unsearchable operation of God's power, able to deliver who he pleaseth in the midst of death

²² Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Settlement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

²³ Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Lawrence Stone, *Causes of the English Civil War* (London: Routledge, 1972).

²⁴ George Abbot, *An exposition vpon the prophet Ionah Contained in certaine sermons, preached in S. Maries church England in Oxford* (London, 1600), 628.

and desperation.”²⁵ Many theologians, when discussing providence, rarely neglected reminding listeners about Matthew 10:29-30 that states, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Many puritans, especially clergy, sought to find the hand of God in all actions, even to the point of keeping daily journals that discussed the events of their day as shaped by God.²⁶

Until recently, historians who have studied providentialism in England have primarily attributed its penetration to the educated elite, especially preachers. They have argued that the average layperson did not have much understanding of providence and that it had not penetrated into much lay writing or lay cultural understanding of the world. Keith Thomas argues that despite the puritan population of England and the puritan clergy that fought relentlessly, much of the general population often placed more emphasis on Fate or Fortune guiding their lives than God. For Thomas, a large majority of the reason puritans placed such emphasis on providence was because the successes in their lives, often monetarily, demonstrated that they were one of God’s elect. Conversely, these same individuals claimed that those without money or success in life did not have God’s favor and were doing or had done something wrong in their lives. Consequently, Thomas claims, much of the lower class population turned elsewhere in order to explain events in their lives and the world around them. The non-puritan population, according to Thomas, replaced God’s providence with personified Fate or Fortune, which made the successes or failures in their lives more arbitrary and less connected to God’s judgment. As Thomas demonstrates, other individuals believed in magic or witchcraft as an explanation, with some even turning to astrology for explanations. For many, it was easier to believe in Fate or

²⁵ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 5:1784.

²⁶ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Penguin University Books, 1973), 92-93.

witchcraft than resign oneself to God's perpetual disfavor. As a result, for Thomas and other historians, belief in God's providence remained largely relegated to the clergy and puritans.²⁷

Alexandra Walsham, in her book *Providence in Early Modern England*, strongly disagrees with Thomas. She asserts that too much emphasis has been placed on the annoyed clergy who bemoaned the lack of their parishioner's understanding. She also argues that, at the same time, too much attention has been paid to the outlandish and anomalous stories that directly compliment the clergy's claims.²⁸ Walsham contends that in Elizabethan and, especially early Stuart England, many vectors of transmission existed for notions of providence and were not limited to puritan clergy, their sermons, and parishioners. One of the major avenues of integration into popular culture was through cheap printed sermons and theological tracts. Printed sermons became an easy way for preachers, armchair theologians, and even laymen to publish and disseminate their theological ideas to much of the social spectrum. In some cases, these sermons became best sellers and had multiple editions printed. Between 1582 and 1638, Arthur Dent's *Sermon of repentance* was reprinted thirty-seven times. Another publisher reprinted his sermon *Platforme, made for the proove of Gods providence* seven times between 1608 and 1629. According to Walsham, Dent was one of many whose printed sermons achieved a high readership in England.²⁹ Sermons were not the only literary genre that discussed God's providence.

In 1618, Thomas Beard published a collection of stories about God's punishment of sinners entitled *The theater of Gods fearfull judgments executed up notorious sinners*. The

²⁷ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 111-112; Also see, Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*, revised ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 201-2; Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson, 'Introduction', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 23.

²⁸ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 52-53.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

volume contained many anecdotes about God punishing people from minor offenses like hypocrisy to heresy. According to one story, in London in 1583, a large crowd gathered, as was the custom, to watch a bear-baiting event. The event happened to be on a Sabbath day. Unfortunately, for a multitude of the attendants, God was unhappy with the ill use of the Sabbath day and consequently decided to punish the attendees. As the crowd was watching the bear baiting, the scaffolding, on which they stood, collapsed causing eight people to perish and many more to suffer injuries.³⁰ This story, one of many that appear in Beard's work, was part of a larger genre of literature that emphasized God's providence and his punishment of sinners. As Alexandra Walsham has demonstrated, Beard's collection was one of many in the widely read genre that told of the deaths of individuals throughout history, and especially England, who acted counter to the teaching of the God, be it through heresy, blasphemy, murder, or failure to follow any other commandment in the Bible. The genre, though not strictly English, played an important role in embedding ideas of God's providence in English culture as a possible explanation for tragic events people witnessed or experienced. Besides Beard's *Theater*, Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and John Reynold's *The Triumph of Gods Revenge* were also among the numerous volumes that emphasized the role of God in shaping events and punishing sinners throughout the history of Christianity.³¹

This genre also played an important role in fostering and perpetuating anti-Catholic sentiment. Beard's *Theater* also tells the story of a man named Burton, a bailiff from Crowland in Lincolnshire during the reign of Edward VI. According to the story, Burton had made a great show of his love for the gospels and his Protestant faith but on the death of Edward he relapsed into his Catholic faith or "poperie." This relapse angered God so much that he caused a crow to

³⁰ Thomas Beard, *The thundebolt of Gods wrath against hard-hearted and stiff necked sinnes, or an Abridgement of the theater of Gods fearfull judgments executed up notorious sinners* (London, 1618), 43.

³¹ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 112.

fly over Burton's head and defecate on his nose. The smell was so bad that Burton vomited the entire horse ride home and on reaching his house he fell dead.³² This story emphasized to the reader that God disliked Catholicism so much so that occasionally he would loose his wrath on individuals as an example to all Catholics or those considering Catholicism. This is just one of many stories about God's wrath against Catholics and 'popery' in Beard's *Theater*. The genre was not limited to anecdotal stories of God's anti-Catholic providential wrath. As with the above story about Burton, the use of providence in England often became political in nature as protestant polemics used tragedies to demonstrate God's divine judgment against hated "papists."

One of the big proponents of illustrating that God's providence favored English Protestants was John Foxe. In his *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe used the majority of his massive work to talk about Protestant martyrs throughout the history of Christianity. For Foxe, one of the key periods of Protestant martyrdom was the reign of Mary I because it saw the death of many Protestant martyrs as she tried to return England back to the Roman Catholic faith during the 1550s. The reign of Mary was also significant for Foxe because the Protestant persecutions of here reign were fresh in his minds of English Protestant that had lived through her reign. Fox spent ample time talking about the Marian martyrs and states,

Although the secret purpose of Almighty God, which disposeth all things, suffered a great number of his faithful servants both men and women, and that of all ages and degrees, to fall into the enemies hands, and to abide the burnt of this persecution, to be tried with rods, with whippes, with rackes, with fetters and famine, with burning of hands, with plucking of beards.³³

³² Beard, *The thundebolt of Gods wrath*, 20.

³³ Fox, *Acts and Monuments*, 12: 2086-2087.

In the following paragraph he also notes, “that a great number, who miraculously by the merciful providence of God, against all man’s expectations, in safety were delivered out of the fiery rage of this persecution...not only ought to stir them up to perpetual thanks, but also may move all men both to behold and magnify the wonderous works of the almighty.”³⁴ For Foxe and many other Protestants, whether a person lived, suffered, or died for their faith was based completely on God’s divine plan. This belief provided ample fodder to wage political battles against Catholics in England. Foxe used the reign of Mary to demonstrate the terrible nature of a Catholic ruler and to show that God favored the English Protestants. God’s providence became just as much a political statement as a religious one.

As the Elizabethan settlement became established in England, a new calendar, based on the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, and a semi-religious cult of royalty and nationalism started to develop. David Cressy has demonstrated that after England’s return to Protestantism it was essential to remove many of the traditional feasts and holidays that had been celebrated under Catholicism. It was a slow process of replacement but it initially began by using the Anglican’s Book of Common Prayer, which celebrated twenty-seven holy days as opposed to the pre-Reformation and Catholic one hundred and twenty-five.³⁵ In addition to holy days prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, throughout the Elizabethan and early Stuart period, days of celebration and remembrance continued to get added to the calendar. In 1570, the Pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, and in that same year, the monarchy began to encourage November 17th as the day of Elizabeth’s ascent to the throne. The celebration began by the ringing of church bells and a general demeanor of celebration was encouraged. As parishes celebrated the holiday, it linked them to other parishes throughout England in a new nationalist

³⁴ Fox, *Acts and Monuments*, 12: 2087.

³⁵ David Cressy, “The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Stuart England”, *JBS* 29 (1990): 34.

celebration. As Cressy has noted, by the latter half of Elizabeth's reign, the celebration of her ascension had blossomed into a grand celebration of national pride, Tudor triumph, and God's election of the Church of England as the true church.³⁶

One of the key triggers for the dedication or creation of new holidays and celebrations was England's relationship with Catholicism. Throughout the 1570s and early 1580s, Catholics made several attempts to assassinate or overthrow Elizabeth. At the same time, Jesuits and other recusants remained in England practicing their Catholicism trying to win England back for Rome, which caused many English Protestants to become more exuberant in their anti-Catholic propaganda. One of the most important events that became a day of nationalist celebration was the defeat of the Spanish Armada. In 1588, the Spanish sent their massive armada to try to conquer England. The Spanish defeat came to represent one of the greatest achievements of the reign of Elizabeth because it represented both God's favor towards England and his hatred of Catholic Spain. It also played a hugely significant role in the rapidly growing anti-Catholic sentiment that was emerging in England. Like the ascension-day festivities, the celebrations of God's deliverance of England from the Catholic Armada became part of England's holiday calendar and continued to reinforce the belief that God through his providence elected Protestant England to be a special nation.³⁷

When Elizabeth died and James ascended the throne in 1603, his ascension day was added to the calendar, much in the same way Elizabeth's was. One of the most celebrated festival days during the reign of James came from the remembrance of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Guy Fawkes and other Catholic conspirators had hatched a plan to blow up the House of Lords during the opening ceremony of 1605 that James had planned to attend. Fortunately for

³⁶Cressy, "The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Stuart England," 35-36.

³⁷Ibid., 35-37.

James, the night before the assassination was supposed to occur, guards discovered Fawkes guarding 36 barrels of gunpowder. Many of the other conspirators fled London but eight, including Fawkes were found guilty, hanged, and drawn and quartered. One Jesuit was also implicated in the plot because it was claimed he had foreknowledge of the plot and did not warn authorities. He was also executed. The fact that Catholics had attempted to try and assassinate the Protestant James brought about even more rampant anti-Catholic sentiment. Along with the anti-Catholic sentiment, it encouraged an even larger belief that again God saved the Protestant King James from a Catholic plot and demonstrated God's election of James and England as a favored nation. Much of the celebration and anti-Catholic propaganda appeared throughout the reigns of James and Charles. Though Bishop Laud and Charles made attempts to quell much of anti-Catholic propaganda, they had limited success.³⁸

The importance of the rise in nationalist celebrations throughout England during the reign of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts was that it began to formalize and engender throughout all socio-economic groups a sense that God elected Protestant England and its monarchs as his chosen nation. According to preacher Isaac Colfe's 1588 sermon, celebrations should include, "the cheerfulness of our countenances, the decency of our garments, the songs of our lips, the clapping of our hands, our melody on instruments of music, the making of bonfires, the ringing of bells, the sounding of trumpets, the display of banners, the shooting of guns...on this special day ordained of the lord...for the happiness of England."³⁹ With this level of celebration ordained from the monarch and permeating throughout England on a yearly bases, as David Cressy has demonstrated, nationalist sentiments started to develop; God's providence favored England.

³⁸Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 232-236.

³⁹ Isaac Colfe, *A sermon preached on the Queens Day being the 17th of November, 1588* (London, 1588), C5v.

The national holidays and celebrations were continually reinforced by preaching and pamphlets that declared God's election of England. At the "Church of St. Pancrace in Soper-Lane,"⁴⁰ a series of three lectures had been endowed in 1626 that would be preached on November 17th in "thankfull remembrance of the coronation of that Virgin Queene Elizabeth of famous and neuer-dying memory and...the establishment of that truth of the Gospell & discipline of the Church."⁴¹ A sermon was also to be preached on August 12 as a remembrance for the deliverance of England from the Spanish Armada and the third of three sermons preached on November 5, "for the preseruacion of our King and State from that damnable powder-plot as yet vnparalleld in any age since the world began."⁴² According to preacher Thomas Gataker, who gave the sermon remembering the defeat of the Armada in 1626, the significance of these sermons was that,

In each of these we may behold Gods goodnesse: first in bringing vs to the glorious light of the Gospell by making that Queene a Mother ouer his *Israel* and a Nurse ouer his *Church*: neither was it lesse goodnesse in him to preserue vs in this happy state, then to con|ferre it vpon vs; and this he hath done maugre the malice of our enemies, who haue not wan|ted both power and policie in these their attempts, yet when they were strong and many, our God was mightier than they, and there were more with vs than against vs: when they had laid their plots and traines, God confounded the wicked...and let them fall into the pit they had digged for others.⁴³

Sermons like Gataker's appeared frequently in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. As Alexandra Walsham has demonstrated, the continued references to England's election and

⁴⁰ Thomas Gataker, *An anniuersarie memoriall of Englands deliuey from the Spanish inuasion deliuered in a sermon on Psal. 48. 7,8.* (London, 1626), 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.

salvation due to God's providence continually reinforced the belief in God's providence, it became integrated into much of the cultural language of England.⁴⁴

It is important to note that Protestants were not the only ones to use providence as a weapon. Catholics, especially Jesuits, used calamities that favored Catholics to demonstrate God's favor.⁴⁵ The use of providence by Catholics did not have the same effect or cultural penetration as that of Protestants in England. As discussed above, the Church of England was an important symbol of English Christian identity in early modern England. Henry VIII famously created the Church of England in 1535, with himself as head, when the Pope would not grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Since its inception, the Church of England had slowly become a symbol of national identity for Englishmen, especially after the reign of Mary I and the re-establishment of the Church of England by Queen Elizabeth. As previously noted, most English historians including Eamon Duffy would agree that after 1570 England was primarily a Protestant nation directly tied to the national Church of England. Catholicism did not have the same national ties in England because of events like the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. The lengthy discussion of providence in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England is important to clearly establish the fact that providence was not a common part of the Calvinist or puritan language but it had permeated the English language and understandings of God. At the same time, use of providential language in England became unique in that it was also used to establish an early protestant English identity. As a result, as one examines the captivity narratives from the late Elizabethan and early Stuart England, providential language appears throughout the narratives. It demonstrates the dual use of providence to express their English

⁴⁴ Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 245.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 232-236.

protestant identity, while at the same time illustrating the power of the Christian God during their fearful and helpless time as captives.

Captivity During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I

It is important to understand the captivity narratives as part of the larger body of information that became popular in England during the reign of Elizabeth. The literature in England was most often meant to discredit Islam and show the superiority of Christianity. Much of the English literature concerning Islam did little to understand Islamic theology; instead, it perpetuated stereotypes and false information. The use of misinformation was done either ignorantly due to the lack of valid information available or purposefully to discredit the Islamic religion and demonstrate the superiority of Christianity and England. Writers propagated these myths because they heard or read stories about Muslims or Muhammad and retold them without researching their accuracy.⁴⁶ One example of this is the anecdote within the medieval text, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, about Muslims' relationship with wine. In the medieval travel narrative, the author claims "Mahomet was drunken on good wine and fell asleep." While he slept, his men took his sword and killed a hermit that Muhammad liked. The men then replaced his sword and convinced Muhammad that while drunk, he himself had killed the hermit. According to Mandeville, due to that experience, Muhammad condemned the consumption of wine.⁴⁷ Richard Hakluyt included this story from Mandeville in his 1589 version of the *Principle Navigations*. As Nabil Matar notes, "Ignorance legitimated prejudice, and prejudice turned into

⁴⁶ MacLean and Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 31-32.

⁴⁷ *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (London: Macmillan and Col Limited, 1900), 95.

exclusion, derision, and hostility.”⁴⁸ He points out that from one of the earliest English texts concerning Islam, Wynkyn de Worde’s *Treatyse of the Turkes Lawe called Alcoran* published in 1519, to the Qur’an’s first English translation in 1649, English writers presented Muhammad as the prophet of the “Turks.” They made no distinctions concerning Islam.⁴⁹

In addition to ignorance about Islam, some of the English literature on Islam directly attacked Islamic theology in an attempt to prove Christian superiority. Many theologians and authors presented Islam and Muslims as the enemy of Christians and Christ. In *Acts and Monuments*, John Foxe included a “Prayer against Turks” which ended with “O lord God of hosts, grant to thy church strength and victory against the malicious fury of these Turks, Saracens, Tartarians, Gog and Magog, and all the malignant rabble of Antichrist, enemies of thy Son Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Prevent their devices, overthrow their power, and dissolve their kingdom.”⁵⁰ Foxe was one of many English writers who portrayed Muslims as the enemy to all good Christians.⁵¹ In addition to Foxe, many theologians integrated “Mahometans” into their sermons about eschatology and denouncing the Muslims as the Antichrist’s agents.⁵² In 1593, Henry Smith’s sermon, *God’s Arrow Against Atheists*, appeared in print to discredit Islamic theology and to help readers better understand their own Christianity. In his book, Henry argued that Muhammad was “a deceiver, a false Prophet, and a king over those whom he had already infected throughout Arabia.”⁵³ Portrayals like this only began to intensify as English contact with Muslims increased during the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign and into the early Stuarts. In 1615, William Bedwell published *Mohammedis Imposturae: that is, A Discovery of*

⁴⁸ MacLean and Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 32.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁰ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, 6:797.

⁵¹ MacLean and Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 31-39.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵³ Henry Smith, *Gods Arrow Against Atheists* (London, 1593), 33.

the Manifold Forgeries, Falsehoods, and horrible impieties of the blasphemous Seducer Mohammed. The purpose of Bedwell's book was to translate Islamic stories and anecdotes to prove the absurdities of Islam. He chose to translate a source that claimed to be a discussion between two Muslim scholars from around the tenth century. In reality, he used a Catholic polemic published in the 1570s as his source material. Despite the error in his source materials, his purpose of trying to discredit Islam remained.⁵⁴ Richard Knolles published his seminal work *The General Historie of the Turkes* in 1603, which describe the rise of the Ottoman Empire. His history copiously detailed the cruelties and violence the Muslims inflicted on the Christians in an effort to cast them as villains of Christian Europe.⁵⁵ These were just some of the anti-Islamic literature that permeated Elizabethan and early Stuart England and reinforced the negative stereotypes of Muslims.

In late Elizabethan England, the power of writing was the only power England possessed to combat Islam and Muslims. England's meager Navy spent much of its time fighting the Spanish and patrolling the English Channel; therefore, there was little time to assist or protect English merchants and captives in the Mediterranean.⁵⁶

The first captivity narrative published during the Elizabethan period was that of the English seaman John Fox entitled *The worthy enterprise of John Fox, an Englishman, in delivering 266 Christians out of the captivity of the Turks at Alexandria, the third of January 1577.* The narrative described the captivity of the Englishman John Fox during the years 1563-

⁵⁴ MacLean and Matar, *Britain & the Islamic World*, 33.

⁵⁵ Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian princes against them. Together with the liues and conquests of the Othoman kings and emperours faithfullie collected out of the- best histories, both auintient and moderne, and digested into one continuat historie vntill this present yeare 1603* (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1603).

⁵⁶ Loades, *England's Maritime Empire*, 123-129. Loades notes that roughly fifty percent of the English seaman during the war with Spain were privateers. At the same time, the majority of England's navy spent its time patrolling the English Channel and the North Sea.

1577. Though Fox achieved his freedom in 1577, it was not published until 1589 when it appeared in Richard Hakluyt's *The Principle Navigations*. Although the events of the story were probably exaggerated, at the end of the narrative, Hakluyt attached three documents that seem to suggest that John Fox actually existed. Each letter, a certificate from the Fathers of the Covent of the Amerciates of Gallipoli, a letter from officials at the Vatican, and another from court officials of Spain, describe what happened to Fox as he traveled from Italy to England.⁵⁷ The Privy Council records also state "to paye unto John Foxe, latelie detained prisoner in Turkes' Galleyes, by waye of her Majesties special rewarde twentie markes, and this shalbe his sufficient warrant in that behalf,"⁵⁸ which combined with the other sources seems to corroborate that Fox existed and was a captive in North Africa.

The purpose of his narrative was to emphasize the power and providence of the Christian God against Islam, while at the same time demonstrating that England was truly a favored and "Elect Nation."⁵⁹ However, it can also be interpreted to illustrate the fear and helplessness that Englishmen experienced as captives. Fox escaped captivity only through the help of God and was powerless in his captivity until, according to the narrative, God intervened.

In the narrative, Fox and the members of his ship, *The Three Half Moon*, fell victim to Muslim pirates near the straits of Gibraltar. As Fox and his crew engaged the pirates, the English captain:

Encouraged his company, exhorting them valiantly to show their manhood, showing them that God was their God and not their enemies, requesting them also not to faint in

⁵⁷ "The woorthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishmen in delivering 266." in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3: 48-50.

⁵⁸ 'Pages151-175,' in Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 11, 1578-1580, ed. John Roche Dasent (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1895), 166, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol11/pp151-175>.

⁵⁹ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 57.

seeing such a heap of enemies ready to devour them; putting them in mind also that if it were God's pleasure to give them into their enemies' hands, it was not they that ought to show one unpleasant look or countenance there against but to take it patiently and not to prescribe a day and a time for their deliverance, as the citizens of Bethulia did, but to put themselves under His mercy."⁶⁰

This quote appears in the first paragraph of Fox's story and establishes the tone for the rest of the narrative; despite the best efforts of the English sailors, the power of Muslim pirates was too much and their only protection came from God's mercy. Unfortunately for Fox and other English sailors, most of them died or became captives. The author of the narrative claimed that the English fought valiantly but through sheer numbers the "Turks" overwhelmed and defeated them. After the being taken captive, John Fox stated:

I will make no mention of their miseries, now under their enemies' raging stripes. I think there is no man will judge their fare good or their bodies unladen of stripes, and not pestered with too much heat, and also with too much cold, but I will go to my purpose, which is to show the end of those, being in mere misery, which continually do call on God with a steadfast hope that He will deliver them and with a sure faith that He can do it.⁶¹

This demonstrates the essence of what it meant to believe in God's providence. For Fox, God maintained a plan for the sailors, and even if it potentially meant captivity, they would willingly endure it because they knew it was part of God's plan. In many cases, an individual's faith in God's providence wavered when faced with unfavorable circumstances but that was not the case for Fox, or at least so he would have his readers believe. It was essential for Fox to make clear to his readers that he was still a good English Protestant and had not succumbed to the temptation of conversion to Islam after being a slave in Alexandria for thirteen years. However,

⁶⁰ "The woorthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishmen in delivering 266." in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigation*, 3:38.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3:40.

another way to interpret this passage is that the captives were unable to free or help themselves and only God would bring freedom. There was no mention of the possibility that the Crown or other merchants would save them.

According to the narrative, Fox was a captive in Alexandria between 1563 and 1577, unfortunately for him, many of the standard avenues of redemption did not exist as an option for him and the other crewmen. Since England did not have formal relations with Ottoman Empire until 1580 it was unlikely that the monarchy would or could aid in the redemption of captives in Egypt. Additionally, neither the Turkey Company nor the English Levant Company existed in 1577, which eliminated another source of redemption that aided later captives. Any redemption was left to the captive's friends or family. For Fox, like other captives of this time, if redemption came quickly, it came for the well-connected captives who had wealthy friends who provided money for redemption. Fox did not have these kinds of monetary connections. A prime example of connected or wealthy individuals who gained their release quickly were the master and owner of *The Three Half Moons*. Fox stated, "the master and the owner [of *The Three Half Moons*], by means of friends were redeemed, the rest abiding still by the misery."⁶² Those who did not have powerful patrons or friends usually remained captive until they could escape or find a wealthy merchant to have pity on them. Unfortunately for Fox, he had to wait for thirteen years and pray that "God would not be always scourging His children."⁶³ This illustrates again the weakness and powerlessness that these Englishmen felt and experienced at the hands of the North African pirates.

After thirteen years, Fox and a several other Englishmen hatched and executed a plan for escape. This particular narrative spent much of the last several pages touting the exploits of Fox

⁶² "The woorthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishmen in delivering 266." in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3: 41.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 41.

and the other captives as they made a successful escape into the Mediterranean. Through each stage of the escape, the narrative proclaimed God's hand in their successes with examples such as, "such impossibilities can our God make possible. He that held the lion's jaw from rending Daniel asunder, yea, or yet from once touching him to his hurt, cannot He hold the roaring cannons of this hellish force? Cannot He keep the fire's flaming blasts from among his elect?"⁶⁴

As Fox and the other captives left the harbor aboard their ship, he stated

There was not one of them that feared the shot, which went thundering round about their ears nor yet were once scarred or touched with five and forty shot, which came from the castles. Here did God hold for this buckler. He shieldeth now this galley and hath tried their faith to the uttermost. Now cometh His special help: yea, even when man thinks them past all help, then cometh He himself down from heaven with His mighty power; then is His present remedy most ready pressed."⁶⁵

Fox declared to his reader that he had utmost faith in God and His providence. It was essential for Fox to make clear to his readers that he was still a good English Protestant and had not succumbed to the temptation of conversion to Islam after being a slave in Alexandria for thirteen years. Additionally, it was important to demonstrate the power of the Christian God over Islam. It can be argued that the English, in using God as the only means by which escape was possible, on their own accord, were powerless without God and that He worked in His own time, often leaving these individuals helpless in the hands of powerful Muslims. This method of writing illustrates the ways in which the captivity narratives used propaganda to emphasize the power of the Christian God over Islam and proclaim the English Protestant identity as English literature was one of the few places the English could do this.

⁶⁴ "The woorthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishmen in delivering 266." in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3: 45.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

Throughout the narrative, the successful of Fox's escape is placed in the hands of God; however, at the end Fox returned to England and the Queen finally assisted Fox. According to the story, Fox, "went unto the Court, and shewed all his travel unto the Councell: who considering of the state of the man, in that hee had spent and lost a great part of his youth in thralldom and bondage, extended to him their liberalite, to helpe to maintaine him now in age."⁶⁶ As Matar points out, Fox's narrative spent ample time trying to demonstrate God's providence. At the same time, he also attempted to portray the Queen and her government as supportive of her subjects. The narrative concluded with the fact that Elizabeth provided Fox with financial assistance. The Privy Council requested the Crown "to paye unto John Foxe, latelie detained prisoner in Turkes' Galleyes, by waye of her Majesties special rewarde twentie markes, and this shalbe his sufficient warrant in that behalf."⁶⁷ While this does prove that the Queen cared for her subjects, the narrative itself illustrated the fact that Fox remained a captive for thirteen years. At the same time, this also corroborated the fact that John Fox wrote the narrative or at least contributed to its writing. According to Fox, the Privy Council openly noted that he lost all the years of his youth in "thralldom and bondage," which referred to the long miserable time in captivity and that assistance from the Monarchy only came when he returned to England.

Fox's captivity narrative used several different tropes to disparage and vilify the "Turks," often using the term "infidels" and in several instances claiming they were enemies of Christ. One of the most effective examples Fox used to castigate Islam described several of the individuals who attempted to escape with Fox trying to take some of the Muslims' treasure for themselves before leaving: "In this chamber [the jailor's lodge] was a chest wherein was a rich

⁶⁶ "The woorthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishmen in delivering 266." in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3: 48.

⁶⁷ 'Pages 151-175,' in Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 11, 1578-1580, ed. John Roche Dasent (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1895), 166, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol11/pp151-175>.

treasure, and all in ducats, which this Peter Unticaro and two more opening, stuffed themselves so full as they could, between their shirts and their skin; which John Fox would not once touch...to the honor of his God, and not to make mart of the wicked treasure of the infidels.”⁶⁸ He further explained that though the individuals took the treasure for good, it only brought ruin in the same way that Saul was brought to ruin when he refused to slaughter all the cattle of the Amalekites, a nomadic tribe that attacked the Hebrews.⁶⁹ By keeping the tainted treasure of the enemies of God, one must expect the wrath of God. According to the narrative, all the individuals who stuffed themselves with the “infidel treasure” died during their flight from Alexandria. This illustrated again the power of Islam and its religious errors in the minds of the English and their fears regarding it. Only through God did Fox fight the temptation to take the treasure, and those who partook felt the wrath of God. For captives, it was only God that brought about their salvation and identity because of the ignorance and fear surrounding the “Turks” and Islam. The English had to create and find ways to disparage them.

Another captivity narrative published during the reign of Elizabeth was *Strange and Wonderful Things Happened to Richard Hasleton*. Hasleton’s story is the perfect example of the combined use of providence and anti-Catholicism to define what Hasleton thought it meant to be English. At the same time, it also reflects the notion he relied solely on God and his providence to assist in his freedom because it was only after eleven years as a captive of both Muslims and Catholics did he attain his freedom.

Hasleton’s narrative was one of the first autonomous narratives printed in London. The printer “A.I for William Barley” noticed the success of other narratives and pounced on the opportunity. According to the the printer, the story was “Penned as he [Hasleton] delivered it

⁶⁸ “The woorthy enterprise of John Foxe an Englishmen in delivering 266.” in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 3: 43.

⁶⁹ 1 Samuel 15:7-10.

from his owne mouth.”⁷⁰ Not much is known about Hasleton, except that from the title of the narrative and the dedication and that he was born in Braintree in Essex.⁷¹ This narrative, like Fox’s, placed a heavy emphasis on God’s ability to sustain Hasleton during his captivity and in the end, to facilitate his escape from Muslim captivity.

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, in 1582, Richard Hasleton, aboard the merchant vessel *Mary Marten*, sailed from London to Ottoman controlled, Patras, Greece. Hasleton and the ship passed through the Mediterranean and made it to Patras without encountering pirates; however, they at one point did ground their ship on some rocks, but, according to Hasleton, “it pleased God that we recovered.”⁷² This statement sets the tone of the rest of the narrative when it comes to place of God in Hasleton’s trials and tribulations.

The return trip to England was not nearly as easy for Hasleton and the crew. According to the narrative, pirates sailed close and killed the *Mary Marten*’s gunners, boarded the ship, took Hasleton and the crew captive, sailed to Algiers, and sold them. As a captive, according to Hasleton, “he, was sent to sea by my master (to whom I was sold) to labour in the Gallies at an oares end.”⁷³ Soon after boarding the galley, Hasleton became extremely sick and “being almost in despair ever to recover, yielded myself to the will of Almighty God, whom it pleased, in the end, to give me a little strength.”⁷⁴ Again, Hasleton proclaimed his belief in God’s will to provide strength in his weakened state. He clearly demonstrated to his English readers that God saved and protected him, and even in moments of weakness, he still maintained his belief in God and God’s providence.

⁷⁰ Matar, “English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625,” 557.

⁷¹ Richard Halseton, *Strange and Wonderful Things Happened to Richard Hasleton, borne in Braintree in Essex, In his ten yeares trauales in many forraine countries* (London: A.I. for William Barley, 1595), Title Page.

⁷² Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

Unfortunately for Hasleton, after two years aboard the galley he was able to free himself but only to fall victim to another type of captor. Hasleton successfully became a free man after a storm wrecked his captor's ship and killed most of the crew. The ship wreck did not result in his freedom because he landed in Genoa and when the authorities realized he was an English Protestant and not a Catholic, they imprisoned him. He was then chained to the oar of a galley, so he could help row to Majorca where the Spanish Inquisition would deal with him more thoroughly. In two different instances, Hasleton noted that the Catholics called him an English Lutheran. Once when he encountered the Catholics in Genoa he states that they thought, "I was an English Lutheran" and again when he first met the officers of the Inquisition in Majorca they, "offered me the Pax, which I refused to touch, whereupon they reviled me and called me 'Lutheran.'"⁷⁵ Hasleton probably included this in the narrative because he wanted to demonstrate the ignorance of the Spanish Catholics. Hasleton and his readers would have known he was Anglican, so by making a point to mention it in the narrative, it was one of the many anti-Catholic jabs he took at the Spanish. He probably did it for the benefit of the English reader and to demonstrate, as clearly as possible, his anti-Catholicism.

With Hasleton in captivity, the officers of the Inquisition began their interrogation of him and his "English Lutheran" religious beliefs. After two days, the Inquisitors brought him to a church and demanded he "kneel down and to do homage to certain images which were before me."⁷⁶ Hasleton refused, stating that "whereas in England, where I was born and brought up, the Gospel was truly preached and maintained by a most gracious princess; therefore I would not commit idolatry, which is utterly condemned by the word of God."⁷⁷ In this one statement, he made clear that the Inquisitor, but more importantly to the reader, that he was born English

⁷⁵Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 6-7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

because it was the place of his birth and upbringing. Hasleton also declared to the Inquisitor and the reader the significance of Queen Elizabeth by praising her for requiring that the Gospel was truly preached and maintained. Finally, he made it clear to the Inquisitor and the reader that he was not Catholic because he refused to commit idolatry, an accusation often leveled at Catholics who venerated saints and relics. As the inquisition continued, the inquisitor asked Hasleton what he had seen in the churches of England. Hasleton replied, “I had seen nothing in the Church of England but the word of God truly preached.”⁷⁸ This statement illustrated to the reader that only one true church existed in England, the Church of England, and that it was a Protestant church because it preached the word of God, unlike Catholicism. Hasleton spent ample time discussing the question and answer sessions with the inquisitor in an effort to demonstrate to his English readers that he was a true Anglican while at the same time demonstrating his anti-Catholic beliefs by exposing, in his opinion, the erroneousness of the theology.⁷⁹

While discussing his trials and tribulations with the Spanish Inquisition, Hasleton also continued to reference God’s providence. During his torture, he mused, “when God, by his merciful providence, had through many great dangers set me in a Christian country and delivered me from the cruelty of the Turks, when I thought to find such favor as one Christian oweth to another, I found them [the Spanish Catholics] now more cruel than the Turks.”⁸⁰ This passage demonstrates that while Hasleton continued in his unwavering belief in God’s providence, he still questioned exactly what God’s overall plan entailed. Despite his questioning, Hasleton maintained to the reader that he knew God was in charge and had a plan for his situation, while simultaneously demonstrating he was not a Muslim or Catholic.

⁷⁸ Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-19.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

During his imprisonment, Hasleton mentioned that the Inquisitors told him about the imminent invasion England by the Spanish Armada: “For at that instant there was their army prepared ready to go for England. Whereupon they would, divers times, give me reproachful words, saying that I should hear shortly of their arrival in England, with innumerable vain brags which I omit for brevity.”⁸¹ Hasleton’s narrative was published in 1595, seven years after England’s defeat of the Spanish Armada. Hasleton possibly decided not to mention the outcome of the Armada for the reader but to allow the reader to contemplate the inquisitors bragging and then to bask in the knowledge that the Armada had been defeated. Hasleton continued to demonstrate to the reader his dislike of Catholics.

Fortunately for Hasleton, his captivity by the Inquisition only lasted several months. After three months of imprisonment and relentless questioning by the Inquisition, Hasleton stated, “forasmuch as I lay without all comfort, reposing myself only unto God’s providence yet unwilling to lose any opportunity that lay in me (if God were pleased) whereby I might be delivered.”⁸² Again, even during his most trying times, Hasleton refused to waiver in belief in God’s providence. He believed in God’s divine plan, which illustrated to his readers, again, that he was a good English Protestant. After several unsuccessful attempts, Hasleton escaped the inquisition, “by the providence of God.”⁸³ During his escape he proclaimed, “I bent myself to the good pleasure of Almighty God, making my humble prayers that he would, of his mercy, vouchsafe to deliver me out of this miserable thralldom.”⁸⁴ According to the narrative, God saved him from Spanish captivity, but his escape route led him back to Algiers where he was recaptured by Muslims. During his voyage from Majorca back to Algiers he claimed, “by the

⁸¹ Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 10.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

providence of God...I descried the coast of Barbary...if it had not been for the power of God, my vessel and I had both been overwhelmed.”⁸⁵ For Hasleton, God was his protector and strength throughout the entire ordeal because, at the time, God was the only hope of redemption he had.

It is understandable why Hasleton did not receive any help from the English, especially during his captivity at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition. For the majority of his initial captivity in 1582 to his Spanish captivity until 1589, tensions between England and Spain had been escalating until they finally resulted in war when Philip II sent the famous Armada to invade England in 1588. The Queen and the Navy were occupied predominately with protecting the shores of England and had little means to send an invasion force to secure the release of a lowly sailor like Hasleton.⁸⁶ Hostile relations between Spain and England also prevented Elizabeth from using diplomatic means to try to secure Hasleton’s release. Consequently, Hasleton’s redemption remained in his hands or God’s, and according to Hasleton, all the onus for his escape rested in the power of God.

Surprisingly though, this is one of the few narratives that actually mentioned a benefactor who, due to God’s providence, secured the release of a poor sailor like Hasleton. According to the narrative, after ten years of captivity, the merchant Richard Staper, who was also one of the founding members of the English Levant Company, secured his redemption.⁸⁷ While this is one of the only narratives that mentioned a wealthy benefactor securing the lowly sailor’s redemption, it is important to note that the redemption took ten years. At the end of the narrative Hasleton reached Algiers and was recaptured by his former master. Before Hasleton would submit, he made a plea to the English consul in Algiers for assistance and redemption.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁸⁶ Loades, *England’s Maritime Empire*, 128.

⁸⁷ Halseton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 1-2.

According to Hasleton, “I went to the English consul, hoping to be presently delivered, who gave me very good words but did not show me that favor which he professed.” Hasleton continued:

I could make some discourse of this unkind dealing with me and others of our countrymen, which I will leave till more fit occasion. For understand that while I was with him there came a messenger from my old master...who would have carried me away by force but I would not go, requesting the consul to take order for my delivery. But he persuaded me to go with him, saying that he would, in time, provide for my liberty.⁸⁸

Politically, the consul probably could not allow Hasleton to escape on an English ship because it would have caused issues with the ruler in Algiers, as Hasleton was technically the property of his old master, an Algerian. If he wanted redemption, either he or the consul would have to pay for his freedom. From Hasleton’s assessment and his interaction with the English consul in Algiers it seems clear that the consul was not a helpful individual when it came to securing captives’ freedom. Hasleton also clearly stated that he was not the only Englishmen that the consul failed to help.

Like other narratives, the lack of aid for the average or poor sailor is apparent. For Hasleton, the monarchy had no capacity to help because of the war with Spain and the unsupportive English consul in Algiers, while professing to care about Hasleton’s captivity, actually did little to help him and other Englishmen. Like Fox’s narrative and others’, it is only through the divine will of God that Hasleton achieved his freedom. The fact that Staper finally procured Hasleton’s release after he had been held captive for ten years is significant because it demonstrated that help might come, but rarely quickly, for poor sailors. The narratives also revealed the inherently fearful position of many English captives in relation to Muslims. It is important to note that Hasleton aimed most of his criticism and claims to superiority at his

⁸⁸ Hasleton, *Strange and Wonderful Things*, 33.

Spanish captors rather than Muslims; however, the same principles applied. During his captivity by the Inquisition, he was still in a position of weakness. His only tool to express a sense of superiority was through his belief in English Protestantism and God's divine providence. As a result, Hasleton's narrative is also the best amalgamation of both a fervent belief in God's providence and a hatred of Catholics. His narrative demonstrates to the readers his English Protestant identity through providential language while also conveying the sense of fear and inferiority he experienced.

The narrative of Thomas Saunders follows many of the similar patterns used by Fox and Hasleton, except his narrative does not heavily emphasize God's providence. The fear and helplessness appears as much more of a prominent tone in Saunders's narrative. According to Sanders, in 1584, he became a captive after a Frenchman named Romaine Sonnings, hid a French debtor named Patrone Norado aboard Sanders's ship, and the authorities in Tripoli had everybody arrested and enslaved for attempting to harbor Norado. During his captivity, Saunders traveled outside the city of Tripoli at the behest of the King as one of eighteen slaves relegated to the task of gathering wood for the king. While on the expedition, he became separated from the group of slaves and their guide. Saunders concluded that he had only two options to deal with the situation. His first option was to escape, but according to Saunders, "if I should go forth and the wilde Moores should hap to meet with me, they would kill me."⁸⁹ The other option, according to Saunders, was to return to Tripoli without the wood and explain the situation to the King and the other masters and hope they believed him. Saunders concluded they would think him a liar and that he would "be most miserably used therefore."⁹⁰ Instead of trusting his fate to his enslavers, he decided to travel on his own. Fortunately for Saunders, "As

⁸⁹ Thomas Sanders, *A true Discription and breefe Discourse, Of a most lamentable Voiage, made latelie to Tripolie in Barbarie, in a Ship named Jesus* (London: Richard Jones, 1587), 16.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

God would have it, I came right to the place where they were [the fellow wood gathering slaves].” Saunders rejoined the wood gathering expedition without any hassles and soon after safely returned to Tripoli. This story illustrates that during captivity, Saunders saw few opportunities for escape, and it was only through God that he successfully fled a potentially life-threatening situation.

Saunders noted during his captivity that two Englishmen named Richard Burgess and James Smith had become captives of the King of Tripoli, who had asked them if they would convert to Islam. According to Saunders, Burgess was the purser or accountant of the English ship *The Green Dragon*, but it was unclear the role James Smith had on the ship, which indicates he likely was a sailor. Burgess’s position provided him with status because he controlled all the ship’s money. Despite this, the King gave both Burgess and Smith to his son as slaves, even after their repeated declarations of Christianity. The King’s son had them forcibly circumcised and dressed in local clothing. During this story, Saunders also mentioned a man named John Nelson who was “a son of a yeoman of our Queen’s guard, whom the king’s son had enforced to turn Turke.”⁹¹ All three of these individuals, two of whom potentially had significant connections back in England, remained helpless as their enslavers forcibly “turned them Turk” through circumcision. The captives had no recourse or means of escape; they were completely at the mercy of Muslims in Tripoli, which further portrays the fear and sense of weakness that captives had regarding Muslims in the Mediterranean.

One of the most significant declarations Sanders made of God’s providence appeared towards the end of the narrative. According to Sanders, God started to bring plagues down upon the King of Tripoli to punish him for taking Sanders and other Englishmen captive and not releasing them. The series of plagues began:

⁹¹ Sanders, *A true Discription and breefe Discourse*, 17.

first when we were made bondmen, being the second day of May, 1584, the King had 300 captives, and before the moneth was expired there died of them of the plague 150....On the fourth day of June next following, the king lost 150 cammels, which were taking from him by wild Moores: & on the xxviii. day of the said moneth of June, one Geffrey Maltees a Runnagado of Malta, ran awaie to his countrie, and stole a Brigandine which the king had builded....Afterward about the tenth day of July next following, the king rode forth upon the greatest & fairest mare that might be seen, as white as any swan, he had not ridden fortie paces from his house, but on a suddon the same mare fell down under him starke dead.⁹²

Sanders clearly wanted to illustrate to the readers the power of God and demonstrate proof that Englishmen were God's elect people. The use of plagues also allowed Sanders to connect the English with the Hebrews and their captivity in Egypt, which reinforced his claims that God favored the English. Scholar Jonathan Burton argues that it was this point in the narrative that Sanders switched from being patient English martyr waiting for God's deliverance to proclaiming the power and God and the English as his chosen people. God was no longer going to use his power to just save his captive English, He was now demonstrating on a grand scale to show his favor for the English and his anger to all those who enslaved his people.⁹³

Redemption from slavery came only a year after Saunders began his captivity. According to Saunders, "I wrote a letter to England unto my father dwelling in...Devonshire...signifying unto him the whole estate of our calamities."⁹⁴ Saunders's father received the letter and approached the Earl of Bedford with his son's predicament. The Earl then stated:

Who short space acquainted his Highness with the whole cause thereof, and her Majesty like a most merciful princess, tending her subjects, presently took order of our deliverance. Whereupon the right worshipful Sir Edward Osburne, knight, directed his letters with all speed to the English ambassador in Constantinople, to procure our

⁹² Sanders, *A True Discription and breefe Discourse*, 12.

⁹³ Jonathan Burton, "English Anxiety and the Muslim Power of Conversion: Five Perspectives on 'Turning Turk' in Early Modern Texts," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2 (2002): 42-44.

⁹⁴ Sanders, *A true Discription and breefe Discourse*, 18.

deliveries, and he obtained the great Turk's commission, and sent it forth with to Tripoli, by one master Edward Barton, together with a justice of the great Turk's.⁹⁵

According to the narrative, Barton and the Sultan's ambassador appeared before the King of Tripoli and demanded the release of Saunders and twelve other English captives.

Then he [the king] sent for master Barton and the other commissioners and demanded of the said Master Barton his message: the Justice answered, that the Great Turk his Sovereign had sent them unto him, signifying that he was informed that a certain English ship called the *Jesus* was by him said King confiscated...and now my said Sovereigne hath been sent his especial commission by us unto you for the delivery of the said ship and goods, and also the free liberty and deliverance of the Englishmen of the same ship, whom you have taken and kept in captivity.⁹⁶

On the surface it appears clear that the Queen, an aristocrat, and two English ambassadors brought about the successful redemption of thirteen English captives, including Thomas Saunders. This event seems counter to the whole argument of the chapter; in this instance, an Englishman attained redemption only a year after his captivity began because it became a concern of Queen Elizabeth herself. However, historian Julia Schleck argues that the chain of connections required to free Saunders and the other English captives still demonstrated the weakness of England compared to the Islamic states in the Mediterranean.

An essential step in securing the release of Saunders and the other English captives in Tripoli required a letter from the Queen to the Ottoman Sultan, a trip by her envoy to secure the blessing of the Sultan, and an envoy from the Sultan to Tripoli, accompanied an agent of the English Crown, before they made any direct attempt to secure the their fellow countrymen's release. Schleck argues that this illustrated how weak English foreign policy was when it came to the Ottoman Empire and North Africa. Queen Elizabeth could not directly send an envoy to the

⁹⁵Sanders, *A true Description and breefe Discourse*, 18.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 19.

King of Tripoli herself because the envoy would probably have been rejected outright, and England had little to no political capital in Tripoli when it came securing English captives. It was essential for the English to receive the blessing of the Ottoman Sultan and for an envoy of the Sultan to accompany the English consul Edward Barton. According to the narrative, it was only after the Sultan's emissary demanded the release of the Englishmen that the King of Tripoli agreed to their release.⁹⁷

Compounding the problem with using the Ottomans to secure the release of Englishmen in North Africa was the fact that the Ottomans did not have firm control of its provinces in North Africa as it did the rest of its empire. While the Ottomans often had a symbiotic relationship with the corsairs, the corsairs became an integral part of the Ottoman Navy to fight against the Hapsburgs and the Ottomans allowed them to remain generally autonomous, they did not always maintain a successful relationship. According to historian Emrah Safa Gürkan, the North African provinces sometimes directly disobeyed the Ottoman Sultan's decrees because they interfered with their profits from piracy. In one instance, the Algerian governor arrested an Ottoman official Algiers during his investigation of a corsair attack against French ships. In another instance, corsairs attacked an English ship with Mehmed Çavuş aboard, an agent of the Sultan, who was on a mission to reassure Elizabeth I that her ships would no longer be attacked. Çavuş, upon reaching Algiers, demanded the governor, under order from the Sultan, to stop attacking Christian ships. The governor flatly refused. When the Ottomans demanded the release of all prisoners and compensation for damages, the governor again disobeyed the order.⁹⁸ The corsairs, because of their relative autonomy and drive for economic gains through piracy, were

⁹⁷ Julia Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press 2011), 140-145.

⁹⁸ Emrah Safa Gürkan, "The centre and the frontier: Ottoman cooperation with North African corsairs in the sixteenth century." *Turkish Historical Review* I (2010): 152. Gürkan's article provides an excellent examination of the complicated relationships between the Ottoman Empire and North African provinces.

often at odds with the Ottomans and their diplomatic agendas in the Mediterranean, which made it even more difficult for the England to secure the release of its captives, even with the help of the Ottoman Empire. Despite all the English effort, the redemption of Saunders and his twelve fellow captives demonstrated the weakness of England when dealing with the Islamic religion in the Mediterranean.

Conclusion

As Elizabeth re-established the Church of England, fear and hatred of Catholics began to develop in England, a new language of providence began to take shape. As Alexandra Walsham and others demonstrated it became pervasive throughout Protestant England and became synonymous with the Church of England's version of Protestantism. Providential language also became heavily laced with political and anti-Catholic connotations making it part of the emerging English identity. The language of national providentialism manifested itself in many different literary sources and one of those sources was English captivity narratives. In many ways, the narratives were an ideal place for nationalist language because they allowed the captives to express to the reader their faithfulness to the England, which specifically included faithfulness to the Church of England. Many of the captives used the language to show not only their devotion to England but at the same time to demonstrate that they had not converted to Islam during their captivity or, in the case of Richard Hasleton, Islam and Catholicism. Thus, the language of providence in English captivity narratives provided an excellent glimpse at the developing national identity in Elizabethan England.

Simultaneously, though manifested in unique ways, the Fox, Hasleton, and Saunders narratives all demonstrated an aspect of English weakness in dealing with Muslims in North Africa and English captives in the Mediterranean during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Even in instances when each received aid from the Queen or a wealthy benefactor, like Richard Staper, it came usually after an extended captivity. All of the authors experienced or witnessed many of their fellow captives tortured and forcibly converted to Islam, and they could only helplessly observe and claim that God strengthened their resolve. On the surface, Queen Elizabeth seemed genuinely to care for her captive subjects and orchestrated efforts to assist them when she could do so. Despite her efforts, it was usually an arduous task to free English captives. During the reign of James, this would change due to James's attitudes towards Islam, the Ottoman Empire, the North African states, and the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER 3

PROVIDENCE, MISERY, AND IDENTITY: EARLY STUART ENGLAND

In 1622, the captivity narrative *A Relation Strange and true, of a ship of Bristol named the Jacob* appeared in print in London and described the escape of four English youths who, after five days of captivity, commandeered their captors' ship and sailed to Spain. This is a valiant tale of captivity and escape and, at the end of the narrative, the anonymous author stated, "these worthy Mariners that have been so delivered, do and ever did, attribute all the means of their deliverance to the mighty hand of God; and they are so far from taking any of these things to their owne praise or glory."¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, the role of providence played an integral role in shaping many of the captivity narratives in Elizabethan England. The use of providence stayed consistent during the early Stuarts and, due to James and Charles lack of assistance, the plight of captives and the desperation apparent in the providential language grew. The use of providential language also continued throughout the narratives to demonstrate the power of God and England as his elect nation.

¹ John Rawlins, *A Relation Strange and true, of a ship of Bristol named the Jacob*, B2r.

The Narrative of Thomas Sherley

The last narrative to portray captivity during the reign of Elizabeth described the experience of the English aristocrat Thomas Sherley the Younger, but it was published during the reign of James. It is significant because it bridged the reigns of Elizabeth and James and revealed a shift in English policy towards the Ottoman Empire. It is also an important narrative because it is the only one in which an aristocrat was the main character and a captive. His family had fallen out of favor with the Queen, and this narrative illustrates the weakness and inferiority expressed by English aristocrats in the same situation as the average non-noble English captive. Sherley's captivity began under the reign of Elizabeth, but his freedom and the publication of the narrative came during the first several years of the King James's reign, which affected the narrative's tone.

Thomas Sherley's story is one of the few in which the biographical information of the subject is known. Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder was an English aristocrat who found favor with Queen Elizabeth in the 1580s through his association as courtier to the Earl of Leicester. Queen Elizabeth eventually appointed Sir Thomas Treasurer at War, the best paid position one could attain in the army. Sherley abused his position with creative bookkeeping and made an estimated £20,000, which was a vast sum at the time. Unfortunately for Sherley, Elizabeth in 1597 called for an audit of his accounts, and he could not produce accurate books to avoid the accusation of embezzlement. Elizabeth then demanded he repay £23,000, an amount which he no longer had available. Therefore, Elizabeth required that all of Sherley's lands be placed in the hands of trustees until he could repay the debt. Unable to pay, he eventually lost all his lands and was

publicly shamed. It was then up to his three sons Thomas the Younger, Anthony, and Robert to restore the Sherley family reputation.²

Two of Sherley's three sons, Robert and Anthony, traveled to Persia in an attempt to establish trade between England and Persia. Thomas, the Younger, traveled to Florence and gained the favor of the Duke of Florence, who provided Thomas with three ships and a crew. He then used the ship and crew to begin a career in privateering in the Mediterranean. Unfortunately for Thomas, ships full of valuable goods remained elusive, and without money or goods to pay his crew, two of his ships mutinied and abandoned him. Thomas was left with only one ship, which mutinied several times, but through begging, pleading, and promises of future wealth, Thomas convinced them to remain. Desperate for a target to appease his crew, Sherley landed near a village in Greece and decided to attack it. With luck continuing to evade him, the people of the village had taken all their goods and fled the village, leaving nothing for Sherley and his crew to pillage. The same villagers raised an army against Sherley, and on seeing the armed villagers, Sherley's crew abandoned him. Sherley and his only two loyal crewmen became captives of the villagers and were transported to Constantinople for imprisonment. After three years in a Constantinople prison, Sherley gained his freedom following several letters from King James and the assistance of the Venetian ambassador. Sherley returned to England to attempt to promote his family's reputation and to trade with the Persians instead of the Ottomans. As part of his plan for reviving his family's name and promoting his economic cause, Sherley commissioned a writer named Anthony Nixon to compose a narrative about his captivity and about Anthony's and Robert's exploits in Persia entitled *The Three English Brothers*.³

² Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands*, 63-65.

³ *Ibid.*, 71-85.

In Thomas's section of the narrative, *The Three English Brothers* described the three years he spent in prison in Constantinople. The narrative attempted to describe the heroic exploits of Thomas and the evilness of the Ottoman Empire. Despite his best efforts, Anthony Nixon had a hard time portraying Sherley as anything but weak and helpless. The dedication of the entire work, which was directed at Thomas, Lord Howard, Earl of Suffolk, began, "Weakness (Right honorable) hath need of helpe and supportance, as well as politick."⁴ The dedication continued to discuss how sheltering oneself in the shadows of the powerful, often provided success through the power and protection of the lord. The dedication almost directly admitted to the weakness of the Sherley brothers.

The narrative itself began with a strong effort to make a case for the glory and success the Sherley brothers brought to England by their actions. The story opened as follows:

It is a natural qualitie, both customary, and commendable in all countries, to enlarge their fames, by divulging the memorable acts of such worthy personages, who noble spirits, shown by their honorable attempts and achievements, have drawne other nations into admiration of their behaviors....Three Heroe [the Sherley Brothers] of our time, the hopeful issues of a happy father, have so glorified their names by their honorable Actes, and hostile impolyments, against the common enemy of Christendome.⁵

This opening alluded to the stories of the three brothers being grandiose and heroic, and suggested that their actions were for the great benefit of England and Christendom. However, while the stories of Robert and Anthony Sherley have tales of heroism and the acts that attempt to better England, the stories of Thomas's privateering misadventures and captivity did not express the message the author intended successfully.

⁴ Anthony Nixon, *Three English Brothers* (London: John Hodgets, 1607), 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

The first half of Thomas's narrative described his unsuccessful attempts at privateering, his crew mutinying, and his last-ditch effort to capture and pillage a town in Greece, which was under Ottoman control, before being captured and transported to Constantinople for imprisonment. Despite having fantasies of reliving Sir Francis Drake's exploits, Thomas Sherley's misfortunes could in no way be described as successful or heroic.⁶ Historian Julie Schleck argues that the most successful part of the narrative meant to foster support "against the common enemy of Christendom" was Sherley's survival in prison and his defiance in paying a ransom for his release.⁷ While not succumbing to the brutal prison conditions or steadfastly refusing to pay his own ransom is in many ways heroic, Sherley still appeared to be miserable and helpless the entire time. It is unclear from the narrative that whether his paid ransom would even guarantee his release from prison. According to Nixon's narrative, Thomas Sherley refused to pay a ransom because he claimed that he did nothing wrong. He argued his excursion into the Greece town was to resupply and not to pillage. The Pasha refused to believe him and, as a result, the remainder of his story, except the last few pages, describes his misery in a Constantinople prison. In addition to experiencing miserable prison conditions, the English ambassador to Constantinople completely ignored all of his petitions for help. The ambassador ignored the petitions for two reasons: First, was the falling out Thomas's father had with Queen Elizabeth, and second, was that the English ambassador did not want to cause an international incident between England and the Ottoman Empire that would interrupt trade or friendly relations.

Like the narratives of Fox, Hasleton, and Sanders during the reign of Elizabeth, the only help Sherley could rely upon, especially after being abandoned by his fellow Englishmen was

⁶ Anthony Nixon, *Three English Brothers*, 3-13.

⁷ Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands*, 71-73.

God. After a year in prison, nobody had helped him and he was completely alone, but the author claimed, “Sir Thomas was carried back to prison, where though he found rather an increase, then any mitigation of his former torments, yet was his life still preserved by the miraculous power of Almighty God.”⁸ It is also important to note that this was the first reference made to God in the narrative. As with the other narratives, during the most trying part of captivity when the captive fully realized his realized weakness and helplessness, God became Sherley’s sustainer through the misery.

By 1604, Sherley remained in prison but James I had become king, and after several letters to England, the English ambassador become more amenable to helping Sherley with his release. The issue for Sherley remained that his prison sentence was in the hands of the Ottoman Sultan; therefore, the English ambassador had little power to persuade the Sultan to release Sherley. The English ambassador after great effort finally secured for Sherley another appeal to the Sultan’s pasha. According to the narrative, after a short conversation the pasha, one of the Sultan’s chief ministers, he proclaimed that Sherley and the two Englishmen with him should be hanged.⁹ Fortunately for Sherley, “God did suddenly possess the heart of one of the interpreters to the Venetian Ambassador with a Christian pity and regard of his estate, who suddenly repaired (for otherwise that had been too late) to the Protector, beseeching him that he would not in his fury take away the life of so gallant a gentleman [Sherley].”¹⁰ The English ambassador exuded weakness when facing the power of Ottoman Sultan and his Pasha. The only entity that saved Sherley and his men was, according to the narrative, God stepping in via the Venetian interpreter. The interpreter’s assistance also had only limited effectiveness. The intervention saved Sherley’s life, but instead of being hanged, the Pasha just returned him to prison.

⁸ Nixon, *Three English Brothers*, 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37

In 1605, Sherley finally attained his freedom after several letters from King James to the Sultan and “with God assisting he was delivered.”¹¹ Despite the narrative trying to demonstrate the power and influence of James, it still took two strongly worded letters and God’s assistance to attain Sherley’s freedom, which did not seem to be a ringing endorsement of the power of the English monarchy or the nation in general, despite the author’s best attempts.¹² This again, like Fox’s, Hasleton’s, and Saunder’s narratives, proved that, notwithstanding the efforts by even the King, the power of freedom for English captives rested in the hands of the Ottomans and God, neither of which acted in a timely or positive manner in favor of English redemption. God rescuing Sherley, like many of the narratives, also demonstrated that election of Englishmen as His favored people. Even in the direst of circumstances, God triumphed for Sherley even against the Ottoman Sultan, one of the most powerful men in world at this time.

James I and English Captives

Thomas Sherley’s narrative, as noted above, was the first captivity narrative published during the reign of James I, and it is the only one that directly mentioned the King as a benefactor in securing a captive’s release. This was probably for several reasons, the first being that Sherley was in prison in Constantinople, which allowed direct access to the Sultan and the Ottoman court. Sherley probably also received favor from the King because of his aristocratic status, despite his family’s political issues with Elizabeth. Other than the Sherley narrative, none of the stories display any gratitude towards James for their escape. This is probably because as

¹¹ Anthony Nixon, *Three English Brothers*, 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 39-43.

the piracy continued to increase during the reign of James, his primary focus was to stop the pirates themselves instead of assisting the captives.

From 1603-1619, the primary focus of James's efforts to combat piracy was through diplomacy. The main issue with his diplomatic efforts was that they were rarely fruitful. James disliked dealing with Muslims because he saw them as the enemy of Christendom, and when it came to dealing with trade relations or the release of captives, James refused to engage in diplomacy except with the official court and the Sultan in Constantinople. This became problematic for James and most English captives in places like Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli because, while officially the Ottoman Sultan controlled these areas, the Sultan had little power or influence in these provinces. James also refused to sign official agreements with the leaders of Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers since he considered it dishonorable to deal with Muslim governors under the control of Constantinople and especially those that condoned and supported the piracy of English ships.¹³ This thought process resulted in little success for the release of captives from the Barbary cities.

Another issue that contributed to the lack of gratitude towards James in the captivity narratives was the fact that militarily he did little to secure the release of captives. In fact, during the early part of his reign, James's stance towards the Mediterranean complicated the lives of English merchants. Early in his reign, he issued letters of marque that encouraged Englishmen to attack Muslim ships.¹⁴ This became problematic for James because by 1609, he had commissioned the Levant company to apprehend English pirates among others as "the Levante and Mediterranean seas, is growne much impaired and continuallie more and more interrupted, by the number of pyrates and sea robbers, being as well of our own unnatural

¹³ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, 181-187.

¹⁴ Matar, *Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic*, 77.

subjects...which at this presente haunte and keep the seas, infesting the passages.”¹⁵ The main issue with supporting hostilities with the Muslim corsairs was that England’s navy did not have the size or capability to protect English merchants in the Mediterranean.

From 1603 through 1610, James issued multiple proclamations trying to combat piracy. In 1603 he issued the proclamation “A proclamation concerning Warlike ships at Sea,” which tried to correct the issues with privateering created by Elizabeth. Three months later, he issued “a Proclamation to repress all Piracies and Depredations upon the Sea” as a result of complaints “made to his Highnesse, aswell by his owne Subjects as others.” In 1603, according to this proclamation, James was not so much worried about Muslim pirates but English pirates who refused to adhere to his calls to end English privateering/piracy. The proclamation included the names of Captain Thomas Tomkins, Edmond Bonham, and Walter Januerin who had raided several ships including a Venetian ship called the *Black Balbiano* and apparently gained “great and enormous spoyles.” Since almost the beginning of his reign, piracy was a problem for James in the Mediterranean, and it was his own subjects that created many of the problems in addition to the Muslim pirates.

The problem of English piracy continued to plague James during the early years of his reign. In 1604 he issued “a Proclamation for the search and apprehension of certain pirates.” This proclamation opened with the naming of William Hull, Philip Ward, Christopher Newman, Edward Follet, and Henry Burt as pirates who had been captured and tried for piracy in the Mediterranean against French ships. The proclamation then stated that anybody who assisted or helped English pirates could potentially be killed and have all their land and goods confiscated. This proclamation and two from 1603 illustrate the growing problem for James in the Mediterranean. He could not control the former English privateers who had turned to piracy. It

¹⁵ *Documents Relating to the Law and Custom of the Sea*, ed. R.G. Marsden (London, 1915), 1:377.

would also be these English pirates that would, as David Hebb has argued, settle in places like Algiers and Tunis and help promote the vast increase in Muslim piracy in the early seventeenth century.

The years 1605 and 1606 saw the issuance of several more proclamations aimed at halting English piracy in the Mediterranean. James issued “A proclamation for revocation of Mariners from forreine Services.” The 1606 proclamation, “A proclamation for the search and apprehension of certaine pirates,” listed twelve pirates by name who were committing acts of piracy in the Strait of Gibraltar and Mediterranean. It also, like the 1604 proclamation, reiterated that anybody caught assisting the pirates was subject to death and the seizure of lands.¹⁶

In 1608, the Levant Company petitioned the King for assistance with the pirate raids on their ships, but the only action taken by the King was to establish a commission to examine ways to reduce Mediterranean piracy; little resulted from the commission.¹⁷ The piracy problem continued worsen for James in 1609. One of the most famous English pirates, John Ward, had actively been raiding ships in the Mediterranean, especially the Venetian ships, who had continued to petition to James to solve the pirate problem. As a result of Ward’s actions, James issued the proclamation, “A proclamation against Pirates.” The proclamation reiterated again that anyone caught assisting pirates, buying goods from pirates, or selling goods to pirates, especially in Tunis, Algiers, or other places in Barbary, would be punished. It also directly called out John Ward for his piracy and forbid Englishmen to trade with Ward. The proclamation ended by outlawing “his Majesties Subjects, residing for the time in Tunis, Argiers, or in any other place in Barbary, or the places adjoining, or hereafter resorting thither, dare to buy, barter, exchange, or

¹⁶ *Stuart Royal Proclamation*, vol. 1 *Royal Proclamations of King James, 1603-1625*, ed. J.F. Larkin and P.L. Hughes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), nos 15, 28, 46, 50, 53; *CSPD Venice* x. 90ff contains a full account of the correspondences of the Venetians concerning the raiding of their ship the *Black Balbiano*.

¹⁷ TNA SP 14/37/91.

receive directly or indirectly any goods taken at the Seas.”¹⁸ During the early part of his reign, James’s main concern was English piracy in the Mediterranean against other Christian nations and, consequently, he paid little attention to the plight of English captives that resulted from the English and Muslim piracy. While James probably had the best intentions about stopping piracy through diplomatic efforts and royal decrees, both had little effect on the increasing power of the North African pirates. James refused to commission naval forces, and as a result, the decrees had little bite, so the plight of English captives in the Mediterranean increased.

Besides James’s lackluster diplomatic efforts and the failure to stop piracy through royal proclamations, another issue that hampered the release of captives during his reign was the unwillingness of the Crown or the Levant Company to spend official funds to secure the release of captives. This hesitancy was most likely a result of many of the relief efforts for captives having been assigned to Trinity House by James.¹⁹ David Hebb notes that while James had been willing to contribute to a naval expedition against Algiers, he committed little money to the release of captives. The Levant Company did its best to avoid spending any money on the release of captives. Thomas Roe, England’s Ambassador to Constantinople, and James Frizzel, the Levant consul in Algiers, had to spend their own money or secure credit to pay for the release of captives. The Crown only provided money that had been collected in churches and parishes for the release of captives. As a result, the process was slow, and by the time Frizzel and Roe had secured the release of captives in Algiers with their own money, James had died and Charles had become King.²⁰

¹⁸ *Stuart Royal Proclamation*, 67, 93; In proclamation 93, the outlawing of English residents in Tunis, Algiers, or other Barbary states trading with known pirates was a result of a request by the English Levant Company; TNA SP 14/37/91.

¹⁹ Matar, “English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East”, 562.

²⁰ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 193-196.

Due to James's and the Levant Company's ineffectual policies towards English captives, no narrative, except that of Thomas Sherley, mentioned their help in redemption. Consequently, most narratives printed during the reign of James claimed that God's providence provided them with their safe return to England. This shows that the major aspect of English identity manifesting itself in these narratives was the inherent weakness of Englishmen when it came to dealings with Muslims in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire.

It was during this time in 1608 that Anthony Munday published *The Admirable Deliverance of 266 Christians by John Reynard Englishmen from the captivity of the Turkes*. The narrative was a plagiarized version of John Fox's narrative. Anthony Munday was a well-published author of plays, poems, pamphlets, and other literature, and as was sometimes the case in sixteenth and seventeenth century literature, he likely appropriated Fox's narrative for his purposes.²¹ Nabil Matar argues that Anthony Munday decided to capitalize on the lack of narratives published in the early reign of James and thought he would profit off of his version. According to Matar, Munday published this account to demonstrate English superiority over the "Turks," similar to Fox.

While it is clear that the Munday narrative is an appropriation of Fox's, and thus a fiction, it can still be used to demonstrate the weakness expressed by captives in their narratives. In the story, Reynard, the main character, invoked God's providence and assistance in only a few sentences compared to Fox's narrative. Munday instead used classical terms like "God of the Sea" or Neptune, as deities that shaped the outcome of the voyage and sea battles rather than that of the Christian God.²² The only reference made directly to God's providence was in regards to Reynard's ability to endure the suffering of captivity: "But John Reynard, the gunner being

²¹ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 57.

²² Anthony Munday, *The admirable deliuerance of 266. Christians by John Reynard Englishman from the captiuitie of the Turkes* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1608), 2-3.

enabled by the providence and will of God to endure this affliction with a strong heart than other could out lived most of his fellows, only to be a preservation of his own life, with many other Christians.”²³ Like that of Fox and others, this narrative recounted that the only thing that sustained Reynard during his supposed thirteen years of captivity was God’s will during his most desperate suffering. The captive’s will was weak when confronted by Muslims and only God could sustain him. It was integral to the narrative to demonstrate God’s sustaining nature and superiority because captivity illustrated the actual power of the Muslim states compared to England.

In contrast to many of the other narratives, Munday claimed in only one other passage of the narrative that God aided the captives’ attempts to escape. The captives had escaped Alexandria but were in the middle of the Mediterranean and desperately trying to survive while fighting famine and storms. According to the narrative, “but with a more mercifull eye (when he beheld how patiently they endured his trials) did God look down upon them. And on the 29 day after they set from Alexandria, they fell upon the Iland of Candy, and so put in at Gallipoli.”²⁴ Like many of the previously examined narratives, in the direst of circumstances, it was God that provided deliverance.

Like Fox’s narrative, Munday’s showed that not all captives remained enslaved for long periods of time. He referred to the owner and master of the *The Three Half Moons* being redeemed and leaving the rest of the crew in captivity: “it was not long [in captivity] ere the Master and Owner [of *The Three Half Moons*] by the good meanes of freindes were redeemed from this slavery.”²⁵ In Munday’s version it is a little unclear as to why he included their redemption. One explanation is that it was not something Munday really considered and

²³ Munday, *The admirable deliuerance of 266. Christians by John Reynard*, 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

therefore did not alter. Another explanation is that he purposefully included it because, as noted in Hasleton's narrative and later in Rawlins's, the Crown and the Levant Company did not do a particularly good job of redeeming captives who did not have powerful connections. The majority of captives were poor mariners with little means to procure their own freedom, which by 1608 had become problematic for many English sailors. James waited sixteen years to commission a naval expedition to secure the release of Englishmen. Surely, the inclusion of the owner and master's speedy redemption was a demonstration of the plight and weakness of most Englishmen who became captives in Muslim North Africa.

Another important aspect of Munday's story when compared to Fox's is that at the end King James provided no assistance for the returned captive; Hakluyt, on the other hand, noted in Fox's narrative that he received a small pension from the Queen. Munday ended his narrative rather abruptly, and his main character Reynard discussed finding employment in Spain. Matar argues that this could possibly be Munday's commentary on the state of captives in England.²⁶ The absence of any recognition of the monarchy assisting Reynard, coupled with the anecdote about the master and owner of the ship being redeemed quickly after capture, promotes the idea that most captives could not rely on help from the monarchy or the English Levant Company.

Few narratives made a direct plea to the monarch or individuals in the aristocracy to assist or acknowledge the capture of English sailors who had manned the ships that travelled in the Mediterranean. Most of the narratives completely omitted the monarchy or aristocracy because they provided no assistance in the author's redemption, and if they did mention the monarchy or aristocrat/powerful merchant who provided assistance, then it generally came after a long miserable captivity.

²⁶ Matar, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East", 561-562.

After the publication of Munday's plagiarized story, it took until 1622 for a captivity narrative to appear in print. It is unclear why it took almost fifteen years for another one to appear since more than 450 ships and many Englishmen had become captive between 1609 and 1622.²⁷ The policy of diplomacy to quell pirate activity stayed constant for James until 1618, when he decided to use naval intervention.

In 1615, James sent a letter to the English ambassador in Constantinople to continue his efforts to petition the Sultan about the suppression of piracy and that pirates had captured "above 100 sail of ships for which we can show good records."²⁸ As David Hebb has argued, the letter and request seemed to have had little effect; early in 1616, the King had to send yet another letter to Paul Pindar, the English ambassador, demanding that he again approach the Sultan about the suppression of piracy. James commanded Pindar to give an ultimatum to the Sultan: "that if the Grand Signor himself does not remedy it, they will in time cut off trade in the Levant, which will redound in the end as much to his damage as ours."²⁹ This petition also had little reaction from the Porte, but it meant that James was more serious about the dealing with pirates in the Mediterranean.³⁰

Fueling much of James's growing emphasis on addressing the pirate problem was the continual reports of pirate activity, some of which had migrated from the Mediterranean into the Atlantic. On September 22, 1616 Sir Francis Cottington, and English agent in Madrid, summarized the growing threat in a letter to the Lord High Admiral:

The strength and boldness of the Pyrats (or rather the Turks) is now grown to that height, both in the Ocean, and Mediterranean Seas, as I have never known anything to have

²⁷ Matar, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East", 563.

²⁸ TNA SP 105/147/f.76.

²⁹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 18; TNA SP 105/110/f.85.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

wrought a greater sadness and distraction in the Court, then the daily advice thereof. Their whole Fleet consists of 40 sail of tall Ships, of between 200 and 400, tuns apiece...they took there divers ships, and amongst them 3 or 4 of the West part of England. Two bigg English Ships they drave on shoar, not past four Leagues from Malaga; and after they went on shoar also, and burnt them. They lately met with seven Sail of English ships...five of these...they took, and the other two escaped. They roob'd them only of their victuals, their Ordnance, and some of their Sails, and so let them go; but in their company was also taken a great ship *Lubeck*, said to be very rich, which they still keep with all the men.³¹

The report primarily focused on the power of the pirates and that Cottington questioned even Spain's ability to deal with the pirates. The last sentence in the above quote is the only reference in the multi-page letter to English captives. The main focus of James and his agents was dealing with pirates, not English captives, the consequence of piracy. In early 1617, the King demanded that Paul Pindar approach the Sultan one more time about the pirates and, like the previous attempts, it had little effect.³²

In 1617, James's attitude towards naval action in the suppression of pirates started to shift when several of the trading company, including the Levant Company, sent another petition to the King requesting aid in suppressing the North African pirates. The petition was necessary according to the Levant Company's "Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Court" of February 11, 1617:

Mr. Deputy [Nicholas Leate], Mr. Garraway, Mr. Abdy, the Husband, the Secretary & such others as the deputy shall call...are appointed to prepare a petition to the kings Majesty in behalf of the Company, for some course to be taken for suppressing the Pirates, in the Straits, who increasingly daily do much disturb the general trade and Commerce into those parts and therefore to move for redress"³³

³¹ *Cabala, Sive Scirina Sacra: Mysteries of State and Government, in Letters of Illustrious Persons, and Great Ministers of State, As well Foreign as Domestick, In the Reigns of King Henry the Eighth, Queen Elizabeth, King James, and King Charles* (London, 1663), 217-218.

³² TNA SP 105/147/ff85v-86, 87, 91, 93.

³³ TNA SP 105/147/f.88.

It is also important to note that the petition to the King did not mention anything about assisting English captives, only piracy. The men who sailed the Levant Company's ships were not nearly as important as the loss of money the company experienced due to piracy. According to James in 1617,

One thing there is, which we again seriously recommend unto your diligence, which is a matter of a high nature, wherein both the advancement of our honour and the welfare of our loving subjects are deeply interested: for what can be more honourable to the propagation of our name and glory, to all ensuing posterity; than when we have not only governed our own kingdoms in peace and tranquility, but established by the enterprise of our authority a settled repose in all our neighbor countries, to draw our sword against the enemies of God, and man, that is the pirates, which at this time infest the seas, to the detriment of intercourse, and commerce of all trade: or wherein can we more clearly demonstrate our affectionate care to our good subjects, then by our protection to endeavour to enable them, that they may enjoy themselves, and the continuance of their wonted trades in peace and security.³⁴

By 1618, James began preparations to send a naval expedition to Algiers to destroy the pirates and rescue captives. As discussed in Chapter One, the results, however, were lackluster at best. The single expedition sent against the pirates of Algiers, launched in 1619, cost around £64,000 and resulted in the securing of sixteen English captives, ineffective negotiations for the halting of piracy against English vessels, and no destruction to Algiers or the pirate ships within its harbors.³⁵

After the failed expedition, the number of captives in North Africa continued to increase and by 1622 had stretched into the thousands. In May 1622, the Privy Council sent a letter to Thomas Roe, the English Ambassador in Constantinople who, as noted in Chapter One, had written to the Privy Council begging for funds to secure the release of English captives. The return letter from The Privy Council acknowledged the problem of English captives:

³⁴ TNA SP 14/90/136.

³⁵ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 90-100, 193-196.

It is not unknowne to you want exceeding losse and prejudice this kingdome hath sustayned by Turkish pyrates of Argier and what robberies and spoyles have been committed by them upon his Majestie's subjects; and forasmuch as those injuries and depredacions are now growne to that height excesse as cannot be suffered without an utter dissolucion of trade and comerce, there being above 1000 of his Majestie's subjects now captive in Argier, Tunis, and Tituana, and all the Westerne portes of this kingdome so discouraged that they are even at a stand and readie to give over all further commerce to those partes.³⁶

The letter commissioned Thomas Roe to do his duty as ambassador and petition the Sultan to secure the release of all English captives in North Africa or Roe, and the rest of the English subjects in the Mediterranean would be recalled. Eventually by 1625 and 1626, Roe would secure the release of several hundred English captives; however, in 1622, those captives had not yet been redeemed, and it was probably not a coincidence that two narratives appeared that year.

The Captivity narratives of 1622

The year 1622 saw the publication of two captivity narratives: the anonymously authored *A Strange and True Relations of a Ship of Bristol named the Jacob* and John Rawlins's *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll, called the Exchange*. Both of these narratives exuberantly professed the power of God and his providence in the escape of the captives and the glory of God and his elect nation over "the Turks".

A Strange and True Relations of a Ship of Bristol named the Jacob opened with a bold statement proclaiming the power of God and his role in the escape of four English youths. "As all Relations of any goodness that befalls to men, of or any euill that they are defended or

³⁶ 'Pages 226-251,' in Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 38, 1621-1623, ed. J V Lyle (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1932), 228, accessed April 30, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/acts-privy-council/vol38/pp226-250>.

delivered from, are manifest declarations of Gods power in mans weakness, and the richnesse of the Almightyes mercy graciously extended to our pouertie and miserie”³⁷ This statement set the tone for the rest of the narrative. According to the story, in October 1621 “Turkish” pirates attacked the *Jacob* near the Strait of Gibraltar. The pirates took “their Ordinance, Cables, Anchors, Sailes...took all the Englishmen out of the ship, except four youthes, whose names were John Cooke, William Ling, David Jones, and Robert Tuckey, into which ship the Turkes did put thirteen of their own men to command the English.”³⁸ The newly captured ship with the four English youths, who had resolved to suffer a life of slavery rather than “trie the hazard of a memorable death,”³⁹ sailed towards Algiers. After five days and nights, the captives “being quite hopeless, hapless, and for any thing they knew, for ever helpless” received assistance from God, when he showed them a means of escape.

God’s intervention allowed them to execute an almost flawless escape plan. According to the narrative, John Cooke and William Ling called for help from the pirates. As the captain came to check on the boys, they attempted to throw him overboard but were not successful. Instead, one of them used a large wooden weapon to beat him so hard that “his brains forsake the possession of his head.”⁴⁰ After dispensing with the captain, two of the boys, William Ling and John Cooke, rushed to the master’s cabin and obtained several cutlasses and started assaulting the remaining twelve pirates. The boys killed two and wounded another, who jumped from the ship to escape. The other nine pirates soon retreated below deck for safety, but the four Englishmen locked the hatches and kept them prisoner. Only occasionally would the English

³⁷ *A Strange and True Relation of a Ship of Bristol named Jacob, of 120. Tunnes, which was about the end of Octob. Last 1621. Taken by the Turkish Pirates of Argier: and how within five dayes after, four English Youths did valiantly overcome thirteene of the said Turkes, and brought the ship to Saint Lucas in Spain, where they sold nine of the Turkes for Galley-Slaves.* (London, 1622), 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

youths allow two or three of the pirates above deck and only at musket point to assist with sailing the ship. After gaining control of the ship, the four boys sailed it to Saint Lucas in Spain and sold their captive “Turks” as slaves.⁴¹ While the narrative extolled the exploits of four Englishmen, it also, in the strongest terms, deflected any responsibility the youths played in their escape and placed the onus solely on God.

With the story of the youths’ escape completed in the first six pages of the narrative, the narrator used the remaining five pages to discuss the power of God and his role in saving the four boys. In the paragraph following the sale of the “Turkish” pirates in Spain, the narrator stated, “I have set downe a true relation and description of these mens captivity, and joyfull deliuerance, in which the Reader may see the instability of humane accidents, and that the supernall power and providence hath a ruling hand to dispose all the purposes of men to his own glory.” All the responsibility and praise for the English youths’ escape rested in the hands of God. The narrator continued, “In the reason of man, the poore mens case was desperate and past recouery; but see, Gods arme is not shortned.”⁴² The narrative deliberately and continually emphasized God’s power but did allow some agency of the youths.

In this story, while primary power was placed in the hands God, the narrator noted that God provided the opportunities and the beneficiaries and the captives must act. Captives and slaves who “sate whining like whelpes, and like vassals haue put their necks into the noose of perpetuall servitude, crying onely, God helpe, but neuer endeououring to use the meanes that God hath given them” could never gain their freedom. It was only those who, like the English youths, “contemned all dangers, they despised all miseries, and they with fortitude conquered their Conquerors...these braue sparks and spirits, the darlings of valour, to their own long last fame

⁴¹ *A Strange and True Relation of a Ship of Bristol named Jacob*, 4-6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6.

and their countreys neuer dying honour, makes Bristoll famous, Britaine glorious, their reputation precious, and the Turkes contemptuous.”⁴³ This quote is important for several reasons because it notes that captives were supposed to use their God-given opportunities to escape; if a captive wanted freedom, the captive must act because only God was providing assistance.

This narrative epitomizes the combination of providential identity and captive helplessness. A good Englishmen as a captive would always take advantage of the opportunities provided by God to escape. In doing so, the captive would benefit because it was unlikely anybody from England could or would help. When a captive successfully escaped through God’s assistance, it demonstrated the power of God and his favor of the English captive and the English nation over all others, especially “the Turkes.” The narrative also references John Fox and how, even after eighteen years in captivity, he still diligently waited for God to provide an opportunity for escape. The narrator also insinuated that once Fox returned to England the Queen only met with him because of his brave exploits and not because he had returned from captivity.⁴⁴ As Nabil Matar argues a hint of bitterness appears in tone of the story:⁴⁵

Had John Cooke been some Collonell, Captain, or Commander, or William Ling, some nauigating Lord, or David Jones some gentlemen of land and riches, or had Robert Tuckey beene one of fortunes minions, to haue had more money then wit, or more wealth than valour, oh what a triumphing had heere beene then, what rare Muses would have toyld like Mules, to haue gallopt with their flattering encomiums, beyond the 32. points compasse; whilst these 4 rich caskets of home-spun valour and courage, haue no pen to publish their deserued commendations, no inuention to emblazon their saltwater honour but the poore lines and labours of a freshwater Poet.⁴⁶

⁴³ *A Strange and True Relation of a Ship of Bristol named Jacob*, 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁴⁵ Nabil Matar, “English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625”, 565.

⁴⁶ *A Strange and True Relation of a Ship of Bristol named Jacob*, 7-8.

Despite the four English youths and their escape that demonstrates the power and favor of God towards the English nation, only a poor poet would write about their triumph, mostly due to the socioeconomic status of the youths. Only those with money received all the praise and had great epic stories written about them. Though the anonymous author provided no person or other narrative that he was referencing, one of the possibilities is that he had read the narrative or play about Thomas Sherley and his failure in the Mediterranean. As discussed above, Thomas had the money to commission a pamphlet about his and his brother's exploits and tried to create legends about themselves through stories. Even if he was not referencing Thomas Sherley, the author of *A Strange and True Relation of a Ship of Bristol named Jacob* clearly detested the fact that "true brave Englishmen" were not championed in the literature of the early seventeenth century.

The other narrative that appeared in 1622 was *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol, called the Exchange, from Turkish Pirates of Argier with the Unmatchable attempts and good success of John Rawlins*, which told the story of John Rawlins's capture and escape from Muslim pirates, both North African and English. The 1622 publication is the only extant version and seems to be the only edition of the narrative.⁴⁷ It is also hard to verify the authenticity of Rawlins's story because little evidence exists that he was anything more than a fictional person. Despite the narrative's origins, it echoes many of the themes of providence and weakness the previously mentioned stories display. Rawlin's narrative is similar to Fox's because it has no direct anti-Catholic messages, but the presence of providential language still demonstrates that he wanted to prove to his readers he was a good English Protestant and remind fellow Englishmen of the importance of staying true to one's faith despite the influence of Muslim captors.

⁴⁷ Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 97.

The main theme of Rawlins' narrative was the importance of relying on God through captivity and not converting to Islam. Rawlins's story began with a dedication to George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham and the Lord High Admiral of England. At the time, the Duke of Buckingham was an unpopular figure in England, but he was also the most powerful man in the navy. As a seaman trying to protect and assist fellow captives, it was understandable that Rawlins would try and petition the Lord High Admiral of the Navy. Rawlins's dedication opened as, "Seeing it hath pleased God by so weakness, as my poor self, to have power and goodness made manifest in the world."⁴⁸ Rawlins used the adjective of weakness to describe himself in relation to Buckingham and especially to God, which illustrates his sense of inferiority. This is reinforced in the dedication when Rawlins stated,

For though you [Duke of Buckingham] have greater persons, and more braving spirits to lie over our heads, and hold inferiors in subjection; yet are we the men that must pull the ropes, weigh up the anchors, toile in the night, endure the stormes, sweat at the Helm, watch the Biticle, attend the compass, guard the Ordnance, keep the night houres, and be ready for all impositions.⁴⁹

This description of the common sailor and the plea to be remembered showed that Rawlins had a sense of being forgotten by the aristocracy and the monarchy. When Rawlins stated that sailors should "be ready for all impositions," it is not hard to imagine that he was implying captivity, which was considered one of the worst "impositions" a sailor could face. Rawlins ended the dedication by stating, "If then you vouchsafe to entertain it[the narrative], I have my desire. For according to the oath of Jurors, it is the truth, and the very truth: If otherwise you suppose it triviall, it is only the prostitution of my service, and wisdom is not bought in the market."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, A2-r.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, A2r.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, A2r.

Rawlins wished for his narrative to provide an education for the Duke of Buckingham about the plight of English captives, but he clearly was not overly optimistic because it seems that it would just be treated as a prostitution of Rawlin's services. When Rawlins stated, "wisdom is not bought in the market," it might also be alluding to the fact that the Duke of Buckingham spent much of his time trying to gain vast amounts of wealth by extorting the trading companies.

In 1622 the East India Company had captured the Hormuz from the Portuguese for Shah Abbas, the Safavid ruler, and in doing so they captured a significant amount of wealth for themselves. At the behest of James, the company offered Buckingham £2,000 as a gift since he was the Lord Admiral, which he rejected. Instead, the Admiral demanded ten percent of the profits for all prizes seized by the East India Company. To emphasize the seriousness of his demands, Buckingham claimed the Portuguese seizure was illegal and charged the company with piracy in the High Court of the Admiralty. Though the case never went to trial, it demonstrated the gravity of the East India Company's situation and the need to increase the amount of money they would "gift" to him. In the end, Buckingham successfully extorted £10,000 for himself and £10,000 for the King from the East India Company.⁵¹ He was not a well-liked individual in England, and Rawlins' dedication to him illustrates that well.

As Nabil Matar argues, the level of anger in the dedication towards Buckingham exemplified the helplessness and weakness that English captives endured as a result of the lack of support from James, his ministers, and the Privy Council. The anger of the dedication coupled with Rawlins being able to rely only on himself for assistance, reinforced the sense of weakness many Englishmen experienced.⁵² It is also important to note that the dedication to the Duke of Buckingham is the only time any aristocrat or person of importance in England is mentioned

⁵¹ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 222.

⁵² Matar, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East", 564.

throughout the narrative, except for two passing references when Rawlins claimed they were escaping for “God, King James, and St. George of England.”⁵³ For Rawlins to declare that he performed his actions for “God, King James, and St. George of England,” it reinforced the idea that his actions and their success demonstrated the power of God and the power of England as an elect nation over that of Muslims and North African pirates.

After the cry for help in the dedication to the Duke of Buckingham, who had power but was and not using it, the narrative itself opened with a plea to praise God. “Give God the praise of all deliverances, and to instruct one another in the absolute duties of Christianity. By the one, the power and providence with all the attributes belonging to so immense a dietie, shall be made manifest.”⁵⁴ The narrative described the capture of Rawlins and a few of his fellow crewmen as they traveled through the Straits of Gibraltar. The captors took Rawlins to Algiers where they sold him for a small sum since he had a useless hand. An English Muslim, named Henry Chandler, eventually bought Rawlins and made him part of the slave crew on his corsair. Rawlins spent several months aboard Chandler’s ship working below deck before he led a mutiny against Chandler and the other “Turkish” pirates. Rawlins’s mutiny succeeded, and he and other slaves aboard the ship restrained the pirates and sailed the ship back to England. While this story sounds valiant in many ways, Rawlins, like Fox, Hasleton, and Saunders before him, claimed the success of his escape depended completely on God’s intervention.

During his captivity Rawlins also stressed the power of his Muslim captors and the lack of any help other than from God. Once captured, Rawlins purposefully pointed out the cruelties and hardships inflicted on captives: “Concerning them enforcing them, either to turn Turk, or to attend their filthiness and impieties...they commonly lay them on their naked backs, or bellies,

⁵³ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, D4r.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, A3r.

beating them so long till they bleed at the nose and mouth, then they strike the teeth out of their heads, pinch their tongues, and use many other sorts of tortures to convert them.”⁵⁵ These tortures were possibly what Rawlins meant by “all impositions” in his dedication. He described the tortures to express to the reader the extreme sense of fear, weakness, and helplessness the captives experienced and what they were willing to endure for the Crown as long as the Crown and Lord Admiral of the Navy remembered them.

The theme of helplessness and fear continued through much of the story. Several pages later, Rawlins described that he was initially sold to a Muslim named Villa Rise but Villa demanded a refund after witnessing Rawlins’s lame hand. The seller informed Rawlins that “unless he could procure fiteene pound of the English there, for his ransom, he would send him up into the country, where he should never see Christendom again, and endure extremite of a miserable banishment.”⁵⁶ Fortunately, according to Rawlins, God provided a means for him to raise the money through convincing Henry Chandler to buy him as a slave. Chandler agreed because of Rawlins’s navigational experience and Rawlins escaped without having to procure the money himself. Again, weakness and hopelessness were conveyed because Rawlins had to find the money on his own, and no English merchant or aristocrat provided any assistance. It was only God working through a Muslim Englishman that saved Rawlins.

Throughout his trials and tribulations Rawlins continued to cite God’s providence. Rawlins and his fellow conspirators first attempt at mutiny stopped before it could even begin because the timing was wrong and Rawlins states, “But as you have heard, God was the best physitian to our wounded hearts, and used a kindle of preventing physicke, rather then to cure us so suddenly: so that out of his providence perceiving some danger in this enterprise, he both

⁵⁵ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, B2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, B2r.

caused us to desist, and at last brough our businesse to a better period, and a fortunate end.”⁵⁷

Eventually, Rawlins and his fellow mutineers timed their revolt correctly, with God’s assistance, and took control of the ship and subdued the crew. With control of the ship, Rawlins sailed the ship back to England. At the end of the narrative when Rawlins and his crew were successfully back in England and the Renegadoes were either repentant or dead Rawlins concluded:

So then, entertaine it [the narrative] for a true and certain discourse: apply it, make use of it, and put it to they heart for they comfort. It teacheth the acknowledgement of a powerful, provident, and merciful God, who will be known in his wonders, and make weak things the instrument of his glory. It instructeth us in the practice of thanksgiving, when a benefit is bestowed, a mercy shown, and a deliverance perfected.⁵⁸

One of the common themes that links the quotes together is the idea of God’s providence. For Rawlins, the belief that God had his hand the outcome of all events and manipulated the outcomes of events to show the true nature of his divinity was integral to his successful escape. These quotes also demonstrate that Rawlins believed God had his hand over the good Christian man and would protect him through purposeful intervention, despite his trials and tribulations, while making it clear to the reader that he was an English protestant because of God’s favor.

This narrative also reinforced the ineffectiveness and lack of information about the raids on Algiers in 1620 and 1621. Rawlins did not indicate he knew about the expedition to Algiers or he might not have made such a desperate plea. Even more important is the fact that Rawlins set sail from Plymouth in November 1621 aboard the ship *Nicholas*. Accompanying the ship on Rawlins’s voyage was another ship named *George Bonnaventure*, which had taken part in the

⁵⁷ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, B3r.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, E3r.

expeditions to Algiers in 1620 and early 1621.⁵⁹ The fleet that raided Algiers did not disband and return to England until August or September 1621, which meant that Rawlins's narrative described the *George Bonnaventure's* first merchant voyage after the Algiers' expedition. It seems unlikely that he would not have known about the ship's previous engagement in the Mediterranean. Rawlins published the narrative in 1622, soon after his return to England. The raid on Algiers symbolized James's entire effort in assisting captives. He provided only minimal assistance and only a few Englishmen benefited from his efforts, leaving many to the arduous life of a captive in North Africa.

Rawlins's narrative began with a plea to the Duke of Buckingham to remember the poor sailors and ended with a reminder of the weakness of man, in this instance the sailors, and that God shaped all the events, including Rawlins's escape. This narrative can be interpreted as a reminder of God's favor towards Englishmen and his power over "the Turks." Additionally, one can also conclude that the Crown and the Duke of Buckingham spent little effort to assist English sailors as they continually became captives and experienced extreme misery. As a result of this lack of ability and effort, Rawlins, like Fox, Hasleton, and others, encapsulated the helplessness and inferiority experienced during captivity.

Captivity Narratives During the Reign of Charles I

No captive accounts appeared between 1625-1640, even though this period in English history witnessed the highest numbers of Englishmen held captive in North Africa. In 1625, James died and Charles I became king of England. Charles held many of the same views on

⁵⁹ British Library, Add. MS 36, 444, f.167; David Hebb also provides a discussion and list of the ships that participated in the raid on Algiers page 82-83. From here on British Library will be abbreviated BL.

England's relationship with the Ottoman Empire as his father, James, though he made more attempts to help captives. He still generally refused to open the royal treasury to assist with the redemption of captives. As Charles's reign progressed, the threat of Muslim corsairs became an unavoidable domestic and international issue. In 1633, Edward Coke presented a memorial to Charles outlining the conditions of his subjects in the Mediterranean. "At Tunis and Algiers, it is lamentable to consider how many are kept in slavery, & how many turn Turk. So at Sally & Morocco when the favour of England was their greatest ambition, now the spoils of our people are their greatest wealth."⁶⁰ As David Hebb and others have argued, ship money became one of the first ways that Charles tried to combat Muslim corsairs domestically.⁶¹ The purpose of Ship Money was to pay for the protection of English ships and fishing vessels in and around English waters.⁶² While this may have had some effect in the waters around England itself, it did little for the captives in North Africa and also created many political issues for Charles back in England.⁶³

With the number of captives near its height during Charles's reign, there is a high probability that some returned captives wrote private or unpublished accounts, but, according to Nabil Matar, the main reason that no accounts appeared for fifteen years can be attributed to Charles I and his control of the press. Charles dissolved Parliaments and implemented ship money throughout England, but he did not want to lose any more support from the populace.⁶⁴ He was feeling the weight of pressure from the public, especially the captives' family members

⁶⁰ TNA SP 16/269/51.

⁶¹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government 1616-1642*, 221-223.

⁶² Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 291-92.

⁶³ For a detailed analysis of Ship Money see: Kenneth R. Andrews, *Ships, Money, and Politics: Seafaring and Naval Enterprise in the Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, chapter 10; Richard Cust, *Charles I* (London: Routledge, 2007), 567-597.

⁶⁴ Matar, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East", 570.

as they continually petitioned him for assistance, and published captivity narrative, which were often popular, would only add fuel to the fire.

During the reign of Charles, a general sense of weakness and helplessness persisted among many people in England, especially the wives and families of captives, as they tried desperately to petition Charles for help. In March 1626, Charles and the Duke of Buckingham received a petition on behalf of 2000 wives to “commiserate the most wofull, lamentable and distressed estate of the said poor captives, your petitioners, and their poor children and infantes.”⁶⁵

Unfortunately for the women, the petition had little effect other than the King trading a few Muslim captives in England for Englishmen in Algiers. The uncertainty and misery were reinforced for many families and especially women who had captive husbands. In 1632, *The Lawes Resolution of Womens Rights* appeared to effectively compile all the laws regarding women in England into a single volume. One of the topics reminded the spouse of her status when a partner was a captive. The law stated, “after a husband had beene gone five years, and nothing knowne whether he lived or no, the wife might marry again, and so might the husband....But the common Law commandeth simply to forbear marriage till the death of him or her that is missing be certainly knowne.”⁶⁶ As Nabil Matar notes, the publishing of the laws probably reinforced the desperation of families, who had to wait five years before they could escape their uncertain marriage and financial status.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ TNA SP 16/306/f. 85.

⁶⁶ *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights: or, The Lawes of Provisions for Women* (London, 1632), 66.

⁶⁷ Nabil Matar, “Wives, Captives Husbands and Turks: The First Women Petitioners in Caroline England,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*. Vol 23 (1997), 116-117.

In 1635, the King received additional petitions from “a thousand poore women more and upwards”⁶⁸ pleading for help in the redemption of their husbands or family members. This petition echoed much of the same language as the 1626 petition, but it was more specific. The petitioners stated: “Yor highness and subjects & husbands cannot bee redeemed or delivered, but by deathe, or extraordinary ransoms unless yor majestie be pleased to send to the kinge of Moorocoe, whoe as the said subjects have been informed will deliver them all out of captivitie if your majestie send an Ambassador, or yor highness letter.”⁶⁹ This petition indicated that the women had worked to find inside knowledge regarding what was necessary to free their husbands in Morocco and also that they were still desperate for Charles to act and secure their husbands’ release. It is also important to note that these women represented a larger number than one thousand and all felt helpless because their King refused to act.⁷⁰

Only when censorship was lifted in 1640, as Charles’s problems with the Long Parliament escalated, did the first captivity narrative of his reign appear.⁷¹ The narrative of Francis Knight was one of the most telling about the plight of English captives during the reign of Charles. According to his narrative, Knight became a captive in 1631 and remained so for seven years in Algiers. In 1638, Knight and fourteen other individuals, four from England and the rest from varied European countries, escaped their chains, found a small boat, and sailed to freedom. Much like the majority of the narratives previously discussed, Knight placed the credit for surviving seven years in captivity and for his escape squarely on the shoulders of God.

In his narrative published in 1640, Francis Knight echoed the same language of providence of the previously mentioned narratives. He begins his narrative by stating, “it

⁶⁸ TNA SP 16/306/fo1. 85.

⁶⁹ TNA SP 16/306/fo1. 85.

⁷⁰ Matar, “Wives, Captives Husbands and Turks: The First Women Petitioners in Caroline England”, 117-119.

⁷¹ Matar, “English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East”, 570.

pleased Almightye God to give power to the Infidels to prevaile over me, whereby I became captive, and interdicted the company of those of my consanguinitie...and detained from my native countrey(to which I am yet a stranger) but (praised be God) in way to survive.”⁷² Like all the previously mentioned narratives, he clearly expressed to his readers that he believed in the will of God and God’s control over all actions that occurred in his life.

At the same time, Knight’s narrative has some distinct similarities to that of John Rawlins. Knight begins his narrative with a dedication to Sir Paul Pindar, the English Ambassador to Constantinople at the time. In the dedication, Knight affirmed the following:

Hath been so apparent to me [knight]...that I have presumed to present your Worship with this treatise, expressing my ardent affection for the enlargement of the multitude of my poor countrymen groaning under the merciless yoke of Turkish thralldom; and the rather my self having there suffered, loss of my estate, and the misery of 7 years slavery in chains, and in the gallies of Algiers, its not unknown to your Worship, having been resident in those parts, what their sufferings are, as scoffs, threats, blows, chains, hunger, nakedness, with innumerable others, and which is most deplorable, their danger of falling from the Christian and most holy faith.⁷³

Like Rawlins in his dedication to the Duke of Buckingham, Knight spent much of the dedication reminding Pindar, somebody who could potentially assist in the situation, of the tragic and miserable suffering of captive Englishmen. In the dedication, Knight did something that Rawlins only alluded to in his narrative; he directly pointed out to Pindar that he could aid in the plight of captives. After mentioning all the travesties experienced by the captives, Knight stated, “now by the mercy of God, happily escaped, do still increase my zeal for their liberties, which your worship being an eminent personage in this flourishing kingdom, may be a worthy instrument to

⁷² Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under The Turkes of Argeire, suffered by an English Captive Merchant* (London: 1640), 1.

⁷³ Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie*, 2-3.

accomplish.”⁷⁴ Knight wanted to remind Pindar of the plight of Englishmen that he, as ambassador, had witnessed firsthand, and which in turn persuaded him to convince Charles I to send a rescue mission or to negotiate diplomatically. It is reasonable to argue that Knight wanted Pindar to instigate a rescue mission since he overtly stated it later in the narrative.

None of the narratives except that of Knight mentioned the possibility of a raid to secure the escape of Englishmen. This is most likely due to the fact that only one had been attempted, the raid on Algiers in 1621, and it was not successful. As noted above, John Rawlins, who had been a captive in Algiers a year after the English attempted a raid, did not even mention the raid in his narrative. Knight, on the other hand, knew that the English had attempted a raid on Salé in 1636 and that it had been a success, which led to the freeing of over six hundred English captives from Morocco. Knight’s narrative is broken into two distinct books, the narrative itself being book one.⁷⁵ In book two, Knight attempted to provide descriptions of Algiers and its inhabitants. During these descriptions, Knight continued to mention the plight of Englishmen enslaved in Algiers and he also tried to provide a solution. According to Knight,

For more than 1500 of my miserable countrymen, who are there plunged in the most vile and greatest detriments, certainly a fair course would effect their enlargement, and without all doubt the most acceptable to Almighty God, and bring a benediction upon his Majesty, his Royal posterity, people and dominions; they have a most confident opinion of his Majesty’s gracious favor toward them, and are credulous that his Royal bounty will be no less propence to them, than it hath been to those that were in Morocco and Sally.⁷⁶

When writing the narrative, Knight knew about the successful raid on Salé, but he also stated that even the captives in Algiers knew about the raid and had gained hope that God would prompt Charles I to send a similar raid for their redemption.

⁷⁴ Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie*, 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

One of the main reasons that England had not sent an expedition or ambassadors to try to secure a treaty with the leaders of Algiers, according to Knight, was that they feared that the pirates of Algiers would soon break the treaty and all the effort would be useless.⁷⁷ Knight, however, claimed that it was the England's fault that peace could not be preserved and that Englishmen were preventing their own countrymen from being redeemed. According to the narrative,

It is further pretended, if they should be enlarged, and a peace established, those pirates of Algiers would never conserve and keep it; I am certaine that the last peace was broken by the English, by whom those of Algiers received many injuries and long suffered them before they sought the least revenge, and the first English ship brought thither, caused many differences betwixt themselves in Duana.... I am confident that if his Majesty should send for those poore, but most loyal subjects; that the Turks would give them upon honorable terms, and have a just propention to a good firm and constant peace.⁷⁸

Knight argued that with the King's assistance the Englishmen in Algiers could be redeemed and their suffering ended. Moreover, much of the responsibility for the suffering lay in the hands of fellow Englishmen who caused enough problems in Algiers to hinder the redemption of English captives. This is the only passage in any of the captives' narratives that proposed that the King should actually act and redeem captives in Algiers. The only other narrative that mentioned the King's involvement in securing the release of captives was Thomas Sherley's, and his narrative mentioned the King's actions but not what the King should do. Unfortunately for Knight and all the captives in Algiers, it took six more years for an agent of the English government to secure the release of captives and that agent was an agent not of the King, but of Parliament, primarily due to the English Civil War. Knight's predictions about the leaders of Algiers being reasonable

⁷⁷ Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie*, 52.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

were accurate, and Agent Edmond Cason secured the release of over 200 English captives at their sale prices.⁷⁹

The narrative of Francis Knight, like those previously mentioned, illustrated that rarely did Englishmen receive assistance from the King, aristocrats, or merchants in their redemption. Generally, the captive had to secure their own release and pray that God would assist. In all the narratives, God sustained them in their misery and provided help in desperate times; He was the only one providing assistance. Knight provided the most direct reminder to those in charge, Sir Paul Pindar and King Charles, about the plight of the English captives, showing that action needed to be taken. English captives were utterly helpless and not many people were willing to help them. Muslim pirates and by proxy Islam represented a power in the Mediterranean that could not be easily overcome. This depiction appeared in the captives' narratives throughout the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles.

Conclusion

Redemption for English captives was rarely a speedy process. Escape or redemption from captivity during the reigns of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts often took many years, and the captives endured miserable circumstances as slaves. They could turn to God for assistance in hopes that he would free them from their captivity as most other avenues for redemption were unsuccessful. It was through these supplications to God that, according to their narratives, the captives gained freedom and could return to England. These supplications can be interpreted as an expression of English belief in God's providence and as part of their identity. The English

⁷⁹ *A Relation of the whole proceedings concerning the redemption of Captives in Argier and Tunis* (London, 1646), 1-12.

believed themselves to be the elect because God clearly assisted his chosen people. Elizabeth tried to assist captives, but because of war with Spain and a weak Navy, she was only marginally successful. James also had a lackluster Navy, but his feelings towards the Ottoman Empire made him impotent to assist more than a few captives and instead caused many more to become captured. Charles I sent the only successful naval expedition to rescue captives after continual and immense public pressure twelve years into his reign. Due to these monarchs' overall unsuccessful assistance of the captives, the fear, weakness, and helplessness of the captives appears as a common theme throughout the narratives, despite their continual attempts to show a strong belief in God.

CHAPTER 4

THE ENGLISH “TURK”

In the early seventeenth century, Englishmen Henry Timberlake and John Burrell decided to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its many Christian holy sites. On arrival at the gates of the city, Burrell suggested that both he and Timberlake pretend to be Greeks because it was unlawful for Christians to enter unattended. When confronted at the gates about their identity, John Burrell claimed to be Greek, because this would provide him protection under the Greek Patriarch, but Timberlake refused stating that “I would neither deny my Country nor my Religion” whereupon the guards responded that they had never heard of Timberlake’s Queen or country and promptly threw him in prison.¹ Timberlake refused to deny his “country and his religion,” implying that while closely linked they were separate. At the same time, he believed that if he assumed a Greek identity then it would be a grave offense against himself and his English identity; therefore, at the cost of jail time he proclaimed his allegiance to country and his religion.

This chapter will demonstrate another aspect of the emerging English identity, based on a commonality of birth and the shared experience of living in England prior to travel, captivity, or conversion in the Mediterranean. As the previous chapters have discussed, an integral aspect of

¹ Henry Timberlake, *A True and strange discourse of the travailes of two English Pilgrims: what admirable accidents befell them in their journey to Jerusalem, Gaza, Grand Cayro, Alexandria, and other places* (1603), 7.

early modern English identity was Protestantism; however, as noted in Chapter 1, one of the major issues captives faced was the potential conversion to Islam. Many English captives converted to Islam, some for self-preservation and others in order to start a new life in Muslim lands. Despite the loss of their Protestant identity, Englishmen still often retained their English identity in the eyes of English travelers and other captives who encountered the converts. English Muslims or English “Turks”, as they were often labeled, still provided English travelers and captives with something familiar in the unfamiliar Mediterranean and Levant.

For many writers, becoming a “Turk” or Renegado was a heinous offense, but the same writers did not mention a loss of Englishness, only a loss of religion, thus demonstrating that another important aspect of English identity in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, hinged on one’s birth and experiences growing up in England. One of the possible reasons that English travelers and captives identified English Muslims as still English was because new communities began to develop in Elizabethan and early Stuart England based on geographic location, language, and shared experiences. The new communities created allegiances and connections between fellow Englishmen that had not previously existed, while at the same time altering and shaping new aspects of English identity. These new communities allowed Englishmen in the Mediterranean to make connections with other Englishmen who had become Muslims while also identifying them as English since a familiarity existed based on one’s link to the English soil common birthplace. These connections provided Englishmen something familiar to latch on to in an unfamiliar Muslim-dominated Mediterranean world.

It is important to note that identification of being English is based on the perspective of the English traveler or captive and not the “English Turk” himself. The “English Turks” had no voice, because no records exist of their accounts, and the interactions between them and the

authors all came from the latter's perspective. Thus, the identification of being English is purely from the perspective of the English author and possibly the "English Turk" would have not identified himself as English. Instead the English "Turk" probably would have either identified himself as an Ottoman, if he lived in the Ottoman Empire, or just as a Muslim. It is significant, though, that that English authors writing for English audiences still identified "English Turks" as English; this emphasizes the connection many of these travelers and captives established in the Mediterranean.

Establishing Communities in the Mediterranean

As discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, questions about the development and creation of national identities have generated considerable interest among scholars of early modern culture, and England has been one of the countries that received much of this attention. A general consensus has even been reached around the idea that England was one of the first places—if not the first place—in which a national identity developed in Europe. One of the most important contributors to the national identity historiography is Benedict Anderson.

In his book, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson explores the development of nationalism through the idea of "imagined communities." He argues that nationalism did not develop until the end of the eighteenth century during the age of Enlightenment and Revolution as legitimacy of the absolutist monarchs crumbled under the strain of modern states not tied to the monarch's claims of divine right. For Anderson, an imagined community embodies the idea of a state in which most individuals "will never know most of their fellow members, meet them,

or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”² At the same time, the community became imagined because regardless of the individual’s station within the community, “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”³ It is this comradeship, which allows people to identify with many other individuals and often be willing to die for the idea and people within their shared community. Much of Anderson’s construct can be applied to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Englishmen in the Mediterranean. As English travelers and captives navigated life in the Islamic Mediterranean world, many of them created new communities or identified with the larger imagined community that was England.

As discussed in the introduction, Richard Helgerson argued that Elizabethan and early Stuart England represented a transitional period in the development of an English identity. It was a period in which old allegiances to the monarch as the embodiment of the nation began to shift to people, culture, and land. For Helgerson, the Elizabethan era was the beginning of a period in which the English people began to create their own national identity. Helgerson’s thesis was that much of the literature of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century moved the focus away from monarchy and nobility and pointed it towards the merchant classes. Thus, it began the development of an English national identity.

This chapter adds to Helgerson’s work in that, like the previous chapters, it broadens the focus of English identity to include travelers, captives, and Muslims converts in the Mediterranean. One of the ways it does this is through the idea that Englishmen, as they lived and traveled the Mediterranean, created new communities. The development of an English community based on shared experience is also an idea explored by Helgerson, as noted in the introduction. He states, “the young Elizabethans may have been partially uprooted from

² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

traditional associations of locality, family, and guild but they did nevertheless enter into a wide variety of new and newly reformed discursive communities, and it was often on behalf of those communities that they represented England.”⁴ Some of the literature in England by the early seventeenth century had begun to differentiate the England and monarchy. Works like Hakluyt’s focused on the English merchant classes and moved away from stories of the exploits of the nobles and monarchy.

Another important avenue of Helgerson’s study, applicable to this chapter, is the way in which late Elizabethan and early Stuart cartographers began to emphasize the importance of the land over the representation of royal authority on the maps. Helgerson argues that late Elizabethan era maps prominently display the royal arms, like that of Christopher Saxton, who created his map in 1579. Cartographer John Norden’s 1594 map of Middlesex and 1598 map of Hertfordshire also conspicuously displayed the royal arms. The placement of the royals was significant because on Norden’s 1604 map of Cornwall the royal seal did not appear, and it appeared on only eleven of the fifty-six county maps Norden contributed to Camden’s 1607 *Britannia*. In 1611, when John Speed published his famous atlas, *Theater of the British Empire*, thirty-six of the forty-two maps contained the royal arms, but in many cases, the size of the arms were reduced or scattered among various arms of local gentry, colleges, and guilds. At the same time, Speed also included various architectural and historical monuments on the maps. The evolution of the maps culminated in Michael Drayton’s 1612 *Poly-Olbion*.⁵ His collection of maps wholly removed the royal arms and Drayton’s maps focused entirely on the geography, going so far as to include, “every mountain, forest, rivers, and valley, expressing in their sundry

⁴ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-117.

postures their loves, delights, and natural situations.”⁶ This trend continued as Drayton released a second part of his *Poly-Olbion* in 1622. For Helgerson, removal of the signs of the monarchy in the early seventeenth century indicated that a shift had begun in England that pointed towards the importance of the land. More importantly, it emphasized the land and disassociated it from the monarchy and royal authority. Using Anderson’s and Helgerson’s models it is also important to examine the role the homeland played in the English mindset.

Historian John Eliot echoes much of Helgerson’s argument about the ways that English literature began to shift away from monarchical glories and towards that of merchants and people not of the noble class. Eliot focuses primarily on early modern Europe as a whole but does spend a few paragraphs on England. He argues that while a sense of general nationalism did not exist, people had a sense of *patria* or homeland. For Eliot, this sense of *patria* could range from a person’s hometown, to a province, or even a nation. The significance for Eliot though, is that this sense of *patria* created many different communities within the larger nation itself. These communities ranged from family to vocational communities or even larger urban or provincial communities. According to Eliot, these communities had a sense of allegiance, which in turn created a sense of kinship and unity with all the individuals who shared the same allegiance.⁷ Each of these communities, according to Eliot, “was founded on history, law and achievement, on the sharing of certain common patterns of life and behavior.”⁸ In many ways, this is similar to Anderson’s model of imagined communities. Englishmen had a sense of shared community based on the common experiences and loyalty to England, which provided the basis for expressions of English identity as they ventured into the unfamiliar Mediterranean.

⁶ Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion: A Chorographical Description of all The Tracts, Rivers, Mountains, Forests, and other Parts of this Renowned Isle of Great Britain* (London, 1612), 6.

⁷ John Eliot “Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe” *General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 108-127.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

New communities began to develop, especially among those who traveled into the Mediterranean, because they were often looking for something familiar in an unfamiliar place. One example these new communities was illustrated in the dedication to the Lord Admiral of the Navy, The Duke of Buckingham, in John Rawlin's 1622 captivity narrative, as mentioned in the previous chapter, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol*:

I humbly beseech you, as an unpolished work of a poor sailor and the rather for that it exemplifies the glory of God. For by such men as myself, your Honor must be served, and England made the happiest of all nations. For though you have greater persons and more braving spirits to lie over our heads and hold inferiors in subjection, yet are we the men that must pull the ropes, weigh up the anchors, toil in the night, endure the storms, sweat at the helm, watch the biticle, attend the compass, guard the ordnance, keep the night hours, and be ready for all impositions.⁹

According to Rawlins, a community of sailors existed in England that was essential to the execution and maintenance of England's sea ventures, both naval and commercial. Rawlins clearly wanted to remind Buckingham that the sailor community existed and played an integral in determining the greatness of England abroad.

Rawlins's dedication also reinforces Helgerson's argument that a shift in the focus and importance of common individuals was occurring in England. It was relevant to Rawlins to point out the significance of the common sailor to one of the most powerful noblemen in England at the time. As Eliot and Anderson argue, to belong to these communities, individuals owed the communities their allegiance. Rawlins in his dedication wanted to remind the Duke of Buckingham of his and other sailors' faithfulness to England, while reminding the Lord Admiral of the Navy that he had an obligation and allegiance to the sailor community. Many of the new

⁹ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol*, A2r.

communities brought together people from disparate groups that had the shared common allegiance to England.

Some captives and travelers considered themselves part of the much larger community of England. Edward Webbe, in his 1590 captivity narrative *The Rare and most wonderful thinges which Edward Webbe an Englishman borne, hathe seene and passed in his troublesome travailes*, made a point first to demonstrate to the reader that he was an Englishman by birth and he remained loyal to the crown and his native England. Secondly, that he was part of the English community at large, by mentioning almost every Englishman he encountered during his captivity in Constantinople and on his return trip to England.

It is clear at the outset of the narrative that Webbe wanted to show that he was a loyal Englishman, so much so that one of the first descriptors in his title was that he was “an Englishman borne.”¹⁰ In the dedication of his narrative to Queen Elizabeth he stated, “wherein may be seen, that if in Turkie I would have denied my Christ, or in my travels would have forsaken my Prince to have served for Spaine, thereby to have become a traytour to your Majesty and my native country.”¹¹ He made clear his allegiance and loyalty to the monarchy and that he was not a traitor. It was important to him to present himself as an Englishman because it was the land where he had been born and lived. A few lines later in the dedication, he demonstrated his allegiance and desire to serve for the betterment of England: “my desire is that I may be employed in such service and affairs, as may be pleasing to God, and to my prince and country.”¹²

¹⁰ Edward Webbe, *The Rare and most wonderful thinges which Edward Webbe an Englishman born, hathe seen and passed in his troublesome travaile* (London, 1590), Title page.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

When Webbe used the words “country” or “native country,” he used them in reference to the land as Helgerson and Eliot have demonstrated. He also differentiated between “your Majesty” and “my native country.” His intention became clear because he also used country to describe Russia in the early part of the narrative: “for the country was wondfull cold and subject to much frost.”¹³ This is evident because Webbe made a point to create a distinction between the monarchy and the country. After the dedication, Webbe wanted it to be known beyond any doubt that he was an Englishman because the first words of the narrative stated, “I, Edward Webbe an Englishman born at St. Kathrines, near the tower of London.”¹⁴ This should leave little doubt in the reader’s mind that Webbe was an Englishman because of his birth on English soil.

In addition to mentioning his native country and place of birth, Webbe made a point in the narrative to list the majority of the Englishmen he encountered during his captivity. In the narrative, he recalled that he was redeemed from his captivity by the English Ambassador to Constantinople, William Harborne, who “to the great honor of England did behave himself wonderful wisely, and was a special means for the releasement of me and sundry other English captives.”¹⁵ For Webbe, Harborne represented a good Englishman because he loyally assisted in the release and betterment of other Englishmen from captivity. This theme recurred in many of the captive and travel narratives. Englishmen who assisted their fellow countrymen, no matter their religion, were generally considered good Englishmen.

As the narrative continued, Webbe stated that twenty Englishmen gained their freedom along with him because of William Harborne. After his release from captivity, Webbe began his

¹³ Webbe, *The Rare and most wonderful things*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

journey back to England. On this journey, he encountered many Englishmen, some helpful and some harmful, in his quest to get home to England.¹⁶

I intending my journey towards England, came to the land of Venice, where I met at Padua, xxx English students, I also met an Englishman, who lived in a the state of a frier, he brought me before the bishop where I was accused for a hereticke...From thence with my passport, I came to Bolony in Italy, where I met with a popish Bishop being an Englishman which showed me great friendship, he is called Doctor Poole, from thence to Florence, I met an English gentlemen named maister John Stanely, and from thence I went to Rome...[T]he English Cardinal Doctor Allen, a notable Arch-papist...let me pass and understanding that I had bene captive long time in Turkey, gave me xxv crowns.¹⁷

After Rome, Webbe traveled to Naples, where the authorities accused him of being an English spy, and imprisoned and tortured him for several months. Since the authorities could not prove he was a spy, he was released and finally able to return to England.¹⁸ By referencing these specific connections, Webbe wanted the readers to remember the Englishmen he met on his travels back to England. During his enslavement and redemption, he illustrated how he was part of the English captive community, and on his travels home he further noted his connection and familiarity with other Englishmen. He even mentioned the names of all the Englishmen who helped him in his journey, even if they were “popish or arch-papists.” It is important to remember that when this narrative was published in 1590, two years after the Spanish Armada, most English Catholics were not favorably viewed; however, Webbe could overlook their Catholicism because they helped him. At that point, the common experience of being born in England mattered far more than religion to Webbe. It was something familiar for him with which he could connect. For Webbe, birth and a shared experience of being raised in England, defined a person as truly English.

¹⁶ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁷ Webbe, *The Rare and most wonderful things*, 16.

¹⁸ Ibid., 16.

Captives or former captives often created their own communities based on the shared experience of captivity and slavery. Francis Knight, in his 1640 captivity narrative, *A Relation of Seven Years Slavery Under the Turks of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant*, became an advocate for the captives in Algiers who had remained unredeemed after his departure. He dedicated his captivity narrative to Paul Pindar, the English Ambassador to Constantinople and began it by stating:

Though a stranger to my native country, I have presumed to present your worship with this treatise, expressing my ardent affection for the enlargement of the multitude of my poor Country-men groaning under the merciless yoke of Turkish thralldom; and the rather my self having there suffered, loss of my estate, and the misery of 7 years slavery.¹⁹

From the beginning, Knight wanted to illustrate his connection to England or his “native country” and to demonstrate to Pindar and the readers his affiliation and shared common experience with the captive community for which he advocated. In the brief note to the reader, Knight stated, “The subject of this following discourse [is]...the estate and condition of captives in that place Argeire. I have undertaken thus mainly to present them to your sight.”²⁰ Again, Knight cited his connection and allegiance to his former captive community by trying to present to the readers the horrible conditions in Algiers.

The captivity narratives provide valuable perspective to add to Helgerson’s and Eliot’s studies of Elizabethan and early Stuart communities, since especially Helgerson primarily focused on communities within England itself. A sense of the land and community began to develop outside of the traditional ways. Individuals like Webbe connected with and created new communities of Englishmen as travels and tribulations took them into new and foreign places.

¹⁹ Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Years Slaverie*, 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

Francis Knight connected with fellow and former captives, and his allegiance to their captive community prompted him to write about the shared experiences. Rawlins wanted the Duke of Buckingham to remember the lowly sailors, who made sailing possible.²¹ These new communities began to develop and shape what it meant to be English in Elizabethan and early Stuart England.

Due to the many Englishmen's heavy contact, and sometimes antagonistic relations with Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East, often as captives, it was necessary for them to define themselves as English. As discussed in the previous two chapters, the use of providential language allowed the defining of a captive as English. This was especially necessary when it came to writing for English audiences. As Helgerson states, "Self-definition comes from the not-self, from the alien other. However, in the discourses of nations, such alienation cuts still deeper. To constitute itself as a nation-state, a political or cultural community must distinguish itself not only from its neighbors but also from its former self or selves."²² One of these cultural communities developed, as illustrated above in the stories of Rawlins, Webbe, and Knight, among Englishmen who lived or traveled abroad. In the case of Webbe, after many years of being in completely foreign lands, he demonstrated in his narrative that he connected with a wide variety of Englishmen during his travels and what made them all similar was their birthplace and familiarity with England. Conversely, some Englishmen in the Mediterranean had converted to Islam, which people in England considered a heinous act that damaged identity, especially for those remaining in England, but it did not necessarily mean that they were not English.

²¹ Nabil Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1563-1760*, 81. Matar argues that by 1622 the Duke of Buckingham was in control of the Navy and that he was unwilling to spend any money or use any naval resources to assist captives.

²² Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 22.

Conversion to Islam and the “English Turk”

Conversion to Islam posed a problem for many Englishmen and England in general. According to Nabil Matar, English writers described four different categories of individuals who converted to Islam. The first were Christian children. The majority of Christian children who converted to Islam did so because of the *devshirme* system implemented by the Ottoman Empire. Under this system, every few years, the Ottoman Empire collected boys from the Christian Balkans, converted them to Islam, and trained them to become Janissaries to fight for the Ottoman Empire. Fortunately, for most English, this was not a problem they directly encountered; instead, it predominately provided fuel to the fire of anti-Islamic sentiment and concern about the military power of the Ottoman Empire.²³

The second category of converts English writers described, were those individuals who converted in the hope of ending their slavery. The Scottish traveler William Lithgow noted that many individuals from the Balkan states converted to Islam for this reason.²⁴ Unfortunately, they found that conversion did not necessarily mean freedom. As Nabil Matar points out, the Quran encourages Muslims not to enslave other Muslims but it does not strictly forbid it. As a result, freedom for individuals who converted to Islam remained in the hands of the slave owner and, as noted in chapter one, conversion may have saved slaves from rowing in a galley but often they would still be required to pay for their freedom.²⁵

Conversion for wealth, economic, and cultural reasons was the third category that English writers addressed. One of the biggest fears Englishmen had about trade and travel in the Mediterranean and Islamic lands was the idea that long term contact could lead a person to

²³ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 23-25.

²⁴ William Lithgow, *A Most Delectable and True Discourse*, H3v.

²⁵ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 25-26.

convert willingly.²⁶ Sir Thomas Sherley argued, “conuersations with infidelles doth mutch corrupte.”²⁷ Long term contact with Muslim nations by travelers and merchants, for individuals such as Sherley, became problematic because when a merchant lived or traded in an Islamic nation, especially the Ottoman Empire, he was subject to its laws. In other instances, English people converted to Islam for economic reasons. Pirates such as John Ward grew wealthy while operating out of Algiers. According to Daniel Vitkus, the primary reason Ward became a pirate was because of the vast amount of wealth they could reap from capturing merchant ships in the Mediterranean. Henry Blount in his travels to North Africa in the early 1600s stated that “there was none taken either with that [the Muslim idea of paradise] or other points of their doctrine, but manifestly with respects worldly.”²⁸ Due to proclamations against piracy by James I, the pirates’ activity became illegal, and they would have faced prison and maybe even execution if they returned to England. As a result, the best pirate stronghold in the Mediterranean was Algiers, and pirates were generally more successful if they converted to Islam and operated out of Algiers.²⁹

The fourth category of English conversions, according to Nabil Matar, involved extreme duress. As Matar notes, English writers acknowledged that Muslims could not force Englishmen to convert.³⁰ As George Sandys stated in 1610, “the Turke puts none to death for Religion.”³¹ According to some stories, the problem for many Englishmen and other Christian captives, though, was that Muslims often used, according to the captivity narratives, painfully coercive

²⁶ Ibid., 28-29.

²⁷ *Disours of the Turkes by Sr. Thomas Sherley*, ed. E. Denison Ross (London: Camden Miscellany, 1936), 11.

²⁸ Henry Blount, *A Voyage Into the Levant* (London, 1636), 206.

²⁹ Daniel Viktus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and The Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 151-154.

³⁰ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 30-32.

³¹ George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun An: Dom: 1610: Four Books* (London, 1615), 56.

tactics to try to induce conversion. John Rawlins described how and why Christians often converted to Islam:

They commonly lay them on their naked backs or bellies, beating them so long till they bleed at their nose and mouth, and if yet they continue constant, then they strike the teeth out of their heads, pinch them by their tongues, and use many other sorts of tortures to convert them....And so many...make their tongues betray their hearts to a most fearful wickedness and so are circumcised with new names and brought to confess a new religion. Others again, I must confess, who never knew any god but their own sensual lusts and pleasures...renounced their faith and became renegadoes.³²

Rawlins and the other authors showed sympathy and pity for those tortured into conversion and a complete disdain for those who willingly converted. Thomas Dallam, an English traveler, described Renegadoes as his ship made a stop in Algiers on route to Constantinople:

Thar be a greate number of Turks that be but Reneid[renegade] cristians of all nations. Som, but moste are Spanyardes, Italians, and other Ilands adjoining, who, when they be taken, are compelled so to doo, or els to live in moche more slaverie and myserie. But, in process of time, these Renied[renegade] Christians do become more berberus and villanus, taking pleasure in all sinful actions; but that which is worste of all they take most delite in, and that is Theyre prowle aboute the coastes of other countries, with all the skill and pollacie thei can, to betraye cristians, which they sell unto the Moors and other marchants of Barbarie for slaves.³³

Dallam's story describes both conversion through torture and the continued adherence to Islam for economic gain through piracy. One did not necessarily lead to the other but often could do so.

The loss of one's Christian identity also inflicted a serious wound on one's English identity. Nabil Matar argues, "To have been among the Muslims did not necessarily mean that

³² Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderfull Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, 10-11.

³³ Thomas Dallam, "The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600" in *Early Voyages and Travels in The Levant* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1893), 14-15.

the English/British/Christian identity had been preserved. Rather, it had been tested, and there was no forgone certainty that it would have passed the test successfully.”³⁴ English authors and clergymen addressed apostasy in similar and sometimes stronger terms because of the fear that surrounded returned captives. George Wilkins, in his 1609 narrative *Three Miseries of Barbary: Plague, Famine, and Ciuill warre*, warned his countrymen about the dangers of forsaking one’s religion. Wilkins cited an example of an Englishman who been beaten by his master. According to Wilkins, the Englishman “desperately resolved (whilst the fire was in his bloud) to revenge those blowes on his body, buy giving wounds to his own soul; and thereupon he presently went and denyed his religion forsooke Christ to follow *Mahomet*; and from a Christian turned Moore.”³⁵ Turning Moore, for Wilkins, should be viewed as synonymous with “turning Turk.” The individual abandoned his Christian convictions and salvation for Islam.

As the power of the pirates and number of captives increased throughout the reign of James and Charles, the fear for and of those that had potentially converted to Islam also increased. Not all authors and institutions in England addressed conversion equally. A 1627 printed sermon entitled *Return from Argier: A Sermon Preached at Minehead in the Country of Somerset the 16 of March 1627 at there admission of a relapsed Christian into our Church*, began with the following words: “A Countryman of ours goinge from the Port of Mynehead in Sommersetshire, bound for the streights, was taken by Turkish Pyrats, and made a slave at Agrier, and living there in slaverie, by frailty and weaknesse, forsooke the Christian religion, and turned Turk.”³⁶ While acknowledging the terrible act of apostasy, the Preacher Edward Kellet made a point to remind the listeners and readers of the sermon that the apostate was also a fellow

³⁴ Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, 72.

³⁵ George Wilkins, *Three Miseries of Barbary: Plague, Famine, and Ciuill Warre* (London, 1609), B2r.

³⁶ Edward Kellet, *Return from Argier: A Sermon Preached at Minehead in the Country of Somerset the 16 of March 1627 at there admission of a relapsed Christian into our Church* (London, 1627), 1.

countryman. He reaffirmed the bonds of the community based on land and geography, as Helgerson has argued, while at the same time acknowledging the individual's loss of his Christian identity.

The author Samuel Purchas published his massive collection of travel narratives *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* in 1625 and voiced his hatred for Algiers and its pirates that plagued the English. He described Algiers and Tunis as “the Whirlepoole of the Seas, the Throne of Pyracie, the Sinke of Trade, and the Stinke of Slavery; the Gage of the uncleane Birds of Prey, the Habitation of Sea-Devils, the Receptacale of Reneagdoes of God, and Traytors to their Country.”³⁷ One of the main reasons for the hatred, in addition to the captives, was the fact that some of the pirates who operated out of Algiers were English renegadoes. As discussed above, one of the most famous English renegadoes was John Ward who, because of his piracy, could not return England with fear of being hanged. He eventually converted to Islam and set up his base in Algiers in the early seventeenth century. William Lithgow in his travel narrative through North Africa in 1615-17 argued that it was the English, John Ward amongst them, and other European renegades who taught the “Turkes” to be skilled mariners.³⁸ “For true it is, the natural Turkes were never skilfull in managing Sea battells, neither are they expert Mariners nor experimented Gunners, if it were not for our Christian Runnagates, French, English, and Flemings.”³⁹ These renegadoes because of their piracy became traitors to England, and since they became Muslims, it linked conversion to Islam with their traitorous actions.

Apostasy could not only potentially turn English pirates into traitors but the idea that it also infected their souls was significant. Baptist Goodall, English merchant and member of the

³⁷ Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumous or Purchas His Pilgrims* (Glasgow, 1625), 6:108.

³⁸ Vitkus, *Three Turks Plays*, 34; Vitkus discusses the roles the English pirate John Ward and the Flemish pirate Simon Danser played in providing and teaching many Muslims in North Africa with the skills in the early 1600s to become skillful pirates.

³⁹ Lithgow, *The Total discourse of the rare adventures*, 188.

Levant Company, wrote a lengthy set of poems in 1630 titled, *The Tryall of Travell*, which described the importance of travel and its potential pitfalls. Goodall believed it was virtuous to travel abroad for financial reasons but warned that contact with Muslims could possibly lead to apostasy and the contamination of the soul:

No Jew or Turk can prove more ruinous
Then will a Christian one apostulate thus.
Avoid as death a reconciled foe,
Nor ever with him reconciled go.
The sore smooth'd up not cured out will fly,
And soon'st infect a careless stander by.
Man of a cross religion do not trust,
He hath evasion t'be with thee unjust.⁴⁰

For Goodall and many others, the taint of conversion to Islam could not be cured. Reconciliation with the Church was only a salve that temporarily sent the disease into remission, but it could reappear at any time and infect those around reconciled.

The Anglican Church treated conversion/apostasy as a serious offense, and by 1636, Archbishop William Laud created formal ceremony to bring the apostate back into the Anglican Church. The ceremony titled *A Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate from the Christian to Turcism* was a direct reaction to the several hundred captives rescued as a result of the successful 1637 raid on Salé. The fear that so many captives had converted to Islam due to their extended captivity in under Muslims prompted Laud to formalize a way for the Church of England to officially reconcile apostates and those suspected of apostasy back to the Church of England.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Baptist Goodall, *The Tryall of Travell* (London, 1630), 12.

⁴¹ *The Works of the Most Revered Father in God, William Laud, D.D., Sometimes Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, John Henry Parker, 1853), 5: 372.

The ceremony required the prerequisite that the apostate had to be first found guilty of apostasy by the ecclesiastical court in the dioceses, which indicates the seriousness of the offense.⁴² Once found guilty, the Church excommunicated them, and the excommunication would be publicly decreed both in the diocese cathedral and the local parish church. The purpose, according to the proclamation was to add weight to the “heinousness of his sins”⁴³ against God, the Church, and his soul. The ceremony consisted of the apostate doing acts of penance for three weeks and attending three different services to acknowledge his apostasy publicly. At the end of the three-week ordeal, the renewed Christian would be welcomed back into the community.

As part of the Laudian ceremonies, ministers often preached sermons about the terrible nature of apostasy. According to the puritan preacher William Gouge, “They who deny him [Jesus] by whom alone salvation is to be had must needs bring destruction upon themselves.”⁴⁴ William Gouge, a noted puritan, who wrote prolifically defending Calvinism against Arminian attacks, preached regularly at St. Ann Blackfriars in London. He, like other notable puritan ministers in Carolinian England, found himself opposed to many of the reforms of Bishop Laud.⁴⁵ Despite his many theological disagreements with Archbishop William Laud, the heinous crime of apostasy seemed to be a topic on which both men agreed.

In 1639, William Gouge published a sermon he gave in Stepney Church in 1638 titled, *A recovery from Apostacy*, about the returned captive Vincent Jukes, who had been captured and enslaved in Algiers. It is clear from the text of the sermon that he delivered it as a direct result of Archbishop Laud’s ceremony: *A Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate*

⁴² Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*. 361.

⁴³ *The Works of the Most Revered Father in God, William Laud, D.D.*, 5:372.

⁴⁴ William Gouge, *A recovery from Apostacy* (London, 1639), 24.

⁴⁵ Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker’s Revenge: ‘Othodoxy’, ‘Heterodoxy’ and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 221-228.

from the Christian to Turcism. The sermon itself appears to be part of the Laudian rites in which “On the Third Sunday, let him [the apostate] at the beginning of the Divine service be brought into the body of the church...where the minister, immediately before the Apostles’ Creed, shall publicly put the offender in mind of the foulness of his sin, and stir him up to a serious repentance.”⁴⁶ According to Gouge, during Lukes’s enslavement, “hee was sold to a Negro. That Negro used him most cruelly: and by daily threatnings and soare beatings forced him to renounce his Christian Religion, denie Christ, acknowledge Mahomet to be a great Prophet, and in testimony thereof to bee circumcised and to conforme himselfe to the Turkish rites, and attire.”⁴⁷ According to the sermon, once Lukes returned to England his guilt at his own apostasy weighed so heavily upon him that he confessed his sin to his bishop and began the process of reorientation to the Church of England. Gouge preached a sermon about apostasy that was specifically directed at Jukes as part of the Laudian rites.

The sermon began with Gouge providing a brief history of how Jukes became an apostate, “This penitent here before you Vincent Jukes by name, is an English man, born in Shropshire.”⁴⁸ It was important for Gouge to establish in the minds of those English men and women listening to or reading his sermon that Jukes was an Englishmen by birth because of the potential ways becoming an apostate changed his identity. It is also important to point out that Jukes had been forcibly converted to Islam and still had to perform all the Laudian rites to be received back into the Church of England. The fact that the conversion was against his will did not matter to Gouge and the Church of England. This illustrates the power that many religious figures, including Laud, believed conversion to Islam had in altering one’s English Protestant identity.

⁴⁶ *The Works of the Most Revered Father in God, William Laud, D.D.*, 5:372.

⁴⁷ William Gouge, *A recovery from Apostacy* (1639), B2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, B2.

Despite the pervasive and vehement disdain for renegadoes and English “Turks,” not all Englishmen showed them same level of hatred. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, Protestantism played a key role in the definition of an Englishman’s identity, but it was not essential to it. Some Englishmen who traveled or were captives in the Mediterranean sought to establish a connection of familiarity with other Englishmen, even if those Englishmen had “turned Turk.” As discussed above, new communities developed among many different parts of English culture and society. Some Englishmen in the Mediterranean identified other Englishmen as part the English community because of their desire to connect with someone familiar in an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile place.

Connecting with “The English Turk”

The 1583 captivity narrative of Thomas Sanders, *The Voyage made to Tripoli in Barbarie*, provided one of the first names of Englishmen who converted to Islam.⁴⁹ Sanders became a captive in Tripoli after a French merchant, who owed a Muslim merchant money, hid from his debt on an English merchant vessel. A group of Janissaries boarded the ship, took all the Englishmen captive, and eventually enslaved them, Sanders being one of them. Sanders remained a slave in Tripoli for a little over a year before an English factor named Edward Barton procured his release along with that of his shipmates. During his enslavement, Sanders observed several Englishmen who converted to Islam. According to Sanders, “the king [of Tripoli] had there before in his house a sonne of a yeoman of our Queenes guard, whom the kings sonne had inforced to turne Turke, his name was John Nelson.”⁵⁰ By making a point to mention his name

⁴⁹ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 34.

⁵⁰ Sanders, *Of a most lamentable Voiage*, 17.

and his connection to the monarch, Sanders demonstrated that, although John Nelson “turned Turk,” he was still an Englishman. In this instance, Nelson’s Englishness derived from his familial connection to the monarchy and not to the land. By making a point to mention him by name, Sanders wanted to draw a connection between himself as an Englishman and the English readers who would have some sympathy for Nelson, who was forced to “turn Turk.”

In his narrative, Sanders mentioned two other Englishmen, Richard Burges and James Smith, who converted to Islam under duress. According to Sanders, Burges and Smith both refused requests by the King of Tripoli to convert. After several days, the King sent both men to his son who, according to Sanders, again requested that they convert to Islam, but both Smith and Burges still refused. Then, according to the narrative, the son “commanded them [his men] to make him [Burges] Turke, and they did so, and circumcised him, and would have had him speake the words that there unto belonged, but he answered them stoutlie that he would not.”⁵¹ According to Islamic tradition, for people to fully convert they must speak the words, “La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad, rasoolu Allah”, which means “there is no true god but God (Allah) and Muhammad is the messenger of God,”⁵² but Burges flatly refused to utter the words. According to Sanders, Burges stated, “although they had put on him the habit of a Turke, yet said he, Christian I was borne and so I will remain, through you force me to do otherwise.”⁵³ The same process was then applied to Smith to try to force him to convert to Islam and, like Burges, he refused. Despite his refusals, he was also forcibly circumcised and dressed in “the habite of a Turke.”⁵⁴ In reaction, Sanders stated, “For it was so much as eight of the kings sonnes men

⁵¹ Sanders, *Of a most lamentable Voiage*, 18.

⁵² "Pillars of Islam." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1859> (accessed 10-Mar-2015)

⁵³ Sanders, *Of a most lamentable Voiage*, 18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

could do to hold him, so in the end they circumcised him, and made him Turke.”⁵⁵ Sanders probably mentioned them by name out of admiration and because he considered them Englishmen, especially because of the stalwartness of their Christian faith and refusal to bend, even when faced with bodily harm.

Despite the valiant resolve the men showed, Sanders still considered them “Turks,” as he stated “they circumcised him, and made him Turke.” Thus, for Sanders, Smith and Burges were both Englishmen and “Turks,” despite the fact that both men flatly refused to speak the words of conversion. This is also confirmed when Edward Barton arrived in Tripoli to redeem Sanders and his fellow captives. According to Sanders, on his and other captives’ release to Barton, “so he deliuered vs all that were there, being thirteene in numer, to Master Barton, who required also those two yong men which the Kings sonne had taken with him. Then the king answered that it was against their lawe to deliuer them, for that they were turned Turkes.”⁵⁶ Barton probably knew the situation with Smith and Burges, and he wanted to see them freed and returned to England with the rest of the Englishmen. Like John Nelson, both Smith and Burges were still considered Englishmen by Sanders and Barton, while at the same time being considered “Turks” in religion because of their forced conversion, primarily through the circumcisions, that Sanders described. Sanders probably considered them part of the captive community in Tripoli because they were initially crewmembers on the same ship and they were all Englishmen, despite their conversion. Sanders, more than likely, felt enough of an allegiance towards them to mention them in his narrative so that they would be remembered as Englishmen, especially because of their valiant refusals to convert to Islam, even though in the end they were forcibly converted.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁶ Sanders, *Of a most lamentable Voyage*, 19.

There is a potential that the forced conversion of Smith and Burges was just a nice public relations move by Sanders to save the reputation of two of his friends. At the same time, it is also important to point out that had these individuals returned to England, despite their forced conversion, they would have still been considered corrupted and potential traitors to God and maybe England. If they had returned after 1637, according to William Gouge, despite their forced conversion, they would still have had to endure the penance and ceremonies of the Laudian rites to be welcomed back into the Church of England. Thomas Sanders witnessed their conversion and even claimed they flatly refused all efforts to convert but, in the end, despite being circumcised against their will, it still meant conversion. Forced apostasy, for many Englishmen was still apostasy.

Though not a captivity narrative, Thomas Dallam's journal provides another example of an Englishman who encountered an "English Turk" in the Mediterranean and acknowledged him as both an Englishman and a Muslim. As Gerald Maclean argues, Dallam's journal provides a unique insight of Constantinople and travel in the Mediterranean by an Englishman because Dallam did not publish the journal. He kept the journal private, and according to Maclean, it remained unknown until 1848, when Henry Rhodes sold it to the British Museum.⁵⁷ Maclean notes, "Experts assured me that 'there is no reason to suspect' that the manuscript is a forgery."⁵⁸ The fact that the manuscript was unpublished, and is not a forgery, increases the veracity of Dallam's account since he was not writing for a public audience. It means he was less likely to filter information or tailor his journal to a particular agenda as he traveled throughout the Mediterranean and described the people and places he encountered.

⁵⁷ Maclean, *Rise of Oriental Travel*, 4-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

In 1599, Queen Elizabeth commissioned Thomas Dallam to take a clockwork organ he had built as a present to the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul. Prior to this trip, Dallam had not traveled outside of England and had probably not met any Englishmen who had “turned Turk.” From his diary, it becomes clear that he encountered several “English Turks” on his trip. His first encounter was with a dragoman or translator in the employ of the English ambassador to Constantinople, Thomas Lello. According to his diary, Dallam and the dragoman were on a tour of one of the Sultan’s gardens and learned that the Sultan and his concubines were heading towards the gardens. The dragoman knew that if they encountered the sultan with his concubines it meant death. Thus, the dragoman ran leaving Dallam on his own and who also began to run, as the sultan’s guards, wielding scimitars, chased him from the gardens. Eventually, Dallam made his way back to the Ambassador Lello’s residence and told him the story. According to Dallam, “As soon as my dragoman came home, my Lord [Lello] made him believe that he would hang him for leaving me in that danger; but at last granted him his Life, but forbid him to come to his [place] any more. He was a Turke, but a Cornishe man borne.”⁵⁹ While Dallam did not directly call his dragoman an Englishman, he did identify him as being born a Cornishman, linking him back to having roots in England. At the time, the English monarchy had a contentious relationship with Cornwall but the political relationship was trumped by the Cornish man’s place of birth and that the man probably grew up and lived at least some time in England. Though a tenuously linked community, Dallam sought to make a connection with something or somebody familiar in Constantinople and a man born in Cornwall was much easier to connect and identify with than almost everything else in the palace of the Sultan in Constantinople.

Dallam’s encounter with the Cornish man was not his only interaction with an “English Turk.” After having completed his commission to install the Sultan’s organ, Dallam began his

⁵⁹ Thomas Dallam, “The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600”, 79.

journey back to England. A group of eight men accompanied Dallam on his trip back to England and in several instances, they had to take land routes instead of going by ship; one such route was through part of Greece. As they traveled by horse through the “hills of Parnassus,” according to Dallam, they “were dogged, or followed, by four stout villans that were Turks.” The four “Turks” tried to persuade Dallam’s dragoman (a different one than the one previously mentioned) to let them cut Dallam’s and his companion’s throats. Fortunately, for Dallam, his dragoman, whom Dallam also called “our Turk,” made sure that the group kept a thorough watch every night, after several days went to the “stout villains,” got them quite drunk, and drugged their wine causing them to become sick enough that they no longer followed Dallam’s party. This story’s relevance revolves around Dallam’s dragoman or “his Turk.” After their fortuitous escape from the villains, Dallam described his “Turk”: “This man that was sente with us to be our dragoman, or interpreter, was an Englishman, born in Chorlaye in Lancashier; his name Finche. He was also in religion a perfect Turke, but he was our trusted friend.”⁶⁰ Dallam liked Finche so much that once they parted ways, Dallam again repeated, “Thoughe he was a Turke, his righte name was Finche, borne at Chorlaye in Lancashier.”⁶¹ For Dallam, this man was simultaneously an Englishman and a “Turk,” and thus showed that it was not essential for an Englishman to be a Protestant or even a Christian, in order to remain an Englishman in the eyes of fellow Englishmen in the Mediterranean.

Similarities of Dallam’s connection to Finche were evident in Edward Webbe’s encounters with Englishmen in Italy on his trip back to England. Webbe included the names of the English Catholics Doctor Poole, John Stanely, and Doctor Allen, in his narrative presumably because they treated him well and helped him in his journey back to England, even though they

⁶⁰ Thomas Dallam, “Diary”, 84-85.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

were “popish and arch-papists.” Webbe’s narrative was published in 1590; two years after the English defeat of the Spanish Armada, and England and Spain were still at war. Due to the association of Catholicism with Spain, Catholicism was not viewed favorably in England. Webb could overlook their Catholicism because they had treated him well.

Webbe also referred to other English Catholics he encountered but he does not mention their names possibly because they hindered his return trip, even costing him prison time and torture. Both Dallam and Webbe established a significant enough connection with non-Protestant Englishmen in foreign lands that they mentioned them by name. At the same time, even the problematic Englishmen, the Cornishman for Dallam, and the English friar and students for Webbe, appeared in the narratives because they still retained some of their Englishness through their connection to the English land. For Dallam and Webbe, birthplace trumped religion.

Another example of connection to “English Turks” appears in the narrative of John Rawlins. After his initial capture and sale into slavery, as discussed in chapter 3, Rawlins found himself in a predicament. His current master, Villa Rise, did not want him because Rawlins had an injured hand. Rawlins had the option to either repay the money Villa spent to purchase him or find another buyer. Fortunately for Rawlins he found a man named Henry Chandler or Rammetham Rise to buy him from Villa. According to Rawlins, Chandler wanted, his reasons were unclear, to have all English slaves to outfit his ship and English and Dutch renegadoes for their gunners. Though it is unclear exactly why Chandler wanted all English slaves and English and Dutch gunners, it could have potentially been that he preferred Englishmen because of his familiarity with his fellow countrymen.⁶² Familiarity, however, does not necessarily mean care for them, since he did keep them as slaves, though Rawlins admitted that Chandler had “admitted

⁶² Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, B2r-3.

him [Rawlins] to a place of command in the ship, [and] honest usage in the whole course of the voyage.”⁶³

Rawlins used the term “English Turk” in several instances in his narrative. Part way through the narrative, when Rawlins had formulated his escape plan and began to include other individuals in the plot, he stated, “then very warily he undermined the English renegado....Last of all were brought in the Dutch renegadoes, who were also, in the gunner roome, for always there lay 12 there, five Christians, and 7 English and Dutch Turkes.”⁶⁴ Though he never mentioned their names in the narrative, Rawlins clearly identified these “English Turks” and “English renegadoes” as Englishmen. He could have used the ambiguous term “Turk” and not used an identifier to define their home country; instead, he chose to identify them as English Turks. Moreover, he also made numerous references to other “Turks” aboard the ship. He stated, “there in her 63 Turkes and Mores...[;]Turks delighted in ostentatious bravery...[;]John Goodale joined with two Turkes.”⁶⁵ Rawlins made a distinction between “English Turks” and “Turks” who were probably born in North Africa or the Ottoman Empire. For Rawlins, despite his enslavement and oppression by “English Turks,” he still referred to them as English, demonstrating that something besides religion mattered.

Scholar Mary Fuller argues that before the mutiny Rawlins only acknowledged the existence of other Renegadoes aboard the ship but did not name them, list their numbers, or cite their countries of origin. She states, “the English and other converts are indistinguishably ‘Turks’ until they change sides and return to the fold.”⁶⁶ However, this ambiguity is only the case

⁶³ Ibid., E1.

⁶⁴ John Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol*, C3.

⁶⁵ Ibid., B4-B5.

⁶⁶ Mary C. Fuller, “English Turks and Resistant Travelers: Conversion to Islam and Homosocial Courtship.” In *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 71.

when it applies to the nameless “English Turks and not Henry Chandler or John Goodale.” Both of those individuals Rawlins identifies early in the narrative as “English Turks” when they purchased him. In that instance, neither of them men were on his side, willing to help him mutiny, or willing to reconcile to the Church of England but Rawlins still named them. This is another instance in which protestant identity was trumped by ones cultural Englishness.

During the mutiny, Rawlins confronted Chandler and almost killed him but Chandler begged for mercy. Rawlins granted it but not without commenting on, “the fearfullnesse of his [Chandler’s] apostasie from Christianity, the uniuertifiable course of piracy, the extreame cruelty of the Turkes in general, the fearfull proceedings of Argier against us in particular, the horrible abuses of the Moores to Christians, and the execrable blasphemies they use both against God and men.”⁶⁷ Rawlins decided to spare Chandler and the “English Turks” who willingly reconciled themselves back to Christianity but he was not so forgiving to the other renegadoes and Muslims on the ship, most of whom had been killed during the mutiny. Rawlins probably was merciful to the “English Turks” because of their shared connection with England and their willingness to reconcile themselves with Christianity. It is also important to note that Rawlins switched roles from somebody who had been tempted by conversion to Islam, to somebody who was now forcibly converting Englishmen back to Christianity. The narrative seemed to indicate that Rawlins gave Chandler and the other little choice in their reconciliation to Christianity. If they refused to reconvert, he probably would have killed them, though it is doubtful Rawlins would have noticed the irony.

According to Rawlins, he identified them as English instead of by their self-chosen Muslim names because they were something familiar to him while he remained a slave on a boat run predominately by non-English Turks. In the end, some of the “English Turks” actually

⁶⁷ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recoverie of a Ship of Bristoll*, E1-r.

assisted him in his successful mutiny aboard the ship. In a final testament to Rawlins's belief in the "English Turk's" English identity, he returned to England with his new crew of slaves and "English and Dutch Turks." Rawlins published the names of all the English Renegadoes from the ship on which had helped him mutiny, except for the captain; "The Captaine was called Ramtham Rise, but his Christian name Henry Chandler, and as they say, a Chandler's sonne in Southwark. John Goodale was also an English Turke, Richard Clarke, in Turkish, Jafar, George Cooke, Ramadam; John Brown, Memme, William Winter, Mustapha."⁶⁸

At the end of his narrative, he again mentioned the names of the English Renegadoes who assisted in the mutiny, which echoes back to Dallam and Webbe. In an interesting deviation from Webbe and Dallam, Rawlins at the end repeated, "the Captain, One Henry Chandler, borne in Southwarke."⁶⁹ According to Rawlins, at the time of publication, Chandler was in jail in Plymouth. All but the Captain, Henry Chandler, aided in the escape and eventually reconciled themselves with the Church of England. Interestingly, it was Captain Chandler, whose birthplace Rawlins specifically mentioned several times, which reinforces the notion that English identity often came from one's shared experience of birth and residency in England. Rawlins may have also wanted his readers to remember the name and place of birth of Henry Chandler as a reminder of what could happen to Englishmen who converted to Islam. Either way, the new communities that developed around the changing connections to the land determined the way Rawlins viewed the identity of the "English Turks" he encountered during his captivity.

In some instances, "English Turks" were mentioned only in passing as part of larger travel narratives or discourses on the Mediterranean. In his 1589 travel narrative, John Sanderson noted, "many Englishmen old and young, have in my remembrance, turned Turke, as

⁶⁸ Rawlins, *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol*, E1-r.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, E5.

Benjamin Bishop, George Butler, John Ambrose, and others.”⁷⁰ While not mentioning their place of birth, he used their English names and considered them both Englishmen and “Turks.”

Sanderson referred to these English converts to Islam only in passing as he did not mention again. The fact that he noted their names might indicate that he had known them personally or had some type of relationship with them. His interactions or connection to them probably was not to the degree of Sanders, Dallam, or Rawlins but it was enough that he thought it necessary to include their names. As has been noted in the other narratives, mentioning an individual’s English name connects them back to England and to their fellow countrymen to remember them and establishing their connection to England as part of the English community in the Mediterranean.

In 1646, Parliament sent a ship to rescue English captives from Algiers and Tunis with Edmond Cason as head of the mission. The Parliament had decided during a time of peace, after the defeat of Charles at Naseby in 1645, that “as nothing can demonstrate to the world the sincerity of the intentions of a State better than their own publick actions. At the commense of this Parliament, while yet the kingdom was in peace, both Houses passed an Act...undertaking the Christian work of the redemption of the Captives.”⁷¹ Cason successfully redeemed over a hundred English men and women. The official record, *A Relation of the Whole Proceedings Concerning the Redemption of the Captives in Argier and Tunis*, listed the names of captives he helped redeem for Parliament. According to this record, “and upon this business that you sent here one of your Gentlemen, named Edmond Cason, who took the names of all the Englishmen, except them that were “turned Turk,” and put their names down in his register book.”⁷² Cason

⁷⁰ Sanderson, *A discourse of the most notable things of the famous citie in Purhas’ Pilgrams*, 9:427.

⁷¹ Edmond Cason. *A Relation of the Whole Proceedings Concerning the Redemption of the Captives in Argier and Tunis* (London, 1646), 5.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 16.

listed only the English men and women he redeemed and since those who “turned Turk” were not returned to England he did not list them. Probably the main reason that he did not redeem them was for the same reason that Edward Barton could not secure the release of two Englishmen that had converted in Sanders narrative; the rulers of Algiers and Tunis would not allow English “Turks” to be freed. It is important to note though, that he still acknowledged them as Englishmen, which again demonstrates that despite the hatred of conversion to Islam, people could still retain their Englishness in the eyes of other Englishmen, even if they had turned their back on their Christianity.

One of the more famous English converts to Islam was the famous pirate John Ward, as discussed earlier. As Daniel Vitkus has noted, Englishmen had a convoluted relationship with the legacy and reputation of John Ward. In several plays, such as *A Christian Turked Turke* and *The Renegado*, depicted Ward because of his conversion to Islam as a traitor to England. But, as Vitkus observes, Englishmen also celebrated his achievements as a successful and legendary English pirate.⁷³ So for many Englishmen, it was possible for Ward to be an “English Turk.” In his travels to Tunis, William Lithgow, “met with our English Captaine, generall *Ward*, once a great Pyrat, and Commander at Seas; who in despight of his denied acceptance in *England* had turned *Turke*, and built there a faire Palace, beautified with rich Marble and Alabaster stones: With whom I found Domestick some fiftene circumcised English Runnagats, whose lives and Countenances were both alike even as desperate as disdainfull. Yet old *Ward* their Master was placable, and joyned me safely with a passing Land conduct to *Algier*.”⁷⁴ Lithgow still considered Ward an Englishman, despite the fact that he probably profited from plundering

⁷³ Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (Palgrave: New York, 2003), Chapter 5.

⁷⁴ Lithgow, *A Most Delectable and True Discourse*, 358.

English ships in the Mediterranean, and a rather nice one at that. Despite Lithgow being from Scotland, a famous English pirate was something familiar and worth mentioning.

Conclusion

From the examples mentioned it becomes clear that a person's English identity in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries did not depend wholly on religious identity. As the two previous chapters illustrated, for some Englishmen identity was based adherence to Protestantism and a belief in God's providence. In other instances, as this chapter has discussed, identity in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England was based more on one's connection to the land and to England. Englishmen continued to recognize as compatriots people who had abandoned Protestantism, and, in the case of Renegadoes, often took part in hostile actions towards English mariners and ships. Thomas Sanders acknowledged several Englishmen by name in his narrative, all of whom had converted to Islam. Despite their conversions to Islam, he still considered them Englishmen. John Rawlins still considered Captain Henry Chandler an Englishmen, even though Chandler captained a ship full of English slaves and refused to be reconciled with the Church of England even after his capture and return to England. On two occasions in his narrative, Rawlins called John Goodale an "English Turk," openly admitting that Goodale was both an Englishmen and a Muslim. Thomas Dallam did not mention the name of his Cornish dragoman who abandoned him to the sultan's guards, but Dallam still identified him

as a Cornish man, implying he was English. Later in his narrative, he explicitly provided the name of an Englishman named Finche and stated he was “borne at Chorlaye in Lancashier.”

As has been discussed in the chapter, two major reasons -- the development of new communities not based on allegiance to the monarchy and the need for something familiar in an unfamiliar place -- exist as to why Englishmen still acknowledged fellow Englishmen who had converted to Islam as English. These two reasons blended together, as new communities developed based on allegiance to the land, English locales, occupational communities, or communities based on a shared experience of living, traveling, or being a captive in the Mediterranean. These communities developed because Englishmen, especially captives, sought something familiar in the Muslim-controlled areas of the Mediterranean, and they sought out something familiar, often other Englishmen. Even if those Englishmen had converted to Islam, they still had a shared experience and familiarity of birth and other life experiences in England. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, these examples of English identity were not homogenous throughout English literature. As demonstrated, the Church and other English authors remained quite harsh towards any Englishmen who had forsaken his or her Christianity and converted to Islam. What this chapter demonstrates is that late Elizabethan and early Stuart England represented a transitional period in the shaping of a new English national identity and these captive and travel narratives that acknowledged the existence of “English Turks” provide further insight into to emerging national identity and it could potentially mean to be English in Elizabethan and Stuart England.

CONCLUSION

Muslim pirates and the Islamic Ottoman Empire played an important role in shaping late Elizabethan and early Stuart English identity. An English national identity in late Elizabeth and early Stuart England was still in its infancy but as scholars like Richard Helgerson, Anna Surayni, and Hilary Larkin have argued, different aspects of that emerging identity can be seen in a variety of ways and through a variety of sources. This study has attempted to explore the use of providential language as one major aspect of early English identity and its place in the captivity narratives. The captivity narratives provide a valuable window into English expressions of identity because as captives encountered the power of Muslims in the North Africa and the Ottoman Empire and potential conversion, it forced them to define themselves and prove in their narratives that they were good Englishmen. At the same time, the fear many Englishmen faced as they returned to England was that they had succumbed to Islam and converted. Because of this fear, many English captives used the narratives to demonstrate to the English readers that they had not converted to Islam and were able to maintain their Christianity due to God's providence and power.

Beginning in 1580, England officially established trade relations with the Ottoman Empire, increasing the number of Englishmen in the Mediterranean, which in turn, effected the number of captives in the Mediterranean. More and more Englishmen encountered Muslims, be

it through trade, employment, or captivity. One of the main fears expressed by many English authors was the power of Islam because of its association with the power of the Ottoman Empire and North African Muslim pirates. Stoking many of the fears and sense of helplessness experienced by English captives was the lack of support by the English monarchy and English Levant Company.

As this study has discussed, the use of providential language played a key role in the captives' expressions of their English identity. Providential language had permeated much of late Elizabethan and early Stuart culture because of the Calvinist and puritan influences. At the same time, much of the providential language became much more symbolic for England as events like the Spanish Armada and the failed Gunpowder plot caused many Englishmen to re-appropriate providential language to show that England was God's Elect nation. With God's supposed favor on England as a nation, it only makes sense that many Englishmen would also claim to have witnessed God's providence as they experienced and overcame their personal trials and tribulations. As has been seen in the captivity narratives of individuals like John Fox, Richard Hasleton, and John Rawlins, each faced miserable circumstances in their often lengthy captivity narratives. John Fox was a captive for fourteen years, but according to his narrative, God strengthened him and provided him the opportunity and protection to make a daring escape, which resulted in Fox's freedom. Richard Hasleton faced brutal torture while rowing a Turkish galley as a captive and then later at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition. During his torture by the Inquisition, he continually reaffirmed his Protestant faith and the sustaining power of God. Hasleton conveys to his readers that God's providence saved him from horrible Roman Catholics and by extension demonstrated England's Protestant faith superior as to Catholicism. In the same story, Hasleton also had to escape again from his Muslim captors and again God assisted in

Hasleton's escape demonstrating his power over Muslims and his favor for Englishmen and England. John Rawlin's narrative provided one of the most powerful testimonies of God's favor for England and Englishmen. The purpose of Rawlin's narrative was to remind Englishmen of God's power and the mercy he shows towards Englishmen to sustain and strengthen them during the harshest of treatments during captivity by Muslims. According to his narrative, Rawlin escaped because of God and his assistance, again like the other narratives, demonstrating God's power over Muslims. Thus, providential language provided Englishmen a way to demonstrate God's favor to England and Englishmen.

The use of providential language, as this study has demonstrated, should not be interpreted as wholesale expression of Englishmen's supposed superiority. Much of the language should be viewed as an expression of the fear and helplessness many of the captives experienced because only God was the only one, in theory, assisted in their release from captivity. In the cases of captives, John Fox, Richard Hasleton, and Thomas Sanders, all of them escaped captivity through some assistance from the Crown, Privy Council, or generous benefactor either during escape or after returning to England. Unfortunately, for the captives, assistance generally came after a lengthy captivity, fourteen years in the case of Fox and seven for Hasleton. For most of the captives, the use of providential language was a way for them to combat the fear and helplessness they experienced during their captivity when help rarely came and God was the only one they could rely on.

The situation only intensified during the reigns of James and Charles. Due to the foreign policy decisions and lack of a navy, James and Charles provided little assistance for captives, except the one successful raid on Salé in 1636. As a result, only one narrative, that of Thomas Sherley, praises the Monarchy, Privy Council, or anybody else for their escape from captivity

other than God. John Rawlins's narrative pleads with the Lord Admiral of the Navy, the Duke of Buckingham, to remember the poor sailors and Francis Knight begs Charles to send a fleet to Algiers to rescue the hundreds of enslaved Englishmen. The narrative *A Relation Strange and true, of a ship of Bristol named the Jacob* expressed a true sense of bitterness about the fact that four youths who valiantly escaped captivity with the help of God received no assistance from the monarchy on their safe return to England. It also complained about the fact that only a poor author was willing to write their tale instead of a brilliant writer like their valiant escape deserved. James spent much of his reign trying diplomatically to combat piracy, with little success. It was only sixteen years into his reign, and after North African pirates had taken large amounts of ships, goods, and captives that, he sent a naval expedition to try to deal with the situation. Unfortunately, for James and the captives, the expedition had had few gains, and as a result, less than a dozen captives gained their freedom. Charles invested a little more effort through his agents and launched a successful raid eleven years into his reign to assist captives but overall, his legacy on helping captives remained much the same as his fathers. The lack of assistance was reflected in the captivity narratives, as the captives claimed the only assistance they received was from God. It was God's power and mercy that sustained them during their horrible experiences because he was the only one on which they could rely. Fear and helplessness permeates the captivity narratives as they were forced to escape captivity through their own actions, with the assistance of God of course, because they could not rely on any worldly entities for assistance, except maybe after ten or more years of captivity.

The other important aspect of early English identity this study explored was the stronger identification towards the importance of the land. As historians like Richard Helgerson have argued, late Elizabethan and early Stuart England was a period in English history as the land

became less associated with monarchy and more towards the people. New communities began to develop based on local connections to the land. One of the ways this study explores development of new communities based on associations with the land, is the idea of the “English Turk.” As illustrated in this study, it was abhorrent for an Englishmen to convert to Islam and they were often considered traitors to their faith and traitors to England if they engaged in piracy against English ships. However, as Englishmen traveled throughout the Mediterranean, they sometimes encountered these English Muslim converts or “English Turks,” and they generally considered them Englishmen and sometimes viewed them favorably. As this study has argued, this illustrates the fact that while Protestantism was integral to early English identity, it was not essential. New communities developed in the Mediterranean based on one’s association with having grown up and lived in England. Many Englishmen sought something familiar as they traveled in an unfamiliar Mediterranean and “English Turks” despite their conversion to Islam provided the familiarity many travelers and captives sought.

The emerging English identity that began to appear during the late Elizabethan and early Stuart England was a complicated identity that was shaped by factors both internal and external to England. This study provided a look at two small aspect, Muslims and captivity in North Africa, which played an important role in shaping the emerging English identity. As historians continue to explore and integrate how trade in the early modern Mediterranean played a part in shaping English history and early modern English identity, more information about England and its people’s identities will be uncovered.

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