

A Turke turn'd Quaker: conversion from Islam to radical dissent in early modern England.

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Abstract

The study of the relationship between the anglophone and Islamic worlds in the seventeenth century has been the subject of increasing interest in recent years, and much attention has been given to the cultural anxiety surrounding "Turning Turke", conversion from Christianity to Islam, especially by English captives on the Barbary coast. Conversion in the other direction has attracted far less scrutiny, not least because it appears to have been far less common. Conversion from Islam to any form of radical dissent has attracted no scholarship whatsoever, probably because it has been assumed to be non-existent. However, the case of Bartholomew Cole provides evidence that such conversions did take place, and examining the life of this "Turke turn'd Quaker" provides an insight into the dynamics of cross-cultural conversion of an exceptional kind.

Keywords: Turk, Islam, conversion, Quaker, dissent

Introduction

The minutes of the Quaker Meeting for Sufferings committee held on 3 July 1679¹ include an unusual entry:

A letter of the 15th of the 10th mo[n]th [December] 1677 probably should be 1678² from Bartholomew Cole³ of Lymehouse [Limehouse] late bozen [boatswain] in the ship *Kent*, now being captive in the Algeirs – his ransom not know[n] Sam[ue]l Groome and Percivall Towle informe they knew him – his wife lives now att Lymehouse is a good Friend, and may advance aboute £50 towards his redemp[t]ion[.] S[amuel] G[room] further informs his wife is now sick and not capable to come here and that the said Bartholemew Cole was borne a Turke and if be kno[wn] that he is turned Christian [sic] from being a Mahometan by the custome of the country he is not to be ransomed but burnt.

This was not the first time that a request for assistance from Friends enslaved in Algiers had come before this recently constituted body,⁴ the appropriately named Meeting for Sufferings. The committee had been established in 1675, primarily to provide support for Quakers experiencing persecution for their convictions,⁵ but the business of trying to redeem Quaker slaves in North Africa would occupy an increasing proportion of its time and resources over the next two decades.⁶ Early Quaker sailors, fishermen, merchants, and colonists, were as vulnerable to being enslaved by corsairs venturing out of North African ports as anyone else who travelled by sea in the North Atlantic, Caribbean and Mediterranean, in the seventeenth century, or who lived or worked in their littoral settlements.⁷ Indeed, the year that saw Cole's ship captured was part of an especially active period for privateers from Algiers: the *Kent* appears in a list published in London in 1682 that details a hundred and fifty-two other English vessels taken by them over the preceding five years.⁸ Somewhat appropriately, given the subject of this paper, the seizure of the naval ketch the *Quaker* in 1677 had recently sparked a war between Algiers and England, and an intensification of attacks upon the latter's shipping.⁹ So, Cole's captivity was not, in itself, unusual.

However, the revelation that Cole "was borne a Turke" is. Although there were notable examples of converts from Islam to Christianity, such as Muhammad el-Attaz (Baldassare Diego Loyola), son of Prince Abdelwahid of Fez, and Osman (Domenico di San Tommaso), son of the sultan Ibrahim I,¹⁰ and, perhaps most famously, the diplomat and geographer al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi (better known as Leo Africanus),¹¹ they seem to have been rare in the early modern world. By far the largest number appears to have come from those for whom Christianity, rather than Islam, had been the faith of their birth.¹² Indeed, converts were distressingly scarce for the English;¹³ despite frequent fictional depictions, few Muslims proved willing to abandon their faith and join the ranks of the Protestant nation.¹⁴ The English cultural and religious imagination was haunted by the antithesis of the convert, the renegade, the apostate from Christianity *to* Islam, a figure far from uncommon amongst captives and others who encountered the Barbary coast and the Ottoman empire first-hand.¹⁵ This preoccupation is at its clearest in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turke: or, The Tragical Lives and Deaths of the Two Famous Pyrates, Ward and Dansiker* (1612), but is also evident in the sermons preached on the readmission of renegades to the Anglican church, and the Laudian rite composed for this purpose.¹⁶ And converts from Islam to any form of radical¹⁷ dissent, such as Quakerism, were rarer still. Indeed, there is no record of any others. So evidently Cole's life was, in one way at least, exceptional, and merits attention. *Prima facie* it has potential for contributing something distinctive to, amongst other things, our understanding of early modern transcultural encounters and the place of religious radicalism in such things. It might also add to our knowledge of the experience of ethnic and religious diversity in the early modern period,¹⁸ and the related issue of the reception of Islam within England and Europe more widely, both equally pressing subjects in contemporary scholarship.

However, frustratingly, we have little more about Cole than the information found in this minute.¹⁹ We do know that he did avoid being burnt as by 4 December 1679 Cole had been redeemed.²⁰ The threat was a real one given that in most schools of Islamic jurisprudence the punishment for apostasy, if the apostate did not repent, was death,²¹ and being burned alive was the punishment for apostasy in Algiers at the time,²² as it was elsewhere in the Ottoman empire,²³ as well as in the Kingdom of Morocco²⁴ (and could be the fate of some recalcitrant renegades in some Christian states too).²⁵ Indeed, it was meted out for some other crimes too,²⁶ becoming, at times, the preferred means of killing Christians and Jews found guilty of capital crimes,²⁷ even though it was a contentious means of execution in most Islamic polities; in the Qur'ān apostates are believed to burn in hell in the next life²⁸ but there is no Quranic text that states that they should be consigned to the flames in this one, and it is expressly rejected as a punishment in some authoritative hadith.²⁹

Although his wife contributed some money towards his freedom,³⁰ an appeal made by Meeting for Sufferings to all Quakers to provide funds to assist in the redemption of Friends enslaved in Algiers was crucial to Cole's prompt release.³¹ He was very fortunate: about half of those Quakers enslaved in North Africa in this period died during their captivity, and when a final group was redeemed in 1701 they had spent, on average, over seventeen years in servitude, with one, James Burgin of Exeter, a slave for twenty-six years,³² whereas Cole probably spent little more than a year as a prisoner. Indeed, not only did Cole avoid being killed but he lived for more than another thirty years, dying in 1712, aged "about ninety-six",³³ still an active member of the Society, and was buried in the Ratcliff Quaker burial ground where his wife had been interred a few years earlier.³⁴ Indeed, in his final years, following the death of his wife, the Quakers moved him into a small room in the loft of the meeting house itself to provide him with accommodation and, one assumes, some support in his dotage ("It being Proposed that Bartholomew Cole be removed to ye meeting house it is agreed there be a closet roome mad[e] in ye rome over ye meeting next Schoolle house lane for his acomodation W[illia]m Sanders to see it done"³⁵). But that is all our sources tell us about Cole.

Given such sparse information, an understanding of what caused this man, "borne a Turke", to convert to Quakerism, is clearly not easily arrived at. For some, it might appear to be explicable given what we know about early Friends' interest in missions aimed specifically at Muslims. As Matar and others have noted, early Quakers were exceptional in the early-modern anglophone world in deliberately travelling to the Ottoman empire to declare their message to its inhabitants,³⁶ something upon which the nascent movement, at a time of considerable persecution and uncertainty,³⁷ expended considerable funds.³⁸ However, there is no evidence that such missions made any converts amongst Muslims; indeed, it is unlikely that these Quaker "missionaries" ever intended to make converts. These journeys seem to have been more concerned with the proclamation of apocalyptic tidings than making Quakers. Once the Quaker prophet had discharged their duty or, in the words of George Robinson, a young cobbler who travelled to the Levant in 1657, "I had cleared my Conscience", they invariably returned home.³⁹ This pattern can be seen, for example, in the actions of Mary Fisher, who famously appeared before Mehmed IV in Adrianople in 1658.⁴⁰ Early Quaker soteriology presupposed that Muslims as Muslims might be saved if they responded to the light of Christ present within them – "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"⁴¹ – regardless of their propositional knowledge of Christian faith or scriptures, and without the need to undergo baptism or to join a visible church. Although Quakers remained concerned with "spreading of the Truth among the Turks and Moors",⁴² even when they were themselves enslaved in Barbary, they did not seem to envisage Muslims becoming Quakers but rather that they should "come to this Grace of God in their hearts which brings their Salvation".⁴³ Such a position is an unusual one, easily misunderstood, and was shaped by the intense apocalypticism of the earliest period of the movement.

In fact, we can be certain that Cole did not become a Quaker as a result of such Quaker "missions" because he was married in Saint Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, on September 29th 1659.⁴⁴ He could not have been a Quaker at this point as from at least 1653 Quakers had developed their own form of marriage, and failure to adhere to it was punishable by formal expulsion from the group.⁴⁵ And although we have no record of his being baptised, it seems most likely, therefore, that Cole was an Anglican prior to becoming a Quaker, or possibly a Protestant of some other kind, as Dissenters generally married according to Church of England rites in this period.⁴⁶ There is obviously a clear need to examine what might have drawn Cole, as a Muslim, to English Protestantism before we return to the question of why he subsequently became a Quaker.

Conversions from Islam to Protestantism in England

Conversions to Protestantism by Muslims in early modern England were thin on the ground but not unknown. Although scholars in the field have been drawn to the handful of high-profile baptisms that were celebrated in print – which we shall turn to presently – parish records indicate that there was probably a steady trickle of Muslims deciding to do this. Despite converts almost invariably adopting Christian names on baptism, as is likely to have been the case with Cole, occasionally evidence of an earlier, Islamic identity, is discernible in such sources. For example, Samuel Munsur, a "blackamore", was married in Deptford in 1613, a surname that could well be Arabic in origin.⁴⁷ However, more importantly, as MacLean and Matar have argued, the natal religion of "most if not all" of those identified as "moors", "blackamoors" or "negroes" in parish records in this period is likely to have been Islam, something that would indicate that there were rather more converts than is normally assumed in the secondary literature, although the numbers were still relatively small.⁴⁸ Such converts were drawn from the small community of Muslims resident in England in the seventeenth century, the majority of whom were found in the capital,⁴⁹ and virtually all of whom had been captives of some kind, either of the English or their enemies.⁵⁰ A number appear as recipients of charity, from parishes and other sources, both those who remained Muslim⁵¹ and those who converted to Protestantism.⁵² Given the probable date of his birth, it is tempting to think Cole might well have been one of the young boys amongst the Barbary crews captured in the 1620s, whose "likely fate would have been the same as that of British ship boys who were seized by Barbary seamen: conversions and integration".⁵³

However, if Cole was not compelled to become a Christian as a child, it is reasonable to ask what might have led him to choose to do so as an adult. And "choose" is the appropriate word to use as there is no evidence of the forced conversion of Muslim adults in England in this period. Indeed, our sources show a reluctance to baptise Turks; there were often misgivings about their motivations, fears that they might be seeking material gain,⁵⁴ or to escape justice in the Islamic jurisdictions from which they originally came.⁵⁵ The concern that such converts did not know enough about the faith that they wished to adopt was also common.⁵⁶ But some adult Muslims did manage to convert and our best sources for understanding Cole's initial decision to leave Islam and adopt Protestantism are the accounts of others who did so in England in this period.

Pamphlets celebrating the baptism of such converts provide us with virtually all our knowledge of these; other records rarely give us anything beyond the most perfunctory evidence that a conversion took place.⁵⁷ But these texts are not without their difficulties. We possess only four of them from this period: Meredith Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke* (1586); Thomas Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk* (1658); and Thomas White, *A True Relation of the Conversion and Baptism of Isuf the Turkish Chaous* (1658)⁵⁸; Jean Despagne, *The Joyfull Convert* (1658), detailing the conversions of Chinano, Rigepe Dandulo, Isuf the Chaous, and Armand Adrian respectively.⁵⁹ Such a limited number should give us grounds to be wary about any generalisations we might be tempted to make. The subjects of the pamphlets also appear to **be far from**

representative. For example, in two of the works, much is made of the converts' former wealth, something that does not seem to have been the case with Cole, nor most other Muslims who appear in the parish or court records.⁶⁰ In the case of Armand Adrian, his baptism took place at the French Church, Westminster,⁶¹ and was into a form of Protestantism that was hardly typical of the nation at the time, or even that prevalent amongst Huguenots in England.⁶² These sources are problematic for other reasons too. Most consist largely of the sermon delivered at the convert's baptism, and are extensively shaped by the political, theological and denominational interests of the preacher and those sponsoring and witnessing the event;⁶³ the proselyte often seems barely present, their voice almost inaudible in the text, drowned out by a cacophony of confessional and national preoccupations. For example, the sermon preached by John Durie at the baptism of Isuf the Chaous is almost entirely concerned with disputes over the nature of Christian baptism, including the validity of paedobaptism, and only addresses the baptismal candidate himself, briefly, at its conclusion.⁶⁴ Even when we are ostensibly provided with the convert's own words, as is the case in the confessions of faith provided by Isuf the Chaous⁶⁵ and Armand Adrian,⁶⁶ what they say is clearly circumscribed by the questions put to them.⁶⁷ Much is also lost in translation, as English was not a language in which any of the converts appears to have been proficient at the time of their baptism, despite it being the language of the pamphlets.⁶⁸ The converts were also keen to tell their new-found co-religionists what they wanted to hear, something epitomised by Chinano's exclamation that "if there were not a God in England, there was none nowhere".⁶⁹

Nonetheless, the accounts do provide some indications of what drew the converts to Protestantism and how conversion was achieved. "Chinano, a Turke, borne at Nigropontus",⁷⁰ explicitly identified the example of English Christians as decisive. Whilst his upbringing within the Ottoman empire and his years as a galley slave of the Spanish "had beaten into him (as he saide) the knowledge of the true God", his treatment at the hands of the English, notably Francis Drake and William Hawkins, and his observations about how the English behaved towards their own poor and sick, were key in his decision to embrace their religion.⁷¹

For Rigepe Dandulo⁷² conversion was a rather more complex, variegated process. He was eventually won over following discussions with various Protestant divines⁷³ and their appeals to "the light of Nature and Reason"⁷⁴ but a dream⁷⁵ and a providential lectionary reading at the following morning's worship⁷⁶ also appear to have been pivotal. That his mother was a Christian and provided the convert with "a more than ordinary knowledge" of the faith, was also important; in the words of the Warmstry, it "gave a good advantage to our work".⁷⁷

The conversion of "Isuf the Turkish Chaous"⁷⁸ was, by his own admission, a gradual, piecemeal affair. When asked directly what drew him to embrace Protestant Christianity, he allegedly replied: "As a man at a feast takes one bit here, and another there, till at last he is so satisfied that he can eat no more; so there were several reasons that from time to time affected him, that at last he could stand out no longer."⁷⁹ Although he says that he was "much satisfied by the Truth of Christian Religion before he came out of his own Country" and had already begun to hold the Bible in high esteem,⁸⁰ the specific reasons Isuf decided to convert that are evident from his account include: disillusionment with Islam following a visit to Muhammad's tomb;⁸¹ the brave and persistent witness of a Christian slave whilst he was still in the Ottoman empire;⁸² an encounter with two Arab Protestants in France;⁸³ the influence of Protestant ministers in Paris,⁸⁴ and also those from the Dutch, Italian and French Protestant churches in London.⁸⁵

In the case of Armand Adrian our knowledge of the reasons for his conversion comes entirely from the brief answers that he gave to questions immediately prior to his baptism. These are narrowly doctrinal albeit with a marked soteriological and Christological interest, which is, perhaps, unsurprising given the circumstances. For example, the convert allegedly responded to the initial question, "Wherefore do you

foresake the Law of Mahomet in which you have been bred?" with the answer, "It doth not acknowledge the Redemption. It denyeth that Jesus Christ is dead; as for Mahomet he died not for others."⁸⁶ He is fuller in his criticism of Islam than is the case with the other converts,⁸⁷ and also, unlike them, counters common Islamic complaints against Christianity, such as the claim that the text of the New Testament had been corrupted,⁸⁸ and that the doctrine of the Trinity amounted to tritheism.⁸⁹

In as much as we can conclude anything from these very different accounts, the reasons for conversion from Islam to Protestantism in England were diverse and, to a large degree, contextually determined. They are clearly far from being formulaic; none, for example, could be said to be a Damascene conversion, and, perhaps surprisingly, the narratives are not even universally hostile to Muslims (White's pamphlet includes a very positive section on the "charity and fidelity of Turks"⁹⁰). Nor are there any recurring motifs across the pamphlets that allow us to make claims about why Protestantism in England might appeal to some Muslims. Certainly, none of the converts appears to have benefitted substantially from their decision – Dandulo, for example, had to deny rumours that penury had subsequently driven him to crime.⁹¹ All that can be said is that individuals from the convert's past and present appear to have been significant in most cases. It therefore seems likely that if Cole converted to some form of Protestantism as an adult, prior to his adoption of Quakerism, the reasons for this would most likely have been equally idiosyncratic. The diversity of explanations for conversion evident in these texts should also make us extremely cautious as we try to account for Cole's turn to Quakerism; simple answers are unlikely to be adequate.

Quakers and Islam

Why Cole was subsequently drawn to Quakerism is not easy to determine. We could, of course, speculate about what specific Quaker *beliefs* may have been attractive to him given his Muslim background. Quaker self-representation to Muslims was exceptional⁹² and its valuation of Islam was probably only matched in England by Unitarians⁹³ or individuals such as Henry Stubbe.⁹⁴ Quakerism was capable of going beyond the positive tropes about Islam sometimes found in Protestant discourse, such as the shared abhorrence of Catholic idolatry (something exemplified by Elizabeth I's sending broken religious images to Sultan Murad III when trying to cement an alliance with the Sublime Porte against Catholic powers).⁹⁵ George Fox could, for example, quote extensively from the Qur'ān, in a manner that presupposed the authenticity of its revelation and its prophet,⁹⁶ using the first English edition of 1649, which typically for the time, vehemently denied both.⁹⁷ He even argued that the religious tolerance Quakers sought should be extended to Muslims as well, including the freedom to build mosques in England.⁹⁸ Other early Friends, such as John Perrot, actively sought common spiritual ground with Muslims and claimed shared religious experience.⁹⁹ Indeed, alleged similarities between Quakers and Muslims were often remarked upon by contemporaries in England, with Quaker inspiration judged comparable to that of Muhammad,¹⁰⁰ and parallels drawn between Fox and Muhammad,¹⁰¹ and Fox's *Journal* and the Qur'ān.¹⁰² On one occasion, Quaker prisoners on the Isle of Wight were even given a copy of the Qur'ān by their gaolers in the expectation that it would bring about their conversion to Islam,¹⁰³ an indication of how similar the groups were seen to be.

However, there is no evidence that Muslims themselves saw any affinities between Quaker beliefs and their own. The limited records that we have of Muslim responses to Quakers do not support the notion that Quakerism was more inherently appealing than any other kind of Christianity: Isuf the Chaous, for example, on meeting some Quakers "was much offended at their demeanour, and said unto them that for his part, that he thought that Worship was due to God and Courtesie to man."¹⁰⁴ And the parallels between Quakerism and Islam were almost invariably drawn by detractors for polemical purposes, to malign both movements, not because there was thought to be any substantive resemblance between them.

But even if a Muslim were able to see affinities with Quaker beliefs that might be attractive, it is unclear to what extent the religion of Cole's birth shaped his religious predilections and predispositions; as we have noted, it is even possible, he might have become a Christian as a child or adolescent, and had little knowledge of Islam. And, more importantly, to think of religious conversion in terms of the attractiveness of religious *ideas*, is a rather simplistic way of understanding its contingent, embodied, and multifactorial nature, something clear from our preceding discussion.

Nonetheless, we can still say some things that might be useful and plausible about how Cole became a Quaker. Although a fully rounded analysis of conversion in any epoch obviously requires a "multidimensional and interdisciplinary"¹⁰⁵ approach, something that the thin data is unable to bear, there are aspects of Cole's biography that may be indicative of macro- and meso- level¹⁰⁶ factors that helped draw him to the movement and, perhaps more importantly, kept him in it.

Mariners, "Sailortowns" and Religion

At the macro-level, the forces of early modern globalisation, mercantalism and imperialism – both Ottoman and European – helped lead to the emergence of a new sailor class who functioned as transcultural agents. However, unlike other transcultural agents, such as diplomats, merchants, travellers, and colonists, mariners were often culturally estranged from their compatriots and strikingly protean in their allegiances, often out of necessity: Edward Barlow, for example, famously remarked that the poor treatment of sailors in the English navy in the period, "led many to abandon their country, finding better entertainment in another".¹⁰⁷ This is well illustrated by the words of another Quaker sailor, Ned Coxere, who spent time as a slave in Porto Farina, Tunis, in the 1650s, although here he is talking of his experience before he joined the movement:

I served the Spaniards against the French, then the Hollanders against the English; then I was taken by the English out of a Dunkirker; and then I served the English against the Hollanders; and last I was taken by the Turks where I was forced to serve then against English, French, Dutch, and Spaniards, and all Christendom. Then, when I was released from them, I was got in a man-of-war against the Spaniards.¹⁰⁸

Coxere was a man who could speak English, Dutch, French and Spanish fluently,¹⁰⁹ as well as Lingua Franca or Sabir, the simplified pidgin that was common throughout the Mediterranean.¹¹⁰ Coxere took some pride in the mutability of his identity, and the difficulty people had in guessing his nationality.¹¹¹

Mariners were also particularly vulnerable to finding themselves, as a result of the vicissitudes of early-modern seafaring, in contexts that could both offer and compel them to adopt new religious identities. In this sense Cole could be said to be someone who was not so different from famous English renegades such as Joseph Pitts,¹¹² Thomas Pellow,¹¹³ or John Ward,¹¹⁴ about whom we know so much more, even if his religious direction of travel was opposite to theirs.

These forces also helped create the unusual context within which Cole lived. Early modern London was in some parts more heterogeneous than is often assumed, as the work of Selwood and others has shown¹¹⁵ but it is unsurprising that, as someone who was by background a Turk, and by occupation a sailor, Cole chose to live where he did. Limehouse, where he had his home, and Ratcliff, where his Quaker meeting was located, were two adjacent hamlets on the north bank of the Thames, just outside the city. They were the hub of London's maritime trade¹¹⁶ and constituted the capital's "sailortown" with all that that entailed.¹¹⁷ Although some ports could be provincial and parochial,¹¹⁸ "sailortowns", especially those of

major ports, were often liminal spaces, literally and culturally littoral; transnational and transgressive places that harboured the distinctive subculture of seamen,¹¹⁹ and exemplified deviance and alterity in the eyes of others. And early modern Limehouse and Ratcliff in many ways constituted an archetypal "sailortown", as the work of Morris and Cozens has demonstrated.¹²⁰ Although popular and scholarly studies have been drawn to their salacious aspects – Limehouse and Ratcliff had their fair share of infamous brothels and bawds in the seventeenth century, most notably "the great bawd of the seamen", Damaris Page,¹²¹ – they also exhibited other characteristics common to such places. They were not only places that offered opportunities to earn a livelihood to those who might find many possibilities closed to them – as a popular proverb of the time put it: "He who unto the sea commits his bodie, is either poore, or desp'rat, or a noddie"¹²² – they were locales where difference and dissent could exist more easily than elsewhere and consequently drew to them people who were judged by others to embody such alterity. It is unsurprising that Cole found his home there.

Given that he was "borne a Turke", it is likely that Cole would have been visibly different from most other inhabitants of London and its environs, as the term "Turke" was not used solely by the early modern English as a religious label, as a synonym for Muslim¹²³ – whether from the Ottoman empire or the Safavid, Mughal or Moroccan empires – but was also a term that was racialised, and indicative of skin colour. Turks were regularly depicted as having a darker complexion than most of the early modern English, as we can see, for example, in the language chosen by those who wrote against the proliferation of Turkish coffee houses that appeared from the 1650s onwards, where the "swarthy" colour of the Turk and the darkness of coffee are seen as indicators of their alien and potentially corrupting character.¹²⁴ Indeed, although our records do not give us any indication of Cole's physical appearance, his surname might indicate this too: Cole was a common English surname, and may have been that of his baptismal sponsor,¹²⁵ or perhaps the name of the church in which he was baptised (a number of those baptised in St Mary Colechurch, for example, were given "Cole" as their last name),¹²⁶ but it is also possible that it was deliberately given to him because of the colour of his skin. Such naming practices are known in the baptismal records of the time¹²⁷ and "Cole" or "Coale" was regularly used as a descriptor for dark skin. It is used in this way in the late sixteenth century by another resident of Ratcliff, the explorer George Best,¹²⁸ who had sailed with Martin Frobisher in an attempt to discover the northwest passage. Best remarked, in passing, about an African he had seen in England and his progeny:

I myselfe have seene an Ethiopian as blacke as a cole brought into England, who taking a faire white English woman to wife, begat a sonne in all respects as blacke as the father was, although England were his native countrey, and an English woman his mother.¹²⁹

Indeed, it would have been unsurprising if Best had seen this couple in Ratcliff itself because it was somewhere that black people had lived for many years. For example, the church in which Cole was married, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, includes in its register for 1603 the baptism of "Charity Lucanoa a blackamore" who is identified as being "from Ratclif",¹³⁰ and, in the preceding year, "Christian Ethiopia borne of a Blackmore".¹³¹ Similarly, a few months before Cole's wedding, Sara Reide "of ye age 27 years a Blackamore", was baptised in the same church.¹³² St Dunstan's also saw three couples identified in its registers as of African origin married there between 1608 and 1610.¹³³ In addition, Miranda Kaufmann has discovered that another couple resident in Ratcliff, Helen and Thomas Jeronimo, first mentioned in the rolls of the Middlesex Quarter Sessions for 12th July 1615, were both black.¹³⁴ Indeed, given the long-established participation of Ratcliff's merchants in the slave trade, it was unsurprising there was such an African presence.¹³⁵ The interracial marriage that Cole and Browne had contracted¹³⁶ would not have been exceptional nor especially noteworthy in this "sailortown". As Habib has noted, we have records of just such marriages in the adjacent parishes in 1660 and 1672.¹³⁷

As the "sailortown" of a major port, Ratcliff could also be an environment in which religious, as well as ethnic, diversity was able to flourish. Although "English mariners were habitually portrayed as superstitious and irreligious" in writings of the period,¹³⁸ something repeated in much scholarship,¹³⁹ they "shared the full array of spiritual choices that spanned the spectrum of Christian attitudes",¹⁴⁰ and major ports had been especially associated with the dissemination of radical religious ideas.¹⁴¹ So, just as Francis, a "blackmore maide" thrived within the "sailortown" of Bristol, and was prominent in a Baptist congregation she helped establish there in the 1640s,¹⁴² so Cole could find the "sailortown" of Ratcliff an environment in which he, as someone ethnically distinctive, could encounter and adopt religious radicalism, albeit in the form of Quakerism.

Quaker Ratcliff

At the level of the congregational or collective life of Quakers in Ratcliff – at what could be reasonably called the meso-level – it is also possible to discern conditions that may have facilitated Cole's attraction and adherence to his new faith: Ratcliff was a well-established, large and active meeting that had proven resilient and resourceful in the face of persecution. They were bound tightly together not just by a distinctive religious faith and associated practices,¹⁴³ but also by strong networks of marriage and employment, especially employment in trades associated with the sea.

Ratcliff Meeting was one of the earliest in London, begun in 1655, a year that saw three Quakers imprisoned for disrupting worship within its parish church, that of St Dunstan and All Saints.¹⁴⁴ By the time of Cole's association it had outgrown its initial home in the house of Captain James Brock in Mile End Green,¹⁴⁵ and the congregation had swollen to a substantial size, something evident from, amongst other things, the number of members thrown into prison over thirteen consecutive Sundays in 1664, a figure only just shy of 300.¹⁴⁶ It was also clear from the size of the building the congregation erected: its first purpose-built meeting house, initially constructed in 1667, was described by William Sewel, the first Quaker historian, as "substantial"¹⁴⁷ and it is likely that his judgement is accurate given the twelve cartloads of doors, windows and other fixtures taken away when it was torn down by orders of Sir John Robinson, the Lieutenant of the Tower, in September 1670, and this after sixty-one benches and two tables had already been removed a little while earlier. The meeting house that replaced it was of a comparable size.¹⁴⁸

Ratcliff was also clearly a dynamic and prominent congregation. It remained actively engaged in proselytism long after its initial foundation: in the year Cole was captured one of its most prominent members, John Sellwood, had published and distributed a tract to the local inhabitants entitled *An invitation of love to all people: but especially to the inhabitants of the parish of Stepny, and those of the hamlets of Mile-End and Ratliff* (1678), which, despite its irenic title, was an aggressively sectarian restatement of Quaker convictions, redolent with the confrontational rhetoric that was characteristic of the movement's earliest years. Worship regularly drew leading Friends. George Fox was a "not infrequent" visitor,¹⁴⁹ on one notable occasion fleeing the Meeting, pursued by soldiers.¹⁵⁰ It was during worship at Ratcliff meeting in February 1695 that William Penn felt moved to denounce the key Quaker schismatic George Keith as an apostate whilst Keith himself was present,¹⁵¹ an event that marked the latter's final break with the leadership of the movement.¹⁵²

As with most early Quaker meetings, Ratcliff had also been tempered by persecution. In addition to the spate of imprisonments and the razing of the meeting house that we have already mentioned, there is evidence that the members suffered considerably in the first decades of its existence.¹⁵³ Amongst the punishments inflicted on its members, two in particular stand out. The first occurred in June 1662 when a couple of Quaker youths, aged 13 and 16, were incarcerated in Bridewell, and famously remained steadfast in the face of physical abuse, even managing to write a letter of exhortation to other Quaker children

encouraging them to follow their example.¹⁵⁴ The other occurred in 1664 when the cobbler John Otter was sentenced to be transported to the colony of Virginia and "there to be sold as a Slave for seven years" for repeatedly refusing to answer a justice when asked where he lived, other than by declaring that he had a dwelling in God.¹⁵⁵ Whilst such obstinacy was hardly untypical of Friends – Otter joined another 98 Friends awaiting transportation in Newgate – or indeed other sectaries in this period, such public faithfulness, in the face of punishment, could paradoxically draw adherents to the movement, as well as consolidating the faith of those already committed to it.¹⁵⁶ Suffering was "an integral part of early Quaker identity"¹⁵⁷ and taken as confirmation of the truth of its claims. An example of a convert drawn to Quakerism by just such persecution was Benjamin Bangs, who later became a leader of Stockport Friends: the response of Ratcliff Quakers to the violent events surrounding the destruction of their first meeting house, which he witnessed at first-hand, proved pivotal in his decision to join the movement.¹⁵⁸

Ratcliff was a community shaped by significant affective ties too, evident in records of mutual support as well as admonition and disownment.¹⁵⁹ Such solidarity is apparent in the settlement patterns of Quakers in this period, which saw Friends clustered in close proximity to one another and around their meeting houses.¹⁶⁰ The care shown to the aged widower Cole when he was moved into the meeting house after the death of his wife,¹⁶¹ is emblematic of the character of the meeting. Such poor-relief was indicative of its sectarian, corporate life and typical of Quaker behaviour from the outset of the movement; it was a manifestation of "cohesive fellowship that went beyond a purely religious bonding".¹⁶²

Although an examination of Ratcliff's Minute Books and other records of the meeting indicate that it drew members from several occupations, from apothecaries to brewers, and generally reflected the lower to middling strata of society from which most adherents to Quakerism in London and Middlesex came in the initial decades of the movement,¹⁶³ it is also clear that the majority of members of the Ratcliff meeting were involved directly or indirectly in seafaring. Indeed, about half of those identified as "mariners" in Quaker records for London and Middlesex from 1667-1714 lived in Stepney, the parish in which the meeting was located.¹⁶⁴ Of the Quakers who found themselves enslaved in Algiers in the late seventeenth century, Ratcliff provided the largest number of any Quaker congregation.¹⁶⁵ The meeting was the hub of a number of active maritime networks that could prove attractive to someone like Cole, as a bosun, and within which he evidently found a place. Such networks were a significant feature of Quakerism from its earliest years, as can be seen in the autobiographical narratives of the Quaker mariners Edward Coxere and Thomas Lurting.¹⁶⁶ Such networks of employment often overlapped with other Quaker networks of commerce and family. And they were consolidated, as well as policed, by the institutional structures of the movement and its collective discipline.¹⁶⁷

The Quaker networks were extensive, not just national¹⁶⁸ but transnational in their scope, a quality that has been the subject of considerable study in recent decades.¹⁶⁹ Their efficacy was particularly evident in the quick and substantial responses to appeals for funds to redeem Cole and his co-religionists that came not just from Quaker meetings in Britain and Ireland but also those in the Atlantic and Caribbean colonies.¹⁷⁰ Requests for funds for the redemption of captives were regularly made in letters to Quaker meetings from various bodies, including, perhaps most significantly, the annual epistle from London Yearly Meeting, which was sent to all Quaker meetings, irrespective of their geographical location.¹⁷¹

So, on the meso-level, there is much that can be said about the conditions that might have led to Cole's conversion. However, it is at the individual, or micro-level, that our analysis comes unstuck, the level at which most attempts to account for conversion tend to focus and which, as we have seen, from our earlier survey of conversion narratives, was clearly paramount. And it is this micro-level that is of special interest to Quakers themselves, at least if their own accounts are taken seriously. So often, in the autobiographical texts they produced, conversion is understood as a result of the providential actions of

God mediated through events, experiences and individuals expounding or embodying the faith,¹⁷² and to certain degree, the same pattern is found in Quaker historiographical writing too.¹⁷³ Yet we are at a loss to determine what “predisposing conditions” and “situational contingencies”¹⁷⁴ were specific to Cole himself. But, whilst the lack of sources means we cannot know about the specific events and experiences that might have led Cole to Quakerism, it is tempting to speculate. Perhaps, like Dandulo, Cole’s conversion relied as much on suprarational factors, such as his dreams,¹⁷⁵ something we know were often prominent in Quaker narratives of conversion and had a special significance within the movement?¹⁷⁶ Or, perhaps individuals were key. Did Cole perhaps encounter Stephen Smith, a Friend who had lived in the Levant for some years and was both knowledgeable and positive in his estimation of Turks?¹⁷⁷ We know he preached at Ratcliff Meeting in 1671 (something that earned him six months in Newgate).¹⁷⁸ Or was Cole's wife, Mary Browne, indispensable?¹⁷⁹ Or did he, like Lurting, first come across Quakers whilst at sea, where they had small but noticeable presence amongst mariners in this period?¹⁸⁰ Or, like Coxere, at a public disputation held in a port?¹⁸¹

Conclusion

In the end, it might appear that Cole does not warrant as much scrutiny as we have given him. He was, after all, no Leo Africanus/Muhammad al-Wazzan, that highly educated polymath who bridged cultural worlds and moved deftly between multiple Christian and Muslim identities. Nor was he an Adam Neuser, the prominent Reformed theologian from Heidelberg whose journey from orthodoxy to anti-trinitarianism ended with his seeking sanctuary in the Ottoman empire and conversion to Islam.¹⁸² Cole’s life seems of little consequence besides such figures and his religious transition left barely an impression on contemporary sources. Indeed, we would not even know he had been “born a Turke” if he had not had the misfortune to be captured by corsairs. And, despite the potential we identified at the outset of the paper, the life of Cole does not tell us anything much about the reception of Islam and Muslims in this period, except, perhaps, that “being born a Turke” turned out to be of far greater importance in Algiers than Ratcliff, and to Muslims than Quakers: aside from it ensuring he was redeemed ahead of others captured with him, it does not appear to have had any discernible consequence on his subsequent life nor been remarked upon further.

However, on reflection, there may be a number of benefits in trying to make sense of this “Turke turn’d Quaker”, some of which are of broader significance. The lack of documentary evidence has forced us to explore something of the prosaic dynamics of cross-cultural conversions, of such things as occupation and place, and, most notably, of “sailortowns”, factors too readily overlooked. His life also adds to our understanding of the heterogeneity of early modern London, a heterogeneity that needs to be extended to our understanding of its sectaries. But perhaps one of the most valuable contributions of the story of Cole to our historical knowledge is ultimately counter-intuitive: Cole’s conversion to radical dissent from Islam is clearly exceptional but the explanation for his conversion almost certainly is not.

Notes

- 1 Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680, YM/MfS/M/1, pp. 109-110 (3 July 1679).
- 2 The suggestion is correct. The *Kent* had been seized on 25th October 1678 according to an entry found in Anon., *A List of Ships*.
- 3 Cole's surname also appears as Coale in some Quaker records e.g. *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 111 (10 July 1679), p. 119 (11 September 1679), p. 122 (16 October 1679).
- 4 A couple of months earlier the committee had been informed of a two other Quakers languishing there. See *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 103 (29 May 1679). Other Quaker sources indicate that Friends were enslaved elsewhere in the Ottoman empire somewhat earlier than this. See Mortimer, *Minute Book*, 93.
- 5 For the establishment and early years of the Meeting for Sufferings committee see Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 281–6; Leachman, “From an ‘Unruly Sect’” 84–93.
- 6 See Carroll, “Quaker Slaves in Algiers”; Carroll, “Quaker Captives in Morocco”; Matar, *British Captives*, 256–7; Meggitt, *Early Quakers and Islam*, 42–56.
- 7 For the origins of European slaves in North Africa see Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 27–65. For those who were British, see Matar, *British Captives*.
- 8 Anon., *A List of Ships*. Fifty-three people are recorded as having been on board, the largest number of any ship on the list.
- 9 Pennell, *Piracy and Diplomacy in Seventeenth-Century North Africa*, 19.
- 10 These were both baptised in Malta 1656, and later became prominent amongst the Jesuits and Dominicans respectively. See Castries, “Trois princes marocains”; Colombo, “A Muslim Turned Jesuit”; Colombo and Sacconaghi, “Telling the Untellable”.
- 11 Whether Leo Africanus ultimately remained a Christian is contested. See Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 245–60; Masonen, “Leo Africanus,” 129–31.
- 12 See, for example, Ciappara, “Conversion Narratives”.
- 13 MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 20.
- 14 For an analysis of such literature, see Britton, *Becoming Christian*; Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 120–52.

- 15 See Burton, "English Anxiety"; Burton, *Traffic and Turning*; Hindle, "Breaching 'Community'"; Matar, "The Renegade"; Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685*, 21–72; Norton, "Lust, Greed, Torture, and Identity".
- 16 See Gouge, *A Recovery from Apostacy*; Kellett, *A Returne from Argier*. For the Laudian rite, see Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption*, 361–6.
- 17 For a robust defence of the use of 'radical' in early modern studies see Hessayon and Finnegan, "Introduction".
- 18 See, for example: Dixon, Freist, and Greengrass, *Living with Religious Diversity*; Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*; Vigne and Littleton, *From Strangers to Citizens*.
- 19 Cole is mentioned in the following records: **marriage** (to Mary Browne): London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of Marriages 1631-1686, P93/DUN/266 (29 September 1659); **redemption**: *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, pp. 109-110 (3 July 1679), p. 111 (10 July 1679), p. 119 (11 September 1679), p. 122 (9 October 1679), p. 122 (16 October 1679), p. 129 (4 December 1679), Yearly Meeting Epistle 1 June 1680 (Marsh and Marsh, *Some Records of the Early Friends*, 101–2); **move into a room at Ratcliff Meeting House**: *Ratcliff Monthly Meeting Minutes*, MGR 11b6, vol. 2 (1701-1710) p. 114 (5 January 1708/9); **death and burial**: National Archives, *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1699-1723)*, RG 6/331, p. 406 (1 April 1712) and National Archives, *Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking: Burials (1666–1714)*, RG 6/676, p. 147 (1 April 1712). Some important sources have been lost, notably the first volume of the *Ratcliff Monthly Meeting Minutes 1667–1681*, a period that would have covered the period of Cole's enslavement (the first extant volume begins in 1681).
- 20 *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 129 (4 December 1679). This followed the successful production of a certificate proving he was a member of Ratcliff Meeting. See *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 111 (10 July 1679).
- 21 Although in the Hanafite school some categories of apostate receive lesser punishments (see Peters and de Vries, "Apostasy in Islam," 5–7).
- 22 D'Aranda, *The History of Algiers*, 196–200; Okeley, *Eben-Ezer*, 28–31; Pitts, *A True and Faithful Account*, 124
- 23 See Thévenot, *Travels*, 69. See also the unpublished fourth volume of Fynes Moryson *Itinerary* (1617) in Kew, "Shakespeare's Europe Revisited," 140.
- 24 See Braithwaite, *History of the Revolutions*, 366; Busnot, *Histoire du règne de Mouley Ismael*, 11; Moüette, *Travels*, 100.
- 25 See, for example, Losada, *Escuela de Trabajos*, 368; Moüette, *Travels*, 77. Interestingly, William Okeley, a Puritan captive in Algiers in the mid-seventeenth century, believed that the burning of apostates was something that Muslims had learned from the treatment of their co-religionists at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition. Okeley, *Eben-Ezer*, 30.
- 26 Christians who entered a mosque without any intention to convert could also be burnt. See Braithwaite, *History of the Revolutions*, 355; Moüette, *Travels*, 89; T. S., *Adventures*, 45. A Moor who helped Christian captives to escape, and the Jewish translator of the British consul at Salé, were likewise killed in this manner (Brooks, *Barbarian Cruelty*, 112–3; Pellow, *The History of the Long Captivity*, 223).

- 27 Shaw, *Travels or Observations*, 253. On one occasion, all of the Christian slaves in Morocco faced immolation on the orders of the emperor Moulay Ismail, in revenge for the alleged abuse suffered by a Moroccan prisoner at the hands of the Spanish. See Moüette, *Travels*, 18.
- 28 E.g. Qur'ān 2:217.
- 29 E.g. Sahih Bukhari 52: 259, 260. Nonetheless, there were some historical precedents for such a form of punishment, notably Abu Bakr's treatment of Abdul Yalil (al-Tabari, *The History of Al-Tabari*, 10:80) and the behaviour of the 'Abbasi caliph al-Mu'tasim (Cook, "Apostasy from Islam," 256). See Cook, "Apostasy from Islam"; Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 121–39; Peters and de Vries, "Apostasy in Islam".
- 30 Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680, YM/MfS/M/1, pp. 109–10 (3 July 1679), p. 122 (9 October 1679).
- 31 Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 116 (14 August 1679). The text of the letter from Meeting for Sufferings can be found in Marsh and Marsh, *Some Records of the Early Friends*, 99–101. Cole is named, along with other beneficiaries of the collection, in an epistle from the Yearly Meeting dating from June 1680, the text of which is preserved in the same work (*Ibid.*, 101–2).
- 32 This last group were redeemed from Morocco. Meggitt, *Early Quakers and Islam*, 44; Tuke, *Account of the Slavery of Friends*, 22. See also Carroll, "Quaker Captives in Morocco," 76–7.
- 33 See, National Archives, Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1699–1723), RG 6/331, p. 406 (1 April 1712) and National Archives, Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking: Burials (1666–1714), RG 6/676, p. 147 (1 April 1712).
- 34 National Archives, *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1699–1723)*, RG 6/331, p. 77 (2 January 1708/9). See also National Archives, *Monthly Meeting of Ratcliff and Barking: Burials (1666–1714)*, RG 6/676, p. 131 (2 January 1708/9)
- 35 *Ratcliff Monthly Meeting Minutes, volume 2 (1701–1710)*, p. 114 (5 January 1708/9). The Ratcliff Meeting House that Cole was moved into was built on land on the corner of Schoolhouse Lane and Brook Street (later Cable Street). It was the second purpose-built meeting house on the plot, being hastily constructed in late 1670 after the first, put up some three years earlier, had been pulled down during a period of intense persecution. See Bangs, *Memoirs*, 13–15. In 1681 a loft had been added. See Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1:413–14.
- 36 Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 418–33; Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685*, 132–7; Meggitt, *Early Quakers and Islam*, 57–74.
- 37 See Anderson, "Religious Persecution"; Ayoub, "The Persecution of 'an Innocent People'"; Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System*; Miller, "'A Suffering People'"; Reay, "Popular Hostility towards Quakers".
- 38 London Yearly Meeting (Society of Friends), *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting*, 1:viii–ix. Of the £443 3s 5d raised from a national collection held in 1658 for Quaker overseas missions, £177 4s 19d, or approximately forty percent, was spent on work in the Ottoman empire.
- 39 Robinson, "An Additional Account," 292. For Robinson see Meggitt, "George Robinson"; Villani, *Il calzolaio quacchero*.
- 40 See Bishop, *New England Judged*, 19–20. Although Fisher was ultimately sent back to England by the English ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Sir Thomas Bendyshe (Birch, *A Collection of the State Papers*

of John Thurloe, 7:287), it seems she believed she had completed her mission once she had delivered her prophetic message to the Sultan. For Fisher see Andrea, *Women and Islam*, 54–61; Meggitt, “Mary Fisher”; Villani, *Tremolanti e papisti*, 49–53.

- 41 John 1:9 was one of a handful of texts that were regularly employed by early Quakers to justify their heterodox theology. See, for example, Fox, *Epistles*, 492 (Epistle 388).
- 42 See, for Fox, *A Collection of Many Select and Christian Epistles, Letters and Testimonies*, 493 (Epistle 388). See, Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*, 132–37; Meggitt, “Islam and Christianity in the Works of George Fox.”
- 43 Fox, *Epistles*, 492 (Epistle 388).
- 44 London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of Marriages 1631-1686, P93/DUN/266 (29 September 1659): “Bartholomew Cole of Lymehouse Marriner & Mary Browne ibidem Mayde.” See also Colyer-Fergusson, *The Marriage Registers of St. Dunstan’s Stepney*, 2:96.
- 45 See Lloyd, *Quaker Social History 1669-1738*, 48–65; Polder, *Matrimony in the True Church*; Probert, *Marriage Law*, 152–60.
- 46 Probert, *Marriage*, 145. There is a small chance that Cole may have begun his Christian life as a Roman Catholic or even Orthodox, especially if his conversion took place *before* he came to England, but evidently he was a Protestant by the time of his marriage. For the presence of Orthodox Christian ‘strangers’ in London see Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, 182–7.
- 47 Chater, *Untold Histories*, 136. London Metropolitan Archives, St Nicholas, Deptford, Register of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1571–1647, Reference Number: P78/NIC/001 (26 December 1613).
- 48 MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 20. See also Dimmock, “Converting and Not Converting”; Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685*, 120–52; Schen, “Constructing the Poor,” 457. For an extensive collection of sources containing evidence of such individuals, see Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 274–368.
- 49 See Matar, “The First Turks and Moors in England”; Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen*, 19–42. For possible evidence of a Muslim presence in London in this period see, for example, Anon., *A Discovery of 29, Sects Here in London*, 4. For the attraction of London to Muslims who initially arrived in other parts of England, see the complaint found in the Lyle, *Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1627*, 42:48.
- 50 For example, the 42 prisoners mentioned in the correspondence of Sir Francis Basset, vice-admiral of Cornwall (Matar, “The First Turks and Moors in England,” 264). See also Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 118–32.
- 51 For instance, St. Olave Jewry gave 12d. to a ‘moore taken by the turkes’ whilst St. Lawrence Jewry helped ‘foure poore Turkes undonn by sea’, and the Court of Aldermen provided funds for some inhabitants of Barbary stranded in London to return home (Schen, “Constructing the Poor,” 461).
- 52 For example, a converted Turk, John Baptista of Tripoli, received a pension by the crown in 1605. See Green, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1603-1610*, 14:216 (14 May 1605). See also Schen, “Constructing the Poor,” 457.
- 53 Matar, “The First Turks and Moors in England,” 266.
- 54 Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk*, 9; White, *A True Relation*, A3r.

- 55 See, for example, Birch, *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7:567.
- 56 See White, *A True Relation*, *4v. The Protestant requirement for instruction prior to baptism is contrasted with alleged Catholic practice in Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke*, E4v.
- 57 The description of the baptism of Mary Fillis, a woman of Moroccan origin, found in the register for St Botolph's, Aldgate, is exceptional as it provides a brief narrative of events leading up to the event. From this we learn that she sought out baptism after over a decade of living in England and had to demonstrate her understanding of Christianity and her knowledge of both the Lord's Prayer and the "articles of her faith" (probably the Apostles' Creed) before being baptised (London Metropolitan Archives, St. Botolph's, Aldgate, Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1596–7, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/006 (3 June 1597). See Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 324–6; Kaufmann, *Black Tudors*, 134–68.
- 58 See also British Museum, Harley MSS 7575, fs. 19–23.
- 59 Unlike the others, we are not informed of the Islamic name that Armand Adrian had prior to baptism.
- 60 Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk*, 2–5; White, *A True Relation*, 1.
- 61 Pearson appears to claim that Armand Adrian was baptised in France ("One Lot in Sodom," 43). However, the title page of *The Joyfull Convert* clearly identifies the French Church, Westminster, as the place of his baptism.
- 62 The French Church at Westminster, under Jean Despagne, was distinct theologically from the longer-established Huguenot congregation in Threadneedle Street which even tried to have it suppressed. See Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 131–3.
- 63 See the discussion in Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685*, 143–152.
- 64 White, *A True Relation*, 19–57 (55–7).
- 65 Ibid., 58–82.
- 66 Despagne, *The Joyfull Convert*, 10–21.
- 67 For the reasons such questions were asked, see the explanation provided by John Durie in Birch, *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7:567–8.
- 68 Chinano used Spanish to communicate (Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke*, A1v., F3v); Dandulo used Lingua Franca (Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk*, 22); Isuf used French and Italian (White, *A True Relation*, 13, 15, 57, 84; Birch, *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7:567); Armand Adrian probably conversed in French given that his baptism took place in the French church in Westminster (Despagne, *The Joyfull Convert*).
- 69 Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke*, E4v.
- 70 For Chinano see Brotton, *This Orient Isle*, 136–40; Dimmock, "Converting and Not Converting," 469–78; Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685*, 126–9; Pearson, "'One Lot in Sodom'," 35–6.
- 71 Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke*, E4v.
- 72 For Dandulo see Brummett, "The Early Modern Convert," 103–9; Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685*, 144–6; Pearson, "'One Lot in Sodom'," 36–40; Shinn, "Dreaming Converts". See also the engraving by Thomas Cross, *Rigep Dandulo*.

- 73 Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk*, 119–137
- 74 Ibid., *v–*4v, 136.
- 75 Ibid., 24–70. See Shinn, “Dreaming Converts”.
- 76 Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk*, 71–97.
- 77 Ibid., 122. See also *ibid.*, 5–6.
- 78 For a discussion of Isuf see Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685*, 146–52; Pearson, “‘One Lot in Sodom’,” 40–2.
- 79 White, *A True Relation*, A7v.
- 80 Ibid., A7v.
- 81 Ibid., A8r.
- 82 Ibid., 2–3.
- 83 Ibid., 6.
- 84 Ibid., 7.
- 85 Ibid., 15.
- 86 Despaigne, *The Joyfull Convert*, 10–11.
- 87 The discussions of the alleged failings of Islam found in the conversion texts do not appear to be derived from the converts themselves. See, for example, Hanmer, *The Baptizing of a Turke*, A1v–E2v.
- 88 Despaigne, *The Joyfull Convert*, 16. E.g. Qur’ān 2.75, 79. See Lazarus-Yafeh, “Taḥrīf”.
- 89 Despaigne, *The Joyfull Convert*, 18. E.g. Qur’ān 4.171, 5.73.
- 90 White, *A True Relation*, a4r–a6r.
- 91 *Mercurius Publicus*, 26 December–2 January 1661. See Brummet, “The Early Modern Convert,” 103. This despite being granted letters patent by the Privy Council. See Shinn, “Dreaming Convert,” 114–5; Hervey, *Rushbrook Parish Registers 1567–1850*, 80.
- 92 Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 1558–1685, 136.
- 93 In a letter presented by Unitarians to the Moroccan ambassador, Mohammed bin Hadu, shortly before his departure from England in August 1682, the authors declared that they were closer to Muslims, on the important points of doctrine, than “all other Protestant and Papal Christians” and the “nearest fellow Champions for those truths” (Leslie, *The Socinian Controversy Discuss’d.*, vii). The original manuscript can be found in the Lambeth Palace Library, Codices Tenisoniani MSS 673, along with three other treatises also presented by the Unitarians to the ambassador. Although some scholars are aware of these additional texts (see, for example, Mulsow, “The ‘New Socinians’,” 57–61), they have yet to be examined.
- 94 See Henry Stubbe's treatise “The Originall and Progress of Mohametanism”, written sometime between 1671 and 1676, For the most recent, critical edition, see Matar, *Henry Stubbe and the Beginnings of Islam*.

- 95 Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*, 167.
- 96 See Fox, *To the Great Turk and An Answer*. For Fox's unusual use of the Qur'ān see Matar, "Some Notes on George Fox and Islam"; Meggitt, "Islam and Christianity in the Works of George Fox."
- 97 Anon., *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, 395–407, Eer–Ff3v.
- 98 Fox, *Truths Triumph*, 14.
- 99 See, for example, Perrot, *A Visitation of Love*. See Meggitt, "John Perrot."
- 100 The product of a "falling fit" (R. H., *The Character of a Quaker*, 4).
- 101 Leslie, *A Short and Easie Method*, 11; Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 101; Anon., *Four Treatises*, 29.
- 102 Bugg, *New Rome*, 2.
- 103 Green, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles II, 1664-5*, 106:109. (10 December 1664). I would like to thank Nabil Matar for this reference.
- 104 See White, *A True Relation*, a2v. For other responses by Muslims to Quakers see Meggitt, *Early Quakers and Islam*, 42–74.
- 105 Steigenga and Cleary, "Understanding Conversion," 4.
- 106 I follow the definition by Yang and Abel: "By 'meso level' we mean simply that level of social organization between the state or society, on the one hand, and individuals and their families, on the other" ("Sociology of Religious Conversion," 152).
- 107 Lubbock, *Barlow's Journal*, 1:146.
- 108 Meyerstein, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, 25. For Coxere, see Harasemovitch Truax, "The Many Lives of Ned Coxere".
- 109 Meyerstein, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, 106. Coxere's knowledge of languages was partly a born of necessity (ibid., 18) but it was also something that his parents ensured he acquired when young by exchanging him for a period with a child in France (ibid., 3).
- 110 Meyerstein, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, 58.
- 111 Meyerstein, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, 19.
- 112 For Joseph Pitts see Auchterlonie, *Encountering Islam*. Pitts' account of his experience can be found in *Pitts, A True and Faithful Account*.
- 113 Pellow, *The History of the Long Captivity*. For a critical commentary on Pellow's text see Morsy, *La relation de Thomas Pellow*.
- 114 Unlike Pitts and Pellow, Ward never returned to England or Christianity, and became the leading corsair in Tunis. He also became a significant figure in popular culture of the day. See Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke* and Dekker, *If It Be Not Good, the Divel Is in It*, L2v. Ward's exploits were detailed in Anon., *Newes from Sea*; Anon., *The Famous Sea-Fight*; Barker, *A True and Certain Report*; Rowlands, "To a Reprobate Pirat".
- 115 Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*. See also Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London*; Vigne and Littleton, *From Strangers to Citizens*.

- 116 Indeed, Ratcliff ships regularly traded with Algiers, amongst other places. See Okeley, *Eben-Ezer*, 25.
- 117 For the classic study of “sailortowns” see Hugill, *Sailortown*. For a useful review of the problems evident in current scholarship, see Lee, “The Seafarers’ Urban World”.
- 118 “Sailortowns” were not invariably cosmopolitan. See, for example, Land, “The Many-Tongued Hydra,” 414–5.
- 119 Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 42–3. See also Lands, “The Humours of Sailortown”. The degree of cultural isolation of seafarers should not be exaggerated as most seamen spent most of their working lives ashore, not at sea. See Vickers, “Beyond Jack Tar,” 422.
- 120 Morris and Cozens, *London’s Sailortown 1600-1800*.
- 121 Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 14: 351. For Page see Anon., *The Wandring Whore*, 10; Anon., *The Gracious Answer*; Burford and Wotton, *Private Vices-Public Virtues*, 70–6.
- 122 Patarino, “The Religious Shipboard Culture,” 142.
- 123 MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 32.
- 124 See, for example, Anon., *A Broad-Side against Coffee*; Anon., *The Women’s Petition against Coffee*, 4. It is not the case that “The ‘swarthy Turk’ is an entirely modern construction” (McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks*, 197). Cf. Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance*, 12.
- 125 For an example of a Muslim convert being given the name of his sponsor see Despagne, *The Joyfull Convert*, 24.
- 126 See, for example, Mary Cole, baptised on 16 July 1602 (London Metropolitan Archives, St Mary Colechurch, Composite register: register of baptisms, 1558–1670, marriages, 1558–1665/6 and burials, 1558–1666, P69/MRY8/A/001/MS04438). See also Milbourn, *The History of the Church of St. Mildred the Virgin*, 62.
- 127 For a discussion of such practices, see Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 39, 94. A famous example is Edward Swarthy (“alias negro”). See Kaufmann, *Black Tudors*, 90–112.
- 128 For evidence of Best’s residence in Ratcliff see Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 102.
- 129 Best, *A True Discourse of the Late Voyages of Discoverie*, 29.
- 130 London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of baptisms, September 1568– September 1608, P93/DUN/255 (29 Jul 1603).
- 131 London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of baptisms, September 1568– September 1608, P93/DUN/255 (8 Mar 1603).
- 132 London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of Christenings 1656–1681, P93/DUN/258 (31 March 1659).
- 133 “Peter & Mary both nigers”, London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of marriages, October 1568– January, 1610 P93/DUN/264 (10 July 1608) and “John Mons of Ratclif a niger & Luce Pluatt a niger”, *ibid.*, P93/DUN/264 (Februray 1608/9); “Salomon Cowrder of Popler a niger sailler & Katheren Castilliano a niger also”, London Metropolitan Archives, St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, Register of marriages, January 1610– January 1632, P93/DUN/265 (3 September

1610). Miranda Kaufmann kindly provided these references in personal correspondence. See also Kaufmann, "Africans in Early Modern London".

134 Whilst Thomas, a mariner, is identified as a "moor", along with John Anthony, a musician (London Metropolitan Archives MJ/SR/S53, nos. 112, 113), Helen's ethnicity is only apparent from later petitions made to the East India Company after the death of her husband. British Library, IOR/574, B8: Court Minute Book VI, f. 280 (East India Company Court Minute Book, 26 November 1623); BL, IOR, B/9, f.78. (Helen Jeronimo's second petition to the East India Company, 18, August 1624); BL, IOR, B/10, f.102. (Helen Jeronimo's third petition to the East India Company, 7 July 1625). Miranda Kaufmann kindly provided these references in personal correspondence.

135 Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 134.

136 The ethnicity of Mary Browne is not remarked upon in any Quaker or parish records, so it is reasonable to make this assumption. However, it is possible that her surname, though a common one, could have been given to her at her baptism to indicate her skin colour. An example of this is the case of "Barbary Moore, also Browne" (Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 326).

137 Ibid., 176.

138 Patarino, "The Religious Shipboard Culture," 142.

139 For example, according to Rediker, mariners were amongst the most "notoriously irreligious groups of the early modern period" (*Between the Devil*, 169).

140 Patarino, "The Religious Shipboard Culture," 148. See also Patarino, "'One Foot in Sea and One on Shore'".

141 Patarino, "The Religious Shipboard Culture," 156, 165.

142 Terrill, *Records of a Church of Christ*, 35–6. See Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 349–51; Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 71–103. It should be noted that Francis is unlikely to have been another convert from Islam to radical dissent as nowhere in the narrative of her is this mentioned.

143 The best analysis of these remains Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few*.

144 Besse, *An Abstract of the Sufferings*, 1:163.

145 Beck and Ball, *The London Friends' Meetings*, 266–7.

146 The total number of arrests was 296. This figure probably includes some arrested on multiple occasions but the largest number arrested on one day amounted to 50. See Ibid., 267. See also Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings*, 1:393–404.

147 Sewel, *The History*, 496.

148 Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings*, 1:428.

149 Penney, *The Short Journal*, 302.

150 Penney, *The Journal of George Fox*, 2:8.

151 Keith, "An Appendix," 20.

152 Shelton, "The Way Cast Up," 326.

- 153 This continued after Cole's return from Algiers. For example, a "Kinsman of Mr Thomas Day" was fined £20 for repeatedly preaching in the Ratcliff meeting house. Middlesex Sessions Rolls 1682: 16 November in Jeaffreson, *Middlesex County Records: Volume 4, 1667–88*, 160–91.
- 154 Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings*, 1:368.
- 155 Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings*, 1:404; Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1:413.
- 156 The paradoxical effect of persecution on the growth of some religious movements is well known. Pre-Constantinian Christianity provides perhaps the most famous example (see Justin Martyr, *Second Apology* 12.1; Tertullian, *Apology* 50.15).
- 157 Miller, "'A Suffering People,'" 1. For the significance of suffering for early Quaker identity, see Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 216–55.
- 158 Bangs, *Memoirs*, 14.
- 159 For the growth in organisational unity and discipline see Leachman, "From an 'Unruly Sect'".
- 160 See Dixon, "Quaker Communities in London," 60.
- 161 Ratcliff Monthly Meeting Minutes, volume 2 (1701–1710), p. 114 (5 January 1708/9).
- 162 Kunze, "Poore and in Necessity," 565.
- 163 See Dixon, "Quaker Communities in London," 78– 102.
- 164 *Ibid.*, 96.
- 165 In addition to Cole we know that the following members of Ratcliff meeting were enslaved in Algiers: Daniel Baker and his three sons, Thomas, Daniel and John (*Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 137); James Braynes, the younger (*Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 148) William Sedcole, Benjamin Guy, John Harris (*Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1680–1683*, YM/MfS/M/2, pp. 15, 24, 49); Spland Rand (National Archives, *Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials 1699–1723*, RG6/331, p. 493); Francis Cooley (*Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1680–1683*, YM/MfS/M/2, p. 15). In addition, Ratcliff had responsibility for the redemption and care of a Norwegian Quaker, Gerrard Sorrenson (*Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680*, YM/MfS/M/1, p. 150, *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1680–1683*, YM/MfS/M/2, p. 47).
- 166 Meyerstein, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, 97, 108; Lurting, *The Fighting Sailor*, 36.
- 167 It is important not to exaggerate the efficacy of these networks for ensuring solidarity within Quaker meetings as we can see in the case of Daniel Baker, a leading figure in the movement from 1650s, and member of Ratcliff Meeting. Not long after being redeemed from enslavement in Algiers, Baker was incarcerated in Newgate because of a financial dispute with another Ratcliff Quaker, James Strutt. See Braithwaite, *Daniel Baker*, 89–110.
- 168 For example, the Cornishman Henry Tregenoe, the captain of the *Kent*, and enslaved in Algiers alongside Cole, was married to the daughter of prominent Ratcliff Friend. Although Henry Tregenoe (Tregennow, Tregany) is described as living in Limehouse in the record of his marriage to Elizabeth Braines on 14 February 1677/8 (Monthly Meeting of Devonshire House, Houndsditch, London: Marriages [1666– 1764] RG 6/974, p. 60) and in Ratcliff in the record of the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth on 6 August 1700 (Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Marriages [1690– 1704], RG 6/497, p. 495), it is clear from the attempts made to redeem him, that he remained actively connected

with his family and the Quaker movement in Truro (*Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680, YM/MfS/M/1*, p. 119; *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1680-1683, YM/MfS/M/2*, p. 32).

169 See, for example, Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, 112–34; Landes, *London Quakers in the Trans-Atlantic World*.

170 See, for example, Library of the Society of Friends, National Stock Accounts, 1 (1678– 1716), 14a, 16a, 17a; *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1675–1680, YM/MfS/M/1*, pp. 24, 163; *Meeting for Sufferings Minutes 1685–1686, YM/MfS/M/2*, pp. 16, 68.

171 London Yearly Meeting (Society of Friends), *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting*, 1:17 (1684).

172 The accounts by fellow Quaker mariners Coxere and Lurting provide examples of this.

173 See, for example, Penney, *The First Publishers of Truth*.

174 Yang and Abel, "Sociology of Religious Conversion", 142.

175 See Warmstry, *The Baptized Turk*, 24–70; Shinn, "Dreaming Converts".

176 See Gerona, *Night Journeys*. For an example of dreams playing a significant part in early Quaker narratives of "convincement", see Penington, *Experiences in the Life of Mary Penington*, 35–8

177 Smith worked for the Levant Company in Alexandretta (İskenderun /Scanderoon) before becoming a Quaker. The relevant work is Smith, *Wholsome Advice*. For Smith's views on Islam see Meggitt, "Stephen Smith."

178 For Smith's association with Ratcliff see Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings*, 1:431.

179 There are a number of examples of wives adopting Quakerism before their husbands. Elizabeth Hooton provides the earliest, and perhaps most influential case (Leachman, "Hooton, Elizabeth [d. 1672]"). There are also cases of couples joining the movement at the same time, such as Alice and Thomas Curwen, and Mary and Isaac Pennington. See Mullett, "Curwen, Thomas (c.1610–1680)"; Penington, *Knowing the Mystery of Life Within*, 14–8.

180 Patarino, "The Religious Shipboard Culture," 174–5. For an account of how Quakerism could spread on a ship, see Lurting, *The Fighting Sailor*, 10–7.

181 Meyerstein, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, 86.

182 For Neuser see Burchill, *The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians*; Mulsow, "Antitrinitarians and Conversion to Islam".

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