Conversion and Convergence in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands

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In the spring of 1627, an unusual party set foot in the Venetian Casa delle Zitelle, an institution for teenage girls in danger of "moral corruption."[1] Heading the delegation was Ahmed Ağa Šatorović, the former Ottoman *dizdar* (castellan) of Klis, a strategic fortress at the edge of the Ottoman province of Bosnia. Ahmed's entourage included his brother-in-law Hassan, some slaves, and two interpreters appointed by the Venetian government, one for Turkish, and one for Slavic. Ahmed was also carrying a letter from Sultan Murad IV urging the Venetian doge to see to the release of Ahmed's daughter, who had resided in the Zitelle for the past five years, from her supposed imprisonment.[2] In response, the group was taken on two carefully orchestrated tours of the premises, where Ahmed was united with his daughter. The visit concluded with a tearful but satisfied father bidding farewell to a daughter who by 1627 had become a model Catholic convert and a staunch Venetian. This outcome is noteworthy considering that the affair embroiled the highest echelons of the Ottoman and Venetian states. It is all the more remarkable given the two sides' conflicting claims about the circumstances of the girl's departure from home and conversion in 1622, the significance of Dalmatia for Ottoman and Venetian geopolitics, and the long history of intercommunity strife in this Venetian-Ottoman-Habsburg borderlands region.

In this essay I seek to explain this surprisingly peaceful outcome to a potentially explosive situation, and more broadly to contribute to a new kind of history of early modern diplomacy that takes as its starting point practices of mediation in all their complexity.[3] To that end, I reconstruct the competing notions of converthood and belonging that informed the interactions between the Ottoman dignitary, his daughter, the patrician governors of the Zitelle, the interpreters, and the Venetian Senate.[4] Above all, I attempt to foreground the ways in which participants managed to preserve a

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sense of boundaries between properly "Ottoman" and "Venetian" models of piety and converthood, while simultaneously elaborating religious practices and concepts that could be claimed by both.

In unpacking the interpreters' reports to the Senate, our only surviving source on these visits, I have found it especially helpful to draw on recent work by linguistic anthropologists on "linguistic syncretism" and its strategic, social uses. This form of syncretism, to be clear, has little to do with the notion of "mixing together diverse elements from different religions."[5] Rather, it refers to "the suppression of a relevant opposition under certain determined conditions," a practice "through which speakers may render obscure the retrievable histories of particular expressive modalities."[6] Crucially, however, strategic syncretism does not assume clearly defined and neatly bound cultures. To the contrary, it points to a process that was dynamic and involved the articulation not only of boundaries but also, given the interpreters' cross-border background and training, of ideals about conversion and honor that could be claimed by both parties. In the end, this extraordinary case, I argue, helps shed light onto the ongoing, at times mundane, ways in which religious, social, and political boundaries were drawn and redrawn in what is now understood as a circum-Mediterranean "Age of Confessionalization," revealing the historical contingency of these boundaries themselves.[7]

I

In 1622, a teenage girl, accompanied by a boy servant, ran away from her Ottoman hometown of Klis to the Venetian-controlled port city of Spalato (Split), only five miles to the southwest, where she was promptly baptized at her request. Upon learning of the affair, the Venetian Senate reacted with grave concern, fearing it might lead to a serious diplomatic flare-up. Yet despite dismay at its representatives' complicity in the hasty baptism, the Senate denied the request of the girl's father to have her returned. Instead, after several futile visits in which she emphatically declared to various relatives her wish to remain a Christian, and in order to prevent the "further agitation" that doubtless would have ensued from continued contact with her family, the girl was whisked off to Venice and admitted into the Casa delle Zitelle in the spring of 1622.[8]

What might have prompted a girl from a prominent and affluent Ottoman Muslim family to leave her home and reach Venetian territory, undergo baptism, and then refuse to go back to her kin despite their plead-

ings and numerous interventions by local dignitaries? In the absence of any direct evidence, we can only hypothesize. Like other settlements in the Dalmatian borderlands, Klis was probably less religiously homogenous than is sometimes assumed. By the early seventeenth century, the Ottoman province of Bosnia (which encompassed much of modern Herzegovina and Croatia as well) was largely Muslim. However, contemporary reports mention sizable Catholic and Orthodox populations.[9] The same period saw waves of Christian emigration from Ottoman into Venetian as well as Habsburg territories. With no physical border, and given substantial mobility across the frontier (which was, after all, only a few miles away), stories of both religious ritual and life on the other side surely circulated in Klis. Whether or not conversion and relocation to Venetian territory held a special appeal to women is hard to gauge.[10] But when the town was occupied by the Venetians in 1648, it saw a wave of women and children immigrate to Venice and seek baptism.[11] Ahmed Ağa's daughter herself was certainly not the first in her hometown to convert to Catholicism or to relocate to Venetian territory, and she may well have been inspired by stories of previous convert émigrés. For example, sometime before 1610 a woman from Klis named Sultana arrived in Venice, where she was baptized and christened Lucia. Sultana-Lucia later became a tertiary nun (*pizzochera*) and assumed the monastic name Zuanna.[12] In 1624–25 at least four soldiers from Klis, named Ibrahim, Alia, Yusuf, and Mehmet, were similarly baptized in Venice, only to return shortly thereafter to their posts in the Venetian army on the Italian mainland.[13] There may have been others before them who followed the same path.[14] Did Ahmed Ağa's daughter, growing up in a military household, meet as a child any soldiers returning from Venice? Did she hear stories about Sultana's departure the previous decade? Was she perhaps lured by the ornate, multisensory rituals of Baroque Catholicism? Or was she in contact with a Venetian man, as her relatives implied?

None of these questions is ever addressed in the reports from Ahmed Ağa's visits to the Zitelle in 1627. Nor do the reports ever identify the young protagonist either by her birth name, or by her baptismal Christian name. She remains, throughout both the reports and the earlier correspondence from Split, simply "the girl" (*la putta*), "the youth" (*la giovane*), or the daughter (*la figliuola*). These appellations reinforce her structural position as a young daughter, who in principle should have been subjected to her father's wishes and commands. Her conversion, however, extricated her from this position, and, indeed, from the authority of her kin altogether. Yet, as in other cases involving converts from the borderlands, she evidently did not

sever her ties to her birthplace entirely. Decades later, after marrying a Venetian citizen and assuming the name Cattarina Biancolini, she or her children received some of her father's property in the wake of the Venetian conquest of the area in 1648.[15]

To a certain extent, the generic references to our protagonist throughout the ample documentation of her case as "girl," "daughter," or "youth" could be seen as a Venetian concession to her Ottoman relatives. These terms signaled clearly her embedding in a kinship structure (and hence lingering ties to the borderlands), as well as her subaltern status as a young, nubile female. But there may be another reason why she remained nameless. Invoking either her birth name or her Christian name would have marked her squarely as either Ottoman-Muslim or Venetian-Catholic, but not both. By avoiding her name, Ottoman and Venetian interlocutors could maintain their respective claims to her person as a form of "strategic syncretism," that is, without having to settle definitively the question of which side she belonged to, and without the need to acknowledge the transformative effect of her conversion.

II

Parallel to their continued silence about the girl's name, the interpreters' reports in 1627 also do not mention her father Ahmed's patronymic, Šatorović, although this detail is provided in the initial dispatches from Split in 1622.[16] The Šatorović were a powerful Dalmatian family, well-connected throughout the region and beyond. By omitting this important detail, and repeatedly referring to Ahmed simply as Ağa, a generic Ottoman military title, the reports helped foreground his Ottomanness, highlighting his military rank and his status as a "servant of the sultan" rather than his specific Dalmatian roots. The de facto bracketing of Ahmed's embeddedness in the borderlands fit well in a political climate that clearly demarcated Venetian versus Ottoman categories of belonging, and which did not allow for the ambiguity of political affiliation and affect that membership in a borderlands provincial elite family might suggest. As I show below, however, this binary opposition was eventually challenged, at least implicitly, by one of the interpreters.

Ahmed Ağa's familial connections and Dalmatian provenance are worth dwelling on, as they proved crucial in shaping both his initial ability to harness the sultan's support for his efforts to retrieve his daughter, and the ultimate outcome of his Venetian sojourn. Ahmed's extensive social

networks and long career in military service typified the process by which provincial elites were integrated into the Ottoman core in the seventeenth century. This process encouraged such elites to align their interests with those of the imperial center. As a career officer, Ahmed's fortunes depended on the sultan's goodwill. More specifically, similar to other military officers in Bosnia, his access to land grants and ability to pay salaries to his soldiers were subject to annual review and renewal. The linkage between administrative and military organization in early modern Ottoman Bosnia limited hereditary rights and used taxes raised in the province to establish a separate cash fund for garrison troops. This specific form of land tenure—half way between *miri* (state-owned agricultural land) and the yet-to-consolidate *ocaklık* (fully hereditary private landed property) thus helped perpetuate dense networks of patronage both locally, with villagers, soldiers, and other clients, and vertically, with the sultan as the ultimate arbiter of military promotion and land ownership and usufruct rights.[17] We know that Ahmed's family, the Šatorović, and their patrons, the Crnčić, were both embroiled in ongoing disputes with landlords of nearby Venetian territories and well-connected at the Ottoman court.[18] These connections in the Ottoman capital may explain how the case caught the attention of the sultan and yielded a direct appeal to the Venetian doge for the girl's retrieval in 1627. Indeed, already in 1622 Venetian officials in Dalmatia repeatedly alluded to powerful relatives, who strove to escalate the conflict even after the girl had declared to her parents her wishes to remain a Christian.

Ahmed Ağa's apparent difficulty to accept the girl's claim to have escaped of her own volition was also informed by borderlands geopolitics. The fortress of Klis, of which Ahmed was in charge, was strategically vital to the Ottomans. Situated on a mountain range and linking the Dalmatian coast with the agricultural hinterland, it had already served as a military fort for the medieval Hungarian-Croatian kings. After the Ottoman conquest of 1537, Klis remained significant thanks to its close proximity to the Venetian-controlled coast of Dalmatia and to Habsburg-controlled Senj. The town soon became the administrative seat of the district of Bosnia, and retained its geopolitical significance during the long Venetian-Ottoman peace that lasted from 1573 to 1644. Notwithstanding a temporary and much-celebrated occupation of Klis by Habsburg-based Uskok corsairs in 1596, the fort and its environs were to remain a highly visible sign of Ottoman sovereignty until the middle of the seventeenth century.[19] The Ottoman fortress of Klis looms large in a 1605 pen-and-ink drawing by the Dalmatian adventurer and anti-Ottoman advocate Christofaro Tarnowskij (see fig. 1). The fortress

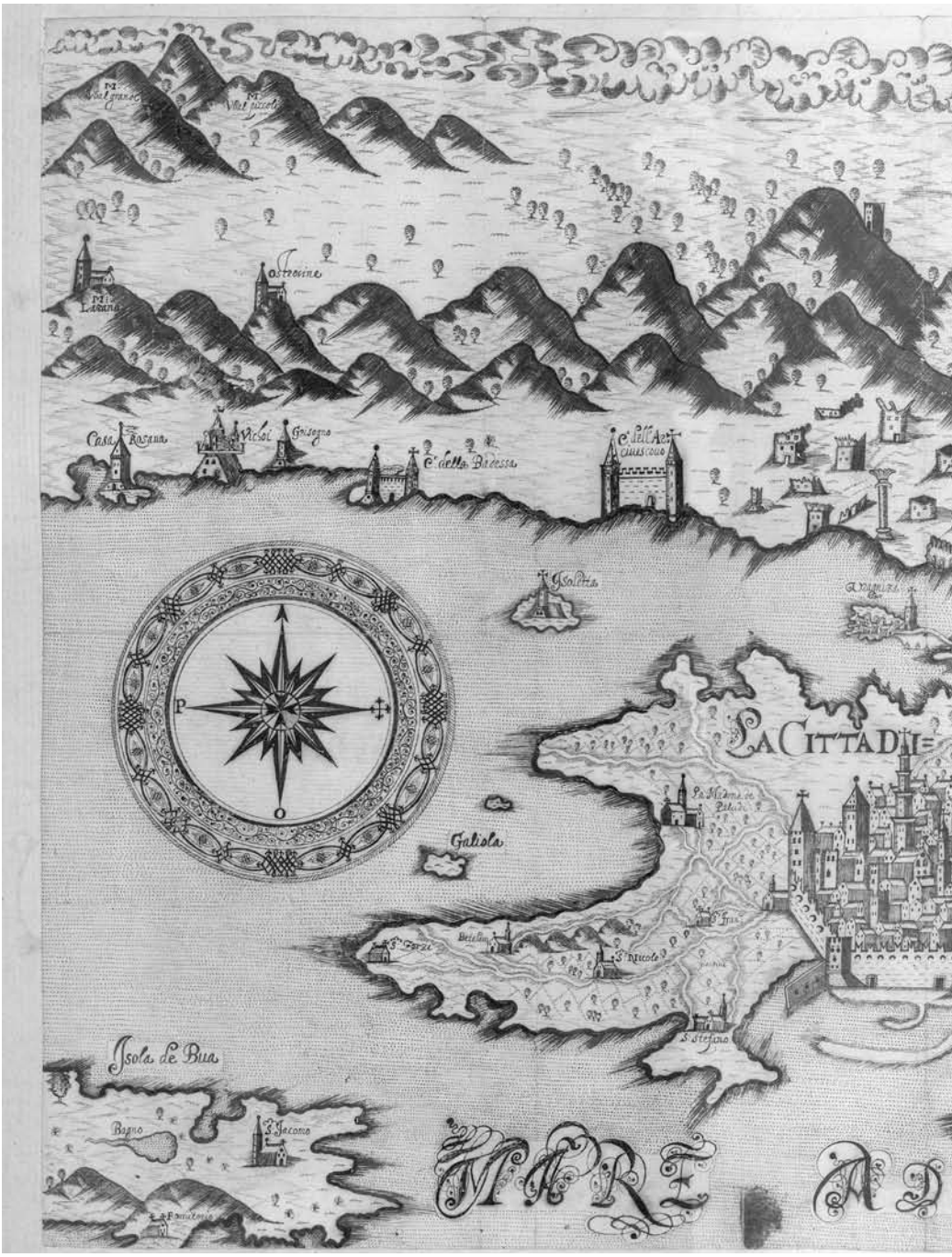
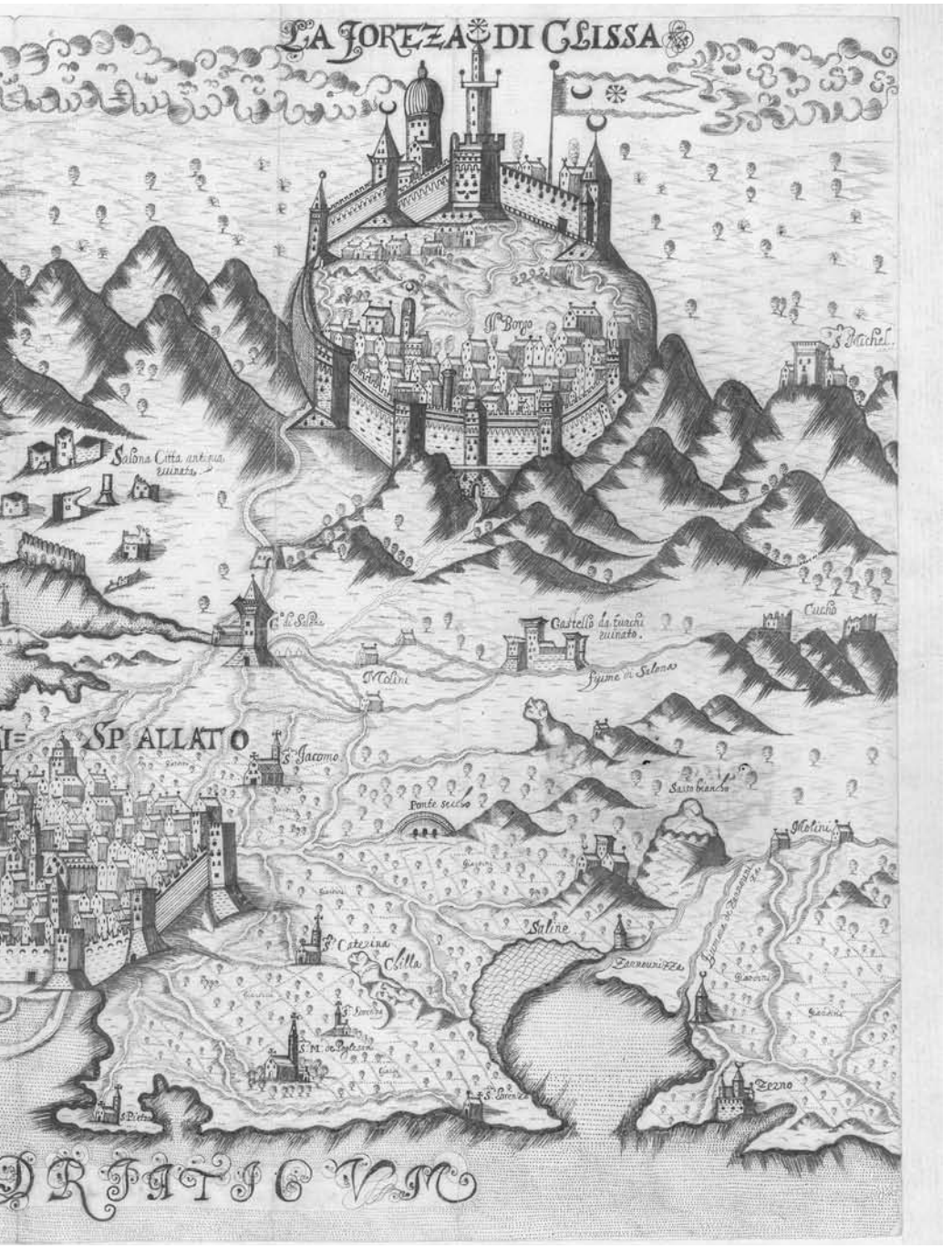


Figure 1.
Christofaro Tarnowskij, "Clissa principal fortezza del Turcho nella Dalmatia, et chiaue del regno di Bosna lontano da Spallato miglia 5"
[Klis, the chief fortress of the Turk in Dalmatia, and key to the Kingdom



of Bosnia, five miles distant from Split], July 24, 1605. Chicago, Newberry Library, Novacco Map Collection. Reproduced with permission of the Newberry Library.

is depicted at the top right, with the (disproportionately small) Venetian port city of Split in the bay below.[20]

Given its location and history, Klis held special significance to Ottoman-Venetian efforts to maintain the status quo in the Adriatic against a common Habsburg rival.[21] However, the presence nearby of the shared Habsburg foe did not resolve mounting tensions between Venetians and Ottomans. As a well-informed military officer, Ahmed Ağa may well have suspected Venetian involvement in his daughter's disappearance, considering ongoing territorial disputes that dated back to 1570, when Venetian attempts to build in the countryside nearby were listed among the official causes for the Ottoman declaration of the War of Cyprus.[22] Conflicts over the construction of fortlike structures and land incursions in the area continued to plague Venetian-Ottoman relations throughout the first decades of the seventeenth century, and Venetian representatives were repeatedly sent to Split in order to negotiate with their Ottoman counterparts.[23] The strategic location of Klis was made even more apparent in the years leading up to 1622, as the town became embroiled in a protracted feud with adjacent Venetian communities. In February 1621, less than a year before the girl's disappearance, the sultan issued the first of some half a dozen orders to the provincial governor of Bosnia, and to the district governor and qadi of Klis, urging them to put a stop to repeated incursions on Venetian territory led by a certain Halil Viranlı. This conflict took several years to resolve.[24]

Even without this immediate cause, the notion that a girl's departure from home in the borderlands may be embroiled in larger, international machinations was not entirely unfounded. Throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Klis had been the subject of repeated raids and attempted conquests by Uskok corsairs based in nearby Habsburg Senj, in the course of which several local women were abducted. The Uskoks were themselves largely refugees from the Ottoman hinterland; their numerous plots to retake Klis served as particularly poignant reminders of the shifty nature of sovereignty in the area.[25] As occasional abductions were an integral part of the Uskoks' low-intensity warfare tactics, it is easy to understand why an Ottoman military officer might have been prone to follow those who used the occasion to stir local sentiments against Christian raiders operating from bases across the frontier.[26]

The strategic significance of Klis was shaped not only by military and territorial disputes, but also by commercial interests. Starting in the 1590s, the newly established Venetian port of Split was increasingly becoming a "gateway into the Ottoman Balkans," displacing the Ottoman-

controlled port of Salona (Solin), half way between Klis and Split.[27] The port of Split was, in fact, built precisely to divert Ottoman merchandise away from competing commercial ports in the area, including Salona and Dubrovnik, in an effort to revive Venice's fading dominance in the Levantine long-distance carrying trade. Given the continued role of provincial elites like the Šatorović in both cross-border mercantile activity and Ottoman military administration, any interimperial negotiations in Klis were informed not only by grand strategy and the physical proximity of Klis and Split, but also by the economic interests of regional notables, whose ability to incite residents into action was evident to both sides.[28]

The pressure to interpret the case as a Venetian provocation or retribution must have been abundantly clear to Ahmed Ağa, who remained an active member of the local military elite in the years after his daughter's departure from home.[29] At the same time, the broad geopolitical incentives for maintaining friendly relations with neighboring Split would not have been lost on him either. The thinly disguised fear of conflagration and the pressure at all levels to keep amicable relations across the border are palpable throughout the correspondence between Venetian and Ottoman regional administrators in the matter of his daughter. An undated letter by the Ottoman military commanders of three adjacent districts, probably written shortly after the girl's departure from home, addressed the Count of Split as "our noble and honored neighbor, and friend" and reminded him that "it is better that the friendship among us endures."[30] A letter by Zafir (Cafer), "Captain of Klis" to the Count of Split addressed him as "my neighbor and friend" and emphasized the importance of resuming trade relations and freedom of movement across the border.[31] A *hücett* (certificate) issued by the qadi of Klis, Şaban son of Osman, and translated into Italian on June 5, 1622, states clearly that all claims for the retrieval of the girl had been thereby revoked, and that from now on the qadi "intends to pursue love and peace" with the neighboring city of Split.[32] Correspondence at higher levels invoked similar phrases. The Venetian governor in Dalmatia, Giust'Antonio Belegno, who was visiting Split for the occasion, urges his Ottoman counterpart, the district governor of Klis, Ibrahim Paşa, to take a firm stance "against those who wish . . . to disturb that good friendship which prevails on this frontier thanks to the good peace which obtains between the Majesty of the Grand Signor and the Most Serene Republic."[33] These recurrent expressions of friendship, as well as the underlying fear of the consequences of cross-border raids, were themselves highly conventionalized commonplaces in Venetian-Ottoman discourses about the Dalmatian borderlands, having

been mediated, transacted, and translated by dragomans employed by Venetian colonial chancelleries across the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean over the centuries. These dragomans' notions of commensurability between Ottoman and Venetian honorifics, expressions of amity, and conceptions of peace, sovereignty, and violence warrant their own detailed study.[34]

III

The discussion thus far has focused on the immediate geopolitical and economic contexts of Ahmed Ağa's quest to reclaim his daughter in 1627. Yet if by the 1620s geopolitical and economic woes increasingly forced Venetian and Ottoman political elites to recognize their shared interests in the Dalmatian borderlands and to work out their differences amicably, when it came to cases of religious conversion, diplomatic solutions were harder to come by. This is what made Ahmed's demand for the girl's retrieval potentially explosive. Any Venetian concessions to Ottoman demands in the matter of converts from Islam were bound to be frowned upon by the papacy. It was precisely the Republic's institutionalized and well-publicized support for Catholic converts that legitimated its otherwise equivocal record on religious zeal. Rhetoric aside, Venice was notoriously slow in responding to papal exhortations to join an anti-Ottoman crusade. Moreover, it often turned a blind eye on New Christians' relapse (and, in the case of Judaizing, sometimes even tacitly facilitated it). But when Muslims or Jews came to the baptismal font, the Venetian Pia Casa dei Catecumeni (Holy House of Catechumens) offered rapid integration into metropolitan Venetian society by acting as a surrogate family and by seeking to sever neophytes' ties with their unconverted kin.[35] Given that, a restitution of a Catholic convert to Ottoman Muslim relatives would have been problematic indeed.

The difficulty concerning Ahmed Ağa's daughter was compounded by the girl's repeated, explicit declarations of her wish to live as a Christian. As the Venetian Senate instructed its permanent representative in Istanbul on the appropriate response to the sultan's letter, "On religious grounds, the girl being firm and constant in our most sacred faith, we will never under any circumstances be in a position to send her back."[36] The girl's wishes were in fact at the heart of the unfolding Venetian narrative about her. By the seventeenth century, Catholic converthood was presumed to entail both volition and insertion into local networks of kinship and patronage. Post-Tridentine Venetian Catholicism shared much of the Protestant emphasis on intentionality and sincerity as essential components of religious conversion,

and this emergent emphasis also colored contemporary Venetian views on Ottoman religious subjectivity. As I have argued elsewhere, Venetian commentators on the matter were informed by the dual lens of confessionalization and Oriental despotism. They thus tended to interpret the sultan's patronage of converts, and the predominance of "renegades," child-levy recruits, and other converts in the Ottoman imperial bureaucracy, as incontrovertible proof that the Ottoman state was "a republic of slaves," where individual will in matters of religio-political affiliation was obviated.[37] In this intellectual climate, the girl's unambiguous declarations of her wish to convert—amply documented and attested by both Venetian and Ottoman dignitaries—operated to legitimize the Venetian authorities' complicity in her hasty baptism and removal from the frontier.

At the same time, ideal representations of proper converthood aside, one should not assume that the seventeenth-century Venetian authorities always paid great attention to the wishes of female neophytes of Muslim background. On the contrary, given that the vast majority of Muslim women in early modern Venice were domestic slaves and servants, who were expected to abide by their masters' own words, such attention to a neophyte's wishes was unusual indeed.[38] The repeated textual elaboration of the girl's wishes in this case could thus signal not only her Christianity but her elite status, as a subject more fully imbued with volition and intentionality.

Thus, the textual emphasis on the girl's volition operated as a sign of her elite status and reinforces the sense that administrators on both sides were quite aware of the high stakes. This shared recognition aside, it was the question of volition which also made the Venetian and Ottoman narratives about her incommensurable. At first, Ottoman officials described the girl as "sviata," led astray, placing agency with someone other than the girl herself. This descriptor—which we can access only through the Venetian translation of the now-lost Ottoman original—caused much Venetian concern. Several Venetian administrators in Dalmatia insisted on its falsity and emphasized the voluntary nature of the girl's departure from home, baptism, and refusal to return to her parents.[39] An early letter to the Senate describes how relatives "came to talk to the girl, with whom they argued for a long time, but could not win over, neither with tears, nor with other infinite persuasions, and they left confused, without saying a word."[40] A letter by a Venetian official to the *sancakbey* (district governor) of Klis on March 15, 1622 reports the following:

> I had [the girl] promptly see her father, mother, and relatives; as the girl with a steadfast spirit freely wanted to change her law [i.e.,

> convert], and she answered her father and her mother with virility, in the presence of the district governor of Szekszard and of Nasuh, that she wanted to remain a Christian, and never go back home.[41]

By 1627, the term used by Ottoman officials (again, through dragomans' mediation) to describe the girl's departure from home had morphed from *sviamento* into *rapto* (abduction): the sultan's letter to the doge, which Ahmed Ağa carried with him on his visit to Venice, protests her alleged abduction, forced baptism, and imprisonment.[42] According to the letter, the girl had been led to a church surrounded by thirty or forty men and women, forced to kiss the cross and "idols," and given a Christian name, upon which cannons were fired outside and great festivities ensued.[43] The polemical charge of such allegations, mirroring the prevalent contemporary Christian trope of conversion to Islam at sword's edge, would not have been lost on Ahmed's Venetian hosts.[44] Whereas the initial claim that the girl had been "led astray" left the question of agency and volition open to interpretation, the claim of abduction and forced baptism was less ambiguous. The escalating nature of the allegations from 1622 to 1627 may suggest how the narrative of abduction was produced gradually, over time, paralleling the transformation of the case from a locally negotiated affair between neighboring communities into a diplomatic incident embroiling two imperial centers, eager to avoid conflict, but also to emerge victorious and perhaps reap some dividends of religious legitimacy along the way.

To sum up, for Ahmed Ağa familial, religious, and political considerations were inextricably connected. As a father, he clearly wanted to see his daughter, whom he believed to have been led astray, come home. As an Ottoman official, he recognized the significance of appealing for the return of a Muslim subject of the sultan. Moreover, in this demand he was bound to an authorized sultanic narrative. Thus, before he could back down from his demands, he had to be provided with an alternative narrative about the circumstances of his daughter's arrival in Venice, and be convinced of the authenticity of her wish to stay there; in other words, he had to be persuaded of her true transformation from an Ottoman Muslim to a Venetian Catholic (and, along the way, be introduced to Venetian conceptions of ideal converthood and how they differed from Ottoman notions of embracing Islam). This was crucial for his ability to relate the story back to the sultan, as well as for his own sense of accomplishment.[45]

IV

How, then, was the imminent interimperial conflict avoided? In part, this remarkable feat was achieved through the retroactive commensuration of the competing narratives of what had transpired in 1622. In order to understand this process, we now turn to the crucial role of the two interpreters who accompanied Ahmed Ağa on his tours of the Zitelle in 1627. These interpreters did not simply convey the words of one side to the other. Rather, they helped articulate the boundary between Venetian and Ottoman socio-religious practices and sensibilities, and at the same time brought into consciousness the borderlands as a zone of intensive interaction across this emergent boundary.[46] For while the case began literally at the border between the Venetian and Ottoman empires, it should by now be clear that this ever-elusive border was articulated by both local and metropolitan institutions, which regulated (and were themselves shaped by) ongoing cross-border activity.[47]

Above all, the two interpreters played an important role in reframing the girl's past and present. This reframing transformed the girl from an elite, nubile Muslim daughter into a devout Catholic convert, a quasi-monachized young woman relieved from any duties to her kin. In this they were aided by both the girl herself and the Zitelle governors. At the same time, this shift also crucially entailed Ahmed Ağa's ability to accept his daughter's conversion. This acceptance was facilitated by a series of gestures throughout his visit, which were meant to convey the idea that the girl's new circumstances were commensurable with her (and his) elevated position in Ottoman society. For example, after visiting the refectory on the ground floor of the Zitelle, Ahmed Ağa was taken upstairs, where he was given a vocal concert by veiled and covered young women, and was shown the dormitory, where the veiled residents busily attended to their needlework. As one of the interpreters recalled, the father responded by expressing "his utmost contentment, showing to have received the honor with pleasure, while I, Scaramelli, interpreted some idea of mutual satisfaction, according to the occasion, the Turkish father always showing himself to be very honored, chiefly for the good manner of words used by the Illustrious Governors."[48] By holding a concert for the visitor, and by veiling and covering the singers, the Zitelle governors demonstrated their trust in the visitor's ability to appreciate both the performance and the respectability of an establishment where girls are trained in music but not expected to expose themselves. Veiling, of course, was an important aspect of female monastic piety, and it

was widely practiced by Venetian lay elite women of the time as well. As similar distinctions between honorable and exposed female bodies obtained in Ottoman elite culture, the Zitelle governors here underscored at once their recognition of the visitor's high status, their concern for his daughter's moral wellbeing, and, perhaps more implicitly, the commensurability of Ottoman and Venetian signs of female respectability.[49] By repeatedly assuring Ahmed Ağa that his daughter was placed in an honorable institution among her peers, namely, other girls who were well born ("ben nate") and supervised by prominent ladies ("gentildonne principale [*sic*]") the governors signaled that they shared the Ottoman dignitary's self-perception as a man of high status ("buone conditioni"). His daughter, they implied, was neither a captive nor a singing-girl.[50]

Here, the governors may well have sought to address a Venetian audience, as well as Ahmed Ağa. Contemporary discussions of what went on behind convent doors often imagined enclosed institutions as this-worldly brothels rather than the "secluded harems of God," advocated in the rules of one newly reformed Benedictine convent in 1527.[51] Moreover, post-Tridentine Venice witnessed an upsurge in more or less willing encloistered women, as new, quasi-monastic female charitable institutions sprang up across the city and as patrician families continued to struggle to find respectable arrangements for their "excess" daughters while limiting the costs of inflationary dowries. Thus, beyond her position as a convert, caught willy-nilly in the web of interimperial religious politics, Ahmed Ağa's daughter could also stand as an icon for a new model of Venetian elite female piety, that of the monachized virgin.[52] Although the Zitelle was not a convent, it did adhere to similar principles of all-female enclosure and celibacy. At a time of massive forced female monachization, Ahmed Ağa's daughter perhaps came to personify the post-Tridentine Catholic ideal of a chaste, obedient, and willingly encloistered nubile elite woman.

The Zitelle governors' efforts to distance their institution from any allegations of forced monachization or sexual promiscuity evidently met with success. Toward the end of his second visit, Ahmed Ağa is reported to have closely observed his daughter's hands, fingers, and nails, and to have noted with great satisfaction that they were "very gentle, and nicer than those of her mother, and that the good treatment she has received has made her beautiful, healthy, and well taken care of."[53]

The two interpreters were invaluable for ensuring that Ahmed Ağa fully realized the Zitelle governors' pure intentions, and that the governors could in turn read his response through a legible gloss. It was the inter-

preters' mediation which established the commensurability between Ahmed Ağa's status and that of his Venetian patrician interlocutors, and, more generally, between Ottoman and Venetian signs of respectability. One of the interpreters in particular, Francesco Scaramelli, repeatedly acknowledges the father's legitimate concerns, and approvingly reports Ahmed Ağa's displays of emotions. Scaramelli thus brought Ahmed Ağa's narrative of paternal concern more in line with the Venetian concern of Christian care for the girl's spiritual and material wellbeing. Scaramelli's participation as an interpreter enabled the two narratives to become mutually intelligible, if not entirely commensurate.

Yet for the interaction to succeed in the ultimate, if unstated, goal of saving face for both sides, the parties had to agree on one more fundamental issue, namely, the girl's own agency. The two narrative perspectives could not find common ground until Ahmed Ağa recognized that his daughter was not held in Venice against her will and that in fact she had not been abducted from home but rather left of her own volition. For that to happen, the girl had to inhabit the interactional role of "convert," Venetian style. The reports articulate how this role was achieved primarily by controlling affective expression, through linguistic code-switching and by countering Ahmed Ağa's vocabulary of patriarchal family order with one of spiritual salvation outside kin structures. Let us look at each of these semiotic mechanisms in turn.

The reports mention, at least ten times, Ahmed Ağa's affective gestures during the visits, including kisses, hugs, tears, and rising eyebrows. The rapid switches in the father's mood, from rage at his daughter's alleged abduction and fear for her wellbeing, to contentment, and ultimately to joy at her apparent good treatment in Venice, are contrasted repeatedly with the girl's much more subdued range of emotional expressions. The narrative closely links such expressions to her shifting positions in relation to her multiple interlocutors. Indeed, throughout the interaction, she is presented as addressing two audiences at once. When approached by her father and uncle, and questioned in Turkish as to whether she would like to be liberated and return home, she not only answers in the negative, but does so in Italian, a language which, as Scaramelli was quick to note, her kinsmen did not understand. Even after the two interpreters beseech her "to at least speak in Slavic," she continues to assert, in Italian, that she is free and "does not wish to leave Heaven for the earth." When she finally relents and repeats her negative answer in Slavic, she maintains, according to the report, "a happy and smiling" posture.[54] Her defiance is now made clear: not only does she

speak to her relatives in a language they cannot follow, addressing herself to her Venetian interlocutors as much as to her relatives, she casts the conversation in the theological terms of heaven and earth, while their questions are framed by paternal concerns for a girl's wellbeing far from home. If for her kinsmen the story is a family drama (replete with tears, kisses, hugs, and references to the desolate mother at home, missing her only child), the girl, her Venetian hosts, and the official interpreters seek to present it rather as a triumphant parable of spiritual salvation. When her father reminds her that if she were to go home with him she would be served by noble women, married well, and eventually inherit his "opulent estate," she retorts—again, in Italian—that she wishes not to "depart from the salvation of the soul, that she is a noble lady here, and that if her relatives were dead, dying here they would be saved."[55] While seeming to reaffirm the equivalence, if not commensurability, of Ottoman and Venetian noble status, she also endorses a Catholic claim to spiritual superiority and absolute assurance in salvation. By privileging the afterlife over her father's concern for her worldly wellbeing, she reminds him of his own imminent mortality. Finally, when her father seeks compromise by suggesting that at least she move to some convent in Dalmatia, where she would be closer to her family, she cavalierly responds that she is already used to the city of Venice. For her, in other words, Venice is a haven and a home, not a prison.

By preferring Italian to either Slavic or Turkish, and by framing her experience within a narrative of spiritual salvation, the girl suggests her complete transformation into a Venetian Catholic subject and evades her role as a Muslim Ottoman daughter, whether runaway or abducted. Through the narrative framework of conversion, she thus refuses the role designated for her in her kinsmen's narrative of family drama and absolves herself from any potential charges of youthful disobedience. After all, as a convert, her overriding duty is to God and to the salvation of her soul, rather than to any gendered familial expectations involving the mundane matters of marriage and inheritance. In this context, her evasion of the question of why she had left home in the first place seems only fitting. When Ahmet Ağa reminisces—in Turkish—about a quarrel the two of them had had before her escape from home, she bursts into laughter, which, according to the interpreters, "meant to signify that this is not why she had left."[56] Clearly, as a model convert, the girl should feel no need to justify her departure, let alone fit it into her father's explanatory frame of childish rebellion against a doting parent.

Another aspect of the interaction in which the interpreters' mediation proves crucial is language choice and code-switching. As mentioned,

by refusing to speak Turkish or Slavic, the girl signals a break with her pre-Christian past. Yet she does allow for one exception, when she asks her father, in Slavic, "Do you love me?"—a highly intimate genre of family talk—to which the father is reported to have responded by "raising his eyebrows, looking almost stupefied."[57] Throughout the remainder of the visit, however, by not speaking to her relatives in languages they understood, the girl guaranteed the continued presence of interpreters, who provided a gloss even to her relatives' nonverbal emotional expressions. Forcing the interaction to be mediated, she reenacted her alienation from her kin and her radical break with her past, both essential elements of post-Tridentine conceptions of proper conversion.

The girl was not the only one to code-switch masterfully between languages. Ahmed Ağa, too, switched between Slavic and Turkish, depending on audience and content. He used Turkish—the official language of Ottoman statecraft—to address the Zitelle governors, and sometimes also to speak to his daughter, especially when the conversation was intended to be overheard by others. The mediated nature of the interaction thus served his interests, as well as hers. For example, on several crucial occasions, he asked his daughter—in Turkish—about her situation and the circumstances of her departure from home. But many of his—and his brother-in-law's—exchanges with the girl, especially in the absence of the Zitelle governors—were carried out in Slavic. If the girl used Italian to signal her interactional role as a deracinated Venetian Catholic convert, her kinsmen's use of Slavic rather than Turkish reinforced their efforts to fit the interaction into a familial narrative frame and conversational register, and their choice of language served as a not-so-subtle reminder of the girl's lingering affective ties to her family.

V

The frequent code-switching between Italian, Slavic, and Turkish was obviously facilitated by the presence of the two authorized interpreters: public dragoman Francesco Scaramelli for Turkish, and Dr. Pietro Matteacci for Slavic. Here, a few words are in order about these two interpreters, as their divergent backgrounds profoundly shaped their interpretive strategies and conceptions of mediation more broadly. Francesco Scaramelli was born in the last decade of the sixteenth century to a family of Venetian citizens by birth. Members of this estate, second in rank only to the city's patricians, monopolized key positions in the Venetian chancellery and colonial admin-

istration. During their long careers as secretaries in Venetian diplomatic service, Scaramelli's own father, Giovanni Carlo, and brother Moderante sojourned in several foreign courts, including Milan, London, and Istanbul.[58] Following in their footsteps, Francesco trained to be a secretary and a diplomat, and even apprenticed for a decade (1611–21) as a diplomatic interpreter in the house of the Venetian *bailo* (permanent representative) in Istanbul, where he learned Turkish and Ottoman diplomatic protocol.[59] Upon returning from the Porte, he entered the Venetian ducal chancellery, and, in 1626, was appointed as a public dragoman (interpreter) attached to the powerful Board of Trade, the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia.[60] He was the first and only Venetian-born citizen to occupy this position in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All of his predecessors, as well as his immediate successors, were either Ottoman Catholics or Venetian colonial subjects from Cyprus.[61]

Scaramelli's duties as public dragoman were multiple: to translate letters sent to Venice by the Sultan, to accompany Ottoman dignitaries on official visits to the Serenissima and produce authoritative reports on such visits to the Senate, and to travel to the Ottoman frontier to negotiate in border disputes. But his most frequent assignment by far was to assist Ottoman and Safavid merchants on their daily interactions with often less-than-scrupulous Venetian merchants and commercial brokers. His position as public dragoman was thus twofold: as a civil servant, he was expected to keep tabs on foreigners and report their whereabouts to his patrician employers in the Senate and the Board of Trade; at the same time, he was charged with safeguarding foreign merchants' interests, under the assumption that because they lacked connections in the city, they were vulnerable and needed special protection.[62]

Sacramelli, then, was a member of a self-conscious, elite segment of Venetian society, and a seasoned diplomat and a civil servant. In 1625 he even represented the Venetian government in military negotiations with Ottoman provincial officials. Yet his day job in Venice entailed a more ambiguous position vis-à-vis Ottoman subjects. As a public dragoman, he acted not simply as a Venetian representative but as an employee of the Board of Trade, whose main function was to promote Venice's continued prominence in long-distance trade. By definition, then, Scaramelli had to maintain excellent relations with the Ottoman merchant community in the Lagoon. This was especially crucial in the 1620s, as the Board of Trade sought, unsuccessfully, to stop the diversion of Levantine trade from Venice to Livorno and other Mediterranean ports. The challenge was multiplied

by the forced relocation of all Ottoman Muslim merchants to the Fondaco dei Turchi, the Ottoman Exchange House, in 1621, a move that was met with some resistance. As a recently appointed public dragoman, and as the first Venetian citizen by birth to hold this sensitive position, Scaramelli was probably keen on proving himself by not burning any bridges to an already disgruntled Ottoman merchant community.

The other interpreter between Ahmed Ağa and his daughter was Dr. Pietro Matteacci. Like Scaramelli, Matteacci occasionally represented Ottoman merchants before Venetian authorities. Unlike Venetian-born Scaramelli, however, Matteacci was born in Dalmatia. His father Giuseppe, a physician, was sent to Istanbul to treat the Ottoman sultan and was later rewarded with an office in the Venetian colonial administration of Šibenik, some fifty miles northwest of Split, where Pietro grew up. Both father and son maintained personal ties in Dalmatia throughout their lives. A staunch supporter of Venetian territorial expansion, Matteacci was involved in military reforms in the Venetian colony of Pola in 1621, following the Venetian-Habsburg War of Gradisca (1615–17), and he later served as a civil servant in various capacities throughout the Venetian state.[63] At the same time, Matteacci was a prolific author and scholar. In addition to several plays and wide-ranging philosophical, historical, and theological tracts, he published numerous apologetic texts in defense of the Venetian Empire.[64] The significance of these biographical details will become evident shortly.

Whereas Scaramelli was an official dragoman, employed by the Venetian Board of Trade and thus expected to accompany any Ottoman dignitary, like Ahmed Ağa, during a visit to Venice, Matteacci's appointment was more unusual. The assignment of this second, Slavic interpreter suggests awareness of the bilingual nature of Ottoman provincial elites in Dalmatia, and the sociosemiotic potentials of code-switching.[65] Matteacci's presence and performance also confirmed the inherent ability to blur the Venetian-Ottoman boundary, not only through a shared language, but through kinship ties as well. In fact, Matteacci's personal connections in Dalmatia proved quite potent precisely in this regard when Ahmed Ağa asked him, toward the end of his second visit, whether the girls in the Zitelle were truly of noble blood. As a proof that they were, Matteacci mentioned a daughter of the Kosača family "of the royal blood of Bosnia," who, he added, "was well known" to the visitor.[66] Rather than follow Scaramelli's vision of Venetian and Ottoman nobilities as commensurable but separate, Matteacci here hinted at their actual convergence in the Dalmatian borderlands. Drawing on the language of kinship, he suggested not simply that Ahmed

Ağa's daughter was surrounded by girls of similar provenance, but that, in fact, the difference between Ottoman and Venetian nobility could on occasion be suppressed altogether.

Scaramelli and Matteacci assisted Ahmed Ağa during his visits to the Zitelle by providing simultaneous interpretation. As we've seen, they also, more fundamentally, performed cultural mediation in ways that rendered Venetian and Ottoman social categories and scales of value mutually intelligible and, indeed, commensurable. Scaramelli's performance of mediation was premised on the notion that both Venetian and Ottoman societies were hierarchical and orderly, and that both clearly demarcated status through a set of gendered semiotic practices (from noble lineage and proper veiling to clean fingernails). These practices, he implied, if not always identical across the border, could at least be mapped onto one another.

Matteacci's performance of mediation differed from Scaramelli's on several levels. Scaramelli translated between Turkish and Italian, two official languages that indexed what were prototypically seen as mutually exclusive political communities, one Ottoman, the other Venetian. Matteacci, on the other hand, interpreted to and from Slavic, whose language community transgressed these exact same political boundaries. The shared provenance of Matteacci and Ahmed Ağa in the Dalmatian borderlands was capitalized upon during the interaction at the Zitelle to produce similar ambiguity about the nature of Venetian-Ottoman boundaries.

At the same time, both Scaramelli's and Matteacci's presence confirmed the parties' inability to interact without mediation, sustaining the claims of Ahmed Ağa's daughter to belong strictly on the Venetian side—linguistically, spiritually, and socially. On occasions such as this, an interpreter's mediation entailed that he clearly categorize persons along linguistic, confessional, and kinship-based lines of demarcation, and that he suppress—rather than emphasize—other structural differences. Scaramelli and Matteacci's performance was crucially shaped by their implicit grasp of the sociopolitical and confessional determinants of the mediated parties and their own embodied subject position in relation to these parties.

Ultimately, the existence of intermediaries also signified the presence of a boundary and the limits of commensurability. At least while on Venetian soil, where the state could mobilize its force against the visiting official, there were clear restrictions on what an Ottoman subject, even a high-ranking one, could demand. In other words, there were structural limits to Ahmed Ağa's potential refusal to see the commensurability. Thus, one might suggest that he took solace in the fact that his daughter was still being

treated as nobility, even though she was no longer Muslim. For lack of a better option for retrieving her, he still had this to hold on to. The commensurability "worked" because he could not insist on her return without ignoring her spoken will to remain. And on this level, too, a fundamental commensurability prevailed across the Venetian-Ottoman frontier.

. . .

For all we know, Ahmed Ağa's daughter converted to Catholicism in a rather Ottoman-Muslim fashion. As Tijana Krstić has cogently argued, paradigmatic early modern Ottoman narratives about becoming Muslim are not adequately characterized by the term *conversion* with its heavy Christian baggage. Such narratives only infrequently ascribe the embrace of Islam to either intellectual revelation or miraculous epiphany. Rather, neophytes were introduced to a community of believers, often through personal or familial ties, and only then embarked on a long process of self-education about the religion they had already ritually embraced. Christian Ottoman subjects in such narratives rarely describe the process of becoming Muslim as originating in deep spiritual transformation, extreme rupture with their past, and radical severance of their former ties. Instead, they focus on the acceptance of new ritual practices. Spiritual transformation may or may not have followed at a later stage, through participation in communal activities.[67] This model fits quite well the case of Ahmed Ağa's daughter, whose baptism was precipitated by spatial and familial dislocation, with little indication of prebaptismal instruction. This may help explain the Venetian Senate's alarm when they first learned about the case.

However, a conception of converthood stemming from shifting kinship and patronage ties rather than from deep conviction and a radical transformation of the heart and mind may not have been unique to Ottoman Islam. Keith Luria, who has studied Protestant-Catholic conversion in early modern France, argues that it was precisely the seeming self-interest of converts and their frequent oscillation between confessions that encouraged both Catholic and Protestant theologians in the seventeenth century to develop "a model of conversion that stressed the importance of conscience and deep interior motivation, as well as true doctrine and the role of intellect and emotion in adhering to it."[68] This is, at least in part, why post-Tridentine Catholic theology placed so much emphasis on prebaptismal instruction and on interrogation into the catechumen's "true wishes."[69]

The girl's evident Catholic militancy during her father's visit to the Zitelle and her resolute rejection of kinship ties to her unconverted kin in

favor of a quasi-monachized existence in imitation of the brides of Christ may thus be seen as a retroactive attempt to counter any Catholic doubts about her spiritual preparation for baptism, that is, about her Ottomanness at the moment of conversion. But it may also reflect the inherent tension within post-Tridentine Catholicism between, on the one hand, the theological emphasis on converts' sincere intentions and radical break with their past, and, on the other, the de facto acceptance of lingering ties and the myriad mundane contexts that led catechumens to the baptismal font.[70] In other words, while clearly incongruent with idealized representations of Catholic conversion, the girl's journey to Christianity may not have been so unusual after all.

In this context of theological ambiguity and flux, Ahmed Ağa's visits to the Zitelle, as discursively elaborated in the interpreters' reports, provided closure and syncretized competing models of conversion while suppressing these models' divergent origins and internal inconsistencies. The reports accomplished this strategic syncretism by retroactively privileging a Venetian perspective on the events, yet allowing the father to accept this version as his own. That Ahmed Ağa had, indeed, adopted the Venetian perspective to such a degree that he could now voice it as his own is made clear in his farewell statement to the Venetian Senate upon concluding his sojourn in the city:

> I have seen my daughter in a very different state from that which was represented to me, beautiful, healthy, and virtuous, under the guardianship of prominent ladies, in a very ample and spacious location, different from what I had [previously] believed, of which I thank God, and I shall not forget to always exalt Your Serenity for the good justice, kindness, integrity, and protection which you have given my daughter, whom I entrust to you with all my heart.[71]

In this statement, Ahmed Ağa actively participates in and completes the process of commensurating the two narrative frames about his daughter. First, he elides the major obstacles to such commensuration: the question of her agency and volition as well as any references to the fact of her baptism and religious conversion. Then he deflects from his own responsibility for the political tensions caused by this case, by obliquely referring to others who misinformed him, providing himself (and the sultan) a way to back down from the demand for the girl's restitution. Furthermore, he presents the girl's current situation as an approximation of her elite status back home: nubile,

well-guarded, and enclosed in a morally upright, all-female environment. In other words, he accepts the Venetian elite understanding of the Zitelle as a safe haven for girls whose wellbeing could not be guaranteed by their natal kin. (Earlier, he even states how pleased he is that an arranged marriage he had contracted for her with a subject of lesser status fell through, implicitly recognizing the structural equivalence between a young woman's quasi-monastic life and marriage.) In order to accept this Venetian perspective and make it his own, Ahmed Ağa picks up some of the very words that were conveyed to him by Suriana, the patron-governor (*protettrice*) of the Zitelle at the beginning of his first visit there,

> that it was prominent ladies who guarded and governed the girls, all of them well born, and that his daughter was not only under her [the patron-governor's] protection, but that of the Most Serene Republic, which took special care regarding the good conditions of her birth and her good habits, which merited public and private favor.[72]

Suriana's statement, in turn, voiced the guiding principles of the Zitelle, as articulated in the institution's constitution, penned by the Jesuit Benedetto Palmio in 1587 and reiterated in various prescriptive texts.[73]

What began as a diplomatic conflict in the making, pitting Venetian and Ottoman officials against each other in a heady mix of geopolitics, religion, and elite familial interests, concluded on a conciliatory note, with a visiting Ottoman dignitary thanking his Venetian hosts and, moreover, adopting their perspective at least partially. This outcome was far from inevitable, but, as I have argued, it was also not accidental. Rather, it was achieved collaboratively by the two officially appointed interpreters and with the tacit collaboration of all parties. Together, they were able to commensurate distinct narratives and to facilitate the suppression of their differences so that one narrative frame could be subsumed by the other. This case thus instantiates—on a micro scale—the broader processes of strategic syncretism that underwrote the articulation of religious boundaries in the early modern Mediterranean and the crystallization of distinctly "Ottoman" and "Venetian" conceptions of conversion, salvation, and, indeed, religious subjecthood itself. These subtle, ongoing processes of boundary-marking and boundary-crossing suggest how the borderlands were shaped by metropolitan categories, but also how these categories themselves were, in turn, shaped in the process.[74]

Notes

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1 The source reads, "per levare con questo mezzo l'occasione di nuove commotioni, et allontanarla in quanto si possa dai suoi parenti." Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter cited as ASV), Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli (hereafter cited as SDC), reg. 14, fol. 29v (May 13, 1622). The Casa delle Zitelle, which in the 1620s hosted about 140 boarders, was designed to accommodate girls over nine or ten years old, beautiful and healthy and "in imminent danger of losing their virtue." It provided its charges with devotional instruction as well as some practical training in embroidery or lace-making, in preparation for future marriage or the convent. See Brian S. Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 388–91; Bernard Aikema and Dulcia Meijers, "Le *Zitelle*: Chiesa e ospedale di Santa Maria della Presentazione," in *Nel regno dei poveri: Arte e storia dei grandi ospedali veneziani in età moderna, 1474–1797* (Venezia: Arsenale, 1989), 225–40; Monica Chojnacka, "Women, Charity, and Community in Early Modern Venice: The *Casa delle Zitelle*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1998): 68–91; Vanessa Scharven Chase, "The Casa delle *Zitelle*: Gender and Architecture in Renaissance Venice" (Ph.D. diss. Columbia University, 2002); Barbara Boccazzi Mazza, "Governare i 'Luoghi Pii': La Casa delle Zitelle," *Studi Veneziani* 50 (2005): 293–99; Tracy Elizabeth Cooper, "Le Zitelle," in *Palladio's Venice: Architecture and Society in a Renaissance Republic* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 281–85.

2 ASV, Documenti Turchi, reg. 12, fasc. 1352 (Feb. 17–26, 1627).

3 See the special issue "Toward a New Diplomatic History," edited by John Watkins in *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008).

4 The two detailed reports that the interpreters submitted to the Venetian Senate—our only sources on what might have transpired during Ahmed's visits to the Zitelle—along with a translation of the sultan's letter and various decrees and correspondence in the matter with Venetian representatives in Istanbul and Dalmatia are in ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fols. 38r-48v (June 3–11, 1627). The case is described briefly, and with significant inaccuracies, in Anna Vanzan, "In Search of Another Identity: Female Muslim-Christian Conversions in the Mediterranean World," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7, no. 3 (1996): 327–333, at 331–32.

5 Andre Droogers, "Syncretism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behav-*

ioral Sciences (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2004), 15386. Nor is this notion of linguistic syncretism intended to support Christoffe Jaffrelot's view of strategic syncretism as an ideology whose content "has been supplied to a large extent by material taken from the cultural values of groups who were seen as antagonistic towards the . . . community" and that "aims to dominate the others, in terms of prestige as well as on a concrete socio-political plane." Such a definition, while fruitfully recalling the power relations that all syncretic practice both presupposes and potentially transforms, conflates social form (community), circulating discourse, and culture, which risks reinforcing primordialist views of the relationship between ethnicity and cultural essence. See Christophe Jaffrelot, "Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building," *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, nos. 12/13 (1993): 517–24, at 517. On the role of claims to syncretism in the construction of (purified) religious communities, see also Peter van der Veer, "Syncretism, Multiculturalism, and the Discourse of Tolerance," in *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, ed. Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (London: Routledge), 196–211.

6 Jane Hill, "Syncretism," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9, no. 1/2 (1999): 244–46. As Hill observes, this definition was imported into linguistics from the history of religion by Indo-Europeanist Jerzy Kurytowicz. On the strategic use of claims to either syncretic or pure religious practice, see also Danilyn Rutherford, "After Syncretism: The Anthropology of Islam and Christianity in Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 1 (2002): 196–205.

7 On the Ottoman Age of Confessionalization, see Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 35–63.

8 This account is based largely on the voluminous diplomatic correspondence occasioned by the girl's departure from home, which occupies over twenty folios, and which encompasses frequent letters exchanged between Venetian and Ottoman provincial governors in the early months of 1622, as well as dispatches sent by Venetian representatives in Dalmatia to the Senate. See ASV, SDC, reg. 13, fol. 218r (Jan. 12, 1621 m.v.), and reg. 14, fol. 29r (May 13, 1622); ASV, Bailo a Costantinopoli (hereafter cited as BC), reg. 108 II, fasc. 6 ("Lettere e documenti relativi alla Dalmatia [1590, aprile 26–1678, marzo 23]"). For a somewhat different take on this case, focusing on the girl's background and treatment in Split more than on the father's visit, see Eric Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 63–75.

9 For example, the Apostolic delegate Pietro Masarechi listed the clearly imprecise numbers of 450,000 Muslims, 150,000 Catholics, and 75,000 Orthodox Christians. See Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, corr. ed. with a new epilogue (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 54. For a differing view that suggests more comprehensive Islamization, see Colin Heywood, "Bosnia under Ottoman Rule, 1463–1800," in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. Mark Pinson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 22–53.

10 See Vanzan, "In Search of Another Identity." On women's movement in the other

direction, see Marc David Baer, "Islamic Conversion Narratives of Women: Social Change and Gendered Religious Hierarchy in Early Modern Ottoman Istanbul," *Gender and History* 16, no. 2 (2004): 425–58; Dursteler, *Renegade Women*.

11 In the late 1640s and early 1650s, at least twenty-four Muslim children and two adult women from Klis arrived in Venice to be baptized. Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Sezione antica, Catecumeni, Registri battesimi, reg. 2, fols. 22v–32r.

12 Archivio IRE Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione di Venezia, CAT B 6 (Catecumeni, Notatorio, 1610–1619), fol. 13r (Feb. 17, 1610), fol. 97v (Jan. 7, 1616), fol. 102r (June 3, 1616), and passim.

13 Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Sezione antica, Catecumeni, Registri battesimi, reg. 2, fol. 11r (Nov. 5, 1624), fol. 11v (Mar. 26, 1625).

14 On soldiers' spatial, social, and confessional mobility in the Dalmatian borderlands, see Tea Mayhew, "Soldiers, Widows, and Families: Social and Political Status of the Professional Warriors of the Venetian Republic (1645–1718)," in *Professions and Social Identity: New European Historical Research on Work, Gender, and Society*, ed. Berteke Waaldijk (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, Pisa University Press, 2006), 89–102.

15 Several pertinent biographical details, including the girl's name after her conversion and ultimate marriage, have been uncovered by Croatian historian Krešimir Kužić through his research in the Venetian colonial archives in Zadar. See Krešimir Kužić, "Osmanlijski zapovjedni kadar u Tvrđavama Klis, Lončarić i kamen oko 1630. Godine," *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 23 (2005): 187–214, at 195 n. 35; available at http://hrcak.srce.hr/file/11234. I thank Tijana Krstić for her continued help in translating this article.

16 See Girolamo Michiel's letter to the Senate dated Feb. 1622, which identifies Ahmed as "Meemet Agà Sattarovich già disdaro di Clissa," in ASV, BC, reg. 108 II, fasc. 6, n.p.

17 The precise nature of land ownership in seventeenth-century Bosnia is still understudied and contested. For illuminating (if somewhat general) discussions, see Nedim Filipović, "Ocaklık Timars in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Prilozi za orientalnu filologiju i istoriju Jugoslovenskih naroda pod Turkskom vladavinom* 36 (1986): 149–80; Michael Robert Hickok, *Ottoman Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 43–50 and passim.

18 Kužić, "Osmanlijski zapovjedni," passim.

19 On the 1596 takeover of Klis, see Bracewell, *Uskoks*, 206–7. On the centrality of fortresses to early modern Ottoman conceptions of the frontier, see Palmira Brummett, "The Fortress: Defining and Mapping the Ottoman Frontier in the 16th–17th Centuries," in *Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. Andrew Peacock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31–55.

20 On this map, see James P. Krokar, "The Ottoman Presence in Southeastern Europe, 16th–19th Centuries: A View in Maps," *The Newberry Library: Smith Center Publications*, Slide Set 27 (1997), at http://www.newberry.org/smith/slidesets/ss27.html; and Krokar, "New Means to an Old End: Early Modern Maps in the Service of an Anti-Ottoman Crusade," *Imago Mundi* 60, no. 1 (2008): 23–38.

21 It was only in 1617 that the Treaty of Madrid between the Habsburgs and the Vene-

tians put an end to the Uskok colony at Senj. Uskok raids continued for at least another decade thereafter. On the Uskoks, see Catherine Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992). On the effects of corsair activity on Venetian-Ottoman relations, see Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). For an overview of Venetian-Ottoman commercial relations in the early seventeenth century, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire (1600–1630)," *Journal of European Economic History* 15, no. 2 (1986): 345–84. On Ottoman provincial rule in the western Balkans, see Hickok, *Ottoman Military Administration*.

22 Maria-Pia Pedani, "Some Remarks upon the Ottoman Geo-Political Vision of the Mediterranean in the Period of the Cyprus War (1570–1573)," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 2, ed. Colin Imber, Keiko Kiyotaki, and Rhoads Murphey (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 23–35, at 23.

23 A sense for Ottoman imperial correspondence with Klis concerning territorial disputes and cross-border negotiations with the Venetians can be gleaned from documents that were intercepted by Venice, and then archived and translated in the *bailo*'s house in Istanbul. For representative records from the 1610s and 1620s, see, for example, ASV, BC, reg. 250, fasc. 2, items 15–16, 27 (Feb.–Apr., 1605), and fasc. 3, items 14–16 (May–June, 1612), item 58 (1613).

24 For copies and translations of the intercepted Ottoman imperial orders in Halil's matter, see ASV, BC, reg. 251, fasc. 4, items 13–14 (Feb. 1621), items 17–18 (n.d.), and fasc. 5, items 1–2 (Dec. 1624), items 69–71 (May 1626). For Venetian perspectives on this case, see, for example, dragoman Giovanni Antonio Grillo's report on his efforts to intervene in a confrontation between the Count of Split and the governor of Klis in 1624, and the petition for a raise by Venetian dragoman in Dalmatia Girolamo della Pace, where he mentions numerous travels to Klis to negotiate with the local Ottoman governors: ASV, Documenti Turchi, b. 12, p. 1345 (ca. 1624–25); ASV, Collegio, Risposte da dentro, b. 26, n.p. (Nov. 22, 1635).

25 On Uskok attempts to retake Klis, see Bracewell, *Uskoks*, 161 n. 24 and the references cited there.

26 On multidirectional, cross-border raids in Dalmatia and their social consequences, see Mayhew, "Soldiers."

27 Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 177. The plan for the port was hatched by a group of Venetian-based "Levantine Jews"—Ottoman subjects who were the descendants of Iberian exiles. On the leadership of Levantine Jews in promoting the plan, see Renzo Paci, *La scala di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra Cinque e Seicento* (Venezia: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1971); Benjamin C. I. Ravid, "The First Charter of the Jewish Merchants of Venice, 1589," *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 187–222, at 214–17; Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 7 n. 22 and the bibliography given there.

28 For reports on these negotiations, penned by Istanbul-based Venetian dragomans Giovanni Antonio Grillo and Giovanni Battista Salvago, see ASV, Documenti

Turchi, reg. 12, fasc. 1345 (ca. 1624–26); and ASV, SDC, reg. 118, fols. 605r–v, 612r–15r (1626). For a letter by Sultan Murad IV to Ali, the *beylerbeyi* (provincial governor) of Bosnia, instructing him to maintain good relations with the Venetian authorities on the border, as well as two Venetian translations of this letter prepared by dragomans in the Venetian *bailo*'s house in Istanbul, see ASV, Documenti Turchi, reg. 12, fasc. 1339–1341 (Sept. 13–21, 1626). On Venetian Split, see Paci, *La Scala di Spalato*. On the triplex Ottoman-Venetian-Habsburg frontier, see also the website project *Triplex Confinium: Croatian Multiple Borderlands in Euro-Mediterranean Context* based at the Institute of Croatian History, University of Zagreb, at www.ffzg.hr/pov/zavod/triplex/homepagetc.htm.

29 Ahmed resumed his post as castellan of Klis at some point after 1622 and before 1627, a position he seems to have kept until 1648, when the fortress surrendered to the Venetians. See Kužić, "Osmanlijski zapovjedni."

30 ASV, BC, reg. 108 II, fasc. 6, item 2 (n.d.): "Al Nob[ile], et honorato nostro vicino, et Amico . . . è meglio ,che tra noi continui l'amicitia."

31 Ibid., item 3 (n.d.): "avicino, et Amico."

32 Ibid., item 1 (June 5, 1622): "con le predette Città siamo per proseguire amore e pace."

33 Ibid., item 5 (Mar. 19, 1622): "contro quei, che in ciò . . . mostravano di voler con novità sturbare quella buona amicitia, che corre à questi confini per la buona pace, che passa tra la M[aes]tà del Gran Sig[no]re et la Ser[enissi]ma Rep[ubbli]ca."

34 For suggestive comments on the subject, see Palmira Brummett's perceptive observations about competing interpretations of ritualized inequality in Venetian-Ottoman diplomacy, in "A Kiss Is Just a Kiss: Rituals of Submission along the East-West Divide," in *Cultural Encounters between East and West, 1453–1699*, ed. Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock (Newcatle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2005), 107–31.

35 On the House of Catechumens, a Jesuit-inspired institution for the catechization and conversion of Muslims and Jews that had operated in Venice since 1557, see E. Natalie Rothman, "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21, no. 1 (2006): 39–75; Pietro Ioly Zorattini, *I nomi degli altri: Conversioni a Venezia e nel Friuli Veneto in età moderna* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2008). On New Christians reverting to Judaism in Venice, see Federica Ruspio, *La Nazione Portoghese: Ebrei ponentini e nuovi cristiani a Venezia* (Torino: S. Zamorani, 2007); Benjamin C. I. Ravid, "Venice, Rome, and the Reversion of New Christians to Judaism: A Study in 'Ragione di stato,' " in *L'identità dissimulata: Giudaizzanti iberici nell'europa cristiana sell'età moderna*, ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2000), 151–93.

36 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fol. 46v (June 11, 1627): "per termine di Religione, stando ferma, et constante quest giovane nella n'ra santissima fede, non saressimo per alcun accidente giamai capitati à restituirla."

37 E. Natalie Rothman, "Narrating Conversion and Subjecthood in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands," in *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*, ed. Harald Hendrix, Todd Richardson, and Lieke Stelling (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2011).

38 Rothman, "Narrating Conversion"; see also Rothman, "Becoming Venetian," 44, 53–54.

39 See, for example, Antonio Belegno statement to the Senate about the need to "repeat the falsity [of the notion] that the girl had been led astray" [recitare la falsità che essa figl(iuol)a fosse stata sviata]; ASV, BC, reg. 108 II, fasc. 6, n.p. (dispatch by Antonio Belegno from Zadar, Mar. 26, 1622). See also the translation of a letter by the Sancak of Klis, Ibrahim Paşa, conceding both that the girl had stated that "no one had led her astray" [niuno non l'ha sviata] and that the Ağa of Klis had falsely claimed as much in a previous letter; ibid., Split, n.p. (Mar. 21, 1622).

40 ASV, BC, reg. 108 II, fasc. 6, n.p. (letter by Girolamo Michiel, Split, Feb. 1622): "vennero li Parenti sud[et]ti ad aboccarsi colla figliuola, la quale per buon spatio combattuta et tentata, ne potendola vincere ne con lachrime, ne con altre infinite persuasioni, si partirono confusi, senza formar parola."

41 ASV, BC, reg. 108 II, fasc. 6, n.p. ("Copia di lettera fatta scrivere dal Ecc[ellentissi]mo S[ignor] G[e]n[er]al in nome dell'Ill[ustrissi]mo S[ignor] Conte di Curzola al S[ignor] Bassà Sanzacco di Clissa," Mar. 15, 1622): "La feci doppo prontam[en]te vedere al P[ad]re, alla m[ad]re, et à suoi Parenti; mentre essa figliola con animo costante volse muttar spontaneam[en]te legge, e con virilità rispose al Padre et alla M[ad]re; med[esi]ma in presenza del sanzaco di Seczar, et del Nasuh di voler rimanere Christiana, ne più far ritorno alla casa."

42 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fols. 38r–39r (Mar. 1627).

43 Ibid., fol. 38v.

44 For the genealogy of this trope, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Multidirectional Conversion in the Frankish Levant," in *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, ed. James Muldoon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 191–99; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Confessionalization and Community in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011); Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

45 I thank Tom Cohen for highlighting this point.

46 On this point, see E. Natalie Rothman "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4 (2009): 771–800.

47 For a critical assessment of the notion of the "frontier" in Ottoman historiography, see Colin Heywood, "The Frontier in Ottoman History: Old Ideas and New Myths," *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700–1700*, ed. Daniel Power and Naomi Standen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 228–50. For some representative examples of more recent Ottoman borderlands history, see D. Roksandić and N. Štefanec, eds., *Constructing Border Societies on the Triplex Confinium* (Budapest: CEU History Department, 2000); Sabri Ateş, "Empires at the Margin: Towards a History of Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands and the Borderlands Peoples, 1843–1881" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2006); Wendy Bracewell, "The Historiography of the Triplex Confinium: Conflict and Community on a Triple Frontier, 16th–18th Centuries," in *Frontiers and the Writing of History, 1500–1850*, ed. S. G. Ellis and

R. Eßer (Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2006), 211–27; Palmira Brummett, "Imagining the Early Modern Ottoman Space, from World History to Piri Reis," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15–58; Tolga U. Esmer, "A Culture of Rebellion: Networks of Violence and Competing Discourses of Justice in the Ottoman Empire, 1790–1808" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2009); and Andrew C. S. Peacock, ed., *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

48 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fol. 39v (June 5, 1627): "Le fù fatto un concerto di voci da Giovani velate, et coperte, con suo som[m]o contento, havendo dimostrato di ricever l'honore à grado, mentre da me Scaramelli veniva interpretato, secondo le occorrenze, qualche concetto di sodisfattione vicendevole, dimostrando sempre il turco Padre di esser molto honorato, principalm[en]te per le buone forme di parole usatele dall'Ill[ustrissi]mi S[igno]ri Governatori."

49 On early modern Ottoman conceptions of women's honor, see Leslie Peirce, "Domesticating Sexuality: Harem Culture in Ottoman Imperial Law," in *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, ed. Marilyn Booth (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 104–35.

50 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fol. 39v (June 5, 1627).

51 Jutta Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 325 n. 52: "serate neli seralgi [*sic*] del Dio."

52 This idealized model featured prominently in Venetian political debates of the 1620s. As Sperling suggests, the strict monastic enclosure of women was widely practiced as part of the confessionalizing and disciplining momentum of post-Tridentine Catholic states in general, and of Venice in particular: "To the same extent that virginity signified the purity of an interior bodily space, convents were to become oases of purity and sacred enclosures in the midst of Venice" (*Convents and the Body Politic*, 127). On post-Tridentine enclosure, see also Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2000).

53 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fol. 39v: "All'hora guardando le mani, le dita, et le ungie della giovane, disse, che erano molto gentili, et più benne di quelle della Madre, et che il buon trattamento la rendeva benna, sana, et ben governata."

54 Ibid., fol. 40r–v.

55 Ibid., fol. 41r.

56 Ibid., fol. 43r: "Parve al Padre di narar in turco certa occasione di disgusto, che temeva d'haver dato alla figliola mentre era fanciulla; onde senza spettar l'interpretatione, per haver il tutto inteso, si pose à rider, volendo significare, che per tal ocasione no' era partita."

57 Ibid., fol. 42v.

58 Horatio Brown, preface to *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collection of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, ed. Rawdon Brown (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1900), lxii–lxix. Giovanni Carlo served as a high-level Venetian civil servant and diplomat for forty-seven years. His pride in his professional identity can be gleaned already from an early memoir, which he composed in 1569 at age twenty. In it, he criticized Sans-

ovino's ideas about secretaries' inferiority, as articulated in his tract *Del segretario*. Based on his practical experience, Scaramelli recorded the great esteem with which the patrician members of the Council of Ten held their secretaries and the latter's de facto authority and influence. Giovanni Carlo's own elevated position enabled him both to secure the status of citizen for his apparently illegitimate eldest son, Moderante, and guarantee Moderante's and Francesco's entrance into public service. It also allowed him to marry his daughter Chiara to a Venetian patrician, Bartolomeo Barbaro. Giuseppe Trebbi, "Il Segretario Veneziano," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 144, no. 527 (1986): 35–73, at 55–56; and Eric R. Dursteler, "Identity and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Venetian Nation in Constantinople, 1573–1645" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2000), 173–74.

59 On the training of diplomatic interpreters in the house of the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul, see Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans."

60 Dursteler, "Identity and Coexistence," 173 n. 12. On the Venetian Board of Trade and its role in regulating Venetian-Ottoman relations, see E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, forthcoming 2011).

61 In endorsing Sacramelli's appointment, the Board of Trade cited strong recommendations by Giacomo de Nores, the then acting public dragoman (a Cypriot nobleman by birth who had spent his childhood and youth in Ottoman captivity), and by Giovanni Battista Salvago, an Ottoman subject and a long-time, highly respected Venetian dragoman in Istanbul. ASV, Cinque Savii, Risposte, b. 147, fol. 4r–v (Mar. 26, 1626). On De Nores's and Salvago's career paths, see E. Natalie Rothman, "Self-Fashioning in the Mediterranean Contact Zone: Giovanni Battista Salvago and His *Africa Overo Barbaria* (1625)," in *Renaissance Medievalisms*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 123–43; Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans," 786–93.

62 On early modern legal definitions of foreigners as "lacking in relational resources," see Simona Cerutti, "Giustizia e località a Torino in età moderna: Una ricerca in corso," *Quaderni storici* 89, no. 2 (1995): 445–86.

63 Bartolomeo Cecchetti, *La Republica di Venezia e la Corte di Roma nei rapporti della religione* (Venezia, 1874), 444 n. 37.

64 Pietro Matteacci, *Miscellanea de discorsi istorici, politichi, e morali* (Treviso, 1634). See especially his dedication to the College of the Republic and chapter 40, "La Republica di Vinezia non hà hauuto mai altro oggetto, che la pace; e nelle guerre, la giustitia dell'armi" [The Republic of Venice never had another objective, but peace; and in war, the just use of force], 220–29. For biographical details, see Angiolgabriello di Santa Maria, *Biblioteca, e storia di quei scrittori cosi della città come del territorio di Vicenza* (Vicenza, 1779), lxviii; Gino Benzoni, "Un ulpiano mancato: Giovanni Finetti," *Studi Veneziani* 25 (1993): 49–51.

65 Bosnia's rapid and massive conversion to Islam in the fifteenth century led Ottoman authorities to greater linguistic lenience compared to other provinces. Bosnian elites were permitted to preserve their indigenous languages in official communication, which ultimately enabled the development of Aljamiado—Bosnian Slavic literature written in the Arabic script. On Aljamiado, see Ottmar Hegyi, "Minority and

Restricted Uses of the Arabic Alphabet: The 'Aljamiado' Phenomenon," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99, no. 2 (1979): 262–69. On Ottoman religious identities in Bosnia, see John Fine, "The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society," in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. Mark Pinson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 1–21; and Heywood, "Bosnia under Ottoman Rule."

66 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fol. 44r. The Cosača family, descendants of the Byzantine royal family of Comneni, ceded their many possessions in Montenegro to Venice and in return joined the ranks of Venetian nobles in 1430. Members of the family appear in various Venetian records throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including three daughters listed as monastic brides in the period 1590–1670. See Giuseppe Tassini, "S. Maria Zobenigo," in *Curiosità veneziane, ovvero origini delle denominazioni stradali di Venezia* (Venezia, 1887), 391–93; Jutta Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 246. For the 1606 correspondence between the Paduan nun Tadea Cosazza and her noble brother Alfonso in Venice, see Enrico Cornet, ed., *Paolo V. e la Repubblica veneta: Giornale dal 22. Ottobre 1605–9. Giugno 1607* (Vienna, 1859), 135–36.

67 Tijana Krstić, "Narrating Conversions to Islam: The Dialogue of Texts and Practices in Early Modern Ottoman Balkans" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2004), 120–22; and see Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011). See also, albeit for a later period, Selim Deringil, " 'There Is No Compulsion in Religion': On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1839–1856," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 3 (2000): 547–75, at 554.

68 Keith P. Luria, "The Politics of Protestant Conversion to Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century France," in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter van der Veer (New York: Routledge, 1996), 23–46, at 28.

69 See the paragraphs headed "Baptism of Adults," "Ordinarily They Are Not Baptised At Once," and "Dispositions for Baptism," in the chapter on the sacrament of baptism in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, trans. John A. McHugh, O.P., and Charles J. Callan, O.P., *Modern History Sourcebook*, at www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/romancat.html.

70 See, for example, Kenneth R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy, 1555–1593* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1976); Benjamin Ravid, "The Forced Baptism of Jewish Minors in Early-Modern Venice," *Italia* 13–15 (2001): 259–301. On interiority, agency, and sincerity as essential elements of Christian conversion, see also Webb Keane, *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

71 ASV, SDC, reg. 18, fol. 44v (June 11, 1627): "Ser[enissi]mo Principe, son venuto à licentiarmi da V[ostra] S[ereni]tà et à renderle gratie dei favori, et delli honori, che si è compiacciuta farmi, et sicome conosco di non poter sodisfar in alcuna parte à questo debito, cosi ne prometto à V[ostra] Ser[eni]tà perpetua obligatione; Hò veduto mia figliola in stato assai diverso da quello, che mi è stato rappresentato, bella, sana, et virtuosa, custodita da principalissime Gentildon[n]e, in luogo molto ampio, et spacioso, diversamente da quello, che io credeva, diche ne ringratio Dio, et non mancarò in

ogni luogo di essaltar la Ser[eni]tà V[ost]ra de buona giustitià, de bontà, de integrità, et della protettione, che tiene della p[redet]ta mia figliola, la quale io gli racomando con tutto il cuore."

72 Ibid., fol. 39v (June 5, 1627): "fù ad esso Acmat Agà fatto sapere, che quelle erano Gentildon[n]e principale, le quali custodivano, et goernavano quelle Giovani, tutte ben nate, et che la figliola di lui era in protettione no' sola sua, ma della Ser[enissi]ma Rep[ubbli]ca che ne teneva particolar cura, rispetto alle buone conditioni del suo nascim[en]to et alli buoni costumi di lei, che si haveva meritata la gratia publica, et privata." On the administrative hierarchy of the Zitelle, see Chojnacka, "Women, Charity, and Community," 74.

73 Chase, "The *Casa delle Zitelle*," 4; Chojnacka, "Women, Charity, and Community," 68.

74 For a fuller treatment of this topic, see Rothman, *Brokering Empire*.