

## **Conversion** **Abigail Shinn**

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### **Introduction**

Conversion was a phenomenon which defined the post-Reformation world in multiple ways. The fracturing of the Catholic Church meant that Christians were faced with choosing which way to turn, whether towards Rome or the new reformed faith of Luther. Increased travel and trade in the period also resulted in exposure to new faiths and anxieties about seamen who 'turned Turk' came to define English attitudes to the perceived threat of the Ottoman Empire and Islam. Such anxieties resulted in conversion being explored expansively on the early modern stage and in poetry. It also produced its own genre in the form of the conversion narrative, a strand of spiritual autobiography which became increasingly prolific and a widespread print phenomenon by the mid-seventeenth century. The Counter-Reformation and the evangelising missions of the Jesuits, also placed the conversion of the indigenous peoples of the New World as well as the inhabitants of countries in the Far East and Africa at the forefront of a now-global mission to convert.

### **General Overviews**

There are a number of useful general overviews related to the history of conversion. Mills and Grafton 2003 offer a global perspective on the phenomenon from the thirteenth through to the twentieth century. Questier 1996 provides a detailed examination of the political and theological underpinning behind decisions to convert during the immediate post-Reformation period in England. Barbara's collection (2022) focuses on conversion in the Atlantic world using the lens of sacrifice. Ditchfield and Smith's collection 2017 looks at the intersection of conversion and gender in Europe. Mazur and Shinn's special issue of *The Journal of Early Modern Studies* 2013 looks at the production and dissemination of narratives of religious change in a global context. Morrison 1992 looks to the eleventh and twelfth centuries and outlines a useful methodology for approaching a phenomenon which is always ineffable and can only be experienced by scholars via the mediating influence of texts. Hendrix, Richardson and Stelling's collection 2012 foregrounds the intersection of conversion with literary and artistic cultures across Europe. Rambo and Farhadian's 2014 handbook provides a survey of approaches to conversion through time and from a global perspective.

Barbara, Maria, ed. *Sacrifice and Conversion in the Early Modern Atlantic World*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2022-06-15

This edited collection looks at the phenomenon of conversion in the Americas through the lens of sacrifice. A way of understanding cultural exchange and power struggles, differing understandings of sacrifice shape encounters between Europeans and indigenous populations and their attitudes to conversion.

Ditchfield, Simon and Helen Smith, eds. *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.

An edited collection which examines the fluid and creative relationship between gender and conversion in a variety of contexts. Chapters by historians, art historians and literary scholars examine how conversion was gendered in literature and life writing, consider the intersection of gender, conversion and race, and explore the material aspects of conversion.

Mazur, Peter and Abigail Shinn, eds. *Conversion Narratives in the Early Modern World* special issue of *The Journal of Early Modern Studies* 17 (2013).

This special issue on the topic of conversion in a global context, foregrounds how stories of conversion were disseminated, advertised, and translated to a wider audience. Articles cover stranger baptisms in London, the Roman Inquisition, Jesuit representations of the conversion of native peoples in Brazil and India, the visual representation of ambassadorial visits to Rome by emissaries from Kongo, Japan and Safavid Persia and the stories of serial conversions of Portuguese Jews in the Ottoman Empire.

Mills, Kenneth and Anthony Grafton, eds. *Conversion: Old Worlds and New*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003.

This edited collection explores conversion from a global perspective and across a broad time period, ranging from the thirteenth through to the twentieth century. Of particular interest for early modernists will be chapters by Brad S. Gregory on Reformation martyrs' resistance to conversion, R. Po-Chia Hsia on the Catholic mission in China (1580 -1780), Ines Župarov on sixteenth-century Jesuit translations, Peter Gose on colonial Peru (1532-1614) and Allan Greer on Iroquois conversion in New France.

Morrison, Karl F. *Understanding Conversion*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992.

Focusing on Western paradigms of conversion in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Morrison emphasises the inherent difficulties in studying conversion as a phenomenon as we have to analyse the experience at one remove through surviving texts. This study is a useful work for early modernists wishing to track points of continuity and rupture with earlier periods but it also provides a valuable model for approaching conversion as a mimetic process.

Questier, Michael C. *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Questier reads the Reformation as an 'experiment in conversion' and analyses the experiences of individual converts, how they were persuaded to convert and negotiated pressures to conform. Of particular note is Questier's attention to the matrix of religious and political factors out of which conversion emerges.

Rambo, Lewis R. and Charles E. Farhadian, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

A major survey of religious and theoretical perspectives on conversion, global in scope, and concerned with the multifarious nature of religious change. While not focused on the early modern period the handbook is nonetheless of interest to scholars who wish to think about the study of conversion in a broader context.

Hendrix, Harald, Todd M. Richardson and Lieke Stelling, eds. *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

This edited collection makes important links between conversion, literature and the visual arts in Europe. Chapters consider both the use of art to express the experience of conversion and to act as an instigator of religious transformation. Broad in geographical scope, topics covered include poetry, conversion narratives, drama, sermons, rhetoric, aesthetics and religious art.

### **Protestants and Catholics**

The conversion of Catholics to Protestantism and vice versa is the concern of a number of the general overviews of conversion in the early modern world above. The studies below explore specific aspects of conversion between these confessions and how attitudes to Protestant and Catholic conversion changed during the period. Using the term 'evangelical' Marshall explores the reasons behind the dearth of descriptions relating to Protestant conversion in the immediate post-Reformation period at a point when such converts were not yet identified as Protestant. Gibbons 2012 and Marotti 2005 consider the

performance of conversion via a study of the life of the spy Anthony Munday and anti-Catholic literature respectively. Ryrie 2013 identifies conversion as a significant stage of life for Protestants. Walsham 2014 argues for the prominent role played by print culture in the conversion of Catholics.

Gibbons, Katy. "When he was in France he was a Papist and when he was in England...he was a Protestant": Negotiating Religious Identities in the Later Sixteenth Century." In *Getting Along?: Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England – Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Shiels*, edited by Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton, 169-184. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

Gibbons examines the phenomenon of the travelling convert via a reading of the life of Anthony Munday, the English spy who pretended to be a Catholic in Italy and later provided evidence at the trial of Edmund Campion.

Marshall, Peter. *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England*. London: Routledge, 2005.

In a chapter on evangelical conversion understood as a rejection of Catholicism and a regeneration of an individual's spiritual identity, Marshall argues that converts who would later be called Protestants were often reticent about recording their conversion experiences.

Marotti, Arthur F. *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England*. Notre Dame, IA: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

A major re-evaluation of the religious literature of early modern England which includes an important chapter on the performance of conversion. Marotti analyses the rhetorical and imaginative strategies employed by Catholic and Protestant writers when defining the Catholic community with a particular focus on anti-Catholic discourse. Marotti includes in his analysis a number of prominent conversion narratives including those composed by William Alabaster and Sir Tobie Matthew.

Ryrie, Alec. *Being Protestant in Reformation England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Ryrie puts Protestant lives at the heart of this study of the Reformation. He dedicates a section of the chapter 'The Stages of Life' to conversion.

Alexandra Walsham. *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain*. London: Routledge, 2014.

In a chapter on Catholicism and the culture of print, Walsham discusses the importance of Catholic print in making converts.

## Judaism

The eschatological impulse behind the Millenarian fascination with the conversion of Jews to Christianity has been explored as an important aspect of seventeenth-century religious culture by Katz 1982 and Guibbory 2000. The phenomenon of the converted and converting Jew has also been identified by Shoulson 2013 as an important heuristic space for thinking about religious change. While very few Europeans appear to have converted to Judaism from Christianity, Popkin and Mulsow's 2004 edited collection explores individual's who did traverse this unusual spiritual path.

Guibbory, Achsah. "Conversation, Conversion, Messianic Redemption: Margaret Fell, Menasseh ben Israel, and the Jews." In *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, edited by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, 210–34. University of Missouri Press, 2000.

Guibbory explores how the Quaker leader Margaret Fell advocated for a spiritual community of Quakers and Jews.

Katz, David S. *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982

Katz includes an important chapter on the 'Calling of the Jews', which examines the focus of Millenarians on the conversion of the Jews as a precursor to the Second Coming of Christ.

Mulsow, Martin and Richard H. Popkin eds. *Secret Conversions to Judaism in Early Modern Europe*. Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic, 2004.

This edited collection brings together work focused on Christians who were attracted to Judaism some of whom converted. The chronology spans the mid-sixteenth to the late eighteenth century.

Shoulson, Jeffrey S. *Fictions of Conversion: Jews, Christians, and Cultures of Change in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Shoulson's study argues that the converted and converting Jew provided a significant heuristic model for thinking about religious change in early modern England and charts the influence of Jewish conversion on the early modern imagination. Shoulson also considers conversion as one of a number of interrelated cultures of change including translation, religious enthusiasm, and alchemy.

## Islam

Conversions to and from Islam were a source of intense fascination for early moderns and were epitomised by the phenomenon of 'turning Turk'. Matar's 1998 extensive research into the impact of Islam on Britain broke new ground in this regard. Case studies of texts recounting the baptism of Muslims and strangers in London have been written by Shinn 2017 and Dimmock 2013, with Dimmock arguing for their improvisatory nature. Beyond Britain a significant study of conversion in Istanbul and the Balkans by Krstić 2011 has made links between conversion to Islam and the shaping of Ottoman imperial policy.

Dimmock, Matthew. "Converting and Not Converting "Strangers" in Early Modern London." *Journal of Early Modern History* 17 (2013): 457–478.

Dimmock examines accounts of the baptism of strangers in London and argues that they were improvisatory in nature, rather than part of an organized 'protocolonial' enterprise. Dimmock includes a careful analysis of the account of the baptism of a 'Turk', Chinano, then William, undertaken in 1586.

Krstić, Tijana. *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Krstić's study focuses on Istanbul and Rumeli (primarily the Balkans), investigating how Rumeli converts to Islam helped to shape Ottoman imperial policy.

Matar, Nabil. *Islam in Britain: 1558-1685*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

A ground-breaking study examining the impact of Islam on Britain, Matar includes chapters on conversion. He explores the phenomenon of 'turning Turk' in English writings, including drama, and the baptism of Muslims who converted to Christianity.

Shinn, Abigail. "Dreaming Converts in the Seventeenth-Century: The Case of Philip Dandulo and Thomas Warmstry's *The Baptized Turk*." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 17 (2017): 97-119.

A case study of the 1658 account by the Royalist Thomas Warmstry of the conversion of the Muslim Rigepe Dandulo. Shinn focuses on Warmstry's description of a dream experienced by Dandulo and his accompanying guide to dream interpretation. She links Warmstry's text to the use of dream accounts in radical Protestant conversion narratives, arguing that Warmstry adopts and subverts the model in order to argue for the legitimacy of moderate Protestantism.

## Mediterranean and Italy

The early modern Mediterranean was a particularly rich site for conversion as individuals frequently changed faiths as they crossed borders, often for pragmatic as well as spiritual reasons. Rothman 2011 calls such individuals 'trans-imperial subjects' in her study of the Venetian and Ottoman empires.

Dursteler 2011 focuses on female renegades who crossed Mediterranean boundaries, often changing religious identity in the process. Szpiech's 2013 study of religious polemic in an earlier period reads the Mediterranean as a generator of important narrative models for conversion. Focusing more narrowly on Italy, Mazur 2016 explores conversion in the heart of the Counter-Reformation. Michelson 2016, 2017 and 2022 looks in detail at the spectacle of conversionary sermons aimed at Rome's Jewish population.

Dursteler, Eric R. *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Dursteler produces case studies of three Mediterranean women who transgressed boundaries, widening the scope the term renegade (someone who rebels against their faith often by abandoning Christianity to become Muslim) in order to explore the experience of women who crossed boundaries of faith, politics and society.

Michelson, Emily. "How to Write a Conversionary Sermon: Rhetorical Influences and Religious Identity." In *Religious Orders and Religious Identity Formation, ca. 1420-1620: Discourses and Strategies of Observance and Pastoral Engagement*, edited by Bert Roest and Johanneke Uphoff, 235-251. Leiden: Brill, 2016

Michelson examines the phenomenon of weekly conversionary preaching aimed at Rome's Jewish population in the 1570s and 1580s. She argues that this reflected legislation designed to police the behaviour of the city's non-Christian inhabitants but also serviced an interest in urban display and spectacle. Emphasis is placed on the development of a new style of conversionary sermon in this period, adapted to the needs of its audience.

Michelson, Emily. "Conversionary Preaching and the Jews in Early Modern Rome." *Past & Present* 235 (2017): 68-104.

Michelson looks at conversionary sermons preached in Rome to the Jewish population in order to analyse how the universal category of the Jew fared in a local setting. In the process she considers how imaginary Jews, as both a rhetorical and visual category, converged with actual Jews.

Michelson, Emily. *Catholic Spectacle and Rome's Jews*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022.

Michelson employs extensive archival research to argue that weekly conversionary sermons in Rome addressed to its Jewish population had a significant impact on the development of early modern Catholicism. Providing a vehicle for defending and defining Catholicism's global outlook, these sermons became a point of prestige but also a source of Jewish resistance.

Rothman, E. Natalie. *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Rothman focuses on groups who traversed the boundaries between the Venetian and Ottoman empires in the period 1570-1670. These trans-Imperial subjects included visitors to Venice's *Casa dei Catecumeni* where Muslim and Jewish converts to Christianity negotiated their new religious identity with their Venetian patrons. More broadly, Rothman's work provides a new conceptual framework for analysing how institutional practices helped to shape and police conversion.

Szpiech, Ryan. *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Concentrated on the Western Mediterranean, this book primarily studies religious polemics from the twelfth to the fifteenth century and their use of ancient models. Szpiech's work is hugely important for scholars looking to explore the history of pre-Reformation conversion in Europe. Szpiech emphasises the importance of narrative for dramatizing conversion and his primary sources are important pre-cursors to the early modern conversion narrative.

Mazur, Peter. *Conversion to Catholicism in Early Modern Italy*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Based on extensive archival work Mazur's book analyses the strategies employed by Italian clerics to bring converts to Catholicism and explores the biographical writings produced by converts from a range of backgrounds. Mazur identifies an intriguing oscillation between toleration and repression which speaks to the complexity of conversion in Italy during the Counter-Reformation.

## Conversion Narratives

Conversion narratives constitute one of the most significant genres of spiritual writing in the early modern period. Consequently, they have garnered considerable attention from historians and literary critics. Often linked to the explosion in published narratives associated with the Evangelical Protestant community in the mid-seventeenth century, as explored by Watkins 1972 and Hindmarsh 2005, the genre has also been expanded by critics such as Conti 2014 to include autobiographical elements in works of religious controversy. Further work has been done by Shinn 2018 to map continuities between Protestant and Catholic conversion narratives as part of a shared bookish and rhetorical culture of conversion. Murray 2016 stresses the importance of models and archetypes for shaping early modern conversion narratives, even as they employ innovative rhetorical and imaginative techniques to persuade their readers. Lynch 2012 emphasises the influence of the first English publication of Augustine's *Confessions* in her study of Protestant autobiography in both England and America. Stewart's 2018 discussion of the manuscript sources for the conversion narrative of Sir Tobie Matthew emphasises the importance of processes of revision and editing for the composition of conversion narratives. Caldwell 2011 and Rivett 2011 explore the genre in the American context.

Caldwell, Patricia. *The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginnings of American Expression*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Caldwell examines how New England Puritans adopted the old world practice of new members telling the story of their religious conversion upon their entrance into the religious community. Examining these stories as a literary phenomenon, Caldwell posits that they represent the 'first murmurings of a truly American voice.'

Conti, Brooke. *Confessions of Faith in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Conti examines works of religious controversy which incorporate forms of spiritual autobiography. Looking at the writings of John Milton, John Donne, Thomas Browne, John Bunyan, James I and James II, she argues that these instances of autobiographical incursion sit uneasily in their surrounding material, often obscuring more than they reveal, testifying to the pressures placed on religious identity by the complex religious politics of the time.

Hindmarsh, Bruce D. *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Based on extensive archival research, Hindmarsh's book places particular focus on the proliferation of the genre during the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival. Hindmarsh also charts the rise of the genre in the mid-seventeenth century and ends with an examination of conversion narratives in the context of the late eighteenth-century evangelical mission beyond the borders of Christendom, providing a number of case studies.

Lynch, Kathleen. *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lynch focuses on the production of spiritual autobiography in England and America as part of attempts to shape an authentic rhetoric of self-hood, arguing that the search for inward signs of election created a new culture of life writing. Using studies of Augustine, Richard Baxter, and Bunyan alongside less well known writers, Lynch places emphasis on the circulation of ideas and texts across the Atlantic, the print trade and religious community.

Murray, Molly. "The Radicalism of Early Modern Spiritual Autobiography." In *A History of English Autobiography*, edited by Adam Smyth, 41-55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Murray's exploration of spiritual autobiographies, including conversion narratives, emphasises how these texts were both rooted in early models and strikingly innovative in their attempts to capture the experience of religious transformation. Her chapter includes discussion of the lives and writings of William Alabaster, John Gerard, John Bale, Richard Crashaw, Benjamin Carier, Anna Trapnel, and Tobie Matthew.

Pickett, Holly Crawford. "Motion Rhetoric in Serial Conversion Narratives" Religion and Change in Early Modern England." In *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism*, edited by Lowell Gallagher, 84-114. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2012.

Pickett focuses on the difficult position of serial converts who have to defend their multiple changes in religious identity. She highlights the importance of the language of motion and discovery, often borrowed from natural philosophy, in providing a riposte to charges of inconstancy and opportunism.

Rivett, Sarah. *The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

An interdisciplinary study which connects the testimonies of faith generated in Protestant New England to a scientific view of the soul as a locus for empirical enquiry. Rivett includes a chapter on praying towns which considers the phenomenon of Native American conversion. Her conclusion looks at conversion in America and its relationship to literary genre, tracking the persistence of the testimony of faith as a form of American self-expression.

Shinn, Abigail. *Conversion Narratives in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

A cross-confessional study exploring conversion narratives from a number of different faith perspectives, this book foregrounds the literary and bookish nature of conversion. Chapters focus on the role played by an instrumental reading culture in shaping processes of conversion and analyse the use of specific rhetorical strategies and narrative typologies when shaping a persuasive story of religious transformation.

Stewart, Alan. *The Oxford History of Life Writing: Volume 2 Early Modern*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

In his comprehensive overview of early modern life writing, Stewart highlights the capacious nature of the genre and utilises extensive archival research into 'messy and complicated' manuscript sources. He includes a useful chapter on Tobie Matthew which highlights Matthew's continued re-writing of his conversion narrative.

Watkins, Owen C. *The Puritan Experience*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

Watkins explores puritan autobiographies, providing a useful survey of the genre which notably includes chapters on Quaker journals and testimonies as well as chapters on John Bunyan and John Baxter.

### **Conversion and Literature**

The intersection of conversion and literature is a growing and diverse area of study. Work on conversion and drama has investigated the continuities and ruptures with Medieval conversion plays, Stelling 2019, explored the phenomenon of 'turning Turk,' Vitkus 2000, and the depiction of Jewish conversion, Shapiro 1996, Adelman 2008 and Preedy 2012. Studies of conversion and poetry have highlighted the intersection of race and religious change, Britton 2014 and argued that conversion acts as a catalyst for devotional poetry, Murray 2009. Conversion has also been intimately linked to the workings and effect of rhetoric, Parry 2022 and Smith 2014, and to bible reading, Smith 2015.

Britton, Dennis Austin. *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.

An innovative study of the intersection of race, romance and religion, Britton's work argues that romance narratives which include the conversion of Jews and Muslims register theological formulations of race in the early modern period. Examining the writings of Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, John Fletcher and Philip Massinger as well as John Harrington's translation of *Orlando Furioso*, Britton identifies baptism as a coded racial marker and demonstrates how a theology of race changed the literary landscape and the wider culture.

Murray, Molly. *The Poetics of Conversion in Early Modern English Literature: Verse and Change from Donne to Dryden*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Murray proposes that conversion is a catalyst for some of the most innovative and important devotional poetry composed in the early modern period. Analysing the work of William Alabaster, John Donne, Richard Crashaw, and John Dryden, she pays particular attention to the role of poetic form in expressing religious change.

Parry, David. *The Rhetoric of Conversion in English Puritan Writing from Perkins to Milton*. London: Bloomsbury, 2022.

This book focuses on the work of preacher-writers such as John Bunyan and Richard Baxter with a concluding chapter on John Milton. Parry's study analyses the appeal to reason and imagination employed by writers when seeking to persuade their readers to convert. Tracing the emergence of Puritan allegory as a dominant literary mode and its paradoxical popularity in a culture often sceptical of the imagination, Parry argues that conversion and rhetoric were closely entwined in Puritan writing.

Preedy, Chloe Kathleen. *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2012.

Preedy includes an informative chapter on false conversion and conformity in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Massacre at Paris*. Exploring Marlowe's interest in the link between religious persecution and outward conformity and his alignment of false conversion with a sceptical political agenda.

Shapiro, James. *Shakespeare and the Jews*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

A groundbreaking work exploring Shakespeare's depiction of Jews and Judaism, Shapiro dedicates a chapter, 'The Hebrew will Turn Christian', to the phenomenon of the Jewish convert in Shakespeare's drama.

Smith, Helen. "'Wilt thou not read me, Atheist?': The Bible and Conversion." In *the Oxford Handbook of The Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*, edited by Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie, 350-364. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Smith explores the role of books and reading in securing conversion in England and its colonies, paying particular attention to how books were used as 'technologies of conversion' at home and in the context of mercantile and missionary encounter.

Smith, Helen. "Metaphor, Conversion and Cure in Early Modern England." *Renaissance Quarterly* 67 (2014): 473-502.

Smith's article explores the intimate links between the metaphorical language of ill health and cure and spiritual suffering, pain and conversion.

Stachniewski, John. *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Despair*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

A study of the impact of Calvinist despair on life writing and literature, Stachniewski argues that uncertainty about election shaped textual cultures. Writers covered include John Bunyan, Christopher Marlowe, John Donne and Richard Burton.

Stelling, Lieke. *Religious Conversion in Early Modern English Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

This is an in depth analysis of conversion on the early modern stage, examining the changes in the representation of conversion from the medieval period to the Elizabethan age. Stelling argues that while early drama encouraged conversion, in the post-Reformation era conversion was questioned. Analysing over forty works, from plays by Shakespeare and Marlowe to lesser-known dramas, Stelling contends that drama was a privileged site for examining the possibility of religious transformation and reflected a fundamentally unsettled understanding of conversion.

Vitkus, Daniel. *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.



Vitkus looks at points of cultural contact between the Mediterranean and the English stage, arguing that the representation of the Mediterranean helped to shape English identities in a period when fantasies of Empire were transforming concepts of nation. Particular emphasis is placed on how anxieties about conversion to Islam shaped Christian identity formation in the period.

### Primary Resources

Significant primary resources related to conversion include modern editions of conversion narratives by relatively well known converts such as William Alabaster, Sutton 1997, Richard Norwood, Craven and Haywood, 1945 and Sir Tobie Matthew, Matthew 1904. Less well known narratives by women which appear in modern editions are those composed by Rose Thurgood and Cicely Johnson, Baker 2005, Dionys Fitzherbert, Hodgkin 2010 and Catherine Holland, Van Hying 2019. A useful anthology of seventeenth-century women's writing includes conversion texts by Gertrude More and Lady Mary Carey amongst others, Adcock, Read and Ziomek 2014. A significant edition of three so called 'Turk plays' is Vitkus 2000. Excerpts from a range of seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographies are included alongside an edition of Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* in Stachniewski and Pacheco 2008.

Adcock, Rachel, Sara Read and Anna Ziomek, eds. *Flesh and Spirit: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Writing*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014.

This anthology dedicates two sections to women who write about conversion under the headings of 'Exemplary Conversion Narratives' and 'Conversion and Cure'. The writers included are Lady Mary Carey, Gertrude More, Elizabeth Major, Lady Elizabeth Deleval, Katherine Sutton and Hannah Allen.

Alabaster, William. *Unpublished Works by William Alabaster 1568-1640*, ed. Dana F. Sutton. Salzburg: Salzburg University Press, 1997.

Sutton's edition of William Alabaster's unpublished writings includes his description of his conversion to Catholicism and eventual return to the Protestant faith.

Baker, Naomi. *Scripture Women: Rose Thurgood, 'A Lecture of Repentance' and Cicely Johnson, 'Fantastic Reveries'*. Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2005.

Baker's edition provides access to two of the earliest known conversion accounts. Significantly, both texts composed by women. Cicely Johnson belonged to the middling sort, while Rose Thurgood experienced periods of extreme poverty. Baker includes an informative introduction which outlines the backgrounds of both women and draws on further archival research to contextualise their conversion accounts.

Hodgkin, Katherine. *Women, Madness and Sin in Early Modern England: The Autobiographical Writings of Dionys Fitzherbert*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.

Dionys Fitzherbert's (c.1580-c.1641) life writing includes a detailed description of a period of intense spiritual suffering and her eventual recovery and conversion. Alongside a transcript of Fitzherbert's autobiography, Hodgkin includes an informative and exhaustive introduction detailing what is known of Fitzherbert's life and family background, explores the importance of spiritual reading for her recovery and places her narrative in the context of wider discourses about madness, sin, and gender.

Holland, Catherine. "How I came to change my religion". appendix to Victoria van Hying, *Convent Autobiography: Early Modern English Nuns in Exile*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

For the first time, Van Hying provides a modern edition of a rare account of a nun's conversion written in her own hand by Catherine Holland (b. 1637- d.1720) after her entrance into the English Nazareth convent at Bruges.

Matthew, Tobie. *A True Historical Relation of the Conversion of Sir Tobie Matthew to the Holy Catholic Faith; with the Antecedents and Consequences Thereof*, ed. A. H. Matthew. London: Burns & Oats, 1904.

An edition of the conversion narrative composed by the Catholic convert and son of the Archbishop of York, Sir Tobie Mathew.

Norwood, Richard. *The Journal of Richard Norwood Surveyor of Bermuda*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and Walter B. Hayward. Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints, Schuyler Press, 1945.

An edition of the journal of Richard Norwood, first surveyor of Bermuda. Norwood's journal includes accounts of a brief conversion to Catholicism while travelling in Italy and his conversion to reformed Protestantism.

Stachniewski, John and Anita Pacheco eds. *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

This edition of John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* also includes excerpts from contemporaneous spiritual autobiographies by Richard Norwood, John Crook, Lawrence Clarkson and Agnes Beaumont.

Vitkus, Daniel. *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Important modern edition of three so-called 'Turk plays': *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks* by Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge, Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, and *The Renegado* by Philip Massinger.