

The Reinvention of the Christian Turned Turk in English and Algerian Modern Fiction

*A Study of Rafael Sabatini's The Sea
Hawk and Chukri Khodja's El Euldj*

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Submission date: 25.03.2026

Acceptance date : 20.04.2026

Publication date : 20.04.2026

**Ex
PROFESSO**

Volume 11 / Issue 01 / Year 2026

* Auteur correspondant.

Abstract

This article examines the representation of the renegade, a Christian-turned-Turk, in the early modern Mediterranean world of captivity and conversion, as portrayed in two modern novels by Rafael Sabatini and Chukri Khodja. Rooted in a history of corsairing, enslavement, and shifting allegiances, the renegade figure embodies complex negotiations of identity, faith, and cultural belonging. The study draws on Stephen Greenblatt's concepts of cultural mobility, self-fashioning, and self-cancellation to analyse the captive-renegade as a mobile and constructed subject. The analysis reveals how each novelist reimagines the renegade to reflect distinct perspectives on captivity, power, and identity formation.

Keywords : Renegade; captivity; Early Modern Mediterranean; cultural mobility, self-refashioning; Sabatini; Khodja.

Url de la revue :
<https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/484>

INTRODUCTION

Captivity and apostasy, though closely interconnected, are neither exclusive to any single people, culture, or geographical space. Long before the Barbary Coast became associated with white slavery in the Mediterranean, captivity was already embedded in the laws and practices of warfare across civilizations (de Grammont, 1884, p. 1). In ancient Rome and medieval Europe alike, captivity and enslavement functioned as extensions of both warfare and diplomacy. Actually, the seizure of hostages, for instance, was a well-established Roman practice, as Julius Caesar, in his famous *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, showed that hostage-taking served as an instrument of Roman foreign policy and a mechanism for integrating and controlling conquered territories within the imperial system. Later, in medieval Europe, captivity became institutionalised as a result of the sustained conflicts between Christian and Muslim powers across the Mediterranean. This institutionalisation was so profound that religious orders such as the Order of the Most Holy Trinity (Trinitarians), founded in 1198, and the Order of Mercy (Mercedarians), established in 1218 by St. Peter Nolasco, were created specifically to redeem Christian captives by paying ransoms and negotiating their release.

If this demonstrates anything, it is that the captive-renegade, far from vanishing after the renunciation of his original culture, Christianity in this case, emerged as a figure of persistent significance within the European imagination. Rather than being erased, he was reconfigured into a powerful cultural and symbolic presence, embodying anxieties about religious conversion, loyalty, and the instability of identity. The Christian-turned-Turk, in particular, came to occupy a central place in European discourse, not as a historical reality but as a charged site of representation through which early modern societies negotiated fears of cultural contamination, political betrayal, and the perviousness of confessional boundaries.

But before examining the figure of the Christian turned Turk in European imagination, it is primordial to provide a brief definition of the term renegade. In its original, broader sense, the term “renegade”ⁱ referred to anyone who deserted his or her culture or religion, but over time it came to be associated almost exclusively with Christian captives who converted to Islam. Tobias P. Graf, in *The Sultan’s Renegades*, notes that the term *renegade*, derived from the Latin verb *renegare* (“to deny, reject, renounce”) and having entered English through the Spanish *renegado*, originally emphasised an individual’s apostasy from Christianity and the presumed abandonment of Christian values (2017, p. 30). While it was initially applied to Christians who converted to Islam, by the seventeenth century, the term had broadened in English usage to encompass other forms of perceived defection from Christianity and Christendom across various contexts (Graf, 2017, p. 30).

Existing literature on the topic is so rich and diverse. Monique O’Connell and Eric Dursteler note in *The Mediterranean World: From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Napoleon*, the so-called “golden age of renegades” witnessed substantial numbers of converts across major Mediterranean centres. Contemporary accounts reflect the scale of this phenomenon: Arnold von Harff, a German traveller, reported approximately 15,000 renegades in Mamluk Egypt in 1496, while Diego de Haëdo estimated that renegades constituted nearly half of Algiers’ population around 1600.

Although most Christian renegades originated from the Balkans, the Greek islands, and the Iberian and Italian peninsulas, others came from more distant regions, including England, Holland, Scandinavia, Russia, Bulgaria, and Germany. Conversion was frequently entangled with conditions of slavery and captivity. As O'Connell and Dursteler observe, many captives, driven by the desire for freedom, adopted Islam under coercion, while others converted willingly or not for economic, social, or personal reasons.

Coerced conversions did occur but were comparatively rare, and both Christian and Muslim authorities often recognised the legitimacy of external conformity while allowing the conservation of inner belief. The practice is known as *nicodemism* in Christianity and *taqiyya* in Islam. What makes O'Connell and Dursteler's well-grounded and documented study of renegades particularly valuable for our work is that their detailed account of movement, coercion, conversion, and life on the Mediterranean frontier provides the historical foundation from which one can understand renegades as complex subject / figures rather than as simple turncoats.

Because of the numerous conflicts between Christendom and the Ottoman Empire and the widespread practice of captivity, enslavement soon became a rich literary and cultural motif. Writers, particularly in early modern Europe, were drawn less to the political or economic dimensions of captivity than to the personal and spiritual transformations of the captives themselves. The figure of the renegade became popular in the theatre, especially during the Golden Age (Duprat, 2009). Many writers of this period were inspired by stories of Christians who turned Turk, such as John Ward, Simon Danser, Jan Janszoon, and Samson Rowlie.ⁱⁱ

I. THE EVOLUTION OF RENEGADES FROM PROTOTYPES TO ARCHETYPES

How historical renegades were transformed into literary characters between the 16th and 19th centuries and survived into 20th-century fiction resulted from processes of dramatisation, symbolization, and romanticisation. This transformation was shaped by the ideology of the period; for instance, the historical renegade John Ward is now remembered as a traitor not because he was one, but because of the play *A Christian Turned Turk* by Dabourne, in which the real story was filtered through the dominant discourse (Duprat, 2009). The religious and political discourses of the early 17th century shaped not only the aesthetic preference but also charged the cultural productions of the period. Renegades were seen with suspicion and fear, especially those who served under the Ottoman flag. A sailor who converted to Islam was interpreted as a renegade, a symbol of apostasy or betrayal.

In works such as *A Christian Turned Turk* and similar early modern texts, narratives about historical figures tend to follow recognisable storytelling patterns: the fallen hero, the traitor, the adventurer, or the exile. Rather than reconstructing these figures strictly from primary historical evidence, writers draw inspiration from individuals already circulating in cultural discourse and inherit the meanings and symbolism attached to them. The recurring use of the renegade figure in literature

illustrates how ideology is transposed into narrative form, shaping the literary representation of historical experiences.

This narrative pattern is also visible in early modern English drama, where the figure of the renegade became a recurring device through which playwrights explored questions of religion, loyalty, and identity (Fuchs, 2000). Writers such as Philip Massinger in *The Renegado* made extensive use of this figure. Nabil Matar, in *Britain and the Barbary, 1589–1689* (2005), provided a detailed study of the period's literature, with particular attention to the portrayal of Muslim characters, or Moors, in drama (Matar, 2006). Although his study is not exclusively devoted to renegades, he addresses this figure several times throughout the book. Matar notes that Muslim characters, often minor figures, as in John Fletcher's plays *The Knight of Malta* and *The Island Princess*, frequently appear in these dramas, as do renegades in works such as Massinger's plays and Isaac Bickerstaffe's *The Sultan, or a Peep into the Seraglio* and A. Roberts's *The Adventures of (Mr. T. S.), an English Merchant, Taken Prisoner by the Turks of Argier*. The examples provided by Matar prove that the figure of the renegade, used negatively, was not isolated.

Other important English captivity narratives of the era were studied by Daniel J. Vitkus in *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (2001), where he examines a wide range of early modern English accounts of enslavement and cultural encounter. These include John Fox's "The Worthy Enterprise of John Fox, in Delivering 266 Christians Out of the Captivity of the Turks," published in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589); Richard Hasleton's *Strange and Wonderful Things Happened to Richard Hasleton ... in His Ten Years' Travails in Many Foreign Countries* (1595); John Rawlins's *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol, Called the Exchange, from the Turkish Pirates of Argier* (1622); *News from Sally of a Strange Delivery of Four English Captives from the Slavery of the Turks* (1642); William Okeley's *Ebenezer; or, A Small Monument of Great Mercy, Appearing in the Miraculous Deliverance of William Okeley* (1675); Thomas Phelps's *A True Account of the Captivity of Thomas Phelps* (1685); and Joseph Pitts's *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammedans, with an Account of the Author's Being Taken Captive* (1704).

Daniel J. Vitkus (2001) argues that captivity accounts were written to assert English identity and authorize national commitment; they reveal a deep-seated sense of Anglo-Christian self-righteousness, with authors denouncing the "piracy" and "barbarousness" of the Moors and the Turks, often without acknowledging the more devastating piracy and destruction committed by their own coreligionists against North African inhabitants (Viktus, 2001, p. 37-38). Most of the narratives studied in his monograph were written by captives-turned-writers, and while these narratives provided the first original information about North Africa, they also embodied a highly charged polemic against the Muslims of the region and grounded the demonisation of the Moors not on fiction but on the authenticity of personal experience. Accordingly, English captivity accounts had the same purposes as Spanish Golden Age plays (Viktus, 2001, p. 38).

According to Daniel J. Vitkus, John Rawlins's *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol, Called the Exchange, from the Turkish Pirates of Argier* (1622) "provides an interesting picture of the place of renegade corsairs in the Algerian maritime economy, with an English renegade, Henry Chandler, purchasing an

English ship taken by Algerian corsairs and then buying English and Dutch slaves who had the skills necessary to sail it" (Vitkus 2001, p. 96). Vitkus notes that the account dramatises both the figure of the renegade and the theme of forced conversion, highlighting moral, religious, and national tensions central to English captivity literature (Viktus, 2001, p. 39).

This ideological and literary use of the renegade figure is also evident in the works of Spanish Golden Age writers (Abi Ayad, 2010; Asuero et al., 2010; King, 1992a; Soler, 2022). In Golden Age Spain, playwrights, writers, and novelists often used the figure of the renegade, but for different purposes. For example, Lope de Vegaⁱⁱⁱ in his play *The Feigned Algiers and the Renegade of Love* (*El Argel fingido y renegado de amor*, ca. 1599), presents a renegade figure who feigns conversion and adopts Moorish dress but ultimately does not abandon Christianity. On the other hand, Diego de Haedo dedicated a whole chapter titled "De los renegados" ("On the renegades"), but it was Dr Antonio de Sosa^{iv}, who, in his *Topografía*, distinguished between the Turks of profession and other Turks^v. Sosa discussed renegades who outwardly converted but inwardly remained Christian. Another significant writer is Cervantes, who himself was enslaved in Algiers. According to Willard King, Cervantes, during his captivity, interacted with several renegades, including Arnaut Mami, an Albanian renegade corsair; Dali Mamí, a Greek renegade; and Morat Arráez Maltrapillo, a Murcian renegade (King, 1992b, p. 82). These interactions informed his literary work, especially *The Captive's Tale* in *Don Quixote*, in which renegades appear as figures negotiating between the Christian and Muslim worlds (King, 1992).

The figure of the renegade also appears in other European literary traditions, where it similarly reflects ideological concerns. A good example of an Italian captivity narrative is Giovanni Battista Salvagos *Memorie istoriche delli regni della Barberia*, which includes descriptions of European converts serving in North African societies. In French literature, similar themes appear in travel accounts and historical writings such as those of Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, whose *Africa illustrata* discusses the presence of European renegades in Algiers and other Barbary cities. Portuguese writings also include references to captives and converts in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, as seen in chronicles influenced by authors such as João Mascarenhas. Even in Northern Europe, the theme appears indirectly in Scandinavian captivity narratives and travel accounts describing encounters with Barbary corsairs. In Algerian literature, the figure of the renegade is a relatively recent development. It first appeared in the early twentieth century with the publication of the novel *El Euldj* by Chukri Khodja in 1929. Prior to this period, most of the stories about the renegade were oral, and they persist in collective memory to this day.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Postcolonial, social, and migration studies have emphasised migration, exile, and cultural identity, often conceptualising cultural mobility within the context of modern globalisation. However, such perspectives tend to obscure the fact that culture has never been static and that forms of cultural mobility have existed throughout history, long before contemporary global flows. As Stephen Greenblatt suggests:

A vital global cultural discourse then is quite ancient; only the increasingly settled and bureaucratized nature of academic institutions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conjoined with an ugly intensification of ethnocentrism, racism, and nationalism, produced the temporary illusion of sedentary, indigenous literary cultures making sporadic and half-hearted ventures toward the margins. The reality, for most of the past as once again for the present, is more about nomads than natives.” (Greenblatt, 2010, p. 6)

Culture, then, is essentially mobile. Greenblatt (2010) further complicates traditional understandings of cultural mobility by identifying two dominant traditional models. The first is the classical notion of *translatio imperii*, which traces the transfer of political and cultural authority from one civilisation to another. The second model is theological. However, Greenblatt does not treat cultural mobility as something symbolic or abstract. Instead, he emphasises its material and spatial dimensions.

To illustrate cultural identity, Greenblatt gave the example of Roman imperial expansion. Cultural transfer, he believes, is inseparable from physical displacement: conquered peoples, objects, and symbols are forcibly moved, displayed, and re-contextualised within new sites of power (Greenblatt, 2010, pp. 10-12). The Roman triumph, in which defeated leaders were paraded through the streets of Rome, illustrates how mobility itself becomes a mechanism of domination, transforming the movement of bodies into a public performance of imperial authority.

Our study extends the definition of cultural mobility provided by Greenblatt to a phenomenon that has received comparatively less attention: coerced or constrained cultural mobility, particularly in contexts of captivity. While much scholarship has focused on voluntary forms of mobility associated with migration and exchange, less attention has been given to situations in which movement is imposed under conditions of domination. The figure of the captive or renegade, therefore, raises crucial questions about identity formation under coercion: what happens when mobility is not chosen but enforced? How does the subject negotiate the transformation of cultural and religious identity under pressure?

In this regard, Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning provides a complementary theoretical agenda for understanding identity construction within systems of power. Although Greenblatt (1980) does not explicitly analyse captivity or the renegade figure, his study of Renaissance subjects demonstrates how identity is constructed through cultural institutions such as family, religion, and the state. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, particularly in the chapter “At the Table of the Great,” he shows how individuals fashion themselves within and through structures of authority. Greenblatt, in his chapter, introduces the concept of self-cancellation, referring to processes by which subjects partially erase or suppress elements of their original identity to conform to dominant cultural or political expectations (Greenblatt, 1980, pp. 11–73). These concepts provide a useful framework for understanding identity under coercive cultural mobility, where self-formation is not only strategic or performative but also shaped by displacement, constraint, and enforced transformation. What follows is the analysis of the Christian turned Turk figure in the selected novels using the theoretical insights of Greenblatt.

III. RE-FASHIONING OR SUPPRESSING THE SELF OF THE CAPTIVE

Although *The Sea Hawk* by Rafael Sabatini and *El Euldj* by Chukri Khodja were written in the same period, both novels revisit the history of the sixteenth-century Mediterranean world. Their narratives converge on the Regency of Algiers, then a powerful political and maritime centre, though their timelines differ. Central to our study is the representation of the renegade in both texts, and whether these portrayals reflect historical accounts of Europeans captured and enslaved in Algiers. It is important to consider that *El Euldj* was written by an Algerian author in the 1920s, during the period of French-imposed assimilation, while *The Sea Hawk* is the work of an English writer known for adventure and swashbuckling nautical novels, produced during the politically unstable Edwardian era.

To begin with, it is important to note that Rafael Sabatini situates his novel in the sixteenth century, when seafaring emerged as a defining characteristic of Elizabethan political culture. During this period, the Atlantic became a stage for Anglo-Spanish rivalry. At the same time, England's relationship with the Muslim Mediterranean was ambivalent; Elizabeth I's foreign policy encouraged diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire and its North African regencies as a counterweight to Spain. The Levant Company, founded in 1581 to facilitate trade with Ottoman ports, corresponded with Elizabeth, who in turn corresponded with Sultan Murad III. Rafael Sabatini's *The Sea-Hawk* (1915) is an Edwardian popular romance and a modern sea novel that clearly emerges from a well-established literary tradition dating back to the seventeenth century. In this sense, the novel can be understood as a modern reworking of the early modern captivity narrative, the corsair romance, and sensational sea tales such as Joseph Pitts's *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammedans* (1704), Penelope Aubin's *The Noble Slaves* (1722), and William Rufus Chetwood's *The Voyages, Dangerous Adventures and Imminent Escapes of Captain Richard Falconer* (1720).

Unlike early captivity narratives, which typically emphasize the barbarity of Muslim captors, Rafael Sabatini's *The Sea Hawk* offers a more nuanced perspective on privateering, a practice also carried out by the English during and after the Elizabethan period. It is worth noting that Sabatini explored similar maritime themes in another novel, *Captain Blood*, set not in the Mediterranean but in Barbados. That novel recount the struggle against Spanish power and explores the world of buccaneers and privateers in the seventeenth century. Together, these works demonstrate that Sabatini was deeply influenced by the long tradition of sea writing and by the historical realities of English privateering.

The Elizabethan period was not only a golden age of maritime expansion but also a crucial moment in the formation of English national identity, particularly in the context of ongoing conflict with Catholic Spain, which was perceived as a major political and religious threat. In *The Sea Hawk*, although much of the narrative unfolds in Algiers, references to this broader geopolitical tension remain noteworthy. Like in early captivity narratives mentioned earlier, issues of power, culture, human nature, and cultural mobility are central to the novel. The protagonist, Sir Oliver Tressilian, later known as Sakr-el-Bahr, illustrates well self-fashioning. His

transformation is not a change of circumstance but a process of identity reconstruction shaped by captivity, betrayal, and the desire for revenge. Betrayed by his half-brother and sold into slavery, and later subjected to Spanish domination, he is constrained to renegotiate his identity within shifting structures of power.

From a Greenblattian perspective, this transformation illustrates self-fashioning as a process of constructing the self in response to cultural and ideological constraints. The protagonist refashions himself more than once: first, upon his liberation from the Spanish vessel, and later as he rises in status within the court of the Pasha. His adoption of the name Sakr el Bahr symbolizes not only a change in identity but also a strategic repositioning within a new cultural and political order. In this sense, identity becomes a form of negotiation, enabling him, in Greenblatt's terms, to "fashion" a self that can operate within structures of authority and gain access to power.

Sabatini presents this transformation as gradual rather than abrupt. Cultural mobility in the novel is neither entirely coerced nor entirely voluntary; rather, it is mediated through adaptation, strategy, and self-awareness. In several scenes, the protagonist demonstrates a clear consciousness of his constructed identity, revealing the tension between his former self and his adopted role.

Sabatini demonstrates through his protagonist that self-fashioning is inevitable and can be deliberate. In contrast, Khodja's *El Euldj* offers a markedly different scenario. Chukri Khodja's *El Euldj* is a problematic novel that does not engage directly with the colonial present of the 1920s because, under French rule, the ideology of assimilation left little room for openly nationalist or anti-colonial expression; writing about contemporary Algeria could therefore be politically dangerous. A. Djeghloul observes that *El Euldj* constitutes a literary phenomenon apart within Algerian novelistic production of the period. Published at the author's expense and without endorsement from a French writer or publishing authority, the novel could not be appropriated by colonial ideology (1984, p. 89). This perspective invites a reconsideration of the text, which, for a long time, did not receive the attention it deserves; in literary anthologies, for instance, it has often been grouped under "Algerianist literature" alongside works by assimilationist writers.

El Euldj, captif des Barbaresques by Chukri Khodja is a historical novel, though not in the strictly conventional sense of the genre. While the narrative initially unfolds like a work of fiction, it progressively incorporates micro-narratives grounded in documented historical realities. The novel recounts the story of a Christian mariner, Bernard Ledieux, who is captured and imprisoned by the corsairs of the Regency of Algiers. In order to transform his condition from enslaved captive to free man, he converts to Islam and assumes the name Omar Ladiousse. As this new name symbolically suggests, conversion functions as a mechanism of social mobility.

The protagonist of Khodja can be better understood through the lens of self-cancellation rather than self-fashioning. Whereas Sakr el-Bahr's transformation is gradual, strategic, and ultimately empowering, Ledieux's conversion is abrupt, coerced, and deeply destabilising. His transition from Bernard Ledieux to Omar Ladiousse does not constitute a successful negotiation of identity but rather a process of dispossession in which the subject loses coherence and agency. His new identity does not grant him legitimacy or authority; instead, it marks him as an abject and

socially precarious figure. Even after his marriage and his appointment as *surveillant des captifs*, he remains suspended between worlds, neither fully integrated into his adopted culture nor able to reclaim his original identity.

But why does Khodja depict a failed process of self-fashioning that culminates in tragedy? A careful reading of the secondary narrative embedded within the main plot suggests that Chukri Khodja was pursuing a broader objective: the figure of the renegade serves another function beyond his personal fate. The story of the renegade serves as a background to comment on the present through reflections on the past. As Hafid Gfati notes, this novel “is a frontal attack on one of the foundations of the assimilationist ideology, which it effectively denounces. The author adroitly makes his points by choosing a French protagonist and by transposing the narrative to another time period” (1997, p. 63). Through Bernard Ledieux, forced to abandon his original culture and adopt a new one, Khodja implicitly alludes to the situation of colonised Algerians compelled to assume a French identity. As Amrouche explains, this narrative strategy functions as a subtle device to address a politically and socially sensitive issue that would have been difficult to confront openly at the time (2017, p. 62).

CONCLUSION

The figure of the “Christian turned Turk” as this comparative study has shown, remains one of the most persistent symbolic formations in European and Mediterranean literatures. It emerged from early modern histories of conversion, captivity, and maritime conflict and was gradually incorporated into literary discourse, where successive processes of dramatisation and fictionalisation transformed a historical subject into a complex literary archetype. Whether inspired by real or fictional figures, the renegade endures as a polysemic symbol shaped by shifting cultural and ideological contexts.

Our Greenblattian reading of the selected novels demonstrated that the “Christian turned Turk” is not only a literary, romantic figure but also a mobile subject, produced through processes of cultural mobility and identity transformation. This figure constructs identity either through self-fashioning or through forms of self-cancellation, depending on the conditions under which transformation occurs. Accordingly, cultural mobility does not always yield a single consequence but generates different destinies shaped by power, coercion, and agency.

Self-fashioning, as we have seen, may serve as a strategy for attaining power and individual agency, as illustrated by Sabatini’s protagonist, who embodies the self-fashioned overreacher. His ambition recalls many characters of the Elizabethan period who pursued power, freedom, and self-authority, shaping their destinies through planned action, even within contexts of control such as captivity. In contrast, the second novel presents a fundamentally different dynamic. Here, self-fashioning gives way to a process of self-erasure, in which identity transformation is imposed rather than negotiated. Much like the logic of colonial assimilation imposed by the French in colonised Algeria, this enforced reconstruction of identity proves deeply dislocating, resulting in disintegration, loss of agency, and tragedy. The renegade, in this case, does not achieve empowerment but instead embodies the destructive

consequences of coerced cultural mobility. Last but not least, these literary representations reveal that the renegade figure is not simply a sign of cultural crossing, but a site where questions of power, identity, and belonging are transferred. Cultural mobility is a complex process; it can allow agency in some contexts but not others.

¹The English word renegade first appears in the 1580s with the meaning “an apostate from a religious faith,” probably borrowed (with a change of suffix) from the Spanish *renegado*, which originally denoted “a Christian turned Muslim.” The Spanish term itself comes from Medieval Latin *renegatus*, the noun form of the past participle of *renegare* (“to deny,” “to renounce,” “to disown”), related to the English word *renege*. The broader sense of “turncoat” or “one who deserts to an enemy” emerged in English in the 1660s. A variant form, *renegate*, derived directly from Medieval Latin, is attested in English from the late 14th century; its adjectival use appears from 1705 (*Renegade - Etymology, Origin & Meaning*, n.d.) resulted from.

²Some authors did depict Muslims who converted to Christianity; however, the majority of writers focused on Christians who became Muslims. It is worth noting that, in early modern European literature, depictions of Muslim captives or converts to Christianity are relatively rare compared to the abundant representations of Christian captives who “turned Turk.” The most notable examples of Muslim figures appear in Spanish captivity literature: the renegade in *The Captive’s Tale*, who becomes Christian and assists the captive in returning to Spain, yet remains nameless and bears neither a clearly Christian nor Muslim name; Zoraida in *Don Quixote*, who is baptized María; and Zahara in *Los baños de Argel*. This disparity in literary treatment between Muslim and Christian characters warrants further scholarly attention.

³ Lope de Vega (1562–1635) took part in the Spanish expedition against Algiers. He recorded his experiences in his plays such as *Los cautivos de Argel* and *La nueva victoria de don Gonzalo de Córdoba*. His writings contributed to the early modern Spanish literary imagination of Algiers as a major center of captivity and Mediterranean conflict.

⁴Antonio de Sosa (c. 1530 – 1587), a Spanish priest and writer, was captured by corsairs and imprisoned for several years in Algiers, where he met Miguel de Cervantes, who was also a captive there. Sosa is traditionally considered the author of *Topographia e historia general de Argel*, a detailed description of the city, its society, corsair activity, and the life of Christian captives in 16th-century Algiers.

⁵ For further details on how Antonio de Sosa explains the distinction between the “Turks by profession” (renegades or converts serving in the Ottoman military or administration) and the “natural Turks” (those born Ottoman), see *Topographia e historia general de Argel*, especially Book I, chapters 7–9, where he describes the composition of the Ottoman population in Algiers and differentiates between native Turks, renegades, and other groups serving in the regency.

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TO QUOTE THE AUTHOR :

SAIBI, Sihem, (2026), «The Reinvention of the Christian Turned Turk in English and Algerian Modern Fiction A Study of Rafael Sabatini's The Sea Hawk and Chukri Khodja's El Euldj », Ex Professo, V 11, N 01, pp. 08- 18, Url : <https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/484>