

## Angell in Oxford: The Travails of a Greek Monk in Seventeenth-Century England

In 1608, a Greek monk named Christophoros Angelos landed at Yarmouth. Escaping to the West after his imprisonment and torture in Athens, where he had gone to study, Angelos hoped to find refuge in England. His story emerges in an autobiographical pamphlet published in 1617 in Oxford as *Christopher Angell, a Grecian who tasted of many stripes and torments inflicted by the Turkes for the faith which he had in Christ Jesus*<sup>1</sup>; in this brief account, the author narrates his misfortunes in Ottoman-held Greece and his escape to England, followed by the praise of the country and its inhabitants. An obscure manuscript at the Gennadius Library in Athens (MS 121.1), which contains the English translation of the Greek text, presents in a more direct way than the printed quarto the collaboration between the author and his English associates, the scribes, translator, and illustrator involved in the production of the text. The manuscript, acquired by bibliophile John Gennadius in the sale of Sir John Arthur Brooke at Sotheby's on May 25, 1921,<sup>2</sup> reveals the pamphlet's publishing history, the first publication by a Greek in England, as well as an engaging story of intercultural exchange, translation, and quest for patronage.

Angelos, or Angell's life—in the anglicized version of his name—<sup>3</sup> may be reconstructed through his autobiographical pamphlet.<sup>4</sup> Angelos was born in the Peloponnese; as he writes in a letter included in a later edition of this work (1620), he came from the town of Gastouni. He left his home at the age of fifteen to study and started wondering in Greece, becoming a monk at an early age. Citing the Bible, the author emphasizes

his desire and quest for knowledge which paradoxically became “the cause of [his] misery”: “I in my youth desired much to better my understanding & my learning, remembring that saying of Christ; search the Scriptures, and in them thou shalt find everlasting life.”<sup>5</sup> His quest led him to Athens after he had “travelled through many places in Greece that I might supply that want; profiting in some places more, in some lesse: At length I came to Athens, & studied there” (sig. A2v).

He arrived at the Athens in 1606 or 1607 to continue his studies with a famous teacher, who, as Angelos explains in the Gennadius manuscript, was “a man more eminent and noble than the rest” (121.1. f. 1r),<sup>6</sup> hated by the Ottoman rulers of the city. He also mentions that when he reached Athens he had been away from home for 20 years, so he must have been around 35 years old at the time.<sup>7</sup> Angelos soon became the target of “the Captaine of that place ... a deadly enemy to all Christians which dwelt at Athens” and was arrested (A2v–A3r). According to the pamphlet, the Athenians had complained to the Sultan about the Captain who “was very covetous and cruell; unjust and did much wrong to the Athenians” (sig. A3r). Yet, “by reason of his ritches & nobilitie,” the Captain was not punished, becoming instead “offended with the Athenians: & farther to satisfie his owne greedy desires he oppressed many strangers” (sig. A3). Angelos, “a stranger and unknowne of all,” was detained and interrogated by the Ottoman authorities of the city. They accused him of being a Spanish spy only because of his appearance, especially his “apparell of red colour, such as the chiefe of the greeke Monkes use” (sig. A3r):

he is a traitorous Spaniard, as we knowe by his beard, for it is long and picked, and blacke, and his clothes are of a spanish red ... and some of the Christians standing by, made answer for me to the Turkes, that this was the usuall apparell of the better sort of the Greeke Monkes: but the Turkes withstood that, saying, that the Monkes habits were made of courser cloth, but mine was of finer, and therefore a spanish garment: this they said, not that the cloth was indeed finer then that of other Monkes, but that the might unjustly picke a quarrell & bring some accusation, whereby they might punish mee. (sig. A3r–A3v)

After this unfair accusation, they imprisoned and tortured him in an attempt to convert him to Islam. In the manuscript, he adds that the judges who tried him promised wealth and privileges if he denied his

religion: “if you become a Turke wee will make thee noble and famous and geve thee greate preferment” (12.1, f. 2r).<sup>8</sup> While describing the abuse that he suffered, Angelos also singles out one of the governors of Athens who was a Christian “turned Turk”:

Then one of the governours came, and plucking mee by the beard, and the haire of the head, buffeted mee, saying, why, seeing I turned Turke, maist not thou also? (for before time he had beene a Christian) I answered him that I cared not what hee had done, I allow not of it. Then he threwe me on the ground, and trampled upon my head before all the congregation of Turkes, and Christians. (sig. A3v)

Resisting enticement, threats, and torture, Angelos persevered in his faith: “but I denied them alwaies, telling them, that my care was not for honors, but that I desired rather to die in the same religion, for which my mother and father died also” (sig. A4). In Angelos’ account, the fear of “turning Turk” is worse than the fear of pain or even death. When put in prison, he enters into a dialogue with his own self and after reflecting on the suffering of Christ and the Christian martyrs finds the inner strength to keep his faith until death:

Then my conscience said to me in private: But can I then indure torments even unto death? then my reason answered, Christ was a man, and yet he suffered on the Crosse to death, and that not for himselfe, but others. But then I reasoned againe, Christ was both God and man, therefore hee could withstand the terrors of death: but I am a fleshly man, and perchance I cannot undergoe the cruell pangs of death: but my conscience solved all this doubt, in that the Martyrs were fleshly men, and sinners, yet by the grace of God were strengthened to die, therefore by the same grace shall I be sustained. (sigs. A3v–A4r)

The tortures he endured are not only vividly described but also represented in a rough drawing, which is attached on the manuscript and then developed into an illustration for the pamphlet: “they lead me streight waies to the place of execution, and bound me hand, and foot in maner of a crosse upon the earth, as appeareth by this figure” (sig. A4r). This is how Angelos narrates his torment: “they began to beate me with scourges as appeares in the figure. Two men dipping their rods in salt water began to scourge me... my pain was most grievous: and so they continued beating me, saying turn Turke, and we will free thee:

but I answered them, in no case, until they made me halfe dead” (sig. A4v). Despite the torture, he refused to confess being a spy sent by the Athenian merchants in Venice or convert to Islam.

At this point in the narrative, Angelos addresses those who might doubt the truth of his account:

Since here I have no witnesses, that for the present may testifie of these my sufferings, therefore I call the eternall father and God of all, both witness and judge in this maner: The eternall God punish mee in this world and in that to come, if I have not thus suffered from the Turkes unjustly, for my faith in Christ, as is under written. (sig. A4v)

The truth of his story is testified by his own body, marked by the physical suffering and privation described in the account. His emphasis on truthfulness is further related to the general purpose of publishing his pamphlet at Oxford University; the author solicited the sympathy of fellow Christians for material support, what was known in the Greek world as *zeteia* (ζητεία), a common practice among monks and the clergy in Greece during the Ottoman period.<sup>9</sup> After his dedication to the “most renowned and resplendent, most wise, and judicious, most learned and loving Patrons of the Greeke tongue: most gracious supporters of the decayed estate of all distressed Grecians and strangers” (sig. A2r), Angelos explains the reason for writing this book, which is connected to the goal of his journey, the pursuit of freedom and knowledge: “Concerning me, if any man shal inquire what might be the cause, and for what reason I came into into famous Iland, and have travelled so farre as this most illustrious and renowned Universitie of Oxford, may it please him to heare the cause (God himselfe will witness it to be true according to this ensuing discourse)” (sig. A2r). Through the narration of his life story, Angelos hoped to secure both sympathy and money. Although most contemporary English travelers to Greece viewed the Greek Orthodox Church only one degree less superstitious and corrupt than the Roman one, moderate Anglican theologians were interested in the Greek Church and clearly Angelos depended on this positive view.<sup>10</sup> In his narrative, he further justifies the publication of his autobiography by implying his financial need: “I am conscious to my selfe of mine owne unworthinesse, having not so much as a tast of that learning, which might make me bold to present my lines before so worthy men: yet because (as a wise man hath it) necessitie drives a man to many a

shift;" (sig. Bv). Therefore, with the pamphlet in his hands, he traveled through England to collect alms, a journey also repeated two years later.

According to his narrative, the plan to migrate to England emerged immediately after Angelos managed to escape from Athens. Through the help of powerful Greeks, he was let free from jail but was afraid of being again arrested or even killed:

Then I fled from Athens, and wandring abroad, found expert Marchants, which knew well both England and many other places: and I inquired diligently of them where I might find wise men, with whom I might keepe my religion, and not to loose my learning: they told me in England you may have both, for the English men love the Grecians, and their learning, and it is a monarchie, where are found many very honest, wise, and liberall men. (sig. Br)

Angelos does not give any details about his journey ("Therefore I came in a streight course to England, and came through Flanders to Yarmouth"), continuing his narration from his arrival at Yarmouth in 1608. He had collected reference letters from Peloponnesian bishops for the bishop of Yarmouth, who gave him some money and sent him to Cambridge where he stayed for two years. In the pamphlet, Angelos presents his gratitude to the bishop for his help as well as to "the Doctors of Cambridge [who] receaved me kindly, and frankly, & I spent there almost one whole yeare... Then I fell sicke, that I could scarce breath: and the Physitians and Doctors counselled me to goe to Oxford, because (said they) the aire of Oxford is far better" (sig. Br). Because of health reasons, Angelos left Cambridge for Oxford with another warm reference letter signed by the vice-chancellor John Duport among others, attesting that Angelos "hath beene very honest and studious" while in Cambridge (May 10, 1610).<sup>11</sup>

With this "testimony of honest behavior,"<sup>12</sup> Angelos was accepted at Balliol College in Oxford where he remained until his death, giving tuition in Greek: "And so I came to this famous Universitie of Oxford: & now I live here studious these many yeares" (sig. Br). As Micha Lazarus has argued, after 1540, "the point after which Greek became routine at the universities,"<sup>13</sup> all undergraduates were given daily instruction in the language. By the end of the sixteenth century, not only had Greek become a "professional fixture," but also few Greek teachers were philologists, as the Greek language "was a means more than an end, aiming

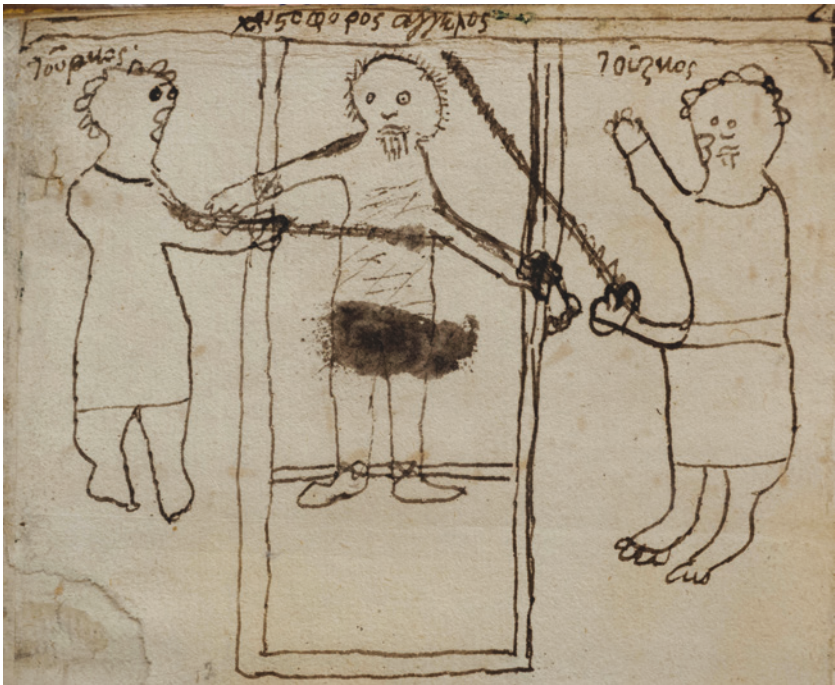
at reading access to classical and theological texts and the latest advances in other fields of expertise, rather than the philological study and interest in Greek antiquity.”<sup>14</sup> Angelos died on February 1, 1638, and was buried the following day in the churchyard of Saint Ebbe, as documented in church and college records: “Christopher Angell a Greeke borned in Peloponesse he was buried 2 of February 1638.”<sup>15</sup>

### A MANUSCRIPT WITH “CURIOUS DRAWINGS”

The Gennadius Library manuscript reveals Angelos’ effort to make his story known in England beyond the small circle of the Greek scholars in Cambridge and Oxford. It also embodies the collaboration between the Greek author, whose fluency in English is unknown, and his English associates, including scribes, translators, illustrators, and publishers. The manuscript’s colophon in Greek includes the author’s signature, “Χριστόφορος Ἀγγελος ἑλλην πελοποννήσιος” [Christophoros Angelos, a Greek from Peloponnese], following the English text in book hand; the uneven handwriting of the colophon contrasts with the English script of the two different scribes: the first having a bolder hand while the second a rounder and straighter one. The difference between English and Greek handwriting could be attributed to the scribe’s not knowing Greek rather than to the possibility, as it has been argued, that the colophon could be in Angelos’ own hand.<sup>16</sup> The colophon also provides the information that the author is a monk of the order of Saint Basil [ἁγίου Βασιλείου τοῦ μεγάλου],<sup>17</sup> who has been unjustly tortured by the Turks because of his faith to Christ (“Τυραννηθεῖς πληγῶν καὶ μαστίγων γευσάμενος”), and ends with the date and place: “1617, 12 March here,” another indication that this could not have been written by Angelos himself.

The four lines of the Greek handwriting are not straight, while letters are much bigger than those of the English script; corrections over a letter (τη) and the dative in the second line as well as the thicker ink over some letters (χ in μοναχός, β in βασιλείου, ο in χριστόν) reinforce the contrast between the English handwriting—with very few errors and crossed out words in the manuscript—and the Greek. The errors further support the opinion that the colophon cannot be in the author’s own hand, as Angelos was not just a speaker but a student and later a teacher of Greek. Above the Greek inscription, one of the scribes has written in larger writing than the rest of the manuscript: “The work of Christopher Angell a Greek persecuted of the Turks for his Religion” (121.1, f. 6r).

The manuscript also contains two attached ink drawings, which provide the models for the woodcuts in the printed editions and pictorially represent the book itself. The first, depicting Angelos' torture, looks as if someone with no ability in drawing wants to show an illustrator how to represent the author's suffering (Fig. 2.1). Could it have been drawn by Angelos himself? The drawing is on a separate paper (8 × 9 cm) attached to the leaf of the manuscript (f. 3r). Angelos appears as a bearded figure, tied on a frame by his wrists and ankles, while two other figures on each side are beating him with long rods. A caption with the author's name in Greek (χριστόφορος ἄγγελος) appears over the head of the central figure, while the word Turk, also in Greek, is written over the other



**Fig. 2.1** Christophoros Angelos' Torture in Athens. Drawing from "The Praise of England and the Inhabitants thereof with an account of his life and suffering." Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library. MS.121.1



figures in handwriting similar to that of the colophon. An inkblot over Angelos' midriff, as if covering the naked figure, adds to the rough and sketchy quality of the picture. At the same time, the drawing suggests a sense of urgency, an insistence that the illustration of the author's torture is essential for the book. Interestingly, on the page just next to the attached drawing, the scribe has added a caption, in which the author addresses those who might doubt the truth of his account by vowing to suffer "greater punishment" in the "world to come" (121.1, f. 3r). This vow is incorporated and developed in the text of the pamphlet, as mentioned earlier, emphasizing Angelos' anxiety to persuade readers of the veracity of his account. The scarred and naked body depicted in the manuscript's drawing reinforces the description of bodily suffering in the text, while the smudge could indicate the publisher's decision to dress the body in the printed text. Therefore, the drawing supports the intention of the autobiographical text to construct a persona that elicits both pity and sympathy.

The second ink drawing, attached on the fourth leaf of the manuscript (f. 4v), is much larger than the first one (15 × 15 cm) and depicts an allegorical figure of England, wearing a crown, with two much smaller figures on each side (Fig. 2.2). The figure on the right represents the author as a suppliant at the moment of arrival in Yarmouth, surrounded by a caption saying that he is seeking "refuge" in England. On the right, a figure with a hat and a staff represents the bishop who welcomes him to England, while another figure next to him has been blotted out possibly suggesting that it should not be included in the printed edition. This drawing, which is much more skillful and artistic than the first, was apparently made by an associate with some drawing skills, closely resembling the illustration in the author's proofs of Corpus Christi College in Oxford.<sup>18</sup> It also has captions in English on the crown ("England crowned"), the eyes ("the two universities Oxford and Cambridge"), the chin ("England"), and the body ("the whole country"). Whereas the first drawing emphasizes the sufferings of the author, symbolizing the autobiographical part of his text, the second drawing expresses his praise of England, which appears in the second part of the pamphlet ("The Epistle of the praise of England and the inhabitants thereof"). Angelos' exaggerated praise of England corresponds to the juxtaposition between the tiny figure of the suppliant and the large allegorical figure of the country.





Fig. 2.2 Allegorical figure of England. Drawing from “The Praise of England and the Inhabitants thereof with an account of his life and suffering.” Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library. MS.121.1

The pamphlet's woodcut illustrations, which are the same in the Greek and English editions of 1617, are based on the manuscript drawings. However, the image of Angelos' torture is more sophisticated with a bearded and dressed figure representing Angelos and two turbaned Turks hitting him with rods (Fig. 2.3). Moreover, in the pamphlet's illustration of England, the second figure representing the bishop has disappeared, thus highlighting the relation between Angelos and his place of



**Fig. 2.3** Angelos' torture in Athens. Woodcut illustration from *Christopher Angell, a Grecian, who tasted of many stripes and torments inflicted by the Turkes for the faith which he had in Christ Jesus*, Oxford, 1617. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library



**Fig. 2.4** Angelos and England. Woodcut illustration from *Christopher Angell, a Grecian, who tasted of many stripes and torments inflicted by the Turkes for the faith which he had in Christ*, Oxford, 1617. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library

refuge (Fig. 2.4). The role of the two illustrations in both manuscript and printed editions of Angelos' autobiography draws attention to his self-fashioning as a Greek Christian refugee, scholar, and messenger (the Greek meaning of his name) of the wrongs committed against the enslaved Greek nation.

### AN "HONEST" OR "VAGABONDING" GREEK?

Starting with the translation and publication of his autobiographical pamphlet, Angelos used anti-Ottoman prejudice in Stuart England in order to find money and patronage. The negative portrait of the Ottoman Empire in Angelos' publications, which was also prevalent in many English travelers' accounts of the region, was connected to the politics of the Stuart reign and King James' view of the Ottomans as enemies against whom Christians might unite.<sup>19</sup> In 1603, Richard Knolles had dedicated his *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, the most authoritative and influential early English account of Turkish history, to James. Knolles' work depended on the key concepts of providence and tyranny, representing the Ottoman Empire as the epitome of arbitrary government. As Ingram points out, most early modern English accounts of the Ottoman Empire "depicted its polity as a tyranny, or a state founded and sustained on the principle of slavery, where the persons, property, liberty, and life of the subjects belonged directly to the ruler."<sup>20</sup> Angelos' narrative provides further evidence of this tyrannical rule to contemporary readers, along with the writing of contemporaries who had traveled to the Ottoman Empire such as Sandys and Moryson.

The "Epistle in commendations of England" which concludes Angelos' narrative aims at flattering his hosts and strengthening the bonds between England and Greece; not only does Angelos address England as "the place of refuge, even the haven of comfort to poore Grecians oppressed with the tyrannie of the Turkes"(sig. B2r), but he also sees the country as the successor of ancient Greek civilization: "Heretofore gray-eyed Minerva spake and prophesied in Athens, by the mouthes of learned Grecians: but now and long before this time I see her singing in Brittany by the mouthes of most wise English men, and crowning the sonnes of England with all kindes of divers coloured garlands" (sig. A2r). He goes as far as saying that:



Grecians and English were mingled in bloud...Constantine the great, and his holy mother Helen were Brytanes, the offspring and floures of Brittainē ... for this cause the English love the Grecians, and their learning, and are beloved of them more then any other nation. And they partake one of another in many things beside: For the English nation have excelled in wisdome, and all heroicall vertues, as the Grecians of old did.” (sig. B2v)

The old legend that Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine and supposed finder of the True Cross, was British by birth, a daughter of the British King Coel was still popular in the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as Markidou points out, in Jacobean England, the aggressive, military Protestant faction gathered around the heir, Prince Henry, “repeatedly presented as the new Constantine” who would launch a crusade to redeem Christian lands from bondage and recapture Constantinople.<sup>22</sup> Although the pamphlet was published a few years after Henry’s death, this myth of origin connects Britons to Greeks, the destitute Angelos to his generous hosts, expressing a sense of belonging, of traveling home rather abroad.

Angelos argues that by loving and emulating the “Grecians of old” and their learning the English also care about contemporary Greeks like himself, stressing the unbroken continuity of Greece from antiquity to the present. The similarities between Greece and England extend beyond learning to hospitality, as evidenced by his own story: “and they are also given to hospitalitie, and pittie of poore strangers, as were the Grecians” (sig. B2v). The epistle ends with another bond between the English and the Greeks, especially with the author himself: “and they will also die for their religion, but never turne from their true worship of God to any other, as also the Grecians: yea I my selfe was once dead through the cruell scourging of the Turkes for the faith of Christ, and I never denied Christ the true God” (sig. B2v). The praise for England is thus linked to the autobiographical part of the pamphlet, to Angelos’ suffering and devotion to his faith.

Angelos’ project of forging the bonds between England and Greece continued throughout his life: he developed the epistle praise of England in the *Encomium of the famous kingdome of Great Britain, and of the two flourishing sister-universities Cambridge and Oxford*, published in 1619, in parallel English and Greek versions. Also, in his *Labor Christophori Angeli Graeci de apostasia ecclesiae, et de homine peccati, scilicet Antichristi* (1624), based on the book of Daniel, Angelos,

influenced by Protestant millennialism, contends that the Prophet Muhammad was Antichrist. Another relevant work was *Enchiridion de institutis Graecorum*, a description of the organization and ceremonies of the Greek Church, which again emphasized Ottoman oppression. This was his most successful publication, translated and published in English by Samuel Purchas in *Purchas His Pilgrims* (1625).<sup>23</sup> In the beginning of this essay on the Greek Church, Angelos writes that the Greeks surrendered to the Turks because they saw them as the Beast of St. John's prophecy in the *Apocalypse*, a claim that made the English editor comment in the paratext: "Simple sillinesse either of this Monke or of this Nation! Or rather base courages palliated with Scripture misapplied. The true cause [of the fall of Byzantium] is that they weakened by divisions amongst themselves and from the Latines."<sup>24</sup> In the context of this general condemnation of Greeks as cowardly, conflict-ridden, and deceiving, which is also evident in contemporary travelers' accounts, Angelos' essay defends his nation and faith, presenting in detail the rites of the Greek Church and the customs of the Greek Christians as well as explaining all the tributes Greeks have to pay to the Ottoman rulers, including the abduction of their children, the *devşirme*, or blood tax.

Using the hostility against Islam and the interest in eastern Christians, Angelos, like other Greeks, tried to find a place in seventeenth-century England. As Alasdair Hamilton points out in the DNB entry, "[he] was one of a number of Greeks to travel to northern Europe in the early seventeenth century, and the first to be connected with Balliol."<sup>25</sup> Before Angelos' publication, Patrick Young (Patricius Junius), the keeper of the king's library, had already written letters on behalf of persecuted Greeks seeking for Christian alms, such as the trader Anastasios Joseph, who traveled to Scotland in 1609 with such letter of commendation "for soliciting charitable contribution" to rescue his son from captivity.<sup>26</sup> MacLean and Matar also mention two other Greeks, Lucas Argenter and Anastatius Ralapolus, traveling to England to seek help in ransoming their families, who were in captivity or imprisoned by the Turks.<sup>27</sup> In the late sixteenth century, many London parishes collected alms not only for English captives but also for other Christians, who had suffered under the oppression of the Ottomans and whose families were held captives. Examining the city's parish records from 1587 to 1595, Roslyn Knutson mentions the petitions of a number of Greeks, such as Martin Lascaris of Macedonia, Demetrios Dorolego of Phillipopolis, Emmanuel Misichius of Negroponte, Icominos Elinos, Demetrius, Archbishop of

Larissa, Lucas Argenteus [Argenter], and Jacomo Milloita of Patmos.<sup>28</sup> A characteristic example of such petitions to London parishioners is that of Jacomo Milloita, who sought alms at the parish of St. Boloph in February 1594, not only because he had been imprisoned and tortured, having had to leave his wife and three children as pledges against a ransom of one thousand crowns, but also because he had endured all that for “procuring the freedom and libertie of six Christians.”<sup>29</sup>

Yet, not all Britons welcomed Greeks to their country. Lithgow, a Scottish traveler who had begun his long itinerary around the time of Angelos’ arrival to England, warned against Greek travelers to England, who sought not only sympathy for their suffering under Ottoman rule but also financial support. Although Lithgow had traveled to the Greek lands in 1609–1610, the warning appears in the complete edition of his travelogue, *The Totall Discourse Of the Rare Aduentures and painefull Peregrinations of long nineteene Yeares Trauayles, from Scotland, to the most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia, and Africa*, published in 1632:

I must give the Kings Kingdomes a caveat here, concerning vagabonding *Greekes*, and their counterfeit Testimonials: True it is, there is no such matter, as these lying Rascals report unto you, concerning their Fathers, their Wives, and Children taken Captives by the *Turke*: O damnable invention! How can the *Turke* prey upon his owne Subjects, under whom, they have as great Liberty, save onely the use of Bels, as we have under our Princes... And farre lesse for Religion, can they be banished, or deprived of their Benefices, as some false and dissembling fellowes, under the Title of Bishops make you beleeeve; There being a free Liberty of Conscience, for all kinds of Religion, through all his Dominions, as well for us free borne Frankes as for them, and much more them, the *Greekes*, *Armenians*, *Syriacks*, *Amoronits*, *Coptics*, *Georgians*, or any other Orientall sort of Christians: And therefore looke to it, that you be no more gulled, golding them so fast as you have done, least for your paines, you prove greater Asses, than they do Knaves.<sup>30</sup>

The caveat interrupts Lithgow’s narrative of his journey in Greece and follows his general unfavorable conclusion about the nation:

In a word, they are wholly degenerate from their Auncestors in valour, vertue, and learning: Universities they have none, and civill behaviour is quite lost: formerly in derision they tearmed all other *Nations Barbarians*: A name now most fit for themselves, being the greatest dissembling lyers, inconstant, and uncivill people of all other Christians in the World. (118)



Like most early travelers to Greece, Lithgow remarks on the contrast between antiquity and contemporary reality, a dichotomy that was a common theme in travel accounts of Greece. Separating the past from the present, Lithgow places contemporary Greece in the East rather than Europe, noting the irony of its current situation. Lithgow echoes Sandys' views on the degeneration of the Greeks, which originate from Juvenal's famous attack on Greeks in his third Satire.<sup>31</sup> Once marking the boundary between East and West, now it is part of the political and social order of the Ottoman Empire; as Lithgow points out, contemporary Greeks, like other "Orientall Christians," are Ottoman subjects, distinguished by their language, religion, and legacy, a legacy, however, that they have betrayed.

Whereas the general condemnation of the Greeks also exists in the first editions of his travelogue, the warning about "vagabonding" Greeks in England appears only in the complete edition, suggesting that Lithgow was at the time angry at the Greeks who had arrived in England claiming to have escaped conflict and oppression and asking for help. Prejudices defining Greeks as degenerated, deceiving, uncivil, superstitious, and barbarous are thus validated not only during his travels, despite instances in which he received hospitality and care, but also after his return home. Lithgow calls the Greek refugees and suppliants "false" and "dissembling," arguing that they can freely practice their religion in the Ottoman Empire. Rather than persecuted Christians, Greeks asking for English support and compassion are "knaves" who abuse Christian charity. In fact, Lithgow had been asked to expose such a "knavish Greek" who had been soliciting money for the Monastery of the Holy Cross near Jerusalem at King James' Court.<sup>32</sup>

Lithgow's caveat raises the question of who these "vagabonding" Greeks might be. Rice argues that while some of the Greeks seeking refuge from persecution could have been impostors, others were genuine refugees, and some even brought books from Ottoman-held Greece to England.<sup>33</sup> At the time, many English Protestants were becoming interested in the Christians of the East and especially in the Greek Church. Although initially, Protestants considered Orthodox Christians ignorant of theology and doctrine, once English trading factories were established in the Ottoman Empire, Britons began wondering whether eastern Christians had preserved early Christianity and whether they could become converted to Anglicanism and allies against Rome.<sup>34</sup> The Church of England's interest in approaching the Christian

denominations of the East continued throughout the seventeenth century, culminating after the Restoration with works such as Thomas Smith's and John Covell's treatises on the Greek Orthodox Church<sup>35</sup> that include chapters on the doctrine, liturgy, and mysteries of the Orthodox dogma and on the adoration of icons and saints. Another treatise on the Greek Church was Paul Rycart's *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, which emphasized its ability to survive and analyzed religious celebrations and customs, commenting also on the use of icons and dedicating an entire chapter to Mount Athos.<sup>36</sup>

Even as early as 1617, the year of Angelos' publication, Archbishop Abbot wrote to the Patriarch Cyril Lucaris at Constantinople inviting him to send young Greeks to study in England.<sup>37</sup> Among the students sent to Oxford were Metrophanes Kritopoulos, a Macedonian who arrived at Balliol in 1621 and later became Patriarch of Alexandria, and the Cretan Nathaniel Konopios, who also studied at Balliol and became a minor canon of Christ Church.<sup>38</sup> In 1637, John Evelyn mentions in his diary meeting Konopios in Balliol.<sup>39</sup> Although Konopios was expelled from Oxford by the Puritans in 1647, both Evelyn and the Oxford historian Anthony Wood credit him with introducing the practice of drinking coffee to Oxford.<sup>40</sup> Even if some of the Greek scholars studying in Oxford at that point amplified their suffering and financial need, most of them contributed to the University through their learning and their teaching of Greek.

Does Angelos' anxiety to publicize his story and tour England for alms, rather than simply petition officials to grant him a license allowing him to collect alms from parishes, make him one of the "vagabonding" Greeks Lithgow so vehemently attacks? Angelos' constant claims for truthfulness, his use of pictures of suffering and supplication to affect his readers, and his appeal for reference letters to English scholars and clergymen could be interpreted as either suspect or protective acts. Two letters, dated 1618 and 1620, respectively, which were included in a reprint of the English edition of his autobiography published (curiously enough) in 1618, further complicate the question by giving ambiguous clues about Angelos' purposes in England.

In 1620, Angelos went on another tour to collect funds, claiming that he had received a letter from his siblings in Gastouni who owed a debt of 300 pounds to the Ottoman authorities. The letter in English, dated January 10, 1618, was attached to the reprint of his pamphlet, which he probably published in London. Notwithstanding the absence of the

proper sign of the University Press, the pamphlet writes that it is published by Oxford in 1618. Moreover, the inclusion of a letter dated in 1620 (two years after the date of the publication) questions the supposed date of this edition. This reference letter which Angelos managed to get from his Oxford professors, interestingly attests that “his manner of life hath beene quiet, honest and studious, greatly differing from the lewd course of some other Greekes, that wander up and downe” (July 3, 1620).<sup>41</sup> Lithgow’s warning against dissembling Greeks pretending to be bishops was probably more than mere prejudice; in addition to the date of the recommendation letter, contemporary evidence suggests that a few Greeks pretending to be persecuted clergymen from the East had sought references from Patrick Young in order to collect alms.<sup>42</sup> Angelos clearly wanted to disassociate himself from such “vagabonding Greeks,” although the letter from his relatives, appearing in English ten years after his arrival may, in fact, be in Lithgow’s words a “counterfeit Testimonial.”<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, Angelos, as evidenced by all the reference letters he managed to collect, was well liked in Oxford. Anthony Wood verifies that he was widely regarded as a “pure Grecian and an honest and harmless man.”<sup>44</sup> Although the letter from his siblings is most likely a forgery, the account of his life and persecution in Athens is historically plausible, despite Lithgow’s assertion that Greeks enjoyed liberty in the Ottoman Empire. It is true that compared to the religious intolerance in Europe during the largest part of the seventeenth century, where Christians persecuted and fought against each other, the Ottoman Empire allowed its Christian subjects religious freedom, while depriving them of their civil and political liberties. This relative freedom did not arise from tolerance of other faiths, since tolerance was neither valued, nor its absence denounced, but was related to the multiethnic and multireligious structure of Ottoman society. Muslims accepted Christians while rejecting their religious doctrines, something which was difficult for Europeans visiting the Ottoman Empire to understand. Despite his remark on the religious freedom of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, cited earlier, Lithgow denounces the Turks’ contempt for all Christians.<sup>45</sup> Other travelers, such as Moryson and Sandys, emphasize the oppression of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, including forced conversions to Islam.<sup>46</sup> For Knolles, the *devşirme*, by which usually Christian boys were tithed into service, was the vehicle of tyranny:

In which so absolute a soveraigntie (by any free borne people not to be endured) the tyrant preserveth himselfe by two most especiall meanes: first by taking of all arms from his naturall subjects; and then by putting the same and all things els concerning the state and the government thereof into the hands of the Apostata or renegade Christians, whom for most part every third, fourth or fift year (or oftener if his need so require) he taketh in their childhood from their miserable parents, as his tenths or tribute children.<sup>47</sup>

Even though involuntary conversions occurred through the *devşirme*, in general, they were not common throughout the empire.<sup>48</sup> In his refutation of Greek complaints against the Ottoman tyranny, Lithgow claims that the *devşirme* had been abolished by Ahmed I but this information was wrong, as the tithe of boys sporadically continued throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>49</sup> Besides, Christians were sometimes forced to convert for political, social, and economic reasons or as an alternative to torture, imprisonment, and death when they found themselves before the court, as in Angelos' case.

Furthermore, Angelos' desire for learning, especially in ancient Greek philosophy and literature, would not have been fully satisfied in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, where Greeks received only the basics of an education and there was a general decline in literacy.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the need for better-educated priests was one of the reasons that King James and Gorge Abbott offered scholarships to Greek Orthodox students, such as Kritopoulos and Konopios.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, rather than a "lying rascal," the narrator of the pamphlet emerges as a credible man, a Christian scholar deserving relief. Angelos, like any refugee, tried to make a living in his adopted country, using his Greekness as a means of survival. His life story, translated in English, emphasizes his unfair persecution and his hope for a better future in an idealized England, civilized, benevolent, and caring about both Greek letters and people.

The Gennadius Library manuscript and the printed pamphlet of Angelos' narrative display in a personal and dramatic way relations between Britons and Greeks in the early seventeenth century, counter-acting Lithgow's prejudices. Although quite a few English travelers wrote about Greece in the seventeenth century, this account of a Greek traveling and settling in England is unique. The manuscript documents Angelos' collaboration with translator and scribes as well as his desire to disseminate his experience and alert the English audience about the state

of his country. As suggested by the etymology of the name he almost certainly chose when he became a monk, Angelos views himself as a messenger from Greece to England, representing the interests of his nation. Involved in acts of mediation and communication between cultures, he permeates boundaries by underlining cultural and religious bonds between Greece and England. According to Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani, the emissary is a figure who “embodies the processes of representation and communication within the world of the (literary and cultural) text, itself an ‘emissary’ that strives to communicate certain perceptions of the ‘real’.”<sup>52</sup> Angelos’ life writing, published in both Greek and English, puts into perspective the English travelers’ perceptions of Greece and the Greeks in early seventeenth-century England. Whereas travelers like Lithgow, functioning as cross-cultural translators and mediators, are often engaged in materializing their readers’ imaginary notion of Greece, Angelos wishes to produce meaning across cultural barriers, representing the Greeks and the English as inextricably linked. Just as the physical “travails” of English and Scottish travelers in Greece prove to their readers that the truth is written on their bodies, Angelos’ clumsy drawing in the manuscript symbolizes the truthfulness of his testimony and the urgency for England’s help to persecuted Greeks.

## NOTES

1. It was first published in Greek as: *Πόνησις Χριστοφόρου τοῦ Ἀγγέλου Ἑλλήνου, τοῦ πολλῶν πληγῶν καὶ Μαστίγων γευσσαμένου ἀδίκως παρὰ τῶν Τούρκων διὰ τὴν εἰς Χριστὸν πίστιν* (Oxford: Printed by John Lichfield and William Wrench, Printers to the famous Universitie, 1617). The English translation was published in the same year: *Christopher Angell, a Grecian, who tasted of many stripes and torments inflicted by the Turkes for the faith which he had in Christ Jesus* (Oxford: Printed by John Lichfield, and William Wrench, Printers to the famous Universitie, 1617).
2. The manuscript is listed in the card catalog of the Gennadius manuscript archive 121.1. A note in (partly faded) handwriting provides the information that it was acquired in the “sale of Sir John Arthur Brooke Br of Fenay Hall Huddersfield at Sotheby’s 25/5/21. Lot 24 Angel [sic] The Praise of England and the Inhabitants thereof with an account of his life and suffering. Original MS. 7 leaves, paper, written in a bookhand, with two curious drawings in pen and ink. Old Russia gilt; from the Haber and Phillips Collections.”

3. There are quite a few variations of his name besides the Greek Christophoros Angelos and the English Christopher Angell, such as Christophorus Angellus, Christopher Angelos, Christopher Angelus, Christopherus Angelus. I will be using the transliteration of the Greek name. Although monks do not use a last name, he may have kept his (if that is his real name) due to its significance, a messenger from Greece to England.
4. A brief biography is available at the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. See Alastair Hamilton, "Angelus, Christopher (d.1638)," first published 2004 (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/548>, accessed on February 4, 2016. Another short biography in Greek has been published by Stephanos Makrimichalos, "Christophoros Angelos, the Greek Teacher of Oxford (1575?-1638)," *Peloponnisiaka* (1955): 219-246.
5. *Christopher Angell*, sig. A2v. All quotes from the pamphlet are from the 1617 edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text. I have followed modern conventions regarding u/v and i/j to facilitate readers.
6. Quotes from the Gennadius library manuscript will be cited parenthetically in the text.
7. See Konstantinos Garitsis, *Christophoros Angelos and his Works [Ο Χριστόφορος Άγγελος (1638) και τα έργα του]* (Thira: Thesvitis, 2008), 79, a two-volume edition of Angelos' works with introduction. Whereas Makrimichalos states that Angelos' birthdate is around 1575, Garitsis puts it in 1571-1572.
8. Garitsis points out the various differences between manuscript and pamphlet concerning his imprisonment and his torture in *Christophoros Angelos*, 82-83.
9. The importance and frequent use of this practice made it an institution of the Greek Church during the Ottoman rule: two or three monks, called "travelers," carrying relics or miraculous icons, undertook several months of touring towns and villages to bless the faithful. By collecting funds in this way, monasteries faced expenses without having to borrow or sell assets.
10. There were numerous contacts between members of the English clergy and the Greek Orthodox Church during the early seventeenth century. See William Brown Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 196-219.
11. The letter is the first among five cited in the 1618 edition of Angel's pamphlet (Oxford [really London?]: J. Lichfield and J. Short, 1618 [really 1620?]). The letters are also included in Garitsis' edition, *Christophoros Angelos*, 132.

12. The phrase is from the same letter: "...he hath requested these our Letters for a Testimonie of his honest behavior, which we have willingly granted unto him."
13. Micha Lazarus, "Greek Literacy in Sixteenth-Century England," *Renaissance Studies* 29.3 (2014): 457.
14. Ibid., 445, 447.
15. Makrimichalos, "Christophoros Angelos," 236. Copied by Ingram By-water from the church records in 1895.
16. This is what both Makrimichalos and Garitsis argue ("Christophoros Angelos," 228 and *Christophoros Angelos*, 88–89 respectively). However, there is no hard evidence for this claim, as the difference could be due to the scribe simply trying to copy the author's signature. I am grateful to Professor Carlo Bajetta for this observation.
17. However, there were no monastic orders in the East. In Angelos' *Enchiridion De Institutis Graecorum*, published in Greek and Latin in 1619 and translated in English in 1625, the author writes that the order of St Basil is the only order of Greek monks.
18. Corpus Christi College Oxford has the author's proof and copy of the Greek edition of the pamphlet, which includes a list of corrections at the end, as well as corrections in the margins of the text.
19. On King James' view of the Ottoman Empire, see Patterson, *King James VI and I*, 196–219 and Laurence Publicover, "Strangers at Home: The Sherley Brothers and Dramatic Romance," *Renaissance Studies* 24 (2010): 697.
20. Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans*, 76.
21. In *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth had popularized this earlier legend which continued to be popular in Britain even in the seventeenth century, despite the lack of any historical evidence. For example, the merchant Henry Timberlake while visiting Jerusalem and sites related to the Crucifixion at the turn of the century, remarked that one of those structures "was builded by the fore-remembred Queene Helena, Mother to Constantine the Great" who was "(as I have read in some Authors) an English woman, and daughter to King Coel, that builded Colchester." Henry Timberlake, *A True and Strange Discourse on the Travailes of two English Pilgrims* (London: Thomas Archer, 1603), 24.
22. Vassiliki Markidou, "'To take our imagination/ From bourn to bourn, region to region': The Politics of Greek Topographies in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*," in *Shakespeare and Greece*, 180.
23. The English translation of the *Enchiridion* is included in the first volume of Samuel Purchas *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (London: William Stansby, 1625): "Of the condition of life in which the Greekes now live, and of their rites of Fasts, Feasts, and other



- observations, gathered out of the Booke of Christopheros Angelos, a Greekish Monke and Priest.”
24. “Of the condition of life,” *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, I. XIII, 422.
  25. A few Greeks had visited England as early as the fifteenth century, such as the diplomat-scholar Manuel Chrysoloras in the beginning of the fifteenth century and Emanuel of Constantinople and Johannes Serbopoulos, who copied manuscripts and probably taught Greek at Oxford at the end of the century. See David Carlson, “Greeks in England, 1400,” *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A. G. Rigg*, ed. Richard Firth Green and Linne R. Mooney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 74–99 and Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England 1965* (Routledge Library Editions History of Education, vol. 1, London: Routledge, 2013), 53.
  26. Cited in Patterson, *King James VI and I*, 203.
  27. Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World 1558–1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 158–159.
  28. See Roslyn L. Knutson, “Elizabethan Documents, Captivity Narratives, and the Market for Foreign History Plays,” *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996): 87–91.
  29. *Ibid.*, 87.
  30. William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures, and painefull Peregrinations of long nineteene Yeares Trauayles, from Scotland, to the most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia, and Affrica* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1632), 118. All further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.
  31. See Juvenal, *Satires*, in *Juvenal and Persius*, ed. and trans. Susanna Morton Braund (Loeb Classical Library 91, Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3.73–78; see also 6.16–17. Juvenal’s generalized attack on Greeks mostly relates to the hellenization of Rome, having Umbricius complain that true Romans like himself are driven out of their city by foreigners, especially Greeks (58–125).
  32. The incident is described in *The Totall Discourse*, 245. This “dissembling knavish Greeke,” as Lithgow calls him, had come to London to “beg Support for the reparation of this decayed Monastery of the holy Cross.” Lithgow was asked to interrogate him in Whitehall and, according to the author, the man unable to answer any of his questions about Jerusalem, proving that he had never been there. See also Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *An Intrepid Scot: William Lithgow of Lanark’s Travels in the Ottoman Lands, North Africa and Central Europe, 1609–1621* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 45, note 66.
  33. Rice, “Early English Travelers to Greece and the Levant,” 243.

34. MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 159–160.
35. Thomas Smith, *An Account of the Greek Church* (London: Printed by Miles Flesher for Richard Davis, 1680) and John Covell, *Some Account of the present Greek Church, with Reflections on their present Doctrine and Discipline...* (Cambridge: Cornelius Crownfield, 1722). Both Smith (1638–1710) and Covell (1638–1722) were classicists and clergymen, who served as chaplains to the Levant Company and the English embassy in Istanbul.
36. *The present state of the Greek and Armenian churches, anno Christi 1678 written at the command of His Majesty by Paul Ricaut* (London: Printed for John Starkey, 1679). Ricaut (1628–1700) settled in Istanbul in 1661 as member of the embassy of Charles II to the Porte, holding the position of private secretary to the ambassador. Ricaut's diplomatic ability earned him the position of General Consul of England at Izmir, a post that he held until 1678. Ricaut also wrote *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1667), which was translated into other European languages, and *The History of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1680).
37. Stephen Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 293.
38. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, 295. On Kritopoulos' career in England see also William Brown Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, 203–214.
39. MacLean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, 159.
40. See Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London: Bliss, 1815), 2.895: "he [Konopios] made the drink for his own use called coffee, and usually drank it every morning, being the first, so the ancients of that house have informed me, that was ever drunk in Oxford."
41. Garitsis, *Christophoros Angelos*, 135.
42. Makrimichalos, "Christophoros Angelos," 232–234, cites letters sent to Patrick Young from two fake Greek Bishops, asking for references or financial help.
43. Garitsis, *Christophoros Angelos*, 95, considers the letter a forgery and concludes that Angelos' second tour must have been successful because he did not reprint his pamphlet.
44. Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 2.633.
45. See Lithgow's *Totall Discourse*, 112. After an incident involving a Janissary in Troy who hit the travelers until he got the money he wanted, the author writes: "they make no account of conscience, nor rule by the law of compassion, neither regard they a Christian more than a dogge."

46. See for example George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey*, 56.
47. Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes, from the first beginning of that Nation to the rising of the Othoman Familie* (London: Adam Islip, 1603), sig. Fffff2 r.
48. See Marc Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 192–194 and Eric Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 15–18.
49. Bosworth, *An Intrepid Scot*, 48.
50. See Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, 208–219. Although there was an academy in Athens in the beginning of the seventeenth century, higher education was almost impossible in Ottoman-held Greece and young Greeks went to study in the West, mostly in Venice and Padua.
51. Patterson, *King James VI*, 197.
52. Brinda Charry and Gitanjani Shahani, Introduction, *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 3.

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