The City and the Sea: Trickster Geographies in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*

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Introduction

The premise of William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* can be described in a single far-fetched sentence[1]: Two sets of identically dressed twins, identically named and even identically freckled,[2] somehow wander around the same town without noticing each other. The family at the center of *Errors* is separated after a shipwreck. Wife and mother Aemeila, one of her twin sons, and one of the family's twin servants, wash ashore in Ephesus. Husband and father Egeon, the other twin son and other twin servant find their way to Syracuse. After the shipwreck, the separated twin sons both take the same name, Antipholus, and both servant twins also take the same name, Dromio, setting the stage for mass confusion. Mistaken identities such as these are common in the major forebears of Shakespeare's comedy—in Roman New Comedy (especially the works of Plautus) and the Italian *commedia dell arte* of the sixteenth century—but a key difference is that deception in classical comedy often relied on trickster figures, while the two sets of twins in *Errors* are accidental deceivers, tricky only because they are a physical paradox. That is, the twins are novel because of their rarity as genetic duplications, unique because of their sameness—a "tricky stratagem at best on the part of nature" (Nevo 28). The twins themselves attribute the confusion surrounding them to physical location, and in this chapter I make a similar argument, attributing the confusion of *Errors* not to trickster characters but to "trickster geography."[3] The trickery that drives the play's plotline emanates from the places the twins

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[1] Barbara Freedman notes that *Errors* is "widely considered Shakespeare's most insignificant, unselfconscious, and disjointed play" (264).

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations and references to *The Comedy of Errors* are taken from The New Cambridge Shakespeare edition.

[3] William Hynes details the six general traits and roles trickster figures share: Tricksters are usually 1) ambiguous and anomalous which leads to them functioning as 2) deceivers and trick players, 3) shape-shifters, 4) situation-invertors, 5) messengers or imitators of the gods, and 6) sacred and lewd bricoleurs (34).

inhabit, and Shakespeare characterizes these settings—in particular, the Mediterranean Sea and the city of Ephesus—as magical, liminal, and beguiling.

TRICKSTER GEOGRAPHIES

Even the earliest Elizabethan reviews recognized Shakespeare's debt to Plautus. The 1594 *Gesta Grayorum*, for example, noted Errors' resemblance to the "Menechmus," which was half-right, since Shakespeare lifted from both *Menaechmi* and *Amphitryon* (Miola 427). From the former, Shakespeare took the idea of a twin in search of his long-lost brother; from the latter, a second set of twins and a "lockout" scene. In Plautus' play, Amphitryon and his slave Sosia are locked out of their house while Amphitryon's wife Alcmena entertains Zeus and Mercury, who are disguised as her husband and slave. Since *Errors* is unmistakably adapted from these two Plautus plays about twins, the "errors" referred to in the title are almost always interpreted as mistaken identity. It is true that much of the humor in Shakespeare's play results from characters presuming that they are talking to one twin when it is actually the other. However, the sinister and terrifying aspects of *Errors*, the ones lurking just under the simple gags and jokes, may require a different interpretation. I am certainly not the first to note the title's etymology (from the Latin errare) or claim that the play has as much to do with wandering or roaming as it does with making mistakes,[4] but I also claim that the twins' wandering in particular geographical spaces, both before the events of the play and during them, are central to the play's characteristic "errors" of identity. Moreover, the specific locations where they roam are just as significant (if not more so) as the wandering itself.

Although *Errors* follows the traditional Aristotelian unity of place, various locations arouse confusion within the unified stage setting. Syracusan Antipholus and Dromio[5] describe the sea and the city as places that "confound" and are imbued with" imaginary wiles" and "goblins, owls, and sprites," which they believe are the

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4 See Barbara Freedman's *Reading Errantly*. She notes the ambiguity in the play's title through its Latin etymology: "Since the etymology of errors suggests not only mistakes but wandering, we will move with this play and seek to catch our errors as we make them" (266). See also Harry Levin, "Two Comedies of Errors" in *The Comedy of Errors: Critical Essays* (113-133) and Alexander Leggatt's chapter on "The Comedy of Errors" in *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (1-20).

5 The two sets of twins share the same names, Antipholous and Dromio and are distinguished from each other by their hometowns: Syracuse or Ephesus.

supernatural cause of the confusion they experience during their day spent in Ephesus (1.2.38, 2.2.181, 4.2.10). In Shakespeare's work, these two geographies replace the archetypal trickster whose task it is to cause confusion and stir up trouble. In Plautus' *Amphitryon*, on the other hand, Mercury fills the trickster role when he nearly drives the slave Sosia mad by taking on his likeness and insisting that the slave must be an imposter (455-457).[6] No such trickster is to be found in *Errors*, an absence explained by Leo Salingar's distinction between Roman and Elizabethan comic sensibility: "There was much in classical comedy that the Elizabethans could not accept. Their attitudes towards trickery, for instance, is morally cautious, if not ambiguous—it is funny when applied to moral deviants, but otherwise reprehensible" (171). My claim is that Shakespeare revised and re-visioned the trickster character in *Errors*. What results is the play's seemingly purposeful rejection of guile and deliberate deception, relying instead on coincidence and confusion.

As I argue, it is geography, not the intentions of the twins themselves, that drive the mistaken identities. The Syracusans come to Ephesus specifically to look for their twins, and the many coincidences should tip them off that their doubles might actually be there. Instead, Syracusan Antipholus attributes the strangeness he encounters to the confounding effects of the sea and the witchcraft of Ephesus. Thus, the geographies that the Antipholi and Dromios inhabit—and wander around in—are more than just settings. In a sense, they become agents that exacerbate the hidden problems of identity. Nevo attributes the confusion to a "knot of errors, the *processus turbarum*, [that] turns the world of the protagonists upside down, and discovers them to us in all their comical, previously hidden ambivalences, violences, and consternations" (27). While I agree with Nevo about the presence of "hidden ambivalences, violences, and consternations," I would suggest that the world that the Antipholi and Dromios roam around in was already upside down; the places themselves help bring out the previously hidden identity issues that exist between the twins.

That geography plays such an important role in *Errors* should not be surprising. Aside from the ambiguous meaning of "errors," which connotes not only mistakes but wandering in far-flung places, several major characters are defined geographically. Scholars refer to

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6 Mercury's trickery immediately throws Sosia into a troubling identity crisis. He asks himself and the gods, "Di immortales, obsecro uostram fidem, / ubi ego perii? Ubi immutatus sum? Ubi ego formam perdidi? An egomet me illic reliqui, si forte oblitus fui?" "Immortal Gods, I beg your protection. Where have I vanished to? Where have I been transformed? Where have I misplaced my appearance? Or did I leave myself over there, if by chance I forgot myself?" Translation mine.

the twins by their city of residence to distinguish them: Solinus, as Duke of Ephesus, is inseparable from the territory he governs, and Egeon and Adriana have names that echo regional bodies of water within the larger Mediterranean. Not only are many characters intimately associated with particular places, but the play's many confusions often arise from the perceived supernatural attributes of the Mediterranean Sea and the city of Ephesus—liminal, seemingly magical places that deceive and confound, just as an archetypal trickster would. These are the places that shatter familial bonds, force long separations, and ultimately play a role in the twins' reunion. In calling these places liminal, I borrow from anthropologist Victor Turner, who explains that "liminal entities are neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (95). The unexpected happens within these threshold places because they are unstable. Further, by wandering through these liminal spaces, the Antipholi and Dromios become liminal figures. They, too, find themselves betwixt and between, searching for a solid identity and familial structure while roaming in the margins. In the pivotal lock-out scene, Ephesian Antipholus finds himself literally stuck in the threshold, begging to be let in to his house (3.1). For both the characters in the play and for Elizabethans watching it, these locations possess ambiguous but predominant dualities: the sea brings separations and reunions, and Ephesus represents both witchcraft and Christianity.

The following sections focus on these trickster geographies, examining the characters' attitudes toward them and how those attitudes arise from Elizabethan cultural concerns. Each of these locations plays a part in the twins' magical and somewhat miraculous transformation. Turner claims that liminal people go through three steps: "separation, margin (*limen*, signifying 'threshold' in Latin), and aggregation" (94). The Syracusan and Ephesian pairs go through this process as they are exposed to each trickster geography. The sea is the source of their separation, while the town causes marginalization and alienation.

THE HOMERIC SEA

Although *Errors* rejects an archetypal trickster figure as the architect of the play's confusion, the traits of the archetypal trickster can be found dispersed among the uncertain spaces in which the twins roam. Of the play's trickster geographies, the Mediterranean

Sea is the one that destroys Egeon's family and diminishes each member's identity. The Mediterranean is tricky because it is an in-between space, separating cultures, beliefs, and territories, but also serving as a fluid passageway that enables the commingling of these elements. William Hynes claims that tricksters are "shape-shifters" who possess "ambiguous and anomalous" qualities—characteristics and traits that accurately describe not only the Mediterranean in *Errors* but also the literature that influenced Shakespeare's characterization of it (Hynes and Doty 34). Indeed, one can see how much Homer's *Odyssey* shaped Shakespeare's Mediterranean as the characters in *Errors* go through their own odyssey of separation and reunion.

When considering literary representations of the Mediterranean Sea, scholars inevitably find themselves looking back at the *Odyssey*. At its heart, Homer's epic is an episodic set of fantastical myths, but its treatment of the sea and sea travel gives real insight into the Greek's fear of and reverence for the Mediterranean. It can also serve as a guide for thinking about the meaning of the Mediterranean in *Errors*. While the tales in the *Odyssey* mostly center on Odysseus' thwarted journey by sea to return to Ithaca after the Trojan War, one of the most compelling characterizations of the Mediterranean comes not from these misadventures, but from Menelaus' retelling of his return to Sparta. Having been stranded on the island of Pharos for over twenty days by a lack of wind, Menelaus learns he must capture Proteus, the archetypal old man in the sea, and force him to reveal how to get back home. The problem for Menelaus is that Proteus possesses "old wizard's tricks" that allow him to transform into other creatures and escape (4.461). Indeed, when Menelaus and his men rush Proteus, the divine old man "turned into a great bearded lion, and then a serpent— a panther—a ramping wild boar—a torrent of water—a tree with soaring branchtops" (4.512-517). Menelaus subdues Proteus, learns about the fate of his brother and other Achaeans, and also learns that he has to make a sacrifice to Zeus in order to leave Pharos.

Homer's personification of the Mediterranean in the form of a shape-shifting wizard reminds his audience that the sea is capricious, possessing raw, untamable power and multiple dangers, but also valuable resources. There is a magic in the sea's volatility and a liminality in its uncertainty. Although notw a personified character in *Errors*, the Mediterranean exhibits these same protean qualities, granting fortunes one moment, then bringing destruction the next, and leading to a family reunion in the end. Much like Proteus in the *Odyssey*, the characters in *Errors* who have been submerged in the

Mediterranean take on unstable identities, as if the qualities of the sea become ingrained in their very natures. Egeon, the merchant of Syracuse, tells Solinus, Duke of Ephesus, about a violent tempest that he and his family endured, calling it "a doubtful warrant of immediate death" in the first scene (1.1.67). Their lives are spared but the separation caused by the subsequent shipwreck explains the mistakes people make in distinguishing the Antipholi and Dromios throughout the rest of the play. When the family is split apart, the twins' identities are fractured, and the way the characters describe their confusion is framed in terms of the sea, as if any perplexing situation must be traced back to the first tragedy that damaged their identities. Members of Egeon's family talk about the waters that have torn them apart in a way that makes the Mediterranean a source of magic, an agent of fortune, a place of uncertainty.

The Mediterranean is not dangerous just because of tragic acts of fortune, such as the shipwrecks and pirates Egeon encounters, or because of magical sea creatures like the ones Syracusan Antipholus compares Luciana to. Quite possibly the biggest threat the Mediterranean poses is the effects of its transformative qualities. Unlike Circe, who fully transforms Odysseus' men into pigs, the magical effects of the sea in *Errors* leave the characters half-formed, neither the people they were before, nor wholly someone else. If one spends enough time at sea or has had his or her life shaped by traumatic events at sea, it can also drastically change one's identity and the connectedness he or she feels with family.

In *Errors*, the sea is not simply dangerous because of the many outward obstacles it presents or because of the bodily harm it threatens. It is also dangerous because it changes the characters that have been submerged in it into liminal figures without full personalities and identities. The Syracusans are afraid that some magical force will transform them while they are in Ephesus, yet their time at sea before their arrival might be the real agent of change (1.2.95-102). Only through reunification of their family can they fully regain themselves and their place in the word. Paradoxically, as the play shows time and again, they have trouble reuniting with family precisely because their identities are too diminished to be recognizable to others.

Shakespearean storms at sea and shipwrecks often cause a loss of family, loss of identity, and a reversal of fortune, as in *Twelfth Night, The Tempest,* and *Pericles,* and the storm and shipwreck of *Errors* cause these same kinds of losses and reversals. As the family voyages to Syracuse, their ship is caught in a storm and starts to sink. Aemilia ties herself,

one twin son, and one twin servant to one side of a mast. Egeon does likewise with the other two boys on the other side of the mast.[7] At this point the family is separated into two little groups of three, but they are still tenuously linked by the mast as they float helplessly in the sea. Ships show up on the horizon as the storm clears, and the family believes that they are saved, but a rock breaks the mast in two, completely fracturing the family. As the two groups float away from one another, they are rescued by ships heading in different directions. Just within this one episode, which Egeon recalls to Duke Solinus just before his death sentence is supposed to be carried out, there are a few separations and hopes of reunion before the final heartbreak, when two ships carry off the separated family groups (1.1.62-120). This initial episode establishes a template for the rest of the family's missed opportunities to reunite in Ephesus. It seems during Egeon's tale that when the connecting mast of the ship does not keep the family together, then he is certain a rescuing ship will. When two different ships pick up the family groups, Egeon tells Solinus that he was still confident that his ship could catch up to the one that rescued his wife and the other half of the twins (1.1.115-117). In the same way, the audience is reassured that the mistakes in identity that take place in the rest of the play cannot go on indefinitely. Eventually, one of the twin merchants, one of the twin servants, or a family member will wise up and reveal the cause of the errors. Part of the reason this fails to happen time and again is because the original rift in the family separates them for so long that they cannot recognize each other even when they are so close and have so many interactions with the same people. The separation at sea causes the family's lack of identity, and that lack of identity causes much of the confusion in the rest of the play.

PALIMPSESTIC EPHESUS

Building upon his allusions to the *Odyssey* and representation of the sea as a liminal space and agent of fortune, Shakespeare darkens the Ephesian city center by making it a town overrun with witches and sorcerers—ones that take their influence from ancient Greek and Roman religion, the New Testament, and Renaissance magic. Shakespeare's Ephesus, with all its cultural, religious, and geographic overtones, has led Randall Martin to refer to the city

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7 Odysseus similarly has himself tied to a mast so that he can listen to the Sirens' song without being lured to his death (12.174-179).

as "a palimpsest" because of the anachronisms in *Errors* (366). And like a palimpsest, the town is not wholly one place. Viewers can see the surface representations of an Eastern Hellenized space, but also traces and glimmers of something more mysterious. Shakespeare's Ephesus combines both Eastern and Western elements. For example, Antipholus of Ephesus speaks of "Turkish tapestry" in his house, but that house, the Phoenix, is named after a London tavern or a shop on Lombard Street (1.2.75 and fn. 75). T.W. Baldwin even refers to the Ephesus of *Errors* as "Ephesus-London" because of the numerous allusions to London in the Ephesian cityscape (96).[8]

Yet Ephesus hardly needed Shakespeare's vision to be classified as a city influenced by Eastern and Western culture. Anatolia changed hands between Eastern and Western powers several times. It was ruled by the Persians beginning around 550 BCE, then fell under the control of Alexander the Great in 334 BCE (Kealhofer and Grave 417), and was finally absorbed into the Roman Empire in 133 BCE (Graf 53). Situated on the Western coast of modern-day Turkey, Ephesus was a major hub for merchants and travelers moving between Asia Minor, the Near East, and the Mediterranean regions. In *Revelations of John*, William Barclay describes Ephesus as "the Gateway to Asia ... For all the travelers and the trade, from the Cayster to the Maeander Valleys, from Galatia, from the Euphrates and from Mesopotamia, Ephesus was the highway to Rome" (58). As Barclay points out, the trade route in Ephesus was two-way—both an entrance to Asia and a path to Rome. As a point of transition between East and West, Ephesus has a natural liminality that lends itself to the themes of dislocation, discovery, and metamorphoses in *Errors*.

Setting the play in such a region places contemporary anxieties and tensions as a backdrop for the entire play. The movement and transition inherent to the place correlates to great flexibility of cultural interactions, whether they be profitable or polluting. Linda McJannet notes of this cross-cultural contamination, "Although eventually dominated and influenced by Rome, the culture of the East retained much of its Hellenic character, and the Romans were 'Orientialized' even as the East was 'Romanized'" (McJanet 88). This concern is expressed more overtly in other Shakespeare plays where the phrase "turning Turk" is used to signify a complete reversal in one's actions, attitudes, or fortunes (*Much ado about Nothing* 3.4.50; *Hamlet* 3.2.251;

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8 Baldwin suggests, "the twin Dromios, find themselves much confused in the witchery of Ephesus-Lon-
   don, as no doubt did their creator."

Othello 2.3.15).[9] Not only does the phrase suggest betrayal of one's Christian, Western European heritage, it also implies an inherent untrustworthiness in those from the East.

These same anxieties over Eastern contamination appear in *Errors* and can best be seen in Syracusan Dromio's description of one of its citizens, the Ephesian kitchen maid Nell. He describes her as "swart like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept" (3.2.95). This description at once identifies Nell as a dark-skinned representative of Turkey and suggests that she is a metaphorical and literal contaminant who cannot be contained. Nell, who mistakes Syracusan Dromio for her husband, also sweats so much that "a man may go overshoes in the grime of it" (3.2.96). Nell insists that she and Dromio are married and she harasses the servant until he is driven away. These descriptions, which speak overtly about foreign pollution and contamination, come before Dromio projects her Turkish pollution and spreads it worldwide. What follows is a comparison of the woman to a globe, presumably because of her rotund shape, with many European countries located in seemingly diseased parts of her body. As Syracusan Antipholus asks more questions about her, a map of Western Europe is projected on her body, making her both a figure of jest and danger. Pauw describes the scene as a form of commodification in which "a woman's body is imagined as a geopolitical entity to be mapped out according to the rules, and field of reference, of male power politics" (5).

Since antiquity, nations and regions have been compared to women's bodies. Pauw compares the above passage in *Errors* to a passage in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* where "Athenian and Spartan negotiators … map out their respective sexo-territorial demands on the sexy body of Reconciliation," personified as a young woman (1). The practice of depicting a country or region as a female was commonplace in Renaissance Europe as well. In fact, European monarchs at war with the Ottoman Empire commissioned artists who represented their patrons' battles through the female form.[10] Titian's *Religion Succored by Spain* (c.1575) depicts Spain as a woman armed with shield and

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9 *Much Ado About Nothing* 3.4.50, Margaret tells Beatrice, "Well, and you be not turned Turk, / there's no more sailing by the star." *Hamlet* 3.2.251, "Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if / the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me." *Othello* 2.3.15, "Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that / Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?"

10 See Larry Silver's "Europe's Turkish Nemesis" in *Representing Imperial Rivalry in the Early Modern Mediterranean* 58-79. Silver discusses the importance of Titian's *Religion Succored by Spain* and von Aachen's *The Battle of Sisak*, among other paintings, as representations of European women and the Turkish Other.

spear striding toward Religion, a cowering, bedraggled, bare-breasted woman with snakes nipping at her back and a cross by her feet (see fig. 1). In the background, a turbaned man representing Turkey struggles at sea with a chariot and two horses. This unsubtle piece of allegorical propaganda commemorated the Holy League's victory in the Battle of Lepanto—a maritime battle in the Gulf of Corinth that prevented the Ottomans from taking further territory in the Mediterranean.

In a similar female-centered piece of propaganda, Hans Von Aachen created *The Battle of Sisak* (1603) to commemorate a Habsburg victory over the Ottomans ten years before (see fig. 2). In it, the goddess Victory places a laurel crown atop a woman in a blue and white checked dress representing Croatia. Above the two women, an eagle, representing Rudolph II, Holy Roman Emperor, attacks a crescent moon, representing the Ottoman Empire. In the background Rudolph II's forces can be seen driving Ottoman forces into a river. Both works address European Christian victories over the Muslim Other, and both works use women to represent Christian nations or Christianity itself. The Turkish threat in von Aachen's painting, on the other hand, is represented less by men in stereotypical garb and symbols that would mark the Turks as Other to a European audience. In both works the Turks driven into bodies of water, which often serve as natural boundaries, and so may be used in these paintings for locative and topographical value; however, as natural boundary markers that help establish ownership of territory, the waters subsuming Ottoman forces also clearly demarcate Christian European lands that the enemy has been pushed back from. These waters place the Turks back in an indeterminate space beyond the Christian pale and function much in the same way as the Mediterranean Sea did in real life.

Fig. 1. Titian, *Religion Succored by Spain*, 1575, oil on canvas, Prado Museum, Madrid.

Fig. 2. Hans von Aachen, *The Battle of Sisak*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

These two works contrast with Syracusan Antipholus' description of Nell and serve as good points of departure from Pauw's assertions in *Landscaping the Body*. Nell's description does not at all seem like Western dominance over a contested space nor male dominance over a female body, as Titian and von Aachen's works convey and as Pauw suggests. The fact that she is in pursuit of Syracusan Dromio shows that Nell is not willing to play by "the rules of male power politics." Although Nell's description is hardly complimentary, it shows an entirely othered figure, Eastern and female, threatening and harassing a Western male, the opposite of what takes place in *Religion Succored by Spain* and *The Battle of Sisak*. On a macro level, the description illustrates the fear of the East subsuming and polluting all the countries of Western Europe. After all, the Ottoman Empire was a real threat to European powers. Suleiman the Magnificent ruled from 1520-1566 and was in control of not only the Middle East and Northern Africa, but also southeast Europe and the Mediterranean (Strobel). Scholars have noted that many of Nell's ailments sound like she is suffering from venereal disease.[11] Ireland is located "In her buttocks," Scotland in "the palm of her hand," France is in her hair, and England is located on her chin "by the salt rheum," next to a stream of either mucous or tears. Finally, Spain, which during Shakespeare's time was arguably the most infiltrated by Turkish forces, is on and in her nose, which is covered with pimples and pustules that Dromio calls "rubies, carbuncles, and sapphires" (3.2.119-120). Taken together, the historical threat of Turkish dominance in the Mediterranean coupled with Nell's overtures and implied venereal disease within the text, and Syracusan Dromio's description of her shows Renaissance anxieties about Eastern liminality and its polluting effects on Western Europe. As Europe is projected all over Nell's body, one gets the sense of an Eastern invasion and infiltration, or a Europe drowning in foreign pollution, rather than Western countries leaving marks of dominance on an Eastern body. If infected with Nell's disease, these European countries could effectively "turn Turk."

Syracusan Dromio's description of Nell is more than a comedic episode making fun of a large, promiscuous woman. It is not a coincidence that the majority of body parts mentioned by Dromio are themselves liminal and paradoxically provide both boundaries and

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11 See Jonathan Gil Harris's "Syphilis and Trade: Thomas Starkey, Thomas Smith, *The Comedy of Errors*" in *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (40-42). Harris suggests that Nell's "communicable disorder resulting from transactions between nations" is "integral to the play's presentation of syphilis" (40).

passageways between the inside and outside of the body. In this way, viewing Nell as an Eastern presence invading and infecting Europe illustrates the liminality of Turkey, Ephesus, and the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey sits in an in-between space, decidedly Eastern and yet close enough that it can reach, influence, and pollute Europe. A commonly held and heavily trafficked sea serves as both a buffer zone and a passageway. If Nell could at any time have been described as merely a Turkish kitchen maid, Syracusan Dromio's depiction of her shows that she can no longer be dismissed that easily. In the same way, the Ottoman Empire emanated from Turkey and took control over large swaths of the Mediterranean Sea before chipping away at parts of Europe. The Ottomans were associated with Turkey but could not be contained there. Nell's own border and boundary ambiguity mirror the region she comes from, not only in the ancient world that *Errors* supposedly takes place in, but in Shakespeare's time as well.

If Nell and Syracusan Dromio's interaction is looked at as a parallel to Luciana and Syracusan Antipholus' in 3.2.1-70, then we have a full picture of the dangers of the Mediterranean region. Nell threatens to overpower Dromio with her sexual forwardness, hinting at the real-life contemporary struggles over land, trade, and influence between Europeans and Ottomans in the region. Luciana lacks Nell's overt and aggressive sexuality, but her allure, her refusal to engage with Antipholus, and her almost bewitching charm draw the Syracusan twin away from his mission to reunite with his family and his desire to get back home. Linda McJannet asserts, "the relatively benign views of the East in these plays [*The Comedy of Errors* and *Pericles*] suggest a paradoxical relation between humanist veneration for ancient Greek culture and Christian hostility to the Muslim Turks" (McJanet 87). In a point of contrast, I do not see the views of the East in *Errors* as particularly benign. With its witchcraft, mountebanks, harsh laws against foreigners, pirates, and tempestuous sea, Ephesus and the Eastern Mediterranean are about as threatening as can be in a comedy. The second part of McJanet's statement, however, highlights the difference in treatment between Luciana's characterization as the sea and Nell's characterization as a contaminating force threating to take over Europe. Both the sea and Turkey itself are dangerous, as we can glean from their applications to two dangerous women. Yet Luciana's characterization in terms of the Odyssean sea show a sort of veneration of her within the text and a veneration of Homer without; Luciana is dangerous, magical, and forbidden, but still beautiful and intriguing. On the other hand, Nell, representing Turkey, shows

hostility and even fear of the region and the people who inhabit it. Together Luciana and Nell illustrate the reputation for the practical reality of magic in Ephesus that confuses the visiting Syracusans, causes mistakes in identity, and keeps Egeon's family separated, even while they all in such close proximity to one another.

CONCLUSION

As with carnival, the reversals of power in *Errors* last only for a prescribed time. At the end of the play, order is restored, and power is placed gently back into the hands of the palace, church, and family. More than a conventional Christian ending on par with the anticipated weddings at which so many Shakespearian comedies conclude, the abbey and Aemilia's new role as abbess represent the vow that all cloistered religious take—stability of place and personal identity, which the Antipholi, Dromios, and Egeon have lacked since the family's separation. The abbey where the family reunites acts as a tranquil, stable antidote to the chaos caused by the sea and city. Sequestered in the abbey and thus far removed from volatility, Aemilia appears, sets the world right side up, and provides refuge and clarity not only for the Syracusans fleeing Ephesian captivity, but for everyone threatened with permanent displacement caused by the play's trickster geographies.

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