

**ENGLISH REPRESENTATIONS OF ISLAM
AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY:
ISLAM IMAGINED AND ISLAM EXPERIENCED,
1575-1625**

by

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For Mama and Dad

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes English representations of Muslims between 1575 and 1625, charting a chronology of intersections of material, political, and cultural interests. Although the focus is upon representations of Islam drawn from the general culture of London, in order to decode these consideration is given to representations of Islam made in the course of commercial and diplomatic contact between the English and Muslims of the Ottoman and Moroccan empires.

In 1575 the English were engaged in an ongoing struggle with Spain, a struggle which had cultural as well as commercial, diplomatic, and military consequences. On account of repeated embargoes at Spanish-controlled Antwerp, the trading hub of Western Europe, the English were forced to take their wares directly to northern and southern Europe, and beyond. Queen Elizabeth, through a canny use of conditions attached to grants of monopoly, imposed upon the emerging commercial infrastructure a network of diplomatic contacts. Among these were embassies established at Istanbul and Marrakech, through which Elizabeth attempted to create anti-Spanish military alliances with the Ottoman and Sa'adian sultans.

The breadth of vision of Elizabethan commercial culture is impressive, but Elizabethan literary culture was even more aggressively innovative and expansive. As writers such as Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, and William Shakespeare transformed the literary forms of their homeland they captured the farthest reaches of English travel and commerce, granting Islam a prominent place in the symbolic landscape of English general culture. In keeping with the openness towards Islam demonstrated in Elizabethan commerce and diplomacy, literary representations of Islam of the last quarter of the sixteenth century were by turns positive and affiliating.

Even prior to the death of Elizabeth I Anglo-Islamic relations had cooled. With a stable commercial infrastructure in place and the Spanish threat in decline, English culture became amenable to engagement with Catholic Europe. Under King James I English foreign policy became more conciliatory towards the Spanish, a shift in policy which resonated with the increasingly negative representations of Islam that appeared in English general culture during the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

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Hell and night must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

INTRODUCTION

The East is a career.

- Edward Said, quoting Benjamin Disraeli

Edward Said's *Orientalism* was among the first, and remains one of the best, of the most recent wave of studies to explore English representations of Islam.¹ Said argues that Western cultures have always defined themselves negatively, identifying what "we" are not, and ascribing those qualities to the "others" who exist outside of "our" culture. Pogo-sticking through the centuries, Said suggests that the origins of this tendency lie in ancient Greece, but can be traced through the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the age of imperialism, and from thence to the present. It is in the study of the eighteenth through twentieth centuries that Said's work comes into its own, however, and it is upon this period that Said has subsequently focussed his efforts, strengthening his arguments by abandoning his cursory and problematic review of pre-modern eras.² Nonetheless, in the twenty-two years since the publication of *Orientalism*, as scholarly interest in representations of Islam has expanded, Said's monograph has emerged as a key text and his concept of "otherness" has become a touchstone, even in studies that focus on the early modern period.

This dissertation examines early modern English representations of Muslims and in the process questions whether the concept of "otherness" is as temporally transcendent as Said and other scholars have argued. By examining representations made over a fifty-year period starting from approximately 1575, I argue that early modern English culture

¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

² Since the publication of *Orientalism* Said has abandoned his insistence that this polarizing view of "us and them" is a timeless feature of Western culture. In the introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*, for instance, Said places clear limits on his argument, stating "my exclusive focus here is on the modern Western empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," and clarifying further that although ideological structures based on othering can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, its overwhelming predominance in European thought is "the hallmark of the imperialist cultures" of the nineteenth century. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), pp. xii, xviii.

lacked a stable concept of Islam in either absolute or relative terms. Quite to the contrary, I have found that, especially during the latter years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the English could by turns distance themselves from Islam through rhetorics of alienation or segregation, but that, depending upon circumstances, they might also employ rhetorics of affiliation, identifying English Protestantism with Islam and declaring a unity of interest between the Ottoman Empire or the Sa'adian empire and England. This suggests that English notions of Islam at this time cannot be captured by the simple binaries of "otherness."

This introduction will situate my study by conducting a brief review of the study of early modern English representations of Islam in the twentieth century. Secondly, it will present an overview of my findings, the structure of the thesis, my methodology and sources.

The first wave of interest in English representations of Islam during the early modern period occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century.³ The assumptions

³ It is important to note at the outset that the study of early modern and medieval representations of Islam have followed very different courses. In part this is because they are very different phenomena: representations of Islam in the Middle Ages were generally more international, less tied to the vernacular culture of a particular nation. But more than this, the study of these representations has tended to be more complex and, in many instances, less overtly ideological. The great exception to this general rule is, surprisingly, the single study that is best known and most often cited as authoritative: Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. In this book Daniel presents a simple, monochromatic portrait of Christian hatred of Islam, seemingly oblivious to the counter-currents and various symbolic uses that medieval writers made of Islam. Much more complex, and published only two years after Daniel's study, is R. W. Southern's *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*. The difference between the two works is apparent even from their titles: where Daniel saw only a single, coherent "image," Southern explores multiple views that shift and change over time. Studies of medieval representations since these two foundational works have, on the whole, followed Southern's lead, including *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* by Dorothee Metlitzki, and James Muldoon's rich and nuanced *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels*. Most recent has been the excellent collection of essays edited by John Tolan, entitled *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, which confirms the continuing

and interests behind the work of scholars such as Henry de Castries, Louis B. Wann, and Samuel C. Chew were clearly imperial. Methodologically, as well, these studies grew out of movements begun during the nineteenth century, specifically the great bibliographic projects which sought to identify, catalogue, and, in some cases, publish the raw materials of English Renaissance scholarship. Major projects like those of Pollard and Redgrave, Wing, and the editors of the lists and calendars of State Papers helped to identify, locate, and make available primary source materials, with the intention of making them readily available to succeeding generations of scholars. The work of Henry de Castries is most obviously of a piece with these efforts.⁴ De Castries worked as one of a team of French scholars who combed the archives of Europe to create a comprehensive, authoritative collection of documents chronicling European engagement with Morocco. De Castries edited the two volumes that deal with Anglo-Moroccan relations during the Sa'adian dynasty (1509-1603), providing faithful transcriptions of documents accompanied by illuminating annotations and informed introductions.⁵

preference, at least in medieval studies, for Southern's more complex "views" rather than Daniel's simple "image." Surprisingly, outside of medieval studies it is Daniel's work that is most frequently cited. It is telling that Said, in the sections of *Orientalism* that refer to medieval representations of Islam, most frequently cites Daniel's book, although he had read Southern's and Metlitzki's studies as well. There is no question that Daniel's is the one that best lends itself to Said's interpretation of the static, negative representation of Islam throughout pre-modern Europe. Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1960); R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels* ([Philadelphia]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979); John Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*. New York: Garland, 1996.

⁴ Henry de Castries. *Les Sources Inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc*. Première série – Dynastie Saadienne: Archives et Bibliothèques d'Angleterre I (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1918), II (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1925).

⁵ The spirit of these efforts is captured by the quotation that appears on the title page of each of the volumes edited by de Castries: "History cannot be written from manuscripts." The tradition of publishing of groups such as the Hakluyt and Camden societies can also be traced back to this period.

Useful though de Castries' work is, it deals not so much with English ideas about Islam as with Anglo-Sa'adian relations. In this sense, de Castries' work is related to *The Early History of the Levant Company* by Malachi Epstein and *A History of the Levant Company* by Alfred C. Wood,⁶ rather than to studies of representations of Islam. But with the works of Louis Wann and Samuel Chew the study of English representations of Islam may be said to have begun in earnest. From the 'teens to the thirties Wann published a series of articles that examined the symbolic and dramatic use of "Oriental" terms and characters in Renaissance English drama, of which the most notable was "The Oriental in Elizabethan drama."⁷ This essay is curious by present standards, but not remarkable by the methodology of the time. As much a catalogue as an analysis of the plays, Wann provides a list of extant and lost plays with non-European Christian characters, and briefly analyses the representations made in the plays. Wann's imperialist background emerges in his cataloguing of "Oriental races," including Jews, Turks, Moors, and Eastern Christians, in his suggestion that the "essential truth concerning the Orient" might best be expressed through legends and romance rather than historical fact, and most noticeably in his assumption of the timelessness of the people and cultures that he classified as "Oriental." Wann's article remains useful today primarily as a catalogue of early modern dramatic representations of "others."

Leah Marcus provides a fascinating, if brief, overview of this phase of literary scholarship in the introduction to *Unediting the Renaissance*. But while she discusses these efforts in terms of the efforts to collect and preserve unique historical documents, especially following the devastation of World War I (echoing the motto from de Castries title pages, although she does not discuss de Castries work), she has overlooked another important motivation behind these efforts: the imperialist desire to sort, classify, control, and contain. Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁶ Malachi Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: Routledge, 1908); Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935).

⁷ Louis Wann, "The Oriental in Elizabethan drama" *Modern Philology* 12 (January 1915), pp. 163-187.

Much more substantial, and still very useful, is *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* by Samuel C. Chew, a massive volume of almost 600 pages.⁸ Like de Castries' collections of documents, the sheer number of sources consulted by Chew is astounding. Like Wann's work, however, Chew's can at times seem more like a catalogue than a work of analysis. There seems to be no thesis argued, and no method other than the arranging of works under somewhat arbitrary subject headings, and then summation after summation of their contents. Commentary is generally restricted to drawing connections between works, and to shedding light on obscure terms or references. It is only in the epilogue that Chew reveals that he had originally hoped to write a work that was more unified, that presented a singular "world picture" of the sort that E.M.W. Tillyard would present five years later.⁹ It is to Chew's credit, however, that he abandoned this project in the face of the diversity of his sources:

"He lesse offends," says Fynes Moryson, "that writes many toys than he that omits one serious thing." The consequence of this naïve receptivity is that when one attempts, as the attempt has been made in this book, to fashion into a single picture the observations of travellers who ventured into the Levant and the fantasies of poets and other writers who stayed at home in England, that picture must be composed of multitudinous fragments: it is a mosaic, not a painting.¹⁰

Chew's mosaic is impressive, composed of hundreds of contained treatments of individual works. If this makes his work frustrating to read as a study of the period, it also makes it a useful reference work. Unlike much of the work that would follow Chew's lead, Chew's study preserves nuanced differences among his sources. Nonetheless, while Chew provides a meticulous description of each piece within his mosaic, he fails to communicate the sweep of the whole: he is all trees and no forest. This is a particularly acute drawback given that his study examines an extended period. Like Wann, Chew uses "Elizabethan" to denote anything written from the middle of the

⁸ Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937).

⁹ E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1943).

sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth. Chew's arrangement of works by subject categories further obscures changes in representations of Islam over time.

The works of de Castries, Chew, and Wann, like those of contemporaries such as A.C. Wood and Warner G. Rice, were written against the backdrop of the imperialism of the English and French, and broadly reflect the French interests in North Africa and the expansion of British involvement in the Middle East. With the disaster of the Second World War and the formation or strengthening of independence movements throughout the Middle East during the 1940s and 1950s it is, perhaps, understandable that the next wave of writing on English representations of Muslims should have lacked either the paternal warmth of scholars such as Chew and Wood or the tidy and authoritative classifying of Wann.

The tone for the next wave of studies was set by two articles by Franklin Le Van Baumer, both published in 1944.¹¹ These articles brought a new sensibility to the study of early modern English ideas about and relations with Islam. Baumer presents a vision of Christianity poised against Islamic menace, and portrays Elizabeth's political involvement with the Ottomans as "a serious political blunder," a result of her naïve ignorance of the true nature of the Islamic threat.¹² Baumer offers warm praise of King James's greater faith in and dedication to "the common cause." For Baumer, the inability of James to rally Europe to embark upon a new crusade was testimony to the petulance of Europeans in clinging to their individual identities with a tenacity that might have provoked disaster had the Ottomans been in the position to turn upon Europe in force. Written in the midst of the horrors of the Second World War, it is possible to discern in Baumer's articles the presumably unconscious casting of the history of early modern Europe, and England's role within that history, in a sort of typology. Baumer's

¹⁰ Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, p. 543.

¹¹ Franklin Le Van Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom" *American Historical Review* 50 (1944-1945), pp. 26-48; "The Church of England and the Common Corps of Christendom" *The Journal of Modern History* 16 (March 1944), pp. 1-21.

characterization of Anglo-Islamic relations under Elizabeth and James is evocative of Anglo-German relations under Chamberlain and Churchill, and all the more jarringly so, given that his portrait of the aging Elizabeth as politically naïve is so unlikely. The principal difference between the early modern and modern crises, Baumer seems to suggest, is that, by good fortune, the great showdown between Europe and “the Turk” was avoided in the seventeenth century, while in the twentieth Europe paid dearly for failing to stand united against Nazi aggression.¹³

By the 1960s the identification of prototypes for modern events in the history of early modern European relations with the Ottomans had become so overt that Robert Schwoebel could write in 1967 that “[i]t is not surprising to find writers sometimes comparing the confrontation of our so-called communist and free worlds with the clash of East and West in the Renaissance period. Indeed there are some remarkable parallels... The fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries were filled with battles between Turks and Christian powers. Full-scale wars alternated with limited operations and with periods of uneasy peace comparable to our cold wars.”¹⁴ Over the course of his study, the “shadow of the crescent” of Schwoebel’s title comes more and more to resemble a sickle. Even more explicit was an article of the following year, in which the author’s typological

¹² Baumer, “England, the Turk and the Common Corps of Christendom” pp. 33-34.

¹³ It is interesting that in crafting his argument Baumer examined Christian-Muslim relations, ignoring the fact that a better prototype for the Second World War could be found in the Thirty Years War. Of course, the Thirty Year’s War lacked both English involvement and the embodiment of tyrannical menace in a single power (the Ottomans), and even a single person (“the Turk”), analogous to Nazi Germany and Hitler respectively.

¹⁴ Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1967), p. ix. The tone of Schwoebel’s work is, in this at least, similar to another major monograph published the following year, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968) by Paul Coles. See, for example, Coles’s account of the “almost natural” hatred between Christians and “Turks” during the Renaissance, p. 148.

approach and argument are neatly summarized in the title: “The Moriscos: an Ottoman Fifth Column in sixteenth-century Spain.”¹⁵

If the limitations of writing history as a massive roman à clef were not already obvious, a quick read of Hess’s article is sufficient to demonstrate them. Hess blunts and shapes early modern history until it resembles the American paranoia of the 1960s, working himself into such a lather by the conclusion that he declares that the “self-defense” of the Spanish against the Ottoman-funded Moriscos “dictated some sort of action. Expulsion was to be the final, tragic solution, and the Strait of Gibraltar became the dividing line between two civilizations.”¹⁶ Extreme though it is, Hess’s blurring of distinctions between sixteenth-century Spanish Moors and twentieth-century American communists differs in degree but not in kind from the subtler shaping that appears in Baumer’s writing in the 1940s.

These studies refined the periodization – moving away from the bloated “Elizabethan” period of the studies of the early twentieth century by establishing a more distinct chronology – but still obscured the nuances of English representations of Islam in the period. In part this was a result of their dual agenda, serving as both history and analogy, but equally this was because they tended to be broadly European studies. Of the studies examined here, only Baumer’s two articles were particularly focused upon English culture, although Schwoebel’s accorded much attention to the English, and tended to draw its raw materials from English archives whenever possible. Nonetheless, Baumer and Schwoebel, like other mid-century writers on the topic, were international in their perspective, obscuring the finer differences that can emerge when studies are limited by geography and regional culture.

¹⁵ Andrew C. Hess, “The Moriscos: an Ottoman fifth column in sixteenth-century Spain” *The American Historical Review* 74 (October 1968), pp. 1-25. At the same time as the study of representations of Islam became increasingly overtly ideological, this same period produced what remains one of the strongest studies of European-Ottoman relations, Dorothy Vaughan’s *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances 1350-1700* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954).

¹⁶ Hess, “The Moriscos,” p. 25.

While historians such as Schwoebel were moving the study of representations of Islam to a broad, international perspective, one aspect of these representations began to develop a bibliography of its own. The publication in 1965 of *Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* by Eldred Jones marked the emergence of a new field of study. Whereas for Wann North Africans, or "Moors," had simply been another "Oriental race" like "Turks" or Jews, and whereas for Chew they had been little more than a variant form of Muslim, Jones analyzed representations of Moors as they related to historical Africans.

Working at approximately the same time as Jones, Winthrop Jordan, writing in the context of the American civil rights struggles, further politicized the study of blackness by arguing for a strong connection between early modern representations of blackness and the enslavement of Africans in the centuries that followed.¹⁷ While in Jordan's account this association is neither obvious nor iron-clad, it is intriguing to note that as the years have passed this connection has been increasingly simplified. The next major contribution to the study of blackness was *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688* by Elliot H. Tokson. Tokson presents a complex interpretation of early modern English representations of blackness, but erroneously asserts that the Elizabethans had a cultural investment in denigrating blacks owing to their involvement in the slave trade.¹⁸ In reality the Elizabethans had little involvement in the slave trade beyond the three slaving expeditions made by John Hawkins in the 1560s, in which he took slaves from west Africa and sold them in the Spanish New World. Although his first two journeys were immensely profitable, the third was an unmitigated

¹⁷ Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968). Jordan notes that "this study was begun several years before Mrs. Rosa Parks got 'uppity' on that bus," but nonetheless clearly states that his work is not about "the current, continuing crisis in race relations in America." Jordan, *White over Black*, pp. viii-ix.

¹⁸ Elliot H. Tokson, *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1982). See Chapter Three generally, and especially p. 37, on Tokson's assertion of an Elizabethan slave trade.

disaster, which perhaps discouraged further attempts at plying the slave trade until it began in earnest in the middle of the seventeenth century.¹⁹ Disregarding this fact, the direct connection between early modern representations of blackness and the slave trade is asserted in more recent monographs by Anthony Gerard Barthelemy and in particularly strong terms by Kim F. Hall.²⁰ Continuing this trend, a recent article by Camille Wells Slight, published in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1997, has made the “Elizabethan slave trade” the foundation of an analysis of “the new individualism of the seventeenth century.”²¹

All of these studies of blackness at least touch upon representations of Islam, for the imprecise and often interchangeable use of terms such as Moor, Negro, and “Mohammedan” or “Turk” in the period make the study of one impossible without at least addressing the other. Nonetheless, this literature argues, convincingly, that when a coal-black character walked across a London stage the primary referent for that character in the minds of the audience was likely to be his or her blackness. Although it is one of the intentions of this thesis to explore the connections and disjunctures between representations of coal-black Moors in the early modern drama and representations of much lighter flesh-and-blood Moors that appear in the accounts of English travellers, factors, merchants, and diplomats, the secondary literature on early modern English representations of blackness stands almost entirely outside of the literature on representations of Islam – which is not in itself problematic.

¹⁹ Accounts of Hawkins’ voyages can be found in Richard Hakluyt, ed., *The Principal Navigations of the English Nation III* (London: 1600) pp. 500-525. Of his third voyage, Hawkins wrote “If all the miseries and troublesome affaires of this sorowfull voyage should be perfectly and thoroughly written, there should neede a painefull man with his pen, and as great a time as he had that wrote the lives and deathes of the Martyres.” This could hardly count as encouragement for other Englishmen to follow Hawkins’ lead.

²⁰ Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987); Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

It is interesting to note that, while the mid-century studies of representations of Islam had tended to be the work of historians, the studies of blackness have, with the exception of Jordan, been the work of literary scholars. Similarly, as the study of English representations of Islam entered its most recent phase it once again became dominated by historicist literary critics. In contrast with the historicism of earlier scholars like Wann, Chew, and Tillyard, whose concept of the past was rooted at least as much in aesthetics as in historical fact, the hallmark of the New Historicists who took up the study of representations of Islam at the end of the century is the construction of complex accounts of discreet historical moments, accounts which – in theory, at least – use literary texts as paint and canvas rather than as subject.

Hayden White has argued that the New Historicists (or rather, pioneering scholars such as Stephen Greenblatt who eventually became known as New Historicists) originally crossed disciplinary boundaries not for specific information on the early modern period, the traditional reason for literary critics to make interdisciplinary forays into history, but rather in search of a new methodology of interpretation.²² Greenblatt and other New Historicists sought to examine works of literature as historical documents, considering them to be rooted in the social and cultural settings in which they were composed rather than as discreet and transcendent. Much as a historian might search for reasons why a seventeenth-century English woman submitted a petition to parliament seeking the readmission of Jews to England, a New Historicist literary critic might search for reasons why so many of Shakespeare's plays include cross-dressing episodes. As White has wryly noted, while the New Historicists originally turned to history for a methodology, in the end they have become more historicist than historians, emphasising cultural context over individual agency to a greater degree than many historians are comfortable with.²³

²¹ Camille Wells Slight, "Slaves and Subjects in *Othello*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997), pp. 377-390.

²² Hayden White, "New Historicism: a comment" in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veenser (New York: Routledge, 1989).

²³ White, "New Historicism" p. 295.

This emphasis on cultural context is typical of the work of New Historicist scholars such as Stephen Greenblatt, Stephen Orgel, Karen Newman, and Emily Bartels, but more to the point, it is typical of Michel Foucault before them. Although much New Historicist work on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries disagrees with Foucault's own interpretations of the same period, Foucault's shadow looms large in the theory of culture and power that anchors New Historicism. Foucault's model of the operation of individual agency, "free will," within the restrictions of a constitutive culture pervades the work of the New Historicists, as does his model of power as a relationship rather than as a commodity. One result is that, like Foucault, New Historicists tend to examine historical phenomena synchronically rather than diachronically, and to attribute causation to broad cultural systems rather than to specific people or events.

In adopting Foucault's cultural model, New Historicism inherited several of the weaknesses of Foucault's own histories. Most obviously, synchronic studies do not lend themselves to the construction of sophisticated models of change over time. Foucault's solution to this problem was to view history as a series of stable plateaux isolated by periods of dramatic change.²⁴ Similarly, New Historicist studies tend to focus on discreet moments, either on their own or in series, and are not necessarily concerned with charting the evolution of events or ideas up to or beyond those moments. These "moments" may be ten, twenty, fifty years long, or even longer. In the case of one particular study of English representations of Islam, *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*, Nabil Matar presents a vision of a single, undifferentiated "early modern" period that differs only in name from Samuel Chew's "Elizabethan" period. As in Chew's study, this temporal conflation occludes the fine differences that occur over years, differences that add up to major change over decades.²⁵

²⁴ See, for example, Michel Foucault, "The eye of power" in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 146-165.

²⁵ Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Such temporal conflation is typical of Foucault's histories as well.

New Historicist studies draw upon Foucault's theory of the restriction of individual agency within constitutive culture. Though he frequently asserted the importance of individual agency, Foucault's work depicts a dissolved individuality within a constitutive culture. Foucault favoured the idea of free will providing individuals with the ability to make choices, but not to create the criteria that they might choose from.²⁶ This position is itself not necessarily problematic, and much of the great strength of Foucault's work stems from this insight. In particular, this idea lies at the root of Foucault's model of power-in-relationships, which presents the exercise of power as a selective rather than creative act, and which allows tremendous insight into the highly complex manifestations of power as both resistance and discipline. The acceptance of a Foucaultian constitutive culture within New Historicism, however, has allowed individual New Historicists to replicate one of the prime methodological errors of Foucault's histories. The concept of a constitutive culture can easily slip into the notion that the ideas, words, and actions of people are expressions of the culture that they lived in. From here it is only a short step to conclude that any document is the child of the culture of the day, necessarily unique to that time and place, a theory which undercuts the value that historians have traditionally placed upon triangulation. While the Foucaultian/New Historicist emphasis on the dissolution of the individual within a constitutive culture permits a necessary correction of the exaggerated value which some historians have placed on individual agency (the "Great Man" theory of history), it has also allowed some New Historicists to disregard cross-referencing of their arguments through multiple sources. In its benign form, this failure to cross-reference can lead to a scholar's failure to realise just how common (or rare) the phenomenon under consideration really is; in its more insidious form, it may lead to the "microcosm" fallacy, in which a scholar believes that the single document provides general information on a culture, failing to take into account the individual limitations and abilities of particular authors.

²⁶ A particularly interesting example of Foucault's conflicting views of this can be found in "On popular justice: a discussion with Maoists" in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 1-36.

If this overview of New Historicist methodology seems overly negative, it should be noted that it is very easy to criticize an intellectual method in the abstract, and that there have been more than a few triumphs of New Historicist scholarship. Stephen Greenblatt's works stand as some of the most powerful historicist studies of literature written to date.²⁷ In the study of early modern representations of Islam, Jack D'Amico's monograph *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* is a particularly good example of the kind of analysis that is possible through a postcolonial historicist analysis.²⁸ Although D'Amico's work shares with the "old historicism" a tendency to use history to illuminate literature, lacking Greenblatt's focus upon decoding culture, neither position is inherently better or worse: they are different. In truth much New Historicist scholarship has shared D'Amico's perspective.

The Moor in English Renaissance Drama is self-consciously postcolonial. In his introduction D'Amico positions his work by discussing the cultural frisson he felt teaching *Othello* and other Renaissance plays in Lebanon and Morocco, and notes that "this is a book, therefore, that has grown out of thoughts about the boundaries set by race, religion, and custom, but it is also about how boundaries in the imagination are shaped and changed."²⁹ If this brings to D'Amico's work an urgency that is lacking from some historicist scholarship, it also can create problems if we accept that Elizabethan England lacked colonial pretensions towards North Africa and the Ottoman Mediterranean. This, however, is less problematic in D'Amico's study, whose very title declares its primary interest in the aesthetics of literature, than it would be upon a study intended to provide commentary upon English culture more generally.

Much more problematic is the postcolonial stance taken by Emily C. Bartels in the articles she has published in the 1990s. The earliest of these articles, "Making more of

²⁷ See, for example, Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

²⁸ Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991).

²⁹ D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama*, p. 1.

the Moor: Aaron, Othello and Renaissance Refashionings of Race” is the most flawed, but it has served as the foundation of Bartels’ work, referenced even in her later, less teleological articles.³⁰ At the heart of “Making more of the Moor” is Bartels’ analysis of a single document, the report of the merchant-ambassador Edmund Hogan back to London from his embassy to Marrakech. Although her treatment of this report is confined to three pages out of the twenty-one in the article, it is largely upon this analysis that her claims that the English had adopted a position of imperialist superiority towards the North African Moors is based. Reading the document through from a postcolonial perspective and without a solid grounding in either the history of diplomatic practice or of Anglo-Sa’adian relations, Bartels makes a number of errors of fact and interpretation, culminating in her assertion that through the report Hogan represented the sultan as “childish” and deceitful, and conducted “a heightening of exotic differentness and a hiding of the threatening sameness of the Moor.”³¹ This is a surprising claim, for as I argue in Chapter Three, Hogan employed in this report a rhetoric of affiliation that grotesquely amplified Elizabeth’s own rhetoric in her correspondence with the Ottoman and Sa’adian sultans, in the hopes that Elizabeth would sanction his bid for a monopoly on trade to Morocco.

Bartels’ misinterpretation of this document appears to be the result of two methodological problems. The first is what I referred to above as the “microcosm fallacy,” the belief that the analysis of a single document can reveal the nature of Anglo-Sa’adian relations. Had Bartels read more widely, she would have realized the connection between Hogan’s characterization of Sultan Abd al-Malik and that of Queen Elizabeth. Secondly, in her concern to connect the Elizabethan treatment of Moors to imperialist and racist treatments of the same people, she constructs a simple, teleological causal chain

³⁰ Emily C. Bartels, “Making more of the Moor: Aaron, Othello and Renaissance refashionings of race” *Shakespearean Quarterly* 41 (1990), pp. 433-454; “Imperialist Beginnings: Richard Hakluyt and the Construction of Africa” *Criticism* 34 (1992), pp. 517-538; “*Othello* and Africa: Postcolonialism Reconsidered” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 54 (1997), pp. 45-64.

that draws upon Jacques Derrida's theories of racism and carelessly assumes that, as in the age of imperialism, the Elizabethans "othered" the Moroccans in an age of "nascent imperialism." Unfortunately, Bartels does not discuss the characteristics of this "nascent imperialism," nor its relationship to what presumably she would call "mature imperialism." As is suggested by the term "nascent imperialism," however, Bartels seems to imply that there is a natural connection between the two: like a child who grows to be an adult, the term "nascent imperialism" asserts an inevitability to the development of Victorian imperialism from its "nascent" Elizabethan form.

The most comprehensive study of English representations of Islam since Samuel Chew's *Islam in Britain 1558-1685* by Nabil Matar. There is much to admire in Matar's work, and especially in his insistence that modern and early modern English representations of Islam are fundamentally different on account of the overwhelming advantage of the early modern Ottomans in their political, commercial, military and cultural relations with Europeans. Where scholars such as Bartels and Hall have adapted postcolonial models and in the process ascribed to the early modern English a colonising superiority, Matar clearly establishes that the English who travelled into the Ottoman Mediterranean recognised that they did so upon the sufferance of their Islamic hosts. As mentioned above, however, Matar's blending of more than a century into a single period obscures the nuances of change over time. Like Foucault, Matar attempts to compensate for this long, static period by arguing in his conclusion that there was a sharp, dramatic break between the style of representations of Islam made during his unified early modern period and the period that followed.³² Even more problematic is Matar's willingness to base sweeping conclusions on only a handful of documents. Whereas in Bartels' essays this appears to be a factor of not having read widely enough, in Matar's monograph it seems to have resulted from a suspension of disbelief: thus, Matar cites cheap print news pamphlets as authoritative sources, a proposition that is not warranted if such pamphlets

³¹ Bartels, "Making more of the Moor," p. 342.

³² Matar, *Islam in Britain*, pp. 184-188.

are not corroborated by other sources. More similar to Bartels' assumption of the typicality of her sources is Matar's reliance on single diary sources to provide insight into English attitudes generally. For example, he states that "there is ample evidence to show that writers and thinkers from all sectors in English society read Ross's [translation of the] 'Alcoran.'"³³ The examples that he then cites – problematic in themselves, for some allude to the Qur'an without demonstrating comprehension or even awareness of its contents – are mostly drawn from the writings of theologians and preachers, who are hardly a cross-section of society.

The most recent study of early modern representations of Islam to be published is Daniel J. Vitkus' edition of three so-called "Turk plays."³⁴ Like Matar, Vitkus, both in *Three Turk Plays* and in an earlier essay on *Othello* that appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, foregrounds his analysis by articulating the superior power of the Ottomans in their dealings with the English and other Christian powers.³⁵ Like Bartels' work, however, Vitkus in *Three Turk Plays* creates a simplistic, linear causal chain between early modern and modern representations of Islam, asserting that the post-Cold War stereotyping of Islam "draws upon a venerable tradition of demonization that began in the medieval period and acquired some of its present features in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," and suggesting that "if we examine, in particular, the representation of Islam in American journalism during the last thirty years, we will find ample evidence for an unbroken tradition depicting Islamic people as violent, cruel, wrathful, lustful, and the like."³⁶ As in Bartels' work, this is a teleological position that can do little to advance our understanding of either early modern or modern representations of Islam.

³³ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, pp. 80-81.

³⁴ Daniel J. Vitkus, ed., *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, and The Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

³⁵ Daniel J. Vitkus, "Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997), pp. 145-176.

³⁶ Vitkus, Introduction, *Three Turk Plays*, p. 16.

Although I have rejected the direct importation of postcolonial theories into this thesis, in pursuing my research I have found the work of postcolonial scholars such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha to be enormously stimulating.³⁷ While I eventually came to the conclusion that, given the power hierarchies of the day, their works could not illuminate the early modern situation, I only arrived at this point by working through the implications of applying their ideas. Moreover, while the studies of these and other postcolonial scholars cannot be brought directly to bear upon early modern English relations with “others,” their analyses of interwoven social, linguistic, and material elements in power relations can be studied with great profit by scholars of any period. Nonetheless, Elizabethan England was not imperialist: therefore, the dynamics of neither colonial or postcolonial culture were present in it. Although a case can be made that sixteenth-century England was proto-imperialist, as has been persuasively argued by Kenneth R. Andrews in *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*,³⁸ English culture was proto-imperialist only in the sense that it was aggressively expanding its economy through maritime trade. Even in the realms of politics and commerce, Andrews continues, the English empire of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was only one possible end of the commercial expansion of the Elizabethans. Andrews’s monograph has very little to say about the cultural impact of Elizabethan proto-imperialism, other than to note that true colonial ventures – involving the claiming of lands, the subduing of local populations, and the planting of Britons – were rarely proposed in this period, and when they were, never received the support of the queen.³⁹ Moreover, if England *were* to have

³⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

³⁸ Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

³⁹ This situation is made slightly more complex by the fact that Henry VIII declared in the 1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals to Rome that “this realm of England is an empire,” a claim that was seconded by his Protestant successors. In this act, however, Henry was

launched a colonial venture of this sort, which Sir Walter Raleigh in fact had proposed, such a venture would have been in the New World: a point not lost on Richard Hakluyt, who spent much of his life arguing in favour of such action. There simply was not room enough for the English anywhere but in North America. The Atlantic coast of Africa was already claimed by the Portuguese, who, as was demonstrated by repeated protests in London, vigorously defended their claim even though the English were interested in trade, and not territory.⁴⁰ Morocco itself was held by the Sa'adians. The Mediterranean, including North Africa, was under the domination of either the Ottomans, the Spanish, or the Venetians, and a proposal to "colonize" it would have been as bizarre as a proposal to colonize southern France. Asia was still, at this point, beyond the reach of English shipping.⁴¹

not making claims to extra-territorial dominions. Quite the opposite, he was declaring the contained, self-sufficient powers of his island kingdom.

⁴⁰ This is discussed more fully in Chapter One below.

⁴¹ Any discussion on early modern English "colonialism" has to at least make reference to the extensive debate over the status of the English presence in Ireland in the sixteenth century. Proponents of the view that the English ventures in Ireland may properly be considered colonial have emphasised the fact that proposals for English projects in Ireland used the language of colonialism, occasionally made comparisons between the Irish and American peoples, and cast their projects in terms of civilising the local population as well as of increasing the stature and wealth of the English crown. Other scholars, however, have pointed out that while the projectors used the rhetoric of colonialism, from an institutional perspective the English administration in Ireland most strongly resembled the administration of the Scottish frontier and the Welsh marches, rather than later colonial ventures. These scholars argue that it is a mistake to identify sixteenth-century English ventures in Ireland as colonial, suggesting that the English, and especially the political elite, viewed them instead as an extension of the governance of England. Ultimately, this debate may come down to a question of language usage: what did the term "colony" mean to the sixteenth century English, and was this the same as what the nineteenth century English meant by "colony"? As with Henry VIII's use of the term "empire" to describe England in 1533 (see note 38 above), it is possible that much confusion has been caused by a coincidence of language. A concise overview of the debate over the sixteenth-century English presence in Ireland is given in Nicholas Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 1-15.

Daniel Goffman begins his recent study of seventeenth-century British relations with the Ottoman Empire by exploring the myth of the Englishman overseas as “the imperialist incarnate,” who, “with an overweening, almost mystical sense of mission, seems to have forced his politics, language, and culture upon ostensibly passive and unsuspecting colonies around the world.”⁴² Goffman argues that this myth is part of the cultural baggage of the nineteenth century, and continues:

In an Eastern setting at least, such depictions reek of ahistoricity. Given the relative insecurity of his position in the East, it seems more likely that the seventeenth-century Englishman, in his guises as merchant, diplomat, and even missionary (the three types who usually ventured to Asia), was more accommodating, sensitive, and respectful toward his powerful hosts than were his more intransigent, acerbic, and contemptuous nineteenth-century progeny. In short, the Englishman’s imperialism is not innate, and his image as an imperialist is a transfigured one created by the changing relationship between the growing power and prestige of his own state, on one hand, and, on the other, the receding abilities of the societies he sought to enter and exploit.⁴³

In other words, at this point England was economically and politically too weak, and its culture too introverted, while “Eastern” cultures like the Ottoman and Mughal empires were too strong, for England to be capable of sustaining anything like the cultural effects of imperialism in its nineteenth-century mode. That this situation was eventually reversed can only appear relevant in a teleological view of history.

Nonetheless, to state that early modern English relations with Islamic empires were not imperial is hardly to suggest that they were unimportant. Quite the opposite, this thesis argues, in part, that these relations were far more significant than has been allowed in English history generally, and in English commercial, diplomatic and literary history in particular. When faced with the closure of Antwerp in 1569, English merchants made an impressive imaginative leap, seeing a future in which the English would not be reliant

⁴² Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁴³ Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 4.

upon Dutch, Italian, or Hanseatic middlemen, but would take their trade directly to markets in the Mediterranean and in north-eastern Europe. As English commercial contacts expanded, English diplomacy began to take a broader view as well. Through a canny use of conditions attached to grants of monopoly, Elizabeth sent embassies as far afield as Moscow, Istanbul and Marrakech, all at no expense to the crown. The founding of these embassies was itself a significant accomplishment, but Elizabeth was not content merely to have representatives at foreign courts. The Istanbul and Marrakech embassies became particularly important during the years of greatest tension between England and Spain, the late 1580s and early 1590s, when Elizabeth's agents aggressively pursued Anglo-Islamic military alliances against Philip II of Spain.

If the imagination of the merchants who financed the expansion of English commerce and diplomacy was impressive, the imagination of English writers of the same era was astounding. During the reigns of Elizabeth and James English literary culture was even more aggressively innovative and expansionist than its commercial culture. By 1576, the centenary of printing in England, the English had become sufficiently comfortable with the new medium to begin using it in ways that not only built upon the sturdy foundations of manuscript culture, but introduced innovations that signaled the onset of print culture. One of the most revolutionary of these was the use of the printing press to create small, cheap works whose appeal cut across the social orders, and even across levels of literacy.⁴⁴ At the same time, traditions of popular drama were being professionalized and reinvented. As English literary culture was transformed, it captured the expanding horizons of English travel and commerce, granting Islam a prominent place in the imaginative and symbolic landscape of the new literature.

⁴⁴ Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1981); Keith Thomas, "The meaning of literacy in early modern England" in Gerd Baumann, ed., *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Cheap print, especially in its early years, tended to be conservative, presenting in many instances content that had been derived from older works. The new drama, however, almost immediately demonstrated a passion for novelty which, during the late 1580s and 1590s, was evident in the bringing of the new world of English commerce and diplomacy onto the stage. References to Islam, Turks, and Moors abound in these plays, even in plays that lack “exotic” settings or characters. These representations of Islam defy generalizations: in some texts Muslims are depicted as hated outsiders, while in other texts they appear as egregiously wronged innocents, abused by Christians who lacked integrity and honor. Still other texts represent Muslims as people, not unlike the English themselves. When the parallel development of English dramatic writing and the expansion of English contacts in the Mediterranean are examined in concert, it quickly becomes apparent that Islam was assuming an increasingly important place in the English imagination at this time.

This thesis presents a chronology of contact and representation. Chapter One charts the rich history of Anglo-Islamic interaction in the second half of Elizabeth’s reign, the ambiguous status of these relations in the final years of the reign, and the abrupt change in policy direction that occurred with the accession of James I. This history is based largely upon documents from the State Papers, as well as manuscripts from the British Library. Chapter Two examines the representations of Islam in English cheap print and drama during the 1580s and 1590s, and suggests that the relatively open diplomatic policy of the period, which included Elizabeth’s extensive use of affiliating rhetoric in her communications with the Sa’adian and Ottoman sultans, has its counterpart in unconventional representations of Islam which encouraged the English to imagine themselves into the Islamic world to witness the injustice of the treatment of Muslims at Christian hands, to consider the human consequences of a Christ-less theology, or to observe English political dilemmas explored in an Islamic setting. Nonetheless, cheap print representations made at this time, as well as some dramatic representations, were much more conservative and hostile, often drawing on images of

Holy Crusade in order to construct noble heroes, or to rouse English horror at ongoing Ottoman expansion into eastern Europe.

While the first two chapters lay the foundation for the study of Anglo-Islamic relations and representations in the thesis, Chapter Three explores a related field of representations: early modern English representations of Moorishness. This chapter argues that, while representations of Islam, blackness, and other forms of “exoticness” merge in literary writings of the period, such confusion should not be interpreted as evidence that the English could not – or could not be bothered – to differentiate non-Christian and non-European people into separate categories. Instead, by considering the lack of reference to blackness in the writings of merchants and diplomats who traveled to Morocco during the same period, this chapter argues that blackness was used by literary writers as a kind of symbolic short-hand that referenced and condensed longstanding English associations of blackness with the devil. At the same time, undermining these associations by granting black characters human as well as diabolical characteristics, writers could use these characters to force audiences to realize the dangers of assuming too easily that evil presents itself in readily recognized forms. In this way, the playwrights considered in this chapter actually distanced human blackness from spiritual blackness. This, I argue, was one of the effects of increasing English interaction with Moroccans, which revealed that actual Moors were not “things of darkness” in any sense: not only that the unadulterated blackness of stage Moors was a literary convention without basis in reality, but Moors were simply men, and were as given to virtue or vice as other men.

Chapter Four explores representations of Islam at the turn of the century to the end of Elizabeth’s reign by taking an in-depth look at two particular texts: the travel diary of Thomas Dallam, a London craftsman who traveled to Istanbul and back in 1599-1600, and Shakespeare’s *Othello*, which was written in 1603 or 1604 and set against the backdrop of Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean. In Dallam’s diary popular representations of Islam confront Anglo-Islamic diplomacy and commerce: Dallam, fresh from his London apprenticeship, was hired by the Levant Company to deliver a rich

present to Sultan Mehmed III, to be given to the sultan in the name of the queen. While we cannot know how fully Dallam engaged with London apprentice culture, we do know that apprentices numbered among the most faithful of play audiences and were major consumers of cheap print. Dallam's diary presents a series of sharply defined representations of Islam that, when examined in turn, echo the variety of representations offered in the cheap print and public drama. When examined as a group, however, Dallam's representations of Islam conflict with each other, revealing his shifting, unstable perceptions of Islam. In contrast with the confusing and ultimately ambiguous representations of Islam made in Dallam's diary, Shakespeare's *Othello* presents a coherent, carefully constructed exploration of symbolic uses of Islam at a moment in which Anglo-Islamic relations and representations were themselves ambiguous and confused. My treatment of *Othello* does not prioritize the Moorishness of the title character, arguing instead that this was one of a series of red herrings that Shakespeare wrote into the play to distract both the characters and audience from other features and arguments of the play, including the welling up of evil – in the shape of Iago, but also in subtler forms – from within Venetian culture itself. This aspect of Chapter Four builds upon the exploration of Moorishness of Chapter Three.

With the accession of James I, the Anglo-Spanish peace he negotiated soon after, and his clearly voiced disdain for Christian-Muslim interaction, neither Anglo-Islamic policy nor English representations of Islam remained ambiguous for long. As James embarked upon an ideologically-driven attempt to draw Europe into a nostalgic, mythic common Christendom, there was an increasing tendency to create simplistic representations of Muslims as the inveterate enemies of Christ and Christendom. Chapter Five explores this process by examining the relatively abundant documentation on the pirate John Ward, who converted to Islam in Tunis in 1611. Ward's life spans the entire time span under study in this thesis, and the accounts of his life run like a thread through all of the media and genres drawn upon, allowing this chapter to provide a summation and extension of the arguments and findings presented in the preceding sections. The

chapter concludes with a consideration of what the representations of John Ward can tell us about English representations of Islam, but also about Englishness itself.

The account of Thomas Dallam presented in Chapter Four, and especially the history of representations of John Ward presented in Chapter Five, should be considered the summation of the thesis. In determining the topic of this dissertation, I had decided early on to focus on early modern English popular culture, or, as it might be termed more accurately, general culture. It may be helpful to pause for a moment to consider the shortcomings of the concept of “popular culture,” as well as those of “general” or “shared” culture.

It is unfortunate that Peter Burke’s *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* has become strongly associated with a binary view of culture.⁴⁵ Burke used the terms “little tradition” and “popular culture” to describe the dominant culture of the period, the culture that was shared by all social and occupational strata. While it is true that he argued that the period witnessed a gradual separation of the cultures of the lower and upper orders, he maintained that unity of culture was the norm prior to the eighteenth century. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, scholars such as Bob Scribner, Tim Harris and Tessa Watt took issue with Burke’s use of the terms “popular culture” and “little tradition,” as well as the contention, which belongs more to the scholars who wrote after Burke than to Burke himself, that it is possible to isolate and study the culture of the lower orders through extant records. Instead, these scholars focussed upon “general culture,” defined as the common culture of all social orders, created through the joint participation of all, but whose extant remains are embedded in media that were controlled by the upper and middle orders.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978).

⁴⁶ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*; Bob Scribner, “Is a history of popular culture possible?” *History of European Ideas* 10/2 (1989), pp. 175-191; Tim Harris, “Problematising popular culture” in *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850*, ed. Tim Harris (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), pp. 1-27.

These scholars brought fresh nuance to the study of the common culture of early modern England, but almost from the start they recognised that the notion of general culture was itself problematic. Harris's work has been particularly radical in suggesting that early modern general culture may, like popular culture, be impossible to isolate from our vantage point. In *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850*, a collection of essays Harris edited in 1995, leading scholars from the field explore the concept of general culture, demonstrating its shortcomings in the process. David Underdown, drawing on his own earlier work, illustrates the difficulty in generalising about English culture in the period, given cultural variation among towns and villages, and given the strength of regional cultures; Susan Dwyer Amussen notes the difficulty of assessing women's perspectives in the overwhelmingly male milieu of the surviving documentation; and Tim Harris and Jonathan Barry both point to the inherent problems of drawing on written or printed items as evidence of a shared culture. These objections demonstrate the need to qualify exactly what we mean when we invoke any concept as broad as English culture, or even early modern English general culture.⁴⁷

This thesis is an investigation of Elizabethan and Jacobean general culture, but I do not mean to imply that the phenomena discussed here were necessarily common to all of England. Much of my work is based upon images of Islam that were created through cheap print and the popular drama. While we know that these circulated throughout England, through the efforts of the apparently ubiquitous chapmen and chapwomen and travelling troops of players, it is impossible to determine which items were carried into what regions. Only in London can we be reasonably confident that all the plays discussed here were performed, and all the ballads and chapbooks circulated. Similarly, while it is evident that people who had had face-to-face experiences with Muslims could be found

⁴⁷ David Underdown, "Regional cultures? Local variations in popular culture during the early modern period" pp. 28-47; Susan Dwyer Amussen, "The gendering of popular culture in early modern England" pp. 48-67; Harris, "Problematising popular culture" pp. 1-27; Jonathan Barry, "Literacy and literature in popular culture: reading and writing in historical perspective" pp. 69-94; in *Popular Culture in England*, ed. Harris.

in seaports around southern England and probably also travelled further inland upon occasion, we cannot know which regions might have had sufficient concentrations of such people to have made any sort of impact upon the local culture, except in the great commercial hub of London. In short, this thesis is essentially a work in the history of the culture of London.

This is why it is accurate to view the stories of Thomas Dallam and John Ward as summations of the thesis. Although both men were born outside London, each became associated with the general culture of the great city in different ways. Dallam, born in Lancashire, came to London as an apprentice, the pre-eminent group of general culture consumers, and departed for Istanbul shortly after the completion of his apprenticeship. Everything that we can know of Dallam from his travel diary, the only substantial extant document written by Dallam, indicates that he was not one to pass up on cultural experiences out of religious scruples. A daring soul whose Mediterranean adventures caused such headaches for the captain that he (unsuccessfully) attempted to have Dallam forcibly restrained from going ashore towards the end of the journey, Dallam was eager to sample the delights of all of the cultures that he passed through. As I argue in Chapter Four, Dallam's diary is the closest we are ever going to come to knowing what a representative of London's general culture would have made of flesh-and-blood Muslims.

John Ward's experience of the general culture of London was completely different. If Dallam can be considered a consumer of, and therefore participant in, London's general culture, Ward provided the raw material that that culture shaped and consumed. Whatever Dallam's other qualities, he was not introspective, and his diary can be frustrating in his refusal to explore experiences that contradicted his expectations, or to seek to reconcile the contradictions within his own observations of Islam. With Ward, however, we can begin to deconstruct the process of cultural production, to get inside the general culture that today exists only in its print remains.

My focus upon general culture has required the exclusion of some sources that have been central to some previous studies of early modern English representations of Islam. I do not deal with millenarian and theological writings on the grounds that they

have already been quite thoroughly explored by scholars such as Paul Christianson, Katherine Firth and Peter Toon.⁴⁸ More important, these sources, which frequently present Islam as one of the forces of antichrist described in Revelations, have often been granted unwarranted prominence.⁴⁹ These representations agree with our preconceptions of what early modern and medieval representations of Islam should have been like, as well as modern simplifications of the religiosity of early modern culture, and as a result, theological and millenarian representations of Islam have often been accepted as typical. This dissertation suggests this is a mistake: non-theological sources from the general culture of the period testify to a wealth of representations, some quite positive, some negative, but all of which only rarely, if ever, refer to Islam in the straightforward terms of the theological literature.

Secondly, I have excluded the massive histories that were the especial delight of literate gentlemen in the period. As has been argued by scholars such as Bob Scribner, general culture was the point of intersection of exclusionary cultures of many segments of the population, like a giant Venn diagram. As Tim Harris has argued, there must have been an oral culture of the lower orders that has been irretrievably lost to historians. Of the literate culture of the upper orders, on the other hand, we have a comparative wealth of sources.

The interest in history during the period appears to have been universal, but it took many forms. History plays, historical chap books and plays, mystery plays, and other sources attest to the presence of this interest in general culture. Moreover, we can in some instances reconstruct oral sources that testify to a similar interest among the lower

⁴⁸ Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Peter Toon, ed., *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel* (London: James Clarke, 1970).

⁴⁹ The tendency to cite millenarian and theological works when dealing with Anglo-Islamic relations is very widespread. The works of Franklin Le Van Baumer offer a particularly good example.

orders.⁵⁰ The writing, publishing, and consumption of sprawling, lengthy histories among the upper orders are evidence of this interest at the top of the social order. This particular historical culture was intensely literate,⁵¹ and remained the preserve of the elite, except where these histories informed the production of general culture forms such as plays and ballads. A work such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* was absorbed into general culture to a surprising degree; on the other hand, Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, which contains several passages on the cosmological significance of Islam in the history of the world, remained an artefact of elite culture.⁵²

Even more significant to a study of elite representations of Islam would be Richard Knolles' massive, magnificent, and lavishly illustrated folio *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, first published in 1603.⁵³ Knolles' work is extremely detailed and extremely complex in the representations of Islam that it makes. It defies all generalizations except one: it was clearly beyond the ken of general culture. It is a thousand-page history in an age when the purchase of virtually any work that used more than ten sheets of paper was

⁵⁰ See, for example, D.R. Woolf, "Of Danes and giants: popular beliefs about the past in early modern England" *Dalhousie Review* 71/2 (Summer 1991), pp. 166-209. On the oral culture of the lower orders in general, see Woolf, "The 'common voice': history, folklore and oral tradition in early modern England" *Past and Present* 120 (August 1988), pp. 26-52.

⁵¹ As opposed to general culture, whose print artifacts themselves attest to non-literate forms of consumption: play texts were acted, ballads and pamphlets were read aloud. Moreover, as Tessa Watt and Keith Thomas have argued, through the use of woodcuts, and through vicarious literacies, cheap print was designed to appeal even to the illiterate. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*; Thomas, "The meaning of literacy."

⁵² D.R. Woolf, in his study of elite historical writing during the first half of the seventeenth century, almost entirely excludes popular histories as irrelevant to understanding the historical culture of the upper orders. Woolf notes "a division between scholarly and popular beliefs about the past," and suggests that the historical interests of elite and popular audiences, as well as the intentions of the historians who wrote for either audience, varied so greatly that their independent treatment is warranted. Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology and 'The Light of Truth' from the Accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 245-247, quotation from p. 246.

⁵³ Richard Knolles, *The Geneall Historie of the Turkes* (London: 1603).

beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest. It is difficult to demonstrate that Knolles' history had a significant impact upon Jacobean general culture, despite its being popular enough to be reprinted several times.⁵⁴ Samuel Chew is undoubtedly correct to describe it as "the greatest of English works of the Renaissance period dealing with Turkey,"⁵⁵ but only in terms of quality of scholarship and prose composition, not in terms of readership or influence. Its significance to understanding the general culture of the period is more of the order of *The Faerie Queene* than *Tamburlaine*.⁵⁶

In focusing upon general culture, I have relied to a large degree upon cheap print and dramatic sources. It can be misleading, however, to write intellectual history solely based upon works of imagination. Sources like Dallam's diary provide a necessary corrective, providing one example of how the vision of Islam presented in the cheap print and popular drama might prepare a person for an encounter with Islam. Unfortunately such sources are rare; I know of no other document comparable to Dallam's diary. Instead, I have relied upon the reports of encounters with Islam written by men who, though socially superior to Dallam, were also participants in the general culture of the day. Men such as the merchant-ambassador Edmund Hogan, the Levant Company merchant John Sanderson, or Sir Francis Walsingham were far removed from the quotidian reality of Dallam. Nonetheless, they too had to deal with actual Muslims, and

⁵⁴ Citing reprinting as evidence of popularity is a tricky business in the early modern period, as we have no idea of the size of the print runs. For a work such as Knolles's *Generall Historie*, we have to assume that print runs were very limited, for the book was far too expensive for a bookseller to risk stocking it in hopes of general interest.

⁵⁵ Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, p. 111.

⁵⁶ Richard Helgerson notes that works such as *The Faerie Queene* and erudite histories such as Camden's *Britannia* offer a limited view of English culture: "[t]heir audiences were highly literate and at least relatively well-to-do. No one but the literate and well-to-do could read or buy such books. And their representations of England were similarly exclusive. Neither in form nor in content did they wander far from the culture of learning and privilege." This statement can be extended to include the representations of Islam made in similar works, such as Raleigh's *History of the World* and Knolles' *Generall Historie*. Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 196.

their observations offer further insight into the similarities and differences between Islam imagined and Islam encountered.

Finally, this thesis is interested in identifying and exploring the parallels that exist between the evolution of representations of Islam in literary, political, and commercial discourses. It is a fortunate coincidence that Anglo-Islamic commercial and diplomatic relations were strengthened by Elizabeth, her advisors and eager English merchants, at the same moment as the mimetic drama came into its own under the sure hands of playwrights such as Marlowe and Kyd, and later, Shakespeare. It was, however, perhaps not a coincidence that Islam came to occupy such a prominent role in the drama of the late 1580s and early 1590s, for it offered the opportunity to present lavish spectacle, disguised political commentary, and the possibility of creating dramatic tension by forcing the English to imagine themselves outside of themselves.

This thesis presents an intensive examination of a relatively limited period of time. Through this tight focus, and through the cross-referencing of literary and non-literary sources, it is my hope that I can provide fresh insight into the nature of English representations of Islam, the nature of “Englishness” itself, and the relationship between the early modern English and the “others” beyond their borders.

CHAPTER ONE

Anglo-Ottoman and Anglo-Moroccan Diplomatic and Commercial Relations

The roles played by the Ottoman Empire and the Sa'adian sultanate of Morocco and Fez in European politics have been greatly underestimated in histories of early modern Europe. Andrina Stiles noted in her 1989 survey of early modern Ottoman history, echoing Halil Inalcik, that "from the accession of Suleiman [1520] to the end of the century, there was no question of European international politics which did not somehow involve the Ottomans."¹ Inalcik's analysis goes further in illustrating how Ottoman policies had an impact on European rulers and international relations, positing that the Ottomans played a key role in the sixteenth-century European balance of power, through pressure exerted on the Austrian Habsburgs in the Balkans and the Spanish Habsburgs in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as through diplomatic engagement with European leaders, including direct encouragement of the Protestant leaders of northern Europe.² The influence of Morocco and Fez on European affairs, though less overt than that of the Ottomans, is also significant, especially during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Most important, late in the 1570s King Sebastian of Portugal became embroiled in a Moroccan civil war at the request of a pretender to the Moroccan throne. The result was the Battle of Alcazarquivir,³ during which the king of Portugal was killed and many of the leading Portuguese nobility were slain or captured, resulting in the impoverishment

¹ Andrina Stiles, *The Ottoman Empire 1450-1700* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), p. 29. This is almost an exact quotation from Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: the Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p. 35.

² Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, pp. 35-40; Inalcik, "The Turkish impact on the development of modern Europe," pp. 51-60. In a modern parallel, the French newspaper *Le Monde* recently published an article by Joëlle Stolz that detailed the financial support that Muammar Gadafy has given to schismatic nationalistic leaders in Europe and America such as Louis Farrakhan, Vladimir Zhirinovsky and Jörg Haider. "Loitering within tent: Haider and his good friend Gadafy," *Le Monde*, 24 May 2000.

³ The names of places and people in North Africa are modern transliterations, and as a result, are available in many forms and spellings. In order to standardize the references in my work, I have followed the names given in the UNESCO *General History of Africa*.

of the Portuguese through the ransoming of captured sons or their bodies, and ultimately resulting in the annexation of Portugal by Philip II of Spain in 1580. Moreover, the influx of funds resulting from the ransoming of the Portuguese captives provided the basis for the new Moroccan ruler, Ahmad al-Mansur, to consolidate his rule and become a major African empire builder.⁴

Nonetheless, historians have often relegated the Ottomans and Saadians to the margins and footnotes of European, and especially English, history.⁵ More often than not, Ottomans and Moroccans have been viewed as external forces that only periodically influenced events within Europe. Even the Ottoman historian Halil Inalcik, in his English-language writings of the 1970s, tended to view the Ottomans as affecting the European balance of power, rather than as an element in that balance. This is surprising, for the Ottomans controlled very substantial portions of eastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, and North Africa – all territories that were contested by one or the other branch of the Habsburg family, as well as by other European powers. There are signs

⁴ E.W. Bovil's, *Battle of Alcazar* (London: Batchworth Press, 1952) remains the only monograph-length treatment of the battle and its aftermath, but is very much European-focussed. Nehemian Levtzion's essay in the *Cambridge History of Africa IV*, ed. Richard Gray, "North-West Africa: from the Maghrib to the finges of the forest" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), and M. El Fasi, "Morocco" *General History of Africa V* (Paris: UNESCO, 1992) offer more recent, North African perspectives. According to El Fasi, "More gold was received from the Portuguese than had been brought back after the conquest of the Sudan" (p. 210).

⁵ See, for example, the monographs by R.B. Wernham and Wallace T. MacCaffrey on Elizabethan foreign relations. R.B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy 1485-1588* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966); Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1588-1603* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Wernham, *After the Armada: Elizabethan England and the Struggle for Western Europe, 1588-1595* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981);

that the long-overdue reconsideration of the role of the Ottomans and Saadians in the history of Europe has begun. Daniel Goffman's monograph *Britons in the Ottoman Empire* provides such a perspective for the latter seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Nabil Matar's literary analyses assumes a similar perspective in his analyses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶

This chapter lays out the history of English diplomatic and commercial contact with the Ottoman Empire and the sultanate of Morocco and Fez. There already exists a significant literature on Anglo-Ottoman relations, and a substantial body of work on Anglo-Moroccan relations; however, in both of these areas scholars have tended to compartmentalize their fields, formulating ideas about individual ventures, alliances and initiatives without attempting to integrate them into a wider view of English or European affairs. Moreover, there has been no attempt to view English overtures to the Ottomans and Sa'adians as related either to each other, or to other English diplomatic/commercial enterprises. This chapter, then, will attempt to place the history of Anglo-Moroccan and Anglo-Ottoman relations within the context of a holistic view of English foreign policy during the period, recognizing as well the impact that these relations had on the wider European political and commercial climate. In order to do this it is not sufficient merely to consider the secondary literature on early modern English foreign policy. It is also necessary to return to the primary documents, in order to clarify the nature, extent, and meaning of Anglo-Islamic involvement.

English foreign relations under Elizabeth I

During the Elizabethan era foreign affairs and foreign commerce became more integrally intermixed than in any previous era. From its mechanics to the formulation of

MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

its larger aims, Elizabethan foreign policy often followed where commerce led. Partly this was the result of Elizabeth's sense of economy. As always, if it was possible to have someone other than the crown bear the costs of a venture, the Queen was quick to seize the opportunity. The Elizabethan government tapped into merchants' information and communications networks, receiving copies of merchants' newsletters, and sending instructions and information to agents abroad on merchant ships and with merchants' couriers. More than this, however, Elizabethan foreign policy was to a considerable extent driven by the necessity of foreign commerce in generating revenues for the crown. G.D. Ramsay slightly overstates the case when he argues that "[f]rom the export tax on English woolen cloths the Queen derived most of her assured revenue", but not by much.⁷ To borrow a metaphor from R.B. Wernham, "customs [duties] were, with the land revenues, one of the two great pillars of English crown finance."⁸ As a consequence, Elizabethan foreign policy, whatever other ideological, religious, or political issues arose, was always concerned with securing markets for England's principal export, woolen cloth. For most of the first half of the sixteenth century, such exchange had been made at Antwerp, where commodities from throughout Europe and Asia changed hands.

⁶ Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁷ G.D. Ramsay, "The foreign policy of Elizabeth I" in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Houndsmills: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1984), p. 147.

⁸ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, p. 31. This is a very different perspective from that offered by Kenneth R. Andrews in *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime enterprise and the genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), in which Andrews asserts that under Elizabeth "the crown welcomed the efforts of its subjects to develop oceanic enterprise, but it always treated them as secondary to the main interests of European power politics" (p. 11). Throughout his study, Andrews occludes the degree to which English political power, at home and abroad, was dependant upon customs receipts from the foreign wool trade, focussing instead upon the commodities, mostly luxuries, that English merchants brought back into the realm.

By the time Elizabeth ascended the throne the English had already developed a dangerous dependency on the market at Antwerp, and had weathered one major trade crisis. The glut of English cloth at Antwerp in 1550 demonstrated the dangers of reliance on a single “vent” for English cloth, and resulted in sporadic attempts to diversify English access to the markets of the European continent and beyond, attempts which included the founding of the Russia trade and the chartering of the Muscovy Company in 1553, and the 1550s West African ventures of Thomas Wyndham, William Towrson, and others.⁹ Nonetheless, throughout the 1550s Antwerp remained the primary vent for the Merchant Adventurers, England’s principal cloth trading merchants. In the early 1560s English dependence on Antwerp caused a second crisis, when English access to Antwerp briefly became pawn to the politics of the Counter-Reformation. In 1563, Cardinal Granvelle,

⁹ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, pp. 31-2. On the forging of the trade into Northern and North Eastern Europe, see Richard Hakluyt, ed., *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation ... I* (London, 1599), in which Hakluyt collected accounts of three journeys made into the North and Baltic Seas during the fourteenth century, and none from the fifteenth or the first half of the sixteenth century, but includes a total of sixteen for the period from 1553 to 1571. Moreover, whereas the earlier documents recount the travels of kings, clergy and nobility, the sixteenth century documents describe the travels of merchants and their representatives. *The Principal Navigations II* (London, 1599), which describes the voyages made by the English “to the South and South-east parts of the World” offers a similar contrast for the earlier and later periods. Here the differences of motive are more clearly highlighted, with “A voyage intended by king Henry the fourth to the holy land, against the Saracens and Infidels, Anno 1413” directly preceding an early commercial foray into the Levant, “A voyage made with two ships ... to the Isles of Candia and Chio about the year 1534.” In contrast with the voyages made into the North and Baltic Seas, Hakluyt includes accounts of four voyages made “by and within the Streight of Gibraltar” during the first half of the sixteenth century. As with the voyages north, however, it is only after 1550 that we can see a concerted effort on the part of the English to break into the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, with Hakluyt including accounts of twelve voyages made between 1550 and 1566, and at least one every year from 1550 until 1557. For neither the period before 1550, nor for the period after, should we believe that Hakluyt was able to collect accounts for every voyage made; I offer these statistics only as an attempt to show an increase in interest, and to suggest the likelihood that there was an accompanying increase in the absolute number of voyages as well.

Philip II's chief minister in the Netherlands, alarmed by English support of Protestant rebels in Scotland and France and fearing English interference in the Netherlands, used the pretext of the return of plague-ridden English soldiers from Le Havre to declare Antwerp closed to English cloth. As it transpired the English had already been in negotiation with Emden as a possible alternative to Antwerp, and were able to transfer their commerce there with little disruption. It rapidly became apparent that Granvelle's tactics were harming Antwerp more than London, and after little more than a year the embargo was rescinded.¹⁰

Although the closure of Antwerp in 1563-4 was a timely reminder to the English of the dangers of exclusive reliance on one port of trade, English merchants flocked back as soon as they could. Antwerp's attractions were substantial: just across the channel, it could easily be reached with small ships and very little danger of miscarriage by either storm or piracy. Moreover, as economic historian Brian Dietz has demonstrated, the "hyper-market on the Scheldt" succeeded because it was able to combine ready access with attractive rates of exchange and a solid, well-established trade infrastructure: "[a] vast range of wares were offered in the one place at prices which were presumably, in so far as there were accessible alternative markets, competitive. For payment it accepted through a sophisticated mechanism of credit and exchange the cloths which were redistributed throughout Europe."¹¹ Emden had proven to be a workable short-term alternative, but as religious, political, and military tensions rose within the Netherlands and between Philip II and Elizabeth, Emden's proximity to Antwerp, which had been part of its attraction in 1563, became potentially worrisome. Fortunately, Elizabeth and her advisors had long recognized the dangers of Antwerp. Cecil had written several memoranda during the 1560s about the decay in English shipping that had resulted from

¹⁰ Wernham, *Before the Armada*, pp. 281-3.

¹¹ B. Dietz, "Antwerp and London: the structure and balance of trade in the 1560s" in *Wealth and Power in Tudor England: essays presented to S.T. Bindoff*, ed. E.W. Ives, R.J. Knecht and J.J. Scarisbrick (London: Athlone Press, 1978), p. 197.

the ease of English access to Antwerp, and about the risk that the English took by being reliant on a single port of trade. In 1564 steps were already being taken to reduce the importance of Antwerp with the grant of a new charter to the Merchant Adventurers that expanded their trading area to include Germany in addition to the Netherlands. The company opened up negotiations with the Hanse town of Hamburg and by 1567 had secured an agreement to allow them to trade there. Nonetheless, Antwerp continued to be the market of choice for English merchants, as Hamburg lacked access to southern European markets and commodities, as well as to the exotic goods and spices of the Levant and even further afield.

As with the agreement with Emden in 1563, the English narrowly avoided disaster through the agreement with Hamburg of 1567. In 1569 the defining foreign crisis of the Elizabethan era came as a sequence of events heightened tensions between Philip II and Elizabeth I. In December 1568 the English seized a shipment of Italian bullion, intended to pay the Spanish troops in the Netherlands, that had been driven onto English shores by storms and French privateers. Encountering English intransigence over the return of the bullion, Don Guerau de Spes, Philip's agent at Elizabeth's court, urged the governor of the Netherlands, the Duke of Alva, to retaliate by once again closing Antwerp to English shipping. Alva did so in January 1569. These events neatly closed the circle between English foreign politics and foreign trade. Regardless of the preference of England's merchants for the trade with Antwerp, the indefinite embargo of 1569 forced the English to look for long-term trading solutions and opportunities.

The embargo at Antwerp must be counted, according to Wernham, as "one of the great turning pints of early modern history."¹² Not only did it set the stage for the increasing Anglo-Spanish hostility of the 1570s and 1580s, it also forced England's "conservative and complacent" commercial culture onto a new course of "experiment and

¹² Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, p. 34.

exploration.”¹³ And, owing to the interrelations of early modern English diplomacy and commerce, and especially to the reliance of the Elizabethan government upon the taxes raised through the exports and imports of the cloth merchants, England’s outlook on foreign affairs became much broader. It is important not to read back to the 1570s the beginnings of English imperialism, for England’s first forays into Africa, Asia and the Americas were anything but imperial;¹⁴ nonetheless, with the closure of Antwerp the traditional political and commercial certainties fell away and a new era of diplomacy and commerce was ushered in.

With the loss of access to Antwerp, English merchants also lost their connection to southern European and Mediterranean markets and products. As a result, enterprising Italian and English merchants revived the direct trade between England and Italy which, though profitable in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, had decayed during the rise of the Antwerp “hyper-market.” T.S. Willan, working from High Court of Admiralty records and the few extant English port books, has documented English merchants importing goods from Venice from as early as 1567; as well, Fernand Braudel, working from Italian records, has found evidence of English ships at Livorno during the early 1570s.¹⁵ Despite the lifting of the embargo at Antwerp in 1573, English commercial activity continued to expand in the Mediterranean, perhaps owing to the uncertainty that two embargoes in a single decade had caused. When the English agreement with Hamburg expired in 1577, it was only with considerable difficulty, and in the face of determined resistance from other member cities of the Hanseatic League, that it was

¹³ Dietz, “Antwerp and London,” p. 201.

¹⁴ Even Andrews, who argues that the Elizabethan era created some of the conditions necessary for the later founding of the English empire, nonetheless agrees that “Queen Elizabeth was not an imperialist.” Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement* pp. 9-17.

Quotation from p. 11.

¹⁵ T.S. Willan, “Some aspects of English trade with the Levant in the sixteenth century” *English Historical Review* 70 (1955), p. 401; Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, I, trans. Siân Reynolds (London: Collins, 1972), pp. 621-626.

renewed for a further year. Once again, English efforts to find new vents for their cloth and other exports were intensified. By 1585, roughly fifteen years after the 1569 embargo at Antwerp, English trade links had been established throughout the Mediterranean world, and charters had been issued by the Queen chartering various groups of merchants to trade to the Ottoman Levant, Venice, Spain and North Africa. This was a considerable achievement; and while it is important to avoid characterizing these early trade forays as “imperial” by drawing a direct connection between them and the efforts of the English to secure overseas territories in the seventeenth century and later, neither should these early efforts be casually disregarded. Most important, they cannot be viewed in isolation – rather, they must be viewed as part of a general effort to widen the field of English trade into northern Europe as well.

The Levant Company

In 1577, the same year as the English agreement with Hamburg expired amid determined anti-English sentiment among the merchants of the Hanseatic League, Elizabeth’s government made moves to establish more securely the Anglo-Spanish trade by granting a charter to the Spanish Company, thus securing at least one vent of English cloth. In the same year, Sir Edward Osborne and Richard Staper, two of the foremost merchants of London, members of the fledgling Spanish Company and experienced in the Italian and North African trades, welcomed home members of a special delegation sent to Istanbul to secure a safe conduct for William Harborne, a factor in the employ of Osborne and Staper. In 1578 Harborne set out overland for Istanbul himself under cover of a trade expedition to the Levant. Upon his arrival there, he conducted his trade under the French flag, as per the French capitulations, a set of interrelated trade and political treaties Francis I had negotiated with Suleiman I in 1535. The real reason behind Harborne’s

mission however, was to enter into negotiations with the government of Murad III to establish a set of trade privileges for the English themselves.¹⁶

When the French ambassador to Sultan Murad III, Jacques de Germigny, caught wind of Harborne's activities he immediately began to exert whatever pressure he could to bring them to a swift, and unsuccessful, close. Germigny's efforts were wasted, however, for not only was Harborne a diplomat whose skill went far beyond his political experience, he was also able to promise the friendship of Queen Elizabeth, who shared with the Sultan the enmity of Philip II of Spain. Elizabeth had sent along with Harborne letters for the Sultan authorizing Harborne to negotiate on her behalf, and may have financed Harborne's voyage either in part or in its entirety.¹⁷

In 1580 Harborne returned to England by sea, victorious. In his possession was a charter of privileges that laid out freedoms for English merchants in Ottoman territories equaling those that had been granted to the French in 1535. This agreement protected the English from capture and enslavement by Ottoman subjects and allies, guaranteed Ottoman assistance to English vessels in the Mediterranean, allowed English subjects to pass freely by land or sea through Ottoman territories, and granted to the English the right

¹⁶ The story of the securing of Harborne's safe conduct at the charge of Staper and Osborne, as well as Harborne's voyage of 1578, is told in "The renewing and great increasing of an ancient trade unto divers places in the Leuant seas, and to the chiefest parts of all the great Turkes dominions, Anno 1575, 1578" in Hakluy, ed., *Principal Navigations* II part I, pp. 136-137; that Harborne traded under the French flag is asserted by Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 8. Harborne's missions to Istanbul, and his early years as Elizabeth's representative, are related through the surviving documentation in S.A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582: a Documentary Study of the first Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹⁷ Wood, *History of the Levant Company*, p. 10.

to trade under their own flag within the Ottoman empire, as well as to establish the necessary infrastructure of consuls and factories to facilitate that trade.¹⁸

Osborne and Staper immediately requested letters patent establishing the trade to Ottoman territories as a monopoly under the control of themselves and a small group of other English merchants. Burghley and Walsingham wrote favorable memoranda on the matter, seeing the trade as an opportunity to expand customs receipts and strengthen the English merchant navy.¹⁹ With such support, it is not surprising that on September 11, 1581 letters patent for what became known as “the Turkey Company” were issued, which have been preserved in Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations*.²⁰ This charter granted Osborne, Staper and ten other named merchants a monopoly on the trade to the Ottoman territories on the basis that, although they had not established a new trade, they had renewed a trade that had fallen out of use so long ago that the former Anglo-Levant trade was beyond “the memory of any man nowe living.” Claims to the originality of the trade may have been a bit stretched, for, like Harborne in 1578, other English factors may have traded in Ottoman territories under the French flag. Moreover, as T.S. Willan has demonstrated, the English were definitely trading in the Mediterranean during the 1560s and 1570s.²¹ In this, the Anglo-Ottoman trade may have resembled the Anglo-Spanish trade, which had existed for several years before the charter for the Spanish Company was issued. It is likely that Osborne and Staper’s originality lay not in re-opening a dead trade, but in choosing in Harborne a canny agent who was able to negotiate for the right for the

¹⁸ “The charter of priuiledges granted to the English, and the league of the great Turke with the Queenes Maiestie, for traffique onely, Anno 1580” in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations* II part I, pp. 141-145.

¹⁹ Burghley’s memorandum is recorded in BL Lansdowne Ms. 34, fo. 177; Walsingham’s is discussed in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925; reprint Archon Books, 1967) pp. 373-375.

²⁰ “The letters Patents or Priuileges granted by her Maiestie to Sir Edward Osborne, M. Richard Staper, and certaine other marchants of London, for their trade into the dominions of the great Turke, Anno 1581” in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations* II part I, pp. 146-154.

English to trade under their own flag, thus establishing a profitable business for his masters, as well as augmenting the customs receipts and prestige of Elizabeth's small island nation.

Having secured the monopoly to the trade, the newly-exclusive "Turkey merchants" faced a further challenge: that of getting the privileges Harborne had negotiated reinstated at Istanbul. Almost immediately upon his departure, pressure from the French and Venetian representatives had induced the government of Murad III to repudiate its agreement with the English. There seems to have been little concern about this action, and it may be that Harborne had expected as much. Perhaps the most significant result was that it became necessary for Harborne to return to Istanbul sooner rather than later, but first Harborne's status had to be determined. Either late in 1581 or in 1582, the Turkey merchants drafted a petition to Elizabeth requesting that Harborne be sent as an ambassador, conveying gifts valued at "one thousande pounds sterlinge" from the Queen; furthermore, that in the future Elizabeth "contynue ... sendinge over at the change of everie Gran Signr. a present, as aforesaid."²² It is likely that Elizabeth had little cause not to recognise Harborne as her ambassador, but stuck at having to meet the cost of gifts for Murad and his court. In the end the Queen consented to recognize Harborne as her official representative²³ and left the Turkey Company responsible for the cost of the

²¹ T.S. Willan, "Some aspects of English trade with the Levant," pp. 401-403.

²² "Petition of the Turkey Co. for sending an ambassador" PRO SP 97/1, fos. 14-15. This document is undated.

²³ Oddly enough, Harborne is not identified in any of the documents issued by the crown as an "ambassador", but rather as an agent or representative. Nonetheless, he was known in Istanbul, as well as in some of his correspondence, and in Hakluyt's preambles to the relevant documents, as Queen Elizabeth's ambassador. Perhaps the term simply was not used precisely in the period. See, for example, "The Queenes Commission vnder the great seale, to her seruant master William Hareborne, to be her maiesties Ambassadour or Agent, in the partes of Turkie" and "The Queenes Letter to the great Turke 1582. written in commendation of Master Hareborne, when he was sent Ambassadour" in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations II part I*, pp. 157-159.

gifts, but granted them a loan of £10,000 on generous terms of repayment.²⁴ At any rate, when Harborne left England on 14 November 1582, he carried with him his commission and a letter of commendation from Elizabeth, as well as nearly £2,000 worth of gifts supplied by the merchants of the Turkey Company. The gifts consisted mainly of gold plate and utensils and various types and qualities of cloth, to be apportioned to the Sultan and his chief courtiers. In addition, Harborne had a fantastic mechanical clock built in Cologne which by itself cost over £250 and was given to the Sultan.²⁵

Harborne was very well received in Istanbul, and made an excellent impression on his hosts. For the next six years he served not only as the Queen's representative at the court of Murad III, but also as the author and manager of a sprawling commercial infrastructure on behalf of the merchants of the Turkey Company. For the first three years of his tenure most of his attention was focused on establishing the consulates and factories that would oversee Anglo-Ottoman commerce in Istanbul, Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis, Chios and Patras, as well as smoothing out the inevitable frictions that arose from the not always friendly meetings of two very different cultures. Goffman's monograph, though focussing on a slightly later period, nicely illustrates the cultural displacement that Englishmen felt when travelling to the Levant. Goffman demonstrates that the diversity of Ottoman culture, in which people of different religions, ethnicities and somatic types interacted on a day-by-day basis, was particularly difficult for Englishmen of the day to deal with. Moreover, in his most striking departure from the traditional historiography, Goffman further demonstrates that Englishmen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, unlike those of later periods, arrived in the Levant in a position of inferiority and vulnerability. England, while gaining prestige as the preeminent power of Protestant Europe, was as yet a commercial and political backwater, especially from the perspective

²⁴ PRO SP 97/1 fos. 158-159; BL Cotton Ms. Nero B VIII fo. 53. Wood suggests that this money represented a portion of Elizabeth's profits from Drake's circumnavigation. *History of the Levant Company*, p. 17.

²⁵ The gifts are described in PRO SP 97/1, fos. 24-25 and 26-27.

of the Ottomans, who possessed political and commercial networks that spanned three continents.²⁶ Alfred Wood, writing in 1935, suggested that the English merchants, factors and sailors who made the journey to the Levant arrived at “a remote and semi-civilized area,” reflecting his own modern biases.²⁷ In reality, the Englishmen who traveled to Istanbul found themselves in a resplendent, cosmopolitan, and thriving imperial capital, far grander than Elizabethan or Jacobean London.

Harborne was not only concerned with policing the commercial agreement between the English and their Ottoman hosts; he was also the official representative of the English crown at the Ottoman court. Like Elizabeth’s agents and ambassadors elsewhere, a good portion of Harborne’s correspondence back to England was taken up with intelligence of rumours and events. From 1582 until 1585 Harborne received very little in the way of instructions in return. However, as the war with Spain heated up, Walsingham began to explore the possibility of either a joint Anglo-Ottoman attack on Spain, or the cultivation of Ottoman aggression in the Mediterranean as a means of diverting the attention of Philip II from England. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1585 he dispatched instructions to Harborne to try to persuade the sultan to “convert some part of his *forces bent* ... wholly *against the Persians* rather against *Spain*, thereby to *divert the dangerous attempt and designs* of the said King from these parts of Christendom ... *either by some incursion from the coast of Africa in itself* or by the *galleys of the Grand Seigneur* in his [Philip’s] dominions of *Italy* or otherwise.”²⁸ Walsingham’s machinations were not out of place in the longer tradition of Christian-Ottoman alliance; Dorothy Vaughan has well established that alliances with the Ottomans were regularly sought out during periods of European warfare throughout the late medieval and early modern

²⁶ Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660*, Chapters One and Two.

²⁷ Wood, *History of the Levant Company*, p. 10.

²⁸ This letter has been transcribed in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham III*, pp. 226-228. Sections in italics were originally written in code.

periods.²⁹ Nonetheless, at a time when the concepts of “Christendom” and “Christian unity” were regularly invoked in embassies and treaties within Europe,³⁰ Walsingham’s rhetoric is striking: “the limbs of the devil being thus set one against another, by means thereof the true Church and doctrine of the gospel may, during their contention, have leisure to grow to such strength as shall be requisite for suppression of them both.”³¹

Walsingham’s understanding of the differences between the Ottomans and the Persians greatly underestimated the political and religious dimensions of their conflict, and he instructed Harborne to “[m]ake them find a taste in this *course*, laying before them how much more the *greatness of Spain* is to be regarded and *doubted* at this season than that of *Persia*, who profeseth the *same religion* that *themselves* and hath no such difference with *Persia* for *dominion*.”³² It would be reasonable to expect Walsingham, mired in the struggles of Counter Reformation Europe, to have had a greater appreciation for religious difference than this. At any rate, Harborne apparently worked diligently to secure an Anglo-Ottoman anti-Spanish alliance, but was unable to do so prior to his return to England in 1588.

Harborne’s tenure as the Queen’s representative to the court of Sultan Murad III must be counted a success both for English merchants and for English policy. Although in 1588 the trade was in almost total hiatus owing to what Walsingham called “hot war” with Spain,³³ Harborne had already established a solid infrastructure for the trade that spanned the major Ottoman ports in the eastern Mediterranean. The Turkey Company was able to exceed the obligation, established in the letters patent of 1581, of generating a minimum of £500 worth of customs revenue for the crown. Equally important, the

²⁹ Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350-1700* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1954).

³⁰ Franklin L. Baumer, “England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom” *American Historical Review* 50 (1944-1945), pp. 26-48; Walsingham in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham III*, p. 226.

³¹ Transcribed in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham III*, p. 226.

³² Transcribed in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham III*, p. 226.

Turkey merchants were able to vent substantial quantities of English cloth and tin to the Ottoman empire, thus helping to keep England's major industries in operation. On the policy side, Elizabeth's prestige was enhanced by having her representative recognized at Murad's court on a par with the French ambassador. Finally, although Harborne's attempts to secure Ottoman assistance against Spain ultimately failed, serious discussions of alliance were carried out, resulting in numerous rumours of Ottoman preparations against Spain, which was itself one of the aims of Walsingham's policy. Such rumours were only made more believable by persistent allegations that the English were trading war supplies into the hands of infidels. This charge certainly was true, for the Ottomans, lacking sufficient mineral reserves themselves, were dependant upon tin and iron traded from the English and others in order to cast cannons and shot.³⁴

Between 1588 and 1592 trade between England and the Ottoman empire became somewhat uncertain owing to the threat an actively hostile Spain posed for English shipping in the Mediterranean, but also due to the expiration of the Turkey Company's charter in 1588. When Harborne left Istanbul his duties were taken over by his secretary, Edward Barton, who managed to keep the English profile in Istanbul high despite his newly tenuous position. The Turkey Company's charter was allowed to lapse, in part as a result of the merchants' fruitless attempts to negotiate the transfer the cost of the Istanbul embassy to the crown, but mostly on account of their application for an amalgamation of the Turkey and Venice trades upon the expiration of the Venice Company's charter in 1589. In 1592 a new charter was issued which united the merchants of the Turkey and Venice Companies into the new Levant Company, thus ending the competition between the two for products and territories.³⁵ Once again, however, the merchants were

³³ Transcribed in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham III*, p. 226.

³⁴ Inalcik, "The Turkish impact on the development of modern Europe," pp. 54-5.

³⁵ "The second letters patent granted by the Queenes Maiestie, to the right wor. company of the English merchants for the Leuant, in the yere of our Lord 1592" in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations II* part I, pp. 295-311. This period of the company's development is well described in M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London:

responsible for bearing the cost of the Istanbul embassy, in part due to Harborne's recommendations to Walsingham that the ends of both diplomacy and commerce would not be well served if the embassy were allowed to lapse.³⁶

Like Harborne before him, Barton behaved as the Queen's ambassador, though he was never formally granted that title. Barton proved as adept as Harborne in managing affairs in Istanbul, and quickly established himself as one of the preeminent Europeans at the Sultan's court. The Levant Company proved to be as profitable as its forerunner had been, and the expanded scope of operations resulted in some impressive returns, though the records for this period are far too scanty to allow any sort of comprehensive assessment of the company's fortunes. In the single year of 1595, however, the company employed 15 ships, 790 sailors and paid customs duties of £5,500. Barton became one of Elizabeth's best paid foreign agents, earning a salary of approximately £1,500.³⁷

Well paid by the merchants of the Levant Company, Barton nonetheless remained answerable to the Queen, and seems to have preferred his role as diplomat over his duties to the Company. In 1590 the Ottomans and Persians agreed to a truce, thus allowing Murad III once again to look west. Soon, in 1593, a series of border skirmishes in eastern Europe blossomed into all-out war between the Ottomans and the Austrian Habsburgs. Barton, something of a maverick in his willingness to act without awaiting orders, fell into a role of encouraging Ottoman aggression against the Habsburgs both in the Mediterranean and on the continent. Given the record of the English in Istanbul, and given the willingness of the English to trade metals into the hands of the Ottomans, rumours of a secret entente between England and the Ottomans began to circulate, with

George Routledge and Sons, 1908; reprint New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), Chapter Five, "The history of the company from 1592-1605," pp. 40-66.

³⁶ Harborne to Walsingham, 17 February 1589. PRO SP 97/1, fos. 166-167.

³⁷ Wood, *History of the Levant Company*, p. 23.

the Archbishop of Lemberg going so far as to speculate “that Barton was ready to become a Turk and that the Queen was probably promising to do the same.”³⁸

Barton’s activities eventually caused a minor crisis for Elizabeth, and brought to a close her attempts to influence events through the Istanbul embassy. In 1596 Barton was summoned by Mehmed III, who had succeeded Murad III, his father, in 1595, to accompany him on campaign in Turkey. John Sanderson, an officer of the Levant Company, was given responsibility for the Istanbul embassy and Barton, apparently without first notifying the Queen, went into the field with Mehmed. Had this been his only error of judgement, Barton could have argued, as he later did, that Mehmed gave him no choice in the matter; but once in the field, Barton had the royal arms of England displayed on his tent, giving rise to speculation that Elizabeth was acting in alliance with Mehmed in the Ottoman land campaign. Secretly encouraging an Ottoman-Spanish naval war was one thing; being the open ally of the Ottomans in eastern Europe, where stories of Muslim atrocities were rife, was another. Elizabeth quickly distanced herself from Barton, hoping to halt the stories that she was a traitor to Christendom. Barton’s death from dysentery in 1597 saved him from the full force of Elizabeth’s displeasure, but for the final years of Elizabeth’s reign the English representative to Mehmed III acted almost exclusively as the representative of the Levant Company.

Barton was succeeded by his secretary, Henry Lello, who appears to have been content with the relative paucity of instructions from his political masters.³⁹ Cecil and Elizabeth, for their parts, seem to have been content with Lello’s greater distance from the intrigues of the Ottoman court. This is not to say that Lello’s tenure did not see its

³⁸ Cited in I.I. Podea, “A contribution to the study of Queen Elizabeth’s eastern policy (1590-1593)” in *Mélanges d’Histoire Générale*, ed. Constantin Marinescu (Bucharest: 1938), p. 459.

³⁹ Henry Lello has often been unfavorably compared to Harborne and Barton, but, while Lello clearly lacked the brio of either of his predecessors, his tenure in Istanbul was one of consolidation and modest expansion. Certainly after Barton’s debacle in Hungary a period of relative cool between the English and their Ottoman hosts was required.

share of crises; in fact, the greatest one occurred immediately upon his assumption of Barton's duties following the latter's death. Barton had assumed the role of agent when Harborne departed Istanbul in 1588, and saw the English commercial infrastructure in the Levant through the difficult period of the hiatus in the trade occasioned by Anglo-Spanish fighting of the late 1580s, and the period when the trade was operated without a charter. Shortly after the granting of the Levant Company charter in 1592, letters of accreditation were written recognizing Barton as the official representative of the English crown in Istanbul; in 1593 Barton presented these and kissed hands at the court of Murad III. With the accession of Mehmed III in 1595, however, it became necessary for the English trade agreement to be re-issued by the new Sultan, and for Barton to present new letters of accreditation; as well, Mehmed's succession would have to be honoured with a round of gifts for the new Sultan and his court. When Barton died in 1597 these necessary steps had still not been taken; Lello's succession to Barton's post occasioned a further need for the Queen to acknowledge her representative with formal letters of accreditation, and to honour the new sultan with appropriate gifts.

Once again the Levant Company tried to get the crown to pay for the necessary gifts; but once again Elizabeth demurred. And so, after some minor delays, in August of 1597 the Company commissioned the construction of another fantastic musical clock, this one even more grand than the one that Harborne had purchased in Cologne to give to Murad III.⁴⁰ Early in 1599 the Levant Company ship *Hector* was laden with the clock and other gifts for the Sultan, the Sultana-mother and various court officials, as well as a diplomatic packet containing Lello's letters of accreditation and commendation. The delivery and reception of these gifts are considered in detail in Chapter Four; here it is sufficient to note that the gifts were very well received. Whatever strain may have been caused by Barton's adventures in Hungary, and Elizabeth's subsequent disavowals of

⁴⁰ The contract for the construction of the clock survived to the nineteenth century, but has since been lost. The only remaining copy is the one printed in *The Illustrated London News* 20 October 1860, p. 380.

association with the Ottomans, appears to have lifted. For the remainder of Lello's tenure, which continued beyond the deaths of both Elizabeth I and Mehmed III in 1603, his activities were largely restricted to commercial affairs and disputes. With the accession of James I in England, English policy focussed upon the cultivating of Christian unity, and relations with Istanbul cooled further.

The early and middle years of Elizabeth's reign witnessed a combination of political and commercial factors that made entente with the Ottomans attractive, and perhaps even necessary. The loss of access to the hyper-market at Antwerp left the English without access to the products of the Asian, African and Mediterranean trades, and without vent for a substantial share of English cloth. The loss of this market threatened mass unemployment; but the effects were not limited to the domestic economic scene: "[f]rom the export tax on English woolen cloths the Queen derived most of her assured revenue, so that on the security of the cloth trade there hung not merely a measure of social stability but the financial strength of the English crown and the international prestige this engendered."⁴¹

More than this, however, the hardening rifts within Christian Europe reduced the attraction of the concept of a united Christendom. The victory of the Catholic League over the Ottoman navy at Lepanto in 1571 had been cause for masses of thanksgiving, bonfires and bells throughout London and elsewhere in England, despite the fact that the "Bishop of Rome" had placed England outside the Catholic fold with the excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570. A mere decade later, however, much had changed. Elizabeth's escalation of aid to the Dutch rebels had allowed her to groom a reputation as one of the leaders of Protestant Europe, in turn increasing the tension between herself and the "Catholic King", Philip II. Prior to 1588 nobody, including the English, would have believed that England could best Spain in open military confrontation; therefore, the grooming of an alliance with the one European power equal

⁴¹ Ramsay, "The foreign policy of Elizabeth I," p. 147.

to Spain, the Ottoman empire, had obvious attractions. The excommunication of Elizabeth served her well not only in establishing her Protestant credentials in northern Europe, but also in Istanbul, where Elizabeth's letters to the sultan and his officials routinely drew a distinction between the pure Christianity of England and the "idolatry" of Catholic Europe, appealing to the sultan on grounds of unity of religious beliefs as well as political enemies.⁴²

The initiation and warming of relations between London and Istanbul thus served a number of political and commercial purposes. The principal one would always be that the Ottoman empire consumed large quantities of English cloth, thus helping preserve English commercial prosperity and social stability, as well as helping to maintain the financial stability of the crown through the wealth generated by customs receipts, which in turn allowed Elizabeth to carry out her domestic and foreign policies. Also significant, however, was the potential for further political and military alliance in the event of all-out war between England and Spain. Although such an alliance never materialized, this fact should not blind us to the importance of this potential, in London and in Madrid. Until Barton went too far in 1596, Elizabeth and Walsingham played out this potential well, causing scandal by allowing English merchants to trade tin and iron into Ottoman hands, and by adding grist to the international rumour mill by having the crown's agent at Istanbul pursue closer relations with the sultan.

All of this illustrates the close connections between trade and diplomacy in the period. The appointment of a single official to monitor the trade agreement and act as the official representative of the English crown further demonstrates the perceived and actual compatibility of diplomacy and commerce at the time. It was not only in the Levant that

⁴² See, for example, "The answer of her Maiestie to the foresayd letters of the great Turke, sent by M. Richard Stanly, in the Prudence of London, Anno 1579" in Hakluyt, ed. *Principal Navigations* II part I, pp. 138-141. It is a testimony to the spirit of Hakluyt's work that the gestures of affiliation included in the terms of Elizabeth's address to Murad III, very similar to her terms of address to the sultans of Morocco and Fez, were included without alteration in *The Principal Navigations*.

commerce and diplomacy went hand in hand, however. A similar phenomenon, if not a similar sequence of events, can be discerned in English relations with the sultanate of Morocco and Fez.

The Barbary Company

The licensing of the Turkey Company in 1581 allowed a group of twelve merchants to transform a haphazard, occasional trade into a major vent for English woolens and Cornish tin. With the Levant Company charter of 1592 these twelve were expanded to fifty-three through the merging of the Turkey and Venice Companies; as well, another twenty merchants who had pleaded to the crown for inclusion in the trade were given the right to join the Levant Company for a £130 fee.⁴³ By 1600, the number of merchants in the company had risen to eighty-seven, some twenty of whom had reinvested their profits from the Levant Company into the East India Company, chartered in 1599.⁴⁴ At the same time, Elizabeth was able to augment her customs revenues and to deploy, at little or no cost to the crown, a resident ambassador at the court of the Ottoman sultan. If the managing of the trade to the eastern Mediterranean is instructive of how crown-granted monopolies might work to the mutual benefit of crown, merchants and the realm, the story of the Barbary Company provides a lesson on the potential of the monopoly system to be abused by those closest to the crown.

In August 1561 Sir Nicholas Throckmorton advanced the cause of a Portuguese sea captain, recently arrived in England, who offered to disclose to the English a “new” trade route to Morocco. Sir William Cecil, upon hearing of the matter, contacted the current mayor of London, Sir William Chester, a member of the Merchant Adventurers and sometime governor of the Muscovy Company, who also had trading interests in

⁴³ “The second letters patents granted by the Quennes Maiestie, to the right wor. company of the English merchants for the Leuant, in the yere of our Lord 1592” in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations* II, part II, pp. 295-311.

⁴⁴ Wood, *History of the Levant Company* pp. 23-4, 31.

Africa. Chester and a few of his associates interviewed the Portuguese captain and reported to Cecil, in a letter preserved among the state papers, that far from describing a new trade, “wee fyend hit to be the verie same that hath byn knowen and traded contynewally by us this 12 or 13 yers.”⁴⁵ If Chester is to be believed, this would mean that there had been regular commerce between England and North Africa since 1548 or 1549, which predates by two or three years Hakluyt’s account of the “first voyage to Barbary” by Thomas Windham in 1551.⁴⁶ Another date for the onset of the trade is afforded by a petition of the Muscovy Company, dated 1566, which refers to “the trade of Barbary” having been founded “not above xiiij yeres past”, suggesting a date of 1552 for the origin of the trade.⁴⁷ All of this suggests that the Portuguese captain had considerable gall to arrive in England and offer his services to merchants who had been frequenters of the North African coast since at least the early 1550s. It is reasonable to suggest that the establishment of the trade to North Africa was a consequence of the glut of English cloth on the Antwerp market during the early 1550s. This same crisis, it should be noted, initiated the push to northern Europe that resulted in the founding of the Anglo-Russian trade, the development of the so-called “new draperies”, and other efforts to diversify England’s trading partners and products.⁴⁸

The earliest trading voyages to Morocco, including Thomas Windham’s in 1551 and 1552, described in Hakluyt’s compendium, were conducted on a joint-stock basis, as was the Guinea trade, which was founded at about the same time as the Morocco trade.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, even at this early date, the two trades were distinct, despite the fact that ships bound for Guinea passed directly by the ports of Morocco. Not only did different merchants using different ships ply the two routes, the evolution of the trades moved on

⁴⁵ PRO SP 12/19 fo. 21.

⁴⁶ Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations II*, Part II, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁷ Willan, *Studies*, p. 93.

⁴⁸ Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁹ These early voyages to Morocco and the Gulf of Guinea, conducted between 1551 and 1557, are recounted in Hakluyt, ed., *Principle Navigations II*, part II, pp. 7-44.

very different tracks. Whereas the Guinea trade was conducted throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods as a joint-stock, occasional, “hit-and-run” trade (for example, John Hawkins’s profitable but illegal forays into slave trading in the 1560s⁵⁰), the Morocco trade was quickly organized upon more conventional lines. Certainly, by the latter 1550s the English had established in Morocco an infrastructure of factors and factories, similar to the apparatus established in Antwerp, northern Europe, the Russia trade, and so forth.⁵¹

The trade was primarily one of English cloth for Moroccan sugar. Ships departed from southern England and arrived at Safi two weeks later. At Safi, port-town to Marrakech, cloth was unloaded and exchanged by the English factors for promissory notes for sugar, as well as occasional non-sugar items such as dates, almonds, goat skins and ostrich feathers. Once the cloth had been unloaded and sold, English ships moved south on the Moroccan coast to Agadir, the principal port of the Sus, the principal sugar-producing region of the sultanate. Here a second set of factors exchanged the promissory notes for sugar of various grades, ensuring that their masters received sufficient quality and quantity. This accomplished, the ships returned to England.

The establishment of a regular trade with Morocco during the 1550s and 1560s is somewhat surprising given the turbulence of Morocco’s domestic politics at the time. From the late fifteenth century the armies of the Sa’adians had been making a concerted effort forcibly to break the Portuguese commercial/military strongholds in the Sus, and to establish a trade with Europeans other than the Portuguese. In doing so, the Sa’adians needed regular supplies of firearms and metal shot, both of which the Portuguese were understandably reluctant to deliver to them. By the 1540s the situation was further complicated by the Sa’adian push north from the Sus into Morocco,⁵² bringing them into

⁵⁰ Hakluyt, ed., *Principle Navigations ...* III (London:1600), pp. 500-525.

⁵¹ Willan, *Studies*, pp. 100-106.

⁵² The area known as Morocco today was comprised of three distinct regions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: the Sus in the south, Morocco in the middle (the name

open conflict with the ruling Wattasids as well as the Portuguese. Throughout the 1550s the Sa'adians more or less successfully pushed north, eventually capturing all of Morocco and Fez, and even sparring against Ottoman forces at Tlemcen.⁵³

One of the key elements in the Sa'adian strategy in their conquest of the Sus, Morocco and Fez was the breaking of the Portuguese stranglehold over exchange with Europe, not only to break the Portuguese domination of trade into and out of the region, but specifically in order to gain access to European firearms.⁵⁴ From the earliest days of the establishment of the English trade to Morocco, the Portuguese protested that not only were the English encroaching on their trading territories, they were also hampering the expansion of Christendom through the trading of war materials into the hands of infidels.⁵⁵ The first, and unsuccessful, petition for a monopoly on the trade to Morocco states that “whereas before time there hath been carried divers kinds of munitions out of this realm into the said country of Barbary, to the great strengthening of the heathen

derived from a corruption of “Marrakech”), and Fez to the north. Generally the term “Morocco” was used to refer to Morocco and the Sus together; thus, “the sultanate of Morocco and Fez” was roughly equivalent to the geographical entity known today as Morocco.

⁵³ The history in this section is based on a variety of sources, principally M. El Fasi, “Morocco,” *General History of Africa V* (Paris: UNESCO, 1992), pp. 200-232; Levtzion, “North-west Africa;” Charles-Andre Julien, *History of North Africa: Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco from the Arab Conquest to 1830* (New York: Praeger, 1970); E.W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Bovill, *The Battle of Alcazar*.

⁵⁴ Levtzion, “North-west Africa” pp. 400-401; El Fasi, “Morocco” pp. 201-204.

⁵⁵ See, for example, “The second voyage to Barbary, Anno 1552” in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations II part II*, pp. 7-8: “it is to bee understood that the Portugals were much offended with this our new trade into Barbarie.” The reason for this animosity, according to the Spanish ambassador, was that the ships that went to Morocco in 1552 were “laden with all sorts of munitions of war ... to be transported, it is said, to Barbary.” Cited in John William Blake, *Europeans in West Africa, 1450-1560 II* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1942), p. 305.

people of the country,” the unnamed petitioner promises to carry “none but such shall serve for the defense of our ships only.”⁵⁶

It seems likely that from the 1550s forward the English were trading firearms and munitions into North Africa. Indeed, it may even be that it was this trade in military supplies that gained the English their first foothold in Morocco, and allowed them to establish their trading infrastructure with such ease and speed.⁵⁷ An interesting document, written sometime between 1575 and 1585 and describing “divers trades of merchaundize to be used for soundrie placis,” includes a paragraph on the trade to Morocco which suggests that by this time the trade in military supplies, including wood for galleys and oars as well as metal in raw and finished forms, occupied a significant place in the goods the English traded into Morocco:

Item, for Barbary, very fyne clothes, sade blewes, of xxx *li.* the clothe; and the Redd caps for marriners; and all kinde of greate ordinaunce and other artellyrye; ashe timber for Oares; Armory of all sortes; but yf the Spanyerdes take yowe trading with them you dye for it.⁵⁸

This document is all the more significant given the breakdown of the Anglo-Portuguese trade in 1569 and the subsequent agreement negotiated between the English and Portuguese in 1576. As early as the 1550s the Portuguese had protested the English presence in North Africa, on the grounds that English had no right to trade there (unlike the Portuguese who had discovered the trade and had been granted a monopoly of it by

⁵⁶ PRO SP 12/42, fo. 22.

⁵⁷ The speed with which the trading infrastructure was developed in Morocco has traditionally been viewed as one of the amazing aspects of the Anglo-Moroccan trade (see, for example, Willan, *Studies*, p. 106). It should be noted, however, that the speed with which the English factories appeared is only remarkable relative to trading ventures below Cape Blanc, in Asia and in America. During the sixteenth century, however, the English seem to have thought of the Moroccan trade in the same terms as they thought of trading within Europe. This is probably a result of the geographic proximity of Morocco, and its long association with Europe on account of its being part of the Mediterranean system.

the Pope), and secondly, on account of the English willingness to trade arms to infidels to the harm of all of Christendom.

Naturally, such arguments were more effective before 1558 than after. In 1555 the Portuguese were successful in securing, through the intervention of Philip II, a cessation of the Guinea trade by order of Queen Mary.⁵⁹ Seven years later, however, the Portuguese felt compelled to send an embassy to England charged with renewing the prohibition of the English merchants to trade in Guinea and Morocco. On this occasion the English were more intransigent. Elizabeth denied that her subjects were trading arms to the Moroccans and put off the ambassador's other protests stating "that the more Christian people that shall resort to the gentiles and Saracens, the more shall the faith increase."⁶⁰ Over the 1560s the situation became more serious, when English ships engaged the Portuguese in skirmishes off the West African coast, leading to the seizure of English goods in Portugal. By 1569 all trade between England and Portugal had ceased, though the Morocco trade apparently continued unabated.⁶¹

Towards the end of 1571 the Portuguese and English began to negotiate terms to allow the reopening of the trade. An intriguing document dated "Primo Februarii 1571" [i.e. 1572], which has "words to be inserted in the treaty with Portugall" written on the recto in Burghley's hand, lays out the opinion of twenty-six merchants involved in the Anglo-Moroccan trade on the question of the Portuguese claims. In their short statement they recognize Portuguese rights only to those areas "under the domynyon of the Kinge of Portingale" – namely "the realmes of Portingale and Algarve, the islandes of Madera, and all the islands of Assoryes." Elsewhere, they continue, the king of Portugal had not established dominion by conquest and so could not claim exclusive rights. Specifically, "because he hath three fortes on the cost of Barbarie, we thinke it not amysse that ... the

⁵⁸ R.H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds., *Tudor Economic Documents* III (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937), pp. 199-210. The paragraph on Morocco is on p. 202.

⁵⁹ Blake, *Europeans in West Africa* II, pp. 355-358.

⁶⁰ Cited in Willan, *Studies*, p. 141.

hole cuntry of Barbarie be excepted” from any negotiated exclusions. In closing, the merchants, demonstrating once again the separation of the Guinea and Moroccan trades, state that at most the English crown should recognize Portuguese rights only to the regions to the south of Cape Blanc.⁶² Throughout the negotiations the Portuguese continued to press for a ban of English trade to Morocco, but were repeatedly rebuffed. When consulted, the Lord Mayor of London replied “that it were better to be forbidden Portugal” than to consent to a prohibition of the Morocco trade.⁶³ In the end the English rejected any significant limitations to their activities in Morocco. In one particularly frank response to the importunities of the Portuguese ambassador, the English negotiator, Sir Thomas Wilson, remarked that “her majesty marvelleth that this should be required for Barbary, considering it is notorious that there is a king known, that possesseth that country of Barbary.”⁶⁴ Despite this hard stance, and despite the exclusion of all references to Morocco or West Africa whatsoever from the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1576, during the negotiations Elizabeth freely agreed to ban English merchants from selling war materials to the Moroccans.

Securing such a ban was without doubt one of the principal goals of the Portuguese, for from 1574 King Sebastian had voiced his intention of invading Morocco, and in 1576 he began to prepare his invasionary force. It was at this point that Edmund Hogan came to the fore. Hogan was one of the twenty-six merchants who had signed the declaration of 1572 stating the position of the Morocco merchants on Portugal’s claims to an exclusive trade with Morocco. Now, in the later 1570s, as the Portuguese prepared to invade Morocco, and as Edward Osborne and Richard Staper prepared to initiate direct English contact with the Ottoman government in Istanbul, Hogan sought to create an alternate trade route into Africa and the Mediterranean through the Atlantic coast of

⁶¹ Willan, *Studies*, pp. 140-142.

⁶² PRO SP 70/125 fo. 380.

⁶³ *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603* (London: Public Record Office 1863-) X, p. 223.

Morocco, a shorter and less perilous voyage than that proposed by Osborne and Staper. The story, at least as Hogan told it in a report of 1577, began in 1572 when Hogan's patron at court, Sir Thomas Gresham, asked Hogan's factor at Hamburg, John Williams, to investigate the availability and price of saltpetre on behalf of the crown.⁶⁵ Saltpetre was an essential element in the manufacture of gunpowder, and one which was almost entirely lacking in England. In the beginning of Elizabeth's reign Gresham had been able to meet England's needs for the mineral through the market at Antwerp;⁶⁶ but the embargo on English trading at Antwerp forced the English to look further afield.

Williams found saltpetre scarce and dear at Hamburg, but evidently kept the request in mind. Not long after looking into the cost of saltpetre, Williams purchased in Hamburg "a kynde of thynn lynnyn clothe" on behalf of Hogan, who then sent both cloth and factor to Morocco, where Williams sold the cloth and also "perceavyd that in that cuntry was store of saltepeetar, far bettar then he coolde provyde anne in ane other plase wher hee had travalyd." Williams attempted to purchase some, and found that all trade in saltpetre was restricted by decree of the sultan. Eventually Williams had an interview with one of the sultan's courtiers, who went to the sultan on Williams's behalf. As it transpired, the sultan was willing to sell the English saltpetre, but only in exchange for "bullets of eyeron for his greate ordenanse." Williams was further informed that although there were religious prohibitions against selling saltpetre to Christians, "consideringe the comodeti of pellats was as needfull for hym as saltepeetar to the Chrysteans, it was to be dyspensyd withall."⁶⁷

Williams returned to England with a sample of the saltpetre and "dyvars heightes and compasis for the pellets." The saltpetre was delivered to Hogan, who then passed it on to Burghley, who in turn gave it to the earls of Warwick and Leicester, "whose

⁶⁴ De Castries, ed., *Les Sources Inédites I*, pp. 123-5.

⁶⁵ Edmund Hogan, "A discourse of John Williams dealyng in Barbarie for the provision of saltpetre from thence" PRO SP 71/12, fos. 1-3.

⁶⁶ Wernham, *Before the Armada*, pp. 278-279.

Honnors had good leeking of the saltepeeter.”⁶⁸ Arrangements were made to send a small amount of shot to Morocco as a trial of the arrangement, when one of the twists of an extremely turbulent period of Moroccan history dealt Hogan a sudden – though, as events developed, brief – windfall.

When Sultan Abdallah al-Ghalib Billah died in 1574, his son Muhammad was proclaimed sultan, and was thereafter known as Muhammad al-Maslukha. Muhammad’s succession was disputed by his uncle, Mawlay Abd al-Malik, who cited the long established tradition that the throne passed not necessarily to the son of the previous sultan, but to the eldest male in the family. Al-Malik fled Morocco, first to Algiers, and then to Istanbul, where he persuaded the Ottoman Sultan Murad III to sponsor his bid to take the Moroccan throne by force. With the aid of Ottoman troops from Algiers, in 1576 Abd al-Malik successfully unseated but failed to capture his nephew, who took refuge in the Atlas mountains.⁶⁹

Edmund Hogan’s factor, John Williams, had made the shot-for-saltpetre arrangements with the government of Muhammad al-Maslukha, but by the time the first shipment of shot arrived in Morocco, Abd al-Malik had taken the throne. Williams and John Bampton, who had been jointly charged with delivering the shot and exchanging it for saltpetre, found themselves welcome at Abd al-Malik’s court, who, “fydinge the lacke of pellets” in the royal munitions, was eager to honour the terms of al-Maslukha’s agreement with the English. Moreover, because of Abd al-Malik’s close connections with the Ottoman sultan, the Sultan further suggested that the Moroccans and English “enter in leage as well for the quiett trafficke of her [Queen Elizabeth’s] shipps and subjectts in to this cuntry of Barbere, as throuhe the Straightes in to the Leavant seas.” Williams was dispatched immediately for England with letters to Gresham and the Queen, and quickly

⁶⁷ Hogan, “discourse.”

⁶⁸ Hogan, “discourse.”

⁶⁹ El Fasi, “Morocco,” pp. 200-204; Julien, *History of North Africa* Chapter Eight, “The Sharifian Empire.”

returned with a letter from Elizabeth which stated her willingness to enter into such a league.⁷⁰

At this point Hogan's report changes from describing the activities of his factor to proposing a project for the Anglo-Moroccan trade. In approximately one and a half folio pages Hogan laid out the advantages for England of such a trade; and although he made no comments about a monopoly on such a trade for himself, it seems likely that this was what he was angling for. His submission of the report to the crown in 1577 must have coincided roughly with Edward Osborne and Richard Staper's preparations to send Harborne, with letters of commendation from Elizabeth, to negotiate the Anglo-Ottoman trade pact. Wood, in his *History of the Levant Company*, suggests that Hogan's overtures to Morocco represented an allied effort to ease the dangers of the Levant trade.⁷¹ I would suggest, however, that Hogan's proposal stands in competition with Osborne and Staper's bid for a monopoly on the Ottoman trade. As Hogan outlined the advantages of his project, the opportunity to trade with the Moroccans received equal attention with the benefits of an overland trade through Morocco and into Ottoman North Africa. Hogan emphasised that such a trade would allow the English to take over the provisioning of the Ottomans with European goods, a trade presently practised by the Germans and Italians. In the concluding lines of the report, Hogan further stated that the overland trade with the Ottomans via Morocco should be considered superior to a direct trade: "thear shalbe savyd ij thowsand mylles of carraige, and a good dyrect passage, withowte daingar of Portingalle and Spayne. And in owr tyme, synce the trade hathe bin in to Barbere, the passage is suttche by sea as no shipp hathe myscarryd that waye."⁷²

Hogan's proposal should not be dismissed as unworkable. With the exception of Morocco and Fez, North Africa was more or less under Ottoman domination at this time,

⁷⁰ Hogan, "discourse." Neither the sultan's letters to Gresham and the queen nor Elizabeth's response have survived; however, since the report that Hogan mentions them in was submitted to the queen, there is no reason to suspect that he fabricated the episode.

⁷¹ Wood, *History of the Levant Company*, p. 10, n. 1.

and the Ottomans could reasonably offer protection of such a trade. The distance to be covered was great, but certainly not as extensive as the overland trade in Persian goods plied by the Muscovy Company, nor as vast as the long-standing and immensely successful spice trade across Asia that terminated at Aleppo. Moreover, the trade would only have to go as far, at most, as Tripoli, which was a securely established Ottoman trading port, and from which English wares might be transported in the Ottoman galley fleets to Istanbul and elsewhere in the empire. For their part, Elizabeth and her council were sufficiently impressed to take immediate action on the proposal. Within a month of the writing of his report Hogan received letters of accreditation, instruction and commendation from the queen and was dispatched shortly thereafter to Marrakech to serve as Elizabeth's authorized representative in negotiating a league with Abd al-Malik.

Hogan arrived at Safi early in June, 1577; his report had been written in March, 1577.⁷³ Williams' first voyage to Morocco took place sometime between 1574 and 1576, the beginning and end dates of the reign of Muhammad al-Maslukha's reign; his second voyage took place probably in the late summer or fall of 1576, just after Abd al-Malik had ousted his nephew. It was during this second voyage that Elizabeth and Abd al-Malik exchanged the letters mentioned in Hogan's report, letters which directly addressed the shot-for-saltpetre trade. It may be helpful to pause a moment and juxtapose this timeline with the Anglo-Portuguese negotiations. Breakdown of relations between the nations occurred in 1569; serious discussion towards a treaty began in 1572. Elizabeth committed to the prohibition of the Anglo-Moroccan arms trade in 1574 (a commitment commensurate with all official statements prior to this), and took action to prevent Hanse merchants from trading arms to Morocco in accordance with the wishes of the king of Portugal in 1576.⁷⁴ The Anglo-Portuguese treaty was ratified in 1576, and although it

⁷² Hogan, "discourse."

⁷³ Although the document is undated, Henry de Castries conclusively dates it to March 1577 in *Les Sources Inédites* I, p. 200 n. 1.

⁷⁴ PRO PC 2/3, fo. 142. De Castries, *Les Sources Inédites* I pp. 188-189.

failed to mention any aspect of the trade to Morocco, entering into a direct crown-to-crown arms trade with the Moroccan sultan at the same moment as King Sebastian began preparations for his invasion of Morocco went against the spirit of the earlier negotiations, to say the least.

T.S. Willan, the foremost historian of the Anglo-Moroccan trade, has argued that in fact Elizabeth at no point condoned the arms trade, and, though recognizing that such a trade did exist, Willan further argued that it was never very important in terms of volume, and was never integral to the much more major cloth-for-sugar trade. As evidence for this, Willan points to the records of the trade in England's port books, and the lack of any mention of the shot-for-saltpetre trade in the copy of Hogan's instructions that has survived. And while he concedes that the letters Hogan referred to in his report of 1577 might offer evidence to the contrary, their disappearance renders any speculation as to their contents unwarranted.⁷⁵

Willan's hard-nosed empiricism is disingenuous. The context in which Hogan mentioned the letters in the report of 1577 not only warrants speculation on their contents, but gives us a reasonable idea as to their contents. Hogan's report was submitted to Elizabeth and her council, who certainly would have known the contents of the letters; therefore, it would have been foolish to make reference to the letters in a way that might misrepresent their contents. Furthermore, although the arms trade to Morocco was officially illegal throughout the period – a point stressed in Elizabeth's communications with the Portuguese king and his various representatives – we know that it went on from the testimony of the Portuguese ambassador, various petitions of the Morocco merchants to the crown, and from the description of the trade of 1577 (one of the sources that Willan concedes provides indisputable evidence that the trade existed). It is less than surprising that those participating in an officially illegal trade did not pay customs on it, and so the trade would not appear in Willan's primary sources, the port

⁷⁵ Willan, *Studies*. See especially Chapter Four, Part Two, "The unregulated trade."

books. Moreover, the survival of port books has been haphazard from the mid to late sixteenth century, rendering them unreliable as a source for establishing trends in English commercial activity.⁷⁶

At first glance, the surviving copy of Hogan's instructions does lend weight to Willan's argument. Not only do these instructions fail to authorize Hogan to establish an arms trade, they specifically state that Hogan should reject any attempts of the sultan to negotiate such a trade, no matter how strenuously the sultan might insist:

And for that he hath heretofore made means ... to recover from hence such artillerie and munition as he shall from tyme to tyme have neede of (a matter to which we can neither in honour or conscience yeild unto) ... in case he move any suche matters, we would have you endevore yourselfe to put it of the best waye and with the best wordes you can. But if he persist in that purpose, and urge it with more instaunce, you shall then declare unto him in our name how much it importeth us, both in honour and safetie, to yeild to any such request, having regarde of such leagues as our progenetores and we have hadd, and presently have with other christiane princes our neighbors ... especially ... in this time of controverseye betweene some of the said princes our colleagues and hym ... And therefore you shall desire hym in our name to forbear to presse us therein, especiallie seinge it is a matter that somewhat concertecth the service of our God ... And if so be you shall see hym not rest satisfied with this our answer, you shall then more particularlie lett hym understande, that, in case we should consent to his said demandes, we see it verie apparent that we should drawe the hatred of all christian princes our neighbours uppon us ... Which beinge a matter of so greate consequence, and touchinge us so nearlie, we hope he will weigh it accordinglie, and forbear to presse us farther therein.⁷⁷

Before embracing Willan's conclusions, however, it is important to note that these instructions are not only completely at odds with the report that occasioned the embassy, they are also insulting to the sultan. At a time when diplomatic practice required that the ambassador present his instructions not only orally to his host, but also in writing, these instructions seem very peculiar. The terms of Elizabeth's rejection of the arms trade to

⁷⁶ Dietz, "Antwerp and London," p. 198.

Morocco would have been highly offensive to the Moroccan sultan – describing him as an undesirable partner for alliance – and it is difficult to see how an embassy armed with such instructions could have made headway in forging any sort of relationship between England and Morocco. And yet, Hogan’s embassy was quite successful: while Hogan was still in Morocco Abd al-Malik published two proclamations which corrected abuses against the English factors by Moroccans involved in the sugar trade; Hogan spent several days in closeted discussion with the Sultan; he secured in principle generous trade concessions and guarantees; and he returned to England with a shipment of saltpetre.

In the opinion of E.W. Bovill, the instructions are “obviously a blind,” and it is difficult not to agree.⁷⁸ “By the sixteenth century”, writes Garrett Mattingly in *Renaissance Diplomacy*, “double sets of instructions [for ambassadors] were completely customary.” One set could be freely shown in the event of the ambassador having to justify the embassy to third parties, while the other, kept secret, set out the actual goals of the embassy.⁷⁹ Given that Hogan’s ship would be passing through Portuguese-controlled waters, the precaution of a false set of instructions would have been an absolute necessity.

Turning from the instructions to the actual embassy, the lavishness of Hogan’s reception at Safi and Marrakech, and his subsequent successful negotiation of trade terms with the sultan are well documented. Surviving from the brief, two-month embassy are a letter from Hogan to Elizabeth dated 11 June 1577, a rather more lengthy account of the embassy written by Hogan and preserved in Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations*, and a letter written from Abd al-Malik to Elizabeth, dated 10 July 1577.⁸⁰ I will return to the

⁷⁷ “Instructions given by her Ma^{tie} to Edmund Huggenes” BL Harleian Ms. 36, fo. 303.

⁷⁸ Bovill, *Battle of Alcazar*, p. 50.

⁷⁹ Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1955), p. 41.

⁸⁰ Hogan to Elizabeth, June 11, 1577: BL Cotton Ms. Nero B XI, fo. 297; “The voyage and ambassage of Master Edmund Hogan to the Emperour of Marocco, Anno 1577” in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations* II part II, pp. 64-67; Abd al-Malik to Elizabeth, 10

representations Hogan made of the Moroccan sultan and his court in Chapter Three; here it is sufficient to note that Abd al-Malik responded positively to Hogan's overtures, and took advantage of the opportunity to press Elizabeth for further diplomatic contact in the form of a Moroccan embassy sent to Elizabeth's court. In both the sultan's letter to the queen and in Hogan's final report the sultan assures the queen of his interest in a closer alliance. Hogan's report goes further in describing the Abd al-Malik's agreement to reject diplomatic overtures from Spain, to allow the English use of Moroccan ports in the event of war, and to allow the use of Morocco as an entry point for trade into Ottoman territories – all of these issues not mentioned in the surviving set of Hogan's instructions. If we are to accept, as Willan has, the surviving copy of Hogan's instructions as an accurate representation of Hogan's mission, then there is no way to account for what would have been unconscionable liberties taken in the Queen's name in negotiating military arrangements with the enemy of an official ally. Moreover, the symmetry of these arrangements with the proposals Hogan made in his report of 1576 suggest once again that the report of 1576 might be a more accurate guide to the actual goals of the embassy than the surviving set of instructions.

Fascinating an episode as this is, it proved a dead end. If Hogan was able briefly to enjoy the windfall of Abd al-Malik's coup d'état, his plans nonetheless came to naught when Abd al-Malik's reign was brought to a bloody end on the plains outside of the city of al-Ksar al-Kabir. In 1576 Muhammad al-Maslukha, Abd al-Malik's deposed nephew, sent an envoy to King Sebastian of Portugal, appealing for aid in regaining his kingdom. Sebastian seized upon the promised alliance as his opportunity to fulfill his cherished dream of leading a force against the infidels, regaining and expanding Portuguese holdings in Morocco and Fez. For his part, Sebastian's joining Muhammad's forces allowed Abd al-Malik to advertise the war against his nephew as part of the greater holy war the Sa'adians had been waging against the Portuguese since the first quarter of the

century.⁸¹ Late in July, Sebastian appeared at Arzila, a Portuguese stronghold in Fez, at the head of a force of 15,500 infantry and 1,500 cavalry, as well as several hundreds of servants, women and other camp followers. The army included representatives of most houses of the Portuguese nobility, as well as several thousand German and Italian mercenaries, and a small force of papal troops under the command of the Englishman Thomas Stukeley, diverted from his intended insurrection against Queen Elizabeth in Ireland.⁸² Muhammad al-Maslukha brought almost no troops.

On 29 July 1576, in the heat of the Fessian summer, Sebastian set out towards Larache, only to be intercepted by Abd al-Malik's superior force at al-Ksar al-Kabir on 3 August. By this point Sebastian's army was already disoriented, badly suffering from the heat, and out of rations. Sebastian had formulated neither an offensive or a defensive strategy, and had no thought of retreat. The ensuing battle witnessed the absolute defeat of Sebastian's forces, including the death of Sebastian and Muhammad al-Maslukha. In a bizarre twist Abd al-Malik, who was at al-Ksar al-Kabir but not on the battlefield, also died, perhaps the victim of a heart attack, poisoning, or an ailment unrelated to the events of the day. As a result of these three deaths the battle became known in Europe as the "Battle of the Three Kings." Mawlay Ahmad, Abd al-Malik's only remaining brother, inherited the throne of the double sultanate uncontested, and with a terrific windfall: for years to come, the ransom of hundreds of Portuguese captives, many of them from the kingdom's leading noble families, would provide a tremendous flow of gold into Morocco. Following the victory at al-Ksar al-Kabir Ahmad took the name "al-Mansur"

236-238.

⁸¹ Julien, *History of North Africa*, pp. 220-228.

⁸² Bovill provides a concise report on Stukeley's intended invasion and his decision to join Sebastian. Bovill, *Battle of Alcazar*, pp. 79-83. See also "The voyage of *Thomas Stukeley into Barbary, 1578*" in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations* II part II, pp. 67-68.

(the Victorious), but, as a result of the ransoms that came after, he also became known as “al-Dhahabi” (the Golden).⁸³

The year 1576 was a major turning point in the histories of both Morocco and Portugal. In Portugal, the slaughter or capture of so many young Portuguese left the country, and especially the nobility, profoundly shaken and increasingly impoverished; moreover, Sebastian’s death left no clear heir and made possible the union of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns by Philip II of Spain in 1580 after the bizarre attempt, and failure, of Cardinal Henry to engender a Portuguese line of succession. In Morocco, the accession of Ahmad al-Mansur signaled a fundamental re-orientation of foreign and domestic policy. Under Abd al-Malik Morocco had looked east to a strong partnership with the Ottoman empire, and north to a potential alliance with England against Spain. Al-Mansur envisioned a future for Morocco wholly independent of the Ottomans and uninvolved in European affairs. While shrugging off Ottoman alliance, al-Mansur nonetheless continued the Ottoman-style reform of the Moroccan military initiated by Abd al-Malik and began to look south and east. Largely funding his offensive with the money pouring into Morocco from Portugal, al-Mansur’s army made a series of successful strikes south during the 1580s, culminating in a campaign of 1591 that captured the rich gold mines of the Sudan. With seemingly unlimited wealth at his disposal al-Mansur went on to secure through conquest or alliance a vast territory at least nominally under his rule, stretching from the lower Senegal River to Lake Chad. Under Ahmad’s rule, Moroccan court life reached an opulence and pomp never witnessed before or since.⁸⁴

But if the Battle of Alcazarquivir ushered in a golden age in the history of Morocco, the breaking of the nascent Moroccan-Ottoman alliance and the re-orientation

⁸³ My account of the battle and its aftermath is based on el Fasi, “Morocco,” pp. 204-212; Bovill, *Battle of Alcazar*; A.H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp.310-312; and H.V. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 151-159.

of Moroccan ambitions into Africa instead of into the Mediterranean dashed Hogan's hopes for an overland trade into the Ottoman empire. This was not, however, the end of the Anglo-Moroccan saltpetre trade. Instead, a new era of the trade began, with the earl of Leicester replacing Hogan as its prime mover.

In 1581 John Symcot, a merchant of London, applied for and received a license to export timber from Sussex and Southampton to Morocco in exchange for saltpetre, "because the Kinge there will suffer none to be caryed awaie for money or any comoditie but only in exchange for timbre... [C]onsidering howe necessarie a thinge it is to have store of saltpetre for the increase and mayntenaunce of our municion, We are pleased and contented to graunt unto the said Sympcote to provide and buy in the said shires tymbre to the quantitie of sixe hundred tonnes..."⁸⁵ Four months later, the Spanish ambassador in London reported that the timber intended for Morocco was being cut and dressed for the building of galleys, and that the English were forced to purchase some of it in the Netherlands because they could not keep up with the demand. By January of 1582 the Spanish ambassador wrote that the business was being managed by the earl of Leicester, who held a monopoly on the export of English timber.⁸⁶ A letter from Leicester to the Lord Mayor of London, written in September 1582, sheds further light on Leicester's involvement in the trade and the nature of Symcot's role. The letter orders the mayor to release Symcot, who had been imprisoned for an unnamed offence, so that Symcot might transport the timber to Morocco, and also fulfill his commission from Elizabeth to "go over there himself to the said King with her Ma^{ties} letters."⁸⁷ From this, and from the comments of the Spanish ambassador, some connection between Leicester and Symcot

⁸⁴ El Fasi, "Morocco," pp. 210-212; Levtzion, "North-West Africa," pp. 412-415.

⁸⁵ BL Cecil Ms. 11, fo. 95.

⁸⁶ Willan, *Studies*, pp. 164-165.

⁸⁷ De Castries, *Les Sources Inédites I*, pp. 401-403.

seems likely, and it was this belief that prompted Willan to suggest that Symcot was merely Leicester's agent in the timber-for-saltpetre trade.⁸⁸

Symcot's run-in with the London authorities was not the only time that he found himself in trouble; once in Morocco, he ran afoul of the English factory at Safi, where his "sinister and undirect dealinge" with the sultan resulted in the goods of the regular merchants being "ymbarged ashore" while Symcot had, by the sultan's decree, choice of goods already purchased by other merchants. According to the same source, a letter to the Privy Council written by several merchants trading to Morocco in protest of Symcot's activities, Symcot had also sought and received from the sultan a license "that none sholde bringe into this country either iron, tyn, lead, or brymstone, but he."⁸⁹ Shortly after sending this letter, the Morocco merchants made a more formal petition, complaining that "the trade of Barbary was a ryall trade for the vente of the commodyties of this lande, and for ther retorne, untill the first shippers of unlawfull commodyties spoyled the same; who obteyned soche favor of the Kinge, as they obtayned the Kinges graunte ... to geve unto them other mens sugars long before payd for..." and asking for the return of the trade to its previous healthy and lawful condition.⁹⁰

The renegade faction of merchants next submitted before the council a request supposedly from the Morocco merchants generally requesting incorporation into a regulating company.⁹¹ In reply, the established Morocco merchants proffered a statement arguing against incorporation, stating that the trade was already well managed, and that the creation of a company in England would be of no moment unless the sultan also certified the company (as had been done in the Ottoman empire, Russia and elsewhere).⁹² The renegade faction then clarified its position, stating that its members did not desire the formation of a corporation as in the Ottoman or Venice trades; rather, they were asking

⁸⁸ Willan, *Studies*, pp. 164-165.

⁸⁹ PRO SP 71/12, fo. 14.

⁹⁰ PRO SP 71/12, fos. 14-15.

⁹¹ PRO SP 71/12, fo.

for “a restraint of traders for a tyme with license for those that trade to take some good orders for the trade amongst themselves.” As de Castries noted, it is difficult to see the distinction they draw here: the request was for a monopoly on the trade to be granted to a select group of merchants, just as in the Turkey or Venice Companies.⁹³ In this new statement, however, the renegade merchants more clearly articulated their goals. Complaining of “the discredite growen and growing to the trade by suche as without ordre going thither sell our wares under hande, and buye their wares there at over prices, somme for want of skylle, and somme of malice to others,” the merchants identified themselves as concerned particularly with the saltpetre trade, noting “the great store of saltpetre that mought have bene brought ere this, hadde not the afore saide disodres bene, and shalbe nowe brought yf ordre may thus be taken.” In closing, the renegade merchants offered one further inducement to the crown in considering the request for incorporation: “there shall (yf this be granted) an agent be there, which may do her Ma^{tie} good service without charge to her Highness.”⁹⁴ The longstanding merchants made one more protest, specifically refuting the need or desirability of having an agent at the court of the sultan, which was signed by seventeen established London merchants.

These efforts were to no avail. On 15 July 1585 Elizabeth issued a curious set of letters patent incorporating the Morocco merchants into the Barbary Company. Unlike the charters of the Muscovy Company or the Merchant Adventurers, the Barbary Company charter makes no mention of the rules governing the trade, how these should be determined and amended or the methods by which new members would be absorbed into the company. T.S. Willan compares the Barbary Company charter to that of the Turkey Company, in which Edward Osborne was given extraordinary powers of regulating the trade and superior benefits to be accrued from the practice of the trade in recognition of his key role in reviving the Anglo-Ottoman trade and securing the English trading

⁹² PRO SP 71/12 fos. 18-19.

⁹³ De Castries, *Les Sources Inédites I*, p. 462 n. 4.

⁹⁴ PRO SP 71/12 fo. 20.

privileges from Istanbul.⁹⁵ In the Barbary Company charter, however, it is the earl of Leicester – who made no notable contribution to the trade, with the exception of the establishment of the new saltpetre trade – who is so privileged. Leicester went on to compound insult with injury by not only forcing the Morocco merchants into this unnatural trading company, but by levying £1,000 from each of the forty merchants so incorporated, as a fee for his services in securing the charter.⁹⁶

The whole episode was an obvious abuse of Leicester's power at Elizabeth's court, but this is not the whole story. There is no reason to doubt Leicester's letter, cited above, in which he identified John Symcot as the appointed bearer of letters from Elizabeth to Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur. The new saltpetre trade strongly resembled the one Hogan had hoped to establish in the 1570s, with the notable exception that it now was under control of Leicester, who was of course much closer to the crown than Hogan had been. This may be an indication of the importance placed on the trade, or it may suggest no more than that Leicester recognized that substantial money was to be made. Looking beyond concerns for the saltpetre trade, it is possible that Elizabeth was keen at this time to establish a resident ambassador at Marrakech. Once again, it is helpful to keep in mind the chronology of Anglo-Ottoman relations. By the early 1580s Harborne, agent of the Turkey merchants and representative of the Queen at Istanbul, under orders issued by Walsingham had begun to explore the possibilities of an Anglo-Ottoman military alliance against Philip II of Spain. It seems evident that Elizabeth wished similarly to explore the possibilities of an Anglo-Moroccan alliance. The project she wished to pursue at Marrakech, however, was much more concrete than that at Istanbul, where Harborne had attempted no more than to persuade the Ottomans to send even a small fleet of thirty galleys against any point of Philip's Mediterranean territories. By the mid 1580s Elizabeth was actively promoting the cause of Don Antonio, the Portuguese pretender, against Philip II, who had seized the Portuguese throne in 1580. According to

⁹⁵ Willan, *Studies*, pp. 186-187.

Willan, “the Queen could be persuaded into granting a charter by assuring her that the company would maintain an agent in Morocco, who would act as her ambassador without cost to herself and would negotiate with Muley Ahmed over that aid to Don Antonio which the Queen regarded as a vital factor in her diplomatic and military struggle with Spain.”⁹⁷ While this may overstate the importance that Elizabeth placed on the Don Antonio affair – it was only one of several efforts aimed at annoying the king, and probably not the most effective, given the king’s strong legal and practical claims to the Portuguese throne – it is possible that Harborne’s success in Istanbul was an inducement to try a similar arrangement in Marrakech. As had occurred in Istanbul, it is likely that Elizabeth sought to augment her international prestige by having far-flung representatives engaged in secretive negotiations as much as by achieving any particular policy ends.

Unlike Harborne, however, the man chosen to represent Elizabeth in Marrakech, Henry Roberts, had no particular understanding for, or aptitude in, dealing with commercial disputes. Not that this particularly mattered: when Harborne had departed for Istanbul as the Queen’s representative in 1580, in addition to his political duties, he had to establish an infrastructure of factories and depots throughout the Ottoman empire. In Morocco in 1585 such an infrastructure had already existed for at least a quarter of a century. Had they not been forced to assume the costs of the Marrakech embassy, the Morocco merchants would have been content had Roberts simply ignored them, which for the most part he did; the merchants would later grumble that the Moroccan embassy cost them approximately £300 per year and did not benefit them “the value of one penny.”⁹⁸

Not only was Roberts lacking in commercial experience, neither did he have relevant political experience. It appears that he owed his appointment chiefly to the patronage of Leicester. The latter had already secured Roberts’ employment in Ireland,

⁹⁶ BL Cotton Ms. Nero B XI, fo. 296.

⁹⁷ Willan, *Studies*, p. 183.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Willan, *Studies*, p. 230.

following which Roberts had served as a privateer licensed by Don Antonio to harass Spanish shipping. This experience may have been important in Roberts's appointment, as it appears that Hogan's primary assignment in Marrakech was to raise either financial or military aid for Don Antonio. Ahmad, however, was not easily to be drawn into European conflicts, and seems to have been content to hold the English in anticipation of such aid without ever actually promising and certainly not delivering it. Ahmad's Mediterranean strategy seems to have been to avoid either allying with or antagonizing the Spanish or the Ottomans, and there is no evidence that he would have risked upsetting this balance by siding with a minor power like England, at least in the years before Philip himself had threatened the balance of power by seizing the Portuguese throne and its attendant territories, and before the Armada.⁹⁹

The year of the Armada saw two major changes in the nature of English diplomatic involvement in Morocco: the first was the startling devastation of the Spanish forces by the English, which may have led Ahmad al-Mansur to reconsider his European strategy; the other was the death of Leicester, who had supplied much of the political will behind the English embassy to Morocco, and who had been the patron of the ambassador to Morocco. In January 1589 Roberts began to make his way back to England in the company of an ambassador from Ahmad named Mushac Reiz, who was charged by his master with negotiating an Anglo-Moroccan alliance to return Don Antonio to his throne. The degree to which the Armada directly resulted in this diplomatic breakthrough is unclear, but it seems the most likely cause for Ahmad's turnabout, and the dispatch of Mushac Reiz to England. The cause for Roberts' return is easier to determine. Without Leicester in London it was unlikely that the Morocco merchants could be induced to continue paying Roberts's salary; moreover, it seems that Roberts had hopes of receiving

⁹⁹ See, for example, how Ahmad dealt with the episode of *The Dolphin*, an English ship that seized a Spanish caravel and put into Safi in December 1586. Although the English claimed the Spanish ship and its contents as a legitimate prize of war, the sultan ordered

part of Leicester's fortune by bequest. In the years immediately after his return Roberts submitted to the Morocco merchants a series of claims of lost wages and due compensation. Among these claims were the assertion that his separation from Leicester's person, and his absence from England at the time of the Earl's death, had cost him £1,000.¹⁰⁰ As well, Roberts submitted to Leicester's estate the ridiculous debt of £43 5s. It is unlikely that either sum was ever paid to the former ambassador, and a petition from Roberts to James I paints a pathetic picture of his subsequent fortunes.¹⁰¹

Mushac Reiz arrived in England apparently intent upon securing an Anglo-Moroccan alliance on behalf of Don Antonio. Plans were already underway for the Norris/Drake expedition of 1589,¹⁰² and promises of Moroccan subsidies and supplies were eagerly welcomed.¹⁰³ When Drake sailed in April 1589, the Moroccan ambassador sailed in the same ship as Don Antonio. On this ill-fated expedition, however, the Moroccan aid failed to materialize as surely as hopes of the anticipated popular support among the Portuguese for Don Antonio evaporated.

Jack D'Amico has suggested that the Moroccan aid failed simply because Ahmad al-Mansur lacked sufficient time to make the arrangements.¹⁰⁴ This certainly is possible, given that Roberts and Mushac Reiz had only arrived in England in January 1589; but it is even more likely that Ahmad's newly found respect for the English in the wake of the Armada only entitled them to the same hot-and-cold treatment the Spanish had been enjoying since Ahmad had ascended the throne in 1578. As before, Ahmad's attention

that it be returned to the Spanish along with all of its goods upon pain of confiscation of the cargo of *The Dolphin*. De Castries, *Les Sources Inédites* I, pp. 479-483.

¹⁰⁰ De Castries, *Les Sources Inédites* I, pp. 543-546.

¹⁰¹ BL Additional Ms. 38139, fos. 33-34.

¹⁰² MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics 1588-1603*, pp. 82-89.

¹⁰³ "A project how to deale with Don Anthonio and the ambassador of Morocco, written by Mr. Robert Cecil." [sometime between January and April 1589] BL Lansdowne Ms. 53, fo. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991), p. 29.

remained focused on his African empire, and in Europe and the Mediterranean he continued to appear to court alliances while withholding final commitment. Over the next few years Elizabeth sent two embassies to Morocco to seek financial aid for Don Antonio, in recompense for the failure to provide the military aid Mushac Reiz had promised in 1589. At the very least, Elizabeth sought the return of Don Christopher, Antonio's son, who had been sent to Morocco as a pledge of Antonio's faith at the outset of the negotiations for Moroccan support.¹⁰⁵

The first English embassy to Morocco after the failed Portugal expedition of 1589 was led by John de Cardenas, and is documented by a lengthy letter from de Cardenas to Walsingham dated 8 October 1589.¹⁰⁶ De Cardenas's account of Ahmad's court differed markedly from Edmund Hogan's account of Abd al-Malik's, and is discussed in Chapter Three. At present it is sufficient to note that both de Cardenas and his successor, Edward Prynne, of whose embassy in 1590 we also have letters written home,¹⁰⁷ found themselves repeatedly offered "fair words" but no action from Ahmad al-Mansur. Both ambassadors returned to England having secured neither money for Don Antonio nor the return of Don Christopher.

After Prynne's embassy regular diplomatic contact between England and Morocco halted for a decade, although the Anglo-Moroccan trade continued, apparently including the trade in war supplies.¹⁰⁸ It appears that, with the death of the earl of Leicester the political will to support a resident ambassador in Morocco also died. As the Morocco merchants had made clear earlier, they neither required or desired a representative at the sultan's court, and certainly did not want to pay for one; in this, they were quite unlike the Turkey Company merchants, who needed a representative to the

¹⁰⁵ "The substance of the Emperor of Marocus message sent by his servaunt" January 1589. BL Lansdowne Ms. 59, fo. 1.

¹⁰⁶ PRO SP 71/12, fos. 28-31.

¹⁰⁷ PRO SP 71/12, fos. 36-38.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example the request from an unnamed merchant made to Elizabeth in 1593 (PRO SP 12/245, fo. 48).

Ottoman sultan, but did not want to pay his salary. The death of Leicester allowed the Barbary Company to quietly pass into history, with no set of orders ever drawn up for its organization, no attempts made by its governors to regulate the trade, and no evidence that it ever served any end other than to enrich Leicester. When its charter expired on 5 July 1597 no moves were made to renew it.

Towards the end of the 1590s Elizabeth and Ahmad began to exchange letters once again, both rulers avoiding potentially sensitive topics such as the recently deceased Don Antonio. A particularly interesting letter from Elizabeth to Ahmad of 20 May 1599, asking for the release of several Dutch sailors taken prisoner in Morocco, makes the request on the grounds of “the malyce of our and your common ennemie the Spanyard” and “forasmuch as also they are joyned with us both [i.e. Elizabeth and Ahmad] in lyke profession of relygion.”¹⁰⁹ This and similar letters signaled a thaw in Anglo-Moroccan relations, culminating in the embassy sent into England by Ahmad in the summer of 1600.

The embassy was something of an awkward affair, with Elizabeth insisting on secrecy surrounding the arrival and departure of the Moroccans, and the embassy itself having obscure focus and goals. Complaints about the behaviour of the ambassadors abounded, though it seems that most of these stemmed from cultural misunderstandings rather than any intentional antagonism. At any rate, Ahmad professed himself pleased with the outcome of the embassy, and relations between the two states continued to warm for the final years of Elizabeth’s reign.¹¹⁰

The year 1603 marked the deaths of both Elizabeth and Ahmad al-Mansur. It is unlikely that the warming of Anglo-Moroccan relations at the end of Elizabeth’s reign would have continued beyond her death under any circumstances, given the scorn of

¹⁰⁹ PRO SP 102/2 fo. 24.

¹¹⁰ Although I cannot agree with his overall interpretation of the events of the embassy, Bernard Harris provides a good survey of its chronology and surviving documentation. Bernard Harris, “A portrait of a Moor” in *Shakespeare Survey* 11 (1958), pp. 89-97.

James I for relations between Christian and Islamic nations and his policy of attempting to heal the religious divisions of Europe. Thus, after 1603 the sultanate of Morocco and Fez ceased to be viewed as a possible ally by Europeans, as Ahmad's sons competed for the succession and the empire that Ahmad had built crumbled away during bloody civil wars.

Conclusions

Elizabeth's foreign policy must be understood in light of two great realities of her reign: the importance of the cloth trade to the financial stability of her government as well as to the social and economic well-being of her realm, and the importance of the decision of her and her advisors to support the cause of militant Protestantism in Scotland, France, and the Netherlands and to trade on her notoriety as an unrepentant excommunicant in doing so. Of these two realities, the former is by far the more important, and was largely responsible for inducing Elizabeth to embrace continental Protestantism (or at least become the foe of the champion of papal Catholicism, Philip II of Spain), as is amply demonstrated in the works of G.D. Ramsay and R.B. Wernham.¹¹¹ The embargoes of the English at Antwerp in 1563-1564 and in 1569-1572 reawakened in Elizabeth and the English merchant community fear of the great crisis in the English cloth trade created by the glut of cloth at Antwerp in the 1550s.

Ramsay and Wernham have rightly argued that the re-orientation of English trade and diplomacy away from the House of Burgundy was one of the great breaks with tradition made by Elizabeth during her reign. Neither scholar considered, however, how Elizabeth's new directions in foreign policy shaped the identity of her reign, and the identity of her nation. During the 1560s English merchants made direct contact with the markets in north-eastern Europe and, more slowly, in the Mediterranean. The founding of

¹¹¹ Ramsay, "The foreign policy of Elizabeth I"; Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, especially Chapter Two; and Wernham, *Before the Armada*, especially Chapter Twenty-two.

the Turkey Company, forerunner of the Levant Company, and the establishment of a regular Anglo-Moroccan trade, have traditionally been considered testament either to English adventurousness or desperation in the face of the imminent collapse of the cloth trade.¹¹² These views may not be incorrect, but I believe that the story is more complex. The timing of the English attempts to break into the Moroccan and especially the Ottoman markets is significant; moreover, the explicit linking of trade and diplomacy in the Islamic Mediterranean coincided with the worsening of Anglo-Spanish hostilities.

Neither the Levant nor the Morocco trades was founded in the later 1570s, when the first successful schemes for their consolidation were advanced in London. In the case of the trade to the Levant, English merchants were already charting joint-stock voyages when Harborne made his way to Istanbul to negotiate English trading privileges on behalf of the London merchants Edward Osborne and Richard Staper. In the case of Morocco, English factories had already been established for well over a decade when Hogan proposed his scheme for the expansion of the Anglo-Moroccan trade to create an overland trade into Ottoman North Africa. Even more significantly, the decision in the 1580s to establish official representation of the English crown at the courts of the only major Islamic powers known intimately to Christian Europe itself was an eloquent, and public, statement of Elizabeth's increasing willingness to view the divides of post-Reformation Europe as unbridgeable. Although other princes were probably not privy to the nature of Elizabeth's correspondence with the Ottoman and Moroccan sultans, her use of a rhetoric of affiliation between Muslims and Protestant Christians marks a significant departure from older, if artificial, traditions of drawing on the rhetoric of a common Christian identity in articulating foreign policy and communicating with foreign princes. Finally, the decision to use the commercially-funded representatives of the English crown to pursue an overtly political, anti-Spanish agenda came at the peak of Elizabeth's acceptance of a role in leading Europe's Protestants. In 1585 Harborne's instructions

¹¹² See, for example, Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*.

began to take on an increasingly political tone, and his attention switched from being solely devoted to commercial affairs to actively encouraging the sultan to attack the holdings of Philip II. In the same year the Morocco merchants of London were compelled to form a regulating company that they did not want, with the result that Elizabeth was able to establish, free of cost to the crown, a representative in Marrakech. This representative, Henry Roberts, pursued an almost purely diplomatic agenda from the beginning to the end of his three-year tenure.

The abandonment of the anti-Spanish policies of the English at Istanbul and Marrakech came almost simultaneously as well. The failure of the embassies of John de Cardenas and Edward Prynne to secure any financial support for Don Antonio resulted in a general chilling of Anglo-Moroccan diplomatic relations. This chill only lifted after the death of Don Antonio in 1595, at which point Elizabeth began to pursue a more conciliatory policy on the continent as well. Barton's accompaniment of Mehmed III on campaign in Hungary in 1596, and his subsequent disavowal by his queen, brought to a conclusion the English attempts to foment anti-Habsburg feeling in Istanbul. It is difficult to know what the fruits of the Moroccan embassy to England in 1600 might have been, but it is reasonable to assume that Anglo-Moroccan relations might have followed the course that marked Anglo-Ottoman relations after 1596: an increasing emphasis on trade, and a clearer division between politics and commerce.

Previous scholars of Anglo-Islamic trade and diplomacy have tended to focus upon accomplishments rather than the diplomatic and commercial processes themselves. The importance of Anglo-Ottoman and Anglo-Moroccan relations in the period stems not only from their absolute value – the amount of cloth traded, the failures to establish military alliances – but also from their symbolic value. For English merchants successfully to trade beyond Antwerp, they required the backing of the crown, a reality recognized in the political assistance lent to the Merchant Adventurers in establishing staples at Emden and Hamburg, and in the authority bestowed upon the trade missions of Harborne and Hogan in the following decade. Elizabeth's decision to use her authority in

such a manner testifies to her recognition of the finality of the break with the House of Bourbon, and illustrates her willingness to craft unorthodox new alliances to replace the English reliance on their traditional commercial and political allies.

CHAPTER TWO

Representations of Muslims in Elizabethan General Culture

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.¹

When Marx stated that “men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please,” he neatly dealt with the question of the agency of the individual. If postmodernism has taught us anything, it is at least the power of “culture” (the ideas and practices of the society in which an individual operates) in moulding the personality, thoughts, and actions of individuals. One of the chief criticisms of postmodernism has been that it has overstated the power of culture; that if culture determines the thoughts and actions of individuals, it becomes difficult to explain where culture itself comes from, and more importantly, how it changes. As the roots of so much postmodernist thought lie in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it is appropriate to find there an elegant statement of the relationship of culture and individual. In Marx’s opinion, the two determine each other: if individuals cannot determine the *range* of their choices, they nonetheless are accountable for the choice they make within that range. By exploring how Islam was deployed in early modern English general culture, this chapter seeks to chart the range of choices available to the English people generally when they encountered either the idea or the actuality of Islam.

¹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 15.

Representations of Islam in the Cheap Print

“Saint George for England!” cries Captain Thomas Stukeley in George Peele’s play *The Battle of Alcazar*, as Stukeley resolves to join Sebastian, King of Portugal, in an invasion of Morocco.² Given that Stukeley, an English adventurer and rogue, had only just been diverted from his traitorous mission of leading a battery of papal forces into Ireland, his use of the traditional English rallying cry is highly ironic. Nonetheless it is also appropriate to his new endeavour, which Sebastian has cast as a crusade against the infidel. By the early modern period, the myth of St. George had become identified with courage in battle, war against the infidel, and England itself. In *Henry V* Shakespeare makes St. George represent both king and country, as Henry says to his French fiancée: “Shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound a boy, half French and half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard?”³ As in *The Battle of Alcazar*, the reference to St. George leads naturally to an imagined crusade.

St. George was not only called upon in war against the infidel; he was regarded as the patron saint of England, and in particular, of English warriors. David Cressy has commented on the use of St. George and the dragon as symbols of England and its foes, both Christian and non-Christian, in religious iconography and preaching.⁴ Cressy also

² Line 735. All line references to Peele’s *Battle of Alcazar* are from the edition of the play included in *The Life and Works of George Peele II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 213-373.

³ 5.2.206-209. All line references to Shakespeare’s plays throughout this chapter are derived from *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978).

⁴ David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989), p. 126. In particular, Cressy notes the symbolic use of St. George in descriptions and depictions of the English victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588. In one particularly interesting casting of the St. George myth, Shakespeare has Richard III invoke St. George and the dragon before entering battle; however, instead of looking to the saintly George, the villainous Richard calls for inspiration from “the spleen of fiery dragons.” *Richard III*

describes the longevity of the traditions of popular devotion surrounding St. George, traditions which continued despite the attempts of religious reformers to do away with all saints' cults, including St. George's.⁵ Popular devotions to St. George on his feast day (23 April) included fairs, games, bell-ringing, pageants, processions and plays, and were common throughout England. Also common, both on his feast day and as a part of the literate/oral culture of the period, were performances of the saint's story through drama as well as through ballads.⁶ Ballads of St. George were part of the stock of traditional tales which included tales of other folk heroes like Robin Hood, Adam Bell, and Sir Guy of Warwick. These stories were staples of the print industry from the late sixteenth century through to the eighteenth, their popularity attested by their frequent reprinting.⁷

Although the story of St. George was an intimate part of English identity, according to the authoritative version of his life none of his feats was performed on English soil. The story of St. George told by Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda Aurea*

5.3.350.

⁵ Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 20-1. See also Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 178 on St. George as a "helper saint." One moderate reforming clergyman, Daniel Featly, was disciplined by Archbishop Laud for doubting the historicity of St. George. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 40-1.

⁶ Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, 20-21. Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth Century England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 229-231.

⁷ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Chapter Three; Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, pp. 227-31; Hyder E. Rollins, "The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad," *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 34 (1919), pp. 258-339; Rollins, *An Analytical Index to the Ballad Entries (1557-1709) in the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London* ([Raleigh]: University of North Carolina Press, 1924. Reprinted by Tradition Press, Hatboro, 1967); Cyprian Blagden, "Notes on the Ballad Market in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century" *Studies in Bibliography* 6 (1954), pp. 161-180; Carole R. Livingston, *The Extant English and Scottish Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century: A Catalogue and Essay* (New York University, New York: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1986).

tells of a third-century Christian born in Cappadocia who slew a dragon in Libya, thereby saving the king's daughter and inspiring the conversion of twenty thousand Libyans. George was then captured by the prefect of Persia during the persecutions of Christians under Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Subjected to extensive, ghastly torture, the saint was eventually killed by decapitation. His martyrdom complete, George died in Christian bliss, and took his place among the army of the saved.⁸

But this is not the story of St. George told in the cheap print. According to the ballads George was an English crusader who, after performing feats of arms against "the *Saracens*, full rude" wanders through Egypt. In Egypt he slays a dragon and saves the life of Sabrina, daughter to the King of Egypt. Nonetheless, the Egyptians "for good, did him reward / with evil, and most subtly." Despising him as a Christian, the King of Morocco, the King of Egypt and the "Sophy" of Persia capture and torture George in order to prevent his wooing of Sabrina. George, however, escapes unharmed. Quitting Egypt, he returns to Christendom and raises a new crusading army and devastates the "Heathen Lands," sparing only Egypt out of regard for Sabrina. Thoroughly humiliated, the King of Egypt submits to George, gives over his daughter to conversion and marriage, and George and Sabrina travel to George's native England, where "[t]hey many years of joy did see / and lead their lives at Coventry."⁹

The content of the cheap print version of the St. George story indicates a general consciousness of Islam among the early modern English. Despite an almost absolute lack of contact with Muslims, English men and women of all social ranks had an awareness of Muslims which can be compared to their awareness of Jews. In 1290 Edward I expelled all Jews from England. Practically speaking, there were no Jews in England from that

⁸ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, trans. (New York: Arno Press, 1969), pp. 232-238.

⁹ All quotations drawn from the ballad reprinted in *The Shirburn Ballads, 1585-1616*, Andrew Clark, ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), pp. 96-103.

time until their re-admittance by Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the English nursed a hatred of Jews through a general cultural mythology that vilified them as the inveterate enemies of Christians and the murderers of Christ. This mythology was supported through the periodic retelling of the crucifixion in Corpus Christi and Passion Plays, in which Jews such as Herod and Caiaphas appear as blood-thirsty fiends who delight in making Christ suffer, as well as in saint and miracle plays and stories.¹¹ The enactment and telling of the St. George story similarly fused depictions of Islamic duplicity, cruelty and tyranny into the general consciousness of the English people. Chap-book heroes such as Sir Guy of Warwick and Sir Bevis of Hampton, who were popular crusading warriors like St. George, also kept Muslims within popular consciousness.

The depiction of Islam in such tales was shaped through the rhetoric of crusade, though not necessarily through the experiences of the crusaders. This is an important distinction, for the crusades actually increased communication between Christians and Muslims, undermining the stereotypes that crusaders had learned at home.¹² Whatever the relations of the crusader kingdoms of the Holy Land with their Islamic neighbours,

¹⁰ Lucien Wolf argued in the early twentieth century that there was, in fact, a secret Jewish community in London possibly dating back to the Spanish expulsions of Jews in 1492. Nonetheless, this community was secret; in fact so secret that there are virtually no records of its existence. As far as the vast majority of English men and women knew, there were no Jews in England. Lucien Wolf, "Jews in Elizabethan England," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 11 (1914); Wolf, "Jews in Tudor England," *Essays in Jewish History*, by Lucien Wolf, Cecil Roth, ed. (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1934).

¹¹ Greg Bak, "The Anachronism of Racism: Discrimination against Jews in early seventeenth-century England," (University of Toronto, Toronto: unpublished masters research paper, 1991); Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943). For a similar depiction of Jews in Eucharistic miracle stories, see the discussion of *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament* in Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 105-8.

¹² John Tolan, "Introduction" to *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. Tolan (New York: Garland, 1996), especially pp. xix-xx.

however, propaganda of the era, including stories of crusader-heroes like Guy of Warwick and St. George, was uniform in its depiction of Islam as a variety of anti-Christianity, in which a demonic Muhammad took the place of Jesus, and inspired an implacable hatred for Christianity in all Muslims. Dorothee Metlitzki, writing on the medieval romances from which these stories are descended, noted that, unlike other chivalric romances, these serve as

fanatical propaganda, in which the moral ideal of chivalry is subservient to the requirements of religion, politics and ideology. Pagans are wrong and Christians are right whatever they do. The ideal held up to the audience is not courtly love or perfect knighthood. It is the triumph of Christianity over Islam.¹³

Grounding these stories was the notion that Muslims, like the Jews of contemporary English imaginings, were diabolically-inspired fiends who reject Christ out of malevolence, not ignorance, and who continuously strive to destroy Christ's church on earth. It is a perspective that allows no shades of grey. There are only two varieties of religion: good Christianity and evil non-Christianity.

During the medieval and early modern periods the struggle for the Holy Land became the war against the expanding Ottoman empire, providing a continuing context for the popularity of stories of crusade. Until relatively recent times, crusader heroes like Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton have been popular, with chapbooks and ballads recounting their exploits generally available.¹⁴ Certainly through the sixteenth and

¹³ Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 160. I do not mean to imply that this view of Islam was the only one which existed in medieval England. On medieval representations of Islam generally, see also R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966); James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels* (Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979); and Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*.

¹⁴ Spufford, *Small Books*, Chapter Nine.

seventeenth centuries they remained current in the context of events such as the siege of Malta in 1565; the Ottomans conquest of Cyprus in 1571; the Battle of Lepanto in 1571; the Battle of Alcazarquivir in 1578; and the ongoing wars in Hungary and the Balkans during the 1590s, including the fall of Raab in 1594. The latter sixteenth century not only witnessed the revived popularity of *Guy, Bevis and St. George*, but also the emergence of a new generation of romances, many translated from Spanish, but many more by English writers seeking to meet the demand for the tales. These items remained popular, and in many instances specific titles remained in print, throughout the seventeenth century.¹⁵

Although printing of such items remained constant throughout the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, production was particularly high during the late 1580s and early 1590s, based upon the number of new titles released. During these decades a number of Spanish neo-chivalric works appeared in translation, thanks largely to the efforts of Anthony Munday. In the late 1580s Munday's translations of *Amadis of Gaule* and *Palladin of England* were published, and during the 1580s and 1590s various books from the Palmerin cycle appeared, including *Palmerin of England*, some of which Munday translated. In addition to these translations, English authors such as Richard Johnson (*Seven Champions of Christendom*) and Emmanuel Forde (*Parismus, Prince of Bohemia*) began to compose new works in the same tradition as the neo-chivalric tales.¹⁶

Representations of Muslims in such cheap print items tended to be conservative and simplistic. In part, this was determined by their medium. In the early modern period the cost of most printed works was a factor of the amount of paper used in their production. Cheap print items were printed on one sheet of paper, or two at most, so that they could be sold for a penny or less.¹⁷ This meant that octavo chapbooks were generally

¹⁵ Margaret Schlauch, *Antecedents of the English Novel 1400-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 164-174 and Spufford, *Small Books*, Chapter Nine.

¹⁶ Schlauch, *Antecedents of the English Novel*, pp. 164-174 and Spufford, *Small Books*, pp. 224-237.

¹⁷ Philip Gaskell estimates that paper usually determined about 75% of the cost of an

restricted to eight small leaves, or sixteen at most, upon which text and woodcuts had to be balanced and arranged. Quarto pamphlets had a larger page size, but fewer leaves. Broadside ballads, of course, had only one side of a large (double folio) sheet of paper, although a successful ballad might be followed up with a second part. Again, illustrative and decorative woodcuts were essential to the appeal of the ballads.¹⁸ Given such restrictions and the rapidity with which writers churned out cheap print items, it is understandable that characters tend more often to appear as stereotypes than real humans, and traditional values tend to be affirmed more often than questioned.¹⁹ Moreover, the descent of the crusader tales from periods when religious division in Europe was not perceived to be complex encouraged clear-cut divisions between Christians and “infidels.”

The chapbooks and ballads discussed so far are examples of stock cheap print: items whose appeal was not limited by currency, and so could be periodically reprinted. A second class of cheap print of the later sixteenth century, which also kept Muslims in English consciousness, were the print cousins of the manuscript newsletters that began at this time to be circulated among the upper orders throughout England. Unlike the manuscript newsletters, however, whose cost placed them beyond the reach of most, cheap print news pamphlets and ballads appealed to all,²⁰ and provided short accounts of

item. Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 177-178.

¹⁸ Margaret Spufford and Tessa Watt have examined the importance of woodcuts in selling cheap print articles to a partially literate audience. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*; Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*.

¹⁹ Rollins, “The black-letter broadside ballad,” especially pp. 265-281 and 327-339.

²⁰ Although he deals with a slightly later period, it is interesting to note that F.J. Levy has found evidence of the sharing of information in the production of both news pamphlets and manuscript letters. Printed news items were sometimes enclosed with manuscript newsletters as well. Levy, “Staging the news” in *Print, Manuscript, and Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in early modern England*, Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol, eds. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), pp. 263-264. On

current events from around England and the European world. The content of news ballads ranged from the fabulous (not atypical of which might be Autolycus's ballad of the fish that arose from the ocean to warn "against the hard hearts of maids"²¹) to the much more concrete, such as "A ioyful new Ballad of the late victorie obtained by my Lord Mount Joy and our Maiestie's forces in Ireland ... Also the yeelding of the Towne of Kingsalt, with 3 or 4 other houldes, by Don John at Aquila, Generall of the Spanish army, ... the 9 of January last 1602."²² Habsburg-Ottoman conflict in eastern Europe, the capture of Christians for use as galley slaves in the Mediterranean, and the civil wars in Morocco are just some of the subjects about which chapbooks and ballads have survived. The *Short Title Catalogue* and the registers of the Stationer's Company offer up a wealth of topical broadsides and pamphlets describing encounters between Christians and Muslims. These are by far the most numerous cheap print titles which discuss Islam and Muslims,²³ and they represent a steady trickle of publications produced in London and distributed throughout England.²⁴

the "news" ballads generally, see Rollins, "Black-letter broadside ballads," pp. 265-281.

²¹ Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.275-280.

²² *Shirburn Ballads*, pp. 124-128.

²³ It is important to be mindful that, though these titles are more numerous in the Stationer's Registers and in the *Short Title Catalogue*, the individual tracts had a much shorter shelf-life, as well as shorter print-runs, than the neo-chivalric ballads. This was because these "news" ballads were tied to current events, and therefore inevitably staled.

²⁴ It should be noted that the Stationer's Company registers can only detail the existence of those items which were registered with the company; Hyder Rollins has proven that this represents only a fraction of the ballads printed. The *Short Title Catalogue* can only provide references to those works which have survived from the early modern period to the present. There is little doubt that the vast bulk of "cheap print" ephemera has been lost. Thus, the "trickle" that I have been able to identify is only a rough indication of the actual numbers of items printed. Rollins, "The black-letter broadside ballad"; Rollins, *An analytical index to the ballad-entries*; Alfred W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, *A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640 I-III*, 2nd ed., (London: Bibliographic Society, 1976-1991).

The distribution of this literature throughout England, and its consumption by

Most, though not all, of these were written abroad and translated into English. Quite often they consist of a series of short notices from various parts of Europe, though there was usually a “headlining” item written in a more conventional narrative style. *NEWES FROM ROME, Venice, and Vienna, touching the present proceedings of the Turkes against the Christians in Austria, Hungarie, and Heluetia, otherwise called Seuenbergh. Also the true Copie of a Lamentable Petition exhibited in the names of the afflicted Christian in those partss, to the Christian Kingdomes in the West* (1595), is a good example of this sort of pamphlet. Consisting of two sheets of paper folded quarto, the pamphlet presented a substantial front, but stayed within the two-sheet range of a cheap pamphlet. The sixteen pages (eight leaves) contain fourteen pages of content, after making allowance for the title page and blank rear cover. The “lamentable petition” appears to have at one time been a publication in its own right, and takes up the entire second sheet of paper (i.e. eight pages). Presumably the publisher/printer had printed more of these than had sold and so sought to use them to bulk up a new publication – a very common strategy in the early modern printing industry. Of the remaining six pages (the verso of the title page was left blank), the lead item, a description of the fall of Raab (the account of which had arrived in England via Italy, resulting in the title “News from Rome”), took up three pages, with the remaining three devoted to other intelligence of the Ottoman forces, arranged inversely chronologically. This system allowed for the judicious recycling of content, as older notices culled from previous news pamphlets could be included in the current one. In the case of this pamphlet, all of the notices are relatively current, dating from either December 1594 or January 1595. The lead item is undated, but given the dates of the other items, is probably from mid to late January or

both literate and illiterate people of all social rank, has been well established. Watt, *Cheap Print*, introduction and Chapters One and Three; Spufford, *Small Books*, Chapters Two, Three and Five; Keith Thomas, “The meaning of literacy in early modern England” in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, Gerd Baumann, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 97-131.

early February. As Raab was captured late in 1594, this is a very reasonable lapse of time for such a publication.²⁵

The writing in the lead piece sounds a series of odd notes, which together suggest that not just the information, but the item itself originated outside England, and was simply translated and published. The unidentified author introduces the capture of Raab with a short eulogy to Christian unity and charity, and sounds an apocalyptic note: “Mens unbeleeuing harts hasten too late to repentance, and the unwilingnesse of Christians either to assist other, gives way for Infidels to insult over all. Christs Prophecie is nowe performde, the daies ware worse and worse, & charitie is growne colde.”²⁶ This yearning for an idealized pre-Reformation unity of Christians seems odd in the anti-Catholic culture of late sixteenth century England, perhaps indicating non-English origin of the item.

Not all of the news pamphlets were simply translations of Italian and French originals, however. *MOST RARE and straunge Discourses, of Amurathe the Turkish Emperor*, published in 1585, is a good example of a Protestant perspective in such an item. Although the lead item pretends to be a letter written out of Istanbul to “a godly learned man of Germanie,” this conceit is inconsistently maintained, and the item may well have been written within England.

Instead of looking for a return to a pre-Reformation united Christendom, the writer of this pamphlet looks to the heathen nations of the east, beyond the Ottoman empire, the “Tartarians” and the “Muscouites”:

O Lorde that it would please him to open the eyes, and inspyre the hearts of all those Princes, which are not yet called to the knoledge of thy holy Gospell, that they may once detest and abhore that Untechriste of Rome, with al his usurpation and supersittions, & that al christian Princes, would ioyne hearts and hands unfaynedly in the Lord, against this Mahumet,

²⁵ *NEVVES FROM ROME, Venice, and Vienna, touching the present proceedinges of the Turkes* (London, 1595).

²⁶ *NEVVES FROM ROME*, p. A3v.

whereby it might come to passe that those Territoryes which now the Turke holdeth, might be wonne againe unto Christendome.²⁷

This tone is maintained through the description of the court and affairs of Murad III that follow. Occasionally the author aims a more pointed barb, as in his description of Philip II's recent treaty with the sultan, contrasted with his attempts to suppress revolt in the Netherlands:

It is to be lamented, that this most mighty king, is of force to resist the violence of the Turke, which thing he will not doo, because he may more safely inuade his owne people.²⁸

These two works nicely illustrate the range of authorial voice in the cheap print news pamphlets: from anti-Muslim pleas for catholic Christian unity to anti-Muslim and anti-Catholic pleas for Protestant strength in the face of persecution by the legions of Antichrist. In all cases, however, the perspective is relentlessly anti-Muslim. Nowhere in these pamphlets and ballads is there to be found the permissive spirit that licensed the diplomatic/commercial forays into the Islamic world made by William Harborne and Edmund Hogan in the late 1570s, or of the rationalisations of Elizabeth in seeking military alliance with the Moroccan and Ottoman sultans against the "idolatrous" Catholic Christians during the 1580s. Interestingly, however, the spirit of the second pamphlet, *MOST RARE and straunge Discourses, of Amurathe*, published in 1585, is true to Walsingham's letter to Harborne of October 1585, in which the former justifies turning the Ottomans against Philip II by arguing: "the limbs of the devil being thus set one against another, by means thereof the true Church and doctrine of the gospel may, during their contention, have leisure to grow to such strength as shall be requisite for suppression of them both."²⁹

²⁷ *MOST RARE and straunge Discourses, of Amurathe the Turkish Emperor* (London: 1585) p. A2r.

²⁸ *MOST RARE and straunge Discourses, of Amurathe*, pp. B1r-B2v.

²⁹ Walsingham to Harborne, October 8, 1585. Transcribed in Conyers Read, *Mr.*

Beyond the stock and news cheap print genres, there are a wealth of references to Muslims scattered throughout the cheap print more generally. Such references tend to be only crudely symbolic. For example, in the ballads “The Despairing Lover” and “The Second Part of Jane Shore” spurned lovers wander the world over. Their travels to Turkey are important primarily in that they symbolise the extremes, culturally and geographically, to which the lovers go in their attempts to escape the memory of the beloved. Most references to Muslims are even briefer and less cogent than this, however, relying upon presumably well-known stereotypes to add exotic colour. For example, in one nonsense ballad “The blackamoors are blabber-lipt” is rhymed with “At Yarmouth are the herring shipt;” a news ballad which decries Spanish atrocities states: “If faithless *Turks* had won / what proud *Spain* hath done / more mercy they would extend;” and the story of an English woman whose suitors came from all over Europe mentions that “A troublesome Turk, did make hasty work, / but his suit it was quickly ended.”³⁰ Such casual references are legion and for the most part banal; however, the regular appearance of such allusions, regardless of their content, is a further indication of a consciousness of Muslims in the cheap print culture of the day.

Representations of Islam in the Public Drama

The ballads that Autolycus sells to the rustics in *The Winter's Tale* suggest not only that printed items had made their way into the provinces by the end of the sixteenth century (a suggestion corroborated by modern research on the movements of chapmen and women), but also that the milieu of the cheap print shared something of the milieu of

Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925. Reprinted by Archon Books, 1967), p. 226.

³⁰ “An excellent new Medley” in *The Roxburgh Ballads* I, ed. Charles Hindley, (London: Reeves and Turner, 1873), pp. 74-81; “Callis, his wofull Lamentation for her haplesse spoyle,” *Shirburne Ballads*, pp. 240-44; “A mery Ballad of a rich Maid that had 18. seuerall Suitors of seuerall countries,” *The Pepys' Ballads* I, ed. H.E. Rollins,

the public drama. This is further demonstrated by the considerable overlap of subjects in the different media, from passing references to St. George to treatments of the same subjects. Thus, the plays *The Battle of Alcazar* by George Peele and the anonymous *Captaine Thomas Stukeley* were based around the Battle of Alcazarquivir of 1578, which had been reported in the now lost ballad *A briefe Rehersall of the bloodie Battell fought in Barbary* and the lost pamphlet *The Barbarie newes of the battell there* and the extant pamphlet *A Dolorous Discourse of a most terrible Battel fought in Barbarie*. Similarly, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* were based on pamphlets, and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* was either based on a pamphlet and inspired a ballad, or inspired both.³¹ Also fascinating are the migrations from newsletter to stage traced by F.J. Levy in his recent essay "Staging the news."³²

But even when they share subject matter, public drama could bring a considerably different sensibility to an event or topic. Whereas references to Islam in the cheap print tended to be conventional and often included only for exotic flavor, treatments of Islam in the public drama could be more complex. This can be obscured by the fact that many of the casual references to Islam in the drama tend to be similar to the representations in the cheap print. It is when we turn to works in which Muslim characters play important roles, however, that we can find surprisingly complex uses of Islam. In some cases, such as Christopher Marlowe's trio of exotic plays, *1 Tamburlaine*, *2 Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*, the caliber of the playwright leads us to expect a complex response to Islam in the plays. But equally interesting are the symbolic uses of Islam made by playwrights like George Peele in *The Battle of Alcazar*, Robert Greene in *Selimus*, Thomas Heywood in *The Fair Maid of the West*, Philip Massinger in *The Renegado*, or Robert Daborne in *A Christian Turn'd Turke*. In fact, when these "Easterns" are

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), pp. 243-246.

³¹ Jonathan Bate, "Introduction," *Titus Andronicus*, by William Shakespeare (London: Arden, 1995), p. 83.

examined as a body, several patterns are discernible, patterns that resonate with the diplomatic and commercial evidence. Most obviously, there is the “craze” of the late 1580s and early 1590s, perhaps triggered by the success of Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays, but coincident with the “craze” for neo-chivalric cheap print items of the same period. Although the representations of Islam made in the cheap print and drama present a spectrum of opinion, this surge in interest, if not the specific content of the plays, ballads, and pamphlets, shares something of the moment of the push for Anglo-Moroccan and -Ottoman commercial and diplomatic relations of the late 1570s through to early 1590s. During the middle years of the 1590s no plays with significant Islamic content appeared. When they began to appear again in the years after 1600 the plays display a subtly different sensibility, one in which Islam is used less elastically and much more negatively, perhaps reflecting the cooler attitude to Anglo-Islamic relations of the final years of Elizabeth’s reign and of the reign of James I.³³

Imagining Islam in the public drama: the theology

We need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because the language is not trying to be accurate.³⁴

In 1587 Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* appeared on the London stage, shocking and delighting not only with its powerful language but also with its entirely non-Christian cast of characters. Very loosely based on the fourteenth-century warrior Timur the Lame, the play tells of an unstoppable conqueror who consumes kingdoms in western Asia, the Levant and North Africa, including the seemingly invincible Ottoman Empire. Marlowe’s combination of adventure, exoticism, and

³² Levy, “Staging the news.”

³³ Appended is a chronological list of the plays consulted in the writing of this chapter.

³⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p. 71.

bombast was an instant hit, prompting a sequel and spawning a sub-genre of plays incorporating non-Christian characters.

Despite the fashion for Muslim characters, however, English playwrights made little effort to attain accurate knowledge of Islam, and there was little consistency in the imagined versions of Islam presented on the English stage. Islam might be depicted as worship of God through the veneration of his Prophet, Muhammad; worship of Muhammad as God; worship of Muhammad as one of a pantheon of gods/demons which included Apollo and Termagant; worship of the gods and goddesses of classical Rome; or worship of the sun, moon and stars. This bewildering variety is heightened by the fact that none of the plays presents a consistent vision of Islam. Even Marlowe, who evidently had attained some knowledge of Islam prior to the *Tamburlaine* plays, slips between depicting Muhammad as the Prophet of God and Mohammed as the god that Muslims worship.³⁵ Adding to the confusion are plays that treat Islam as no more than an opportunity for exotic spectacle. The grandest, and most bizarre, example of this is Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, in which Muslims worship a brazen head that spews out smoke and fire while uttering prophecies. Though this scene appears to depict Islam as devil worship (who but a demon would be speaking from the brazen head?), Greene seems to be simply trying to make a second use of the same brazen head that had wowed audiences in his more famous play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.

The lack of consistency in these depictions of Islam, within individual plays as much as among the plays, masks a more fundamental similarity. With striking uniformity the many imaginings of Islam in the Elizabethan and Jacobean plays demonstrate a core set of values, according to which Islam licenses total indulgence of sensual and especially sexual pleasures. Thus, a Muslim in Heywood's *1 Fair Maid of the West* queries:

Why should we not make here terrestrial heaven?
We can, we will; our god shall be our pleasure,

³⁵ For example, compare 1.2.60 and 5.1.173-174 of 2 *Tamburlaine*.

For so our Meccan prophet warrants us.
(4.3.38-40)

Similarly, in Massinger's *The Renegado* a Christian is pressured to convert to Islam, and give up the "ponderous weight" and "fetters" of Christianity for Islam,

... whose least favours are
Variety, and choice of all delights
Mankind is capable of.
(4.3.75-84)

This depiction of Islam is tied into a long, established Christian tradition which held that Muhammad created Islam to enable himself to pursue his lascivious interests.³⁶

Depictions of Islam in the plays have at least these two distinctive features: a lack of concern for the actual beliefs and practices of Islam, and the notion that, whatever its beliefs, the essence of Islam was unrestrained carnal indulgence. This view of Islam makes sense when early modern English ideas about the veracity of Christianity and human nature are taken into account. First of all, the lack of a specific, stable set of religious beliefs and practices make sense because if it is accepted that Christianity is absolutely and uniquely true, it ceases to matter whether non-Christians worship the moon or Jove or Termagant; what is significant is that they lack the one true faith. Secondly, early modern Christians believed that the corrupt human will is governed by appetite, and that corrupt human understanding is subjugated by will.³⁷ Without redemption through Christ, corrupt desires and appetites rage beyond the limits of normal human control. Therefore, Muslims, like all Christ-less people, lack motive to curb the appetites of the corrupt human will.

³⁶ On this tradition, see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, Chapter Five and Southern, *Western Views of Islam*. It should be noted that Marlowe's representations of Islam do not conform to this notion.

³⁷ E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1943), pp. 78-84; Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

While this perspective on religion and free will satisfied a Western desire for absolute truth and the Christian impulse to lament the post-lapsarian world, it failed to account for the remarkable virtues of some Muslims and heathens. The admiration of Renaissance humanists for the pre-Christian scholars of ancient Greece and Rome, and the crucial role that Muslim scholars such as Averroes and Avicienna had played in Western thought impelled Christians to recognise sources of virtue in addition to the grace of Jesus Christ. Contemplation of this issue led even a Catholic as strident as Erasmus to doubt the exclusivity of Christian access to the saving grace of Christ:

Perhaps the spirit of Christ is more widespread than we understand, and the company of saints includes many not in our calendar. Speaking frankly among friends, I can't read Cicero's *Of Old Age, Of Friendship, Of Duties, Tusculan Disputations* without sometimes kissing the book and blessing that pure heart, divinely inspired as it was.³⁸

Erasmus's radical statement can be interpreted in a relatively orthodox light, in that he has assumed that the virtues of Cicero's works flow from the spirit of Christ, however unusual Cicero's access to that spirit might have been. Erasmus's suggestion that Cicero may exist in the company of the saints, however, is highly unconventional. More common was the assumption that pre-Christian and non-Christian people, whatever their virtues, could never enter the company of the saints without direct access to the grace of Christ through his gospels and sacraments. In *The Divine Comedy* the outer ring of hell, limbo, is reserved for virtuous non-Christians. Here resides Dante's guide to the underworld, the Roman poet Virgil, along with other virtuous non-Christians such as Homer, Euclid, Cicero, Seneca, Avicenna, and Averroes, and even military heroes such as Hector, Caesar, and Saladdin. Dante's heart is overcome with sorrow when Vergil informs him that:

They did not sin: yet even their just merits
Were not enough, for they lacked baptism,
The gateway of the faith that you profess.

³⁸ Erasmus, *The Golden Feast*. Quoted in Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance poetry* (London: G. Allen, 1979), p. 144.

And, if they lived before the Christian era,
 They did not worship God in the right way:
 And I myself am one of those poor souls.
 For this failure and for no other fault
 Here we are lost, and our sole punishment
 Is without hope to live on in desire.

Inferno, Canto IV, lines 34-42.

Petrarch, too, was adamant in his admiration of the ancient and classical authorities, but like Dante he stopped short of suggesting that following them could lead the soul to salvation:

If to admire Cicero means to be a Ciceronian, I am a Ciceronian. I admire him so much that I wonder at people who do not admire him ... However, when we come to think or speak of religion, that is, of supreme truth and true happiness, and of eternal salvation, then I am certainly not a Ciceronian, or a Platonist, but a Christian.³⁹

Virtually the same view is expressed more succinctly by Joseph Hall, writing on Seneca:

I have followed Seneca and gone beyond him; followed him as a philosopher, gone beyond him as a Christian.⁴⁰

Humanists such as Petrarch and Hall believed that the ancients had been able to approach perfection solely through the exercise of the divine gift of reason, the gift that Renaissance humanists believed made humankind of all earthly creation the most similar to the angels.⁴¹ Admirable as the accomplishments of the ancients were, however, they were no substitute for the divine grace afforded by the life and subsequent worship of the Messiah.

A related discourse operated through representations of Islam in the public drama. Here Muslims frequently demonstrated themselves capable of discerning right and wrong, but lacked either the moral strength or ideological frame of reference to choose the just course over the unjust. For example, in Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* the emperor Soliman

³⁹ Quoted in Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas*, pp. 143-4.

⁴⁰ Joseph Hall, Dedicatory Epistle, *Heaven Upon Earth*, (London: 1606), p. A2^v. I owe this reference to Adriana McCrea.

⁴¹ Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, pp. 78-9.

consistently knows right from wrong, but equally consistently fails to let this knowledge guide his actions. In Soliman's own words, he is unable to "gouverne priuate fond affections,"⁴² and repeatedly allows his better judgement to be overruled by desire or violent impulses, thereafter falling into sloughs of melancholy and remorse. Thus, though Soliman knows that fratricide is reprehensible, he impulsively murders his brother, only to spend thirty-four lines lamenting his action.⁴³ Similarly, Soliman knows that he should allow the Christian knight Erastus to live peaceably with Perseda, but, unable to control his own lust for her, Soliman has Erastus arrested and executed on false charges. As Erastus is put to death, Soliman looks on and moans: "O uniuſt *Soliman*: O wicked time, / Where filthie luſt muſt murder honeſt loue."⁴⁴ Soliman's ineffectual hand-wringing contrasts with the behaviour of the other principal Muslim character in the play, the villain Brusor. For most of the play Brusor schemes without regard for right and wrong, judging success or failure solely in terms of the achievement of his goals. But as the play draws to its bloody conclusion Brusor lets slip a highly significant comment. After Perseda kills Lucina, the object of Brusor's lust, Brusor states: "Vnkinde *Perseda*, couldſt thou vſe her ſo? / And yet we vſed *Perseda* little better."⁴⁵ These are not the words of a diabolical, anti-Christian fiend: they are the words of a corrupt, fallen man who is brought face to face with his own crimes through the crimes of another.

This may seem like no more than a strategy for rendering Muslim villains even more culpable for their crimes, given that they recognise their villainy even as they perform it, but it also reflects a significantly different vision of Islam from that found in the more conservative cheap print. Whatever the carelessness of the playwrights in describing the

⁴² 4.1.146. All line references to *Soliman and Perseda* are from the edition of the play found in *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, Frederick S. Boas, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901).

⁴³ 1.5.82-116.

⁴⁴ 5.2.90-91.

⁴⁵ 5.4.5-6.

beliefs and practices of Islam, they did not generally characterise it as simple anti-Christianity, as in the ballads of St. George or in the neo-chivalric romances that gave the Elizabethans such cheap print heroes as Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hampton, and Palmerin of England. In these works the Islamic foes are similar to the popular late medieval notion of Jews as literally anti-Christians, aping Christian sacraments even as they curse Christ.

It is difficult to determine the precise cause of the development of this more sophisticated interpretation of Islam in the public drama. It is possible that the shift reflects the new style of dramatic writing. It could be argued that a self-aware villain with identifiably human motivations and failings is, objectively speaking, more interesting than a villain who is simply a cipher for Satan; however, this argument seems suspiciously teleological. After all, late medieval popular drama such as the Corpus Christi cycle plays, miracle plays, and saints plays allowed no shades of grey, but nonetheless remained popular well into the second half of the sixteenth century. At the same time, the success of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays and the Islamic plays that followed suggest that audiences responded favourably to the re-imagining of Islam in which Marlowe and the other playwrights were participating.

Moreover, when this shift in representations of Islam is examined in conjunction with the change in patterns of English trade and diplomacy in the period, interesting patterns emerge. William Harborne and Edmund Hogan set out for Istanbul and Marrakech respectively in 1578; Marlowe's play was first performed nine years later, in 1587. By this time the English had firmly established commercial and diplomatic ties to the Ottoman and Sa'adian empires, and the hundreds of sailors, merchants and factors who had journeyed to the Levant and North Africa must have brought back to London stories and artefacts from their travels, perhaps heightening interest in things Islamic. Equally significant, this new, more ambivalent attitude towards Muslims appeared at precisely the same moment as the English were making increasingly overt appeals to Murad III for military aid against Philip II, and to Ahmad al-Mansur for assistance in placing Don Antonio on the Portuguese throne.

This was a period when English horizons were expanding. Spanish and Portuguese forays into the Americas, Africa and Asia were well known, as were the triumphant voyages of John Hawkins and Francis Drake during the 1560s and 1570s. New continents and new peoples put a strain on established explanations of the peopling of the earth. While the notion that the earth was only 6,000 years old and that all humanity had descended from Japheth, Shem, and Ham, the sons of Noah, could and would be stretched to include the New World, the realisation that Christians made up only a minority of the population of the earth, that there were whole continents of people who had not been known to exist a century earlier, must have been shocking. By the end of *Tamburlaine* huge portions of the traditional “triple world” of Europe, western Asia and northern Africa have been brought under Tamburlaine’s authority. In the famous map scene of the sequel, however, the seemingly unstoppable “scourge of God” lies upon his death bed and seethes with frustration that, for all of his triumphs, the world has simply proven too big:

Look here, my boys; see what a world of ground
Lies westward from the midst of Cancer’s line
Unto the rising of this earthly globe,
Whereas the sun, declining from our sight,
Begins the day with our Antipodes!
And shall I die, and this unconquered?
Lo, here, my sons, are the golden mines,
Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
More worth than Asia and the world beside;
As much more land, which never was descried,
Wherein rocks of pearl shine as bright
As all the lamps that beautify the sky!
And shall I die, and this unconquered?
(5.3.146-159)⁴⁶

In this new context, many old certainties became open to question. At the same time as the magnitude of the world became apparent Europeans were confronted with the

⁴⁶ All line references to Marlowe’s plays are from *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, J.B. Stone, ed. (London: Penguin, 1969).

fracturing of their tiny corner of it, as it became increasingly unlikely that either Catholics or Protestants would ever succeed in subduing the other by force or by persuasion. This, too, caused a rethinking of the traditional Christian world-view. The representation of Islam as simple anti-Christianity was a relic of a period when the nominal unity of European Christianity under the authority of the papacy licensed the division of all religions into only two: Christianity, the attempt to live and worship in accordance with the will of God; and non-Christianity, the attempt to thwart God's will and destroy his earth church and followers. How then, to understand a world in which Christianity itself existed in a variety of forms? Could all forms be absolutely true? Obviously not. Could there be degrees of truth? The binary paradigm would not allow it.⁴⁷

Responses to this dilemma varied. Some sought to preserve the binary paradigm by placing Catholics among the practitioners of absolute evil. But as Protestants and Catholics hurled the epithet of antichrist at each other instead of at other religions, expressions of affinity between Christians and Muslims began to appear in the correspondence of Queen Elizabeth to the Ottoman and Moroccan sultans, stressing their common monotheism and hatred of idolatry.⁴⁸ Edmund Hogan, writing to his Queen during his embassy to Marrakech, took this view to its illogical extreme, describing Sultan Abd al-Malik as "a verrie earnest Protestant."⁴⁹ Elizabeth's successor had inconsistent views on the nature of the relations between Protestantism and Catholicism, but was uniform in his abhorrence of Islam. Thus, while James I could in some of his writings account the Ottoman

⁴⁷ Working from the opposite chronological direction, R.W. Southern came to the same conclusion. He argues that one of the factors which sets apart the early modern conception of Islam from the medieval was that "the divisions of Christendom [blurred] the contrast [between Christianity and] the outside world." *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, p. 12.

⁴⁸ See, for example, "The answer of her Maiestie to the foresayd letters of the great Turke, sent by M. Richard Stanly, in the *Prudence of London, Anno 1579*" in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations II part I*, pp. 138-141; or Elizabeth I to Ahmad al-Mansur, 10 May 1599, PRO SP, Royal Letters, 2, no. 24.

emperor the open enemy of God and the Pope the equally dangerous secret enemy within Christendom,⁵⁰ he nonetheless was among the chief proponents of a new common Christendom, where confessional differences were to be submerged in the interest of unity against the Ottoman sultan.⁵¹ Significantly, it is also in considering such rhetorics of differentiation and affiliation that differences between the pre and post-1596 groups of Islamic plays emerge.

The politics of Islam: rhetorics of affiliation in the public drama

Elizabeth seems to have had no scruples whatever about seeking Turkish help against Spain during the national crisis of the 1580s... What is even more significant, she apparently made no attempt to keep her negotiations with the Turk a secret... It is as though she belatedly grasped the fact that European public opinion still regarded a Turkish alliance as a scandal and that not to take that fact into account would constitute a serious political blunder on her part.⁵²

By the 1580s Elizabeth I had been governing England for over twenty years, and had demonstrated her canny, if unorthodox, style of rule while weathering crises domestic and foreign. Neither obtuse nor politically naïve, it seems highly unlikely that, as Franklin Le Van Baumer suggests above, she openly pursued negotiations at the Porte simply because she had failed to understand that such negotiations might seem scandalous in Europe. Nonetheless, Baumer's central thesis, that post-Reformation

⁴⁹ Letter from Hogan to Elizabeth, 11 June 1575. BL Cotton Ms. Nero B 11, fo. 297.

⁵⁰ Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.131-2.

⁵¹ W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Franklin Le Van Baumer, "England, the Turk and the Common Corps of Christendom" *American Historical Review* 50 (1944-1945), pp. 26-48. See also Baumer, "The Church of England and the common corps of Christendom" *The Journal of Modern History* 16/1 (March 1944), pp. 1-21 for a study of the simultaneous rejection of Catholics as Antichrist and acceptance of a Christian commonality among English theologians.

Europe maintained an idealised common identity even in the midst of Catholic-Protestant warfare seems sound, even if he overstates the importance of this common identity to a ruler such as Elizabeth.⁵³ Baumer assembles an impressive range of evidence from Protestant thinkers such as John Jewel, John Foxe, and Mathew Parker, demonstrating that even among radically anti-Catholic English Protestants there seems to have been a sense that there was some sort of a common Christendom, and that it could be defined through enmity with Islam. On the other hand, Baumer notes that during the later sixteenth century political theorists such as Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius were working out the basis for non-religious based international law. Gentili's *De jure belli*, written during the 1580s, was particularly important in extending the concept of *dominium* to include "infidels" in general and the Ottomans in particular. According to Gentili, the right of Muslims to *dominium* meant that commerce and alliance between Christians and Muslims was legitimate, and that war against Muslims solely based on differences in religion illegitimate.⁵⁴ These early efforts to formulate a system of international law that was not based upon confession have been thoroughly examined and analysed.⁵⁵ Less often commented upon, however, are the efforts of contemporary playwrights in working through similar issues on the English stage.

⁵² Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom," pp. 33-34.

⁵³ The idea of a common Christendom would become very important during the reign of Elizabeth's successor. See Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*.

⁵⁴ Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom" pp. 29-32; Gesina H. J. van der Molen, *Alberico Gentili and the Development of International Law*, 2nd ed. rev., (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1968).

⁵⁵ See, for example, Molen, *Alberico Gentili*; Hedley Bull, *Hugo Grotius and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). Also interesting in this regard are the efforts of Bartholomew de Las Casas and Francis Vitoria to understand the legal/political status of New World natives during the early sixteenth century. See Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels*, Chapter Seven.

As in so much else, Marlowe led the way. *2 Tamburlaine* opens on the Ottoman-Hungarian border, as the armies of Sigismund, the Christian king of Hungary and Orcanes, the Muslim king of Natolia square off for battle.⁵⁶ Act One, Scene Two closes with the two leaders agreeing to a truce, Sigismund swearing by “The Son of God and issue of a maid, / sweet Jesus Christ,”⁵⁷ and Orcanes by “sacred Mahomet, the friend of God, / Whose holy Alcoran remains with us.”⁵⁸ War averted, Orcanes dismisses the greater part of his army. Marlowe then breaks the action to bring the audience up to date on characters and events from *1 Tamburlaine*. Act Two, Scene One returns us to the Ottoman-Hungarian border, where Sigismund’s counsellors urge him to take advantage of the Muslim king’s weakness and attack. Sigismund protests that to do so would break “the league we lately made with King Orcanes,” but his counsellors retort:

... with such infidels
In whom no faith nor true religion rests
We are not bound to those accomplishments
The holy laws of Christendom enjoin.
(2.1.33-36)

Sigismund is won over, and the attack commences.

Orcanes’ reaction to the unexpected attack is astounding:

Can there be such deceit in Christians,
Or treason in the fleshly heart of man,
Whose shape is figure of the highest God?
Then, if there be a Christ, as Christians say,
But in their deeds deny him for their Christ,

⁵⁶ This opening episode would have been extremely topical, as tensions between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs were only recently on the rise, as a result of the Ottoman successes in Persia during the latter 1580s. Open warfare between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs would begin in 1590 when the Ottomans signed a peace settlement with Persia.

⁵⁷ 1.2.57-8.

⁵⁸ 1.2.60-1. These oaths reveal a relatively sophisticated understanding of the differences between Christianity and Islam, as Marlowe avoids the common error of simply substituting Muhammad and Jesus in the different cosmologies.

If he be son to the everliving Jove,
 And hath the power of his outstretched arm,
 If he be jealous of his name and honour
 As is our holy prophet Mahomet,
 Take here these papers [the peace treaty] as our sacrifice
 And witness to thy servant's perjury!

...

Thou, Christ, that art esteem'd omnipotent,
 If thou wilt prove thyself a perfect God,
 Worthy the worship of faithful hearts,
 Be now reveng'd upon this traitor's soul,
 And make the power I have left behind
 (Too little to defend our guiltless lives)
 Sufficient to discomfit and confound
 The trustless force of those false Christians!
 To arms, my lords! On Christ still let us cry:
 If there be Christ, we shall have victory.
 (2.2.36-64)

The next line of the play echoes Orcanes' call on Christ to "discomfit and confound" the Christians, as Sigismund moans: "Discomfited is all the Christian host."⁵⁹ There is no doubt why Sigismund's forces are defeated: the Muslims, though numerically inferior to the Christians, are morally superior. Christ, who does have a powerful arm, has aided the Muslims. Even more radical is the ambiguity of the term "false Christians" in line sixty-two of Orcanes' speech. Is Orcanes saying that the Hungarians, who are Christians, have acted in a false manner, or is he saying that the Hungarians are counterfeit Christians? If the latter, then who are the genuine followers of Christ? Perhaps they are those who live in a moral fashion, whom Christ sees persecuted and whose distress he relieves when they call on his name. If this is the case, then Orcanes is correct to call the Hungarians "false Christians," and to imply that he himself is a true Christian because he has acted honourably. This, it should be noted, is in keeping with the concept, most famous for its exposition in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, of the Church of Christ as being the property of no single nation, but

⁵⁹ 2.3.1.

existing at all times and all places, dependant only upon the presence of godly and virtuous men.⁶⁰

As with many of Marlowe's non-Christian characters, King Orcanes does not represent an attempt at creating a worldview that respects the claims of other religions; Orcanes exists only to upbraid Christian hypocrisy. But in creating the Orcanes-Sigismund episode, Marlowe rejects the notion that Christians could disregard obligations when dealing with non-Christian peoples based upon notions of the superiority of the Christian religion (which Marlowe never calls into question). Marlowe's approach to the issue is theological, suggesting that Christians cease to be Christians when they use their religion as an alibi instead of a guide to their actions. This was not a novel approach to the issue of Muslim-Christian warfare, but it was substantially different from the attitude that Dorothee Metlitzki found in medieval crusader romances:

The ideal held up to the audience is not courtly love or perfect knighthood. It is the triumph of Christianity over Islam... The question of conduct, of *how* the game is played – the crucial problem in *Gawain and the Green Knight* with which these romances are contemporary – does not arise in these poems. The utter humiliation of the hated enemy is an end that justifies every perversion of decency in the "chivalric" hero.⁶¹

The moral dilemma presented in the Sigismund-Orcanes episode of *2 Tamburlaine* is clear-cut: Sigismund made a pact with Orcanes, pledging to keep the peace not only on his personal honour, but in the name of Jesus Christ. In breaking his oath, Sigismund lost any possible claim to be morally in the right. George Peele's play *The Battle of Alcazar*, written perhaps a year after *2 Tamburlaine*, presents a much more complex dilemma: a

⁶⁰ D.R. Woolf, "The Rhetoric of Martyrdom: Generic Contradiction and Narrative Strategy in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*" in *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 258-259; Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

Christian king is offered the opportunity to invade the kingdom of a legitimate Muslim ruler in order to plant the Christian faith in Africa. Does a Christian prince need to honour the territorial integrity of a Muslim potentate? Is the greater good of expanding Christendom enough to compensate for the failure to uphold the territorial claims of a non-Christian?

Peele's play is a broadly accurate account of the Battle of Alcazarquivir. The battle captured the imagination of the English, inspiring at least two plays and numerous ballads and pamphlets during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁶² Peele captures the romantic appeal of the battle in the Prologue to his play:

Sit you and see this true and tragicke warre,
 A modern matter full of bloud and ruth,
 Where three bolde kings confounded in their height,
 Fall to the earth contending for a crowne,
 And call this warre The battell of Alcazar.
 (lines 49-53)

The play opens with a prologue and two dumb shows that offer a condensed account of the descent of the Moroccan sultanate and the invasion of Abdelmelec (the historical Abd al-Malik) into the realm of his nephew, Muly Mahamet (the historical Muhammad al-Maslukha). The action of the play begins with the arrival of envoys from Muly Mahamet at King Sebastian's court, where they secure an alliance with the Portuguese king by promising him the kingdom of Morocco if he will help Muly Mahamet capture the kingdom of Fez. Sebastian casts his involvement as a new crusade, excusing his alliance with the pretender Muly Mahamet by asserting that the bringing of Christianity to North Africa warrants it.

⁶¹ Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*, p. 160.

⁶² The plays are Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* (1589) and the anonymous *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1596), in which the battle at Alcazar forms the climax. There may have once been a third play centered on the battle as well, referred to as "mullymullocco" in Hensloe's diary.

While Sebastian musters his invasionary force, a storm forces English adventurer Captain Thomas Stukeley into Lisbon, where he is persuaded to join Sebastian in the North African invasion. Sebastian also receives pledges of support from Philip II of Spain, but Philip sends the troops to suppress Protestant rebels in the Netherlands instead. Sebastian and Stukeley then make their way to Morocco, combining forces with Muly Mahamet and squaring off against Abdelmelec at Alcazar, where Sebastian, Stukeley, and Muly Mahamet are soundly defeated. The play ends with the legitimate succession of Muly Mahamet Seth (the historical Ahmad al-Mansur) to the double throne of Morocco and Fez.

Peele highlighted the role played by Stukeley, already known to English audiences through cheap print accounts of his life, partly to make the play more interesting to an English audience, but also for thematic reasons. Born the younger son of a Devonshire knight, Stukeley married the daughter of a rich London merchant and then used her wealth to fund a series of foreign adventures.⁶³ These adventures eventually brought him to the court of Pope Gregory XIII, who allegedly promised to make Stukeley Marquis of Ireland if Stukeley would command a Catholic invasion of the island. Stukeley agreed, and was on his way to Ireland with the papal force when a storm at sea forced him into Lisbon.

⁶³ In *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, Stukeley defends his treatment of his wife:

Vernon:

Will Mallerye writs ye do not loue your wife,
You are unkind, you make not much of her.

Stukeley:

Writs he I have not made much of my wife[?]
Ile tell ye captaine how much I haue made,
I haue made away her portion and her plate,
Her borders, bracelets, chaines and all her Rings,
And all the clothes belonging to her back,
Saue one poore gowne, and he that can make more
Of one poore wife let him take her for me
(lines 1085-1093)

The Famous History of Captain Thomas Stukeley, Judith C. Levinson, ed., ([Oxford]: Malone Society, 1975).

Peele used Stukeley's arrival in Portugal as an opportunity to moralise on the sinfulness of waging territorial wars against a legitimate monarch. Stukeley and his lieutenants are met by the governor of Lisbon who, upon hearing the nature of Stukeley's mission to Ireland, is aghast:

Under correction, are ye not all Englishmen,
 And longs not Ireland to that kingdome lords?
 Then may I speake my conscience in the cause,
 Sance scandall to the holy sea of Rome,
 Unhonorable is this expedition,
 And misbeseeming yoo to meddle in.
 (lines 403-408)

The only justification Stukeley offers for his treasonous actions is a desire for personal glory, which in this context is clearly inadequate. And yet, as we shall see, personal glory is also the motive that prompts Peele's Sebastian to make war against Abdelmelec, the legitimate ruler of Morocco and Fez.

But before chronicling Sebastian's fall, Peele allows Sebastian to damn himself. Upon hearing of Stukeley's intended invasion of Ireland, Sebastian, like the governor of Lisbon, is astounded. Sebastian first decries Stukeley's mission as foolhardy:

Were everie ship ten thousand on the seas,
 Mand with the strength of all the Easterne kings,
 Convaying all the monarchs of the world,
 To invade the Iland where her highnes raignes
 Twere all in vaine, for heavens and destinies
 Attend and wait upon her Majestie ...
 (lines 672-677)

And so on for nearly fifty lines. This is standard post-Armada glorification of Elizabeth; nonetheless, it is significant that Sebastian casts Stukeley's imagined invasion of England as an invasion of "Eastern kings" against a legitimate monarch of the west. Sebastian's own invasion of Morocco is, of course, the attack of a western king against a legitimate ruler of the cultural, if not geographic, east. In concluding the speech Sebastian, who as a Catholic

should have had an interest in seeing the papal forces triumph in Ireland, nonetheless emphasises the dishonourable nature of Stukeley's mission:

... danger, death and hell doth follow thee,
 Thee and them all that seek to danger her.
 If honor be the mark whereat thou aimst,
 Then followe me in holy christian warres,
 And leave to seeke thy countries overthrow.
 (ll. 701-705)

Convinced by Sebastian, Stukeley and his lieutenants decide to cast their lot with the Portuguese and Muly Mahamet in Africa.

But Peele is not so willing to allow that Sebastian's campaign in Morocco really is a "holy Christian war." Throughout the play Peele maintains the honourable nature of Sebastian's proclaimed intentions, and especially Sebastian's desire to advance the spread of Christianity. Nonetheless, through the speeches of the presenter, who makes chorus-like comments at intervals during the action, and through characterisations of Sebastian's ally and his opponent, Peele establishes the dishonourable nature of Sebastian's "crusade."

Sebastian periodically states that his primary motive in invading the lands of Abdelmelec is "to plant the christian faith in Affrica," taking up arms in the name of "Christ for whom in chiefe we fight" in "holy christian warre."⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the Presenter consistently depicts Sebastian as prompted not by Christian zeal but by ambition and youthful vanity. In the opening lines of the play the Presenter declares:

Honor the spurre that pricks the princely minde,
 To followe rule and climbe the stately chaire,
 With great desire inflames the Portingall,
 An honorable and couragious king,
 To undertake a dangerous dreadfull warre,
 And aide with Christian armes the barbarous Moore,
 The Negro Muly Hamet that with-holds
 The kingdome from his unkle Abdelmelec
 (lines 1-8)

⁶⁴ Lines 734, 916, 638, 705.

This is not so bad; in principle it is honourable to seek honour, though already the Presenter suggests a paradox in that Sebastian seeks honour by providing a “barbarous Moor” with “Christian arms.” Later in the play the Presenter is more harsh: “The brave couragious king of Portugall ... Who surfetting in prime time of his youth / Upon ambitious poison dies thereon.”⁶⁵ Poisonous ambition rather than honour is now seen as “the spur that pricks the princely mind.” The Presenter’s next speech compares ambition to a wanton woman who draws Sebastian on to his destruction with her “golden lookes.”⁶⁶

Nor is it only the presenter who questions Sebastian’s motives. Muly Mahamet cunningly sees through Sebastian’s pious ejaculations, enticing Sebastian not with visions of saved souls but of “so great a glorie,” not with a chance to enlarge Christendom, but with a chance to “inlarge your fame.”⁶⁷ Sebastian himself, in speaking to the Spanish ambassador, describes his mission as an opportunity to “propagate the fame of Portugall,” his words simultaneously suggesting and rejecting the propagation of Christianity as his primary motive.⁶⁸ In speaking to Muly Mahamet, Sebastian declares: “Lord Mahamet, we have adventured / To winne for thee a kingdome, for our selves / Fame.”⁶⁹ By his own admission Sebastian is motivated by earthly vanity rather than heavenly inspiration. This in itself may be excusable, for vanity and ambition could be readily accounted for as a result of Sebastian’s youthful dreams of fulfilling the chivalric ideal. But neither youth nor chivalry can excuse Sebastian’s decision to raise arms against a legitimate monarch.

Abdelmelec is the mightiest moral force in the play. From act one, scene one, when Abdelmelec returns to Morocco with a Turkish force to reclaim his birth-right from his usurping nephew, Abdelmelec is unfailingly wise, just, and in the right. Sebastian’s ally

⁶⁵ Lines 738-746.

⁶⁶ Line 988.

⁶⁷ Lines 1104, 1119.

⁶⁸ Line 765.

⁶⁹ Lines 909-11.

Muly Mahamet stands in stark contrast. He is, by all accounts, a villain. In one long speech the presenter establishes the disparity between the tyrannical usurper Muly Mahamet and Abdelmelec, the legitimate monarch. “Nemisis with bloudie whip in hand, / Thunders for vengeance on this Negro moore” in reparation for Muly Mahamet’s seizure of Abdelmelec’s throne. Muly Mahamet is referred to as “this usurper,” a “[t]raitor to kinne and kinde, to Gods and men”; “Good Abdelmelec” is lauded for chasing the “barbarous Moore” into the mountains of Morocco and claiming the throne for himself: “Muly Mahamets furie overulde / His crueltie controid, and pride rebukt.” To celebrate Abdelmelec’s ascent of the throne, “Now at last when sober thoughts renude,” his subjects “Erect a statue made of beaten gold” and sing songs in praise of him.⁷⁰

Like Marlowe’s King Orcanes, Peele’s magnificent, magnanimous King Abdelmelec faces righteous battle unafraid, confident that “proud, invading Portugall” who “rashly seekes the ruine of this land” through “a quarrell so unjust” will be repulsed.⁷¹ “The heavens will right the wrongs that they sustaine,” noted one of Stukeley’s men earlier in the play:⁷² Abdelmelec will retain his throne; Muly Mahamet will receive the dividends of tyranny and evil; and Sebastian will be upbraided for his audacity in challenging the rightful monarch of a neighbouring nation, just as Sebastian himself had warned Stukeley would happen if Stukeley had challenged the rightful Queen of Ireland.⁷³

⁷⁰ Lines 276-328. This apparently was true. According to el Fasi in the UNESCO *General History of Africa*, Muhammad al-Maslukha was disliked by the population, and the arrival of Abd al-Malik was greeted with “wild enthusiasm.” El Fasi, “Morocco.” *General History of Africa V* (Paris: UNESCO, 1992), p. 204.

⁷¹ Lines 850, 1063, 840.

⁷² Line 822.

⁷³ Arguably there is also a subtext here regarding Spain’s invasion of Portugal, which would come two years after the Battle of Alcazar, and about ten years before Peele’s play. As Sebastian received his comeuppance at the Battle of Alcazar so, it is perhaps hinted, Philip II of Spain will receive his in the Battle of the Armada:

The heavens will right the wrongs that they sustain,
Philip if these forgeries be in thee,

None of this has anything to do with the religion that Abdelmelec professes and everything to do with his political legitimacy. Peele, like Marlowe, never denies that Christianity is True and that its propagation is Good, but he does establish that Christianity must be spread by free conversion rather than conquest. Peele's play unequivocally rejects the notion that Christian monarchs can simply disregard the right of Muslim monarchs to *dominium* by calling an invasion a crusade. Catholic Sebastian recognised the right of Protestant Elizabeth to her territories; the lesson he learns at Alcazar is that Muslim Abdelmelec has an equally legitimate claim to his lands. Shortly before entering battle Sebastian declares:

... if our Christ for whom in chiefe we fight,
 Heereby to inlarge the bounds of christendome,
 Favor this warre, ... [he will]
 Send victorie to light upon my crest ...
 (lines 916-919)

Sebastian's subsequent defeat gives these words potency: in retrospect they hail not the rebirth of the crusader ideal, but a divine refutation of the principle that Christians may disregard the rights of Muslims. In the heat of battle Sebastian recognises the lesson heaven has taught him, groaning as he dies:

Seest thou not Stukley, O Stukley seest thou not
 The great dishonour doone to Christendome?
 Our cheerfull onset crost in springing hope
 ...
 False hearted Mahamet, now to my cost,
 I see thy trecherie, warnd to beware
 A face so full of fraud and villanie.
 (ll. 1251-1263)

Assure thee king, twill light on thee at last,
 And when proud Spain hopes soundly to prevail,
 The time may come that thou and thine shall fail.
 (822-26)

Sebastian's last lines in the play bring to the mind of the reader what would have been obvious to the theatre-going spectator throughout the play: that not only was Sebastian dealing with Muslims, he was dealing with black Muslims, and all of the colour prejudices that English theatrical and cultural traditions had loaded upon the notion of black men. But while Muly Mahamet fulfils this view of blackness as diabolical, his face "so full of fraud and villainy," his uncle Abdelmelec most certainly does not; and yet both characters are Moors. I will return to the question of "Moorishness" in Chapter Three.

The right of black Muslim monarchs to *dominium* is revisited in *Lust's Dominion* by Thomas Dekker. Many commentators have followed Eldred Jones in describing this play as a poor imitation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, which in many ways it seems to be.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, *Lust's Dominion* deals with an entirely different set of issues than *Titus Andronicus*. The two plays are similar in that they both have diabolical black characters who corrupt and ultimately destroy the societies they live in. But whereas Shakespeare's play presents a black man who lacks sufficient motive to account for his wicked actions, Eleazar, the moor in *Lust's Dominion*, has excellent motives for hating the Spanish court where he lives. Nonetheless, the extent of Eleazar's villainy and the glee with which he performs it render his motives, in the final analysis, unconvincing.

Abdelmelec was a legitimate Moorish ruler who saved his kingdom from an illegitimate Christian invasion; Eleazar is a legitimate Moorish ruler who has lost his kingdom to an illegitimate Christian invasion. Eleazar, once Crown prince of Fez, now lives in the midst of a Christian society where he is despised and insulted:

... me, a Moore, a Devill,
A slave of *Barbary*, a dog; for so
Your silken Courtiers christen me, but father
Although my flesh be tawny, in my veins,
Runs blood as red, and royal as the best
And proud'st in *Spain*, there do'es old man;

⁷⁴ Eldred Jones. *Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

My father, who with his Empire, lost his life,
 And left me Captive to a Spanish Tyrant ...
 (1.1.151-158)⁷⁵

But this is not a straightforward revenger's tragedy. Only at very few points in the play, and briefly, does Dekker attempt to garner sympathy for Eleazar. Although we are told that at one time Eleazar's thoughts did "to heaven aspire,"⁷⁶ over the course of the play he demonstrates himself to be a thorough villain, Eleazar himself linking his villainy to his skin colour with the declaration:

Ha, ha, I thank thee provident creation,
 That seeing in moulding me thou did'st intend,
 I should prove villain, thanks to thee and nature
 That skilful workman; thanks for my face
 (2.2.66-69)

Nonetheless, Eleazar maintains that it is revenge, not his devilish nature, that is the mainspring of the villainy he practices in Spain. At least twelve times over the course of the play Eleazar calls out for revenge, and at one point he explains that while he could have practised his villainies in Portugal, Barbary, Turkey or anywhere else, to leave Spain would be to leave "My wrongs, dishonours, and my discontents, / Oh! unrevenged."⁷⁷

If *The Battle of Alcazar* took us one step beyond *2 Tamburlaine* by suggesting that not only must Christian monarchs honour explicit covenants with Muslims, but that they must also respect the principle of *dominium* in Islamic territories as in Christian, then *Lust's Dominion* takes us even further, suggesting that neither skin colour nor moral condition is sufficient to justify incursions into the rightful territories of Muslims. If

⁷⁵ Line references to *Lust's Dominion* are from the edition of the play found in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker IV*, Fredson Bowers, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

⁷⁶ 1.2.204.

⁷⁷ 1.2.174-186.

Eleazar is a devil, then the Spanish can only blame themselves for bringing the devil into their midst. Moreover, by making Eleazar the scourge by which Providence punishes the Spanish, Dekker also suggests that the behaviour of Christians may in part account for the villainy of the Christ-less. In asserting the political rights of even the diabolic Eleazar, *Lust's Dominion* followed to its conclusion one of the paths pioneered by Marlowe with the confrontation of King Sigismund and King Orcanes on the Hungarian border.

Nonetheless, the moral dilemma that Marlowe explored in the Sigismund-Orcanes episode was not specifically one of *dominium*, but rather the efficacy of oaths. In fact the *Tamburlaine* plays mock the concept of *dominium*, as kingdom after kingdom falls before the armies of the son of a shepherd. English playwrights, at least during the 1590s, seemed less interested in the sub-genre of the conqueror play, with the exception of Robert Greene, than they were in exploring the issues of *dominium* raised through the *Tamburlaine* plays. Greene twice attempted to recapture the excitement that the *Tamburlaine* plays had ignited, first with *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, and then with *Selimus*.⁷⁸ Neither play was very successful, and although both lay claim to being “Part I” of a series, neither had a sequel. Neither captured the brutal power and beauty of Marlowe’s plays, either in language or in conception. Leaving aside the power of Marlowe’s language, part of the appeal of the *Tamburlaine* plays was the thrill of horror that accompanies Tamburlaine’s victories, horror aroused as much by Tamburlaine’s apparent invincibility as by his wasting of entire cities. In place of the spectacle of an infidel shepherd humiliating kings and declaring war against the gods, Greene’s *Alphonsus*, aptly described by one critic as “a servile and even absurd imitation of *Tamburlaine*,”⁷⁹ presents the legitimate heir of Aragon, a Christian, reclaiming

⁷⁸ It is not entirely clear whether Greene wrote *Selimus*. The debate over its authorship is reviewed in Vitkus’s recent edition of the play. Vitkus argues in favor of attributing the play to Greene. In the absence of new evidence, and in light of the collaborative writing techniques of early modern drama, this attribution makes as much sense as any other, and more sense than most. Vitkus, “Introduction” to *Three Turk Plays*, p. 56.

⁷⁹ J. Churton Collins, “General introduction” to *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene I*,

his kingdom from Muslims. Where Marlowe offered deliciously transgressive anarchy without apparent consequence, Greene presented only the return to order. Perhaps the most interesting element in *Alphonsus* is the undeveloped suggestion that Muslims possess forbidden knowledge, a point lent credibility in a Renaissance context by awareness of the intellectual debts that Europeans owed Arabs such as Avicenna and Averroes. In *Alphonsus* this is only hinted at, however, through the naming of two characters as variations on Faust (the Sultana is named Faustina, and one of the lesser kings is named Faustus), and through the spectacle of the oracle scene, in which Mahomet's voice bellows from a brazen head, accurately predicting the future.

More interesting as a conqueror play is *Selimus*, in which clunky verse and interminable, droning speeches at least explore a complex political dilemma. Like Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*, *Selimus* deals with the succession of the crown, using an Islamic context to explore political ideas that would have been much more controversial in an English or European setting. In *The Battle of Alcazar* Peele occluded an important difference between the Moroccan and English laws of succession: whereas in England the eldest son inherits the throne, under the Sa'adians the succession passed to the eldest male of the immediate family. Peele correctly identified Abdelmelec (the historical Abd al-Malik) as the legitimate heir to the throne, but he obscured the fact that the villain of his play, Muly Mahamet (the historical Muhammad al-Maslukha) would have been the legitimate heir according to English traditions of succession. *Selimus*, however, focuses upon the succession issue, and asks difficult questions about honouring the succession when the legitimate heir is not as competent as other contenders for the throne. Moreover, the play does not flinch from either the moral consequences or the imagined moral preconditions of the Ottoman practice of fratricide, and even explores whether the practice is politically astute.

The title character of *Selimus* is based upon the historical Selim I, whose reign from 1512 to 1520 witnessed huge territorial gains for the Ottomans. Greene's play focuses upon Selim's accession, accomplished despite having two elder brothers who were named the primary heirs by their father, Bajazet (the historical Bayezid II). Corcut, the eldest brother, is a man of peace who fills his days with "learning arts and Mahound's dread laws;"⁸⁰ Acomat, next eldest, is a decadent libertine, while Selim is an atheistic Machiavel. Acomat is at no point presented in a sympathetic light, but in the early scenes of the play Corcut is presented as a potential philosopher king. Nonetheless, despite his atheism and amoral behaviour, warlike Selim captures the imagination of his people, and most important, of the army. In a key scene various commanders of the janissaries meet to discuss the succession. Acomat, who "leads his life still in lascivious pomp,"⁸¹ is easily dismissed, but all are forced to admit the virtues of Corcut:

Indeed his wisdom well may guide the crown
 And keep that safe his predecessors got,
 But being given to peace as Corcut is,
 He never will enlarge the empery:
 So that the rule and power over us
 Is only fit for valiant Selimus.
 (9.95-100)

The Ottoman Empire attracted European admiration on account of the military successes of the Ottomans, the dedication of the soldiers to their commanders and their sultan, and the incredible stability of the dynasty over the centuries. Greene's *Selimus* argues that the Ottomans succeeded in consistent expansion through a commitment to leaders whose primary interests lay in conquest, not philosophy. Moreover, while Corcut is a highly regarded figure during the early scenes, in an utterly surprising and truly Marlovian twist,

⁸⁰ 1.81. All line references for *Selimus* are from the edition included in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, Daniel J. Vitkus, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

⁸¹ 9.87

Corcut's weakness of character is exposed through his conversion to Christianity. As Selim consolidates power, Corcut out of fear of his life takes refuge with a Christian shepherd, becoming his servant. This is bad enough, for it was equally disruptive of the social order to have a king become servant to a shepherd as for a shepherd to humble a king; to make matters worse, the shepherd, who is played for low, rustic humour, is uncomfortable with the thought that there might be somebody socially inferior to himself, and declares his relief when Corcut is arrested, thus lifting from the shepherd's shoulders the burden of mastery.⁸² Far from being honourable, Corcut's life among Christians perverted the social order of the realm.

In the next scene Corcut is brought before his brother and declares:

Since my vain flight from Magnesia,
 Selim, I have conversed with Christians
 And learned of them the way to save my soul
 And 'pease the anger of the highest God.
 (22.49-52)

Corcut's words are bold and seem genuine enough; but it is questionable whether they are sufficient to warrant his cowardly flight and subversion of the social order. An early modern Christian audience might have left the theatre believing that Corcut had saved his soul, but equally convinced of the essential cowardice of Corcut and the essential valour of Selim.

Selimus ends in a bloodbath, as Selim ruthlessly secures his claim to the throne through the execution not only of his brothers and sister, but also of his father, his father's retainers, his brother's wife, and his brother's children. By the conclusion of the play Selim's brutal, Machiavel⁸³ logic has been vindicated, as, having "clean consumed all the family / Of noble Ottoman, except himself."⁸⁴ Selim is now able to refocus his attention:

⁸² 21.45-48.

⁸³ I would not characterize it as being in the tradition of Machiavelli, the author, but rather in the English tradition of the Machiavel, a sort of debased or hearsay

And now to you, my neighbor emperors,
 That durst lend aid to Selim's enemies:
 Sinam, those soldans of the Orient,
 Egypt and Persia, Selimus will quell;
 Or he himself will sink to lowest hell.
 (29.67-71)

Selim's eventual descent into lowest hell is no doubt firmly established in the playwright's mind; nonetheless, the enormous territorial gains made by Selim II in the Middle East and Persia were equally unequivocally established in the history books. The ruminations of the commanders of the janissaries upon the potential for leadership of each of the sons of Bajazet are vindicated by these successes, which, a presenter tells us in the conclusion, were to form the plot of the (unwritten) sequel to *Selimus*. Even without the sequel, however, the play is an effective Machiavel fable.

Playwrights writing from the late 1580s to the mid-1590s used Islam as a signifier of the exotic, creating a world in which audiences were entertained with spectacle and political ideas could be explored freely. This freedom resulted not only from the ideological space created by setting a play in an imagined world – as opposed to setting it in England or Europe – but also from the amoral vision of Islam that underwrites these plays. Muslims, like the ancient Romans, could achieve virtue only through reason; therefore Islam allowed English dramatists during the 1580s and 1590s the opportunity to spin out fantasies of virtue as well as vice. The Islamic world portrayed in these plays was barbaric, and its inhabitants were more likely to be villainous than valiant. Greene's *Selimus* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, whatever one might say about their morals, are breathtakingly daring heroes,

Machiavellianism. On this tradition, see Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), especially pp. 51-76. On various shades of Machiavellianism generally, see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

⁸⁴ 29.65-66.

perpetually risking all in order to win more. Like Kyd's Soliman, they lack a moral code that might give them reason to curb their desire for earthly conquest.

Marlowe's Orcanes and Peele's Abdelmelec, and perhaps Shakespeare's Prince of Morocco from *The Merchant of Venice*, offer another view of Muslims, showing them to be honourable men who can only be saddened by Christian duplicity. Lurking within this view is the sense that it is Christian duplicity that may lie at the root of the failure of Muslims to convert to Christianity. Thus, Orcanes, having called on Christ when entering battle, appears almost ready to be converted with his victory, but ultimately decides that "in my thoughts shall Christ be honoured, / Not doing Mahomet an injury."⁸⁵ Would Orcanes have been willing to convert with a better tutor in Christianity than the duplicitous Sigismund? A similar question is raised in *The Merchant of Venice*. Jack D'Amico has argued that the Prince of Morocco fails in the test of the caskets as a result of his sincerity. Morocco assumes that, because he and Portia are noble and rare persons, their fortune and future will be bound up in a noble and rare coffer, one made of gold. Morocco plays by the rules of fair play; but to succeed in the Christian world of Venice, one must practise the arts of dissimulation.⁸⁶ As Morocco departs, Portia voices her relief, saying: "A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go. / Let all of his complexion choose me so,"⁸⁷ reminding the audience of Morocco's earlier statement that, if he could, he would change the colour of his skin to win Portia's heart, despite his intense pride in his complexion.⁸⁸ It is tempting to view this offer as an offer of conversion, and his subsequent departure as a potential conversion lost through the deceitful nature of Christian society. Shakespeare's metonymy allows a simple

⁸⁵ 2 *Tamburlaine*, 2.3.33-34. This sentiment may be further evidence of the depth of Marlowe's understanding of Islam.

⁸⁶ Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991), pp. 162-177.

⁸⁷ 2.7.78-79.

⁸⁸ 2.1.1-12.

message to be drawn from Morocco's departure: as Portia is lost to Morocco, so is Morocco lost to Christianity.

In the later 1590s and early 1600s English playwrights became less generous in their depictions of Muslims, even if their basic interpretation of Islam did not change. *Lust's Dominion* by Dekker, probably written in 1600, has already been cited as the most extreme expression of the right to *dominium* of all monarchs, regardless of religion or moral standards. Nonetheless, Dekker's play is typical of the post-1596 plays in its overall depiction of Muslims. Peele's *Muly Mahamet* is as malevolent a Muslim as Dekker's Eleazar, but *Lust's Dominion* lacks a counterpart to Peele's virtuous Abdelmelec. As a result, the cumulative representation of Muslims advanced through Dekker's play is more sinister than that of Peele's, and also less complex.

Even more significantly, plays written after 1596 rarely asked English audiences to view situations from the perspectives of Muslim characters, or to see the Islamic world as a stage on which to explore political complexities. Unlike the *Tamburlaine* plays, *Battle of Alcazar*, and *Selimus*, works written for the public drama after the mid-1590s were not about the Islamic world, and therefore did not have to find contrasting personality types solely within that world. Instead, the Islamic world came to be either an offstage, impinging threat, as in *Othello* and *The Knight of Malta*, or a place to which Christians travelled at their peril, as in *The Fair Maid of the West*, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, and *The Renegado*. Whereas the world of *Tamburlaine* includes characters as various as Tamburlaine, Orcanes and Zenocrate, and Peele's Morocco is big enough to contain both Muly Mahamet and Abdelmelec, plays written after 1596 tend to have more limited numbers of Islamic characters, and to set them off against Christian characters rather than against other Muslims. An analysis of Heywood's *I Fair Maid of the West* and *The Renegado* by Massinger can help to unpack the continuities and new emphases of the post-1596 period. Two further post-1596 plays, Shakespeare's *Othello* (c. 1604) and Robert Daborne's *A*

Christian Turn'd Turke (c. 1610) will be examined below, in Chapters Four and Five, respectively.

First performed in 1602, Heywood's *I Fair Maid* is a fable of how commerce can unify disparate elements in English culture for the good of all. Through diligent labour and honest living, Bess, the "Fair Maid" of the title, mistress of a London alehouse, is able to charter a ship for an odd sort of commercial venture. Learning of the demise of her adventuring fiancé, Spencer, she dons masculine attire in order to captain the expedition and sets out to collect his bones. Much of the play deals with her recruitment of a group of ruffians and misfits, who Bess fashions into a formidable crew. Bess's travels ultimately lead to the court of Fez, where she is reunited with Spencer who, despite all reports, was not actually dead.

The individual Muslims of Heywood's play are developed through only the crudest generalisations of character, spun out around one of the clearest articulations of Islam as a religion of indulgence to be found in the early modern drama. Heywood's King Mullisheg lives by the dictates of the corrupt desires of his fallen will, lacking motivation to do anything else. In Mullisheg's first appearance in the play, he states:

Why should we not make here terrestrial heaven?
 We can, we will; our god shall be our pleasure,
 For so our Meccan prophet warrants us.
 (4.3.39-40)⁸⁹

The arrival of virtuous Christians at court is sufficient, however, to inspire Mullisheg to aspire to something greater. Upon meeting Bess Mullisheg is awed by her beauty, but rather than immediately lusting after her as Soliman did for Perseda in Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*, Mullisheg declares:

This is no mortal creature I behold,
 But some bright angel that is dropp'd from heaven,

⁸⁹ Line references refer to Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West Parts I and II*, Robert K. Turner, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967).

Sent by our Prophet ...
(5.1.34-6)

True to this initial inspiration to look heavenward, the honourable bearing and conduct of Bess and her crew inspire Mullisheg to overcome his secondary impulse to possess Bess for himself. And when he hears of Bess's chastity in her devotion to her (believed to be) dead beloved, Mullisheg rejects his lust absolutely and arranges for the reunion of Bess and Spencer, stating:

You have waken'd in me an heroic spirit;
Lust shall not conquer virtue – Till this hour
We grac'd thee for thy beauty, Englishwoman,
But now we wonder at thy constancy.
(5.2.118-121)

Despite such a potentially virtuous ruler, Heywood's Fez is a place of considerable peril for those Christians who lack the personal charms of Bess. In his first appearance in the play Mullisheg decrees that

... all such Christian merchants as have traffic
And freedom in our country, that conceal
The least part of our custom due to us,
Shall forfeit ship and goods.
(4.3.16-19)

As a result, Mullisheg arrests a number of Christians who have "run into relapse / And forfeit of the law," and who "for a little outrage done / Are sentenc'd to the galleys."⁹⁰ The punishment may seem to exceed the crime in these cases, but it should be noted that these were men who sought to cheat the king of his rightful due. Worse was the experience of an "honest merchant ... [who] / hath by a cunning quiddit in the law / Both ship and goods made forfeit to the king."⁹¹ In this case the fault was not the merchant's entirely, except insofar as his behaviour somehow left him open to persecution. At any rate, the overall

⁹⁰ 5.1.134-135, 143-144.

⁹¹ 5.2.3-5.

moral of these episodes seems to be that Christians should behave lawfully in Islamic lands, lest they find themselves in far graver danger than they would have been for like offences among Christian nations. As noted in Mullisheg's decree, quoted above, the king has decided to act harshly in persecuting crimes, but not illegally to seize Christians or their goods. To an honourable traveller such as Bess, there is no danger in Fez.

Fez is a dangerous place for those who act dishonourably, and this danger extends to Christians who compromise their own religious beliefs, or who seek to convert the subjects of the king without his permission. One of the members of Bess's crew, the clownish apprentice Clem, sees an opportunity to advance his personal status by donning the robes of "a fantastic Moor" and insinuating his way into the Fessian court.⁹² Finding immediate preferment to the status of chief eunuch, Clem is puffed with pride – until he is led offstage, where he realises what is required of him. Bounding back onto the stage, he calls out:

No more of your honour, if you love me! Is this your Moorish
preferment, to rob a man of his best jewels?

...

No more your
cutting honour, if you love me.

(5.2.126-131)

The lesson, it seems, is that Christians seeking preferment at foreign courts should ensure that they know all of the consequences of their actions.

More interesting is the case of the Christian preacher caught proselytising in Mullisheg's territories. He is charged with seeking to "convert / Your Moors and turn them to a new belief," for which Mullisheg condemns him to death.⁹³ This may seem harsh, but should be understood in the context of the active persecution of Catholics, and especially of foreign priests, that was going on in England at this time. Like Catholic missionaries in England, such Christians in Fez posed a threat to the stability of the realm. Moreover, as

⁹² Quotation from the stage direction at 5.1.109.

⁹³ 5.2.73-74.

Bess's success at Mullisheg's court demonstrates, the most effective means of influencing the Fessians is through virtuous example, by which means they may eventually be led to conversion. Although there are only limited continuities between *1 Fair Maid* and *2 Fair Maid*, which were written over a quarter of a century apart, one of the continuities is in the development of Bashaw Joffer, an officer at Mullisheg's court. One of the concluding triumphs of *2 Fair Maid* witnesses the conversion of the consistently honourable Joffer to Christianity, despite earlier allegiance to both Mullisheg and Islam.

The whole thrust of the Fessian episode of *1 Fair Maid*, then, is that the Islamic world is a dangerous foreign place, where the best defence of a Christian is to behave honourably and to be true to his or her own religious beliefs, without offending Islam. Nonetheless, the interaction between Christians and Muslims is not only mutually beneficial, but efficacious in converting Muslims in a post *Battle of Alcazar* world that has accepted the illegitimacy of the armed invasion of rightfully held Islamic territories. Finally, the greater message of Heywood's play lies in how Bess is able to use foreign adventure to bring together potential disruptive elements in society, represented in the play by the aptly named Roughman and Goodlack, and make them contribute to the common good by working as the crew on her ship.⁹⁴ Louis B. Wright's description of Heywood as "the greatest theatrical spokesman of the bourgeoisie ideals of his age" may be inaccurate in its ascription of "bourgeoisie ideals" to the early modern period, but his characterisation of Heywood is sound.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Although I cannot agree with Jean Howard's interpretation of the race and gender elements in the play, her article offers a particularly succinct analysis of Bess's role in converting marginal or undesirable elements in the English population into members of society who profit themselves and their nation by participating in commerce. Howard, "An English lass among the Moors: gender, race and sexuality in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*" in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, eds., (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 101-117.

⁹⁵ Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 650.

I Fair Maid is among the most positive of the post-1596 treatments of Islam, but like its dramatic contemporaries, it creates an Islamic world that is wholly external to Christians and Christendom, a place which they might visit at their own peril. Like *Battle of Alcazar*, the Fessian scenes of *I Fair Maid* are underwritten by a theory of *dominium* that extends to the Islamic world. Unlike *Battle of Alcazar*, such a theory of *dominium* is accepted simply because not to do so would be to interfere with the free flow of trade. Much unlike *Battle of Alcazar* or the Orcanes-Sigismund episode of *2 Tamburlaine*, where Christian characters are upbraided by the virtuous examples of Muslims, there is no suggestion in *I Fair Maid* that Christians could learn anything from Muslims of any quality. At best a virtuous Muslim like Bashaw Joffer might see the Truth of Christianity and convert, or a potential tyrant like Mullisheg might be inspired to better behaviour.

The majority of the action of *I Fair Maid* takes place in England, on Bess's ship, or in Christian held territories such as the Spanish Azores, allowing Heywood to maintain a sharp division between the Christian and Muslim worlds. More complex is the treatment of the Islamic world in *The Renegado* by Philip Massinger, written in the early 1620s. As in *I Fair Maid*, and unlike any of the pre-1596 plays, the action of *The Renegado* occurs within the context of Christians trading into Islamic territories, though Massinger exchanges Ottoman Tunis for Heywood's Fez. Massinger was the best informed playwright since Marlowe to write about Islam, and easily surpasses Marlowe with details about Islamic life such as the sacred associations of the colour green and the separation of women and men. The play has a triple plot, with only a minor strand involving Grimaldi, the "renegado" of the title (who does not actually convert to Islam, but is simply a very corrupt Christian). A second strand involves a Christian woman, Paulina, captured and sold into slavery by Grimaldi, and her ongoing attempts to resist the sexual advances of the Viceroy of Tunis, who has purchased her for his seraglio. The principal plot strand turns on the activities of Paulina's brother, Vitelli, who comes to Tunis to try to rescue his sister but finds himself

ensnared by the beauty of Donusa, the niece of the Ottoman emperor who has been promised to the Viceroy.

Despite Massinger's grasp of colourful details about Islamic life, once again Muslims are depicted as lascivious libertines, and Islam as more of a licence for such behaviour than as a religion. "[O]ur Religion / Allowes all pleasure" states Donusa early in the play.⁹⁶ Later, as Donusa attempts to win Vitelli over to Islam, Christianity is characterised as "a burthen / Vnder whose ponderous waight you wilfully / Haue too long groan'd," as she urges Vitelli to "cast those fetters off, / With which with your own hands you chaine your freedome" and accept Islam instead, "whose least fauours are / Variety, and choyce of all delights / Mankind is capable of."⁹⁷ In keeping with the notion that Muslims can still find grace through the use of reason, however, it is Vitelli who ends up convincing Donusa to convert. Meanwhile, Paulina is able to resist the advances of the Viceroy because "my chastetiey [is] built vpon / The rocke of my religion:" unlike Islam, Christianity provides both cause and strength to resist corrupt desire.⁹⁸ And finally, Grimaldi, confronted with the enormity of his crimes, seeks to return to the Christian fold by renouncing his old ways and embracing Christianity with a new zeal. As in *1 Fair Maid*, Islam in *The Renegado* exists only in relation to Christianity, but also entirely apart from Christianity. Islam represents all that might tempt Christians away from their faith, but lacks substance sufficient to exist as a faith in its own right.

In the pre-1596 plays the Islamic world was a place where hopes, fears and ambitions similar to those held by the English were played out in a context that was teasingly familiar, but spectacularly different as well. The Christians who appear in plays such as *Battle of Alcazar* and *2 Tamburlaine* learn, too late, that in this seemingly foreign

⁹⁶ 1.2.49-50. All line references to *The Renegado* are derived from the edition of the play included in *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger II*, Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

⁹⁷ 4.3.75-84.

⁹⁸ 4.2.28-29.

world they need to behave honourably, for their own sake. In the post-1596 plays the Islamic world is less foreign but more exotic than in the earlier plays. The characters of the Muslims who inhabit these worlds are not as fully developed as in the earlier plays, and their differences are simply accepted as somehow innate to their being. Nowhere in the post-1596 public drama is there the equivalent of Greene's explorations of the imagined moral pre-conditions and consequences of the Ottoman fratricide, for example. In these plays the exotic exists only as a temptation or a threat to Christians: nowhere does one find the wholly non-Christian casts of *1 Tamburlaine* or *Selimus*. Instead, Islam is an external threat, as in *The Knight of Malta* or *Othello*, or as a form of temptation, as in the Clem episode of *1 Fair Maid*, *The Renegado*, and *A Christian Turn'd Turk*. Before 1596, the drama asked audiences to understand Islamic characters from the inside out; after 1596 it asked them simply to fear Islam. The earlier drama viewed the Islamic world as a foreign place; the later drama viewed it as a sort of metaphysical space that exists only to tempt or threaten, or to both tempt *and* threaten, Christians. Hence, as in both *1 Fair Maid* and *The Renegado*, the post-1596 drama became increasingly concerned with the idea of conversion to Islam, and even the concept of unintentional conversion. "Are we turned Turks? ... For Christian shame, but by this barbarous brawl" Othello exclaims as he comes upon his men engaged in a drunken brawl,⁹⁹ invoking the delicious horror that we might actually become "Ottomites" without even knowing that it was happening.

"And sigh'd English breath in foreign clouds":¹⁰⁰ Trade, Diplomacy, and Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy

When the plays of the latter 1580s and early 1590s were written, Anglo-Ottoman and Anglo-Moroccan relations were at their peak. The Anglo-Moroccan trade had been in full swing for some thirty years, and the Anglo-Ottoman for ten, ensuring that, at least in

⁹⁹ 2.3.170-172.

¹⁰⁰ *Richard II* 3.1.20.

London – the epicentre of commercial and creative activity – there was a good number of people who had been face-to-face with Islam, and an even larger number who had had their interest piqued. This was also the era of England's greatest influence at the Ottoman and Moroccan courts, when English diplomats were able to take advantage of the tremendous coup of the Armada in their negotiations. At the Ottoman court Edward Barton pressed for Ottoman engagement against Spain in the Mediterranean, while in London and Marrakech English and Moroccan diplomats negotiated a joint Anglo-Moroccan military expedition to place Don Antonio on the Portuguese throne.

During the latter 1590s no new plays with major Islamic themes or characters were written, but when English playwrights returned to the theme in the new century, they brought a new sensibility to their enterprise, one that was once again curiously in tune with official Anglo-Ottoman and Anglo-Moroccan relations. Barton's major blunder of 1596, together with his failure to secure Ottoman-Habsburg engagement in the Mediterranean, had resulted in the cooling of Anglo-Ottoman relations. During the tenure of Henry Lello, Barton's successor, diplomatic initiatives became secondary to commercial concerns. Similarly, the failure of de Cardenas and Prynne to secure anything more than nominal Moroccan support for Don Antonio in the mid-1590s, together with the quiet, de facto dissolution of the Barbary Company in the years following the death of the earl of Leicester, allowed the Anglo-Moroccan trade to revert to the wholly commercial character it had possessed prior to Leicester's machinations during the middle 1580s. Although Anglo-Moroccan relations briefly warmed once again with the al-Ouahed embassy of 1600, the moment for Anglo-Islamic affiliation had passed, and the deaths of both Queen Elizabeth and Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur in 1603 ensured that it would not return. With the accession of James I English diplomats increasingly adopted the rhetoric of a common Christendom, defined against the Islamic world, and relations between London and Istanbul and Marrakech cooled further.

How much did playwrights such as Marlowe, Peele, Greene, Heywood and Massinger know of such matters? It is not too much of a stretch to believe that they were aware of the commercial success of the Anglo-Ottoman and Anglo-Moroccan trades, but it cannot be believed that they knew of the intimate negotiations of the representatives of the crown. How, then, to explain this apparent congruence between the views of playwrights, merchants and diplomats? One explanation would attribute it to zeitgeist, the notion that Anglo-Islamic affiliation was somehow “in the air” in the years following the Armada, and that a distinctly cooler attitude towards Islam similarly resonated in the early years of the 1600s. Alternately, it is possible to construct an explanation that relies entirely on the evolution of the drama itself.

The freshness of Marlowe’s writing style, combined with the runaway success of the *Tamburlaine* plays and *The Jew of Malta*, generally dated to between 1587 and 1589, had a tremendous impact on the drama of the period, and introduced an enduring interest in the Islamic world. Other playwrights began to work the same stylistic and thematic territory with varying degrees of originality and success. By the middle of the 1590s the Islamic world had become accepted as an arena in which moral and political questions could be worked out in their most extreme forms. Greene’s *Selimus* tackled head-on the sticky issue of the politics of royal succession, while Peele’s *Battle of Alcazar* questioned the legitimacy of the military conquest of lands held by legitimate monarchs who might also be infidels or heretics. Meanwhile, acting and writing in this milieu, Shakespeare began to treat the same themes but amidst a more familiar geography.

As the production of new Islamic plays dropped off in the middle of the 1590s, similar themes began to appear in Shakespeare’s history plays. Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, probably written in 1592 or 1593, brought before English audiences a stage Machiavel of the sort that had previously been seen in Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* and Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*, but with the important difference that this Machiavel was an Englishman. Then, starting in 1596 with *Richard II*, Shakespeare’s Lancastrian tetralogy began to unfold.

Reading these plays with an awareness of the “Islamic” plays of the early 1590s, it is hard not to be struck by certain thematic similarities. Like *Selimus* and *The Battle of Alcazar*, *Richard II* offers a look at the moral and practical challenges confronting a would-be ruler who lacks the sanction of the established succession. The conclusion of *Richard II*, including the murder of Richard, together with the two parts of *Henry IV*, offer an in-depth study of the lengths to which an illegitimate successor must go to consolidate his rule, providing a more psychologically complex treatment of themes Greene had opened up with *Selimus*. Secondly, the character of Prince Hal/Henry V offers a fresh perspective on the rise of a conqueror-hero, as Henry leaps from shameful obscurity prior to Shrewsbury to Tamburlaine-like triumph at Agincourt.

Always hovering at the margins of the action of the Lancastrian tetralogy is the idea of crusade, itself invoking the setting of the *Tamburlaine* plays, as well as the action of *Battle of Alcazar* and Greene’s *Alphonsus*. There is continually the sense that “England, that was wont to conquer others, / Hath made a shameful conquest of itself,” and that wars against infidels are the proper vent for English aggression.¹⁰¹ In contrast with Bullingbrook’s “shameful conquest” of England are the feats of arms Mowbray performs in the Holy Land on behalf of “Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field, / Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross / Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens.”¹⁰² Through the two parts of *Henry IV* the crusade is fixed as the dream of the king, a dream that resurfaces at the conclusion of *Henry V* when Henry predicts that his son “shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard.”¹⁰³

More specific references to the Islamic plays of the late 1580s and early 1590s are scattered throughout the plays. Lines like the Chorus’s “crowns imperial, crowns and coronets, / Promised to Harry and his followers” may or may not be conscious echoes of

¹⁰¹ *Richard II* 2.1.65-66.

¹⁰² *Richard II* 4.1.93-95.

¹⁰³ *Henry V* 5.2.208-209.

Marlowe's *1 Tamburlaine*,¹⁰⁴ but there can be little doubt that the exchange between Glendower and Hotspur in *1 Henry IV* Act Three, Scene One is an effective parody of Marlovian language generally, and of a would-be Faust in particular. Similarly, when Shakespeare wants to make swaggering Pistol ridiculous in *2 Henry IV* he has him quote from or make reference to plays like *1 Tamburlaine*, *The Battle of Alcazar* and Peele's lost play *The Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the Fair Greek*.¹⁰⁵ In this context, Hotspur's admonition that a man of action has no time "[t]o play with mammets" may scornfully reject both the boasts of men such as Glendower and Pistol, as well as trivial pastimes such as the conqueror plays themselves.¹⁰⁶

The term "mammet" calls to mind the villain of Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*, Muly Mahamet, in a reference that may not be accidental. Shakespeare parodies lines from *Alcazar* at two points in Act Two, Scene Four of *2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V* has strong structural and thematic similarities to Peele's play. One of the most distinctive features of *Henry V*, its division into five distinct acts by the speeches of the Chorus, had previously been used in precisely the same manner in *The Battle of Alcazar*. In both plays the Chorus/Presenter comments on the action as well as provides historical details or notes the passage of time and the change of scene. Also interesting are the parallels between Peele's King Sebastian and Shakespeare's King Henry V. Both are young monarchs who seek to win glory by fulfilling chivalric ideals. More significantly, both lead their nations into foreign wars, though the outcome of these differ greatly, with Sebastian dying in ignominy

¹⁰⁴ *Henry V* 2.0.10-11. See T.W. Craik's note in the Arden Shakespeare (third series) edition of *Henry V* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁰⁵ See *2 Henry IV*, Act Two, Scene Four for examples of Pistols bluster. Shakespeare's characterisation of Pistol through the plays he quotes is discussed further in Anne Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962), pp. 140-143.

¹⁰⁶ *1 Henry IV* 2.3.92. David Bevington explains that "mammets" were "dolls or puppets, originally false gods or idols; from Mahomet." See the note at 2.3.88 in the Oxford Shakespeare edition of *Henry IV, Part I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

and Henry rising in triumph. Both playwrights prepare for such an outcome, however, by foregrounding the legitimacy of the wars. Whereas the early scenes of Peele's play preach against the overthrow of legitimate monarchs, the early scenes of *Henry V* contain extensive justifications for war against France, including the Archbishop of Canterbury's tedious explanation of the Salic law and recitation of the Lancastrian claim to the crown of France.¹⁰⁷ Peele is careful to establish Sebastian's crime in disregarding the claim to *dominium* of his neighbour-king, but Shakespeare is equally careful to establish the justice of Henry V's claim to *dominium* in France.

The references to crusade that regularly appear in the plays not only demonstrate an awareness of the Islamic world, but cast it as the proper enemy of the English. At the same time, the tetralogy shares something of Peele's and Marlowe's sense that the call for crusade can be a mask for other, less honourable motives. And if the tetralogy lacks action as damning as the Orcanes-Sigismund episode from *2 Tamburlaine*, it is nonetheless constant in its slightly sour depiction of crusade. In the first reference to crusade in the tetralogy, it is the traitor Mowbray who wins praise for fighting infidels. Henry IV's motives for embarking on crusade, moreover, are not so much for the honour that such warfare would bring to England as "To lead out many to the Holy Land, / Lest rest and lying still might make them look / Too near my state."¹⁰⁸ And the final reference to crusade in the tetralogy, Henry V's longing prediction that his son would "go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard" is noteworthy for the fact that it follows Henry's slaughter of his fellow Christians at Agincourt.¹⁰⁹

The Lancastrian tetralogy not only looks back to the representations of Islam made in the drama of the previous decade, however; it also functions as a sort of bridge to later representations. Regardless of how Shakespeare undercuts the piety of the crusading

¹⁰⁷ 1.2.33-95.

¹⁰⁸ *2 Henry IV* 4.5.210-212.

¹⁰⁹ *Henry V* 5.2.208-209.

aspirations of Henry IV and Henry V, the Islamic world is nonetheless cast as the cosmological enemy of England, the proper vent for English aggressions. This stands in marked contrast to *The Battle of Alcazar* and *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, in which the duplicitous leaders of European Catholicism, the pope and Philip II of Spain, figure as the true enemies of England. Moreover, the Lancastrian tetralogy shares with the post-1600 Islamic drama a fear of the temptation of an imagined Islam.

When, at the conclusion of 2 *Henry IV*, the new King Henry V observes some apprehension among his courtiers, he states:

Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear.
This is the English, not the Turkish court;
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry Harry.
(5.2.46-49)

This is not only a highly topical reference – *Henry IV* was first performed scant months after the death of Murad (Amurath) III – but is the first evidence of a fear that haunts Henry throughout *Henry V*, a fear that somehow the English court has become the Turkish court. Especially when read in the context of plays such as *Selimus* and *The Battle of Alcazar*, plays that associate blood-letting with the succession of Islamic rulers, the succession of Henry Bullingbrook to the English throne in *Richard II* takes on a decidedly unsavoury flavour. What, then, does it mean for “Harry Harry” to take the English throne? Given the turmoil of the first three plays of the tetralogy, Henry V’s reference to his father at this point can scarcely be comforting.¹¹⁰

Henry V confirms and expands upon the suggestion that Henry himself associates his family’s dynasty with non-Christian tyranny. Thus, when Henry resolves to attack France, he fears that he might fail, and that his grave, like a “Turkish mute shall have a

¹¹⁰ For a very different interpretation of this passage, see Richard Hillman, “‘Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds’: playing doubles in Shakespeare’s *Henriad*” *English Literary Renaissance* 21 (1991), pp. 161-189. Hillman argues that Shakespeare creates

tongueless mouth” – an odd comparison, to say the least.¹¹¹ Several lines later Henry feels the need to assert that “We are no tyrant but a Christian king, / Unto whose grace our passion is as subject / As are our wretches fettered in our prisons,” a statement which not only creates a comparison between Lancastrian rule and non-Christian tyranny, but even links the notion of non-Christian tyranny to the king’s prisoners, who, in the context of the tetralogy, can only be the so-called rebels that fought against the Lancastrian usurpation of the throne.¹¹² Even more chilling is Henry’s speech at the siege of Harfleur, in which he casts himself as Herod, his soldiers as Herod’s minions and the residents of Harfleur as innocent Bethlamites. Henry urges the governor of Harfleur to surrender the town, or

If not, why, in a moment look to see
 The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
 Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters,
 Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
 And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls,
 Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
 Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused
 Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
 At Herod’s bloody-hunting slaughtermen.
 (3.3.33-41)

This is not the speech of a king who rests assured that he is in the right. Like Vitelli from Massinger’s *Renegado*, Henry appears to fear that his soul is in peril of slipping into an Islam that is as much an inward condition as an external threat.¹¹³

the parallel as a contrast, not as a comparison.

¹¹¹ *Henry V* 1.2.232.

¹¹² *Henry V* 1.2.241-243.

¹¹³ Richard Helgerson has argued that the Lancastrian tetralogy “stages exclusion” as it develops, symbolised by the transformation of Prince Hal and the banishing of Falstaff. Helgerson suggests that this banishment is part of “a totalizing fantasy of power,” a fantasy in which “Shakespeare’s play participates with Hal.” Helgerson’s analysis turns on the suggestion that, although the story of Hal was not allegorical to Shakespeare or of the history of Shakespeare’s company, it nonetheless shares a trajectory of exclusion with

The ghosts of Islam that move through the Lancastrian tetralogy are interesting not only because they seem to share in the visions of Islam held by both the pre and post-1596 playwrights, but also because they help to demonstrate the significance of Islam within English imaginations, beyond the spectacle of the public drama. Like the imagined link between St. George and his Muslim foes that survived George's leap from crusader-saint to cheap print hero, Shakespeare's Lancastrian tetralogy welds Henry Bullingbrook to a failure to confront Islam in holy warfare, perhaps hinting that if Bullingbrook had used his exile as Thomas Mowbray had used his England might have been better off. During Henry's pathetic death scene in the Jerusalem Chamber, consciously reminiscent of the other Jerusalem where Henry is not dying, Henry IV not only leaves his realm and the notion of foreign conquest as a solution to domestic strife to his son, but his personal spiritual unrest as well. The genuinely heroic Henry V makes good on all three of his father's bequests, ruling well, conquering widely, and, in Shakespeare's version of the Lancastrian mythology, continuing to be haunted by an internal Islam.

From the perspective of the evolution of the public drama, the Lancastrian tetralogy demonstrated a new way of using Islam, fusing it into the symbolic structure of the drama, casting it as a barely-articulated horror at the limits of the imaginable. As we have seen, plays such as *Lust's Dominion* continued to use Islamic characters and settings in order to bring clarity to thorny issues such the extent of the concept of *dominium*. The Lancastrian tetralogy, however, demonstrated the possibility of exploring these issues in

both, as Shakespeare recast himself from artisanal, collaborative player-writer to muse-fired *author*, and as Shakespeare's company sought to narrow its appeal, to identify with the elite rather than the rabble. My own analysis complements Helgerson's, but suggests further that the Lancastrian plays, consciously or not, betray unease with these fantasies of total power. The banishing of Falstaff comes soon after Hal's apotheosis, which is itself marked with the "Harry Harry" reference towards the close of *2 Henry IV*. Perhaps Shakespeare was not as comfortable as Helgerson suggests with the banishment of Hal, Shakespeare's own elevation into *authority*, or the exclusionist tendencies of his company. See Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*

an English or Christian context while invoking Islam as both external force and internal possibility. It is in this mode that Islam was increasingly used in the plays of the early 1600s.

Conclusions

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.¹¹⁴

From commoner to queen, the early modern English were what every person, in every era is: men and women of their times. This means, Marx suggests, that the extent to which they could shape their own destinies was limited by the “dead generations” that had bequeathed the traditions, customs, beliefs, and ideas that inform the culture of the living. Nonetheless, “men make their own history,” which is only another way of saying that we make our own culture, and, of course, the culture that we will bequeath to our descendents. For example, as we saw in Chapter One, Queen Elizabeth was able to fashion rhetorics of affiliation in her attempt to create Anglo-Islamic alliances, but she did so by working with discourses that lay at hand, such as the anti-iconographic traditions that had been crafted by John Bale and John Foxe, and fear of the militancy of Counter Reformation Catholicism. Similarly, playwrights fashioned new representations of Islam by rummaging in the cultural dustbin. The wronged King Orcanes of Marlowe’s *2 Tamburlaine*, who calls on Christ and achieves earthly triumphs as a result, is an obvious recasting of the story that was told in the cheap print ballads of St. George, in which a single man, aided by Christ, could triumph against the Muslim hordes. This kind of simple reversal is obvious, but only in hindsight: at the time, Marlowe’s

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Chapter Five. Quotations from p. 227.

¹¹⁴ Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*, p. 15.

transformation of the established tradition may have been both thoroughly shocking and thrillingly transgressive.

The most problematic element in Marx's concise expression of culture-formation is his suggestion that we cannot make our culture "as we please," that the traditions of dead generations haunt us "like a nightmare." With these statements Marx implies that there is some human essence that lies outside of culture, that is restrained or limited by history. This is a mistake, and Foucault provides the correction. Culture is, in fact, large enough to accommodate absolute free will, a freedom that is as boundless as imagination itself. The power of the will may be selective rather than creative, in that we can only work within the framework of the culture of our day, but the possibilities for innovation and hybridity within that framework can be endless. Moreover, history and culture are always being written: new traditions are minted from the old, and themselves become the raw materials for the next transformation, perhaps in combination with older traditions.

Thus, Marlowe's *King Orcanes* can be explained from the perspective of the evolution of literary forms. But does it not also share something of the moment of the rhetorics of affiliation that Elizabeth had already been exploiting for almost a decade? Or, perhaps it reflects a new understanding of Islam based upon the greater exposure that the English had to Islam on account of the expansion of English commerce. It is misleading to assign single paths of causation, for we cannot know the extent of Marlowe's knowledge of commerce and diplomacy, let alone the alchemy performed by his free will and imagination in forming and re-forming the culture in which he lived.

Throughout this chapter I have suggested a number of possible causes for shifts in the nature of English representations of Islam, including the evolution of genres and media, the ongoing expansion of the physical and imagined world in which the English lived, developing theories of international law, and so on. All of these factors undoubtedly contributed to the forms of the representations of Islam made by authors as diverse as the doggerel hacks who penned ballads, the playwrights who wrote the public

drama, and the merchants and diplomats, including Queen Elizabeth and King James, who determined English foreign policy. Equally, however, there are the intangible and unaccountable factors of imagination and free will. If the tradition of dead generations weighed like a nightmare upon the early modern English, their response was to dream on.

CHAPTER THREE

Different Differences: Locating Moorishness in Early Modern English Culture¹

A striking but not generally noted feature of the African characters who turn up in Elizabethan and Jacobean public drama is how many of them are either from the sultanate of Morocco and Fez or from North Africa more generally. All the black characters in Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* and the anonymous *Captain Thomas Stukely* are Moroccan. The black characters in Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West* are Fessian. The African kings in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* are from Morocco, Fez, Algiers and Egypt. The Moor Eleazar in *Lust's Dominion* by Dekker is the crown prince of Fez. The invaders in *All's Lost by Lust* by Rowley are North African Muslims. Caliban's mother Sycorax was exiled from Algiers in *The Tempest*; and in the *Merchant of Venice* one of Portia's suitors is the Prince of Morocco. In fact, with the exception of Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, in which the vaguely identified "Emperor of Africa" may have been from anywhere and may not even have had black skin, it is hard to find an African character on the English Renaissance stage who was not principally described as a Moor or explicitly connected to North Africa in some way.

Such stage Moors were apparently painted coal-black, as is the Moor Aaron in the Peacham sketch of a sixteenth-century performance of *Titus Andronicus*.² The oddity of this representation was noted in 1968 by Winthrop Jordan in *White over Black*, his landmark study of early modern representations of blackness:

In Shakespeare's day, the Moors, including Othello, were commonly portrayed as pitchy black and the terms 'Moor' and 'Negro' used almost interchangeably. With curious inconsistency, however, Englishmen

¹ An earlier version of this chapter appeared in *The Dalhousie Review* 76.2 (Summer 1996), pp. 197-216.

² The Peacham sketch is reproduced in *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), plate 8.

recognized that Africans south of the Sahara were not at all the same people as the much more familiar Moors.³

In support of this statement Jordan cites passages from a travel narrative by Walter Wren, taken from Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, and from John Leo Africanus's *Geographical Historie of Africa*. Other examples could be produced from Hakluyt's collection, but the same point can be made by stating that the early modern English could see: the physical differences of colour among Moors and other Africans are obvious. The real issue is whether the English had the opportunity to view Africans of lighter hues, and that they did can be unequivocally affirmed. As noted in Chapter One, a regular trade between England and Morocco had been plied since at least the middle of the 1550s, necessitating the constant movement of merchants, factors, and seamen from England to Morocco and back again. On two occasions, in 1589 and 1600, Moroccan ambassadors visited London. The embassy of Abd al-Ouahed in 1600 is particularly well documented, and includes a portrait of the ambassador painted during his stay in London, which shows him to be an olive-complexioned Mediterranean rather than a "pitchy black" stage Moor.⁴ We also know that on 17 November 1600, during celebrations marking the anniversary of Elizabeth's accession, a special viewing platform was built for Abd al-Ouahed and his entourage, not only allowing the Moroccans to view the parade and pageants, but placing them on display as well.⁵

Why, then, did Renaissance theatre troupes represent as "pitchy black" people whose skin colour was known to be much lighter? This question has not generally been asked by modern commentators on Renaissance drama. Scholars such as Karen Newman,

³ Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 5.

⁴ This portrait is reproduced in Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991), p. 5 and in Bernard Harris, "A Portrait of a Moor" *Shakespeare Survey* 11 (1958), pp. 89-97.

⁵ D'Amico, Jack. *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama*, p. 36

Emily Bartels, Patricia Parker, Jean Howard and Kim Hall have assumed that the early modern English had only a sketchy geographical knowledge of Africa, and from this assumption have suggested that it was unlikely that the English could distinguish the various regions of the African continent, or even differentiate Africa, the New World and Asia. Supporting this contention is the well established fact that writers of the period used terms like Moor, Blackamoor, Aethiope, Negro, Turk, and Indian relatively indiscriminately and interchangeably. Extreme examples of such linguistic confusion is most apt to appear in the work of dramatists and poets, but can also be found in travel writing from late medieval fantasia like Mandeville's *Travels* through Hakluyt's Elizabethan compendia to the collections edited and published by Samuel Purchas in the seventeenth century.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that in most instances such citations represent, in the travel writing if not in the drama, confusion in terminology which can mask more significant differentiation of African peoples. In other words, while imprecise in their use of descriptive terms, English travel writers from the later Elizabethan period onwards nonetheless seem to have had a general grasp of African geography, or at the very least, a mental division of Africa into two regions: Mediterranean/Atlantic North Africa and the rest of the continent. It is inaccurate to state, as has Kim Hall, that for later Elizabethan and Jacobean writers "Africa, as we see it in modern cartography, did not exist."⁶ The first edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589) included a world map derived from Ortelius that is an accurate guide to the shape and a generally accurate representation of the major physical features of the continent. With the publication of the second volume of the second edition of the *Principal Navigations* (1599) English readers had access to "one of the most authoritative [world maps] of its day," the great world map

⁶ Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 8.

by Edward Wright, which provided detailed information about coastal features.⁷ At any rate, even comparatively crude maps such as Robert Thorne's world map of 1527, reproduced as a woodcut in Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* (1582), while distorting the shape of Africa, nonetheless identifies distinctive regions within it, such as "Barbaria," "Ginea," and "Ethiopia."

This differentiation of regions within Africa is consistent with Fernand Braudel's notion of a single, relatively cohesive Mediterranean "world" during the period, one that included Muslims and Christians alike. Restating this point in the preface to the English edition of *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Braudel identified the Ottoman empire as "a major historiographical problem, a zone of formidable uncertainty," but nonetheless included it in "the unity and coherence of the Mediterranean region." Braudel continues: "I retain the firm conviction that the Turkish Mediterranean lived and breathed with the same rhythms as the Christian, that the whole sea shared a common destiny, a heavy one indeed, with identical problems and general trends if not identical consequences."⁸ Braudel's certainty of this unity may have originated from his sources (as does his use of "Turkish" to mean "Islamic"), for it does seem that even the English, so far removed from the Mediterranean, conceived of the Mediterranean, if not as a single, cohesive unit, at least as a part of the known, as opposed to new, world. The earliest Christian English world maps, depicting the "triple world" with Jerusalem at its centre, necessarily included North Africa, as did the cosmology that lay behind them, including the Genesis-derived account of the people of the re-populating of the world.⁹ From Classical times to the Renaissance North African people stood as

⁷ Helen Wallis, "Edward Wright and the 1599 world map" *Hakluyt Handbook I*, ed. D.B. Quinn, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1974), p. 72. On Hakluyt's maps generally, see R.A. Skelton, "Hakluyt's maps" *Hakluyt Handbook I*, pp. 48-69.

⁸ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* vol. I, trans. Siân Reynolds, (London: Collins, 1972), pp. 13, 14.

⁹ According to which the sons of Japheth inherited Europe, the sons of Shem inherited

enemies, allies, and trading partners of Europeans. North Africa, unlike sub-Saharan Africa or the Americas, was not “discovered” in the so-called “Age of Discovery.”

When the English established commercial ties with Morocco during the 1550s and diplomatic relations during the 1570s they were not, as Emily Bartels has suggested, penetrating “the dark continent.”¹⁰ To say that the Moroccans were the only African power with which the English engaged in official diplomatic relations prior to the eighteenth century is true, according to modern notions of Africa, but may subtly misrepresent the status of the Moroccans as residents of the Mediterranean world. It is significant that, during the second half of the sixteenth century, when the English actively traded to both Morocco and the region below Cape Blanc that they referred to as “Guinea,” the English apparently thought very differently of the two regions. Whereas the Morocco trade was conducted in a fashion identical to trading expeditions to Europe – in which regular voyages conveyed goods to English factors resident in Morocco, who then negotiated a complex system of credit and debt exchange with their Moroccan counterparts – the Guinea trade was strictly trip-by-trip, with no trading infrastructure within Guinea itself. Moreover, when the Portuguese demanded, as they had since the early 1550s, that the English respect papally-sanctioned Portuguese claims to Africa, the Barbary merchants recommended that Elizabeth promise to respect Portuguese claims, but only below Cape Verde.¹¹ The fact that it was the Barbary merchants who were consulted during these negotiations suggests that the Guinea merchants lacked a corporate presence, but further, this episode indicates that the English could conceive of claims to “Africa” as restricted to the region below Cape Verde. It may even be that the idea of “Africa” as a coherent entity is a purely modern construction, and that early modern

Asia, and the sons of Ham inherited Africa. This scheme is not directly described in the bible. See Genesis, Chapter 9.

¹⁰ Emily C. Bartels, “Imperialist beginnings: Richard Hakluyt and the construction of Africa” *Criticism* 34/4 (Fall 1992), p. 519.

¹¹ BL Cotton Ms. Nero B I, fo. 163.

Europeans, including the English, conceived of Mediterranean Africa as distinct from sub-Saharan Africa. Edward Said notes that one of the effects of imperialism was to represent as homogeneous huge and internally diverse portions of the world such as India and the Middle East.¹² This appears to be what has happened to Africa as well: whereas early modern Europeans perceived the continent as consisting of several distinct zones (the Levant, Barbaria, Guinea, Ethiopia), nineteenth-century imperialists obscured these in order to construct a monolithic “Africa” that could be uniformly ruled and arbitrarily divided according to the interests of the colonisers. Winthrop Jordan’s observation that some early modern English travel writers were able to discern differences between sub and supra-Sahara Africans is borne out and amplified in the commercial and diplomatic documents, and seems to be no more than an obvious, basic differentiation. Modern scholars of representation, on the other hand, seem to have imported a modern, colonial/post-colonial conception of Africa back to the early modern period.

Whatever difficulties the early modern English had in formulating a stable terminology with which to characterise Africans from North Africa, as opposed to Africans from elsewhere in the continent, in practical terms the English had no problems differentiating these peoples. Despite some continuing linguistic confusion, this distinction is carried through the second (1598-1600) edition of Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations*, as Bartels has demonstrated.¹³ Generally speaking, the pieces included in Hakluyt’s compendium that deal with North Africans, the population usually indicated by the term “Moors,” portray them more sympathetically than Africans from elsewhere in the continent. This leaves us where we started, observing that the English had noted the somatic and cultural differences between North Africans and other Africans, and asking not only why these differences were erased upon the English stage, but also why modern

¹² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), pp. xvii-xviii.

¹³ Bartels, “Imperialist beginnings,” pp. 517-538.

scholars have failed to explore this surprising disjuncture. As it turns out, the answer to the second question may lie in the answer to the first: as suggested above, it may be the perspective of the modern scholars that has obscured the early modern representations.

This chapter is primarily interested in exploring early modern representations of North Africans, and considering how these representations relate to broader representations of Muslims. In order to do this, however, it is necessary first to review the current literature on early modern representations of Africans in order to discern why the portrait of early modern culture that they paint – in which all non-European, non-Christian peoples of the world blur into a single, menacing “other” – may itself be a misrepresentation.

Registering Difference: Genre, Media, and Intent

Difficulties in perceiving the nuances of early modern English representations of Africa are inherent not only as a result of modern, monolithic conceptions of Africa, but also owing to the spirit with which different types of early modern documents are sometimes approached. Stephen Greenblatt, one of the pioneers of New Historicism and still among its most notable practitioners, draws upon many document types in his work, but is careful to observe the different registers in which they are expressed. For example, among the documents studied by Greenblatt in his analysis of *Othello* are late medieval confessional manuals, specifically examining “their casuistical attempts to define the precise moment at which venial temptation passes over into mortal sin.”¹⁴ Greenblatt argues that these manuals provided a context for Othello’s seemingly voyeuristic demands for “ocular proof,” and for Iago’s lascivious fantasies of Desdemona and Cassio’s relationship. Greenblatt carefully anchors this argument not only in resonance between the subject matter of the confessional manuals and the play, but further suggests

¹⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 246.

that Shakespeare has Iago take on the role of a perverse confessor in the bizarre opening of Act Four, Scene One, in which Iago quizzes Othello on a series of hypothetical situations, including whether it would be sinful for Desdemona “to be naked with her friend abed, / An hour, or more, not meaning any harm.”¹⁵ Greenblatt’s analysis is convincing because he has not suggested a similarity between the confessional manuals and Shakespeare’s play simply on account of a common theme, but also cites linguistic and structural homologies between the texts. This is an example of the kind of analysis that is possible through New Historicism that would not have been possible otherwise: by reading widely in the literature of the period, Greenblatt has been able to illuminate a thorny and seemingly incongruous passage of Shakespeare’s play.

Karen Newman, in her widely cited article “‘And wash the Ethiop white’: femininity and the monstrous in *Othello*,” is one of the scholars who has taken Greenblatt to task for the failure of his analysis to deal forthrightly with the blackness of Othello.¹⁶ Newman’s analysis seeks to align *Othello* with the descriptions of sub-Saharan Africans made in Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations*, and provides an extended analysis of several passages taken from a piece written by George Best. On the basis of Best’s writing Newman suggests that the blackness of the sub-Saharan Africans was considered by Shakespeare and his contemporaries to be monstrous. But Newman lacks a smoking gun: she cannot cite any moment in Shakespeare’s play that specifically, consciously invokes Best’s narrative, or indeed, any other narrative from *The Principal Navigations*. Newman’s argument could be laid out as a syllogism:

Best described the blackness of Africans as a threatening contagion
 Shakespeare’s Othello is a black African
 Shakespeare wrote *Othello* within thirty years of Best’s writing of his

¹⁵ *Othello*, 4.1.3-4.

¹⁶ Karen Newman, “‘And wash the Ethiop white’: femininity and the monstrous in *Othello*” in *Shakespeare Reproduced: the Text in History and Ideology*, eds. Jean Howard and Marion O’Connor (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 149-150.

narrative¹⁷

Therefore Othello's blackness should be viewed as a threatening contagion.

Newman's argument is all the more problematic given that Shakespeare's play *does* consciously invoke travel narratives in several scenes, most significantly (but not only) when Othello tells the story of his life before the Venetian senate in 1.3.129-170. E.A.J. Honigmann presents the scholarly consensus in the introduction to his recent Arden 3 edition of *Othello*, where he suggests that there are slight echoes between Othello's story and that of the converted Moor John Leo Africanus, whose *Geographical Historie of Africa* had been translated into English by John Pory and published in 1600, and more pronounced echoes with Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's *Historie of the World*, published in 1601.¹⁸ Thus, on the one hand Shakespeare consciously invoked fantasia from Pliny's narrative ("The Anthropophogi, and men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders") which had, by the time of the writing of *Othello*, been discredited by the publication of the narratives of Elizabethan travellers in general, and in the narratives Hakluyt edited in particular. On the other hand, Shakespeare may have very loosely based the Moor Othello on the Moor John Leo Africanus. Africanus's first-person narrative, in conjunction with Pory's editorial interjections, certainly passes judgement upon various African peoples, but positively distinguishes among various hues of Africans, and does not portray the blackness of Africans or the darkness of Moors as monstrous or contagious.

Newman's analysis is problematic in a manner that Greenblatt's is not. Newman does not demonstrate homologies between her texts, and has based her conclusions upon similarities that she asserts, but does not prove. In drawing on texts that are not

¹⁷ Best's narrative is dated 1578; Shakespeare wrote *Othello* sometime between 1600 and 1604. This time difference is not addressed by Newman.

¹⁸ E.A.J. Honigmann, Introduction, *Othello*, by William Shakespeare (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997), pp. 4-6.

demonstrably invoked by Shakespeare in his play, Newman implies that Best's text must either have been so widely known that we can assume that it was known by Shakespeare, or was typical of the society as a whole, and so did not need to be known individually. Moreover, Newman has elided the differences that characterise the texts. Whereas Greenblatt's analysis accounts for the differences in tone and structure between confessional manuals and the public drama by suggesting that Shakespeare imported the structure and language of the manuals into his play in the first scene of Act Four, Newman's analysis turns on an unstated assumption that Best and Shakespeare wrote in the same linguistic register, that they shared a common structural and linguistic vocabulary.

Newman's brief article is a particularly flawed historicist analysis of Shakespeare's play and of the early modern English concept of Moorishness in general, but the same problems crop up in other, more substantial analyses of blackness and Moorishness, such as Kim Hall's monograph *Things of Darkness*, published in 1995, and Emily C. Bartels series of three articles, published during the 1990s, which deal with Moorishness. Newman, Hall and Bartels have all failed to take into account basic differences between the varieties of texts that they examine. Thus, in her introduction Hall moves from literary texts, to travel narratives, to diaries without pausing to consider how differences of genre and media might have influenced the writers of the different texts. For example, drawing upon John Evelyn's description of the seating plan of a dinner party for the Moroccan ambassador and his retinue, Hall argues that the alternation of Moroccan men with English women was an expression of "the black/white binarism" that she argues pervades English literary texts of the period.¹⁹ This argument fails to take

¹⁹ Hall, *Things of Darkness*, p. 9. Like Newman failing to note the three-decade gap between Best's description of Africans and Shakespeare's composition of *Othello*, Hall does not note that Evelyn's diary was written over half a century after some of her other sources, such as Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* and Shakespeare's plays. As with earlier scholars such as Louis Wann and Samuel Chew, Hall creates a single, century-long

into account many factors, such as that seating arrangements were more likely dictated by custom than by literary symbolism, and more obviously, that Moors are not actually black. The English were capable of observing the actual colour of Moors. In analysing Evelyn's account of the dinner party, Hall overlooks not only the differences between literary texts and Evelyn's diary; she has also collapsed the difference between flesh-and-blood Moroccans and imagined Moroccans.

The failure to consider the different intentions and registers of language that lie behind various document types is common in the writings of Newman, Hall, and Bartels, who draw upon plays, poetry, travel narratives, and diplomatic/commercial documents indiscriminately. Part of the reason for this collapsing of difference is methodological. It seems to be an unstated assumption in these works that there was only one register of language in the early modern period, and that diplomats and merchants used language in exactly the same way as playwrights, poets, and travellers. This assumption runs counter to what we would expect today. While few would assume that a play by Tom Stoppard, a memo by Bill Gates, and a speech by Madeline Albright would use language in exactly the same fashion, Newman, Hall, Bartels and others seem to suggest that the early-modern counterparts of these figures did so, thus obscuring the very real differences that exist among different forms of writing.

The remainder of this chapter seeks to separate literary and non-literary representations of Moorishness in order to identify and analyse the differences between them. In the process, a very different portrait of Moorishness emerges than that articulated by Hall, Newman, and Bartels.

* * * * *

During the second half of her reign Queen Elizabeth sent four embassies to Morocco and received two in return. These embassies varied greatly in their effectiveness. The first English embassy to Marrakech was a tremendous success, laying

period, which she then draws documents from indiscriminately.

the foundations for later diplomatic relations. The second, Elizabeth's sole attempt to establish a resident ambassador in Marrakech, was ineffective, perhaps owing to the incompetence of the ambassador.²⁰ The third and fourth embassies were both failures from the English perspective, as the English ambassadors found themselves skilfully manipulated by the sultan.²¹ Both of these ambassadors returned to England tremendously anti-Moroccan. A comparison of the reports and correspondence of the first and third ambassadors allows for a sampling of representations of Moroccans from the perspective of an ambassador whose mission had gone extremely well, and from another who was frustrated and bitter at having been made a pawn in the diplomatic games of the Moroccans.

Elizabeth's first ambassador to Marrakech was Edmund Hogan, a member of the London Mercer's Guild, a founding member of the Spanish Company, and according to a list T.S. Willan found among the state papers, one of "the wisest and best merchants in London."²² He was not a typical Elizabethan ambassador; but then there was nothing typical about his embassy either.²³ The embassy was apparently sent in response to a

²⁰ The ambassador in question was Henry Roberts, who acted as the representative of the queen in Morocco from 1585 to 1588. He apparently owed his appointment to the patronage of the Earl of Leicester rather than to any diplomatic acumen of his own. See T.S. Willan, *Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 225-233.

²¹ These embassies were sent in 1589 and 1590 in an attempt to persuade the Sultan to provide financial aid for the Portuguese pretender Don Antonio, whose cause Elizabeth had championed as part of her campaign against Philip II of Spain. Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur, who was engaged in negotiations with Philip II at the time, promised to aid Don Antonio but was actually more interested in having representatives of the Queen competing for favor with the Spanish ambassador than fulfilling any such promises.

²² Willan, *Studies*, 148.

²³ Gary Bell provides a good overview of typical Elizabethan diplomacy. Bell, "Elizabethan Diplomacy: The Subtle Revolution" *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Malcolm R. Thorp and Arthur J. Slavin (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publications, 1994), pp. 305-319. See also Bell, "The Men and their Rewards in Elizabethan Diplomatic Service, 1558-1585" (University of California,

report submitted by Hogan to the Privy Council which suggested that Sultan Abd al-Malik of Morocco would be willing to trade saltpetre, an essential ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder, for iron shot. At the time of this report, probably 1575 or 1576, England was dangerously short of saltpetre, while tensions with Spain were rising. Hogan's report further suggested that Morocco could serve as an entrepot to an overland trade to the Levant, allowing English merchants access to Mediterranean markets without hazarding the pirate-infested waters of the Mediterranean Sea or losing profits to Italian middlemen.²⁴

In May 1577 Hogan left for Morocco. Four months later he was back in England, his mission an absolute success. He had secured the saltpetre trade, improved the terms of the regular English commerce with Morocco, established in principle the overland trade to the Levant, and had even secured a promise of passive Moroccan support for the English should they attack Spain.²⁵ Sultan Abd al-Malik wrote to Queen Elizabeth that he

Los Angeles: unpublished doctoral thesis, 1974).

²⁴ PRO SP 71, Barbary States, XII, fos. 1-3.

²⁵ Edmund Hogan to Elizabeth I, Marrakech, June 11, 1597. BL Cotton MSS Nero B 11, fo. 297. Hogan's final report to Elizabeth is known only from the version preserved in the *Principal Navigations*: "The voyage and ambassage of Master Edmund Hogan to the Emperour of Morocco, Anno 1577" in Hakluyt, ed., *Principal Navigations* II part II, 2nd ed., (London: 1599), pp. 64-67. Emily C. Bartels has argued that Hogan's embassy went very badly, and that Hogan subsequently created a negative representation of Abd al-Malik. Her argument, however, is undercut by historical errors, including a basic misunderstanding of who exactly the English ambassador was (for some reason she has identified Hogan as a mere messenger, and Hogan's factor John Bampton (who is clearly identified as a factor in the documents) as the ambassador), and gaps in her understanding of diplomatic protocols. The latter is far the most significant flaw in her analysis, for she has based her odd notion that Hogan was dissatisfied on the outcome of his mission on the fact that he was kept waiting on several occasions. However, it must be stressed that Hogan spent less than a month in Morocco, and in that time secured both commercial and diplomatic agreements. This was, in terms of Renaissance diplomacy, astoundingly swift. Furthermore, while Bartels is correct to state that Hogan left Morocco without a full cargo of saltpeter, she seems to have missed the fact that Hogan's report clearly states that the saltpeter he brought home was intended as a sample, not as the first shipment in the trade.

was pleased with Hogan, and requested that England receive a Moroccan embassy in the near future.²⁶

Hogan's correspondence with Elizabeth from Morocco and his final report on the embassy were written by a merchant eager to encourage an Anglo-Moroccan political alliance as a means of promoting his own commercial interests. Such an alliance must have seemed exceedingly unlikely at the time, given the recent political and commercial treaties signed between England and Portugal, and given the ongoing preparations of King Sebastian of Portugal for an invasion of Morocco. While relations with Morocco were not against the letter of the Anglo-Portuguese treaties, Elizabeth could hardly have doubted that Abd al-Malik was interested in securing iron shot not only to quell the rebellion threatened by his nephew (whom Abd al-Malik had unseated the previous year), but also in preparation for the Portuguese invasion. Elizabeth had to decide whether to honour the spirit of the treaties signed with Portugal, or to strengthen ties with a Muslim ruler who might well prove to be a willing ally against Philip II of Spain, the maternal uncle of the Portuguese king.²⁷ Hogan, who was personally interested only in the commercial opportunities that the Morocco trade might offer, was nonetheless astute enough to see the stakes of the game, and his reports reflect a desire to depict the Moroccan sultan not only as an acceptable political ally, but even an honourable ally from a religious-cultural perspective.

According to Hogan, Moroccan court life was enlivened by bucolic English

In short, Bartels's analysis suffers not only from a failure to read the requisite secondary literature on Renaissance diplomacy, but from a failure to read carefully the documents themselves. Bartels, "Making more of the Moor: Aaron, Othello and Renaissance refashionings of race" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), pp. 438-442.

²⁶ BL Cotton Ms. Nero B VIII, fo. 70.

²⁷ The best account of the Anglo-Portuguese negotiations is still to be found in Chapman's section of V.M. Shillington and A.B. Wallis Chapman, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1907), pp. 136-145. Chapman, however, seems to have been unaware of Hogan's embassy as a complicating

pastimes such as Morris dancing, ducking with spaniels, and bull-baiting, as well as finer entertainments such as court masques. The sultan, who surrounded himself with Christian and Moorish counsellors, was able to converse with Hogan in Spanish, but had Hogan's speeches translated into Arabic "[so] that the Moores might understand", thus drawing a subtle distinction between al-Malik and his Moorish subjects. Most incredibly, Hogan asserted that al-Malik was known to his subjects as "the christian king", that he was "a vearie earnest Protestant", and that he recognised that the English practised "Godes trew religioun".²⁸

It is exceedingly unlikely that Hogan's clumsy attempts to sanitise the Moroccan sultan fooled anyone, least of all Queen Elizabeth. Abd al-Malik was a Muslim, not a closet Protestant. But what is interesting is *how* Hogan sought to sanitise Abd al-Malik. When, a century after Hogan's embassy, Aphra Behn wanted to make the West African prince Oroonoko more palatable to the English reading public, she portrayed him as a white man with black skin:

He was pretty tall, but of a Shape the most exact that can be fancy'd: The most famous Statuary cou'd not form the Figure of a Man more admirably turn'd from Head to Foot ... His Nose was rising and *Roman*, instead of *African* and flat: His Mouth the finest shap'd that could be seen; far from those great turn'd Lips, which are so natural to the rest of the *Negroes*. The whole Proportion and Air of his Face was so noble, and exactly form'd, that bating his Colour, there could be nothing in Nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome.²⁹

Hogan, by contrast, sought to make Abd al-Malik acceptable to his readers not by obscuring the sultan's somatic characteristics, but by eliminating his cultural, and especially his religious, differences. It would appear that, in the opinion of the merchant-ambassador, the greatest differences between the English queen and the Moroccan sultan

factor.

²⁸ Hogan to Queen Elizabeth, 11 June 1577; and "the voyage and ambassage of Master Edmund Hogan" Hakluyt, ed., *Principall Navigations* II part II (1599), pp. 64-67.

were differences of religion and culture, since these are the differences that he sought to erase.

In curious agreement with Hogan's attempts to Anglicise Abd al-Malik are the writings of a later ambassador, John de Cardenas, who travelled to Morocco in 1589. In Cardenas's correspondence and reports, Abd al-Malik's successor, Ahmad al-Mansur, is depicted as a despotic tyrant, a deceitful heathen and a Christ-cursing infidel. But this radical othering of Ahmad is simply a negative version of Hogan's un-othering of Abd al-Malik. Whereas Hogan asserted Abd al-Malik's political legitimacy, styling him "the christian king", Cardenas denied Ahmad's, calling him a usurper and a tyrant. Hogan had differentiated Abd al-Malik from his Moorish subjects religiously and linguistically; Cardenas did not refer to Ahmad by any title or name other than "the Moore," emphasising the Sultan's Islamic beliefs and merging his identity with that of his subjects. Hogan described Abd al-Malik as "a vearie earnest Protestant"; Cardenas included Ahmad among "the sworne ennemyes of Christ". Hogan viewed Abd al-Malik as a favourable political and commercial ally for England; Cardenas accounted all relations between England and Morocco "[of] more dishonour to her Ma^{tie} and the state then benefitt to themselves".³⁰

It is remarkable that although Hogan sought to reduce Abd al-Malik's difference and Cardenas sought to amplify Ahmad's, both employed the same discourses of political legitimacy and religious truth. Neither Hogan's desire to sanitise nor Cardenas's to demonise led either to employ discourses of blackness (or of whiteness), or to attempt any sort of "racist" characterisation of either sultan. Nor are Hogan and Cardenas peculiar in this regard: discourses of blackness are conspicuously absent from the commercial and diplomatic documents generally. While there regularly occur protests against English

²⁹ Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ed. Joanna Lipking (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 13.

³⁰ John de Cardenas to Sir Francis Walsingham, Safi, 8 October 1589. PRO SP 71, Barbary States, XII, fos. 28-30.

trade with “infidels,” especially against the trade in military supplies, there are no attempts in the state papers to represent Moroccans as monstrous or anti-Christian simply because of their darker skin, or to draw a link between this physical trait and putative moral or spiritual traits.³¹

Very different were the representations of Moorishness made on the English stage at precisely this time. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean public drama blackness – not simply darkness – was an integral part of Moorishness; so much so that in this literature the terms Moor, Blackamoor, Ethiopie and Negro are virtually interchangeable. The blackness of the Moorish characters in the drama was so important as to be imbedded into play texts themselves, with both Moorish and European characters calling attention to the blackness of Moors as their defining characteristic. In almost all instances, this blackness was used to identify Moors as physical and spiritual outsiders.

Nonetheless, these playwrights were not the first to create visual metaphors by having actors in black-face. Demons and sinners in late medieval iconography and popular drama were often so represented. For example, in the Judgement Day play of the York Corpus Christi cycle one of the damned moans that he is exiled

In hell to dwell with fiends black
where never shall be redemption.³²

Likewise, in the Townley Fall of Lucifer play the rebel angels undergo a physical change which reveals the extent of their sins, prompting one to exclaim:

Alas, alas, and wail-woe!

³¹ See, for example: “The request of the merchants trading Barbary”, probably dating from 1583, in which a number of anonymous merchants requested that Elizabeth take steps to stop another English merchant from trading arms to “infidells” PRO SP, Barbary States, XII, fos. 14-15; or Henry Roberts report to James I, probably dating from 1603, in which Roberts suggests that King James invade Morocco for “the universall good of all Christendome” BL Additional Ms. 38139, fos. 33-34.

³² *The York Cycle of Mystery Plays: A Complete Version*, J.S. Purvis, ed. (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), p. 376.

Lucifer, why fell thou so?
 We, that were angels so fair
 And sat so high above the air
 Now are we waxen black as any coil,
 And ugly tattered as a foil.³³

Human sinners may also have had their skin darkened in popular drama; certainly in medieval art it is common enough to depict the tormentors of Christ with dark faces, or, as in one Oxonian illumination of the Crucifixion, to depict Christ and the penitent thief with white features while the second thief has dark skin.³⁴

In these examples there is no suggestion that Lucifer, the fallen angels, or the tormentors of Christ were Africans; their physical blackness is a manifestation of spiritual blackness. The blackness of actual Africans was something of a grand coincidence to this tradition of colour symbolism. Nonetheless, there was knowledge that black-skinned people existed, and the coincidence of their existence was exploited in the construction of metaphors. As early as the third century the devil was described as “the king of Ethiopia”; in the fourteenth St. Brigitta accounted the devil “an ethiop”; and in the sixteenth the witch-hunter Reginald Scott asserted that “a damned soul may and doth take the shape of a black Moor.”³⁵ Even these metaphors, which exploit the blackness of Africans by allying it with the blackness of devils, are not primarily about Africans, but about blackness. The conflation of the black beings of hell and the black beings of Africa is a form of symbolic short-hand rather than a literal identification of Africans with demons,

³³ Quoted in Anthony Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 4.

³⁴ Anthony Barthelemy and George Hunter provide overviews of these traditions of colour symbolism. Hunter, “*Othello and Colour Prejudice*” *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978), 30-43; Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race*, 1-17. The Oxonian illumination of the crucifixion is described in Hunter, “*Othello and Colour Prejudice*,” 36.

³⁵ Cited in Hunter, “*Othello and Colour Prejudice*,” p. 34.

and Africa with hell. An illustration of this point can be found by returning to popular drama for a moment. In the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries performance areas and paths for processions were sometimes cleared by having actors in black makeup, often with fireworks attached to their bodies, run through the crowds.³⁶ While these characters are usually termed “blackamoors” or “Moors” in descriptions of the pageants, they intentionally bear a greater resemblance to the devils in a play such as Marlowe’s *Faustus* than to stage Moors such as Othello. There most certainly was a difference.

Dramatists writing in the late sixteenth century inherited a well-established tradition which linked blackness with evil, and a related tradition which exploited the black skin of Africans in creating visual and textual metaphors. Nonetheless, the playwrights of the period did not generally attempt to make the same simple equation between blackamoors and bogey-men.³⁷ Some of the earliest representations of Africans in the late-Elizabethan public drama are not freighted with any moral baggage whatsoever. The Moors who appear in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* and Greene’s *Alphonsus* are exotic trimmings to the main action; similarly, the primary function of the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice* is to demonstrate the extent of Portia’s

³⁶ Eldred Jones, “The physical representation of African characters on the English stage during the 16th and 17th centuries,” *Theatre Notebook* 17 (1962), 17.

³⁷ As might be expected in light of the discussion in Chapter Two, the cheap print continued to conflate black Africans and black devils long after the practice was abandoned in the mimetic drama. In *A Lamentable Ballad of the Tragical end of a Gallant Lord and a Vertuous Lady* the jet-black Moorish servant plays the part of a sort of bogey-man or devil. Another piece of cheap print can help to demonstrate the complexity inherent in this symbolic use of blackness, however. In the visual and textual use of blackness made in the late Elizabethan coney-catching pamphlet *The Blacke Dogge of Newgate* by Luke Hutton, the verse section of the pamphlet is preceded by a woodcut of a satanic black dog who walks the earth and consumes men. The verse that follows dutifully describes and unpacks the meaning of each of the monstrous beast’s features. At no point is Africa invoked; however, the fact that the beast is described as being “coal black” and having a “countenance ghastly, fearful, grim and *pale*” (emphasis added) illustrates the simultaneously literal and metaphorical nature of blackness in the

fame. In such plays the primary association of the blackness of the Moors is not with evil, but with the exotic. They follow in the tradition not of the popular drama, but of the elite court masque.

Nonetheless, visual metaphors of blackness were too rich to be passed by. Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*, first staged in 1589, the year of Cardenas's embassy to the court of Ahmad al-Mansur, is the earliest expression of what became the dominant trend in representations of Moors on the stage: a simultaneous endorsement and rejection of the older metaphors that linked black skin to a black soul. This trend, which would achieve its most complex expression in *Othello*, was expressed in *The Battle of Alcazar* in crude but effective fashion. The two major Moorish characters in the play serve as moral extremes, standards of virtue and vice against which European characters are measured. Muly Mahamet is a villainous pretender to the Moroccan throne who tempts the king of Portugal into participating in his black schemes, thus verifying stereotypical associations of physical blackness and iniquity. Abdelmelec, the rightful king of Morocco, is a perfect expression of Renaissance ideals of kingly virtue and so contradicts any easy equation of black looks with a black soul, even as he repels the invasion of the Christian king of Portugal.

Of the two Moors, Peele's Muly Mahamet has attracted more modern critical attention than the virtuous King Abdelmelec. Muly Mahamet, who is introduced in the company of devils, seems always to have a whiff of brimstone about him, and so has been granted paternity to later nefarious Moors created by Shakespeare, Dekker and others. The noble, virtuous Abdelmelec, on the other hand, is inexplicable in the modern critical tradition which seeks to name Othello as the first noble, virtuous Moor on the English stage. Generally the solution to this quandary has been simply to ignore the existence of Abdelmelec, as in Virginia Mason Vaughan's recent "contextual history" of Othello, in which Peele's description of the usurper Muly Mahamet as "Black in his look, and bloody

period.

in his deeds" (line 16) is quoted while the description of Abdelmelec five lines earlier, "This prince, / this brave Barbarian Lord" (lines 11-12), is quietly passed over.³⁸

Similarly, Karen Newman asserts that in *Othello* Shakespeare dared to create a Moorish hero "at a moment when the only role blacks played on stage was that of a villain of low status,"³⁹ a statement that not only overlooks Peele's Abdelmelec, but also Heywood's Bashaw Joffer and Shakespeare's own Prince of Morocco.

The villainy of Muly Mahamet in the action of Peele's play, however, never quite measures up to the rhetoric that establishes his character in the Presenter's prologue and commentaries.⁴⁰ The first play of the mimetic drama to stage a genuinely diabolical Moor is Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. In this play the Moor Aaron revels in his physical and spiritual blackness, declaring at one point:

Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace,
Aaron will have his soul black like his face.
(3.1.204-205)

Nonetheless, Aaron's villainy is of a curious sort. For the most part he acts as a devilish source of evil: he delights not in sinning, but in facilitating and expanding the capacity of the European characters for sin. An excellent example of this is Aaron's facilitation of the rape of Lavinia by Chiron and Demetrius. Aaron concocts a plot whereby Lavinia will be lured into the woods, and instructs the Goths to

There ... strike, brave boys, and take your turns;
There serve your lust shadowed from heaven's eye,

³⁸ Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Othello: A Contextual History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 59. Quotations from *The Battle of Alcazar* are from the edition of the play in *The Life and Works of George Peele* II ed. John Yoklavich (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

³⁹ Newman "And wash the Ethiop white," p. 157.

⁴⁰ D'Amico provides an interesting discussion of the limitations of Muly Mahamet's villainy. He points out that while Muly Mahamet is in many ways a perfect villain, in at least one scene he displays valour and nobility of spirit. *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama*, 45-46.

And revel in Lavinia's treasury.
(2.1.129-131)

That Aaron himself expresses no desire to rape Lavinia is often overlooked, as is Aaron's cold response to the advances of Tamora, Queen of the Goths at 2.2.10-50. The lust of Tamora, like that of her sons Chiron and Demetrius, is nothing more to Aaron than a means of spreading corruption and twisting the wills of others to obey his own. At no point in the play does Aaron himself betray the slightest trace of actual lust. He does not embody the over-heated sexuality which some early modern travel-writers ascribed to Africans from south of the Sahara, and which many modern commentators have counted among Aaron's chief characteristics.⁴¹ In fact, Aaron seems scarcely human, whether measured against the putative characteristics of Africans or Europeans. He bears a rather closer resemblance to the Vices of the Tudor Moralities: his mission is to corrupt others, not to personally perform evil actions. And like the Vices with their wooden daggers, Aaron is marked with an emblem which made him recognisable as an embodiment of evil: his black skin.

But *Titus Andronicus* is not a Morality. The dramatic space of Shakespeare's play is not a metaphysical "anywhere" in which "everyman" confronts embodiments of virtues and vices: it is late Imperial Rome. And while Aaron devilishly corrupts, perverts and subverts the entire Roman power structure, in the end he is rendered recognisably human when he submits himself to the justice of the state in order to save his infant son. With the birth of his son, Aaron ceases to associate blackness with evil, rhetorically demanding

⁴¹ David Willbern's essay "Rape and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*" *English Literary Renaissance* 8 (1978), pp. 159-182 is a particularly interesting example of the intellectual contortions modern critics have gone through to demonstrate Aaron's lustfulness. Willbern notes that Aaron apparently feels no sexual temptations (p. 166), but nonetheless argues that Shakespeare's Moor is part of "a tradition which haunts us still that black men are abnormally lustful" (p. 167). Willbern finds evidence of this in Aaron's supposed transference of sexuality into vengeance, and in Aaron's use of the allegedly "very sexual metaphors" "coin," "beget" and "piece" (p. 165).

“is black so base a hue?” (4.2.71), and scorning whiteness as weakness, as it allows itself to be manipulated (4.2.97-103). This statement calls into question the too-easy association of whiteness and virtue, and further reminds the audience that Aaron has been only a facilitator of evil in the play.

This curious ending of *Titus Andronicus*, which forces the audience to re-evaluate its understanding of both the nature of evil and the nature of Moors, is usually identified as one of the “master touches” with which Shakespeare graced an otherwise standard depiction of Moors as devils incarnate.⁴² But *The Battle of Alcazar*, written at least two years before *Titus Andronicus*, in some ways did more to subvert automatic associations of evil with Africans by placing the virtuous Abdelmelec opposite the villainous Muly Mahamet. Far from being an atypical rehabilitation of the image of Africans on the English stage, Shakespeare’s Aaron is the most authentically diabolical Moor in all of Renaissance drama. Though other stage Moors shared Aaron’s resemblance to the Vices of the Moralities – for example, Eleazar as he corrupts the Spanish court in *Lust’s Dominion*, and Abdella as she facilitates the sins of Mountferrat in *The Knight of Malta* – these Moors at least have some sort of motive to account for their behaviour. Eleazar is the crown prince of Fez, wrongfully deprived of his kingdom by the Spanish, and Abdella hopes to win the love of Mountferrat by aiding him in devising and carrying out various plots. Ultimately these motives are insufficient to account for the extent of the crimes of Eleazar and Abdella, or for the glee with which they carry them out, but these Moors do have genuine motivations. Aaron, on the other hand, does not. Like Iago he vaguely refers to crimes he must avenge, but his malice remains inexplicable and therefore carries a hint of the supernatural.⁴³

⁴² See, for example, the discussion of *Titus Andronicus* in Eldred Jones, *Othello’s Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

⁴³ The similarity between the Moorish villains of the Elizabethan public drama and the Vices of the Tudor Moralities has been noted previously by Anthony Barthelemy. But

Plays such as *The Battle of Alcazar*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Lust's Dominion* and *The Knight of Malta* depend on the automatic association of blackness with evil to make their visual metaphors work, but do not fully endorse the view that Africans are demons. The counterpoising of Abdelmelec against Muly Mahamet, the paternal instincts of Aaron, Eleazar's calls for rightful vengeance, the hopeful love of Abdella: all are strategies which playwrights used to render Moorishness a human, rather than diabolical, characteristic. Equally this is the case in plays and entertainments which made more positive representations of Moors. *The Triumphs of Truth*, a Lord Mayor's show written by Middleton and performed in 1613, is a case in point. As one of the eponymous triumphs, the black-faced "King of the Moors" arrives in London to profess his love of Christ, and chides the assembled crowds for judging him by his appearance:

I being a Moor, then, in opinion's lightness,
As far from sanctity as my face from whiteness,
But I forgive the judgings of th'unwise,
Whose censures ever quicken in their eyes,
Only begot of outward form and show⁴⁴

Such Moors were of necessity painted "pitchy black." Contrary to Karen Newman's assertion that "a hidden whiteness [below the black skin of a Moor] [was] unimaginable to early modern man,"⁴⁵ Middleton readily perceived the potential for a virtuous Moor to generate reflection among a white, Christian audience; to turn, as Homi Bhabha might write, the condemning gaze inwards. *Othello*, written some ten to thirteen years previous

whereas Barthelemy argues that late Elizabethan drama gave new power to the association of blackness and evil by bringing it onto the mimetic stage, I believe that the representations of blackness made at this time ultimately undercut any such easy associations between skin colour and virtue. Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race*, 72-76. The similarities between Iago and Aaron are discussed further in Bartels, "Making more of the Moor," pp. 445-446.

⁴⁴ *The Works of Thomas Middleton* VII, ed. A.H. Bullen (London: John C. Nimmo, 1886), p. 248.

⁴⁵ Newman, "And Wash the Ethiop White," p. 142.

to Middleton's *Triumphs of Truth*, was essentially written in the same vein. Here Shakespeare performed a remarkable sleight of hand: in his black skin Othello bears the emblem of evil, while Vice-like Iago has the appearance of Everyman. Here the disjuncture between appearance and essence is complete. What was only hinted in earlier plays is plainly expressed: that evil is not exotic, and that it does not wear a recognisable livery.

But were such stage Moors intended to represent flesh-and-blood Africans? The stylised behaviour which links nefarious Moors to the Tudor Vices seems to suggest not, as does the self-conscious spiritual whiteness and physical blackness of Middleton's *King of the Moors*. Renaissance stagings of Moorishness suggest a merging of the older metaphorical exploitation of black-skinned Africans with a new sensitivity to disjuncture between appearance and reality. Hence the confusion in a play like *Lust's Dominion*: the behaviour of the Moor Eleazar is explicable neither if Eleazar's motivations are considered to be fully human, nor if he is considered a cipher for Satan. He is an awkward Richard III.⁴⁶ Tension between appearance and reality was heightened by the audience's knowledge that Eleazar's "blackness" only went as deep as a smearing of grease-paint, beneath which lay an English actor's pale skin.⁴⁷ In this sense, every Moor that appeared on the early modern English stage was possessed of a "hidden whiteness," thus presenting the metaphorical contrasts of Middleton's *King of the Moors* in literal terms, and so exposing the fallacy of transferring the metaphorical use of black and white into the real world. This point is explicitly made in the second scene of Act Five of *Lust's Dominion*, in which two Spanish characters paint themselves with "the oil of hell" to disguise

⁴⁶ Richard III being the best realized fusion of the Tudor Vice with the human villain of the mimetic stage. In Shakespeare's play Richard himself draws attention to his similarity to, and differentiation from, the traditional Vices, stating that he is "like" (but not actually) the Vice Iniquity. See *Richard III* 3.1.82-83.

⁴⁷ I owe this insight to Christina Luckyj.

themselves as Moors.⁴⁸ A further layer of complexity is created by the knowledge – to which dramatists as well as some audience members certainly had access – of the actual skin colour of Fessians, which was of course much lighter than the Moor Eleazar’s pitchy tones.

Playwrights such as Peele, Dekker, Heywood, Middleton and Shakespeare found representations of coal-black Moors to be potent dramatic devices, capable of simultaneously engaging and undermining the prejudices of their audience. In the self-aware, created world of the English stage the blackness of Moorish characters made symbolic sense. But in the utilitarian writings of English diplomats the symbolic value of blackness was largely irrelevant. In this context generalisations about the villainy of all black-skinned people did not count for much, especially as it was known that the people in question were not black-skinned. This is not to suggest that these documents are necessarily truthful, for as we have seen, both the merchant-diplomat Edmund Hogan and the frustrated John de Cardenas manipulated representations of Moors to their own peculiar ends. Nonetheless, in such writings strategies of representation were engaged that differed from those employed upon the stage, and the most important of these tapped into discourses of religious truth and political legitimacy.

Were early modern English representations of Moors racist? It would appear not – at least not in the sense of modern racism, one of the key features of which is its central role in the history of modern thought. The discourses of blackness engaged in representations of Africans on the Renaissance stage were concerned primarily with colour symbolism.⁴⁹ Significantly, in the trade and diplomatic documents there is no support for the transfer of colour prejudices into representations of actual Moroccan sultans and merchants. This should not be surprising, for prior to the institutionalisation

⁴⁸ *Lust’s Dominion*, 5.2.171.

⁴⁹ G.K. Hunter’s essay “Othello and colour prejudice” remains the essential study of this aspect of early modern English colour symbolism.

of slavery in English culture the English lacked a motive for the systematic denigration of Africans in the manner of racism.⁵⁰ It is true that many of the prejudices and associations attached to Africans via colour symbolism would eventually be recycled, re-valued and re-asserted in the perpetually shifting configurations of modern racism. Nonetheless, it is important to avoid exaggerating the importance of colour symbolism in early modern English culture simply because it resonates with modern ideas of race. Of far greater cultural significance in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was religious prejudice. Thus, while blackness was a defining feature of Moorishness in the visual metaphors presented and manipulated on the public stage, Islam appears to have been the defining feature of flesh-and-blood Moors. This is neatly captured by the various

⁵⁰ Although John Hawkins made three slaving expeditions in the late sixteenth century, the English at this time were not regular participants in the slave trade. The English acquired a stake in the slave trade only with the establishment of English sugar plantations in the Caribbean in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Some scholars have considered Queen Elizabeth's proclamation of January 1601, "licensing Casper van Senden to deport Negroes," evidence of institutionalized racism in Elizabethan England. Nonetheless, the proclamation is a red herring, as its real intent was not to rid England of Africans but to compensate van Senden, without incurring expense to the crown, for his efforts in liberating and returning to England eighty-nine English subjects imprisoned by the Spanish (presumably van Senden intended to sell "infidels" deported from England on the slave markets of the Christian Mediterranean, and so recoup his expenses). Moreover, while the "Negroes and blackamoors" whom van Senden was licensed to deport were identified by their skin colour, the stated reasons for their removal from England were: (1) to provide further opportunities for the employment of English men and women (in this the proclamation is similar to other proclamations and legislation of the period expelling foreigners or prohibiting them from practicing their trades in England); and (2) because "most of them are infidels having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel". The proclamation is primarily evidence of xenophobia and religious intolerance rather than racism.

At any rate, the proclamation was never enforced and the number of African servants employed by the English economic elite continued to expand throughout the seventeenth century. The late Tudor and Stuart vogue for black servants is discussed in Hall, *Things of Darkness*, pp. 211-253. Elizabeth's proclamation is reprinted in *Tudor Royal Proclamations III*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, (New Haven: Yale

meanings of the phrase “become a Moor”. In *Lust’s Dominion*, as in *The White Devil* by Webster and *The City Nightcap* by Davenport, European characters “become Moors” by covering themselves with black makeup. In the accounts of merchants, diplomats and travellers, however, the phrase is a euphemism for conversion to Islam, and particularly describes European Christians who converted to Islam in North Africa.

None of this is meant to suggest that diplomatic and dramatic writing were fundamentally disparate activities. The diplomat-merchant Edmund Hogan and the playwright George Peele wrote in distinct discursive arenas, but both were products of and participants in the same culture, the general culture of late sixteenth-century London. While it would be problematic and perhaps simplistic to draw any direct connection between Hogan’s depiction of Sultan Abd al-Malik as “the christian king” in 1576 and Peele’s representation of the same man as a virtuous Moor in 1589, both representations were conceived and inscribed in a common cultural milieu, and their similarities are obvious. The different characteristics of these representations -- the contrasting nobility and blackness of the sultan in Peele’s play and his contrasting Islamic environment and essential Protestantism in Hogan’s correspondence and reports -- were necessitated by the very different discursive conditions and roles of the authors, and by the different genres and media in which these men wrote.

The association of Moors with blackness, blackness with Satan, and therefore Moors with Satan, which pre-dates regular English diplomatic and commercial contact with actual Moors, continued to be influential in the early modern period. Nonetheless, these associations were given a peculiarly Renaissance twist by late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dramatists. Earlier representations of black people in English iconography and popular drama had established physical blackness as a manifestation of spiritual blackness. Renaissance dramatists, more sensitive to disjuncture between appearance and reality, viewed this stereotype as an opportunity to make a different

statement. Through mimetic/historic referents such as Aaron's paternal love and Eleazar's hatred of the Spaniards who had usurped his kingdom, Renaissance playwrights forced their white, Christian audience to recognise that black people are people, not devils; that appearance and essence do not always coincide. This established, playwrights could then attempt to turn the condemning gaze of the audience inward, to recognise that spiritual "blackness" is not a quality limited to Africans. The Moor Eleazar is able to prosper in his crimes first of all because he was removed from his home by the Spanish against his own will, and secondly because of the sinful propensities of the Spanish court. Essentially the same could be said for the Moor Aaron at the Roman court. Plays such as *Lust's Dominion* and *Titus Andronicus*, whatever they may or may not imply about the diabolical propensities of Africans, primarily express the sinful nature of all humanity, Christian Europeans and Moorish Africans included.

Neither the automatic association of blackness and evil in late medieval iconography and popular drama, nor the more complex explorations of physical and spiritual blackness performed by Renaissance dramatists influenced the representations of Moors made in the commercial and diplomatic documents contained in the state papers. Nonetheless, these documents from time to time reveal a similar appreciation for disjuncture between appearance and reality. In the topsy-turvy world of post-Reformation Europe, where members of rival Christian confessions accused each other of being Antichrist, ideological olive-branches were occasionally offered to Muslims. Judging by appearances, Catholics were more similar to Protestants than either were to Muslims. But in her letters to the Moroccan and Ottoman sultans, Queen Elizabeth asserted that this was not so. She alleged that behind a facade of reverence of Christ, Catholics were actually idolaters, worshippers of golden images, allies of Satan. In reality, Elizabeth proposed, Muslims and Protestants, both of whom abhor idolatry, have

more in common than Catholics and Protestants.⁵¹ This sentiment is not so far removed from Edmund Hogan's description of Sultan Abd al-Malik as "a vearie earnest Protestant". The question we are left with is whether this representation of Islam would have been more or less believable in the context of early modern English culture than the "inner whiteness" of Middleton's *King of the Moors*.

In attempting to discern the meaning of the blackness of the African characters who appeared on the English stage and in English literature and art during the early modern period, scholars such as Karen Newman and Kim Hall, like Eldred Jones, Winthrop Jordan, Elliot Tokson, and Anthony Barthelemy before them, embarked upon a defensible and useful project. It cannot be denied that the blackness of characters such as Aaron and Eleazar was an essential feature of who they were. The problem with the work of Newman and Hall is that these scholars have created a historicist analysis that argues that such representations of blackness are fundamental not only to the analysis of *Titus Andronicus* or *Lust's Dominion*, but also to understanding how the English perceived Moors more generally. This proposition is problematic. Most obviously, it quietly ignores the differences of skin colour between stage Moors and actual Moors, and in doing so implies that the English somehow failed to note these differences in their interactions with actual Moors. Moreover, this interpretation ignores the fact that the early modern English used language and representation differently in different contexts. Collapsing the representations of Moorishness made by John Evelyn in his diary with those of William Shakespeare's plays not only obscures the differences between artistic creation and the

⁵¹ Examples of this rhetoric of affiliation can be found in virtually any piece of Elizabeth's correspondence with the sultans of the Moroccan and Ottoman empires. Surprisingly, this is true even of those examples of the correspondence preserved in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*. Therefore, while there is the tendency to discount such rhetoric as a pretence maintained only in the private diplomacy between two princes, in this instance Elizabeth allowed the rhetoric to become part of the public record.

attempt to capture reality, it also fails to appreciate that Evelyn and Shakespeare wrote in different linguistic registers. If it is obvious that the word “black” has different meanings in different contexts, why not extend such linguistic complexity to include the word “Moor” as well? Hall’s analysis of Evelyn’s diary assumes that, because Aaron was a “coal black” Moor in *Titus Andronicus*, Evelyn must have considered the Moorish ambassadors to be coal black as well.

While analysis of the meanings of blackness is necessary to understanding the literary portraits of Moors of the period, it is not as useful in an analysis of English encounters with actual Moors. In order to fathom these, it is necessary to examine them within the tradition of English representations of Muslims.

CHAPTER FOUR

Islam Imagined and Islam Encountered, 1599-1604

In Chapter Three I suggested that scholars working on sources drawn from a variety of media and genres need to be aware of differences in authorial intent, structure, and language use. That said, I also believe that valuable insights can be gained by working across media and genre. As I argued through Chapters One and Two, it is fascinating to observe the parallel, if not duplicate, transformations that sometimes occur across media within a chronologically limited framework. I am not suggesting that all works produced within even a sharply limited time frame inevitably display similar or parallel characteristics. Nonetheless, as scholars of historiography as diverse as E.H. Carr and Hayden White have argued, the essence of historical scholarship is selection: we marshal our sources in order to construct compelling arguments and coherent narratives.¹ Culture, our own as well as the cultures that we study, is always a jumble of contradictory evidence from which deeper patterns can be discerned and constructed.² It is possible to find sources that will contradict any interpretation of any period. At the same time, differences in texts can themselves be used as mutually supportive evidence once differences of media and genre have been thought through and analysed. The decision of Queen Elizabeth to seek alliance with the Ottomans and Sa'adians was a different phenomenon from the discursive strategies that playwrights such as Peele and Greene employed in exploring English political dilemmas through Islamic settings, and both differed from the discursive strategies of the harshly anti-Islamic neo-chivalric romances that came into vogue at the same time. All of these parallel developments contribute to

¹ E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964); Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

² It is the historian's task, then, to select sources judiciously and to be aware not only of differences rooted in genre and media, but also in authorial voice and authorial capability.

our understanding of Anglo-Islamic relations in the period, but it would be a mistake to draw a causal link between them, or to trace them back to a single common cause.

This chapter examines two very different texts: the travel diary written by Thomas Dallam during his voyage to Istanbul in 1599-1600,³ and William Shakespeare's play *Othello*, written sometime between 1602 and 1604.⁴ Dallam and Shakespeare wrote in very different genre and media, and for different audiences: whereas Dallam composed in manuscript and only for himself,⁵ Shakespeare wrote for performance before a general London audience.⁶ Where Shakespeare's *Othello* is much admired for its careful plotting and break-neck development, Dallam's diary meanders between the quotidian and the extraordinary as real-life diaries invariably do, indulging in each by turns with no thought of a greater design. And perhaps most important, whereas Shakespeare was a keen observer of his own society, as well as human nature more generally, Dallam was

³ Dallam's diary is widely available in J. Theodore Bent's excellent Hakluyt Society edition: *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, J. Theodore Bent, ed. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1893), pp. 1-98. While Bent's editing is, on the whole, of very high quality, he has omitted Dallam's sometimes confusing marginal and interlineated commentary, in at least two instances omitted entire passages from the diary, and, while generally careful to preserve Dallam's highly idiosyncratic spelling, has changed some of Dallam's punctuation and much of his capitalisation. As a result, I have felt it best to work from the original manuscript: BL Additional Ms. 17480.

⁴ E.A.J. Honigmann's introduction to the recent Arden 3 edition of *Othello* argues that the play may have been written as early as late in 1601, and probably no later than 1602. Shakespeare, *Othello*, Honigmann, ed. (Walden-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997), pp. 1-4. All of the quotations and line references to the play are taken from this edition.

⁵ We cannot know for certain who Dallam intended his audience to be, but his diary seems personal in that he has written into the text notes to himself. He did not seek publication of the diary, and makes use of none of the stylistic strategies that mark more "literary" accounts that were written for publication. In his selection of episodes to write on he is highly idiosyncratic, often failing to describe events or sights (and especially monuments and architecture) that travel narratives written for publication would have considered essential.

⁶ Richard Helgerson provides a concise discussion of Shakespeare's audiences in *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 196-198.

remarkably lacking in introspection into either his own feelings and motivations or those of his travelling companions and countrymen.

Despite being written by very different men, writing under very different circumstances, with very different intentions, *Othello* and Dallam's diary share some remarkable similarities. Both texts deal with Christian-Muslim interaction, though the nature of the interaction is different. Dallam travelled east as a craftsman accompanying a diplomatic mission, in order to aid in the delivery of a gift to the sultan from Queen Elizabeth; in *Othello* the Ottomans figure most obviously as an off-stage military threat. Despite this major difference in basic assumptions (Dallam was part of an effort to maintain friendly diplomatic contact with the power that figures as the military threat that sets Shakespeare's play in motion), the two texts are underwritten by a common sense of the inadequacy of polarities to express the nature of Christianity or Islam. Neither Dallam nor Shakespeare characterises Islam and Christianity in straightforward terms of good and evil, or even of us and them: in both texts there are moments when the social manifestations of Christianity and Islam are shown to be essentially similar. Nonetheless, at other moments, and again in both texts, Islam is cast as fundamentally alien and menacing.

In accounting for such profound, in contrast to superficial, similarities, it should be noted that there are some broader similarities between the texts as well. While Dallam's diary appears to have been written primarily for his own reading, and perhaps that of his family and friends, and Shakespeare's play for a much broader audience, both were intended to communicate with what could be called a general cultural audience, and from general cultural assumptions. Furthermore, these texts were written within three to five years of each other during a highly distinctive period in Anglo-Islamic relations, one that lasted from approximately 1596 until Elizabeth's death in 1603. During this period, Elizabeth's attitude towards Islam, like the view of Islam that emerges from Dallam's diary and from *Othello*, appears to have been ambiguous and incoherent.

The year 1596 marked a turning point in Elizabeth's attempts to find an Islamic ally in the struggle against her great enemy, Philip II of Spain. The failure of the de

Cardenas and Prynne embassies, combined with the death of Don Antonio in 1595, rendered it unlikely that Ahmad al-Mansur of Morocco would ever produce the munitions or monies that his ambassador had promised in 1589 to aid Don Antonio's bid for the Portuguese throne. Similarly, despite the undoubted abilities of William Harborne and Edward Barton, neither ambassador had convinced the Ottoman sultan to act in concert with the English against Philip in the Mediterranean. Then, in 1596, Barton made the blunder of displaying the English royal arms while accompanying Sultan Mehmed III on campaign in Hungary, causing rumours to spread throughout Europe that Elizabeth was the open ally of the Great Turk in his wars against Christendom. Elizabeth responded by disavowing any knowledge of Barton's activities, and only Barton's death of dysentery in the following year saved him from the queen's wrath. The debacle in Hungary dealt the final blow to a policy that was already on its last legs, on account of the changing times as much as to the failure of Elizabeth's attempts to secure non-Christian alliances. For Barton's successor, Henry Lello, the furore caused by Barton's indiscretion was a potent warning to avoid the dangerous political games played by Harborne and Barton. While remaining the official representative of the queen in Istanbul, Lello increasingly focussed on being the servant of the Levant Company, which paid his wages.

In the final years of Elizabeth's reign it became increasingly difficult to determine what her policy on Islam actually was. While there was a reduction in political involvement in Istanbul, this was accompanied by Lello's efforts to maintain and expand English commercial infrastructure in the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, while the waning years of Elizabeth's reign witnessed the warming of relations with Venice, a longstanding rival of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, it also witnessed the warming of relations with the other great Islamic power of the region, the Sa'adians of Morocco. Moreover, in 1599 the second volume of the second edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* was published, which included letters from the correspondence of Elizabeth with her Ottoman and Sa'adian contemporaries in which Elizabeth employed rhetorics of affiliation that stressed the similarities between Protestant Christianity and Islam. In 1600 Elizabeth made her most public gesture of affiliation with an Islamic ruler to date when she

welcomed the Moroccan ambassador Abd al-Ouahed to her court, and entertained him at her expense for almost a year.

Despite tentative signs of a renaissance in Anglo-Islamic relations, in but a few years the situation would be decisively, and negatively, resolved. The accession of James I in 1603 brought to the English throne a ruler disdainful of Christian-Muslim contact and officially committed to forging a new common Christendom, for which war against “infidels” would be a touchstone, even if James declined to participate directly in such an enterprise. Moreover, even prior to James’s accession his views would have been noted in England, and especially in the final years of Elizabeth’s reign, for despite the queen’s reluctance to name her successor, James was generally considered the obvious choice. Hence, James’s lengthy poem on Lepanto, published in Scotland in 1589 and apparently in England shortly thereafter,⁷ may have been significant in cueing those in the political establishment and in the Anglo-Ottoman trade to the shifting winds of policy. In the poem James depicts the Ottomans as Satanically driven to commit outrages upon the Venetians, who are in turn divinely guided through the intervention of the archangel Gabriel to challenge the Muslims in battle. Emrys Jones has argued that, at the time of his accession, the *Lepanto* had had a high profile, and was closely identified with James, and may have contributed the theme and setting for Shakespeare’s *Othello*.⁸

During this period of conflicting currents in Anglo-Islamic relations, Thomas Dallam, an organ-builder journeyman who had only recently completed his apprenticeship, was hired by the Levant Company to accompany and assemble in Istanbul a lavish clock-work organ, a gift to Sultan Mehmed III paid for by the Company but sent in the name of Queen Elizabeth. We may assume that Thomas Dallam had little

⁷ On August 7, 1589 the Stationers’ Register describes “A Booke intituled *the furious*, translated by James the Sixte kinge of Scotland, with the *le panto* of the same king.” No copy of this publication is extant.

⁸ Jones bases this upon references to *Lepanto* in panegyrics and other writing of the day. The coronation pageant for the new king included a triumphal arch with a representation of the Battle of Lepanto worked into it. Jones, “*Othello, Lepanto, and the Cyprus Wars*” *Shakespeare Survey* 21 (1968), pp. 47-52.

interest in and less knowledge of official policy towards the Ottomans prior to being hired for the job. The diary he kept during his voyage captures an awkward mixture of discomfort and pride in being in the train of an embassy from Christian England at the court of the “Great Turk.” In Dallam’s account of the preparations for the delivery of the gift, and especially in his recollection of the speech that the English ambassador, Henry Lello, made to the tradesmen on the eve of the presentation of the gift, the diarist reaches beyond his own situation and articulates some of the larger issues at stake in English diplomatic involvement with the Ottomans.

Shakespeare’s *Othello*, written sometime between 1602 and 1604 and consistently one of the most popular of Shakespeare’s plays since then, is also typical of the temper of the times, while having the advantage of being more carefully thought through. The Turkish threat that sets the play’s plot in motion apparently disappears in the imagined time and space between the first and second acts. But does it? There are two senses in which it does not: first, there are numerous references to varieties of what modern scholars have identified as “otherness,” as the play contrasts Turks with Christians, Barbary horses with Venetians, witches with responsible citizens, and so on. But while these references serve to keep fear of “others” alive, ultimately the play demonstrates that it is not “others” who pose the gravest threats to civil society. Secondly, there is, as in *Henry V*, a fear of a sort of internal Islam into which a Christian might slip either on purpose or unconsciously. Shakespeare’s play is ambivalent about Islam, suggesting that xenophobic demonisation of Islam might be a dangerous distraction from more insidious and ultimately more dangerous threats originating among Christians themselves, but nonetheless affirms that the Ottomans represent a real threat and deploys Islam as a metaphor for negative Christian behaviours.

Shakespeare’s *Othello* invites more extensive literary analysis than Dallam’s diary as Shakespeare wrote with a conscious design, while Dallam’s writing lacks any sense of purpose other than the recording of what he witnessed. If *Othello* ultimately delivers a fuller sense of closure than Dallam’s diary this is only to be expected, for the texts are different in nature. Where Shakespeare’s play is guided by dramatic design,

Dallam's diary is episodic and open ended. Nonetheless, both texts are of the same moment, and both reflect a deep ambivalence towards Islam. Neither the diary nor the play includes overtly positive images of Islam or Muslims, although both contain moments of affiliation with Muslims. The precise status of Muslims relative to Christians cannot be determined from these texts. Friend or foe? Us or them? Both texts engage rhetorics of affiliation and segregation at different points. Shakespeare's fictional general and the real-life organ-builder both crave certainties but must sort through impressions, second-hand knowledge, and cultural prejudices alone.

* * * * *

Thomas Dallam is best known as the leading English organ builder of the early seventeenth century, patriarch of a line of organ builders who remain active to this day. In 1599, however, he was an anonymous journeyman, one of four craftsmen sent to Istanbul charged with the delivery of a spectacular musical clock to Topkapi Palace. The clock was to be given in the name of Queen Elizabeth to celebrate Mehmed III's accession four years earlier.⁹

The incident would have disappeared from historical record had it not been for the survival of Dallam's travel diary. This fascinating document presents the observations of a young tradesman, fresh from the apprentice culture of early modern London, as he

⁹ Biographical data on Dallam can be found in: B.B. Edmonds, "The Dallam Family" *British Institute of Organ Studies Journal* 3 (1979), pp. 137-139; Gerald Sumner, "The Origins of the Dallams in Lancashire" *BIOS Journal* 8 (1984), pp. 51-56; Betty Matthews, "Thomas Dallam at Norwich Cathedral" *BIOS Journal* 10 (1986), pp. 102-111; Matthews, "The Dallams and the Harrises" *BIOS Journal* 8 (1984). The fullest account of Dallam's journey to Istanbul remains Stanley Mayes, *An Organ for the Sultan* (London: Putnam, 1956); however, Mayes' narrative liberties greatly impair its value as an historical study. John Carswell's more recent article is somewhat better than Mayes' monograph, but Carswell counts Mayes as his chief source. Carswell, "The Queen, the Sultan and the Organ" *Asian Affairs* 25 (1994), pp. 13-23. Stephen Bicknell presents an

voyaged to and from the heart of the mightiest power of the day. Dallam's account of the sultan's court is unique: not only is it written from the perspective of a tradesman rather than a diplomat, merchant, cleric, or gentleman, the task of installing the clock necessitated access to the inner chambers of the Topkapi. Among the outstanding passages in the diary is an eyewitness description of the women of the harem, the only such description in eastern or western sources.¹⁰

Much more than just a description of Topkapi Palace or even the Levant generally, Dallam's diary provides unique insight into perceptions of Islam and the Ottoman Empire circulating in the general culture of the day. Dallam was hired only days before the sultan's gift was to be shipped out of England on board the *Hector*, a Levant Company merchantman. Confessing that he had "no friend to advise me in any thing," lacking time to speak with more seasoned travellers or to read published accounts of the journey,¹¹ Dallam boarded the *Hector* with only the information and misinformation about Islam he had absorbed during his youth in Lancashire and his recently-completed apprenticeship in London. His diary, written during his travels and without intention of publication, avoids the plagiarism and stylistic pretensions of many travellers' accounts. Dallam's diary is as close to an unmediated account of contemporary popular reactions to Islam as we are likely to find. Once on board the *Hector* Dallam, who appears to have been an outgoing, friendly sort, would have had plenty of opportunity to chat with his travelling companions, who included sailors and merchants familiar with the Levant. Nonetheless, Dallam's diary offers a genuinely unschooled perspective, as Dallam struggled to square his experiences, observations and, perhaps most interestingly, his role

excellent synthesis of the literature on Dallam's life and career in Bicknell, *The History of the English Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 72-80.

¹⁰ Gulru Necipoglu, after reading extensively in European and Turkish archives, concluded that Dallam's is the only extant eyewitness description of the women of the harem from the period. Necipoglu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: The Architectural History Foundation, 1991), pp. 179-180. Many accounts of the women of the harem exist, but these are invariably reported second hand.

in English/Levant Company attempts to buy influence in Istanbul with the image of the Ottoman Empire he possessed when he departed from Gravesend on February 13, 1599.

From its inception the English Levant trade controversially mixed politics and commerce. The first English ambassador to Istanbul, William Harborne, was appointed in 1583, having proven his worth by negotiating the Anglo-Ottoman trade agreement of 1580. The appearance in the Levant of English merchants trading under their own flag not only offended Venice and France, the previous masters of the trade, but all Christendom was scandalised by the willingness of the English to trade war materials such as tin, wood and weapons into the hands of Muslims.¹² With the establishment of the English Levant Company the marriage of politics and commerce was formalised, as the Company agreed to meet all costs of the Istanbul embassy.¹³ In consequence, English ambassadors were forced to serve two masters, dividing their time between protecting the Levant trade and promoting the policies of the crown. Elizabeth's most ambitious project, hatched prior to the attempted Spanish attack on England in 1588, was to convince the sultan to join the English in a double assault upon Spain, or at least to provide a diversion from an English attack by harassing the Spanish elsewhere in the Mediterranean. To this end Harborne and Barton pressed for peace in eastern Europe while fomenting war in the

¹¹ BL Additional Ms. 17480, leaf 2r.

¹² S.A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey 1578-1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935); Dorothy Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances 1350-1700* (1954), pp. 166-175; M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1908); Arthur Leon Horniker, "Anglo-French Rivalry in the Levant from 1583-1612" *Journal of Modern History* 18 (1946), pp. 289-305.

¹³ The letters patent for the Levant Company were published in Richard Hakluyt, ed., *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* II part I (London, 1599), pp. 146-150. While the Levant Company had apparently agreed to meet all of the costs of the embassy, this is not specified in the letters patent. As a result, complaints from the Company to various members of Elizabeth's privy council regarding the costs were lodged over the 1590s. See PRO SP, Domestic Series, Elizabeth 253 no. 118 as an example of the complaints of the Levant Company regarding the costs of the embassy.

Mediterranean. Despite encouragement at the Porte, neither Harborne nor Barton was able to obtain concrete results.¹⁴ Although this project was terminated when Barton went too far in 1596, leaving Henry Lello, Barton's successor, with the affairs of his Levant Company as his primary concern, the double identity of the English ambassadors endured throughout the period.

Among the expenses borne by the Levant Company was the provision of gifts which protocol demanded at each sultan's accession and each ambassador's accreditation. The death of Murad III in 1595 and the accession of his son Mehmed III called for a new round of gifts had to be sent to Istanbul; but by 1597, when Barton died in office, the gifts had yet to be sent. Barton's secretary, Lello, took up the duties of ambassador upon his master's death, but was refused formal recognition pending the arrival of letters of accreditation from London, which would necessarily have to include a new round of gifts as well.¹⁵ The officers of the Levant Company knew that something

¹⁴ Sir Francis Walsingham's letter to Harborne of 8 October 1585 fully outlines this strategy. It is transcribed in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth III* (Cambridge: Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 226-228. See also: Edwin Pears, "The Spanish Armada and the Ottoman Porte" *English Historical Review* 8 (1893), pp. 439-466; I.I. Podea, "A Contribution to the Study of Queen Elizabeth's Eastern Policy (1590-1593)" *Melanges d'Histoire Generale Constantin Marinescu*, ed. (Bucharest: 1938), pp. 423-476; and the works cited in note 4.

Despite the failure to convince the Ottomans to act as allies of the English, it should be noted, as I argued in Chapter One, that Elizabeth's policy may have been intended only to foment rumour that such an alliance was possible. We should not be hasty to conclude that the policy was a failure solely on account of its lack of concrete results.

¹⁵ Part of the problem in getting the gifts to Istanbul lay in the unwillingness of the Levant Company to spend more money on the Istanbul embassy. As early as 1595 the Company began to complain of the financial burden of the embassy, stating that it had spent over £40 000 in fifteen years, in purchasing gifts for the sultan and meeting the normal operating costs, such as salaries for the ambassador and his staff (PRO SP, Domestic Series, Elizabeth, 253 no. 118). Moreover, even prior to Barton's death in 1597 the embassy had been denied official standing in Istanbul, owing to the fact that Barton had not yet presented letters of accreditation and gifts to the new sultan since his accession in 1595 (PRO SP, Domestic Series, Elizabeth 256 nos. 16, 18; 259 no. 45). The tensions surrounding Barton's death and the appointment of Henry Lello may be

special was needed, and set upon the commissioning of a fantastic musical clock, the construction of which cost the Company £550.¹⁶ In addition to the clock and numerous lesser items for the sultan, large amounts of cloth were to be distributed to various Ottoman officials, and one of the queen's own coaches was to be given to the sultan's mother.¹⁷

Thomas Dallam's role in the construction of the clock is something of a mystery.¹⁸ His name is not mentioned in the contract; nor does he claim in his diary to have built the organ which formed the clock's base. Whether he worked on the construction of the clock or not, he clearly states in his diary that his role in its delivery came as a surprise. When the ship bearing the gifts was fitted out in February 1599, Dallam boarded it with only a few hastily purchased supplies and, curiously, a spinet.

We can be confident that Dallam knew little of the schemes of his queen and the Levant Company, but he could not have travelled east without a significant stock of assumptions about Islam. By the end of the sixteenth century the phrase "turn Turk" was in common usage, denoting virtually any craven, lascivious or deceitful act. "Saracen's heads" appeared on alehouse and booksellers' signs around London, and were commonly

followed in detail through the reports of the Venetian ambassador to Istanbul, catalogued in Horatio F. Brown, ed., *The Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy IX* (1592-1603), (London: PRO, 1864-1947).

¹⁶ The contract for the construction of the clock existed in English archives during the nineteenth century. It was reprinted in detail in the 20 October 1860 edition of *The Illustrated London News*; unfortunately, after that time it was lost. My reading of the contract is based upon the version published in the *Illustrated London News*, which does seem to be complete. "Relics of the past: curious musical instrument of the sixteenth century." *Illustrated London News*, 20 October 1860, p. 380.

¹⁷ A description of the English gifts is given in two reports of the Venetian Ambassador in Istanbul, written on 18 September 1599 and 16 October 1599, and identified as documents 814 and 821 in *Calendar of State Papers ... Venice IX*.

¹⁸ It has traditionally been assumed that Dallam built the organ. I have argued, however, that it was unlikely that a craftsman as junior as Dallam would have been in 1597 would have been awarded such a prestigious contract. See Bak, "Who built the organ for the sultan?" *BIOS Journal* 25 (2001) (forthcoming).

painted upon archery butts, giving rise to William Camden's description of archery as "shooting at the Turke."¹⁹ As discussed in Chapter Two, references to Islam were inseparable from the mythologies of St. George, Sir Bevis and other folk heroes who had earned their stripes in the east. Muslims frequently appeared in Elizabethan ballads, broadsides and pamphlets, and were already regular visitors to the English stage when, in 1596, the Prince of Morocco wooed Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*. As argued in Chapter Two, representations of Muslims on the English stage at this time were not as straightforward as those made in the cheap print and in urban iconography. Dallam would have served his apprenticeship during the early and mid 1590s. If he attended the plays, he would have encountered the more positive, affiliating pre-1596 dramas. On the one hand this must be counted speculation, for Dallam does not make reference to the drama in his diary. On the other hand, Dallam's character emerges through the diary as easy-going and adventurous, certainly not prone to the religious scruples of the hotter sorts of Protestants of the period. This suggestion is reinforced by Dallam's choice of trades, for organ building was closely associated with the traditional religion.²⁰ Dallam's diary gives us no cause to believe that Dallam led a particularly cloistered apprenticeship.

Such was the context of Thomas Dallam's departure on the *Hector* in February 1599. As an apprentice in London, he had undoubtedly experienced something of the strongly negative but also, on occasion, strongly affiliating representations of Islam made in the general culture of the day, itself caught in the shift in attitudes towards Islam that

¹⁹ Cited in Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England During the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 147.

²⁰ As evidence of Dallam's lack of concern for doctrinal issues, examples can be found in his diary of his attendance of Greek Orthodox services, and his protestations when the more religiously-inclined Lello forbade him to work on Sundays. As an organ-builder, Dallam was tied more closely to "the traditional religion" than many of his contemporaries was. His family was associated with both royalism and recusancy in the county of Lancashire, where Dallam was born and lived during his youth. All of Dallam's organs were destroyed in the English civil wars, but one of Dallam's sons fled to France, where it is likely that he converted to Catholicism before establishing himself in a very

began during the latter years of Elizabeth's reign and continued more dramatically under James. Dallam's own mission, to convey an extravagant gift from his queen to the sultan, could not but force the organ-builder to acknowledge English attempts to curry favour in Istanbul. We should not be surprised, then, if his diary fails to convey a cohesive, coherent representation of Islam.

A recent account of early modern English representations of the Ottoman Empire suggests that to Englishmen Islamic culture must have appeared as absolutely "other," and quotes Dallam's diary to illustrate. The passage was taken from the musician's description of the sultan's court, assembled for the presentation of the English gifts:

[The sultan] sat in great state, yet the sight of him was nothing in comparison of the train that stood behind him, the sight whereof did make me almost to think that I was in another world.²¹

What is unclear from this quotation is what exactly Dallam found other-worldly about the scene. Was it the strangeness of the sultan's court? Or was it simply court life itself? Would the journeyman from Lancashire have been similarly awed if he had seen his own queen's court in full dress, receiving an honoured foreign ambassador? A careful reading of Dallam's diary reveals a much more complex encounter with Islam than a simple, dichotomous "othering." This can be demonstrated by examining three episodes from the diary: Dallam's first face-to-face encounter with Islam as the *Hector* took supplies at Algiers; his description of the formal entry of the *Hector* into Istanbul's harbour; and his account of the speech given by the English ambassador in Istanbul to the tradesmen on the night before the presentation of the gifts to Mehmed III. The first two episodes establish the range of the possible in Dallam's characterisations of Islam, while the latter neatly captures the contradictions inherent in early modern English imaginings of Islam.

successful organ-building practice. See Michel Cocheril, "The Dallams in Brittany" *BIOS Journal* 6 (1982), pp. 63-77; and Bicknell, *History of the English Organ*.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Dallam's account of Algiers is the ability to perceive degrees of affiliation between Christians and Muslims that it reveals. Over several pages Dallam comments upon the marvellous warmth of the Mediterranean spring and the cosmopolitan mixing of Jews, Moors, Turks and renegade Christians, but his overall tone is not one of discovery or surprise. His description of the market at Algiers could almost be interchanged with a description of an English market:

The toun or cittie is verrie full of people, for it is a place of great trad and marchandise. They have tow markeett dayes in the weeke, unto the which do com a great number of people out of the mountains and other partes of the contrie, bringinge in great store of come and frute of all sortes, and fowle bothe wylde and tame. Thar be great store of partridgis and quales, the which be sould verrie cheape, a partridge for less than one penny, and 3 quales at the same price. Thar be also great store of henes and chickins...²²

It is in the context of this affiliating description of Algiers that Dallam offers the only direct commentary on Islam to be found in his diary. It is not long, and is quoted here in full:

The Turkishe and Morishe weomen do goo all wayes in the streetes with their facis covered, and the common reporte goethe thare that they beleve, or thinke that the weomen have no souls. And I do thinke that it weare well for them if they had none, for they never goo to churche, or other prayers, as the men doethe. The men ar verrie relidgus in there kinde, and they have verrie faire churchis, which they do call mosques.²³

What is to be made of this? Did Dallam believe that male Muslims might be saved because they went to "church"? He implies as much. Following as it does the

²¹ Brandon H. Beck, *From the Rising of the Sun: English Images of the Ottoman Empire to 1715* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 32-33. Dallam is quoted from BL Additional Ms. 17480 leaf 56 v.

²² BL Additional Ms. 17480 leaf 17 r.

²³ BL Additional Ms. 17480 leaf 19 r.

description of the market, it appears that Dallam, far from stepping into “another world”, was unable to leave his old one behind.²⁴

Nonetheless, Dallam was not oblivious to the cultural differences between Christian England and the Islamic Ottoman Empire, and his discomfort with English involvement in the Levant is most clearly expressed in his description of the formal entrance of the *Hector* into Istanbul’s harbour. As the sultan looked on from the walls of the Topkapi, the *Hector* passed before him, newly painted and decked out in pennants and banners, alternately firing salvos from small and great artillery. Dallam declares that “it was done with verrie good decorume and true time, and it myghte well deserve commendations”, but goes on to state:

But one thing I noteed, which perswaded my simple consaite that this great triumpte and charge was verrie evile bestowed, being done unto an infidell. There was one man sicke in the ship, who was the ship carpinder, and wyth the reporte of the firste greate peece that was discharged he died.²⁵

While this observation is offered in a markedly different vein from his description of Algiers, it does not mark a major turn in the diary. The death of the ship’s carpenter is one of only two intrusions of providence into Dallam’s narrative, neither of which has any appreciable impact upon his behaviour or observations. In the days after the formal entrance of the *Hector* Dallam set about his work of assembling the sultan’s gift with the

²⁴ This representational strategy was, and still is, common in the observations of travellers to other cultures, for difference can only be grasped if a phenomenon can first be cast into some sort of recognisable action. For example, a text written in another language can be understood as text only if the observer is capable of understanding that what is being observed is text and not, say, art. What is surprising in this passage of Dallam’s diary, however, is that this strategy is not used as a stepping stone to a position from which difference may be discerned and described. Dallam’s description of the Muslims of Algiers is not judgmental.

Many scholars have discussed the rendering of alien cultures and customs recognisable. A particularly good discussion can be found in Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Chapter Five, “The go-between.”

²⁵ BL Additional Ms. 17480 leaf 50 v.

enthusiasm and pride of a skilled tradesman, boasting that through his efforts the clock became “in somthinges better than it was when her maiestie sawe it in the banketinge house at whyte hale.”²⁶ The organ builder apparently failed to perceive the similarities between his efforts in preparing the sultan’s gift and the captain’s efforts to put on a grand show from the decks of the *Hector*.

Dallam’s doubts of the acceptability of the English role in the Levant but pride in English accomplishments simmer throughout the diary, and come to a boil in the comments which Dallam places in the mouth of Henry Lello, the English ambassador, on the night before the presentation of the gifts. As is generally the case with re-created dialogue, it is less important that this may not be exactly what Lello said than that it is what Dallam remembered him saying, or felt that he should have said. Nonetheless, the speech seems to capture not only the confusion of a tradesman confronting the variety of representations of Islam and the Ottomans inherent in English general culture, but also the awkwardness of Lello’s position in the uncertain Anglo-Ottoman policy in the wake of Barton’s blunder of 1596. In the aftermath of this incident Elizabeth had distanced herself from involvement with the Ottomans; and yet she had allowed the Levant Company to commission and deliver lavish gifts in her name to the Ottoman sultan.

The speech, recounted in considerable detail (it takes up both sides of one leaf of the diary), presents a series of contradictory, or at least conflicting, statements. On the one hand, the sultan is described as “a myghtie monarke of the worlde,” above the mean estate of most Christian princes, and thus an appropriate person for “our gracious Quene” to send generous gifts to. On the other hand, the sultan is accounted “an infidell and the grande Enymye to all Christians,” an arrogant tyrant who might strike off the head of any Christian for the slightest breach of etiquette. Most incongruously, the ambassador tells of the terrible magnificence and tyranny of the sultan, only to warn Dallam that he must be prepared, not for slavery or enforced conversion, but for... ingratitude: “It was never knowne,” cautions Lello, “that upon the receaving of any presente he gave any rewarde

²⁶ BL Additional Ms. 17480 leaf 54 v.

unto any Christian, and tharfore yow muste louke for nothings at his handes.” And while Lello decries the presumptuousness of the sultan, for “whate we or any other Christians can bringe unto him he dothe thinke that we dow it in dutie or in feare of him, or in hoppe of some greate favoure we expeckte at his handes,” the ambassador makes it abundantly clear to the tradesman that if the clock “doo not please him at firste sighte, and performe not those thinges which it is Toulde him that it can Dow, he will cause it to be puled downe that he may trample it under his feete. And than shall we have no sute grantede, but all our charge will be loste.”²⁷

What could a man such as Dallam make of this? It is hard to say. Dallam was not of an introspective ilk, and his diary reveals no attempt to reconcile the disparate elements of Lello’s speech. The musician appears to have been able to shift among rhetorical registers without difficulty. Whether he portrayed Muslims as inherently similar to or absolutely different from himself appears to be a largely contextual issue. In his darker moments he could see the hand of God set against English enterprise in the Levant, but such moments were fleeting. For the most part he seems to have gone about his work with enthusiasm and little concern for its cosmological ramifications.

Dallam’s representations of Islam mirror those made by the merchants and diplomats who took on more significant roles in Anglo-Ottoman relations, and not just in Dallam’s recollection of Lello’s speech. Like Dallam, such men could by turns deplore the advances of fiendish Muslims while participating in – and defending – activities which aided the Ottoman forces. In one astounding example, John Sanderson, an officer of the Levant Company, condemned Istanbul as a new Sodom, stating “the temptations to evell ar great in that place, all abhominable, most detestable,”²⁸ but nonetheless agreed to serve as acting ambassador in Istanbul in 1596 when Barton accompanied Mehmed III on campaign in Hungary. This is the sense in which Thomas Dallam’s diary is the perfect

²⁷ BL Additional Ms. 17480 leaf 54 r, v.

²⁸ John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602, With his Autobiography and Selections from his Correspondence*, William Foster, ed., (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), p. 4.

example of English representations of Islam at the end of the reign of Elizabeth: Dallam's diary reveals a mind whose ideas about Islam lacked focus and coherence; his vision of Islam, distorted by personal involvement and interest, is the perfect emblem of a cultural moment in which the course of Anglo-Ottoman relations was under revision.

* * * * *

Dallam's diary reveals the limitations of the concept of "otherness" in discussing representations of Islam made in the closing years of the reign of Elizabeth. While Muslims occasionally appear as "others" in Dallam's writing, they also appear as formidable, worthy allies, or simply as human beings, remarkably like the English themselves. Shakespeare's *Othello* similarly engages but even more decisively rejects otherness as a means of constructing personal, social, or national identities. *Othello* is often cited as an example of Shakespeare's exploitation of categories of otherness in English culture, but in fact these categories are employed as a series of red herrings, distracting characters within the play as well as the audience from the real forces threatening the society of the play. This use of "otherness" is complemented within the play by an ongoing engagement with interwoven themes of the untrustworthy nature of "ocular proof" and with the disjuncture between appearance and reality. These two themes merge in Shakespeare's treatment of the blackness of Othello. *Othello* suggests that colour prejudice is just another instance of the unreliable nature of "ocular proof." The key discourse in the play, however, is not blackness, but Islam. It is the threat of Islam that sends Othello, Desdemona, and Iago to Cyprus. Once there, Othello is haunted by an "inner Islam" that he can only come to terms with by living through his tragic, Iago-induced self-deception, including the murder of Desdemona.

It is tempting to view otherness as the foundation of both Othello the character and *Othello* the play, for Act One invokes disorder and violence at the hands of Moors, thieves, witches, and Turks. The play opens with the vulgar jeers of Iago and Roderigo,

accusing “his Moorship” of being a common thief, rousing Brabantio and awakening fears of civil disorder. Before the first scene has ended Brabantio has introduced the concept of witchcraft as a means of accounting for Othello and Desdemona’s marriage. Meanwhile, Iago in Act One, Scene One and Michael Cassio in Act One, Scene Two, make direct reference to the urgency of the “Cyprus wars,”²⁹ which, as the audience learns in Act One, Scene Three, involve an Ottoman naval assault on the Venetian stronghold of Cyprus. It is part of the complexity of Shakespeare’s drama that each of these external threats turns out to be less crucial to the plot than the audience is initially led to believe. Nonetheless, each of these threats advances the symbolic and narrative development of the play in its own way. To demonstrate this I will briefly examine the symbolic and narrative importance of Moorishness and witchcraft in *Othello* before turning to Shakespeare’s use of Turkishness, which, I will argue, is one of the master tropes of the play.

The emphasis placed upon Othello’s Moorishness by Iago and Roderigo in Act One, Scene One, and subsequently by Brabantio throughout the first act, aids in fixing in the audience’s mind from the outset the perception of a society under siege by monstrous elements. And yet this is also the first “othering” to be discredited, almost before it is performed. Iago and Roderigo’s hooligan taunts are preceded by an extended discussion in which Iago reveals his general viciousness and a decidedly dangerous (from the perspective of good governance) attitude towards the social order:

You shall mark
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave
 That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
 Wears out his time much like his master’s ass
 For nought but provender, and, when he’s old, cashiered.
 Whip me such honest knaves! Others there are
 Who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty,
 Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves
 And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
 Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lined their coats,

²⁹ 1.1.145-151; 1.2.39-47.

**Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul
And such a one do I profess myself.
(1.1.43-54)**

To early modern ears such lines would immediately establish Iago as a villainous, Machiavellian character type, a characterisation which proves to be an accurate guide to Iago's behaviour for the remainder of the play, however much his specific motivations shift from their original statement in this scene.

Even before Iago and Roderigo malign Othello, then, the audience has been cued to the nature of Iago's character. Nonetheless, the terms of Iago and Roderigo's assault on Othello's character – "old black ram," "devil," "Barbary horse," "a lascivious Moor" – are shocking, and Brabantio's acceptance of these terms, demonstrated in the alacrity and desperation of his response to Roderigo's summons, redoubles the shock. And yet, immediately upon Othello's appearance in Scene Two Shakespeare begins to undercut this characterisation. Othello's first line bespeaks forbearance, and his behaviour throughout the remainder of the scene establishes him as prudent and confident in wielding his legitimate authority. Othello is presented as level-headed and honourable, at the same time as Iago's duplicity is further demonstrated through his expressions of loyalty to Othello (which the audience know to be false), and his pretended enmity for Roderigo.³⁰ Othello's response to Brabantio's accusations in particular – to agree immediately to the senator's order that they go to the senate and have their dispute heard – establishes Othello as an honourable man with nothing to hide.

During Act One, Scene Three, the senate scene, this impression of Othello is strengthened. He stands before the senate unafraid, addressing the assembled senators respectfully but not subserviently, confident of receiving justice at their hands despite the political stature of Brabantio, whom the audience knows to be great and powerful.³¹ In the senate scene Brabantio continues to slight Othello on account of his appearance, but

³⁰ On Iago's professions of loyalty to Othello, see 1.2.1-30; on Iago's declarations of enmity for Roderigo, see 1.2.1-5 and 1.2.58.

³¹ On Brabantio's political stature, see 1.1.178-80 and 1.2.13-14.

by this point Shakespeare has undercut Brabantio's stature, not only by rhetorically aligning him with Iago and Roderigo, but also by casting doubts upon the senator's powers of judgement. Over the first act Brabantio emerges as a senile, too-fond father who is utterly out of touch with his daughter as well as society. Physically he cuts a ridiculous figure in Act One, Scene One when, clad in his night-shirt, he is roused from night-terrors by Iago and Roderigo's unsavoury taunts. In the following scenes Brabantio idealises Desdemona's chastity and innocence in speeches that establish Brabantio as a *senex iratus*, one of the stock figures of classical comedy adopted by English playwrights of the period.³² By the time the duke offers his condescending palliatives to Brabantio towards the end of Act One, Scene Three,³³ Shakespeare has already established Brabantio as an untrustworthy judge of character, at least insofar as he might judge his daughter or his daughter's suitors. When the duke tells Brabantio:

If virtue no delighted beauty lack
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black
(1.3.290-291)

he expresses an entirely believable interpretation of Othello's character, despite all the efforts of Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio to begrime Othello's reputation.

The duke's summation of Othello as "more fair than black" seeks to establish Othello's virtue, but nonetheless remains aware of Othello's blackness. At no point in the drama does Othello's blackness become irrelevant, but at no point is its relevance founded upon the sort of invective that Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio utter in the first act.³⁴ I would like to suggest, with A.C. Bradley, that Othello's blackness "makes a

³² See Brabantio's speeches at 1.2.66-68 and 1.3.95-97. Thanks to Christina Luckyj for help in developing this argument.

³³ 1.3.200-210.

³⁴ Critics who attempt to construct *Othello* as a racist or Orientalist play inevitably found their interpretation upon the notion that the invective of Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio in Act One is normative. This ignores the character development of all of the characters over the remainder of the course of the play. See, for example, Karen Newman, "'And wash the Ethiop white': femininity and the monstrous in *Othello*" in *Shakespeare*

difference to our idea of him; it makes a difference to the action and catastrophe. But in regard to the essentials of his character it is not important."³⁵ The blackness of Othello is significant in determining how other characters perceive him, but not because Shakespeare conceived of Othello as being essentially different from the rest of the cast. To return to Bradley, "if anyone had told Shakespeare that no Englishman would have acted like the Moor, and had congratulated him on the accuracy of his racial psychology, I am sure he would have laughed."³⁶ This interpretation runs exactly counter to the notion of "otherness" articulated by Edward Said in *Orientalism* and adopted by modern critics of *Othello* such as Karen Newman, Emily Bartels, Daniel Vitkus, and Virginia Mason Vaughan.³⁷ Said argued that by creating images of non-Europeans rooted in difference, European authors were able to articulate the identities of their own nations. In Shakespeare's play, however, Othello's difference is restricted to his skin colour, despite the attempts of Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio to extend that difference to Othello's essential characteristics by suggesting that his skin marked him as beastly, diabolical, or of lesser social account. To repeat: Othello's colour is significant in the action of the play, but not in establishing Othello's essential character. In this the use of Moorishness in *Othello* is very different from earlier plays such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Lust's Dominion*, and similar to plays such as *The Battle of Alcazar* and *The Merchant of Venice*. As I shall argue below, however, within the action of the play Othello's blackness is a crucial distraction for audience and characters in *Othello* alike. This use of

Reproduced: the Text in History and Ideology, Jean Howard and Marion O'Connor, eds., (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 141-162.

³⁵ A.C. Bradley, "Othello" *Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 187.

³⁶ Bradley, "Othello," p. 187.

³⁷ Newman, "And wash the Ethiop white"; Emily C. Bartels, "Making more of the Moor: Aaron, Othello and Renaissance refashionings of race" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), pp. 433-454; Daniel J. Vitkus, "Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997), pp. 145-176. Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Othello: A Contextual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Moorishness is much more complex than any of the representations of Moorishness prior to *Othello*.

Iago alone is aware that Othello's blackness, precisely because it is not essential to Othello's character, is manipulable. It is on account of this blackness that Iago is able to work his poison. During Act Three, Scene Three, known as the temptation scene, Iago, having already established the possibility of Desdemona's infidelity with Cassio, is able to cultivate this seed of doubt by emphasising Othello's physical differences from Desdemona, and by extension, the rest of the cast:

Iago:

She did deceive her father, marrying you,
And when she seemed to shake, and fear your looks,
She loved them most.

Othello:

And so she did.

Iago:

Why, go then:

She that so young could give out such a seeming
To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak -
He thought 'twas witchcraft ...

...

Othello:

And yet how nature, erring from itself -

Iago:

Ay, there's the point: as, to be bold with you,
Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion and degree,
Whereto we see, in all things, nature tends -
Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.

(3.3.209-237)

Othello's blackness serves as a marker of difference not to Shakespeare, but to the characters that he created, including Othello himself, as his susceptibility to Iago's imputations demonstrates. While Othello broods over the "mismatch" between himself and Desdemona and the "match" between Desdemona and Cassio, he is lured into Iago's

snare, for as the audience knows, Desdemona remains unwaveringly faithful to Othello throughout the play.

At the risk of being tedious I want to stress once again that Othello's blackness is not essential to his being jealous or gullible. Iago's ability to dupe everyone demonstrates that he holds no particular power over the Moorish general. A play such as *The Winter's Tale* is useful in establishing that extreme jealousy was not perceived by the early modern English to be a *necessarily* Moorish trait, and within *Othello* itself Othello's jealousy is consciously rejected as an element of his Moorishness. Desdemona confidently states: "my noble Moor / Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness / As jealous creatures are." Pressed on this point by Emilia, Desdemona continues: "I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humours from him."³⁸ Later in the same scene, when faced with Othello's rage at the loss of the handkerchief, Emilia, perhaps reflecting on her own marital fortunes, casts Othello's increasingly violent behaviour not as an aspect of Moorishness, but as an inevitable aspect of masculinity:

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food:
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full
They belch us.
(3.4.104-107)³⁹

Othello's susceptibility to Iago's vicious rhetoric in Act Three, Scene Three inevitably takes us back to Act One on account of Iago's reference to Brabantio's witchcraft accusation. As with Moorishness, this intrusion of "otherness" also serves to distract characters within the play, as well as the play's audience, from the crucial issues. In this instance Shakespeare provides sufficient cues for the audience to perceive from

³⁸ 3.4.26-31.

³⁹ This same conclusion is strengthened in Act Four, Scene Three, the willow song scene. As Desdemona and Emilia commiserate over the behaviour of "these men, these men," no mention is made of Othello's blackness. The scene ends with Emilia's great speech on the mistreatment of wives by their husbands, which again assumes that masculinity rather than Moorishness lies at the root of Othello's erratic behaviour.

the outset that the witchcraft accusation is spurious, a product of Brabantio's irrational idealisation of his daughter.

The notion that Othello had bewitched Desdemona first arises at the conclusion of the first scene of Act One, in an exchange between Brabantio and Roderigo:

Brabantio:

Is there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidenhood
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Roderigo:

Yes sir, I have indeed.

(1.1.169-172)

From such tentative beginnings, reaching back to a concept only read about and not experienced, the accusation of witchcraft comes to be Brabantio's means of temporarily restoring his ideal image of Desdemona. And yet it is evident that not even Brabantio fully believes that Othello is a witch. In his formal accusation of Othello before the senate, Brabantio states:

She is abused, stolen from me and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks
(1.3.61-62)

This is a curious accusation, for it simultaneously asserts the efficacy of Othello's spells, while denying that witchcraft is anything more than the trade of "mountebanks."

Othello also recognises the weakness of the accusation, and quickly moves to exploit its impotence as a means of dealing with Brabantio. When Othello is approached by Brabantio and his men in 1.2, Brabantio outlines his case, suggesting that if the beautiful Desdemona were not bound "in chains of magic" she would never have "run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou."⁴⁰ There in the street, before the soldiers and citizens attending upon Brabantio and Othello, Brabantio utters his formal accusation:

⁴⁰ 1.2.62-71.

I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
 For an abuser of the world, a practiser
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.
 (1.2.77-79)

Othello's response is coolly to inquire: "Where will you that I go / To answer this your charge?"⁴¹ for he knows that the charge cannot stand.

When Brabantio and Othello arrive before the senate, Othello is careful to identify the exact charge against which he will defend himself:

... by your gracious patience,
 I will a round unvarnished tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love, what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration and what mighty magic –
 For such proceeding I am charged withal –
 I won his daughter.
 (1.3.90-95)

Othello's confidence in answering Brabantio's accusation is rooted in the understanding of witchcraft of Shakespeare's England. Unlike on the continent, or even in Scotland, witchcraft in England was not so much a theological as a social crime. English witches were typically social outcasts, generally female, poor, and elderly. A successful witchcraft prosecution depended as much on demonstrating a grievance between the accuser and accused, and the lack of alternative courses of action for the accuser to pursue in settling the grievance, as on bringing forth evidence of a covenant with the devil.⁴² While it might be argued that Othello felt a sense of grievance on account of Brabantio's treatment of him during the period of the courtship (why else would he and Desdemona have wed secretly?), it could scarcely be argued that Othello, a general of renown in the Venetian army, was either a social outcast or lacked any recourse but witchcraft to deal with his grievances.

⁴¹ 1.2.84-85.

⁴² Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner, 1971); James Sharp, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550-1750* (London: Penguin,

The response of the duke and senate is to follow Othello's lead in dealing with Brabantio. Brabantio reiterates his charge against Othello, and the Duke immediately cuts to the key issue of proof:

Brabantio:

... I therefore vouch again
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood
Or with some dram conjured to this effect
He wrought upon her.

Duke:

To vouch this is no proof,
Without more certain and more overt test
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

(1.3.104-110)

One of the senators then turns to Othello, and, in what would be termed "leading the defendant" in a modern courtroom, states:

But Othello, speak:

Did you by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?

(1.3.111-115)

To which Othello responds:

I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary [the name of an inn],
And let her speak of me before her father.
If you do find me foul in her report
The trust, the office I do hold of you
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

(1.3.115-121)

This would be a curious line of defence if anybody in the senate chamber were taking Brabantio's accusation seriously. If Desdemona were bewitched, how could her

1997); Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch Hunt in Scotland* (Baltimore: Johns

testimony be trusted? That ultimately it is Desdemona's response to the accusation that settles the issue in the eyes of not only the duke and senate, but also Brabantio, indicates once again that even he could not quite bring himself to believe Othello guilty of this particular crime.

But if the witchcraft accusation is from the outset known to be spurious by everyone involved, it nonetheless serves a purpose in distracting Brabantio, the senate, and Othello from the issue which will shortly become the principal focus of the play, the marriage of Othello and Desdemona. When Othello prepares to meet Brabantio in the street in the second scene of Act One, prior to Brabantio's witchcraft accusation, Othello outlines to Iago a defence of the marriage based upon Othello's known and yet-to-be-known merits:

Let him do his spite;
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know -
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate - I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege, and my demerits
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
As this I have reached.
(1.2.17-24)

When Iago nonetheless urges Othello to hide from Brabantio several lines later, Othello again responds:

Not I, I must be found.
My parts, my title and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly.
(1.2.30-32)

Despite being prepared to claim Desdemona's hand by right of birth, service to Venice, and honourable comportment, when he perceives the loophole that Brabantio provides in levelling the witchcraft accusation, Othello, in his rush to have done with Brabantio, throws over his intended defence for the more clear-cut defence against the charge of

witchcraft. At this point the audience cannot know that the marriage will soon become the focus of the play. Nonetheless, when the marriage emerges as the crucial element in the drama, Othello's error in failing to prove his *right* to Desdemona's hand will be revealed as tragic, for it is Othello's own doubts of his worthiness that allow Iago to return to Brabantio's witchcraft accusation in the temptation scene.

Othello's blackness and Brabantio's witchcraft accusation ultimately figure as relatively uncomplicated distractions from the main issues. After the first act these tropes largely disappear.⁴³ Shakespeare makes more extensive use of Turkishness, the final category of otherness I will examine here. It is the threat of the Turkish navy that sets the plot of *Othello* in motion, and that also which gives Act One its thrilling urgency. As messengers arrive with the latest news from the galleys haste-post-haste and Othello is sent for post-post-haste the audience is caught up in an atmosphere of immediate danger and decisive counteraction. It is the Ottoman threat that enables the senate to ride roughshod over the complaints of Brabantio, addressing only the symptoms of his grievance (the witchcraft accusation) instead of the cause (Othello's abuse of his erstwhile friend and host through the secret courtship and marriage). Shakespeare reveals

⁴³ Largely, but not entirely. In some of his darkest moments Othello himself will invoke rhetorics of blackness (e.g. "Her name, that was as fresh / As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black / As mine own face" 3.3.389-391), and Emilia makes notable use of the same rhetoric in her prolonged confession/death scene in Act Five (e.g. "O, the more angel she, / And you the blacker devil!" 5.2.128-129). Similarly, Othello himself renews his association with witchcraft with his story of the handkerchief (3.4.57-78) (though it should be noted that Othello later confounds the elaborate mythology of the handkerchief at 5.2.214-215, when he states that "It was a handkerchief, an antique token / My father gave my mother"). By Act Five Othello has emerged as the character who most strongly exoticises/"others" himself, a point dealt with by Stephen Greenblatt in "The improvisation of power" in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 222-254.

This "othering" of Othello has to be understood in the context of the play. Although Emilia makes reference to Othello's blackness in Act Five, it is revealed shortly thereafter that Othello's blackness was not the cause of the tragedy. On the most obvious level, blame for the tragedy is allotted to the *white* "demi-devil" Iago; but ultimately, as

something of his use of otherness in the play in having the Turkish threat suddenly, and entirely, disappear in the transition from the first to second acts. What had seemed to be the driving force of the plot dissolves, literally before it could appear on the horizon. For the remainder of the play it will be the aspect of the plot that was eagerly pushed aside in the face of the Turkish threat – the marriage of Desdemona and Othello – that will occupy centre stage.

Although the Ottoman threat is dispelled by the tempest that occurs between first and second acts and Two, Shakespeare retains the social energy of Islam within his play by transforming it from an external to an internal threat.⁴⁴ While the audience is gradually brought into awareness of what *Othello* is really about, the characters within the play, including those at the very centre of the drama, remain blind, even wilfully so, to the malignant threat that encroaches not from some removed, non-Christian source, but in the hearts of the Venetians themselves.

Almost at the same moment as the Ottoman navy is vanquished a new Turkishness creeps into the play, an internal rather than external Turkishness. Within a hundred lines of the first proclamation of the destruction of the Ottoman fleet, Iago, in the midst of his game of jests with Desdemona, suggests that he himself may be a Turk.⁴⁵ This hidden Turkishness is not limited to Iago, however, and the next time it arises it lacks the jovial context of Desdemona's arrival. When Othello comes upon Cassio and Montano's drunken brawl in Act Two, Scene Three he again raises the idea of an inner Turkishness:

Why, how now, ho? From whence ariseth this?
 Are we turned Turks? and to ourselves do that
 Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

will be argued below, Othello falls back upon the metaphor of his "inner Islam" to account for his susceptibility to Iago's temptations.

⁴⁴ The concept of social energy is articulated by Greenblatt in "The circulation of social energy," *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 1-20.

⁴⁵ The destruction of the Ottoman menace is declared at 2.1.20-24; Iago declares his jest to be "true, or else I am a Turk" at 2.1.114.

For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.
(2.3.165-168)

This is the same spectre of Islam that haunted Henry IV and Henry V in the Lancastrian tetralogy, the concept of Islam as the interior state of corrupt Christians. This idea has deep roots, roots that can be traced back at least as far as John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century. If Islam has a curious double identity in Shakespeare's plays, appearing as both external threat and internal temptation (or perhaps as a corrupt default identity), Shakespeare is only echoing Wycliffe in his later writings.

According to R.W. Southern, Wycliffe perceived the chief characteristics of both the Western church and Islam to be "pride, cupidity, the desire for power, the lust for possession, the gospel of violence, and the preference for human ingenuity to the word of God." Based upon this observation, Wycliffe shaped Islam into a powerful metaphor of Christian corruption, characterising the leaders of the church as "Western Mahomets," and so developing a notion of "a universal Islam, a religion of worldly power, secular domination, and self-will, opposed to the religion of suffering and poverty" that had been Christ's legacy to Peter.⁴⁶ Shakespeare was not the first English playwright to adapt the metaphorical use of Islam for the stage. One of its earliest expressions is in Marlowe's work, and especially in his *Tamburlaine* plays. The Orcanes-Sigismund episode of 2 *Tamburlaine*, discussed in Chapter Two, is a particularly good example of this, in which

⁴⁶ R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 79-80. Much work has been done on Wycliffe since Southern's monograph. Although these studies have not generally investigated Wycliffe's representations of Islam, the work of scholars such as Margaret Aston and Anne Hudson provides a more comprehensive view of Wycliffe's thought. Particularly interesting here is Aston's work on Wycliffe's views on idolatry. See Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), especially pp. 137-143; Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

the honourable Orcanes is cast as a “true Christian,” while the oath-breaking Sigismund suffers the doom that his advisors had predicted would fall upon the infidels.⁴⁷

What sets Shakespeare’s use of this trope in *Othello* apart from its appearance in his own and other earlier plays, however, is the accompanying exploration of the inevitably untrustworthy nature of appearances. Through *Othello* Shakespeare suggests that while this inner Islam may be a peculiarly Christian perversion, it is merely a malevolent manifestation of a duality that is the essence of the human condition. This is neatly suggested in the point-counterpoint of first and second scenes of Act One. Although Iago and Roderigo in Act One, Scene One prime the audience for Othello’s entrance by calling to mind the most vulgar associations with Moorishness of the culture of the day, subsequent characterisation of Othello through his speech and behaviour in Act One, Scene Two utterly dispel this grotesque mocking, illustrating to the audience, if not yet to Brabantio, the danger of judging by appearances. This same lesson is repeated in the climax of the play. As Othello falls into fits, rolls his eyes, and strangles Desdemona, he fits the stereotype of the malevolent Moor who, to quote Aaron from *Titus Andronicus*, “will have his soul black like his face.”⁴⁸ When confronted with the murder of Desdemona, Emilia, who earlier in the play had attributed Othello’s mistreatment of Desdemona to common misogyny, immediately invokes a rhetoric of blackness, repeatedly calling Othello a devil.⁴⁹ Once again, appearances are deceiving. Shortly after the murder, Iago’s schemes are revealed and in the final actions in the play it is white Iago who is identified as a devil.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Once again it is useful to keep in mind here the rhetorics of affiliation practised by Elizabeth I in her correspondence with the Ottoman and Moroccan sultans. Particularly interesting is the letter of May 1599 cited above, in which Elizabeth, writing to Ahmad al-Mansur, describes Muslims and Protestants as “joyned ... in lyke profession of relygion.” PRO SP, Royal Letters, II, no. 24.

⁴⁸ *Titus Andronicus*, 3.1.205.

⁴⁹ 5.2.127-131.

⁵⁰ 5.2.283-285; 5.2.298. Othello and Iago’s exchange at 5.2.283-285 is particularly interesting, for in it Iago, like Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, may claim for himself the title of devil.

The relationship between the first two scenes of Act One establish what is developed into a running theme in the play. From this point forward examples of the danger of being distracted by appearances, by “ocular proof,” multiply. Act One, Scene Three opens with the senate hotly disputing the true destination of the Turkish fleet. As the latest messenger bursts into the senate chamber with news that “The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes,” the first senator is moved to reply “This cannot be, / By no assay of reason: ’tis a pageant / To keep us in false gaze.”⁵¹ Reasoning soundly, the senator states that there can be no logic in a Turkish assault on Rhodes at the present time. Sure enough, the next messenger to arrive describe the change of course of the Ottoman fleet from Rhodes to Cyprus, vindicating the first senator’s reasoning.⁵²

Unfortunately, this perspicacity is not applied to the other trouble that is brought before the senate in the same scene. Time and time again in this scene, and in the play more generally, characters wilfully keep themselves in “false gaze.” Brabantio leads the way. When confronted with Desdemona’s elopement his immediate reaction is to exclaim: “O, she deceives me ... Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters’ minds / By what you see them act.”⁵³ But no sooner does Brabantio utter this – in fact, in the very same line – than he seizes upon the self-deceiving proposition that Desdemona was bewitched. During the witchcraft trial the entire senate keeps itself in false gaze, watching the pageant of the witchcraft trial, and in the process laying the foundation of the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona, instead of getting to the root of the issue between Othello and Brabantio. Nonetheless, before the senate scene has ended Brabantio has learned the great lesson of the play, and tells Othello, in lines laced with irony:

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceived her father, and may thee.
(1.3.293-294)

⁵¹ 1.3.15-20.

⁵² 1.3.34-40.

⁵³ 1.1.163-169.

This statement must be interpreted ironically, for this is precisely the lesson that Brabantio has learned through the entire affair: it is necessary to look beyond what you see with your eyes. As he stated to Roderigo earlier, it was by trusting his observation of Desdemona's actions that Brabantio was first deceived.

The dissociation of appearance and reality is one of the lessons that Othello must learn during his tragedy, but which Iago already understands. Iago declares at the very outset of the play:

For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In complement extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.
(1.1.60-64)

Soliloquising later, Iago returns to this theme to not only describe the essential disjuncture between appearance and reality, but to assert that it is himself, Iago, who is truly black, and not "his Moorship":

Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows
As I do now.
(2.3.345-347)

Iago's reference to "heavenly shows" recalls the first senator's "pageants to keep us in false gaze," but also directly looks forward to the naïveté of Othello's demand for the "ocular proof" of Desdemona's infidelity in the temptation scene.⁵⁴ It is part of the achievement of *Othello* that this naïveté is tied into Othello's nobility of character. Thus, Othello's last moment of utter confidence in Desdemona is also an expression of his folly, for it remains rooted in the "false pageant" of Desdemona's beauty:

Look where she comes:
If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself,
I'll not believe't.

⁵⁴ 3.3.363.

(3.3.281-283)

This utterance is typical of Othello for, unlike Iago but like John Wycliffe, he believes that the internal and external appearance of an individual should match. In this Othello, like so many of the characters of the play, wilfully keeps himself in false gaze: as he well knows from his own secret courtship and marriage of Desdemona, all people, including Othello and Desdemona themselves, are capable of deception.⁵⁵

Nonetheless, in preparing to murder Desdemona, Othello remains obsessed with the supposed iniquity of disjuncture between appearance and reality, and casts his murder of Desdemona as the means of restoring the unity of the two. When Iago counsels Othello not to poison Desdemona, but rather to “strangle her in her bed – / even the bed she hath contaminated,” Othello replies: “Good, good, the justice of it pleases; very good!”⁵⁶ As Othello prepares to murder Desdemona he returns to this “pleasing” symmetry, stating in a rare soliloquy: “Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust’s blood be spotted,” thus making Desdemona’s invisible crimes visible.⁵⁷ And finally, as Othello enters Desdemona’s bedchamber in the murder scene he once again casts the murder as the means of making Desdemona’s nature conform to her “heavenly” appearance:

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul!
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,
 It is the cause. Yet I’ll not shed her blood
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
 And smooth as monumental alabaster
 (5.2.1-5)

⁵⁵ Once again, it is Iago who makes this lesson plain, declaring:

Who has a breast so pure
 But some uncleanly apprehensions
 Keep leets and law-days and in session sit
 With meditations lawful?
 (3.3.140-14)

⁵⁶ 4.1.204-206.

⁵⁷ 5.1.36.

It was this same desire to believe that appearance and reality are one that had enabled Iago to mislead Othello in the first place. Iago introduces his imputations against Cassio and Desdemona in the temptation scene by pandering to Othello's belief that men's appearances and actions should reflect their inner life:

Iago:

For Michael Cassio,
I dare be sworn, I think, that he is honest.

Othello:

I think so too.

Iago:

Men should be what they seem,
Or those that be not, would they might seem none.

Othello:

Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago:

Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

(3.3.127-132)

One hundred lines later, after introducing the substance of his accusation, Iago returns to this theme, but now subtly implicates Desdemona:

Iago:

My lord, I see you're moved.

Othello:

No, not much moved.
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago:

Long live she so; and long live you to think so.

(3.3.228-230)

That Iago's approach is shrewd is demonstrated by Othello's subsequent demand for "ocular proof," his continued reliance on outward appearances. The insubstantiality of ocular proof is demonstrated once more by Iago's ability to manage the "evidence" of the handkerchief and Cassio's supposed confession. Like Brabantio, who so trusted appearances that he believed it impossible for the beautiful Desdemona, "sans

witchcraft,” to fall in love with such a “sooty ... thing” as Othello,⁵⁸ Othello allows appearances to determine his course of action, and again like Brabantio, ultimately finds himself horribly self-deceived. Echoing Brabantio’s ironic advice to “look ... if thou have eyes to see,” Othello eventually mocks himself for the profound blindness that “ocular proof” can inspire. As Iago is brought back into the bedchamber after Desdemona is dead and Iago’s plots are revealed, Othello ironically states: “I look down towards his feet, but that’s a fable,”⁵⁹ calling to mind the legend that the devil will have cloven feet, and castigating himself for trusting in it.

Just as Othello learns that it is not wise to guard against devils by staring at people’s feet, he also learns to look within himself to find the devil that betrayed him. Othello’s final speech is delivered in the same self-mocking tone as Brabantio’s warning to Othello in the senate scene. Like Iago’s other gulls – Brabantio, Roderigo, and Emilia – in his final moments Othello recognises Iago’s role in leading him to ruin, but ultimately accepts personal responsibility for allowing himself to be deceived.⁶⁰ While he takes due note of being “wrought” by Iago, Othello accounts himself “the base Indian” who “threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe,”⁶¹ and finally recognises within himself the hidden Muslim, the secret Islam, as he conflates past and present in order – simultaneously and ironically – to defend Venice against the “turbaned Turk” one last

⁵⁸ 1.3.65; 1.2.70-71.

⁵⁹ 5.2.283.

⁶⁰ All of Iago’s gulls achieve this self-awareness in the end, although only Brabantio and Othello express it with such eloquence. Roderigo, as he lies dying repeatedly calls himself a villain (5.1.29; 5.1.41), until, murdered by Iago, he croaks out “O damned Iago! O Inhuman dog!” (5.1.62). Similarly, shortly before dying Emilia identifies Iago as having contributed to Desdemona’s murder (5.2.183), but accepts her full share of responsibility in the entire affair, as she prefaces her confession of her role in the theft of the handkerchief with the lines: “Let heaven and men and devils, let them all, / All, all cry shame against me, yet I’ll speak” (5.2.219-220).

⁶¹ 5.2.345-346.

time by executing, at one stroke, both the “circumcised dog” that “traded the state” and the murderer of Desdemona.⁶²

Othello has been seen by some as an example of domestic tragedy,⁶³ but the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona’s marriage is played out within a wider political context. This context is essential to the play in terms of symbolism and narrative. Act One is dominated by the military threat posed by the Ottomans: without this threat the principal characters in the play would not have gone to Cyprus, and the domestic drama could not have been played out (or at least not in the same manner). The voyage to Cyprus is crucial for a number of reasons. Not only does it remove the principals from their accustomed settings – perhaps explaining why Othello becomes administratively and socially reliant upon a staff of two instead of a wider circle of professional and social associates – it also moves the play to an island where the external threat of the Ottomans literally surrounds. E.A.J. Honigmann argues that Shakespeare viewed Cyprus as a nondescript Mediterranean location,⁶⁴ but I believe that this is mistaken. Viewed on a map such as the world map included in Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* – published perhaps five years before Shakespeare wrote his play – Cyprus is prominent, lonely, and defiant in Ottoman waters, a dagger of Christianity poised against the encircling crescent

⁶² It is interesting to note that Shakespeare’s use of Islam in this fashion – as an illusion maintained both by the observer and by the “Muslim” himself – is preceded by the notion of witchcraft advanced in some of the witchcraft literature of the latter sixteenth century. Both Reginald Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584) and George Gifford’s *Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraft* (London, 1593) maintain that, while witchcraft is a very real phenomenon (this we know because the bible tells us so), in almost every modern instance it is the delusion of either the accuser or the accused. In these terms, the notion of Islam found in *Othello* would maintain that, while there are definitely Muslims in the world, those who “turn Turk” (either literally/voluntarily through conversion or metaphorically/involuntarily through corrupt behaviour) among us in fact present only an illusion of Islam.

⁶³ See, for example, Dymna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1989).

⁶⁴ Honigmann, “Introduction,” p. 11.

of Islam. The fragility of the island's resistance was all the more poignant for the knowledge that, after many sieges and skirmishes, Cyprus fell to the Ottomans in 1571.

It is under the cover of this constant external danger that Iago is able to work his "poison" from within. Just as the wider political drama distracts the attention of the duke and senate, Lodovico, and even Desdemona⁶⁵ from the disintegration of Othello and Desdemona's marriage, so does Iago use Othello's status as an outsider to advance his own plots. Fear of corruption from within overwhelming while attention is focussed elsewhere was a common theme in post-Reformation Europe, and was, for example, key to French justifications of their attempts to eradicate Huguenot "heresy" at home before aiding the Austrian Habsburgs in their struggles against the Ottomans.⁶⁶ As Shakespeare's play charts Othello's realisation of the inescapable fact of his own interiority, it guides the audience to the discovery that the immediate threat facing Venice is neither the "barbarous Turks," nor the "changeable Moor," but the corruption of the Venetians themselves.

It is this connection between the temptation and fall of Othello and the fragility of the defence of Cyprus that make it difficult to classify *Othello* as a domestic tragedy. Through the senate scene and the brawl scene, in which Othello hastens to "silence that dreadful bell, it frights the isle,"⁶⁷ Shakespeare connects the personal struggles of his characters to the larger political drama. In the process, he asserts that the danger of internal putrefaction of society is at least as great as that posed by an external enemy such as the Ottoman Empire. Iago's poison endangers all Cypriots, all Venetians, and all Christendom, though it is practised upon only one Venetian general. By the same token, the senate's abdication of responsibility in avoiding the adjudication of Brabantio's grievance against his erstwhile house-guest and Othello's grievance against the

⁶⁵ See Desdemona's reaction to Othello's mounting hostility towards her at 3.4.141-144, and especially 4.1.215-240.

⁶⁶ Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk*.

⁶⁷ 2.3.171.

unjustifiably over-protective father of Desdemona ultimately creates the fertile ground in which Iago's schemes may prosper.

* * *

The subtlety of Shakespeare's treatment of otherness in *Othello* far outreaches that achieved by Dallam in his diary, but this comparison is manifestly unfair. Whereas Shakespeare was engaged in an artistic undertaking, Dallam sought chiefly to record his experiences as he embarked upon what could only be, for an organ-builder, a once in a lifetime adventure. It is all the more surprising, then, to find any symmetry at all in Dallam's and Shakespeare's treatments of Islam. Nonetheless, at least two major points of comparison suggest themselves.

The most obvious is the multiple engagements of both authors with rhetorics of affiliation and segregation. Both authors acknowledge differences between Islam and Christianity but neither creates a stable interpretation of these differences. Dallam's initial impulse was to erase difference altogether, equating mosques with churches, and tut-tutting Muslim women for not attending services. Nonetheless, Dallam's account of the divine disapproval of the gaudy show that the captain of the *Hector* mounts for the sultan, manifested in the death of the ship's carpenter, and his account of Lello's conflicted speech to the tradesmen on the eve of the presentation of the sultan's gifts, demonstrate Dallam's mounting awareness of the differences between Christians and Muslims. Shakespeare's play contains a similar movement from initially simple to increasingly complex understanding of the differences between Christians and Muslims – but here Muslims start as simply and absolutely different. As the play develops, however, we are confronted with the notion of Islam that Shakespeare began to explore in the Lancastrian tetralogy, in which Islam stood as an expression of the inward corruption of Christians. *Othello*, however, demonstrates the unsatisfactory nature of this externalising metaphor, and upon it creates the ironic perspective that *Othello* achieves by the end of the play. At this point *Othello* invokes this metaphor not as a frightful bogeyman – as he

had earlier, during the brawl scene – but rather as a means of expressing his own essential, conflicted interiority. Unlike Wycliffe who sought to exorcise Christendom’s secret Islam, Shakespeare makes the acknowledgement of this inner Islam the moment of Othello’s achievement of self-knowledge, the moment that elevates *Othello* to the realm of tragedy. In *Othello*, as in Dallam’s diary, it is the acknowledgement of the imbrication of Islam within personal and cultural identities that provides the fuel for the most complex, conflicted, and, ultimately, ambiguous representations of Islam.⁶⁸

Secondly, Dallam’s diary and Shakespeare’s *Othello* demonstrate that they are both products of a moment when the very concept of “otherness” was not a satisfactory means of understanding the world. In the case of the diary, written by a man who was apparently unreflective and who was writing a chronicle rather than an analysis of his journey, the result is confusion. Dallam not only shifted his rhetorical position based upon the context of the moment, but was fully capable of moving among several rhetorical streams within the space of a single page. The best example of the latter point is to be found in Lello’s address to the tradesmen, which may capture not only Dallam’s confusion as to the nature of Anglo-Islamic relations, but the ambassador’s as well. In Shakespeare’s considerably more skilled exposition, the notion of “otherness” is demonstrated to be unsatisfactory as well as a dangerous, self-destructive illusion, a potentially fatal distraction from the much more substantial threats posed by corruption from within Christian society and within individual Christians.

⁶⁸ While Shakespeare’s exploration of Othello’s inner Islam in Othello’s final speech is more eloquent than Dallam’s demonstration of the contradictions of English enterprise in the Levant in Lello’s speech to the tradesmen, the conclusion reached by Shakespeare is equally ambiguous. If the Ottomans are legitimate enemies, then what does it mean for Othello to acknowledge his inner Islam? Cosmological speaking, does it profit Othello? This is not resolved.

CHAPTER FIVE

Captain John Ward, Early Modern English Muslim

The accession of James I to the English throne in 1603 realised not only the dynastic break that was inevitable upon the death of Elizabeth, but also ushered in a new political sensibility in London and Westminster. Scholars continue to debate the exact tenets of the political philosophies of Elizabeth Tudor and James Stuart, but it is clear that James was possessed of a more intellectual, coherent, and sacralized theory of kingship than was Elizabeth, and that he created a court culture which set the king above even the highest ranks of the political and social elite. In conjunction with this loftier notion of the nature of the king relative to his domestic subjects, James brought to England a more broadly international perspective on European affairs. Of particular importance to this dissertation is James's desire to lead Europe into a new period of pan-Christian peace as the Great Peacemaker, the New Solomon.

According to W.B. Patterson, "James's concern for church unity on an international scale – reaching across denominational as well as national boundaries – became evident at the time of his accession in England." Nonetheless, Patterson is careful to trace the origins of James's international aspirations to a childhood and youth in a small, marginal nation seemingly hopelessly riven by political and religious divisions.¹ One of James's first actions upon attaining the English throne was to negotiate peace with Spain, which, together with the union of the British Isles into Great Britain, James appears to have viewed as foundational to his intentions of bringing peace to

¹ W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Chapter One. The quotation is taken from p. 4. Jenny Wormald, "James VI and I: Two Kings or One?" *History* 68 (1983), pp. 187-209, also discusses the importance of James's dual kingdom in his governing of both domestic and international affairs.

Christendom. Less prominent but still important to the king's preparations for the new "common corps of Christendom" was his use of a rhetoric of segregation that distanced himself, and all Christians, from Islam, while simultaneously shoring up Christian unity.² Finally, the accession of James to the English throne marked a decisive break in Elizabeth's policy of engagement with the Ottoman and Sa'adian empires, as James voiced his distaste for any Christian interaction with Islam whatsoever.

Chapters Two and Four argued that the representations of Islam made by the Elizabethan dramatists bore a curious symmetry with the representations of Islam that lay behind the policies of Elizabeth's government. The same phenomenon can be observed during James's reign.³ During the latter, however, representations of Islam atrophied. Whereas the playwrights, merchants, and diplomats of the 1580s and 1590s had found in Islam a means of re-imagining their own world, representation of Islam after 1603 became simplified and proved less susceptible to the kinds of shifts and transformations that it had demonstrated in the final twenty-five years of Elizabeth's reign.⁴ After 1603, as Muslims became more consistently imagined as enemies rather than as potential allies, representations of Islam became less vital.

² Franklin Le Van Baumer discusses James use of such rhetoric in "England, the Turk, and the common corps of Christendom" *American Historical Review* 50 (1944-1945), pp. 44-47. Particularly interesting in this context is Baumer's discussion of James's use of this rhetoric as a justification for some of his internationalist policies, such as the Spanish Match. On the attempt to "sell" the Spanish Match to the English, see also Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, pp. 313-338.

³ My argument in some ways is similar to that developed by Jonathan Goldberg in *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). The absolute nature of Goldberg's account leaves me uncomfortable, however, and I am not convinced by the implication of Goldberg's study that the reigning monarch was the agent who determined the discourses employed during his reign. To the contrary, I argue that the monarch was as much bound by the limitations imposed by the culture of the day as any other author, just as any given author was as free as the monarch to make discursive choices within that culture.

⁴ In other words, starting from Edmund Hogan's embassy to Marrakech in 1577 and

When viewed in contrast with Jacobean representations of Islam, it is possible to identify some typical characteristics of Elizabethan representations of Islam. Particularly distinctive is the diversity of the Elizabethan representations: Marlowe's noble but misguided King Orcanes bears little relation to Kyd's dissolute infidel Sultan Soliman, and neither of these seem possessed of the dangerous, tempting Islam that wends through Shakespeare's Lancastrian tetralogy and *Othello*. Related to this diversity is the ambiguity of Elizabethan representations. For all of Soliman's perfidy – and Soliman is one of the more perfidious Muslims of the early 1590s – his flashes of virtue make it difficult to categorise him as anti-Christian, pure and simple. Finally, the diversity and ambiguity of the Elizabethan representations creates a complex vision of Islam and Muslims, whether the representations are considered individually, or more dramatically, in aggregate. In contrast to the diverse, ambiguous, and complex representations of Islam made in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the representations made in the first quarter of the seventeenth seem strangely flat, simple, and lifeless.

Instead, as the English began to experiment in affiliating with Catholics, most obviously through James's internationalism, the new, radical alterity of Islam began to be used to eclipse differences among Christians. It is a surprising and distinctive feature of the Jacobean drama that a number of plays cast Catholics in sympathetic roles, a phenomenon particularly apparent in plays which also include Muslim characters. This is surprising, for James's reign witnessed extreme anti-Catholicism, on the stage and off. The Gunpowder Plot encouraged a popular anti-Catholicism that made itself felt throughout the reign, and especially during negotiations for the Spanish Match. Meanwhile, Thomas Middleton's immensely popular – and promptly censored – play entitled *A Game at Chess* presented a militant, conspiratorial Catholicism that threatened to overwhelm England itself. Nonetheless, when Catholicism was presented not in relation to the English, and especially when it was not Spanish Catholicism, it could be

William Harborne's embassy to Istanbul in 1578.

portrayed as a sort of neutral Christianity. Philip Massinger's *The Renegado*, written sometime in the early 1620s, offers a particularly striking example of this trend. Set in cosmopolitan Tunis, in which Christians, Jews, and Muslims intermingle in commercial and social exchange, Massinger's play presents a cast of Catholic heroes who include a pious, holy Jesuit named Francisco. The man at the centre of the play, Vitelli, is an Italian Catholic who is tempted to convert to Islam, but ends up saving the soul of his would-be temptress by converting her, presumably to Catholic, rather than "True" Protestant, Christianity. Throughout the play there is no sense that either Francisco, Vitelli, or Vitelli's sister Paulina practices an illegitimate or corrupt form of Christianity. Indeed, the sub-plot involving Paulina is particularly interesting, for it is her strength of faith in Christianity – coupled with a suspiciously relic-like and entirely efficacious talisman that had been blessed by Francisco – that preserves her chastity even amidst the horrors of an Ottoman harem. Unlike in the Elizabethan drama, Islam in *The Renegado* is limited to an external, alien threat that impinges upon the secure world of Christendom through direct attack as well as by seduction of weak or dissolute Christians. Representations of Islam at this time do not use Islam to explore English political dilemmas, as in the "Islamic" drama of the early 1590s, nor do they enter into the complex investigations of an internalised Islam that Shakespeare had explored in the Lancastrian tetralogy and ironically resolved in *Othello*.

A comparison with even a late Elizabethan play such as Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West* demonstrates some of the continuities, but also illustrates some of the differences, in the representations of Islam made in the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. As in *The Fair Maid of the West*, Islam in *The Renegado* is primarily a religion of sensual pleasure which proves sufficiently enticing to attract some Christians to it. But whereas Heywood portrayed conversion to Islam as a misunderstanding that only an ignorant bumpkin such as Clem could make, Massinger portrayed conversion to Islam as an act of desperation that might seduce even the intelligent, heroic Vitelli. Moreover, in his portrait

of the dissolute pirate and slave-trader Grimaldi (the “renegado” of the title), Massinger depicted the compromising of Christian dignity as endangering not only the soul of the renegade, but, domino-like, threatening to provoke the fall of many more Christians: Grimaldi forcibly brings Christians into Islamic territories, selling them into slavery and so placing them in physical and spiritual danger; Vitelli comes to Tunis to try to rescue his sister Paulina, one of the Christians that Grimaldi has kidnapped, and finds himself tempted by Islam. Finally, whereas Heywood’s Morocco was presided over by an independent and potentially beneficent king, Massinger’s Tunis is dominated by a corrupt and despotic Ottoman minion.

It may in fact be easier to account for the differences between the representations of Islam made in *The Fair Maid of the West* and *The Renegado* with reference to increasing English experience in the Mediterranean than with reference to the policies of James I. Commercial contact with non-Protestant Christians of the Mediterranean, and especially with the Venetians, may well have taught significant numbers of merchants, factors, and seamen that not all non-Protestant European Christians need be feared and despised.⁵ Equally, the twenty years that separated *Fair Maid* and *The Renegado* provided repeated examples of English Christians converting to Islam both voluntarily and as a result of enslavement by the Ottomans.⁶ Nonetheless, the representations of Catholicism and Islam made in *The Renegado* do bear an intriguing similarity to the representations of Catholicism and Islam that lie behind Jacobean foreign policy. Moreover, the aspirations of King James can help us to understand the profound connection between representations of Muslims and Catholics and the identity of the English. As individual

⁵ Although this, too, was reflected in James’s aspirations to be the Great Peacemaker. One of the novel features of Patterson’s recent study of James’s internationalist philosophy is the attention Patterson devotes to James’s efforts to establish dialogue with the leaders of the Greek Orthodox church. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, Chapter Six.

⁶ Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Englishmen found that they could easily and profitably interact with flesh-and-blood Catholics, and as James dreamed of an ecumenical union of all Christians, the ideological kaleidoscope turned, presenting constructions of identity that might formerly have been unimaginable. If an Anglo-Spanish alliance had seemed impossible during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, at the very moment that plans were underway to construct either an Anglo-Ottoman or Anglo-Sa'adian alliance, than an Anglo-Islamic alliance seemed equally impossible in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when James successfully created Anglo-Spanish peace, and very nearly created an Anglo-Spanish alliance through the Spanish Match.

Such comparisons suggest that during Elizabeth's reign Catholics stood as bogeyman for the English, whereas during James's reign that role was allotted to Muslims. This, however, is mistaken. Even during the most tense days of the Anglo-Spanish war the English maintained commercial and diplomatic relations with non-Spanish Catholics, just as under James, regardless of the royal distaste for Christian-Muslim interaction, commercial and diplomatic relations with the Ottomans remained intact. Instead, what horrified the Elizabethan English was the thought of Catholicism in England, of insidious, infiltrating Jesuits who would corrupt England from within. The paranoia over English Catholic conspiracy seemed almost justifiable in the days following the Gunpowder Plot, and it is telling that during James's reign one of the means of overcoming the alterity of Catholicism on the stage should have been to juxtapose it with Islam. True horror was inspired among the Jacobean English by the notion of English converts to Islam. It is a notable feature of the cheap print literature in particular that the period witnessed a minor boom of the publishing of tales of capture and enslavement of the English by the Ottomans in North Africa and on the high seas.⁷

1998), pp. 21-72.

⁷ Part of the difficulty with Nabil Matar's work on Anglo-Islamic interaction derives from his assumption that this literature reflects reality, instead of English interests and

Intimately connected with such confinement and enslavement was the omnipresent threat of conversion, a threat which was realised in the tales of renegades that travellers to the Mediterranean brought back to England, as well as in general culture fantasies such as Massinger's *Renegado*.

As with the Elizabethan fear of Catholic infiltration, Jacobean fears of Ottoman assault on the coasts of England were greatly exaggerated, and numbers of converts to Islam may have been inflated as well.⁸ Nonetheless, the fact that these fears existed can help to illuminate constructions of Englishness, for fear and loathing are as distinctive as are preferences and aspirations. It is, moreover, intriguing to note a certain continuity

perceptions. See also note 8, below.

⁸ Matar writes that "With the power of the Turkish army and navy on the rise ... England was still not immune to attacks: throughout the 1600s, Barbary coast corsairs were sighted and engaged in the English Channel, in England, and in Ireland, and hundreds of English men, women, and children were captured and hauled to the slave markets of Algiers and Constantinople." This is an excellent example of the methodologically problematic nature of Matar's writing. First of all, even if we accept his evidence as legitimate, he can cite only one example of corsairs landing at Baltimore, another single sighting off the coast of Cornwall, and one instance when they penetrated the Thames estuary. From these solitary sightings, he implies that there were regular excursions from Algiers and Constantinople to the coasts of England to capture English slaves, a proposition that makes no sense when removed from the anti-Islamic paranoia of the period. Secondly, Matar's evidence of even these single sightings must be questioned, for it is mostly based upon cheap print pamphlets, which cannot be considered authoritative without corroboration from more reliable sources. Finally, if these raids did occur, it was likely that they were conducted by independent corsairs, probably under the leadership or piloting of English or Irish renegades, who knew the coasts. Matar, however, blurs the distinction between the corsairs and the Ottoman navy. In part this is understandable, for corsair ships were periodically (though rarely) called upon by their Ottoman hosts to join particular naval actions. Nonetheless, the corsairs were not normally part of the Ottoman navy, and actions involving only one corsair ship (such as the alleged attacks on the English and Irish coasts) cannot be considered exercises of the Ottoman navy. It is understandable if Matar's sources (mis)identified the corsairs as Ottoman ships, but there is no reason for modern scholarship to repeat the error. Nabil Matar, "The renegade in English seventeenth-century imagination", *Studies in English Literature* 33 (1993), p. 489.

between the Elizabethan bogey-man of English Catholic conspiracy, and the Jacobean horror of conversion to Islam. English Catholicism was not feared because Catholics adhered to an “untrue” faith; rather, it was feared because allegiance which rightfully belonged to the queen was offered to the pope. Catholics were abhorred because they were perceived to be traitors, and they were punished as such. Similarly, there was in the Jacobean drama a disregard for the actual tenets of Islam, for, as we shall see, the religion of conversion paled in significance next to the *Englishness* of the convert.

The tellings and re-tellings of the life story of John Ward, an English pirate who operated from Tunis for several years before eventually converting to Islam and settling there, offer a rare opportunity not only to investigate Jacobean representations of Islam, but also to examine resonance among representations in cheap print, dramatic, and diplomatic writing. Even more significantly, Ward’s existence as a flesh-and-blood convert to Islam whose story was appropriated by a range of English writers offers an opportunity to explore the foundations of English constructions of identity. Modern scholars such as Laura Levine and Benedict Anderson have suggested the early modern identities were less solid, less absolute, than their modern equivalents, citing evidence as diverse as early modern anxieties over gender reversal and the existence of supra-national linguistic and religious communities. Furthermore, these scholars argue that early modern English culture generated tremendous anxiety over identity, out of fear that it might prove to be nebulous, insubstantial, lacking a solid, stable core.⁹ The case of John Ward, however, suggests that early modern English identity may in fact have been constructed as absolute. The consistency with which Ward was referred to as “English,” despite betrayals and repudiations of his “Englishness” by Ward himself, suggests that the early modern English believed English identity to be absolute and essential, not superficial and

⁹ Laura Levine, *Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London:

negotiable. I do not suggest that identity itself must be viewed as absolute and essential in all times and all places: I am arguing that the early modern English *constructed* their identity as essential. Were this not the case, John Ward could not have been what he was repeatedly identified as: an early modern English Muslim.

An early modern English Muslim? Surely an oxymoron. Scholars working in fields and with perspectives as diverse as Eamon Duffy, Patrick Collinson, David Cressy, Edward Said and Benedict Anderson all agree on at least one point: Christianity was the foundation of both individual and communal English identities in the early modern period, despite fractious debate over what exactly Christianity was. This chapter examines and contrasts some of the issues of representation and identity which permeate the life of John Ward before and after his conversion to Islam in 1610.

The existence of early modern English Christians willing to convert to Islam must be as disturbing to modern theorists of English identity as it was to early modern Christians themselves. In both cases such converts pose significant challenges: if Christianity is believed to be objective, obvious Truth, as was maintained in England throughout the early modern period, why would a Christian repudiate it for what was accounted at best Truth debased? And if Christianity was a cornerstone of early modern English personal and communal identity, as is maintained by modern scholars of English identity, then how was it possible for an early modern Englishman to shrug it off under any conditions? Interestingly, both of these questions have been answered with what is essentially the same reply, *mutatis mutandis*. According to Robert Daborne, a seventeenth-century playwright, John Ward's conversion was inspired by "not Divinity, but nature", a response to the enticements of a beguiling Turkish beauty.¹⁰ According to

Verso, 1991).

¹⁰ Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke* (London, 1612. Reprinted by Da Capo Press, New York, 1973) leaf E3r.

Nabil Matar, the most recent scholar to write on early modern English conversion to Islam, converts such as Ward “chose Islam because they wanted to join a religious civilization of power,” not out of zeal for submission to Allah.¹¹ In the opinion of both the playwright and the literary critic, then, Ward was an earth-bound opportunist. The similarities of their analyses run deeper. Daborne and Matar also agree that upon conversion Ward’s “English” identity was absolutely effaced. In Daborne’s play John Ward is transformed from an Englishman to a “Turk,”¹² and Matar writes that converts such as Ward “not only renounced their Christianity, but their Englishness, too.”¹³ Thus both early seventeenth-century perceptions of the Truth of Christianity and late twentieth-century perceptions of the nature of early modern “Englishness” are preserved. But at what cost? Of what value is Truth if those who possess it are willing to exchange it for lust? How important is “identity” if it can be shuffled off at will? Daborne and Matar trivialise the notions they seek to preserve.

A close study of representations of John Ward and of Ward’s life itself reveals that the interpretations of both the seventeenth-century playwright and the twentieth-century scholar may need to be modified. Though there is little doubt that Ward’s conversion was opportunistic, it is significant that he lived as a Christian in a Muslim society for seven years and made several attempts to return to Christendom before he finally converted. Spiritually opportunistic he might have been, but only after he had exhausted all other options. And though many attempted to deny Ward his “Englishness” after his conversion, from King James proclaiming him an enemy of the English state to Daborne (and many others) labelling him a “Turk,” Ward nonetheless remained “English”

¹¹ Nabil I. Matar, “The renegade”; “‘Turning Turk’: Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance thought”, *Durham University Journal* 55 (1994), pp. 33-41. Quotation from “Turning Turk,” p. 37.

¹² Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*. After Ward’s conversion in the play he is referred to as a Turk, even by himself (though as we shall see, such references are inconsistent).

¹³ Matar, “The renegade,” p. 501.

beyond his conversion. In official documents he was routinely described as “an English renegade”, and British travellers who visited North Africa habitually accounted him one of “our countrymen”. How could an early modern Englishman bring himself to convert to Islam, and what did conversion mean, both to the convert and to his former co-religionists? This question is rendered more, rather than less, complex if one considers such conversions opportunistic. It is easier to explain a sudden transfer of zeal in a religious culture than a seeming lack of concern for religion in an age when atheism has often been accounted an imagined option at best.¹⁴

The chapter is divided into four parts. First I will examine representations of Ward in general cultural discourses, drawing on evidence from the cheap print and public drama, in order to discuss what Ward the pirate and Ward the Muslim “meant” in these discourses. Secondly, I will consider what Ward “meant” to the English and Italian ruling elites who debated and ultimately frustrated Ward’s attempts to return to Christendom. Thirdly, by considering the extant evidence in its entirety, I will attempt to reconstruct the pirate’s own perspective on conversion. Finally, in the concluding section of the paper I will explore the perplexing phenomenon of Ward’s continued “Englishness” despite his forsaking both king and Christ.

Representations of John Ward in the cheap print and public drama

¹⁴ So-called atheists appear from time to time in the drama of the period, but in all instances their “atheism” is undercut by references to God and the devil. Tamburlaine might rail against religion, but he still accounts himself “the scourge of God.” Similarly, Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* might reject religion, but he nonetheless believes in, and identifies with, devils. Lucien Febvre in *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), argues that “atheism” in any real sense was virtually beyond the grasp of early modern Christian culture. More recently, Stephen Greenblatt has argued that atheism actually was imaginable, but only as a belief which an “other” person held. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 22-23.

On 23 December 1610 Marc Antonio Correr, the Venetian ambassador to King James I, wrote to the Doge and Senate of Venice:

There is confirmation of the news that the pirate Ward and Sir Francis Verney, also an Englishman [but] of the noblest blood, have become Turks, to the great indignation of the whole nation.¹⁵

A remarkable event this must have been – a double conversion of Englishmen, one the eldest son of the ancient Verney line. And yet in the cheap print and public drama, it was not the conversion of Sir Francis that stirred the “indignation of the whole nation,” but that of John Ward, son of a common east-coast fisherman.

To modern sensibilities, conditioned by romantic eighteenth-century traditions of the noble buccaneer, the story of Sir Francis Verney makes better press. Verney bore a grudge against his family and the English legal system, which together had deprived him of what he considered his rightful inheritance. Immediately upon attaining majority he sold off the family estates to which he could lay claim and fled England for Algiers. Here, Francis became a vicious pirate who respected neither religion nor nationality and within three years converted to Islam. In 1615 he turned up at the hospital of St. Mary of Pity in Messina, Sicily, where he expired after two weeks, the victim of an undetermined illness. In his possession at the time of his death was a pilgrim’s staff “conspicuously inlaid with crosses.”¹⁶ Here we have it all: the noble youth, rash and impetuous, craving adventure and glory, rushes into the great unknown, only to repent – too late! – and attempt to re-enter the Christian community.

But Verney’s contemporaries did not see his story as the stuff of a morality tale. In fact, Verney’s career as a pirate received so little attention that the nineteenth-century

¹⁵ *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, 40 vols., (London: PRO, 1864-1947), vol. XII, p. 151 (23 Dec. 1610). This source will be referred to as *CSP Ven* for the remainder of this chapter.

¹⁶ *The Verney Family, Letters and Papers of the Verney Family*, John Bruce, ed. (London:

biographer of the Verney line was forced to confess “of Sir Francis Verney’s individual exploits we know nothing” beyond the basic facts of his residence in North Africa and his conversion.¹⁷ But of Verney’s brother in apostasy John Ward we know a great deal, and what we know demonstrates that among the many differences between the early modern and the modern English must be counted a decided difference of taste in pirates.

The earliest published accounts of Ward are two black-letter quarto pamphlets and two ballads, all published in 1609.¹⁸ In these it is evident that Ward’s low birth was a

Camden Society, 1853. Reprinted by AMS Press, New York, 1968), pp. 93-101.

¹⁷ Bruce, ed. *Verney Family*, p. 100. In Bruce’s opinion, there is no reason to believe that Sir Francis committed “the unnecessary and improbable offence of becoming a renegado.” He cites the existence of the pilgrim’s staff as evidence of Verney’s unwavering commitment to Christ. Samuel Chew answers: “there was nothing improbable in the offence, which was committed by many corsairs and more captives in Barbary; nor was it unnecessary if a man sought to establish himself in a Mohammedan state. The existence of the pilgrim’s staff is no evidence that Verney did not embrace Islam, for whether he was a renegade or not it is highly improbable that he carried into Barbary a souvenir so challenging to Moslem sensibilities.” Chew overstates the need for corsairs to convert, but the linking of Ward and Verney in Correr’s dispatch (quoted above) lends weight to the notion that Verney did convert. There is no doubt that Ward “turned Turk” in both the political and religious senses of the term. The pilgrim’s staff may perhaps be best explained with reference to a death-bed attack of spiritual doubt. Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937; reprinted by Octagon Books, New York, 1965), pp. 355-356.

¹⁸ The two pamphlets are: *Newes from Sea, Of two notorious Pyrats Ward the Englishman and Danseker the Dutchman* (London, 1609); and Andrew Barker, *A True and Certain Report of... Captaine Ward and Danseker* (London, 1609). *Newes from Sea* also exists in a variant edition, also of 1609, titled *Ward and Danseker, Two notorious Pyrates Ward an Englishman, and Danseker a Dutchman*. This probably indicates that the pamphlet was popular enough to warrant a second printing. The two ballads are: “The Seamans song of Captain Ward, the famous Pyrate of the World, and an English man born” (London, 1609); and “The Seamans Song of Dansekar the Dutchman, his robberies done at sea” (London, 1609). These ballads are reprinted in *Naval Songs and Ballads*, C.H. Firth, ed. (London: The Navy Records Society, 1908), pp. 25-29. Though the latter ballad purports to tell Danziker’s story, it is as much about Ward as the Dutch pirate. On the connection between Danziker and Ward see note 69.

significant part of his appeal for early modern audiences:

This Ward, as base in birth as bad in condition, in the last yeare of her late Majesties raigne, gave the first onset of his wicked intendments: his parentage was but meane, his estate lowe, and his hope lesse. His profession was a fisherman of Faversham in Kent, though his pride at last would be confinde to no limits, nor anything would serve him but the wide Ocean to walke in. In this wicked resolution, he set forth from Faversham in a small catch towards Plymouth.¹⁹

So reads the first paragraph of the pamphlet *Newes from Sea, Of two notorious Pyrats Ward the Englishman and Danseker the Dutchman*. Facing the text here is a woodcut of “Wards skiffe when he was a Fisherman,” as if to provide visual evidence of his lowly origins.²⁰

This portrayal is typical of accounts of Ward in the cheap print and public drama. Not content with the lot assigned by his birth (“his estate lowe, his hope lesse”), Ward became a monster of the social order by rebelling against it. As reprehensible as this was, however, condemnation mingles with an awe of Ward’s audacity that borders on admiration. Like Marlowe’s Tamburlaine, Ward is a commoner who seizes fortune’s wheel and turns it as he list, refusing anything less than “the wide Ocean to walke in,” as Tamburlaine refused anything but the entire “earthly globe” for his conquest.²¹

The Seamans song of Captain Ward, the famous Pyrate of the World, and an English born, one of the ballads of 1609, is more forthright in admitting admiration of Ward. In the first stanza Ward is described as

Captain Ward of England
 ...
 Of late a simple Fisherman

¹⁹ *Newes from Sea*, leaf B1r.

²⁰ *Newes from Sea*, woodcut on leaf A4v, text on B1r. The woodcut of Ward’s skiff functions like modern tabloid pictures of the “normal” suburban homes of serial killers, which serve to throw the crimes of the subject into sharper relief by demonstrating that “he was one of us”.

²¹ See 2 *Tamburlaine* 5.3.124-160 (The map scene).

In the merry town of Feversham,
grown famous in the world now every day

The ballad goes on to describe Ward's exploits:

Lusty Ward adventurously
In the Straights of Barbary
Did make the Turkish gallyes for to shake.
Bouncing cannons fiery hot
Spared not the Turks one jot,
But of their lives great slaughter he did make.

The islanders of Malta
With argosies upon the sea,
Most proudly braved Ward unto his face.
But soon their pride was overthrown,
And their treasures made his own,
And all their men brought to a wofull case.

The wealthy ships of Venice
Afforded him great riches;
Both gold and silver won he by his sword.
Stately Spain and Portugal
Against him dare not bear up sail,
But gave him all the title of a lord.

...

The riches he hath gain'd
And by blood-shed obtained
may well suffice for to maintain a king.²²

Ward's rebellion against the social order has been an absolute success. Possessed of a king's wealth, addressed as "lord" by the Spanish and Portuguese (and the Muslims of Tunis, we are told in another stanza), Ward seems to have achieved all that any English labourer or fisherman could dream of, and his accomplishments are clearly cause for a certain pride that Ward, as the title and opening couplet of the ballad emphasise, is an

Englishman. Twice the narrator states that Ward and his crew are among the best mariners in the world, “fit to be Princes Knights” if only they “would but for his [Ward’s] country fight”.

There lies the rub: Ward does not operate under authority of the English crown. As a consequence, even if he restricts his attacks to Catholics and Muslims he lacks the sanction of God’s earthly representative, King James. Ward’s treasure is, according to the narrator, “wicked gotten treasure” which can give “but little pleasure”: ill-got gains end badly. If the first half of the ballad constructs Ward as a jolly adventurer (“Lusty Ward” from “the merry town of Faversham”), the second undercuts this representation by painting a portrait of a vile, lawless life, a tormented conscience, and, ultimately, doom and damnation.

While the first half of the ballad recounts how Ward humbles proud Muslims and Catholics, the second condemns Ward’s equally harsh treatment of Englishmen:

Men of his own country
 He still abuseth vilely.
 Some back to back are cast into the waves,
 Some are hewn in pieces small,
 Some are shot against a wall,
 A slender number of their lives he saves.²³

Furthermore, the second half of the ballad describes how Ward’s “kingly” treasure is spent in a “base” manner:

The land consumes what they have got by sea
 In drunkennesse and letchery
 Filthy sins of Sodomy
 these evil gotten goods do wast away²⁴

“Evil gotten goods” is an effective summary of the tension in the representations

²² *Seamans song of Captain Ward.*

²³ *Seamans Song of Captain Ward.*

²⁴ *Seamans Song of Captain Ward.*

of Ward in this ballad, and in the ballads and pamphlets of 1609 generally. It is conceded that Ward is a good, even great, seaman; more, that his one-man war against Muslims and Catholics is “good” as well. But these are evil-gotten “goods,” for Ward has chosen to operate outside the laws of society, and therefore outside the laws of religion. And so ultimately Ward cannot, must not, prosper. The final lines of the ballad foresee a providential demise for Ward:

[Ward’s] honours we shall find
 Shortly blown up with the wind,
 Or prove like letters written in the sand.²⁵

Ward’s conversion to Islam occurred in 1610; naturally the ballads and pamphlets of 1609 know nothing of it. However, Robert Daborne’s play *A Christian Turn’d Turke*, printed in 1612, makes Ward’s conversion its focus. In so doing the author does not dismiss the earlier accounts of Ward’s transgressions against the social order, but establishes them as preliminary to Ward’s great final transgression. In the preface to the play Daborne declares:

What heretofore set other pennes aworke,
 Was *Ward* turn’d Pyrate, ours is *Ward* turn’d Turke.
 Their triviall Scènes might best affoord to show
 The basenesse of his birth, how from below
 Ambition oft takes roote, makes men forsake
 The good the’ enjoy, yet know not. Our Muse doth take
 A higher pitch, leaving his Pyracy
 To reach the heart it selfe of villany.²⁶

Despite having soundly condemned Ward in the preface, the early scenes of Daborne’s play return to the ambiguity and tensions of the cheap print representations of Ward. Once again Ward is initially depicted as a merry rogue, an honourable buccaneer. Again, Ward’s brazen disregard of the social order characterises him as a Tamburlaine-

²⁵ *Seamans Song of Captain Ward*.

²⁶ Daborne, *A Christian Turn’d Turke*, leaf A4v.

esque hero, awakening both admiration and unease as, in the opening scene, he is heralded: “Heroicke Captaine WARD, Lord of the Ocean, terror of Kings, Landlord to Merchants, rewarder of Man-hood, conqueror of the Westerne World.”²⁷ As in the ballads, however, admiration for Ward disappears as we witness him capture and enslave English seamen.

This crime is preamble to Ward’s ultimate transgression: conversion to Islam. The horror of this act is attested by the desperate protests of the other buccaneers – themselves no angels – upon hearing of his intent:

The tongues of ravens are too mild to speak it,
The very thought whereof methinks should turne
Your haire to quils of Porcupines, it’s the denyall
Of your Redeemer, Religion, Country,
Of him that gave you being.²⁸

Even the Christians that Ward had enslaved prevail upon him in terms that express overwhelming horror at the act of conversion:

Ferdinand:

Wee’l forgiue all our wrongs, with patience row
At the vnweldy oare; we will forget
That we were sold by you, and thinke we set
Our bodies gainst your soule, the deerest purchase
Of your Redeemer, that we regain’d you so,
Leaue but this path damnation guides you to.

Second Son:

Our bloud, our Fathers bloud – all is forgiuen,
The bond of all thy sinnes is cancelled.
Keep but thy selfe from this.

Albert:

Let vs redeem our countries shame by thee,
We willingly will endure our slavery.²⁹

²⁷ Daborne, *A Christian Turn’d Turke*, leaf B1v.

²⁸ Daborne, *A Christian Turn’d Turke*, leaf F1r.

²⁹ Daborne, *A Christian Turn’d Turke*, leaf F2r.

The gravity of Ward's crime is expressed even more forcefully in a poem by Samuel Rowlands, written after Ward's conversion, and published in 1612. Like Daborne, Rowlands links Ward's conversion to the denying of Christ, but here this is articulated more clearly and a connection is drawn between Ward and Judas. According to Rowlands, Ward is

A villaine, worse than he that Christ betray'd
 His Maister, for Gods Son, he ne're denay'd
 But did confesse him Just and Innocent,
 When with his bribe backe to the Priests he went.
 Thou that art worse then devils, they confe'st
 Christ was the Son of God, thou Hellish Beast ...³⁰

What could drive a man to such a heinous act, worse even than Judas's betrayal and Lucifer's rebellion? Rowlands does not trouble himself with examining Ward's motives; he is content to dismiss the pirate as a "wicked lumpe, of onely sin, and shame" and then get on with pruriently plumbing the depths of Ward's depravity. Daborne's play, however, takes care to establish that Ward could not actually deny the son of God except in word: his conversion can only be a conversion of convenience, motivated by base urges. Therefore Ward is tempted into apostasy through lust for a Turkish beauty whose sexual favours are promised in exchange for conversion. As the pirate contemplates conversion, he exclaims: "It is not Divinity but nature [which] moves me,"³¹ and as he is led away to the conversion ceremony, he accounts for his actions by stating:

with what brain can I think
 Heauen would be glad of such a friend as I am.
 A Pirate, murderer? Let those can hope a pardon care
 To atone with heaven, I cannot, I despaire.³²

In for a penny, in for a pound: Ward believes himself already to be justly damned on

³⁰ Rowlands, "To a Reprobate Pirat that hath renounced Christ and is turn'd Turke" in *More Knaves yet? The Knaves of Spades and Diamonds* (London, 1612), leaf B2r.

³¹ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, leaf E3r.

account of his many transgressions, and therefore has nothing further to lose by renouncing Christ and satisfying his base lust for an infidel temptress.³³ There is no question that in satisfying his lust Ward knows that he is embracing damnation, not Islam.

Daborne's play amplifies the moral of the earlier ballad. However admirable Ward may seem as a swashbuckling seaman and commoner turned "king," the very acts which afford him riches are both cause and evidence of his fall. The rebel against society must also be a rebel against God, for he has not accepted the place into which God destined he spend his life. By casting Ward's life as both adventure story and cautionary tale, the cheap print and public drama create a paradox which cannot be resolved. While "heroic Ward" celebrates the possibility of escape from poverty and society's boundaries, "base Ward" warns that the attempt to rise above one's social station is the beginning of the descent into hell. Bearing this in mind, we can return to the puzzling neglect of Sir Francis Verney by the playwrights and balladeers of the period: Verney could never have embodied this paradoxical dual identity. Ward's origins as not just a commoner, but as a poor labourer were essential to his appeal, and help to explain why his story was a fascinating morality tale even in the ballads and pamphlets published before his conversion to Islam.³⁴

It is not surprising that Daborne's play, like the earlier ballad, should end with a representation of Ward's damnation. Much as the damnation of traitors in England was

³² Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, leaf F2r.

³³ This same configuration is used to justify the excessive crimes of Grimaldi, the villain in Philip Massinger's play *The Renegado*. See especially 2.5.1-10.

³⁴ Lacey Baldwin Smith found precisely the same phenomenon in representations of men convicted for treason under the Tudors. "Tudor England had difficulty handling sedition in high places; it did not fit the accepted formula of personal greed and prodigality that engender political and economic desperation." At least one traitor, Sir William Parry, who conspired to assassinate Queen Elizabeth in the 1580s, was falsely assigned lowly origins in order to make his story a tidy morality play. See Smith, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). The above quote was taken from p. 21; on Sir William Parry see pp. 11-19.

symbolically enacted by disembowelling and dismembering them and scattering their body parts across the domain of the king they had betrayed, Ward's damnation is symbolically enacted by having his body dismembered and its parts cast into the raging sea. As Ward is led away to execution, he makes the moral of his story explicit in a fine gallows speech:

All you that liue by theft and Piracies,
 That sell your liues and soules to purchase graues,
 That dye to hell, and liue farre worse than slaues,
 Let dying *Ward* tell you that heauen is just,
 And that despaire attends on bloud and lust.³⁵

This confirmation of established social values helps to explain why the representations of John Ward in the cheap print and public drama are not as subversive as representations of general cultural heroes such as Robin Hood or Tamburlaine. Nonetheless, the tension between "heroic Ward" and "base Ward" which permeates these accounts lends them a complexity which is missing from representations of Ward in trade and diplomatic correspondence. Here the status of Ward's soul and abhorrence of his crimes were not at issue. What was at issue was the fortune that Ward had amassed through years of piracy.

Representations of John Ward in the State Papers

The activities of John Ward caught the attention of the political elite in 1607, the year that he captured the richest prize of his career.³⁶ The taking of the 1,500-ton Venetian merchantman the *Reniera e Soderina*, fully laden, caused fury in Venice and made Ward one of the most notorious and feared pirates in the Mediterranean.³⁷ With the

³⁵ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, leaf I4v.

³⁶ For reasons that will shortly become clear, by far the majority of references to Ward appear among the papers calendared for *CSP Ven*, although he also makes occasional appearances in the State Papers Domestic and Foreign.

³⁷ The best account of the taking of the *Reniera e Soderina* is to be found in Alberto

taking of the *Soderina* Ward rounded out what had already been a highly successful career in piracy with a prize that could well have pushed his personal fortune to the level of many aristocrats in his homeland. As in the cheap print, so in reality Ward possessed the wealth of a lord.

This new-found wealth gave Ward, now in his mid-fifties, the financial security he needed to contemplate retirement. On 24 October 1607 the Venetian ambassador to England reported that a representative of the pirate was in London to negotiate a pardon for Ward and his followers.³⁸ From this point until 1610, the year he converted to Islam, references to Ward in the State Papers occur with great frequency.³⁹

King James I – the man responsible for the creation of baronetcies – was not overly scrupulous about where his money came from, and he undoubtedly favoured pardoning Ward, as long as by doing so he might relieve the pirate of a share of his

Tenenti, *Piracy and the Decline of Venice 1580-1615*, trans. Janet and Brian Pullan, (London: Longmans, 1967), pp. 77-78.

Ward's ability to inspire terror was demonstrated in February 1608 when the Venetian senate, upon hearing a rumour that Ward was in the Adriatic, ordered all merchant ships returning from the Levant to proceed no further than Corfu without an escort of war galleys. This is all the more remarkable given that the war galleys were not normally launched in the winter on account of the high risk of storms. *CSP Ven XI*, 172 and 173. Also interesting in this regard is Wotton's claim that the Venetians were in such awe of Ward that he hath "done upon them almost what he hath liked". *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton I*, Logan Pearsall Smith, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), p. 415.

³⁸ *CSP Ven XI*, 94 (24 October 1607). The negotiation of cash payments in exchange for pardons for pirates was a standard practice not only in England but throughout Europe. John C. Appleby has discussed such negotiations in: "A nursery of pirates: The English pirate community in Ireland in the early seventeenth century" *International Journal of Maritime History* 11 (1990), pp. 1-27; and "'The affairs of Pirates': The surrender and submission of Captain William Baugh 1611-1612" *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 91 (1986), pp. 70-74.

³⁹ The index of volume X (1603-1607) of *CSP Venice* contains no references to Ward; the index of volume XI (1607-1610) devotes two columns to Ward; the index of volume XII (1610-1613) has twelve references to Ward.

fortune. It was widely known that Ward was fantastically wealthy, and, if they played their cards right, James and his courtiers might make a tidy profit of pardoning Ward. James was later to boast that “a certain pirate” had offered him as much as £40,000 in exchange for a pardon, but was spurned because James refused to traffic in such sordid business. Both the sum named and the timing of the boast, made to the French and Venetian ambassadors shortly after Ward’s conversion to Islam in 1610 and after the French king had caused scandal by pardoning another equally notorious pirate, point to Ward as the unnamed pirate.⁴⁰

In fact James’s refusal of Ward’s petition came only as a result of more than a year of debate and negotiation; the granting of a pardon was not decisively rejected before January 1609. Hopes of monetary profit had to be weighed against losses of diplomatic prestige and dynastic ambition. Ward had grievously offended the Republic of Venice, not only with the taking of the *Reniera e Soderina*, but generally in a career that had specialised in raiding the commerce of the Adriatic and Ionean Seas. To pardon Ward without the consent of the Venetian Doge and Senate would risk the breakdown of diplomatic relations between Venice and England, re-established less than a decade previously in the final year of Elizabeth’s rule.

Open relations with Venice were important to James for a number of reasons. First, there were economic considerations. In the middle of the sixteenth century there had been a significant trade between England and Venice which sharply declined towards the end of Elizabeth’s reign, largely on account of the depredations of English pirates.⁴¹ In the first decade of the seventeenth century James actively sought to curtail English piracy and expand trade between Venice and England.⁴² From the perspective of long-

⁴⁰ *CSP Ven XI*, 801 (25 Feb 1610). The pirate pardoned by the French king was Simon Danziker. His pardon will be discussed below.

⁴¹ K.R. Andrews, “Sir Robert Cecil and Mediterranean plunder”, *English Historical Review* 87 (1972), pp. 513-532.

⁴² James had a particularly good reason for doing so at the outset of his reign. In the first

term foreign policy Ward represented more than just one loose cannon in the Mediterranean: he was a microcosm of a greater problem.

Venice's symbolic associations were also important. If James were to realise his pretensions to being the Great Peacemaker (or at least to be perceived as such), he could not afford to antagonise his non-Protestant allies. James had been able to establish strong, friendly diplomatic ties with Venice which, unlike his relations with Spain, were relatively uncontroversial in England. To have those relations severed in order to pardon a notorious pirate would have tarnished James's image.⁴³

Venice's symbolic importance went beyond James's pretensions of forging a new common Christendom, however. In 1599 Sir Lewes Lewkenor published *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, his translation of Gasparo Contarini's *De Magistratibus et Republica Venetorum*, a work which caught the English imagination and helped fix "the myth of Venice" in the consciousness of the English political elite.⁴⁴ W.J. Bouwsma states that throughout Europe "Venice was proclaimed as fatherland of the world, temple of justice, sun among the stars ... Her good order and her survival seemed

year of his rule James had revoked the charter of the Levant Company and made the trade to the Levant a series of royal farms. Thus, the King had a direct financial interest in seeing the trade develop, beyond his interests in overseeing the prosperity of his realm. In 1605 the Levant Company was given back its monopoly over the trade; however, James continued to attempt to suppress piracy. Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 38-9. On James' attempts to curtail the English pirates see Tenenti, *Piracy*, p. 72; and Appleby, "A nursery of pirates," pp. 7-8.

⁴³ On James's pretensions as the Great Peacemaker see Maurice Lee, Jr., *Great Britain's Solomon: James VI and I in his Three Kingdoms*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), Chapter Nine, "The Blessed Peacemaker," pp. 261-298; and Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, passim. On the importance of James's dual crowns to this image, see Jenny Wormald, "James VI and I," pp. 187-209; especially pp. 199-200.

⁴⁴ And not only the political elite; Lewkenor's translation is routinely cited as Shakespeare's source for information on Venice in *Othello*.

unimpeachable evidence of perfection in a world where all else was in flux.”⁴⁵ As J.G.A. Pocock dryly notes, this representation of Venice was “political science fiction,”⁴⁶ but it was influential political science fiction. From a “public relations” perspective James would have been ill-served to wrong the “temple of justice” by pardoning one of Venice’s chief enemies.

Finally, Venice was important to James’s dynastic ambitions. Exactly contemporary with James’s negotiations with the pirate John Ward were his extraordinary attempts to have his son Charles, then Duke of York, established in some sort of official position within the Republic of Venice. Between 1607 and the death of Charles’s elder brother in 1612, Prince Charles, King James and James’s principal advisors from time to time hinted to the Venetian ambassador that Charles was “determined to draw a sword in the service of the republic,” and at one point James baldly stated: “my Lord Ambassador, you must make my son a Patrician of Venice.”⁴⁷ The king’s motives in this ploy may have been various. Perhaps, as one historian has suggested, he was trying to secure for Charles an honorary pension of Venice of the sort Charles already held from France.⁴⁸ Even more likely, James was attempting to secure the prestige of having a son recognised by the Most Serene Republic, that mythic land of rational, virtuous government. Venetian recognition of Charles as a “Patrician of Venice” would indeed have been a coup, for Venice’s aristocracy had been famed for its exclusion of “base” bloodlines since the

⁴⁵ William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 160.

⁴⁶ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 272-330; quote from p. 325.

⁴⁷ See *CSP Ven* X 474; XI 174 (14 Feb 1608), 362 (13 Nov 1608), 617 (10 Sept 1609), 774 (28 Jan 1610), 792 (18 Feb 1610); XII 174 (Feb 1611), 181 (Feb 1611). The quotations are from *CSP Ven* XI 792 and 174, respectively.

⁴⁸ Edith Chapman Farley, “Relationships of the Venetian Ambassadors in England with the Royal Family ... 1603-1629” (Jackson, Mississippi, Mississippi State University: unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1976), p. 109.

freezing of the membership of the Great Council, in which the aristocracy sat as a body, in 1297.⁴⁹ And, of course, the acceptance of Charles as a patrician of Venice would have contributed to James's great ambition of forging a Christian unity that transcended national and religious divisions.

For all these reasons James was reluctant to offend Venice. On the other hand, if Ward's fortune were large enough, there was the hope that the Venetians might countenance the pirate's pardon in exchange for a share in the bounty. Two processes of negotiation began: one between Ward and James, in which the English government sought to exact as great a sum from Ward as possible; and one between England and Venice, in which both states sought to secure the greater portion of the total pardon settlement.

Zorzi Giustinian, Venetian Ambassador to England from 1606 to 1608, was well aware of the stakes in this game. Perceiving immediately that Ward's offer of direct payment in exchange for a pardon was only the tip of the iceberg, he warned the Venetian senate in November of 1607 that Ward was probably bribing Englishmen at all levels of authority in order to favour his case.⁵⁰ The Venetian response was to put everything on the line: either Ward would make full reparation to all injured Venetian interests, or his pardon would meet with the disapproval of the Most Serene Republic.⁵¹

Presumably this proposition was intended as an opening gambit, for it was clearly an unrealistic request. By 1607 Ward had been a pirate for four years, and much of the value of the prizes he had taken in that time had been handed over to his crews and to the

⁴⁹ In discussing this perception, Bouwsma suggests the reality was somewhat different, with the "freezing" of the Great Council resulting in not an entrenched oligarchy, but the creation of a mechanism which ensured the integration of newly monied families through intermarriage with the bloodlines of 1297. Bouwsma, *Venice*, pp. 59-61.

⁵⁰ *CSP Ven XI*, 114 (15 Nov. 1607), 129 (12 Dec. 1607), 141 (2 Jan. 1608).

⁵¹ *CSP Ven 110* (10 Nov. 1607), 114 (15 Nov. 1607).

Muslim authorities of Tunis.⁵² Wealthy though he undoubtedly was, Ward could not have possessed sufficient cash reserves in 1607 to make crown-for-crown restitution to all the Venetian merchants and ship-owners he had pillaged over the years. That this extravagant demand was, indeed, a starting point for negotiation is suggested by a dispatch of Giustinian's from an early phase of the negotiations, in which the ambassador stated that Ward was offering goods to the value of thirty or forty thousand crowns to pacify Venice. Lest the Senate too hastily to accept the offer, Giustinian cautioned that "my informant declares that he himself has seen these people, and that Ward would give even more."⁵³

While Giustinian connived in London, Sir Henry Wotton, the English ambassador at Venice, had an even more difficult task. He had to negotiate the Venetian indemnity before the Doge and Senate, but at the same time could not openly state that King James was actually negotiating with the pirate John Ward. Wotton, famous for his definition of an ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country," was equal to the challenge. Wotton's speeches to the Venetian senate are a marvellous example of early modern double-speak. First, he stated that Ward was seeking pardon not only of James, but also of "certain Italian princes," a veiled reference to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. In 1609 Ward would open negotiations with the Grand Duke, but there is no evidence that he had done so in 1607. It is likely that Wotton, relying on the reputation of the Tuscans for unscrupulous behaviour,⁵⁴ fabricated his account in order to persuade the

⁵² *CSP Ven XI* 267, 268 (23 June 1608). All of the pirates who operated from the Ottoman ports of North Africa had arrangements which saw portions of their spoils go to the Ottoman authorities, to their crew, and to the Turkish soldiers who were usually used as boarding parties. Moreover, cargoes taken by pirates were usually sold at far below their market value, and were often purchased by legitimate Christian merchants who would import their wares into Europe. As we shall see, this is precisely what became of the cargo of the *Soderina*, much to the chagrin of the Venetians. See Tenenti, *Piracy*, 72-73; Peter Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1970), pp. 73-74.

⁵³ *CSP Ven XI* 94 (24 Oct 1607).

⁵⁴ The Tuscans were notorious for their willingness to trade in looted goods and to

Venetians that unless they made a more reasonable request for indemnity Ward would take his fortune elsewhere. Secondly, Wotton mentioned that Ward had refitted the *Soderina* and was preparing to embark on a new season of piracy, which might be avoided if he was pardoned. Thirdly, the ambassador declared that he had no sure knowledge that the whole issue of Ward's request for pardon was anything more than court rumour. Fourthly, he hinted that Ward's pardon might only be a pretext for his elimination: "the King cannot grant life, and it has sometimes happened that men have been ... pardoned by the King and yet their confederates have pursued them and they have had to die." Wotton rounded out his hints, hedging, and lies with the bold assurance that "his Majesty would pardon in all that lies with him; but it is beyond his power to condone offences committed against a foreign prince." It is understandable that the Venetians were somewhat suspicious of English intentions in the affair.⁵⁵

Venetian dander was further raised by the appearance in London, Portsmouth and Bristol of ships bearing goods pilfered from the *Soderina*. The anxiety of the Serene Republic mounted as Giustinian's attempts to secure these goods for their rightful owners were thwarted and delayed.⁵⁶ And while the ambassador became increasingly frustrated, the opening gambit of "no pardon without full indemnity" hardened into Venice's final, stony word on the subject.

The situation did not change through 1608 and James eventually had to sacrifice any hope of pardoning Ward in favour of maintaining peaceable relations with Venice. In

tolerate known pirates. Tenenti, *Piracy*, p. 58.

⁵⁵ *CSP Ven* XI 106 (5 Nov. 1607), 111 (12 Nov. 1607).

⁵⁶ The attempt to secure these cargoes, or compensatory payments, for the merchants of Venice continued well beyond Giustinian's tenure as ambassador. The affair is of some interest in itself, for it may illustrate the practical limits of James's authority. Although Giustinian apparently had the good will of the King, the merchants who had purchased the stolen goods in Tunis proved virtually immune to all attempts to secure restitution. References to the case in the *CSP Venetian* are far too frequent to enumerate here; see the indexes of volumes XI and XII under the headings "ships -- the *Husband*"; "ships -- the

January 1609 the king irrevocably broke off the negotiations by delivering a proclamation against piracy explicitly aimed at Ward:

And whereas diverse great and enormous spoyles and Piracies have been heretofore committed ... by Captaine John Ward and his adherents, and other English Pirats, and the goods moneys and Merchandizes have bene and are sold, dispersed & disposed of, most lewdly and prodigally by the meanes of their receivers, comfortors & abettors, to the great prejudice of his Majesties good friends the Venetians ... His Majesty doth hereby expresly charge and commaund all ... his Officers whatsoever ... to use all care and diligence ... in the inquiring, searching for and apprehending of all such Pirats, their receivers, comfortors and abettors.⁵⁷

Once captured, such pirates and their abettors were to be subjected to the full force of English law. As a further sop to the Venetians, the proclamation ends with James forbidding his subjects to trade in any stolen goods whatsoever, and prohibiting under pain of death all contact with “the said Ward.”

After this rebuff from James Ward entered into negotiations for a pardon from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The Ducal council responded enthusiastically, but sought, in addition to sharing Ward’s fortune, to bring his talents as a naval commander into the service of the Grand Duke’s navy. Ward was offered permission to settle at Leghorn, providing he command a contingent of Tuscan ships against the Ottoman galley fleet and the North African pirates.⁵⁸ This was an offer which Ward literally could not live with: only a fool would double-cross the Ottoman emperor, whose representatives had allowed Ward shelter in Tunis for some six years. Such a fool was Simon Danziker, a Dutch pirate who sought to retire to Europe at the same time as Ward,⁵⁹ and who accepted from the

Reniera e Soderina”; and “ships -- the *Seraphim*”.

⁵⁷ “A Proclamation against Pirats”, Whitehall, 8 January 1609. *Stuart Royal Proclamations* I, James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 203-206.

⁵⁸ *CSP Ven* XI 556 (18 July 1609), 567 (1 Aug 1609).

⁵⁹ *CSP Ven* XI 575 (6 Aug 1609). On the relations between Ward and Danziker, see note

king of France an offer similar to that rejected by Ward from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The wisdom of Ward's rejection of the offer is demonstrated by Danziker's fate. Scarcely eighteen months after receiving his pardon and entering the service of the French king, Danziker was captured by the pasha of Algiers and beheaded, his body left to rot in the North African sun.⁶⁰

In 1610 Ward finally abandoned hope of returning to Christendom, converted to Islam, and settled in Tunis. Unlike the cheap print and drama, which explained and legitimised Ward's conversion to Islam through lust and despair, the question of why Ward would convert to Islam is not even raised in the official records. Hope of profit had been the primary reason why, for three years, Ward had been a source of debate in the council chambers of Venice and London; without such hope Ward would have been merely another pirate plaguing the Mediterranean, worthy of no more than a mention in one of the interminable lists of pirates in James's regularly issued but entirely ineffective proclamations against piracy.⁶¹ It is not surprising, then, that Ward's name virtually disappears from the State Papers after he removed himself from any possibility of pardon by forging a permanent relationship with the Ottoman authorities at Tunis and converting to Islam.⁶²

75 below.

⁶⁰ *CSP Ven XII* 156 (6 Jan 1611); William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures, and painefull peregrinations* (London, 1632), p. 382.

⁶¹ See, for example James's proclamations of 30 Sept 1603, 12 Nov 1604 and 13 June 1606, proclamations 28, 46 and 67 in Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Stuart Royal Proclamations I*.

⁶² It is interesting to note that Ward was seen as a source of potential profit not only by the English and Italian governors, but also by English merchants. In 1609 there were reports that a group of English merchants had invested in an expedition to kill or capture Ward, much as they might have invested in an argosy to Guinea. The Venetian ambassador was repeatedly approached by this group and asked to name a sum which Venice would pay in exchange for Ward's death. The ambassador made vague promises and the expedition went ahead, but was unsuccessful. *CSP Ven XI* 417 (22 Jan 1609), 426 (29 Jan 1609), 431 (6 Feb 1609), 448 (25 Feb 1609), 463 (19 March 1609).

It is impossible to discern what individual diplomats thought of Ward and his conversion. Documents of executive fiat, ambassadors' dispatches, speeches, reports and instructions do not often contain explicit justification of policies. In these records Ward is simplistically characterised as a villain through-and-through; the most penetrating insights into his motivations are implicit in the short epithets which often accompany his name, such as "that perfidious pirate" or "that wicked and infamous pirate." Thus, the only explanation that the official discourse could offer for Ward's conversion was far more simplistic than that of the cheap print and public drama: Ward was a villain.⁶³

Nor is it only the nature of the documents found in the State Papers that dictate such a dismissive attitude to Ward's apostasy and defection. Ward was not the first Englishman to convert to Islam, and certainly not the first to renounce allegiance to the English monarch. To a the playwright Robert Daborne, who viewed Ward's life alternately as a theological threat to be explained away and the stuff from which to fashion a morality tale, such behaviour might appear extraordinary; but to professional diplomats Ward was only one of many factors to be managed in the game at chess, the ongoing business of diplomacy. While awareness of English converts to Islam might awaken feelings of horror in English general culture, clearly the reality of such converts was less than earth-shattering to the men who dealt with them.

Understandable though it may be, this simplistic representation of Ward as a ne'er do well brings us no closer to understanding why a seventeenth-century English Christian would choose to convert to Islam. Living in Tunis between 1603 and 1610, Ward could not have avoided contact with the many Christian soldiers, sailors and merchants who

⁶³ Even in proposals for Ward's pardon there is never any sense that Ward might be rehabilitated. The justifications advanced for considering Ward's pardon were, first and foremost, to end Ward's piracies by bringing him within the ambit of the law; and secondly as a pretext for his elimination. For use of these justifications by the English, see Wotton's speeches to the Venetian senate in *CSP Ven XI* 106 (5 Nov 1607) and 111 (12 Nov 1607). Similar rhetoric was used when the Tuscans considered pardoning Ward; see

converted to Islam and achieved wealth, empowerment and security in the Ottoman power structure.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, Ward initially rejected conversion as a means of establishing himself in Tunis, preferring instead to pay large shares of his prizes to the Muslim authorities. If Ward's conversion to Islam were merely the result of disillusionment with the religion and mores of his homeland combined with avarice and opportunism, he could have chosen to convert much earlier than he did. In order to understand Ward's conversion, it is necessary to re-examine his attempts to be readmitted to Christian Europe from the imagined perspective of a pirate in his twilight years.

A modern reconstruction of the conversion of John Ward

Ward's decision to seek a pardon of James I in the fall of 1607 was probably a result of his capture of the *Reniera e Soderina* earlier that year. The ship had been richly freighted with a cargo from Syria and Cyprus, the sale of which left Ward wealthy enough to contemplate giving up his dangerous profession.⁶⁵ Early in 1608, however, Ward's search for a pardon become somewhat more urgent, owing to a disaster which forced him to change his base of operations from Tunis to Ireland.

After the capture of the *Soderina* Ward had made it the flagship of his pirate fleet, installing some seventy pieces of brass artillery onto its decks which required the creation of many new gunports. During the winter of 1607-1608 the ship encountered a vicious storm and, owing to the burden of the cannon and the structural damage caused by their installation, the *Soderina* took water, collapsed and sank in the waters off Greece, killing

CSP Ven XI 567 (1 Aug 1609).

⁶⁴ Matar, "Turning Turk," pp. 37-38; Earle, *Corsairs*, pp. 28-30, 50, 91-93. According to Earle, "between 1604 and 1615 it is estimated that there were several hundred Englishmen operating on corsair ships from Tunis" (p. 50). These numbers may be exaggerated, but there is no doubt that such men existed.

⁶⁵ For speculations on the value of the *Soderina*, both absolute and to Ward, see: Tenenti, *Piracy*, p. 78; C.M. Senior, *A Nation of Pirates: English Piracy in its Heyday* (Vancouver: David & Charles, 1976), pp. 91-93.

virtually its entire crew of 400.⁶⁶ Rumours of Ward's death immediately began to circulate,⁶⁷ but in fact Ward survived the wreck, though in a manner which almost cost him his life upon his return to Tunis. As disaster loomed, Ward had abandoned the *Soderina* for another ship in his fleet, taking with him most of the Christian members of his crew, but leaving all the Muslims to perish. When news of this treachery reached Tunis, Ward was saved from the furious Muslim population only through his good relations with Kara Osman, captain of the Janissaries.⁶⁸ It is noteworthy that Osman himself may have been an English renegade.⁶⁹

Ward assembled his pirate fleet and sailed out of the Mediterranean as quickly as possible.⁷⁰ During the summer and early fall of 1608 he operated from Ireland, harassing shipping along the southern coast of England and the Atlantic coasts of France, Spain and Portugal.⁷¹ This may have had as much to do with Venetian intransigence over the question of pardoning Ward as any other factor: after putting up with Ward's activities in the Adriatic and Mediterranean for so long, it may have been agreeable to see him unleashed upon his native land.⁷² The transfer of Ward's base of operations from Tunis to

⁶⁶ *CSP Ven XI*, 197 (18 March 1608), 200 (24 March 1608), 212 (30 March 1608), 268 (23 June 1608). See also Tenenti, *Piracy*, pp. 77-78.

⁶⁷ *CSP Ven XI*, 200 (24 March 1608), 219 (9 April 1608), 229 (10 April 1608).

⁶⁸ *CSP Ven XI* 267, 268 (23 June 1608).

⁶⁹ *CSP Ven XII* 157 (8 Jan 1611).

⁷⁰ *CSP Ven XI* 268 (23 June 1608).

⁷¹ *CSP Ven XI* 313 (31 Aug 1608), 319 (4 Sept 1608), 328 (18 Sept 1608), 348 (23 Oct 1608), 350 (26 Oct 1608), 363 (13 Nov 1608). While 313 and 350 do not mention Ward by name, given their context and the fact that they fit into the pattern of Ward's movements, it seems likely that they refer to Ward. All of the biographers of Ward, from J.S. Corbett in *England in the Mediterranean I* (New York: Longmans, 1904) to Christopher Lloyd in *English Corsairs on the Barbary Coast* (London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981), have overlooked the Irish episode in Ward's career. And yet, without understanding this, the sightings of Ward off the European Atlantic seaboard make no sense.

⁷² Perhaps the best evidence of this attitude is to be found in the record of the exchange between Sir Henry Wotton and the Doge of Venice on 2 October 1608 (*CSP Ven XI* 334).

Ireland may also help to explain the hardening of James's attitude towards Ward in the negotiations for a pardon. In particular, Ward's audacious assault on one of the ships of the royal navy did nothing to improve his profile in London, and January 1609 saw the publication of James's proclamation against Ward, decisively ending the three-way debate over the pardon.

The month of October 1609 found Ward back in the Mediterranean, though not at Tunis. Ward put into Algiers, most likely to sell off cargoes taken during his summer of piracy in Ireland. While there, he apparently entered into a partnership with the pasha of Algiers, for it is reported that he spent the summer of 1609 plying the Mediterranean in ships whose artillery was furnished by the pasha.⁷³

But this was not what Ward was looking for. Already possessed of considerable fortune, his sixtieth birthday looming, he needed a home, not a home base. With no hope of an English pardon, Ward sent representatives to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. As we have seen, the Grand Duke was more than willing to let Ward settle in Leghorn, but only on the condition that he wage war against his former hosts. This was unacceptable to Ward, perhaps not only because of the dangers involved in such a change of allegiance, but also because it prevented him from retiring.

Meanwhile Ward received two further setbacks, his worst since the wreck of the *Soderina*. In June 1609 a Franco-Spanish force led by Admiral Fijardo of Spain stole into Tunis harbour by night and fired some twenty or more ships. Ward's fleet was

In response to Wotton's request that Venice contribute to an expedition to assassinate Ward, "The Doge returned thanks and said that the Cabinet would consider the matter, but he believed that Ward was not at Tunis but outside the Straits [of Gibraltar]." Not only did the Doge "believe" that Ward was beyond the Straits, he had recently received word that Ward had sunk one of the ships of England's royal fleet in English waters. Now that Ward had apparently moved his operations out of the Mediterranean, the Doge was not to be easily convinced that Venice should continue to spend its money for his elimination.

⁷³ *CSP Ven XI* 369 (20 Nov 1608).

particularly hard hit: according to some accounts all the ships destroyed were his.⁷⁴ In October of the same year Simon Danziker, recently pardoned by the King of France, made his move in Algiers, seizing booty and enslaved Christians and fleeing North Africa for Marseilles. Much of the booty Danziker seized may have belonged to Ward, for the Venetian agent in Florence reported that “this is expected to be the utter ruin of Ward.”⁷⁵

As Ward’s *annus horribilus* progressed he made one last attempt to return to Christendom. In November 1609 he is reported as preparing to leave Algiers for good and settle in Ireland where, according to the Venetian ambassador at London, “he will find both friends and shelter.”⁷⁶ Once again Ward’s plans were thwarted. First came the reprimand of Henry Lord Danvers, Lord President of Munster, the Irish province from which Ward had operated the previous year. In November 1608, after the pirate had left Munster for Algiers, Danvers had been arrested and brought to London, where he was reprimanded for allowing Ward shelter. Danvers defended himself by saying that he had had only 300 soldiers against Ward’s 700 pirates, and so had had little choice but to tolerate Ward’s presence. Danvers was chastised but allowed to keep his position; perhaps afterward he was less keen on allowing Ward to live unmolested in Munster.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *CSP Ven* 586, 587 (18 Aug 1608), 595 (31 Aug 1609), 628 (16 Sept 1609), 629, 630 (17 Sept 1608), 644 (3 Oct 1609). See also John Stow and Edmund Howes, *Annales* (London, 1631), p. 893; and Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, pp. 358-359.

⁷⁵ *CSP Ven XI* 687 (31 Oct 1609). Ward and Danziker were well acquainted. For a time they had worked as partners in piracy, but by 1609 they were avowed enemies, perhaps owing to a dispute over the division of spoils. Danziker’s choice of booty may not have been entirely arbitrary. On relations between Ward and Danziker, and on Danziker generally, see Lloyd, *English Corsairs* pp. 48-57. Also of interest in this regard are the two blackletter pamphlets of 1609.

⁷⁶ *CSP Ven XI* 700 (12 Nov 1609). Ward might have made such friends when he spent part of 1608 in Ireland; but equally he might have known pirates who formerly worked from North Africa but shifted operations to Ireland, or who used bases in both North Africa and Ireland. According to Appleby, the two areas formed part of a large community of pirates. Appleby, “Nursery of pirates,” *passim* but especially p. 1.

⁷⁷ *CSP Ven XI* 363 (13 Nov 1608).

Nonetheless, Ward's plans proceeded apace until, as he was preparing to sail for Ireland in December 1609, King James had nineteen pirates executed at Wapping, among whom were three of Ward's confederates from the taking of the *Soderina*.⁷⁸ Though earlier proclamations against pirates had been almost entirely ineffectual, it appeared that the king was eager to act on his proclamation against Ward.⁷⁹

Ward's conversion came shortly after the frustration of his plan to return to Ireland. If it is true that Ward wished to retire from piracy for good, his current partnership with the pasha of Algiers could only be a temporary solution at best. Moreover, the ravages of Fijardo and Danziker upon his ships and spoils may have increased the urgency of his efforts to get out of the dangerous business of piracy once and for all. Early in 1610 Ward reached an agreement with Kara Osman and the bey of Tunis which saw Ward convert to Islam and agree to join the Ottoman fleet for a limited period in exchange for protection from the population of Tunis and the security of a permanent residence.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *CSP Ven* 728 (3 Dec. 1609). See also Stow and Howes, *Annales*, p. 893.

⁷⁹ This may have had something to do with Ward's audacious sinking of a ship of the Royal fleet in English waters in September 1608. Undoubtedly this action had not done much to speed the negotiations of his pardon, either; James' proclamation against Ward was published in January 1609. *CSP Ven* XI 328 (18 Sept 1608).

⁸⁰ The details of Ward's settlement with the bey are not known; however, it is evident that Ward did convert, and that he did become a part of the Ottoman military machine. In March 1607 the Venetian ambassador to Constantinople reported "orders sent to the Pasha of Tunis to instruct the English pirate Ward to come with his ships to join the Turkish fleet." This is remarkable, and indicates a qualitative change in Ward's status at Tunis. Christian pirates were allowed to operate from Tunis in exchange for deliverance of a share of the booty to the authorities at Tunis; but they were not required, and certainly were not ordered, to join the Turkish fleet in its military expeditions. *CSP Ven* XI 815 (7 March 1610). On the roles of Christian pirates and renegades in Ottoman North Africa see Tenenti, *Piracy*, Chapter Four, and Earle, *Corsairs*, pp. 28-31, 73-74, 92. According to C.M. Senior, Ward was involved in Ottoman naval actions in 1610 and 1612, and may have been involved in the plunder of a Venetian vessel as late as 1622. Senior, *Nation of Pirates*, pp. 93-94.

As it turned out, Daborne's account of Ward's conversion may not have been as far off base as it initially appeared. On the one hand, it seems likely that Ward's conversion was opportunistic, and perhaps even influenced by a sort of despair. On the other hand, it is unlikely that this despair was prompted by the religious scruples attributed to him by Daborne in the line "to atone with heaven, I cannot, I despair." Nonetheless, Ward's stronger sense of identification with his Christian rather than Muslim crew members in the *Soderina* disaster and his dogged attempts to return to Christendom demonstrate a personal prejudice against Islam and a reluctance to settle permanently in North Africa. Preferring to live even as an outlaw in Ireland than as a free Muslim in Tunis, he converted only after he felt that all other options had been exhausted.

Given the central importance of Christianity in early modern English culture, it would be very surprising to learn that John Ward could easily have shrugged off the prejudices and inhibitions which had informed his adolescence and much of his adulthood. Born in the early 1550s, under Elizabeth Ward had been one of many skilled sailors who found employment as privateers legally entitled to attack the ships and shipping of Spain, the chief enemy of England. Upon the accession of James and the establishment of Anglo-Spanish peace these privateers had to operate illegally as pirates or find legitimate work. John Ward attempted to "go straight," accepting a lowly position in James's channel guard, but this did not last for long. After only a few months in the crown's service, Ward, together with a number of other like-minded sailors, seized a ship from Plymouth harbour and fled to North Africa. Here he began his career as a pirate, operating at first from this single ship. In short order he had assembled a small fleet, demonstrating not only his abilities as a seaman, but also as a commander.⁸¹

It would indeed be surprising to learn that Ward converted to Islam purely out of

⁸¹ This history of Ward is based largely on a report an English sailor who had recently been in Tunis, made to Sir Henry Wotton in Venice on 23 June 1608. *CSP Ven* XI 268. This report supports the accounts of Ward given in the pamphlets of 1609.

zeal for submission to Allah, but not only because of what historians know of the nature of early modern English religious culture. Ward's life and profession demonstrated an ability to rise above religious convictions. Though much of the drinking, swearing, whoring, sodomy, murder, and general debauched living ascribed to him can be written off as uninformed stereotyping, Ward was a pirate. He lived by theft and murder on the seas, and there is no reason to believe that he acted the saint when he was on land. What seems surprising to the modern mind is not that Ward should have converted opportunistically, but that he held out for so long.

Perhaps there is something to Daborne's argument that in the end Ward rationalised his conversion by convincing himself that he was inevitably damned, given his earlier excesses. In the end it is impossible to know what kind of deal Ward struck with Christ, Satan, or his conscience to justify his actions. Nonetheless, the dilemma which Ward faced must be revised from Daborne's account. In Daborne's play Ward chose between reconciliation with Christ and sexual relations with a Muslim temptress. In real life he had to accept that three years of attempts to buy peace and security of a Christian prince had failed. He was left to choose between returning to Christendom to die the horrible death of a traitor, or converting to Islam, settling in Tunis, and living a life of luxury and wealth.

"Turning Turk" and staying English: post 1610 representations of John Ward as an Englishman

"In the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender," states Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, his influential study of the origins of nationalism. Anderson suggests that the notion of "national" identity is distinctly modern, and grew out of circumstances contingent to the late eighteenth century and beyond. In earlier periods, Anderson argues, group identity at the level of the "nation" was determined by factors such as religious belief and allegiance to a monarch,

and, unlike modern national identities, was liable to shift and change as individuals negotiated orthodox and heterodox religious opinions and conflicting allegiances.⁸²

It is evident that at least some of the early modern English conceived of their identity in these terms, at least some of the time. The very use of the term “turn Turk” as a synonym for conversion to Islam demonstrates the interchangeability of “national” and religious identity: thus, in the title of *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, Ward is identified primarily as a Christian rather than as an Englishman, and becomes a Turk rather than a “Mohammedan,” the early modern equivalent of “Muslim.” Also interesting in this regard is the definition of conversion given by Ward’s fellow buccaneer, cited above: “It’s the denial / Of your Redeemer, religion, *country*.”⁸³

The expression “turn Turk” was used in a more general sense as well. English men and women were in constant danger of “turning Turk” in their everyday lives, and not only when they consciously renounced “redeemer, religion, and country.” The charge was invoked to describe betrayals minor and major, as well as situations when Christians ceased to behave in a properly “Christian” manner.⁸⁴ Thus, when Shakespeare’s Othello comes upon his soldiers brawling amongst themselves he exclaims “Are we turned Turks

⁸² Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), p. 5. Anderson’s ideas are compatible with those of a large number of historians and sociologists working on the origins and character of modern national identity, including Hugh Seton-Watson, Charles Tilly, and Ernest Gellner. A useful review of this school of thought is given in the introduction and first chapter of Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

⁸³ Daborne, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*, leaf F1r. Emphasis added.

⁸⁴ Here the idea of “turning Turk” ties into notions that Islam was no more than a collection of precepts which encouraged all pleasure and indulgence without limit. This idea has very old roots in Christendom. See Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1966), Chapter Five (pp. 135-162). Daniel provides a discussion of the history of the term “turn Turk” in another book, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (London: Longmans, 1975), pp. 130, 302.

... ?,” and admonishes them: “For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.”⁸⁵

Similarly, in Massinger’s *Renegado*, all women are accused of “turning Turk” when they “begin in whore.”⁸⁶

This notion of “turning Turk” by acting in a traitorous or otherwise “un-Christian” fashion (but not necessarily denying Jesus as Saviour and submitting to Allah) is asserted in the fascinating woodcut which adorns the cover of *Newes from Sea*, one of the pamphlets of 1609 on John Ward. Although it pre-dates his conversion, the woodcut visually casts Ward’s story in broad religio-national terms by depicting two ships in combat, one identified with the Christian/English symbol of St. George’s cross, the other with the Muslim/Turkish crescent. The deck of the latter ship is peopled with men in turbans, while two dead, unturbaned men hang from the spars.⁸⁷ This woodcut is tantalising evidence that Ward’s “English” identity came into question as soon as he began his piratical ways, or at least as soon as he began to attack other Englishmen on the high seas. As such, it complements aspects of Daborne’s play which also suggest that Ward could not possibly simultaneously be Muslim and English.

And yet it must be questioned whether Ward’s English identity was ever wholly effaced. Although the author of the pamphlet *Newes from Sea* variously terms Ward and his men “Turkes” and “renegadoes,” he also accounts them “Christians and our countrymen,” and “Englishmen.”⁸⁸ Even in *A Christian Turn’d Turke*, which Daborne claims was written specifically in order to chronicle the horror of Ward’s transformation

⁸⁵ *Othello*, 2.3.170-172.

⁸⁶ Massinger, *Renegado*, 5.1.151-153. Louis Wann argues that by the seventeenth century one of the common meanings of “turning Turk” was to engage in prostitution. Wann, “To turn Turk” *Modern Language Notes* (March, 1931) pp. 153-154.

⁸⁷ This detail serves to make the woodcut identifiable with the encounter described on leaf C3r of the pamphlet. The fact that this woodcut was specially cut for this pamphlet makes it all the more intriguing that Ward’s ship is marked with Islamic signifiers of the crescent and the turbaned crew. On the importance of turbans as signifiers of Islam, and especially of Christians converted to Islam, see Matar, “The renegade,” p. 501.

into a “Turk,” Ward is sometimes identified as an Englishman after his conversion. In the closing scene of the play he declares: “I am a Turke,”⁸⁹ but in his gallows speech he moans: “Lastly, oh may I be the last of all *my country* / That trust unto *your* [i.e. the Muslims’] tretcheries ...”⁹⁰, placing himself on the “my country” side of this distinction between Englishmen and Muslims. In the cheap print and public drama Ward retained his “English” identity even after his conversion, even in works that attempted to place him beyond the pale.

Nor is it only in the cheap print and public drama that Ward the Muslim retained an “English” identity. Like the many Englishmen who converted to Islam before and after him, Ward was identified in the diplomatic records after his conversion as an “English renegade,” a term which asserts English identity even as it is denied. The Ottomans, as well, were reluctant to accept Ward as a “Turk” rather than as an Englishman. In 1612, during a meeting between the Venetian ambassadors to Istanbul and an Ottoman vizier in which the Venetians complained yet again about the activities of “Ward an English renegade, who was received and supported in Tunis by Turkish officials,” the vizier replied: “It is all your own fault; you insist on the general term Christians; and yet sometimes it is Christians under the guise of Turks who do the mischief.”⁹¹ While it is difficult to see how Ward’s activities can be blamed on Venetian perceptions that Istanbul should be held responsible for Ward (after all, he was “received and supported in Tunis by Turkish officials”), the vizier’s point is apt: many so-called “renegades” were converts in name only, and used their new status as a cover for their ongoing, indiscriminate raiding of Christian and Muslim shipping. Be this as it may, it is nonetheless surprising to find Ottoman officials accepting such conversions as legal fictions.

Travellers to North Africa were even more definite in their identification of Ward

⁸⁸ See, for example, Daborne, *A Christian Turn 'd Turke*, leaves D2v, E2r, E2v.

⁸⁹ Daborne, *A Christian Turn 'd Turke*, leaf I3v.

⁹⁰ Daborne, *A Christian Turn 'd Turke*, leaf I4v. Emphasis added.

the Muslim as an Englishman. William Lithgow, a Scot who met Ward in Tunis in 1615 and 1616, described him as “our English Captayne, generall Waird.” James Howell also wrote of “our Countryman Ward,” and John Smith wrote of “Ward a poore English sailer” now become one of the chief pirates of the Barbary coast. Ward’s identification as an Englishman survived his death, and became even stronger. Edward Coxere, who visited Tunis sometime in the second half of the seventeenth century, heard tales of “Captain Ward, the great English pirate who ... turned Turk.” Late in the seventeenth century a new ballad on Ward was written, entitled “Captain Ward and the Rainbow,” in which Ward was thematically linked to Robert Devereaux, second Earl of Essex, a well-known general cultural hero. In this ballad Ward, like Essex before him, was mythologized into a tragic figure whose abundant talents were wasted because of mistreatment by the English state, but whose memory endured as an icon of English greatness.⁹²

It cannot be denied, as so many scholars of the period have demonstrated, that some version of Christianity existed at the base of personal and communal English identities in the early modern period. Also, it must be conceded that there is something to Anderson’s claim that the “imagined community” of early modern England was defined primarily by reference to a common symbolic and verbal “sacred language” and allegiance to a common monarch. Nonetheless, the enduring “Englishness” of Ward the Muslim, resident of Tunis, subject of the Ottoman Emperor, must give pause.

This Wardian Knot of identity politics can be cut in two ways. It could be argued,

⁹¹ *CSP Ven XII* 458 (10 March 1612).

⁹² Lithgow, *Totall Discourse* p. 358; Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Eliae* (London: David Nutt, 1890), p. 110; Smith, *The True Travels ... Of Captaine John Smith* (London, 1630), p. 59, reprinted in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith III*, P.L. Barbour, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 239; Coxere, *Adventures by Sea*, E.H.W. Meyerstein, ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 56; “The famous sea-fight between Captain Ward and the Rainbow” has been reprinted in Firth, *Naval Songs*, pp. 30-31.

with Matar, that referring to Ward as English was simply a matter of convenience; that he was known as “Ward the English renegade” only to differentiate him from other European renegades in North Africa.⁹³ This explanation undoubtedly holds more than a grain of truth, but it cannot explain why English travellers to North Africa embraced Ward as one of their own when they described him as “our countryman,” “our English captain” or even “the great English pirate.” Alternately, it could be argued, together with Daborne and the Ottoman vizier quoted above, that Ward was recognised as an Englishman only because it was universally assumed, and quite possibly true, that he could not *really* have converted to Islam; that in his heart of hearts his faith in Christianity endured. This explanation is problematic as well, for Ward, like other English converts to Islam, had publicly renounced allegiance to both Christ and the crown of England. Certainly by the laws of the period this was sufficient to render him guilty of the grossest of treasons and apostasies, and to have him executed forthwith. If he had been captured and forcibly brought to England, where the High Court of Admiralty had already indicted him *in absentia*, few would have accepted pleas that deep down he had always remained a good Christian and faithful subject. Once these tidy explanations of Ward’s “Englishness” are discounted, we are left to consider whether, contrary to what Anderson and other historians of nationalism have argued, early modern identities were, in fact, constructed around the notion of essential, ineradicable, and *natural* “national” identity, determined by the location of an individual’s birth.

In his attempt to differentiate between early modern and modern English “imagined communities” Anderson has downplayed the significance in early modern identities of two important determinants of modern national identity: language and geography. Anderson argues that vernacular languages were overwritten by the existence of a larger community forged through the sacred languages of Latin in Christendom and Arabic in Islam; and that the existence of heterolinguistic empires such as that of Philip II

⁹³ Matar, “The renegade,” p. 491.

of Spain (or of the Ottoman emperors, an example Anderson does not cite) demonstrates the precedence of allegiance to a monarch over language in determining imagined communities. In the case of geography, Anderson argues the often porous borders of pre-modern eras demonstrate that the decisive factor in determining imagined communities was not geographic space but allegiance to a quasi-sacred ruler.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, it seems that Anderson has underestimated the importance of language, and is entirely mistaken in discounting geography, as factors in early modern English identity.

Richard Helgerson has argued that there was a conscious effort among English *literati* in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to create, in the words of Edmund Spenser, “the kingdom of our own language,” that is, to articulate a distinction between English and other European peoples through the use of English as a literary language.⁹⁵ If this was indeed the intention of the men whose work Helgerson examines, who include Spenser, Shakespeare, Hakluyt, Camden, and Coke, they started from advantage. Unlike continental vernaculars such as Italian, French, Spanish and German, which were occasionally employed in early modern diplomacy, English at this time was truly parochial. Even ambassadors to England could not be bothered to learn the language of their host state; nor were they expected to do so.⁹⁶ To speak English was, without question, to be identified as somebody from England, for nobody else spoke such a crude,

⁹⁴ Discussed in the introduction and first two chapters of *Imagined Communities*.

⁹⁵ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). The quotation from Spenser is cited on p. 1, and discussed in the introduction, pp. 1-18. Helgerson argues that among the many tensions evident in the phrase “the kingdom of our own language” is a desire to dissociate English identity from the English monarchy.

⁹⁶ Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), pp. 216-217. While Latin remained the principle language of diplomacy until the eighteenth century, ambassadors were encouraged to learn and use at least the language of their host country and several other continental vernaculars (including Turkish). Nonetheless, “nobody in the sixteenth century except an Englishman was expected to speak English, not even the perfect ambassador” (quoted from p. 217).

backwater language. Ward's status as an Englishman undoubtedly owed something to the fact that he spoke English as his native tongue.

An even stronger case can be built for the notion that Ward retained an ineradicable "English" identity simply because he had been born in England. Anderson's view that allegiance was more important than territoriality in pre-modern identity has been called into question by the work of scholars of the medieval and early modern periods. Cynthia Neville, for example, has argued from legal records that the location of the Anglo-Scottish border was key to constructions of late medieval English identity, even in a period when the border line itself was subject to change. Among the examples Neville cites is the case of Robert de Lynton, who in 1442 tried to prove that he was a "true Englishman" and not a Scot by arguing that the town in which he had been born, though currently in the hands of the Scots, had been part of English territory at the time of his birth.⁹⁷ This was an important point, for people born outside England could at best attain the limited rights of denizens of England, not the full rights and privileges which were accorded the natural subjects of the English crown.⁹⁸ Anderson's view of pre-modern identities notwithstanding, it would have been fully evident to Robert de Lynton that allegiance was neither mutable nor portable, and that the geographical accident of birth was a key feature of English identity as early as the later Middle Ages.

⁹⁷ C.J. Neville, "Local sentiment and the 'national' enemy in northern England in the later Middle Ages" *Journal of British Studies* 35 (1996), pp. 419-437. On Robert de Lynton see pp. 430-431.

⁹⁸ It is also possible that Ward's Englishness derived partly from being under the common law. As J.G.A. Pocock has demonstrated, the early modern English cultivated a myth of the common law which saw it as being an essential part of English culture and identity. In this regard, Pocock's work fits in with a number of scholars of nationalism, led by John Armstrong and Anthony Smith, who view such myths as key to understanding pre-modern "national" identity. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, revised ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); John Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

Neville's work examines the predicament of aliens in England; but what of English aliens in other lands? Could they adopt a new language and a new home and leave their English identity behind them? The case of John Ward suggests not, at least not from the perspectives of the countrymen he left behind. As we have seen, Ward remained English in English eyes and texts despite his rejection of the English king and the English church. Ward might choose to deny "Redeemer, religion, country," but could only succeed in becoming a political and religious Judas, a traitor. Whatever he did, his Englishness was indelible.

Ward's change of allegiance was perceived not as a political and religious do-it-yourself excommunication, but as a treasonous betrayal of King James and King Jesus. This is itself illuminating. Lacey Baldwin Smith has argued that the early modern English viewed treason as an offence against the divinely ordered universe, a cosmic crime which disrupted the "natural" fealty that every man owed his king; for this reason treason was punishable with execution and summary damnation. To change allegiance was not merely illegal, but unnatural and sacrilegious as well. Contrary to Anderson's assertion that national allegiance was a fluid concept in the early modern period, it seems that Ward had only two choices: to be a true English subject, or to be an untrue English subject. In the perceptions of his countrymen he could not reinvent himself. According to English law John Ward was guilty of unnaturally subverting God's laws by disobeying his king. Regardless of whose allegiance he claimed to be in, he remained to the end of his days a traitor before the English king and before God.

In short, the inability of John Ward to move freely from one "nationality" to another, despite becoming a "Turk," suggests that national identity was perhaps *more* firmly fixed in early modern culture than in our own. Anderson's comparison of national and gender identities, it turns out, is at least as appropriate to the early modern period as it is to the modern.

Ward's sustained "English" identity can, on the one hand, be viewed as a triumph of Englishness over Islam. However abhorrent Islam was in the eyes of the English subsequent to the Elizabethan diplomatic and literary experiments with affiliation, it could not overwhelm. Even for the treasonous sinners who committed the political/religious act of conversion, Islam remained impossible to assimilate. Moreover, given time even a traitorous villain like Ward could be rehabilitated into a noble hero, as the late-seventeenth century ballad of "The Famous Sea-Fight between Captain Ward and the Rainbow" demonstrates.

On the other hand, the inability of Ward to transform himself into a Muslim in the eyes of his countrymen left the pirate in a kind of limbo. If some ineradicable essence deep within Ward remained English to the end, that Englishness was nonetheless adulterated by Islam. Ward remained English, but only as an "English renegade." It is important to be mindful of the disregard for the actual tenets of Islam during the period, discussed above in Chapter Two. During this time it was accepted as obvious that Islam was fraudulent while Christianity was True. The rejection of Jesus as Christ by Muslims might be portrayed as a result of either malevolence or ignorance, depending upon the perspective of the individual English writer. In either case, Islam was held to be a religion of sensuality, one that appealed to the corrupt will of all humanity. Christians were expected to rise above such temptation, not because they were superior to other peoples, but because they had access to the gospels, which, together with the divine faculty of reason, instructed them in godly living. Through corrupt use of free will and reason Ward had succeeded in transforming himself, but not into a Muslim. Instead, Ward became a monster of political and religious identity: an English Turk.⁹⁹ While Ward's Englishness

⁹⁹ The word monster should be understood to capture the full range of meanings it held in the early modern period. Monsters were not only horrors that compelled simultaneous revulsion and attraction; they were also lessons, sent by God to instruct humanity. See Kathryn Brammall, "Discussions of abnormality and deformity in early modern England, with particular reference to the notion of monstrosity" (Dalhousie University, Halifax,

survived his apostasy, the juxtaposition of that Englishness with Islam is significant. Though he remained, to quote James Howell, one of “our countrymen,” he had voluntarily, unquestionably, joined the ranks of the Fallen. This was a difference, and one that most certainly set him apart from the English of England.

* * * * *

Much of this dissertation has been spent arguing for a new periodization of English representations of Islam, stressing changes that occurred in these representations over time, sometimes within decades. On the one hand it is important to chart such changes, for this level of analysis can provide a nuanced understanding of English culture that it is all too easy to lose sight of when scholars work at the level of a generalised category such as “the early modern period,” “the Renaissance,” or “the Elizabethan age.” On the other hand, it is important to be conscious of continuities that run through the period, continuities that justify the use of such broad temporal categories. To fail to do so is to fall into the same trap as Foucault did in his histories, to consider the period presently under study to be unified and discrete, radically different from periods before and after it. It is fascinating to note that one of the great works of revisionist history of the English civil wars, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* by Conrad Russell,

NS: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1996).

It is also interesting to note the gender configurations of conversion to Islam in the plays and cheap print. While Matar may be correct in stating that it was merely the result of confusion over the nature of circumcision that castration became so prominently associated with conversion, it is also possible to argue that the writers were actually attempting to demonstrate that conversion to Islam was feminizing. This argument is based upon the well-established early modern principle that men were primarily identified with reason, while women were predominantly identified with desires of the flesh and corruption of free will. For a Christian man to succumb to a religion of sensuality, then, was to allow his will to triumph over reason, to subordinate “masculine” reason to “feminine” will. Castration then becomes a logical means of expressing this relationship. Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* offers a particularly moving account of such a process, though Antony is never crudely castrated, as some of the renegades of *The Fair Maid of the West*, *The Renegado*, and *A Christian Turn’d Turke* are.

evinces the same model of cultural change as the works of Foucault or Matar. The latter work within ill-defined periods that span centuries, and Russell works within a sharply defined period of five years, but the result is the same: the perception that those five years stand as a single unit, out of joint with the period before and distinct from the period after.¹⁰⁰

It is significant that, whatever changes occurred in English general cultural imaginings of Islam after 1603, they nonetheless retained the same basic indifference to the actual tenets of Islam.¹⁰¹ More than this, however, as the English ceased to use Islam to fashion an alternate world in which to explore English dilemmas, they also flattened out and simplified their representations of Islam. The inextinguishable Englishness of John Ward can be compared to the inner Islam possessed by Henry V and Othello. Both were forces that welled up unbidden, and neither could be contained through either free will or reason. Ward may have considered his conversion to be an act of free will, rationally undertaken in order to resolve the complex dilemma that faced him when his attempts to return to Christian Europe failed. He might well have argued, with modern scholars such as Nabil Matar, that upon conversion to Islam he had eradicated his Englishness, but his indictment before the High Court of Admiralty and James's proclamation against "Captaine John Ward ... and other English Pirates" speak differently. Despite his chosen status as Ottoman naval officer and Muslim, Ward was as powerless to prevent his characterisation as English in the writings of British travellers as he would have been able to avoid his trial as an English traitor, had he been captured and returned to England. Similarly, the play *Othello* takes the notion of an inner Islam, explored by

¹⁰⁰ Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁰¹ This is all the more surprising given that knowledge of Islam and Islamic cultures began sharply to increase in England at this time, owing to the work of men such as the historian Richard Knolles and, later, the early Arabist Edward Pocock. On the study of Islam among the early modern English intellectual elite, see Matar, *Islam in Britain*,

Shakespeare previously in the Lancastrian tetralogy, and demonstrates that propensities to violence and tyranny must be accepted as part of human nature, and as such can be neither denied nor contained. While Othello and Henry V are fictional characters, their inner Islam is merely the nightmarish counterpart to the assertions of affiliation that Elizabeth and her representatives made throughout the last quarter century of her reign. While Edmund Hogan asserted that Sultan Abd al-Malik was “a verrie earnest Protestant,” and Queen Elizabeth herself described the English and Moroccans as being joined “in lyke profession of religion,”¹⁰² Shakespeare attempted to work out the deeper meanings of such affiliation. The conversion of the fictional John Ward who appears in Daborne’s play, then, can be considered an obvious, crude rendering of the inner Islam of Othello. Similarly, the assertions of Ward’s new, dual identity as Muslim and Englishman which appear in diplomatic and travellers’ writings can be considered a flattening of Elizabeth’s awkward, ambiguous attempts to demonstrate affiliation between English Protestantism and Islam.

In the introduction to this dissertation I suggested that the story of John Ward might properly be considered a summation of the thesis. This is so partly on account of Ward’s life history: working as a sailor and as a privateer, Ward lived through and participated in Elizabeth’s demonisation of the Spanish and the expansion of English commerce in the Mediterranean, and so at the very least became an observer of English commerce with Islam. Additionally, the appropriation of Ward’s story into English general culture, as well as by English diplomats, make of John Ward a unique intersection of the chief sources of this dissertation. Perhaps most intriguingly, however, is that it is possible to see in Ward’s story the continuing development of English rhetorics of affiliation that originated in an earlier period.

1558-1685, pp. 73-119.

¹⁰² Letter from Hogan to Elizabeth, June 11, 1577, BL Cotton Ms. Nero B XI, fo. 297; Elizabeth to Ahmad al-Mansur, May 10, 1599, PRO SP, Royal Letters, II no. 24.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said states that “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.”¹ To the early modern English, Islam meant both more and less than this. Diverse imaginings of Islam allowed the English to negotiate their own identity, as well as their place in the wider world. Merchants, diplomats, playwrights, balladeers, and pamphleteers presented versions of Islam that were distorted by conflicting interests and interpretations, and which explored Islam not only as a contrasting image, but, depending upon the moment of composition and upon the choices made by individual authors, as a means of asserting commonalities between Englishmen and Muslims. Nonetheless, it is crucial to maintain a sense of the relative vitality of representations of Islam within English general culture. It may be observed that playwrights, for example, made extensive symbolic use of Islam throughout the half century from 1575 until 1625, but it must also be noted that the representations of the first quarter of the seventeenth century lacked the freshness and urgency of those of the last quarter of the sixteenth century. *Orientalism* misrepresents the early modern period not only with regard to the content of English representations of Islam, but also in the identification of these representations as the preeminent means of articulating English identity. Said’s mistake is not surprising, for he had based his conclusions on the early modern period upon his research on the modern era. In representations of Islam, as in any other representations or ideas, context is of primary importance. As Jacques Derrida has demonstrated through the analysis of language, the symbolic sets that inform culture are permanently in flux: there is no stasis in meaning, just as there are no fixed concerns or obsessions. As useful as George Peele found Islam to be in bringing a fresh perspective to the exploration of the concept of *dominium* during the late 1580s, within twenty years English interests had shifted and references to Islam became more formulaic and less complex.

Context, though of primary importance, is not all. Representations of Islam are not formed by “culture”; they are created by people who live within culture. The distinction is not minor: it is the difference between viewing documentary and literary writing as “a product of the age,” and viewing it as the work of individual authors who make individual choices. Culture may well determine what is possible to imagine (and is in this similar to Foucault’s concept of episteme), but individual writers are free to challenge, subvert, and ignore aspects of the culture in which they live. Foucault convincingly argues, especially in his later works, that discipline (the limiting of personal agency) is only one aspect of power within a culture. Equally important are the opportunities that power affords for resistance, for the expression of subversive or counter-cultural ideas and actions. To illustrate with an example from the early modern period, we may say that, from the English Reformation to the Battle of the Spanish Armada, the English were particularly interested in expressing the political, economic, cultural, and religious self-sufficiency of the English kingdom. It is not surprising that, in the year following the Battle of the Spanish Armada, Peele should write a play that strongly defends the right of a monarch and a nation to be free from assault from neighboring nations, and condemns such assaults as unjust even if they are cloaked in religious rhetoric. Nevertheless, Peele’s decision to emphasize the political legitimacy of an Islamic monarch in the face of attack by an evangelizing Christian was both innovative and entirely his own. The Battle of the Spanish Armada lent urgency to the issue of *dominium*, but the interpretation and expression of that issue in *The Battle of Alcazar* is Peele’s own. A second example: the relative lack of vitality in Jacobean representations of Islam, in comparison with late Elizabethan representations, has much to do with the continuing evolution of English understanding and symbolic use of Islam, but it also has to do with the decisions that individual authors made. If Massinger was conservative and formulaic in his use of Islam in *The Renegado*, the same cannot be said of his decision to portray Catholics, including a Jesuit, as heroic defenders of Truth.

¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 1-2.

This combination of constitutive culture and individual agency makes it difficult to validate a concept as broad and blunt as “otherness.” According to theories of otherness, Western cultures define themselves in opposition to cultures and peoples from beyond their borders. There have been two principal means of arguing for the primacy of otherness; the first conflicts with a fully developed notion of individual agency, and the second is not applicable to the early modern period. The first case is the position taken by Said in *Orientalism* and subsequently widely adopted despite being abandoned by Said, and argues that the impulse to “other” is hardwired into Western culture, that we are unable to conceive of identity in any terms but otherness. This places an absolute limit on what is conceivable by “the Western mind,” thus radically limiting human agency. Moreover, the rhetorics of affiliation with Islam employed by the English during the 1580s and 1590s contradict this position, as does the ability of modern scholars to step far enough outside of this mindset in order to analyze it. The second position, which grounds later works by Said such as *Culture and Imperialism*, suggests that at certain periods reliance upon “otherness” made sense owing to the urgency of material considerations. In other words, at moments when it is personally and collectively profitable to represent outsiders as “others” this perspective will achieve hegemony. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the material reliance of colonial masters upon the subjugation of imperial subjects served as a strong determinant in the formulation of representations of both colonizer and colonized, resulting in the tendency to othering that is typical of the English culture of the day. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the English were in no way reliant upon the subjugation of colonial subjects, and so there is no reason to find in English writings of this period a uniform othering of all things non-English.

The early modern English not only lacked imperial power over the Islamic peoples of North Africa and the Mediterranean, they lacked pretensions to such power. It is bizarre in the extreme to suggest that the sixteenth and seventeenth century English believed themselves to be masters over the Ottomans or the Sa’adians. It is a step beyond this to claim that the English had a material investment in the subjugation of Muslims in

these regions. Finally, the suggestion that Elizabethan interactions with Moroccans were weighted by an emerging slave trade must be dismissed as an anachronistic absurdity. Not only is the chronology of this argument suspect, but so is its geography. As discussed in Chapter Three, this argument is itself dependant upon the modern representation, fashioned during the imperialist era, of Africa as a cultural and geographical monolith.

Nonetheless, all three of these positions – that the English coveted imperial authority, that they had a material interest in the subjugation of Muslims, and that this material interest was partly on account of an Elizabethan trade in African slaves – have appeared in modern studies of early modern representations of Muslims and Moors. In many cases, it is the most recent studies that have been the least nuanced. Whereas Winthrop Jordan, writing in the 1960s, was careful to identify the slave trade and modern racial politics as only one possible end of sixteenth century English representations of Africans, scholars writing after Jordan collapsed his carefully constructed arguments into a series of direct connections and inevitabilities. Elliot Tokson, writing in the early 1980s, asserted that ever since the slaving expeditions of John Hawkins in the 1560s the English have had a cultural and economic investment in the denigration of Africans;² Kim Hall, working a decade later, goes even further: “[T]hat England’s first involvement in slave trading occurs in the 1550s suggests that slave trading was from the first an integral part of the African trade.”³ It is a syllogism worthy of Karen Newman. Like Newman’s argument, discussed in Chapter Three, that since George Best described blackness as monstrous and since Othello is black, therefore Othello must be monstrous, Hall suggests that since Hawkins sold West African slaves in the Spanish New World in the 1550s, and since today we do not differentiate various regions within Africa, therefore all English relations with all of Africa since the 1550s must be tied into the slave trade.

² Elliot H. Tokson, *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1982), p. 37;

³ Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 19.

Emily Bartels' offers a welcome corrective to this position, arguing that "the development of the Atlantic slave trade ... neatly feeds into a history of racism, but ... would not come to define England's relation to Africa until the Restoration."⁴ Nonetheless, Bartels maintains the primacy of imperialist desires and concerns in shaping English responses to Muslims and Africans. As her most recent article unfolds, it becomes evident that her point in pushing forward the onset of English involvement in the slave trade is only to suggest that prior to the slave trade the English were not interested in Africa because it lacked commodities to feed English imperialism.⁵ Despite her earlier work on the embassy of Edmund Hogan to Morocco in 1578,⁶ Bartels overlooks both the booming Anglo-Moroccan sugar trade and the militarily crucial, though often secretive, trade in saltpetre.

Most recently, Nabil Matar and Daniel J. Vitkus have begun to move away from the perception, in the words of historian Daniel Goffman, of "the Englishman overseas ... as the imperialist incarnate."⁷ Like Goffman, both Matar and Vitkus ground their work in a sophisticated understanding of the tremendous military, political, and cultural advantage that the Ottomans held in their dealings with early modern Europeans. Nonetheless, Matar continues to work within the interpretative tradition established in Said's *Orientalism*, suggesting that the reality of the Ottoman military threat was sufficient to create the conditions necessary for othering: "[b]ecause Islam and Muslims had successfully – and dangerously – confronted Christendom in the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, and because they had been the enemy for too long and for too many

⁴ Emily C. Bartels, "Othello and Africa: Postcolonialism reconsidered" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 54 (1997), p. 47. This represents a significant modification on the position that Bartels adopted in her earlier article, "Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello and Renaissance Refashionings of Race" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), p. 433.

⁵ Bartels, "Othello and Africa," p. 52.

⁶ Bartels, "Making More of the Moor", pp. 440-442.

⁷ Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), p. 3.

reasons, they would always remain the implacable ‘Other.’”⁸ In operating simultaneously at the level of all Christendom and of English culture, Matar obscures the fact that Christendom itself was not, in the seventeenth century, a working concept, and may never have been.⁹ Moreover, Matar’s creation of a single, unified “early modern period” elides the remarkable efforts of Elizabeth I to create an alliance with the Ottomans or the Sa’adians and her use of rhetoric of affiliation in doing so.

The most recent work by Daniel Vitkus is both more promising and more disappointing than Matar’s. Unlike Matar, Vitkus uses his revision of the relative strengths of the English and the Ottomans to move beyond the reductive analysis of the early modern period offered by Said in *Orientalism*: “...Said’s *Orientalism* reduces a web of unstable signifiers to a monolithic signified called ‘the oriental other.’ In the early modern period there is not yet a construct such as Said’s ‘Orient’; it is a far more confused and complicated set of images and conceptions we see articulated, for example, in the drama of sixteenth and seventeenth-century England.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, Vitkus, like Matar, assumes the validity of a single, long early modern period. As a result, Vitkus’s observation of the richness and variety of English representations of Islam during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fails to bear fruit. Instead of examining multiple intersections of material, political, and cultural interests in Anglo-Islamic relations during this period, Vitkus retreats into the broad, bland assertion that this variety was nothing more than “an attempt to make sense of the porous cultural *mélange* that made up the

⁸ It is significant that Matar anchors this statement with a reference to the central thesis of Said’s *Orientalism*, that modern Orientalism is of a piece with its pre-modern counterparts. Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558-1675* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 186-187, quotation from p. 187.

⁹ As Dorothy Vaughan has demonstrated, individual Christian powers had long looked to the Ottomans for military alliance against other Christian nations prior to the seventeenth century. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350-1700* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1954).

¹⁰ Daniel J. Vitkus, Introduction to *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 44.

Islamic Mediterranean.”¹¹ This simplistic position enables Vitkus to then adopt a teleological interpretation, arguing that variety of representation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was nothing more than an incoherent moment in an otherwise smooth trajectory from medieval to modern representations of Islam: “If we examine ... the representation of Islam in American journalism during the last thirty years, we will find ample evidence for an unbroken tradition depicting Islamic people as violent, cruel, wrathful, lustful, and the like ... that draws upon a venerable tradition of demonization that began in the medieval period and acquired some of its present features in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”¹²

This dissertation has argued that it is time we began to consider a finer chronology of representations of Islam than those of the broad “Elizabethan” or “early modern” periods. By examining in detail the evolution of English representations of Islam and charting them against the development of Anglo-Islamic diplomacy and commerce, it is possible to discern not only that there was a range of representations made in the early modern period beyond a simplistic “othering,” but also that early modern representations had their own rhythm, ebb, and flow. Once early modern representations are studied as a phenomenon of the early modern period, and not as the precursors to modern forms of oppression and exclusion, it becomes possible to perceive not only tremendous variety in representations of Islam during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but also variations in the cultural relevance of these representations. The complex, fresh representations minted during the last quarter of the sixteenth century by authors as diverse as Edmund Hogan, Christopher Marlowe, Elizabeth I, and William Shakespeare speak to the urgency that these representations held at the moment of their fashioning. Similarly, the more formulaic representations made in the first quarter of the seventeenth century suggest that English culture was not

¹¹ Vitkus, Introduction, p. 44.

¹² Vitkus, Introduction, p. 16.

necessarily more insular, but that it had different interests, that the English had begun to reach out to different partners, to explore different possibilities for affiliation.

Once this shift in representations is understood, it is easier to comprehend the importance of the history of representations of Islam to early modern English history more generally, without overstating it. Even during the reign of Elizabeth Islam was not the prime referent for the construction of Englishness, although the continuing evolution of Wycliffe's concept of an "inner Islam" during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries suggests that Islam remained a potent form of symbolic shorthand for the English. It must be noted that the texts analyzed here were deliberately selected, and do not represent anything like a cross-section of English writing. It is all the more important to bear this in mind with regard to my analysis of Jacobean representations. It was not merely the spirit of representations of Islam that changed, but their frequency as well. Early seventeenth-century authors simply did not employ representations of Islam with anything like the regularity of the late Elizabethans. This is as true of James I, who was more interested in establishing contact with other Christian princes than in maintaining contact with non-Christian powers, as it is of the playwrights and pamphleteers who wrote during the period of his rule.

The importance of studying early modern English representations of Islam lies not in their primacy, but rather in the fact that, like the study of shifting theories of political legitimacy or religious truth, representations of Islam cast light upon the culture that produced them. The connection between individual representations and English culture more generally may not always be obvious or direct, but by understanding how the English perceived the most powerful non-Christian powers known to them, we can make progress in understanding how the English viewed the world beyond their shores – as well as providing insight into how the English viewed themselves.

APPENDIX A: The Ottoman and Sa'adian Dynasties

The Ottoman Dynasty to 1640

Osman I (1288-1326)

Orcan (1326-1359)

Murad I (1359-1389)

Bayezid I (1389-1403)

1403-1413 – period of civil war and the invasion of Timur the Lame

Mehemet I (1413-1421)

Murad II (1421-1451)

Mehmed II (1451-1481)

Bayezid II (1481-1512)

Selim I (1512-1520)

Suleiman I (1520-1566)

Selim II (1566-1574)

Murad III (1574-1595)

Mehmed III (1595-1603)

Ahmed I (1603-1617)

Osman II (1618-1622)

Murad IV (1623-1640)

The Sa'adian Dynasty

Muhammad al-Ka'im (1509-1518)

Ahmad al-A'raj (1518-1540)

Muhammad al-Shaykh (1518-1557)

Muhammad 'Abdallah al-Ghalib Billah (1557-1574)

Muhammad al-Maslukha (1574-1576)

Abd al-Malik (1576-1578)

Ahmad al-Mansur (1578-1603)

Civil wars

APPENDIX B: Chronology of Plays¹

Plays Written for the Public Stage

1587	Marlowe, <i>1 Tamburlaine</i>
1588	Marlowe, <i>2 Tamburlaine</i>
1589	Marlowe, <i>Jew of Malta</i>
1589	Peele, <i>Battle of Alcazar</i>
1590	Kyd, <i>Soliman and Perseda</i>
1591(?)	Greene, <i>Alphonsus</i>
1591	Greene, <i>Orlando Furioso</i>
1591	Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i>
1592	Greene (?), <i>Selimus</i>
1596	ANON <i>Captain Thomas Stukley</i>
1596	Shakespeare, <i>Merchant of Venice</i>
1600	Day, Dekker, Haughton, <i>The Spanish Moor's Tragedy</i>
1600	Dekker, <i>Lust's Dominion</i>
1602	Heywood, <i>1 Fair Maid of the West</i>
1604	Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>
1606	Marston, <i>Sophonisba</i>
1606	Shakespeare, <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
1607	Day, Rowley, Wilkins, <i>Travels of Three English Brothers</i>
1607	Mason, <i>The Turk</i>
1610	Daborne, <i>A Christian Turn'd Turke</i>
1611	Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i>
1612	Webster, <i>The White Devil</i>
1617	Fletcher, Massinger, Field, <i>The Knight of Malta</i>
1619	Rowley, <i>All's Lost by Lust</i>
1624	Davenport, <i>The City Nightcap</i>
1624	Massinger, <i>The Renegado</i>
1630	Heywood, <i>2 Fair Maid of the West</i>
1637	Carlell, <i>Osmond the Great Turk</i>
1641	Denham, <i>The Sophy</i>

Closet Drama and School Plays

1593	Daniel, <i>Cleopatra</i> (closet)
1596	Greville, <i>Mustapha</i> (closet)
1600	Greville, <i>Alaham</i> (closet)
1604	Cary, Miriam, <i>Fair Queen of Jewry</i> (closet)
1618	Goffe, <i>Raging Turke</i> (closet or school)
1619	Goffe, <i>Courageous Turk</i> (closet or school)

¹ This chronology presents plays that have either Muslim characters or Islamic settings. The chronology was derived from several sources, but principally from: A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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- Nero B VIII Correspondence from Abd al-Malik to Elizabeth I
- Nero B XI Request of the Barbary Company to Leicester
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