

The Uxoricide Legend of the Sultan and his European Wife in Elizabethan Drama

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Abstract

Because of the loss of Constantinople (Istanbul), the image of Mehmed II (Mehmet or literary Mahomet) is associated with the city and receives the most merciless hostile account from European Christians. The legend of uxoricide (killing wife) is associated with Sultan Mahomet's and his Fair Greek wife in Elizabethan and Restoration Drama. The same story is in Peele, Carlell, Swinhoe, Goring and Johnson. Elizabethan playwrights have interchanged discourses and prejudices as they crisscrossed between the Turks and their fascination in the Turks. The lustful Ottomans fascinate audiences not only through their harem stories, but by the extravagant tragedies and the magnificent staging of these plays. Similarly, the tragic love episode of the Sultan and the Greek spouse echoes in Goffe, Kyd, Shakespeare and others. Although the dramatic story is led in episodes of love, constancy, fortune, inconstancy, triumph, and death, it is politically exploiting the Turkish incursion in Europe, and the bad nature of the Ottoman Sultans.

Keywords: Mehmed II; Constantinople; Sultan; Amurath; Irene; Elizabethan Drama

Introduction

The image of the Ottoman Empire is crucial in the ideological construction of the West since Constantinople was the old seat of Christian Emperors, and then the seat of the Turkish Ottoman. Elizabethan and Restoration Writers write on the "successive subjects" of heroes who triumphed over the Ottoman Empire [1]. Sir Robert Sherley describes Turks as being modern and great leaders of the world, with universal traits that led to the vogue for the Orient in Europe [1]. Despite this view, bitter prejudice appears in Sir Thomas Sherley's Discourse of The Turks (1617) as he refers to Turks as pagans, infidels, sodomites, liars, drunkards, proud, scornful and cruel [1]. Sultan Mohammed II's (1451-1481) capture of Constantinople in 1453 made Westerners acutely conscious of the Ottoman threat, a threat Europe had previously only vaguely considered. The literary response to this new threat, especially by humanists, was slanted against the Turks [2]. Similarly, English writers have interchanged discourses and prejudices as they crisscrossed between the Turks and their fascination in the Turks.

The Ottoman Sultans were enormously generous, wise and courageous. English playgoing audience enthusiastically adopted the Turkish Sultan into their imaginations. However, the real image of the Ottoman Sultan may demolish European prejudices and represents a sultan figure that undermines homogeneity. For instance, the story of Sultan Mahomet killing his Greek wife is only in European accounts but it is not mentioned in any Turkish historical documents. Mustafa Sahiner remarks that the false depictions of both history and life of the Ottoman Turks that they were not [3]. Moreover, Wann finds an excuse for the playwrights of the early modern period for misrepresenting the Ottoman Turks: "if Elizabethan dramatists erred in presenting false pictures of history or life, the blame was not theirs

but that of the historians they followed," a remark that overlooks the intellectual capacity of the early modern playwrights [3,4]. European references in classical literature and philosophy refer to the Turks who have conquered the land of the Greeks, and absorbed the learning of the Greeks; they have fallen under the spell of Greek unnatural lust [5]. The fact that several Ottoman sultans have got married to European ladies or taken them to their harem as concubines is a source of the stories of the sultan's love for girls and taking them to concubinage which seems to have appealed to the English [6].

The theme of unnatural sex and colonial conquest is the spirit of the denunciation of the Turkish Other. The tale of love and war is consistently used in a sexual context, and such tale becomes a legend in Europe that the concupiscent Mahomet, falling in love with Irene, an enslaved Christian. For a short period of time, the Sultan enjoys the matrimonial life and does not care for his duties as a sultan, but later executes her to show that his responsibilities are far more significant, and thus, he retains power over janissaries. This legendary matter is first exposed by George Peele in the Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the Fair Greek (1594) a lost play, L. Carlell's Osmond the Great Turk (1657), G. Swinhoe's Unhappy fair Irene (1658), C. Goring's Irene (1708) and Dr. Samuel Johnson's Irene (1749). Kyd's Soliman and Perseda (1588) and Goffe's Amurath the First (1619) have evoked the theme of killing in the play. The same tragedy of love with an Athenian, Hiren echoes in Peele, Goffe, Kyd, Shakespeare and others [7]. The story of the sultan and the Greek lady Irene/Hirene, was also portrayed in William Painter's tale, entitled 'Hyerenee the Faire Greeke,' in 'The Palace of Pleasure'. The killing of a wife by a husband is a fascinating romantic theme. William Shakespeare addressed uxoricide in Cymbeline when Posthumous tries to murder his wife, Imogen, under the stress of misthinking of her unfaithfulness and so the supposed character in Othello murders his wife, Desdemona, for the same cause. Matar remarks that 'a cognitive keyword that proved that Muslims had no family structure, no "natural" sexuality, and therefore no place in the civilized world' [5]. Like Peele, other Renaissance dramatists have

established a distorted account about Islam and the Muslim Moors and Turks.

The Renaissance travel literature contains ideological accounts on histories and landscapes of the Ottoman Orient which find their way into Renaissance drama. As the travellers drew their descriptions predominantly of the sultans and other personages from a distant and unreliable view of sights that were "forbidden" to the outsiders in the Ottoman Empire, the Renaissance dramatists established their representations on this collective store of "knowledge" about the Turks. For instance, Richard Knolles' General History of the Turks (1603) demonstrated how an "armchair" historian, without leaving England, could give an account of the historical events of Ottoman and Islamic culture though a collection of inaccurate understandings, depictions, attitudes, interests and stereotypes [8]. The Renaissance plays took into account the Ottoman Empire from an aesthetic, as well as from a religious, political, diplomatic and commercial perception. Accordingly, Renaissance playwrights had written against the Islamic Ottoman expansion threatening and causing fear in the Christian Europe. The English knowledge about the Ottomans and other Oriental peoples was enriched and complicated by the representations of the Ottoman sultans on London stage.

The English historical plays about the Ottoman sultans are primarily based on stories described in The History of the Turkes (1603). Evidently, the armchair historian Knolles' disapproval of the "tyrant Mahomett" and "all his works and ways" enables English dramatists to give an interpretation of the historical events in Constantinople [8]. Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481) attained a mythical status during his own time. He was famous as 'the Conqueror' because early in the third year of his period in office, at the age of only 21, he headed an army that apprehended the capital of the Eastern Christian World, Constantinople (Istanbul). Since 1450s, his character as the first Ottoman leader of actually imperial stature has been of extreme interest; and yet he remains a peculiarly famous personality. One aspect has been the fabrication of intentionally falsified and fanciful accounts. Inconsistently, the messages of anxiety scattered by his opponents in the West were not denied but rather exhilarated by the sultan's own image-makers, who were only too satisfied to boom and even intensify Western fears of the unfriendly purposes of the magnificent Turk.

The Ottoman State was a supreme political and military power controlling trade and sea which threatened the Christian world by the capability of invading any Mediterranean seaport such as Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. As Vitkus notes,

The Ottoman Turks were rapidly colonizing European territory. Thus, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Europeans were both colonizers and colonized, and even the English felt the power of the Turkish threat to Christendom [9].

Therefore, the Ottoman submissions with some European states were not mutual arrangements between two countries but an independent favour granted by the sultans [10]. The Ottoman successfully purchases the support of England for the Turkish imperialism [11]. Farhana Khan states that the misrepresentation of the Ottoman 'despotism and cruelty was indeed necessary to demonize the picture of the Oriental invincibility. If for no other reason, the relentless rise of glory of the Turks required some explanation for the fascinated English public, whose attention had recently been turned towards the remarkable Princes, Bassas and Soldans of the East' [12].

The Ottoman Turks are characterized in the early modern works as the "grand evil" whose infidelity and superficial power are such a great intimidation to the Christendom that they must be stopped and destroyed [3]. Performances of romances including Turkish or ambiguously Oriental characters had been popular, perhaps, since the late fifteenth century [4]. However, the demand of these figures was more classified to the generally popular taste and the genre was almost entirely outdated by the end of Elizabeth's reign. Therefore, Elizabethan playwrights used the theatre as a means of mediating between the English and the Turkish counterparts in the Orient. Asli Cirakman states that the Ottoman plays expose Elizabethan opinions that reflect the existing dispute about the Turks in treatises inscribed by Renaissance intellectuals of administration. He adds that there is 'a secular approach along the lines of real politik is embedded in their dealings with the problem of the threat of the Ottomans' [13]. The presentation of Ottoman is continued by artistic interaction that was, for playwrights, players, and playgoers mutually, collaborative and competitive. As Mark Hutchings remarks:

Indeed, in one sense the notion of a play "market" currently in vogue is perhaps particularly appropriate, for if the Turkish material metaphorically (and, in the form of reusable stage properties and transferable costumes, literally) operated as part of the playhouse economy, it was both a component and a by-product of England's controversial trading partnership with the Ottoman Empire [14].

The West had been embarked into economic confusion and fears from Turkey but Renaissance authors did not pay any respect to the details of the decline of trade. Thus, the Western media, literature and governments reacted in business involvement and communication with Turkey. Chew narrates that Purcas, a British traveller in the time of Shakespeare, says: "The mighty Ottoman is the terror of the Christian world" [1]. The Europeans thought of the Turkish culture as 'a deeply alien culture' and they hated anything attached to the Turks and their Ottoman Sultan which caused in depicting "an immovable stereotype of the raging and expansionist Turk" [15].

The discourse of the Ottoman and the European cultural differences within and between societies and civilizations manifests itself in chronicled history. Thus far, with the purpose to justify for ideological domination and ethical hierarchies, cultural differences are revolved into "absolute natural oppositions" [16]. Although playwrights might change in their degree of setting the nature and boundaries of such oppositions, it eventually turns into a "political deviance" [16]. Therefore, Knolles strove to condemn the wicked ways of the Turks [17]. Joy Pasini remarks that theological and historical texts by John Foxe, Samuel Purchas, and Richard Knolles offered a distorted image of the Ottoman sultan which seeped into a negative image in the early modern drama [18]. Ahmed Alam El-Deen also notes that the stories regarding Turks, frequently with some destructive references as cruelty, malice and violence, not merely enthralled and enticed to the English public, but also enthused English dramatists to present Turkish characters in their plays 'to satisfy the popular demand, playwrights resorted to Turkish history as a source of material' [19]. He similarly remarks that 'playwrights portrayed the Turks as ruthless, brutal villains, and this portrayal drew large audiences to the theatres. The gruesome and malicious Turkish character is enormously popular on the English Theatre [19]. The stereotypes of the "cruel Turk" and the "lustful Turk" were already forming in European imaginations [20]. After the events of 1453, most humanists came to call the Turks "barbarians," and many saw them as a threat to high culture [21].

Moreover, the Christian grief of the loss of Constantinople is represented in revenge proposals to restore it from the Turks.

Constantinople

Constantinople was established to be Jesus' government on earth. It was the capital of the Christendom. Constantinople was one of the most important cities in the world with an ancient history of civilizations. Most of the Ottoman Sultans invaded Europe several times. They had made it their lives' mission. Europeans' thought that the Turkish Sultanate posed a continuous serious danger to them. Therefore, it used to mobilize Christian armies in order to defeat the nascent Turkish State. Muslims had no choice but to conquer Constantinople; it was a matter of survival. Since the rise of Islam, the Muslims sought to free their lands from the Byzantine influence exercised by the Rome and Byzantium. Muslims had already freed the Levant, Egypt and North Africa but since the rise of the early Muslim State, and the dawn of Islam, Constantinople had been mobilizing armies every year in order to wage war on the Muslim State. However, Constantinople remained the gate that protested Europe against the Islamic expansion. For Muslims conquering the city was necessary in order to put an end to the continuous byzantine attempts to eliminate Islam by repeated attacks on Muslim lands. Therefore, Muslims launched 29 military campaigns through eight centuries. Moreover, since the time of Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century, Muslims worked out to put down the strongholds of tyranny and disbelief in the entire world. Due to the Constantinople's formidable fortification, many Muslim attempts to conquer the city had failed. Constantinople remained impregnable to the Ottoman Sultanate for two hundred years. During the reign of Sultan Murad I, the Ottomans crossed the Dardanelles westward into Europe and expanded beyond the Byzantine capital Constantinople towards the borders of Bulgaria. Meanwhile, the Ottoman military establishment was widely developed its power, discipline and commitment to its soldiers [5].

The Ottoman Empire was repeatedly portrayed in English writings as place of military fulfilment. Murad I took control of Edirne in 1361 making it its capital until conquering Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmet II, the conquest. The Sultan Mehmet II was known for his unparalleled military skills that allowed him to conquer the city. Constantinopolitans thought that Mehmet II was going to slaughter them as the Catholics did in 1453, but he asked them to gather in Sophia Church and declared freedom for the church and people as they were before. Many Constantinopolitans embraced Islam and the city remained as Islamic land though the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1923. By conquering Constantinople in 1453, the Byzantium ceased to exist as the capital of The Turks and Islamic World. The news of the loss of Constantinople was a great grief and shock for the Christian Europe. Christian Churchmen called for waging a Holy War to retake the city. William Painter describes how shameful the event for all Christians:

[...] to the shame and etemall infamie of all Christian Princes of his tyme did wyne Constantinople, and tooke away the Eastern Empire from Constantine, A Christian Emperour, the yeare of our Lord 1453 [22].

Accounts of the downfall and sack of Constantinople delivered some of the most shocking and graphic descriptions of the Turkish cruelty, violence and voracious sexuality in early modern writings. In *The Travels of Certaine Englishmen* (1609), William Biddulph [23] writes a perfect example of this as he describes how:

During the time of the sacking (which continued three days) there was no kind of fornication, sodometry, sacrilege, nor cruelty by them left unexecuted. They spoiled the incomparable Temple of Saint Sophia (which had been built by the Emperor Justinian) of all ornaments and hallowed vessels, and made thereof a stable and a brothel for buggerers and whores [24].

The event was a great change in the West as well as the East. It was indirectly an end of the middle Ages in Europe. One of the reasons of this shift in Europe after the fall of Constantinople was that the Ottoman controlled that historical trade route which was known as the 'Silk Road'. Therefore, Europeans had to look for alternative trading routes. As they started to seek out new routes, this sparked the Renaissance in Europe. Moreover many scholars left the city of Constantinople and settled in other European capital cities such as Florence. They played a major role in the development of Europe's scientific fields especially because many of those scientists took valuable manuscripts with them when they left Constantinople. Indeed, the fall of ancient Christian capital, Constantinople ends, more or less, in the Enlightenment. Ivan Kalmar calls this period as early Orientalism [25].

There is a great oratory deal employed in the depiction of the conquest of Constantinople. Knolles' Constantine VIII and Christians are described as the poor King and citizens. In contrast, Mehmed II is the 'young tyrant', the Sultan of the 'invading Turks', who are the 'scourge of Christendom', particularly for driving or hiring Christians to combat against Christians, as janissaries: "the Turkish Kings have grown so great, and their kingdom so mightily enlarged, by enforcing and alluring Christians to fight against Christians" [26]. Other historians such as Kemal H. Karpat [27] and Robert Schwobel [22] have detailed that "the fall of Constantinople and the ensuing fear that the Turks would attack the West and destroy Christianity, was the most powerful stimulus conditioning the formation of the Western image about Turks" [21]. Thus, Knolles provides an extremely illustrated account of the loss of Constantinople:

In this fury of the Barbarians, perished many thousands of men, women, and children, without respect of age, sex, or condition. Many for safegard of their lives, fled into the Temple of Sophia, where they were all without pity slain, except some few reserved by the barbarous victors, to purposes more grievous than death itself. The rich and beautiful ornaments and jewels[...]of the magnificent Church of that most sumptuous and pluckt down and carried away by the Turks: and the Church it selfe built for God to be honoured in, for the present conuerted into a stable for their horses, or a place for the execution of their abhominable and unspeakeable filthinesse: the image of the crucifix was also by them taken downe, and a Turk cap upon the head [...] and calling it the God of the Christians [26].

These accounts of the Turks were, to a certain extent, popular in Elizabethan histories. In these histories, the cruelty of the Turks was stressed above all else. The stereotyped image of the Turks as villainous, savage, bloodthirsty, and murderous, was definitely established in the historical traditions of the West. Samuel Chew remarks that Knolles could not avoid prejudice in his explanations, for his intention was in part propagandist. He pursues to describe for the catastrophes and the deteriorating of the Christian Kingdoms [1]. In this judgement, the wicked image of Satan is associated with "Mahomet, born in an unhappy hour", and his "gross and blasphemous Doctrines [Islam]". Likewise, the "Will of God has permitted Turkish greatness to expand; and various lesser causes have contributed to the catastrophe; the uncertainty of worldly affairs, the lack of unity in

Christendom, the Turks' ardent desire for sovereignty, and their unity and agreement among themselves, their courage, frugality, and temperance" [1]. In Barbour's view, Knolles ultimately "proposes a fundamental enmity between Islam and Christendom" [28]. In due course as Europe became politically and economically dependent on the Ottomans Europeans began to familiarize themselves to the challenge of Oriental superiority [28].

Elizabethan traveller, Sir Robert Sherley calls the Ottomans as being modern and great leaders of the world, with universal traits that led to the vogue for the Orient in Europe [1]. Despite this view, hostile prejudice appears in Sir Thomas Sherley's *Discourse of The Turks* (1617) as he speak of the Turks as pagans, infidels, sodomites, liars, drunkards, proud, scornful and cruel [1]. With respect to Peele's play, the depressed depiction represents the pretended images usually associated to the Ottomans, the collective enemy of Christians, such as their 'evilness', 'treachery' and 'lust', etc. shared with material and accounts existing in Richard Knolles that the Sultan Mehmet II as tyrannical and absolute [29]. Another traveller, Moryson says that Mehmet II 'sent out his father's Sodomieticall boyes [...] Also he sent out of his Pallace the dumb men and dwarfes, in whom he tooke no such delight as his father did'. There is no evidence in the chronological sources about the Ottoman Empire showing that Sultan Murad was bisexual. The English productions of the stereotype of homosexuality or sodomy among Muslims were as an extensive practice in Renaissance books [5]. Hence, several Elizabethan dramas reported the mysterious lives of Ottoman sultans. These dramas and other early modern works dealing with the Turks precise a concerned interest in Islamic power that is both byzantine and overdetermined [30]. In Goffe's view, he shows in the play that he was sympathetic to the anti-Greek polemicists who tried to portray the Turkish conquest of Constantinople as the revenge of the Trojans against the corrupt Greeks [21,31]. Because of the fall of Constantinople, the image of Mehmed II is associated with the city and receives the most merciless hostile account from European Christians.

Turkish Mahomet and Hyren

Sultan Mehmed II (1444-60), known as the Conqueror. He conquered Constantinople in 1453 and then arranged the Law of Fratricide, which declared that it was lawful for the succeeding sultan to kill all of his brothers upon assuming power: "for the welfare of the state, the one of my sons to whom God grants the sultanate may lawfully put his brothers to death" [31]. He wished that this law would serve to avoid any prolonged civil wars in the kingdom, as the sultan's competitors would be abolished. The early Ottomans, for example, may have considered themselves "gazi" warriors, who justified bloodshed through faith. The Ottoman despotic Empire was greatly interested in Western Europe. Meanwhile, European states had lacked the respect for civil justice and the dissolution of military discipline [17].

Peele works fundamentally to intertextualize his historical Ottoman sultan in heroic and romantic tragedy entitled *The Turkish Mahomet and Hyren the Fair Greek* (1594). The play is historically and ideologically to restore and reassess Elizabethan understandings and attitudes towards the Turks. The play *Mahomet* engages with diverse critical, cultural and historical issues. It provides a rich material to assess political and natural characteristic themes concerning cross-cultural encounters. As Ottoman rulers were continuously stereotyped, the East and West were then constructed "as sites in a great theatre of imperial strife between two civilizations" [27]. The Ottoman sexuality seems an attractive theme to the Elizabethan audience as well as it is a

form of cultural encounter. Peele's *Mahomet* definitely borrows from the legend of the unholy Mahomet and Irene. The tale of the sultan and the Greek lady Irene/Hirene is portrayed variously in William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure* (1567-8). Hirene, a Christian captive is rescued from the hands of a common soldier, and is gifted to Mahomet by a captain. Sultan Mahomet falls in love with her and commands a Mufti to wed them. Hirene asks him to postpone it for a week and is allowed this demand. On the other hand, she has in secret prepared for her lover, a Greek nobleman called Paeologus, to meet her at the city gate and flee. In the meanwhile, Hirene puts off the Sultan with fair promises, who turns out to be more and more obsessed with her. Accordingly, he neglects his supreme duties and the Janissaries beat upon the palace door. Mahomet, in order to restore their confidence in him murders Hirene. Paeologus, returning to meet her and flee, discovers her dead body and commits suicide.

The story of killing his wife is one of the false accounts made in the Western library to tarnish the reputation of Sultan Mahomet II who conquered the last state of the Byzantine Empire. However, Turkish sources reject these accounts. Peirce states that 'Ottoman narrative sources are virtually silent with regard to life within the harem' [33]. In fact, neither Turks nor Europeans were able to get first-hand reliable information about the sultans' harem since this institution was a firmly prohibited zone. So European second-hand accounts of the harem were, then, established on fantasies, speculations and rumors [34]. As a result, there is a stock of false reports about the Sultan to vilify his character. The dispute between love and duties is an anecdote derived from the romance, epic traditions and public stories in early modern texts. It is significantly modified by employing it in an Ottoman perspective. In particular, the dramatist Peele plays with the stereotype of the Turks as slaves to their erotic and deadly passions and in this manner Peele expands on a theme of killing wife which previously exists in Knolles's *Generall Historie*. Knolles refer to Mahomet II's romance with Hirene as the product of 'disordered affections, where reason ruleth not the reine', a vice typical of the pompous stage Ottoman. Mahomet II's character seems to increase this stereotype, presenting his manslaughter of Hirene as an ultimate case of apathetic temperance and his capability to 'bridle' his fondness. But Knolles remarks that he gets on his succeeding military wars 'to discharge the rest of his choller, proposing that excess of passion, rather than the proper restraint of passion, provoked the execution of Hirene' [26]. Peele's dramatization of historical stories, call into more interrogation of the relationship between the compared twins of love or war and passion or restraint which Peele claims that they only happen among the Turks.

The plot of a Turkish sultan's killing his young Christian woman occurs in the perspective of a lustful Turk spoiling his unclean lust, rather than providing it an open offence. The political motive permits the sultan to kill as it is the necessity to pursue his violent conquests, which concedes his indulgence in sexual love. The smash of the head of his beloved wife is a significant proof of holding his position as a tough leader. For instance, in Painter's description of the tale, Painter portrays the legend of 'the Eastlie crueltie of an Infidell over towards his ladie' and moves to a description of the fall of Constantinople, an enormously symbolic occasion in the history of the Western affiliation with the Turks. Painter depicts Hirene as being 'a Greeke mayden, of suche rare and excellent beautie, as she charmed the eyes of every wight' who was taken 'amonges the spoyle of that riche Citie' and offered by a Turkish captain to the sultan, in order 'to gratifie his Lorde', as 'a Jewell, (as he believed) moste acceptable to him, above all thinges of the worlde'. This usage of women as property, the 'spoyle' of

hostility, previously used to from the portrayal of the sultan's seraglio, is painted here and Hyrenee, her virtue at this instant in the hands of the lascivious infidel, appears to stand as a symbol for Constantinople itself. At this point the 'Emperour Mahomet', who is described as 'yonge and wanton beyonde measure', is shown to experience the type of love-at-first-glance reaction called in some other plays of Ottoman Sultans' reactions to virtuous Christian women in Elizabethan drama. Farhana Khan argues that 'the absolute authority and ruthlessness of the Turkish Sultan allowed him to vanquish his enemies and establish complete control over the defeated nations as well as any rivals' [12]. This dreadful act of homicide being carried out, sultan Mahomet once again speaks to those assembled with a apparently pompous question as he asks them "Now ye know, whether your Emperor is able to repressed and bridle his affections or not?". This action of bloody determination at the end looks to work against the idea that Muslim men are incapable to control their sexual modes and perceptions, but only inasmuch as such deeds conflict with their duty as conquerors and holy fighters, drawing attention to another central matter in the Christian view of the nature of Islam and its believers as a violent religion of the sword.

Amurath and Eumorphe

Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk, Amurath the First* (1619) purposely depicts a complete lack of ethics in the nature of this royal figure, Sultan Amurath in killing his wife Eumorphe. The episode of Amurath's love and homicide suggests the fundamental cause of the Sultan's success in his barbarous cruelty which, he thinks, it would enable him to defeat his enemies and bring them under his oppression. The playwright's aim is apparently to establish the illusion of a common destiny, shared by Turks and the British in the context of imperial greatness, which bids the attention of dramatists and audiences. Slotkin states that 'Goffe's *The Courageous Turk* deploys Turkish stereotypes to produce a more ambivalent and nuanced exploration of the relationships between passions and restraint, and between Turks and Christians' [35]. This play is a battle between Christians and Ottomans. Amurath's stereotypical characteristics lessen the audience's sense of him as a man. Goffe shows Amurath a devil that has hidden mental vulnerabilities that derive from his personality as a Turk. Farhana Khan argues that 'the absolute authority and ruthlessness of the Turkish Sultan allowed him to vanquish his enemies and establish complete control over the defeated nations as well as any rivals' [12]. In fact, the sexual orientation of the sultan was as absolute as the sultan himself. The embarrassing Amurath publicly executes Eumorphe and gets on a military campaign on Europe. He admits that he turns Turk in killing his wife. While Amurath acts as oppressor of Christian infidels, Goffe rationalizes the extraordinary achievements of the Ottoman sultan. Farhana Khan remarks that instead of being presented as 'a Satan or an anti-Christ, the Turk was depicted as a secular prince in the early modern context although this approach contradicted the historical image of the Turk as the champion of Islam' [12].

The setting of the play is Constantinople which echoes the significance of the city and the distinct place it has in the collective conscience in Europe. The plot grows when the anxieties of war and honour carry out the Sultan to behead his adored concubine, Eumorphe, an enslaved Greek woman. The death and destruction, which would have been scandalous if perpetrated by a Christian hero, seem inescapable in an Oriental monarch. Perhaps for the first time in Elizabethan drama, the expedition for mastery over subject races is

made to act approving and admirable in the Turk. His ancestry is drawn to the traditional heroes of Trojan lineage, also entitled Teucric, rather than the 'barbarous' Scythians [36]. The tragedy does not display Eumorphe's [based on Hyrene] capture but initiates with Amurath upcoming on stage and proclaiming that he has misplaced his concern in war thanks to his new attained saint, Eumorphe:

Amurath: [...] Peace (our grand) Captaine, see here Amurath,
That would have once confronted Mars himself, [...]
Puts off ambitious burdens, and doth hate
Through bloody Rivers to make passages,
Whereby his Soule [Soul] might flote [flout] to Acheron, [...]
Jove I will] outbrave thee! Melt thy selfe in Lust
Embrace at once all-star-made Concubines, [...]
To make me happier, here Ile place my Heaven.
And for thy sake this shall be my Motto be,
I conquered Greece, one Grecian conquered me. [...]
Let others warre, great Amurath shall love. (1.1.3-63)

The unholy Amurath follows his impure lust in calling his "Eumorphe, Love, Queene, Wife, let's haste to Bed!" in order to murder her. Although he has just said his wish to wash his hands in a Christian blood, he is seemingly not as irritated as he considers it must be done, and he inspires himself by appealing the violent stereotype of the stage Turk as an idealized Turkish character to which he aims. Amurath fears his people's power to overthrow him from kingship. On the other hand, Amurath is tortured by the fact that while "poor men may love" and live quietly, he can't. Likewise, when he is reconsidering whether to stay with Eumorphe or to drive out and triumph over the Christians, he attempts to disgrace himself by saying that "The Christians now will scoffe at Mahomet/Perchance they sent this wretch thus to enchant me!". The demands of Turkish piety are conflicting not only to Christian piety but also to Amurath's own personality. For instance, he embarks on his military campaign to provoke his wrath by considering it as a responsibility: 'Our furie's patient! Now will I be a Turke'. This testimonial of extravagant anti-Christian aggressiveness is at that time once more associated straight to his position as sultan and Muslim.

Eumorphe's termination is accurately the same as Irene's as depicted by Knolles. Amurath calls his kinsmen Schahin, Eurenofes and Chafe-Illibegge, ensuing the bogus ghost scene, and asks them what they would do if they obsessed such as loftier creature. Schahin indicates that he would delight in his love spontaneously, Eurenofes states that nobody could invoke him 'from betwixt her armes' while Chafe-Illibegge speaks that if he had a crown "That Queen should be the chieft jem to adorne it'. Then the immoral Amurath takes Schahin's sword and cuts off Eumorphes' head to the great astonishment of the noblemen:

Amurath: There kisse now (captaines) doe! And clap her cheeke;
This is the face that did so captive me:
These were the lookes that so bewitcht mine eyes;
Here be the lips, that I but for to touch,
Gave over Fortune, Victory, Fame, and all;
These were two lying mirrors where I lookt

And thought I saw a world of happiness.

Through such means, Amurath breaks free from his unsubdued passion with his concubine and proceeds to military invasions: "Now Tutor, shall our swords be exercised,/In ripping up the breasts of Christians./Say Generals! Whether is first?". Accordingly, the second act determines the legend of Turkish Mahomet and Hyrene. Along with Vitkus "The Courageous Turke suggests that when English readers and spectator thought of Moors and Turks, they imagined them as rash and violent oppressors who made it a point of religion and military honor to kill innocent women" [37]. Therefore, the Eastern Empire of the Greeks is denoted by the imprisoned lady whose slaying is justified as she grieves from an ethical decline when she acts in accordance with Amurath's wishes. She is sacrificed to encourage the opinion of war and Empire, even yet it is the Turks who are described as evolving champion, in the pursuit of Empire.

Eumorphe appears to be a decent lady who efforts to show up the greatest in Amurath. She identifies magnificence as 'the worst part of woman' (1.3.8) and claims for a relationship established on 'obedience, duty, carefull Love' (1.3.21). In reaction, Amurath pledges to adore 'That vertue in thy brest'. Eumorphe's account grants appropriate affection as a kind of restraint. The tragedy, however, also incorporates a powerful contrary narrative, in which Amurath's love represents a lack of self-control and Amurath's love for Eumorphe is 'intemperate Lust' (2.4.4) and therefore she represents a 'putrid Wenne' (2.4.39). Amurath is commended to abandon his love for the Greek, by raising the spirit of Alexander, the 'brave Macedon' (1.5.66). He is enthused by the example of Alexander's refutation of physical enticements: "Know sir our eyes shall have that abstinence/ That will not looke on them, on boyes, or women" (1.5.42-43). By relating the love of Mahomet II with the martial conquests of Amurath I, a combination not found in other sources or analogues, Goffe establishes a protagonist whose potential for social action is well-defined by the contrasting anxieties of love and war, and both love and war turn out to be spoiled as Amurath crosses his way through their inconsistent obligations. In these respects, the show owes less to self-congratulatory anti-Ottoman propaganda and more to the cynical philosophical disillusionment of Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida [35].

The execution scene in Goffe thoroughly de-emphasizes the dishonorable emotionality of the Ottomans and it shows the issue of Amurath's self-control. Slotkin remarks 'the most shocking event of the play, Amurath's sudden decision to behead the woman he loves, evidently captured the imagination of early modern writers and audiences, for it received multiple treatments during the period [34]. In Knolles, the Sultan Mahomet presents Irene to his high court, who had been dissatisfied with his dalliance, and the court people are "all rapt with an incredible admiration to see a fair (lady), and they said all with one consent, that he had with greater reason so passed the time with her, than any man had to find fault therewith." Being "altogether ignorant of the Sultans mind," they are struck with "great terror" when Mahomet kills Irene, thereby enacting an extreme form of their advice immediately after forcing them to recant it [26]. In Goffe's version of this scene, the key members of Amurath's court are all in on Schahin's plot to turn Amurath against Eumorphe. Thus, when they assess her magnificence and proclaim that they would not be capable to resist her charms; their claims are not an occurrence of how eagerly Turks may be persuaded by lustful passions but rather an illustration of Machiavellian political theatre. Amurath represents the Turkish Sultan in the various stages of his development as a lover, conqueror, father and leader of the Empire of the East. The play is unique in the sense

that it underscores the warrior conducts of the Turks to the magnitude that there is a comprehensive deficiency of any criticism for the death of the female protagonist. In depicting the Turkishness, it echoes Elizabethan dramatists' denials of the Turkish romance in Elizabethan writings and it sketches the image of the Turks to a Trojan origin. The killing is symbolic of the conquest of the Byzantine Empire and its complicity in its own defeat [12].

Soliman and Perseda

Thomas Kyd has evoked the theme of killing in the play *The Tragedy of Soliman and Perseda* rather than the historical personage. Kyd's Soliman is an arrogant ruler with blood on his hands who cares only for his sexual lust. Soliman failed to seduce Perseda, an Italian girl. His lust and tyranny triggered her death but Perseda the protagonist placed an end to his cruelty by poisoning him. While the play is led in affairs of love, devotion, fortune, infidelity, victory, and death, it is politically manipulating the Turkish assault to Rhodes, and the wicked nature of the Turks. The story portrays Perseda is captured by a captain Turk and is offered to Soliman. The Sultan is astonished by her beauty at first sight. He romantically describes Perseda:

Fair locks, resembling Phoebus' radiant beams;
Smooth forehead, like the table of high Jove,
Small penciled eyebrows, like two glorious rainbows;
Quick lamp-like eyes, like heaven's two brightest orbs
Lips of pure coral, breathing ambrosia;
Cheeks, where the rose and lily are in combat;
Neck, whiter than the snowy Appenines;
Breasts, like two over-flowing fountains,
Twixt which a vale leads to the Elysian shades,
Where under covert lies the fount of pleasure
Which thoughts may guess, but tongue must not profane.
A sweeter creature nature never made;
Love never tainted Soliman till now.

However, Perseda loves Erastus, a fellow knight in the sultan's service. In Soliman's court, the long-lost lovers are reunified. The plot is entangled in accusing Erastus of treason done against the sultan, and then he shall be destined by marshal law. Soliman thought he will win Perseda, but she becomes more determined to take revenge from Soliman. Perseda patriotically revolts against Soliman to free her city Rhodes. Soliman has slain her, but he is too pathetic to overwhelm his sexual lust. Although he is taken in by a killing kiss to her lips which are full of poison, he thinks that he can fulfil his solid sexual wish on her dead body. The end scene portrays Soliman's personality as a cruel murderer and a lustful lover. The distorted image of the invader Sultan in Kyd is a typical tradition of Turkophobia for Elizabethan dramatists [2]. Soliman and Perseda represent the Elizabethan response to Soliman and Turkey as stereotyped by anti-Oriental prejudice. Said remarks that "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident" [38]. Although Elizabethan England is far removed from the world's political prospect, there is a certain lack of fear and anxiety from the Turks as Kyd's play seems to take a rather relaxed and contemplative look at the latest events that

overwhelmed England through the civil war, and bundled it in an interesting Oriental setting with imaginary characters such as Soliman and Perseda.

Othello and Desdemona

The murder of Soliman to his beloved lady is like Othello's murder to Desdemona in which he has converted to erotic, Islamic evil and conformed to the European stereotype of the irritable and lecherous Muslim. M. Fatih Esen and Melih Karakuzu find that Shakespeare's tragic hero is a Moorish warrior whose public militarism becomes, in the privacy of his bedroom, a version of the sultan's overprotective absolutism in his imperial harem [30]. Villain Turks are sympathetic heroes. Apart of his romantic love, Amurath is extravagantly evil. He smashes the head of his Greek wife to satisfy his Tutor. In Shakespeare's Othello, Othello murdered his faithful Venetian wife for doubts. Other minor Turkish characters are capable of extreme cruelty. For instance, Marlowe's Ithamore in *The Jew of Malta*, speaks delightfully about his murder to a Venetian, which shows the most undesirable descriptions of this stereotype. Although, these Turkish stereotypes mark the Turks less interesting as human beings; they are still fascinating the Elizabethan playwrights and the audience as a demonic personification of evil. Vitkus connects Shakespeare's play with Peele's:

The murder of Desdemona by the Moor would have reminded audiences of the story of the Sultan and the Fair Greek, an exemplary tale of Islamic cruelty that features an Ottoman emperor (usually Amurath I or Mahomet II) who must choose between masculine, military 'honor' and his attachment to a Christian slave, Irene with whom he has fallen in love [37].

Vitkus points out that 'Amurath' in Elizabethan pronunciation would sound like 'Amour-wrath' and 'a-Moor-wrath' of Shakespeare's Othello [36]. Goffe's Amurath apparently inspired Shakespeare in the episodes of opposing the military expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Europe, and spouse killing. Like Shakespeare's Iago, Amurath's favorite counselor Schahin mischievously betrays him into a murderous temper, instigating him to murder his true love and get on an eventually self-damaging crusade of military conquest. The play provides some support for the vision of an honorable stoic affection crushed by extreme violence. Othello says: 'Affections are good Servants: but if will/make them once Master, they'll prove Tyrants still'. Othello's incompetence to control his jealousy underwrites his collapse. He has expressed his dislike and blame on the Turks, in fighting each other, before he behaves like them in slaughtering his wife at the end of the play. Michael Neill suggests that even the assumed visibility of the Moor's "aggressive Otherness" was a source of doubt and concern given the term's indeterminacy [39]. The entire image of Muslim Moors is being transmitted in the Early Modern drama as sexually immodest, tyrannical towards womanhood, and brutal that is as generated from the initial encounters between Europeans and Arabs from North Africa [40]. Othello stands evenly within the play's mobilization of discourses of blackness and fears of Islam, creating him "a hybrid who might be associated with a whole set of related terms-Moor, Turk, Ottomite, Saracen, Mahometan, Egyptian, Judean, Indian-all constructed in opposition to Christian faith and virtue" [41]. Although Othello's marital love came to be seen as a purely spiritual relationship, he is criticized as being lustful.

Englishmen have strongly linked the unnatural lust to the Moors and Turks. Some Elizabethan playwrights indulge in associating the

Turks with evil and abnormality. The Turkish lustful interest in sexuality has represented in the medieval Christian books and underwent well into Renaissance period as it is inspired by the Islamic-Christian polemics. Once Othello gives way to his jealousy will and "tyrannous hate", the audience sees him transformed into a version of the Islamic tyrant' [37]. It is a misleading picture of the religion of the Turks. In the speech of Oriental characters about Prophet Muhammad, Elizabethan dramatists condemn the theology of Islam for Islamic sexuality in order to endorse the Muslims' heavenly doom. From the Christian point of view, the Moors and the Turks have gone astray from God by following the false prophet; and they have become deviants in their open sexuality and in their faith.

Conclusion

Elizabethan dramatists have established a negative image of the noble Ottoman sultans to function as a rhetorical instrument to defame them. These playwrights describe the Turks through a hating lens. Due to the legacy of Constantinople in 1453 Elizabethan imagination establishes dramatized accounts of sensual and mysterious stories of the Ottoman Sultans and majestic harem. The English motif introduces the Turkish rulers in barbaric cruelty and sexual violence. The account of the sultan's romance for European girls attracts the Elizabethan audience. The association between the Ottoman Sultans and sex was neither the first theme nor the greatest exaggerated instance of an extraordinarily tenacious treatment in Elizabethan attitudes to the Ottoman Empire. The depiction of the Turkish tyranny is reaction of the enlightenment image of the Ottoman despot. The symbolic of Constantinople as a fascinating exotic seat of these catastrophic romances is a revolt against Ottoman colonialism. Mahomet II is not a distant figure in Elizabethan England but an individual who had a real textual presence. The polemic biographies lustful Mahomet is recommended in Peele, Goffe, Kyd and others.

These dramatists dehumanize the Muslims and placed them in the position of a fundamentally different other whose humanity and the affectionate sentiments are foregone at the utmost level in the cause of conquest and the continuation of the martial code. This dramatic theme, habitually related to the Elizabethan depiction of Ottomans, is evidently apparent in Goffe who conflates the histories of two famous Ottoman Sultans: Murad I and Mehmet II. Irene Winter remarks that 'the image of the king 'in his office of kingship' is a semiotic, rather than a mimetic, representation' [42]. Orhan Burian argues that the Turks plays are evidences of the kaleidoscopic picture that existed in the Elizabethan mind with regard to the East and especially to Turkey, their significance is undeniable, and does compensate considerably for what they lack as creative works [43-45]. The Senecan story overstates moral insights, human soul, and human manners under ethical stress. Therefore, some Westerners had expressed their fascination over the secrets of the Turkish palaces in maneuvering through the life of the actual Turkish harem. Story episodes have artistically established many interesting tales filled in Orientalizing details of Christian harems of the Turkish sultans and their sons. The scenario mixes the familiar and the exotic-a European slave lady ruling in the court of the Turk, the conqueror. This plot makes the powerful elite of the Ottoman Empire such as Mahomet and Hireen, Amurath and Eumorphe, or Soliman and Perseda appearing as moral fables on theatre.

Elizabethan dramatists treat the Turkish infidel as an object of polarization and holy destruction. The Turks are depicted as a folk who disobey God, nature, and English law; and thus they deserve punishment. The link between the ruling authority and concubine's

behaviour among the Ottoman rulers further established for Christian playwrights their alterity with the Turks. The final episodes of those plays crystallize conflicting narratives by presenting an exemplary instance of Turkish cruelty that seems to be divorced from violent passion. Elizabethan writers, travellers, and politicians tried to possess abreast of the continental confrontations with wicked and tyrant Turks, and recounted on battles, victories, and defeats in tabloid news books. They are portrayed in violation of the laws of humanity. The Elizabethan Turkish characters are represented as obsessed with sensuality, which is followed by barbarous cruelty, extreme pride, vicious passion and highest treachery. It is the portrayal of women as representatives of Christian opposition to the double Turkish fears of sexuality and violence which are significant to the construction of the associations between Muslim males and Christian females in the Turkish plays, which place Christian ladies in a figurative association to their Christendom. These representations have no objective foundations, and they were frequently allusions, misrepresenting and demeaning the Ottomans [30]. Death seals the fate of the sinful Ottoman sultans. Thus, the English representation of Turks seems unjust, tyrannical and associated with prejudice. It is an eternal struggle of good and evil.

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