

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Dissertations, Theses, and Student Research:
Department of English

English, Department of

Spring 2010

Fearing the "Turban'd Turk": Socio-Economic Access to Genre and the "Turks" of Early Modern English Dramas and Broadside Ballads

Katie S. Sisneros

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss>



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Sisneros, Katie S., "Fearing the "Turban'd Turk": Socio-Economic Access to Genre and the "Turks" of Early Modern English Dramas and Broadside Ballads" (2010). *Dissertations, Theses, and Student Research: Department of English*. 20.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss/20>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Student Research: Department of English by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

FEARING THE "TURBAN'D TURK": SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACCESS TO GENRE AND THE
"TURKS" OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMAS AND BROADSIDE BALLADS

By

Katie Sue Sisneros

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: English

Under the Supervision of Professor Stephen Buhler

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 2010

FEARING THE "TURBAN'D TURK": SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACCESS TO GENRE AND THE "TURKS" OF
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMAS AND BROADSIDE BALLADS

Katie Sue Sisneros, M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2010

Adviser: Stephen Buhler

This thesis explores an important means for the non-noble and non-gentry population of England to read and interpret the figure of the Turk as textually represented: the broadside ballad. Cheap to print and produced on an expansive scale, broadside ballads had access to economic and geographic segments of England beyond the reach of the drama. Aimed at a far more general audience than theater-goers (especially during the Restoration period), broadside ballads provide an alternative literary interpretation of the Turk, one long-neglected in Anglo-Ottoman studies. Current scholarship's almost-exclusive focus on drama has led to a progress narrative positing an evolution in scholarly literature from "simple and stereotypical" representations of Turks to "complex and flexible" ones. Bringing a genre tailored to an audience made up of different socio-economic groups into the discussion, I forego such evaluative language. Instead, I argue that dissimilar representations not only reveal how English people thought of Turks but also how economics and status functioned in public discourse in England.

© 2010, Katie Sue Sisneros

I would like to thank my Thesis committee for all of their tireless help on this project. Professors Ruth Nissé, Stephen Buhler, and Julia Schleck have weathered my quirks and queries with the utmost grace and patience; their willingness to support me has been unfathomably valuable. Particular thanks to Professor Schleck, whose passion for her field inspired me to join her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. “He knows not what it is to be king / That thinks a scepter is a pleasant thing”: The Transformed Sultan of English Turk Plays	4
2. Economy and Geography: English Exposure to Dramas and Broadside Ballads	26
3. Fearing the “Turban’d Turk”: Representations of Turks in Broadside Ballads	34
Conclusion	47

Literary scholars whose work centers on the relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire have largely striven to answer one question: how were the Turks viewed in England? What representations of them did the English put forward, and what do those representations tell us about their position in the imaginations of English people? Early scholarship in this area, which was heavily influenced by Edward Said's concepts of Orientalism, focused on the figure of the Turk as the irreconcilable "Other," something to be feared and detested.¹ Recent trends by literary scholars have looked at English-created Turks, most commonly in dramas, as something as malleable and unstable as the very relationship the Crown held with the Ottoman Empire. Such a trend is important to our understanding of the complicated definition of the "Turk" in England, but as important is our understanding of how such definitions, dissimilar as they may be, existed simultaneously among differing populations in England.

It is important to remember that dramas were ultimately limited in geographical and social reach. Confined largely (though not entirely) to the greater London area and available only to those Englishmen and women with both the time and the funds to attend, dramas may give us a fresh look at interpretations of Turks in England, but it is by no means the only or the most widespread representation available at that time. Additionally, productions of dramas, demographically speaking, would not have even been the most popular. In late sixteenth-

¹"Turban'd Turk" from "The Song of the Shirt." Printed by George Walker. (*Bodleian Library Broadside Collection*, Oxford University, 1797-1834); William Shakespeare, "The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice" *The Norton Shakespeare Tragedies*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997) V.ii.362 (p. 469, refers to "turbaned Turk"). Much of the early work in this area was done by Nabil Matar, and though some scholars have criticized his methodology, Matar's pioneering scholarship can largely be classified as recovery work that paved the way for the types of analyses common in the field today.

century to early seventeenth-century England nearly half, if not the majority, of English citizens simply did not have the sort of income necessary to make playgoing practical or possible.²

Broadside ballads—printed frequently, disbursed widely, and written simply—were not only a mainstay of the aristocrats and commoners alike of England, but were one of the few printed literatures that could have permeated the population of intellectually and economically alienated (though vastly larger) poor and migrant peoples. However, broadsides have been largely ignored by literary scholarship, partly because of their simplicity – they do not readily lend themselves to the category of literature. Dramas offer analysts ample layers to peel back and explore in-depth. Dramas have also provided material as understandings in the field have shifted as a whole from seeing the Turk represented as “other” to Turk as complex and intriguing. But such emphasis on complexity elides the existence of a contemporaneous literature that does exactly the opposite.

Distinct differences in the representation of Turks by dramas and broadside ballads point to important differences in the way that the varied levels of the English social hierarchy encountered “Turks.” In this thesis, I will explore the representations of Turks in both plays and broadsides, taking into account how the social and economic circumstances of their respective audiences shaped the portrayal of Turks. I argue for the importance of attention to an audience's status when thinking about English responses to the Ottoman Empire. Differences between drama and broadside Turks stem from two important factors: the first, the kind of interactions that different social groups of English society would have had with Turks; and second, the amount of detailed knowledge about Islam and Turks in particular available at

² For a look at the percentage of poor in England, see: Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Charles Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship, 1603-1763* (London: Longmans, 1965); A. L. Beier, *Problems of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1983).

certain times. I will speak specifically of the publication in England of the first translated copy of the Qur'an, titled *The Alcoran of Mahomet*, translated by Alexander Ross in 1649, which single-handedly spurred increased interest in the world of Islam, most notably its usefulness in denouncing Catholicism while simultaneously justifying Protestantism. The 1649 Qur'an publication coincides with a marked change in how Turks were represented in English dramas and interest in the Muslim world would remain at a fever pitch until the Ottoman Empire was defeated at Vienna in 1683³. However, the publication of the Qur'an and the coinciding increase in knowledge about Islam had little to no effect on the represented Turk of broadside ballads, except in terms of raw content (many ballads dedicated themselves to the Turks' defeat at Vienna immediately following the event, but the overall attitude toward Turks in ballads did not change). This points to the fact that both the newly translated Qur'an and dramas existed in a social and economic sphere inaccessible to English people limited in their means by both literacy and income; broadside ballads knew no such boundaries.

The chronology of performed dramas and printed broadside ballads reveals that their respective interest in Turks reaches its height at different times. The popularity of Turks in English dramas was highest between the in the mid-seventeenth century, dwindling quickly after 1680, with only a handful of plays centered on Turks or the Ottoman Empire in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century. Broadside ballads were widely printed throughout the sixteenth century, reaching a circulation of what Tessa Watt estimates to be a minimum 600,000

³ Bridget Orr notes that after the Ottoman defeat at Vienna depictions of Turkish Emperors changed: "It is hard not to see this shift to theatricalizing weak Ottomans as a reflection of changing, more confident English views of the Great Turks." Though her thesis does not rest on the notion that *fewer* plays were written and rather on how differently the Emperors were depicted, she does acknowledge that there was a marked decline in their printing after the 1680s. "The paucity of plays with Turkish themes in the 1680s presumably reflects the general decline in dramatic production during this decade, a period...which saw a resounding defeat for the Ottomans when the siege of Vienna was lifted in 1683" Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660-1714* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 86.

by the middle of the sixteenth century.⁴ Their attentions did not turn heavily to Turks, however, until the middle of the seventeenth century, hitting a lull during the civil war and the Interregnum, and – unlike dramas, whose interest in Turks or the Empire dissipated after the war - picking up with as much fervor after the Restoration.

As scholars move away from the model of Orientalism they are successfully complicating their exploration of the Turks depicted; now it is time to also complicate how the English depicted and consumed such depictions. Both dramas and broadside ballads (and their respective representations of Turks) serve equally important, though differing, social functions. Ballads favored a poor, non-metropolitan audience and dramas a largely urban audience that had the expendable time and funds necessary for playgoing. This thesis will explore the representations of Turks, first in dramas and then in broadsides, taking into consideration the economic reach of each and the impact the respective audiences had on their depictions of Turks.

⁴ Tessa Watt, "The Broadside Ballad," in *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 11. Watt takes into account the incompleteness of the Stationers' Registers. Ballads legally had to be entered in the register, which was implemented in 1557, but Watt estimates that only roughly 65% in the 16th century actually were.

Chapter 1: “He knows not what it is to be king / That
thinks a scepter is a pleasant thing”: The Transformed
Sultan of English Turk Plays

The most effective way to illustrate representational changes in Turk plays is to look specifically at the character of the Sultan – there hardly existed a Turk play without him. English interest in the Ottoman Empire was primarily in their religion, but was very closely followed by interest in their military, the center of which was the enigmatic Sultan. For the purpose of this study, I will examine four plays – Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), Robert Greene’s *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks* (1594), Lodowick Carlell’s *The Famous Tragedy of Osmond the Great Turk* (1657), and Elkanah Settle’s *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676). Not only do these four plays illustrate the fallacy of older scholarship that argues Turks were represented in an exclusively derogatory and hostile fashion, they also help trace a renovation that took place from the late sixteenth into the mid-to late seventeenth century of the character of the Sultan, who becomes increasingly complex and relatable as the relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire became increasingly economically amicable. Always militarily competent and religiously devout, it seems the dramatic Sultan’s heart grew as upper-class

England increased its contact with Turks, the character of the Sultan being influenced by love for a beautiful woman, torn between the pull of passion and the duties of a ruler.

Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* illustrates the fascination surrounding a Turkish Sultan, and it complicates an English audience's understanding of him by pitting him against the title character. Both *Tamburlaine the Scythian* and *Bajazeth the Ottoman Sultan* represented anxieties surrounding the burgeoning trade relationship England was just beginning with the East. By the time of the publication of *Tamburlaine*, England had barely begun a trade relationship with the Ottoman Empire. It would be another sixty-two years before the publication of an English translation of the Qur'an, and another thirty-three on top of that before Mohammad Ohadu, Morocco's ambassador to England, toured London, Oxford, and Cambridge, spurring what Nabil Matar refers to as "perhaps the climax of curiosity about things Islamic."⁵ Matar has persuasively argued that in the Elizabethan period Englishmen would have had extensive contact with Turks,⁶ but without the foundation of a solid, long lasting economic association with the Ottoman Empire, those Turks that existed and/or lived within the world of Englishmen would still emanate a mystifying and potentially dangerous presence. And few Englishmen, no matter what their status, would have met a Sultan, the man who was the epicenter of Turkish intrigue.

Much scholarship has dedicated itself to exploring the religious role of *Tamburlaine* himself: Jonathan Burton makes a compelling case for *Tamburlaine's* religious fluidity by arguing that "[Marlowe's] title character is, in fact, no more ambiguous than his queen and country's curious relationship with Islam and the Ottoman Empire. *Tamburlaine's* religious identity simply

⁵ Nabil Matar, "Islam in Interregnum and Restoration England," *The Seventeenth Century* 6, no. 1 (1991) 67.

⁶ Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

shifts with the plays' shifting circumstances."⁷ For the purpose of this section I will be focusing my attention on Bajazeth the Ottoman Emperor, but it will be important to keep Burton's argument in mind, as he states that "the immediate amplification of Bajazeth's Muslim identity distinctly contrasts and helps to explain Marlowe's treatment of Tamburlaine's religion"⁸ What we have then, for an audience that had yet to experience part two of Marlowe's Tamburlaine series, is a newly-crowned Persian battling a boastful Turk. Though Tamburlaine would later adopt the Muslim identity for himself, when he takes arms against the scourge of Christianity, that identity is severely diminished.

Throughout the entirety of Act 3 Scene 3, Marlowe is toying with his audience's need to sympathize with a character – should they side with Tamburlaine, the once lowly Scythian shepherd with dreams of world domination, no matter who should stand in his way? Or should commiseration focus on Bajazeth, who in no way provoked Tamburlaine's advances but is still the Emperor of the powerful and dangerous Ottoman Empire? Much time is given over to Tamburlaine and Bajazeth simply exchanging words, preempting their physical battle for superiority with a verbal one. Tamburlaine starts out in the lead for audience sympathy when he speaks about defeating the Turks and releasing their Christian slaves:

I that am termed the scourge and wrath of God,

The only fear and terror of the world,

Will first subdue the Turk and then enlarge

⁷ Jonathan Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in Tamburlaine," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2000) 139. Burton is shifting the focus of the work done by Emily Bartels, extending the notion of multiple representations of Turks but turning away from Bartels's pairing of it with imperial domination. Emily Bartels. "The Double Vision of the East: Imperialist Self-Construction in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part One*," in *Renaissance Drama in an Age of Colonization*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992).

⁸ Burton, 142.

Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves,
 Burd'ning their bodies with your heavy chains
 And feeding them with thin and slender fare (III.iii.44-49)

Bajazeth, fresh from the siege at Constantinople, must be subdued by Tamburlaine the savior of Christians. Perhaps the irony was not lost on the English audience, given that Tamburlaine's own slaves were treated to the same heavy chains and slender fare as the Christians who he claims to want to free. The verbal jousting continues as the two enemies boast about their military prowess, Bajazeth inciting fear of death: "Let thousands die, their slaughtered carcasses / Shall serve for walls and bulwarks to the rest" (III.iii. 138-39). But Tamburlaine counters with an equally violent statement, "Our conquering swords shall marshal us the way / We use to march upon the slaughtered foe, / Trampling their bowels with our horses' hoofs" (III.iii. 148-50). Even their respective wives are pitted against each other, each having taken up their husbands' thrones and sparring with harsh threats about what they plan to do with the other once they've become a slave, Bajazeth's wife Zabina calling Zenocrate a "base concubine" and Zenocrate calling Zabina a "disdainful Turkess and unreverend boss" (III.iii.166, 168).⁹

Eventually, despite all his brags, Tamburlaine's statement that "Turks...menace more than they can well perform" proves true (III.iii. 3-4). Bajazeth is defeated in battle, acknowledging the connection between Tamburlaine and Christianity when he states:

Ah, fair Zabina, we have lost the field,
 And never had a Turkish emperor
 So great a foil by any foreign foe.

⁹ The Oxford World Classics edition of *Tamburlaine the Great*, edited by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen, notes that "boss" meant "fat woman."

Now will the Christian miscreants be glad,
 Ringing with joy their superstitious bells
 And making bonfires for my overthrow. (III.iii. 233-238).

If the battle had occurred in act five of the play and not act three, the respective roles of Tamburlaine and Bajazeth would have been cemented at Tyrant, but Savior of Christians and Overthrown Scourge of Christianity. This would remain a comfortable spot for Tamburlaine to be in, if only Marlowe had not attempted to invoke the sympathies of his audience through the lamenting of Bajazeth and Zabina in act four. Some scholars have attempted to argue that Bajazeth's defeat and humiliation would have settled well with an English audience, but the level to which Marlowe invokes sadness and mourning in the deposed rulers implies otherwise.¹⁰ Bajazeth's role as inhuman and cruel are offset by his treatment as a slave of Tamburlaine. Having been removed from his cage, Bajazeth is ordered to kneel before Tamburlaine to serve as his footstool. "First shalt thou rip my bowels with thy sword / And sacrifice my heart to death and hell / Before I yield to such slavery" (IV.ii.16-18). Tamburlaine's cruelty and violence increases dramatically ("When the sky shall wax as red as blood, / It shall be said I made it red myself, / To make me think of naught but blood and war" (IV.ii.53-55).) and Zabina speaks on behalf of her mistreated husband:

Unworthy king, that by thy cruelty
 Unlawfully usurp'st the Persian seat,
 Dar'st thou, that never saw an emperor
 Before thou met my husband in the field,
 Being thy captive, thus abuse his state,

¹⁰ See, for example, Matthew Proser, *The Gift of Fire: Aggression and the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995) 81.

Keeping his kingly body in a cage...

And treading him beneath thy loathsome feet (IV.ii.56-64).

Bajazeth, too, bemoans the treatment of his wife at the hands of her captors:

You see my wife, my queen and emperess,

Brought up and proppèd by the hand of fame,

Queen of fifteen contributory queens,

Now thrown to rooms of black abjection,

Smearèd with blots of basest drudgery,

And villeiness to shame, distain, and misery.

Accursèd Bajazeth, whose words of ruth,

That would with pity cheer Zabina's heart

And make our souls resolve in ceaseless tears (V.i. 264-72).

If the English audience had appreciated the overthrow of the Turkish Tyrant in act three, they surely become less and less comfortable with Tamburlaine's vicious treatment as Marlowe allows us to see Bajazeth and Zabina at their very weakest. The ostensibly undefeatable Turks have been defeated, and the audience is left wondering with whom their alliances should lie. Any argument for the indefatigable brutality of Bajazeth is contained and offset with a glimpse into the true nature of his universally lamentable condition.¹¹ How, then, would this affect the

¹¹ William J. Brown argues otherwise, drawing comparisons between Marlowe's treatment of Bajazeth and John Foxe's description of the Turkish Sultan Bajazet in *Actes and Monuments*. He states, "Thematically, like Marlowe, he [Fox] depicts Bajazet as a tyrant, debases his personal valor, and views his defeat and suffering without sympathy as a just retribution for persecution against Christians" (48). I would argue otherwise because of the deeply personal and lamentable nature of Bajazeth's and Zabina's pleas in Marlowe's play, with which we actively see into the minds of the Turks. William J. Brown, "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* and *Tamburlaine, Part I*" *Renaissance Quarterly* 24 (1971) 33-48.

audience's previous sympathies with Tamburlaine because of his desire to release Christian galley slaves? It seems that Marlowe is deliberately turning sympathetic attentions away from despondent Christians and placing it rather uncomfortably upon the shoulders of the Sultan and his queen – a notion that would perhaps not settle well with an audience member personally acquainted with a galley slave, if such an audience member existed. Given the cost of admittance to a play that would have been put on almost exclusively in London and the fact that the majority of galley slaves were poor English citizens kidnapped from coastal cities or sailors lured into work by meagre pay, not to mention the immense popularity of *Tamburlaine*, it seems likely that perhaps *Tamburlaine's* audience members were removed enough from the notion of Turkish slavery to have qualms about the transference of sympathies. Wealthy merchants who might have encountered the Turk on the seas were far more likely to be ransomed quickly and sent back to England, leaving his poorer employees at the mercy of Turkish pirates.

Even as early as 1587, English audiences were being asked to sympathize with the Turkish Sultan, even though he was tyrannical and a follower of a false faith. In what was seemingly a step backwards, Robert Greene wrote *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks* in 1594, very shortly after *Tamburlaine* and introduces an equally tyrannical Turkish Sultan but provides no opportunities for emotional sympathy (though Greene does, interestingly, allow Selimus to justify his actions logically thus imposing a sort of intellectual sympathy very different from what audiences would have felt for Bajazeth). Scholars might take Greene's obvious deviation from Marlowe's emotional invocations as countering what he considered to be a blasphemous portrayal of a Turk unworthy of the audience's feelings. However I believe there is a more obvious reason for the difference: Marlowe's play turned huge profits for the Lord Admiral's Men playing company, whereas Greene's play was added to the repertoire of the Queen's Men.

In his innovative work on Turk Plays and the repertory of the Elizabethan playhouse, Mark Hutchings argues for the importance of considering plays as not products of a single author, but rather collaborative works emerging from a larger repertory. The Lord Admiral's Men and the Queen's Men were in heated competition with each other in the late-Elizabethan period, and Hutchings argues that

Selimus is an important text in the 'Tamburlaine narrative' not only because it shows how desperate the Queen's Men were to keep pace with their rivals..., but because it sheds light on contemporary perceptions of Marlowe's play. Theatre audiences respond in diverse ways, but surviving evidence suggests that, far from condemning Tamburlaine, playgoers marveled at his theatrical presence and demonstration of unrestrained and apparently limitless power.¹²

Greene inserted *Selimus* into the marketplace of English drama in an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of the Islamic character but he countered the audience's freedom to sympathize with both Tamburlaine and Bajazeth. In *Selimus*, one is hard pressed to find a character with which to identify. We are first introduced to Bajazet, the old and incompetent Emperor of Turkey, who has failed in almost all respects to prove himself a suitable ruler. Not only does he complain incessantly about the tribulations of a king, stating that "He knows not what it is to be king / That thinks a scepter is a pleasant thing," but he has not lived up to the fearsomeness and tyranny that is expected of the Turkish Sultan (i.30-31). Turkey once had an "uncontrollèd lance," but soon "The Persian Sophy, mighty Ismael, / Took the Levant clean away from [Bajazet]" (i.67, 40-41). But his foreign failures are the last of Bajazet's worries – when he

¹² Mark Hutchings, "The 'Turk Phenomenon' and the Repertory of the Late Elizabethan Playhouse," *Early Modern Literary Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature* 16 (October 2007) 5.

begins telling the tale of his three remaining sons (Alemshae was killed in the battle with Persia), it becomes clear to the audience that this tale will center not on foreign conquests, or the debauchery of the seraglio, but rather the Turkish “custom” that perhaps struck fear into the hearts of Englishmen more than any other – parricide. Bajazet describes his three sons in such a way as to prepare an English audience for what will inevitably become a battle for the crown:

Corcut in fair Magnesia leads his life
 In learning arts and Mahound’s dreaded laws.
 Acomat loves to court it with his wife,
 And in a pleasant quiet joys to pause;
 But Selim follows wars in dismal strife
 And snatcheth at my crown with greedy claws;
 But he shall miss of that he aimeth at,
 For I reserve it for my Acomat. (i.80-87)

Unlike Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* or any of the subsequent plays I discuss, Greene is only attempting to showcase life from within the circle surrounding the Emperor. No foreign power enters into the play (Except Tonombey, son of the Egyptian ruler, whose only role is to aid in the takedown of Selimus and the instatement of his friend Acomat), therefore an English audience is given the unique vantage point of fly-on-the-wall, so to speak, watching with awe as the Ottoman Empire shifts power structure entirely from within.

Eventually all three sons make a play for the crown: Corcut writes his father and asks for the crown upon his death, Acomat writes his father and demands the crown immediately, and Selimus has no plans to bother writing a letter at all. Through the sons Greene outlines the

behavioral patterns of three types of faith: Christian, Islam, and Atheist. Corcut, the learned brother, has “conversed with Christians / And learned of them the way to save [his] soul / And ‘pease the anger of the highest God” (xxii.50-52). Corcut implores Selimus “to ponder these things in thy secret thoughts; / If thou consider what strange massacres / And cruel murders thou hast caused to be done” (xxii.69-71). Before his noble death by strangling, his faith is unwavering: “Now Selim, I have spoken; let me die. / I never will entreat thee for my life. / Selim, farewell. Thou God of Christians, / Receive my dying soul into thy hands” (xxii.81-84). But this play is not a battle between Christian and Ottoman, for two brothers still remain, and only one identifies with the Islamic religion. Acomat, angered at his father’s refusal to give up the crown immediately, invokes the prophet while on a tirade:

Doth he esteem so much the bassas’ words
 And prize their favor at so high a rate
 That for to gratify their stubborn minds
 He casts away all care and all respects
 Of duty, promise, and religious oaths?
 Now by the holy Prophet Mahomet,
 Chief president and patron of the Turks,
 I mean to challenge now my right by arms
 And win by sword that glorious dignity
 Which he injuriously detains from me. (x.11-20)

The cold violence employed by Acomat is matched by Selimus – neither is more or less bloodthirsty for the crown. But someone has to win, and it isn’t the Muslim: Selimus defeats his father and brothers and takes the crown, though he openly identifies himself as an atheist. In a

surprising show of logic defending Selimus's religious leanings, Greene dedicates over eighty lines to Selimus's rational explanation as to why he follows no religion. Selimus argues that at the very beginning of time, there was no concept of poor or rich, war or peace. Therefore "there needed them no judge, nor yet no law, / Nor any king of whom to stand in awe" (ii.86-87). But skirmishes soon broke out and the concepts of possession and bloody fighting were thrust upon the world, things that are taken as commonplace now. Then and only then, Selimus argues, did the world have need for religion:

Then some sage man, above the vulgar wise,
 Knowing that laws could not in quiet dwell,
 Unless they were observed, did first devise
 The names of gods, religion, heaven and hell,
 And 'gan the pains and feigned rewards to tell
 Pains for those men which did neglect the law;
 Rewards for those that lived in quiet awe.
 Whereas indeed they were mere fictions,
 And if they were not, Selim thinks they were;
 And these religious observations,
 Only bugbears to keep the world in fear
 And make men quietly a yoke to bear. (ii.95-106)

He goes on to justify even the concept of patricide, by arguing that the concept of family is just an extension of the falsified concept of religion, serving only to "keep the quiet of society" (ii.115). Corcut is murdered immediately before the final showdown between Acomat and

Selimus, leaving the audience suddenly without a moral partner in the play, and with very little time left to shift and identify with either remaining character. Once again, the audience is in an ethical quandary that remains unsolved at the end of the battle: the bloodthirsty tyrant of a false religion versus the bloodthirsty tyrant of no religion. Given Queen Elizabeth's frequent positive comparisons between the protestant faith and the Islamic religion, one might imagine the audience would reluctantly transfer allegiance from Corcut to Acomat (at least he *has* a religion). But the audience is disappointed: Selimus remains undefeated and is crowned the Emperor of Turkey, turning his attention in his last speech to his enemies around the world: "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 the lowest hell" (xxiv.67-71). Just a few years later, English audiences will experience Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, and perhaps think back to Selimus – the two speak of their atheism with the same tone of cold logic and pride, and though Faustus's body is rent asunder by devilish demons, the final resting place of his soul is unknown; it is possible he was left spiritually unpunished, much in the same way Selimus was left with impunity at the end of the play.

If Greene was attempting to say something scathing about Islam, he skirted the issue enough to make his audience question their own opinions— Bajazet was Muslim but bumbling and foolhardy, and was given the most heartfelt and emotional lines in the play. His loyal follower Aga had just had his hands cut off and given to him by Acomat, and Bajazet was beside himself with grief for his friend:

Ah Aga, Bajazet fain would speak to thee,
 But sudden sorrow eateth up my words.
 Bajazet, Aga, fain would weep for thee,

But cruel sorrow drieth up my tears.
 Bajazet, Aga, fain would die for thee,
 But grief hath weakened my poor aged hands.
 How can he speak, whose tongue sorrow hath tied?
 How can he mourn, that cannot shed a tear?
 How shall he live, that full of misery
 Calleth for death, which will not let him die? (xv.23-32).

Acomat, the most violent character in the play, is devoutly Muslim, but the victory of his defeat is overshadowed by the fact that his Atheist brother is the one who overcame him. Greene is undoubtedly speaking toward the perceived violence of Turkish Emperors, but he created a divide between “Turk” and “Muslim” by defeating Acomat and seating Selimus in the throne. Daniel Vitkus speaks to this divide in his introduction to *Selimus* when he states, “Selimus and his lack of moral principle were affiliated with a clear and present danger to Christendom – he could not be mocked as lightheartedly or dismissed as easily as a bogey from long ago and far away, such as Herod or a Cambyses.”¹³ The point is Selimus and his lack of moral principle, not Selimus and his Turkishness. If Greene’s intent was to benefit from the popularity of Turks on the stage set forth by the success of *Tamburlaine*, despite his discomfort in allowing his audience the autonomy to sympathize with the Turk, he is decidedly less clear about where the audience’s sympathies should lie religiously. An English audience member may have been surprised at himself for sympathizing with the string of defeated Muslims left in the wake of the ferocious Atheist.

¹³ Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000) 22.

The changes occurring in the representations of Sultans in Turk plays from before the Civil War to after and into the Interregnum are often attributed to domestic events – scholars have argued that the plays reflect events occurring in England and serve largely as metaphor.¹⁴ However, I think it stands to reason that the plays were written to be culturally comprehensible and thus it is *easy* to draw connections between events in the Turk plays and events at home; however, this was not the primary catalyst for change in representations of Sultans. Antagonism toward Charles I was growing rapidly, especially after the 1637 mutilation of three pamphlet-writing gentlemen who disagreed with Archbishop Laud’s views on ceremonial nature of church. Internal religious conflicts under Charles could be vaguely drawn out of Turk dramas and viewed as cloaked criticisms of the Crown. More likely, and more specifically, we can attribute the change to an increase in the amount of knowledge about Turks and Islam available to upper society England, specifically the publication of the Qur’an. After the Ottoman defeat in Vienna, interest in them as a military power dropped almost to a standstill. Interest in the supernaturally powerful Sultan of the Turks dwindled because he was no longer viewed as supernaturally powerful.

Lodowick Carlell’s play *The Famous Tragedy of Osmond the Great Turk*, first performed in 1637 but not published until 1657, also represents a complex Sultan character, one for whom sympathy is easier to feel. Rather than confusing the audience and forcing them to question with whom their allegiances should lay, Carlell’s later play explicitly turns any potential sympathy for Despina, the Sultan’s Christian slave, into sympathy for the Sultan himself. Carlell largely manages to do this by giving the Sultan the logical voice of a competent ruler at odds with a lovesick heart, yearning for the woman he desires. However, Carlell’s title stresses the

¹⁴ See the introduction to Matthew Birchwood, *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640-1685* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

point that this is not a play primarily about the Sultan – it is a play about his loyal servant Osmond, the “Great Turk” of the play.¹⁵ Adding to the complexity of his character, Sultan Melcoshus is not just a man divided by his desire for love and his place as ruler, but he is also grounded very much in a loyal friendship with Osmond, whose good nature and faithfulness force Melcoshus to grapple with the morality of his own thoughts and actions. Only by viewing Melcoshus as inextricably tied to Osmond do we get a full picture of how Carlell intended Melcoshus the Sultan to be interpreted. Mark Hutchings also argues that the English audience is explicitly asked to feel sympathetic toward the Sultan, supported by the fact that *Osmond the Great Turk* is a sort of dramatic retelling of the Irene narrative myth popularized after the fall of Constantinople.¹⁶

The play’s negotiation with the Irene narrative is the pretext for a radical dramatization of the Turk as cultural construct; remarkably, its response to the *coup* is not unambiguous. In explicitly aligning the text’s sympathies with the

¹⁵ Friederike Hahn makes a compelling case for why *Osmond the “Great Turk”* of Carlell’s play was likely an allegorical stand-in for the Turkish Sultan Osman who was murdered in 1622. He points out that the stationer’s register entry for the play in 1653 reads as *Osman the Great Turke*. “It is worth considering the paradox inherent in Carlell’s title. It proclaims Osmond to be the ‘Great Turk’ – that is, the Turkish sultan. Even if Carlell had been ignorant of this connotation, there is no escaping the fact that Osmond is a Tartar, not a Turk. In 1622, however, when the Turkish sultan Osman was murdered as the result of a conspiracy in the janissary corps, the title would have made perfect sense.... Calling not the emperor but the servant Osmond was a stroke of genius in Carlell: he hints at what the play really discusses, but creates sufficient ambiguity as to whom the first part of the title refers to. Carlell’s audiences, however, would have readily spotted the parallels between the play and the recent death of Osman, which had been a sensation widely circulated in news sheets.” Friederike Hahn, “One Osmond the Great Turk, Not Two” *Notes and Queries* 54 (2007) 35-36.

¹⁶ Hutchings describes the Irene narrative as: “the myth that came to symbolize the loss of the city” in 1453. In the myth, the city of Constantinople is gendered feminine as Irene the Greek captive with whom Sultan Mehmed II fell in love. Hutchings states that it was “the dominant motif of 1453, the tale of the Christian whose tragedy troped the loss of the city itself. Thus the Irene myth is both ‘historical’, referencing the fifteenth-century fall of Constantinople, and simultaneously contemporary, registering and anticipating post-1453 developments.” In *Osomond*, then, Despina represents the Irene character, or Constantinople, being taken over by the Ottoman Sultan. Mark Hutchings, “The Stage Historicizes the Turk: Convention and Contradiction in the Turkish History Play,” in *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms outside the Canon*, 158-178. (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 159.

sultan rather than taking a 'Christian' perspective, *Osmond the Great Turk* offers a striking counter-narrative to the Irene convention.¹⁷

Hutchings' invocations of the fall of Constantinople and the Irene narrative are extremely useful in the examination of the complexity of England's relationship with the Ottomans. To avoid retelling his already persuasive and well-supported points, I will sidestep the Irene narrative (though a version of it is prevalent in many of the plays I examine) and remain focused on the representation of the Sultan specifically.

Osmond sets the tone of his character immediately by rescuing the captured Despina from Turkish soldiers bent on ravishing her, casting lots to see with whom she would lie first. However his intention is not to release her, but rather to give her to her rightful owner as the most beautiful woman he's seen – the Sultan. Osmond, a Turk both sympathetic and loyal, is praised highly for his gift. Melcoshus offers him a province as a reward, but Osmond refuses.

Other reward than your acceptance would marke me for the server of your pleasure, an Eunuches office, and soyle my act of dutie: when I shall overthrow an enemy in field, or in some doubtfull battaile guard your sacred person then Sir, advance me to some honor if you please, for so I shall become the powerfuller to serve you; but for *Despina* thinke not of any recompence to me, for, by the Gods, the Empire were too little, did not my love and adoration of your sacred person force me to think she was created for You, not for a subject.

(Act I pg. 6)

¹⁷ Hutchings, 162. Hutchings' article examines a number of early English plays and their remapping of the Irene myth, calling attention to the "intersection of cultural memory, sources, conventions, playing and audience perception that underwrites the making of meaning in the theatre" (159). Such a retelling offered dramatists the opportunity to explore a fascination with the Ottoman Empire, adding a layer of complexity to the already complex and irreducible conception of Turks in England.

Osmond states that his action was not motivated by want of reward, making reference to the fact that it is the job of Eunuchs to act with intention of receiving praise. Rather, Osmond seems to think he would have deserved punishment had he *not* given Despina to Melcoshus, as she was clearly created by the Gods for Melcoshus alone (not to mention the fact that as a Greek Christian, Despina is Melcoshus's spoil of war) – why should Osmond receive reward for giving the Sultan what was rightfully his? Melcoshus falls instantly in love with Despina, setting the tone for his internal battle between empire and love that will dominate the rest of the play.

In a reversal of the expected sexual power structure, it is Despina who lusts after Osmond, her savior, and Osmond who dutifully resists her. An English audience expecting a licentious Turk might be surprised at Osmond's show of restraint and loyalty. Melcoshus, too, shows a surprising amount of restraint, given his deep love for Despina. At first attempting to showcase his power and intimidate her into loving him, Melcoshus offers a logical, if not twisted, reasoning for the idea of raping her.

The act will not be wholly mine; your not to be-resisted beautie first made a rape on me, inforcing me to love you; that love made me desire to enjoy the happiness of your embraces....the Gods cannot in justice, after so great victories, appoint Melcoshus the office of a slave to be the kepper of such daintie fruit for any other man, and hee himselfe not taste it.... (Act II pg. 12-13)

It is here that Melcoshus employs the sort of guilt-shifting logic he uses throughout the play, continually blaming his thoughts and actions on Despina's power over him. If her were to rape her, the act would be only partially his fault, for she first raped him by forcing him to love her. He then invokes the Gods, stating that they would not justly put Despina under his keep if he

were not meant to know her. This abrupt turn of logic is shocking, not just because of its vulgarity but more so because we feel (now, and more as the play progresses) that Melcoshus actually *believes* what he says – they are not words meant simply to convince her to sleep with him. As if his justification is not shocking enough, Despina answers by telling Melcoshus that he would win more flies with honey than vinegar – he should attempt to woo her, and thus admirably win her affections. Despina’s fight for her Christian honor comes to an end when the idea of a rich and powerful lifestyle becomes realistic, offering Melcoshus “lasting pleasure” as logically more sound than raping her, “now the deed once done will bring repentance ever” (Act II pg. 13).

Melcoshus cements for the audience his true desires for Despina, no quicker having threatened rape than retracting it: “But fear not, base passion shall not overthrow my wise and nobler resolutions, for since I love you as you are altogether excellent, I must enjoy *Despina*, not Despina’s person, onely that’s not halfe hour selfe” (Act II pg. 14). Hutchings notes the reversal of sexual roles, stating “No longer outside the play’s sexual economy, Despina becomes fully participant in its intrigue.”¹⁸ The moral conflation has been set up for the audience quite early, opening up opportunities for Carlell’s later efforts to shift sympathy from Christian to Turk to be even more effective.

Emotions hit a fever pitch in Act Five, as Melcoshus is no longer able to juggle the contradicting desire for Despina and desire to be a successful ruler. Many of his men have begun questioning his ability to be an effective ruler, blaming Despina for drawing his attentions away from important state matters at hand. As plans for a mutiny are already under way,

¹⁸ Hutchings, “The Stage Historicizes the Turk” 164.

Melcoshus stands among his subjects – some loyal, some not – and pleads his case as a ruler transfixed by love.

I hear that there are some amongst you that dare take upon them to malign my pleasures, and tax me for my easie life, alleading that I have forgot the duty of the gods, paying all my devotions to this Saint...Tell me and tell me truly, which of you that had a beauty like to this, but sometimes would to enjoy her company neglect our greatest businesse, view her well for Ile make no description....and when you have beheld her outward forme, know that her mind as farr exceeds that, as the soul is more worthy than the body, which does indeed admit of no comparison. (Act V pg. 45)

Visually this scene might feel like a trial scene, a man standing amongst his judges, pleading his innocence. Invoking the very logic he has used throughout the play, Melcoshus asks his men which of them would act as he has acted in the presence of such a beauty as Despina. But the stage has been set for a *coup*, and Melcoshus must finally make the decision he has been struggling with for five acts – the woman, or the title?

Mel.

To make you know the difference then twixt you and me, and that I value the good of you my subjects and my honour far above fading pleasures, be this my witness, thus cut I from my selfe such a content, that Mortals nere enjoy'd.

Des.

Oh me, my fault lay in my blood, let that expiate my sin against heaven, mercy, mercy. (Act V pg. 46)

Melcoshus shows his devotion to his subjects by “cutting” from himself something that mere mortals enjoy. It is a powerful statement to make, and one that shows the audience just how tied to Despina Melcoshus had grown – to kill her is to literally cut away part of himself. She is no longer the beautiful Christian slave, but an extension of Melcoshus’s existence that has transformed him from mere ruler into a complete being. As for Despina, her final statement is one of guilt – whether she means to say she is guilty of luring Melcoshus away from his God-given task as Emperor, or if she is guilty of foregoing her Christian imperatives by seducing an Ottoman is left up to interpretation. As her blood drains from her body, she asks that with it flow her sin leaving her with mercy. What is a Christian audience to do with a scene like this - The dutiful and heartbroken Sultan taking the moral high road, and the Christian captive sputtering regret for her sins with her dying breath? It is extremely important to note that this is not the final scene of the play – as I stated above, Melcoshus’ character is marked not only by a relationship with a woman, but a close friendship with a loyal servant. By placing the final action of the play with Melcoshus and Osmond rather than Melcoshus and the guilt-ridden Despina, Carrell is deliberately elevating Osmond above Despina, arguing that the resolution of his character is more important and worthy of the final event than that of Despina’s.

Trumping any sexual appetite, or desire for military conquering, or even unquestioned devotion from his subjects, is the respect of Melcoshus’ lowly servant. Having heard about Despina’s murder, Osmond is initially bent on exacting revenge by killing the Sultan. “My ease alone consists in shedding his heart blood. / That gain’d and then destroyd, earths cheefest good” (Act V pg. 49-50). But when he finally encounters Melcoshus, the two converse, instead. Explicitly stating the very character traits the audience has come to understand Osmond represents, Melcoshus says Osmond was “ordained to be the lasting pattern of love and duty”

(Act V pg. 54). Seeing the true despair his Sultan is in, Osmond finds “[his] resolution of revenge begin to bate its force” (Act V pg. 55). The truest form of love and devotion exists not between Melcoshus and Despina, but clearly between Melcoshus and Osmond:

Mel.

Nay, if my *Osmond* be a traitour but in thought once, he shall not need to use his sword, I would not wish to live beyond his faith; for, can there be a love or truth left in a subject, when 'tis not to be found in him. Now I perceive the murder I committed was most horrid, since he that lov'd me more than her, she she [sic] being alive, would now rob me of life to revenge her.

Osm.

Know, Tyrant, I lov'd thee once, when thou wert worthy to be my Prince and Master, more than my selfe; But thou, when thou hadst satisfied thy beastly lust, to please the ignorant multitude, thou mad'st a sacrifice of her to them, to whom thou rather shouldst have made them offer sacrifice, on peril of their lives.

Mel.

Osmond, thou art here more cruell in thy accusation, then in thy intent to kill me: For, from the danger of thy sword, there's a divinity that waits upon the person of a Prince, that would protect me, but against the thoughts of thy unexpected treason, there is no armour; for thy unkindnesse so invades my soul, that all that blood that should supply these nerves, flies to my heart to tell it, *Osmond* no longer does wish to have a being there, if so, to split it will be kindnesse. (Act V pg. 54-55).

The emotional power of this scene has the capability to draw in even the most xenophobic of English audience members. Their unconditional friendship was marred not so much by the murder of Despina, but by unmet expectations – Osmond expected that Melcoshus would not give in to the whims of his subjects, and Melcoshus expected Osmond to remain eternally loyal. Both men, heartbroken that their belief in each other was invalid, die by their own hand, overcome with the grief of having been traitorous to one another. With his dying breath, Osmond maintains his devotion to the Sultan: “So, me thinks I see *Despina* stand ready to embrace me, but for *Melcoshus* sake, even there again I will refuse her” (Act V pg. 58). Melcoshus was unable to live without Osmond’s love and friendship, which he lost with the murder of Despina, and Osmond was unable to live without the Sultan. Carlell’s final scene speaks not to notions of Turkish tyranny, sexual aberrance, or blood thirst. It speaks to universally understood concepts of trust and loyalty, drawing the English audience’s attentions away from these men as *Turks* and representing them simply as *men*.

Nineteen years after the publication of *Osmond*, Elkanah Settle’s play *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* was performed at The Duke’s Theatre in London (built only the year prior in 1671). Settle speaks directly about his desire to write a Turkish play that is representative of something English – namely, his patron The Duchess of Albemarle. The Dutchess Elizabeth Monck, the wealthy and well-married daughter of Henry Cavendish, second Duke of Newcastle, is spoken of in the highest of regard by Settle, who makes a direct comparison between her and the Sultan’s wife Roxalana. “Your Grace has all her *Vertue*, without the allay of her *Vanity*; and

this advantage above her, that Your *Grace* possesses those Charms with *story* never attributed to *Roxalana*" (*The Epistle Dedicatory*).¹⁹

Roxalana's position as the wife of the Sultan changed things within the Empire, we quickly learn. A Lady of Roxalana speaks, "Even Daughters by their Parents were betray'd, / Who their fair race a willing Victim made; / In a Seraglio, they Cloyster'd slept, / For servile Love in shining Fetters kept: / Till Roxalana the long Bondage broke, / And by her Influence shook off the yoke" (Act I, pg. 1). Before Roxalana, the Sultan's power was absolute and untamable, daughters willingly given up to honor him. *After* Roxalana, the setting of this play is an Ottoman Empire in which the sexual intrigue and influence of the seraglio no longer exists, Roxalana having "confine[d] his wandring heart to one; And singly rul[ing] the Conquer'd *Solyman*" (Act 1 pg.2). Immediately the audience is introduced to an alternate, de-sexualized Empire (contrary to popular stereotypes) in which the Sultan is described as "conquer'd," someone upon whom Roxalana laid siege. By describing the Sultan in this way, before the Sultan himself is even introduced, Settle allows the English audience to empathize with him in two ways: first, by immediately diminishing the culturally perceived invincibility of Turkish Sultans, and second by tying the Sultan's vulnerability to his desire for love (a most human trait). When the Sultan is introduced, having returned from a conquest in Persia, he too utilizes the same submissive language that had been used to describe him by the women of his court:

Yes; I need all my glories, when you're near,

I bring my Trophies as a Tribute here.

Great, though I am, your pow'r is greater yet;

¹⁹ *Ibrahim* was performed first in The Duke's Theatre, or the Dorset Garden Theatre, in 1676 by The Duke's Company, which had the patronage of King Charles's younger brother the Duke of York. The Duke's Theatre was considered one of the most luxurious theatres in London, and the well-funded patronage of both the Dutchess of Albemarle and the Duke of York speak to the high status of this play.

The World to me, I, to your Eyes submit.

Betwixt Loves pow'r and Majesty's this odds;

The Vows men pay to Saints, Saints pay their Gods. (Act 1 pg. 3-4).

An important description, and one that becomes even more poignant as the play progresses and the audience learns the true extent of Solyman's susceptibility to women. By admitting that he *knows* he is great but that Roxalana is greater, he is both acknowledging commonly held conceptions about Ottoman Sultans in the English imagination *and* dispelling the myth at the same time. Though the world may submit to him (a fear distant but real in the collective English mind), Solyman's weakness lies not by the sword but by the eyes of a woman. Solyman even, surprisingly, pays due tribute to his prisoner of war Ulama, the Sophy's son and heir to the Persian throne: "This Princes heart, the bravest and the best / Of all my *Persian* Foes; is Solymans Guest" (Act 1 pg. 5). He presents Ulama to Roxalana, and Ulama thanks the Sultan for his generosity:

Your generous Lord such favours does confer

On *Ulama* his *Ibrahims* Prisoner.

That from my Chains, without a Ransom paid,

Not only freed, but *Solymans* Creature made,

My overthrow I must Heav'ns blessings call,

Who owe this Resurrection to my fall. (Act 1 pg. 5)

In a show of generosity the likes of which would not likely have been guessed at by English audiences, Solyman releases Ulama as prisoner of Ibrahim, Solyman's most loyal and successful

soldier. Ulama likens the overthrow of Persia by the Ottomans to a “resurrection,” rising from Persia’s decline to take up seat as one of “*Solymans Creatures.*” In a mere five pages, Settle has shown his audience that Solyman the Emperor is powerful and strong but emotional and human, doling out sympathy and favors as any reasonable and just ruler should. It might be left up to the imaginations of the English audience to determine what sort of parallel could be drawn from this depiction of Solyman – perhaps he represents a Cromwellian figure, a mere fifteen years after the restoration of Charles II, as a man with authoritarian power. The apparent kindness and weakness of Solyman would leave up for debate the true merits of a comparison to Oliver Cromwell. Or perhaps the parallel goes back a bit farther in English history: Ibrahim I ascended to the Ottoman throne in 1640 but was overthrown and executed just eight years later by his own Janissaries in an obvious parallel with the events that took place in 1649 with Charles I.

Though each of them occupies vastly differing positions in their respective dramas, the Sultans of these four plays illustrate the myriad ways in which an English audience could come to understand the Ottoman Sultan. Though he may be the scourge of Christendom, it is difficult not to feel some sympathy for Bajazeth and his cruel treatment at the hands of Tamburlaine. Selimus, ostensibly the *least* sympathetic character, is severed from the false religion when he declares himself an Atheist and defeats his Muslim brother. Melcoshus’s love for a woman parallels that of Solyman’s: both Sultans wrestle with their opposing devotions to love and nation. These four Sultans functioned no differently than any other dramatic representations of a ruler in an English play (be that ruler English, Danish, Scottish, or otherwise), and the complex nature of their characters and personalities highlights the ease with which an English playgoing audience willingly adopted the Turk (and the Sultan) into their imaginations.

Chapter 2: Economy and Geography: English Exposure to Dramas and Broadside Ballads

While a thoughtful look at depictions of Turks, especially Sultans, in English dramas is important to comprehending their place in English imagination, we cannot truly grasp their role in shaping thought until we qualify their level of impact. To argue that English dramas reveal to the scholar the complex position of the Turk in English imagination is to deny the fact that so very few people had the means of experiencing dramas at all. Our job then becomes discovering how *else* the English people might have come to know the Turk, if not through drama. In order to do this, we must first evaluate the reach of dramas and their representations of Turks, comparing that to the reach of broadside ballads. Much attention has been given to understanding and defining the playgoing audiences of Tudor-Stuart England. Debates over who attended plays in England center on socially hierarchical divides: were the dramas written with a common audience in mind, or an aristocratic one?

Two classic works that ask this question are Alfred Harbage's *Shakespeare's Audience* and Ann Jennalie Cook's *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642*. Cook's argument for London playgoers states that "when all the testimony is considered, it clearly indicates the dominance of one sort of playgoer over all others: he was the privileged playgoer."²⁰ Her argument is frequently pitted against Harbage's, as he argues that "a grocer, his wife, and their young apprentice form as acceptable an epitome of Shakespeare's audience as any the facts will warrant us choose. If Shakespeare did not write to please such a little cockney family as this, he did not write to please his audience."²¹ While Harbage's description of the grocer's family is itself problematic because the job of a grocer was paid quite differently

²⁰ Cook, 8.

²¹ Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) 155.

then as it is now and the term "cockney" didn't even exist, *both* arguments center on people who had the monetary capability – even if only *sometimes* – to attend. The evidence brought forward by Cook has run the gauntlet of criticism, most often because of her neglect of the commoners who could afford plays but were not by definition privileged gentry. Critics have postulated that by arguing that only the privileged population of London regularly attended plays, she is neglecting this other group of people. Ivan Cañadas argues that Cook's fallacy lies in her "easy equation of rank and 'privilege' in what was, fundamentally, a commercial enterprise. The higher prices would have barred gentlemen of little means, and appealed to prosperous citizens, who were not *privileged* but wanted to be."²² Such criticism strikes at Cook's conflation of social statuses, but does not render her discussion of income and leisure any less useful. Critics such as Kristen Deiter note that both Harbage and Cook may be correct: though London's gentry almost certainly frequented the theatres most *regularly*, the fact that they were outnumbered by London's artisans and apprentices "ten to one"²³ means that London's non-gentry though economically stable population was frequently spotted in theatres. Deiter notes, citing from Harbage's statistics, "Citizens and laborers thus provided a much larger pool of potential playgoers who likely composed a substantial segment...of daily audiences at each of London's open-air theatres on a *rotating*, if individually inconsistent, basis."²⁴ All of these constitute valid arguments for who attended the theatre in England, but we must step outside that debate if we are to come to an understanding of the effect of the Turk on the even wider population of England.

²² Ivan Cañadas, *Public Theatre in Golden Age Madrid and Tudor-Stuart London: Class, Gender and Festive Community* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005) 11.

²³ Harbage, 80-81.

²⁴ Kristen Deiter, *The Tower of London in English Renaissance drama: Icon of Opposition* (New York: Routledge 2008) 166n69. Deiter cites statistics by Harbage and from Andrew Gurr's *Shakespearean Stage*: Harbage states that citizens and laborers in London comprised several hundred to several thousand people, out of Gurr's estimation of London's population in the late 17th century around 200,000.

Estimations on the percentage of the population of England that was poor, or those with no discretionary income, range from one third to one half in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.²⁵ While it is true the gentry lived chiefly in the cities of England and primarily London, the population of those cities was still padded heavily with the destitute – general ground-level admission to an open-air amphitheatre for 1 or 2p was perpetually out of reach for those who spent their days trying to find ways to eat. Cook makes a compelling argument for the fact that “the playhouse locations, their capacities and interior structure, the times of performance, the admission prices, the peripheral costs of playgoing...and the companies’ profits all indicate, at least indirectly, how much the professional drama slanted its enterprise toward an affluent, educated, and leisured clientele.”²⁶ It is also notable that the vast majority of scholarship on theatre attendance covers London *exclusively* – not only did the plays put on by traveling troupes have significantly lower numbers in attendance than those plays in London, attendance was also not as well documented. The approximate population of England as a whole at this time was around 5,500,000. As late as 1700, 83% of the population of England was still rural. If we only apply the estimations of the poor in England to the *rural* population (though it should be understood that as industrialization increased, populations of poor flocked increasingly to populated areas), we are left with nearly 2.3 million people who are both financially and geographically incapable of attending the theatre. To put another way, even if the entire population of London, approximately 450,000 around 1660, *and* the entirety of England’s other heavily populated cities were able to attend the theatre (which we know to be untrue, given the numbers of those in poverty), we would *still* be left with over half of England’s population being incapable of going to a play.

²⁵ A few sources include: Cook, 14.; Wilson, xiv.; Beier, 5.

²⁶ Cook, 168.

Not only did income determine one's ability to experience public theatre, it also determined how much actual contact one could have with a Turk. Nabil Matar's *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* does a monumental job of arguing that Englishmen actually had quite a lot of contact with Turks. However, as is the case with scholarship about who attended English dramas, his argument is strictly bound within geographic and financial confines. While it is true that the 1649 publication of a translated Qur'an and frequent visitations of Ottoman Ambassadors to London helped introduce the English people to a more realistic notion of Ottoman culture, these experiences were very much restricted to the wealthy (and thus educated and literate) and those living in or near London. We can see a clear connection between the culturally complex and relatable Turkish dramas and the kind of peaceful, intellectual exposure to Turks the wealthy, leisured, and urban of England could boast. As the relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire became more financially friendly, early modern English dramas – aimed at an audience directly affected by that financial relationship – began to utilize more complicated Turkish characters. Those with the means of attending dramas simply had a more varied and multifarious relationship with and understanding of Turks.

The inevitable question we are left with, then, is how the *non-wealthy* and *non-London* dwelling of England would have interacted with Turks, and the most likely and frequent answer is slavery. From the early seventeenth well into the late eighteenth century, English citizens were forced into slavery in Barbary and the Levant. Sometimes they were captured off their own privateering and/or trading vessels, sometimes they were snatched off the coasts from fishing boats. Still other times they were actively taken from their homes, most often on the Southern coast of England. Matar notes that though thousands of names survive on lists of captives, these names still only represent about a third of the total number of suspected British

captives. In one single raid, North African privateers were successful in taking upwards of a few hundred captives.²⁷ Many captives were poorly paid soldiers who had been forced into military service or Englishmen sailing abroad in search of economic opportunity. The business of the ransoming slaves was purely monetary, and while some captives had the ability to pay their ransom, far more had to languish in captivity until a ransom could be raised for them by their family or community at home. Most were unable to raise ransom at all, and as a consequence converted to Islam as a means to freedom or died in captivity. Poor artisan captives whose craft was prized by their captors and thus were worth more in ransom were unable to raise the funds necessary to return to England.

One list of captives, printed in 1646, lists the names, places of origin, and ransom amount for each captive ransomed by the author, Edmond Cason, who worked as an “Agent for the Parliament.”²⁸ His register lists “650 and upwards, besides above an 100 in the ships of this place, now at Candia in the service of the great Turk.”²⁹ Most of the saved captives (seventy) were from London, but the rest were listed from such places as Plymouth, Bristol, Dover, Liverpool, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Ipswich – representing a geographically diverse array of captives. What we can gather from knowledge about English slaves is that while *some* of the captives were Londoners with the funds necessary to return home, *most* slaves came from rural

²⁷ Nabil Matar, “Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704.” *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption : Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*. Ed. Daniel J. Vitkus. (New York: Columbia UP, 2001) 12-13. Matar’s introduction, and indeed Vitkus’s entire book, treats only captivity narratives from Barbary. But the distinctions between Islamic peoples were grey and often shifting; Matar’s source Edmond Cason, whose proceedings on the release of English captives refers only to those captives held in North Africa, regularly refers to the captors and the men with whom he dealt as “Turks.”

²⁸ Edmond Cason, *A Relation of the Whole Proceedings Concerning the Redemption of the Captives in Argier and Tunis* (London: 1647).

²⁹ Cason, 11. Carson utilizes the term “Turk” though his text speaks about captives around North Africa. The conflation of Turks with other Muslim peoples makes finding a rigid definition in this time period difficult.

areas and were too poor for ransom. Often, as I mentioned earlier, lack of funds was an indirect reason for their capture in the first place.

Since the poor and geographically alienated of England were not directly affected by the relatively stable financial and intellectual relationship England had with the Empire, their imaginations likely were instead influenced by the fear and hatred that stemmed from captivity. This fear and hatred was not reflected in drama, but it was very much so in broadside ballads, which means ballads actually bear a much closer resemblance to captivity narratives of the period than to dramas.

It is at this point that we can begin to see why a look at broadside ballads is so important to our understanding of the Turk in English imagination. If there was one thing the broadside ballad was capable of, it was permeation – not only were the gentry and wealthy members of English society exposed to broadside ballads, so too could the illiterate and destitute experience them. Natascha Würzbach, in her book *The Rise of the English Street Ballad*, is keen in her explanation of the role of broadside ballads in the lives of poor English people, pointing out that the reading interests of the common members of English society were primarily in works that were practical—with limited leisure time and a lack of funds, they would have been passive with regard to purchasing printed materials. Broadside ballads provided straightforward, simple reading and listening material.³⁰

In his 1631 work *Whimzies: or, a New Cast of Characters*, Richard Braithwaite describes in prose the work of a balladmonger. This balladmonger, having exhausted his financial opportunities in the city, must now take his ballads elsewhere. *Whimzies* reads:

³⁰ Würzbach, Natascha. *The rise of the English street ballad, 1550-1650*. Trans. Gayna Walls. (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990) 26. Würzbach's statement about the poor being passive with regard to purchasing printed materials applies just as easily to their passivity toward attending dramas.

You must therefore imagine, that by this time they are cashier'd the Ci[t]e and mu[st] now ride *poast* riding for the Countrey: where they are no lesse admir'd than a Gyant in a pageant: till at last they grow so common there too, as every poore Milk maid can chant and chirpe it under her Cow; which she useth as an harmelesse charme to make her let downe her milke.³¹

This quote gives us an idea of the spread of ballads from the city to the country. Braithwaite describes how the ballads sold by the traveling balladmonger became so common that even a poor country milk maid knew them well enough to sing them while doing her work. At their inception, broadsides and books have many of their production steps in common. Printed material was almost exclusively produced in London, Oxford, or Cambridge; but the later through the seventeenth century we go, the more booksellers and Stationer's Companies appear across England. As booksellers became more localized, more materials were produced to cater to local audiences. F. J. Levy, in his article "How Information Spread among the Gentry," cites a number of examples of localized material printed in either London or the University cities but intended to be sold in non-printing cities that had booksellers. Levy cites examples of books, Almanacs, news pamphlets, and even a broadside ballad, published in Norwich in the late sixteenth century, that told the tale of a fire in the nearby town of Beccles, the audience of which was presumably local.³² But it is at this point where broadsides and books take diverging roads: when publishers or booksellers wanted to *sell* a broadside ballad, their most common method was to hire someone to *perform* them.³³ Putting himself down at street level with the audience members to whom he hoped to sell his wares, the balladmonger

³¹ Richard Braithwaite, *Whimzies: or, a New Cast of Characters*. (London, 1631) 12.

³² F. J. Levy, "How Information Spread among the Gentry, 1550-1640" *Journal of British Studies* 21 (1982) 14.

³³ Würzbach, 13.

makes the broadside ballad less elitist than dramas, with their actors and narrators up above the audience on a stage; or books, the length and cost of which makes them less accessible than ballads. The listening audience is capable of relating closely with the balladeer and thus the ballad, seeing both as representative of common ordinary people—thus, when a balladeer sings a ballad in which the term “Turk” is thrown out, a sense of community is created around such terms and the emotions incited by them. While the reach of dramas did not extend to over 2.3 million people in England, broadside ballads had the permeability necessary to touch *everyone*.

Chapter 3: Fearing the “Turban’d Turk”: Representations of Turks in Broadside Ballads

Though there are dozens of broadsides from this time period that shed light on the English reception of Turks, I will examine six that exemplify common uses of the complex term “Turk,” and explore how the content of ballads was a function of the economic means of their intended audience. The poor of England had a relationship with the Turkish Other that was dominated by fear and hatred since their knowledge of them was heavily influenced by the slave trade. Sympathy for a “Turk” was something a common English person would neither comprehend nor appreciate. Where dramas allowed for Turkish characters as complex and worthy of at least some semblance of compassion, ballads – existing within the same geographic and temporal spaces – proffered exactly the opposite. Either Turks were depicted as cutthroat and ruthless, or as bumbling military buffoons, depending on whether the balladmonger wished to perpetuate fear, or help alleviate it by poking fun at them. The Turks of English broadside ballads were anything but relatable, a strict Other against which English commoners willingly contrasted themselves.

Broadside ballads are new to the exclusive club of “real” literature. Ballads were typically authored by uneducated commoners with a less than exemplary reputation. John Boys, Dean of Canterbury from 1619 to 1625, describes the difference between false and true prophets by comparing them to men whose goods have no worth at all and men whose goods do, quipping that “the Pedler and the Balladmonger hath more company then the graue rich Merchant.”³⁴ Since they were short and easy to memorize, ballads relayed immediately relevant

³⁴ John Boys, *An exposition of the dominical epistles and gospels used in our English liturgie throughout the whole yeare together with a reason why the church did chusethe same*. (Printed by Felix Kyngston: London, 1610) 42.

information quickly and widely. Broadside ballads instigated a particular kind of knowledge—specific enough to be threatening, vague enough to be easily applicable to other occasions—through their utilization of the term “Turk” as a shorthand scare tactic intended to capitalize on the fears that already existed among the poor of England. Those fears were intensified by the overarching use of the word “Turk” by broadside ballads. It came to represent more than just a person, but all the intense fright the English learned to feel toward Islamic enemies abroad—anyone reading the ballads would have known immediately what he was expected to feel at the mention of a Turk. Working in much the same way as modern day advertisements, ballads need only make memorable a negative connotation of “Turk” for their message to succeed – making even complete memorization of the ballad technically unnecessary. Broadside ballads were a powerful mechanism for the transportation of Turkish representations all over England.

“The Honour of a London Prentice,” published in 1670, tells the tale of a young apprentice to a London merchant who liked his work so much that he sent him to be his factor in Turkey for three years. The ballad begins with a woodcut of three images: the first, a fierce battle on horseback. The second of one man standing triumphantly over another man who is lying on the ground, the difference between them made obvious by dress – the man standing is English, and the man on the ground in flowing robes and a turban is Turkish. The third image is of the apprentice himself with his hands down the throats of two lions. According to the ballad, after a year in service, the apprentice encountered some foolhardy Turkish knights that denied that Queen Elizabeth was “the Pearl of Princely Majesty” and so “one day [the apprentice] made to bleed” the band of knights.³⁵ Whether he killed them all or injured them severely is unclear. This angered the “King of that same Countrey” (no awareness whatsoever of the difference

³⁵ “The Honour of a London Prentice. Wherein is declared his matchless Manhood, and brave Adventures, done by him in Turkey, and by what means he Married the Kings daughter of the same Country,” (English Broadside Ballad Archive, University of California Santa Barbara, 1670).

between a “King” and “Sultan”) and he sent his son to take the apprentice down. The apprentice killed his son with naught but a box to the ears, so the vengeful Sultan sent two hungry lions to kill him. The apprentice successfully ripped the hearts of lions straight out of their throats, as depicted by the third woodcut image, giving credence to his previous statement that “A London Prentice still, / shall prove as good a man, / As any of your Turkish Knights.” To make a comparison between a lowly apprentice and a Turkish knight and declaring the apprentice to be the better man was insult indeed.

These events filled the Sultan with such fear that he asked the apprentice if he was “some Angel / sent down from heaven above.” The apprentice forgave the cowering Sultan, who “lift[ed] up his eyes to heaven, / And for his foul offences, / did crave to be forgiven.” The Sultan gave the apprentice his daughter and many riches, capping the adventurous story with a happy ending in merely a page. This rancorous Turkish Sultan, whose Knights dare insult the Queen of England, whose son willingly executes people at his will, and who keeps starved lions waiting in the wings for brave Englishmen to fill their maws, is anything but sympathetic. That is not to say that the Turkish Sultans of English dramas were not also in many ways vile and contemptible – but *this* Sultan lacks opportunity to reveal himself as a more complex character, opportunity to prove he is worthy of our sympathy. It is only after he has been defeated utterly that he cowers in pitiful surrender and immediately forsakes his faith to ask for forgiveness for his foul offenses. What foul offense the balladmonger is referring to is unclear, but presumably one of those offenses is Islam itself. Ostensibly one would assume the offense would be holding the brave apprentice prisoner and trying to have him killed, but the Turk’s lifting “of his eyes to heaven” implies an offense that exists on a far greater plane. He cannot be viewed as a character to whom one is meant to relate – his defeat both in battle and in faith serves as a

legitimate coping mechanism for those people who were most gravely affected by England's relationship with the Ottoman Empire.

"Newes from Argeir," published in 1621, also portrays an English defeat of a Turkish enemy, but is far clearer about the fearsome nature of the opposition. The broadside begins with a woodcut depicting two ships embroiled in battle, their cannons expelling billowing smoke. The ship on the left clearly marked by the English St. George's Cross, and the ship on the right populated with men in turbans with shields donning the crescent moon, flying flags also depicting a crescent moon. The ballad calls itself "newes," and indeed depicts events that occurred between Ottoman and English ships off the coast of modern-day Algiers. On Christmas day 1620, English ships leaving Algiers encountered a fleet of Turkish vessels and "prepared for a lusty fight."³⁶ The ballad mentions England's "noble Generall," who, if the ballad matches actual events, was presumably Admiral Robert Mansell. Though *General* and *Admiral* were two different ranks, one might assume the ballad writer simply got the title wrong – the ballad's woodcut depicts a ship flying flags, and typically the flagship carried the Admiral – just a few lines later the ballad states that the "noble Admirall" was the first to enter battle. Though the Turks in this episode of the ballad are not heavily described, the actions of the English seamen are. They fought "valiantly," were "men of might," men "whom death nor danger never can aff[ect]." As the ballad describes, "The bloody Moone of Turky, / Did flourish out most proudly, / In hope to win the glory of the day." Boastfully the Turkish ships flew their crescent moon flags, proving a formidable enemy for the English. However, "the Lyon of our Land, / With the Unicorne did stand, / The victory to win and make them flye." The English, their "cannons

³⁶ "Newes from Argeir, of the proceedings of our Royall Fleete since their departure from England, and what happened betweene them, and the Turkish Callies vpon Christmas day last," Printer, G.Purslowe (English Broadside Ballad Archive, University of California Santa Barbara, 1621).

[singing] the roaring songs," forced the Turks into retreat that night and "with noble victory / sailed...on gallantly."

If my hypothesis about the factual basis of this battle is correct, the story of the ballad itself is false – Admiral Mansell's actions in Algerian waters near Majorca were considered a failure, as he did not capture the corsair ships. Correct or incorrect facts aside, the moral *truth* of the ballad would have been the same – God is on the side of the English and fights for Christianity.³⁷ The author of "Newes from Argeir" depicted a fearsome foe locked in battle with English soliders – soldiers who, according to the ballad, had just escaped slavery at the hands of Turks the month prior – and quite possibly fabricated the outcome. Describing the Admiral's inability to capture Turkish pirate ships for an audience of English commoners – the people most frequently taken as slaves or entered into service as English soldiers – would have served no purpose but to weaken morale. Though the ballad cries "newes," it was primarily entertainment, and failure would not have entertained. Instead the Turkish ships just *left*, leaving "the golden prize of honour" to the English. Once again we see a depiction of Turks by English ballads that stresses not the importance of relating or sympathizing, but demonizing and defeating. The group of English people who learned little more than fear from the Turks would not have been interested in hearing anything else.

Another ballad is more specific as to why the Turks were defeated in battle with Christians. "An Excellent New Song On the late Victories over the TURKS," published in 1684, recounts the Battle of Vienna of the year prior. The ballad mentions by name both Ernst

³⁷ Julia Schleck discusses the complicated concept of "fact" as it applies to scholarship on Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*: "The problem with this view [of Hakluyt's accounts as being among the most accurate or reliable] lies in the assumed empiricism and factuality that lie behind these praises: these concepts either did not exist, or were not necessarily valued, when the text was first published" (770). Such value therefore is as anachronistic to apply to broadside ballads as it is travel narratives. Julia Schleck, "Plain Broad Narratives of Substantial Facts": Credibility, Narrative, and Hakluyt's "Principall Navigations" *Renaissance Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2006) 768-794.

Rüdiger Graf von Starhemberg, leader of the Vienna army, and Charles V, Duke of Lorraine, who led the Imperial forces against the Ottomans. According to the ballad, the armies--under the command of these two Christian soldiers--were ordered to “*Charge [their] horse[s] through the grand half-moon,*” a phrase metonymically replacing the actual Ottoman forces with the crescent moon of Islam. The ballad attributes the Ottoman’s defeat to their custom of not drinking alcohol, pointing out that their military prowess is inhibited without it. “With dull TEA they sought in vain / Hopeless Vict’ry to obtain, / Where sprightly *Wine* fills ev’ry Vein / Success must needs attend him; / Our *Brains*, (like our *Canons*) war / With often Firing, feels no harm / While the sober sot flies the *Alarm*, no *Lawrel* can befriend him.”³⁸ In a curious twist of reason, the balladmonger credits the English soldier’s ability to win battles and feel no pain to the fact that wine fills his veins. Islamic custom is turned in on itself and accused of hindering Ottoman political goals. But this custom and all its pitfalls is not just credited to the religion as a whole; the writer of this ballad lays blame squarely on the shoulders of Mohammad. “*MAHOMET* was a sober Dog, / A small Beer drouzy senseless rogue, / The Juice of the / Grape so much in vogue / To forbid to those Adore him; / Had he but allow’d the *VINE*, / Given'em leave to carouze in *Wine* / The *Turk* had safely past the *Rhine*, / And conquer'd all before him.” Whether the balladmonger intends for his audience to believe the battle was won by the brave heroics of Lorraine and Starhemberg, or if it was won because the Ottomans could not imbibe, is ultimately unclear and likely inconsequential: Islam is represented as nothing more than “dull tea” in this ballad, heightening both the truthfulness of God’s protection of Christian lands and the abhorrence of the Ottomans by its intended audience.

³⁸ “An Excellent new song on the late victories over the Turks to a very pleasant new tune,” (London, 1663).

The ballads whose plots centered on Turks prove to be powerful mechanisms for inventing a disturbing and frightening ethos. But the ballads that are entirely unrelated to Turks, yet still mention them, are even more poignant in their mastery of simultaneously embedding and utilizing the poor of England's fear of Turks. John Jarret, about whom a ballad was published in 1630, had better shape up lest he lose his estate and bankrupt his family. The subtitle of this ballad reads: "John Jarrets wives counsell to her husband, to have care to his estate in this hard time, lest he turne Bankerout" [i.e. bankrupt].³⁹ Jarret's wife outlines for us the reasons why he's a terrible husband – he has a bastard child in Brainford, he keeps whores his wife fears will give him diseases, he wastes his money on shuffleboard in the alehouses. For twenty stanzas his wife complains, and it is only in the thirteenth stanza that we get mention of a Turk: "When you in your shop should be plying your worke, / In some scuruy blinde Alehouse you all day doe lurke, / More like than a Christian to some Iew or Turke: / If thus you neglect your liuing and worke, *I tell you John Jarret, you'l breake!*" In what is an obvious oversight of the details of Islamic custom, John's wife compares him to a Jew or Turk when he spends all day drinking in the Alehouse—something the right kind of Christian would not do.

What is the common reader to make of such a sentiment? Clearly, we need not know anything specific about Turks *as people*, or even as a generalized term for many different people, to get the sense that "Turk" is a derogatory term (coupled, as it frequently is in ballads, with "Jew" or often "Pope"). Any previous knowledge of Turks is unnecessary, and in this particular case actually serves as a hindrance—someone reading the ballad who had knowledge of the fact that Muslims were forbidden to drink alcohol might be less likely to absorb the point of the reference. The implications of this reference reach beyond the stanza in which it is found.

³⁹ "I tell you, Iohn Jarret, you'l breake: OR, Iohn Jarrets wiues counsell to her husband, to haue care to his estate in this hard time, lest he turne Bankerout,"(1630).

Any English citizen reading, singing, or listening to the lyrics of the ballad would invariably extend the negative connotation of a boozing, lazy Turk throughout the rest of the ballad – perhaps Turks are also unfaithful, diseased, whoring, and wasteful like John Jarret. The inconspicuous nestling of a “Turk” in the latter half of this ballad changes the tone instantaneously. No longer is John Jarret being simply scolded and insulted by his wife, but he’s being compared to a foreign fiend as well, the very name of which comes with its own loaded baggage as well.

In a similar manner, “A merry Ballad of a rich Maid,” published in 1620, tells the tale of an English maiden on the prowl for a husband. She courts eighteen men, most of whom she describes with kind words, even though some fault made them unsuitable for her. The brave Frenchman, the brave Irishman, a brave Dane, and a Pole that “strutted and stalk’t with a grace.” But the “troublesome Turke,” his pursuit was another matter. The stanza reads:

A troublesome Turke, did make hasty worke,
 But his suite it was quickly ended:
 I scornd his beliefe, and so to be briefe,
 He did returne home offended.⁴⁰

This Turke was presumably *not* brave, like so many of the Christian European suitors, but such a fact was unimportant—he was a Muslim, and thus quickly shuffled away. Out of twenty-four stanzas, the Turk only exists in one of them and presumably, apart from the atheist from Amsterdam mentioned in stanza eighteen, he is the only non-Christian in the entirety of the ballad. The Dutchman was dismissed for drunken behavior, the Spaniard for being tardy,

⁴⁰ “A Merry ballad of a rich maid that had 18 seuerall suitors of seuerall countries otherwise called The scornefull maid: to the tune of Hoop do me no harm good man.” (London, 1620).

and the Russian for being ugly—each given, it seems, a fair shot. However the Turk hardly made it through the door before he was quickly sent away, the maid scorning his belief. Directly linking the Turk with the Islamic religion highlights in the simplest terms possible for the reader or listener of the ballad just exactly what makes the Turks so different from the English. There is no need for the detailed depictions of Islamic customs that travel narratives often provided—the rich maid, standing in as representational of the greater population, conveniently spells out for us who is worthy and who is not—who is Christian and thus “one of us,” and who is not, and thus “one of them.” With twenty-four stanzas each devoted to a different nationality, “A Merry Ballad of a rich Maid” actually does a fantastic job of stereotyping a large number of peoples, but it is only the Turk who is pre-judged, as it were, based on his religious affiliation.

“A new BALLAD of a famous German PRINCE,” published in 1666, utilizes two cultural assumptions in one line that would have been universally understood in England, thus taking advantage of a typical Turkish stereotype to make a quick point. The ballad sings of a naval battle during the Anglo-Dutch war, describing the immortal English Generals and their “twenty thousand Thunder-balls” in an exciting retelling of events. It was a war in which the Turks were uninvolved, yet in the twelfth stanza we get a description of British Subcommander Edward Spragge, who “pray’d like a *Christian*, and fought like a *Turk*.”⁴¹ The implications of that one line are enormous. The audience of this ballad is clearly meant to understand what is implied about the Turks’ fighting ability, even though the ballad itself provides no context. Spragge Spragge had the best of both worlds: he prayed to a (Protestant) Christian God while also harboring the

⁴¹ Sir John Birkenhead, “A new ballad of a famous German prince and a renowned English duke who on St. James's day, one thou[sand] fought with a beast with seven heads, call'd provinces, not by land, but by water, not to be said, but sung, not high English nor Low Dutch, but to a new French tune call'd Monsieur Ragou, or, The Dancing hobby-horses” (London, 1666).

military talents of the Turk. Presumably the Turks of this ballad fought so well because they didn't have the moral compass of a Christian God to guide them.

Representing Turks as bloodthirsty cowards who were no match for the English (or any other European Protestant country) was the norm in ballads that recounted military battles. Factual accuracy was wholly unnecessary, as it was the emotional impact of these ballads that would have drawn in an English audience largely made up of the rural and poor. For an audience that was more threatened by the prospect of slavery at the hands of the Turks than a wealthy Englishman was, such representation allayed anxieties. Some ballads weren't specifically about Turks at all, yet still took advantage of a culturally understood definition of "Turk" in order to draw comparisons to a people that the audience of the ballads largely believed to be savage, drunken, lazy, heretical, cruel, or whatever other negative adjective best suited their comparison. As a money-making enterprise, ballads were written for the immediate consumption and entertainment of their audience, and their widespread popularity speaks to the success with which the balladmonger catered to the imagination of his audience.

The representational disparities between early modern dramas and broadside ballads reflect how differently they experienced the Turk. Osmond loved Despina, but his devotion to his Sultan forced him to relinquish her – and he did it willingly. After her gruesome death he cried, "oh let it heare my vow by Mahomet and all the powers of heaven I swear with speed to be reveng'd upon thy cruell murderer" (Act 5 pg. 49). Osmond is without doubt the hero of Carlell's play, and his vow to Mohammad is not meant to alienate him from his Christian audience – rather, his emotional desire to avenge the death of the woman he loved serves to make the audience sympathetic toward his plight – an Englishman who might just as easily wish

to avenge a murder is forced to consider the notion that noble Osmond's vow to Mohammad is as valid as the Englishman's would be to God. Such respect for Islam is absent from English ballads, favoring instead an overarching and often contradictorily stereotypical depiction of Ottoman Muslims.

The aristocratic and urban population of England enjoyed a complex understanding of Turks that was revealed in the literature available to them – dramas. Playwrights, privy to the ways the privileged of England interacted with and came to understand the Ottoman Empire, had a more varied palette of characteristics with which to work. There is not simply a correlation between the depictions of Turks in English dramas and the multifaceted range of access this population had with them – the former is a *direct derivation* from the latter. Likewise, broadside ballads catered to the two-dimensional and simplistic understanding of Turks held by the poor, who were far greater in number, by separating them entirely as a people worthy of fear, ridicule, mockery, and hatred. By examining the relationship between economic status and the depiction of Turks in England, we realize that both representations existed simultaneously and that each catered specifically to the population of England that would have had the best understanding of it.

Bibliography

- Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576-1626*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Bartels, Emily. "The Double Vision of the East: Imperialist Self-Construction in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part One*." In *Renaissance Drama in an Age of Colonization*, edited by Mary Beth Rose. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992.
- Baumer, Franklin L. "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom." *The American Historical Review* 50 (1944): 26-48.
- Beier, A. L. *Problems of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1983.
- Birchwood, Matthew. *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640-1685*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007.
- Boys, John. *An exposition of the dominical epistles and gospels used in our English liturgie throughout the whole yeare together with a reason why the church did chusethe same*. Printed by Felix Kyngston: London, 1610.
- Braithwaite, Richard. *Whimzies: or, a New Cast of Characters*. London, 1631.
- Bray, Alan. "Word and Symbol." In *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 13-32. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Brown, William J. "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* and *Tamburlaine, Part I*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 24 (1971): 33-48.
- Burton, Jonathan. "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 125-156.

- Cañadas, Ivan. *Public Theatre in Golden Age Madrid and Tudor-Stuart London: Class, Gender and Festive Community*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005.
- Carlell, Lodowick. *The Famous Tragedy of Osmond the great Turk. Otherwise called the NOBLE SERVANT*. London, 1657.
- Cason, Edmond. *A Relation of the Whole Proceedings Concerning the Redemption of the Captives in Argier and Tunis*. London: 1647. EEBO.
- Chew, Samuel C. *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1937.
- Clark, Peter and Paul Slack. *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700; Essays in Urban History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.
- Cook, Ann Jennalie. *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Davis, Ralph. "England and the Mediterranean." In *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England*, edited by F. J. Fisher, 117-37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.
- Deiter, Kristen. *The Tower of London in English Renaissance drama: Icon of Opposition*. New York: Routledge 2008.
- Dimmock, Matthew. *New Turkes: Dramataizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England*. Grand Rapids: Ashgate, Ltd., 2005.
- Fox, John. "The Worthy Enterprise of John Fox, in Delivering 266 Christians Out of the Captivity of the Turks." Originally printed 1589. In *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption : Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, edited by Daniel J. Vitkus, 55-70. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Greene, Robert. *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks*. Originally printed in London, 1594. In *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, edited by Daniel Vitkus. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

- Griese, Sabine, and Marcus Ostermann. "Broadsides." In *Transforming the Medieval World Uses of Pragmatic Literacy in the Middle Ages*, 103-25. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2006.
- Gurr, Andrew. *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Haynes, Jonathan. "Two Seventeenth Century Perspectives on the Middle East: George Sandys and Sir Henry Blount." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 3 (1983): 4-22.
- Harbage, Alfred, *Shakespeare's Audience*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.
- Hutchings, Mark. "The Stage Historicizes the Turk: Convention and Contradiction in the Turkish History Play." In *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms outside the Canon*, 158-178. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- . "The 'Turk Phenomenon' and the Repertory of the Late Elizabethan Playhouse." *Early Modern Literary Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature* 16 (October 2007).
- Jowitt, Claire. "Political Allegory in Late Elizabethan and Early Jacobean 'Turk' Plays: Lust's Dominion and The Turke." *Comparative Drama* 36, no. 3-4 (2002 Fall-Winter 2002): 411-443.
- Lezra, Jacques. "Translated Turks on the Early Modern Stage." In *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater*, 159-178. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008.
- Levy, F. J. "How Information Spread among the Gentry, 1550-1640." *Journal of British Studies* 21 (1982).
- MacLean, Gerald. "On Turning Turk, or Trying To: National Identity in Robert Daborne's A Christian Turn'd Turke." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 29, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 225-252.
- Marlowe, Christopher. *Tamburlaine the Great I*. In *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. (Oxford World's Classics) Ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. London: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Matar, Nabil "Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704." *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption : Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, Edited by Daniel J. Vitkus. New York: Columbia UP, 2001.

----. *Islam in Britain*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

----. "Islam in Interregnum and Restoration England." *The Seventeenth Century* 6, no. 1 (1991): 57-71.

----. "The Renegade in English Seventeenth Century Imagination." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33 (1993): 489-505.

----. *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

----. "'Turning Turk': Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought." *Durham University Journal* 86 (1994): 33-41.

McCulloch, J. R. *A Dictionary Geographical, Statistical, and Historical of the Various Countries, Places, and Principal Natural Objects in the World*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866.

McJannet, Linda. *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Orr, Bridget, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660-1714*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Pitts, Joseph. "A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans, with an Account of the Author's Being Taken Captive." Originally printed 1704. In *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption : Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*, edited by Daniel J. Vitkus, 218-340. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Proser, Matthew. *The Gift of Fire: Aggression and the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

Rollins, Hyder E. "The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* XXXIV (1919): 258-339.

- Schmuck, Stephan. "From Sermon to Play: Literary Representations of 'Turks' in Renaissance England 1550-1625." *Literature Compass* 2 (2005).
- Settle, Elkanah. *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa. A Tragedy*. London, 1677. EEBO.
- Shakespeare, William. "The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice." *The Norton Shakespeare Tragedies*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. 389-472.
- Shepard, Leslie. *The broadside ballad: a study in origins and meaning*. London: H. Jenkins, 1962.
- Skeaping, Lucie. Transcript of "Broadside Ballads of 17th Century England." Gresham College, London. 29 May 2008.
- Stallybrass, Peter. "'Little Jobs': Broadside and the Printing Revolution." In *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist and Eleanor F. Shevlin, 315-41. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.
- Vitkus, Daniel. *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption : Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- . *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- . "Turks and Jews in The Jew of Malta." In *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, 61-72. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- . *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Watt, Tessa. "The Broadside Ballad." In *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, 11-127. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Wilson, Charles. *England's Apprenticeship, 1603-1763*. London: Longmans, 1965.
- Würzbach, Natascha. *The rise of the English street ballad, 1550-1650*. Translated by Gayna Walls. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Broadside

"The Algier Slaves Releasment: OR, The Unchangeable Boat-Swain." Printer, J. Deacon. Digital image. Bodleian Library Broadside Collection. 1671-1704. Oxford University.

Birkenhead, John, Sir. "A new ballad of a famous German prince and a renowned English duke who on St. James's day, one thou[sand] fought with a beast with seven heads, call'd provinces, not by land, but by water, not to be said, but sung, not high English nor Low Dutch, but to a new French tune call'd Monsieur Ragou, or, The Dancing hobby-horses." London, 1666. EEBO.

"The bloody siege of Vienna a song. Wherein the Turks have lost one hundred and sixty thousand men; being the greatest victory that ever was obtained over the Turks, since the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. Written by an English gentleman volunteer, that was at the garrison during the seige." Digital Image. London, 1688. EEBO.

"The Christians new Victory Over the TURKS in Hungaria near the Drave. In this Famous Battle the Christians kill'd near Twenty Thousand, took 120 Guns, the Grand Vizier's Tents and Baggage, to an inestimable value, of Gold, Silver and Jewels: a greater Victory was hardly ever known in Europe." Digital image. English Broadside Ballad Archive. 1687. University of California Santa Barbara.

"The Cruel Cooper, of Ratcliff." Printer, J. Jennings. Digital image. Bodleian Library Broadside Collection. 1790-1840. Oxford University.

"A Cup of Coffee, or, Coffee in its colours." Digital image. London, 1663. EEBO.

"An Excellent new song on the late victories over the Turks to a very pleasant new tune." Digital image. London, 1684. EEBO.

"An Excellent Song, call'd the Frighted French, or Russel Scouring the Seas." Originally printed 1692. The Roxburgh Ballads. Ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth. Vol. VI. Hertford: Stephen Austin & Sons, 1887. 446.

“THE GREAT BASTAD, PROTECTOR of LITTLE ONE. Or, the Sighs of the French King under the Power of the German Empire; Giving an Account of his Cruelty against the Prince of Condy, and the French Protestants; His League with Mahomet the Great Turk; Of his breaking the League with Germany; of his Design with the Supposed Prince of Wales, and of his being Pox'd with several Whores.” Digital image. English Broadside Ballad Archive. 1689. University of California Santa Barbara.

“The Honour of a London Prentice. Wherein is declared his matchless Manhood, and brave Adventures, done by him in Turkey, and by what means he Married the Kings daughter of the same Country.” Digital image. English Broadside Ballad Archive. 1670. University of California Santa Barbara.

"Impossibilities. OR, A matter of nothing, yet some thing youle finde, I know, in the reading, will pleasure your minde; Then hear it, I pray, and when you have done, You'le say that the thread is handsomely spunne." Originally printed 1630. *The Roxburgh Ballads*. Ed. Charles Hindley. Vol. II. London: Reeves and Turner, 1874. 122-28. (Author initials E. F.)

“I tell you, Iohn larret, you'l breake: OR, Iohn larrets wiues counsell to her husband, to haue care to his estate in this hard time, lest he turne Bankerout.” Digital image. 1630. EEBO.

"The Jovial Marriner; Or, the Sea-Man's Renown." Originally printed 1682. Author: J. P. *The Roxburgh Ballads*. Ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth. Vol. VI. Hertford: Stephen Austin & Sons, 1887. 369-70.

“A Merry ballad of a rich maid that had 18 seuerall suitors of seuerall countries otherwise called The scornfull maid: to the tune of Hoop do me no harm good man.” Digital image. London, 1620. EEBO.

“Newes from Argeir, of the proceedings of our Royall Fleete since their departure from England, and what happened betweene them, and the Turkish Callies vpon Christmas day last.” Printer, G.Purslowe. Digital image. English Broadside Ballad Archive. 1621. University of California Santa Barbara.

“The Song of the Shirt.” Printer, George Walker. Digital image. Bodleian Library Broadside Collection. 1797-1834. Oxford University.

"The Turkish Lady." Printer, J. Pitts. Digital image. Bodleian Library Broadside Collection. 1819-1844. Oxford University.

"Young Jemmy an excellent new ballad to an excellent new tune." Digital Image. London, 1681. EEBO.