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Ain Shams University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English Language and Literature

Ph.D. Thesis

The Representation of Muslim Rulers In Selected Accounts of Travellers and Ambassadors In the Elizabethan and Jacobean Eras

In Partial Fulfillment of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
(English Literature)

By

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Submitted To
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2020

Acknowledgements

This study takes its fully realized form owing to the unstinting support of many people. I am extremely fortunate with my thesis supervisors. For his edifying conversations and evocative ideas, I am indebted to Prof. Mustafa Riad. His perspicacity and guidance were always in operation throughout the entire process of my thesis. Without his resourcefulness and insight, this study would have been unimaginable. Prof. Mustafa's patient supervision and generous comments pushed me in a new direction. He should already know in what esteem I hold his genius abilities. He undoubtedly deserves special appreciation for the rigour and accuracy of the work he did for me. In short, it would be difficult to find a more exemplary supervisor.

Deep thanks and acknowledgement must go to Prof. Sherine Mazloum for her considerable support and invaluable efforts in removing every obstacle I faced in accomplishing this work. Prof. Sherine is one of the most prominent professors of English literature whose academic writings I substantially benefited from. Without her generous help this humble research would have never seen the light. My gratitude to Prof. Sherine is so great that words are weak to express it, and speech to describe it is inadequate. Any errors or shortcomings are, of course, my own. My supervisors are not responsible for the errors which remain.

I would like to express my deepest sorrow and condolences for the death of my supervisor and mentor, Prof. Nadia Soliman who died a few months after initiating this study. Prof. Nadia provided me with inspiration, encouragement, and kind support for a number of years. I am particularly grateful to all those who taught me, motivated me, and encouraged me during the course of my postgraduate study. I am indebted to the late professors: Prof. Ikhlas Azmy and Prof. Radwa Ashour whose support and guidance are still throbbing in this thesis.

Finally, I would like to record my deep appreciation and gratitude for the help of many people. My wife's enthusiasm sustained me in sometimes tiring circumstances and frustrating moments. She deserves credit for her persistent support and encouragement. Without the trust and friendship and moral support of my dearest friends Essam Sobhy and Amin Fatthy, this work could never have been completed. Their kindness and constant support helped me exert more efforts to complete my work.

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Abstract

This thesis is an attempt to shed more lights on the images of Muslim rulers depicted by selected travellers and ambassadors who sailed to Muslim lands in late Tudor and early Stuart England. The scope of this study is to find a nexus between such representations of Muslim potentates and the ideological motifs of late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England. Such delineations were out-and-out controlled by some political, diplomatic, commercial and cultural correspondences between English sovereigns and Muslim monarchs.

The course of the study of this thesis primarily depends on three main inventories from which early modern travellers and diplomats under study drew their perceptions about Muslim potentates: the English textual heritage, the experiential inventory, and the dramatic production of Muslim rulers in selected Lord Mayor's Day pageants. The textual legacy incorporates selected high medieval to early seventeenth century songs, anonymous poems, travelogues, ecclesiastical, and historical books. The English textual legacy was formed in some prominent Christian-Muslim armed conflicts like the Crusades (1095-1291) and the fall of Constantinople (1453). The experiential inventory embodies the cross-cultural interaction between English travellers and diplomats, and Muslim sovereigns. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, accounts were penned by English travellers and ambassadors about the Muslim potentates they saw. The dramatic production of Muslim rulers renders the images depicted by Thomas Middleton in his Lord Mayor's Day pageants. The thesis attempts to explore how the Jacobean playwright under study offers a different image of the Muslim ruler that suits early modern English imperial aspirations in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.

Abbreviations

CMMS	*Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honorable the Marquis of Salisbury*
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*
CSPE	*Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs*
CSPV	*Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts (Venice)*
DEE	*The Dictionary of English Etymology*
Embassy	*The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Moghul*
Lazaro Soranzo	*The Ottoman of Lazaro Soranzo*
Letters	*Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*
MED	*A Middle English Dictionary*
Memorial	*Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*
MLT	*A Man of Law's Tale*
Relation	*A Relation of a Journey Begun An. Dom. 1610*
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*
Original Letters	*Original Letters, Illustrative of English History*
Pilgrimage	*The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff from Cologne*
Privy Council	*Acts of the Privy Council of England*
Sermon	*A Sermon Preached Before the Right Honourable the Lord Lawarre*
Song	*The Song of Roland*
Tars	*The Kyng of Tars*
Translations	*Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*
Travels	*The Travels of Marco Polo*
Voyages of Vasco da Gama	*The Voyages of Vasco da Gama and his Viceroyalty*

Preface

In recent years, increasing scholarly attention has been paid to the connections between Islam and early modern English culture. Indeed, several exemplary works have contributed greatly to our understanding of these developments since the beginning of the last century. These works have given us a new perspective which broadens our understanding of canonical texts and which sheds light on the nexus between Islam, travel literature, and early modern dramatic production. Travellers and diplomats who ventured into Muslim territories were enticed by the opulence and high ceremonial of Muslim courts and realized that they were confronting a highly developed and strong culture, which could not easily be belittled. Indeed, it was European travellers themselves who felt humbled by the Islamic culture. In the scope of this thesis, I hope to contribute to the understanding of how Muslim rulers are represented in selected accounts of travellers and ambassadors in late Tudor and early Stuart England as well as the nexus between such representations and the early modern English discourse about Islam. In early modern England, the rise of the interest in Muslim rulers' images, was accompanied by an intensified production and reproduction of visions of Islamic worlds, some inherited from medieval descriptions, some generated by actual engagements and recorded in travel narratives, and others shaped by dramatic and literary conventions of early modern English dramatists.

For the early modern Muslim world, the ruler or (the sultan) is the focus of loyalty for those he ruled over. He is the centripetal force in his Islamic state. To the Muslim subjects, he appeals for and secures loyalty on various planes. The sultan is guaranteed to lead the fight to expand and to defend the lands of Islam. He also held the position of leader of Muslims *imam al-Muslmīn*, the protector of religion of Islam, its holy places, pilgrimages, and other rituals, and above all as *gazi* or 'warrior of the faith'. For the early modern European imagination, the Muslim ruler is the epitome of the Muslim world in toto. For the early modern European imagination, he is the source of threat and terror to all the Christian European states since he considers them infidels. The Muslim ruler was viewed as more menacing since he had a formidable military and political force that Christian Europe was not able to oppose.

Europe defined itself in the attire of Christendom, especially beginning with the conquests of Spain by the Arabs in the eighth and the ninth centuries. The image of Islam and Muslim rulers in most of Western Europe prior to and during the crusading period, which was severely distorted if not fictitious, was the product of a vivid imagination of the religious 'other'.

Muslim rulers were typically conceived of as morally-depraved pagan idolaters and Satan-inspired barbarians. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by the Ottoman forces of Mehmed II, Muslims were generally described as 'Turks' regardless of their racial or ethnic origins. Accordingly, Islam was viewed through a military prism and the Holy Qur'an was viewed as being a Turkish policy. The Muslim ruler was defined with the attributes of the Ottoman sultan. The Ottoman expansion in the heart of Europe was depicted as the spread of Islam in the lands of infidels.

As a result of the rapid Ottoman conquests in the heart of Eastern Europe, from the midst of the fifteenth century onwards, when thinking of Islam, what was in the European mind were the Ottoman Turks. The image of Islam, as well as that of the 'Turk', served to define 'Europeanness' as opposed to the Muslim 'Other', this image gradually started to change towards the end of the seventeenth century with the Ottoman decline. When early modern English writings on Muslim potentates underscored stereotypical stress on the attributes of despotism, lasciviousness, and barbarism, these were not always generated in tandem with supporting historical facts and experience. Such monolithic representations were instead the culmination of distorted crusade rhetoric that hatched in the time of Christian-Muslim armed conflict. English travellers and ambassadors who engaged with Muslim potentates in the period under study offered different representations of the sovereigns they saw. Such representations differed according to some personal and ideological perceptions.

This thesis is divided into four chapters and an epilogue. Pogo sticking through centuries, Chapter One underscores the textual-historical inventories that formed the discursive practices that governed travellers and ambassadors who ventured into Islamic territories. Starting roughly from the First Crusade in 1095 till the first decade of the seventeenth century, Muslim rulers, or Saracen rulers as they were described, were in most cases depicted in a rigid stereotyping. During the early medieval era, Christian assimilations of and responses to Muslim rulers were primarily predominated by the weakness of Christian Europe compared with the formidable Islamic civilization.

Concomitant with the speech of Pope Urban II at the council of Clermont to recruit crowds to unify against Muslims in the East in the First Crusade, the Saracen king was stereotyped in the *Song of Roland*, as idolatrous, pagan, and heathen. In the *Kyng of Tars and the Soudan of Damas*, composed in the late medieval era, offers a depiction of the Saracen ruler

based on a contest of faiths. To demonize Islam and Muslim potentates, the Saracen sultan's 'idols' prove inept in respect of the power of the 'true faith' of Christianity. *Tars*, hence, offers an alternative way of subjugating Muslim rulers, i. e via converting them to Christianity. Another account of misrepresentation of Muslim rulers is John Mandeville's book of travels, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Written in the late-medieval pre-Renaissance era, Mandeville's book triggers the medieval English readership about the fabulous Orient and the dream of another crusade to occupy territories in the East and to drive the 'misbelieving men' out of the lands. Mandeville's book is cramped with inaccurate dicta and fabrications about the East and its peoples.

With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, Islam was cloaked in the Turkish attire, Qur'an as the Turkish policy, Muslim rulers as the Ottoman dynasty. Muslims in toto were described as 'Turks' in treatises, church sermons, polemics, and travelogues as Turks. References to their savagery became commonplace in European literature. Christian perceptions, assimilation, and responses to Islam and Muslim rulers were primarily predominated by the military threat by the Ottoman Empire. The threat that the saber-rattling Turks posed to Christian Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century was unprecedented. This confrontation, nevertheless, provided the impetus for the reconstructing of European approaches to the Muslim world. The victories the Ottomans achieved in three continents heated hostility and prejudice against Islam and Muslim monarchs.

English representations of Muslim sovereigns were moved by the growth of economic, political, and cultural engagements with the Muslim rulers. Still were Ottoman sultans vilified, admired, denounced, and glorified in scholarly writings and historical accounts. John Foxe, an English historian and martyrologist, tackled the history of twelve sultans of the Ottoman dynasty in a way of reminding the English readership of the threat posed by the Islamic expansion in Europe. In Foxe's treatise, *Actes and Monuments* (popularly known as the Book of Martyrs), issues like Christian captives in the Islamic lands and the idea of a Christian union were highly underscored. Richard Knolles' chronicle, *Generall Historie of the Turkes*, is another testimony of the early modern discourse of the Ottoman sultans. To demonize and dehumanize Turks in his chronicles, Knolles reminds the English readership of the annexation of Constantinople which constitutes that the rest of European cities might meet the same destiny. Knolles' chronicle is meant to disseminate the image of the Ottoman sultan as infidel, villain, and enemy to

Christendom. Written primarily for a propagandist target, it aimed at uniting Christian Europeans against Turks.

Chapter Two tackles the accounts of two early modern English travellers to the Levant; Thomas Dallam and George Sandys. The chapter records the real meetings between two early modern Britons with two Ottoman sultans. The aim of the chapter is to underscore how the English representations of the two selected travellers were influenced by the ideological baggage and the textual inventory about Muslim rulers. The delineations of the Ottoman Turks by Dallam and Sandys were moved by the two travellers' personal interests, as well as the discourses of their eras. Both of the two travellers arrived in Muslim lands with preconceived dicta about Islamic lands and their peoples. Many were stories about English men taken captives and forced to renounce their religion and embrace Islam by the hands of the Ottomans.

In Chapter Three, I am inclined to demonstrate the accounts of two ambassadors to the courts of two Muslim potentates: Henry Lello who penned a detailed account of the Ottoman Sultans he met in Istanbul, and of Thomas Roe who recorded his account of the Mughal Emperor. The Anglo-Ottoman engagement reached its zenith during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Trade and diplomacy went hand in hand in the long history of Anglo-Ottoman correspondence. Diplomatic relations between the English archipelago and the Ottoman Empire were primarily instigated in order to promote and to protect direct trade, but there were also obvious political motives from the outset. The ambassadors under study engaged themselves in the affairs of the seraglio and also wrote detailed accounts about the daily lives of Muslim potentates. Like travellers and merchants who ventured into Muslim lands and recorded images of Muslim potentates, diplomats, too, sent dispatches to their sovereigns about the smallest details of Muslim courts.

Chapter Four tackles the dramatic representations two civic pageants of Thomas Middleton: *The Triumphs of Truth* and *The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue*. In the two selected pageants, Middleton represents a different image of the Muslim ruler. Such different representations are likely to suit the imperialist desires of Stuart England in the East Indies. Unlike theatrical works whose audiences are restricted to a number of people, mayoral pageants are open to all strata of people; everyone who could claim a view. The chapter then discusses how civic pageants were used in early modern England as propaganda for the English merchants'

trade in the East and how pageantry was used to deflate the English anxiety over a conversion to Islam in the Islamic lands.

The epilogue is an evaluation of all the matters issued in the thesis.