



# Greene's *Selimus* (1594): A Scourge of God to the Ottomans

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## Abstract

The Ottomans were represented in the imagination of Elizabethan drama. However, the Ottoman Sultans were remarkably in demand on Elizabethan stage. Robert Greene's *Selimus* (1594) shows a real interest in exploring and understanding the psyche of the Ottoman Sultan. The play's pattern theme of patricide explores the unnatural characteristics of the Ottoman royal family. The dramatic scenes of the murderous actions are engaging in lawless incursion upon ancient historical claims. Selimus appears as a proud ambitious tyrant, polluted with the blood of his own brothers. The fraternal conflict forms the inevitable bloodshed in transferring power to descendants in the Ottoman Empire. Greene depicts Sultan Selimus as the scourge of God to the Ottoman House. He holds some philosophy which is contrary to Elizabethan ethical and succession rules. Greene's interpretation of his conflict in the domestic scenes is a significant acknowledgement of the settled nature of Turkish sovereignty, and indeed of its complexity, at his own days.

**Keywords:** Selimus, Ottoman Empire, Turks, tyranny, Scourge, Bajazet, Tamburlaine, Elizabethan Drama

## 1. Introduction

Elizabethan drama represents the Ottoman Turks in an exciting episode. The historical lineage of Sultan Selim caught the attention of the Elizabethan writers. Robert Greene's *The First Part of the Tragical Raigne of Selimus, the Emperor of the Turks* (1594), Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*, and Fulke Greville's *Mustapha*, have embodied the Ottoman imperial family on London stage. The extensive canon of the Oriental plays about the Turks represents the matter of Turkishness obliquely within a domestic setting (Note 1). According to Oueijan, two-thirds of the forty-six Oriental plays were tragedies because the Elizabethans considered "the East as the domain of war, conquest, fratricide, lust and treachery" (Oueijan, 1996:15). There was a general availability of English accounts on Turkish affairs. Playwrights represented their Elizabethan audience a picture of the East they desired to see, an Orient filled with treachery, cruelty and false doctrine, an Orient that was destroyed by its own rulers (Note 2). Greene's *Selimus* is one of the most tantalizing imitation plays in Elizabethan drama. It is observable that the Elizabethans do not travel much, but prefer to learn foreign matters and take their pleasures at home. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michele Willems, for example, highlight 'the problems of visualizing and defining the Other which are discovered to be most of the time, another means of defining the Self', and thus, regarding antiphony as dominant over representation (Note 3).

The succession system of the Ottomans, in common with that of other dynasties of the Islamic World, presented no partiality for primogeniture during that century. As a result of the lack of any pre-established priority among candidates for the throne, the early period of Ottoman rule was branded by bloody and sometimes persistent competition between rival brothers. Fratricide continued an unavoidable bloodshed but an informal element in the transfer of rule from sultan to another sultan until Mehmet II, the Conqueror, who decreed formally that 'for the welfare of the state, the one of my sons to whom God grants the sultanate may lawfully put his brothers to death' (Note 4). Among contemporary examples, Shakespeare's reference to the murder of brothers by newly acceded sultan Amurath, could be based on real events of 1574 (Murat/Amurath II) or, with striking topicality, of 1596 (Mehmet III).

Elizabethan playwrights incorporated Turkish material which had considerable influence on English literature, becoming a classic collection of the whole Orient. These dramatists reproduced previous historical, cultural and religious stereotypes of the Turks from the Medieval Age. The Elizabethan traditional hostility towards Islam and the Ottoman Empire was because of the skepticism of integration and multiculturalism. Similarly, English playwrights substituted discourses with prejudices as they interweaved between the Turks and their fascination in the Ottomans. (Al-Olaqi, 2017:1). This trend in play-writing, exemplified by many great Elizabethan plays carry the titles of Turkish names and are set in Constantinople such as Robert Greene's *Selimus The First Part of the Tragical Raigne of Selimus, the Emperor of the Turks* (1594), George Peele's *Turkish Mahomet* (1595), Thomas Kyd's *The Tragedy of Soliman and Perseda* (1599), Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1609), John Mason's *The Turke* (1606), Thomas Goffe's *The Raging Turke or Bajazet the Second* (1631), Ladowick Carlell's *The Famous Tragedy of Osmand the Great Turk* (1657), Elkonah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1677), and Mary Pix's *Ibrahim the Thirteenth Emperor of the Turks* (1696) (Note 5). These royal Turks were characterized in an utterly derogatory and hostile manner. Therefore, the misrepresentation of the Turks in the European humanistic discourse places a special emphasis on the Turkish intellectual vacuity, moral breaks and cultural dictatorship. Regarding the overall conception in the early modern Turk

plays, Louis Wann observes:

The Turks are generally represented as valiant, proud-spirited and cruel... There is scarcely, any mention of the hospitality, patriarchal dignity and simplicity, and frank generosity that impress foreigners today as his most prominent qualities (Wann, 1915:169).

The Elizabethan dramatic reproduction of the Turkish monarch is a likely choice for catastrophic and historic repertoire that introduces tragic ends for the lives of prominent personages. Elizabethan plays frequently depict the Ottoman Turks in a negative light for their historical atrocities to their own families (Al-Olaqi, 2016:168). English dramatists found in the history of the rich Ottoman dynasty a gorgeous source for tragedies that concentrated around the popular themes of ambition, revenge, power conflicts and courtyard treachery. Fatima Belgasem finds that the representation of a group of imperial Turkish characters performed on the stage during the last two decades of the sixteenth century is all distorted because it is formulated and regulated by certain imperatives and traditions (Belgasem, 2013: 182). The Elizabethan dramatist Greene depicts the strength and the roles of various traditional and civil illustrations in the ever-changing discourse about the Ottoman court. He tries to call up images of the Ottoman imperial culture and autonomy. The show similarly scans the significance of the Ottoman magnificent undertakings as a sort of arts for his watchers. Hence, Greene's *Selimus* (1595) was significantly prominent in shaping the Elizabethan judgement of the Ottoman Turks in which the age of Sultan Selim I was a transition period of Turkish history and politics. Knolles refers to the Sultan as an ill-tempered person (Knolles, 1603:548). Sultan Selim violates his devotion to his family when he has killed his brothers:

[They] perished through the unnaturall and execrable crueltie of this most mercilesse man. So that men generally did both feare him and hate him. For as much as he without all feare of God or regard of worldly shame, accounted no practise wicked or devise detestable, that might serve for the better establishing of his kingdome; and had set downe in his mind, (long before corrupted with ambition and tyrannie. That it was farre better for the assurance of his estate, to be feared of all than beloved of many; and therefore spared no man's life, of whom he had but the least suspicion (Knolles, 1603:556).

Robert Greene admires the heroic defiance of his plays' heroes and their shocking protagonists. In Greene's *Selimus*, sensuality and brutality of Selimus seems to be prevailing appearances of the Ottoman Sultans. The attention on the themes of Turkish arrogance, dreadfulness, brutality, vengeance, greediness, deceitfulness shows as the manifestation of their images such as Greene's *Selimus*, Mason's *The Turke*, Greville's *Mustapha* and Carlell's *Osmant the Great Turk*. For instance, Sultan Selim I in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589-90), the son of the Turkish Emperor, leaves Turkey for Malta in the demand of getting a big pearl from Barabbas. Selim is pictured as greedy as Barabbas. Although the play centers on the Jewish character Barabbas, Selim 'Calymath' appears in Malta to collect the ten years tribute and the plot rotates around getting rid of this problem.

Salim, for that, thus saith the Gouernour,  
That he hath in store a Pearle so big,  
So precious and with all so Orient. (*Jew*, V.2252-3)

Sultan Selim I (1470-1520) known as 'the Grim,' was a great conquering sultan. He ascended the throne of the Ottoman Empire by forcing the resignation and plotting the poisoning of his father, Bayazid II, and by murdering his brothers. This historical account is considered by many critics as a document of Turkish barbarism. However, Robert Greene's *Selimus* and Thomas Goffe's *The Raging Turke* both represent the kin killing of Bayazid II by his son Selim. Sultan Selim also triumphed over the Mamelukes in Syria and Egypt, and he gained control over the holy cities of Mecca and Medina (Goffman, 2004:99-101). Thus, he and then his successors until the abolition of the Empire in 1923 assumed the title of 'Caliph', a religious title equal to the vice-gerent of the Prophet. He was granted the title of "Hadim al-Haramain ash- Sharifain" (*Servant of the Holy Mosques of Mecca and Medina*), by the Sharif of Mecca on 1517 (Note 6). Selim I appears in Greene's *Selimus*, *Emperor of the Turkes* (1588) concerning the death of Bajazid II by means of poison, managed by Selim, and the execution of his two brothers Corcut and Acomat, his nephews Amurath and Aladin, and his sister Solyma and her husband Mustapha (Note 1).

Greene's *Selimus* is a tragedy of conspiracy, treachery and internal enmity within the Ottoman royal family. The main source of the play is Peter Ashton's *A Shorte Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles* (1546), Thomas Newton's *A Notable Historie of the Saracens* (1575), and Philip Lonicer's *Chronicorum Turcicorum* (1578) (Vitkus, 2000:18). The authorship of *Selimus* is not certain but Vitkus thinks that Greene is the most possible candidate (Vitkus, 2000:17-18). Some critics have suggested a range of allegorical understandings of Tamburlaine. When Greene came to write *Selimus*, for which a consequence was predicted in the epilogue, undoubtedly gesturing Marlowe's influence, he made an exciting artistic judgment on the Ottoman Selim (Al-Olaqi, 2012: 182). It is interested but also rational that his Tamburlaine stature is actually a Turkish sultan: the play's portrayal of a series of carnage headed over by the Emperor Selimus is evidently invented to out-Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* since Marlowe describes Tamburlaine as the scourge of God. But Greene upsets the historical context that Tamburlaine is transformed from conqueror of the Turks into a Turk himself to serve a theatrical imperative. This is an example of the demands of the market which drove the Elizabethan

artistic production. Definitely, the depiction of the Ottoman family warfare between sons following the death of their father draws on the historical Selim I. Greene's play is successfully an outcome of *Tamburlaine*, which ends, of course, with the death of Tamburlaine as he exceeds his empire to his two sons. If *Selimus* is so held, it may perhaps be that contemporaries examined *Tamburlaine* in a similar way. In *Virgideciarum* (1597), Joseph Hall refers provokingly to Sultan Selim as "the Turkish *Tamburlaine*" (Levin, 1984:53). The central figure in the establishment of the classic image of Turkish power is the historical Selim the Grim (1520-66). His reign provided a complex object of study for western writers of the sixteenth century, embodying an image at once of effective power and domestic tyranny.

## 2. The Ottoman Tyranny

The Ottomans are for some reason constantly portrayed as atrocious stereotypes of cruelty and barbarism. Dennis Wheatley portrays that 'those strange half-Eastern and half-Western people-the Turks' (Hutchinson, 1960:55) were a nation identified with brutality and cruelty. Elizabethan reports comprehend pejorative reminiscences of Turkish brutality and religious bloody clashes with reference to the Turkish conquests in Eastern Europe. Richard Knolles' *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) describes Turkey as the 'the greatest terror of the World,' the 'barbarous Turk' 'terror of Europe', 'Scourge of the Islands', 'whip of the Christian World' and 'Scourge of Christendome' (Note 8). Within this context of the Ottoman Empire as an imperial superpower, the attitude of most early modern English men and women towards the Muslims was one of fear, anxiety, envy and awe (Matar, 1999:69). In the Renaissance, for instance, the Turkish domains grow into a focus of curiosity for Europeans with admiration to the residents' colorful dresses, principles and protocols, and accounts stressed the Turks' evil, cruelty and violence among the royal family which overwhelmed and attracted to the Western people. Dramatists such as Marlowe, Kyd and Shakespeare acquaint with Turkish figures in their works, consuming Turkish history as a source of a rich material to be represented on London stage (Note 9). In fact, there was a mode for shows about the Turks and other Oriental nationals in late Elizabethan drama. On the same way, many plays focused on Turkish kingly fathers, whereas after the 1590s young men turn into significance. Consequently, the Turks and other Oriental natives are themes specific to the Marlowe period, though they are not essentially linked to the plots such as Marlow's *Jew of Malta* in Greene's *Alphonsus*, in Greville's *Mustapha*, etc.

In some other productions, the Turkish stereotype, to some extent, is unlike Greene's *Selimus* in its terrific tyranny. Many greatest shows represent sensuality to be the central characteristic of the Turks. The Elizabethan plays dealing with Oriental matter were predominantly serious in nature (Wann, 1915:182). The plots of tragedies in particular attack numerous negative 'Turkish' characteristics such as brutality, terror, betrayal, and the like. Moreover, other Renaissance tyrant plays are more clearly in the hybrid morality-neo-classical vein, such as *Cambyses*, *Selimus*, and *Soliman and Perseda*. These destructive stereotypes appear to reinforce the bloody images associated with some historical figures such as Sultan Selim I, Sultan Soliman, Sultan Mehmet II. Elizabethan Turk plays have reinforced the image of the Sultans' tyrannical caprice wherein their royal will and deadly caprice do not stand for law and reason. For instance, in *Selimus*, Greene is alert not only to exploit the popular prejudice against Turkey but also to take advantage to a fresh topical interest in the old story which is ascended out of time.

Greene represents a competitive historical reflection centered on the theme of the succession of Oriental Ottoman dynasties. Greene's *Selimus* provides a complex figure for historical analysis, inviting at once revulsion at the lawless deeds of a bloody tyrant, and admiration for a successful ally of the Turks. Greene's probable sources, certainly interprets the historical story of Selim positively, in the light of his role in brutal killing his dynasty. Greene's *Selimus* points out that Turkey is known only for its tyranny and its brutalities which inspires the significance of the national unity in the Elizabethan culture and politics. The Turks are depicted by Greene as being of violent temper, and their traditional treachery is exemplified by Selimus's action in taking advantage of being supported by the army to conjure on his rivals and kill them in cold blood. In the earlier scenes, Sultan Selimus has no reputation of courtesy and magnanimity within his own family and people. He betrays the human sentimentality fallacy so much at variance with history as to be amusing in a way not intended by the dramatist Robert Greene. The barbarian views of some Turkish army officers slaughtering royal princes and princesses are heinous scenes. Selimus kills in deadly earnest, and draws a parallel between the play and his real tragedy in a long curtained speech. Incidents of genocide, massacre or ethnic cleansing are supposed to have happened during Selimus' period as he used to send his army to ferment murder and looting. The well-framed canon of works about the tyrannous Turkish imperial rule, Asli Cirakman offers the following broad definition:

In the sixteenth century, a tyrant was defined as an absolute and arbitrary ruler who disregarded private ownership of property; whose rule was unlawful, impious and unjust; and who employed persons of low or unknown birth rather than nobles for higher offices (Cirakman, 2001:56).

Selimus's war battles would consider this a terrific example of their individual plans. He usually acted violently enough so that cities could be overwhelmed in destruction. This endorses the massive fear of the Ottoman commanders to be brought under Selimus's conquest or executed. The horrible way of execution highlighted in the play is the murder of innocent women. They were overwhelmed before the eyes of the other Turks. The slaughtering scenes of three women strangled at Selimus's command, are shocking. Further acts of violence, including the striking of Aga and the chopping off of his hands on stage, are projected to exaggerate the violent world of the Ottoman conquest. Like the ruthless Tamburlaine, Selimus proudly justifies his oppression as an ultimate justice. Although killing innocent people cannot be justified, David Bevington notes that some strange incidents in *Tamburlaine* 'reveal his [Tamburlaine's] capacity in love

for generosity, loyalty, and a sense of justice' (Bevington, 1962:208). The Ottoman conquering wars in Europe created a popular belief, Hutchinson remarks that 'the lust of massacring Christians is in the blood of every Turk' (Hutchinson, 1960:44). The Turks were seen in the European eyes to be "different and strange, infidels and 'barbarians,' admirable or fearsome," but they did not constitute "colonial targets" (Matar, 1999:2). In fact, Matar maintains, "it is precisely because Muslims possessed an empire that rivaled, indeed superseded that of England in this period that Britons began to demonize, polarize, and alterize them" (Matar, 1999:3). It is true that early modern England was xenophobic and insular to some extent, frequently defining itself in literary and cultural texts against the demonic or vaguely exotic Other especially the Turks. But, the traditional, hegemonic model of post-colonial theory "by which the stereotyping of the subjected people structures ideological unity for the dominant people" by no means describe Anglo-Ottoman political relations in early modern England (Henke, 2008:9).

The Ottoman patterns of fratricide and patricide reveal themes of the unnatural Ottoman royal family. They are examples of the delocalization for the English that reflects a deep engagement with issues from the historical literature about the Turks (Tibbs, 2003:27). Vitkus remarks that "the Great Turk became a European bogey partly on the strength of a dynastic track record of executions, poisonings, strangulations, and general familicide" (Vitkus, 2000:18). The Ottoman tyranny attracts the Elizabethan writers' interest to depict the ambitious Ottoman Sultans executing their sons, brothers, and even fathers to have a supreme power such as Greene's Selimus' tyranny overcomes his father when he has poisoned him. This conception of tyranny, widely existing during the Renaissance period, can be traced to classical sources (Note 10). Selimus poisoned his father, Bajazet and his two brothers, while it is foreseen in the prominent infanticide in Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, concerning the story of Solyman slaying Mustapha his own son which becomes the reason of the death of Gianger his second son. These inhuman patterns of fratricide and patricide represent a dictating trope across the European writing about the Turks. They work both internally, giving a pattern to history writing, which is interspersed by frequent occasions of intra-dynastic betrayal, and externally, in the perception of the Turks as violent and defiant people (Wann, 1915:180).

In the reign of the historical Sultan Selim, 'the Terrible' and also branded as Selim 'the Grim', the official Ottoman attitude of bitter hostility to the Christian West was greatly intensified. Greene draws an implicit and explicit assessment on Islam and Christianity in relationship to culture, religion and manners. The religion of Turkey is Islam; the Ottoman emperors were often represented swearing by God, Mahamet, and Alcoran. Greene's Sultan Selimus brother swears "by the holy rites of Mahomet /His wondrous tomb, and sacred Alcoran" (ix.3..1170-1). Elizabethan dramatic images of the Ottoman Empire were habitually treated with a religious propaganda. Islamic images, thus, in retain to some of the old polemical strains. However, it signifies a slight departure from the Medieval prejudiced views of Islam and Turks into open views of fascination. It witnesses some positive appreciation for the Islamic life and ways. This had been brought about by closer and actual contact in business with Turkey and Barbary.

Robert Greene gives emphasis on the topic of Turkish brutality. The first scene of *Selimus* exposes the sorrowful of Bajazet about his late condition regarding the greed of Selimus and the future of the Ottoman Empire. In the same scene, through the arguments of Bajazet about his weakness to encounter his ruthless son, the spectators are prepared for a matchless tyrant like Selimus:

Whose hands do itch to have the crown,  
And he will have it—or else pull [Bajazet] down.  
Is he a prince? Ah no, he is a sea,  
Into which run nought but ambitious reaches,  
Seditious complots, murder, fraud, and hate. (i.1.77-80).

In fact, these features, ascribed to Selimus here, are part of the foremost religious and political discourse in which the stereotypical sorts of the Turks as characterized in the early modern England. Therefore, in the instant scene, Selimus does not show his father mistaken in the conclusion of his son as he tells his exact purposes to Sinam Bassa. If Bajazet does not hand over the crown to 'Selimus, his right hand is resolved/ To end the period with a fatal stab' (ii.3.66-67). From the very beginning, Selimus looks like a Machiavellian, ready to commit cruel murders. When Sinam Bassa reminds him of the 'revenging God who would punish him for his sins after his death' (ii.185-186), Selimus challenges both God and religion, ending that — 'An empire, Sinam, is so sweet a thing,/ As I could be a devil to be a king' (ii.203-204). It was a conventional in the early modern standard drama to show Turks as unfair, cruel and lusty heathens connected with Satanism. The Ottoman Sultan Selimus, with his greedy lust for power, then, becomes a typical example of this kind of Oriental despotism (Vitkus, 2000:21).

Robert Greene has shaped the social patterns of three kinds of faith in the three sons of Bajazet: the Christian, the Muslim, and the Atheist (Sisneros, 2010:14). Corcut, the educated brother, has "conversed with Christians/ And learned of them the way to save his soul/ And 'pease the anger of the highest God" (xxii.2. 50-52). Corcut beseeches 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 honorable death by choking, his devotion is resolute: "Now Selimus, I have spoken; let me die./ I never will entreat thee for my life. /Selimus, farewell. Thou God of Christians,/ Receive my dying soul into thy hands" (xxii.81-84). Nonetheless this show is not an encounter between a Christian and an Ottoman, for the two brothers remain, and only Selimus identifies with Islam. Acomat angered at his father's rejection to hand over

the crown instantly, appeals to Prophet Muhammad while on a lecture:

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.1.11-20)

The unkind violence engaged by Acomat is accorded with Selimus' dreadful crimes. Acomat is not more or less murderous for the imperial ambition and throne. However, somebody has to triumph, and it is not the Muslim: Selimus overthrows his forefather and brothers and precedes the crown, although he willingly finds himself as an atheist. In a shocking appearance of logic protecting Selimus's religious preferences, Greene bestows over eighty lines to Selimus's coherent justification as to why he tracks no faith. Selimus claims that at the very beginning of time, there was no idea of poor or rich, war or peace. Consequently, "there needed them no judge, nor yet no law,/ Nor any king of whom to stand in awe" (ii.1.86-87). Conversely, he proudly claims to combat shortly and breaks out the concepts of ownership and blood-spattered to struggle with the entire world. Then and only then, Selimus shows off to contend religions as the world needs religion to gain obedience from people: 'And these religious observations, \Only bugbears to keep the world in fear\And make men quietly a yoke to bear' (ii.1.95-106).

The Ottoman Empire had brutal encounters with the Western Europe which resulted in scores of casualties and losses throughout history. In contrast to an idealized image of Greene's Bayazid to appear as unenthusiastic to the Christians he was earlier very brutal to them. But Greene politically wants to send a message to the Ottoman allies that they are going to encounter the same consequences. Greene shows Selim's barbarism to the Elizabethan audience to recognize that he was also a scourge of European pains: Occhiali, a high official of Bajazet, says:

He craues my Lord, another seigniorie,  
 Nearer to you and to the Christians,  
 That he may make them know, that Selimus  
 Is borne to be a scourge unto them all. (xi.2.74-77)

Robert Greene depicts Europe and Europeans as weak. Although Selimus is leading a divided and demoralized Ottoman state, he has swiftly managed to attack many European territories. He threatens to "plague those Christian runnages" in Belgrade and Hungaria (xi.110). Greene civically portrays Sultan Selimus violating the system of the Ottoman House in governing the giant empire; and he behaves like a hooligan. The Elizabethan historian Knolles finds that most of the Ottoman sultans including Selim have an extreme ambition for a supreme power which led them disastrously to bloodshed and chaos. (Knolles, 1603:533). On the other hand, Robert Greene depicts the Ottoman violence as a cautious message to Europe and to those states and nations which have not yet been subjected to the Ottomans, so that they might repent their governmental failures. For Greene it is the will of God that directs the course of events for the Ottoman House. The play often demonstrates how divine providence, judges, rewards or revenges the Ottoman pride and tyranny. Fred Levy remarks that a divine account in Greene's times attributes rationally everything to God's plan (Levy, 1967:287). Thus, Greene gives a pattern of the scourge of God for wrongdoings of the Ottoman Empire as represented in Selimus's severe cruelty and crimes that illustrates divine punishment on the whole Ottomans.

### 3. Selimus the Scourge of the Ottomans

The image of Selimus is based on tyranny and violent deaths to bring the cultural geography of the current Turkish ruler within the analytic framework of classical political theory. The dictatorship of the Ottoman Selimus is established on a number of religious, political and cultural Turkish formulas ranging from misinterpretation of Islamic caliphate and wild lust of power which has distorted the Turkish image in history. The manifestation of the political concepts enclosed in Selimus' monologue in the context of the restraints enforced, plays regarding religious and political contents through a Turkish character on the Elizabethan stage: It is 'but a policy/ To keep the quiet of society' (ii, 1.114-5). This association of religion is as part of politics which links the statements of Selimus in his atheistic speech to Prophet Muhammad as in the Western polemic biographies, and this contains the version enclosed in one of the play's sources: Thomas Newton's *A Notable Historie of the Saracens*. Frederick S. Boas remarks:

Selimus' rejection of religion also echoes some of the statements attributed to Marlowe by those who accused him of atheism, most strikingly those contained in the 'note' of Richard Baines against 'Marley and his blasphemeyes' in which he spoke of Marlowe's 'damnable iudgement of religion and scorn of

God's word', particularly the statement that Marlowe held the belief that, 'the first beginning of Religion was only to keep men in awe' ; a position which seems clearly reproduced in Selimus's speech (Boas, 1955:cxiii).

Daniel Vitkus is smart in recognizing the significance of Selimus' religious identity in the placing of the contents of this speech. As Vitkus precisely observes:

For Elizabethan theatregoers, these lines would have been disturbingly transgressive, providing electrifying moments for the audience, who gasped to hear such fearless defiance of divine law, and became increasingly uneasy later in the play as Selimus' sins went unpunished (Vitkus, 2000:22).

The expressive details of Turkish incivility express at once the Turks' disdain for law. Selimus's bad temper and cruelty are disastrous but at the same time he looks like a perfect politician fox. Selimus admits his involvement in killing his father (i.209). Likewise, these references to Selimus' brutality are underlined in another way towards the end of the play when he slaughtered Queen of Masia in which Selimus made his own understanding of authority and kingship. He says:

First the facred name of King begunne :  
 And things that were as common as the day,  
 Did then to fet pofleflburs firft obey.  
 Then they establisht laws and holy rites,  
 To maintaine peace, and governe bloody fights. (ii, l. 321-5)

Selimus is tremendously motivated by his secular ambition. His words are packed with intellectual argument with himself to prove his own convictions. His overall speeches extremely sound fanatic and blasphemous. Selimus's language echoes as an extremely bad or shocking misrepresentation of religion and politics (Jacquot, 1953:437). In Greene's view, he thinks that Selimus psychologically seems in huge confusion between religious conviction and legislations. He thinks religion lower his speed to reach to the throne. In fact, the play represents "religion as a problem in politics" (Dollimore, 1984:86). On the other hand, Greene's Selimus' social and psychological features are terrifying. He appears as a Turkish monster by rejecting the basic human feelings and social bonds. He claims that such terms parental or brotherhood are silly (ii.112-15). Greene goes deeper into Selimus' psyche to depict how he thinks over to get an excuse to execute his family members. Nevertheless, the Turkish marshal law, which appears to be inspired by Islam, is simply distorted by Turkish Sultans and turned out to be as a quirky faith containing odd traditions and barbaric practices. Islam looks like steadfastly stranded in the treachery, cheating, and injustice of Muslims. The point in Selimus's lack of moral principle is his Turkishness. Greene's emotionally prejudices against Selimus and emphasizes on the chaotic and depraved nature of him as an Ottoman Sultan. He represents Selim as a savage or a beast and sometimes traitor having no human manners, civility or devotion. The historical Sultan Selim's severe cruelty and crimes are measured within the limits of his ambitions apparently, enthused to 'the greatnesse of Alexander of MACEDON' (Knolles, 1603:515). In 1518, Mocenigo marked that: "Sultan Selim I was considered a 'justman' who, nurtured by The Life of Alexander', wished to imitate his feats and become the master of Asia, Africa and Europe" (Vaiensi, 1990:184).

Robert Greene shows a similar negative attitude towards Selimus, who replaced the Ottoman system with cruel martial law, by abusing the Turks of similar brutality, foolishness and betrayal. He is historically known as the destroyer of Persians and Christians. Elsewhere he is represented as the traitor whose ambitions have brought about the sacrifice of the whole Ottoman royal dynasty. The Christian West lived in an agony of suspense. But Selim's death on September 22nd, 1520, in his fifty-fourth year, was a great relief in the East and the West. Daniel Vitkus 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" (Vitkus, 2000:22).

The prevalence of negative stereotypes through a Turkish character in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (c.1594) has an evil Moor, Aaron, who, like Greene's Selimus and Marlowe's Tamburlaine, was ambitious, valiant and ferocious. The Moorish Aaron's personality might be briefly summed up as egotistical, cruel, faithless, remorseless and murderous. In *Selimus*, Greene draws upon the literary, historical, and reform traditions to convey the theme that combines history and drama to represent in significance the Turkey under the Ottoman progeny. Selim I appears in the anonymous play *Selimus, Emperor of the Turkes* (1588) regarding the death of Bajazid II by means of poison, managed by Selim, and the killing of his two brothers Corcut and Acomat. He also gives the impression in Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (1590), though the show focusses on the Jewish character Barabbas, Selimus 'Calymath' comes to Malta to collect the ten years tribute and the plot turns around getting rid of this problem. Edward Said claims that Orientalism is a Western style of dominating, restructuring and building hegemony over the Orient (Said, 2003:146). Therefore, in the style of the play, the Turks are attributed negative physical or moral characteristics so that they are always lustful, fanatical, irrational, cruel, scheming, unreliable and defeated. Vitkus notes that Selimus, with his greedy desire for power, is a distinctive sample of oriental despotism (Vitkus, 2000:11).

Selimus horribly used to cause many horrors, killings, and robberies to anyone oppose him. He seeks the ultimate power over other states and kingdoms. As Irving Ribner observed, by demonstrating that 'he embraces a philosophy which is contrary to Elizabethan moral law' and 'accepts doctrines which the age considered to emanate from Satan' (Ribner, 1955: 169). He is motivated by his ambitious nature and a denial of religion. He arrogantly speaks to himself that he is going to slaughter and destroy all countries to reach to his own goals even though it is against the Islamic laws (ii.1.10-12). Selimus is a gallant combatant. After being crushed by Selimus, Tonombey admits that the violence of Selimus is unbearable (xi.1.28-32, 35-36). He is a pattern of the relationship of power and domination. Selimus looks to himself as the most appropriate candidate for succeeding the command. His other brothers are unfit to power. For instance Corcut is a philosopher, and he did not fight a battle (ix.1.90); and Acomat is grown up as a lavish boy. Selimus' purpose and ambition grasp the entire admiration. He bravely shouts:

Mars, or Minerva, Mahound, Termagant,  
Or whosoe'er you are that fight 'gainst me,  
Come and but show yourselves before my face,  
And I will rend you all like trembling reeds. (vi.20-23)

Selimus often employs his asides and soliloquies to privately communicate with his spectators about what he thinks and plans. Fatima Belgasem finds that "his self-revelatory speeches can be traced to the theatrical conduct of the Vice character in morality plays. In morality drama, the Vice will typically utilize his debut to unfold his identity and mission. Selimus too uses his first lengthy monologue to introduce himself as 'the perfect picture of right tyranny' (ii.2.53); and he then unveils his aspirations towards the throne and his decision to murder his father" (Belgasem, 2013:151). Like the Machiavellian Tamburlaine, he depicts himself as a scourge of the world but he intrigues people to gain political power. His evil and overambitious intentions lead Mankind astray and explain how he will achieve his plans.

The historical character of Timur or Tamburlaine has left a remarkable mark on Europe's cultural memory. This ancient figure Timur was a key from a Christian viewpoint because he had protected Constantinople from the Ottoman Turks in 1402, stopping its submission for half a century. It might sensibly be anticipated then that the modern response of the play may also be read as an endorsement of Tamburlaine's downfall and humiliation of Bajazid I. Therefore, Timur is totally stereotyped in the personality of Sultan Selim. The influence of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* in 1587 was instant but also long lasting. Within at most five (and perhaps two or three) years the two *Tamburlaine* plays had motivated (or otherwise influenced) *Alphonsus, King of Aragon, 1 & 2 Tamar Cham* (both lost), *The Battle of Alcazar*, *Selimus* and perhaps *The Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek* (lost play much in common with *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Soliman and Perseda*), as well as (less definitely) other history dramas inscribed and performed in the 1590s. While little is known about how *Selimus* fared in performance – no records have survived – rather more information about the *Tamburlaine* plays exists, though of course not as much as we would like. Little is known about the play's first performances in 1587-88; rather more, thanks to the survival of Henslowe's *Diary*, can be reconstructed of their revival in 1594-95.

Greene's *Selimus* (1594) portrays Sultan Selimus as the Scourge of God on the Ottomans as well as the entire world. The use of the title "the scourge of God" for Sultan Selimus means he is the just and secret judgment of the Almighty [God], who in justice delivers into the hands of his merciless villain upon Ottoman Kingdom, as unto the most terrible executioner of His God of dreadful wrath. He is sent by God to be punished the Ottoman royal members for their dirty sins of the deadly corruption in destroying other nations. The divine power of God has delivered into the hands of the heartless Selimus, in order to punish first the Ottomans for their wickedness. Moreover, Selimus is designated as the scourge of God especially for forcing or employing janissaries to fight against the Ottoman royal family who were considered as the real enemy of the Christendom. In fact, Knolles remarks that "the Turkish Kings have growne so great, and their kingdome so mightily enlarged, by enforcing and alluring Christians to fight against Christians, to the utter confusion of themselves" (Knolles, 1603:340.). Selimus's wicked temper explodes at a moment's notice. He thinks nothing of greeting warmly with one hand whilst plunging a dagger in with the other. Selimus is presumed to have committed various nasty crimes. He habitually used to launch warfare with rage and in times of nominal peace. Selim successfully carved up Europe for decades. He was also a scourge of God to European monarchs:

Ochiali.. He craves my Lord, another feignorie,  
Nearer to you and to the Christians,  
That he may make them know, that Selimus  
Is borne to be a scourge unto them all. (xx.2.175-8)

Selimus's stereotype of the the scourge of God for his wrongdoings, is already establishing in European thoughts. After the events of 1453, the Ottoman expansion was a terror to the West, and most European humanists came to name the Turks 'barbarians' and many looked at them as a threat to the Western culture (Wheatcroft, 1993:8). Bajazet's death represents similar accounts of massacres in association with his brutal image as the Turkish Sultan.

Bajazet. Is this thy duty sonne unto thy father,

So impiously to level at his life ?  
 Can thy soule wallowing in ambitious mire,  
 Seeke for to reauē that breft with bloudie knife,  
 From whence thou hadft thy being Selimus?  
 Was this the end for which thou joindft thy selfe,  
 With that mischievous traitor Ramirchan }  
 Was this thy drift to speake with Bajazet?  
 Well hoped I (but hope I fee is vaine)  
 Thou wouldft have beene a comfort to mine age,  
 A scourge and terror to mine enemies,  
 That this thy comming with so great an hoast,  
 Was for no other purpose and intent,  
 Then for to chastise those base Christians  
 Which spoile my subjects welth with fire & sword  
 Well hoped I the rule of Trebisonde,  
 Would have increased the valour of thy minde,  
 To turne thy strength upon thy Persians. (iii. 1.74-91)

In these lines, Selimus pompously expresses his views of the superior freethinkers whose individualism harbours on heavenly thoughts and glorious spirit. Irving Ribner concludes that sixteenth-century history plays claimed the most widespread political canon "of the absolute authority of the king, his responsibility to God alone for his deeds, and the sinfulness of any rebellion against him, no matter what the provocation" (Ribner, 1957: 309). Selimus also feels that he is up above to refute the concepts of heaven gods. He looks to 'the names of gods, religion, heaven and hell' (ii, 1.98) as not bad. He says,

Because they keep the baser sort in fear;  
 But we, whose mind in heavenly thoughts is clad,  
 Whose body doth a glorious spirit bear  
 That hath no bounds, but flieth everywhere;  
 Why should we seek to make that soul a slave,  
 To which dame Nature so large freedom gave?  
 Amongst us men, there is some difference. (ii.1.17-23)

The above passage clearly indicates that Selimus' individuality is considered of an upper rank or an earthly deity. He represents the worst superiority in which the hereditary society of sixteenth-century England that was founded on privilege. Islam was exclusively alien to the West; therefore, the stage was turned into a locus which provided the conversion of the Turk into Christianity. In Greene's tragedy, for instance, Corcut the brother of Selimus converts to Christianity before his death. Corcut describes his recent conversion to Christianity and delivers a choric threatening to his brother:

Selim before his dreadful majestic,  
 There lies a booke written with bloudie lines,  
 Where our offences all are registred.  
 Which if we do not hastily repent,  
 We are reserved to lasting punishment. ./.  
 Thy soule shall be tormented in darke hell,  
 Where woe, and woe, and never ceasing woe,  
 Shall sound about thy ever-damned soule. (xx.3.52-6, 67-9)

The scene of Mustapha in fear and despair serves as a source of mockery and a target to wage severe criticism against Turkish assistants and kinsmen. Greene, moreover, highlights the pride of the Turks in politics, religion, military, and business. Greene's audience, Christians or Muslims, would not sympathize with the humiliation of Turks in the hand of Selimus, because of their injustice. They, like Greene, think that Selimus is the scourge of God upon the Turks. Because Greene's audience assume that Muslims adore Prophet Muhammad, Mustapha's calling on Muhammad for help would



not be only seen natural to the audience, but it would be of an expected failure. He finally abandons his faith in Prophet Muhammad and hurls insults at him: Mustapha says,

I do not seeke to left on my offence  
 Great Selimus, but truly do protest  
 I did it not for hatred of your grace,  
 So helpe me God and holy Mahomet.  
 But for I grieu'd to fee the famous stocke  
 Of worthie Bajazet fall to decay,  
 Therefore I fent the Princes both away. /../  
 And yet the Iannizars mourne for me,  
 They know Mustapha never proud salfe.  
 I, I have bene as true to Selimus,  
 As ever subject to his foueraigne,  
 So helpe me God and holy Mahomet. (xx. 3.74-8, 91-5)

Selimus's tyranny was partly done on Europe. It was a fictional Christian revenge narrative – the devoutly to be wished for overthrow of the "Great Turk" that would, of course, not take place. The cruel image of Selimus' name frightens all the enemies of Turkey (i. 80). He was called the Emperor of all the Turks and the terrorist of the world. Unlike Marlowe, the writer of *Selimus* has kept some historical events for his outcome in *Selimus*. Marlowe's tragedy is often boomed and his protagonist is stated by name three times throughout the last third of the play. Bajazet, the father of Selimus, recalls the fate of late Sultan Bajazet:

That wofull Emperour first of my name,  
 Whom the Tartarians locked in cage,  
 To be a spectacle to all the world,  
 Was ten times happier then I am.  
 For Tamberlaine the scourge of nations,  
 Was he that pulled him from his kingdome so. (xx.5.53-8)

Tamburlaine and Selimus have subsequently become historical figures and synonymous with destruction. Tamburlaine's attack has been redefined as a destruction of Islamic culture and even a "vengeful" action against the mighty Arab and Muslim countries. Tamburlaine's reputation has altered over time in numerous places, being disdained by his contemporary neighbors and applauded in Europe as a potential savior, even exalted in songs, prose, and on the stage. Marlowe's Tamburlaine is titled as the "scourge of God" which means a tool of divine punishment, an atoning skin-flaying from the Lord. Marlowe's play depicts the destruction of the Eastern rulers including the historical Turkish Bayazid I as a relief to the world (Collomb, 2006:27). Fatima Belgasem remarks that "Religion here is presented as the safeguard of morality since those, like Selimus, who relinquish religion give themselves a license to commit slaughter, treason or any other possible crime. Remarkably, what is rejected is not the Islamic faith essentially, but the concept of religion in general because the rebuff of 'Mahound's law' amounts to the rejection of universal concepts of 'good' and 'virtuous actions'" (Belgasem, 2013:155).

Greene describes the emperor Selimus as a faithless believer in Prophet Muhammad to convey that the glory of the historical Selim I, comes from his dreadful breakdown and demolition Islamic kingdoms. Greene's Selimus completely scorns Islamic laws and religion. He states that 'nothing is more hurtful to a Prince/ Than to be scrupulous and religious' (xvii.2.141-42). He "count[s] it sacrilege, for to be holy,/Or reverence this thred-bare name of good" (xvi.1.45-6). Moreover, he "scorn[s] religion, [as he thinks] it disgraces man (xviii.3.251). In contrary, he determines 'To arm my heart with irreligion' (ii.74). Selimus contends that kings as scared and they are powerful enough to establish law and order. He proudly says:

... they established laws and holy rites  
 To maintain peace and govern bloody fights.  
 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 . (ii.1.92-98)

The Emperor Selimus continues saying that he will block religious laws:

Now Selimus consider who thou art,

Long haft thou marched in diiguis 'd attire,  
 But now unmaske thy selfe, and play thy part,  
 And manifest the heate of thy desire:  
 Nourish the coales of thine ambitious fire.  
 And thinke that then thy Empire is most sure,  
 When men for feare thy tyrannie endure.  
 Thinke that to thee there is no worse reproach,  
 Then filiall dutie in so high a place,  
 Thou oughtft to set barrels of blood abroach,  
 And seeke with sword whole kingdomes to displace,  
 Let Mahounds laws be lockt up in their case.  
 And meaner men and of a baser spirit,  
 In vertuous actions seeke for glorious merit. (ii. 3.31-45)

Greene's Selimus is a mere stereotypical Oriental tyrant whose character should be portrayed as a faithless. Selimus in *Selimus* has to discard his faith and act as a staunch atheist to fit in the Machiavellian character. Selimus blasphemously utters certain hellish verses devised by that atheist and traitor. He is apparently the least sympathetic character, and is disengaged from the untruthful faith when he proclaims himself as an atheist and overthrows his Muslim brother. Irving Ribner associates the extra-dramatic use of Selimus with Greene's attack on 'that Atheist *Tamburlaine*' in order to show why Greene might have written a play whose themes are otherwise alien to his other writings (Ribner, 1955: 162-71). Greene may have attempted to expose the morality of *Tamburlaine* with a play in which the hero has no qualities to redeem his unnatural cruelty and blasphemous denial of religion.

This representation is a kind of commendation to Sultan Selim's history. It goes beyond that to affirm his faithlessness in Islam and Prophet Muhammad though the real ancient Sultan Selim annexed to his empire the two holy Islamic cities, Mecca and Medina. In fact, Greene's Selimus relinquishes religion to achieve his ends while Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, with his complex and dubious faith, believes in a rather vague divine presence which he variously addresses as Jove, God, Heaven or Mahomet. Selimus says: 'To arme my heart with irreligion/.../The names of Gods, religion, heaven, and hell,.../So that religion of it selfe a bable (xx. 2.304, 329,338). The Machiavellian atheism of Selimus is unique. It frees Selimus from religious or moral restraints that would prevent him from achieving his goals. He predicts that religious scholars might employ their 'bookish ordinance' to contest against his plans, and thus, as a resistance strategy, determines 'To arm my heart with irreligion' (ii.1.74). The early modern English of Biddulph's and Fletcher's polemical accounts represent Prophet Muhammad as an ambitious atheist (Fletcher, 1597:2; Biddulph, 1609:92). The association of Islam with atheism and the depiction of Muhammad's political use of religion are used in the representation of Robert Greene's *Selimus* as an ambitious politician and a villain atheist since he utters brutal terms against his faith. Although Selimus' denial of religion is a pragmatic decision that accomplishes his instant materialist principles, it is at the same time derived from profounder theoretical views. Selimus astonishes the audience with a consistent portion of interpretation that is proposed to establish that religious conviction is a plain human innovation. Selimus competes when the world is made against his right to power, 'Then everyone his life in peace did pass/ War was not then, and riches were not known' (iii.1.78-79). In fact, Selimus depends mainly on conventional sources to provide a different explanation of human existence on earth (Note 11). There are references to the ancient Greek gods and underworld creatures as violent Senecan elements. Accordingly, Selimus' abundant illustration of classical allusions shows that he has a little information about Islamic culture. He dislikes and declines religious faiths, which he considers as 'mere fictions' (ii.102). When his assistant Sinam Bassa tragically warns Selimus of hell (iv.2.86), Selimus answers with reference ancient Greek underworld hell to show the influence of Seneca:

Thinkst thou I care for apparitions  
 Of Sisiphus and of his backward stone,  
 And poor Ixion's lamentable moan?  
 No, no! I think the cave of damnèd ghosts,  
 Is but a tale to terrify young babes. (ii.1.89-93)

Selimus misuses the images of classical pagan and underworld elements to enrich his preferred dramatic narrative. Significantly, his characterization is taken by Senecan influence. Selimus describes himself as the God or his challenger - the devil. This proud description of Selimus to himself displays how Selimus think of himself. He looks to his extreme power brand him as a demigod: 'I could be a devil to be a king' (ii.204). Like other Senecan tyrants, Selimus seeks absolute power (Belgases, 2013:150). Selimus is eager to hold the throne on whatever consequences or costs. Sovereignty is well bought at any price. This over-ambitious figure advocates the dubious moral principles to gain and retain power.

#### 4. Conclusion

The play shows the violent and atheistic content of Sultan Selimus by its employment in the words of a Muslim Turk, and particularly a notorious character in his scourge on the Turks. Greene treats the Turkish infidel Selimus as an object of polarization and holy destruction. In this sense, although Selimus rejects Islam as part of his secular analysis of his thoughts and deeds, he also echoes the intentions and actions of Prophet Muhammad in introducing the violence in the name of the religion, as perceived in the Western Christian traditions to be endorsed by religion. Greene depicts a careful representation of the historical image of Turkish Sultan Selim by showing his brutality, treachery, violence, prejudice, and greediness. This follows a tradition stemming from Europe's first encounters with Islam in the seventh century when Islam was portrayed as a religion founded on bellicosity and barbarity, a perception that continued beyond the Middle Ages (Bisaha, 2004:15). Greene exemplifies one-sided attitude in the play with a hostile and an alienating Western speech concerning the Ottoman royal house. His tragic show truthfully denotes to a Renaissance humanist opinion to reject the violence of the Turkish superpower. The Turko-phobia was behind the revenge theme on the stages of Elizabethan London (Al-Olaqi, 2013:52).

The ferocious nature of Turkish identity has curious associations for the Elizabethan audience, who can perceive the psyche of ruthless characters as a model that may seem barbarous or absurd to them. The show is a typical Renaissance historical manuscript which compared with an anti-Ottoman text that deals with the same characters and events; it becomes clear that an alienating anti-Ottoman discourse cannot be unique to Christian texts in the West. Greene's *Selimus* identifies Turkish stereotypes of an evil Oriental despot. The violent structure of *Tamburlaine* and *Selimus* 'replaces the ambiguities of these earlier plays with a one-dimensional Ottoman stereotype—the 'subverted and sworn enemy of the Christians, and of all that call upon Christ' (Dimmock, 2005: 201). Samuel Huntington claims that "Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1300 years" (Huntington, 1993:31). In fact, the use of the unauthentic information would have contributed towards more unawareness of Islam and Muslims. Although Greene reckons the evils to term the running of the historic Ottoman royal lifetime, he does not outbreak the peculiarities of the Turkish Islamic canon but he does so to depict a noticeable dissimilarity between Turkey and Europe.

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## Notes

1. See Louis Wann, 'The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama', *MP*, 12 (1915). Wann lists forty-six early modern plays featuring Turkish settings or characters; Orhan Burian, 'Interest of the English in Turkey as Reflected in English Literature of the Renaissance,' *Oriens*, 5 (1952), 2 09-29; Linda McJannet, 'Mapping the Ottomans on the Renaissance Stage,' *Journal of Theatre and Drama*, 2 (1996), pp.11-33. Chew proposes that *Selimus* was written after 1594 (Chew, 1937:494).
2. See Naji B. Oueijan, *The Progress of an Image: The East in English Literature*, New York, Peter Lang, 1996, p. 19. Little wonder then that the following Elizabethan plays are marred by a distorted description of Islamic faith and practices: Philip Massinger's *Renegado* (1624), Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* (1588) Fulke Greville's *Mustapha* (1606) and *Alham* (1632) and Thomas Goffe's *The Raging Turk* (1627)..
3. This is cited in Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michele Willems, eds., *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996. Chapter One, Introduction, p. 7.

4. See Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans.by Norman Itkowitz and Colin Imber . New York, Praeger Publications, 1973. See also Andrđ Clot, *Suleiman the Magnificent: the man, his life, his epoch*. London, Saqi, 1992, pp. 27-9, and Appendix 4, 'The law of fratricide'
5. For further reading of Elizabethan writings on the history of the Ottoman Sultans see V. J. Parry, *Richard Knolles 's History of the Turkes*, ed. Salih Ozbaran (Istanbul: Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey, 2003), pp. 92-102.
6. For more information see Belgasem, F. E. (2013). *The Representations of the Ottoman Sultans in the Elizabethan Times*, p. 79; Yılları Arası Sıla Şenlen, *Ottoman Sultans in English Drama Between 1580 – 1660*. p.401.
7. See Christopher Marlowe, *Jew of Malta*. In *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, edited with an introduction by J.B. Steane. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1969; reprinted 1980. pp.341-431.
8. Richard Knolles, 'The Author's Induction to the Christian Reader' in *The generall historie of the Turkes*. London, Adam Islip, 1603, p.42
9. Ahmed Alam El-Deen, *A Critical Edition of Thomas Goffe's The Raging Tyrke, or, Baiazet the Second* (1631), Unpub. Diss. West Virginia, West Virginia Univ., 1984.
10. See W. A. Armstrong, 'The Elizabethan Conception of the Tyrant', *The Review of English Studies*, 22/87 (1946), 161-81, and Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance*. Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1990.
11. Jean Jacquot traces the roots of Selimus's ideas in this stanza to accounts of the origins of the world, and the Golden and Iron Ages, as mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a Greek poem written by Sextus Empiricus, and St Augustine's *The City of God*. 'Raleigh's "Hellish Verses" and the *Tragicall Raigne of Selimus*', *The Modern Language Review*, 48/1 (1953), 1-9, at p. 6. Vitkus adds Hesiod's *Works and Days* as a source for Selimus' account. *Three Turk Plays*, p. 145n.