

**A “STATE-VILLAIN MUST BE LIKE THE WINDE, /THAT
FLIES UNSEENE YET LIFTS AN OCEAN”:
MACHIAVELLIAN ITALIAN AND TURK IN JOHN MASON’S
THE TURKE**

Sıla ŞENLEN GÜVENÇ*

Abstract

Machiavelli’s political philosophy emphasizing leadership qualities, a sense of practical politics, and the intellect to attain and maintain power at all costs, has been greatly influential in 16th and 17th century English drama. In accordance with this philosophy, as expressed in Machiavelli’s Prince and Discourses, the stage Machiavellian, as exhibited by characters ranging from Marlowe’s Tamburlaine to Shakespeare’s Edmund and Richard III, is intelligent, persuasive, conniving, opportunist and inclined to violence. A Jacobean play that incorporates two types of Machiavellians is John Mason’s An Excellent Tragedy of Mulleasses the Turke, and Borgias Governour of Florence (1607); Borgias –an Italian and Mulleasses –a Turk. It is not surprising to see such Machiavellians on the Renaissance stage, but the representation of these particular characters side by side is noteworthy.

The majority of the Renaissance English plays represent foreigners according to their position with respect to England and Christianity. Thus, there are differences of representation between Christian and non-Christian foreigners. Generally, Turks –a term that applied to indicate Seljuks Turks, ‘Othomans’, Moors, Arabs, Greeks, Persians or any nation in the boundaries of the Orient in early modern period- in English drama were allegorical figures symbolizing the Orient, the East or Islam. They were compared and contrasted with Christians in order to define Englishness and illustrate the ‘superiority’ of their culture/religion. But in the Turke, the Christian Italian is as cruel and devious as the Muslim Turk. Thus, he represents the Roman Catholic Church instead of Christianity. Since England officially broke off with the Catholic Church in the mid-sixteenth century,

* Yrd. Doç. Dr., Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, ssenlen@yahoo.com

Catholicism appears to be as much a threat to England as the 'Mohammedans' chiefly represented by the Ottoman Turk. The aim of this paper is to examine these two particular Machiavellian characters in Mason's "tragedy of blood" in relation to their sources and popular notions about them to show that England feared the return to Catholicism as much as the Ottoman threat.

Keywords: John Mason, *The Turke*, Jacobean Drama, Machiavellianism, Muslim Turk, Catholic Italian

Öz

John Mason'un *The Turke* Başlıklı "İntikam Tragedyasında" Makyavelist Müslüman Türk ve Katolik İtalyan

*Machiavelli'nin liderlik vasıflarını, pratik siyaset anlayışını ve her ne pahasına olursa olsun gücü elde etme ve koruma fikrini vurgulayan siyasi felsefesi, 16. ve 17. yüzyıl İngiliz tiyatrosunda oldukça etkili olmuş ve dönemin oyunlarına yansımıştır. Bu felsefeye uygun olarak, sahnedeki Makyavelist tiplmesi zeki, güçlü, riyakâr, ikna edici, fırsatçı, sahtekâr ve şiddete meyilli bir karakterdir. John Mason'un *An Excellent Tragedy of Mulleasses the Turke, and Borgias Governour of Florence* (1607) adlı oyunu biri İtalyan (*Borgias*) ve diğeri Türk (*Mulleases*) olmak üzere iki yabancı Makyavelist karakter içermektedir.*

*Genelde İngiliz Rönesans tiyatrosunda Hıristiyan yabancılarla, Hıristiyan olmayan yabancıların temsili arasında fark mevcuttur; Doğu'yu ya da İslâmî temsil eden Türkler, tiyatro eserlerinde Hıristiyanlarla mukayese edilerek Hıristiyanlık ve Hıristiyan Avrupa'nın 'üstünlüğünü' ortaya koymak amacıyla kullanılır. Ancak söz konusu tragedyada, Hıristiyan İtalyan, Müslüman Türk kadar acımasız ve düzenbazdır. Bu sıra dışı durumun sebebi *Borgias*'ın Hıristiyanlıktan çok Roma Katolik Kilisesi'ni temsil etmesidir. İngiltere Katolik Kilisesi ile bağlarını 16. yüzyılın ortalarında resmen kesip Protestanlığa yöneldiği için, Katoliklik Osmanlı Türkleri tarafından temsil edilen İslâm kadar tehlikeli görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada Mason'un "İntikam Tragedyası" olarak nitelendirilen *The Turke* adlı eserindeki iki Makyavel karakter bu doğrultuda ele alınacaktır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: John Mason, Kral I. James Dönemi İngiliz Tiyatrosu, İntikam Tragedyası, Makyavelizm, Müslüman Türk Makyavel, Katolik İtalyan Makyavel, *Cesare Borgia*, *Mulleassess* (*MollaHasan*)

The political philosophy and doctrines of Niccolo Machiavelli, expressed in works such as *The Prince* (1532), have been greatly influential on and used widely by English playwrights of the 16th and 17th century. In *The Prince* (1532), Machiavelli illustrates that a ruler must have or acquire certain 'virtues' such as leadership qualities, a sense of practical politics, and the intellect to attain and maintain power at all costs. Some of the 'virtues' mentioned are praiseworthy such as being strong, intelligent, persuasive, a

good orator, studying and modeling oneself after earlier rulers, maintaining good councilors and avoiding flatters, but also include negative qualities such as being opportunist, deceptive, conniving, a hypocrite, having a great passion and ability for warfare, making frequent references to divine powers, creating fear in others, using fraud, violence and murder.

Since Machiavelli has been identified with divorcing ethics from politics (Kahn, 1994: 10), many people have denounced his works for their immoral connotations including the Cardinal Pope, who accused his works in general for "stink[ing] of the malice of Satan" and *The Prince* in particular for being written "by Satan's hand" (in Kahn, 1994: 87). With respect to this line of thought, the "Elizabethan dramatists found suitably exotic settings for their tragedies in Renaissance Italy, and Machiavelli supplied them with a useful cliché to describe enormities [...]" (Machiavelli, 1995: ix). In accordance with this philosophy, the stage Machiavellian (whether a ruler, advisor or servant) was intelligent, opportunist, persuasive, conniving, and evil. Although there are a variety of studies on well-known Machiavellian characters in English drama such as the Duke of Gloucester in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Iago in *Othello*, Edmund in *King Lear*, Cladius in *Hamlet*; Barabas in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* or Tamburlaine in Marlowe's play with the same name¹, certain plays by minor playwrights remain fairly neglected.

A play which deals with not one, but two types of 'foreign' Machiavellian villains is John Mason's tragedy entitled *An Excellent Tragedy of Mulleasses the Turke, and Borgias Governour of Florence*, or simply known as *The Turke* (1607/pub.1610). In Joseph Q. Adams' words: "[i]nto this tragedy of blood Mason has brought the two most sensational villains of the Elizabethan drama –the Turk [Mulleasses] and the Italian [Borgias]" (1913: xiv), which will be the focus of this paper.

In the *Turke*, Julia (the Duchess of Florence) has been left under the protection of her uncle Borgias following her father's death. Borgias has promised her hand in marriage to the Duke of Ferrara, while the Florentine Senate has promised it to the Duke of Venice. Thus, the two Dukes bring their armies to the walls of Florence to fight each other for her love, but are deliberately misinformed by Borgias that she has died. In reality, he plans on attaining the Dukedom by getting rid of his wife Timoclea, and kill the two

¹Sıla Şenlen Güvenç. *Words as Swords: Verbal Violence as a Construction of Authority in Renaissance and Contemporary English Drama*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2009.

Dukes through poison in order to marry Julia and become the Duke. According to Adams, the presence of an Italian nobleman as a villain in an Elizabethan play commonly involves two things: ingenious poisoning and Machiavellian statecraft (Mason, 1913: xvii). This connection has been emphasized by Fontinelle in Thomas Middleton's play *Blurt, Master-Constable* (1602): "Poison speaks Italian well" (V.ii.). Mulleasses, the Turk, is professedly Borgias' agent in these designs, but he is secretly conspiring against him and plans on marrying Julia himself. The result is a tragedy of blood, in which the only survivors are the Duke of Venice and Julia.

It is not surprising to see Italian or Turkish Machiavellians on the stage, but the representation of these particular characters side by side is a bit unusual. Generally, the Turks in English drama were allegorical characters symbolizing the Orient, the East or Islam. In such tragedies, Orientalism² functions as a "vehicle for reflexivity, thought mirrored back against itself" (Stone, 1987: 99). Turks are contrasted with and against English culture, ideology, religion and government to illustrate the superiority of and to define 'Englishry' and 'Christianity'. In this respect, they were depicted as 'evil', 'savage', 'warriors of darkness', 'God's enemies', 'infidels', 'barbarians', 'tyrannical', or variations upon the status of Turks as 'evil' in order to identify the English as 'civilized', 'moral', 'chivalric', and 'protector of Christianity'. But in this case, Christian Borgias is as corrupt as non-Christian Mulleasses, because he represents Italy and thus, the Roman Catholic Church.

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G.K. Hunter has explored the relation between Elizabethans and foreigners in the context of literature in *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition*. Hunter suggests that the impact of foreigners on a culture is affected "both by the opportunities for contact and knowledge that exist, and by the framework of assumptions within which information about foreign lands and customs is presented and received" (1978: 3). The connection between Machiavellianism and Roman Catholicism has been commented upon by Bull: "[f]or Protestants, he [Machiavelli] was the tutor of the Catholic kings, whose teaching was, for example, responsible for the

² In *Orientalism* (1977) Edward W. Said argued that the Orient is the source of Europe's greatest, richest and oldest 'colonies' and also of its civilization and languages. Said points that the Orient has helped to define the West as its contrasting "image, idea, personality, experience". Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977.

massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day³" (Machiavelli, 1995: ix), which resulted in the death of thousands of Protestants.

The Protestant view of the Catholics has been shaped by the religious reformation initiated by King Henry VIII. In 1527 he petitioned Pope Clement VII to abolish his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, from whom he had a daughter (later Queen Mary). Following his rejection, Henry summoned the Parliament in 1529 in order to break from Rome. He appointed a Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, after which Henry was able to marry Anne Boleyn. In 1534 Henry and the Parliament passed the "Act of Supremacy", which declared that the king was supreme head of the Church of England instead of the Pope. King Henry's son Edward VI became the first Protestant ruler of England (1547-1553), under which many reforms took place. His sister Mary (daughter of Catherine and Henry) succeeded him (1555-1558) and England was once again Catholic. Then she was restored to its Protestant structure in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and the 'Protestant Reformation' was complete by 1603. Since England broke off officially with the Roman Catholic Church, Catholicism seems to have been as much a threat for England as the Muslim Ottomans. Also, similar to the English attitude towards the Ottomans, a combination of fascination and distress was felt towards the Italians. In this respect, Wendy Griswold indicates that:

Italian settings were especially effective for heightening the English/non-English contrast because the Elizabethan attitude toward Italy combined fascination with abhorrence. A vogue for Italian musicians, players and teachers of dancing and fencing, with cultivated Londoners including the queen speaking some Italian, coexisted with strong anti-Catholic sentiments and fears of papal political activities. (1986: 75)

Thus, as indicated above, the English felt a combination of admiration and antipathy towards them.

The connection between Italians and Machiavellianism is inevitable due to Machiavelli's nationality, but furthermore, the character Borgias has been modeled upon Cesare Borgia (1475-1507), the son of Pope Alexander VI,

³ The St. Bartholomew's Day massacre (1572) was set off by King Charles IX of France, who under the influence by his mother Catherine de Medici, ordered the assassination of Huguenots (Calvinist Protestant), which was followed by Roman Catholic mob violence also directed against the same group. These events led to the death of tens of thousands of Huguenots across France.

who brought respect to the position of the Pope and the Church through military success, making him the most powerful prince in Italy. In Chapter VII of *The Prince* entitled “New principalities acquired with the help of fortune and foreign arms” Machiavelli suggests that an ambitious prince looking for a recent model to imitate should copy Borgia, the ‘new’ prince: “I know no better precepts to give a new prince than ones derived from Cesare’s actions; and if what he instituted was of no avail, this was not his fault but arose from the extraordinary and inordinate malice of fortune” (Machiavelli, 1997: 21). Bull, the translator of *The Prince*, has commented on this new model of ruler:

And the typical modern rulers, in Machiavelli’s Italy, were usurpers who had climbed to power when the communes grew corrupt and feeble during the century before the French invasions. In his sketch of Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli’s idea of the reformer of the state and his vision of the possibilities open at an efficient Italian usurper were fused. He well remembered how Cesare had, with the backing of his father, Pope Alexander, and with ruthless will power, carved out a state for himself in the centre of Italy. When, years before, he had been sent to Cesare by the Republican government of Florence he had viewed him as a dangerous potential enemy. But the Prince he uses his as a flesh and blood example of what an Italian ruler, starting almost from scratch, can achieve if he repudiates half-measures, and he is untroubled by the contrast between the historical Cesare and the Cesare he sets before Medici as an ideal. (Machiavelli, 1995: xix)

Needless to say, Borgia used cruelty, violence, fraud, and all in his means including murder in order to gain power. His inclination towards violence is exemplified by many examples including the following: “This [Remirro being cruel and blaming it on the harsh nature of his minister] gave Cesare a pretext; then one morning, Remirro’s body was found cut into two pieces on the piazza at Cesena, with a block of wood and a bloody knife beside it.” (Machiavelli, 1995: 23). According to Machiavelli, however, the extreme means employed by Cesena was needed for order: “Cesare Borgia was accounted cruel; nevertheless, this cruelty of his reformed the Romagna, brought it unity, and restored order and obedience” (Machiavelli, 1995: 51-2)

Similar to Cesare, the Italian Machiavel is a type that will do anything to acquire power, and is especially inclined to use poison. In the play, Borgias tries to acquire the Dukedom and the Italian throne through the same means: fortune, ability and foreign arms. To this end, he intentionally misinforms the Duke of Ferrara and Duke of Venice "entrench't against the gates of Florence/To gaine your [Julia's] love" (I.i.103-105⁴), that she has died and is "[s]inging with Angels in the quire of heaven," (I.i.251). Borgias asks them to make peace and attend her "funerall supper" (I.i.321) in order to poison them. But first, he must get rid of his wife Timoclea and to provide a kind of justification, he commands a Eunuch to spread rumors that she is ill and likely to die. Although the Eunuch cannot understand Borgias' exact purpose, he is aware of the connection between power, violence and politics: "He kils by law that kils men for a state" (I.ii.481).

On the Eunuch's departure, Borgias presents his true intention through a soliloquy. He will blame the death of his wife on the Turk, his partner in mischief, in order to marry his niece Julia and become the Duke of Florence. The Cardinal of Anjou has solicited the Pope for "dispensation with our bloods alliance:" while the "great Turke" (the Sultan) has promised Borgias 40,000 janissaries to protect and make him King of Italy in exchange for the command of Gibraltar (I.iii/646-664), connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Sea and thus providing a safe passage into Christendom. All this will be done through violence: "I can commaund their liues: and then maintaine/My actions with the sword:" (I.iii.656-667). Thus, in order to attain power Borgias is ready to work against his fellow Christians by offering Christendom to the enemies of their faith:

And I will do it: on my faith to God
And loyalty I owe vnto the starres,
Should there depend all Europe and the states
Christened thereon: Ide sinke them all,
To gaine those ends I haue proposd my aimes.
Religion (thou that ridst the backes of Slaues
Into weakemindes insinuating feare
And superstitious cowardnesse) thou robst
Man of his chiefeblisse by bewitching reason. (I.iii/665-673)

Borgias also delivers another soliloquy concerning Machiavellianism in Act II, scene ii, resembling that of the Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III) in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 3*:

⁴ Joseph Q. Adams' edition provides act numbers, scenes and line numbers. The line numbers start at the beginning and end at the very end of the play.

I'll play the orator as well as Nestor;
 Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could;
 And, like a Sinon, take another Troy;
 I can add colours to the chameleon;
 Change shapes with Proteus for advantages;
 And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
 Can I do this and cannot get a crown? (*Henry VI, Part 3, III. ii, 188-193*)

Borgias' speech follows the same line of thought -adjusting to circumstances according to his own benefit- but expands on the idea by creating the 'Politician Proteus':

A Politician Proteus-like must alter
 His face and habit, and like water seeme
 Of the same colour that the vessel is
 That doth containe it, varying his forme
 With the Cameleon at each objects change. (II.ii/899-903)

He must transform his shape and habit, and adjust to any situation like water, which is colorless and scentless, or a chameleon, which can transform its color to blend into its surrounding. Furthermore, Borgias must play different roles such as the 'devoted uncle' and 'the lover' as a serpent casting off its skin:

Twice like a Serpent haue I cast my skin,
 Once when with mourning sighs I wept for Iulia,
 And made the two Dukes weepe for Iulia,
 That coat is cast: now like an Amorist
 I come in louing tearmes to court my Iulia,
 And seeme a louer: but of all shapes
 This fits me worst: whose constellation
 Stampt in my rugged brow the signes of death,
 Enuy and ruine: strong Antipathyes
 Gainst loue and pleasure: yet must my tongue
 With passionate oaths and protestations,
 With sighes, smooth glances, and officious tearmes,
 Spread artificiall mists before the eies
 Of credulous simplicity: he that will be high,
 Must be a Parasite, to fawne and lye. (II.ii/ 904-918)

Although Borgias does not believe that the role of the lover becomes him, he is determined to woo Julia through sugary words in order to rise in the world.

In the case of the Turkish Machiavellian, John Mason, as many other Renaissance English playwrights composing plays about the Turks, used the

first English chronicle on the Ottoman Turks -Richard Knolles' *Historie of the Turkes* (1603). The playwright appears to have modeled him not after an actual 'Turk' but on Mulleasses (Moley/Molla Hasan), "King of Tunis" mentioned in connection with Sultan Solyman the Magnificent and Barbarosse: "Maimo the right heire of the kingdome in prifon [prison], [Mulleasses] presently murdered; feventeene [seventeen] of his other brethren vnmercifully executed; and three others, Barcha, Beleth, and Saeth, with more the barborous crueltie with a hot yron of their fight deprived: only Rocetes the fecund brother, and Abdemelech, efcaping the hands of their vnnaturall brother [...]" (Knolles, 1631: 642). Here he is portrayed as a tyrant. Moley Hassan also gained the throne through fortune, kept it through fear and murder until Barbarosse captured it. Then he regained Tunis through foreign aid extended by Charles, the Emperor of Germany. Also, Moley Hassan's son Amida proved to be as violent as Mulleasses, gouging both of his father's eyes with "a hot penknife" to eliminate him (Knolles, 1631: 747).

Since Mulleasses is not a Turk, it is apparent that Mason used his historical source freely and in order to create a villain that would comply with the popular notions about the Turks. The playwright could have also been motivated by his contemporary Ottoman ruler Sultan Mehmed III (1566-1603), who murdered 19 of his brothers alongside others on ascending the Ottoman throne. Furthermore, since all Moors and Mohammedans (Muslims) were termed as 'Turks' in Europe, it would not have made a difference for either the playwright or the general public.

Similar to Borgias, Mulleasses also refrains himself from any moral obligations. He first appears in Act II meditating in his thoughts in his chambers. He prays to prophet 'Mohamet' to free him from the dictates of conscience and the fools' philosophy that inculcates honesty and aid him in his evil designs:

Eternall substitute to the first that mou' d
And gave the Chaos forme.
[...]
Thou God of Mecha, mighty Mahomet,
Thus Mulleasses at thy memory
[...]
Gear[Great] Prophet: let thy influence be free
Vncheckt by danger: me wnotvp my soule,
In the pent roome of conscience:
Make me not morall Mahomet, coopt vp
And fetted in the fooles phylosophy,
That points our actions vnto honesty.

Give my plots fortune: let my hope but touch
The marke I aimed at: (II. i. 688-703)

In his soliloquy, morality is clearly presented as foolishness. He is then interrupted by Eunuchus, who informs him that Borgias is asking for him. To this intrusion Mulleases reacts savagely with a curse: “Age and diseases breed consumptions/And rot him [Borgias]. What Craves he?” (II. i. 716-717). Then when he is left alone Mulleases delivers a soliloquy about the “state-villaine” echoing Machiavellian ideals:

Thou art no tutord Pollition [Politician]
To lay another in thy bosome.
Know a state-villaine must be like the winde,
That flies vnseene yet lifts an Ocean,
Into a mountaines height. That on the sands
Whole Nauies may be split in their discent.
I stand about thee, and as from a rocke
Whose eminence outswelles the rangingflood,
See thy hopes shipwrackt: O credulity, (II.i/752-760)

These lines are a clear reference to the Machiavellian state villain, who will change or alter present conditions without being detected or creating suspicion. Mulleases has come to Florence, in exchange for Borgias’ son, to learn the “tongues,/The fashions and the arts of Christendome:” (II.i/769-771) and claims to have gained Borgias’s trust through his “sly” and “affable intrusion”: “He thinks my thoughts are Osiars to be wrought” (II.i/772-774). He is well informed that Borgias is detaining Julia until he secures the death of the dukes, but informs the audience that Timoclea (Borgias’ wife-Mulleases’ lover), whom Borgias’ believes to have been poisoned by Mulleases, has been given “sleep juice” instead and is alive. Furthermore, he expresses his discontent about a match with Borgias’ daughter Amada: “As if my hopes flew not as high as his [Borgias’]:” (I.i.785). Now, he plans on using Timoclea to eliminate Borgias by stirring revenge against him. When she is acquainted with her husband’s plan to get rid of her, she swears “this night to prosecute reuenge/On my liues enemy” (II.i/861-1). Thus, Mulleases proves to conform to the popular notion of ‘Turkish’ treachery, ruthlessness and deceit.

This is attempted in a humorous scene in which Borgias and Mulleases go on a double ‘wooing date’ with Julia and Amada. When Borgias tells his niece that he only values her love (“The gorgeous title of a Soueraigne,/Makes me so euil in your thoughts: the poise of loue” II.ii/974-975), she is shocked and disgusted by the idea of being wooed by her uncle:

“Uncle I am asham’d that any bloud of mine/Should harbor such an incest” (II.ii/978-80).

The two Machiavellians plan to kill the Dukes without creating any suspicion. The drug that they shall give them at a banquet will put them to sleep for almost a month before leading to their death (II.iv. 1237-1246). Mulleasses indicates that crime realized for power and state must be done with great caution:

That were too violent: things done for state,
Must carry forme, and with an outward glosse,
Varnish and couer what would else seeme grosse,
Should they be murdered in their beds, or die, (II.ii/1228-1231)

Through such as plan, the Italian and the Turk Machiavellians will rise together. At least, this is what Borgias ‘appears’ to believe:

My fortunes on thy councell noble Turke.
We’le clime together: my daughter sheddy will
Shall stoope vnto thy pleasure: as for Iulias loue
She must or yield or dye: he that is wise,
Will tread on any that may make him rise. (III.i/1248-1252)

However, Mulleasses, has plans of his own. In Act III Timoclea, following his instructions, disguises herself as the ghost of Julia, in order to persuade the Duke of Venice to kill her ‘murderer’ Borgias. But soon Mulleasses, wearied of Timoclea, tricks her into stabbing her own daughter in a jealous rage by deliberately allowing her to discover that he ‘loves’ Amada. After secretly watching the murder, the scheming Mulleases enters the chambers saying:

What, do you Christians sacrifice with flesh?
Or like the Laodiceans unto Pallas, offer
The blood of virgins? O inhumane deed,
Ungentle monster [Timoclea], beauteous Amada! (IV. i. 1700-1703)

On the other hand, Borgias kills the Duke of Ferrara disguised as the Eunuch (IV.i/1937) and then strangles his wife for murdering Amada (V.i/2106).

With everyone out of the way, both the Italian and the Turk are free to pursue Julia for political gain. In this respect, Borgias plans to kill Mulleases, accuse him for the murders, then announce that Julia is alive claiming to have been misinformed by Muleasses:

First for thy death the lustfull Turke must dye,
My rituall in the loue of Iulia
Him Ile accuse for murdering thee. The Dukes

Because his claime may alienate my hopes
 Him in my accusation I will ioyne
 As ioynt coagent in the Turke deuises.
 As for that rumour of faire Iulias death,
 I'le first proclaime her life: and on Mulleasses
 (Who now detaines her) will transfer the falsehood, (V.i/2118-2126)

Meanwhile, with Amada out of the way, Mulleasses woos Julia by offering her “pleasure on the neighbouring plaines [a foreigner]” (V.iii. 2245) and comparing her uncle’s love with his own: “thy Vncles love cold as the white head of the Apennine/Feeles not my fire: ambition of rule/Turnes al the heate is left in him to incest” (V.iii. 2238-2241). Julia, in return, draws attention to the clash between Christianity and Islam to illustrate the impossibility of her marriage: “If thou beest gentle leave me Mohamet/ Our loves like our religions are at warres” (V. iii. 2265-6). Following her rejection, he threatens her with physical violence and rape (V. iii. 2269-2271, a reference to the presumed violence and lust of the Turk. Villainous actions of the two Machiavellians continue until, at last, Mulleasses and Borgias kill one another, and the Duke of Venice marries Julia. Borgias’ last words are: “False Turke thy fate be but as cruell as is Borgias hate” (V.iii. 2380).

The representation of foreigners in English Elizabethan drama was largely shaped by the opportunities of contact, the knowledge presented about them through discourse and their potential threat to that nation or culture. In Mason’s *The Turke*, we are presented with two Machiavellian villains, the Turk and the Italian, both of which have been constructed based on popular notions about them held by the English public; the Turk as the chief representatives of Islam, evil, bloodthirsty, savage, infidel and barbarian, and the Italian as the representative of Catholicism, double-dealing, deception, treachery, violence, revenge, and statecraft. Such reputations reflect the prejudice that British felt towards them, which made possible to present noteworthy bloody scenes of revenge effective on stage, while false representations of the Turks gave playwrights a chance to define Englishness and Christianity, and illustrate the superiority of English culture, ideology, religion and government. In this case, Italian Borgias representing the Roman Catholic Church, is as corrupt as the non-Christian Mulleasses, which is used to define Protestantism or the Anglican Church. The ideas reflected in such plays as the *Turke* also show the extent to which Catholicism constituted a threat to the Anglican Church and England.

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