

ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE: MARLOWE AND TURKEY*

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When J. Leslie Hotson discovered in 1925 in the Public Record Office the Elizabethan coroner William Danby's inquest report which seemed to have categorically established that, in an "affray" at a boarding house at Deptford, Kent, on 30 May 1593, Christopher Marlowe ("Christopher Morley") had been stabbed to death by an Ingram Frizer¹, it was admitted in the academic circles without a question that Marlowe's brief literary career had suddenly come to an end by this tragic incident and that the mystery surrounding Marlowe's personality and life had finally been resolved. However, it is a serious concern among current students of Marlowe that the facts which so far seem to have been established about him are not final and that, in fact, due to the absence of reliable and adequate documentary evidence, much about his life still seems to be disguised in uncertainty (Butcher xvi-xvii; Nicholl "Marlowe" 1); especially, his involvements in the politics of his time, his relations with Shakespeare as well as with the so-called esoteric "School of Night," and his espionage activities abroad are matters of a great deal of ambiguity. Hence, since the early 1990s, there has been some degree of serious in-depth research on him whereby his historically admitted career and his connection with Shakespeare have been revisited. So, there has risen some controversy with regard to a wide range of issues including the Deptford incident, the credibility of the coroner's inquest report, and his relationship with Shakespeare². Moreover, the extent of uncertainty about the events of his life also includes his possible

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¹ For a comprehensive argument, see Hotson's work, *passim*. Also, for a copy of the Danby report, see "The Inquisition of Marlowe's Death." Trans. (from Latin) Leslie Hotson, 01Apr. 2006 <<http://www.marlowe-society.org/inquis.htm>>.

² In this regard, especially see the arguments put forward by Nicholl, *The Reckoning*, Wraight, and Price.

relationship with Turkey, which is a question that has so far received almost no academic attention. Consequently, the Turkish contents and references of his *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Jew of Malta*, which in fact need to be scrutinized in a broader cultural and historical context of his life and time, have usually been bypassed in the critical and exegetical studies of these plays. Hence, this paper is an attempt to demonstrate that some aspects of the Turkish material used by him derive, to some extent, from personal experience and observation and that he must previously have visited Turkey in his capacity as Elizabeth's secret agent.

If one recalls that *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Jew of Malta* were written in the late 1580s and the early 1590s respectively, Marlowe's inclusion of the Turkish material in these plays may not only have been stimulated by the Elizabethan literary popularity of Turkish topoi and typology but must also have been inspired by his earlier possible connection with Turkey. Therefore, in order to see the events of his early life through a perspective of the time, it is necessary, by way of foregrounding and contextualization, to focus on the 1580s which, in terms of international relations, was a crucial and extremely volatile period of Elizabeth's reign, and in which, as a state agent, Marlowe played a significant role. Historically, until November 1582 when Elizabeth appointed William Harborne as the first English ambassador to the Ottoman court, who arrived in İstanbul in March 1583 to undertake his diplomatic mission (Dereli 78-79; Kurat 49-50; Skilliter 16-19)³, the relations between England and Turkey had mainly been confined to the commercial activities of some English merchants and their factors in the Levant (Dereli 36-78; Kurat 1-7 and 9-44; Skilliter 13-15). However, from the 1560s onwards, when England began to experience a serious political and sectarian crisis in its changing relations with Spain and France, which, at the time, were the leading powers of the Catholic league on the Continent (Guy 266; Doran 6-16 and 21-44), Elizabeth's government was resolved not only to embark on a new alliance with the Austrian Habsburg empire but also to seek other allies in order to eliminate the growing Catholic threat (Kurat 6; Doran 6 and 14). It was in this context that, for Elizabeth and her government, Turkey came to the fore as a possible and indispensable power for alliance (Dereli 77-78 and 94; Hale

³ Unlike Kurat and Skilliter, Dereli suggests that Harborne's arrival in İstanbul was in February (79).

1; Doran 6). Consequently, in addition to the commercial dimension, a developing political dimension gradually began to be attached to the Anglo-Turkish relations. In this connection, one may recall Sir Philip Sidney's intended but averted journey to İstanbul in 1573. In May 1572 Sidney had set out on a long journey on the Continent, and his itinerary included Paris, Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Vienna and on to Venice and Padua; after his stay in Padua nearly for a year, he returned to Vienna and continued his journey to Prague and, finally, back to London, ending in May 1575 (Pears ix ff.; Buxton 43-79). It was during his stay for a fortnight in Venice in November 1573⁴ that he met with the Turkish ambassador Solomon ben Nathan (Pears xxiv)⁵. It is conceivable that, in their talks, Sidney may have taken soundings from the ambassador about the Turkish policies and views with regard to England as well as the state of affairs in Europe, and that he may have been much impressed in the end by what he learned about Turkey. So, also probably at the ambassador's suggestion, he was inclined to extend his journey to İstanbul; however, when he revealed his intention in a letter to his friend Hubert Languet, who was at the time the Elector of Saxony's resident diplomatic agent at the Habsburg court in Vienna and openly displayed in his letters to Sidney his rooted antagonism about Turkey, he was advised by him not to undertake the journey since it involved unforeseen dangers and hardships (Zouch 78-79). In the absence of any documentary evidence, it is of course impossible to judge what Sidney may have envisaged to achieve in İstanbul had his travel plans been realized. Yet, in view of the international problems that England was faced with at the time, one cannot rule it out that, upon his government's approval, Sidney would certainly have made some private contacts with the Turkish authorities and gathered sensitive and valuable intelligence indispensable for the formulation of new policies towards Turkey.

In fact, along with its pursuit of policies for forming new alliances, the Elizabethan government, from its early years onwards, also attached great

⁴ In his letter of 19 December 1573, from Venice, to the French Huguenot scholar and diplomat Hubert Languet (1518-81) in Vienna, with whom Sidney had already developed a close friendly relationship (Zouch 53-55; Buxton 50-52, 56, 62-63 and 78), Sidney wrote: "Meantime I shall stay here [in Venice] for a fortnight, and pass the rest of my time at Padua" (8).

⁵ Solomon ben Nathan (1520?-1603), who was an Ashkenazi, was originally a native of Poland and had previously been the court physician of Sigismund II, Augustus of Poland. See www.jewishencyclopedia.com, s.v. "Solomon ben Nathan Ashkenazi."

importance to overseas espionage (Potter, *Introd.*, 1-8). Accordingly, through the coordinating and managing work of Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer William Cecil (Lord Burghley), Secretary of State Sir Francis Walsingham, his adjutant Robert Beale and secretary Nicholas Faunt, and Dr Thomas Wilson, who has been rightly referred to as "the Elizabethan spy-master" (Skilliter 13)⁶, an extremely efficient spy-network, which was operated through the use of English embassies, specially-assigned agents, merchants, travellers, pilgrims, captains, mercenaries, native informants and so forth⁷, was set up throughout the Continent, obviously including the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, for Cecil, the gathering of intelligence abroad was of so vital importance that, as Potter has pointed out, he "took a close interest in young English noblemen and their activities while on tour" overseas (*Introd.*, 5). For instance, when the Earl of Rutland was about to set out on a journey in France in 1571, Cecil instructed him to learn about

the countries as you pass [...] by whom they are governed as well by superior officers as by subalternall, what noble men have their habitation in the same countrys, whyther ther be any superior place of Parlement for justice in the country [...] what are the principal commodities [...] as well of nature as the soyles or [...] by industry (qtd. Potter, *Introd.*, 5).

It is also possible in this regard that similar instructions may have been given to Sidney before he travelled to the Continent. Since travel was thus considered at the time to be a valuable means of espionage, there were manuals and guidelines written for travellers and instructing them about what to observe and how to gather intelligence. A good example of such writings is obviously Bacon's essay "Of Trauaile," in which he gives a long catalogue of "the Things to be seene and obserued" (73) in foreign countries, ranging from social, political, economic and cultural life to logistic, military, naval and similar other strategical establishments (73-76). Although Bacon first published his *Essays* 1597, he had himself previously been involved in some degree of espionage in France, where, from 1576 to

⁶ Especially, for the active roles played by Cecil, Walsingham, Beale, and Faunt in the running of the intelligence work, see Potter, *Introd.*, 5-8.

⁷ For instance, as regards the activities of English merchants overseas, see Dereli 52. As for the use of native informants, Harborne's close associates in Istanbul, Hodja Saadeddin, who was a chronicler and Murat III's teacher, and Mustafa Chiaus may be suggested as examples. On the pro-English activities of these two Turkish officials, see Dereli 70 and 72-75.

1579, he had been on the staff of the English embassy and gathered information "for the 'intelligencer' Thomas Bodley" (Potter, *Introd.*, 6)⁸.

Under Cecil and Walsingham, hundreds of men from different walks of life were recruited in the 1570s and 1580s as agents and assigned abroad for secret espionage activities, which varied from intelligence gathering to surveillance, infiltration, intrigue and provocation (Nicholl, "Marlowe" 3, 8 and 10). Undoubtedly, besides trade companies and other institutions, the universities were a major source of recruitment since full fluency in Latin and some Continental languages, especially in French, Italian and Spanish, coupled with academic learning and expertise, was an invaluable asset for an agent⁹. Hence, as a student at Cambridge University where Cecil had been Chancellor since 1560, Marlowe was obviously a perfect candidate for her majesty's secret service and may rightly have been recruited by Walsingham (Nicholl, "Marlowe" 3), probably upon Cecil's knowledge and advice. It should be recalled in passing that Marlowe's affiliation with Cambridge began in December 1580, and, following his graduation in the spring of 1584, he continued his studies for the degree of MA, which he received in the summer of 1587 (Urry 55-59). Apparently his recruitment took place sometime in 1582 since from the autumn of this year onwards he began to be absent from the university for prolonged periods, increasing in frequency and duration from 1583 through 1586 (Urry 56-58). Despite a great deal of obscurity and mystery about his movements during these long periods of absence from his studies (Butcher xvi-xvii; Urry 58), it has been commonly and somewhat categorically assumed in modern critical writings that he was

⁸ Bacon's list of the matters in "Of Trauaile" that are to be carefully observed and explored by travellers on their journeys seems to reiterate the kind of instructions which Bodley had given him at the Paris embassy, he had been instructed to pay attention to various aspects of Frances such as

[...] the consanguinities, alliances, and estates of their princes, proportion between the nobility and magistracy; the constitutions of their courts of justice; the state of laws, as well for the making, as the execution thereof; how the sovereignty of the king infuseth itself into all acts and ordinances; how many ways they lay impositions and taxation, and gather revenues to the crown. What be the liberties and servitudes of all degrees; what disciplines and preparations for wars; what invention for increase of traffic at home, for multiplying their commodities [...] (qtd. Potter, *Introd.*, 6).

⁹ For instance, as Potter has stated, "English envoys [naturally, including agents] to France needed a degree of fluency in the language throughout the sixteenth century (since knowledge of English in France was virtually nonexistent). The French language was studied with a high degree of technical expertise" (*Introd.*, 2).

in fact engaged in acts of infiltration in the anti-English and anti-Protestant Catholic conspiracies in France and the Netherlands, and gathered intelligence (Urry 58; Nicholl, "Marlowe" 5-6 and 8-10).

However, the very question, which seems extremely intriguing and, therefore, worth exploring at this stage is whether, during his espionage activities abroad, Marlowe may also have travelled in disguise to Turkey. Since disguise, false names, assumed identities, forged papers, pretence, mimicry, and posing have universally been practices of espionage for camouflage, it is not incongruous to suggest that Marlowe and his fellow agents must at times have resorted to such practices. For instance, with reference to Marlowe's posing as a Catholic in order to infiltrate the anti-English Catholic seminary at Rheims in France, Nicholl makes the point that "on the surface Marlowe appears to be a Catholic sympathizer, but this is only a pose. In reality he is the government's man, working in some way against the Catholics" ("Marlowe" 5). He further adds for emphasis that "all of the chief anti-Catholic agents used by Walsingham were themselves Catholics before they became spies. Perhaps this is the case with Marlowe too. It is a favourite maxim of those in the deception business that the truth is the best cover of all" ("Marlowe" 7). Nicholl also states that "in our estimation of Marlowe we have to take on board [the] elements of falsehood" ("Marlowe" 8). Therefore, if Marlowe was engaged in any espionage activity in Turkey, he must have done it in deception. Of course, it is impossible to demonstrate without concrete documentary evidence, when and how he must have visited Turkey or in what disguise he must have acted. One interesting case is the coincidence of Harborne's voyage in early 1583 to Turkey in his capacity as ambassador (Skilliter 17-19) and Marlowe's prolonged absence for five weeks in late 1582 and early 1583 from the university, followed by another absence of six weeks soon after (Urry 56). Historically, Harborne's embassy staff consisted of twenty three functionaries, and three of them, named "Master John Wroth, Henry Violet and John Pont," were not on the embassy's payroll (Skilliter 20-21). Since university students in Marlowe's time were referred to as "*dominus*" (master) (Urry 58), apparently these three functionaries were affiliated with a university in England. In fact, it would not be out of place to regard them as secret agents, paid directly by Walsingham as the managing head of

the Elizabethan spy network¹⁰ and assigned to Turkey in the retinue of Harborne because every Elizabethan embassy was a kind of what Potter has aptly described as “an information factory” (Introd., 7) and was, therefore, extremely crucial “in the collation of a wide range of intelligence and promotion of secret schemes” (Potter, Introd., 7-8). Moreover, in view of the camouflage of secret agents, it is possible that the officially stated names of these functionaries may have been mere pseudonyms and that they may have been carrying with them forged documents of identity and occupation. Hence, recalling Marlowe’s absences at the time of Harborne’s arrival in Turkey, one cannot help wondering whether one of them may have been Marlowe in disguise. On the other hand, supposing that these three functionaries had their true names and were just the ordinary and undisguised embassy staff members without any assigned secret mission, one still wonders whether, during his later absences such as the nine-week absence in the summer and early autumn of 1584 and the eight-week absence in the spring of 1585 (Urry 56), Marlowe may have visited Turkey secretly by posing as a merchant or a traveller or any other person.

It is by revisiting some specific details of the Turkish material in *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Jew of Malta* that Marlowe’s connection with Turkey can further be queried. In general terms, he may have derived much of the historical material for his Turkish topoi and typology in these plays from popular Renaissance historiographical and political writings in the form of *tractatus*, *libellus* or *commentarii* about the Turks and Turkey. Among the best known and widely read of these writings, which usually gave extensively descriptive but generally antagonistic and relatively moralizing accounts of Turkish life, society, history, language, religion, institutions and politics, were Georgius de Hungaria’s *Tractatus de Moribus, Conditionibus et Nequicia Turcorum* (1481)¹¹ and Paolo Giovio’s treatise *Commentario de le cose de’ Turchi* (1532) as well as his two-volume *Histories* (1550 and 1552)¹². Especially the *Commentario* and the eighth book of the *Histories*

¹⁰ It is on record that, in the summer of 1582, Elizabeth’s Privy Council allocated to Walsingham for secret service expenses “£750 per annum in quarterly installments” and that in 1585 the sum was raised to £2000 a year (Nicholl, “Marlowe” 4).

¹¹ Georgius de Hungarius (1422?-1502), who lived in Turkey from 1538 to 1558 as a slave (captivé), wrote his *Tractatus* after his release from captivity. For reference and discussion, see Classen 257-79, and Falkner 401-02.

¹² As a humanist, historian, physician and papal courtier, Giovio dedicated his *Commentario* to Emperor Charles V, who was, at the time, with papal encouragement, trying to

offered a chronological and political survey of Turkish history (Zimmermann 26 and 122) which was undoubtedly very informative for Renaissance European readers. Although it is not absolutely clear to what extent Marlowe was specifically indebted to the narratives by Georgius de Hungaria and Giovio for the historical context of his Turkish plays, one could suggest that he must have consulted some historical sources as such that evidently contained a full description of the events and persons used in the plays. Indeed, a significant part of *Tamburlaine the Great* revolves around Tamburlaine's horrific persecution of the Turkish sultan "Bajazeth," that is, Bayezid I, popularly known as Bayezid the Thunderbolt, following the latter's defeat at the historic battle of Ankara in 1402 (Uzunçarşılı 1:309-15). *The Jew of Malta*, on the other hand, has as its historical background the great Turkish siege of Malta in 1565, which had become, after the Turkish conquest of Rhodes in 1522, the new seat of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John (Uzunçarşılı 2:388-90). However, some of the details in both plays are of the nature that seem to be related to personal experiences and observations. For instance, in *Tamburlaine the Great* there is presented a remarkably informed survey of the Anatolian geography, which includes references not only to major areas or cities such as İstanbul ("Constantinople"), Trabzon ("Trebizond"), Amasya ("Amasia"), Karaman ("Carmania") but also to some small towns and settlements. This is best illustrated by the speech which the "King of Trebizond," that is, historically, the bey of Trabzon, makes upon the crowning of the new Turkish sultan Mehmet the Chalaby ("Callapine") in order to show his support for the sultan's war against Tamburlaine:

And I as many bring from Trebizond,
Chio, Famastro, and Amasia,
All bordering on the Mare-Major-sea,

organize a crusade against the Turkish advance in central Europe. The treatise, translated by Francesco Negri into Latin in 1537, became so popular that it was published in 1537 in Wittemberg, 1538 in Antwerp, 1538 and 1539 in Paris. As regards this treatise, Zimmermann observes that "of the various treatises written for Charles V on the Turkish menace, Giovio's was probably the most realistic, the least moralizing, and the most informative" (121). As for Giovio's *Histories*, which were first published in Florence and were respectively entitled *Historiarum sui temporis tomus primus* and *Historiarum sui temporis tomus secundus*, they are a comprehensive account of European, Turkish, and Persian history as well as the political and international developments of his own time. For a full study of Giovio and his time, see Zimmermann.

Riso, Sancina, and the bordering towns
 That touch the end of famous Euphrates,
 Whose courages are kindled with the flames
 The cursed Scythian sets on all their towns,
 And vow to burn the villain's cruel heart.

(Pt.2 : III.i. [50-57])

Besides Trabzon and Amasya, reference is made in the speech also to Sinop, Amasra, Rize, and Samsun, which are the other towns and cities of the Black Sea region. Another significant detail in the play is the allusion to the ordeals of the Christian captives at the hands of the Turks and to the urgency to have them released. For instance, while preparing for the battle with Bayezid, Tamburlaine, who calls himself "the Scourge and Wrath of God" (Pt.1 : III.iii. [45]), declares his resolve that he

Will first subdue the Turk, and then enlarge
 Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves,
 Burdening their bodies with your heavy chains,
 And feeding them with thin and slender fare;
 That naked row about the Terrene sea,
 And, when they chance to rest or breathe a space,
 Are punish'd with bastones so griveously
 That they lie panting on the galleys' side
 And strive for life at every stroke they give.
 These are the cruel pirates of Argier,
 That damned train, the scum of Africa,
 Inhabited with stragglng runagates,
 That make quick havoc of the Christian blood.

(Pt. 1:III.iii. [47-55])

Marlowe must have deliberately inserted in the play this dramatic description of the plight of the Christian captives, and the scathing reference to the Turkish pirates in Algeria, since one of the urgent issues, which Harborne's embassy was required to settle in İstanbul, was the release of the English captives (Skilliter 25, n.36). In fact, during his five-year embassy, he was able to have "fifty-four Englishmen released, and [...] none remained in captivity in the Ottoman Empire" (Skilliter 23). Apparently, most of these captives were the English merchants and sailors captured for ransom or galley-slavery by the Turkish pirates mostly operating

from North Africa (Kurat 4 and 67-71). Therefore, Marlowe's dramatized and antagonizing reiteration of the captive problem, with which he may have been fully familiar in his capacity as an agent, was probably intended to pander to the traditional anti-Turkish sentiments and attitudes in England, obviously further intensified in the public by the case of the captives. In fact, throughout *Tamburlaine the Great* and also in the depiction of the Turkish characters in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe recurrently resorts to racial and cultural othering and negative stereotyping, which, in fact, was a common practice among contemporary writers (Shepard 110). In *Tamburlaine the Great*, for example, when Bayezid and his wife Zabina are captured by Tamburlaine's men, they both start cursing Prophet Muhammad:

Baj. Ah, villains, dare you touch my sacred arms?

O Mahomet! O sleepy Mahomet!

Zab. O cursed Mahomet, that mak'st us thus

The slaves to Scythians rude and barbarous!

(Pt. 1 : III.iii. [269-72])

Through their profanity as such, Bayezid and Zabina are presented as heretics or, more rightly, as heathens¹³. So, they become the images of Marlowe's negative stereotyping of the Turks as a heathen people and, by their cursing, reflect the common Christian view in Europe that Islam is idolatry and heathenism, not a true religion, and Muhammad an impostor, not a true prophet¹⁴. The point is further emphasized in other references in the play to the Turks as "heathenish" (Pt. 2: II.ii. [6]) and as the "infidels,

¹³ Also see Zabina's further disbelief in Pt. 1: V.i. [237-45]:

Then is there left no Mahomet, no God,
 No fiend, no fortune, nor no hope of end
 Tour infamous, monstrous slaveries.
 Gape, earth, and let the fiends infernal view
 A hell as hopeless and as full of fear
 As are the blasted banks of Erebus,
 Where shaking ghosts with ever-howling groans
 Hover about the ugly ferryman,
 To get a passage to Elysium!

¹⁴ For an extensive study of the origins and constant reiteration of this anti-Islamic view in the West, see Daniel 30-33, 51, 93, 243-44, 298-99 *et passim*.

/ In whom no faith nor true religion rests" (Pt.2 : II.i. [33-34])¹⁵, and also to Islam as "foul blasphemous paganism" (Pt. 2 : II.i. [53]).

Marlowe's dramatic exploitation of the traditional European preconceptions about the Turks is also seen in his depiction of the Turks as a cruel people that has inflicted unspeakable suffering upon the Christians. So, in the opening scene of the second part of *Tamburlaine the Great*, where the Turkish nobles, "all [...]glutted with the Christians' blood" (Pt. 2 : I.i. [14]), are discussing whether the Hungarian king Sigismund will choose their offer of peace or war, "Orcanes" (Orhan) states that, if Sigismund chooses war,

Our Turkey blades shall glide through all their throats,
 And make this champion mead a bloody fen:
 Danubius' stream, that runs to Trebizon,
 Shall carry, wrapt within his scarlet waves,
 As martial presents to our friends at home,
 The slaughter'd bodies of these Christians:
 The Terrene main, wherein Danubius' falls,
 Shall by this battle be the bloody sea:
 The wandering sailors of proud Italy
 Shall meet those Christians, fleeting with the tide,
 Beating in heaps against their argosies,
 And make fair Europe, mounted on her bull,
 Trapp'd with the wealth and riches of the world,
 Alight, and wear a woful mourning weed.

(Pt. 2: I.i. [32-45])

Also, later on in the play, when Frederick, the lord of Buda, urges Sigismund to go to war against the Turks, he, Frederick, reminds him of the Turkish atrocities against the Christians:

Your majesty remembers, I am sure,
 What cruel slaughter of our Christian bloods
 These heathenish Turks and pagans lately made
 Betwixt the city Zula and Danubius;

¹⁵ For similar expressions, also see *The Jew of Malta*: "[...] these barbarous misbelieving Turks" (I, [113]) and "But I perceive there is no love on earth, / Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks" (III, [120-21]).

How through the midst of Varna and Bulgaria,
 And almost to the very walls of Rome,
 They have, not long since, massacred our camp.
 (Pt. 2: II.i. [4-10])

Obviously, one can see a paradox between, on the one hand, Marlowe's othering and negative stereotyping of the Turks in these terms and, on the other, the Elizabethan government's diplomatic attempts in the 1580s to form an alliance with Turkey in order to stall the Spanish threat. This can be explained by the fact that, despite these diplomatic attempts, England essentially shared the common European policy to check the Turkish advance in Europe and also maintained an anti-Turkish attitude. So, as an agent, acting out of patriotism and serving England's political aims, but also, at the same time, as a European and Christian, Marlowe was naturally drawn to such an antagonistic perception of Turkey and the Turks.

Perhaps the most intriguing detail of Marlowe's association with Turkey is his choice of the name "Ithamore" for Barabas's Turkish slave in *The Jew of Malta*. Actually, Marlowe's spelling of this name is the English transliteration of the name "Aytemur" in Turkish. At first, it may seem somewhat unusual that Marlowe should have chosen this name for Barabas's slave rather than one of the more common Turkish names like, for example, Murat, Ahmet, Mustafa, Sinan, Mehmet, and so on, which appear in various Elizabethan plays. However, some foregrounding is needed at this point to justify Marlowe's preference for the name. In fact, the name "Aytemur" or its variation "Aydemir" belongs to a catalogue of names in Turkish, ending with *-temur* and its phonetic variations of *-temür*, *-temir* and *-demir*. Accordingly, "Aydemir," "Altemur," "Astemur," "Astemir," "Asdemir," "Andemir," "Candemir," "Kandemir," "Kantemur," and "Kantemür" are some of the examples in this respect. However, the interesting fact about all these names is that they have been traditionally used, to a large extent, among the Circassian communities in Turkey and the Caucasus¹⁶. Hence, one may suggest that, although Barabas's Ithamore is first represented in the play as a Turkish captive caught by the Spanish

¹⁶ For a long catalogue of Circassian names, see www.circassianworld.com/CircassianNames.html, where some of the names containing *-demir* or *-temir* are listed like, for example, "Ademir," "Andemir," "Andemirkan," "Zhantemir" (viz. Handemir or Candemir), "Temir," "Temirkan," "Temirzhan" (viz. Demirhan or Demircan), and "Tiymur" (viz. Timur).

“vice-admiral” Martin del Bosco after a sea battle with “the Turkish fleet” “upon the coast of Corsica” (II, [76-85]), ethnically he is a Turkish Circassian. If one recalls that, in the Ottoman period, there was a lucrative slave trade between Turkey and Europe, which was mostly conducted by the Venetian slave merchants (Lewis 11-12), one of the major sources for this trade was the Caucasian region since, as Bernard Lewis has put it, “the Georgians, Circassians and related peoples [were] famous for providing beautiful women and brave and handsome men” (12). Moreover, besides Aleppo, Mosul, and various other Ottoman cities, İstanbul was a major centre for the marketing and distribution of these slaves (Lewis 11-12; Evliya Çelebi 1. Bk. 2, 544). Hence, it would be plausible to imagine that, if and when Marlowe was active in Turkey as a spy, he must have certainly gathered information about the slave markets where slaves of various races and ethnicities, including the European Christians, were often put on sale. So, in presenting most vividly in *The Jew of Malta* a slave market, Barabas’s bargaining for the price of Ithamore, and his final purchase of him as a slave (II, [124-260]), Marlowe may have relied upon his personal observations and knowledge of the slave markets in İstanbul and other cities.

By taking into account what has been discussed so far, one may suggest in conclusion that the contents of Marlowe’s Turkish plays do not seem to derive solely from some Renaissance and Elizabethan historiographical and travel sources, but that certain details embedded in the contents of these plays may have been related to personal experiences and observations. Moreover, since Harborne was able during his diplomatic residence in Turkey to set up English consulates in the major cities and ports of the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean in order to safeguard the trading interests of the Levant Company and its member merchants (Skilliter 23-24), it may be that Marlowe also visited some of these consular centres. Indeed, if one were to agree to the recently-revived arguments that Marlowe was not killed at all in the Deptford incident but was actually whisked out of the country into exile by his superiors in the government, and that Shakespeare was in fact Marlowe in disguise, one would regard the following remarks in *Othello* as Marlowe’s implicit reference to his patriotic secret service for his country and also to his activities in Ottoman Syria:

Soft you, a word or two:
 I have done the state some service, and they know 't;
 No more of that [...]
 [...]
 And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
 Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him thus.

(V.ii.339-41 and 353-57)

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