# THE OTTOMANS AND THE TURKS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIEVAL AND THE ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH POETRY

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**Abstract:** The Ottoman Empire was a geographically, economically, religiously and politically powerful empire that lasted from the late thirteenth century to the early twentieth century, expanding its influence not only to Europe but also to the Middle East, Asia Minor and North Africa. Especially in the late fifteenth century and the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire, as the leader and spreader of Islam, began to have a profound impact on three continents and achieved several military victories, which led Western Europeans to fear that it would bring the downfall of Christianity. The conquest of Constantinople (contemporary İstanbul) by Mehmed II giving the Ottomans a foothold in Europe, and Selim I's becoming the caliphate in the Muslim world strengthened the idea that the Ottoman Empire was the leader of Islam which made the Ottomans a growing threat to Europe with its unavoidable advances. Accordingly, this article intends to discuss the representations of the Turks/Ottomans affiliated with the Muslims/Saracens in both medieval and the Elizabethan English poetry within the framework of *The Turke and Gowin*, *Roland and Vernagu*, *The Romance of Otuel*, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, *Octovian*, *King Horn*, *Sir Ferumbras*, *The Sowdone of Babylone*, *The Sege off Melayne*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* and *The Defense of Poesy* and their associations as the religious, cultural and ethnic 'other' in both periods.

**Key words:** The Turkish image, Saracens, identity, Middle English metrical romance, the Elizabethan poetry.

## Ortaçağ ve Elizabeth Dönemi İngiliz Şiiri Bağlamında Osmanlılar ve Türkler

**Özet:** Osmanlı İmparatorluğu on üçüncü yüzyıl sonundan yirminci yüzyılın başına dek süren, etkisini sadece Avrupa'ya değil Orta Doğu, Anadolu ve Kuzey Afrika'ya da yaymış olan, coğrafi, ekonomik, dini ve politik olarak güçlü bir imparatorluktur. Özellikle geç on beşinci ve on altıncı yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu İslam'ın önderi ve yayıcısı olarak üç kıtada, Batı Avrupalıları Hıristiyanlığı yıkacağı korkusuna sevk eden, derin tesirler bırakmaya ve askeri başarılar kazanmaya başlamıştır. Osmanlılara Avrupa'ya ayak bastıran Kostantiniyye'nin (bugünkü İstanbul) II. Mehmet tarafından fethedilmesi ve I. Selim'in İslam dünyasının halifesi olması Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu İslam'ın önderi olduğu fikrini güçlendirerek önlenemez ilerlemesiyle Osmanlıları Avrupa karşısında büyüyen bir tehdide dönüştürmüştür. Bu bağlamda, bu makale *The Turke and Gowin*, *Roland and Vernagu*, *The Romance of Otuel*, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, *Octovian*, *King Horn*, *Sir Ferumbras*, *The Sowdone of Babylone*, *The Sege off Melayne*, Geoffrey Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Hikâyeleri* (*The Canterbury Tales*), Edmund Spenser'ın *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Philip Sidney'in *Astrophel and Stella* ve *The Defense of Poesy* eserleri çerçevesinde Müslümanlar/Sarasenler ile ilişkilendirilen Türklerin/Osmanlıların ortaçağ ve

Elizabeth dönemi İngiliz şiirinde yer alan tasvirlerini ve her iki dönemde dini, kültürel ve etnik 'diğer' olarak ilişkilendirmelerini tartışmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Türk imgesi, Sarasenler, kimlik, Orta İngilizce metrik romans, Elizabeth dönemi şiiri.

## Introduction

The works of Ottoman poetry supply an account to Ottoman political and cultural history, and plenty of poems produced by individual poets provide the field of literature with invaluable merits of these contemporary poems. The traces of the rise of Ottoman poetry began almost eight hundred years ago with the foundation of the Ottoman Empire and it evolved with the gradual empowerment of the Ottomans in the political, social and religious arenas. The works of the Ottoman poets equip the readers with the ideas as to what have been the conditions under which they were produced and the circumstances which influenced them structurally and thematically. Apart from the self-reflective works produced by the Ottomans, the representations of the Ottomans by the foreign men of letters are also essential in order to understand how political, social and religious roles of the Ottomans brought them into prominence. Although the Elizabethan Anglo-Ottoman relations have been a popular topic in literary scholarship, few studies have turned from analyses of drama to poetry. By examining the stages of the political and religious leadership of the Ottoman Empire, this article, which is based upon a review of representations of the Turks and the Ottomans within the corpus of medieval and the Elizabethan English poetry, provides a study of these representations in order to demonstrate the involvement of Turkish and the Ottoman image into the English poetry in the Middle Ages and the Elizabethan period in England, and the representations of the Turk and the Ottomans as the religious, cultural and racial 'others'.

## Historical Background: The Rise and the Expansion of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans were not the first wave of the Muslim Turk dynasties in the Anatolian geography since they had been preceded by several small principalities known as beyliks such as the Germiyans (1239-40), the Karamanids (1256), Eşrefoğulları (1296-7), apart from the Turko-Persian Seljuk Empire (1037-1194). The Ottoman tradition was initiated by Ertuğrul Bey being settled in North West Anatolia around Söğüt and his son Osman's succession as the ruler after his father's death in the very early thirteenth century (Finkel, 2005, pp. 2-3). The Ottoman Empire, emerged as a Muslim political entity in the late Middle Ages, was the successor of the civilizations such as the Persian Empire, the Hellenistic states, the Roman Empire, Byzantium, Umayyad and Abbasid Empires; "in Western languages, the Ottoman empire from the earliest

times was called Turkey/Turquie/Türkei, a term that the Ottomans never used for themselves" since they preferred to define their empire as the "Well Protected Imperial Domains" or the "Ottoman State" with a lack of ethnic identity in their self-perception (Somel, 2003, p. xxxv), which demonstrates not only their ethnic but also religious and cultural tolerance.

The Ottomans established their empire in the place of the Byzantine Empire; however, the Ottoman Turks did not constitute the greatest threat to the Europe and the Christendom until the reign of Mehmed II (1444-1481) which was unique in the Ottoman history since Mehmed II not only successfully expanded the empire territorially in both Anatolia and Balkans but also strengthened the central government (Pamuk, 2000, p. 40). In addition to these, Mehmed II's conquering Constantinople (contemporary İstanbul) was the milestone for the rise of the Ottoman Empire as a political and cultural leader. The conquest of the Byzantine capital had long been the dream of the Islamic armies; yet, the conquest meant more than a religious victory of the Islam against the Christendom since:

> [t]he fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 is sometimes regarded as the end of the Roman Empire, or as the absorption of a redundant relic by a new and expansionist superstate. In reality, the siege and conquest of Constantinople was neither; nor was it a one-sided affair as it might seem. The real importance of 1453 lies not in the disappearance of something ancient, but in the birth of something new: the Ottoman Empire in its fully developed form, an empire which would endure until 1922 (Nicolle, 2007, p. 174).

The conquest of Constantinople, which was considered as the first step to the fully developed Ottoman Empire, led to the expansion of the empire for the next two hundred years in the Balkans, the Middle East and the North Africa until the empire was at the height of its power under Suleiman the Magnificent (1522-1566). Within this period of expansion and empowerment, Selim I's (1512-1520) conquering the Muslim lands and claiming to be the caliphate in the Muslim world strengthened the idea that the Ottoman Empire was the leader of Islam, which led to a greater challenge to the Ottoman dominance by the Europeans. Prior to the Ottomans, the Mamluks had been the leading Sunni Muslim power and the protectors of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in addition to being the descendants of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo. After the Ottomans' establishing their rule in Syrian and Egypt following the defeat of the Mamluks at Marj Dabık in 1516 and Ridaniyya in 1517, Selim I's authority over the Hejaz was recognized by the sharif of Mecca, and Selim I was handed over his rights as caliph and the title of the protector of Mecca and Medina; in other words, he obtained the leadership in the holy war known as *gaza* against the infidel (İnalcık, 2001, p. 20). The caliph was officially recognized as a spiritual figurehead for Muslims and also for those living out of the Ottoman

domain; therefore, holding of the caliphate reassured the Ottomans to retain their sovereignty even in the territories they abandoned militarily (Pankhurst, 2013, p. 35).

Selim I's becoming the caliph and hence obtaining the religious leadership even outside the Ottoman borders, *de facto*, strengthened the national identity of the Ottomans since a Turkish state became the representative of the caliphate and the Muslim world clung to it (Pankhurst, 2013, p. 37). Accordingly, the religious and the national identities of the Ottomans became foreground and apparent, enhancing their respectability against the European Christendom. Therefore, the transfer of caliphate from the Mamluks to the Ottomans united the Muslim world and the Ottomans, putting more emphasis on the religious identity of the Ottomans rather than their national identity. The unity that was attained and the religious identity that came into prominence not only strengthened the empire politically but also made them one of the subject matters of literature, along with the non-Christians.

**Representations of the Turks in Medieval English Poetry**

The Ottomans were the geographical descendants of the Romans, but not the cultural and religious ones; thus, the images of the Ottoman Turks were constructed over the term 'the Saracens'. As John Victor Tolan points out in his book *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*:

> "Islam" in Arabic means submission, submission to God's will; a Muslim is one who submitted t God's will. Yet medieval Christian writers did not speak of "Islam" or "Muslims," words unknown (with very few exceptions) in Western languages before the sixteenth century. Instead, Christian writers referred to Muslims by using ethnic terms: Arabs, Turks, Moors, Saracens. Often they call them "Ishmaelites," descendants of the biblical Ishmael, or Hagarenes (from Hagar, Ishmael's mother). Their religion is referred to as the "law of Muhammad" or the "law of the Saracens" (2002, p. xv).

However, during the Elizabethan period, the image of the Saracen identified with the Muslims changed meaning due to the fact that the Ottomans took over the leadership of Islam and started to expand in Europe. The representations of the Ottomans were shaped after Mehmed II conquered Constantinople, since the empire became an advancing military threat to the Europe. The gradual substitution of the term Christian with the Europe and the Ottoman/Turk with the Muslim in the Elizabethan period constitutes the base for the acknowledgement of the very rare involvement of the Ottomans in medieval and the Elizabethan English poetry.

In the Middle Ages, the representations of the Turks can be traced in a few Middle English romances. The term Turk, though an ambivalent racial

expression, is referred in the Arthurian metrical romance entitled *The Turke and Gowin* (also known as *The Turke and Sir Gawain*), a fifteenth century North-Midland romance almost half of which is missing because of the damage in its folio (Wells, 1916, p. 59). In the romance, the Turke, described as an impressively strong unchristian man, challenges one of King Arthur's knights in Arthur's court and Gawain accepts the challenge and follows the Turke for the exchange of blows, echoing the story of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. After a couple of adventures in the enchanted castle of the King of the Isle of Man, the Turke wants to be beheaded by Gawain despite Gawain's unwillingness, and the Turke transforms into a knight, Sir Gromer, when his blood touches the basin. Apparently, the Turke is a non-Christian knight and through his being beheaded, he experiences a revival since he abandons his wrong faith and converts to Christianity; in other words, the transformation of his religious identity is more significant compared to his ethnic identity.

In addition to the anonymous poet of *The Turke and Gowin*, the fourteenth century English poet Geoffrey Chaucer pays attention to the ethnic identity of the Turks, though mentions 'Turkye' only on line 66 in his *General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* (ca.1387) while describing the Knight, one of the pilgrims he lists in the *General Prologue*, fighting in several lands as a mercenary and fighting for "Agayn another hethen in Turkye" (Benson, 2008, p. 24). Excluding the discussion on Chaucer's representation of the Knight and the ideal knighthood, the stress upon the Knight's fighting in Turkye might have a historical reference. In 1388, Marshal Boucicaut, one of the most famous chivalric figures of the age and a Crusader, fought against the Ottomans at Nicopolis, and for three months stayed with and honoured by the Ottoman Sultan Murad I, in return for which he offered to fight on the Sultan's behalf against other Saracens (Rigby, 2014, p. 51). On the other hand, the knight might be Sir John Hawkwood, a close acquaintance of Chaucer, who fought in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) between England and France (Umunç, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, Chaucer, in the two lines above his reference to Turkye, writes "This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also / Sometyme with the lord of Palatye" (lines 64-65) (Benson, 2008, p. 24), and "At Lyeys was he and at Satalye, / Whan they wonne, and in the Grete See" (lines 58-59) (Benson, 2008, p. 24). Despite the lack of reliable evidence to prove Chaucer's direct reference to Boucicaunt or Hawkwood in the *General Prologue*, there is a hint of Chaucer's being familiar with the Turks not only as religious but also as geographical and ethnic 'other'. Through his references to the fight between the lord of Palatia (Balat)[1] and another Turkish lord, and the conquest of Satalye (Antalya) and

[1] Within the historical perspective, Palatia was an important mercantile port on the western coast of Anatolia, near the mouth of the Maeander (Büyük Menderes) River. Several commodities were exported to Europe from Palatia (Umunç, 2002, p. 6).

Lyseys (Ayas) by the Christians, Chaucer not only mentions the political and the military conflicts in the second half of the fourteenth century on these geographies, but also demonstrates the ongoing interaction between the Turks and the Europeans through the Knight's involvement into the tale (Umunç, 2002, p. 3).

Chaucer's being familiar with the geography and the military conflicts of the Turks might stem from the fact that he had been involved in several overseas journeys for diplomatic missions throughout his career at the service of Lionel, earl of Ulster, the second son of King Edward III (1327-1377), and later on he became a customs controller in London in 1370s (Brown, 2011, pp. 1-2). Nevertheless, Chaucer does not represent the Turks as a big threat to the Christians. In fact, the major threats to the Christian Europe in the medieval period were not the Turks but the infidels who were represented as the Saracens in medieval English poetry, against whom a fight is sanctified by the papacy in the eleventh century with the words "if you have blood, bathe your hands with the blood of the infidels" (Mohammed, 1999, p. 35). The words 'infidel' and 'Saracen' were interchangeably used in order to indicate the non-Christians, "oriental or Mediterranean peoples, who were, or were regarded as, Islamic" (Speed, 1990, p. 572). On the other hand, Christian and European were another two terms used interchangeably in the fourteenth and fifteenth century European writings. The Crusades between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries by the European Christians to ensure the liberation of the Holy Land strengthened the division between the Christian and Muslim identities. In the eleventh century, Pope Urban II called the Christians to take the cross against the Muslims by emphasizing that the Christians had to retake the lost territories of Christendom, "Wherefore rather, my dearest brothers, if it is necessary lay down your lives for your brothers" (Hay, 1957, p. 33). By preaching the death of brothers for the sake of their siblings, a metaphor stressing their familial bond, broadens the division between the Christian and the non-Christian 'other'. Meanwhile, though their ineffectiveness in ousting the Crusaders, the Seljuk Turks controlling the area on the way to Jerusalem were also the enemies of the Christians. The Fatimids were engaged with taking Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks in 1097-1098, while the first Crusader armies were marching to Jerusalem and the city was taken by the Crusaders in 1099 (Slack, 2003, p. 90). The arrival of the Ottomans after the Seljuks changed the equilibrium since the legacy of the once great Christian Byzantium Empire was replaced by the Ottoman Empire and the Ottomans became the ethnic and religious rivals of the European Christendom. Especially after the defeat of the Crusading army in Nicopolis (Nikopol) in 1396 with the Turkish Sultan Bayazid's help and consequently the opening of the Balkan gates to the Turks, the Turkish position was fortified but also became vulnerable to several Christian military attacks in-between 1397 and 1413 (Riley-Smith, 2014, p. 305).

The ongoing Crusader attacks during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries are the subject matter of several Middle English metrical romances, particularly the ones within the corpus of the 'Matter of France' or, in other words, the Charlemagne romances. The term 'Matter of France' denotes the narratives chiefly concerned with the Emperor Charlemagne, his peers and vassals and the struggles of French heroes (Schofield, 1931, p. 145). Apart from the popularity of the 'Matter of Britain' romances -chiefly dealing with King Arthur and his knights, the chivalrous exploits of British warriors, accounts based largely on tales of Celtic origin-, the recognition of 'Matter of French' romances in England derives from their Christian militancy which stems from the Saracen versus Christian conflict shared by the English and the French (Crofts and Allen, 2011, p. 87). They disregard the rivalry between England and France, and they praise the chivalric display of the true Christian knights fighting against the infidel rather than one another (Warm, 1999, p. 87). Although they were not very popular in England because of their close connection to the French king Charlemagne, the Church was very influential in popularizing texts in the Middle Ages, and although the saints' legends and *exempla* were popularized by the Church to give religious instruction, romances were regarded with suspicion - except for the Charlemagne romances which served the Church's purpose (Hudson, 1989, pp. 38-39).

The Charlemagne romances mainly concentrate on the subject matter of the Christian and non-Christian rivalry, irrespective of the national identity; hence, these romances lack the images of the Seljuk and the Ottoman Turks; whilst they are melted into the term 'Saracen' or 'infidel' in most romances.[2] Saracens, representing "the enemies of Christianity" (de Weever, 1998, p. xxx) or 'the infidels' (Ashton, 2010, p. 12), are forced to choose either death or conversion in medieval romances due to the fact that they represent Christ's supposed enemies who had to be defeated and destroyed because the "Saracen bodies exist to menace Christian integrity and as a consequence to be spectacularly destroyed" (Cohen, 2001, p. 126). Alternatively, they were forced to convert, and the Christian demands for the conversion of Saracens were "accompanied

[2] Charlemagne romances are classified within different corpuses by different romance scholars. For instance, Billings classifies *The Sowdone of Babylone, Sir Firumbras, Roland and Vernagu, The Sege of Melayne, Otuel, Duke Rowlande and Sir Otuell of Spayne, The Song of Roland, The Taill of Rauf Coilȝear* as the 'Charlemagne Legends'; John Edwin Wells classifies 'Firumbras'- *The Sowdone of Babylone, Sir Firumbras, Charles the Grete*; 'Otuel'- *Roland and Vernagu, The Sege of Melayne, Otuel* as the 'Charlemagne Legends'. See Billings, A. H. (1901). *A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances Dealing with English and Germanic Legends, and with the Cycles of Charlemagne and of Arthur*. New York: Holt; and Wells, J. E. (1916). *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

by threats of violence or promises of rewards, and the outcome may be the desired conversion or the death of the Saracens" (Speed, 1990, p. 558). As Carol F. Heffernan states:

> The subject of conversion of the infidel is a popular theme in the English Charlemagne romances that appears to develop out of the underlying assumption of all Middle English crusading romances: the Christian faith is superior to that of the infidels just as Christian knights are superior to Saracen warriors (2003, p. 10).

In most medieval metrical romances which are grouped as homiletic or pious romances, the religious conflict of a Saracen knight and a Christian knight is contextualized, presenting a duel between the two which begins with their mutual insults; the former to the Christian belief, while the second to the Saracen one. Both sides invite each other to abandon their corrupted faith, which leads to an inevitable fight ending with the victory of the Christian knight. Apart from the vigour of the knights during the fight, their piety is also a matter of comparison. Whilst the Christian knight's prayers to the God are enough for his victory, the Saracen knight's idols, magical garments or rings which are supposed to make him invulnerable are ineffective because of his false belief. In other words, the fight which is presented in medieval romances between the knights from different faiths is, indeed, between the pious Christians and the infidel Saracens.

Saracen versus Christian conflict is frequently represented by a duel between individual warriors of both faiths, as in *Roland and Vernagu*, an early fourteenth century romance from North Midland (Wells, 1916, p. 5) and *The Romance of Otuel*, an early fourteenth century romance from South-East Midland (Wells, 1916, p. 5). John Finlayson appropriately defines the duel as a "dramatic climax in which the struggle becomes directly one between the champion of Christ and the champion of Mohammed, literally a struggle of the gods" (1990, p. 178). The duel has scholastic overtones, with an exchange of theological questions and answers, and it is "a kind of catechesis, whether for the Saracen or the Christian reader, for whom the debate reiterates and rationalizes central Christian doctrines" (Vincent, 2010, p. 95). Here the participants act as representatives of their faith groups – romances reveal that whilst it is generally evil for an individual Christian to victimize another individual, it is perfectly acceptable – and good, even – for Christians as a group to victimize non-Christians, as a group. Like the duel, the motif of the converted Saracen "provides a natural opportunity for catechesis as Christian knights seek to convey the essential truths of the Christian faith to unbelievers. No doubt one aim of such passages was to remind the reader or listener of these same truths" (Hardman, 1999, p. 86). On the other hand, these teachings are divine warnings to non-Christian knights, who are doomed to suffer both on the battlefield and

in the Otherworld. This motivation makes Christians stronger against Saracens, despite their physical inferiority, and makes them victimizers of those with false faith rather than being their victims.

Saracen and Christian conflict in romances is, indeed, exemplary for its presenting never-ending mutual victimizations which follow on from one another. Apart from a fight to overcome the 'other' because of faith, the main motivation for their never-ending villainy is presented as desire for revenge for previous ordeals they have inflicted on each other, which triggers much of their hostility to each other. *Roland and Vernagu* is a romance of Saracen and Christian victimization motivated by avenging their previous mutual victimizations. After hearing of the victimization of the Christians by heathens, King Charles marches to Constantinople to avenge and punish the Saracen King Ebrahim, the King of Spain; therefore, the role of the victim and the victimizer changes afterwards, as Charles conquers Spain and kills the Saracens. The mutual victimization of Saracen and Christian forces is also exemplified by the duel between the Christian knight Roland and a Saracen knight, Vernagu, during which Roland talks about Christianity to Vernagu, then slays him, in return for his ignorance and humiliation of the Christian faith which is presented as more important than Vernagu as a person. A similar duel takes place in *The Romance of Otuel* between a merciless and unkind Saracen knight Otuel, who "demonstrates all the defects of the unenlightened" (Barron, 1987, p. 95) and Roland, who is a Christian knight. Otuel mocks King Charles and challenges Roland to single combat, saying that he represents the Saracen King Garsie's threat to make King Charles and his men his vassals; yet, Otuel accepts conversion to Christianity after a white dove descends miraculously onto his head, as at the baptism of Christ. So, the result is achieved by a combination of unchristian fear, self-interest, greed and a heavenly sign, implying that any means to this end will do in these romances. After Otuel's conversion, he fights on the side of the Christians and slays Saracen knights.

Although it is a secular story mainly concentrating on the adventures and successes of Otuel, *The Romance of Otuel* has significant religious implications, with the story of Otuel's miraculous conversion through divine intervention and his capturing of the Saracen King Garsie. Garsie is, by implication, punished by one of his men that he trusts most in attacking the Christians; however, ironically this man turns out to be Garsie's victimizer, thus justifying the right cause of the Christian faith. On the other hand, Otuel becomes a nobler and kinder knight after his conversion and he is presented as an ideal Christian knight, with perfect military skills and mercy for those who ask for it. It is even more apparent when compared with his rude and combative manners towards the French before his conversion. He becomes a forgiving knight, more

'Christian' than the Christians, showing mercy to Garsie when he asks for it and agreeing to pay homage to Charles.

The supremacy of the Christian cause and the rightness of Christian villainy are mirrored in heroic representations of Christians, despite the monstrosity of their villainy. Even if in other romances it is always the non-Christians who are represented as rude and villainous, in *Richard Coer de Lyon*, an early fourteenth century romance from Kent (Wells, 1916, p. 5), it is Richard who is presented as a rude and villainous Christian. Although Richard is monstrous for the Saracens, he is heroic for the Christians because of his personal prowess against all treachery and enemies surrounding him (Finlayson, 1990, p. 172). All controversial situations come together in Richard's heroic, but also cruel, nature since Richard's brutality and mercilessness is pure villainy in a secular reading of the text, because he kills all Saracens regardless of age and sex. He refers to the Saracens as 'hounds', since the Saracens in the Middle Ages were associated with dogs to stress their beastly character, as opposed to rationality (Uebel, 2000, p. 69). He rides "To slee þe houndes non ne sparde" (Brunner, 1913, p. 294), and he orders his men to kill the Saracens until valleys run all in blood.

Geraldine Heng in her article "The Romance of England: *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Saracens, Jews, and the Politics of Race and Nation" (2000, p. 139) and Derek Pearsall in his article "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century" (2001, p. 15) point out that Richard's description is influenced by the idea of the Crusades, and his cannibalism is a military tactic as "[i]n devouring the heirs of Muslim kings and princes of the Orient, English Christians will swallow up lineages and sweep away succession, consuming the future itself, in world domination" (Heng, 2000, p. 141). However, when the text is read in a religious sense, his brutality and mercilessness turn out to be the means to accomplish his holy mission and to avenge Christ's foes. Ironically, the text is somehow paradoxical in a religious reading, because it presents the child of a mother with demonic nature as the avenger of Christ; in other words, although Richard is the son of a woman who cannot tolerate hearing Mass, he adopts a holy mission. Richard, combining God's power with that of the devil, is a creation of "this strange and unholy mixture" (Ramsey, 1983, pp. 79-80). He becomes the devil himself for the Saracens that he kills without pity, though Christ sends him grace when he does so; thus, despite the inconsistency, Richard embodies both evil and Christian devotion at the same time, and this justifies his villainy. On the other hand, the Saracens are presented as "no longer as human beings, but as personifications of all that is unchristian and of the malice of Satan" (Mehl, 1968, p. 245), who thus deserve their punishment.

The humiliation of the Saracens is present in detail throughout the romance. In contrast to Richard, and unlike many other romances, Sawdan Saladyn (Sultan

Saladin), is presented as a weak person who escapes when Christians attack, a cowardly ruler asking for mercy and offering treasures to Richard to spare his life, and Christian nobles are superior to Saracen nobles in every sense. When Christian nobles are on the best steeds, Saracen ones are described riding on 'rabbits', in order to humiliate and be little them. This total contrast between Saladyn and Richard is empowering for Richard whilst weakening Saladyn. Like their rulers, the Saracens are inferior to the Christians. Richard says one Christian man equals the worth of nineteen Saracens; and "þe moo þ*er* be, þe more j schal sloo, / And wreke Jh*e*su off hys ffoo" (Brunner, 1913, p. 410).

Furthermore, the Saracens are literally consumed as food, and thus they are deprived of their humanity. Richard has an unending appetite for victory over the Saracens and for their flesh as meat, which makes him not a typically 'heroic' figure in a Christian sense. Moreover, "Richard as a 'lionheart' is rendered baldly literal: it is recast as a simple act of (alimentary) cause and effect: you are what you eat" (McDonald, 2004, p. 139). This, then, makes Richard not only of demonic descent, but a beast since Richard makes himself a real monster for the Saracens when he orders his men to kill the Saracens of most renown, who have the richest relatives, to smite off their heads, write their names on a parchment, cook them and strip them of their beard and lip. As Carol F. Heffernan states, "[t]he cannibalism is a significant part of what makes the king demonic to his opponents" (2003, p. 13). He wants them to be served to the Saracen nobles who have brought Saladyn's treasure to him in return for the lives of their sons. Richard wants the heads of the Saracens to be put on a plate:

> Lay euery hed on a platere,
> Bryng it hoot forþ al in þyn hand,
> Vpward hys vys, þe teeþ grennand;
> And loke þey be nothynge rowe! (Brunner, 1913, p. 267).

He ignores the mourning Saracens, eats the meat with relish, then humiliates them by saying that the English do not need to go back to England because they have plenty of Saracens to eat there.

Despite Richard's continual reminders that he is the avenger of God's enemies and he fights in the name of God, he acts inhumanly and outside the moral codes and understandings of the religious faith he fights for. His brutal treatment of the Saracens is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of mercy, and his inhumanity whilst pretending to be the warrior hero of Christendom is paradoxical and makes him not so much the defender of faith, but a mere man in search of ultimate military power in the world. This conflict is reflected in the text by the different expressions used by the Christians and the Saracens to define Richard since he is defined as a king with a lion's heart, the defender of Christianity and avenger of Christ's foes by the Christians, and is praised a lot for his bravery:

He may be callyd, be ryȝt skylle,
Kyng jcrystenyd off most renoun,
Stronge Rychard Coer de Lyoun!' (Brunner, 1913, p. 139).

However, in contrast to these statements, he is defined by the Saracens as "It is a deuyl wiþoute ffayle" (Brunner, 1913, p. 277) who has come to earth to kill them. When an angel's voice is heard from heaven bidding Richard to behead all Saracens pitilessly, Richard's victimization and brutality are sanctified by God, and the suffering he inflicts cruelly on the Saracens is justified as the order of God. This justification is supported by the statements, repeated several times in the text, that the Christians have fewer losses in the fight against the Saracens. The great difference in the number of deaths on both sides reflects the justness of the Christian cause, and those on the 'wrong' side are punished through death and by implication of hell in great numbers.

Despite the fact that violence of the Christians against the Saracens is sanctified since it is a means to avenge for the victimization of the Christians, violence of the Saracens against their Christian enemies even for self-defence is never justifiable as they have the wrong faith, and their villainy is always punished with their defeat in their fights against Christians. This is presented in *Octovian*, an early fourteenth century romance from North of England (Wells, 1916, p. 5), by the defeat of the Saracen Sultan's forces by Octovian with the help of the King of France's army, and in *King Horn*, an early thirteenth century romance from South-East or Midland (Wells, 1916, p. 5), by the defeat of the Saracens who have invaded Christian lands and killed Horn's father. The heroes in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*, the former a late fourteenth century romance from South of England (Wells, 1916, p. 6) and the latter an early fifteenth century romance from East Midland (Wells, 1916, p. 6), are not only English but also French knights fighting against the Saracens to emphasize Christian unity against non-Christians; therefore, "[t]he world they portray always seeks to emphasise the importance of Christian, as opposed to national" (Warm, 1999, p. 88). Unlike the unity of the Christians against victimization by the Saracens, the Saracens fighting against the Christians are fragmented in both romances, because they are worried about themselves rather than about their faith. Sons named Sir Ferumbras in both romances convert to Christianity by betraying their Saracen fathers in order to avoid execution. Through their conversions, the representation of the 'other' also changes because the 'Saracen other' becomes 'Christian', which blurs the representation of villainy. Suzanne Conklin Akbari believes that, before his conversion, Ferumbras "exhibits Saracen behaviour: he is violent and aggressive. Once he becomes a Christian, his acts are governed by compassion rather than aggression" (2009, p. 168); however, Sir Ferumbras is still violent against his enemy. Sir Ferumbras is:

> Fifteuene fet hol & sound & wonderliche muche of strengþe.
> Had he ben in cryst be-leued & y-vollid on þe haly fant,
> A bettre knyȝt þan he was preued þo was þer non lyuand (Herrtage, 1903, p. 22).

Although the Saracen Sir Ferumbras is described in *Sir Ferumbras* as a monstrous, threatening, rude and brutal person, even a monster in appearance, fifteen feet tall, wonderfully strong with broad shoulders, he becomes monstrous for the Saracens after he converts. Subsequently, his monstrosity and violence against the Saracens is justified since he is no more an infidel, which serves to draw attention away from the fact that Christians might still be afraid of him, despite his conversion. It also makes him a potentially problematic Christian and raises problems with the nature of Christian knighthood, which is not different from Saracen knighthood in its physical demands, nor in its violence against the enemy.

*The Sowdone of Babylone*, contextualizing a corresponding story of *Sir Ferumbras*, begins with a story pretending justification of the Saracen Sultan Laban's violent revenge for his victimization by Christian Romans. He attacks and slays Christians when he learns that the vessel full of riches brought to him as a present has been robbed by the Romans, and in return for his 'just' attack (though the desire for rich presents indicates the Sultan's greed), the Pope of Rome assembles his council to ask for help. Indeed, the unity against the Saracens is "a model of Christendom defending both its secular and spiritual identity against invasion by heathendom" (Hebron, 1997, p. 90). This need for Christian unity against a Saracen threat is also presented in *The Sege off Melayne*, a mid-fourteenth century romance from North of England (Wells, 1916, p. 5) when the Lord of Milan asks for King Charles of France's help after a prophetic dream when the Saracens besiege his city. King Charles, who is also warned by a dream, refuses to fight as a result of his advisor Ganelon's ill advice. However, Bishop Turpin summons an army consisting of clergy and fights against the Saracens, and King Charles takes over the fight only after Turpin excommunicates him, and consequently the French defeat the Saracens with the help of the Britons despite the military superiority of the Saracens.

*The Sege off Melayne* differs from other romances narrating Christian versus Saracen conflicts because of the shift of authority from nobles to men of religion in the holy fight. As stated by Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Turpin's wounds in the fight against the Saracens are not personal but stand for "visible signs of the damage inflicted upon the crusaders by the Saracen enemy" (2004, p. 32). In that sense, Turpin represents all Christians by proclaiming a crusade, while Charles stands only for himself as long as he refuses to take part in the fight because of his cowardice. Charles's refusing to fight against the Saracens and his late involvement in the fight in order not to lose his fame makes him a

coward rather than a hero, contrary to Turpin whose actions are presented as heroic. He only victimizes Charles by excommunicating and humiliating him to guide him as to how he should behave as a Christian king, which is moral and religious chastisement for a good purpose.

This contrast favouring with the Christian knight and the God in medieval metrical romances demonstrates that the non-Christians are the rivals of the English because of their different faith, regardless of the racial background. Therefore, it is ambivalent whether the romances are targeting the Arabs, the Turks or any other racial backgrounds as the enemies of the English. However, within the historical context, it is a bit remote possibility that primarily the Ottomans are their enemies to be destroyed or converted. This has several reasons such as the geographical locations of the Ottoman settlements and the settings specified in the romances –as in *Roland and Vernagu*, in which King Charles marches to Constantinople to avenge and punish the Saracen King Ebrahim, the King of Spain- do not collide with each other. This strengthened the idea that the English metrical romances refer not to the Ottomans particularly but to the Muslims in general. Despite the distortion of the historical facts, the romances present the religious difference as the major reason for the conflicts of the Christians and the Saracens, in which the Ottomans are also included because of their religious identity but excluded with their national identity.

**Anglo-Ottoman Cultural Contacts in the Elizabethan Period (1558-1603)**

The religious difference creating the primary conflict between the Christians and the Saracens in the Middle Ages was mostly sustained as the reason for 'othering' the Ottomans from the rest of the Europe during the Elizabethan era; however, the main reason for the ambivalent representations of the Turks during the Elizabethan period was the lack of reliable information about the Turks and the Turkish territories since they were provided by plenty of diplomats, merchants, travelers, some of which are translations into English. In other words, the English had to make use of the other European sources –mainly Italian and French- of information most of which were based upon the representation of the Turks. Accordingly, the English acknowledgement of the image of the Turk was mostly negatively stereotyped; apart from being arguable whether it had been adopted by all the social classes in England, since it is unclear whether the Turks were recognized as a threat by the lower-class in Elizabethan England since they might have been unknown to a certain population (Aksoy, 2004, pp. 59-60). On the other hand, Nancy Bisaha points out that there were also various European travelers and scholars writing on the Turks in the sixteenth century from a less biased perspective such as Italian Giovanni Menavino, Andrea Cambini, Giovio, speaking of the Turks' honourable behaviour, contrary to the barbarian Turk stereotype exhorted by the

European imagination. Additionally, diplomatic missions provided several diplomats in the Ottoman Empire with a more realistic perception of the Turks; hence, they could have less biased information on the Turks, since they had access to more accurate historical reports (Bisaha, 2004, pp. 177-178).

Although so little was known in England about the trade activities of the Turks before the Elizabethan era, English merchants began to venture into the Mediterranean and the Levant during the fifteenth century (Wood, 1964, p. 1). Through the foundation of trade companies, goods were imported from the Far East by way of the Ottomans. After the Levant Company, formerly known as the Turkey Company, was granted a loyal charter by Elizabeth I in 1581, English merchants got the trading monopoly with the Ottoman Empire, which gave way to an increase in diplomacy between England and the Ottoman Empire (Vlami, 2015, p. 2). Besides, the first ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire were merchants, indicating that "Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations were from the start bound up with trade" (Jacobson, 2014, p. 1). Although Anglo-Ottoman trade relations and dramatic representations, despite the negative stereotypical representations, have been popular topics for research, there are only a few studies on the Ottoman representations in English poetry. As Jacobson also pays attention, "this is partly because the Elizabethan stage was the prime stage for negotiating the issues of cultural and religious identity" (2014, p. 4). In addition to this, for Jonathan Burton, the lack of interest in the racial and religious identities of the Ottomans in the Elizabethan English poetry stems from the fact there is no evidence of the Ottomans as allies (2005, p. 28).

On the other hand, the awareness of the Ottoman's actual expansionist power and its controlling influence over the East enabled a new understanding of the Ottoman and Islamic image. Hence, the appraisals and the representations of the Ottomans in the Elizabethan poetry shifted to accommodate different historical occasions, depending on the prominence of political and religious developments. During the Elizabethan period, England never had the upper hand in its dealings with the East, and "England could not possibly imagine itself in any way 'dominating' the Ottoman Empire, a relatively superpower of the age, and the only regional power with a standing army" (Burton, 2005, p. 57). Elizabeth's correspondence with Murad III, considered to be the turning point for English assessment of the empire and the threat of Islam, reveals that the English accepted and approved the Ottomans and treated them with respect (Burton, 2005, p. 58). As Burton points out:

> The correspondence between Sultan Murad III and Queen Elizabeth I is just such a moment. As the first official exchange between England and the Ottoman Empire, the correspondence may be considered a watershed moment and a benchmark for practical English assessments of Ottoman Turks and the threat of Islam (2000, p. 130).

The English assessment of the Ottoman Turks and the acknowledgement of Islam as a threat to England were among the subject matters of the Elizabethan literary works since in the Elizabethan period Humanists utilized the classical past as a guide for the subjects they wrote, without an exception of the Turks and the Crusades. Even if the classical period, coined to designate the period of classical antiquity, preceded the rise of Islam and the Crusades, the Humanists saw connections and made use of the ancient models to make them fit the Turkish advance. The greatest shift brought to the discussion of the Turks was its secular tone since the Turks who moved across the borders of Europe were presented like the barbarians invaders of the antiquity rather than the enemies in the Crusades, reducing the religious antagonism to a political one. On the other hand, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 resonating with the classical past for its parallelism to the fifth century attacks on Rome encouraged the classical treatment of the Turks; therefore, the representations of the Turks by Humanists were not original and objective (Bisaha, 2004, pp. 43-44).

**Representations of the Turks in the Elizabethan English Poetry**

Different from the medieval period, in the Elizabethan period, medieval romances were criticized by Humanists on account of their glorification of villainy. Robert P. Adams explains that:

> In the romance world they found the glorification of passion and unreason, carried over into the glamorization of tyrants, of conquerors, and of a militarism that resulted in unmeasurable suffering to the commonwealth. […] In the romances they found, typically, a thinly disguised pagan social order that glorified injustice, violence, and war- and they attacked it as both unchristian and absurd. To them the romances sought to glamorize (and the vogue of romance to perpetuate) antisocial concepts of the superman-hero, together with equally false ideas of 'honor' of 'glory'; and of the 'greatness' (not to say the dignity) of man (1959, p. 48).

Since the exposure to the cruelty of physical and emotional violence in romances was criticized by the Humanists in the Elizabethan period, medieval romance was refashioned through the rediscovery of the Greek romances and the debate over the nature and value of romance in the sixteenth century, and consequently, epic, associated with the stories of quests and heroic birth of nations, regained importance while romance gradually declined (Fuchs, 2004, pp. 66-67). Nevertheless, the religious image of the non-Christians was not completely invalidated in the Elizabethan period since the earlier Christian representations of Muslims were still resilient as the religious 'other'; furthermore, there emerged a stereotypical depiction of the Turks due to the fact that the Ottomans had been gradually taking over the role of the Saracens as the religious 'other' with their military achievements.

Some confusion arises from the loose Elizabethan usage of the term Turk mostly used to signify the Ottoman Sultan or a practitioner of Islam in early modern Europe which sustained "an immovable stereotype of the raging and expansionist Turk" (Parr, 1995, p. 11). While this view is visible in several plays of the Elizabethan era, the poetic works produced in this period are not marked by the images of the Ottomans or the Turks. This lack of representation *de facto* stems from the assumption that "the word 'Ottoman' does not describe a place" (Goodman, 1999, p. xiii) until the Ottomans constituted a threat to European Christendom. The term Turk, coextensively used with Islam, was equated to abandoning Christianity and embracing Islam in the Elizabethan period, which complicated the relationships with the Ottomans since the Christians assumed that the Ottomans were religiously corrupt (Burton, 2000, p. 126). Moreover, the attempts of the English to define themselves by means of religious identity had been maintained due to the fact that the lack of nationalist feelings in the sixteenth century England politically, socially or culturally prevented people to think of themselves as belonging to one nation; hence, the sense of belonging to the nation was supplied mainly by the religion which is a unifying concept (Kumar, 2003, p. 119). Hence, the image of the Turk, the Ottoman or the Muslim sustains the religious identity rather than a racial identity in the Elizabethan era and literature as a successor of the medieval idea and the representation in poetry.

For instance, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), an allegorical work with a praise of Queen Elizabeth I, is the Elizabethan poem in which representations of Turks, Muslims and Saracens are ambivalently introduced. Spenser's depiction of Cymochles both as a phlegmatic, self-indulgent Easterner and a brave man of fight, and his use of 'Saracen' and 'pagan' interchangeably in the poem, except Bruncheval in Book IV and the Souldan in Book V, blurs the distinction between the representations of the Saracen and the pagan (Heberle, 1993, p. 84). Actually, the only historical allusion to the Christian and Saracen conflict in the poem (Heberle, 1993, p. 83), the ransoming of Christian soldiers captured by the Muslims in Book I Canto X, is narrated by Spenser as follows:

> The fourth appointed by his office was,
> Poore prisoners to relieue with gratious ayd,
> And captives to redeeme with price of bras,
> From Turkes and Sarazins which them had stayd. (Spenser, 1977, p. 137).

In Mark Heberle's words, "Spenser refers to them [Turks and Saracens] explicitly one here" (1993, p. 83). In these lines, the Saracens and the Turks are marginalized and unified politically and religiously, despite their being mentioned as two separate ethnic groups, contrary to the Christian Europeans.

As Nazan Aksoy points out in her book *Rönesans İngiltere'sinde Türkler*, especially in the sixteenth century, the understanding of the significance of the Turkish people modified among the Europeans due to the fact that the Turks had been becoming a serious threat to them; therefore the Turks, ethnically stated in the Elizabethan literature -particularly in drama-, were mostly presented as cruel and traitor villains. This negative stereotypical representation was derived from the victories of the Turks over the Christendom which were achieved unvirtuously because of their rejecting Christianity (Aksoy, 2004, p. 116). The cruelty attributed to the Turks is expressed within the first three lines of Sonnet VIII in Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591):

> Love, borne in Greece, of late fled from his native place
> Forc'd by a tedious proofe that Turkish hardned hart
> Is not fit marke to pierce with his fine-pointed dart— (Sidney, 1888, p. 8).

In the sonnet, while Sidney is describing Cupid's voyage from Greece to Astrophel's heart, he mentions that the heart of the English is soft and vulnerable to his darts, unlike the heart of the Turk which is hard to be pierced with his arrows. In addition to this, there is another reference to the Turk in Sidney's Sonnet XXX in *Astrophel and Stella*:

> Whether the Turkish new-moone minded be
> To fill his hornes this yeare on Christian coast ?
> How Poles' right king meanes without leave of hoast
> To warm with ill-made fire cold Moscovy ? (Sidney, 1888, p. 30).

In the sonnet, while several political issues that are of importance to England are mentioned, the Ottoman threat to Europe is expressed within the first two lines with a reference to the crescent representing Islam (Glassé, 2002, p. 314) and the Turks as its representative and leader. Furthermore, Sidney, in his *The Defence of Poesy* (1595) emphasizes the respect that the Turks paid to the poets and poetry while complaining about the failure of cultivating poets in England. He writes that "And therefore, as I said in the beginning, even Turks and Tartars are delighted with poets" (Sidney, 1890, p. 39); however, his statement is humiliating:

> In Turkey, besides their lawgiving divines they have no other writers but poets. In our neighbor country Ireland, where truly learning goeth very bare, yet are their poets held in a devout reverence. Even among the most barbarous and simple Indians, where no writing is, yet have they their poets, who make and sing songs (Sidney, 1890, p. 4).

Along with the Irish and the Indians, Sidney includes the Turks among the most barbarous nations which revere their poets, unlike the English. Therefore, the Turks are not only discriminated as religious and ethnic 'other' but also cultural 'other'. Apart from being a non-Christian 'other' during the medieval period and literature, the Ottomans were also cultural 'others' in the Elizabethan

period. The Ottomans, actually, had never been regarded as a part of the European culture since the rise of the Empire, because the existence of the Ottoman Empire created a kind of dislocation between the classical past and the Renaissance English Humanist understanding, since it was neither the successor of the Roman antiquity and the Eastern Christianity nor the predecessor and the representative of the newly emerging European culture in the Elizabethan period. As pointed out by Miriam Jacobson:

> early modern English depictions of the classical past as a "golden age" allowed writers to question and critique the practice of classical imitation and the authority of the ancients. … The alternately familiar and vexed relationship of early modern English writers to classical antiquity derives in part from the authority that the Elizabethan education system vested in Latin authors, grammar, and language (2014, p. 8).

As a consequence of the acknowledgement and the emulation of the Elizabethan English poets to the classical antiquity, the literary authority of the classical antiquity was inherited and reproduced. The English poets of the sixteenth century imitated and maintained an interest in the classical poetics and looked for inspirations from this familiar tradition, instead of engaging with the foreign ones. The poetry produced in the Elizabethan era was mostly in form of sonnets, epics, pastorals, satires depending largely upon period (Miles, 1955, p. 866). The exclusion of the Ottomans or the Turks from the European faith and culture indicates the very early form of the Oriental idea which Edward Said came up with, claiming that the significance of Orientalism arises from the fact that there is an "ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and oriental inferiority" (Said, 1978, pp. 14-15). However, instead of presenting the Ottomans as cultural and religious 'others', the Elizabethan poetry excludes their representations, and hence, through the lack of their representations, even as a religious and cultural 'other', the Ottomans' expansionist power and existence are ignored. The lack of interrogation of the Ottomans in the Elizabethan poetry complicates the audience responses to them as 'others' and blurs how religious and racial otherness is scrutinized during the period. Historically, the Renaissance vision of the East encapsulates both denunciation and admiration of the Turks, since "the demonization of Oriental rulers provided a highly charged impetus for England's own attempts to dominate the East, their valorization provided a model for admiration and imitation" (Bartels, 1992, p. 5) because England never had the upper hand in the relationships with the East and possessed no territory outside of the British Isles when the official relations with the Turks started in 1579; therefore, they could not dominate the Ottoman Empire which was the superpower of the age (Burton, 2000, p. 130).

## Conclusion

It can be deduced after all these discussions that the rising military might of the Turks that became apparent with the Ottoman advances particularly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 during the reign of Mehmed II put the Christian Europeans in a defensive position against the advancing Muslim Turks and clarified the religious, ethnic and cultural divergence and 'otherness' of the Muslim Turkish Ottoman Empire. This Elizabethan image of the Ottomans as the cultural 'other' is, *de facto*, a regenerated 'otherness' of the main medieval stereotype of religious 'other', associating the Turks only with the rest of the Muslims, irrespective of their cultural or ethnic identity. Actually, the medieval image of the Saracen, interchangeable used for the non-Christians, functioned as a model for the representation of the Turk which became the Muslim 'other' in the Elizabethan era. Although the Turks were not distinguished from the Saracens in medieval period and considered among the Saracen rivals during the Crusades, the Turks, particularly the Ottomans, were began to be identified with the Muslim world in the late medieval period with the rise of the Ottoman Empire as a mighty political and military entity. Especially after the Turks' becoming the contemporary barbarians within the European understanding after the fall of Constantinople (Bisaha, 2004, p. 72), the Turks were perceived mostly as the barbarian leaders of Islam, particularly after Selim I's becoming the caliph, uniting their ethnic and religious identities in their 'otherness'. The change of the enemies of Christendom from the Saracens to the Turks in the Elizabethan period with the prominence of the ethnic and cultural identities of the Turks, as Schwoebel states, made Turks "the bloodthirsty foe of Christ and Plato" (Schwoebel, 1969, p. 166), stressing their otherness to the Europeans with regard to their religious and cultural heritage.

The medieval usage of 'Saracen' synonymous with 'Muslim' changing into the Elizabethan usage of the 'Turk' conflated with the 'Muslim' with a stress upon the ethnic affiliation are reflected to the literary works produced during the mentioned eras. Whilst the romances employed Turks/Ottomans interchangeably with the Saracens as Muslim 'others', with the rising prominence of the Ottoman ethnic identity in the Elizabethan period due to the Ottomans' getting the upper hand in the military, political and religious positions, the Turks gained acknowledgement in literary works, distinguishing them from the other Muslims and not restricting their representation only to their religious identity, despite the ongoing 'other' stereotyping since the Middle Ages. The Turks are represented as the religious 'other' by being merged with the representations of the Saracens as the non-Christian 'others' in medieval period; however, towards the late Middle Ages, with their embracing the Islamic leadership through taking over the caliphate, their ethnic identity became more foreground in addition to their religious identity; hence, the Turks

are marginalized twice. Thus, the representation of the Turks as a part of the Saracen 'other' in medieval romance was relatively enriched with the representation of the Turk as an ethnic and cultural 'other' in Elizabethan period, though the poetry produced in the mentioned era lacks vast Turkish representations. In the Middle Ages, the Turks lacked the political and religious leadership but they were still religious 'other'; nonetheless, in the Elizabethan period, the Ottomans' rising political power and the religious leadership of the "other" faith, apart from being the cultural "other" since not the successor but the destroyer of the Roman Empire, made the Turks religious, ethnic and cultural 'other', unifying all differences in itself. To focus on these variable images of the Turks from medieval to the Elizabethan poetry helps illustrating the diverse acknowledgement of Turkish identity that has been shaped by religious and ethnic ideologies and cultural beliefs.

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